

Doorway on South side-wall of
Old Church of Kilmoylan

THE PARISH OF KILMOYLAN.

SITUATION. This Parish is divided into an east and west portion, which are separated by a part of the Parish of Shanagolden. The west portion is bounded on the north by the Parishes of Kilfergus, Loughel and Shanagolden, on the east by Shanagolden and Dunmoylan, south by Rathronan (1st division) and on the west by a detached portion of Nantenan Parish and by the Parish of Kilfergus. The eastern portion is bounded on the north by the Parish of Robertstown, south by the Parishes of Kilbradran and Dunmoylan, east by Lismakeery and Dunmoylan Parishes, and on the west by the Parishes of Robertstown and Shanagolden.

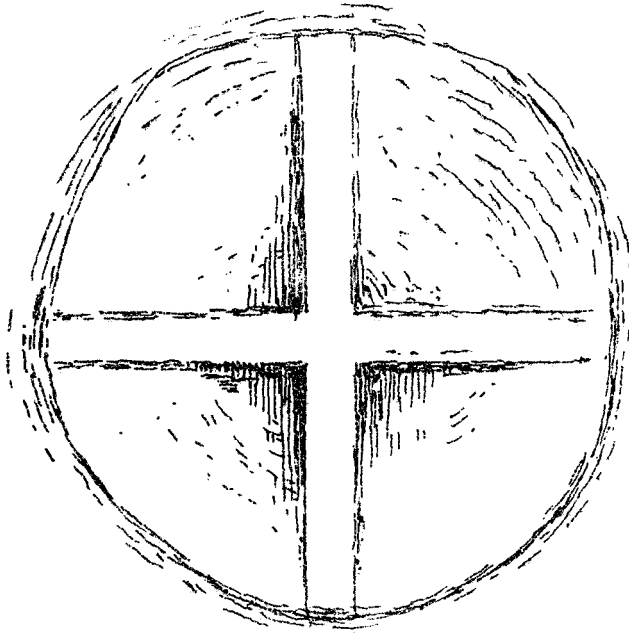
NAME. This Parish is called in Irish Cill Maolain, which signifies the Cell or Church of Saint Moelan, but nothing can be gathered to prove which of the Saints of that name gave name to this Parish.

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The old Church of Kilmoylan is situated in the Townland of the same name on high ground, and about one mile south of Shanagolden Village. The walls are perfect with the exception of the west gable, which fell about two years ago. It is thirty five feet long by eighteen feet in breadth. On the east gable there was a window which is now disfigured. On the south side wall two feet from the west gable there is another window, now also disfigured. The doorway is on this wall seven and a half feet from the west gable; it is disfigured on the inside. On the outside it is five feet eight inches high by two feet nine inches; the centre of the stone (a) has fallen away; the lintel is but three feet long and eight inches in depth, and enters the thickness of the wall one foot. It is formed of hammered stones.

The walls of this Church are about ten feet high, two and a half feet in thickness and built of large stones, very irregularly laid, and cemented with lime and sand mortar; they have the appearance of antiquity. There is a large graveyard attached much in use at present.

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*Upper part of Mound,
Fort near Shanid Castle*

Shanid Castle, which gives name to the Barony, is situated on a large earthen moat on the north end of the summit of a high hill in the Townland of Shanid Lower. Of this Castle, which was circular on the inside and polygonal outside, no more than one half facing the west and south remains; the north and east part is level with the ground. It was twenty two feet in diameter, and about thirty five feet high, the wall being eleven feet in thickness. There is no window on the part that remains. The cement used was coarse sand and lime. This Castle was surrounded by a wall, part of which remains on the south side; it is about sixteen feet high and five feet in thickness. The moat is about one hundred and seventy paces in circumference at the base, and twenty one paces in diameter on the top and appears to be about thirty five feet in height. This moat is surrounded by an external rampart sixteen feet high, the intervening ditch being twelve feet wide.

The following is from Gough's Camden:—

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"Shanet Castle, situate within a mile of Shanagolden on the eastern extremity of the Manor of Glen, which estate, except a few acres, still remains in the Desmond family, is a curious model of ancient fortification, a large round tower built on a very high eminence, surrounded with a wall and deep moat, commanding an extensive view of one of the most fertile parts of the County. The motto of the Desmond family was from this Castle Shanet Abco (ib.450). Abco was the cry used by the vassals and followers of the Irish Chieftains, to which was added the name of the Castle or Mansion of their respective estates. Thus Crom Abco was the cry and motto of the Fitzgeralds; Butlers Abco, of the Butlers. By an Act of Parliament 10 Henry VII, their several cries were abolished and the partizans of the respective lords and gentlemen were to call only on Saint George and the name of their sovereign lord, the King of England for the time being (Rot. Parl. C. 38 Walker's Mem. of the Irish Bards 165, Farrar 454). Religious houses in this County were (See next article)."

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About one hundred and twenty yards south of Shanid Castle there is a high fort thirty four yards in diameter on the top, where it is almost level. The central mound which is about eighteen feet high, is surrounded by two external ramparts, the inner one being about ten feet high and five feet wide at the top; the ditch between it and the mound being eight feet in width. There is a shallow ditch between the two ramparts. The upper part of the mound is thus divided into four compartments by a cross of earth which runs on a level with the external part of the mound; the earth between the parts of this cross is sunk in the centre about three feet and the depth diminished gradually towards the external part, where the elevation of the cross vanishes.

See Sketch opposite.

About half a furlong north of Shanid Castle is the site of another Castle which is said by the people to have been much larger than the former. This is said traditionally to have been the dwelling place belonging to the Castle on the hill. Its ruins, which now present merely the appearance of a heap of rubbish, are situated on level ground.

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In the Townland of Tinnakilla (Tigh na Cille) there is a perfect Cromleac. The north end of the flag stone nearly touches the ground. It is supported by ten brown field stones which could not be measured as they are almost entirely covered with small stones, grass and weeds. A clear view of the interior can be obtained from the western end, where the space between the supporting stones is four feet four inches, and the end of the flag is raised one foot four inches from the ground. This flag measures nine feet four inches from north to south; and seven and a half feet from east to west at the south end, and at the north end five feet. It is two feet in depth (thickness) at the south end; and eighteen inches at the north end, and inclines slightly downward towards the north. The flag is green mountain stone. This Cromleac is situated in a corn field, and on a hill.

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Fitzgerald, in his History of Limerick, Vol.I, p.364 (and proced.) gives the following description of this Castle and moat:-

(page 363). "About a mile south of Shanagolden is Shanet Castle which (p.364) belonged to the Earl of Desmond, and from which he took his war cry, as the Fitzgeralds of Leinster took theirs from the Castle of Croom. The approach to Shanet Castle is up a steep hill until you meet an immense rampart with a deep fosse six hundred feet in circumference; within this entrenchment is a lofty mound in form of a truncated cone, round the periphery of which runs a wall twenty feet high and six feet thick. This wall enclosed an area of one hundred and eighty feet in circumference, in the centre of which is the Castle, apparently a polygon on the outside, but within it is perfectly circular, and is sixty two feet in circumference; its walls, which are embattled, are forty feet high, and ten feet thick, having as many ports and loopholes as there are angles. This must have been one of the strongest places in Munster from its situation, the approach being through bogs, mountains and rocky hills. From its walls there is a fine view of the Shannon.

About half a furlong south of the Cromleac there is a standing stone (or flag) almost in the form of an isoscales triangle. It is seven feet high, five feet nine inches wide and fourteen inches in thickness. To the west of it are two small flags which were originally part of the standing stone, the latter having been split from top to bottom. The entire original thickness of the standing stone was two feet, as is

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seen from a piece of the broken part which remains in the ground in the position in which it was previous to the rupture.

For the correct names and situations of forts, wells, etc., in this Parish see Field Name Book.

The antiquities of this Parish were examined by Mr. A. Curry, whose notes were put into the above form by Mr. O'Keeffe.

J. O'Donovan.
