

CHAPTER III.

THE GROWTH OF THE SEAPORT TOWNS.

THE foundation of the seaport towns was the most important, and at the same time the most permanent effect of the Viking invasion of Ireland. Before this the only towns were the larger monastic centres¹ at Armagh, Clonmacnois, Durrow and Clonfert, which, besides the monastery itself, consisted of numerous beehive-shaped houses of stone, or small huts of clay and wattles built for the accommodation of the students attending the schools. During the first half of the ninth century these monasteries suffered sorely from the attacks of Viking raiders. After a stubborn resistance on the part of the Irish, Armagh fell into the hands of Turgeis, who drove out the abbot Farannan and "usurped the abbacy" (c. A.D. 839). Some years later Armagh was abandoned when the Vikings captured Dublin, at this time a small "town by the hurdle ford,"² but they were quick to realise its possibilities as the seat of their monarchy and the chief centre of their trade. As a result of the struggle for ecclesiastical supremacy, which took place at a later period³ between Armagh and Dublin, the Bishops of Dublin were obliged to acknowledge the Primate of Armagh ;

¹ In the *Annals of Tighernach* (A.D. 716), the *Annals of Ulster* (A.D. 715), and the *Book of Hymns* (ed. Todd, p. 156) the Latin *civitas* (Ir. *Cathair*) is the word used for a monastery.

² The old name for Dublin was *Baile-atha-Cliath*, "the town of the hurdle ford." It was afterwards called *Dubh-linn* ("black pool"), of which the O.N. *Dyflin* is a corruption,

³ See p. 55.