CARN-FERADÁI Ó (CARNARY)
NOW KNOWN AS
CAHERNARRY.

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The prominent eminence about three miles south of the City of Limerick, known now as Cahernarry, was an important landmark in ancient history and known as *Carn-Feradáig*—"the Carn of Feradach, son of Rochorb, son of Gollan, son of Conmael, son of Heber, that by Tighernmas mac Follach fell there." (1) The remains of this carn may still be seen on the summit. It was about sixty feet in diameter. In the Book of Leccan we read that—"According to rule, until his death, he brandished his arms, which are under the Duma of the beautiful Carn. Feradach was killed in the battle of Carn-Feradáig, and this here is Feradach's Fort." (2)

Its identity with Cahernarry had escaped the notice of all the modern historians who had dealt with the topography of Munster—most of whom had placed it in the south of the County Limerick—until recently, when Father Begley, in his History of the Diocese of Limerick, in dealing with the incidents in the life of St. Patrick, relating to Limerick, called attention to the pronunciation of the Irish words and shewed that the correct pronunciation was Carnary, or Carnarrie, by which name the hill was known up to comparatively recent times, and that Cahernarry is a corruption. I find that in the "Indenture of Perambulation," defining the extent of the Liberties of Limerick added to the city by the Charter of James I., 1609, "Carnarrie" is mentioned as a boundary. (3) In the Down Survey Map, 1655, the Carn is marked Carnarry which is further evidence of the ancient name having been derived from a Carn, and not a Caher, and so called in olden times.

(1) Silva Gadelica, p. 543.
(2) O'Curry. "Manners and Customs," vol. 1, cccxl.
(3) Lenihan's History of Limerick, p. 135.
In the Tripartite life of St. Patrick, W. M. Hennessy’s translation (4), we read that having visited Kilteely and Pallasgrean “He went after this to Hy-Fidhgente, where Lonan (4a), son of Mac Eirc, provided a banquet for him.” The banquet was on “Mullach Cae over against Carn Feradhaigh on the south” on this the Revd. J. Begley remarks: (5)

The situation of Knockea is to be determined from the position of Carn-Feradhaigh, or Feradhaigh’s sepulchral mound, which was a well known historical spot and the scene of many a battle, as our annalists abundantly testify. There are many conjectures as to the locality where it lay. The most reliable of our antiquarians are of opinion that it was situated on the south-east of the county. But in the compound word Carn-Feradhaigh the F is silent (6) and would be pronounced Carnary, or Carnarrie, forms that occur in official documents down to the Cromwellian confiscations when it is written Carnarrie and Cahernary. The latter form of the word has prevailed to our own time and obscured the origin of the name. Cahernary, as it is now written, is a well known hill and parish about three miles south-east of the city. On its summit are the remains of a large heap of stones evidently a vestige of the ancient Carn that was raised over the grave of Feradhaigh. In the same parish, and about half a mile to the south is the hill of Knockea answering exactly to the description given in the Tripartite. (7)

I think this explanation is very strong evidence in favour of establishing the correct situation of Carn-Feradaig. Mr. Hennessy, in his notes to the passage in the Tripartite life, by adopting O’Donovan’s location of Carn-Feradaig given in the “Four Masters” (A.M. 3656)—to which we will refer later on—as Seefin Mountain, south of Killfinane, thinks Mullach Cae may possibly be a mountain called Knockea, south of Ardpatrick parish, County Limerick. This would be north of the Carn instead of south, and this location, taken with the context in the narrative, is quite untenable. (8) St. Patrick’s previous resting places

(4a) Dr. W. Stokes’ translation has this Lomman.
(5) History of the Diocease of Limerick, p. 29.
(6) O’Donovan’s Irish Grammar, pp 50 and 56.
(7) The townland of Knockea, as shown on the map, is not of great extent, but the entire of this hill is known as “Knockea,” as it was, no doubt, in ancient times. The R. C. Church, which is in Drombanny townland, is called Knockea church, and the Caher, probably the ancient stronghold of Lonan, is in Tobarquin.
(8) See Dr. Healy’s Life of St. Patrick, p. 427, et seq. Patrick, after leaving Pallasgrean, would appear to have gone due west, and then north to have reached Knockea, probably passing by Lough Gur. There is a Patrickswell close to this route at Knockderrc, between Lough Gur and Knockainey. To pass Knockainey would be somewhat of a detour. We cannot follow Dr. Healy as to the Patrickswell south-east of Donoughmore, which he substitutes for Terryglass. The only place of the name within a reasonable distance that we know of is Patrickswell village, about six miles south-west of Donoughmore, excepting the well near the old church.
had been Kilteely and Pallasgreen, near Limerick, and he was travelling north from Cashel. It was at this stage of his journey he is said to have founded Mungret—close to Limerick—for Nessan; and by carrying the inquiry further so as to identify some of the other places mentioned, this portion of the Tripartite life will be found to reveal, in our opinion, a very clear and connected narrative, which can now, after the lapse of centuries, be followed with interest by studying the place names around Limerick.

After referring to the incidents connected with the baptism and ordination of Nessan, of Mungret, at Knockea, the Tripartite life continues:

The men of North Munster to the North of Luimneach, went in fleets of boats to meet Patrick southwards as far as Domhnach-mor of Magh-Aine, i.e. Dun-Nocfene, then and now so called, and he baptised them in Tir glass to the south-east of it. He afterwards went to Finine to the north-west of Domhnach-mor, a hill, from which he could see the country to the north of Luimnech, when he gave a blessing to the men of North Munster, who had gone with a profusion of gifts to meet Patrick.

Cairthend, son of Blat, the senior of the Clan-Toirdhelbhaigh (Turlough) believed in the Lord, and Patrick baptised him at Sangul (Singland) . . . . Patrick himself did not go into the country, but he saw from him about Luimnech to the west and to the north, and he blessed the district and its islands.

By referring to the map the reader can follow the narrative without difficulty. The Domhnach-mor of Magh Aine is the site of the present old church of Donoughmore. Magh Aine (the plain of the goddess Aine) from which Knockaney is so named, is of the great central plain of the county Limerick, and on a line north-west from Knockaney this portion may be said to extend to the Shannon, with the elevated ground around Donoughmore as its north-east boundary. It was as far south as Donoughmore the men of North Munster travelled to meet Patrick after crossing the Shannon in their boats. This place was also called Dun noc-fene, which might mean the “fort of the white hill” from sin or sionn white. (9) At the present day the adjoining extensive townland is called Rathbane, which means white fort, while another adjoining townland is Drombanny, which, I should say, means white ridge, most probably survivals in a different form of the more ancient names. (10)

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(9) Joyce, 2nd series, p. 264.
(10) The adjoining townland, Rathurd, is the site of Rath-arda-Suird, the fort of Sords height, A.F.M.—A.M. 3501.
MAP OF PORTION OF THE CO. LIMERICK.

SINGLE LINES DENOTE TOWNLAND BOUNDARIES.
The North Munster men are said to have been baptised in Tirglass to the south-east of Domhnach-mor. Mr. Hennessy and other writers, without any regard to its geographical position or the proper connection of the narrative, identify this with Terryglass on Lough Derg in North Tipperary, about thirty miles north of Donoughmore. However, Canon O'Hanlon, in his life of St. Patrick, states that—"this is by no means certain, and Terryglass may be sought for within the boundaries of the County Limerick." Tir glass would mean the territory or land at the stream (11) and at present there is a townland called Garryglass (garden at the stream) alongside the Groody River, in the Parish of Donoughmore, and to the east of Domhnach-mor old church (12). This most probably was a portion of the original Tirglass (the remains of an ancient church exist there to this day), and the Groody River was the stream of their baptism. "He afterwards went to Finine to the north-west of Domhnach-mor." The Latin version has it Fintine Juxta Domhnach-mor. There is a doubt as to this locality. O'Donovan has it Fintone (O'Reilly's Dictionary), and suggests that it may be the hill of Cahirnarry. Certainly, if the Saint's object was to see the country "to the north and west of Limerick, and the Shannon," his desire would have been gratified. Before him stretched that noble river coursing to the sea, and dying away in a faint streak close to the estuary of the Fergus, with the Clare hills behind, continuing north and east to where the Shannon divides them from the mountains of Owney and Arra in Tipperary. To the west the view extended over the great plain of the county Limerick on to Slieve Luachair. However, as Cahirnarry has already been mentioned as Carn Feradaig it cannot have been Finine or Fintine; but the hill of Newcastle would afford an equally fine prospect, it is close to and adjoins Singland, where next we hear of St. Patrick as baptising the Chief of the Clan Turlough. The territory of this sept in the County Clare was close to Limerick; it was bounded on the north by O'Gonnelloe, on the east, south and south-west by the Shannon, on the west by Glenomra. (13) Finine, too, I should say, was the ancient name

(12) The Irish Tripartite life states to the south-east, the bearings are not mentioned in the Latin Tripartite.—See O'Hanlon's life, p. 706.
(13) Poems of O'Dubhagain and O'Huidhrin O'Donovan Ixxxii N 373.
of one of the hills around Domhnach-mor (14), for as is stated in the Tri-
partite life "Patrick, himself" (at this time) "did not go into the
country, but he saw from him about Luimnech to the west and to the
north."

It will thus be seen that the places mentioned in this ancient life
in connection with St. Patrick's visit to Limerick may be identified,
making due allowance for the changes brought about by time, as in
close proximity to Carn-Feradaig, and that this portion of the
narrative appears to be well connected and intelligible to those
acquainted with the district. The traditions connected with his work
in the south, however, are comparatively scanty. (15)

The events related in the life of St. Senan as to the blessing of the
Corco Baiscenn, or the tribes of West Clare, and their baptism from their
boats, and within view of Scattery Island, could only have taken place
from Knockpatrick, near Loughbill, and appears to be an overlapping
of events, but it would be entirely outside the scope of these notes to
deal with this incident, or to travel so far from Carn Feradaig.

Mr. T. J. Westropp, in his notes on the Ancient Castles of the
County Limerick (16) under the records of Cahernarry, returns it from
the Burke estates rental 1540 as "Carn-Fheardhaigh." Rev. J Begley
refers to this in the notes and corrections at the end of his history. (17)

We hope now to shew that from the Annals also, and other ancient
records, it is reasonable to infer that Carn Feradaig was situated in the
north of the County Limerick, and not far from the Shannon.

The first mention of Carn Feradaig in the Annals of the Four
Masters is:

A. M. 3656. This was the seventeenth year above three score of Tighearmmas
as King over Ireland. It was by him the following battles were gained over the
race of Emhearr, and others of the Irish and foreigners besides.

The battle of Carn Feradaigh, in which fell Fearadhach, son of Rochorb, son of
Gollan, from whom Carn Feradaigh is called.

(14) In the Down Survey Map there is a townland south of Garryglass marked
Ardmore, quite close to Donoughmore old church.
(15) See Prof. Bury's life of St. Patrick, p. 163.
(17) The doubt about the names still appears to cling, as, since these publications
appeared, we have read notes in the Journal of the Cork Historical Society adhering
to the old location of Carn Feradaig, and suggesting another derivation for Cahernarry.
O'Donovan in a note explains:—Feanadhach's Carn or sepulchral heap. This is referred to in the Book of Leicar, fol. 204, as on the southern boundary of the territory of Clu-Maile. It was probably the ancient name of Seein, in the barony of Coshlea, in the south of the County Limerick.

In his supplement to O'Reilly's Dictionary, under "Marsh," he gives the quotation in full:—"f. i, n uaim Chomanae Chair; 5. Clu-Maile o mulla Caille co bofhna m eair eagar o Chaim-raemnaeis aer oth a scain abhaio bo thairg co eile anuaid co rochmhamaisi: eagar le taif Mairgi anaith co teumneach."

Under "Carn Raemnaeis" he gives above translated, Cormac Cas's portion in Clu Maile extended from the summit of the mountain Claire to the gap of Bearn tri g-Carbad and from Carn Feradaigh and Ceann Abhrat directly northwards to Fochair Maighe (18) and by the east side of the Maigue northwards to Limerick."

According to O'Donovan, the name teumneach, though now generally accepted as the name of the City of Limerick, was anciently applied to the lower Shannon only (19) and therefore the above translation should read: "by the east side of the Maigue northwards to the Shannon," which defines the northern boundary of the territory.

These definitions of the boundaries of Cormac Cas's territory appear somewhat involved, as a reference to the skeleton map of the County Limerick under will explain. By taking "from Mullach Claire to
Barna tri g-Carbad" (the pass of the three chariots) as the breadth from south-east to south-west, the only gap in the south-west, is that supposed to be Barna Derg, which O'Donovan must have taken to be the gap meant—and as Carn Feradaig is mentioned with Ceann Abhrat, I suppose it was for this reason that O'Donovan identified the Carn as on Seefin or Carron Mountains. In this way all the landmarks would be in the south of the county, and there would be no north-eastern landmark or eastern boundary defining the territory of Cormac Cas.

By taking Mullach Claire (now Duntryleague Hill) (20) and Barna tri g-Carbad as defining the eastern boundary of the territory, with the latter on the north-east (see map) then, the pass being at the Carn (21) defines the Carn, and the gap must be that between Carrig Martin and Cahernarry, through which the road from Lough Gur to Limerick now passes (see large scale map). Carrig Martin—a portion of "Mullach Cae"—rises abruptly from the road on the one side to about 300 feet, while Cahernarry rises with an easier gradient to about the same height on the other side. (22)

The other boundary lines, i.e. from Ceann Abhrat (in the mountain range to the south of the County Limerick) (23) northwards to the banks of the Maigue and by the east side of the Maigue to the Shannon appear sufficiently clear and would describe a territory fairly well defined, the eastern boundary of which would nearly correspond with the eastern boundary of the present Diocese of Limerick; and bounded on the west by the Maigue, and in length from Ceann Abhrat to the Shannon.

It is the adoption of O'Donovan's location of Carn-Feradaig that has led to so much confusion in the notes of our ancient annals and histories up to recent times. Hennessy, in the Index to Chronicon Scotorum, and also O'Brien (24) state that Carn-Feradhaigh is now Knockainy Hill, Co. Limerick, and Dr. Todd repeats the statement. (25) This shows that a doubt existed as to O'Donovan's explanation.

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(21) See note infra, also Onomasticon Gaelicum, p. 98.
(22) There is no gap or pass near Knockainy Hill, which Dr. O'Brien suggested as the site of Carn Feradaig. The letter K on smaller map denotes Knockainy Hill.
(23) See Journal N. M. A. S., vol. i, p. 31, Cenn Febrhat.
(24) Vallauncey Collect: p. 432.
The next mention of the Carn in the A.F.M. is A.D. 622. "The battle of Carn-Feradhaigh was gained by Failte Flann over the Connaughtmen." It is related that "the King of Connaught fled and that six of his chieftains were killed at Ath-cuma-an-tseisir (the Ford of the slaughtering of the six)."

In ancient times Clare County formed part of Connaught (26). It would appear from the reading of most of the annals that there was a kind of neutral zone, probably in part swampy, between Carn Feradaig and the Shannon, and the frontier strongholds of Munster here, appear to have been about Rathbane, Rathurd, Knockeal, etc. The Dalkeassians refer to Connaught as north of the Carn, and to this day the parish north of Carn-Feradaigh in the County Limerick is portion of the Killaloe Diocese, which corresponds to a great extent with the ancient division of Thomond. It is clear that this battle was fought and won near the Shannon, and the slaughter at the Ford would lead to this conclusion.

A.D. 710. A.F.M. The battle at Carn-Feradhaigh in which Cormac, son of Finghin, King of Munster, was slain.
A.D. 735. A.F.M. The battle of Carn-Feradhaigh in which Torcan Finchadh was slain.

This completes the references to be found in the A.F.M. "The slaughter of the foreigners," A.D. 836, refers to an invasion of the South of Ireland by Norsemen; which is more fully described in the "War of the Gaedhil and the Gaill." (27) It mentions that they plundered, amongst other places, Cork, Scellig Michael, Innisfallen, Kenmare, and the greater part of the South of Ireland, "but the men of middle Munster gave them battle and their slaughter was completed at Ardferadhaigh." This, Dr. Todd notes, reads: "Carn-Feradaigh," in Michael Cleary's MSS. and in the A.F.M., but that the Book of Leinster has Aọr-Ferá (Ardfort), and he had previously explained that the Book of Leinster was an older text and orthography than the other MSS. When we consider that these sea rovers had been engaged plundering along the coast-line of Cork and Kerry, it is natural to suppose that they should

(27) p. lix., p. 17.
have been met and defeated near the coast at Ardsfert. As the Norsemen occupied Limerick at this time, it is possible that a battle may have been fought at Carn-Feradaig also. The A.F.M. record a victory at Carn Feradaig and also at “Fearta,” in the same year.

Later on the Carn is again referred to (28), when Brian Boru is reproaching his brother Mahon, for having made peace with the foreigners, he reminds him how his ancestors “never yielded to the foe,” and “treated with contempt the three battalions of Connaught and pursued them in their retreat from Carn-Feradaich to Ath Lucait.” (29) The same mistake as to locality is made in the note to this record “pursuing them in their retreat” would not mean to the Dalcassians (as Todd states), “covering the County Limerick” (in which they were established), “and the greater part of Clare,” but clearly penetrating from North Munster in those days into Connaught, as far as Ath Lucait after their victory at Carn-Feradaig.

One of the tales in Silva Gadelica (p. 373), “The death of Crimthann” (Curson), throws much light on the position of Carn-Feradaig and the importance as a landmark which it derived from its situation. Eochaidh Muighmedoin was King of Ireland, he had a wife Mongfhionn (fair tresses) sister of Crimthann King of Munster. She bore him four sons, Brian, Fiachra, Aillill, and Fergus; by his second wife, Carinna, daughter of the King of Britain, he had one son, Niall (of the nine hostages). On the death of Eochaidh, A.D. 345, Crimthann succeeded to the throne of Ireland at Tara. During his absence in Scotland, Mongfhionn’s sons laid forcible hands on his domain. On his return he proceeded to expel them, and mustered a great force against them in Connaught. It was there that Mongfhionn, with a desire to secure the throne for her son Brian, conceived the idea of poisoning Crimthann; and, on the Moy in Tyrrawley, she invited all to a feast, ostensibly to make peace between them, Crimthann partook of the poisoned cup, but forced Mongfhionn to drink of it before him. Mongfhionn died on the Moy, and Crimthann, travelling south, “until he gained slibh suide in righ, or the mountain of the King’s sitting” (on Cratloe hills), “and there he died.” Niall of the Nine Hostages became Ard-righ, and Brian acquired the

(29) Now Lochid bridge in the north of the barony of Inchiquin, parish of Kilkeedy, County Clare.
sovereignty of Connaught, "while Fiachra took all from Carn-Feradaig, or Feradach's cairn, to Magh Muiramha." This would represent all Clare and part of Galway, "hence between the two was a vicing and a great jealousy, so much so, that a war sprang up among them." Then the tale relates the several battles between the Clan Brian and the Clan Fiachra, and the death of Brian, and subsequently of Fiachra after he had invaded Munster as far as Kenry in the north-west. After Fiachra's death the Munster men returned from the far west, where they had been driven, and then between the two races, Eochy's and Crimthann's, "there subsequently was a great war, and for a lengthened space, which occasioned them (Munster) to win and to hold the soil on which at this day they still are planted (Thomond), and the matters that you have now heard make up the efficient cause of all later war between Connacht and Munster, of the whole rivalry that they have carried on between them." From this tale it appears clear that all these struggles were confined to the north of the county Limerick and Clare, and that the original cause of the warfare was Fiachra's possession of the territory from "Carn Feradaig to Magh Muiramha," the greater portion of which was subsequently merged in Thomond, and is now known as the County Clare, and that Carn Feradaig was close to its southern boundary.

In our opinion the evidence gleaned from the records we were able to consult, is convincingly in favour of locating Carn Feradaig (Carnary) on the hill now known as Cahernarry, and the Rev. Father Begley is to be thanked for having directed attention to the correct pronunciation of the words, and by which it was known up to comparatively recent times, until the corruption of the name into Cahernarry obscured its ancient history. Then came the confusing notes of O'Donovan, Hennessy, Todd and others, so difficult to follow, and, by which its identity was completely lost. (30)

(30) While these notes were passing through the press we received a copy of Father Hogan's recent publication for the R.I.A., on Irish place names,—a mine of wealth to the student of Irish topography in the future (31) and for which the learned author is to be congratulated. We find a considerable space devoted to Carn Feradaig, embracing the authorities we have already referred to. Father Begley's and Mr. Westropp's discoveries were no doubt too recent to find a place in the notes.

After reciting the different authorities that go to prove that it was situated in Munster, the author appears to favour the neighbourhood of Knockany,
In modern times the hill serves to mark the close of a contest of a different character to those which were waged around it in the early years of our history, reminding us that

"Peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war."

The small tower which now stands on the summit of the hill alongside the remains of the Carn was erected in 1820 by Mr. John Howley, a prominent member of the "Independent Citizens of Limerick," to commemorate their victory over the corrupt Corporation of that day, in returning Mr. Thomas Spring Rice, brother-in-law to the Earl of Limerick, as member for the city. The history of that long and costly struggle is very fully recorded in Lenihan's History of Limerick (32) and will well repay perusal.

This monument, which may be seen in the trees at the top of the photograph (33) is a small circular tower of masonry, about 9 ft. in diameter, and about 15 feet high. On the top is fixed a rough

and suggests three townland names in that district as possible locations, Corrocnecrada, Cappanafarraha and Cahercorney, and also Lough Gur, but in none of these could the surroundings be identified in any way with the places mentioned in the Tripartite life, nor would the situation be close enough to the ancient boundary of Connaught to justify any one of them from being the site of so many struggles between the monarchs of both Kingdoms, by which Carn Feradaig eventually came to be considered as one of the landmarks of the conquered territory.

We find the notes on Beirn tri-g-Carbad are very helpful, as by Keating (159 f.) it is located at or in Carn Feradaig. "Lugaid Meann made sword land of all the tract from Beirn tri-g-Carbad in Carn Feradaig to Luchad, i.e. Bealach an Luchad and from Ath na Bóraime to Leim an Chon."

In the fourth century Lugaid Meann, the fourth in descent from Cormac Cas, wrested Clare from Connaught, and this record gives the boundary lines of the country conquered. It states that Beirn tri-g-Carbad is at or in Carn Feradaig and from this the conquered territory extended to the north of Inchiquin (see note supra), and from a ford at Bóraime (near Killaloe) to Leim an Chon (Loop Head).

It is clear these hills, Cahernarry, Knockea, Rathbane, etc., formed the frontier at this point of ancient Munster; while the Connaught tribes were protected by the Shannon with a narrow neutral zone between, and it was from Carn Feradaig the Munster men advanced into Connaught, either as invaders, or to follow the retreat of a defeated enemy.

In the Onomasticon "Cahernarry" is also suggested as a possible location for Carn Feradaig, and we think there can be very little doubt that it is the correct one.

(31) Onomasticon Goedelicum, Rev. E. Hogan, S.J.
(32) P. 440, et seq. Mr. Howley was afterwards Sir John Howley.
(33) The general elevation of the hill cannot well be judged by the photograph; that could only be seen in a very distant view. The monument is marked with a + in the illustration.
LEAGAN, or standing stone, which we may safely describe as a novelty in
finials. On a limestone panel inserted near the top is the inscription:

"In memoriam libertatis Limericensis restituta,
hunc turrem posuit Johannes Howley.
1820.
When name and frame, whence came are all forgot,
Who raised this obelisk, peace be his lot."

Mr. Howley's remains rest in the little churchyard beneath, over
which the tomb with obelisk, appearing in the photograph, has been
raised. (34) In the same little picturesque enclosure on the hillside
the tombstones record the names of many good old citizens of Limerick
and its Liberties, but unlike Feradach, Spring Rice, and John Howley,
they have not helped to make history.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool, sequestered vale of life
They kept the even tenor of their way.

(34) Of the church built in 1810 only the tower and spire remain, and they are in
a dangerous condition.