

History Of Thomond

Before It Was formed Into An English County.

*The
History and Topography
Of
The County Of Clare,
from the
Earliest Times To The Beginning Of The 12th Century.*

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MDCCCXCIII.

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From the death of de Clare in 1318.

During the long interval between the expulsion of the English and their re-appearance in the affairs of Thomond (1318-1543), its story is shortly told. The Annalists give only concise and scattered accounts of its inhabitants and their history. Their references have relation mainly to intestine disorders, or to invasions made upon neighbouring regions for the purposes of plunder. Such matters are so uninteresting in themselves, and afford so little information as to the history of the times, or the manners of the people, that we shall treat them as deserving of comparatively slight notice. [1]

After the fall of de Clare, Brian Bane, accompanied by what remained of his followers, betook themselves to that part of the kingdom of Thomond which lay at the east side of the Shannon, and settled themselves there. The MacNamaras, as before related, having expelled the inhabitants of most parts of the present baronies of Lower Bunratty and Lower Tulla, who, for the greater part, had been partisans of de Clare, took possession of their country, and continued to hold it until Cromwell put them out in turn. They became so powerful that, in the year 1578, they owned no less than forty-two castles, scattered over Upper and Lower Bunratty, and Upper and Lower Tulla, and in 1641, according to the *Book of Distributions* they numbered no less than one hundred and ninety-one proprietors of land in what would now be called fee-simple.

Brian Bane O'Brien was distinguished for his turbulence. Amongst his many enemies, he had for antagonists, his own relations, who had expelled him from Clare. These were ruled successively, in his life time, by Murtagh, by Dermot, and by Murtagh's son, Mahone Moinmoy, who by violence, had deprived his uncle Dermot, and his first cousin Brian, son of Donogh, of their right to reign. His own tenure of power lasted for twelve years, and at his death he was succeeded, in accordance with the laws of Tanistry, by his brother Turlogh Maoel (1367). After a rule of three years, Turlogh was dispossessed by his nephew, Brian Catha-an-Aonaigh.

Being thus driven out, he betook himself for aid to Garrett, Earl of Desmond, and was cordially received by that nobleman. They raised an army, and proceeded towards Thomond to re-instate Turlogh Maoel, but before they could cross the Shannon they were met at Manister an-Aonaigh, near Croom, by Brian, and utterly routed. Great numbers were slain in this battle, and amongst the prisoners were Garrett, together with many chiefs of the English

army. The victors took possession of the city of Limerick, and Sheeda Cam MacNamara was placed in the town as warden (1369). [2] Turlogh Maoel finding it now useless to protract the struggle, gave it up, and having obtained from Desmond a grant of extensive tracts of land in Waterford, he went to reside there. Very little information touching the actions of Brian-Catha-an-Aonaigh is given by the Annalists. We gather from them that being joined by the Mac William Burkes of Galway, he suffered a defeat in 1386, from the O'Connor Roe, and that, in 1395, he went to Waterford to pay nominal homage to Richard II. by whom he was honourably received. His death is recorded, in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, under the year 1399. [3] His successor was his brother Conor, of whom nothing is handed down to us deserving of mention, and Conor was succeeded, in 1426, by his nephew Teige-na-Glemore. Of this ruler's history nothing remains on record, save that he was deposed by his brother Mahone Dall (the blind) in 1438. Mahone Dall was not permitted to enjoy his power long without molestation. He was attacked, in 1446, by Mac William Burke and deposed, his brother, Turlogh Bog (the soft), the son-in-law of Mac William, being placed in his stead. [4] Turlogh Bog enjoyed the sovereignty till his death in 1459, when he was succeeded by his nephew Donogh, the son of Mahone Dall. Donogh had to give way, in two years after his accession, to his cousin Teige-an-Chomhaid (of Coad on the lake of Inchiquin).

At this time, the power of the English in Ireland was very much weakened, owing to their contests at home in the Wars of the Roses, and the Irish chieftains, taking advantage of their adversaries' strait, united with one another to drive them, if possible, out of the country. Teige-an-Chomhaid placed himself under O'Neill as an ally, [5] and he marched to South Munster to enforce payment of the tribute called the Duv-Cios, which his great grandfather, Mahon Moinmoy, had been the first to levy on the English settlers of Munster. His success was complete.

He plundered the west and south of Munster, and took possession of Clanwilliam and the whole county of Limerick, these having been made over to him by the Earl of Desmond as a condition of obtaining peace. Moreover, he imposed a yearly tribute of sixty marks, to be payable for ever, by the citizens of Limerick. It is hinted by MacFirbis, in his Annals, that the people of Leinster had a project for raising O'Brien, like his ancestor Boroimhe, to the throne of Ireland. It is also mentioned by him that never since the time of that monarch had such a host been seen as the one led by Teige to overrun the country south of the Shannon. From such statements as these, it may be inferred how weak was the power of England at that epoch. [6] Teige-an-Chomhaid died soon afterwards (1466), in the castle he had built on the margin of the lake of Inchiquin ; its picturesque ruins yet remain as an object of attraction to the visitor. He was succeeded by his brother, Conor-na-Srona, (of the great nose), his own children being too young to take his place. On the subject of Conor-na-Srona's actions, while he continued to govern Thomond, the annalists are almost silent. It is mentioned that he sent his nephews, Gilla Duv, and Murtagh Garv, to the aid of their relative, Mac William of Clanricard, when his territory was invaded by the other MacWilliams, and by O'Donnell of Tirconnell. He also co-operated with the Butlers against the Fitz-Geralds of Kildare. The Earl of Kildare, after his marriage with a niece of the King of England, returned from that country in 1496, and lost no time in coming to Thomond to punish the act of its king. Conor-na-Srona boldly met him, and in an action at Ballyhickey, near Quin, defeated his troops, and put him to flight. Conor then took possession of the stronghold of Fineen Mac Namara, near the place of battle. This was the last of his actions, for he died in the same year (1496), after an unusually long reign of thirty years. [7]

After the death of Conor-na-Srona, his brother Turlogh Oge, surnamed Gilla Duv, from the darkness of his complexion, was inaugurated chief in his place. He had been elected Tanist, had enjoyed that title since 1474, and now he became king. His reign was short ; it lasted

only three years. Nothing is recorded of him except his accession, his short reign of three years and two months, and his death in 1499. History is not equally silent as to the actions of his nephew and successor, Turlogh Don, (the yellow-haired), eldest son of Teige-an-Chamhaid. It is recorded, that in 1501, he wasted and burned Limerick City, and Cois Maighe in that county. His consanguinity with the MacWilliams of Clanrickard drew him into many quarrels in the course of his reign. They had been using their neighbours the O'Kellys, oppressively, and an appeal for protection being made by these to Garrett Earl of Kildare, the Lord Deputy, he marched into Connaught to their assistance. He was met at Knocktow, in the territory of Clanrickard, by MacWilliam and by O'Brien, joined by the MacNamaras and other septs. A fierce battle was fought, in which Kildare was worsted. By this defeat, his anger being fairly roused against the Burkes and O'Briens, he led an imposing array into Munster, in four years afterwards, designing to inflict condign punishment upon them for their delinquencies. " He marched through Bealach-na-Fadbaighe and Bealach-na-Gamhna, [8] until he arrived at a wooden bridge (*i.e.*, the bridge of Portcroise), which O'Brien had constructed over the Shannon. This bridge he broke down, and encamped that night in the country. O'Brien encamped so near that they heard one another's conversation during the night. On the morrow, he set out for Limerick, taking the short cut through Moin-na-brathair as his way. [9] Here he was attacked by O'Brien and utterly defeated. [10] Between the years 1510 and 1522 we have nothing to record of Turlogh Donn. In the latter year a quarrel sprung up between the O'Neills and O'Donnells of the north. The King of Thomond sent his sons, Donogh and Teige to render assistance to the chieftain of Tir owen. They were accompanied by the bishop of Killaloe, Turlogh son of Mahon, who was the cousin-german of their father. Before they could effect a junction with O'Neill, they found he had been defeated in battle by the O'Donnells, and they returned home after a fruitless journey. It was not long till their services were again called into requisition. In the early part of the sixteenth century, the kingdom of Thomond included part of the present counties of Tipperary and King's County. The Earl of Ormond's territory was adjacent, and he, having some grudge against O'Carroll of Ely, attacked that chieftain's country. O'Brien immediately took up arms to defend his dependant chief. A battle ensued at the ford of Camus, near Cashel, in which the fortune of the day was undecided, but where Teige, son of the King of Thomond, lost his life " by the shot of a ball," as the annalists describe it His body was brought to Ennis and buried in the abbey there amongst his ancestors. [11]

From this time, till the date of the death of Turlogh Donn, there is nothing to relate concerning the general history of Thomond. Some isolated facts touching the career of particular individuals have been set down by the Four Masters ; these, although not of much interest we reproduce here : —“ A.D. 1503. Teige Boirneach (*i.e.*, of Burren) ; Murrough and Mahone, two sons of Mahone O'Brien ; Conor, the son of Brian, son of Murrough, son of Brian Roe O'Brien ; Conor, the son of Rory, son of Ana O'Loghlen ; and Murrough, son of Turlogh, son of Murrough, son of Teige O'Brien, went with Owen, son of O'Flaherty, into West Connaught, against Rory Oge, and Donald (of the Boat) O'Flaherty). A battle was fought between them, in which the sons of Mahone O'Brien were slain. A.D. 1508. Donald O'Brien, son of Brian, son of Turlogh, Tanist of Thomond, died. A.D. 1512. Teige, son of Donald O'Brien, died ; and Brian, the son of Donald, son of Teige, son of Turlogh, died in six weeks afterwards. A.D. 1514, Donogh, the son of Conor O'Brien, was vindictively and unbecomingly slain by the sons of Turlogh, son of Murrough O'Brien, namely, by Murrough and Donogh. The murdered man had been the choice of the men of Ireland for his dexterity of hand, puissance, vigour, and bravery. A.D. 1524. Dermot, son of Gilla Duv O'Brien,, a man who assisted those who asked anything of him, more liberally than any other man owning a like extent of territory, a man of the most untiring hospitality and prowess, who was rather expected to live and enjoy the wealth and dignity of his patrimony, died after unction and penance. A.D. 1524.

More, the daughter of O'Brien (*i.e.*, Turlogh Donn), and wife of Donogh, the son of Mahone O'Brien, a woman who kept a house of open hospitality, died. A.D. 1528. Finola, the daughter of the O'Brien, that is, of Conor-na-Srona, and wife of Hugh Roe O'Donnell (the O'Donnell), a woman who, as regards both body and soul, had gained more fame and renown than any of her contemporaries, having spent her life and her wealth in acts of charity, and after having been twenty-two years in the habit (dress) of St. Francis, died on the first day of Lent, which fell on the 5th of February, and was buried in the monastery of Donegal, which had been founded by her husband and herself in 1474. A.D. 1531. Donogh, the son of Turlogh Donn, who was Tanist of Thomond, a man of hospitality and nobleness, died.

Turlogh Donn died in 1528, after a long reign of twenty-nine years. His death is recorded in these words by the Four Masters : “ The O'Brien, *i.e.*, Turlogh, the son of Teige, who of all the Irish in Leth Mogha had spent the longest time in acts of nobility and hospitality, the worthy heir of Brian Boroimhe, in maintaining war against the English, died after unction and penance.” [12]

By his wife Raghnailt, daughter of John MacNamara, Lord of Clanculein, Turlogh left several sons, but this history is concerned with two of them only, Conor, his successor, and Murrogh, called *par excellence* the Tanist. From the elder of these two men descended the Earls of Thomond ; from the younger, the Barons of Inchiquin, the O'Briens of Dromoland, those of Blatherwycke, Glencolumbkille, and others. Conor, now King of Thomond, was married a second time. His first wife had been Arabella de Burgh, daughter of the Mac-William, of Clanrickard, and by her he had one son, Donogh, surnamed The Fat. By his second wife, sister of the Earl of Desmond, he was father of Sir Daniel O'Brien of Ennistymon, and of Sir Turlogh, who died childless. Desmond was desirous to promote the interests of his nephews at the expense of their elder brother, while he, to preserve his rights, allied himself in marriage with the house of Ormond, a connexion which, in the subsequent reign of Elizabeth, tended very powerfully to the support of his family and the maintenance of their ancient power in Thomond. [13] He proposed that a piece of ordnance, with one hundred men of the king's army should be placed under his command, that with these he might become master of the castle of Carrigoguinniol and of the country round, and that, after the acquisition of these, he might hold them from Henry VIII., and conform to such English usages as that monarch should prescribe. Donogh thus set the first example of an O'Brien prepared to surrender his ancient kingly title, and willing to become a vassal of a foreign ruler. [14]

Conor O'Brien had rendered every support in his power to Silken Thomas FitzGerald in his rebellion against Henry VIII. After his defeat, FitzGerald repaired to Thomond, and got protection from its king, while a ship could be put in preparation to carry him off to Spain. To punish the refractory conduct of O'Brien, Lord Leonard Gray, the Lord Deputy, was ordered to bring him into submission. He was directed to compel Conor to bind himself, by indenture, to renounce the Pope's supremacy, to acknowledge in its stead that of Henry, to agree to contribute to the expenses of the Government, and to send a certain quota of men to every hosting of the royal troops.

Conor allowed the Lord Deputy to proceed no further on his way than Limerick. There he met him in July, 1537, and came into all his terms. He further undertook to aid the English in the work of subduing his brother Murrogh, the Tanist, and breaking down his bridge at O'Brien's bridge. Both these objects being accomplished, a peace for one year was made between the King of England and O'Brien. From the terms of this league it is obvious that

the provincial ruler was treated on a footing of perfect independence of British power. [15] He did not long survive the visit of the Lord Deputy, his death occurring in two years afterwards (1539). He was the last of the descendants of Brian Boromhe, who to the end of his life exercised supreme rule as king over Thomond.

We now approach the time when the struggle between the English and Irish began in Thomond. Hitherto the natives were masters of the land of their birth. Each sept, and each individual of the sept, enjoyed his property absolutely free from any control of a man calling himself his landlord. The Church of the people too had its rights clearly defined, and enjoyed the lands bestowed upon it by the munificence of pious benefactors in former days. By the establishment of the rule of England all this was changed, and the endeavour to subdue the people, and bring them under the British system of land tenure, was the cause of a sanguinary struggle between the rival races that did not come to an end till the time of Cromwell and William III. In their preliminary movement to draw Thomond into subjection, the English Council proceeded very cunningly. They resolved to buy over O'Brien to their interests, by the offer to him of enormous bribes.

They saw that if he could once be seduced, the other and smaller chieftains would follow. Acting on these views, they tendered to him the ownership in fee-simple, and to the exclusion of all the rest of the world, of the lands out of which he had received tribute as chief king, but to which he could lay no claim, as owner in our sense of that term. They further offered him the lands of the abbeys then lately suppressed, together with the Improprate ownership of the Tithes of the parishes to which the king claimed the right of presentation. Such proposals were too tempting to be refused, and Murrough, who, in his capacity of Tanist, had succeeded to the chieftainship on the death of his brother Conor, gave intimation of his readiness to enter into negotiations with the king with a view to the surrender of his authority. His first step was to write to Henry VIII. through the Lord Deputy, St. Leger, proffering his allegiance, and praying for pardon for himself and his adherents for the assistance they had given to Silken Thomas, and again, to the chieftains of the north in their attempt to drive the foreign enemy out of that country. He proposed to give up his claim to tribute from all lands lying on the east side of the Shannon, and as an equivalent, he embodied in his request the other privileges and demands already adverted to, to wit, a grant in fee-simple of all lands to which he could lay claim from ancient usage ; authority to govern Thomond according to the king's laws ; the right to all the lands of the suppressed livings, as well as to all church patronage, except the appointment of bishops. He further offered to give up the title of the O'Brien and to take that of an earl, with the privilege of sitting in Parliament. All his demands were acceded to, and he was summoned over to the English Court at Greenwich to receive the investiture of his earldom. He repaired thither accordingly, accompanied by his nephew Donogh, son of the last King of Thomond. To himself was given the earldom of Thomond, with remainder to Donogh, who was in reality, according to British ideas, the legitimate and proper chief, as being the eldest son of the last ruler. Lest Donogh should feel discontented, the title of baron of Ibrickan was bestowed upon him, and he was to enjoy it during the lifetime of his uncle. [16] The example of the O'Brien and his nephew was followed by other chieftains of Thomond, who saw that the time was come when the power of England was likely to become predominant. Sheeda MacNamara, the Lord of Clanculein, offered to become the king's subject on condition of obtaining a peerage, and of having the lands from which he only had the right of tribute previously, conferred upon him in fee-simple. His proposal relative to the peerage was refused, and he was obliged to content himself with the simple dignity of knighthood, but the lands were granted to him in conformity with his

wishes. A similar honour was conferred on Donogh O'Grady, head of the Ui Donghaile, and the lands of his tribe also bestowed upon him.

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In the letter of the king to the Irish Council, signifying his decision on these matters, he refers to another topic, namely, a request preferred by Dr. Neylan that the Abbey of Ennis, then about to be dissolved, should be granted to him, and stating the decision of the monarch declining to yield to Neylan's application. Neylan grounded his claim upon the fact that he had advised Conor, the late Prince of Thomond, to give in his adhesion to the Government of England. In the same letter, Henry states, that he had conferred the bishopric of Kilfenora on the son of Sir Dermot O'Shaughnessy. [17]

All these questions of titles and grants of land were viewed by the people with indifference. They little knew how important such things might become in the future. As long as the O'Briens, MacNamara, and O'Grady lived they received their usual tribute, and it was not till after their death that the enormous significance of their dealings with the English Crown became manifest. Then it was found that the lands which had for ages belonged to the members of the clan, each possessing his own share by indefeasible right, suddenly became the exclusive property of the eldest son of the defunct chief. Their eyes were opened to the trick that had been played upon them, and they fiercely resisted every attempt to enforce claims which they deemed absolutely preposterous and untenable. On the other hand, the eldest sons of the grantees claimed the aid of English power to support them in the assertion of their newly acquired rights, and the foreigners feeling that by the creation of dissensions amongst the natives their own authority might be more easily extended, lent a willing hand to the chieftains in their endeavour to coerce their kindred into a recognition of the feudal law of primogeniture. Very few records of these struggles have come down to our times, but from incidental glimpses, furnished by the writings of the Four Masters, we learn that they were fierce, protracted, and bloody.

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Murrough O'Brien died in 1551, and the earldom devolved upon his nephew, Donogh the Fat, according to the terms of its creation. He was, however, to be earl only for his lifetime, without power to transmit the title to his descendants. To enable him to do that, he was advised to surrender his dignities to Edward VI., and to apply for a new patent. The young king did all that he wanted and more ; he granted to Donogh the lands and hereditaments which had lapsed to the Crown by the death of Murrough, to descend to his heirs according to the course of the common law of England. The new patent bears date the 7th of November, 1552. No sooner were its terms made known than the half brothers of Donogh (who were the children of his father by his second marriage with the daughter of the Earl of Desmond), saw how completely their interests had been sacrificed. Instead of having a share in the inheritance of their father, and having the right of being nominated Tanists in case that, at any time, one or other of them might, perchance, be selected for that honour by the Dalcassians, they saw themselves cut off from every hope of succession to lands or attainment of dignity. They flew to arms and attacked their brother, in the dead of night, at the Castle of Clonroad, whither he had retired for safety. They burned and plundered the town, but whether they reached Donogh is not related, although his death happening five weeks afterwards gave rise to the suspicion that he received some bodily injury at the hands of his infuriated brothers. [18] Being thus delivered from their foe, they proceeded to elect a King of Thomond according to the ancient usage of the country, and so set at naught the validity of the title of earl inherited by their nephew, Conor. The choice of the people fell upon the eldest of the brothers, whose name was Donald, and who was the ancestor of the O'Briens of Ennistymon.

He was evidently a man worthy of their vote, for he was bold and warlike, as the relation of his actions will sufficiently show. He invaded Ely O'Carroll, and compelled its chieftains to submit to his authority. He ravaged the territory of Clanrickard. He invested the Castle of Doonmulvihil, inhabited then by the earl, but was forced to raise the siege. He immediately afterwards invaded Clanrickard, and thence drove away flocks and herds belonging to the Burkes. [19] In 1555 he led an army into Leinster to oppose the forces of the Lord Deputy Sussex. He met them in the Queen's County, and a truce was concluded, both parties preferring a patched-up peace to the risk of a battle. In this truce O'Brien acted as the representative of all the Irish from the Barrow to the Shannon. [20]

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Hitherto all went favourably for Donald, and for two or three years longer he was suffered to rule supreme over Thomond, and to regulate its affairs by the law of Tanistry. He was the last native prince of Ireland who governed according to the ancient usages of the people, and in whose territory the Brehon laws were latest administered. But a change was soon to come over his affairs. By the death of his brother Turlough, in 1557, he lost a valuable auxiliary, and his nephew Conor, having claimed the aid of the Lord Deputy, received that nobleman's promise of support in his endeavour to assert the rights and property of an eldest son and of an English earl. Sussex accordingly repaired to Thomond with a strong army, took the castles of Bunratty, Clare, and Clonroad, placed them in the hands of Conor, and re-established him in all the privileges and lands appertaining to the earldom of Thomond. Donald was proclaimed a traitor, and with his son, Teige an Tsusain, (of the uncombed hair), was obliged to fly to Maguire of Fermanagh. There, before a year had passed, Teige died, but Donald lived to return to his native country and to give much additional trouble to the Earl. [21]

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Conor O'Brien, thus restored to his rights, testified his gratitude by solemnly relinquishing the title of the O'Brien, and promising on his own behalf, and on the part of his kindred, to be for ever obedient to the Government of England, and to live according to its laws. His act of renunciation was performed in the Cathedral of Limerick, and it was soon afterwards followed by a solemn engagement, entered into by the principal chieftains of Thomond, to be faithful subjects of the English Crown.

Conor now proceeded to bring into subjection his rebellious relatives, Teige and Donogh, the sons of Murrough. The latter named of these resided in the castle of Inchiquin, and the Earl resolved to dispossess him. He laid siege to the place, but he had to abandon it soon afterwards, because of the intelligence he received, that the Earl of Desmond was coming to support his kinsman. Desmond hearing that the Earl was at Ballyallia, marched to that place and reached it late in the evening. On the following morning, at break of day, he gave battle, at Spancilhill, to the forces of the Earl of Thomond and to those of the Earl of Clanrickard, who had joined him, and routed them completely. [22] He restored Donogh and Teige to the quiet possession of Inchiquin and the other places which had belonged to them and then departed to his own country. [23] Notwithstanding the defeat suffered by Conor at Spancilhill, he soon plucked up courage to attack other enemies. His first enterprise was against O'Flaherty, of West Connaught ; his next was to aid the Earl of Essex in an expedition against the chieftain of Tyrone. Again, he invaded the country of O'Conor Kerry, and Glenn Carraighe (Glin, county of Limerick.) [24] But he was soon called back to defend himself from his own kinsfolk at home. Donald, who had been driven out of the country in 1558, came back from Fermanagh to assert his position as elected king of Thomond. He was immediately joined by the brothers Teige of Smithstown, and Donogh of Leamaneh. Their first act was to force and plunder the stronghold of Baile-mac-Riagain (Ballymacrogan). They were pursued by the

people of the place and overtaken at Cathair-meg-Gormain (Cahermagorman, in the townland of Soheen, parish of Dysert). At first they fled from their enemies to Cnoc-an-Scamhail (Scool-hill) ; suddenly they turned and routed the Earl and his followers.

Two years afterwards (1564), another coalition was made between the Earl's enemies, and they prepared to plunder the lands he possessed in the eastern parts of the county. They ranged along the river O'Cearnaigh, in Clan Culein, (Sixmile-bridge), and attacked the castle of Rossroe, where he happened to be at that time. They burned the town, and killed nearly one hundred of his followers whom they found there. Their proceedings alarmed the whole country, and the Annalists relate that every man from Sliabh Oidhcadha-an-Righ (Cratloe mountains), to Luchat (Lughid Bridge), and from Rinn Eanaigh (Rinanha), to Scairbh (Scariff), rose to pursue them. They escaped across the Fergus, bringing off their booty safely. To sustain themselves in their efforts against the Earl, they brought from beyond the Shannon " Bonnaghtmen" (mercenaries), of the Clan Sweeney and Clan Sheehy, whom they employed in helping to devastate their own unfortunate country. [25]

A.D. 1570. It now became necessary that the English should publicly exhibit their newly-acquired authority in Thomond. Sir Edward Fitton, President of the Province of Connaught, issued a proclamation for holding an assizes at Ennis in February of this year. A supply of provisions and liquors was sent into the monastery of that town by the high sheriff, Teige O'Brien of Smithstown, the first man who ever held that office in the county. When Fitton arrived, he expected that the Earl of Thomond should be among the first to receive him, but that nobleman, disdainful to acknowledge the authority of the President, remained at his castle of Clare, two miles distant. A message was sent to him, carried by a party of cavalry, headed by his uncle. Sir Donald of Ennistymon. Instead of obeying, he attacked the messengers and made them prisoners. Fitton, on the following day, apprehensive for his own safety, retired towards the county of Galway, being conducted thither by the high sheriff, and by his brother Donogh of Leamaneh. They were pursued as far as Gort-insi-Guaire (Gort), by the Earl. Such conduct as this, after all the favours bestowed upon him, excited the anger of the Lord Deputy, and it was resolved to chastise the rebellious O'Brien. The Earl of Ormond was deputed to perform that duty, but when he arrived in Thomond, instead of meeting opposition, he was met by Conor, and received at his hands full submission. It was agreed that he should give up to Ormond the Castles of Bunratty, Clonroad, and Clare, reserving to himself only one stronghold, that of Moy, near Lahinch. No sooner had he surrendered these than he repented of his facility, but it was too late. Finding that he could not make head against the new powers, he fled to Kerry and afterwards to France. Ormond took advantage of his flight and seized his other castles of Castlebank, Dysert, Moynoe, and Moy. He also received the submission of the O'Loughlens, MacMahons, and many other principal people of the county. In the course of his operations, he had occasion to make a demand upon the Mayor of Limerick for the conveyance of ordnance to the Castle of Bunratty, and he complains to the Lord Deputy that he had been refused all aid by that magistrate. He also refers to a good road which he had got made through the long pass to Bunratty. [26]

Thomond, from his place of exile at Paris, wrote to the Queen expressing contrition for his rebellion, and asking to be restored to his possessions. Elizabeth, knowing how essential it was to secure the allegiance of so important a personage, readily granted the pardon asked for, and gave permission that he should present himself at her court in England. [27] After his return home, he adhered strictly to his engagements, and in the following year, when Fitton held another assizes at Ennis, he gave every assistance to the President in his endeavour to bring the country under the rule of English law. [28]

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In 1573, for some reason not known to us, a war broke out between the O'Briens themselves. It is needless to say that the quarrel was taken up by their partizans on all sides, and that a general plunder of the country was the consequence. What the dispute was about is of very little importance, but in their description of the fighting, the *Four Masters* give the names of several places in the county, according to their original spelling, which we here reproduce as illustrative of its topography. One of the belligerent parties assembled at Ard-na-cabóg. near Clare Castle. Thence they marched through Dromcliff, Kilnamona, and Dysert, and "over the stone road of Coradh-Finné (Corofin), by the gate of the Castle of Inchiquin, and by Bothar-na-mac Riogh" (the road from Corofin to Killinaboy, called the road of the king's sons, for some reason with which we are unacquainted). They despoiled the church of Cill-inghine-Baoith (Killinaboy), and proceeded in a north-westerly direction, by the confines of Corcomroe and Burren ; spreading themselves about, they plundered the country in all directions. Their opponents mustered their forces at Cam-mic-Tail, now Carn-Connachtach, but they had to retire from that place early the next morning, their invaders approaching by Sliabh-na-ngroigheadh, [29] keeping Bel-atha-an Ghobhain (Smithstown), on their left. Both armies—one in pursuit of the other, then marched by Cill Mainchin to Béal-an-chip. [30] There a skirmish took place, and one party retreating before their antagonists, by way of Beann Formaile, [31] both arrived at Caherush (Cathair Ruis).

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Having in view the final subjugation of the Irish of Munster, the Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, made a progress through that province in 1576. He abolished the ancient customs of "Coigny, Kernetty, and Bonaght," and ordered that the rules of English law should be substituted for them. He made Donald O'Brien of Ennistymon, Governor of the County of Clare, and the new ruler signalled his accession to the office by hanging refractory rebels and malefactors. In this year, Thomond was separated from Connaught and joined to Munster, at the solicitation of the Earl of Thomond. In the following year, Sir William Drury, who had been recently appointed President of Munster, and who had, at Limerick, hanged several of the gentlemen and common people of the O'Briens, held an assizes at Ennis which lasted for eight days. He left the county, after he had appointed a marshal to compel the inhabitants to pay a tribute of ten pounds for each barony to the Queen, an impost wholly unknown to the Dal Cais up to that time. The lands of the Earl of Thomond were not exempted from payment, although he had proceeded to England to obtain that favour, as well as to complain of the injury and injustice done to him by his kinsmen. His journey, however, was not quite unproductive of advantage. He obtained from Elizabeth a renewed grant of all his lands, pardon for his people, and a patent conveying to him most of the Church lands and livings of the county. [32] He did not long survive his return home, for his death occurred in 1580, his age being forty-five years, during twenty-two of which he enjoyed the chieftainship of his race. He was buried in the abbey of Ennis, and his eldest son Donogh succeeded, as fourth Earl of Thomond.

[1] The following extracts relating to those times are taken from the *Four Masters* : —

" A.D. 1335. Finola, the daughter of O'Brien, and wife of Turlogh O'Connor, died.

" A.D. 1339. Turlogh O'Connor put away his wife and re-married Slaine, daughter of Turlogh O'Brien, who was widow of the son of the Earl of Ulster. She died in 1343.

" A.D. 1343. Murtoth O'Brien, Lord of Thomond, died."

" A.D. 1343. Rory Magrath, Ollav, " died." (He was the father of John Magrath, author of *The Wars of Thomond*.)

- [2] *Ann, Four Masters.*
- [3] A.D. 1421. Died More, daughter She was usually called the great More of Brian O'Brien, and wife of Walter of Munster. Burke. She was the most distinguished woman of her time in Leath Magha for hospitality, good sense, and piety.
- [4] *Ann.Four Mast*, A.D. 1446.
- [5] *Idem*, A.D. 1464.
- [6] *Annals of Four Masters*, A.D. of 1466, with O'Donovan's note, in which he reproduces the statement of Donald MacFirbis, contained in *Annals of Ireland* of the same date.
- [7] The Annals of the Four Masters have the following particulars which, although not referring immediately to the History of Thomond, we give here :
- “ A.D. 1474. The abbey of Donegal was commenced by Hugh Roe O'Donnell, and by his wife, Finola (the white-shouldered), daughter of Conor-na-Srona O'Brien, and was granted by them to God and to the friars of St. Francis, for the good of their own souls, and as a burial place for themselves and their descendants.” [This abbey, of which a most interesting account is given by Rev. Mr. Meehan in his work, *The Franciscan Monasteries* was the place where the Four Masters subsequently compiled their great work.]
- The next extract we shall give is under the year 1481, and is in these words :
- “ Slaine, the daughter of O'Brien, (Conor), and wife of MacWilliam of Clanrickard, a vessel full of charity and hospitality, and who excelled the women of her time, died, after having gained victory over the world and the devil.”
- Another extract is as follows :
- “ A.D. 1490. Celia. daughter of Dermot-an-Duna MacCarthy, and wife of Turlogh Oge O'Brien, worthy of being queen of Cashel, died.”
- [8] Old roads, on the south side of the Shannon, between Limerick and Portcroise in the parish of Castleconnell.—Note by J. O'Donovan.
- [9] Moin-na-brathair, is the low ground, now the Long Pavement, between Parteen and Limerick, on the Clare side of the Shannon,
- [10] *Ann, Four Mast*. A.D. 1504 to 1510.
- [11] *Ann, Four Masters*, A.D. 1523.
- [12] The author has in his possession, on the occasion of the Election of a MS. translation by Eugene O'Curry of the Inauguration Ode, composed on the Election of Turlogh Donn to the chieftaincy of Thomond.
- [13] *O'Donoghue's Historical Memoir of the O'Briens* ;Dublin, 1860, p. 165
- [14] *Calendars of State Papers*, A.D. 1535 Oct. 6.
- [15] *State Papers Ireland*, Vol. iii., p. 56.
- [16] *Calendars of State Papers*, November, 1541, March 31, 1542, June 2, 1542, July 5 and 12, 1542. *Annals of the Four Masters*, A.D.1542
- [17] *Calnd.of State Papers*, July 9 1543.
- [18] *Annals of Four Masters*, A.D. 1553. The attack on Clonroad was made in the very beginning of Lent, and Donogh's death happened on the Passion Saturday following :
- About this time (A.D. 1552), the same Annalists record the death at the hands of the followers of Earl Donogh of his first cousin Mahon, the son of Brian, son of Teige, son of Turlogh Donn. They also state that Dermot, second Baron of Inchiquin, and eldest son of Murrough the Tanist, died in 1552, on the eve of the Festival of Si. Bridget, and that he was buried in the monastery of Ennis.
- [19] *Four Masters*, A.D. 1554.
- [20] *Idem*, A.D.1555.
- [21] *Idem*, A.D.1558. *Calendar of State Papers*, A.D. 1558.
- [22] *Annals Four Masters*, A.D. 1559. These writers call the place Cnoc Fuarchoile, the hill of the cold wood. of It is now corruptly called in Irish Cnoc Urcoill, and incorrectly translated Spencil Hill.—*O'Donovan*.
- [23] Eveleen, daughter of the Mac Carthy, who had been successively the wife of the Earls of

Desmond and Thomond, died in 1560, and was in buried at Oirbealach (Muckross Abbey).—*Four Masters*.

[24] *Four Masters*, A.D. 1562.

[25] The following occurrences are related by the *Four Masters* as having happened about this time, viz. :

“ A.D. 1565. Mahon, son of Turlogh Mantagh (Toothless), son of Donald, son of Turlogh Meith (the Fat), was slain in his own town of Aircin, in Arran, by his own relations. Alarmed for the consequences of their act, they fled to Rossbay, near Loop Head. Donald O’Brien of (Ennistymon), made them prisoners, and having brought them to Magh Glae (Ballinalacken), in sight of their island, he hanged some and burned others of them in expiation of their offence.

A.D. 1568. Margaret, daughter of Donogh, second Earl of Thomond, and wife of the Earl of Clanrickard, died.

A.D. 1569. Slaind, daughter of Murrough, the Tanist, died.

A.D. 1569. More Phecagh, (the Gaudy), daughter of Brian, son of Teige-an-Chomhaid, and wife of O’Shaughnessy, a woman distinguished for her beauty and munificence, died.

A.D. 1569. Gilla Duv O’Shaughnessy, the son of the above lady, died. He was a man who, although not skilled in Latin or English, was much esteemed by the English.

A.D. 1570. MacNamara, that is John, the son of Sheeda, son of Maccon, son of Sheeda, son of Teige, son of Loughlin, Lord of East Clan Culein, died. He was a man noble and majestic, the favourite of women and damsels, on account of his great mirthfulness, and Donald Reagh, the son of Cuvea, the son of Donogh, took his place.”

[26] *Four Masters*, A.D., 1570. *Calendar of State Papers* relating to Ireland preserved in Public Record Office, London. A.D. 1570.

[27] *Calendar of State Papers*, A.D. 1570.

[28] *Idem*, April 21, 1571. The following are taken from the *Four Masters* :

“ A.D. 1572. Died, Margaret, aunt of Conor the Earl. She was hospitable, pious, and chaste.

A.D. 1572. Conor, the Earl hanged Owen Roc Mac Ward and Maurice Ballagh O’Clery, men learned in Poetry and History.”

[29] Now Slievenagry (the mountain of horses), near Lisdoonvama.

[30] Now Cnoc-a-chip (cip means the trunk of a tree), in the townland of Carowntedaun, on the seashore.

[31] Now Binn-Formaoile, a mountain about one mile to the west of Inagh chapel.

[32] About this time the *Four Masters* record the following events : —

A.D. 1577. Teige O’Brien of Smithstown, died.

A.D. 1578. Slainé, sister of Conor, and of Morrough the Tanist, and wife of Brian MacMahon of West Corcabaskin, died.

A.D. 1578. Sida, son of Maccon, son of Sida, son of Maccon, Tanist of East Clan Culein, was slain at Sliabh Echtghe, as he was pursuing a prey which the kerns of Clanrickard were carrying off.

A.D. 1579. Sir Donald O’Brien of Ennistymon aged 65, died, and was buried at Ennis. His son Turlogh succeeded.

A.D. 1581. Two companies of soldiers were billeted in Thomond, by Captain Deering, from November to March.

A.D. 1582. Teige O’Brien, (ancestor of the O’Briens of Ballycorick), brother of the 2nd earl of Thomond, died, and was interred in the Monastery of Ennis.

A.D. 1582. The Deau O’Grady, that is, Donogh Oge, son of Donogh, son of Donogh, son of Nicholas, a man of great power in Church and State, died.

A.D. 1582. Donogh O’Brien of Leamaneh, son of Murrough the Tanist, had joined the Earl of Clanrickard against the English, but had been pardoned. Captain Mordant, Marshall of Clare, pretended to discover some flaw in the protection, and having taken

O'Brien prisoner, hanged him in the gateway of Limerick. Mordant was joined in this foul act by Sir George Cusack, who was that year Sheriff. O'Brien's body was laid in the Abbey of Ennis. (By an Inquisition, taken at Dromoland, 6th December, 1582, it was found that Donogh O'Brien was taken in rebellion and executed ; that at his death he was seized in fee of the castles of Dromoland and Ballyconneely, and the lands of Ballyconablan, Ballygirrean, Latoon, Rathfolan, and Lytherayne. It was also found that Donogh's father, (*i.e.*, the Tanist), was seized of Leamaneh, of the castle of Tromroe, of Ballygriffy castle, and of the abbey of Corcomroe.)

A.D. 1583. The countess of Thomond, *i.e.*, Eveleen, wife of Donogh the fourth Earl, and daughter of Maurice Roche, died at Clonroad, and was buried in Ennis abbey.

A.D. 1583. Turlogh O'Brien of Ennistymon, went to England, and was created a knight by Queen Elizabeth.

A.D. 1584. Turlogh O'Loghlen, was taken prisoner at Muckinish, by Sir Turlogh O'Brien, and at the Summer assizes following, was hanged by Captain Brabazon.

A.D. 1584. The son of MacNamara of West Clanculein, namely, Donogh, son of Teige, son of Cumeadha, son of Cumara, son of John, died.

A.D. 1584. The Lord Justice, Sir John Perrott, repaired from Galway to Limerick, staying the first night at Kilmacduagh, and the second at Quin. There he was met by those chieftains of the County of Clare who had not already paid their respects to him at Galway. Cruise, the Sheriff of Clare, also waited on him, having in his custody Donogh Beg, a nephew of Donogh, second Earl of Thomond, who had been guilty of various depredations in Connaught. Perrott ordered that he should be hung from a cart, and that his bones should be broken with an axe. His body thus mangled was fastened with ropes to the top of the ' *Cloccas*' (belfry) of Quin.

A.D. 1585. A parliament was convoked at Dublin, and the following representatives from the County of Clare attended its sittings : the Earl of Thomond ; Sir Turlogh O'Brien of Ennistymon, and Boetius Clancy, who had been nominated members ; Turlogh O'Brien, nephew of the Earl ; John MacNamara, Lord of West Clanculein ; and Rossa O'Loghlen of Burren. (Lord Inchiquin also sat in this parliament as a peer.)"

The history and topography of the county of Clare, from the earliest times to the beginning of the 18th century (1893)

Author : Frost, James

Publisher : Dublin, Printed for the author by Sealy, Bryers & Walker

Year : 1893

Language : English

Digitizing sponsor : Google

Book from the collections of : University of Michigan

Collection : americana

Source : Internet Archive

<http://www.archive.org/details/historyandtopog00frosgoog>

Edited and uploaded to www.augty.org

January 24 2011