

THE PARISH OF ABINGTON.

152

SITUATION. This Parish is situated partly in the Barony of Owneybeg and partly in the County of the City of Limerick and Barony of Clanwilliam. The latter portion is situated about five miles east of the City of Limerick. It is bounded on the east by the Parish of Abington in the Barony of Owneybeg; north by Cloonkeen, Killinagarriff and Derrygalvin; west by Kilmurry and Carrigparson and on the south by the Parish of Caherconlish.

NAME. See the other portion of this Parish.

J.O'D.

There is nothing of antiquarian interest in the portion of the Parish of Abington here treated of.

ABBINGTON PARISH.

416

SITUATION. This Parish is situated in the Barony of Owneybeg and is bounded on the east by the Parish of Tuogh; on the west by Killinagarrieff and Abbington (in the Barony of Clanwilliam); on the south by Caherconlish and Tuogh and on the north by the Co. of Tipperary.

NAME. The name Abbington may be considered as a modification of Abbeyowny, which sounds in Irish Mainistir Uaithne, that is, the Monastery of Uaithne, the latter being the name of the territory in which the establishment was situated. Abbeyleix (in Queen's Co.) in Irish Mainister Laoighise, that is, the Monastery of Laoighis, which latter is an inflection of Laoighis (Laoighis) a territorial name also, affords an instance of this mode of anglicising such names, Mainister being rendered Abbey and Laoighis being anglicised Leix. Perhaps too, the first who made the name Abbington, had in view Avington near Winchester in Hampshire, or some such name, to which he assimilated the above one in order to make it as pure an English form as possible.

417

The walls of an old edifice, which the people say belonged to the old Abbey of this place, are still standing to the south of the Protestant Church outside the wall of the Church yard. It is divided into two apartments by a wall that runs across the whole breadth. The building ran from east to west, the eastern part measuring twenty feet four inches by ten feet ten inches and the western part nineteen and a half feet by fourteen feet three inches. The side walls are about sixteen feet high and three and a half feet thick. There are two doorways on the south side wall, one opening into each apartment, which consist, the one half of brickwork, and are of a quadrangular form. The materials of this structure are small field stones and cement of lime and sand mortar.

418

Mr. A. Curry, who traversed this Parish, thinks the above building was not an appendage of an old Abbey that stood here, though the people say, as is remarked above, it was portion of that establishment.

The old graveyard of this Parish, in the centre of which stands the Parish Church, is situated over the River of Abbington (or Mulkeir) on the north side of it. Locality is level ground.

In the documents in our hands we find the following authentic account of the period at which the above mentioned Abbey was founded; of its founder and of the Order of Monks for whom it was founded. 419

In Smith's Collections for Limerick (MSS. R.I.A.), Camden's Annals of Ireland, it is stated that in A.D. 1205 "The Abbey of Wetheny in the Co. of Limerick was founded by Theobald, the son of Walter Butler, Lord of Carrick, so says Flatsbury" (he calls it the Abbey of Wetherham).

In Smith's Miscellaneous Limerick Papers MSS. R.I.A., (Annals) (From Ware) we find it written at A.D. 1205, that: "In the 17th year of King John, Theobald Fitzwalter Fitz-Gilbert Beckett, the first Lord Butler of Ireland, founded the Monastery of Wethencia, alias Wethan, alias Wethenoya, alias Voghney, in this County. This Monastery being thus variously named in Dowling, Grace and others." 420

Here follows the account given in Gough's Camden, Archdall's Monasticon and Dr. Lanigan's Ecclesiastical History of Ireland.

Gough's Camden:-

421

Abbington, founded for Cistertian Monks 1205 by Theobald Fitz-Walter, Lord of Carrick and Chief Butler of Ireland, who was buried in it 1206 (H.432) as was in 1299 Theobald, vice butler of Ireland (Farrar 429).

Archdall's Mon. Hib. Vol.II, p.411, R.I.A:-

422

Abbington (called also Owney and Woetheney, but more anciently Wethencia, Whethram, Wethenoya and Voghaey).

An Abbey was founded here A.D. 1205 for Cistertian Monks (Pembridge Caenob. Cistert., p.79) with which it was furnished from the Abbey of Savigniac in France (War. Mon.) by Theobald Fitz Walter, Lord of Carrick and chief butler of Ireland, who richly endowed it (Monast. Anglican Vol. II, p.1034) and was interred here in the year 1206 (Lodge Vol.II, p.8). 423

A.D. 1228. William was Abbot (King p.336).

A.D. 1290. The Abbot of this house and his tenants, having received and harboured the King's enemies, he was fined the sum of sixty marcs on the 4th of November this year, the said sum to be paid at sundry times by annual payments (Pyrnne Vol.II, p.434).

A.D. 1292. Hugh was Abbot this year, when he and the Convent, for a certain sum of money, mortgaged to Francis Malesar, Gerald Chamber and Reginald Rapundi, merchants of the Company of the Ricardi of Lucca, the Church of Thurles and together with all the tithes and other emoluments thereunto belonging for the term of fifteen years; the said Abbot bound himself in penalty of £1000 for the due performance of this agreement, and in the year 1294 the said merchants demised and set the aforesaid premises to the said Abbot for same term, he conditioning to pay them or their Order in the City of Dublin, the annual rent of eighty marcs sterling, lawful money of Ireland (King p.366). 424 425

A.D. 1295. This year a writ was directed to John Wogan, Lord Justice of Ireland, to take the fealty of the Abbot (Cox. p.85).

A.D. 1297. The Abbot, Thomas, being deposed, a licence was granted, dated April 25th to proceed to an election (Pyrnne Vol.3, p.774).

A.D. 1299. Theobald, the fifth of the family of Butler, was interred here on the 27th of May (Lodge Vol.2, p.4). 426

A.D. 1307. It appears that the Abbot of this house paid an annual pension of 100 shillings to the Prior of Kells in Ossery (King p.240).

A.D. 1341. The Abbot of St. Thomas, Dublin, recovered from this Abbot the advowson of the Church of Loughmoy in the Co. of Tipperary (Id. pp.365 & 366).

A.D. 1342. The Abbot of Owey sued the Bishop of Ely for the advowson of the Church of Cathirrelny in the County of Limerick (Id).

A.D. 1363. The Abbot recovered the advowson of the Church of the Blessed Virgin of Arklow from James, Earl of Ormond (Id.). 427

A.D. 1365. Henry, who was Abbot this year, having by various methods contrary to the law of the land and to the King's Crown and dignity, distressed and molested Thomas De

Kildare, then tenant to certain lands in Limerick. he was this year committed to gaol for the same, but on the payment of a fine of forty shillings, he received his Majesty's (King Edward III) most gracious pardon (Id).

A.D. 1537. On the 25th of June this year, the Lord Deputy came to this Abbey, where O'Mulrian, Lord of the country, Ulick Bourke of Clanrickard and Thybot Bourke M'William made their submissions and took the oaths of allegiance (Cox. p.85). 428

A.D. 1540. One of the articles brought against the Lord Deputy Grey in this year, was, that he had compelled the Abbot of Owey to give him the sum of £40 for the purpose of preserving his Abbey from ruin (Id. p.253).

A.D. 1550. The Abbey was burned by O'Carroll, (Annals 4 Masters). John O'Mulrean was the last Abbot. 429

The Inquisition taken on the Wednesday next before Palm Sunday, 1st Mary, finds that he was seized of the following rectories, all in the Co. of Tipperary: Thurles, annual value besides reprises £11; Rahelle annual value besides reprises 40s; Wony-Kierin, annual value besides reprises 20s; Twoballysser, annual value besides reprises 30s; Enaghe in Ormond, annual value besides reprises £4; and Cnoyaghe, annual value besides reprises £3, and on the Friday following it was found that these Rectories made parcel of the Abbey's possessions, viz., Arclo in the Co. of Wicklow, annual value besides reprises £4, and Tullaghfelim in the Co. of Carlow, annual value besides reprises £4, both Irish money (Chief. Remem.).

Inquisition 8th May same year thus finds the Possessions both Temporal and Spiritual; viz., the site of the Abbey, a Church and two chambers of no value, besides reprises; the demesne lands in the Townland of Woney, the hamlets of Cassell, Boenagh, Kilnevenore, Knockan and Carinregrag, containing - acres of - and forty of underwood, annual value 40s; the Townland of Anaghe, which the Chieftain claims as his property, at the annual rent of 5s; the Townland of Keapenock which M'Roe claims, at the annual rent of 3s. 4d; the Townland of Keaxecalten, which Conogher O'Muirian claims at the annual rent of 18d; and the Townland of Lismollan, which Meiler Cormoke claims at the annual rent of 6s; the Townland of Cloghan-Kitt in Kerie, annual value, by an extent made V Edward VI, 26s. 8d. and the tithes of all the possessions, annual value £4. 18d; also the following Rectories: Woney and Cloghan-Kitt £4; Karkin-lisse 53s. 4d; Ballenworle 20s; Rath-jordan 13s. 4d; Kahyr-Iilly 26s. 8d; Jchenishe-Grene 2s. 2d; Burres in Dohearre 3s. 8d; and Burres-Glenekene 3s. 8d. 431

Dec. 6th, V Elizabeth, this Abbey with its appurtenances,

situate and lying in the vicinity thereof and the lands of Caslane; Reanaghe; Kilmevenach; Knocknegurtage alias Knocknegustone; Rathreighe; Kappenecke alias Kappenourkey; Kappencullen; Lismellan and Anaghe and Clonkittle alias Clonkill, in the Co. of Kerry, together with the Rectories of Arklow and Tullaghfelym in the Co. of Carlow, were granted for ever to Peter Walshe in capite, at the annual rent of £57 2s. 3d. Irish money, who was to maintain one horseman on the premises (Auditor Gen.).

432

Inquisition 23rd August XXXIV Q. Elizabeth, finds that Peter Walshe, gent, was seized in fee of the site and precincts of this Abbey and of all ye lands etc., belonging thereto in ye town and lands of Woney; Castleneboynaghe; Kylnevenoge; Knocknegurten alias Knockneguston; Rathriagh alias Ragraieg; Kappemowk alias Kappemock; Kappicullen; Lesmolane; Kyshecurk and Annagh in this County and also of Rectories, Churches or Chapels of Woney; Karkinlish; Ballynely; Rajordan and Charylley, with their tythes and other appurtenances. The said Peter Walsh died 20th June 1575 seized of ye same to him and his heirs in capite by Knights service and ye tenth of a Knight's fee and are of ye annual value of £57 2s. 3d. Irish (Quinquaginta) (Chief. Remem.).

433

1st April VIII K. James, Sir Edward Walshe, Knt., was seized in fee of the town and lands of Cappinicke, with a carucate and a half of land, yearly value ten shillings; Dromfallagh, containing the fourth part of a carucate, also a third part and half a carucate of land, yearly value 3s; Bortnykilly, containing one fourth part of a carucate, yearly value 2s. Cappnicullen containing one carucate, yearly value 6s. 8d; Claustale, containing one carucate, yearly value 6s. 8d; Loghaneleigh, containing the half of a carucate, yearly value 3s. 4d; Skartwarevoy, containing half of a carucate, yearly value 3s. 4d; the sixteenth part of a carucate, yearly value 6s; the fourth part of a carucate in Cullinagh, yearly value 20s; a parcel of land in Dromynythawtwe containing the eighth part of a carucate, yearly value 10d. Crelaghbegg, with two mills, containing the half a carucate, yearly value 15s; Clonsingill, with a water mill, yearly value 2s; the Rectory of Toagh Oliogine, yearly value 12d; the town and lands of Castlebanagh alias Agkory, containing one carucate; Killninucky, containing one carucate; two towns called Knocknigunhus, containing two carucates; Dromleagh, containing one carucate; Rathcow and Farnane, two carucates, each being of the yearly value of 6s. 3d; the Rectory patronage of the Vicarage, tithes, glebes, etc., of the Churches and Chapels of the Abbey of Owney, Cahirkenlish, Caherellin, Rathjordan, Ballyvelly and Towhgreny, all of the yearly value of 15s all Irish money (Lib. Inq. In Bibliort. honoratiss W. Conyngham).

434

435

436

Lanigan's Ecclesiastical History Vol.IV, p.335.
Abbington.

437

*** To these times we might, according to one account (page 336) assign the foundation of the Priory of Arcasian Canons at Rathkeale in the now Co. of Limerick, under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but it appears more probable that it did not exist until after the year 1200*. In like manner the Cistercian Abbey of Woney or Wetheny, alias Abbington, in said County, which some have affixed to the latter end of the 12th century, was in all appearances not founded until 1205, the year prior to the death of its founder, Theobald Fitz-Walter, Butler of Ireland, who was interred there in 1206+.

* (p.337) Harris (Monast.) marks it about 1200, but neither Ware nor Archdall mention the time of its foundation. It existed, however, in the latter part of the 13th century. Were we to believe Alemand, its founder was one, Harvey.

438

+ See Ware, Antiq. Cap.26 at Limerick and Archdall at Abington. The Charter of Foundation and Endowments is in Monast. Angl. Vol.2, p.1034, marked about A.D. 1205.

Fitzgerald in his History of Limerick Vol.I, p.278, gives the following account respecting Abington. He says at Owneybeg, that:-

"This Barony forms the north eastern boundary of the County and contains but two Parishes, viz., Abington, a Rectory, and Tuogh Island, a Rectory and Vicarage divided."

"Abington, situated on the River Mulchair, is a small town about 7 miles east of Limerick; it has a Church in good repair with a glebe house and the Parish contains 4248 acres. It was anciently called Woney, or Wotheny. A famous Abbey was founded here in the year 1189 by Theobald Fitzwalter Butler, Lord of Carrick, head of the Ormond family, to whom, with Ranulph de Glanville, John, son of Henry II, granted five cantreds and a half of land in the Kingdom of Limerick on north Munster, part of which was Woney or Wotheny. This Theobald Fitzwalter was sister's son to St. Thomas of Canterbury. The Abbey was a daughter of that of Savigny of the same (p.279) Cistercian Order in the Diocese of Avranches in Normandy. The Abbot of Woney had the honour of being one of the Lords Spiritual and sat as such in the House of Peers. One of the charges against the Deputy, Lord Leonard Grey who was beheaded in the reign of Henry VIII, was that he had forced the Abbot of Woney to give £40 to preserve the Abbey from ruin. In Abbington is a very pleasant residence of Lord Cloncurry."

439

440

"There are two fairs held here annually on the 29th of May and 31st of August."

Wetheny (Wetherham) Wethencia alias Wethan alias Wethan-oya alias Voghney, Owney, Wothenev, Whethran, Wethenoya, are all anglicised forms of Uaithne, which was the name of an ancient territory now comprised in the Barony of Owneybeg in the Co. of Limerick and in that of Owny in the Co. of Tipperary.

Uaithne Cliach occurs as a territorial name in the Annals of the Four Masters at the years 914, 1107 and Uaithne as the same at the year 1600, at which year the Monastery of Uaithne is made mention of also. Owny (i.e., Uaithne) in the Counties of Limerick and Tipperary, is mentioned in the Annals of Innisfallen at the year 1304. Here it is the name of a Territory. 441

In "Caithreim Thoirdealbhaigh", i.e., Exploits of Torlagh, O'Gorman MSS. R.I.A. referred to above at Caherconlish, we find Uaithne mentioned in several places as a territory. Namely, at 1278 Cricoch Uaithne, Territory of Uaithne, is read and Cro corcra comirceach na bhFialuaitheach, i.e., the bloody (but) protecting battalion of the generous Uaithneans, is mentioned at the same year.

At the same year we also find: Gluasacht go hiathaibh úrthórtacha Uaithne, i.e., to march to the fruitful lands of Uaithne. At A.D. 1304 Uaithne, a territory, is mentioned, as also at 1306, and at 1313 we find Binn Uaithneach, i.e., the melodious Uaithneans and Go hiathaibh ardchnocacha iollchoillteacha iasgthoirtheacha Uaithne, i.e., to the lands of Uaithne abounding in high hills, woods and fish. At 1314 are these words: Rangodar taranais an Uaithneibh, i.e., they returned to the Territory of Uaithne. 442

Uaithne Cliach is designated from Cliach, the name of an extensive territory in which Uaithne, as a minor one, was comprised.

Situated in the north part of Annagh Townland to the north of the road running through same, are the ruins of Annagh old Church. The walls occupy about sixty by twenty feet and are about ten feet high. A burial place lies here. 443

Killeen, in Irish Cillin, a burial place for children, is situated in the west part of Cappanahannagh Townland within a green field, and measures about thirty feet in diameter.

Kyle Nanny, in Irish Cill Nana, a small burial place about twenty feet in diameter in which children are interred, is situated in the Townland of Cappanok, within a short distance eastwards to the road from Cappamore to Limerick.

Situated in the south east corner of Farnane Townland is Castle Comfort, the seat of the Revd. - O'Brien Costelloe P.P., which was built in 1824 at the expense of about £800. It occupies an eminence which, it is said, was the site of an old Castle, from which the name Castle Comfort has been retained in the above modern residence.

444

In the south west corner of the Townland of Meentulla and at the boundary of it with Glanstale, is situated a monument called Tuaim an Fhir Mhóir, locally translated the Big Man's Grave. It is a small heap of stones thrown together by passersby, it is said, over the remains of a highway man who was killed there.

The same name notifies a grave situated in the Townland of Capanahannagh, within half a mile to the north to Liss Guaire. This grave is on a small eminence in a green field and measures twenty one feet in length and four feet in breadth and three feet in height. Both its sides are defended by large stones from three to four feet high, set upright in a row and deeply sunk in the ground. Two stones of the same size with those in the sides and set in the ground in the same way with them, defend, one each end. The grave is now uncovered above; it appears there were stones placed over it which rested on, and were supported by the side and end ones; these lie confusedly on each side. There lies here also a heap of stones of smaller size than those just mentioned, which is overgrown with grass, moss, etc.

445

446

On the centre of a high lime stone hill, which is situated in the Townland of Eyone and commands a view of from ten to fifteen miles on every side around, is visible a cavern called in Irish Poll Buidhin, that is, Ivy Hole, from ivy that grows around the entrance to it. It is twenty feet in diameter at the mouth and the extent of its descent into the hill was never discovered, though many have entered it a great way with the view to explore the space within who, for some reason known only to themselves, returned without ever having their design brought to an end, having found no end to the cavern they proceeded to descend.