



Atlas
AND
Cyclopedia
OF
IRELAND



IRISH HERALDRY, TOPOGRAPHY AND MODERN HISTORY

PART I.

CONTAINS THE COATS OF ARMS OF OVER SEVEN HUNDRED IRISH FAMILY NAMES
PRINTED IN THEIR PROPER COLORS

AND

A Comprehensive Delineation of the Thirty-two Counties with a Beautifully Colored Map of each, Arranged
Alphabetically, showing Over 11,000 Cities, Towns, Villages and Places
of Public Interest.

Embracing Over Two Hundred Illustrations of the Natural Scenery, Public Buildings, Abbeys, Round
Towers, and Other Romantic and Historic Places, Reproduced by Eminent Artists
from Photographs Especially Taken for This Work.

PART II.

THE HISTORY OF IRELAND

SINCE THE FENIAN INSURRECTION TO PRESENT TIME, WITH SPECIAL ARTICLES
AND HISTORY OF THE IRISH EXILES IN AUSTRALIA

INCLUDING SKETCHES OF

Michael Dwyer, the last of the Irish Chieftains, John Mitchel, Thomas Francis Meagher, John Martin, Keven
Izod O'Doherty, Smith O'Brien, Terence Bellew McManus, John Boyle O'Reilly, etc.,
with a graphic account of

The Dark Famine Days of '47 and The Memories of All Hallows and Maynooth

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Coats of Arms



Leading
Irish
Families.

COATS OF ARMS OF LEADING IRISH FAMILIES.

INTRODUCTION.

Heraldry is defined as the art or science of blazoning or describing in appropriate technical terms coats of arms and other heraldic and armorial insignia. The system is of very ancient origin.

We can trace it back to the Jewish tribes; and subsequently, we find it in a more elaborate form in the leading families of Greece and Rome, who bore distinguishing symbols, illustrative of, or pertaining to, deeds of valor or merit performed by their ancestors.

In its modern sense, however, the heraldic art dates from the time of the Crusades, and was re-

duced to its present perfect system by the French; and it was not until that period that the crest or cognizance was generally adopted. The crest is a device worn on top of the shield, usually placed on a wreath, and was worn by knights and other

personages of rank, when clad in armor, to distinguish them in battle, and as a mark for their followers and supporters. At first these badges were worn on the helmet, to render them more plainly visible, or on the arm, but in later times were transferred to the shield or armor.

An erroneous idea is entertained by some, that heraldic symbols denote an aristocratic or exclusive class, and is undemocratic in its origin and permanency. On the contrary—and this is especially true of the Irish-Milesian families—these badges of distinction were the reward of personal merit, and could be secured by the humblest as well as the highest. They are to-day the testimonials and warrants of bravery, heroism, and meritorious deeds of our ancestors; and they appeal to the pride of the intelligent and enlightened descendants of these distinguished families to-day, as the valiant deeds and self-sacrificing acts of contemporary persons would to their posterity.

The antiquity of Irish heraldry antedates that of any other people, ancient or modern. It is universally conceded that a high order of Irish civilization prevailed many centuries anterior to the foundation of modern European peoples, or the foundation of the oldest of the Continental nations.

"See she smiles upon the touchstone on her distant youth;
Looking down her line of leaders and of workers for the truth;
When the sun of art and learning yet was in the Orient;
When the might of Babylonia under Cyrus' hand was spent;
When the Sphinx's introverted eye turned fresh from Egypt's
guilt;

When the Roman bowed to Athens, when the Parthenon was
built;

When the Macedonian climax closed the commonwealths of
Greece:

When the wrath of Roman manhood burst on Tarquin for
treachery;

When the Norman, Teuton, Briton left his primal woodland
spring;

When his rule was might and rapine, and his law a painted
king,—

Then was Erin rich in knowledge, then from out her Ollan's
store,

Conned to-day by sage and student, grew her ancient Mor;

Then were reared her mighty builders, who made temples to
the sun;

There they stand, her old Round Towers, showing how the
work was done;

Thence a thousand years upon them, standing in our later
art,—

Warning fingers raised to tell us, we must build with reverent
heart."

Nearly a thousand years previous to the Chris-

tian era, we find the prototype of modern Parliamentary government in the triennial Parliament established at Tara, where, in addition to the functions of government, one of the chief objects of the assemblage was to preserve historic and family descent of all the Milesian-Irish clans and fam-

ilies. "At these assemblages it was the custom for each chief or head of a clan to hang his shield over his seat; and on these shields were emblazoned devices emblematic of some glorious deed or praiseworthy act of the owner. In time the various branches or offshoots of the family adopted the heraldic symbol. Many of these latter added to the original, or adopted others of their own,—a circumstance which accounts for the fact that many Irish families of to-day have two or more coats of arms.

Many of these devices, as in heraldic designs among all peoples, were bizarre and fantastic, though founded on some fact or tradition pertaining to the bearing of his ancestors. Some of them are so remote as to be lost in mists of antiquity; while others are of comparatively modern origin.

Perhaps the oldest and most renowned of all Irish armorial symbols is the Red Hand of Ulster, the centuried badge of the O'Neills. It dates from the landing of the sons of Milesius. According to tradition, two of the chieftains had agreed that whosoever first touched the "Isle of Destiny" after leaving the vessels in their small boats, should possess the right of selection over the portion of the land he was to rule. One seeing his

INTRODUCTION.

rival gaining apace, drew his sword from the sheath, and cutting off his left hand, hurled the gory member to the shore, and thus overcame his rival. Hence the bloody hand has since been

the chief badge of his descendants.

derived from the tradition of the early Milesian period. During the long continued migration of the Milesians from the East, they journeyed for a time in North Africa, before arriving in Spain, and while there, according to the legend or fact, one of the chiefs during a morning's hunt slew three lions single-handed, a deed of valor ever afterward perpetuated by his descendants in their heraldic history. Another legend relates that a distinguished member of the clans was cured of the bite of a venomous reptile by gazing on the brazen image of the serpent erected by Moses, as narrated in Scripture.

Many of the Irish clans and prominent families have preserved their mottoes, or watch-words, which usually represent some characteristic of the family, or sometimes 'the war cry of the clan.' Others never adopted a motto, just as many never adopted a crest. In the Middle Ages, and the preceding centuries when Ireland was the centre of

lated into that tongue, while some retained their mottoes in both.

During the invasions of the Danes, and subsequently during the centuries of the Anglo-Norman

tion during the centuries of the English domination, and the introduction of a system of taxation, much of the records of leading Irish families were lost; as the Anglo-Norman invader in his repeated confiscation of the Irish lands sought by the destruction of the ancient records to remove all vestige of the original ownership.

During the period of the penal laws, when the Irish emigrants to the Continent attained the highest distinction in civil and military stations in almost every country from Spain to Russia, many of them were ennobled by the sovereigns and governments whom they served. These records of their valor and worth form an addition to their ancestral Irish inheritance, and are given in this collection, and their kindred may justly and proudly retain the double honor bravely and nobly won.

Many of the most distinguished Irish families also come of that patriotic stock descended from the Norman invaders, who intermarried with the Irish, adopted the Irish language, manner of life, customs, and became known in Irish history as being "more Irish than the Irish themselves."

Some also whose names are of more modern
traction as the Emmets, Mitchels, Parne

E R R A T A .

There being a few inaccuracies in the Index they are here inserted in their correct form.

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