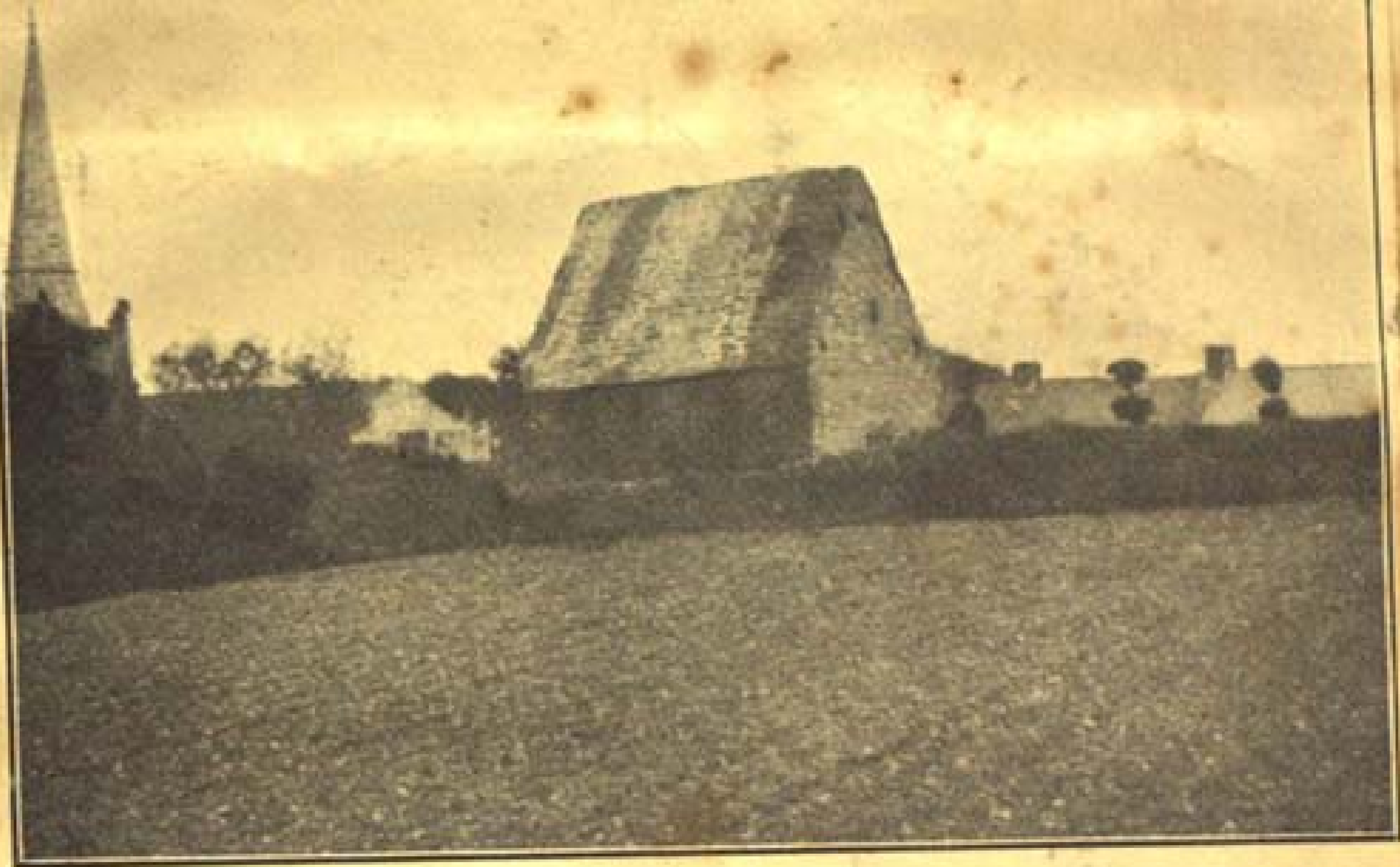


FORE ABBEY, CO. WESTMEATH.

By Mr. W. Park, Mullingar.





Oratories of the Second Class.

ST. COLUMB'S HOUSE, KELLS, CO. MEATH.

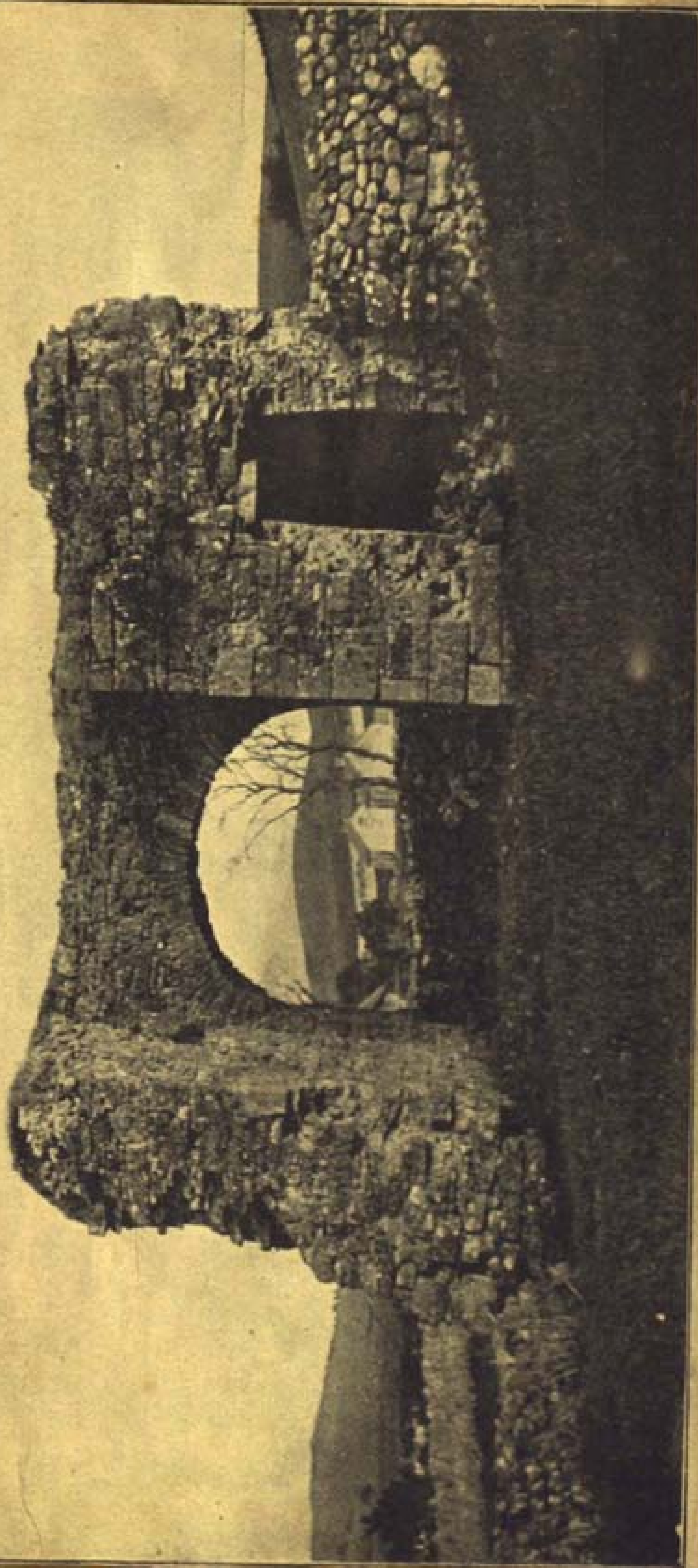
# THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

OF THE

# DIOCESE OF MEATH.



HOLY WELL AT KELLS.



ANCIENT GATEWAY, WEST SIDE OF TOWN OF FORTÉ.

Photo by James R.

THE  
DIOCESE OF MEATH  
ANCIENT AND MODERN.

BY THE  
REV. A. COGAN,  
CATHOLIC CURATE, NAVAN.

"Remember your prelates who have spoken the word of God to you: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation"—*Epistle to the Hebrews*, xiii. 7.

VOL. I.

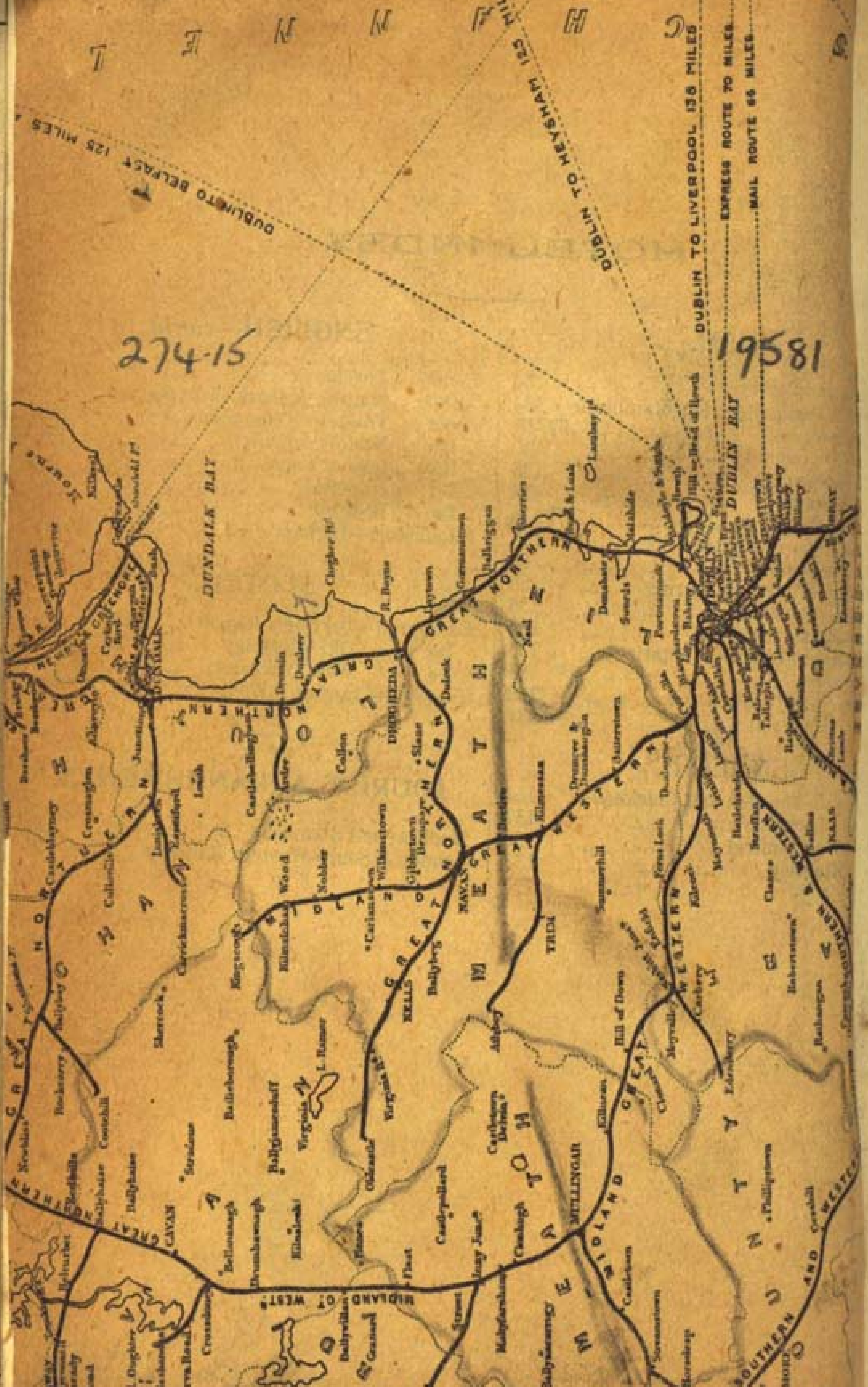


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JOHN F. FOWLER, 3 CROW STREET, DAME STREET.  
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1862.



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DUBLIN TO BELFAST 128 MILES

DUBLIN TO KERRYMAN 125 MILES

DUBLIN TO LIVERPOOL 136 MILES

EXPRESS ROUTE 70 MILES

MAIL ROUTE 86 MILES

DUNDALK BAY

DUBLIN BAY

Hill of Howth

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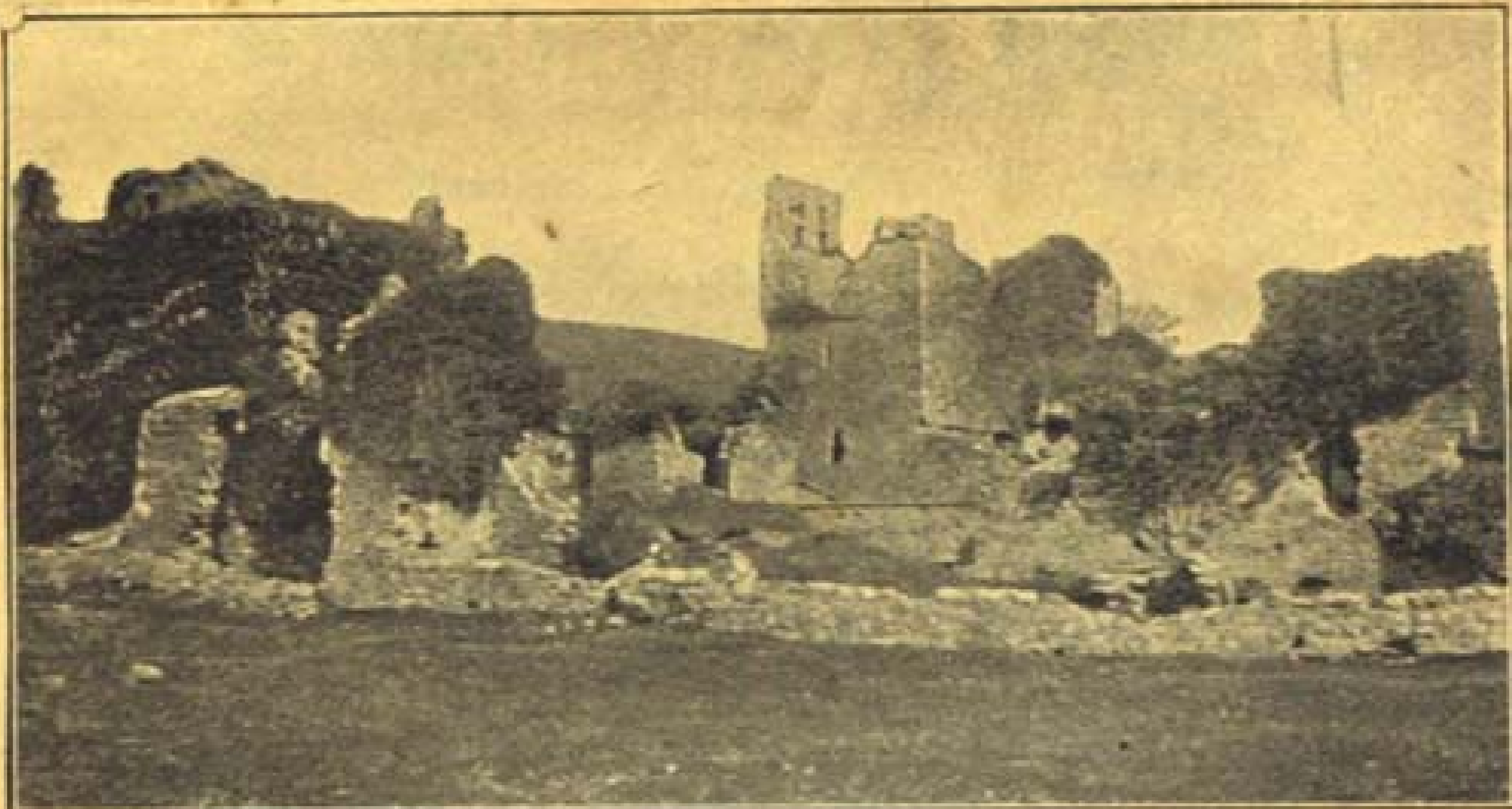
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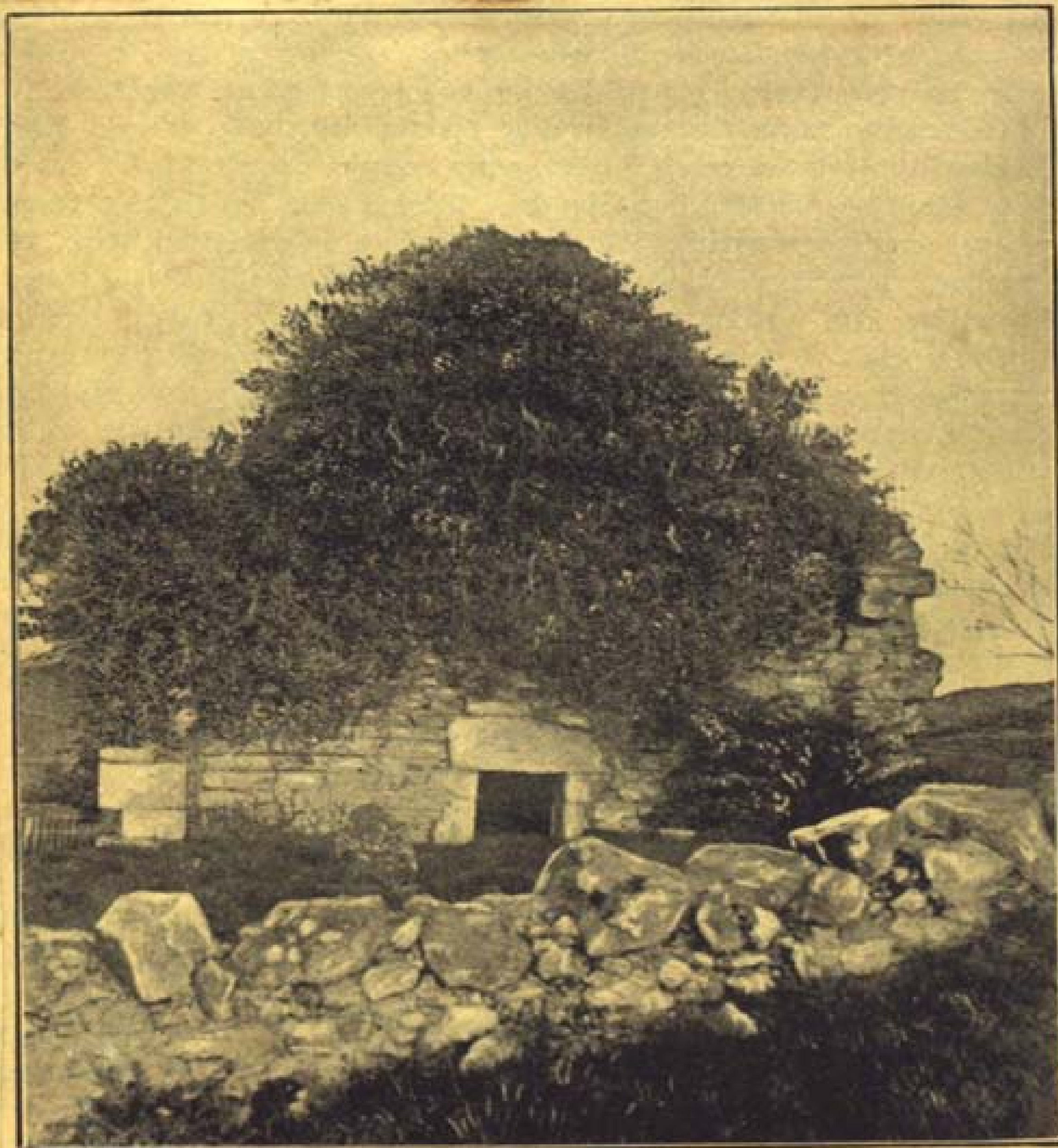


TO  
THE MOST REV. DR. CANTWELL,  
THE VENERABLE AND VENERATED BISHOP OF MEATH,  
WHO,  
FOR UPWARDS OF THIRTY-ONE YEARS,  
HAS GOVERNED  
OUR ANCIENT DIOCESE WITH DIGNITY AND GRACE,  
AND WHO,  
IN ALL THE STRUGGLES OF THE IRISH NATION  
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM,  
HAS EVER BEEN CONSPICUOUS IN THE POPULAR RANKS,  
**This Volume,**  
UNDERTAKEN AS A LABOUR OF LOVE,  
TO RESCUE FROM OBLIVION AND NEGLECT  
THE ECCLESIASTICAL  
ANNALS, ANTIQUITIES, AND TRADITIONS  
OF THE DIOCESE OF MEATH,  
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY AND HUMBLY DEDICATED  
BY THE AUTHOR.





CISTERCIAN MONASTERY, FORE.



CYCLOPEAN DOORWAY, ST. FECHIN'S CHAPEL, FORE.





## PREFACE.

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IT may not be out of place to explain how it happened that a person in my position, discharging the active and laborious duties of the mission, ventured to take up his pen and enter on a subject which necessarily required long, arduous, and patient research. I met by accident, a few years ago, one of the distinguished professors of my Alma Mater—an ecclesiastic to whom Ireland is deeply indebted for his valuable illustrations of her history—I mean the late lamented Very Rev. Mathew Kelly, D.D., professor of ecclesiastical history in the College of Maynooth. Previous to this, for about a year and a half, I had been contributing an occasional article to the *Tablet* Newspaper on the monasteries of Ireland and the ancient episcopal sees of Meath; and as the Rev. Dr. Kelly had been aware of this, he introduced the subject of Irish history. In the course of conversation he remarked, that any attempt to compile a complete history of the Irish Church would be altogether insufficient and unsatisfactory, until each diocese in Ireland was separately explored, its existing memorials collected, the succession of its prelates and priests fixed and authenticated, and the genuine traditions of each locality put into intelligible shape and form. “If a priest”, said he, “in each diocese could be found to undertake this glorious and meritorious work, he would bequeath to his country a priceless treasure, he would entitle himself to the lasting gratitude

of the Irish people, and Ireland would then, indeed, have an Ecclesiastical History to which she might point with pride".

I concurred in his remarks, but urged the impossibility of a priest on the mission, in the midst of so many urgent, onerous, and responsible duties, remote too from public libraries, and labouring under innumerable inconveniences, attempting so serious and so difficult an undertaking. He combated my objections, adduced various examples of persons who, *for love of religion and country*, compiled and wrote under more adverse circumstances, and concluded by pressing me most earnestly to do my part and make a beginning. I at length consented: he promised me his coöperation and assistance; and we parted—alas! to meet no more. In a few months after this interview the learned and venerated Dr. Kelly departed this life, profoundly lamented by all who knew him or heard of him, and was buried in the cemetery of the College of Maynooth.

*Peace to his soul.* His death was indeed a loss—an irreparable, a national loss,—as no priest of our generation took a more absorbing interest in collecting the scattered records of our country,\* and disentombing the venerable history of our Church. To me it was peculiarly and seriously lamentable, as, had he lived, I would have received many judicious and valuable suggestions.

For the sake of order I have divided this work into four parts, viz. :

---

\* The Rev. Daniel M'Carthy, editor of the O'Renehan MSS., who knew the deceased well, remarks in his preface, ". . . and it is much to be regretted that the whole work was not edited by him (Dr. Kelly), for no man living was more competent to the task, having devoted, or rather sacrificed, his life to the study of Irish history". After the death of Dr. Kelly there are few so competent as the Rev. Daniel M'Carthy himself.



I. The Bishops of Meath, commencing with the eight episcopal sees.

II. The Abbeyes of Meath founded in the early period.

III. The Abbeyes of Meath founded after the Anglo-Norman invasion.

IV. The Chantries of Meath.

In tracing the bishops of the early sees I have followed the *Four Masters*, as edited by the late Dr. O'Donovan; and from the beginning of the thirteenth century to the Protestant Reformation, I have been guided for the most part by Sir James Ware.

As it was impossible to condense in one volume the ecclesiastical memorials of our extensive diocese, I have been obliged to reserve for a future volume the Bishops of Meath since the death of Dr. William Walsh, the Abbeyes of Westmeath and the King's County, together with parochial histories and biographies of eminent pastors.

The Abbeyes of Meath are compiled from the *Four Masters*, Archdall's and our other Irish *Monasticons*, as also from the *Patent Rolls*, the *Inquisitions of Meath*, and the *Confiscations of the Pale*; and if I have not been more diffuse in the compilation of the *Annals*, it was either because the materials were limited or beyond my reach, or again, uninteresting to the general reader.

To the Abbeyes and Chantries I have appended parochial histories, comprising the succession of the parish priests since 1690, and the gradual development of religion since the dread days of Queen Anne.

To accomplish this branch of the work with accuracy and fidelity, I have devoted my summer vacations for the last few years (I had no other time), making excursions into the neighbouring parishes, and collecting all the necessary infor-



mation. I went from churchyard to churchyard, taking the dimensions of the existing ruins, deciphering the tombs of priests, transcribing inscriptions on the pedestals of the old chalices, searching the registries, gathering old documents and letters of the deceased pastors, examining the lists of subscribers catalogued in old books, visiting the old crosses and the holy wells, and taking notes of every surviving memorial of the faith and piety of the people. I found many of the tombs erected over the priests of the last century, deeply imbedded in the clay, covered with grass and weeds, lost to all external appearance, and only remembered in the traditions of the peasantry; and I was obliged to dig with the spade to remove the superstratum of earth, and wash the stone, in order to decipher the inscription, and thus find materials for my work. As very many of our old parochial churches were converted to Protestant uses after the Reformation, the old custom of placing the corpse before the high altar was of course abandoned; and even after the temple had been deserted and permitted to fall to ruin, the people ceased carrying the corpse inside, but selected the grave of some old pastor on which to deposit and unrope the coffin, and chant the *De profundis* previous to interment. I found in almost every churchyard a particular priest's grave where this was done, and on inquiring I ascertained that this touching homage of the Irish heart, this popular canonization, was manifested to attest the holiness and fidelity of his life, and to perpetuate a traditional respect for his virtues.

By means of the inscriptions on tombs, registries, lists of the dead, family papers, inscriptions on chalices, etc., together with the presentation list of parish priests by James the Second, registration list of 1704, and the unpublished

papers and diaries of the late Dr. Plunkett, bishop of Meath, I succeeded in discovering the unbroken chain of pastors since 1690 in almost every parish throughout the diocese of Meath. This was, unquestionably, the most laborious and difficult part of the whole work, and, I believe, the very first attempt of the kind made in Ireland since the dissolution and confiscation of our monasteries. And yet these heroic old pastors, whose memories are allowed to die out, were the men to whom, under God, we are indebted for the preservation of the faith. These devoted fathers supplied martyrs and confessors to the long roll of Christian heroism. They sacrificed all the comforts of this world, crossed the seas at the peril of their lives, indifferent to the fearful penalties of the law, graduated in foreign colleges, and, true to their sacred calling, they returned home to be hunted like the wolf—houseless wanderers in the land of their forefathers.

“ They bribed the flock, they bribed the son,  
To sell the priest and rob the sire;  
Their dogs were taught alike to run  
Upon the scent of wolf and friar”.\*

Undaunted by the haughty despots of the day, in defiance of the atrocious Penal Code, unawed and unintimidated by the ruthless myrmidons of the law and the merciless bloodhounds who tracked their footsteps, the old priests of Ireland stood faithful and true to the Irish people; and unparalleled in the annals of any other country are the unswerving loyalty, the affectionate devotion, the child-like docility, and the profound reverence with which that sacred fidelity was recognized, appreciated, reciprocated, and, as far as could be, repaid.

---

\* Poems of Thomas Davis.



“ Who, in the winter’s night,  
 Soggarth aroon,  
 When the cold blast did bite,  
 Soggarth aroon,  
 Came to my cabin-door,  
 And, on my earthen flure,  
 Knelt by me, sick and poor,  
 Soggarth aroon ?

“ Who, as friend only met,  
 Soggarth aroon,  
 Never did flout me yet,  
 Soggarth aroon ?  
 And when my hearth was dim,  
 Gave, while his eyes did brim,  
 What I should give to him,  
 Soggarth aroon”.\*

Assuredly, the ecclesiastical history of Ireland would be incomplete, without commemorating the faithful old priests who fought the good fight, and handed down the faith.

There are several deficiencies in this volume, which I hope to be able to supply in the next, namely, a good diocesan map, and illustrations of the various ruins.

I must remark too, that as I solicited neither advice nor assistance from the clergy of the diocese, nor received any, my faults and imperfections are my own, *no one else is responsible for them*. I found my brother-priests, wherever I went, disposed to encourage me, and to lend me any books or papers in their possession ; but I neither consulted them on the compilation of this work, nor received any suggestion or hint whatever. I am fully conscious that there are many priests in the diocese immeasurably more competent for this undertaking than the writer ; but as none took the subject

---

\* Banim.



in hands, or, as far as I could judge, seemed likely to do so, I may be excused for at least having made a beginning. The time had at length arrived when it could no longer be postponed with any hope of its possible accomplishment. With the change of language, the wholesale emigration of the people, the disruption of old ties consequent on the famine years, the levelling of old boundaries, the consolidation of farms, the inhuman clearances of the land to make room for "flocks and herds", *with every agency at work to weed out the remnant of the people*, no wonder if the old traditions were dying out and the memory of the old pastors fast fading from the land.

I now place this little volume in the hands of the people, that they may be more familiarized with the history of the past, with the old abbeys, the old traditions, the old graveyards where their fathers sleep, and where many of themselves expect to repose, that the memory of the old priests to whom they owe so much, and whose names they have been taught from their infancy to reverence, may be rescued from oblivion and neglect.

If my humble labours tend to awaken a spirit of antiquarian research, if they be any way instrumental in urging a brother in the ministry to take up his pen and record the "*Gesta Dei per Iberos*", the sufferings and triumphs of our Church, and the unswerving constancy of our people, under innumerable trials, to the faith of their fathers, then I will not have written in vain.

To those who have made the history of Ireland their study, and who can realize the many inconveniences under which this work was compiled, I can easily appeal for an indulgent criticism. To such as may be disposed to be hypercritical, I may address with Horace:

" . . . si quid novisti rectius istis,  
Candidus imperti ; si non, his utere mecum" ;

or, again, with the learned author of the *Hibernia Dominicana* :

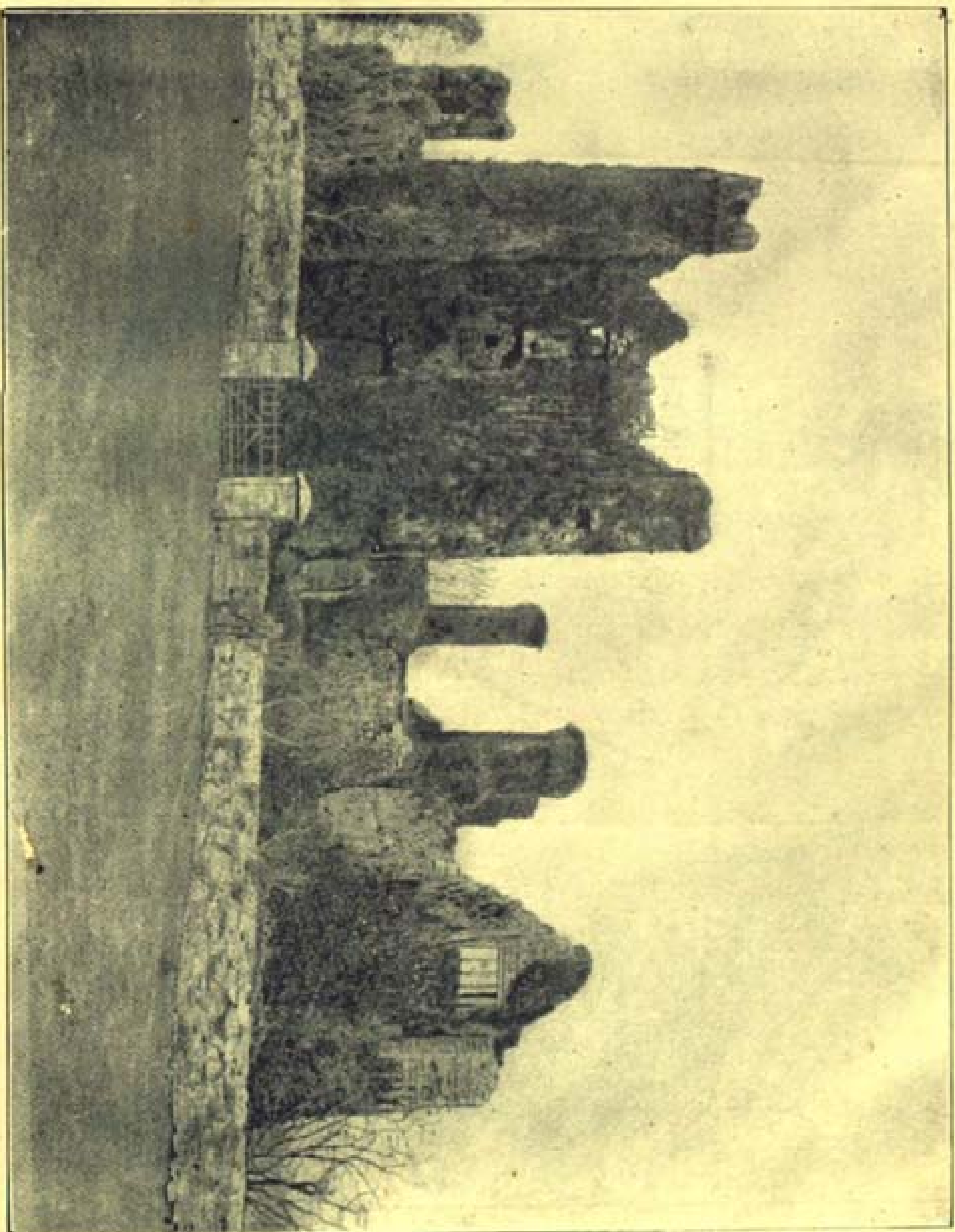
" *De suo meliora proferant, antequam judicent de alieno*".



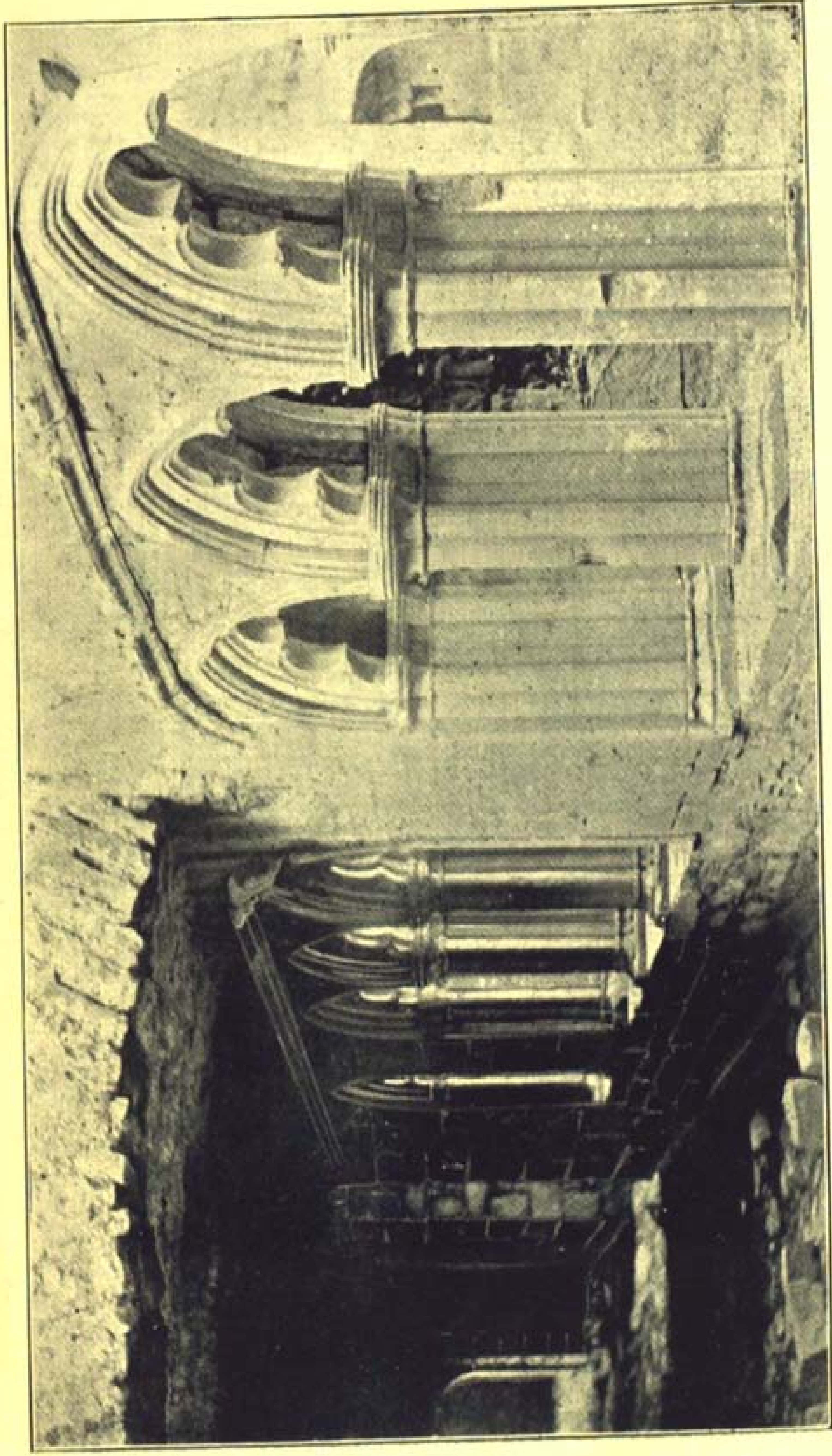
Tara. Co. Meath.

most prosaic visitor with a "love far brought  
from out the storied past."

excitement and strife which can at once mar the  
beauty and make the fortunes of a town.







BEATTIE ABBEY CLOISTERS IN 1897.

...hty mo  
... What is Tara h  
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# TESTIMONY

OF

## PROFESSOR O'CURRY.

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AFTER I had compiled this volume, I brought the manuscript for supervision, as had been arranged, to Eugene O'Curry, Esq., M.R.I.A., Professor of Irish Archæology in the Catholic University. The venerable and learned antiquary welcomed its arrival with his usual kindness, and after we had read together every page, and examined the various authorities quoted or referred to, as a significant comment, *he urged me to put it immediately to press.* A few days subsequently I received from Professor O'Curry the following complimentary and characteristic letter.

2 Portland Street, North, Dublin,  
July 18th, 1862.

MY DEAR FATHER O'COGAN,\*

Ever since I have had the pleasure of seeing you here, and reading with you the manuscript of your forthcoming work upon the ecclesiastical History of the Diocese of Meath, I have not ceased to congratulate myself and all true lovers of old Erin on the near prospect we have of very soon seeing that curious and important work in print. It astonishes me that, with your distance from public libraries and your heavy parochial duties—which it must be your first care to discharge—you managed to make time to collect, from a thousand scattered sources, the fragmentary history of your ancient diocese. Nor am I less amazed at the successful way in which you have re-

---

\* The author's name being an Anglicised form of Keogan accounts for the Celtic prefix.



duced this vast mass of broken records and ruined monuments to a shape and form so light, so graceful, as to read more like the beautiful creation of a rich fancy, than the severe compilation of the critical stern historian. If your book had no other merit than the great number of vivid sketches of the long forgotten, more modern *martyrs* and confessors of your diocese and district, it would be an invaluable addition to the ecclesiastical history of our holy island. And why should not the virtues and sufferings of the saints and sages of our later years be entitled to a lasting record in our National Annals, as well as those whose names stand forth so gloriously in our ancient martyrologies and festologies? It will be a proud day for you in a Christian sense, when the future diocesan historian shall point to your book, and say, "It was Dr. Anthony O'Cogan that cleared away the rubbish of ages from the old foundation of our Ecclesiastical History, and upon it raised a single, new, and graceful pile, which brings the old structure in all its grandeur within distinct view of our own days".

That you may live to see this day, and a nation to duly appreciate it, is, my dear and reverend friend, the prayer of one who understands and values your intentions and labours.

Your ever faithful,

EUGENE O'CURRY.

Rev. A. O'Cogan.

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With the deepest, the most heartfelt regret I am obliged to append a Postscript. The national press, as is meet, is draped in mourning; biographies are being compiled; panegyrics are being pronounced; a gloom has spread over the land, saddening the heart of every true lover of Ireland; for our greatest Celtic scholar—the learned, the orthodox, the truly noble Eugene O'Curry, is *no more*. One of the most pleasing recollections of my life is the fact of having been honoured with his friendship, and I can aver, without reserve, that a character more thoroughly unselfish, amiable, and generous—an Irishman, more truly Catholic and

national—I have never met. Who that beheld the venerable *Ollamh*, in the pride of his intellect, seated beside the Archbishop of Armagh on the memorable day of the Catholic University Demonstration, could ever apprehend that in a few days the good and great O'Curry would pass away—would leave us just when Ireland began to know and to value him? During the procession I had the pleasure of a genial and mutual salute with the illustrious deceased, and I congratulated him on his apparent health, as well as on the success of the University. A few days before his death I sat with him for an hour, and he renewed a promise of joining the excursion of our Navan Young Men's Society on the first Sunday of August, to Gormanstown. The evening before his lamentable departure, my appendix reached him for supervision, and, I believe, it was the last manuscript he ever held in his hands. The melancholy intelligence was conveyed to me from the pen of one of his own affectionate and devoted children, in the following words :

2 Portland Street,  
30th July, 1862.

MY DEAR FATHER COGAN,

Oh, may God in His mercy give me strength to bear the heavy cross which has fallen on me this day; for alas! the hand of death struck down my darling father this morning at five o'clock. . . . I know you were a *loved friend* of his, and therefore I write to ask your prayers . . . . From your old friend's broken-hearted child. . . . .

The 2nd of August was the day fixed for sending him my manuscript copy of the Introductory Lecture, but, alas! on that day all that was mortal of Eugene O'Curry was consigned to the tomb.

Our great Irish scholar is gone, and there is no one to fill his place. The key of antiquity is lost, and much of the

learning of ancient Ireland is now a sealed book. Eugene O'Curry lived and laboured for Erin ; he toiled noiselessly for years to render our history popular and dignified—to rescue from neglect the memory of our long forgotten saints and sages ; and surely a grateful country will know how to cherish his memory, to appreciate his services, and to present to his orphaned family something more substantial than the barren sympathy of words. May sweet Jesus have mercy on his soul. Amen.



Durrow, Laoighis

April 6<sup>th</sup> 1921.

My dear Mr. Coleman,

I am greatly obliged as well by  
your own esteemed letter as by the letters you  
kindly enclosed.

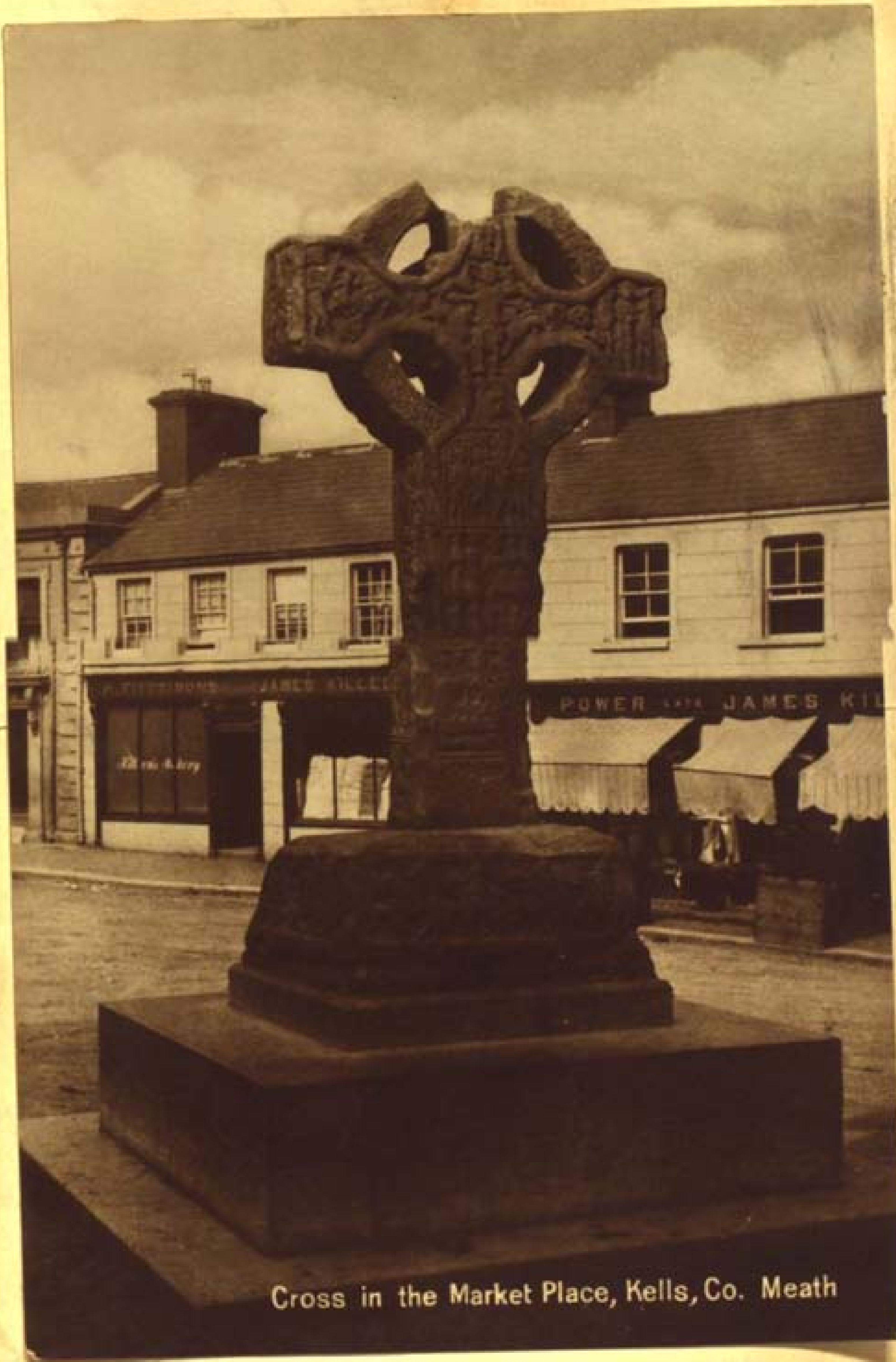
All I can add about Father Cogan is that  
he entered Maynooth for the Logic class, Aug.  
1844. I think I used hear the Meath  
men in Maynooth pronounce his name  
"Cogan". As far as Meath history his  
affairs turned out to be a "blessing in disguise".  
It is a wonderful history that of the  
of the chalice.

I find from the Cath. Directory that Fr. Cogan's  
present address is, "Rev. J. Cogan, C.C., Belvin,  
Westmeath."

I expect a few days ere long in Record Office.  
The kindest regards & trusting you are very well.

Sincerely yours

W. Carrigan P.P.



Cross in the Market Place, Kells, Co. Meath

Dean Logan is turned into  
a native parish of St. Leon's and  
a memorial is also erected there  
in the Church to his memory.  
Many lectures of the Earl of Arundel  
are still alive in St. Leon's  
knowledges. His last lecture at  
Rochester House <sup>St. Leon's</sup> and a memorial  
is presently in the Church.  
in the Church of St. Leon's.

... Just Friday ...

... 1785

11



The Palace  
Wellington  
25<sup>th</sup> March 1921.

Very Rev. & Dear Sir.  
His Lordship who  
is unwell directed me to reply  
to your letter.

The Rev. Dr Henry Cofer was  
born in Slane Co. Meath. He  
laboured during his missionary  
years almost entirely in Hawaii.

he relieved from his numerous  
and the then Bishop & Vellie  
gave him permission to visit  
all the parishes of the diocese  
with a view to compiling a  
history thereof. The work bearing  
his name is the result.

The palm of the high mantle  
altar in Navan. Church bears  
the date of his birth and death.



St. Columbkille's House, Kells, Co. Meath





# INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

TO THE YOUTHFUL READER.

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## PART I.\*

ANCIENT CATHOLIC IRELAND—HER NUMEROUS MONASTERIES—GREAT RELIGIOUS AND LITERARY DEVELOPMENT—IRISH MISSIONS ON THE CONTINENT—FOREIGN TESTIMONIES—THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF IRELAND.

IF we ascend the stream of time to that period when the various races of Ireland professed the same faith and worshipped at the same altar, we will find that some of the proudest monuments of which our fathers could boast, as well as the noblest specimens of the architecture of the country, were the monasteries of Ireland. Founded coeval with the introduction and development of Christianity in our island, associated with the most glorious traditions of our spiritual and intellectual conquests at home and abroad, the memory of the abbeys cannot fail to awaken venerable recollections, and to be enshrined in the hearts of her children, so long as they love the ancient faith or hold in reverence the saints and scholars of their fatherland. Behold on that lofty hill, which commands an extensive view, or in that lone valley, which charms the eye and speaks to the heart—behold in these beautiful solitudes the crumbling walls, ivy-clad and desolate, but grand, imposing and venerable in their desolation. What associations hang round these allowed shrines! what holy thoughts they awaken! what melancholy feelings arise within us as we think of the glo-

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\* Part II., comprising "the injuries inflicted on religion and literature by the Danish invasion", is reserved as an introduction to the next volume.

rious past, and now witness the ruined arch, the deserted sanctuary, and the silent cell! Reader, these mouldering walls, now temples of the dead, were once consecrated to piety and learning; they were once spiritual forts for the defence of God's Church, fountains of living water, which gushed over the Continent and purified it, asylums of sanctity and literature for the "foreigner and the stranger" when Europe was inundated by the Goths and Vandals; they were literary and religious light-houses, which enkindled many a quenched church abroad, and warmed with the beams of piety and learning our green and holy island. Yes, these venerable ruins were once the great missionary schools of the West, and the footprints of their alumni are on every European soil from the Alps to Scandinavia, from the *Atlantic to the Carpathians*.

We will see, as we proceed, that these monasteries were nurses of genius and sanctity; that the great fame of their saints and doctors attracted numbers to our shores from all parts of Europe; that they made Ireland\* for ages the glory and admiration of the western world; and that they made the name of an Irishman respected wherever virtue and learning were prized. We will see, too, that so long as these benevolent edifices were allowed to minister to humanity, extreme poverty was unknown, and that inside their friendly and hospitable gates the destitute and infirm, the traveller on his way, and the stranger far from home, had refreshment and rest. We will see the heavenly influence they exercised on all around them, and the heroic virtue, the thirst for learning, the spirit of self-sacrifice they kindled up in this old Catholic land. By contrasting those ages of faith and charity—when poverty and destitution were not crimes, when the poor of Christ were a valued portion of the Christian community—with our present progress and enlightenment, when, alas! *poverty is a crime*, when discontent

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\* Ireland was then called *Scotia*, subsequently *Scotia Major*. See Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*; Jonas, *Vit. S. Columbani*; Messingham's *Florilegium*; Usher's *Brit. Ec. Ant.*, cap. xvi.; Fleming's *Collectanea*; White's *Apologia*; O'Flaherty's *Ogygia*; Ward's *Rumold*; *Cambrensis Eversus*; Dr. Reeves's *Adamnan*. The Scotch afterwards sought to appropriate to their own country all the honours of ancient *Scotia* or Ireland.



and pauperism are spread over the land, when the lives and happiness of a whole nation hang on the precarious mercy of a privileged few, the reader can estimate at their due worth the boasted blessings which Protestantism, with the plunder of our abbeys and the confiscation of our Church property, brought on the poor and oppressed people of Ireland.

No sooner had St. Patrick laid the foundation of Christianity in Ireland, than he instantly commenced to found religious houses. This was particularly necessary, as, in consequence of continental wars and the perils of sea travelling, he could not otherwise keep up the succession of the hierarchy or the priesthood. The time Providence had selected to enlighten the Irish nation is itself significant. Before St. Patrick had landed on our shores the Roman Empire was fast sinking into decline. Barbarians had, on all sides, invaded her, and deluged her fairest provinces with the blood of the inhabitants. The Huns, the Goths, and the Vandals overran Europe, and nothing escaped their unsparing hands. Disorder everywhere prevailed: nation plundered nation, and the waves of Paganism had almost swept from Europe every vestige of religion and learning. It was at this crisis that Providence gave faith to Ireland, that she might be the home of sanctity and literature—that religion, banished and extinguished abroad, might take refuge on her friendly shores—that she might preserve, undimmed, the sacred lamp of faith, and enkindle again the quenched churches of the Continent.

*Insula Sancta! Missionary Island! ever faithful and ever true!* in the long night of thy bondage, when thy enemies were drunk with the blood of thy saints, when thy soil was purpled with the blood of martyrs, when thy temples were desecrated, thy shrines plundered, thy virgins banished, thy priests were struck down on the very steps of thy altars, when the mysteries of that saving faith for which you sacrificed all in this world, were celebrated in the lone glen or in the fastnesses of the mountain, as well as in the days of thy greatness and glory, when admiring Europe hailed thee as the “*Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum*”. Holy Island! through



the gloom of thy chequered and mournful history, *true hast thou been to thy sacred trust.*

As the speedy and bloodless conquest of Ireland to Christianity is unparalleled in the annals of the Church, in like manner, the prodigious number of her abbeys, and the sudden fame they acquired for piety and learning, not only in Ireland, but throughout Europe, are historic facts, which the concurrent testimony of all antiquity unanimously proclaims. The tradition of founding religious houses was handed down by the Fathers of the Irish Church and their successors, so that before the Danes landed on our shores, almost every locality in Ireland was provided with its monastic school. At first these establishments had no great pretensions to architectural beauty.\* They consisted of a number of wooden houses or cells for the monks, a *damhliag*, or stone church, a common refectory, a central house for the abbot, a "*scriptorium*", where the monks used to write, and a large apartment where the poor were fed and hospitality dispensed to the wayfarer and the stranger. In course of time, num-

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\* Speaking of the early Irish monasteries, Dr. Petrie remarks (*Round Towers*, p. 416): "It is clear, however, that in the earliest monastic establishments in Ireland, the abbot, clergy, and monks, had each their separate cells, which served them as habitations, and that such other houses, as the house for the accommodation of strangers, the kitchen, etc., were all separate edifices, surrounded by a cashel, or circular wall, and forming a kind of monastery, or ecclesiastical town, like those of the early Christians in the East, and known among the Egyptians by the name of *Laura*". In page 422 he adds, "But it is obvious that there were at the same time in Ireland, almost innumerable cœnobitic establishments, in which vast numbers of monks lived in communities, and had everything in common, as at Bangor, where, it is stated, there were no less than three thousand monks; at Rahin, where St. Carthagh had eight hundred and sixty-seven monks, *who supported themselves by the labour of their own hands.* Yet it seems certain that such communities, unlike those in the East, of whom Epiphanius speaks, did not dwell in any single building, but in a multitude of separate cells, arranged in streets in the vicinity of the church; and hence, tradition points out to this day the situation of such streets, adjacent to the abbey churches, and called such in many parts of Ireland. Such communities would, however, require at least one large building, to answer the purpose of a common refectory; and that they had such, is proved by innumerable references in the Irish annals, and in the oldest of the Irish ecclesiastical authorities. It will be seen that the name of such a building was *Proinnteach*, or dining-house". See also *Duffy's Catholic Magazine*, p. 155.

bers of the people gathered round these homes of industry and prayer; so that, to her monasteries Ireland is indebted for the origin of her cities and towns. Thus we find that Kildare owes its origin to St. Brigid,\* Trim to St. Loman, Slane to St. Erk, Glendaloch to St. Coemgen, Tuam to St. Jarlath, Armagh to St. Patrick, Derry to St. Columba, Cork to St. Findbarr, Lismore to St. Carthagh, and so on of many others. Hence, the venerable O'Connor observes:† “The monks spread themselves over the whole face of the land, and edified everywhere by the sanctity of their lives. They fixed their habitations in deserts, which they cultivated with their own hands, and in course of time rendered the most delightful spots in the kingdom. Those deserts became well peopled cities; and, *it is remarkable enough, that to the monks we owe so useful an institution, in Ireland, as bringing great numbers together in one civil community*”.

“It was, in fact, the monasteries”, says Dr. Petrie,‡ “that usually gave birth to the towns, not the towns to the monasteries; and the destruction which fell upon the primitive establishments, has, in most instances, been followed *by the decline of these, their constant appendages*”.

#### RULES.

As to the rules by which these communities were regulated, it seems most probable, they were modelled on such as were practised in the monasteries of Tours and Lerins, where St. Patrick received his education. “The religious houses in Ireland”, says Dr. Lanigan, “were both monasteries and

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\* “Innumerable convents of women”, says Montalembert, “trace their origin to the Abbess of Kildare: wherever the Irish monks have penetrated, from Cologne to Seville, churches have been raised in her honour; and wherever, in our own time, British emigration spreads, the name of Brigid points out the women of Irish race. Deprived by persecution and poverty of the means of erecting monuments of stone, they testify their unshaken devotion to that dear memory, by giving her name to their daughters—a noble and touching homage made by a race, always unfortunate and always faithful, to a saint who was like itself a slave, and like itself a Catholic. The productiveness of the monastic germ planted by Patrick and Brigid was prodigious. In his own lifetime, the apostle of Ireland was astonished to find, that he could no longer number the sons and daughters of chieftains, who had embraced cloistral life at his bidding”—*Monks of the West*, vol. ii., p. 395.

† O'Connor's *Dissertations*, p. 201.

‡ *Round Towers of Ireland*, p. 34.



colleges, in which the sciences, particularly theological, were taught, and young men educated for the active services of the Church; and in this respect, the monastic system of Ireland differed from that of Egypt, and from the Benedictine institution, as originally formed and observed"—vol. ii., p. 19. The duties of the Irish monks were both contemplative and active, that is to say, they spent a portion of their time in silence, meditation, prayer, and other religious exercises, and also at manual labour, tilling the land, and working at their various trades.\* Some performed the duties of the mission, administered the sacraments, preached, lectured, taught the arts and sciences, compiled the civil and ecclesiastical annals of the country, and transcribed the Scriptures and the classics.

About the twelfth century the Irish monasteries seem to have very generally adopted the rule of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine.

“The transition”, says Dr. Lanigan, “was not difficult; for the old Irish rules did not, in substance, differ much from that of the said canons, inasmuch as they were not as strictly monastical as those of the Egyptian, Basilian, or Benedictine monks, and allowed, without particular dispensation, the union of the active service of the Church, such as practised by the secular clergy, with the observance of monastic regulations, which, although varying more or less, were, as I have often remarked, founded on the system which St. Patrick had seen followed in Lerins and at Tours, and which he introduced into Ireland. Now the characteristic feature of the Canons Regular, which distinguishes

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\* A writer in *Duffy's Magazine* (vol. i. p. 155) well remarks: “The morning devotions over, some went to the schools to lecture, some to the country to missionary labour, some to the church for a day of meditation, and some to the refectory to give alms and attend the visitors and travellers. Those skilled in psalmody succeeded each other in the choir. Good transcribers and illuminators had full occupation in the *scriptorium*. The infirmaries busied some, the hall of mendicants others, while, as we have seen, agricultural and manufacturing pursuits occupied no inconsiderable number. Thus revolved for centuries their sweet harmonious round of duties, so useful, peace-bringing, and solemn. . . . The Irish was a monastic Church. Most of its prelates were abbots, and most of its priests monks. It was founded by monks, and it grew and flourished under them. It organized by monasteries, taught by monasteries, and worked by monasteries’



them from monks emphatically so called, is, that, although they make vows and are bound to observe certain laws similar to those of the monks, they are capable of practising the functions which usually belong to the secular clergy. Yet the system of the ancient Irish communities was much more severe than that of the Canons Regular, as is clear from the Rule of St. Columbanus, which was taken from those of the monasteries in Ireland, particularly that of Bangor, of which that great saint had been a member"—vol. iv. p. 348.

The Irish monasteries were therefore the homes of *religion, education, and industry*. They were usually founded in the *derg*, the *cluain*, and the *disert*, in consequence of the solitude of these places; and by the untiring labour of the monks, the barren mountain was converted into a profitable farm, the gloomy forest into a garden, and the lonely island into a paradise. Kings and princes, the wealthy and benevolent, seeing what numbers were gratuitously relieved and educated, what comfort and blessings were diffused amongst the poor, made the monasteries the vehicle of their alms, and thus augmented their usefulness. Many of the wealthy, retiring from the storms and turmoil of life to these abodes of peace and piety, brought with them a portion of their riches; so that in a brief period Ireland was covered with establishments of literature and virtue, of hospitality and charity, where the child of genius, unbefriended by the world, had a home, where the ascetic had an asylum, and the destitute and afflicted a place of comfort and consolation. Under the shadow of these cloisters saints grew up, practised in virtue, inured to labour, skilled in sacred and profane learning, and, when called to a more extensive sphere, they edified the faithful by the holiness of their lives, they confounded the unbeliever by the depth of their learning, and they were pillars of light in the war of religion with the powers of Hell. Hence the learned Gorres, the German historian, writes of the Irish monasteries of these ages:

“When we look into the ecclesiastical life of this people, we are almost tempted to believe that some potent spirit had trans-

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\* For the rigid discipline and penitential practices of the ancient Irish monks, see Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. iv., chap. 32.

ported over the sea the cells of the valley of the Nile, with all their hermits—its monasteries with all their inmates, and settled them down in this western island; *an island which, in three centuries, gave 880 saints to the Church, won over to Christianity the North of Britain and a large part of Germany*, and, while it devoted the utmost attention to the sciences, cultivated with especial care the mystical contemplation in her communities, as well as in the saints whom they produced”.

The Irish monks paid great attention to calligraphy, illumination of manuscripts,\* and the compilation of the civil and ecclesiastical annals of the country, and to this laudable diligence must be attributed the fact that no people in Europe has a more ancient or authentic history than the Irish nation. Hence, Edmund Spenser, the celebrated poet, who was chief secretary of Ireland, yielding to the force of authority, observes:

“It is certain that Ireland hath had the use of letters very anciently, and long before England”—*View of the State of Ireland*, p. 29.

And Sir James Mackintosh adds:

“The Irish nation possesses genuine history several centuries more ancient than any other European nation possesses in its present spoken language”.

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\* For Giraldus Cambrensis' description of the *Book of Kildare*, see *Top. Hib.*, ii. 38. Consult also O'Connor, *Rer. Hib. Scr.*, vol. i.; *Epistola Nuncupatoria*, vol. iv. pp. 130, 139; the Works of Dr. F. Keller; and Dr. Reeves's learned notes on the interesting paper of Dr. Wattenbach. On the employment of Irish monks in *scripto*, see the note in Rev. Dr. Reeves's *Adamnan*, p. 353. The Sacred Scriptures, theology, philosophy, classics, and psalmody were studied and professed with especial care in our Irish monasteries. Of the languages, the Greek and Latin were cultivated, and, by many, the Hebrew. “The reliques of Irish authors” (in Latin), says Rev. Dr. Reeves, “are very respectable and sometimes beautiful; as of Sedulius the poet, circ. 474; Secundinus, circ. 615; Cum-mianus, 634; Augustin, circ. 652; Aileran, circ. 655; Adamnan, circ. 685; Dungal, circ. 810; Sedulius Junior, circ. 818; Discuil, circ. 825; Johannes Scotus, circ. 858”. Dr. Wattenbach's Paper, note, p. 3. On the cultivation of Greek by the Irish, see Reeves's *Adamnan*, p. 354.

The Irish monks spent several hours each day transcribing books, and were most careful in rendering their transcripts correct. “How ungrateful”, says Dr. Lanigan, “are some modern pettifoggers in literature to those good and indefatigable monks, who have preserved for us so many monuments of ancient learning, history, poetry, etc.”—vol. iv. p. 356.



The learned Camden admits :

“ From thence (Ireland) our old Saxon ancestors seem to have had the form of their letters, as they plainly used the same characters which are at present in use among the Irish”.

Of the Saxon language, Dr. Johnson, one of the best authorities, observes :

“ What was the form of the Saxon language, when, about the year 450, they first entered Britain, cannot now be well known. They seem to have been a people without learning, and, very probably, without an alphabet”—*Preface to Dictionary*.

Lord Littleton, in his *Life of Henry the Second*, states this fact more distinctly :

“ A school was formed at Armagh, which soon became very famous. Many Irish went from thence to convert and teach other nations. Many Saxons out of England resorted thither for instruction, and brought from thence the use of letters to their ignorant countrymen”. He also adds :

“ We learn from Bede, an Anglo-Saxon, that about the seventh century, numbers, both of the noble and second rank of English, left their country, and retired out of England into Ireland, for the sake of studying theology, or leading there a stricter life; and all those, he affirms, the Scots (*i.e.* the Irish) most willingly received and maintained at their own charge; supplying them with books, and being their teachers without fee or reward; which is a most honourable testimony, not only to the learning, but also to the hospitality and bounty of that nation”.

“ It was in reference to this period”, says O’Driscoll, “ that Ireland, by the unanimous consent of the European nations, was placed in the rank of a third empire; the Roman, the Constantinopolitan, and the Irish. Is this any evidence of her worth and renown? It was not, surely, her extent, or her conquests in the world, that gave her this high place? Her’s was not an empire purchased by the tears and sufferings of other nations, but by benefits conferred upon them. Her triumphs were peaceful triumphs, and such as in comparison with which Cressy, Agincourt, and Waterloo fade into nothing. It is a vulgar thing to subdue a nation. Have not the Goths, and the Huns, and the Turks, and the Tartars done this? But to give refuge to many people, to instruct many nations—these are triumphs worthy of empire. The claim of Ireland to a third



empire was established at the Council of Constance,\* and it was more glorious than the other two, for it was the empire of intellect and benevolence"—*Views of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 104.

Speaking of this period, Dr. Wattenbach, an eminent German antiquary, contributes the following important testimony :

“ But, along with the Christian religion, there was brought in by the numerously immigrating British, Gaulish, and Roman—nay, perhaps even Egyptian—clergy, the learning of the Latin Church, and various new arts, among this already somewhat advanced and accomplished people. They learned how to build with more elegance and durability ; how to use lime and mortar ; how to turn arches ; likewise, how to manufacture costly vessels for the service of the Church. In particular, they also learned the Greek and Latin languages and letters. With singular industry, they multiplied the manuscripts of old authors which were brought to them, and soon gained the reputation of *being the most skilful scribes of the age*. Numerous monasteries were speedily erected ; in Bangor alone there were at one time three thousand monks. Their superiors possessed episcopal authority, and they steadfastly maintained the strictest discipline. Self-denial was familiar to them, but it was accompanied with great activity in the pursuit of knowledge, and always with a particular fondness and great talent for music.† Such was the state

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\* The Council of Constance was convened by Pope John the Twenty-third in the year 1414. At this council the French and English ambassadors contended for precedence, and the decision was given in favour of England, *on the ground of Ireland's great antiquity and preëminence*. Archbishop Usher thus narrates it : “ In the year 1417, when the legates of the king of England and the French king's ambassadors fell at variance in the Council of Constance for precedence, the English orators, among other arguments, alleged this also for themselves : ‘ It is well known that the whole world is divided into three parts—to wit, Asia, Africa, and Europe. Europe is divided into four kingdoms, namely, the Roman, for the first ; the Constantinopolitan, for the second ; *the third, the kingdom of Ireland*, which is now translated with the English ; and the fourth, the kingdom of Spain. Whereby it appeareth that the king of England and his kingdom are of the more eminent ancient kings and kingdoms of all Europe.’ ” . . . When Sir Robert Wingfield was ambassador from England to the Emperor Maximilian, he found at Constance the record of this proceeding among the acts of the Council, and had it printed at Louvain in 1517. It was reprinted in London in 1690. See Usher, *Brit. Ec. Ant.*, cap. xi. (Wks., v., p. 38) ; Harris's *Ware's Antiquities*, p. 173.

† Ireland was, in truth, the “ Land of Song”. We might adduce innumerable witnesses to testify to our superior cultivation of music, “ ere the hand of the stranger lay heavy upon us” ; but, limited as we are in space,

of Ireland during the sixth and seventh centuries of our era. It was thus at a time *when the whole western world seemed irrecoverably sunk in barbarism*; when the Roman Empire, after a hard and protracted struggle, had been at last subdued by the ever-recurring assaults of the Germanic nations, and when these latter, though very eager to acquire the olden civilization, had no strength as yet to maintain it; when also the Merovingian kingdom, after brilliant beginnings, fell away into distraction, which daily increased, for corruptions of every kind, barbarism, and senselessness seemed everywhere to prevail; *it was at this time that Ireland, almost alone, afforded a refuge for the remnants of the old civilization*: and when the Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity by Rome, they crossed over to the *Sacred Isle in multitudes, in order there to become scholars under these celebrated teachers in the monasteries of the Scots*" (i.e. Irish).

"The kings, the chiefs, the warlike and impressionable people of Green Erin", says Montalembert, "listened to St. Patrick, followed him, and testified towards him that impassioned veneration which has been the most popular tradition of the Irish, and which thirteen centuries have not lessened. After thirty-three years of apostleship he died, leaving Ireland almost entirely converted, and, moreover, filled with schools and communities destined to become a nursery of missionaries for the West. . .

. . . The monasteries founded by St. Patrick became the asylum and centre of Celtic poetry. When once blessed and transformed, says an old author (La Villamarque, *Légende Celtique*, p. 109), *the songs of the bards became so sweet that the angels of God leant down from Heaven to listen to them*; and this explains the reason why the harp of the bards has continued the symbol and emblazonry of Catholic Ireland" — *Monks of the West*, authorized translation, vol. ii., pp. 391, 392.

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we will confine ourselves to one authority. Giraldus Cambrensis, *the hired libeller of Ireland*, thus admits the superiority of our music at the time of the English invasion: "This people, however, deserves to be praised for their successful cultivation of instrumental music, in which their skill is, beyond comparison, superior to that of every nation we have seen. For their modulation is not drawling and morose, like our instrumental music in Britain, but the strains, while they are lively and rapid, are also smooth and delightful. It is astonishing how the proportionate time of the music is preserved, notwithstanding such impetuous rapidity of the fingers; and how, without violating a single rule of the art in running through *shakes* and *slurs*, and variously intertwined *organizing* or counterpart, with so sweet a rapidity, so unequal an equality of time, so apparently discordant a concord of sounds, the melody is harmonized and rendered perfect" — *Top. Hib.*



The schools\* of Ireland were in those early ages so celebrated, that they were frequented by young men, not only from England and Scotland, but from various parts of Europe; and such were the hospitality, charity, and philanthropy of the Irish monks, that they supplied food, clothes, education, and even books, *gratuitously*, to the strangers who flocked to Ireland from distant lands. The venerable Bede, an Anglo-Saxon monk of the seventh and eighth centuries, thus accords testimony to the sanctity, learning, and hospitality of our monastic schools:

“During the time of Finan and Colman, many nobles and others of the English nation were living in Ireland, whither they had repaired either *to cultivate the sacred studies, or to lead a life of greater strictness*. Some of them soon became monks; others

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\* A writer in *Duffy's Catholic Magazine* (July, 1847), one who thoroughly understood the monastic history of Ireland, makes the following remarks:

“Next to religion, which, we need scarcely add, is itself the best stimulus to intellect, scholastic education was, as we have seen, the great object of monachism. The monks, discerning the importance of nurturing the intellectual as well as the moral attributes of man, and the wisdom of preserving and increasing antique civilization, which past ages had produced, and having command of the youth of their own and foreign lands, exerted all their influence in creating a high-toned intellectual and scholastic movement. They resumed and renovated that Catholic philosophy which the Augustines and Ambroses had originated; and they trained such minds as Dungall, Clemuch, and Erigena, who, to this moment, and through the long series of mediæval philosophers, exercise a potent and appreciable sway. They encouraged the cultivation of the imaginative and artistic powers, and produced men like Sedulius and Alcuinus, whose glorious hymns (*‘A solus ortu Cardine; Crudelis, Herodes, Ducum’*) are every day chanted in our churches. They taught those languages which open the stores of ancient thought and learning; and we see in the sixth century St. Columbanus writing in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and showing, by numerous quotations and criticisms, a profound and scholarly knowledge of the classics in each tongue; and in the ninth age, Dungall reviving the graces of style and the polish of polite literature, and combining with them still more extensive erudition. And they studied the exact sciences, and sent forward such men as Virgilius of Salzburg, who was the first modern that discovered the sphericity of the Earth and the existence of the antipodes.

“Undoubtedly, then, to this mighty religious and intellectual institution, spreading over the island, with its network of affiliations and connections, alliances and weapons, studies, genius, and rewards—its myriad hands, and heads, and hearts—is to be attributed that civilization which made ‘*Insula Sacra*’ loved of the Phœnician voyager, the ‘*Insula doctorum et sanctorum*’ of mediæval Europe. Each of these monasteries was, in its own district, ‘a flame on the hill-top’, sentinelling the provinces,



were better pleased to apply to reading and study, going about from school to school through the cells of the masters; and all of them were most cheerfully received by the Irish, who supplied them gratis with good books and instruction"—*His. Eccles.*, iii. 27.

"No men", says Camden, "came up to the Irish monks, in Ireland and in Britain, for sanctity and learning; and they sent forth swarms of holy men all over Europe, to whom the monasteries of Luxueil in Burgundy, Pavia in Italy, Wurtzburg in Franconia, St. Gall in Switzerland, etc., etc., owe their origin. . . . The Saxons also, at that time, flocked to Ireland from all quarters, as to a mart of literature. Whence we frequently meet in our writers of the lives of the saints: 'such a one was sent over to Ireland for education'; and in the life of Fulgenus (*Collectanea de Rebus Hiber.*, book i., p. 112):

'Exemplo patrum commotus, amore legendi,  
Ivit ad Hibernos, sophia mirabile claros'.

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startling the wicked, cheering the good, and beaconing the struggling, lighting up the gloom of ignorance, and preserving always around it a genial moral atmosphere of sanctity and learning. And, betimes, they grew to be 'light-fountains', to which the holiest and wisest of Europe's sons came to kindle their lamps, from which a Willibroid, a Boniface, an Alfred, a Bede, a Dunstan, caught the enthusiasm for which true men bless their names on Earth, and angels claim companionship with them in Heaven".

In a very ancient catalogue cited by Dr. O'Connor (*Prolegomena*, pars. ii., p. 93), the monasteries are thus characterized: "The head of Ireland, Armagh; the arts of Ireland, Clonmacnoise; the happiness of Ireland, Kildare; the learned of Ireland, Bangor; the joy of Ireland, Kells; the eye of Ireland, Tallaght; the litanies of Ireland, Lismore; the difficult language of Ireland, Cork; the cemetery of Ireland, Glendalough", etc., etc.—*Cambrensis Eversus*, edited by Dr. Kelly, note, vol. i., p. 173.

The learned Bonaventure Maroni thus describes the great conflux of foreigners to the school of Lismore:

"Undique conveniunt proceres, quos dulce trahebat  
Discendi studium, major num cognita virtus,  
An laudata foret. Celeres vastissimâ Rheni  
Jam vada Teutonici, jam deseruere Sicambri;  
Mittit ab extremo gelidos Aquilone Boemos  
Albis et Averni coeunt, Batavique frequentes,  
Et quicumque colunt alta sub rupe Gebennas.  
Non omnes prospectat Arar Rhodanique fluentia  
Helvetios: multos desiderat ultima Thule,  
Certiam hi properant diverso tramite ad urbem  
Lismoriam, juvenis primos ubi transigit annos".

Usher's *Primordium*, p. 755.

Aldhelm of Malmesbury, a Saxon writer, describes our country in 690, as "rich in the wealth of science", and "as thickly set with learned men as the poles are with stars"—*Sylloge Epist. Hib.*, xiii.

‘ By his ancestors’ bright example moved,  
 He sought abroad the learning which he loved,  
 And in Hibernia skilful masters found,  
 Whose wisdom is through all the world renowned’.”

We have seen that the faith planted in Ireland by St. Patrick, in the fifth century, took deep root in our land, and produced a wonderful development of literature and religion; we have seen that the practice and tradition of encouraging monasticism were earnestly adopted and faithfully carried out by his successors and by the other great founders or fathers of the ancient Irish Church; we have seen how the fame of our schools attracted here the Briton, the Saxon, the German, and the Gaul—that those strangers were fed, clad, educated, without fee or reward, and that even books were gratuitously supplied to them by the Irish monks; we have seen how the learning, sanctity, philanthropy, and hospitality of ancient Ireland elicited the applause of admiring Europe, and how all antiquity, with one voice, hailed our country as the “*Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum*”. We come now to consider the spiritual invasions of ancient Catholic Ireland—the legions of learned and holy men whom she sent forth to Christianise Europe—

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In the litany of St. Aengus the Culdee, written at the end of the eighth century, he invokes the intercession of numberless saints: Romans, Italians, Egyptians, Gauls, Germans, Britons, Saxons, Picts, and natives of other lands, who were buried in Ireland, and venerated in consequence of the holiness of their lives.

Moreri, in his *Historical Dictionary*, thus sums up the ancient literary and religious fame of Ireland: “Ireland has given the most distinguished professors to the most famous universities of Europe—as Claudius Clements to Paris; Alcuinus to Pavia, in Italy; Johannes Scotus Erigena to Oxford, in England. The English Saxons received from the Irish their characters or letters, and with them the arts and sciences that have flourished since among these people, as Sir James Ware proves in his treatise on the *Irish Writers*, book i., chap. 13, where may be seen an account of the celebrated academies and public schools which were maintained in Ireland in the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth ages, which were resorted to, particularly by the Anglo-Saxons, the French, and ancient Britons, *who were all received there with greater hospitality than in any other country of the Christian world*”. Hence, Sir James Ware remarks: “It is evident from ancient writers of undeniable credit, that there were formerly in Ireland several eminent schools, or, as we now call them universities, to which the Irish and Britons, and at length the Gauls and Saxons flocked, as to marts of good literature”—*Antiquities of Ireland*, p. 240.



the success which attended their preaching and teaching, in whatever land they planted the symbol of redemption, and the respect and benediction in which their memories have been embalmed in the traditions of Europe to the present day. That a matter of such great historical interest and laudable national pride, may be placed outside the range of controversy, we will adduce, *in limine*, a few foreign witnesses, who can neither be suspected of partiality or exaggeration.

The venerable Bede, an Anglo-Saxon, speaking of the departure of St. Colman and the Irish monks from Lindisfarne, pays them the following tribute, which is equally applicable to the Irish missionaries in general of that period:

“The place which he (Colman) governed, shows how frugal he and his predecessors were, for there were very few houses besides the church found at their departure, indeed no more than were barely sufficient for their daily residence; they had also no money, but only some cattle; for if they received any money from rich persons, they immediately gave it to the poor, there being no need to gather money or provide houses for the entertainment of the great men of the world, for such never resorted to the church except to pray and hear the Word of God. . . . For the whole care of those teachers was to serve God, not the world; to feed the soul, and not the stomach”—*Ec. Hist.*, book iii., chap. 26.

In lib. iii., chap. 3, of the same history, Bede tells us that numbers were daily coming into Britain from the country of the Scots (Irish), preaching the word of God with great devotion.

Eric of Auxerre, a French writer of the ninth century, in his letter to Charles the Bald, is so astonished at the number of saints and scholars whom Ireland sent at this time to the Continent, that he asks:

“What shall I say of Ireland, which, despising the dangers of the deep, is migrating, with almost her whole train of philosophers, to our coasts?”

St. Bernard\* writes, that:

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\* “In exteras etiam nationes, quasi inundatione facta illa se sanctorum examina effuderunt”—*Vita S. Malach.*, c. 5.



“From Ireland, as from an overflowing stream, crowds of holy men descended on foreign nations”.

Lord Lyttleton, whom we quoted before, adds :

“Great praise is likewise due to the piety of those Irish ecclesiastics, who (*as we know from the clear and unquestionable testimony of many foreign writers*) made themselves the apostles of barbarous heathen nations, without any apparent inducement to such hazardous undertakings, except the merit of the work. By the preaching of these men, the Northumbrians, the East Angles, and the Northern Picts, were converted. Convents were also founded by them in Burgundy, Germany, and other foreign countries, where they distinguished themselves by the rigid integrity and purity of their lives ; so that Ireland, from the opinion conceived of their sanctity, was called the country of saints”.

Mosheim, the German Protestant historian, volunteers the following important testimony :

“That the Irish were lovers of learning, and distinguished themselves in those times of ignorance, beyond all other European nations, travelling through the most distant lands with a view to improve and communicate their knowledge, is a fact with which I have been long acquainted ; as we see them *in the most authentic records of antiquity*, discharging with the highest reputation and applause the functions of doctors in France, Germany, and Italy”—*Hist. Eccl.*, cent. viii., chap. 3, note.

Mezerai, a French historian of the seventeenth century, adds :

“Through the labour of their hands frightful and uncultivated deserts became soon converted to most agreeable retreats ; and the Almighty seemed particularly to favour ground cultivated by such pure and disinterested hands. Shall I mention that to their care we are indebted for what remains of the history of those days ?”—*Histoire de France*, tom. i., p. 118.

Dr. Johnson, the great English lexicographer and critic, remarks :

“Dr. Leland begins his history too late ; the ages which deserve inquiry are those times, *for such there were*, when Ireland was the school of the West, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature”—*Boswell's Life*, anno 1777.

Thierry, in his *History of the Norman Conquest*, thus speaks of Ireland :

“ In many things, especially in religion, they (the Irish) were enthusiasts, and willingly intermingled the Christian with their poetry and literature, which was perhaps *the most cultivated in all western Europe*. Their island possessed a multitude of saints and learned men, venerated alike in England and in Gaul ; *for no country had furnished a greater number of Christian missionaries*, animated by no other motive than pure zeal and an ardent desire of communicating to foreign nations the opinions and the faith of their native country. The Irish were great travellers, and always gained the hearts of those whom they visited by the extreme ease with which they conformed to their customs and way of life”—book x., p. 193.

Dr. Wattenbach, the German antiquary already quoted, tells his readers :

“ But above all, *the Irish went forth themselves into every part of the world*. They filled England and the neighbouring islands ; even in Iceland their books and pilgrims' staves were found by the Norwegians of later times. In France, *they were everywhere to be met with ; and they made their way even into the heart of Germany*. Their outward appearance was most striking, and the more so as they were still in the habit of painting their eyelids. . . . Their whole outfit consisted of a *cambutta*, or pilgrim's staff, a leathern water-bottle, a wallet, and (what was to them their greatest treasure), a case containing some relics. *In this guise they appeared before the people, addressing themselves to them everywhere with the whole power of their native eloquence*. Some, as for instance Gallus, learned the language of the country ; the rest employed an interpreter when they preached before the laity ; but to ecclesiastics they spoke in the common language of the Latin Church. Columbanus and his companions in a fearless and determined manner opposed the degenerate Merovingian clergy with their penitential sermons, and of course soon excited their bitter hatred ; while the people, *with the most ardent veneration, flocked in multitudes to hear them*. To the powerful hierarchy of the Franks, their presence in the country had become obnoxious, as it was the source of disadvantageous comparisons. But the kings received them with reverence, and gave them land to build monasteries on, for themselves and the numerous Franks and Romanized natives who gathered around



them. There they settled, and there, after their national manner, they enclosed a large space which they filled with their huts, in the midst of which conspicuously rose the church, and beside it the round tower, or steeple, which also served as a place of refuge in time of need. Yet this was not an abiding place to them; *for their strict uncompromising ministry spared not even the kings; and they preferred to leave the country and their gloriously flourishing monasteries, rather than pass over in silence the abominations of the Merovingians.* . . . In the countries of the Rhone, numerous monastic establishments trace back their origin to such Scottish (Irish) pilgrims; but authentic information on the subject is wanting regarding them all, and there is nothing further preserved in the memory of the people *than the veneration for the name* which bears witness to their remarkable exertions. So it is likewise in Franconia, where testimony is borne to the exertions of St. Kilian and his associates, not so much by fabulous legends as by very ancient manuscripts in the handwriting of the Irish, which are preserved in the library at Wurtzburg, and, above all, by the Latin Bible, written in uncial letters, which, according to creditable tradition, was found in St. Kilian's tomb. . . . When Charles the Great gathered about him, from all sides, teachers for his nations, there came also Scots; and Dungal acquired an illustrious name while preceptor at the cathedral school at Pavia. Under Charles the Bald the name of Johannes Scotus is distinguished for that profound erudition and liberty of mind which elevated him far above his contemporaries. From the time of Columbanus, Irish monks had continued to wander in numbers into those countries where he had laboured, and where we find many traces of their presence. Their most brilliant monument, however, is the monastery of St. Gall; there, at the tomb of their pious countryman, they settled in a barren wilderness, until, by-and-by, there arose out of the poor cottages of the Scots that splendid monastery, which, at a later period, contained a majority of Allemannic monks, yet still for a long time received many Irish comers, and among them teachers of such celebrity as Moengall, called also Marcellus. We may judge of their industry by the study of Greek, the love of music, and the skill in various arts, which distinguished the monastery from all others. Scarcely was there any other establishment so celebrated for the beauty of the manuscripts, nor did any other so highly prize the art, or develop with such care and ardour the ornamentation of initial letters. Therein



especially do these monks show that they were faithful followers of their Irish brethren, whom they soon surpassed and left far behind.\* The Scottish (Irish) manuscripts are distinguished by very elaborate execution, by brilliant colouring of unfading splendour, and by the richness and beauty of their ornamentation, but at the same time by a singular rudeness in the representation of natural objects, especially in the correct treatment of the human figure. Their favourite ornaments are the interlaced serpent, and by them, as well as the serpents' heads, one can trace the influence of Irish art. . . . . *As in writing, so likewise in music, in Goldsmith's work of all kinds, and in carving, the Scots (Irish) have been celebrated from olden times, and in these arts they have also been the teachers of the industrious monks of St. Gall.* . . . . But there were, besides, other monasteries erected exclusively for Scottish (Irish) monks, by bishops as well as by laymen, who took delight in their pious mode of life. In these monasteries the brethren prayed for the souls of the founders, and hospitably received their journeying countrymen when on pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem. In France and Lorraine there were many such monasteries".†

Allemande confesses "that it was enough to be an Irishman, or even to have studied in Ireland, to become the founder of some religious seminary in any part of Europe"—*Histoire Monastique d'Irlande*.

The glories and greatness of ancient Catholic Ireland are thus graphically sketched by Montalembert:

"From the moment that this Green Erin, situated at the extremity of the known world, had seen the sun of faith rise upon her, she had vowed herself to it with an ardent and tender devotion which became her very life. The course of ages has

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\* Dr. Reeves, the translator and editor of Dr. Wattenbach's paper on the Irish Monasteries in Germany, remarks here in a note: "They may have surpassed the Irish in perspective as painters, but as scribes they never equalled them; and there is a lamentable falling off from the Scoti (Irish) in the German school of calligraphy. Compare, for example, the Scoti specimens in Keller with the fac-similes in the second volume of Pertz, *Tabb. ii.*, v., vi. In conception, intricacy, and skill, the Scoti (Irish) execution has never been equalled. There are two plates in Keller which might well challenge comparison; but what are we to say of the Book of Kells?—where is its equal?"

† See Dr. Wattenbach's Paper on the Irish Monasteries in Germany, translated and edited by Dr. Reeves, and published in the *Ulster Journal of Archæology*.

not interrupted this; the most bloody and implacable of persecutions has not shaken it; the defection of all northern Europe has not led her astray; and she maintains still, amid the splendours and miseries of modern civilization and Anglo-Saxon supremacy, an inextinguishable centre of faith, where survives, along with the completest orthodoxy, that admirable purity of manners which no conqueror and no adversary has ever been able to dispute, to equal, or to diminish. The ecclesiastical antiquity and hagiography of Ireland constitute an entire world of inquiry. . . .

“For shortly the monasteries at Bangor, Clonfert, and elsewhere, became entire towns, each of which enclosed more than three thousand cenobites. *The Thebaid reappeared in Ireland, and the West had no longer anything to envy in the history of the East.* . . .

“There was, besides, an intellectual development, which the Eremites of Egypt had not known. The Irish communities, joined by the monks from Gaul and Rome, whom the example of Patrick had drawn upon his steps, entered into rivalry with the great monastic schools of Gaul. They explained Ovid there; they copied Virgil; *they devoted themselves especially to Greek literature*; they drew back from no inquiry, no discussion; they gloried in placing boldness on a level with faith. . . .

“A characteristic still more distinctive of the Irish monks, as of all their nation, was the imperious necessity of spreading themselves without, of seeking or carrying knowledge and faith afar, and of penetrating into the most distant regions to watch or combat paganism. This monastic nation, therefore, became the missionary nation *per excellence*. While some came to Ireland to procure religious instruction, the Irish missionaries launched forth from their island. *They covered the land and seas of the West.* Unwearied navigators, they landed on the most desert islands; *they overflowed the Continent with their successive immigrations*”—*Monks of the West*, vol. ii., pp. 389, 396, 397.

Without quoting from Colgan's *Acta Sanctorum*, Usher's *Primordium*, or Dr. Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, we might adduce similar testimony from the pages of Mabillon, the Bollandists, D'Orleans, Dr. Ray, Prideaux, Scaliger, Schuyd, and other foreign and disinterested authorities; from which we can conclusively demonstrate that the ancient literary and religious renown of Ireland is not a mere



national dream, or the exaggeration of rhapsodists and poets, but a stern historical fact, authenticated by all antiquity, and corroborated by the traditions of Europe to the present day.

It has been calculated\* that the Irish monks had thirteen monastic foundations in Scotland, twelve in England, seven in France, twelve in Armoric Gaul, seven in Lotharingia, eleven in Burgundy, nine in Belgium, ten in Alsatia, sixteen in Bavaria, six in Italy, and fifteen in Rhetia, Helvetia, and Suevia, besides many in Thuringia and on the left bank of the Rhine, between Gueldres and Alsatia. So that before the Irish war-cry was heard at Staffardo, Marsiglia, Valenza, and Namur; before Irish blood ran in torrents at Steenkirk, Spire, Blenheim, and Malplaquet; before Irish valour shone conspicuous at Linden, Cremona, and Fontenoy; before the Irish exiles—the Historic brigades—encircled with fresh laurel the military glory of our nation, and elicited the sympathy and admiration of Europe by their bravery and fidelity, legions of Irish, on a holier mission, on a more sublime service, had, centuries before, given our country and our people a claim on the gratitude and benediction of the Christian world. Hence, Pope Benedict the Fourteenth, in a letter addressed to the Bishops of Ireland, dated the 1st of August, A.D. 1746, thus recognizes the piety and zeal of our early missionaries and apostles:†

“ . . . . Place before your eyes the most glorious, and, to you, domestic examples of those numberless saintly bishops, who, replenished with charity and with a burning love for the salvation of souls, rendered Ireland illustrious by their zeal for the Catholic faith, and exhibited her to the world as a land abounding in sanctity and religion. Recall to your minds that immortal apostle of your nation, St. Patrick, whom St. Celestine, our predecessor, sent amongst you, and in the history of whose apostolic missionary career, this amongst other triumphs stands recorded, that Ireland, which had hitherto been the seat of idolatry, becomes at once universally and deservedly celebrated

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\* See chap. xxi. of *Cambrensis Eversus*, edited by Rev. Dr. Kelly; Haverty's *History of Ireland*, p. 108; Stephen White's *Apologia*, *passim*.

† *Suppl. Hib. Dom.*, p. 380.

as an *island of saints*. . . . . But were we to enumerate all the saintly men, Columbanus, Kilian, Virgil, Rumold, Gallus, and numberless others, who conveyed the Catholic faith from Ireland into other provinces, or, martyrs-like, rendered it glorious by their blood, we should encounter a task which would far exceed the limits of this epistle. Let it suffice thus briefly to point out these few, that ye may the more easily recall to your minds the religion and sanctity of your forefathers". . . . .

The Emperor Joseph the Second, having listened to a Latin oration delivered by the late Dr. Lanigan, then professor of Scripture, Hebrew, and Ecclesiastical History in the University of Pavia, observed:

"That so young and so enlightened a professor reflected new lustre on the Irish nation, and reminded him of *the ancient literary glory of that people*".\*

Let us now briefly glance at some of the missionaries whom our monasteries sent forth either to convert the heathen, to revive literature, or to enkindle quenched churches abroad. "One singular and extraordinary fact", remarks the Rev. Dr. Kelly (*Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. ii., p. 653), "namely, that to foreign sources almost exclusively, are we indebted for a knowledge of those Irish saints. From our native annals we could not even know their names, with very few exceptions. . . . ."

Beginning with England and the neighbouring islands, we find that Diuma,† an Irishman, was the first bishop of Mercia, and he was succeeded by another countryman named Cellach. St. Fursa planted Christianity at Burgcastle, in Suffolk. St. Maildulf, an Irishman, founded Malmesbury, which had hitherto been called Ingeborne. Dicul, an Irishman, founded the monastery of Bosenham; St. Bees, in Cumberland, derives its name from Bega, an Irish virgin who established a cell there. St. Moninna is the patron saint of Burton-on-Trent, and St. Ciaran, called also Piran, is the patron of several churches in Cornwall. The famous

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\* Rev. M. J. Brennan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii. p. 427.

† For notices of these eminent and holy men, consult Father Colgan's *Acta Sanctorum*, and Dr. Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*; see also the sixteenth and eighteenth chapters of *Cambrensis Eversus*, edited by the Rev. Dr. Kelly.



St. Cuthbert,\* the patron saint of Durham, is, says Dr. Reeves, the Nullohc or Mochudrick of the Irish, a native of Leinster, and he received part of his training at Inhrypum, now Ripon, a monastery founded by the Scots (*i.e.* Irish). The church of Lindisfarne was founded by Bishop Aidan, and he was succeeded by Finan, and he by Colman—all Irish.

The celebrated St. Columba, or Columbkil, is justly revered as the apostle of the Picts and Scots; he founded the monastery of Hy, or Iona, and, in addition to innumerable other places, he was regarded as the patron saint of Mull, Tiree, Islay, Oronsay, and Lewis. Maccaldus, a native of Down, became bishop of Man in the fifth century. St. Donnan was the patron saint of Egg; St. Maelrubha, of Skye; St. Moluoc, of Lismore and Raasay; St. Brendan, of Seil; St. Molaise, of Arran; SS. Catan and Blaan, of Bute. "In fact", says Dr. Reeves, "there is scarcely an island on the west side of Scotland which does not acknowledge an Irishman as the founder of its church". But not only to England and Scotland, to the Orkneys and Shetland Isles, but to *Inis Thyle*, the Ultima Thule of the Romans, to the island of Iceland,† our zealous and fearless missionaries, in those early ages, carried the lamp of faith. In a passage quoted by Johnson (*Antiq. Celto-Scand.*, p. 14) from the *Landnamaboc*, we find the following:

"Before Iceland was inhabited by the Norwegians, there were men there whom the Norwegians called *Papas*, and who professed the Christian religion, and are thought to have come by sea from the West; for there were left by them *Irish books, bells, and crooked staves*, and several other things were found which seemed to indicate that they were West-men. These articles were found in Papeya towards the east, and in Papyli".

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\* Usher, Ware, Colgan, Harris, Rothe, White, Fitzsimon, Alban Butler, and many others, say that St. Cuthbert was a native of Ireland. Ware says he was born at Kells in Meath, or, as some have said, at Kill-Mochudrick, four miles distant from Dublin, and was the son of a petty Irish king (see Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 138). The Bollandists (*St. Wiro—8th May*) seem to acknowledge that Cuthbert was an Irishman. Mabilon, followed by Dr. Lanigan, says he was a native of Northumbria (see Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. iii., pp. 88, 90. etc.)

† See Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i., p. 401; vol. iii., p. 220.

On this passage Dr. Lanigan remarks :

“ As to the crooked staffs, they were of that kind which the ancient Irish had a particular veneration for, viz., those which had belonged to holy bishops, abbots, etc. Such was the famous staff of St. Patrick, that of St. Mura, and many others, which were considered as most valuable relics, so that it was usual, even until a late period, to swear by them. According to the above account, those Irishmen, who had lived in Iceland, were called *Papa* or *Papas* by the Norwegians. This might seem to have been a name invented by the old Norwegians for them, because they were in communion with the Pope. But it is more probable that it was that which was used by themselves, signifying *clergymen*. Instances occur in our history of not only bishops but abbots being called *papa*”.

During those early ages, as we have seen, legions of Irish missionaries passed over to France, crossed the Alps, evangelized northern Italy, ascended the heights of Switzerland, penetrated the gloomy forests of Germany, and left after them wherever they trod, the footprints of their piety, learning, and zeal. The learned Dr. Lynch has left us, in his *Cambrensis Eversus* (vol. ii., chap. 25), an interesting chapter, carefully culled from the ancient writers, from which the following is an extract :

“ All the world knows that the Irish went over, not one by one, but in crowds, to Britain, Gaul, Belgium, and Germany, to convert the inhabitants of those regions to the Christian religion, and bring them under the obedience of the Roman Pontiff. A signal testimony to this fact is found in the letter of Eric of Auxerre to Charles the Bald: ‘Need I mention Ireland, who, despising the dangers of the deep, emigrates to our shores, with almost the entire host of her philosophers; the most eminent amongst them become voluntary exiles, to minister to the wishes of our most wise Solomon’. Such also is the testimony of St. Bernard: ‘From Ireland, as from an overflowing stream, crowds of holy men descended on foreign nations’. Walefridus Strabo says, ‘that the habit of emigrating had become a second nature to the Scoti’, namely the Irish, as I have already proved; hence the just observation of Osborne, that the habit of emigrating had taken the strongest hold of the Irish; for what the piety of other nations has made a habit, they have changed from habit into nature. Those holy emigra-



tions of the Irish were distinguished by a peculiarity never, or but very seldom, found among other nations. As soon as it became known that any eminent monk had resolved to undertake one of those sacred expeditions, twelve men of the same order placed themselves under his command, and were selected to accompany him; a custom probably introduced by St. Patrick, who had been ably supported by twelve chosen associates in converting the Irish from the darkness of paganism to the light of the true faith. St. Rioch, nephew to St. Patrick, and walking in his footsteps, was attended in his sacred missions to foreign tribes and regions by twelve colleagues of his own order; and when St. Rupert, who had been baptized by a nephew of St. Patrick, apostle of Ireland, departed to draw down the fertilising dews of true religion on pagan Bavaria, twelve faithful companions shared the perils and labours of his journey and mission. St. Finnian, bishop of Clonard, selected twelve from the thronged college of his disciples, to devote them in a special manner to establish and animate the principles of the Christian religion among the Irish, and hence they were styled by posterity the twelve apostles of Ireland. St. Columba was accompanied in his apostolic mission to Albany by twelve monks. Twelve followed St. Finbar in his pilgrimage beyond the seas, and twelve St. Maidoc, bishop of Ferns, in one of his foreign missions. St. Colman Fin was never seen without his college of twelve disciples. When the ceaseless irruptions of foreign enemies, or the negligence of the bishops, had well nigh extinguished the virtue of religion in Gaul, and left nothing but the Christian Faith—when the medicine of penance and the love of mortification were found nowhere, or but with a few, ‘then’, says Jonas, ‘St. Columbanus descended on Gaul, supported by twelve associates, to arouse her from her torpor, and enlighten her sons with the beams of the most exalted piety. Twelve disciples followed St. Eloquius from Ireland to illumine the Belgians with the rays of faith; twelve accompanied St. Willibrod from Ireland to Germany; the pilgrimage and labours of St. Farrannan in Belgium were shared by twelve faithful brothers of the cowl; and the same number were fellow-exiles with St. Macallan. Perhaps the reason why the Irish clung with such invincible attachment to this custom, was the number of the apostles chosen by our Saviour, and the same number of disciples appointed by the Apostolic See to accompany Palladius to Ireland.

“ But it was not in companies of twelve alone that great men went forth from Ireland to plant or revive sound doctrine and discipline in foreign lands. Bodies far more numerous are also mentioned. St. Albert was accompanied by nineteen disciples; sixty accompanied St. Brendin in his voyage in search of the land of promise; St. Guigner, son of the King of Ireland, passed over to Britain with a noble band of seven hundred and seventy associates; and St. Blaithmac, son of the King of Ireland, was followed thither by a good number of monks. St. Donnanus led away from his country fifty-two associates. Twenty-four disciples of St. Ailbe were sent by him to propagate the faith in Ireland. St. Emilius brought to the aid of St. Fursa at Lagny, a large body of their countrymen, and gave him wonderful aid in instilling the grace of God into the souls of men. St. Seizen was accompanied by seventy disciples to Armoric Britain; and Alsace welcomed St. Florentius with Argobastus and Hildulph. Irish saints are always found toiling in strange lands, in smaller numbers, and fortifying them abundantly with the dew of their faith and virtues. In Italy there were Donatus of Fiesule, Andrew, and their sister St. Brigid of Opaca; in Picardy, SS. Caidoc and Fricorius, otherwise Adrian; at Rheims, SS. Gibrian, Tressan, Hoelan, Abram, German, Veran, Petroan, Promptia, Possenna, and Iruda; at Paris, Claude, Clement, and John; among the Morini (of Boulogne), SS. Vulgan, Kilian, and Obod; in the territory of Beauvais, SS. Maura and Brigid, virgins and martyrs, and their brother Hyspad; at Fusciria, SS. Marildis, virgin, and her brother Alexander. In Kleggon, a district in Germany, St. Northberga, with Sista and nine others of her children. At Ratisbon, SS. Marian, John, Candidus, Clement, Murcherdach, Mognoald, and Isaac. In Austrasia, SS. Kilian, Colonatus, and Totnan; and St. Cadroe and his associates at Walcedore. These devoted their lives to the instruction of the people, and were celebrated for the miraculous favours obtained by their intercession.

“ Though it would be too tedious to mention in detail the great number of our countrymen who were distinguished on the Continent for their marvellous works and the sanctity of their lives, it would be unpardonable to omit them altogether. Not taking into account those who were canonized in Britain, nor those who went over to the Continent in large bodies, we have in Italy, St. Cathaldus, patron of Tarentum, St. Donatus, patron of Fiesole, St. Emilian, patron of Faventum, and St. Frigidian of Lucca. Pavia honours John Albinus as the founder of her



university, and St. Cumean is, above all other Irish saints, the favourite patron of Bobbio.

“In Gaul, St. Mansuetus is patron of Tulle, St. Finlag, abbot of St. Simphonan, patron of Metz, and St. Præcordius of Corbie, situated between Amiens and Peronne. Amiens honours St. Forcensius, and Poitiers, St. Fridolinus, abbot of the monastery of St. Hilary. St. Elias is patron of Angouleme, St. Anatolius of Besançon, St. Fiacre of Meaux, St. Fursa of Peronne, and St. Laurence of Eu. Liege honours St. Momo, and Strasburg SS. Florentius and Arbogastus. In Bretagne, SS. Origin, Toava, Tenan, Gildas, Brioc, and many others are revered as patrons. In Rheims and the surrounding district SS. Gibrian, Heran, German, Veran, Abran, Petran, and three sisters, are held in the highest veneration. ‘In Burgundy, the vineyard of the Lord yielded an abundant harvest to the zeal of St. Columbanus, who founded there a great number of monasteries and colleges of monks, restored the true service of God, and left there after him Deicolus, Columbinus, and Anatolius’—Flodoard, *Hist. Rhemes*.

“In Burgundy also St. Maimbode is honoured as a martyr.

“In Belgium, you have, in Brabant, SS. Rumold, Fredegand, Himelin, Pympia, and Gerebernus. In Flanders, SS. Levin, Guthagon, Columbanus; in Artois, SS. Liugluio, Liuglianus, Kilian, Vulgan, Fursa, and Obodius; in Hainault, SS. Ette, Adalgisus, Abel, Wasnulp, and Mombolus; in Namur, SS. Farennan and Eloquius; in Liege, SS. Ultan, Foillan, and Bertuin; in Guedres, SS. Wiro, Plechelm, and Othger; in Holland, St. Hiero; in Friesland, SS. Suitbert and Acca.

“But Germany especially was the most flourishing vineyard of our saints. St. Albuin, or Witta, is honoured as apostle in Thuringia; St. Disibode at Treves; St. Erhard in Alsace and Bavaria; St. Fridolin, in the Grisons of Switzerland; St. Gall, among the Suabians, Swiss, and Rhoetians; St. John, in Mecklenburg; St. Virgil, at Salzburg; St. Kilian, in Franconia; St. Rupert, in part of Bavaria. From these saints these different places received the grace of faith and the sacred discipline of Christian virtue, and afterwards honoured the memory of their benefactors as the apostles of their nation. But these are not the only saints to whom the Germans send up their filial prayers; equal honours are paid by them to some others of our countrymen. St. Albert is honoured at Ratisbon, SS. Deicola and Fintan at Constance, and St. Eusebius in Coire. The town and canton of St. Gall took their name from our countryman St. Gall. ‘This monastery’, says Munster,

‘ was the school of the noble and the peasant, and the nursery of a great number of learned men; at one period it contained no less than one hundred and fifty students and brothers’. Ireland was, therefore, both the athenæum of learning and the temple of holiness, supplying the world with literati and Heaven with saints. Truly doth she appear the academy of the earth and the colony of Heaven. Was ever panegyric more appropriate than the words of Eric of Auxerre? “ Need I mention Ireland, who, despising the dangers of the deep, emigrates to our shores, with almost the whole host of her philosophers ; the most eminent among them become voluntary exiles to minister to the tastes of our wisest Solomon ?”

The great St. Columbanus is compared by Baronius to Elias the prophet; St. Gallus, the founder of the Abbey of Gall, is revered as the apostle of the Allemanni or Suevi; St. Kilian is venerated as the apostle and patron saint of Franconia; St. Aidan, bishop of Lindisfarne, is regarded as the apostle of Northumberland; St. Romuald, apostle of Mechlin; St. Virgilius, bishop and patron saint of Salzburg and apostle of Carinthia; St. Albuin or Witta, apostle of Thuringia; St. Alto, founder of Altmunster in Bavaria; John, Bishop of Mecklenburgh, apostle of Slavonia. The lives of any of these eminent Irishmen, and the services they rendered to religion and literature, would far exceed the limits of a lecture.

Our countryman, St. Donatus, who was bishop of Fiesole, in Tuscany, about the middle of the ninth century, thus commemorates the land of his birth:\*

“ Far westward lies an isle of ancient fame,  
By nature blessed, and Scotia is her name;  
Enroll’d in books; exhaustless is her store  
Of veiny silver and of golden ore.  
Her fruitful soil for ever teems with wealth,  
With gems her waters, and her air with health.  
Her verdant fields with milk and honey flow,  
Her woolly fleeces vie with virgin snow:

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\* For the original Latin verse, of which the above is a translation, see Usher's *Primordium*, p. 1060; Colgan's *Acta*, p. 238; Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 15; Lanigan, vol. iii., pp. 280, 281, etc. The reader must remember that Ireland was then called *Scotia*. In the cathedral of Fiesole, over the altar of St. Donatus, there is a picture of the saint in his pontifical robes, and attended by an Irish wolf-dog. For the inscription on his tomb, composed by himself, see Lanigan, vol. iii., p. 282.



Her waving furrows float with bearded corn,  
 And arms and arts her envied sons adorn.  
 No savage bear with lawless fury roves,  
 Nor rav'nous lion, thro' her peaceful groves ;  
 No poison there infects, no scaly snake  
 Creeps thro' the grass, nor frog annoys the lake :  
 An island worthy of its pious race,  
 In war triumphant, and unmatch'd in peace".

Another countryman, St. Colman, is revered as the patron saint of Austria, and in memory of his life and martyrdom an ode was written by John Stabius, historiographer of the Emperor Maximilian the First, of which the following is a translation :

" Undaunted Colman, greatly sprung  
 From royal ancestors, is sung.  
 Fair Austria's guardian, a star  
 From Scotia's western clime afar.  
 While he intent on pious calls  
 Passed to the Solymœan walls,  
 Abandoning his native soil  
 And rest, to combat foreign toil,  
 He scorn'd the regal pomp, the gem,  
 The sceptre, crown, and diadem ;  
 In other climes to serve the Lord,  
 An exile of his own accord.  
 Within his pure and faithful breast  
 He gain'd the mansions of the blest.  
 Through various nations as he pass'd  
 At Rhoetia's bounds arriv'd at last,  
*The goodly memorable sage*  
 A victim fell to pagan rage".\*

In fact, such was the reverence throughout Europe for Ireland, that Stephen White tells us that for the preceding one thousand years, "there was not one cathedral church from the Grisons to the German Ocean, in which the festival of St. Brigid of Kildare was not kept on the 1st of February". The same authority thus sums up the labours of our Irish continental apostles :

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\* For the Latin ode, see Harris's *Ware's Writers*, pp. 40, 41 ; also Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. iii., pp. 440, 441.

“ Among the names of saints whom Ireland formerly sent forth there were, as I have learned from the trustworthy writings of the ancients, one hundred and fifty now honoured as patrons of places in Germany, of whom thirty-six were martyrs ; forty-five Irish patrons in the Gauls, of whom six were martyrs ; at least thirty in Belgium ; forty-four in England ; thirteen in Italy ; and in Iceland and Norway eight martyrs, besides many others” —*Apologia*, Dr. Kelly's edition, p. 34.

For more extensive information on this subject I refer the reader to Colgan's *Acta Sanctorum*, Mabillon, the Bollandists, Ware, White's *Apologia, Cambrensis Eversus*, Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History, Calendar of the Irish Saints*, and Irish Histories, *passim*. On one subject more, intimately connected with the preceding, we will make a few observations, and then bring this lecture to a close. It was for many years a favourite study with Protestant antiquaries to prove that the ancient church of Ireland had been corrupted in the twelfth century ;\* that *Popery*, or *Romanism*, as they call it, had been introduced into Ireland with the Anglo-Norman invasion, and that previous to that time it was identical with Protestantism as at present professed. The great champion of this novelty was Dr. James Usher, Protestant Archbishop of Armagh, a man of great learning, wonderful research, deeply versed in the antiquities of his country, but who partook largely of the intolerant and persecuting spirit of the age. It is not our intention in the present lecture to unravel the varied tissue of sophistry by which Usher seeks to fence his position and to entangle his adversaries. We merely confine ourselves to a few leading arguments, from which it will be sufficiently conclusive that the faith of the ancient Irish and of their descendants is the same, in other words, that the Church of Ireland before the Anglo-Norman invasion professed the same truths and acknowledged the same visible authority which

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\* The latest theory makes the Irish Church be corrupted in the year 600. See a very able and learned article, in refutation of this assertion, in the *Dublin Review*, June, 1846. The Rev. M. J. Brennan's *Appendix*, Dr. Cullen's *Essay*, and this article in the *Review*, are very conclusive on this subject. I have in this lecture merely glanced at some of the leading arguments. The reader will also find abundant materials in Lanigan's and Carew's *Ecclesiastical Histories*.



the Church of Ireland professes and acknowledges at the present day.

That St. Patrick derived his mission and received his jurisdiction from Pope Celestine, is a fact testified to by all antiquity, and which Usher himself dare not deny. Thus in the fourth life of St. Patrick contained in Colgan's *Trias Thaumaturga*, we read, "Wherefore St. Germanus sent the blessed Patrick to Rome, that with the permission of the Bishop of the Apostolic See, he might go forth to preach, for order so requireth. But Patrick having arrived at Rome, was most honourably received by the holy Pope Celestine, and the relics of saints having been delivered to him, he was sent into Ireland by Pope Celestine".

Again, Eric in his life of St. Germain, writes: "Germain directed Patrick to the holy Celestine, Pope of the city of Rome, by means of Segetius, his priest, who was to give a testimony of ecclesiastical probity for this most excellent man before the Holy See; and having in its judgment been approved of, being supported by its authority and strengthened by its benediction, he repaired to the regions of Ireland". Nennius also states: "He (Patrick) is sent by Celestine, Pope of Rome, to convert the Scots (Irish) to the faith of Christ".

Now will any one for a moment believe that St. Patrick preached a different doctrine from that believed in and professed by Pope Celestine, from whom he received mission and jurisdiction? The doctrines, therefore, which St. Patrick taught to the Irish nation in the fifth century were those believed in and professed by Pope Celestine. Therefore the religion of the Irish of that century was identically the same as the religion of Rome.

2. St. Patrick left an heirloom to the Irish Church, which, in all the disputations which have agitated our island, has ever been referred to and obeyed. Now one of the canons established by him—and one too which should set all controversy at rest—was: "Si quæ questiones in hac insula oriantur, ad Sedem Apostolicam referantur". "If any religious disputes arise in our Church, let them be referred for decision to the Holy See". This canon is thus copied

by Usher from an ancient book of the Church of Armagh :<sup>\*</sup> "If any difficult cause should occur, which cannot be easily decided by the Irish Prelates and the See of Armagh, we have decreed that it shall be referred to the Apostolic See, that is, to the chair of the Apostle St. Peter, which hath the authority of the city of Rome".

Now no people in the world ever held so tenaciously what had been handed down by their apostle as the Irish nation. The adherence to this canon demonstrates it, and the Paschal controversy is an illustration of it. In this controversy there was no question of faith, but merely of discipline, and yet, before the Alexandrine cycle could be introduced to the Irish Church, the whole nation was in motion *because it had not been introduced by St. Patrick*. At first the Irish rejected the Alexandrine cycle as a novelty, because it did not correspond with what they had received from St. Patrick, and at the synod of Old Leighlin, when no conclusion could be arrived at regarding the Paschal question, it was proposed by the Fathers of the Irish Church, and instantly adopted by the whole assembly, to appeal to the Holy See, in accordance with the canon of St. Patrick and the traditions of our national Church. The elders said to their juniors: "They (that, is their predecessors) charged us to receive with humility, and without hesitation, whatever approved institutes are brought to us *from the fountain of our baptism* and of our wisdom, and from the successors of the apostles; it is therefore our desire that the festival of Easter be observed after the custom of the universal Church". It was resolved, therefore, that the controversy be referred to Rome, "the head of cities", and that for this purpose "some wise and humble persons should be sent to Rome, *as children to their mother*".

"It was decreed", as Cummián relates, "by our seniors, according to the command, that if any difference arise between cause and cause, and opinion vary between leprosy and no leprosy, they should go to the place which the Lord had chosen; and if the cause was one of the 'causæ majores', that it should be referred to the head of cities, according to

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<sup>\*</sup> See pages 138 and 139 of this volume, and Prof. O'Curry's comment.



the synodical canon" (see Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii., pp. 371, 387; Carew's *Ecclesiastical History; Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. ii., p. 631; Rev. Mr. Brennan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. appendix).

From the tenacity with which the Irish clung to a mere question of discipline, because they had received it from St. Patrick, we can imagine what a reclamation would have been raised, what resistance would have been given, if faith itself had been in danger.

3. In those early ages we have seen that vast numbers of young men flocked to Ireland from all parts of Europe, either to acquire knowledge or to lead stricter lives under the Irish monks. Will any one believe that the Irish masters professed a different religion from their pupils? If so, where is the proof? And if so, would British, Saxon, German, and French parents send their children to imbibe heresy, schism, or call it if you will a different form of Christianity, in our secluded island? And if so, again, why is not this fact animadverted upon, or even alluded to, by the venerable Bede, and others who bestow such eulogy on the learning and piety of the Irish monks? Why do not Lanfranc, St. Anselm, and St. Bernard, who inveigh against abuses, make no reference to the difference of doctrine? Therefore the religion of the ancient Irish was the same as the religion of Europe in those early ages.

4. From the sixth to the twelfth centuries Ireland sent forth swarms of holy men, who preached the Gospel on every European soil, and attracted universal respect in consequence of their piety and learning. Now, these Irish missionaries preached and taught abroad the doctrines which they imbibed and professed at home. Could any man in his senses doubt this fact? Could any one conceive that St. Columbanus, St. Gallus, St. Rumold, St. Virgilius, St. Donatus, St. Kilian, and the hosts of other Irish apostles so eulogised by ancient writers, so hallowed in the recollections of the Church, so venerated in the countries which were the scenes of their apostolic labours, that these learned and holy men, after having been educated in our monasteries, and after leaving home and country to preach the Gospel,

apostatized as soon as they landed on the Continent, and commenced teaching a different religion to that which they believed in and professed at home? Common sense rejects such an absurdity. Now what doctrine did they preach abroad? All the monuments of antiquity bear unmistakeable testimony to the identity of the faith of these missionaries with the churches of the Continent; and as all these churches acknowledged the primacy of the Holy See, therefore the Church of Ireland acknowledged it; as all these churches professed Catholic doctrine in its integrity, therefore the Church of Ireland professed it; as these Irish apostles have been always held in reverence and benediction by the Roman Church, therefore they were faithful in upholding her; and therefore, again, the religion of the ancient Irish in the centuries succeeding that in which St. Patrick lived, was the self-same as that of Rome and the churches subordinate to her, namely, the Catholic world.

This argument acquires additional strength from the fact that history has fortunately preserved the writings of some of our Irish continental apostles, and certainly no writer at the present day could express Catholic doctrine more significantly. We will take one example. St. Columbanus, the illustrious founder of Bobbio and of other monasteries, was an Irishman who flourished in the sixth and seventh centuries, and was undoubtedly one of the greatest men of his age. In his fourth epistle to Pope Boniface, St. Columbanus thus addresses him: "To the most lovely of all Europe, *to the Head* of all the Churches, to the beloved Father, to the exalted Prelate, to the Pastor of Pastors, etc.". In the body of this epistle he says: "For we, Irish, are disciples of St. Peter and St. Paul, and of all the divinely inspired canonical writers, adhering constantly to the faith and apostolic doctrine. Among us neither Jew, heretic, or schismatic can be found, *but the Catholic faith, entire and unshaken, precisely as we have received it from you*, who are the successors of the holy Apostles. For, as I have already said, we are attached to the Chair of Peter, and although Rome is great and renowned, yet with us it is great and distinguished *only on account of that Apostolic Chair*."



Through the two apostles of Christ ye are almost celestial, and *Rome is the head of all the churches in the world*". If this be not Catholicism, I know not what it is; and if to speak and write thus be *Popery* or *Romanism*, it demonstrates that Irishmen in the seventh as well as in the nineteenth century had the same belief on this matter.

5. The same is manifest from the acts of the Irish ecclesiastical councils, the lives of the Irish saints, the penitential canons, our ancient liturgies, and the whole course of our ecclesiastical history. In the old manuscripts coming to light, we find in every page mention of the Eucharistic sacrifice, the invocation of saints, prayers for the dead, confession, fasting, abstinence, and other works of mortification and devotion, which supply new proofs of the identity of our faith with that of our forefathers. As one proof out of many, the *Liber Hymnorum*, or *Book of Hymns of the Ancient Church of Ireland*, edited by the learned Dr. Todd, will amply demonstrate that there was nothing Protestant in the Church of our Fathers.

6. Should all history be silent—should no record have survived to chronicle or vindicate the past, our ancient crosses, our crumbling churches, and the very tombs of the departed, asking the prayers of the faithful, will supply abundant evidences of the Catholicity of the ancient Church of Ireland. It was the custom of our forefathers to erect the emblem of salvation along the highway and in the market-place, as well as in the lonely cemetery and on the church ground. Their object was to familiarise the mind with religion, and to raise up the heart when bowed down with the turmoil and cares of life. Who that visits Castlekieran, Kells, Castledermot, Clonmacnoise, Monasterboice, not to mention other places—who that examines their ancient crosses with the effigies of our Saviour and the saints, and on some of which prayers are asked for those who erected them—who that examines the very construction of our ancient churches, so exclusively adapted for Catholic worship—who that remembers how preëminently distinguished ancient Ireland was for convents and monasteries, and the vast number of her children who professed therein poverty,

chastity, and obedience—who that calls to mind how for ages the Iconoclasts of the Reformation waged war on the cross, and effaced, as far as they could, every beautiful image carved by our Catholic ancestors,—who, I say, that contemplates the ruins of our ecclesiastical edifices, but must be struck with their unfitness for Protestant uses, their antagonism with Protestant notions, their conformity with Catholic traditions, and the identity of ancient worship with the present faith and practices of the Catholics of Ireland? Yes, we were robbed of all in this world. The Catholic charities of our forefathers were torn from us and confiscated. Our churches were levelled, our altars overturned, and our sanctuaries profaned. Our priests were hunted to the caverns of the wilderness, and the same price was fixed upon them as upon the head of a wolf. After having robbed us, they reproached us with our poverty: after having burned our books, levelled our schools, and murdered or banished our teachers, they belied our history and taunted us with our ignorance. But, praise be to God! there was one gem which they could never pluck from us, one ray of glory and of light of which they could never deprive us; it cheered us in our sorrows, it consoled us in our afflictions, it dispelled the gloom which hung over us for many a weary day and through many a dismal night; it enriched us in our poverty, and kept alive the hopes of our race—it was the *Faith of our Fathers*.

“Faith of our Fathers! living still,  
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword!  
Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy  
Whene’er we hear that glorious word!  
Faith of our Fathers! holy Faith!  
We will be true to thee till death.

“Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,  
Were still in heart and conscience free;  
How sweet would be their children’s fate,  
If they, like them, could die for thee!  
Faith of our Fathers! holy Faith!  
*We will be true to thee till death”.*



# THE DIOCESE OF MEATH.

## CHAPTER I.

### ANCIENT MEATH.

THERE were anciently in Ireland four kingdoms in addition to the monarchy, viz. : Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connaught; and these were again subdivided into territories, each governed by a chief. In the second century, Meath\* was formed into a principality, as mensal lands to support the monarchy, by Tuathal† the Legitimate, king of Ireland, who, for this purpose, took a portion from each of the surrounding kingdoms. It originally extended from Dublin to the Shannon; from the centre of Ireland to the sea; and included Meath, Westmeath, a large part of the King's County,‡ and the County Longford, with portions of Dublin and Cavan. The present Diocese of Meath, the largest in Ireland, is almost coëxtensive with the ancient principality.

At the great national Synod of Kells, held in 1152, over which presided Cardinal Paparo, as legate *a latere* of Pope Eugene the Third, amongst other matters transacted, the sees of Meath, namely, Clonard, Duleek, Kells, etc., were assigned as suffragans to the archiepiscopal see of Armagh. Since that period Meath has belonged to the ecclesiastical province of Ulster, and after the union and consolidation of the ancient bishoprics, the prelates of Meath have ranked as

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\* Meath has been variously written *Meth*, *Midhe*, *Media*, and *Meidhe*. By some it is derived from *Media*, signifying its position in the midst of the provinces of Ireland. Others derive it from *Meidhe*, a neck; because the kingdom of Meath was formed from necks taken from the surrounding districts.

† His name was *Tuathal Teachtmhar*, i.e., Legitimate or Lawful King.

—See O'Donovan's *Four Masters*, at A.D. 106.

‡ The territory of Fercall, now part of the King's County, and that of Anahy, now Longford, belonged to ancient Meath.—See Harris's *Ware's Antiquities*, p. 31.

the first suffragans of Armagh.\* After the Anglo-Norman invasion, Henry the Second disposed of the principality of Meath in the following manner.†

“ Henry, by the grace of God, King of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Earl of Anjou, to the Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Earls, Barons, Justices, and to all his Ministers and faithful subjects, French, English, and Irish, of all his dominions, greeting: Know ye, that I have given and granted, and by this my charter confirmed unto Hugh de Lacy, in consideration of his services, the land of Meath, with the appurtenances: to have and to hold of me and my heirs, to him and his heirs, by the service of fifty knights, in as full and ample manner as *Murchard Hy-Melaghtlin* held it, or any other person before him or after him. And as an addition I give to him all fees, which he owes or shall owe to me about *Duvelin*, while he is my bailiff, to do me service in my city of *Duvelin*. Wherefore I will and strictly command, that the said Hugh and his heirs shall enjoy the same land, and shall hold all the liberties and free customs which I have or may have therein, by the aforesaid service, from me and my heirs well and peaceably, freely, quietly, and honourably, in wood and plain, in meadows and pastures, in waters and mills, in warrens and ponds, in fishings and huntings, in ways and paths, in seaports and all other places and things appertaining to the said land, with all liberties which I have therein or can grant or confirm to him by this my charter. Witness Earl *Richard*, son of *Gilbert*, *William de Braosa*, etc., at *Weisford*”.

King John confirmed this grant to Walter de Lacy, the son of Hugh, in the ninth year of his reign. The Lacys made extensive grants of land in the principality of Meath, to the Petits, Fitzhenrys, Nangles, Tuites, de la Chappelles, de Constantines, de Feipos, de Nugents, de Missets, de Hoses (Husseys), Dullards, Flemings, etc.; and as the old Irish nobility were driven from their inheritances, their lands were divided amongst Anglo-Norman adventurers, and thus a new class of men was subsidized, the future lords of the

\* “*Episcopus Midensis*”, says de Burgo, “*primus semper est, provinciæ Armacanæ suffraganeus, quanquam enim inter ceteros Hiberniæ Episcopus esset consecratione junior, eos nihilominus loco præcederet*”—*Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 86.

† Harris's *Ware's Antiquities*, pp. 192, 193.



English pale, whose traditionary prejudices and sympathies were thoroughly anti-Irish, until the penal enactments and sweeping confiscations of the Reformation placed all such as were faithful to the religion of their ancestors outside the pale of the law. In 1210 King John formed the kingdom of Meath into a county,\* and united it in *civilibus* to the province of Leinster. By the 34th of Henry the Eighth, Meath was divided† into the counties of Meath and Westmeath, because its proportions had been found too extensive for one sheriff. In the reign of Philip and Mary, the King's County was formed,‡ and in 1565, time of Queen Elizabeth, the territory of Analy, which had belonged to the principality of Meath, was formed into the present county of Longford.

There are many historic associations connected with ancient and royal Meath. Here stood the palace of Tara, long the seat of royalty, whither resorted the kings, princes, and chieftains, the bards, druids, and brehons of the various kingdoms of Ireland. Uisneach in Westmeath, Tlachtgha, or the Hill of Ward, near Athboy, and Teltown, on the Blackwater, are celebrated for their royal palaces, their pagan games, their solemn conventions, and their Druidic ceremonies. In Meath stood the royal cemetery of *Brugh-na-Boinne*,§ “the town or fort of the Boyne”, where the great princes of the Tuatha de Danaan race chose to sleep after the turmoil and toil of life. Newgrange, by its remote antiquity, is still, like the pyramids of Egypt, the wonder and puzzle of the antiquarian tourist. Pagan cromlechs,

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\* Harris's edition of *Ware's Antiquities*, p. 31. Besides counties, there were other districts called *crocea* or *cross-lands*, in which Bishops and Abbots had extensive jurisdictions. Thus we read of the *Crocea Villæ de Navan*, *Crocea Midiæ*, etc. The sheriffs of counties were distinct from these of the cross-lands.—See Harris's *Ware's Antiquities*, p. 32.

† *Stat. 34, Hen. VIII.*, sess. 1, ch. 1. *Ware's Antiquities*, p. 31.

‡ *Stat. 3, 4, Philip and Mary*, ch. 2. It took place about 1556.

§ By some antiquarians the pagan cemetery of *Brugh* is supposed to have been in the vicinity of Stackallen Bridge. It appears to me that Dr. Wilde assigns very satisfactory reasons for supposing it to have stood on the right bank of the Boyne, convenient to the ford of Ros-na-righ (Rosnaree), in other words, at Knowth, Dowth, and Newgrange. For the pagan princes of the Tuatha de Danaan race who were buried at *Brugh*, see *Round Towers of Ireland*, p. 101. See also *The Boyne and Blackwater*, pp. 185, 186, etc.

circular raths, military forts, mounds, and tumuli, scattered over Meath, are existing monuments of its primitive history, pagan worship, and the stern determination of its chieftains to uphold and defend the rights and prerogatives of their clans. The battle-fields of Meath are closely interwoven with the most important epochs of our civil history; for the fertile plains of *Midhe* and the flowery fields of *Bregia* have attracted every wave of invaders, from the days of Partholan to the troopers of William the Third.

But, if Meath has been the seat of royalty—if her annals teem with deeds of blood, sceptres fallen, hopes extinguished, and fresh resolves—neither are they silent regarding her great monastic schools, her religious preëminence, and the heroic fidelity with which her children, during the long night of bondage and persecution, have preserved and handed down the “sacred deposit” of faith. The ruins of her abbeys, priories, convents, churches, and oratories, demonstrate the ample provision made in the ages of faith for charity, education, and religion; while the architectural beauty of many of her temples vindicates her ancient civilization, and are monuments of her zeal and self-sacrifice for the worship of God.

About the year 433 St. Patrick entered the mouth of the Boyne, and having landed with his companions, proceeded on foot to *Ferta Ferfeig*, “the graves of the men of Feig”—now called Slane—where he caused a tent to be erected and the Paschal fire to be kindled, it being Holy Saturday, in accordance with the tradition and practice of the Church.\* It happened that at that very time a pagan festival was about to be celebrated at the royal palace of Tara, and there was a standing law strictly forbidding any fire to be kindled for a considerable distance around, until a great fire should be visible on the heights of Tara. The appearance of the Paschal fire kindled on the hill of Slane by St. Patrick filled Laeghaire, monarch of Ireland, and his whole court with rage and astonishment; and this led to St. Patrick’s interview with the king, and his promulgation† of the Gospel, like St. Paul

\* Lanigan’s *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i., pp. 224, 225, etc.

† St. Patrick preached at Tara, according to the most probable opinion, on



at the Areopagus, before the princes, brehons, and chief men of the nation. On Easter Monday, same year, St. Patrick went from Tara to Teltown, where the public games were celebrated, and where the chiefs who assembled at Tara had adjourned, and here he remained for a week preaching, converting, baptizing; so that in Royal Meath occurred the first remarkable conversion of the Irish people to Christianity.

*Tara, Tlachtgha, Uisneach, and Teltown*, once the resort of kings and princes, are now desolate indeed; their glory is gone; flocks and herds roam over their solitudes; they exist alone in the neglected records of the country and in the traditions of the people. The sceptre has passed from Ireland; her national independence is extinct, and the hand of the spoiler lies heavy upon her. But there is one royalty that has never been extinguished—one heirloom remains of brighter and happier days, which neither the sword, nor the scaffold, nor the wiles of subtle and astute statesmen, nor all the diplomacy and machinations of this world could weaken or dissolve—the independence of her hierarchy and her national faith. Of the sacred fire which St. Patrick kindled on the hill of Slane it is said the Magi remarked: “Unless that fire which we behold be extinguished this night, it will live for ever”. It was not extinguished, and the faith which it symbolized burns as brightly to-day, and sheds a light as earnest and lustrous, as in the most brilliant and most glorious epochs of the history of our Church.

There were anciently eight episcopal sees in the present diocese of Meath, viz., *Clonard, Duleek, Kells, Trim, Ardbraccan, Dun-haughlin, Slane, and Fore*. All these dioceses, except Duleek and Kells, were consolidated, and

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Easter Sunday, the 2nd of April, 433. For the hymn which St. Patrick chanted, journeying from Slane to Tara, see *Transactions of Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xviii. A metrical translation of this hymn, by C. Mangan, was published in *Duffy's Catholic Magazine*. On Easter Monday St. Patrick visited Teltown, and on Easter Wednesday he performed, at or near Teltown, his first solemn baptism in Ireland. The festival of *St. Patrick's baptism*, that is, the first solemn baptism administered by him, was celebrated on the 5th of April. See *Lanigan*, vol. i., p. 233. *Martyrology of Tallaght*, p. 3.

\* “Hic ignis, quem videmus—nisi extinctus fuerit hac nocte, non extinguetur in æternum”—*Probus*, l. 1, c. 35.

their common see fixed at Clonard before 1152. There were other sees in Meath of minor consequence,\* and there were abbey-churches, where distinguished ecclesiastics were occasionally promoted to the episcopal rank,† thus:

588. St. Aedh, Bishop of Killare, in Meath (now Westmeath), died on the 10th of November.

709. Tethghal, Bishop of Lynally, died on the 16th of April.

769. Forannan, scribe and Bishop of Trevet, died.

783. Dubhdathuath, Bishop and Abbot of Rahugh (in Westmeath), died.

837. Egnech of Kildalkey, Bishop, Abbot, and scribe, was killed with his people by the Gaileanga.

837. Cormac, Bishop and scribe of Cill-Foibrech (Kilbrew), died.

\* Skryne and Kilskyre are occasionally noted as sees.

† Many of these bishops were no doubt *chorepiscopi*. The Council of Kells, in 1152, decreed that according as the *chorepiscopi* and bishops of smaller sees died, archpresbyters were to be appointed by the diocesans in their stead to preside over rural deaneries.—Wilkins' *Concilia*, etc., vol. i. p. 547. In reference to these *chorepiscopi*, who were very numerous in the ancient Irish Church, Rev. Mr. Brennan remarks: "They (the *chorepiscopi*) were regularly ordained or consecrated bishops, without possessing the canonical episcopal jurisdiction over a see or district. Many of them had been stationed in the large monasteries, some were attached to the cathedral church, and assisted the ordinary in several of his offices; and numbers of them had the pastoral care of rural districts; still, however, subject to the jurisdiction of the ordinary of the diocese. Agreeably to the canons of the Council of Nice, three bishops, at least, should be present at the episcopal ordination; but it appears that the *chorepiscopi* used to be consecrated by the bishop, properly so called, or ordinary of the diocese, without any application having been made for the assistance of other bishops. That this was lawful and customary appears from the tenth canon of the Council of Antioch; and Bingham states that the city-bishops, or ordinaries, were accountable for the ordination of the country-bishops (*chorepiscopi*) to a provincial synod. By the canons of the Church the ordinaries were not allowed, except on some very urgent occasions, to leave the sees to which they had been originally appointed; whereas, on the contrary, the *chorepiscopi* were not unfrequently removed from one district or province to another, which removal serves very often to indicate whether the person was an ordinary or a *chorepiscopus*, particularly in cases where history observes a profound silence as to the fact"—*Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. p. 192, 193. See also Lanigan, vol. ii. pp. 128, 318; vol. iii. p. 477; vol. iv. p. 80. Carew's *Ireland*, chap. iv.

There were other bishops in ancient Meath besides those referred to above. St. Cethecus, a disciple of St. Patrick, was Bishop of Domnach-sarige, near Duleek; St. Mogenoch, of *Kildumhagloinn* (in Brehmugia), was bishop and abbot in the sixth century; St. Carban, after whom *Fear-tachearbain* was called, near Tara, was bishop in the fifth century; St. Ossan, after whom *Rathossain*, was a bishop, and died on the 17th of February, 686.



843. Gormghal, Bishop and anchorite of Lann-Leire, died.  
 865. Conall of Kilskyre, Bishop, died.  
 868. Comsudh, Abbot of Castlekieran, scribe and Bishop, died.  
 884. Eochaidh, Bishop of Lynally (King's County), ended his days at an advanced age.  
 898. Suairleach, anchorite and Bishop of Trevet, died.  
 900. Maelcinain, Bishop of Lann-Leire, died.  
 902. Ferghill (Virgilius), Bishop of Fennor (near Slane), and Abbot of Indenen, died.  
 919. Ciaran, Bishop of Dulane, died.  
 923. Maelpoil, Bishop, anchorite, and (best) scribe of Leath-Chuin (the northern half of Ireland, or Conn's half), and Abbot of Indenen, died.  
 964. Dubhdabhoireann, distinguished Bishop of Magh-Breagh, and successor of Buite, died.  
 1047. Cathernach, Bishop from Teach-Collain (Stackallen), died at Hy, on pilgrimage.

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## CHAPTER II.

### DIOCESE OF CLONARD.

THERE are few places in Ireland with which so many remembrances are connected, or which were so closely identified with the literary and religious glories of our native country, as the ancient and far-famed Monastery of Clonard. Slane was a great religious establishment in its day; so, too, were Duleek, Ardbraconn, Kells, Trim, Dunshaughlin, and Fore. They were the centres of the various dioceses into which the ancient kingdom of Meath was subdivided. Rahan, Durrow, Fennor, Kilskyre, Trevet, Skryne, Dulane, Castlekieran, Donaghpatrick, Donaghmore, Lann-Leire, not to mention other places, were pillars of light in the war of religion with the powers of darkness. And, in subsequent years, the great abbeys of Bective, Athboy, Ballybogan, Beaubec, Drogheda (Meath side), Kilmainhambeg, Lis-

mullen, Navan, Newtown, Odder, Ballinamore, Kilbeggan, Mullingar, Multifernham, and Tristernagh, perpetuated the literary and religious renown of Meath, shed lustre on the Pale, and handed down, through generations, the sacred deposit of Faith. Yet, over all these homes of sanctity, above all these halls of science and learning, towered, like a colossal mountain, the genius and piety of Clonard. Its schools rivalled for centuries those of Armagh, Bangor, Clonmacnoise, and Lismore. It trained up some of the ablest scholars, sent forth from its peaceful shades the greatest ornaments and lights; and, as an indication of the esteem in which it was held, as a proof of its recognized career of usefulness, few abbeys were more frequently plundered, bore more vivid traces of the cupidity and Vandalism of the ruthless Scandinavian, or were more generously rebuilt and reëndowed by the faithful and grateful Irish, than the great Abbey of Clonard.

Clonard indeed is gone, Lismore is gone, Armagh, Clonmacnoise, Bangor, Glendalough, Kildare, Devenish—all these ancient landmarks have been swept away. The hand of the spoiler has torn up these sanctuaries of the faith and charity of our fathers. Their halls are no longer filled; the door of hospitality is no longer open to the poor man, the traveller, or the wayfarer. Silence, the silence of the grave, reigns around these holy places, where the cheerful laugh of youth, the pious chant of the monks, the sacred song and the holy sacrifice, amidst incense and ceremony, once resounded. All that the powers of this world could effect has been done. The monastery, the gorgeous temple, the abbey church have disappeared. The abbey lands have been seized, the patrimony of the poor was confiscated. As if to show the strength of God's word, the interposition of His providence, and His merciful designs for the Irish nation, all the external aids which the charity and philanthropy of past ages have conferred on religion, were permitted by Him to be torn away.

The village of Clonard is situated in the barony of Upper Moyfenragh, county of Meath, being eleven miles and a half (w.) from Kilcock, and twenty-six miles (w. by N.)



from Dublin. Archdall tells us in his *Monasticon*\* that the original name of this place was Ross-Finnchuil, "The wood or shrubbery of the white hazel".

In the *Annals of the Four Masters*, and other ancient authorities, it is called "Cluain-Iraird", or "Cluain-Erard", which meant, according to Sir James Ware and Vallancey, "the retirement on the western heights"; but, most probably, according to Colgan and O'Donovan, "Erard's lawn or meadow".

## ST. FINIAN.

St. Finian, the distinguished founder of Clonard, was a native of Leinster, but of what precise place is not exactly known. Most probably it was near the Barrow, and not far from the present New Ross.† The name of his father was Fintan, of the race of Loschain—that of his mother, Talech. His parents are said to have been Christians at the time of his birth. In the office of St. Finian we read:

"Nativus de Lageniâ  
Qui sprexit nomen regium  
Hic sumpsit infra moenia  
Legendi privilegium".

He was baptized by St. Abban, received an ecclesiastical education from a Bishop Fortkern, probably Bishop of Trim, after which he spent some time with the venerable Cayman of Darinis.‡ Having arrived at a suitable age, he proceeded to Tours;§ and, on his return, spent a considerable time at Kilmuine, in Britain—a name which the Irish applied to Menevia, or St. David's, in Wales.|| While in this place he founded three churches, and became acquainted with three distinguished Britons, whose names often occur in our ancient ecclesiastical history. These were David, Gildas, and Cadoc or Docus.¶

David is said to have been the grandson (by his mother,

\* Pages 525 and 526.

† Lanigan, vol. i. p. 466.

‡ Usher's *Primordium*, p. 908. Usher, Ware, Colgan, and Lanigan.

§ Office of St. Finian.

|| *Acta Sanctorum*, p. 402.

¶ Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. pp. 469, 489, etc.]

whose name was Melari) to an Irish prince named Brecan, and nephew to St. Canoc of Gallen. He was the tutor of St. Aidan, or Maidoc of Ferns, became first bishop of Menevia, and died about the year 589.

Gildas was the son of a chieftain near the Clyde, and born about the year 490. After being educated in his native country, and wishing to improve himself still more in philosophy and theology, he proceeded to the schools of Armagh, where he so distinguished himself as to become a professor there for some time. He afterwards lectured at Lincarvan, near the Severn, and superintended its schools for one year. He was the author of a celebrated epistle, and of a history, *De Excidio Britanniæ*, and died, according to the *Annals of Ulster*, in the year 570.

Cadoc, or Docus, as he is variously called, was a cousin to St. David. His father's name was Gundlaeus, a chieftain of South Britain. His mother's name was Gladusa, daughter of Brecan, and sister to Melari, mother of St. David. He was instructed by St. Thaddeus, an Irishman, who kept a celebrated school at Caer-went, in Monmouthshire.\* After this he founded the monastery of Lincarvan; and, having acquired a considerable property from his father, gave gratuitous education, and dispensed charity to vast numbers of the poor. He died in his monastery about the year 570.

As the names of these eminent men must be familiar to the student of Irish monastic history, and their acquaintance with St. Finian being mentioned with emphasis by all the ancient compilers of his life, I thought it not out of place to give a brief sketch of their lives.

After spending some years at Kilmuine, St. Finian returned to Ireland, accompanied by some religious Britons, two of whom, Biteus and Genoc, are particularly mentioned, who were much attached to him. He next visited his friend Cayman, at Darinis, after which he landed at Kille-Caireni, in the present county of Wexford. His subsequent movements are thus detailed by the learned and judicious Lanigan:†

\* Lanigan, p. 489.

† *Ecclesiastical History*, i. p. 465.



“Thence he sent messengers to Muiredach, sovereign of Hy-Kinsellagh, requesting permission to enter his territory. The prince, highly rejoiced at his arrival, went to visit him, and throwing himself at his feet, told him that wherever he would wish to erect a church, he should not want ground for that purpose. Finian then set about his mission, erected some churches, and established a religious community at a place called Achadh-abhla. Hence he went to the district of Hy-barche, and formed an establishment at Magna, in which he gave lectures on the Holy Scriptures for seven years. It is related that on a certain occasion he preached before St. Brigid and her nuns; whence it appears that he had returned to Ireland some years before her death; for, according to the series of the narrative, this circumstance is placed after several other transactions of his subsequent to his return. It is very probable that his return was prior to even A.D. 520, although he did not remove to Clonard until, perhaps, about 530. Before his settling there, he is said to have been in some other places besides the above-mentioned. Clonard was the scene of his greatest exertions and celebrity”.

According to Harris, St. Finian was seated at Clonard in 520. Usher places this event at 544. The most probable year seems to have been 530. Usher quotes from a registry of the diocese of Meath, that St. Finian got the domain of Clonard from St. Kieran of Clonmacnoise. By other authorities Clonard is said to have been a desert when St. Finian founded his monastery, and by the untiring labours of the monks it was converted into a rich and luxuriant soil. However that may be, it is certain that the monastery of Clonard became one of the greatest schools in Europe. Venerable Bede bears testimony to its learning and to the hospitality with which foreign students who crowded thither were entertained. It was frequented by youths not only from Ireland and the British Isles, but even from Armorica and Germany, so that the number at one time was computed at three thousand.

Thus, in the *Office of St. Finian*, we read—

“Trium virorum millium  
Sorte sit doctor humilis;  
Verbi his fudit fluvium  
Ut fons emanans rivulis.

En hic rexit in literis  
 Viæ vicimus regiæ  
 Hic se jungebat superis  
 Hic transfertur egregii”.

Some of the greatest names in the Annals of Ireland are recorded as having studied scripture and theology under St. Finian of Clonard; St. Columbkil, the apostle of the Picts; St. Kieran, the founder of Clonmacnoise; the Venerable Kieran, of Saigar, over whose head had then passed nearly one hundred winters; the great St. Brendan, of Clonfert, and his namesake, of Birr, who is characterized as a “prophet and one of the leading men in the schools of Ireland”; St. Molua, the founder of Clonfert-Molua; St. Canice, after whom the city of Kilkenny derives its name; St. Columb, of Tirdaglass, and numberless others, were enrolled as the pupils of St. Finian of Clonard.\* The Four Masters call him “tutor of the saints of Ireland”. Sir James Ware says that his school was a “sacred repository of wisdom”, and that he was called “Finian the Wise”. In a life of his, quoted by Usher, he is called “chief among the saints of the second class”; and according to all ancient authorities, he was a profound commentator on the Scriptures, and, by his learning and holiness of life, elevated the literary and religious fame of his country. One of the hymns anciently sung at his festival begins thus:†

“Exultamus Finiano  
 Jubilemus diluculo  
 Cujus dogma fuit favo  
 Prædulcius in populo”.

And another thus:

“Regressus in Clonardiam  
 Ad Cathedram Lecturæ  
 Apponit Diligentiam  
 Ad Studium Scripturæ”.

\* Usher's *Primordium*, p. 909.

† Ware's *Writers of Ireland*, p. 13



In a fragment of his life, quoted by Sir James Ware, we read :\*

“ In a place called Cluanaraird, St. Finian, like the sun in the firmament, enlightened the world with the rays of his virtues, of wholesome doctrine and miracles. For the fame of his good works invited many illustrious men from divers parts of the world to his school, as to a holy repository of all wisdom, partly to study the sacred Scriptures, and partly to be instructed in ecclesiastical discipline”.

And in the *Life of Saint Molua* :†

“ He came to the holy school of St. Finian, in his own city, which stands on the borders of Leinster, and of the Sept of Neill, in which school a great multitude of the holy men of Ireland studied divinity under the care of St. Finian”.

In O’Clery’s *Irish Calendar* the following notice is given of him :‡

“ St. Finnen, Abbot of Clonard, son of Finnlogh, son of Fintan, of the Clanna-Rudhraighe. He was a philosopher and an eminent divine, who first founded the College of Clonard, in Meath, near the Boyne, where there were one hundred bishops, and where, with great care and labour, he instructed many celebrated saints, among whom were the two Kierans, the two Brendans, the two Columbs, viz., Columbkille and Columb Mac Crimthain, Lasserian, son of Nadfraech, Canice, Mobheus, Rodanus, and many others not here enumerated. His school was in quality a holy city, full of wisdom and virtue, according to the writer of his life, and he himself obtained the name of Finnen the Wise. He died on the 12th of December, in the year of our Lord 552, or, according to others, 563, and was buried in his own church at Clonard”.

St. Finian was distinguished for his austere mode of living. His usual food was bread and herbs; his drink water. On festival days he sometimes used fish and a cup of beer or whey. He slept on the bare ground, having a stone as his pillow. He was attended in his last illness by St. Columb of Tirdaglass, and died at Clonard on the 12th of December, 552. It is a matter of uncertainty whether

\* Ware’s *Antiquities of Ireland*, p. 241.

† Ibidem.

‡ Note to O’Donovan’s *Four Masters*.

St. Finian was Bishop, or simply Abbot. Ware calls him first bishop of Clonard. In the Life of St. Columb of Tirdaglass, quoted by Colgan,\* he is expressly called bishop. He seems also to have been the Bishop Finian alluded to in the Life of St. Colman. Mention is made, too, in the prayer for his Office, of his episcopal dignity, although there is no allusion to it in the Lessons. On the other hand, the Four Masters call him simply Abbot, although they designate his successor, Senachus, who died in 588, as Bishop of Clonard. The Prelates of Clonard being called Comorbans, or successors of Finian, would lead one to infer that Finian was likewise Bishop. The Four Masters place his death at 548. "St. Finnen, Abbot of Clonard, tutor of the saints of Ireland, died". The most probable year of his death seems to have been 552.†

#### ANNALS OF CLONARD.

548. St. Finnen, Abbot of Clonard, Tutor of the Saints of Ireland, died.

587. St. Seanach,‡ Bishop of Clonard, died.

St. Fiachrius,§ Abbot of Clonard, and also of Conwall in Donegal, died March 29th, between the years 582 and 652.

652. St. Colman, the Bishop, Abbot of Clonard, died on the 8th of February.

Same year St. Ossenius, Abbot of Clonard, died on the 1st of May.

664. St. Ultan, Abbot of Clonard, died this year of the plague. There died very many ecclesiastics and laics in Ireland

\* *Acta Sanctorum*, p. 404.

† The *Annals of Inisfallen* place his death at 551. See Lanigan, vol. ii., p. 24. There was a Festival of St. Finian on the 23rd of February, and another at his Natalis, or the day of his death, on the 12th of December. On the 12th of December Ængus commemorates him thus:—

"A tower of gold over the sea  
(May he bring help to my soul)  
Is Finnian fair, the beloved root  
Of the great Cluian Iraid". *Calendar of Irish Saints*, p. 78.

‡ St. Senach died on the 21st of August. See *Acta Sanctorum*, p. 406; *Martyrology of Tallaght*.

§ The Festival of St. Fiachra, Abbot of Clonard, is marked in the *Martyrology of Tallaght* at the 8th of February.



of this mortality, and amongst others St. Aileran\* the Wise, who was chief professor of the schools of Clonard. He wrote the lives of St. Patrick, St. Brigid, and St. Fechin of Fore (see Ware's *Writers of Ireland*, p. 36).

700. Colman O'Heirc, Abbot of Clonard, died.

716. Dubhduin O'Frelain, Bishop and Abbot of Clonard, died.

726. Aelchu, Abbot of Clonard, died.

731. Fianamuil, Abbot of Clonard, died.

733. St. Tola, Bishop of Clonard, a worthy soldier of Christ, died.

740. Forannan, Abbot of Clonard, died.

743. Dodimog, Abbot of Clonard and Kildare, died.

746. The burning of half the granary of Clonard.

755. Ailgnio, Prior-Abbot of Clonard, died.

758. Beclaitnae, Abbot of Clonard, died.

760. Loarn, Abbot of Clonard, died.

767. Aerlaidh, of Clonard, died.

771. Gaeidheal, of Clonard, died.

774. Fulartach, Bishop of Clonard, died.

778 (recte 783). Faelghus, a wise man of Clonard, died.

782 (recte 787). Dubhdabhoireann, Abbot of Clonard, died.

784 (recte 789). Clonard was burned on Easter night precisely.

788 (recte 793). Crunnmhael of Druim-Inesglainn (Drumiskin, county Louth), Abbot of Clonard, died.

791 (recte 796). Clotchchu, Bishop and anchorite of Clonard, died.

794 (recte 799). Clonard was burned in the beginning of summer.

800 (recte 805). Dubhdabhoireann O'Dubhain, Abbot of Clonard, died.

818. Crunnmhael, Abbot of Clonard, died.

824. Clemens, Bishop, Abbot of Clonard, died.

828. Cormac, Abbot of Clonard, scribe and bishop, died.

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\* There is a prayer composed by St. Aileran in the *Yellow Book of Lecain*, at present in Trinity College, Dublin. Fleming, in his *Collecta Sacra*, has published a fragment of a Latin tract of Aileran, discovered in the ancient Monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland, which is entitled *The Mystical Interpretation of the Ancestry of our Lord Jesus Christ*. See O'Curry's *Lectures*, p. 379. "A perfect copy of this curious tract, and one of high antiquity, has been lately discovered on the Continent"—*Lectures*, p. 379. Lanigan, vol. iii., p. 54.

833. Eoghan of Monasterboice,\* Abbot of Armagh and Clonard, died.

837. Ruaidhri, Prior† of Clonard, and abbot of other churches too, died.

840. The destruction of Clonard by the foreigners.

856. Comsadh, Bishop and Abbot of Clonard, died.

857. A great meeting of the chieftains of Ireland was convened this year, by Maelseachlainn the Monarch, at Rahugh (Westmeath); the Bishop of Armagh and Suairleach, Bishop of Clonard, attended for the purpose of uniting them in peace and harmony.

860. Dalach, Abbot of Clonard, died.

862. Conor, son of Donchadh, lord of Meath, was drowned at Clonard, by Aulave, king of the Danes.

868. Suairleach of Eidhnen, Bishop, anchorite, and Abbot of Clonard, doctor in divinity and in spiritual wisdom, in piety and in good deeds, so that his name spread all over Ireland, died.

879. Aedhan, Abbot of Clonard, died.

881. Ailbrend, successor of Finnen of Clonard, died.

882 (recte 885). Cormac, Bishop of Duleek and Abbot of Clonard, died.

883. Clothchu, Prior of Clonard, died.

885. Cucongalta, Abbot of Clonard, died.

887. The plundering of Kildare and Clonard by the Danes.

919. Ruman Mac Cathasach, Bishop of Clonard, died. It was for him this quatrain was composed:—

“Shrine of wisdom, illustrious, acute, a man of virgin purity,  
By the hosts of people assembled was he loved, Ruman, son  
of Cathasach the amiable”.

924. Colman Mac Ailill,‡ Abbot of Clonard and Clonmacnoise, a bishop and wise doctor, died. It was by him the Daimhliag (cathedral church) of Clonmacnoise was built; he was of the tribe of Conailli-Muirtheimhne.

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\* This Eoghan or Eugenius of Monasterboice is set down, by the Psalter of Cashel, as Archbishop of Armagh.

† The Prior was Vice-Abbot.

‡ See Petrie's *Round Towers*, pages 266, 267, and 268. One of the inscriptions of the Cross of Clonmacnoise, erected by this Abbot Colman, to commemorate the Monarch Flann, son of Maelsechlainn, runs thus (translated into English):—“A prayer for Colman, who made this cross on the King Flann”. Another thus:—“A prayer for Flann, son of Maelsechlainn”. These inscriptions speak unmistakeably of the Catholicity of the ancient Church of Ireland.



"The tenth year, a just decree, joy and sorrow reigned,  
Colman of Cluain, the joy of every tower, died". . . .

930. Ferdomnach, son of Flanagan, Abbot of Clonard, died.

940. September 9th, Maelmochta, scribe and Abbot of Clonard, died. He was the head of the piety and wisdom of Ireland.

"Maelmochta, of the plain of Meath—  
Great grief is the beauteous sweet branch,—  
The chief of the spiritual direction,  
The centre of the praise of Mugain".

942. Maelfeichine, Abbot of Clonard, died. Same year died Dubthach, Professor of Clonard.

949. The freedom of Clonard (was granted) by Conghalach, Monarch of Ireland, no king or prince having claim of coigny upon it.

951. Anghal, Professor of Clonard, died.

952. Celeachair, successor of Finnen and Ciaran (Bishop of Clonard and Clonmacnoise), died.

954. Maenach, successor of Finnen and Professor of Armagh, died.

970. Clonard, Fore, Lann-Eala, and Disert-Tola, were burned and plundered by Domhnall Mac-Murchadh.

971. Becan, successor of Finnen (Bishop of Clonard), died.

973 (recte 975). Artghal, successor of Comhghall and Finnen (i.e., Abbots of Bangor and Clonard), died, after a long and virtuous life.

992 Tuathal, successor of Finnen and Mocholmoe (i.e., of Clonard and Dromore), a wise man and governor, died.

996. Clonard and Kells were plundered by the Danes of Dublin.

1007. Feardomnach, successor of Finnen of Clonard, died.

1010 (recte 1011). Fachtna, successor of Finnen of Clonard, died.

1012. The Danes set fire to this abbey.

1013 (recte 1014). Flaithbheartach, successor of Ciaran and Finnen, died.

1018 (recte 1019). Domhnall, successor of Finnen and Mocholmog, died.

1019 (recte 1020). The Termon of Clonard was plundered by the Ui-Frelain.

1020. Clonard, Clonmacnoise, and many other abbeys were burned this year by the Danes.

1025. Maelbrighde, successor of Finnen and Comhgall, died.
1028. Tuathal, Bishop of Clonard, died. (Note, his death is also entered in the *Four Masters* at 1030).
1031. Cathasach, successor of Finghin, was blinded.
1039. The cloictheach (the steeple or round tower belfry) of Clonard fell.
1043. Ceallach O'Cleirchan, successor of Finnen and Mocholmog, died on his pilgrimage at Armagh.
1045. Clonard was thrice burned in one week, with its daimhliag (great stone church or cathedral).
1047. Maelmoicheirghe, Professor of Clonard, died.
1048. Feardomhnach, successor of Finnen, was killed.
1052. Echthighern, successor of Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, and of Comman, died on his pilgrimage at Clonard.
1055. Tuathall, successor of Finnen of Clonard, died.
1061. Tighearnach Boircheach, chief confessor of Ireland, anchorite, and successor of Finnen, died of the plague.
1070. Ailill O'Harretaigh, chief successor of Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, died on his pilgrimage at Clonard.
1073. Clonard and Kells, with their churches, were all burned in one month.
1075. Clonard with its oratory was burned.
1085. Ænghus O'Candelbain, Lord of Laeghaire, was slain at Clonard, after he had entered into religion (he became a monk), by M'Coirthen O'Maelruain, Lord of Delvin (in West Meath).
1090. Ingnadan, Professor of Clonard, was killed.
1092. Muircheartach, successor of Finnen of Clonard, died.
1095. Clonard, Durrow, Kells, Glendaloch, Fore, Lismore, and other places, were all burned.
1102. Maelmuire Midheach, a learned priest of Clonard, died.
1114. Clonard, Fore, Cong, and other places, were all burned this year.
1116. Clonard was again burned in the beginning of the Lent of this year.
1117. Conor O'Follovan, Coarb of Clonard, died.
- Same year—Maelmuire O'Dunan,\* Archbishop of Munster,

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\* This O'Dunan seems to be the Idunan, Bishop of Meath, given in Harris's edition of *Ware*, who flourished in 1096. See O'Donovan's *Notes to the Four Masters*; also Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 140; *Miscellany of the Archaeological Society*, pages 136, 155, 156. In a charter in the *Book of Kells* he is called "Senior of Leath-Chuinn or northern half of Ireland". Idunan, with some other bishops, signed a letter, in 1096, styling himself



head of the clergy of Ireland, and Lord of the almsdeeds of the West of Europe, died in the 77th year of his age, on the 9th of the Calends of January, on his pilgrimage at Clonard.

1122. Conghal, Professor of Clonard, died at Glendaloch, on his pilgrimage.

1131. Clonard was twice plundered this year by the men of Carbrey and Teaffia. A slaughter was made of the plunderers by Murchadh O'Melaghlyn.

1135. Fiachra, learned senior of Clonard and of all the men of Meath, died. Same year Clonard, Kells, and many other churches were burned.

1136. Gillachrist O'Heachan, successor of Finnen, died.

Same year the inhabitants of the Breney plundered and sacked Clonard, and behaved in so shameless a manner as to strip O'Daly, then chief poet of Ireland. Amongst other outrages, they sacrilegiously took from the vestry of this abbey a sword which had belonged to St. Finian, the founder. (*Annals of Clonmacnoise.*)

1139. Cuchonnacht O'Daly, Chief Ollamb in Poetry, died at Clonard. He was of Leekin, in Meath (near Bunbrussna, in West Meath).

1141. Domhnall O'Coinfhiacra, Lord of Teaffia, died at Clonard, after penance.

1143. Clonard was burned for the most part, with Less-an-nemra (*i.e.* the Fort of the Shrine. This was the house in which the Shrine of St. Finnen was preserved).

About this time flourished Gilda Module,\* of whom a contemporary writer gives this character: "That he never told a lie, nor writ one word foreign from truth". He was the author of a historical poem in the Irish language, in which he gives a short history of the Christian kings of Ireland, from Laogaire to the death of Malachy, *i.e.* from 428 to 1043.

1144. Gillaphadraig MacConghail, the paragon of the Irish for wisdom, Professor of Clonard, and its priest, died.

1148. Clonard was burned this year.

Bishop of Meath, to St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury. See Usher's *Sylloge*, Epistola xxxiv. He seems to have been the first bishop of Clonard who assumed the title of Meath. See Lanigan, vol. iii. p. 452

\* Colgan makes this Gilda a monk of Clonard (*Acta*, p. 200). O'Flaherty reckons him an ecclesiastic of Ardraccan. He may have spent a portion of his life in each of these Monasteries. See *Monasticon Hibernicum*, p. 524; also Harris's edition of *Ware's Writers*, p. 70.

1150. O'Follamhain, successor of Finnen of Clonard, died at Kells.

1155. Gillegott O'Kierga, prince of Carbery, was killed at Clonard by Donnogh O'Melaghlyn, king of Meath. The Meath men deposed King Donnogh, in consequence of his having dishonoured the memory of St. Finian by such a crime, and elected his brother Dermod as their king.

1170. The town and abbey of Clonard were plundered and burned by Dermod Mac Murcha, who was aided and assisted by the English, under the command of Earl Strongbow—both town and abbey were afterwards reëdified by the inhabitants. They plundered and burned also Kells, Teltown, Dowth, Slane, Dulane, Kilskyre, and Castlekieran.

1171. Dermod Mac Murcha, king of Leinster, by whom a trembling sod was made of all Ireland, after having brought over the Saxons—after having done extensive injuries to the Irish—after plundering and burning many churches, as Kells, Clonard, etc.—died before the end of a year (after this plundering), of an insufferable and unknown disease; for he became putrid while living, through the miracle of God, Colum-Cille, and Finnen, and the other saints of Ireland, whose churches he had profaned and burned some time before; and he died at Fearnamor, without (making) a will, without penance, without the Body of Christ, without unction, as his evil deeds deserved.

1173. Ettru O'Meehan, Bishop of Clonard, died at an advanced age, after having spent a good life.

1175. Clonard was again plundered.

About this time Walter de Lacy erected, probably on the ruins of the ancient abbey, a monastery, under the invocation of St. Peter, for the Regular Canons of St. Augustine.

1185. Maelisa O'Daly, ollave (chief poet) of Ireland and Scotland, Lord of Corcaree and Corca-Adain, a man illustrious for his poetry, hospitality, and nobility, died while on a pilgrimage at Clonard.

In 1206, Simon Rochfort, Bishop of Meath, founded the Abbey of Newtown, near Trim, for the Regular Canons of St. Augustine. He transferred his episcopal residence from Clonard to Newtown, and erected the church of the latter into a cathedral.

NOTE.—“733. St. Tola, son of Dunchadh, bishop, a worthy soldier of Christ, died”. This St. Tola belonged to the family of the Galengi, and led the life of a hermit for many years at Diseart-Tola (now Dysart-Taula,



in the parish of Killoolagh, barony of Delvin, county of Westmeath). He was thence promoted to the See of Clonard, and died on the 30th of March, on which day his anniversary has since been commemorated. In the *Calendar of Cashel* he is called "St. Tola of Disert-Tola". The *Martyrology of Donegal* calls him "St. Tola, bishop and anchorite of Disert-Tola". See *Acta Sanctorum*, at 30th of March: Lanigan, vol. iii., p. 173; *Calendar of Irish Saints*, p. 109. There is an old church called after him *Disert-tola*, near Corofin, county of Clare, where are remains of a round tower and a stone cross.

"774. Fulartach, Bishop of Clonard, died". This bishop is supposed to have been the same as St. Fulartach, who lived as a hermit at a place called from him *Disert-Fulartach*, in Offaly, county of Kildare. His memory was revered on the 29th of March. See *AA. SS.* at 29th of March. Lanigan, vol. iii., p. 202. *Calendar of Irish Saints*, p. 108.

### CHAPTER III.

#### DIOCESE OF DULEEK.

DULEEK, once a bishopric now only remarkable in an ecclesiastical point of view for being the seat of a theological conference, had anciently a celebrated monastery, founded by St. Kienan, its first Bishop and patron Saint; a Magdalene hospital, where the destitute and sick had a hallowed asylum; and a priory of the Blessed Virgin, founded by an O'Kelly, long anterior to the English Invasion.

The antiquarian will remember that Duleek was the seat of an ancient diocese; that the first stone church built in Ireland was erected there; that its schools rivalled for many years the great literary retreats of Armagh, Clonard, Clonmacnoise, Lismore, and Bangor; and that for six hundred years an uninterrupted succession of bishops ruled here, to whose memory our annalists pay a deserving tribute. Nor will it be forgotten that Duleek was a district of crosses, churches, and monasteries; that it had anciently a round tower; that the relics of St. Kienan and other saints were preserved here up to a late period; and that the *Book of the Gospels*, which belonged to St. Patrick, was committed to the care of this church. The pilgrim who visits Duleek will remember that the Danes frequently plundered this place; that the body of Brian Boroimhe, after being stricken down at Clontarf in the moment of victory, was waked in

the abbey-church of Duleek, by the monks of St. Kienan. He will also recall to mind the great cell founded here by De Lacy, the thousands of acres with which it was endowed, and the great respect which the Norman barons exhibited to this favoured locality. Few monasteries in Ireland were so richly endowed as Duleek; the very names of the townlands by which it was enabled to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and give gratuitous instruction to the numbers that flocked to its schools, would amaze the reader were we to recite them. Alas! these good times have passed away. The abbey, once the seat of literature and religion, is now ivy-clad and desolate, the resting place of the dead; and the poor of Christ may now look in vain for what the piety and charity of Catholic ages bequeathed for their use.

Duleek, anciently called *Daimhliag*, *Doimhliag*, and *Daimhliag-Chianain*, is a small town, partly in the barony of Upper, but chiefly in that of Lower Duleek, county of Meath. It is situated on the Nannywater, being twenty miles from Dublin, and about four miles and one-half (s.s.w.) from Drogheda. Duleek lies in the heart of a rich and beautiful country, anciently called *Cianachta-Breagh*, and though comparatively obscure and unknown, was oftentimes the scene of stirring events, and memorable in the ecclesiastical history of the country.

#### ST. KIENAN.

St. Kienan, or Cieran, Bishop and founder of the Church of Duleek, was born about the year 442.\* He was of a distinguished family, and his birthplace was most probably in *Cianachta-Breagh*, the very country over which he ruled. He is said to have been baptized by St. Patrick, and was held in great esteem for his extraordinary virtue and learning. This St. Kienan is not to be confounded with another of the same name mentioned by Usher, who was a native of Connaught, became a monk in the Monastery of St. Martin of Tours, and afterwards founded a church in the territory of the Eugenic Sept. The writer of the *Tripartite Life of*

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\* See Dr. Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i., pp. 67, 341, 418.



*St. Patrick* says that “*St. Patrick* instructed him (*Kienan*) in learning and virtue, and formed him into a man of extraordinary sanctity”. *St. Kienan* was consecrated Bishop in or about the year 472. The annotations of *Tirechan* state that he was consecrated by *St. Patrick*. He was the founder of the church and abbey of *Duleek*, which, in after years, became so celebrated as to rival for a time the great schools of *Armagh*. The church was built of stone and lime cement, and, if not the very first, was, at least, amongst the first edifices of that description erected in *Ireland*. In the annotations of *Tirechan* it is reckoned the eighth church erected by *St. Patrick*, or in his time, in the great plain of *Bregia*. Although reckoned the eighth in order, it may still have been the first stone church in point of time.

In the Office of *St. Kienan*, quoted in *Harris's Ware*,\* we read “that *St. Kienan* built a church of stone in this place (*Duleek*); and that from thence it took the name of *Damleagh* (house of stone); for that before this time the churches of *Ireland* were built of wattles and boards”. *St. Kienan* was held in such esteem by *St. Patrick* as to have received from him a present of his own copy of the Gospels. This fact is thus chronicled in the *Annals of Tighearnach*: “A.D. 490. *The rest of St. Cianan of Duleek. It is to him Patrick gave his Gospels*”. From a topographical account of *Meath*, written in 1682, it appears that this very copy was then preserved in the neighbourhood of *Duleek*, and *Dr. Petrie*† assures us that this venerable monument is probably at present in the library of *Trinity College, Dublin*. The *Calendar of Cashel*, a most respectable and trustworthy authority, written in the eleventh century, states that *St. Kienan*, of *Damliag* (*Duleek*), wrote a life of *St. Patrick*. The words are “*Sanctus Kienanus de Damliag, filius Sednæ.—Hujus Sancti Kienani remanet incorruptum et illæsum corpus.—Scripsit vitam Sancti Patritii*”. The *Four Masters* place his death at 488. “*Cianan, Bishop of Doimhliag (Duleek), died*”.

It is very remarkable that, although there were many *Daimhliags* (stone churches) in *Ireland*, this one, of which

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\* *Harris's Ware's Bishops*, p. 137. † *Round Towers of Ireland*, p. 140.

St. Kienan was the founder, should alone retain the name. Duleek is believed to have been the place where the first church of stone and lime cement was erected in Ireland, and, as if to distinguish it from all future buildings of the kind, seems to have been called, par excellence, *the Doimhliag*.

#### CHURCHES OF STONE IN IRELAND PREVIOUS TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

It has been a very fashionable error, to which some of our own antiquarians have lent the weight of their authority, that, in the construction of their churches and monasteries, the ancient Irish used boards, wattles, and other perishable materials, up to the twelfth century. That this practice existed to some extent, we are free to admit. Thus Venerable Bede\* tells us that Finian, who was a monk of Iona, when he became Bishop of Lindisfarne, “built a church fit for his episcopal see, not of stone, but altogether of sawn wood, covered with reeds, after the Scotie (Irish) manner”. Also in the *Annotations of Tirechan on the Life of Saint Patrick*, a MS. supposed to be of the seventh century, we read:† “And, behold, Patrick proceeded to the land which is called Foirrgea of the sons of Awley, to divide it among the sons of Awley, and he built there a quadrangular church of moist earth, because wood was not near at hand”. Another instance is cited from St. Bernard’s *Life of St. Malachy*, where he says St. Malachy had, some years before, built a chapel in the same place, “made, indeed, of planed timber, but well jointed, and compactly put together, and, for a Scotie (Irish) work, elegant enough”. Influenced by these examples, the usually judicious Lanigan observes:‡

“Prior to those of the twelfth century, we find very few monuments of ecclesiastical architecture in Ireland. This is not to be wondered at, because the general fashion of the country was to erect their buildings of wood, a fashion which, in great part, continues to this day in several parts of Europe. As, consequently, their churches also were usually built of wood, it cannot be expected that there should be any remains of such churches at present”.

\* Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. iii. c. 25.

† *Round Towers of Ireland*, p. 123.

‡ Vol. iv. pp. 391, 392.



Now it would be incredible to suppose that, while Ireland was carrying the light of the Gospel to European nations, and attracting, by the fame of her schools and the sanctity of her children, the foreigner and the stranger to her shores, she neglected to raise up to God durable temples, and to ornament them in proportion to her means. Can we conceive that Irish ecclesiastics and others, who visited Rome, who knelt, prayed, and sacrificed in the great churches of the Continent, returned to Ireland, and never dreamed of imitating what they saw, even on a limited scale? Wherever the Catholic Church has made conquests (and where has she not?)—whatever nations she has humanized—wherever her spirit has prevailed,—her children have vied in erecting temples symbolical of her eternity, and embellishing them with all the resources of their wealth and skill. Was Ireland—the land of faith, the home of learning, the island of saints and sages, of churches and monasteries—to be an exception to this universal rule? From the embellishments of the illuminated manuscripts, the richness and elaborate beauty of the shrines, croziers, and other relics of ancient art, which have escaped to our day, we might easily infer the durability and splendour of our ancient churches. Cogitosus tells us of the painted pictures with which the great church of St. Brigid of Kildare was decorated. Cormac's chapel at Cashel, with its ancient remains of frescoes, still attracts the antiquarian tourist. Clonmacnoise, Monasterboice, Glendaloch, Kells, and Fore, not to mention others, speak still of their olden glory. The stone cross of Tuam, the cover of St. Patrick's bell, the cross of Archbishop O'Duffy, the crozier of Cormac MacCarthy, the shrine of St. Manchin, excite our admiration, and carry us back to those days when art was assuredly in a high state of perfection. Giraldus Cambrensis, who was certainly no friend of Ireland, tells us that he saw "a concordance of the Four Gospels, by St. Hieronymus, written by, or for, St. Brigid of Kildare. The margin was ornamented with mystic pictures, most wonderfully and animatingly finished; the writing, but particularly the capital letters, so highly ornamented, that (says Giraldus) neither the pencil of an Apelles nor the

chisel of a Lysippus ever formed the like. In a word (says he), they seem to have been executed by something more than a mortal hand". Moreover, the *Book of Kells*, at present in Trinity College, is said to be the finest MS. in Europe. Hence Dr. Petrie observes, "that we have not only abundant historical evidence to show that many of the ecclesiastics in those early times obtained celebrity as artificers and makers of the sacred implements necessary for the Church, and as illuminators of books, but we have also still remaining the most indisputable evidences of their skill in those arts, in ancient croziers, bells, shrines, etc., and in manuscripts not inferior in splendour to any extant in Europe". Can we conceive that ecclesiastics, who were so skilled in the arts, were alone, of all their contemporaries, ignorant of ecclesiastical architecture, or, if acquainted, were unwilling to erect durable temples to Almighty God?\*

Again, vast numbers of Egyptian, Roman, Italian, Gallic, British, and Saxon ecclesiastics flocked to Ireland as to the home of sanctity and the nursery of learning. That many such came to Ireland, not only with St. Patrick but after his day, spent here the evening of their lives, and are now sleeping in our graveyards, is evident, not merely from the lives of our saints and the history of our Church, but also from the *Litany of St. A'ngus the Culdee*, in which the names of vast numbers of foreign saints, buried in Ireland, are invoked?†

"Sanctos Romanos, qui jacent in Achadh Galma in Ybh-Echia, invoco in auxilium meum per Jesum Christum, etc.

SS. Romanos de Lettir ercha invoco in auxilium meum, etc.

SS. Romanos, qui cum Cursecha filia Brochani, jacent in Acadh-Dalrach, invoco, etc.

SS. Romanos de Cluain-chuinne, invoco, etc.

SS. Peregrinos de Cluain-mhoir, invoco, etc.

SS. Romanos qui cum S. Aido jacent in Cluain Dartadha, invoco, etc.

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\* See a series of able articles on this subject, headed *Ecclesiastical Architecture*, in Duffy's *Catholic Magazine*.

† *Acta Sanctorum*, p. 535. This hymn is also inserted in O'Halloran's *Ireland*, vol. i. pp. 170, 171. *Round Towers of Ireland*, p. 135.



- SS. Duodecim Conchennacios, qui cum utroque Sinchello jacent in Killachuidh, invoco, etc.
- SS. Conchennacios, qui cum S. Manchano jacent in Lethmor, invoco, etc.
- SS. Septem Monachos Ægyptios, qui jacent in Disert Vlidh, invoco, etc.
- SS. Peregrinos, qui cum S. Mochua filio Luscan jacent in Domnach Resen, invoco, etc.
- SS. Peregrinos de Balach forchedail, invoco, etc.
- SS. Peregrinos de Cuil-ochtair, invoco, etc.
- SS. Septem peregrinos, de Imleach-mor, invoco, etc.
- SS. Duodecim peregrinos, Socios S. Sinchelli, invoco, etc.
- SS. Peregrinos Romanos, qui in centum quinquaginta cymbis, Sive Scaphis advecti, comitati sunt SS. Eliam, Natalem, Ne-manum, et Carcnutanum, invoco, etc.
- SS. Centum quinquaginta Romanos Peregrinos et Italios, qui comitati sunt S. Abbanum in Hiberniam, invoco, etc.
- SS. Gallos de Saliduic, invoco, etc.
- SS. Gallos de Mag-Salach, invoco, etc.
- SS. Saxones (i.e. Anglos) de Rigair, invoco, etc.
- SS. Saxones de Cluain-mhuicedha, invoco, etc.
- SS. Peregrinos de Inis-Puinic, invoco, etc.
- SS. Duodecim Peregrinos de Lethglais-mor, invoco, etc.
- SS. Centum quinquaginta Peregrinos in Gair-mic-Magla, invoco, etc.
- SS. Quinquaginta Monachos de Britannia, Socios filii Mainani in Glenloire, invoco, etc.
- Sanctos quinque peregrinos de Suidhe Cœil, invoco, etc.
- Sanctos 150 discipulos S. Manchani Magistri, invoco, etc.
- Sanctos 510 qui ex partibus transmarinis venerunt cum S. Bœthio Episcopo, decemque Virgines eos comitantes, invoco, etc.
- SS. Duodecim Socios S. Riochi transmarinis, invoco, etc.”.

Now, supposing for a moment that the ancient Irish were ignorant of stone-building, can we conceive that these ecclesiastics, many of whom were, of course, men of learning, and well skilled, at least, in ecclesiastical architecture, never instructed their benefactors in the mode of church-building they observed abroad? No nation on Earth was more disposed to coöperate with religion than ancient Ireland. Can we credit, then, that, knowing and understanding how to erect durable temples, they still persisted in erecting perishable ones?

Dr. Petrie has proved, in his *Essays on the Military and Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland*, that the Firbolg and Tuatha-de-Danaan tribes were accustomed, long anterior to Christianity, to build their fortresses, dome-roofed houses, and sepulchres in the Cyclopean and Pelasgic style; that this style (the use of stone without mortar) was continued amongst these tribes after the introduction of Christianity; and that it was adopted by Christians in many of their religious structures. Some monasteries built after this style remain to this day. Thus the Abbey of St. Molaise,\* on Inishmurray, in the bay of Sligo, erected in the sixth century; that of St. Brendan, on Inishglory, off the coast of Erris, county Mayo, erected in the beginning of the sixth century; and that of St. Fechin, on High Island, off the coast of Connemara, county of Galway, erected in the seventh century. Similar to these was the abbey erected on the Island of Farren, in Northumberland, in the year 684, by St. Cuthbert, bishop of Lindisfarne, who is reputed to have been an Irishman.† On these ancient buildings Dr. Petrie remarks:‡—

“In all these establishments the churches alone, which are of the simplest construction, are built with lime-cement. The houses or cells erected for the use of the abbot and monks are of a circular or oval form, having dome-roofs, constructed like those of the ancient Greek and Irish sepulchres, without a knowledge of the principles of the arch, and without the use of cement; and the whole are encompassed by a broad wall composed of stones of great size, without cement of any kind”.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DIOCESE OF DULEEK (CONTINUED).—CHURCHES OF STONE IN IRELAND PREVIOUS TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

IN our last chapter we showed how extremely improbable, not to say absurd, is the assertion that the ancient Irish

\* *Round Towers of Ireland*, p. 124.      † Said to have been born in Kells.

‡ *Round Towers*, p. 125.



ignored the use of stone and lime cement in the construction of their churches and monasteries, up to the dawn of the twelfth century. Having entered on a subject so interesting, about which there existed such a variety of opinions, and which is so intimately connected with the greatest and most brilliant ages of the Irish Church, we claim the indulgence of the reader while establishing more fully and conclusively our position from the authentic annals of the country.

Amidst the variety of ecclesiastical structures erected by the ancient Irish, the *Daimhliag*, *Duirtheach*, *Cloigtheach*,\* *Erdamh*, and *Cashel*, occupy a distinguished place. For the present we must confine our notice to the *Daimhliag* and *Duirtheach*.

The *Daimhliag* (house of stone), as its very name indicates, was always built of stone, and signified a cathedral or abbey church. Its roof was cemented stone, though more frequently of wood and covered with reeds, straw, and oak shingles. When we read in our annals of a *daimhliag* being set on fire, the meaning is, not that its walls were consumed, for such could not be the case, but that the roof, door, or other combustible materials, inside the church or outside, succumbed to that element. The *daimhliag* was sometimes roofed with lead, as appears from a notice in the *Annals of Ulster*:—

“A.D. 1020. All Armagh burnt wholly; the *damliog* with its cover of lead; the steeple with the bells”.

*Duirtheach* (house of oak) signified a smaller chapel or oratory, and though oftentimes built of stone, was more generally, and, perhaps, in the early ages of our Church, almost invariably, constructed of oak wood. That the *daim-*

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\* In our humble opinion, the learned Dr. Petrie has conclusively proved the Christian origin of the Round Towers of Ireland. The late and ever-to-be-lamented Rev. Mathew Kelly, of Maynooth College, told the writer of these pages that he believed that Dr. Petrie had finally and satisfactorily set the question at rest. It is a very remarkable fact that our Round Towers are to be seen always in connection with ancient churches, and hence their Christian origin is in possession until the contrary is proved. Why are they not on Tara, Teltown, Newgrange, Tlatga, or the other great seats of Druidism? No record or tradition exists of their ever having been in these places.

hliag differed from the duirtheach another extract from the *Annals of Ulster* will prove :—“ A.D. 839. The burning of Armagh, with its *derthechs* and *daimhliag*”. That churches of stone and lime cement were erected in Ireland from the days of St. Patrick, we have abundant evidences in our annals and in the existence amongst us of ruined edifices indicating their very ancient origin.

1. In the office of St. Kienan, which is extant in MSS. in the library of Cambridge, and which we quoted from Harris's edition of *Ware*, we read,\* “ that St. Kienan built a church of stone in this place (Duleek), and that from thence it took the name *Damleagh*; for before this time the churches of Ireland were built of wattles and boards”.

2. In the poem of Flann of Monasterboice—a work composed in the eleventh century—mention is made of St. Patrick's household, and amongst other personages, of his three stone masons, who, it remarks, built damliags :†—

“ His three stone masons, good was their intelligence,  
Creman, Cruitnech, Luchraid strong ;  
They made damliags first  
In Erin ; eminent their history”.

That Flann is justly reputed of great authority, we may easily infer from the following tribute paid to his memory in the *Annals of the Four Masters*:—“ The age of Christ 1056. Flann Mainistreach, Professor of Mainistir-Buithi (Monasterboice, in the county Louth), the paragon of the Gael in wisdom, literature, history, poetry, and science, died on the 14th of the calends of December, as is said :—

‘ Flann of the chief church of melodious Buithi,  
Slow the bright eye of his fine head ;  
Contemplative sage is he who sits with us,  
Last sage of the three lands is fair Flann’ ”.

The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* remark that Flann “ was the most learned chronicler in these parts of the world”.

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\* Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 137. † *Round Towers of Ireland*, p. 139.



3. That stone churches became common in Ireland from the earliest period, appears from the fact that *damhliag* (house of stone) was the Scotie or Gælic name by which Irish writers designated a cathedral or abbey church, although at the same time they used the terms *tempull*, *eclais*, *regles*, *baslic* indifferently, words evidently adopted from the Latin language. Irish writers, when writing in Latin, invariably rendered the *daimhliag* by *ecclesia* or *basilica*, and, when writing in Irish, they applied the terms *damhliag*, *tempull*, *eclais*, and *regles* indiscriminately to the same buildings. Now, that these terms were never applied to a wooden church appears from the fact that they invariably designated such buildings by *oratorium*, and when the oratory was not of wood, by *oratorium lapideum*. This will appear manifest to any one who takes the trouble to examine the various notices of our ancient churches in our annals and ecclesiastical records.\*

4. In an ancient tract of the Brehon laws, preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and in the book of Ballymote, the wages of the *Ollamph Saer*, or chief builder, for stone and wood building are enumerated, and it is remarked that the most distinguished branches of his profession are the *damhliag* and the *durthech*.†

5. The following notices which we have extracted from the *Four Masters*, will demonstrate how very common were *damhliags* or stone churches in Ireland previous to the twelfth century; and let it be borne in mind that our annalists rarely chronicle the foundation of a church, or even allude to it, unless when some event of importance, or the death of some dignitary, attracted public attention. There is reason to suppose too, that the churches to which we are about to allude existed for centuries previous to the dates of these notices in our annals—in fact, that they were the original churches erected by the Fathers of the Irish Church, or the great founders of religious houses, in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries :‡

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\* *Round Towers*, p. 140.

† *Round Towers*, pp. 341, 342.

‡ *Annals of the Four Masters*, edited by the lamented Dr. O'Donovan,

“ 839. The burning of Armagh, with its *derthechs* and *daimhliag*.

904. The *daimhliag* of Clonmacnoise was erected by the King, Flann Sinna, and by Colman Coneellagh.

949. The *daimhliag* of Galen (King's County) was burned by the Danes.

995. Armagh was burned with lightning, both houses, *daimhliags*, and *cloictheacha* (round towers).

1010. Muireadhach, successor of Columkille and Adamnan, a learned man, bishop and virgin, and intended successor of Patrick, died after the seventy-fourth year of his age, on the fifth of the calends of January, on Saturday night precisely, and he was buried with great honour and veneration in the *daimhliag* of Ardmacha, before the altar.

1020. Armagh was burned, with all the fort, without the saving of any house within it, except the library only, and many houses were burned in the Trians, and the *daimhliag-mor* was burned, and the *cloictheach* with its bells, and the *Daimliag-na-Toe* (this was the original parish church), and *Daimhliag-an-t-Sabhail*, and the old preaching chair, and the chariot of the abbots, and their books in the houses of the students, with much gold, silver, and precious stones.

1026. The Great Gospel of Columkille was stolen at night from the western *erdamh* (sacristy) of the *Daimhliag-mor* (great stone church) of Kells (County Meath). This was the principal relic of the western world, on account of its singular cover, and it was found after twenty nights and two months, its gold having been stolen off it, and a sod over it.

1031. Ardbraccan (in County Meath) was plundered by the Danes of Dublin, and two hundred persons were burned in the *doimliacc*, and two hundred persons were carried into captivity.

1037. Rory, Tanist of Hy Kinsellagh, was taken prisoner in the *Daimhliag* of Kilcullen (County Kildare).

1037. Skryne (in Meath), and the *Daimhliag* of Cianan (Duleek), were plundered by the Danes.

1051. Faelan was killed in the *Daimhliag* of Lismore, by Maelseachlann.

1053. Many prisoners were taken from the *Daimhliag* of Lusk.

1065. Donchadh, King of Ulidia, was killed by the Ulidians themselves in the *Daimhliag* of Bangor.

1099. The *Daimhliag* of Ardstraw (County Tyrone) was burned.



1145. A limekiln, which was sixty feet every way, was erected opposite Eamhain-Macha, by Gelasius, successor of Patrick, and Patrick's clergy in general". Colgan tells us that this limekiln was erected to repair old and decayed churches. From the preceding quotations the reader can conclude that churches of stone were very common in the Irish Church previous to the twelfth century.

6. Another great argument in favour of the antiquity of stone churches in Ireland is drawn from the characteristic features of the existing remains of the churches themselves.

"These churches", says Dr. Petrie,\* "in their general form preserve very nearly that of the Roman basilica, and they are even called by this name in the oldest writers; but they never present the conched semicircular absis at the east end, which is so usual a feature in the Roman churches, and the smaller churches are only simple oblong quadrangles. In addition to this quadrangle, the larger churches present a second oblong of smaller dimensions, extending to the east, and constituting the chancel or sanctuary, in which the altar was placed, and which is connected with the nave by a triumphal arch of semicircular form. These churches have rarely more than a single entrance, which is placed in the centre of the west end, and they are very imperfectly lighted by small windows, which do not appear to have been ever glazed . . . . The doorway seldom presents any architectural decorations beyond a mere flat architrave or band, but are more usually plain, and the windows still more rarely exhibit ornaments of any kind".

The *Derthech* (house of oak) seems to have been distinguished from the *daimhliag* in this, that, as the latter signified house of stone, and was the Irish name for a cathedral or abbey church, so the former meant a smaller chapel or oratory, and was constructed, at least originally, of wood. A few notices from our annals will establish this.†

"812. The Dertech of Fore was burned.

835. The Dertech of Glendaloch was burned by the Danes.

854. The Dertech of Lusk was burned by the Norsemen.

891. A great wind occurred on the festival of St. Martin, which prostrated a great quantity of trees in the woods, and

\* *Round Towers*, p. 159.

† Dr. O'Donovan's edition of the *Four Masters*.

*carried the duirthechs from their places, and the other houses likewise.*

905. The Dertech of Mayo was burned.

1028. The Dertech of Slane fell".

That these dertechs were sometimes of considerable dimensions, appears from the number that fled for safety to the Dertech of Trevet, near Dunshaughlin.

" 848. They (the Danes) also burned the Dertech of Trevet, within which were 260 persons".

The praise which St. Bernard, in his life of St. Malachy, bestows on the Derthech of Bangor, proves that they were not devoid of ornament. They were usually kept very white, as appears from a passage in the *Leabhar Breac* regarding the mystical signification of the colours in the vestments of a priest.\*

" What the white is intended for, when the priest looks upon it, is, that he should blush at it with sensitiveness and shame, if he should not be chaste and pure in heart and mind, like the froth of the wave, *or like the lime on the gable of a dertech*, or the colour of the swan before the sun, without any kind of sin, small or great, in his heart".

After the English Invasion, the Anglo-Norman adventurers built castles and ecclesiastical edifices of great beauty and magnificence. Dunbrody, in the county of Wexford, Athassel, on the Suir, St. Patrick's cathedral, the Priory of the Holy Trinity, not to mention others, are monuments, whether ostentatious or not, of their munificence and devotion to religion. Coeval with these were erected, by Irish chieftains, the cathedral churches of Cashel, Limerick, and Killaloe, the abbeys of Jerpoint, Boyle, and Mellifont, and Holycross, which were fit to stand beside the proudest structures of the invaders. With few exceptions, however, architecture declined after the English Invasion. The Irish were at the mercy of every succeeding lord deputy; they knew not the moment a fresh swarm of adventurers would seek to deprive them of their lands, their liberties, and their very lives; and hence, between continual efforts to regain their lost territories and to repel aggression, there were very few

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\* *Round Towers*, pp. 344, 345.



opportunities for cultivating architecture. Still many of the churches and monasteries erected then, demonstrate, even in their desolation, how superior they must have been to the corresponding structures of our days.

## ANNALS OF DULEEK.\*

“ 488. Cianan, Bishop of Duleek, died. His festival is observed on the 24th November.

749. Cearban, of Duleek, died.

778. Fearghus, Bishop of Duleek, died.

784. Feadhach, Abbot of Louth, Slane, and Duleek, died.

Same year, O'Enghus, Abbot of Duleek, died.

805. St. Caithni, Abbot of Duleek, died.

817. Crunmhael, successor of Cianan of Duleek, died.

818. Dalach, successor of Cianan, of Duleek, died.

830. The plunder of Duleek and the tribe of Cianachta, with all their churches, by the Danes.

847. Finsneachta, Abbot of Duleek, died.

858. Colman, Abbot of Duleek, died.

866. Caemhan, Abbot of Duleek, died.

870. Gnia, Bishop, Abbot of Duleek, anchorite, and scribe, died. Eighty-seven years was his age when he died.

In lamentation of him was said :

‘ Gnia, the sun of our fair race, head of the piety of the island of Emhir. Well he celebrated the festival of St. Prainne, the successor of the wise Cianan.

For a long time the bright congregation, of which he was head, had dignity without obscurity.

Alas ! for the great precious gem, our fair, bright friend, Gnia’.

878. The Derthech of Cianan (Duleek) was plundered and destroyed by the Danes, and a great number of persons were carried off from thence into captivity. Barith, a fierce champion of the Northmen, who was the chief of these persecutors, was afterwards slain and burned at Athcliath (Dublin), through the miracles of God and St. Cianan.

882. Cormac, Bishop of Duleek and Abbot of Clonard, died.

890. Oenacan, Vice-abbot of Duleek, died.

895. Maenach, Abbot of Duleek, died.

902. Colman, scribe, and Bishop of Duleek and Lusk, died.

918. Finchar, Bishop of Duleek, died.

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\* From O'Donovan's *Four Masters*, and Archdall's *Monasticon*.

920. Loinseach, Œconomus of Duleek, died.
927. Tuathal, Bishop of Duleek and Lusk, and steward to the family of Patrick (Proctor to the Archbishop of Armagh), died.
933. Muireadhach, Abbot of Duleek, died.
941. Crenchomhrac, Bishop of Duleek, died.
953. Aenghus, Airchinneach of Duleek, died.
961. Anaile, scribe of Duleek, died.
984. Eochaidh, Airchinneach of Duleek, died.
1014. The bodies of Brian Boroimhe,\* Monarch of Ireland, and of Morrogh, his son, both of whom were slain at the battle of Clontarf, were brought by the monks of Swords to this abbey, but they were afterwards conveyed to the abbey of Louth by the monks of St. Kienan.
1023. A predatory excursion was made by the Danes over South Breagh, and to Duleek.
1033. The Danes again plundered Duleek.
1037. Skryne and Duleek were plundered by the Danes of Dublin.
1045. Muireadhach, Airchinneach of Duleek, died.
1050. The abbey church of St. Kienan of Duleek was burned this year.
1055. Murcha O'Brien again burned and destroyed this abbey.
1070. Gluniarn, son of Dermot, son of Mael-na-mbo (king of Leinster), was killed by the men of Meath, and he was buried at Duleek.
1093. Aedh, Airchinneach of Duleek, died.
1098. Eochy, successor to St. Kienan, died.
1117. Gillamochuda, Bishop of Duleek, died.
1123. The Gaileanga took a house at Duleek from O'Melaglin, king of Tara; and they burned eighty houses around it on

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\* On Holy Saturday, the day after the battle of Clontarf, the monks of Swords came for the body of Brian Boroimhe, to have it interred in the cathedral of Armagh. It was conveyed to Duleek, from whence the monks of St. Kienan, with numbers of the people, conducted it to the monastery of Louth, whither Maelmur Mac Eochad, Archbishop of Armagh, accompanied by the Northern clergy, came to meet it and escort it to their cathedral. After the funeral obsequies had lasted for twelve days, the relics of St. Patrick having been exposed, the Holy Sacrifice repeatedly offered, and all those aids which the Church extends to those who die in her communion, liberally dispensed, the remains of one of Ireland's greatest princes were deposited in a stone coffin, and buried at the north side of the cathedral of Armagh. See Irish Histories, *passim*.



that occasion. Melaghlin escaped being killed or burned by the protection of Cianan.

1127. Conghalach, successor of Cianan, died.

1147. A thunder-bolt fell this year upon the Cloictheach (bell house or round tower) of Duleek, and knocked off its beann-chobhair (the roof of the tower).

1149. The half of Duleek was plundered by the Danes of Dublin, and by Dermot MacMurchadh and the Leinstermen; and they killed Dermot O'Loghlin, Tanist of Oileagh, who was taking revenge for the plunder, and his body was brought to Armagh, and there interred.

1160. Aedh, of Duleek, died.

1169. The great abbey-church of Duleek was burned this year.

1170. The Parliament of Ireland passed an act this year empowering the Abbot of Duleek to repair a weir on the river Boyne.

1171. Duleek was plundered this year by the Knights of Milo de Cogan; and some of them were slain on the following day by the Danes of Dublin in revenge of Cianan. (The Danes were then Christians.)

1182. About this year Hugh de Lacy erected two monasteries in Meath for the Regular Canons of St. Augustine. One of these establishments was founded at Colpe, near the mouth of the Boyne, which de Lacy made a Cell to the Priory of Lhanthony in Monmouthshire; the other was erected at Duleek, which he made a Cell to Lhanthony, near Gloucester. Sir James Ware speaks of the Cell of Duleek as a new foundation, and altogether distinct from the Monastery of St. Kienan. This Cell seems finally to have absorbed much, if not all, of the church property wherewith St. Kienan's Abbey was originally endowed. In the year 1297, the seventh year of the reign of Edward the First, a license was granted to this cell or abbey to elect an abbot, the said office having been vacant for upwards of thirty years. In course of time this abbey became possessed of immense property, all of which, to the number of several thousands of acres in East Meath, West Meath, and county Dublin, together with tithes and rectories, were confiscated and granted to Sir Gerald Moore".

## CHAPTER V.

## DIOCESE OF KELLS.

KELLS, anciently called *Dun-Chuile-Sibrinne*, *Ceanannus*, Anglicised Kenlis (and Headfort), is pleasantly situated on the Blackwater, and gives names to the baronies of Upper and Lower Kells. It was a place of great importance in the days of our freedom, and is frequently alluded to by our annalists from the earliest period of our history. On the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, it was walled, and fortified with towers, and had a castle erected by de Lacy in 1178, the site of which is occupied by the present market place. The round tower of Kells, the splendid sculptured crosses, and the house of St. Columbkil remind us still of the ages of faith, while the chivalrous generosity of the inhabitants, whenever religion or country calls for their coöperation, indicates that the old Catholic and national spirit has by no means degenerated. The present union of Kells comprises the parishes of Kells, Girley,\* and Burry. The patron saint of Kells is St. Columbkil, whose festival here has been, from time immemorial, celebrated by a public station on the 9th of June.

The ancient religious foundations of Kells were: the abbey of the Blessed Virgin, founded by St Columba; the priory of St. John; the church of St. Senan; and a perpetual chantry of three priests in the parish of St. Columbkil, to celebrate

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\* The ancient name of this place was *Ghreallaigh Bhunna*, Grellech, and Anglicised Girley. The patron saint is St. Rodaighe, abbreviated Raed, whose festival was celebrated on the 16th of December. In the list of guarantees and sureties given in the *Irish Charters in the Book of Kells*, on the occasion of the purchase of land near Donaghmore, at Navan, from O'Riaman by the priest of Kells and his kinsmen, occur, "and the Erenagh of Grellech (Girley), and the Sech-nabb (i.e. the vice-abbot), and the crozier of Reodaidhe". There was therefore in the early period a monastery at Girley of which St. Raed was abbot. Up to a few years ago his holy well was frequented, in the language of the peasantry, "nine clear days before Christmas". See the *Miscellany of the Irish Archaeological Society*, vol. i., p. 135. *Martyrology of Donegal* at 16th of December.



mass daily, "one in the roode chapel, another in St. Mary's chapel, and a third in the chapel of St. Catherine the Virgin".

ABBEY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN OF KELLS.—ANNALS.

This celebrated abbey was founded about the year 550, by St. Columba, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The site was granted by Dermot, the son of Kervail King of Ireland".\*

"692. Muredach O'Cricain was abbot.

713. Died, in the 74th year of his age, the abbot Foylcow.

807. The church of St. Columba at Kells was destroyed.

About the same year Cellach, abbot of Iona, took refuge in Ireland from the Norsemen, who had murdered many of his monks. He rebuilt this abbey, governed it for some years, and resigned in favour of Dermot.

903. Kells forcibly entered by Malsechlainn, upon Doncha, his own son, and many were killed about the oratory.

918. Kells was plundered by the Danes, and the Daimhliag (cathedral) was demolished.

949. Godfrey, son of Sitric, with the Danes of Dublin, plundered Kells, Donaghpatrick, Ardraccan, Dulane, Castlekieran, Kilsyre, and other churches (of Meath) in like manner; but it was out of Kells they were all plundered (that is, the Danes made Kells their head-quarters). They carried upwards of three thousand persons with them into captivity, besides gold, silver, raiment, and various wealth and goods of every description.

966. Conmach, successor of Ultan, and priest of Kells, died.

967. Mafinnen, Bishop of Kells, successor of Ultan and Cairneach, died.

968. Kells was plundered by Aulaf with the Danes and Leinstermen.

992. Donnogh O'Hughtan, professor of Kells, died.

996. Kells and Clonard were plundered by the Danes of Dublin.

1001. Maenach, Ostiarius (*i.e.* porter and bell-ringer), of Kells, died.

1006. The great Gospel† of Colum Cille (*i.e.* St. Columba's

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\* Archdall's *Monasticon*. O'Donovan's *Four Masters*, and Irish Annals *passim*.

† This splendid manuscript copy of the Gospels, believed to have been transcribed by St. Columbkille, is now preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. Dr. Petrie testifies that it is "a manuscript which for beauty and splendour is not surpassed by any of its age known to exist"—

manuscript copy of the Gospels) was stolen at night from the west erdomh (sacristy) of the great church of Ceanannus. This was the principal relic of the western world, on account of

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*Round Towers*, p. 203. This manuscript is now familiarly known as *The Book of Kells*, and from its connection with the memory of one of Ireland's most revered saints, together with its great antiquity, and the strange vicissitudes through which it has passed, it must be regarded as a national treasure. In this manuscript there are *charters* which have been copied into it during its abode in the Abbey of Kells, and which prove, says O'Donovan, "that the ancient Irish had committed their covenants to writing in their own language before the Anglo-Norman invasion"—*Miscellany of the Irish Archæological Society*, vol. i., p. 150.

The first charter, says the same authority, cannot be older than 1128, nor later than 1140. It certifies that Muredhach O'Cluain, abbot of Kells, Conaing O'Breslen, the priest, Guaire O'Cluain, the lector, Aedh, the son of Mac Rectogan, the vice-erenagh, granted Ballyheerin with its mill, and Ballycowan with its mill, "to God and to Columbkille, and to the Bishop O'Cellaigh, and Maelmaire O'Robhartaigh, head of the Disert" (an asylum for pilgrims near Kells).

The second charter (in point of order in the *Book of Kells*) testifies that Maelsechnaill, King of Tara, Domhnall Mac Robhartaigh, with all the ecclesiastics of Kells, both priest, bishop, and professor, also Cormac Mac Rectogain, the vice-erenagh, with the young clerics of the congregation of Columbkille, have granted for ever Disert-Columbkille in Kells, with its vegetable garden, to God and pious pilgrims. Then follows a list of sureties and guarantees, after which a blessing is invoked on those "who shall increase the respect and veneration for this grant", and a malediction on those who shall oppose the same. The date of this charter is about 1084. *The third charter* regards the purchase of land, for twenty ounces of gold, in the parish of Donaghmore, near Navan, by O'Breslen, priest of Kells, from O'Riaman. From internal evidence, this charter must have been executed about the close of the eleventh century.

*The fourth charter* certifies a grant of Kildalkey, "with its territory and lands, to God and to Columbkille for ever" by Conor O'Melaghlin, King of Meath, and took place previous to the middle of the eleventh century.

*The fifth charter* regards the purchase of a house about the middle of the eleventh century.

*The sixth charter* specifies the freedom of Ardbraccan, or its exemption henceforth from Coigny, a species of tribute which the O'Kennellans or Quinlevan, lord of Upper and Lower Navan, exacted from it, and which they were induced to sell for three ounces of gold at the representation of Muirchertach O'Loughlin, King of Ireland, Dermot O'Melachlin, King of Meath, and Gelasius, Archbishop of Armagh. This took place a few years after the middle of the twelfth century.

*The seventh and last charter* authenticates the purchase of some land, near Kells, by Gillachrist Mac Manchain, from the sons of Beollan, for twenty-four ounces of silver and the tuition of one of the sons. This took place about the close of the eleventh century.

See the *Miscellany of the Irish Archæological Society*, vol. i., pp. 129, 130, etc., with Dr. O'Donovan's learned notes.



its singular cover; and it was found after twenty nights and two months, its gold having been stolen off it, and a sod over it.

1007. Ferdomnach, Abbot of Kells, died.

1008. Maelduire O'Huchtan, Coarb of Kells, died.

1015 (recte 1016). Kells, Clonmacnoise, and Clonfert were burned.

1016 (recte 1017). Gilkrist O'Lorkan, King of Coillfallavan, was killed at Kells.

1018 (recte 1019). Kells was plundered by Sitric, son of Aulav, and the Danes of Dublin, and they carried off innumerable spoils and prisoners, and slew many persons in the middle of the church.

1027. Roen O'Melaghlyn, King of Meath, robbed and despoiled the shrine of St. Columb; he was afterwards killed by the Danes.

1028. Cormac, priest of Kells, died.

1030. Flann O'Flainn, lord of Gaileanga, died penitently at Kells.

1034. Macnia O'Huachtan, professor of Kells, was drowned coming from Scotland with the bed of Colum-Cill and three of St. Patrick's relics, and thirty persons along with him.

1036. Kells and Kildare were burned.

1040. Kells and many other churches were burned.

1045. Maeldmartin Finn, professor of Kells, died.

1047. Cuduiligh, son of Gaithine, Fosairchinneach of Kells, died.

1050. Maelan, professor of Kells, who was a distinguished sage, died.

1060. Kells was all burned, both houses and churches.

1061. Ciaran, professor of Kells, a distinguished sage, died.

1073. Kells and Clonard, with their churches, were all burned in one month.

1076. Murchadh O'Melaghlin, at the expiration of three days and three nights after having assumed the supremacy of Tara, was treacherously slain in the cloictheach (round tower) of Kells, by Aulav, lord of Gaileanga; and the latter was himself immediately slain in revenge, through the miracles of God and Colum-Cille, by Maelsachliun, son of Conchobhar.

1095. Kells, Durrow, Clonard, Fore, and other places were all burned,

1098. Donnell O'Rafferty,\* successor of Columbkille, died.

1099. Kells was burned in the spring of this year.

1109. Ængus O'Donallan, chief anmchara (confessor or spiritual director), and chief senior of the clergy of Colum-cille, died at Kells.

1111. Kells was burned.

1117. Maelbryde MacRonan, coarb of Kells, was killed, and the people of Kells slaughtered along with him, by Hugh O'Ruark and the O'Briains, on the night of Domhnach Chroim Duibh (*i.e.* Black Crom's Sunday, the last Sunday in summer; Crom Dubh, chieftain of Umhal, was converted by St. Patrick on that day. See O'Donovan's notes to the *Four Masters*, page 1004).

1127. Maelmaire O'Godain, noble priest and learned senior of Kells, died.

1128. Conaing O'Begleighbinn, abbot of Kells, died.

1135. Kells, Clonard, and many other churches were burned.

1143. Kells, Trim, Dunshaughlin, and Kildare were burned.

1144. Kells was burned thrice this year.

1148. Maelchiarain MacMengain, noble priest of the church of Suidhe-Choluim-Chille at Kells, died after victory of martyrdom and penance.

1150. O'Fallan, successor of Finian of Clonard, died at Kells. Same year Kells was burned.

1152. In this year was held the national council of Kells. We take the following extract from Rev. M. J. Brennan's *Ecclesiastical History*:† 'That a matter of such importance (the palliums for the metropolitan sees of Armagh, Cashel, Dublin, and Tuam) might be conducted with becoming solemnity, a national synod was convened at Kells, on the 9th of March, A.D. 1152. At this synod, besides the Cardinal, who presided, and Christian, bishop of Lismore, then legate apostolic, there

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\* On the celebrated heirloom of St. Columbkille, called the Cathach, which consists of "a highly ornamented shrine or box, enclosing a fragment of a copy of the Psalms on vellum", there is an inscription (thus Anglicised):—"A prayer for Cathbharr O'Donnell, by whom (that is, by whose desire and at whose expense) this shrine was made; and for Sitric, the son of MacAedha (MacHugh), who made it; and for Domhnall Ua Robhartuigh (O'Donnell O'Rafferty) the Comharba (or successor) of Cenannus (Kells), by whom it was made (that is, at whose joint expense with that of O'Donnell it was made)". See the interesting lectures of the learned and honest Professor O'Curry, p. 331.

† Vol. i., p. 303.



were also present Gelasius, the primate, Domnald O'Lonergan, archbishop of Cashel, Gregory, bishop of Dublin, together with the bishops of the following sees : Glendaloch, Leighlin, Waterford, Kildare, Cork, Clonfert, Kerry, Limerick, Clonmacnoise, Roscommon, Achonry, Clonmacne (Ardagh), Kinel-Eogain (Ardstrath), Connor, and Down, together with the vicars-general of Emly and Ossory ; a great number of abbots and priors were also present, and a vast number of inferior clergy (the *Four Masters* say the number amounted to three thousand). When it was known that palliums had been intended for Dublin and Tuam, many of the clergy were much dissatisfied, and particularly those who belonged to the dioceses of Armagh and Down. This circumstance has been considered by some as one of the reasons why the prelates of several sees had been absent. The Council opened by the distribution of the palliums to the four following sees, in order : Armagh, Cashel, Dublin, and Tuam ; on which occasion the Archbishop of Armagh was declared primate over the others. This is the synod in which an attempt was, for the first time, made of introducing the notorious tithe system into Ireland.

The decrees, by which simony and usury had been condemned, passed unanimously, but when the cardinal set forth his favourite yet strange system of tithes, the proposition was instantly rejected ; nor do we find that it had met with the approval of a single ecclesiastic in this national synod. The cardinal then proceeded to the arrangement of the suffragan sees in the following order :—1. Under Armagh were the sees of Connor, Down, Louth or Clogher, Clonard, Kells, Ardagh, Raphoe, Rathclure (in the county of Tyrone), Duleek, and Derry. 2. Under Cashel were placed Killaloe, Limerick, Inniscatthy, Kilfenora, Emly, Roscrea, Waterford, Lismore, Cloyne, Cork, Ross, and Ardfert. 3. Under Dublin were named Glendaloch, Ferns, Ossory, Leighlin, and Kildare. 4. Under Tuam were placed Mayo, Killala, Roscommon, Clonfert, Achonry, Clonmacnoise, and Kilmacduagh. It may be proper to remark, that in this list, the sees of Elphin and Dromore are not mentioned, for which reason it is generally supposed that the former was at this time united to Roscommon, and the latter to Armagh. The sees of Louth and of Clogher had been united for many years prior to this synod ; however, in later times the town of Louth and other parts of that ancient diocese were annexed to Armagh. The decrees of the synod of Kells were confined exclusively to discipline and morals ; nothing

relative to faith had been discussed, the doctrine of the Irish Church being, at that time, as it is at this day, the very same which the Apostle of the nation had introduced, and which had been consecrated by all that was great or grand in antiquity—by the learning, the wisdom, and the sanctity of ages. The proceedings of the synod having been terminated, Cardinal Paparo remained but a short time in Ireland, having on the 24th of the same month set out on his journey to Rome.

1153. Colman O'Breslin, noble priest of Kells, a distinguished sage, died.

1154. Muireadhach O'Clugain, abbot of Kells, died.

1156. Kells was burned, both houses and churches, from the cross of Doras-urdoimh (*i.e.* from the gate of the porticus) to Sifoc.

1161. O'Klocan, coarb of St. Columbkille in Kells, died.

1163. Niall O'Loghlin committed depredations at Kells.

1170. Kells, Clonard, Teltown, Dowth, Dulane, Kilskyre, and Castlekieran were plundered and burned by Dermot MacMur-chad, King of Leinster, and the English".

NOTE.—The crozier of Kells is at present in the possession of Cardinal Wiseman. Professor O'Curry says:—"It bears a Gaedhlic inscription which identifies it with the Church of Kells, and assigns it to the middle of the eleventh century"—*Lectures*, p. 338.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### TRIM.

ON the banks of the historic Boyne, in the heart of a rich and beautiful country, encompassed with ruins of churches, monasteries, and castles, whose gray mouldering walls speak of ages long past, and celebrities long forgotten, stands the capital of the once powerful palatinate of Meath—the ancient and celebrated city of Ath-Truim.\* Many and varied were the scenes which this old town has witnessed

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\* *Ath-Truim*, "the pass or ford of the elder trees". For interesting notices connected with the civil and ecclesiastical history of Trim, see the admirable volume compiled by the Very Rev. Richard Butler, Dean of Clonmacnoise.



from the days of St. Loman, its first bishop, to the last election of a representative to sit in a foreign parliament. In the early ages Trim was the seat of an episcopal see—said to have been the most ancient in Ireland, and had a monastic school of the first class, which dispensed its blessings to the neighbourhood.

After the English Invasion, Trim became one of the principal strongholds of the Pale, and parliaments were frequently held in its castles or monastic halls. In 1173, a military fort or castle was erected here by De Lacy, to which Hugh Tyrrell, his deputy, set fire in his absence, on the approach of Roderick O'Connor, King of Connaught. After the departure of the "Irish enemy", and previous to De Lacy's return from England, this castle was rebuilt by Tyrrell. In 1210, King John dwelt for some time at Trim. In 1220, the present castle of Trim was built by William Peppard, lord of Tabor. In 1263, the Dominican abbey of Trim was founded by Geoffry de Geneville, or de Joinville, a nobleman of Champagne, who had married Maud de Lacy, and in 1273, after his return from the Crusades, Sir Geoffry was appointed Lord Justice of Ireland.

In 1308, on the feast of SS. Simon and Jude, he resigned the lordship of Meath to his grand-daughter, Joan, and her husband, Roger Mortimer, became a monk in the Dominican abbey of Trim, and in 1314, on the 19th of October, he died, and was interred in the cemetery of his monastery.

In 1399, Richard the Second confined Humphrey, son of the Duke of Gloucester, and Henry—afterwards Henry the Fifth—son of the Duke of Lancaster, in the castle of Trim.

In 1447, Sir John Talbot, Lord Furnival and Earl of Shrewsbury, held a parliament at Trim, when an act was passed prohibiting "English marchours" from wearing beards on their upper lips, after the manner of the "Irish enemy". This Sir John, who is called the "scourge of France", is said to have erected the building near the yellow steeple called the "Talbot Castle".

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the illustrious William Walsh, Bishop of Meath, denounced the doctrines of the Reformation at Trim, for which he was imprisoned in the

castle of Dublin. He afterwards died an exile and a confessor for the faith, at Complute, in Spain.

The religious houses in Trim, previous to the Reformation, were, viz.:—The abbey and abbey-church of St. Patrick, which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin; the Gray Friary, dedicated to St. Bonaventure, called also the Observantine Friary of Trim; [this house is by some said to have been founded by King John; others ascribe its foundation to the family of Plunkett]; the Dominican Friary, founded by Geoffry de Geneville, Lord of Meath, which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin; a convent for nuns; a Greek church; a chantry of three priests, in the parish of St. Patrick, one in the chapel of St. Laurence the Martyr, another in that of St. Patrick, and the third in the Roode chapel.

At *Newtown*, near Trim, was the Priory of Canons Regular of the Congregation of St. Victor. Simon de Rochfort, the first English bishop of Meath, founded this house, erected the church into a cathedral, and dedicated it to the honour of SS. Peter and Paul; and the Priory of St. John the Baptist at Newtown, near Trim.

The ecclesiastical origin of Trim is thus accounted for by Tirechan, a writer of the seventh century:\*

“A.D. 433. When Patrick, in his holy navigation, came to Ireland, he left St. Loman at the mouth of the Boyne to take care of his boat forty days and forty nights; and then he (St. Loman) waited another forty, out of obedience to Patrick. Then, according to the order of his master (the Lord being his pilot), he came in his boat, against the stream, as far as the ford of Trim, near the fort of Feidilmid, son of Loiguire. And when it was morning, Foirtechern, son of Feidilmid, found him reciting the Gospel, and admiring the Gospel and his doctrine, immediately believed; and a well being opened in that place, he was baptized by Loman in Christ, and remained with him until his mother came to look for him; and she was made glad at his sight, because she was a British woman. But she likewise

\* Usher's *Primordium*, pp. 853, 845. Dr. Lanigan is of opinion that Saint Loman, or Luman, belonged to the seventh century. For various notices of Trim by this learned but hypercritical author, see vol. i., pp. 222, 317, 416, 427, 428, 466; vol. iii., pp. 176, 177; vol. iv., pp. 55, 225, 322, 324.



believed, and again returned to her house, and told to her husband all that had happened to her and her son. And then Feidilmid was glad at the coming of the priest, because he had his mother from the Britons, the daughter of the king of the Britons, namely, Scothnoessa. And Feidilmid saluted Loman in the British tongue, asking him, in order, of his faith and kindred, and he answered: 'I am Loman, a Briton, a Christian, a disciple of Bishop Patrick, who is sent from the Lord to baptize the people of the Irish, and to convert them to the faith of Christ, who sent me here according to the will of God'. And immediately Feidilmid believed, with all his family, and dedicated (*immolavit*) to him and St. Patrick his country, with his possessions and with all his family; all these he dedicated to Patrick and Loman, with his son Fortchern, till the Day of Judgment. But Feidilmid crossed the Boyne, and Loman remained with Fortchern in Trim, until Patrick came to them, and built a church with them, twenty-two years before the foundation of the Church of Armagh".

In the *Annals of the Four Masters*, at 432, we read:

"Ath-Truim was founded by Patrick, it having been granted by Fedhlim, son of Laoghaire, son of Niall, to God and to him, Loman and Fortchern".

St. Fortchern, grandson of King Laoghaire, succeeded St. Loman, at his dying request; but in three days after he resigned the abbacy of Trim to Cathald (Archdall from *Acta Sanct.*).

482. St. Cormac, the son of Enda, and Bishop of Trim, was in this year made Archbishop of Armagh. He died the 17th of February, 497, and was interred at Trim (Harris's *Ware's Bishops*. See Lanigan, vol. i., p. 416). The Book of Armagh gives a list of eight abbots of Trim previous to 741; and of these it observes: "*Hi omnes episcopi fuerunt et principes venerantes Sanctum Patricium et successores ejus*".

554. On the 8th of April died the holy Cathald, Cathlad, or Cathub.

742. Died St. Cormac, Bishop of Trim. He is said to have been of the royal house of the Nialls, and his name appears in various calendars at the 17th of February, as the anniversary of his death. Three brothers of his are spoken of: Rumond, a very wise man, and deeply skilled in history and antiquities,

who died in 743 ; Baitellach, Abbot of Trim, whose death is marked at 752 ; and Ossan, a priest, the year of whose death is not known (Lanigan, vol. iii., p. 176).

751. Baethallach, Abbot of Ath-Truim, died (*Four Masters*).

791 (recte 796). Suibhne, Abbot of Ath-Truim, died (*Four Masters*).

819. Ceannfaeladh, scribe, Bishop, anchorite, and Abbot of Ath-Truim, died (*Four Masters*).

837. Ceallach, Abbot of Ath-Truim, died.

844. Cairbre, Abbot of Ath-Truim, died.

929. Maeleoin, Bishop and anchorite of Ath-Truim, died, after a good life.

1059. Eochaidh Ua Cinaedh, Airchineach of Ath-Truim, died.

1100. Flann Ua Cinaetha, Airchinneach of Ath-Truim, and chief poet of Meath, died.

1127. Connor O'Loghlin, an Ulster prince, having marched with a great army into Meath, amidst other depredations, burned the steeple of the church of Trim, in which a very considerable number of persons were shut up at the time. Lanigan, vol iv., page 55, from the *Annals of Innisfallen*.

1143. Trim, Kells, Dunshaughlin, and Kildare, were burned.

1155. Trim, with its church was burned.

NOTE.—In the Martyrology of Tallaght, the festivals of the following saints of Trim are marked at the 17th of February :—

St. Aedha ; St. Coelochtra ; St. Cormac, Bishop ; St. Cuimaen, Bishop ; St. Finnsegh, viz. :—St. Lactan, Bishop ; St. Lurech Mac Cuanach, 'hostiarius Patricii' ; St. Ossan ; and St. Saran.

The festival of St. Fortchern is marked at the 18th of February ; and that of St. Loman "cum SS. omnibus", at the 11th of October.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE DIOCESE OF ARDBRACCAN.

THE Abbey of Ardbaccan, " Breacan, or Brecan's height or hill", was founded by St. Brecan, in the sixth or very early in the seventh century. St. Brecan\* was the son of Eochaidh Baldearg, prince of Thomond, and grandson of Carthen Finn, first Christian ruler of that territory.

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\* Harris's *Ware's Writers of Ireland*, p. 32 ; *Round Towers of Ireland*, pp. 136, 137.



After having governed Ardbraaccan for some time, he proceeded to the west of Ireland, and founded, on the great island of Arran, in the bay of Galway, the Church of Templebraaccan, where he fixed his residence. He is said to have written some prophecies regarding the future wars of Ireland and the coming of the English. The exact year of his death is unknown, but it was probably in the sixth century. He was interred in his own church of Templebraaccan, where his festival was celebrated on the 1st of May. In the *Martyrology of Donegal* he is called Bishop of Ardbraaccan, and his festival is marked at December the 6th. The *Martyrology of Tallaght* commemorates him at May 1st. His tomb—on which was an Irish inscription—was discovered some years ago :

“ This monumental stone”, says Dr. Petrie, “ was discovered about forty years ago within a circular enclosure known as St. Breacan’s tomb, at a depth of about six feet from the surface, on the occasion of its being first opened to receive the body of a distinguished and popular Roman Catholic ecclesiastic, of the County of Galway, who made a dying request to be buried in this grave. Under the stone within the sepulchre there was also found, on this occasion, a small water-worn stone of black calp or limestone. . . . On the upper side is carved a plain cross, and around this, in a circle, the following simple inscription (Anglicised) :—‘ A Prayer for Breacan the pilgrim’ ”.\*

#### ST. ULTAN.

Archbishop Usher,† on the authority of some very old and authentic manuscript, which throws much light on our ancient ecclesiastical history, divides the saints who

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\* This venerable relic is at present in Dr. Petrie’s possession. Ware makes St. Breacan flourish about 650. Dr. Petrie says he died early in the sixth century.

† See Usher’s *Primordium*, pp. 913, 914, 915. Dr. Lanigan says that this catalogue is “ a very interesting document, throwing great light on our ancient ecclesiastical history. The fact is, that it bears every mark of high antiquity, and was most probably drawn up some time before the disputes about the Paschal cycle and the tonsure had totally subsided, which was not until about the year 716”—vol. ii., pp. 13, 14, 331.

flourished in Ireland during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, into three classes.

#### THE THREE CLASSES OF SAINTS.

Dr. Lanigan is of opinion that this catalogue was written before the year 715, the period at which the disputes about the tonsure and the Paschal cycle had concluded. The first class consisted of one hundred and fifty bishops, who were all founders of churches and eminent for sanctity. Those bishops were Romans, Britons, Franks, and Scots (Irish). They observed one and the same discipline, one mass, and one celebration—that is, one uniform liturgy, one tonsure, and one Easter or Paschal cycle. They did not reject the society and attendance of women; because, being founded on the rock Christ, they did not fear the wind of temptation. This class was called most holy.

The second class commenced from the year 542, the latter end of the reign of Tuathal, and continued to A.D. 598 or 599. This class consisted of three hundred saints, few of whom were bishops, the greater part having been priests. Their Paschal computation and tonsure were the same as those of the former class; but they admitted a diversity of masses or liturgies, and of monastic regulations. They received a mass from the Britons, David, Gildas, and Docus or Cadoc. To this class belonged, besides many others, the two Finians, two Brendans, Jarlath of Tuam, Comgall, Coemgan, Cieran (Kieran), Columba, Caineach, Egan, MacLaisre, Lugeus, Ludeus, Moditeus, Cormac, Colman, Nessian, Laisrean, Berrindeus, Cœman, Ceman, Conan, Endeus, Aideus, and Byrchin. In the times of this class a rule was established prohibiting women from serving monasteries. This order was called very holy.

The third order of saints consisted of holy priests and a few bishops, in all one hundred in number, who dwelt in deserts, and lived on herbs, water, and alms. They shunned possessing private property, and had divers rules and masses and divers tonsures, some having the *corona* and others their hair. They differed also as to the Paschal solemnity; for some of them celebrated the feast of the Resurrection from



the 14th of the moon, and others from the 16th. They lived during the reigns of four dynasties—viz., of *Aeda Allain*, who reigned only three years; *Domnail*, the sons of *Mailcob*, and the sons of *Aeda Slane*, and continued until the great mortality. Their names are, Bishops Petran, Ultan, Colman, Murgeus, Aedan, Loman, and Senach, besides several other bishops. The following were priests: Fechin, Airendan, Failan, Coman, Commian, Colman, Ernan, Cronan, and very many other priests.

“The first order (or class) most holy; the second very holy; the third holy. The first burns brightly like the sun, the second like the moon, and the third like the stars”.

## ST. ULTAN.

St. Ultan, mentioned in the third list, was of the race of Hua Conchovair\* (O'Connor), and is said to have been related to St. Brigid by his mother's side. He was Abbot of Ardbraaccan after St. Breccan had departed for the Arran Islands, and is supposed to have been the founder, or first bishop of that see. He was so remarkable for charity, that, it is stated in O'Clery's *Irish Calendar*,† he educated and fed with his own hands all the children who were without education in Ireland. He collected the transactions of St. Brigid into one volume, in alphabetical order, and is said to have composed a Latin hymn in her honour.‡ Whence an anonymous author, quoted by Usher, who wrote St. Brigid's life in verse, has prefaced his poem with these lines:§

“Scripserunt multi virtutes virginis almæ,  
Ultanus Doctor, atque, Eleranus, ovans,  
Descripsit multos animosus nomine libros,  
De vita ac studiis virginis, ac meritis”.

“The virgin's virtues many writers paint,  
Ultan the sage, and Eleran the saint;  
And Amchaid in immortal works display'd  
The life and merits of the spotless maid”.

\* Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i., p. 454; vol. ii., pp. 342, 343, 346; vol. iii., p. 51.

† Dr. O'Donovan's notes to the *Four Masters*.

‡ See *Liber Hymnorum*, edited by Dr. Todd.

§ Harris's *Ware's Writers*, p. 30. Usher's *Primordium*, p. 1067.

He wrote a life of St. Patrick or a treatise on some of his acts. Some prophecies regarding the English invasion are likewise attributed to him. The annotations of Tirechan on the life of St. Patrick are stated, in the book of Armagh, to have been taken from the mouth of Ultanus, first bishop of the Conchubrenses, *i.e.* of the Dal Conchubhair of Ardraccan. In the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* his death is entered at A.D. 653; in the *Annals of Ulster* at 656, and again at 662; the *Four Masters* at 656. "St. Ultan Mac-ni-Conchobhair of Ardraccan died on the fourth day of September, after (completing) the one hundred and eightieth year of his reign". There is a holy well\* in the demesne of the Protestant Bishop of Meath, who lives at Ardraccan, called still "St. Ultan's well". It is circular, and measures nine feet and a half in diameter. Stations were made at it on the vigil of St. Ultan's festival, up to a recent period.

## ANNALS OF ARDBRACCAN.

Tirechan† succeeded St. Ultan as Bishop of Ardraccan. He wrote the *Acts of St. Patrick* in two books, with this title "Bishop Tirechan writ these things from the mouth or from the book of Bishop Ultan, whose pupil or scholar he was". These books are often quoted by Usher in his *Primordium*.‡

717. Drostan Dairthighe died at Ardraccan.

731. Daniel MacColman, Abbot of Ardraccan, died.

760. Tola, of Ardraccan, died.

776 (recte 781). Ailgniadh, Bishop of Ardraccan, died.

777 (recte 782). Cormac MacBresal, Abbot of Ardraccan and other churches, died.

784. The translation of the relics of St. Ultan.

823. Maelrubha, anchorite, Bishop and Abbot of Ardraccan, died.

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\* There were several other holy wells bearing his name, and stone-crosses in the County of Meath. One of the best branches of the Navan Young Men's Society is the "Guild of St. Ultan". The members are at present erecting a spacious hall at Boyerstown, in the parish of Ardraccan, and they purpose, when completed, to adorn it with a life-like figure of their patron saint.

† Harris's *Ware's Writers*, p. 30; also Colgan's *Trias Thaum.*, p. 217.

‡ *Primordium*, pages 829, 835, 848, 853, 887, 899.



847. Maelfuadaigh, Abbot of Ardbraaccan, died.

881. Suairleach, Abbot of Ardbraaccan, died.

886. The plundering of Ardbraaccan, Donaghpatrick, Dulane, and Glendaloch, by the Danes. Same year the abbey was again plundered (*Trias Thaum.*, p. 633).

918. Maelfmuire, Abbot of Ardbraaccan, died.

949. Godfrey, son of Sitric, with the Danes of Dublin, plundered Ardbraaccan.

966. Connmhac, successor of Ultan, and priest of Kells, died.

967. Maelfinnen, Bishop of Kells, successor of Ultan and Cairneach, died.

992. Ardbraaccan was again plundered by the Danes.

1002. Eoghan, son of Ceallach, Airchinneach of Ardbraaccan, died.

1024. Dubhslaine, chief anmchara (confessor or spiritual director) of the Gaedhil, and priest of Ardbraaccan, died at Clonmacnoise.

1031. Ardbraaccan was plundered by the Danes of Dublin, and two hundred persons were burned in the Daimhliag (the great church), and two hundred persons were carried into captivity.

1035. Ardbraaccan was plundered by Sitric, son of Aulave, and the Danes.

1055. Maelbrighde, son of Baedan, lector of Ardbraaccan, died.

1064. Cormac, Airchinneach of Ardbraaccan, died.

1069. An army was led by Morrogh, son of Dermot, into Meath, where he burned territories and churches, namely:—Granard, Fore, and Ardbraaccan; but Fechin slew him face to face, and a great destruction was made of foreigners and Leinstermen by various distempers.

1109. Ardbraaccan was burned with its churches, by the Ui-Briuin, and many persons were killed there, and prisoners carried off from thence.

1115. The daimhliag (great stone church) of Ardbraaccan, with its full of people, was burned by the men of Munster, and also a great many churches in Feara-Breagh.

1156. A predatory incursion was made by Dermot MacMurrough, the Danes of Dublin, and Duncha, son of Donnell O'Loughlin, into East Meath, and they plundered the country, both churches and territories, and they carried off the cows of Ardbraaccan, Slane, Cill-Teltown, Downpatrick, and some of the cows of the country in general.

1163. Niall O'Loghlin committed depredations at Ardbraccan and other places.

1166. Moriertach, King of Ireland, granted a parcel of land to this abbey in perpetuity, at the yearly rent of three ounces of gold.

1170. The steeple of this abbey fell.

After the English invasion the Abbey of Ardbraccan\* pined away, and the town fell gradually into obscurity.

NOTE.—“ In the early part of the twelfth century flourished the learned O'Cassidy, Abbot of Ardbraccan, in Meath, whose well-known historical poem, *Sacred Erin, Island of Saints*, is printed by Dr. O'Connor in his *Rerum Hiber. Scriptores*”—See Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy*, Introd. xv.

“ The second poem was composed by G. Modud, ecclesiastic of Ardbraccan, as is mentioned in the work, a man perfectly acquainted with the antiquities of his country. It contains the history of Ireland from 428 to the death of Malachy the Second, in 1022. It begins thus: ‘ Eire ogh, Inis na naomh ’ ”—See O'Flaherty's letter to Lynch, *Ogygia*, xxv.

“ 1143. Giolla Modhuda O'Cassidy, otherwise called *Dall Clairineach*, Abbot of Ardbraccan in Meath, died this year. He was a very learned man, a well-informed historian, and a famous poet. Of his work three poems only have come down to our times, all of which are on the history of Ireland”—O'Reilly's *Irish Writers*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DIOCESE OF DUNSHAUGHLIN.

DUNSHAUGHLIN is a small town in the barony of Ratoath and county of Meath. It is situated on the Dublin road to Navan, being thirteen miles and three quarters (N.W.) from the former, and nine miles and a quarter (S.S.E.) from the latter. The parish of Dunshaughlin is encompassed on all sides with ruins of churches, abbeys, and chapels of ease. The green mounds of the dead, the traditional reverence of the people, the drooping willow, or the hoary ash-tree, spreading her branches over these consecrated spots, alone mark the sites of many sanctuaries, which demons in human shape have uprooted and profaned. The gray walls or ivy-

\* The ecclesiastical history of this parish since the Reformation is very interesting, and we have collected voluminous details for our next volume.



mantled ruins of others stand still, records of past ages, heirlooms of piety and charity, speaking to the heart, and recalling to memory those ages of faith and philanthropy, "when", says Dr. Johnson, "Ireland was the school of the west, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature".

The first notice of Dunshaughlin which occurs in our annals—a very remarkable one indeed—is its connection with St. Seachnall. In fact it owes its origin to this saint, and derives its name from him—"Domhnach (Dominica) and Seachnall or Seachlann"—St. Seachnall's Church.

St. Seachnall\* or Secundus was a native of Gall, and son of Restitutus, a Lombard, by, it is said, Liemania, otherwise named Darerca, who is usually said to have been sister to St. Patrick. According to Tirechan's list, Secundinus and Auxilius, his brother, were disciples of St. Patrick, and seem to have accompanied him from the commencement of his mission to Ireland. After a few years they were sent to Britain or Gaul to be consecrated, as, according to the established usage of the Church, three bishops are required for the consecration of another. The *Annals of Ulster and Innisfallen* remark, at A.D. 439, that the Bishops Secundinus, Auxilius, and Isserninus, were sent this year to aid St. Patrick. St. Seachnall fixed his see at Dunshaughlin, and was reputed a very wise, prudent, and holy man. In the *Four Masters* he is called "St. Patrick's bishop without fault". So high was the opinion St. Patrick had of him that when he went to preach the Gospel in Leinster and Munster, he appointed St. Seachnall to preside over the converts of Meath and the North. Hence he is called St. Patrick's vicar or suffragan. It is recorded that on one occasion he expressed disapprobation at St. Patrick's extreme disinterestedness in refusing presents from the wealthy, by means of which he could support the religious converts who might be in distress. On St. Patrick explain-

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\* Lanigan, vol. i., pp. 259, 271, 293, 321. Speaking of the relatives of St. Patrick, Dr. Lanigan observes: "The very ancient practice of designating religious women by the name of *sisters* was, in all probability, the cause of mistaking some pious ladies, who lived in or about St. Patrick's time, for real sisters of his"—vol. i., p. 126.

ing his reasons St. Seachnall asked forgiveness, and composed a hymn\* in his honour which, most probably, was the first Christian Latin hymn composed in Ireland. It has been published by Father Colgan, and republished by Ware, who calls it an alphabetical hymn, because the strophes, consisting each of four lines, begin with the letters of the alphabet, following in order. It appears too in the ancient *Antiphonarium Benchoreense*, a work certainly beyond one thousand years old, which has been republished by Muratori. There are different readings in the various editions, but substantially the same. St. Seachnall's hymn is frequently referred to in our ancient writers, and many favours are promised to those who reverently recite it. After a holy and edifying life, his suffraganship having lasted for six years, St. Seachnall died on the 27th of November, 448, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and was interred in his own church of Dunshaughlin. He was the first bishop who died in Ireland, and has been held in special reverence throughout the diocese of Meath. As an instance of this, the name Maol-Seachlan (servant of St. Seachnall) was common amongst the ancient Irish (but particularly in the royal race of Meath. The O'Maolseachlains, or O'Melaghlins, who belonged to the great branch of the Southern Hy-

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\* The hymn begins with "Audite omnes amantes Deum sancta merita"—In the *Book of Hymns of the Ancient Church of Ireland*, edited by Dr. Todd, the "hymn of St. Sechnall in praise of St. Patrick" is given in the Irish characters, together with the historical preface and copious notes. In the *Antiphonarium Benchoreense*, a MS. of the eighth century, written in the monastery of Bangor, county of Down, and preserved in the Ambrosian Library, Milan, there is another hymn, entitled "Hymnus quando communicarent Sacerdotes", and begins—

Sancti venite,  
Christi corpus sumite;  
Sanctum bibentes,  
Quo redempti Sanguinem.

The origin of this hymn is thus accounted for: "As St. Patrick and St. Sechnall (Secundinus) were going round the cemetery (at Dunshaughlin), they heard a choir of angels chanting a hymn at the offering in the church—'Sancti venite', etc., etc., and from that time to the present the hymn is chanted in Erin when the body of Christ is received"—*Liber Hymnorum*, p. 31. These hymns supply an additional argument for the Catholicity of the ancient Church of Ireland.



Nialls or Clan Colman, took their name from their ancestor Maolseachlain (Latinised Malachias and Anglicised Malachy), who again took his name from the first Bishop of Dunshaughlin. This name O'Maelseachlain has been Anglicised MacLoughlin since the reign of Queen Anne.

We now come to the annals of Dunshaughlin, which the reader will find very deficient. The position of the town and abbey, being on the high road from Dublin to the heart of Meath, must have left them peculiarly exposed to the plunderings and burnings of the Danes :

## ANNALS OF DUNSHAUGHLIN.

796. Ruamnus, Abbot of Dunshaughlin, died.

841. Consudh, Abbot of Dunshaughlin, died.

849. Scannell, Abbot of Dunshaughlin, died.

876. Feirghil (Virgilius), Abbot of Dunshaughlin, was murdered, and his body concealed.

883. Scannell, Abbot of Dunshaughlin, died.

1026. A great depredation was committed by Gearr-an-Chogaidh (i.e. the short man of the war) at Dunshaughlin, and Gearr-an-Chogaidh himself was slain on the following day, and his two brothers along with him—namely, Etigen and Gilla-maith, by Muireadhach-na-Ceile in his own house. This happened through the miracle of God and Seachnall.

1027. Dunchadh, successor of Seachnall, the most distinguished wise man of the Irish, died at Coloin\* (Cologne, where there was a celebrated Irish monastery).

1040. Dermot O'Shaughnessy, the most distinguished sage of Leath-Cuinn (the northern half of Ireland or Con's half), and successor of Seachnall, died.

1143. Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, and Kildare, were burned.

1152. Some time before this year the bishoprics of Dunshaughlin, Trim, Ardraccan, Slane, Fore, and Skryne, were consolidated, and their common see fixed at Clonard.

1153. Dunshaughlin, Skryne, and Trevet, were burned by the Hy-Briuin (the men of Brefny).

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\* For a list of the Irish monasteries in Germany see *Cambrensis Eversus*, cap. xxi., with Rev. Mathew Kelly's notes; Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. iv., pp. 157, 158; see also a paper published by Dr. Reeves in the *Ulster Journal*.



## CHAPTER IX.

## THE DIOCESE OF SLANE.

AMONGST the many ecclesiastical ruins with which Ireland abounds, few surpass in interest or association the ancient abbey of Slane. Seated on a lofty hill, where St. Patrick kindled the Paschal fire, clothed in ivy, surrounded by the richest pastures, within view of some of the most ancient pagan and Christian antiquities, looking down on the blue waters of the Boyne, commanding the most extensive view of Meath, the ruins of Slane Abbey impress the beholder with religious solemnity, and carry us back to those ages when its aisles, now deserted, were thronged with worshippers, and when the piety and learning of its monastic teachers attracted numbers to its halls. "The man", says Dr. Johnson, "is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force on the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona".

Before we proceed to the history of the ancient church of Slane, let us ascend the stairway of its ivy-mantled belfry. Where in Ireland could the antiquarian or the tourist find such materials to gratify their respective studies ? For miles and miles beneath you and around you, lie the green pastures of Meath and Louth in their richest luxuriance. In the distance you can see the mountains of Wicklow and Dublin, of Iveagh and Mourne in the County Down, and far to the west, the green hills of Westmeath. Run your eye along the valley of the Boyne from the gray walls of Trim Castle to the Irish Sea. Move on from Trim to Ballinter, Kilcairne, Navan, Donaghmore Round Tower, Dunmoe Castle, Ardmulchan Church, Stackallen, Beauparc, Carrick-Dexter, the Rocks, Slane Castle, and its picturesque village, Fennor Church, Rosnaree (the ancient Ros-na-righ, or wood of the Kings, where King Cormac is buried), the old pagan mounds of Knowth, Dowth, and New Grange, Townly Hall, Old-bridge, the Hill of Donore, on which stood the unfortunate James the Second ; Duleek, where was built the first stone



church in Ireland; and Droghedra, where the myrmidons of Cromwell massacred indiscriminately, without mercy or remorse.

Look to the south at "Tara of the Kings", with which so many memories are intertwined, from the earliest epochs of our history to the memorable 1843. See near it the old belfry of Skryne, the *Scrinium Sancti Columbæ*, and the woods that hide from our view the ancient churchyard of St. Seachnall. See in the western view the Kells of Columbkille and the intermediate space, covered with Celtic monuments, crumbling castles, and ancient churches. Look to the north at Knock-Erk, "St. Erc's hill", and below it the old ruins, where, amid the mountain solitudes of Grange, our fathers worshipped in the days of persecution. To the north-east you can see the round tower and stone crosses of Monasterboice (the monastery of St. Buite or Boetius), where flourished the celebrated poet, antiquary, and historian, Flann, whose virtues and learning are eulogized by our annalists. See nearer to you the ruins of the Cistercian Abbey of Mellifont ("the fountain of honey"), once the resort of kings and princes, and where, it is said, the bride of Breffny, the unfortunate but wronged Devorgilla, closed her sad years in austerity and prayer. Assuredly the history of Meath, both civil and ecclesiastical, could be written on the hill of Slane.

The ancient name of Slane was *Ferta-fer-Feig*, "The graves of the men of Feig". Where these graves were has not been ascertained.

The first ecclesiastical notice we have of Slane is the kindling of the Paschal fire by St. Patrick on its hill, within view of the palace of Tara. This fact is noticed in all the lives of St. Patrick, and we take the following condensed report from Dr. Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History* :\*

"On the following day, which was Easter Eve or Holy Saturday, St. Patrick continued his journey, and arrived in the evening at a place called *Ferta-fer-feic*, now Slane. Having got a tent pitched there, he made preparations for celebrating the festival of Easter, and accordingly lighted the Paschal fire about nightfall. It happened that at this very time the King

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\* Vol. i., pp. 222, 223, 224.

Laogaire and the assembled princes were celebrating a religious festival, of which fire-worship formed a part. There was a standing law that, at the time of this festival, no fire should be kindled for a considerable distance all around, until after a great fire should be lighted in the royal palace of Temoria or Tara. St. Patrick's Paschal fire was, however, lighted before that of the palace, and being seen from the heights of Tara, excited great astonishment. On the king's inquiring what could be the cause of it, and who could have thus dared to infringe the law, the magi told him that it was necessary to have that fire extinguished immediately, whereas, if allowed to remain, it would get the better of their fires, and bring about the downfall of his kingdom. Laogaire, enraged and troubled on getting this information, set out for Slane with a considerable number of followers and one or two of the principal magi, for the purpose of exterminating these violators of the law. When arrived within some distance from where the tent was, they sat down, and St. Patrick was sent for with an order to appear before the king and give an account of his conduct. It was arranged that no one should show him any mark of respect, nor rise up to receive him. But, on his presenting himself before them, Herc, son of Dego, disobeyed the injunction, and standing up, saluted him, and receiving the saint's blessing, became a believer. He was afterwards Bishop of Slane, and celebrated for his sanctity".

#### ST. ERK.

Erk, "the sweet spoken judge", was, in all probability, a native of Munster, and is said to have been page to King Laogaire at the time he showed this respect to St. Patrick.\* He was consecrated some time before the year 465, and was the first bishop of the ancient diocese of Slane, and abbot of the monastery which was erected there by St. Patrick. He is said to have been the preceptor of St. Brendan, and was an intimate friend of St. Brigid. At the synod of Mag-Femyn, in Tipperary, it is related that Erk spoke highly of the great abbess of Kildare, and of the miraculous favours with which she was endowed by the

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\* Lanigan, vol. i., p. 346.



Almighty. He assisted at the consecration of Conlaeth, first bishop of Kildare, and took an active part in all the ecclesiastical movements of the age.

In his declining years he retired from the active duties of the mission, and founded a *hermitage* on the banks of the Boyne, where in solitude, mortification, prayer, and the practice of every virtue, he prepared himself for eternity. The Four Masters say he died on the 2nd of November, 512.

“His age was four score years and ten when he departed. This Bishop Erk was judge to Patrick. It was for him Patrick composed this quatrain :—

Bishop Erk,—  
Everything he judged was just ;  
Every one that passes a just judgment  
Shall receive the blessing of Bishop Erk”.

That St. Erk was a man of great sanctity and usefulness, the respect in which he was held by St. Patrick, the honourable mention made of him in our annals, and the veneration with which the people of Slane still regard his memory after the lapse of thirteen hundred years, are a sufficient testimony. In the *Martyrology of Donegal*, his festival is marked at the 2nd of November. Colgan says that, in the old calendars, Ercus is treated of on 2nd of October and 2nd of November. Probus, writing of him in the tenth century, says: “Hercus, filius Dego, cujus reliquiæ nunc venerantur in civitate, quæ vocatur Slane”.

#### ABBEY OF SLANE.

The monastery on the hill of Slane, founded by St. Patrick, was governed by St. Erk, and, after him, by comorbans (successors) down to the time of the Anglo-Norman invasion. These abbots were frequently bishops, and as such they governed their sees and discharged their episcopal functions. In course of time, Slane became a great school of learning and piety, and, as was usual, a flourishing town rose up near the gates of the monastery. Archdall tells us, that in the year 653 Dagobert, King of Austrasia (part of France), when at the age of only seven

years, was taken by Grimoald, mayor of the palace, and by his directions was shorn as a monk, rendered unfit to hold the reins of government, and banished to Ireland. Archdall adds, that Dagobert was received into the Abbey of Slane; that he received an education proper for the enjoyment of a throne; that he spent twenty years in Slane, when he was recalled into France, and replaced in his government. There is no doubt a tradition still exists amongst the people of Slane as to the truth of this statement. In the *Four Masters* and our Monasticons we have the following.—

“ 512. St. Erk, Bishop of Lilcach and of Feartha-fear-Feig, by the side of Sidhe-Truim, to the west, died on the second day of November. His age was four-score and ten years when he departed.

746. Colman of the Britons, Abbot of Slane, died.

768. Maenach, Abbot of Slane and Cil-Foibrich, died.

782. Robhartach MacMooney, œconomus (the spenser or house steward) of Slane, and Abbot of Cill-Foibrigh, died.

784 (recte 789). Teadhach MacCormac, Abbot of Louth, Slane, and Duleek, died.

797 (recte 802). Ailill MacCormac, Abbot of Slane, a wise man and a learned judge, died.

801 (recte 806). Congal, son of Macnach, Abbot of Slane, who was a learned sage, and a pure virgin, died.

809 (recte 814). Suibhne, son of Macnach, œconomus of Slane, died.

823. Colman, son of Oilíolla, Abbot of Slane, and also of other churches in France and Ireland, died.

833. The plundering of Slane and Fennor by the foreigners.

838. Colman, Abbot of Slane, died.

The *Annals of Ulster* at 837 record:—‘ St. Dochata, holy bishop and anchorite, finished his virtuous life in this world, and resigned his spirit to heaven’.

843. Labhry, Abbot of Slane, died.

847. Onchu, Bishop and anchorite of Slane, died.

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NOTE—In the Martyrology of Tallaght, the festival of St. Maelodran of Slane is marked at the 31st of May. Amongst the “Lost Books of Ancient Erin” is the *Leabhar buidhe Slaine*, or Yellow Book of Slane. See Professor O’Curry’s Lectures, p. 20.



847. Robhartach MacColgan, Abbot of Slane, died.

Same year. The cross which was on the green of Slane was raised up into the air; it was broken and divided, so that a part of its top reached (*i.e.* fell at) Teltown and Fennor.

854. Sodhomna, Bishop of Slane, received martyrdom from the Norsemen.

867. Niallan, Bishop of Slane, died.

874. Maelbrighde, Bishop of Slane, died.

886. Maelpadraig, son of Niall, Bishop of Slane, died.

920. Colga, Abbot of Slane, died.

935. Fedhach, Abbot of Slane, died.

938. Suibhne, son of Cu-Breatan, Abbot of Slane, was killed by the foreigners.

945. An army was led by Rory O'Cananan to Slane, where the foreigners and Irish met him, and the Danes of Dublin were defeated, and numbers slain and drowned.

946. Colman, airchinneach of Slane, was slain by the foreigners.

948.\* The belfry of Slane was burned by the Danes, with its full of relics and distinguished persons, together with Caein eachair, Lector of Slane, and the crozier of the patron saint, and a bell (which was) the best of bells.

954. Maelpatrick MacConbretan, airchinneach of Slane, died.

956. Lughaidh MacColgan, airchinneach of Slane, died.

1001. Cele, son of Suibhne, Abbot of Slane, died.

1002. The abbey of Slane was plundered by the Danes.

1028. The derthech (oratory) of Slane fell.

1038. Niall, airchinneach of Slane, was killed by O'Conduibh.

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\* The position of Slane abbey in the great plain of Bregia, and its proximity to the sea, rendered it peculiarly exposed to the plunderings of the Danes. The burning of Slane, which is noticed in the *Four Masters* at 948, is placed by the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* at 945. "The steeple of Slane was burned by the Danes, which was full of worthy men and relics of saints, with Kennyagher, Lector of Slane". In the *Chronicon Scotorum* (see Petrie's *Round Towers*, p. 368), which is a condensed copy of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, corrected as to chronology from the *Annals of Tigernach*, we read: "950. The cloigtheach (belfry) of Slane was burned by the pagans, with its full of people in it, *i.e.* with Conecar, the reader of Slane". This Caeineachair was no other than Probus, the distinguished professor of the schools of Slane, who wrote a life of St. Patrick, and dedicated it to Paulinus, Bishop of Indenen, near Slane. This life was written in two books, and is considered one of the most correct and circumstantial records on this subject which have come down to our day.

1042. Eochagan, airchinneach of Slane, and lector of Swords, and a distinguished scribe, died.

1053. Donell O'Cele, airchinneach of Slane, died.

Same year. Slane was burned by the son of Mael-na-mbo.

1150. Slane was plundered by Tordelvack O'Brien.

1156. Slane was plundered by Dermot MacMorrogh and the Danes of Dublin.

1161. Slane was plundered.

1170. Slane was plundered and burned by Dermot MacMurrogh, King of Leinster, and his English allies.

NOTE.—The heritage of St. Erk, in which he spent his declining years, is still to be seen on the northern bank of the Boyne, and a more romantic or enchanting spot can scarcely be imagined. The old walls, clothed in ivy, are situated at the foot of a swell of ground which gradually rises until it reaches the hill of Slane, and are almost washed by the blue waters of the Boyne, which sweep by the southern basement. A rich grassy plain stretches along the south of the river, and the horizon is bounded on the one side by the castle of Slane, on the other by the gray walls of Fennor church, and by the green hills and woods which rise in the distance. Near the hermitage is a large sculptured stone, having figures of the crucifixion and the twelve apostles. It is difficult to conjecture now what may have been its peculiar use; but it is held in great respect, for pilgrims, after performing their stations at our Lady's Well (which is near), usually repeat the *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, and the *Credo*, twelve times round this stone.

## CHAPTER X.

### DIOCESE OF FORE.

FORE\* is a parish in the barony of Demifore, county of Westmeath. A monastery was founded here in the seventh century by St. Fechin, which in process of time became the centre of an episcopal see. The life of the distinguished founder is thus given by Dr. Lanigan:†

\* According to Usher (see *Primordium*, p. 966), Fore derives its name from Baille Leabhair, "the town of the books". Dr. O'Donovan derives it from Fobhar—"a term which it is probable was originally applied to the remarkable springs which flow from the hill into the mill-pond at the village of Fore"—See O'Donovan's valuable note to the *Four Masters* under A.D. 1176.

† Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. iii., pp. 45, 52, etc.; also vol. i., p. 345; vol. ii., pp. 20, 190, 192, 331; vol. iii., p. 177; vol. vi., p. 323.



St. Fechin, who is the first named among the priests of the third class of Irish saints, was a native of the territory in which St. Athracta had her nunnery, that is, of Lugne. Bile, or afterwards called Bile-Fechin, in the barony of Leney, is stated to have been the place of his birth. His father was Coelcharna, a descendant of Eochad Fionn, brother to the famous King Con of the Hundred Battles, and his mother Lassair, of the royal blood of Munster. When fit to be sent to school, Fechin was placed under St. Nathy of Achonry, in whose monastery he remained until he made a considerable progress in learning and piety. How long he continued there we are not correctly informed. According to one account, he staid with Nathy until he was ordained priest; but according to another, which appears more consistent, he left that school several years before he was ordained, and went to that of some other holy man. Having finished his studies, and being raised to the priesthood, he left his own country for the purpose of leading a retired life, and arriving at Fobhar, now Fore, in the county of Westmeath, stopped there, being very kindly received by the proprietors of that place. Here he erected a monastery, to which such numbers of persons were attracted by his reputation, that after some time his community consisted of about three hundred monks,\* who, as well as their holy abbot, subsisted on their own labour, and were sometimes reduced to great penury. Some other monasteries or churches are attributed to St. Fechin, but, with the exception of one or two of them, I greatly doubt whether they were of his foundation. That he established a religious house in the island of Immagh,† near the coast of Galway, cannot be questioned. The inhabitants were still pagans when Fechin, taking with him some of his monks of Fore, undertook their conversion. At first he met with great opposition, and the people were so obstinate that they refused to supply him and his companions with even the necessaries of life, so that two of them died of want of food, whom, however, the Almighty was pleased, through the saint's intercession, to bring again to life. But Guaire, King of Connaught, being apprised of their distress,

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\* In a hymn for the office of St. Fechin we read :

Dehinc fuit monachorum  
Dux et pater trecentorum  
Quos instruxit lege morum  
Murus contra vitia. Amen.

† Now Omey.

sent them abundance of provisions. When setting about the construction of a monastery, the islanders threw their implements and utensils into the sea, which, it is said, were driven back on land. At length Fechin succeeded in bringing all of them over to the Christian faith, and baptized them. Their zeal became so fervent that they consigned themselves and their island to him as their master and superior.

Among the many transactions in which Fechin is said to have been engaged, it is related that, on occasion of Donald the Second, King of all Ireland, having marched with a great army into the country of the Southern or Meath Nialls, for the purpose of fixing the boundaries of their principality, they applied for protection to the saint, who happened to be then at a place called Tibrada, where, perhaps he had some small establishment. Fechin complied with their request, and acted so powerfully on the king's mind as to induce him to desist from any further proceeding against the Southern Nialls, between whom and the king he procured a perfect reconciliation. His influence was very great with the kings and princes of his time. An instance of this is given in the case of a young man named Erlomhan, whom Moenach, King of Munster, immediately discharged from prison on perceiving that Fechin wished for this act of grace. Erlomhan afterwards embraced the monastic state under Fechin. In like manner he obtained from the joint kings of Ireland, Diermit the Second and Blaithmac, the liberation of one Aedus or Aedan, a brave military man, who, on being dismissed from prison and given up to Fechin, went with him to Fore, where he became a monk. Several holy men are mentioned as united in friendship with Fechin, for instance, Coeman or Comain Breac, abbot of Roseach, in Meath, Ultan of Ardbraccan, Fintan Munnu, Ronan, son Berach, and particularly Mochua, Abbot of Ardslaine. Fechin's life was one continued course of austerity, and he was so fond of solitude that he often used to retire from his monastery, either of Fore or Immagh, to lonesome situations, passing his time in prayer, fasting, and other mortifications, and taking no food except now and then a little bread and water. Many miracles have been attributed to him. This great saint died on the 20th of January, A.D. 665, of the dreadful pestilence that raged all over Ireland.\* His memory

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\* The *Four Masters* record his death at 664. "A great mortality prevailed in Ireland this year, which was called the Buidhe-Connail, and the



has been most highly respected, and the monastery of Fore, which continued down to the time of the general suppression, was greatly celebrated, and in the course of ages became very splendid and wealthy.

## ANNALS OF FORE.\*

- 705. Conodhar, Abbot of Fore, died on the 3rd of November.
- 709. Ceannfaeladh, Abbot of Fore, died.
- 735. Dubhdabhoireann, Abbot of Fore, died.
- 745. St. Suairleach, Bishop of Fore, died on the 21st of March.
- Same year. Fore and Donaghpatrick were burned.
- 765. Ua Becce, Abbot of Fore, died.
- 766. Aedhgen, Bishop and Abbot of Fore, died.
- 776 (recte 781). Feachtnach, Abbot of Fore, died.
- 812 (recte 817). The oratory of Fore was burned.
- 855. Maenghal, Abbot of Fore, died.
- 866. Ceallach, Abbot of Fore, who was a noble and illustrious wise man, died
- 869. Ailill, Bishop, Abbot of Fore, died.
- 887. Cormac, Abbot of Fore, and Tanist-abbot of Clonmacnoise, died.
- 930. Maelgirie, Abbot of Fore, died.
- 941. Feardomhnach, Abbot of Fore, died.
- 954. Ænghus, successor of Feichin, died.
- 970. Fore and other places were plundered and burned by Domhnall MacMurchadh.
- 980. Clerchen, successor of Fechin, died.
- 981. Muireadhach, successor of Fechin, died.
- 992. Maelfinnia Ua h-Aeniagh, lector of Fore, and Bishop of Lune, died.

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following number of the saints died of it: St. Fechin, Abbot of Fore, on the 14th of February; St. Ronan, son of Bearach; St. Aileran the Wise; St. Cronan, son of Silne; St. Manchan of Liath; St. Ultan, son of Hua Conga, Abbot of Clonard; Colman Cas, Abbot of Clonmacnoise; and Cummine, Abbot of Clonmacnoise". The venerable Bede makes mention of this plague (called the yellow plague) in his *Ecclesiastical History*, and says that it not only depopulated many parts of Britain, but extended its ravages to Ireland, where many of the English nobility and of the lower ranks were studying theology or leading monastic lives, the Irish supplying them with books, and given them food and education gratis. See O'Donovan's note at A.D. 664; also the *Martyrology of Tallaght*, p. 59.

\* From the *Four Masters* and other Monasticons.

1000. Maelpoil, Bishop of Clonmacnoise and Abbot of Fore, died.

1010. Dalach of Disert-Tola, successor of Fechin and Tola, died.

1013. Ronan, successor of Fechin, died.

1095. Fore, Durrow, Kells, Clonard, and other places, were burned.

1098. Ronan O'Davin, successor of Fechin, a pious and distinguished man, died.

1112. Fore was burned.

1114. Fore was again burned.

1117. Maelruanaidh O'Geilahan, Abbot of Fore, died.

1126. Gillafinain, Abbot of Fore, and Maelisa Ua Coinne, the most learned of the Irish in history, in judicature, and in the Ord-Padraig, died after a good penance.

1137. MacGillafhinain Ua Gibhleachain, Abbot of Fore, died.

1143. The Abbot of Fore, with the bell of St. Fechin, was, amongst other ecclesiastics and relics, a surety and guarantee of peace and concord between Terlagh O'Connor, King of Connaught, and Morrogh O'Melaghlin, King of Meath.

1163. Gillachiarain Ua Draighnen, successor of Fechin, died.

1167. Fore was burned.

1169. Fore, Mayo, and Duleek were burned.

1176. Fore and Kells were laid waste by the English, and by the Hy-Briuin.

NOTE.—The Festival of St. Aedgein of Fore is marked in the *Martyrology of Tallaght* at May the 1st.

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## CHAPTER XI.

BISHOPS OF MEATH DURING THE LAST HALF OF THE  
TWELFTH CENTURY—ETTRU, O'MEEHAN, EUGENE,  
JEFFRY CUSACK.

WE have seen that in the great Synod of Kells,\* held in March, 1152, over which presided Cardinal Paparo, the various dioceses of the kingdom of Meath were reduced to

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\* See page 40. Previous to the Synod of Kells in 1152, there was a Synod held at *Fidh-Aengussa*, which is thus noticed by the *Four Masters*:

"1111. A Synod was convened at *Fiadh mic Aenghusa* (the land of the



three, namely, Clonard, Duleek, and Kells. After a few years Duleek and Kells were absorbed in Clonard, and the bishop of these union-sees took the title of Meath. As early as 1096, we have seen Idunan (the Maelmuire O'Dunan of the *Four Masters*, who died in 1117) style himself Bishop

sons of Aenghus) by the chiefs of Ireland, with Celsus, successor of Patrick; Maelmuire na Dunain, noble senior of Ireland; with 50 bishops, 300 priests, and 3,000 students (clerics), together with Murtoch O'Brien and the chiefs of Leath-Mogha (the southern half of Ireland), to prescribe rules and good morals for all, both laity and clergy". Colgan describes this Synod as near the hill of Uisneach, in Westmeath. Immediately after the account of the Synod of *Fiadh mic Aenghusa*, the *Annals of Inisfallen* add:—

"In the same year (i.e. 1111) the great Synod of Uisneach was also held; wherein the parishes of Meath were equally divided between the bishops of Clonmacnoise and Clonard". By some the Synod of *Uisneach* is said to have been the same with *Fiadh mic Aenghusa*.

About 1118 was held the Synod of *Rathbreasil*. Dr. O'Donovan conjectures that *Rathbreasil* was the ancient name of *Mountrath* or *Osraidhe*, and near *Clonenagh*. Some regard the Synods of *Fiadh mic Aenghusa* and *Rathbreasil* as one and the same. At all events in *Rathbreasil* the number of bishops was determined, viz.: twelve in the northern and twelve in the southern half of Ireland. Of the northern, two were, by order of the Synod, marked out as the only fixed sees for Meath, viz.: Clonard and Duleek. In this Synod also the boundaries of the various dioceses were defined. Thus for Duleek, "Damhliacensis (Duleek) diœcesis a monte Brago (i.e. Sliabh Breagh, now Slieve Brey, a range of hills in the barony of Ferrard, in the south of the county of Louth) ad Carnduncuaram (i.e. Rathcore, in the barony of Moyfenrath, county of Meath), et a torrente Hinnergensis (Lochan na h-imreme, i.e. the small lake of the rowing, now unknown) ad oceanum (mare) versus orientem petit".

The boundaries of the diocese of Clonard were thus defined:—

"Cluanardensis episcopatus inter Clochanum (i.e. a row of stepping-stones in a ford; the exact situation is uncertain, but it was some place on the boundary of East and West Meath), et Sinneum amnem (the Shannon), Urchultum (Urchoillte, or Hibhorchollin, is now unknown), et Cluanconiriam (now Cloncurry in the north of the county of Kildare, on the boundary between the ancient Meath and Leinster) sita est".

So that Duleek and Clonard comprised ancient Meath. Duleek was almost coëxtensive with the present Eastmeath, and Clonard absorbed Westmeath and the present diocese of Ardagh.

In 1158, was held the Synod of *Bri-mic-Taidhgh* (i.e. the hill of the sons of Taidhg; it was situated near Trim in Eastmeath), where there were present, according to the *Four Masters*, "twenty-five bishops, with the legate of the successor of Peter, to ordain rules and good morals". For a fuller account of these Synods see Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. iv., chap. 25; Keating's *History of Ireland* (Duffy's Edition), pp. 512, etc.; *The Four Masters*, with O'Donovan's Notes; *Cambrensis Eversus* (Dr. Kelly's edition), vol. iii., pp. 53 and 783. For the location of *Rathbreasil*, see note in Professor O'Curry's *Lectures*, p. 485.

of Meath in a letter to St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, but this title was not permanently assumed till the close of the twelfth century. The deaths of two bishops are entered in the *Four Masters* thus:—

“1140. Eochaidh O’Kelly, chief head of the men of Meath, the most distinguished bishop of all Ireland, died at an advanced age at Durrow of Columbkille.

1163. Maelchiarain, chief senior of the men of Meath, a paragon of wisdom and piety, died”.

Ettru, or Eleutherius, O’Meehan succeeded as Bishop of Clonard in 1150. He assisted at the Council of Kells in 1152, and died in 1174. The *Four Masters* enter his death at 1173, thus—“1173. Ettru O’Meehan, Bishop of Clonard, died at an advanced age, after having spent a good life”.

Eugene succeeded as Bishop of Clonard, and after a few years took the title of Bishop of Meath, which his successors have constantly used to the present. Two acts of his are recorded, namely, the appropriation to the Abbey of St. Mary’s, Dublin, of the church of Skryne, and the confirmation of grants made by Hugh de Lacy to the Abbey of Thomas Court, viz.: the tithes of the fee of Ratoath and Dunshaughlin. He died about 1194.

Jeffrey Cusack is said by some to have succeeded, and to have died in 1200. His name is not in Ware’s catalogue.

## CHAPTER XII.

BISHOPS OF MEATH DURING THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.—

SIMON ROCHFORT, DEODAT, RALPH LE PETIT, RICHARD DE LA CORNER, HUGH DE TACHMON, THOMAS ST. LEGER.

SIMON ROCHFORT.

Suc. 1194—Died 1224.

SIMON ROCHFORT, or *de Rupeforti*, an Englishman, and the first of his nation that governed the Diocese of Meath, was consecrated about 1194.\* He took an active part in founding and endowing religious houses, and in healing the

\* Harris’s *Ware’s Bishops*, p. 141.



wounds inflicted on religion by the rapacity of the first Anglo-Norman adventurers. About the year 1200 he was witness to a grant of land, near Dunshaughlin, made by Walter De Lacy to the Abbey of Thomas Court, "in pure and perpetual alms, for the good of his soul, and of Hugh, his father, and of his mother Rose de Munemnene, who lies buried in the Church of St. Thomas". About the same time Sir Geoffry de Constantin founded and endowed the Abbey of Tristernagh, in Westmeath, called sometimes the Priory of Kilbixy, which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The Bishop of Meath was witness to the foundation-charter; and he himself granted to this monastery the church of Slewin, with other privileges regarding sepulture. When the controversy arose between the canons of St Thomas's Abbey, near Dublin, and the monks of Bective, concerning the right to the body of Hugh de Lacy, Pope Innocent the Third appointed the Bishop of Meath, together with the Archdeacon of Meath and Gillebert, Prior of Duleek, to act as judges. They gave their decision on St. Valentine's Day, 1205, in favour of the Abbey of St. Thomas. In 1206, Simon Rochfort founded the Abbey of Newtown, near Trim, for canons regular of the congregation of St. Victor, and erected the church of this abbey into a cathedral, having dedicated it under the invocation of St. Peter and St. Paul. He transferred the episcopal residence from Clonard to Newtown, and held a diocesan synod\* here in 1216.

Simon Rochfort died in 1224, and was interred in the Abbey Church of Newtown. His character is thus given by Ware:†

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\* Wilkin's *Concilia*, vol. i., p. 547. According to the preamble, it appears it was decreed in the Council of Kells that, as the chorepiscopi and bishops of smaller sees should die, arch-presbyters were to be appointed by the diocesan. Hence we find, at this time, Trim, Kells, Slane, Skryne, and Dunshaughlin, as only heads of rural deaneries. We have no record of the precise year that each diocese became absorbed. In this Synod also the bishop made provision for the acting pastors of such churches as were appropriated to the abbey of St. Thomas, near Dublin.

† Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 141. Dr. Lanigan remarks that Simon Rochfort deserved to govern Meath, "as he was an excellent and attentive prelate"—vol. iv., p. 322.

He died in the year 1224, having carried himself in the episcopal functions with so much fidelity, integrity, and wisdom, especially in establishing the clergy of his diocese, and was of such an humble and meek behaviour, that he justly acquired the reputation among the inhabitants of his diocese, of a most excellent prelate.

#### DEODAT.

Suc. 1224.—Died 1226.

On the death of Simon Rochfort, the clergy of Meath elected Deodat, and he obtained the royal assent on the 29th of August, 1224. By some he is said to have died before consecration. The *Annals of Multyfernán* call him "Deodatus electus Midie". The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* and the *Four Masters* call him "Donum Dei, Bishop of Meath". He died about the close of 1226.

#### RALPH LE PETIT.

Suc. 1227.—Died 1230.

Ralph le Petit belonged to the family of Petit, who were Barons of Dunboyne and Mullingar. Previous to his election to the see of Meath, he had been Archdeacon\* of Meath; and, in this capacity, witnessed, with Bishop Rochfort, the foundation-charter of Tristernagh. In 1227 he founded and endowed the Priory of St. Mary of Mullingar, for the regular canons of St. Augustine. "He was a man", says Ware, "of great gravity and wisdom, and died advanced in years, in the fourth year of his consecration, about Michaelmas, 1230". In the *Annals of Multyfernán* his death is entered at 1230, "Obiit Radulphus Episcopus Midie". In the *Annals of Kilronan* this event is placed at 1229, "Rool Petit, vir religiosus et caritatissimus, et Dei famulus, in Christo quievit". The *Four Masters* note at 1230, "Rool Petit, Bishop of Meath, a select ruler and soldier of Christ, died".

#### RICHARD DE LA CORNER.

Suc. 1230.—Died 1250.

Richard de la Corner, who had been Canon of St. Patrick's, Dublin, and Seneschal of St. Sepulchre's, was

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\* Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 142.



elected by the clergy of Meath to the vacant see, and was consecrated in St. Peter's Church, Drogheda, in 1232.\* He was a great benefactor to religion, and an uncompromising vindicator of the rights of his see. He granted to the Abbey of Tristernagh the church of Leene, with its appurtenances, reserving to himself and successors the episcopal rights. In 1235 he held a diocesan synod, and allotted competent portions to the vicars of the diocese. About the same time he had law suits with St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, and the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. In the latter case the friars claimed the right of patronage to the churches of Moylagh, Donaghpatrick, Tara, Kells, Dungrey, Ardmulchan, Leckno, Killalon, Dullardstown, Kinevelane, etc. It was decided that the bishop had the right as far as regarded Kells, Dullardstown, Ardmulchan, and Kinevelane, and that to the friars belonged the others, "saving, nevertheless, competent portions to the vicaridges". In 1240, Alicia (or Avicia) de la Corner, sister to the bishop, founded the Abbey of Lismullen, under the patronage of the Holy Trinity for Augustinian nuns, and the bishop granted the manors of Dunsink and Ballygodman to the convent. He died in 1250.

#### HUGH DE TACHMON.

Suc. 1250—Died 1281.

After the death of Richard de la Corner, Reiner, Archbishop of Armagh, consecrated Geoffry Cusack,† a friar, who was elected by the clergy of Meath. We find Hugh de Tachmon also elected, consecrated, and the temporalities of the see restored to him by the king. After a time de Tachmon was recognized as the Bishop of Meath, and resolved to have himself exempted from the visitation of the Archbishop of Armagh. For this purpose he applied to the Holy See, but was unsuccessful. In 1262 Patrick O'Scanlan, Archbishop of Armagh, convened a provincial synod at Drogheda,‡ and it was attended by all the bishops

\* Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 142.

† In the Martyrology of Killen—from *Cusack's MS.*—the death of "Friar Geoffry Cusack, Bishop of Meath", is marked at 1300.

‡ Harris's edition of *Ware's Bishops*, p. 68. In this Synod of Drogheda it was decided "That it should be lawful for the Archbishop of Armagh,

of the province of Aamagh, with some from the archdiocese of Tuam. The Lord Justice, several canons of cathedral churches, the privy council, and very many of the chief men of the kingdom, were also present. In this synod the primatial jurisdiction of Armagh was vindicated, and its privileges solemnly published; and Pope Urban, by a bull, dated November, 1263, confirmed the primatial dignity of Armagh over Ireland.

King Henry the Third made Hugh de Tachmon Lord High Treasurer of Ireland, and this office he held after the accession of Edward the First. The latter, on the death of his father, issued a commission to the Lord Justice of Ireland, the Escheator, and the Bishop of Meath, to administer the oath of allegiance to the nobility and commonalty of Ireland.

Hugh de Tachmon died in January 1281, and was buried at Mullingar. The *Annals of St. Mary's Abbey* call him "a man of piety and of a venerable life".

THOMAS ST. LEDGER.

Suc. 1287—Died 1320.

On the death of the late Bishop of Meath, the clergy of the diocese unanimously elected John de Dubleton, Rector of Kells, who, however, emphatically refused the honour. They next elected Thomas St. Leger, Archdeacon of Kells, a man of illustrious family and of distinguished virtue. Nicholas MacMolissa,\* Archbishop of Armagh, refused to

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and his successors, without any cause of offence, to visit the bishop and clergy of Meath and their successors"—Harris's *Ware*, p. 68. In 1374, Milo Sweetman, Archbishop of Armagh, visited Meath as Metropolitan; and, in 1429, the bishops and priests of Meath "granted to Archbishop Swayn, that he might visit them by his commissaries, without any contradiction".

\* Harris remarks that this prelate was "an inveterate enemy to such Englishmen as were preferred to bishoprics in the kingdom, and laid them under all the difficulties in his power". Ware says he was a man "in great reputation for his eloquence and wisdom". He formed a defence association amongst the bishops and priests, in order to resist all undue lay encroachment. The agreement was executed at the Dominican convent of Trim, on the Sunday after St. Matthew's day, 1291. The *Four Masters* enter his death at 1299, "Nicholas MacMaelsia, Archbishop of Armagh, the most godly and devout ecclesiastic of his time in Ireland, died". See Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 70; Stuart's *Armagh*, pp. 177 and 178.



confirm his election ; St. Leger appealed to the Holy See, and, in his absence, the primate, who claimed the right of provision, consecrated Walter de Fulburn, the Dean of Waterford, and brother to the Lord Justice. Both parties appealed to the Pope, and the Holy Father decided in favour of St. Leger. On the 3rd of November, 1287, he was consecrated in the cathedral of St. Canice, Kilkenny, by John de Saundford, Archbishop of Dublin, and in 1292 he was called to the privy council by Edward the First. About the same time the Pope granted a disme or tenth to the king for the relief of the Holy Land, and appointed the bishops of Meath and Kildare to collect it.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

BISHOPS OF MEATH DURING THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

—THOMAS ST. LEGER CONTINUED, JOHN O'CARROLL, WILLIAM DE PAUL, WILLIAM ST. LEGER, NICHOLAS ALLEN, STEPHEN DE VALLE, WILLIAM ANDREW, ALEXANDER PETIT.

THOMAS ST. LEGER was a stern vindicator of his spiritual and temporal rights and privileges, and firmly resisted all lay encroachment. He died at an advanced age, in December, 1320, after a severe and lingering illness.

JOHN O'CARROLL.

Suc. 1321—Trans. 1327.

John O'Carroll or MacCarwil, had been dean of the Cathedral of St. Finbar, Cork, and on the death of Robert MacDonogh, in 1301, was unanimously elected bishop of that see. He ruled the diocese of Cork for twenty years, and on the death of St. Leger was translated by the Pope to Meath. He was translated by the Pope to the Archdiocese of Cashel in 1327, on the death of Archbishop FitzJohn. In 1329 he visited Pope John the Twenty-Second at Avig-

non, and died in London on his return, about the beginning of August, 1329.

WILLIAM DE PAUL.

Suc. 1327—Died 1349.

William de Paul, or Pagham, was born in Yorkshire, England, graduated in Oxford, and afterwards in Paris, in both of which colleges he obtained the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Having entered the Carmelite Order, he was elected provincial at a general chapter held at Genoa, in consequence of his "singular piety, gravity, learning, wisdom, and dexterity in the management of affairs". He was promoted by the Pope to the see of Meath, was consecrated at Avignon in 1327, and died on the 24th of July, 1349. He wrote several works on theology and philosophy, of which the following were the names:\*

*In Quatuor Libros Magistri Sententiarum*, lib. i.; *Placita Theologica*, lib. i.; *De Perfectione Intellectus*, lib. i.; *De Notitia Actuali*, lib. i.; *De Veritate Formali*, lib. i.; *De Ente Rationis*, lib. i.; *Quæstiones Ordinarias*, lib. i.; *Concionum*, lib. i.; and other works.

WILLIAM ST. LEGER.

Suc. 1350—Died 1352.

William St. Leger, Archdeacon of Meath, was elected by the clergy of the diocese, and appointed by a provisory bull of Clement the Sixth, without any reference to the election. He was consecrated in England on the 2nd of May, 1350, by John Thursby, Bishop of Worcester, assisted by other prelates. He died on St. Bartholomew's day, 1352.

NICHOLAS ALLEN.

Suc. 1353—Died 1366.

Nicholas Allen, Abbot of the monastery of St. Thomas, near Dublin, was elected by the Archdeacon and clergy of Meath, and was consecrated about the beginning of 1353.

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\* Ware's *Writers of Ireland*, p. 321.



In 1357 he was made the Lord High Treasurer of Ireland, which office he seems to have filled up to 1359. He died on the 5th or (15th) of January, 1366.

STEPHEN DE VALLE.

Suc. 1369—Died 1379.

Stephen de Valle, or Wale, had been Dean of Limerick, and was appointed by the Pope to the see of Limerick in 1360. He governed the ancient diocese of St. Munchin for nine years, and, while in this position, was made Lord High Treasurer of Ireland. On the death of Nicholas Allen he was translated by the Pope to the see\* of Meath.

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\* During the vacancy of the see, in the year 1367, was enacted the celebrated *Statute of Kilkenny*, passed in a parliament held at Kilkenny, before Lionel, Duke of Clarence, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. There were thirty-four acts passed, and amongst these the following :

XIII. Also it is ordained that no Irishman of the nations of the Irish be admitted into any cathedral or collegiate church by provision, collation, or presentation of any person, nor to any benefice of Holy Church, amongst the English of the land; and that if any be admitted, instituted, or inducted into such benefice, it be held for void, and the king shall have the presentation of the said benefice for that avoidance, to whatever person the advowson of such benefice may belong, saving their right to present or make collation to the said benefice when it shall be vacant another time.

XIV. Also it is ordained and established that no religious house which is situate amonst the English (be it exempt or not), shall henceforth receive any Irishmen to their profession, but may receive Englishmen without taking into consideration whether they be born in England or Ireland; and that any that shall act otherwise, and thereof shall be attainted, their temporalities shall be seized into the hands of our lord the king, so to remain at his pleasure; and that no prelate of Holy Church shall receive any . . . to any orders without the assent and testimony of his lord, given to him under his seal. See Hardiman's *Statute of Kilkenny*.

Comment on such inhuman legislation would be superfluous. The object of these men was not only to keep the Irish and Anglo-Irish for ever separated, but to carry the war into the very sanctuary, and to exclude the youth of the country from the priesthood and the religious institutes, *because they were of Irish extraction*, or, in the parlance of that day, *mere Irish*. The result of these enactments was, that the Irish, seeing nothing before them but extermination, rose in arms and carried terror into the English Pale. "At this crisis", says the late eminent antiquary, Mr. Hardiman, "an opportunity offered, such as had never before occurred, of terminating the dominion of the English in Ireland; but if the natives had ever conceived such a project, they were never sufficiently united to achieve it. The opportunity passed away, and the disunion of the Irish saved the colony".—*Statute of Kilkenny*.

About 1370 he caused the remains of Richard FitzRalph, Archbishop of Armagh, called Richard of Dundalk, to be translated from Avignon, where he died, to Dundalk, the place of his birth, and had them deposited under a monument in the parish church of St. Nicholas. In 1373 he formed one of a deputation sent by parliament to certify to the king the state of Ireland. In 1376 Stephen de Valle was appointed governor or overseer of Munster. He died intestate at Oxford, on the 10th of November, 1379, and was interred there in a church of the Dominicans.

WILLIAM ANDREW.

Suc. 1380—Died 1385.

William Andrew was born in England, entered the Dominican Order,\* and took the degree of Doctor of Divinity. In 1373 he was appointed by the Pope to the see of Achonry, and on the death of Stephen de Valle he was translated by the Pope to the diocese of Meath. He died on the eve of St. Michael the Archangel, 1385, and left behind him a high character for sanctity and learning. "He was", says Ware, "a prelate of great wisdom and learning; yet, after the manner of Socrates, he would never publish any of his writings, although great matters were expected from him".

ALEXANDER PETIT.

Suc. 1386—Died 1400.

Alexander Petit, called *de Balscot* from the place of his birth in Oxfordshire, had been canon of the cathedral church of St. Canice, Kilkenny, and, on the death of John Tatenale, Bishop of Ossory, in 1370, he was promoted to that see by Pope Gregory the Eleventh. He was made Treasurer of Ireland by Edward the Third, and had a guard allowed him of six men at arms and twelve archers, paid out of the Exchequer while he continued in this office. He was also Treasurer under Richard the Second, Chancellor in 1377, 1385, and 1394, and Lord Justice in 1378 and 1387. On the death

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\* Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 146. *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 465.



of William Andrew, the clergy of Meath petitioned the Pope to have him translated to the vacant see. The request was granted, and the bulls of his translation were published in the abbey-church of Newtown, near Trim, in the month of December, 1386. Amidst the multiplicity of his worldly duties, he seems not to have neglected his still more important episcopal obligations. Sir James Ware calls him "a man of great learning and wisdom"; and Harris adds, that "he had the reputation of a good bishop, and is said to have executed the high stations in which he was placed with great sufficiency". He died at Ardraccon, on the 10th of November, 1400, and was buried in the abbey-church of the Blessed Virgin, Trim.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

**BISHOPS OF MEATH DURING THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.—**  
**ROBERT MONTAIN, EDWARD DANTSEY, WILLIAM HAD-**  
**SOR, WILLIAM SILK, EDMUND OULDHALL, WILLIAM**  
**SHIRWOOD, JOHN PAYNE.**

**ROBERT MONTAIN.**

Suc. 1402—Died 1412.

ON the death of the bishop, Henry the Fourth sought to have his own confessor, Robert Mascall, a Carmelite friar, elevated to the vacant see, and granted him the custody of the temporalities. In this effort he signally failed. Robert Montain, pastor of Kildalkey, was appointed by the Pope, and governed the diocese for ten years. He died on the 24th of May, 1412.

**EDWARD DANTSEY.**

Suc. 1413—Died 1429.

Edward Dantsey, Archdeacon of Cornwall, was promoted by the Pope to the vacant see, and was received by the clergy of the diocese on the 8th of May, 1413. During his episcopacy he was, for some time, Lord High Treasurer of

Ireland, and in 1428 Lord Deputy to Sir John de Gray, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He died on the 4th of January, 1429 (English style), having governed the diocese for sixteen years.

WILLIAM HADSOR.

Suc. 1430—Died 1434.

On the death of the bishop, Thomas Scurlog, Prior of Newtown, near Trim, and then Lord High Treasurer of Ireland, is said to have been elected by the clergy, and to have proceeded to Rome to obtain the Pope's confirmation. Whether he was consecrated or survived it a short time, is uncertain, for we find William Hadsor, a native of Louth, appointed by the Pope in 1430. He died on the festival of the Ascension, 1434.

WILLIAM SILK.

Suc. 1434—Died 1450.

When the see became vacant, the General Council of Basil, by commendatory letters to John Swayn, Archbishop of Armagh, dated the 28th of August, 1434, promoted William Silk, or Sylke. He had been doctor of canon law, official of the court of Meath, and pastor of Killeen. It would seem that in his advanced years he petitioned the Holy See to be exonerated from the episcopal duties on account of age and infirmity. Whether he died previous to the Pope's reply or not is uncertain. His death took place at Ardraccan on the 9th of May, 1450, and he was interred before the high altar of St. Mary's Church, Killeen. A magnificent tomb\* with his life-like figure, was erected over him, which is still to be seen in the chancel of the old church.

EDMUND OULDHALL.

Suc. 1450—Died 1459.

On the death of Dr. Silk, the custody of the temporalities was committed to Sir William Ouldhall, chamberlain to

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\* See Tombs of Killeen. In the Martyrology of Killen—from *Casake's M.S.*—the death of "Master William Silke, Bishop of Meath", is marked at May 5, 1452.



Richard Duke of York. The Holy See promoted Edmund Ouldhall, a Carmelite friar, brother to the chamberlain. He died on the 9th (or 29th) of August, at Ardbraccan, and was buried in St. Mary's Church of same place. A splendid monument was erected over his remains, which, with many other tombs, was swept away, some years ago, when a site was being cleared for the erection of the present Protestant church of Ardbraccan.

## WILLIAM SHIRWOOD.

Suc. 1460—Died 1482.

On the vacancy of the see, Pope Pius the Second promoted William Shirwood, and he was consecrated in 1460. During his episcopacy he was for a time Deputy to George Duke of Clarence, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and subsequently he became Lord Chancellor. He was involved in disputes with Thomas Earl of Desmond, who for a time was Lord Deputy of Ireland. William Shirwood died in Dublin, on the 3rd of December, 1482, and was buried before the high altar of the abbey-church of Newtown, near Trim.

## JOHN PAYNE.

Suc. 1483—Died 1506.

On the death of William Shirwood, Pope Sixtus the Fourth promoted John Payne, or Pain, a Dominican friar, and doctor of divinity, to the vacant see. He was born in Ireland, became Professor of Theology in the Dominican College of Oxford, and subsequently was appointed Provincial of his order in England. He was elected by the Pope\* to the see of Meath on the 17th of March, and was received or enthroned, by his clergy, on the festival of St. Dominic, the founder of his order, in August, 1483. When Lambert Simnel, personating Edward Earl of Warwick, landed in Ireland, he was acknowledged as rightful sovereign by most of the Anglo-Irish nobility. They had him solemnly crowned in Christ Church, Dublin, and the sermon was

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\* See letter of Pope Sixtus the Fourth to John Payne, Bishop-elect of Meath, in the *Hibernia Dominicana*, 477.

preached by the Bishop of Meath. For this offence he received the royal pardon in 1488. In 1489 he assisted at a provincial synod in the Church of St. Mary's, Ardee, and was arbitrator, together with the Bishops of Clogher and Ardagh, between the rival claims of Thomas Brady and Cormac to the see of Kilmore. In the month of July, 1495, he assisted at the provincial synod of Drogheda, over which presided Octavian, Archbishop of Armagh. The synod was for the most part occupied with a complaint of the four mendicant orders against some seculars for infringing on their apostolical privileges. The friars complained that some of the seculars interfered to prevent the interments of the laity in the churches and cemeteries of the regulars, and that they held the regulars to be bound, in case of such interments, to hand over the *quartam funeralem*, or canonical portion, to the seculars. The synod decided that the regulars were not bound, and Dr. Payne addressed a pastoral\* to the clergy and laity of the diocese, embodying the decision of the synod. On the 3rd of October, 1496, Dr. Payne was made Master of the Rolls. He died on the 6th of March, 1506, and was buried in the Dominican Church of St. Saviour's, Dublin. "He was a prelate", says Ware, "in great repute for his alms-deeds and hospitality".

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## CHAPTER XV.

BISHOPS OF MEATH DURING THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.  
—WILLIAM ROKEBY, HUGH INGE, RICHARD WILSON,  
EDWARD STAPLES.—THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

WILLIAM ROKEBY.

Suc. 1507—Trans. 1511.

WILLIAM ROKEBY, a native of Yorkshire, and doctor of canon law, was brother to Sir Richard Rokeby, Lord Treasurer of Ireland. He had been Rector of Sandal, near Doncaster, and Vicar of Halifax, in Yorkshire. He was

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\* *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 86. See the Appendix.



made Lord Chancellor of Ireland by Henry the Seventh in 1498, and was promoted to the see of Meath by Pope Julius the Second in 1507. After his consecration he was called to the Privy Council, and was translated by the Pope, on the 28th of January, 1511, to the Archiepiscopal see of Dublin. Henry the Eighth made him Lord Chancellor of Ireland in 1515, in which office he continued during the remainder of his life. He died in Dublin on the 29th of November, 1521, and was interred in the cathedral of St. Patrick, Dublin. His heart, according to his will, was deposited in the chancel of the church of Halifax, and a chapel was erected there in which was a monument with the following inscription:\*

“Orate pro anima Wilhelmi Rokeby, Juris Canonici Professoris, ac etiam Episcopi Midensis, ac deinde Archiepiscopi Dublinensis capelæ fundatoris istius; qui obit—Novembris, A.D. MCCCCXXI”.

HUGH INGE.

Suc. 1512—Trans. 1522.

Hugh Inge, an Englishman, and doctor of divinity, was promoted by the Pope to the vacant see. He had held many offices in the Catholic Church of England, and was one of the representatives of Henry the Seventh at the Court of Rome in 1504. He was translated by the Pope from Meath to the Archdiocese of Dublin in 1522, was made Lord Chancellor of Ireland by Henry the Eighth, and continued in this office during the remainder of his life. He died in Dublin, on the 3rd of August, 1528, of an epidemic called the *English sweat*, and was buried in St. Patrick's Church. He caused the ancient rolls† of proxies, synodals, etc., of the diocese to be copied out afresh, and was, says Ware, “a just observer of justice and equity”.

RICHARD WILSON.

Suc. 1523—Died 1529.

Richard Wilson, an Englishman, was promoted by the Pope to the vacant see in 1523. It appears that after his

\* Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 345.

† Archdeacon Cotton's *Fasti Ecclesiæ Hibernicæ*.

consecration he spent most of his time in England, to the great loss of his diocese. In 1528, Archbishop Inge, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and Lord Chief Justice Birmingham, complained of him to Cardinal Wolsey :\*

“ The dioces of Meth, which is large in cure, and moste of value in this country, for an honorable man to contynue in, is ferr in ruyne, both spiritually and temporally, by thabsence of the bisshopp there. If your grace thinke so convenient, som good man, being towards the same, mought be provided unto the saide bisshoppricke, whiche sholde be to the great comferte, manifoldely, of all that dioces ; for it is said here, the Bisshopp wol nat retourne”.

He died most probably in England, but where interred is now unknown.

#### EDWARD STAPLES.

Suc. 1530—Deposed 1554—Died 1554.

Edward Staples was an Englishman. He was born in Lincolnshire, graduated in Cambridge, became master of arts, canon, and for a time held St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, *in commendam*. In 1530, at the request of Henry the Eighth, he was appointed to Meath by Pope Clement the Seventh, who little imagined that the new bishop would soon betray his sacred trust and scandalize the faithful by his apostacy. As to the early years of his episcopacy little is known. In 1534 he fled to England, in

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\* *State Papers*, part ii., p. 127.

NOTE.—The mode of electing bishops after the Anglo-Norman invasion was in this manner : when a vacancy would happen, the chapter memorialled the king for a *conge d' elire*, or license to proceed to an election ; after the election a regular certificate was presented to the king, and obtained his assent. The proceedings of the chapter or synod (in the diocese of Meath a synod supplied the place of chapter) were at the time submitted to the Holy See and received confirmation. The king then issued a writ of restitution to the temporalities or episcopal possessions, which remained in the king's hands during the vacancy. An election without the *conge d' elire*, was invalidated by law, and a new election with the legal forms was ordered under severe penalties. The kings of England, previous to the Reformation, were constantly encroaching on the freedom and independence of the Church, and this gave rise to many prolonged and bitter controversies. When an election was litigated, the Pope usually interposed by the plenitude of his authority, and provided for the vacant see. See Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, pp. 63, 67.



order to avoid the rebellion of Silken Thomas, to whom he had rendered himself hostile. In the meantime the great apostacy of the sixteenth century was spreading over Europe, and, as the seeds of spiritual rebellion were taking deep root in England, the faith which Ireland inherited from St. Patrick was soon to be assailed, and in this unholy crusade the bishop of Meath was to take a prominent part. Let us go back a few years.

Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk, jealous of the privileges which Pope Leo had conferred on the Dominicans, began to rail at indulgences, and ended in attempting to enter into marriage with a nun, contrary to their solemn vows, and in breaking off from the communion of the Catholic Church. The bond of authority being severed, and all ecclesiastical subordination and jurisdiction being ignored, numberless sects arose, at variance with each other, claiming the right of private judgment, straining the Scriptures to their own visionary theories, and anathematizing all others, who, acting on the same principles, chose to differ. Civil war followed in the wake of spiritual rebellion, and, as the old landmarks were plucked up, the flood-gates of the passions were opened, and thus a sea of libertinism and impiety burst over Europe.

While the heresies of Luther and his kindred reformers were being diffused over the Continent, Henry the Eighth of England published a defence of the seven sacraments, and dedicated it to Pope Leo. For this manifestation of orthodoxy, Henry received from two Popes the distinguished title of "Defender of the Faith", a title from Rome, which the kings and queens of England have retained to this day. Now Henry had been married to Catherine, princess of Arragon, the betrothed wife of his deceased brother Arthur, and had obtained for this purpose a dispensation from the Holy See. After having lived with his wife for seventeen or eighteen years, he became enamoured of Anne Boleyn, a maid of honour, and pretending scruples of conscience, he applied to the Pope to have his marriage annulled. Failing to obtain a divorce, and devoured by passion, he renounced the authority of the Holy See, plunged his kingdom into

open schism, assumed the spiritual supremacy of the English church, and thus paved the way for the Anglican heresy. Unfortunately for the interests of religion at that period, too many of the prelates, who should have braved the tyrant, and, if necessary, sealed with their blood, like the great St. Thomas of Canterbury, the rights and liberties of the Church, were time-serving sycophantic courtiers, who preferred ease and indulgence to the vindication of principle, who were more faithful to Cæsar than they were to God. Thus, the wretched prevaricating Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, married and divorced the monster, according as passion or caprice panted for a change of victims, and a servile parliament was ready to ratify all the abominations and absurdities of the day. To extinguish all religious freedom, it was made high treason to deny the king's spiritual supremacy, and to refuse to take this oath was construed into a denial of it. An act was next passed for the suppression of religious houses and the confiscation of ecclesiastical property. The work of spoliation commenced now in earnest, and a liberal portion of the spoil being allowed to the court-minions and camp-followers, a class of men arose whose consciences were reconciled to any change, because they had an interest in the progress of plunder.

In 1535 Dr. Staples returned to the diocese of Meath, deeply inoculated with the principles of the Reformation, and henceforth we will find him a willing instrument in upholding lay-supremacy, church robbery, open schism, and, in the end, apostacy and every heresy which the whim or fashion of the hour may impose.

Events were now crowding in close succession, and the time had at length arrived when Catholic Ireland was to be tested by such experiments as no nation ever endured, in intensity or duration, either in ancient or modern times. Since the foundation of Christianity, no other national church has passed through such an ordeal of woe, persecution, and death. Other churches have had their shower and sunshine, their tempest and calm; but poor Ireland had one bleak, dismal night, during which the winds howled and the rain fell piteously and without cessation. All the horrors of the



ten persecutions were renewed ; all the efforts which the cunning and malignity of her foes could devise were exhausted. Penal laws, the most inhuman, were enacted and enforced ; Catholic property was robbed ; it was felony to be a Catholic, and treason to be a priest ; her clergy were struck down on the very steps of the altar ; her sanctuaries were desecrated ; her churches were levelled ; many of her children were wanderers, unwilling exiles, dispersed amongst the nations, and those at home were weeping in chains ; the patrimony of God's poor was confiscated, and the great monuments of her piety and glory, "the abbeys of Ireland," were left roofless and ivy-clad, melancholy mementoes of a persecuted church and an oppressed people. Who can describe the robberies of Henry, the murders of Elizabeth, the butcheries of Cromwell, the ingratitude of the Stuarts, the rapine and desolation which swept our homesteads, the stripes, chains, and scorpions under which our people groaned for three hundred years ? What shall be said of the mountain-altar, the treasonable mass, the wretched barn, the drenched stable, the "*e loco refugii nostri*,"\* the tenacity and fidelity with which the Irish people clung to the faith of their fathers during these ages of darkness and storm ? Other nations have lost their hierarchy, have lost their faith. Look at Africa—the land of the Cyprians and Augustines ; look at Greece, Asia Minor, Russia, England. When the storm blew, the lights were extinguished, the trees of the sanctuary were uprooted ; but, although the midnight hurricane swept over Ireland, although the waves of persecution passed and re-passed over the surface of the island, carrying with them all the externals of religion, every fond memorial of the piety and charity of the people, yet, by her close attachment to the See of Peter, the faith of Ireland has survived these elements, and, like the rock in the ocean, has remained unshaken amidst the buffets and assaults of the angry waters.

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\* This signified the hiding-places of the clergy in the days of persecution. It was thus they marked all their letters.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE REFORMATION IN IRELAND.

WE have seen that Henry the Eighth assumed the supremacy of the English church, plundered the sanctuary, and perpetrated every crime with impunity. He was now about to repeat the experiment in Ireland. In 1535, George Brown, an Englishman, was consecrated for the archiepiscopal see of Dublin. He was, from the beginning, heart and soul in the new movement, and, immediately after his arrival in Ireland, lost not a moment in preparing the way. The English novelties were firmly resisted by George Cromer, Archbishop of Armagh, a man, says Ware, "of great gravity, learning, and sweet demeanour", and by the whole nation, with the exception of a few interested individuals. Brown writes to Cromwell that his mission had completely failed; that almost at the peril of his life he endeavoured to draw over the nobility and gentry to the acknowledgment of the king's spiritual supremacy, and that the people of Ireland were "more zealous in their blindness than the saints and martyrs were at the beginning of the gospel".\*

He advised therefore the calling of a parliament, that, as in England, the sword might be unsheathed, and that the terrors of confiscation, imprisonment, or death might reconcile the recusants to what their consciences abhorred. A parliament was convened in 1536, and amongst the first measures submitted to it was an act for establishing the spiritual supremacy of the king. It was proposed, too, to prohibit appeals to Rome; that first fruits should be paid to the King instead of to the Pope; that the twentieth part of the annual profits of ecclesiastical promotions should be due to the crown; and that all defenders or assertors of the Papal authority should incur a *præmunire*. The men who in parliament most strenuously and successfully opposed these

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\* *Harleian Miscel.*, vol. v.



innovations, and who most fearlessly obstructed the favourite projects of the tyrant and his minions, were the spiritual proctors. Each diocese sent spiritual representatives to parliament, who from time immemorial had exercised the right of voting. In 1536 (17th of May) Brabazon writes to Cromwell :\*

“The Proctours of the Spiritualitie sumwhat doo stick in diverz of thiez Actes, and lothe thei ar, that the Kinges Grace shuld be the suppreme Hed of the Church”.

On the 18th of May, 1537, Lord Deputy Gray and Brabazon write to Cromwell that the proctors, in the lower house, and the spiritual lords in the upper, gave great opposition to the new ordinances. To silence all opposition, and to remove every impediment, it was resolved that the proctors be deprived of the privilege of voting. In the meantime the Reformation was making such slow progress in Ireland, that the king, unaccustomed to be thwarted even in his whims, felt restless and indignant. Burning with rage, he growled at his episcopal slaves, and, in language worthy of the new supremacy, he reminded Staples that the king had advanced him to his bishopric, and that the same authority could remove him. Addressing Brown as “Right Reverend Fader in God”, he says :†

“Such is your lightnes in behaviour, and suche is the elation of your mynde in pride, that glorieng in follishe ceremonies, and deliting in *We* an *Us*, in your dreame comparing yourself soo nere to a prince in honour and estimation, that all virtue and honestie is almost banished from you”.

The letter goes on to threaten him with deposition if he neglect to—“*doo your duetie*”.

Brown and Staples were alarmed. The former replied that the receipt of his letter made him—  
“to trymble in body for feare of incurgng your Majesties displeasures”.

\* *State Papers*, vol. ii. part iii. p. 316.

† *State Papers*, clxxiv. vol. ii. pp. 513 and 514. To what a depth of degradation and servility these men descended!

He goes on to say that he incessantly preaches God's Word—

“utterly dispising the usurped poure of the Busshop of Rome, being a thing not a litle roated amonges thinhabitantes here”.

And again—

“Beseching your highnes to accept this my rewde letter; aunswerable, even as I were personally doing my dutie *proch-ing on knes before your Majestie*”.

He promises the greatest attention to the—

“advancement of your Grace's affaires in rebewking the papisti-call poure”.

And prays, should he not be prompt—“*that the groundes shulde open and swallow me*”.

On the 8th of January, 1538, Brown writes a doleful letter to Cromwell that, not even in the diocese of Dublin\*

“can I persuade or induce onye, either religious or secular, sithens my comyng over, ons to preache the word of God, or the just title of our moste illustrious prince”.

He adds, that his authority is completely disregarded. To prevent applications to Rome, he urges the necessity of “a vicar-general, and a maister of faculties”.

About this time, the two reforming bishops, Brown and Staples, had several disputes, which resulted in mutual denunciation. On the 15th of April, 1538, Brown writes to J. Allen:†

“I thinke you have not, no more I truste the commissioners hath, commytted to oblivion thoccasion of myn aunswer unto the Busshop of Mythe, when I preachid at Christes Church the 4th Sondag in Lent. He hath not onlie, sithens that tyme, by penne (as you know his wante full well) rayled and raged ayenste me, calling me heretike and beggar, with other rabulouse revilinges, as I have written unto my Lord, which I am ashamed to rehearse; but also on Palme Sondag, at after none, in Kilmaynam, where the stacions, and also pardons, ben now as bremely usid as ever they were. Yet cannot I helpe it, by cause the place is exempte; but I truste it is not so exempte, but that the kinges commaundement myght take place. There, as ye know, he is highly bol-

\* *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 539.

† *State Papers*, vol. iii. p. 1.



stered. He made a sermon, which in deade he is not to be blamed for any new doctrine that was in yt, for the sermonde was made many yeres agon in a boke intitiled *Tresdecim Sermones*. After that he had absolved his sermon, besides certen chekes therein conteyned ayenste me, yet he, standing still in the poulpet, desiring the auditori of pacience to harken a few wordes moo; and therewith plocked out of his bosom a letter, the which, though it were not trew, he appertely assevered to be sent hym from Dublin, from a servante of his that harde me preache, comprehending certen poyntes of my sermon, inveyhed ayenste hym. The truthe is, Humfray, of Saynte Patrikes, wrote the letter, signifying unto hym ferr otherwise then I spake. Nevertheles, he made there, at his pleasure, a comment on the saide letter, without all honest shame, even before myn owne face, present at his sermon, with souche a stomake, as I thinke the three-mouthed Cerberous of Hell could not have uttered it more viperiously. And all this he doith, to elevate the auctoritie commytted unto me by my prince, and to plocke away the credence of the people from me, whereby I shall neither edifye unto God, nor yet to my prince. He gloasid every sentence after souch an opprobrious facion, that every honest eare glowed to hire it. He exhorted them all, yea, and so motche in hym lay he adjured theym, to geve no credence unto me what so ever I saide, for afore God he wolde not. Good Maister Alen, *leave not this unshewed to my Lorde Private Seale*. Now you be, *where ye may do good*. . . . I am well assured, that, unmayntayned, he never durste be so bolde. *You know what I meane*".

Brabazon writes to Cromwell on the 30th of April, 1538:\*

" . . . . Here hath bene sermondcs made by th Archbysshop of Dublin and the Bisshop of Meth, who have set forward the Word of God; but after their prechingcs, the oon haith taunted thother with a little collacion" . . . .

On the 20th of May, same year, Brown writes to Cromwell:†

" . . . . I committed one Humphrey, a prebendarye off Sanct Patricks, unto ward, tyll tyme that I knew ferder the Kynges pleasour yn correctying off soche obstinate and sturdye papistes, . . . . *I thyncke the symplest holy water clerke ys better esteemed,*

\* *State Papers*, vol. iii. p. 5.

† *State Papers*, vol. iii. pp. 6, 7.

than I am . . . . I have committed now off late yn to warde the Besshop off Mithes suffragand, whiche, yn hys sermon, prayed fyrst for the Bisshop of Rome, then for the Emperore, and att last for the Kinges Grace, saying: '*I praye Godd he never depart thys world, untyll that he hathe made amendes*'. What shall a man thyncke be the Bisshop, that hathe soche a suffragand?"

On the 17th of June, same year, Bishop Staples writes to Sentleger, or Moyle:\*

" . . . . . He (Brown) now bostyth hyme self to ruell al the clergy under our Soveran Lord, and he hath gyvyne a tast of his good demeanour, that every honest man is not only wery their off, but rekenyth that pryd and arrogance hath ravishyed hyme from the ryght remembrance of hyme self. . . . . The comyn voyce goyth, *that he doth abhoor the Mayss*. It weer wel don my Lord Privy Seall wold of hys goodness *apoynt sum inquisition* secrett of truth of their demeanour and discretyon". . .

He then proceeds to describe how he denounced the authority of the Bishop of Rome throughout the diocese of Meath, and concludes:—

"I pray you most hertely recomende me to the good Maister Moyal, and if ye both kan preserve the poor sool from the purgatory of the Byshop of Dublyne, I wyl gyve every of you on Meas peny. Alas, poor sool!"

On the 20th of June, same year, Archbishop Brown writes to Cromwell:†

" . . . . . There goithe a commen brewte amonges the Irish men, that I intende to plope downe Our Lady of Tryme, with other places of pilgramages, as the Holy Crosse and souch like; *which indeade I never attempted, although my conscience wolde right well serve me to oppresse soach ydolles*".

The following articles were drawn up by Brown, on which the Bishop of Meath's witness was to be interrogated:‡

"*Imprimis*, whether the Bishop of Mythe, in his sermon made the seconde Sonday in Lent, at Saynt Owens, did say these wordes following, viz.: Good people, beware of sedicious and false preachers, which movith questions of Scripture; for I tell you,

\* *State Papers*, vol. iii. p. 29.

† *State Papers*, vol. iii. p. 85.

‡ From a MS. in the British Museum, published in a note to the *State Papers*.



all mysery, all wretchedness, and also deathe, came by moving of a question; for they that movith questions of Scripture, doth preache, now this way, now that way, and be inconstante?

“*Secondarly*, whether the Archbusshop of Dublin did invey ayenste the Busshop of Mithes sermon, and proved that it was lefull to move questions, viz. at Christechurch, in his sermon made the fourth Sondag in Lente; whereat were present the Commyssioners, and other of the Kinges Counsaile?

“*Thurdely*, whether that the Busshop of Mithe, at Kilmaynam, after his sermon made on Palme Sondag, ded plope out of his bosom a letter, which he saide his servante sente hym? and whether the contentes thereof were fayned and untrew, to the said Archbusshop of Dublin, not onely slanderous, but also contemptuous?

“*Fourthely*, how neclectlie the Busshop of Mithe ded passe over this texte, ‘Quem dicunt homines esse filium hominis’, etc., as whoo saithe it made nothing to the purpose?

“*Fiftelie*, whether the Busshop of Mithe sente a letter unto Umfrey, the contentes whereof in parte was, that the saide Busshop of Mythe wolde prove thArchbusshop of Dublin to be an heritike?

“*The sixth Article*, whether the Busshop of Rome’s pardons ded, on Palme Sondag, hange in the church of Kilmaynham, according to that day of stacion before tyme used there for the mayntenance of the Busshope of Romes auctorite, or not?

“*To the last article*, whether the Busshop of Mithe said, ‘Good people gyve no credence to him, beleve him not; for I tell you if ye will, in faith I will nott’?

“On this other side ben expressid the articles mynistered by the Busshop of Mithe, whereuppon certen witnes should be examyned upon.

“Imprimis, that they, that were chosen to say beytwexte the Archbusshop of Dublin and the Busshop of Mythe, shulde uppon theire ote be examyned, whether they were at Kilmaynan on Palme Sondag, or noo?

“*Secondarly*, whether that they harde him there, in his sermon touche the kinges supremacie, or not?

“*Thurdely*, whether that he spake any thing of the Busshop of Rome?

“*Fourthlie*, whether he in the pulpett ded call thArchbusshop of Dublin heritike, or not?

“I beseche your good Lordship way and ponder my letter,

unto your Lordeship before tyme written, of the very mater, and now consider howe this matter is handeled”.

Cromwell interposed between the episcopal belligerents, and brought about a temporary reconciliation.

On the 20th of October, 1538, Thomas Allen writes to Cromwell :\*

“ Here was a bishop and a friar put in the Castell of Dublin for their high and notorious offences against the kingis majestie ; and at the last cessions were brought to Trym, to have them indited, arrayned, and suffered according : yet our maisters of the lawe and all other (in good faith, except my Lord Tresorer, and veray fewe beside) been seche papistes, ypocrites, and worshippers of idolles, that they were not indited ; whereat my Lord of Dublin (Brown), Mr. Tresorer, and the Maister of the Rolles were veray angrie. Howbeit they could not remedie it. The thre wold not come in the chappell, where the *Idoll of Trym* stode, to thintent they wold not occasion the people ; notwith-

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\* *State Papers*, vol. iii., pp. 102, 103. *The Four Masters* describe the changes that occurred at this period in the following words :

“ 1537. A heresy and a new error (sprang up) in England, through pride, vain-glory, avarice, and lust, and through many strange sciences, so that the men of England went into opposition to the Pope and to Rome. They at the same time adopted various opinions, and (among others) the old law of Moses, in imitation of the Jewish people ; and they styled the king the Chief Head of the Church of God in his own kingdom. New laws and statutes were enacted by the king and council (parliament) according to their own will. They destroyed the orders to whom worldly possessions were allowed, namely, the monks, canons, nuns, brethren of the cross, and the four poor orders, i.e. the orders of the Minors, Preachers, Carmelites, and Augustinians ; and the lordships and livings of all these were taken up for the king. They broke down the monasteries, and sold their roofs and bells, so that from Arøn of the Saints to the Iccian Sea there was not one monastery that was not broken and shattered, with the exception of a few in Ireland, of which the English took no notice or heed. They afterwards burned the images, shrines, and relics of the saints of Ireland and England ; they likewise burned the celebrated image of (the Blessed Virgin) Mary at Trim, which used to perform wonders and miracles, which used to heal the blind, the deaf, and the crippled, and persons affected with all kinds of diseases ; and they also burned the staff of Jesus, which was in Dublin, performing miracles, from the time of St. Patrick down to that time, and had been in the hands of Christ while He was among men. They also appointed archbishops and sub-bishops for themselves ; and though great was the persecution of the Roman Emperors against the Church, scarcely had there ever come so great a persecution from (pagan) Roman as this ; so that it is impossible to narrate or tell its description, unless it should be narrated by one who saw it”—*Annals of the Four Masters*, by Dr. O'Donovan.



standing my Lord Deputie, veray devoutely kneling before hir, *hard thre or fower masses*".

In 1539 a serious charge was brought against Staples, which caused him to fall into disfavour. Cowley, Master of the Rolls, wrote to Cromwell, on the 8th of September, 1539, amongst other matters, to intercede for him :\*

"I . . . . . beseche your Lordship to bee his (Staples's) good lord, soo that there bee noo more heynous especiall matier to be objected to hym, then I know as is before expressed. He hath offrid to suffer dethe, yf any other matier can be provid, then as I have before expressid. Surely I do not write in his favoures for any inordynat affeccion, but oonly of pittie, seeing his lamentacion, as oon in utter despaire".

Cowley proceeds—we quote the following as being most applicable to poor Ireland at the present day—

"Sir (addressing Cromwell), we bee so covetous insaciably to have so many fermes, every of us, for our singular proffittes, that we *have exterpide and put awaye the men of warre that shuld defend the cuntrey*; and all is like to goo to wrack, except an order be takyn the rather as to have a survey, whate I and every other have in fees and fermes, and every oon that hath such fees and fermes to be taxed to fynde a certain nombre of hable men, to serve the king and to defend the cuntrey, uppon great payns; and they that have to many fermes to departe with able men of warre to live upon it, *to replenysh the cuntrey with men, for it is depopulated by gredy covetousness emonges our silves*".

Walter Cowley writes in his *Remembrances*, dated February, 1540, amonst other matters :

"To wryt to the counsell to exmyn substancially, by comysion, such matter as is layde to the Bisshop of Methes charge, and therin to proceed according to the Kinges Majesties lawes; and percace the said Bisshop by any maner of meane bee not found giltie, that yet for his apparent offence, yf it were no more but groundid oonly uppon temerositie, for thinsample of others, he bee assessid to pay a right grevous fin".

While Brown, Staples, and the other disciples of lay-supremacy were busily denouncing the venerable authority

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\* *State Papers*, p. 149.

of the Holy See, and drifting from the secure anchorage of the rock into the slippery and shifting sands of heresy, Henry the Eighth was robbing the churches, monasteries, priories, chantries, and hospitals of Ireland—the sacred bequests of the piety of past ages—the trusts for the widow and the orphan—for education and religion; and these degenerate churchmen, who should have braved the sacrilegious plunderer even at the peril of their lives, were prostrate in the dust, offering the sickening incense of their adulation, worshipping the golden calf, and begging a few crumbs from their master's table.\* On the 21st of May, 1539, the Lord Deputy and Council of Ireland write to Cromwell:†

“May it pleas your honorable Lordship to be advertised, that by the reporte of Thomas Cusake and other repaired lately out of the Realme of England into this land, it hath bene openlie bruted the Kinges graces pleasure to be, that all the monasteries within this land shuld be suppressed, none to stand”.

In this letter also they petition that six monasteries be exempted from the general suppression, viz., St. Mary's Abbey and Christ Church, Dublin; the nunnery of Grace Dieu, county Dublin; Connel Abbey, county Kildare; and Kells and Jerpoint, county Kilkenny, and they assign the following reasons:—

“For in thois houses commenly, *and other suchelike*, in defaute of comeninnes, whiche are not in this land, the Kinges Deputie, and all other His Graces counsaill and officers, also Irishmen, and others resorting to the Kinges Deputie in ther quarters, is and hath bene moste commenlie loged at the coasts of the said housez. Also in them yonge men and childer, bote gentilmen childer and other, bothe of man kynd and women kynd, *be broght up in vertue, lernyng*, and in the English tonge and behavior, to the great charges of the said houses; that is to say, the women kynd of the whole Englishrie of this land, for the more parte, in the said Nunrie, and the man kynd in the other said houses”.

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\* At the first rumour of the approaching commission to suppress the abbeys, Brown wrote to Cromwell, requesting that he would obtain for him “a very poure house of friars, named the New Abbey, which lay very commodious for me by Balymore”. Failing in this request, he solicited a grant of the nunnery of Grace Dieu, and was disappointed.

† *State Papers*, vol. iii., p. 130.



While this petition was on its way to Thomas Cromwell, Vicar-General of Henry the Eighth's creation, a ukase was crossing St. George's Channel, confiscating at one blow the monastic property of the Irish Church, and expelling the doomed inmates for ever from their consecrated homes.\*

"Henry, by the grace of God, etc., to John Allen, Chancellor, George (Brown), Archbishop of Dublin, William Brabazon, Vice-Treasurer, Robert Cowley, Master of the Rolls, and Thomas Cusake, Esq., or any three of you, the Chancellor or Vice-Treasurer to be one.

"Whereas, from the information of trustworthy persons, it being manifestly apparent that the monasteries, abbeys, priories, and other places of religious or regulars in Ireland, are at present in such a state, that in them the praise of God and the welfare of man are next to nothing regarded; the regulars and nuns dwelling in the same being so addicted, partly to their own superstitious ceremonies, partly to the pernicious worship of idols and to the pestiferous doctrines of the Roman pontiff, that, unless an effectual remedy be promptly provided, not only the weak lower order, but the whole Irish people, may be speedily infected, to their total destruction, by the example of these persons; to prevent, therefore, the longer continuance of such religious and nuns in so damnable a state, the king (having resolved to resume into his hands all the said monasteries, etc., *for their better reformation*, as also to separate from them the aforesaid religious men and women, and to cause them to return to some honest mode of living, and to the true religion) appoints the said commissioners to signify this his intention to the heads of such religious houses; to receive their resignations and *surrenders willingly tendered*; to grant to such as so tender the same, liberty of exchanging their habit, and of accepting benefices under the king's authority; *and to apprehend and punish such as adhere to the usurped authority of the Romish pontiff*, and contumaciously refuse to make such surrenders:—*also to take charge, for the king's use, of the possessions of the said houses*; assigning competent pensions to the persons who spontaneously surrender. Dated the 7th of April, 1539"—*Rot. Pat. 30 Henry VIII.*

Comment on such audacity and injustice would be superfluous. The royal libertine, the new "Supreme Head",

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\* Pat. 30, 31, Hen. VIII., part 2.

wants money to gratify his beastly propensities, and religion, which he outrages, must supply him with the means. The royal commissioners, being "all hungry for monastic spoil", faithfully carry out the programme of their master. The monks and nuns, accused of "superstitious ceremonies—pernicious worship of idols—pestiferous doctrines of the Romish pontiff", were modestly called upon, in the name of the king, to surrender their possession, and the recusants are threatened with the dread penalties of the law. The abbey-lands were now seized upon with a vengeance and confiscated. The gold and silver vessels of the temple were grasped by sacrilegious hands and turned to profane uses. The cross was torn from the altar and the chalice and ciborium from the tabernacle, images were burned, shrines were plundered and the sacred relics were scattered to the winds. The celebrated image of the Blessed Virgin of Trim, so long venerated by the faithful, was taken out of the church and profaned in the public market; while the image of Christ crucified was brought from the abbey of Ballybogan and the crozier of St. Patrick from Christ Church, Dublin, and both indignantly committed to the flames. In a short time nearly six hundred monasteries, fifty cathedrals, and numerous colleges were invaded and gutted, besides sundry places of pilgrimage, hallowed by a thousand recollections and enriched by the pious offerings of successive generations. To add insult to injury, the commissioners of Henry the Eighth summoned the community of each monastery to go through the mock form of a "voluntary surrender", and the religious were obliged to yield to force, in the same way that the traveller surrenders his purse when the blunderbuss of the highwayman leaves him no other alternative.

"The form of surrender", says the learned Dean Butler,\* "then executed omitted no property which could belong to the house. It specified the scite, ambit, and precinct, the whole church, belfry, and cemetery, all manors, messuages, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, and services, mills, meadows, and pastures, woods and underwoods, houses, buildings, granges,

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\* *Registrum Prioratus Omnium Sanctorum*—Introduction, p. xxix.



granaries, stables and dovecots, fisheries, warrens, annuities, waters, ponds, rectories, vicarages, knights' fees, advowsons of churches, chapels, and chantries, pensions, porcions, tithes, oblations, courts leet and of frankpledge, and their profits and perquisites, and all other rights, possessions, and hereditaments, as well spiritual as temporal. Nor were these all. There were added their charters, evidences, writings and manuscripts, their goods, chattels, utensils, ornaments, jewels, and debts. All these were granted to the king, to be disposed of at his good pleasure, without appeal or complaint, and the unhappy men were forced to declare, that they thus deprived themselves of house and home of their own free will, and that they put an end to a venerable institution, to which they were bound by the most solemn obligations, certain just and reasonable causes thereto moving their minds and their consciences".

When, standing amidst graves, and tombstones, and mouldering walls, we reflect on the past—how in years gone by the holy sacrifice was offered with incense and ceremony—how the divine office was chanted there by night and by day, and the benedictions of Heaven invoked upon a sinful world by hearts dedicated to the service of God; when we think of the merry laugh of the young student, the holy aspirations and resolves, the religious ceremonies, the ordinations, the last farewell of generation after generation of young missionaries to their *Alma Mater* before entering on the perilous warfare, and the generous and cheerful welcome with which the young aspirant was greeted by the good old monks; when we think of the *easy and indulgent landlords*, the happy and contented tenantry, the well clad and joyous peasantry, the board of hospitality spread at all hours for the indigent and infirm, for the traveller and the stranger; the sciences encouraged; architecture, sculpture, painting, the fine arts patronised; when we think on the past, and then look at the crumbling walls, the ivy clad ruins, the silent graves, the loneliness, and solitude, and desolation of a once populous and frequented abbey; when, in particular, we look around us, and behold a wretched, half-starved, half-clad people, and call to mind what little compassion their sorrows, and poverty, and sufferings, and privations excite in the breasts of those who have fattened on the plunder of the

Church and the patrimony of the poor; when we think of all this and the long train of woes which the pen cannot describe, assuredly we will have no great reason to eulogise English rule, or feel grateful for the boasted blessings of the so-called Reformation.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### APOSTACY AND DEATH OF DR. STAPLES.

THE Bishop of Meath beheld with the greatest unconcern the wholesale robbery of the ecclesiastical property of the diocese; and even had he felt a pang of remorse or indignation, he was steeped too deeply in servility to hazard even a remonstrance with his intolerant and capricious master. As a reward for his flexibility of conscience, and his abject subserviency to the "Royal Supremacy", he was appointed justice of the peace\* for the county of Meath, and he obtained license from the king to appropriate and annex to his see the archdeaconry of Kells and the rectory of Nobber, or rather the temporalities of these offices, for the maintenance of his episcopal table.†

\* The appointment is dated, in the Calendar of the Patent Rolls, on the 30th of September, 32nd of King Henry VIII.

† See the Calendar at page 103, the date is December 27th, 1544; in page 108, the suppression of the archdeaconry of Kells and the grant of Nobber is called "ad mensam".

On January the 14th, 1545 (old style), Dr. Staples obtained license from the king to alienate the manor and lordship of Ardcath, the lands of Ardcath, Balgeith, Portereston, Prensparke, Clony, Irishton, Boynardeston, Coruston, Largwy, otherwise Largay, Prenston, Rowleston, Denaneston, Moreton, and Bertramston, in the parish of Ardcath, and the watermill of Kylberbe; and also to convey the manors and lordships of Scurlockeston, Neweton, Killeane, and Clonard, in the county of Meath. See the Calendar at p. 105.

On the 16th of March, 1545, the Calendar has the following entry:—  
"Surrender unto the king, by the bishop and clergy of Meath, of all their procurations, in recompense and satisfaction of the parish church of Loghsewdy, and the chapels of Clonecally, Bonowne, and Oghwall, parcels of the church of Loghsewdy".

On the 30th of May, 1546, Dr. Staples and his clergy obtained license to alienate the parish-church of the Blessed Virgin of Painstown, to Patrick Delafield, his heirs and assigns, for ever.



On the 16th of March, 1543, died George Cromer, Archbishop of Armagh, and, on the 28th of November, a mandate was issued by the king for the consecration of George Dowdall. He was consecrated by Dr. Staples, assisted by other bishops, and, unlike his suffragan, neither the frowns nor caresses of the world could turn him from the path of rectitude and duty. The day came at length when even Henry the Eighth had to appear at the bar of divine justice. The world had long since grown tired of him; but before his departure he bequeathed to the world a legacy of evil, a memorial of pride and impiety, which was destined to perpetuate his name. The ruling passions of this prince were lust and avarice, and, to satiate these, he plundered the Church, murdered his wives, gratified every brutal propensity, and, as a congruous sequel to an infamous life, he died in despair. On the 28th of January, 1547, Henry the Eighth ceased to exist, and was succeeded by his youthful son Edward the Sixth.\* The Earl of Hertford, uncle to the prince, now became Duke of Somerset, protector and guardian. The mask was soon thrown off, and Lutheranism openly introduced. The English nobility, already in possession of church-property, swam with the current, as they were apprehensive lest the restoration of orthodoxy would oblige them to part with their ill-gotten goods. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, long a Lutheran in disguise, now openly acknowledged his wife, and his example was followed by the other fathers of the Reformation. A new liturgy was composed and confirmed by act of parliament, and no-

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On the 27th of February, 1546, Staples obtained license to alienate the advowson of Painsworth.

On the 10th of April, 1546, the Rev. James Winifrey, Rector of Pains-town, and Patrick Delafield, patron of the same, obtained license to alienate and grant to Edward Staples, Bishop of Meath, a pension of £20 out of the said rectory.

On the 7th of April, 1547, first year of King Edward, the Lord Protector and Council of England write to the Lord Deputy and Council of Ireland (inter alia) "that the bishop of Meath should have the parsonage of Ardbraccan for life"—*Calendar*, p. 149.

\* Edward the Sixth, in the first year of his reign, called Dr. Staples into the Privy Council of Ireland, and made him "Judge of the Faculties"—Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 154; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 132.

velty generated by passion, nourished by plunder, recruited by recreancy, and backed by the terrors of the law, having succeeded in England, Cranmer and the Protector resolved to join issue with Catholic Ireland. An order was forthwith sent to St. Leger, the Lord Deputy, to have the oath of allegiance administered to the bishops, and the new liturgy adopted. The Irish prelates assembled at Dublin, and all the old bishops refused compliance, with the exception of Archbishop Brown, Dr. Staples of Meath (both nominated by Henry the Eighth), and a few more. Archbishop Brown, the first and foremost apostate, now placed himself at the head of the Reformation-party in Ireland, and around him gathered all those who, having shipwrecked morals and conscience, were hungering after the flesh-pots of Egypt. The parliamentary liturgy was read for the first time in Ireland, in the cathedral of Christ Church, Dublin, on Easter Sunday, 1551, and in the same year Sir James Crofts, the Lord Deputy, invited the bishops of the Catholic Church and of the Reformation to have a discussion on religion. The prelates assembled in the great hall of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin; the subject of debate was the sacrifice of the Mass. The Primate, Dr. Dowdall, defended the Catholic doctrines, his antagonist on the Protestant side being no other than his consecrator, Edward Staples,\* once Catholic bishop of Meath. Whatever may have been the relative learning or abilities displayed by the disputants, there was no doubt on which side lay the prospect of worldly promotion. The result of the discussion was, says Ware, that "it gave to the king and council *an opportunity* to deprive Dowdall, *for his obstinacy*, of the title of primate of all Ireland, and of annexing it to the see of Dublin for ever". Accordingly Brown obtained letters patent from King Edward the Sixth, dated the 20th of October, 1551, that he and his successors should be primates of all Ireland. Harris adds, "because he (Brown) was the first of the Irish Bishops who embraced the order for establishing the English Liturgy and Reformation in Ireland". Dr. Dowdall, knowing the men he had to deal with, fled to

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\* Ware's *Bishops*, p. 351.



the continent and took refuge in the monastery of Centre, Brabant; while Brown and Staples, in imitation of Luther, Cranmer, and the other lights of the Reformation, took to themselves wives, or rather concubines, in defiance of their solemn vows of chastity, and thus sought consolation for the loss of their faith.

It is not to be supposed that the diocese of Meath beheld with indifference the recreancy and immorality of its bishop, and his efforts to seduce from the faith the flock once committed to his charge. Even before he had fallen, his cringing subserviency to the powers of this world, and his schismatical disobedience and disrespect of the Holy Father, rendered him, throughout the diocese, odious and contemptible. As early as December, 1548, he writes from Ardbraccan a doleful letter to the Secretary of Sir Edward Bellingham, Lord Deputy, in which amongst other grievances, he complains that

“a benyficed man of myn owne promocion” told him, in addition to other matters, “if the countrie wiste how, they wolde eate yow . . . . and I advyce you for Criste sake not to preche at the Novam” (Navan).

Edward the Sixth died in July, 1553, and was succeeded by Mary, daughter of Catherine of Arragon. Soon after her accession, Archbishop Dowdall was recalled from exile, and the title of Primate of all Ireland was by letters patent restored to him. To reform abuses which crept in during the last two reigns, and to remove false brethren from the sanctuary, were the especial objects of his care. He held a Provincial Synod in Drogheda,† where many useful regulations were adopted for the reformation of morals and discipline. In April, 1554, Dr. Dowdall and Dr. William Walsh, Bishop-elect of Meath, received a commission to proceed against immoral ecclesiastics, and to depose such as were married and impenitent. Accordingly, on the 29th of June, same year, Edward Staples was removed from the diocese of Meath,‡ deprived of his benefices, and suspended

\* See Shirley's *Original Letters*, pp. 22, 23, 24.

† *Cambrensis Eversus*, edited by Rev. Dr. Kelly, vol. ii., p. 780; Ware's *Bishops*, p. 92.

‡ Ware's *Bishops*, pp. 92, 155

from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction ; and about the end of the same year unfortunate Brown of Dublin, the first who apostatised in Ireland, followed him. During the remainder of Queen Mary's reign, Staples lived in obscurity, and his place was filled by William Walsh, a man renowned for his virtues and learning. After the accession of Elizabeth, we find him again on the surface, and on the 16th of December, 1558, he writes from Dublin to Sir William Cecil, complaining that he had been\*

"made a gesteing stocke amongst munkes and ffreers, nor any cawse why was layed agaynst me, but for that I did marrie a wif, they did put an Ireyshe monke in my place, whose chiefe matter in preachynge hath been in realeyng agaynst or. olde Mr."

Dr. Staples died soon after having written this letter, but whether he was reconciled to the Church or not, or where buried, we are unable to say. He was the last Englishman that ambitioned to rule the diocese of Meath. While temporal power and worldly wealth encircled the mitre, courtly prelates of his stamp were emulous to give us the benefit of their services ; but when the hour of persecution set in, when it was death to be a priest, and felony to harbour him, when the faithful pastors were driven to seek shelter in the caverns of the earth, in the unfrequented woods, and in the cabins of the poor, the Catholic Church of Ireland was no longer a profitable speculation for such ecclesiastical adventurers, and hence they sought promotion on a more congenial field.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

WILLIAM WALSH.

Suc. 1554—Died 1577.

AFTER the suspension and deprivation of Dr. Staples, the providence of God sent to the scandalized and afflicted diocese of Meath, a learned bishop, in the person of Dr. Walsh. Sir James Ware says that he was a native of Waterford ; but another authority, who certainly had better

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\* Shirley's *Original Letters*, pp. 87, 88, 89.



opportunities of information, namely, John, alias Malachy Hartrey,\* a Cistercian monk of the Abbey of Holy Cross, in a manuscript treatise entitled *De Cisterciensium Hibernorum viris illustribus*, states that William Walsh was born at Dunboyne, county of Meath, joined the Cistercian order, and lived in the Abbey of Bective previous to its suppression. Whatever doubt there may be about the place of his birth and his early history, there is none whatever as to his eminent virtues, distinguished abilities, and the heroic fortitude with which he bore numerous and prolonged sufferings for the faith. His unbending orthodoxy and opposition to the innovations of Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth, marked him out for promotion after the accession of Queen Mary, and accordingly we find him associated, by special commission, with the zealous Primate, Dr. Dowdall, in driving from the sanctuary all such as were faithless to their trust. A *congè d' elire* was issued to the Archdeacon and clergy of Meath for the election of Dr. Walsh, and, after having received the royal assent and the confirmation of the Holy See, he addressed the following petition† to Philip and Mary:—

“Petition of William Walsh, stating that he was elected Bishop by the chapter and clergy of the bishopric of Meath, and had for his consecration their graces’ letters patent; but not having his lawful confirmation from the universal Catholic Church like other bishops, he could not with good conscience be consecrated; and stating that he was sent into Ireland at his own cost, by commission, to deprive certain married bishops and priests, and was so occupied in execution of this office, that he could not attend to his consecration. He therefore prays a grant of the temporalities of the see from the date of the deprivation of the late incumbent, which was the feast of SS. Peter and Paul last past”.

On the receipt of this petition the King and Queen wrote to the Lord Deputy, the Chancellor, and the Council of Ireland, thus:

“We send you herein enclosed a supplication exhibited unto us by our loving subject, Doctor Walsh, Bishop of Meath elect, wherein he desires the temporalities of the bishopric from the

\* Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 155. † Calendar of the Patent Rolls, p. 337.

time of the deprivation of the late incumbent : our pleasure is, that you shall give order to make forth an *utterlemagne* under our great seal, whereby he may enjoy the whole temporalities of the Bishopric from the time of the amotion or deprivation of the last incumbent". Oct. 18, 1<sup>o</sup> and 2<sup>o</sup>.

Dr. Walsh was consecrated about the close of 1554, and immediately applied himself with zeal and energy to reform abuses and to heal the wounds which during the last two reigns had been inflicted on faith, morals, and discipline. The period of his usefulness was, however, destined to be brief, and he had time merely to stimulate his priests and to fortify his diocese when the gathering storm burst over the Irish Church and sacrificed the Bishop of Meath, amongst the first and noblest victims, to its vengeance and rage. Queen Mary died in 1558 and was succeeded by Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn. Scarcely had she ascended the throne when she threw off the mask and openly assumed the championship of the Reformation. As her legitimacy was denied by the Catholic Church, she was animated with a fanatical hatred, and hence she laboured unceasingly to uproot its very name.

Sir James Ware thus summarises the conflicting changes in religion which characterized this and the preceding reigns :\*

1. " King Henry the Eighth held the ecclesiastical supremacy, with the first fruits and tenths ; maintaining the seven sacraments, with obits, and mass for the living and the dead, then—

2. " King Edward abolished the mass, authorizing the Book of Common Prayer, and the consecration of the bread and wine, in the English tongue, and establishing only two sacraments.

" 3. Queen Mary brought all back again to the Church of Rome and to the Papal obedience.

" 4. Queen Elizabeth, in her first parliament in England, took away the Pope's supremacy, reserving the tenths and first fruits to her heirs and successors. She put down the mass ; and for a general uniformity of worship in her dominions she established the Book of Common Prayer, and forbade the use of Popish ceremonies".

Queen Elizabeth commenced in England by propounding

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\* Ware's *Annals*: Reign of Elizabeth



her spiritual supremacy, and because the bishops refused to subscribe to this monstrous innovation, they were repelled with scorn, deprived of their bishoprics, and committed to prison.\* In Ireland, her deputy, the Earl of Sussex, by means of a packed parliament, succeeded in having the following enactments passed:†

1. Any clergyman who refused to use the Book of Common Prayer in his church, or who used any other form of worship, rite, ceremony, or manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper, openly or privily, than was laid down in the said Book of Common Prayer, was to forfeit all the profit or income of his benefice for one year, and also suffer imprisonment for six months.

2. For the second offence, he was to forfeit his income for ever, and suffer imprisonment at pleasure.

3. For the third offence, he was to suffer imprisonment for life.

4. Laymen, for the first offence, were to undergo imprisonment for one year, and for the second, imprisonment for life.

5. Every person in the kingdom, absenting himself from the usual place where common prayer was read on Sundays and holydays, was subject to a fine of twelve pence, and also to the censures of the Church.

All appeals to Rome were strictly forbidden; all the laws enacted in the reign of Mary for the restoration of ancient worship were annulled; and every official in church or state was obliged, under penalty of forfeiting the same, to take

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\* "She first sent for the bishops", says Dr. Lingard, "and required them to conform; but they pleaded the prohibition of conscience, and were dismissed with expressions of scorn and resentment. The next step was to tender to them the oath of supremacy; on their refusal they were deprived of their bishoprics, and committed to custody"—*History of England*, vol. vi., p. 8.

Of the English hierarchy, at this time, only one—Kitchin of Llandaff—betrayed trust. As to the clergy, Dr. Lingard says: "The oath of supremacy was tendered by them (the new Protestant bishops) to the clergy of their respective dioceses. In general it was refused by the deans, prebendaries, archdeacons, and the leading members of the universities, who sacrificed their offices and emoluments, and in some cases their personal liberty, to the dictates of their consciences; but among the lower orders of the clergy, many thought proper to conform, some through partiality for the new doctrines, some through dread of poverty, and some under the persuasion that the present would soon be followed by another religious revolution"—vol. vi., p. 10.

† Lib. Stat., p. 201.

the oath of supremacy, and after a third such denial, was held guilty of high treason. No means were spared to ridicule and oppress the Catholic Church, and to draw off the people from the religion of their forefathers.

It was now the fidelity of Dr. Walsh was tested to the utmost. Had he, like some of his contemporaries, sacrificed conscience to expediency, worldly comfort and ephemeral honours were sure to have been his portion. But he felt he had a higher authority to obey than Queen Elizabeth, and hence he repudiated her pretensions to rule the Church, and guarded his flock, even at the peril of his life, against her parliamentary creed.

In Ware's *Annals*, under 1560, third year of Elizabeth, we get a glimpse at the constancy of Dr. Walsh, the zeal with which he opposed the new state-church, and the many sufferings which resulted from his fidelity :

“After the return of the Earl of Sussex to Ireland, letters came from her majesty, signifying her pleasure, for a general meeting of the clergy of Ireland, and the establishment of the Protestant religion through the several dioceses of this kingdom. Among the bishops, William Walsh, then Bishop of Meath, was very zealous for the Romish Church, not content with what offers her majesty had proposed, but very much enraged (after the assembly had dispersed themselves), he fell to preach against the common prayer (in his diocese at Trim) which was newly come over, and ordered to be observed ; for which the Lord Lieutenant confined him, till he acquainted her majesty with it, who sent over her orders to clap him up in prison : within a few months after, persisting in the same mind, he was deposed, and the bishopric of Meath was about two years vacant, till by her majesty's provision Hugh Brady became Walsh's successor”.

In the *Liberum munus Publicorum Hiberniæ* there is a note to the same effect :

“He (Dr. Walsh) was deprived in the reign of Elizabeth (for no small offence one should think) for preaching against the *Book of Common Prayer*, as well as against the queen's supremacy, and thrown into prison”.

On the 16th of July, 1565, Adam Loftus, Protestant Archbishop of Armagh, writes to Sir William Cecil :\*

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\* Shirley's *Original Letters*, pp. 219, 220.



“ . . . . . The xiiiith of this monthe, by vertu of our comission for cawsis ecclesiastycall, we comitted to the Castell of Dublyn doctor Welche, late byssippe of Methe, there to remayne untill the queenes majesties pleasure were knowne. *He refused the othe, and to answer such articles as we required him; and, besides that, ever sithens the last parliament, he hath manifestly contemned and openly showed himself to be a mislyker of all the queenes majesties proceedings; he openly protested before all the people, the same day he was before us, that he would never communicate or be present (by his will) where the service should be ministrid, for it was against his conscience and (as he thought) against God's woord.* If it shall seeme good to your honour and the rest of her majesties most honourable counseyle, in myne opinion, it wer fit he should be sent to England, and peradventure by conferringe withe the lerned bishoppes there, he might be brought to sum conformitie; *he is one of great creadit amongst his countrymen, and uppon whome (as tutchinge cawsis of religion) thay wholly depend*”.

After having suffered thirteen years' imprisonment for the faith, during a portion of which time he was bound in chains and subjected to innumerable trials and persecutions, he at length, through the connivance of his gaoler, effected his escape and took shipping to Spain. Having arrived there, the noble exile proceeded to the Cistercian monastery of Complute, and spent in this house of his order the few remaining years of his life. Worn down with infirmities and the wounds inflicted by the heavy chains which bound him to his dungeon during his long imprisonment, this heroic confessor, full of years and merits, after a glorious life, during which he fought the good fight and was faithful to the end, fortified by the sacraments, amidst the tears and prayers of the community, passed to a better world, and was interred in the Cistercian cemetery of Complute. Over his remains a monument was erected by the Bishop of Granada with the following inscription:\*

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\* Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 155. I am indebted to the Rev. Professor M'Carthy for the following extract from the O'Renehan MSS., taken from the original work of Malachy Hartrey:—

“ Incredibile furore quotidianaque persecutione, tempestate Elizabethæ Reginae Reverendissimus (Gulielmus Walsh) affligitur, quia iniquis legibus contra fidem Catholicam Romanam reclamaret; obscurissimo mancipatur

“Hic facet Gulielmus Walsheus, Cistertiensis Ordinis Monachus, et Episcopus Midensis; qui pro fide Catholica post tredeciam annos, carceris, et multos toleratos labores, tandem obiit exul Compluti anno 1577, pride non. Januarii”.

Thus rendered by Harris:—“Here lieth William Walsh, a Cistercian Monk, and Bishop of Meath, who having suffered imprisonment and many other hardships for thirteen years, at last died in banishment at Alcala, on the day before the Nones of January, in the year 1577”.

The lives and times of the prelates of Meath who succeeded Dr. Walsh, with other important and interesting diocesan memorials, too long for insertion here, are reserved for a future page.

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carceri as conniventia Custodis in Hispaniam aufugit, et ad Cistercium in Complutensi Academia Collegium pergit, ubi ob catenarum vulnera et gravia vulnera lecto decumbebat. Pietatis et Religionis testimoniis, necnon monachorum de eo approbatione, sacramentorum denique gaudiis animam Deo Omnipotenti tradidit, cujus monumento hoc additum fuit Episcopi Granalensis impensis: Hic jacet Gulielmus Walsheus, etc., ut supra”.



**ANCIENT ABBEYS OF MEATH.**

ANALYST ABREVS OF MEATH



# ANCIENT ABBEYS OF MEATH.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### ARDSALLAGH.

ARDSALLAGH, or Ard-Saileach, "the height of the shallows or willows", is situated on the left bank of the Boyne, near Ballinter bridge, in the barony of Lower Navan. A monastery called *Escair-Branain* (otherwise *Ard-bren-ndomnach*) was erected in this romantic and charming locality by St. Finian, the celebrated founder of Clonard, in the sixth century. (*Acta Sanctorum*, p. 399 and 406. *Archdall's Monasticon*, p. 513). The records of this house have been long since lost, and not a trace remains of either abbey or church. After the Anglo-Norman invasion the family of de Angulo or Nangle became possessed of Ardsallagh and Navan. The celebrated stone cross of Navan, which stood up to a late period in the centre of the market square, and the Augustinian Friary of Navan, which was under the patronage of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, owed their origin to the munificence of this house. A castle\* was erected by the Nangles at Ardsallagh, and convenient to it a convent† in honour of the Purity of the Blessed Virgin.

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\* In 1643 the castle of Ardsallagh was taken by Own Roe O'Neill. Carte's *Ormond*, p. 448, vol. i.

† I have a letter in my possession, written by a nun in England, who is descended from the noble family of de Angulo or Nangle, in which she says: "On the Ardsallagh property stood, in former times, a monastery in honour of Our Lady's Purity, erected in fulfilment of a vow by Sir

Some of the walls of this monastery remained up to sixty years ago. About the close of the twelfth or early in the thirteenth century, the Church of Cannistown or Cannons-town, in the parish of Ardsallagh, seems to have been founded or reëdified by the same family, in order to compensate the public for the occupation of Ardsallagh. Henceforth Cannistown became the parish church, and the district has been variously named Cannistown or Ardsallagh. The parish was dedicated to St. Brigid, and her holy well\* is in the demesne of Ardsallagh, still an object of veneration—a link in memory, carrying us back to the ages of faith.

The church of Cannistown was quadrangular, and separated into sanctuary and nave by a rood screen or choir arch. The chancel measures *twenty-four feet in length*; the nave is forty-one feet two inches, by seventeen feet eight inches. On the east end stood the altar, and on the west the belfry, with its three semi-circular headed windows. The circular choir arch,† “springing from highly-decorated imposts”, is in a wonderful state of preservation.

In Bishop Montgomery's visitation,‡ 1612, we find the chancel repaired, but the church is in a ruinous state.

In 1690 the Rev. Dr. George Plunket was presented§ by

Jocelyn de Angulo”. She quotes the Nangle pedigree, which I have never seen. I may add, in corroboration of her statement, that persons still living saw the old walls, which were called “the monastery”. The present house of Ardsallagh, a modern mansion, occupies a portion of the monastic site.

\* Of this well, Dr. Wilde writes: “Although a modern cut stone pointed arch has by some tasteless architect been thrown over it, still the thorns and elders that overhang its pure waters, the mullen, the ground ivy, and wild geraniums that droop and festoon the adjoining bank, and the old carved head of St. Brigid, with its plaited hair and prim formal features—the very impersonation of a mother abbess—all combine to render this once celebrated spot a pleasing picture”—*Boyne and Blackwater*, p. 128. A branch of the Navan Young Men's Society was established in this parish in 1859, which adopted St. Brigid as Patroness. It is called the “Guild of St. Brigid”, and the members commemorate her memory by approaching holy communion on the morning of her festival, and by a soiree on the Sunday evening following.

† See *Beauties of the Boyne*, p. 129. Wakeman's *Antiquities*, p. 119.

‡ See the *Visitation Book* in the Royal Irish Academy.

§ A list of King James's presentations in my possession. See also Harris's *Life of William*, Appendix. *Hibernia Dominicana*, pp. 19, 20, 21.



James the Second to the parishes of Ardsallagh and Navan, and appointed by Patrick Tyrrell, Bishop of Meath. In 1704 we find the Rev. Garret Darcy registered as parish-priest of "Ardsallagh, Navan, Bective, and Donaghmore". He was ordained at Kilkenny by Dr. Whelan, Bishop of Ossory, and at this time lived in Navan. Ardsallagh has continued up to the present time in the parochial union of Navan.

As to the proprietors of Ardsallagh, the Nangles got this property from Hugh de Lacy in the twelfth century. Early in the seventeenth century Hugh Preston,\* grandson to Jenico, the third Viscount Gormanston, married a daughter of Jocelyn Nangle, Baron of Navan, and thus Ardsallagh passed into the Preston family. A century afterwards Peter Ludlow,† who represented Meath in 1719 and 1727, married

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\* Archdall's *Lodge*, vol. iii., pp. 79, 80, and 86.

† The Ludlows were a very liberal and kind-hearted family, and their memory is still held in grateful recollection. They were considerate and indulgent landlords, and cultivated friendly relationship with the priests and the people. During the lifetime of the first Peter Ludlow, there was a parish-priest in Johnstown, named Father Clarke, with whom he was on very intimate terms. This pastor lived in a farmer's house at Oldtown, convenient to the Boyne, and a boat was at all times at his disposal to ferry him across the river to Ardsallagh Castle, where he was accustomed to fly for shelter whenever the Penal Laws were enforced with more than ordinary rigour. Here he was at all times welcome, and here he remained until the storm subsided. It happened on one occasion that three priest-hunters from Navan, covetous of the reward for the apprehension of the Catholic priesthood, resolved to arrest Father Clarke, and to drag him before the courts. They lay in wait near the farmer's house, and excited the suspicions of a servant by their interrogatories, "Was n't the priest in the house and in disguise?" The servant reported progress inside, and Father Clarke, who was a man of great physical strength and athletic frame, went forth, having a "blackthorn" with him, concealed in the ample folds of his overcoat. They rushed on their prey, but received so warm a reception that they were glad to beat a retreat, resolved, however, to return reinforced by the myrmidons of the law. Father Clarke, foreseeing what was in store for him, made to the Boyne, crossed to Ardsallagh Castle, and let known his fears to his friend Peter Ludlow. He was not long in the Castle when the priest-hounds, who had gone round by Kilcaine bridge, were seen making thither, and, on arriving, knocked and asked to see "the Master". Ludlow went out and demanded their business. They said they went to arrest a priest, and that he resisted the law and inflicted grievous wounds on them for endeavouring to discharge their duty. One complained of his shoulder, another of his back, and each moaned piteously at the rough treatment he experienced, and begged "his honour" to sign a warrant to have the priest arrested. "Tell me", said Ludlow, "did the priest really beat the three of you?" "He did, your

Mary, daughter and heiress of John Preston of Ardsallagh, He died at Bath on the 19th of June, 1750, and was succeeded by his son, Peter Ludlow, who was advanced to the peerage of Ireland, with the title of Baron Ludlow of Ardsallagh. In 1760 he became Viscount Preston of Ardsallagh and Earl Ludlow. From the Ludlows Ardsallagh passed to the late Duke of Bedford, and from him to Lord John Russell, now Earl Russell.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### BECTIVE.

BECTIVE,\* Bectiff, or Begty, is situated in the barony of Navan, three miles east of Trim, and on the banks of the Boyne. A Cistercian Abbey, called *De Beatitudine*, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, was founded here, between 1146 and 1151, by Murchard O'Melaghlin, King of Meath.† The first Cistercian house founded in Ireland was Mellifont, in 1142.‡ St. Malachy, admiring the great institute of St. Bernard, had left, on his return from Rome in 1140, some of his monks at Clairvaux in order to learn the rules and regulations of the order, and to be trained up under that learned and holy abbot. After sufficient time, at St. Malachy's request, St. Bernard sent over the Irish monks, accom-

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honour". Ludlow, in apparent indignation, calling his servant, ordered a whip, and scutched the three worthies from the castle, "because they were not able for one priest". There are very many interesting traditions amongst the people, apparently well-founded, of the interposition of the Ludlows to soften the asperity of the laws, and to connive at the exercise of the priestly functions. Their castle often gave shelter to the Catholic clergy in the days of persecution, and their philanthropy and charity have endeared them to the grateful remembrance of the people.

\* Bective seems to derive its name from *Begteach*, "Tectum parvum", the "Little Palace", in contradistinction to *Teachmor*, *Tectum magnum Tara*. Bective was probably the place to which the royal palace was transferred from Tara in 564. See Dean Butler's notes to *Trim Castle*, pp. 95, 96, and 153.

† Ware's *Monasticon*. ‡ Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, iv., p. 119.



panied by some of the brotherhood of Clairvaux, and they settled at Mellifont. In a little time the great fame of this monastery was diffused over Ireland, Christian (Gilla-Criost) O'Conarchy, the first abbot or superior, was advanced to the see of Lismore, and became, moreover, Apostolic Legate in Ireland. Mellifont was soon filled with holy men, branches of the order were established in many places, and, amongst the first, at Bective. After the Anglo-Norman invasion, it would seem, the Irish monks were gradually wed out of Bective, and their places filled with foreigners. Sir James Ware\* tells us that, in 1195, the body of Hugh de Lacy† was interred here with great solemnity, while his head was placed in the Abbey of St. Thomas in Dublin. This latter house was founded by William Fitz-Adlem, an Anglo-Norman baron, and was largely endowed by De Lacy. Both parties claimed the body of De Lacy, and the result was an appeal to the Holy See. Pope Innocent the Third appointed Simon Rochfort, Bishop of Meath, the Archdeacon of Meath, and Gilebert, Prior of Duleek, as judges in the controversy, and "they gave their decision", says Ware, "on St. Valentine's Day in 1205, in favour of the Abbey of St. Thomas". In the annals of Bective, from this period to the Reformation, there is scarcely anything to interest the reader. During the

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\* Ware's *Annals*, and Pembridge.

† Giraldus Cambrensis, who knew de Lacy well, thus describes him: "His eies were blacke and deepe, and his nose somewhat flat, like that of an ape; and the right side of his face, from the chin upwards, by a mischance was schrewolie skalled; his neck was short, and his bodie hairie, as also not fleshie, but sinewish and strong compact; his stature was but small, and his proportion deformed; but in construction he was verie sober, trustie, and modest . . . . He was verie greedie and covetous of wealth and possessions . . . . After his wife's deathe he indulged in habits of general profligacie". The death of de Lacy is thus noted by the *Four Masters*: "1186. Hugo de Lacy, the profaner and destroyer of many churches . . . . after having finished the Castle of Durrow, set out, accompanied by three Englishmen, to view it. One of the men of Teflia, a youth named Gilla-gan-inathar O'Meyey, approached him, and drawing out an axe, which he had kept concealed, he with one blow of it severed his head from his body, and both head and trunk fell into the ditch of the castle. This was in revenge of Columbkille. O'Meyey fled, and, by his fleetness of foot, made his escape from the English and Irish to the wood of Kilclare. He afterwards went to the Sinnagh (Fox) and O'Breen, at whose instigation he had killed the earl".—See O'Donovan's *Notes*.

rebellion of Lambert Simnel, the abbot, James of Castle-martin, took part with the other Anglo-Irish lords, and in 1488, received pardon from Henry the Seventh. The princely possessions of this house comprised twenty messuages and twelve hundred acres of arable and pasture land, and the lord-abbot sat as a spiritual peer in the parliaments of the Pale. When Henry the Eighth commenced plundering the Church and confiscating the patrimony of the poor, the broad acres, the rich chalices, shrines, and altar-plate of Bective were amongst the first,\* in Ireland, to attract the tyrant's cupidity. Accordingly on the 31st of July, thirty-fourth of King Henry the Eighth, the abbot was forced to surrender the possession of this abbey.† In 1537, Alen, Master of the Rolls, in a letter‡ to the commissioners, suggests, amongst other things, that the Deputy or Lord Lieutenant abide for the most part at Trim, and that the castle there be sufficiently repaired, "and the timber and stones of the monasteries of St. Peter, the Betty (Bective), and if need be the Black Friars there (Dominican monastery), be drawn thither for the same purpose". Bective fortunately escaped such Vandalism. In 1552, during the reign of Edward the Sixth, the possessions of this monastery were sold to Andrew Wyse, Vice-Treasurer. The following is the memorandum :§

"Grant to Andrew Wyse, Esquire, Vice-Treasurer, in consideration of the sum of £1,380 16s. 7d., Irish, of the monastery of Bectyfe, with the manor and lordship, and all edifices,

\* In Ware's *Annals*, the suppression of Bective, Dulceek, and St. Peter's, near Trim, is placed at 1536 (See *Annals*, p. 95); in his *Antiquities*, p. 274, he says the grantee of Bective was Alexander Fitton; the assignee, Bartholomew Dillon.

† William Walsh, afterwards Bishop of Meath, is said to have been a monk of Bective. See his life.

‡ *State Papers*, part iii., p. 481.

§ *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, pp. 280, 281. The following memorandum (p. 265) acknowledges the receipt of the purchase money. "That I, Nycholas Stanyhurst, of Dublin, one of the clerkes of the Hanaper, have presently received of the Right Worshipful Andrewe Wyse, Esquier, the King's Majestie's Vice-Treasurer in Ireland, the som of a thowsainde a hundrethe fourescore eight poundes aleaven pence sterling, due to the King's Majestie for the purchase of the late house and possessions of the Bectyfe, which his Grace, by his Highnes letters patentes, hath granted



churches, belfry, cemetery, woods, gardens, meadows, pastures, mills, and fishing weirs, in the county of Meath; the manor of Revaghe, in the county of Westmeath, with court leet and view of frank pledge, fairs, markets, tolls, and customs, wards, messuages, and escheats, advowsons, donations, patronage of churches, vicarages, rectories, and all things spiritual arising out of the lands of Bectife, alias Grange of Bectife, Scriboke, Claidaghe, Ballgill, alias Grange of Ballgill, Ballradaghe, alias Grange of Ballradaghe, Douloghe, alias Dielogh, Clonecoyllen, alias the Grange of Clonecoyellen, the two Balbrios, alias Grange of Balbroy, Monleton near Trim, Balston, otherwise called Balsune, in the county of Meath; Renaghan, alias Renaghe, in the county of Westmeath; the rectories or chapels of Bectife and Cladaghe, with all the houses, edifices, churches, tithes, altarages, and oblations belonging to same; to hold for ever by knight's service, viz., by the service of one knight's fee, as scutage runs in Ireland. Rent, £4 5s. 4d. Irish".

On the 22nd of February, 1553, license\* was granted to Andrew Wyse to alienate to Richard Dillon of Preteston, John Wycombe of Dublin, and Richard Cox, all the possessions of this abbey which he had purchased. On the death of Andrew Wyse this property passed into the hands of Sir Alexander Fitton, who had married his daughter and heiress Mary. The issue of this marriage was a daughter and heiress, Catherine, who was married to Sir Bartholomew Dillon,† son to Sir Robert Dillon of Riverston. From

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and past to the same Andrewe, his heires and asignes, for ever. In witness whereof I have subscribed this byll, the thirde day of December, the sixte of the reigne of our moste dread Sovereigne King Edward the Sixth. Nicholas Stanyhurste".

\* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 293.

† Sir Robert Dillon, father to Sir Bartholomew, held for many years the office of Chief Justice. He died in 1597, and was buried in the church of Tara, where his monument is still to be seen. Sir Bartholomew, son to Sir Robert, by Catherine Sarsfield, his second wife, married Catherine Fitton about 1595, and died in 1633. His family has fallen to decay. Sir Richard Bolton was Recorder of Dublin, then Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and subsequently Lord Chancellor of Ireland. He had a son, Sir Edward, who was also Chief Baron of the Exchequer. It appears from Archdale's *Lodge* (vol. vi., p. 208), that Bolton purchased Bective from the Dillons. Lewis (*Topographical Dictionary* at Bective) says that Charles the First

the Dillons Bective passed, about 1639, to Sir Richard Bolton, Lord High Chancellor of Ireland, in which family it still remains.

The magnificent ruins\* of this abbey are still in a wonderful state of preservation, and, with ordinary care, are likely to last for ages.

In Bishop Montgomery's Visitation we find the church of Bective repaired. In 1622 Bishop Usher writes of Bectiffe, " Bartholomew Dillon of Riverston, Esq., his Majesty's farmer of the impropriate property. This church belongeth to the abbey of Bectiffe, in the possession of the said Mr. Dillon, who pretendeth to have an exemption from the Lord Bishop's jurisdiction, and doth prove wills and graunt administrons".

After the expulsion of the monks from Bective, and the confiscation of their property, the community retired to some obscure residence in the neighbourhood, and lingered long, expecting better and brighter days, within view of the castellated turrets of their once lordly home. A sketch of the life of one of the abbots is thus given in Harris's *Ware* :†

" Sebastian, or Stephen Shortal, was born in the city of Kilkenny, and became a Cistercian monk in the monastery of Nucle in Galicia in Spain, where he was held in great reputation. A noted writer (Henriques) of that order tells us, that he was a man of sharp wit, a good disputant, and one of the best poets their society ever had ; and that his writings had obtained a high character. . . . He was sent a missionary into Ireland ; but in his passage was taken by the Moors and made a slave. Being redeemed, he returned to his native country, and was made Titular Abbot of Bectiff in Meath, and died on the 3rd of December, 1639".

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granted this property to Sir Richard Bolton. See *Inquisitions of James the First*, held at Ratoath, 1624 ; *Inquisitions of Charles the First*, 1635 ; Archdall's *Lodge*, vol. iv., pp. 144 and 145 ; vol. ii., p. 326 ; vol. v., p. 147.

\* For a description of the existing remains, see Wakeman's *Antiquities*, p. 117 ; *Boyne and Blackwater*, p. 111. There was no more inhuman butcher in the Cromwellian army than Captain Bolton, son to the Chancellor. See *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. iii., pp. 191, 193.

† *Writers of Ireland*, p. 108.



## THE FRIARY OF COURTOWN.

Early in the last century a community of Franciscan Friars settled near the old walls of Clonmaduff, or the Black Church, and received jurisdiction from Dr. Luke Fagan, Bishop of Meath, over the parishes of Bective Rataine, Churchtown, Clonmaduff, Moymet, Tullaghenog, and Kilcooley. A Protestant gentleman generously set them a farm at a moderate rent, and here they built a house, which was called from the name of the townland the *Friary of Courtown*. The guardian or prior of this establishment was pastor of the district, and the friars discharged parochial duty and assisted in the neighbouring parishes. From this humble residence went forth some of the most eminent preachers of the last century, and many glorious traditions still live of their pastoral zeal and charitable ministrations amongst the primitive people to whose salvation they had dedicated their lives. The first prior and pastor of whom we have any record\* is the Rev. Francis Fay. He presided from 1720 till 1743, in which latter year he died and was buried in the "Black Church".

The Rev. Thomas Mathews succeeded, died in 1761, and was buried with his predecessor. The Rev. John Coleman was next prior and pastor. He died in March, 1767, in the 74th year of his age, and was buried in the "Black Church".

The Rev. Michael Tipper succeeded. This distinguished ecclesiastic was born in the county Kildare, and, from the traditions of the people and the testimony of the old priests of the diocese, many of whom remember him, it appears he was a man of great intellect and learning. The inscription on his tomb styles him "Lector Emeritus of Sacred Theology and Exdefinitor". He died on the 8th of October, 1801, in the 68th year of his age, and sleeps with his brethren in the ministry in the churchyard of Clonmaduff. The Rev. John O'Molloy succeeded as prior of the convent and administrator of the union. He was a venerable, zealous priest, and was held in great esteem. He died on the 7th

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\* See *Registry of Courtown*, at present with Rev. Christopher Newman, Parish Priest of Kilbride.

of January, 1818, aged 70 years, and was buried in the tomb of the friars at Clonmaduff.

The Rev. Patrick Lynch succeeded as prior and administrator. The last of the friars of Courtown was the Rev. Patrick Ryan, who died in August, 1826.

On the south-east of the cemetery of Clonmaduff, or the Black Church, there are two tombs placed together—the one upright, the other horizontal. Holy are the memories which linger around these graves, and heartfelt the reverence and gratitude of the people. In the dark days of Ireland these humble friars were the fathers and friends of the poor; they devoted their lives to the service of the people, they fought the good fight, they preserved the faith, and now they are sleeping after their labours.

#### TOMBS OF THE FRANCISCANS.

Here lieth the body of  
Rev. JOHN COLEMAN,  
who departed this life the 15th day  
of March, 1767, aged 74 years.

Likewise the body of the  
Rev. Father JAMES O'FERRALL,  
who departed this life on  
the 28th day of October, 1776.

Aged 29 years.

Requiescant in pace.

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This monument was erected by the  
Rev. John Molloy, in memory of the  
Rev. Gentlemen following: Rev. JOHN  
COLEMAN, Rev. JOHN CLARKE,\* Rev. JOHN  
WALDRON, Rev. JAMES FARRELL, Rev. WILLIAM  
REYNOLDS, Rev. MICHAEL FLEMING.

Here also lyeth the body of the  
Rev. MICHAEL TIPPER, Lector  
Emeritus of Sacred Theology,  
and Exdefinitor, who departed

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\* The Rev. John Clarke was a native of Athboy, and served, it is said, in the Irish Brigade at the battle of Fontenoy. He was a distinguished Irish preacher, and his memory is held in very great esteem in this and the neighbouring parishes.



this life October the 8th, 1801. Aged 68.

Here also lie interred the remains  
of the Rev. JOHN MOLLOY, who  
departed this life on the 7th day of  
January, 1818, aged 70 years.

Here also lieth the body of the  
Rev. PATRICK RYAN, who departed  
this life August 23rd, 1826. Aged 60 years.

Requiescant in pace.

As the friary had died out about 1826, the library and furniture were for the most part sent to the Franciscan Convent of Multifarnham. One of the old chalices, at present in Multifarnham, has the following inscription on the pedestal: "Fr. Alexander Plunkett me fieri fecit pro conventu fatrum minorum de Trym, 1633". There were other friars at Courtown besides those mentioned on the tombs, but many of them became pastors of parishes in the diocese. The Rev. Messrs. Weyburne, Lynch, Donaghoe, and Brady are buried at Clonmaduff.

A few years before the dissolution of Courtown, the parish of Bective was united to Navan, and, in 1828, a chapel was erected at the cross roads of Robinstown,\* in the parish of Bective. A slab over the chapel door has the following inscription:

Situm dedit et  
Donum ari magnificum  
Ric. Bolton de Bective  
Com. Mid. Vice Comes.  
Eug. O'Reilly, Pastore.  
1828.

There is a monument in the chapel to the memory of Dr John Jones, curate of Navan, to whose exertions the merit of erecting this chapel is principally due. This pious and exemplary young priest was born in the parish of Bective, on the 19th of July, 1797, studied in the Diocesan Seminary, entered Maynooth College, and went from thence to the

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\* The parish of Bective is sometimes called the "Parish of the Crosses", because the chapel is situated on the cross roads of Robinstown. The proper name for it is Bective, and Catholics, at least, should call it by no other name.

Irish College in Rome, where he took out the degree of Doctor of Divinity with applause. He returned to Ireland about the close of 1826, and officiated as curate in Navan with great zeal and ability. He died of fever, caught in the discharge of his sacred duties, on the 12th of January, 1832, and was buried, amidst the wails of the poor and the unfeigned grief of all, in the chapel of Bective. A marble slab commemorates him thus :

On January 12th, 1832,  
 departed this life  
 The Rev. Dr. JOHN JONES,  
 curate of the union  
 of Navan and Bective parishes,  
 by whose exertions  
 this sacred edifice  
 was chiefly erected.

His worth and excellence as a man,  
 his zeal and piety as a priest,  
 his charity and example as a Christian,  
 have made on all who knew him  
 a deep, a sad impression.

Within five feet of the entrance  
 to the Sanctuary  
 lie his mortal remains.

Requiescat in pace.

The parish of Bective at present belongs to the union of Dunderry.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ABBEY OF CASTLEKIERAN.

CASTLEKIERAN, called sometimes *Ister-Chiarain*, is situated in the parish of Loghan, barony of Upper Kells. This place was anciently called Bealaigh-duin, "the Road or Pass of the Fort". A monastery was founded here on the southern bank of the Abhainn-Sele, or Blackwater, by St. Ciaran, which was called Discart Chiarain-Bealaigh-duin. In the



*Annals of the Four Masters* we have the following notices of this place :

770. Ciaran,\* the Pious, of Bealach-duin, died on the 14th of June.

855. Siadhal, Abbot of Disert-Chiarain (Castlekieran), died.

868. Comsudh, Abbot of Disert-Chiarain, of Bealach-duin, died.

949. Castlekieran was plundered by the Danes.

961. Dubhthach, Abbot of Castlekieran, died.

1170. Castlekieran was burned by Dermot Mac Murcha, king of Leinster, and the foreigners.

The old church† is quadrangular, measuring forty-five feet six inches by twenty feet. Most of the stones have been carried away, and the whole presents a melancholy picture of desolation. There are interesting remains of five Termon crosses,‡ between four of which the church is situated; and one of those on the north side is placed in the Blackwater.

#### ABBAY OF CILLDUMHAGLOIN, OR KILGLINN.

Cilldumhagloinn, now Kilglinn, is situated in the parish of Balfeaghan, barony of Upper Deece. A monastery was

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\* The name of St. Kieran again occurs in the *Annals* at 778: "Ciaran of Bealach-duin, who wrote the life of St. Patrick, died". In the *Martyrology* of Tallaght, the festival of St. Kieran is also marked at the 14th of June.

† Dean Butler, in his notes to Dymmok's *Treatise on Ireland* (page 83), says: "Castle, or Trystel Keran. There was a church here appropriated to the Priory of St. John the Baptist at Kells, of which there are some interesting remains. In the yard are three Termon crosses".

‡ Of Termon crosses Dr. Lanigan says: "We find some canons relative to the ecclesiastical lands or tracts, called Terminus, and their boundaries or marks. 'Let the Terminus of a holy place have marks about it. Wherever you find the sign of the cross of Christ, do not do any injury. Three persons consecrate a Terminus of a holy place—a king, a bishop, and the people'. It appears that crosses used to be erected in such holy places, and that this might have been done by either a king, a bishop, or by the people"—vol. iv., pp. 386 and 388. On the crosses at Castlekieran, see Wilde's *Boyne and Blackwater*, pp. 138, 139, 140, 141. Dr. Wilde says of St. Kieran's well: "About a furlong's length to the west of the old church may be seen St. Kieran's well, one of the most beautiful holy wells in Ireland, and shaded by a hoary ash tree of surpassing size and beauty. . . . The well is situated on the side of a beautiful and exquisitely green sloping bank, upon which the neighbouring sheep love to congregate. It springs from a limestone rock of considerable length; and appears first in a small natural basin immediately at the foot of the tree".—pp. 141, 142.

founded here at an early period—some say by St. Patrick—over which, in the sixth century, presided St. Mogenoch, who was a bishop. Colgan says that Mogenoch was nephew to St. Patrick, and that he was the same with Mogenoch of Kille-comly, who was an eminent pupil of St. Finian's of Clonard. Lanigan\* is of opinion that Mogenoch of Kille-comly was no other than Genoc, a Briton, who followed St. Finian to Ireland. According to O'Clery's *Irish Calendar* and the *Martyrology of Tullaght*, the festival of St. Mogenoch was kept at Kilglinn on the 26th of December. In the *Four Masters* we have the following scant notices of this place :—

834. Breasal, Airchinneach, Abbot of Cill-dumha and other churches, died.

841. Fineachta, Abbot of Cill-dumhagloinn, died.

#### NUNNERY OF CLONARD.

A nunnery for regular canonesses was founded at Clonard previous to the Anglo-Norman invasion. It was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and received liberal endowments from O'Melaghlin, king of Meath. On the 26th of February, 1195, Agnes being abbess, Pope Celestine the Third confirmed this nunnery in all its possessions, also the church of St. Mary of Luscha, the church of St. Mary of Dublin, the church of St. Mary of Duleek, the church of St. Mary of Termonfechin, the church of St. Mary of Skryne, the church of St. Odra (St. Brigid's at Odder in Meath), the church of St. Brigid at Trim, the church of St. Mary at Kells, the church of St. Mary at Fore, the church of St. Mary of Durrow, the church of St. Mary of Clonmacnoise, to the east, the church of St. Mary, to the west, the church of St. Mary of Evachdun, and all the several possessions belonging to the said churches ; and further ordered, that the nuns should ever after observe the rule of St. Augustine ; he likewise declared them exempt from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction—(*Monast. Angli.*, vol. ii. p. 1043).

This house became afterwards a cell to the nunnery of St. Brigid of Odder—Ware, *Mon.*



## NUNNERY OF CLONGUFFIN.

Cluain-Guifhinn, Anglicised Clonguffin, is situated in the parish of Rathcore, barony of Lower Moyfenraght. A nunnery was founded here at an early period, of which St. Fintina was the patron saint. Her festival is marked, in *Martyrology of Donegal*, at the 1st of November. In the *Four Masters* occur the following notices of this place :—

766. Coblaith, daughter of Cathal, Abbess of Clonguffin, died.

777. Tailefhlaith, daughter of Murchadh, Abbess of Clonguffin, died.

847. Maelmedha, daughter of Aedh, Abbess of Clonguffin, died.

## CLOONMAINAN.

Cloonmainan was founded in 800. (Conry.) Now unknown.

## CLUAIN-MOR-FERNARDA.

Cluainmorfernarda, in the territory of Bregia, was founded by St. Columbkil, who placed over it St. Ossineus. (*Tr. Th.*, p. 450, apud Archdall.)

## DOIREMACAIDMECAIN.

Doire-mac-Aidmecain, which signifies the wood (of oak) of the sons of Aidmecain, was founded by St. Lasra, who graduated as a nun under St. Regnach, or Regnacia, sister of St. Finian of Clonard. This St. Lasra was one of the many pious virgins who at that period presided over nunneries and directed the Christian education of females. She received instructions in piety and knowledge from St. Finian. (See *Lanigan*, vol. ii., pp. 77, 78). This place now unknown.

## DOMNACHSARIGE.

Domnachsarige was situated in *Kiennachta Breg*, near Duleek. A religious establishment was founded here in the time of St. Patrick, but whether it was a monastery or only a church, I am unable to determine. St. Cethecus, a bishop, presided over this place in the fifth century. This Cethecus was born in Sligo, his father was from the neighbourhood of Duleek, in Meath. He was employed by St. Patrick as

bishop, in various places during the conversion of Ireland. Hence he is called in our records "St. Patrick's bishop". St. Cethecus was buried in the parish church of Kill-garadh or Oran, in the county Roscommon. In the *Martyrology of Tallaght* his festival is marked at the 16th of June. (See Archdall's *Monasticon*; Lanigan, vol. i., pp. 245, 246.)

## CHAPTER XXII.

### DONAGHMORE.

DONAGHMORE, anciently called *Domnach-mor-muighe Echnach*, or "the great church of the plain of Echnach", is situated on the northern bank of the Boyne, about a mile from Navan, in the barony of Lower Navan. In the *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* we have the following account of the erection of this church:—

"While the man of God was baptizing the people called Lnaignii, at a place where the church of Domnach-mor, in the plain of Echnach, stands at this day, he called to him his disciple Cassanus,\* and committed to him the care of the church recently erected there, preadmonishing him, and with prophetic mouth predicting, that he might expect that to be the place of his resurrection, and that the church committed to his care would always remain diminutive in size and structure, but great and celebrated in honour and veneration. The event has proved this prophecy to be a true one, for St. Cassanus's relics are there to be seen in the highest veneration among the people, remarkable for great miracles, so that scarcely any of the visitors go away without recovering health, or receiving other gifts of grace sought for"—*Tr. Th.*, p. 130.

The original church has long since disappeared, and on its site was erected, in the twelfth or thirteenth century, a parish church, the western end and belfry of which still stand.

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\* The name of St. Cassan occurs on four days in the calendars. Colgan conjectures that the Cassan of Imdhual, whose festival is marked at 28th of March, was the person mentioned above, and to whom St. Patrick gave a "valuable patena".—*Calendar*, p. 107.



Adjoining this ruin the round tower of Donaghmore raises its venerable form to the height of one hundred feet, and, while beautifying the landscape by its graceful proportions, it carries back the mind through centuries, until it is lost in the night of time. Of this ancient *cloighteach* Dr. Petrie remarks :

“It is to this period also (the tenth century) that I would ascribe the erection of the neighbouring round tower of Donaghmore, in the county of Meath, the doorway of which is so remarkable in having a figure of our Saviour crucified sculptured in *relievo* on its keystone and the stone immediately over it. This doorway, which is placed at an elevation of twelve feet from the base of the tower, measures five feet two inches in height, and its inclined jams are two feet three inches asunder at the sill, and two feet at the spring of the arch. It will be perceived that there is a human head carved on each side of the door—the one partly on the band, and the other outside it. Some of the antagonists of the Christian origin of the round towers have asserted that this doorway ‘plainly appears, to an observing eye, to be an after work’; but there is not the slightest ground for such an assertion, and as Sir Richard Colt Hoare, a profoundly skilful antiquary, observes, this doorway furnishes ‘a decided proof that these buildings (the round towers) were not (as some writers have conjectured) built by the Pagans’. To me, indeed, it establishes more, namely, that many of the round towers were erected not earlier than the tenth century”—*Round Towers of Ireland*, pp. 404, 405, and 406.

In the *Irish Penny Journal* the same venerable authority observes :

“Neither can the round tower . . . be referred to the time of the Irish Apostles, or perhaps to an earlier age than the ninth or tenth century. At all events, its erection cannot be ascribed to an earlier date than that of the tower of the church of Kells—a religious establishment founded by St. Columbkille in the sixth century—as these towers so perfectly agree in architectural style and mason-work, that they appear to have been constructed by the same architects or builders”. See also Wakeman’s *Irish Antiquities*, p. 102; *Boyne and Blackwater*, p. 160.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion Donaghmore became a

parish church.\* In the reign of Henry the Fourth, Rev. Nicholas Symonds was vicar of St. Patrick's, Donaghmore (*Pat. Rol.*, 10 Henry the Fourth). At the period of Bishop Montgomery's visitation this church was in ruin. In Usher's visitation the rectory was valued at 12<sup>l.</sup> sterling, and of the parochial buildings and property he says they comprised "a manse house with backsides". This dwelling house has long since been swept away. In 1690, Rev. Thomas Coleman was presented by James the Second to the parishes of "Dunamore and Dowth". In 1704, Rev. Garet Darcy was pastor of Navan, Ardsallagh, Donaghmore, and Bective. Early in the last century a community of Franciscan Friars settled at Flower Hill in Navan. They received charge from the *Bishops of Meath over the parishes of Donaghmore and Dunmoe*. The last of these fathers was Rev. Mr. Teeling, who died at an advanced age, about 1780, and was interred in the churchyard of Rathkenny. Donaghmore has since been permanently united to Navan.

The churchyard of Donaghmore has many attractions for the antiquarian and the tourist. At the entrance there is the pedestal of the large stone cross† which formerly stood here. In the body of the church there is a horizontal tombstone, which is held in great reverence by the people. At interments the coffin is placed on this stone, and the "De Profundis" chanted previous to burial. Underneath sleeps the Rev. William Killen.‡ He was born in the parish of Ballyboggan, studied in France, and was ordained in April, 1786, by the late Dr. Plunkett, Bishop of Meath. He officiated as Catholic Curate in Navan for many years, and in 1802 was appointed Pastor of Skryne. He resigned his parish in 1804, owing to declining health, returned to Navan, and died in September of that year. He was a most eminent preacher in the Irish and English languages, and discharged

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\* Donaghmore, in course of time, became parcel of the estate of St. Thomas's Abbey, Dublin. In the reign of James the First, the rectory of Donaghmore—the rent of which was £20 13s. 4d., Irish—was granted to Richard Netterville, of Corballis.

† Another cross stood along the high road; an aged tree has grown up among the fragments of the pedestal.

‡ See Pastors of Skryne.



all his ecclesiastical functions with great zeal and ability. His name is still fresh in the memories of the people, and his many excellent qualities are a favourite theme. On his tomb is the following inscription :

REV. GUIL. KILLEN,  
Parochiæ R. C. Navanensis, Prius Vicarius  
Scrinensis deinde Parochus,  
Piis fractus laboribus, omnibus carus  
obiit.

Die Sept. 20, A.D. 1804,  
Mortalibus Cujus Exuviis  
Hoc monumentum  
Unius dicavit liberalitas.

NOTE—One of the sureties and guarantees to the purchase of land in the parish of Donaghmore, in the latter part of the eleventh century, by the priest of Kells from O'Riaman, was "O'Fiachrach, Erenagh of Domhnach mor"—(*Miscellany of Irish Archæological Society*, vol. i., p. 137). There were two holy wells here, one called Tober-Patrick, and the other Tober-Rioch. A branch of the Navan Young Men's Society was established here in April, 1859, and adopted St. Patrick as the patron saint of the guild.

#### DONAGHPATRICK.

Donaghpatrick, or Domnach-Padraig, "the church of St. Patrick", was situated on the banks of the Blackwater, in the barony of Kells, about four miles east of that town. A church and monastery were founded here by St. Patrick, which, in consequence of its proximity to Teltown, and to distinguish it from others bearing the same name, was called in our annals "Domnach-mor near Tailteann". In the Annotations of Tirechan, in the Book of Armagh, and in the *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* ascribed to St. Evin, which Colgan has published in his *Trias Thaumaturga*, we read,\* that St. Patrick baptized Conall, brother of Laoghaire, monarch of Ireland, that this prince granted to our apostle his own palace or rath,† and that on its site one of the earliest churches, sixty feet in length, was erected here by St. Patrick. In the *Annals of the Four Masters* we have the following notices of this place :

\* Part ii., c. v., *Trias Thaum*, p. 129, 130.

† Dr. Wilde justly remarks, "the outline of this very castle can still be discerned in the present graveyard"—*Boyne and Blackwater*, p. 155.

- 745. Donaghpatrick was burned.
- 844. Conaing, Abbot of Donaghpatrick, died.
- 847. Aenghus, Abbot of Donaghpatrick, died.
- 871. Scannlan, of Donaghpatrick, a celebrated scribe, died.
- 886. Donaghpatrick was plundered by the Danes.
- 949. Godfry, lord of the Danes of Dublin, plundered Donaghpatrick.
- 984. Maelfinnia, Airchinneach of Donaghpatrick, died.
- 992. The Danes plundered Donaghpatrick.
- 994. Donaghpatrick was again plundered by the Danes.
- 1156. Donaghpatrick was plundered by Dermot Mac Murchadh and the foreigners of Dublin.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion Donaghpatrick became a parish church.\* A flourishing town was pleasantly located here on the banks of the Blackwater. The church has been long since uprooted, and a Protestant edifice erected on its site. The town, too, has been swept away, and the country converted into a vast sheepwalk. Such is our modern system of political economy.

In Bishop Montgomery's report, the rectory of Donaghpatrick was valued at twenty marks—the church was then in repair, but the chancel in ruin.

In Bishop Usher's report there remained in connection with this rectory "a manse house and other houses of office decayed, an haggard, a backside, and an orchard". In 1704 Rev. Andrew Matthews was registered as parish priest of Donaghpatrick, Teltown, and Kilberry. He was ordained at Lisbon in 1691, and in the year of the registration lived at Randalstown, and was then forty years of age. The tombs in the churchyard of Donaghpatrick are numerous. Many of the priests of the neighbouring parishes were interred here, and some monuments to their memory stood in the chancel of the old church. A branch of the Franciscan Order officiated in this parish during a considerable portion of the last century, and most, if not all, of these fathers sleep in this cemetery. On the east end of the churchyard a

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\*"The right of patronage belonged to the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, with an obligation of fifteen marks annually to the vicar"—Harris's *Ware & Bishops*, p. 143.



headstone commemorates Rev. George Kelly, who is supposed to have been a Franciscan :

Here lieth the body  
Of the Rev. Fr. GEORGE  
KELLY, aged 36 years, who  
Departed this life July  
The 4th, 1762.

At the west end of the cemetery there is a tomb to the memory of Rev. Christopher Byrne, parish priest of Skryne:

Erected by Bryne Byrne in memory  
of the Rev. CHRISTOPHER BYRNE,

Parish Priest of Screen, who departed

this life the 24th of June, 1802, aged 54 years.

A Rev. Mr. Carolan, born at Nevinstown, in the parish of Navan, died about the close of the last century, is buried here with his friends. The Most Reverend Augustine Chevers, Lord Bishop of Meath, sleeps in this churchyard, and, we grieve to add, no tombstone or headstone marks his resting place. He lies on the south side of where the Protestant church now stands, and there are only a few now living who can identify his grave. As we are collecting materials to illustrate his memory, we will confine ourselves for the present to an extract from the registry of deaths in the parish of Kilberry :

“ 1778. 18 Augusti—Piissime ex hoc sæculo migravit Illustrissimus et Reverendissimus Dominus Augustinus Chevers, Episcopus Midensis, 7 Octobris—ut supra—item—Fra Michael Walsh.

“ Quorum reliquæ conditæ sunt in ecclesia de Donaghpatrick.  
“ Requiescant in pace”.

NOTE.—From the *Tripartite Life*, published by Colgan in his *Trias Thaum.*, it appears that St. Patrick bequeathed to the Abbey of Donaghpatrick, “quasi quoddam memoriale et pignus suæ specialis dilectionis”, his portable altar-stone, called “Superaltare Marmoreum Sancti Patricii”. See *Obits of Christ Church*—Introduction, xxii.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### DULANE.

DULANE, or Duleene, is a parish in the barony of Upper Kells. A monastery was founded here, called in our annals Tuilen or Tulan, at an early period, by St. Cairnigh, or

Cairneach. The festival of the founder was observed on the 16th of May.\* From the *Four Masters* we gather the following notices of this place:

754. Dubhdroma, Abbot of Dulane, died.

781. Faebhardaith, Abbot of Dulane, died.

870. Maeltuile, son of Dunan, successor of Tighearnach and Cairneach, *i.e.*, of Dulane, died; he was a bishop.

886. Dulane, Ardbraccan, and Donaghpatrick were plundered by the Danes.

919. Ciaran, Bishop of Dulane, died.

936. Maelcairnigh, Abbot of Dulane, died.

943. Maeltuile, Bishop and Abbot of Dulane, died.

949. Dulane, Kells, and other monasteries were plundered by the Danes.

967. Maelfinnen, Bishop of Kells, Abbot of Ardbraccan and Dulane, died.

1170. Dulane was plundered by Dermot Mac Murchadh, King of Leinster, and the foreigners.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion, the abbey of Dulane pined away, and henceforth we find it a parish church. To the south of the old church, in the cemetery, is a horizontal tomb, considerably sunk in the clay, with the following inscription:

This monument was erected  
by the Rev. Father PATRICK  
CAROLAN, Pastor of Loughan  
and Dulane, March ye 26, A.D.  
1777.

The Rev. Patrick Carolan and some of his predecessors and successors sleep under this tomb.

\* There was another St. Carnech, who was Abbot and Bishop of Drumleena, on the western shore of Lough Foyle. His festival was kept on the 28th of March. See *Calendar of Irish Saints*, p. 107. See *Battle of Magh Rath*, pp. 20 and 147.

Speaking of the ancient shrines and relics of Ireland, Professor O'Curry remarks: "The *Miosach* was one of the three insignia of battle which St. Cairnech of Dulane appointed to the O'Donnells and O'Neills; the other two being the *Cathach* . . . . and the *Cloc Phactraic*, or Bell of St. Patrick. The word *Miosach* means literally 'Monthly', or 'of months'; and the relic was probably a Calendar"—*Lectures*, p. 336.



## THE PRIORY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, DULEEK.

A priory was erected here, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, by the family of O'Kelly, for Canons Regular of St. Augustine, long anterior to the Anglo-Norman invasion. (Ware's *Mon.*) In the year 1200 we find that Gilbert was prior of this house. In 1212 the Bishop of Meath and the Priors of Duleek and All Hallows were judges in a dispute between the abbeyes of St. Mary and St. Thomas, Dublin. In 1279 license was obtained by the canons to elect a prior. In 1283 Nicholas was prior, to whose appointment King Edward gave his special approbation. In 1308 it was enacted by parliament, *that no mere Irishman should be permitted to profess himself in this priory.* (King, p. 244.) In 1533 Edward Anger was elected prior.

This abbey paid four marks annually to the Bishop of Meath. After it had undergone various confiscations, King James the First granted (*inter alia*) to Sir Gerald Moore :\*

“ The site, etc., of the late Priory of Duleek, a garden, and a close, containing half an acre of pasture ; in Carrickbroger, sixteen acres arable ; in Arberbusshe, twenty acres arable ; in Langanan, three acres arable ; Westerparke, eight acres arable ; on the north side of the common green of the town of Duleek, eight acres arable ; Castlecott Pasture, twelve acres pasture and furze ; Cowe Park, containing four parks ; another pasture, called the Park Meadow, four acres ; a dove house, thatched ; the Bourglasse, twenty acres arable ; Smithe's Meadow, one close of pasture by the side of Longeford, on the south side, two acres arable by the Newton, on the east side, nine acres by Carranstowne, on the south side, five acres arable and five acres meadow, called the Maudlen Meadow, in Duleeke ; ten acres, one park full of ashes (ash trees), by the site of the priory ; a cottage with a garden and a small close ; a cottage and a small close ; a cottage and a garden ; three cottages and gardens ; a garden by Pontickwell, called the Bulbrine ; a garden by Culan's house ; a small close called the College Yard or Park ; another close called the Yarde ; two curtilages called the Fox Parks ; a little piece of ground called the Culverhouse Park ; one

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\* Pat. 3, James the First.

acre meadow, called Atkine's Acre; one quarter acre in Smithe's Meadow, on the south; parcel of the estate of the said Priory".

The above is but a fragment of the possessions of this piory. Thus was the property of the Church and the patrimony of the poor plundered and disposed of at the royal pleasure,

#### EMLAGH.

Emlagh, or Imlagh, is a parish in the barony of Lower Kells. An abbey was founded here at an early period, called *Imleach-Fia* and *Imleach-Beccain*, the patron saint of which was St. Beccan.

In the *Annals of the Four Masters* we have the following notices of Emlagh:

732. Graiphnidh, Abbot of Imleach-Fia, died.

742. Abel, Abbot of Imleach-Fia, died.

842. Suibhne, Abbot of Imleach-Fia, died.

948. Reachtabhra, chief priest of Clonmacnoise, Abbot of Imleach-Fia, i.e. of Imleach-Beccain, died.

990. Ceallach, Abbot of Imleach-Beccain, died.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion Emlagh became a parish church.

#### FENNOR.

Fennor is a parish in the barony of Lower Duleek, separated from the parish of Slane by the river Boyne. An abbey was founded here at an early period, called Finnabhair-abha, "the bright field of the river".\* The patron saint was St. Neachtain, a disciple of St. Patrick, and said to have been son to his sister Liemanian.† His festival is marked in our Irish Calendars at the 2nd of May. In the *Four Masters* and our other Irish Monasticon's we glean the following:

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NOTE—In the *Martyrology of Tallaght* the festival of St. Colman Mac Corardain, of Imlech Brenn, is marked at the 15th of June.

\* Irish version of *Nennius*, p. 214.

† Of the reputed sisters of St. Patrick mentioned by our annalists, the learned and judicious Lanigan observes, "the very ancient practice of designating religious women by the name of *sisters*, was, in all probability the cause of mistaking some pious ladies, who lived in or about St. Patrick's time, for real sisters of his"—vol. i., p. 126; see also p. 125 and 127.



804. Maelforthartaigh, Abbot of Fennor and Kilmoon, died.

827. Maelumha, Prior of Fennor, died.

833. The plundering of Fennor, Slane, and Glendaloch by the Danes.

837. Tigernach, Abbot of Fennor and other churches, died.

843. Fiachna, Abbot of Fennor, died.

847. The cross which was on the green of Slane was raised up into the air; it was broken and divided, so that a part of its top reached (*i.e.* fell at) Teltown and Fennor.

882 (*recte* 885). Eochu, Abbot of Fennor and Kilmoon, died.

902. Ferghil (Virgilius), Bishop of Fennor and Abbot of Indeidhnen, died.

1024. Fachtna, Professor and Priest of Clonmacnoise, air-chinneach of Fennor and Indeidhnen, and the most distinguished abbot of the Gaedhil, died at Rome, whither he had gone upon a pilgrimage.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion we find Fennor a parish church. In the reign of Edward the Third, Rev. Stephen Palmer was pastor of Fennor. (*Pat.* 32). In the same reign Revs. Thomas Malecken and Henry de Rathfaygl were successively pastors of Fennor. In the reign of Richard the Second, we find Rev. Robert Wakeman pastor of this parish. (*Rot. Pat.* 8, *Ric.* II.).

The old church of Fennor is situated on a height, on the southern bank of the Boyne, convenient to the bridge of Slane. The church measures fifty-five feet by nineteen, and had a chancel arch twenty-two feet from the east end. The patron saint since the Anglo-Norman invasion has been St. Michael, and a station is held on his festival at the residence of a gentleman\* in the parish. In passing along the Dublin road to Slane, the gray walls of Fennor cannot fail to impress the beholder and awaken Catholic reminiscences. Since the beginning of the last century Fennor has formed part of the union of Slane.

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\* Mass was celebrated on Christmas morning up to a few years ago at Fennor House, the residence of James Cruise, Esq. Since the last sentence was written, James Cruise has been called to his eternal rest. He died on the 19th of April, 1862, and was interred in the family tomb in the churchard of Duleek.—R. I. P.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## INNEIDHNEN.

INNEIDHNEN, or Indenen, was situated in the territory of Bregia, in the neighbourhood of Slane. An abbey was founded here at an early period, the precise location of which is now unknown. Our monasticons have preserved the following notices of this place :

849. Suarlach, Abbot of Indenen, with the clergy of Meath, attended the convention of the synod of Armagh.

902. Ferghil\* (Virgilius), Abbot of Indenen and Bishop of Fennor, died.

920. Maelpoil,† Bishop, Anchorite, and (best) scribe of Leath-Chuinn, and Abbot of Indenen, died. Concerning his death the following quatrain was composed:

Maelpoil, who was in great dignity, a bishop who took the road of a king.  
A sage who enforced the law upon all, a man who dispensed peace all  
around.

1024. Fachtna, Airchinneach of Indenen, died at Rome,‡ whither he had gone on a pilgrimage.

\* The death of Virgilius, an abbot of the Scots, is noticed in the *Saxon Chronicle* at 902.

† Dr. O'Connor thinks that Maelpoil was the Paulinus to whom Probus, professor of Slane College, dedicated his life of St. Patrick. Father Colgan, in his *Trias Thaum.* (p. 64), translates the name Mal-Paulinus, and says he was the best writer of Northern Ireland. See O'Donovan's note to the *Four Masters* at A.D. 920.

‡ As Rome is the fountain of our baptism—the great centre of Catholic unity, the “head of all the churches”—a mystic link must necessarily have connected the head with the members in times gone by as in days present. One of the canons of St. Patrick's, which has been always reverentially obeyed by the Irish Church, is as follows: “Moreover, if any case should arise of extreme difficulty, and beyond the knowledge of all the judges of the nations of the Scots, it is to be duly referred to the chair of the Archbishop of the Gaedhil, that is to say, of Patrick, and the jurisdiction of this bishop (of Armagh). But if such a case as aforesaid, of a matter at issue, cannot be easily disposed of (by him), with his counsellors in that (investigation), we have decreed that it be sent to the apostolic seat, that is to say, to the chair of the Apostle Peter, having the authority of the city of Rome”.

“These are the persons who decreed concerning this matter, viz.:—Auxilius, Patrick, Secundinus, and Benignus. But after the death of St. Patrick his disciples carefully wrote out his books”. *Book of Armagh* (fol. 21, b.b.), Appendix to O'Curry's *Lectures*, pp. 611, 612.

In reference to this celebrated canon of St. Patrick, adhered to in every controversy by the Irish Church, and referred to in all our ecclesiastical histories, the learned and orthodox Professor O'Curry makes the following



## KILBREW.

Kilbrew is a parish in the barony of Ratoath. An abbey was anciently founded at Cill-Foibrigh, which Dr. O'Donovan has identified with Kilbrew. The following notices occur in our Monasticons :

judicious comments : " This most important Canon affords a proof so unanswerable as to dispose for ever of the modern imposition so pertinaciously practised upon a large section of our countrymen, as well as upon foreigners speaking the English language ; namely, that the primitive Church of Erin did not acknowledge or submit to the Pope's supremacy, or appeal to it in cases of ecclesiastical necessity and difficulty. Nor is this canon, I may add, by any means the only important evidence furnished by our ancient books on this great point of Catholic doctrine". *Lectures*, p. 373. See Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii. p. 391, etc. Irish histories, passim. When the Paschal controversy was discussed at the Synod of Old Leighlin, held in 630, and could not easily be decided, " it was decreed", as Cumman relates, " by our seniors, according to the command, that if any difference arise between cause and cause, and opinions vary between leprosy and no leprosy, they should go to the place which the Lord had chosen", and if the cause was one of the " causæ majores", that it should be referred to the head of cities, according to the Synodical Canon.—See *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. ii. p. 631. Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii. c. 15. Brennan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. pp. 130, 131, etc. That legions of Irish pilgrims visited the " holy city" and paid their respects to the successors of Peter. See Colgan's *Acta Sanctorum*. See also chapter twenty-fifth of *Cambrensis Eversus*, where the names of the Irish ecclesiastics and dates of their pilgrimages are commemorated. Dr. Lynch concludes his catalogue in the following words : " If I allowed myself to detail at length the intercourse of the Irish with Rome in former ages, my page would swell to unreasonable limits, and exhaust my power of language, though not the subject itself. To sum up, then, in a few words, no dissension on religious matters ever arose in Ireland which was not instantly referred to Rome for adjudication. From Rome Ireland had her precepts of morality and her oracles of faith. Rome was the mother, Ireland the daughter ; Rome the head, Ireland the member. From Rome, the fountain-head of religion, Ireland undoubtedly derived, and with her whole soul imbibed her faith. In doubtful matters the Pope was ever the arbiter of the Irish ; in things certain, their master ; in ecclesiastical matters, their head ; in temporals, their defender ; in all things their judge ; in everything their adviser ; their oracle in doubt, their bulwark in the hour of danger. Some hastened to Rome to indulge their fervour at the tomb of the apostles ; others to lay their homage at the feet of the Pope ; and others to obtain the necessary sanction of his authority for the discharge of their functions".—*Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. ii. p. 653. The *An. of the F. M.*, and our other Irish records, chronicle also the pilgrimage of the ancient Irish to the Holy See thus :

926. Cele, Coarb of Comgall (i.e. Abbot of Bangor), went to Rome on his pilgrimage.

927. Cele, son of Scannall, successor of Comhgall of Beannchair (Ban-

737. Maelochtraigh, Abbot of Cill-Foibrigh, died.

768. Maenach, Abbot of Slane and Cill-Foibrigh, died.

782. Rovartagh, *Economus* (spenser or house steward) of Slane and Abbot of Cill-Foibrigh, died.

gor), throughout Ireland, bishop, scribe, preacher, and learned doctor, died on his pilgrimage at Rome, on the 14th Sept. and in the 59th year of his age.

1024. Fachtna, lector and priest of Clonmacnoise, *airchinneach* of Fennor, Indenen, and (the most distinguished) abbot of the Gaedhil, died at Rome, whither he had gone upon a pilgrimage.

1028. Sitrick mac mick Aulaiv, King of Galls (Irish-Danes), and Flannagan O'Cellai, King of Bregh, went to Rome.

1030. Flavertach O'Neill went to Rome.

1031. Flavertach O'Neill returned from Rome.

The *Annals of the Four Masters* record the death of this Flavertach at 1036. "Flaithbheartach an Trostain (*i.e.* Flaherty of the Pilgrim's Staff), lord of Oileach, died after a good life and penance. (See O'Donovan's note).

1034. Aulaiv, son of Sitric, was slain by the Saxons on his way to Rome.

1038. Cairbre O'Coimhghillain, successor of Cainneach (Abbot of Aghaboe), died at Rome.

1051. Laignen mac Moylain, lord of Gaileanga, and his wife, the daughter of the Gott (O'Maeleachlainn), went on their pilgrimage to Rome, and they died in the east, on their return from Rome.

1064. Donogh O'Brien, chief king of Munster, was deposed; and he afterwards went to Rome, where he died, under the victory of penance, in the monastery of Stephen the Martyr.

1134. Imhar O'Hegan, by whom the church of Paul and Peter at Armagh was erected, died at Rome on his pilgrimage. Note.—St. Bernard calls St. Imhar, "*Vir Sanctissimæ vitæ*". He was tutor of St. Malachy.

1148. A synod was held at Innis Padraig (Patrick's Island, near Skerries, in the county Dublin), by Maelmaedhog (St. Malachy), successor of Patrick, at which were present fifteen bishops and two hundred priests, to establish rules and morals for all, both laity and clergy; and Malachy O'Morgair, by advice of the synod, went a second time to Rome, to confer with the successor of Peter. From these quotations we find that, in those early ages, long before the English invasion, notwithstanding the perils and difficulties of travel by sea and land, it was usual, with both clergy and laity of Ireland, to visit the see of Peter, and pay due homage and reverence to the father of the faithful.

Moore justly remarks: "It is true, from the secluded position of Ireland, and still more from the ruin brought upon all her religious establishments during the long period of the Danish wars, the intercourse with Rome must have been not unfrequently interrupted, and the powers delegated to the prelate of Armagh, as *legatus natus*, or, by virtue of his office, legate of the Holy See, may, in such intervals, have served as a substitute for the direct exercise of the Papal authority. But that the Irish Church has ever, at any period, been independent of the spiritual power of Rome, is a supposition which the whole course of our ecclesiastical history contradicts. On the contrary, it has frequently been a theme of high eulogium upon this country, as well among foreign as domestic writers, that hers is the only national church in the world which has kept itself pure from the taint of heresy and schism"—vol. ii. p. 193.



809. Orthonach, Abbot of Cill-Foibrigh, died.

837. Cormac, Bishop and Scribe of Cill-Foibrigh, died.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion we find Kilbrew a parish church.

In 1402 Rev. William Ashwell, Rector of Kilbrew, was elected by the clergy to collect the ecclesiastical subsidy for the king in the deanery of Ratoath. (*Pat.* 4, Henry the Fourth.)

In 1422 the Rev. William Taillour, Rector of Kilbrew, collected the ecclesiastical subsidy. (*Pat.* 1, Henry the Sixth.)

In 1424 King Henry the Sixth granted the advowson of Kilbrew to Christopher Barnwall. (*Pat.* 3, Henry the Sixth.)

The old church of Kilbrew has been uprooted, and a Protestant edifice erected on its site. The parish is dedicated to St. Brigid, and since the beginning of the last century it has formed part of the union of Curraha.

NOTE.—Walter de Lacy granted the church of "Kilbruy" to the Abbey of St. John the Baptist, Lanthony. See *Monasticon Anglicanum* at Lanthony.)

## CHAPTER XXV.

### KILDALKEY.

KILDALKEY is a parish in the barony of Lune. A monastery was founded here, called Killelga, Cill-Dealga, or Cill-Deilge, at a very early period, of which St. Trena\* (Trenanus, Trienus), the friend of St. Mochta of Louth, was abbot in the fifth century. The festival of St. Trena is marked in our calendars at the 22nd of March. Dr. Lanigan† is of opinion that this St. Trena is the Bishop Trianus, a Roman, who entertained St. Patrick in the monastery of Creelbach, near the Brosna, on the north-eastern

\* *Acta Sanctorum*, p. 720. *Calendar of Irish Saints*, p. 102.

† Vol. i., pp. 302, 348.

limits of the old province of Munster. The festivals\* of St. Cairnan and St. Sillan of Kildalkey were held on the 31st of January.

721. Cuanan, of Kildalkey, died.

753. Fidhbhadhach, of Kildalkey, died.

774. Kildalkey was burned.

794. Suibhne, of Kildalkey, died.

836. Fedach, Abbot of Kildalkey, died.

837. Egnach, of Kildalkey, bishop, abbot, and scribe, was killed, with his people, by the Gaileanga.

866. Conghall, Abbot of Kildalkey, and a distinguished scribe, died.

885. Donchadh, Abbot of Kildalkey and other churches, was slain by the Danes.

After this year we lose sight of the abbey of Kildalkey. It seems not to have survived the frequent plunderings of the Danes. We find in an Irish charter of the early part of the eleventh century, which is preserved in the Book of Kells, that O'Maelseachlainn gave Kildalkey "with its territory and lands to God and to Columbkille for ever". (*Misc. Archæol.*, vol. i., p. 137.) In 1402 Rev. Robert Mountain, Pastor of Kildalkey, was promoted by the Holy See to the mitre of Meath. (Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 148.) In 1413 Rev. James FitzSymond was Archdeacon of Glendaloch and Pastor of Kildalkey. He got leave of absence from Ireland for two years. (*Rot. Pat.* Henry the Fifth.) In 1418 Edmund, Earl of March and Ulster, granted to the Abbot of St. Mary's Abbey, Trim, the advowson of the Church of St. Mary's in his manor of Kildalkey. In 1422 we find William, Abbot of St. Mary's, Trim, Pastor of Kildalkey. (*Rot. Pat.* 1, Henry the Sixth.) On the 14th of November, 1542, the royal plunderer gave the abbey of St. Mary, Trim, with its numerous townlands and churches, to Sir Anthony St. Leger. In 1617 James the First gave the churches of St. Mary's, Trim, and Kildalkey, with other possessions, to Sir Thomas Ashe of Trim.

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\* *Martyrology of Tallaght*, pp. 4, 28.



## PASTORS OF KILDAKEY.

In 1612 we find the Church of Kildalkey\* in a ruinous state and the chancel repaired. At the present time all that remains is the nave, which measures forty-four feet six inches by twenty-one feet. The chancel has been long since uprooted. The triumphal or choir-arch is eight feet four inches to the vertex by six feet one inch at the base. A square tower of considerable height stood at the west of the church. This was the belfry, and a large portion of it remains. The crumbling walls of this ancient church are ivy-clad, and the whole presents a scene of melancholy desolation. In 1704 Rev. James Carey was registered as parish priest of Kildalkey. He was ordained in 1690, at Leitmeritz, Bohemia, by Laiseaus Staremburgh, Bishop of Leitmeritz. He was forty years of age at the time of the registration, and lived at Moyrath. He died about 1730, and was buried in the church-yard of Kildalkey. Rev. Bernard Shaw succeeded, and died about 1760. He was interred with his predecessor. Rev. Michael Gavisk succeeded, and died in May, 1782. He was born in the parish, studied in Rome, and was interred in Kildalkey. Rev. Laurence O'Reilly† succeeded. He was born in the parish of Oristown, and was uncle to the late Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly, parish priest of Navan and vicar-general of Meath. He died in May, 1794, and was buried in the same grave with his predecessor. Father O'Reilly repaired the chapel of Kildalkey, got a belfry erected, but was obliged by the Protestant rector of Athboy, who enforced the penal statute against Catholic belfries, to have it taken down. This officious and ungenerous interference, coming too from a man who was living on the spoil of the Catholic Church, naturally produced a great degree of irritation in the minds of

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\* The patron saint of the parish is St. Dymphna—the virgin-martyr—and her festival is observed here on the 15th of May, the anniversary of the translation of her relics. A holy well, now almost dried up, is convenient to the old church, called Tober-Damhnat, or Dymphna.

† See Pastors of Kells. In the Visitation of Dr. Plunkett to Kildalkey, on the 22nd of May, 1788, he found "one school, one chapel repaired and partly rebuilt".

the people. To evade the law the bell was suspended from the branches of a tree in the vicinity of the chapel, and from this humble eminence the little bell of Kildalkey tinkled on until happier days dawned on the Irish Church. Rev. John Rickard succeeded. He was ordained in Navan, in the year 1782, by the Most Rev. Dr. Plunkett, studied in Rome, officiated as curate in Kingscourt and other parishes, and was appointed to Kildalkey on the 25th of May, 1794. He died in March, 1814, and was interred in Kildalkey **ALONGSIDE OF THE TWO PRECEDING PASTORS.**

Rev. James Rickard succeeded. He studied in Maynooth, and was appointed to Kildalkey on the 6th of March, 1814. He was translated to Athboy on the 12th of January, 1830. (See Pastors of Athboy.)

Rev. John O'Connell succeeded. He was translated to Trim, in February, 1837, where he is at present V.F. and Master of Conference, esteemed and respected.

Rev. Richard Magrane succeeded. He was born in the parish of Ardcah, studied in France, and officiated as curate in Kells, Mullingar, Kildalkey, etc. He was parish priest of Rusnaree for a short time, and was translated to Kildalkey on the 17th of February, 1837. He was a very zealous and exemplary priest, and his memory is revered by his people. He died in November, 1838, and was interred in the chapel of Kildalkey. A marble monument commemorates him in the following words :

Sacred to the memory of the  
 Rev. RICHARD MAGRANE,  
 For two years the zealous  
 And beloved pastor  
 of Kildalkey.  
 His amiable simplicity,  
 His engaging manners,  
 His generous  
 And benevolent heart,  
 Earned the esteem  
 And affection of all.  
 Though the period of his  
 Pastoral labours was brief,  
 Yet in that short space



His distinguished virtues  
 Won every heart.  
 To testify their high sense of his worth,  
 And deep regret for his loss,  
 The parishioners of Kildalkey and other friends  
 Have erected this memento  
 Of their departed pastor, who  
 Exchanged this mortal life  
 For a better world  
 On the 26th day of  
 November, A.D. 1838.

The Rev. Thomas Meighan succeeded. He was born in the parish of Rushwee, union of Slane, studied in Navan and Maynooth, officiated as curate in Rathmolyon, Mount Nugent, etc., and was for a time administrator of Longwood. He died in May, 1850, deeply regretted, and was buried in the chapel of Kildalkey. A marble slab commemorates him thus:

Sacred  
 to the memory of  
 The Rev. THOMAS MEIGHAN,  
 Late P.P. of this parish,  
 Who departed this life 19th of May, 1850,  
 In the 49th year of his age;  
 Deeply lamented by numerous  
 friends and parishioners.  
 Requiescat in pace.

The Rev. John Grogan succeeded. He was born in the parish of Eglish, King's County, and officiated as curate in Arddraccan, Delvin, Moynalty, Fore, and other places. He was remarkable for amiability and singleness of purpose. Being in declining health at his appointment, he sank under the burthen of his pastoral duties, and passed away deeply regretted by his brother priests and all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. He died in May, 1856, and was buried with his friends in the King's County.

The Rev. Charles Reynolds, present worthy pastor, succeeded.

## KILMOON.

Kilmoon is a parish in the barony of Upper Duleek. An abbey was founded there at an early period, called Cill-Moinne, and dedicated to St. Moen.\* According to Colgan (See *Acta Sanctorum*, 26th of February), this Moen or Moenna (called Munni in the *Martyrology of Christ's Church*) was a Briton who accompanied St. Brendan of Clonfert on his return to Ireland from Britonny. Lanigan observes "that it is very probable Moen was Bishop of Clonfert". The festival of St. Moen was celebrated on the 26th of February. Whether St. Moen founded the monastery of Kilmoon, or that it was merely dedicated to him, I am unable to determine. The following scant notices of Kilmoon occur in the *Four Masters*:

804. Maelfothartaigh, Abbot of Kilmoon and Fennor, died.

809. Felim, Abbot of Kilmoon, anchorite and celebrated scribe, died. (In the *Annals of Ulster*, Cod. Clarendon, tom. 49, this Felim is called "Serjeant of Bregb, from Patrick", i.e., the collector of St. Patrick's tribute in Meath for the Archbishop of Armagh. See O'Donovan's Note to the *Four Masters*.)

810. Ceile-Isa, Abbot of Kilmoon, died.

846. Robhartach, Abbot of Kilmoon, died.

882. Eochu, Abbot of Kilmoon and Fennor, died.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion we find Kilmoon (or Kilmone) a parish church. In 1432, Henry the Sixth granted to John Swayn, Archbishop of Armagh,† the patronage of Kilmoon, which was then valued at twenty marks. He authorised him to annex to his cathedral church this parish for himself and successors (*Rot. Pat.* 10, Henry VI.) In the regal visitation we find "the church repaired, the

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\* Dr. O'Donovan is clearly mistaken in translating Cill-Moinne, "the church of the bog". It is the church of St. Moen. In the Patent Rolls of Henry the Sixth this church is called "St. Moune of Kilmone". In the registry of Curraha, the patron is called St. Moon, and his festival marked at the 26th of February. The patron day in this parish has been from time immemorial the 26th of February. See *Acta Sanctorum*, at 26th of February; Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii., p. 36; *Martyrology of Tallaght*; and present Registry of Curraha.

† In the Protestant church, Kilmoon is still in the patronage of the Primate.



chancel in ruin". In Usher's visitation: "Patron the Primate, value 20<sup>l.</sup> sterling. A manse house, a messuage indifferently repaired, a garden, an orchard, an haggard, twenty acres of arable land, and one acre of moor".

In 1690 James the Second presented Rev. Thomas Newman to the parishes of Kilmoon and Kilbrew. In 1704 we find the same Rev. Thomas Newman registered as parish priest of Creekstown, Kilbrew, Kilmoone, and Trevet. He was ordained at Clonene, county Westmeath, by Dr. Patrick Plunkett, Bishop of Meath. At the time of the registration he lived at Creekstown. The old church of Kilmoon has been pulled down, and a Protestant edifice erected on its site.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### KILSKYRE.

KILSKYRE, or Kilskeer, is a parish in the barony of Upper Kells. A monastery was founded here—called Cill-Scire, "the church of St. Schiria"—in the early ages, and dedicated to St. Schiria. This holy virgin and her sister, Corcaria Caoin, were daughters of Eugene, who was great-grandson to Fergus, a brother of Neil Negilliach, "of the Nine Hostages", monarch of Ireland. Schiria died about the close of the sixth century, and her festival was celebrated at Kilskyre\* on the 24th of March. In our monasticons occur the following notices:

745. Dubdathethe of the Writing (an annalist), Abbot of Kilskyre, died. This Dubdathethe was author of some Irish annals.

750. Daelgus, Abbot of Kilskyre, died.

865. Conall, of Kilskyre, bishop, died. Of this bishop Lanigan remarks: "To the year 866 is affixed the death of St. Conall, son of Fiachna, prince of East Meath, and of the royal blood of Ireland, and bishop of Kilskyre, five miles from Kells, in Meath, and the only bishop we met with in that place" (vol. iii., p. 323). St. Conall was buried in the Great Island of Arran,

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\* See Lanigan, vol. ii., pages 327 and 330; O'Clery's *Irish Calendar; Martyrology of Tallaght*.

in a place called "Tempuil na Creathuir aluin", Church of the Four Beautiful Saints, who were Fursey, Brendan of Birr, Conall, and Berchan, whose bodies are also said to be buried in the same tomb, lying in the cemetery of the same church. (See Colgan at 28th March. His festival is marked in the *Martyrology of Tallaght* at March 28th.)

920. Alldghus, Abbot of Kilskyre, died.

949. Kilskyre was plundered by the Danes.

1170. Kilskyre was plundered and burned by Dermot Mac Murcha and the foreigners.

After this period we find Kilskyre merely a parish church.

In 1385 the Rev. John Taaffe was Rector of Kilskyre. (*Pat.* 9, Richard the Second.)

In 1408, the Rev. William Silk was rector. (*Pat.* 10, Henry the Fourth.)

In 1442, the Rev. Richard Stanyhurst was rector, and in his time the grant of ten marks annually was given in perpetuity from the Rectory of Kilskyre to the College of Killeen. (See Killeen.)

In Bishop Usher's visitation the rectory of Kilskyre was valued at "40<sup>l</sup>. sterling, out of which he payeth yearly to the Lord of Killeen 5<sup>l</sup>. sterling for a pencion belonging to the Colledge of Killeene, graunted to it in tymes past for the mayntenance of four chaplains". And of the parochial property Usher writes: "A castle and manse house, with other houses of office, inreasonable repayre; backsides, fifteen acres of arable land, and a close, all in the possession of the incumbent. There belongeth to it another close which the landlord of the towne keepeth away".

The old church of Kilskyre is now a ruin. It measures eighty-two feet by twenty-seven feet three inches. The body of the church is completely desolate. Windows, doorways, and east wall have been swept away. The western end terminated in a triple belfry. In the chancel there is a sepulchral cross, which originally marked the grave of an ecclesiastic. There is another grave, in which some priest, now unknown, is interred, on which, to perpetuate respect for the occupant, the coffin is placed, and the *De Profundis* entoned previous to interment. The Rev. Bryan Brady,



parish priest of Kilskyre, who died in 1784, is interred here with his friends. In the chancel there is a headstone, marking the grave of Rev. James O'Farrell, with the following inscription :

The R. Catholic inhabitants  
Of the parish of Kilskyre,  
have,  
in testimony of their gratitude,  
erected  
this monument to the memory of  
The Rev. JAMES O'FARRELL,  
the Parish Priest,  
who died, universally  
regretted  
on the 8th day of July,  
A.D. 1797.

There is a tomb in the east end, erected by Hugh O'Reilly, Esq., and Catherine Plunket, his wife, dated 1686. There is an extensive cemetery in connection with the church, and many ecclesiastics sleep here ; but

“ Multi . . . . . illacrymabiles  
carent quia vate sacro”.

The ecclesiastical history of this parish since the Reformation is reserved for the next volume.

#### LIOLCACH.

The exact location of this monastery, called Liolcach, or Lilcach, has not as yet been identified. It was situated near the Boyne, and in all probability not far from Slane. The following notices of this place occur in the *Four Masters* :

512. Died, St. Erck, Bishop of Slane and Liolcach.

723. St. Gall of Lilcach died.

743. Cuan, Anchorite of Lilcach, died.

In the *Martryology of Tallaght* the festival of St. Cillene of Lilchaich is marked as having been commemorated on the 12th of March.

NOTE.—There was a book called the *Book of Cuana*, or *Cuana's Book of Annals*, quotations from which appear in the *Annals of Ulster* from 468 to 610. Whether it was Cuan of Liolcach, or Cuana of Trevet, does not appear. See Eugene O'Curry's *The Lost Books of Ancient Erin*, p. 19.

There was a Bishop Cillene, Abbot of Ferns, who died in 713; St. Celene, Abbot of Fahan, near Lough Swilly, county Donegal, who died on the 3rd of March, 720; a Cillene of Lough Derg, who died in 721; a St. Cillan Foda, Abbot of Iona, who died in 725; a St. Cillene, Abbot of Ia, who died on the 3rd of July, 747; and a St. Cillen, Abbot of Fearn, who died in 814.

#### NUACHONGBHAIL OR NAVAN.\*

The position of Nuachongbhail is thus described in the *Life of St. Fechin* published by Father Colgan: "Nuachongbhail est oppidum Mediæ ad ripam Boinnii a Pontano (Drogheda) decem millibus passuum distans, ab Authrumia quinque" (*Acta Sanctorum*, pp. 135, 141). A monastery was founded here long before the English invasion, of which a St. Fachtna† is commemorated as abbot. In the *Martyrology‡ of Tallaght*, the festival of St. Fachtna, a bishop of Nuachongbhail, is marked at the 19th of January. Amongst the lost Books or Annals of "Ancient Ireland" is the Book of Nuachongbhail.§ The Augustinian monastery erected at Navan, in the twelfth century, by Joceline de Angulo, or Nangle, seems to have been on the site of the abbey of Nuachongbhail.

#### PIERCETOWNLANDY, OR LECKNO.

Piercetownlandy is a parish in the Barony of Upper Du-leek. An abbey was founded here about 750.|| After the Anglo-Norman invasion, Piercetown became a parish church, and belonged to the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem.

In 1422, Rev. John Loragh was Vicar of Luckno. (*Pat. 1, Henry the Sixth.*)

In 1561, died Rev. Gerald Dalton, Rector of Pierston. (*Calendar*, p. 475.)

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\* The mound of Odhbhra—probably the Moat of Navan—took its name from Odhbhra, the first wife of Heremon, king of Ireland, who was buried here. For the battles fought at Odhbhra, near Navan, see the *Four Masters*, at A.M. 4415; A.D. 607, 890, 1016, 1072, with Dr. O'Donovan's notes.

† Archdall's *Monasticon*, p. 566 (from Ware, p. 159).

‡ *Calendar of Irish Saints*, p. 14. There were several Irish saints of that name. See Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii., pp. 193, 194, 317, 318. The *Four Masters*, at A.D. 723, 1010, 1024.

§ See Eugene O'Curry's *Lectures on the M.S. Materials of Irish History*. He calls it the "Book of the Uuachongbhail" or "probably Navan".

|| Archdall's *Monasticon*, p. 567 (from Conry).



In 1605, King James the First granted the ecclesiastical profits of this parish\* to John Hoy, Esq., Sergeant-at-Arms.

In 1622, Bishop Usher writes† of this parish: "Lecknow, alias Prestownlandy—value 10<sup>l</sup> ster.—B. and G.—A. manse house in good repair, and other houses of office unrepaired, and five acres of arable land near the church".

The old church of Piercetown measures fifty-eight feet internally by nineteen feet ten inches at the west end. A graveyard is attached.

In 1690, Dr. Patrick Curtis was presented by James the Second to the "rectories of Ardcath, Clonalvy, and Piers-townlandy". Since that period this parish has formed part of the union of Ardcath.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### SKRYNE.

THE ancient name of Skryne was Achail† or Aichill. In the year of Christ 76, the *Four Masters* record the great battle of Achail, in which Elim, the Usurper, and a vast number of his followers, were slain by Tuathal Teachtmhar, or the Legitimate. After the introduction of Christianity an abbey was founded here, during the early period; and in 875§ the shrine of St. Columbkil, containing his relics, was conveyed to Ireland, for the purpose of protecting it from the sacrilegious cupidity of the Danes, and deposited for security in the monastery of Achail. To commemorate so great an event, and to mark the

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\* *Pat.* 3, James the First. † Usher's *Visitation of Meath*.

† Achail, pronounced Akill. There is still in existence a law tract, attributed to Cormac MacArt, monarch of Ireland, called the *Book of Achail*. It is annexed to a law treatise by Cennfaelad the learned, who died A.D. 677. "The whole of this volume", says Professor O'Curry, "comprises the parts ascribed to King Cormac; and those said to be Cennfaelad's, form a very important section of our ancient national institutes, known as the Brehon Laws". In the list of historic tales named in the *Book of Leinster*, occurs "The Siege of Acaill". See Professor O'Curry's *Lectures*, pp. 29, 47, 230, 264, etc.; O'Flaherty's *Ogygia*, part iii. c. 45; O'Donovan's *Notes to the Four Masters* at A.D. 76.

§ The *Four Masters*.

resting place of an heirloom so national and venerated, Achail was henceforth called "Scrin-Colum-Cille"—"Scrinium Sancti Columbæ", or the place of St. Columbkil's shrine. In 1027 Skryne was plundered by Roen, and a great prey of cows was carried off from thence.

1037. Skryne and Duleek were plundered by the Danes of Dublin.

1058. Skryne was plundered by the men of Teaffia, and the men of Meath made a slaughter of the men of Teaffia and Cairbre in revenge thereof.

1127. The shrine of Columbkil was carried off into captivity by the Danes of Dublin, and was restored again to its house (Skryne) at the end of a month.

1152. Skryne, Dunshaughlin, and Trevet were plundered by the Hy-Bruin. At the close of the twelfth century, Eugene, bishop of Meath, appropriated the church of Skryne to the Cistercian Abbey of St. Mary, near Dublin; and at the Synod of Newton, near Trim, held in 1216, and presided over by Simon Rochfort, bishop of Meath, the old episcopal churches of Trim, Kells, Slane, Skryne, and Dunshaughlin were only heads of rural deaneries, governed by arch-presbyters.

#### TREVET.

Trevet,\* anciently called *Dumha Dergluachra*,† is celebrated for having been the burial place of Art, monarch of Ireland, and for its great monastic foundation. It is situated in the barony of Skryne, only a few miles distant from Tara, Skryne, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Lismullen, and many other localities distinguished in the civil and ecclesiastical annals of the country. In the *Senchas na Relic*, i.e., the History of the Cemeteries, preserved in the *Leabhar na h-Uidhre*, it is stated that Art, son of Con Cedchathac, monarch of Ireland, was buried here. In the "Cath Maighe Mucraimhe", it is added that the place was called Tri-foid, i.e. "Three sods", because "three sods were dug there in honour of the Trinity,

\* Trevet is variously written, "Treoit, Treoitmore, Trefoit, and Trefoitmor". After the Anglo-Norman invasion it was written "Tryvet, Trevete, Trevot, and Trevet". See O'Donovan's *Four Masters*, passim, and the *Patent Rolls* before the Protestant Reformation.

† See Dr. Petrie's *Round Towers*, pp. 96, 97, 98, and 99, where he gives the Irish text of the *Senchas na Relec*, with an English translation.



when the grave of Art was being dug there". In this historical story it is stated that Art, who was a Christian, predicted that a Catholic church would be after some years erected over his grave.\* A monastery was founded here† at an early period, and in subsequent years it became very distinguished in the history of our Church. The *Annals of the Four Masters* contain the following notices of this place :

## ANNALS OF TREVET.

734. Cuannan‡ O'Bessair, Scribe of Trevet, died.

769. Albran, Abbot of Treoit-mor, died between the two Easters (*i.e.*, between Easter Sunday and Dominica in Albis, or Low Sunday).

Same year, Forannan, Scribe and Bishop of Trevet, died.

788 (*recte* 793). Doimtheach, Airchinneach (hereditary warden) of Trevet, died. In the *Annals of Ulster* this Doimtheck is called princeps of Trevet.

808 (*recte* 813). Conall, Abbot of Trevet, died.

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\* Art, the son of Con, "of the Hundred Battles", monarch of Ireland, was slain at the battle of *Magh Mucruimhé*, in the year of our Lord 195. A "prophetic" poem is ascribed to this Art, which is preserved in the *Leabhar na h-Uidré*, a MS. compiled before the year 1106. In reference to this so called prophecy the learned Professor O'Curry makes the following remarks: "There is a short prose introduction, headed 'The Prophecy, and Christian Belief of Art the Lonely', which states that the prophecy was the result of a vision which Art saw while enjoying a sleep on the top of his *Dumha Selga*, or hunting mound, a short time before the battle, while hunting at Treoit (Trevet). In this vision Art is said to have seen the coming of St. Patrick; the great changes which his mission would bring about in the condition of Erin; the subsequent importance as a religious establishment of Trevet, the place in which he then happened to be, and where, by his own direction, his body was carried from the battle-field and buried, in anticipation of the future sanctity of the place. The poem, which consists of 156 lines, was addressed to *Den Mór*, Art's attendant . . . . . This is one of the oldest poems that I am acquainted with . . . . . but it is remarkable that it has no reference to those who were to succeed Art in the monarchy, nor to the Danish or Saxon invasions. I think it was written immediately at or about the time of founding the church of Treoit". *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Irish History*, p. 391.

† In the *Feilire Aenguis*, the festival of St. Lonan mac Talmaigh, of Trevet, is marked at the 13th of November; in the *Martyrology of Donegal* it is commemorated on the 1st of November.

‡ There was a book of annals called *Book of Cuana*, quotations from which appear in the *Ulster Annals* from 468 to 610. Professor O'Curry is of opinion that the author was Cuanan of Trevet. See the *Lost Books of Ancient Erin*, p. 19. Harris's *Ware's Writers of Ireland*, p. 26.

838. Cormac, Abbot of Trevet, died.

848. Cinaedh, son of Conaing, with the Danes, burned the oratory of Trevet, within which were two hundred and sixty persons.

885. Maelpadraig, scribe, wise man, and Abbot of Trevet, died.

898. Snairleach, anchorite and Bishop of Trevet, died.

906. Etigen, Abbot of Trevet, died.

917. Innrechtach, Abbot of Trevet, was slain in his own abbatial house (by the Danes).

1004. St. Aedh, Lector of Trevet, bishop, wise man, and pilgrim, died after a good life, at Armagh, with great honour and veneration. In lamentation of him was said :

The wise man, the archbishop,  
The saint of God of comely face,  
Apostleship has departed from us,  
Since Aedh departed from the side of Teamhair,  
Since Aedh of sweet Breaghmhagh liveth not,  
Of bright renown, in sweet verses sung ;  
A loss is the gem, shining and pleasant,  
The learning of Ireland has perished in him.

1145. Trevet was burned by Donchadh, and sixty persons were killed therein.

1152. Trevet was plundered by the Hy-Bruin.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion, Hugh de Lacy rebuilt the town of Trevet for his followers, and after a few years it became a place of considerable note. The church of Trevet was refounded about the same time, and placed under the patronage of St. Patrick.

In 1411 the Rev. Gregory Neel was Vicar of Trevet. (*Pat.* 13, Henry the Fourth.)

In 1545 died Rev. Richard Mortimer, Vicar of Trevet, (*Calendar*, p. 120.)

The Rev. Peter Rowe succeeded as Vicar of Trevet. (*Ibidem.*)

In 1558 the Rev. Edmond Roue, of Lismullen, was Vicar of Trevet.

In 1614 King James the First granted (*inter alia*) to Francis Edgeworth, Esq., assignee of Sir John Eyres,



knight, one of the gentlemen of the privy chamber, by deed, bearing date 30th July, 1614,\*

“In the grange of Trevett, two houses, four cottages, one hundred acres arable, six acres of meadow, fourteen acres of pasture, and one and a half acre of bog; rent, £3 14s. 0d. Irish; parcel of the estate of the monastery of Thomas Court, near Dublin”.

In Usher's visitation the rectory is valued at 10<sup>l</sup> sterling; and the parochial property consisted of “a manse and other houses of office well repaired; a garden, a haggard, and half an acre of arable land”.

The magnificent old church of Trevet is now one pile of ruins, and almost the whole population has been swept from the land. The country has been converted into pasture, a herd's house is all that remains of the old town; sheep and oxen abound here in great numbers, but the bone and sinew of the country have passed away:†

“Princes and peers may flourish and may fade,  
A breath unmakes them, as a breath had made;  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplied”.

#### PASTORS OF TREVET SINCE 1690.

In 1690 the Rev. Dr. William Plunkett was presented by James the Second to the Rectories of Killeen and Trevet.

In 1704 the Rev. Thomas Newman was registered at Trim as “Popish priest of Creekstown, Kilbrew, Kilmoone, and Trevet”—See Kilmoon.

At this period a thatched chapel was erected in the neighbourhood of the old church of Trevet, and another on the townland of Curraha, parish of Kilbrew, and as the pastor resided near the latter, the united parishes were called the union of Curraha.

*The Rev. Mr. Reynolds succeeded.* His name was commemorated on the list of the deceased priests of Curraha up

\* *Pat.* 15, James the First.

† Goldsmith. I may add that the present proprietor of Trevet is not to be held responsible for the extermination of the people. They were gone before he inherited this property, and since his advent he has given considerable employment and benefited the neighbourhood.

to thirty years ago. He is supposed to be buried in the body of the old church of Crickstown.

*The Rev. Patrick Langan succeeded.* He was born in Ardeath, officiated as curate of Ratoath, and was appointed by Dr. Chevers to the union of Curraha.\* He was translated to Ratoath by Dr. Plunkett in 1789. See Pastors of Ratoath.

*The Rev. Patrick Keonan succeeded.* This pastor was born in the neighbourhood of Ratoath, studied in Salamanca, and officiated as curate of Ratoath† under the venerable Father White. On the translation of Father Langan to Ratoath, he was appointed by Dr. Plunkett to the union of

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\* In the visitation of Dr. Plunkett, Bishop of Meath, to the union of Trevet or Curraha, on the 2nd of August, 1788, he found in the united parishes "two schools, and two chapels repaired".

† As Father Keonan had officiated as curate in Ratoath for many years, he naturally had expectations of succeeding as pastor. It must be remembered that Father Langan had discharged that duty before him, and, being his senior, he had, of course, higher claims. The following characteristic letters of Dr. Plunkett may not be deemed uninteresting:

LETTER OF DR. PLUNKETT TO REV. PATRICK KEONAN.

"Navan, 20th of April, 1789.

"REV. DEAR SIR,

"The Rev. Mr. Langan is nominated successor to the late Rev. Mr. White, of Ratoath. A little reflection must convince you that duty, not human considerations, dictated the choice I have made. This observation and your own piety will, I flatter myself, reconcile you to whatever disappointment you may experience on the present occasion, and induce you cheerfully to accept your appointment, which I now announce, to the united parishes of Trevet and Curraha. This living supported Mr. Langan decently; yet I wish on your account the emoluments of it were more considerable. The Easter dues of Ratoath for this year, being a harvest of which you sowed and cultivated the seed, belong to you. Sorry as I should be to be obliged to change my opinion of your virtuous and priestly dispositions, I received with particular pleasure the letter you wrote from Trim disavowing some improper steps taken during the late vacancy. That you were not, however, at the bottom of this unhandsome business, you will more unequivocally demonstrate by resignation and becoming acquiescence under circumstances that put you to the test, than by mere declarations, however strong and peremptory. May the Almighty God enable you to perform the duties of your new situation to His greater honour and glory, and to the advantage of the flock now committed to your care.

"I am, with most sincere regard, Rev. Dear Sir,

"Your affectionate and most humble servant,

"✠ P. J. PLUNKETT".

"To the Rev. Patrick Keonan,

"P.P. of Trevet and Curraha".



Curraha. He died on the 7th of May, 1809, and was interred in the churchyard of Crickstown. On his headstone is the following inscription :

This stone was erected  
by the Executors of the Rev.  
PATRICK KEONAN, Parish Priest  
of Trevet, to his memory,  
who departed this life the  
7th of May, 1809, aged 60 years.  
Requiescat in pace. Amen.

*The Rev. John Cregan succeeded.* He was inducted by the Rev. Philip Mulligan, parish priest of Dunshaughlin,

SECOND LETTER OF DR. PLUNKETT TO REV. PATRICK KEONAN.

“Navan, 23rd of February, 1790.

“REV. DEAR SIR,

“Happily, a most respectable witness, Rev. Mr. Fagan, can attest, and has attested in your presence, how little I encouraged you to remain in Ratoath, and with what concern I saw the manœuvres which deprived Rev. Mr. Langan of the late Rev. Mr. White's confidence, and put you in his place. You intended yourself for the parish of Ratoath; I never intended you for it, nor could I, in conscience, while there existed such a competitor as Mr. Langan with pretensions of an earlier date. If you have entered into any imprudent engagement, it is your business to extricate yourself as well as you can. The obligations which I contract, on principles of charity, I shall always endeavour to discharge; with those contracted by others, I will not interfere. For dispensations in banns you have your own vicar to recur to. ‘People of a different persuasion have’, you say, ‘applied to you’, and you desire I will direct ‘what to do’. Instruct them in the Heavenly spirit of our holy religion; deter them from the folly, the guilt, and absurdity of forming odious comparisons between themselves and others; advise them to respect those whom divine Providence has placed over them; tell them not to be unmannerly to those to whom at the altar of the living God they shall have promised obedience; make them acquainted with the doctrine of St. James the Apostle, ‘If any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain’. Conjure them to keep their minds, during this holy time especially, free from fretfulness, rancour, and revenge, and to endeavour by patience, resignation, and humility to prepare themselves to reap the precious fruit of the meekness, obedience, and humiliations of the Son of God. Read for them the second chapter of the *Imitation of Christ*; it will greatly contribute to engrave these pious sentiments on their hearts. This done, you are empowered to do the rest by

“Rev. dear Sir,

“Your affectionate Bishop, and most humble servant,

“✠ P. J. PLUNKETT”.

and vicar-forane. In September, 1813, he was translated to Skryne. (See Pastors of Skryne.)

*The Rev. David Ryan succeeded.* He was born in the parish of Castlepollard. He died in 1820, and was buried in the churchyard of Crickstown.

*The Rev. John Mitchell succeeded.* This pious and zealous priest was born in the parish of Martry, union of Ardraccan, studied in Navan and Maynooth, and officiated as curate in Stamullen, Ardath, and other places. He was appointed to the union of Trevet, on the 9th of February, 1820. He was a very exemplary and laborious priest, and his memory is still vividly and affectionately revered by his parishioners. He died on the 12th of January, 1825, universally regretted, and was buried in the churchyard of Crickstown. On his headstone is the following inscription :

Erected to the memory of Rev. JOHN  
MITCHELL, by the parishioners of Curraha  
and Trevet, in testimony of their affection  
and esteem for him, on account of the  
many virtues which distinguished him  
during his sacred ministry as their pastor.

Died the 12th day of January, 1825,

Aged 35 years.

Requiescat in pace.

On the 1st of July, 1823, the parish of Trevet was united to Skryne, and the parishes of Donnymoor and Greenoge were united to Curraha, and have been continued so down to the present. (*See the Appendix.*)

(*To be continued.*)



THE ABBEYS OF MEATH,  
FOUNDED  
AFTER THE ANGLO-NORMAN INVASION,  
TOGETHER WITH  
THE ECCLESIASTICAL ANNALS, ANTIQUITIES,  
AND TRADITIONS OF THE PARISHES  
IN WHICH SITUATED.



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# THE ABBEYS OF MEATH.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### ATHBOY.

ATHBOY is a town in the barony of Lune, about five miles (N.W.) from Trim. It derives its name from "Ath-buidhe-Tlachtgha", the Yellow Ford of Tlachtgha.\* Previous to the Anglo-Norman invasion Athboy was a place of considerable importance. In 1167 a great convention of the prelates and princes of Leath-Cuinn, or the northern half of Ireland, assembled here. Amongst the most distinguished were Roderick O'Connor, the last monarch of Ireland; Gelasius, Archbishop of Armagh; St. Lawrence O'Toole, Archbishop of Dublin; Catholicus O'Duffy, Archbishop of Tuam; the chieftains of Meath, Ulidia, Breffny, Oriel,

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\* Tlachtgha is now called the Hill of Ward. In the days of paganism, druidic fires were kindled here on the 1st of November. "This Hill of Ward", says O'Donovan (note to the *Four Masters* at 1172), "is crowned with a magnificent ancient rath, consisting of three circumvallations". In 1022 Malachy, monarch of Ireland, defeated the Danes of Dublin at the battle of Ath-buidhe-Tlachtgha. In 1172 O'Rourke, Prince of Breffny, was treacherously slain at Tlachtgha by Hugh De Lacy. "He was beheaded by them, and they conveyed his head and body ignominiously to Dublin. The head was placed over the gate of the fortress, as a spectacle of intense pity to the Irish, and the body was gibbeted, with the feet upwards, at the northern side of Dublin"—*Four Masters* at 1172; Haverty's *History of Ireland*, p. 210, 211; Moore's *History of Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 266, 267; Irish histories, passim. Cromwell encamped here, and, from the heights of Tlachtgha, shot down the Plunketts of Rathmore. In the reign of Queen Anne a mud wall, thatched chapel was erected at the foot of this hill, and here the inhabitants of Athboy worshipped during the dark days of the last century.

Kildare, and Dublin, and a vast number of ecclesiastics and nobles, together with thirteen thousand horsemen. Of this ecclesiastical and secular synod or congress the *Four Masters* record :

“ They passed many good resolutions at this meeting, respecting veneration for churches and clerics, and control of tribes and territories, so that women used to traverse Ireland alone ; and a restoration of his prey was made by the Ui-Failge at the hands of the kings aforesaid. They afterwards separated in peace and amity, without battle or controversy, or without any one complaining of another at that meeting, in consequence of the prosperousness of the king, who had assembled these chiefs with their forces at one place”.

Little the men who attended that meeting ever imagined that able and unscrupulous foes were then busily plotting against the liberties of the Irish nation, and that, in a few years thence, seven centuries of misrule were to be inaugurated. After the invasion, Athboy became one of the most flourishing towns of the English Pale. In 1575 Athboy was visited by a plague, which carried off many of the inhabitants. The *Four Masters* thus chronicle the cause and effects of this visitation :

“ 1575. Intense heat and extreme drought (prevailed) in the summer of this year ; there was no rain for one hour, by night or day, from Bealtain to Lammas (*i.e.* from the first of May to the first of August). A loathsome disease and a dreadful malady arose from this heat, namely, the plague. This malady raged virulently among the Irish and English in Dublin, in Naas of Leinster, Ardce, Mullingar, and Athboy. Between those places many a castle was left without a guard, many a flock without a shepherd, and many a noble corpse without burial, in consequence of this distemper”.

In 1643 Owen Roe O'Neil besieged Athboy (Carte's *Ormond*, vol. ii., p. 448). From the second of Elizabeth, Athboy sent two representatives to the Irish parliament. During the last half of the last century this town was increasing in trade and population ; but Ireland was sold, the fatal union took place, our national independence was extinguished, let us hope *not for ever*, and, as a consequence,



Athboy, like other Irish towns, has pined away. Early in the fourteenth century was founded, by William de Loundres, the

#### CARMELITE FRIARY OF ATHBOY.

This monastery\* was erected in honour of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel, and, on the 17th of October, 1317, "a license was granted to William de Loundres, permitting him to make a grant to the Friars of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel, in Athboy, that lot of ground in the said town, whereon this monastery was erected"—Ware's *Monasticon*, King, p. 247.

1325. A Provincial Chapter of the Carmelite Order was held here before John Bloxham, Bachelor of Divinity, of the White Friars of Chester, and Vicar General of the Order in Ireland; many useful regulations were adopted (*Id.*). 1372. The Friars of Athboy were this year indicted for acquiring from Richard de Maghery two gardens contrary to the statute (*Id.*).

1442. An entire street was burnt in the town by accident. (*Annals Dud. Fir.*)

1467. This year a Chapter of the Order was held in Athboy. (Ware, *Mon.*)

In the month of April, the thirty-first year of the reign of Henry the Eighth, the Abbot of Athboy was obliged to yield to force, and surrender the property of this abbey.

At that time the friars were possessed of the following:†  
A church and belfry, a cloister, a stone tower, a mansion, a

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\* All that remains of this religious house is a square tower, used at present as the belfry of the Protestant Church. The old foundations have been uprooted, and a Protestant church occupies the site. The old baptismal font is octagonal and unornamented. The bowl is circular, and measures one foot eleven inches in diameter. When I visited this churchyard a few years ago, the font was under a waterspout. Not very long since, a fanatical parson carted off several loads of human clay and bones for the purpose of manuring his land. The inhabitants of Athboy, fearing the desecration of their ancient pastor, Rev. John Martin, assembled, dug up his grave, and carried off his remains to their new chapel, where they are at present interred. Good God! when will this unchristian, this reckless and audacious insult to the living and the dead, finally terminate? Is it not enough to enjoy the spoil of our plundered Church, the charitable bequests of our Catholic forefathers? Must tithes also be wrung out of the dead bodies of the Irish people?

† *Inquisitions of James the First.*

small orchard, and six small gardens, all within the precincts, and of the annual value, besides reprises, of two shillings; also eight messuages, situated in the said town, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of twenty-four shillings; and two other messuages there waste; and four acres of meadow called the Friar's meadow, in Adenston, near Athboy, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of sixteen pence. On the 21st of June, thirty-fourth King Henry the Eighth, this monastery, with eleven messuages, three cellars, an orchard, and six gardens in Athboy, with four acres of meadow in Advenston, called the Friar's meadow, were granted for ever to Thomas Casey, *in capite*, at the annual rent of two shillings Irish money.

For the chantry of Athboy, see Chantries of Meath.

The parish of Athboy was dedicated to St. James at an early period.

In 1382, Richard the Second assigned to Thomas Heth, rector of Athboy, and Nigel Nangle, to make inquiries regarding the names of those who sold horses, arms, and the like to the Irish (*Pat.* 5, Richard the Second).

In 1401 we find the Rev. John Burdevyll, vicar of St. James' of Athboy (*Pat.* 2, Henry the Fourth).

In 1404, Rev. Hugh Bannent was presented by Henry the Fourth to the church of St. James of Athboy (*Pat.* 5, Henry the Fourth).

In 1553-4, "Grant of English freedom to Robert Dermot, vicar of Athboy"—*Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 327.

By an Inquisition\* dated at Slane, on the 22nd of August, and twelfth year of the reign of James the First, it was found:

"Christopher, Archbishop of Armagh, was seized, in right of the church and see of Armagh, of the manor of Kilmoone, with the appurtenances, in the countie of Meathe, the advowson and right of patronage and presentation of the rectorie or parsonadge of Kilmoone; one messuage, yard, and seven acres of land within the town, feildes and parish of Duleeke, the rectory and parsonadge of Athboy, and the advowson of the vicaridge of the same, together with the gleabe lands thereto belonging. . . . The said archbishop was alsoe seized, in right of the said church and see of Armagh, of divers auntient customs, royalties, liberties,

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\* *Inquisitions of Meath.*



etc., heretofore granted unto the Archbishop of Ardmaghe and his successors for ever, by King Edward the Fourthe".

## PASTORS OF ATHBOY.

At Montgomery's visitation he found "the church and the chancel repaired". Bishop Usher writes in 1622: "Athboy, united to the Archbishopricke of Armagh—valor 20<sup>li</sup> sterling. A manse house reasonably well repaired, a small garden, and an orchard".

In 1690, Rev. Patrick Dard was presented by James the Second to the vicarage of Athboy.

In 1704, Rev. William Cullenan, *alias* Gullivan, was registered as parish priest of Athboy. He was ordained at Fraine, Co. Meath, in 1684, by Dr. Patrick Tyrrell, then Bishop of Clogher. At the year of the registration he was fifty-four years of age, and lived at Castletown.

In 1704, Rev. James Lestrangle was registered as parish priest of Rathmore. He was ordained at Kilkenny, in 1687, by Dr. James Whelan, bishop of Ossory. At the year of the registration he was forty years old, and lived at Athboy. After his death, Rathmore and Athboy were united under one pastor.

Rev. Christopher Plunkett was appointed pastor of Athboy in 1713. He was related to the Fingall family—to Dr. Michael Plunkett, parish priest of Ratoath and vicar-general of Meath, and to Rev. Joseph Plunkett, parish priest of Slane. There is a chalice used at present in the parish of Athboy, on the pedestal of which is the following inscription:

"CHRISTOPHORUS PLUNKETT me renovari fecit, ora pro eo—  
A.D. 1723".

Father Plunkett died in 1767, and was buried most probably in Rathmore.

*Rev. James Flinn succeeded.* He was vicar-forane of Meath, died in 1776, and was buried in the churchyard of Athboy.

*Rev. John Martin*, a native of the parish, succeeded. He had been parish priest of Bohermeen or Ardbraccan,\* and was

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\* There is a chalice in the parish of Ardbraccan with Father Martin's name inscribed, dated 1771.

transferred. He died on Ash Wednesday in 1807, at a very advanced age, and was buried in the churchyard of Athboy.\*

*Rev. Bryan Reilly succeeded.* He was born in the parish of Kilbeg, studied on the Continent, and was remarkable for his charity and philanthropy. He is interred in the present chapel of Athboy, on the wall of which is a marble slab with the following inscription:

To the memory of  
The Rev. BRYAN REILLY, P.P.  
of Athboy.

As a tribute to those benevolent virtues  
Which beamed so mildly  
Around his character,  
This monument  
Has been erected, amidst the tears  
Of sincere regret,  
By his successor  
And afflicted parishioners.  
Obiit, A.D. 1823.

“ Learn of me to be meek and humble of heart”.

*Rev. Thomas Kennedy succeeded.* He was born in the West of Ireland, became parish priest of Donnymoor and Kilbride, and was transferred on the 7th of July, 1823, to the parish of Athboy. He died in Dublin, 1826, and was buried in the chapel of Athboy.

*Rev. John Burke succeeded,* and was transferred on the 1st of January, 1830, to the parish of Castlepollard.

*Rev. James Rickard,* a native of the parish, succeeded. He had been parish priest of Kildalkey, and was transferred on the 11th of January, 1830, to Athboy. He died on the 18th of April, 1848, and was buried in the chapel of Athboy. To his memory a marble slab has been erected, with the following inscription:

To the memory of the  
Rev. JAMES RICKARD, P.P. of Athboy,  
Who departed this life  
On the 18th of April, 1848,

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\* His remains have since been deposited in the chapel of Athboy.



In the 67th year of his age,  
 And 40th year of his ministry.  
 His life exhibited a true portrait  
 Of a zealous minister of Christ,  
 And a faithful dispenser of the  
 Mysteries of God.

He was pastor of Kildalkey fifteen years,  
 Where he built a chapel and two  
 Schools, and during the eighteen years that he  
 Was afterwards pastor of Athboy,  
 He erected this splendid church  
 And eight schools.  
 Amiable in disposition,  
 Affable and unaffected in manner,  
 He lived in the affection of his flock.  
 Requiescat in pace.

*The Rev. Thomas M'Cullagh succeeded.* This accomplished pastor was born on the banks of the Boyne, in the parish of Donore, studied in Navan and Maynooth, officiated as curate for many years in Trim, and was appointed by Dr. Cantwell, on the 28th of April, 1848. He was inducted by Very Rev. John O'Connell, parish priest of Trim, and vicar forane of Meath, in presence of Rev. Thomas Nulty (at present president of Mullingar College), Rev. James Dillon (late parish priest of Kilbeg), and a large number of the parishioners. Rev. Mr. M'Cullagh still happily reigns.

NOTE.—The parish of Rathmore forms part of the present union of Athboy. A parish church stood here from time immemorial, but the present ruin was founded by the family of Plunkett. The church was dedicated to St. Lawrence, and his holy well, still occasionally frequented on the vigil, is on the townland.

Rev. Thomas Fournays was pastor of St. Lawrence of Rathmore (*Pat. 7. Henry Fourth*).

Rev. John Ingoll was pastor (*Cl. 3, Henry Fifth*).

Rev. John Brande was pastor (*Cl. 14, Henry Sixth*).

About the middle of the fifteenth century, Sir Thomas Plunkett, the third son of Christopher first Lord Killeen, married,\* as his second wife, Marian, heiress of Sir Christopher Cruise, and thus acquired Rathmore, Girley, Kilskyre, Stillorgan, etc. He and his descendants thence became lords of Rathmore.

The old church of Rathmore is one of the most magnificent ruins in Ireland. In truth it surpasses description. The length is eighty-three feet eight inches, by twenty-two feet seven inches. The rood-screen or

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\* Archdall's *Lodge*, vol. vi. p. 181.

choir-arch, long since demolished, stood thirty-eight feet from the east end. The altar window is truly grand. The frame is Gothic, with a double mullion, and highly ornamented above the spring of the arch. The internal length to the vertex is twelve feet three inches, by six feet at the base. The windows, doorways, towers, and sacristy are all in keeping with the internal beauty of the church, and both sanctuary and nave are strewed with mausoleums, sculptured tombs, and the *debris* of this once gorgeous and sacred edifice. Since the beginning of the last century Rathmore has been united to Athboy, and up to a few years ago Mass used to be celebrated in an outhouse on a Christmas morning. Lately, owing to the generosity of Mr. Gannon, a handsome chapel has been erected in the parish.

#### ORDINATIONS.

During the lifetime of Dr. Patrick Tyrrell, bishop of Clogher, and afterwards bishop of Meath, there were several ordinations at the castle of Frayne and in Athboy :

In 1682, amongst others ordained by Dr. Patrick Tyrrell, was the Rev. Charles Cashel, registered in 1704, as "Popish priest of Coolock".

In 1683, the Rev. John Porter was ordained by Dr. Patrick Tyrrell at the Castle of Frayne. This priest was registered in 1704, as "Popish priest of Clane", county Kildare.

In 1683, Dr. Tyrrell, ordained, in Athboy, Rev. Peter Powel, afterwards registered as "Popish priest of Ballycallan, Kilkenny".

In 1684, the following priests were ordained by Dr. Patrick Tyrrell at the Castle of Frayne :

Rev. William Cullenan, registered in 1704 as "Popish priest of Athboy"; Rev. Patrick Smith, registered as "parish priest of Kells, etc."; Rev. Charles Reilly, registered as "parish priest of Mountown, Dowdstown, Kilcairne, and Follistown".

Rev. Con. M'Mahon, registered as "parish priest of Killivan and Curin", county Monaghan.

Rev. James Duffy, registered in 1704, at Monaghan, as "parish priest of Rechwallis".

Rev. T. Melaghlín, registered in 1704, at Mullingar, as "parish priest of Athlone".

In 1679, Rev. James Fitzgerald, registered in 1704, as "Popish priest of Brides-Church and Kalbegs", diocese of Kildare.

In 1685, Rev. Mathew Sheerin, registered in 1704, at Cavan, as "Popish priest of Monterconaght".

In 1685, ordained at Athboy Rev. Connor M'Loughlin, registered in 1704 as "Popish priest of Coonelare", county Leitrim.

There is a lettered stone in the south end of the chancel, before which the peasantry kneel down and recite "Our Father" and "Hail Mary". This is a remarkable instance of the tradition of old pious practices, as not one of them knows anything of this stone, and the inscription, in antiquated contracted Latin, is now all but illegible. The following, divested of contractions, is a faithful transcription :—

"Orate pro animabus Cristoferi Plunket, de Rathmore militis et Katerinae Preston uxoris ejus qui crucem lapideum infra villam istam ante cimiterium constructerunt et porticum istum et omnibus ante crucem predictam dicentibus Pater Noster et Ave Maria pro animabus dictorum Cristoferi et Katerinae, et parentum suorum concessum est ducenti dies



Indulgentiæ per quinque Episcopos in concilio Provinciali toties quoties perpetuis temporibus duraturis—Anno Domini 1519". This stone was taken from one of the towers of the church and placed in the chancel some years ago.

## BALLYBOGAN.

Ballyboggan, or Ballybogan, derives its name from Baile-Ui-Bhogain, "the town of O'Bogan". It is at present a parish, in the barony of Upper Moyfenrath, about two and a half miles (south-west) from Clonard. A priory was founded here in the twelfth century, by Jordon Comin, for canons following the rule of St. Augustine. It was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and was called for some time "the Priory de Laude Dei".

1399. By an Inquisition taken this year, it was found that John O'Mayller, *a mere Irishman*, and of the Irish sept of O'Mayllers, *enemies to our lord the king*, was instituted to the priory of the Blessed Virgin of Ballybogan, contrary to the form of the statute of Kilkenny; but Richard Cuthbert did, on the same day, make due proof that the said priory was not under the invocation of the Virgin Mary, but dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and that he was the lawful prior thereof. Cuthbert was accordingly restored to the temporalities. (*King.*)

1446. The priory of Ballybogan was burnt in the beginning of this year. (*Dud. Fir.*)

Same year, Tany O'Mulconry was interred in the priory of Ballybogan. (*Four Masters.*)

1447. In the summer and autumn of this year there raged a great plague, of which the prior of Ballybogan, the prior of Connell, the baron of Galtrim . . . and a great number of others in Meath, Leinster, and Munster, died. Some say that 700 priests died of this plague. (*Four Masters.*)

There was in this priory a crucifix which was held in great repute and veneration, and which attracted pilgrims from various parts of Ireland. Whether it contained a portion or relic of the true cross, or that God had vouchsafed to exercise His omnipotence through its instrumentality, we cannot now exactly determine; but it is certain, that amongst the most cherished monuments and venerated heirlooms of the Irish Church, the destruction of which outraged the national and religious feelings of the people, were the holy crucifix of Ballybogan, and the statues or images of the

Blessed Virgin of Navan and Trim. According to Ware's *Annals*, the crucifix of Ballybogan, "which", he says "had been held in great veneration", was publicly burnt in 1538. The last prior of Ballybogan was Rev. Thomas Bermingham, in whose time this monastery had to surrender its vast possessions,\* numbering five thousand two hundred acres of arable and pasture land, in various counties. In 1541 all the manors, lands, and liberties of this abbey, with the title and dignity of "Baron of Carbric", were granted by Henry the Eighth to Sir William Bermingham, at a rent of £4 3s. 4d.† By the forty-first of Elizabeth, the reversion was granted to Edward Fitzgerald and his heirs. In 1608, King James the First granted to Sir Edward Fitzgerald, Knight, amongst other properties:‡

"The site, etc., of the late monastery of Ballybogan, with all the buildings, orchards, gardens, etc., thereto appertaining, and all lands, customs, and hereditaments in Ballybogan, with a fair there, and a watermill, parcel of the estate of the said monastery".

In 1612, Bishop Montgomery found the church and chancel of Ballybogan in ruin.

In 1690, Rev. John Hoey was presented by James the Second to the vicarage of Clonard. In 1704 we find Rev. John Hoey registered as parish priest of Clonard, Ballybogan, and Castlejordan. He was ordained in Flanders in 1676, and, at the time of the registration, lived at Moydrum.

A tomb in the churchyard has fortunately preserved the names and succession of the pastors of Ballybogan:§

Here lies the body of  
The Rev. JOHN HOEY,  
who died March 15th,  
1732, aged 90. Also the

\* For the names of the townlands, see the Appendix.

† *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, page 85.

‡ *Pat. Roll.*, 5 James the First, part 1.

§ We reserve for a future volume the ecclesiastical, or parochial, history of Ballybogan—the sites on which the mud-wall thatched chapels were erected, the lives of the pastors, and "struggles of faith" from the reign of Queen Anne—the last, and, to Ireland, the worst of the Stuarts—down to the present time.



body of the Rev. THOMAS  
WHITE, who died July  
24th, 1732, aged 40. Also  
the body of the Rev.

DANIEL ENN, who died  
June 26th, 1765, aged 80.

This monument was  
Erected by Very Rev. Thady  
Grehan, June 7th, 1786.

The Rev. THADY GREHAN,

Who was parish priest  
of Clonard and Balnabrackey

Forty-two years, died in the 75th year  
of his age, 1789, August 9th.

The Rev. GERALD O'REILLY,  
parish priest thirty-seven years, died 16th Sept.  
1826, aged 73.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### BEAMORE.

BEAMORE is a townland in the parish of Colpe and the barony of Duleek. A preceptory\* was anciently here, which belonged to the priory of Kilmainham. At the suppression of the monasteries the tithes of this place were granted to Henry Draycot, from whose family they passed into that of Talbot.

### BEAUBEC.

Beaubec, Beabeg, or de Bello-Becco, is a townland in the parish of Colpe, barony of Duleek. It was anciently called Killokeran, and granted under this name by Walter de Lacy, in the time of King John, to the church of St. Mary and St. Laurence of Beaubec in Normandy. A mo-

\* Archdall's *Monasticon*. D'Alton, *Drogheda*, vol. ii. p. 453.

† Harris remarks of the abbey: "Founded in the thirteenth century by Walter Lacy, an abbey of the B.V.M. First, a Benedictine cell to Bec in Normandy; then a Cistercian cell to the Abbey of Furnes, in Lancashire, by purchase"—*Antiquities of Ireland*, p. 274.

nastery was accordingly founded here, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. De Lacy further granted the liberty of keeping a boat on the Boyne, toll free, which benefactions were afterwards confirmed by Henry the Third, to be held in free and perpetual alms (*Harris Collec.*, pp. 237, 238.)

1322, Edward the Third granted a license to the abbot of Beaubec in Normandy, to assign to the abbot of Furnes in Lancashire, the manor of Beaubec, near Drogheda, together with three messuages, sixty acres and a half of land, and 57s. and 9d annual rent, arising from Marinerstown (now Mornington), Rennelas, and Drogheda; also a fishery on the Boyne; saving, however, to the lords of the fee their proper services.

1348, Edward the Third, in a charter dated May 4th, recites and repeats the grant of Walter de Lacy, and says, moreover, that King Henry the Third had confirmed the same, and that the abbot of Beaubec, of the Cistercian Order, had afterwards, with the king's license, granted the aforesaid manor of Beaubec to the abbot of Furnes (*Harris*). At the confiscation of the abbey, Henry the Eighth granted "Great and Little Beaubec" to Sir John Draycot.\*

#### CALLIAGHTOWN.

Calliaghtown is a townland in the parish of Kilsharvan, barony of Lower Duleek. A cell was anciently here, which became dependant on the nunnery of St. Bridget of Odder. The cell is supposed to have stood near the well of Shallon, which was dedicated to St. Columb.

#### CLONARD.

About 1175 a monastery was erected here by Walter de Lacy, probably on the site of the ancient abbey of Clonard, under the patronage of St. Peter, for canons regular following the rule of St. Augustine. This monastery was richly endowed by de Lacy and other Anglo-Norman knights, and at the suppression of religious houses it was found to possess† one hundred and sixty messuages, with their gardens, nine hundred and twelve acres of arable land, one thousand two

\* D'Alton's *Drogheda*, vol. ii., p. 454.

† *Audit. Gen*, lapud Archdall.



hundred and eighty acres of pasture, one hundred and ninety-two of meadow, one hundred and eighty-four of underwood, and four hundred acres of moor. Many townlands and rectories in Kildare belonged to this monastery. Rev. Gerald Walsh was the last abbot. He died in 1540

In 1542 the Abbey of Clonard, and a vast portion of its possessions in Meath and Kildare, were granted by Henry the Eighth to Sir William Bermingham. In 1551, Edward the Sixth granted to Sir Thomas Cusack, Lord Chancellor of Ireland,\*

“The late Monastery of Clonard, in the county of Meath, the church, belfry, cemetery, hall, and garden, containing one and a half acres; within the site and precinct fourteen acres arable, and four acres pasture, parcel of the demesne, with the custom called the ‘towlbolle’, in the town of Clonard; Kylreny, sixty acres; Kylglasse, sixty acres; Ballyinluge, twenty acres; Ballyenfagha, ten acres; Kiltaleyn, thirty acres; Toboyen, sixty acres; the tithes and other profits of the vicarage of Kylren; the rectories Kyllaghan, Clonedaly, Tynam, in the county of Meath (the tithes of the lands of Toboyne excepted); to hold for ever, in fee-farm; rent £8 sterling. January 14, 5<sup>o</sup>”.

The following letter, dated “Westminster, November 23rd, 1551”, was written by the Lords of the Council in England to Sir Thomas Cusack, Lord Chancellor:†

“After our hertie comendations to your goode Lordshipe: Although in our comen letter to the Lord Deputie and the rest of the Counsaill, we have written what we thought meate beside the king’s majesty’s letter, touching the estate of that realme, yet doth your good service, with wysdome and successe, so much commendé you to us, that we cannot but lett you know, by this our special letter, not only that the king’s majestie hath a good and veray favorable opinion of you, but also that we ourselves think the same justly conceyved and well deserved of you, for declaration whereof we have obtained of the king’s majesty an increase of your fee, to the sum of £100 per yere, to beginne at Christmas nexte, and also, in fee farme, the site of the Abbey of Clonarde, with the vicarage of Kilrenie, and the parsonage

\* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 252.

† *Patent and Close Rolls*, p. 252. Edward the Sixth also wrote to him, rewarding him at the expense of the Church and the poor. See p. 258.

of Kyllegan and Tyghenam, to the which his Majesty's goodness, we doubt not but your contynuanee and proceeding shall be answerable; and so we heartilie praye you the rather that wee may have comforte, and continue your friends, and occasyon to doo your Lordship more good hereafter, and so we wyshe to you helth to serve and success in service.

“Your Lordship's loving friends,

WYNCHESTER,  
JOHN GATE,  
PEMBROKE,  
W. CECYLL,

NORTHUMBERLANDE,  
N. WOTTON,  
G. COBHAME,

BEDFORDE,  
F. HUNTINGDON,  
JO. MASON”.

In 1611, James the First granted\* to Sir William Loftus, Knight,

“The site, etc., of the late Monastery of Clonard, with a church, churchyard, hall, and garden of one and a half acres, within the site, and fourteen acres arable, and four acres pasture of the demesne; the custom of a toll bowle out of every brewing in Clonard; in Kilclasse, sixty acres arable and pasture; in Balliluge, twenty acres arable; in Killrene, sixty acres arable and pasture; in Ballienfagha, ten acres; in Killtaline, thirty acres; in Tobine, sixty acres; the tithes excepted. Total rent, £17 3s. 0d. Irish. To hold for ever, by the twentieth part of a knight's fee, for a fine of £10 Irish. 12 December, 8th”.

In 1612, James the First granted† to Sir Thomas Ashe, knight, *inter alia*,

“The tithes of the town of Tebohin, otherwise Tobin, parcel of the estate of the late monastery of Clonard; rent 13s. 4d. Irish”.

In the same year the king granted to Sir John Davies, knight, Attorney-General (*inter alia*),

“The town of Tebohine, sixty acres; the tithes excepted; parcel of the estate of the late monastery of Clonard; rent 13s 4d”.

When Archdall published his *Monasticon* in 1786, and for forty years subsequently, a considerable portion of the ruins of this celebrated place were standing. Archdall‡ thus describes them :

“The entrance into this abbey, on the west side, was through a

\* *Pat.* 8 James the First.

† *Pat.* 9 James the First.

‡ *Monasticon Hibernicum*, pp. 525, 526.



small building, with a lodge over it, which led into a small court; to the right of this court stand the kitchen and cellar, and over them the dormitory, ranging with the river, and overlooking the garden, which sloped from thence to the water's edge. Opposite the entrance was another small compartment, and adjoining it the refectory, which was carried for some length beyond the square, and joined the choir, a large and elegant building, most part of which still remains, and the windows are finished in a light Gothic style. On the south side of the altar, fixed in a wall, is a small double arch in the old Saxon manner, and divided by a pillar, through which iron bars were fixed; this is supposed to have been the founder's tomb. There are many remains of walls adjoining the other parts of the abbey, but in so ruinous a state that little information can be gleaned from them. At a little distance from the east window, in the burial ground, stands a small chapel, in which is a table monument, ornamented with the effigies of a man and woman in a praying posture, and dressed in the ruff of Queen Elizabeth's time; the sides are adorned with many coats of arms; that of the family of Dillon is most conspicuous".

These venerable ruins have disappeared, and all that now remains of Clonard are a square stone trough, a head which figures over the door of the present church tower, and a baptismal font. This last is thus described by Dr. Wilde :\*

"It is one of the finest, and, perhaps of its kind, one of the oldest in Ireland, and being of very hard, compact, gray limestone, or marble, is still in most wonderful preservation. It is three feet high, and stands on a square pedestal, the upper portion of which is highly ornamented with floral decorations, in eight compartments, and divided by a moulding from the basin, which formed out of a separate stone, the lower part of which corresponds in the number of its sides with the upper part of the shaft; but four of the panels contain figures of angels, the remaining ones being filled with the representations of trees or shrubs. The basin is octagonal in shape, two feet one inch in diameter, and highly sculptured externally, with figures in relief representing the Flight into Egypt, the Baptism in the Jordan, St. Finian, St. Peter, and various grotesque figures of monks of the Augustinian Order; which latter show that it was carved

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\* *Boyne and Blackwater*, pp. 64, 65.

since the days of Walter de Lacy, or the rebuilding of the monastery in 1175. . . . . The carvings on this curious relic are well worthy of inspection, and are a rude pictorial representation of Scriptural and Irish monastic history and hagiology. The bowl of this font is very deep, and measures about twenty inches across, a sufficient size to permit of immersion. . . . . There is an aperture in the bottom of it".

There is no denying the fact that our abbeys and ancient churches are fast disappearing. What time cannot conquer man is dismantling; and, after some years, we fear that scarce a vestige will remain of edifices which were once the pride and ornament of this country. Such being the case, it is the duty of every one who reverences the past to aid in preserving these venerable mementoes. These old monuments are not the property of any particular generation. We have but a life-interest in them, and we should preserve them with fidelity for those who come after us. They are the landmarks of our history, the footprints of days gone by, the memorials of an ancient people, and it would be a just reproach on our generation if any Vandal or Iconoclast were allowed to sweep them away. Every nation that has any pretension to civilization takes a laudable pride in preserving the relics of the past, for they are the heirlooms of history, the monuments and tombs of the dead. There was a day when many Protestants thought it a duty to deface and destroy our ecclesiastical architecture, when religious hatred urged them to drown every recollection of our ancient glory; there was a day when our churches, our abbeys, our crosses, and other monastic treasures were smashed or stolen, when to burn our manuscripts was a pastime, when to invest the past with doubt and obscurity was regarded as a proof of loyalty. That day, thank Heaven, is fast passing away, and now we are happy to admit, that few have done so much to enkindle antiquarian research, or have been more impartial, conscientious, and successful in their archaeological labours, than Drs Todd, Petrie, Graves, Reeves, and many others we could mention. Let us hope, then, that a better day is dawning upon us, and that Irishmen of every class and creed will unite *in saving from destruction the monuments of their forefathers.*



## CHAPTER XXX.

## COLPE.

COLPE is a parish in the barony of Duleek, which, including the ecclesiastical division of Marinerstown, or Mornington, fringes the southern bank of the Boyne to the mouth of that river. It derives its name from Colpa, one of the brothers of Heremon, the Milesian chief, who was drowned in the Boyne at the invasion of Ireland.\* The mouth of the Boyne, has, in consequence, been called "Inbher-Colptha" or "Colpa's Bay", and a huge mound, which his successful clansmen erected over his remains, is still pointed out in the neighbourhood of the church of Colpe. In 433, St. Patrick landed here, and went with his companions to the plain of Breagh, which occasioned his preaching at Tara and Teltown, and the conversion of Meath. During the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, the ferocious Scandinavians frequently landed here, and spread desolation over the country. In 1032† the Irish were defeated here by Sitric, the Danish chief, with the loss of three hundred men. About the year 1182,‡ Hugh de Lacy erected a monastery for Augustinian canons at Colpe, under the invocation of St. Columb, and made it a cell to the priory of Lhanthony, in Monmouthshire, which an ancestor of his had founded. Lacy endowed this establishment with the following:§

"The tithes of Coungerie and Donnycarney, the church of Marinerstown, with the tithes of the fishery; the church of Aney; the church of the valley of Clonalvey; the church of O'Garastown, county of Meath; those of Stamullen, Kilmessan, Kilcooley, Delvin, Killimethe, Kilsharvan, Dunboyne, Rathbeggan, Kilbruy, and Drumrath; the church of Ballymadun; the advow-

\* According to the *Four Masters* the Milesians arrived in Ireland 1700 years before Christ; O'Flaherty's *Chronology* places this event 1015 years before Christ.

† *Four Masters*.

‡ Ware's *Monasticon*.

§ D'Alton's *Drogheda*, vol. ii. p. 445. In reference to the religious houses founded and endowed by the Anglo-Normans, Dr. Lanigan observes: "Thus these adventurers and plunderers endeavoured to atone for their robberies in Ireland, committed not only on the laity, but likewise on the native clergy of the country"—vol. iv. p. 252.

son of the vicarage of Lillen; the land of Ballybin; and the land which Gilbert de Cornwall held in the lordship of Ratoath; with all the chapels and appurtenances of said churches, together with all the lands belonging to said ecclesiastical benefices, and the right of patronage of said churches, with their chapels and appurtenances".

At the suppression and confiscation of the monasteries, Colpe was found entitled to the following measures of corn :\*

"From Colpe-townland, eight couples or measures; from Newtown, one and a-half; from St. James's, one; Stagrenan, one; Pylleston and Ballymad, one; Ballangston, *alias* Braelaghton, four and a-half; Paynston, two and a-half; and the tithes of Weisle's farm in Mornanton. This abbey paid four marks annually proxies to the Bishop of Meath".

In 1588, the grange of Colpe, comprising one hundred and twenty acres, was granted to Henry Draycott,† Remembrancer of the Irish Exchequer. The great bulk of the estates of Lanthony and Duleek, in this locality, were given by King James to Sir Gerald Moore.

In 1603, King James granted to Sir George Carew,‡ knight, vice-chamberlain to the queen,

"The tithes of the fish of Mornanton, in the parish of Colpe, with the appurtenances in and through the said parish, being parcel of the rectory of Colpe; the estate of the late priory of Gloucester, in England".

The abbey and church of Colpe have been levelled. A Protestant church occupies a portion of the site. Archdall, writing in the last century, remarks§ of the ruins then existing: "The walls of a church in ruins are still to be seen here, the arches of which are both in the Saxon and Gothic style, and the east window appears much older than the other parts of the building, and made, as we suppose, a part of the abbey; on the north side is a small chapel, and to the south are two other chapels, one of which is at present the burial place of the family of Bellew". Not a trace now remains of either abbey or church.

\* King apud Archdall.

† D'Alton's *Drogheda*, vol. ii. p. 446.

‡ *Patent Rolls*, 1 James the First. § *Monasticon Hibernicum*, p. 528.



## PRIORY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, DROGHEDA.

The Priory of St. John the Baptist was founded in the twelfth century, on the south or Meath side of the Boyne. The founder is supposed to have been Walter de Lacy,\* who, at all events, was a liberal benefactor to it. In August, 1210, King John is said to have held a parliament here. This priory was an hospital for the sick and infirm, and to augment its sphere of charity and benevolence, numerous bequests were given to it in trust for the afflicted and the distressed. However, neither the sacred cause of charity, nor the crying wants of the people, could shelter this house from the sacrilegious robbery of Henry the Eighth. The last prior was Rev. Thomas Dawe, who, on the 26th July, 1539, was obliged to surrender to the royal plunderer upwards of a hundred acres of land, besides closes, messuages, orchards, gardens, cottages, and mills—the property of the poor, the religious bequests of the wealthy, by which suffering humanity was relieved and consolation imparted. As a compensation to the prior a pension of £3 was allowed him, payable out of the lands of Priorton and Killartre, in the county of Louth, part of the possessions of the priory. How long faith was kept with the abbot we are not informed, for doubtless in the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth the only guarantee for the continuance of his pension was apostacy. After the suppression of the priory a part of the possessions was granted to Richard Netterville. The vast portion was granted by Edward the Sixth, in consideration of a fine, to James Sedgrave, a merchant of Dublin. At a rent of 15s. he acquired,†

“The house, site, ambit, and precinct of the late hospital or priory of St. John the Baptist, near the town of Drogheda, with all the houses, edifices, chapels, churches, cemeteries, lands, tenements, tithes, altarages, oblations, and other hereditaments, as well temporal as spiritual, therunto belonging; and all the messuages and lands called St. Leonarde's land, as well within the franchises of Drogheda as without; and the fields and ham-

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\* De Lacy made this priory a cell to the priory of Kilmainham.

† *Calendar*, p. 392.

lets of Curragh, in the parish of Grallaghe, Crofty, Kyllertre, *alias* Killorton, Priorton, and Lowthe".

#### HOSPITAL OF ST. JAMES, DROGHEDA.

An hospital was founded here, on the Meath side of the Boyne, in the thirteenth century, outside St. James's gate. In 1302, Richard is recorded as prior of this house.\* This hospital, like others of its kind, rendered invaluable services to the public by the hospitality which was dispensed to the poor and to strangers. It was not only an alms-house, but an infirmary for the sick. The Commissioners of Henry the Eighth suppressed this house of mercy, and confiscated the property of the poor. In 1607, King James the First granted† (*inter alia*) to Henry Piers, of Dublin, the King's secretary, and John Cusack, of Trubley, in Meath county, "the site of the late hospital of St. James, near Drogheda, and sixty acres arable thereto belonging; rent, £1".

In 1611, King James granted‡ to Richard Nugent, Lord Delvin:

"The site, etc., of the hospital of St. James, with sixty acres arable thereto belonging, in or near Drogheda; rent, £1 6s. 8d."

#### CARMELITE FRIARY, DROGHEDA.

The Carmelite Friary was founded in the thirteenth century by the inhabitants of Drogheda, on an elevated site on the Meath side of the Boyne. It was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel, and the parish has been ever since called St. Mary's. From D'Alton's *Drogheda*§ we gather the following:

"It was early subjected by Walter de Lacy to the priory of St. Cienan of Duleek, and is said to have derived a portion of its support from the tolls on butter entering the town at St. John's gate, the ruin of which is still denominated the Butter Gate. De Lacy afterwards granted this church, with Duleek, in frankalmoine, to the house of Lanthony near Gloucester, which latter donation was subsequently confirmed by King John, Edward the Second, and Edward the Fourth. By inquisition taken in 1307,

\* D'Alton's *Drogheda*, vol. i. p. 135.

† *Pat.* 9, James the First.

‡ *Pat.* 5, James the First.

§ Vol. i. pp. 42 and 43.



it appears that the corporation had theretofore granted to this establishment eighty square virgates of land, each virgate containing from twenty to forty acres, as local custom prescribed. In 1310, the Carmelites of this house had a further grant, which is of record in the Tower of London; and in 1345, Richard Fitz William, Mayor of Drogheda, had license to assign four acres of land adjoining the same, for increasing and maintaining lights before the statue of the Blessed Virgin here. In 1376, when King Edward the Third directed the remarkable summons whereby he required representatives of the clergy, counties, and boroughs of Ireland to attend a Parliament to be held at Westminster, the Bishop of Meath sent 'Master Bartholomew Dullard', rector of this church, as the representative of his lordship and his clergy, to advise the crown on the state of Ireland, but reserving any power of taxing the said diocese. In 1393, King Richard the Second granted the advowson of this church, and of the chapel of St. Nicholas, which was then thereto annexed, to the prior and convent of Lanthony. There were three other chapelries at this time also annexed to this house, respectively dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, St. Catherine, and St. Patrick, as is proved by a donation of bells presented to each of them by William Symcock and Agnes his wife, about the year 1412. One of the acts passed in the Parliament of Drogheda in 1468 confirmed a grant of chief rents to this house".

In 1605, King James granted\* to Sir Garret Moore, privy counsellor (*inter alia*), "the rectory and tithes of St. Mary's in Drogheda".

In Montgomery's visitation the benefice of St. Mary's was valued at £6 13s. 4d. He found the church repaired. Bishop Usher values St. Mary's at twenty nobles sterling.

In the days of the Confederation the Carmelites seem to have recovered their old monastery and to have celebrated divine worship in its ancient splendour and solemnity. When the legions of Cromwell entered Drogheda, although promise† of quarter had been given, men, women, and children were slaughtered indiscriminately. Neither age nor sex was spared, the streets ran with blood for five days, and

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\* Pat. 3, James the First.

† Letter of Cromwell to Hon. William Lenthall, Speaker of the English Parliament, September 17th, 1649. See also Johnston's *History of Drogheda*.

the few inhabitants that escaped the sword were shipped off in slavery to Barbadoes.

#### PASTORS OF ST. MARY'S PARISH.

In 1376, Rev. Bartholomew Dullard was Pastor.

1386, Rev. Robert Sutton was Pastor of St. Mary's, and in this year he exchanged with Rev. Roger Winter, Pastor of St. Patrick's, Slane. (Rot. Pat. de anno 9, Ric. II.)

In 1399, King Henry the Fourth granted to the Prior and Convent of Lanthony the advowson of St. Mary's and the chapel of St. Nicholas annexed to it. (Pat. 1, Henry the Fourth.) From this period to the Reformation the parish was most probably attended by the Carmelite Friars. After this period we meet with a blank of one hundred and fifty years, which it would be hopeless now to attempt to fill up.

In 1690, King James the Second presented the Rev. Dr. James Cusack to the parish of Duleek and the vicarage of St. Mary of Drogheda. On the 13th of July, 1704, the Rev. Thomas Reilly was registered, at the Tholsel of Drogheda, parish priest of St. Mary's, Drogheda, Colpe, and Mornington. He had been ordained at Bealis, county Meath, by Dr. Patrick Plunkett, Bishop of Meath, in the year 1671. In the year of the registration he lived at Drogheda, and had for sureties, according to the Act of Parliament, Mr. Coleman, Drogheda, tanner, and Henry Warren, do., merchant.

After the death or transfer of Rev. Mr. Reilly, we find Rev. Dr. Cusack again parish priest of St. Mary's. He lived to an extreme old age, and, in accordance with a custom by no means unusual at that period, he had his grave marked out and his tomb inscribed, in order the better to prepare himself for the judgments of God and the long home of eternity. He sleeps in the Carmelite churchyard, and over him is a horizontal tomb with the following inscription:

Here lieth the body of the  
Rev. Dr. JAMES CUSACK,  
Parish Priest of St. Mary's,  
Drogheda, 1744.  
Pray for him.



The Rev. Dr. JAMES CUSACK  
 Departed this life in March, 1752,  
 Aged about 90 years.

The Rev. James Kieran is supposed to have succeeded. He built the old Catholic parish church\* in John's Lane in 1763.

*Rev. Mathew Boylan succeeded.* This pastor belonged to the ancient and respectable family of Micknanstown. He was buried in the churchyard of Moorechurch, along with his brother, the Rev. Nicholas Boylan, of Lazar's Hill, Dublin. A tomb has been erected over them with the following inscription:

Erected by Mr. John Boylan  
 To the memory of his uncles

The Rev. MATHEW BOYLAN, P.P., of St. Mary's, Drogheda,  
 And the Rev. NICHOLAS BOYLAN, Lazar's Hill, Dublin;  
 Also his brother, the Rev. NICHOLAS BOYLAN,  
 Parish Priest of the Seven Churches, county Wicklow.

This venerable house has given many excellent priests to the Church, and has been foremost in supporting Catholic charities.

A Rev. Mr. Cummins is said to have succeeded.

*The Rev. Patrick Moore† succeeded.* This pastor was transferred in December, 1782, from Kilberry. In the visitation of Dr. Plunkett to St. Mary's, on the 19th of August, 1788, he found "six schools" in the union. Father Moore died on the 17th of June, 1793.

*The Rev. William Harford succeeded.* This pastor‡ was appointed on the evening of the death of his predecessor, and on the 19th of October, 1795, was made vicar-forane of Meath, and master of conference for the district of Duleek. He died in August, 1813, and was buried in the churchyard of Ardcath. Over his remains a monument has been erected with the following inscription:

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\* Dalton's *Drogheda*, vol. i., p. 52. Between the death of Dr. Cusack in 1752, and the succession of Rev. Patrick Moore in December, 1782, the Rev. Mathew Boylan was pastor; but of the other priests mentioned above, viz., Rev. James Kieran and Rev. Mr. Cummins, I have not the same certainty.

† Unpublished diaries and papers of Dr. Plunkett. For more about Rev. Mr. Moore, see pastors of Kilberry and Navan.

‡ Rev. Mr. Harford was born in Knockisland, parish of Duleek.

This stone was erected by  
 Bartholomew Harford of Tankardstown  
 as an humble tribute of his affection for  
 the memory of his deceased brother,  
 The Rev. WILLIAM HARFORD,  
 Parish Priest of St. Mary's, Drogheda,  
 who departed this life the 14th  
 day of August, 1813,  
 aged 69 years.

*Rev. Christopher Halligan succeeded.* This pastor was translated from Skryne—(see Pastors of Skryne). . He was translated to the union of Stamullen on the 1st of November, 1814.

*The Rev Michael Callan succeeded.* This holy and zealous priest was born at Beabeg, and was ordained by Dr. Plunkett in the chapel of Navan, in May, 1782. After his return from the Continent, whither he went to study philosophy, theology, and the sacred Scriptures, he officiated as curate in Castletown-Geoghegan and other places. At the close of 1806, he was appointed parish priest of Kilbeg, and, on the 17th of June, 1807, he was translated by Dr. Plunkett to the parish of Frankford, King's County. On the 10th of November, 1814, he was translated from Frankford to St. Mary's, Drogheda, and had for successor the Rev. James O'Rafferty, promoted from the curacy of Navan, afterwards parish priest of Tullamore and vicar-general of Meath. Father Callan built the present chapel of St. Mary's, and celebrated Mass in it for the first time on Christmas morning, 1820.\* He was a very exemplary and charitable priest, and his memory is still held in the greatest reverence. He died in March, 1837, and was buried in the chapel of St. Mary's. A marble monument commemorates him in the following words :

Juxta hoc monumentum positæ sunt reliquiæ  
 MICHAELIS CALLAN,  
 de Sanctæ Mariæ Parochia olim Pastoris. In ministerio  
 Sacerdotale ad annum quinquagessimum laboravit  
 fidelitate, pietate, morumque simplicitate insignis

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\* The present pastor, then a boy, served this mass.



tandem, senio confectus, laboribusque fractus  
 obdormivi tin Domino, pridie Kalendas  
 Aprilis, anno Salutis 1837,  
 ætatis suæ vero 84.  
 Requiescat in pace.

*Rev. M. Donnelan*\* succeeded. He died at Torquay, in 1847, whither he journeyed to improve his health. He died after a lengthened illness, universally regretted.

*The Very Rev. Thomas Mathews* succeeded. Present pastor was born at Colpe, studied in Navan and Maynooth, and officiated as curate in Slane and Duleek. He is vicar-forane of Meath, and master of conference for the district of Duleek. He has built the present handsome chapel of Mornington on the site of its predecessor, and erected the present convent of Mercy. He has also established a flourishing Young Men's Society under the patronage of St. Mary, the patroness of the parish.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### DULEEK.

IN 1182, Hugh De Lacy erected, for Augustinian Canons, a monastery at Duleek, under the invocation of St. Kienan, which he made a cell to the priory of Lanthony, near Gloucester.† Whether this monastery was a reëdification of the original abbey of St. Kienan, or a distinct foundation, we are not told. The founder endowed this house with princely possessions, and, at the confiscation of religious houses, it was found to possess the tithes of the rectories or parishes of Marre, Stamullen, Ardcath, Clonalwaise, Macetown, Dowth, Tymoole, Kilmessan, Rathkenny, Duleek, Kilcarvan, Rathconnel in the county of Westmeath, Castletown-Delvin, Killowan, Creganstown, part of the rectory of Mullingar, Kilcooley near Trim, Nall, Drumrath, Grallagh, Cologe, Hollywood, the chapels of Archestowne and Cloghran, and

\* Father Donnelan had been curate to Father Callan.

† Ware's *Monasticon*; Lanigan, vol. iv., p. 252.

sundry other possessions in the counties of East Meath, West Meath, and Dublin.\* In the reign of James the First the immense possessions of this abbey were granted to Sir Gerald Moore.†

#### HOSPITAL OF DULEEK.

In addition to the other great religious foundations of Duleek, there was an hospital for the sick, which was liberally endowed. In 1403, King Henry the Fourth granted the guardianship of this hospital to Thomas Scargyll, together with sundry other gardens in said town, being part of the possessions of St. Mary of Odder, and all profits, etc., belonging to the said hospital, then seized in the King's hands.‡

On the 29th of June, 1419, King Henry the Fifth granted to John Tenour, the custodium of the house, called Le Magdelyns in Duleek, with all lands, rents, etc., thereunto belonging, and then seized in the king's hands, to hold the same whilst they continued in that state, free of all rents and taxes.§ This house and its possessions were swept away in the confiscations of Henry the Eighth.

On the 3rd of July, 1619, died Jennet, Lady Dowager Howth, daughter to Dowdall of Athlumny castle, Navan, and widow of William Bathe of Athcarne. During her widowhood she conveyed|| the town and lands of Kenocke in the parish of Duleek, and one house on Merchant's Quay, Dublin, to Sir John Bellew of Bellewstown in Meath, knight, and others, for the maintenance of two poor houses in Duleek, the one consisting of four men, and the other of three women, for ever.

In the leading street of the village of Duleek, situated on a solid square of masonry about five feet in height, up which is a flight of steps, surrounded by a green knoll, and encompassed with ruins, stands one of those venerable sculptured crosses so emblematic of the ancient faith, and which were

\* Archdall's *Monasticon*.

† Harris's *Tables, King*, p. 208, *et seq.* The confiscations of Duleek and its parochial history since the Reformation, are reserved for the next vol.

‡ Pat. 4, Henry the Fourth, also Pat. 5, Henry the Fourth, dated at Kells, the 4th of May.

§ Pat. 7, Henry the 5th.

|| Lodge's *Peerage*, vol. iv., p. 58.



once so common in Ireland. The cross of Duleek is eight or nine feet in height. Its erect shaft has four sides, and, in place of a cross-bar, it is encompassed by a ring or belt having corresponding sides. Over the belt facing the cardinal points are figures of our Saviour representing Him under different mysteries. On the belt are figures of angels; the one on the west exhibits the "Sacred Heart". Under the cross-bar, on the north side, are figures of St. Mary Magdalen, St. James, and St. Thomas. On the south are figures of St. Andrew, St. Catherine, and St. Stephen. On the east is a mitred figure holding keys in his hand, over which is inscribed "Sancte Petre". Lower down is a Bishop, holding a cross, over which is written "Sancte Patrice". Underneath is a Bishop, with crozier in hand, over whom is inscribed the name of the first Bishop of Duleek, "Sancte Kienane". Nothing could be more felicitous than these representations on the east side. Above is Christ; beneath is His vicegerent on Earth, the Roman Pontiff in the person of Peter; beneath again is the Apostle of the Irish nation, deriving jurisdiction from Christ through Peter; and underneath is St. Kienan, the first Bishop of Duleek; symbolising the beautiful subordination of the various orders and offices in the Church.

On the west, under the belt, are the initials "W. Bathe, J. Dovda": under these names is a shield, beneath which is the following inscription:

"This cross was Buildd by Jenet Dowdall, Wife to William Bathe, of Athcarne, Justice of Her Majesties (Queen Elizabeth) Court of Common Pleees, for Him and Her. Ano 1601. He deceased the 15th of Oc., 1599. Buried in the Church of Duleek. Whose Soules I pray God take to His mercie".

Another cross, still more massive, stands still by the wayside facing the entrance to Annsbrook, in the parish of Duleek.

There is an old bridge across the Nannywater, adjoining Duleek, on which is a slab with the following inscription:

"This bridge and the causewaye were repaired and buildd by William Bathe of Athcarne, Justice, and Genet Dowdall, his wife, in the year 1587, whose soules God take in His mercie. Amen".

## CHAPTER XXXII

## DUNBOYNE.

DUNBOYNE, or *Dun-Buinne*, is understood to signify the "fort or dun on the yellow river". It is at present a union comprising the parishes of Dunboyne and Kilbride, coëxtensive with the barony of Dunboyne. After the subjugation of Meath by de Lacy, Dunboyne was granted to the Petits, who became barons of Dunboyne and Mullingar. In 1227, Dr. Ralph Petit, bishop of Meath, founded a priory of the Blessed Virgin at Mullingar, and endowed it with the townland of Kilbraynan or Kilbrena, in the parish of Dunboyne, the rectory of Dunboyne, the tithes and other ecclesiastical profits. Early in the fourteenth century, in the reign of Edward the Second, Thomas Butler, brother of the first Earl of Ormond, married Sinolda, heiress of Sir William Petit, baron of Dunboyne and Mullingar, and thus the property and title passed into the Butlers.

Dunboyne was once a borough town of considerable trade and importance, and as early as 1423, we find the Portrieve and commons of Dunboyne, with all the able men of the bailiwick, ordered to meet the Lord Justice at Trim for the purpose of defending the English Pale. The causes which have led to the decline of this flourishing town were the extinction of our national independence, and in latter years the new system of political economy, viz., pasturage and the consolidation of farms.

## RELIGIOUS HOUSES.

There was a monastery at Dunboyne, founded in the townland of Kilbraynan or Kilbrena, which belonged to the priory of Mullingar. The ruins of this religious house stood up to seventy years ago, when the walls were ruthlessly torn down. Some of the old inhabitants still remember them.

A monastery at *Salestown*, which seems to have belonged to the abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin, some of the walls of which still stand.



A monastery at *Portane*, parish of Dunboyne, the walls of which remained up to fifty or sixty years ago, when they were levelled and the stones carted away. It belonged to the Abbey of Christ Church, Dublin.

A convent stood at the west end of the present cemetery of Dunboyne.

A convent at *Cushinstown*, parish of Dunboyne; some of the walls remain.

### CHURCHES OF DUNBYONE.

In addition to the parish church of Dunboyne there were chapelries at Vessington, Rathleek, Jarretstown, Loughsallagh, Clonee, Portane, Cushinstown, Salestown, and Kilbraynan. In the parish of Kilbride there was the parish church, and a chapelry at Belgree, which belonged to the convent at Lismullen.

The parish church of Dunboyne was dedicated to St. Peter\* and St. Paul. All that remains of the old building is the belfry, a square tower about seventy-four feet in height. A Protestant church at present occupies the site. The baptismal font is in the church, and another, more ancient, marks the grave of a priest.

The chapel of *Vessington* has been uprooted, and even the tombstones were carried off and converted to profane uses. To crown the sacrilegious desecration, a ditch has been constructed through the graveyard, from which the skulls and bones of the dead can be seen protruding. A cart-load of human skeletons from this cemetery was sold in Dublin about thirty years ago. No language can be too strong in reprobating such cruel, such heart-rending barbarism; and in no cemetery throughout the Christian world dare such indignity be perpetrated with impunity, unless in the holy graveyards of poor down-trodden Ireland. All that remains

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\* These two apostles are still the Patron Saints of the parish. The *Four Masters* record the death of a bishop at Dunboyne: "1306, Donough O'Flaherty, Bishop of Killala, the most eminent of the Irish for piety, died at Dunbuinne, on his way to Dublin, and was interred with honour at Mullingar, in the house of the Blessed Virgin Mary". Ware places this event at 1303. See Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 650.

now of the chapel and cemetery of Vessington is a green mound. Two old thorn trees mark the site of the altar, and the field is still called "Chapel-field".

*Rathleek.* A chapel stood on the hill of Rathleek, the ruins of which remained up to forty years ago. It was a very extensive burying-ground. A ditch has been constructed round a portion of the hill, nearly every shovelful of which consisted of human remains. Gold coins, celts, and flint arrow-heads were found here in 1840.

*Jarretstown.* The chapel has been levelled, and the stones carried off. Over the spot which tradition points out as the site of the altar, a hoary ash tree of vast dimensions spreads its venerable arms. There were interments here up to forty years ago. *The wall enclosing the cemetery has been taken away, and the cattle graze over the graves of the dead.*

*Loughsallagh.\** The church of Loughsallagh was dedicated to St. Michael. The walls have been levelled. St. Michael's well is in the churchyard. Stations were made at it up to fifty years ago. For the last twenty-four years it has been discontinued as a burying ground.†

*Clonee.* The chapel of Clonee has been levelled. Not a trace of it remains. There was a cemetery attached. The yard of the present police barrack occupies a portion of the ancient site. The locality is still called "the Churchyard", and named such in the leases of the adjoining houses and premises.

*Portane.* All traces of the monastery and chapel have been uprooted. The prebends of Christ Church, Dublin, are the lessors.

*Cushinstown.* The convent and chapel uprooted. A portion of a wall remains.

\* *I.e.* "Lake of the Sallows", which burst forth 1410 years before the birth of Christ. See O'Donovan's *Four Masters*, at A.M. 3790, A.D. 738 and 1122.

† A young girl that died of fever was interred here about twenty-four years ago, and, on the morning after, a portion of her hair was observed in the thorns of the ditch that separates the cemetery from the high road. This led to an examination, and it was found that her remains had been taken up. Since then there have been very few interments in Loughsallagh. The present pastor of Dunboyne attended that girl in her last illness.



*Salestown.* The chapel stood on a moat or mound. The walls were pulled down and the stones carried off. A cemetery still here.

*Kilbraynan.* The townland of Kilbraynan stretched along the north-west of the town of Dunboyne. The name has, in latter years, been absorbed in that of Dunboyne, but, amongst the old inhabitants it is still contradiistinguished. The extensive ruins of the monastery and church are remembered by some of the old people. All traces have been torn up.

Surely if the Tartars under Tamerlane, or a horde of the most savage Goths or Vandals, passed over a Christian country, they could not have left behind them more traces of their barbarism or of their fanatical hatred of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, than men boasting of their Christianity, have perpetrated in Dunboyne. Churches were uprooted, monasteries levelled to the ground, cemeteries desecrated, the very bones of the departed—the poor fragments of our common humanity, which the most ruthless pagan holds in respect—outraged, disintombed, and vended for filthy lucre. Such conduct deserves the malediction of God and the marked execration of man. Let the dead rest, and envy them not the green humid sod under which they sleep in peace.

*Kilbride.* The church of Kilbride is separated into chancel and nave by a choir arch. The nave is fifty-five feet three inches by seventeen feet one inch. The chancel is twenty-three feet in length. The choir-arch is eight feet seven inches to the vertex, by five feet two inches at the base. This arch is one of the most ornamented and beautiful of its kind of all the existing ruins in the diocese of Meath. The walls of the church are ten or eleven feet in height, and are clothed in ivy. There were two ancient monumental crosses in the grave yard, which were stolen about thirty-six years ago. The inscriptions asked the prayers of the faithful for the deceased to whose memory they were erected. There is a tradition in the parish that St. Brigid founded a church here.

*Belgree.* The townland of Belgree, in the parish of Kilbride, belonged to the convent of Lismullen. There was a chapel here, the walls of which were torn down, but the

foundation remains. The field in which it stood is still called "chapel field".

### THE PARISH OF DUNBOYNE.

The parish of Dunboyne belonged to the priory of the Blessed Virgin, of Mullingar. The abbey of St. Mary's, Dublin, the priory of Kilmainham, the abbey of Thomas Court, and the priory of the Holy Trinity, had estates and chapelries in this parish.

In 1385, the king granted to John Porter the custodium of one messuage and two acres in Dunboyne, called "les Nunesouches" (*Pat.* 9, Richard the Second).

In 1399, leave of absence was granted to William Pyrton, vicar of Dunboyne, to proceed to Rome on diocesan business during one year. He was entitled to receive the ecclesiastical fruits during that period (*Pat.* 1, Henry the Fourth).

In 1400, the parishes of Dunboyne and Kilbride were united.

In 1408, leave of absence for two years was granted to William Lullyngton, vicar of Dunboyne (*Pat.* 10, Henry the Fourth).

On the surrender of John Petyt, last prior of St. Mary's, Mullingar, the 28th of November, thirty-first of King Henry the Eighth, the abbey was found to own the following\* in Dunboyne:

A messuage called the parsonage, and forty acres of arable land in Dunboyne, with the altarages and other ecclesiastical profits, called the Door of St. Peter's Church in Dunboyne; annual value, besides reprises, £6 13s. 4d.; the prior was also seised of the rectory of said church.

Another inquisition, twenty-ninth of Elizabeth, finds that the prior was also seised of three acres of meadow in Pierston, in the parish of Dunboyne, near the river of Rathbegan, annual value 4s.; and of five acres arable on the north of the said meadow, annual value, 3s. 4d.

1561, license† to Rodolph Knight and George Foxley to alienate the tithes of grain of the towns and lands of Clony, the Bride Street, the Long Tithe, Foleston, Harbarteston, the two

\* Archdall's *Monasticon*.

† Calendar of the *Patent Rolls*, 461.



Ballinacolles, Caelston in the parish of Kilbride, the Bewton, Preston, Rayeston, Dardiston, with a parcel of Fiddorth, a parcel of Babeston and Irishton, and a quarter of Belg, amounting to thirty four couples of grain by the year, belonging to the rectory of Dunboyne, in the county of Meath, parcel of the possessions of the late abbey of Mullingar, in the county of Westmeath. April 25th, fourth of Elizabeth.

In 1573, Queen Elizaboth ordered a lease\* in reversion to be made to Robert Loftus, of a moiety of the rectory of Dunboyne. In 1603, King James the First granted† most of the church property of Dunboyne to Richard Cooke, Esq., Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In Bishop Montgomery's visitation, the chancel of the old church‡ was in ruin.

In Usher's visitation the rectory was valued at "six marks; a manse house, and another house of office, all ruined, which the lessee is tied to repair".

#### PASTORS OF DUNBOYNE.

The Rev. Robert Ford, parish priest of Dunboyne, died in May, 1609, and was buried in the cemetery of Kilbride, south of the old church. Over him a horizontal tomb§ was erected with the following inscription:

Here lieth the body of  
ROBERT FORD, parish priest of Dunboyne,  
Who deceased the 30th day  
of November, Anno Domini 1609.

In 1690, the Rev. Michael Plunkett, "one of the masters

\* *Calendar*, p. 554.

† *Pat.* 1, James the First, too long to be quoted.

‡ The celebrated Hugh Brady, Protestant bishop of Meath, was interred in the chancel of the old church of Dunboyne. He was a native of Dunboyne, apostatised, and was appointed to the see of Meath by Queen Elizabeth. He died February 13th, 1583. His tomb seems to have been brushed away by the Protestant architects of the present Protestant church of Dunboyne.

§ I discovered this tomb by accident. Attending a funeral, I noticed that they placed the coffin on a green mound. I ascertained that at all interments the same was done. I had the clay taken away, and about one foot under the surface this tomb appeared. Without knowing it, the people were in reality paying a traditional tribute of respect to the grave of an old priest. This is done in nearly every Irish graveyard.

of our chancery of Ireland", was presented by James the Second to the rectory of Dunboyne. He was transferred to Ratoath before 1704. See Pastors of Ratoath.

In 1704, the Rev. James Trenor was registered at Trim as "Popish priest of Dunboyne and Kilbride". He was ordained at Concro, county Monaghan, by Dr. Patrick Tyrrell, bishop of Clogher, 1676. In the year of the registration he was fifty years of age, and lived at Pierce-town.

In the same year, the Rev. Nicholas Plunkett was registered at Trim as "Popish priest of Greenoge". He was ordained at Rome, in 1695, by Gasper Carpineus, bishop of Albano, lived at Dunboyne the year of the registration, and was thirty-six years of age.

*The Rev. Thomas Plunkett succeeded.* He was buried in the churchyard of Dunboyne, and on his headstone is inscribed:

Here lieth the body of  
THOMAS PLUNKETT, parish priest of Dunboyne,  
Who departed this life  
the 9th day of ———, in the  
year of our Lord, Anno Domini, 1722.  
Miserere mei.

*The Rev. Dr. Jennett succeeded.* His name, and that of his predecessor, were on the list of deceased priests commemorated in the parish of Dunboyne up to a few years ago. He is said to have been interred in Dunboyne. His tombstone has disappeared.

*The Rev. Michael Moore succeeded.* He was a venerable priest, and his name is still familiarly and affectionately mentioned amongst the parishioners. The chapel of Dunboyne was at that time outside the town, on the townland of Kilbraynan, along the road leading to Ratoath. The locality is still called "the place of the old chapel". Father Moore lived opposite the chapel, on the other side of the road, in a neat cottage, which was given him by the then Catholic baron of Dunboyne. After the apostacy of the Butlers, the pastors removed to the present parochial residence, and got a farm of fourteen acres from the Wilsons of



Roosk. The house in which Father Moore lived has been levelled, and the old chapel was burned in 1798. There is a chalice still used in the parish of Dunboyne, with an inscription round the pedestal, "this chalice belongs to the parish of Dunboyne, Rev. Michael Moore, pastor, 1770". Father Moore died, at an advanced age, on the 10th of December, 1782, and was buried in the churchyard of Dunboyne. It is said that a headstone was placed at his grave, and that it has also been taken away.

*The Rev. Patrick Smith succeeded.* This pastor was born in the parish of Kells, of a respectable old family,\* studied in France, and after officiating for a time as curate, was appointed by Dr. Chevers parish priest of Grangegeith and Dowth. In 1776, the Rev. John Martin was translated from Ardraccan to Athboy, and in the same year the Rev. Patrick Smith was transferred from Grangegeith to Ardraccan. On the death of Father Moore, he was translated to Dunboyne, and continued there till June, 1787, when, shocked and disgusted at the apostacy of Lord Dunboyne, and the fearful scandal which was given, he resigned his parish and awaited a vacancy. When the Very Rev. Thomas Flood, parish priest of Kells, died in July 1790, the friends of the Rev. Patrick Smith sought to have him appointed, and the Earl of Bective wrote several times to Dr. Plunkett for the same object. The bishop respectfully refused, and appointed the Rev. Laurence Eugene O'Reilly, parish priest of Kildalkey, to the vacant parish. A faction was got up in Kells to close the chapel doors, and resist the appointment of Father O'Reilly. This led to the suspension of Father Smith, and his appeal to the Primate. After being condemned by the Provincial Synod of Armagh, and in 1792 by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rome, he presented himself on the 21st of June, same year, at visitation at the chapel of Girley, and in presence of the bishops, priests, and flock, he asked pardon for his late schismatical conduct, expressed sorrow for it, and professed dutiful obedience to Dr. Plunkett.†

\* He was nearly related to Dr. Plunkett, and this fact demonstrates how perfectly disinterested the bishop was in punishing him for deserting Dunboyne at a time so well calculated to call forth his pastoral zeal.

† Unpublished diaries and papers of Dr. Plunkett.

He was appointed in 1793 to the parish of Castlepollard, county Westmeath, where he died on the 8th of May, 1796.

*The Rev. James Connell succeeded.* This venerable priest was born on the banks of the Nannywater, in the union of Stamullen, studied in Flanders, and officiated as curate for four years in the parish of Navan,\* under Dr. Plunkett. On his appointment to Dunboyne he found the parish in deplorable confusion in consequence of the melancholy fall of the bishop of Cork (Lord Dunboyne), and the unpardonable desertion of the Rev. Mr. Smith, at a time so perilous to the faith and morals of the people. Father Connell was peculiarly adapted to stem this tide of evil, and to grapple with consequent abuses. He was a holy zealous priest, ever attentive to the spiritual wants of his flock, and ever ready to succour them in their temporal distresses. To great decision of character and an unblemished life were superadded a high order of intellect, considerable popular talents, and a happy familiarity with the humblest of his people. He was moreover a sterling patriot, and took an active part in all the popular movements of his day. Hence, in a brief period, under his zealous supervision, chaos in Dunboyne was reduced to order, and the contagion of scandal was effectually counteracted.

In the visitation of Dr. Plunkett to Dunboyne on the 10th of August, 1788, he found "one chapel repaired, and two schools in operation".

✕ Early in the memorable summer of 1798 a considerable military force entered Meath on the Dublin side, and halted at the cross-roads of Kilbride. There was a regiment of Highlanders in this division, and the famous "Black Horse", so execrated by the peasantry, in consequence of the wanton cruelties which tarnished the name of that corps. Adjacent to the cross-roads, on a swell of ground, stood the Catholic chapel of Kilbride, crowning which is a little iron cross, which on this occasion was converted into a target for the amusement of the soldiers. After a time the signal to "fall in" was given, and, under the guidance of a bigoted local ma-

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\* His name is still commemorated on the list of the deceased curates of Navan.



gistrate, the division was soon in full march for Dunboyne. A kind-hearted Protestant gentleman, knowing perhaps more than he wished to communicate, rode in haste to the residence of Father Connell, and advised him to fly for his life, as the military were coming, and there was no knowing what they might do. Father Connell had just time to escape by a back window into his little garden, and through the garden hedge into the woods of Roosk, when the advanced guard appeared at the cross-roads of Loughsallagh. On the arrival of the military, they first searched the house and premises for the priest, and not finding him, they plundered his humble home of all they could carry off, and then set fire to the house and furniture. They next marched to the town of Dunboyne, less than a quarter of a mile westward, levelled the Catholic chapel, burned the town, and committed innumerable excesses. On the 6th of June of this year, Dr. Plunkett made his annual visitation of Dunboyne, and he says: "Here I found the chapel, and the house of the parish priest, and almost all the houses of the town, four or five excepted, burnt. Mr. Connell did not appear to me, and I withdrew with grief". Dr. Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, complained to the Lord Lieutenant of the brutal conduct of the soldiers, and succeeded in getting £100 as compensation to the inhabitants for the loss of their chapel. Previous to the completion of the new chapel, Mass was celebrated sometimes in a roofless shed attached to the parochial house, sometimes in a barn at the Mayne, and at other times in one of the out-houses attached to the old brewery of Dunboyne. The site of the present chapel was procured from the Butlers. Advantage was subsequently taken by some members of that family of a flaw in the lease, and a lawsuit was about taking place, until,

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NOTE.—Lord Dunboyne, during his apostacy, endeavoured to cultivate friendly relations with Father Connell, and was most charitable to the poor. On one occasion, driving in his carriage through Dunboyne, he observed a tradesman fall from a scaffold. He instantly sprang from his seat, ran to where the man was lying, and seeing death imminent, *gave him absolution*. The unfortunate bishop was afterwards reconciled to the Catholic Church by Father Gahan, and bequeathed a considerable property to the College of Maynooth, as a reparation for his scandal. A lawsuit took place between his friends and the trustees of the College, which terminated in a compromise.

at the recommendation of Daniel O'Connell,\* a compromise was effected by giving them £200. Father Connell died, full of years and good works, in September, 1827, and was buried in the new chapel of Dunboyne. On one of the walls is a slab of marble, with the following inscription:

Sacred  
To the memory of  
the Rev. JAMES CONNELL,  
for forty years parish priest of Dunboyne.  
He died the 20th of September, 1827,  
aged 80 years.  
His parishioners and friends  
have dedicated this monument  
to his memory,  
in testimony of their veneration  
for the faithful and pious  
discharge of his duties as their pastor,  
and of their high esteem  
for his general character.

*The Rev. Joseph Kennedy succeeded.* This worthy pastor was born in the parish of Trim, studied in Navan and Maynooth, officiated as curate in Kells for nine years, and subsequently in Navan. He was appointed to Dunboyne by Dr. Logan, and translated in 1833 to Ardraccan or Bohermien by Dr. Cantwell. He built the present chapel of Boyerstown, in which he is interred, and endeared himself to all by his unbounded charity and hospitality. We will say more about him when we come to the pastors of Ardraccan or Bohermien.

*The Rev. William Grennan succeeded.* This venerable and respected priest was born in the parish of Rahan, King's

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\* O'Connell used to tell an anecdote of Father Connell, with whom he was well acquainted. During the agitation for Emancipation, there was, on some occasion, a threat on the part of a member of the privy council to put down the agitation by brute force, and of imprisoning the leaders. This language produced a great sensation throughout Ireland, and on the very next day of meeting, the first letter O'Connell opened was one from Father Connell, which said, "Dear namesake, fear not; let them come; if they do, Father Connell will guarantee five hundred Dunboyne men—good men and true". He told this to the present pastor of Dunboyne. The old people call Father Connell "*a real old soldier*".



County, studied in Navan and Maynooth, and was ordained in 1821. His first missionary duty was the chaplaincy of Corbalton Hall, after which he officiated as curate, successively, in Frankfort and Rahan. Since his appointment, he has reëdified the present beautiful chapel of Dunboyne, built schools, and given all a noble example of piety, patriotism, hospitality, and charity. The writer of these pages has had the great pleasure of officiating under him from August, 1853, till June, 1857, and he will never forget the happy hours, during which he was edified by his example, instructed by his precepts, and charmed by his genial and dignified society. May this good and zealous priest long preside over the noble and generous people of Dunboyne.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### KELLS.

AFTER the Anglo-Norman invasion, the abbey of Kells was reëdified by Hugh de Lacy, and by him was liberally endowed. A castle was erected in Kells, and the town was fortified, so that in population, trade, and military defences, it was reputed one of the most important strongholds of the English Pale. In 1203, Kells was burned. In 1316, Edward Bruce, brother of Robert Bruce, the hero of Bannockburn, after having defeated the Anglo-Irish army under Roger Mortimer, burned Kells, and laid waste the country. In 1388, Richard the Second confirmed the charter granted to the burgesses of Kells by Walter de Lacy. From the second of Elizabeth this town sent two members to the Irish Parliament, till the ill-fated Union, when the borough was disfranchised, and £15,000, awarded as compensation, were paid to Thomas Earl of Bective. Two disastrous events led to the decline of Kells. The one, the confiscation of the wealthy religious houses, where poverty was relieved, numberless artizans employed, and the lands of which were set

at moderate rents. The other was common to all Irish towns—the loss of our national independence.\*

#### ABBEY OF KELLS.

1173. Hugh de Lacy made a considerable grant of land to this abbey; and, being entitled to a measure out of every brewing of ale in the town of Kells, he also made a grant of the same, and conditioned that one of the canons of the abbey should be constantly retained as chaplain, to say Mass for the health of his soul and the souls of his ancestors and successors (*Monasticon Anglicanum*, vol. ii., p. 1041).

1277. The abbot Bren. O'Mulmoghery died (*Four Masters*).

1286. The abbot Maurice of this abbey was made bishop of Kilmore. He died in 1307 (Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 277).

1335. The abbot Thomas O'Sheridan paid a fine of forty marks for the grant of a charter, giving to them equal liberties with the English settlers (*King*, p. 142).

The abbot of this house paid two marks proxies to the bishop of Meath, seven shillings to the archdeacon of Meath, twenty shillings to the archbishop of Armagh, and eleven shillings to the archdeacon of Kells (*King*).

The landed property of this abbey was immense. It comprised†twelve messuages, three orchards, twelve gardens, twenty acres of arable land, five closes, containing seven acres, six acres of pasture, and four of moor, in Kells; twelve messuages, one hundred and forty acres of arable land, forty of pasture, and forty of moor, in Malerdone; five messuages,

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\* Mr. Haverty, in his admirable *History of Ireland*, sums up the effects of the Union in the following words: "On the 1st of January, 1801, the act came into operation, and from that date Ireland ceased to be a distinct kingdom; for an independent legislature she received an inoperative minority in the imperial parliament; her local interests were no longer under the care of her own representatives; her debt accumulated; her taxation multiplied to an excessive amount; her commerce fell into decay; her nobility and gentry became absentees; her wealth was drained into another country, with scarcely any appreciable return; and, in exchange for all these sacrifices, she acquired the honour of being an integral portion of the British empire!"

† Inquisitions of James; Archdall's *Monasticon*.

‡ *Patent Rolls*, pp. 57 and 136. See the Appendix.



twenty acres of arable, six of pasture, and three of moor, in Knockbrack and Gybonston; two messuages, eighteen acres of arable, three of meadow, and thirty-five of pasture and moor, in Emlaghbegan; two messuages, twelve acres of arable, five of pasture, and two of wood, in Kiltome; three messuages, twenty acres of arable, three of meadow, and ten of pasture, in Knockumbury; six messuages, thirty acres of arable, seven of pasture, and three of moor, in Corbally; thirty acres of pasture, in Kilbrede; two messuages, sixty acres of arable, twelve of pasture, and six of moor, in Grangeston; a yearly rent out of Oliver Nugent's land, of three shillings and four pence; an annual rent from Thomas Dardis, in Gaynston, of three shillings and four pence; two messuages, twenty acres of arable, ten of pasture, ten of moor, and six of wood, in Dareworerdan; two messuages, forty acres of arable, ten of pasture, twenty of wood, and five of moor, in Knoktamveibre; and seven acres in Tobbir. The following rectories were parcel of the possessions of this abbey, viz.: Emlobegan, *alias* Mullaghbegan, Killaghe, Castlerahan, Templeport, Credagh, the Church of Killester, in the county of Fermanagh. The greater part of the parish churches in the county Cavan belonged to this abbey and the abbey of Fore, in Westmeath.

The last abbot of St Mary's, Kells, was the Rev Richard Plunkett;\* and on the 18th of November, 1539, he was forced to surrender† the monastery, church, cemetery, and all the possessions of this abbey to the commissioners of Henry the Eighth. The monks were banished from their cloisters, and sent adrift on the world to starve or beg, the sacred vessels of the temple were grasped by sacrilegious hands and prostituted to profane uses; the doors of hospitality and charity, always open to the poor and to the stranger, were closed for ever, and with such antecedents, the Anglican schism was inaugurated in Ireland. A pension‡ of ten pounds was

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\* *Patent Rolls*, pp. 57 and 136.

† "The surrender", says Cobbett, "wherever it did take place, was precisely of the nature of those 'voluntary surrenders' which men make of their purses when the robber's pistol is at their temple, or his blood-stained knife at their throat".—*Reformation*, p. 100.

‡ *Patent Rolls*, 31st of Henry the Eighth.

awarded to the abbot, Rev. Richard Plunkett, twenty shillings to Rev. Henry White, and twenty shillings to Rev. John Rone, payable out of the church and rectory of Killeagh, county Meath. This precarious annuity was designed to reconcile a few of the dignitaries of the abbey, but depended, of course, for its continuance on their conformity with the ever-changing formularies of the day. The greater part of the possessions of the abbey was granted to Sir Gerald Plunkett.\*

In 1608, King James the First accepted a surrender, on the 20th of April, from Captain Garrett Fleming, of the lands recited in the ensuing grant, in order to make him a re-grant of the same.

On the 22nd of December, same year, King James granted to *Gerald Fleming, Esq.*, the following :†

In Meath : the entire abbey, monastery, or religious house of Kenlis, otherwise Kells, with the site thereof, and all hereditaments in or near the same and thereto belonging ; all manors, castles, lands, and other hereditaments whatever in Kells, Emlobegan, Corbally, Grangeston, Knockumvurry, Kilbride, Kildrume, Urier, and Gainston, and in Maghelendon, now in Cavan county, to the said late abbey in anywise appertaining ; the rectories, churches, or chapels of Emlobegan and Killeagh, rent six pounds six shillings and eight pence Irish. In Cavan, Leitrim, and Fermanagh counties ; the rectories, churches, or chapels of Killine, Knockbride, Castlerahan, Templeporte, and Crodraghe, late parcel of the estate of the said abbey ; rent thirteen pounds thirteen shillings and four pence. *In Cavan county, in Clanchye barony* : The territory and precinct of land, called Clankina, containing five parcels, called Ballibetowes ; rent thirteen shillings and four pence ; to deliver out of this territory thirteen and a-half good beoves at the castle of Dublin yearly, on the feast of All Saints, for the chief governor's use. *Louth county* : the lordship or manor of Crewmartin, containing ten tathes of land ; the castle, town, lands, and watermill of Belalagan. *Kildare county* : the town and lands of Bolybeg, containing thirty acres arable, with meadow and pasture thereto belonging ; with all waifs, estrays, and such like customs, and the moiety of felons' goods within all the premises ; to yield, for the premises in counties Louth and Kildare, the king's composition and risings out ; license to

\* Harris's *Tab.*

† *Patent Rolls*, 6 James the First.



hold a court-leet and view of frank-pledge at the castle of Clanchye in Cavan county twice in the year, with a Tuesday market there, and a fair on the 1st of August, and two days after, so that the said 1st of August be not a Saturday or Sunday; with a court of pye-powder; to be held for ever. To hold the abbey of Kells and the estate thereof *in capite*, by the fifth part of a knight's fee, the lands and premises in Louth and Kildare, by the twentieth part of a knight's fee, and those in Cavan, as of the Castle of Dublin, in free and common soccage.

In 1611, King James leased\* (*inter alia*) to Richard Harding, Esq.,

Five messuages, twenty acres of land, six acres of pasture, and three acres of moor, in Knockbrack and Gibbonston; two messuages, forty acres of land, ten acres of pasture, twenty acres of wood, and five acres of moor, in Knocktanveyly; seven acres in Tobbir; two messuages, thirty acres of land, ten acres of pasture, ten acres of moor, and six acres of wood, in Dolreworenden; parcel of the estate of the abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Kells; rent, £2.

In 1617, King James granted† to Sir Robert Stewart, knight, one of the gentlemen of the king's privy chamber (*inter alia*),

The three entire rectories, churches, or chapels of Moyneally, Cloncare, and Kilasned; the three rectories of Lorgen, Moibolge, and Mointerconnought; the two rectories of Kinnally and Killaser, with all the tithes, great and small, etc., thereof; rent, £10 6s. 8d. Irish; the rectory and tithes of Killeniaght; rent, £2; all being parcel of the estate of the abbey of Kells, in Meath county.

All traces of the abbey and church of Kells have been uprooted. A Protestant church now occupies the site. The round tower‡ of Kells stands beside the wall of the cemetery, and is about one hundred feet in height. Adjoining the round tower is an ancient and beautifully sculptured cross,

\* *Patent Rolls*, 9 James the First.

† *Patent Rolls*, 15 James the First.

‡ The round tower of Kells is an object of surpassing interest. For a description of it, see the *Round Towers of Ireland*, by the venerable Dr. Petrie, pages 369, 370, 409, 424, etc.

eleven feet four inches in height. There is another cross in the cemetery, the shaft of which measures ten feet six inches. On one of the sides of the square tower, used at present as the Protestant belfry, there is a slab, with the following inscription :

This windowe  
was builded by RICHARD FLOUDI, of  
Kenlis, Merchaunt, the 12th  
of Juli, 1578 :  
Whose soule God take to His  
mercies.

There is a horizontal tomb in the cemetery, with the following inscription :

Sacred to the memory of the  
Reverend JOSEPH NUGENT,  
Curate in the  
Catholic Metropolitan Church, Dublin.  
This distinguished clergyman  
terminated the career of  
his pious labours at the chapel-house,  
Liffey Street, on the 30th day  
of May, 1825, in the twenty-ninth year of  
his age. His mortal remains  
are here deposited. Zealous  
in the discharge of his sacred  
functions, and in co-operating  
with the graces of his ministry, he  
crowded the labours and  
merits of many years into a  
short space of existence.

There is a "holy well" in Kells, dedicated to St. Columbkille, the patron saint; and his house,\* "a small, arched, and stone-roofed building", said to have been used by him as an oratory, is still here an object of interest and curiosity. There is a font in the present chapel of Kells, circular, unornamented, measuring in diameter one foot eight and a-half inches. It belonged to one of the old churches. The great

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\* See Dr. Petrie's *Round Towers*, passim; Wakeman's *Handbook of Irish Antiquities*, pp. 76, 77; Wilde's *Boyne and Blackwater*, pp. 144, 145.



cross of Kells,\* so often alluded to and eulogised by every antiquarian and tourist, stands in the market-place, and cannot fail to awaken holy remembrances. Numerous fragments of abbeys, churches, and crosses are scattered about the town, and everything indicates the great antiquity of this place, as well as its truly Catholic reminiscences.

#### THE PRIORY OR HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN, KELLS.

The priory† or hospital of Kells, under the invocation of St. John the Baptist, was founded by Walter de Lacy, at the close of the twelfth or early in the thirteenth century. The monks belonged to the illustrious order of Trinitarians, founded by St. John of Matha, and approved of by Pope Innocent the Third in 1198. The religious followed the rule of St. Augustine, and were distinguished from other orders by a white habit, with a red and blue cross on the breast; hence they have been sometimes called, "Red Friars". This order was very rigid.‡ At first the monks were not permitted to use any food, except bread, pulse, herbs, oil, eggs, milk, cheese, and fruit; never flesh nor fish. In 1267, Pope Clement the Fourth approved of a mitigation of this rule. "Their principal exercises were", says Alban Butler,§ "to sing the divine office at the canonical hours, praising and glorifying the adorable Trinity as angels of the Earth; and to gather and carry alms into Barbary, for the redemption of slaves, to which work one-third of the revenues of each house is applied". An alms-house and hospital were usually attached to the priory, and the holy religious spent their lives chanting the praises of God, alleviating the distresses of the poor, and ministering to the afflicted. The Reformation, therefore, in confiscating the property of these hospitals, plundered the poor of Ireland of the sacred bequests which Catholic philanthropy had provided for their comfort, and expelled from their homes a body of men

\* There is a tradition in Kells, that the shaft of this cross was prostrate, and was placed on its pedestal by Dean Swift; also that a regiment of cavalry sharpened their lances on the pedestal at the close of the last century. The cross of Kells was converted into a gallows for the unfortunate prisoners of 1798. † Ware's *Monasticon*, Allemande.

‡ *Lives of the Saints*, vol. i. pp. 214 and 215.

§ Ibid.

whose whole lives were devoted to works of charity. The last prior of Kells was Cornelius Duff,\* and on the 24th of July, 1539, he was obliged to surrender the priory and all its possessions to the commissioners of Henry the Eighth. A pension† of four pounds was promised to the prior, and twenty shillings to Thomas Corregan, payable out of the profits of the rectories of Stonehall and Trystelkeran.

At the suppression of this priory, it was found to possess the following :‡

The hospital, also seventy-four acres, being the demesne lands of the said hospital, and situate in the parish of St. Columbkille of Kells ; two acres of meadow, three small closes, containing four acres of arable land, a watermill, and nineteen messuages, with their appurtenances, in the townland of Kells ; seventeen acres of mountain in Mollaghe ; forty acres of arable land in St. John's Rath ; an annual rent or pension of thirteen shillings and four pence, arising out of the tenements of William Balfe, in Coristown, near Kells ; and another annual rent or pension of six shillings and eight pence, arising from the several lands and tenements of Edward Plunkett, in Dromberaghe, all of the annual value, besides reprises, nineteen pounds eleven shillings and four pence ; also of the rectory of the parish of St. John of Kells, with the appurtenances, annual value, besides reprises, fifty-three shillings and four pence ; the tithes of the rectory of Stonehall, with the appurtenances, annual value, besides reprises, fifty-three shillings and four pence ; and the tithes of corn in the parish of Durvaghe, in O'Reli's country, of the annual value, besides reprises, of twenty shillings ; all the said rectories and tithes were appropriated to the prior and his successors.

May 31st, and eighth year of Elizabeth, this priory (with appurtenances) was granted to Richard Slayne, for the term of twenty-one years, at the annual rent of fourteen pounds ten shillings.

The church of St. John's Priory has been levelled. It is now a burying ground, and nothing remains to denote the Catholicity of this place, or its hallowed memories, unless the cross of Christ on the tombstone of the faithful.

\* *Patent and Close Rolls*, pp. 57, 136.

† *Patent Rolls*, p. 65.

‡ Apud Archdall. Harris has John Wakeman the grantee and assignee of this priory. See Harris's *Tab.*



## ARCHDEACONS OF KELLS.

This office, now extinct, had the rectory or parish of Nobber annexed to it, and the archdeacons were as often styled "of Nobber" as "of Kells". It would be impossible now to ascertain the origin of this dignity, or to catalogue the regular succession of the ecclesiastics who filled this office. The following have been preserved :\*

1047. Cuduiligh, the son of Gaethin, archdeacon of the abbey of Kells, died (Archdall, from the *Four Masters*).

1176. In an instrument of this year, remaining in the archives of Christ Church, Dublin, ——— mayor, and ——— "in Ecclesia Midensi Archidiaconi" are named (see *Registrum Novum ad ann.*).

1287. Thomas St. Leger, archdeacon, was this year elected Bishop of Meath (Ware's *Bishops*).

1315. William St. Leger, archdeacon, is witness to a grant made by his bishop (King's *Collections*).

1362. Henry Powell is archdeacon (see an enrolment of a deed of gift made by him and the vicar of Kilpatrick in *Pat. Roll.* 33, Henry the Eighth).

1380. Walter de Brugge (MS. Trin. Coll., Dub., F., i. 18).

1384 to 1415. Adam Naas (*ibid.*). He is mentioned as having episcopal power in his archdeaconry during the vacancy of the see of Meath (*Rot. Pat.* 9, Richard the Second).

1418. Robert Sutton, "archdeacon of Nobber" (*ibid.*).

1423, 1435. John Stanyhurst, called "archdeacon of Kells and parson of Nobber" (*Rot. Pat.* 1, Henry the Sixth). A person of his two names was archdeacon in 1464 (*Cod. Clar.*, 46).

1534. Charles Reynolds (*Reg. Cromer.*). This person (whose real name was M'Ranell, afterwards changed to the English form of Reynolds) was deputed, in 1535, by "Silken Lord Thomas" of Kildare to seek aid from the Pope and the Emperor Charles the Fifth (D'Alton's *Annals of Boyle*, p. 405).

1535 to 1541. Thomas Lockwood. He is also styled archdeacon of Nobber (*MS. Marsh*), and in this year he obtained a grant of the next presentation to the archdeaconry of Meath. In 1543, he was made dean of Christ Church, Dublin.

On the 27th of December, 1544, license† was granted to

\* *Fasti Ecclesiæ Hibernicæ*, pp. 125-131; a work of great research.

† *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, pp. 103, 108.

Edward Staples, bishop of Meath, to appropriate and unite to the see of Meath, for ever, the archdeaconry of Kells, with the rectory of Nobber.

Bishop Montgomery writes, "hæc dignitas tempore Henrici octavi fuit unita Episcopatu Midensi in perpetuum" (*Regal Visitation*, in the Royal Irish Academy).

#### ARCHDEACONS OF MEATH AND PASTORS OF KELLS.

The diocese of Meath has neither dean nor chapter. The highest dignitary, after the bishop, was the Archdeacon of Meath, to whose office the parish of St. Columbkille, Kells, was usually annexed. The clergy of the diocese met in synod, and possessed a common seal. Owing to the researches of Dr. Cotton we have the following catalogue:†

11—. Helias was Archdeacon (MS. Trin. Coll., Dub., F. i. 18).

1190. Radulphus (or Ralph) Le Petit. He held the office for a very long time, and being a man, says Ware, "of great gravity and wisdom", was elected in the year 1227 to the see of Meath. In a MS. in Trinity College, Dublin, he is styled "archdeacon of Mullingar", perhaps because he had founded a priory of Augustinians in that town.

1222. R——, archdeacon, appears, with the archdeacon of Kildare, as a delegate in a dispute between Christ Church and St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin (Archdall's *Ch. Ch.*).

1235 and 1244. Simon de Burford† occurs (MS. Trin. Coll., Dublin, F. 18).

1264. Richard of Malmesbury; he died in 1269 (*Cod. Clar.*, 46; and *Annals of Multifernan*).

1269. John de Dubleton, or Dumbilton; he died on the 18th of November, 1288, and was buried at Kells (MS. Trin. Coll., Dublin). He wrote a logic on natural philosophy (see Ware's *Writers*).

1289. John de Kenelve (Prynne's *Records*, iii., p. 1016).

1295 to 1315. William de Sidan (*ibid.*, and *Regis Prene*).

1325. William de Leodegario (St. Leger). In 1350 he was appointed bishop of Meath by the Pope.

\* *Fasti Ecclesiæ Hibernicæ*, 125 to 131.

† In 1235 he decided between the bishop of Meath and the friars of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, regarding the patronage of the churches of Moylagh, Donaghpatrick, Tara, Kells, Dungrey, Ardmulchan, etc.



1350. Robert de Emeldon. He was treasurer of Ireland (*ibid.*).

1361. Mathew Crumpe (*Cod. Clarend.*). It appears by a chancery roll of the forty-eighth of Edward the Third, that the king disputed the patronage\* of the archdeaconry with the bishop, and, having signed it, he presented Crumpe again in the year 1372.

1362. Adam Owen (MS. Trin. Col., Dub., F. i., 18).

1369. Henry Poole (*ibid.*).

1374 to 1388. Thomas Sprott† (*ibid.*). In O'Phelan's *Tombs of Kilkenny* is an inscription (without date) to "Dominus Wilhelmus Carleil, quondam Archidiaconus Midensis, Rector de Yochil, ac Ecclesiarum Dublin, Cassel, Ossor, Fern, Clonens, et Corkag Canonicus". He was likewise one of the barons of the exchequer. In another part is one to "Dominus Joannes de Karlell (probably a relative), quondam cancellarius S. Patricii, Dublin", etc. He was chancellor in the year 1388.

1400. Thomas Bathe, or Bache. In 1403 he was made chief baron of the Exchequer and treasurer of Ireland (*Rot. Canc.*).

1407. William (or Walter) Young‡ presented by the Crown during the vacancy of the see (*MS. Marsh*, and *Rot.* 13, Henry the Fourth). In 1402 he held the office of Chancellor of Ireland (*Rot. Canc.*). In 1437 he was still archdeacon, and rector of Ardmulchan (*Reg. Swayne and Fleming*). In this year he was excommunicated by the primate (*Reg. Prene*).

1450 to 1478. John White (*Reg. Prene* and *Cod. Clarend.*, 46). He was the clergy's proctor in the parliament of 1450 (*Cod. Clarend.*, 36).

1489 to 1498. Christopher Dowdall (*Rot. Canc.*).

1528 to 1534. Christopher Dowdall (*Cod. Clareud.*, 36). In 1528, King Henry the Eighth permitted him to found a chantry in Termonfechin (*Reg. Cromer*).

1540 to 1542. John Chambre or Chamber (*MS. Marsh*).

1558. Robert Luttrell is archdeacon (*Reg. Dowdall*, Armagh). In 1535 he had been presented by the crown to the rectory of Kilberry, in this diocese.

\* See *Claus.* 46, Edward the Third, where the king says he lately recovered the presentation.

† King Richard the Second gave him leave of absence from Ireland for four years—See *Pat.* 9, Richard the Second.

‡ The roll states that the king had the presentation, in consequence of the vacancy, and that Young was presented to the archdeaconry of Meath, and the church of St. Columb of Kells united to the office.

In 1559, Robert Luttrell was deprived by Queen Elizabeth of the archdeaconry\* of Meath and the parish of Kilberry, and his more obsequious successor, John Garve (or Garven), was substituted. The Bishop of Meath, Dr. William Walsh, and the archdeacon of Meath were, therefore, amongst the earliest victims to the intolerance of Elizabeth, and their fidelity amidst the persecutions of that age, consoled the diocese for the servility and recreancy of Edward Staples.

Of the income of the archdeaconry in 1622, Bishop Usher writes :

“ Archdeaconry of Meath, to which belongeth the rectory of Kells, valued 140<sup>l.</sup> sterling, had an auncient manse-house at Kelles, in the countie of Meath, now altogether ruined ; an old house called Rosemyne, and houses of office hereunto belonging, now well repaired, with the town of Rosemyne and v<sup>xx</sup> acres of arable land, with meadow and pasture ; another house, called Balrathe, and vi<sup>xx</sup> acres of arable land, and pasture thereunto belonging ; the town of Carlstown, the Graunge goddan, with xii<sup>xx</sup> acres of arable land, and pasture thereunto belonging ; the manse of Kellis, l<sup>x</sup> acres.

During the long and sanguinary reign of Elizabeth, and the plundering and persecuting tyranny of James the First, we have no record of the pastors of Kells, nor of the peculiar trials to which they were subjected. In the reign of Charles the First, the Rev. James Lynch was parish priest of Kells, and during the invasion of Cromwell he was murdered† in his bed by the blood-stained Puritans, being then nearly eighty years of age, and long confined to his room in consequence of old age and infirmity. At the provincial synod of Ardpatrik, held in August, 1678, under the presidency of Dr. Oliver Plunkett, Archbishop of Armagh, the Very Rev. Christopher Plunkett assisted as archdeacon‡ of Meath.

On the 4th of June, 1690, James the Second presented “ Mr. Luke Plunkett ” to the archdeaconship of Meath.

In 1704 we find Rev. Patrick Smith registered as parish priest of Kells, Bury, Girley, and Moyagher. He was or-

\* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, pp. 432, 442.

† Rev. M. J. Brennan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii., p. 196, from Bruodin's *Appendix*.      ‡ *Memoir of Oliver Plunkett*, by Dr. Moran, p. 59.



dained at Frayne, county Meath, in 1684, by Patrick Tyrrell, then bishop of Clogher. In the year of the registration he lived at Kells, and was then forty-eight years of age. This priest is said to have suffered much from the rigid enforcement of the penal laws in the "blue barony of Kells".

A Rev. Mr. Coyle succeeded. The traditions of the people represent him as "clad like the peasantry, to conceal his ecclesiastical dignity, and having frequently to sleep on hay-lofts and garrets, and in the houses of the poor". The family of Headfort protected him, and often sheltered him from the priest-hunter.

*The Very Rev. John Plunkett\* succeeded.* He was Archdeacon of Meath, and a most respectable ecclesiastic. He died on the 14th of January, 176 , and was buried in the churchyard of Cortown. A large, uninscribed, horizontal tomb has been placed over his remains, and to this day the coffins are deposited on the stone, and the *De Profundis* chanted previous to interment.

*The Very Rev. Thomas Flood succeeded.* He was a native of the parish, studied on the Continent, as did all the priests at that time, and was remarkable for prudence and charity. He was archdeacon of Meath, and took an active part in the organization of the diocese under the indefatigable Dr. Plunkett. He died of dropsy on the 23rd of July, 1790,† universally regretted, and was buried in the abbey churchyard of Kells.

*The Rev. Laurence Eugene O'Reilly succeeded‡ (see Pas-*

\* The Very Rev. John Plunkett was uncle to the late bishop of Meath, and taught him his classics. We will have more to say of him when we come to the life of Dr. Plunkett.

† Diaries of Dr. Plunkett, in my possession.

‡ The chapel of Kells was closed against him by the friends and admirers of Rev. Patrick Smith, who wished to have the latter appointed. The Earl of Bective wrote thrice to the bishop, soliciting to have Rev. Mr. Smith nominated. "I answered him", says Dr. Plunkett, "firmly, but respectfully, in the negative". Father Smith was a native of the neighbourhood of Kells, studied in France, became parish priest of Monknewtown and Douth, thence of Ardracran, and subsequently of Dunboyne. In 1787, John Butler, bishop of Cork, in order to secure the family property, apostatised, and married a daughter of Theobald Butler, of Wilford, county Tipperary. The advent to Dunboyne of these celebrities induced Rev. Mr. Smith to resign the parish and await a vacancy. Father Smith gave considerable annoyance to Dr. Plunkett, but afterwards repented, and died an edifying death.

tors of Kildalkey). He was transferred from the parish of Kildalkey to Kells on the 26th of July, 1790, and on the 8th of August, same year, he resigned Kells, and returned to Kildalkey.

*The Rev. Joseph O'Ferrall succeeded*, and was inducted on the 25th June, 1791. He died on the 5th of August, 1795, and was buried in the churchyard of Kildalkey.

*The Very Rev. Peter O'Reilly succeeded*. He was born at Ballybeg, parish of Cortown, of an ancient and respectable family, studied in France, and was appointed parish priest of Ardraccan in December, 1782. After his appointment he resided for some time in Navan, as assistant and secretary to the late Dr. Plunkett, and during his residence he erected the late chapel of Navan, which in architectural beauty was considerably in advance of its day.

On the 7th of August, 1795, he was transferred to Kells, became vicar-forane, and after the death of the Rev. Dr. M'Kenna, of Nobber, was appointed archdeacon and vicar-general of Meath. The chapel of Kells, a poor, lowly temple, was then situated at the Ashgrove, off Farrell's Street. In 1798, the Earl of Bective granted a commodious site for a church, presbytery, and schools, and gave as his first donation £100 towards the building of the new church.

In the unpublished diaries and papers of the Most Rev. Dr. Plunkett occur the following allusions to the origin of the present chapel of Kells :

1798, April 6. This night I wrote to Lord Bective to make his lordship acquainted with the motives of delicacy which deterred me from assisting next day at the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone of the new chapel of Kells, which his lordship graciously consented to perform. His lordship returned a most polite answer, and approved these motives.

April 7, Saturday, Earl Bective laid the foundation stone of the new chapel of Kells, in the presence of a great concourse of the inhabitants and neighbouring gentry. A silver trowel, on which his lordship's donation was inscribed, was presented to his lordship; and a brass plate, recording the donation and the ceremony of the day, was affixed to the foundation stone.



On the 11th of October, 1801, Dr. Plunkett held his visitation in the new chapel of Kells, and amongst the subjects to which he alluded were :\*

Grateful sentiments expressed to the Most Noble the Marquis of Headfort, for giving the ground plot and one hundred pounds, and to the Protestant gentlemen of the neighbourhood, for their contributions ; compliments paid to all the Catholics who subscribed, especially to the parishioners, who were reminded of the faith received by their ancestors, and exhorted to prove and honour it by living according to its maxims—not to imitate the degenerate nominal Catholics, by whom our religion is more wounded than it has been by the penal code or the prejudices of its most bitter enemies.

The Rev. Peter O'Reilly was a very eminent preacher, both in the Irish and English languages, and was beloved by his people for his zeal and charity. He continued to the end on the closest intimacy with Dr. Plunkett, and his brother priests had unlimited confidence in his wisdom and prudence. He died, universally regretted, on the 16th of July, 1820, and was buried in St. John's churchyard. A short time after his interment, his remains were taken up by night and deposited in the present chapel of Kells, where a gorgeous monument has been erected to his memory, with the following inscription :

Sacred to the memory of  
The Rev. PETER O'REILLY,  
Parish Priest of Kells and Girley,  
and Archdeacon of Meath,  
whose mortal remains lie entombed near this spot.  
He departed this life on the 16th July, 1820,  
In the 70th year of his age.  
Kind-hearted, disinterested, and sincere, he won  
the admiration and love of all who knew him.  
His severe yet prudent discipline, his pious precepts  
and example, led his flock in the path to  
eternal life.  
Animated by his zeal (and aided by the munificence  
of the Most Noble the Marquis of Headfort,

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\* Papers of Dr. Plunkett.

who granted this beautiful site and the ground annexed to it, with a princely donation), the parishioners raised, in times of public distress and calamity, this temple for the worship of the living God.

This monument was erected by his grateful flock, in testimony of their esteem and veneration for his many virtues.

*The Very Rev. Michael Kearney* succeeded. This distinguished priest was born in the neighbourhood of Athboy, studied in France, became parish priest of Frankford, in the King's County, and subsequently of Tullamore; he was archdeacon of Meath and vicar-general of the diocese, and was held in high repute amongst clergy and laity. He died on the 11th of February, 1827, and was buried in the chapel of Kells. A splendid monument has been erected to his memory, on which is inscribed:

Sacred to the memory  
of the Very Rev. MICHAEL KEARNEY, V.G., etc.,  
for seven years the zealous and beloved pastor  
of the united parishes of Kells and Girley.  
His amiable simplicity, engaging manners,  
his generous and benevolent heart,  
conciliated the esteem and affection of all.  
To testify their high sense of his worth,  
and deep regret for his loss,  
The Right Hon. the Earl of Bective  
and the Protestant gentry of this neighbourhood  
have, in unison with the Catholic parishioners,  
munificently contributed to erect this handsome  
memento of their dear departed friend.

This distinguished pastor  
terminated the career of his  
apostolic labours,  
the 11th of February, 1827,  
in the 74th year of his age,  
and the 42nd of  
his ministry.

Requiescat in pace.

*The Most Rev. Dr. Logan* succeeded. As his life belongs to the Bishops of Meath, we reserve it for the next volume.



He died on the 22nd of April, 1830, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and sixth of his episcopacy, and was buried in the chapel of Kells.

*The Most Rev. Dr. Cantwell succeeded.* After the death of the Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly, his lordship became parish priest of Navan.

*The Very Rev. Nicholas M'Evoy succeeded.* This eminent and beloved priest was born in Navan on the 25th of February, 1800, graduated in the Diocesan Seminary, and completed his studies in the College of Maynooth. After a solid and brilliant course, during which he received high literary honours, he was ordained in November, 1827, and appointed, by Dr. Logan, to the curacy of Kells. In a brief period he became administrator, vicar-forane of Meath, and master of conference for the deanery of Kells. In the long struggles of Ireland for civil and religious rights, the lamented Father M'Evoy took an ardent and active part; and it is needless to say his heartfelt sympathies and powerful advocacy were always on the side of the oppressed people of his fatherland. The great Liberator, whose irreparable loss we have every day cause to lament, valued Father M'Evoy highly, and acknowledged his patriotic efforts in the most complimentary terms. On the morning of the great meeting of Tara, August 15th, 1843, Father M'Evoy celebrated Mass convenient to the "Croppies' Grave"; and there are many still living who remember his eloquent sermon on faith and fatherland to the myriad worshippers, when, big with hope, he anticipated the freedom of Ireland. Great God! these days are gone. The famine came, O'Connell died, the homes of our people were levelled, the *exodus* took place, our enemies sang pæans that we were *gone with a vengeance*, and poor Ireland was doomed to another decade of oppression and despondency. During the agitation for Tenant Right, Father M'Evoy entered warmly into the movement, and in the formation of an Irish party, independent alike of Whig and Tory, and the return and sustenance of Frederick Lucas, he was a conspicuous and able supporter. In all the public movements of his day he coöperated earnestly and with ability; and, to the last

moment of his life, he was ever ready to make sacrifices for the cause of the Irish people. As a pastor, he was endeared to his flock by a thousand ties, and he was especially beloved by the poor of Christ, to whom he was a father and a friend. He had the great happiness, owing to the Dempsey bequests, of introducing to his people the Sisters of Mercy and the Christian Brothers, invaluable auxiliaries in the cause of education and morality. He loved the beauty of God's house, and hence spared no expense in adorning His temple. He was kind-hearted, amiable, charitable, hospitable, a devoted pastor, a true friend, a gentleman, a scholar, and a genuine patriot.

At the great Meath demonstration of sympathy for the *Holy Father*, held in Navan at the close of December, 1859, Father M'Evoy, although in declining health, attended, and spoke for upwards of one hour and a-half. The weather was very inclement, and the rain poured down incessantly during the whole day and evening. Father M'Evoy took ill, and lingered on till the following May. Finding himself sinking, he went to Dublin to take medical advice, became speechless in the railway carriage, was taken to a hotel, where he received the last rites of the Church, and died, as he had lived, the death of the just, on the 17th of May, 1860. His remains were taken to Kells, his brother-priests from all parts of the diocese attended his funeral Mass and anniversary, the bishop preached his panegyric, and he was interred in the chapel of Kells. R.I.P.

*The Very Rev. John Nicolls succeeded.* The present pastor was born in Navan, studied in the Diocesan Seminary and Maynooth, and was ordained in June, 1841. He officiated for sixteen years as curate of Mullingar, and in the autumn of 1857 was appointed administrator of Castletowndelvin. On the death of Father M'Evoy he was translated to Kells, and is now vicar-general of the diocese.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## KILMAINHAM-BEG.

A PRECEPTORY was founded by Walter de Lacy, in the twelfth century, at Kilmainham-beg,\* near Kells, for Knights-Hospitallers, or Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Speaking of the origin of this military order, which embodied much of the chivalry and faith of Christendom, Alban Butler observes:†

“The Knights of Malta, or of St. John of Jerusalem, were originally called Knights-Hospitallers (*i.e.*, those residing in an hospital to receive the poor and strangers, vol. i. p. 67), instituted by certain merchants of Amalphi, in the kingdom of Naples, who, trading in the Levant, obtained leave of the Caliph of the Saracens to build a house at Jerusalem for themselves and pilgrims, on paying an annual tribute. Soon after, they founded a church in honour of St. John the Baptist, with an hospital for sick pilgrims, from which they took their name. The valiant and most pious prince, Godfrey of Bouillon, who took Jerusalem in 1099, exceedingly favoured these hospitallers, who, in the reign of Baldwin the First, king of Jerusalem, in 1140, added to their three religious vows another, by which they obliged themselves to defend the pilgrims in the holy land from the insults of the Saracens. From that time they became a military order of knights, and wore for their badge a cross with eight points. . . . They make three religious vows, consequently can never marry; and add a fourth, never to make peace with the infidels. They observe certain constitutions, borrowed from the rule of the regular canons of St. Augustine”.

1292. Friar John, of St. Bottulph, was preceptor of Kilmainham-beg.

1326. Friar Roger Utlawe was preceptor (*Pat.* 2, Edward the Second).

1381. King Richard the Second appointed Friar Richard White, preceptor of Kilmainham-beg, the archdeacon of Meath, Andrew Daundon, and Thomas Fleming, baron of Slane, to supervise the guardians of the peace for the baronies of Kells, Morgallion, Slane, Navan, etc. (*Pat.* 5, Richard the Second).

\* Harris's *Tab.*

† *Lives of the Saints*, vol. i. p. 571.

In the reign of Henry the Eighth the possessions of Kilmainham-beg were confiscated, and the friars ejected from the hospital.

In the instructions\* from Queen Elizabeth to Sir Henry Sidney, dated, "Greenwich, April 20, 1568", it was ordered that :

"Alexander Barnwall, of Robertowne, shall have a lease in reversion of the commandery of Kylmaynhambeg, lying near to O'Reyley's country, for twenty-one years more than he had, paying the accustomed and usual rent, and upon condition that he will build such fortification as shall be thought meete by our deputy and council for the strengthening of those borders of the country against O'Reilly and MacMahon within the space of two years".

An inquisition of 1588 found this commandery in a ruinous state, owing to the devastations committed by Sir Thomas Barnwall, knight, Alexander, his son, and Sir Thomas Cusack, who endamaged the same to the following amount:†

Viz.: the roof, battlements, and windows, 10s.; the chapel, a low room, and two upper lofts, £35; the kitchen, 10s.; a castle, £15; the legate house, to the west of the commandery, £5; the bawn, with a stone wall, 5s.; the granary, 3s.; a watermill, wasted by Sir Thomas Cusack, £15; and the great farm-house in Kilmainham, £3. Also the following townlands; Syddaurat, £15; Gardourat, £100; Mitchelston, £20; and Begston, £6; four houses in Donaghpatrick, 6s.; the town of —ollis, £8; and a house in Kells, 13s. 4d.; all English money.

"November 22, thirty-third of Queen Elizabeth, this commandery was granted to Sir Patrick Barnwall, knight, for the term of sixty-one years, at the annual rent of 50 marks, for the first twenty-one years, and £63 12s. 2½d., Irish money, for the remainder of said term".

\* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 515.

† Archdall's *Monasticon*, p. 551, etc. See also *Inquisitions of Meath*, James the First, anno 1616, 1618, No. 22. Inquisition taken at Navan, 24th September, 1635, Charles the First. See also *Lodge's Peerage*, by Archdall, vol. v. p. 47.



## KILMAINHAMWOOD.

A commandery was founded at Kilmainhamwood,\* near Nobber, in the thirteenth century, by the Preston family, for Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. The property of this hospital was confiscated by Henry the Eighth. On the 23d of September, 1587, a lease of the said commandery was granted, for the term of twenty-one years, to Henry Duke,† at the yearly rent of £4 10s.

On the 30th of September, 1619, an inquisition was taken at Trim, from which we learn the possessions of this commandery.‡

Callagh O'Moore, lately of Kilmainhamwood, in the county of Meath, was seized of the manor or preceptory of Kilmainhamwood, containing three hundred acres arable, and two hundred acres in Donnagh, *alias* Boyannagh, in the aforesaid county; two hundred acres in Tancree, *alias* Oldcar; and one hundred and twenty acres in Cowhill, and the rectory of Kilmainhamwood. All these premises are parcels of the manor of Kilmainhamwood, and are held from the king *in capite* and by the service of a knight.

In 1704 the Rev. John Gargan was registered as parish priest of Moybolge and Kilmainhamwood. He was ordained in Dublin, in 1677, by the venerable Patrick Plunkett, bishop of Meath, was fifty-five years of age in the year of the registration, lived at Greagh nadaragh, and had for his sureties, in accordance with the act of Parliament, James Smith, Knockbridge, £50, and Owen Doherty, Corweelish, £50.

The parish of Kilmainhamwood belongs to the diocese of Kilmore.

## LISMULLEN.

About the year 1240, Alicia de la Corner, sister of Richard de la Corner, bishop of Meath, founded,§ in the beautiful vale of Lismullen, nearly two miles from Tara, a religious house for nuns following the rule of St. Augustine. This

\* Allemande, Harris's *Tab.* † Archdall's *Monasticon*, p. 555.

‡ *Inquisitions of James the First*, No. 37.

§ Ware's *Monasticon*; Harris's *Tab.* The parish of Lismullen is situated in the barony of Skryne, nearly five miles (s.s.e.) from Navan. (See Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary*.)

convent was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and continued to hold a very conspicuous position amongst the great monasteries of the Pale down to the time of the Reformation. Soon after its foundation, the bishop of Meath granted, amongst other donations, the lands of Dunsenkill, or Dunsink, which the prior of Newtown, with certain limitations, had enfeoffed to himself.\* In process of time, by bequest and by purchase, the good nuns acquired an immense property, and, in accordance with the rules of their order, they relieved the poor, they welcomed the homeless stranger, they instructed the youth, and they diffused comfort and happiness around them. In 1322, the lady prioress, Eleonora, sued John, bishop of Meath, for the advowson of Paynstown-Dullard, near Tyanure, of which a former prioress, Alicia, was seized in the reign of Henry the Third, and also for the advowson of the church of Ardmulchan.

1346. Margaret was prioress of the house of the Holy Trinity, of Lismullen, and, by attorney's letter, the Rev. Messrs. Geg and John Cosyn managed the temporal affairs of the convent (*Pat.* 20, Edward the Third).

1431. The Lady Agnes was prioress (*Pat.* 10, Henry the Sixth).

In the history of this convent we meet with no event of any consequence to distinguish it from others of its kind. The matin bell chimed long before day-break; the consecrated virgins arose to chant the praises of God; the Holy Sacrifice was offered up; the hungry were fed; the children of the poor were catechised; and, between ceremonies and devotions, receptions and professions, deaths and elections, three hundred years of uninterrupted innocence and piety rolled over the hallowed walls of the cloister. A time had come, however, when neither innocence, the most sublime practice of virtue, nor the most inalienable and sacred rights, could afford protection from spoliation and sacrilege. On the 15th of June, 1539, the commissioners of Henry the Eighth knocked at the gates of Lismullen,† demanded ad-

\* The prior reserved to the priory two pounds of wax, or, in lieu of it, twelve pence annually.

† *Calendar of the Patent Rolls.* See the Appendix.



mittance, and summoned the nuns, in the name of the king, to surrender all the possessions of their convent. There was no alternative left : the royal plunderer had decreed that out they must go. It remained then for the lady-prioress, Miss Maria Cusack, to assemble her community in the chapter-house\* *for the last time*, and to go through the prescribed forms of "a voluntary surrender". This done, the nuns were ejected, the jewels, plate, and furniture of the convent were collected, the doors were closed for ever, and the nunnery of Lismullen ceased to exist.

In the *Patent Rolls*† we have a record of a pension being promised to a few of the nuns, viz., forty shillings to Genet Barnewall, forty shillings to Alison Eustace, and forty shillings to Anne Veldon, payable out of Lismullen, Powderlagh, Belgray, and Balmakarnan, in Meath county.

On the 15th of June, 1582, the king granted‡ to Thomas Luttrell the lands of Kelleston and Ballestown, in the county of Dublin, parcel of the possessions of the monastery of Lismullen; to hold for ever; rent £3 18s.

On the 23rd of September, 1547, King Edward the Sixth granted§ to Sir Thomas Cusack, knight, in consideration of a fine of £413 11s. 1d., the site and circuit of the priory of Lismullen, with the glebe lands and manor of Lismullen; a water-mill and watercourse in Bludestone, parcel of the possessions of the said house; to hold for ever, at a rent of £1 2s. per annum.

In 1607, King James granted|| to John King, Esq :

Meath and Dublin counties : the manor of Belgree, with its appurtenances, viz., the town and lands of Court-Belgree, West-Belgree, Ballinacarnan, and Irishton. Meath county : near Belantree, thirty acres arable. Dublin county : in Effielston, thirty acres, and a chief rent of £26 0s. 8d., or 26s. 8d., out

\* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, pp. 135, 136.

† *Calendar*, p. 63.

‡ *Calendar*, p. 90.

§ *Calendar*, p. 144. On the 24th of March the king had written to the lord deputy, the lord chancellor, the vice-treasurer, and the chief baron, directing them to sell to Sir Thomas Cusack the site and precinct of the religious house of "Nonnys", called Lismullen, with the watermill in Blundeston, and all glebe lands, tenements, rents, and services thereto belonging. (*Calendar*, p. 148.)

|| *Pat. 5, James the First.*

of the lands of Lavellin Nugent, of Holliwoodrath, parcel of the said manor; the moat of Belgree, otherwise Stouton, being twenty acres in or near Court-Belgree; two messuages, with their curtilages, and thirty acres arable, in or near Belantree, commonly called "the thirty acres of Belantree", lately in the possession of John Barnwall, of Kilbrue, and let by him to James Sweetman, at a rent of 3'; all being parcel of the estate of the late monastery of Lismullen, in Meath county; rent, two shillings Irish.

In 1610, King James granted\* to James Netterville, of Castletown, county of Meath:

The rectory, church, or chapel, tithes, and other profits of Killpatrick, parcel of the estate of the late nunnery or religious house of Lismullen.

In 1603, King James granted† to Richard Cooke, chancellor of the exchequer (*inter alia*):

In Dunsincke (county Dublin), five messuages, and arable, two hundred and forty acres, with the customs; in Scribleston, one messuage and meadow, arable and pasture, eighty acres, belonging to the late dissolved monastery of Lismullen; the towns of Dunsincke and Scribbleston, with all the hereditaments thereof; total rent, £14 5s. 8d. Irish. These having been demised by King Henry the Eighth to Sir Thomas Cusack, knight, for a term of years, the reversion thereof was granted by patent, dated at Westminster, 29th October, fourth and fifth Philip and Mary, to Gerald Earl of Kildare, and Mabel, his wife, and his heirs male, remainder to the crown, which reversion was then in King James the First in full right.

The magnificent convent and chapel of Lismullen are now a heap of ruins.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

### NAVAN.

NAVAN is a town situated at the confluence of the Boyne and Blackwater, in the barony of Lower Navan, about seven miles (N.N.E.) from Trim, and twenty-three (N. by W) from

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\* *Pat.* 8, James the First.

† *Pat.* 1, James the First.



Dublin. It is at present a union parish, comprising the ancient parochial districts of Navan, Donaghmore, Ardsallagh or Cannistown, and Dunmoe.

Patron saints of

Navan, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

Donaghmore—St. Patrick.

Ardsallagh—St. Brigid.

Dunmoe—St. Leonard.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion, the town of Navan, in consequence of its central position, was considered a stronghold of importance, and accordingly was walled and fortified by Hugh de Lacy. After the conquest of Meath, de Lacy subdivided that ancient principality amongst his followers, and bestowed Navan and Ardsallagh on Joceline de Angulo, or Nangle, one of the bravest of his knights. Under the Nangle family Navan became a flourishing town, and, owing to the munificence of that house, it was one of the first boroughs established in the palatinate of Meath. In the reign of Edward the Fourth, Navan received a charter, and, under Henry the Seventh, additional privileges were granted to the citizens. In 1539 the northern Irish, under Con O'Neil and Manus O'Donnell, invaded the English Pale, and, amongst other Anglo-Irish towns, plundered Navan, and carried off from thence "spoils of gold and silver, copper, iron, and every sort of goods and valuables besides". To guard against such a recurrence, it was enacted, in the thirty-fourth of Henry the Eighth, that every ploughland in Meath and Westmeath should be charged, for four years, with the payment of 3s. 4d., for the purpose of building the walls of Navan. Under James the First and Charles the Second this town received additional charters and favours, and, while our national independence lasted, Navan sent two representatives to the Irish parliament. For the last half century no town in Ireland has been more conspicuous for sterling patriotism, or has made more sacrifices for faith and freedom. During the long and glorious agitations of O'Connell, and, subsequently, in the return of Frederick Lucas, and the formation and sustainment of a national party in the

House of Commons, independent alike of Whig and Tory, no town in Ireland discharged its duty to the national cause with greater disinterestedness, or gave a nobler example of practical patriotism, than incorruptible Navan.

#### ABBEY OF NAVAN.

About the close of the twelfth century, Joceline de Angulo founded\* or rebuilt an abbey at Navan, for regular canons following the rule of St. Augustine. It was dedicated under the invocation of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and the parish has continued under the same patronage to the present day.

Christian O'Loddan was abbot of Navan in the reign of King John (*King*).

1284. Richard was abbot (*Archdall's Monasticon*).

1346. Thomas was abbot.

1370. Thomas Devenish, abbot of Navan, died (*King*).

1371. John de Leighton was abbot of Navan.

1391. John de Warren was elected abbot.

1438. Rev. Martin White, pastor of Liscarton, died on the 28th of September, "on whose soul may the Lord have mercy". He bequeathed to this monastery a book of the Decretals and a small Bible (*Ex Antiquo Martyrologio Monasterii de Navan—Ware's MSS.*).

1450. John Bole was abbot, and procured a Bull from Pope Nicholas the Fifth, granting certain indulgences to all persons undertaking pilgrimages to this abbey, or contributing to repair or adorn it (*Ware's MSS.*).

In 1457 John Bole was elevated to the archiepiscopal see of Armagh,† and was consecrated in June of that year. He held a provincial synod in St. Peter's Church, Drogheda, on the 9th of June, and died on the 18th of February, 1470.

1458. Peter White was abbot of Navan (*Ware's MSS.*).

1488. Richard Nangle, the abbot, having been concerned in the rebellion raised on account of Lambert Simnel, did in this

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\* It is most probable that this monastery was founded on the old site of the abbey of Nuachongbhail, which very likely had fallen into decay, as all our monasticons are unanimous that the erection of Joceline de Angulo was "founded or rebuilt", and no trace of the former house has ever since been alluded to.

† Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, pp. 86, 87. Stuart's *Armagh*, p. 199.



year received a pardon from the king (Henry the Seventh), and took the oath of allegiance on the 25th of July (Ware's *Monasticon*).

1509. Peter Manne, or Marne, was abbot of Navan (Ware's MSS.).

1512. Patrick Cantwell was abbot, and died on the 22nd of May, 1536 (*ibidem*).

The last abbot of Navan was Thomas Wafre;\* and on the 19th of July, 1539, the commissioners of Henry the Eighth summoned the monks in the name of the king, to surrender all the possessions of the monastery in Meath, Louth, Dublin, Kildare, and Carlow, and elsewhere in Ireland. The abbot assembled his community in the chapter-house, and, the peremptory ukase of the tyrant leaving no alternative, the unfortunate monks were coerced to go through the legal farce of a "voluntary surrender"—to sign their own expulsion from house and home, and to pretend that this wholesale robbery and sacrilege had their full sanction and approval. The abbey of Navan was now plundered as if a wave of Goths or Vandals had passed over it. The image of the Blessed Virgin,† so long held in

\* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, pp. 56, 135.

† In the abbey-church of Navan there was an image or statue of the Blessed Virgin, held in great repute, to which persons from all parts of Ireland, princes and peasants, rich and poor, were in the habit of making pilgrimages. In the parliament of Dublin, 1454, amongst other acts, it was ordered "that letters patent of the king be made (in the form laid down) for taking into protection all people, *whether rebels or others*, who shall go in pilgrimage to the convent of the Blessed Virgin of Navan"—See Hardiman's *Statute of Kilkenny*, p. 51. In a parliament held at Drogheda, A.D. 1460, 38th Henry the Sixth, under Richard, Duke of York, an act was passed, summoning Thomas Bathe, knight, "pretending himself to be Lord of Louth, wherein he hath no title of inheritance", to appear before the prince on the Tuesday before the next St. Patrick's day, under penalty of forfeiture of all his property, and of being excluded from the king's protection, to answer the charges of which he was accused. In the preamble of this act, it is stated that Bathe, for the purpose of obtaining the king's favour, suborned one of his servants to falsely accuse Dr. John Stackbolle (doctor of each degree), one of the dignitaries of the Abbey of Navan, of high treason, for which he was imprisoned in Dublin Castle, sent to England, and was there vindicated and set free; that Bathe next robbed Dr. Stackbolle, and refused to make restitution; that Dr. Stackbolle, "being in despair of any remedy against the extortion, violence, and oppression" of the said Bathe, wrote to the Pope, and obtained an order for Dr. Ould-hall, bishop of Meath, to threaten him with excommunication, unless

veneration here, was torn from her altar and indignantly destroyed. The gold and silver ornaments of the church—chalices, ciboriums, crucifixes, images, vestments, altar plate and altar linen—all were carried off to fill the coffers of Henry the Eighth, and to enrich the worshippers of lay-supremacy. All being now accomplished, and everything of value carried off, the doors were shut for ever, and the abbey of Navan ceased to exist.

On the 21st of July, two days after their expulsion, a pension was promised to the following canons of the abbey, viz., £15 to Thomas Wafre, late abbot of Navan; £3 6s. 8d. to Thomas Cahyll; 26s. 8d. to Thomas Folane; 20s. to John Betagh; and 26s. 8d. to William Orche; payable out of the churches of Navan and Smermore, and hereditaments in Smermore and Horleston.

At the suppression and confiscation of the abbey of Navan it was found to own the following :\*

The manor of Smermore, together with twelve messuages, six cottages, one hundred and thirty-five acres of arable land, and ten of pasture, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £10 13s. 4d.; and it was found that William Elys held five acres in the said manor at the annual rent of 3s. 4d.; Walter Kelly, sixty acres of arable land at 2s. annual rent; and Nicholas Kelly, ten acres of arable, called Begg's land, at 6d. annual rent, all held from the said manor by soccage; the abbot was also seized of forty acres of arable land in Hurlestown, annual value, besides all reprises, 13s. 4d.; and of the rectory of Smermore, of the annual value, besides reprises, of £8; also, in Whyteston, one messuage, sixty acres of arable land, three of meadow, and three of unprofitable, annual value £1 6s. 8d.; and one other messuage, sixty acres of arable land, eight of

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within a limited time he made reparation; that restitution being refused, and Bathe continuing in his contumacy, the bishop of Meath, in accordance with the Pope's order, went in solemn procession to the market-place of Navan (where the old cross of Navan stood), on a market day, and there excommunicated thomas Bathe; that after this, Bathe sent some ruffians to the abbey of Navan, who forcibly carried off Dr. Stackbolle to Wilkinston, and there cut off his tongue and put out his eyes; that Dr. Stackbolle was carried back to the abbey, and cast before the image of the Blessed Virgin, and "*by her grace, mediation, and miraculous power, he was restored to his sight and speech*"—Hardiman's *Statute of Kilkenny*, p. 25.

\* Chief Remembrancer, apud Archdall.



pasture and meadow, and eight of unprofitable, of the annual value of £1 13s.; one messuage in the town of Navan, on which a stone turret was built, and sixty acres of arable land in Robenrath, near Navan, part of the possessions of this abbey . . . . granted to Robert Dillon.

In the *Patent Rolls*\* of Edward the Sixth, there is an order, dated Westminster, Dec. 31, 5°, directing the council to give a lease in reversion for thirty years, to John Wakely, of the dissolved house of "Our Lady of Nowan", of which "he has several years unexpired", at the former rent.

On the 28th of October, 1564, Queen Elizabeth directed† Sir Henry Sidney, lord deputy, to give a lease in reversion to John Wakely, of the spiritualities and temporalities of the dissolved house of "the Novan", in the county of Meath.

In 1613, King James the First granted to Sir Arthur Savage,‡ knight, privy councillor (*inter alia*):

The site, etc., of the monastery of Navan, an orchard and garden therein, rent, £1 6s. 8d.; three watermills, adjoining the hurling park, rent, £12 10s.; with pasture and wood adjacent, containing five acres, rent, 16s.; all the demesne lands, containing one hundred and eighty acres arable, eight acres meadow and pasture in Navan, rent, £10 10s.; the town of Graunge, near Faughan-hill, containing one hundred and ten acres arable, and four acres pasture, rent, £5 16s. 3d.; at Deranstown, a house and nine acres, rent, 10s.; in Ballinevan, twenty acres, rent, £1 3s.; the manor of Angeoilston, or Augeston, sixty acres, rent, £3; Trinne's land there, containing nine acres, rent, 9s. 6d.; with other lands there, rent, 18s. 1d.; parcel of the estate of the monastery of Navan.

In 1616 King James granted to the same Sir Arthur Savage:

Meath County.—In Rathlough, 5 acres, and a portion of the fishings in the Boyne, parcel of the estate of the monastery of Navan, rent, 17s. 4d. Irish; the tithe corn of the demesne

\* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 255.

† *Pat. 2*, James the First.

‡ *Calendar*, p. 494.

lands of the said monastery, gathered yearly by four and a-half couples in said county; rent, £3 Irish.

In Montgomery's visitation the church of Navan is described as "well repaired". In Usher's visitation it is noted: "£12 sterling allowed by the farmer of the impropriation".

In the course of time the abbey of Navan\* and abbey church fell into decay, and on the site was erected in after years a cavalry barracks, capable of accommodating four officers and fifty-two non-commissioned officers and privates, with stabling for fifty horses. The old walls of the abbey were completely uprooted, and not a trace now remains to identify this once hallowed ground with ancient worship. Archdall, writing in 1786, says: "In the burial-ground are the remains of many ancient tombs, with figures in alto-relievo". Since Archdall wrote, the tombs† have been torn from the graves, and were broken up, to form paving-stones and flags for the barrack-yard, and the cemetery has been dug up and converted into a garden. It would sicken the heart to contemplate the sacrilegious desecration here. An abbey, once the pride of this country, uprooted, a venerated church levelled to the ground, and, worse still, the sleep of death rudely disturbed, and the poor fragments of mortality outraged, and shovelled into the Blackwater, or scattered about

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\* In 1539, R. Cowley writes to Cromwell: "Your lordship preferred him, John Broke, to the ferme of the house of Navan. The same is burned, with all the appurtenances rifled; the corn in the fields burned, and all the whole town, which was the wealthiest and quickest English market-town in all that shire"—*State Papers*, part iii. 275.

† There was a splendid monument erected over one of the abbots, with carved figures of mitre, crozier, and other abbatial insignia. A colonel, named Bishop, in one of his drunken freaks, at the close of the last century, asked whose monument was that, and being told it was a bishop's, he swore an oath that "only one Bishop would command there". He had the tomb smashed, and the fragments flung into the Blackwater. About five years ago I observed an old pensioner, who had temporary care of the barracks, take up a skull, while planting cabbage in the garden. It is said that the garden was the cemetery of the friars. Ought not some law be passed to prevent desecration of the dead? On sinking the pump in the barrack-yard, about 1854, the remains of nine persons were discovered, laid the one upon the other. No coffin seems to have encased their bodies. The workmen collected the fragments, and piously interred them in another part of the barrack yard.



to manure the land. Here slept the good old abbots and friars, awaiting the sound of the archangel's trumpet; and here, too, the inhabitants of Navan, poor and rich, after being wearied with the cares and tribulations of life, lay down to rest in peace, little expecting that the sanctuary of death, respected even by pagans, would in their case be inhumanly violated, and the silent inmates barbarously expelled from their consecrated homes.

## STONE CROSSES.

There was a stone cross in the centre of the market-place of Navan, which was uprooted many years ago. The site is still pointed out, and the recollection of it is perpetuated by the people, who, at all funerals passing through the town, carry the coffin around it. A synod, held long before the English invasion, warned the people, "Wherever you find the sign of the cross of Christ do not do any injury". Hence, on the mountain-top, in the lone valley, by the shady *boreen*, in the market-place, along the way-side, as well as in the churchyard and cemetery, the cross was erected as a monument to solicit prayers for the dead or the founder; or again, as a landmark to familiarise the mind with the symbol of redemption, and to bring religion into the ordinary actions of men. Of one saint alone, St. Columbkille, it is recorded that he blessed "three hundred miraculous crosses and three hundred holy wells" (see *Leabhar Breac*, quoted in Dr. Petrie's *Round Towers*, p. 334). Wherever the eye turned, it rested on a church, an abbey, an oratory, a holy well, a monumental cross, or some emblem of the religion of the country. It is calculated that almost every townland in Ireland was, in former times, ornamented with the figure of the cross, and the sites of very many such are still pointed out in the traditions of the people. There are two fragments of the old cross of Navan preserved by a family in the town. One of these has an inscription, in Irish, commemorative of the sufferings of Christ, and His opening Heaven to us. The other has a figure of St. Patrick, with mitre and crozier, on one side of which is "S" (saint), and on the other "P" (Patrick); a second side

has a shield and a figure of a bird—perhaps the arms of the Nangles; a third side has the “*Ecce Homo*” crowned with thorns; and the fourth has a crowned figure of the Blessed Virgin, with the Infant Jesus in her arms. A fragment of the Navan cross is in Dublin.

There is a portion of across at Nevingstown, which stood adjoining the old road from Navan to Rathaldron Castle, the ancient residence of the Cusacks. The inscription is contracted, and in the black letter character, thus, “. . . (erased) . . .” (*M. Cusack*) “*Armigeri, et Margaretæ Dexter uxoris ejus ac heredum eorum qui hanc crucem fecerunt. Anno Domini 1588, quorum animabus propicietur Deus. Amen*” (see *Boyne and Blackwater*, p. 157).

I am happy to be in a position to say that there is at present in Navan a very beautiful stone cross, chiselled and executed with considerable skill by an enterprising young man, a native of this town, named Thomas Curry. The erect shaft measures 11 feet, and, standing on its pedestal, 20 feet 6 inches. The crossbar measures 5 feet 1 inch. On one side is a figure of the crucifixion, measuring 4 feet 9 inches, and on the other the *Stabat Mater*, which measures 5 feet 1 inch. The hammer, nails, and ladder are also chiselled with great taste, and the whole presents an object of surpassing interest. The same young artist has carved a very beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin, which at present ornaments the pleasure-grounds of the Diocesan Seminary. Verily, if a reasonable amount of patronage were extended to many of our young men, Ireland might take her stand, even in the domain of art, amongst the proudest nations of Europe.

#### PASTORS OF NAVAN.

From the period of the so-called Reformation till 1669, we have no record of the pastors of Navan or of the ecclesiastical annals of the parish. In that year, Dr. Patrick Plunkett, bishop of Meath, held an ordination at Navan, and amongst the priests ordained by him were :\*

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\* Registration paper—See *Battersby's Registry*, 1838.



Rev. Nicholas Tranlavy, registered in 1704 as parish priest of Ballinderry and Maghereregall, county Antrim.

Rev. Francis Fleming, registered as parish priest of Skryne, Tara, Rathfeigh, Templekieran and Macetown, county Meath.

Rev. Kedagh Dunn, registered as parish priest of Rossinolis, Rerymore, Castlebrack, and Killmanham, Queen's County.

In 1669, Dr. Plunkett held an ordination in the old chapel of Bailis, parish of Athlumney, near Navan, and amongst others ordained, was :

Rev. Garret Dease, presented by James the Second to the parish of Moyglare, and registered in 1704 as parish priest of Rathregan, Ballymaglasson, Rodanstown, Kilcloon, Balfeighan, and Moyglare.

In 1670, Dr. Plunkett ordained in the chapel of Bailis :

Rev. Edmund Murphy, registered as parish priest of Clonmethan, county Dublin.

In 1671, Dr. Plunkett ordained at Bailis :

Rev. Thomas Reilly, registered as parish priest of St. Mary's, Drogheda.

In 1673, Dr. Plunkett ordained in Navan :

Rev. Farrel Berne, registered as parish priest of Killoole, county Roscommon.

In 1690, King James the Second presented to the parishes of Navan\* and Ardsallagh Dr. George Plunkett.

In 1704, the Rev. Garret Darcy was registered as parish priest of Navan, Donaghmore, Ardsallagh, and Bective. He was ordained at Kilkenny in 1687, by the Most Rev. James Whelan, bishop of Ossory. In the year of the registration, he lived at Navan, and was then forty years of age. During the early years of the reign of Queen Anne, a little mudwall thatched chapel was erected at Leighsbrook, Navan, separated from Leighsbrook House, the present residence of the Sisters of Mercy, by a stream. In this humble temple

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\* There was a church in the parish of Navan, situated between Navan and the bridge of Kilcairne, on the townland of Balreask, called by tradition "St. Columb's Church". There was a burying ground around it. All the stones have been taken away. It is at present "glebe land".

the Catholics of Navan worshipped God for seventy years, and frequently, during this time, their little chapel was closed against them, owing to a more rigorous enforcement of the penal laws, and then Mass would be celebrated by stealth, while the stars were twinkling, on the lonely rocks which line the Boyne below Blackcastle. During the same period the statute against Catholic education was never relaxed; no school was tolerated, up to 1782, inside the corporate boundaries, and the youth of Navan who wished to acquire knowledge were obliged to steal out to the parish of Donaghmore, and there graduate under the hedge school-master. How long Rev. Garret Darcy lived after 1704 is now unknown. He was succeeded by Dr. Luke Fagan, bishop of Meath, whose secretary and administrator was Rev. Nicholas Dempsey.\* Dr. Fagan was transferred to the archiepiscopal see of Dublin in September, 1729, and was succeeded in the diocese of Meath by Dr. Stephen MacEgan, O.P., to whom the Holy See granted the parish of Navan *in commendam*. Dr. MacEgan† died in Dublin on the 30th of May, 1756, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and was interred in St. James's churchyard. He was a zealous and untiring labourer, and as a preacher‡ was second to none in the Irish Church.

*The Rev. Christopher Fleming* succeeded. He was curate for many years under Dr. MacEgan, and, after his death, became vicar-general§ of the diocese of Meath. About the year 1772, the mudwall thatched chapel of Leighsbrook crumbled and fell on Christmas night, and on the following morning the parishioners found themselves without a place of worship. For many months after this the Holy Sacrifice was offered up in a sentry box, which was procured from the cavalry barracks; and, under this temporary shelter, in a yard off Trimgate Street, the priest officiated, while the people knelt on the bare ground, with no other roof but the

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\* A paper of Dr. Fagan's, in my possession.

† The lives of Drs. Fagan and MacEgan, reserved for the next volume.

‡ "Divini verbi Conscionator non minus facundus quam indefessus erat, nulli in Hibernia secundus"—*Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 501.

§ Papers of Dr. Plunkett, in my possession.



canopy of Heaven. A mudwall thatched house was next erected on a portion of the site occupied by the present Catholic church of Navan. The neighbouring farmers used this during the week as a barn for threshing corn, and on Saturday evenings the little boys attended to sweep the floor and make preparations for the following morning. Two barrels were then procured and placed in a corner of the house, the door was taken off the hinges and placed on the barrels, and here the Holy Sacrifice was offered: this was the altar of Navan for eight or nine years.\* The next ambition of the Catholics of Navan was to erect some sort of a belfry, in order that all might know the hour for Mass, and that none might be disappointed. To accomplish this openly and directly, they knew was hopeless, as the penal statute against Catholic belfries was then rigorously enforced, and no exception to this law was, up to that period, tolerated throughout the diocese of Meath. To evade the statute, they suspended a little bell along the side wall of a neighbouring brewery, kept by a Catholic, and this little monitor answered a two-fold purpose—it summoned the labourers to work, and the parishioners to worship.

The Rev. Christopher Fleming was in declining health for several years previous to his death. At the close of 1775, or beginning of 1776, he resigned the parish of Navan in favour of Rev. Patrick Moore, parish priest of Kilberry, and petitioned the Holy See to have this arrangement approved of and confirmed. On the 9th of May, 1776, his resignation was accepted, and the Rev. Patrick Moore was appointed to the vacant parish. In the meantime, a controversy was taking place in the diocese as to the validity of this resignation in favour of another, and ended, as we shall see, by the renunciation on the part of Rev. Mr. Moore of all claim to the parish. About this time a great number of deaths took place throughout the diocese. Many of the old trees of the sanctuary, which had weathered the storms of half a century, yielding now to the fury of the

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\* Since my appointment to the curacy of Navan I have met old persons who remembered this altar.

tempest, were uprooted and passed away. The links which connected the dread days of Queen Anne with the first dawn of freedom, consequent on the American Revolution, were, one by one, disappearing, and with them many of the fearful traditions of that dark and intolerant age. In May, 1778, the coadjutor Bishop of Meath, Dr. Eugene Geoghegan, departed this life; and in the following August the Most Rev. Dr. Chevers, bishop of the diocese, followed him. The vicar-general of Meath, Father Christopher Fleming, remained not long after them. He died in January, 1779, and was buried in the churchyard of Athlumney.

*The Most Rev. Patrick Joseph Plunkett*, Bishop of Meath, succeeded. This distinguished prelate was born at Kells, county Meath, of a respectable family, on the Christmas eve of 1738. Manifesting at an early age a determination of embracing the ecclesiastical state, he applied himself with diligence to his studies, and to the still more important duty of practising virtue. Fortunately for him, his uncle, the Rev. John Plunkett, was then parish priest of Kells, and, availing himself of this opportunity, he commenced his classical studies, and made rapid proficiency. At that time education was penal at home, and the youth who volunteered his services to the Irish Church, was obliged to seek, at his peril, the necessary information in one of those continental colleges which the charity and philanthropy of Europe had endowed for the persecuted Church of Ireland. In order to evade the law, Dr. Plunkett was articed to a merchant in Pill Lane, Dublin, and in this capacity he proceeded to France, with his master's permission, as if on mercantile business, but in reality to prosecute his studies for the priesthood. By this artifice he eluded the watchful eyes of government, and, having obtained letters of introduction, he reached Paris in 1752, and obtained a place in the celebrated College of Trent-trois.

During his collegiate course, his brilliant success, his meek and amiable disposition, his unassuming piety, and his conscientious observance of rule, won the respect and attracted the admiration of his superiors and fellow-students. After being promoted to the priesthood, he took out the degree of



doctor of divinity with applause, became chief almoner to one of the first families in France, an associate of Navarre, professor, and one of the four principal superiors of the Irish College of the Lombards. In these various and responsible offices, his polished manners, which attracted the attention of even the French court, his varied and extensive information, his meek and benevolent disposition, his candour and sincerity, secured the friendship of all with whom the calls of business or of social intercourse brought him into connection. The old priests who graduated under him, all of whom have long since departed, frequently spoke of his order and eloquence in the lecture hall, of the solidity and clearness of his views, of his classic style, and, above all, which is held longest in remembrance, of his friendly and gentlemanly bearing, and the deep interest he took in the comfort and welfare of even the most insignificant student in the house. Hence, when the bishop of Meath and his coadjutor were called to their eternal rest, all eyes were directed to Dr. Plunkett; and although he struggled against the high honour with a humility worthy of the first ages of Christianity, the inflexibility of the Holy See left him no other alternative. He was elected to the see of Meath on the 19th of December, 1778, and consecrated in Paris on the 28th of February, 1779. Previous to his departure for Ireland he petitioned the Holy See for the parish of Navan, that he might establish there his episcopal residence, and have means to support his ecclesiastical dignity. It was replied to him that the late parish priest of Navan had resigned, and that the Rev. Patrick Moore, parish priest of Kilberry, had been appointed to succeed him. Having made all his preparations, and supplied himself with books and every other requisite, he was obliged to sunder old ties, separate himself from collegiate life, endeared to him by a residence of twenty-six years, and hasten to his native diocese to begin a long and laborious career. On his passage to Ireland, the ship in which he sailed was attacked by that historic personage, Paul Jones, the American privateer, who took with him most of the books, furniture, and vestments belonging to Dr. Plunkett. Soon after his arrival, he

commenced the visitation of his extensive diocese, and henceforth, for the long space of forty-eight years, his incessant labours were worthy of the most apostolic ages of the Church. When we bear in mind, that he visited every parish of his diocese annually, examined all the children for confirmation personally, and preached at all his visitations, together with preparation for and attendance at conferences and other episcopal duties, we can form some idea of the services of Dr. Plunkett, and of the great blessings which necessarily resulted from his long and faithful career. His return from visitation was not accompanied by any relaxation from toil. He attended the confessional as regularly as any of his curates; he preached usually twice, and frequently three times, on Sundays and festivals; he corresponded, too, not only with the clergy and gentry of his diocese, but very extensively with the presidents of continental colleges, the prelates of the Irish Church, and the Holy See. It is very fortunate for all who take an interest in the gradual development of the Irish Church after the days of persecution, that Dr. Plunkett kept a regular diary. In the early days of his episcopacy he merely entered his visitations, the number confirmed, the subjects of his exhortations, the obits and successions of his clergy, and other parochial and diocesan matters; but, as time passed on, his entries became more diffuse, until they comprised every fact of public importance. It does not appear that he ever had an idea of having these registries published; on the contrary, they lay on a shelf in his library, and all his curates had at all times free access to them. To the late Very Rev. Dr. O'Rafferty, parish priest of Tullamore and vicar-general of Meath, we are indebted for the preservation of the great bulk of his papers. While curate in Navan, he took a deep interest in these documents, and after the death of Dr. Plunkett, he came from Tullamore for the express purpose of securing them. On his return he brought with him these ecclesiastical treasures, and during his long life he had them secured under lock and key. At his death he bequeathed them to the Most Rev. Dr. Cantwell, as diocesan property; and to the kindness of the bishop and the courtesy of the



Very Rev. Matthew M'Alroy, present parish priest of Tullamore and vicar-general of Meath, the writer is indebted for the use of these papers, and the public for the very interesting facts which the second volume of the *Diocese of Meath* will disclose.

We treat henceforth, in this volume, of Dr. Plunkett as parish priest of Navan. During the lifetime of Dr. Chevers, bishop of Meath, the Rev. Patrick Moore signed a document, in the presence of Dr. Geoghegan, the coadjutor bishop, and many priests of the diocese, resigning the parish of Navan, and renouncing any claim which he might have to it. On the 19th of July, 1779, he signed another renunciation of his claim, in presence of the Rev. Christopher Chevers, parish priest of Kilbeg and vicar-general of Meath, and the Rev. Patrick Smith, parish priest of Ardbraccan. This document was sent to Rome, signed by Rev. Patrick Moore and the witnesses, and had the following attestation from the Most Rev. Dr. Troy, archbishop of Dublin:

“Nos, etc., Instrumentum retroscriptum esse genuinum atque authenticum attestamus. Datum atque sigillo nostro munitum Dublinii, hac die 24 Julii, A.D. 1779. — JOANNES, Archiepiscopus Dubliniensis, Hiberniæ Primas, et Metropolitanus”.

On the following April another attestation was sent to Rome bearing on this subject, of which the following is a copy:

“Nos infrascripti testamur D. Patritium Moore, presbyterum Midensis, ac Rectorem ecclesiæ parochialis de Kilberry, in diocesi Midensi, nunquam cepisse, immo nec canonice petisse, possessionem parochialis ecclesiæ de Navan, in prædicta diocesi. In cujus rei fidem subscripsimus Navaniæ, die Aprilis vigesima octava, A.D. 1780.

“THOMAS FLOOD, Archidiaconus Midensis,  
Pastor de Kells, necnon Vicarius.  
PATRITIUS SMITH, Pastor de Ardbraccan”.

On the receipt of these documents, demonstrating that the rights of others were not interfered with, the Holy

Father, without hesitation, collated Dr. Plunkett to the parish of Navan. He was inducted on the 8th of February, 1781, as the following registry attests:

“Ego infrascriptus, parochus de Kells, et archidiaconus Midensis, etc., ab illustrissimo ac reverendissimo D.D. Hugone O'Reilly, Episcopo Clogherensi delegatus, induxi in ecclesiam parochialem de Navan, Rev. D. Patritium Smith, parochum de Ardraccan, in diocesi Midensi, vices ad hunc effectum illustrissimi ac reverendissimi D.D. mei Patricii Josephi Plunkett, Episcopi Midensis, gerentem, et præfato paracho de Ardraccan, personam prædicti illustrissimi ac reverendissimi Antistitis agenti, corporalem prædictæ ecclesiæ de Navan cum omnibus juribus et annexis possessionem dedi, hac die octava Februarii,

—A.D. 1781

“Testibus,  
PATRICIO MOORE, Pastore  
de Kilberry.  
PETRO O'REILLY, Capellano  
et Vicario de Navan”.

“THOMAS FLOOD,  
Pastor de Kells et Archidiaconus  
Midensis”.

On the accession of Dr. Plunkett to the parish, the old chapel of Navan was reëdified, and after a few years, under the direction of Rev. Peter O'Reilly, a new church was erected, which, in architecture and ornamentation, was in advance of its day.

In May, 1782, Rev. Messrs. Philip Mulligan, John O'Hare, Bernard O'Reilly, Michael Flood, Michael Callan, John Rickard, and John Leonard were ordained by Dr. Plunkett in the chapel of Navan.

In May, 1785, Rev. Messrs. Christopher Halligan, Nicholas Arnold, and Walter Drake were ordained here.

In April, 1786, Rev. Messrs. William Killen, James Fagan, and Thomas Ganly were ordained here.

In 1788, month of March, Rev. Messrs. Eugenius Coffy, Fra. Thomas Murray, O.P., Peter MacMahon, John and Christopher Reilly were ordained here.

In September, 1791, Rev. Messrs. Henry Dowling, Laurence Dempsey, Laurence Geoghegan, James Wyer, and James Dunn were ordained here.

1793, 19th of February, the Most Rev. Dr. Richard



O'Reilly, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland, received the pallium in the chapel of Navan after Mass. Dr. Plunkett, Bishop of Meath, represented the Holy See on the occasion.

On the 2nd of April this year the Rev. Messrs. John Fay, Eugene O'Reilly, Michael Keogan, and Patrick O'Leary were ordained priests in the chapel of Navan.

1799, May 15th, Richard Gosson, Patrick Carey, Simon White, and Francis Kelly received subdeaconship here.

#### THE SEMINARY.

Dr. Plunkett frequently deplored the pains and penalties which hung over the intellectual development of his countrymen, and thus kept them "hewers of wood and drawers of water" to the wily taskmasters under whose servitude they groaned. Presiding over a diocese which numbered so many of the Catholic gentry and middle classes, and in which, owing to the energy and industry of the people, the old faith, so long oppressed and humiliated, was rapidly resuming her position, he regarded as one of his most important duties the education of youth and the diffusion of knowledge. Ignorance has at all times been the scourge of religion, and, on the other hand, intelligence, under proper direction, has been a valuable auxiliary to the progress of the Church and the reformation of the people.

Immediately after his arrival in Ireland, Dr. Plunkett intimated to his pastors the deep interest he took in the education of the youth; and as early as 1778, this indefatigable prelate set out on a tour of inspection, for the purpose of ascertaining how far his wishes in this respect were carried into effect. The result was, that a new impetus was communicated, and even before the Catholic Relief Bill of 1793, the diocese of Meath was covered over with schools. In 1791,\* the Primate and suffragans of Armagh met in Drogheda, to consult on the best means of forming schools of divinity and philosophy throughout their ecclesiastical province. On the 20th of April, 1796, Earl Camden, Lord

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\* Papers of Dr. Plunkett.

Lieutenant, laid the foundation stone of Maynooth College, and there was no longer any reason why the important diocese of Meath should be unprovided with a diocesan school. In a few years the long-cherished wishes of Dr. Plunkett were realized. The seminary\* of Navan was opened in 1802. Of all similar establishments in Ireland, few have produced more eminent men, more patriotic or pious priests, more zealous missionaries, many of whom are on the English, Scotch, American, Australian, and Indian missions, than St. Finian's seminary of Navan. She can boast of men in the army and navy, at the bar, in the various professions of life, in the bustle of cities and towns, or ornamenting the private ranks of society, who were once reckoned her *alumni*. Professors in various colleges feel pride in their youthful connection with her halls. Doctors, engineers, lawyers, merchants, and farmers look back with pleasure to the days when they learned wisdom in her schools. In a word, the seminary of Navan has stood the test of time and competition, and in this year of grace 1862, the number of pupils has surpassed that of any preceding year since its foundation. The first president and father of this establishment was the late Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly, who directed up to 1827. He was succeeded by the Very Rev. Patrick O'Connor, late parish priest of Skryne, and vicar-forane. His successor was and is the present accomplished president, Very Rev. Nicholas Power. *Diu sospes sit*. Amongst the professors were the Rev. Mr. M'Encroe, present archdeacon of Sydney, and, in after years, the Most Rev. Dr. Eugene O'Connell, the present meek and saintly bishop of Maryville, California.

As the vast majority of the staff passed out to the mission, we confine ourselves to those who died during their connection with the house.

Rev. Nicholas Sheil, born of respectable parents, in the parish of Ardcath, graduated in the seminary, and afterwards in the College of Maynooth. After his ordination he was

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\* There is a chalice at present used in the Seminary, having the following inscription on the pedestal: "Anna Nowlan, me fieri fecit pro Disc. Carm., Hib.—orate pro ea—1714".



appointed a professor here, and left the seminary in declining health a short time previous to his death. He was interred in the churchyard of Ardath, alongside of Rev. John Leonard, parish priest, and over him is a tomb, with the following inscription:—

. . . . . Here also are interred two  
dearly beloved sons of Mr. Richard Sheil, of Ardath,  
the Rev. NICHOLAS SHEIL, who departed this life  
on the 7th of April, 1836, in the twenty-sixth year of his age  
and third year of his ministry. And here also  
is buried his brother, the Rev. RICHARD SHEIL, who died  
on the 27th of December, 1840, in the twenty-seventh year of  
his age and second of his ministry.

Those reverend brothers were distinguished for  
their humility, zeal, and piety, and God rewarded them  
by calling them early to Himself.

The Rev. John O'Rafferty was born in Navan, studied in the seminary and Maynooth, was ordained in 1834, officiated as Catholic curate in Castletown-Kilpatrick, and was afterwards a professor in the seminary. He died in 1840, much regretted, and was buried in the cemetery attached to the present Catholic Church of Navan.

Hic sepeliuntur reliquiae  
REV<sup>di</sup>. JOANNIS O'RAFFERTY.  
Obiit 30<sup>mo</sup> Ætatis suæ anno  
28 Julii, 1840.

Requiescat in pace.

The Rev. Patrick Horan was born in the parish of Tullamore, studied in Navan and Maynooth, officiated as Catholic curate in Tullamore, and afterwards professed in the seminary to the time of his death. He died at Navan on the 1st of December, 1850, deeply regretted by a numerous circle of friends, and was buried in the churchyard of New Durrow, King's County. A monument has been erected over his remains with the following inscription:

Hoc est corpus meum  
Hic est calix sanguinis mei.  
Have mercy, O Lord, on  
the soul of Rev. PATRICK HORAN,

whose mortal remains,  
 in the hope of  
 a happy resurrection,  
 repose under this stone.  
 This much gifted priest,  
 on the 1st of December, 1850, in  
 the forty-third year of his age,  
 departed this life in the Roman Catholic Seminary  
 at Navan, where,  
 for many years, he taught  
 with great ability and honour  
 rhetoric and philosophy,  
 and was respected during life  
 for solid piety, eminent virtues,  
 and extensive learning.

Requiescat in pace.

The Rev. Edward Flynn was born in the parish of Clara, King's County, graduated in Navan and Maynooth, and, after his collegiate course, was appointed to profess in the Seminary, which position he discharged with zeal and ability to the time of his death. He died in the Seminary, April the 7th, 1856, and was interred, amidst the deep regret of his brethren and a numerous circle of friends, in the vaults of the parish church. A marble slab points out where he sleeps, and commemorates him thus:

In spem resurrectionis  
 hic positæ sunt Reliquiæ  
 REV. EDVARDI FLYNN,  
 de Gymnasio R. C. apud Navan,  
 qui ex hac vita migravit die Septimo  
 Aprilis, 1856, anno vero  
 suæ ætatis 49.

Requiem eternam dona ei Domine.

For many years previous to the actual establishment of the Seminary, Dr. Plunkett had in contemplation the foundation of some such diocesan institution. As early as 1794, while making his episcopal visitation, he addressed every parish on this important subject, and solicited contributions, in order to have adequate means at hand whenever an opportunity would present itself. His appeal was responded to with generosity, and one



gentleman alone, Matthew Corbally, Esq., grandfather to the present member for Meath, contributed £500. After the appointment of the Rev. Eugene O'Reilly to the office of president, Dr. Plunkett guaranteed that his position would not be disturbed unless for promotion, and, thus encouraged, he devoted himself with zeal to his new mission, and the school rapidly rose and prospered under his guidance. The following letters,\* found amongst the papers of the late Very Rev. Peter O'Reilly, parish priest of Kells and vicar-general, illustrate the memory of the good and great Dr. Plunkett, and show what interest he took in encouraging his youthful and deserving priests.

LETTER OF REV. EUGENE O'REILLY TO DR. PLUNKETT, THEN AT KELLS.

“ Chapel Lodge, Navan, June 9th, 1803.

“ MOST HONOURED AND BELOVED LORD,

“ Yesterday, when last I had the pleasure of seeing you, you desired that I should fix upon whatever arrangement I thought suitable to my new situation at St. Finian's. This I wish the more cheerfully to do on this occasion, as you may have an opportunity of conferring with Rev. Mr. O'Reilly on that subject. Your lordship and the Rev. Mr. O'Reilly have been kind and bountiful to me at all times. Before I was even capable of reflection and of feeling your favours, you have been my constant friend and benefactor. This is, for me, a most certain pledge, that whatever arrangement you make will be for my greater good. For my part, I have settled upon no particular plan; but, whatever you do, I am satisfied, ‘ tuus sum ego’, in everything, always, in every situation of life. The only thing I wish is, that I should not be disturbed from St. Finian's, unless to be promoted to a better situation, except, what I hope, with the help of God, shall never be the case, I should unfortunately forfeit your friendship and my place by any unbecoming conduct; and that you would be pleased to express your desire that, should God call you before me from the present order of things, I should be dealt with in like manner. This is my only desire, and the only request I beg of your lordship. Should this request be extravagant or inconsistent with religion or reason, I do not desire it; but should you think it not improper,

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\* I am indebted to the Very Rev. Nicholas Power, president of the Seminary, for the use of these letters, and for much useful information and unpublished documents, to be incorporated in a future volume.

and be pleased to grant it, you will satisfy my mind to its fullest extent in this life, and you will encourage and animate me to make every effort that lies in my power to advance the important objects of the establishment.

" I request my best respects to Rev. Mr. O'Reilly. If I can procure the loan of a horse, I hope to have the honour of seeing your lordship to-day in Kells. Meanwhile, I beg leave to assure you that I have the honour to be, most sincerely, ever beloved lord,

" Your lordship's most obedient and devoted subject,

" EUGENE O'REILLY.

" P.S.—I write in haste ; I beg you will excuse my blunders".

LETTER OF DR. PLUNKETT TO REV. PETER O'REILLY.

" June 25, 1803.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" Nothing is more just and reasonable than the desire expressed in the letter hereto annexed, by the Rev. Eugene O'Reilly, When, at my request, he consented to devote his time and talents to the management of the school of St. Finian's, Navan, I *resolved* he should be undisturbed there, nor be removed, unless to a better situation, if possible, in the diocese. Hence, the request he makes has been anticipated by my intention. This intention is cordial and sincere ; so much so, that I earnestly wish it may pass to my successor, by whom it is my humble prayer that he be dealt with in like manner. These lines will attest the sentiments I entertain ; and I deposit them with you to be made use of according to the desire of,

" My ever dear friend,

" Your affectionate and devoted,

" ✠ P. J. PLUNKETT".

#### DEATH OF DR. PLUNKETT.

After a glorious career of nearly half a century, as bishop of Meath and parish priest of Navan, entering on his eighty-ninth year, the venerable Dr. Plunkett\* died at Navan, on the 11th of January, 1827, deeply and sincerely regretted by priests and people, and was buried in the parish church of Navan.

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\* Our notices of this prelate will be more detailed, when we come to illustrate his life as Bishop of Meath.



*The Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly succeeded* as pastor of Navan. In the long roll of priests who edified and ornamented the Church of Ireland, not one can be pointed to who was more distinguished for piety, patriotism, and every ecclesiastical virtue, than the late lamented Father Eugene. After his death, in December, 1852, many interesting biographies have been written by those who knew him best, and as most of these have been collected and condensed, with laudable zeal, by the enterprising Mr. Battersby, we quote the following from his *Catholic Directory* :\*

“The Very Rev. Father Eugene O'Reilly, parish priest of Navan, vicar-general and archdeacon of Meath, was born about the year 1768, and descended, in a paternal line, from the ‘O'Reilly’ of Heath House, in the Queen’s County, and, on the maternal side, from the Maguires of Rathmore, who were closely connected by marriage with the Dunsany branch of the Plunkett family, in the county of Meath, and with the Balfes of Courtown, who were the progenitors of the Roscommon branch of the same name, against whom, being ‘Papists’, bills of discovery were filed by the Taylor family, now ennobled by the title of marquis, and which penal proceedings were the last instituted in this country against the rights and profession of Catholics. At the desire of his uncle, Rev. Laurence O'Reilly, parish priest of Kildalkey, he and his brother, Mr. Matthew O'Reilly, afterwards an eminent solicitor in Dublin, were sent to France in the year 1786.† There, in the College of Lille, he prosecuted his classical studies with distinguished success till 1792, when he was forced, by the fury of the Revolution, to return to Ireland. Subsequently, having studied a short time in Carlow, he was amongst the first to enter Maynooth, in 1795, the year of its foundation. In 1797‡ he was appointed by that illustrious prelate, the late Right Rev. Dr. Plunkett, curate of his own parish in Navan. In 1802 he was appointed president

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\* *Catholic Directory*, 1853.

† On the 5th of September, 1786, Dr. Plunkett writes : “I wrote to Rev. Mr. Moore, Superior of the Irish College of Lille, to recommend to him Messrs. Eugene and Matthew O'Reilly, nephews to the Rev. Laurence O'Reilly, parish priest of Kildalkey. These two brothers go to fill two vacancies belonging to Meath in that house”.—*Diaries of Dr. Plunkett*.

‡ March the 3rd, 1797, Dr. Plunkett notes : “The Rev. Eugene O'Reilly commenced his functions at Navan, as second curate”.—*Diaries*.

over the Catholic seminary which was opened that year in Navan. For this office, doubly arduous at that period, his piety, his regular and laborious habits, together with his remarkably paternal disposition and great classical acquirements, abundantly qualified him. How he acquitted himself of his charge, the splendid success of this establishment, the number of distinguished men whom it has given to the Church and to other professions, and its present most flourishing condition, after the lapse of fifty years, sufficiently testify. Removed from the seminary in 1827, he was appointed parish priest of Navan, then vicar-general, and afterwards archdeacon of the diocese of Meath. Shortly after 1827 he received proofs of confidence and high esteem from the Holy See, having been appointed notary-apostolic, an office of very high trust. During the twenty-five years that he discharged the duties of parish priest, his labours were unceasing for the eternal and spiritual welfare of his dear flock. For their use and edification he compiled a beautiful prayer-book, with numerous sacred hymns, both the words and music of his own composition ; for he loved the sacred music of the Church, and was endowed with great musical taste and genius, and in college he used to receive the first premiums for poetry in various languages, gifts which he afterwards turned to the great advantage of the Church. A reverend correspondent writes : ‘ I well recollect Father Eugene spending hours, night after night, in the very depth of winter, in the parish chapel, instructing the choir in singing, employing for that purpose the violin, from which he elicited tones such as the mellowest of human voices’. His zeal in promoting the honour and glory of God was, through life, unceasing and active, not cooled by the snow of years. A mere list of the many foundations and religious institutes for which the Catholic Church in Meath is indebted to him, would show how devoted and untiring a labourer he was in the vineyard of the Lord. For example, Father O'Reilly was the founder of the noble and spacious church of Navan, its grand entrance, and splendid organ ; he built the parochial house ; the Crosses Chapel ; of the new infant schools he may be called the founder, since it was at his request and by his influence that the Duke of Bedford was induced to build them. Father O'Reilly also built a convent for the nuns of the Loretto Order, which has diffused the blessings of education among the poor and rich.

“ A reverend correspondent wrote as follows last year, when



the good old priest had temporarily recovered from a severe attack of illness, arising from the infirmities of old age: 'Indeed, I often think of him and speak of him; of the days I spent under his roof; of his sayings and doings; of his calm temper and edifying manners; of the great works he has accomplished; of his zeal as a priest, and of his purity as a patriot; of his long and eventful life; and, more particularly, of the beautiful serenity in which we all see that that life is now verging towards its setting. Reverencing him as, I may say, my first master and guide on the mission, and loving him as a friend, I shall not fail to plead for him at the holy bar'.

"The last act of his life was to found and endow for ever a convent for the Sisters of Mercy, to be established on his own estate in the town of Navan,—a lasting proof of his love for the poor, to whom also this good priest has left other bequests in perpetuity. He was foremost in contributing to every religious institute, and, among the many he established in Navan, and for which future generations will bless his name, may be mentioned the Christian Doctrine Society, a religious circulating library, a Wake Society, the Sodalties of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the Society of the Living Rosary, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. As a patriot, no less than a good and holy priest, we need scarcely say that Father Eugene O'Reilly merited the respect and gratitude of his country. He was a sterling patriot, a friend and follower of the great O'Connell, always on the people's side, and ever ready to subscribe liberally to whatever was calculated to promote the welfare of Ireland. Of the Tenant League he was a warm and generous supporter, and the last political act of the saintly old patriarch's life was to go and vote for the Tenant League candidates for the county Meath. The Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly closed his earthly career on Sunday afternoon, 12th December, 1852, at half-past seven o'clock, in the eighty-fourth year of his age and the sixtieth of his ministry. The following day his remains were removed processionally to the church, where they lay in state till Tuesday, when they were deposited in the cemetery attached to the church, built by himself for the clergy. The bishop and a vast number of the clergy assisted at the office, which was celebrated with all the pomp and solemnity due to the obsequies of an ecclesiastic held in such veneration. The people of Navan showed the utmost respect and sorrow for the faithful pastor whom Almighty God had taken to his reward. The shops were closed, and business

suspended, and a vast concourse of people attended the funeral, many of them of influence and rank, and of different religious denominations, eager to do honour to the memory of a man whose worth was held in reverence by all. May he rest in peace! Amen".

The month's memory of this great priest was held at Navan\* on the 25th of January, 1853, and, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, the bishop and sixty-six priests attended his office and requiem Mass. At the anniversary the bishop and fifty-five priests assisted, and a magnificent panegyric on the illustrious deceased was delivered by the Rev. Michael Tormey, professor in the Seminary. Father Eugene was interred in the cemetery of the parochial church, and a slab on the wall, with the following inscription, points out his resting-place:



Memoriæ sacrum

Admodum Rev. EUG O'REILLY, P.P., Navanensis,  
V.G., Not. Apost.,

Qui ministerio suo omnium laude animarumque  
Maximo fructu, per annos 60, erat perfunctus

Ingenii dotibus doctrinæque subsidiis

Instructusquo modo posteros ditaverit,

Collegium studiis altioribus deditum monialium etiam,

cum schola claustrum templumque condendo

testamento suo præterea, sororum misericordiæ

pro ædibus gratia pauperum opes designando

sint ipsa in monumenta,

intrepidus pastor quem nulla moles laborum

ardua devicit populo latura quietem

hunc merito flebunt simili qui deinde carebunt.

Obiit, die festo Sancti Finianis, 1852.

Requiescat in pace.

In the parochial church there is a marble monument inscribed thus:

To the memory of  
the Rev. EUGENE O'REILLY,  
parish priest of Navan,

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\* The writer of this had the great pleasure of assisting on all these occasions.



archdeacon and vicar-general of Meath,  
and notary apostolic;

a true minister of Christ, who for sixty years  
devoted his life and labours to the service of God.

The seminary that he founded, the churches that he built,  
and the convents that he established and endowed,  
are living monuments of his charity and zeal  
for the religion and improvement of his flock.

He died December 12th, 1852, in the 84th year of his age.  
This tribute to his virtues is erected by the liberality of the  
Duke of Bedford and the affection of his friends.

#### LORETTO CONVENT—TOMBS OF THE NUNS.

Some years previous to the death of Dr. Plunkett, a lady was travelling by the mail-coach through Navan, and observing a large number of destitute little girls soliciting alms, and following the coach with their little hands stretched out, importuning the passengers, she was filled with compassion, and began to reflect on how she could best alleviate their sufferings, and make them useful members of society. In a few days afterwards she waited on Dr. Plunkett, and placed in his hand £500, as her donation towards the erection of a convent, in which the poor children of the town were to be relieved and to receive a gratuitous education. Another lady, animated by a similar spirit of benevolence, gave a donation of £500 for the same object, and with a portion of this money the present site of the Loretto House was purchased from the late Mr. Murphy of Navan. It was reserved for Father Eugene to carry out these charitable intentions, and to have the erection of a convent successfully accomplished. It was founded in 1830, completed in 1833, and in this latter year a branch of the Loretto nuns of Rathfarnham was conducted to Navan by Father Eugene, and introduced by him to their new cloister. Since then it has been a boarding-school for young ladies, and has an extensive day-school attached. Branches of this order have been formed from Navan in Balbriggan.

The first superioress was Mrs. M'Carthy, who returned to Rathfarnham, and died there. The next superioress was

Mrs. Murphy (called in religion Mother Francis), succeeded by Mrs. Daniel (in religion Mother Agatha), and by the present superioress, Mrs. Finn (in religion Mother Mary Paul).

In the cemetery of the convent are the following tombs :

J. M. J.

Departed this life,

Feb. 9, 1836,

Sister

CATHERINE MARY ANTONIA GIBSON,

In the first year

of her religious profession ;

aged

20 years and seven days.

Requiescat in pace.

Amen.

J. M. J.

28th March, 1859,

departed this life,

Sister MARY CATHERINE PAULA BOYLAN,

in the eighth year of her

religious profession,

and 35th year of her age.

Requiescat in pace.

Amen.

J. M. J.

Departed this life,

April 28, 1851,

Sister

CAROLINE MARY GERTRUDE DANIEL,

in the second year of her

religious profession ;

aged

23 years and 4 months.

Requiescat in pace.

J. M. J.

Departed this life,

1st of November, 1851,



Sister  
CATHERINE MARY IGNATIUS KELLY,  
in the 5th year of her  
religious profession ;  
aged 30 years.  
Requiescat in pace.

## PASTORS OF NAVAN.

After the death of Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly, the Most Rev. Dr. Cantwell petitioned the Holy See, and received the parish of Navan *in commendam*. He resigned the parish of Kells to Very Rev. Nicholas M'Evoy, and appointed the Rev. Philip Callery, in 1853, administrator of Navan. Father Callery was appointed parish priest of Slane in October, 1857, and the Rev. Patrick Blake\* was appointed administrator of Navan, where he at present presides.

## THE SISTERS OF MERCY.

In 1853 a branch of the Sisters of Mercy came to Navan from the Convent of Kells, and settled in a house bequeathed for that purpose by the Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly, late pastor of Navan. In 1857, the good sisters, in consequence of increasing numbers, took Leighsbrook House, their present beautiful residence, raised the roof, and built splendid schools in the vicinity. Since their arrival in Navan, they have accomplished much good in visiting the sick, relieving the destitute, and educating the youth ; and hence, they are held in the highest respect and veneration, as they justly deserve. The first and only superioress is Mrs. Atkinson (called in religion Mother Catherine), and she has had the happiness of witnessing the development of her community beyond her most sanguine expectations. Death has already taken away one of the most devoted of the sisterhood. On the 13th of October, 1858, died Miss Harriet Morgan (called in religion

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\* The Rev. Mr. Blake has purchased the present magnificent bell of Navan, and is at present erecting a lofty and capacious belfry, which, when completed will cost over £1,000. The architect is J. Burke, Esq. ; the contractor, is Mr. William Curry, brother to the artist, an enterprising and skilful mechanic.

Sister Mary Joseph), and, as her life was holy and consecrated to the service of God, so her death was calm and edifying. She was interred in the new cemetery of Leighsbrook; and, to mark their respect for her memory and for the noble cause to which she devoted her life, a vast number of priests attended her funeral office, month's mind, and anniversary. May she rest in peace.

#### THE YOUNG MEN'S SOCIETY.

The Navan branch of this praiseworthy organization was established on the 22nd of March, 1859. The Very Rev. Dr. O'Brien, the distinguished founder, preached in the parish church on the occasion, and there were present the bishop, the parochial clergy, and a vast congregation.

This society has worked admirably since its foundation, and it has rendered incalculable services to religion, morality, and the practice of every virtue. It has gone on accomplishing its noble mission, developing piety and charity, diffusing knowledge, and attracting to its standard all classes of the social scale, not only here, but for miles around. Specially blessed by the Holy Father, and enriched with the treasures of the Church, it merits the respect and coöperation of every well-wisher of religion; while, on national grounds, its well selected library, abounding in works on the history and antiquities of the country, and the numberless lectures it has supplied to the members on almost every subject connected with Ireland, must necessarily endear it to all who love to see the sacred fire of patriotism enkindled and fostered in the hearts of the people. The council for the present year consists of the following brothers: the Spiritual Director; President, John Mullen, Esq., J.P.; Vice-President, Mr. Robert Rice (Athlumney); Secretary, Mr. Patrick O'Neill; Messieurs William Rothery, Christopher Keogan, Thomas Keappock, T.C.; John Caffrey, Patrick Flood, Patrick Smith (Curraghtown), Patrick Rogers, James Flood, Thomas O'Brien, Matthew Magoona (Donaghmore), Francis Sheridan (Cannistown), James Brown (Commons), and Peter Foley (Boyerstown). The council consists also of the wardens of the following guilds:



Wardens.	Guilds.	No.	Festival days.
Br. John Flood	St. Mary's, Trimgate Street	79.	The Assumption
„ Joseph Nulty	St. Mary's, Ludlow Street	44.	Nativity of B. V.
„ Thomas Rogers	St. Columbanus	49.	Nov. 21
„ John Fay	St. Kiaran	71.	Sept. 9
„ Patrick Clarke	St. Joseph	47.	March 19
„ William Gaughran	St. Columbkil	57.	June 9
„ William Sherry	St. Laurence O'Toole	39.	Nov. 14
„ James Flood	St. Francis	38.	Jan. 29
„ James Cargan	St. Augustine	57.	Aug. 28
„ Nicholas Milady	St. Patrick's, Donaghmore	75.	March 17
„ Richard Sheridan	St. Bridget's, Ardsallagh	51.	Feb. 1
„ James Brown	St. Mary's Commons, No. 1	58.	The Assumption
„ William Boyle	St. Mary's Commons, No. 2	34.	Do.
„ John O'Brien	St. Mary's, Athlumney, No. 1	60.	The Nativity
„ James Landy	St. Mary's, Athlumney, No. 2	27.	Do.
„ Thos. Fitzsimons	St. Finian	57.	Dec. 12
„ Patrick M'Kenna	St. Ultan, Ardbraccan	149.	Sept. 4

## THE LIST OF THE DEAD.

We conclude our chapter on Navan with the “List of the Dead”. What reminiscences are revived in the minds of the people when they hear recited the “List of the Dead”! The old priests, long dead and gone, who poured the baptismal waters on their heads, who taught them in their youth to love and serve God, who prepared them for the sacraments, who cheered and consoled them in their sorrows, who pointed out the path that leads to eternal life,—all have passed away, as the wave succeeds the wave, as the leaves wither, fall off, and are succeeded by the leaves. The child of that generation is an old man to-day; how his eye is moistened! how his spirit droops! how his heart grows sad, as memory wanders to other days, and calls around him faces once familiar, friends long dead and gone!

“We recommend to your pious prayers the souls of all the faithful departed; the souls of all those who were members of this flock, and who left no one after them to recommend them to the Divine mercy; the souls of all the bishops and priests who have gone before us in this diocese and parish; and, in particular, the souls of the Most Rev. Drs. Geoghegan, Chevers, Plunkett, and Logan, late bishops of this diocese; the Most Rev. Dr. Murphy,\* bishop of Adelaide;

\* A native of Navan.

Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly, vicar-general and archdeacon of Meath; Very Rev. Nicholas M'Evoy, Very Rev. Richard Ennis, Very Rev. Patrick O'Connor, the Rev. Patrick Gannon, the Rev. Joseph Rooney,\* the Rev. Messieurs Kavanagh, Rowe, Fleming, Derham, Meighan, O'Reilly, Stephen Smith, O'Rafferty, O'Donoghoe, Smith, Murphy, Sheil; and also the Rev. Messieurs O'Connell, Killen, Peter, James, and John O'Reilly, Hart, Doyle, Bannon, M'Cormack, Gaynon,† Gargan, Lynch, Jones, Kennedy, and Brady, formerly curates of this parish; the Rev. Patrick

\* He was born in the parish of Athlumney, studied in Navan, entered the College of All Hallows in 1843, and was ordained in May, 1847. He left Ireland for the East Indian mission in September, 1847, and he was put to death by the Sepoys, while engaged hearing the confession of a soldier, in Cawnpore, on the 17th of June, 1857. He obtained his wishes—a martyr's death.

† The Rev. Doctor James Joseph Gaynon was born in the parish of Frankford, King's County, studied in Rome, and read a very distinguished course. In 1822 he took the oath to the Propaganda, and is registered "792" in that catalogue. He was ordained in 1824, and, returning to Ireland, was appointed to the curacy of Navan. He was a man of surpassing eloquence and of great zeal. He died on the 31st of August, 1826, profoundly lamented by the people, and his remains were accompanied to the churchyard of Athlumney by one of the largest funerals ever known in this county. The people of Navan erected a monument to his memory, with the following inscription:

This monument  
was erected by the parishioners of Navan,  
in memory of the Very Rev. JAMES JOSEPH GAYNON, D.D.,  
graduate of Propaganda, missionary apostolic,  
prelate of Montelletta, and late assistant to  
the Right Rev. Dr. Plunkett, Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath.

The short term of two years completed the  
ministry of this young divine, which he supported  
with remarkable dignity and grace.

By his powerful eloquence and pathetic appeals  
he gained many a soul to Christ. His entire time was  
occupied in discharging the sacred duties of  
his calling, and in administering the Bread of Life  
to the hungry. He lived in the hearts of his parishioners,  
and died, universally lamented,  
the 31st of August, in the year of our Lord 1826, and  
the 26th year of his age.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.



Horan, the Rev. Hugh Farrelly, Rev. Cormac Connolly,\*  
Rev. Edward Flynn, Rev. James Sheridan.†

“ Sisters Mary Joseph Morgan, Mary Antonia Gibson, Mary Gertrude Daniel, Mary Ignatia Kelly ; we recommend also to your pious prayers the deceased members of the Young Men’s Society, of the Christian Doctrine Society, of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of the Arch-Confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the Conversion of Sinners, of the Living Rosary, of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, of the Lady’s Association of Charity, of the Wake Society, of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the deceased members of the choir, Daniel O’Connell, Frederick Lucas, etc.”.—[Then follows the list of the deceased parishioners ]

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### ODDER.

ODDER, or, as it was sometimes called, *Othir*, is a parish in the barony of Skryne, four and a-half miles (N.N.W.) from Dunshaughlin. A convent was founded here towards the

\* The Rev. Cormac Conolly was born in the parish of Rathkenny, studied in Navan, and proceeded thence to his uncle, Dr. Connolly, bishop of New York. After having graduated in philosophy and divinity, he was ordained, about 1828, and officiated for some years on the American mission. Broken down in health, he returned to Ireland, assisted for some time as curate in the parish of Johnstown, and spent his remaining years with Very Rev. Eugene O’Reilly, who had the highest respect and esteem for him. He died in 1851, and was buried in the cemetery of the parish church, where a marble slab commemorates him thus :

Hic jacet corpus  
CORMAC JOSEPHI CONOLLY,  
presbyteri Americæ olim,  
Midensis nuper  
qui vita sanctissima peracta,  
dicens in festo expectationis partus,  
B. M. Virginis,  
1851.

Cujus animæ propitius sit Deus.

† As we are preparing a chapter for a future volume, on the eminent

close of the twelfth century, by the illustrious family of Barnwall, under the patronage of St. Brigid, for the regular canonesses of St. Augustine. In 1195, Pope Celestine the Third granted a confirmation of their possessions. Several cells of the nunneries of Meath were annexed to this house. The prior of the Blessed Virgin's abbey of Louth had the first voice in electing the abbess of this house. Upwards of two centuries and a half of uninterrupted peace and happiness rolled over this community, until robbery and sacrilege reached their consummation, in the plunder of the Catholic Church, and the suppression and confiscation of the religious houses of Ireland. On the 16th of July, 1539, the last abbess of Odder, Margaret Sylke, yielded to force, and surrendered to the commissioners of Henry the Eighth all the possessions of the convent in the counties of Meath, Louth, Dublin, Kildare, and Carlow, and elsewhere in Ireland.† The following‡ was a portion of the property :

“ Twenty-four messuages, a water-mill, pigeon-house, three hundred and twenty acres of arable land, forty of pasture, and six of meadow, with the appurtenances, in Odder; eight messuages, one hundred acres of arable land, thirty of pasture, and twelve of meadow, with the appurtenances, in Calliaghton, near Skryne; one messuage, twenty acres of arable land, twenty of pasture, and six of meadow, with the appurtenances, in Dowkeston; ten messuages, one hundred acres of arable land, thirty of pasture, twelve of meadow, and a fishing-pool, with the appurtenances, in Clonard, and Calliaghton, near Clonard; sixteen messuages, one hundred and eighty acres of arable land, forty of pasture, twelve of meadow, and a lough, with the appurtenances, in Calliaghton, near Fore; three messuages, forty acres of arable land, thirty of pasture, and ten of meadow, with the appurtenances, in Calliaghton, near Kenlis (Kells); ten messuages, two hundred acres of arable land, forty of pasture,

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bishops and priests of Meath, who officiated elsewhere, the life of the late zealous pastor of St. Mary's, Liverpool, is unavoidably postponed; and, for the same reason, Rev. Dr. Murphy, Rev. Patrick Gannon, etc.

\* Ware's *Mon.*, Allemande; Harris's *Tab.*

† *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 55.

‡ Archdall's *Monasticon*, from the Chief Remembrancer and Auditor-General.



twelve of meadow, twenty of moor, and twenty of wood, with the appurtenances, in Westmeath; one messuage, with a park containing three acres, and the appurtenances, in Duleek; and two messuages, with twenty-four acres of land, and the appurtenances, in Skryne; all the said premises, with the appurtenances, were found of the yearly value of £20. The monastery of St. Brigid, and the lands of Calliaghton, near Skryne, in this county, parcel of the possessions thereof, were granted, 12th of September, fifth and sixth of Philip and Mary, to James Stanihurst, for twenty-one years, at the yearly rent of £19 5s., Irish, which grant was renewed for the term of twenty-one years following the expiration of said grant. April 1st, fifteenth of Queen Elizabeth, it was again renewed for twenty-one years at the aforesaid rent; and 17th of February, thirty-first of Queen Elizabeth, the reversion of this monastery and lands was granted to Richard Power and his heirs for ever, to hold by fealty, at the aforesaid rent. The nunnery paid annually one mark proxies to the bishop".

The surrender of the convent was acknowledged by George Brown, archbishop of Dublin, Thomas Cusack, and others.

On the first of March, 1540, a pension or annuity of six pounds was promised to Margaret Sylke, late abbess of Odder, forty shillings to Margery Mape, and forty shillings to Joan Tansey, late nuns of Odder, payable out of hereditaments in Odder.\* An annuity of twenty-six shillings and eight pence was promised to Matilda Hancocke, payable out of the possessions in Odder and the rectory of Odder.

In 1606, King James the First granted† (*inter alia*) to Sir George Thornton:

"The site of the cell of Clonard, a garden, forty acres arable, and two acres pasture, near Clonard, rent, 2<sup>l</sup>, parcel of the estate of the late monastery of Odder; in Collaughton, near Kenlis, sixty acres arable, rent, 2<sup>l</sup>; three messuages, certain cottages, one hundred and eighty acres arable, pasture, and mountain, in Callaughton, near Fower, rent, £2 13s. 4d.; and to maintain one able horseman of the English nation upon these premises, parcel of the estate of the late monastery. Total

\* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 64.

† *Pat. 3, James the First.*

rent, £34 12s. 5d. Irish, being £25 19s. 3½d. English. To hold for ever, by fealty, in common soccage. 10th October, third of the king".

In 1613, King James the First granted\* to John Baxter:

"The rectory of St. Brigid, of Odder, with the tithes and other profits thereof; the tithes of the town of Calligton, near Shalton, otherwise Shalton; and a parcel of land in Shalton; parcel of the estate of the house of monks (*recte* nuns) of Odder; rent, £8 6s. 8d. Irish, and thirty pecks or thirty couples of port-corn at Navan, on the feast of the Purification, for which he is to be allowed 4<sup>l</sup>, or two shillings and eight pence per peck. To hold *in capite*, by the fortieth part of a knight's fee, 17th of February, tenth of the king.

In 1617, King James granted† (*inter alia*) to Sir James Ware, assignee of Sir Charles Wilmott:

"The town or parcel of Killnegallagh, containing fifteen acres; Clonemolt, ten acres; Gannagh, ten acres; all of the country measure (in Westmeath); parcel of the estate of the late abbey of Odder".

In the regal visitation of 1612, Odder is entered as "Capella spectans ad Taragh". Usher remarks of Odder, "valued with Tara".

A few old walls of the nunnery and church of Odder are all that remain. A cemetery adjoins.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### RATOATH.

THE village of Ratoath is situated in the barony of Ratoath, about eleven and a-half miles (N.W.) from Dublin. It is said to have derived its name from an ancient rath or moat which, preserved with praiseworthy care, still ornaments this neighbourhood. In the reign of Henry the Sixth

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\* *Pat.* 10, James the First.

† *Pat.* 14, James the First.



Ratoath was a town of importance,\* and ranked amongst the boroughs of Meath. It sent two representatives to the Irish parliament down to the period of the disastrous Union, when it was disfranchised, and since that time it has pined away.

#### ABBEY OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN.

The abbey† of St. Mary Magdalen was in existence in the fourteenth century. The origin of it is now unknown, as is also the exact time of its suppression. In 1388 it owned forty acres of land, valued at six shillings and eight pence, and in 1456 we find another allusion to the abbey of Ratoath (*King*, 220).

#### CHANTRY.

A chantry‡ was founded here in the parish of St. Thomas the Apostle, for three priests, who were daily to celebrate Mass, one in the roode chapel, one in St. Mary's chapel, and one in St. Thomas's chapel. This chantry acquired seventeen messuages in Ratoath, forty acres in Galmole's farm, and forty acres in Dowdall's farm, both in Ratoath; thirty acres in Newton, forty in Balresk, and one close, called Our Lady's Park, containing seven acres; two acres in Ratoath, and one in Harlock; two in Moylena, and three in Rayeston, near Ratoath; of the annual value of thirty shillings sterling. All this property fell a prey to the spoiler.

Ratoath was the head of a rural deanery called the "deanery of Ratoath".

In 1405, Rev. John Mordoun was vicar of Ratoath (*Pat.* 7, Henry the Fourth).

In 1422, we find the Rev. William Taillour, rector of

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\* In Stanyhurst's *Description of Ireland*, printed in Holingshed's *Chronicles*, the towns in Meath are described as "Trimme, Doonshaghlene, Rathtouth, Navanne, Abooie, Scrine, Taraugh, Kenles, Doonboine, Gree-nocke, Duleeke, Molingare, Fowre, Loughseude, Kilkeniwest, Moilagagh, and Delvinne".

† Harris's *Tables*, *King*, p. 220; probably the abbey of Ratoath was absorbed in the possessions of the abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin, as we find the rectory belonging to the latter house. Archdall, writing in the last century, says, "some old walls and the west window of the abbey still remain". Since Archdall wrote every vestige has been swept away.

‡ *King*, p. 138.

Kilbrew, elected by the priests of the deanery of Ratoath to collect the deanery's portion of one hundred and twenty marks, which the clergy of the diocese of Meath had granted as a subsidy to the king (*Pat.* 1, Henry the Sixth).

In 1559, died Rev. Patrick Fyne, vicar of Ratoath. After his death a Rev. John Hele was appointed here by Queen Elizabeth (*Calendar*, p. 43). The rectory of Ratoath belonged to the monastery of St. Thomas, near Dublin.

In 1616, King James granted (*inter alia*) to Sir John Davys, knight, attorney-general :

The tithes of corn, hay, and turf, called the long tithes of the parish of Ratowthe, yearly issuing out of the towns and lands of Fidorhkerd, Henotiston, Cabbagh, Fidorgh, Rochford, the Graunge, Begiston (Mebsenan or Mossenan), Pecoockston, the two Glascons, Raieston, and thirty acres in Ballinalagelin ; Birford's lands, twenty-six acres ; Goulding's lands and Rathconlie's lands, near Riwencrosse, thirty acres ; certain lands in Ballibin-Magna, thirty acres ; the estate of the monastery of Thomas Court ; rent, £10 16s. 8d.

In 1617, King James the First granted (*inter alia*) to John Bathe, Esq. :

The corn tithes of Harlotstowne and Baltrasnie, parcel of the rectory of Ratoath ; the corn tithes of Ratoath, parcel of the rectory of Ratoath, parcel of the estate of the monastery of Thomas Court.

In 1622, Usher describes this rectory as worth 30<sup>l</sup>. sterling, and the parochial property to consist of " a manse, with some houses of office well repayred, a garden, an haggard, and four acres of pasture enclosed".

#### PASTORS OF RATOATH.

After the death of Rev. Patrick Fyne, in 1559, the second year of Elizabeth's reign, we have no record of the parish priests of Ratoath until 1650, when we find Rev. Richard Nugent pastor of this parish. This devoted priest sealed with his blood the faith he professed. Being arrested for no other cause but that he was a Catholic priest, he was hurried off to Drogheda, escorted by a company of Puritan troopers, and within sight of the walls of that town a gibbet was erected, on which the faithful pastor suffered martyrdom



for the faith.\* His Christian firmness confounded his enemies, and gave joy to his disconsolate friends.

The next pastor of whom we have record is the Rev. Dr. Michael Plunkett. Dr. Plunkett was born in 1652, while Ireland was bleeding under the sword of Cromwell. He was closely connected with the houses of Fingall and Dun-sany, a near relative of Oliver Plunkett, the martyr-primate of Ireland, and of Patrick Plunkett, the venerable bishop of Meath. The position of Ireland in the early years of his life was awful to contemplate. During the usurpation of Cromwell the country was scourged by the merciless Puritans, and deluged with the blood of the people. Thousands were shipped off to the Continent, or transported to Barbadoes and the other West Indian islands. The Catholic nobility were stripped of their possessions, and a new class of masters imported, who were taught to regard the natives as "aliens in blood, in language, and religion". The Irish bishops and clergy were wandering exiles over Europe, depending for their support on the charity of strangers; and such as remained at home were hid in the houses of the poor, or the unfrequented woods and caves of the country. Even after the Restoration, in 1660, the Catholics of Ireland, after having seen their lands confiscated and divided amongst the soldiers of Ireton and Cromwell, suffered for years a refinement of persecution under the apostate viceroy, the wily and perfidious Ormond. The Irish priesthood had, therefore, nothing Earthly to attract the youthful aspirant, and those who entered on its perilous pathway, found their days filled with tribulation and affliction. However, God in his mercy made ample provision, even in the worst of times, for the spiritual necessities of the country. Heroic men arose, forgetful of self, who, sacrificing this world and all its pleasures, volunteered their lives for the salvation of the people. To the zeal and fidelity of these Irish priests, and to the endearing and enduring bond of sympathy and affection between them and their flocks, which neither the sword nor the scaffold, nor the wiles of subtle and astute statesmen,

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\* Rev. M. J. Brennan's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii. p. 196; from Bruodin's *Appendix*.

nor all the diplomacy or machinations of this world, could weaken or dissolve, we are indebted, under Providence, for the preservation of the faith, and its existence amongst us to-day in all its freshness and bloom.

Michael Plunkett had determined from his earliest years to embrace the ecclesiastical state, and, on the arrival from Rome of his great kinsman, Dr. Oliver Plunkett, in 1670, he availed himself of the opportunity of receiving instructions from such a master, and accordingly placed himself under his guidance and direction. In 1673 he became secretary to the primate, and in 1674\* he was ordained at Ardpatrick, county Louth. In the autumn of 1676 he was sent to Rome, to prosecute his studies in the Irish College, and Dr. Plunkett sent with him to the authorities at Rome several letters, all dated August 15th, 1676, on matters connected with the Irish Church. In one of these, addressed to the Cardinal Protector of Ireland, after speaking of abuses then prevailing, and the proper remedies, he adds:†

“The bearer, Mr. Michael Plunkett, my cousin, who was also my secretary for three years, will give you a more minute detail of our affairs here, and of all we have to suffer. He will act as our agent until the arrival in Rome of Dr. James Cusack, who was educated in Rome, and was afterwards a great preacher in English and Irish, a good theologian and canonist, but who cannot commence his journey before next spring. In the meantime, I pray you to protect the bearer; and, making you a profound reverence, and wishing you every felicity and a long life, I shall ever remain

“Your Eminence’s

“Most humble and obliged devoted servant,

“OLIVER OF ARMAGH.

Dublin, 15th August, 1676”.

Michael Plunkett graduated at Rome with applause, and rose to such eminence, as to become the trusted and chosen agent of the Irish bishops at the Holy See.‡ It was a mark of no ordinary appreciation, to be deemed worthy to succeed

\* Registration of the Irish Clergy in 1704—see *Battersby’s Registry*, 1838.

† Dr. Moran’s admirable *Memoir of Dr. Oliver Plunkett*, p. 85.

‡ *Memoir of Dr. Oliver Plunkett*, p. 24.



ecclesiastics of such national celebrity and historic fame as Dr. O'Dwyer, Dr. Burgatt, Dr. Oliver Plunkett, Dr. John Brennan, Dr. Peter Creagh, and Dr. Sleyne, in representing the interests of the Church of Ireland, during years of great national peril, at the common centre and capital of Christendom. This duty Dr. Michael Plunkett discharged with such prudence and ability as to elicit the marked approbation not only of the Irish bishops, but of the Sovereign Pontiff himself. From the time he departed from Ireland, we find the great prelate of Armagh keeping up a regular correspondence with him, and, when immured within the gloomy walls of a London prison, the victim of a fiendish conspiracy, the saintly archbishop writes to his "Dear Michael Plunkett", enumerating the circumstances of his trial, and says :\*

Sentence of death has been passed against me, and there is no hope of respite or pardon, and thus those who beheaded me in effigy, have now attained their intent of beheading the prototype. I pardon them all, and, with St. Stephen, I cry out: "O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge".

A few days later Dr. Oliver Plunkett writes again to him, giving a sketch of the trial, and the character of the witnesses who swore away his life; after which he adds :†

I have recommended you to my friends there; and also my nephews and two nieces. Jemmy and Joseph begun their philosophy, and Mickey ended his prosody. Catty‡ and Tomasina and all will be in a sad condition. You know that Ned is simple, and that by Cromwell's people what little land and mortgages he had left him by his father were lost; and I believe my friends there will help my nephews, if you speak to Monsignore. I stuck to my care and districts until death . . . . . I expect daily to be brought to the place of execution, where my bowels are to be cut out and burned before my face, and then my head to be cut off, etc.; which death I embrace willingly; I desire to be dissolved. . . . . If the trial had been in Ireland, no Protestant jury had believed the romances of treason sworn against me . . . . . See what you can do with Mr. Cybo and others for Jemmy, Joseph,

\* *Memoir*, p. 359.

† *Ibid.*, p. 361.

‡ First superioress of the Sienna Convent, Drogheda.

etc., who, by my untimely death, will be in a sad condition, unless they be relieved.

The illustrious Archbishop of Armagh was executed at Tyburn, on the 11th of July, 1681.

In 1687 Dr. Fergus Lea and Dr. Michael Plunkett, as proxies, received the palliums from Pope Innocent the Eleventh, for Dr. Dominick M'Guire, archbishop of Armagh, and Dr. Patrick Russell, archbishop of Dublin; and returned to Ireland. In the month of June, 1690, James the Second presented "Dr. Michael Plunkett, one of the Masters of our Chancery of Ireland, to the Rectory of Dunboyne"; and, after Dr. Patrick Tyrrell had been put to death by the Williamites, Dr. Michael Plunkett governed the diocese of Meath, as vicar-general apostolic, until Dr. Luke Fagan was promoted to the vacant see. In 1704 we find the Rev. Dr. Michael Plunkett registered at Trim as :

Michael Plunkett, Popish priest of the parishes of Ratoath and Rathbeggan, aged fifty-two, living at Ratoath.

There is no period in Irish history more dismal than that which followed the violated treaty of Limerick, October 3rd, 1691. Up to that time there was Catholic chivalry and soul in the country; after that succeeded the long dark night of bondage and despair. Sarsfield was gone; the Irish soldiers—the bone and sinew of the country—passed over to the Continent; and there were none left to defend the altars of fatherland, or to avenge the wrongs of the people, save and except the rapparees. No sooner was Ireland prostrate and helpless, than the spirit of fanaticism burst forth from the pulpits of bigotry. Dopping, the Protestant bishop of Meath, in a sermon before the lords justices, maintained that Protestants were not bound to keep faith with Papists. The treaty of Limerick was grossly violated in all its parts; it was violated with impunity, because the Irish nation was no longer able to resist oppression. The Catholics were first disarmed, then robbed of their property and excluded from parliament, and, being reduced to a state of utter prostration, the penal code was renewed in all its force and malignity. In 1695, amongst other penal enactments, it was forbidden to educate a Catholic at home or



abroad. The fell object of this law was to prevent the diffusion of knowledge, and thus to brutalise the people and reduce them to slavery. The houses of parliament were closed against the moans and cries of the oppressed, the oaths of abjuration and supremacy were enforced, and an edict was issued ordering all archbishops, bishops, vicar-generals, and friars to quit the kingdom before the 1st of May, 1698, and forbidding their return under the penalty of high treason. To carry out this infamous law the more effectually, it was enacted, that, should any Catholic harbour a bishop, vicar-general, or friar, he was liable for the first offence to the penalty of twenty pounds; for the second, forty pounds; and for the third, he forfeited all his goods and chattels, one half of which went to the common informer, and the other half to the crown. The result of this barbarous enactment was, that between 1696 and 1699, four hundred and twenty-four friars were transported for life, and even the poor defenceless nuns had to fly from their cloisters, and seek refuge and protection abroad. In 1703, the Whigs introduced into the Irish House of Commons "a bill to prevent the further growth of Popery". This was a condensation of all the penal laws. This "bill" passed, and obtained the royal assent on the 4th of March, 1704. To have this act enforced with vigour, a corps of informers was organised and subsidised, and the Commons resolved, "that the prosecuting and informing against Papists was an honourable service". And, as there were many high-minded Protestant gentlemen, who, entertaining deep sympathy for the sufferings of their Catholic countrymen, felt shocked at such ferocious legislation, the Commons also resolved, "that all magistrates who neglected to execute these laws were betrayers of the liberties of the kingdom". This law was accompanied by an act for the registration of the clergy. Every parish priest was obliged to present himself at the quarter sessions, and there register his name, age, parish, date of his ordination, name of the bishop from whom he received orders, and give security for his constant residence in his own district. In order that the clergy might die out, it was enacted, that if any parish priest would keep a curate, he forfeited the benefit of the regis-

tration act, rendered himself liable to transportation for life, and of high treason should he return. At the same time, all archbishops, bishops, vicar-generals, friars, and seculars not registered, were subjected to the seventh of William and Mary,—ordered to quit the kingdom, and, if they returned, liable to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. The object of this law for the registration of the clergy was, manifestly, to convict the priest by his own testimony. Heretofore it was difficult to prove legally that such a one was a priest, owing to the fidelity of the Irish people. Henceforth they had only to evoke a storm, and the accused stood convicted by his own evidence.

In 1709 a reward of fifty pounds was offered for the arrest of a bishop or vicar-general, and twenty pounds for a friar. What rendered this bribe peculiarly grievous was, that the money was to be levied off the Catholics of the county in which the ecclesiastic was convicted. In order to plunge the people into hopeless ignorance, it was enacted that all Popish schoolmasters and tutors should be subjected to the penalties of proscribed priests. The real object of the act of parliament soon became manifest, for it was enacted that before the 25th of March, 1710, every registered priest should present himself at the quarter sessions and take the oath of abjuration, under the penalty of transportation for life, and of being hanged, drawn, and quartered if he returned. By the oath of abjuration the priest was ordered to swear that the sacrifice of the mass and the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the saints were damnable and idolatrous. In other words, the priest was ordered to apostatise or fly for his life; and not only that, but as a reward for his apostacy, a bribe of thirty pounds per year was offered to any priest who would turn Protestant. The priest-hunters were now called upon to be up and stirring. Each of these wretches had an infamous corps under his command, designated *priest-hounds*, whose duty was to track, with the untiring and unrelenting scent of the blood-hound, the fissures of the rock and the caverns of the earth where the poor humble priest took refuge. Religion was now in a lamentable condition. The wretched mud-wall, thatched



chapels of which the Irish Catholics were then glad to have the use, were levelled or closed over the whole kingdom. In cities and towns the Catholic clergy were concealed in garrets or cellars, and in the country districts they were hid in the unfrequented caves, in the lonely woods, and the ever welcome homes of the poor Irish peasant. During these storms of persecution the sacraments were dispensed in the dead of night, and during the week days word would be sent round the people where to meet their pastor on the following Sunday morning. The place of sacrifice was constantly being changed, in order to baffle pursuit, and many a time, while the stars were twinkling, Mass was celebrated on the lone mountain or by the side of a ditch, while a few of the most active of the congregation kept vigil, lest the bark of the bloodhound, or the stealthy steps of a more remorseless enemy, the priest-hunter, would break in on the sacred ceremonies, and subject the unfortunate priest to the dread penalties of the law. The priest-hunter, however, could not always exercise his mission with impunity. The Irish peasant, ever devoted to his priest, was ready to shed the last drop of his heart's blood, sooner than that any wrong would be inflicted on his "Soggarth Aroon"; and hence it oftentimes happened, in the country districts, that the priest-hunter, while out on his mission, searching for and pursuing the Catholic clergy, was himself pursued, and sent prematurely to judgment—a victim to the wild and maddened vengeance of the people. In cities and towns the priest-hunters were more successful, owing to the proximity of the garrison; and, the more expeditiously to clutch the reward of their infamy, they frequently pretended to be Catholics, and as such to have sick calls, or to wish for the sacraments; and sometimes they even pretended to be priests, and thus imposing on the people, they found out the hiding-places of the clergy, and dragged them to the neighbouring jails. De Burgo\* tells us, that a notorious priest-hunter, a Portuguese Jew, named Garzia, pretending to be a priest, thus found out the hiding-places of seven priests, and had them

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\* *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 160.

arrested and transported for life, not to return under penalty of death. He adds, moreover, and it is a pleasing reminiscence, that, so odious and detestable were these priest-hunters and informers in the eyes of the honest Protestants of Dublin, that, when any of the wretches made their appearance in public, both Protestants and Catholics rushed forth to stone them in the streets, amidst shouts and groans of execration. So that if there were infamous laws on the statute-book, and demoralized, degraded miscreants to enforce them, for the honour of human nature be it recorded, that there were found men of high and lofty principles, who soared above the low prejudices of the hour, and neutralized by their philanthropy the intolerant spirit of the times.

After the year of the registration, Dr. Michael Plunkett lived at Ratoath, and exercised jurisdiction over the parishes of Ratoath, Rathbeggan, Greenoge, and Kilbride. The chapel of Ratoath was then a wretched mud-wall, thatched house, surrounded by other houses which screened it from public view. In this humble temple Dr. Plunkett officiated, and, whenever a temporary persecution would set in, even this little chapel would have to be closed up, and the pastor fly to the retired parts of the country. Dr. Plunkett's great piety and learning, together with his respectability of birth and amiable qualities, gained for him the personal friendship of some of the Protestant gentry, who not only connived at the exercise of his ecclesiastical functions, but often sheltered him for weeks, during the frequent storms which blew over the Irish Church in the reign of Queen Anne. So distinguished an ecclesiastic as Dr. Plunkett, a parish priest and vicar-general, could hardly escape the watchful eyes of the vile agents whom the law set in motion against the Catholic clergy. There lived, about the year 1715, between Navan and Ratoath, a priest-hunter named Thompson, who, anticipating a rich reward from the value of the victim, singled out Dr. Plunkett for pursuit, and exercised all his ingenuity to have him captured. It is said that, on one occasion, he and his minions searched a stable on "Luttrel's farm", in which the pastor had taken refuge, and that Dr. Plunkett had a narrow escape by being concealed behind the harness.



This low villain was effectually baffled by the kindness of a Protestant gentleman, who then lived in the manor-house of Ratoath. As he dared not to interpose openly, the plan he adopted was this. He set apart a room on the second story, which he furnished with a bed, fuel, and provisions of every sort. He kept this room constantly locked, and cautioned his servants not to attempt to enter it. Being a magistrate, he had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the movements of the priest-hunters, and, whenever Thompson would determine on prosecuting his search, he managed to procure timely information. He then sent word to Dr. Plunkett, and the night previous to the intended priest-hunt, the pastor and his servant would approach the rear of the manor-house, and draw forth from its hiding-place a ladder left specially for the purpose. Dr. Plunkett would ascend the ladder, raise up the window, enter the room, and here the old vicar was secure from his enemies, here he had refreshment and rest. While the storm lasted he slept here by day, and at night, if there were sick calls, or sacraments to be dispensed, the servant would apply the ladder, give the signal, and the faithful pastor would descend, attend his people, and return before the break of day. In his old days the servant would be obliged to carry him up the ladder, and return to take him down. This was Dr. Plunkett's *e loco refugii nostri* for many years. There was no need of forbidding access to the servants, for oftentimes at night they heard steps in the room, and, believing it haunted, they kept after nightfall at a respectful distance. So their superstitious fears outweighed their curiosity, and were the occasion of prolonging a valuable life. Reader, in the east end of the old church of Killekland, near the village of Ashbourne, union of Ratoath, there is a horizontal stone, sheltered by the arms of a large palm-tree. Why is this resting-place held in such reverence? Because here sleeps, after a glorious life, spent in the service of God and the poor of Ireland, here reposes the Rev. Dr. Michael Plunkett, the bosom friend of the martyred Oliver, the trusted representative of the Irish bishops, the vicar-general of Meath in the dread days of persecution, the faithful

pastor, who was ready to lay down his life for his flock. One hundred and thirty-five years have rolled over his grave since the great priest went to rest after his labours, and his memory is as fresh to-day amongst the parishioners as if they—not their forefathers—had left him in his tomb. Verily, “the memory of the just man shall live for ever”. On the tomb is the following expressive inscription:\*

Jesus, Maria, Joseph, Salvator,  
Patrona, Advocate, Salva Protege,  
Defende Peccatorem, Famulum  
Clientem sub hoc Lapide Jacentem  
MICHAEL PLUNKETT,  
Pastorem.

—He died August 1797  
aged 75.

Memento mori.

On the death of Dr. Plunkett, the Rev. Patrick Allen was transferred from the neighbouring parish of Donaghmore, or Donnymoor, to Ratoath, and the parishes of Grenoge and Kilbride, united to Ratoath in the time of Dr. Plunkett, were formed, with Donaghmore, into one union, under the pastorate of Rev. Patrick Boylan.† The Rev. Patrick Allen was a native of this neighbourhood, and received ordination at Carrignashure, county Tipperary, in 1692, from Dr. James Whelan, bishop of Ossory. He was registered‡ in 1704 as “Popish parish priest of Donaghmore, aged thirty-six, and living at Donaghmore”. He was buried in the churchyard of Ratoath, and a monument was erected over him, the inscription on which, within the last few years, has been chipped off. The Rev. Messrs. Clinch and Steward are said to have succeeded, both of whom were interred in Father Allen’s grave. Their names likewise have been erased from the tomb.

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\* A similar inscription is on the tomb of his relative, the Rev. Joseph Plunkett, parish priest of Slane.

† His letter of appointment by Dr. Fagan, then bishop of Meath, dated 28th of May, 1729, is in my possession (see the Appendix).

‡ Battersby’s reprint makes him be ordained in 1672, in place of 1692. See this list corrected in Rev. Daniel M’Carthy’s *Collections on Irish Church History*, pp. 286, 287.



The Rev. Nicholas White succeeded. He was a native, I understand, of this neighbourhood, studied in Rome, and officiated for some years as curate in this parish. On the death, or translation, of the preceding pastor, about 1740, he became parish priest of Ratoath. About the year 1760 the Catholics of this parish erected a new chapel in the valley, under the Rath of Ratoath, and had the date of erection carved on a stone in a prominent part of the building. The spirit of the times would not tolerate even this, and accordingly they had to conceal the stone in the interior of the chapel. This chapel was several times reëdified.

The Rev. Nicholas White lived to a very great age, and, for some years previous to his death, the Rev. Patrick Keonan assisted him as curate. He died on the 17th of March, 1789, and was buried in the churchyard of Ratoath. A horizontal tomb has been placed over his remains, with the following inscription :

Here lyeth the body of  
Rev. N. WHITE, parish priest of Ratoath,  
who departed this life  
17th day of March, 1789.  
Requiescat in pace.

The Rev. Patrick Langan succeeded. He was born of an ancient and respectable family in the parish of Ardcath, studied abroad, and, after officiating as curate in several parts of Meath, became parish priest of Curraha and Trevet. On the death of Father White he was transferred to Ratoath,\* and the Rev. Patrick Keonan, curate of Ratoath, was appointed his successor. Father Langan was a priest of great zeal and charity, and his memory is held in grateful reverence. He died in July, 1818, at an advanced age, and

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\* He was Master of Conference for the deanery of Ratoath. In the year 1798, three Wexford men, who had remained behind the main body, were overtaken near Ratoath by the savage yeomanry, and were ordered to be instantly hanged. The poor fellows begged and supplicated for a priest, and Lord Fingall, being one of the officers in command, despatched a messenger for Father Langan. The soldiers were with difficulty restrained from executing them without allowing them the benefit of the sacraments. Father Langan arrived, heard their confessions in the wood near Ratoath, and they were launched into eternity.

was interred with his friends in the churchyard of Ard-cath.

The Rev. Richard Carolan succeeded. He was born in the parish of St. Mary's, Drogheda, and entered Maynooth College on the 6th of October, 1807, to fill the place vacated by the Rev. James O'Brien, afterwards parish priest of Slane. In 1816, the Rev. Mr. Carolan was appointed to the union of Skryne, on the death of the Rev. John Cregan, and in July, 1818, he was appointed successor to the Rev. Patrick Langan. Father Carolan was a zealous good priest, and the inscription on his monument faithfully expresses the feelings of his flock. He died on the 28th of July, 1838, and was buried in the modern chapel of Ratoath. A marble slab points out his resting place, and has the following inscription :

Sacred to the memory of  
The Rev. RICHARD CAROLAN,  
parish priest of Ratoath for twenty years,  
who departed this life on the 28th day of July, 1838,  
Aged 52 years.

This tablet, erected by the pious gratitude of his flock,  
marks the place where his venerated remains  
are interred in this church, which was begun under  
his auspices. The public schools of this parish  
are also a lasting monument of his pastoral  
zeal and efficacy.

May he rest in peace.

On the death of Father Carolan, Rev. Patrick Sheridan, present pastor,\* was transferred from the parish of Drumcondra. The list of the dead of this parish commemorates the following priests: Rev. Messrs. White, Keonan, Langan, Carolan, and Gillic.

The Rev. Laurence Gillic was born in Ratoath about 1824. studied in the academy of Ratoath under his distinguished father, and subsequently in the seminary of Navan. In 1842 he entered Maynooth College, where his great abilities soon became apparent to all. It is not too much to say, that, since the opening of the College, a more intellectual

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\* Within the last few months Rev. John Fullam has been appointed administrator.



student has never graduated in its halls; and hence the highest honours which his *Alma Mater* could confer were, year after year, showered upon him with applause. In 1850 he was appointed to the chair of logic and natural philosophy in the Irish College of Paris, and on the promotion of Dr. Dixon, late professor of Scripture and Hebrew in the College of Maynooth, to the primatial see of Armagh, the Rev. Laurence Gillic presented himself at the *concursum*, and there being no one to oppose him, he was accordingly appointed to the vacant chair. His career of glory and usefulness was, alas! cut short. He died of decline, on the 24th of January, 1854, deeply deplored and regretted by all who ever knew him, and was buried in the cemetery of the College of Maynooth.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### SKRYNE.

WE have seen in the first part of this *Monasticon* the origin of Skryne, and why it was so called. After the Anglo-Norman invasion, the enterprising De Lacy built a castle here for the defence of his newly-conquered territory, and granted this property to Adam de Feypo, one of his knights. Skryne gave the title of baron to this family, and subsequently to the Marwards. In a brief space of time a flourishing Anglo-Irish town rose up here, owing to the monastic foundations at Skryne and Lismullen, and also the patronage of its barons. As early as the reigns of Richard the Second and Henry the Fourth we find allusions in the rolls and records to the town of Skryne. In 1393, Roger Earl of March and Ulster had license for twenty years to appoint collectors of certain tolls and customs on all goods going to be sold in the towns of Trim, Athboy, Skryne, and Navan, or for a league around them, for the purpose of surrounding Trim with a stone wall, and improving the town. Henry the Fourth transferred this license to the portreeve and commons of Trim \* In 1423 the portreeve

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\* *Rot. Pat.* 3, Henry the Fourth.

and commons of the towns of Skryne, Ratoath, Greenoge, Dunshaughlin, Slane, and Dunboyne, were ordered to be at Trim with all the able men of their several bailiwicks, to meet the lord justice and assist him in the defence of the English Pale. After the dissolution of the monasteries, the once flourishing town of Skryne gradually pined away. In latter years, farms have been consolidated, the country converted into pasture, and the people, finding no employment or means of living at home, have emigrated, so that at present the town of Skryne exists no more—it deserves not even the name of a village.

#### ABBEY OF SKRYNE.

An Augustinian friary was founded here\* about 1341, by Lord Francis de Feypo, who granted some land near his demesne for the term and space of ninety-nine years, at the rent of a peppercorn annually. He made an additional grant of twelve acres of land near the village of Ponetown, at the annual rent of twelve pence, with pasturage for three horses in his own pasturage of Skryne for the aforesaid term.

#### CHANTRY OF SKRYNE.

About the year 1342, Lord Francis de Feypo founded a perpetual chantry in the church of Skryne,† for the health of his soul and the soul of his wife, Eyl de Verdon, and for his ancestors and successors.

#### CONFISCATIONS OF SKRYNE.

In 1533, we find the Rev. Peter Wallis vicar of the church of St. Colomb and abbot of the monastery of Skryne. He was most probably the last abbot, for on the 8th of July, 1539, this friary was obliged to obey the summons of the royal plunderer, and submit to confiscation and dissolution. On an inventory being taken of its possessions by the commissioners of Henry the Eighth, the abbey was found to own the following :

A church and belfry, a chapter-house, dormitory, hall, two chambers, a stone house, kitchen, stable, cemetery, and a park

\* *Annals of Munster*, p. 420, *apud* Archdall, *Harris's Tables*.

† King *apud* Archdall.



containing one acre, also a messuage, a garden, fifteen acres of arable land, five of pasture, and three stangs of meadow; annual value, 29s. 10d.

On the 24th of May, 1542, Sir Thomas Cusack purchased for the sum of £148 13s. 4d, and a fine of £20, the Dominican monasteries of Dublin and Trim, and "the site and precinct of the late priory of Augustinian friars of Scrine, with all its messuages, lands, and possessions in the county of Meath", to be held by the said Sir Thomas, his heirs and assigns, for ever, by knight's service. Rent, by the name of one-twentieth part, 8s. 5d. In Usher's visitation, Skryne was valued at "20<sup>l</sup> sterling", and the parochial property consisted of "a castle and a manse-house, and other houses of office, a messuage and backsides, well repaired, a pigeon-house, and iiii. acres of land".

The ruins of the old church are situated on the hill of Skryne, from which a very extensive view can be had of the ancient churches, the numerous battlefields, and the fertile plains of Bregia. On the western side of the church stands still a lofty square tower, nearly one hundred feet in height, which, though no longer summoning to worship, yet beautifies the landscape, awakens Catholic recollections, and casts its venerable shadow over the graves of the dead. The church was upwards of one hundred feet by twenty-two feet four inches. The walls are three feet nine inches in thickness. There were two doorways, one on the north, the other on the south side, near the western end. The east, and a considerable portion of the north and south walls have been levelled. In the churchyard there is a stone cross deeply sunk in the earth, having inscribed a rude image of the crucifixion. It must have been chiselled at a very early age. There is a sculptured tomb with a mailed head on the west end, and a cross, the foot of which rests on a shield, on one side of which is "miles", and on the other "S<sup>t</sup> Joannis". The cross is three feet eleven inches in length, and the whole stone, which has a coating round it, measures five feet eleven inches. There are monuments to Walter Marward, Baron of Skryne, and family, to Rev. Mr. Langan, and Rev. Mr. Sherlock.

## THE PARISH OF SKRYNE.

The parish of Skryne has been from the earliest period, and is still, dedicated to St. Columbkil. The church of Skryne was appropriated to St. Mary's abbey, near Dublin, about 1183,\* by Eugene, bishop of Meath. About the same period we find a grant of the church of Skryne, with endowments, to St. Mary's abbey, by Adam de Feypo,† Lord of Skryne.

In 1402, the Rev. Nicholas Wafre, vicar of the church of St. Columb, of Skryne, got leave of absence for one year, to study divinity in Oxford College (*Pat.* 4, Henry the Fourth). In 1422, the Rev. Audoen Brode, vicar of Tara, was elected by the clergy to collect the ecclesiastical subsidy to the king in the deanery of Skryne (*Pat.* 1, Henry the Sixth). In 1450, Rev. Walter Prendergast was vicar of Skryne (*Pat.* 28 and 29, Henry the Sixth). In 1534, Rev. Peter Wallis was vicar of Skryne and abbot of the monastery.

In 1609, James the First granted to Gerald Earl of Kildare (*inter alia*):‡

Two small cottages, a dove-house, and fifteen acres in Kinawde, in the parish of Ardcath, parcel of the estate of the church of Skryne.

The present union of Skryne comprises the ancient parishes of Skryne, Tara, Rathfeigh, Trevet, Macetown, part of Templekieran, and part of Lismullen. The patron saints are: of Skryne, St. Columbkil; of Tara, St. Patrick; of Rathfeigh, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin; of Trevet, St. Patrick; of Macetown, St. Nicholas; of Templekieran, St. Kieran; and of Lismullen, the Holy Trinity. Of the old churches, *Tara* has been uprooted, and a Protestant edifice erected in the vicinity. *Rathfeigh* measures seventy-five feet by twenty-two feet eight inches. The priests buried in Rathfeigh are Rev. Mr. Delany, Rev. John Cregan, parish priest of Skryne, Rev. Mr. Ryan, a native of the parish, who studied in Maynooth, and officiated

\* Harris's *Ware's Bishops*, p. 141. † Archdall's *Monasticon*, p. 133.

‡ *Patent Rolls*, 7, James the First.



as curate in Duleek, Rev. Peter Flanagan. This last named was born in the parish, studied in France, and officiated as curate in Nobber, where he died of decline. On his tomb is :

Here lieth the remains of the  
Rev. PETER FLANAGAN,  
who departed this life the  
2nd of May, 1782,  
aged 32 years.  
Memento mori.

*Trevet* is a heap of ruins. It measures ninety-three feet by twenty feet two inches. A tomb here to Sir Thomas Cusack, lord chancellor of Ireland. A cross at Lismullen, erected by him. *Macetown*, erected by the family of Chevers. The church measures fifty-six feet by sixteen feet ten inches. A stone found here has the following: "En Dieu Ma Fiaunce—Christofor. Chever. Armg—et. Dame Anne Plunkett". The castle of Macetown adjoins. *Templekieran* is uprooted, and a Protestant church occupies the site. *Lismullen* (see convent of Lismullen).

#### PASTORS OF SKRYNE SINCE THE REFORMATION.

From the confiscations and church robbery of Henry the Eighth and his children down to the reign of James the Second, we have no record at present of the names or succession of the pastors of Skryne. In the month of June, 1690, the Rev Francis Fleming was presented by James the Second to the "rectory of Taragh and vicarage of Skryne". In 1704 we find Rev. Francis Fleming registered at Trim as "Popish priest of Skreen, Taragh, Rafeigh, Macetown, and Templekeran". He was ordained at Navan in 1669, by Dr. Patrick Plunkett, bishop of Meath, and in the year of the registration he lived at Obristown, and was sixty-three years of age. The chapel of Skryne, in the time of this pastor, was a mudwall thatched house, in the neighbourhood of the abbey churchyard. This building was reëdified in succeeding years, until the present site was granted, about 1824, by A. J. Dopping, Esq., a family to which the Catholic body is much indebted for liberality in days when such was not fashionable.

The chapel of Rathfeigh, in the reign of Queen Anne, was a mudwall thatched house, situated in the valley of Rathfeigh. The next erection was on the townland of Macetown, the third on the townland of Loughenstown, and the fourth on a sort of commons in Rathfeigh. This last was erected in 1779, according to a lettered stone on the right-hand side of the doorway.

The Rev. Francis Fleming seems to have died soon after the registration.

*Rev. Laurence Langan* succeeded. He died in 1728, and was buried in the churchyard of Skryne. His tomb has the following inscription :

Here lieth the body of  
LAURENCE LANGAN,  
priest of Skreen,  
who departed this life  
July the 25th, 1728,  
aged 55 years.

*Rev. Patrick Sherlock* succeeded. He died in 1747, and was buried in the churchyard of Skryne. Over his remains a tomb has been erected, on which :

Here lieth the body of  
PATRICK SHERLOCK,  
priest of Skreen,  
who departed this life  
August y<sup>e</sup> 16, 1747,  
aged 51 years.

*Rev. Mr. Howard* succeeded. His name is still commemorated on the list of deceased priests in the parish of Rathfeigh.

*Rev. Thomas Boyle* succeeded. He was born in the parish of Grangegeith, of an ancient and respectable family. He died in 1780, and was buried in the churchyard of Grange. As Rev. Mr. Boyle was held in great respect by his parishioners, a vast multitude accompanied his remains to their last resting place. By the time the funeral procession had reached Slane, night had set in, and upwards of two miles still lay before them. Fortunately the weather



was calm, and the people having procured torches, the procession, extending upwards of two miles, was renewed, receiving at every cross-road fresh streams of people. The effect was imposing, and the night funeral of Father Boyle is still spoken of. On his tomb is the following inscription:

Pray for the soul of the  
Rev. Mr. THOMAS BOYLE,  
who departed this life.  
December y<sup>e</sup> 4th, 1780,  
aged 39 years.

*The Rev. Christopher Byrne succeeded.* He was appointed to the vacant parish by Dr. Plunkett, bishop of Meath, on the 19th of December, 1780. In the visitation of Dr. Plunkett to the union parishes of Skryne, August 1st, 1788, he found "three schools, one chapel rebuilt, and another repaired". Father Byrne died in 1802, and was buried in the churchyard of Donaghpatrick. Over his remains a tomb has been erected with the following inscription:

Erected by Bryan Byrne, in memory  
of the Rev. CHRISTOPHER BYRNE,  
parish priest of Skreen, who departed  
this life the 24th of June, 1802, aged 52 years.

*The Rev. William Killen\* succeeded (see Donaghmore).*

\* Father Killen, after his appointment to Skryne, was in very delicate health. General debility, together with a shock he experienced from an attempt having been made on his life, induced him early in 1804 to resign his parish and return to Navan. The circumstances were these: He was one evening returning from a sick call, and met on the road, near Tara, two Protestants, who were somewhat intoxicated. One was a Mr. H——, and the other a Mr. W—— (clerk of the Protestant church of Tara). The latter asked him who he was, and he answered, "Father Killen". "I'll kill you", said W——, and saying this he presented a pistol at the priest, and pulled the trigger twice, which fortunately missed fire each time. As the wretch was preparing for the third attempt, H—— interposed, and held him until Father Killen escaped. When it was known in Navan that W—— attempted the life of so beloved and venerated a priest, there was fearful indignation amongst the people. Soon after W—— was riding home, late in the evening, from the fair or market of Navan, and had behind him a Mr. R——. On passing a lonely part of the old road to Dublin, above Kilcain bridge, a shot was fired from behind a ditch. W—— fell, and his companion, R——, was wounded in the shoulder, and galloped home. A carman passing soon after heard moans in the ditch, and hastening to a neighbouring house, brought with him a few men, who discovered W—— writhing in agony. They conveyed him to the house, and

*The Rev. Christopher Halligan succeeded.* He was born in the parish of Ardcath, of a family which gave many excellent priests to the Church. In May, 1785, he was ordained in the Catholic church of Navan by Dr. Plunkett, and proceeded, as was the custom then, after his ordination, to complete his studies in the college of Douay. He returned early in the summer of 1790, and presented himself to Dr. Plunkett at the visitation of Trim, on the 13th of June, same year. After officiating as curate in several parishes, he was appointed, in 1804, successor to Father Killen. In 1813, he was transferred to St. Mary's, Drogheda, thence to Stamullen, and subsequently back to Skryne. For several years previous to his death he was in delicate health, and unable to discharge any duty. The Rev Patrick Kiernan administered the parish for him; and, after his translation, the late Rev. Patrick O'Connor. The good and venerable Father Halligan departed this life at a very advanced age, on the 23rd of November, 1837, and was buried with his friends in the churchyard of Ardcath.

*The Rev. John Cregan succeeded.* He was born at Knavinstown, studied in France, and was appointed parish priest of Summerhill on the 2nd of October, 1787. On the 2nd September, 1809, he was transferred to the union of Curraha and Trevet, and, on the translation of Rev. Christopher Halligan to St. Mary's, Drogheda, in 1813, he was transferred to Skryne. He died in 1816, and was buried in the churchyard of Rathfeigh. On his headstone is the following inscription:

Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
et in terra pax hominibus  
bonæ voluntatis !  
Hic jacet JOANNES CREGAN,  
Presbyter Midensis,  
obiit  
anno Domini 1816,  
ætatis 67.  
Requiescat in pace.

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in a few minutes he expired. It has never since been known, beyond surmise, who fired that shot. Father Killen was grieved when he heard of this act of his avenger, and survived it not long. I have for obvious reasons suppressed the names.



*Rev. Richard Carolan* succeeded. He was translated to Ratoath in 1818 (see pastors of Ratoath).

*Rev. Michael Berry* succeeded. He laid the foundation stone of the new chapel of Skryne, and was transferred about 1827 to the parish of Kinnegad. He was a most zealous and laborious priest, and the inscription on his monument faithfully portrays his many excellent qualities. He died in 1844, and was buried in the present chapel of Kinnegad. On the left side of the altar a marble slab commemorates him in the following words :

Beneath are deposited the remains of  
the Very Rev. MICHAEL BERRY, parish priest  
of this parish, who died August 10th, 1844,  
in the 58th year of his age, and 32nd of his ministry.  
In the life of this enlightened and devoted pastor  
was brightly reflected every virtue of the priesthood.  
Fervent in piety, unceasing in labours, ardent in zeal,  
he kept the ministry of faith in a pure conscience.  
He revered the sanctuary, loved the beauty of  
God's house, and instructed the  
little ones in the science of salvation.  
In manner amiable and interesting, in friendship warm  
and sincere, he was universally loved and esteemed,  
but especially by a grateful and mourning flock,  
amongst whom his memory will live long in benediction.  
Eternal rest grant to him, O Lord,  
And let perpetual light shine upon him.  
Amen.

After the translation of Rev. Mr. Berry, the Rev. Christopher Halligan\* returned to Skryne, as we have stated before.

*The Very Rev. Patrick O'Connor* succeeded. This distinguished divine and scholar was born in the diocese of Elphin, graduated in the college of Maynooth, and was affiliated to the diocese of Meath about 1822. His first appointment was a professorship in the Seminary of Navan, and he discharged this duty with such ability and zeal as to be promoted in 1827, on the translation of Very Rev. Eugene

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\* Father Halligan was ninety-four years of age at the time of his death.

O'Reilly, to the office of president or rector. During his tenure of office, he elevated the literary status of the diocesan school, and he was most attentive to the comfort and happiness of the students. As a professor he gave universal satisfaction in consequence of his varied and extensive knowledge, combined with a most felicitous method of imparting information. His health being impaired, he resigned his responsible position, and, in accordance with medical advice, he solicited and obtained leave of absence for a few years. Availing himself of this indulgence, he proceeded to Paris, Madrid, Vienna, Munich, Rome, and other seats of literature and science, where he amassed that continental lore on which he used to draw, to the instruction and amusement of many a circle, in his social hours. On his return to the diocese, he was appointed administrator of Kilcloon, and subsequently of Skryne, and on the death of Father Halligan, in 1837, he succeeded as parish priest. After a short time he was promoted to the dignity of vicarius foraneus of Meath, and master of conference for the deanery of Duleek. Father O'Connor was undoubtedly a profound scholar, and as a conversational speaker he was unrivalled. As a pastor he was a prudent guide, a generous friend, and stood on familiar terms with the most humble of his flock. In his intercourse with his clerical brethren he was genial and warm-hearted, affable and hospitable, abounding in *bon mots*, anecdote, and story. Daniel O'Connell, Tom Steele, and John O'Connell, often met him at the late Mr. Lynch's of Tara Hall, and all were captivated by his charming manners and ready eloquence. The Liberator congratulated his host on having a pastor of such literary preëminence. The Catholic gentry were ambitious of his society, for Father O'Connor was a walking encyclopedia. He died of apoplexy on the 26th of April, 1858, and was buried in the chapelyard of Skryne. His death has left a void in ecclesiastical society; and, for years to come, the friendly smile, the genial welcome of the eloquent, the learned, the amiable Dr. O'Connor will be long and warmly remembered. Over his grave the parishioners have erected a monument with the following inscription:



Of your charity,  
 pray for the soul of  
 the Very Reverend  
 PATRICK O'CONNOR,  
 who for 22 years was parish priest  
 of Skryne and Rathfeigh.  
 He died 26th of April, 1858,  
 Aged 58 years.

Eternal rest grant to him, O Lord,  
 And let perpetual light shine to him.  
 This monument is erected to his  
 memory by his parishioners.

*The Rev. John Kelly* succeeded. This worthy and amiable priest was born in Westmeath, graduated in Navan and Maynooth, and officiated as curate in Drogheda, Castlepollard, Kells, Navan, and Skryne. He was appointed by Dr. Cantwell, at the month's memory of his great predecessor, and at present happily presides.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### SLANE.

AFTER the Anglo-Norman invasion, de Lacy granted Slane to Richard Fleming, one of his knights. A castle was erected by the Flemings, and under the patronage of this family, Slane became one of the most prosperous borough towns in Meath. In 1176, the Irish, under Melaghlin, lord of the Kinel-Owen, plundered the castle of Slane, and slew Richard Fleming. In 1317, Robert Bruce, king of Scotland, and the Scotch army, crossed the Boyne at Slane, and marched towards Dublin. In 1414, the Irish, under O'Connor, Lord of Offaly, and Mageoghegan, defeated the Anglo-Irish at Killeagha, near Oldcastle, and slew the Baron of Skryne and a great number of nobles and plebeians. Amongst the prisoners was the Baron of Slane, for whose ransom 1,400 marks were demanded and obtained. In 1423, the portreeve and commons of Slane, with all the able men of the bailiwick, were ordered to meet the lord justice at

Trim to defend the English Pale. In 1595, the barony of Slane was plundered by the O'Neills. During the confiscations of Cromwell, the Flemings lost most of their property here, and, after the battle of the Boyne, the Conyngham family became possessed of Slane. On the morning of that battle, a division of King William's army crossed the Boyne at Slane, and marched to attack the flank of King James's troops at Oldbridge. In the memorable 1782, at a meeting of the corps of volunteers of the barony of Slane, assembled on their parade, 3rd of March, the following resolution was unanimously adopted :

“RESOLVED—That no power on Earth can make laws to bind the people of this land, but the king, lords, and commons of Ireland.

“FRANCIS ADAMS, Secretary”.

During the agitation for Emancipation and Repeal of the Union, and in all the struggles for civil and religious freedom, Slane has been ever true to the national cause. In 1840, Father Mathew preached in Slane, and administered the temperance pledge to vast numbers for three days. In 1852, the late and lamented Frederick Lucas—the faithful and fearless advocate of Irish rights—the able and uncompromising defender of the liberties of the Church—made, at a great tenant-right meeting in Slane, one of his most eloquent and telling speeches.

#### ABBAY OF SLANE.

After the plunder of the old Abbey of Slane, in 1170, by Dermot Mac Murrough, king of Leinster, and the English under Strongbow, it fell gradually into ruin. In 1175, the English again plundered this place, and completed its destruction. The Flemings rebuilt Slane abbey, but it never recovered its former magnificence. In 1512 it was refounded\* for friars of the third order of St. Francis, by Christopher Fleming, knight, lord of Slane, and Elizabeth Stuckle, his wife. At that time there were two friars of the order, namely, “Malachy and Donogh O'Brine”, dwelling in the hermitage

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\* Ware's MSS. Harris's *Tables*.



of St. Erk, and, having obtained the sanction of the bishop, they were introduced by Lord Fleming to the new erection on the hill of Slane. He granted them the annual sum of forty shillings out of the lands of Balsetrick, Ekan, and Logbra, and made them additional bequests.

On the 30th of April, thirty-second of Henry the Eighth, the monastery of Slane surrendered to the commissioners of the king, and on that occasion the prior was found to own the following:\*

A church and belfry, dormitory, garden, and two closes containing one acre.

On the 12th of November, thirty-fifth of Henry the Eighth, this friary was granted to James Fleming,† knight, at the annual rent of one penny, Irish money.

#### PARISH OF SLANE.

In 1216, it was decreed in the synod of Newtown, near Trim, that the churches of Trim, Kells, Slane, Skryne, and Dunshaughlin, being heretofore bishops' sees, shall hereafter be the heads of rural deaneries, with archpresbyters personally resident therein.

In 1312, the Rev. John Fleming was rector of Slane (*Rot. Cl.* 6 Edward the Third).

In 1385, the Rev. Roger Winter, pastor of Slane, exchanged with the Rev. Robert Sutton, pastor of St. Mary's, Drogheda (*Pat.* 9 Richard the Second).

In 1389, the Rev. Richard Bonevyll was vicar of Slane (*Pat.* 13 Richard the Second).

In 1402, the Rev. William Rowe was chaplain of Slane (*Pat.* 4 Henry the Fourth).

In 1422, the Rev. Robert Haket, rector of Clongill, was elected by the clergy of the deanery of Slane to collect the ecclesiastical subsidy for the king (*Pat.* 1 Henry the Sixth).

In 1431, the Rev. Mr. Adyn was pastor of St. Patrick's, Slane (*Pat.* 10 Henry the Sixth).

In the same year the Rev. William Sutton was presented by the king to the parochial church of Slane (*Pat.* 10 Henry the Sixth).

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\* Chief Remembrancer.

† Auditor-General.

## COLLEGE OF SLANE.

In connection with the rectory or parish of Slane, there were a castle for the clergy, a college, 100 acres of land, and the rent of twenty houses, for the maintenance of four priests, four clerics, and four choristers. This property seems to have been confiscated by the Flemings at the time of the Reformation (see Usher's report).

In Montgomery's visitation, the rectory of Slane is valued at forty marks. In 1622, Bishop Usher's visitation, the parish is valued at "60<sup>u</sup> sterling", and the parochial property consisted of:

"A faire stone house or castle and some howses of office reasonahlie repayred, an haggard and backsides. Of ancient time there belongeth to this rectory a colledge, an C<sup>d</sup>, or thereabouts, acres of land, and some twentie houses for mayntenance of foure priestes, foure clarkes, and foure quiresters. The walles of the colledge are yet standing and adjoining to the parsonage house, all which have of long tyme beene in the possession of the Lord of Slane, but by what right it is not known".

About the year 1583, Dr. O'Hurley, archbishop of Cashel, who had landed in Drogheda a few years previous, being denounced to the government by the spies of Queen Elizabeth, fled for refuge to the castle of Slane.\* He was kindly received by Thomas Fleming, baron of Slane, and Catherine Preston, his wife. At first he dared not leave his room; but by degrees becoming more confident, he appeared at the public table in the castle, and dined even with strangers. On one of these occasions Sir Robert Dillon,† chief justice, met him, and the archbishop conversed with such grace and eloquence that Dillon suspected he was a Catholic ecclesiastic in disguise. He communicated his suspicions to

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\* See *Collections on Irish Church History*, pages 252, 253, etc.

† Ismay Dillon, daughter of Sir Bartholomew Dillon of Riverston, county Meath, and aunt to Sir Robert, was married to John Fleming of Stephenstown, second son of James Lord Slane, by whom she had Thomas Lord Slane. Dillon and Lord Slane were therefore cousins. Dillon was then Chief Justice of the Court of Chief Pleas. The wife of Lord Slane, Catherine Preston, was daughter of Jenico, the third Viscount Gormanston. She died in 1597, and was buried in the hermitage of St. Erk, Slane. See Archdall's *Lodge*, vol. iii. p. 78, vol. iv. pp. 143, 144.



the notorious Loftus, Protestant primate and chancellor, and to Henry Wallop, the chief treasurer. A peremptory order, threatening the severest penalties, was sent to Lord Fleming, to have his strange guest arrested and conveyed to the castle of Dublin. In the meantime the plot was discovered by some of the Fleming family, who apprised the prelate of the storm that was gathering, and besought him to fly from his enemies. Yielding to their entreaties, he proceeded as far as Carrick-on-Suir, but was overtaken, arrested, taken prisoner to Dublin, and, having refused to apostatise, was bound in irons, and thrown into a dark, loathsome prison. After enduring fearful torture, his arms and legs having been rubbed over with pitch, salt, oil, and sulphur, and the parts thus affected placed over a slow fire, he was ultimately hanged, drawn, and quartered in Stephen's Green, on the 6th of May, 1584, in the sixty-fifth year of his age.

## PASTORS OF SLANE.

After the confiscations of Henry the Eighth we have no record at present of the priests of Slane until 1631. During the interval the priest had shelter in the castle of Slane, as the noble family of Fleming remained faithful to the Church of their fathers. In 1631 a community of Capuchin friars settled in the town of Slane,\* and were warmly patronized and assisted by the barons† of Slane and the Catholics of the parish. During the persecutions of Cromwell these holy men were dispersed; but after the storm had subsided they returned, and consoled the faithful until 1695, when, with many other regulars and seculars, they were shipped off to the Continent.

The Rev. Neal Carolan‡ succeeded as parish priest in 1669. He was ordained by Dr. Anthony Geoghegan, bishop of Meath, in 1662, and having proceeded to Paris in that year, he studied philosophy in the college of Grassini, and took out the degree of master of arts in the University of

\* *Tabula Topographica Capucinatorum Hujus Provinciæ Hibernensis*, page 54.

† Letter signed by the Baron of Slane, October, 1669, in the *Notitia Historica Capucinatorum*, pp. 44, 45.

‡ Harris's *Ware's Writers of Ireland*, page 204.

Paris He studied divinity in the college of Navarre, and, returning to Ireland in 1667, he taught a private school for two years on the borders of Meath. In 1669 he was appointed to the parishes of Slane and Stackallen by Dr. Oliver Dease, vicar-general of Meath. In 1675 he was translated to the neighbouring parishes of Painstown and Brownstown, and in 1679 he returned to Slane and lost the faith. He published a defence of his apostacy, dated at Dublin, 1688. We know no more about him.

In June, 1690, the Rev. James Reilly was presented by King James to the rectory and vicarage of Garlandstown, and, at the same time, the Rev. Philip Carolan was presented to the vicarage of Rathkenny. These priests were transported or dead before the year of the registration.

In 1704, the Rev. Edmond Mackenna was registered at Trim as "Popish priest of Slane, Stackallen, Rathkenny, Garlanstown, and Fennor". This holy and zealous priest was born of an ancient and respectable family in the year 1648. A memorable year this was, and suggestive of melancholy reflections; for, owing to intestine divisions, the curse of Ireland, the sun of the once great Catholic Confederation was fast setting, and thus preparing the way for the long dark night of Cromwellian despotism. Edmond Mackenna was ordained in 1673, at Ardpatrik, county Louth, by Dr. Oliver Plunkett, archbishop of Armagh, and proceeded to the Continent to complete his theological studies. Where he received his education we are not informed, and of his many trials through life, in those days of affliction, down to his appointment to Slane, we are unable to tell. He was a priest of great learning, piety, and charity, and his name is still freshly remembered and revered amongst the people. In accordance with a custom, not unusual then, he had his grave marked out and his tombstone prepared, in order the better to remind him of eternity. He died in the month of January, 1717, and was buried in the churchyard on the Hill of Slane. To the south-west of the old church of Slane there is a horizontal tomb,\* now covered with weeds, on which :

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\* Down to 1845 the inhabitants of Slane were accustomed, every third



This monument was erected by  
 Fa<sup>tr</sup> EDMOND MACKENNA, parish priest  
 of Slane, who died January y<sup>e</sup> fifth, 1717,  
 aged 69 years. Renewed in 1845  
 by the parishioners of Slane as a tribute  
 of respect to their ancient pastor.

*Rev. Mr. Teeling* succeeded. He was born in the parish of Rathkenny, of the noble house of Tyling, or Teeling, of Syddan and Mullagha, studied abroad, and officiated at a time of great peril and trial to a Catholic priest. His father was an extensive proprietor in the parish, but this, so far from sheltering the son, exposed the whole family to the local bigotry and persecutions of the times. He was obliged often to go disguised\* and conceal himself in the cabins of the poor, as his father's house was frequently searched by priest-hunters. The year of his death is unknown to me. He was buried in the semicircular arched vault of the Teeling family in the churchyard of Rathkenny.

*The Rev. Joseph Plunkett* succeeded. Father Plunkett was nearly related to Lord Fingal, to the Rev. Christopher Plunkett, parish priest of Athboy, to Sister Catherine Plunkett, first superioress of the Sienna Convent of Drogheda, and to Dr. Michael Plunkett, the great pastor of Ratoath. The precise place of his birth, study, ordination, as well as the exact year of his appointment, is now unknown; but his holy life and zealous labours were so deeply impressed on the minds of his flock, that his memory, embalmed in reverence, has been handed down with such a feeling of gratitude as the Irish peasant alone can fully appreciate and remember. In the early years of his pastorship he lived on the townland of Shalvenstown, subsequently at

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or fourth year, to make a collection and send a person up to the Hill of Slane for the purpose of refreshing and washing the tomb of their ancient pastor. The famine years set in, and in the struggle for life, many pious customs and national usages were discontinued.

\* The old people say that this pastor had to dress like a peasant. The priests of that day carried the vestments in a "wallet" slung across the shoulder. They went from house to house clad in frieze, with staff in hand. Amongst the bigoted gentry they passed for beggarmen, but amongst the people they were recognized as the "Soggarth Aroon". These were the men to whom, under God, we owe the triumph of faith.

Gernonstown, or Garlanstown, and lastly, on a farm of fourteen acres, in the parish of Gernonstown, given to him by his relative, Lord Fingal. Here, on a rising ground, the pastor erected an humble dwelling, which has been called since "College Hill".

There were three chapels at that time in the union of Slane: one at Shalvenstown, a second at Leckin, in the parish of Rathkenny, and a third, situated in a quarry, less than a quarter of a mile to the west of Slane. These were mud-wall thatched hovels, without any interior or exterior ornaments whatever. Father Plunkett was an eminent preacher in the Irish language, and remarkable for his kindness to the poor. He died in November, 1760, and was buried in the churchyard of Gernonstown. Over his remains a large horizontal tomb, supported by pillars, has been erected, with the following characteristic inscription:

Jesus, Maria, Joseph, Salvator Patrona  
Advocate, Salva Protege Defende,  
Peccatorem Famulum Clientem,  
Sub hoc capide Jacentem, Josephum  
Plunkett, Pastorem Slaniæ Hujus—  
Obiit Die — Novembris, 1760, et ætatis  
sue anno Septuagesimo Quarto.

*The Rev Thomas Grehan* succeeded. He was born in the parish of Rathkenny, studied in France, and officiated for some years as curate to Father Plunkett. On the death of the latter he was appointed by Dr. Chevers to the vacancy, and during his pastorate lived with his friends. He died in February, 1773, and was buried in the churchyard of Rathkenny. On the family tomb is the following inscription:

Pray also for the soul of the  
Rev. Mr. THOMAS GREHAN, who  
departed this life February y<sup>e</sup> 9th, 1773,  
aged fifty-one years.

Father Grehan\* was a member of a very respectable family, and his memory is held in great reverence.

*The Rev. Thomas Clarke†* succeeded. He was born in

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\* His oil-stocks are in my possession.

† There is a chalice at present in use in the parish of Rathkenny, on which is inscribed, "The parish of Rathkenny, Rev. Thomas Clarke pastor, A.D. 1793".



the parish of Kilberry, of an ancient and respectable house, which gave many eminent priests to the diocese of Meath. After his return from France, he officiated as curate in the parish of Castletown-Kilpatrick, and on the death of Father Grehan was appointed to Slane by Dr. Chevers. In the visitation of Slane, on the 30th of July, 1788, by Dr. Plunkett, we find there were then in the union parish "four schools, two chapels repaired". Father Clarke lived at Gernonstown, and was an humble, zealous priest. He died of apoplexy on the 30th of November, 1795, and was buried alongside of his uncles, Rev. Mr. Clarke of Kilberry, and Rev. Father Clarke of Castletown, in the tomb of the Clarks in the churchyard of Kilberry.

*The Very Rev. Michael O'Hanlon succeeded.* This great priest and scholar was born in the neighbourhood of Dowth, graduated in the college of Bordeaux, and on his return was appointed curate of Slane and chaplain to Hussey of Rathkenny, Baron of Galtrim. He was not long in this position when a request was asked of him to accompany young Mr Caddell, of Harbournstown, in quality of chaplain and companion, on a tour to the Continent. He assented, obtained the bishop's sanction, and they left Ireland. After stopping some time in London, they went to France, and put up at the Irish College at Paris, with the president of which Father Hanlon was intimately acquainted. One day, while dining in the college, a voice was heard outside asking in French, "Does any one here know Colonel Conyngham?" Father Hanlon answered in the affirmative, and was conducted before a military tribunal. It appears that a member of Lord Conyngham's family was taken prisoner in the war then raging between France and England, and as reprisals were taken with great severity, in other words, as prisoners were shot on both sides, those only were held over for exchange who were distinguished by military rank, or were ennobled by birth or education. Father Hanlon, who spoke French fluently, interceded warmly for the prisoner, and gave the family of Conyngham a high character for liberality and kindness to the Irish people. The result was, that, owing to his influence and earnestness, Colonel Conyngham's

life was spared, and he was remanded for exchange. This generous act was afterwards long and gratefully remembered, and it procured for the inhabitants of Slane an indulgent landlord, and for the Catholics of the parish a friend who always aided and protected them. From France the tourists proceeded to Germany, and they were hospitably entertained at the castle of Prince Esterhazy.\* After several years spent in visiting the places of note and interest on the Continent, the travellers returned to Ireland, and Father Hanlon was reinstated in his former mission, viz., the curacy of Slane and chaplaincy of Captain John Hussey, Baron of Galtrim. On the death of Father Clarke, Baron Hussey presented Father Hanlon, and Dr. Plunkett collated him, to the parish of Rathkenny and the administration of Slane, *cum annexis*. At first he resided at Gernonstown, but having obtained from Lord Fingal the farm of fourteen acres, which had been called "College Hill" since the days of Father Plunkett, he built here a very beautiful parochial house in the very centre of his duties. The old mud-wall thatched chapel of Slane, situated in a quarry about a quarter of a mile to the west of the town, fell suddenly in the beginning of 1798, and the inhabitants were for a considerable time without any place of worship. Mass was in the interim celebrated in a barn or outhouse attached to the hotel of Slane, kept by an old Catholic lady, and the people knelt around and in the yard without any shelter. In the meantime Colonel Conyngham succeeded to the inheritance of the Slane† property and title, and amongst those who

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\* Father O'Hanlon kept a diary during his continental tour. The late pastor of Slane, the amiable Father Denis O'Brien, often read it while curate under him. It abounded with anecdotes, and recorded many facts which would be very interesting to a reader at the present day. During their stay with the prince, Caddell (who by the way was very eccentric) and his highness had a dispute. "Remember, sir, you are in the presence of a king", said the German. "King be hanged", replied Caddell, "why, my father employs more men than your miserable kingdom contains. King!! don't degrade the name". They were reconciled by Father O'Hanlon, and parted on good terms. This diary passed into the hands of some of Dr. O'Hanlon's friends after his death, and cannot now be found.

† When George the Fourth visited Ireland in 1821, he stopped for some time at the castle of Slane, and held his court in the large circular hall of the castle. Prince Esterhazy, with many other celebrities of that day,



went to visit and congratulate him was Father Hanlon. The colonel remembered his benefactor well, received him most cordially, and begged to know in what way could he make a return, however inadequate, for having saved his life. Father Hanlon replied that he wanted nothing for himself, but his people were, like the primitive Christians, without any place of worship, and accordingly requested a site for a chapel, and leave to erect a belfry. The site was granted and a liberal donation, and, through the influence of Lord Conyngham, permission, or rather connivance, was obtained from the Lord Lieutenant, and thus the first bell-tower erected in the diocese of Meath since the Protestant Reformation, was the present belfry of Slane. It is still to be seen in the shape of a round tower, and on its summit stood, until blown down by the great storm of January, 1839, a massive iron cross, which, crowning the belfry, threw a halo over the picturesque village of Slane, and reminded one of the ancient days of our Church. Father Hanlon also built a chapel at Rushwee, and, having obtained a site from the Baron of Galtrim, he next erected the beautiful chapel of Rathkenny. He also erected schools in Slane, Rushwee, and Rathkenny, and lived to see religion and education developed and extended. Under his prudent and fostering care, the Church cast off the weeds of her mourning, and his people, no longer in the catacombs of poverty and obscurity, worshipped once more in suitable temples. Father Hanlon was an eminent preacher in the Irish and English languages. He was a very learned man, and up to his last illness spent a few hours each day at study. He was vicar-forane of Meath, and master of conference for the district of Duleek. He died on the 11th of

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accompanied him. Dr. O'Hanlon visited this prince at the castle, and paid his respects to him. George observed him, and inquired who he was, and being told that he was the parish priest of Slane, he remarked with an oath, "That priest is fit to ornament a court". Dr O'Hanlon was a man remarkable for grace and dignity, and dressed with great neatness. I heard a Protestant gentleman say, that he was the most dignified, learned, and amiable old man he had ever met. His library was very valuable, and abounded with the tomes of Usher, Ware, Walsh, etc., and of course the great authorities on theology and the sacred Scriptures.

July, 1823, universally regretted by Protestants and Catholics, poor and rich, and his remains were accompanied to the churchyard of Dowth by one of the largest funerals witnessed in this country for the last half century. Tourist or pilgrim! whether you visit the churchyard of Dowth through curiosity or devotion—*siste*—on the south side of the cemetery stands a horizontal tomb, supported by pillars. This monument was erected to the memory of Father Hanlon, and on it, at funerals, the coffin is deposited, and the *De Profundis* chanted previous to interment:

Underneath are deposited the  
remains of the late Very Rev. DOCTOR HANLON,  
Pastor of Slane, who finished the course of  
his earthly career, after a tedious indisposition,  
which he bore with truly Christian resignation,  
on the 11th day of July, 1823, in the 67th year of his age.  
In this exemplary clergyman were united every  
virtue that could render him agreeable to God  
and pleasing to man. He combined in his person  
the piety of the saint with the learning of the  
scholar. He lived esteemed, and died regretted.

*The Very Rev. James O'Brien succeeded.* This learned and distinguished pastor was born in the parish of Moynalty, and was the first student that entered the Navan Seminary in 1802, the year it was opened. After completing his classical studies here he entered the College of Maynooth, and came first of all his cotemporaries in logic, theology, and the sacred Scriptures. He was ordained by dispensation on the 29th of September, 1807, not having arrived at the canonical age, and on the 15th of December, same year, he was appointed by Dr. Plunkett to the curacy of Slane. On the death of Rev. Henry Connell, in April, 1813, he was appointed parish priest of Syddan, or Lobinstown, and, in after years, exchanged with Rev. Mr. Gaughran, administrator of Slane. Father O'Brien was a man of great intellect; his mind was both solid and acute, and he was profoundly versed in canon and civil law. He was vicar-forane of Meath and master of conference for the deanery of Duleek. He died in September, 1849, after a short illness, and was buried with his friends in the churchyard of Moynalty.



*The Rev. Denis O'Brien succeeded.* Father Denis, brother of the preceding pastor, was born in the parish of Moynalty, studied in Navan and Maynooth, and was ordained in 1821. He officiated as curate under the Rev. Dr. O'Hanlon, and subsequently under his brother. He was a man of great meekness and humility, and endeared himself to all by his piety and amiability. He built schools at Slane, Rathkenny, and Rushwee, and, during his pastorate, his zealous and efficient curate, Rev. Christopher Magrane (present pastor of Drumcondra), reëdified the chapel of Rushwee, and re-erected the chapel of Slane. Father O'Brien died of paralysis on the 10th of October, 1857, and was buried with his brother in the churchyard of Moynalty. A headstone marking the graves of these priests has the following inscription :

To the memory of the  
 Very Rev. JAMES O'BRIEN, P.P.  
 of Slane, who departed this life on the  
 22nd of September, 1849, in the 64th year of his age  
 and 41st year of his ministry.

His life exhibited a true portrait of  
 a zealous minister of Christ and  
 a faithful dispenser of the mysteries  
 of God.

He was 28 years pastor of Slane.  
 Amiable in disposition,  
 Affable and unaffected in manner,  
 He lived in the affection of his flock.  
 Requiescat in pace.

*The Rev. Philip Callary succeeded.* Present pastor was born in the parish of Oldcastle, studied in Navan and Maynooth, and officiated as curate in the parishes of Ardraccan, or Bohermien, Tullamore, and Navan. After the death of Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly, Dr. Cantwell became parish priest in Navan, and appointed, as administrator, the Rev. Philip Callary. In October, 1857, he was translated to Slane,\* where he still happily presides.

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\* After the death of the Rev. Denis O'Brien, the bishop, in virtue of power delegated to him, for the more convenient spiritual benefit of the

NOTE.—The old college and church of Slane are so familiar to the public, in consequence of the many notices which for the last few years have appeared in various journals, periodicals, and other publications, that a passing allusion will on the present occasion suffice.

The college stands a short distance to the north of the church, and between both is a holy well, called *Tober-Patrick*. This well is encompassed by a circular stone wall, down which is a flight of steps. Stations were made here on St. Patrick's day until within the last few years. The college is an oblong building, measuring 103 feet by 80. The interior is now one heap of ruins, in which numerous stairways, rooms, towers, windows, doorways, and very beautiful cut stones can still be distinguished. A few years ago the beasts of the field herded in this venerable building. The gaps which gave admission to cattle are now closed up, portions of the walls have been refreshed; and, owing to the antiquarian tastes of the Marquess of Conyngham, the further ruin of the old college has been arrested, and the remnant is likely to last for ages.

The church and cemetery of Slane have been, by Lord Conyngham's orders, enclosed by a ditch, for the purpose of keeping away cattle and preventing desecration of the dead. The church is entered on the western end, under the arched doorway of the square belfry tower, which, clothed in ivy and rearing its head aloft over the surrounding plantation, beautifies the landscape and recalls to mind the ages of faith. The church is upwards of one hundred feet in length by eighteen feet two inches. On the south side is a small aisle connected with the body of the church by a row of four arches. The old baptismal font was presented to the new chapel of Slane by Lord Conyngham, and is now used as a holy water font. A mitred figure, said to represent St. Erc, was taken many years ago from the churchyard and placed in a wall of the old schoolhouse of Slane. It is at present in the west end of the present national school. Rev Edmond M'Kenna sleeps in the churchyard of Slane—also a Rev. Father Lynagh, supposed to have belonged to the Fran-

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people, re-arranged the union parishes of Slane, and grouped Grangegeith, Rathkenny, part of Gernonstown, and part of Stackallen, into one union, usually called the parish of Rathkenny; his lordship formed the parishes of Slane, Fennor, Dowth, Monknewton, part of Gernonstown, and part of Stackallen, into another union, called the parish of Slane. Rev. Philip Callary is pastor of the latter union; Rev. Thomas Finegan of the former.



ciscan order, who was chaplain to Hussey, Baron of Galtrim, in the last century. A black wooden cross marked his resting place up to a few years ago. A Rev. Denis Walsh is also buried here. This priest was born in the neighbourhood, studied in France, and after celebrating his first Mass was called to his eternal rest. A Maynooth student, named Thomas Heany, a native of Slane, returned from college about 1835, died of decline, and sleeps in this churchyard. Here also repose the lamented and beloved father of the writer of these pages, the late Mr. Thomas Cogan of Slane, and his three brothers, Robert, James, and Patrick Cogan. May they sleep in peace. Amen.

## BARONSTOWN CROSS.

This monumental wayside cross is situated on a green knoll adjoining the high road from Navan to Slane, not far from the crumbling castle of Carrickdexter. The head of this cross has been smashed many years ago. On the north side, under a shield, is the "Hail Mary", with a prayer to the Blessed Virgin for her intercession. On the east is a figure of St. Peter, with the following inscription: "I pray you, St. Peter, pray for the soules of Oliver Plunket, Lord Baron of Louth, and Dame Jenet Dowdall, his wife". On the west is a figure of St. Patrick with a similar prayer. On the south side is inscribed: "This cross was builded by Dame Jenet Dowdall, late wife unto Oliver Plunket, Lord Baron of Louth, for him and herselfe, in the yere of our Lord God" . . . (obliterated).

## ARCHDALL'S TOMB.

The Rev. Mervyn Archdall, Protestant rector of Slane, the distinguished author of the *Monasticon Hibernicum* and of the *Peerage of Ireland*, is buried in the Protestant churchyard of Slane. He was an indefatigable compiler, and to his valuable labours we are all indebted for much interesting information. Over his remains a monument has been erected with the following inscription:

"We shall also bear the image of the Heavenly".

Sacred to the memory  
of

MERVYN ARCHDALL, A.M.,  
Rector of this Parish,  
who died the 6th of August,  
1791.

Aged 68 years.

## CHAPTER XL.

## TRIM—ST. MARY'S ABBEY.

TRIM is in truth a city of ruins, and the monuments of its past civil and ecclesiastical importance arrest the beholder wherever he turns. The view on the Dublin side of the Boyne is thus graphically described by Dr. Wilde :\*

“To see Trim aright, the tourist must approach it by the Black-bull road from Dublin, when all the glorious ruins which crowd this historic locality, and which extend over a space of above a mile, burst suddenly upon him : the remains of St. John's friary and castellated buildings at the bridge of Newtown ; the stately abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul, a little further on, raising aloft its tall, light, and ivy-mantled windows ; the neighbouring chapel, with its sculptured tombs and monumental tablets ; the broad green lawns, through which the Boyne winds between that and Trim ; the silver stream itself, gliding smoothly onward with unbroken surface ; the gray massive towers of King John's castle,† with its outward walls and barbican, the gates, and towers, and bastions, the fosse, and moat, and chapel ; the sheep-gate, and portions of the town-wall ; and, towering above all, the tall, commanding form of the Yellow Steeple, which seems the guardian genius of the surrounding ruins. All these beauteous objects, with the ancient church tower, the town itself, the Wellington testimonial, and the modern public buildings, form a combination of scenery and an architectural diorama such as we have rarely witnessed. We have also this additional charm in the views of Trim, that, look at this place as we may, its noble ruins are ever forming new combinations, fresh groups of beauty and of interest, singly or collectively ; in all the varying aspects caused by atmospheric changes ; in glaring sunshine playing upon their massive walls ; with the heavens overcast, and the drifting shower half revealing some of their turrets and gables ; with the calm subdued light of evening softening every object in the landscape, or the silver moontide throwing into shadow every dark recess and deep cathedral niche ; with the stream that winds among them, now

\* *The Boyne and Blackwater*, pp. 79, 80.

† For a description of the celebrated castle of Trim, see Dean Butler's *Notices of the Castle and of the Ecclesiastical Buildings of Trim*.



burnished as a golden mirror, now dark and gloomy, with scarce light upon it to reflect the ruins that are usually mirrored in its calm waters".

### ST. MARY'S ABBEY.

The abbey of St Mary, of Trim, originally founded by St. Patrick, was rebuilt, some time in the thirteenth century, by the family of de Lacy, for canons regular following the rule of St. Augustine.

1348. Died the abbot Thomas, and the temporalities were seized into the king's hands, from October 20th, to the month of December following, when they were restored to Peter Morgan, who was then confirmed abbot (King, p. 299).

1362. Thomas Whittington, one of the canons, being elected abbot, the temporalities were restored to him on the 10th of November (*Ibidem*).

1368. The church of St. Mary, in Trim, was burnt. The steeple, now called the Yellow Steeple, was probably built after this fire (Dean Butler's *Trim Castle*, p. 183).

1381. The king issued a writ to William, bishop of Meath, ordering him to perform what was necessary in the election of John de Leghtoun, who presented himself in the king's court as elected abbot of the monastery of St. Mary's, Trim, in the place of Thomas Whittington, deposed, according to a license granted by the king, at the request of the bishop and canons. The same day, December 10th, Leghtoun had a writ to the escheator for the delivery of the temporalities (*Rot. Pat.* 5 Richard the Second).

1400. Alexander Petit, *alias* Balscote, bishop of Meath, was interred here.

1402. The king, Henry the Fourth, at the supplication of the abbey and convent of St. Mary of Trim, took under his protection all pilgrims, whether liegemen, Irish, or rebels, going on pilgrimage to said abbey, according to immemorial privilege (*Pat.* 3 Henry the Fourth).

1412. The image of (the Blessed Virgin) Mary of Trim wrought many miracles (*Annals of the Four Masters*).

1418. Edmund, Earl of March and Ulster, obtained a license to grant to the abbot of this house the advowson of the church of St. Mary in his manor of Kildalk and diocese of Meath, in pure and perpetual alms (King).

1437. January 4th, died the abbot Alexander Roch, a brother of the congregation of the Holy Trinity, Dublin.

1447. Great famine in the spring of this year throughout all Ireland, so that men were wont to eat all manner of herbs for the most part. Great plague in the summer, harvest, and winter, by which died the prior of Ballyboggan, and the prior of Conala, and the baron of Galtrim, . . . and many more in Meath, in Munster, and in Leinster died of the plague; and it is difficult to get an account of the innumerable multitudes that died in Dublin by that plague. The abbot of Teaghmurry (St. Mary's) in Trim died by the aforesaid plague (*Miscel. Arch.*, vol i. p. 218).

1447. Felim, the son of John, son of Philip O'Reilly, worthy materies of a king of Breffny, for his hospitality and prowess, was treacherously taken prisoner at Trim by Furnival, the deputy of the King of England, *after he had gone thither at his own invitation*; and at that time Trim was visited with a great plague, of which Felim died, after the victory of unction and penance, seven weeks before All-hallowtide, and he was interred in the monastery of the Friars of Trim. This Furnival was a son of curses for his venom, and a Devil for his evils, and the learned say of him, that there came not from the time of Herod, by whom Christ was crucified, any one so wicked in evil days (*Annals of Ulster*; O'Donovan's *Note to the Four Masters*).

1464. Great miracles worked by the image of our Blessed Mary of Trim in this year (*Annals*; *Misc. Archæol.*, vol. i.).

1472. An act passed, in the parliament held at Naas, which confirmed letters patent granting to this abbey two water mills, with the entire manor of Mathreene (Moyare?) in the parish of Trim, and all the timber and underwood lying thereon, for building the said mills; also the custom and services of the villains of the manor of Trim, for the purpose of erecting and supporting a perpetual wax light before the image of the Virgin in the church of the said house, and for supporting four other wax lights before the said image *on the Mass of St. Mary*; also for confirming other letters patent, granting the sum of £10 to find a perpetual Mass in the said house for the repose of the soul of his brother and progenitors; and further, for confirming a grant made to the said house by Richard, Duke of York, of fifty-one acres and a-half, with half a stang and thirteen perches of land in Trim, a field called Porchfield, and many other particulars.

It was also enacted that, as the abbot Christopher was then



going on an embassy to King Edward the Fourth, respecting the affairs of the kingdom, no person whatsoever should, in his absence, take, pledge, coyn, or livery, upon the spiritual or temporal possessions of said house, and if any person should do so, or should attempt to rob or assault any pilgrim on his way to or from this abbey, the person or persons so offending should be attainted of felony, and totally excluded from the royal protection, and no charter of pardon whatsoever should be available, save by express order of parliament (King, p. 297).

1488. The abbot received the royal pardon for being concerned in the rebellion of Lambert Simnel (Ware's *Mon.*).

1500. Donnell O'Fallon, bishop of Derry, friar minor of the Observantines, who for thirty years preached through Ireland, was buried in Trim (*Four Masters*).

There was an image of the Blessed Virgin in the abbey of Trim, which was held in great veneration throughout the Irish Church. Pilgrimages were made to it from all parts of the country; the Irish and Anglo-Irish vied in reverencing it and enriching it with their votive offerings, and even parliaments made provision "for the purpose of erecting and supporting a perpetual wax light before the image of the Virgin in the church of said house, and for supporting four other wax lights before the said image on the mass of Saint Mary". Many miracles are recorded\* as having been performed through its instrumentality; and hence our annalists refer to it as an object of national veneration. On the 20th of June, 1538, Archbishop Browne wrote to Cromwell:†

"There goithe a commen brewte amonges the Yrish men, that I intende to plope downe our Lady of Tryme, with other places of pilgrimages, as the Holy Crosse and souch like; which indeade I never attempted, although my conscience wolde right well serve me to oppresse soache ydolles".

On the 20th of October, 1538, Thomas Alen wrote to Cromwell:

"They thre (Browne of Dublin, the treasurer, and the master of the rolls) wold not come in the chapell, where the idoll of Trym stode, to thintent they wold not occasion the people, notwith-

\* See *Four Masters* at A.D. 1397, 1412, and 1444; also at 1537.

† *State Papers*, vol. iii., p. 35.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 102, 103.

standing my lord deputie veray devoutely kneleng before hir, hard thre or fower masses”.

About this time (1538), says Ware, among other images whereunto pilgrimages were designed, the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary was burnt, then kept at Trim, in the abbey of the canons regular, *and the gifts of the pilgrims were taken away from thence*. Whatever scruple the reforming Archbishop of Dublin had about “plucking down the idol of Trim”, he had none whatever about carrying off the “gifts of the pilgrims”. His fanaticism, however, overshot the mark, as such sacrilege and robbery shocked the faithful and stirred up Catholic feeling in those whose hearts had been previously cold or lukewarm. Her image was indeed sacrificed to the fury and avarice of the Reformation, but devotion to her was the more inflamed, and horror of the iconoclasts the more intensified.

On the 15th of May, 1539, the commissioners of Henry the Eighth summoned the community to surrender, and, on that day, Geoffry Dardice, the last abbot of the monastery of the Blessed Virgin of Trim, yielding to force, was obliged to sign his own expulsion from house and home, and to appear to acquiesce in the suppression and confiscation of a venerable institution. The abbey was now gutted with a vengeance. Vases, jewels, ornaments of gold and silver, chalices, crucifixes, altar plate, and altar linen—all were industriously gathered together, and were carried off to enrich the coffers of a profligate king and to fee the cormorants of the Reformation. It is stated\* that the price of property in the abbey of the Blessed Virgin at Trim amounted to £1,861 15s. 2d., besides £20 previously accounted for. When we consider the great value of money at that period, and the fact that the commissioners were all “hungering for monastic spoil”, and were not the most scrupulous about matters of conscience, we can form an idea of the wealth and splendour of these monastic institutions.

On the 20th of July, 1539, a yearly pension of £15 was promised to Geoffry Dardice, the late abbot; 26s. 8d. to

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\* Mant's *Hist.*, p. 162.



William Harte; 26s. 8d. to John Ashe; 20s. to Walter Caddell; 26s. 8d. to Robert Laurence; 20s. to Patrick Smart; 20s. to Patrick Fynglass; 20s. to David Yong; and 26s. to Dominick Longe, canons of the abbey, payable out of the revenues and profits of Kyldalke, Wodtowne, Le Grange, Creroke, Ladierath, Rocheston, Fresan, and Ryngerston.\*

1542. 14th November, thirty-fourth King Henry the Eighth. This abbey, with all the appurtenances thereto belonging in the townlands of Trim, Ladyrath, Grange of Trim, Rathnally, Cre-rock, Freflane, Richardston, Ardcoaghe, Chanonton, Stonhall, Rowheton, Ruighesleston, Rathkenny, and Wodtown, and the several churches appertaining to St. Mary of Trim, with the lands of Kildalke, Cloynarde, *alias* Le Grange, *alias* the West Grange, and Ballenecloigh, with the land called Porchfield, near the abbey, containing eighty acres, in the said county, for the fine of one hundred marks, and the yearly rent of 3s. 4d., all Irish money, were granted to Sir Anthony St. Leger, knight; and 31st May, eighth Queen Elizabeth, two messuages, seventy-two acres of land, and eight of moor, in the town of Ballenegrangh and its vicinity, in the county of Westmeath, with twenty-one acres in Ballynecley and its vicinity, in the said county, parcel of the possessions of this abbey, were granted to Richard Slayne (Archdall, from Aud. Office).

1544. January 6th. A grant from the king to Sir William St. Leger, knight, and his heirs for ever, in consideration of his services, and for the sum of £50 sterling. Two water-mills on the Boyne, near Trim, of the yearly value of £3, with the water-courses, weirs, and all other profits thereof, late belonging to the monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Trym, also all the water, water-courses, and soil of the river Boyne, from the mill of the Newhaggard to St. Peter's bridge, near the Newetown of Trym, with all the fishings, weirs, woods, and appurtenances thereof (*Pat.* 35 Henry the Eighth).

1617. James the First granted to Sir Thomas Ashe of Trim, the rectories, churches, and chapels of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Trim and Kildalkey, and two parts of all the tithes and altarages of the town, rectory, or chapel of Clonard, parcel of the possessions of the late abbey or monastery of the Blessed Virgin

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\* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 64.

of Trim (*Pat.* 5, Treasurer's Office). On the 16th of July, 1567, Queen Elizabeth wrote to Sir Henry Sydney and the Lord Chancellor, to direct them to grant letters patent to Luke Dillon, Attorney-General, and his heirs male, of the late abbey of Saint Mary the Virgin, of Trim, and a lease of a moiety or halfendale of Castleknock, for forty-one years, and certain other lands, late the possession of John Burnell, attainted (*Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 511).

In 1610, King James granted to Edward Southworthe, Esq. (*inter alia*),

In Stowehall, ten acres arable, formerly in the occupation of Thomas Nugent, parcel of the estate of the late monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Trim; rent ten shillings (*Pat.* 7 James the First).

In 1611, King James granted (*inter alia*) to Thomas Jones,\* Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, and then Chancellor of Ireland, and Sir Roger Jones, his son and heir apparent,

The two water-mills on the river Boyne near Trim, with the water-courses, and all weirs, etc., thereto belonging; parcel of the estate of the late monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Trim. To hold St. Mary's Abbey by the twentieth part of a knight's fee (*Pat.* 8 James the First).

In 1612, King James granted (*inter alia*) to Sir John Davys, Attorney-General,

The town of Scribock, containing four cottages with their backsides, thirty-four acres arable, one acre meadow, four acres pasture, two ruinous eel-weirs, and two-thirds of the tithes, parcel of the rectory of Clonard; the estate of St. Mary's Abbey of Trim (*Pat.* 9 James the First).

1626, April 17th, Edward Cusacke, late of Lismullen, was seized with two abbeys in the town of Trim; one commonly called "the Blackfriars Preachers", and the other called "Our Lady's Abbey", eighty acres of land, and one castr' tect' lapid', lately inhabited by Sir Thomas Ashe, and various houses in the town of Trim. In the 40th Elizabeth, he sold these premises to Roger Jones, without the queen's license (Dean Butler's *Trim*, from the Inquisitions of Meath).

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\* The Earl of Essex and Lord de Ros are the representatives of Archbishop Jones.



The remains of the once celebrated abbey of St. Mary's, Trim, are thus described by Dean Butler :

"The only remaining part of this noble building is the east side of the tower called the Yellow Steeple, with a small portion of its exquisite stair-case and its fine geometrical window. This tower is 125 feet high, and is a characteristic feature in the home landscape of many an emigrant in Wisconsin and Australia. There is a rude engraving of it in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1784 (1786), from which—and from the letter referring to it—it would appear that at that time three sides of the tower were standing. A beautiful lithograph of it in its present state is given in Wilkinson's *Irish Architecture*.

"The seal of M. Abbot of this house, and also abbot of St. Mary's, Durmag (Durrow), was found some years ago near Mullingar, and is engraved in the *Penny Journal*. It is in the possession of Mr. R. Murray, of Mullingar. It has been assigned by Dr. Petrie to the close of the thirteenth century" (Dean Butler's *Trim*, fourth edition, pp. 195, 196).

#### THE DOMINICAN FRIARY OF TRIM.

A monastery for the illustrious order of preachers was founded near the Athboy-gate of Trim, under the patronage of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, by Geoffrey de Geneville, Lord of Meath, in the year 1263 (*Allemande*; Harris's *Tab.*; King, p. 87; *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 263). The annals of this friary are thus given in Archdall's *Monasticon*, and Dean Butler's *Trim*.

1285. A general chapter of the order was held here (King, p. 87).

1291. On the Sunday next after the feast of St. Mathew, the archbishops, bishops, deans, etc., of the kingdom, held a meeting in this convent, under the presidency of Nicholas MacMolissa, Archbishop of Armagh, when they entered into a remarkable association for promoting and strengthening the powers of the church.\*

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\* The Archbishop of Armagh was a determined upholder of the rights and liberties of the Church. The Crown of England and the Anglo-Irish aristocracy were incessantly invading the freedom of religion, and some such defensive association was necessary to counteract these influences. The following resolutions—embodying the substance of their deliberations—are given in Harris's *Ware's Bishops*:—

1300. A general chapter of the order was held here (King, 87).

1308. Geoffrey de Geneville, resigning the possession of the lordship of Meath to the Lord Roger de Mortimer and his wife, the rightful heir, daughter of Sir Peter, son of Geoffrey de Geneville, he entered himself a friar in this monastery on the morrow after the feast of St. Edward the Archbishop (Pembridge).

1314. The Lord Geoffrey de Geneville died on the 21st of October, and was interred here in his order of Friars Preachers (Pembridge).

1315. A general chapter of the order was held here (King, 87).

1324. Nicholas, the son and heir of Sir Simon de Geneville, was interred in this friary (Pembridge).

1347. The Lady Joan Fitzleons, widow of Sir Simon de Geneville, was interred here on the 12th of April (Pembridge).

1418. Mathew Hussey, baron of Galtrim, died on the 4th of August, and was interred here (Marlborough).

First, they swore that if they, or any of them, their churches, rights, jurisdictions, liberties, or customs, should by any lay power or jurisdiction *whatsoever* be impeded, resisted, or grieved, that they would, at the common expense, in proportion to their respective incomes, support, maintain, and defend each other in all courts, and before all judges, either ecclesiastical or secular.

Second, if any of their messengers, proctors, or the executors of their orders should suffer any loss or damage in the execution of their business, by any lay power or jurisdiction, that in such case they would amply, and without delay, make up to them all such losses and damages out of their own fortunes, according to a rateable proportion of their revenues.

Third, if any ordinary should pronounce sentence of excommunication against a delinquent, that all the other bishops should promulgate and with effect prosecute such sentence in their respective dioceses; so that if a person excommunicated in one place should fly to another, the place he continued in should be put under an interdict, as also wherever he had his habitation or the greater part of his fortune, provided notice thereof be given in writing by the bishop, publishing such sentence.

Fourth, if any of the archbishops should prove cool or negligent in the execution of the said agreement, then they bound themselves, by virtue of the oath they had taken, in 500 marks to the Pope, and as many to their brethren who should observe it; and each bishop, under the like circumstances, in £200 to the Pope, and as much to their brethren, who should keep up to the terms prescribed.

And, lastly, they agreed, that if any archbishop, bishop, etc., absent at the time of the agreement, should, upon request, refuse to comply with the terms stipulated, then they engaged and promised to complain of him to the Pope, and to prosecute such complaint with effect at their common charges, and not only so, but that they would not afford him any aid, counsel, or assistance in any other affairs relating to him or his church (page 70).



1540. May 24th, a grant to Sir Thomas Cusacke, of Cushinstown, knight, of the house, site, precinct, etc., of the late house of friars preachers of Trim, and the church of the said house, all messuages, castles, etc., in or near to the precinct of said house, three messuages, sixty-six acres of land, three acres of meadow, and one park in Trim aforesaid, and all other messuages, lands, etc., in Trim, or elsewhere in Meath county, which were ever reputed parcel of said manor (*Pat. Roll.* 33, 7 Henry the Eighth).

Sir Thomas Cusacke paid £168 13s. 4d. for these lands, those of the Augustinian Friars of Skryne, and the land in Londreston, late parcel of the monastery of the friars preachers near the bridge of the city of Dublin (*Calender of the Patent Rolls*, pp. 88, 89).

1598. 40th Elizabeth. Edward Cusacke, of Lismullen, sold these premises to Roger Jones.

After the dissolution and spoliation of their monastery, the friars lingered long in the neighbourhood of Trim, hoping for better days, instructing and consoling the faithful in the days of persecution. They never recovered their ancient home, and in a short period most of the walls were pulled down, and the stones converted to other uses. De Burgo tells us, in his *Hibernia Dominicana*,\* that a few years before 1756, the year in which he compiled his work, the ruins gave evidence of their original magnificence; but that when he visited this place, the stones had been sold and carried away for other purposes, so that scarcely a vestige remained. It seems, however, that, nothing daunted, the friar preachers settled in a more humble residence, and kept up the succession and prescriptive fame of their order in the darkest hour of the penal days down to the dawn of the nineteenth century. One of the alumni of this house was Dr. Oliver Darcy,† bishop of Ardagh in 1649.

1689, November 8. At a meeting of the Corporation of Trim, Father John Dillon, president of the Dominicans, was sworn a

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\* "Paucis abhinc annis muros videre erat, licet haud integros, tam domus, quam ædium sacrarum, qui antiquæ structuræ magnificentiam ad oculum demonstrabant. Nuperrime autem eo loci versans, paucissima duntaxat deprehendere potui rudera, saxa siquidem inde ablata fuerunt, et pro alienis fabricis divendita"—page 264.

† *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 491.

freeman of the corporation. He signed the corporation book, May 14th, 1690, as *Prior Trimmensis, Ord. Pres.* (Town Records, quoted in Dean Butler's *Trim*, p. 201).

Early in the eighteenth century a farm was set to the community by Mr. Ashe, a Protestant gentleman, at Donore, a few miles from Trim. A house was erected here, which answered the purposes of a convent, and over this presided a prior, who was tenant of the farm and pastor of the adjoining parishes. This humble friary conferred innumerable blessings on the neighbourhood, and supplied many parishes of the diocese of Meath with zealous and learned pastors in the last century. It was a retreat, too, for the secular clergy, many of whom entered the order, and spent here the evening of their lives. Thus, Dr. Burke tells us of the Rev. Father Francis Lynagh, who was born in Meath in the month of October, 1651, and who, after having officiated for upwards of thirty years as pastor in one of the adjoining parishes, at length embraced the order of St. Dominic, and presided for many years as prior over this friary of Donore. This venerable priest died, full of years and good works, on the 24th of November, 1750, having reached the patriarchal age of nearly one hundred years.\*

The following friars were in the convent of Donore in 1756 :

*Prior*, the Rev. Patrick Lynham, a near relative of Hussey, Baron of Galtrim, and presented by him to the parish of Galtrim, aged fifty-five, and in the thirtieth year of his religious profession (*the reverend prior died in 1759*).

*Prædicator Generalis*, the Rev. Michael Wynne, aged fifty-eight, and in the thirty-seventh of his religious profession (*he died in 1759*).

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\* De Burgo says of him : " Vir maturinæ compositionis, ac modestiæ, linguæ, et oculorum diligentissimus custos, actotis, moribus ad regulæ, sacrarumque constitutionum, pro rerum conditionibus, ideam effigiatus, adeoque pluries tum Magister Novitiorum, tum prælibati Cænobii Prior, et per omnes officiorum gradus sui perpetuo similis. Divinas Laudes in deliciis habens, quotidie, ultra Horas Canonicas, integrum officium, et Rosarium Marianum, integrumque officium defunctorum recitabat. Paupertatis amantissimus erat, suique abnegatione tranquillus. Tandem plenus dierum, et meritorum, in sancta pace requievit die 24 Novembris, 1750. Ætatis suæ centesimo" (*Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 580).



*Prædicator Generalis*, the Rev. Thomas Hussey, parish priest of Donore, aged fifty-seven, and in the thirty-seventh year of his religious profession.

The Rev. Thomas Curtis, a parish priest in the diocese (*place not named*), aged fifty-six, and in the thirty-fourth year of his religious profession (*He died in Dublin on the 20th of July, 1751.*

The Rev. Philip O'Reilly, aged forty-eight, and in the twenty-fourth year of his religious profession.

The Rev. William Cruice, aged thirty-eight, and in the eighteenth year of his religious profession.

*Lector*, the Rev. Vincent Coffey, aged thirty-five, and in the fifteenth year of his religious profession (*Hibernia Dominicana*, pp. 264, 265).

Standing along the wall in the interior of the old church of Killyon, there is an upright stone, still frequented by many a pious pilgrim, around which a thousand memories of holy deeds and pastoral zeal ascend and linger. This slab marks the grave of the Dominican fathers, where, after having fought the good fight and preserved the faith, they are resting from their labours:

Christians,

To God your dayly homage pay,

And for the following Fathers pray :

Rev. VINCENT Cusack, died June 5th, 1737 ; aged 72.

Rev. JAMES DILLON, D.D., died May 2nd, 1743 ; aged 84.

Rev. FRANCIS LYNAGH, P.P. and P.G.,

died November 24th, 1750 ; aged 99.

Rev. MICHAEL WYNNE, P.G., died May 5th, 1758.

Rev. JAMES FLINN, vicar-general of Meath, and parish priest of Rathmolyon, died March 17th, 1775 ; aged 54.

Rev. THOMAS HUSSEY, P.P. and P.G.,

died September 13th, 1786 ; aged 97.

Requiescant in pace.

This monument was erected at his own expense,

in pious remembrance of the above brethren,

by the Rev. MICHAEL FLEMING, P.P.,

vicar-forane of Meath, P.G. and prior of Donore,

April 17th, 1787.

NOTE.—The lives of these fathers will be given at greater length when we come to the parochial histories of these several localities.

In the registration list of 1704 the Rev. Francis Lynagh is entered as parish priest of *Larrachor, Drumlargan, Gallow, and Agherpallis*. He was ordained in Tuy, in Galicia, Spain, by the Bishop of Tuy, in the year 1686, and at the time of the registration lived at Umberstown.

#### THE GRAY FRIARY OF TRIM.

The Gray Friary, called in general the Observantine Friary of Trim, was dedicated to St. Bonaventure. It was originally founded early in the thirteenth century, by King John, though others say by the family of Plunkett. The Observantines reformed this house before the year 1325 (Ware's MSS.).

1330. A flood in the river Boyne, such as never was seen before, by which all the bridges on that river, both of wood and stone, were totally destroyed, except Babe's bridge.† The flood also carried away several mills, and much damage to the Friars Minor of Trim and Drogheda, and broke part of their monasteries (Pembrige).

1518. A grant was made to the warden of this friary and his successors, of the park of Trim, not exceeding the yearly value of 20s. sterling, dated 11th of August (*Audit. Gen. apud Archdall*).

Maurice was the last prior, who was found to be seized of the church and steeple, a dormitory, hall, three chambers, and sundry other offices in the precincts, and of no value; a mill and water-course with the appurtenances, annual value twenty shillings, besides reprises; an orchard, a church or chapel, called the Mawdelin's chapel, in ruins; a close called the Mawdelin's churchyard, annual value six pence, besides reprises; a weir on the Boyne, with its appurtenances, annual value three shillings and four pence, besides reprises; twenty acres of arable land, one of meadow, and eight of pasture, with the appurtenances in Trim, annual value five shillings, besides reprises; and a parcel of

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\* Wadding, *Allemande*, Harris's *Tab.*

† Now called Mabestown, near Blackcastle, Navan.



land called the King's Park, *alias* the Park of Trim, containing eighty acres of pasture, moor, and underwood, with the appurtenances, annual value, besides reprises, five shillings.

July 10th, 34th King Henry the Eighth. This friary, with several small parcels of land and a church in Trim, was granted for ever, in capite, to Lodwyche O'Tudyr, a parson of Roslaye, John Morye, parson of Walterstown, and John Wakely, at the annual rent of two shillings and ten pence Irish money.

Henry the Eighth, by letters patent, dated July 10th, 34th year of his reign, granted for ever to Sir Anthony St. Leger, the site, circuit, and precincts of the monastery of St. Francis, called the "Observant, or Gray Friars of Trim", containing six messuages with their gardens. These were afterwards conveyed to Sir Thomas Ashe of Trim, who made them over, with the exception of the house called "the shore house", and the town house in Trim, to Francis Baron Longford (Inq. Navan, August 28th, 1633).

After the dissolution and robbery of their monastery the Franciscans settled in a more humble abode, and, supported by the gifts and free offerings of the people, ministered here for a century and a half after the so-called reformation. In 1662 the Rev. Richard Plunkett, a poor brother of the Franciscan convent at Trim, wrote a Latin and Irish Dictionary, now in Marsh's Library. There is also a copy in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin (O'Reilly's *Irish Writers*).

After the inhuman edict of 1697, banishing all archbishops, bishops, vicars, deans, friars, etc., the Franciscan house of Trim was finally suppressed and the community banished. Early in the eighteenth century the scattered brethren of St. Francis returned, and founded the friary of Courtown, near the old church of Clonmaduff, where, for upwards of a century, they laboured in the service of God and of the people (see *Friary of Courtown*). Some of these friars officiated in the parish of Trim during the greater part of the last century, and many parishes in the dioceses of Meath are indebted to the Franciscans of Courtown for the preservation and perpetuation of the Catholic faith. There is an old chalice in the present Franciscan Friary of Multi-fernam (as I remarked before, see *Courtown*) which belonged

to the Franciscans of Trim, on which is inscribed "Fr. Alexander Plunkett me fieri fecit pro conventu Fratrum Minorum de Trym, 1633".

There is another chalice in Tullamore, which has inscribed "Ora pro anima Frs. Petri Gogherty, prioris Trimensis, qui me fieri fecit, 1713". I am not able to determine whether the latter chalice belonged to the Franciscans or Dominicans. Both communities were then situated a few miles from Trim—the one at Courtown, and the other at Donore—and the head of each *modo antiquo* signed himself "Prior Trimmensis".

All traces of the Gray Friary of Trim have long since been swept away. Dean Butler tells us :

"D. M'Loughlin, who was alive in 1820, remembered the assizes being held in the hall or church of this friary ; only one judge went circuit at that time. The town house was part of the same building, and stood on the site of the present record court ; the shambles were under the town house. In the market street opposite this building was a pyramid of seven or eight flat steps, called "the Market Cross", on which Mr. M'Loughlin believed there had originally stood a silver statue of St. John, six feet high ; but in his remembrance it was surmounted only by a pole and a weather-cock. From the circumstance that the assizes were held in this priory, it appears to be probable that it was the place in which the parliaments were held in Trim" (see also *Rot. Pat.* 15, Richard the Second, 42).

#### THE PRIORY OF NEWTOWN, NEAR TRIM.

The ruins of Newtown abbey are situated on the north bank of the Boyne, about half a mile below Trim. Of the position of this once magnificent building, Dr. Wilde remarks :\*

"Unlike the military and ecclesiastical ruins of many other localities in Ireland, choked by the dilapidated buildings of some wretched dirty town, like the rank weeds of a neglected garden obscuring its urns and statues, those of Newtown, Trim, stand alone and distinct on a swelling bank of the river, whose stream seems here to linger by them, as if in memory of their by-gone splendour, and stretch, without even a wall or fence to break

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\* *Boyne and Blackwater*, p. 98.



the foreground, over nearly an acre of the richest turf, and surrounded by the greenest verdure in the broad plains of Meath".

About the year 1206, Simon de Rochfort, bishop of Meath, founded the priory of Newtown for canons regular of the congregation of St. Victor, and erected the church into a cathedral, which he dedicated in honour of St. Peter and St. Paul.\*

A.D. 1206. William was prior, which office he appears to have filled in the year 1212 (Ware MSS.).

1216. The episcopal founder held a synod here (Wilkin's *Concilia*, p. 547).

1224. Simon Rochfort, bishop of Meath, was interred here (Ware, *Mon.*).

Richard, prior of Little Malvern, in the county of Worcester, granted to this priory, in perpetuity, all the lands of Dunsenekill, or Dunsink, and the rents arising from the several lands then held by Walter de Subley, Adam le Peter, and Richard Rodipac; also an annual rent of two shillings, arising from the lands of Keppock, and twelve pence out of Dubber; reserving to the priory of Little Malvern all the rents and tithes of the ecclesiastical benefices, and the tithes of Castleknock, with one pound of wax annually (King, pp. 116, 293).

1240. Simon was prior, who made a grant to Richard de la Corner, bishop of Meath, of the said lands of Dunsenekill, in perpetuity, reserving only to the prior two pounds of wax yearly, or, in lieu thereof, twelve pence (*ibidem*).

1244. Richard Nonnaud was prior (Ware MSS.).

1260. Hugh de Ardiz granted the sum of twenty shillings to this priory, and the abbey of St. Thomas in Dublin.

1302. William de Galtrim was prior, who this year sued John Dawe, prior of the hospital of St. John at Kells, for the advowson of the church at Stonehall (King, p. 192).

1307. This year Richard Sweetman, the prior, was accused of murdering Robert Mody, one of the friars, and of assisting his brother, William Sweetman, to kill another

canon. The prior gave Hugh de Lacie and John le Blounde, of Rathregan, as bail for his appearance at the next assizes (King, p. 293). There is no record of the result of the trial.

1314. Martin was prior (Ware MSS.).

1335. Walter White was prior (King, p. 292).

1365. The prior, Thomas Scurlock, was elected abbot of St. Thomas's, Dublin (Ware MSS.).

1386. December 24. The bulls of the translation of Alexander de Balscot from the see of Ossory to that of Meath were published in this church (Harris's *Ware*, p. 147.)

1386. John Franhome was prior (Ware MSS.).

Roger de Appleby went over to Ireland and there became abbot of St. Peter's, near Trim; hence by the Pope he was preferred bishop of Ossory. He died A.D. 1404 (Fuller's *Worthies*, Westmoreland).

1400. Henry, son of Gerald Dillon, of Drumrany, was prior (Lodge).

1402. Leonard Golding was prior (Ware MSS.).

1405. Leonard, the prior, having resigned, Thomas Scurlock was elected in his room (*ibidem*).

1419. King Henry the Fifth granted to the prior and convent, for the better support of this abbey, a license to acquire lands, etc., to the annual value of £40. Dated Trim, 24th September (Harris's *Collectanea*, vol. iv.).

1423. William Scurlock was prior (Ware MSS.).

1427. Thomas Scurlock was prior (*ibidem*).

1430. On the 8th of January the said prior, Thomas, was treasurer of Ireland, and before the end of the same month he was elected bishop of Meath, but going to Rome, he was there rejected (Ware MSS.).

Same year Thomas Strong was prior (*ibidem*).

1464. Nicholas Herbert was prior (*ibidem*).

1482. William Shirwood, bishop of Meath, was interred here before the high altar (Ware's *Bishop*, p. 150).

1488. The prior, Richard Hussey, having been concerned in the rebellion raised in behalf of Lambert Simnel, he received the royal pardon for the same, and took the oaths



of fidelity to King Henry the Seventh on the 25th of July in this year (Ware's *Annals*).

1516. Henry Garnet was prior (Ware MSS.).

1518. Thomas Dillon, third son of Sir Bartholomew Dillon, then chief baron of the exchequer, was prior (Lodge, vol. i. p. 151).

1528. Thomas Browne was prior (Ware MSS.).

1530. On the 10th of January, Owen Coffy was elected prior (Ware MSS.).

1533. The prior of St. Peter's beside Trim, was to send one man to the hosting. Ordinances of 1534 (*State Papers*).

1533-4. This year the parliament passed an act to appropriate the parsonage of Galtrim to this priory (see the act in Dean Butler's *Trim*).

1537. 28th King Henry the Eighth. This house was suppressed and granted to the king by act of parliament (*Irish Statutes*).

On the 29th King Henry the Eighth, this monastery with the lands of Kylltombe, Cloynboynagh, Shirlokeston, and Rathnalle, was granted, for the term of twenty-one years, to Robert Dillon, at the annual rent of £16 5s. 9d. Irish money. Also, 22nd of July, thirty-second of same king, the town of Dunkennie, with five messuages, six cottages, one hundred and sixty acres of arable, and twenty acres called Huntsland, parcel of the possessions of St. John the Baptist of Newtown; with one messuage in the town of Navan, containing sixty acres, parcel of the possessions of the abbey of St. Mary in Navan; together with Branganston, being part of the possessions of John Burnell, and Daltonston, part of the possessions of Christopher Eustace, both of whom were attainted of high treason, were granted for ever to the said Dillon, to hold *in capite*, at the rent of four marks, Irish money. And 22nd July, thirty-third of same king, all the several possessions of this abbey situate in Newtown, Kilthombe, Cloynboynagh, Skirlokeston, and Rathnalle, the tithes of hay and corn in Newtown, Kilthombe, Cloynboynagh, and Skirlokeston excepted, were granted to the said Dillon for ever, at the yearly rent of four marks, to commence at Michaelmas, 1558, at the expiration of the first lease for twenty-one years.

Fourth and fifth of Philip and Mary, a mill on the river Blackwater, and one hundred acres of land in Moyvally, in this county,

part of the possessions of this priory, were granted to Gerald, Earl of Kildare, together with the priory of Lismullen. In 1550, it was found that this priory had been seized of the tithes of the chapel of Baskyn, with the appurtenances, being three couples of corn, each valued at thirteen shillings and four pence. 1560, February 3, the tithes of the rectory of Kilfare and Gary, in the county of Westmeath, part of this priory, were granted to Henry Draycot in perpetuity, at the annual rent of four pounds, besides the procuration.\* This priory paid five marks annually to the bishop of Meath.

The prior of this monastery was third in dignity, and sat as a baron in the House of Lords.

In 1603 King James the First granted (*inter alia*) to Richard Netterville, of Corballis, Esquire,

The churches, tithes, or chapels of Kilclone, Galloe, and Ballroddame, with their tithes, altarages, etc., rent £14 8s. 10d., Irish, parcel of the rectory or parsonage of Galtrim, parcel of the estate of St. Peter's, of Trim.

In 1608, King's letter to grant to Francis Goston, one of the auditors of imprests, the rectories of Kilcloune, Gallo-  
wey, and Balrudden, parcel of the possessions of the late monastery of St. Peter's, Trim, in East and West Meath counties, at a rent of £14 1s. 10d., Irish, being £10 16s. 7½d. English (*Pat.* 5 James the First).

In 1610 King James granted (*inter alia*) to Thomas Fitzsimons, of the Grange of Baldoyle, Gentleman,

The town, village, and lands of Ballyhac, containing one hundred and forty acres, parcel of the estate of the late monastery or abbey of St. Peter's of Newton, near Trim (*Pat.* 7 James the First).

In 1611 King James granted (*inter alia*) to Sir John Elliott, Baron of the Exchequer,

The rectories, tithes, oblations, and obventions of Athesey and Rathtaine, parcel of the estate of the late priory or monastery of St. Peter's, of Newton by Trim, rent £18 13s., Irish, and five couples of corn, or fifty pecks, viz., five pecks of wheat and bere malt, and five pecks of oat malt out of each couple, to be delivered at Navan on the Annunciation, for which he was to be

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\* Archdall's *Monasticon*; Dean Butler's *Trim*, pp. 215, 216.



allowed five pounds. He surrendered these premises by deed, dated 29th November, 1610, which he claimed as executor of his father, Thomas Elliott, Gent., deceased, to whom they had been demised, 13th November, eighteenth Elizabeth, for a fine of £2 13s. 4d., Irish, to hold for twenty-one years from the date of the surrender (*Pat.* 8 James the First).

In 1612 King James granted (*inter alia*) to Richard Harding, Esquire,

The rectory of Churchtowne, with the mansion-house, garden, seven acres of arable land, half an acre underwood, and all the corn tithes collected yearly by seven couples, besides the tithes and altarages assigned to the curate for his stipend; parcel of the estate of the monastery of St. Peter of Newtown, near Trim (*Pat.* 9 James the First).

In 1613 King James leased to John Eustace,

The tithes of the rectory and town of Newton collected yearly by nine couples, the tithes of Rathmallic collected by one half couple, the altarages of the same; rent £7 13s. 4d., Irish; the tithes of the town of Galtrim, parcel of the rectory of Galtrim, and two parts of the tithes of the tithe turf there; rent six pounds, parcel of the estate of the monastery of St. Peter's, of the Newton by Trim. Queen Elizabeth had, 31st December, thirteenth of her reign, demised to the said John and his assigns for twenty-one years (*Pat.* 10 James the First).

In 1617, King James granted (*inter alia*) to Sir James Ware, assignee of Sir Charles Wilmott, Knight,

In Knockmarke, one acre and three stangs, parcel of the estate of the monastery of St. Peter of Newtown, near Trim (*Pat.* 14 James the First).

Grant from King James to Robert Kennedy and William Rowles, of Dublin, assignees of David, Viscount Roche and Fermoy, by deed dated 14th July, 1615, to receive a grant of lands to the amount of £17 sterling by the year (*inter alia*),

A close of pasture in Staffordston, called St. Peter's Park, besides one acre belonging to Patrick Barnwall of Staffordstowne, gentleman, parcel of the estate of St. Peter of Newtown, near Trim, rent three shillings and four pence (*Pat.* 16 James I.).

Of the existing ruins of Newtown Dr. Wilde writes :\*

"The principal ruins consist of the monastery, with its usual appendages, and the remains of the ancient cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul, which is one of the most elegant structures, and perhaps one of the very earliest specimens of the light pointed Gothic, in the kingdom. Portions of the southern wall, and of the eastern and western ends, still remain. Ivies, centuries old, of enormous size, yet still of the freshest green, cluster round and mantle over these ruins, particularly about the eastern window, which now lies open to the ground, and is some fifty feet in height, affording, in several points of view, those beauteous framings to the neighbouring landscapes to which we have already alluded. . . . Much of the adjoining ground is still used as a graveyard, and we regret to see, throughout, several fragments of the ancient sculpture used as headstones by the people. This destruction, which has proceeded for so many years in all similar localities in the country, has in no small degree conduced to the dilapidation of several of our finest monasteries. Scarcely a day passes but several of the carved stones, and portions of doors and windows are rudely torn from their situations to be placed as headstones ; *and some means, though late, should even now be taken to rescue these remains from further demolition.* Even the ancient tombstones, many of which contained valuable Irish inscriptions, have been removed, defaced, or broken".

Dean Butler, in his admirable volume on Trim, remarks :†

"The ruins of this priory give proof of the architectural taste and magnificence of the Anglo-Normans, and of the order which they had established in this country within less than fifty years of their arrival. The church once 'the cathedral of Meath', consisted of a simple nave, without aisles or transept, one hundred and thirty-six feet in length, by thirty in breadth. On the south side of the altar are two sedilia, with round-headed arches, which, both from their form and from the sandstone of which they are composed, appear to be of an older date than the rest of the building. At the west end are two passages, or triforia, in the thickness of the walls ; and here are also some beautiful remains of the springing of a groined roof. . . . The priory was supplied with water from St. Peter's well ; many yards of the lead pipe through which it was conveyed, were dug up about twenty

\* *Boyne and Blackwater*, pp. 99, 101.

† P. 217.



years ago. . . . When the area of the church was cleared out some years ago, there were found at the east end some indented tiles, now in the vestry-room of Trim [Protestant] church, and under the east window a considerable quantity of small fragments of painted and stained glass. Some broken pieces of an arched tomb, and some other carved stones were then built into the walls\* of the old church; and as they were not respected by the sacrilegious hands of the passers-by, the remains of another tomb, and of a carved doorway, for greater security, were inserted in the porch, and at the east end of Trim church".

#### ST. JOHN'S PRIORY AT NEWTOWN NEAR TRIM.

The priory or hospital of St. John was founded in the thirteenth century, under the patronage of St. John the Baptist, for cross-bearers or crouched friars. The bishops of Meath are supposed to have been the founders.†

1281. Walter, the son of Alured the younger, granted to this house an annual rent of forty shillings out of the manor of Magathtreth, in this county, in pure and perpetual alms (King, p. 62).

1395. Eighteenth Richard the Second. The king permits the prior and convent of the house or hospital of St. John of Newtown, near Trim, to acquire in perpetuity the advowson of parishes not exceeding ten pounds, according to their taxation, and six caracutes of arable land not held *in capite*. He also confirms them in all their possessions in Ireland (*Rot. Can.*).

1406. Seventh Henry the Fourth. John, prior of the monastery of St. John, near Trim, had custody of one messuage, thirty acres arable, two of meadow in Dunkenny, and one weir on the Boyne, as long as they were in the king's hands (*Rot. Can.*).

1427. John Pakkere was prior.

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\* The venerable and learned antiquary of Trim, the Reverend Richard Butler, Protestant Dean of Clonmacnoise, has inserted a small tablet with the following inscription:—

"Has antiquæ pietatis et artis reliquias  
Vicini Monasterii SS. Petro et Paulo Dedicati.  
Olim ornamenta  
Prostrates diu et pene detritas  
Parietibus hujus Ecclesiæ  
Infigendas curavit R. B. Vicar. de Trim.  
A.D. MDCCCXLII".

† Ware, *Mon.* Harris's *Tab.*

Edmund, fourth brother to Sir Bartholomew Dillon, who was made chief baron of the exchequer in 1513, was prior of Newtown and Lusk (Lodge, vol. i, p. 151).

The prior of this house paid annually half a mark proxies to the bishop of Meath.

The last prior of St. John's, Newtown, was Lawrence White, and on the 16th of July, thirty-first of King Henry the Eighth, he was obliged to surrender the priory, with its moveable and immoveable property, to the commissioners of the king. The hospital, the church, the tabernacle—all were plundered: the trusts for charity and religion were confiscated, the pious fraternity was ejected, and the priory or hospital of St. John's ceased to exist.

On the 18th of July, same year, a pension of ten pounds was promised to the late prior, and twenty-six shillings and eight pence to Patrick Dongan, payable out of the profits of Fynnower and Tollanaghoge (*Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 64).

"This priory", says Dean Butler, "stands on the south side of the river, a little below the abbey, and contiguous to St. Peter's bridge. The ruins are extensive, though by no means remarkable for regularity of style, nor have they much appearance of a religious foundation. A square castle adjoins St. Peter's bridge, from whence a regular range of building, along the water's edge, extends to another castle at the east end, near which is the triple east window of a chapel, which appears to have been one hundred and seventeen feet in length by twenty-four in breadth. This priory, and its possessions, were granted to Robert Dillon. It afterwards became the property of the Ashe family, and was inhabited by them for many years, at which time many alterations were probably made for domestic purposes" (p. 223).

At the suppression of this priory it owned the following:\*

"A church, two towers, an hall, storehouse, kitchen, brew-house, two granaries, a pigeon-house, and haggard; also four messuages, twenty acres of arable land, being part of their demesne on the south side of the Boyne; seventy acres of arable land, twelve of pasture, being part of the said demesne on the north side of the Boyne; and a close containing an acre of pas-

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\* Archdall's *Monasticon*, *Patent Rolls*, and *Inquisitions*.



ture, with three gardens in Newtown; annual value, besides reprises, 104s. 4d.; four messuages, six cottages, one hundred and twenty acres of arable land, and twenty acres of pasture, with a mill on the river Blackwater, in the town of Clonguffyn, of annual value, besides reprises, £4 16s.; a castle, six messuages, forty acres of arable land, and forty of pasture, moor, and underwood, in Longwood and Atomodarire, annual value, besides reprises, 52s. 4d.; seven acres of arable land and three of pasture, in Ballreyn, annual value, besides reprises, 4s. 8d.; two acres of arable land, with the three Warrenstowns, in the parish of Knockmarke, annual value, besides reprises, 2s.; two acres of arable land in the townland of Agher, in the aforesaid parish, annual value, besides reprises, 2s.; twenty acres of arable land in the townland of Trim, annual value, besides reprises, 20s. 8d.; five messuages, three cottages, one hundred and sixty acres of arable land, three of meadow, and six of pasture, with the appurtenances in Downekennye, annual value, besides reprises, of £19 5s. 6d.; one messuage, forty-eight acres of arable land, two of meadow, and two of pasture, in St. Johnstown, annual value, besides reprises, 6s. 8d.; sixteen acres of arable land in Moyhangaye, annual value, besides reprises, 16s. 6d.; six acres of arable land in Coraghetown, and an annual rent of 7s. 4d. payable out of the lands of Thomas Plunkett of Rathmore, Christopher Plunkett, junr., Richard Proudfoote, Nicholas Ford, etc., annual value, besides reprises, 13s. 4d.; twenty acres of arable land in Richardstown, annual value, besides reprises, 20s.; also one messuage, with a garden in the town of Inche, annual value, besides reprises, 4s.; and thirty acres of arable land in Moher, near Kells, annual value 20s.; together with the rectories of Tillanoge and Fennor.

In 1608, King James the First granted (*inter alia*) to Henry Piers, of Dublin, the king's secretary, and John Cusack of Trublie,

“In Trim, twenty acres arable and eight acres of meadow, parcel of the estate of St. John the Baptist, of the Newtown of Trim” (*Pat.* 5 James the First).

In 1611, King James granted (*inter alia*) to Gerald, Earl of Kildare,

A messuage, forty-eight acres arable, two acres meadow, and two acres pasture in St. Johnstown, rent £2 13s. 8d.; a messuage,

forty-eight acres arable, and six acres pasture and heath, in Mooretown, Parva, rent £2 13s. 8d; both being parcels of the estate of the hospital of St. John the Baptist of Newton, near Trim.

In 1612, King James granted (*inter alia*) to Sir Christopher Plunkett,

One castle, six houses, forty acres arable, sixty acres pasture, bog, and underwood, in Longwood, otherwise Mordervie, otherwise Moydervy, and the rent of 12s. 3d. for the customs of said lands; parcel of the estate of the hospital of St. John the Baptist of Newtown, near Trim; rent £2 12s. 4d.

In the same year, King James granted to Sir Christopher Plunkett of Dunshoghly,

The site, etc., of the late hospital of St. John of Newtown, near Trim, with all buildings, etc., thereon; four messuages, three gardens, one park of one acre of pasture and the Feyrres, twenty acres arable on the south side of the Boyne, seventy acres arable on the north side of the Boyne, twelve acres of pasture in Newton and the Rath, being the demesne of the said hospital; in Clonguffan, four houses and six cottages; in Ballireyne, seven acres; in Warrenstown, in Knockmarke parish, two acres; in Agher, in said parish, two acres; in Moyaghy, sixteen acres; in Corraghton, six acres; in Moygher, near Kells, twenty acres; the rectories, churches, and chapels of Tullagenoge and Fennor, with their tithes, etc.; parcel of the estate of the said hospital, rent £25 0s. 4d., Irish, and to find two able archers, or in default thereof to pay £2 per annum.

#### RECTORS\* OF TRIM BEFORE THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

- In 1324, William de Clebury (*Rym. Fæd.*).
- 1381, Walter de Brugge (*Rot. Can.* 5, R. 2).
- 1403, Richard Petyr (*Pat.* 4, Henry the Fourth).
- 1412, John Prene (*Rym. Fæd.*).
- 1412, John Tanner (*Pat.* 13, Henry the Fourth).
- 1432, Patrick Prene.
- 1435, Robert Dyke.
- 1454, Philip Norreys, S.T.P. (regis. John Mey).

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\* This list of rectors has been collected by Dean Butler, and published in his *Trim*.



1483, Richard Walsh (reg. Octavion, fol. 88, ab. 130 b).  
Edward Wellysley (reg. Oct. fol. 254 a).

1501, Thomas D'Arcy.

1527, James Sheffelde (19 Henry the Seventh).

1541, Francis Agard.

1546, William Nugent (*Calendar*, p. 123).

After the suppression and confiscation of the monasteries, the parish of Trim was attended by the Franciscans and Dominicans.

#### THE PURITANS.

In the year 1641-2, when every effort was made by the Puritan faction to drive the Catholic gentry and people of Ireland to rebellion, in order that their estates might be confiscated and their religion uprooted, Trim was made the head-quarters of Sir Charles Coote, and from thence the savage soldiery sallied forth to carry out the programme of their employers—to massacre man, woman, and child. In a pamphlet\* entitled *A Collection of some of the Massacres and Murders committed on the Irish in Ireland, since the 23rd October, 1641*, we have the following account of some of the murders and cruelties perpetrated in Meath:

#### COUNTY OF MEATH—1642.

Mr. Barnewall, of Tobertinian, and Mr. John Hussey, innocent persons, were hanged at Trim by old Sir Charles Coote's party. General Lynch, of Donower, aged eighty years, was killed by troopers of Trim, being in protection. Mr. Thomas Talbot, of Crawly's Town, about eighty years old, being protected, and a known servitor to the crown, was killed at his own door by some of Captain Morroe's troop. About the month of April the soldiers under the said Grenville's command, killed in and about Navan eighty men, women, and children, who lived under pro-

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\* Speaking of this pamphlet, Dr. Curry writes: "This collection was first published in London in the year 1662. The author's frequent, candid, and public appeals to things openly transacted, and to enemies themselves, then living and well known, is a strong proof that what he relates is real matter of fact; and there is yet a stronger inducement to think it so, because it has never yet been proved to be otherwise, nor, as far as I have learned, even attempted to be proved" (*Review*, p. 623).

tection. Captain Wentworth and his company, garrisoned at Duno, killed no less than 200 protected persons in the parish of Dunamore, Slane, and barony of Margellion and Ovemorein, the town of Ardmulchan, Kingstown, and Harristown, *all protected persons*.

In April (1642), Mrs. Ellinor Taaffe, of Tullaghanoge, sixty years old, and six women more, were murdered by the soldiers of the garrison of Trim; and *a blind woman, aged eighty years, was encompassed with straw by them, to which they set fire and burned her*. The same day they hanged two women in Kilbride, and two old decrepit men that begged alms of them. In the same year, Mr. Walter Dulin, an old man, unable to stir abroad many years before the war, was killed in his own house by Lieutenant-Colonel Broughton's troopers, notwithstanding the said Broughton's protection, which the old man produced. Mr. Walter Evers, a justice of the peace and quorum, an aged man, and bedrid of the palsy long before the rebellion, was carried in a cart to Trim, and there hanged by the governor's orders. Many ploughmen were killed at Philberstowne. Forty men, women, and children in protection, reaping their harvest in Bonestown (near Dunshaughlin), were killed by a troop of the said garrison, who, on the same day, killed Mrs. Alison Read at Dunshaughlin, being eighty years old; and forty persons more, most of them women and children, shunning the fury of the same troop, were overtaken and slaughtered. About seventy men, women, and children, tenants to Mr. Francis M'Ovoy, *and under protection*, were killed by Grenville's soldiers, and 160 more in the parish of Rathcoare, whereof there was one aged couple blind about fifteen years before. Captain Sandford and his troop murdered, in and about Mulhussey, upwards of 100 men, women, and children, *under protection*, and caused one Connor Breslen to be struck with a knife in the throat, and so bled to death. *And one Eleanor Cusack, one hundred years old, was tied about with lighted matches, and so tortured to death in Clonmoghon*. James Dowlan, about one hundred years old, Donagh Comyn, Darby Denis, Roger Bolon, and several other labourers and women, to the number of *one hundred and sixty*, making their harvest, were slaughtered by the garrison of Trim.

Sir Richard Grenville's troop killed forty-two men, women, and children, and eighteen infants, at Doramstown (parish of Ardbraccan). A woman under protection was, by Captain Morroe's soldiers, put into the stock of a tuck-mill, and so



tucked to death in the town of Steedalte. Lieutenant Ponsonby put *two aged protected persons* to death at Downastone, each of them about eighty years old. Captain Morroe caused about one hundred protected persons, men, women, and children, to be put to death in the barony of Dooleek; and Lieutenant John Tench killed *a protected person seventy years old*, near Dooleek. Mr. Patrick White, son and heir of Mr. White, of Clangill, *in protection*, was taken out of his bed, and knocked on the head by Lieutenant Luaton of the garrison of Trim. *Many thousands* of the poor inhabitants of this county *were destroyed in the firs*, as those in the county of Dublin, and the rest for the most part *perished with famine*.

Borlase\* describes the death and funeral of the monster Sir Charles Coote, in the following words:

“In April, 1642, pursuing the rebels at Trim, he was unfortunately shot in the body, as it was thought, by one of his own troopers, whether by design or accident was never known. And this end had this gallant gentleman, who began to be so terrible to the enemy, as his very name was formidable to them. His body was brought to Dublin, and there interred with great solemnity, *floods of English tears accompanying him to his grave*. By his death the fate of the English interest in Ireland seemed eclipsed, if not buried”.

At this passage of Borlase's, O'Connell indignantly exclaims:† “Floods of English tears! *Floods of English tears!* This one fact at least is certain—that a more hideous, a more horrible villain never existed. The French revolution—fertile in sanguinary monsters—produced nothing like him, who spared neither man, woman, nor child; neither priest nor layman. Yet this most superlative of diabolic miscreants was embalmed with ‘English tears’! *English tears!* How heartily they went for the man who was perfect in one talent—that of shedding Irish blood! A dry eye at *his* funeral would indeed have been, according to the modern phrase, ‘un-English’.”

On the 18th of March, 1643, the agents of the Catholic

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\* *History of the Irish Rebellion*, p. 104.

† *Memoir of Ireland*, pp. 257, 258. For the bloody deeds of Sir Charles Coote, see Carte's *Ormond*, Clarendon, Warner, Borlase, and Irish histories *passim*.

confederation, viz., Lord Gormanston, Sir Robert Talbot, Sir Lucas Dillon, and John Walsh, Esq., presented at Trim to the commissioners of the king, viz., to the Earls of Clanrickarde and Roscommon, the Viscount Moore, and Sir Maurice Eustace, a remonstrance\* of grievances in the name of the Catholics of Ireland, which remonstrance (says Borlase) was solemnly received by his majesty's commissioners, and by them transmitted to his majesty. This remonstrance underwent severe examinations in the Irish House of Commons (from which all Catholic members had been expelled) from the 8th to the 12th of April, 1644, and, says Curry (*Review of the Civil Wars*, p. 237), was "then dismissed without the least disproof or contradiction of any of the numerous grievances it complains of, and without any resolution or motion, after a debate of so many days, that bears the slightest appearance either of a censure or denial of the facts it contains".

#### PASTORS OF TRIM SINCE 1690.

In June, 1690, the Rev. Mathew Dillon was presented by James the Second to the parishes of Scurlockstown and Newtown.

In 1704 the Rev. John Tyrrell† was registered at Trim as "Popish priest of Trim, Trimblestown, Drimdaly, Cloony upon Boyne, and Newtown". He was ordained in 1676, at Ardpatrik, county Louth, by Dr. Oliver Plunkett. In the year of the registration he lived at Newhaggard, and was then fifty-two years of age. How long Father Tyrrell lived after the registration, I am not able to say. There was an old chalice in use here some years ago, on the pedestal of which his name was inscribed.

*The Very Rev. William Brett* succeeded. The name of this pastor is frequently entered in the old Registry of Courtown as a vicar who granted dispensations. There is at present an old chalice still in use in the parish of Trim, on

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\* See this remonstrance in the Appendix to Curry's *Review*, p. 614, and in the Appendix to this volume.

† In 1690 there was a Rev. Dr. John Tyrrell presented to Kilmersan and Galtrim, and a Rev. John Tyrrell to Rathconnell.



which is inscribed, "Orate pro anima Gulielmi Brett, pastoris Parochiæ S. Patritii de Trim, qui hunc calicem fieri fecit mense Augustii, Anno Domini 1759". During the first half of the last century mass used to be celebrated in the old castle of Newhaggard. About 1750 Father Brett procured a site, and built a chapel in Trim; an humble temple, indeed, but one of which the oppressed and impoverished people were then proud to have the use. The year of Father Brett's death is unknown to me.

*The Rev. William Allan* succeeded. He died of apoplexy\* on the 31st of May, 1786, and was buried in Trimblestown.

*The Very Rev. Henry Doherty* succeeded. This pastor, said to have been a convert, was translated from the parish of Frankford, King's County, of which he had been parish priest, to that of Trim, on the 2nd of June, 1786.† At the visitation of Dr. Plunkett to the union of Trim on the 21st of May, 1788, he notes: "I found six schools in the parish, and one chapel repaired". Immediately after Rev. Mr. Doherty's translation to Trim, he was appointed master of conference for the deanery, and early in 1789 he was made vicar-general of Meath. He was a man of considerable abilities, and remarkable for piety, zeal, and charity. He died on the 30th of April, 1796.

*Very Rev. John Clarke* succeeded. This venerable priest was born in the neighbourhood of Carlanstown, near Kells, studied in France, and, after having officiated for some time as curate, was appointed by Dr. Plunkett to the union of Loghan and Dulane, now called Carnaross, early in the year 1786. On the 6th of May, 1796, he was translated to Trim, and was appointed vicar-forane and master of conference for the deanery. In 1810 he erected the present chapel of Trim, over the entrance of which a slab has been placed by his worthy successor, with the following inscription:

This church was built, Anno Domini 1810, by  
the Very Rev. JOHN CLARKE, vicar-forane and parish priest,  
whose remains, awaiting his Redeemer's

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\* Diaries of Dr. Plunkett.

† *Ibidem*.

second coming and infinite mercies,  
 within repose near the altar,  
 whence for upwards of forty years  
 he imparted to his flock  
 the bread and word of eternal life.

He died 2nd January, 1837,  
 aged 84 years.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Inscribed to his memory and worth by his successor,  
 Rev. John O'Connell, vicar-forane and parish priest, 1858.

Father Clarke was a great priest, and his name is deservedly embalmed in the traditionary love and reverence of the people. He was renowned throughout the diocese for learning and eloquence, and for the practice of every ecclesiastical virtue. His pithy and practical sermons are still vividly remembered, and it is said of him that he could condense and communicate more in one sentence than any preacher of his day. After a prolonged, a brilliant, and a preëminently useful life, during which he won the respect and esteem of all who knew him, Protestants as well as Catholics, he died on the 2nd of January, 1837, profoundly lamented, especially by his attached and afflicted parishioners, and was buried in the present chapel of Trim. A marble slab on the wall commemorates him thus:

DIVINA SPE MISERICORDIÆ  
 GLORIOSÆ NECNON RESURRECTIONIS  
 PROPE JACET SEPULTUS  
 ADMODUM REV. JOANNES CLARKE  
 VIC. FOR. ET PAROCHUS  
 ANNO DOMINI 1810  
 MUNERIBUS FIDELIUM ET DIVINITUS ADJUTUS  
 HANC EDIFICAVIT ECCLESIAM,  
 ET QUADRAGINTA CIRCITER ANNOS,  
 GREGI DELECTO SIBI CREDITO,  
 PANEM ASSIDUE IMPERTIVIT,  
 ET VERBUM VITÆ ÆTERNÆ,  
 MANSUETUS ET ERUDITUS,  
 PIETATIS ET SAPIENTIÆ PLENUS,  
 OMNIUM PRÆSERTIM PAUPERUM  
 VERE MERUIT OBSEQUIUM,  
 PENE NONEGENARIUS OBIIT, JAN<sup>II</sup> 2<sup>ND</sup>A 1837.  
 REQUIESCAT IN PACE. AMEN.



An English translation runs alongside of the Latin inscription thus :

In the hope of the Divine mercy,  
and of a glorious resurrection,  
underneath lies buried  
Very Rev. JOHN CLARKE, Vic. For. and P.P.  
In the Year of our Lord 1810,  
by the gifts of the faithful and the Divine aid,  
he built this church,  
and for about forty years,  
to the beloved entrusted to his care,  
he unceasingly imparted  
the Bread and Word of Eternal Life.  
Meek and learned,  
replete with piety and wisdom,  
he merited the veneration of all,  
of the poor especially.  
Approaching 90 years of age,  
he died on the 2nd. of January, 1837.  
May he rest in peace. Amen.

*The Very Rev. John O'Connell succeeded.* Present pastor was born in the parish of Nobber, graduated in the diocesan seminary, and subsequently in the College of Maynooth, where his distinguished abilities merited and won high literary honours. He was ordained about 1822, officiated for several years in the parish of Castlepollard, Westmeath, and was appointed parish priest of Kildalkey in February, 1830. On the death of Father Clarke, he was translated by Dr. Cantwell to Trim, and was raised to the dignity of vicar-forane and master of conference for the deanery. During the last few years he has been erecting, at considerable expense, a convent for the Sisters of Mercy, which, when completed, will be a noble and lasting monument of his pastoral zeal, destined, we hope, to diffuse countless blessings amongst his flock through generations to come. In style of architecture and in magnificence of proportion and embellishment, the convent of Trim will be an ornament to the Irish Church, and it will contribute in no small degree to revive again the monastic glories of the ancient and important city of Ath-Truim. May the veteran pastor live

long to witness the development and fruits of his great undertaking.

The priests on the list of the dead in Trim are, the Rev. Messrs. Brett, Clarke, Halligan, Dillon, and Sherlock. The Rev. Mr. Halligan, who was curate here for many years, died parish priest of Castletowndelvin; and Rev. Mr. Dillon died parish priest of Kilbeg. Of these fellow-labourers we will treat when we come to their parishes. *The Rev. Philip Sherlock* was born at Killeary, union of Lobinstown, studied in Slane and Navan, and completed his course in the Irish College of Paris. He was ordained in 1851, and officiated as curate in Kilbeg, Athboy, and Trim, and won universal respect by his piety, humility, and unremitting attention to his duties. His life was sacrificed to his zeal, and a more amiable or unassuming priest has not passed from amongst us. He sleeps in the chapel of Trim, and a marble monument recalls to mind his many excellent qualities in the following words:

Beneath repose the remains of  
 Rev. PHILIP SHERLOCK,  
 for six years curate of Trim.  
 With firm faith and the merits of redemption,  
 a strong hope of a blissful immortality,  
 and replete with ardent charity,  
 he departed this life August 12th, 1859,  
 aged thirty-six years.  
 His mild demeanour and great integrity  
 his unaffected piety and attention to sacred duty,  
 won universal respect and attention.  
 May he rest in peace. Amen.

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NOTE.—Without reckoning the various abbeys, or the parish church, there were in the parish of Trim, before the Protestant Reformation, chapels of ease at *Trimblestown, Drimdaly, Brannockstown, Clonee, Kilttoome*, and the chapel of *St. Mary Magdalen, near Trim*. Now there are only two chapels in the union, viz., Trim and Bord's mill.



**THE CHANTRIES OF THE DIOCESE  
OF MEATH,**

TOGETHER WITH

**THE ECCLESIASTICAL ANNALS, ANTIQUITIES,  
AND TRADITIONS OF THE PARISHES  
IN WHICH FOUNDED.**





# THE CHANTRIES OF THE DIOCESE OF MEATH.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

### ARDCATH.

ARDCATH is a parish in the barony of Upper Duleek, about six and three quarter miles (s. by w.) from Drogheda. There was a perpetual chantry of a priest or chaplain, who was constantly to celebrate Mass in the parish church of the Blessed Virgin at Ardcath. According to an inquisition, taken in the 14th of King James the First, it appears the chantry was a body corporate. It was endowed, contrary to the statute, with two messuages and twenty acres of land in Ardcath, and five acres in Correston and Pinespark; also, a house and one acre of arable land and commonage of pasture in Boynanstown; four acres of arable land in Bertramston; one acre in Cloghan, and one acre in Moleston.\* All this church property fell a prey to the spoiler.

### PARISH OF ARDCATH.

The parish of Ardcath has been, from time immemorial, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The manor of Ardcath belonged to the bishop of Meath. The rectory of Ardcath, containing the lands of Ardcath, Carrestown, Primespark, Balgetha, Bertramstown, Mucknanstown, The Rath, Clatterstown, Finmore, Milkhill, Nockinston, Newton, Corragh, Denhamstown, Mooreton, Claghean, and Bayneston, belonged to the abbey of St. Kienan of Duleek.

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\* *Pat. 5 James the First.*

In 1421, license was accorded to Rev. John Bolt, vicar of the church of the Blessed Virgin of Ardcath, to study for a year at Oxford College, and to receive the ecclesiastical fruits during this time (*Pat.* 9 Henry the Fifth).

In 1533, Rev. Edward Serle was vicar of the church of the Blessed Virgin of Ardcath (*Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 9).

In 1545, license was granted to Edward Staples, bishop of Meath, to alienate to Philip Pentony, of Tara, and Edward Felde, of Cushinstown, the "manor and lordship of Ardcath, the lands of Ardcath, Balgeith, Porterston, Prensparke, Clony, Irishton, Boynardeston, Coruston, Largwy, otherwise Largay, Prenston, Rowleston, Denaneston, Moreton, and ~~the watermill of Kylberbe~~, in the parish of Ardcath and the watermill of Kylberbe".

In 1609, the following grant of church property was made by James the First to Gerald Earl of Kildare (*inter alia*) :

"Meath County. Seven old cottages, and three tofts, with twelve small crofts, gardens, or closes, in Duleeke ; a parcel called the Moory-ridge, and thirty acres arable, meadow, and pasture, called the Mary-land and Rood-land in Duleeke ; parcel of the estate of the Mary chapel of Duleeke, rent £1 3s. ; two old cottages, a toft, and three closes in Larrock Street, and two stangs in Duleeke, parcel of the estate of St. Kennan's church there, rent 2s. 6d. ; two small cottages, a dove-house, and fifteen acres in Kinnawde, in the parish of Ardcath, parcel of the estate of the church of Skryne, rent 10s. 6d. ; in Betranston, or Bertranston, four acres arable, meadow, and pasture, an old house and one acre in Bwynyanston in the parish of Ardcath, two cottages and twenty acres arable, meadow, and pasture, in Ardcath, rent 14s. ; nine houses, five old messuages, and thirteen closes or crofts in Grenock, and twenty acres arable there, called the Mary-land, parcel of the estate of the chapel of St. Mary of Grenock, rent 6s. 8d., besides a chief rent of 13s. 4d., payable to Patt Scurlock and his heirs. To hold for ever, as of the castle of Dublin, by fealty only, in common soccage—12th of March, seventh of King James".

Bishop Usher, in his visitation of Ardcath in 1622, writes, "Valued at twenty livres sterling—G. & B.—A manse



house and other houses of office, which are all ruined, a garden and an orchard and eighteen acres of arable land".

#### THE OLD CHURCH.

The magnificent old church is situated on the lofty hill of Ardath, from which the tourist can behold the ancient territory of Cianachta, Magh-Breagh, and the numerous abbeys, churches, and castles, where, in days gone by, were congregated the learning, piety, and chivalry of Eastern Midhe. The church is quadrangular, separated into sanctuary and nave by a triumphal or choir arch of large dimensions. The nave measures sixty-four feet internally by nineteen feet ten inches. The sanctuary is forty-three feet eight inches in length. The choir arch, which is of immense height to the vertex, measures eleven feet seven inches at the base. The arch is three feet seven inches in depth. There are two doorways, one on the north and the other on the south of the nave. There is a doorway on the south side of the sanctuary which led from the sacristy. The walls of the church are undiminished, and the whole ruin, although roofless and no longer filled, unless by the numerous dead, is still in a wonderful state of preservation. The eastern or altar window, judging from what remains, must have been gorgeous, and on the western end a bell is still suspended which announces the deaths of the parishioners and summons the congregation to worship in the neighbouring Catholic church. The old bell of Ardath survived the plunder of the Reformation, tolled away during the penal days, lived to see the Emancipation, and only retired from active service a few years ago.

#### TOMBS.

The number interred here is very great, as the country adjoining has been very populous, and Ardath, from its Catholic traditions, has been regarded as a cherished resting-place. Of the pastors of Ardath, here sleep Rev. John Pentony, Rev. Edward Carolan, Rev. Nicholas Purfield, vicar-forane, and Rev. John Leonard. The Rev. Patrick Langan, parish priest of Ratoath; Rev. William Harford,

parish priest of St. Mary's, Drogheda; Rev. Christopher Halligan, parish priest of Skryne; Rev. Nicholas Sheil, professor of the Navan Seminary; and Rev. Richard Sheil, of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, are, with many other ecclesiastics long forgotten and now unknown, awaiting here the angel's summons.

#### PASTORS OF ARDCATH.

In June 1690, James the Second presented the Rev. "Dr. Patrick Curtis to the rectories of Clonalvy, Ardath, and Piercetown-Landy".

In 1704, the Rev. Patrick Curtis\* was registered at Trim as "Popish priest of Ardath and Clonalvy". This venerable priest was ordained at Creggin, county Galway, in 1683, by Dr. Thady Keogh, bishop of Clogher, and, at the time of the registration, lived at Haymontown. In his advanced years, the Rev. John Pentony administered the parishes of Ardath and Piercetown for him. He died in January, 1743, and was buried in the churchyard of Clonalvy. Alongside of the western wall of the old church there is a headstone with the following inscription:

Here lieth the body of  
The Rev. Father PATRICK CURTIS,  
parish priest of Cluanalvi, Ardath, and Pierstown,  
who departed this life  
the 11th day of January, 1743,  
aged 86 years.

The Rev. John Pentony, who assisted Father Curtis, went before him, and was buried in the churchyard of Ardath. A monument was placed over him, with the following inscription:

Here lies underneath the body of the  
Rev. Father JOHN PENTONY,  
parish priest of Ardath,  
who died y<sup>e</sup> 30th of April, 1733,  
aged 55 years.

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\* Father Curtis was a native of the parish of Stamullen; his friends were tenants to Lord Gormanston. The late Dr. Curtis, archbishop of Armagh, was a member of the same family. To the same house also belonged the Rev. Francis Curtis, who inducted Rev. Patrick Boylan into the union of Kilbride, Greenoge, and Donnymoor, on the 28th of May, 1729.



*The Rev. Edward Carolan* succeeded. He died in December, 1766, and was buried in the body of the old church of Ardcath. Over his remains is a tomb, with the following inscription :

Here lieth the body of  
the Rev. Father EDWARD CAROLAN,  
of the parish of Ardcath,  
who departed this life  
the 2nd day of December, 1766,  
aged 67 years.  
Requiescat in pace.

*The Very Rev. Nicholas Purfield* succeeded. Father Purfield was born in the neighbourhood, and was cousin to the Venerable John Purfield, parish priest of Duleek, and the Rev. Nicholas Purfield, one of the Franciscan friars of Courtown. The chapels in the union of Ardcath, in the last century, were the following: In Ardcath parish, a mud wall, thatched house on the townland of Cloghan, not far from the site of the present parochial school-house. This existed from the early days of Father Curtis, and was replaced by the late chapel, which was erected on an unclaimed piece of ground in the village of Ardcath, by the Rev. Nicholas Purfield, a few years before his death. Rev. John Leonard, his successor, enlarged and completed it, and it was one of the first slated edifices of the kind completed in the diocese of Meath. In Clonalvy parish, a mud wall house was erected by Father Curtis, soon after the battle of the Boyne, on the townland of Grange, the property of Lord Gormanston. The next erection was on the townland of Beashelstown, part of the estate of the Somerville family. This old chapel was abandoned in 1799, when the present chapel was erected on a vacant space between the townlands of Beashelstown and Flemingtown, by Rev. John Leonard. In 1820, the walls were raised and re-roofed, and a vestry was added by the present pastor in 1835. It is now an excellent chapel and in admirable repair.

In the visitation of Dr. Plunkett to Ardcath on the 14th of August, 1788, he found three schools in the union parish.

The Rev. Nicholas Purfield, vicar-forane of Meath (not

vicar-general, as his tombstone states) and master of conference for the deanery of Duleek, died of apoplexy on the 16th of October, 1795, and was buried in the churchyard of Ardcath. Over his remains a monument was erected, with the following inscription :

This stone was erected in memory of  
the late Rev. NICHOLAS PURFIELD,  
Vicar-general of the diocese of Meath,  
and parish priest of Ardcath,  
who departed this life the 16th day of October,  
in the year of our Lord 1795,  
and in the 65th year of his age.  
Requiescat in pace.

*The Rev. John Leonard* succeeded. This worthy pastor was born in the parish of Ardcath, of an ancient and respectable house, and received ordination from Dr. Plunkett in the old chapel of Navan, during the month of May, 1782. After his ordination, he proceeded to the college of Louvain, in Belgium, for the purpose of completing his education, and, returning in 1788, was appointed assistant\* to Father Purfield. On the 27th of October, 1795, Dr. Plunkett, being then on visitation at St. Mary's, Drogheda, appointed him parish priest of Ardcath, and a few days subsequently he was inducted by Very Rev. William Harford, parish priest of St. Mary's, Drogheda. The present chapel of Clonalvy was built, as we have said, by Father Leonard, and the late chapel of Ardcath enlarged. Father Leonard took an active part in the long struggles for emancipation, and coöperated in every movement for the interests of the church and country. He was a zealous priest, and remarkable for his hospitality and courtesy. Being an only child of wealthy parents, he inherited a princely property, and he bequeathed an estate of fifteen acres to the future parish priests of Ardcath, on condition of their paying ten pounds annually towards the education of the poor of the parish. He thus provided for the comfort of his successors, and at the same time made them tributary to the children

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\* He was also, previous to his appointment of parish priest, for a time curate in Stamullen.



of the poor. He died in April, 1831, greatly regretted by priests and people, and was buried in the churchyard of Ardcah. Over his remains a monument has been raised, with the following inscription:

On the 8th of April, 1831,  
and in the 74th year of his age,  
were deposited the remains of the said  
Rev. JOHN LEONARD,  
who had been for thirty-four years  
the pious, exemplary, and charitable pastor  
of this parish. . . .

*The Rev. John Langan succeeded.* Present worthy pastor, a near relative of Rev. John Leonard, was born in the parish of Ardcah, studied in Navan and Maynooth, and officiated as curate under his predecessor. Since his appointment he has erected a comfortable parochial residence on the estate bequeathed by Father Leonard to the parish priests of Ardcah. About 1840, he and his distinguished brother, the Rev. Thomas Langan,\* erected an excellent school house containing two rooms, twenty by thirty-five feet each, and a master's residence containing four apartments. The site was granted by Sir William Somerville rent free for ever.

Also, within the last few years, they have erected a very handsome church at Ardcah, about one furlong from the old chapel, on a site granted rent free for ever by Sir William Somerville. It is a Gothic building measuring one hundred and twelve feet by thirty. There are two vestries and a large committee room. The confessionals are not in the nave or chancel, but are approached by two cloisters leading from the nave. The carved stone altar, the encaustic tiling, and all the construction and decoration of the sanctuary, have been erected at the sole expense of priests who are natives of the parish. It is needless to add that, in all the struggles of the Irish people for civil and religious rights, during the last thirty years, the Father Langans of Ardcah have taken a prominent and patriotic part.

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\* I am indebted to the Rev. Thomas Langan, C.C., Ardcah, for valuable information connected with this and the adjoining parishes, also for papers illustrating the memory of many diocesan celebrities, to be quoted in the next volume.

## CHAPTER XLII.

## ARDMULCHAN.

THE parish of Ardmulchan is situated in the barony of Skryne, about two and half miles (N.E.) from Navan, skirting the river Boyne. It derives its name from Ard-Maelchon, "Maelchu's height or hill". In the year 968 the Danes under Amlaff Cuaran (*i.e.* Olave the Crooked or Stooped) gained a victory over the Southern Hy-Niall at Ardmulchan. A monastery is supposed to have stood here in ancient times, but no record can now be adduced to prove its existence.

## CHANTRY.

A chantry was founded in the church of the Blessed Virgin of Ardmulchan, the exact origin of which is involved in obscurity. By an inquisition taken tenth King James, it was found that there had been a perpetual chantry of one priest in Ardmulchan, and that it was a body corporate. It was endowed with seven messuages, seventeen tofts, and commonage of pasture in Ardmulchan, contrary to the statute, and this formed a pretext for its suppression and plunder.

## PARISH OF ARDMULCHAN.

The parish of Ardmulchan\* has been from the earliest period dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and her holy well is still pointed out in the neighbourhood of the old church. In 1235, a controversy took place between the friars of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, Dublin, and Richard de la Corner, bishop of Meath, regarding the right of presentation to the churches of Ardmulchan and Dullardstown (now Dollardstown), which was finally decided by Simon, archdeacon of Meath, and the other constituted judges, in

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\* In Montgomery's visitation, the rectory of Ardmulchan is valued at twenty marks. Bishop Usher writes of the church property of Ardmulchan in 1622: "Valued at 60*l* sterling. Buildings and glebe land, a castle, and other houses of office, now in good repair; a garden, an haggard, and one acre of land. More four acres of arable land, with certain pastures thereunto belonging".



favour of the bishop and see of Meath. In 1322, Eleonora, prioress of Lismullen, sued Dr. John O'Carroll, bishop of Meath, for the advowson of the churches of Ardmulchan and Paynstown-Dullard, claiming that the first prioress Alicia was possessed of the same. In 1381, license was accorded to Rev. David de Peulyn, pastor of Ardmulchan, on the 13th of May, to go to Rome, and the ecclesiastical fruits to be forthcoming to him, or his right, up to the following festival of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin (*Pat.* 5 Richard the Second). In 1543, the Rev. Roger Dorthan, rector of the church of the Blessed Virgin of Ardmulchan, got leave of absence (*Calendar of the Patent Roll*, page 95). In 1545, leave was granted to Edward Staples, bishop of Meath, to alienate to Rev. Roger Durran, rector of Ardmulchan, and others, the manors and lordships of Scurlockstown, Newtown, Killeane, and Clonard, in the country of Meath, to hold for ever (*Calendar*, page 105). In 1550, we find Charles Coyn rector of St. Mary's, Ardmulchan. Whether he was orthodox or not, I am unable to say (*Calendar*, page 199).

#### THE OLD CHURCH.

The old church of Ardmulchan\* is situated on an elevated bank, over the blue waters of the Boyne, from which an extensive view can be had of the scenery and meanderings of that river, from the distant round tower of Donaghmore and the castle of Dunmow to the ivy-clad belfry of the abbey of Slane. The church consists of a lofty square bell tower and the shell of the old chapel. Length of the latter seventy-eight feet internally by eighteen feet two inches. The altar window was magnificent, the splay is eight feet

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\* The traditions of the people state that, to save the bells of Ardmulchan from the church robbers of the Reformation, the parishioners threw them into Lug Gorrom, or the Blue Hole, a deep pool in the Boyne, opposite Taaffe's lock. . . . In the reign of George the Second, a schoolhouse was erected convenient to the old church of Ardmulchan, which was attended by a Protestant teacher named Story. A rival school in the neighbouring townland of Faganstown, was taught by a Catholic named O'Ruark, and frequented by the Catholic farmers' children. Story had O'Ruark arrested for teaching in violation of the statute against Catholic schools, and he was saved owing to the active interference of Merydith of Dullardstown.

six inches. If any relic of by-gone days speak to the heart of the pilgrim; if any deserted temple awaken holy thoughts and melancholy reminiscences, the crumbling walls of Ardmulchan, the romantic beauty of the scenery, and the solitude of the place, cannot fail to impress the tourist with the grandeur and piety of once happy Catholic Ireland.

#### TOMBS.

The cemetery of Ardmulchan is crowded with the numerous dead. It is the resting place of many of the Catholic gentry and of the peasantry for miles around. In the east end of the old church there are two horizontal tombs, under which repose many members of the noble family of Porter. The Rev. Francis Porter, a Franciscan friar, author of the *Compendium of the Ecclesiastical Annals of Ireland*, and of several works on theology, belonged to this house. He was born in the neighbourhood in 1640, studied in Rome, and became guardian of the convent of St. Isidore, lector of philosophy, and subsequently professor of theology. He died in Rome in 1702, and was buried in St. Isidore's. The Rev. Father M'Namee, pastor of this parish, is buried here under the family monument. The Rev. Thomas O'Reilly sleeps here with his friends. He was born at Hayestown of a respectable old family, and was parish priest of Enniskeen, now Kingscourt, from 1741 to 1779. He was a holy and zealous priest, and his name is still revered amongst his parishioners. There is another grave on the south side of the churchyard, frequented still by the pious pilgrim, and around which many holy memories linger. It is the tomb of the Rev. Patrick Dunan, parish priest of Dowth. This venerable ecclesiastic suffered much for the faith, and his name and zealous labours are yet, and will long be, gratefully remembered. In his advanced years he lost the use of his sight, and his nephew, the Rev. Christopher Cheevers, tended his flock and conducted him by the hand on a Sunday morning to the humble thatched chapel of Dowth. To such men as Father Dunan Ireland owes a debt which God alone can repay. In the dark days of our bondage he preserved undimmed the sacred lamp of faith,



and handed it down to us in its original purity and lustre. The primitive inscription on his humble tomb epitomises the history of our Church during the first half of the eighteenth century, and speaks more eloquently than the most studied panegyric :

Here lieth the body of Rev.  
 Father PATRICK DUNAN, who was  
 for several years in jail and  
 banished for Christ and the flock,  
 and afterwards pastor of Mount-  
 newtown and Dowth, and begs  
 the prayers of all the faithful.  
 May the 20th, 1761, aged 90 years.

PASTORS OF ARDMULCHAN.

After the so-called Reformation, we have no record, for one hundred years, of the names of the pastors who officiated here. About the middle of the seventeenth century a community of Franciscan friars settled at Ardmulchan, and attended this and the adjoining parishes. There is an old chalice still in use in the union of Painstown or Blacklyon, which union includes Ardmulchan, on which is inscribed the following :

“ 1677.



T. Porter.

R. T. Connelly sacerdos me donavit Confraternitati Fratrum Minorum Ardmulchano”.

In 1690, the Rev. Dr. Oliver Nugent was presented by James the Second to the parishes of Ardmulchan, Ballymagarvy, and Tymóole.

In 1704, the Rev. Oliver Nugent was registered as “ Popish priest of Ballymagarvy, Danistown,\* Kentstown,

\* There is a holy well at Danistown, dedicated to the Trinity ; another at Ardmulchan, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin ; and a third, convenient to the swell of ground on which stood the old church of Dullardstown, likewise dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

Brownstown, and Painstown". He was ordained at Dublin, in 1667, by Dr. Patrick Plunkett, bishop of Meath, lived at Danestown the year of the registration, and was then in his fifty-fifth year.

In 1704, the Rev. Edmund Gallagher was registered as "Popish priest of Tymoole". He was ordained at Kilkenny in 1692, by Dr. James Whelan, bishop of Ossory, lived at Snioigne the year of the registration, and was then thirty-six years of age.

In 1704, the Rev. Thomas Betagh was registered as "Popish priest of Ardmulchan". He was ordained at Cork in 1696, by Dr. Slyne, bishop of Cork, lived at Seneschalstown the year of the registration, and was fifty-four years of age.

Thus, we see, that in the midst of the penal laws, there were three parish priests where only one presides at present. According as these priests were departing, their parishes were grouped together, until they formed the present union of Blacklyon or the Yellow Furze.

#### PASTORS OF BLACKLYON.\*

After the death of the last of the fathers above mentioned, the *Rev. Dr. Berrill* received charge of the union. He lived near Brownstown, and left the parish about the middle of the last century. He is supposed to have been the Very Rev. Thomas Berrill, who was elected prior of the Augustinian Friary of Drogheda in 1766.

*The Rev. Father M'Namee succeeded.* He was a native of the union, belonged to an old respectable family, and assisted as curate here for some years. He died about 1766, and was interred with his parents in the churchyard of Ardmulchan. His name and all his deceased successors, are on the list of the dead in the union of Blacklyon.

*The Rev. Father Fleming succeeded.* He is supposed to

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\* The parish got this name in the last century, in consequence of a chapel having been founded on the townland. In the same way the union was called "of the Yellow Furze", from a chapel having been erected on that townland. In this way likewise Ardbraccan, Bective, Kilbrew, and many other parishes, exchanged names for those of the townlands on which chapels or parochial residences were erected in the last century.



have been a native of Navan, related to Rev. Christopher Fleming, and to have been interred in Ardmulchan. He died about 1775.

The chapels of the union since the battle of the Boyne, were the following:

In the Blacklyon division, which includes the ancient parishes of Danestown, Kentstown, Brownstown, Ballymagarvey, and Tymoole, mass was celebrated in the days of persecution under the shade of an immense thorn tree, in a lonely part of the country, on the townland of Veldenstown. The root and fragments of this aged sentinel are still there. A mud wall thatched house was erected in a lane on the townland of Balrath, the poverty and humility of which screened it from public notice. The next erection took place on the left of the old road leading to Danestown, which was called the chapel of Blacklyon. Mass was celebrated here for very many years, until the present chapel of Kentstown replaced it. A prosperous and populous village stood near the old chapel, every house of which has been levelled. Political economy and modern civilization have been tested here with a vengeance. The people are gone, and replaced with the beasts of the field. The country has been converted into a sheep-walk, and the noble peasantry have been ruthlessly wed away.

In the Yellow Furze division, which includes the parishes of Paynestown and Ardmulchan, there was a mud wall thatched house on the townland of Hayestown in the beginning of the last century. The next erection took place on the townland of Seneschalstown, the site of which was given by the family of Aylmer. The present is on the same site.

*The Rev. John Kelly* succeeded. In the visitation of

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\* An anecdote is told of this pastor, which is worth preserving. He kept a magnificent horse, which attracted the attention of some of the squireens of that day. One night that Sir James Quail Somerville was dining in Drogheda, he overheard a conversation between two of these gentry, the purport of which was, that they arranged to offer the priest five pounds in accordance with the statute, and demand the horse. Early next morning Sir James sent for Father Kelly, told him all, and arranged that the horse should henceforth be Sir James's property, and lent to the priest. The squireens met Father Kelly, offered the money, but they were disappointed. Sir James was grandfather to the present Sir William Somerville.

Dr. Plunkett, on the 26th of August, 1788, he found in the union "one chapel was rebuilt and one repaired, and two schools". Father Kelly died on the 2nd of May, 1791, at eleven o'clock at night, of a paralytic stroke, after a few days' illness, and was buried with his friends in the churchyard of Monknewtown.

*The Rev. Thomas Walsh succeeded.* This pastor was born in the parish of Duleek, of a respectable old family, studied in Salamanca, and after his return officiated as curate in his native parish. He was appointed by Dr. Plunkett to the union of Blacklyon on the 3rd of May, 1791, and died in November, 1815. He was buried in the churchyard of Danestown, and over his remains a tomb has been raised with the following inscription :

Here lieth the body of the REV. THOMAS  
WALSH, son to Robert Walsh and Jane  
Pentony, and parish priest of this place  
near twenty-five years, who departed this life  
the 7th of December, 1815, aged seventy-two years.

*The Rev. James Sheridan succeeded.* He was born in the parish of Drumcree, and officiated as curate in Navan, and for many years in Kells. He was appointed by Dr. Plunkett to the vacant parish on the 8th of December, 1815. He built the present chapel of Yellow Furze on the site of its predecessor, which had been granted by the Aylmers. During his pastorate, James Kinsella, Esq., Veldonstown, granted a site, and on it was erected the present beautiful church, through the exertions of Rev. Patrick Gibney, then curate of the parish, now parish priest of Castletown. This edifice has been completed by the Very Rev. Thomas Lynch, present pastor, and it is now one of the most beautiful country chapels in the diocese of Meath. In 1856, it was consecrated by the Most Rev. Dr. Cantwell, and on that occasion a sermon was preached by the Very Rev. Dr. O'Brien, then professor in all Hallows' College, now parish priest and vicar-general, Newcastle-West, county Limerick. The baptismal font of the old church of Tymooole was brought to Kentstown and placed in the chapel. This font is octagonal, and the bowl measures in diameter one foot nine



inches. Around it is the following inscription: "This font stone was bwylded by Roberte Holliwod, Ano Domini 1597, he beynge proctor".

The Rev. Father Sheridan was a man of considerable ability and of great physical powers. He fought the good fight here for many years, and gloried in his national sympathies. During the long and healthy days of agitation, he performed his part, and in all the struggles of the great Liberator he contributed his quota of coöperation. He died in April, 1853, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, and was interred in the chapel of the Yellow Furze. Just as we write, we are informed that a monument is about being erected to his memory.

*The Very Rev. Thomas Lynch succeeded.* This worthy pastor was born in the parish of Kilbeg, of an ancient and respectable family, graduated in Navan and Maynooth, professed in the Diocesan Seminary for nine years, and during ten years officiated as curate in the parish of Navan. For nearly two years after his appointment to Blacklyon, the writer of these pages had the pleasure of assisting him as curate, and he can never forget the many happy hours which were spent in such genial and intellectual society. Father Lynch is at present vicar-forane of Meath, and master of conference for the deanery of Duleek, and all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance will join the writer in wishing him a long career of usefulness and happiness.

NOTE.—Of the other old churches in the union of Blacklyon, *Dullardstown* has been uprooted and the stones carried off. The tombs have been torn from the graves, and no trace now remains of either cemetery or church.

*Painstown* has been levelled, and a Protestant church erected on its site.

*Brownstown* has been pulled down. The foundation of the church remains, and measures 66 feet by 18 feet 7 inches. The chancel arch stood 20 feet from the east end. A large ash-tree spreads its branches over the site of the altar. There is a tomb here erected by Laurence Taaffe in memory of his wife, Catherine Plunkett, daughter to Mathew Plunkett, Lord Baron of Louth. Adjoining this is a horizontal tomb over a priest, supposed to be

the Rev. Theobald Taaffe. The inscription has been chipped off, and all that remains is a chalice resting on a skull, on one side of which is *Memento mori*.

*Kentstown* is uprooted. A Protestant church occupies the site. A monument here to Thomas Cuit, Knight, and dated 14 —, “Cuit-rath”, called from the family.

*Danestown*.—The old church is beautifully situated. Length, 59 feet, by 18 feet 8 inches. The chancel-arch 20 feet from the east end. An extensive cemetery.

*Ballymagarvey*.—The old church is embosomed in wood, surrounded by a beautiful country. Length, 61 feet 6 inches; breadth of the nave, 18 feet 11 inches; breadth of the chancel, 14 feet 6 inches. The chancel-arch is 22 feet from the east end; depth of the arch, 2 feet; height to the vertex, 6 feet, by 2 feet 11 inches at the base. The church is ivyclad; and the chancel, nave, and cemetery are filled with nettles and weeds.

*Tymoole*.—A few old walls remain. A cemetery adjoins. The population is gone from the parish. The font of Tymoole is in the chapel of Kentstown.

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

### ATHBOY.

THERE was a chantry in the parish church of St. James, Athboy, founded and endowed by the portreeve and common of Athboy, for the purpose of maintaining a chaplain to celebrate Mass for the souls of the portreeve, common, and the faithful departed.

The Rev Thomas Hodane was chaplain.

Rev. William O'Hallan was chaplain (claus. 3, Henry the Fifth).

This property, like all other religious endowments, was confiscated at the time of the Reformation.

### KELLS.

There was a perpetual chantry of three priests in Kells,\* one in the Roode chapel, another in St. Mary's chapel, and a third in the chapel of St. Catherine the Virgin. This chantry was endowed with thirteen messuages or burgages,

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\* King *apud* Archdall.



and thirty acres of land in Kells, with five acres in Clogh-ranmore, two acres in Knockbane, half an acre in Caveig, three in Chindony and Coulanerg, and one acre near the Grange of Rosmead; yearly value, £2 6s. 8d. The chantry was, like all others, suppressed, and the property confiscated.

There was a chapel near Kells dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, of which the Rev. John Hanwood was chaplain in the reign of Henry the Fourth.

#### KILBERRY.

Kilberry is a parish in the barony of Morgallion, about four miles north from Navan. A town, often alluded to in our records, rose up here after the Anglo-Norman invasion, every trace of which has been swept away. It is at present the head of a union comprising the parishes of Kilberry, Donaghpatrick, Teltown, and Oristown. There was a chapel of ease dedicated to St. Anne at Randalstown.

#### CHANTRY.

The parish of Kilberry was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and in it was a perpetual chantry of two priests, who were constantly to celebrate Mass with the intention of the benefactors. The chantry was a body corporate, and it acquired property to the amount of twenty-one acres of land in Kilberry. This pious confraternity, like all others, was suppressed at the time of the Reformation, and the property confiscated.

#### PASTORS.

In 1449, the Rev. John Stackboll was Catholic rector of Kilberry (*Pat.* 28 Henry the Sixth).

In 1498, the Rev. William Botiller (Butler) was rector, and leave of absence was given to him for seven years (*Pat.* 14 Henry the Seventh).

1534. Presentation of the Rev. Robert Luttrell to the church of St. John of Kilberry, in the diocese of Meath, vacant by the death of Edward Delahid, and devolving to the king's presentation by reason of the wardship of the heir of Sir James Butler, knight, baron of Dunboyne, being in the king's hands (*Patent Rolls Calendar*, page 15).

1560. Presentation of Richard Birmingham to the rectory of St. John the Baptist of Kilberry, vacant by the removal of Robert Luttrell (*Calendar*, page 442). In the following year we find William Brady presented (*Calendar*, page 466).

#### THE PARISH.

In Bishop Usher's visitation the rectory or parish was valued at 40<sup>l</sup> sterling, and of the parochial property he says, it consisted of "a manse house or castle, and some houses of office reasonable repayred, an haggard and backside, a farm of iiii<sup>xx</sup> acres of land called Castleton, in the parish of Donapatricks". In 1611, King James granted (*inter alia*) to Roger Atkinson, "1½ carew of land in the Rath,\* parcel of the lands of the proctorship of Kilberry and St. Leonard's of Dunmowe" (*Pat.* 9 James the First).

#### THE CHURCHYARD.

The old church of Kilberry measures 42 feet 9 inches internally, by 18 feet 8 inches. It was formerly of greater length; but in the days of Montgomery and Usher, was diminished and reëdified for Protestant service. It is in ruins for the last seventy or eighty years. The baptismal font is in the cemetery, its bowl is circular, measuring one foot eight inches in diameter. There is a stone cross here, used at present as a headstone, with a modern inscription. On the wall enclosing the burying-ground there is a stone with the following inscription:

These Peers were  
Erected by  
Christopher  
Everard\* of  
Randalstown,  
Esqr., in y<sup>e</sup> year  
1715.

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\* This rath is called in the *Patent Rolls*, "otherwise Tankardsrath, otherwise Priestrath, otherwise Mooretowne".

† There is an old chalice, at present in the possession of Richard Barnwell, Esq., Bloomsbury, which has inscribed: "Jehovam exora pro anima Patricii Everard me fieri mandantis, A.D. 1637.—Ad usum S. Annæ de Randalstowne". The present pastor of Kilberry has a pixis, on



There is a tomb in which many priests are buried, with the following inscription:—

Here lieth the body of the Rev. Dr.  
THOMAS CLARK, who served the  
parishes of Killpatrick, Clongill,  
Knock, etc., faithfully for 24 years,  
and parted this life the 28th day  
of November, 1742, in the fifty-ninth  
year of his age.

Here lieth also the body of the  
Rev. WILLIAM CLARKE, pastor in  
this parish, etc. Deceased the 14th  
of March, 1758, aged sixty-seven years.

Requiescant in pace.

#### PASTORS.

In 1690 the Rev. Nicholas Plunkett was presented by James the Second to the parish of Kilberry.

In 1704 the Rev. Andrew Mathews was registered at Trim as "Popish priest of Kilberry, Donaghpatrick, and Teltown". He was ordained at Lisbon in 1691, was forty years of age the year of the registration, and lived at Randalstown. In this pastor's time there was a mud-wall thatched chapel at Kilberry, and another at Oristown; and, oftentimes, owing to the intolerance of the age, these humble temples were closed, and Mass was celebrated at the back of a ditch on the townland of Balsaw. This priest is said to have suffered much in the days of persecution, and although even the names of some of his successors are forgotten in the traditions of the people, his zealous labours and memory are still vividly remembered.

*The Rev. William Clarke succeeded.* This worthy priest was born in the parish, of a respectable old family, and

which is inscribed: "This pixis given to y<sup>e</sup> parish of Kilberry, to have y<sup>e</sup> soule of Mr. Thomas Joseph Everard pray'd for, who dy'd on y<sup>e</sup> 20th of June, 1757". The Everards were once a great Catholic family, and princely in their benefactions. The old chapel of St. Anne's, Randalstown, was erected by them. It is now in ruin, and even the frames of the windows and doorway have been taken away. It is quadrangular, and measures internally twenty-four feet three inches, by ten feet ten inches.



officiated here for many years. He died on the 14th of March, 1758, and was buried in the churchyard of Kilberry. For the inscription on his tomb see above.

*The Most Rev. Augustine Chevers, Bishop of Meath, succeeded.* During the pastoral reign of this venerable prelate, a community of Franciscan friars assisted him in the administration of the parish, and supplied the neighbouring districts with faithful and zealous priests. Dr. Chevers died at a very advanced age, on the 18th of August, 1778, and was buried in the churchyard of Donaghpatrick (see Donaghpatrick).

*The Rev. Patrick Moore succeeded.* This pastor had officiated as curate under Dr. Chevers, and, on his death, succeeded to the vacant parish. The Rev. Christopher Fleming, parish priest of Navan and vicar-general of Meath, had, a few years previous to the death of Dr. Chevers, entered into some contract with Father Moore, and applied to the Holy See for a ratification of his resignation of the parish of Navan in favour of Rev. Patrick Moore. This gave rise to a lengthened controversy in the diocese, which terminated satisfactorily by a renunciation of all claim on the part of Father Moore. In December, 1782, he was transferred by Dr. Plunkett to the parish of St. Mary's, Drogheda, where he died on the 17th of June, 1793.

*Rev. John Kearny succeeded.* This pastor was born in the union of Slane, studied in France, and was appointed, on the 20th of December, 1782, parish priest of Kilberry and administrator of Oristown. In the visitation of Dr. Plunkett to Kilberry, on the 22nd of July, 1788, he found three schools in operation. In July, 1791, Rev. Mr. Kearny was translated to Duleek, where he died in 1819.

*The Rev. Christopher Lennon, O.M., succeeded.* This holy and zealous priest had been chaplain to Dr. Chevers, and assisted in the parish since 1774. On the 1st of August, 1791, he was appointed by Dr. Plunkett to fill the vacancy, and on the 9th of April, 1797, he departed this life. In the diaries of Dr. Plunkett, his death is thus entered: "1797, April 9. This evening, at eight o'clock, died the Rev. Christopher Lennon, O.M. and parish priest of Kilberry, of a con-



sumption, under which he had lingered for a long time". He was buried in Donaghpatrick alongside of Dr. Chevers.

*The Rev. John Fay succeeded.* This venerated priest was born in Navan, and was ordained by Dr. Plunkett in the parish church of Navan, on Easter Tuesday, the 2nd of April, 1793. He was appointed successor to Father Lennon on the 20th of April, 1797, and died on the 30th of May, 1813. He was a holy, zealous, and charitable pastor, and his name is still held in reverence and benediction. In the diaries of Dr. Plunkett, his sudden and melancholy departure is thus entered: "1813, May 30th. This morning died Rev. John Fay, parish priest of the union of Kilberry. He was apparently well the day before, and was found dead in his bed this morning". He was buried in the churchyard of Teltown.

*The Rev. Eugene O'Reilly succeeded.* Owing to the opposition of a faction that closed the chapel doors\* against him, Father Eugene resigned his appointment in disgust, and returned to the Diocesan Seminary, of which he was president.

*The Rev. Matthew Kelsh succeeded.* This venerable priest was born in the union of Slane, studied in Maynooth, and received ordination in June, 1805. After officiating as curate in Ardraccan or Bohermien, and other places, he was appointed, in 1810, parish priest of Kilbeg, where he completed two chapels which had been commenced by his predecessor. On the resignation of Father Eugene, he was translated by Dr. Plunkett to the union of Kilberry, and, after the lapse of half a century, he is still here on the roll of active missionary service. He has built churches and schools, established religious confraternities, and, under his active and zealous supervision, few parishes have been administered with greater efficiency. He is now the patriarch of the diocese—a silver link connecting the present with a generation long since departed. He is a veteran patriot†

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\* Father Eugene on that occasion celebrated Mass in the graveyard on a tombstone. The people afterwards regretted their conduct on this occasion.

† At the meeting of Slane, held early in July, 1852, to secure the return to parliament of the late lamented Frederick Lucas, the inspector

who took an active part, during the last half century, in all the struggles of the Irish people for civil rights and religious freedom.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### KILLEEN.

KILLEEN is a parish in the barony of Skryne, about two and a half miles (N. by W.) from Dunshaughlin. A castle was built here in 1180, by the enterprising de Lacy, which in the course of time passed with the property, by intermarriage, into the noble family of Cusack. In 1403, Sir Christopher Plunkett, grandson of Richard Plunkett of Rathregan, married Joan, daughter and heiress of Sir Lucas Cusack, lord of Killeen, Dunsany, and Gerardstown, and in her right became Lord of Killeen.\* There were seven sons and three daughters by this marriage. The eldest, John, second Lord Killeen, was ancestor to the family of Killeen or Fingal; the second, Sir Christopher,† founded the family of Dunsany; Sir Thomas, third son, founded the house of Rathmore; Robert founded the house of Dunsaghly; Richard died without issue; Edward founded Balrath; and Edmund became a priest.

### CHantry.

Sir Christopher Plunkett and his wife Joan Cusack, erected, early in the fifteenth century, the present old church of Killeen, on the site, most probably, of its predecessor, and

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of the police (the late Mr. D——) endeavoured to bring about a collision with the people, and marched for this purpose a body of armed men with fixed bayonets towards the assemblage. There was naturally great indignation. Many of the priests, amongst whom was Father Kelsh, ran from the platform, and interposed between the police and the excited crowd. "If you fire on the people", said the glorious old priest, "you must first shoot me". The good sense of the multitude and the exertions of the priests prevented "a massacre" on that day. See the able letter of Rev. P. J. Ferral in the *Tablet* newspaper of July 10th, 1852. See also a few notices on "Frederick Lucas", written by the writer of these pages, and published in the *Tablet* of November 24, 1855.

\* Archdall's *Lodge*, vol. vi., p. 171, etc.

† This Sir Christopher, in his will, dated 1461, ordered his executors to pay to the college of Killeen the sum of xix marks x<sup>s</sup>, which he owed.



in the west end of the chancel they founded a chantry,\* consisting of four priests, to have the holy sacrifice of the Mass offered up for their souls and the spiritual welfare of their family. This chantry was liberally endowed, and for several years survived the confiscations of the Reformation.

#### GUILD OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Sir Christopher Plunkett and his wife, Joan Cusack, founded and endowed a confraternity of brothers and sisters under the name of the guild of the Blessed Virgin.† Application was made for legal license, and King Henry the Sixth, by letters patent, dated the 20th of July, ninth year of his reign, granted for himself and successors, to Richard Talbot, archbishop of Dublin, that the masters, wardens, brothers, and sisters of this confraternity should be regarded as a religious corporation, with power to acquire property. Henry the Seventh gave similar license, and in a short time nearly one thousand acres of land were acquired, a chantry was founded, special indulgences were obtained, a college, occupying a quarter of an acre of land, was erected on the west of Killeen cemetery, and this pious confraternity became a great Catholic organization for spreading knowledge, discountenancing vice, developing virtue, and diffusing the blessings of piety and charity amongst the people.

In 1442, Richard Corbally and Richard Notter, chaplain, were masters or wardens of the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin of Killeen. They acquired an annual pension of ten marks from the church of Kilskyre,§ payable by the rector, Rev. Richard Stanyhurst, and his successors.

At the close of the fifteenth century we find Robert Plunkett and William Rivers, chaplain, masters of the fraternity.

\* Archdall's *Lodge*, vol. vi., p. 174.

† *Inquisitions of Meath*, time of Elizabeth, No. 6.

‡ Inquisition held at Ratoath, April 25th, 1609.

§ The ten marks were granted with the consent of the bishop and clergy of Meath. In reference to this endowment, Bishop Usher notes in his diary of 1622, that the rector of Kilskyre paid 5*l*. sterling to the Lord of Killeen, "for a pencion belonging to the Colledge of Killeen, graunted to it in tymes past for the mayntenance of four chaplains'.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, John Plunkett, late of Dunsoghly, Oliver Plunkett, and Rev. Thomas Clinch, rector of Donsany, were masters and wardens.

At the close of the sixteenth century, time of Queen Elizabeth, James Plunkett, Baron of Killeen, Patrick Plunkett, Lord of Dunsany, Richard Plunkett of Rathmore, and Oliver Plunkett, of Balrath, were masters and wardens of the guild.

On the 7th of August, 1609, King James granted (*inter alia*) to Christopher Plunkett, Baron of Killeen, all the lands, messuages, and parks of the confraternity, numbering eight hundred and forty-eight acres, in the counties of Meath and Dublin, together with the following :\*

A stone house in the west end of the churchyard of Killeen, called the College of Killeene, surrounded with a stone wall, and containing about one quarter acre . . . a parcel of land in or near Bolbane, otherwise Bolkbane, called the College Land, containing thirty acres arable, with meadow, common, and pasture . . . one stang of meadow, called Lady's Stang, near the rivulet of Blackbogge, in Moreton . . . six acres in the fields between Molinan and Congerhill, belonging to the said college . . . a chief rent of three shillings and four pence out of Thurceston . . . a pension of ten marks out of the church of St. Skyrria of Kilskyre . . . all being the estate of the fraternity or guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Killeen, founded in the College of Killeen, to hold for ever, as of the Castle of Dublin, in common soccage.

#### PARISH OF KILLEEN.

The church of Killeen was dedicated in honour of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and the patron day of the parish is the same to the present day.

The rectory, advowson, a house, and two acres belonged to the abbey of the Blessed Virgin, Dublin.

In 1402, Rev. William Birmingham was vicar of Killeen, and the clergy elected him to collect the ecclesiastical subsidy for the king in the deanery of Skryne (*Pat.* 4 Henry the Fourth).

William Silk was vicar of Killeen, and was consecrated bishop of Meath in 1434.

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\* *Patent Rolls*, 7 James the First.



In 1536, the Rev. Sir Henry Plunkett was vicar of Killeen (Archdall's *Lodge*, vol. vi., p. 176).

In 1566, Queen Elizabeth granted to William Peppard, Two parts of the tithes of corn and hay of the rectories of Killene and Duffecton, in the county of Meath, parcel of the possessions of the priory of the Blessed Virgin, near Dublin (*Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 496).

#### THE OLD CHURCH.

If there be any deserted sanctuary in the diocese of Meath—if there be any holy relic of a by-gone age, which in its ruin and desolation impresses the beholder with ancient religious splendour, and awakens hallowed memories, that temple is unquestionably the ivy-clad church of Killeen.\* Situated near the magnificent stronghold founded by de Lacy, owing its origin and its gorgeous decorations to the Catholic munificence of the house of Plunkett, it carries us back through centuries of gloom to the ages of faith, and speaks to the heart of how the good old lords of Killeen, in days gone by, loved the glory and beauty of God's house. The church is quadrangular, separated into sanctuary and nave by a choir-arch of immense dimensions. The chancel is forty-five feet and a half internally, by nineteen feet ten inches. The choir-arch is four feet three and a half inches in depth, and is of great height and width. The nave measures fifty-five internally, by twenty-one feet nine inches. The old baptismal font, still here, has an aperture and pedestal. The bowl is circular, and measures one foot nine inches in diameter. The whole edifice wears a magnificent and venerable aspect, and although roofless and deserted, is still, owing to the laudable care of the Killeen family, in a wonderful degree of preservation.

#### TOMBS.

There is a monument to the memory of the great progenitor of the Meath Plunketts, Sir Christopher, and Joan Cusack, his wife, with the following inscription:

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\* The three most beautiful old churches which I have met with in the diocese of Meath are Killeen, Rathmore, and Dunsany, each founded by a Plunkett.

Hic jacent Corpora Cristoferi Plunkett,  
 Milit. qnd Deput Locumt. Hibernæ et  
 Jonæ Cusack uxor. suæ, q fieri fecrnt.  
 istan Eccliam. Orate pr aia Richi  
 Plunkett milit, q multa bona dedit  
 isti Ecclie. Orate pro aiab Dnæ Elizabeth  
 Plunkett, Johis. Plunkett, sen., Johis.  
 Plunkett, jun., Ric. Plunkett, sen.,  
 Ric. Plunkett, jun.

There is a tomb over Sir Christopher Plunkett, founder of the house of Dunsany ; another commemorates Edward Plunkett of Balrath, dated 1584 ; another to Robert Cusack of Gerardstown which commemorates his first wife, Margaret Porter, his second wife, Margaret Plunkett, and his son and heir, James Cusack, dated 1620 ; and another to John Quatermas (who roofed the church) and his wife, dated 1507. In the chancel, under a richly sculptured tomb, sleeps Dr. William Silk, bishop of Meath, who had been previously parish priest of Killeen. He was consecrated in 1434, and died in 1450.

Under the same tomb reposes, after his long and glorious labours, the venerable Dr. Patrick Plunkett, bishop of Meath. He was the second son of Christopher, ninth Lord Killeen, joined the Cistercians, became abbot of St. Mary's, Dublin, and, on the recommendation of the Nuncio, was promoted in 1647 to the see of Ardagh. During the bloody days of Cromwell he fled to the Continent, and about 1665 was permitted to return to his flock. In the long and perilous controversy on the remonstrance of loyalty, he took an active and successful part against the recreant friar, Peter Walsh, for which he and the primate, Dr. O'Reilly, were cast into prison and kept in close confinement for several months. Dr. French, bishop of Ferns, tells us in his *Elenchus*,\* presented to Pope Clement the Ninth in November, 1667, that Dr. Plunkett then lay hid in the woods, on the mountains, and in the cabins of the poor. As a token of appreciation by the Holy See, he was transferred in 1669, by Pope Clement the Tenth, from Ardagh to Meath. He

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\* *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 491.



was a great prelate, and for many years discharged almost alone the episcopal duties of the Irish Church. He died on the 18th of November, 1679, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, and was buried alongside of Dr. Silk in the chancel of Killeen.

On the right hand of the chancel sleeps Sir Nicholas Plunkett, the third son of Christopher, Lord Killeen, brother to the bishop of Meath, and scarcely less remarkable during the stormy days of the seventeenth century. He became an eminent barrister, represented Meath in 1634, and was returned also in the following year. When the Catholic Confederation was formed, he became a member of the supreme council, and was sent with Dr. French, bishop of Ferns, as ambassador to Rome, where he received knighthood from the Holy Father. During the usurpation of Cromwell, he lived in exile in France and Flanders, and returned to Ireland soon after the Restoration. In 1669, he was deputed by the Catholic nobility of Ireland to obtain from the ungrateful Charles the Second the restoration of their estates, and in 1670, when the national synod of the Irish Church signed a declaration of allegiance to his majesty, Sir Nicholas was deputed to be the bearer.\* On the south wall of the chancel, near the east end, there is a slab having the following inscription :

SIR NICHOLAS PLUNKETT, knight, third son to  
Christopher, Lord Baron of Killeen,  
and JANE DILLON, his lady, daughter to  
James Dillon, Lord Baron of Kill-  
kenny-West, afterwards Earl of  
Roscommon, died y<sup>e</sup> 27th day of  
December, 1680.

This monument was erected  
for him by Sir Valentine Brown,  
of Ross, in the county of Kierry,  
Bart., and Dame Jane, his wife,  
sole daughter and heir of y<sup>e</sup> said  
Sir Nicholas Plunkett, and was  
finished in y<sup>e</sup> month of  
October, 1681.

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\* *Memoir of Dr. Oliver Plunkett*, p. 122.

The massive ivy-clad walls, the splendid altar window, which surpasses description, the life-like figure of the bishop, the sacred solitude of the place, the number of ancient tombs scattered over chancel and nave, and the holy memories which, like mists in twilight, ascend and gather round the sleeping inmates, all will impress the pilgrim, and amply repay him for lingering long in the ruined sanctuary of Killeen.

#### PASTORS OF KILLEEN.

In 1690, the Rev. Dr. William Plunkett was presented by James the Second to the parishes of Killeen and Trevet. This Dr. Plunkett was a son of James Plunkett's by Maria Cusack,\* of Jerristown, his second wife. His grandfather was Colonel George Plunkett, who was the fourth son of Lucas, first Earl of Fingal. He studied in Rome, and returned to Ireland early in 1680, and on the 20th of March wrote from Dublin to the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda, apprising them of the arrest and imprisonment of Dr. Oliver Plunkett, archbishop of Armagh. Detailing the perils of his own journey to Ireland, he says:†

After a long journey I at length arrived at Nantes, a maritime city of France, in which, though there were many English and Irish vessels, yet none wished to receive me, fearing lest (should they bring ecclesiastics to Ireland during the persecution) *their ships and merchandise would be confiscated.*

In the same year, 1690, the Rev. Dr. John Tyrrell was presented by King James to the parishes of Kilmessan and Galtrim.

In 1704, the Rev. John Smith was registered at Trim, as "Popish priest of Killeen, Dunsany, Kilmessan, Scurlockstown, Trubby, Balsoone, and Assey". He was ordained at Lisbon, in Portugal, in the year 1685, lived at Dunsany the year of the registration, and was fifty years of age.

*The Rev. Patrick Fay succeeded.* He was born in Navan of a respectable old family, and entered on his duties of pastor about 1736. He died in 1768, and was buried in the

\* Archdall's *Lodge*, vol. vi., p. 184.

† *Memoir*, p. 286.



churchyard of Dunsany. The Registry of Kilmesson, which commences with Father Fay, has the following entry of his death : "The Rev. Patrick Fay departed this life the 23rd of April, 1768, at twenty minutes after eight in the evening, aged seventy-four years, was parish priest of Dunsany and Kilmesson for thirty-two years. Buried at Dunsany".

*The Rev. Michael Derham succeeded.* This pastor was born in Navan, and had officiated for some years as curate under Father Fay. In the visitation of Dr. Plunkett to this parish on the 3rd of August, 1788, he found "three schools, one chapel rebuilt in a new situation". The Rev. Father Derham died on the 3rd of November, 1791, and was buried in the west end of the churchyard of Dunsany. Over his remains a tomb was erected, with the following inscription :—

Erected by  
Mary Derham, of Navan,  
in memory of  
her dear uncle, Rev. MICHAEL DERHAM,  
parish priest of Dunsany.  
Died the 3rd of November, 1791,  
aged sixty-eight years.

*The Rev. James Fleming succeeded.* This pastor died of a fall from his horse at Dunboyne, on the 16th of September, 1805, as he was going to, or returning from, Dublin. He was buried in the churchyard of Culmullen with his friends.

*The Rev. Eugene O'Reilly succeeded.* This pastor had been president of the Navan Seminary (see Navan). He was appointed on the 18th of September, 1805, and resigned on the 31st of December, same year.

*The Rev. Patrick Lynn succeeded.* He had been parish priest of Summerhill, and was transferred. He resigned in July, 1806.

*The Rev. John Reilly succeeded.* This pastor was born in the parish of Kilskyre, and received ordination from Dr. Plunkett in the old chapel of Navan, in February, 1788. After his studies on the Continent he was appointed to the curacy of Navan, and officiated there for several years. He was appointed to the union of Kilmesson in July, 1806,

and died on the 24th of February, 1832. In the Registry of Kilmesson, his life, labours, and melancholy death are thus summarized:—

On the 24th of February, 1832, the Rev. John Reilly, parish priest of Kilmesson and Dunsany, died. He lived amongst them for the period of twenty-six years, at the expiration of which it was the will of divine Providence to visit him with a sudden death, on the road near his house, immediately after offering up to Almighty God the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar for one of his deceased parishioners. He died as he lived, in the discharge of his sacred functions.

This worthy and zealous priest was buried in the modern chapel of Kilmesson. The registry of deaths in Kilmesson has the following notice of a Father John Brady, who resided here :

1826. August 7th, died at Duleek, the Rev. John Brady, on his way to the sea-side, a resident in the parish of Kilmesson for fifteen years, a companion and occasional assistant to the Rev. John Reilly, parish priest, during the above period. He was remarkable for piety, the spirit of prayer, and many other good qualities. Requiescat in pace.

This Father Brady was interred in the tomb of Dr. Cusack, bishop of Meath.

*The Rev. Thomas Charles Dunne succeeded.* He died after a lengthened illness, which he bore with patience and resignation, and was interred in the modern chapel of Kilmesson. A marble slab commemorates him in the following words :

Dedicated by  
Laurence and Peter Dunne,  
to the memory  
of their beloved brother  
the Rev. THOMAS C. DUNNE,  
twenty years parish priest of Kilmesson and Dunsany,  
who departed this life  
3rd of September, 1851,  
aged fifty-three years.  
Requiescat in pace. Amen.



*The Rev. Michael Jones succeeded.* Present pastor was born in the parish of Bective, in September, 1809, studied in the Seminary of Navan, and thence proceeded to Rome in 1825. After graduating for nine years in the Propaganda, he was ordained on the 19th of March, 1834, returned to Ireland, and was appointed to the curacy of Killucan. In 1837, at the express wish of the Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly, he was removed to Navan, and laboured here with zeal and efficacy for fourteen years. On the 25th of September, 1851, he was promoted to the union of Kilmesson, and on the 22nd of October, 1854, the bulls arrived for his consecration to the see of Grahamstown. He had great difficulty in evading the proffered dignity, and succeeded only on the ground of physical debility, corroborated by a medical certificate. In the compilation of this work, no priest took a more kindly interest, and often when the writer relaxed in his labours, he was stimulated to perseverance by the remonstrances and encouragement of Father Jones.

## TRIM.

There was a perpetual chantry of three priests in the parish of St. Patrick, Trim, who were to celebrate Mass daily, one in the Rood chapel, another in the chapel of St. Laurence the Martyr, and the third in the chapel of St. Patrick (in the visit book in Marsh's Library, that of St. Mary is added. See Dean Butler's *Trim*, p. 165). They were found to have acquired, contrary to the statute, a castle and ten messuages in Trim, with eight tenements and ten acres of land in Dunderry and Irestown. All this property was confiscated.

1680, October 14th, Philip Conway was chosen master of the Rood guild of St. Catherine's, of the church of St. Patrick in Trim (Town Records, quoted in Very Rev. Dean Butler's *Trim*). The guild of St. Catherine and the Rood priest were continued to the time of Queen Anne (*ibidem*).

LAUS DEO, PAX VIVIS, REQUIES DEFUNCTIS.





## APPENDIX.





# APPENDIX.

## I.

### THE ALPHABETICAL HYMN\* OF ST. SECUNDINUS, BISHOP OF DUNSHAUGHLIN, IN PRAISE OF ST. PATRICK.

[This hymn has been published by Colgan in his *Tr. Th.*, p. 211, and republished by Ware, who calls it an Alphabetical Hymn, as the strophes begin with the letters of the alphabet (*Opuscul. S. Patric.*, etc., pp. 146, etc.). This hymn is also in the very ancient *Antiphonarium Benchoreense*, which has been republished by Muratori (see Lanigan, vol. i. p. 295, *Liber Hymnorum*, edited by Dr. Todd).]

1. Audite omnes amantes Deum sancta merita  
Viri in Christo Beati, Patricii Episcopi :  
Quomodo bonum ob actum similatur angelis,  
Perfectamque propter vitam æquatur apostolis.
2. Beati Christi custodit mandata in omnibus ;  
Cujus opera refulgent clara inter homines,  
Sanctumque, cujus sequuntur exemplum mirificum,  
Undé et in cœlis Patrem magnificent Deum.
3. Constans in Dei timore et fide immobilis,  
Super quem ædificatur ut Petrum Ecclesia ;  
Cujusque apostolatum a Deo sortitus est,  
In cujus portæ adversum Inferni non prævalent.
4. Dominus illum elegit ut doceret barbaras  
Nationes, ut piscaret per doctrinæ retia,  
Ut de sæculo credentes traheret ad gratiam,  
Dominumque sequerentur sedem ad æternum.
5. Electa Christi talenta vendit Evangelica,  
Quæ Iernas inter Gentes cum usuris exigit :  
Navigii hujus laboris, tum operæ pretium  
Cum Christo regni cœlistis possedit gaudium.

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\* See Diocese of Dunshaughlin. For the *scholia* see *Liber Hymnorum*.

6. Fidelis Dei minister, insignisque nuntius,  
Apostolium exemplum formamque præbet :  
Qui tam verbis, quam factis plebi prædicat Dominum,  
Ut quem dictis non convertit, actu provocet bono.
7. Gloriam habet cum Christo, honorem in sæculo :  
Qui ab omnibus ut Dei veneratur Angelus :  
Quem Deus misit, ut Paulum ad Gentes, Apostolum,  
Ut omnibus ducatum præberet regno Dei,
8. Humilis Dei ob metum spiritu et corpore,  
Super quem, bonum ob actum, requiescit Dominus :  
Cujusque justa in carne Christi portat stigmata,  
In cujus solâ sustentante gloriatur cruce.
9. Impiger credentes pascit dapibus cœlestibus,  
Ne qui videntur cum Christo in via deficiant :  
Quibus erogat panes, verba Evangelica,  
Cujus multiplicantur, ut manna, in manibus.
10. Kastam qui custodit carnem, ob amorem Domini :  
Quam carnem templum paravit sanctoque spiritui,  
A quo constanter cum mundis possidetur actibus :  
Quam ut hostiam placentem, vivam offert Domino.
11. Lumenque mundi accensum ingens, Evangelicum,  
In candelabro levatum, toti fulgens sæculo,  
Civitas Regis munita supra montem posita,  
Copia in qua est multa, quam Deus possidet.
12. Maximus quoque in regno cœlorum vocabitur  
Qui quod verbis docet sacris, factis adimplet bonis,  
Bono præcedit exemplo, formaque fidelium  
Mundoque in corde habet ad Deum fiduciam.
13. Nomen Domini audenter annuntiat gentibus,  
Quibus lavacri salutis æternam dat gratiam :  
Pro quarum orat delictis ad Deum,  
Pro quibus, et Deo dignas immolatque hostias.
14. Omnem, pro divina lege, mundi spernit gloriam,  
Qui cuncta ad ejus mensam æstimat quisquílias ;  
Nec ingruenti movetur mundi hujus flumine,  
Sed in adversis lætatur, cum pro Christo patitur.
15. Pastor bonus ac fidelis gregis Evangelica  
Quem Deus Dei elegit custodire populum,  
Suamque pascere plebem divinis dogmatibus ;  
Pro qua, ad Christi exemplum, suam tradidit animam.
16. Quem pro meritis salvator provexit Pontificem,  
Ut in cœlesti moneret clericos militiâ.



- Cœlestem quibus annonam erogat cum vestibus,  
 Quod in divinis impletur sacrisque affatibus.
17. Regis nuntius, invitans credentes ad nuptias,  
 Qui ornatur vestimento nuptiali indutus ;  
 Qui cœleste haurit vinum in vasis cœlestibus,  
 Propinansque Dei plebem spiritali poculo.
18. Sacrum invenit thesaurum sacro in volumine,  
 Salvatorisque in carne Deitatem pervidet :  
 Quem thesaurum emit sanctis perfectisque meritis,  
 Israel vocatur hujus anima videns Deum.
19. Testis Domini fidelis in lege Catholica,  
 Cujus verba sunt divinis condita oraculis,  
 Ne humanæ putrent carnes esæque a vermibus,  
 Sed cœlesti salientur sapore ad victimam.
20. Verus cultor et insignis agri Evangelici,  
 Cujus semina videntur Christi Evangelica,  
 Quæ divino serit ore in aures prudentium,  
 Quorumque corda ac mentes Sancto arat Spiritu.
21. XPS. (Christus) illum sibi elegit in terris vicarium,  
 Quem de gemino captivum liberat servitio.  
 Plerosque de servitute quos redemit hominum,  
 Innumeros de zabuli absolvit dominio.
22. Ymnos cum Apocalypsi, Psalmosque cantat Dei :  
 Quosque ad ædificandum Dei tractat populum,  
 Quem legem in Trinitate sacri credit nominis,  
 Tribusque Personis unam docetque substantiam.
23. Zona Domini præcinctus, diebus ac noctibus  
 Sine intermissione Deum orat Dominum :  
 Cujus ingentis laboris percepturus præmium,  
 Cum Apostolis regnabit sanctis super Israel.

(In Colgan's copy of this hymn the following is added) :

Audite :

Patricii laudes semper dicamus, ut nos cum illo defendat  
 Deus ;

Ibèrniensis omnes clamant ad te pueri :

Veni, sancte Patricii, salvos nos facere.

Patricius sanctus Episcopus oret pro nobis omnibus,

Ut deleantur protinus peccata, quæ commissimus. Amen.

## II.

LORICA SANCTI PATRICII, OR HYMN OF ST. PATRICK WHEN GOING TO  
PREACH AT TARA.

The original Irish of this hymn, written in the *Bearla Feine*, the most ancient dialect in Irish, was published by Dr. Petrie, with a Latin and an English translation, and copious notes, in the eighteenth volume of the *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*. The learned editor proves, from the authority of Usher and others, that the manuscript of the *Liber Hymnorum*, preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, from which this hymn is taken, must be nearly 1,250 years old. The *Luireach Phadruig* (Lorica Patricii) was popularly known in the seventh century as the production of St. Patrick. "It has been a favourite prayer at all times in the Irish Church, and was believed to be the best protection in all dangers of soul and body. Its frequent recitation is specially mentioned in the *Book of Armagh*, which was written in the beginning of the ninth century, as one of the four modes whereby honour was to be paid to his memory, the other three being: 1. The celebration of a triduo at the time of his death, 'in the middle of the spring'; 2. The saying of the proper Mass on his feast day; and 3. Singing the hymn of Secundinus in his honour" (*Calendar of Irish Saints*, p. 97).

In the old *Liber Hymnorum* this hymn of St. Patrick has a preface in Irish, of which the following is a translation by the learned editor:

"St. Patrick composed this hymn. In the time of Leogaire, the son of Nial, it was composed. The cause of its composition was to protect himself with his monks against the enemies unto death, who were in ambush against the clergy. And this is a religious armour to protect the body and soul against demons, and men, and vices. Every person who sings it every day, with all his attention on God, shall not have demons appearing to his face. It will be a protection to him against every poison and envy. It will be a safeguard to him against sudden death. It will be an armour to his soul after death. Patrick sang this at the time that the snares were set for him by Leogaire, that he might not come to propagate the faith at Temur" (Tara).

The following metrical translation was published in Duffy's *Irish Catholic Magazine* (February, 1848), by C. Mangan, at the request of the Very Rev. Matthew Kelly, Maynooth College. It is "rigidly, wonderfully literal, the best substitute that can be had for the original" (*see Magazine*):

## ST. PATRICK'S HYMN BEFORE TARA.

*From the original Irish (by Clarence Mangan, Esq.)*

## I.

At Tarah to-day, in this awful hour,  
I call on the Holy Trinity!  
Glory to Him who reigneth in power,  
The God of the elements, Father and Son,  
And Paraclete Spirit, which Three are the One,  
The ever-existing Divinity!



## II.

At Tarah to-day, I call on the Lord,  
 On Christ, the Omnipotent Word,  
 Who came to redeem from death and sin  
     Our fallen race;  
 And I put and I place  
 The virtue that lieth and liveth in  
 His incarnation lowly,  
 His baptism pure and holy,  
 His life of toil, and tears, and affliction,  
 His dolorous death—his crucifixion,  
 His burial, sacred, and sad, and lone,  
 His resurrection to life again,  
 His glorious ascension to Heaven's high throne,  
 And lastly, His future dread  
 And terrible coming to judge all men—  
 Both the living and the dead. . . .

## III.

At Tarah to-day, I put and I place  
 The virtue that dwells in the seraphim's love,  
 And the virtue and grace  
 That are in the obedience  
 And unshaken allegiance  
 Of all the archangels and angels above;  
 And in the hope of the resurrection  
 To everlasting reward and election,  
 And in the prayers of the fathers of old,  
 And in the truths the prophets foretold,  
 And in the apostles' manifold preachings,  
 And in the confessors' faith and teachings,  
 And in the purity ever dwelling  
 Within the Immaculate Virgin's breast,  
 And in the actions bright and excelling,  
 Of all good men, the just and the blest. . . .

## IV.

At Tarah to-day, in this fateful hour,  
 I place all Heaven with its power,  
     And the sun with its brightness,  
     And the snow with its whiteness,

And fire with all the strength it hath,  
 And lightning with its rapid wrath,  
 And the winds with their swiftness along their path,  
 And the sea with its deepness,  
 And the rocks with their steepness,  
 And the earth with its starkness,  
 All these I place,  
 By God's Almighty help and grace,  
 Between myself and the powers of darkness.

## V.

At Tarah to-day,  
 May God be my stay !  
 May the strength of God now nerve me !  
 May the power of God preserve me !  
 May God the Almighty be near me !  
 May God the Almighty espy me !  
 May God the Almighty hear me !  
 May God give me eloquent speech !  
 May the arm of God protect me !  
 May the wisdom of God direct me !  
 May God give me power to teach and to preach !  
 May the shield of God defend me !  
 May the host of God attend me,  
     And ward me,  
     And guard me,  
 Against the wiles of demons and devils,  
 Against the temptations of vices and evils,  
 Against the bad passions and wrathful will  
 Of the reckless mind and the wicked heart,  
 Against every man who designs me ill,  
 Whether leagued with others or plotting apart !

## VI.

*In this hour of hours*  
 I place all those powers,  
 Between myself and every foe  
 Who threatens my body and soul  
 With dangers or dole,  
 To protect me against the evils that flow  
 From lying soothsayers' incantations,  
 From the gloomy laws of the Gentile nations,



From Heresy's hateful innovations,  
 From idolatry's rites and invocations,  
     Be those my defenders,  
     My guards against every ban  
     And spell of smiths, and Druids, and women ;  
 In fine, against every knowledge that renders  
     The light Heaven sends us dim in  
     The spirit and soul of man !

## VII.

*May Christ, I pray,*  
 Protect me to-day,  
     Against poison and fire,  
 Against drowning and wounding,  
 That so, in His grace abounding,  
     I may earn the preacher's hire !

## VIII.

Christ, as a light,  
     Illumine and guide me !  
 Christ, as a shield, o'ershadow and cover me !  
 Christ be under me ! Christ be over me !  
     Christ be beside me  
     On left hand and right !  
 Christ be before me, behind me, about me !  
 Christ this day be within and without me !

## IX.

Christ, the lowly and meek,  
 Christ, the all-powerful, be  
 In the heart of each to whom I speak,  
 In the mouth of each who speaks to me !  
 In all who draw near me,  
 Or see me, or hear me !

## X.

At Tarah to-day, in this awful hour,  
 I call on the Holy Trinity !  
 Glory to Him who reigneth in power,  
 The God of the elements, Father and Son,  
 And Paraclete Spirit, which Three are the One,  
 The ever-existing Divinity !

## XI.

Salvation dwells with the Lord,  
 With Christ, the Omnipotent Word.  
 From generation to generation  
 Grant us, O Lord, thy grace and salvation !

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## III.

## HYMNUS QUANDO COMMUNICARENT SACERDOTES.

[“As St. Patrick and St. Sechnall (Secundinus) were going round the cemetery (at Dunshaughlin), they heard a choir of angels chanting a hymn at the offertory (rather offering) in the church, *Sancti Venite*, etc., etc., and from that time to the present, the hymn is chanted in Erin when the body of Christ is received.” See *Liber Hymnorum*, edited by Dr. Todd.]

## I.

Sancti venite,  
 Christe corpus sumite ;  
 Sanctum bibentes,  
 Quo redempti sanguinem.

## II.

Salvati Christi,  
 Corpore et sanguine,  
 Aquo refecti,  
 Laudes dicamus Deo.

## III.

Hoc sacramento  
 Corporis et sanguinis,  
 Omnes exuti,  
 Ab inferni faucibus.

## IV.

Dator Salutis,  
 Christus filius Dei,  
 Mundum salvavit,  
 Per crucem et sanguinem.

## V.

Pro universis,  
 Immolatus Dominus,  
 Ipse Sacerdos,  
 Existit et hostia.

## VI.

Lege preceptum  
 Immolari hostias,  
 Qua adumbrantur  
 Divina mysteria.

## VII.

Lucis indultor  
 Et salvator omnium,  
 Præclaram sanctis  
 Largitus est gratiam.

## VIII.

Accedant omnes  
 Pura mente creduli,  
 Sumant eternam  
 Salutis custodiam.

## IX.

Sanctorum custos,  
 Rector quoque Dominus,  
 Vitæ perennis  
 Largitur credentibus.

## X.

Cœlestem panem  
 Dat esurientibus,  
 De fonte vivo,  
 Præbet sitientibus.



## XI.

Alpha et Omega,  
Ipse Christus Dominus,  
Venit, venturus  
Judicare homines.

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## IV.

## COMHORBAS AND AIRCHINNECHS OR ERENACHS.

[Just as this volume was going to press, I applied to Professor O'Curry, the greatest living authority on the subject, for an explanation of the titles "Comhorbas" and "Airchinnech", which the reader will meet in almost every page of our ecclesiastical annals. He referred me to the interesting *Life of St. Malachy O'Morgair*, by the Rev. John O'Hanlon,\* where, at page 131, I found my question anticipated and satisfactorily replied to by the learned *Ollamh* himself.]

"The *Comhorba* was the vicar, a legal representative of the patron saint or founder of the church; but the word *Comhorba* is not exclusively ecclesiastical, for in the ancient laws of Erin it meant the heir and conservator of the inheritance; and it is in the latter sense it is always used in our ecclesiastical writings.

"There was an understood original compact, recognized by the 'Brehon Laws', which vested the *comhorbship* of the church and its lands in two families, namely, in that of the patron saint or founder, and in that of the person who gave the original site and endowment.

"It was the family of the patron saint that invariably supplied the abbot, as long as there could be found among them, even a psalm-singer to take the office; and when they failed to supply a fit person, then he was sought from the family of the owner of the land. If, in the mean time, a better and more learned man of the patron's family should spring up, the abbacy was to be handed over to him; but if he were not better, he should wait until it became vacant by death or otherwise.

"If, however, in the absence of a qualified person from either family, an unqualified person should succeed as temporal heir, he was obliged to provide a suitable clergyman to discharge the offices of the church, according to its dignity, whilst the natural abbot administered the temporal offices and the management of the land.

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\* As soon as Rev. Mr. O'Hanlon was informed of the subject of my inquiry, he forwarded to me without delay a copy of his very excellent biography. Courtesies such as these are *felt* and appreciated.

“The *Airchinnech* or *Erenach* was a mere temporal agent or steward of the church lands, under the *Comhorba*, whoever he might be. He sometimes took the tonsure and some other minor order, which raised his *eric*, or composition, in case of any insult or injury offered to him. He was generally a married man, without any official value or reverence of person but what was derived from the character or ecclesiastical dignity of the patron saint, whose secular inheritance he managed. It happened often, however, that the whole administration of the church and its land was performed by one and the same person. This was when the abbot, bishop, or priest performed himself the clerical duties, and also acted as his own *Airchinnech* or steward”.

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V.

PASTORAL LETTER OF DR. JOHN PAYN, BISHOP OF MEATH.

From the *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 86.

“Omnibus Christi Fidelibus, præcipue, etc. Prælati ac Curati Midensis Diœcesis, etc. Frater Joannes Ordinis Prædicatorum, etc. Episcopus Midensis, etc. ad etc. Notitiam deducimus, etc., quod in Concilio Provinciali *Ardmach* celebrato apud *Drochedath*, MCCCCXCV., venerunt, etc., Discreti Patres Quatuor Ordinum Mendicantium, gravem Querimoniam in Medium proferentes, videlicet quod nonnulli Ecclesiarum Curati dictæ Provinciæ Ardmachanæ Privilegia eis concessa a Sanctissimis Patribus Summis Pontificibus, etc., ausu temerario, etc., infringere non verentur. In primis Felicis Memoræ Clemens Papa IV., Sixtus IV., aliique Summi Pontifices, concesserunt Fratribus Quatuor Ordinum Mendicantium, Sepulturam in eorum Ecclesiis fore liberam, ut Christi Fidelium Devotioni, et extremæ voluntati eorum, qui se illic sepiliri deliberaverint, nisi Excommunicati, vel Interdicti, vel etiam publici usurarii fuerint, nullus obsistat. Salva tamen justitia illarum Ecclesiarum, a quibus Mortuorum corpora assumuntur, etc., ut Fratres ipsi, nullius super hoc petita licentia, parochias, in quibus corpora prædicta forent, cum cruce processionaliter ingredi, et corpora ipsa levare, et ad eorum Ecclesiam sepelienda deferre possint, ubi hoc fieri consuetum foret, vel Presbyteri, de levatione requisiti, id facere recusarent. Nec cogantur inviti, etc., ipsi, vel defunctorum consanguinei, vel Hæredes, illa ad Parochias Ecclesias, vel alia



loca deferre, etc. Ex his, quæ Fratribus prædictis, apud quos tunc corpora ipsa sepeliuntur, de Bonis defunctorum quomodo-libet obvenirent quovis universali, vel particulari Titulo directe, vel indirecte nullam Canonicam Portionem, aut Parochialem dare tenentur. In reliquis vero casibus, quam præmissis, in quibus quarta ipsa solvenda veniret, conventiones, si quæ sint inter Fratres prædictos, et Locorum Ordinarios, ac Ecclesiarum Rectores initæ, laudabiles etiam honestè observentur in posterum, etc., dicta Privilegia in omni sua Forma per totam Provinciam esse observanda, etc. Nos igitur, qui dicto Concilio, dum sic, ut præfertur, Acta fuerunt, interfuimus, vobis omnibus, etc., firmiter injungendo sub Pœna Excommunicationis, etc., mandamus, etc.”

## VI.

DIOECESIS MIDENSIS EXTENTA ET TAXATIO, 31 HEN. VIII.,  
FACTA ET TAXATA.

[I found this record of the taxation of Meath in Appendix No. 6 of Seward's *Topography of Ireland*. The value of money was considerably greater then than now.]

	£	s.	d.
Episcopatus Miden . . .	373	12	0½
Archidiaconatus Miden . . .	100	0	0

## DECANATUS DE DULEEK.

R. de Admulghen . . .	21	15	6
V. de Balmagarve . . .	9	9	6
V. de Tymole . . .	2	14	4
V. de Mora . . .	5	2	0
V. de Lecknowe, <i>alias</i> Pierstown Landy . . .	0	17	0
R. de Rathfeigh . . .	12	7	0
R. de Kilmone . . .	13	9	1½
V. de Stamollen . . .	14	13	4
V. de Kilkervan . . .	3	7	0
V. de Ardcath . . .	6	16	3
V. de Nany . . .	5	0	0
V. de Clonalvey . . .	0	16	0
R. de Kentiston . . .	10	12	8
V. de Ponte . . .	6	13	4
R. de Ballygarte . . .	8	3	10½
R. de Payneston . . .	22	2	8

## DECANATUS DE RATHTOUTH.

	£	s.	d.
V. de Rathtouth	3	17	8
V. de Trevett	5	12	8
V. de Dunboyne	21	9	4
V. de Rathbeghan	5	17	0
R. de Kilbrue	13	7	1½

## DECANATUS DE SKRYNE.

Vicaria de Moyclare	4	3	7½
V. de Kilmore	1	13	7
— Knockmarke	4	17	0
R. de Agher	6	17	8
V. de Galtrim	13	5	4
— Skryne	6	18	0
— Athlomney	6	2	0
— Dowetiston	2	13	4
V. de Daneston	3	10	0
— Tabelagh, <i>alias</i> Taberaght	5	0	0
— Killen	9	0	0
R. de Raperston	6	10	0
V. de Kilmessan	3	17	0
R. de Troubley	3	7	0
R. de Dunsaney	4	9	8

## DECANATUS DE TRYM.

V. de Athboy	23	14	2½
V. de Killowan	6	0	9
V. de Laracor	6	0	9
R. de Lascartan	9	6	0
V. de Rathmolion	5	12	0
R. de Rathmore	17	12	0

## DECANATUS DE SLANE.

R. de Slane	24	6	0
R. de Nobbir	29	5	8
V. de Kilpatrick	5	17	1
R. de Drakeston	10	10	8
V. de Donamore	9	9	8
V. de Rathkenny	10	9	4
R. de Drumconragh	21	15	4
V. de Syddan	8	11	0
R. de Kilberry	18	0	0



	£	s.	d.
R. de Stacallen . . . . .	10	0	0
R. de Gernonston . . . . .	14	8	6
R. de Killary . . . . .	20	5	0
R. de Stokeston . . . . .	9	3	0
R. de Dowthe . . . . .	6	2	6
R. de Dunmowe . . . . .	7	18	4
V. de Killary . . . . .	3	10	0

## DECANATUS DE KELLYS.

R. de Moynaltie . . . . .	18	0	0
R. de Newton . . . . .	5	6	0
R. de Cruston . . . . .	3	4	10
V. de Donapatrik . . . . .	7	16	0
V. de Moyaghir . . . . .	8	0	0
V. de Girlic . . . . .	8	16	0
R. de Kilskir . . . . .	17	15	0

## DECANATUS DE CLONARD.

V. de Clonard . . . . .	12	18	5
R. de Castlericard . . . . .	6	0	0
R. de Killagh . . . . .	4	19	8
R. de Rathwere . . . . .	43	13	4
V. de Rathwere . . . . .	22	6	8

## DECANATUS DE MOLINGAR.

V. de Molingar . . . . .	5	15	0
V. de Rathconnyll . . . . .	2	16	11
R. de Killagh, <i>alias</i> Kilwellagh . . . . .	13	1	8
R. de Lynn . . . . .	1	19	8
R. de Moleskyr . . . . .	0	10	10
R. de Karryk . . . . .	0	2	8
R. de Clonfadforan . . . . .	4	0	2½
R. de Kilbridepilate . . . . .	0	14	0
V. de Portesangan . . . . .	2	8	8
R. de Moltefaran . . . . .	8	10	0
V. de Delvyn . . . . .	14	18	8
R. de Taghmone . . . . .	6	18	0

## DECANATUS DE FOURE.

V. de Faghly . . . . .	5	13	0
R. de Killaloe, <i>alias</i> Killalow . . . . .	11	10	0
V. de Rathgarth . . . . .	5	2	4

	£	s.	d.
V. de Diamore . . . . .	2	9	11
V. de Loghcrewe . . . . .	4	5	4
V. de Mayne . . . . .	6	17	0
R. de Moylaghe . . . . .	7	5	0
R. de Castlecorre . . . . .	3	6	8

## DECANATUS DE LOUGHSEUDIE.

R. de Loughseudie . . . . .	16	0	0
R. de Dysarte . . . . .	5	4	5
R. de Rathconnartie . . . . .	13	15	0
V. de Rathregan . . . . .	2	13	4
V. de Culmollen . . . . .	10	0	0
R. de Trym . . . . .	65	6	8
R. de Loghbracan . . . . .	6	0	0
R. de Clonegell . . . . .	10	0	0
V. de Stahalmocke . . . . .	2	3	4
R. de Kylbride-bestane . . . . .	2	0	0
R. de Newton in Fertullagh . . . . .	2	3	4
R. de Dysertale . . . . .	2	0	0
V. de Ardnurcher, <i>alias</i> Ballynurcher . . . . .	0	0	0
R. de Amory . . . . .	2	0	0

All Irish money.

## VII.

## TEMPORALITIES OF THE BISHOPRIC OF MEATH.

From Usher's Report. See appendix in Dr. Elrington's edition of his life, vol. i.

“ A certificate of the state revennewes of the bishopricke of Meath and Olonmackenosh.

Bishop's means arise from temporalities or temporal rentes ; 2nd, tithes ; 3rd, pencons ; 4th, proxies.

Temporalities belonging to the bishoprick are, viz., the manor of Ardrackhan, the house with *ccclx. akers*.

Chappell of St. Marie's, with appurtenances.

Neilstowne, a *c.* acres of arable land, a *ffirparke* between Neilstowne and the moore, foure messuages in Ardrackhan, and *lxiiii.* acres of Ardrackhan, etc.

Betaghtaghtowne, containing *lx.* acres.



Richardstown, *xxi. and  $\frac{1}{2}$  acres.*

An old house in Ricardstown, with *xxxvi. acres of land.*

The mannor of Ardrath.

The mannors of Clonard and Killian, with the villages of Mollrick, Moringuliath, etc., containing about 500 acres adjoining to the bishop's manor-house, Morebride.

Ballibarne, Anaghe, and Moyden or Moydrome, containing *cl. acres or thereabouts.*

Tollaghe.

Arnemullen, Inane, and Kilwarden, in Meath, containing *cxl. acres.*

Moyfin, containing *lx. acres in Meath.*

Scurlockstown, Effernocke, and Castlerag, in Newtowne by Trim, in Meath. The mannor of Trim. His Majesty allowith to the bishop a yearly pension of *v<sup>Li</sup> Irish, or iiij<sup>Li</sup> x5<sup>s</sup> sterling.*

Farneforth or Farren-loare, containing *lx. a res.*

Taffernam or Staffernam (in Westmeath), containing *lx. acres of arable land, besides meadow.*

Knocke and Churchtowne.

Ballamacartan, containing *40 acres.*

Clonfadforam, containing *cx. acres.*

Ballinaspricke, *alias* Bishopstown, in Westmeath.

Clare, in Westmeath.

Ballindrynam Ballintolcham, Kilmanaghan, Ballinkilline, Tullamoyragher, Ballemurre, in the parish of Moyraffin; Ballinckny, Ballikilmurry, Athenry, and Balladrohid, in the parish of Moylin in Fercall, in the King's County; with the advowson of the rectory of Rathwere in Westmeath.

#### TITHES.

The rectory of Ballimore, *alias* Loxeudy, the rectory of Nobber, with the chappels belonging thereunto, worth *lx<sup>Li</sup> sterling per annum.* The tithe corn and hay of Julianstown.

The rectory of Trim (*Note.*—This was lately annexed by his Majesty to the bishopricke).

#### PENTIONS.

The pentions belonging to the bishopric of Meath are: out of the rectory of Paynestowne, *xx. nobles, Irish, or v<sup>Li</sup> sterling.*

Out of the priorie of Duleek, *xxvi<sup>Li</sup> xiii<sup>s</sup> iii<sup>d</sup> Irish, or xx<sup>Li</sup> sterling.*

Out of the priorie of Colpe, *xx<sup>Li</sup> Irish, or xv<sup>Li</sup> sterling.*

Out of St. Mary's Abbey, of Dublin,  $xx^{\text{Ll}}$ . *Irish*, or  $xv^{\text{Ll}}$ . *sterling*.

Out of the priorie of Mullingar  $v^{\text{Ll}}$ .  $viii$   $viii^{\text{d}}$ . *Irish*.

Out of the monastery of Loxewdy,  $vi$ . *beoues*.

Out of the priorie of Darrowe, 6 *beoues*.

Out of Wastina in the deanrie of Loxewdy, 6 *beoues*.

Out of the mcnastery of Kilbeggan, 4 *beoues*.

#### PROXIES.

The proxies are received partly out of the institutive, partly out of the impropriate livings. The institutive proxies yield  $lx^{\text{Ll}}$ .  $v^{\text{s}}$ .  $vi^{\text{d}}$  *sterling in money*,  $xxx^{\text{t}}$  *beoues*.

The institutive proxies of the archdeaconry of Kells, *alias* Nobber, annexed to the bishopricke of Meath, are yearly  $x^{\text{Ll}}$ .  $iiii^{\text{s}}$   $ix^{\text{d}}$  *sterling*.

The impropriate proxies amount to the yearly sum of  $lxi^{\text{Ll}}$ .  $viii^{\text{s}}$   $viii^{\text{d}}$  *Irish*, which is  $xlv^{\text{Ll}}$ .  $x^{\text{s}}$   $vi^{\text{d}}$  *sterling*.

### VIII.

#### GRANT FROM JAMES THE FIRST TO GEORGE MONTGOMERY, PROTESTANT BISHOP OF MEATH, AND SUCCESSORS.

From the *Patent Rolls* of James the First.

The following procurations or proxies, yearly payable, viz. : out of the late abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Duleek, and the churches which were thereto united and appropriated at the time of its dissolution, £2 7s. 8d., *Irish*; out of the priory of Kenles, the churches of Tristlekeram, the stone hall, and the other churches thereto united at the dissolution, 15s. 4d.; out of the priory of St. Peter, near Trim, and the churches of Newton by Trim, Rathregan, Rathayne, Roberston, Kilbegan, Laskie, St. Thomas of Loghsewdy, and Eneskoy, £10 19s. 4d.; out of the priory of St. John, near Trim, and out of the churches of Finnor, Tallaghemocke, and Arendell, 14s. 4d.; out of the late hospital of St. John of Drogheda and the churches thereof, 6s. 8d.; out of the late priory of the Holy Trinity of Lesmoller and the churches thereof, £4; out of the abbey of Odder, 13s. 4d.; out of Clonard abbey, £1 8s.; out of the priory of Ballibogan, and the churches of Ballibogan, Crenegedgagh, and



Kilbrideweston, £4; out of the monastery of Tristernagh, Kynleyne, and Leighin, £6 7s. 4d.; out of the late priories or cells of Duleek and Colpe, £5 6s. 8d.; out of the late friary of Fower, and the churches of Fowerfeighin, Dorfinkill, Faghill, and Cowley, £5 5s.; out of the abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Trim, and the churches of Clonard and Kildalk, otherwise Kildalky, £2 10s. 4d.; out of the churches of Skryne, Killcarne, Allomney, Doweston, Daveston, Killede, and all other churches in Meath diocese belonging to the monastery of St. Mary's, Dublin, £2 13s. 4d.; out of the churches of Donamore, Rathtowth, Grenocke, Killeglan, Dunsaghlen, Trevett, and Ballinglassan, and all other churches in Meath diocese belonging to the monastery of Thomas Court, Dublin, £4 6s. 8d.; out of Mellefont abbey, £1 11s.; out of the abbey of Navan and the churches of Navan, Ardbraccan, Ballyeske, Killsheny, and Clonemaduffe, £5 3s. 4d.; out of Kilkenny priory, 13s. 4d.; out of Loghsewdy priory, £2; total, £61 7s. 8d., Irish, all which had been granted to King Henry the Eighth by Edward (Staples), bishop of Meath, and his clergy, by their deed dated 16th March, thirty-sixth Henry the Eighth, to hold for ever, in pure alms—9 March, ninth of King James.

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## IX.

### ABBEY OF BECTIFF OR BECTIVE.

Archdall's *Monasticon*, pp. 517, 518, from Chief Remembrancer.

July 31st, and thirty-fourth of King Henry Eighth, the abbot surrendered this abbey, being then seized of the same, also of a church, hall, cloister, with certain chambers and other buildings, together with two hundred and five acres of arable land, seven of meadow, and thirty-three of pasture, in the townland of Bectiff, being the demesne land of the abbey, and a water mill and fishing weir on the river Boyne, all of the annual value, besides reprises, of £19 6s. 8d.; five messuages, five cottages, two hundred and twenty acres of arable land, and five of meadow, with the appurtenances, in the Grange of Bectiff, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £7 13s. 4d.; four messuages, three cottages, one hundred and twenty acres of arable land, and four and a half of meadow, in the townland of Ballgyll, of the annual

value, besides all reprises, of 119s.; three messuages, one hundred and twenty acres of arable land, five of meadow, and twenty of pasture, in Balbradocke, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £4 16s.; two messuages, three cottages, seventy-three acres of arable land, one and a half of meadow, and twenty of pasture, in Dyellogh, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £4 10s.; two messuages, five cottages, three acres of arable land, four of meadow, and twenty of pasture, in the townland of Cloncorley, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £4 11s.; two messuages, three cottages, one hundred and twenty-eight acres of arable land, four of meadow, and twelve of pasture, in Balbreithe, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £6 16s.; one messuage, and sixty acres of arable land in Monketon, near Trim, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of 20s.; fifteen acres of arable land in Balston, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of 8s.; and twenty messuages and cottages, three hundred and sixty acres of arable land, pasture, and mountain, in Renaghe, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of 71s. 8d.; also of the rectory of Bectiff, with the appurtenances, appropriated to the said abbot and his successors, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £22 6s. 8d.; all the said lands, etc., lying and being in the county of Meath. The abbot sat as a baron in parliament.

#### THE ABBEY OF KELLS.

From Archdall's *Monasticon*.

At the confiscation of this abbey it was seized of the following:—

“The site of the monastery, containing the church and cemetery, an hall, four chambers, a kitchen and granary, twelve messuages, three orchards, twelve gardens, twenty acres of arable land, five closes containing seven acres, six acres of pasture and four of moor, in Kells; these possessions were valued at £4 4s. annually. On the 10th of July, thirty-third King Henry the Eighth, this monastery, with the lands of Comlebogan, Corbally, Grangeston, Knockabury, Kylbrede, Maghlendone, Kyldrum, Urier, and Ganston, and the rectories of Killaghi and Omlebogan, were granted, in *capite*, to Gerald Fleming, Knight, at the yearly rent of £6 6s. 8d., Irish money. And 5th of March 1609, it was found that Gerald Fleming of Cabragh, in the county of Cavan, was seized, long before his death, of the rectories, churches, or chapels of Killin, Knockbride, Castel-Rahan,



Templeporte and Crodragh, with all their appurtenances, in the county of Cavan ; and of the lands, tenements, and other hereditaments lying in Maggrendone in the said county, parcel of the possessions of this abbey. By an inquisition taken on the Saturday next after Palm Sunday, thirty-fourth king Henry the Eighth, it was found that Gerald Fleming, late of Stephenston, knight, deceased, was seized of this abbey and three chambers, a kitchen, etc., with ten acres of arable land and two of meadow in Kells ; four messuages, and a close containing twelve acres, ten acres of arable land, two of pasture, and some mountain pasture called the Hill of Leeds, containing sixty acres of scrub and moor, with the appurtenances, in the townland of Kells ; eighteen acres of arable land, with the appurtenances, in Emlebegan ; thirty acres of arable land, with the appurtenances, and two messuages, in Corbally ; sixty acres of arable land, four of meadow, and twelve of pasture, with the appurtenances, in Grangeston ; thirty acres of arable and twelve of pasture, with the appurtenances, in Knockubury ; thirty-six acres of pasture, with the appurtenances, in Kylbrede ; four messuages, sixty acres of arable, four of meadow, two of wood, and fourteen of pasture, with the appurtenances, in Maghlendone ; 3s. 4d. annual rent, payable out of the lands of Oliver Nugent, in Kilkenny (West), and 3s. 4d. annual rent, out of the lands of Thomas Dardyce, in Gyanston. The said Gerald was also seized of the rectories of Emlebegan and Kyllaghe, with the appurtenances, and at a yearly rent of £6 6s. 8d. Irish money, the whole being of the annual value, besides reprises, of £26 4s. Another inquisition, taken 28th of September, 1618, finds that Gerald Fleming, lately of Ballalegan, in the county of Louth, was, long before his death, seized of the site, etc., of this abbey, annual value 12d. Irish money, besides reprises ; and twenty acres of land in Kells, annual value 6s. 3d. ; forty acres in Corbally, in the county of Louth, annual value 10s., besides reprises ; thirty acres in Knockemoylery, annual value 7s. 6d., besides reprises ; thirty acres in Kilbride, annual value 7s. 6d., besides reprises ; the rectories of Killeagh and Emloghbegan, with eight acres of arable land in Emloghbegan, of the annual value of 10s. all Irish money, and parcel of the possessions of the said abbey.

## LISMULLEN.

At the suppression of this convent the nuns were possessed of the following :

“The vill and hamlet of Ballenvoll, in the parish of Churchtown, near Pierstown, in the county of Westmeath, containing a castle, with half a caracnte of the said vill and hamlet, the whole of the annual value, besides reprises, of 3s. 4d. ; also four messuages, eighty acres of arable land, five of meadow, twenty of pasture, and six of wood, with the appurtenances, in Killieston and Ballyshovan, in the county of Dublin, annual value, besides all reprises, £3 18s. ; and twenty-four acres of arable land and forty of pasture in Paynstown, in the county of Meath, annual value £4 6s. 8d. It was also found that ——— Hadzor held at will twenty-four acres of arable land at Mulaghcurrne, by service, at the annual rent of 53s. 4d. ; and that Nicholas Taaffe held there, at will also, certain lands at the annual rent of 10d. ; and by another inquisition take 15th of June, thirty-first King Henry the Eighth, the abbey was seized of a castle, one messuage, eight cottages, sixty acres of arable land, two of meadow, twelve of pasture, one of underwood, and two of moor, in Cornelly's Court, otherwise Cornele's Court, in the county of Dublin, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of 46s. 8d.

June 15th, and thirty-fourth of King Henry the Eighth, the lands of Killieston and Ballyshoan, in the county of Dublin, parcel of the possessions of this priory, were granted for ever in fee-farm to Sir Thomas Luttrell, of Luttrellstown, in the said county, at the annual rent of £3 18s. Irish money ; and 23rd of December, second of King Edward the Sixth, this abbey, with the manors of Lismullen and Dimond, with a mill in Blondeston, in this county, was granted in capite, at the annual rent of 22s., Irish money, to Thomas Cusack. And fourth and fifth Philip and Mary, the annual rent of 22s. (called the twentieth part), reserved in the patent granted by King Edward the Sixth, and one hundred and fifty acres of arable, seven of meadow, and six of pasture, being the demesne lands of this priory, with a water-mill and a mill in Blondeston, granted by the same king to Thomas Cusack for ever, and an annual rent of 22s. issuing out of the above-named premises, granted also to the said Cusack ; sixty acres in Harreston-Barret, with the yearly rent of 20s. arising from the same ; and the following annual rents out of Harreston aforesaid, viz., £20 10s. 5d., 15s. 11d., and 4s. 2d. ; four messuages, one hundred and sixty acres of arable, twelve of



meadow, and twelve of pasture, in Bathaton; one messuage, sixty acres of arable, four of meadow, and six of pasture in Clotterston; a water-mill, with the yearly rent of twenty-six measures of corn and the same of manset; three messuages, and twenty acres of arable and pasture in Cloghanue, and a yearly rent of 20s. payable out of the said lands; the annual rent of 24s. 4d. out of Moreton, and the sums of 10s. and 3s. 6d. arising from sundry other parcels of the said lands; 80s. annually, out of the lands of Denanston; an annual rent of 13s. 4d. out of Corlenston; 2s. annually out of Platon; two messuages, a cottage, and ninety-seven acres in Belgre Court, thirty of which are in the county of Meath, and the remainder in the county of Dublin; also four messuages, four cottages, and one hundred and thirty acres in Belgre; one messuage, two cottages, and eighty acres in Ponderlaughe; one messuage and thirty acres in Baltantrie (Ballantrie); two messuages, four cottages, and one hundred acres in Balmacaruan; one messuage and thirty acres in Irishton; eighty acres in Molaughmore; one hundred and twenty acres in Payneston; five messuages and two hundred and forty acres in Dunsincke; one messuage and eighty acres in Scribbleston; the annual rent of 78s. out of Killieston and Ballistrowan; and 28s. 8d. out of Elfoston; in Poncheston, three messuages, one hundred acres of land, and ten cottages, with the annual rents of 6s. 8d. and 5s. out of certain lands in Termon Feighnue; the monastery of Ballybogan, in the county of Meath, Gray Abbey, in the county of Down, and the abbeys of Inche, Saul, and Bangor, in the same county; also the Franciscan friary and the monasteries of St. Patrick, St. John, and St. Thomas, in Down, were all granted *in capite* to Gerald, Earl of Kildare, and Mabell his wife, and to their heirs, free of all rent; with four other closures and twenty acres of land in the county of Dublin, parcel of the possessions of this abbey, were granted to Robert Harrison. This priory paid six marks proxies annually to the bishop of Meath.

#### THE PRIORY OF DULEEK.

From Archdall's *Monasticon*.

October 1st, and first Queen Elizabeth, this monastery and its appurtenances, situate and lying in the town and vicinity of Duleek, with the Grange, alias Rughgrange, Corbally, Callaghston, alias Calliaghton, Ridder, alias Rodder, Multon, Danesland, alias Dawesland, and Fowlerston, in this county, and all other posses-

sions thereto belonging, lying in and near Marinerton, alias Marinerston, Great Bebeck, Small Bebeck, Bebeck near Kenles, in the said county, were granted to Henry Draycot and his heirs, *in capite*, at the yearly rent of £40 17s. 7d. About the same time we meet another grant to the said Draycot, of a parcel of land in Marinerston aforesaid, late in the possession of the Abbey of the Virgin Mary, of Furnes, in Lancashire, at the yearly rent of £19 10s. 4d. Also sundry lands, etc., in the town and vicinity of Clereston and Norreston, in the county of Wexford, at the annual rent of 26s. 8d., with the several lands, etc., in and near the town of Colpe, alias the Grange of Cope and Marinerton, with one acre and a stang of meadow near Duleek, part of the possessions of the abbey of Lanthony, in Gloucestershire, at the annual rent of £4 17s. 1d., all in the county of Meath.

In 1612, by several inquisitions, the possessions of this house were found as follows, viz. The rectory of St. Peter's in Drogheda, extending into Drogheda; Kilmore, Philipstown, Newtownrath, and Lessedowick, alias Lessden; three couples of corn arising from Parsonstown, and two from Donany, all in the county of Louth; the advowsons and presentations to all and singular the vicarages of Duleek and Colpe (the tithes and altarages due to the vicars only excepted); one acre of arable land in Platten, near Newtown, in the county of Meath, and two acres of arable in Harrock and Woodway; thirty acres of arable, and thirty of pasture and meadow in Ratholland, with the rectory and tithes of Julianston, Danielston, Rogerston, Mucklaghten, and both the towns of Mayneston, all in the county of Meath; the rectory and tithes of Molengar, containing Molengar, le Grange, Irishston, Stockston, Tateston, Ballynae alias Pollardston, Ballymora, alias Ballyvora, Ballyfedwich, Ballyrobin, alias Ballygrobin, Ballymambrine, Ballinclare, and Ballymacslane, all in the county of Westmeath; one couple of corn out of Wilkenston, half a couple out of Bacon, and the tithe of two acres in Commingerfield, in the county of Meath; one cellar on St. Saviour's dock in Drogheda, under the church of St. Saviour, late in the occupation of Robert Carver, and a waste plot of ground in Drogheda adjoining the said church; three couples of tithe-corn out of Great Slane, in said county, one couple out of Little Slane, and six couples out of Doneycarney; the site of the priory, with a garden, a close, and half an acre of pasture; sixteen acres of arable land in Carrickbroger; twenty acres of arable land in Arbushe; three acres of arable in Longanmane, and eight acres



of arable called Woosterpark ; eight acres on the north side of the common green of Duleek, and the Castleoust, containing two acres of pasture, with the furze, cow-park, and four other acres of the same land ; four other acres of pasture, the meadow-park, dove-house, and twenty acres of arable called Bowglasse, the Smith's meadow ; one close of pasture in the town of Newtown, on the east side, nine acres of arable adjoining the town of Carranston, on the south side, and five acres of arable and five of meadow, called the Madlune meadow in Duleek ; a park containing a great number of ash trees, contiguous to the site of the priory ; a cottage, garden, and small close, one other cottage, late in the tenure of William Broad ; a cottage and garden in the tenure of Patrick Purcell ; a cottage and garden in the tenure of George Golburn ; a garden near Powlickswell, called the Bullbrine ; a garden adjoining Cullamer's house ; a small close called the College Yard ; another close, late in the tenure of Thomas Backhan ; two curtileges, called the Fox Park ; also the Pigeon-house park, and an acre of meadow called Attkyna Acre, with one-fourth part of an acre of pasture at the end of the Smith's meadow, and on the south side. All these several possessions were granted to Sir Gerald Moore at the annual rent of £9 11s. 7d., he to maintain an archer on the said lands for ever. This priory paid four marks annually proxies to the bishop of Meath.

## BALLYBOGGAN.

From Archdall's *Monasticon*.

At the suppression of this priory the possessions consisted of the following :

A cloister, kitchen, etc., and twenty-four messuages, four gardens, one orchard, one curtilage, and an haggard, within the precincts of the said priory ; also the manor of Ballybogan, containing one hundred and sixty messuages, one hundred and sixty gardens, a water-mill, six eel-weirs, eighty acres of arable land, one hundred and forty of meadow, one thousand of pasture, forty of wood, forty of underwood, and six hundred of moor in Ballybogan, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of eight pounds, six shillings, and eight pence ; sixty messuages, forty gardens, three hundred and twenty acres of arable, two hundred and forty of pasture, forty of meadow, eighty of underwood, and three hundred of moor, in Herryeston, *alias* Ballykill, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of forty shillings ; one hundred

messuages, sixty gardens, forty acres of arable land, ninety-six of meadow, six hundred and forty of pasture, one hundred and sixty of wood, and three hundred and sixteen of moor, in Knockangoll, Ballakesty, and Cardoneston, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of fifty shillings; and sixty messuages, forty gardens, two hundred and forty acres of arable, three hundred of pasture, two hundred and forty of moor, and two hundred of underwood, in Kyllnedobragh and Killaskelyin, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of fifty shillings. This priory paid, annually, four marcs proxies to the bishop of Meath.

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## X.

From Carte's *Ormond*, vol. iii.

THE REMONSTRANCE OF THE CATHOLICS OF IRELAND, DELIVERED TO  
HIS MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS AT TRIM, 17TH MARCH, 1642.

To the King's most excellent Majestie.

Most gracious soveraigne,

WEE your majestie's most dutifull and loyall subjects, the catholiques of your highness kingdome of Ireland, being necessitated to take armes for the preservation of our religion, the mainetenance of our majestie's rights and prerogatives, the naturall and just defence of our lives and estates, and the liberties of our country, have often since the beginning of these troubles attempted to present our humble complaynts unto your royall view; but we are frustrated of our hopes therein by the power and vigilance of our adversaryes (the now lords justices and other ministers of state in this kingdome), who, by the assistance of the malignant partie in England, now in armes against your royall person, with less difficultie to attain the bad ends they proposed to themselves, of extirpateing our religion and nation, have hitherto debarred us of any access to your majestie's justice, which occasioned the effusion of much innocent blood, and other mischiefs in this your kingdome, that otherwise might well bee prevented. And whereas of late notice was sent unto us of a commission granted by your majestie to the right honorable the lord Marques of Ormond, and others, authorizing them to heare what we shall say or propound, and the same to transmitt to your majestie in writeing, which your majestie's gracious and princely



favour, wee finde to bee accompanied with these words, viz. (albeit wee doe extremely detest the odious rebellion which the recusants of Ireland have without ground or colour rayseed against us, our crowne, and dignitie) which words wee doe in all humilitie conceive to have proceeded from the misrepresentations of our adversaries; and therefore do protest, we have been therein maliciously traduced to your majestie, haveing never entertayned any rebellious thought against your majestie, your crowne, or dignitie; but allways have beene, and ever will continue, your majestie's most faithfull and loyall subjects; and doe most humbly beseech your majestie so to owne and avowe us; and as such we present unto your majestie these ensueing grievances and causes of the present distempers.

Imprimis, The catholiques of this kingdome, whome no reward could invite, no persecution enforce, to forsake that religion professed by them and their ancestors for thirteen hundred years, or thereabouts, are, since the seconde yeare of the reigne of queene Elizabeth, made incapable of places of honour or trust, in church or commonwealth; their nobles become contemptible, their gentry debarred from learning in universities or public schools within this kingdom; their younger brothers put by all manner of employment in their native country, and necessitated (to their great discomfort, and impoverishment of the land) to seeke education and fortune abroad; misfortunes made incident to the said catholiques of Ireland only (their numbers, qualitie, and loyaltie considered) of all the nations of Christendom.

2. Secondly, That by this incapacitie, which in respect of their religion was imposed upon the said catholiques, men of meane condition and qualitie, for the most part were in this kingdome, imployed in places of greatest honour and trust, who being to begin a fortune, built it on the ruins of the catholique natives, att all times lying open to be discountenanced and wrought upon: and who (because they would seem to be carefull of the government (did, from tyme to tyme, suggest false and malicious matters against them to render them suspected and odious in England; from which ungrounded informations, and their many other ill offices, these mischiefes have befallen the catholiques of Ireland. First, the opposition given to all the graces and favours that your majestie, or your late royall father, promised, or intended to the natives of this kingdom; secondly, the procuring of false inquisitions, upon faigned titles, of their estates, against many hundred years possession, and no travers, or petition of

right admitted thereunto, and jurors denying to find such offices were censured even to publique infamie, and ruin of their estates, the findinge thereof being against their consciences and their evidences; and nothing must stand against such offices taken of greate and considerable parts of the kingdome, but letters pattents under the great seale; and if letters pattents were produced (as in most cases they were), none must be allowed valid, nor yet sought to be legally avoyded: so that, of late tymes, by the underhand working of Sir William Parsons, knight, now one of the lords justices heere, and the arbitrary illegal power of the two impeached judges in parliament, and others drawn by their advice and counsell, one hundred and fifty letters pattents were avoyded in one morning; which course continued untill all the pattents of the kingdome, to a few, were by them and their associates declared void; such was the care those ministers had of your majestie's great seale, being the publique faith of the kingdome. This way of service, in show only pretended for your majestie, proved to your disservice; and to the immoderate, and too timely advancement of the said ministers of state, and their adherents, and nearly to the utter ruin of the said catholiques.

3. That, whereas your majestie's late royall father, king James, having a princely and fatherly care of this kingdome, was graciously pleased to grant several large and beneficial commissions, under the great seale of England, and severall instructions, and letters under his private signett, for the passing and securing of the estates of his subjects here by letters patents, under the great seale, and letters pattents accordingly were thereof passed, fynes payed, old rents increased, and new rents reserved to the crowne. And the said late king was further graciously pleased to graunt att severall tymes, to send divers honorable persons of integritie, knowledge, and experience to examine the grievances of this kingdome, and to settle and establish a course for redress thereof. And whereas your majestie was graciously pleased, in the fourth year of your raigne, to vouchsafe a favourable hearinge to the grievances presented unto you by agents from this kingdome; and there-upon did graunt many graces and favours unto your subjects thereof, for securitie of their estates, and redress for remove of those heavy pressures, under which they have long groaned; which acts of justice and grace, extended to this people by your majestie and your said royall father, did afford them great



content, yett such was, and is yet the immortal hatred of some of the said ministers of state, and especially of the said Sir William Parsons, the said impeached judges and their adherents, to any welfare and happiness of this nation, and their ambition to make themselves still greater and richer, by the total ruine and extirpation of this people, and under pretence of your majestie's service, the publique faith involved in those grants was violated, and the grace and goodness intended, by two glorious kings successively, to a faithful people, made unprofitable.

4. The illegall, arbitrary, and unlawfull proceedings of the said Sir William Parsons, and one of the said impeached judges, and their adherents and instruments in the court of wards, and the many wilfully erroneous decrees and judgments of that court, by which the heirs of catholique noblemen, and other catholiques, were most cruelly and tyrannically dealt withall, destroyed in their estates, and bred in dissolution and ignorance, their parents' debts unsatisfied, their sisters and younger brothers left wholly unprovided for, the auncient and appearing tenures of mesne lords unregarded, estates valid in law, and made for valuable considerations, avoyded against law, and the whole land filled upp with the frequent swarmes of escheators, feodaryes, pursuivants, and others, by authoritie of that court.

5. The said catholiques, notwithstanding the heavy pressures beforementioned, and other grievances, in part represented to your majestie by the late committees of both houses of parliament of this kingdom (whereunto they humbly desire that relation be had, and redress obtained therein), did readily, and without reluctance or repineing, contribute to all the subsidies, loanes, and other extraordinary graunts made to your majestie in this kingdome, since the beginning of your raign, amounting unto well neare one million of pounds, over and above your majestie's revenue, both certain and casuall: and although the said catholiques were, in parliament and otherwise, the most forward in graunting the said summes, and did beare nyne parts of ten in the payment thereof, yett such was the power of their adversaryes, and the advantage they gained by the opportunitie of their continuall address to your majestie, to increase their reputation in getting in of those moneys, and their authoritie in the distribution thereof to your majestie's greate disservice, that they assumed to themselves to be the procurers thereof, and represented the said catholiques as obstinate and refractory.

6. The army raised for your majestie's service here, at the great charge of the kingdome, was disbanded by the pressing importunitie of the malignant partie in England, not giving way that your majestie should advise therein with the parliament here; alledging the said army was popish, and therefore not to be trusted; and although the world could witness the unwarrantable and unexampled invasion made by the malignant partie of the parliament in England uppon your majestie's honour, rights, prerogatives, and principall flowers of your crowne; and that the said Sir William Parsons, Sir Adam Loftus, knight, your majestie's vice-treasurer of this kingdome, and others their adherents, did declare that an army of ten thousand Scots was to arrive in this kingdome, to force the said catholiques to change their religion, and that Ireland could never doe well without a rebellion; to the end the remaine of the natives thereof might be extirpated; and wagers were laid at a general assizes and publique meetings, by some of them then and now employed in places of greate profitt and trust in this kingdome, that within one yeare no catholique should be left in Ireland; and that they saw the ancient and unquestionable privileges of the parliament in England, in sending for and questioning, to, and in, that parliament, the members of the parliament of this kingdome, sitting the parliament here; and that by speeches, and orders printed by authoritie of both houses in England, it was declared that Ireland was bound by the statutes made in England, if named, which is the contrary to knowen truth, and the laws here settled for fowre hundred yeares, and upwards; and that the said catholiques were thoroughly enformed of the protestation made by both houses of parliament of England against catholiques, and of their intention to introduce lawes for the extirpation of catholic religion in the three kingdomes; and that they had certain notice of the bloody execution of priests there, only for being priests, and that your majestie's mercy and power could not prevail with them to save the lyfe of one condemned priest; and that the catholiques of England being of their own flesh and blood, must suffer, or depart the land, and consequently others of not so near a relation to them, if bound by their statutes and within their power. These motives, although very strong and powerful to produce apprehensions and fears in the said catholiques, did not prevaile with them to take defensive armes, much less offensive; they still expecting that your majestie in your high wisdome might be able in a short tyme, to apply



seasonable cures and apt remedies unto those evils and innovations.

7. That the committees of the lords and commons of this kingdome, having attended your majestie for the space of nyne months, your majestie was graciously pleased, notwithstanding your then weightie and urgent affayrs in England and Scotland, to receive, and very often with great patience to hear their grievances, and many debates thereof at large; during which debates, the said lords justices, and some of your privy councill of this kingdome, and their adherents, by their malicious and untrue informations conveyed to some ministers of state in England (who since are declared of the malignant partie), and by the continuall solicitation of others of the said privy councill, gone to England of purpose to cross and give impediment unto the justice and grace your majestie was inclined to afford to your subjects of this realme, did, as much as in them lay, hinder the obtayning of any redress for the said grievances, and not prevailing therein with your majestie as they expected, have, by their letters and instruments, laboured with many leading members of the parliament there, to give stopp and interruption thereunto, and likewise transmitted unto your majestie, and some of the state of England, sundry misconstructions and misrepresentations of the proceedings and actions of your parliament of this kingdome, and thereby endeavoured to possess your majestie with an evill opinion thereof; and that the said parliament had no power of judicature in capitall causes (which is an essential part of parliament), thereby aymeing at the impunitie of some of them, and others, who were then impeached of high treason, and at the destruction of this parliament: but the said lords justices and privie counsell, observing that no art or practice of theirs could be powerfull to withdraw your majestie's grace and good intentions from this people, and that the redress graunted of some particular grievances was to be passed as acts in parliament; the said lords justices, and their adherents, with the height of malice, envieing the good union long before settled, and continued between the members of the house of commons, and their good correspondence with the lords, left nothing unattempted which might rayse discord and disunion in the said house; and by some of themselves and some instruments of theirs in the said commons house, private meeteings of greate numbers of the said house were appointed, of purpose to rayse distinction of nation and religion, by meanes whereof a

faction was made there, which tended much to the disquiet of the house, and disturbance of your majestie's and the publique service; and after certain knowledge that the said committees were by the water side of England, with sundry important and beneficial bills, and other graces, to be passed as acts in that parliament; of purpose to prevent the same, the said faction, by the practice of the said lords justices, and some of the said privy councill and their adherents, in a tumultuous and disorderly manner, on the seventh day of August, 1641, and on severall days before, cried out for an adjournment of the house, and being over-voted by the voices of the more moderate parties, the said lords justices and their adherents told severall honorable peers, that if they did not adjourne the lords house on that day, being Saturday, that they would themselves prorogue or adjourne the parliament on the next Munday following, by meanes whereof, and of great numbers of proxies of noblemen, not estated, nor at any time resident in this kingdome (which is destructive to the libertye and freedom of parliaments here), the lords house was on the said seventh day of August adjourned, and the house of commons by occasion thereof, and of the faction aforesaid, adjourned soone after, by which meanes those bills and graces, according to your majestie's intention, and the great expectation and longing desires of your people, could not then pass as acts of parliament.

Within few dayes after this fatal and enforced adjournment, the said committees arrived at Dublin, with their dispatch from your majestie, and presented the same to the lords justices and councill, expressing a right sense of the said adjournment, and besought their lordships for the satisfaction of the people, to require short heads of that part of the dispatch wherein your majestie did appeare in the best manner unto your people, might be suddainely conveyed unto all the partes of the kingdome, attested by the said lords justices, to prevent dispaire or misunderstanding. This was promised to be done, and an instrument drawen, and presented unto them for this purpose, and yett (as it seemes desireing rather to add fuell to the fire of the subjects' discontents, than quench the same), they did forbear to give any notice thereof to the people.

8. After this, certain dangerous and pernicious petitions, contrived by the advice and councill of the said Sir William Parsons, Sir Adam Loftus, Sir John Clotworthy, knights, Arthure Hill, esquire, and sundry other malignant parties, and signed by



many thousands of the malignant partie in the city of Dublin, in the province of Ulster, and in sundry other partes in this kingdome, directed to the commons house in England, were at publique assizes and other publique places made known and read to many persons of qualitie in this kingdome, which petitions contayned matters destructive to the said catholiques, their religion, lives, and estates, and were the more to be feared by reason of the active power of the said Sir John Clotworthy in the commons howse in England in opposition to your majestie, and his barbarous and inhumane expressions in that howse against catholique religion and the professors thereof. Soone after an order conceaved in the commons house of England, that no man should bowe unto the name of JESUS (at the sacred sound whereof all knees should bend) came to the knowledge of the said catholiques, and that the said malignant partie did contrive and plot to extinguish their religion and nation. Hence it did arise that some of the said catholiques begun to consider the deplorable and desperate condition they were in, by a statute law here found among the records of this kingdome, of the second yeare of the raigne of the late queen Elizabeth (but never executed in her tyme, nor discovered till most of the members of that parliament were dead) by which no catholique of this kingdome could enjoy his life, estate, or lyberty, if the said statute were executed; whereunto no impediment remayned but your majestie's prerogative and power, which were endeavoured to be clipped, or taken away, as is before rehearsed; then the plot of destruction by an army of Scotland, and another of the malignant partie in England, must be executed; the feares of those two-fold destructions, and their ardent desire to maintain that just prerogative, which might encounter and remove it, did necessitate some catholiques in the North, about the 22nd of October, 1641, to take armes in maintenance of their religion, your majestie's rights, and the preservation of life, estate, and libertie; and immediately thereuppon tooke a solemn oath, and sent several declarations to the lords justices and councill to that effect, and humbly desired they might be heard in parliament, unto the determination whereof they were ready to submit themselves and their demands; which declarations being received, were slighted by the said lords justices, who by the swaying part of the said councill; and by the advice of the said two impeached judges, glad of any occasion to put off the parliament, which by the former adjournment was to meete soone after, caused a procla-

mation to be published on the 23rd of the said month of October, 1641, therein accuseing all the catholiques of Irelande of disloyaltie, and thereby declareing that the parliament was prorogued untill the 26th of February following.

9. Within few dayes after the said 23rd day of October 1641, many lords and other persons of ranke and qualitie made their humble address to the said lords justices and councill, and made it evidently appear unto them, that the said prorogation was against law, and humbly besought the parliament might sit according to their former adjournment, which was then the only expedient to compose or remove the then growing discontents and troubles of the land; and the said lords justices, and their partie of the councill, then well knowing that the members of both houses throughout the kingdome (a few in and about Dublin only excepted) would stay from the meeting of both houses, by reason of the said prorogation, did by proclamation two dayes before the time, give way the parliament might sitt, but so limited, that no act of grace, or anything else for the people's quiet or satisfaction, might be propounded or passed. And thereupon, a few of the lords and commons appeared in the parliament house, who in their entrance at the castle-bridge and gate, and within the yard to the parliament house doore, and recess from thence, were environed with a great number of armed men with their match lighted, and muskets presented even at the breasts of the members of both houses, none being admitted to bring one servant to attend him, or any weapon about him within the castle-bridge. Yet how thin soever the howses were, or how much over-awed, they both did supplicate the lords justices and councill, that they might continue for a tyme together, and expect the coming of the rest of both houses, to the end they might quiet the troubles in full parliament, and that some acts of securitie graunted by your majestie, and transmitted under the great seale of England, might pass to settle the minds of your majestie's subjects. But to these requests, so much conducing to your majestie's service and settlement of your people, a flatt denial was given; and the said lords justices and their partie of the councill, by their workeing with their partie in both howses of parliament, being then very thin as aforesaid, propounded an order should be conceived in parliament, that the said discontented gentlemen tooke armes in rebellious manner, which was resented much by the best affected of both howses; but being awed as aforesaid, and credibly informed, if



some particular persons amongst them stood in opposition thereunto, that the said musketteers were directed to shoot them att their goeing out of the parliament house, thorough which terror way was given to that order.

10. Notwithstanding all the beforementioned provocations, pressures, and indignities, the farr greater and more considerable parte of the catholiques, and all the cities and corporations of Ireland, and whole provinces, stood quiet in their howses, whereupon the lords justices and their adherents, well knowing that many members of the parliament of England stood in opposition to your majestie, made their application, and addressed their dispatches, full fraught with calumnies and false suggestions against the catholiques of this kingdome, and propounded unto them to send several great forces to conquer this kingdome; those of the malignant partie here were by them armed; the catholiques were not only denied arms, but were disarmed, even in the citty of Dublin, which in all successions of ages past continued as loyall to the crowne of England as any citty or place whatsoever: all other auncient and loyall cittyes and corporatt townes of the kingdome (by means whereof principally the kingdome was preserved in former tymes) were denied arms for their money to defend themselves, and express order given by the said lords justices to disarm all catholiques in some of the said cittyes and townes: others disfurnished were inhibited to provide arms for their defence; and the said lords justices and councill having received an order of both houses of parliament in England to publish a proclamation of pardon unto all those who were then in rebellion (as they termed it) in this kingdome, if they did submit by a day to be limited, the said Sir William Parsons, contrary to this order, soe wrought with his partie of the councill, that a proclamation was published of pardon only in two counties, and a very short day prefixed, and therein all freeholders were excepted; through which every man saw that the estates of the catholiques were first aimed att, and their lives next. The said lords justices and their partie having advanced their designe thus far, and not finding the success answerable to their desires, commanded Sir Charles Coote, knight and baronet, deceased, to march to the county of Wickloe, where he burnt, killed, and destroyed all in his way in a most cruell manner, man, woman, and childe; persons that had not appearing wills to doe hurt, nor power to execute it. Soone after, some foote companies did march in the night by

directions of the said lord justices, and their said partie, to the town of Sauntry in Fingall, three miles off Dublin; a country that neither then, nor for the space of four or five hundred years before, did feelee what troubles were or war meant; but it was too sweet and too near, and therefore fitt to be forced to armes. In that towne innocent husbandmen, some of them being catholiques, and some protestants taken for catholiques, were murdered in their inn, and their heads carried tryumphant into Dublin. Next morning, complaint being made of this, no redress was obtayned therein; whereupon some gentlemen of qualitie, and others the inhabitants of the country, seeing what was then acted, and what passed in the said last march towards the county of Wickloe, and justly fearing to be all murdered, forsooke their houses, and were constrained to stand together in their own defence, though ill provided of arms or ammunition. Heereupon a proclamation was agreed upon at the board, on the 13th of December, 1641, and not published or printed till the 15th of December, by which the said gentlemen, and George Kinge by name, were required to come in by, or upon the 18th of the said month, and a safety was therein promised them. On the same day another proclamation was published, summoning the lords dwelling in the English Pale near Dublin to a grand councill on the 17th of the said month; but the lords justices and their partie of the councill, to take away all hope of accomodation, gave direction to the said Sir Charles Coote, the said 15th day of the said month of December, to march to Clontarffe, being the house and town of the said George Kinge, and two miles from Dublin, to pillage, burn, kill, and destroy all that there was to be found; which direction was readily and particularly observed (in manyfest breach of public faith), by meanes whereof, the meeteing of the said grand councill was diverted: the lords not daring to come within the power of such notorious faith-breakers: the consideration whereof, and of other the matters aforesaid, made the nobilitie and gentry of the English Pale, and other parts of the province of Leinster, sensible of the present danger, and put themselves in the best posture they could for their naturall defence. Wherefore they employed lieutenant collonel Read to present their humble remonstrance to your sacred majestie, and to declare unto you the state of their affayres, and humbly to beseech relief and redress; the said lieutenant collonel, though your majesty's servant, and imployed in publique trust (in which case the law of nations



affords safety and protection), was without regard to either, not only stopped from proceeding in his imployment, but also tortured on the rack at Dublin.

11. The lord president of Munster, by the direction of the said lords justices (that province being quiet), with his accomplices, burnt, preyed, and put to death men, women, and children, without making any difference of qualitie, condition, age, or sex, in several parts of the province; the catholique nobles and gentlemen there were mistrusted and threatened, and others of inferior qualitie trusted and furnished with arms and ammunition. The province of Connaught was used in the like measure; whereupon most of the considerable catholiques in both the said provinces were inforced (without arms or ammunition) to look after their safety, and to that end did stand on their defence; still expecting your majestie's pleasure, and always ready to obey your commands. Now the plot of the said ministers of state and their adherents being even ripe, applications were incessantly by them made to the malignant partie in England, to deprive this people of all hopes of your majestie's justice or mercie, and to plant a perpetual enmity between the English and Scotch nations and your subjects of this kingdome.

12. That whereas this your majestie's kingdome of Ireland in all successions of ages, since the raigne of king Henry the Second, sometime king of England and lord of Ireland, had parliaments of their owne, composed of lords and commons in the same manner and forme, qualified with equal liberties, powers, privileges, and immunities with the parliament of England, and onely depend of the king and crowne of England and Ireland: And for all that tyme, no prevalent record or authentique precedent can be found that any statute made in England could or did bind this kingdome, before the same were here established by parliament; yet upon untrue suggestions and informations, given of your subjects of Ireland, an act of parliament, entituled, an act for the speedie and effectual reducing the rebells in his majestie's kingdome of Ireland to their due obedience to his majestie and the crowne of England; and another act intituled, an act for adding unto and explayneing the said former act, was procured to be enacted in the said parliament of England, in the eighteenth yeare of your majestie's raigne; by which acts, and other proclamations, your majestie's subjects, unsummoned, unheard, were declared rebells, and two millions and a half acres arrable, meadow, and profitable pasture, within this kingdome,

sold to undertakers for certain summes of monie; and the edifices, loghs, woodes, and bogges, wastes and other their appurtenances, were thereby mentioned to be granted and past gratis. Which acts the said catholiques doe conceive to have been forced upon your majestie; and although void and unjust in themselves to all purposes, yet containe matters of evil consequence and extreme prejudice to your majestie, and totally destructive to this nation. The scope seeming to aim at rebels only, and at the disposition of a certaine quantitie of land; but in effect and substance all the landes in the kingdome, by the words of the said acts, may be distributed, in whose possession soever they were, without respect to age, condition, or qualitie; and all your majestie's tenures, and the greatest part of your majestie's standing revenue in this kingdome, taken away; and by the said acts, if they were of force, all power of pardoning and of granting those lands is taken from your majestie; a precedent that no age can instance the like. Against this act the said catholiques do protest, as an act against the fundamentall lawes of this kingdome, and as an act destructive to your majestie's rights and prerogatives, by collour whereof, most of the forces sent hither to infest this kingdome by sea and land, disavowed any authoritie from your majestie, but do depend upon the parliament of England.

13. All strangers, and such as were not inhabitants of the citty of Dublin, being commanded by the said lords justices, in and since the said month of November, 1641, to depart the said citty, were no sooner departed, than they were, by the directions of the said lords justices, pillaged abroad, and their goods seized upon and confiscated in Dublin; and they desireing to returne under the protection and safetie of the state, before their appearance in action, were denied the same; and divers other persons of rank and qualitie, by the said lords justices imployed in publique service, and others keeping close within their doores, without annoying any man, or siding then with any of the said catholiques in armes, and others in severall parts of the kingdome liveing under, and having the protection and safetie of the state, were sooner pillaged, their howses burnt, themselves, their tenants and servants killed and destroyed, than any other, by the direction of the said lords justices. And by the like direction, when any commander in chiefe of any army promised or gave quarter or protection, the same was in all cases violated; and many persons of qualitie, who obtained the same, were ruined



before others; others that came into Dublin voluntarily, and that could not be justly suspected of any crime, if Irishmen or catholiques, by the like direction were pillaged in Dublin, robbed and pillaged abroad, and brought to their trial for their lives. The cittys of Dublin and Corke, and the ancient corporatt townes of Drogheda, Youghal, and Kingsale, who voluntarily received garrisons in your majestie's name, and the adjacent countrys who relieved them, were worse used, and now live in worse condition than the Israelites did in Egypt; so that it will be made appeare that more murders, breaches of public faith and quarter, more destruction and desolation, more crueltie, not fit to be named, were committed in Ireland, by the direction and advice of the said lords justices and their partie of the said councill, in less than eighteene months, than can be paralleled to have been done by any Christian people.

14. The said lords justices and their adherents have, against the fundamental lawes of the lande, procured the sitting of both howses of parliament for several sessions (nyne parts of ten of the naturall and genuine members thereof being absent, it standing not with their safety to come under their power), and made upp a considerable number in the howse of commons of clerks, souldiers, serveing men, and others not legally, or not chosen at all, or returned, and having no manner of estate within the kingdome; in which sitting, sundry orders were conceived, and dismisses obteyned of persons before impeached of treason in full parliament; and which passed or might have passed some acts against law and to the prejudice of your majestie and this whole nation. And during these troubles termes were kept, and your majesties court of cheefe place, and other courts sate at Dublin, to no other end or purpose, but by false and illegall judgments, outlawries, and other capitall proceedings, to attaint many thousands of your majesties most faithfull subjects of this kingdome, they being never summoned, nor having notice of those proceedings; sheriffs made of obscure meane persons, by the like practice, appointed of that purpose; and poore artificers, common souldiers, and meniall servants returned jurors, to pass upon the lives and estates of those who came in upon protection and public faith.

Therefore the said catholiques, in behalf of themselves and of the whole kingdome of Ireland, doe protest and declare against the said proceedings, in the nature of parliaments, and in the other courts aforesaid, and every of them, as being heynous

crimes against law, destructive to parliaments and your majestie's prerogatives and authoritie, and the rights and just liberties of your most faithfull subjects.

Forasmuch, dread sovereigne, as the speedy applycation of apt remedies unto these grievances and heavie pressures will tend to the settlement and improvement of your majestie's revenue, the prevention of further effusion of blood, the preservation of this kingdome from desolation, and the content and satisfaction of your said subjects, who in manifestation of their duty and zeal to your majestie's service, will be most willing and ready to employ ten thousand men under the conduct of well experienced commanders in defence of your royal rights and prerogatives; they therefore most humbly beseech your majestie, that you will vouchsafe gracious answers to these their humble and just complaints, and for the establishment of your people in a lasting peace and securitie, the said catholiques doe most humbly pray, that your majestie may be further graciously pleased to call a free parliament in this kingdome, in such convenient tyme as your majestie in your high wisdom shall think fitt, and the urgencie of the present affairs of the said kingdome doth require; and that the said parliament be held in an indifferent place, summoned by, and continued before some person or persons of honour and fortune, of approved faith to your majestie, and acceptable to your people here, and to be timely placed by your majestie in this government, which is most necessary for the advancement of your service and present condition of the kingdome; in which parliament, the said catholiques doe humbly pray these or others their grievances may be redressed; and that in the said parliament, a statute made in this kingdome in the tenth yeare of King Henry the Seventh, commonly called Poyning's Act, and all acts explayning or enlarging the same, be by a particular act suspended during that parliament, as it hath beene already done in the eleventh yeare of queen Elizabeth, upon occasions of far less moment than now doe offer themselves; and that your majestie, with the advice of the said parliament, will be pleased to take a course for the further repealing, or further continuance of the said statutes, as may best conduce to the advancement of your service here, and peace of this youre realme; and that no matter whereof complaint is made in this remonstrance, may debarr catholiques, or give interruption to their free votes, or sitting in the said parliament, and as in duty bound they will ever pray for your majestie's long and prosperous raigne over them.



Wee the undernamed being thereunto authorised, doe present and signe this remonstrance in the behalfe of the catholiques of Ireland, dated this 17th day of March, 1642.

GORMANSTON.

LUCAS DILLON.

ROBERT TALBOT.

JOHN WALSH.

According to your majestie's commission to us directed, we have received this remonstrance, subscribed by the lord viscount Gormanston, sir Lucas Dillon, knight, sir Robert Talbot, bart., and John Walsh, esq., authorised by, and in the behalfe of the recusants of Ireland, to present the same unto us to be transmitted to your sacred majestie, dated the 17th day of March, 1642.

CLANRICKARD and ST. ALBANS.  
MOORE.

ROSCOMMON.

MAU. EUSTACE.

## XI.

### PRESENTATION BY JAMES THE SECOND TO VACANT PARISHES IN THE DIOCESE OF MEATH.

Letter to the Most Rev. Patrick Tyrrell, bishop of Meath.

[For the Latin copy of this letter see the *Hibernia Dominicana*, page 19, 20, and 21; also Harris's *Life of King William the Third*, p. 235—Appendix to same, No. xxxvi. De Burgo was clearly mistaken in calling this bishop *Dr. Patrick Cusack*. Dr. Patrick Tyrrell had been translated from Clogher to Meath since 1688-9, so that his predecessor Dr. James Cusack had been a few years dead at the time.]

JACOBUS REX.

James the Second, by the Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc., to our Beloved and Faithful Patrick, Bishop of Meath, our chief Almoner, greeting: Whereas, the undernamed rectories and vicarages in your diocese are at present vacant, and the nomination and presentation, or the right of nomination and presentation, is known to belong to us; hence it is, that, desirous of unburthening our conscience respecting that matter, we of our special grace, certain knowledge, and mere notion, unto you have nominated and presented, and by these presents do nominate and present, as sufficient and competent, our beloved priests



undernamed, to have, hold, enjoy, occupy, and govern the said rectories and vicarages respectively, with all lands, tenements, tythes and produce, profits, oblations, rights, and appurtenances whatsoever to the said rectories and vicarages belonging, or in any way appertaining, or which by right to either of them belong or appertain, in manner and form to all intents and purposes as ample and beneficial as the last Rector and Vicar, or any other Rectors and Vicars of the said churches, rectories, and vicarages heretofore ruled, had, held, enjoyed, and occupied, or by right the premises ought to have, hold, enjoy, occupy, and govern, that is to say :—

Mr. (Magistrum) Luke Plunkett, to the Archdeaconship of Meath.

Dr. Michael Plunkett, one of the Masters of our Chancery (“unum ex Magistris Cancellariæ Nostræ Hiberniæ”), to the Rectory of Dunboyne.

Dr. Philip Tyrrell, to the Rectory of Lyn and Moylisker.

Dr. William Plunkett, to the Rectories of Killeen and Trevet.

Dr. James Cusack, to the Rectory of St. Kienan of Duleek and Vicarage of St. Mary of Drogheda.

Dr. William Nugent, to the Rectory of Castletown-Delvin.

Dr. Nicholas Fitzsimons, to the Rectories of Rathmore and Kilskeer.

Dr. George Plunkett, to the Rectories of Navan and Ard-sallagh.

Dr. Malachy Lynch, to the Rectory of Killallen.

Dr. John Tyrrell, to the Rectories of Kilmesson and Galtrim.

Dr. Patrick Curtis, to the Rectories of Clonalvey, Ardcath, and Pierston-Landy.

Dr. William Dease, to the Rectories of Kilcooly, Clonmaduff, and Rataine.

Dr. Peter Dillon, to the Rectories of Julianstown and Moorechurch.

Dr. Michael White, to the Rectories of Dunshaughlin and Culmullen, and Vicarage of ditto.

Dr. John Daly, to the Rectory of Kilbeggan.

Dr. Christopher Dillon, to the Rectory of Stamullen.

Dr. Oliver Nugent, to the Rectories of Armulchan, Ballymagarvy, and Timoole.

Dr. James Plunkett, to the Rectories of Rathbeggan and Rathreggan.

Dr. Thomas Fleming, to the Rectory of Drumconragh.



Dr. Thomas Dease, to the Rectory of Kilvolagh.

Francis Fleming, to the Rectory of Tara and Vicarage of Skryne.

Thomas Newman to the Rectories of Kilbrew and Kilmoon.

Mathew Dillon, to the Rectories of Scurlockstown and Newtown.

John Drake, to the Rectories of Staholmock and Drakestown.

Dr. Thomas Tying, to the Rectories of Castletown-Kilpatrick and Knock.

Hugh Smith, to the Rectory of Cruisetown.

Nicholas Plunkett, to the Rectory of Kilberry.

Robert Plunkett, to the Rectory of Agherpallis.

Dr. Robert Cusack, to the Rectories and Vicarage of Robertstown and Kilmainhamwood.

James Fagan, to the Vicarage of Doustown and Castle-Cor.

Francis Luttrell, to the Rectories of Oldcastle and Loughcrew.

James Reilly, to the Rectories of Moylagh and Clonibreny.

Edmund Lynch, to the Rectory of Killue.

James Cormac, to the Rectory of Reynagh.

John Tyrrell, to the Rectory of Rathcounell.

Richard Nugent, to the Rectory of Carrick.

Edward Molloy, to the Vicarage of Farkall.

John Hoey, to the Vicarage of Clonard.

George Everard, to the Rectory of Emlaghcor.

Mathias Geoghegan, to the Rectory of Laracor.

Dr. John Reilly, to the Vicarage of Rathmolian.

James Reilly, to the Rectory and Vicarage of Garlandstown.

Patrick Dard, to the Vicarage of Athboy.

James Dillon, to the Vicarage of Dromrany.

Charles Reilly, to the Vicarage of Cruisetown.

Philip Reilly,\* to the Rectories of Grangegeith and Mountnewtown.

Thomas Reilly, to the Rectory of Kilcarvan.

Patrick Slannane, to the Rectories of Donore and Knockomon.

\* This venerable pastor was buried in the churchyard of Mountnewtown, and for some years previous to his death had his grave marked out and a stone cross erected as his headstone. The cross is fixed in a pedestal, and measures four feet ten inches in length, by six and a half inches. The crossbar measures one foot eight inches. There is a figure of the crucifixion carved on the upper part of the cross, beneath which are a skull and bones, and under these the following inscription :

Peter Fahy, to the Rectory of Kilmore.

Garrett Dease, to the Rectory of Moyglare.

Thomas Coleman, to the Rectories of Donamore and Douth.

George Fleming, to the Rectory of Syddan.

Philip Carolan, to the Vicarage of Rathkenny.

Charles Molloy, to the Rectory and Vicarage of Reynagh.

Entreating and ordaining, nevertheless, and by this our firm injunction commanding, as far as regards said rectories and vicarages, as above distributed to the aforesaid priests, and respectively premised to and for them, and all their rights and appurtenances respectively to provide, and letters of collation and provision, without delay, to execute and expedite, or that you will order them to be made and expedited, and perform all other matters requisite for the same, such being our will.

Given at our Castle of Dublin, the 4th of the month of June, 1690, and in the sixth of our reign.

By command of the king,

MARQUIS D' ABBEYVILLE.

## XII.

### LETTER OF DR. PLUNKETT TO CARDINAL CASTELLI.

From the unpublished MSS. of the late Dr. Plunkett, Bishop of Meath.

EMINENTISSIME CARDINALIS PRÆFECTE,

Dum adhuc Lutetiæ Parisiorum versarer ad Eminentiam vestram litteras misi, optans ut *parocia de Navan* cum annexis in diecesi Midensi mihi, si nihil obstaret, ad sedem episcopalem

This  
cross  
was er-  
ected  
by the  
Reverend  
Father  
Philip  
Reilly,  
Anno  
Domini  
1711.

At all interments the coffin is placed on the grave of the old pastor, and the *De profundis* entoned previous to burial.



et dignitatem tuendam conferretur. Ab Eminentia vestra die decima Aprilis anni præteriti rescriptum est idcirco "votis meis vix posse satisfieri quod eadem parœcia a D. Christophero Fleming prædecessore, dum adhuc viveret, resignata fuisset in favorem D. Patricii Moore non sine litterarum Apostolicarum auctoritate, quæ quidem resignatio inani fortasse aventu in dubium revocaretur nec aliunde de adserta, cessione prædicti Moore plenè constaret". Responsionis hujus tenori obsecuturus in Hiberniam profectus sum; ibique statim ab adventu meo significavi circa prædictam parochiam nolle me litem intentare. Mihi autem nondum ingresso Midensem diœcesim allata est istius ecclesiæ parochialis resignatio a prædicto Patricio Moore in manibus summi Pontificis sponte facta, quam his annexam litteris Eminentia vestra recipiet.

Mutatis ita circumstantiis spero nihil impedire quo minus Sacra Congregatio de Propagande Fide votis meis annuat. Vacantis igitur nunc per prædictam resignationem *parœciæ de Navan cum annexis* in diœcesi Midensi petitionem iterum facio; et precor ut ea mihi a Sanctissimo Domino nostro P.P. Pio VI. ad sedem episcopalem et modum tuendæ meæ dignitatis conferatur. Eo minus in presenti negotio difficultatis occurrit, quod prædictus Patricius Moore, ne vel uno quidem die possessor extitit Ecclesiæ parochialis de Navan, Licet enim litteræ Apostolicæ, quibus ipsi dicta collata fuit Ecclesia, Romæ datæ fuerint anno millesimo septingentesimo septuagesimo sexto nono calendas Maii, possessionem tamen nunquam cepit, immò nec canonice petivit, uti annexo instrumento testantur *Archidiaconus Midensis et Rector de Ardraccan*, viri graves ambo et fide digni, ambo vicini oppido de Navan, ubi orta est controversia circa validitatem resignationis factæ a prædicto Christophero Fleming in favorem prædicti Patricii Moore. Huc accedit, quod D. Moore qui a pluribus jam annis rector est ecclesiæ parochialis *de Kilberry* in diœcesi Midensi, sorte gaudet haudquaquam infelici. Ultimus possessor *parœciæ de Navan* fuit dictus Christopherus Fleming, qui mense Januario anni 1779, ex hac vita migravit. Administrata est ab illo fere tempore Episcopi nomine jussuque propter pendentem litem aut saltem non extincta dubia circa validitatem memoratæ resignationis. Hanc administrationem a mense Octobri ultimo ipse suscipi: sed non aliam quam administratoris egi vel ago personam.

Quoniam vix dubitare possum quin ad sedem Episcopalem a beatissimo Patre nostro mihi prædicta conferatur Ecclesia Paro-

chialis, peto etiam ut mihi, in hac hypothese ultimo possessori successuro, cedant deductis impensis quibusque necessariis fructus durante administratione percepti. Modici quidem sunt: sed librorum et sacrarum vestium emptione necnon longi sumptibus itineris plurimum gravato non spernendum subsidium vel modicum. Parochialem Ecclesiam de Navan eâ potissimum mente statim administrandam suscepi, ut eam Deo juvante reliquis Midensibus ecclesiis exemplar et formam exhiberem, ut ipse citius inciperem *facere*, sicque majori cum fiducia docere possem et exhortari. Votis, aspirante gratia divine, respondet eventus. Plebis hujus minuitur ignorantia, mutantur sensim mores, messisque spes majoris affulget. Frequentius concionandi, catechizandi frequentius ab episcopo parochi sponte sumunt exemplum; quodque per se præstare conatur episcopus, id quemque pudet non imitari. Hæc omnia jampridem exponere cupienti vix licuit, urgebant adeo novi muneris innumera gravissimaque negotia. Dum ab Eminentissimo Cardinale Præfecto responsum expecto per Excellentissimum Nuntium Apost. Bruxellensem Deum Opt. Max. precor ut Eminentiam vestram sopitem diutissime servet atque incolumem.

Eminentiae vestrae

Humillimus addictissimusque Servus

P. J. PLUNKETT,

Episcopus Midensis.

Navan, datum die 29 Aprilis, 1780.

COPY OF REV. PATRICK MOORE'S RESIGNATION OF THE PARISH OF  
NAVAN.

From the unpublished MSS. of the late Dr. Plunkett.

Cum beatissimus Pater noster Pius divina Providentia Papa VI., duobus annis jam retro elapsis mihi infrascripto Patricio Moore, diœcesis Midensis in Hibernia Presbytero pro parochia de Navan cum annexis per resignationem Reverendi admodum Domini D. Christopheri Fleming, ejusdem nuperi pastoris, tunc vacante, litteras Apostolicas gratiose contulerit; cumque prædictos litteras in manus Illustrissimi et Reverendissimi D. D. Eugenii Geoghegan, Midensis, dum viverit, episcopi coadjutoris, timore quodam reverentiali percussus, et quadantenus invitatus, præsentibus pluribus ejusdem diœceseos pastoribus resignaverim: Eandem jam parochiam cum annexis unâ cum omnibus juribus, prærogativis, etc., easdemque litteras Pontificias Comæ licet aliunde confirmatas ad omnes in posterum lites



præcavendas, omnesque scandalosas commotiones radicitus amputandas, in publicum etiam veri tenerique mei in Christi salvatoris sponsam amoris indicium, filialeque in Illustrissimum Midensis Ecclesiæ Præsulum obsequium, Sanctitati suæ spontaneæ prorsus et libere resigno. Datum hac decima nona Julii die anni millessimi Septingentesimi Septuagesimi noni.

PATRICIUS MOORE,  
Presbyter Midensis.

Testibus Christophero Chevers,  
D<sup>s</sup> Midensis V.G.

Patricio Smith, Pastore de Ardbraccan.

Then follows the attestation of the Most Rev. Dr. Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, that the document was genuine and authentic, dated at Dublin on the 24th of July, 1779.

LETTER OF DR. PLUNKETT TO THE CARDINAL PREFECT OF THE PROPAGANDA, AFTER THE HOLY SEE HAD COLLATED HIM TO THE PARISH OF NAVAN.

EMINENTISSIME CARDINALIS PREFECTE,

Dicecesim hanc Midensem a quatuor et amplius mensibus visitanti nec nisi nuper domum reverso nunc tandem licuit significare, acceptas a me fuisse, quas Excellentissimus ac Reverendissimus D. Nuntius Apostolicus Bruxellensis ad me transmisit litteras Eminentiae vestrae, Romæ 24 Junii datas, quibus certior factus sum, mihi a Sanctissimo Domino nostro collatam fuisse parœciam de Navan, mittendasque primo quoque tempore Apostolicus de hac re litteras, quarum etiam paulo post transumptum accepi. Per Eminentissimum Cardinalem Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Prefectum sciat obsecro sua sanctitas perpetuam apud me fore hujus novæ beneficentiæ memorium; sciat Sacra Congregatio vividos in me grati animi sensus excitari propenso quo me ornat studio. Gratias autem ago speciali modo debitas Eminentiae vestrae quippe quæ et statim impetravit quod desideraveram, et impetratum humanissime significaverit. In vehementi, qua meum desiderium Excellentissimus Nuntius Bruxellensis commendatione prosecutus est, novum erga me Illustrissimi ac Reverendissimi viri benevolentiae specimen gratissimus agnosco. Sine beneficio nuper collato, quaecunque sit, decenter vivendi nulla spes Episcopo Midensi fuisset. Illud autem possidentem, et, quod nunquam esse futurum ope divinæ gratiæ confido, immemorem egenorum nihil opportuna Eminentissimi Cardinalis adhortatione potentius ad charitatem exercendam stimulare: et,

quemadmodum officium monet, ita voluntas impellit ut Sanctissimi Domini nostri benignitate, sacræque congregationis opinione prorsus indignus haud inveniar.

Quod præstitisse me jampridem oportuit, Eminentissime Cardinalis præstare jam tandem liceat, gratulari nimirum Eminentiae vestrae nova dignitate latiore aperiri campum, in quo de universali Ecclesia insignius merearis. Gratulor Hiberniae nostræ, quæ de illo Sacrae Congregationis Præfecto nihil non faustum auguratur, quem doctrina, pietas, egregiæque dotes non minus quam apostolicæ vocis oraculum ad præclarum munus vocaverunt. Tibi, nobis totique reipublicæ Christianæ diutissime vivas ex animo precatur.

Eminentissime Cardinalis Præfecte,

Eminentiae vestrae humillimus observantissimusque

PATRICIUS JOSEPHUS PLUNKETT,

Episcopus Midensis in Hibernia.

Navanæ, 19 Decembris, 1780.

### XIII.

#### THE PARISH OF RATOATH—THE UNION OF DONAMORE.

##### Addenda.

During the pastorate of the Rev. Dr. Michael Plunkett, V.G., the parishes of Grenogue, Kilbride, and Donamore were united to Ratoath and formed into one union. After the death of Dr. Plunkett, in 1727, the parishes of Grenogue, Kilbride, and Donamore were grouped together, and the Rev. Patrick Boylan, a native of the union of Stamullen, was appointed pastor. The following is a copy of his letter of appointment by Dr. Luke Fagan, bishop of Meath :

“ Lucas Dei et Sanctæ Sedis Apostolicæ Gratia Episcopus Midensis, Domino Patricio Boylan, Presbytero Midensi salutem in Domino. Inter cætera quæ pro Pastoralis nostri officii Debito præstare cupimus illud præcipue nobis cordi est, ut Parochialibus Ecclesiis, quibus de Rectoribus per nos providendum est, tales præficiamus, qui officio, et ministerio curæ animarum, quod omnium gravissimum est, laudabiliter satisfaciant. Vacante igitur mense Augustii, anno 1727, Ecclesia Sanctæ Brigidæ de



Kilbride, et Ecclesia Sancti Nicolai de Grenogue per obitum Reverendi Doctoris Michaelis illarum, dum viveret, ultimi possessoris eas per verbalem collationem tibi gubernandas concessimus; at quia illarum proventus adeo tenues sint, ut nec vel uni sacerdoti sustendendo sufficiant idcirco Ecclesiæ Sancti Patricii de Donaghmore perpetuam curam, ac collationem tibi conferimus, cum illi forsitan annexis, ac omnibus juribus et pertinentiis suis universis, scientes, præmissis de Jure, præmittendis, te esse verum, probum et idoneum tamillius, quam supradictarum Ecclesiarum gubernandi. Quocirca præcipimus et mandamus in virtute sanctæ obedientiæ, ac sub pœnis, et censuris contra inobedientes superiorum mandatus a Jure inflictis, et arbitrio nostro infligendis, ut cum pro parte tua vigore præsentium aliquis sacerdos Secularis, vel Regularis requisitus fuerit, ad ipsam parochialem ecclesiam præfati loci de Donaghmoor accedat, teque in corporalem realem et actualement possessionem illius auctoritate nostra Inducat, et defendat Inductum, amoto exinde quolibet Illicito detentore, quem nos etiam harum serie amovemus, et denuntiamus amotum. In quorum fidem præsentem Litteras manu ac sigillo nostri officii, necnon per secretarium nostrum referendatas expediri Jussimus *ex loco Refugii nostri* hac die 26 Maii, anno 1729.

LUCAS EPISCOPUS MIDENSIS.

De Mandato Illustrissimi Domini mei,  
Nicholas Dempsey, Secretarius.

The record of the induction of Rev. Patrick Boylan is inserted in the original manuscript in the following words:

Ego infra scriptus requisitus pro parte Reverendi Domini Patricii Boylan, auctoritate Illustrissimi Domini Lucæ Episcopi Midensis induxi præfatum Dominum Patricium Boylan in realem, personalem, et actualement possessionem trium supradictarum parochiarum, viz. Sancti Patricii de Donaghmoore, Sanctæ Brigidæ de Kilbride, et Sancti Nicolai de Grenoge, hac vigesima octava die Maii anno 1729—ita testor.

FRANCIS CURTIS.

The year of Rev. Patrick Boylan's death is now unknown.

*The Rev. John M'Kenna succeeded*, and lived at Kilbride. At that time there was a mud wall thatched chapel convenient to the cross-roads of Priesttown, in the parish of Kilbride, and another at Dunamore. At the visitation of Dr. Plunkett to this union on the 12th of August, 1788, he found "one chapel

rebuilt on a larger scale, and two schools". Father M'Kenna died at an advanced age, on the 28th of July, 1782, and was buried, as I have been informed, in the churchyard of Kilbride.

*The Rev. Patrick Ferrall succeeded.* He had been curate in Navan for several years under Dr. Plunkett, and after his appointment to Dunamore, lost no time in communicating a fresh impetus to religion and education. The old chapel of Kilbride was already crumbling into ruin, and the worthy pastor having procured a site from a Protestant family named Brassington, erected the present chapel of Kilbride; the iron cross of which, in 1798, formed a target for the soldiers.\* Early in that memorable year a warrant was issued for the arrest of Father Ferrall, in consequence, it is said, of his deep sympathy for the cause of the people. He left the neighbourhood until the storm blew over, and the parish was in the interim administered by Rev. Christopher Halligan. At the close of 1798 the reverend pastor returned, and on the 12th of April, 1801, he died† of fever caught in the discharge of his duties. He was a zealous priest and a stern uncompromising patriot. He was beloved by all who knew him for his many excellent qualities, and there are few sleeping in their graves held in holier or more grateful reverence. He was buried to the east of the old church of Greenogue, where a simple unornamented stone marks his resting place.

*The Rev. Patrick Lynn succeeded.* He was appointed on the day after the death of Father Ferrall, and resigned on the 15th of the same month.

*The Rev. Christopher Halligan succeeded.* He was appointed on the 15th of April, 1801, and was translated to Skryne after the resignation of the Rev. William Killen, in 1804 (see Pastors of Skryne).

*The Rev. Thomas Kennedy succeeded.* He was translated to Athboy on the 7th July, 1823 (see Pastors of Athboy).

About this time the parish of Kilbride was united to Dunboyne, the parish of Trevet was united to Skryne, and the parishes of Kilmoon, Kilbrew, Crickstown, Primatestown, Donamore, or

\* See life of Father Connell, parish priest of Dunboyne. The little iron cross is still on the chapel of Kilbride.

† In the diaries of Dr. Plunkett his death is thus entered: "This day died of a putrid fever, Rev. Pat Ferrall, parish priest of Greenoge and Kilbride". He took fever from attending a sick call.



Donnymoor, and Greenogue were formed into the present union of Curraha.

*The Rev. P. J. Bacon succeeded* as pastor of Curraha. He was born in the parish of Sonna, county Westmeath, studied in Maynooth, officiated as curate in Athboy, Bohermien, etc., and was appointed to Curraha on the 12th of January, 1825. After a short time he resigned and went to France.

*The Rev. Lawrence Healy succeeded.* This holy and zealous priest was born of an ancient and respectable family in the parish of Castletown-Kilpatrick, studied in Navan, went thence to the college of Bordeaux, and completed his course of philosophy and divinity in the Irish College of Paris. After his return to Ireland he officiated as curate in the parish of Castletown-Geoghegan, and was appointed to Curraha in 1829 or 1830 by Dr. Logan. He died on the 24th of March, 1833, and was buried in the churchyard of Castletown-Kilpatrick, profoundly lamented by all who knew him, especially by his afflicted parishioners. An old pastor, still living, told the writer of these pages that the most holy and most perfect priest he had ever known was Father Healy of Curraha.

*The Rev. Patrick Gough succeeded.* Present pastor was born in the union of Stamullen, studied in Navan, and completed his course in the Irish College of Paris. His first appointment was to the curacy of Dunboyne, where he officiated for three years under the Rev. Joseph Kennedy. On the 14th of July, 1831, he was removed to Curraha, and on the 28th of May, 1833, he was appointed successor to Father Healy. Since that time two very beautiful churches—gems of ecclesiastical architecture—have been erected by the worthy pastor, the one at Curraha, and the other at Donnymoore. They are ornaments to the diocese of Meath, and reflect the highest credit on the priest and people of the parish. The magnificent sculptured baptismal font, which anciently stood in the church of Crickstown, and which attracted a large share of public curiosity and attention when placed in the antiquarian department of the great Dublin Exhibition, occupies now a prominent position in the chapel of Curraha. The singular preservation of this old relic, the most perfect and ornamented of its kind that has escaped the vandalism of the Reformation, is highly creditable to the old pastors and people of the parish, and from the care taken of it at present, this venerable heirloom seems destined for many years to remind us of how our forefathers loved the beauty of God's house.

In all the heroic efforts of Irish patriots for the last thirty years to raise up our prostrate country, to obtain freedom for religion and education, *to emancipate the Irish serf from landlord feudalism, and to secure a home for the people in the land of their forefathers*, no priest in Meath, or in any other diocese, sympathised more warmly, or coöperated more earnestly and faithfully, than the patriot pastor of Curraha. *Diu sospes sit.*

#### XIV.

##### THE PARISH OF KILSKYRE.

[The following letters, found amongst the papers of the late Dr. Plunkett, regard the *right of advowson* to the parish of Kilskyre. At that time there were two claimants for the privilege, viz., Lord Fingall and the O'Reilly family of Ballinlough. Dr. Plunkett appointed the archdeacon of Meath, the Very Rev. Thomas Flood, and the Rev. William Fitzsimons as Commissioners, to investigate the relative claims and arguments of the parties at issue, and the following was the finding of the commission.]

TO THE RIGHT REV. DR. PLUNKETT, ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF MEATH.

By virtue of your lordship's commission hereunto annexed, and bearing date the 1st day of October, 1781, we, whose names are signed at foot, did meet at Skreen, on Tuesday, the 27th of November following, in order to execute the same; but finding the investigations necessary thereto would be tedious, we adjourned to Sydenham, where for two days we together examined and compared the deeds and documents produced, on the one part by the Right Honourable the Earl of Fingall, and on the other by James O'Reilly, Esq., Ballinlough, in support of their respective claims of advowson in Kilskeer parish, all which we represent as follows:

*Produced by the Earl of Fingall.*

*First*, A parchment old manuscript, sealed and dated 24th of January, 1619, between Richard Plunkett, of Giltown, in the county Meath, Esq., Anne Plunkett, *alias* Dillon, his wife, and Sir James Carroll, of Finglass, in the county of Dublin, knight, containing the sale of the lands of Kilskeer, Quittington, and Miltown, unto Luke, Lord Baron of Killeen, together with the *advowson, nomination, etc.*, to Kilskeer parish, and also the right of court baron of the mannour thereof; indorsed No. 30.



*Item*, Another like old parchment manuscript, sealed and dated on said day, 24th of January, 1619, between said Luke, Lord Killeen, and said Richard Plunkett, being a lease of nineteen years to the latter of said lands of Kilskeer, etc., in which deed is mentioned again *the said advowson, presentation, etc.* No. 29.

*Item*, Another like parchment manuscript, sealed and dated 14th July, 1628, containing a release to Luke, said Lord Killeen, from Richard Plunkett of Girly, Esq., for £1,600, being the purchase money of Killkeer, Miltown, etc. No. 33.

*Item*, Another like parchment manuscript, signed and sealed "*Fingall*", dated 9th of July, 1661, containing a Latin presentation to Kilskeer and Killallon parishes, of the person of John Lenox,\* clerk to Henry, then bishop of Meath. No. 32.

*Item*, A well written manuscript parchment (imperfect because not signed), purporting a Latin presentation, dated "*Anno Domini 1663*", from Luke, Earl of Fingall, to Henry, then bishop of Meath, of the person of James Morphey, D.D., for *Kilskeer parish*. Indorsed No. 18.

*Item*, A paper manuscript, dated 12th of June, 1722, between Josiah, then bishop of Leighlin and Ferns (but late rector of Kilskeer parish), and the Earl of Arran (guardian to the then Earl of Fingall), relative to a yearly rent-charge claimed by said earl on Kilskeer rectory. No. 56.

*This closes the documents produced by the Earl of Fingall.*

#### DOCUMENTS PRODUCED BY JAMES O'REILLY, ESQ.

*First*, The Rev. John Reilly, on the 16th of November, 1781, writes on behalf of said James O'Reilly, Esq., and by his order, to the Rev. Thomas Flood, one of the commissioners, "*That said James's pretensions to the advowson of Kilskeer are founded on three presentations made by him or his predecessors, added to the papers sent on said 16th of November to Rev. Mr. Flood*".

*Item*, A manuscript of several sheets, bound together by a tape, which seems to be an *imperfect* copy of an answer to some bill, filed heretofore (but in what court does not appear), with

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\* He was a Protestant minister; the Protestant bishop was Henry Jones. The two other cases mentioned subsequently were clearly Protestant presentations. The Catholic bishop of Meath in 1661-3, was Anthony Geoghegan. Lord Fingall, therefore, brought forward no instance of the exercise of such a right in the Catholic Church.

names only of the defendants, viz., Edward Reilly and James Reilly, but not the name of complainant. We call it *imperfect*, the first for being marked at foot fol. 32, so that it has not any beginning; nor does it conclude, for it ends at fol. 76, with the words "Silvester or either of them"; moreover, there is no lawyer's name, nor sixth clerk, or agent to the same.

On perusing said manuscript volume at said fol. 32, we find the words following, viz., "That the said defendants, about the year 1700, put in their answer to some former bill, that complainant was entitled to the presentation of Kilskeer rectory, of which the defendant Edward, having purchased the advowson, did present Charles Proby, clerk, to the said church or living, vacant by Henry Purdon's death, and being refused by the bishop of the diocese (who by dates it is presumed was of the *Church of Ireland by law established*), the said defendant, Edward, brought his "*Quare impedit*" in the Common Pleas of Ireland, setting forth (fol. 35), that said Edward, in the year 1694, purchased the advowson of Kilskeer from Thomas Loftus, Esq., for £50.

*Item*, Three manuscript sheets (one marked fol. 5, another 12, and the *third* fol. 13, so blotted and interlined as to be almost unintelligible for want of beginning or sequel.

*Item*, Three scraps of like manuscript paper, kept together by a pin, almost lacerated; in one of these (marked\*) are the following words, viz., "but have heard that the then Earl of Fingall was some years before the year 1641 seized of the said advowson, and had the right of presentation thereto; and being so seized, that he did some years before the year 1641, grant the same to the said Richard Purdon and his heirs for ever, *and do deny*" (obliterated).

*Item*, For the three presentations (mentioned in the first document for James O'Reilly, Esq.), no proof has been offered or produced: so here we close that gentleman's assertions.

We remark that no witness or oral evidence has been produced before us by either of the said claimants, and submit this report to your lordship. Witness our hands and seals at Sydenham,\* in said diocese, this 29th day of November, 1781.

THOMAS FLOOD, Archdeacon of	} Commissioners.
Meath and Rector of Kells,	
WILLIAM FITZSIMONS,	

\* The present name of Sydenham is Corbalton Hall, the residence of Mathew Elias Corbally, Esq., M.P. for Meath.



## PARISH OF KILSKYRE—SECOND LETTER OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

Cause in advowson aforesaid :

TO THE RIGHT REV. DR. PLUNKETT, ROMAN CATHOLIC LORD BISHOP  
OF MEATH.

James O'Reilly, Esq., having made a farther exhibition in support of his aforesaid claim, your lordship has lately ordered us (who sign at foot) to report our opinion of the nature and validity, as well of the several titles and proofs withinmentioned in our report of November last, as of the three present titles now produced by said James O'Reilly, Esq., which last are here literally copied, marked A, B, C.

A.

“Ego infrascriptus fidem facio et attestor D.D. Jacobum O'Reilly de Ballinlogh, equitem jure patronatus Reverendum D. Bernardum Brady, diœcesis Midensis presbyterum, Illustrissimo ac Reverendissimo Fra. Agustino Chevers, prædictæ diœcesis Episcopo, pro Ecclesia de Kilskeer, præsentasse ; ipsumque consequenter ad hanc præsentationem ad præfatam Ecclesiam de Kilskeer ab Episcopo nominatum fuisse. In quorum omnium fidem hisce subscripsi hac die 18<sup>a</sup> Julii, Anno Domini 1772.

JACOBUS FLYNN, V.G. Midensis.

B.

The next exhibition by said Mr. O'Reilly is an original letter, dated the 29th of April, 1772, from the Right Rev. Dr. Chevers, then Roman Catholic Lord Bishop of Meath, addressed to (name unknown), wherein the said Bishop Chevers expresses a desire to oblige the said O'Reilly by nominating a pastor to Kilskeer parish. As far as justice and conscience will allow, the bishop promises to comply with said gentleman's claim of patronage to that parish, etc. Signed AUGUSTINE CHEVERS.

C.

Mr. O'Reilly farther exhibits another original letter, dated 14th of July, 1772, from said Bishop Chevers to said James O'Reilly, Esq., written mostly by said bishop's clerk, containing an account of the examination and fitness of the Rev. Mr. Brady, junior, of Oldcastle, for being appointed pastor of Kilskeer parish, in virtue and consequently to the said O'Reilly's

presentation: at foot of said letter the said Bishop Chevers writes with his own hand the following words, viz.:

MY DEAR AND MOST WORTHY SIR,

A numbness in my fingers, owing to a lingering nervous disorder, obliged me to make use of a clerk. It gives me particular pleasure to find your right of presentation is incontestible; you therefore may be assured I will be as careful to preserve it for you and your family as you should be. My most respectful compliments to you and Mrs. O'Reilly. Believe me to be, etc.

AUGUSTINE CHEVERS.

In execution of Dr. Plunkett's aforesaid commission and orders, we, the undersigned, do give our opinion on the whole proceedings in this cause, and say that the Right Honourable the Earl of Fingall has fully proved the right of advowson in Kilskeer parish to have been vested in his ancestors (from time immemorial) *appendant* to the mannour of Kilskeer,\* of which

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\* The Commissioners seem throughout to suppose a *right* on the part of one or other of the claimants. Now, let us grant that the lords of Kilskyre in Catholic times, in consequence of having erected a church and endowed it with temporalities, acquired the patronage of the church, and that the Holy See acquiesced in all this, a question naturally arises, *does this right persevere under every circumstance?* If the proprietors lost the faith, would they continue to possess the right? If the church and temporalities perished, would they still retain it? If, in place of the original church and temporalities—confiscated and lost—another church was erected by public subscription and by the pence of the poor, by *what right* would the proprietors call themselves patrons of the second church? *Possession is against them*, for the second church is the people's church, and its temporalities are the free offerings of the parishioners. Again, supposing that the advowson of Kilskyre, or right of nomination, survived the Reformation, that is, continued in the proprietor after the confiscation of the church property—continued, in fact, when there was neither church nor endowment to present to—another question arises, *could the proprietor make merchandise of the advowson—could he hand it over to another, without the consent or confirmation of the Holy See?* The first proof brought forward by Lord Fingall states that he purchased this property, *together with the advowson, nomination, etc.* Unless, therefore, that he can produce a rescript from the Holy See since 1619—a document, by the way, which is significantly absent from his proofs—it seems to me that he has brought forward no satisfactory testimony to establish his claim. As to the cases brought forward by Lord Fingall, it is manifest that they were *Protestant presentations*. But even if any bishop or bishops of Meath acknowledged or permitted the exercise of advowson on the part of the lords of Kilskyre, the fact would go for nothing, unless Lord Fingall could, *aliunde*, make good his claim. The late Dr. Plunkett, and perhaps many of his predecessors, frequently permitted the Catholic gentry to present to parishes; but assuredly their



he and they have been lords in possession, undisputedly ; we also find they exercised said right. We say that James O'Reilly, Esq., of Ballinlough, has not (hitherto) furnished in this cause any proofs to support his claim of advowson (*appendant*) in said parish. We also say that he has not sufficiently proved his claim of advowson in *gross* or personal in that parish : his exhibitions (marked A, B, C, in the last foregoing page) only suppose a right in that gentleman, which, we apprehend, could not be granted, "*ex motu proprio*", by the extraordinary collator, without the motives required in such cases by the canons.

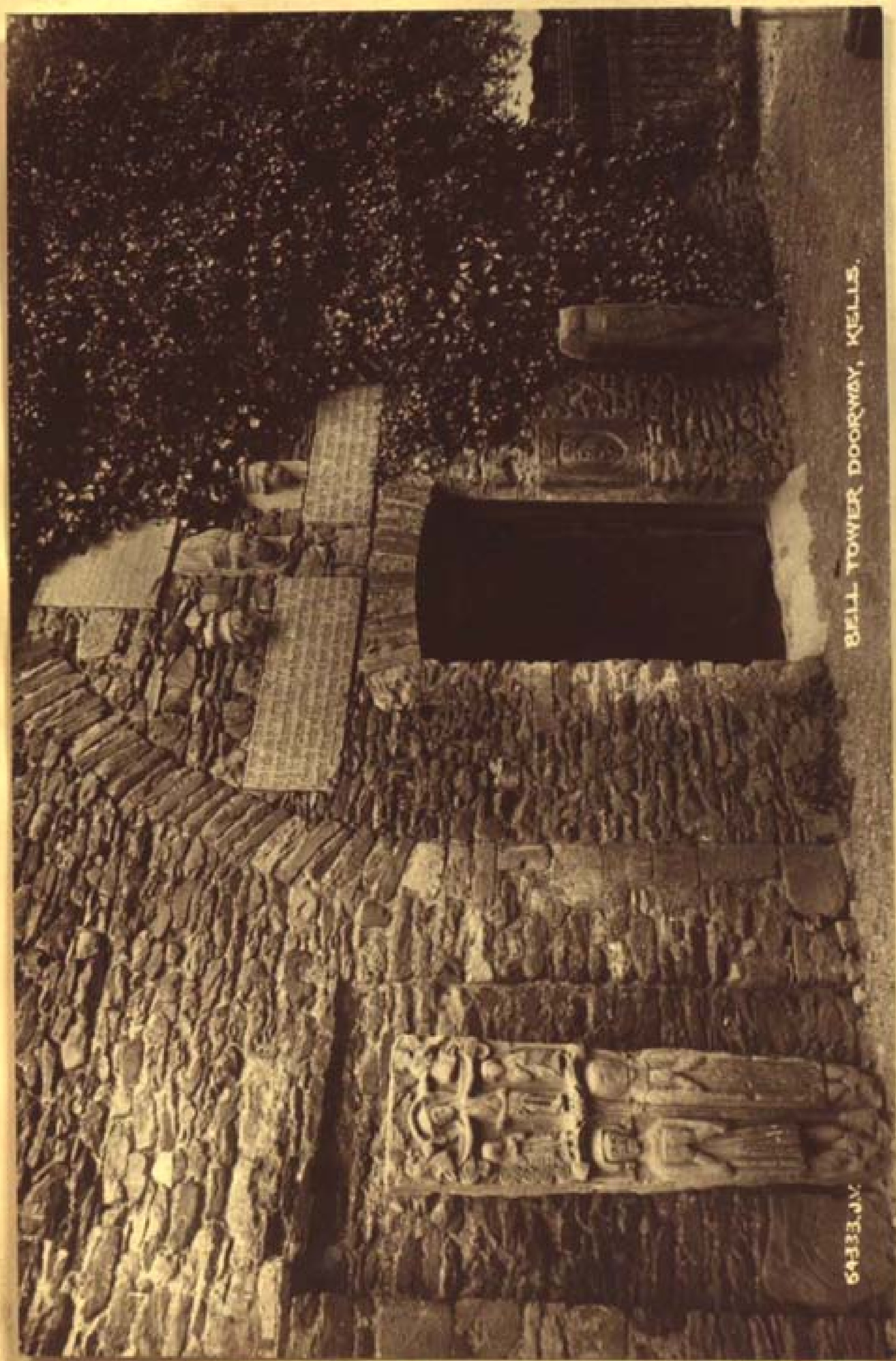
We farther say, that Mr. O'Reilly has not *prescription* in his favour, and on the whole conclude, that he is not founded in his claim to any right of advowson in the parish of Kilskeer.

Dated at Sydenham, the 15th day of March, 1782 (eighty-two).

THOMAS FLOOD, Archidiaconus	} Commissioners
Midensis et Rector de Kells,	
WILLIAM FITZSIMONS,	
	in this cause.

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condescension, or *modus agendi*, cannot bind their successors. Whatever concessions episcopal courtesy may have made to the Catholic gentry in times gone by, they certainly, as a body, have forfeited all claims *since the emancipation*. It is a sorrowful admission, but it is too true, that the Catholic nobility of Ireland are at this moment *the most worthless, the most heartless, and the most anti-national aristocracy in Europe*. By means of heroic sacrifices on the part of the Irish people, under the guidance of O'Connell, the Catholic gentry have been emancipated from political degradation, and have been qualified for imperial recognition and advancement in life. What has been the return ? *They have deserted the people ;* they have gone in soul and body to the Castle, and now scarcely a spark of feeling animates them for either faith or fatherland. It was not so with their chivalrous forefathers. As I speak of the Catholic aristocracy *collectively*, and not individually, "*qui potest capere, capiat*". At all events, the less intermeddling permitted to the gentry with the independence of the priesthood, the better for the Church and the country.



BELL TOWER DOORWAY, KELLS.

64333.J.V.



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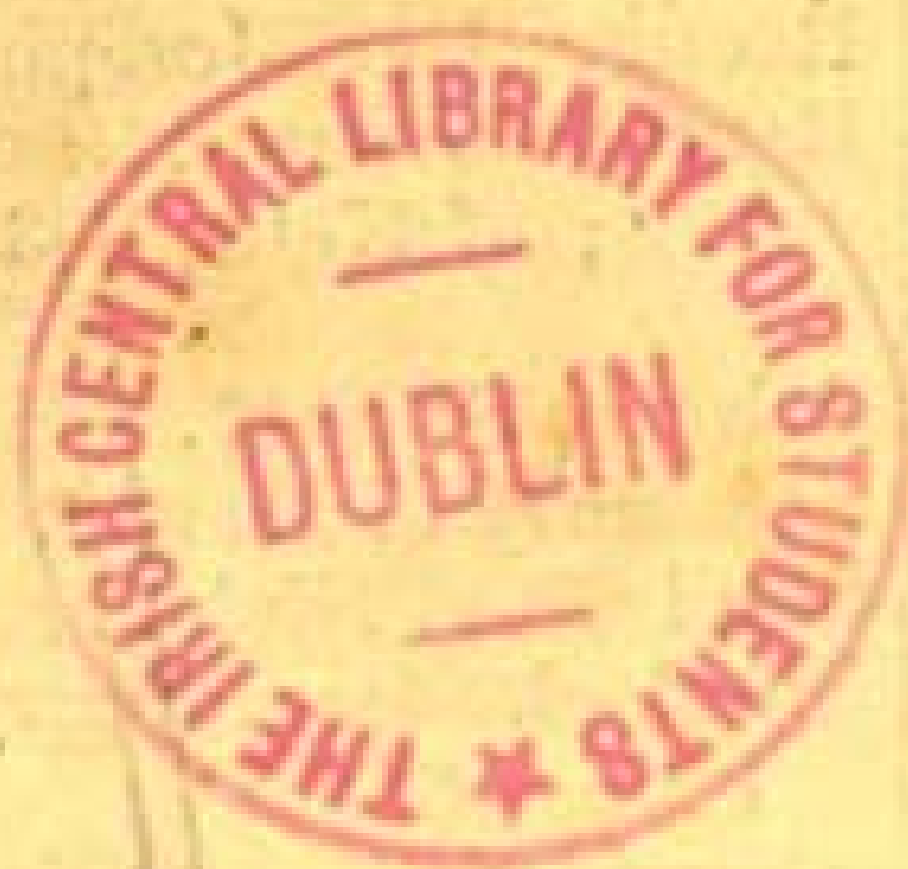
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