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annihilation is the final reward of those whose guilt has been the inordinate desire to live. And he quotes a number of passages from the Bible, the Fathers, and religious mystics, ancient and modern, with a view to show that Christianity inculcates both self-effacing quietism and asceticism. But all this in utter forgetfulness of other passages which call on the Christian to rejoice, and such as 1 Cor. vii. 30, where the attitude of mind depressed by the "present distress" is that of temporary, not permanent, acquiescence in the evil which is in this present world. And even here the recommendation to utter self-forgetfulness wears a double face. The Christians in times of persecution were to "weep as though *they wept not*," as well as "to rejoice as though *they rejoiced not*." That pain in itself is not to be preferred—that its value consists solely in its elevating and purging effects—is plain enough from Heb. xii. 11. What Pessimism as a modern and passing mode of thought has done for Christian Europe is this: It serves as a bridge from a self-satisfied materialism and superficial optimism to a humbler view of our own attainments in this "age of progress." This acquired self-knowledge and self-abasement are apt to produce a greater readiness to accept the comforts and consolations of religion, and thus to reach a stage higher in the progress of religious thought. In an age when worldliness and unhealthy absorption in worldly pursuits endangers the pursuit of holiness, it produces that kind of home-sickness which longs for the better country. It impresses on Christian men and women in the most effective manner that truth which needs to be pressed home with such powerful illustration, which the literature of Pessimism furnishes with appalling profusion, that "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

M. KAUFMANN.

ART. II.—THE ROUND TOWERS OF IRELAND.

THERE is no country in the world, perhaps, which possesses more interesting ecclesiastical remains than Ireland; and this is not to be wondered at, inasmuch as Ireland in early ages was renowned for its schools of learning, its famous monasteries, its devoted clergy, and its great missionary successes. We meet with the ruins of old churches and abbeys everywhere, some of them in excellent preservation and beautiful in their dress of "living green." In Ireland the traces of the old religious life of the people have been least obliterated, and therefore nowhere else can the early workings

of Christianity be better studied. The Irish schools from the seventh to the tenth century were so celebrated that we find large numbers of young men from England, France and elsewhere in Western Europe sent to study there; and from those schools went forth the devoted men who evangelized in great measure Germany, Switzerland, France and other Continental countries. This early religious life in Ireland has left behind it no more interesting memorials of a material kind than the well-known round towers. There are upwards of a hundred of them within the limits of the island, and among the best and finest specimens are those of Glendalough, Kildare, Cashel, Donaghmore, Lusk, Clondalkin, Kells, Cloyne, Ardmore and Desert Oenghus (county Limerick).

The round tower appears to have gradually become an adjunct of a church when previously it was a building belonging to a religious settlement inclosed by a common wall, just as a barn or granary belongs to the settlement called a farm. The Rock of Cashel in the South of Ireland exhibits different sorts of towers erected at different ages, but the ordinary round tower is a circular column from fifty to one hundred and fifty feet high, with a conical stone cap. From the base, which is frequently of cyclopean masonry, and measures from forty to sixty feet in circumference, the tower is externally of ashlar or spawled rubble work, and tapers upwards towards the summit. In the wall there is a single door, which is always at least eight or ten, and in some cases fifteen, feet from the ground, and is reached by a ladder, and there are windows or narrow apertures here and there. At a short distance from the conical roof there are usually four windows. Internally the tower is divided into stories about twelve feet apart, and varying in number according to its height. The Round Tower of Ardmore, near Youghal, is girdled with bands or string-courses, which are, however, entirely ornamental, and unconnected with the internal floors.

But "the model Round Tower of Ireland," as it has been called, is in the Island of Devenish (*Daimh-inis*, or the island of the oxen), in Lough Erne. It is in a complete state of preservation. Indeed, if it were not for the absence of the internal fittings, such as floors, ladders, etc., it might be pronounced almost as perfect as when it was left by the builders. Mr. Wakeman, after giving an elaborate description of the dimensions of the several parts of the tower, says: "The speciality of Devenish Tower, however, and one which renders it of highest interest to intelligent archæologists, is the ornamentation of its cornice. Surmounting three of its topmost apertures are quaintly-executed human heads, displaying beards, most curiously and artistically interlaced in a style of

art which we find admirably developed in some of our most venerable MSS., and also in others of much later date. The heads are supposed to be those of SS. Patrick, Columba, Molaise, the patron saint of the island, and Bridget."

Those unique structures are evidently the work of skilled architects, and in graceful symmetry of form and solidity of build far excel the attempted imitations of them in modern times. A distinguished architect of the present day gives it as his opinion that there are clear traces of classical influences in those towers. He thinks that the builders of them must have known the shape of the pillars in Greek temples.

The origin of the round towers of Ireland has always been a subject of much debate in the learned world, and it may be desirable before we proceed any further to mention some of the various conflicting theories about them that have gained currency amongst men. One theory maintained that they were originally fire temples, in which the Druid priests kept up sacred fires all the year round. A similar custom prevailed among the Parsees or Guebres of Persia, from which the conclusion is drawn that an identity of creed and civilization existed between the ancient Irish and the fire-worshippers of the East. The round tower, in fact, links together Magianism and Druidism. This theory is untenable. There is no evidence that the Irish pagans had sacred fires except in open spaces on the hilltops. Two of these were lighted, with great incantations, at certain times, and "the Druids used to drive the cattle between them, against the diseases of each year"—a custom which seems to have come down to our day, in the fires lighted on St. John's Eve in every part of Ireland.

It was held by other writers that the round towers were erected by the Danes as *watch towers*, but that the Christian Irish changed them into clock or bell towers. Their contention was that all stone buildings, and, indeed, all that remains of mechanical civilization in Ireland, were Danish; that some traditions attributed the round towers to them; that they had fit models in the monuments of their own country, and that the word by which, as they say, the native Irish call them—*clogachd*—comes from the Teutonic root *clugga*, a bell. This theory of the Scandinavian origin of the towers is also worthless, for the facts on which it rests are no facts at all. It is not true that the Danes introduced stone architecture into Ireland. They found it flourishing here, and some of the very finest of such buildings they razed and burned to the ground; in fact, every form of civilization and mechanical art they destroyed and swept away. The upright stones and little barrows which the tourist meets in Denmark could not give models or skill to the Danes. We may ask, If they

were the builders of these towers in Ireland, how comes it to pass that we find no such erections in England or Scotland, where those fierce Northmen had much ampler and larger possessions? And, lastly, the native Irish name for a round tower is *cloic-theach*—from *theach*, a house; and *cloic*, the word used for bell in old Irish documents before the Germans or Saxons had churches or bells, and before the Danes had ever put foot upon our coasts. It is clear, then, that the Danes did not originate those interesting monuments of an ancient civilization.

There are those, again, who argue that those towers were for hermits, a solitary abode in which, like the pillar of Simeon Stylites, the anchorite did penance for his sin.

> In hunger and in thirst, fevers and cold,
> In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
> A sigh betwixt the meadow and the cloud.

The cloich-angcoire, or hermit's stone, quoted in aid of this fancy, turns out to be no pillar at all, but a narrow cell where the holy man fasted and prayed and lived his life obedient to the rules of a virtuous discipline and of useful labour. So much for the hermit theory! Dr. Stokes, in dealing with it, somewhat facetiously remarks that if it be true "our Irish saints had even a more uncomfortable and lofty position than the Syrian. Simeon stood at the top of a pillar sixty feet high, in an erection like a pulpit, while the Irish saints had to stand or sit on the apex of a conical roof a hundred feet from the ground, where the merest slip would consign them to certain destruction."

The monks of the West lived a more active than contemplative life. No doubt they abjured domestic life, and chose for the place of their voluntary exile some lonely spot among the mountains or in the forest, or in some bleak and barren rock surrounded by "the white-bosomed sea," where they served God according to their light; but in most cases the Celtic monks went forth from their huts to engage in the great work of their time—the work of spreading Christianity in the world. They were, above everything else, missionaries. There is no ground at all for supposing that in any instance they adopted the *rôle* of the Stylite enthusiast!

That the round towers were hero-monuments, which some antiquarian scholars have suggested, is another theory which will not hold water for a moment. The Irish annals are entirely silent as to their answering any such purpose, or being put to any such use.

It will thus be seen how much speculation those interesting old towers have given rise to, and what incongruous though

beautiful and agreeable fancies have been woven round them, just because men have overlooked the principles of true criticism, and have, as has been said, evolved their history out of the depths of their own imaginations.

Dr. Petrie was the first man who brought to the investigation of this subject all the requisite qualifications—a profound knowledge of the ancient history of Ireland, a life of antiquarian study, an intimate familiarity with the country (he left no glen unsearched, no island unvisited, no mountain untrod and unexplored), a mind unprejudiced, and feelings at once rational and lofty. He had, too, the assistance of the best Celtic scholars in carrying on his work. And what was the result of his labours and researches? After long years of study and patient investigation, he came to the conclusion—a conclusion adopted substantially by all subsequent antiquarian authorities—that the round towers are of Christian and ecclesiastical origin, and were erected at various periods between the fifth and thirteenth centuries, that they were used for a threefold purpose—(1) as belfries (*cloic-theach, i.e.*, bell-house); (2) as keeps, or places of strength where the sacred vessels, books, relics, and other valuables were deposited, and in which the clergy could take refuge in case of sudden attack; and (3) as beacons and watch-towers. It has been remarked that the round towers are always connected with ecclesiastical buildings, whether churches properly so called, or great religious houses in which men lived together for the service of God. No doubt the form of them was copied from something that already existed in pagan Ireland. Military prototypes for such a structure must have been in Ireland from time immemorial, though there are now to be found no traces of them. Among the Irish, what may be called national consciousness and memory are extremely stubborn; hence the round towers that have endured to the present day, though actually built and used by Christian communities, have been assigned to the pagan period to which, not they belonged, but the architectural prototypes on which they were patterned. In the old legends, buildings are described which tally very well with round towers, but in shape must have been more squat; they were evidently built of wicker or wattle, and in certain Roman sculptures bas-reliefs showing their general appearance, have luckily been preserved.

The round tower would probably arise in this way. The hermit's cell or hut grew into a chapel with walls of enormous thickness, and hardly room enough inside for a handful of assistants. The faithful had to kneel on the ground before the door. There was no need of watch-towers while the Church was gradually becoming national in character, lengthening her

cords and strengthening her stakes in the land, usurping all but certain barren corners of the island where pagans still lurked. But when the rich and powerful adopted the Christian faith, and wealth began to centre about church and monastery; when prelates received great incomes from the offerings of the devout, from chiefs whose sons they taught, from pupils out of England and the Continent, and from lands they had acquired in various ways, then the house of God became a booty to sacrilegious natives or foreign invaders, Saxon or Dane. The clergy had to look about for a high keep from which to watch for raids; and so this species of tower, well built of stone, was attached to priories and churches for, as we have seen, men on watch, for summoning the congregation to prayers and the scholars to their lessons, and for the temporary safe-keeping of the church valuables during a sudden and predatory incursion of foreign or internal enemies.

Travellers tell us that to this day round towers are used in Central Asia for purposes of defence as well as ornament. In his great work on Central Syria,[1] Count de Vogüé, a French writer, depicts a tower attached to a church, which he considers was evidently for defensive purposes. It is divided into stories like the round towers, and has a door with a flat lintel in exactly the same position as those of the round towers. Towers were used by the hermits of Mount Sinai with exactly the same object, and under precisely the same circumstances. And all this is interesting because it has been clearly established by Dr. Stokes, in his excellent work on "The Celtic Church," that the round towers of Ireland originated, like much else in the usages of the early Irish Church, in the East, and especially in Syria. In the Litany of Oenghus, the Culdee, which was composed about the time of Charlemagne, we are told of many Eastern ecclesiastics who had found refuge in Ireland during the eighth century, and of the round towers which they built, and of the Greek learning which they revived, and of the various other benefits which they conferred upon the islands of the West. The way in which the historian traces the progress of this style of architecture and of Byzantine and Eastern art in general from Asia to Europe, from the Hauran to Constantinople, and from Constantinople to Italy, and thence through France to Ireland, is full of interest and instruction.

The subject on which we have so meagrely treated in this short paper is well worthy of the attention of all, on account of the light which it throws on early Irish life, and especially

1 "Central Syria: its Architecture, Civil and Religious, from the First to the Seventh Century."

on the Church-life of the people. They were days of trial, bloodshed, and utmost peril to the Christians when those towers were in active use. We have seen that they were places of safety in cases of sudden invasion. As they stand before us in gray ruins they mutely witness to the heroic struggles for faith and fatherland in which our Celtic ancestors engaged, to the tears they shed, the sufferings they endured, and the labours they carried on. What varied scenes have they witnessed! How many tragedies have been enacted beneath their walls! What countless hearts have ceased to beat under their shadow, and now mingle with the graveyard dust around! Here "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." Here factions fought, unrestrained by the sacredness of the ground and the associations of the scene. Here piety and patriotism grow warm, as on the plains of Marathon or the storm-tossed shores of Iona. And hither comes to-day the pilgrim from distant land to muse and wonder and admire and learn. For those old towers teach solemn and precious lessons. A sweet Irish poet, Denis Florence Macarthy, has written of them:

> The pillar-towers of Ireland, how wondrously they stand
> By the lakes and rushing rivers, thro' the valleys of our land!
> In mystic file all through the isle they lift their heads sublime,
> These gray old pillar-temples, these conquerors of time!
>
> How many different rites have these gray old temples known!
> To the mind what dreams are written in these chronicles of stone!
> What terror and what error, what gleams of love and truth,
> Have flashed forth from these walls since the world was in its youth!

WILLIAM COWAN.

ART. III.—MY CASES OF OLD SERMONS.

MY eye has just fallen on this cold wintry night on my old sermons. There they are before my eyes as I write, on a wide under-shelf of one of my book-cases; and as I have been looking at them in a somewhat sad and reflective mood, being all alone to-night, they have suggested some thoughts which I feel strangely moved to attempt to write down. It may be that to do so will be useful to some of the younger clergy, and, I hope, not without interest to some older ones. At present my thoughts seem a heterogeneous mingle, but they impress me greatly. Tennyson's touching lines rise to my mind—

> O would that my tongue could utter
> The thoughts that arise in me!