THE CROMWELLIAN SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTY OF LIMERICK.

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CONCLUSION.

Macaulay, in his *History of England*, states that:

"In Ireland, during the reign of Charles II, existed feuds, compared with which, the hottest animosities of English politicians were lukewarm. The enmity between the Irish Cavaliers and the Irish Roundheads was almost forgotten in the fiercer enmity which raged between the English and the Celtic Races. The interval between the Episcopalian and the Presbyterian seemed to vanish when compared with the interval which separated both from the Papist. During the civil troubles, the greater part of the Irish soil had been transferred from the vanquished nation to the victors. To the favour of the crown, few either of the old or the new occupants had any pretensions. The despisers and the despoiled had, for the most part, been rebels alike. The Government was soon perplexed and wearied by the conflicting claims and mutual accusations of the two incensed factions. Those colonists among whom Cromwell had portioned out the conquered territory, and whose descendants are still called Cromwellians, asserted that the aboriginal inhabitants were deadly enemies of the English nation under every dynasty, and of the Protestant religion in every form. They described and exaggerated the atrocities which had disgraced the insurrection of Ulster; they urged the king to follow up with resolution the policy of the Protector; and they were not ashamed to hint that there would never be peace in Ireland till the old Irish race should be extirpated. The Roman Catholics extenuated their offence as best they might, and expatiated in piteous language on the severity of their punishment, which, in truth, was not lenient. They implored Charles not to confound the innocent with the guilty, and reminded him that many of the guilty had atoned for their
fault by returning to their allegiance, and by defending his rights against the murderers of his father. The Court, sick of the importunities of the two parties, neither of which it had any reason to love, at length relieved itself from trouble by dictating a compromise. That system, cruel, but most complete and energetic, by which Oliver had proposed to make the Island thoroughly English, was abandoned. The Cromwellians were induced to relinquish a third part of their acquisitions. The land thus surrendered was capriciously divided among claimants whom the Government chose to favour. But great numbers who protested that they were innocent of all disloyalty, and some persons who boasted that their loyalty had been signally displayed, obtained neither restitution or compensation, and filled France and Spain with outcries against the injustice and ingratitude of the House of Stuart." (Macauley’s History of England—Vol. I, p. 92.)

The allotment of lands was vested in a Board sitting in London, who, like the Estate Commission of to-day, depended on local subordinates for laying out and partitioning the allotments. As may be imagined, this system did not give satisfaction, and complaints were many and allegations of bribery and corruption not infrequent. Sir Nicholas Crispe had adventured over £3000 for the pacification of Ireland, but only £1000 worth of land fell to his share in the County Limerick. His Petition is as follows:

The Petition of Sir Nicholas Crispe Knbt.

"Sheweth—That your petitioner having a Lott for his adventure in the barony of Connello in Ireland, those that had share in the same barony with him (who were men of power in that ill time), being to divide the said barony into four equal parts, which was done, each fourth part to be subdivided into four equal quarters which, contrary to all justice and equity, in that quarter where your petitioner’s lott fell they divided the one half into three parts, which should have been by a cross line into equal quarters as by a character thereof under the hand of the Surveyor hereunto annexed appears. By which unequal doing, contrary to order and practise, they left your Petitioner his proportion in a Bogg and coarse land, which your petitioner cannot let for more than the Quit rent,
which is his division for £1000. "It is therefore, his most humble prayer that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to give order to the Right Honble. the Commissioners, that by the Bill now preparing are to regulate the Adventurers interests in Ireland, that there may be a view had of this indirect dealing, and that right be done the petitioner therein."

"Referred (8th December, 1664), to the Duke of Ormond and those other honourable persons who are appointed to assist his Grace in the consideration of the Bill (of Explanation) to be prepared for the Settlement of Ireland."—to report Vol. F. Record Tower, Dublin Castle, p. 266.

The worthy knight died before his petition was heard, as his widow, Dame Anne Crispe, appears as grantee under the Act of Settlement. She obtained lands in the Parishes of Rathronan, Kiliscanlan and Loughill.

When the civil war broke out in 1641, the gentry of the County Limerick threw in their lot with their fellow Catholics—or, as usually designated in the official language of the day, "Papists." There were, however, many Protestant colonies scattered throughout the county, these settlements represented the undertakers of Elizabeth’s reign and their tenants. Their castles were well garrisoned and provisioned—Courtney held a strong position at Newcastle West; Southwell and Herbert at Rathkeale; Dame Elizabeth Dowdall held Kilfinny Castle for six months against the forces of the Confederates. She states that she had a garrison of forty horse and one hundred foot soldiers, in her remarkable, though highly-coloured, account of this siege, which is reproduced from the original depositions in T.C.D. Library, by the Rev. J. Dowd, in his "History of the County Limerick." Dame Anne Waller, wife of Sir Hardress Waller, made a gallant defence of Castletown during her husband’s absence in England. The Earl of Kildare held Croom Castle; The Earl of Bath, Loughgur; and Dame Barbara Browne, Aney (Hospital). This lady was the daughter of John Boyle, Bishop of Cork, and married Sir John Browne, Knt., son of Sir Thomas Browne, an Englishman, who married the only daughter of the "Master of Aney," and thus got the broad lands of the Commandery of the
Knights Hospitallers of Aney. Dame Barbara's grand-daughter brought this rich inheritance into the Kenmare family by her marriage with Nicholas, second Lord Kenmare. In her deposition she gives a graphic description of the raids made on her by her neighbours—Lacy of Carrigkettle, Hurley of Knocklong, O'Brien of Duharra, and Baggot of Baggotstown, and she claims £3,800 for her losses in stock, corn, furniture, and personal effects. She finally took refuge with Dame Waller, and gives the following account of the siege of Castletown.

"She also saith, that the castle of Castletown, where she fled for refuge, was besieged on the 26th of March, 1642, by Luke Purcell of Croagh, Lieut-General; Captain John Fitzgerald, second brother of Thomas Fitzgerald of Glyn Esquire; Lieut-Col. Garrett Purcell of Curragh, and divers others to the number of two or three hundred rebels, who lay close to the castle, so that the besieged could not stir out; during which time she often heard the besiegers say that they had the king's authority for what they did. During the siege one—Thomas Hill, shoemaker, of Castletown—was killed by a shot from the besiegers, and at length, for want of water, the place was yielded up, about the 13th of May following, having been besieged five weeks and odd days; the quarter was for their lives and wearing clothes, and a few other commodities."

Dame Barbara Browne goes on to say that "she was courteously treated by Patrick Purcell, who conducted her with a sufficient convoy to Macroom where she was delivered into the hands of her nephew, Lord Castleconnell."

Sir John Dowdall married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Southwell of Rathkeale, in 1604, and settled on her the castles and lands of Kilfinny. Sir John purchased Castletown and other lands in Kenry in 1621. He died in 1623. His eldest daughter, Anne, married William Pigott, son of Sir John Pigott of Capard, Queen's County, and succeeded her mother. The Pigotts still hold the castle and lands of Kilfinny. The second daughter, Elizabeth, married Sir Hardress Waller before 1640, and got as a dowry Castletown and the other lands in Kenry. This was confirmed by a grant to her from the king, the original of which I have seen.
The following is a summary:

"Grant of 15th Charles I (1640) to Dame Elizabeth Waller wife of Sir Hardress Waller Knight second daughter of Sir John Dowdall of Kilfinny, of the manor and lands of Castletown, Cappagh, Beigh Castle, &c. Castletown created a manor to enclose 600 acres as deer park in capite at one Knight's fee £15 rest of estate at rent of £120 to the crown remainder to issue and then to each of the four sisters. Grantee to keep for the service of the crown three well armed horsemen and twelve footmen. To settle on the estate at least 21 English freeholders and not to have more Irish tenants on a longer tenure than 21 years.

The large grants of land which Sir Hardress Waller received for his services were excluded by the Act of Settlement, and he himself was outlawed, but his wife's property was not interfered with, and after some years he was allowed to return to Castletown.

The following County Limerick gentlemen held commissions in the Confederate army:

Colonel Lord Burke of Castleconnell.
Colonel Lord Burke of Brittas.
Lieut.-General Patrick Purcell of Ballycullane.
Colonel Garret Purcell of Curragh.
Colonel John Baggot of Baggotstown.
Colonel Pierce Walsh of Abbeyowney.
Captain John Fitzgerald of Glyn.
Captain Thomas Hurley of Knocklong.
Captain Murtoagh O'Brian of Duharra.
Captain Thomas McGibbon of Mahoonagh.
Captain Maurice Fitzgerald of Ballyteige.
Captain Edward Fitzgerald of Caherass.
Captain Stevenson of Dunmoylan.
Colonel Richard Stevenson (High Sheriff of County Limerick).
Captain John Roche of Fanningstown.
Captain Eddy Lacy of Bruree.
Captain John Lacy of Athlacca.
Captain Ed. O'Shee of Ballyallen.
Captain Richard Fitzgerald of Ballymartin.
Captain P. Purcell of Pallaskenry.
Captain Garret Fitzgerald of Herbertstown.
Captain Teige O'Brien.
Captain David Power.
Captain Richard Cullum.
George Thornton of Dunnaman.
Nicholas Lillis of Dysert.
Leogh of Tullavine.
Garret Dunlea of Dunnamane.
Ed. Dunlea of Oolagh.
Edward Lacy of Kilmacanearla.
Lacy of Carrigkettle.
M. O'Brien of Carrigogunnel.
John Sheahan of Rathmore.
Maurice Casey of Rathcannon.

The following names also appear:—Burkes, O'Briens, Barrys, Ryans, O'Gradys, Dundons, Creaghs, Naish, Sheehy, White, Hurley, Rawley, Clancy, Dwyer, Kirby, Fitzgibbon, O'Hea, Hynes, etc.

Further confiscations took place after the Treaty of Limerick, and William of Orange Nassau gave the lands granted to the Duke of York (James II) to his favourites, both male and female. On the king's death, Parliament passed an Act of Resumption, and all these lands were sold by public auction in Dublin, in 1703. This is known as the Chichester House Sales. The documents connected with these sales are preserved in the Public Record Office, Dublin.

The Cromwellian Settlement appeared a permanent one, as the years passed the new owners of the soil of our county waxed powerful and wealthy, and by the industry of their tenants the productiveness of the land increased and rents went up. However, by the Repeal of the Corn Laws and the great famine of 1847, a crisis came to many landlords; their estates became bankrupt and interest on mortgages could not be met. Their estates were compulsorily sold under the Encumbered Estates Act at prices ranging from seven to twelve years' purchase. The
Landed Estates Court Act followed and a new class of landlord appeared, generally successful professional and business men, who brought the commercial spirit into their dealings with their tenants. They were not an improvement on those whom they succeeded, who came to be known as "Th' ould stock," to distinguish them from the new comers. Rack-renting and evictions brought forth the land agitation, which, in our own time, produced Mr. Gladstone's remedial legislation and culminated in the recent Land Purchase Acts, which have transferred the ownership of the land from the landlords to the occupiers. The landless gentry retain their demesnes, and their former tenants—the men with the old Norman and Celtic names—get possession of the land which their forefathers fought for and lost. A peaceful revolution—and let us hope a permanent one, and that it will bring us peace, concord and toleration, so that all may unite in helping to promote our country's prosperity; by working and utilising to the utmost the "unearned increment" of her fertile soil; by reviving and encouraging home industries, and thus stimulating local trade, so that we may see at no distant time a successful development of our natural resources—a nation's true wealth—now lying dormant and unproductive.