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The Cists, Dolmens, and Pillars, in the Eastern Half of the County of Clare

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## VII.

THE CISTS, DOLMENS, AND PILLARS, IN THE EASTERN  
 HALF OF THE COUNTY OF CLARE. BY THOMAS  
 JOHNSON WESTROPP, M.A.

[PLATES V. AND VI.]

[Read APRIL 14, 1902.]

So important are methodical field surveys to antiquaries, and so few persons have even attempted to treat exhaustively the early remains of any of the counties of Ireland, that I venture again to trespass on the time of the Academy by further notes on the dolmens of the county Clare. The present paper is an attempt to give the position and description of all the oldest sepulchral remains, cists and pillars of rough stone, in the baronies of Upper and Lower Bunratty. I do not anticipate that it will prove exhaustive; it is still probable that other cists may be found in the northern portion of upper Bunratty. There, among a network of fields with rocks and boulders (very like dolmens when seen at a little distance), some actual cists may even yet be found. It is an undulating country difficult to examine without passing through every valley, if not through nearly every field, and on this account this paper only claims to contain descriptions (or notes where the monuments have perished undescribed) of the eleven dolmens in Upper Bunratty, and seven in Lower Bunratty, as marked on the maps of the Ordnance Survey of 1843, together with ten which I have been able to add to the list of the first barony during a series of researches from 1870, but more especially since 1892. I hope to continue these notes to include the other dolmens of Clare.

This paper is a continuation, or rather an expansion, of one—"The Distribution of Cromlechs in the County of Clare"—read before the Academy in May, 1897, and (as any detailed descriptions of the Bunratty dolmens in Mr. Wm. Copeland Borlase's book, "The Dolmens of Ireland," were from my notes), I must here ask forgiveness for any repetitions needful for the completion of this paper.

## SECTIONS 1 AND 2—THE BARONIES OF BUNRATTY.

The dolmens in the district of Bunratty have been strangely neglected by previous antiquaries. None have been noted in the Ordnance Survey letters; in either of Miss M. Stokes' lists of Irish dolmens, or in Canon Dwyer's "Diocese of Killaloe." Mr. James Frost only notes Croaghane and its destroyed neighbour.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Borlase gives my notes and illustrations of the remains at Caheraphuca, Caherloghan (with the cists wrongly located as in Moymore in the barony of Upper Tulla), Rylane, Knappoge, and Ballinphunta. Plans are given of the three last.

The baronies of Bunratty extend from the borders of Galway to the Shannon. The northern extremity is a grassy and hilly district abounding in small lakes, and the frequent occurrence of the place-names of "Derry" and "Durra" confirm the allusions in early history, showing that it was for the most part wild and wooded. South of this lie large tracts of bog, then a region of crags or grassy districts (in part well cultivated) with many forts of earth and stone. Along the south lie the rich corcasses of the Shannon.

is conventionally divided from the barony of Tulla, but for archæological purposes the whole district may be counted as one from the Fergus to the hills of Slieve Bernagh and Slieve Aughty.

The tribal arrangements even as recorded in the earliest legend and history are probably too late to have any bearing on the dolmens.<sup>2</sup> We may briefly note that Lower Bunratty nearly corresponds to the ancient Tradree (Tradraighe), and is clearly marked by the two streams—the Rine or Gissagh<sup>3</sup> flowing into Latoon creek to the north, and the Owennagarnagh or Raite to the east. This tract, as noted

<sup>1</sup> "History and Topography of Clare" (ed. 1893), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> The age of the smaller cists is very doubtful. Some may be post-Christian. The "Tripartite Life of St. Patrick" (ed. W. Stokes, p. 123) mentions a "Giant's Grave" 120 feet long, dating 100 years before the Saint's mission. According to the *Leabhar na hUidhre* (*Revue Celtique*, vol. xiii., 1892, p. 64) Fothaidh Airgtheach, King of Erin, killed by Caeilte in A.D. 285, was buried in a cairn in "a chest of stone." The alleged erection of the Clochogle dolmen, near Ballina, in the sixth century, is not supported by the original narrative, and in any case could only imply a secondary burial. See Mr. H. T. Knox in *Journal of Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii. (1893), p. 430, and vol. xxviii., p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> The name is "Misagh" in MSS., R.I.A., 24 D 10, a poem "on the Franciscan Monastery (Quin) on the Misagh." The stream is "the Gissagh at Quin" in Hugh Norton's account of Clare, 1695, MSS. T.C.D., I., 1, 2, p. 235. He calls the Sixmilebridge river "the Kney." The "Gossogh" and "Gosseogh" appear in early seventeenth-century maps.

before, was the first portion of county Clare overrun by the Dalcassians under Lughad Meann, King of Munster, before A.D. 370, and so formed the mensal land of the kings of Thomond, the O'Briens as named in later times. Probably on this account it was seized by the Norsemen in the tenth century, and by the Normans in the thirteenth. It remained the special appanage of the Earls of Thomond till 1712, and was then sold in fee-farm to various English families. No dolmen remains, probably from Tradree having been so long under cultivation.

The northern portion of this barony (with portions of the upper barony, and of the barony of Tulla) forms a rather bleak plain, "the beautiful cold Magh Adhair."<sup>1</sup> It was a legendary settlement of a clan of the Huamorian Firbolgs; and its name contracted from a district to a townland (Tuanamoyri<sup>2</sup> in 1584 and 1685), then to two fields "Moyri," or "Moyross Parks" in 1839, and to a single field "Moyars Park" at the present time.

The oldest allusion to any dolmen in Clare is to that of Knoekalappa, or "hill's bed," by Thomas Dyneley in 1680;<sup>3</sup> there is, as already noted, no detailed description of any in eastern Clare till 1897.

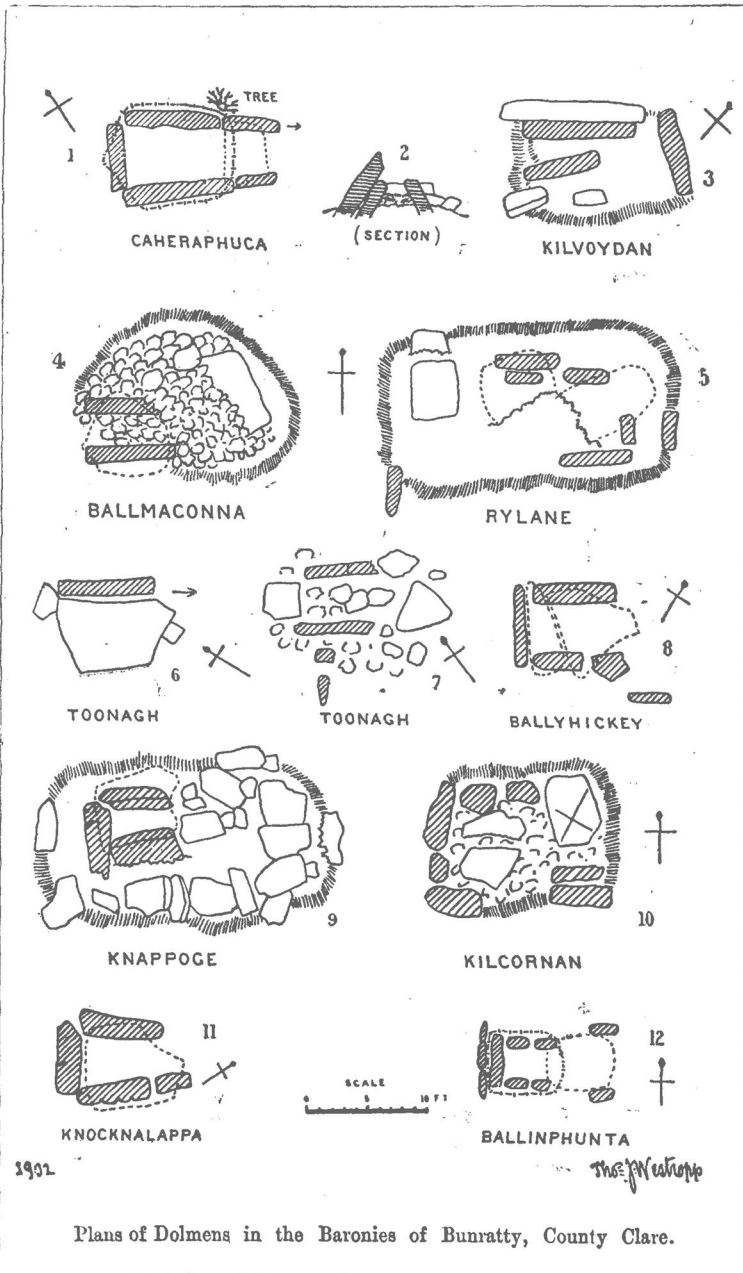
The dolmens are here described topographically, and, where possible, in groups; the townland names are always given, and are followed by the sheets of the Ordnance Survey maps, which, with the sections of each sheet on that of 25 inches to the mile, are given in brackets.

We may classify the remains in the baronies of Bunratty as—(1) simple cists—Kilvoydan, Toonagh (three), Caherloghan (six), Ballyhickey, Monaoe (site), Ballymacloon, Knocknalappa, Drumullan (northern), Ballysheen (site); (2) cists, with two or more chambers—Caheraphuca, Ballymaconna (?), Rylane (western), Ballinphunta; (3) dolmen with enclosure—Knappoge; (4) long dolmens—Ballyogan (two, one removed); (5) circle—Clooney (eastern); (6) enclosures of blocks—Dooneen, Clooney (western); (7) doubtful and destroyed—Rylane (eastern), Clooney (blocks), Drumullan (southern) (site), Kilcornan (perhaps multiple chambered), Brickhill (site), Lacht (? (site)); (8) pillars—Knocknafearbreaga (five), Magh Adhair. None of the stones to my knowledge exhibit any sign of dressing, and only one

<sup>1</sup> "Circuit of Ireland," A.D. 941, by Cormacan Eigeas, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Tuanamoyre in "Castle List," 1584, MSS. T.C.D., Tuanamoree, 1655, Petty's Survey (Vallancey's copy Tuanamoret).

<sup>3</sup> Royal Hist. and Archæol. Assoc. Ireland, vol. ix. (1867), p. 176, repeated by Mr. Frost in "History and Topography of County Clare," p. 543.



Plans of Dolmens in the Baronies of Bunratty, County Clare.

(at Kilcornan) of scribing, whereas hammer-dressing occurs in several of those made of limestone slabs in the districts of Burren and Inchiquin.

(1). CAHERAPHUCA, Inchicronan Parish (O. S. Sheet 26, No. 2).—A very perfect double-chambered cist made of five side stones and two covers lies close to the north west of the main road from Ennis to Gort, not far to the south of the village of Crusheen. It is in perfect preservation, and is a most interesting specimen; but, like every other dolmen (except the closely similar Ballinphunta), known to me in this county, it has been opened. There seem to be slight traces of the earth mound in which it was once embedded. It is of the usual type, getting narrower and lower towards the last. Its axis (as is usual) lies E.S.E. and W.N.W.; and the main chamber, which is exactly 8 feet long inside, tapers from 5 feet 5 inches to 4 feet 4 inches. The sides are



Fig. 13.—Caheraphuca.

4 feet high to the west and 2 feet 7 inches to the east, the lesser and lower chamber being only 18 inches high at its eastern end and 4 feet long. The block closing the western end measures 5 feet 3 inches by 4 feet 2 inches by 12 inches. The north block of the larger chamber, 7 feet 3 inches by 13 inches thick; the southern, 8 feet long, 4 feet to 2 feet 7 inches high, by 13 inches thick. The blocks are of the coarse and irregular gritstone of the district and exhibit no dressing. A fine and picturesque hawthorn springs at the north side near the junction of the two chambers, and is, I fear, slowly overturning the structure. The dolmen has been illustrated by Mr. Borlase.<sup>1</sup> Of the defaced Caher, which gives its name to the townland, I have failed to find any legend. It is possible that it was deserted at an early date, and the people (before the townland name was fixed) believed that it was haunted by the phuca—that mischievous goblin pony or goat which, even in this age of unbelief, is still a reality to some of the peasantry. This connexion of the phuca with forts and

<sup>1</sup> "Dolmens of Ireland," vol. i., p. 82. See plan, p. 88, fig. 1, *supra*, and Plate V., fig. 1.

rocks is sufficiently marked in other places; as at Carrigaphuca, in Cork, Clochaunaphuca in Kerry, the Dun of Clopoke in the Queen's County, and the dolmen of Poulaphuca in the Burren, and other examples might be cited.

(2). KILVOYDAN, Inchicronan Parish (O. S. Sheet 26, No. 14).—A defaced dolmen, which occupies a beautiful position on the summit of an abrupt grassy hill, with a fine view of two lakes and the ivied peel-tower called O'Brien's Castle. To the north, at the foot of the hill and near Durra House, are the very ancient graveyard of Kilvoydan,<sup>1</sup> with a large basin stone and a dry holy well, and the remains of a ring fort.

The dolmen is to all appearance an example of the very curious (though scarcely credible) type which occurs near Louisburg, in Mayo, as figured by Mr. G. H. Kinahan, of which, as Mr. Borlase points out, examples occur in Portugal. These structures are formed of sloping blocks overlapping till they nearly meet at the top, and then roofed with small slabs. The section of the Kilvoydan cist closely resembles this type, as may be seen in the illustration (p. 88, fig. 2, *supra*); but after careful consideration it seems more probable that the slipping inward of the sides tilted the massive cover over the north side, against which it now leans. The cell is 12 feet long, with single blocks to the north and south. These measure, respectively, 9 feet 6 inches by 18 inches thick and 5 feet by 20 inches thick, being at present only about 3 feet high. The cover measures 11 feet 8 inches long, about 6 feet wide, and 22 inches thick. All the slabs are of massive gritstone or conglomerate.<sup>2</sup>

(3). BALLYMACONNA, Kilraghtis Parish (O. S. Sheet 26, No. 10).—Not far to the west of Kilvoydan three other monuments lie near Kilraghtis church, and with the first named may be called the Kilraghtis group. The district is diversified and interesting, formed by a group of low rounded hills with a curious fortress-like outcrop of stratified rock at Dromgloon. The church was called "Kilrathusa" in the Papal taxation of 1302, and is at present a plain building of the later fifteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

The cist lies in the remains of a cairn on the slope of the hill to

<sup>1</sup> Not the Kilvoydan near Corofin described by Dr. MacNamara in *Journal R.S.A.I.*, vol. xxx. (1900).

<sup>2</sup> See section and plan, p. 88, figs. 2 and 3, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> The fields in which these dolmens stand (we were told) were a few years ago covered by an assembly of myriads of rats. The great meeting was held for several days, and then broke up, and marched eastward in squadrons which must have dispersed as they went, for they could only be traced for a couple of miles.

the north of the church. It seems to have two chambers, but is much buried in the cairn. The principal cell is formed of two massive blocks rising 3 feet above the stones and 7 feet long, being about 3 feet apart and tapering eastward. The cover is nearly level, and is a strong slab of gritstone, over a foot in thickness and about 7 feet square. Both the north side and the east end are deeply buried in small stones, which nearly fill the interior.<sup>1</sup>

A large slab 6 feet 6 inches long protrudes from the cairn about 9 feet from the end of the cist, and may be the top of a second chamber; it does not seem to rest on side blocks. The dolmen is locally called the "Lobba." The names of Dermot and Grania seem to have passed out of local memory at this place.

(4). BALLYOGAN,<sup>2</sup> Kilraghtis Parish (O.S. Sheet 26, No. 10).—On the eastern slope of the same hill, in the adjoining townland of Ballyogan, lie the foundations of a large and massive stone ring-wall called Cahereiny; it has the remains of a souterrain, but is most completely defaced. A fort-like knoll of rock juts up not far away, rising from a cultivated field.

(a) The bohereen to the west of the caher did not exist when the O. S. survey of 1840 took place; but the older labourers remember its construction, and state that this led to the removal of a "Giant's Grave" very similar to and not far from the existing monument. It was a "long grave," as we learned from two independent descriptions, each side consisted of five or six blocks, across the middle of which rested a large slab 5 feet or 6 feet each way. There had once been "two other covers," but few remembered them at the time of the demolition. Only for the positive statements of the men and the corroborative recollections of the late Mr. Pierce O'Brien of Durra (who gave me much kind aid when studying the dolmens of his neighbourhood), I should have suspected some confusion with the existing "giant's grave" which it so closely resembled. I was shown the approximate site a couple of fields from the latter and to the north-west. No antiquities were unearthed in the removal.

(b) The existing "long grave" lies nearly covered with grass

<sup>1</sup> See plan, p. 88, fig. 4, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Ballyogan, in 1640–1668, was the residence of Maoilin M'Brody (MacBruodin) and his wife, Margaret Molony, whose son, the well-known monastic historian, Anthony "Bruodinus," was born there. It is called Gortnefunchin in the 1675 Book of Survey at Edenvale. "Ashgrove" in the townland is probably a mistranslation of this name. We may note that the adjoining townland Bearnafunshin is also called Ballyfinshan in the 1703 estate-maps of the Earl of Thomond.



and stones in a tilled field to the north of the second bohereen. Its axis lies N.N.E. and S.S.W., and it consisted of four rows of stones. The complete portion is 24 feet long, and tapers eastward from 7 feet 4 inches to 5 feet 4 inches over all. The end slab remains to the west. Rows of stones stood about 3 feet from and parallel to each side of the central enclosure. Only two remain to the north and three to the south. It is even possible that the most western of the latter belonged to the inner row. The longest slab remaining is 7 feet 6 inches long. If the minute sketch-plan on the Ordnance Survey map of 1840 may be trusted, two long blocks projected from the southern side, and (apparently) a cover remained *in situ*. It is still called, as on the maps, "the Giant's Grave," but no fuller legend survives.

This monument is one of a very interesting and wide-spread type, though of less frequent occurrence than the cist type so common among the dolmens of Ireland, Portugal, and Spain.<sup>1</sup> The long graves are closely akin to (in some case identical with) the *allées couvertes* of France, and to passages in the tumuli in Scandinavia and other parts of Europe, as far south as Sardinia. For comparison

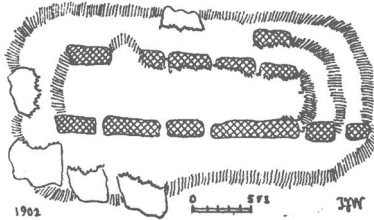


Fig. 14.—Ballyogan.

with the Ballyogan grave, we select a few others—Lachtneill, Cork, 12 feet long, 3 feet wide inside; Slieve-owen, Cork, 20 feet long, 3 feet to 1 foot wide, with parallel rows of slabs at each side; Burren, Cavan, two graves, respectively, 29 feet by 5 feet to 4 feet, and 17 feet 6 inches by 4 feet 9 inches to 3 feet 2 inches; Carryglass, Tyrone, 40 feet by 4 feet to 2 feet 3 inches, with parallel rows of slabs at each side; Coolbuck, Fermanagh, 33 feet by 4 feet to 3 feet; Proleck, Louth, 22 feet 6 inches long, 6 feet to 2 feet 6 inches wide; and Moiglisha, near Arklow, in Wicklow. With these we may compare the "Hun's Beds" (Hünebed), in the district of Drenthe, in Holland, which consist of long chambers, outside of which are parallel rows. Mr. Ferguson says these differ from those of France and Ireland by having closed ends; but this is not the case,

<sup>1</sup> "Dolmens of Ireland," vol. i., pp. 29, 31, 202, 214, 324, 317, 414; vol. ii. p. 639. Ferguson "Rude Stone Monuments of all Countries, their age and uses" (Ed. 1872), pp. 320, 356.

as we have learned, even from the defaced "long grave" of Ballyogan. Similar structures have been also found under long barrows, as at Kerlescant, which is 52 feet long and 5 feet wide, with rows of stones parallel to its sides. The nearest example to Ballyogan is probably the much more perfect long grave of Formoylemore on the brow of that steep hill, up which runs the road from Broadford to Limerick.

I was much interested to see "microlithic" representatives of these "long graves" in certain churchyards in Kerry, where slabs set on edge and covered with other slabs enclose the coffin. They rise above the level of the churchyard, and are covered by miniature cairns.

(5). RYLANE, Clooney Parish (O.S. Sheet 96, No. 16).—The two dolmens at this place are not named on the map of 1840, but may be found marked by two small squares to the south-west of a rath, and near a second fort directly above the "E" of the parish name. They were first noted by Mr. Arthur Gethin Creagh, of Fiaghmore, to whom I am also indebted for particulars about the destroyed burial-place and the hearths at Coolosluasta Lake.

(a) The more southern monument is called the "Labba." It is a cist about 23 feet long, and 11 feet 6 inches wide, and had at least three, if not four, chambers. It has been illustrated and described from my notes by Mr. Borlase. It probably consisted of a parallel-sided enclosure, with an outer line of slabs round it. The eastern end is nearly perfect.<sup>1</sup>

(b) The second "Giant's Grave," as it is called, is greatly defaced. It is of larger blocks than the "Lobba." Its south side lies east and west by compass, and it tapered eastward. It lies in a circular patch of stones and mounds, much overgrown, and evidently the base of a cairn or tumulus. Some of the blocks are 5 to 6 feet long and 4 feet high. Near it is the almost levelled ring of a small rath; while a much more perfect and larger earth fort occupies the summit of a low green hill to the north-west. It is girt with a deep fosse, which frequently contains water.

Not far away to the north-east, in a field at the Donoghue's house, and about 500 yards from Maghera cross roads, was found (on February 4th, 1897)<sup>2</sup> an interesting early burial-place. The field was dug up for the first time in human memory. Scarcely 2 feet

<sup>1</sup> "Dolmens of Ireland," vol. i., p. 82; see plan, p. 88, fig. 5, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Journal R.S.A.I., vol. xxvii. (1897), p. 178.

below the surface lay a passage 10 feet long and 2 feet 6 inches wide, of rather small dry masonry roofed with thick sandstone flags. The passage ran N.N.W. and S.S.E. At its southern end was a small circular cell, domed in the usual way by courses overlapping till the space could be closed with a slab. Another slab was laid outside the flank of the dome, as if to ease the pressure of the earth at that point. Fragments of a human skull, including a portion of the lower jaw with six teeth, lay at the north-west end of the grave; and a few vertebræ in the last stage of decay lay along the passage. Around the remains lay charcoal and burned earth, while other traces of a fierce fire were apparent on the side walls. Nothing was found in the round cell, nor were there any traces of either metal or pottery. On the top of the covering slabs lay portions of the skull of a horse and "bones of a goat or pig." Similarly, in an early cairn-burial near St. Cernin de l'Arche, near Brive, in France, the bones of a horse lay outside a cist covered by a cairn. In another cairn lay the skeleton of a woman, the upper part of which was partly cremated. An oval hearth of sandstone blocks, including a portion of a quern, lay 1 foot 2 inches south of the Clare grave, and 4 feet higher than its floor. It was about 2 feet 6 inches under the surface of the field. Mr. Creagh at once wrote to me; but when I next was able to visit Clare, in the following April, the whole structure had been removed and stacked against the fence of the field, and corn was sprouting in the slight depression that marked its site.

Some years before this, discoveries of some interest were made at the little bog-pool of Coolosluasta Lough.<sup>1</sup> The peat had evidently grown in and greatly diminished the lake, and the Carrahan drainage works considerably lowered its waters. Mr. Creagh found several planks under 4 feet of good peat, which had been covered by about 6 feet of water. One plank was worn along the edges as if by a rope. It was 5 feet long, and had a round hole cut in it. The other boards were in fragments, and so soft that the hand sank into them. All

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<sup>1</sup> Journal R.S.A.I., vol. xxv. (1895), p. 179. Fich and Coolosluasty appear in Petty's "Book of Distribution" (1655), p. 2. The latter is noted by Canon Dwyer from King's "Church History of Ireland," Suppl. vol., p. 1047. "O'Sluaisti from Cill Osluaisti"; and others, "these were they who stole the horses, the mules, and the asses of the Cardinal who came from Rome to instruct in the time of Domhnall Mór O'Brien, King of Munster; and it was on that account the Cowarba (*i.e.* the successor) of Peter sold the rent and right of Erin to the Saxon." If so this little marshy spot is one of the most historic sites in the world, but the story needs far better authority to support it.

around and under the plants was a mass of deer's bones, recalling the popular interpretation of the townland name Fiaghmore, "the big deer." Directly beneath were found three human skulls, "two females and one male." All the teeth were sound but much worn. The lower jaws were, it is said, still in the sockets, and the arm-bones with the shoulder-blades. Among these bones lay two long oak poles, one neatly shaped with a sharp implement. No metal was found, but it may have sunk in the deep peat below.

A fragment of a very neat gritstone quern is preserved; it was about 20 inches in diameter, with a ring 8 inches wide and a central hole, with three concentric and rounded edges, each an inch wide. A straight band crossed these, and girdled a small handle-hole, which did not pass through the slab. I could not ascertain the locality of this "find."

Around the margin of the lake were found some twenty hearths of gritstones; they measured about 6 feet across, with wonderfully fresh charcoal and remains of pigs and goats, the long bones were broken for the marrow. Great stems and roots of bog-deal lay everywhere; all had fallen towards the east; the tops, and in some cases the roots, had been burned, or in a few cases cut.

(6). CLOONEY, Clooney Parish (O. S. Sheet 34, No. 7).—In the picturesque demesne of Mr. Joseph Hall, and at no great distance from the fifteenth-century castle and church, are two remarkable remains.

(a) The first is of a type not very common in Ireland; it occupies the summit of a low natural mound near a stream, and is much overthrown. Enough, fortunately, remains to show the plan. The late Mr. Borlase<sup>1</sup> (who had not seen it) considered it a "boat-shaped enclosure"; but, as I pointed out to him when sending the plan, the structure is a nearly straight-sided but not rectangular oblong inclosure, with the angles cut off. It is formed of two rows of slabs, equidistant and about a foot apart. The "southern" side actually points E.S.E. and W.N.W., and is 10 feet long; the northern is 12 feet, and the remaining sides about 20 feet each. A



Fig. 15.—Clooney.

small entrance, with two side-blocks, opened eastward; and a slab stood in line with its northern jamb projecting at right angles from the inner

<sup>1</sup> "Dolmens of Ireland," vol. i., p. 82.

face of the "western" side. Thirteen slabs of the inner and seven of the outer row are in position, many others remain out of place. I repeat the plan from the earlier paper.<sup>1</sup> The enclosure and knoll are thickly planted, and there is no trace of a cist or any other structure in the garth.

(b) A second monument lies nearly eastward from the last in a grove of fine beech-trees. It was a circle, once probably double, and is much defaced. The western portion is, however, partly preserved. Beginning at the south, and going westward, there are four outer blocks, measuring respectively 12 feet 6 inches long by 8 feet by 25 inches, 9 feet 3 inches by 6 feet 6 inches by 24 inches to 30 inches thick, 4 feet 2 inches by 3 feet by 11 inches, and 3 feet by 2 feet 4 inches by 12 inches. Inside there are two fallen blocks, one 5 feet 6 inches long. A single fallen and nearly buried block lies to the north, and another, 5 feet by 4 feet by 21 inches, to the south. At some distance outside the grove another set block suggests a third ring.

(c) Three blocks are set in line, N.N.E. and S.S.W., in another grove, and possibly represent the remains of a third monument.

(7). **KNOCKNAFEARBREAGA**, Clooney Parish (O.S. Sheet 34, No. 3).—Near Classagh House, but in the townland of Knockanoura, is a low cultivated hill, called Knocknafearbreaga. On it stands a line of five pillars, lying N.N.E. and S.S.W. Noting these from the north they measure respectively—the first, 4 feet 10 inches high by 3 feet 8 inches by 1 foot 2 inches; the second, 4 feet 5 inches by 11 inches by 17 inches; the third, 5 feet 2 inches by 3 feet 10 inches by 10 inches; the fourth is broken, the stump being only 1 foot 6 inches high; and the fifth leans towards the north-west, and is 6 feet 2 inches by 2 feet 3 inches by 10 inches. There are said to have been two others in human memory.<sup>2</sup>

Such alignments of pillars are not unknown in Ireland, Scotland, France, and elsewhere. Examples occur in Caithness, Wiltshire, and Brittany, varying from a single line to the great group of Carnac. The Rev. S. Baring Gould, in his interesting account of those on Dartmoor, advances the ingenious theory that they are tribal monuments, the stones varying from under 3 to over 6 feet; and, on this supposition, varying according to the number or individual strength of each family.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Proc. R.I.A., vol. iv., ser. iii., p. 546.

<sup>2</sup> See Plate VI., fig. 1.

<sup>3</sup> "Book of Dartmoor" (1900), pp. 60, &c.

In Ireland, we may note, for comparison, the alignment near Lough Gur, in Limerick, and that in the townland of Reenaree and parish of Kilnamartry, Cork. The rows in the latter case are 4 feet apart, and the highest galloway is 5 feet 6 inches high.<sup>1</sup>

Local tradition states that the Clare pillars were seven robbers who "kept about the place in old ancient times." Now there was a saint (possibly Mochulla) at Tulla who was building the church there; and he was so busy, "he had no time to cook his food." The holy man fortunately possessed "a blessed bull," and used to send it with bags to Ennis Abbey, where the monks used to pack a supply of cooked provisions for the church-builder. Hearing of this, the robbers waylaid the faithful animal, and proceeded to ravage the bags. The bull thereupon roared so loudly that he was heard at Tulla; and the saint stopped building, "and he prayed and cursed at the one that was hurting his bull." Rapid was the retribution—in the twinkling of an eye, the seven robbers were "struck and turned into fearbreags," or sham-men, on the spot where they stood.

The legend is late in form, but has ancient equivalents in all ages and counties; we need only note some Irish and Scottish forms. We find at Iona, a "Portanfhirbhreig," so called from a tall rock, supposed to resemble a man's figure.<sup>2</sup> Another late Scottish legend, "Fionn's Enchantment,"<sup>3</sup> tells how Fionn and his lads had been hunting in a snow-storm, and, while waiting for their "bird-stew" to be cooked, a hare ran into the house and kicked up the ashes. All the men ran out after her, and followed her to a hut, which proved to be the abode of a giant magician, named "Yellow Face," who lived on enchanted boars and human flesh. The giant called in the intruders to help him, and, on their crossing the threshold, struck them with his rod of magic, and "they became pillars of stone; and he set them on the north side of the door to stop the sleety wind" (like the shelter slabs at the doors of clochauns in Corcaguiney). The curing of Fionn, whose legs had been burned off, and the disenchantment of the petrified youths, do not bear directly on the subject of Fearbreags. St. Brendan is said (in an Irish legend) to have saved a young man from murderers by changing him into a pillar, and a pillar into his form. The villains

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<sup>1</sup> "Cork Historical and Archæological Society's Journal," vol. iv., ser. ii., p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Adamnan's "Life of S. Columba" (ed. Dr. Reeves), p. 429.

<sup>3</sup> *Revue Celtique*, vol. i. (1870), p. 196.

stabbed the pillar and cut off its head, and carried it away to another place, "and still that stone remains."

At Kilross, in Sligo, two men endeavoured to steal a magician's cow; but the owner pursued, and, striking them with a wand, turned them into stones, which are still shown. It is possible that the "cow-stone" and "thief-stone," near Gallerus, in Kerry, commemorate some such legend. In the "Book of Feenagh," when the Druids of Fergna "do corrguineacht" against St. Caillin, Aedh Dubh, son of Fergna, orders his soldiers to attack them. "No," said Caillin, "we will not exercise human power upon them; but it is my will (if it be the will of my God of Heaven and Earth) that the Druids may be changed into stones forthwith." Thereupon the Druids were immediately turned into forms of stone. Fergna, in his wrath at his son's defection, and because "his Druids were transformed into the shape of stone columns," brings on himself the vengeance of Heaven, and dies. The whole subject of Fearbreags, as John Windele has long since noted, is much in want of elucidation. It crops up in Monaghan, Cork, Clare, Tipperary, and, as we have seen, in Iona and elsewhere in Scotland. The name is applied to a stone circle near Kimalta (Keeper Hill), in Tipperary, and to a cairn at Kilcolman, in Cork.<sup>1</sup>

Natural rocks, called Fearbreags, occur at Fanygalvan, in the Burren, in the hills near Broadford, and at other places in Clare.

Mr. Borlase notes its connexion with the name and legend of the wolf (breag) and were-wolf, and that wolf-names are connected with cairns and tumuli in Germany (as, *e.g.*, the wolf hügel) and Bohemia, as well as in Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

It is, however, possible that the pillars at Classagh, like those not far from the Fearbrega Rock of Fanygalvan, form some long-forgotten tribal boundary rather than sepulchral monuments, though, in the historic period, they seem to have coincided only with townland borders. It will be remembered how Cuchullain, when mortally wounded in battle, went to drink at a lake. "Now a great mearing went westward from the lake, and his eye lit on it; and he went to a pillar-stone which is in the plain, and he put his breast-girdle round

<sup>1</sup> "Brendaniana, or St. Brendan the Voyager in Story and Legend," Rev. Denis O'Donoghue (ed. 1893), pp. 16, 17. See also "Battle of Moy Leana," p. 31 n.; "Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland," Col. Wood-Martin, vol. ii., p. 214; and "The Book of Feenagh" (ed. W. Hennessy and D. H. Kelly, 1875), p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> "Dolmens of Ireland," vol. iii., pp. 912-915. See also some valuable notes on the name in Dr. Joyce's "Irish Names of Places." Series ii., pp. 411, 412.

it that he might not die seated or lying down.”<sup>1</sup> “Cormac’s Glossary” also has a sentence: “They are not neighbours till their properties are meared with boundaries of pillar-stones.” A manuscript in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, says: “Land is secured by the joint memorial of two territories—*i.e.*, the ogam on the gallan.” Unfortunately the Classagh pillars are uninscribed.<sup>2</sup>

(8). *MAGH ADHAIR*, Clooney Parish (O. S. Sheet 34, No. 12).—Near this fully-described<sup>3</sup> place of inauguration, at the opposite side of the stream from the moat, cairn, and basin-stone, and in the townland of Corbally, is a rude limestone pillar. It measures 6 feet 3 inches high, by 3 feet to 2 feet 6 inches wide, and 10 inches thick. It stands in line with the mote and its sloping descent and the cairn. Between it and the stream is a shattered block set firmly in the ground, and possibly the base of another pillar. Another stone lies near Drumbaun fort, two fields to the west of Moyars Park.

(9). *TOONAGH*, Clooney Parish (O. S. Sheet 34, No. 8).—Not far to the north-east of Magh Adhair, near the same rivulet, is a group of defaced cists. They are not marked even on the new map, but were shown me by the Rev. J. B. Greer, of Tulla. They lie on the 1899 map at the apex of a practically equilateral triangle, resting on the main road from Clooney to Tulla, between the bench-marks 121 and 120·4, and south of the road. The remains of two, if not of three, defaced cists lie in a furzy hollow near a small brook.

(a) Of the western cist only the sides remain; the northern is still standing, a coarse gritstone block, 7 feet 6 inches long and 4 feet 8 inches by 20 inches; beside it lies a slab (the fallen south side 10 feet by 4 feet 3 inches by 20 inches); the axis of the standing slab lies S.S.E. and N.N.W.

(b) Another thick block, 5 feet long and 16 inches thick, set north and south, lies at a short distance to the north-east, and may be the west end of a cist.

(c) On higher ground, to the north of the last, are the remains of a little cist. The south side lies north-west and south-east, and is about 6 feet long, 32 inches high, and 12 inches thick. The north side has been much broken, and lies from 4 feet 4 inches to 4 feet

<sup>1</sup> *Revue Celtique*, vol. iii., p. 182. From the “Book of Leinster,” p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> “Cormac’s Glossary” (ed. W. Stokes), p. 84, MSS., T.C.D., H. 3, 18, p. 230. For “meerstones” see Notes on the Landnamabok (by Rev. E. T. Ellwood), p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> R.S.A.I., vol. xxxi. (1891, p. 463 n.), with illustrations. Proc. R.I.A., vol. iv., ser. iii., p. 55.



3 inches away; only 4 feet 6 inches remain—the rest is broken to the ground. The west end is 4 feet 4 inches long and 3 feet high; the cist tapers eastward to 3 feet 9 inches internally, and the broken cover lies near it.<sup>1</sup> A short distance from the east end is a large round cairn of mossy stones overgrown with bushes. In this, near its northern edge, a large block is set east and west.

A line of slabs 3 feet to 6 feet long is set in the ground southward from the northern cist to a small pillar 22 inches square, 9 feet to the west of which lie a fallen slab and traces of an old-looking curved earthwork.

(10). CAHERLOGHAN, Clooney Parish (O. S. Sheet 35, No. 8 and No. 12).—This townland adjoins the barony of Tulla; and its monuments group naturally with the once numerous cists of Milltown and Moymore. Our plan of adhering to the lines of the map necessitates their separation. The group of four small cists were (by a mistake of my own as to the townland bounds) given as in Moymore by Mr. Borlase. They were shown to me by the Rev. J. B. Greer, and lie near a farmhouse between the Moymore bridges, being marked on the new survey, whose officers were careful to insert any unmarked monuments pointed out to them; but unfortunately (so far as I know) only Dr. George U. Macnamara and I took any trouble with the marking of pre-historic remains of Clare on the new maps.

(a) The first or southern cist hardly rises over the field; its cover only measures 4 feet by 2 feet 3 inches by 12 inches; it rests on three other blocks, one being 3 feet square. There is no trace of a mound or cairn about it.

(b) Two blocks of similar character lie side by side; but it is not certain that they formed a cist.

(c) In the north wall of the field is set a block 4 feet by 2 feet 8 inches by 12 inches, and is said to have been part of a "Lobba," of which the other portions were used for the wall.

(d and e) Beyond this are two small cists entire: the northern resembles a demi-dolmen; its cover measures 6 feet east and west, and 6 feet 8 inches north and south, being about 12 inches thick. The standing-block, supporting it to the east, measures 33 inches by 14 inches, and rises only a foot above the ground. The neighbouring cist has an irregular top slab 4 feet 4 inches to 7 feet 3 inches east and west, and 4 feet 2 inches north and south, and is 16 inches thick. The sides are nearly buried.

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<sup>1</sup> See plan, p. 88, figs. 6 and 7, *supra*.

(f) There are remains of a cairn, with a small and defaced cist of four blocks, in a patch of bushes, near (but outside) the west wall of the field. The cist was about 4 feet square.

It may be noted that, both in size and in the lack of definite orientation, these tiny cists differ greatly from the usual type in Clare, whether of the huge dolmens of Poulabrone, Ballyganner, or Fanygalvan, or the little cists at Poulaphuca, Parknabinnia, or Toonagh, which taper eastward, and are identical in every respect save size.

(g) The remains of a larger dolmen are found at the opposite (southern) edge of the townland, beside the road to Magh Adhair. In human memory, it was "a great box of stones"; but unfortunately a farmer overthrew it when clearing the field. He removed the sides, but found the top too heavy; and (unable or afraid to blast it, though popular belief does not extend its protection to dolmens or cahers as it does to earthen forts) he set it up on edge, where it remains propped by lesser stones, and measuring 8 feet by 5 feet by 12 inches to 15 inches thick.

(11). BALLYHICKEY, Clooney Parish (O. S. 34, No. 15).—This small cist of coarse gritstones is quite perfect, and is unusual in having parallel sides and level cover. The axis lies E.N.E. The north side is of one block 6 feet 8 inches long and 16 inches thick. The south side has two, parallel to which, and about 3 feet away, is another and thinner slab. The west end is 7 feet 2 inches long and 8 inches to 9 inches thick. The cist is 8 feet 1 inch long, and the interior 7 feet 4 inches east and west by 4 feet 2 inches north and south. The cover is somewhat pear-shaped; and, broken into two, it does not overlap the west end.<sup>1</sup> It lies in a plantation to the side of Hazelwood House, and is shown correctly in a little sketch on the map of 1840.

(12). DOONEEN, Doora Parish (O. S. Sheet 34, No. 6).—There are only two dolmens in Doora parish, much of which (as its name implies) is swampy. The Dooneen monument is called a "Giant's Grave," and is not recognized as a "Lobba"; it lies in a field to the north of the road from Moyreisk

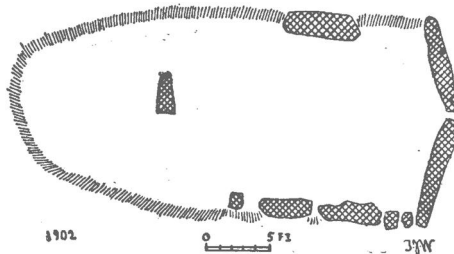


Fig. 16.—Dooneen.

<sup>1</sup> See plan, p. 88, fig. 8, *supra*.

Cross, past Maryfield House. It is a defaced enclosure of deep-set slabs from 9 feet to 6 feet long, and measures internally 22 feet 8 inches east and west, and 13 feet north and south. The two largest slabs at the eastern end make a slight angle. Of the other side blocks only one remains to the west, one to the north, and two to the south. It has been considerably defaced since I first saw it. Ferguson figures a somewhat similar Continental example at Eginlar.

(13). **MONANOE**, Doorra Parish (O. S. Sheet 34, No. 10).—A small cist stood on a gravel hill not far from a large stone-faced earth fort. I failed to find it on my earlier visits, owing to an altered bohereen and field-bounds. When aided by the new map of 1894, I found the place the monument had been removed and its very site deeply dug out for gravel.

(14). **BALLYMACLOON**, Quin Parish (O. S. Sheet 42, No. 4).—This parish—one of the most historic parts of Clare—only possesses two dolmens. One stands near a small lake in a field with outcrops of rock in Ballymacloon. It is entirely overthrown, but was of rude and massive slabs of gritstone. One measures 7 feet, east and west, by 5 feet 3 inches. It is shown on the map of 1840 as a massive block, resting on three lesser stones. Near it is a dolmen-like slab resting on a large boulder, but probably natural, and certainly bearing no marks of human workmanship.

(15). **KNAPPOGE**,<sup>1</sup> Quin Parish (O. S. Sheet 42, No. 8).—This cist lies south of the road from Knappoge Castle to Kilkishen, and has suffered from the hands of the “improver,” having been partly removed and blasted, the blocks still bearing marks of the crowbar. Its western end defied the vandals, and still rests on the end and two side blocks. It is hard in its present condition to speak with confidence as to its original design. The cist appears to have stood in an oval earthen mound with a kerbing of blocks round the base. The cover measures 8 feet north and south, 4 feet 7 inches east and west, and is about 10 inches thick. The west end is 5 feet by 1 foot thick, and rises 18 inches over the mound. The north is 6 feet long by 12 inches; some ten blocks of the ring seem to lie in position. My drawing and a rough sketch-plan are figured by Mr. Borlase.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Or Knoppoge.

<sup>2</sup> “Dolmens of Ireland,” vol. i., p. 84. See also plan, p. 88, fig. 9, *supra*.

## BUNBATTY LOWER.

It is noteworthy that in the ancient Tradree<sup>1</sup> from Latoon and the Fergus to the Shannon and Owen na Gearna no dolmens occur. This probably arises from the district having been (as pointed out) in an unusual state of cultivation and clearance as the special appanage of the native princes. It is only between the Lakes of Rossroe and Mountcashel that any monuments remain, for the dolmens at Croaghane really belong to the group on the Slieve Bernagh Hills.

(16). KNOCKNALAPPA, Kilmurphy na Gall Parish (O. S. Sheet 43, No. 11).—This is named in Dineley's sketch of Rossroe, in 1680, as "Knockalappa, *anglice* the Hill's Bed,"<sup>2</sup> but is not drawn. It rests on a low green hill, at the foot of which stands the massive ivied tower of Rossroe Castle, and the large lake called after it.

The cist is of large blocks, less shapely than most other "Lobbas" in this county. It is at present 11 feet long, and tapers eastward from 4 feet 7 inches to 3 feet internally. A single block, 6 feet 3 inches long, and 2 feet 8 inches thick, remains; a second was, I hear, blown up; and other stones bear marks of crowbars. For some reason not stated, the destruction is stopped; and there is no present intention of removal. The west end is 5 feet 7 inches long, and from 17 inches to 24 inches thick. The cover is irregular, about 8 feet 6 inches by 8 feet, and of varying thickness.<sup>3</sup>

Close beside the "Lobba" was found a gold fibula, described to me as about 3 inches across and as thick as a cedar pencil, with, however, slightly expanded ends, but without cups; my informant roughly sketched it for me. I could not learn to whom it was sold.

(17). DRUMMULLAN, Kilmurphy na Gall Parish (O. S. Sheet 43, No. 9).—There were two cists in this townland. One lies north of the road to Fenloe. It is so rude and defaced that, only for the orientation and tapering of its side blocks, it would be hard to believe it a dolmen at all. Indeed, despite this and the 1840 map, I am scarcely satisfied that the blocks are not a split rock. Each slab is about 10 feet long; the northern is much broken. Two lesser blocks lie at the opposite

<sup>1</sup> *Tratraighe of the Firbolg Race, Mac Firbis*: see "Irish Nennius," p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal R.S.A.I. (R.H.A.A.I.)*, vol. ix. (1867), p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> See plan, p. 88, fig. 11, and Plate VI., fig. 2.

side of the fence in which it is embedded. Another dolmen lay near Knockacunag Lake, and has been entirely removed since 1839. It is shown as a small, square cist on the 1840 map.

(18) KILCORNAN, Kilmurry na Gall Parish (O. S. Sheet 43, No. 5, No. 6).—A greatly defaced but massive and interesting monument lies within a ring of lakes, and has a pleasing view of the long-wooded ridge of Cullaun, crowned with its turret. The grave is covered with earth, stones, and tangled masses of hazel scrub. It was hard to understand its nature until a plan was made; when it became evident as a group of some three or four compartments, an arrangement not unexampled in other Irish monuments, but, I think, otherwise unknown in Clare. To the north-west angle is a block 5 feet long, lying north and south; near its northern end are blocks at right angles to the last and 6 feet long. To the east of this lies a cover of irregular shape, 4 feet 8 inches by 4 feet, deeply marked by the narrow lines of a large cross. The graving must be of no little age, as the edges are worn and the grooves mossed. South of this are two parallel blocks, 4 feet 6 inches long and 9 inches apart; and west of these, in line with them and its west end—also in line with the north-west block—is a large irregular stone about 5 feet long. It is called a “Giant’s Grave.”<sup>1</sup>

(19). BALLYSHEENBEG, Kilfinaghty Parish (O. S. Sheet 52, No. 4).—Major Walton, of Ballysheen, informs me that it was a small box-like cist. It was destroyed about 1852. It is shown by two small marks on some maps of the 1840 Survey.

(20). BRICKHILL, Kilfintinan Parish (O. S. Sheet 62, No. 2).—This lay to the west of the dolmen of Ballinphunta and Croaghane Church. At least one large block remained in 1839; but I only found a low green mound of earth and stones on the site, which may or may not conceal the slab.

At no great distance is a place called Lacht, where I found no remains of a cist. However, “Lobba,” and not “Lacht,” is the received local name for a dolmen.

(21). BALLINPHUNTA OR CROAGHANE, Kilfintinan Parish (O. S. Sheet 52, No. 2).—One of the most perfect cists in the county stands in the tilled field south of the defaced church of Croaghane, in full sight of

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<sup>1</sup> See plan, p. 88, fig. 10, *supra*.

passengers on the railway which runs along an embankment directly east of the remains. It is now much buried in field rubbish, and overgrown with brambles and ash-plants. However, as this may add to its chance of survival in its endangered position, we may the less regret the fact. It was (so far as I could find when making its plan in 1887) unopened. In naming this to local antiquaries we suggest great caution and consideration in any action to be taken.

Having given to Mr. Borlase (and here repeating) the plans and elevations, I need only note that this cist is double, lying east and west. The west chamber has a large end-slab, with two stones to

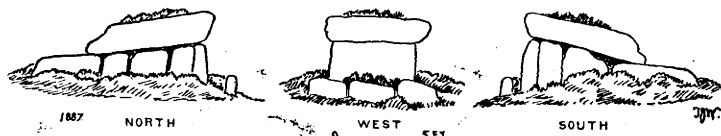


Fig. 17.

each side, and three low stones parallel to the end, which, with two others near the east end, show that this dolmen had a kerbing of smaller blocks around it.

The cover measures 6 feet 7 inches by 5 feet 6 inches by 10 to 13 inches thick. The eastern chamber is far lower, so that its slab is partly overlapped by the western cover. It measures 4 feet 8 inches by 4 feet 2 inches. It was nearly buried even when I first remember it in about 1881.<sup>1</sup>

This, to our present knowledge, completes the survey of the dolmens in the baronies of Bunratty. The problems raised must be reserved for solution till the subject is more advanced. Much as the ground has been cleared by Mr. Borlase's great work, much more remains to be done. We want field-work, spade-work, and folklore at present. Later on we may proceed to clearer light than is afforded by the theoretical portion of our only general survey. Till a map can be prepared of each Irish district (not necessarily a county), little progress can be made; and as one short step towards this map, this paper is offered to the Academy. We are at present bewildered in

<sup>1</sup> See plan, p. 88, fig. 12, *supra*. "Dolmens of Ireland," vol. i., p. 86.  
[8\*]

mist and darkness; but every district completed is at least a step towards the light.<sup>1</sup>

[NOTE.—The group in each parish is marked off by a broader space.]

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<sup>1</sup> Of the dolmens named in this paper there are photographs of the following in the photographic collection of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland:—Caheraphuca, Ballymaconna, Kilvoydan, Clooney Circle, Ballymacloon, Knappogue, Knocknalappa, and Ballinphunta.

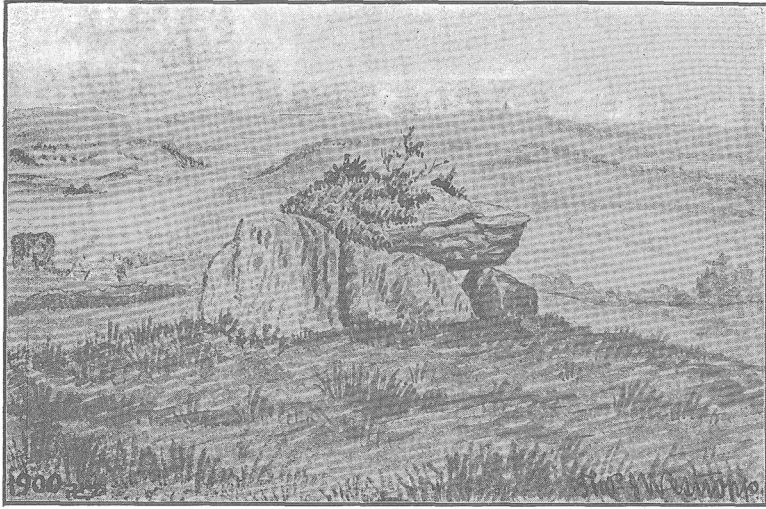


1. CAHRAPHUCA, CRUSHEEN.

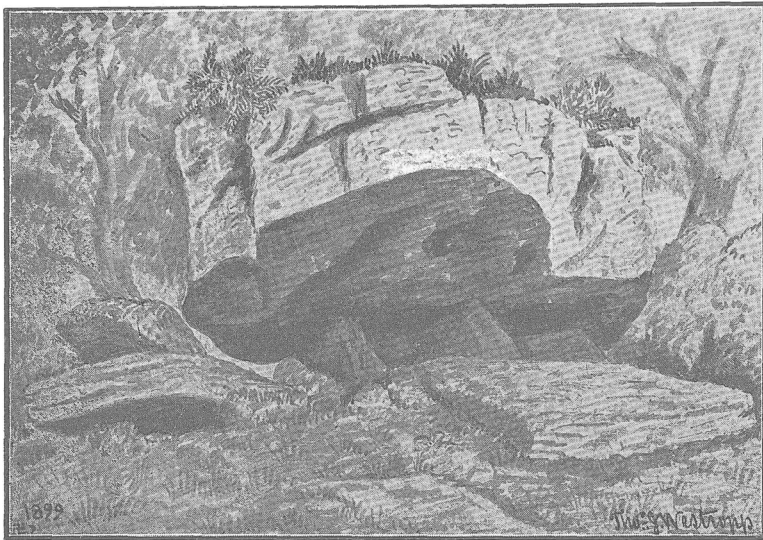


2. KNOCKNAFARREAGA, CLOONEY.





1. KNOCKNALAPPA, SIXMILEBRIDGE.



2. DERRYMORE, TULLA.