

THE PARISH OF ROBERTSTOWN.

SITUATION. This Parish is situated in the north of the Barony of Shanid, and consists of two detached portions. One is bounded on the north by the River Shannon and on the east, south and west by Shanagolden Parish. The other portion is bounded on the north by Aughanish and Faunamore Parish, on the southeast by Kilmoylan Parish, and on the north, east, south and west by the Parish of Shanagolden.

NAME. Signifies the Town of Robert.

Of the old Church of Robertstown situated in the Townland of that name, the walls are perfect. It is thirty seven feet long by nineteen and a half in breadth. The window on the east gable which is now disfigured, was formed of brown cut stone on the outside, as appears from five of the stones which remain on the north side; these stones have the appearance of great age. On the south side wall, two feet from the east gable, there was another window which is now completely disfigured. The doorway, situated on this wall eight feet eight inches from the west gable, is broken on the inside. On the outside, where it is in the pointed style and formed of cut limestone, it is six feet high by three feet in width. On the north wall there was another doorway, the sides of which are broken away; the arches remain both inside and outside, being formed of thin stones. The walls are about fourteen feet high, three feet in thickness, and built of large stones irregularly laid with lime and sand mortar. There is a large graveyard, not much in use at present, attached to this Church. 12

About three hundred yards north of the old Church stands a small part of the eastern end of Robertstown Castle, situated on the margin of an inlet of the River Shannon.

On the summit of Knockpatrick Hill, and in the Townland of the same name, are the ruins of Saint Patrick's Church, of which both the gables have disappeared; forty one feet of the south wall and forty six of the north wall remain. On this north wall there are two doorways, the one nine feet from where the wall is broken on the west end, the arches (inside and outside) being pointed and formed of thin flags. This doorway is filled with old masonry. The other is nine feet from the east end; its arches are broken. No cut stone appears in either of these doorways. There was another doorway on the south side wall opposite the western one 13

on the north; no cut stone appears in this doorway, of which only one side remains. The walls of this Church are about twelve feet high by three feet in thickness and built of regular sized quarry stones regularly laid with lime and sand mortar. It has not the appearance of great age. On the top of these walls inside runs a cornice of cut stones. There is a very large graveyard much in use attached to this Church.

About three hundred yards west of this is Patrick's Well.

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About two hundred yards east of the old Church is Saint Patrick's Seat (Suidheachán Phátraic) which consists of six rather small stones laid on the ground almost in a circle. They have not the appearance of a Cromlech. The tradition among the people is that the Saint, on a certain occasion, having knelt and prayed here, left the impression of his knees and arms in the stones. No marks however appear in these stones resembling those holes in holy stones to be met with elsewhere which are popularly believed to be impressions of the knees or feet of Saints.

There is a most extensive prospect of the Counties of Cork, Kerry, Clare, Tipperary and Limerick from Knockpatrick Hill.

In Fitzgerald's History of Limerick we read (p.365) "About a mile north of Shanagolden is Knock-Patrick (366) said to be the highest mountain in this County, with respect to which Camden cites the following lines of Necam:-

Fluminibus magnis laetatur Hibernia, Sineus
Inter Conantism Memoniamque fluit;
Transit per muros Limerici, Knock Patrick
Oceani clausum sub ditione videt.

"On the top of Knock Patrick are the walls of an old Church in good preservation, the entrance into which is by a low Gothic arch on the west. This Church is held in great veneration, as it is supposed to have been consecrated by Saint Patrick whose chair is shewn here composed of five stones. At a little distance from the Church is a well dedicated to the Saint, where the Country people say he left a golden cup which remained there until within these fifty years, and that it is now in the possession of some family in that Country; they also relate that a Druid Priest, whilst helping Saint Patrick with water from the well, mixed some poison with it, which was discovered to the Saint by three drops falling through the cup into the well, by which the latter was discoloured. Within the walls of the Church are two handsome monuments belonging to the Burke and Griffin families.

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"From the summit of this wild and lofty solitude the surrounding Country presents a grand and extensive prospect *** (p.367) Knock Patrick terminates at the road that leads from Limerick to Glin and Tarbert by the Shannon."

The following is from Ware's "Bishops of Limerick":-

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"The Shenon, called by Ptolemy the Senus, which is the noblest river of all Ireland, is divided here into two channels and flows round the greatest part of this City (Limerick) of which Alexandra Necham says thus:-

Fluminibus magnis laetatur Hibernia Sineus
Inter Connatium Momoniamque fluit;
Transit per muros Limerici Knock Patrick illum
Oceani clausum sub ditione videt.

Great rivers do delight Ierne's sons
'Twixt Munster and Connaught the Shenon runs,
By Limerick Walls we see it gently glide,
And at Knock Patrick in the ocean hide."

John Nevill, aged 83 (78) a native of the Barony of Kenry, now residing at Ballingarry, states that the Mias Phadruig was in the possession of the family of O'Niadh, anglicized Nevill, and that it was pledged by Maire na Meise ni Niadh, to Mr. Roche of Limerick, who brought it to Paris, where it now remains.

Dysart Castle, which stands in the Townland of the same name 17 on level ground, measures nineteen feet by thirteen feet inside. It had four stories, the arches of two of which still remain. The walls are about fifty feet high and four and a half feet in thickness. This Castle lies north of the road from Askeaton to Shanagolden.

In the Townland of Old Abbey are the ruins of a religious edifice called Mainistir na gCaillleach Dubh, the walls of which are all standing and perfect, with the exception of a fragment which has fallen from the west side (according to the Name Book).

In the Townland of Craggs is Borrigone (Barraig Eóin) Holy Well, which was formerly much resorted to; its waters are still believed to be efficacious in curing diseases.

The Antiquities of this Parish were examined by Mr. A. Curry and his notes arranged by Mr. O'Keeffe.

J.O'D.

OF THE PARISH OF AUGHINISH.

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SITUATION. This Parish is situated in the north of the Barony of Shanid and is bounded on the north by the River Shannon; on the east by the Parish of Morgans and on the south and west by those of Shanagolden and Robertstown.

NAME. The name of this Parish is in Irish Each-Inis, which signifies Horse Island, a name which is very common throughout Ireland. The Parish is also sometimes called by the alias name of Fawnamore, in Irish Fánadh Mór, which signifies the Great Slope or Declivity.

I could not meet a single ruin of a Church in this Parish, nor even the site of it, nor could I meet any one that ever heard of the existence of a Church or grave yard in any part of it.

John O'Donovan.

July 15th 1840.

This is Saint Swithin's Day, which is remarkable for constant rain very injurious to the crops. I hope the proverb will not be fulfilled this year.

It has not, thank God. - J. O'D. Aug. 7th 1840.
