

## CHAPTER IX

### Irish Jewelry

**A**FTER learning that the Irish of the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries had made what are literally the most beautiful books ever made, it is not surprising to learn that in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries they proceeded to manufacture some of the most beautiful jewelry that has ever come from the hand of man. Indeed this is, strange as it may seem, one of the most wonderful contributions of the Irish to the arts and crafts of the world. The same talent which applied to book making has left us the precious treasures that are still to be seen in the library of Trinity College and the British Museum and elsewhere, bequeathed to us also a corresponding precious legacy of Irish jewelry. Only that we have a large number of specimens of this work preserved for us, it would have been quite impossible to persuade the modern world that the Irish had ever made such beautiful jewelry. There are literally hundreds of beautiful pieces of the most delicate work in the precious metals and particularly of gold. The Irish were famous for the amount of gold in their possession among all the nations of western Europe but they used most of it for the making of the choicest artistic objects of many kinds. These show a workmanship in precious