

THE PARISH OF CAPPa or CAPPAGH.

SITUATION. This Parish is situated in the Barony of Lower Connello and is bounded on the north by the Parishes of Croagh and Nantenan; on the east and south by Croagh and on the west by Nantenan.

NAME. The name of this Parish is not of ecclesiastical origin but derived from that of the townland in which the original Parish Church was placed. The word Cappa or Ceapach, which is the name of hundreds of townlands in Ireland, is used in the Irish Life of St. Kevin (Trin. Col. H.4. 4.) to signify a plot of ground laid out for tillage and it is used in the same sense throughout the Co. of Roscommon.

The ruins of the old Church are in tolerable preservation and situated on level ground in the Townland of Cappa. This building is fifty three feet in length and fourteen feet in breadth. The east gable contains a window of considerable size, which is semi-circular at top on the inside, constructed of chiselled stones and measuring ten feet in height and four feet six inches in width. On the outside it is pointed, constructed of chiselled lime stones and measures four feet nine inches in height and one foot six inches in width. It is six feet from the present level of the ground and divided into two parts (lights).

At the distance of three feet three inches from the east gable there is on the south wall a window whose head on the inside is a flat arch and which measures five feet in height and three feet in width. On the outside it is pointed and measures three feet six and a half inches in height and only six inches in width.

At the distance of thirteen feet from this window the same wall contains another window of the same form and dimensions.

At the distance of fifteen feet six inches from the west gable the same (south) wall contains the doorway which is flat-arched at top on the inside and pointed on the outside; on the inside it is seven feet nine inches in height and three feet ten inches in width and on the outside six feet three inches in height and three feet three inches in width. Between this doorway and the west gable and at the distance of three feet two inches from the south west corner, there are two quadrangular windows of the same size, one over the other, the lower being four feet six inches from the present level of the ground and the other two feet six inches over the first. They measure on the inside three feet four inches by two feet seven inches and on the outside one foot seven inches in height and six inches in width and are constructed of cut lime stone.

441

The west gable is surmounted by a small belfry consisting of one semicircular arch, constructed of cut lime stone. This gable also contains a window placed at the height of eight feet from the ground and measuring on the inside about six feet in height and three feet six inches in width and on the outside, where it is pointed and constructed of chiselled lime stone, three feet six inches in height and five inches in width. The north wall is featureless.

The side walls of this Church are about fifteen feet in height (of which three feet is a parapet) and two feet ten inches in thickness and all well built of hammered stones cemented with lime and sand mortar. There is a large grave yard attached to this Church but it is not now much used as a cemetery. About half a mile to the west of this Church and in the same Townland stands the ruins of the Castle of Cappa, of which the north wall and six feet of the west wall only remain. The wall remaining is about seventy feet high and five feet thick and has windows and apertures for five floors. It is built on a low rock on which parts of the walls of the "court" attached to this Castle remain to the height of about thirty feet. This was a truly magnificent structure when perfect and reflects honor on the noble family of Desmond, by whom it was erected. It is thus described by Fitzgerald in his History of the Co. of Limerick:-

442

"The Parish of Cappa is situated to the north of Rath-keale; near the Village is a handsome house and improvements belonging to Robert Peppard, Esq. At some distance to the southward is Cappa Castle, once a noble structure, half of which only now remains to shew its former grandeur; it is at least one hundred feet high including the mound on which it is built; the coigne stones are all square and polished; the windows are at various heights according to the different loftings, being formed of carved stone and arched. The Castle is surrounded by an embattled wall enclosing an area of thirty five yards by twenty four; it is built, according to tradition, by the Fitzgeralds, of which family there were two brothers, one of whom lived in Cappa Castle and the other in a Castle near Holly-Park, north of it, to whom also belonged that of Cappa" page 359. 443

Antiquities examined by Mr. A. Curry.

J. O'Donovan.