

well as the men of Connaught and had a narrow escape from death when a would-be assassin of one of his own Dalcassian sept, the Ui Chaisin, cut off his right hand. However, Donnchadh was no weakling and, having defeated the Connaught men and extracted hostages and tribute from them, he had his rival half-brother, Tadhg, treacherously slain.

Donnchadh at length restored peace with the sword and the *Annals of Innisfallen* relate that he enforced taxes "such as had not been made from the days of Patrick in Ireland, so that nobody dared to bring a head of cattle into a house on a Sunday. . . ." This was high praise for the discipline imposed by Donnchadh throughout his kingdom.

However, the effect of Donnchadh's forceful policy made him many enemies and eventually reacted upon himself. Turlough, the son of his half-brother whom he had murdered, allied himself with Donnchadh's enemies and split the Dalcassians, and when Donnchadh was raiding the Norse town of Dublin, the Connaught men, allied to Turlough, raided Clare, burned the sacred Dalcassian tree at Magh Adhair, near Quin, and slew Donnchadh's son, Domhnall Ban. Next the Norsemen under Diarmait Mac Mael na mBo raided Munster, devastated Scattery Island, and, on being pursued home by Donnchadh, who was returning from a raid on the Decies, turned and inflicted a crushing defeat on him.

Donnchadh could no longer maintain his kingship alone and, in 1059, he made full submission to the King of Connacht, Aedh O Conchobhair. For a time this alliance saved his kingdom for him, but, in 1061, Turlough, in league with Diarmait Mac Mael na mBo, his father-in-law, and the Leinster men, again raided Munster and defeated Donnchadh.

Turlough was now recognised as King of Munster, and Donnchadh resigned and set out for Rome on a pilgrimage of penance. Here he died, in 1064, in the Monastery of St. Stephen, "after a victory of penance."

## MATTHEW O'BRIEN

Matthew O'Brien, Astronomer and Mathematician, was the son of Matthew O'Brien, a doctor with a large practice in Ennis. He was born in that town in the year 1814.

He entered Cambridge University where he became a scholar in 1834, graduated Third Wrangler in mathematics in 1838, and received his M.A. in 1841. In the latter year he resigned his Junior Fellowship, but was given a Moderatorship in mathematics in 1843.

After his brilliant University career he was appointed Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy in King's College, London, in 1844, and retained that post till his death. In 1849, he was also appointed Lecturer in Practical Astronomy in the Royal Military College at Woolwich.

O'Brien was the author of many mathematical works. His text books *Differential Calculus*, published in 1842, and *Plane Co-ordinate Geometry*, published in 1844, were popular for many years after his death. Other works were: *Solutions to the Senate House Problems of 1844*, *Lectures on Natural Philosophy*, 1849, and *A Treatise on Mathematical Geography*, 1852. There were also many pamphlets of a minor nature on various mathematical and astronomical problems.

O'Brien, who had always been delicate, broke down in health when only forty years old, went to the Channel Islands to recuperate, and died there on 22nd August, 1855.

### PATRICK O'BRIEN *(Limerick Piper)*

Patrick O'Brien, or Pdraig O Briain as he was more commonly called, was born at Labasheeda, County Clare, about the year 1773. His parents were comparatively well-off farmers and Patrick, who was a native speaker, received a good education at the hedge schools. He was an excellent Latin scholar and great hopes were held out for his possibilities in life, but unfortunately, his eyes were bad and, before the age of twenty-six he became totally blind.

Like so many blind people, Patrick turned to music for a livelihood and learned to play the Union bagpipes. Having thoroughly learned this instrument he went to Limerick City, and, not finding the encouragement he expected, eventually became a street musician. His favourite stand was at the corner of Hartstonge Street and the Crescent, where he became one of the sights of Limerick. Few visited the city without going specially to hear him play his melodious Irish tunes.

Here he was one day discovered by Joseph Patrick Haverty, the famous Galway artist, who, struck by the fine figure and noble features of the piper, made him the immortal subject of his painting "The Limerick Piper." In it, O'Brien is depicted as old and grey, but still possessing all the nobility of countenance of his youth, bent over his beloved pipes, playing, while his young and beautiful daughter sits pensively beside him. The background to the picture is a woodland scene. The picture is painted in the romantic style and we cannot help thinking how much better it might have been, good though it is, if Haverty had given O'Brien his proper background, the hard wet pavement and walls of O'Connell Street.

The original picture was painted for Sir Robert Gore-Booth, <sup>in 1844</sup> of Lissadel, County Sligo, but it became so popular that a copy<sup>i</sup> was made for William Smith O'Brien, who presented it to the National Gallery. From this an engraving was made by J. S. Templeton for the Royal Irish Art Union, and copies of the work may still be found in many Irish houses. There is one in the Limerick City ~~Museum~~ Art gallery.

[Haverty, the artist born in Galway 1794. Died 1864.]