

THE PARISH OF CROOM.

SITUATION. This Parish is situated in three Baronies, viz., Coshma, Upper Connello and Pubblebrien, but the greater part of it is in the Barony of Coshma.

NAME. The name of this Parish is written Croma in the Chronicon-Scotorum and Cromadh in the Annals of the Four Masters, but I have never met any authority for proving its meaning. Crom means stooped, and Cromadh stooping, but it is not easy to determine why a word with such a meaning should become the name of a place. See my letter on Crum Castle in Lough Erne.

Gough's Camden:-

193

Croom, twelve miles south west of Limerick, a small town with four fairs and a Castle founded by the Donovan's; for many years the principal residence of a branch of the Duke of Leinster's family, from whence the word crom in his Grace's motto is said to have been taken (O'Halloran, Farrar, 438).

194

O'Halloran asserts that the old Castle of Croom was originally built by O'Donovan, Chief of Cairbre Aobhadha, and he has been followed by Seward and Gough; but I have great doubts that any part of this present Castle is as old as the period at which O'Donovan was Chief of this Territory. A part of one square tower of this Castle still remains near the Minister's house, but it would appear not to be more than four or five centuries old, and there is every evidence to prove that O'Donovan was driven out of this Territory shortly after the year 1200, when there were few Castles of this description in Munster. There is no doubt however that this place was in O'Donovan's Territory, and it is highly probable that he had a residence here as well as at Bruree, but I am not ready to believe that these residences were stone Castles, though I may be wrong in this instance. O'Heerin, in treating of the Territory of the Hy-Cairbre Aobhadha, thus speaks of the ancient Chief of this country:-

195

Dual d' Ó'Donnabháin Dhúin Cuirc
An tír (si) 'na tír longphuirt
Fa leis gan chíos fo'n Máigh moill
Is na cláir síos co Sionninn.

"Hereditary to O'Donovan of Dun Cuirc (Dunkirk)
Is this country as a land of encampment
He owned without tribute the lands along the
slowly flowing Maige,
And the plains down to the Shannon."

On this subject I shall treat more fully when I come to write of the Territories comprised in the Co. of Limerick.

In the Townland of Dunnaman (Dún na mBeann, Fort of the Gables) are the ruins of a square Castle of considerable height and extent. It is about seventy feet in height and near its south angle there is a chimney standing about sixteen feet above the square. This is mentioned in the Annals of the Four Masters at the year 1506:-

A.D. 1506. Catherine, the daughter of the Earl of Desmond (Thomas, the son of James) Lady of Hy-Carbury, a charitable and truly hospitable woman, died. It was by her that Beann-Dubh* and Dun-na-mBeann+ had been erected. 196

* Beann-Dubh, i.e., Black Gable or Pinnacle, now commonly called Castle Salem. It is a strong and picturesque building situated one mile north east of Ross in the Co. of Cork.

+ Dun-na-mBeann, i.e., the Fortress of Gables or Pinnacles, now Anglicised Dunnaman, an old Castle between Croom and Adair in the Co. of Limerick.

There is another Castle in ruins in the Townland of Pullagh, 197 but I have no historical reference to it, and another in the Townland of Tullovin.

There are also two ruins of Churches in this Parish, one in the Townland of Caherass (Cathair Basa) and the other in the Townland of Cloonanna (Cluain Anna) but they are of no great antiquity and I have no historical reference whatever to them.

For the correct names of other features and localities in this Parish see Field Name Books, in which I have written them as pronounced by the natives of the Parish.

Examined by me.

John O'Donovan.

July 28th 1840.
Ballingarry.
