

of the Tuatha-de-Dananns a large, fair complexioned and very remarkable race; warlike, energetic, progressive, skilled in metal work, musical, poetical, acquainted with the healing art and skilled in Druidism. The Dananns met, fought, and defeated the Firbolgs, and drove them to the Islands on the coast. Eventually the two races coalesced. The Dananns were great masons, for they built the sepulchral monuments of New Grange, Douth and Knowth. It is said that the Dananns ruled for a long time in Ireland, till another inroad was made into the Island by the Milesians, brave, chivalrous, skilled in war, good navigators, and much superior in adornment though not better armed than their opponents. They deposed the three last Danann Kings, and rose to be, it is said, the dominant race—assuming the sovereignty, becoming the aristocracy and landed proprietors, and giving origin to all those chieftains who afterwards rose to be petty Kings, and from whom some of the best families in the land with anything like Irish names claim descent, and particularly those with the prefix of the “O” or the “Mac.” When this race came to Ireland is uncertain, but it was some time prior to the Christian era. The story goes that they came from Spain. This finds verification in the Spanish character of the architecture of the town of Galway. These Milesians seem to have fused so completely with the Firbolgs and Dananns as to lose all their own customs for their monuments are almost the same as those of the conquered races. Though many evidences of the Milesian invasion are to be found in Ireland, yet the Spanish annals do not throw any light on the subject. The Dananns and Milesians soon divided the Island between them, and their general characteristics are given us by Mac Firis a historian of great authority. Of the Dananns he said: “Every one who is fair haired, vengeful, large, and every plunderer, professors of musical and entertaining performances, who are adepts of druidical and magical arts, they are the descendants of the Tuatha-de-Dananns.” And of the Milesians. “Every one who

is white of skin, brown of hair, bold, honourable, daring, prosperous, bountiful in the bestowal of property, and who is not afraid of battle or combat, they are the descendants of the sons of Milesians in Erin.” The Firbolgs located themselves near the boundaries of Mayo and Sligo, while the Dananns settled upon the other parts of Connaught and small portions of Ulster. The Milesians took up the rich pasture lands of Leinster and Munster. This was the state of Ireland when a Christian youth of Romano-Saxon and probably of patrician origin was carried off in a raid of Irish marauders and employed as a swineherd in Ulster, and lived there for several years, learning the customs of the people and speaking their language. He escaped to Munster and thence to his native land of Brittany whence he returned with missionaries and passing up the Boyne, raised the paschal fire at Slane and soon made Ireland a Christian nation. In the eighth century came the Danes who however never obtained any foothold. They were expelled from Ireland never to return, in the year 1014. In 1172 came the Normans from England, who received a stronger and more lasting foothold. Most of those mingled with the people and became *Hibernicis ipsis hibernicis*. Edward Bruce in the fourteenth century brought over a number of his countrymen who settled in Ulster. Then came in Cromwell's time a new contingent of colonists who drove out the former proprietors and became almost the sole owners of the east and parts of the south. Thus we see how many and how various have been the changes that have taken place in Ireland's population in the past, and hence we may account for the characteristics which seem to differ in every county.

At present there are about 800,000 persons who are familiar with no language but the ancient one. There is hope of a revival which will increase the study of Irish history and Irish legends and make us more familiar with a nation which has played so important a part in the history of the world.

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