

THE PARISH OF DYSART.

189

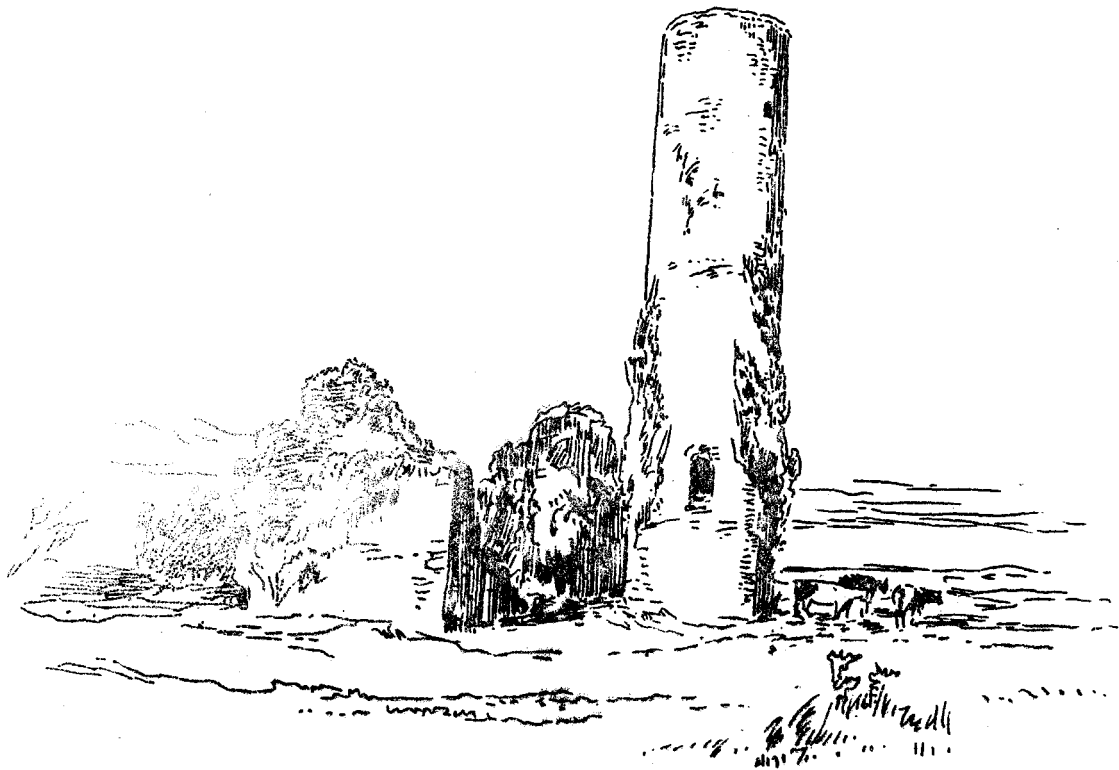
SITUATION. This Parish is situated in the Barony of Coshma and is bounded on the north and west and east by the Parish of Croom, and on the south by that of Ballingarry.

NAME. This is the place called Diseart Muirdeabhraigh of the ancient Irish Calendars, where St. — — was held in veneration on the 3rd November; Diseart Muirdeabhraigh is placed in the Territory of Hy-Conaill Gabhra and there can be little doubt that that Territory embraced some of the western part of the Barony of Coshma, in which Dysart is now situated.

The old Church of Dysart is one of the primitive ages, but the antiquarian has to lament that its features are nearly destroyed. It is fifty three feet six inches in length and seventeen feet three inches in breadth on the inside, and its side walls are about fourteen feet high and from two feet ten inches to three feet thick, and built of enormous blocks of lime stone laid in pretty regular courses. The building was not divided into nave and choir.

190

The east gable is in tolerably good preservation, but so clothed with ivy that I could not see its window, if it has any, which is to be doubted. The west gable is also up, but contains no feature but a large quadrangular window nearly disfigured and its sides so covered with ivy that I could not see how (of what materials) it is built.



Dysart
CO Limerick

At the distance of eleven feet six inches from the east gable the south wall contained a window which is reduced to a formless breach. At the distance of twenty one feet from the west gable the east side of the doorway and a fragment of its lintel are to be seen, but the rest of it is destroyed, there being a large breach in the wall here. The side of the doorway is built of blocks of red sand stone and is six feet three and a half inches in height. The fragment of the lintel is also a block of sand stone, measuring one foot five and a half inches in depth and extending the entire thickness of the wall (two feet eleven inches).

There is a large breach in the north wall nearly opposite the one in the south wall.

At the distance of eleven feet from the north wall stands an ecclesiastical Round Tower of great antiquity, called by the old people Clogás a' Dísirt, i.e., the Belfry of Dysart. It is built of large field granite stones, the larger ones of which were hammered into segments of circles. The stones of this Tower are very large towards (at) the bottom, and gradually decrease in size towards the top. This Tower is seventy feet eight inches in circumference at the base and - - feet in height. Its doorway is on the east side at the height of fourteen feet nine inches from the present level of the ground, which is not much raised; it is semicircular at top but now a good deal injured, and its sides slope like all the old Irish doorways in the semi-Cyclopean style. The first or ground floor of this Tower was not lighted by any window or aperture in the walls; the second was lighted by the doorway already described; the third floor was lighted by a triang'r-headed window placed on the west side; the fourth by a roundheaded one on the south side and the fifth by a quadrangular little window on the north east side. It would appear that this Tower had another window on the east side over the doorway, besides the four placed immediately under the cap, but these are now gone.

191

192

The people believe that this steeple was never finished and that it was built by a woman who intended to raise it up to the sky, but etc., etc. See a similar legend in my letter on St. Tierny's Clacker at Clones in the Co. of Monaghan.

Examined by me.

J. O'Donovan.
