

In 1891, O'Brien was created a Baronet and, in 1900, raised to the Peerage of Ireland as Baron O'Brien of Kilfenora. In 1867, he married Annie Clarke, Bansha, County Tipperary, and had two daughters. He retired from the Bench in 1913, and died at Stillorgan, County Dublin, on 7th September, 1914, aged 72.

TURLOUGH O'BRIEN

Turlough O'Brien, High King of Ireland, though with much opposition from opposing contenders for that title, was the grandson of Brian Boru, and son of Tadhg who was slain by his younger brother, Donnchadh O'Brien, King of Munster. He was born in 1009, and fostered by Maolruanaidh O Bilraighe, the Lord of Ui Cairbre in the plains of County Limerick. He assumed the title of King of Munster in 1064, when Donnchadh was compelled to abdicate in his favour, and immediately set about asserting his grandfather's right to the Kingship of Ireland.

When his ally and foster-father, Diarmuid Mac Maol na mBo, died, Turlough no longer felt any obligation to his Leinster allies, and, invading their State, soon brought them into subjection, receiving hostages from both the Leinstermen and the Northmen of Dublin. In 1073, he imposed his rule on Meath, and, shortly after, exacted the usual tributes from the Kings of Connaught and Breifne. On Good Friday in the same year he is reputed to have carried off the head of Connor O Maelsechlainn and two gold rings from Clonmacnoise.

Turlough's career was one long battle against all the tribes of Ireland, from the Ulstermen to the Deisi of Waterford; from the Connaughtmen to the Northmen of Dublin, and he never seems to have been at peace. He was a brave warrior but never had sufficient forces at his command—for the battle of Clontarf had left the Dalcassians a spent force—to fully enforce his right to the Kingship of Ireland, and he was never High King in anything more than name.

He was said to have been attacked by some foul disease for his sacrilegious robbery of Clonmacnoise in 1073, and the Annals relate how his hair and beard fell off as a result. He never fully recovered from it, and, "after long suffering and intense penance for sins," he died at Kincora on 14th July, 1086.

He was married to Gormflaith, a daughter of the O'Fogarty, Cheftain of Eliogarty, County Tipperary, and had three sons, Tadhg, Diarmaid and Muirchertach Mor, who succeeded him in the High-Kingship, but with more success.