

CAHERCONLISH PARISH.

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SITUATION. This Parish is situated in the Barony of Clanwilliam and is bounded on the east by the Parishes of Grean, Drumkeen and Abbington; on the north by the latter Parish; on the west by Ludden and Inch St. Laurence Parishes and on the south by Ballybrood Parish.

NAME. The name of this Parish is pronounced Cathair Chinnlis in Irish, which signifies the Caher of the Head of the Liss, and is not of ecclesiastical origin. The objects from which the name has been composed are not known to the

inhabitants of the place and consequently are not pointed out to the topographical investigator. Both have been probably destroyed.

Cathair Cinnliss is mentioned in the Annals of Innisfallen; insert here what is said of it; old ecclesiastical, state, and historical information.

We find mention made of Cathair Cinnliss in the Annals of Innisfallen at A.D. 1304. "A great hosting of north Munster by Terlogh, son of Taig Caoluiske O'Brien to attack Munster, wherein the English were more numerous and passed the Shannon eastward to the district of O'Cuanach upon that expedition, that the Irish inhabiting them (these) counties and the two Eile and North Munster and Owey in the Counties of Limerick and Tipperary and Aograine and Aostrimaighe were brought under subjection and gave up their hostages to Terlogh; he pursued on his journey with his bands of soldiers into the plains of Munster foremost with his standards or ensigns and with his colours in the midst and their golden shields on the outside, with their spears ready and their cavalry hindmost, and in that order proceeded to Cahercinliss and attacked the Englishmen that were in the town and made a common slaughter of them there; he demolished the Castle and burned the town from bawn to bulwark to the other end of the city, that there was no abode with the Englishmen that was not entirely burned."

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Of the old Church of Cahercinliss, only a small portion of the east gable twelve feet in height, and seven feet in length of the south wall which is joined to it and is twelve feet in height, remains as yet undemolished. There is a vault built up against these walls on the inside. Materials in them are regular sized stones and cement of lime and sand mortar. The Protestant Church of the Parish occupies the remainder of the site of the old one just mentioned, where the walls have been pulled down towards the west. Here is a large graveyard much in use.

Karkinlish (Chapel of) Churches and Chapels of the Abbey of Owey, Cahir-kenliss, etc., are mentioned in Inquisition 23rd August XXXIV Elizabeth, quoted in Archdall's Mon. Hib. at Abbington, which see in our Extract from the work relative to Abbington inserted at the description of the Parish of that name, which will be given below. (Civil historical information, modern and old).

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Fitzgerald in his History of Limerick, Vol. I, p. 283 at Cahircinliss, tells us that:-

"It is at present a large but not very thriving village,

though it was once a walled town containing four castles and an extensive College the site of which is called the "College Field." The foundation of this Seminary and of a strong gateway that led into the town were to be seen not long since. In the village is a very handsome Church with a fine steeple. Within the Church and close to the Communion Table is a monument of the Gabbett family, and in the chancel there is a monument of the Bourkes, now occupied by the Wilson family, the present proprietors. It is in basso relievo and on the top is a representation of the Crucifixion, with the Arms of the Bourkes between the lines of the following inscription:-

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"Hunc tumulum Theobaldus Bourke sibi et uxori suae Slany Brien fieri Bourke adsum sobolis Carolina Sanguine tinote atque Brianorum. Anno Domini 1441."

(p.286) The Glebe has been beautifully and tastefully planted by the present incumbent, the Rev. Richard Cox *** Near the house is the Castle of Carrigfarrioyla or O'Farrell's Rock. The O'Dalys were its last inhabitants, but it was built by the Bourkes and near it is a fine old fortress called Cnoc a tSean Chuisleann, or the Hill of the Castle (rectus, the Hill of the Old Castle).

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Caherconlish House, situated near the Village, was built a few years since by the present Major Wilson, the old family mansion having gone to decay (p.287). In the Parish of Caherconlish is situated Brittas.

A note says here that the Wilson family claims great antiquity. That W. Wilson was both Chancellor and Chaplain to William the Conqueror (references made to "Chronica Judicialia" as authority). His family settled at Elton, Yorkshire. Col. Sir Ralph Wilson was the first of this family who came over to Ireland during the troubles between Charles I and the Parliament. He was the ancestor of the Major Wilson above mentioned.

Carrigoreely old Castle stands in the south west corner of Carrigoreely Townland (about a mile north west of Caherconlish Village). It is erected on a lime stone rock about two chains in diameter and twenty feet high. This rock is twenty feet high at the west side of the castle only; four feet or five feet on the other sides. The Irish name is Carraig Ebearghaile, which signifies Farel's Rock. (This is generally written Farrell in the anglicised form though there is but one r and one l in the Irish form. The name in the present instance must be considered a praenomen - christian name - and not a surname. Therefore O'Farrell's Rock, given above as a translation by Fitzgerald, is downright nonsense). The walls are perfect. It measures nineteen feet eight inches by fourteen and a half feet in the clear and has five

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stories; the fourth floor is arched underneath. The height of the structure is about seventy feet and the thickness of the walls about six and a half feet.

Knockatancaslaun is the name of a townland bounded on the west by Carrigoreely in this Parish. It is written Cnoc a tSean Chaisleain in Irish and signifies the Hill of the Old Castle. There is no remark made in the Name Book as to the existence of any old ruins in this townland.

The ruins of the Castle of Brittas are situated in the east part of the Townland of Brittas on the west bank of the River Mulkeir, which defended one side of this military structure. On the southwest and northwest corners were two round towers, one on each, of which forty feet in height yet remain their diameter inside being sixteen feet. The thickness of the walls is the same with that of the walls of the Castle, which is five feet. The wall of the Castle running between them from north to south is twenty eight paces (eighty four feet) long, which is the distance they stand from each other, and twenty five feet high. The locality is level ground.

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In Smith's Collections for Limerick (MSS. R.I.A.) we find the following reference to Caherconlish:-

The Second Siege of Limerick (1691).

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"After the defeat at Aghrim, General Ginkle made preparations for the Siege of Limerick. But notwithstanding the great supply of horses from England, he found there were many more still wanting for the use of the heavy cannon and therefore it was proposed in Council to convey them from Athlone to Limerick by water, but that being found impracticable by means of the stops at Killaloe, the General sent to Dublin and was furnished by most of the nobility and gentry with their coach horses, but all together being insufficient for the purpose, many more were pressed in all parts of the Kingdom for the purpose. The General in his march received intelligence that the Irish foot were drawn in Limerick and that their horses were posted near the town - that Tyrconnel was taken suddenly ill and that several factions were fomented among the Chief Officers in the town, some of them being suspected to incline to an accomodation with the English. This news occasioned the General to disperse his declarations among them, by a spy, encouraging the Irish to submit, which was effected without any discovery. On the 14th of August the army encamped at Caherconlish, from whence the General with other great officers marched with a party within two miles of Limerick, where some of the enemies scouts deserted and early on the 15th, 1500 horse and dragoons, commanded by Major General Ruvigny and 1000 foot by the Prince of Hesse

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with six Field pieces marched towards Limerick, with whom the General and the Chief Officers went to take a view of the place" etc.

See also at the same year (A.D. 1304) with that mentioned in the Annals of Innisfallen, to which reference has been made above, Caithreim Thoirdealbhaigh, i.e., the Exploits of Torlogh. O'Gorman MSS. R.I.A. written originally in the year of Christ 1459 by John, son of Rory Mac Crath, Chief Antiquarian to the princely family of the Dalcassians and translated into English by P. O'Connell, who died about the year of Christ 1826. 412

The site of an old Church called Teampall Mhíchíl, that is, the Church of St. Michael, lies within a green field planted with fir trees in the west part of the Townland of Templemichael, to the north of the road leading from Caherconlish to Abbington. It is covered with grass and measures about sixty by thirty feet. The inhabitants of the place say there was a grave yard here formerly; human bones and old coffins were found in 1819 whilst the ground was dug up when the field was under cultivation. It was from the above mentioned Church the townland obtained its name. 413

Situated in the north west corner of Skahard Townland and to the south of the road between it and Highpark, within a cultivated field, is a spot, some time ago used as a burial ground, called Cill a Bhothair, which signifies, according to the common application of Cill now prevalent in this part of the country, the Burial Ground of the Road. Children were buried until about the year 1800, when the place was cultivated. Three hawthorn bushes growing on the ground mark the locality.

Kilmurry is the name of a townland in this Parish and, according to its signification, is of ecclesiastical origin, being Cill Mhuire in Irish, which means the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Cella S.V. Mariae. However there are no old Church ruins found here at present. The ruins of a Roman Catholic old Chapel and a grave yard enclosed by a wall, are situated in the west end of the townland to the south of the road from Caherconlish to Abbington. 414

Killanure is the name of a Townland in this Parish, which is pronounced Cill an Iubhair in Irish and signifies the Church of the Yew Tree, i.e., Cella Taxis. In this townland is situated a small hill, now cultivated, which is known by the name of Killanure and on which great quantities of human bones were found on digging the earth some time since; a circumstance that, together with the name, puts it beyond conjecture that there were a Church and burial ground, or at least the latter as Cill would be applied to it also, situated here which have

been disused and destroyed at some period back, not now exactly known.

Tobermolaga Townland obtained name from a well situated in the west end of it and called in Irish Tobar Molaga, which means the Well of Saint Molaga, i.e., Fons Sancti Molagae. The Life of Saint Molaga is published in AA. SS. at - day of - The well is now dried up. A stone work, which yet remains, surrounded its waters. Situated in the north end of the Townland of Knockeen is Knockeen Hill, which is pronounced in Irish Cnoc Caoin, that is, the Delightful Hill, i.e., Collis amaenus, and from which it appears the townland obtained name. On this hill is a cavern whose entrance is about three feet in diameter. It branches inwards into several apartments overhung with massive cliffs.

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