

Mahon deserves a large niche in our memory for his unending conflict with the Northmen who were eventually completely subdued by his more famous brother.

His father, Kennedy the Pure, had laid claim to the Kingship of Cashel, that is, of all Munster, but had neither the right nor the power to enforce it. He died fighting the Danes in 951, and Mahon succeeded him in the Kingship of Thomond, a territory more or less co-terminous with the present County Clare. After a struggle lasting nine years, in which he was ably assisted by Brian, he eventually succeeded in defeating the Eoghanachta and usurping the Kingship of Munster.

In addition to his struggle with the other Irish Clans, Mahon carried on a bitter fight with the Northmen of Limerick, emerging from the thick woods of Cratloe again and again, and devastating their island fortress of Inis Ibhton. For a time he left the fight to Brian, but in 968, he returned to the contest and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Northmen at Sulchoid or Sullohod, near Limerick Junction. Following up the victory, the Dalcassians chased the Northmen right into the city, which they burned, slew eight leaders and about 2,000 men, and captured jewels, satin, silk, and foreign saddlery and cloth of all colours. In addition, they took many boys and girls prisoners to Kincora. The victory was celebrated "for the good of the souls of the foreigners who were slain," by holding games within a great circle of the Danish women resting on their hands and knees.

The Danes returned to the attack but were again badly defeated, this time at Shanagolden. Their power was temporarily shattered and Munster enjoyed peace and prosperity for nine years. But what they could not achieve by force, they eventually succeeded in accomplishing by wiles. They conspired with the Irish tribes whom Mahon had conquered, and eventually got Mahon into their clutches. In 976, he was slain by Maelmuadh of the Eoghanachta, assisted by Donovan, chief of the Limerick area, and Ivar the Northman. At the time of his death, he was "under the protection of the clergy," and the Annals describe how "his blood stained the reliquary of Saint Barri's Gospel, which he had clasped in his bosom." Mahon was succeeded in the Kingship of Cashel by Brian of the Tributes, who quickly avenged his brother's treacherous death.

ATTIE O'BRIEN

Frances Marcella O'Brien, poetess and novelist, was born at Peafield, near Ennis, on 24th June, 1840. Her mother, Marcella Burke Browne, of Newgrove, of the same family as the de Veres of County Limerick, died at the early age of 30, and her father, William O'Brien, emigrated to California with his elder children. Attie, the childhood name by which she always preferred to be known, remained at Newgrove with her grandmother. She was

an extremely delicate child and, therefore, never went to any school or received any systematic education. The delicacy developed into chronic asthma and she was subject to severe attacks of this painful disease all her life.

While still young, Attie O'Brien left Newgrove to live at Kildysart, and, except for a short trip to Dublin just before her death, never afterwards left this beauty spot overlooking the Shannon and the Fergus. In March, 1883, she set out for Dublin but the journey proved too strenuous for her and she died in the city on Holy Thursday, 5th April, 1883. Her grave in the old churchyard of Kildysart is marked by a Celtic cross of white marble, with the inscription:—"Pray for the soul of Frances (Attie) O'Brien, who died on 5th April, 1883. R.I.P."

Attie O'Brien was a very devout Catholic and her journal, published after her death, in *Memories of Attie O'Brien*, by Mrs. Morgan John O'Connell, contains many entries relating to her spiritual exercises and her patient resignation in suffering. By thoughtful reading she educated herself, and, because she was too delicate for manual work, she turned to writing for something to occupy her mind.

She became a regular contributor to the *Irish Monthly*, an excellent Catholic periodical then edited by Father Matt Russell, S.J., first of poetry and then of stories and novels. "Lost in the Moonlight" and "One Summer by the Sea," two long short-stories, appeared in 1877. She also contributed two long serials to the *Weekly Freeman*—"From Darkness to Dawn" and "Won by Worth." Her last work, a serial story in fifteen parts, "The Monk's Prophecy," appeared simultaneously in the *Irish Monthly*, the *Nation*, *Tinsley's Magazine* and other foreign periodicals. It was a great success and, if only Attie O'Brien had lived, her place in Anglo-Irish letters was assured.

On her death, Father Russell, who had rejected her first contribution of poetry, wrote of her:—"Her life-work seemed only begun when in reality it was over. Far better than anything she has written was her cheerful endurance of illhealth, which would have doomed any nature less strong than hers to complete inaction. Her departure has saddened the hearts of many who loved her and quenched the hopes of many who believed in her talent."

DANIEL O'BRIEN

Daniel O'Brien, of Moyarta and Carrigaholt, first Viscount Clare, was born about the year 1577, the third son of Conor O'Brien, the third Earl of Thomond. In 1598, when his eldest brother had gone to England, Daniel was left in command of his castle at Ibricken. He was attacked by another brother, Tadhg, who had joined in the northern revolt against Elizabeth, was