

THE PARISH OF DRUMMIN.

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SITUATION. This Parish is bounded on the north by the Parishes of Bruff and Mannisteranenagh; on the west by Ath-lacca and Bruree Parishes; on the south by the Parishes of Tankardstown, SS. Peter and Paul and on the east by the Parish of Uregar.

NAME. The name of this Parish is not of ecclesiastical origin, but derived from the name of the Townland in which the original Parish Church was erected. This place is called in the Annals of Inisfallen Dromain-I-Chleircin in one copy, and in another Droman In Clerican, Druim Ua Clercen in the Annals of the 4 Masters, and in the Chronicon Scotorum Droman O Cleircin, which names signify "the Hill or Ridge of O'Cleircin (or O'Cléireacháin)" who was one of the sub-chiefs of Hy-Cairbre Aodhbha, a territory extending from the neighbourhood of Bruree to the Shannon (See letter on Bruree Ph.).

Among the old inhabitants of the Parish of Dromain, O'Cléireacháin is still remembered to have been the ancient name, although it is now universally called contractedly Dromain.

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Of the old Church of this Parish, situated on high ground in the Glebe of Drummin South, the walls are perfect with the exception of the south west corner, which is slightly injured. It is fifty feet nine inches long by twenty feet two inches in breadth. The window on the east gable is square and is five feet four inches high by three feet ten and a half inches in width on the outside. A horizontal bar of stone runs across this window at the distance of two feet ten inches from its bottom. On the inside it (the window) is wider than on the outside and has a flat arch on its upper part. On the north side wall, at nearly equal distances from the ends of the wall and from one another, there are three square windows measuring two and a half feet by nine inches on the outside and widening on the inside. On the south wall there are two similar windows, the more westerly of which is injured on the west side. The doorway, which is placed on this south wall close to the west end, is in the pointed style; it measures five feet four inches in height by three feet three inches in width and enters the wall ten and a half inches. The walls of this Church are about twelve feet high and about two and a half feet in thickness and built of rather small stones mixed with some regular sized and large ones and cemented with lime and gravel mortar. Attached to the west end of the Church there is an additional building (called by some a Castle) the east wall of which is the western wall of the Church, from which it is entered by a pointed doorway at the north west corner of the Church (now filled up with rubbish). At its north west corner this building, which certainly appears to have been used as a dwelling place, has a square tower of the same height with the walls, i.e., about twenty six feet. The south side of this building is level with the ground and the southern part of its west side is destroyed. The portion of this side which remains is twenty four feet long including the west side of the tower. The east side projects five feet one inch beyond the north wall of the Church. The north wall measures twelve feet three inches to the tower and the north side of the tower measures eight feet five inches. There are some large stones in the western side of the building. The burial ground in which these ruins are situated is still in use.

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Trinity Well is situated in the Townland of Ballynamuddagh, a short distance from the old Church to the south west.

Maidstown Castle (Hib. Baile Ui Bhenóg) situated in the Townland of the same name, enters into the building of Mr. Coll's dwelling house. This Castle, which is square, measures thirty five feet one inch by thirty two feet outside, the walls, which are embattled being about fifty feet high and three and a half feet in thickness. The main body of the building contained three stories; the portion which contains the stair-case consists of five stories. It does not seem to be very old.

In the Annals of Inisfallen, as translated by Charles O'Connor of Belanagare, the following notice of Dromain-I-Chleircin occurs:-

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"A.D. 1088. Donall MacLochlainn, at the head of an army of the men of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, marched to destroy Conn-aught according to a Treaty made by him with Mortogh O'Brien, King of Munster, who was under a joint promise of doing the like, which he did not perform; then Donall with his forces marched to Raith-Cruachan where Roderic O'Connor submitted to him and gave him a splendid entertainment for a fortnight; then joining their numerous forces they marched into Munster and destroyed the country as far as Imleach-Iubhair (Emly, County Tipperary) Loch Gair, Brughrigh, (the Four Masters and the Chron. Scot. add here "et Dun Aichead") Dromain-I-Chleircin and Mungret; they also demolished Limerick and brought away the head of Art Uallach O'Ruairc from the hills of Fearann-Saingil" etc.

This account is also given in the Annals of the Four Masters and in the Chronicon Scotorum, but less copiously in the former. The Field Name Book of this Parish places an old Church in the Townland of Maidstown, but although I made a diligent search and enquiry about it on the very townland, I have not been able to discover it, nor could I meet with any person who knew of its existance.

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The Name Book also places Cahirnadrumin Fort in the Townland of Ballyreagh (Ballinreagh) but according to the people this is the name of a Fort (Moat) in the Townland of Drummin South near the old Church of Drummin. They generally call it contractedly the "Cathair".

The antiquities of this Parish were examined by and described by Mr. O'Keeffe.

J. O'Donovan.