

O'Brien had a fall on the ice in 1855, injured himself badly, and from August, 1856, until his death on 1st December, 1856, he was completely confined to bed in his lodgings in Nicholas Street. He was buried in Kilquane graveyard just outside the city.

PETER O'BRIEN

Peter O'Brien, Baron O'Brien of Kilfenora, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, was the fifth son of John O'Brien, of Ballynalacken, and Ellen Murphy, of Hyde Park, County Cork. His father was Member of Parliament for Limerick from 1841 to 1852. O'Brien, who was born at Carnelly House on 29th June, 1842, will be more easily recognised by Clare readers by his less imposing but more descriptive title "Pether the Packer."

He was educated at Clongowes Wood Jesuit College and at Trinity College where he studied law. In 1865, he was called to the Bar and, after a sound apprenticeship to Chief Baron Pallas and his uncle, Justice James O'Brien, he joined the Munster Circuit. Here he soon established a reputation for his powers of cross-examination and, in 1880, took silk.

He was a fearless advocate and a good lawyer and, on account of his open hostility to Land Leaguers and Nationalists at a time when Ireland was rampant with agrarian disputes, he was retained by the Government for their prosecutions in such cases. He was of considerable assistance to them in quelling the disturbances and his promotion was correspondingly rapid—Sergeant in 1884, Solicitor-General in 1887, Attorney-General in 1888, and Lord Chief Justice in 1889. It was during this period he earned the soubriquet, "Pether the Packer" on account of his skill in packing juries that would convict the defendants.

In spite of this however, O'Brien, who was genial, humorous, a keen sportsman and an excellent talker, was liked by all the barristers of the Munster Circuit, and his lisp has been the subject of many a bar-room joke. Maurice Healy, in his recently published *The Old Munster Circuit*, writes of him: "He was full of mannerisms, of which his lisp was the least notable, being a sibillance rather than a lisp. He hated a wig, and, five minutes after coming into Court, he would take it off and put it on the table in front of him, from time to time playing a tattoo on his massive bald pate. He had enormous lips, with which he made slightly sarcastic suctional noises. He nearly always knew where the truth lay; sometimes he was too lazy to make sure it had reached the jury. 'Tith cathe mitht be thettled,' was a common phrase in his mouth. And yet, at the Bar, he had been noted for his courage; and Ajax never defied the lightning with greater imperturbality."

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.