

without any manner of mortar to cement them, some of which cabins will hold forty men on their floor, so ancient that nobody knows how long ago any of them was made. Scarcity of wood and store of flintstones, without peradventure, found out the first invention." These houses are of a circular or oval form, having dome roofs, constructed without a knowledge of the principle of the arch, and without the use of cement. They are formed upon the model left by the pagan Firbolg and Tuatha de Danaan tribes, as is obvious from the resemblance they bear to the pagan circular stone forts. One remarkable difference between the houses of the pagan and Christian periods is, that whereas the former are round internally and externally, the latter, though externally round, are occasionally quadrangular in the interior, as if the quadrangular form of the churches had been adopted also for the houses of ecclesiastics. Whole villages of these houses exist on Aran-more.*

The neighbouring island of Ardillaun still exhibits the Laura, founded by St. Fechin, in the seventh century, which is one of the most interesting and best preserved anchoretical establishments in Ireland, or perhaps in Europe.† On the crest of the hill, on which Tempull Benain stands, about thirteen feet to the north-west of the sacred edifice, there was a *cloughaun*, partly under the ground, ten feet in length, and five feet four inches in breadth; the doorway was more than two feet broad, and the walls three feet thick. O'Donovan, who describes it,‡ is of opinion that it was probably the house of St. Benignus himself. Our interest was most excited by a cyclopean house, of angular form, which measured from north to south eleven feet eight inches, and six feet ten inches across. It had two doorways, about two feet broad and three thick; and in one of the chambers there was a window. The double door is said to be more common in the Aran *cloughauns* than in these found elsewhere.§ One of the chambers in this house measures four feet nine inches in length, and four feet in breadth. The entire structure has suffered much from exposure. In addition to these separate cells, Dr. Petrie discovered on Aran-More the ruins of a building which would have been large enough to serve the purpose of a refectory. It is situated near the churches of St. Colman Mac Duach, at Kilmurvey, and is an oval structure, without cement, of fifty by thirty-seven feet, external measurement, with a wall of six

* Proceedings of R. I. Academy, vol. x., p. 25.

† Ibid., pp. 551-555.

‡ Ordnance Survey, MSS.

§ Proceedings R. I. Academy, vol. x., p. 555.