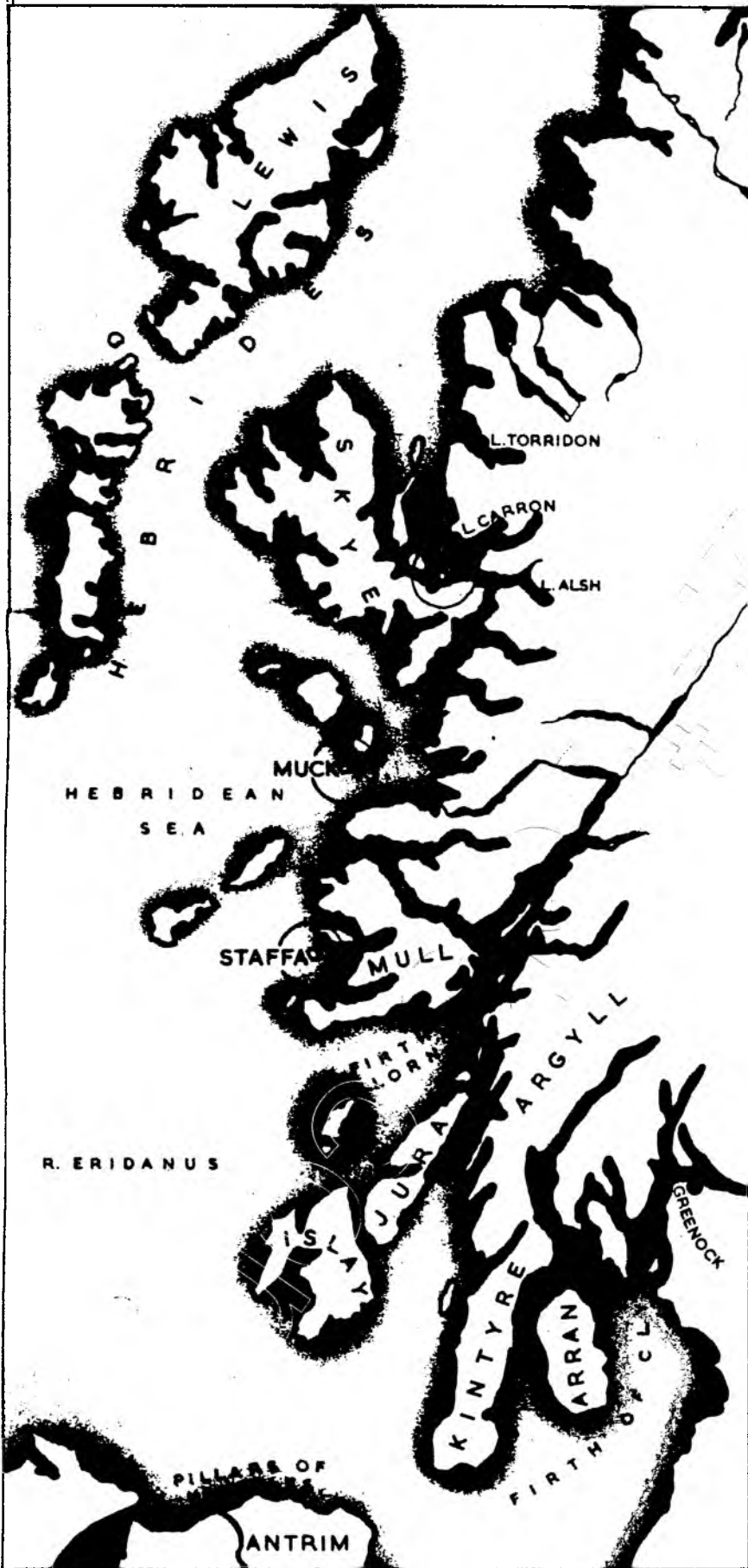


IS BRITAIN THE LOST ATLANTIS?

By COMYNS BEAUMONT

The legend of the lost island of Atlantis, believed to have been submerged in some prehistoric convulsion of nature, has tantalised the imagination of man ever since the days of Plato. Here a new and extraordinary theory of the island's identity is presented.



A map of the West Coast of Scotland, showing the Western Isles and northern Antrim, where the author locates the ancient 'Pillars of Hercules'.

MOST of us have heard at some time or other of the island named Atlantis, which traditionally was submerged in the Atlantic Ocean within a day and a night many thousands of years ago in a convulsion of nature. Was it reality or 'myth'?

According to Plato, who first related the story, the people of Atlantis formed the oldest civilisation in the world. They possessed great cities with palaces, temples of gold with huge golden images of its deities, roads of size and length, chains of canals, and rejoiced in a climate so benign that they reaped two harvests a year. They owned ships and war chariots, and bred the finest horses and cattle.

Atlantis, says Plato, was situated "in front of the straits you call the *Pillars of Hercules* and led to a succession of islands from which you might pass through the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true Ocean." This description certainly could not have referred to any great island opposite the Straits of Gibraltar, for deep-sea soundings have never discovered any possible trace of such, nor elsewhere in deep-sea soundings. Yet there survive many indications of this lost island in the ancient civilisations of Central America and Peru, which reveal undoubted relationship with Egypt yet lack a mutual motherland from whence they sprang.

Priestly Legend

DURING a visit to Egypt, Solon, the famous Athenian philosopher and lawgiver, was told of Atlantis by an aged priest at Sais, who added; "there dwelt in Atlantis the fairest and noblest race of men who ever lived, of whom you and your city are but a seed or remnant." The original Atlantis, he said, was pre-eminent in laws, performed the noblest deeds, and possessed the finest constitution, its antiquity being such that it was "founded by the goddess Athene a thousand years before Sais." It was "a great and wonderful empire, which had rule over the whole island and several others, as well as over parts of the continent." A "mighty power" invaded it "and endeavoured to subdue our country (Egypt) and yours (Athens) and the whole land within the straits." But violent earthquakes and floods in a single day and night caused the island and its warlike men to sink beneath the sea. Such, in brief, is the legend; invasion by a mighty host, a great war, and submersion through violent earthquakes and floods.

War Of The Giants

OTHER traditions support the legend. Athens held its five-year festival of the Pan-Atheneia, traditionally instituted by Erectheus, who rebuilt Athens after the Deucalion or Ogygian Flood, which commemorated the city's heroic deeds in the fabled war between the Gods and the Giants, the latter being the invaders. In this war the Giants hurled rocks and burning trees against heaven and in their plight the Gods called on Hercules, always represented with a pillar or column in each hand, and who on this occasion buried the Giants under rocks and stones. Likewise the Giants represented as fabulous beings, with scaly serpents in place of legs and accorded wings, are engraved on the famous Pergamon Reliefs, where the goddess Athene, bearing her awful aegis is shown destroying the Giants, and being crowned by the goddess of victory, while at her feet, Ge or Gaea, the Earth, as she sinks downward into the abyss, gazed imploringly at her.

On the birthday of the goddess a grand procession marched to Athene's temple, the Parthenon, with Athenian maidens, bearing the *peplos*, a hand-woven saffron-coloured veil with which they ceremoniously adorned the famous statue by Pheidias. The *peplos*, it is said, was embroidered with repre-

sentations of the battle between the Gods and the Giants.

Pausanias, the Greek geographer, describes the Cimmerians as Gauls or Gaels, "formerly called Celts," who dwelt "in the farthest parts of Europe on the shores of a great sea unnavigable at its extremity, where the sea ebbed and flowed and contained marine beasts unlike those found elsewhere." This presumably referred to the Arctic Ocean where about the whale, polar bear, sea-lion, walrus, and seal. Thus the Cimmerians dwelt in the north and were really the Gaels, who still live in Northern and Western Scotland.

The Cimmerians

PAUSANIAS adds: "In the land of the Galatai (or Gauls)—flows the river Eridanus, on whose banks people think that the daughters of Helios bewail the fate of their brother Phaeton." Herodotus confirms this account. He relates that the Cimmerians—whom he thought were extinct—dwelt by the river Eridanus, where too, says he, were found amber and tin. Amber is only found in the north and once was by no means rare in the Scottish regions, while tin, in ancient times, was only obtained in Cornwall and adjacent isles.

Who were the Cimmerians? Their descendants in Wales to this day are known as the Cymry, claimed in the ancient Welsh Triads as the aboriginal natives of Britain. Racially, they were the Iberi, or Hebrews, after whom the Isles off Western Scotland obtained the name of Hebrides, Isles of the Hebrews, The Welsh tongue is full of Hebrew words to this day. So the Atlantis 'myth' brings us irrevocably to our own Britain!

Pillars Of Hercules

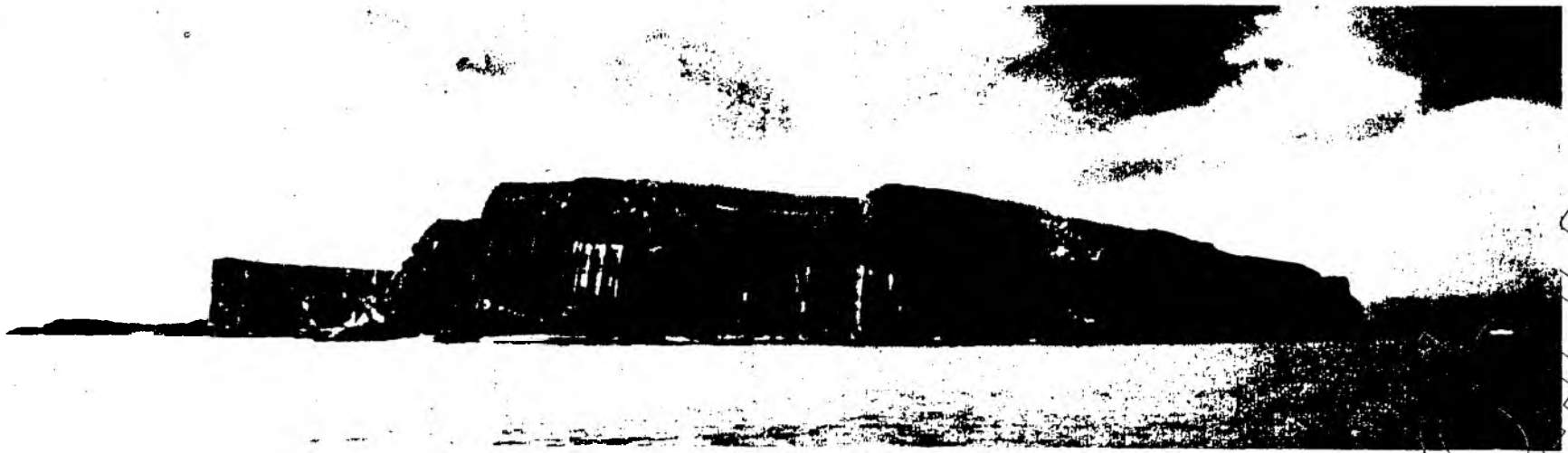
SO does the river Eridanus. When analysed the word is a combination of Eri (i.e. Erinn) earliest name for Ireland, and Danus, relating to the famous De Danaan race, which, according to Irish tradition "before the Flood," inhabited the Western Isles and the Western Highlands. The Greek name for them was Danai. Moreover, the classic writers often referred to the Ocean (or Gulf Stream) as the 'River of Ocean' and this name Eridanus lets us identify the 'river' in question as the Hebridean Sea, the sea of the basaltic pillars or columns, the Sea of the Erinites and Danai. That very sea was where Phaeton was flung down by Jupiter when he tried to burn up the earth! The columns thrown down by Hercules are there staring us in the face!

We have indeed, if we have open minds, facing us here the real Pillars of Hercules, held in such awe and superstition by the ancients on the Faroe Isles, on the Outer Hebrides, on Skye, on the Isles off Mull, and notably at Giants' Causeway, Co. Antrim, On Staffa, a few miles off Mull and Iona, with its famous vast cave, lies one enormous mass of amorphous material, with tens of thousands of these same pillars.

I assert that these are the real Pillars of Hercules! Aristotle, in describing the north of Europe, washed, he says, by a vast sea along which "beyond the Celts and Scyths, the land contracts as far as the Sinus Gallicus and the Pillars of Hercules. In this sea are two very large islands, Pretannikai (Britain) and Ierne (Ireland), and many smaller isles," scenes of the most violent plutonic event in the world's history.

Sky Bombardment

THE geological view is that amorphous basalt fell in liquefied form on old Red Sandstone, together with basaltic columns in vast profusion. At that time Ben Mhòr, and the islands of Skye, Rum, Eigg, Staffa, were one vast blaze on which the pillars were rained down as well of course in the adjoining seas. Ben Mhòr ('Giant Mountain') rises today 3,169 ft. above sea level, its higher rocks with indications of stria-



The island of Staffa, showing the eastern side where the famous cave is situated. According to the author the island is marked by the prehistoric upheaval which caused the submerision of Atlantis.

tion and scorching. Prof. W. J. Judd, the seismologist, estimated that it originally towered to a height of 10,000 ft. or more. It was crushed down by a celestial bombardment.

This mountain possesses at least two unusual features. One is a series of terraces rising towards its summit which look as though artificially designed. Another is its enormous cavern, looking westward to the broad Atlantic, called MacKinnon's Cave, with remains of a former cromlech or altar named Fingal's Table. Dominating the west, and surrounded by the Isles, it answers to the sacred Mount Atlas or Prometheus (one and the same) by whose volcanic fires Deucalion, the Greek Noah, was warned of the coming disaster and built his Ark.

Proof Of Flood

IF we cross to the mainland opposite Mull, not far inland stand the Lochaber Mountains, dominated by Ben Nevis. These too bear evidence of the past event with their series of sea-terraces or sea-beaches, which range from 847 ft. to 1,278 ft. in Glen Gloy, above sea level. They bear proof of the most stupendous flood in this mountain region, where the waters were unable to subside for long and have left behind their *detritus*. I may add that this part of Scotland compares completely with the original Greek Thessaly, scene of the Deucalion Flood, as it should do if the priest of Sais were correct in his story.

Did Deucalion or Noah learn here, then, of the imminent danger and hastily build his Ark? At the base of Ben Cruachan, is 'Glen Noe,' and in the Aberdeen country to the north-east stand the remains of a vitrified fort or castle in the Strath of Bogie, 1,851 ft. above the sea, called 'Tap O'Noth.'

Struck By A Comet

IT may be said of 'this most complicated igneous centre of the world,' as described in the 'Geological Survey of Scotland,' that at some time over three thousand years ago a celestial body, a comet, Phaeton 'the Shining One,' struck the earth in these parts, taking a south-westward course, whereby the Western lands received the worst blow. Ireland, beyond Antrim, and the boglands of Co. Donegal, escaped the worst. Another part passed over south-west England and Wales, and apart from a few patches in France and Spain, the remainder probably fell into the broad Atlantic, while a few isolated masses fell in Iowa and Brazil. No doubt great numbers of survivors escaped, or emigrated to other regions, including Egypt and Mexico.

In Egypt the priesthood reconstructed completely their religious system and left, as a priceless legacy, the 'Book of the Dead.' It was the Egyptian faith that all the spirits of the dead must appear before the god Osiris, at Amenta, the region where he, a mortal king, was struck down by his evil brother Seth, the Comet. Therefore from distant Egypt the souls set out, it was taught, to the West; hence the cry of mourners



One of Nature's marvels which inspired Mendelssohn to compose a haunting piece of music—Fingal's Cave, Isle of Staffa, connected by the author of this article with the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead' from which is taken (below) portion of the papyrus of Hunifer depicting souls in the Hall of Judgment.



"to the West, to the West." It was an arduous and dangerous journey beyond the seas, largely through tunnels, where lurking fiends and monsters waited to devour them unless they were provided with magical amulets and charms, sold them by the priests.

Eventually they reached their destination, led thither by Thoth and jackal-headed Anubis, god of the dead, where they sought the Pillars of the *Tuat* or *Tai*, a word akin to the Gaelic *Tuath*, the North, depicted on Egyptian wall-paintings with polygonal stripes to indicate the Pillars. The *Tuat* was deemed to lie "at the ends of the earth," always in the West, and the name is still extant in Loch Tuath, adjoining Mull.

Arrived at Amenta, the soul was conducted into the Hall of Judgment where Osiris sat enthroned, holding the sacred *ankh*, symbol of life, attended by the goddesses Isis (Law) and Nephthys (Conscience). In this Hall also sat the Twelve Great Gods and Goddesses, forming a sort of jury, and beyond them in two rows sat the forty-two lesser gods, each representing a *nome* (district).

In the representation in the Papyrus of Hunifer, he and his wife Nasha are led into the Hall of Judgment by Anubis. In a tableau above are shown all the gods and goddesses, but before entry Thoth had propounded the enigma to Hunifer: "Who is he whose roof is fire, whose walls are living serpents, and whose floor is a stream of water?" The mystic answer was "Osiris."

One Inevitable Conclusion

WE may identify this 'Hall of Judgment' in Fingal's Cave, Staffa, a pagan temple of a myriad columns. Once it was actually a fiery mass from roof to base, its walls living serpents of flame, its floor to this day deep under water. It stands solitary and aloof, this cathedral-like cavern, Llain Binn, Cave of Music, where the winds triumph, often furious, sometimes eerie, at their softest like the murmurings of a vast throng of whispering lips.

Fantastic realism might describe this extraordinary so-Celtic religious belief, so faithfully held by generation after generation of Egyptians, a faith developed from and based upon the destruction of Atlantis. The unique site of Amenta lay in the area more terribly ravaged than any other. For, as Sir Wallace Budge says, the *Tuat* was "a region of death and destruction, a place where the dead rotted and decayed, a place of abomination, horror, terror, and annihilation." This Underworld belief was equally held by the Greeks. Did not Ulysses, as recounted by Homer in the 'Odyssey,' sail to the entrance into Hades to consult the spirits of the dead?

In my opinion, the conclusion is inevitable that Britain was the Atlantis of Plato and that the Egyptian Underworld faith evolved from that disaster. If it be so, Britain emerges as the mother of world civilisation!