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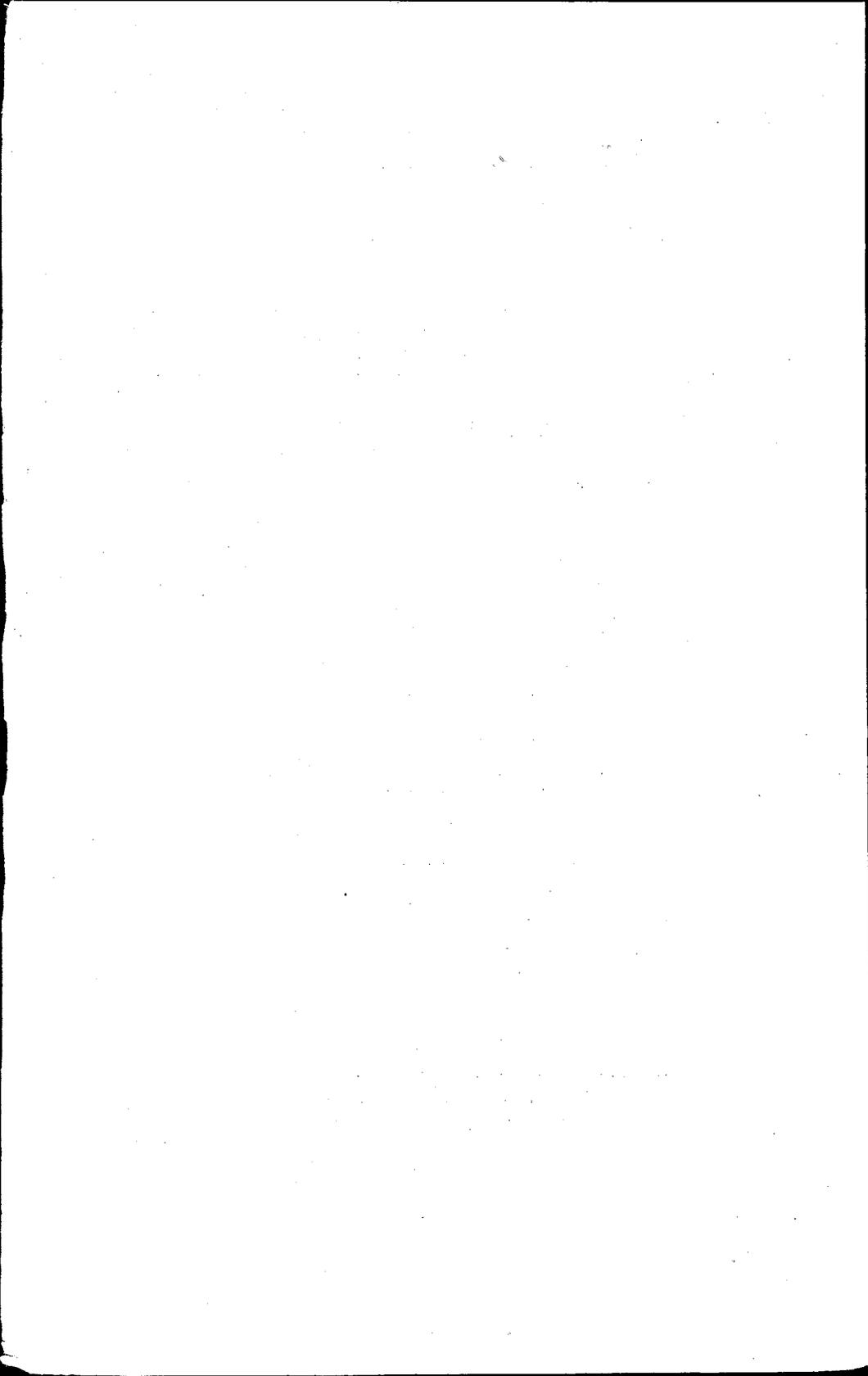
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The following communication, by R. A. S. MACALISTER, B.A., S. John's College, was taken as read.

ON KILLEEN CORMAIC, KILDARE.

SCATTERED over the whole of Ireland are numbers of ancient cemeteries, which have never been used for Christian burial within human memory or tradition. Mr Brash, in his work on Ogham Inscriptions, gives us an idea of the enormous number of these. He examined the ordnance maps of Kerry, and found, in that one county alone, a total of 217 such localities marked. To these cemeteries the peasantry affix the name *kill* (pron. *keel*), or its diminutive *killín* (pron. *killeen*). They look upon them with dread, and will on no account bury their dead there, unless they be unbaptised children or suicides. To this rule there are but few exceptions: the particular *killeen* under our notice at present is one of these, for it is used as a graveyard at the present day, and well filled with modern gravestones. The earliest date which I found upon these stones was 1741; the latest 1892.

The chronology of Irish antiquities is still in a very unsettled state. One school of archæologists is inclined to refer such objects and places as these *killeens* to prehistoric times; while another refers them all to a date more or less late in the Christian period. There are few data as yet to guide the student to a choice between these alternatives; and specious arguments are brought forward on both sides. With regard to the *killeens*, however, I cannot help thinking, with Mr Brash and others, that the utter absence of all Christian associations with the great majority of them, the superstitious dread with which they are popularly regarded, and the evidences of the practice of cremation which is amply afforded by such as have been excavated, all point irresistibly to the pre-Christian—which, in Ireland, is synonymous with the pre-historic—period as the true epoch to which these antiquities must be referred.

The second member of the name of this locality, *Cormaic* (genitive of *Cormac*), is explained by a local tradition which asserts this to have been the burial-place of Cormac, king of Munster—which of the so-named kings of Munster does not appear. The legend is confused, and is complicated by variant versions; the main lines of it are as follows. Cormac's body was borne to this cemetery by a team of bullocks, who were allowed to follow their own instincts in bearing it to the grave, for the possession of which rival claims were made. After a long journey eastward they arrived at Ballynure, about two and a-half Irish miles south of the *killeen*: at this place, being overcome by thirst, they "pawed" the ground (or, as another version says, the teamster struck his goad into the earth), and a stream of water gushed forth. This stream still flows by the road-side. Having slaked their thirst the bullocks journeyed on till they arrived at Bullock Hill, which is opposite the cemetery. Here they stood, and refused to proceed further; it thus became clear that this *killeen* was to contain the grave of Cormac. When the body had been placed for burial in the cemetery the team returned in a homeward direction till they came to the river Greise; here they were engulfed in the stream, and were never seen again¹. Another version adds a hound to the team which accompanied the corpse; when the procession stopped at Bullock Hill this hound jumped across the river to the cemetery, and alighted on the top of a pillar-stone on which he impressed the mark of his paw, thus indicating the very spot of Cormac's grave. Yet another version further complicates the story by making the hound leap from the top of a hill which is rather more than an Irish mile S.W. of the *killeen*. In either case the impression of the hound's paw is still to be seen on the pillar-stone. The various elements of this strange story are of course well known to the

¹ The Greise must have been a much greater river in Cormac's day than it is now. It is a little stream about the size of the Binn Brook, and in the neighbourhood of Killeen Cormac serves as the boundary between the counties of Wicklow and Kildare; the road crosses it between Colbinstown Station and the cemetery.

folk-lorist in one form or another; they meet us, if I am not mistaken, in the legends of more races than one.

Killeen Cormaic lies about three Irish miles S.W. of the little town of Dunlavin, co. Kildare; it is not more than five minutes' walk from the railway station of Colbinstown. The names of the surrounding hills, natural and artificial, singularly fit in with the legend of the burial of Cormac—Bullock Hill, Knockbunnion (the hill of the heifer), Rathounbeg (the fort of the little stream): though how far these coincidences (like the paw-mark on the stone) are of the *ex post facto* kind it is of course impossible to say. The *killeen* itself lies between the two last-named hills. It is a mound of oval shape, having a low annexe, about half the height of the principal mound, joined to it on the North. It is surrounded by a remarkable set of four or five artificial mounds, of which Rathounbeg is the finest. Its major axis lies N.E. and S.W.; its circumference is about 230 paces. It shows traces of having been built in three terraces, but these are now almost defaced, except at the Southern end. The top is flattened and slightly concave. It is enclosed by a boundary wall about five feet in height; the level of the ground within the precincts is flush with the top of the wall. It contains no traces of any buildings.

Analogy with similar places elsewhere would lead us to expect that the mound contained one or more chambers or vaults for sepulchral purposes. These chambers, when opened, are usually found to be passages, lined along the sides and top by pillar-shaped blocks of stone—each pair of opposite pillar-stones supporting a lintel similar to themselves. Many suggestive facts are frequently brought to light in exploring these chambers. In not a few the lintels or supporting stones are found to bear Ogham inscriptions, so placed that it is obvious that the stones are not in the position for which they were originally intended; but were simply annexed as building material, when the names of the persons whom they commemorated had been forgotten: much as the tombstones of forgotten fellow-townsmen of our own have been utilised as

pavingstones in the pathways through the churchyards of more than one of our Cambridge churches.

That such a chamber exists in Killeen Cormaic is possible though not certain. An apparent entrance is visible on the side of the mound above the Eastern part of the "annexe" already alluded to. It consists of an unwieldy stone about three feet in height, marked on either side with a deep groove, as though for the reception of a sliding door. The groove on the left-hand side is 10 inches in length, that on the right a little more. This jamb appears to have borne two lintels which were supported at their other extremities by side jambs, thereby giving the whole the appearance of a double doorway. The arrangement however has been much disturbed and is obscured by superincumbent earth, by a rank growth of grass, and by the distortion of the structure itself. The grooves are, I believe, a feature unique at Killeen Cormaic. I enquired of a man resident in the neighbourhood, who accompanied me to the cemetery, whether these hypothetical chambers had ever been encroached upon in digging graves in the cemetery, and received a negative answer; so that either the chambers (if they exist) cannot be very extensive, or the modern graves cannot be very deep.

The following is a complete record of the ancient monuments which I saw on my two visits to this cemetery, in September 1893 and June 1894.

I. Near the entrance-gate; a prostrate pillar-stone, bearing inscriptions in Ogham and Roman letters. Dimensions 6 ft. 4 ins. by about 1 ft. by 1 ft.

II. Close to the above; a prostrate pillar-stone, bearing on one face near the top a rude bust, and, possibly, an Ogham inscription in very small letters on one angle.

III., IV. Two small pillar-stones close together; one a rough block of conglomerate, tapering to the top, 3 ft. 4 ins. high; the other a smooth stone about the same height, cut off flat at the top, and bearing on the top a deep depression resembling the paw-mark of a dog, with some random scorings round it. (This is Cormac's alleged gravestone.)

V. An upright flagstone, 2 ft. 7 ins. \times 1 ft. 1 in. \times 3 ins., bearing engraved on its face and one edge a series of rough scores distantly resembling Ogham scores, but not capable of being grouped into letters.

VI. A fine pillar-stone of granite, 6 ft. 10½ ins. \times 1 ft. 7 ins. \times 1 ft. 6 ins., somewhat tapering towards the top. Now prostrate. No inscription or tooling of any kind.

VII. A shapeless block of stone about 3 ft. in length, lying in the centre of the level pathway round the mound. It appears to have fallen down from some point on the mound. No inscription.

VIII. A pillar-stone, prostrate, uninscribed, measuring 4 ft. 7 ins. \times 1 ft. 4 ins. \times 7 ins., considerably tapering to the top.

IX. A shapely pillar-stone, 3 ft. 11 ins. \times 1 ft. 5½ ins. \times 11 ins., bearing traces of an Ogham inscription on one edge.

These stones are all to be found along the level pathway which surrounds the mound, within the boundary wall; and have been catalogued in the order in which they would be seen by one who, on entering the gate of the cemetery, turned to his left and walked completely round it. The following are *on* the mound.

X, XI. Two stones at opposite ends of the top of the mound, about 3 ft. in height, artificially squared, and bearing at the top a depressed socket as though for the insertion of a cross. This socket is formed by the prolongation of three sides of the stone, the fourth being left open. Though probably much later than the stones already mentioned, these stones have every appearance of a respectable antiquity.

This catalogue does not include a very considerable number of small shapeless stones set on end, probably the humble marks of the graves of those whose friends were too poor to be able to afford regular tombstones. All are flagstones save one, a small standing stone, square in section (which I neglected to measure, but estimated roughly at about 2 ft. \times 6 ins. \times 6 ins.); and only one bears any sign of tooling; it is inscribed with a Greek cross in relief. To the catalogue should also be added the apparent entrance to the crypts already described.

The inscribed stones of Killeen Cormaic are, or were, four in number. What has become of the first of these stones I cannot say¹. It bore an inscription in Ogham, running over the greater part of two angles. By an unusual piece of good fortune all the authorities who have examined it are agreed on the reading, and we need have no hesitation in accepting the transcript they give as accurate, especially as it is substantiated by a paper squeeze made by the late Sir Samuel Ferguson, and now in my possession:

Maqiddeceda maqi Marin
(Stone of) Macdeced, son of Marin.

Few names are more interesting among those found on Ogham inscriptions than the name of the person here commemorated; and an idea of its widespread occurrence will be obtained from the following list of inscriptions in Britain which contain it:

Maqiddeceddas avi Toranias, Ballycrovane, co. Cork.
Maqiddeceda maqi Siconas, Ballintaggart, co. Kerry.
Maqiddecedda maqi Catuwig, Gortnagullenagh, co. Kerry.
Maqiddeceda maqi..., Dunloe, Co. Kerry.

And the following Romano-British stones:

Hic iacet Maccvdecheti, Penrhos Llygwy, Anglesea.
Sarini filii Maccvdecceti, Buckland Monachorum, Devon.

Mr Brash treats at length of this name in his work on Ogham inscriptions. He considered that all those who are commemorated under this name were members of a great Munster family, the *Clanna Degaid*, for whose existence there is MS authority, and who have left their name in some early place-names. This is, however, unlikely; the fact that Macdeced, in all cases but one, is the name of the person commemorated, and not a patronymic, seems to me to militate against this theory.

The inscription is couched in the regular formula of Ogham inscriptions; but we must premise that much of the

¹ I have since learnt that it has been broken into fragments and built into the boundary wall by those responsible for the care of the cemetery.

discussion and treatment of Ogham inscriptions is as yet tentative, owing to our uncertainty respecting the construction and accident of the protoceltic dialects. Observe how the Ballycrovane inscription gives us the primitive genitive form in *s*, dropped in later monuments.

Before leaving this inscription, I would call attention to the duplication of the first *d* in *Maqiddecceda*. The meaning of the persistent duplication of the consonants in Oghams is one of the many mysteries which circle round these inscriptions. Taken into consideration with the isolation of this Macdecced from his namesakes, it is possible that the unique spelling of his name which this tombstone presents may indicate some local peculiarity in pronunciation.

The second inscribed stone lies prostrate beside the entrance to the cemetery. The inscription commences a little below the middle of one angle, runs up to and over the top, and ends a short distance down the opposite angle. It is much weather-worn, and greatly obscured by the shadows of trees, but with care and patience the whole can be satisfactorily read.

The inscription in Roman letters occupies nearly the whole of one face of the stone. It is unusually evenly and neatly cut, and though much abraded by the action of the weather every letter except one can be deciphered without difficulty. The Ogham reads:

Uvanos avi Ivacattos.

(Stone) of Uvan, descendant of Ivacatt.

I made this transcript with great care, and am satisfied that it is correct, the only letters for which I cannot personally vouch being the *catt* at the end of the inscription. These letters are on the concealed face of the stone, which I had no facilities for raising, but nearly all the copyists are agreed at this point; and a recent discovery, made in a most unexpected locality, places the patronymic as given above beyond all reasonable doubt. In the excavations at Silchester, last August, a stone was discovered, bearing engraved on its face two lines of Ogham writing. This stone is unfortunately only a fragment, but enough remains to re-construct *Ebicatos magi mucoi* ([stone] of

Ebicat, son of the race (?) of.....). Here we have the very name which meets us at Killeen Cormaic, with a slight but very interesting orthographical transformation.

Let us now turn to the associated inscription for a few minutes. This is one of the most difficult lapidary puzzles in the British Islands. With one exception every letter is clear, though worn; that exception is the fifth, the greater part of which has been carried off with a flake of the slaty stone, leaving an unfortunate ambiguity as to its identity. The inscription is

IVVE*EDRVVIDES.

The first suggestion as to the missing letter made was that it was an R; and the inscription was divided—*IV vere druvuides*—four true druids (!). Various efforts, all equally futile and far-fetched, have been made to extract the name of the four druids from the Ogham inscription; and the failure of these attempts, apart from other considerations, is a strong argument against this translation. No other intelligible reading can be given if we retain R as the fifth letter. The question then arises: if R be not the real value of this letter, what value must we assign to it?

A most ingenious and attractive suggestion has been made to me by my brother-in-law, Dr D. MacAlister, of St John's College. He would read the fifth letter as K, and bearing in mind that the eighth letter, R, is raised above its fellows, as though intended to commence a new word, space the inscription *Ivoked Rvvides*, thus equating *Ivoked* to *Ivacattos*. The objections to this suggestion are that *Rvvides* still remains intractable, and the letter K does not occur on any other Romano-British inscription, so far as I know.

Professor Rhys and Dr Whitley Stokes agree in taking the missing letter as N, bound to the following E. This gives us *Ivvene Drvvides*, in which it is pretty clear that *Ivvene* must be regarded as the equivalent of *Uvanos*. *Drvvides* is probably a proper name, recalling the *Droata*¹ of one of the Ogham in-

¹ Which has also, though I think unnecessarily, been equated to "druid."

scriptions at Ballaqueeny, Isle of Man, but what the inflectional termination may be I do not pretend to say definitely¹. The equation *Drvvides* = druids, does not commend itself.

Beside this stone is another, six feet in length. Incised at the upper end is a bust in outline, holding a cross; there can be little doubt that it is intended to represent our Lord. This figure has been seriously injured by some misguided enthusiast, who has gratuitously sharpened it up according to his own ideas; and one like unto him has been operating on the Roman inscription on the adjacent stone, which has also been recently enriched with the initials of some idle loafer. Mr Brash sensibly remarks on this bust, "It is of so exceedingly rude a type as to give no grounds for determining its age; it may be of a very early or a very late date." On the right-hand edge of this stone is a series of very minute scratches which were first noticed by Sir Samuel Ferguson. They are certainly artificial and, if Oghamic, are the smallest Ogham scores known. As some of the scores are a little more oblique than others, they are capable of reading

//////
M A G I S T

and may possibly be a signature of the engraver of the bust.

The fourth inscribed stone is No. IX. in the above list. The inscription seems to have extended over the whole of the left angle of the face turned toward the mound; but it was roughly scratched originally, and is much worn now, so that the five letters ...*addes*..... near the bottom of the stone, with dim traces of other scores further on, can alone be deciphered.

Such are the points of interest and some of the problems which await the visitor to this ancient cemetery. It is much to be feared that its use as a modern graveyard will preclude the undertaking of excavations there for many years to come; otherwise we might reasonably hope that much would be learnt by this means. It may be thought that some apology

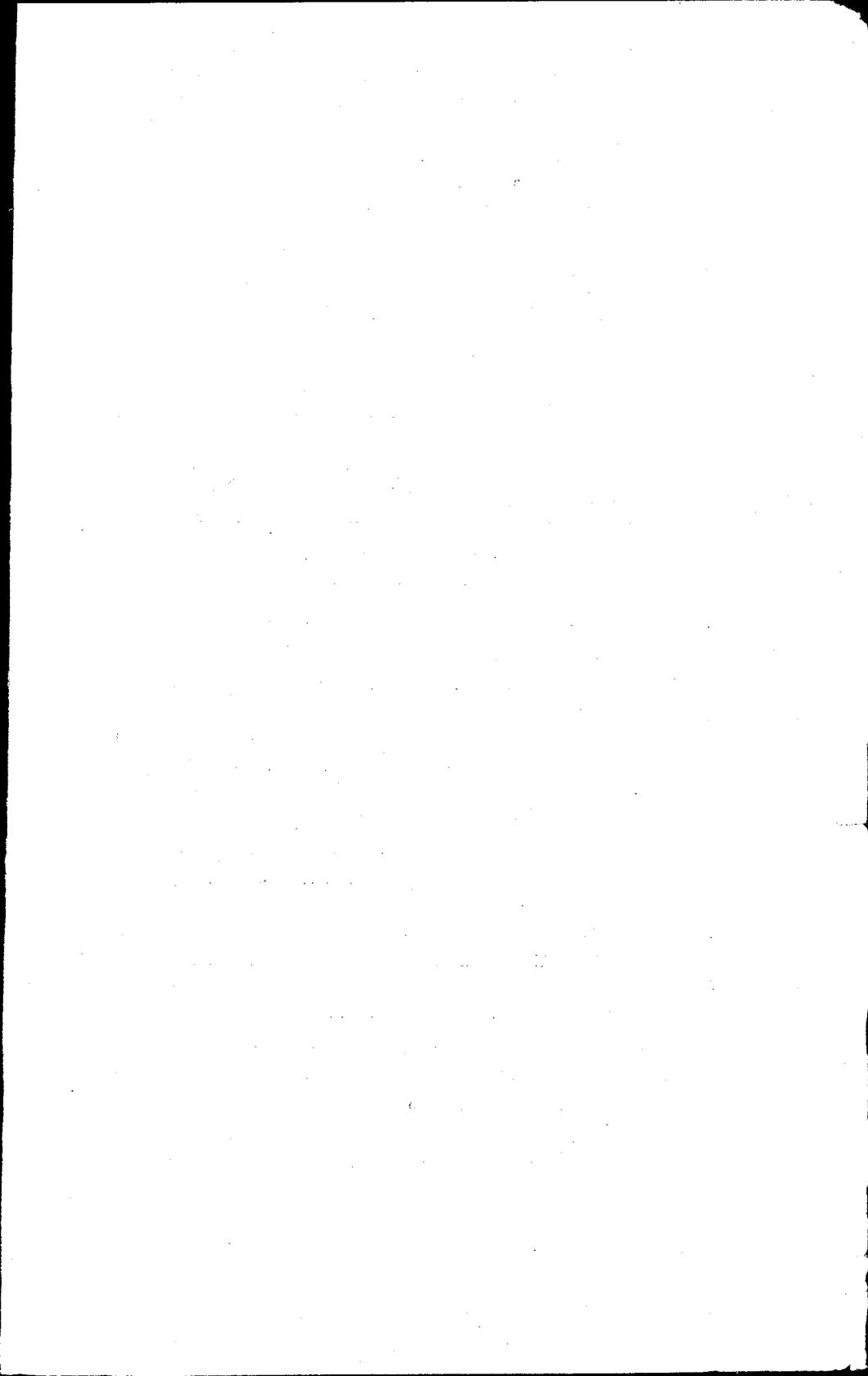
¹ The most satisfactory solution which has occurred to me is that the *-ides* might possibly be the Latino-Hellenic patronymic suffix (as in *Atrides*, &c.). But this must be regarded merely as a guess.

is necessary for bringing a subject connected entirely with Irish antiquities before a Society of such widely different local interests; and it would certainly be out of place if this ancient cemetery had no claim on the attention of those residing out of its neighbourhood. But the antiquities of Ireland have more than a mere local interest. The priceless art treasures and archæological remains, the extensive and varied literature, and the weird and fantastic folk-tales of that beautiful though sadly troubled wonderland are the heritage of the world as truly as are the monuments of Egypt, Greece or Rome. And may we not look to Cambridge—that home of Classic and exact learning—with a reasonable hope that at some time a satisfactory solution may there be found of some of the problems that hover round the remains of Killeen Cormaic?

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