LETTERS OF AN EXILE.
PART II.

By DR. GEORGE U. MACNAMARA,
Vice-Pres. for Clare, N.M.A.S.


The third letter is taken from a copy of what remained of a draft answer by Mr. Andrew Lysaght to the Admiral in reply to Letter No. II. From it we can infer that a system of native heraldry, or perhaps to speak more accurately, a system of distinctive family and tribal devices, existed in Ireland side by side and quite independent of the official heraldry in vogue at Dublin Castle, and about which the Dublin heralds knew nothing whatever. Some passages in ancient Irish authors seem to confirm this view, and I have little doubt but such pseudo-heraldic devices were used by the chief Celtic families long before the Norman invasion. From the fact that Mr. Lysaght offers to send two coats of arms belonging to the O'Neylans, it is probable that the Admiral was closely connected by blood with that family. (1)

The chalice mentioned is still in use in the Parish of Killaspuglonane. The Rev. Father Burke, Administrator, kindly allowed me on a recent occasion to inspect and photograph the vessel, which in truth is a "decent, solid piece" of silver, in excellent preservation. Its height is 9 3/8 inches, diameter of bowl, 3 inches, that of base, 4 3/4 inches. Two plate-marks are on outside of bowl near the top. One, quite distinct, a harp surmounted by a crown; the other, a good deal worn, is a female figure seated and holding vertically in hand a branch, showing that the piece is of Dublin manufacture of the years 1755-6. On the inside of bottom the date 1820 is engraved, which probably denotes a repair.

(1) There is an "achievement" of the "O'Nellian" family carved in stone over the O'Nellian tomb in Kilnaboy Church. It is at present so incrusted with calcareous matter from the drip that details cannot be made out.
The dedication, incised in two lines around the outside of base, is as shewn in illustration. The translation is:

"The illustrious man, Mr. Daniel O'Huony, who recently held the post of Governor of Ferrol under the Catholic King [of Spain], and who also several times commanded certain ships of the same [King], gave this chalice to his native parish of Kilaspuglenane in the year 1756."

Dear Uncle

I received your very welcome and agreeable ansr of the 31st of August last about ye 30th September, which gave your sisters, nephews & me, the utmost pleasure, as we thereby were informed of your welfare, and as it gave us some hopes (tho' faint & Distant) of having an Opportunity of Seeing and Embracing you before you & they dye, which that you may think more off & that your affairs & God's great Goodness permit, is their constant prayer.

I would have acknowledged that Favour much sooner but Expecting by a close Enquiry I made to find your Family Coat of Arms, which I intended to have sent you on parchment handsomely Embellished & Gilt, but after the strictest Search [made] in the Herald's Books in Dublin & different applications among Friends in this Country, have failed in finding the least trail of it, which is as great a disappointment to my Inclinations as it may be to your Expectations, but cannot at present help it. I have found two different Coats belonging to the O Neylans, and if you chuse it I can send you One or both, tho' I think they can be but of little use not being quartered with your Own. Noe Person here being able to furnish me with any hint or particular of your Arms is a loss to me, if your Own Memory can recollect any part of the Seal you have mented your Brother John to have had, it May be of use to me, as I intend to Continue my search, and shou'd be likewise Glad to know yr Foundatn or Motive for writing Huonyn or O'Huony, when your Father and (I believe) his predecessors wrote and spoke Huonyn or O'Huony.

I read from Mr. Ignatius Terry the remittance mentioned in your letter, the ten pounds for your Sister Mary, and the three for William Corcoran were read with all thanks & Gratitude both by both, in truth it was a most Seasonable relief to both as they are low, and the present a very scarce & hard Season in this Kingdom. Mr. Terry having by my direction bespoke the Chalice in Dublin the Silver Smith either by Willfull or involuntary Mistake made it of a larger size than the sum of 6/ you remitted would answer by 1/ : 10s : od in value which I paid—it is a Decent Solid Piece and has the following inscription, of which I wish you may approve. [Inscription illegible in MS.]

I avoided as you may see having the Inscription too pompous as I understood you always disliked any such. It is now in the hands of Fr Walter Huonyn who is Priest of [Kilaspuglenane Parish, a man] of Learning & Exemplary piety & Morality: but unhappily subject to some Constitutional Weaknesses of Mind.
CLARISSI: VIR DNS DANIEL O HUONY, SUB REGE CATH:
PRAEFECTURAM FERROLAE MODO GERENS, QUIQUE ALIAS IDEN-
TIDEM EJUSDEM * NAVIV: ALIQUOT PRAEFUERAT, CALICEM HUNG
NATALI SÆ PAROCHIAE DE KILASPUGLENANE DONAVIT. AN. 1756.
There being (thank God) noe Material Change in your Relations' affairs or circumstances I forbear saying anything on that head but that my Uncles desire I should repect [to you their Invitation & the pleasure it would assure them & yu] yt you should think of coming to see them, which I most sincerely do in their name & my Own, at the same time declaring my apprehensions that yr Promotion & some other motives, tho yr honour should not be immediately Engaged, will [cause] yu to too long a procrastination which [at] yr time of Life is dangerous in Events, and be assured that nothing but my great affection for yu could Embolden me to take this Freedom with you

Mr. James Aylmer,* a gentleman of High Birth good [judgment] Great Honour & possessed of Every happy & social Qualification & Esteemed by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance you are much obliged to for saying very Good things of you to Your Relations and others, and as I had the happiness of a Degree of Intimacy with him when here about two years agoe. If you see him or Correspond with him I pray you will tender him my most sincere Respects & Compliments, & assure him that if anything he should commission me here in his affairs whereby I could serve him, It would give me the greatest pleasure to do soe. His Worthy Mother dyed about a Month since at Tiremaclanc & was Decently Buried in his Family Tomb in Ennis.

* The first of the ancient family of Aylmer who settled in Clare was James Aylmer, of Cragbrien (par. of Clondegad), youngest son of Bartholomew Aylmer, of Lyons, Co. Kildare. These were a branch of the Aylmers, Barons of Ballinah, Co. Meath. (Vide pedigree of the family in Archdall, 1789.) James, of Cragbrien, appears to have been a transplanted 'papist,' having got lands in Co. Clare, viz., part of Murrough, in Gleninagh parish, parts of Faunoraoska and Ballyny in par. of Killonaghban, and Kildonelballagh (now Ardbookey) in the par. of Tulla. He held Cragbrien in 1659 from the Earl of Thomond, which place the said earl leased for ever in 1712 to John Stackpoole at £70 per annum. (Vide Frost’s Hist. of Clare, pp 490-1, 492-3, 525.) James grandson, Captain Peter Aylmer, of Cragbrien, was surety in 1704 for the Rev. Andrew Boorke, P.P. of Drumcliffe. The Captain James Aylmer of the Spanish service mentioned in Letter III & IV, who must have been a son or other very near relation of Capt. Peter of Cragbrien, had a brother, Richard, an engineer employed on the new naval works at Ferrol in 1758. (Vide Letter No IV.) From the statement in Letter III that Capt. James Aylmer's mother died at Tiermaclanc in Feb. (7) 1757, she may have been one of the Wolfes of that place. This Capt. James was the Don Diego Aylmer, Lieut.-Colonel in 1760, and Colonel in 1772, of the Regimiento de Ultramar, of Spain, and his brother Richard was the Don Ricardo of the same corps. (Vide O’Hart; 1831, p 667.)

The following entry, which throws some further light on the Aylmers of Cragbrien:
I took from an old rent-book of the Earl of Thomond, under the heading "Cragbrien":

"A lease Dated the 1st November 1675 to James Aylmer, during the lives of the said James, Jane his wife, and George their eldest son, with a clause of renewal, Paying a year's Rent within six months, and £5 Herriott on the death of each life. George Aylmer the son was blown up in the River of Cork after the surrender of the Town in the year 1690. I never heard of any tender of the fine or any new life named now 21 years since the Herriott is paid and also what due to the Countess Dowager of Thomond.

"George Aylmer Dead \{ Herriott due £10."
Jane Aylmer Dead
In letter IV. Admiral O'Huonyn gives some further interesting particulars of his career, and treats us to an interesting philological disquisition on what he considers the correct form and spelling of his surname. He distinctly states that his father always wrote himself "Huonyn," the Irish spelling of which was in his opinion Uonhefion, and that it was he (the Admiral) who first changed it into "Huony," while serving in Spain, for certain reasons which he gives. His father certainly wrote his name "Huonyne," for it is so given in the list of sureties for Catholic priests in 1704, one of whom was this very "Walter Huonyne," of Tullamore, who goes bail for the Rev. Murtagh Egan, of Clooney and Kilmanaheen, and for the Rev. Conor O'Brien, of Killshanny and Killaspugtionane (2) According to the late Mr. James Frost, the surname, Huoneen has been Anglicised Green, (3) an opinion which is borne out by the fact that persons of the latter name now live, or very lately lived, in that part of Clare. Furthermore, Green is always rendered O'Tynte by Irish speakers. The latter patronymic seems to have been derived from Tante, a word which used as a substantive means a column, prop, or pillar, but, as an adjective denotes the colour, green. Hence the transformation. In this particular instance we have a very good example of how respectable Irish names were murdered. The iron of slavery, indeed, must have sunk deeply into the hearts and minds of the Irish-speaking people during the penal days, and a very false sense of what was true respectability must have possessed them, when men could be found to deliberately change an ancient patronymic like O'Tynta (which, if the old Admiral's father is correct in his philology, is etymologically beautiful, meaning Fair Column,) into what was to them a most unmeaning and—if I may use the term—a colourless name like Green, which, however, they generally looked upon as the correct thing to do when speaking English. Many similar instances have occurred, I am sorry to say, and are still occurring, in Clare and other parts of Ireland, all from a mistaken notion of respectability. To give an instance—the once very respectable Clare surname O'Tyne (the correct Irish spelling of which I do not know) is now invariably written Thynne, a purely English

(2) Frost's Hist. of Clare, p. 558.
(3) Ibid. Where in a note he refers to these letters.
family name. One more instance of this sort of thing may be mentioned. There are numerous Howards in Thomond to-day, not one of whom has a single drop of Howard blood in his veins, their real name being Ó h ʿomáit, a tribe-name which figures in John Mac Rory MacGrath's History, the _Cathbhrim Toirdealbháigh_.

IV.

Ferral, April ye 4th, 1758.

Dear Nephew

Your esteemed favour of ye 1oth of ye expir'd satisys ye great longing I had to receive yr lines, wth yr acct of yr welfare, & yr of my dear sisters, & their long issue, wch thank God is good & gives me inexpressible satisfn, wishing all of you the hapiness you can desire. The Coat of arms you remit is arriv'd safe, & I esteem much yr care in procureing it, in ye Search of wch I observe you mett more difficulty than I expected, in ye consideration yt I have been inform'd for certain yt my Br John brought [one] wth him yt disappear'd, wth everything else he posses'd. I thought a Copy, or some notice of it may remain in ye hands of Somebody of our relations & observing wth care ye description you give of its parts, my ignorance of Heraldry, & ye Terms of it, makes me uneasy about what you say of ye Crest, wch in my ignorant opinion seems to be too Pomposious, corresponding rather to Illustrious Family's I revere (than to mine) wth whom I doe not presume to cope. Wherefore I expect yr Council & Directions about reforming of it (altho you say it belongs to ye ʿo Neylans) or any other superfluities in, or about itt, seeing you say my own part is genteel, or rather honorable wth yr will remain content, & will make noe show of this untill I receive yr answer to my proposal, wth yr further directions, and as for ye inscription upon ye chalice, wch you say you avoided to make too Pomposious, understanding I always dislik'd such (in wch you are right) I would chuse itt was not see much as itt is, rather yt itt was more Laconick, neither can I comprehend ye necessity of mentioning ye dirty Ferro, to express itt was, or is, my gift etc. Notwithstanding I confirm all you acted & am overjoy'd itt is any how in its Destiny, & in ye hands of Fr Walter. Towards complying wth yr gifts I recommended to yr care, Mr. Ignatius Terry writes he deliver'd you 20l. 7s. 4d wherefore I expect by your next an acct of ye deficiency of sd sume to satisfy ym, together wth cost, & charges you have been att, for ye Coat of Arms, in order to remitt you wt itt may be (so soon as possible) wth a large interest of thanks.—And in order to satisfy yr desire of knowing ye motive of ye alteration you observe in my Sirname, diff. from wt yr Fr writt, I lett you know (wth all truth) yr having arrd at Cadiz in 1713, I unexpectedly mett one Fr Jn a Franciscan Fryer, & a relation of my Frs of whom ye fame reachd yt he was Chaplain of ye Spanish Guards, in great vogue, & wt not of extraordinary circumstance, as is usual, I made my selfe known to him, & to doe justice to his memory he reco'd me kindly, giving me marks of his consideration every way yt depended on him, introducing me as a near relation he valued, and did him no dishonour, but as for intrest I owe him nothing, I believe for the want of means, rather than of good will, neither did I want itt then,
altho often afterwards. He found no difficulty to persuade me to leave ye Engh Service, & being then with Captn Christr ô Brien, he (altho with reluctance) gave me my discharge, & upon ye Fryers examining me to discover my morals, & inclinations, amongst other questions, he asked me who thought me to write my Surname Huony, to wch I answerd yt my Fr from whom I had, yt one by name Uonhefon gave origin to it, from whence Huony (probably in the vocative) to wch he replyed yt he confirm’d ye origin making use of ye Patronymical name Uonhe, as being ye custom of our Contry, & denied ye addition of Fion, as undue for being a Nickname, wch ought to be rejected, affirming he knew ye affair att least soe well as my Fr, wherefore desired I shoul’d thenceforward sign ô Huony as he did, moreover that all men caled me soe takeing & stifling me his Nephew (wch he did not mislike). Notwithstanding his reasons had equal strength & Probability (in my weak opinion) wth those of my Fr I cou’d not resolve for several years to alter my signature until reflecting upon ye inconveniency of my being upon ye Kings Books, & in my Patents Huony and caled soe by all who knew me, in order to prevent ye absurdity yt appeared to me in ye Contradiction I resolved to run wth ye general strong Current, my utmost endeavors cou’d not resist, or turn. Moreover I reflected ye Fryer the only man of ye name known in this Contry, & bore in all stations, soe well in ye Guards, the Irish Brigade, where he served as Chaplain, & in his Convent at Cadiz an extraordinary Good Caracter, & general esteem, wch without passion I think he deserved, for he was a man of solid sense, of happy wit, & becoming facetious humor, generous, with many more Gentleman like qualifications accompanied with ye good ones yt corresponds to his Character of a Religious person, & altho I observe I enlarged too far upon this subject, I think I cou’d not doe less, in order to Justify my Conduct, & satisfy you yt, neither vanity, or legerety contributed, in ye least, to ye alteration you observe, but ye reasons I expose without exaggeration, & further for yr information I let you know yt ye Spaniards (amongst whom I serve) cou’d never pronounce ye last n in my Name as sounding too harsh for them, & yt they continue pronouncing Huony, Ony or Oni to wch I am obliged’d to answer, & conform, as being impossible to redress this any more than wth I exposed above. And as for my retireing to finish my Days amongst you my Dr relatives, I assure you upon honor, yt as ye motives subsist I heretofore hinted upon ye subject, ye study of ye manner of fulfilling my desire & happiness yt way, occupies my thoughts more frequent than is convenient for my repos’d, I leave to God’s care to bring it about with ye circumstance of decency without reproach. It penetrates my Heart wth grieve yt yr Br Conor precipitated himself, as you participat, he will suffer for itt smartly, & itt wou’d be an incurable wound, & black blemis to my reputation yt such a rake should resolve to come to join me, as he may, like the rest of his extravagancy’s, for by coming from Eng’d I cou’d not procure him the place of a single soldier, as being an invincible law of ye Contry upon ye acct of Religion. I am sorry itt is not in my power to procure Mr. Sexton the busines you propose, for ye Contractors of ye Provisions of ye Navy are Great Men, & live att Court, who employ Merchants (settled in ye Contry) of known reputation to supply what they want, I doe not expect this cæle [sic] will continue—This part of ye Contry does not afford such Jack asses as you.
would have, they can only be had in the Southermost Provences of ye Kingdom 160 leages hence, where I have no acquaintance, & only can inform [you] that Mr. Willm Terry of Malaga,* is ye person yt can serve you best, as he lives near ye place where they abound, & by ye best information I can gett, they are excessive dear.——Captn James Ailmer is at present 450 miles hence, & shall know yr expressions immediately by ye means of his Br Richd who is here in ye quality of an Ingenier.—This is a retired place, in ye poorest, & most barren part of Spain, hitherto a miserable Fishery village, now beginning to be mentioned upon acct of the arsenal for ships yt is building in its good Fort, without any Comerce, or Trade, a proof of wch, this is ye only vessel I have seen in itt those 2 years from yt Contry. I comanded here 2 years (not the Ferrol but ye branch of our Mareen in itt) until 29 months age an officer of Higher rank took possession of itt, since I remain without Destiny, & never have been halfe soe long in any place, wch wth ye quality of ye Contry, & climat makes me desireous to exchange itt for ye better air of Cadiz, but how to obtain itt is ye Difficulty, if fortune does not favor me this Summer wch I doubt altho we have an armament.——My Kinsman John O'Brien could inform you if he pleas'd of the miserableness of this Contry, who att his Departure asked me, what I would have him say att home to wch I answr'd briefly yt he may relate what he saw, adding yt I believed he woud doe wt he pleas'd, in wch I imagine I was right, for as he did not lett me know his arrival I may doubt he complied with my request, in acknowledgmt of my kindness to him. This goes by ye vessel yt brought me yours, altho in ye doubt yt she returns to Limerick a duplicat of wch you may expect by the 1rst opportunity yt offers for yt Kingdom in order to prevent miscarriage, & in case of another occasion shoud offer from Limerick this Spring you may direct to me to this, but generally speaking the shortest way is under cover to Mr. Dominick Terry att Cadiz & lett ye superscription for me be, To Admiral Daniel O' Huony. I conclude wth my most cordial love, & service to my Dr Sisters, & their large issue to whose Prayers I recomand my selfe, & in return I pray the Almighty to bles & direct them, in ye true way to eternal bliss, & remain Dr Nephew

Your most affectionat Uncle & humble
servt

To Mr. Andrew Lysaght.

DANIEL HUONY.

The following note was appended to the copy of this letter lent me in the handwriting of the late Mr. T. G. Stackpoole Mahon:——

"The duplicate is almost exactly the same, word for word—except that it states that the original thereof was sent by the Portuguese vessel that brought the letter to which it was an answer, it being doubtful whether that vessel would return to Limerick. "This letter was copied for choice, as the duplicate was quite faded and in parts illegible. T. G. S. M., Nov. 16, 1888."

* Dominick Terry was a well-known merchant of Cadiz. Vide list of subscribers to Silvester O'Halloran's "General History of Ireland, etc." London 1778. William Terry, probably a son or brother, was a merchant at Malaga. (Ibid.) Ignatius Terry, mentioned above, was another member of the family, and from the context appears to have lived somewhere in Ireland.