

1452, is the chief authority for the Desmond estates in the century. It gives the lands and their valuations, with the royalties and sergeantries, the mills, and free tenants on the Desmonds' Manors of Shaned, Killyde (Killeedy), Corkothe, Bathyn, Rathgalway, Moytawnagh (Mahoonagh), Innyskefty and Offargus. (Appendix B, at end of Paper.)

The rental was probably taken by the Crown during a minority or temporary seizure of the lands. There is no mention of the castle, though the castles of "Robert Dondwnull vocata haroldes castell" and "Castro Robti Goer vocat" (blank) are mentioned on other manors. If silence proves anything, we might suppose that the castle of 1199 had perished, and that the present castle, as tradition said (when the Ordnance Survey letters were written in 1840) was only built by Gerald, the 7th Earl of Desmond, who died in 1459.<sup>1</sup> At least the tradition falls in with many of the details of the building, and the apparently older portions (at least) are not inconsistent with an extensive rebuilding.

In 1541 a meeting was held in the Chapter House of the convent before Maurice Maddy, Official General of the diocese, and Hugh Lees, in presence of John, Bishop of Limerick, at which John, son of Thomas, son of Philip, Knight of the Valley, acknowledged an obligation to the Bishop of 5 marks, in usual English money, out of Cappagh Kilm<sup>o</sup>lwony.<sup>2</sup> This must have been soon followed by the Dissolution.

#### THE CLOSING YEARS OF DESMOND RULE, 1557-1575.

As the Earls of Desmond were all-powerful in their own domain, it is not surprising that the convent survived the dissolution for many years. In 1558 James, the 14th Earl of Desmond, and in 1564, Joan, Countess of Ormond (wife of James Butler, the 9th Earl), were buried within its walls.<sup>3</sup> The Countess was the only daughter of James, the 11th Earl of Desmond. "During the time" of the 14th Earl "it was not found necessary to infold cattle or to close the door in all Munster." Alas! other records show that this is a pretty fiction, like the jewelled lady of King Brian's day, and other personages of the Golden Age yearned after but never seen.<sup>4</sup> The year 1564 also saw a chapter of the order held in the monastery.

There remains one tragic story of the monks before that terrible day when Malbie destroyed their convent under the eyes of Gerald, Earl of Desmond, safe in his stronghold up the river, but unable to beat off the invincible heretics of the "Red Queen." If Russell, the author of the curious "History of the Fitzgeralds," can be trusted in this tale (though he differs elsewhere from the Four Masters and the State Papers as to the

<sup>1</sup> Ordnance Survey Letters, R.I.A. MSS. 14. 2. 9. p. 453.

<sup>2</sup> "Black Book of Limerick," p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> "Annals of the Four Masters," 1558 and 1564.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1558.

slaying of Earl Gerald and other matters, and wrote nearly a century later), the neglect of Earl Gerald to punish a crime led to his own death at the hands of the murderer's sons. The story gets a strange side-light from another tale "heard truly" by Sir Henry Sidney, how the same Earl of Desmond countenanced "a principal servant of his" after a still more revolting, inhuman, and above measure detestable crime.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, conceivable that the weak earl, under the influence of his strong-minded and not very scrupulous wife,<sup>2</sup> may well have condoned the crime of a favourite and (then the most powerful of ties in Ireland) a fosterer. In any case it will bear repeating as part of the great latter-day "saga of Gerald the Earl" worthy of a place with the lays of Deirdre and the other "sorrows of story-telling" in Ireland!—

"Garrett (fitz James, the 15th Earl of Desmond) was betrayed by his own fosterers, who, with their own hands, did cut off his head in Glunegainhagh, in the County of Kerry.' So powerful were the 'murtherers, that Fitzmaurice, Lord Kerry, could get no man to execute the chief actor, who first laid hands on the Earle, and, being before the gallows, he was forced to put the halter about his neck with his owne hands. It was surely the judgment of God fell out upon this great person, for the very father of these murtherers, being overseer of the Earl's lands about Athskeaton, was wont to distrain two or three cowes, which the Poor fryers had thereabout in a little pasture belonging to their Abbey, which cowes, chancing to goe out of it, were by this man detained from them until they should pay treble trespass. This fellowes cattle, I say, chanced to goe into the said fryers' little pasture, and were by the fryers also impounded, they (poore souls!) thinking noe other harme but something to allay the man's fury, always bent against them. This man haveing notice hereof came to the Abbey door and there knocked, whereupon one of the Fryers came forth and saluted him according to their wonted manner, which was noe satisfaction to him, but called for the father Guardian, who likewise came, and with a religious, grave countenance, saluted him. There was no further discourse, but he, asking the guardian how durst he presume the boldness as to impound his cattle, he being the Earl's fosterer, and with him in great estimation? He expected [awaited] noe answer, but presently [at once] draweing out his long skeane, stabbed the good prelate to the heart: whereupon the fellow betooke himself to flight; thinking by long running to procure his pardon from the Earle. . . . Not long after this man's wife goes to the Countesse of Desmond with a present of a whole cupboard's furniture of plate, and with many other fine and gay things, begging her Ladyship, with weeping eyes, that she would mitigate the Earl's fury against her husband, but, to be short, the mild Earle being of merciful and generous disposition, pardoned at last this wicked malefactor, whose sons, as I sayd, brought him to his ruine.'"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 20th April, 1567, "Hamilton Calendar," p. 330; "Carew Calendar," vol. iii., p. lviii; Richey's "Short History," p. 490.

<sup>2</sup> Eleanor, Countess of Desmond, the second wife of Gerald. See accounts of her interviews with her husband's enemies, and of her securing a pension and her own interests while he was a fugitive. She was daughter of Edmond Butler, Baron of Dunboyne, and married, secondly, Donogh, the O'Connor Sligo. Her will, September 6th, 1636, was proved at Dublin, and her well-preserved effigy remains in the chancel of Sligo Friary.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal*, (vol. x. (1868-9), pp. 466-7).

## ASKEATON ON THE EVE OF DESMOND'S REBELLION.

It is a difficult task to restrain oneself from telling once more the story of that awful desolation which swept over a whole province, and confine oneself to the vicissitudes of one little fortress. The waves of destruction swept again and again over the ill-destined lands of the Earl of Desmond and his adherents till, in the fearful words of a recent historian, "the victory was terribly purchased. The entire province of Munster was utterly depopulated. Hecatombs of helpless creatures—the aged, the sick, the blind, the young mother, and the babe at the breast, had fallen under the English sword; and though the authentic details of the struggle have been forgotten, the memory of a vague horror remains imprinted on the national traditions."<sup>1</sup> "They killed the feeble men, women, boys and girls, sick people, idiots, and old people," say the Four Masters; and the English despatches abound in similar horrors, and more than support the Irish accounts. The far less deadly and cruel Cromwellian war has overlaid and obliterated the traditions of the Desmond campaign; but the record lives in countless letters and reports; and as we read these, our blood can still be stirred and our interest intensified till that dark war seems closer and more real to us than even the campaigns of our own days. To tell how Askeaton fared in that evil period, when "the gods of destruction were athirst" in Munster, is all that we can here attempt.

So early as October 18th, 1569,<sup>2</sup> we find the Government casting covetous eyes on "the Earl's house of Askeating" for the President of Munster; and its owner corresponded with Cecil about a surrender of the castle to the Crown. Desmond had at the time 160 "galliglasse," 300 kerne, and 30 horsemen, and the Government was not in a position to oust him from any of his castles by violence; but in some way the English got possession of some of them, and retained them, as he complained to the Lord Deputy on November 28th, 1573. Desmond had been under some restraint; but he got free, gathered his kerne, and this threatening portent led the Deputy to send him in great haste royal letters securing his personal liberty, and asking him to disperse his forces. Desmond might have kept himself very safe had he observed an armed neutrality and formal loyalty; but, unfortunately for himself, he tried to be "all things to all men"—unlike the apostle, to save himself. He sent his relatives letters, and betrayed some proscribed ecclesiastics to the Government, while at the same time (not so secretly as he imagined) he kept in touch with the more dangerous of the malcontents of the time—encouraging them to plot against the Crown.

In 1574 he went to Killaloe to meet with O'Brien Arra, and Clanrickard, and promised "to fortify Castlemaine and Askeaton." That

<sup>1</sup> Froude's "History of England."

<sup>2</sup> Carew MSS., p. 392; C. S. P. I., p. 421.

same day Queen Elizabeth wrote to Lord Burleigh to complain of Desmond's "undutiful taking of Castlemaine." The Earl soon got information that he was being watched; he brought "pickaxes and tools" to Askeaton, sent a threatening letter to the sheriff of County Limerick, and a letter of injured rectitude to the Lord Deputy, complaining that the latter was bent on making war on him.<sup>1</sup>

On June 10th, 1575, Desmond wrote to Leicester "from Asketten," asking to have his castles restored. He was afraid to "come into a walled town since Kildare was committed," wrote Lord Ormonde,<sup>2</sup> "and he maketh a very strong house at Askeaton." Desmond also made an unsuccessful attempt to bring his son from Bristol to Askeaton. The Earl of Ormonde, on October 28th, visited Desmond, and attempted to arrange for the surrender of Askeaton; but, of course, in vain. Again the Government hesitated to proceed to extremities, and again the Earl got a respite to mature his plans and prepare for a struggle now scarcely avoidable.

Desmond was more or less forced into revolt by the action of his more manly relatives; they had taken up arms under Sir John of Desmond and the Papal Legate, Nicholas Saunders. They met near the noble Cistercian Abbey of Monasternenagh (which also perished in the struggle), and a bloody combat terminated in favour of Malbie and the English (October 3rd, 1579).<sup>3</sup> Desmond, wavering to the very last, watched the battle from the summit of Dromassell, or Tory Hill; his sympathy, of course, lay with his brother Sir John and his followers, but he saw the Irish, after a brave attack on Malbie and the English, checked, broken, beaten back, the Papal standard taken, and all lost; so he fled to Askeaton Castle. Malbie had written a fierce letter, bidding him not to heed Saunders, "who deceiveth with false lies"; but even yet the Earl imagined that he could prevaricate, and wrote exculpating himself and asking Malbie not to camp in the Abbey. The distracted Earl had recently met Sir William Drury at Kilmallock, and attempted to clear himself from the charges of Sir James Fitz Maurice; he now realised at last that his statements were disbelieved. He wrote, in his despair, to some unnamed member of Elizabeth's Government, enumerating his services, and telling how he had executed a bishop and two Irish soldiers, and opposed the O'Flaherties. It was all in vain, for Drury had returned "in his chariot to Waterford," and there died.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. S. P. I. (1574-1585), pp. 28, 34.

<sup>2</sup> The "Carew Papers," vol. i., page 15, show that in January, 1541, James, Earl of Desmond, renounced the right (claimed since the beheading of his grandfather at Drogheda) of exemption from appearing in Parliament, or "entering a walled town, under the King's obedience."

<sup>3</sup> *Journal*, vol. xix. (1889), pp. 235, 236.

<sup>4</sup> C. S. P. I., October, 1579, various Papers, p. 189. &c.: "Annals of the Four Masters." Father Hugh Ward puts the destruction of the Abbey "in the day of persecution in 1575," Wadding in 1581: both probably trusted to memory.

## ASKEATON RAVAGED.

Malbie followed the Earl like an avenging spirit—burning, slaying, “spoiling”—he slew at the altar the monks of Monasternenagh; he burned Rathmore; he destroyed Rathkeale; and Desmond could see the smoke of his advance from the keep of Askeaton. The Earl wrote an agonised letter to his friend in the ministry—“As you are a gentleman, tell the Queen of my wrongs”; but long ere the letter could have reached the Tudor Court it was too late—Malbie was at his gates. The fierce captain and army burned the town and crops; they then “defaced and burned the Abbey”; they entered the deserted church, desecrated it, and smashed the tomb of Earl James. The monks had fled, save brother John Cornelius (or Conolly); him they “cruelly slew”; they also hanged an Irish soldier of the Earl, one Geoffrey Ferall; and (if there is no mistake in the later “Epitome,” for the original “*Annales Minorum*” are silent) hanged with his own cord another monk, William Tenal.<sup>1</sup>

While this tragedy was accomplished, the Earl was safe in his island fortress. In view of the flaming friary, he wrote a letter to Malbie, protesting against “the destruction of his tenants’ property,” but he was powerless to save, and the only notice taken by the English Captain was to press him to disseminate the English manifestoes, and to arrest Saunders and give him up to the Government. The wretched Earl wrote to another Englishman, October 7th, 1579: “Sir Nicholas Malbay camped within the Abbey of Askeaton, and there most maliciously defaced the ould monuments of my ancestors, fired the Abbey, the whole town and the corn thereabouts, and ceased not to shoot at my men within Askeaton Castle.”<sup>2</sup> Malbie again, on October 8th, wrote “to the Earl or Countess, or Morice MacSheehan or the Constable of Askeaton”; but the matter was now beyond negotiation, and after a week in the blackened ruins of the convent, and a feeble attempt to take the castle, Malbie marched away. The Fitzgeralds were left to bury the slain, and probably gibbeted, body of Friar Conolly in the Chapter House,<sup>3</sup> while the refugees could steal back to the ruined town and burned cornfields, to face the anxiety and scarcity of winter.

Events came rapidly to a crisis; a vain correspondence with Pelham, Malbie, and Captain Felton closed on November 8th, 1579, by the formal proclamation of Gerald, Earl of Desmond, as a traitor. He had, they

<sup>1</sup> “*Annales Minorum*” of Wadding (ed. 1723), vol. viii., p. 87; “Epitome” of same makes Ferall a friar. Volume xx., p. 303, mentions the deaths of Conolly and Tenal. One suspects confusion between “Ferall” and “Tenal”; see also Carew MSS., 1579, p. 161. A few bosses, ribs, panels with defaced saints, and other shattered remnants of a canopied tomb remain in the Friary, and may bear the mark of the vengeance of Malbie.

<sup>2</sup> “Carew MSS., 1579, p. 160; also C. S. P. I., pp. 189, 195, and “Annals of the Four Masters.”

<sup>3</sup> “*Annales Minorum*,” *loc. cit.*

stated, "practised with foreign princes, caused murders, settled the Spaniards at Smerwick, released traitors, hanged the Queen's servitors, and his warrs in his castle of Askeaton caused the death of 2 or 3 of Her Majesty's soldiers."

They could not as yet besiege the castle of "Asketten," for they "had no victuals or other necessities, and especially because the house is circuited with a deep water and well fortified,"<sup>1</sup> while all their own artillery was "one dismounted culverin."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Carew MSS., 1579, p. 165.

*(To be continued.)*

## NOTES ON ASKEATON, COUNTY LIMERICK.

## PART II.—THE HISTORY AFTER 1579.

BY THOMAS J. WESTROPP, M.A., M.R.I.A., VICE-PRESIDENT.

*(Continued from page 40.)*

EACH side had now drawn the sword and thrown away the scabbard. For the Government fought skill, grim determination, fierce religion, and ardent loyalty, and on Desmond's side were the desperate enthusiasm of a clan, the strongholds of the woods and hills, the morasses and tangled valleys, and a deep religious zeal fed with strong stimulants. There were no such overwhelming military resources on the side of the English as to decidedly outweigh the advantages of the outlawed Earl and his followers when aided by the sympathy of a province.

On the 12th of November, 1579, the disaffected gentry, Nicholas Saunders, and many other persons met Gerald, Earl of Desmond, at Askeaton, and with 1000 armed men entered formally on that fearful war;<sup>1</sup> soon all the district was up in arms; reports flew about; some said the Spanish forces were at Askeaton, others that Desmond could not muster his galloglasses or get them to fight.<sup>2</sup> Next month Ormond, whose country Desmond had sworn to burn, ravaged and burned Desmond's lands from Askeaton to Newcastle, Kilfinnan, and Kilbride, "taking the Earle's studd," and slaying not a few of his soldiers; but he was unable to assault Askeaton Castle, for, despite his urgent letters, the Lords Justices and the War Department had sent him no shot for his demi cannon.<sup>3</sup>

1580.

When the spring came round, the English pressed on the campaign, and took Carrigfoyle in April: the very "sound and roar of those unknown and wonderfui cannon"<sup>4</sup> heard for incredible distances across Thomond and Desmond did more than the actual damage of the shot to terrorise the garrison into surrender. On April 3rd the English were before Askeaton. Lord Justice Pelham had little difficulty in reducing

<sup>1</sup> Exchequer Inquisitions, vol. xii., p. 219 (September 11 and 26), 1584.

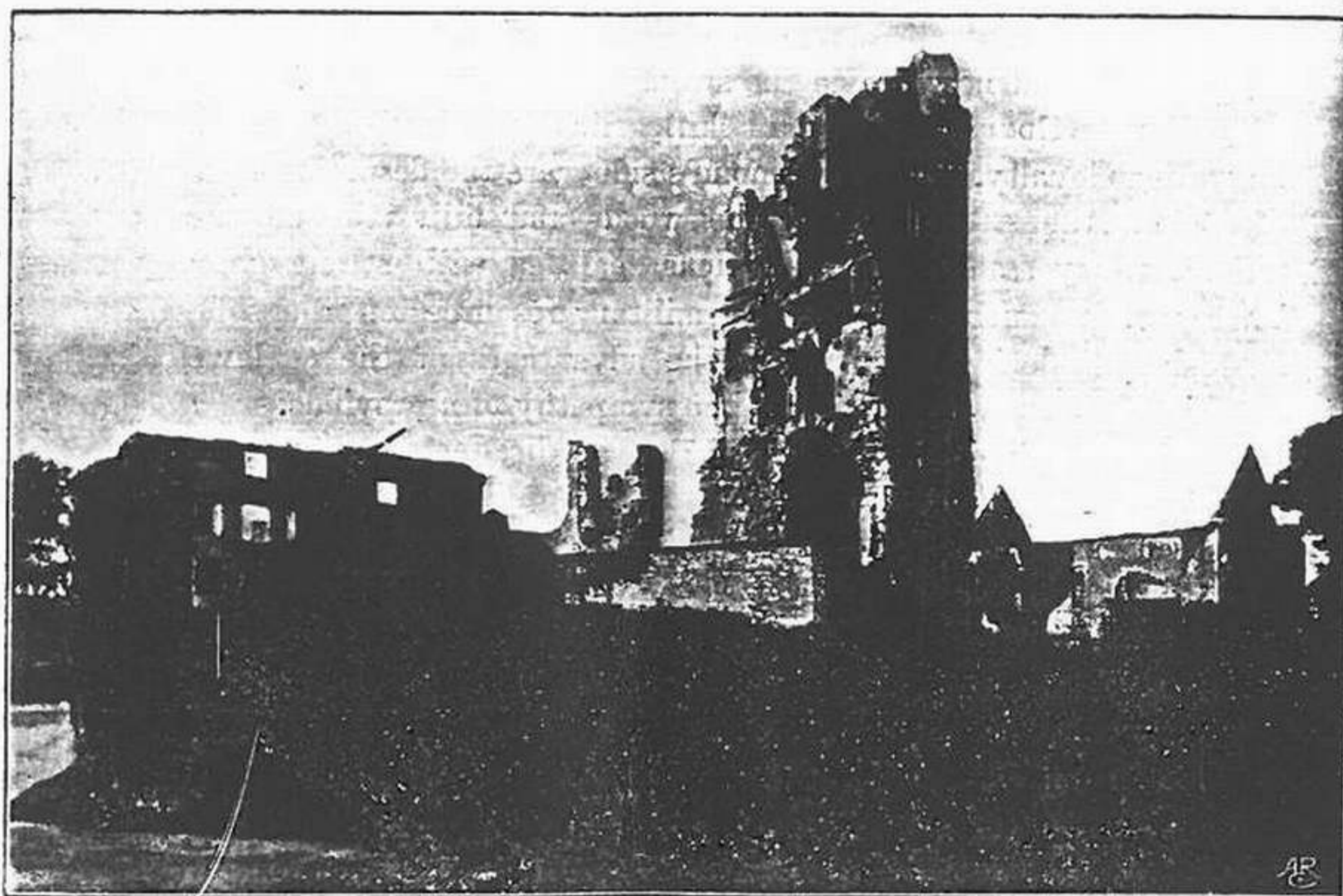
<sup>2</sup> C. S. P. I., 1579 (November 13), p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> Carew Calendar, 1579, p. 203; (C. S. P. I.), p. 201.

<sup>4</sup> "Annals of the Four Masters." If the discharge of guns on the Shannon can (as I am told) be heard on the hills of Burren, the Annalists' statement is hardly exaggerated. See also Carew, 1580, p. 239.

the formidable fortress "in the midst of a deep river"; a few shots of the English cannon, and the garrison fled by night, blowing up and burning a portion of the out-buildings,<sup>1</sup> and, on the 5th, Pelham dated his letters from Desmond's vaunted stronghold.

The English were unable to press their advantage because of their sore want of horses, the severe riding "spending" their steeds. Also because their enemies "were too swift of foot for the heavy English men at arms. Castles could not, however, run away, and could be garrisoned, and the enemies' resources were gradually



THE DESMONDS' CASTLE, ASKEATON.

(From the Bridge, 1875.)

but surely exhausted." The English, moreover, occasionally took cattle, spoil, and prisoners; and that spring, Pelham, on one occasion, got so close on the track of Desmond as to capture his "aquavitæ, wine and dinner."<sup>2</sup> The army was at Askeaton again in August, and was visited by the Countess of Desmond, who confessed "with impudences" that she had urged Desmond against the Queen, but promised to bring

<sup>1</sup> Lenihan's "Limerick: its History and Antiquities," p. 106, falls into the strange errors of stating that the Lord Justice, after taking Askeaton Castle, "partially destroyed (it) by gunpowder, leaving the towers untouched, as they remain to this day." The error of the first statement being as great in one direction as that in the second is in the opposite.

<sup>2</sup> Carew (1580), pp. 246, 249.



about his submission. A wife is not always able to "bring in" a husband to surrender, even where his fate would be safer than that of Desmond, and nothing came of the interview. Pelham also spent some of his time in repairing that portion of the castle partly destroyed by the retreating Irish.<sup>1</sup>

The English next found themselves badly off for stores,<sup>2</sup> save cattle: the biscuit was musty, the beer was made of bad malt, and a ship, the "Green Dragon," had met with some rough weather, and stove the beer casks, so that much of the longed-for drink had to be pumped "out of shipboard." The horses of the soldiers were again spent, and the land round the town was too bare to restore them to condition. Guerilla warfare increased, and the bands were seldom hunted down, escaping by their superior speed and perfect knowledge of the country. Desmond sought foreign intervention, and sent to ask help from Philip of Spain, as well as from the northern chiefs O'Neill, O'Donnell and Sorley Boy.

In December Grey, the Lord Deputy, had sent a captain, Edward Berkeley, who had served with distinction against Sorley Boy,<sup>3</sup> to take over the command of Askeaton. The day after he had started for it the rebels entered the place, but were driven out by Lieutenant Parker. The garrison consisted of 400 foot, Mr. Treasurer's and Sir Peter Carew's bands being quartered in the castle, and Mr. Hollingworth's in the Abbey. We incidentally hear of a monk of Askeaton, a certain friar, James O'Haie, who was examined by the English as to the message brought by Shane O'Farrall, Friar of "Askeaton," from James FitzMaurice to the Earl of Desmond. O'Farrell, on landing in Spain, hastened to the Court, and brought Fitzmaurice to Bilbao, where O'Haie lay sick. The latter asked how the Irish fortunes went, "both good and bad." "How does the Earl of Desmond?" "He is well if he gets FitzMaurice home"; and (added he) O'Farrell had been sent by FitzMaurice to the Earl. This was of some importance, as it contradicted the Earl's statements to Drury.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE BERKELEYS.

Captain Edward Berkeley, who was now warden of Askeaton Castle, and his brother and successor Francis, were respectively third and second sons of Sir Maurice Berkeley, of Bruton, in Somersetshire, who had been standard-bearer to Henry VIII., and (in the rebellion that so seriously threatened that monarch's daughter, Queen Mary) had received the surrender of Sir Thomas Wyatt, taking up that ill-fated person on his own horse for his better temporary security. The Berkeleys of Bruton sprang from a warlike race descended from Eadnoth the Staller, Sheriff of Bristol, under Edward the Confessor,

<sup>1</sup> Desmond Roll (quoted *infra*, Appendix B), 1581.

<sup>2</sup> Carew (1580), p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> Carew (1584), p. 383; (C. S. P. I.) (1598), p. 346.

<sup>4</sup> Carew (1580), p. 309.

Harold, and William.<sup>1</sup> There had been few of the greater battles of England, in which the FitzHardings, Barons of Berkeley (the descendants of Eadnoth's son Harding), had not taken part—Hastings, the wars of Stephen, the Welsh wars, Caerlaverock and Bannockburn, Crécy, Calais, the French wars of the Duke of Bedford, and the Battle of Bosworth. The Tudors had few more loyal or hard-fighting adherents. The few facts of Edward's connexion with Munster appear in these pages, while of Francis we need only note at present that he was Provost Marshal and Sheriff of Connaught, his provostry at that time covering Thomond (1586). He was a friend and favourite of Perrot (in whose ruin he was nearly involved),<sup>2</sup> a bitter opponent of Bingham, and won the confidence and even some share of the friendship of the Irish in Connaught, and at Askeaton, and was indeed censured for this latter fact in the reign of James I.

#### 1581-1583.—END OF DESMOND'S WAR.

In the following three years (1581-1583) little of note happened at Askeaton: (Sir) Walter Raleigh reported to Grey that eleven of the ward of Askeaton had been slain in May, 1581. Edward Berkeley returned to Bristol in January, 1583, and in his absence Gregory Morgan was vice-constable, and was committed for relieving rebels. A few months later Sir Warham St. Leger heard that Desmond had crossed the Shannon to confer with John O'Ferrall, friar of Askeaton. Then Norreys, the President of Munster, asked for the place; but the Lord Deputy would not dispossess Edward Berkeley.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of the year fate overtook the unhappy fugitive Earl. He had been closely pursued, "as when one doth hunt a partridge on the mountains," during two years. He spent Christmas Day of 1582 in the woods near Kilmallock, and was discovered by that garrison, who slew and dispersed his followers, and took his goods. He and his wife barely escaped, half naked, and saved themselves by standing up to their chins in water, under the river bank, till their pursuers had gone. In

<sup>1</sup> For Eadnoth and Harding, see Freeman's "History of the Norman Conquest," vol. iv., p. 757. The subsequent descent and history are fully given in Collinson's "History of Somerset"—the Visitation of Somerset, 1626 (Harleian Society), vol. xi., pp. 5-7; and in a Paper of mine in the "Journal of the Limerick Field Club," 1902, vol. ii., p. 118. The descent from Louis VI. (through the families of Taillefer, Valence, and Creoun) is in *The Genealogist*, New Ser., vol. x. (1893-4), p. 140. Mr. Richard Langrishe has deduced the descent of Catherine Blount (daughter of Lord Mountjoy, and mother of Francis and Edward Berkeley) from John of Gaunt. The reputed descent from the King of Denmark is mythical (though named in a mediæval inscription), as the "might of buried Denmark" usurps the place of Eadnoth in the pedigree.

<sup>2</sup> He was brought to London and imprisoned on the occasion of Perrot's arrest, but was acquitted, and sent back to Ireland the following year, and his lands confirmed to him, August 16, 1591 (C. S. P. I.).

<sup>3</sup> C. S. P. I. under dates. pp. 304, 423, 448, 462, 557.

August, 1583, he was in Aherloe with sixty galloglasses, when (as they cooked some horseflesh) they were attacked, and most of the Irish fell; their master only escaped by the swiftness of his horse. How many other hair-breadth escapes took place we know not, but the Earl drifted into western Kerry, and there he met his end.

Desmond had sent his wife away; she sought refuge in England and got a pension from the Queen:<sup>1</sup> he then wandered about the mountains and woods of Kerry, sleeping by day and watching by night; the English soldiers were of course unable to molest him, but more mobile allies came to their assistance. In the solemn words of the greatest of our annalists—“At the beginning of winter, when the long nights began to set in, the insurgents and robbers of Munster . . . prepared to rekindle the torch of war; but God thought it time to suppress, close, and finish the war of the Geraldines.” Desmond’s followers seized some cattle; the owner’s brothers-in-law tracked the plunderers, and got some soldiers from Tralee to join them. They followed the raiders to Glennageenty, watching the freebooters’ camp-fire down in the glen all night. In the “dusk of the morning” of November 11th, 1583, they surrounded and surprised their camp, and burst into the huts, finding in one of them a majestic old man. One of them struck him on the arm, nearly severing it from his body. “Spare my life: I am the Earl of Desmond,” he cried; but the assailants fell on him (or, as some say, took him into the woods) and beheaded him. His body was concealed and buried in Kilnamanagh; his head was impaled on London Bridge.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1584–1598.—THE NEW GRANTEES.

The Crown had now to re-distribute the estates of its late too powerful subject, which were made the scene of several Inquisitions and Surveys. An early one, May 20th, 1584,<sup>3</sup> mentions the free tenants of “Inislesty.” The mill of Inniskesty worth 30s. The weir there worth 16s. The annual returns or “royal services” of O’Connyll in Asketten, viz., of the Castle of Inneskesty 40s., after which this ancient and familiar name disappears from the records.

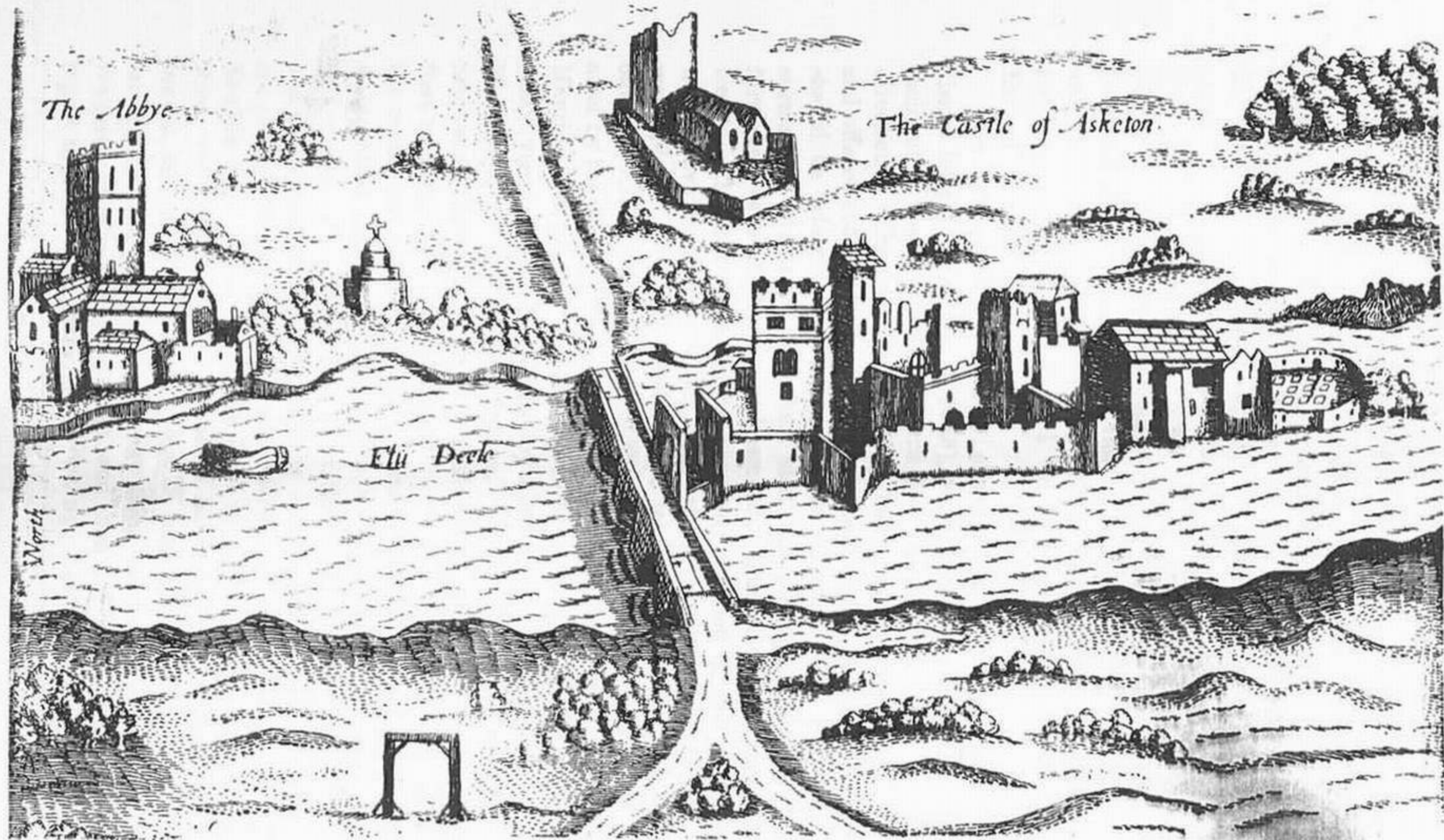
The very full surveys of the Castle, Manor, and Abbey of Askeaton in the great Desmond Roll and the Peyton Book of 1586 will appear in the description of the castle, and in Appendix B to this Paper, and so need not be given here.

Edward Berkeley continued to be Constable of Askeaton till 1589. The Government, in one of its periodical fits of economy, got impatient of

<sup>1</sup> She had, however, to find securities and pass a recognizance of £1000 for herself, and only received pardon from the Queen on February 8, 1597.—Fiants 6195, Elinor, Countess of Desmond.

<sup>2</sup> “Annals of the Four Masters,” C. S. P. I., and several Inquisitions in the Public Record Office.

<sup>3</sup> Calendar of Inquisitions (Record Office, Dublin), Limerick, pp. 206 and 208.



ASKEATON. (Circa 1586. From "Pacata Hibernia.")

the expense, and in the end Berkeley prudently resigned his pension and 15 footmen (small garrison for so important a place) for a fee-farm rent or other recompense.<sup>1</sup> He gave up the castle between May and September, and in the latter month Sir W. Herbert tried to get the "void castle" for his cousin. The next month, however, the lands of Desmond were apportioned among the "undertakers," and we find a group of three names (two of world-wide fame, one of only local interest)—Sir Walter Raleigh, 12,000 acres, Captain Francis Berkeley, 7000 acres, and Mr. Edmund Spenser, 4000 acres, at from 3*d.* to 4*d.* an acre head rent. Edward Berkeley must have died soon after the time of his surrender, for Queen Elizabeth, by a document granted at Richmond, December 18th, 1589, states that, "for the better re-peopling of the Province of Munster," she had desired that Sir Edward Barkley should have held the Castle and Seignory of Askeaton; but he having died before the great seal was affixed to the grant, she desired it to be transferred to his brother Francis. Accordingly Francis Berkeley got "the Manor of Rock Barkley" for ever at a rent of £87 10*s.*, and was bound to erect houses for 56 families and himself; 4 houses for freeholders, 3 for farmers, 46 for copyholders. He was also granted all the lands and tenements in the town of Askeaton, except the castle and 40 acres reserved for the Crown. The grant comprises 12,000 (not 7000) English acres, and is dated 18th October, 1590.<sup>2</sup>

£ 3825.

The fall of his patron, Perrot, clouded the prosperity and endangered the safety of the new constable of Askeaton, after a few months; for, in 1591, he was sent with other prisoners to London, but was eventually set free and given £100 compensation for his detention; his lands were also restored to him. He married Katherine, one of the numerous daughters of Dr. Adam Loftus, Archbishop of Dublin, in 1596. His settlement now was 7250 acres, and 21 English families were planted on it.<sup>3</sup> He was appointed Governor of Limerick Castle, November 2nd, 1597, the patent being given free of seal because he was son-in-law to the Chancellor. Strange to say, the Crown gave a lease of "the castle or chief house called the Castle of Askeatinge" to Sir Anthony St. Leger, 17 October, 1598; but we may presume the outbreak a few weeks later brought the grant to an untimely end.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was not unprecedented among English soldiers in Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth, and seems to have been agreeable to the economy of her administration, though at times very much to the advantage of the pensioner. For example, I have a copy of a patent, 10 Eliz., part 8 (1568), relating to which I find a later grant under 1599, in the Calendar of Domestic Papers (p. 505), for the latter year, where Captain Thomas Westropp, of Sutton, Yorkshire, resigns a pension of £18 for his services, and the loss of his right arm, in the Irish wars, receiving instead a lease of lands at Sutton worth £30 per annum, for thirty-one years.

<sup>2</sup> Cal. Fiants. Eliz., No. 5469.

<sup>3</sup> C. S. P. I., p. 592 (1591), pp. 14, 60, 88.

<sup>4</sup> Cal. Fiants, No. 6347. St. Leger was granted Mellifont Abbey and many other places by this deed.

## THE WAR OF THE SUGAN EARL.

The last of the Earls of Desmond to "make history" was James, contemptuously called "the Sungan Earl." We may, after so many generations, call him here Earl of Desmond without political ill consequences. He was son of Sir Thomas Roe Fitzgerald (half-brother to the ill-starred Gerald, the 15th Earl), whose first wife, the daughter of Maurice Roche, Lord of Fermoy, being his own grandniece, the issue of their union was illegitimate. Sir Thomas, nevertheless, was recognised as Earl of Desmond by Philip and Mary, and sat in Parliament in 1555. He was knighted by Sidney in 1569, and died in peace in January, 1593. James had joined O'Neill in 1598, and been by him created or recognised as Earl of Desmond.<sup>1</sup>

The Lords Justices, Adam Loftus and others, had soon to write a dismal letter<sup>2</sup> (November 3, 1598), recounting a long list of "regrettable incidents," losses of small towns and castles, raids and revolts in all directions. The rebels, they stated, had come to the Castle of Askeaton, and offered conditions to Sir Francis Berkeley, that his wife and others should be safely conveyed to any port he chose; and called on him to surrender. Berkeley told them that the place was as rich and well furnished as ever it was in Desmond's time, and bade them do their worst. Thereupon the enemy promptly assailed it, and were expelled with heavy loss, upon which they retired from its neighbourhood, but watched the English. Twelve days later Loftus wrote again, pointing out how Askeaton Castle was of great importance and was much thirsted after by the rebels;<sup>3</sup> and how Captain Berkeley, being one of the sons of Sir Maurice, was already well known to their Lordships by his services for many years; he enclosed Berkeley's letter,<sup>4</sup> which commences—"From Her Majesty's Castle of Askeaton, where I now am environed with neighbours that seek always to disadvantage us and preventing all means that may minister to us any relief." Berkeley continues by telling how the revolt had been so sudden and unexpected that he had only the provision fitted for a private gentleman, when, on Friday, October 6th, 1598, at 8 o'clock at night, over 500 of the English settlers—men, women, and children—came pouring into the castle without provisions. He kept six score able men, and was fortunately able to send on the others in an English bark which lay on the Deel, to Limerick, where the Mayor saw them well cared for. He seems to have got in supplies of corn and beeves, and asked for 500 men, and he soon had got his refugees trained for service and anxious to avenge their losses. The enemy had only ventured on a twelve days' siege, and then fled precipitately on a (false) report that the Lord General was coming; but they had rallied. And he

<sup>1</sup> MSS. T.C.D., E. 3. 18.<sup>3</sup> C. S. P. I., p. 346.<sup>2</sup> C. S. P. I. (1598), p. 331.<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, p. 347.

closed by telling how "my lands are wasted and burned, and my goods all taken away that are without the castle gate; there remaineth but my life, which shall be bestowed in Her Majesty's service." The condition of the garrison, however, was not absolutely desperate, for a certain James Gould wrote, the same day as Loftus, to the Earl of Ormonde to tell how he had convoyed provisions into Askeaton, and that it was safe. No further relief seems to have arrived that year; Sir Thomas Norreys mentions Berkeley and his "100 tall men of the English" as holding out and deserving pay. This despatch was brought to the Privy Council by Edmund Spenser, the poet, himself a sufferer, ruined in the same revolt.<sup>1</sup> The "Four Masters" merely note under 1598, "Eas Gephthine in Ui Connell Gaura plundered by the Sugan Earl."

#### 1599.—RELIEF OF ASKEATON.

In March Askeaton was still unrelieved, for "the traitors' galleys and other boats" still held the Shannon. At last, in June, the Earl of Essex visited Limerick, and hearing of the extremity of the garrison of Askeaton, set out to relieve and victual it in person. He was the more piqued to do so by Desmond "swearing to impeach" his pass, so he set out on June 8th to Adare, where the venerable bridges green with ivy spanned the Maigue near the noble ruins of the Desmond's Castle and the lofty towers and ivied gables of three monasteries. The enemy let him cross, and put seven companies in an old abbey (probably the Augustinian) which secured the bridge. Essex, Bingham, and the Earl of Thomond pressed forward, Thomond being in the van, "the forlorn hope," as it is strangely called. Desmond lay in a wooded place among bogs at Robhar (Rower), to the west of Adare, with "2000 or 3000 Connaught men and bonnaughts." Essex makes light of the ambushade, saying that 100 of the rebels fell and only six English, with twenty more hurt. If we had Thomond's report, it might give the more serious aspect which the skirmish presents in the pages of the "Four Masters"; the latter state that the Geraldines made a fierce resistance, "they discharged into their (the invaders') eyes the fire and smoke of their black powder and showers of balls from straightly-aimed guns." An English account says that Sir H. Norreys lost his leg and Captain Jennings was killed. Essex spent the night near Cappagh,<sup>2</sup> a broken and picturesque tower, with a walled and battlemented courtyard visible to the north of the railway, and one of the few interesting objects seen from the train between Adare and Askeaton.

<sup>1</sup> C. S. P. I. (1598), pp. 399, 400.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Lawless' "With Essex in Ireland" has a picturesque account of the spirits of those slain in the war passing before Essex in the night as he camped in Askeaton Friary. This has been treated as a genuine legend in a recent History. I certainly did not hear it from the people, or from the Morgans of Old Abbey, with whom I first visited the ruins in 1875. It is more likely that Essex would have slept in Askeaton Castle as a most welcome guest than in the ruined Friary.

The enemy only ventured on a slight attack, so the English reached Askeaton on the Sunday, June 10th, drove off the besiegers, and provisioned the castle in (about) the 247th day of the blockade. The "Four Masters" say that Essex stayed at his camp, sending on the convoy to Askeaton; but O'Sullivan Beare,<sup>1</sup> confirms the English account.

Berkeley, after the relief of his castle, was there knighted by Essex, for his brave maintenance of the siege, on June 12th,<sup>2</sup> and evidently followed him to Kilmallock. He "haunted and hunted"<sup>3</sup> Garrett Fitz-Nicholas and his kerne, capturing their cattle, horses, and corn supply in July, and left Askeaton in charge of a garrison of 300 soldiers in August to take various commands and commissions in Munster and Connaught. Sir Anthony St. Leger got a grant at Dublin, October 17th, 1599, of "A castle or chief house called the Castle of Askeatinge, with all edifices, buildings, towers, gardens, courts and bawns," and 40 acres which had been demised to Sir Francis Berkeley in the 32nd year of Her Majesty's reign. The mismanagement of the military authorities left James Fitz Thomas, the Sagan Earl, to blockade the castle (after Berkeley left) by November 18th. The Government were able again to revictual it about Christmas, but their army was ready to break up from foul weather and want of food, money, and clothing.<sup>4</sup>

#### 1600-1610.

Sir G. Carew passed Askeaton Castle<sup>5</sup> in the summer of 1600, and put in a garrison of 700 foot and 75 horse, sending Oliver Stephenson to hold Corgrig. Berkeley meanwhile was serving in the disturbed northern districts. He was at Elphin in August, and O'Donnell, taking advantage of a fog, nearly surprised his camp, but Berkeley, noticing his movement, let him come close; and "then seeing he meant mischief," beat him back, slaying 80 men.<sup>6</sup> Berkeley subsequently took an active part in the siege of Kinsale.

Finally, on May 29th, 1601, the Earl of Desmond was captured on the Galtees, and ended his days in the Tower of London, so fatal to others of his name. Neither his dashing gallantry, his attractive personality, nor the devotion of a province, saved him from this dismal fate:

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by O'Donovan ("Annals of the Four Masters") :—"Essexius Asketiniam pervenit in cujus castra Catholici noctu faciunt impetum."

<sup>2</sup> "Arms of Knights" (1565-1616), in Ulster's Office, Dublin Castle, Book 1., p. 60 :—"S<sup>r</sup> Fraunces Barkley knighted at Asketon ye xij. of June, 1599. At Kilmallocke. King 20 shillings." The arms are given quarterly, 1st, gules, around a chevron argent, 10 crosses pattee 6 and 4. 2nd, or. a saltier engrailed sable. 3rd, az. two lions passant, or. 4th, gu., 10 bezants, 4. 3. 2. 1.

<sup>3</sup> "Pacata Hibernia" (ed. 1810), cap. xii., p. 138.

<sup>4</sup> Carew (1599), p. 304; C. S. P. I., 1599-1600, p. 259, p. 343.

<sup>5</sup> Carew (1600), p. 401.

<sup>6</sup> "Pacata Hibernia" (ed. 1810), cap. vii., p. 316.



better had he died in that mountain glen a free man, as his kinsman died in the glen in Kerry.

The new year (1602) had scarcely commenced when Don Juan de Aquila came to terms with Carew, and the Spanish surrendered Kinsale to the English army.<sup>1</sup> This victory was commemorated by a most honourable monument, the foundation of the Library of Trinity College, by the soldiers. The rebellion then died out into a sullen "peace" of nearly forty years. Berkeley, in 1602-3, repaired Limerick Castle, and kept in efficiency the small garrison of Askeaton, numbering barely 150 men.<sup>2</sup> We hear little of the place; but during 1603 one of its citizens, Roger Rise, with Rowland Delahoyde, brought about the establishment of ferry boats on the lower Shannon. The fares are worth noting, and were regulated by the breadth of the river according as the ferry was near its estuary or farther up. The fee for a cow or garron varied from 4*d.* to 6*d.*, two sheep, goats, or pigs from 1*d.* to 1½*d.*, and passengers from 2*d.* to 3*d.*, any packs they carried being free.<sup>3</sup> Berkeley, the same year, petitioned against the action of the Crown rent collector, who (foreshadowing the illegal claims that cost the second Stuart King his head) claimed the same rent for unprofitable as for profitable land contrary to the terms of the grant of Queen Elizabeth. Askeaton was disturbed by rumours; the first news of the gunpowder plot said that it had been successful, and that John Mac Thomas, a titular Earl of Desmond, was about to arrive in the district supported by a Spanish army. We—though we may have occasionally suffered from false rumours—can scarcely imagine the serious danger and misery caused in those times by news that our better knowledge of public events would have saved us from fully believing till the speedy refutation overtook the falsehood. In those days a rumour that would scarcely lead to the publication of a "stop press" in our time, paralysed business and kept the authorities in grave correspondence and deep anxiety for many weeks. Berkeley's neighbourly feelings towards the native gentry led O'Sullivan Beare to write to him about this time, entreating his intercession with the Government for restoration to his lands and the royal favour.<sup>4</sup> King James, in 1603, granted to Sir R. Boyle the churches of Ballengarie, Gare or Garrestown; Askettan. Askeatinge, or Askeaton; Kilmachoe; Lismakyre or Lesmackyre, and Eglishe O'Rossey (Iveross), part of the estate of the dissolved Abbey of Kensham, in England.<sup>5</sup>

In 1606, despite the deep unrest, the Government, from motives of economy, cut down the pay of its soldiers and the strength of its garrisons; Berkeley found himself left to keep down a large discontented city (writhing under religious disabilities and every real and imaginary grievance), with a constable, a porter, a "cannoneer," and

<sup>1</sup> "Pacata Hibernia," cap. xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> C. S. P. I. (1603), p. 352.

<sup>3</sup> Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1 Jas. I., lxxviii, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Carew (1602), pp. 226, 366, 396.

<sup>5</sup> C. S. P. I., pp. 380, 432, 454, 512.

twenty warders. The constable was paid 3*s.* a day; the porter, 9*d.*; the "cannoneer," 1*s.* 4*d.*; and the warders, 8*d.* each. As no outbreak took place, the Government two years later discharged Berkeley from his captaincy, but let him hold the two fortresses of Limerick and Askeaton as best he was able.<sup>1</sup>

#### WALLING AND INCORPORATION OF ASKEATON, 1610-1615.

In January, 1610, Sir Arthur Chichester, the Lord Deputy, was visited by Sir Francis Berkeley, who offered to wall Askeaton town on such terms as the Lord Deputy should think fit. A few months later the King directed Chichester to pass the Castle of Askeaton and 40 acres of land in fee-farm to Sir Francis Berkeley, as he had offered to make the castle a place of refuge for the English in those parts. He also constituted the Constable's lands to be the Manor of Rock Barkeley, and established a fair and weekly markets. By a second letter (April 25th, 1611), the King further granted the Constablership of Limerick to "Morice" Berkeley for life, after the death of his father Francis. From a third document in the same collection we learn that "Rock Barklie" was also called "Magnestre," evidently from the ruined monastery, and that the lands had originally been confiscated from Donough Mac Teige.<sup>2</sup>

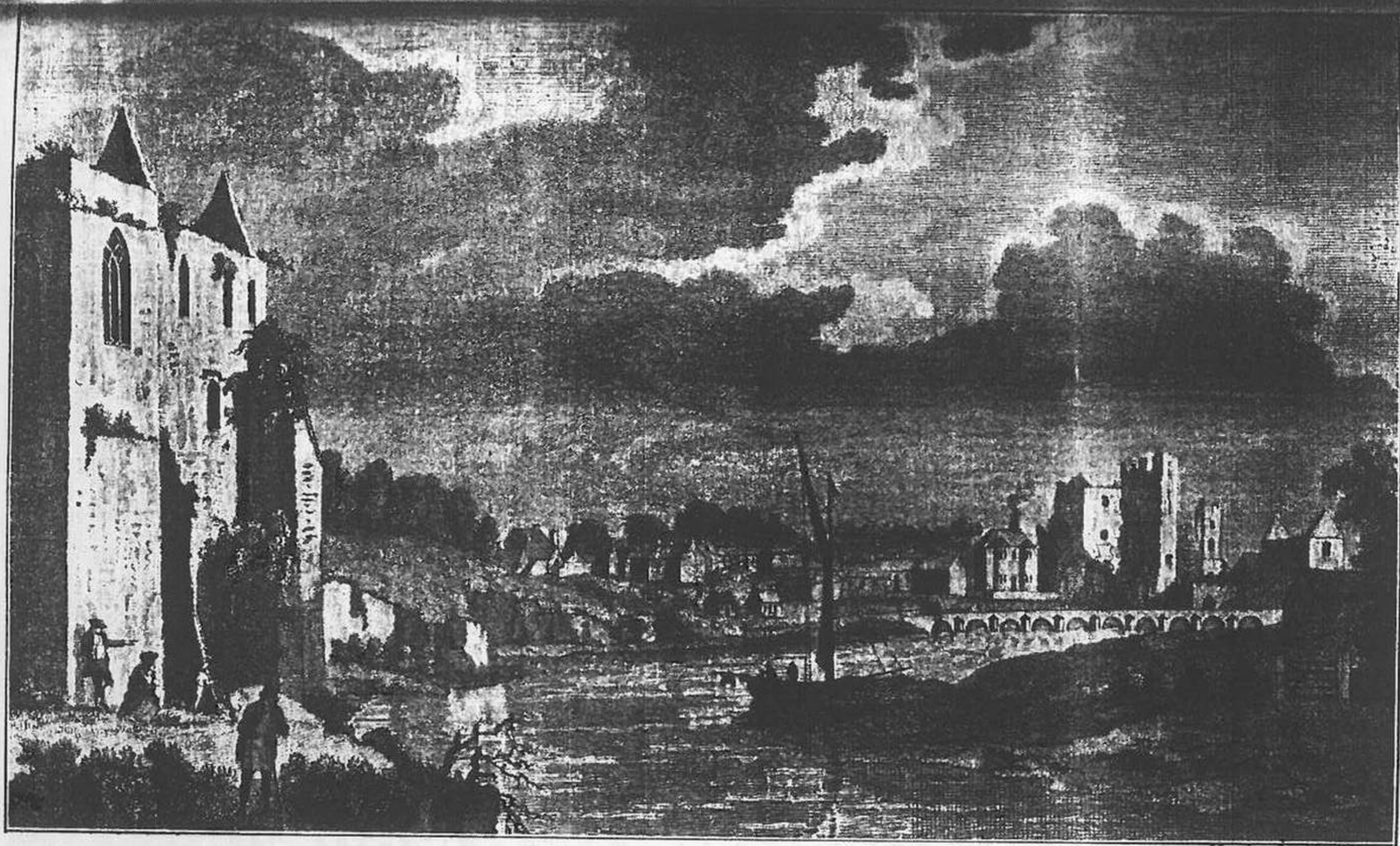
Askeaton, even if a feeble "walled town," was now ripe for another act of the Government, whose influence was weak in the counties and older towns, and who were at once anxious to strengthen the new colonies and uneasy as to the strength of their own party in the next Parliament. A number of small boroughs were incorporated, with small close constituencies, and among the rest we find, "Askeyton,"<sup>3</sup> October 20th, 1612. Edmund Drew was first "portrieve or provost," and the burgesses were Sir Francis Barkley, Edmund Ley, Roger Rue, William Rastell, Henry Widnam, John Eaton, Gilbert Rue, Anthony Cooper, John Green, John Atkinson, John Stokes, and Andrew Davys.<sup>4</sup> Drew, Lee,

<sup>1</sup> C. S. P. I. (1606), p. 580 (1607), p. 87. The neglect of Limerick Castle was no new policy. In about 1224 the C. S. P. I., p. 187, records how "in the Castle of Limerick there were found (articles) worth scarcely 18 pence, as broken dishes," &c.

<sup>2</sup> C. S. P. I. (1610), pp. 351, 430, 433, 577.

<sup>3</sup> Members of Parliament for Askeaton—1613. Anthony Stoughton and Roger Rice. 1639. Maur. Williams and George Crofton. 1661. Peter Pett and Richard Southwell. 1689. John Burke and Edward Rice. 1691. Robert Taylor and John Odell. 1693. George Evans and Robert Taylor. 1696. Chichester Philips. 1703. Robert Taylor, junior, and Chichester Philips. 1713. Robert Taylor and Philip Percival. 1715. John Bury and Edward Denny. 1723. Berkeley Taylor. 1727. Berkeley and Edmond Taylor. 1729. William Taylor. 1747. John Minchin Walcott. 1753. Edmond Malone. 1761. Joseph Hoare and Sir James Cotter. 1768. J. Hoare and Hon. Hugh Massy. 1783. Sir J. Hoare, Bart., and Richard Griffith. 1790. Sir J. Hoare and Henry Alexander. 1797. John Seward. 1799. Sir Vere Hunt, Bart. The single names were persons elected in succession to dead or retiring members.

<sup>4</sup> C. S. P. I. (1612), p. 293.



“TOWN AND CASTLE OF ASKEYTON—TAKEN FROM THE RUINS OF THE ABBEY.”  
(Painted by P. Sandby, R.A.; published 1779.)

Widenham, Cooper, Green, and Atkinson established county families in Limerick, Tipperary, and Clare. Not contented with the safe boroughs, every means were taken to elect Government supporters for the counties and old towns. The election was far from being above suspicion, and indeed it is impossible to say anything more charitable than that the methods on both sides were of equal "integrity." To give one example—In Limerick, Edward Fitz Harris and Jefferie Galway were said to have been elected by 314 freeholders, yet the sheriff returned Sir Francis Berkeley and Sir Thomas Browne. The matter was gone into by the Parliament, and many of the complainants' votes were found to be given by unqualified persons, and also many were absent whose names were recorded. The cause being lost, the complainants confessed that this was so; but the successful side by no means cleared away all suspicion from themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Berkeley, however, continued on no bad terms with his Irish neighbours, and was accused to the Government, and found guilty, of violating his articles of plantation by harbouring Irish husbandmen. The matter seems to have been speedily dropped by the authorities, who had few friends to spare, at any rate in those days. The seignory of Rockbarkeley is stated in the same memorandum to have consisted of some 1200 acres of demesne, 900 in fee-farm, 1200 evicted, 1100 leased, and 36 in other tenures. The muster was 21 foot and 7 horsemen. Berkeley used to bring his tenants to church, and employed Irish-speaking ministers, which "made the people very attentive." He did, according to his lights, all that was possible for his tenants, and evidently had succeeded in undoing much of the ravage of two civil wars, before his death, which took place at Askeaton Castle on December 20th, 1615.<sup>2</sup> He was succeeded by his eldest son, Maurice Berkeley, then aged 17 years and 10 months, who became governor of Limerick Castle, and married, but died young (aged 24), on September 8th, 1622. His brother, Henry, a boy of 16, succeeded to the Askeaton estates, Limerick Castle being granted to his brother-in-law, George Courtenay; but Henry died before the age of 20; and his co-heirs were found to be his nephew and sisters, William Courtenay (son of George Courtenay and his wife, Katherine Berkeley), Elizabeth, wife of George Crofton, then aged 20, Frances Berkeley, and Gertrude, wife of John Taylor.<sup>3</sup> Through the descendants of the last named, the blood of Sir Francis Berkeley is preserved among the landowners of the district. Livery of the estates was given to Elizabeth Crofton and Gertrude Taylor on November 21st, 1626, the other sisters not being mentioned. Frances successively married Thomas Blayney of Tregonan, Denbighshire, by whom she left

<sup>1</sup> C. S. P. I. (1613), p. 362; Carew (1613), p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Inq. *post mortem* (Exchequer).

<sup>3</sup> Inq. *post mortem*.

issue, and James Purcell, of Croagh, who died without issue; her sister, Katherine Courtenay, also died without issue.<sup>1</sup>

#### REVIVAL OF THE CONVENT.

It is evident that there had been a most complete break in the history and life of Askeaton Convent. The indefatigable Father Donat Mooney in 1617 was unable (through the dispersion of the monks and the establishment of the English colony) to collect any facts of value about it or even (one concludes from his unusual silence) to visit its ruins. His account seems all the more scanty from the interesting and, to students of monastic architecture in Ireland, invaluable particulars about the Franciscan Friary of Adare, which almost immediately precede his notice of Askeaton. Strange to say, while he apologises for the Adare notes as meagre (though giving copious extracts from the convent register and full particulars about the founders of each part of the building, and about the plate, vestments and monks), he makes no apology for the truly meagre notes on Lislactin and Askeaton. He writes—"The Convent of Askeaton is said to have been built by the Earl of Desmond. It has not been inhabited by the Friars for many years. In the wars against the Geraldines of Munster the inmates were treated in a most barbarous manner by the English under Sir Nicholas Malbi. Some were put to death for the Faith; among these martyrs of Christ was Father John Conor, whose remains are buried in the Chapter Room. I have been unable to ascertain the names of the others."<sup>2</sup>

The unconquerable courage and vitality of the Franciscans resuscitated the convent in 1627, when Father Francis Matthew was Provincial. Some Friars "at the instance of many of the nobles (*i.e.* men of family) began to dwell among the ruins of the convent and repaired it, so far as the persecution would allow them." Father Hugh Ward, who records this in his "*Brevis Synopsis Provinciæ Hiberniæ*,"<sup>3</sup> about 1630,

<sup>1</sup> A very full account (*temp.* William III.) of Berkeley's descendants is given in the great Loftus Pedigree (MSS. T.C.D., F. 2. 23, pp. 95-115). From Gertrude's son, William Taylor, descend the Barons Massy, who succeeded to Ballinort, and the Taylors of Hollypark: from her daughters the families of Gore and Westropp (see *Journal*, vol. xx. (1890), pp. 74, 78, 79): of Gore-Hickman and many others. From Frances Blayney descend, among others, the Croftons, Blayneys, Brownes (of Newgrove, Clare), and Ormsbys. See also Appendix to Thirtieth Annual Report of Deputy Keeper of the Records (Patent Rolls, 1626. Roll I., Close); also Calendar of Domestic Papers for November, 1672, giving curious particulars of the alleged plot of Captain Thomas Walcott, son-in-law of Frances Blayney, to seize Limerick Castle, and bring help from Holland, and his offer to Mountfort Westropp, son-in-law to Gertrude. It presents a curious picture of the jealousies between the Royalist and Cromwellian families, and the deep discontent of both parties against the Government. The last person of the name is "Mr. Purcell, *alias* Berkly," of Croagh Gowne, in the parish of Croagh, 1655. in the "Book of Distribution," p. 21 (Limerick). I cannot locate him in the family unless the "d.s.p." is wrongly recorded of James Purcell, of Croagh.

<sup>2</sup> "The Franciscan Tertiary" (Dublin, April, 1895), vol. v., p. 357.

<sup>3</sup> Copied for me by the Rev. Mr. O'Reilly, at the Library of the Franciscan Convent, Dublin.

unfortunately gives no further particulars. However, by his time the tradition of the unmolested community, dispersed 52 years back, must have got very dim—no less from the interval of time than from the expulsion of all the better class adherents of the ruined house of Desmond from the town and its neighbourhood. The records preserve no appointment of a guardian from 1629 to 1645; probably the monks who haunted the ruin never attempted to organise themselves; but a great change was near at hand.

#### THE CONFEDERATES.

Fifteen years after the return of the monks Askeaton was reduced by the Confederate Catholics. Lord Broghill had sent 200 soldiers to garrison the castle a few months before; but the summer passed, and the Irish besieged the place, and there seemed no hope of relief. Belling<sup>1</sup> preserves the terms of the capitulation: "August 14th, 1642.—Lieut.-Col. Purcell and the Council of his Majesty's Catholiques for the Province of Munster for the one part, and the Warden of Askeaton for the other." The articles were—1-3. The arms, munitions, and horses of the garrison and goods belonging to Catholics were to be surrendered. 4. The English and Irish warders to have their lives and safe conduct to Downarayne or Corcke, with their goods, and half the books in the Castle. 5. To swear on the Evangelists not to bear arms against the King, and to sign and seal the same. 6. The garrison and inhabitants to be unmolested in the Protestant religion. It was signed for the Confederates by Patrick Purcell, Oliver Stephenson (of Castleconnell), Maurice de Rupe (Roche of Fermoy), Richard Butler and Thomas Purcell. Among the besiegers were Purcells, Stephensons, Fitzgeralds, Herberts, Donough O'Brien of Carrigogunnell, gent. and captain; Dermot and Murrough O'Brien of Ballykett (Co. Clare), and Macnamara of the same, captains; Lycett of Fannigiston (Fanningstown), Macmahon, and Dominick Fanning, Mayor of Limerick. A letter from the Lords Justices to the Commissioners in London, dated September 1st, 1642, seems written in ignorance of the surrender. The rebels, with the ordnance found in Limerick Castle, it runs, "have taken all the castles in the county of Limerick except Asketon," and the numbers of the English who had been maintained in these castles was so great that the refugees to Youghal caused great scarcity.<sup>2</sup>

Those who have searched through the great collection of depositions relating to the rising in Limerick in 1641-42 and the huge rolls wherein, with lavish waste of parchment and stern economy of detailed entries,

<sup>1</sup> "History of the Irish Confederates and the War in Ireland" (J. T. Gilbert), vol. ii., xxxvi., p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Carte MSS. III., pp. 268, 272; Gilbert's "History of the Irish Confederates and the War in Ireland" (1882), vol. ii., pp. 53, 54.

are set the receipts, booty, and expenditure of Axtell's regiment, found little to reward them so far as Askeaton is concerned.

Askeaton is only named once, so far as I can find, in the 1641 depositions, and then only as the residence of a person casually named in one of them. In 1653, however, commissioners were appointed to take evidence against the leading Confederates. They sat at Mallow, and one of the deponents, "Christopher Webb, of Mallow, aged twenty-seaven yeares," told briefly how, in 1641, "he lived at Archkeaton in y<sup>e</sup> County of Limbrick . . . that the said (Oliver) Stephenson was in Actuall Armes against y<sup>e</sup> English in y<sup>e</sup> yeare 1641. This Deponent's cause of Knowledge is that hee was in y<sup>e</sup> Castle of Archkeaton aforesaid, when y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> Castle was taken by y<sup>e</sup> Irish, and that after it was surrendered he saw y<sup>e</sup> said Stephenson Amongst y<sup>t</sup> p<sup>ty</sup> (that p<sup>ty</sup>) that tooke y<sup>e</sup> said Castle, and was called by name of Maior Generall. The Deponent further saith y<sup>t</sup> hee had a passe fr: him and Lt.-Gen: Purcell after y<sup>e</sup> Castle was surrendered to repaire to Rathgoggan Castle, in the County of Corke."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE RESTORED CONVENT.

The victory of the Confederates enabled the monks to repair and openly re-establish their long ruined home. It is evident from the ruins that no rebuilding took place; very probably the church was cleared from the *débris* of the fallen tower, and the buildings, or a portion, were roofed and refurnished. Lewis gives the date as 1648, but the probabilities, and the date on the Stephenson monument, make it clear that this is a misprint for 1643. The monument was erected (as we shall see) in 1646, to Richard Stephenson and his son Oliver; the latter fell in the battle of Liscarroll; the upper tablet is dated 1642. I fail to identify any other structural feature of the convent as belonging to that anxious period.<sup>2</sup>

In 1645 Jerome Herbert was elected by the monks as guardian, being re-elected in 1647 and 1648, and he held office till 1650, when Owen O'Caghan, s.t.l., was elected. In Herbert's time (1647) the bodies of Patrick Healy, Bishop of Mayo, and Cornelius Rorke, who had been executed in August, 1578, were, it is said, removed to this convent with great pomp and there buried.<sup>3</sup> After this the acts of the Chapter are significantly silent, till the iron rule of Cromwell closed. In all probability the monks fled abroad, or remained in close concealment. The restoration of Charles brought the possibility of reorganization. In 1661 William Hurley was appointed guardian; he must have been re-elected several times, as he was only succeeded by Francis Wall in 1670. In conclusion, and to keep together these notes, we record the succession of

<sup>1</sup> Depositions, T.C.D. Library, Clare and Limerick, p. 387, March 7, 1653. Before H. Wheeler and Tho. Coakley.

<sup>2</sup> For the Stephensons, see Appendix D, at end of this Paper.

<sup>3</sup> O'Reilly's "Memorials of those who suffered for the Catholic Faith," p. 189.