

BARING-GOULD SABINE

# A BOOK OF CORNWALL

Sabine Baring-Gould

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# **S. Baring-Gould**

## **A Book of Cornwall**

### **CHAPTER I**

### **THE CORNISH SAINTS**

A saint or squab pie-The saints belong to five classes-I. The members of the royal Dumnonian family-II. Irish-Welsh colonists-The invasion of Brecknock-Brychan-The invasion of Cornwall and Devon-Murtogh Mac Earca-III. Irish in West Cornwall-IV. Welsh-Breton saints-V. Pure Breton importations-Ecclesiastical colonies-Llans and cells-Tribal organisation-Ecclesiastical also tribal-The sanctuary-How a tribe was recruited-Jurisdiction-What a Celtic monastery was-Rights exercised by the saints-That of ill-wishing-Missionary methods of the Celtic saints-Illdan and S. Bridget-The power of the keys as the saints understood it-Reciprocal rights-The saint expected to curse the enemies of the secular tribe-Asceticism-A legal process carried into religion-Story of the three clerks-A higher idea of asceticism gained ground-S. Columba and the nettles-The saints and animals-And children-How they used their powers-What they did for womankind-The biographies, how far trustworthy-The interest in knowing something of the founders of the Churches.

**The** story goes that the devil one day came to the Tamar from the Devon side and stood rubbing his chin and considering.

"No," said he, "I won't risk it. Yonder every person is made into a saint, and everything into squab pie. I do not feel qualified for either position."

And it is a fact that nowhere else in England are there so many villages bearing the names of saints, and these names strange, and such as may be sought out in vain in the calendars that are easily accessible. One is impressed with the idea that the vast majority of these saints are unknown and negligible quantities.

This, however, is an entirely false assumption, and it is based on the fact that their history has not been studied.

On close examination it will be found that the saintly names in Cornwall belong to certain well-defined groups, and when we have determined the localities occupied by these groups we have taken the first step towards the elucidation of some important problems in the early history of Cornwall.

Now let us look at these groups.

I. The first belongs to members of the royal Dumnonian family that ruled Devon and Cornwall.

The first-known prince was Constantine the Blessed (about 460), whose brother Aldor migrated to Brittany, and married the sister of Germanus of Auxerre, who came to Britain in 429 and 447 to oppose the spread of the Pelagian heresy.

Constantine's son Erbin, prince of the Dumnonii, died about 480. We know nothing of him save that he was the father of Geraint, the heroic king who fell at Langport, in Somersetshire, in 522, fighting against the Saxons.

His name is familiar to us as the husband of Enid, daughter of the lord of Caerleon, whose virtues and pathetic story have been revived with fresh interest in Tennyson's idyl. Geraint has left his name at Dingerrein, where was his palace, near the church he founded-S. Gerrans, in Roseland-and a tomb, supposed to be his, is still pointed out. Although his story is preserved in the Mabinogion, this story has no pretence to be regarded as history.

His first cousin was Gwen of the Three Breasts, married to Fragan, also a cousin, who migrated to Brittany. There is a curious monument of Gwen in Brittany, on which she is actually represented as having three breasts. But the expression three-or four-breasted was used of a woman who was married thrice or four times, and had a family by each husband. The mother of S. Domangard was called the four-breasted for no other reason than this.

Fragan and Gwen had three sons-Winwaloe, Wethenoc or Winock, and James-and although the great field of their labours was in Brittany, yet they certainly visited their cousins in Cornwall and obtained grants of land there, for they founded churches in two districts, where their names remain to this day somewhat disguised in Gunwalloe, Lewanick, and Jacobstow. Geraint and Enid had several children; the eldest was Solomon or Selyf, who died about 550.

He married Gwen, sister of Non, the mother of S. David, and it was due to this connection that Non and her son came to Cornwall and founded Altarnon, Pelynt, and Davidstowe.

Gwen herself we recognise as S. Wenn; she was the mother of S. Cuby, founder of Duloe and Tregony. Docwin or Cyngar, brother of Solomon, was an abbot in Somersetshire. In his old age his nephew Cuby took his uncle with him to Ireland, where he kept a cow for providing the old man with her milk. A chief carried off the cow, and Cuby left Ireland and brought the aged uncle back with him. Docwin or Cyngar was the founder of S. Kew.

Again, another uncle of S. Cuby was Cado, Duke of Cornwall, who makes a great figure in Geoffrey of Monmouth's fabulous history, and in the Arthurian romances. He was father of Constantine, whom Gildas attacked so venomously in his spiteful letter about 547, and who was converted by S. Petrock in his old age. We have in Cornwall two of his foundations and one in Devon.

After his conversion Constantine went to Ireland and entered a monastery without disclosing who he was. He was discovered by accident; for, having been set to grind corn with a hand-quern, he was overheard laughing and saying, "What would my Cornish subjects think were they to see me thus engaged?"

II. The second group of saints is of Irish-Welsh origin. The Welsh have a droll legend to account for the Irish conquest of Brecknock.

Meurig, king of Garth-Madrin (a part of Brecknockshire), had a daughter, Marchell, who said to her father in coaxing terms, "I *do* want a fur cloak; the winters here are abominably cold."

"You shall have one," answered the father.

On cool reflection Meurig considered that fur cloaks were expensive luxuries, far beyond the means of a petty Welsh prince.

So he said to Marchell, "My dear, I am going to marry you to a very agreeable young man, Aulac" (Amalgaidh), "an Irish prince, and he has ample means at his disposal to provide you with the desired fur cloak."

So Aulac was invited over, found Marchell charming, and carried her back with him to Ireland.

Now whilst he was in Wales he had allowed his eyes to wander, and he had seen that there was a good deal of rich and covetable land there. So he speedily returned at the head of a host of Irish kernes, and overran, not Brecknock alone, but all Cardigan, Carmarthen, and Pembroke, and established himself as prince there.

Whether Marchell ever got her fur cloak history does not say.

Aulac and Marchell had a son, Brychan (the Speckled or Tartan-clad), who has given his name to the county of Brecknockshire.

Brychan was a much-wived man, unless he be greatly misrepresented, and had a numerous family.

Not only do the Welsh genealogists give him forty-nine children, but the Irish, the Cornish, and the Bretons attribute to him several more.

The fact is that all Brychan's family, grandchildren as well as children, have been run together, for all such as exercised tribal rights formed the family clan.

In one of the S. Neot's windows may be seen good old Brychan seated on a throne, holding a lapful of progeny before him, dense as young rabbits.

In Ireland the tribes are called after the founder, as the Hy Conaill, Hy Fiachra, or sons of Conal, sons of Fiech, though grand, great-grand, and great-great-grandchildren.

Now the Irish who had invaded South Wales were not allowed a peaceful time in which to consolidate their power, for in the time of the grandchildren of Brychan, if not in that of his son Cledwyn, king of Carmarthen, there came down a Northern Briton, named Dyfnwal, into South Wales and drove them out, and pretty well exterminated the family of Cledwyn. This must have been about the year 500, and it was probably due to this that so many of Brychan's sons and daughters and grandchildren took to their heels and crossed the Severn Sea, and established themselves in North Devon and Cornwall.

It was not till about fifty years later that Caradoc Strong-i'-th'-Arm, the son of a granddaughter of Brychan and prince of Gallewig, the region about Callington, marched westward from the Severn, and expelled the invaders, and recovered Brecknockshire.

When the great migration took place it comprised not only the family of King Brychan, but also the Gwentian royal family, that was allied to it by blood.

Of course there has accumulated a certain amount of legend about Brychan, and we cannot really be sure that such a person ever existed; that, in fact, the name is not really that of a clan, for Breogan, which is the same as the Welsh Brychan, was the reputed ancestor of one of the branches of the Scots or Irish who migrated, according to legend, from Spain to the Emerald Isle.<sup>1</sup>

What is true is that a certain Irish clan did invade and occupy Brecknock and Carmarthen, as well as Pembrokeshire, and that about 530 they were driven out of the two first counties, and that they thereupon invaded and occupied North-East Cornwall from Padstow harbour, and the north of Devon as far as Exmoor. This was not by any means a first descent. The whole coast had been a prey to invasions from Ireland for two centuries. On this occasion among the Irish-Welsh from Gwent and Brecknock came a great number of saints, that is to say, princes and princesses devoted to the ecclesiastical profession. The significance of this I shall explain presently.

I will here only point out that almost all the foundations of churches in North-east Cornwall were made by members of the same Gwent-Brecknock family. Is there, it may be asked, any Irish record of this invasion? We have a good many records of earlier forays and occupations of Britain by the Irish, but of this particular one only a somewhat confused legend. There was a certain Princess Earca, married to a king named Saran, in Ireland, who was much engaged in raids in Britain. She was the daughter of Loarn, king of Alba or Scotland, from whom Lorn takes its name, the date of whose birth is given by the Irish annalists as taking place in 434. He was, in fact, one of the Irish Ulster adventurers who invaded Scotland.

Earca ran away from her husband to be with Murtoth, a distant cousin of Saran, and she bore him four sons. The most noted of all was Murtoth MacEarca, who in time became king of Ireland. Saran then married Earca's sister, and by her became the father of S. Cairnech and Lurig, king of the Scots (Irish) in Britain. Murtoth having committed several murders in Ireland, fled for protection to his grandfather, Loarn, in Alba, and murdered him. Thereupon he was banished from what we now call Scotland. He went to his cousin S. Cairnech to bless his arms, as it was his intention to offer his services to one of the kings of Britain, and do as much fighting as came in his way. Before leaving Cairnech he murdered in cold blood his cousin Lurig, and carried off his wife.

In Britain this ruffian, we are told, became the father of Constantine and Goidel Ficht, who became the reigning princes in Cornwall.

Murtoth was back in Ireland in 488, for we find him there fighting; and he remained there stirring up strife, and a cause of bloodshed till he was elected king of Ireland in 508.

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Nennius*, ed. Todd and Herbert (Dublin, 1848), p. 237.

Now, Murtogh most certainly when he went to Britain led a body of adventurers like himself. He is said to have been the father of Goidel Ficht, who remained there as sovereign. Now, Goidel Fichti signifies the Irish Picts, neither more nor less, a generic name, and his fatherhood of the Irish Picts means no more than that his clan or horde, which swooped down on Cornwall and Wales, regarded themselves as Hy Murtogh.

It is rather remarkable that his cousin, the whole brother of S. Cairnech, was named Broechan or Brychan.

Now, in this story, attached to a perfectly historical character, I cannot but suspect that we have a reference to a descent on Wales and Cornwall in or about 470-480.

Perhaps it may interest the reader to hear what was the end of this ruffian.

On his return to Ireland he brawled and fought till he became king in 508.

He was married to a good wife named Duiseach, and had by her a family, but he fell under the fascinations of a beautiful woman called Shin, whereupon he turned away his wife; and-by the witchcraft, so it was supposed, of the witch-one after another of his children was carried off by disease, possibly by poison. Duiseach fled for refuge to S. Cairnech, who blessed her and all who would take up her cause, and gathered together a body of men resolved on fighting to replace her. Cairnech gave a book and his staff to be carried to battle before the host.

Now it happened that in a battle fought in 524 Murtogh had killed Shin's father and brother, and though the beautiful woman continued to exercise her blandishments on the king, she had vowed revenge in her heart against him. She awaited her opportunity. It came on the eve of Samhain, All Hallows, when high revelry was kept in the hall at Cletty, where Murtogh was residing. She had the hall secretly surrounded by her men, and herself set fire to it. Murtogh was very drunk, the fire caught his clothes, and, unable to escape by the doors, which were guarded, he threw himself into a vat of wine to quench the flames, and so perished, partly by fire, partly by wine, in 527.

It is possible-I cannot say more-that as this incursion, mentioned by the Irish writers, took place precisely at the period of the Brychan descent, it may refer to it, and that Brychan may actually have been Murtogh's half-brother, who accompanied him to Britain to carve out for himself a kingdom.

III. The third group is likewise Irish, but unmixed with Welsh elements. This consists of a swarm, or succession of swarms, that descended about the year 500 upon the Land's End and Lizard district.

Concerning them we know something more than we do about the second group.

Happily Leland, who visited Cornwall in the reign of Henry VIII., made extracts from their legends then in existence, very scanty extracts, but nevertheless precious. Moreover, we have one complete legend, that of S. Fingar or Gwinear, written by a Saxon monk of the name of Anselm. And we have the lives of many of those who made a temporary stay in the Land's End and Lizard districts, preserved in Irish MSS.

IV. A fourth group is that of saints, half Welsh and half Breton, who made a short stay in Cornwall on their way to and fro.

According to Celtic law, all sons equally divided the inheritance and principalities of their father. The consequence was that on the death of a king the most masterful of his sons cut the throats of such of his brothers as he could lay hold of. And as these little games were enacted periodically in Brittany, the breath was no sooner out of the body of a prince than such sons as felt that they had no chance of maintaining their rights made a bolt of it, crossed into Cornwall, and either halted there or passed through it on their way to Wales, where they very generally got married.

Then either they or their sons returned to Cornwall and lingered there, watching events in Brittany for the safe moment to go back and reassert their rights, and as they rarely could recover princely rights, they became ecclesiastics; a compromise was effected, and they were allowed to return and set up as founders of saintly tribes.

Whilst they tarried in Cornwall they occupied their leisure in founding churches.



Such was S. Samson, with his disciples S. Mewan, S. Austell, and S. Erme.

Such again was S. Padarn, who established a large settlement where are the Petherwins.

When Samson crossed from Wales to Cornwall on his way to Brittany, he sent word to Padarn that he was going to visit him. They were first cousins. Padarn heard the news just as he had left his bed, and had pulled on one shoe and stocking. So delighted was he to hear that Samson was approaching that he ran to meet him with one leg and foot shod and the other bare.

Samson founded churches at Southill and Golant.

V. A fifth group consists of importations. In the year 919 or 920, on account of the devastations of the Normans, Brittany was almost depopulated. The Count of Poher fled with a number of his Bretons to Athelstan, and he took with him Alan his son, afterwards called Barbe-torte, who was Athelstan's godson. At this date Athelstan could do little for them; he did not ascend the throne till 924, and it was not till 926 that he defeated Howel, king of the West Welsh, as the Cornish and Devon Britons were called, and forced him to submission. In 935 Athelstan passed through Cornwall to Land's End and Scilly, and possibly enough he may have then allowed some of these fugitive Bretons to settle in Cornwall; and this explains the existence there of churches bearing the names of merely local and uninteresting saints, as S. Meriadoc at Camborne, S. Moran, and S. Corentin of Cury. These foundations mean no more than that some of the Breton settlers had brought with them the relics of their patrons in Rennes, Nantes, and Quimper. But an early Celtic foundation had quite another meaning. Among the Celts churches were not generally called after *dead* saints, but after their founders. The process of consecration was this: -

A saint went to a spot where a bit of territory had been granted him, and fasted there for forty days and nights, and continued instant in prayer, partaking of a single meal in the day, that plain, and indulging in an egg only on Sundays. At the conclusion of this period the *llan* or *cell* was his for ever inalienably, and ever after it bore his name. Moreover, among Celtic saints there existed quite a rage after multiplication of foundations, *daltha* churches, as they were called. Unless a saint could point to his baker's dozen of churches founded by himself, he was nought. But not all churches bearing a saint's name, say that of Petrock, were founded by him in person. A saint was supposed never to die, never to let go his hold over his territory. And when in after-years a chief surrendered land to a monastery, he gave it, not to the community, but to the saint; and the church built on that land would bear the name of the saint whose property it was.

The reader may like to hear something about the organisation of the Church in Celtic lands. But to understand this I must first very shortly explain the political organisation.

This among all Celtic people was tribal. The tribe, cinnel, clan, was under a chief, who had his *dun* or fort. Every subdivision of the tribe had also its camp of refuge and its headman.

When the British became Christian, Christianity in no way altered their political organisation. This we may see from the conduct of S. Patrick, who converted the Irish. He left their organisation untouched, and accommodated his arrangements for the religious supervision of the people to that, as almost certainly it existed in Britain, except perhaps in the Roman colonial cities.

Now this was very peculiar, quite unlike anything that existed in the civilised Roman world.

This organisation consisted in the creation of an ecclesiastical tribe side by side with the tribe of the land. The saint was given by the king or chief a certain territory, and at once he set to work thereon to constitute an ecclesiastical tribe subject to his rule, precisely similar to the secular tribe subject to the rule of the chieftain. A rill of water usually divided the two settlements. The idea of the church and the priest in the midst of the tribe of the land, acting as chapel and chaplain did to the Saxon thane or the Norman baron, did not occur to the Celt. The two tribes coexisted as separate units, but tied together by reciprocal rights.

The saint having been given a bit of land, at once constituted his sanctuary. He put up stones or crosses marking his bounds, a thousand paces from his cell, in a circle.

Every noble, *arglwyd*, or *flath* exercised rights of sanctuary, and the extent of his sanctuary constituted his *llan*, or lawn. The lowest grade of noble had the limits of his lawn marked at the distance of three throws of a spear or a ploughshare from his door; the *rig* or king had his as far as sixty-four pitches.

Now all those who took refuge within the lawn had sanctuary for a limited period, and the noble or the saint employed this time of respite to come to terms with the prosecutor, and furnish the fine (*eric*) appointed by law for the offence committed by the refugee. If he could not pay the fine he surrendered the man who had come for sanctuary, but if he paid it, thenceforth that man became his client, and he provided him with a *bod* or *both*, a habitation, and land to cultivate; he became one of his men. This was an important means whereby the saint recruited his tribe.

Throughout Cornwall a number of sanctuaries, remain, under the name of "sentry fields." If we could find out how many and where they are, we should know what were the mother *llans* of the early saints.

But a saintly tribe was recruited in another way. Every firstling of the secular tribe was made over to the saint: the first son of a family, the first lamb and calf. The son did not necessarily become an ecclesiastic, but he passed into the ecclesiastical tribe, and became subject to the jurisdiction of the saint.

But it may be asked, What happened when the saint died?

Every chief had his *taanist*, or successor, appointed during his life, and enjoying certain privileges. So every saint had his *coarb* chosen to rule in his name, his steward, his representative on earth. Here came in an usage very strange to Latin minds. The *coarb* must be of the royal or chieftain's race, and the right to rule in the ecclesiastical tribe belonged to the founder's family, and was hereditary, whether he were in ecclesiastical orders or not, to a female as well as to a male. Thus, although in an ecclesiastical establishment there was always a bishop to confer orders, he did not exercise jurisdiction. The rule was in the hands of the head of the sacred tribe. Thus S. Bridget kept her tame bishop, Conlaeth, who was wholly under petticoat government. He did kick once, and was devoured of wolves as a judgment, having strayed, against Bridget's orders, among the mountains. S. Ninnocha had as many as four bishops under her command. Bishop Etchen was subject to the jurisdiction of S. Columba, who was in priest's orders.

The Celtic Church as we know it, till gradually brought under Roman discipline, was purely monastic. The monasteries were the centres whence the ministry of souls was exercised. Within the sanctuary a rampart was thrown up, generally of earth, and within this was the church, and about it the separate circular cells occupied by the monks. Outside the sanctuary and throughout the lands belonging to the saint lived those subject to the rule of the saint or his *coarb*.

There was a right exercised by the saint which had previously been accorded to the bard. It was that of *ill-wishing*. The right was a legal one, but hedged about with restrictions. A bard, and after him a saint, might not ill-wish unless he had been refused a just request. If he ill-wished unjustly, then it was held that the ill-wish returned on the head of him who had launched it.

And there can be no doubt that this legal power conferred on the saints inspired terror. If a chief's horse fell under him, or his cows refused their milk, if he got a bad cold or rheumatic pains, he immediately supposed that he had been ill-wished, and sent for the saint, and endeavoured to satisfy him.

That this supposed power may have been employed occasionally for ambitious purposes is likely enough, but in general it was exercised only for good, to release captives, to mitigate barbarities, to stay bloodshed, to protect the weak against the strong.

A cheap and easy way of explaining the exercise of this power by the saints is that of saying that they traded on the credulity of the people. But it is, I am sure, a false appreciation. They were of the people, steeped in their ideas, and did not rise above them. To trade on credulity implies a superiority they did not possess. Besides, it was the exercise of a formal legal right.

There is one rather significant feature in all the missionary work of the Celtic saints which contrasts sharply with that of our modern emissaries into "foreign parts."

What we do is to collect moneys and start a missionary, who, wherever he goes, draws for his supplies on the mother-country, and depends, and his entire mission depends, on the charity of those at home. The Celtic method was absolutely the reverse. The missionary went among strange people, and threw himself on their hospitality. That is just one of the great virtues of a savage race, and these Celtic saints caught at the one noble trait in the characters of the half-barbarians among whom they went, and worked upon that and from that point.

The chiefs and kings felt themselves bound in hospitality to maintain them, to protect them, and to give them settlements. How strongly this feeling operated may be judged by an instance in the life of S. Patrick, who went to Laogaire, the Irish king, without any backing up from behind and without presents. When Laogaire refused Patrick something he wanted, the apostle and his little band refused to eat. The king was so alarmed lest they should be starved to death, and it be imputed to him as due to his niggardliness, that he gave way, and let Patrick have what he desired.

But this system worked on the material interests of the chiefs. They argued in their calculating way, "Here are all these missionaries. We have been feeding them, giving them land and cattle; it is a drain on our resources. We must really get something out of them in return."

And so, out of that frugal mind which was not the exclusive prerogative of Mrs. Gilpin, they accepted the gospel-at least, the ministrations of the saints-as a return for what they had themselves granted them: acres and cows.

There is a story in the life of S. Bridget that illustrates this somewhat sordid view taken of their dealings with the saints.

Bridget's father had been lent a sword by King Illand, son of Dunlaing of Leinster. He asked his daughter to negotiate with the king that this sword should become his personal property. She agreed. At the same time one of Illand's men threw himself upon her, and begged her to put him into her tribe. So she asked the king for two things: the man and the sword.

"Humph!" said he. "What am I to have in return?"

"I will obtain for you eternal life, for one thing, and for the other the assurance that the crown shall remain to your sons."

"As to eternal life," replied the practical and sceptical king, "I have never seen it, and so do not know what it is worth; as to the boys, if they are worth their salt, they will maintain their own rights. Give me victory over those Ulster rascals, and you shall have my man and the sword."

So Bridget agreed to this.

These Celtic saints certainly appropriated to themselves the right of the keys, to give heaven to whom they would, and to exclude from it whoever offended them. Of course they could appeal to the Bible for their authority, and who were these half-wild men to dispute it with them and quibble the text away? That they were sincere in their belief that the power of the keys was given to them is certain.

I have mentioned reciprocal rights.

Now one of those demanded of the saint by the chief of the land was to march with him to battle and to curse his enemies.

This had been what was expected and exacted of the chief Druid; and in this, as in many another particular, the saint stepped into the shoes of the Druid. This is frankly enough admitted in one life, in which we are told that the king sent for S. Finnchu to curse his enemies, because the Druid was too old and feeble to do the job effectively.

When a saint passed out of this world he left a bell, a book, or a crosier, to be the *cathair* of the tribe, and his *coarb* marched with it in his name before the tribesmen.

When the tribe was successful in battle, then certain dues were paid to the saint for his assistance.

In the lives of some of the early Celtic saints we are told strange stories of their self-mortification, their rigorous fasts. This was due to a very curious cause.

According to the Celtic law of distress, the appellant took the matter into his own hands. There was no executive administration of law. Everyone who was aggrieved had to exact the penalty as best he might. If he were too weak to recover the penalty by force, then the legal proceeding for him was to fast against the debtor or aggressor. He sat down at his door and starved himself. The person fasted against almost always gave way, as the fact of the institution of the fast doubled the fine, and as he did not venture to allow the creditor to proceed to the last extremities lest he should entail on himself a blood feud.

When S. Patrick wanted to carry a point with King Lear (Laogaire) he adopted this method and succeeded, and the king gave way.

There is a very odd story-of course mere legend-of S. Germanus when he came to Britain to oppose the Pelagian heresy. He found one particular city mightily opposed to the orthodox doctrine, and as he could not convince the citizens by reasoning with them, he and his attendant clerks sat down at the gates and starved themselves to force the citizens into adopting the true faith.

The same law of distress is found in the code of Menu, and the British Government has had to forbid the *dharmā-i. e.* the legal fasting against a creditor-from being put in practice in India.

Now, very naturally, and by an easy transition, the early Celtic saints carried their legal ideas into their religion, and just as when S. Patrick, wanting something from King Lear, fasted against him till he obtained it, so did the followers of Patrick, when they desired something of God for themselves or for others, proceed against Him by the legal method of levying a distress.

This is frankly admitted in an odd story in the *Book of Lismore*. Three clerks agreed together that they would each recite a certain number of psalms daily, and that should one die the other two would share his psalms between them. All went smoothly enough for a while. Then one died, whereupon the survivors divided his portion of the Psalter between them. But soon after a second died, whereat the third found himself saddled with the sets of psalms that appertained to both the others. He was very angry. He thought the Almighty had dealt unfairly by him in letting the other two off so lightly and overburdening him, and in a fit of spleen and resentment *he fasted against Him*.

But this view of asceticism was held only at the outset, and rapidly sounder ideas gained the mastery, and we find self-denial in the saints assume quite another complexion.

An instance in point is in the life of S. Columba. One day he saw a poor widow gathering stinging-nettles, and he asked her why she did it. "For the pot," said she; "I have no other food."

The good old man was troubled. He went back to the monastery and said to the cook, "I will eat nettles only now."

When this had gone on for some time, his disciple who cooked the nettles for him saw that he was falling away in flesh, so he took a hollow elder-stick, put butter into the tube, and by this means enriched the dish.

S. Columba said, "The nettles do not taste as before. They have a richer flavour. What have you done to them?"

"Master dear," answered his disciple, "I have put nothing into the pot but this stick, wherewith I stirred its contents."

Nor were they pedantic in observance of rule.

Travellers came to S. Cronan, and he had meat and ale set on the board, and he himself and his monks sat down to make merry with them.

"Humph!" said a formalist among them, "at this rate I do not see much prospect of matins being said."

"My friend," answered Cronan, "in receiving strangers we receive Christ; as to the matins, the angels will sing them in our room."

Finding that some travellers had wandered all night unable to find shelter, "This will never do," said he; "I shall move my quarters to the roadside."

Though rough in their treatment of themselves, they were tender-hearted and kind to bird and beast and man. It was through a frightened fawn flying for refuge to S. Petrock that Constantine was brought to repentance. S. Columba prayed with his arms extended till the birds perched on his hands. Another Columba, the founder, as I suspect, of Columb Major and Minor, was almost incommoded with their affection, fluttering about his face.

"How is it," asked one of his disciples, "that the birds avoid us and gather round you?"

"Is it not natural," answered the saint, "that birds should come to a bird?"

A play on his name, for Columba signifies a dove.

S. Cainnech saw a rich lady with a starved dog.

"Who feeds that poor brute?" he asked.

"I do," answered the lady.

"Feed it? Maltreat it. Go and eat what you cast to the poor hound, and in a week return and tell me how you relish such treatment."

One day an abbot saw a little bird with drooping wings.

"Why is the poor thing so wretched?" he asked.

"Do you not know," said a bystander, "that Molua is dead? He was full of pity to all animals. Never did he injure one. Do you marvel then that the little birds lament his decease?"

It was the same with regard to children.

One day King Eochaid sent his little son with a message to S. Maccarthen. The child's mother gave him an apple to eat on the way. The boy played with it, and it rolled from him and was lost. He hunted for his apple till the sun set, and then, tired, laid himself down in the middle of the road and fell asleep. Maccarthen was going along the road and found the sleeping child there. He at once wrapped his mantle round him, and sat by him all night. Many horsemen and cars passed before the child woke, but the old man made them get by as best they might, and he would neither suffer the child to be disturbed, nor let an accident befall him in the dark.

Great as were the powers conferred on the Celtic saints or arrogated to themselves, there can be no doubt but that they employed them mainly as a means of delivering the innocent, and in putting down barbarous customs.

S. Erc-in Cornwall Erth-made use of his influence to prevent the king of Connaught from baptising his new lance, after pagan custom, in the blood of an infant; S. Euny his in rescuing a boy from being tossed on the spears of some soldiers. Again, finding after a battle that it was the custom to cut off the heads of all who had fallen, and stack them at the king's door to be counted, he with difficulty induced the victors to take turves instead of the heads.

I do not think we at all adequately appreciate the service the saints rendered to the Celtic nations in raising the tone of appreciation of woman.

Next to founding their own monastic establishments, they were careful to induce their mothers or sisters to establish communities for the education of the daughters of the chiefs and of all such maidens as would be entrusted to them.

The estimation in which woman had been held was very low. In the gloss to the law of Adamnán is a description of her position in the house. A trench three feet deep was dug between the door and the hearth, and in this, in a condition almost of nudity, the women spent the day cooking, and making candles out of mutton suet. In the evening they were required to hold these candles whilst the men caroused and feasted, and then were sent to sleep in kennels, like dogs, outside the house as guardians, lest a hostile attack should be made during the darkness.

The current coin seems to have been, in Ireland, a serving-maid, for all fines were calculated by *cumals*-that is, maidservants-and the value of one woman was the same as that of three cows.

A brother of one of the saints came to him to say that he was bankrupt; he owed a debt of seven maidservants to his creditor, and could not rake so many together. The saint paid the fine in cows.

Bridget's mother was sold as a slave by the father of Bridget to a Druid, and the father afterwards tried to sell his daughter; but as the idea had got about that she was wasteful in the kitchen, he could not find a purchaser.

But this condition of affairs was rapidly altered, and it was so through the influence of the saints and the foundation of the great schools for girls by Bridget, Itha, Brig, and Buriana.

Till the times of Adamnán women were called out to fight as well as the men, and dared not refuse the summons. Their exemption was due to this abbot. He came on a field of battle and saw one woman who had driven a reaping-hook into the bosom of another, and was dragging her away thereby. Horror-struck, he went about among the kings of Ireland and insisted on the convocation of an assembly in which he carried a law that women were thenceforth exempted from this odious obligation.

I have but touched the fringe of a great subject, which is one that has been unduly neglected. The early history of Cornwall is inextricably mixed up with that of the saints who settled there, or who sprang from the native royal family. We have unhappily no annals, hardly a Cornish record, of those early times. Irish, Welsh, Bretons, have been wiser, and have preserved theirs; and it is to them we are forced to appeal to know anything of the early history of our peninsula. As to the saintly lives, it is true that they contain much fable; but we know that they were originally written by contemporaries, or by writers very near the time. S. Columba of Tir-da-Glas, whom I take to have been the founder of the two Columbs in Cornwall and Culbone in Somersetshire, caught one of his disciples acting as his Boswell, noting down what he said and did, and he was so angry that he took the MS. and threw it in the fire, and insisted on none of his pupils attempting to write his life.

S. Erc was wont to retire in Lent to jot down his reminiscences of S. Patrick. The writer of the *Life of S. Abban* says, "I who have composed this am the grandson of him whom S. Abban baptised." But about the eleventh century a fashion set in for rewriting these histories and elaborating the simple narratives into marvellous tales of miracle, just as in James I.'s reign the grand simple old ballads of the English nation were recomposed in stilted style that robbed them of all their poetry and most of their value.

Now it is almost always possible to disengage the plain threads of history from the flourish and frippery that was woven in at this late period. The eye of the superficial reader is at once caught by all the foolery of grotesque miracle, and turns in disgust from the narrative; but if these histories be critically examined, it will almost always be found that the substratum is historical.

Surely it affords an interest, and gives a zest to an excursion into Cornwall, when we know something of the founders of the churches, and they stand out before us as living, energetic characters, with some faults, but many virtues, and are to us no longer *nuda nomina*.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HOLY WELLS

S. Patrick in Ireland-A pagan holy well-S. Samson-Celtic saints very particular about the water they drank-S. Piran and S. Germoe-S. Erth and the goose-eggs-S. Sithney and the polluted well-Dropping of pins into wells-Hanging rags about-Well-chapel of S. Clether-Venton Ia-Jordan wells-Gwennap ceremony-Fice's well-Modern stupidity about contaminated water.

**The** system adopted by S. Patrick in Ireland was that of making as little alteration as he could in the customs of the people, except only when such customs were flatly opposed to the precepts of the gospel. He did not overthrow their lechs or pillar-stones; he simply cut crosses on them. When he found that the pagans had a holy well, he contented himself with converting the well into a baptistery. It is a question of judgment whether to wean people gently and by slow degrees from their old customs, or whether wholly to forbid these usages. S. Patrick must have known perfectly what the episcopal system was in Gaul, yet when he came into a land where the Roman territorial organisation had never prevailed, he accommodated Christian Church government to the conditions of Celtic tribal organisation.

He found that the Irish, like all other Celtic peoples, held wells in great veneration. He did not preach against this, denounce it as idolatrous, or pass canons condemning it. He quietly appropriated these wells to the service of the Church, and made of them baptisteries.

What Patrick did in Ireland was what had been done elsewhere.

When S. Samson was travelling in Cornwall between Padstow and Southill, and visited his cousin Padarn on the way; at a place called Tregear he found the people dancing round an upright stone, and offering it idolatrous worship. He did not smash it in pieces. He contented himself with cutting a cross on it.

Now the Celtic saints were mighty choice in their tippie. They insisted on having the purest of water for their drink; and not only did they require it for imbibing, but they did a great deal of tubbing.

One day S. Germoe paid S. Piran a visit; after they had prayed together, "It is my tubbing time," said Piran. "Will you have a bath too?" "With the greatest of pleasure," responded Germoe. So the two saints got into the tub together. But the water was so cold that Germoe's teeth began to chatter, and he put one leg over the edge, intending to scramble out. "Nonsense!" said Piran; "bide in a bit, and you will feel the cold less sharply."

Germoe did this. Presently Piran yelled out, "Heigh! a fish! a fish!" and, between them, the two nude saints succeeded in capturing a trout that was in the vat.

"I rejoice that we have the trout," said Piran, "for I am expecting home my old pupil Carthagh, and I was short of victuals. We will cook it for his supper."

Some of the saints had the fancy for saying their prayers standing up to their necks in water.

There is a story of S. Erc, the S. Erth of Land's End district, to the purpose, but I admit it is on late authority.

Domnhal, king of Ireland, sent his servants to collect goose-eggs. They found a woman carrying a black basket on her head piled up with the eggs of geese. The king's servants demanded them, but she answered that they were intended as a present to Erc, who spent the day immersed to the armpits in running water, with his Psalter on the bank, from which he recited the psalms. In the evening he emerged from his bath, shook himself, and ate an egg and a half together with three bunches of watercress.

However, regardless of the saint's necessities, the servants carried the eggs away.

When S. Erc came out of the river, dripping from every limb, and found there were no eggs for his supper, he waxed warm, and roundly cursed the rascals who had despoiled him, and those who had set them on, and all such as should eat them.

The story goes on to tell how these eggs became veritable apples of discord, breeding internecine strife.

But to return to the wells.

Whether taught by experience, or illumined by the light of nature, I cannot say, but most assuredly the saints of Ireland, Wales, and Cornwall were vastly particular as to their wells being of the purest and coldest water obtainable.

S. Senan had settled for a while by a well in Inis Caorach, and one day his disciple Setna-our Cornish Sithney-found a woman washing her child's dirty clothes in the fountain. He flew into a fury, and his companion Liberius was equally abusive in the language employed. Shortly after the boy tumbled over the rocks into the sea. The distracted mother ran to S. Senan, and when he heard the circumstances, assuming that this was due to the imprecations called down on the woman and her child by his two pupils, he bade both of them depart and not see his face again, unless the child should be produced uninjured. Setna and Liberius sneaked away very disconsolate, but as they happily found the lad on the beach uninjured, they were once more received into favour.

It is unnecessary here to repeat all the hackneyed references to the cult of fountains among the Celts; they may be taken for granted. We know that such was the case, and that the same cult continues very little altered among the Irish and Breton peasantry to the present day. In Cornwall there is now little or none of it. "When I was a man I put away childish things," says S. Paul, and the same applies to peoples. When they are in their cultural childhood they have their superstitious beliefs and practices; but they grow out of them, and we pity those who stick in the observance of usages that are unreasonable.

In pagan times money was dropped into wells and springs, and divination was taken from the rising of bubbles. Now the only relic of such a proceeding is the dropping in of pins or rush crosses.

Wells were also sought for curative purposes, and unquestionably some springs have medicinal qualities, but these are entirely unconnected with the saints, and depend altogether on their chemical constituents.

It is said that rags may still be seen on the bushes about Madron well as they are about holy wells in Ireland and about the tombs of fakirs and Mussulman saints. I doubt if any Cornish people are so foolish as to do such a thing as suspend rags about a well with the idea of these rags serving as an oblation to the patron of the spring for the sake of obtaining benefits from him.

In Pembrokeshire till quite recently persons, even Dissenters, were wont to drink water from S. Teilo's well out of a portion of the reputed skull of S. Teilo, of which the Melchior family are the hereditary custodians.

The immersing of the bone of a saint in water, and the drinking of the water thus rendered salutary, is still practised in Brittany. This was done when Ireland was pagan; but the bones soaked were those of Druids.

There is a curious illustration, as I take it, of this practice in S. Clether's well chapel, recently restored. Here the stone altar remains *in situ*; it has never been disturbed

S. Clether was the son of Clydwyn, prince of Carmarthen and grandson of Brychan. He came to Cornwall in consequence of the invasion of his territories by Dyfnwal, and here he spent a great part of his life, and died at an advanced age. He settled in the Inney valley in a most picturesque spot between great ruins of rock, where a perennial spring of the coolest, clearest water gushes forth. There can be very little doubt that S. Clether employed this spring as his baptistery, for the traditional usage of fetching water from it for baptisms in the parish church has lingered on there.



The holy well lies north-east of the chapel or oratory. When the chapel was reconstructed in the fifteenth century the water from the holy well was conveyed in a cut granite channel under the wall, and came sparkling forth in a sort of locker on the right side of the altar in the thickness of the wall.

To reach this there was a descent of a step in the floor. Thence the water flowed away underground, and gushed forth in a second holy well, constructed in the depth of the chapel wall outside on the south near the east end. Consequently there are two holy wells. The first, I take it, was the baptismal well; the second was used to drink from. A relic of the saint was placed in the channel where exposed; the water flowed over it, acquired miraculous virtues, and was drunk at the second well outside the chapel by those who desired healing.

That there was a further significance in the management of the course of the water I do not doubt.

An attempt was made to carry out the imagery of the vision of the holy waters in Ezekiel: -

"Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar." (xlvii. I.)

Cornwall possesses a vast number of holy wells, many of them in very bad repair. That at S. Cleer has been restored admirably; Dupath is in perfect condition; that of S. Guron at Bodmin has been restored; S. Melor's well at Linkinhorn is very beautiful and in perfect condition; S. John's well, Morwenstow, S. Julian's, Mount Edgcumbe, S. Indract's in the parish of S. Dominic, the well of S. Sidwell and S. Wulvella at Laneast, S. Samson's, Southill, Menacuddle, S. Anne's, Whitstone, S. Neot's, S. Nin's, Pelynt, Roche, S. Ruan's, are in good condition, but many are ruinous, or have been so altered as to have lost their interest. That of S. Mawes has been built up, and two great cast-iron pipes carried up from it for the circulation of air over the water, which is drawn away to a tap which supplies the town or village.<sup>2</sup>

Here is a melancholy account of the condition to which a holy well has sunk: -

"Venton Eia (S. Ia's well), on the cliff overlooking Porthmeor. – This ancient well, associated with the memory of the patron saint of the town (S. Ives), was formerly held in the highest reverence. Entries occur in the borough records of sums paid for cleansing and repairing it, under 1668-9 and 1692-3. On the last of these occasions the well was covered, faced, and floored with hewn granite blocks in two compartments. It is still known as 'the Wishing Well,' from the old custom of divination by crooked pins dropped into the water. For some years past, however, this ancient source of purity has been shamefully outraged by contact with all that is foul. Close to it is a cluster of sties, known as 'Pig's Town,' and the well has become the receptacle for stinking fish and all kinds of offal. Just above it are the walls of the new cemetery. All veneration for this spot, so dear to countless generations of our forefathers, seems to have departed."<sup>3</sup>

The well of S. Bridget at Landue remains, but the saint's chapel is gone. Stables near the well are thought to have polluted the water, and the well is closed lest the incautious should drink of the reputedly contaminated waters.

There are a good many holy wells in Devon also, but none of mark. At Sticklepath above the well rises a very early inscribed stone. There is a holy well, ruinous, at Halwell, one, probably of S. Lo, at Broadwood, one at Ermington, from which water is still drawn for baptisms, one at Lifton, one

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<sup>2</sup> Misses Couch were misled when they visited S. Mawes, and they give a photograph of a well which is not the holy well. The latter is among the houses opposite the post office, and had an arched entrance, now walled up.

<sup>3</sup> Matthews, *History of the Parishes of S. Ives, Lelant, Towednack, and Zennor* (London, 1892), p. 40.

at Ashburton, probably dedicated to S. Wulvela. S. Sidwell and S. Anne each has her well at Exeter, and the water of the latter has of late become of repute, and is in request under the form of beer. It supplies a brewery.

When S. Cadoc returned from the Holy Land he brought with him a bottle of water from the Jordan, and poured it into a well in Cornwall. None that I know of bears his name, but that at Laneast is called Jordan well.

There is a very singular custom still observed in connection with a stream in place of a holy well at Gwennap. There, on Good Friday, children seek two spots by a stream to baptise their *dolls*. This can be due only to a dim reminiscence of baptising in the open.

In addition to the holy wells, there are the pixy wells, where the ancient spirits have not been dispossessed by the saints.

Poughill parish takes its name from a puck or pisgie well.

Fice's well, near Prince Town, has on it "J. F. 1568." John Fitz, the astrologer, and his lady were once pixy-led whilst riding on Dartmoor. After long wanderings in the vain effort to find their way, they lighted on a pure spring, drank of it; and their eyes were opened to know where they were and which was their right direction. In gratitude for this deliverance, old John Fitz caused the stone memorial to be set over the spring for the advantage of all pixy-led wanderers. Alas! the convict establishment has enclosed the moor all round, and now this well, though intact, no longer stands, as I remember it, in wild moorland, but enclosed by a protecting wall in a field.

In a certain large village of which I know something water was introduced by means of earthenware pipes for a considerable distance, and then conveyed to taps at convenient spots by iron and lead.

Now there was one of these taps placed outside the Board school. The master said within himself, "If I go to the tap, I shall have to pay the water rate, which will be very heavy; if I never turn the tap, I surely cannot be required to pay. So I know what I will do. Go to! I will draw all my water from the well in the yard of the farm at the back of my premises."

He did so, and lost his wife and child by diphtheria. Verily even modern Board school masters might learn something from these wild old pure water-loving Celtic saints.

**Note.**-Book on Cornish Holy Wells: -

Quiller-Couch (M. and L.), *Ancient and Holy Wells of Cornwall*. London: Clark, 1894.

## CHAPTER III

### CORNISH CROSSES

Abundance of crosses-The menhîr-Crosses marked the limits of a Llan-Crosses marked places for public prayer-Instance of a Cornish Dissenter-Churches anciently few and far between-The cross erected where was no church-Which therefore precedes the village church-Crosses as waymarks-The Abbot's Way-Interlaced work-The plait a subject for study.

**There** is no county in England where crosses abound as they do in Cornwall. Second to it comes Devonshire. Indeed, on Dartmoor and in the west of the latter county they are as numerous as in Cornwall.

Their origin is various.

In the first place, where the pagans worshipped a menhîr or standing stone, there it was Christianised by being turned into a cross. In the second place, crosses marked the bounds of a *minihi* or *llan*, the sanctuary of the saint.

Then, again, the Celtic churches were very small, mere oratories, that could not possibly contain a moderate congregation. The saints took their station at a cross, and preached thence. With the Saxons there was a rooted dread of entering an enclosed place for anything like worship, fearing, as they did, the exercise of magical rites; and they were accustomed to hold all their meetings in the open air. S. Walpurga, the sister of S. Willibald, who wrote in 750, and was a Wessex woman, says: -

"It is the custom of the Saxon race that on many estates of nobles and of good men they are wont to have not a church, but the standard of the holy cross dedicated to our Lord and revered with great honour, lifted up on high so as to be convenient for the frequency of daily prayer."

In connection with this, I may mention a fact. In the parish of Altarnon was an old pious Wesleyan, and when the weather was too bad for him to go to chapel he was wont to go to one of the crosses of granite that stood near his cottage, kneel there, and say his prayers. He died not long ago.

Bede, some twenty years before Walpurga, says that-

"The religious habit was then held in great veneration, so that wheresoever a clerk or a monk happened to come he was joyfully received, ... and if they chanced to meet him upon the way, they ran to him, and bowing, were glad to be signed with his hand and blessed with his mouth. On Sundays they flocked largely to the" (bishop's) "church or the monasteries to hear the word of God. And if any presbyter chanced to come into a village, the inhabitants flocked together to hear the word of life; for the presbyters and clerks went into the villages on no other account than to preach, baptise, visit the sick, and in short to take care of souls" (*H.E.*, iii. 16).

This shows that, in the first place, among the Anglo-Saxons there were no churches except the cathedral and the monastic church, and no parochial clergy. Bede does not actually say that there was a cross set up from which the itinerant clergy preached, and to which the faithful resorted for prayer, but this additional fact we have learned from Walpurga.

So we come to this very interesting conclusion, that the *village cross preceded the parish church*. The crosses were, in fact, the religious centres of church life, and we ought accordingly to value and preserve them with the tenderest care. A great many of those that we have now on our village greens are comparatively modern, and date from the fourteenth or fifteenth century, but there still remain a vast number, not in the midst of a village, but on moors and by highways of an extremely early

description, and which most assuredly have been the scene of many a primitive "camp meeting" in the fifth and sixth centuries.

On Sourton Down beside the road stands a cross of very coarse granite. On it is inscribed PRINCIPI FIL AVDEI, and above it an early and rude cross of Constantine. Some time in the Middle Ages the rudeness of the stone gave dissatisfaction, and its head was trimmed into a cross.

A third occasion for the erection of crosses was as waymarks. Across Dartmoor such a succession of rude crosses exists where was what is called the Abbot's Way from Buckfast to Tavistock and to Plympton. But there are others not on these lines, and such may have served both as guiding marks and also as stations for prayer. That the monks of Buckland-and Buckland goes back to pre-Saxon times-did go out to the moor and there minister to the tin-streamers or squatters and shepherds, I cannot doubt, and accordingly look with much emotion at these grey monuments of early Christianity.

The interlaced work which is found on some of the crosses is of the same character as the ornamentation in the early Irish MSS., and it was adopted from the Celtic clergy by their Anglian and Saxon converts.

But whence came it?

We know that the Britons delighted in plaited work with osiers, and it was with wattle that they built their houses, their kings' palaces, and defended their camps. By constant use of wattle through long ages they became extraordinarily skilful in devising plaits; and when they began to work on stone they copied thereon the delicate interlaced work they loved to exhibit in their domestic buildings.

The various plaits have been worked out by Mr. A. G. Langdon in his admirable study of the Cornish crosses. At a meeting of the British Association he exhibited a hundred drawings of different crosses, etc., illustrative of a paper read by Mr. J. Romilly Allen on "The Early Christian Monuments of Cornwall." When some incredulity was expressed as to there being so many examples in that county, Mr. Langdon explained that not only did all these come from Cornwall, but that the examples brought before the Association represented only about one-third of the whole number known to exist. And since that date a good many more have been noticed. The variety in design of the crosses is very great indeed. Some affect the Greek cross, some the Latin; some are with a figure on them, some plain, others richly ornamented. But what is remarkable about them is, in the first place, they are nearly all in granite, a material in which nothing was done from the seventh century down to the fifteenth, as though the capability of working such a hard intractable stone had been lost. And, in the second place, the ornamentation is in the lost art of plaiting, of the beauty and difficulty of which we can hardly conceive till we attempt it. There is first the four-string plait, then that with six, and lastly that with eight. Then three strings are combined together in each plait, then split, forming the so-called Stafford knot; the knot and the plait are worked together; now a loop is dropped, forming a bold and pleasing interruption in the pattern. Then a ring is introduced and plaited into the pattern; then chain-work is introduced; in fact, an endless variety is formed, exercising the ingenuity of the artist to the uttermost. It would be an excellent amusement and occupation for a rainy day in an hotel for the tourist to set to work upon and unravel the mysteries of these Celtic knots.

The old interlaced work, or the tradition of it, seems to have lingered on in the glazing of windows, and some very beautiful examples remain in England and in France. Mr. Romilly Allen points out: -

"In Egyptian, Greek, and Roman decorative art the only kind of interlaced work is the plait, without any modification whatever; and the man who discovered how to devise new patterns from a simple plait, by making what I term *breaks*, laid the foundation of all the wonderfully complicated and truly bewildering forms of interlaced ornament found on such a masterpiece of the art of illumination as the

*Book of Kells*. Although we do not know *who* made the discovery of how to make breaks in a plait, we know pretty nearly *when* it was made."<sup>4</sup>

He goes on to show that the transition from plaitwork to knotwork took place *in Italy* between 563 and 774. But is that not a proof of introduction into Italy, and not of its discovery there? I am rather disposed to think that partly through the adoption of the osier wattle in domestic architecture, partly through the employment of the tartan, the plait in all its intricacy was a much earlier product of the genius of the Celtic race.

There is a pretty story in the life of an early Irish saint. He had been put at school, but could not learn. At last, sick of books, he ran away. He found a man at work with willow rods, weaving them to form the walls of a house he was building. He dipped them in water, and laced them in and out with wonderful neatness, patience, and dexterity. And the boy, looking on, marvelled at it all, took it to heart, and said to himself, "These osiers flip out; but when there are patience and skill combined, they can be made into the most exquisite patterns, and plaited together into a most solid screen. Why may not I be thus shaped, if I allow myself to be bent, and am docile in my master's hands?" So he went back to school.

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<sup>4</sup> *Archæologia Cambrensis*, January, 1899. See also A. J. Langdon, "The Ornament of the Early Crosses of Cornwall," *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, vol. x. (1890-1).

## CHAPTER IV

### CORNISH CASTLES

The ancient camps-Their kinds-1. Rectangular, Roman-2. The Saxon burh-3. The Celtic circular or oval camp-The *lis* and the *dun*-4. Stone fortresses-Heroic legends in Ireland-The Firbolgs-5. The stone castle with mortar, Norman-No good examples.

**Anyone** with a very little experience can at once "spot" a camp or castle by the appearance from a distance of a hill or headland; and the traveller in Devon and Cornwall will pass scores of them, as he will see by his Ordnance Survey Map, without giving much attention to them, without supposing that they can be of great interest, unless his attention has been previously directed to the subject. It is a pity that anyone should go through a country which may really be said to make ancient camps and castles its speciality and not know something about them.

Of hill castles or camps there are several kinds: -

1. Those that are rectangular or approximately so, and which have been attributed to the Romans. Of these in Cornwall there are but few. Tregear, near Bodmin, and Bossens, in S. Erth, have yielded Roman coins and relics of pottery; but whether actually Roman or Romano-British remains undecided.

2. There are those which consist of a tump or mound, sometimes wholly artificial, usually natural, and adapted by art, and in connection with this is a bass-court, usually, but not universally, quadrilateral. This was the Saxon type of *burh*; it was also that of the Merovingian. The classic passage descriptive of these is in the *Life of S. John of Terouanne*, written in the eleventh century: -

"It was customary for the rich men and nobles of these parts, because their main occupation is the carrying on of feuds, to heap up a mound of earth as high as they are able to raise it, and to dig round it a broad, open, and deep ditch, and to girdle the whole upper edge of the bank with a barrier of wooden planks, stoutly fastened together, and set round with numerous turrets, and this in place of a wall.

"Within was constructed a house, or rather a citadel, commanding the whole area, so that the gate of it could alone be reached by means of a bridge that sprang from the counterside of the ditch, and was gradually raised as it advanced, supported by sets of piers, two, or even three, trussed on each side, over convenient spans, crossing the moat with a managed ascent, so as to attain the upper level of the mound, landing on its edge level with the threshold of the door."

A very good idea of such a camp may be derived from the representation of the fortifications of Dinan on the Bayeux tapestry.

In France the *mottes* on which the wooden donjons of the Merovingian chiefs were planted certainly abound; but in many cases the bank enclosing the bass-court has disappeared. Good examples may be seen at Plympton, at Lydford, and at Launceston. At the former and latter Norman walls took the place of the palisading; but at Lydford a keep was erected on the tump, but the line of earthworks was never walled.

In Ireland and in Scotland such camps abound; they are there due to Saxon and Danish invaders. In Ireland they are called *motes*, in England *burhs*. They afforded the type on which the Normans constructed their castles.

3. A much more common form of camp in Devon and Cornwall is one that is circular or oval, and consists of concentric rings of earth, or earth and stone mixed, with ditches between.

There is, however, a variant where a headland is fortified, either one standing above the sea into which it juts, or at the junction of two streams. There it sufficed to run defensive banks and ditches across the neck of the promontory.

This description of camp or castle is usually supposed to be Celtic.

In Ireland such a camp is a *rath*. The same word is employed for similar camps in a portion of Pembrokeshire.

Every noble had a right to have a *rath*, and every chief had his *lis* or *dun*.

A *lis* was an enclosed space, with an earth-mound surrounding it, and was the place in which justice was administered. *Lis* enters into many place-names in Cornwall, as Liskeard, Lesnewth, Listewdrig, the court of that king who killed S. Gwynear and bullied S. Ewny and the other Irish settlers; Lescaddock, Lescawn, Lestormel, now corrupted into Restormel.

In Ireland *les* had a wider meaning. S. Carthagh was throwing up a mound around a plot of land where he was going to plant a monastery.

"What are you about there?" asked an inquisitive woman.

"Only engaged in the construction of a little *lis*," was the reply.

"Lis beg!" (small *lis*), exclaimed the woman. "I call it a *lis mor*" (a big *lis*). And Lismore is its name to this day.

In Ireland every king had his *dun*. This was an enlarged *rath* with an outer court in which he held his hostages, for the law required this: "He is no king who has not hostages in lock-up."

*Dun* in Welsh is *din*, and *dinas* is but another form of the same word, and signifies a royal residence.

A gloss to an old Irish law tract says that a royal *dun* must have two walls and a moat for water.

*Dun* in Scotland is applied to any fort. According to the Gaelic dictionaries, it is "a heap or mound," and even a dung-hill is a *dun*.

In fact, the French *dune* and the Cornish *towan* derive from the same root. *Dun* so much resembles the Anglo-Saxon *tun* that we cannot always be sure of the derivation of a place-name that ends in *tun*.

Every tribe had its *dun*, to which the cattle were driven, and where the women and children were placed in security in times of danger. This would be in addition to the royal residence, that is the *dun* of the *rig*.

Within the *dun* were numerous structures of timber, roofed with oak shingles, some of a large description, such as a banqueting hall; but the habitations of the garrison were circular, of wicker-work, and thatched with rushes.

In Cornwall there is Dingerrein, the *dinas* of S. Geraint; Castel-an-Dinas; Damelioc (*Din-Maeloc*); Dunheved, the old name for Launceston; Dundagel.

4. I come now to the stone fortresses that are found in parts of Cornwall and Wales. They are also to be seen in Scotland and Ireland. These are called *caerau* in Wales. A *cathair* is the term applied to them in Ireland, and *cathair* signifies as well a city.

They are found in England only in Somersetshire, Devon, and Cornwall; and in Wales only in such parts as were invaded and occupied from Ireland.

In Kerry and the isles of Arran are those in best preservation, and from these we can see that the walls were regularly built up with double faces, rubble being between them. Very usually in Arran stones are placed with the end outwards, so that they serve as ties to hold the walls together.

The Welsh examples are very perfect, and precisely similar to those in Ireland.

We know that the Gauls built stone camps-Cæsar calls them their *oppida*-but they employed beams of timber along with the stone to tie the walls together. The wood has everywhere rotted away, and the enclosing walls of the Gaulish camps now present the same appearance precisely as do the similar stone camps in Devon, Somerset, and Cornwall. When the timber decayed the stones fell into

heaps. In Arran and Anglesey there was no timber; consequently stones were employed as ties, and there the walls remain comparatively intact.

Within the *caer* were circular stone beehive huts; also chambers that were circular were contrived in the thickness of the walls. These "sentry boxes" have been noticed in Wales, and also in Cornwall and Devon.

The account of Castel-an-Dinas, before it was robbed for the erection of a tower, is precisely such as might be given of one of those in Ireland or Wales: -

"It consisted of two stone walls, one within the other, in a circular form, surrounding the area of the hill. The ruins are now fallen on each side of the walls, and show the work to have been of great height and thickness. There was also a third or outer wall built more than half-way round. Within these walls are many little enclosures of a circular form, about seven yards in diameter, with little walls round them of two or three feet high; they appear to have been so many huts for the shelter of the garrison."

In fact, this was a royal dinas. Not only had it the requisite double wall, but also the *drecht gialnai*, or dyke of the hostages. Every king retained about him pledges from the under-chiefs that they would be faithful.

There are several of these stone camps in Devon and Cornwall. In Somersetshire Whorlebury is very interesting; in Devon are Whit Tor and Cranbrook; in Cornwall the Cheesewring camp, Carn Brea, Chun Castle, the camp of Caer Conan on Tregonning Hill, Helborough, beside Castel-an-Dinas in Ludgvan.

The heroic legends of Ireland attribute these stone camps to the Firbolgs, the non-Aryan dusky race that was in possession previous to the arrival of the Celts. But that the Milesians learned from them the art of constructing such castles is very certain, for in Christian times the monks imitated them in some of their settlements.

Lord Dunraven, who has photographed these stone duns, says: -

"The legends of the early builders are preserved in the compilations of Irish scribes and bardic writers dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. The story, which is said by these writers to have been handed down orally during the earliest centuries of the Christian era, and committed to writing when that art first became known in Ireland, is the history of the wanderings and final destruction of a hunted and persecuted race, whose fate would seem to have been mournful and strange as the ruined fortresses of the lost tribe which now stand before us. Coming to Ireland through Britain, they seem to have been long beaten hither and thither, till, flying still westward, they were protected by Ailill and Maeve, who are said to have reigned in Connaught about the first century of the Christian era. From these monarchs they obtained a grant of lands along the western coast of Galway, as well as the islands of Arran, where they remained till their final expulsion. Thus their forms seem to pass across the deep abyss of time, like the white flakes of foam that are seen drifted by the hurrying wind over the wild and wasted ruins of their fortresses."

Excavations show that these stone caers are more ancient than the Christian era; they belong to the period of flint weapons and the introduction of bronze. But, as already stated, the conquerors of the rude stone monument builders adopted some of their arts, and some of their camps are much later.

5. The stone castle, the walls set in mortar, is not earlier in Devon and Cornwall than the Norman Conquest. There are no really stately castles in either county, with the exception of Launceston. Rougemont, Exeter, is eminently unpicturesque; Tiverton, Totnes, Plympton, are almost complete ruins; Lydford-well, as Browne the poet wrote of it in the reign of James I.: -



"They have a castle on a hill;  
I took it for an old windmill,  
The vanes blown off by weather;  
To lie therein one night, 'tis guessed  
'Twere better to be stoned or pressed  
Or hanged ere you come hither."

And ruin that has fallen on it has not improved its appearance.

Okehampton is but a mean relic; Restormel is circular; Trematon is like a pork-pie; Pendennis, S. Mawes, late and insignificant. Tintagel owes everything to its superb situation and to the legend that it was the place where King Arthur was born. The most picturesque of all is Pengersick, near Breage, but that is late. Its story shall be told in the [chapter on Penzance](#).

## CHAPTER V

### TIN MINING

The granite eruptions in Devon and Cornwall-*Elvans-Lodes*-Tin passing into copper-Stream-tin-Story of S. Piran and S. Chigwidden-Dartmoor stream-tin-Joseph of Arimathea-The Cassiterides-Jutes-Danish incursions-Tin in King John's time-Richard, Earl of Cornwall-Elizabeth introduces German engineers-Stannary towns-Carew on mining-Blowing-houses-Miners' terms-Stannary Courts-Dr. Borlase on tin mining-Present state.

**I remember** being at a ball many years ago at that epoch in the development of woman when her "body" was hooked along her dorsal ridge. Now I learn from competent authorities that it is held together in other fashion.

There was at the ball a very lusty stout lady in slate-grey satin.

By nature and age, assisted by victuals, she was unadapted to take violent exercise. Nevertheless dance she would. Dance she did, till there ensued an explosion. Hooks, eyes, buttons, yielded, and there ensued an eruption of subjacent material. In places the fastenings held so that the tumescent under-garments foamed out at intervals in large bulging masses.

This is precisely what took place with Mother Earth in one of her gambols. Her slate panoply gave way, parted from N.E. to S.W., and out burst the granite, which had been kept under and was not intended for show.

Her hooks and eyes gave way first of all in South Devon, and out swelled the great mass of Dartmoor. They held for a little space, and then out broke another mass that constitutes the Bodmin moors. It heaved to the surface again north of S. Austell, then was held back as far as Redruth and Camborne. A few more hooks remained firm, and then the garment gave way for the Land's End district, and, finally, out of the sea it shows again in Scilly.

Or take it in another way. Cornwall is something like a leg. Let it be a leg vested in a grey stocking. That stocking has so many "potatoes" in it, and each "potato" is eruptive granite.

Granite, however, likewise cracked, formed "faults," as they are called, in parallel lines with the great parent crack to which it owed its appearance, and cracks also formed across these; and through the earlier cracks up gushed later granite in a molten condition, and these are dykes.

Moreover, the satin body not only gave way down its great line of cleavage, but the satin itself in places yielded, revealing, not now the under-linen which boiled out at the great faults, but some material which, I believe, was the lining. So when the granite broke forth there were subsidiary rifts in the slate, and through these rifts a material was extruded, not exactly granite, but like it, called *elvan*. These elvan dykes vary from a few feet to as many as four hundred in breadth, and many can be traced for several miles. The younger granite intruded into the older granite is also called elvan.

But when the secondary fissures occurred, the intrusive matter was not only a bastard granite, but with it came also tin and copper. And these metallic lines, which run on Dartmoor from E. to W., and in Cornwall from E.N.E. to W.S.W., are called *lodes*.

The cross-cracks do not contain metal. They are called *cross-courses*.

In addition there are some capricious veins that do not run in the normal direction, and these are called *counter-lodes*. Their usual direction is N.E.

The cross-courses, although without metal, are of considerable value to the miner, because, as he knows well, the best lodes are those which are thus traversed.

There is, however, one description of cross-course that is called *floocan*, and which is packed with clay, and holds back water. These are accordingly not cut through if it can possibly be avoided.

A very curious feature in the lodes is, that after going down to a variable depth the tin is replaced by copper.

Percy was the first to establish this, towards the close of last century. He pointed out that many an old tin mine was in his time worked for copper. And it came to be supposed that this would be found to be an unchanging law: Go deep enough after tin, and you come to copper. But this opinion was shaken when it was found that Dolcoath, the profoundest mine in Cornwall, which had for some time been worked for copper, became next rich in tin. What seems to have been the case was this: when a vent offered, there was a scramble between the two minerals which should get through first and out of the confinement under earth's crust, and now a little tin got ahead; then came copper trampling on its heels, but was itself tripped up by more tin.

Now, when the granite came to the surface, it did not have everything its own way, and hold its nose on high, and lord it over every other rock as being the most ancient of all, though not the earliest to put in an appearance. There was a considerable amount of water about. There is plenty and to spare in the west of England now, but we may feel grateful that we do not exist in such detestable weather, nor exposed to such sousing rains, nor have to stand against such deluges, as those which granite had to encounter. Hot, over-hot, it may have been below, but it was cold and horribly wet above.

The rains descended; the floods came, and beat on the granite, which, being perhaps at the time warm and soft, and being always very absorbent, began to dissolve.

As it dissolved, the water swept away all its component parts, and deposited the heaviest near at hand, and took the lightest far away. Now the heaviest of all were the ore from the veins or lodes, and the water swept this down into the valleys and left it there, but it carried off the dissolved feldspar and deposited it where it conveniently could and when it was tired of carrying it. The former is stream-tin; the latter is china clay.

Now to get at stream-tin very little trouble is needed. The rubble brought down and lodged in the valleys has to be turned over; and the ore is distinguishable by its weight and by a pink tinge, like the rouge ladies were wont (a hundred years ago) to put on their cheeks and lips. There is no tunnelling, no nasty shafts and adits to be made; and shafts and adits were beyond the capacity of primitive man, furnished with bone and oak picks only. Besides, why take the trouble to mine when the tin lay ready to be picked up?

The story told in Cornwall of the discovery of tin is this: -

S. Piran came over from Ireland in a coracle, and, like a prudent man, brought with him a bottle of whisky. On landing on the north coast he found that there was a hermit there named Chigwidden. The latter was quite agreeable to be friends with the new-comer, who was full of Irish tales, Irish blarney, and had, to boot, a bottle of Irish whisky. Who would not love a stranger under the circumstances? Brothers Chigwidden and Piran drank up the bottle.

"By dad," said Piran, "bothered if there be another dhrop to be squeezed out! Never mind, my spiritual brother; I'll show you how to distil the crayture. Pile me up some stones, and we'll get up the divil of a fire, and we shall manage to make enough to expel the deuce out of ould Cornwall."

So Chigwidden collected a number of black stones, and the two saints made a fine fire-when, lo! out of the black stones thus exposed to the heat ran a stream like liquid silver. Thus was tin discovered.

The story won't wash.

Tin was invented a thousand years at least before either Piran or Chigwidden were thought of. But that was most certainly the way in which it was revealed.

On Dartmoor the stream tin can thus be run out of the ore with a peat fire. And the Dartmoor stream tin has this merit: it is absolutely pure, whereas tin elsewhere is mingled with wolfram, that makes it brittle as glass; and to separate wolfram from tin requires a second roasting and is a delicate process.

Another Cornish story is to the effect that Joseph of Arimathea came in a boat to Cornwall, and brought the Child Jesus with him, and the latter taught him how to extract the tin and purge it of

its wolfram. This story possibly grew out of the fact that the Jews under the Angevin kings farmed the tin of Cornwall. When tin is flashed, then the tinner shouts, "Joseph was in the tin trade," which is probably a corruption of "S. Joseph to the tinner's aid!"

We will now shortly take the history of tin mining in Devon and Cornwall.

Whether the west of Cornwall and Scilly were the Cassiterides of the ancients is doubtful. But one thing is sure: that they had their tin, or some of it, from Britain.

Diodorus Siculus, who flourished in the time of Augustus, says so: -

"The inhabitants of that extremity of Britain which is called Belerion both excel in hospitality" – they do so still- "and also, by reason of their intercourse with foreign merchants, are civilised in their mode of life" – very much so. "These prepare the tin, working very skilfully the earth which produces it. The ground is rocky, but it has in it earthy veins, the produce of which is brought down and melted and purified. Then, when they have cast it into the form of cubes, they carry it to a certain island adjoining Britain, called Ictis. During the recess of the tide the intervening space is left dry, and they carry over abundance of tin in carts... From thence the traders who purchase the tin of the natives transport it to Gaul, and finally, travelling through Gaul on foot, in about thirty days bring their burdens on horses to the mouth of the Rhine."

Ictis has been variously supposed to be S. Michael's Mount, the Isle of Wight, and Romney in Kent.

Whether the Romans worked the tin in Devon and Cornwall is very questionable. No evidence has been produced that they did so. The Saxon invasion must have destroyed what little mining activity existed in the two counties, at least in Devon. It is noticeable that, although Athelstan penetrated to Land's End and crossed to Scilly, he is not said to have paid any attention to the tin workings, which he assuredly would have done had they then been valuable. To the incursions of the Saxons succeeded those of the Danish freebooters, who ran up the rivers and burnt Tavistock and Lydford in 997, and carried fire and sword through the stannary districts of Devon.

Under the Norman rule mining revived. The general use of bells in churches caused a considerable demand for tin, more particularly as those for cathedrals were of large calibre. The chief emporium of the tin trade was Bruges, whence the merchants of Italy obtained the west of England tin and distributed it through the Levant. There exists an interesting record of Florentine commercial industry by one Balducci, composed between 1332 and 1345, in which is described the trade in Cornish tin, and how it was remelted into bars at Venice and stamped with the lion of S. Mark.

In King John's time the tin mines were farmed by the Jews. The right to it was claimed by the king as Earl of Cornwall.

Old smelting-houses in the peninsula are still called "Jews' houses," and, judging by certain noses and lips that one comes across occasionally in the Duchy, they left their half-breeds behind them.

During the time of Richard, Earl of Cornwall and King of the Romans, the produce of the tin mines was considerable, and it was in fact largely due to his reputed wealth from this source that he was elected (1257).

The tin workings went on with varying prosperity till the reign of Elizabeth, when she introduced German engineers and workmen, with improved appliances. In her time the tanners of Cornwall were divided into four portions, named from the principal works of that period. Each of these divisions had its steward under the Lord Warden, who kept his court once in every three weeks. The four stannary towns of Cornwall were Helston, Truro, Lostwithiel, and Liskeard; and at Lostwithiel may be seen the remains of the ducal palace; and at Luxulyan the church, in the tower of which the stannary records and charters were formerly preserved.

In Devon the stannary towns were Tavistock, Ashburton, and Chagford, to which Plympton was added in the reign of Edward III., and Lydford was appointed as the stannary prison.

Ordinary justices of the peace had no jurisdiction over the miners in their disputes.

Carew, who was about the court of Queen Elizabeth, has furnished us with a valuable record of the state of the mines before the introduction of new German machinery and methods.

He notices both the stream-works and the lodes, and his opinion was that the deposits in the former were the result of the Deluge.

He then describes the process of *shoding*, that is of tracing the direction of a vein by fragments found near the surface. The shode pits, which are also called costeening pits, were holes sunk into the ground to no great depth till indications of the lode were reached. The miners next sank pits seven or eight feet deep till they reached the lode itself.

"If they misse the load in one place, they sincke a like shaft" (pit) "in another beyond that, commonly further up the hill, and so a third and a fourth, until they light at last upon it."

Over Dartmoor and the Bodmin moors "the old men's workings" may be seen; hardly a gully has not been streamed, every river-bed has been turned over. The face of the moor is in places weltered to such an extent that it alters the character of the scene. These workings are now grass-grown; they are very ancient, and clearly were conducted open to the sky. As the miners worked up a river-bed they built a colander behind them of rude blocks of granite, through which the stream might flow away, and many a rivulet now runs underground through these artificial passages.

In dressing the ore the miners broke it with hammers, and then "vanned" it on their broad oak shovels. The wind bore away the valueless dust, leaving the metal behind. By the side of the "goyles," or deep workings, may be found "vanning-steads" where this process was conducted. But with the introduction of machinery the *crazing-mill* was employed, worked by a waterwheel, in which the ore was passed between two grinding-stones. The washing of the dust which took the place of the dry process was this: -

"The streame, after it hath forsaken the mill, is made to fall by certayne degrees" (steps) "one somewhat distant from another, upon each of which at every descent lyeth a green turfe, three or four foote square and one foote thick. On this the tinner layeth a certayne portion of the sandie tinne, and with his shovell softly tosseth the same to and fro, that through this stirring the water, which runneth over it, may wash away the light earth from the tinne, which, of a heavier substance, lyeth fast to the turfe."

After the black tin, or ore, had been thus treated it was conveyed to the blowing-house. The usage on Dartmoor was, when a miner was far from one of these, to tie the ore in a bag marked with his name or sign, and hang it about a dog's neck; the beast then conveyed it to the mill.

Of the "blowing-houses" a great many remain on Dartmoor. There are two on the Yealm, one, very perfect, on the Erme, one very early, before the introduction of the waterwheel, at Deep Swincombe, several on the Dart.

The blowing-house was a small structure of one chamber and a *cache*, or storeplace, underground. The doorway was rarely high enough to admit a man without stooping double. The walls were of stone without mortar, and, as far as can be judged from their remains, had no window. The furnace was heated with charcoal, and the fire blown by means of a great pair of bellows worked by a tiny waterwheel. The process was so roughly conducted that "divers light sparkles" of tin are said to have lodged in the thatched roof in sufficient quantities to render the burning of the roof once in seven years worth the undertaking. The melted metal ran out into a spoon-shaped hollow in a block of granite, or elvan, and was run into moulds also cut in slabs, many of which remain near the old blowing-houses.

The white tin was then conveyed to a royal smelting-house, where it received a stamp; and no miner was suffered to dispose of his metal till it had thus been marked, and he had paid his due to the Crown for it.

Some of the terms used by tin miners may not prove uninteresting.

Stream-tin when found scattered beneath the surface on a small declivity is called *shode*, and runs to a depth that varies from one to ten feet. A right to work a certain portion is called a *sett*. The rubbish thrown out of a mine is called *stent*; sand or gravel, including tin, is termed *gard*; the walling on each side of a *tye* or adit is called *stiling*; the channels by which superfluous water is let run off are *cundards*, a corruption of "conduits." Oblong pits for a washing-floor are *gounces*; the frame of iron bars above is a *ruddle*.

Buckets are *kibbals*; breaking up ore is *bucking*.

A *whim* is said to have derived its name from this: A man named Coster, observing the labour that was expended on bringing up the refuse from the mines in buckets, fell a-thinking.

"Well, old man," said a mate, "what be up wi' you?"

"I have a whim in my head," he answered, "and I'm tryin' to reduce he to practice."

Coster's whim was much joked about, but when set up outside his head at the pit mouth, it proved to be no joke at all, but a real boon.

Superincumbent earth is *burden*.

A miner worked at Headland Warren mines, on the Webburn, and lived at Challacombe. Every day when leaving work he brought away with him a lump of ore in his pocket, and on reaching his lodging threw it away among the furze bushes. Years after the farmer at Challacombe removed three cartloads of these lumps; that was when tin was at £60 a ton.

From a speech of Sir Walter Raleigh in Parliament in 1601, when Lord Warden of the Stannaries, it would appear that the pay of a working tinner was then four shillings per week, finding himself. Of this he boasts as a great change for the better, inasmuch as previously the tinner had received but half that amount. By all accounts the tanners were in a worse condition than the agricultural labourers.

The Stannary Parliament for the tanners on Dartmoor sat on Crockern Tor till the court was removed to Truro.

The first Parliament held there of which records remain was on September 11th, 1494; the last I have heard of was held at the close of last century.

The Cornish tanners had their Stannary Court on Caradon.

Already in Carew's time mines had been driven into the bowels of the earth. It would appear that levels were at about five fathoms under each other, and the water was raised to the surface by means of "a winder and keeble, or leathern bags, pumps, or buckets."

Dr. Borlase describes the engines that were employed just after the middle of last century. He took a mine in Illogan as typical.

There were seven shafts upon the lode, upon one of which there was a fire-engine working the pumps, and raising the water of the mine to the adit level, twenty fathoms from the surface. Another shaft had a whim upon it, and the remaining six had common winzes at their heads. The walls of the lode were supported by timber, and planks were laid on them for the *deads*, or unprofitable rock. Captains superintended the work. The machines employed were the *water-whim*, the *rag and chain pump*, the *bobs*, and the *fire-engine*. The whim was much the same as the common horse-whim of the present day, employed to draw up the water in kibbles or buckets. The rag and chain pump consisted of an iron chain, furnished at intervals with knobs of cloth, stiffened with leather, which on being turned round a wheel was made to pass through a wooden pump cylinder, twelve or fifteen feet long, and to heave up the water that rose in this cylinder between the knobs of rag. These pumps were worked by hand. The water-wheels with bobs worked other pumps.

The machinery seems to us clumsy and imperfect in the extreme.

The atmospheric or steam-engine of Newcomen was costly, as it consumed an enormous amount of coal; but in 1778 it began to give place to Watt's engine.

Since then the machinery employed advanced with strides till reaching perfection, when the need for any ceased in Cornwall and Devon, where nearly all mines have been abandoned. Barca tin can be raised so much more cheaply, being surface tin, that lode tin cannot compete with it in the market.

Now the mining districts of Cornwall are desolate. Heaps of refuse, gaunt engine-houses, with their chimneys, stand against the sky, hideous objects, and as useless as they are ugly. The Cornish miner has gone abroad. There he remains till he has made his little pile, when he returns home, builds a house for his wife and children, remains idle till money gets low, when away he goes again.

A good deal of discussion has taken place relative to the causes of the decline and extinction of the mining industry in Cornwall. The primary cause is that already referred to, but there is another. Into that industry too much dishonesty was allowed to intrude. Speculators became shy of embarking capital in companies to work bogus mines. The promotion of such schemes was too frequent not in the end to discredit Cornish mining altogether.

The surface tin in the "Straits" mines must come to an end shortly, and then let us trust captains in Cornwall will have learned by experience that in the end honesty is the best policy.

Formerly the metals were taken out of Cornwall for distribution over Europe. Now the coined metal is being brought into Cornwall by trainloads of tourists, by coveys of bicyclists, come to visit one of the most interesting of English counties and inhale the most invigorating air, and everywhere they drop their coin. So life is full of compensations.

## CHAPTER VI

### LAUNCESTON

Launceston a borrowed name-Celtic system of separation between town of the castle and town of the church-A saint's curse-Old name Dunheved-Castle-Church-Sir Henry Trecarrel-The river Tamar-Old houses-S. Clether's Chapel-Altarnon-The corn man-Cutting a neck-The Petherwins-Story of S. Padarn-Is visited by his cousin, Samson-Trewortha Marsh-Kilmar-An ancient village-Redmire-Cornish bogs-Dozmare Pool-Lewanick-Cresset-stone-Trecarrel-Old mansions-The Botathen ghost.

**The** most singular thing about the former capital of Cornwall is that it does not bear its true name. Launceston is Llan Stephan, the church of S. Stephen. Now the church of S. Stephen is on the summit of a hill on the further side of the river, divided from the town by the ancient borough of Newport.

The true name of the town is Dunheved. It grew up about the Norman castle, instead of about the church, and as it grew, and the colony at S. Stephen's dwindled, it drew to itself the name of the church town

Launceston is, in fact, one of those very interesting instances of the *caer* and the *llan*, separated the one from the other by a stream. According to the Celtic system, a church must stand in its own lawn, surrounded by its own tribesmen, and the chief in his *caer* or *dun* must also be without competing authority surrounded by his own vassals. Consequently, in Cornwall, churches are, as a rule, away from the towns, which latter have grown up about the chieftain's residence, except in such instances as Padstow and Bodmin, where a religious, monastic settlement formed the nucleus. Camelford, an old borough town, is over two miles from its parish church, Lanteglos, without even a chapel-of-ease in it, an ecclesiastical scandal in the diocese. Callington, the old capital of the principality of Galewig, is three miles from its church of Southill.

The church of Launceston has grown up out of a small chapel erected for the convenience of those who lived about the castle walls, hangers-on upon the garrison.

The Norman baron, and perhaps the Saxon eorldeorman, liked to have his chaplain forming part of his household, and much at his disposal to say mass and sing matins in a chapel to which he could go without inconvenience, forming part of his residence. But such an arrangement was alien to Celtic ideas. Among the Celts the saint stood on an entirely independent footing over against the secular chief, and was in no way subordinate to him. The chaplain of the Norman might hesitate about reprimanding too sharply the noble who supplied him with his bread-and-butter. But the Celtic saint had no scruples of that sort. If a chief had carried off a widow's cow, or had snatched a pretty wench from her parents, the saint seized his staff and went to the *dun* and demanded admittance. A saint's curse was esteemed a most formidable thing. If unjustly pronounced, it recoiled like a boomerang against him who had hurled it. Once pronounced, it must produce its effect, and the only means of averting its fall was to turn it aside against a tree or a rock, which it shivered to atoms. In this the Celtic saint merely stepped into the prerogatives of the Druid.

In Cormac's *Glossary of Old Irishisms*-and Cormac, king-bishop of Cashel, died in 903-is a curious instance of the force of a curse in pagan times.

The wife of Caier fell in love with Neidhe the bard, her husband's nephew. Now a bard had the privilege of hurling a curse if a request made by him should be refused, but not else. So the woman, desiring to be rid of her husband, bade the bard ask of the king a knife which had been given to him in Alba, on condition that he never parted with it. Neidhe demanded the knife.

"Woe and alas!" said Caier, "it is prohibited to me to give it away."



Neidhe was now able to pronounce a *glam dichinn*, or curse. Here it is: -

"Evil, death, and short life to Caier!  
May spears of battle slay Caier;  
The rejected of the land be Caier;  
Buried under mounds and stones be Caier!"

Caier went out next morning to wash at the well, when he found that boils and blains had broken out over his face, disqualifying him for reigning, as a king must be unblemished. He accordingly fled the country, and concealed his disgrace in the dun on the Old Head of Kinsale, and Neidhe took to him the wife and throne of his uncle. Caier remained at Kinsale till he died, blasted by the curse pronounced by the bard.

The saints did just the same, only not for such scandalous reasons; they did it in the cause of humanity, and for the protection of the weak against the strong.

But it will be seen, from what has been said, that the Celtic saint was a very independent personage, and that he and the chief had their separate residences. It will be found that usually a stream divided the territory of the saint from that of the chieftain.

All this in illustration of Llan Stephan and Dunheved, the castle and the church facing and glowering at each other from opposite heights.

Launceston Castle is Norman. That there stood here a castle in Celtic times is certain; the name Dunheved indicates as much. The *heved* in composition is a difficulty. Some suppose it a Saxon addition: *haefod*, a head; but it is more probable that the whole name is Celtic, and signifies the summer *dun*. *Hafod* is a summer residence in contradistinction to a *hendre*, which is that for the winter-the old house, in principal use. The keep consists of concentric rings on a mound natural originally, but much adapted by art. That the castle was employed to dominate the West Welsh, first by the Saxons and then by the Normans, is indisputable. It formed one in a chain of fortresses employed by the Saxon kings, of which Warbstow and Helborough and Killibury were others. That the garrison of Warbstow was composed of Mercians is probable, as they dedicated their chapel to S. Werburga, a Mercian princess-saint. Another contingent was planted at Wembury, commanding Plymouth harbour, where also they introduced the same saint, who really had no "call" to come into these parts.

The parish church of Launceston, dedicated to S. Mary Magdalen, is a very interesting structure externally, of carved granite of extraordinary but somewhat barbaric richness.

The church was begun in 1511. Henry Trecarell, of Trecarell, in Lezant, was rebuilding his mansion there in great splendour. He had already constructed a chapel and a noble banqueting hall, and had got masses of carved granite ready for a gateway, when his only son, a child, was drowned in a basin of water whilst the nurse was bathing him, she having left him for a few moments. The mother survived the shock only a few hours. Henry Trecarell, the father, dropped for ever the intended mansion for himself, and devoted his wealth to a higher ambition-the glory of God. He rebuilt not only the church of Linkinhorne, but also that of Launceston. On the south porch of the latter on a shield appear the Trecarell arms, arg. two chevrons *sable*, which are those of Ashe of Devon, Trecarell being really an Ashe, but he bore the name of his Cornish residence. On a scroll is the date 1511. The niche over the door has lost its image, but on the left are S. George and the dragon, and on the right S. Martin dividing his cloak with a beggar. Above S. George is the Good Samaritan, and above S. Martin is Balaam striking his ass.

At the east end of the chancel, externally in the central gable, are the royal arms, the supporters of which are the lion and red dragon (the unicorn was substituted for the dragon by James I. in 1603). Under the sill of this window, in an arched recess, is a recumbent figure of the Magdalen. Four surpliced minstrels are on each side of the niche, and above the line of the niche similar figures ascend

in pairs, but those in the two topmost storeys seem never to have been completed. The instruments which these musicians hold are the rebec, the lute, the bagpipe, shawm, and harps, and one plays the viol, turning a handle like a hurdy-gurdy. The leader of each set of minstrels carries a *bâton*, and wears a chain about his neck.

The devices carved round the church are repetitions of the plumes of the Prince of Wales, pomegranates, balm-plants dropping precious gums, the Tudor rose, and the arms of Trecarell, Kellaway (three pears), and the castle of Dunheved. Above the plinth encircling the building is a line of panelled tracery. In every alternate panel is a shield, bearing a letter, that make up the words: "Ave Maria, gracia plena! Dominus tecum! Sponsus amat sponsum. Maria optimam partem elegit. O quam terribilis ac metuendus est locus iste! Vere aliud non est hic nisi domus Dei et porta celi" ("Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord be with thee! The bridegroom loves the bride. Mary hath chosen the best part. Oh, how terrible and fearful is this place! Truly this is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven").

The church was consecrated on June 18th, 1524. It was never completed, as may be seen by the condition of the west end. The tower belongs to the earlier church, and is twenty-six feet west of the church. Trecarell doubtless intended to rebuild that in a stately style according with the church, but the religious disturbances of the Reformation took all heart out of him, and he abandoned his task. The interior is very disappointing, but it must be remembered it was intended to have a screen of surpassing richness, which would have brought the whole into proportion. The pulpit alone was completed, and that is of singular richness. The modern carving in the church is thin and fanciful.

The neighbourhood of Launceston is rich in objects of interest and scenes of great beauty. The Inney valley will well repay a visit. There is an Inney also in South Wales. It is an excellent stream for fishing, and flows into the Tamar at Cartamartha (*Caer Tamar*), in a glen of wooded loveliness. The unfinished mansion of Trecarell deserves a visit. There are also old houses at Treguddic and Basil, both much spoiled by bad "restoration." On the heights commanding the river are Laneast, with old bench-ends, old glass, and a holy well, and S. Clether, with its well chapel, recently reconstructed. It was in a condition of complete ruin; almost every stone was prostrate, and the rebuilding was like the putting together of a child's puzzle. At the north-east of the chapel is a rather fine holy well, about three feet six inches from the north wall. A description has already been given in the [chapter on holy wells](#), and the explanation of some very curious features in it.

But there is one further feature of interest in this structure that deserves to be noted. The old granite altar, rude, like a cromlech, had never been cast down. It remained intact, and has been left intact in the reconstructed chapel.

S. Clether was the son of Clydwyn, king of Carmarthen. Clydwyn's sister was married to an Irish priest, Brynach, who, on account of the ill-favour in which the Irish were regarded in South Wales, moved into Cornwall and Devon. After a long while he returned, but was again badly received. However, Clether welcomed him, and Brynach spoke to his nephew of the God-forsaken condition of North Cornwall, and an overpowering impulse came over the king to surrender his principality to his sons, and to depart for Cornwall, there to labour for the evangelisation of his Welsh brethren in the peninsula. He had relatives there. His uncle Gwynys was at S. Genes, on the coast, and his aunt Morwenna at Morwenstow. How long he remained at S. Clether we do not know, but he probably moved on to S. Cleer, near Liskeard, where also he has a fine holy well, and there died. We do not know the precise date, but it was about A.D. 550.<sup>5</sup>

A very fine and interesting church, deserving a visit, is that of Altarnon (*Alt-ar-Nôn*, the cliff of S. Non). The village is called Penpont (the head of the bridge). The church is rich in carved oak,

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<sup>5</sup> Not to be confounded with S. Clether of Clodock, in Herefordshire, son of Gwynnar, and from whom the poet Taliesin was descended. The invasion of Carmarthen by Dyfnwal from the north had much to do with Clether's departure.

benches, and screen. On several of the benches may be seen carved the corn man, that is to say the little figure that was plaited out of the heads of wheat in the last sheaf at a harvest.

About this and the custom of "crying, 'A neck!'" at harvest I will say a few words.

Towards the end of last century the member for North Devon was extremely unpopular, especially with the lower classes, and there had been a disturbance on the occasion of his election, in which he had run some personal risk. The time was when Lord North was Prime Minister.

Not long after the election he went to Dunsland, the seat of George Bickford.

Whilst strolling near the house he came near a harvest field, whereon he saw a rush of men, and he heard a cry of "Us have'n! us have'n! A neck! a neck!"

Panic-stricken, he ran, nimble as a hare, to the house, and shouted to Mr. Bickford, "For God's sake, hide me, anywhere, in the cellar or the attics! There is a mob after me who want to string me up!"

What the M.P. for North Devon saw and heard was the "crying, 'A neck!'" a custom universal in Devon and Cornwall till reaping machines came in and abolished it. It is now most rarely practised, but I can remember it in full swing some forty or fifty years ago.

Mrs. Bray, in her *Borders of the Tamar and Tavy*, thus describes it in 1832: -

"One evening, about the end of harvest, I was riding out on my pony, attended by a servant who was born and bred a Devonian. We were passing near a field on the borders of Dartmoor, where the reapers were assembled. In a moment the pony started nearly from one side of the way to the other, so sudden came a shout from the field which gave him this alarm. On my stopping to ask my servant what all that noise was about, he seemed surprised by the question, and said, 'it was only the people making their games, as they always did, to the *spirit of the harvest*.' Such a reply was quite sufficient to induce me to stop immediately, as I felt certain here was to be observed some curious vestige of a most ancient superstition; and I soon gained all the information I could wish to obtain upon the subject. The offering to the 'spirit of the harvest' is thus made: -

"When the reaping is finished, towards evening the labourers select some of the best ears of corn from the sheaves; these they tie together, and it is called the *nack*. Sometimes, as it was when I witnessed the custom, the nack is decorated with flowers, twisted in with the seed, which gives it a gay and fantastic appearance. The reapers then proceed to a *high place* (such, in fact, was the field, on the side of a steep hill, where I saw them), and there they go, to use their own words, to 'holla the nack.' The man who bears the offering stands in the midst and elevates it, whilst all the other labourers form themselves into a circle about him; each holds aloft his hook, and in a moment they all shout as loud as they can these words, which I spell as I heard them pronounced, and I presume they are not to be found in any written record: 'Arnack, arnack, arnack, wehaven, wehaven, wehaven.' This is repeated several times; and the firkin is handed round between each shout, by way, I conclude, of libation. When the weather is fine, different parties of reapers, each stationed on some height, may be heard for miles round, shouting, as it were, in answer to each other.

"The evening I witnessed this ceremony many women and children, some carrying boughs, and others having flowers in their caps, or in their hands, or in their bonnets, were seen, some dancing, others singing, whilst the men (whose exclamations so startled my pony) practised the above rites in a ring."

Mrs. Bray goes on to add a good deal of antiquated archæological nonsense about Druids, Phœnicians, and fantastic derivations. She makes "wehaven" to be "a corruption of *wee ane*" "a little one," which is rubbish. "Wehaven" is "we have'n," or "us have'n," "we have got him." As I remember

the crying of the neck at Lew Trenchard, there was a slight difference in the procedure from that described by Mrs. Bray. The field was reaped till a portion was left where was the best wheat, and then the circle was formed, the men shouted, "A neck! A neck! We have 'n!" and proceeded to reap it. Then it was hastily bound in a bundle, the ears were plaited together with flowers at the top of the sheaf, and this was heaved up, with the sickles raised, and a great shout of "A neck! A neck!" etc., again, and the drink, of course.

The wheat of the last sheaf was preserved apart through the winter, and was either mixed with the seed-corn next year or given to the best bullock.

My old coachman, William Pengelly, who had been with my grandfather, father, and then with myself, and who died at an advanced age in 1894, was wont annually, till he became childish with age, to make the little corn man or neck, and bring it to be set up in the church for the harvest decorations. I kept a couple of these for some years, till the mice got at them and destroyed them.

In Essex a stranger passing a harvest field stands the chance of being run up to by the harvesters, caught in a loop of straw twisted, and held till he has paid a forfeit. To the present day in Devon, at haysel, the haymakers will make a twist of dry grass, and with this band catch a girl-or a girl will catch a boy-and hold her or him till the forfeit of a kiss has been paid, and this is called "making sweet hay."

Hereby hangs a tale.

The Quakers in Cornwall have, as elsewhere, their Monthly Advices read to them in the meeting-house, wherein are admonitions against various sorts of evil. Among these is one against "vain sports." Now, just about haymaking-time a newly-joined member heard this injunction, and he timidly inquired whether "making sweet hay with the mīdens" came under the category. "Naw, sure!" was the answer; "that's a 'i' the way o' Natur'."

Our Guy Fawkes is actually the straw man transferred from harvest to November.

These straw men take the place of human victims, and the redemption with silver or a kiss is also a last reminiscence of the capture of a victim to be sacrificed for the sake of a future harvest to the Earth Spirit. In Poland the man who gives the last stroke at thrashing is wrapped in corn and wheeled through the village. In Bavaria he is tied up in straw and cast on a dunghill.

Among the Pawnees, as late as 1838, the sacrifice was carried out in grim reality. A girl was burnt over a slow fire, and whilst her flesh was still warm it was cut to pieces, and bits were carried away to be buried in the cornfields. At Lagos, in Guinea, it was till quite recently the custom to impale a young girl alive to ensure good crops. A similar sacrifice was offered at Benin. The Marimos, a Bechuana tribe, sacrifice a human being for the crops. He is captured, then intoxicated, carried into the fields, and there slaughtered. His blood and ashes, after the body has been burned, are distributed over the tilled land to ensure a good harvest next year. The Gonds of India kidnapped Brahman boys for the same purpose. The British Government had to act with great resolution in putting down the similar sacrifices of the Khonds some half-century ago.

The mode of performing these sacrifices was as follows. Ten or twelve days before the sacrifice the victim's hair was cut. Crowds assembled to witness the sacrifice. On the day before, the victim was tied to a post and anointed with oil. Great struggles ensued to scrape off some of this oil or to obtain a drop of spittle from the victim. The crowd danced round the post, saying, "O god, we offer this sacrifice for good crops, seasons, and health." On the day of the sacrifice the legs and arms were first broken, and he was either squeezed to death or strangled. Then the crowd rushed on him with knives and hacked the flesh from the bones. Sometimes he was cut up alive. Another very common mode was to fasten the victim to the proboscis of a wooden elephant, which revolved on a stout post, and as it whirled round the crowd cut the flesh off while life remained. In some villages as many as fourteen of these wooden elephants were found, all of which had been used for this purpose. In one district the victim was put to death slowly by fire. A low stage was erected, sloping on each side like a roof; upon this the victim was placed, his limbs wound about with cords to prevent his escape. Fires were then lighted and hot brands applied to make him roll up and down the slopes of the stage as much

as possible, for the more tears he shed the more abundant would be the supply of rain. The next day the body was cut to pieces. The flesh was at once taken home by delegates of the villages. To secure its rapid arrival it was sometimes forwarded by relays of men, and conveyed with postal fleetness fifty or sixty miles. In each village all who had remained at home fasted until the flesh arrived. When it came it was divided into two portions, one of which was offered to the Earth Goddess by burying it in a hole in the ground. The other portion was divided into as many shares as there were heads of houses present. Each head of a house rolled his share in leaves and buried it in his favourite field. In some places each man carried his portion of flesh to the stream that watered his fields.

Since the British Government has suppressed the human sacrifices inferior victims have been substituted, such as goats.

Here, then, we have almost before our eyes a change of the victim. A still further change takes place when an image is used as a substitute; and there is again modification when the person captured and destined for sacrifice is allowed to redeem himself with a handsel or a kiss. But the fact that in Europe, aye, and in England, we have these modified customs only now dying out, is an almost sure proof that at a remote period our ancestors practised the awful rites at harvest and in spring, of which a description has been given as still in use in Africa, and as only just put an end to in America and in India.

North and west of Launceston is the Petherwin district; the former of these is in Devon, although lying west of the Tamar, as is also Werrington.

These three churches, all dedicated to S. Padarn, form a large territory once under his government. It was his Gwynedd, but whether so called from its being open moorland or from its being exposed to the winds-windblown (*Gwynt*) – I cannot say. Padarn was son of Pedredin and Gwen Julitta, and was first cousin of S. Samson. He was born in Brittany, but owing to a family revolution his father and uncles fled to Wales, but Padarn remained as a babe with his mother. Finding her often in tears, he asked her the reason, and she told him that she mourned the loss of his father. So when Padarn had come to man's estate he went in quest of him, and finally found him in Ireland, where, old rascal, he had embraced the monastic life, entirely regardless of what was due to the wife of his bosom. As Pedredin absolutely refused to leave his newly-chosen mode of life, Padarn returned to his mother, and they went together to Wales, passing through Cornwall. In Wales he founded Llanbadarn Fawr in Cardiganshire, which became an episcopal see; but he got across with Maelgwn, king of North Wales, as also with King Arthur, who in the lives of the Welsh saints is always represented as a bully, showing that they were written before that king had been elevated into the position of a hero of romance by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century. His position now became untenable, and he left Wales. It was then, I presume, that he made his great settlement in East Cornwall.

According to one account he crossed into Brittany with Caradoc Strong-i'-th'-Arm, but the expedition ended in no results, and he returned. Now after a while Cousin Samson arrived in Padstow harbour, and resolved on making a Cornish tour before he crossed into Brittany, whither he much desired to go and see what could be done towards the recovery of his paternal acres. At Padstow he visited S. Petrock. Then he went along the north-east, and as he approached Gwynedd, or Padarn's Venedotia, he sent word that he was coming. Now Padarn was getting out of bed when the tidings reached him, and he had pulled on one stocking and shoe; but so delighted was he to hear that his cousin was at hand, that he ran to meet him with one leg shod and the other bare.

The dates of his life are approximately these. He came to Wales in 525, remained there till 547, when he migrated to Devon and Cornwall, where he remained to his death in 560.<sup>6</sup> When the Saxons obtained the mastery, North Petherwin and Werrington were given to the abbey of Tavistock, and the old Celtic foundation of Padarn ceased-monastically.

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<sup>6</sup> Tremendous confusion has been made of his life, as he has been confounded with a S. Paternus, who was Bishop of Vannes in 462 or 465; and the Cornish Venedotia has been construed as Venettia, Vannes. Nearly a century intervened between the two saints.

A pleasant excursion may be made from Launceston to Trewartha Marsh. This occupies the site of a lake, but it has been filled by detritus from the granite tors around, and this rubble has been turned over and over by tin-streamers, who not only extracted the baser metal, but also gold.

On the way Trebartha is passed, one of the loveliest sites in England, second in my mind only to Bolton Abbey. It is the seat of F. R. Rodd, Esq. The parish church of Northill is a foundation of S. Tighernach or Torney, godchild of S. Bridget. There are two ways up to Trewartha: one is by Higher and Lower Castick, where a picturesque old farm is passed, by Trewartha Tor, on which is shown King Arthur's bed; the other is by the bridge at the back of Trebartha. The stream flowing from the marsh forms a really beautiful fall in the grounds.

The marsh itself and its surroundings are desolate, but Killmar (*Cêl-mawr*, the great place of shelter) rising above it is a noble tor, and the view from the north-west, by Grey Mare Rock looking over the flat marsh to Killmar, is as fine as anything on the Bodmin moors. On the west side of the marsh is an ancient British settlement, apparently unconnected with the stream-works for tin. The houses were long and quadrangular; one was apparently a council chamber, having a judge's seat in granite and benches of granite down the sides. Unfortunately these have been wantonly destroyed recently by a man who was building pigsties. The houses had separate bakeries, and two or three of these with their ovens remain in a tolerably perfect condition. The same long building was occupied by two or three families, divided off from each other by an upright slab of granite, making so many horseboxes, but each family had its own hearth. The pottery found there was all wheel-turned; and as many hones were found, no doubt could exist that the occupants belonged to the iron age. No other village of the kind has as yet been noticed on the moors except another somewhat higher up the stream that feeds Trewartha Marsh, and this has been much mutilated of late years. Independent of these singular quadrangular buildings are hut circles belonging to a far earlier age, before steel and iron were known.

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