

OF THE PARISH OF ARDAGH.

07

SITUATION. This Parish lies to the north and west of the Town of Newcastle, but I have no document that defines its exact boundaries.

NAME. The name of this place is in Irish Ard-ach, which signifies High Field. See my letter on Ardagh in the County of Longford.

The old Church of Ardagh was twenty feet in breadth, but its length cannot be ascertained as the west gable has totally disappeared. It appears however from what remains that it was a Church of considerable length, for seventy two feet of the south wall still remain. The north wall is destroyed except a portion near the east gable, twenty seven feet in length, and the east gable is all down except four feet of its height.

At the distance of four feet from the east gable the south wall has on it a broken window of which only the top stone, in which its pointed head is formed, and a stone of each of its sides remain. At the distance of twenty feet to the west of this on the same wall there is another window in good preservation and constructed, as was the former, of cut lime stone. On the inside its top forms a flat arch and it measures six feet in height and four feet three inches

in width and on the outside, where it is pointed, it is four feet in height and seven inches in width. The doorway which was on this wall also is just destroyed. The side walls of this Church are about thirteen feet in height and three feet eight inches thick and built of stones of a good size irregularly laid and cemented with lime and coarse sand mortar. It is situated on level ground in the Townland of Ministers Land and close to the Village of Ardagh. There is a large grave yard attached which is much in use, but contains no monument worthy the attention of the antiquarian. 70

About one hundred and fifty paces to the south west of this Church there is a holy well dedicated to Saint Molua, the Patron of the Parish, over which well grows an aged ash tree which measures fourteen feet six inches in girth at the base. This day is still resorted on the 3rd of August, the eve of the festival of the Saint, for the cure of various diseases. This shews that the Saint Molua of this Church was the Saint of that name whose principal Church was at Cluain Feartha Molua, near Ballaghmore in Ossory, whose festival was celebrated according to all the Irish Calendars on the 4th of August.

In the Townland of Kilrodaun about a mile to the south of the Village of Ardagh, there was a little Church and burial ground dedicated to St. Rodan, but both have been destroyed and the spot which they occupied is now part of a meadow. 71

There is no other remain of antiquity in this Parish, though the names of the Townlands of Killard and Killréish suggest that there was a Church in each of them.

Antiquities examined by Mr. A. Curry.

J.O'D.
