

FEDDAMORE PARISH.

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SITUATION. This Parish is situated in the Barony of Clanwilliam and is bounded on the east by the Parish of Rochestown; on the north by Cahervally; on the south by a portion of Cahervally and on the west by Feddamore in the Barony of Small County.

NAME. The name of this Parish is pronounced Fiádamair in Irish, which signifies the Wood of Damar. (Qu? Fiádh Damair).

In this Parish we find the ruins of Rockstown old Church situated in the north east end of the Townland of Rockstown, to the north of the road from Caherconlish to Feddamore.

The original length of this building was forty three feet and the breadth was nineteen feet. Only small portions of the side walls six feet in height remain at present, which are covered with ivy and have no architectural features. There is here a large grave yard not much in use.

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About three hundred yards north east of this ruin is Rockstown Castle, standing on a lime stone rock about three or four chains in diameter, as remarked in the Name Book. The walls are perfect to the height of about fifty feet; it was four stories high and measures twenty six feet by twenty four feet on the inside.

Fitzgerald in his History of Limerick Vol.I, p.297, tells us that:—

"Williamstown Castle is said to have been built by one of the Bourkes, together with that on the site of which the House of Ballynaguard now stands. Adjoining the Demesne of Ballynaguard is Rockstown Castle situated to the west of the public road from Limerick to Cork, and south of the Castle are the very handsome residence of James Barry, Esq., and the ruins of Rockstown Church."

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There is a Townland called Williamstown in this Parish but it is not remarked in the Name Book that any old Castle is seen there now.

Ballynaguard is a townland in this Parish constituting part of the Demesne of Jno. Crocker, Esq.

Fitzgerald's account of this Parish of Feddamore, History of Limerick Vol.I, p.296 (Fitzgerald describes Feddamore Parish under Small County Barony. The Name Book places the Parish of Feddamore in which Ballinaguard Townland is situated in the Barony of Clanwilliam):-

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"In this Parish is Ballynaguard, the fine seat of Edward Croker, Esq. *** The house was built by the late Croker nearly on the site of an old Castle *** "

"Within view of the house is Williamstown Castle, a plain square building destitute of outworks or fortifications, which is generally the case with most similar structures in this county. They are usually erected on bold rocky hills or on some dry spot in marshy grounds and surrounded with a morass, which renders them almost inaccessible. Near Ballynaguard is the Hill of Knockhay, which appears to have been very strongly fortified, as on it are still to be seen the remains of square and round buildings encircled in the usual manner by a deep but dry fosse, and around the entire hill is a strong rampart of earth and stone. A quantity of human bones have been dug up here and some (p.297) remains of iron instruments. Between the west end of this hill and Cahiravahalla, is a very deep morass, in which is situated a large rath."

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FEDDAMORE PARISH.

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SITUATION. This Parish is situated in the Barony of Small County and bounded on the - - - -

NAME. See Feddamore Parish just now described.

Old Church.

No old Church ruins are existing in Feddamore Townland; a Protestant Church built in 1740 stands in it with a burial

ground lying at it, which seems to be older than the above period. A holy well called St. John's is situated here.

An old Church of which only the foundation is now to be seen stood in Fanningstown Townland. It was situated in the north side of a graveyard which yet remains here and measured thirty eight feet by sixteen feet. The foundation of the walls appears one and a half feet over the surface of the ground. For Archdall's Account of this place Ex. p.113.

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In Smith's Miscellaneous Limerick Papers, MSS. R.I.A., (Annals) (From Ware) we find the following reference to the Town of Fannings.

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"Sir William Pelham being sworn Lord Lieutenant on the 11th of Oct. 1597, the Earl of Ormond was appointed Governor of Munster and Sir Warham St. Leger was made Provost Marshall under him. The Lord Justice soon after set out for this Province, and passing through Kilkenny and Cashel, he arrived at Limerick where he was met about a mile from the City by Sir Nicholas Maulby and sundry other captains and gentlemen, who fired a volley of shots in honour of his arrival and so brought him to the town, where the Mayor very dutifully received him and presented him with a thousand well weaponed and appointed men of the City. The next day he went to a town named Fannings, where Malby presented his Lordship with a letter which he received from Ulick Bourke, which had been wrote by Doctor Saunders to Bourke, to persuade him to join in rebellion against the English. And to this place came the Countess of Desmond with letters of excuse from the Earl for not having attended the Lord Justice. From hence the Earl of Ormond was sent to him by the Lord Justice and Council, requiring him to abandon the Spaniards, to deliver up them and Dr. Saunders, to put Askeaton or Carrigfoil into the Queen's hands and to join forces with those of the Queen to prosecute the war against his brethren and other traytors and that if he agreed to comply with these conditions he should be received into favour; otherwise he should be openly proclaimed a traytor. But he returned a trifling answer by a letter dated at Crogh, October 30th 1579 requiring restitution for old wrongs and injuries and insisting that he was a good subject, tho' he did not comply with the Lord Justice's conditions. During this negotiation the Lord Justice removed to Croome, where he expected the return of the Earl of Ormonde, etc."

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Abbey ruins.

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In Friarstown North Townland are the ruins of an Abbey at which there was formerly a burying place, which has in latter times fallen into disuse.

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Fitzgerald in his History Vol.I, p.291, speaking of the ruins of a Friary called Baile-na-mBratharbeg or Little Friarstown, says it was so called to distinguish it from Friarstown in the Parish of Fedamore and (ibid. p.299) he says:-

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"In the northern part of the Parish (i.e., of Fedamore) is Friarstown, the old residence of the Hunt family *** In its neighbourhood are the fine remains of an ancient Abbey "embosomed high in tufted trees"; founder not known. On the summit of Friarstown Hill, looking a little to the west is a large Dun or Fort and on the east side the walls of a handsome Abbey, no mention of which is made in any of our Monasticones."

We are told in the work just cited (ibid) that:-

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"About a mile south west of Fedamore is Cloch na Monach or Monk's Stone, where are the remains of some ancient buildings, but of their date or founder we have no trace."

Cloghnamanagh, Cloch na Manach, that is Monk's Stone or Stone of the Monks, i.e., Lapis Monachorum, is the name of a Townland in this Parish in which, however, no old buildings are noted in the Name Book as being situated.

There was a burial ground in Kilcaskin Townland, from which it derived its name, being pronounced Cill Chaiscín in Irish. The place still lies untouched, being situated in the centre of the Townland and of small extent. It is at present falling into disuse, no one having been in latter times interred in it. A large ash tree stands at the west side of this spot.

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Old Castles.

The old Castle of Fanningstown, situated in the townland of that name, has fallen nearly into utter ruin. It measures about fifty six feet by twenty eight feet. Only fragments of the walls about six feet in height remain up.

The old Castle of Skool stands in ruins in a townland of that name. Only part of the walls remain; the south wall is twenty two feet high and the north one ten feet high.

In Gough's Camden (Vol. ? p. ?) it is read that "Scule and Rockstown Castles are in ruins (Wilson 358, Farrar 434 and 435).

Skule Castle is noted in Fitzgerald's History (Vol.I, p. 315) above referred to, as being observable on the north side from Knockfennel.

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Forts.

Cashelmangan (Caisiol Mangain) is a fort situated in the

Townland of Cloghadaloorty at its east boundary. There are five forts in Ballyea Townland, one of which is called Rath na Gréine, which signifies the Rath of the Sun, i.e., Arx solis (vel soli? - From solum). Here is a spring well called Tobar Ratha na Gréine, that is the Well of the Rath etc., i.e., Fons arcis solis (Qu? soli from solum).

Wells.

St. John's Well above mentioned and the one here noted.

Traversed by Mr. A. Curry; notes arranged by Mr. O'Connor.

Remarkable Stones.

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On the lands of Friarstown North Townland is to be seen a large stone seven feet high, five feet broad and one foot thick, which was found supported by small stones set on the edges, which being removed, human bones of an extraordinary size were found underneath the monument.

In Ballyea Townland above mentioned is a very remarkable stone called Gearán Bán, that is, White Horse, i.e., equus albus, which is seven feet high, four feet broad and one foot thick, being nearly perpendicular.

"This discovery is a beautiful specimen of the nidus equae and ought to be communicated to the Zoological Society."

The "Liber Regalis Visitationis" mentions Fedamore as a "Rectoria impropriata" situated in the Deanery of Limerick.

Traversed by Mr. Curry; notes arranged by Mr. O'Connor.

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J.O'D.