

On the History and Antiquities of the Parish of Dunmore,  
in the Baronies of Dunmore and Ballymoe, Co. Galway.

*By The Rev. J. Neary.*

i . — Introduction .

The scope of this paper differs from that of others which have appeared in this Journal concerning parishes in the Barony of Dunkellin, in that the area under observation is the present Catholic parish and not the official parish of Dunmore. The latter, which has now lost even its official administrative importance, was a complex area interdigitating to the N.W. with portions of Addergoole parish, and having several outlying “ islands ” to the N. and S. The shaded areas in the map indicate bogs and marshes as evidenced by the geological nature of the surface deposits, and are marked because their extent may probably have influenced the choice of site of ancient ring fort, castle and church. Within the limits of the modern parish I have set down every object of antiquarian interest which I could find, as well as the sites of some ring forts which have disappeared since they were mapped by the Ordnance Surveyors in 1838 or thereabouts. Outside the parish limits I have merely copied antiquities from the earliest edition of the Survey and do not know whether the objects marked are still extant.

The Ordnance Survey Letters are so brief that I have transcribed them in full, except a few lines relating to purely official matters.

The materials for a connected history of the parish, if they anywhere exist, are not within my reach, so this branch of the subject is treated in the form of separate notes, in which some repetition has been found unavoidable.

ii.— THE ORDNANCE SUEYEY LETTEES.  
J. O’Donovan to Geo. A. Larcom.

OF THE PARISH OF DUNMORE.

Tuam, Aug. 30th. 1838.

*Situation.*— This parish is bounded on the north by the County of Roscommon, and the parish of *Teampull a tochum* [1] in this county ; on the east by the parish of Bweenaunagh [2] (*buidheanach*) and Cloonbern ; on the south by Cloonbern and the parish of Tuam in which a part of it is isolated ; and on the west by the parish of Addragool.

*Name.*—In the ancient Irish Annals, this place is called *Dunmor*, signifying large Dun or earthen fort ; which is the true name, though present tradition interprets it as if it were written *Dun Moire*, the *Dun of Moira*, daughter of the great navigator Manannan.

*History.*—Tradition says that this place took its name from an earthen fort erected by *More* the daughter of *Manannan*, within which a large castle was afterwards erected immediately after the English invasion of *Haiste*, a distinguished chieftain of the Conquest, the ancestor of the present people called *Hosty*, now numerous in this part of the county. We have now no historical authority to prove when or by whom this castle of Dunmore was erected, but the tradition is vivid and I think true. It has been preserved by Donnell Treacy, who lives at the old Castle, from the lips of the poet Cormac O’Coman, [3] who lived to the age of 110 and who was the living Fintan [4] of the history of Connaught in his time.

Dr. O'Connor states in the Stowe Catalogue that the Annals of Connaught are the best authority for the history of the Castles of Connaught. Do they mention this Castle of Dunmore (in Conmaice Kinel Dubhain [5]) which was in later times called Dun Mor Fheorais?

The tradition [6] preserved by old Treacy from the mouth of the poet O'Coman, is that the noble *Haiste*, [7] the son of Membric, a distinguished warrior of the Welsh nation, commenced erecting a castle a short distance to the west of where Dunmore Castle now stands, but that the fairy who presides over the place, Mor Ni Mananain, not wishing that he should erect his fortress there, destroyed by night as much as his masons had erected by day, and that she continued to do so for several nights until Haiste consulted a Magician, who told him that *Mor-Ny-Mhanannain* did not wish him to place his fortress there, but that she would be willing to allow him to erect it on the site of her own fort, and Hasty, taking the advice of the Sage, and seeing the old *Dun* a favourable position, immediately commenced to build there, and More, being delighted to view so lofty a pile towering over the humble mounds of her ancient fortress, suffered no fairy to interrupt the work.

Hosty was not long in the quiet possession of this Castle when Bermingham came hither from the north, where he was after gaining a great victory, and drove him out of it partly by force and partly by treachery; and his descendants, who assumed the name of Mac-orish, maintained possession of it until the wars of Ireland, when Col. Hoath drove them out. This is all that tradition remembers of the history of this fortress.

This Castle stands on a small hill over a rivulet about a quarter mile to the west of the little town of Dunmore. The hill seems to have been originally crowned with an earthen *Dun*, from which the name, but it is now so effaced that no idea can be formed of its extent or character. The entire hill was enclosed by a strong wall now almost entirely destroyed, some of it scattered about in massy fragments, and some tumbled into the rivulet.

The Castle itself is a square building, measuring on the inside 45 feet in length, 27 in breadth, and, as well as I could judge by the eye, 60 in height. Walls 7ft. thick. It had three lofts, as appears from the windows and the holes for joists. It certainly does not appear to be the fabric erected by *Hosty-Mac Membric*. The Four Masters have collected the following annals of this place, from which it appears that it was an ancient Irish Military station before the arrival of the Anglo-Norman and Welsh families.

“ 1133 Cormac MacCarthy and Conor O'Brien led an army into Connaught, and killed Cathal O'Conor Raydamna of Connaught and O'Flyun, chief of *Sil-moc-bmain*, and they DEMOLISHED Dunmugdorn and DUN-MORE, and plundered a great part of the country.”

“ 1143 Morogh O'Melaghlin, King of Meath, was most treacherously taken prisoner by King Turlogh O'Conor, and confined with other Meathian prisoners in DUN-MORE.”

“ 1159 Murtagh MacLoughlin (presumptive monarch of Ireland) with the nobles of the Kinel-Connell, Kinel-Owen and Oriel, marched an army into Connaught and burned Dun-Mor, Dun-Ciar and Dun na ngall and devastated a great part of the country.”

These three notices are antecedent to the period of Hosty Mac Membric. The following are subsequent to it :

“ 1249 Dunmore was burned by the sons of the King of Connaught.”

“ 1271 Matthew O'Conor was killed by the English of Dunmore.”

“ 1284 Dunmore was burned by Fiachra O'Flynn.”

“ 1569 Sir Henry Sydney took (the Castle of) Dunmore Mac-Feorais and Roscommon.”

Archdall is wrong in making this the *Domhnach-padraig* of the Tripartite, as we shall show when treating of the parish of Donagh-patrick. It is sufficient here to observe that the two names are not identical, and that DUN-more is not a corruption of DOMHNACH-more as Donshaughlin in Meath is of *Domnach Seachlainn*. It is possible that it could be a corruption of it, but we know from history that it is not.

We therefore come to the historical conclusion that there was no abbey at *Dun-mor* in *Con-maicne Kinel-Dubhain* until the year 1425, when Walter de Birmingham, Lord Baron of Athenry, erected there a friary for Augustinian Eremites. The remains of this house are in the same state as described by the French artists in 1779 :

“ This abbey is in the town of *Dunmore*, and, I believe, was much larger, but cannot be traced as the ground *is level* and no ruins about, it being a kind of market, the part A. on the plan is a waste, the arches built up and B. is converted into a parish church where service is performed. Over the door C. are arms and an inscription which I copied. Said to be built by the lords of “ Athenry.”

There is a holy well called *Tobar na croishe naomhtha* in the townland of Cappagh, which is dedicated to the holy Cross of Christ.

In the townland of *Sruthair*, now Shrule, in the eastern extremity of this parish, the original parish church is said to have stood. Tradition says that it was built by Saint Patrick who left the impression of his knee in a stone still to be seen at the place,

There is an old church and graveyard in the townland of *Cill tsuibhne*, called after a *St. Suibhne*, of whom I recollect nothing.

Geraldus states that the sepulchral *cairn* of the antedeluvian *Ceasair* was pointed out in Connaught in his own time. Let me have his very words. I have stood on the cairn supposed to be hers but I have not historical evidence enough to prove the identity. Do not the Four Masters place her cairn over the river Boyle? See *Leahhar Gabhal*, and *Catal* ; MSS. T.C.D. If they are right—which I doubt—the *Carn Ceasrach* shewn to Cambrensis does not exist ; but if O’Flaherty be right in placing it in the barony of Clare in this county, it is still as perfect as that of her husband *Bith* on *Sliabh Beatha*. ’Tis curious to find these cairns still in existence !

#### DUNMORE PARISH — Further Particulars of.

Tuam, Sept. 4th, 1838.

There is a remarkable *Sheeaun* or fairy hill immediately opposite the Castle of Dunmore to the S.W. called *Cnoc-Mhanannain*, which should be marked on the map ; and not far distant a fort called *Rathcoll*.

At the time that the castle of Dunmore was stormed on Mac Feorish by Col.—? [8], one of Cromwell’s officers, the ancestor of the present John Burke of Kilmaine was, with his family, within the castle. The castle was battered and its outer wall almost entirely destroyed before Mac Feorish and Burke surrendered. All their estates were confiscated and Burke’s property, containing the townlands of Atty Flynn and Flaskagh, given to a family of the name Purcell. In the year 1821 the Purcells became extinct, and the tenants on the lands aforesaid offered possession to the present John Burke of Kilmaine, the lineal descendant of the Burke who forfeited them about the year 1650. John took the possession and maintained it till the year 1829 by Law and feudal force, but in that year he was defeated by a distant relation of

the last of the Purcells, aided by three attorneys of the Kelly's. John Burke however has succeeded in obtaining possession of the townland of Attyflynn by Law *and feudal skill*, the tenants, out of old respect for his family, having consented to give him possession of it !

All the old people here assert that Cormac O'Goman was the last bard of Connaught, and that his likeness and poems have been published (by Walker in his Irish Bards). I never heard a word about him before. Has Mr. Petrie ever heard of his poems ? Old Donnell Treacy who lives at the Castle of Dunmore, says that he saw him about 50 years ago, and that he was then more than one hundred years old. He was a blind man gifted with an extensive and tenacious memory. His poems were published in some Connaught Magazine about 40 or 50 years ago. [9]

iii.— HISTORICAL NOTES. [10]

Turlough O'Connor.—Early in the 13th Century the Barony of Dunmore appears to have been granted in fee by Richard de Burgh to the de Berminghams, or MacFeorais, as they were called by their Irish neighbours, and the castle which they built on the ancient Dun became known as Dunmore MacFeorais. The barony was, of course, part of the dominions of the O'Connors, Kings of Connaught and last Ardrigh of Ireland, who, after the conquest of Connaught by de Burgh, were, at least nominally, confined to five cantreds along the Shannon held in fee from the King of England. The great fort itself, as the *Dún Mór* of Turlough O'Connor, has earlier historical associations.

For fifty years (1106-1156) Turlough stands forth as indisputably the one dominant figure in Ireland. The clansmen who had no allodial independence, followed their leader to battle in every province, and he led them to victory in dozens of hard-fought fields from Cork to Tory Island, from Limerick to Dundalk. Only once, in 1133, did the Southernns invade his territory and destroy his fortress at Dunmore, and for this he made sanguinary reprisals. He again and again invaded Munster, Leinster and Ulster, and fought his last battle off the coast of Inishowen, in which he inflicted a disastrous defeat on the combined forces of the O'Loughlins and the Danes, and returned completely victorious to Connaught, 1156. In the same year he died. He had reigned a king for fifty years, and in that great crisis of our history, when MacMurrough became viciously active, O'Connor alone was competent to meet and defeat him in Leinster in 1153, and compel him to restore Dervorgilla to O'Rourke.

“Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war,” and Turlough was great in both. He bridged the Shannon at Athlone and Shannon Harbour and the Suck at Ballinasloe, erected a wonderful stone castle at Tuam, and founded the Abbey at Cong, His artists made the stone cross at Tuam, and the processional cross of Cong, and he established a mint for coinage. Tradition says that he breathed his last in Dunmore, and was waked with solemn obsequies for six days. Blazing bog-deal and rush-lights illuminated the darkness each night until his remains were carried with funeral dirge to his crypt in Clonmacnoise.

The de Berminghams. [11]— Meyler de Birmingham was head of the Connaught clan in 1289, and his son, William, became Archbishop of Tuam. It was about fifty years earlier that this branch arrived in the province, for it is quite beyond the region of doubt that the Norman barons began to spread over Connaught and build castles there in A.D. 1237.

Like other Lords of the Fee, the MacFeorais-de-Birminghams built their massive square tower near the chief fortress of the occupied territory. Dunmore castle was accordingly erected near the great dun of Turlough O'Connor, and it is always referred to in the Annals as the Castle of Dunmore. We first find reference to it in the Four Masters under the year 1315,

where it is stated that it was razed to the ground by King Rory O'Connor. The following year, 1316, de Birmingham of Dunmore, in retaliation, formed an alliance with Rory's rival, Phelim O'Connor. Mustering his mail-clad warriors in conjunction with his confederate, he inflicted a disastrous defeat on Rory's troops in Williamstown, and Rory himself being slain, Phelim reigned undisputed King of the Irish chiefs and clans.

In the same year, 1316, the fame of the de Birmingham was at its zenith. It was the year of the invasion of Robert Bruce. The English forces mustered in martial array under Edward de Birmingham at Athenry. His army was fully accoutred with every weapon offensive or defensive. The Irish troops, despising mail armour as the garb of cowards, in vain assailed the English army until rank after rank on the Irish side were cut down. When evening fell the flower of the chiefs of Connaught, and 8,000 fool-hardy fellows lay dead on that disastrous day at Athenry. John de Birmingham was equally successful near Dundalk where he routed Edward Bruce's army. For their joint victories the former was created Baron of Athenry, and the latter Earl of Louth. In 1525 this Earl acquired the Barony of Carra from Nesta MacEvelly, and he was assassinated in 1529 by one of his own countrymen.

The Earl of Louth's descendants must have in some way inherited the Dunmore patrimony of the family. We know that the ownership of the estate was disputed by Walter de Burgo in 1566. In that year the Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, held a meeting for a general pacification and settlement of disputes. Lord Birmingham, of Athenry, complained to him that Walter, son of John Bourke, withheld the Castle of Dunmore from him. Walter repudiated his claims, alleging that the place belonged to another branch of the de Birmingham, and Sir Henry arranged for a trial of the case. At all events, Lord Louth lived in the buildings, comprising the present barracks, in the eighteenth century, and his name is enshrined in Louthlodge, the name of a village close to the town.

The Lords of Athenry enter largely into the history of Mayo and Galway in the centuries following the disastrous battle of 1316. They took part in various battles and internecine conflicts—sometimes against the de Burgos and sometimes against the O'Connors. Lord Athenry helped Malbie to bring Richard-in-Iarainn to his knees in 1578, and he fought against Richard, the Devil's Hook's son, in 1588. He co-operated in commissions with Fitzwilliam, and assisted, or at least countenanced, the operations of Sir Richard Bingham.

There seem to have been several branches of the de Birmingham clan in Dunmore barony. A village called Birmingham, near Tuam, derives its name from this Norman family. Birmingham, of Dalgan, was descended from Edward Birmingham, whose castle at Milltown was attacked by Teighe O'Flaherty in a foraging expedition A.D. 1589. Writing an account of this raid, Edward states that after destroying sixteen towns in the baronies of Clare and Dunmore, this ferocious O'Flaherty was attacked by the English soldiers in Kilmaine and his forces were scattered and he himself slain. "I struck," writes Edward, "their guidon under his morion with my staff, and ran him through in the face of the battle. I followed another and had him down," etc. [12]

In a State paper of 1515 there are enumerated "sixty separate states, some as big as a shire, some more, some less, some as big as a half shire, and some a little less, and in these were sixty chief captains, whereof some call themselves kings, some princes, dukes, arch-dukes, that live only by the sword, and obey no other temporal person but only him that is strongest, and every one of the said captains makes war and peace for himself, and holds by the sword and has imperial jurisdiction within his limits, and obeys no other person, English or Irish, except only such persons as may subdue them by the sword." Among a long array of names of those that follow these principles occurs the name of Lord Birmingham, of Athenry and Dunmore.

The Augustinian Abbey.—The dismantled ivy-clad ruin in Barrack street, which occupies the ground near the great fort of the O’Kelly’s, destroyed by Conor O’Brien in 1133, is a conspicuous and interesting object to the discerning eye of the casual visitor. Built in the Gothic style of the fourteenth century style, a massive square tower supported by two arches separates the chancel from the choir. Inside the tower an unique feature of architecture meets one’s view : the interior rubble masonry is built on a stone—a keystone which knits the apex of a dome. The chancel is now the Protestant Church, the choir is roofless, and all traces of the corridors, the refectory, and other conventual appendages which extended across the public thoroughfare, have disappeared.

The Abbey was founded for the Hermits of St. Augustine, or Augustinian Friars, in 1425 by Walter de Birmingham, Lord Athenry, [13] when John Batterley, of Barlay, was Archbishop of Tuam.

The De Birminghams were Norman Barons of powerful influence, who had held Dunmore from the year 1327. At the suppression and dissolution of monasteries in 1541, the then Lord Athenry saved Dunmore House, successfully pleading for its exemption on the grounds that the country was wild, the abbey lands limited, and because it was founded by his ancestors, [14] but the exemption was only ephemeral, and we find the Rector, Cornelius O’Heffernan, and the Vicar, Hilary O’Donelan, in possession after the Cromwellian war had spent its force. John Burke Fitz-Thomas seized the abbey in 1574, but he was again expelled. [15]

When the Rebellion of 1641 broke out, the Community of Friars in Dunmore numbered thirty-one—a Prior and thirty Friars. A Protestant, writing in that year, says [16] —

“ The Friars maybe met in any of the roads in their distinctive habits. In Dunmore is a house with a Prior and thirty Friars, and they have their oratory, dormitory, and refectory, and they observe the rights of their Order as fully as when they were in Spain.”

The Augustinian novitiates were situated in some of the Spanish University towns ; the novices, recruited in Galway, took shipping in the Spanish ships from the City of the Tribes, and returned to their arduous mission after some years abroad, fully professed.

Dunmore Town and Castle.— In those days Dunmore was a chartered town, duly incorporated, with power to make by-laws to regulate the townfolk and all who sought protection or came for business within its walls. By this Urban Home Rule the privileges and immunities of the inhabitants were safeguarded.

In the thirteenth century the Normans in Connaught constructed walled towns in connection with their fortresses. [17] Many of those Norman towns existed in Mayo, “ but none of them,” says Knox, “ could compare in importance with Dunmore, which had a charter of murage.” The custom of building those feudal castles and of issuing ancient charters was a Continental [18] one introduced by the Normans into Ireland. This fighting race began to build feudal castles as early as the reign of Charles the Bald, as places of strength or refuge — entrepôts for their vassals. Wherever they were victorious their hamlets were “ begirt with strong and lofty walls, bristling with towers and parapets.” Especially at the fords of rivers and at every vantage point, their castles arose, guarded by warders on the battlements. Ancient charters to construct such walled towns still exist and one diploma, issued as early as 909, specifies and enumerates the various defences ;—Castles, towers, entrenchments, fosses, outworks, barbicans, trenches, moats, ramparts, palisades and bastions. One snob charter was granted to Dunmore in the thirteenth century.

Just an English mile to the west of the modern town, the Lords of the Fee, the de Berminghams, the victors of Dundalk and Athenry, raised their massive quadrangular fortress in stolid solidity on a huge mound beside the Sinking River. The walls of the ramparts, built of rubble masonry, 20ft. high and 6ft. broad, extended towards the west in a circle of 800 yards, and with such cohesion that to this day a dozen huge blocks of masonry, detached from the walls, still remain intact. Although ramparts, bastions, and outworks have well-nigh disappeared, we can still discern what a great fortress the dismantled castle must have been hundreds of years ago. It was not the hand of time that lay heaviest on this Norman ruin, but the desecrating hands of modern vandals, who, not content with filching the cut-stone frame work from the five doors and ten windows, removed the inscribed mural slab from the centre of the south wall, which would have thrown much light on the history of the castle. High up near the parapets, two windows on this south side, still intact, show the kind of ornate sculptured stone frame-work which has disappeared from the others. Three lime-kilns perhaps contributed not a little to pulverise detachable stone-work. The two gables of the roof arise on the inner sides of the east and west walls, allowing room to the warders to sentinel the battlements. The water from the roof was carried off through grooved stones inserted in the walls three feet down from the parapets. The remains of a cause-way, extending from the ramparts or outworks to the river, may still be discerned.

Knox gives the following account of Dunmore Castle in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries*, 1912 : —

“ The castle mound is partly natural but mainly artificial, certainly in shape. The top is an oblong rectangle, the length being from east to west and was enclosed by a great stone wall without bastions of which only broken fragments remain. A high keep is in the north-west corner. It rises 15 to 25 feet above the plain on three sides : on the west it is cut off from a low swell of land by a ditch probably once much deeper than it is now, which must have been crossed by a bridge, as the gate of the castle is at the end. The plan of the mound is practically that of the Bohola Mote without the terrace and it may be classed as a peninsular mote. It is most likely the site of the ancient Dun Mor. It was a manor of the De Berminghams in the 13th century and remained in possession of the family until after the sixteenth century. Tradition ascribes the building of this castle to Hosty Merrick, who was killed in 1272. He may have been the builder of the original work, but not of the great stone castle—is the great wall that for which Murage was collected in 1820? The town must have been a small place in those days. As this paper deals with earth works I do not further mention the castle. It is evident that it succeeded an early castle of the Mote type which succeeded a Gaelic dun.”

Dunmore seems to have been under the jurisdiction of the abbey as the lands Abbeylands north Abbeylands south comprised the town area. Not infrequently under the feudal system the Abbot and the townsmen clubbed together into a Guild or Friendly Society, petitioned for a charter for self-defence and public order, or for the purposes of religion, mutual assistance and trade, and were empowered to collect revenue, exact tolls, and administer landed property. [18]

Much of the history of our local ruins lies hidden away in Government offices awaiting illumination from a trained mind and skilful pen. He who is curious in such matters will find in the Record Office, behind the Four Courts, Dublin, a bundle of recondite MSS., dating back to the days of George I., which once lay in the archives of Dunmore Monastery. But our friend must bring to the study of those old papers a considerable knowledge of Latin, Spanish, Irish and English, and an uncommon amount of patience to plot unweariedly through those musty, dusty documents, and raise the curtain that enfolds in darkness the history of the old abbey.

Vol. 9 (R.E.P., S.U.P., 1220-2167) gives a table of contents showing that the items in this bundle of our local annals are of a very varied assortment. There are wills, charters, receipts, dimissorial letters, letters from Spain, from the island of Antigue, in the West Indies,—whither some of the friars were deported—documents dealing with the internal discipline and the domestic affairs of the Conventual body ; letters about novices, testimonial letters, and documents dealing with chapters, manual masses, complaints and recommendations.

Some of the letters are worth perusal, and throw light on the current history of Connaught. No 260, from the Island of Antigua, which complains of the high price of slaves in the West Indies, and made reference to old Dunmore families, is a curious document. No 276 complains of the large number of young men sent abroad to Spain to study for Holy Orders. Spain and other countries complained that those batches of young men, sent mostly from the Port of Galway, were despatched to foreign lands unprovided with funds. There are altogether some hundreds of items of which only a small quatum is here indited.

Vol. 9, R.E.P., S.U.P., 1220-2167

No. 257.—Letter from F. Hanley to Rev. Paul Brehony, recommending a novice, and a will of Bryan Higgins, 1726.

No. 258.—Letter to Rev. Peter Mulligan, complaint against Fr. Brehan.

No. 259.—Ditto. 1728

No. 260.—Letter from the island of Antigua, referring to old families of Dunmore and price of slaves. 1725.

No. 261.—Letter from a priest of Dunmore to a Friar in Galway.

No. 262.—Character of Pat Brennan (novice). 1728

No. 263.—Letter to Revs. Thos. Mulvey, Thomas Reilly, Pat Crehan (friars), intimating that Pat Kelly was examined and admitted by Rev Mr McDonnell, Superior, 1728.

No. 264.—Letter from Dr. Kelly to Rev. Pat Brehon, 1726

No. 265.—Tutor of Captain Cheevers recommended as a novice to Rev Fr. Irwin.

No. 266—Protestant minister writes to Father Brehon, Superior, that the banns of two Catholics had been read, 1731.

No. 267.—Fr. P. Brehon alias Johnson—a tumultuous election

No. 268.—Letter to Rev. Fr. Johnson about a novice, 1725.

No. 269.—Letter to Pat Brehon recommending a novice 1725

No. 271.—John Bermingham writes to Fr. Pat Brehon about the mandate of Bishop O'Hara as to number of daily Masses.

No 272.—Oliver Smyth, tutor of the Berminghams, recommended to Fr Pat Judge (viz. Brehon) as a novice, 1725

No. 273.—Ditto.

No. 274.—Letter to Fr. Johnson about dispute with the Friars.

No. 275.—Letter about a Conventual named Mannion, 1729

No. 276.—Letter about money collected in Galway, and the great number young men sent abroad, of which Spain and other countries complain 1722

No. 277.—Description of a Chapter, the procedure and President '

No.279.—To Fr. Brenon about money left to Dunmore by Mr. Ambrose McDonnell and Mr. Forbasby,

No. 280,— From Paris to Fr. Brehon about appeal to Rome.

Mayfield Hermitage.— After Ludlow's visit to Connaught only a Prior and four Friars remained—the Cromwellians had spread desolation with fire and sword over Connaught—and these took refuge in a hermitage at Mayfield, or Louthlodge within a gunshot of the town. It had been stipulated that as a condition for exemption, they should adopt secular dress and discard their distinctive hooded habit, and during the Penal times this was all the more

necessary. Fr. Brehon was Prior of Mayfield in 1720, and had a commodious chapel and house. About this time a Friar named Thomas Tully was shot at Cloughnakillibeg and another Friar hanged on a tree midway between the town and Castle.

The hermitage continued to flourish, as we find that in 1785 there was a community of seven, Fathers Patrick Kane John O'Neill, Michael Hussey, Patrick Kelly, Patrick Mannion Michl. Nestor, and John Kelly. The connection of the Friars with Dunmore came to a close in 1809, when Dr. French authorised the Friars to translate their foundation, chattels real and personal to Athlone. A house was purchased from Christopher French, brother of the Bishop, for £200, and Dunmore knew them no more. At this time the Friars were Frs, Michael Hussey, Michael Cahill, Page, O'Hara, Twomey, Jennings, and two Frs Michael Morris. An old-man in the vicinity remembers to have heard the people in the days of his youth, speak of some of those Friars

The site of the commodious chapel and Friars' house in Mayfield was on a rising upland formerly embowered in trees with a view towards the river which bisects the town. The place was all denuded of wood in the year of the turf famine, and only a solitary ash marks the spot. Of the hermitage not a vestige remains.

About this period flourished the famous Gideon Ouseley, his military brother, and Glosson, the tragedian, who were native's of Dunmore.

Carrantrilla.—A circular dun, now overgrown with trees, may be clearly discerned to the rearward of the modern house. The ruins of a very ancient building stand on the mound, and it is not improbable that this was the residence of the de Burgos. Oliver Burke states that Carrantrilla was one of their strongholds. One of the chieftains who lived here having been attainted, outlawed, and his property sequestrated to the Crown, refused to surrender. Captured and deported to London with his daughter, who defended him with great intrepidity, he was brought before the reigning Queen. She was so struck by his noble deportment and the demeanour of his daughter that she remitted the sentence and restored his property.

Lord Ross and Sir George Shea.—The present pile of spacious buildings occupied by the Royal Irish Constabulary—formerly the cavalry barracks—was erected in the middle of the eighteenth century as a manorial residence by Lord Ross—a liberal-minded nobleman. About 1780 Sir George Shea returned from the far east with well-filled money bags. He was out in the halcyon days when immense fortunes were piled up in British India in a few years. As secretary in Calcutta to Warren Hastings, we may rest assured that Sir George participated in the immense wealth extorted from Cheyte Sing and the Begums of Oude. In 1798 Sir George handed over his residence to a military detachment, which was in pursuit of Lynch, the outlaw rebel—the Michael Dwyer of these parts. After eluding capture for a long time the fugitive was run to ground in Carrantrilla wood, and hanged in the square of Dunmore.

Merton House, occupied by Mrs. Kirwan, was built by Sir George Shea's sister.

Cemeteries.—St. Patrick, in his journey to the far West travelled this parish, then inhabited by the Conmaicne-Dunmore, from whom sprang St. Benignus, of Kilbannon. Descending Sheve Dart from Clogher, he founded a church at Kiltivna, established another at Shrulle on the Derrymore river, crossed the hills to Belwell—Tobar-na-Clug—around which tradition has woven a story about him, and having erected a church at Dunmore on the Sinking River, he proceeded on to Kilbannon.

Kiltivna Cemetery containing the remains of the Patrician foundation referred to above, lies on a rising upland, a few hundred yards due north of Kiltivna Church, and is approached by a passage partly through private property, with a right of way for funerals. Of Kiltivna, Dr. Healy writes in his *Life of St. Patrick*, p. 221 :—

“ As it would be impossible to cross Slieve Dart, Patrick, it would appear, passed from Kiltullagh to the old church at Kiltivna, or rather to the place where it once stood, and near was a blessed well, now dry. The local traditions still tell of the Saint’s prayers at the old church, and of his journey through the district.”

Dunmore old cemetery, situated in Abbeylands North, beside the parish church of St. Nicholas, stands high above the roadway, strongly enclosed, and contains some slight remains of an ancient ruin, concerning which tradition is silent.

Cloc-ma-Kiraun—derivatively Kirwan’s Castle—situate on private property, the lands of Mr. Charles Flattery, contains the remains of an old ruin from which it takes its name. The interments in this cemetery, or in Kiltivna, are very infrequent.

Ardcloon, a well-walled cemetery, lies right on the boundary of Dunmore and Liskeevy parishes,—half in each. Some portions of an old church may still be seen, but no tradition about it is extant.

Cloondergan Church and graveyard are mentioned in old Ordnance Surveys, and tradition says they are more ancient than Ardclon ; that clay was brought from Cloondergan at the blessing of Ardclon cemetery. The site overlooks a wide-spreading prospect of the Clare river towards Kilvine, but a grove of trees, surrounded by a wall, is all that remains of this ancient foundation.

Shrulle is associated with the name of our National Apostle. The Ordnance maps mark a bullaun, or hollow stone, used as a font, close by the old church, as “ St. Patrick’s Stone.” The place still shows the well-defined foundations of a church, surrounded by some scraggy trees. A tradition, similar to that about Cloondargan, states that clay was brought from Shrulle to the blessing of Dunmore cemetery, which would seem to indicate that Shrulle antedates Dunmore. Shrulle is derived from “ Shru-Fuil”—Blood river—it ran red with blood after a battle in ancient days.

Some Notable Names Connected with Dunmore. —

The O’Kellys, who had a fort in pre-Norman times near the site of the Augustinian Abbey. The O’Connors—Turlough, Roderick, Cathal—Turlough-Mor, 1106-56, “ the Augustus of the West,” had his great fort in Clooneen, where the Norman Castle now stands. The MacCarthy Mor and Conor O’Brien, of Munster, who destroyed O’Connor’s fort, 1133. Murthough O’Loughlin, who demolished the stronghold, 1155. Milo de Cogan, who occupied the fortress, 1176. Hosty Merrick, who founded the Castle and the Walls for which the “ murage” tax was collected, 1280. The de Birminghamas, Lord Athenry and Lord Louth, who seized the Cantred of Dunmore in the 13th century. Walter erected the Augustinian Abbey, 1425. The de Burgos, whose fort was at Carrantrilla, Walter de Burgo held the castle in 1566, in which year Lord Athenry claimed it from the Lord Deputy, Sir Philip Sidney. John Burke Fitz-Thomas seized and occupied the Abbey, 1574.

O’Flaherty razed castle and town, 1589, about which time the present castle was erected by the de Birminghamas.

#### iv.— PLACE-NAMES.

The interpretations of the place-names are in the main O’Donovan’s, but a large number of names have been superadded to those found in the Name-Book. It will be observed that various ingredients enter into the composition of these words which have been derived from personal, historical and traditional associations, from fairies, animals, trades, physical features and descriptive qualities. The castle, the church, the fort and the ford, the hills, the

valleys, the marshes and meadows, the lake, the stream, the pond, the mountain, the cat, the lamb, the carpenter, the horseman, the flax-bleacher, the shrub, the bush, the yew-tree, the oak, the hazel and the willow, the grange, the pin-fold, the wren, the corncrake, the lark, the thrush, the peacock and the bittern—all have been pressed into service in the formation of these picturesque compounds.

Fian or Fiangallion, Mananaun, More or Moira, Coll or Goll, Brodir, Clandaid, Mac Esshinas or Mac Hostys, Mac Gorisb or de Birmingham, O'Connors, Blakes, Ku.vvans, the Gallda and the Ultacs recall the Mythological, Fenian, Ossianic, Danish, pre-Norman, Norman and Plantation periods of Irish history.

*Aille*, a cliff : Attyflynn, *Áit-tighe-Fhloinn*, the site of Flynn's house : Addergoole, *Eadar-gabhail*, between the forks or fork-land ; Ardcloon, *Ard-cluan*, high lawn : Altarhill, Cruachán-altóir, Ballydonlan, *Baile Ua Dhomhnaí* : Ballintava, *Baile-an tSamha*, village of sorrells : *Baile Bhaitéir*, Walter's town, called after Walter Blake : Ballintise, *Baile-an-tSadhas*, the village of the machine : Ballymoney, *Baile Ua Mainín*, Mannion's town : Ballagh, *Bealach Brenóg*, road of the sluggish stream : Breunra, *Bréunra*, dug-out stubble land or malodorous land : Baunoges, *Bánóghaidhe*, small green fields : Ballinlass, *Baile-an-leasa*, , village of the fort : Brackloon, *Breach clúan*, speckled meadow : Ballaghadorrougha, *Bealach-dorcha*, dark road.

Carrownagur, *Ceathramhadh-na-gcorr*, quarter of the herons or cranes: Cruacarath, *Cruach-a-rat*, hill of the fort: Carrowroe, *Ceathramhadh-ruadh*, reddish quarter : Clockmakeeran, *Cloc-ma-Ciaráin*, Castle of Kirwan's plain: Cloonkeen, *Cluan-Caoín*, pleasant meadow: Curraghan, *Currochán*, rough hilly land : *Cluan Dárgain* or *Dalgain*, Dargin's lawn or thorny meadow: Cloonfane, *Cluan fean*, meadow of the Fians or Fiangallions : Checkerhill, *Cnocháin-breach* : Cruacmananaun, *Cnuach-Mananáin*, Castle-farm, *Pairch-a-caisleán*, : Clooneen, *Cluínin*, small lawn : Cappagh, *Ceapach*, a plot : Carrowmanagh, *Ceathramhadh-Meadhnach*, middle quarter : Carrownaseer, *Ceathramhadh-na-Saor*, quarter of the masons or carpenters ; Cloonmore, *Cluan-mór*, large lawn : Cluid, *Cluid-a-guailain*, shoulder corner : Carrantrilla, *Ceathramhadh Tradhaile*, quarter of the corncrake: Carrowmuniagh *Ceathramhadh Múineach*, shrubbery quarter : Cloonagh, *Cluan-eac*, meadow of the steeds : Cruckanewer, *Cruach-an-íubhair*, hill of the yew-tree : Carrowcullen, *Ceathramhadh-Coillin*, woody quarter, Carrowpadden, *Ceathramhadh-Phaidín*, Paddy's quarter : Carrow-keelanahglass, *Ceathramhadh-caol-leuna-glas*, slender quarter of the green meadow.

Dunmore, *Dun-Mhór-Ni-Mhananáin*, fort of Mor the daughter of Mananaun : *Dun-mór Mhic-Fheóruis*, fort of the Mac-Oorishes or Berminghams : *Dun-mór-Mhic-Oisseana*, fort of the Mac-Esshinas or Mac-Hostys : Darray, *Darrarídhe*, oak-woods : Dunbally, *Dun Báile*, fort village : Derrymore, *Dáire-mor*, great oak-wood : Drimbane, *Druim-bán*, white ridge : Dunblayney, *Dun Bléithne*, Blaney's fort.

Falmore, *Fal-mor*, a large fence : Flaskagh, *Fleascach*, land of twigs.

Gortagurraun, *Gort-a-gráun—gearran—gerann*, field of grain or horses or trees ; Grange, *Grainseach* : *Gort-na-leasa*, fort field : Graigacullaire, *Graig-a-coilléir*, the grange of the quarry : Gortnalea, *Gort-na-lia*, field of the grey stone or physician : Garrafauns, *Garbh-fhearán*, rough grassy place : Gortnagoyne, *Gort-na-gcadhan*, field of the barnicle geese : Gortaleam, *Gort, a leam*, field of the leap : Gaiter street, *Sráid-na-Gauteri*, street of the oaten cakes. Luke and Sally Pinan sold farls of oaten bread in this street ; hence the name, Glanismeer, *Glan-na-smear*, vale of the blackberry ; Glanismol, *Glan-na-smól*, glen of the thrushes,

Knockatoura, *Cnoc-a-tuair*, hill of the bleaching ground ; Knockaunamoohallee, *Cnocán-na-mbhuaicaili*, boy's hill : Knockballyvisteal, *Cnoc-bhaile-Mhisteal*, hill of Mitchell's village ; Kilnalappa, *Coill-na-leptha*, woodbed : Cnocunawishoge, *Cnocán-Fhuiseóig*, lark's hill ; Kiltivna, *Cill-tSuibhne*, Sweeney's or Suiney's church : Kilnaslieve, *Coill-na-Sliabh*, wood of the mountain ; Knockaunagath, *Cnocán-a-g-cat*, Cathill or battle-hill : Killivoher, *Coill-a-bhothair*, wood of the road : Kilmurry, *Cill-Mhurraigh*, church of the grassy sward or Murry's church ; *Cill-luine*, Looney's church : Kilclooney, *Cill-cluaine*, church of the meadow.

Lisnatreeblee, *Lios-na-dtrí-n-glaoidh*, fort of the three battles ; *Lios-na-dtrí-mblaoith*, fort of the three shouts ; *Lios-na-dtrí-cloídhe*, fort of the three ramparts : Lishivaun, *Lios Siubhán*, Joan's or Julia's fort : Liscasserly, *Lios Caiserlaigh*, Lissybrodir, *Lios-Ua-Brodir* ; Lissawaura, *Lios-an-bhaire*, fort of the hurling held : Lisavallaire, *Lios-an-mheallaire*, fort of the deceiver, named from Fogeemara or Will-o-the-Wisp : Lisnagranard, *Lios-na-gcrann-árd*, fort of the high copse : Lisseachra, *Lios eachtra*, fort of the plain or bottoms : Lislandaid, *Lios-clan-daid* : Lismulcrone, *Lios Maolcron* : Lisgarraunagappal, *Lios-gcrann-na-gchappaill*, fort of the horse grange : Lisnaseraghna-gall, *Lios-ná-searrach-na-ngall*, fort of the foals of the strangers : Lisnagry, *Lios-na-graige*, fort of the pinfold : Lisanon, *Lios-an-úain*, fort of the lamb or cave : Lissachran, *Lios-an-chrann*, fort of the tree : Lisnashragh, *Lios-na-sreagh*, fort of the shreagh or swamp : Leacht-a-leaga, *Leacht-a-léige*. league monument. It marked site of watch tower, three miles from Dunmore, on top of Checker Hill overlooking Co. Roscommon : Lissyconnor, *Lios Úa Chonchubháir*, O'Connor's fort : Loorha, *luachra*, sedgy place : Laughill, *leath-choill*, half-wood : Leenareeva, *léun-a-riobhach*, grey meadow.

Mealeane, *míon-leuna*, fine lawn : Mullaghmarkagh, *mullach-marchach*, horseman's hill : Moneenpollagh, *moinín-pollac*, hole-pitted bog : Menus, *medhmas*, middle part.

Pollakeen, *pollchín*, duck pond : Peacockhill, *cnochán-pheacóg* : Pollaphuca, *poll-a-phuca*, fairy or goblin hollow.

Quinultagh, *ciung-Ultach*, swingle-tree of the Ulster naan, or *ciung-Altac*, knotty swingle tree?

Rathcoll, *rat-coll*, hazel rath : Roymonahan, *rat-Monacháin*, Monaghan's fort.

Shrulle, *Srutháin*, stream or *sru-fuil*, stream of blood. It was a battle ground : Sylaunagraun, *saoíglán-na-gcrann*, willow copse : Shanballymore, *sean-báile-mór* : Sionhill, *Síghean* hill : Summerhill, *cnocán-an-tSamhradh*.

Teamplegallda, *teampaill gallda*, stranger's church : Tobernaclug, *tobair-na-clug*, i.e. Belwell: Toberanara, *tobair-na-raithe*, well of the fort: Toberadosh, *tobair-na-doís*, well of the bush.

[1] Templetogher.

[2] Boyounagh.

[3] Does O'Reilly in his *Irish Writers* mention this Cormac ?— O'D.

[4] Fountain.

[5] Modernised Divaney and Dwane and Divine, still in use.

[6] This tradition is still preserved by Tommie Treacey, grand-nephew of Donal.

[7] Hosty Merrick was killed 1272, *Annals of Lough Ce*, and buried at Annaghboggan near Lake Beltra. Burrishoole.

[8] Gore.

[9] Cormac Dall, whose real name was Cormac or Charles Commins, was a blind bard or Shanachie, who lived in Dunmore in the eighteenth century. Born 1703, he died *proxime* 1790. As a superior man of his class, his name still lives in popular memory. His great grandson Pat Commins, who lives at Castlefarm under the shadow of the great castle of the de Berminghams, states that the proper name of the family was Kilcommins and that the *locus originis* was Kilcommin or Hollymount, Co. Mayo.

A notice of Cormac, the materials of which were collected by Ralph Ouseley, together with his elegy on John Burke of Carrantrilla, may be read in Walker's *Memoirs of the Irish Bards*. An engraving of the bard with a brief essay, based on Walker's notice, by Mr. Francis J. Bigger, appeared in the *Ulster Journal of Archæology*, Vol. XIII, Pt. 3.

[10] Authorities Consulted :—Knox (H. T.) : *Notes on the Diocese of Tuam, etc.* Dublin, 1904. *The History of the County of Mayo*. Dublin, 1908. Bourke (O. J.) : *History of the Catholic Archbishops of Tuam*. Dublin, 1802. Crean (O.S. A.) : *History of the Augustinians in Ireland*. Lanteri ; *Annals of the Augustinians*. Renehan (Rev. L. F.) : *Irish Archbishops*. Dublin, 1861. D'Alton (Dr. E. A.) : *History of Ireland*. London, 1912. Record Office : Vol.9. (R.E.P. S.U.P). Local Tradition.

[11] Knox, *History*.

[12] Knox, *History*, p. 227.

[13] Knox, *Notes*, p. 276.

[14] Knox *Notes*, p. 122. Bourke, p. 75.

[15] Knox, *History*, p. 272.

[16] Bourke, p. 125.

[17] This Journal, Vol. VII, No. ii, 1911, p. 79. From other records we know that there were burgages at Athenry and Dunmore. The former became a strong walled town. The latter got a murage charter and spent 51s. on its walls in 1279-80 (36 Rept. Deputy-Keeper of Public Records, Ireland, App., 39). The wall which enclosed the Castle and the flat top of the mound, whereof fragments are on the slopes, may be the wall then put up. The burgesses of a small town could be packed somewhat tightly inside its walls. This place, Dunmore, deserves examination for traces of this town wall, if it was not the wall which surrounded the castle. The 51s. is not all that was spent, but only an account entered in the Pipe Roll of what was collected and spent in a short time. These were Bermingham towns. All these burgages were under the protection of a castle. Dunmore is still called "Dunmore mac-Oarish" from the Irish patronymic of the de Berminghams.

[18] Hallam, *Middle Ages*, I., p. 20 *seq.*

[19] Hallam, *Middle Ages*, I., p. 311.

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