O'Grady Of Cappercullen

BY L. J. BARDWICK

In the former deerpark of Glenstal Castle are to be seen some of the most remarkable surviving specimens of the oaks which covered the hills of Ireland in ancient times: the 

quercus sessiliflora.

Guide-books to Ireland mention a romantic link between the ancestors of the Earls of Ilchester and the time-scarred oak-tree which stands on the left-hand side of the main avenue, just before you reach the first little lake. The big bow however on which the child was fond of playing horse-riding, as on a spring-board, has disappeared long ago.

The demesne of Glenstal was assembled by Sir Matthew Barrington around the years eighteen-thirty. But the deerpark cut out of the old forest of Uachtaine, is older. Colonel George Evans, of Welsh extraction, obtained part of the townland of Cappacullen(1) from Cromwell(2). Since Evans took up his residence in South Limerick, one of his descendants, Lord Carbery, let Cappacullen House to Standish O'Grady, Esq.

According to Burke's Landed Gentry, Hugh O'Grady had acquired by marriage the land of Kilballyowen near Bruff, in the beginning of the fourteenth century. His son William married a daughter of the Knight of Tim; the latter's great-grandson married a daughter of the White Knights; and these were the grandparents of Donough O'Grady, who, early in the seventeenth century, married a daughter of Sir Thomas Browne of Carnas.

Burke's version of the Kilballyowen pedigree must be read in the light of the recent comments of Dr. MacLysaght, and Revd. M. Ronan(3).

Donough's son, Darby, The O'Grady, married in 1633 the daughter and co-heiress of Sir Thomas Standish, who had a grant of the extensive Lacey estate at Bruff. The eldest of the three daughters of Sir Thomas Standish was married to Francis Hartstonge. Their son was created baronet in 1681. The estate of the last baronet of that name went to the first Earl of Limerick, his nephew by marriage(4).

Darby's eldest son, Thomas of Kilballyowen, married a daughter of John Anketell of Farrhy—a staunch Catholic living in the hills west of Lromcollogher; he attended at the consecration or a bishop in an old building on his lands. The present Colonel Gerald de Courcy The O'Grady, M.C., Kilballyowen, is his direct

REFERENCES

(1) This place is called in a State Paper of 8th James I, Capupullin; on the Down Survey Map, Capaghullin; in the Civil Survey of 1654-6, Capacullin, Capacullin, Kapacullin: at present, Cappercullen.

(2) See this Journal, 1906, p. 18.

(3) Analecta Hibernica, no. 15, pp. 37, ff; Ronan: Vicissitudes of an Irish Catholic Family in Irish, Eccl. Record, January, 1953.

(4) See this Journal, 1901; p. 6.
descendant; and so were the Viscounts Guillamore. In 1831, one Standish O'Grady, after having been chief baron of the Irish Exchequer, was created Baron O'Grady of Fort Grady and Viscount Guillamore of Cahir Guillamore near Bruff, an estate which he had inherited from his grandmother, Honora Hayes. One of his brothers became the ancestor of the O'Gradys of Aghamarta Castle, Co. Cork. Another brother of the first viscount was Admiral O'Grady of Erinagh House, Casticconnell, father of Standish Hayes O'Grady, the Celtic scholar (1832-1915). O'Gradys from Ballyingarry descend from a grand uncle of the first Guillamore. The second Viscount had served as a junior officer at the battle of Waterloo and sent a graphic inside description of the event to his father(6). He married a daughter of the Marquess of Anglesey. The third Viscount lived at Rockbarton, Bruff. He was succeeded by three of his brothers, all dying childless; and then by a first cousin, Hugh Massey O'Grady of Castlegarde, Doon. The eighth Viscount (1930-43) descended from the third son of the second viscount. The title has become extinct at the death of his brother, Standish Bruce O'Grady, of Rathfreedagh.

To identify O'Grady of Cappacullen, we have to go back to a brother of Thomas of Killballyowen, named Standish O'Grady, ancestor of the O'Gradys of Elton (a fee purchased in 1748)(9) and of Standish O'Grady of Cappacullen; also of Deane Grady. The one of Cappacullen married Mary, daughter of Richard, third son of Colonel R. H. Hungerford(7).

W. R. Le Fanu has told in his delightful style(1) how Lord Stavordale, son and heir of the first Earl of Ilchester, being garrisoned in Limerick, fell in love with their daughter, Mary Teresa, at her first ball, and how her honest father, thinking that an English peer would never suffer his heir to marry the daughter of an impoverished Irish squire, wrote to Lord Ilchester that he was aware that his son was about “to be involved in an unpleasant scrape,” and that the young officer should be transferred elsewhere. This was done. But the lord was touched by the interest which a stranger had taken in his son, and asked whether a friend of his might, on a coming visit to Ireland, bring his thanks. He came himself, incognito, and, after a week's stay, was so charmed with the father and the daughter, that he ratified his son's choice.

The Annual Register for 1772 has in its list of marriages: “August 20, Lord Stavordale, eldest son of the Earl of Ilchester, at Cappacullen, Co. Limerick, to Miss Mary O'Grady, daughter of Standish O'Grady, Esq.”

This story has become the subject of a novel An April Day by Miss Jephson, afterwards Mrs. Boyle.

Henry Thomas, Lord Stavordale, was the son of Stephen Fox Strangways, first Earl of Ilchester, whose brother was Henry Fox first Lord Holland, father of the famous statesman. Lady Sarah Lennox, whom King George II had wanted to marry(8) was a sister-in-law of this first Lord Holland. Her Life and Letters were published in 1901 by the then Countess of Ilchester and her son, F.R.H.S.

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(5) Printed by Dr. MacLysaght in Analaoga Hibernica, no. 15, pp. 58-61.
(6) Gabbett's Notebook.
(7) Ibid.
Lady Sarah testifies at various times of the charms and virtues of Lady Mary Teresa Stavordale. She writes v.g. to Lady Susan O'Brien on 21 August, 1775: "I saw Lady Stavordale's likeness to my girl, and am both sorry and glad of it, the first because it strikes people, and of course is a sad disadvantage to Louisa, as an ugly likeness to a pretty woman is terrible, but yet I like to see it myself, because I admire Lady Stavordale so very much that I like anything that is like her; what would I give that my girl might be like her in everything! but I am sorry to think there is no wherewithal in her character to make so perfect a creature, nor have I the least chance of resembling Mrs. O'Grady in her method of education and example, for I hear there never was such a charming woman, and Lady Stavordale's greatest admirers say, she could not help being charming when brought up by such a woman as a mother."

The following extract might be quoted in a gallery of illustrations of eighteenth century life: "I have not heard of the regiment Lord Stavordale is in being ordered to America . . . . Poor Lady Stavordale, how melancholy a breaking up it would be of her favourite scheme of spending almost all the whole year so happily at her own house with her husband, her father, mother, child and sisters. She talked of it in such raptures that it would be a real disappointment to her." And the following is the last mention of Mary Teresa in Lady Sarah's correspondence; it is dated 24 July, 1780: "I am excessively shocked at your account of Lady Ilchester's illness. She will indeed be such a loss to all who belong to her as makes me shudder to think of it. When I see such superior characters taken away from the world early in life, I can account for it in no way but supposing that the world is grown too bad to be indulged with such pleasing examples of goodness, for otherwise how can one comprehend why they are not left among us for the good of thousands?"

That first volume of letters contains photos of portraits by Reynolds of Lady Mary Teresa with two children, and also of her father-in-law. The second volume displays portraits of the second and third earls of Ilchester.

Mary Teresa's husband remarried in 1794. He was succeeded, at his own death in 1802, by the son of the first marriage. And the fifth and youngest daughter of this first union married in 1803 the third Marquess of Landsdowne, a Fitzmaurice, Lord of Kerry and Lixnaw. The British Secretary for War in 1895-1900, and for Foreign Affairs in 1900-1905, was their direct descendant.

Would anyone know about descendants of the two brothers of Mary Teresa O'Grady?

Cappercullen House is still mentioned as the seat of Mr. O'Grady in 1803(10). It was still standing when the father of W. R. Le Fanu became rector of Abington in 1820. But it was in a ruinous condition: the floor fell in one night during a dance. In 1840 O'Donovan records in his Namebook that Cappercullen was still the property of Lord Carbery. After Sir Matthew Barrington had annexed Cappercullen Park to his estate, a tennis-lawn (still used by the Benedictine school) was arranged on the site of the house, below the terraced gardens which were laid out by an English revenue official named Stepney, c. 1679. These are also still extant. The stone bridge over the glen at Cappercullen was designed by W. R. Le Fanu c. 1867.

This O'Grady family must have known about the Mass being celebrated in the depth of that glen beside their house during the Penal Times.

(10) Post-Chaise Companion. 1803.