

## THE PARISH OF KILLEEDY.

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**SITUATION.** This Parish is situated in the Barony of Glenquin and is bounded on the north by Monagay, on the east by those of Mahoonagh, Killohollahan and Drumcullaher, on the south by the Co. of Cork and on the west by the Co. of Kerry.

**NAME.** The name of this Parish was originally Cluain Chreadhail, the Religious Retirement, but in latter ages it has taken the name of Kill-Idé from the Virgin St. Idé, the St. Bridget of Munster who founded an Abbey here about the year 569. Gough in his foolish additions to Camden supposes that the Abbey of Cluain Chreadhail or Kill-Ida was at Castletown Mac Eniry, but in this he was misled by Archdall who had been misled by O'Halloran. All these writers supposed that the Territory of the Hy Conaill Gabhra was only a part of the present Barony of Conello, but in this they were entirely mistaken, for we have the most satisfactory evidence to prove that that Territory, in the west of which the Church of Kill-Ita is described to be, comprised not only the modern Baronies of that name, but also the entire of the Barony of Glenquin; but as I shall speak more at large on this subject when treating of the ancient Territories of which the Co. of Limerick consists, I shall adduce only one quotation from the topographical poem of O'Heerin, which will settle the question. After mentioning the Territories of O'Keeffe and Magawley he gives notice of his moving out of these Territories over Sliabh Luachra into Claonghlais in the Country of the Hy-Conello. Now what clearer evidence could be required than this? Claonghlais is in the Parish of Killeedy and in the Barony of Glenquin, and the Church of Killeedy is described in all the ancient authorities as at the foot of Sliabh Luachra.

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Ticcem tar Luachair ale  
 Imeirce is oirches d'écse  
 Gus an gClaonghlais bhfuair bhfleadhaigh  
 An chuain braonghlais bileadhaigh  
 Hui Conaill catha Múmhan  
 Toirteamhail an tiomsúghadh  
 Ratheaghlach ris nach dual dréim  
 Sluagh caithfeadhach o'gcuilén.

Let us pass over Luachair onwards  
 An emigration which is meet for the learned  
 Unto Claonglais, the cold, the festive  
 Of the green irriguous woody land.

The old Church of Killeedy at which the memory of the Virgin 77  
 Saint Ida is still held in the highest veneration, is a curious  
 remnant of antiquity, though much injured and partly remodelled.  
 It consists, as it stands at present, of nave and choir, the one  
 measuring forty seven feet three inches in length and twenty nine  
 feet two inches in breadth on the inside and the other thirty  
 seven feet by eighteen feet. The choir was modernized and used  
 as a Protestant Church till about forty years since, from which  
 period there has been no service in the Parish. Its walls are  
 in tolerable preservation and measure ten feet six inches in  
 height and two feet six inches in thickness. The choir arch is  
 in very good preservation but contains no part of the ancient  
 work. It is constructed of chiselled lime stones in the pointed  
 style and measures ten feet nine inches in width and about thir-  
 teen feet from the present level of the floor to the vertex. This  
 choir contains three modern windows; one in the middle of the  
 south wall, another opposite it in the north wall and the third  
 in the east gable, but these, not being more than a century old,  
 are not worth the attention of the antiquarian.

The nave of this Church is in the primitive Irish style and  
 in all probability a part of the original Church of St. Ida. The  
 west gable is now destroyed down to the very foundation, but  
 there are people living who saw a part of it standing and these  
 assert that it contained a doorway consisting of concentric arches  
 (like the doorway in the west gable of the Church of Clonfert in  
 the Co. Galway).

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Of the north wall of this nave only a fragment remains, which  
 is connected with the middle gable and measures eighteen feet six  
 inches in length and about nineteen feet six inches in height, but  
 nearly the entire of the south wall is standing to its original  
 height (nineteen feet six inches). It contained two beautiful  
 round-headed windows, but unfortunately one of them is disfigured  
 on the inside and outside by the unenlightened venerators of St.  
 Ida, who are in the habit of pulling out the cut stones of this  
 building to place them at the heads of the graves of their departed

friends. The window above referred to as destroyed is placed at the distance of five feet three and a half inches from the middle gable, but its dimensions cannot be determined though it is probable that it was exactly of the same size with the other, which is in better preservation. This is placed at the distance of thirty one feet ten inches from the middle gable; it is constructed of beautifully chiselled free stone and round-headed inside and outside. On the inside it is placed at the height of four feet nine inches from the present level of the ground and measures six feet two inches in height and two feet nine and a half inches in width. On the outside it is placed at the height of six feet seven inches from the level of the ground, but destroyed except four cut stones near its head.

The side walls of the nave are both of the original work; they are three feet one and a half inches in thickness and very well built of large stones cemented with excellent mortar. The middle gable is surmounted with a small modern belfry placed directly over the choir arch, both of which were erected when the choir of this building was fitted up for a Protestant Church. 79

At a short distance from the Church to the north west in the Church yard is Saint Ida's Well, now dried up. The festival of the Saint is still observed at it on the 15th of January, and the well is celebrated for curing the small pox in children and other diseases.

Immediately to the north west of the Church is situated, on a small hillock which is nearly insulated by a stream, a fragment of the Castle of Killeedy, which looks very conspicuous from every direction you approach it, though it consists of only a fragment of the south wall. Tradition ascribes its erection to King John.

About one mile to the west of this Castle in the Townland of Glenquin North is the lofty Castle of Glenquin from which the Barony has taken its name. It is now beautifully repaired by Mr. Furlong of Newcastle, the Earl of Devon's Agent. It is thirty feet by forty feet and the highest part of it is seven stories high. It is now in such a state of preservation as will preserve it for several centuries more.

At a short distance from this Castle is an old Church called Teampull na h-Inghine Baoith, i.e., the Church of St. Inneenboy, 80 the Patroness of the Dalcassians. It measures sixty seven feet in length on the outside and eighteen feet six inches in breadth on the inside. The north wall is destroyed except a fragment at the north west corner eleven feet in length and eleven feet in height. A considerable portion of it together with a white-thorn which grew out of it was blown down by a late (recent) storm.

The south wall is in tolerable preservation but all its features

are destroyed or disfigured. The doorway is on it at the distance of fifteen feet from the west gable; it is destroyed at the top on the outside, but on the inside it forms a flat arch at the top and measures six feet ten inches in height and three feet six inches in width. On the outside it is two feet two inches in width but its height cannot be ascertained. It is constructed of hammered red free stone. Besides this doorway the south wall contained two windows, which are now reduced to shapeless breaches. The east gable is nearly destroyed, but the west gable is in good preservation and clothed in ivy but it contains no feature. The walls are three feet two inches in thickness and constructed of hammered red stones cemented with lime and sand mortar.

This Church is about five centuries old, but it is probable that it occupies the site of a primitive Irish Church built by the Patroness of Killinaboy in the Co. of Clare. I here insert what the Irish writers have collected of the history of this Parish:-

CLUAIN CREADHOIL\* - Irish Calendar.

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15 January. Ite ógh ó Chluain Creadhoil Midi ainm oile dhi; asi ro fhudaing mar mhartra ar Dhia. Daol do bheadh aga diul gan fhios do neoch go haimsir imchein gur bho meaidighthior ore no banbh go ró ciaoí a leath uile (etc.) Deirdre a chead ainm. A.D. 569.

Is beg nach ndéarna sí íde dhi fén - J.O'D.

15th January. Ite, Virgin of Cluain Creadhoil. Mide was another name for her. It was she who suffered great tortures for the love of God; she permitted a daol to suck her unknown to all for a long time, until it grew to a size greater than that of a sucking pig, so that all her side was weakened, etc. Deirdre was her first name. Anno Dni. 569. (Poor Idy was an idiot - J.O'D.)

This insect called daol or Darbh Daol is well known and universally detested by the Irish people, because they believe that he feeds on human flesh in the Church yards.

Annals 4 Masters:-

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"A.D. 569. S. Ite ogh ó Cluain Creadhail decc an 15 January. As di ba hainm Mide."

"A.D. 569. St. Ite (Idy) virgin of Cluain Creadhail, died on the 15th of January. She was also called Mide."

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\* Now Kilmudy near Glenduff, Co. Limerick - E. Curry.

No! but Killeedy in the Barony of Glenquin four miles to the south of Newcastle - J.O'D.

Historical sketch of the family of Saint Ita.

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AA.SS. p.66, Col.1, Cap.1.

Vit. S. Itae, aliis Midae, Virginis et Abbat.

Ex Codice Kilkenniensi (1).

Concerning the Life and miracles of the most blessed (of her country and family) Virgin Ita (2 & 3) we wish briefly to relate some commendation (commendationem) for much with respect to her miracles lies concealed of us, because she herself always hid them; and what happened to herself alone she related to nobody; but others which we know, we omit for brevity's sake. Indeed, the most holy Virgin Ita was sprung from the most noble family in Ireland; from the seed of Feidhlim Reachtmhuir (4) by whom all Ireland was for many years ruled in monarchial power in the Town of Royal Themoria. But he had three sons, that is, Fiacha, Conn, Eochaich. Fiacha indeed, having three sons, died without (enjoying) the government, or before that his paternal kingdom descended to him. But Conn, surviving his brother, powerfully ruled in greatest felicity the whole of Ireland; and he (O woe!) was slain in battle which was engaged in the Plain of Cobha (5) by the King of the Ultonians, who was called Tybraide Tíreach (5) - Constantinus Rex Hiberniae occisus a Tipradio, Rege Ultoniae. Those (6) three sons of his brother Fiacha with great numbers of people and a great army, came from Themoria to the Country of the Mumonians and seized there on a very large territory, nobly and bravely by their swords, which is now-a-days called Nandesí (7) from which tribe the most noble Virgin S. Ita (she was sprung from royal blood) has descended; who from the font of baptism was filled with the Holy Ghost; for all admired the continence and morals of her infancy and her abstinence on days on which the servant of God ought to fast. And many miracles seemed to be performed through her when she was a little infant; and when she was able to talk and to walk she appeared prudent in her discourse and work, sweet in address (or) conversation and constant in mind, setting forth always most chaste words from her mouth, mild towards all, very generous, fearing and loving God, prohibiting always evil, persuading good; so she lived in the house of her parents during her girlish years.

Notes page 71, Col.1.

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(1). Speaks of the Book of Kilkenny from which the life published has been taken, and of the Book (codex) of the Island of All Saints in which there is another life given of the Virgin Ita. (2). Speaks of her name, etc. (3). Remarks on the origin of the various modes of writing some (Irish) names, etc. (4). Feidhlim Reachtmur. This King of most celebrated name in our histories obtained the cognomen Reachtmur .i. Legifer vel Legislator that is, Legislator, because he augmented his name and fame by the severity of Justice and Laws: as the most learned Ketten testifies in Book 2 about the Kings of Ireland:- "Fedhlimius Reachtmur"

he says "has this appellation from the excellence of the laws passed in his time throughout Ireland". He died in the ninth year of his reign according to the same (author) and the author of the Life of S. Declan and the Four Masters in the Annals, who add that he died in the year of Christ 119. (5). In campo Cobha. In the 89 copy which I use is read Cotha, but erroneously, for the Codex Insulensis (the MS. of the Island of All Saints) and others have Cabha, which is a celebrated Plain in Ulster, commonly called Mag Cobha from a King of the Ultonians who was called Typraide Tireach - C.1. The Four Masters and Keten (already) cited agree, who write that this Conn or Constantine, a most celebrated King 90 of Ireland, was slain in the year of his reign 35th and of Christ 157th by aforesaid Tipraid, King of Ulster (Ultorum) who is here called King of the Ulti (Ultonii - Ultoniorum) although the author of the life of S. Declan does not attribute to him but twenty years' reign. (6). Tres-antem illi filii fratris sui Fiacha, etc. These three sons were Ross, Aenguss and Eugene, as is found in the Life of Saint Declan, C.1 and 3; or, according to the "Menologium Genealogicum", C.16, Ross, Eugene and Artcorb. See concerning the Saints sprung from the seed of these brothers below in Appendix C.2. (7). Quae gens hodie Nan Desi vocatur, C.1. The Irish word Nan Desi signifies the same as Desiorum in Latin (illa gens.) for that tribe (was) then and is at this day called the Tribe of the Desii.

Cluain Chredhuil or Kilita - Cap.VI - XV Januarii. 91

She vows virginity publicly in a Church.

An angel shows her the place in which she might serve God.

The Virgin Ita afterwards prayed to the Lord to show her a place in which she might serve Him, and behold! the Angel of the Lord came to her, saying: leave this Country and go to that Territory which is called Hy-Conaill (9) and you shall remain in the western part of the same Territory at the foot of the Mountain of Luachra (10) and the Angel of the Lord will come to you there and 92 will show you the place in which will be your city, in which you will emigrate to the Lord. For you shall be the Patroness of the people (or tribe - gentis) of Huaconail, which tribe (quae gens) has been given to you and Saint Senan (11) by the Lord.

Hearing these words of the Angel, St. Ita proceeded with her companions to that territory, and remained at the foot of the Mountain of Luachra as he told her and the Angel of the Lord immediately came to her and pointed out to her a place in which she might serve God. And instantly the fame of the most holy Virgin was spread throughout the whole of that Territory and many Virgins came from 93 (hinc et inde) every quarter to S. Ita to serve God under her care and she piously and with a cheerful mind received them all. (Hinc inde on every side, here and there. Plin. Ainsworth's Dictionary).

Notes p.71, Col.2.

(9). Quae vocatur Hyoconail C.6. (This) is a territory situated at the southern bank of the River Shannon (and) is at this day called Conalleha. (10). Ad radices Montis Luachra, etc., Cap.6. At the foot of this Mountain in the Diocese of Limerick was the very famous Monastery of S. Ita, which is called Cluain Credhail, as our Martyrologies state at this day and Annals at the year 569. 94

Quae gens tibi & S. Senano data est, etc., C.6. S. Senan of Inis-Catahig and S. Ita are the two Patrons of the whole Territory of Huaconail, near Limerick. See the Life of St. Senan at 8th of March and our notes to it.

Page 72, Col.2.

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Note 29. Virgo Sancta Ita 18. Calend. Februarii migravit C.33.

Marian, AEnguss, the Martyrology of Tamlaet and AEnguss Auctus agree. This Virgin formerly was and always continues in great veneration among the Irish on account of her own and the excellent sanctity of her disciples. For, besides her own sister S. Fina and other holy Virgins, among the numerous holy Confessors whom she nurtured in the beginning of their youth and imbued in holy studies, were that most famous Brendan, Septennial Sailor (Septennis Navigator) of the Ocean; S. Cumin, Archbishop; and S. Pulcherius, of whom above. She is venerated not only in the Church of Cluain-Credhail and in the whole Territory of Hua-Conaill with solemn feast, but also in the Territory of the Desii in a place which is called Rosmide. She is very often spoken of in the Lives of Saints Kieran, 16th May; Pulcherius, 3rd March; Cuminaeus, 12th November; S. Cuminaeus of Connor in his Book on the Chief Saints of Ireland; S. AEnguss and S. Marian at 15th of January, speak of her also. In like manner, -- Martyrol, Suben and Tamlaeten at the same day, etc. 96

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Cap.111, Append.

Divers Eulogies and testimonies with respect to S. Ita.

Marian Gorman, S. AEnguss and other domestic and foreign festilogies place the festival of this Virgin on this 15th January, at which they recount some of her eulogies and miracles. The Martyrology of Tamlaet (says): "The sleeping (Dormitatio) of S. Ita and of the daughters of Carbreus." The Calendar of Cashel (says): "S. Ita or Mida, the daughter of Kennfoelanus, who was son of Conchorbus, who was the son of Comorburius, who was the son of Conall, who was the son of AEnguss, who was the son of Artcorb, who was the son of Fiach Suigde, who was the son of Felemius, The Law-Maker (Legis-lator). Ita, first Derthrea or Derthea, and (she) is venerated in Cluain-Chredhail in the Territory of Conallia 98

Gaura in Munster." S.AEnguss in his Festiloggy (says): "S. Ita of Cluani-Credhuil having suffered continually many tortures, having made use of much abstinence, the burning lamp of the women of Munster." The Martyrology of Donegal (says): "Saint Ita of Cluain Credhuil, otherwise called Mida; her first and proper name was Derthrea or Dorothea, continually suffered for the Lord a rare and living martyrdom, permitting her flesh to be corroded by a certain kind of a poisonous vermin (venenosi vermis) for a long space of time, so that the vermin thus by degrees, wasting and consuming her side, grew to the size of a young pig (porcini faetus). She died in the year 569." St. AEnguss in his Scholia to his Festiloggy, or another ancient Scholiast of the same (says): "St. Ita of Cluaincredhuil. Cluain-Chredhuil is the name of the place or retreat (loci sive secessus) in which is her cell in the Territory of Conallia. But she is called Ita from (her) thirst of divine love; Dorothea was her first name; her alumnus first called her Ita, that is Thirst (Sitim) and hence the name of Ita adhered to her. A vermin called Daol was wont to suck out her blood and this emaciated her side for a long time, all being ignorant (of it) until at length it (the vermin) grew to the size of a young pig (sucking pig). Whilst herself went out on a certain day, that vermin coming out of its hole (caverna) as usual thus approached; her disciples saw it and killed it. But she having returned home inquired who was the cause of the extinction of her alumnus. The sisters asking pardon, replied that they themselves killed it thinking that it was a noxious and venomous scorpion. (Says the handmaid of Christ) the rule of this Monastery after me (God so disposing it) will not be in the power of women. And turning herself to God, she says: 'I will not be content until the Lord who has taken that alumnus (or nursling) from me, gives himself to be carried and nursed (recolendum - recoilo signifies to cultivate, exercise, polish. It might be translated "attended to" in the present instance) in the form of an infant.' Then the Angel who was wont to appear to her, appearing, says to her: 'What you have asked you will receive.' Then Christ appeared to her in the form of a beautiful boy." In like manner the Mart Salisburiense at the same day, 15th January (says): "In Ireland the Festival of S. Dorothea, who was also called by another name, Sithe, who was sprung from high blood; when she was espoused to a man she fled off to a nunnery, where the devil appeared to her, and when he could not persuade her to obtain that she would relinquish her purpose, he began severely to threaten her; but she, contemning all his wiles, received the habit on the following day and having afterwards become an Abbess of holy life and many miracles, she singularly loved poverty, so that when gold or riches were offered her she threw them away with displeasure and asked for water for washing her hands because she touched earthly filth and dirt." These have been taken from the Martyrologies. In the Lives also of other Saints of our Country, there is frequent and celebrated mention of her found, and some of her encomiums and miracles are recorded in the Life of Saint



Mocheomoc (who was) both her nephew by her sister and (was) her  
 alumnus, C.2 & 3. On a certain time Beoanus, a builder (artifex)  
 erected a certain noble edifice in the Monastery of Saint Ita,  
 which being finished Saint Ita says to him: Ask a recompense.  
 (Pete pretium) Master, what do you wish for the labor of your  
 art (or trade?). He says: Promise me in Christ, holy mother,  
 what I will ask. And the Virgin promised him whatever he would  
 ask. Then Beoanus says to the Saint of God: You yourself know,  
 pious mother, that your sister, my wife, is barren and we have 106  
 no heir, therefore ask God for us that we may have a son; the  
 holy Virgin says to him: You will (habebitis jam) ere long have  
 a son, chosen before (in the presence of) God and men, which pro-  
 phesy was after a time completed. A certain cruel King by name  
 Crunnmhoel from the southern part of Hua-Conaill, much offended  
 the tribe which (gentem quae) is called Corco-bhascinn, and came  
 one time with a numerous army to plunder the people (ipsam ple-  
 bem) and made a great slaughter of the soldiers resisting him,  
 and among whom (& inter quos) Beoanus, the builder (artifex) was  
 beheaded. But his wife was as yet barren and had not an heir; 107  
 who (quae, who - the wife) came to the slaughter (ad stragem -  
 strages, means a multitude of men slain) together (cum) with her  
 (suis) people to search for the dead body (cadaver) of her hus-  
 band. Now, finding the head she could not recognise the body.  
 Which (the head) she brought with her and showed to St. Ita, her  
 sister, weeping and saying: Not this dear sister, you have pro-  
 mised, saying that he would leave a son after him, and behold,  
 my womb remains closed with barrenness, whilst (cum, when, may be  
 used) he has been slain. To whom Saint Ita says: Do not weep, 108  
 sister; God is powerful to assist us and fulfill my promise. Go  
 then and put (componere - compono signifies also to join close to-  
 gether) the head on (ad) his body. Nessa, her sister, replied to  
 St. Ita: Indeed we cannot recognise his body among the great  
 multitude of the slain, by reason of the excessive quantity of  
 blood spilt. The holy Virgin says: Call him by his name three  
 times in memory of the most Holy Trinity and he will rise and  
 come to you; you will put the head on him and he will say to you,  
 O woman, why have you called me, for I was well (happy). And 109  
 the woman did according to this instruction (praeceptum) and he,  
 strong in soul and sound and entire body, the power of God per-  
 fecting (him) says to his wife what the holy Prophetess Ita had  
 said. Then he and his wife proceeded together and came to St.  
 Ita, giving thanks and bending their knees. Blessed Ita says:  
 Do you wish to remain, friend, in this life, or do you now go to  
 heaven? Beoanus replies to her saying: As nothing do I reckon  
 the whole world and as if it were dung in comparison of eternal  
 joy. Then St. Ita says to him: It is good however that the 110  
 recompense which I have promised you should be given you. Then

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St. Ita should have been put under the care of such a person  
 as Mr. Jackson at Limerick - J.O'D.

Saint Ita washed him with water and afterwards there was no wound found on him, and (she) blessed him and consecrated and sent him with his wife to his house. And Beoanus himself slept with his wife, and the Lord opening her womb she conceived a son full of the grace of God and venerable." Also in the Life of St. Brendan of Cluanfert, who was another alumnus of hers, much is found concerning her, 3, 4, 44, 46, 47 & 56, of which hear (or receive) the following:- 111

"And the pious boy Brendan was nurtured for one year in the house of his parents, and at the end of the year the holy Bishop Erc came\* after? (post) St. Brandan and brought him then with him to be nurtured with the most holy Ita, dwelling in her famous Monastery, formerly called Cluain-Chredhuil but now Kill-Ita, that is, the Cell of Ita, near the foot of the Mountain of Luachra in the Territory of Hua-Conaill Gabhra; and Saint Ita with great joy received the holy infant and nurtured him five years and loved him very much, and the glorious Virgin Ita, seeing him frequently of a cheerful mind interrogated him, saying, O holy infant, What gladdens you, Saint? The little one said in puerile speech: Because I see you speak to me and the other holy Virgins like you, and they always make me glad holding me in their arms; the Saint said to him: Let there be joy in heaven, my son, about you. Now after five years the above mentioned S. Erc, the Bishop, came and brought S. Brandan with him to read, and S. Ita was sad about the absence of her alumnus. In the meantime S. Brendan proceeded to S. Ita, his nurse, which holy Virgin of God, with piety embraced him in her bosom, whose mind the holy man refreshed with the miracles which he saw in the ocean. And below (or afterwards) But on a certain day S. Brandan sailed to the aforesaid Island of Truma alias Crumma. And he left one youth on the shore to take care of the vessel (navem). An overflowing of the tide having occurred, germanus illius fratris, says to S. Brendan, O holy Father, the tide roughly overflows and carries off the vessel, and will overwhelm my brother and he shall be dead. To whom S. Brendan, moved with anger says: Do you love him more than I (me?). If then you wish to compassionate him more, go to him and die for him. Now, the brother obeying, went off speedily to the place and the sea instantly surrounded him on every side and he was drowned. But to the former youth who was his germanus, the sea was as a wall, as even to Moses. Then, S. Brendan feared the Lord with regard to the death of his brother, deeming himself the killer of him. And he asked holy men on that account, the verbum 112 113 114 115

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\* Finitoque anno venit Sanctus Episcopus Ercus post Sanctum Brandanum, & duxit etc., might be rendered perhaps more correctly "Bishop Erc came afterwards and brought St. Brandan, etc." If post be taken as a preposition, as it seems to be by the text, the translation would run as on this page. Such an acceptance however seems strange.

paenitentiae (literally the word of penance) who said to him: Go to the holy Prophetess of God, Ita, who was his nurse, and she will tell you what it behoves you to do."

She (St. Ita) prescribes to S. Brendan a mode of doing penance.

And S. Ita said to him: Perform at some time a pilgrimage, because you are guilty in his death. And preach to men (people) that you may lead other souls to the Lord.

Afterwards S. Brendan sailed on a pilgrimage to Britain. And below. At length the Most Blessed Virgin, the above mentioned Ita, the nurse of S. Brendan, said in her own heart on the night of the Nativity of our Lord: I wish to receive on this holy night the Body of the Lord from the hand of my alumnus, the most holy Brendan. And the most faithful Virgin, rising on that night to celebrate the vigils in her own Monastery, was taken up by an Angel, secundum similitudinem S. Abacuch, as far as the city of S. Brendan (viz.) Cluainferta; and Saint Brendan, foreseeing the arrival of S. Ita, went to meet her out of his own Church with the Communion of the Lord, abroad in the yard (atrió). And the Saint of God humbled (dimissaque Sancta Dei in terram; dimissus signifies sent down, dropped or thrown down) to the earth, received the Body of the Lord from the hand of S. Brendan, giving thanks to Christ. And the Saints blessing each other, the Virgin of God was again taken up by the Angel to her own Monastery. That there is a journey of three days between the Monastery of Saint Ita (viz.) Cluain-Credhail in the Country (in regione) of the Mumonians (Muminensium) and the City of Saint Brendan, (viz.) Cluainferta in the Province of the Connacians (Provincia Connachtorum) is evident, through which the Saintess of God was conducted and brought back by the Angel in one hour. 116 117 118

See more about her in the Life of her third alumnus, Saint Cumin (S. Cuminei) Bishop of Cluainfert at 12th November, and with Saint Cumin (S. Cumineum) of Connor in his book on the eulogies of the Chief Saints of Ireland, (de elogiis praecipuorum Sanctorum Hiberniae) where among other things he relates of her that she was so much "given to genuflections and vigils without intermission, that she never inclined her head to her pillow," and with Saint Alchuinus Flaccus in a certain poem of his on the very numerous holy Virgins of our country, which in the last editions of it (ejus, or of him? viz., the author) is erroneously read thus:- 119

Virginibus sacris presens haec ara dicata est urbes  
Quarum clara fuit Scotorum fama per Ita fidelis:  
Brigidae Sancta femina, Christo simul ministrent  
Hac nobis saltem suffragia sancta

for the penultimate verse is seemingly to be thus restored:-

Brigida, Samtna, Feme, Chrone, Schire, Ita, Fidelis.

For that it ought to be thus restored is obvious. Firstly because otherwise the verse would be deficient in its numbers and in sense. Secondly, because the fame of these virgins was truly noble (Clara, clear, bright, evident. The two last meanings seem the more applicable) throughout the Cities of the Scoti in Ireland in the time of Alchuinus, in which their festivals are with solemnity celebrated; (the festival) of Brigid on the 1st of February; (that) of Samtna or Samthanna on the 19th of December; of Femea on the 17th of September; of Schiria on the 24th of March; of Chronia on the 7th of July; of Ita on the 15th of January; of Fidelis, who is also called Fedelim, on the 9th of December. Translation according to the correction:-

"This present altar has been dedicated to holy Virgins whose fame shone bright throughout the Cities of the Scoti. Brigid, Samtna, Feme, Chrone, Schire, Ita, Fidelis. May these afford to us, at least their suffrages."

AA. SS. p.334, Col.2.

Note 7 to the Life of Saint Cellacus or Kellacus.  
14th February.

At this Note the Annals of the 4 Masters are quoted, from which the following quotation is given thus:-

"Anno 833. Cellachus Finnachtae Abbas de Kill-Ithe, obiit filius."

Archdall's Mon. Hib., V.11, R.I.A., p.419.  
Cluain Chredhuil, or Kilita.

Situated at the foot of the Mountain Luachra in Hua-Conail-Gabhra (a Territory in the south of the Barony of Conillo) we are told that an Abbey (high in repute) was founded here by S. Ita alias Mida, a descendant of the royal blood of Munster, who died 15th January, 569. She is said to have wrought many miracles and her festival is still solemnized (AA. SS. page 69, 73, 74 & Index).

Gough's Camden, R.I.A.  
Cluain Chredail - Castle Mac Eneiry.

In the Barony of Conillo at Castle Mac Eneiry, formerly the seat of Mac Eneiry, are the ruins of a very large Monastery and some other buildings, which sufficiently evince the piety, dignity and splendor of that ancient family (ib. ex O'Halloran). Saint Ita or Mida of the royal blood of Munster is said to have founded a famous Abbey at Cluain Chreduil or Kilita, at the foot of the Mountain Luacra, (ib).

This is all fudge! - J.O'D.

Lanigan's Ecclesiastical History, Vol.II, page 29:—

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To atone for the death of a person who had been drowned in the sea and to which Brendan feared he had involuntarily contributed he is said to have gone, by the advice of St. Ita\* to Britain, by which is to be understood not Great Britain, but Brittany.

\* (p.32) This celebrated Virgin, of whom more will be seen hereafter, was greatly attached to St. Brendan and seems to have been a relation (p.33) of his. Her Nunnery of Cluain-Credhail, in the west of the Co. of Limerick was near the place where Brendan was born. It is said that when he was a year old Bishop Ercus placed him under her care and that he was reared by her for five years. If there be any truth in this narrative, it must be understood of some time when St. Ita was still young, and before she was old enough to preside over a nunnery. For if we were to suppose that she was governing it when Saint Brendan was only a year old, viz., in the year 485, it will follow that she must have been born as far back as, at least, 460; whereas it will be admitted that as Abbess she could not have been less than twenty five years of age. Now, as St. Ita died in 570, it would follow that she lived to the extraordinary age 110, for which we have no authority. Accordingly, what is said of the infant Brendan having been reared in her nunnery cannot stand, and indeed the whole matter, however explained, is very doubtful although it is certain that a great intimacy existed between these two Saints.

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(p.81) St. Ita who may justly be called the St. Brigid of Munster, was of the princely house of the Desii or Nandesii in the now Co. of Waterford. Her father's name was Kennfoelad, her mother's Necta. They were Christians, as appears from St. Ita having been baptized in her childhood. The time of her birth is not recorded but it must have been some years prior to A.D. 484 if it be true that she had for some time under her care Brendan of Clonfert when an infant. Yet unless we are to suppose that she lived to an extraordinary great age (p.82) only a few years can be allowed for this priority of birth and on the whole it may be laid down that she was born about the year 480. From her earliest year she appeared animated with the Holy Spirit, observing besides other religious duties even the fasts prescribed by the Church, and displayed an extraordinary degree of modesty, sedateness and suavity of temper. It is related that while she was still young a room in which she was asleep seemed to be all in a blaze, and that some persons who hastened to extinguish what they thought to be fire, found it uninjured and observed Ita on awakening to exhibit an Angelical form of exquisite beauty.

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Having reached the age fit for choosing a permanent state of life she applied to her mother and after expatiating on the divine commandments requested of her to procure her father's permission to consecrate herself to Christ. The mother acted according to her

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request, but the father obstinately refused to comply with her wish, particularly as a noble and powerful young man had just made him a proposal of obtaining her in marriage. Ita then said to some people about her: "Let my father have his own way for a while, I tell you that he will soon not only permit me, but order me to give myself up to Christ and will allow me to go whithersoever I please for the purpose of serving God." Not long after she fasted for three days and nights, during which time she was assailed with constant attacks of the enemy of mankind, which she resisted with invincible firmness. On the third night her father was admonished in a vision not to oppose her inclination any longer and accordingly, without loss of time, after informing her of what had occurred to him, he advised her to take the veil immediately. Matters being thus settled she repaired to the Church and was there in due form clothed with the veil and enrolled in the list of consecrated virgins (1). Some time after she prayed the Almighty to direct her in what (p.83) place she might best serve him, and was instructed in a vision to proceed to the Territory of Hy-Conaill and to remain in the western part of it at the foot of the Mountain Luachra (2). Thither she went and fixed her residence in a retired spot called Cluain-Credhuil, where she was soon visited by a number of pious maidens who flocked from all parts of the territory to place themselves under her direction. Thus her nunnery was established in a short time, and it was most probably the first in that part of Ireland (3). 129 130

### Notes.

(1) Life, Cap.5. It is not improbable that Saint Declan of Ardmore was the Bishop from whom she received the veil. The time of her receiving it seems to have been in the early part of the sixth century and when Declan presided over the Nandesl Country.

(2) Luachra was rather a name of the district in which that mountain is, than of the mountain itself (See Note 84 to Chapter VI). A part of Hy-Conaill was so called, apparently from its abounding in rushes. The Barony of Connello or Connillo in the County (p.84) of Limerick is the ancient Hy-Conaill, or at least a part of it. The southern division of this Barony, or Upper Connello, was distinguished by the additional name Gaura, being called Hy-Conaill Gaura, and in a western part of this tract Saint Ita formed her establishment.

(3) We may be allowed to suppose that the want of a similar institution in those western parts was, in the order of Providence, the cause of St. Ita having been directed to settle there. Nunneries and establishments for the education of females had in all appearance been formed already in her own country, particularly as Saint Brigid had been there for some time. 131

II. The Chieftain and other principal persons of Hy-Conaill, on being informed of the extraordinary sanctity of Saint Ita waited upon her and offered to her a large tract of land around the house for the support of her establishment. She refused to accept of more than a small spot sufficient for a garden. As another instance of her disinterestedness it is related that a wealthy man having laid before her as an offering a considerable sum of money, which he could not induce her to receive, she happened to touch it and then called for water to wash the hand which had been defiled as it were by the contact of corruptible silver. She carried abstinence and fasting to such a pitch that it is said she was cautioned by an angel to be less abstemious for the future, and not exhaust her frame by such excessive austerity. Several miracles, some of which are of an extraordinary kind, have been attributed to her. One of them is said to have been performed on a man called Feargus, whom she delivered by her prayers from excruciating pains in his eyes and whole body which brought him almost to the last extremity. She was favoured with the gift of prophecy and with the knowledge of persons whom she had never seen, and of distant and secret occurrences. When Columbanus, a Leinster Bishop, was on his way to pay (p.85) her a visit without his having given her any previous notice of it, she ordered an entertainment to be prepared and on his arrival sent to ask for his Episcopal benediction before she could have known in an ordinary manner that he was a Bishop, and mentioned other circumstances which she could not have been apprized of except by supernatural means. A theft had been committed in a nunnery at a place called Direo-Chuisgrigh\*. One of the nuns was unjustly accused of it, but as the matter was very obscure the Abbess and the whole community waited upon St. Ita to consult her. She immediately declared that the nun charged with the theft was innocent, and told them who was the guilty one. 133

\* (p.86) This place, of which no further account occurs, must have been, as appears from the narrative, not far from Cluain-Credh-ail. The Nunnery there was, in all probability, a branch of Saint Ita's institution.

In the southwest of this Parish is situated the Commons of Claenghlais, which is celebrated in our Annals as the Woody Fastness of the Geraldines during the reign of Elizabeth. It is now generally called in the anglicised form Cleanglass. 134

CLAONGLAISE - Annals 4 Masters.

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"A.D. 1155. Cuilen na Claonghlaisi Tigherna Ua cConaill Gabhra do thuitim la (le) hUa Cindfhaoladh, agus a mharbhadh somh fo chedoir la Muintir Chuilen."

"A.D. 1155. Cuilen of Claenglais, Lord of Hy-Conaill Gabhra, fell by the O'Kinnealy, who was immediately killed (in revenge) by the people of Cuilen."

"A.D. 1266. Mahon O'Cuilcin, Lord of Claonglaise, was killed by his own wife by one wound from a knife inflicted through jealousy."

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"A.D. 1535. Mac Auley gained a great battle in which were slain the Lord of Claonglais (then a Fitzgerald) and Fitzgibbon, besides a large battalion of the Clann Sheehy. Maolmurry, the son of Brian Mac Sweeny, was also slain in front of the battalion and in the rage of the conflict."

"A.D. 1579. James, the son of Maurice Duff, who was son of John, who was son of Thomas, who was son of the Earl, returned from France, and it was reported that he had brought with him a greater number of ships than was really the case. He landed at Oilen an Oir contiguous to Daingean-Ui-Chuis in Kerry. At this time the Earl of Desmond was encamped at Cuilleán-O'gCuanach where he had commenced to erect a Castle, and having heard of the arrival of this fleet in Kerry he went to see it. The Chief Mareschal of the two Provinces of Munster, Arthur Carter by name, Master David and all the Queen's people in Munster set out to meet the same fleet, as did also the kinsmen of the Earl of Desmond, viz., the two young sons of James, the son of John, who was son of Thomas, viz., John and James Oge. These had formed a confederacy with James, the son of Maurice, and they had made an attack by night upon the Mareschal and Master David at Tralee and had beheaded them while asleep on their beds. They had then brought James ashore and both repaired to the woods of Claonglaise and Coillmor. James soon after the landing set out from these woods upon his first expedition accompanied by all his cavalry and infantry through the middle of O-Conaill-Gabhra and Clan William, and his army proceeded to plunder the country as they passed along." (See Limerick at this year, p.457, for the conclusion of this article).

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"A.D. 1580. \*\*\* (See Limerick at this year, p.465, for the whole of this article):-

The Lord Chief Justice proceeded with his forces to Limerick and although it was cold spring weather at the time, he delayed only one week in that town arranging his military Ordnance and procuring provisions for his soldiers. Thence he proceeded south west by Deise-Beag and Magh Maighreach, and at length pitched his camp in Hy-Conillo. He sent forth loose marauding parties into Coill-Mor, into the woods of Claonglaise and into the wilds of Delge. These marauders wheresoever they passed shewed mercy to neither the strong nor the weak. It was not wonderful that they killed people able to bear arms; but they killed blind and decrepid men, women, boys and girls; sick persons and idiots and old people. They carried their property to the Chief Justice's camp, many Englishmen having been left by these plunderers to convey them."

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"A.D. 1581. John, the son of James, who was son of John, marched with an army in the month of May eastwards across the Suire and totally destroyed the towns lying east of that river, viz., Ardmaile and the Monastery of Athassel; he then returned across the Suire with great spoils and booty, but was overtaken by a very strong and numerous body of forces. He continued resolutely carrying away the spoils as long as he was able, but was afterwards obliged to stand and come to an engagement, in which he destroyed more than three hundred of his pursuers both by drowning and slaying. John (then) carried off the spoil in triumph to the haunts in the woods of Claonglais (Cleanglass) and Coill Mor, where he was wont to abide."

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Annals Innisfallen:-

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"A.D. 1178. Loch-Gair (now Lough-Gar) was plundered by O'Coilean of Claonglais."

The name O'Coileáin is now anglicised Collins in the neighbourhood of Newcastle and Abbeyfeale, where they are still very numerous.

The antiquities of the Parish of Killeedy were examined and described by me.

J. O'Donovan.

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