

THE GERALDINES OF WEST L

Last Phase Of Desmond Rebellion

CONCLUDING PORTION OF SPECIAL ARTICLE

BELOW we give the third and concluding portion of "Orjay's" special contribution on the Geraldines of West Limerick. This instalment deals with the last phase of the Desmond Rebellion, and tells how Gerald Fitzgerald met his end. It is as follows:—

THE 11th Earl of Desmond was "Thomas The Bald," uncle of James. Thomas' wife was Catherine, the famous "old Countess,"

"Who lived to the age of one hundred and ten

And died of a fall from an apple tree then."

Thomas died at the Castle, Rathkeale in 1534, and was succeeded by his grand-son, James, "The Court Page." The Court Page was slain by his kinsman, Maurice, at Leac an Sgail, County Kerry, in 1540, his namesake and cousin, James succeeding him. James, who was appointed Lord High Treasurer of Ireland, was a safe and much married man. He died in Askeaton Castle on the 14th October, 1558. And so we come to Garrett or Gerald, James's son, the 15th and last true Earl

LAST PHASE OF DESMOND REBELLION

The Desmond Rebellion has been recounted too often to tell it again here. So we will content ourselves with the last phase. It is the year 1583, Gerald is on the run in West Limerick, broken, defeated and encompassed by his enemies.

Here is the concluding portion of a letter written by him to St. Léger at the time:—"The Earl of Ormond giveth forth that I should submit myself before him as Attorney to her majesty, you may be sure he doth report more thereof that I have sent him either by word or writing. But this I have offered in hope to prove the unreasonable wrongs and injuries done to me by her highness's officers in this realm, from time to time, ungully in my behalf as God knoweth. I am contended upon these conditions so as my country, castle, possessions and lands, with my son, might be put and left in the hands and quiet possessions of my council and followers, and also my religion and conscience not barred. With a pardon, protection, and passport for my own body, to pass and repass, I would have gone before her majesty to try all those causes just and true on my part, as still I do allege if I

might be heard or have indifferency and likewise hoping I might have more justice favour and grace at her majesty's hands when I am before herself than here at the hands of such her cruel officers as have me wrongfully proclaimed. And as thereby thinking her majesty and I may agree, if not that I may be put safe in the hands of my followers again, and I to deliver my son and my said possessions back to her highness's officers. At Abbeyfeale, April 28th, 1583. Garrot Desmond."

HUNTED MAN.

There are still glimmerings of greatness about Gerald, certainly dignity, and fully to appreciate this letter, one must remember that Gerald was a hunted man, living with a mere handful of followers in abject circumstances, with a price set to tempt a prince upon his head. It is interesting to note the stiffening in the letter at the mere mention of Ormond, the traditional enemy.

How right he was in his dislike of Ormond, because St. Leger's answer to this letter was to send an armed force, into West Limerick, with Ormond at their head. Ormond made Newcastle his headquarters, and one of his dispatches written from Newcastle to Lord Burgley in London has been preserved. The letter was dated June 22nd, 1583, and sets out that the Earl of Desmond was deserted by all, save a priest, one Maurice MacKenraghty, and a few horsemen. It expressed the hope that Ormond would not be supplanted at Court by the malice of his enemies until he had reduced the Earl.

HOW THE END CAME.

Gerald withdrew from the West into the mountainous districts of Castleisland, and may have escaped, but for treachery. And this was the way the end came. Gerald, wanting provisions, moved to a place called Dolremore, in the valley of Glengenty, about five miles from Tralee. His men seized forty cows and nine horses from one Maurice MacOwen, whose wife was a Moriarty from Castlegregory, and with

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