

THE BARRINGTONS OF LIMERICK

The Barrington family claims descent from Odo du Barentin, who came over from Normandy with William the Conqueror. That explains how their motto is worded in Old French: *Ung durant ma Vie* - which sounds like a reminder of the troubadours. Barentin is still the name of a place in Normandy, between Rouen and Le Havre.

One of the oldest Renaissance castles in England is called Barrington Court, in Somerset. It was built by Lord Daubeny c. 1520 (James Lees-Milne *Tudor Renaissance*, Batsford, 1951). This Tudor mansion is now the property of the National Trust. Barrington is mentioned in the Papal Registers as a place-name in Somerset as far back as A.D. 1400.

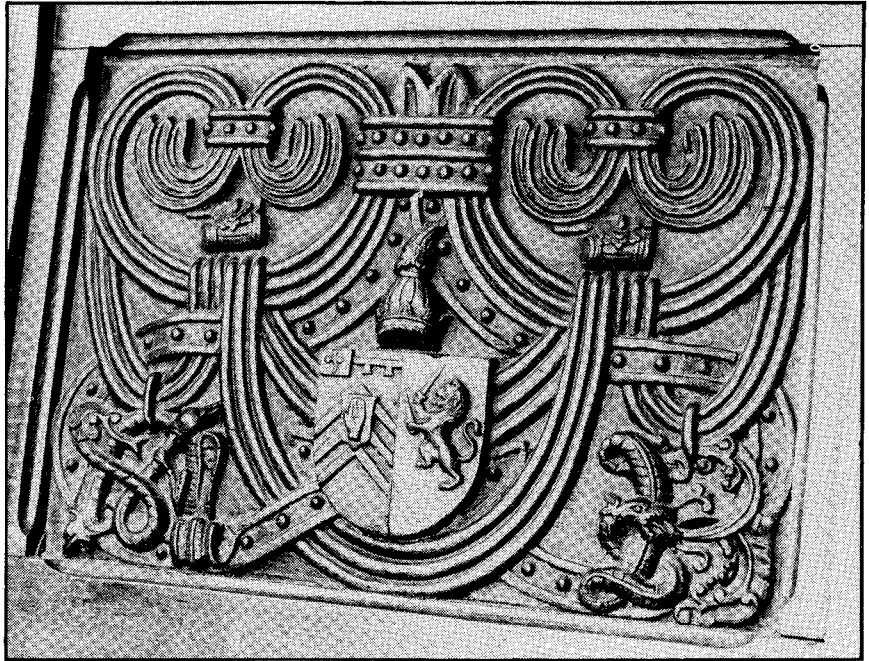
The fifteenth in descent from Odo was Sir Francis Barrington, of Barrington Hall, Essex, who was created a baronet in 1611. This title became extinct on the death of the tenth baronet in 1833.

Mr. Herbèrt de Hamel, of Southsea, Hants, has obligingly sent me a copy of his notes on the ancestry and lineage of his own great-great-grandfather, Sir Jonah Barrington, judge of the high court of admiralty in Ireland and M.P. for Tuam and Clogher.

Camden attributed the fortune of the early Barringtons to King Stephen. Le Neve, Norroy king-of-arms, mentioned a Saxon instead of a Norman as earliest known forbear: Barentone, custodian of Hatfield Forest, in the days of William the Conqueror. His son, Eustachius de Barentona, received grants of land from Henry I.

The father of Sir Francis Barrington, first baronet, married firstly the daughter of Lord Morly, and secondly the youngest daughter of Henry Pole, Lord Montagu. She was a granddaughter of Blessed Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury, mother of Cardinal Pole who presided over the Council of Trent. Sir Francis was thus a descendant of the Duke of Clarence, brother of King Edward the Fourth. Sir Francis married Joan Cromwell; his brother John married Jane Ovington and was granted much land in the Queen's County by Elizabeth I (according to *Burke's Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England*, 1838, 2nd. edition; and *The Plantagenet Roll of Blood Royal, Essex Volume*, by the Marquis de Ruvigny).

Sir Jonah (1758-1834) was a descendant of this John Barrington of Cullinagh.



The Barrington coat-of-arms, carved on a boardroom chair at Barrington's Hospital.

by Dom Hubert
Janssens de Varebeke

H.J. Hore (*Journal of the Kilkenny & South of Ireland Archaeological Society*, 1863, p.369) took a quotation from the Carew MSS. 635, f. 110, concerning one Barrington who inhabited Coulinaght in Leix in 1599:

'Barrington of Essex had a son, George Barrington, a captain. This George, when the Moors were banished, had lands given him in Leix by the Erlø of Sussex. He had issue:

John a captain, married a daughter of Giles Ovington. Their son was slain in service by the O'Moors.

John, slain by the O'Mores.

Robert, married a daughter to one of the followers of the O'Mores; she married secondly Thomas Lighe, who was slain in service in 1598, by the O'Mores'.

From a volume of funeral entries (Harl, MS. 4820, p.58) it appears that Alexander Barrington, Esq., of Timoge, married Jane, daughter of Edward Brereton, Esq., of Loghtioge, and died on 15 September, 1635.

It seems that the Barringtons of Limerick were descendants of these Elizabethan settlers. There are still some

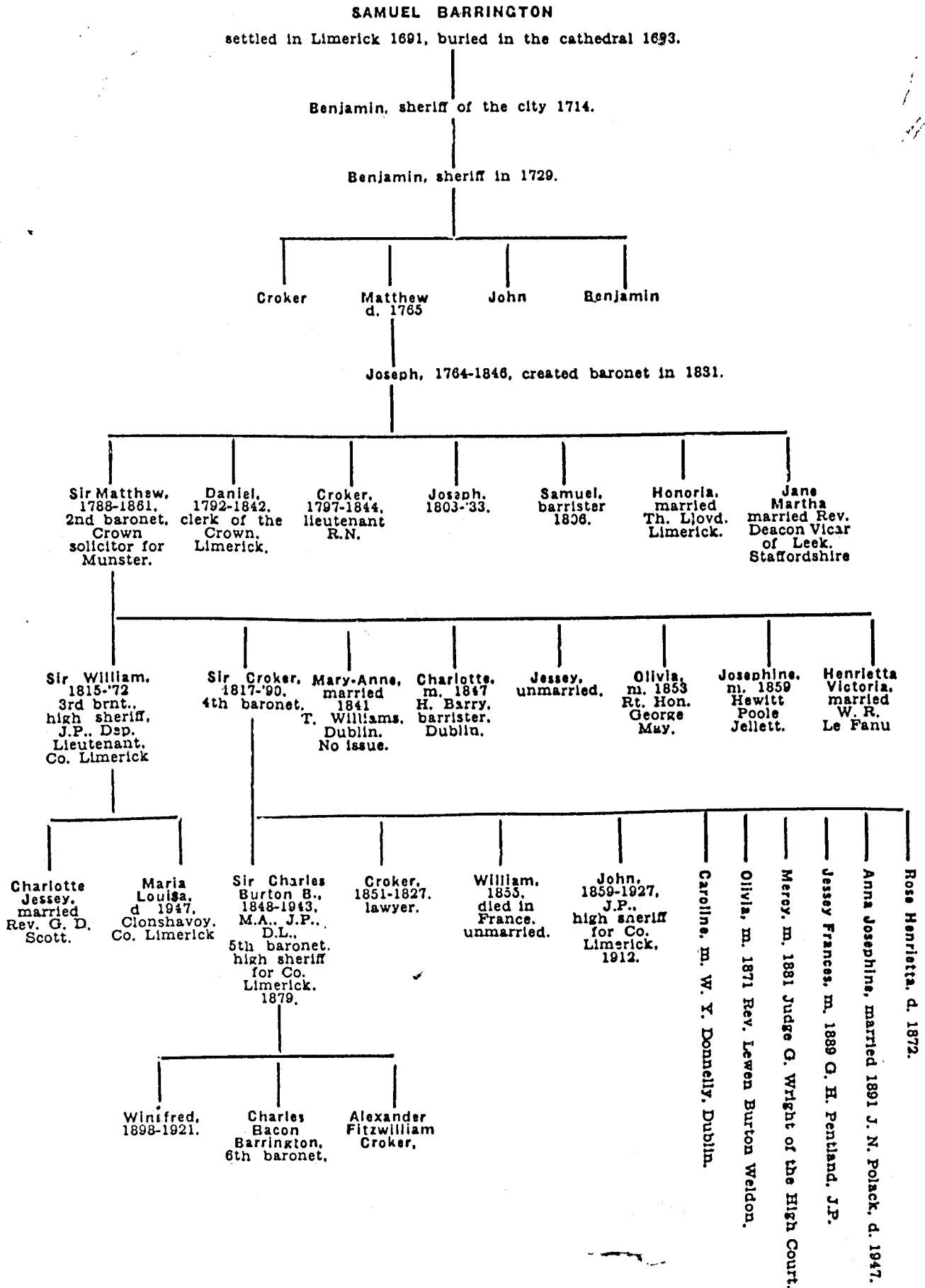
Barringtons left in Leix, although most of those have gone to live in Co. Wicklow. One of them made a name in science. The two families have found some physical resemblances between them; but they have never been able to trace the genealogical link.

On one of the pillars in the old cathedral of Limerick there is a tablet inscribed as follows:

*'Memento Mory.
Here lieth littell Samuel
Barinton that great under
taker of famous cittis
clock and chime maker
He made his one time goe
early and latter but now
he is returned to God his creator:
the 19 of November then he
scest and for his memory
this here is pleast by his
son Ben. 1693'.*

One of the clocks made by Samuel is in the town hall at Cashel. According to one of the editions of *Burke's Peerage of the British Empire*, Samuel's father, Francis, would have come to Ireland with Cromwell. But Prendergast's standard work on the Cromwellian settlement does not mention any Barinton.

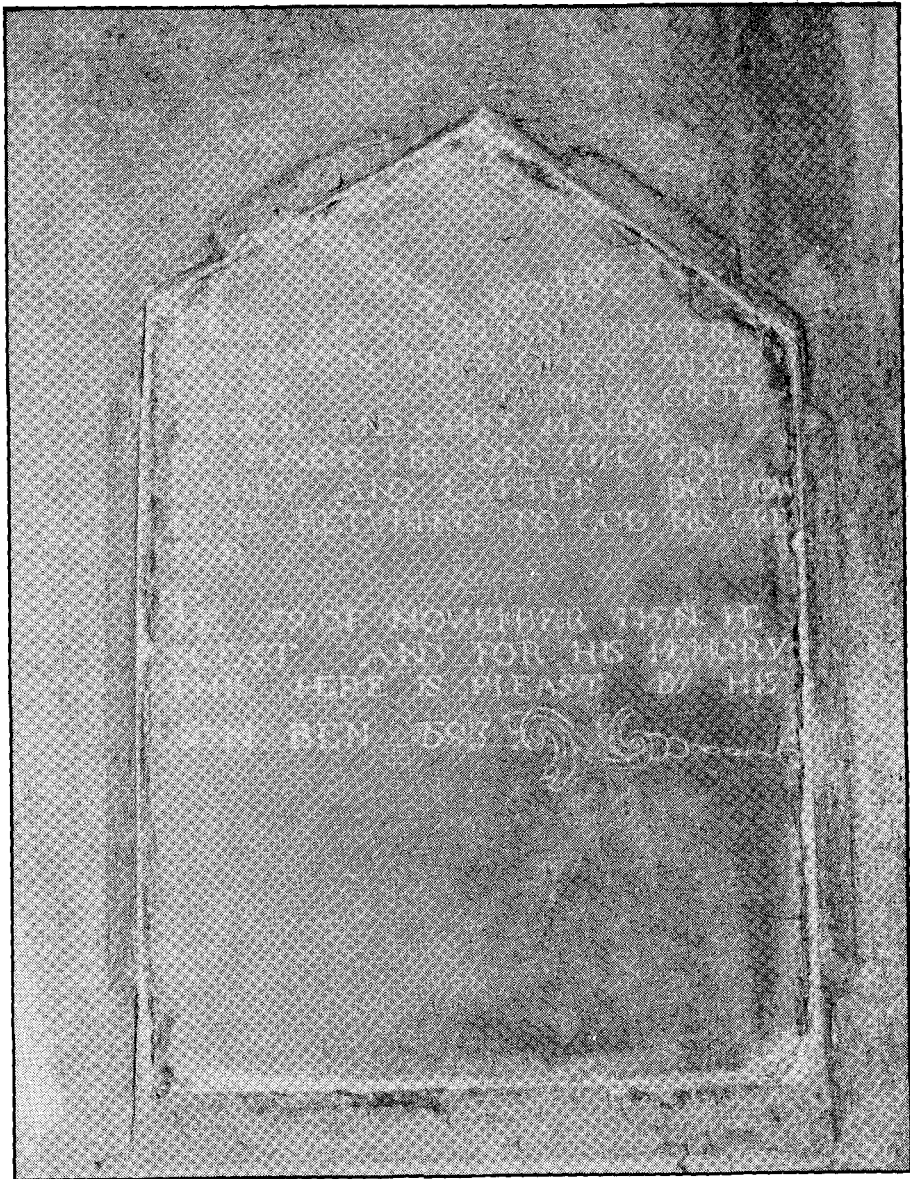
Benjamin, the son of Samuel, was sheriff of the city of Limerick in 1714. These Old Testament names are characteristic of Irish puritans. His own



The Barrington family tree.

son, also named Benjamin, was sheriff in 1729, and one of the leading merchants of the city, which was at that time regarded as second only to Dublin in importance. And Dublin was then the third city in the British Isles. He married in 1724, Anne, daughter of John Waltho and of Catherine, daughter of Joseph Croker of Ballynagard, Co. Limerick. This Benjamin called his eldest son Croker. Croker and his brother Matthew were granted the freedom of the city on 12 October, 1747 (R. Herbert, *North Munster Journal*, 1945). There are about ten Crokers on the list of freemen. It was the second son, Matthew, who assured the succession. He married Jane Canter of Ballyvara, Co. Limerick. There are still descendants of that Canter family there, near Barrington's Bridge. The son of Matthew and Jane, Joseph, married in 1787 Mary Baggott, a Limerick Catholic, whose parents owned a bootshop. He was living first in Broad Street, the fashionable thoroughfare of the day; but by 1797 he had moved to Charlotte Quay, where he took over a pewterer's shop under the sign of the Copper Globes - where he advertised that 'stills, worms, boilers, etc., were manufactured at the shortest notice' (R. Herbert, *Journ. N. Munster Antiq.* 1941, p. 159). It was Joseph who built, in 1830, Barrington's Quay, on the northern side of the Shannon, a good mile west of the present Sarsfield Bridge. It is said that Barrington's Pier had already been built on that spot by Benjamin. The opening of the big bridge in the eighteen-twenties started the development of this area as a suburb. Inglis wrote in 1834 in his *Journey through Ireland*: 'Some extensive embankments are now in course of being constructed below Limerick, with the view of reclaiming land ... the others are undertaken by Lord Lansdowne and by Mr. Barrington'. The ruin of Kilrush Church, within the parish of St. Munchin, was included in the Barrington lands. (Ordnance Survey Letters 1839: Clare, Vol. II, p. 131). In 1838, Croker Barrington, one of the sons of Joseph, who had married in 1840 Margaret Lewin, of Fort Fergus, Co. Clare, built, 12 chains north from Barrington's Quay, *Woodville House*, at the cost of £1,300. This house was subsequently known as *Tivoli*, and is now the Villiers School.

Lenihan wrote in his *History of Limerick*, 1866, p. 478, that 'the name of Sir Joseph Barrington is inseparably interwoven with the history of these times in Limerick'. He received the baronetcy on 30 September, 1831. His coat-of-arms is to be seen on the eastern entrance-lodge of the demesne at Glenstal; 'Argent, three chevronels gules, with on top a label of three points vert' (the sign of the minor branch of a lineage). The crest is 'Out of a crown vallery or, a hermit's bust with a cowl, vested, paly, argent and gules'. This was an emblem of



The memorial to Samuel Barrington at St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick.

lawyers. Joseph's eldest son, Matthew, made a considerable fortune as a lawyer for the county and for the first Irish railways. This enabled Sir Joseph to undertake in 1829, with his sons, to found a charitable institution for the relief of the poor of their native city. Barrington's Hospital Act was passed in 1830. The sick were first admitted to it on 5 November, 1831. The Barrington family expended £10,000 on it. There is to be seen in the boardroom of that hospital a beautiful group painted by Cregan, President R.H.A. The elderly Sir Joseph stands in the centre with the two eldest of his grandsons: the future third and fourth baronets. Sir Matthew, who took the most important part in the establishment, sits at the table, with the plans in his hands. Three of his brothers are sitting around him. Two religious paintings in the hospital are by John Murphy, a young Limerick artist who was the protege in London of the second baronet. Later on, an Act of Parliament constituted important donors as governors of the



Joseph Barrington.

hospital. In 1832 the outbreak of cholera proved how invaluable this institution was for the citizens.



Finding that many hospitals on the Continent were supported by *monts de piété*, which at the same time supplied the poor with a loan-office at low rates, the second baronet organised one in Limerick, the first one in the then British Isles. In the one year (1840), the amount advanced at the Limerick *Mont de Piété* was £25,488, while the amount returned for released articles was £23,675, and the gross profit, even at the low interest of 4d. in the pound, and with no charge for tickets for the pledged articles, came to £1,357 - which sum meant a lot more a hundred years ago than it does now ...

The family had the big white house at the place called now Barrington's Bridge, some nine miles east of the city. O'Donovan in his Ordnance Survey Letters, 1840, calls it the townland of Clonkeen Barrington. An inscription of the base of this bridge testifies that it was erected by Matthew Barrington in 1818.

The most imposing building which Sir Matthew left behind him was Glenstal Castle in Owneybeg. Having chosen his site on a commanding though sheltered height in the townland of Garranbane, he bought up a number of small farms to lay out a magnificent park, planted with exotic trees imported from America, Asia and Australia. William Bardwell, a London architect, made the plans for a grand medieval fortress - which, however, was never completed. Sir Matthew anyhow carried to completion the four round towers and two turrets,



Mary Baggott, wife of Joseph Barrington, painted by C. Salisbury in 1806.

and enriched his castle with remarkable stone carvings. Marble was quarried near Limerick for columns of a size for which there would be no adequate machinery in this country in our days. Sir Matthew's coat-of-arms is to be seen in the entrance-hall of the present secondary school at Glenstal. He had added 'a canton of the same, charged with a trefoil or': presumably the shamrock, to mark their Irish birth. And in the centre he added a little escutcheon bearing a red hand. Was that because Viscount Barrington of Ardglas, Co. Down - who

had the same coat-of-arms as Sir Joseph - also hailed from Essex? Sir Matthew's coat-of-arms is quartered with the lion rampant of the Hartigans of Dublin, for his wife. One of her grandsons, a past-president of the Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, told the writer of these lines: 'She was the ambitious woman!' Sir Matthew erected a monument of Caen stone in memory of his brother Samuel at the top of the southern aisle of the old cathedral of Limerick. After his own death, his friends filled in the tall lancets at the west end of the cathedral with stained glass 'as a tribute to the memory of Sir Matthew Barrington of Glenstal'. And his son Croker gave there another large stained glass window in memory of Lady Matthew Barrington, deceased in 1858.

We may note that the second son of Sir Joseph, Daniel, became, through his second son, Colonel Joseph Barrington, the grandfather-in-law of Lord Castlemain of Athlone - whose only issue is the wife of Governor Gardiner of Western Australia. Daniel's eldest daughter, Charlotte, married John Mayly of Debsborough, Nenagh - whose two daughters were to marry sons of Sir Croker Barrington.

Sir Matthew, having married in 1814 Charlotte Hartigan, the daughter of a Dublin doctor, had eight children. His two sons succeeded each other in the baronetcy, the eldest dying without male issue in 1872. Sir William had married in 1858 Elizabeth Olivia Darley of Wingfield,

County of the City
Limerick to wit

Be it Remembered, that a Common Council held at the Council Chamber of said City on the Eleventh day of October in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and Nineteen -

The Freedom of said City was granted to Joseph Barrington of the said City Esquire. And on the twenty third day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty he was sworn and admitted to the Freedom at large accordingly. In Testimony whereof the Common Seal of said City is hereunto affixed by the Right Worshipful Joseph Gabbott Esq. Mayor this Eighteenth day of April in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and twenty.

Colonel Barrington

Joseph Gabbott Mayor



To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty

*The humble Petition of Sir
Joseph Barrington of Glenstal
in the County of Limerick and of the
City of Limerick Baronet.*

And your Petitioner will ever pray.

J. Barrington

Sir Joseph Barrington's unsuccessful petition 'to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty', in 1832, seeking the title of Lord Montacute.

Co. Wicklow. His two daughters taught woodcarving to boys of the neighbourhood. They sculptured the bannisters on top of the big staircase in the castle of Glenstal. The eldest daughter married the son of Archdeacon Scott of the Protestant archdiocese of Dublin, who built the beautiful church of Bray, where her husband became rector, and chancellor of that archdiocese. One of their four daughters is married to the Rev. E.F.B. Moore, rector of Greystones. The second Canon Scott wrote a geological and historical book entitled *Stones of Bray*.

On Sir William's death in 1872, Glenstal Castle had to pass on to his brother, Sir Croker, whose coat-of-arms is displayed on the main entrance-lodge of the demesne, quartered with that of his wife, Annie Beattie-West, daughter of a M.P. for Dublin. She did not take possession, however. She was reluctant to leave the Barrington Bridge house, her home since 1848; and it so happened that she died soon after her father-in-law.

Of Sir Matthew's six daughters, Olivia, married in 1853 George May, a future Lord Chief Justice of Ireland. They had ten children. The eldest daughter, also called Olivia, married a Catholic, Colonel Acton, and gave a striking painting of the Holy Face to the parish church of Murroe. Their daughter is the wife of Professor Weaver, President of Trinity College, Oxford, in 1942. Three of Mrs. May's sons were knighted for public service: Edward as a general, Henry as a governor-general of Hong-Kong and the Fiji Islands, Gould as a doctor. Henry's

eldest daughter married Mr. de Fonblanque, also a Catholic.

Another daughter of the second baronet married at Glenstal in 1859 serjeant-at-law Jellett, Q.C., the brother of a provost of T.C.D. who was the grandfather of the artist Mainie Jellett.

And Sir Matthew's youngest daughter married W.R. Le Fanu, a son of the rector of Abington, their parish. The squire had induced that promising young man to become engineer for the early Irish railways. Eventually W.R. Le Fanu acted as chief engineer in the construction of half the line from Dublin to Cork. He had been second engineer for the first half. And he became Chief Commissioner for the Public Works of Ireland. It was he who designed the high stone bridge in the park of Glenstal. In his old age he wrote one book *Seventy Years of Irish Life*. This Huguenot family has been rich in literary achievements. Joe Sheridan Le Fanu, who wrote *Uncle Silas* and so many other frightening stories, was his brother.

Of Mrs. W.R. Le Fanu's ten children, the eldest was president R.S.A.I. in 1933-36; his son-in-law, Mr. Christie, has become headmaster of the Westminster School. Another grandson of Sir Matthew Barrington, Henry Le Fanu, was successively Anglican coadjutor bishop of Brisbane in 1915, archbishop of Perth in 1929, and primate of Australia from 1937 till his death in 1946.

Sir Croker Barrington, the fourth baronet, had also ten children. The eldest one, Charles, succeeded him as fifth baronet in 1890, and married, five

years later, Mary Rose Bacon, daughter of the Premier Baronet of England. She belonged to the family of the philosophers, Roger Bacon, 'doctor mirabilis' O.F.M. in the thirteenth century, and Francis, Lord Verulam and St. Albans, in the sixteenth. Her direct ancestor was the first keeper of the Great Seal under Elizabeth I. His eldest son, who held several manors in Norfolk and Suffolk, was the first person to be advanced to the dignity of Baronet upon the institution of that order by James I. Francis Viscount St. Albans, and the painter Sir Nicholas Bacon, were his brothers.

Sir Charles Barrington had two brothers, who married their second cousins, Florence and Catherine Bayly. The eldest one, Croker, barrister and solicitor, built the Red House at Barrington's Bridge; the youngest, John, lived at Ashroe, but acted as agent for his father first, and for his brother afterwards. His office was in Barrington Street, Limerick.

Charles was a great sportsman. Having been at school at Rugby, it was he who first introduced rugby football into Ireland; and he captained the victorious T.C.D. rowing crew at the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876. His brother Croker was also on that team. On their return to Glenstal, they were the object of a presentation from their tenants - who were entertained on that occasion in the big rooms of the castle. Their brother John also received a silver watch, although he was too young to have accompanied them to America. It is



Jane Martha Barrington, daughter of Joseph Barrington.

strange to compare the hearty and simple speeches that were exchanged on that evening, and printed in the press, with some threatening letters which came with the land-war, a few years later. Besides their extensive properties, the family had the game on the Cloncurry estate - under whose landlord the trouble started. Sir Charles employed a numerous staff himself, and he helped many young men of the neighbourhood to get a place on the railway, in the police, or in the army. He was honorary colonel of the Limerick City Artillery. The fifth baronet gave both the site and the stone for the Catholic Church of Murroe, which was consecrated in 1914. He also allowed a bazaar to be held on the entrance field of his park, in aid of the building. The newspapers have reported in 1938 that he celebrated his ninetyeth birthday at his English country-seat, Fairthorn Manor in Hampshire, by cutting grass with a scythe continuously for a couple of hours. He told a reporter that he thought scything and rowing the finest

exercises.

His eldest sister married W.Y. Donnelly, son of a Register-General for Ireland. The second of his six sisters married, in 1871, a son of the fourth baronet, Lewen-Burton-Weldon, whose ancestor was a Wolseley. Their eldest son was surveyor-general of Egypt in 1920-1923. He has retired at Birr with his daughter. His brother, a colonel in the first Great War, retired to Dorset. Their youngest sister married a brother of Mr. Stephen Gwynn.

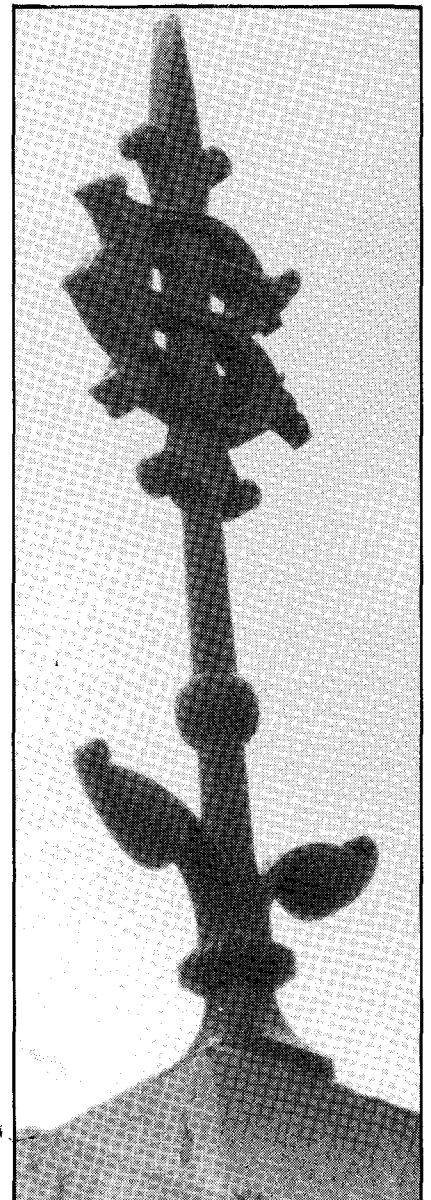
Sir Charles and his wife both died in 1943, while their youngest son was on hard labour under the Japanese in Thailand: he had arrived at Singapore as an officer only just before the surrender.

It was twenty years since the fifth baronet had abandoned his Irish mansion and the flower-gardens on which he and Lady Barrington had bestowed so much care. On Whitsunday Eve, 1921, their cherished daughter had been killed by mistake at Coolboreen, three miles beyond Newport. Sir Charles

insisted that the dreaded sanctions be not taken. Death had come so unexpectedly that her former teacher from the National School of Murroe said, years later, that when the corpse was laid out in a room of the castle, surrounded with the huge pink rhododendron blooms, Winnie seemed to be still alive. Shortly before, Miss Winifred had made arrangements with a nun of the convent of Cappamore to receive instructions in the Catholic religion. During the Great War she had devoted herself to cooking in a military hospital, and doing auxiliary work in the air force. Sir Charles's universally popular daughter had fallen a victim to her indiscriminate kindness, at the age of twenty-three.

Thirty years afterwards, the only member of the Barrington lineage in these surroundings was Miss Florence Barrington of Clonshavoy, Lisnagry, sole survivor of Mr. Croker of the Red House.

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Barrington heraldic ironwork on Glenstal Castle gatehouse.