Medieval Kilmallock

By GERARD A. LEE, Member

Kilmallock derives its name from the Church and monastery founded by St. Mochealog in the early seventh century, the remains which are still to be seen, together with a burial ground, on the green hill adjoining the town. If the round tower incorporated into the Church of SS Peter and Paul in the town itself is as early as is claimed for it, this would suggest that the monastic settlement may later have been removed from the hill down to a site nearer the river. Little is known about the saint as there is no manuscript or record extant dealing with his life, but references to him in the lives of other saints place him as having lived at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century, while some authorities say that he was both bishop and abbot. In the Annals of the Four Masters the deaths of two lectors of this community are recorded under the years 1028 and 1050. Local tradition suggests that the early lay settlement in the area also started around or near the hill, which is about one mile square and still contains a small colony of dwelling-houses, but the present town is built on a level stretch of land some distance away. From the low summit of the hill of Kilmallock one can see the plains stretching to the mountains and the town nestling in the valley.

With the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, the Geraldines gradually occupied the south of Ireland and, with it, that rich tract of valley known as the Golden Vein which stretches through parts of the present counties of Limerick and Tipperary. Kilmallock town was, in all likelihood, founded by a branch of the Geraldine family which settled in the area, and it would appear that a permanent settlement was early established, and flourished, on or about the present site.

Kilmallock stands in a region of great natural fertility which from earliest times must have been, at least in the metaphorical sense, a land flowing with milk and honey. It adjoined the important early strongholds of Bruree and Bruff, and was protected to the west by the wooded heights and valleys of Upper Connelloe, and the natural barrier of the Ballyhoura Hills with the pass of Redchair (Red Gap) and the Glen of Aherlow to the east and south.

After the decline of the early pre-Norman monastery its possessions would seem to have merged into the episcopal property of the diocese, and one Geoffrey de Marisco, who was in possession of the Manor of Kilmallock as tenant of the bishop paid homage for the town and other lands to Hubert de Burgh shortly after the latter became bishop of the Diocese of Limerick in the thirteenth century. He promised to pay twenty shillings per annum for Kilmallock, and thirteen shillings for the other lands, together with three pounds of wax to St. Mary’s Cathedral on the feast of the Assumption. The Cathedral of St. Mary is dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption.

In the Black Book of Limerick are included an important set of deeds dating from the end of that century by which certain rents in the town of Kilmallock were conferred on the bishops and chapter of the Diocese. These deeds also disclose the names of the principal streets as well as roads leading to the country, and also the names of some of the citizens.
The first of these documents relates to a grant by John Young to the bishop and chapter of the rent of certain houses and lands which were situate inside and outside the town, and a second deed relates to a similar grant made by Philip FitzJohn FitzThomas of certain tenements in the town. Reference is often made to a burgage of land which was a feudal tenure by which houses and lands in ancient boroughs were held of the Lord at a yearly rent, and at that time there were twenty-seven burgages in the main street of the town. The names of the streets include Main Street, Blossom Street, Fleming Street, Water Street and John Street; and reference is made to names such as Mona Mor; the great water of the new mill; Martyn’s lake, and the king’s highway or royal road to Emily and the south.

The Church of SS Peter and Paul is mentioned and the deeds are witnessed by the provost which title was associated with the head keeper or senior priest of a collegiate church, of which that of Kilmallock was one, and which was a church, other than a cathedral, having a Chapter of Canons. Many other churches in the diocese were associated or belonged to the chapter or college of Kilmallock. At this time the diocese was divided into six deaneries of which Kilmallock was one. The rectory of this collegiate and parish church belonged, however, to the chapter of St. Mary’s Cathedral in Limerick, for the maintenance of twelve vicars, and the vicarage of Kilmallock belonged to the college of Kilmallock. There are extant two returns of the Papal Tax which was levied off the diocese between the years 1302 and 1306 which give a full list of the churches of the diocese and their value. Among those within the deanery of Kilmallock are mentioned that church and the vicarages itself, as well as the churches (and sometimes the vicarages) inter alia of Dromin, Ballingaddy, Uregare, Ardpatrick, Kilfinane, Darragh, Ardkilmartin, Athlacca, Effin and Bruree.

Most of the surnames used in the deeds of the Black Book have now disappeared or have greatly changed in form, although the names of White, Fleming, Bluet and Smith have remained common up to the present day. The christian names of the people referred to are, however, traditional and include those of John, William, Thomas, James, Walter, Nicholas and Robert.

One of the properties granted by deed refers quaintly to the tenement of Philip of the Mills, and it is clear that a town of such strategic and commercial importance to both Anglo-Norman and ecclesiastical authority must have had several mills or graneries within or adjoining its walls.

A reference is made, in an inquisition of 1201 regarding the ecclesiastical property of the diocese, to the Church of Ardvullen near Kilmallock, which, in the Anglicised form, is called Millmount. This church has long since disappeared, but a landed estate at Ardvullen continued, however, until recent years when it was divided. In the modern part of the town some of the houses are built on the estate and still pay ground rent to its representatives.

Kilmallock was a walled town at the end of the thirteenth century and closely connected with that branch of the Desmond family known as the White Knights. It is one of the most ancient towns in Ireland and, formerly, was one of the most splendid. Its corporation, if not one by prescription, was created by a very early charter recognised as already existing in a later charter of Edward III which granted to the provost and commonalty tolls or customs of certain commodities coming to town to be sold, or passing through for sale, for a period of ten years towards the rebuilding, repairing and fortifying of the town. By another charter of Henry IV,
the King granted to the portreeve and burgesses certain customs therein mentioned for the space of twenty years. Edward IV nominated Kilmallock as one of the towns in which he established a royal mint, and in 1483 it was named among the principal places where a coin of Richard III, then recently struck, was, by Act of Parliament, made current. In 1673, a coin or token appeared bearing the name of Matthew Meade, a merchant of the town, and showing the arms of the Meade family.

By Letters Patent dated the 15th April 1584 to the Archbishop of Dublin and Sir Henry Wallop, Queen Elizabeth referred to a petition of the inhabitants of Kilmallock for renewal and enlargement of their charter and to a certificate of their loyalty by the Lords Justices, and directed, *inter alia*, that their charter be renewed as amply as that of Kilkenny, and that no unreasonable liberties be inserted in it.

The charter by which the town was governed was one granted during the reign of Elizabeth apparently in pursuance of her letter of 1584. It gave to the corporation and burgesses of the town all their former liberties and franchises in as full and ample a manner as they, or their predecessors, enjoyed by virtue of any former charters; and further directed that every year on the Monday after the feast of St. Michael they should assemble within the town and there, by assent of twelve of the best burgesses forming the Council or the majority of them, elect one to be sovereign of same, apparently with the office of Justice of the Peace and Coroner; and it granted that the sovereign and his successors should for ever with the burgesses of the town and their successors be a body corporate by the name of "The Sovereign and Burgesses of the town of Kilmallock."

The charter gave power to the Corporation to levy certain customs to be laid out in walling, fortifying, and defending the town, and to assess the inhabitants for that purpose. It empowered the Corporation to hold a hundred court within the town and there hold pleas and certain actions not exceeding £20; to hold a fair in the town once a year "from nine o'clock on the night of Pentecost for five days following"; that the sovereign with the twelve burgesses should choose four men to be barons in the court of *pie poudre* (which was a court of record held by the steward of a fair or market for the summary adjudication of commercial disputes arising therein, and so called from the dusty feet of the suitors) who should have power to hold pleas of debt, covenant and account arising within the bounds of the town, and that the sovereign and officers on the expiration of their term should render an account of its tolls and customs.

Letters Patent in the twelfth year of the reign of Elizabeth recited in a charter of 1594, granted to the sovereign brethren and community of the town for the term of twenty-one years, the site, circuit ambit and precinct of the late monastery of friar preachers of Kilmallock, a ruined church, a close, a dormitory, three chambers, three small gardens with all buildings and edifices attached thereto, nine acres of arable land and two of pasture in the town and fields of Kilmallock, a water-mill adjoining the town, a parcel of possessions of the monastery at a certain rent and the maintainance of two fit archers, suitably armed, for the defence of the premises. The Charter of 1594 then confirmed to the sovereign of the town, to the brethren and community and their successors the monastery of St. Dominic to hold for ever as of the Castle of Limerick by fealty in free and common soccage, and not *in capite*.

The liberties of the town contained 2,142 acres of forfeited lands, denominations called the corporation commons containing 135 acres, and 9½ acres of Spital lands; the town itself was not included in the measurement. The town with its liberties constituted, in effect, a separate administration and was called the Barony of the
Liberties of Kilmallock. The Spital lands formed the site of an ancient leper hospital which may have been in the charge of members of an Order of Knights Hospitallers. The site of this hospital, about one mile north of the town, is still called "The Spital Field".*

The town was made into a borough in 1585 and from that time onwards returned two Members of Parliament, starting with John Verdon and Thomas O'Hurley. A descendant of the latter sat, with John de Lacy, in King James' Patriot Parliament in 1689, and the ruins of the O'Hurley Castle still crown the hill at Knocklong. Other names that appear as Members of Parliament and which are associated with Kilmallock, the city of Limerick and the county, include Robert, Philip and Silver Oliver, of Castle Oliver, Kilfinane; Sir Philips and Chidley Coote, of Ash Hill and Mount Coote Estate, Kilmallock; Wyndham Quin, of Adare Manor; Edward Villiers and Standish Hartstonge, both of whom are still associated by name with the county and city of Limerick. In 1783 John FitzGibbon, afterwards the Earl of Clare and Lord Chancellor of Ireland, infamous as the chief pilot of the Act of Union through Parliament in 1800, was one of the elected representatives of Kilmallock.

The historic references to Kilmallock during the reign of Elizabeth are numerous and its name is clearly linked with the fate of Gerald, the last effeetual Earl of Desmond in the direct line of succession (excluding his nephew and successor the Siúgan Earl) to be accepted by the Irish as their leader. Having been arrested and conveyed to the Tower of London, his cousin James FitzMaurice FitzGerald assumed the leadership of the Geraldines and attacked the town and destroyed it on the 2nd of March, 1571. In the Annals of the Four Masters the writer says that FitzMaurice captured the town "not from a desire of [obtaining] its riches and various treasures, though its riches were immense, but because it had always been the rendezvous and sally-port of the English and Geraldines [in their contests] against him."

A vivid account of the raid is given in the Annals: "Before sunrise in the morning those who had gone to sleep happily and comfortably were aroused from their slumber by a furious attack made by the warlike troops of the Clann-Sweeney and Clann-Sheehy, who were along with James Mac Maurice; and they proceeded to divide among themselves its gold, silver, various riches, and valuable jewels, which the father would not have acknowledged to his heir, or the mother to her daughter, on the day before. They were engaged for the space of three days and nights in carrying away the several kinds of riches and precious goods, as cups and ornamented goblets, upon their horses and steeds, to the woods and forests of Ethlarach [Aherlow], and sending others of them privately to their friends and companions. They then

* The neighbouring town of Hospital (and possibly also the townlands of Spittle near Ballylanders and Ballyorgan respectively) owes its name to such an institution. In 1226 a commandery of Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem was founded in that town by Geoffrey de Marisco, then Lord Justice of Ireland, and it was the second most important establishment of the Order in Ireland. With the suppression of the monastery by Henry VIII in 1540, all the properties of the Order were acquired by the Crown and Grand Jurors valued each of them. In 1541 the Jurors reported that all the buildings of the Hospital of Any, as it was called, were then standing, and that 280 acres of land and other property belonged to it. Hospitals in Ireland for the sick and poor were mostly maintained by the religious orders during the Middle Ages, but those for lepers were sometimes called lazare houses and may have been, at least in part, under the ancient Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem.
set fire to the town, and raised a dense, heavy cloud, and a black, thick, and gloomy shroud of smoke about it, after they had torn down and demolished its houses of stone and wood; so that Kilmallock became the receptacle and abode of wolves, in addition to all the other misfortunes up to that time.”

The town was, however, soon rebuilt and restored by Sir John Perrott who placed a large garrison within its walls. Shortly afterwards Sir Henry Sydney, the Lord Deputy, described Kilmallock as having been “lamentably spoiled and burned by that vile traitor, James Fitzmaurice, but so speedily again re-edified as surely it is not almost to be credited, but by constant report of them that knew it, and saw it then, and now have perused and seen it again; for where there was not a roof left unburned, few or no houses within the walls now uncovered.”

Fitzmaurice was eventually captured, and was brought to the Church of SS Peter and Paul where the nobles of Munster and the distinguished officers of the English were gathered. There, in 1573, the Irish chief was forced to confess his guilt on his knees and in abject terms, at the feet of the President of Munster who held a drawn sword towards his breast: “The earth of Kilmallock which town I have most traitorously sacked and burn’t, I kiss and on the same lie prostrate and fraught with sorrow upon the present view of my most mischievous past.”

The rightful Earl of Desmond was released in 1573 after an imprisonment of six years, but, in July 1579 when Fitzmaurice returned from the Continent with a body of Spanish and Italian troops determined on revenge, he refused to throw in his lot with his kinsman. When the latter was killed in a skirmish with the De Burghs, and his body quartered over the gates of the town, the Earl made a journey to Kilmallock to assure the Lord Deputy of his continued loyalty, and gave his eldest son as a hostage for his future obedience. Later, however, driven by the hostility of his enemies, he wandered a fugitive and an outlaw among the woods of the Ballyhoura Hills. The English soldiers garrisoned at Kilmallock failed to capture him, and he eventually died in 1583 at the hands of one of his countrymen at Glenagerty near Tralee Bay, in Co. Kerry.

In 1600, James, the fifteenth and last Earl of Desmond, who had been given as a hostage by his father and who had been educated at the English Court, was sent to Ireland in an attempted prudent move to restore the lawful Earl of Desmond to the honours of his family. The following is a description of the arrival in Kilmallock of the Parliamentary Earl, as he is sometimes called, as given in one account: “The Young Earl arrived at Kilmallock on a Saturday evening and was received with unbounded enthusiasm. At the entry of the town a vast concourse was gathered, the streets were crowded, the windows filled with eager faces, the very house tops were crowded with people anxious to catch even a passing glimpse of the representative of a line of mighty chieftains. That night the Earl was to dine with Sir John Thornton, commander of the Garrison, and so great was the number that an escort of soldiers was required to force a passage through the crowd.

Next day was Sunday; the Earl went to the Protestant service at the Church of SS Peter and Paul; all the way thither the people endeavoured by words and looks to persuade him not to go. He went, however, not understanding what was meant by their hints; but, on coming back again, a vast change had taken place in the feelings of the concourse. The favourite of yesterday was mocked, cursed, spit upon. The town had to be cleared of strangers; there was no longer any respect shown to the heir of the Desmonds; no one took the slightest notice of him, and he shortly after-
wards returned to England where he died in the following year."

In the Cromwellian Wars Kilmallock did not occupy a prominent place and was held by the Irish forces for several years under Lords Mountgarret and Purcell. In 1643, it was unsuccessfully besieged by Lord Inchiquin, and two years later, Lord Castlehaven, commander-in-chief of the Irish Confederate army, deposited all his army and stores in the castle, a fifteenth century tower house erected, probably, on the site of an earlier fort. On the arrival of Ireton, however, the town surrendered without resistance, after which the walls were dismantled by order of Cromwell and the castle used as a hospital. Later the walls were repaired by the Corporation and stood intact until their partial destruction by the Duke of Berwick in the Williamite Wars of 1690-91, when Kilmallock was held by a Jacobite garrison.

The town formerly gave the title of Viscount to a branch of the Sarsfield family by whom it was forfeited in consequence of their adherence to James II in 1689-91, and the medieval town-walls were pierced by five gates of which one Blossom’s Gate (south) survives to-day. The other gates John’s (north-west), Friars’ (north), Water Gate (north-east) and Ivy Gate (south-west) have disappeared but their sites are known.

At present the chief relics of Kilmallock’s medieval glory are the ruins of the Church of SS Peter and Paul and the fine Dominican Friary; the castle in the centre of the town, built as a citadel to guard the valley of the Loobagh; and the surviving portions of the old town walls together with Blossom’s Gate on the Charleville road. At one time there were several castellated mansions inhabited by wealthy families, all built of hewn stone and communicated by gateways with the streets. The last two of these to be preserved were owned respectively by the Earl of Buckinghamshire and the family of Godsell. Among the property owners of the town were the Earls of Kenmare and Buckinghamshire, together with Sir Leonard Holmes and members of the Maunsell and Godsell families.

The remains of at least two of these mansions are still extant in Sarsfield Street. The site of one, at present occupied by a cinema, was known as Sarsfield’s House and it is said that Patrick Sarsfield stayed there on his way to Limerick. This may well have been, but it is probably more accurate to say that the mansion was owned by one of the family who bore the title Viscount Kilmallock. The side-walls built of fine limestone blocks still stand, showing three chimneys and one fine mantelpiece formed by a limestone slab resting on supports high up in the left wall. More is left of the outline of the second mansion including the end-wall, while the two chief features surviving are a Gothic archway leading to the garden and a beautiful square window devoid of glass, but with its mullions all intact. Some old prints of the town show a number of these castellated houses in the street near the citadel with the usual concourse of people, horses and dogs forming the centrepiece of the picture. But now, the facades have gone, and, to the casual traveller, the streets present a commonplace aspect with glimpses here and there of the more important ruins. Those who know and love Kilmallock know also that, throughout the town and its environs, are many tangeable records in stone verifying the records in print which show that, among the smaller cities of Ireland, the town ranks high as a centre of historical importance in late medieval times.

Reference is made to many of these residential castles or mansions in the Cromwellian Surveys. In 1583 the Earl of Desmond held a tenement named Lauery near the citadel which was itself granted to the Billingsly family in 1588 and to the Browns.
of Hospital in 1604. Reference is made to mansions held by James Fox in 1655, one of which had a room in each of the three stories. The Meade (or Miagh) family, who appear to have been settled in County Limerick since 1296, had three mansions in the town in Cromwell’s time. That of Laurence Meade was to the west of the street with the town wall to its east, while David Meade had a house with two lower rooms, two middle rooms and one upper room, its garden being bounded on the east by the town wall. In the High Street, George Meade’s mansion was on the east side and bounded by the friars’ lands to the north.

Colonel Randall Clayton was confirmed by Act of Settlement in a castle fronting the street on the west side and he was also confirmed, by the same Act of Charles II, in the Vicar’s Castle in Limerick Street with the garden behind it. Other castles were held by James Lewis, James Bluett, Laurence Wall, Captain Stannard and Francis Creagh, and there is a reference, in that Survey of 1655, to Water Gate Castle with its garden to the north of the gate, and to Proppinge, where a small butt of an old castle stood north of the river. Lastly the site of Castle Coote is marked near the present Ash Hill Towers.

Courtinaruddery, or the Knight’s Castle, near Kilmallock, was probably built by the first White Knight in the 14th century. It was the property of John Og FitzGibbon who held the title up to his death in 1569, and after the attainder of John Og was granted to the Burght family in 1579. In 1590 a grant is recorded in favour of Edmund FitzGibbon, who was then White Knight, of the site of this castle with its water-mill “surrounded with a stone wall, the Court being ruineous.” In 1677 Maurice O’Hurley of Knocklong is stated to have settled this ruined castle with its water-mill and garden, and in 1655 Courtinaruddery is described as an old ruineous castle and waste mill outside the town walls, having the river to the west and the Abbeylands to the south. It has long ceased to exist but its site was identified by John O’Donovan with some mounds in the demesne of Mount Coote.

The Church of SS Peter and Paul was both collegiate and parochial and its chancel was used for Church of Ireland services until a generation ago. It has now been replaced as a place of worship by a simple though attractive brick church, with a squat Norman-style tower with weathercock, built some distance away on the other side of the river. The old church is more ancient than the nearby Dominican Friary, and lies within the area of the medieval town walls. It stands in a spacious burial-ground near the river and part of the boundary walls consist of portions of the old fortifications of which other portions are clearly visible at the backs of some of the nearby houses. A great portion of this ruined church still stands, but it is over-shadowed by the lovely ruin of the Friary just across the river and outside the walls. The church consists of a chancel, nave, aisles and a pseudo south-transept. The nave is separated from the aisles by four lofty pointed arches springing from pillars four feet square.

In the Church of SS Peter and Paul are many old, and sometimes splendid tombs and headstones dating from the seventeenth to the present century, and representing several of the older names associated with the town. Included are those of the Fitz-Gerald, Coote, and Verdon families, and the tomb with the coat of arms of the Blakeney family, one of whom became famous for his defence of Stirling Castle in Scotland and of Port St. Philip in Minorca. [Major-General William Blakeney was born at Mount Blakeney between Charleville and Kilmallock, which latter borough he represented for many years in Parliament. In the year 1746 he defended Stirling
Castle against Prince Charles at the age of 76 years and, ten years later, defended Minorca against the French. He then became the popular hero of the day in England, and was created Baron Blakeney of Castle Blakeney and a Knight of the Bath by George II. Having died in 1761 in his 91st year, he was interred with great ceremony in Westminster Abbey, but the family tomb is in Kilmallock. There is also the vault of Thomas Newe, and a large one containing the remains of twenty-one members of the Hussey family, including a relation from Cardiganshire in Wales, while Godfrey, James and Robert Lowe Holmes of Maiden Hall, Co. Limerick, are represented by headstones and a vault. In 1850 Eyre Evans erected a mausoleum there for the remains of his daughter, the Honourable Caroline Louise Grant, and for the family of Evans of Ash Hill Towers, Kilmallock, and of Miltown Castle, Co. Cork. This was restored in 1933 by the Lady Nina Geraldine Knowles, a granddaughter of the late Major George Thomas Evans of Ash Hill Towers.

Tombs or memorials also exist, in the body of the Church, to the families of Fleming, Shinkwin, Hoare, McNamara, Webb, Clery, Thomas Pollard, and to the Meade family of Bulgarden Hall, County Limerick. Some of the stonework bears carvings of elegant coats of arms and most of the vaults and tombs are in reasonably good repair; the writing, sometimes in Latin, is often easily decipherable.

Incorporated into the church ruins is the apparently early but altered and truncated round tower in the north-west corner of the building of which the walls are five feet thick and about fifty feet high. At the farther angle of the west wall is a circular stairs leading to the battlements with which the outer walls were surmounted.

On the opposite side of the river and situate in a large tract of meadow land is the fine ruin of the Dominican Friary always referred to locally as the "Abbey of Kilmallock", and which was founded in 1291. Some of the Dominican Houses in Ireland owe their foundations to Anglo-Norman Lords, more were the work of Irish patrons, while others, of which Kilmallock is one, were built solely on the friars' own initiative. The Firary of St. Saviour at Kilmallock is to-day one of the best preserved of Dominican medieval buildings, the walls of both church and convent still standing, and the graceful tower of slender Franciscan type, now partly shattered, is a favourite meeting place for rooks and jackdaws which circle continuously around it.

When the Dominicans came to Kilmallock they acquired a plot of land from John Bluett one of the burgesses of the town, and immediately built some temporary houses for themselves. The bishop of the diocese, being the feudal lord of Kilmallock, gave orders to have the friars ejected as they had not got his permission. Being unwilling to leave, they were forceably ejected and their houses pulled down. The friars complained to the King and the matter was sent for trial by a jury of twelve men of Kilmallock and that neighbourhood. The inquisition took place at Cashel, on the 31st December 1291, on the question whether the land owed any rent or services to the lord of the fee or to any other person. The jury vindicated the Dominicans' right to the Kilmallock property, 'who upon their oath say that the friars had by grant of the kind, so far as he could grant, purchased in Kilmallock of John Bluett, senior burgess of that ville, a piece of land; that having remained in seisin of it for seven weeks they were by order of Gerald, bishop of Limerick ejected therefrom and their houses levelled by Raymond the dean, Robert Blund, Archdeacon, and Simon FitzJohn, Canon of Limerick. They further say that the piece of land owes no rent or service to the bishop as lord of the fee, and that the residence there of the
friars would not tend to the prejudice of the king, the lord of the fee or any other person."

Accordingly the friars were confirmed in the possession of the meadow and they eventually built the magnificent church and Friary which still stands there in ruins separated from the old town by some surviving fragments of the wall and by the river itself. During the subsequent centuries of its existence there are few records relating to the house, but it would appear that, in 1340, a provincial chapter was held there and, as already stated, after the dissolution of the monasteries, it was granted to the corporation and may have been restored in the latter years of the reign of James I. In the reign of Charles II the Prior was a member of the Burgate family and the "Abbey" was probably finally abandoned about the year 1790. Close to the river was the private residence of the Prior which, after the Reformation, became the home of several sovereigns of the borough.

The most interesting portion of this ruin is the choir, and its special glory is the east window which consists of five slender lancets included under a pointed arch. The south wall is pierced by six double lancets, splaying so much within that but a few inches separate one from the other; the central mullions have disappeared except so much as to show that they once existed. The south window of the later transept is also a lovely work of art in Gothic tracery. Within the ruin are two noteworthy tombs. The first is the canopied tomb-niche and is, in all likelihood, the last resting-place of Maurice FitzGerald, the first of the White Knights, who died in 1357. Not far off is the grave of his descendant, Edmund, the last but one of the White Knights, who died in 1608. In the choir is the Burgate inscription commemorating those kinsmen who perished in 1642 at the Battle of Liscarroll.

In a sixteenth century map of County Limerick many of the ancient place-names and territories are set out, showing at a glance the important centres and divisions of the county towards the end of the feudal age. The bishop's lands of Emly are shown as well as the territories belonging to the Earl of Kildare, the Earl of Desmond, the Knights of the Valley or the Glen around Glin and Newcastle West (formerly called the Black Knights), and lastly, the lands of the White Knights in that now peaceful corner of East Limerick where the hills and valleys blend gently with the fertile plains of the Golden Vein.

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