

artificial music of the modern cathedral but too rarely excites, even in minds most predisposed to feel its influences and appreciate its refinement. In short, these ancient temples are just humble, unadorned structures, as we might expect them to have been; but, even if they were found to exhibit less of that expression of congruity and fitness, and more of that humbleness so characteristic of a religion not made for the rich, but for the poor and lowly, that mind is but little to be envied which could look with apathy on the remains of national structures so venerable for their antiquity, and so interesting as being raised in honour of the Creator in the simplest ages of Christianity."

But where, it may be asked, did all these religious men live? How were they sheltered from the Atlantic tempests of which the first fury was necessarily spent on the beetling cliffs of Aran? How were they protected from the wintry cold and from the rain?

Let not our readers expect, in answer to this question, a description of any vast structure sufficient for the adequate accommodation of communities as large as those that were housed in the stately monasteries of the middle ages. In Aran, as elsewhere in Ireland, the early monastic establishments were composed* of separate cells for the abbot, monks, and clergy, while the houses required for the accommodation of strangers, the kitchen, &c., were all separate edifices, surrounded by a cashel or circular wall, and forming a kind of monastery or ecclesiastical town, like those of the early Christians in the East, and known among the Egyptians by the name of *Laura*. The *Laura* herein differed from the *Coenobium*, that the latter was but one habitation where the monks lived in common, whereas the former consisted of many cells divided from each other. Such groups of cells are frequently mentioned in the Lives of the Irish Saints.†

These structures, it is fair to assume, were formed of the materials within easy reach of the builders, and consequently, in many parts of Ireland, of perishable materials, such as wood and clay. For this reason few vestiges of them remain in the northern and eastern portions of the island. But in the west and south many such buildings yet survive, and of these we found interesting specimens in Aranmore. "There," writes O'Flaherty, ‡ "they have *cloghauns*, a kind of building of stones laid one upon another, which are brought to a roof,

* Round Towers, p. 416.

† Bollandists, Act. SS. Maii, tom. 3, in Life of St. Mochuda or Carthage of Lismore.

‡ Op. cit. p. 68.