

## REVIEWS

Dermot F. Gleeson & Rev. Aubrey Gwynn, S.J. : *A HISTORY OF THE DIOCESE OF KILLALOE*. Dublin. Gill & Son. 45/-.

The man who sets out to write the history of an Irish diocese is like someone building a large palace. Materials for the fabric have to be sought for in all directions, and even when the materials have been gathered, the plans of the building must be drawn and re-drawn many times. Finally, the building has to be furnished, and opened to the public. It was not unfitting that the author of this History of the Diocese of Killaloe should have spent his last hours amidst scenes of medieval splendour in the ancient castle of Bunratty. He had given the best years of his life to re-constructing and re-telling the history of the diocese of Killaloe, and this present volume is a worthy monument and memorial to him.

Father Gwynn has contributed the early section of the book, taking us from the days of St. Patrick down to the Synod of Kells. He is mainly concerned with the origin of the various churches and parishes, as well as the origins of the diocese of Killaloe itself. He has given us a masterly survey of early Irish Church history, which should be a guide to those who wish to cover the same ground in other dioceses. Although this part of the book is mainly factual, Fr. Gwynn has made history re-live in a vivid fashion for us. Of special interest to the Church historian is the section on 'The Boundaries of the Diocese of Killaloe.' The general reader will be interested in the origin of the word 'Killaloe', which may mean either 'The Church of St. Mo-Lua', or 'The Church of the two waters'.

Parts II—IV of the book have been written by Dr. Gleeson, and treat of the history of the diocese from the 12th to the 15th centuries. This section fills just 400 pages and is so rich in information that it would be impossible to begin selecting major points. It must be said that what makes this volume of diocesan history so valuable is the way in which both Fr. Gwynn and Dr. Gleeson have fitted the story of one particular diocese into the general setting of Irish Church history. No Irish diocese stood in isolation at any moment of history. The Irish Church was part of the whole 'nation', and it is interesting to see the ways in which the Church was used in political 'intrigues'. Killaloe seems to have had more than its share of interference from without and within, and the efforts made by the various bishops to maintain their rights and privileges make very interesting reading.

In Part III we are given a thorough and satisfying study of one of the thorniest problems in church history: diocesan economy. How did the Church maintain itself? How did the bishops obtain and administer their lands and property? How did the various deaneries and parishes subsist in the middle ages? Was the diocese of Killaloe rich or poor during this period? We learn from Dr. Gleeson that in addition to his mensal parishes, the bishop had his annual income from a large number of coarb parishes. In some cases the bishop was himself the coarb. "Both at Ard-cronev and Dolla, there are still remains of an episcopal residential tower incorporated in the church ruins". (p. 295) Besides these sources of income, the bishop had his 'procurations,' which were derived from an episcopal tax on each parish for 'cathedratics' and were payable by the incumbents.



While he gives us a complete study of episcopal and diocesan conditions, Dr. Gleeson has not neglected the role played by the regular clergy in the Irish Church in the middle ages. There is an excellent chapter on 'The coming of the friars' in Part II, and another chapter 'The Franciscan and Dominican Friars' in Part IV. Besides studying the question of foundation dates of such friaries as Nenagh, Ennis, Roscrea and Quin, Dr. Gleeson shows us the friars in their day to day work of preaching and evangelising. In fact they became an integral part of the medieval Irish Church, and it was this that enabled them to survive the Reformation.

The volume concludes with a very rich Appendix, giving 'A Manuscript List of the Bishops of Killaloe', the 'Fasti of the Diocese of Killaloe' and 'The diocesan Extents'. There is also an exhaustive bibliography, giving the list of manuscripts and books consulted.

May we hope that the remaining volume which Dr. Gleeson had prepared will one day see the light of day. Yet, even to have completed and produced this one volume would entitle a man to our worthiest respect and gratitude. Let it be said of the author: *Defunctus adhuc loquitur!*

MARK TIERNEY O.S.B.

THE INCHQUIN MANUSCRIPTS. Edited by John Ainsworth, M.A. Dublin: Stationery Office for the Irish Manuscripts Commission. Pp. ix—749. 1961. 63s.

Here is an essential text-book for the social and economic history of Clare through three centuries to the Union. The political story can be found elsewhere: the O Briens who helped to make it like Elizabeth's great earl and Murrough the Burner appear in the papers only in their capacity as local landlords. These two notables represent different lines—the Thomond and Inchiquin lines descended from two O'Brien claimants who made their peace with Henry and were content to receive their lands and lordly titles at his hands.

Donogh, the queen's great earl, converted Bunratty fortress into a stately home but the generations after him severed the connection and resided abroad. From Donogh's brother derived the Counts Thomond in the service of France. Both these houses died out in the eighteenth century. The senior Inchiquin line, the Burner's line, became extinct in 1855: actually from Murrough's time they resided mostly at Rostellan in the country of the Cloyne Fitzgeralds, a family into which they had married. Consequently most of the papers so aptly quoted or summarised in this volume concern the present Inchiquin line. Their lordly title begins with Lucius, brother of William Smith O'Brien and of Robert O'Brien of Old Church.

The family branches remembered their kinship through the generations. Thus the last Earl of Thomond, as you can read in his will, was mindful of his outlaw cousins in France and of his Inchiquin kin at home. These latter would have inherited his lands but for the inopportune death without heirs of the designated beneficiary. And the reversion was to a Wyndham whence the Leconfields owners of so much of Clare down to our times.

Land transactions form the most considerable part of the record, and the indexes



of place and family names are so conscientious and thorough that there is a fair chance of tracing the succession of lease-holding families in most townlands. One notices the influx to Clare after Cromwell's victory of a cluster of old merchant families of the Limerick of an earlier day—Arthurs, Comyns, Creaghs, Stackpooles, Stritchs. And the appearance too in the O'Brien lands and towns of new arrivals like the Gores, Hickmans, Spaight and Wilsons.

Farmers will learn the manner of life of the time from lease stipulations about hedges, wide ridges, plantations and prescribed types of residence. They may even learn something about discreet smuggling along the river creeks. And much emerges about the growth and business of towns like Clarecastle and Sixmilebridge.

And inevitably there is the human element. The marriages for instance, the land intrigues and the pious will of the almost legendary Maire Rua. And one gleans that Murrough the Burner was no admirer of the formidable dame. And there was her shrewd son, Donogh, curiously modern in his successful policy of neutrality during King William's wars. He emerged as the wealthiest commoner in Ireland but fate sent him an heir in his grandson who gaily squandered the rich heritage. With his aristocratic English relatives Sir Edward was a racing addict: he even renamed the village near Dromoland after the Newmarket course where he had scattered old Sir Donogh's gains. For all his peculiarities his last Will reveals a rather lovable human being concerned for his old retainers. He was worried as he wrote the Will in 1765 about the magnitude of his debts. He might have derived some consolation had he anticipated that the paintings he had commissioned of favourite horses would realize nine thousand guineas at the Dromoland auction in 1963.

Congratulations to the editor whose worthy presentation of these Papers is a capital service to Thomond history.

M.M.

*Irish Historical Studies*: Hodges, Figgis & Co., Ltd. Annual Subscription, 20/-.

Respectful greetings to this notable periodical just now keeping its silver jubilee. The Journal appears in spring and autumn and No. 50 is now in circulation. The history faculties in our three universities collaborate in the production and make it the best available guide to research in Irish history. Apart from the main contributions there are the recurring sections: 'Writings on Irish History' listing publications from issue to issue, and 'Research on Irish History in Irish Universities' with particulars of theses completed or in preparation. Naturally these features and the review section are indispensable to anyone seriously engaged or deeply interested in historical work.

Take for instance Vol. XII (1960, 1961). We get a new look at the Easter Revolution from the Eoin MacNeill memoranda edited by Revd. J. X. Martin recently appointed to a history chair at U.C.D. Dr. J. G. Simms, who has lectured to our Society on a kindred subject, treats of penal legislation of Queen Anne. Of particular local interest are the notes of our member, Sir Henry Blackall, on landed proprietors in the Repeal movement. One is mildly surprised to find the Macnamaras of Doolin among them, as well as Sir David Roche of Carass, and the flamboyant Corney O'Brien whose name is linked with the now ruinous tower at Moher cliffs, and the commemorative column near Liscannor.

All credit to the editors for a high standard consistently maintained.

M.M.