

## THE PARISH OF DOON.

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**SITUATION.** This Parish is situated partly in the Barony of Owneybeg, but mostly in that of Coonagh and is bounded on the northeast and east by the Co. of Tipperary; on the south by Castletown and on the west by the Parish of Tuogh.

**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, which Townland derived its name from an earthen dun which still remains.

It is absolutely certain that this is the Dun Bleisce of the ancient Irish writers, which they describe as situated in the Territory of Cuanach and as having taken its name from a celebrated harlot of the name Blesc. There is no other Church but this in the Barony of Coonagh of which the name begins with

Doon, but every ambiguity is removed by the existence of the Well of the Patron Saint to this day, viz., Tobar Fionntain. It is situated in a grove of Fir Trees in the east corner of the Townland of Kilmoylin Lower, and west of the road which runs through the same Townland.

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Fintan, the Patron of this Parish, is mentioned in the Feilire Aenguis at the 3rd of January, which was the day on which his memory was celebrated in this Parish. This Fintan was a disciple of the celebrated Saint Comgall of Bangor and in the Leabhar Breac, the following quatrain is given as a prophecy of St. Comgall that his alumnus would settle at Dun Bleisce.

Gebhaidh mo dhaltán in múr  
 Finntan las fagebther dún  
 Is í a chathair comall nglé  
 Dia mba comh-ainm Dún Bleisce.

Literal translation:-

My little foster son shall obtain the fortress (mur)  
 Fintan by whom the dun will be obtained  
 His city of sacred protection shall be  
 That which shall (is) be called Dun-Bleishé.

Free translation:-

My Daita Fintan shall erect his fame  
 At that old fort which now we Dun-Blesc call  
 And there immortal honors he will gain  
 His city will a termon be to all.

Or thus:-

My dear alumnus Fintan shall erect  
 His sacred city at the fort we call  
 The dun or Blesc and there he shall protect  
 The poor and weak and pray for mankind all.

I here insert what Lanigan has abstracted from Colgan on the history of this Saint:-

Lanigan's Eccles. Hist., Vol. II, p. 232.  
 Guanach (Coonagh).

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XII. Another Fintan, usually called Fintan of Dunbleische, flourished in those times (sixth century). He was of a noble family of Ara-Cliach and is said to have studied for some time under Comgall of Bangor, on which occasion he became acquainted with Finnian of Maghbile. We find him afterwards at a place

called from his name Kill-Fintain (179) somewhere in Munster. Thence he went to Dunbleishe in the district of Cuanagh (now Coonagh, Limerick) where he seems to have spent with some companions of his, the greatest part of the remainder of his life. He died on a third of January.

(179) Probably Killfinan in the Co. of Limerick (p.234).

In the Townland of Castleguard in this Parish is situated a Castle of the same name, said to have been erected by a branch of the Mac Brian O'gCuanach family. It was lately (1829) repaired by Walter O'Grady, Esq., the proprietor of the Townland, who has built several beautiful towers near it. It is a small square Castle, five stories high. I have no historical reference to it.

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For the correct names of forts and other objects in this Parish see the Field Name Books, in which I have written them with great care.

John O'Donovan.

At Tipperary.  
Aug. 18th 1840.

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