



Methen Cup.

NOTE.—Methen Cups were in common use among the early Celts in Ireland and Scotland. The ordinary drinking-vessel was a *methen* (so called from mead or meth, a fermented liquor of honey and water), made of wood and, at meals or drinking-bouts, passed from hand to hand, each giving it to his neighbour after taking a drink. Many of these ancient *methens* are preserved in public museums and in private collections. The *swastika* and the Latin cross are carved side by side on a few of the cups. They are found in deep bogs and in remote mountain wilds of Scotland and Ireland and are now becoming very rare. Their antiquity is very great, and when found are generally blackened with age, resembling bog oak. The photo reproduction is from a cup now in possession of Dr. Charles O'Reilly, "Ballinlough Lodge," St. Clair Avenue, Toronto. It is an exact duplicate of the cup now preserved in Ballinlough Castle, County Meath, the homestead of the O'Reillys of Brefney. The original cup has been in the possession of the O'Reillys since the time (1596) when the Irish chief, Mallmora the "Handsome," better known in Irish history as Myles O'Reilly—"The Slasher," fell at the Battle of the Yellow Ford detending the Bridge of Finea against the invaders of his country. As the cup carries the pagan Swastika and the Christian Cross it probably belongs to the fourth century, when the Irish Celts were passing from Druidism to Christianity.