

## THE PARISH OF TULLABRACKY.

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**SITUATION.** This Parish lies partly in the Barony of Coshma and partly in that of Small County. The former portion is bounded on the north by the Parish of Glenogra; on the west by Tullabracky in Small County and Manisteranenagh; on the south by the Parish of Bruff and on the east by another small portion of Tullebracky in the Barony of Small County. The principal portion of this Parish in the Barony of Small County is bounded on the north and west by the Parish of Glenogra; on the south by the Parish of Athlacca and on the east by the Parish of Manisteranenagh and the portion of Tullabracky Parish in the Barony of Coshma.

**NAME.** Called in Irish Tula Bhraice, but nothing has turned up to prove its meaning; Tula means a gentle hill; Braice ?

Of the old Church of this Parish, situated on rising ground in the Townland of Tullabracky Bishopland, the east gable is level with the ground with the exception of a very small portion adjoining the south side wall. The upper portion of the west gable is very much injured. The south wall remains with the exception of two breaches, of which hereafter. There are only two small portions of the north wall remaining, the one adjoining the west gable, the other about (near) the middle of the wall. This Church was forty three and a half feet long by twenty one and a half feet in breadth. On the south side wall, about five feet from the east, there is a breach of about five feet (in width) extending to within three and a half feet of the ground. The western side of this breach presents the appearance of that of a window, widening on the inside. On the same wall, ten feet from the west gable, there is a large breach extending

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to the ground, evidently where the doorway was placed. The south west corner is destroyed. On the upper part of the portion of the west gable which remains there is a breach which may have been a window, now disfigured. The north side wall is featureless. The walls of this Church are about nine feet high and two feet seven inches in thickness. There is a large burial ground still used attached to this Church.

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In the same Townland and at a very short distance southward of the old Church, close to the house of Mr. Maloney, there is a holy well called by the people variously Tobar Mullana, Tobar Mhlunna, and in English Blunny's Well, Mullany's Well and Lunny's Well. The Saint to whom it is dedicated is called Mullana Naomhthe, and in English Blunny; some say that Blunny Maruainigh is the Saint's name. He is believed to have been the founder of the Church (called by some Friary) of Tullabracky. Over the side of this well there is a rocky stone, having on the side facing the well two incisions, traditionally believed to be the impressions of the Saint's knees while at prayer. The people state that there was formerly a "Pattern" here, but the day is not remembered; the well is still however, though seldom, visited for the cure of various diseases. The name of the Patron Saint of this well does not resemble the name of any Saint given in the Irish Calendar; the nearest to it is Mlubhnaín Liaigh, whose festival fell on the 29th March.

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In the same Townland of Tullabracky Bishopland, in the immediate vicinity of the holy well, there was an old Castle called Tullabracky Castle, which was levelled about thirty years ago by John Malony, the father of the present farmer who occupies the house built on or near its site; part of one of the walls of the Castle is said to enter into the building of a stable belonging to the house. Immediately over the well and running north and south there is a portion of a wall, considered by the people as having belonged to Tullabracky Castle! it may possibly be one of the outworks.

In the Townland of Grange and situated on the top of a solid rock about thirty five feet high, are the remains of an old Castle the walls of which are very much injured. The length outside was about forty feet and the breadth about thirty feet but on account of the shattered conditions of its walls its dimensions inside cannot be taken nor even outside with any precision. The west wall remains to the height of about ten feet and small portions of the rest of the walls also remain; these walls were about six and a half feet in thickness and built of rather small grouted limestones. The rock on which this Castle was erected is called in the Name Book Cahercon Rock, but this name I could not find known to the inhabitants, who say that Carraig A Mhéara (Mhiara) is the name of the Rock.

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*A Standing Stone in  
Caher Townland*

In Lord Gillemore's deer-park in the Townland of Caher there is a circle of stones about one hundred and eighteen paces in circumference, about five and a half feet high and two feet or one and a half feet in thickness. It is not easy to determine the thickness on account of the unevenness of the surface above, where the wall is coped. This circular wall, which is formed of regular sized lime stone, without cement, assumed its present form about five years ago and is said to have been built with the foundation stones of an old Castle; yet some of the inhabitants say that the lower stones retain their original position, which is not like that of the foundation stones of a Castle. About a hundred and seventy four paces north west of this, there is another somewhat similar wall of uncemented stone work, about one hundred and twenty six paces in circumference, but its form is not circular, some of its sides being right lines connected by curves, altogether forming an irregular outline. Some of the stones of this latter wall are very large. The space inside both is thickly planted with trees of various kinds. It is possible that these walls of stone may have been formed with the stones of the original Caher (Cathair) which gave name to the townland. About fifty paces eastward of the first mentioned ring, there are the traces of stone work, which may have been the foundation of the building. The two sides which remain and which are almost right lines and face the north and east, meet at an obtuse angle.

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At the distance of about two hundred and twenty seven paces eastward of the second ring of stones there is a standing stone seven feet high, three feet four inches wide at the top and middle and five and a half feet in width at the lower part. The original flag seems to have been split to within three feet from the bottom and two and a half feet from the east side and on the west side from top to bottom. The upper part is about fifteen inches thick, the lower about twenty two inches.

See sketch opposite.

The Name Book places an old Castle in ruins in the Townland of Rockbarton; I searched through the Townland but could find no person who could point out its locality or was acquainted with its existence. Rockbarton and Caher Townlands adjoin each other; perhaps some of the features described in this letter as situated (according to the inhabitants) in Caher Townland may be what is alluded to in the Name Book.

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The antiquities of this Parish were examined and described by Mr. O'Keefe.

J.O'D.