

Apparently the West Indian climate affected Coote's brain as well as his health, and he became noted for his eccentricity. In 1815 an inquiry was held into his conduct, and the three generals conducting it reported that Coote was eccentric, not mad, and that his conduct was unworthy of an officer and gentleman. He was dismissed from the army and degraded from the Order of Bath. He died on 10th of December, 1823.

Coote was twice married and left children by both wives. He was a member of the Irish House of Commons for Ballynakill from 1790 to 1797, for Maryborough from 1797 to 1800; a Member of the Imperial Parliament for Queen's County in 1802, and for Barnstable in 1812. He lost the latter seat in 1818.

JOHN CLARAGH McDONNELL.

John Claragh McDonnell, Celtic poet and hedge-schoolmaster was born in Charleville, on the borders of Limerick and Cork, in 1691. His nickname Claragh comes either from the fact of his being fostered in Co. Clare or of his family being from that county.

He was the founder of the Court of Poetry of Coshma, and presided over its sessions which were held in Charleville and Bruree. Having lost most of his land in the confiscations that followed the Siege of Limerick, McDonnell was a strong Jacobite, and many of his poems deal with the Williamite wars and the expected invasion of Prince Charlie. It is interesting to note that the Sessions of the Poetic Court were held in the open, in Bruree, in the old Royal Fort, and in Charleville in the lios of Kiltuohig.

McDonnell had to take to school teaching for a livelihood and Sylvester O'Halloran, the famous Limerick Surgeon, who was one of his pupils, de-

scribes him:— “Mr. McDonnell, a man of great erudition and a profound Irish antiquarian and poet . . . and from whom I learned the rudiments of our language when a boy. . . . He had made valuable collections and was writing in his native tongue, a history of Ireland; but a long illness prevented his finishing this work. He proposed to some gentleman in the County Clare to translate Homer into Irish.”

He was married to a Protestant named Agnes White, and in a Gaelic couplet he describes her going with the parson's wife to church:—“Behold Ursula, with her large hooped petticoats going down to her meeting-house, and my Agnes walking after her.”

McDonnell died in 1754 and Seán O'Toomy, his friend and fellow-poet, wrote an elegy on him. He is buried in the graveyard of Ballysallagh, outside Charleville, where his grave is marked by a stone with the inscription in Latin:—

“John McDonald, surnamed Claragh, a man truly a Catholic, and accomplished in three languages, namely, Greek, Latin and Irish—a poet of no common genius—is buried under this grave-stone. He died in the 63rd year of his age, in the year of salvation, 1754. May he rest in peace.”

The following is a good example of McDonnell's hatred of the despoiling Williamites:—

Squeeze down his bones, o ye stones, in your hall
of clay,
Yon reeking, gore-sprinkled boar, old Dawson the
grey,
Sheathed was his sword when the foemen called to
the fray,
But he cheated and sold, and slowly slaughtered
the prey.
Although you were ever self-sufficient and exces-
sive and greedy,
A narrow kimmirya will have your treasures
after you;
The worms will have your body, picking it voraciously
and fiercely,
And your soul shall be boiling in a cauldron for
countless years.