

CHAPTER XXX

ROUTE NO. 4._TO BRIDESWELL AND SOUTH EOSCOMMON, BY SKEA, ELPHIN, SHANKILL, TULSK,
CRUACHAN, BASLIC, EOSCOMMON, CASTLEREA AND FRENCHPARK

LEAVING Boyle, we skirt the Hill of Dunamease on the right and pass Dun Ceasair on the left, keeping the straight road through Runabull Bog until we come in sight of the old churchyard of Caldragh. Hereabouts, though no monument of any kind marks the scene, fell once for Ireland's cause, a successor of St. Patrick, Archbishop MacGauran, who was the immediate successor of Primate Creagh, who also suffered martyrdom. The place is called Sciath-na-Feart—the field of wonders. In Myles O'Reilly's *Martyrs and Confessors* the story is thus told:—

“ In the year 1594 Pope 'Clement VIII employed the prelate as his envoy to the Irish nation, with the view of animating them to persevere steadfastly in the Faith, and, rather than deny their consciences and their God, to shed the last drop of their blood in defence of their religion. The recent edict of Elizabeth against the priests and Catholics was the last of the many causes that alarmed the holy Pontiff's zeal, and rendered such exhortation necessary.

Not content with ejecting the bishops and priests from their dwellings and hunting them into woods, nor by punishing them by fines and confiscations, both priests and people, for not attending the Protestant worship, nor with punishing as high treason every acknowledgment of the Pope's spiritual authority, this unrelenting persecutrix published a new edict on the 18th October, 1591, in which she commands all heads of families to seek out and discover the priests, whom she calls Jesuits and Seminarists, and deliver them over, under a strong guard, to her officers.

◁ The Irish princes had frequently implored, during the last fifty years, the advice of the Roman Pontiff, and his interposition, either personally or through the French or Spanish Monarchs, with the Court of England on their behalf. When their remonstrances failed of effect, the Irish then asked for military assistance.

◁◁ In these circumstances Philip II of Spain, incensed against England for some depredations committed on his European and American dominions and waging against her an unsuccessful war for the last five years, promised at length to send an effectual military aid to the Irish, and commissioned Primate MacGauran to give the Irish princes the most positive assurance of its speedy 361

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arrival. Dr. MacGauran, setting sail from Spain in the vessel of James Fleming, a merchant of Drogheda, arrived in Ireland in the beginning of 1594 with these two commissions.

◁ He lost no time in visiting the different princes of Ulster. He communicated to them his commissions, and then took up his residence with Maguire, Prince of Fermanagh, on the confines of his diocese.

◁ Maguire, before his arrival, had been in arms against England, and when Lord Deputy Sussex called on him to deliver up the Primate he peremptorily refused.

Shortly after he directed his forces against the English possessions in Connaught, and brought the Bishop with him.

< Sir H. Bingham, the Governor of that province, despatched Sir William Guelfort with a body of troops to oppose him.

< The two armies, on the 23rd of June, met at a place called Sciath-na Feart (the shield of wonders). The cavalry of both were before the fort and, there being a very thick mist, they saw not each other till they met.

< The signal was given, and a brisk and determined action having been commenced by the cavalry, Maguire, after much fighting, fixed his eye on the opposite General, and setting spurs to his horse and cutting a passage for himself through the surrounding officers with his sword, he pierced Guelfort through with his lance.

The English, astonished at this daring bravery and seeing their commander slain, fled from the field.

The Primate was at a short distance from the engagement, administering the last sacraments and hearing the confessions of some of the mortally wounded soldiers. (Dr. Roothe says * reconciling a dying heretic.)

* (A party of fugitive cavalry happened to come upon him while thus engaged, and transpierced with their lances the unarmed and inoffensive Archbishop, being roused to rage by seeing him thus engaged in the vocation of a Catholic clergyman."

EDMUND MACGAURAN, ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH

Brady says:—" Contradictory accounts are extant of the death of MacGauran. The *Four Masters* say that he was killed on the 3rd of July, 1593, in a battle fought near Tulsk, in Roscommon Barony, between McGuire, Prince of Fermanagh, and the English, commanded by Sir Richard Bingham, President of Connaught."

On the other hand, the author of *Analecta* says that " Primate MacGauran was killed in 1598, while administering confession to a wounded man."

Warding (Tom. XXIII, page 294, sub anno 1598) gives the date as February 15th, 1598.

Sir Richard Bingham himself, however, has proved that

MacGauran died in 1593, although not on the 3rd of July. In his letter to the Privy Council, dated the 28th June, 1593, he thus narrates the death of MacGauran:—< McGuire was on horseback; and. all their principal men and himself escaped so narrowly that the very next unto him, round about him, were stricken down, amongst whom his ghostly father titular, Primate MacGauran, lost his life—a man of more worth in respect of the villainy and combinations which he had wrought with the ill Irishry than the overthrow of divers hundreds of the other beggars, and so generally is his death lamented as. if the same were their utter overthrow.

< And assuredly (right honourable) he was the only stirrer and combiner of their mischiefs towards us in Ulster (and the primer of McGuire to come forward in their two journeys, making the Irishry full of belief that they should have this summer Spaniards), and another champion of the Pope's, like Dr. Alien, the notable traitor; but,

God be thanked, he has left his dead carcass on the Maughery, only the said rebels carried his head away with them, that they might universally bemoan him at home."—Brady's *Episcopal Succession*, Vol. —, p. 224.)

MacGauran was Bishop of Ardagh till 1587, when he was promoted to Armagh on the death of Archbishop Creagh. In Boscommon, June 23rd—Bonfire Night—should be also the Feast of this patriotic Primate and Martyr.

SCORMORE AND OFLANAGAN'S COUNTRY

O'Donovan says:—

Ail Finn, July 31st, 1837. Dear Sir,

Yesterday I went to the pattern of Scormore, a place formerly celebrated for pilgrimages, but now for drinking whiskey and fighting. There is a very fine well there, which is said to have been blessed by St. Patrick, who called it TOBHAR AN SCUIR, which means, it is said, the well of the *cessation*, because he *ceased* (scuiR) from all his labours there. But of this I believe not a word. There is a collection of round stones on a hill not far from the well to the north-east, and in one of these stones is shown a hollow formed by the knee of St. Patrick while he prayed there. I knelt on one of those round stones yesterday while some old Seannachies were pronouncing the names of the townlands in Kilmacumshy for me, and I must confess the truth that instead of my knee making a hollow in it, it formed a hollow in my knee. So much have things changed their nature since the time of St. Patrick! No Stations are performed here now, nor have been since a man was killed at a quarrel several years since, which caused the clergy to condemn, or desecrate, the place. While this place retained its sanctity (which it does yet if men would lay aside their wickedness, for the blessing of St. Patrick

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will never be rendered null and void) the pilgrims used to pray on the hill above referred to, and, *inter oraudentum*, took up in their hands the round stones, one by one, and laid them down again in the same order in which they found them, repeating a pater and ave for every stone. *Hi lapides* NA DEICHNEABHAR appellati sunt, quod Latine sonat *decades*. They might be called the *beads* of the hill. The parish of Kilmacumshy, in which this sacred (cursed) locality lies, is called CILL O'G COIMSICH in Irish, but I have no historical reference to it.

It is stated in the *Annals of the Four Masters* at the year 1468 that SCOR MOR was situated in the territory of *Clann Chathail*, which was O'Flanagan's country. And it appears from another passage that a part of this territory, which was held by MacDermot as a portion of his territory of Moylurg, was recovered by O'Conor.

The tradition in the country is that O'Flanagan's country extended from Belanagare to Elphin, and that he resided at Mointeach, now confined to Mantua. This tradition agrees with the position of O'Flanagan on Ortoluis Improved, and is corroborated by the *Annals of the Four Masters* which, at the year 1601, speak of Elphin as on the frontiers of Moylurg, Tir-Ui-Briuin, Clann Cathail and Moy-Nai.

The Abbe Mageoghegan, in his Map of the Dynasties of Connacie, makes this territory extend all the way from Elphin down to Lough Arrow, which is shamefully

wrong, for Moylurg lay between it and even Lough Key. Dr. O'Connor calls Mageoghegan's *History of Ireland* a work below mediocrity. Mr. Moore will also sprinkle his history with innumerable petty blunders in topography and history, as he will swallow all Dr. O'Connor's mistranslations and wilful fabrications. I now find that I must cut the parish of Kilmacumshy off Moylurg and all of it to the territory of the Sil-Murry. It is true that MacDermot possessed a great part of this parish, but MacDermot's extension of his territory by conquest would not extend the Plain of Moylurg. In the list of parishes from the *Liber Regalis visitationis*, 1615, the following parishes are placed in the Deanery of Moylurg, but by Moylurg is there meant *all* MacDermot's country of Moylurg properly so called (now the Plains of Boyle), *Tir-Tuathail* and *Airteach*:—(1) Kilnamanagh; (2) Ardcarne; (3) Killumod; (4) Assylin, now Boyle; (5) Taghboin, now Tibchine; (6) Kilcoulagh; (7) Kileivekin, now Killukin Hiberne Kill-Evekeen; (8) Kilrudan, Clonard and Killienaw, belonging (as they now also do) to Taghboyne. In the Deanery of Sil-Murry are placed the parishes of (1) Elphin; (2) Kilmacumshy; (3) Shankill; (4) Ballinakill; (5) Kilcorkey; (6) Baslick; (7) Kilking-han; (8) Kilkeevin, Kill Coemgin; (9) Ballintober; (10) Kilcooley; (11) Killukin; (12) Ogulla; (13) Roscommon, (14) Fuerty; (15) Drumtemple,

This does not give a complete list of all the parishes in either territory, for it omits parishes belonging to monasteries and those the tithes of which were in the possession of laymen. But the list, as far as it goes, answers my purpose very well; for it proves where the territory of the Sil-Murry met Moylurg. The parishes of Shankill, Kilmacumshy and Kilcorkey were in Sil-Murry ; Kilcolagh and all to the north between it and Boyle were in Moylurg.

Now to point out the extent of the three *Tuathas*, which has never yet been done! In the Royal Visitation Book of 1615 I can plainly see that just as the country of the three MacDermots is set down as the Deanery of Moylurg, so are the three *Tuathas* set down as the Deanery of *Tranligh* (Tir Ainlighe), or O'Hanly's country. This is pretty correct, as I believe O'Hanly was considered the *senior* of the three tribes, who occupied NA TEORA TUATHA, the three territories called the three *Tuathas* of Connaught. Thus in the *Annals of the Four Masters* at the year 1475:—

" Edmond, the son of Melaghlin O'Hanly, worthy of becoming the chief of the *three Tuathas*, died 15 days before the festival of St. Michael."

This much being cleared up, another difficulty presents itself, : for the Royal Visitation Book does not give us all the parishes in the Deanery of Tir-Ainlighe, but only such as were then occupied by the monastic parishes and such as were usurped by laymen being omitted. The number given, however, will afford a great clue to the extent, viz.: (1) Termonberry; (2) Kiltristan; (3) Aughrim; (4) Clonfelagh, now Clonfinlough.

This list shows that the Deanery of Tirenligh extended from the parish of Aughrim to that of Cluain Finlough, and included both. So far the stream of the inquiry is clear. Next we learn from the Annals and MacFirbis's pedigrees that the three principal chiefs who inhabited the three *Tuathas* were: (1) O'Hanly, over *Kinel-Dofa*; (2) MacBrannan, over *Corcachlan*; (3) O'Beirne, over *Tir Briuin*.

Now there are many ways for discovering the extent of country called the *three*

Tuathas. (1) We learn from the whole current of the Irish Annals the Tuathas were completely defined and bounded on the east by the Shannon; on the north by the Shannon and Moylurg; on the west by Sil-Murry, and on the south by modern Tir or Hy-Many. (2) From the list of parishes in Moylurg, it appears that the parishes of Killukin and Killymod bounded the Tuathas on the north; and from the list in Sil-Murry, that the parishes of Elphin and Killukin bounded them on the west. (3) It appears from Inquisitions 32c and 34 Eliz. that the Rectory of *Corcachlan*, in the barony of Roscommon, extended into all the townlands of the parishes of Kiltrustan, Clonfinlough and Templeareogh, This at once gives us the extent

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of *Corcachlan*, the country of MacBrannan. Next we want the situation and the extent of the other *two Tuathas*, viz., Kinel-Dofa and *Tir-Briuin*. (4) *Tir-Briuin* retains its name to this day, and is said to extend from Elphin to Jamestown, and we have the testimony of John Keogh, who wrote in 1683, for the same. Writing to Sir William Petty, he said: « Connaught—and, I suppose, other provinces—was anciently distinguished into countries called Doochie or Tycare (Tuaith, Tire), named from such and such families inhabiting them, as in the barony of Athlone Doochie Keogh, the country or nation of the Keoghes. In the barony of Ballintober Doochie Hanly, the country of the Hanlys, *and betwixt Elphin and Jamestown that sweet country Tuer-O'Ruin, alias Tuer O'Byrne, the country of the Beirns.*»

This country of the O'Beirnes was called by the Irish Annalists UI BHRIAIN NA SIONA, and TIR BRIUIN NA SIONA, or Hy-Briuin and Tir-Briuin of the Shannon, to distinguish it from other territories of the name in Connaught. It is now called TIR UA RIUIN (now Ruin), the *bh* being by corruption entirely suppressed in the pronunciation. The tradition in the country is that *Tir-Ua-Riuin* is co-extensive with the parish of Aughrim, but it can be proved from the Annals that it also comprised the parish of Kilmore.

« 1232. The Church of Kilmore in Hy-Briuin na Sionna was consecrated by Donogh O'Conor, Bishop of Elphin, and Canons were ordained (appointed) in the same town (Baile) by Con OFlanigan, who was Prior there.»

At the year 1398 Aughrim Mac Naodha, now Aughrim, is mentioned as lying in the territory Tir Briuin na Sionna, which corroborates the tradition now current in every part of this country that *Tir-Ua-Riuin* lies between Elphin and Jamestown, and it is as sweet a country as ever men contended for. The O'Beirnes are getting up there again. The probability is that Tir-Briuin comprehended the parishes of Aughrim Kilmore and Tir-Briuin, that Corcachlan comprised those of Kiltrustan, Cloon-finlough and Templeareagh; and Kinel-Dofa, or O'Hanly's country, Termonbarry, Lissonduffy and Cloontooskert. But of these *three Tuathas* I have much more to write, and many other proofs to bring forward to show their real situation and varied extent. The three summer months are over, and Roscommon not yet finished.

Your obedient servant,

JOHN O'DONOVAN.

OFLANAGAN'S COUNTRY

From the extent of the *Lathach ria-bhach*, said to have been O'Flanagan's country, from the present locality of the tribe, and from many other evidences I could infer that before O'Conor Roe had crippled the power and circumscribed the territory of

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O'Flanagan, his country comprised the parishes of Kilmacumsby, Kilcorkey, Shankill, and the greater part of the parishes of Creeve and Elphin. This territory was called Clan Cahill, and the following places are mentioned as lying in it, viz. : (1) *Scor-mor*, now in the very centre of the district called the *Lathach-riabhach*; (2) *Loch-na-n-Gasan*; this name does not now exist; there was a church at the place but, as the name is lost and as so many loughs have been drained and dried up, I cannot say, *with* any certainty, which of the many old ruins of churches at present existing in the district it could have been. (3) Kilvegoone, in O'Flanagan's country, did belong unto the Dominican Abbey of Elphin: Inquis. 27, Eliz. (4) *Cealldrach*, in the parish of Shankill, Inquisition temp. Jac. I, finds < that Cormac O'Flanagan, of Caldrach, is < seized of fee of the cartron of Caldragh, Clowneboyage/ " (5) Ballyroddy. This was the seat of the O'Flanagan, who was *Mormaor* to the King of Connaught.

Shankill, west of Elphin, is the next place of interest we meet with on the road to Tusk. It is called Senchell Dumaige, the Old Church of the Mounds, by those who chronicled the missionary journeys of .St. Patrick. Dr. Healy must be our guide here. He says the Old Church was just at the cross-roads beyond the Deanery and < the mounds " that gave it its ancient name, Sumacha Hy n, Arlella. The Mounds of Hy Arlella may still be noted, but the building itself has now -completely disappeared, although the graveyard is still much frequented and is full of tombs of O'Flanagans, Morans, and Sharkeys. At this point Patrick was at the meeting of three territories, Tu Ailella, Corcu Achlann, and Magh Ai, in its stricter sense, which designated merely the royal demesne of the Connaught Kings. Their palace lay straight before him to the south-west, about four miles distant on the brow of the beautiful ridge which overlooks one of the fairest scenes in Ireland.

Leaving in Shankill, Maichet and Cetchen and Rodan, a chief priest, and moreover Mathona, the sister of the youthful Benan, Patrick left this second convent germ—the first appears to have been the two Emers at Clonbroney. Patrick went by the high ridge .stretching over the small lakes and marshes that intervened on the south by Cloonyquin towards Tusk and Tomona. It was the road to Cruachan, and he probably pitched his camp for the night not far west of Tusk. As we pass on to Tusk we meet the wood of Ross, where, according to the Annals, a great battle was once fought between the Irish and the invaders. The ruins of the old Church or Abbey is to be seen in the churchyard of Killina, concerning which we refer the reader to O'Donovan's letters on the matter, *i.e.*, Killenaghmore.

Dr. Healy describes the dawn of Christianity in Cruachan thus:—"When the morning sun rose over the hills near the Shannon, St. Patrick and his clerics went at sunrise to the well,

namely, Clebach, on the eastern flanks of Cruachan Hill. The well is there still, a great rushing fountain coming out from the rocks just under the road from Tulska towards Cruachan, close to the spot where stood the ancient church, built expressly to commemorate this most touching scene in the whole history of St. Patrick.

"Even the old chroniclers feel its charm, and were melted into poetry when they described it. It never fades from the mind of those who read the history of St. Patrick, and to this day no one can ever hear the story unmoved. But to appreciate it fully one must visit the place, or at least try and realise the scene.

< Patrick and his household camped during the night close to the Well of Clebach, or Cleabach, intending next day to proceed to celebrate the mystic Sacrifice. They were dressed in their long robes, worn by the monks of the time, but their tonsured heads were bare, and their feet were sandalled.

<< There is a green bank all round the well, and limestone crops up here and there, making natural seats just on the margin of the great limpid foundation. It was a great and beautiful spot, and so the clerics sat down on the rocks, with their books in their hands, to chant their office, just as the sun was rising over the far distant hills of Leitrim, through which they had travelled some days before. But now they, too, saw a strange sight at early morn—two maidens tripping down the green meadows, one of fair complexion, with her golden hair streaming in the wind;

the other with ruddier features crowned with auburn hair. They were attended by their maids and by two aged men, clearly Druids, who had charge of the maidens, as their fosterers. It was customary for these royal girls, according to the simple habits of the times, to come and wash in the fountain, as royal maidens did in ancient Greece.

< But now when they came to the fountain and saw the clerics seated with their books in their hands, dressed in strange garments and speaking strange words, they stood lost in amazement. But they were royal maidens, daughters of the High King of Erin, and they were not afraid. Their curiosity prompted them to speak, for, as the *Book of Armagh* tells us, they knew not who the strangers were, nor of what guise nor of what race, nor of what country—they thought them fairy men, or gods of the earth, or perhaps ghosts.

< Wherefore they said, * Who are you, or whence have you come?' Whereupon Patrick, repressing their curiosity, said:

* It were better for you to confess your faith in our true God than to ask about our race.' The narrative is exact, but the questions are compressed in it. Then the elder girl, the fair-haired Eithna, said: ' Who is your God? Where is His dwelling-place? Has your God sons and daughters, gold and silver? Is he ever-living? Is he beautiful? Have many chiefs fostered

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His Son? Are His daughters beautiful and dear to the men of the world? Dwelleth He in Heaven or on earth, or in the sea, or in the rivers or in the mountains, or in the valleys? How is He to be loved? Is He to be found, and shall we find Him in youth or old age? Tell us this knowledge of God and how He can be seen.'

« This flood of questions the curious maiden, with Royal courage, addressed to

Patrick, the leader of those strange beings. Then "Patrick, full of the Holy Spirit," says the writer, < replied to the Royal maidens, answering all their questions, but beginning with the most important.

< ' Our God is the God of all men; the God of the'-heavens and of the earth, of the sea and of the rivers; the God of the sun and of the moon; the God of lofty hills and of deep valleys; a God 'who is over the heavens, under .the heavens; who hath for His dwelling-place heaven and earth, and sea, and all things that are therein. He breathes 'in all things, sustains all things. He kindles the light of the sun, and the moon light He keeps by night. He made the foundation's in the dry land, and the dry islands in the sea; and the stars He has set to aid the greater lights. He has a Son alike and co-eternal with Himself. Neither is the Son younger than the Father, nor is the Father older than the Son, and the Holy Spirit .breathes in them 'both; nor are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost divided.

< * Now, as you are daughters of an earthly king, I want to bring you right to this Heavenly King. Believe ye, then.' And the maidens, as with one voice and one heart, said : * Teach us with all care how we may believe in this Heavenly King; tell us how we may see Him face to face, and how we may do all that you have told us.'

"Then Patrick, after instruction, no doubt, said: * Do you believe that by baptism the sin of your father and mother (original sin) is taken away?' They said: (We believe it.' (Do you believe in penance after sin?' 'We believe it.' 'Do you believe in a life after death and a resurrection on the Day of Judgment?' * We believe it.' (Do you believe in the unity of the Church?' * We believe it.'

** It will be observed that Patrick here merely required faith in the chief articles of the Apostles' Creed. He had, no doubt, first instructed the maidens, and then required them to make a formal act of faith in those articles, as is done still before baptism. Whereupon they were baptized, and Patrick blessed a white veil and placed it on their heads. This was, apparently, not the veil of the baptismal rite, but the white veil of their virginity, which they consecrated to God. Then they asked to see the face of Christ, but the Saint said to them: (You cannot see the face of Christ except you taste death and receive the

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Sacrifice (before death)/ And they replied: * Give us the Sacrifice that we may see our spouse, the Son of God/

“ So, by the well-side, under God's open sky, the Sacrifice was offered, and they received the Eucharist of God, and fell asleep in death.

< They were placed in the same bed, covered with one coverlet, and their friends made great mourning for the maiden twain, but all heaven rejoiced. So far as we can judge, they were the first of the white-robed host of Irish maidens who passed the gates of death to be with their Spouse for ever in heaven."

** * Give us the Sacrifice! ' each bright head

Bent towards it, as sunflowers bend to'the sun;
They ate, and the blood from the warm cheek fled,

The exile was over, the home was won. A starry darkness overflowed their
 brain, • "
 Far waters beat on some heavenly shore, Like the dying away of a low, sweet
 strain,
 The young life ebbed, and they breathed no more. At death they smiled, as
 though on the breast
 Of the Mother Maid they had found their rest."

AUBREY DE VERE.

We have given here the account of the *Book of Armagh*, word for word. To add 'to it would be to spoil it. We cannot here continue the full story of developments. Caplait the Druid became a cleric. Mael, his brother, acted differently at first, but Patrick preached and prayed until Mael finally yielded and became a Christian and a cleric; hence there arose the celebrated Irish proverb, "Mael is like unto Caplait," which seems to signify the hardened sinner has at last been converted. So both the Druids believed in God, and, when the time for wailing for the maidens was over, they buried them by 'the fountain of Clebach. making for them a round grave, or ferta, according to ancient customs of the Scots.

But we called it, says Tierchan, a relic, from the relics of the dead that are dead therein, and that graveyard, or ferta, with the bones of the saints, was given to God and Patrick and his heirs for ever. They also built a church of earth in the same place, and it was called Sendomnach Magh Ai, and was given to Patrick for all time.

There can be no doubt that this ancient church is that whose ruins, though of later date, still stand close by Clebach's Well. It is called Ogulla—the church of the Virgins—and has given its title to the parish. It may interest many of our readers to "know that it was only this week—the first week of July, 1927—the Roscommon County Council passed a resolution asking the successor of St. Patrick and the Bishops of Ireland to choose this spot, Ogulla and Clebach Fountain, as the centre at which

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to begin preparations for the holding of the Eucharistic Congress in Ireland in 1932, in commemoration of the fifteenth centenary of St. Patrick's arrival here in 432 A.D.

In all the annals of the Blessed Eucharist there is nothing to equal or excel the welcome given to the Eucharistic King by the royal children in the Heart of Ireland, and in all the earth, large as it is and rich as it may be in places hallowed by scenes of grandeur, glory, heroism or holiness, there is no place more fitting for the erection of a High Altar of Him who loves with an everlasting love than on this (< little bit of heaven," where the ardent love of the first communicants, Eithna and Fidelm, burst through the barriers of flesh and blood to see and live for evermore with the True King, Jesus Christ.

When the children of Ireland—men, women, youths and maidens—set to work to build the Throne of Christ the King in the Eucharistic City of O'Donnell, then indeed will the last honoured of our Blessed Sacrament Saints become the first, for no land can equal their *cead mile failte*—then shall the little children of Clebach Fountain lead us again to the true fountain of peace and charity and faith in the sacred decagon of

God's love—the Ten Commandments. While we have been telling the story of Roscommon's welcome to St. Patrick, and his Divine Mother, we have come upon the Abbey of Tulsk, and we shall allow Duaid MacFerbis and others to speak of this and other vestiges of its olden glories before we give John O'Donovan's letters from this district. We shall quote again from the Archbishop of Tuam: —

Princes of the line of Heremon dwelt in Cruachan of Magh Ai from the beginning, and continued to dwell there down to the Anglo-Norman invasion. . . . It was for seventy years the

scene of the loves and the wars of the renowned Queen Maeve during the first century before the Christian era, and always continued to be the chief royal residence of the Gaelic Kings of Connaught. Not far from the royal rath was the royal cemetery, which is filled with the dust of kings. It was perhaps the most celebrated of all the pagan cemeteries of Erin. There was a famous cave there too, the enchanted cave of Cruachan, which is celebrated in fairy legends, and there too stands the pillar-stone of red granite—the famous Cairrthe-dhearg—which marks the grave of the renowned Dathi. The enchanted cave can still be traced, and Dathi's pillar still stands erect above the hero's grave. But the royal palace is merely a great mound overlooking all the wide-spreading plain of Magh Ai."

TULSK ABBEY

Situated 15 miles south of Boyle, was founded in 1443 by Phelim Mac Dowell. In the *Annals of Ireland*, Mac Firbis says:—" 1448. Brian (O'Connor) went wounded to Ballintobair, and

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died next day, and was buried in the Friars' Monastery in Roscommon;

and Phelim (O'Connor) remained that night in Kilculy, and died in the same house the next day, after Extreme Unction and Penance, in a friar's habit, and he chose to be buried in the friars' house at *Tulsky*, to whom he granted a quarter of land the same year to 'build a monastery therein, and it was after his burial that the monastery was consecrated to the glory of God and the honour of St. Dominic and to Diarmuid Maeltaly. And also Phelim, aforesaid, bestowed and left a great rick of corn as help to the friars to begin that work."

1595. The Abbey was << newly repaired" by Sir Richard Bingham; and in '1596 it was leased to Taaffe of Sligo.

1608. It was leased to William Brounker, esquire. The Dominicans do not appear to have made any attempt to live in Tulsk after the suppression of the monasteries, except that the General Chapter held in Rome in 1694 enjoins the Provincial to institute a Prior for this convent.

TULSK, 15 miles south of Boyle. O'Connor Roe erected a castle here in 1406, and during the same century a Dominican monastery was founded either by Mac Dull or Mac Dowell, or by Phelim, son of Phelim Cleary O'Connor, who was interred here in 1448. The castle was for a long time one of the strongest in the province, and was garrisoned by the Earl of Kildare when he led his forces into this province in 1499.

The monastery continued to flourish till the reign of Elizabeth, but for some time prior to the dissolution its possessions were usurped by the Corporation of Galway.

A Dominican Abbey was also founded at Toemonia, near the town, by O'Connor Roe, which in the reign of Elizabeth was found to be in the possession of the Franciscans of the Third Order, on whose suppression it was granted by the Queen to Richard Kyndelinshe. The inhabitants were incorporated by Charles II. by* the designation "Portreeve, Free Burgesses and Commonalty of the Borough of Tulsk." The charter also conferred the elective franchise, with the power to hold a court of record and a weekly market. Under this charter the Corporation consisted of a portreeve, 15 free burgesses and an indefinite number of freemen, assisted by two sergeants-at-mace and other officers appointed in the usual manner. The portreeves and free burgesses continued to return two members of the Irish Parliament till the Union, when the borough was disfranchised. The town is now only a village. There are some remains of the ancient Abbey, situated in a large cemetery, which is still used as a burial place, and also of the conventual buildings; but the chief feature is the double-arched doorway, divided in the centre by a round pillar, which is of elegant and good preservation.

Bullocks and sheep now possess the rich lands once held << by

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bold peasantry," the children of Ireland. Nearby is the famous site of Rath Cruachan.

FEIS EATH CRUACHAN. The restoration of Ireland to its rightful place among the nations of the earth was the abiding dream of Padraic Pearse and his companions in martyrdom and in suffering. When Pearse and Plunkett died for their ideal their shattered hopes and dreams were taken to the Heart of Ireland, and Count Plunkett, father of one of the martyrs, was hailed as "the Corner-stone of the Republic." The descendants of Ono, the Elphin Druid, were there, as of old, to assist and confirm his inauguration—Father M. O'Flanagan representing Clan Cathaill, Father Malachy Brennan representing O'Branain, Father Hanly representing the Hanly Clan, Father Martin O'Beirne representing the O'Beirnes—and so on. Time passed and brothers again, as too often before, were set at each other's throats, and the disastrous family quarrels are not over yet. Once again English artifice weakened Irish purpose by the old game of (< division among the heads," but this division did not prevent the Heart of Ireland from registering its determination to give Ireland an example of unity on the all-important question of our native language.

Hence, notwithstanding acute divisions on the other matter, there was a unanimous sinking of every personal interest by both parties in order to make Feis Cruachain a success, and once more there seemed but one purpose in the minds of the thousands who assembled at the royal Rath of Meave on July 20th and 21st, 1924—"Tir agus Teanga"—Ireland a nation, one, free and indivisible. The following Roimh-Radh of the Irisleabar na Feise Moire may give the reader a better idea of the sentiments in the Heart of Ireland than any further words of ours:—

ROIMH-RADH

On behalf of the County Committee of the Gaelic League, we beg to bring under the notice of the public the special objects the Committee have in view in reviving the ancient Feis Chruachain after the lapse of about one thousand years.

In the first place to impress the people of Roscommon and adjoining counties with the paramount importance of Rath Cruachain as the royal seat of the Kings of Connacht, and as the parent home of the great High Kings of Ireland for several centuries, as well as the burial-place of the most famous of our kings and warriors.

Secondly, to take steps to preserve from further destruction all that remains of the historic sites, after the course of ages and artificial destruction.

Thirdly, to revive the ancient Feis Chruachain, by bringing together for exhibition and competition the best element in the

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country, in matters that are most essential to preserve our historic continuity with the ancient Irish Race.

We are confident these objects will appeal to the patriotic instincts of every good Irishman. It is calculated that a sum of at least £500 will be necessary to carry out the project in a fitting manner, and therefore it is hoped that the Committee will receive generous financial assistance to enable it to make this first attempt at the revival of Feis Chruachain a success.

M. MACBRANAIN, S., Mointeach, Caislean Riabhach.

T. O'SEARCAiGH, S.P., Mainistir na Buaille.

S. O'DoMHNAiLL, O.S., Caislean an Phluingceadaigh,
Gaislean Riabhach. CAITLIN NI THOIRBEIRD, Runaidhe Timthreachta,
Mainistir na Buaille.

A few quotations from this publication may not be out of place:—"Rathcroghan was more than an ancient settlement, it was a royal capital, a focus of social and political life, a centre in which the inarticulate aspirations of a people crystallised into national law. That fruitful labour and the accumulation of surplus wealth were possible in this favoured area is beyond question, deducible not merely from the authentic tradition that Rathcroghan was a royal capital, with the *entourage* of wealth and leisure which that implies, but directly from the study of the region itself. As all flesh is grass, so all wealth is soil;

for though man does not live by bread alone, man-power is very largely a function of food supply, and the man-power cradled here became in time the first power in the West, because to the natural wealth, strength, and nodality of the site was added that central position in the western plain which was a *sine qua non* to its effective control."

* The historic picture of Queen Maeve assembling here the man-power of Connaught for her Ulster wars is much more than a romantic or personal episode. It is a symbol of the leadership assigned to Rathcroghan by Nature herself. Early heroic literature is mainly concerned with a long drawn out struggle between Ailill and Medbh of Connaught and Conchobhar of Ulster. The struggle continued intermittently. The supremacy of Connaught was definitely established. McNeill summarises as follows:— The hostile relations between Ulster and Connaught continued, but the Kings of Connaught gradually grew more powerful. Upon their increase of power thus acquired they established a hegemony or primacy over all Ireland. This primacy found its definite expansion in the institution of the high

kingship or monarchy, and the King of Connaught dynasty, reigning at Tara, became monarch of Ireland about the fourth century. Although Tara was the official residence, Cruachan was regarded as the home of the Ard Ri. On the death of the King of Tara the King

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of Connaught became monarch, and a new King was elected at Cruachan. Thus Niall of the Nine Hostages, Dathi, Laoghair, and Ailill Molt reigned first at Cruachan and afterwards at Tara. Niall's great-grandson, Muirchitach, conspired with Lugaid to overthrow Ailill Molt, and at the battle of Ocha, 483 A.D., Ailill Molt was defeated and slain. The wondrous welcome given to Christ the King by the daughters of the High King of Ireland, which took place at this spot, is, says Dr. Healy, * the most touching scene in the whole history of St. Patrick.' And St. Patrick's own successor, the Primate of All Ireland, his Eminence Patrick Cardinal O'Donnell, says, in a letter to the compilers of the volume, ' it is the brightest gem in our whole ecclesiastical history.' Now in view of these statements and the impending celebration of the fifteenth centenary of St. Patrick's arrival here as an apostle by having in Ireland the Eucharistic Congress in 1932, it behoves all who are desirous of fittingly celebrating the memory of those wondrously hospitable First Communicants to strive for the celebration of the Eucharistic Congress in the Heart of Ireland—Roscommon, and oh the site of what was so long the home of the High King of Ireland."

The only objection that can be raised to the erection of the High Altar of the Eucharistic Congress over the ashes of St. Eithna and St. Fidelm is that it is too far removed from railways and towns, but with our modern methods of solving the problem of transport those objections vanish. The other, regarding towns and accommodation for visitors, must be answered by pointing out what America did in the erection of the Eucharistic City of Mundelein. The Irish race, that contributed most to the building of Mundelein, are just as willing, and as well able, with the help of their kinsfolk at home and through the earth, to build for 1932 the Eucharistic City of O'Donnell. The logical place for that Eucharistic City is at Ogulla, in the Heart of Ireland.

We have heard much from the mineral, geological and other experts concerning the undeveloped possibilities of Ireland as regards the materials for construction of houses. There was in the vicinity of Boyle a cement factory at one time, and the material is there still in untold quantities, awaiting the call of the will and the way to grow into constructive material of the finest kind. There is no less than two quarries of what the-geologists call black marble and blue marble in this county. Rockingham House and the Princess Hotel, Boyle, are living examples of the blue variety, and the Roscommon Courthouse of the black variety. Either or both of these when polished show a marble surface. There are also iron mines in Boyle Barony, the products of which were once world-famed, and there are wonderful deposits of clay here and there. These and many other < talents" are ours for the taking, and if we go outside the Heart of Ireland we shall find every portion of the physical body of Ireland

equally prepared •to give up its "talents" to those who seek them and desire to employ them as Nature and its creator, God, intended.

If once the Celtic Cross crusade was carried into every district in Ireland, we would have there a parish or district council of investigation, and the composite reports of the whole physical body could then be arranged in such a manner that the best of the talents of the subsoil and the soil could be brought together to build the City of O'Donnell, and the home for the King of Ireland's Son, and an Irish Race Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

Ireland is a Catholic country, and it is high time that it gave a visible proof of its election of Christ the King. The task here outlined in a general way may seem too great to the timorous man who sets too much value on his own strength and too little on God's. St. Teresa when starting on a campaign to build what was afterwards a great hospital was asked how much money she possessed, and she replied one and sixpence. Her questioners laughed at her as ridiculous, but she was not perturbed in the least, as she replied: "Teresa and one and sixpence cannot do much, but God and Teresa and one and sixpence can do all things." Her achievement proved that she was right. Money is useless unless it is regarded as a slave; when it is set up as a dictator it becomes a curse. Too many business men have ended their lives abruptly of late to make the lot of the millionaire an enviable one. The will is undoubtedly there to build a town and a tabernacle for the celebration of St. Patrick's Eucharistic Congress in 1932, and we ask all who are willing to lend a hand—and who are not willing?—to at once take the initial steps in arranging for the contribution of their own particular district towards the great day. Only in the exalted spirit of such a labour of love can we dissolve the bitterness of years that have passed; only in the building of a genuine home to the High King of Ireland can we fuse the hearts of all the race at home and abroad in one grand, glorious effort. The time to begin is now, here, and the place is ready—the land is actually reserved for the home of the High King of Ireland. Roscommon, the Heart of Ireland, offers to the Irish race the site on the ancient foundations of the home of the High King of Ireland, the casket that enshrines the world's two most glorious First Communicants—Eithna the Fair and Fidelm the Ruddy.

William Bulfin has given us some stirring pages from the notes he made while in Rath Cruachan, and we cannot refrain from the temptation to quote some of them here:—"The richness of the soil is evinced in many ways. There is no doubt that the land is some of the best in Europe. It could easily support in decent and prosperous comfort a family to every fifty acres, families that could give higher education to their boys and doweries to their girls. If there were a family to every fifty

acres, those plains would have a population of thousands and thousands. At present there are tracts of the Pampas more thickly peopled, and there is ample room in the Connaught ranches for all the emigrants that ever left Ireland for the great stock runs of the South."

« During my tour I fell in with one of the priests of the diocese of Elphin, who said: 'I have 110 sheep crooks in my parish,' meaning that instead of hundreds of agriculture families he had 110 herdsmen. Another sagarth told me he had spent all the years of his mission on the Connaught plains. He said that in his own parish at the moment two-thirds of his congregation were shepherds. The other third consisted of unfortunate people who were living on the skirts of the plains in little holdings, which they themselves had reclaimed from the bogs, the moors and the swamps, and for which they had been rackrented in proportion to the extent of the improvement effected by their own labour."

"And let us not forget that the people crowded together on the skirts of the plains—starved in body and mind, bent by toil and chilled by penury—are the rightful owners of the land. They are the rightful descendants of the clansmen who held the land under the chieftains. They are the people hounded out of their rights under the laws which English domination imposed upon the country. They are the descendants of the men who were dispossessed so that the soil might be portioned out among the soldiers who had fought for the conquest of the nation. They are the tenants evicted by the sheep and cattle breeders."

TRIALLAM GO CLAR CRUACHAN

O'Donovan says:—Yesterday Mr. Matthew O'Connor and four of his family accompanied me to Rath Cruachan, the royal palace of Connaught, and we examined every feature of the land with great enthusiasm and interest; but Mr. O'Connor is the greatest historical sceptic I ever met.

Croghan may be described as the ruin of a town of *raths*. BATH CRUACHAN itself standing in the centre like the sun in the centre of the planetary system. Must not this be one of the towns mentioned by Ptolemy? The following are the *Dingna* of Crua-chain:

(1) BATH CRUACHAN, the large central rath. This is very much effaced by cultivation; all its circumvallations are levelled and nothing remains but a flat moat, the height and extent of which will appear from the fact that no man in the country is now able to drive a ball over it with a *hurly*; but old Cormac Brannan, who remembers when the men were strong, saw a man puck a ball

•completely over Rath-Croghan with a hurly. This moat exhibits *air holes* all around it, and it is said that they admitted air to those who lived in the round castle which is inside the moat,

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and now inhabited !by Queen Mab and her attendant bands of fairies. Standing on this central moat, which the natives call the *Rath Cruachan*, I saw the following raths and other objects around me:

(1) *Rath Screig*, to the north, in Toberrory townland. Behind this is *Cuirt mhaol*, but it cannot 'be seen. (2) (Rath) *Caran Fort*, in the same townland. This fort contains a cave. (3) *Rath Beag*, in the townland of Rathcroghan, and lying to the northwest. Rathmore lies. about 500 yards to the north-west of this. (4) *Crockaun Stanly*, a fort lying about ^ 1/4 mile N.W. of Rath Croghan. Crockaun Stanly is certainly a modern name. (5)

Rath-na-dtarbh, the fort of the bulls, lies due west. (6) *Rath-na-ndeaig* lies to the west of *Rathnadtarbh* about 1/2 mile. This gives name to a townland. (7) *Rath-fuadach* lies to the S.W. of *Rath Croghan*, in the parish of *Baslic*, and gives name to the townland in which it is situated. (8) *Caisiol Mhananain* lies S.W. about 1/4 mile from *Rath Croghan*, in the townland of *Glenballythomas*. This is now just level with the ground but the circular foundation of it can still be traced. (9) *Roilig na Riogh* lies exactly 1/4 mile to the south of *Rath Croghan*. This is the Royal cemetery of *Connaught*; it is enclosed with a circular mound like a *Rath*, and exhibits several little *tumuli* much effaced by time. One of these was opened by the uncle of the present *Matt O'Connor*, and he found in it a square chamber and some bones. This chamber is now to be seen. Close to the north of *Roilig-na-Riogh* is a small hillock called *Crocaun na gcorp*, where they used to lay down the bodies while the graves were being dug or opened. About 200 paces to the north of the circular enclosure now called *Roilig-na-Riogh* is to be seen a small enclosure with a *tumulus* in the centre, and on the top of the *tumulus* a very remarkable *red sandstone* pillar, which marks the grave of *Dathi*, the last pagan monarch of *Ireland* and the ancestor of the *O'Dowds*. This stone stands perpendicularly; it is 7 feet high, 4 and a half feet broad at the base, and 3 feet near the top; it gradually tapers, and is nearly round at the top.

The history of this monarch is given in the *Book of Lecan and Ballymote*, and by *Dudley Firbisse* in the pedigree of the *O'Dowds*, the descendants of *Dathi* and the patrons of the *Mac Firbisses* of *Lecan*. It is stated that *Royal recluse* who had shut himself up in a tower on the *Alps*;

\ that the hermit pronounced a curse against *Dathi* and prayed that no splendid monument might perpetuate his memory. The curse had its effect: *Dathi* was killed by a flash of lightning and his body carried home by his people, who interred it at *Roilig na Riogh*, near *Rath Cruachan*; and *Mac Firbis* adds that the *LIA DEARG*, or red stone, which marked his grave was to be seen at *Roilig na Riogh* in his own time. It happens, however, that the 379

Lia dhearg is now the most remarkable monument at *Roilig na Riogh*, and that although it is not as conspicuous a monument as *Carn Oilill* or *Measca Meive* on *Knocknarea*, that it is as lasting a monument as either. The *LIA DHEARG* is sunk deep in the earth, has occupied its present site since the burial of *Dathi*, and will remain on the *tumulus—monumentum aere perennius—*until the cows and sheep of *Moy-Cruachna* shall have worn it by scratching themselves against it.

(10) *Cathair na Babhaloide*, understood to mean the *Rath* of the feasting party, lies about three quarter mile east of *Rath Croghan*; it is said to have been the kitchen of the palace of *Rath Croghan*. (11) *Carn Ceit* lies 1 mile S.W. of *Rath Croghan*; it is a *tumulus* raised over *Keat Mac Morna*. Is he mentioned by *MacFirbis* in his account of the *Clann Hua-moir*, who emigrated to *Connaught* in the time of *Oilioll* and *Meive*? (12) The celebrated *Carnfree*, on which the *O'Conors* were inaugurated, is situate 3 miles to the south of *Rath Croghan*, but of this more from *Elphin*.

An ancient road can be traced leading from *Rath Croghan* in the direction of *Strokestown*, and another to the west. There are two large stones, lying flat, about 100 paces to the N.W. of *Rath Croghan*, one a large square rock called *Milleen Meive*, the

other, measuring 9 feet long and 2 feet broad and 2 feet thick, is called Miosgan Meive.

In a part of the townland of Moneylea is a remarkable cave called *Poll na gcolumb* by some, UMHAID CROIM SCOILT by others, and UMHAIDH AN N'ScE by others. It extends in a N.W. direction about 300 yards.

THE BANK OF IRELAND

There are two remarkable caves in the townland of Glenbally-thomas, of which the more remarkable is called UMHAIDH NA GCAT, because wild cats used to hunt rabbits in it. I walked into this a considerable distance and saw its fine roof and hanging spars like icicles, but will leave the description of it to geologists. The country people say that a woman followed a calf into this cave, and that she could not stop him till he came out at Keish Corran ! I went as far into it as anyone could, that is, until it terminated in a cleft not wide enough to admit my head, but perhaps the woman metamorphosed herself into a weasel. This cave, according to tradition, was the Bank of Ireland in the time of Queen Mab ! But if it was, the drops from the Gothic roof of the edifice must have injured the bank notes very much. A truer tradition connected with it is that one, *Croghan*, a rebel, hid in it after the rebellion, and by so doing saved his neck from the halter. This is a great district for fairies. Mr. O'Conor's herd used to see them at night kicking football on the plain, and going through various other exercises. But he would be afraid to tell what they did, lest they might injure his person

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or property. This is a very Irish country, but the natives can all speak English, and the rising generation are beginning to forget the Irish. Mr. Arthur O'Conor tells a story of the country people here which I can scarcely believe: that a negro was one day passing through Belanagare and that the people, taking him for the Devil, followed him with pitchforks to kill him. They . might have done this 300 years ago, but scarcely now.

Your obedient servant,

JOHN O'DONOVAN.

Direct next to Boyle Belanagare, 37.

Alfin, August 10th, 1837. Dear Sir,

There is a constellation—a milky way—of lakes in this parish of Elphin and its neighbourhood, and to make sure of their names is difficult indeed, but they are generally called after families, as Lough-y-Moran, Lough-y-Donnellan, Lough-y-Rory, etc., or after townlands. I traversed the parishes of *Ogilla*, *Killuckin*, *Kilcooley* and *Shankhill*, from which you will observe that I am drawing to a close at last

In this parish (Ogilla) lies the celebrated Abbey and Castle of Tulsk, which belonged to the O'Connor Roe. The Castle and Abbey are still to be seen joined together as closely as *piety* and warfare were in the age of their erection. The Abbey is small, but beautiful, and the Castle is nearly destroyed. The last representative of the O'Conor Roe is interred within the Abbey, and on his tomb is the following inscription:—

"May the Almighty Lord be merciful to the soul of John O'Conor of Tomona, Esq., who departed this life in June, 1777, in the 45th year of his age, and ordered this tomb to be erected for himself and family."

The present Peter O'Conor Roe of Tomona is the present acknowledged head of this very respectable family, but, like almost every other head of a sept in Ireland, !!!

I have no historical document before me to prove the exact year in which this Abbey was founded, but, according to the *Annales Rivenses*, the Castle was erected in 1406. Ware says that the Abbey was founded for Dominicans in the 15th century. I abstract the following from the Four Masters:—◀ 1407. Brian O'Connor and the Mac Donoghs destroyed the Castle of *TobarTuillsoe* "—the Well of Tusk.

This Well of Tusk lies near the bridge at the foot of an old rath, and is now called *Tobar-na-Circe*, i.e., the well of the hen, but no one knows why. It is, of course, connected with an old legend, which is now lost, unless it be preserved in the *Dinnseanchus*, the only repertory of pagan Irish legends now extant.

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" 1430. Con, the son of O'Connor Roe, took the Castle of Tusk from the sons of Torlogh Oge O'Connor."

◀◀ 1485. Ulick Burke, Earl of Clanrickard, and heir of the Red Earl of Ulster, ravaged *Machaire Connacht* and, among others, burned and demolished the Castle of Tusk."

" 1489. A battle at *Tusk* between the O'Connors."

◀ 1490. O'Donnell goes to Tusk, along with the descendants of Teige O'Connor, and takes possession of the Castle.

◀ 1501. The brave Hugh Maguire preyed *Machaire Con-naught*, and came in contact with Sir Eichard Bingham, the Governor of Connaught, who was encamped on a hill near the *gate* of Tusk, in the *Barony of Roscommon*. A battle ensued between their cavalries; Maguire triumphs, and returns home loaded with the rich spoils of the *Machaire*." *Spoliis campi onustus*.

" 1595. The English garrisoned all the strongholds of Con-naught, and among the rest *Tusk*, which lies in the CENTRE of *Moy-ai*, south-east of *Cruachain*." (See *Carnfree infra*.)

" 1596. Sir John Norris, the Queen's General in Ireland, placed a garrison in Tusk."

" 1599. Sir Conyers Clifford marched through Tusk with an army of 28 *standards* (what?) which was routed and slaughtered by O'Donnell in the battle of *Doonaveeragh*."

"1937. Aug't 5. J. O'Donovan, Wanderer-General to the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, passed through Tusk on his way to *Carn-Frasich-mhic-Fiodhaigh-Foltruidh*, and found Tusk, which, before the Union, returned two members to Parliament, a poor, miserable-looking village, though lying in the centre of one of the richest plains in the world, the Plain of *Ae*, the son of *Alguba*."

In this parish also lies *Tomona*, the seat of the present O'Connor Roe, The house is a comfortable dwelling, but Peter O'Connor Roe has no fee-simple property. The Four Masters, at the year 1488, call this place *Tuaim-mona*, which means the tumulus of (i.e., *in*, *at* or *near*) the bog.

◀ A.D. 1488. As a number of persons were cutting turf on the bog of *Tuaim-mona* a great whirlwind arose which killed some of them and swelled the faces of the rest. The same wind killed four others in *Machaire Chonnacht*."

The bog of *Tuaim-mona* is now nearly cut out, and in a few years the progress of cultivation will remove every monument—that proves the etymology of the name.

In this townland are also to be seen the ruins of a little monastery, described in an Inquisition Temp. Eliz. as ◀ *Ecclesia sive cellula fratrum tertii ordinis Sancti Francisci vocata Toemona*."

Archdall places *Toemonia* in the country of O'Connor Don, but this must be a mistake, and Burke states that the monastery

belonged to his own Order of St. Dominic. Let me have his words on this subject, as it is hard to depend upon Archdall, and also what he *says* about Tulsk. In this parish of Ogilla is also Cargins House, the seat of Dan Kelly, Esq., supposed to be the richest man in the *Machaire*, and universally esteemed as a worthy, good man, but he has no male issue. He would not be so if he were a poor man!

I made every effort while at Castlereagh to connect the pedigree of Dominic O'Connor Don, the last of the direct line of the Kings of Connaught, with the line given by Mac Firbis, but failed. The following is all that tradition preserves:—

** Dominic, the last O'Connor Don. ; << Daniel, or Donnell.

** Andrew. '* Daniel, married to Lady Hariott O'Brien/'

Not to digress. In this parish also lies the celebrated Carnfree on which O'Connor used to be inaugurated King of Connaught. Dr. O'Connor frequently speaks of *Carnfree*, but does not tell where it lies. In fact no writer has pointed it out yet, and I can confidently say that I discovered *Carnfree*. The Four Masters state that Felim O'Connor was inaugurated on it in the year 1461, on which occasion Mac Dermot, of Moylurg, handed him the white straight wand, and put on his *sandle* in token of being his humble servant.

One of the stories given in the Dinnseanchus point out the situation of Carnfree very clearly in the following words : ' They conveyed the body of *Fraech to Cnoc-da-dala* (i.e., the hill of the meeting) to *South East of Cruachain*, and interred him there, so that it is from him the *Carn* is named * *unde dicitur Carnfraich.*' ff Lib. Lee., fol. 243, p. a, col. a.

It is a small *cairn* of stones and earth situated about 3 miles to the *south-east* of Rath Croghan, and a mile S. from Tulsk, in the townland of *Carns*, to which it and a small moat lying to the east of it, gave names. This cairn, though small, is a very conspicuous object in the *Machaire*, and Elphin commands a view of it and Rath-Croghan. The addition, *Free*, is no longer remembered, and the people call it simply the *Cam* and *Carn ban*, but its identity with the *Carn Fraich* of the Dinnseanchus and the Annals is beyond dispute. It would be very easy to dig *Fraech* out of this *Cairn* and ascertain whether he was buried with his arms (battle dress) about him, or burned and his ashes placed *under* an urn. Easier than open MIOSGAN MEIDHI^E. Not far from this *Cairn*, in the same field, is a long standing stone called CLOCH FADA NA G-CARN, the long stone of the cairns, said to be dropped there by the same giant who dropped the stones of Elphin, Croghan and Mount Druid! What were they for? Your .obedient servant,

J. O'DONOVAN.

ROUTE No. 4

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I made careful search for a stone with the impression of a foot but could find none, but there is such a wilderness of thistles at the place that it would not be easy to find such a stone. It is probable that it was carried away or broken several centuries ago.

The next parish I shall send you is the celebrated Oran, concerning which I shall first transcribe all the references before me and *then* elucidate them with some local remarks.

The first notice of this famous place is found in the Tripartite *Life of St. Patrick*, Triad. Thau., p. 136:—

< Afterwards the man of God erected, in the same place, the *noble* Church of *Kill-Garadh*, called by others *Huaran Garadh* (Fons Garadii). For St. Patrick elicited from the bowels of the earth a *living and very clear fountain*, which was afterwards very dear to himself, and gave name to the place and to the church built there. *Huaran*, or

Fuaran, signifies among the Irish *a living fountain*, spring, or cold (FUAR) water gushing from the earth. There Cethegus, the bishop, and his sacred reliques lie."

In a note upon this passage in the Tripartite, Colgan says that this may be either of two *Uarans*, but he inclines more to make it the Oranmore in the diocese of Ailfinn, in the country of the Sil-Muireadhuigh, which was in his time called *Uaran Hi Chlabaigh*.

An entry in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, under the year 1556, throws additional light upon this locality.

(< A.D. 1556. Gilla Columb O'Clabaigh, *Coarb of St. Patrick*, at Uaran, in Moy-Aoi, the most distinguished for hospitality and affluence of the Coarbs of Connaught, and generally supporter of the indigent, died in Clanrickard after having been expelled from *Uaran* and after his son, Dermot Roe O'Clabey, had been slain by the Clan-Connmuigh."

This place is called *Uaran Ni Chlabaigh* to this very day. Patterns are held there (here) annually on St. Patrick's Day, 17th March, and on Garland Sunday, about 31st July, and not many years ago the senior of the O'Clabys used to appear at the pattern and show the people the extent of his Termon lands, and tell them how his ancestors were deprived of them, on which occasion the people used to *make a collection for his support*. The O'Clabys are still in the neighbourhood, but very poor."

I find the following reference to this place in Keogh's account of Roscommon, written for the use of Sir William Petty :—[#] The priory of *Oron*, called Oronchlaby, dedicated to St. Dominick, inhabited by Dominicans."

Archdall has; not a word about a Dominican Abbey here. Has De Burgo in his *Hibernia Dominicana*? Can Keogh be right? He seems to me a very unlearned authority: nothing of the master mind about him.

Doctor O'Connor has stated more than once that Magh Aoi, or Machaire Connacht, was bounded on the east by the Shannon, on the south and west by the Suck, and on the north by the Curlieu Mountains. But in this he is most rascally wrong, and he is the more to be censured for the mistake, as the plain described by him lies in *his own* county of Roscommon, and is, defined by natural boundaries, and its extent so well known in the country that it makes one curse the native of Roscommon who would not know all about it.

*' Look at the *lie* of the country, and that's enough." Mr. Keogh defines it in this wise, but I could scarcely believe that Keogh could be right in anything.

" Here (that is, in this county) is Maughery Connaught-aught, or 'the Maughery,' an open country, consisting of *huge*, wide, and spacious plains, extending in length twenty miles or more, (even from Roscommon to Abbey Boyle, exceeding good sheep walks, and harbouring few other *inhabitants* (good!) but sheep. It hath its name from the Irish term Magh (A MAGH), signifying *extra without, apprehended* to be outside of those woods, bogs, and mountains herewith, places of 'narrow bounds are encompassed and hath the epithet of Connaughtaugh, the plain of Connaught, because there is not the like of it in Connaught again.' ' An excellent soil for corn, if made use of to that end, but the greatest part of it is taken up with flocks and for other products of this country.' "

His definition of the extent is hardly right, but his derivation of *Machaire* is entirely

wrong: *Magh* is the ancient Irish word for *plain*, but not for *extra, without*; the word for *extra* being A MUIGH, which literally means *in the plain* and is used in contradistinction to ASTIGH, which means *in the house*. This goes some length to show that men first made words to express sensible objects, and that they afterwards formed from a combination and modification of them other words to express abstract ideas and the relations of external objects. Keogh here puts the car before the horse. Instead of deriving A MUIGH from *Magh* he derives MAGH from A MUIGH, though the former is a simple word and the latter acknowledgedly a compound word, or rather two words.

I will also show in a letter from Boyle that he unites *Magh Aoi* and *Magh Luirg* to form *Maghery Connaught*, which no evidence from our ancient documents will support. He is, however, much nearer the truth than Dr. O'Connor, who would extend *Magh Aoi* southwards to Shannon Bridge and northward to the Curleus and in breadth from the source of the Suck to Carrick-on-Shannon. The inhabitants of the town of Boscommon and its vicinity, when speaking of the country generally, call the tract lying between them and Athlone the *Barony*, and the country between them and Croghan the *Maghery*, but they say that you are not in the *Maghery* till you are two miles to the north of Roscommon. The

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following are the bounds of *Maghery Connaught*, as I am informed by a land surveyor who knows the country well:— Maghery-Connaught runs northwards to Lismaccoil, in the parish of "Kilcomshy (CAIMSIGHE), eastwards as far as Failsc, in the parish of Killukan; westwards as far as Castlereagh, and southwards as far as within about 2[^] and a half miles of Roscommon."—

JOHN O'DONOVAX. ^{k<} BASLIC/' IRELAND'S PATRICIAN BASILICA, AT CASTLE PLUNKETT

Ireland's one and only Basilica was built in the Heart of Ireland, and the person who pointed out its site was none other than the Apostle of Ireland, Patrick himself. It is most interesting to hear, and from a descendant of Ono, the Druid, too (Rev. Malachy Brennan, P.P., Kilglass), that there has been recently discovered in Rome a Papal document which puts beyond all doubts the facts referred to in the following extracts :

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 "PATRICK AT ORAN.—Patrick does not appear to have gone further south on the present occasion, but turned back to Magh Ai, which was in Roscommon, the centre of his missionary activity, as Tara in Meath. He had, however, others amongst his household who wished to get churches in that fertile territory, and who, it seems, began to show signs of impatience at the delay. Amongst them were certain Franks who had accompanied him from Gaul. We are now told that they went from him, as if to set up for themselves. So Patrick followed them; it would seem fifteen brothers and one sister, but only the names of three are given, Bernicius, Hibernicius, and Henricus, with their sister, Nitria. And Patrick gave them many places to dwell in and serve God and the people, but the chief place he gave them was Ingo Baislice, between Hy Many and Magh Ai; that is, it was just on the boundary. Sachellus was then their head, but he was not one of the Franks. Baslic is still the name of a parish church in the diocese

of Elphin, and a glance at the map will show that it is only a little north of the boundary line between Hv Many and Magh Ai, as we have already described it.

◁ The old church was, we believe, near Castle Plunkett. It would appear that the Frenchmen had found out the place for themselves, or, rather, Patrick showed it to them with his finger, from the summit of the hill of Oran, a little further south, where he was at the time engaged in building a church. Although they went off to provide for themselves, they had returned to Patrick that he might sanction their choice of a place they had found. They found several places in the neighbourhood, the names of which Tirechan says he did not know, save the Basilica Sanctorum alone, that is, Baslic.

◁ The graphic language in which Tirechan tells how, from the summit of the hill of Oran, Patrick pointed out the site of the Church of Baslic on the high ground some five miles away, due

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north, is a striking proof of the authenticity of the narrative, which he must have had directly or indirectly from eye-witnesses. Incidental touches of this kind, which are frequent both in Tirechan and the Tripartite, clearly show that the original narrative was both truthful and accurate.

◁ A stump of a round tower still marks the site of the ancient Church of Oran. The name Uaran means a cold spring, and Oran deserves it, for a beautiful spring pours out its abounding waters close to the town of the ancient church. Patrick loved this place, for he had a keen eye for the beauties of nature, and was charmed by the swelling fountain, watering those green and fertile fields; and he enjoyed the noble prospect which is revealed from the summit of the hill. He even became poetic in its praises:—

f UARAN GAR

<< Uran, which I loved, which loved me. Sad is my cry, O

dear God,

Without my drink out of Uaran Gar, Cold Uaran. Cold is every one who has gone from it (with sadness) Were it not my King's command, I would not wend from it. . . ."

" Over the Church of Oran Patrick placed Cethecus, the brother of Sachell, or Sachellus, of Baslic."—*Life and Writings of St. Patrick*,

Castlereagh, July 8th, 1837. Dear Sir,

It is now precisely two calendar months since I left Dublin, and the second county is not finished yet! I have four months more, however, before the hard weather sets in, during which much will be done if the books be prepared in time.

The parish, of Baslic was anciently 'under the patronage of St. Sacel, Bishop, but he is recognised no longer, though his memory seems to have been annually commemorated there in the time of Colgan, as we learn from the following notice of this church in Triad : Thau, p. 177.

* *Baisleac mor* is a parish church in the diocese of Alfinn, in the country and deanery of Siol Muireadhuigh, as the catalogue of the churches of that diocese shows, which was sent us by the most venerable Bishop of the place, Brother Boetuis Aegan, and there the birthday of St. Sacel, Bishop, is (was?) celebrated on the first day of August, according to Marian Gorman, Cathal Maguire, and the Martyrology of

Donegal. In the Irish *Life of St. Berach*, of whom in the preceding tome, February 15, mention is made of St. Sacel, or Socel."

The ruins of the chapel or cells of the brothers of the Order of St. Dominic are still to be seen in the townland of Kilmurry.

ROUTE No. 4

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The celebrated spring, called *Tober-Oilbhe* by the Four Masters and *Tober-Ilbhe* in the Registry of Clonmacnoiae, is still to be seen in the centre of a townland to which it gave name in this parish.

There is a townland in this parish in the E.S.E. end called in the name book Lismeentagh, but the parish priest tells me that the real name is *Lismurtagh*, and that he is of opinion that *meentagh* is a mistranscription of *murtagh*. This I believe, and I therefore wish that more written authorities be procured before the name be finally decided upon.

In the townland of Drishaghan, in the same parish, there is a hall which is said to be the naval *Ceart Lar* of the Maghery Connaught. This is probably more correct than what the Four Masters make it, viz., Tober Tulsk, but of this hereafter. *The ancient name of Ballintober was BAILE TOBAR BHRIGHDE, and received that name from a holy well called Tobar Bhrighde, which is still to be seen near the church, near the foot of an aged tree. But this well is no longer a blessed well, for its waters are used for washing potatoes, old shirts, and for every other purpose for which it is required in the village; and it is curious that it has removed some yards from the sacred spot which was its original fountain. It originally sprung at the very foot of the old tree, but when the due veneration for it ceased to exist it removed a short distance to the S.W[^]. This is curious.*

Within a quarter of a mile of Toberelva Well, in the parish of Baslic, there is an old stone in a field with a Latin inscription, said to have been placed there as the monument of an ecclesiastic. The ruins of old Castle Plunkett exist in the same neighbourhood.

The name Baslic is a shortening of the Latin *Basilica*, which in the ecclesiastical style means a DAIMHLAIC, or distinguished church, but the Rev. Mr. Dillon, P.P., of Ballintober, says that the word is BAS-LEAC, which, when interpreted, is *sepulchrum mortuorum*, and laughs at my *Basilica*. Perhaps he is right. In this part of Ireland the word MAOL signifies: (1) *level*, (2) *ruined*, (3) *flat*, and a great stretch of the meaning; (4) *bald*, hornless. The ruins of the old house at Belanagarr, of which only one chimney remains, are now known by no other name than SIMLEIR MAOL. With us of Ossory, MAOL means: (1) bald, (2) hornless, (3) earless, (4) bare, (5) diminutive, AN FEAR MAOL. MAOLUCAN. Query, then, meaning of the Templemoyle in Ulster? *Cluain Eamhuin*, in St. Peter's parish, is still called a half parish. < The half parish of *Cluain Eamhain*, lying along the Shannon," is well known.

Your obedient servant,

JOHN O'DONOVAN.