Reviews

JOURNAL OF THE KERRY ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

Though members of our own Society might regard Kerry, the northern half of it at least, as
legitimately part of North Munster, the Kerry people prefer to think of themselves as a sort of
race apart (subjects of 'The Kingdom') and thus deserving of their own archaeological journal.
Several attempts to successfully publish such a journal were made since the middle of the last
century, but none lasted the pace. Now, once again, a determined effort is being made. The Kerry
Archaeological and Historical Society was formed on the 8th of May, 1967, lectures and outings
followed, and a year later the first number of their Journal appeared.

The first number is an attractive publication, well bound and printed on good quality paper,
though one might perhaps regret that such a small format (9 x 6 ins., as opposed to our own Journal
which measures 9½ x 7½ ins.) was chosen—this is to be particularly regretted as the illustrations
and tables on pages 14, 16, 18, 20 and 65 are all likely to have their edges trimmed off when
being rebound by libraries.

The contents are impressive, including as they do articles of general as well as of local interest.
Undoubtedly the most ambitious article is that on "Beaker Pottery in Ireland" by Aedeen
Cremin Madden. In this article an attempt is made to deal with the whole corpus of such pottery
found in Ireland. A new classification is proposed: Type I (corresponds to Abercromby's B-type);
Type II (Abercromby's A-type); Type III (squat vessels with short, straight necks, and waist
marked by a groove) only. Whether a new terminology is really necessary is not demonstrated
to the reviewer's satisfaction, especially as the types of decoration encountered on the vessels are
also classified into three groups called Types I, II and III, which causes some confusion when the
decoration on the pots is being discussed. This article is not the answer to every archaeologist's
prayers, but it will, nonetheless, be helpful to all students of the Early Bronze Age in Ireland.

The other articles deal with matters of more local interest, but this does not mean that their
value is confined to Kerry readers. A good example of this is Donncha Ó Corráin's paper on "The
Regnal Succession in Ciarraige Luachra, 741-1185," the first of a series of articles under the
general title of "Studies in West Munster History" which will be appearing in subsequent
numbers of the Journal. This article is of importance to all who are interested in the early history
of Munster, and is a fine example of what some would term the study-book approach to history, an
approach beloved of Irishmen from the professional genealogists of old down to all the followers
of "Meet the Clans."

Séadh Ó Luing contributes an interesting article on "Some Travellers in Kerry" during the
first half of the last century. There are few better ways to understand the social history of the
time than to carefully glean from the often verbose accounts of such travellers, and Mr. Ó Luing
has usefully served us in this regard.

Also of interest to the social historian is the first part of "Charles O'Brien's Agricultural Survey
of Kerry, 1800" (to be concluded in the second number of the Journal) by M. G. Moylea and
Pádraig de Brún, while the articles on "Castleisland Charter School" by Michael Quane, and on
"Phillip Ronayne, Gent." by F. M. Hiltard will be of greatest interest to the local historian. Those
interested in the background history of the new Society will find it all in the introductory article
by Thomas Armitage, Honorary Secretary of the Society.

The journal is provided with an index, something for which the Honorary Editor must be
congratulated.

ETIENNE RYNNE.


The Old Wexford Society which was founded in 1941, is to be congratulated on the production
of the first number of its new journal. This is a most welcome addition to the growing numbers
of periodicals dealing with local history and antiquities. For the moderate charge of only five
shillings, the Old Wexford Society offers its readers eleven articles, the majority written by mem-
bbers of the Society, but also, we are pleased to note, some written by professional Museum per-
sonnel.
Dr. George Hadden, Founder and Chairman of the Society, in his paper treating of the origins and development of Wexford town, traces the growth of the town through the prehistoric, Viking, and Anglo-Norman periods, discussing the buildings, streets and place-names in a most interesting manner, and providing a most comprehensive map of the area. Dr. Hadden, in discussing the origin of Kayser Lane, quotes, among other authorities, King Haakan of Norway with whom he had corresponded on the matter.

In his short article on Irish Norse relations, Dr. A. T. Lucas, Director of the National Museum and a member of our Society, summarizes briefly a subject which he has treated in a more exhaustive manner in our own publication, *North Munster Studies*. Dr. Joseph Raftery, Keeper of Irish Antiquities in the National Museum, describes in an all too brief note the discovery of a cist-grave containing two Food-Vessels at Knocknaskeagh, near Enniscorthy. An illustration of the grave and of these objects would have been a help to readers who might well be unfamiliar with the appearance of such burials and their contents.

For those interested in family history there are articles on Monegrange and the Orpen family, by John O'Callaghan, on Commodore John Barry, 'The Father of the American Navy,' by E. P. O'Brien, on Donall Spáinnmoch Caomháinach, by Sámas De Vál, and on the Etchingsham of Dunbrody, by W. H. Jeffery. Local history is dealt with by Nicholas Furlong in his description of the deserted town of Clonmines, and by Edward Culleton writing on the parish of St. Margaret's, Carne.

A section is also included at the end of the *Journal* for those who wish to advertise their services. While regrettable, this is only to be expected and, indeed, is necessary if the existing standard of production is to be maintained at such a low cost.

This new journal should have a wide appeal, not only to members of the Society which produces it but also to the average man in the street or to the farmer who is interested in the past history of the Wexford area, and, indeed, it should also appeal to all members of similar organisations throughout the country who are concerned about the preservation of the records of their country's past.

PÁDRAIG Ó HÉAILIDHE

Myles Dillon (editor), *IRISH SAGAS*, The Mercier Press Ltd., Cork 1968. Price 10/-. The essays in this volume were first given as a series of Thomas Davis Lectures from Radio Éireann in the winter of 1955, and subsequently published in 1959 as a paperback with a dark green cover. It was a dignified production costing only 2/6. It now re-appears, nine years later, again in paperback, but depicting a fierce shaggy-haired pseudo-Viking warrior on the cover, more appropriate, I suggest, to an American horror comic; price 10/-. The cost of living has undoubtably spiralled in the interval, but one raises one's eyebrows at this 400% increase, for the addition of a mere five-and-a-half pages of introductory comments!

The purpose of these essays is to introduce readers to the four Cycles of Irish Sagas, to give us all a gentlemanly knowledge of these wonderful tales. All the contributors, and they form an impressive list, have done their work well. They add meaning and depth to these sagas. They whet one's appetite. And many who read these essays will be driven to read the tales themselves in their entirety in the various English or Irish editions available. We all take it for granted that we know the stories of Diarmuid and Gráinne, of the Táin, for example, but if we examine our consciences we soon realise how little we really know about them.

Admittedly, many of these old sagas are heavy going. Full of allusions, aside, and with purple passages galore, they also have the habit of breaking into rather undistinguished verse from time to time—all very irritating to us who live in this age of jets and condensed books.

What the contributors have done, almost without exception, is to give us the historical background to the saga in question, and to tell us where and in what manuscripts it is found. Then follows a synopsis of the tale, often including a translation of an actual passage to illustrate a point or to give a better idea of the manner of storytelling. Nowhere have they burdened us by those semi-technical discussions beloved of scholars but so boring to ordinary readers.

And how full of unexpected riches these old sagas are! Listen to this perfect description of Brícriu of the poison-tongue: "On his face would rise a blister as big as a fist, if he knew some
secret concerning an honourable man and could not blab it at once." Or this little poem which has that hint of eternity, the hall-mark of true poetry, composed by Ronan over his dead son:

"It is cold against the whirlwind
For him who herds the cows of Aoife;
That is the vain herding
With neither cows, nor the one you love."

What a pity Telišív Eireann have not attempted to give us some of these wonderful stories. Perhaps it is a pleasure still in store for us?

P. B. LYSAGHT

Various authors, GREAT BOOKS OF IRELAND, Clonmore & Reynolds Ltd., Dublin 1907. Price 16/-.

This useful addition to the well-known Thomas Davis Lectures series comprises eight short chapters, each of which describes a 'great book'; six of them early (Du rew, Kells, Lindisfarne, the Stowe Mss., Armagh, and Leabhar na h-Uidhre) and two others, not so often discussed, somewhat later—the so-called Book of Uí Mhíne (1304 +) and the Annals of the Four Masters (completed, in 1636). The authors are all well-known in their fields, and, given the restricted compass of some twelve pages each, have been obliged to commit themselves on such matters as origins, dates, external relationships, historical value, and so forth, in rather more concrete terms than those which tend to emerge from much more detailed studies. This alone would make the work particularly interesting to the lay reader, who cannot be expected to follow the intricate currents of palaeographic argument and (worse still) the constantly-changing views as to dates which are based, for the oldest works, on subjective art-historical estimates.

There is a quite inadequate bibliography of some dozen or so entries at the end, and one wonders why each chapter could not have had (as Fr. Giblin's on the Annals of the Four Masters alone possesses) a detailed book-list. The eight pages of half-tone illustrations, doubtless to keep the book low-priced, are all over-inked and in at least one case there appears to be a photograph of a photograph!

Members of the Thomond Archaeological Society will no doubt peruse with special interest the first three chapters. Liam de Paor contributes a most workmanlike analysis of the Book of Du rew. William O'Sullivan's essay on the Book of Kells, however, side-steps the important question as to whether it was written at Kells, or at Iona, or both (begun at Iona, finished at Kells—in many ways the least probable view). R.L.S. Bruce-Mitford condenses his very much more elaborate treatment of the Book of Lindisfarne with some skill. In a work of this size, one cannot expect greater detail than the original context—the 1964 series of lectures on Radio Telefís Eireann—called for, but this is still a good fifteen shillings' worth.

CHARLES THOMAS


In Ireland, the popular image of the Vikings is of a pagan, barbaric race of seafaring robbers, uncivilised and therefore unappreciative of the finer things in life, into which catagory art is usually lumped. Scholars of the period have long known the picture so painted to be untrue, being fully aware of the artistic capabilities of the Scandinavians. In the past it has not been easy to study the full range and development of their art, from its beginnings with the emergence of animal ornament in the 4th century to its subsmergence by the Romanesque art of the early 13th century, as no adequately illustrated and clearly presented monograph dealing exclusively with the subject was readily available. This book answers any such complaint. It is packed with beautiful illustrations: 69 line-drawings, 80 photographic plates (most of which illustrate more than one object), and a coloured frontispiece. The text is written with the specialist as well as the intelligent layman in mind, though the latter will probably wish that a final chapter, clearly summarising and setting out the results of the brilliantly argued chapters dealing with the various art-styles, had been included in the book.
The general tendency in past studies of Viking art was to search for, and consequently to emphasise, foreign sources from which it was thought to have evolved, but the joint authors of this book concentrate firmly on the indigenous qualities inherent in the art. A very reasonable and perfectly acceptable case is made in favour of the native origins of most of the art motifs, neatly summed up on page 83 where it is stated that, although outside influence undoubtedly was present, “Scandinavian taste always gains the upper hand . . . . Animal art was the only art which really satisfied the Viking mind.”

In presenting this viewpoint, the authors trace the history and development of the art from pre-Viking times. The first animal style to flourish in Scandinavia was the Germanic art-style known as Salin Style I, mainly datable to the latter part of the 5th and to the whole of the 6th centuries. Some of the Style II followed, being characterised by the adapting of the animal motifs into plaits, scrolls, and knots, an interlaced element which probably reached Scandinavia from southern Europe. The earliest versions of these types found in Scandinavia are labelled A to E, Style A being the link between Salin I and II, Style B being equivalent to Salin II, and Styles C, D, and E being true Scandinavian art-styles. They range in date from the late 6th century to about the end of the 8th century, and are followed by the earliest Viking styles, namely those exemplified in the famous Oseberg ship-burial, datable to the first half of the 9th century.

The great art-styles of the true Viking Period followed. These are dealt with under separate chapters, each dealing with a particular style. The first is the Borre Style which began at least as early as the mid-9th century and lasted well into the 10th century. It was followed by two styles so closely related that up to the publication of this book they were always included together as a single style. The first is the Jellinge Style which developed out of Styles D and E, and begins about the mid-9th century. About the mid-10th century it merged into the Mammen Style which cannot be completely separated from it. In fact, the famous Jellinge Stone, erected between 982 and 985 by order of Harald Bluetooth, King of Norway, is described (p. 118) as the greatest monument of the Mammen Style. This style lasted into the first quarter of the 11th century, overlapping and thus providing the link with the next great Viking art-style, that called Ringerike. The Ringerike Style emerged towards the end of the 10th and lasted into the third quarter of the 11th century. In turn, it overlapped with and was followed by the Urnes Style which began in the second quarter of the 11th and lasted into the first quarter of the 12th century when it was replaced by the powerful, non-Scandinavian, art of the Romanesque Period.

Some of the art-styles reached Ireland and, indeed, Irish material figures fairly prominently in the book. One might perhaps wonder, however, why such an important piece as the wooden gaming-board from Ballinderry Crannog is not included, as it surely deserved at least a mention in connection with the discussion on the ‘Gaum’s ring-chain’ motif. Indeed, its omission is incomprehensible, as it is undoubtedly the outstanding example of Jellinge ornament from Ireland, and is significant as being probably the earliest (mid-10th century) example of Viking art from a non-Viking Irish site.

North Munster readers are likely to be a little disappointed too, insofar as the well-known stone trial-piece from Killaloe (now in the British Museum) is not mentioned, especially as it would have been interesting (particularly in view of the runic inscription at Killaloe) to have learned the authors’ views on its date—in the past, the general tendency has been to describe it as decorated in the Jellinge Style, though to this reviewer it would appear more likely to be Urnes in style.

The rather fine example of Ringerike ornament on the ‘Doorty Cross,’ Kilfenora, is mentioned indirectly as being “rather far outside the mainstream of Ringerike art,” while the Urnes patterns on the Dynans O’Dea Cross are described as “very debased.” However, we need not complain overmuch at such a description because they are, in fact, “debased” by Norwegian standards that is, as a glance at the illustrations in this book will reveal. One regrets, nonetheless, that something other than that laconic comment was made, as this so-called “debasement” is certainly a characteristic feature of much of the finest examples of the style, as worked in stone, here in Ireland, e.g. on the High Cross at Tuam or the Romanesque doorway at Clonfert. This Irish version of the Urnes Style deserved, one feels, treatment as an interesting directly-derived art-style, rather than curt dismissal with the verdict “debased.”

This book is a first-class production and is likely to remain the standard work on Viking art-styles for many years to come, and it should run into several editions. With this in mind, one might be forgiven for pointing out a few minor errors for correction in subsequent editions. One might start with the statement on page 38 that the Book of Durrow has, in recent years, received wide recognition as a Northumbrian product—this is not quite accurate, witness the case made for an Irish origin in several important recent publications, notably in the Ums Graf Verlag facsimile edition (1960) and in Dr. Françoise Henry’s standard work on Irish Art in the Early Christian
Period, to 800 A.D. (1965). One must also point out that the Flann associated with the ‘Cross of the Scriptures’ at Clonmacnoise is less likely to have been a King of Munster who died about 904 (p. 107) than Flann Sinna, King of Tara, who died in 918. The description of the knob and front of the Cross of Cong as being decorated with gilt openwork panels (pp. 157–8) is likewise not quite accurate. In both cases the craftsman has succeeded in producing a clever trompe-l’oeil: the whole of the knob is cast as a unit while the front is decorated with four large cast bronze panels, each divided into several smaller gilded panels containing high relief interlaced animal patterns. One regrets the absence of a photograph of an enlarged detail of the front of the Cross of Cong, as the photograph on plate LXXVI[a] is totally inadequate for study purposes (the only photograph in the book which one might justifiably fault). Finally, all future editions should correct the slip in line 5 of page 158 where “right” should read “left.”

ETIENNE RYNNE


Fr. Aubrey Gwynn’s monograph on the twelfth century reform in Ireland is one of a series now appearing under the general editorship of Monsignor Patrick J. Corish. Although complete in itself, each booklet of this series is destined eventually to form part of a history of Irish Catholicism, spanning over 1,500 years which will be published in six volumes at some later date. Fr. Gwynn’s first contribution to this project covers the poorly documented—and hence highly controversial—period between the Viking and the Norman invasions.

The booklet is divided into seven sections: Origins of the reform movement; the first Synod of Cashel; the reformers at Armagh; the Synod of Rathbreasail; St. Malachy as bishop and legate; the Synod of Kells; and a brief note on contemporary church building, art and literature. In the sixty-eight pages of this booklet Fr. Gwynn gives us, from his unrivalled knowledge of the period, most of what is now known about the reforming synode of the twelfth century.

It is a mark of the high quality of this monograph that it stimulates many questions. For example, although it is obvious, as Fr. Gwynn holds, that a movement which gave Ireland the final form of the hierarchy which has remained, with no more than minor alterations, to the present day cannot be lightly dismissed as a mere ‘paper’ reform, we are still in the dark as to what impact, if any, the movement made on general standards of morality and church discipline. Neither the system of succession to abbacies in such places as mainistir Laois—where at least five of the ruling abbots in the fifteenth century bore the surname O’Leathlobhair—would lead one to believe that either clergy or laity paid much attention to synodic decrees. Native annalists were not concerned with public morality and foreign sources are patently ill informed, or else inspired by political self-interest. To use the so-called Brehon Laws as a means of filling in the picture is to forget D. A. Binchy’s warning that early legal texts are not a photograph of the society that they describe. Besides, how much do we really know about the manner in which these laws were interpreted in the twelfth century?

In a semi-barbarous age, when austerity and brutality flourished side by side in every country of Western Europe, the Irish were probably no better nor no worse than their neighbours. St. Bernard’s diatribe against the pagan Irish, beasts not men, shameless in morals, etc. must be taken with many grains of salt, his object being, like that of every medieval hagiographer, to interest and edify rather than to inform. In any case, as Fr. Gwynn points out, the good man misunderstood whatever information he had picked up about Irish ecclesiastical affairs. Not that St. Bernard’s life of St. Malachy can be totally disregarded as a source of information; nor can many of his charges be easily refuted. That the Irish knew no entry into marriage is probably an overstatement; yet Fr. Gwynn’s candid exposition of the problem will convince most readers that the Irish of that period did, in fact, pay scant heed to the Christian Law of marriage.

As to general pre-reform standards of morals, opinions will continue to differ, depending on individual interpretations of the evidence available. The Cashel decree, for example, i.e. ‘land, a chich na seathar na a sléid na a mhois do bhoith ina mbuail ag for nEirinn, may, in Fr. Gwynn’s opinion, be read as an order prohibiting the marriage of a man to the sister or the daughter of his wife, rather than a marriage to his own sister or daughter. Celtic scholars, on the other hand, hold firmly to the belief that the decree means what it says. Perhaps too much importance has been

88
attached to this point: for it is difficult to see how the decree, even in its generally accepted form, can be validly used as proof of a common abuse. All codes of law take cognizance of crimes seldom committed and the Irish legal tradition of covering every possible, or even impossible, contingency would hardly permit the omission of the worst forms of incest from the list in question, even if the incidence of such abnormalities were no more frequent then than now.

As evidence of the long-continued observance of a pagan system of marriage in Ireland, Fr. Gwynn cites the well-known fact that many leaders of society in fifteenth and sixteenth century Gaelic Ireland are known to have re-married during the life-time of their previous wives. Yet, to accept these marriages as proof that divorce was still tolerated by the church in Ireland at this period is rather dangerous, seeing that we know nothing of the circumstances in which the marriages in question were celebrated. On one excuse or another, prominent people elsewhere succeeded in repudiating their wives with little protest from ecclesiastical authorities, and compliant priests in Ireland may well have found more acceptable grounds than a pagan code of law for annuling the distasteful marriages of their powerful patrons. Nevertheless, a tradition older than Christianity may indeed account for the frequency of these occurrences in Ireland.

Bláth an fháirinne seachrú, and much that is to be found in this booklet will make painful reading for the average Irishman conditioned to believe that, before the advent of the wicked foreigner, Gaelic Ireland was mostly inhabited by saints and scholars. The aim of the booklet is not, of course, to paint an over-dark picture of twelfth century Irish society; but since its main theme is reverence, it is naturally chiefly concerned with the abuses the reforming synods sought to correct. Care is taken, moreover, to balance the picture by reference to such matters as St. Bernard's reluctant admission that learning flourished among the pagan beasts of Armagh, or by drawing attention to the foundation of the famous Schottenkloster, as witness to the fact that the introduction of continental monasticism into Ireland was by no means a one-way traffic.

Many articles on this section of Irish ecclesiastical history have been published in academic journals; the chief merit of the present publication is that it presents the major findings of a major historian to the reading public at a trivial cost. Unhappily, the omission of an appropriate map from a work largely concerned with intricate diocesan boundaries will prove a serious disappointment to the non-specialist reader for whom this new series is primarily intended. It is to be hoped that this omission will be rectified in future editions.

SÍLE NÍ CHINNÉIDE


Nineteenth century romance and the 'Twilight' hangover of the early Twentieth, was rather muddled as to how Norman/Irish affairs should be viewed. The potstern line ran roughly as follows: these awful Flemings rampaged into our illluminated paradise, abused the saintly and scholarly people of the land, initiated a detestable connection that was totally evil, but filtered in the face of Christian forbearance that turned the other cheek, succumbed to something like Bód Fáite blarney and ended up ipse hibernicus hibernicus (thanks be to God!). This digestion and absorption secreted saints like Lord Edward who hopped on the nationalist bandwagon (that a few disgruntled young men had produced from a cocked hat in Trinity College), and, in the confessional of history, the Normans were pardoned their sins, saved from the fires of the Celtic hell and presented to posterity as penitent prodigals.

This dim 'Twilight' assessment of the Norman role in Irish history is a penance much greater than they deserved. It is one of the beauties of Dr. Otway-Ruthven's book that this role is truly assessed, that the contribution of the race is not considered in terms only of the good blood it was to spill for Tricolour or Republic, but of the constructive elements the Normans gave the island, ideas without which, talk of such things would never, perhaps, have been heard. But, be warned, despite the title, this book deals only with Norman medieval Ireland. This the author makes clear in the foreword; Gaelic Ireland lurks, as yet, in the wings.

The Introduction by Kathleen Hughes sets the scene describing the archaic nature of Gaelic society in a world moving towards centralisation and its incomprehension of racism, nationality, or any of the angelic attitudes bestowed upon it by the 'Twilight' romantics (who, incidentally, seem as much responsible for the 'wandering pastoralist' notion as the Cambridge History).
Dr. Otway-Ruthven early points out the impact of the Normans on this society. In exhaustive detail, she presents us, not only with the military aspect of the conquest, but with the civil aspect as well:

"... with the reign of Edward I, records become comparatively abundant and make it plain that, seen in its proper perspective, the Norman settlement of Ireland was no mere military occupation... but a part of that great movement of peasant colonization which dominates so much of the economic history of Europe from the 11th to the 14th century..."

The author cross-refers to European developments of the era again, when she treats of urbanisation. The Norman supplement to the Norse contribution in this respect is dealt with thoroughly, and she illuminates, particularly, the inland phenomenon as opposed to the coastal. The importance of manors and castles, confluences of rivers, and charters to hold markets and fairs, in the economic growth that is the cornerstone of urbanisation conforms with the Firenze Thesis for the economic development of medieval Europe. With typical thoroughness she even lists commodities!

A notable chapter is that which deals with the Norman impact on Church affairs; the impetus given to Europeanisation (already initiated before the Invasion) and, of course, Norman agency in the long love-affair between the Franciscans and the Irish people which has survived that well-merited jealousy of the secular clergy which existed, apparently, even then.

The chapter on the power structure within the Colony is exhaustive and enlightening. It is also brilliantly new. The development of that structure through the centuries, whether or not it paralleled that of England, the waxing and waning of such specialist offices as that of escheator, these things are of absorbing interest, since without them a national identity, a Triumvirate, a Free State or a Republic, would hardly have accrued—at least in the form we know them. It is interesting here to note that despite the handicaps imposed by 1922 the efforts of the author have succeeded in demonstrating clearly that the office of justiciar was neither the sinecure nor the repose of the slothful that we heretofore supposed. Further, that de Wogan was, perhaps, the rule rather than the exception. Significantly, the seal of justiciar/archbishop John de Sandford appears on the dust-jacket.

Of particular interest to members of this society will be the details of the grants of land in North Munster made by Lackland to Theobald Walter in 1185 (pp. 67 and 69) and the baronies map on page 68. The author acknowledges her debt in this respect to the late D.F. Gleeson (a former President of this Society) who identified the territories named in the grant with existing baronies.

The Bruce episode, as treated by Dr. Otway-Ruthven, made one lasting impression on this reviewer: the Bruces have a tremendously 20th century ring about them. Their propaganda for involvement in Ireland sounds terribly like that of the Americans re Vietnam: the scorched earth in the wake of their armies comparable to the price Vietnam has had to pay for the "assistance" of a "good neighbour." Indeed, racist romance takes a body-blow from one contemporary Irish commentator who refers to "Scottish foreigners less noble than our own foreigner."

The noble foreigners, of course, repulsed the Scots at a price: the Colony declined. To the reasons for this decline, Bruce, the Black Death, the "curse of daughters," we are given a fourth, namely, the slackening off in this period of the spread of peoples. Great work had, however, been done. Gaelic Ireland was disintegrating and, almost simultaneously, re-integrating along new lines, feeling its way into modern times.

Caryle wrote of the English race:

"Without the Normans what had it ever been? A glutinous race of Jutes and Angles capable of no great combinations; lumbering about in pot-bellied equanimity; not dreaming of heroic toil and silence and endurance, such as lead to high places of the Universe, and the golden mountain-tops where dwell the spirits of the Dawn."

The Jutes and Angles had, so to speak, put all their eggs in a basket held by Harold; came Hastings, and their England fell to one swoop of a chance arrow.

The 'Great Gaels of Ireland' were nearly two thousand years here when the Normans came. It was ample time to evolve a political structure geared to their ecology, recognising the natural divisions into which the island falls; a system with powers of resistance that became increasingly stubborn the closer an invader got to grass roots. Nor were the Gaels glutinous or devoid of dreams. (And the stones of Cashel or Clonfert are hardly testaments to pot-bellied equanimity.) But, lesser than that with which Carlyle would charge the English, we, the Irish, owe the Normans a similar debt. This book tells us precisely why.

TOM CULLIVAN

A reprint of Lenihan's *History of Limerick* (as it is called on the dust-jacket) must be welcomed by all the readers of this *Journal*. The work had become so highly priced on the second-hand market that it was outside the limits which many potential buyers could afford. The reprint, of course, cannot itself be produced cheaply, even by lithographic processes. The work consists of some eight hundred closely printed pages and about half a dozen additional illustrated leaves. These are well reproduced in this new edition which is limited to 1,000 copies, and is well bound.

Maurice Lenihan was an avid student of the history of North Munster. Throughout his career as a journalist in Nenagh and in Limerick he showed this interest. In fact, much of his *History of Limerick* appeared first in the columns of the *Limerick Reporter*, of which he was proprietor and editor. He collected a number of manuscripts, all of which are now scattered—some are in the British Museum and others are in the National Library of Ireland. His book remains his greatest monument. It is a documented story of Limerick city and county from the earliest times down to the middle of the last century.

In many ways it shows a fine historical appreciation, while in others it has a remarkable lack of balance. Lenihan was an ardent supporter of Daniel O'Connell and thus his death in 1847 is recorded in far greater detail than the famine of the same year. On the other hand, Lenihan shows that he had an understanding of the importance of economic events, such as the development of transport, on local history.

While Lenihan based his work to a large extent on original sources, it must be remembered that since this book was published in 1866 many new sources of information have become available. Calendars of State Papers have made the documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the Public Record Office in London more accessible to students. The work of the Irish Manuscripts Commission, the Catholic Record Society of Ireland, and of other bodies, have made many more documents available. In particular, one may mention the value for the local historian of the records of the Cromwellian plantation period edited by Dr. R. C. Simington. The National Library of Ireland was not established when Lenihan wrote. Neither was the Public Record Office of Ireland. Thus, it is evident that there are gaps in Lenihan's work which are a challenge to modern local historians.

Indeed, much research has been done on the local history of Limerick since Lenihan's time. Canon Begley's *Diocese of Limerick*, in three volumes, is but one example. Our own *Journal* has, over the years, made many contributions which add to our understanding of matters dealt with more than a century ago by the author of the book now reprinted. These do not detract from the value of the work, rather they enhance it. It remains a starting point for any further research on aspects of North Munster history.

It would have been worthwhile to have provided a critical introduction in this reprint. It would have served as a guide to the author and would have been a help to the modern reader. Some twenty years or more ago, Fr. Francis Fingan, S.J., published a valuable series of articles on Maurice Lenihan in *Studies* (vols. XXXV-XXXVII) based, for the most part, on a series of reminiscences which appeared weekly in the *Limerick Reporter* from 1866 to 1870. It would have been worthwhile had Father Fingan's articles been reprinted as an introduction to the present volume, but they would undoubtedly have added to the cost. A shorter foreword should, at least, have been provided.

TOMÁS P. Ó NEILL


Although this booklet first appeared nine years ago it has only now become readily available, due to a hitch in its distribution when published. It is not a history and yet it is more than a guide-book; it provides a gentleman's knowledge of the two important Franciscan foundations at Ennis and at Quin, both in Co. Clare.

Ennis Friary came into being when Donough O'Drinn, King of Thomond, after a life of intrigue
and violence, sought to allay a troubled conscience by inviting the Franciscans into his domains in the year 1239. He gave them the ʻinisʻ formed by two branches of the Fergus about a mile up-river from his stronghold at Clonroad, and, unwittingly, thereby gave the present town of Ennis a location and a name. He saw the first friars arrive in 1240, but he died the following year. His successors continued the work of construction and embellishment of the new monastery till it reached the fullness of its glory when Turlogh O’Brien erected the beautiful east window at the turn of the century.

Quin was a later foundation, later than 1402 (and not 1302 as stated in the booklet under review) if we follow the Brussel MS 3410, where it is written in the hand of Brother Michael O’Clery, of Four Masters fame, that “The monastery of Quin in Thomond and Diocese of Killaloe was founded by Sioda Cunn MacNamara, Prince of Cunn Cullen.” Fr. Paul Mary singles out 1433 as Quin’s year of greatest fame. In that year, with the authority of the Pope and sponsored by Prince Mahon MacNamara, the friars selected Quin Friary as the first outpost in Ireland for the great continental revival of pure Franciscanism known as The Observance.

The author takes us on a visit to each friary in turn, giving us an explanation of the various monuments and a history of each architectural feature (though correct in the text, the captions of the photographs on pages 14, 18, 22 and 24 all are incorrect in dating the MacMahon Tomb to the fourteenth rather than to the late fifteenth century). Now and then, he treats us to pleasant diversions with anecdotes of some of the famous friars who had a home there down the centuries. This is altogether a delightful little book, which gives life and meaning to these two old and stately remains. It has over one hundred pages, twenty-five of them given to admirable photographs, and is excellent value at its ridiculously low price.

REV. MARTIN RYAN

Price 6/-.

This is a revised edition of the original publication, which appeared in 1938, and while it is in essence the same, some pruning, here and there, takes from it the intimate discursiveness and the scholarly asides which made the first edition such delightful reading. It also differs from the original publication in that it lacks the Appendix, which contained a list of books which were used in the hedge schools, and also lacks the Bibliography, essential to a book of this kind; while the learned and detailed Index is cut to the bone. Surely some reference should have been made in the present re-publication to these changes?

These criticisms apart, the book is excellent value and it will be read and esteemed by an everwidening reading public. It provides a general survey of hedge schools and their teachers during Penal Times, from the Siege of Limerick to Catholic Emancipation; and it illustrates the ingenuity and the inventiveness of the Irish answer to one of the most inhuman laws that ever disgraced a Statute Book.

Thomond played no inconsiderable part in providing hedge schools in every parish, staffed by teachers who were totally dedicated to their work, and attended by vast numbers of students. Famous names like Brian Merriman, Peter O’Connell, and Richard McElligott keep on occurring on every second page, and make us proud of the part our ancestors played in a great intellectual movement.

ROBERT CUSSEN


The Books of Survey and Distribution containing abstracts of various surveys and instruments of title from 1636 to 1703 are lodged, in manuscript form, in the Public Record Office of Ireland. Twenty volumes are listed for the whole of Ireland, county by county, and the list is prefaced

92
"Distribution Books containing the names of the proprietors and forfeiting persons in 1641, the names of lands, numbers of acres profitable and unprofitable and to whom they were distributed under the Act of Settlement." Volume IV deals with Co. Clare and is drawn largely from the Stafford Survey made in 1637-8 and which provides a description of the land, and its denomiational content in quarters, cartrons and other land measures. Parish by parish, this publication lists the proprietorship of each denomination over the whole county as found in 1641 and its distribution under the Acts of Settlement and Explanations, 1662 and 1665, and The Commission of Grace, 1684-8. Here then, is testimony of the transfer of the land of Clare from the old Gaelic owners, who apparently had title from Brehon Law, to settlers who benefited by Act of Settlement grants, planters who obtained 'Connaught Certificates' in 1676, those who had received degrees of innocence, those who were called the trustees of the 1649 officers and, finally, those who obtained land by purchase in 1709-4 from the trustees of the forfeited estates—all of whom had title from English Statutes.

To the student of this, one of the most interesting phases of Clare history, namely that of the complete sequestration of its land, this volume is indispensable. The disintegration of many of the old Clare sept, the McNamaras, the McDonells, the MacBrodys and the McLaughly, can be followed side by side with the rise of new landlords and a new aristocracy. This publication is no less important for the opportunities it offers for topographical and genealogical research. It has preserved vital particulars of place-names, phonetically expressed, as recorded over the period 1636-60. To the serious student of local history it is very good value at six guineas!

REVD. MARTIN RYAN


Mr MacDermot's biography, first published in 1939, now makes a welcome appearance in paperback form. Thirty years ago the book represented a breakthrough in Irish historical scholarship. However, it had to compete for public interest with such events as Hitler's invasion of Poland, and it aroused hostility among those committed to a more traditional interpretation of Irish history. In the 1930s Mr MacDermot was active in right-wing politics, and, while he shows admirable detachment as a historian, his political views are occasionally reflected in the book.

This work, the fruit of wide research, traces Tone's life step by step against the background of events in Ireland, Britain, France and America. The author holds no brief for the inevitability theory nursed by nationalist historians. His biggest debunking job is done on Tone himself. Wolfe Tone emerges not as a charismatic figure consumed with a life-long ideal, but as an extremely human, talented, adventurous and likable fellow, not without ambition, whose life—like that of most men—was decided largely by circumstances and environment.

In 1788, Tone submitted a memorandum to the British prime minister in the hope of winning support for a plan to colonize the Hawaiian Sandwich islands. Shortly afterwards we find him trying to enlist in the service of the East India Company. But it may be that men of Tone's calibre are fated to cheat mediocrity and thread the thorny path to immortality.

We are told that Tone's 'most cherished ideas' were the 'iniquity' of the English influence in Ireland and the glorification of the French Revolution. Mr MacDermot disapproves of both sentiments. He makes the wide claim that William Pitt tried 'to rest Irish government upon the the will of the people.' With critical insight he strips revolutionary France of all glamour.

Considerable portions of the diaries of Wolfe Tone are reproduced. Mr MacDermot points out about his subject: 'As an observer, he had the advantages of a lively intelligence, an educated mind, and an eager curiosity.' Hence the reader is treated to fascinating comment on a wide range of topics. Theobald Wolfe Tone combines style with scholarship. Mr MacDermot displays the power of subtle expression and shows that he has an eye for the absurd. The reappearance of his book evoked an editorial in one national newspaper, part of which read: 'But Tone, warts and all, stands as impervious to time as MacArt's Fort, that rock on which he and his fellows committed their lives to an ideal which is as valid and as honourable today as it was in 1795.'

BREANDÁN Ó CATHAOIR

This book has a misleading title: such was the viciousness of Anne Devlin's jailors that she would not have been allowed to keep a journal during her long detention, nor indeed would she have risked keeping one. It is, in fact, Bro. Luke Cullen's transcript of her story—with long interpolations by himself—taken down when Anne was an old lady, living in poverty in an alley off the Coombe, in Dublin. But it remains a most important document of the period and to be found in it, rather than in the perennially popular "She is far from the Land" of Thomas Moore (which simmers the reality out of attempted revolution) is the mood of Emmet's rebellion and its significance for the ordinary Wicklow '98 men.

Those who adhere to a concept of Emmet as a romantic speaker from the dock need exposure to the radicalism of his proclamation of the Provisional Government, issued for the rising. In a fascinating way, Anne Devlin's story indicates that such radicalism was not without opposition among the United Irishmen. She recalls Hamilton—one of the Ulster officers—telling her cousin, Michael Dwyer, and his men, "You are not to think of recovering the forfeited estates—it would create a civil war among ourselves."

Another vignette, about Orangeism among the Rathdrum Mounted Yeomen in 1798, suggests that the still current belief that the Orange Order came into South-East Leinster with the North Cork Militia needs considerable revision.

The main testament of the book, however, is to the indomitable courage of Anne Devlin who, despite beatings, torture, exposure, £500 bribes, the fate of her own family—a ten year old brother died of exposure in Kilmainham—and the crippling erysipelas which she contracted, refused to become, in her own phrase, one of "Major Sirr's corps of swearers."

The story might have been better told had she accepted Richard Brinsley Sheridan's offer to lay her story "before the world." But it has been told, and our knowledge of that period of Irish history is the richer for its telling.

OLIVER SNODDY

THE LEITRIM GUARDIAN, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim 1968. Price 5/-.

This is a new annual, a very attractive one, edited by Gabriel Martin who is now resident in Co. Limerick. Still available at only five shillings, this magazine contains much of interest to historians. The most important single contribution to the annual is by a member of our own Society, Eamon T. Dore. His article is a long study of one of Leitrim's best-known heroes and perhaps Ireland's least-known revolutionary, Seán Mac Diarmada. Mac Diarmada, in fact, provides the key to our understanding of the 1916 Rising and the immediately preceding years of preparation. Mr. Dore's knowledge of him—as his messenger, his colleague, his bodyguard and his friend—is unrivalled, and his memoir is, therefore, of prime importance.

One fascinating snippet deals with the 'Castle Document' of April 1916 which some commentators have dismissed as 'bogus' on the grounds of a 'smile' from Seán Mac Diarmada in his death-cell. Here, Dore states his willingness to depose on oath the Revd. Dr. Paddy Browne's version of what Mac Diarmada actually said about this document.

Other important articles include one by the editor which deals with the story of Charles J. Dolan who launched an earlier journal called The Leitrim Guardian (in 1907), and whose resignation, as M.P. for North Leitrim, from Westminster in 1908 led to the first election contest for a parliamentary seat by Sion Fén; Dolan himself was the Sinn Féin standard-bearer in that initial bid.

An f-thair Mac an Ghallóigheal studies the Sheemore Ambush of 1921, and Michael Whelan fills in Tom Clarke's Leitrim background—his father, James Clarke, was born in the parish of Carrigallen in 1829.

Among other items included in this new magazine are some extracts from a lecture by Mrs Vera McCarthy dealing with the antiquities of Fenagh.

OLIVER SNODDY
In these days when our thinking is done for us by machines it is refreshing to focus our attention on a bye-gone time when the mind was still functional in a more natural manner. In the absence of piped synthetic amusement, our grandparents' generation relaxed their minds in the traditional manner, by talking to each other. Those gifted with a clear memory and a witty tongue were welcomed at any fireside when the day's work was done. Such storytellers are the last surviving links with an ancient oral heritage, and Kevin Danaher has done well to immortalise some of them in this volume.

His storytellers are the old relatives and neighbours he knew in his native Co. Limerick. Here he acts as their medium and records some forty of their tales verbatim. There is nothing contrived or touched up; we are privileged to hear them speak for themselves and tell of straids and amaduns, of magic fiddles and almighty sunbeams, blood-curdling and heart-warming as the pattern of life itself is. Inevitably there is much of social history interlaced with the moonshine and much wisdom among the innocents. With admirable restraint the author confines his own commentary to the tabloid notes at the end of the book and here, swiftly and neatly, he puts each story in its historical and international setting. Being an officer of the Irish Folklore Commission he does this with authority.

There is not a parish in the country which has not its own variation on the themes of this lore, and it needs but a reminder to touch off the memories. No one is so far removed from the rural scene that he would fail to enjoy these nostalgic tales. Let Kevin Danaher once again lead you up the fairy paths of other days.

ELLEN PRENDERGAST

THE PEELER AND THE GOAT, AND OTHER SONGS BY DARBY RYAN (THE TIPPERARY MINSTREL), selected by Mrs. Lonergan-Keyes. Duffy, Dublin 1965. Price 8/-.

It is often forgotten that ballads have authors, though sometimes communal ones. 'The Peeler and the Goat' was written by Diarmuid Ó Ríain, of Ashgrove, near Bansha, Co. Tipperary, who was born about 1777 and who died in 1853. This selection of his ballads and poems is introduced by a brief account of his life, by Seán Ó Gráagáin, which was originally published in one of the local newspapers. None of Ó Ríain's poems in Irish are included in the present collection. Obviously there is room for local as well as literary research into his life and times.

O. S.

WELCOME TO KILLALOE, Killaloe (Lough Derg) Development Association 1968. Price 3/-.

This illustrated guide-book to Killaloe, centre of a district noted for its scenery, lakes, islands, and antiquities, is a welcome addition to the tourist literature of Co. Clare. It provides much information on the recreational facilities of the area—fishing, sailing, cruising, swimming, waterskiing and hiking. Treated very briefly, but concisely, are the town's place in history and the antiquities in its area. The latter include, of course, the Cathedral and Oratory of St. Flannan, St. Luas's Oratory, Inis Cealtra, Tuamgraney, and Beal Boru, the fortress of 'Killaloe's most famous son.'

The guide-book contains nine quarto-sized photographic plates, showing general views of the River Shannon at Killaloe, some of the local antiquities, and a most interesting 130-year old illustration of the iron-hulled paddle-steamer, Lady Lansdowne, moored at the Pierhead, Killaloe—the hull of this steamer can still be inspected (by skin-divers) in the river nearby. Also included are town plans of Killaloe and adjacent Ballina, a mileage chart of the Lough Derg area, and a general but useful book-list (North Munster Studies could profitably be added to this). This booklet is finely produced and might well serve as a headline for projected similar publications.

GERALD O'CONNELL
George Stacpoole (editor), *A Guide to Irish Antiques and Antiqu Dealers*

The editor, Mr. Stacpoole, and all concerned with its publication, are to be congratulated on the current and second number of *A Guide to Irish Antiques*. An attractive cover, good paper and printing, excellent layout, and material with good illustrations, give it an all-round appeal. The different papers contributed are well written and provide information and guidance for the many who have begun to study and collect antiquities of late, as well as for the seasoned buyer and auction-goer. Included is a survey of the rising values of antiquities ("Antiques as an Investment" by Leonard Clarke) which will give confidence to all who may be new to and cautious about buying antiquities, as well as to the long-time collector. Sooner or later almost every collection comes under the hammer, and it is pleasing to know that the family fortunes are being augmented rather than diminished by the discreet purchase of an item of silver, some piece of bric-a-brac, or a book. If the present rate of appreciation continues, as seems most likely, then antique collecting could well become one of the soundest and safest forms of investment for anyone who possesses a bit of taste, money or, preferably, both. For that reason alone such a Guide as the one under review is of great value.

The inclusion of a list of Irish museums, art galleries and libraries, and also a list of the growing number of country houses open to the public, is to be commended, as until the appearance of these lists there was nothing in that line readily available. These lists will prove useful both to the native Irishman as well as to the foreign tourist. The houses listed are those of the thirty-two counties—or what would appear to be thirty-three, for having visited Mussenden Temple, Downhill, Co. Derry, anyone unfamiliar with the seeming contradictions of the Irish would expect to have to set out for another county to arrive at Springhill, Moneymore, Co. Londonderry! Those houses listed in North Munster are Bunratty Castle, Co. Clare, Adare Manor, Co. Limerick, and Longfield House, Cashel, Co. Tipperary.

THOMAS PIERCE