

THE PARISH OF KILDIMO.

60

SITUATION. This Parish is situated in the east of the Barony of Kenry, and is bounded on the north by the Parishes of Ardcanney and Chapel Russel, on the east by the Parish of Kilkeady, on the south by that of Adare and on the west by Kilcornan.

NAME. The name of this Parish is pronounced by the native Irish Cill Dima, which signifies the Church of St. Dima; but nothing can be gathered on the spot to prove which of the Saints of that name he was. O'Halloran, a very bad authority, no doubt, states that Dima, who erected the original Church of this Parish was the Tutor of St. Declan of Lismore, and this has been copied by Archdal, and from him by Gough, but we must not believe O'Halloran nor either of his humble followers till we discover some original authentic evidence to prove it.

The site of the original Church of this Parish is occupied by a small rude Protestant Church, and there is nothing in the Church yard to attract the notice of the antiquarian. 61

On a rising ground in the north east of the Townland of Glennameade there is a small Church called Cill Ollta, i.e., the Church of the Ultonian. It is the most ancient Church I have yet seen in the County, and there cannot be a doubt of its being one of the primitive age of the Irish Church. It measures on the inside sixteen feet in length and nine feet ten inches in breadth. The side walls are nine feet high and two feet eight inches thick and built of large stones cemented with excellent lime and sand mortar.

The east gable contains a small rude window in the primitive rectilineally pointed style. It measures on the inside four feet to the vertex of the triangle and two feet in width, and on the outside fifteen inches in height and from seven to eight inches in width. The doorway was in the west gable and covered at top with a lintel, but it is now so disfigured that its dimensions cannot be determined (ascertained).

Ferrar in his History of Limerick asserts that this Church was built by the pious Saint Dima, but I do not know where he found evidence for this. The people have no tradition connected with the origin of this Church, and were it not for its name, Cill Ollta, they would not believe that it is a Church at all.

The other ruins in this Parish are those of Castles, of which 62 there are three; one in the Townland of Ballyculhaun, a second in the Townland of Court to which it has given name and a third, which is called Cullam Castle, in the same Townland, and the fourth in the Townland of Beolaun.

In the Townland of Tobermurry in this Parish there is a Holy Well called by the same name, which signifies Lady's Well. Stations are occasionally performed at it.

In this Parish is situated the Townland of Baile Ul Chathlain (anglicised Ballyculhaun) which is mentioned in the Annals of the Four Masters at the year 1581. From the notice of it given by the Annalists it appears that the old Castle in that Townland belonged

to the family of Purcell. For the entire of this passage see letter on the Parish of Adaire. 63

Antiquities examined by me.

John O'Donovan.

July 13th 1840.

I insert what Archdall and his humble follower Gough have written about this Church, which is not however worth a pinch of snuff, as they quote no older authority than O'Halloran, who is no authority:-

Archdall's Mon. Hib., Vol. II, R.I.A., page 423:- 64

"Kildimma. A Monastery was founded here some time before the arrival of Saint Patrick in Munster by Dimma, a Priest who instructed and educated Saint Declan; this house is situated near Adaire and at this day retains its ancient name. (O'Halloran, Vol. ? page 44)."

Gough's Camden:- 65

At Kildimma near Adaire was a Monastery before the arrival of Saint Patrick. Another at Kilfiachna. (Archdall 423).