

## THE BOOK OF THE GALTEES

ever did travel from one end of Munster, even from Waterford to the head of Smeerweeke, which is about six score miles, he would not meet any man, woman, or child saving in towns and cities; nor yet see any beasts but the very wolves, foxes, and other like ravening beasts, many of them late dead, being famished and the residue gone elsewhere."

Lecky continues: "A high English official writing in the same year (1582) computed that in six months more than 30,000 people had been starved to death in Munster, besides those who were hung or who perished by the sword."

"A faint gleam of light falls across the dark and lurid picture in the humanity of Sir John Perrot."<sup>1</sup>

"The Mass became illegal, the churches and church revenues were taken from the priests, but the benefices were filled with adventurers without religious zeal, and sometimes without common morality."<sup>2</sup>

These extracts enable us to understand better the determined resistance of Fitzmaurice to such a cruel rule, and his bitter dying testament. He had indeed "fatal experience" of the English ways. The Desmonds had naturally played their own parts in this drama of fire and slaughter. Yet in spite of the thorough measures of warriors and politicians a remnant of the people must have managed to survive somehow. Otherwise there would have been none left to receive the "pardons"

<sup>1</sup> He only slew or hanged "800 miserable creatures" we may remember! He was opposed to confiscation however.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, *Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 11.

## THE BOOK OF THE GALTEES

so often mentioned in Elizabeth's "Fiants", after the suppression of the first rebellion, and to flock to the standard of the leader of the second. Indeed, nothing is more curious in all this sombre story than the persistence with which the old Irish race has maintained its grip upon the soil in spite of all the terrible experiences it has undergone.

In the country that was once Muskry Quirke there are plenty of Quirkes to-day. In Aherlow there are perhaps more of the name of O'Brien than of any other. Wearers of princely Eoganacht names—McCarthys, O'Sullivans, O'Donoghues, etc., are found in numbers all over the "Onaght" territory.

It is astounding to think, but it is highly probable, that the bearers of those names now live upon the lands which the septs of their ancestors held as owners in the days of King Brian, and on which they have lived in unbroken succession ever since. Kings and Lord Deputies, Norman, Elizabethan, and Cromwellian landlords have come and gone. They have vanished like the mists from the Galtees, and still this sturdy people holds its place. War and famine have taken toll of them again and again. Often they have lain prostrate and exhausted for a time, but they have never really submitted in their hearts for an instant to the overlordship of their invaders.

### THE CASE OF ARCHBISHOP O'HURLEY

It has been often contended that Elizabeth and her Council persecuted no man because of his

## THE BOOK OF THE GALTEES

religion, and the statement has a sort of literal truth. In her reign men were not brought to trial charged with being Catholics.

But if you suppress Catholic monasteries and schools, drive the ecclesiastics of that religion abroad for education, and treat them as traitors and emissaries of foreign powers on their return, the result is much the same as if their religion were proscribed as criminal.

This is what happened in the case of Archbishop O'Hurley. He was educated abroad, residing at Louvain for fifteen years, and acting as professor of Canon Law at Rheims for four years.

On his appointment as Archbishop of Cashel in 1581 to replace Miler Magrath, as far as Catholics were concerned, he came to Ireland, and, arriving in the height of the Desmond rebellion, managed to exercise his functions secretly for some time.

In 1583 he went to the house of the Baron of Slane, and was guided from there to the Earl of Ormond (being "a born man under his lordship" according to his depositions). The Irish government, having discovered this, "so dealt with the Baron of Slane that he travelled to the Earl and brought the said Hurley hither unto us, where we have committed him close prisoner to the castle".

The Lords Justices, Adam Loftus, Archbishop of Dublin, and Wallop wrote to London to know what they were to do with him.

They acknowledged a reply in the following terms:<sup>1</sup> "We received one '(letter)' from your Honour (Walsingham) declaring Her Majesty's

<sup>1</sup> *State Papers*, vol. cvi. No. 7.

## THE BOOK OF THE GALTEES

pleasure for the proceeding with Dr. Hurley by torture or any other severe manner of proceeding". . . .

We . . . "will also deal with himself by the best means we may. But for that we want here either rack or other engine of torture to terrify him. . . ."

The Lords Justices did not like the job. They thought it better to have the archbishop taken to London and tortured there if the government wanted it.

They got peremptory orders on the matter evidently for they wrote on March 7, 1584,<sup>1</sup> that they had examined him without effect, and "not finding that easy examination to do any good we made commission to Mr. Waterhouse and Mr. Secretary Fenton to put him to the torture, such as Your Honour (Walsingham) advised us, which was to toast his feet against the fire with hot boots".

His feet were inserted in boots filled with oil or butter and roasted until lumps of flesh came away, but very little was obtained from the archbishop as result. So little evidence was there against him that his persecutors were compelled to invoke martial law to obtain his sentence. There was a letter to Ormond from the archbishop by which with other letters, "Your Honour may discover what favour these Romish runagates have with our great potentate here".

Ormond was too big a man, however, and too high in the Queen's favour, to be injured by the

<sup>1</sup> *State Papers*, vol. cviii.

## THE BOOK OF THE GALTEES

attacks of the Lords Justices. They were afraid, too. One of their reasons for refusing a public trial was an apprehension that the prisoner "should break out and exclaim to the people . . . whereof we humbly pray Your Honour to be careful in our behalf, considering in how little safety we live here for the like services we have already done to Her Majesty——"

The archbishop was hanged in a straw rope (by way of contempt) about June 19, 1584 (old style). Many Protestant authorities dispute the fact of his torture, and Froude minimises it. A discrepancy in the accounts of the torture seems to afford them a ground for this. Some of the writers say that boots of tin filled with oil were used to encase the archbishop's legs, under which a fire was then lit; others say that the boots were of leather in which butter and salt were put.

The *State Papers* above quoted, however, put the facts of the torture "by toasting his feet against the fire with hot boots" beyond doubt. Any one who likes can dispute as to the exact method employed.

Meantime the Papal Archbishop of Cashel is thus removed, and Miler is left to reign alone—perhaps as strange a vicegerent of God upon the earth as has appeared in any country at any time.

### THE SHARING OF THE SPOILS

The death of Desmond left Munster defenceless before the crowd of hungry government supporters. The huge estates of the Earl, to the extent of 574,628 acres, except what was restored to the

## THE BOOK OF THE GALTEES

White Knight, Patrick Condon, etc., were confiscated by an Act of Attainder passed in 1586 in Perrot's parliament.

Many of the occupants of the confiscated lands, however, were able to show that they held legal titles to their estates which were better than those of the Desmonds themselves, to whose overlordship they had only submitted under duress owing to superior force. In the end the confiscations were reduced to between two and three hundred thousand acres altogether.

These were allotted to "gentlemen undertakers" to enclose demesnes of specified area, and plant English farmers on the rest. The lots were 12,000, 8000, 6000, and 4000 acres. The descendants of some of these undertakers remain to the present day, especially in County Limerick, but the attempt to plant English farmers was a failure on the whole. Spenser was an "undertaker" for 4000 acres. Sir Walter Raleigh was perhaps the most favoured grantee, receiving three lots of 12,000 acres each in the Lismore-Youghal district, but he did not hold them for long. A great part of Aherlow and the lands lying between that place and Knockaney was granted to Sir Edward Fitton (whom we have known as Desmond's gaoler). The Fittons were Catholics and Confederates in Cromwell's time, and lost these lands in consequence.

Another remarkable adventurer who was in Ireland about this time deserves some notice. Sir Peter Carew, who came of Geraldine stock, had come over to assert his troublesome claims to the property of remote ancestors. He brought