

THE FLIGHT OF THE O'FLAHERTYS, LORDS OF MOY SOELA, TO IAR CONNAUGHT.

BY THE VERY REV. J. FAHEY, P.P., V.G., LOCAL SECRETARY, SOUTH GALWAY.

FROM the fifth century the chieftains of Muintur Murchada were lords of the fertile plains of Moy Soela.¹ Their tribe name was derived from Morough, the son of Mnonach, Prince of Moy Soela, who died A.D. 891. This Morough was a descendant of Eochy, monarch of Ireland, through Duagh, the "sweet-tongued," who is referred to as the "third Christian king of Connaught."

In later years the lords of Moy Soela took the name of O'Flaherty, and for a considerable period held a position of pre-eminence amongst the chieftains of the Western Province. They were near kinsmen of the O'Connors. The O'Hallorans, lords of Clan-Feargail, the MacConrys, and the clans of Dealbna Fendha beyond the Corrib, were their relatives, and seem to have ruled those districts as subordinate chieftains. Hence we find that, in the tenth century, and after, the O'Flahertys are frequently styled Chieftains of Iar Connaught, as well as Lords of Moy Soela. Our annalists record the death of Archad, son of Murchad, chief of Moy Soela, A.D. 943, but we find that he is also styled "Lord of Iar Connaught." But though exercising a paramount influence over their kindred chieftains in the adjoining territories, the territory of Moy Soela, over which they were recognized lords, was by no means extensive. It extended from the village of Clare Galway to Tuam; and from near Athenry to the shores of the Corrib. The entire district, according to the learned editor of "Iar Connaught,"² would only measure an area of 10 miles in length by 6 in breadth. But the district was exceedingly interesting. Several of the localities included within this area have been long memorable in our annals: Abbey Knockmoy is one of the oldest of our venerable Cistercian abbeys. Clare Galway and Rosserilly are, even in their ruins, striking evidence of the splendour of our Franciscan monasteries before the Reformation period. And the ecclesiastical remains at Kilursa and Annaghdown recall the still earlier period, when the religious and monastic life of Ireland was the light of Northern Europe.

The battlefield of Knock Tuagh has its memories of valour and heroism, but, alas! of profuse and profitless bloodshed also. And just as those venerable ruins of churches and monasteries recall the religious history of Moy Soela, so, too, the ruined castles which stand out in the

¹ O'Flaherty's "Iar Connaught," ed. Hardiman, pp. 2-3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

landscape, weather-stained and roofless, speak to us of the conquerors who wrested the supremacy of the territory from the grasp of the O'Flaherties.

The territory of Clanfeargail was adjoining,¹ and extended from Clare Galway to the sea; it lay east of the Corrib and the Galway river, and included *twenty-four ballys*, in which Galway, Clare, and Roscam were situated. The O'Hallorans, who were kinsmen of the O'Flahertys, were the Dynasts of this small territory. But we have at so remote a period as the reign of Cathal O'Connor clear evidence that the O'Flahertys were, at least, paramount lords of the district. It is recorded² that the chief of Muintur Murchada, with the consent of Cathal, King of Connaught, made a present of the town of Lismacaun, in Clan-Feargail, to the abbot and convent of Knockmoy. The erection of an O'Flaherty castle in Galway,³ in the early part of the twelfth century, may be regarded as an additional evidence that the authority of the chiefs of Moy Soela extended southwards to the sea. In addition we have the fullest historical evidence that the O'Flaherty territory was co-extensive with the Diocese of Annaghdown, in which we know the town of Galway was situated.

Though the O'Hallorans seem never to have attained military fame, yet it is their privilege to claim some of the most eminent of our Irish saints as kinsmen. St. Finbar of Cork and St. Alleran "the Wise" are regarded as members of this ancient tribe. It should be remembered that the O'Hallorans of Clan-Feargail are entirely distinct from the Munster family of the same name who claim descent as a branch of the Dalgais.

We think it pretty certain that the authority of the O'Flahertys was also recognized by the chieftains of Gno-more and Gno-beg in the remote districts of Iar Connaught from an early period. Mr. Hardiman regards this opinion as probable, though he does not consider it can be supported by "*direct evidence*."

But the important part which they took in the warfare of the period would be consistent with this opinion. In the early part of the twelfth century they frequently supported the growing power of their kinsmen the O'Connors against the Princes of Munster. In 1117 the son of Dermot O'Brien and his brave Dalcassians were "defeated with great slaughter," by the sons of Cathal O'Connor and by Brian O'Flaherty. And when a few years after, Dermot O'Brien and his armies would wipe out the disgrace of their defeat, by an invasion of Connaught, it was to suffer a still more crushing repulse at the hands of Cathal O'Connor and O'Flaherty. King Turlough O'Connor received a loyal and continuous support from Mureadhach O'Flaherty, prince of Iar Connaught, against

¹ O'Flaherty's "Iar Connaught," ed. Hardiman, p. 232.

² "History of Galway," p. 3.

³ "Iar Connaught," p. 232.

O'Brien. At the battle of Ardfinnan O'Connor was defeated, and O'Flaherty, with many others of his bravest followers, slain. But Connor O'Brien soon carried the warfare into the enemy's country. The castle of Galway was destroyed, and soon after the entire territory of the O'Flahertys was devastated by Turlough O'Brien.

But this loyal alliance was not destined to last between the O'Connors and their powerful kinsmen. We find that "Cathal, the son of Hugh O'Flaherty, was slain by Mortagh-Midhe-O'Connor." We find the English invaders then upon the scene, and constantly allied to some one of the ambitious aspirants to the Connaught crown; in whose wretched ambition all other interests were lost sight of, whether of country or of kindred. We find accordingly that Roderic O'Flaherty, lord of "West Connaught," was taken prisoner by Cathal Crovedearg, "who delivered him over to the English, by whom he was put to death." And in the year 1204, when the authority of Crovedearg was still more firmly established as sovereign of Connaught, he expelled Hugh O'Flaherty from Moy Soela only to confer the territory on his own son.

Richard De Burgo had obtained royal grants of the entire Province of Connaught. And in 1225 the Earl Marshal of Ireland was ordered by Henry III. to "seize" the whole country of Connaught, and deliver it to Richard De Burgo. Hugh O'Connor lent De Burgo his royal aid to carry this decree into effect in Moy Soela. By their combined forces Hugh O'Flaherty, lord of Moy Soela, was deprived of the islands of the Corrib, and obliged to take refuge in his strong castle of Galway. Here, after a spirited defence against these unnatural allies, he was obliged to capitulate in A.D. 1232. "Hugh O'Flaherty and his people crossed Lough Orbsen, and took possession of these western districts, to which the name of Iar Connaught had been exclusively given."¹

No sooner was De Burgo master of the Castle of Galway, than he "built several additions to it,"² and made it his chief residence. From it he was able to hold undisturbed possession of the plains of Moy Soela, on which several strong castles were soon after erected by his kindred and descendants. As many as *thirty-three castles* were erected by them in this district from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. And as De Burgo seized the territory of the O'Flahertys, so also he appropriated the lands of Clan-Feargail, and drove its chiefs, with their kinsmen, into Iar Connaught.

This district, designated "Iar," or "Western" Connaught, was also known by other names, which perhaps more clearly indicate its position. It was called Dealbna Feadhá and Tir da Lochá—the country of the two lakes—which were, we assume, Lough Orbsen and Lough Lurgan. It was also known as Conmhaicne of the Sea (Mará), now familiarly

¹ "Iar Connaught," p. 380.

² "History of Galway," p. 48.

anglicised Connemara, and was described in 1586 as a territory of about 20 square miles. Iar Connaught, interesting though it is in many respects, is by no means the most picturesque portion of Western Galway. The mountain and lake scenery, which even in our own day charm the traveller by their beauty, belong chiefly to the still more remote districts of Ross and Ballinahinch, which were of old the homes of the Joyces and O'Malleys. Yet the Iar Connaught districts present many charming pictures of hill and dale, of lake and open sea.¹

For the most part the country slopes gently to the sea. Its highest hills do not reach a greater altitude than 700 feet; while three-fourths of the district is not 100 feet over the sea-level. The weird and wooded lakes, the charming bays, the mountain gorges over which the hills reach an altitude of 2000 feet, belong to the more remote districts of Ross and Ballinahinch. And though much of the lands of Iar Connaught was comparatively unproductive, many of the plains which skirt the Corrib are very fertile.

We have seen that the expulsion of the clans of Moy Soela and Clan-Feargail was effected in the opening of the thirteenth century. Hugh O'Flaherty was on the occasion chief of his name. On migrating beyond the Corrib with his tribe, and his kindred of Clan-Feargail, he seems to have, without opposition, asserted his authority over the districts hitherto held by the MacConrrys and O'Heyneys, the chiefs of Gno-more and Gno-beg; and Hugh O'Flaherty might therefore be regarded as the first of his name who could be, strictly speaking, regarded as chief of Iar Connaught. His new territory, which extended from the shores of the Corrib to Kilkieran Bay, was then comparatively unknown.² Indeed, it may be said to have remained unexplored by the English till towards the close of the reign of Henry VIII. Yet Richard De Burgo felt himself insecure as long as the ex-chiefs of Moy Soela and Clan-Feargail could maintain their independence even in the "Wild West." Until the chieftain of Iar Connaught was completely subdued, the astute Norman felt insecure in his newly acquired territory.

In 1235 he accordingly organized an expedition for perilous service in Iar Connaught. But Hugh O'Flaherty, finding himself abandoned by the O'Connors and others to whom he might have looked for protection, entered into a treaty of peace with his powerful enemy, against whom he considered himself powerless to struggle alone. Though the O'Connors had been his faithless allies, they were still his kings; he must have felt that he still owed them allegiance, notwithstanding their petty strifes and ambitions. Yet he entered into an alliance with De Burgo in violation of his fealty to his king. "This," says Hardiman, "was the last and the only disgraceful act of his life."

In 1244 King Henry III. was engaged in his Scotch campaigns. He

¹ "Iar Connaught," p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 383.

considered the support of the chief of Iar Connaught of sufficient importance to solicit it by letters under his seal.¹ But before the Lord of Iar Connaught could have led his clansmen to his Majesty's aid, terms of peace were arranged with Scotland. But they supported Henry in his expedition to Wales, under Felim O'Connor,² "whence they returned victorious," says Hardiman.

On this occasion the O'Flahertys endeavoured to utilise their claims on his Majesty's good will, for the purpose of regaining their ancestral possessions in Moy Soela. They represented truly to his Majesty that they had been "unjustly expelled from their territory"; but they also represented with absolute untruth, "that their ancestors and themselves, though mere Irish, always showed their fealty to him and his predecessors by assisting the English to reduce the Irish. They had notwithstanding been unjustly expelled from their territory to which they humbly prayed to be restored."³ This appeal was made conjointly by Morogh O'Flaherty and his brother Roderic; and we doubt if history supplies at this early period, on the part of any Irish chieftain, greater evidence of base recreancy to the Irish cause. The astute monarch replied through the Lord Justice of Ireland to this appeal to the Royal clemency, in a manner calculated to flatter their selfishness. His Majesty informed the Lord Justice, in Latin more courtly than classical, that if those O'Flahertys and their ancestors had always supported the English cause, they could not then be justly deprived of their possessions, even *though they were Irish*.⁴ The king's reply may perhaps be regarded as an evidence of his willingness that some protection should be extended to such recreants. "But," says Hardiman, in his valuable appendix to "Iar Connaught," "the O'Flahertys derived no benefit from the Royal Mandate." On the contrary, their new territory was again invaded by Walter De Burgo, as if in defiance of it, and was plundered by the English. In 1248, Walter De Burgo marched against them with an army, but was defeated with considerable slaughter; he soon after made another excursion against Roderic O'Flaherty, plundered his territory of Gno-more and Gno-beg, now called the barony of Moycullen, and seized on Lough Orbsen with its islands. The persecuted chief was at length forcibly expelled from his territory, but his expulsion was only temporary. It was the old struggle which their ancestors had fought out on the plains of Moy Soela, and now as of old, fortune favoured the invaders.

But it did not suit the De Burgos to continue the struggle for the wild districts of the west, and so the O'Flahertys were soon after able to return to their territory. And from the close of the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, they continued practically undisturbed as chiefs of Iar Connaught. Their wise abstention from interference in contem-

¹ "Iar Connaught," p. 389.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

² *Ibid.*, p. 380.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

porary struggles outside of their territory, and the friendly relations which they cultivated with the O'Malleys and Joyces of the more remote regions of Connemara, also helped to give for a period additional security to their authority. Nor have we any reason to justify the assumption that their assertion of authority over Gno-more and Gno-beg met with any opposition from the friendly chieftains of those districts.

O'Duggan tells us, in his "Topographical Poem," who the chieftains of those districts were until their territories were seized by the O'Flahertys:—

" Mac Conry, mark, you shall find
Over Gno-more of smooth callows;
O'Heyney over Gno-beg lasting,
A nest not poor nor transient."

We are informed by Hardiman, in his valuable notes to "Iar Connaught,"¹ that Conry was the first chief of Gno-more. In the course of centuries, the tribe migrated westward and settled in a district on the seacoast, which received from them the name of Ballymaconry. It is interesting to know on the same authority that the English rendering of the name as "King" (as if the Irish were Mac an Righ) is entirely incorrect. The name seems to have been also anglicised as Mac Enry.

Those districts of Gno-more and Gno-beg over which the O'Flahertys and O'Hallorans had asserted a kind of joint occupation were also known as Moycullen, *i.e.* the plain of Ullin. O'Flaherty and others derive the name from Ullin, the grandson of Nuad, monarch of Ireland. On this plain Ullin slew Orbsen, a famous merchant, also known as Manannan Mac Lir, who had his principal residence on the Isle of Man. From this event, the place was designated the "Magh" or plain of Ullin, *i.e.*, Moy Cullin; or to use O'Flaherty's words, "therefore from Ullin Moycullen is named—to wit, Magh Ullin, the field of Ullin." The name is still preserved as the designation of the barony, which comprises the territorial divisions already referred to, of Gno-more and Gno-beg. It extends from the Corrib to the sea. It has the baronies of Ross and Ballinahinch on its northern and north-western borders. And we are told by O'Flaherty that "Lough Orbsen,"² and the river of Galway were the eastern boundary.

The principal residences of the chiefs of Iar Connaught were at Kinvoyle, Bunowen and Aghenure, "where the salmon comes under the castle on a river not far from the west side of Lough Orbsen." The site of Aghenure on the shore of the Corrib, must have derived considerable attractiveness from the ancient yews which grew around it, and from which the picturesque site derived its name Aghenure, *i.e.* "Field of the Yews." But these ancient trees from which Aghenure had derived its

¹ "Iar Connaught," p. 281.

² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

name had nearly all perished when the author of *Iar Connaught* lived. One alone had remained, and that, which was showing evidences of decay, was reputed to be over a thousand years old.

The Castle of Aghenure with 500 acres was, by Royal grant created a manor by James I. on the 25th June, 1618, in favour of Hugh O'Flaherty, father of Roderic, author of "*Iar Connaught*," and "*Ogygia*," who writes of Moy Cullen as his patrimony:—"This is my natal soil and patrimony, enjoyed by my ancestors time immemorial. There was a manor exempted by a patent from all taxes; it likewise enjoyed the privilege of holding a market and fairs, and was honoured with a Senechal's Court to determine litigations. But having lost my father at the age of two years, I sheltered myself under the wings of royalty, and paid the usual sum for my wardship. But before I attained the proper age for possessing my fortune, I was deprived of the patronage of my guardian by the detestable execution of my king. Having completed my nineteenth year, and the prince half a year younger, then I was compelled to take refuge in a foreign clime."

Even at the present day the ruins of the Castle of Aghenure at Moycullen are amongst the most striking in the West of Ireland.

Bunowen Manor was another of the chief residences of the O'Flahertys. It occupied a picturesque situation on the shores of the beautiful lake of Ballinahinch, three miles from Irosbeg, and outside the borders of *Iar Connaught* proper. It was overshadowed by some of the loftiest peaks of the "pins" of Bunnabeola. The hill of Duin stood near, which gave its name to the surrounding parish of Ballindown in which St. Flannan of Killaloe was venerated as patron. The Castle of Bunowen is described by Hardiman as an "extensive fortress." Donell na Chogaidh O'Flaherty, so called from his warlike proclivities, was owner of the castle in the sixteenth century. In the compositions under Elizabeth in 1585, we find that the "Castle of Bunowen and six quarters of land next adjoining the same was conferred on Donell's sons, Owen and Morogh, as a free demayne for ever." After the death of Owen, who was slain, Morogh became sole claimant of the Bunowen estates. He was known as Morogh an Maor (the Steward.) On the 25th May, 1618, King James I. made a grant by letters patent to Morogh, of "the Castle of Bunowen, with numerous lands in the barony of Ballinahinch, and thereby created the manor of Bunowen to contain 1300 acres in demesne; gave a power to create tenures, hold courts, *leet and baron*; a Monday market at Bunowen, and a fair there on St. Laurence's Day and the day following."

These were very important Royal favours; and before Morogh passed away in 1626, he was justly regarded as equal in prominence and influence to his kinsmen at Moycullen. He was succeeded by his son Morogh na

¹ "*Iar Connaught*"—"Ogygia," p. 27.

Mart (of the beeves) in the lordship of Bunowen, who was regarded on his accession as the most powerful of the western O'Flahertys."¹

The Lord Deputy did him the honour of paying him what seemed to be a visit of ceremony in his remote mountain fortress. But the favours of Wentworth ("Black Tom") were open to grave suspicion. Though the chieftain was away on some military raid, the representative of royalty patiently awaited his return, and his stay was honoured by profuse and lavish hospitality; and so pleased did his lordship seem to be with the hospitable chieftain, that he conferred upon him the honour of knighthood on his departure. We are told, however, that Wentworth carefully utilised his stay for the purpose of exploring the intricate passes of the district, and of ascertaining the exact extent of O'Flaherty's property. But whatever the Deputy's designs may have been, it is certain that Sir Morogh experienced in his own person one of those sad vicissitudes but too frequent at that period. He was robbed of his property in the name of law, and died A.D. 1666 in abject poverty.

On the 15th May, 1678, his castle of Bunowen, and the "adjoining lands," were conferred on Edmond Geoghegan, the son of Art Geoghegan, of Castletown in Meath, a forfeiting proprietor.²

Early in the seventeenth century we find the O'Flahertys extending themselves still further to the north-west, and acquiring there from their kinsmen, the O'Hallorans, some additional territory and the strong castle of Rinvyle. This castle stood on Rinvyle headland, which runs into the sea opposite the Island of Boffin. Some say that this castle was erected by the Joyces, though it is difficult to say on what authority. We know with certainty that, in A.D. 1594, this castle was the property of Dermott Duff O'Halloran of Bearna, who sold it to Edmond O'Halloran, a Galway merchant.³ The deed of assignment or transfer, which is a curious one, is preserved by Hardiman in his appendix to "Iar Connaught." And we also find that, in October, 1638, this same castle and lands of Rinvyle were transferred to Edmond O'Flaherty by Theo. Eremond, the son of Edmond O'Halloran.

From some other deeds of sale made by the O'Hallorans to their well-beloved lord, Morogh na Moyer O'Flaherty of Bunowen, it is certain that the Edmond O'Flaherty referred to was the second son of Sir Morogh, by whom the castle was held in 1642, whose opposition to the English at that period was active and continuous.

The castles of O'Hery and Bearna, with extensive lands, were in the possession of the O'Hallorans at the close of the sixteenth century.⁴ O'Hery Castle occupied a picturesque situation on an island in Lough Lonan, now known as the Lake of Ross. It was therefore in dangerous proximity to the castle of their "well-beloved lord," Morogh na Doe at

¹ "Iar Connaught," p. 83.

² *Ibid.*, p. 255.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

Aghenure. In 1585 it was in the possession of Lonick O'Halloran. In that year he was driven out by Morogh "of the Battle-axes," who appropriated both the castles and lands of his kinsmen. The castle of Bearna was the chief residence of the O'Hallorans. It was situated by the seashore about three miles west of Galway. In 1594, we find that Dermott Duff O'Halloran of Bearna, who had transferred his Rinvoyle castle and property to Edmond O'Flaherty, was still proprietor of Bearna. On the 28th November, 1638, we find that "Stephen Lynch obtained a decree in Chancery against Edmond O'Halloran of Bearna in £410 19s. 8d." With reference to this judgment Hardiman adds: "This decree is supposed to have led to the transfer of the Bearna estates to the Lynches, by whom it is possessed to this day."

¹ "Iar Connaught," p. 255.

THE ISLANDS OF THE CORRIB.

By RICHARD J. KELLY, B.L., HON. SEC. FOR NORTH GALWAY.

Lough Corrib is described in the Parliamentary *Gazetteer of Ireland* for 1845 as being "situated partly on the boundary between Mayo and Galway, but chiefly within the latter county. It is a large lacustrine expanse, very variable in width, depth, and scenery, but to a large extent gemmed with green islands, and either bounded by luxuriant grounds or overhung by wild and lofty mountains." It is the second largest sheet of inland fresh water in Ireland, being thirty-five miles in length from Galway to Maam, varying in breadth from eight miles as between Oughterard and Cong, to one quarter of a mile as from the wood of Doon to Curraun Point, where it narrows between the Joyce Country and Iar Connaught hills. Its general direction is from west north-west in a curvature to south south-east. In depth it varies considerably, being, says the late Sir William Wilde, in many parts full of rocky shoals, having but 6 or 7 feet of water in some places, and in other parts descending to 152 feet, as between the island of Inehmicitreer and Cong, and between Doorus Island and Farnaght Point, where portions are styled by the fishermen "the old Lough." The Corrib covers a space of 44,000 acres, and its water-shed comprises 780,000 acres in the two counties. The summer level of the lake is 14 feet above the medium data of the sea at Galway, and 37 feet below the surface of Lough Mask. It is connected with the sea at Galway by the Corrib river, which is four miles in length, and the extent and volume of its waters may be imagined from the fact that often at its outfall 800,000 cubic feet per minute are the volume of its floods, equal to 10,000 horse power in machinery. The lake, according to Nimmo, has fifty miles of shore, and occupies 30,000 Irish acres, 1000 acres being arable land. The surface of the lake is only 13 feet 9 inches above high water, and the medium rise in floods about 3 feet.

The lake is fed by many streams, namely, the Shrule, Cloghenower, Killroe, Cregg, and Claregalway rivers. One of the most remarkable is the river of Fough or Owen Riff, which, according to an old account, "whenever the river runs shallow, sulphur is found on the stones in the channel, from the mountains, till it passes by the castle of Fough." On the north side of this river is a well in honour of St. Michael the Archangel, which O'Flaherty says was discovered by revelation in 1654. Fough Castle was called Nowghe in 1586, and stood on a natural bridge. It was pulled down, and out of its stones the barrack of Oughterard was built. The river of Cong is, says an old writer, the confluent of divers

waters which, springing under ground from the south side of Lough Measg (Mask) are divided into two rivers which enter into the earth again till they break out in one near the castle and abbey of Cong, and about a quarter of a mile thence in a deep, narrow, and smooth stream, "exonerates itself," as he expresses it, into Lough Orbsen. From hence, says he, "an eel carried a purse of 13s. 4d. sterling, and a knife for about sixteen miles through Lough Orbsen, till it was caught in Galway." O'Flaherty tells the story also, and gives the name of the Cong fisherman, as one William M'Ghoill, whose knife was so lost and found. The district about Cong (so called from the Irish *cunga*, "a neck") abounds with curious natural and artificial structures and cavernous formations. Strange limestone caves, such as those at Cuslough, Kildun, Altiricard, Caher Paetar, or at Lis Leenard, in Ashford demesne, or Kelly's cave, at Learganeal, are to be found in almost every field from Knockma to Benlevi.¹ At Cong is a curious flagstone called Leachnapoll, or the flagstone of the holes where a limpid stream ever runs. But to describe all these strange sights would occupy too much time. To those not familiar with the natural appearance, beauty, and characteristics of this romantic district, this brief description must suffice. We are more concerned here and now with the Corrib's history and its antiquities as found and seen upon its principal islands.

At the top of the Corrib Lake lies Cong, as we know, a place replete with many interesting monuments of the past, and at Ashford,² one of the most magnificent structures of the present day, the picturesque residence of our respected Hon. President, Lord Ardilaun. Cong is full of sights natural and antiquarian. Its historic abbey alone is a classic spot. In the townland of Cluanna Marbh, at the head of the lake, there is a remarkable cavern called Poll-na-gColumb, or the pigeon-hole, which Lady Morgan and Lover wrote about, and in the adjoining townland of Dooghta are two holy wells, one dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and the other to St. Feichin the patron saint of Cong. Near the latter is a flagstone called Leac Feichin, beside which, according to O'Donovan, men were put to trial by ordeal. Cæsar Otway also mentions a story about this curious custom.

Of the islands of the Corrib, however, with which this Paper concerns itself, the first, starting from Cong, which a traveller will meet with, is Kirke or Hen's Island. It is near the arm of the lake, which

¹ These are divided into two groups by M. Martel, a French scientist, in his "Irlande et Cavernes Anglaises" (1897): one comprising Kelly's Cave, Captain Webb's Hole, Spindle Hole, Steward's Cave, Lady's Buttery; and another group, the Horse's Discovery, the Priest's Hole, and the Pigeon Hole—all marvellous subterranean formations of unexampled beauty and grandeur. M. Martel, speaking of the region, says that one of the most remarkable of subterranean rivers is that which connects the Corrib and Mask lakes.

² Mlle. de Bovet, in "Trois Mois en Irlande" (1891), described Ashford as "une oasis dans un chaos de pierrailles."

receives the water of the river Belanabrack. Upon this island are the ruins of Caislean-na-Circe. O'Flaherty, the first and real historian of this district, thus describes it in his "Iar Connaught":—"Kirke Island, or the Hen's Island, is that part of Lough Orbsen which is within Ross half barony, and had a strong castle till broken in Cromwell's time. In Anno 1225, the Lord Justice of Ireland, coming to the port of Iniscraawa, caused O'Flaherty, Lord of West Connaught, to deliver that island, Kirke Island, and all the boats of Lough Orbsen into the hands of Odo O'Connor, King of Connaught, Cathal Redfist's son, for assurance of his fidelity. In 1233 Fedlim, King of Connaught, brother to the former, demolished the castles of Kirke Island, Galway, Hag Island, and Donamon." From the references to Kirke Castle in the "Four Masters," we learn that it was erected by the sons of Roderick O'Connor, assisted by Fitzadelm de Burgo, and the tradition in the country is that it was built by O'Conchubhair, King of Connaught. O'Donovan gives the measurement of the castle as being upon the inside 42 feet in length by 29 feet in breadth, and as having a small room arched overhead called O'Connor's Room, probably from its founder, measuring $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length by 5 feet 9 inches in breadth, and 6 feet 3 inches in height.

Near is Inehagoil Island, situate midway between Lemonfield and Cong. O'Flaherty, to whom we must have recourse, thus describes it:—"Inch-na-Ghoill, so called, that is from a certain holy person who there lived of old known only by the name of 'an Gall Craibhteach,' that is the devout foreigner, for Gall is one of the Gallic race: they call every foreigner so. Inis-na-Ghoill, the foreigner's island, between Ross and Moyeullen barony, on Lough Orbsen, contains half a quarter of pleasant land belonging to Cong Abbey, and hath a fine chapel therein, which is not for burial of any body. On the island died Anno 1128, Murgess O'Nioc, Archbishop of Tuam. Inis-na-Ghoill had two chapels, the one dedicated to St. Patrick, the other to the saint of whom the island is named, which admits not of the burial of anybody, but in the first it is usual to bury."

Of these chapels the one dedicated to St. Patrick is said to be the older, and more interesting, and Petrie ascribes its origin to the apostle's time. It is divided into nave and choir, and its doorway, which is placed in the west gable, is in the semi-cyclopean style. According to O'Donovan's measurement, the nave is 23 feet long, and 17 feet broad, and the choir is 11 feet 6 inches long. The doorway is at present 5 feet 9 inches high, 1 foot $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at the top, and 2 feet 1 inch at the bottom. The lintel is 4 feet 8 inches long, 1 foot high, and originally extended the entire thickness of the wall, that is 2 feet 7 inches, but it is now partly broken on the inside.

The other chapel which O'Flaherty says was dedicated to Gall Craibhteach is now called "Teampul na Naomh," that is, the church of the saint. It lies a short distance to the south-east of the church of St.

Patrick, and a winding old road or passage which led from the one to the other is still distinctly traceable. This church was a highly finished specimen of the kind of religious house erected by the Irish from the eighth to the eleventh centuries. The antiquary, says O'Donovan, has "to lament that it has suffered severely from the touch of envious time, but enough of it, however, remains to satisfy the curious investigator of the architecture of the ancient Irish that it was a highly finished little church." As, says the same eminent historian and antiquary, "the strength of a lion may be inferred from one talon and one jaw, so may the beauty of this church be proved from the fragments which remain of its characteristics." Like St. Patrick's, it consists of a nave and choir, but it is built of smaller stones. The nave measures on the inside 21 feet 10 inches, and in breadth 12 feet 9 inches. The choir measures on the outside 11 feet 6 inches in length. The choir arch is still standing, but has suffered so much from the storms, and particularly that of "the big wind" of 1839, that it is fast losing its peculiar characteristics. It is about 8 feet 8 inches high by 8 feet 8 inches broad. The south side wall contains a window which is broad inside and narrow outside, being on the inside near the top 1 foot 7½ inches wide, at bottom, 2 feet, and 3 feet 9 inches high. There is a very ancient stone inserted in this wall, ornamented with a cross, but containing no inscription. The west gable contains the doorway, which was highly finished, very like that in the church of Killestrin, near Cong, but now very much injured. It consisted of three concentric arches formed of red grit stone, but the two external ones are nearly destroyed. The arch which remains, but which is the doorway, is 5 feet 9 inches in height by 1 foot 11 inches broad at the top, and 2 feet 5 inches at the bottom. The walls of the church are 2 feet 3 inches in thickness, and the inner arch is 1 foot 4 inches in thickness. At the north-east corner of the choir is a square tomb which is probably that of the Archbishop Muirge O'Nioc, who died here in 1128.

A short distance to the south-west of this church is a small headstone of hard granite now 3 feet over ground, and not more than 5 inches square, which exhibits a very ancient inscription, in Roman characters, of about the fifth or beginning of the sixth century. This stone has two crosses on the east side, but on the reverse side to the letters one is nearly broken off. The inscription is reproduced and translated by O'Donovan, but a whimsical attempt was made in another quarter which cannot upon this or any subject be regarded as an authority. In Dutton's "Survey," mention is made of the inscription having been translated by an intelligent soldier in the Tipperary Militia in this wise—"Underneath this stoney Goill, Ardau and Sionan." The translator adds that the letters are in what he calls hard Irish virgin characters or ogham. This false rendering of the inscription, and falser description of it, made O'Donovan naturally indignant at imposing such trash upon a too credulous public.

Dutton, however, says more of Inchagoill, and speaks of many extraordinary traditions afloat concerning the island, which he says was called after Goill interred under the stone, one of the three brothers buried underneath the pillar, and he gives this as a specimen story:—"The noise of beasts and birds upon the island is said to have been so loud and so often repeated as frequently to have interrupted the devotional exercises, in consequence of which an earnest appeal was made to Heaven, and although the place still contains many of the quadruped and winged species, the former is not heard to bellow, nor the latter to warble." This is of a piece with the whole description of Dutton, so characteristic that one would think it was taken from a modern tourist guide, those publications that print such a lot of maudlin and meaningless nonsense under the head of information. O'Donovan gives the exact translation of the inscription as referring to Presbyter Lugnath, who was the son of Liemania, otherwise Darerca, the sister of St. Patrick. This is a highly probable reading, for although we have no authentic account of his having lived or having been buried on this island, we can trace Lugnath to an island on the adjoining Lough Mask. According to the "Book of Lecan" (fol. 51, p. b, col. 5), Presbyter Lugna, otherwise Lugnath, was the alumnus of St. Patrick, and the son of his sister, and he lived at a place called Fearta, of Tir Feic on Lough Mask, not three miles from this very spot, where not improbably from its association with his name his grave is situated. A king of Connaught named Duach Teanga Umha (we learn from the same authority) gave Lugna and his fellow labourers the lands extending from that part of Lough Mask which was called Suamh Tire Feig to Sail Dea. In the same ms. (fol. 45 a) he is called St. Patrick's Luamair, or navigator. The Irish authorities, however, are not exactly agreed upon the history of this saint, some making him out to be the son of St. Patrick's sister Lupita, some of his other sister Darerca, and others of Liemania. All agree in the essential fact of his near relationship to the National Apostle, and of his association with these parts. The stone stands a very strong proof of his authenticity, and we can safely agree with O'Donovan in regarding it as strong historical evidence to prove that the son of Liemania lived or died here. This inscription in the Uncial or old Latin character is one of the oldest specimens of Christian writing in Ireland. O'Donovan regarded it as the most ancient he saw up to the time of his memorable visit to Inchagoill in 1839—a visit recorded in his report to the Ordnance Survey authorities in the interesting form of letters to Sir Thomas Larcom, never published by him then or since, but altogether availed of by Wilde in his account of these and other parts of the Corrib.

If Baxter and Camden are to be relied upon, the Ausoba of Ptolemy is our present Corrib—others are of opinion that this eminent geographer referred to Galway Bay—any way to this western district of Ireland he referred, and whether Corrib had a place and prominence in

the classical geography, it undoubtedly has a remote antiquity to boast of. Its old name was Orbsen, which became corrupted into Oirb, and it ultimately acquired its present form of Corrib. It was called Orbsen after a famous merchant of that name, remarkable for carrying on a commercial intercourse in his remote days between Britain and Ireland. He was, according to O'Flaherty, commonly called Manannan, also Mac Lir, or son of the sea, from his expertness in swimming, and because of his skill in reading the changes of the weather, by which he always avoided storms. In Cormac's "Glossary" he is spoken of as "Lir," a famous merchant who was in the Isle of Man; while William Sacheverell, who was Governor in 1702, stated he was the father, founder, and legislator of that country. He was the best navigator in the western world. He used to discover by observation of the heavens when there would be good or bad weather, and when each would change by the moon. Hence the Scots or Britons used to call him the God of the Sea, and they said he was the son of the sea. From him the Isle of Man is named. He fell in battle at Moycullen, on the margin of that spacious lake which, says O'Flaherty, "discharges its redundant waters into the Bay of Galway, by the river of Galway, being stabbed by Ullin, the grandson of Nuada, King of Ireland, by his son Tadhg. The site of that battle was called after Ullin, and the lake after Orbsen." Concerning these Flann of the monastery writes thus:—

"Mac Alloid of prowess fell. | The great fierce champion Manannan. | In the battle at hard Ullin. | By the hand of Ullin of the red brows."

Magh Ullin, therefore, the plain of Ullin, in which the battle was fought, by changes of time became what it is to-day, Moycullen, one of the most extensive baronies in the county Galway, with certainly a name the most historically interesting. O'Flaherty, the historian of the Corrib, writes thus of this territory:—"This was my natal soil and patrimony through a long series of ancestors. It was a manor exempted by patent from royal tribute, endowed with the privilege of holding a market and fairs, and honoured with the liberty of a seneschal's court to settle litigation. But having lost my father before I was two years of age, I came under the tutelary protection of the king by the laws of the country regulating minors, and paid, as was the custom, money for my wardship, but before it was lawful for me to enter upon the enjoyment of my patrimonial inheritance, I lost the patronage of my guardian by the regicidal execution of my king in the nineteenth year of my age, and the royal heir (the prince), half a year younger than I, was forced to seek refuge in a foreign country. The Lord has wonderfully restored the prince to his kingdom, by the consent of all good men without contention or blood, but He has not found me worthy to be restored to the kingdom of my cottage. Against thee, O Lord, only have I sinned. Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever." Thus the historian of Corrib and its

hundred isles submitted patiently to his fate. The Cromwellian confiscations were bad enough, but the Stuart's ingratitude to his ward whom he was bound to protect, was worse. The O'Flaherty patrimony, embracing some of those islands we are speaking of, was parcelled out and distributed, and none ever came back to their original owners. The district of Gnobeg went to the Martins.

On the brink of the Corrib, upon the townland of the same name, were two famous castles called the Castles of the Two Sisters, round which many romantic tales linger. One of the castles was blown down in the memorable year of the "big wind," illfated 1839. Another equally remarkable structure was the Castle of Aughenure, which means in Irish the field of the two yews. Two trees grew here in former times, and one so late as the beginning of the century, even down to 1840. It may still be there. It grew west of the castle, and was supposed to have been over a thousand years old. The castle is situate on the brink of the Corrib, two miles east of Oughterard, and is described, as only he could, by George Petrie in the "Dublin Penny Magazine" of 1841.

O'Flaherty's fairly accurate description of the general aspect of the Corrib as known to him is worth reproduction:—"It is a very spacious and large lake, hath its sources at Bunbannon in the half barony of Ross, and extends thence 8 miles eastward to the river of Cong, having the half barony of Ross partly on one side, partly dividing Ross from Moycullen barony, and partly having Ross on the north side. It extends southwards twelve miles in length, till it discharges itself into the river of Galway, having the baronies of Kilmain and Clare on the east, and the barony of Moycullen on the west: somewhere four miles in breadth, and sometimes less than a quarter of a mile. It is said to have as many islands as there are days in the year, all of them belonging to the west as far as where a boat can pass between them and the east side."

We next come to the famous island of Inchiquin, the largest of the Corrib's Islands. It is situate about a half mile off the shore near the Killursa side. It is a long low island, running north and south, upwards of a mile and a quarter in length, and containing 292 acres. Here, according to O'Flaherty, "St. Brendan built a chapel and worked divers miracles. In the same island, St. Meldan, whose festival day is the 7th February, was abbot of a famous abbey, about the year 580 A.D. He was the spiritual father of the great St. Fursa of Verone, in France, who carried the relics of this saint along with him, and enshrined them at Verone." The island is often now called Inis-na-cuinn, and it was so celebrated in former times that the lake itself came to be called after this famous part. O'Donovan explains the origin of the name as the island of the descendants of St. Meldan, they being called Hui Cuinn, and it, therefore, as the island of the descendants of Con, monarch of

Ireland, in the second century. It was here Roderick O'Connor, the ill-fated king, tarried on his way to Cong, in 1183, but, says the old chronicler, "finding a favourable breeze spring up, he said, well if the land is against me the wind is with me," and so set sail for Illaun Re. A name often occurring in connexion with Inchiquin, is that of Rathmally, often to be found in Irish hagiology, so called from the rails of the field, the local habitation of the saints on this island, the ruins of which are now scarcely discernible, but occupying the site is an old churchyard.

The learned Bishop of Clonfert, Dr. Healy, thus in his excellent work on Irish Saints and Scholars, describes St. Brendan's connexion with Inchiquin:—"It seems that after Brendan's return from Britain, he paid a second visit to Connaught. During his first sojourn there, he became familiar with the great plain, stretching westward from Tuam to Lough Corrib, and doubtless also saw the beautiful islands that stud that noble sheet of water. In one of these islands called Inchiquin, which is separated by a narrow rocky channel, from the eastern shore of the lake, near Headford, he founded his first monastery in the province of Connaught. He was accompanied to the island by his nephew, Bishop Moennu, or Moinenn, whom he afterwards appointed to preside over Clonfert. With their own hands they carried the stones and built their cells and little oratory. Here, too, St. Fursey received his early training." While Brendan was at Inchiquin he founded a convent for his sister at Annaghdown, not many miles inland, and a parish and townland near it, in their present perpetuated name of Killursa, bear testimony to the labours of St. Fursey. From Inchiquin, St. Brendan went off to near Erris, founding there upon the island of Inisgluair a celebrated oratory. A few paces to the east of the doorway of his chapel, there are two flagstones which mark the place where the immortal children of Lir are buried. St. Brendan died at Annaghdown, in 557, and his remains were carried away by stealth, from the devoted people of the Corrib, who wished to cherish them, to repose in his famous foundation at Clonfert.

There are 145 islands in the Corrib altogether, not as many as O'Flaberty thought. Some of them have names, but a number are practically mere nameless bits of land. Among the best known are Ineuinactreer, Doorus, Cannaun, Lee's Island, Illauna Conaun, Bilberry Island, Cussafoor, Coad, Inisbeagh, Carrickashlin, Inchbrana, Inisdoorus, Glenillaun, Inishabee, and Ardilaun, after which the popular and respected lord of the soil took his title with patriotic appropriateness.

Lee's Island contains $47\frac{1}{2}$ acres, and was the scene and occasion of a murderously memorable conflict between the O'Flaertys and the O'Lees. The latter were in early times a numerous and a powerful clan. Concerning one of the name, one Morough O'Lee, a curious story is told. He received, he said, a book from one of the inhabitants of

O'Brazil, the mythical island off the Galway coast, with a command not to look into its pages for seven years. He obeyed the injunction, and at length opening it found it to contain a lot of valuable information upon medicine, and the healing art generally. He became a great doctor, and the Book of O'Brazil (now in the Royal Irish Academy) became famous. It is a medical manuscript on vellum, forty-six large quarto folios, written in fifteenth century Irish and Latin, and bearing date 1434.

We learn that in the year 927, the islands of the Corrib were pillaged by the Danes. O'Flaherty, speaking of Echenis, or Inis Gerain, or Horse island, says:—"It lies very near Enagh Coelain continent, but nearer Ard, part of Aughenure. In this island, St. Enna, of Arran, visited St. Coelan, priest on Lough Orbsen. This Coelan is worshipped the 25th April (Vita St. Endei). Of him, likely Enagh Coelan, nigh Aughenure, is named." This Enagh Coelain is now called Annagh Keelann. Then there is Inisflannan, "an island," says the same writer, "which retains the memory of St. Flannan, patron of Ballydoon parish. St. Flannan, of the noble Tuamonian blood, consecrated by Pope John the Fourth, A.D. 640, first bishop of Killaloe, is patron of the parish of Ballydoon, in which is the celebrated well of the seven daughters."

There is an island opposite the castle of Cargins, called Iniscrowa, or Garlic Island, upon which are the remains of an ancient circular cyclopean wall, which used to encompass the whole island. From this isle, Maeamb Iniscrowa, a wonderful ancient magician, took his name. In 1225, the Lord Justice of Ireland, coming into the port of Iniscrowa, caused Odo O'Flaherty, lord of West Connaught, to deliver up that island, Kirke Island, and all the boats on Lough Orbsen, into the hands of Odo O'Connor, King of Connaught, for assurance of his fidelity. Upon the Ordnance Map the island is called Illaun Carbery, from the circumstance of a modern hermit of the name of Carbery, having built himself a hut upon it in the last century, and lived there in peace and quiet during his untroubled life. The ancient fortress on it is worth a passing notice. A still finer specimen of that peculiar style of mortarless building of cyclopean dimensions may be found two miles further inland from the shores of the lake, at Cahergal, or the white fort; some of its stones measure 9 feet 4 in., as placed in position; the walls average 7½ feet in thickness, and enclose a space of 137 feet in diameter. Two islands upon the Corrib River, which joins the lake to the sea, are worth a mention, one is called Jordan Island. According to O'Flaherty, in Cromwell's time, a fanatic sect of Anabaptists came thither "to dip themselves by the island's side, as alluding to the River Jordan." But they quarrelled among themselves, and soon disappeared from the place, not before some curious examples of their fanaticism had taken place.

We shall allow O'Flaherty to describe another island:—"There is an island where the river issues from the lake, now called Olen-na-mbrahar,

or Friar's Island, but anciently Olen-na-gCleragh, or Clergy's Island, for the Irish Annals mention that A.D. 1178, from midnight to noon, Galway River became dry from Clergy Isle to the sea, and much fish and goods long afore drowned therein, found by the people of the town. It became dry the second time, A.D. 1190, wherein was found the head of a spear, one cubit long ('Ware Ant. Hib.,' c. 12, p. 65). It became suddenly dry in our own memory twice, first on Tuesday, the 7th September, 1647; a second time was a mighty great frost, from 28th November, 1683, to 3rd of February, whereby the river was all congealed; only the rapid stream from the Wood-key of the town to the sea. This stream suddenly stopped on Wednesday, 23rd January, from the night before to the night after, so as the channel was all along dry during that time, and though the frost continued as much after as before, yet the stream runned the day after and filled its channel, so also did it after the 7th September, the first time. The river hath the same fish with the lake whence it springs, and in the mouth thereof where the sea flows abundance of yelvers or eel fry is taken up by casting trident spears at them with long ropes, to draw up the spears again." Before we come to this, and near the Friar's Cut is Caislean-na-Caillighe, or the Hag's Castle; and if we refer to the "Donegal Annals," we find another of the same name mentioned as, in 1195, being on Lough Mask.

The old Irish divisions of the territory of Moycullen were Gnomore and Gnobeg, and the present parish of that name extends from the Corrib to Galway. The old castle of Moycullen belonged to the O'Flahertys. The two castles of Tolokian and the Hag's Castle stood on the brink of the lake, and were called the castles of the two sisters, concerning which many romantic tales were told if not written. Moycullen was the ancient territory of Dealbhna Feadha, one of the seven Dealbhnas or territorial divisions, of which there were five in Connaught. Dr. O'Brien's "Irish Dictionary" calls it by Irish names, which signify "Delvin of the land, between the two lakes, viz., Corrib or Orbsen, and Lurgan or Galway." Sir William Wilde tells a humorous legend about the Hag's Castles as accounting for their origin. It is said that when the old maids were too old to visit, they built for themselves these castles, close together, in order that they might conveniently barge at each other from their respective windows, but the truly sisterly occupation was cut short by one of the viragoes killing the other. One of the castles was blown down in 1839. With these brief notes we must close our present remarks upon the interesting islands of the picturesque and historic Corrib.

A CRANNOGE NEAR CLONES.

By DR. S. A. D'ARCY, MEMBER.

(Continued from page 220.)

OBJECTS OF WOOD.

THE following articles were found:—An object formed of oak-wood still sound, and roughly dressed as with an adze. It is curved, and measures 12 inches in length along the rim, and 5 inches in depth. The wood, the grain of which runs in the direction of the longest measurement, is about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick at the rim, slightly thinner below. This article is evidently part of a wooden vessel, the most notable point about it being the rounded notches cut on the inner surface of the rim, which are almost an exact reproduction in wood of the designs seen on five pottery fragments from this crannoge. The holes in the wood are 4 inches apart; the one to the right is the largest, measuring on the inner surface of the rim $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in the longest diameter. They are both rather oval in outline, which may be due to shrinkage of the wood; and their edges, especially in the case of the left, are crushed looking, and considerably splayed on the inner surface of the rim, both holes being very much smaller, with clean cut edges on the outer surface. These apertures were probably intended for a short handle of thin rope, both ends of which were passed through from the outside, and then knotted; no doubt there was a similar arrangement on the opposite side of the vessel, which could thus be lifted up like an ordinary tub. The constant pressure thus exercised by the handle-knots would account for the edges of the holes on the inner surface having become crushed and splayed. This, I think, affords a clue to the use of the perforations in two fragments of pottery, one of which is illustrated by fig. 12 (p. 391). These, I have no doubt, served also as handle holes; but with this difference, that such earthen vessels had probably only two such holes, placed directly opposite to each other, or perhaps sometimes four, not, however, placed in couples side by side as in the wooden specimen, but also at opposite points of the rim. That cord, or wire, the ends passed through from without, and then secured, was also used here, is borne out by the fact that the marks of wear are on the inner side of the holes, in the case of the pottery also, which, as it is encrusted with soot on the outside, evidently belonged to a cooking vessel. In this case in order to resist the flames, wire was

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GRAINNE O'MALLEY
The Sea Queen of Connacht

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A PAPER read to the Irish Genealogical Research Society on 13th March, 1940,

BY

COMMANDER ANTONY MACDERMOTT, R.N., Knight of Malta.

It is a curious fact that although the subject of this lecture was one of the most remarkable Irish women that ever lived, no mention whatever is made of her by any of the Contemporary Irish Annalists. The Annals of the Four Masters, and the Annals of Loch Ce' are alike silent regarding her, and it is only from the Elizabethan State papers that much reliable information is to be had.

Legends and stories are, of course, fairly numerous; though most of these are manifestly untrue and often absurd. They are for the most part scraps of much older legends, just tacked on to Grainne's name. That sort of thing is extremely common in Ireland as in all Celtic countries. There is also one novel, "The Dark Lady of Doona." The author, William H. Maxwell (who wrote that delightful classic, "Wild Sports of the West of Ireland") evidently knew little of the history of his heroine, and was thus content merely to make up a story about her which bears however but slight relation to known facts.

Grainne Ni Mhaille (as she called herself), described as a haughty, fearless and dark-featured princess, was born about 1530 in the Castle of Belclare, the daughter of Dubdhaire O'Malley, or O'Malley of the Black Oak, chief of the O'Malley nation, and of Margaret his wife, of the same name and family.

The territory of the O'Malleys comprised all the coast and country round Clew Bay, as well as the bare and venerable Isles of Arran. The whole of this district was known as the Umhalls, or Owels of O'Malley, or countries owing allegiance to O'Malley. Dubdhaire, otherwise known as Owen, was a mighty chief, and he also owned a great fishing fleet, doing a large trade in salt fish with Spain and England. It should be noted that there was far more seafaring on the South and West coasts of Ireland during the XVI century than later. O'Maille in Mayo; O'Donnel in Donegal, (known as the "King of the Fish" from the extent of his trade); O'Sullivan Beare in Kerry, and other territorial chieftains all owned large fishing fleets and exported great quantities of salt herrings. Moreover they levied toll on all English and foreign vessels fishing in their waters. O'Sullivan Beare granted fishing licences to the Spaniards but refused them to the English. Several foreign powers paid large sums for fishing licences. Phillip II of Spain (husband of our own Bloody Mary) in 1556 paid £1,000 a year (perhaps £20,000 today) for leave for 21 years to fish off the Irish coast.

A report by Sir Humphrey Gilbert states that there was no less than 600 Spanish vessels using Baltimore and the Blasquet Islands as centres, and there were also large French and Dutch Fleets. The clan O'Driscoll of Baltimore was notorious for its piracies at that time.

Grainne married at an early age, Donal an Chogaidh O'Flaherty, "Donal of the Battles," Tanist or heir apparent of the O'Flahertys of Ballinahinch, a powerful clan of fierce and hardy fighters by land or sea.

These O'Flahertys were the most contentious of all the bellicose clans of Ireland; they had a terrible name in the West. So fierce and formidable were their onslaughts, that the Burghers of Galway and other towns used a form of prayer in their churches, saying: "From the Ferocious O'Flahertys Good Lord deliver us," and this legend could be seen over the West Gate of Galways until quite recent times. Also in a petition to Pope Innocent VIII, the Burghers of Galway expressed their country neighbours as "mountainous and savage men, by whom the citizens are sometimes robbed and killed."

But to return to the O'Malleys; O'Dugan the Bard who died in 1372 wrote of them:—

"O Clann Maille of the Sea-sent treasure
Every land is against thee in this,
Ye inhabit the two Umhalls."

"A good man never there was
Of the Ui Maille, but a mariner.
The prophets of the weather are ye,
A tribe of affection and brotherly love."

But never a sailor of *all* the O'Malleys could excel Grainne O'Malley in driving a galley through a winter gale or in ruling the wild and turbulent clansmen who fought and sailed under her banner of the White Sea-horse. "Terra Marique Potens" is the latin motto of the O'Malleys, meaning powerful by Land and Sea, and Grainne herself in reply to questions by the British Government says that her living was "*Maintenance by Land and Sea.*" I think that in plain language that just meant that nothing she could lay her hands on, whether ashore or afloat, came amiss to her. She raided the territories of neighbouring chiefs, and towns and villages on the coast of Scotland; and God help any poor merchant ship that she'd run aboard of, with maybe 150 of her wild tribesmen armed with pikes and hatchets. 'Tis little enough they'd leave after them; only the bare hull—if they left that much.

Now in those days Ireland used to be governed by a Lord Deputy, acting for the English Queen, with Governors of provinces under him; and you may be sure that Grainne's ways of living were not always to the taste of these gentlemen. More, by token, that whenever there would be a rebellion—which was pretty frequently—she'd surely be behind it somewhere.

Sir Richard Bingham, the Governor of Connacht in those days, was the man she used to fall foul of mostly. He was cruel and treacherous, and being a great robber himself (like most of Elizabeth's men), he had marked distaste for anyone that would be in the same line of business! This Richard had a brother called John by whom even he was out-stripped in this respect. Well, one day John Bingham was hunting rebels, when he came out on the coast opposite an island called Inisturk where Grainne's son Owen was living. Owen was a quiet peaceful young man and took no part in any rebellion, but always lived on good terms with the English. So when John Bingham asked for food and shelter for himself and his troop, Owen ferried them over to the island and entertained them the best way he could. But the moment Bingham's ruffians got the chance, they rose up against their hosts and murdered them to a man, and then made off with 4,000 head of cattle and 500 brood mares. It is the memory alas of such deeds that tends to preserve a bitter feeling among the Western Gaels even to this day. Small wonder if it made Grania Uaile Bingham's deadliest and most cunning enemy.

After the death of her husband Donal O'Flaherty, Grainne had to leave her home of Bunowan in Ballinahinch, which was seized by her husband's relatives, and she went back to the O'Malley country where she built a strong castle on the island of Cliara, or Clare Island, in Clew Bay. The remains of that castle still stand overlooking the Strand where her galleys were drawn up. And indeed it was inhabited till quite recent years, being utilized as a police barrack and as a Coast-guard station.

Grania married her younger daughter to Richard Burke of Corraun—a neighbouring chief, whom the English called the Devil's Hook. Bingham refers to him as "a terrible rebel called the Devil's Hook," and writes in 1593, that as long as he and Grainne have power to make any stir they will not appeal to Her Majesty. Corraun is a wild peninsula on the north shore of Clew Bay facing Achill Island.

So now, with the Devil's Hook to the north of her, and her nephews and cousins at Murrick and Carramore to the south, Grainne was in as strong a position for attack or defence as she could wish. Moreover, she built a castle at Doona at the north end of Achill Sound over-looking Blacksod Bay; and then, taking a great fancy to the stronghold of Carrigahowlay, right up in the north east corner of Clew Bay, she got possession of that, by the simple expedient of marrying the owner, Richard-an-Iarainn Burke, meaning "Richard the Lord," which was his real native title, but known to the English as Richard-in-Iron, because he always wore a coat of mail. Anticipating Hollywood, they married "for a year certain;" after which either could divorce the other. How long they lived together I do not know, but it is said that when Grainne had got her supporters into Carrigahowlay and other Burke strongholds, she waited for her husband to return from one of his many wars with the Joyces, and then standing on the battlements, bawled to him, "I dismiss you!" and that was that. This Richard-in-Iron was an important chief himself, of the great and powerful Clan of the Burkes, or De Burgos, and a near relation of the Earl of Clanricarde. He was a "great man, Lord of a wide sea coast territory" (vide Letter from Sydney to Burghley) and owned a fleet of trading vessels. He was also described by Bingham as "a plundering war-like, unquiet and rebellious man, who had often forced the gap of danger and as often had it forced against him." In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Burkes were the most powerful tribe in Connacht, or at any rate in Mayo. They owned their origin and glory to William, younger brother of Walter de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, who was famous for his bravery in war. He reconquered Connacht, having slain O'Connor, MacDermot and O'Kelly in battle; but he himself was slain at last by Cormac MacDermot. William and his posterity governed Connacht for a long time under the title of Lords of Connacht. William's daughter married Lionel, Duke of Clarence, son of Edward III. The descendants of Richard de Burgh are called clan-Rickard. Others, descended from William are called MacWilliam, and are divided into the two clans of MacWilliam Oughter or Uachter, i.e., Higher, and MacWilliam Eighter, i.e., Lower, referring to the territories over which they held sway.

But if Richard-in-Iron wore a coat of mail, it was his wife that wore the breeches. Sir Henry Sydney, the Lord Deputy tells us that when he came to Galway in 1576, there came to visit him there "A most famous feminine Sea-captain called Grania O'Malley, and she offered her services to me whenever I would command her, with three galleys and 200 fighting men, either in Ireland or in Scotland. She brought with her, her husband, for she was, as well by sea as by land, more than master's mate to him. He was of the Nether Burkes, and now, I hear, is MacWilliam Eighter called by nickname "Richard-in-Iron."

Sir Henry saw plain enough that it was Grainne was the master both by land and sea, but he made Richard a Knight, which no doubt pleased the poor fellow, and Grainne was now of course Lady Burke, though devil a soul ever heard her called by

that name in Connacht. Grainne O'Malley she was, and Grainne O'Malley she remained, despite her two husbands.

Most of Grainne's coastal raids were carried out in long fast-sailing galleys, drawing little water, and pulling 20 or 20 oars when occasion required. They were ideal craft for this form of piracy as they could carry 60 or 70 fighting men in addition to rowers, and could make rapid descents on unsuspecting settlements, or on ships at anchor, or becalmed; and then take advantage of every narrow and dangerous channel amongst the islands if pursued by men o'war. She took toll of all passing craft, according to the ancient Maritime Law of Olnemacht; that is to say she took toll if the ship was strong enough to put up any resistance. If not, she took every thing else.

Besides these galleys, however, Grainne had larger vessels, perhaps captured at sea, in which she made longer voyages. In them she swooped on the Chiefs of Munster, and harried the shipping in the English Channel. Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Spaniard or Portuguee, it was all one to Grainne. It was when she was away on one of these forays that her third son Theobald Burke was born. He was nicknamed Tibbód-na-long, or Tibbód of the ships, in consequence. It is recorded that on the very day that she was brought to bed, a Turkish Corsair attacked her ship and was getting the better of her men. A word was brought down to her, where she lay with her newborn infant. Springing up, she cried, "Go mo shaught massa ves siv bleen o nu nough dig live a veh la wan go merise!" (May you be seven times worse in a year's time seeing you can't get on for even one day without me.) Then putting a blanket about her, and a string around her neck, she seized two blunder-bushes and rushed on deck, dancing and capering about. Her monstrous size and odd figure surprised the Turks. Their officers crowded together talking about her; when discharging both her pieces amongst them, she killed them all, crying:

"Beef spen fuv o lav gun cosregan." (Take that from an unblest hand.) Meaning she had not been churched. After taking the ship she hanged the whole pirate crew at Carrig-a-howley! I like that touch of righteousness.

She was very proud of her warriors and often boasted about them, saying that she preferred a ship full of the Conraoi and MacNalley families to a ship full of gold.

Later on Grainne took Tibbód to London and presented him to Queen Elizabeth, hoping to get a peerage for him—for was he not as good a Burke as the Earl of Clanricarde himself, and as highborn as any nobleman of the Pale?—and sure enough he *was* made a peer, years afterwards, in 1628, not by Elizabeth, but by Charles I; Tibbód-na-long then became Viscount Mayo; the first of an illustrious but unfortunate line (now extinct). The present Earldom of Mayo is of a later creation.

After the birth of Tibbód, Grainne kept pretty quiet for a few years; but when Richard-in-Iron died in 1583 and left her a widow for the second time, life became tedious, and she was soon back at her old trade of piracy and raiding. She now made Carrigahowley her headquarters. It was a powerful stronghold, well defended by cannon and with a safe and well-sheltered harbour alongside of it. Here she was besieged in 1579 by Captain William Martin, and a strong body of troops, raised by the Burghers of Galway whose ships she had plundered; but after three weeks of it, Grainne drove him off and nearly captured his whole band. They say that more than once she had driven her own husband Richard-in-Iron from the walls.

Her son Morrogh O'Flaherty, who had regained possession of Bunowen, was a good subject of Queen Elizabeth, so good indeed, that his mother brought a Navy of Galleys to Ballinahinch; landed, and killed several of his men, and took some of

his cattle, to punish him for his ignoble submission to a foreigner! That was the way to larn your boys in 1580.

Of course Grainne didn't always have it all her own way. One time she made a swoop on the territory of the Great Earl of Desmond at the mouth of the Shannon and having landed a party to raid the Earl's Country, she had the mischance to be taken prisoner by the Earl, who threw her into his dungeon. Later he sent her to Drury, the Governor of Munster, who kept her in prison for eighteen months, and then sent her on to Lord Deputy, describing her as "Grany O'Mayle, a woman who had impudently passed (over-stepped) the part of womanhood, and been a great spoiler, and chief commander and director of thieves and murderers at sea to spoil this province"—The Deputy met her at Leighlin Bridge and sent her on to Dublin; but when he got to Dublin himself he released Grainne—for whom indeed he had some admiration—and let her go back to the West on condition she'd behave herself. "I'm going to have this country governed peacefully and properly," says the Deputy, "and all fighting and piracy, and robbery has to stop. "But," as Grainne said, "sure how could there be any peace, with all *that* law and order, in a country like Ireland?" So it wasn't long before she was warring with her neighbours again; and that was the time Captain William Martin went down to capture her, and was sent off with a flea in his ear.

Bingham cordially detested the whole brood of Burkes, O'Malleys and O'Flaherties, and never lost an opportunity of trying to damage Grainne. Fortunately for her she had a good friend at Court in the Earl of Ormonde who often interceded for her.

In 1586 there was another rebellion of the Burkes, and though Grainne wasn't in it, she came very near to being hanged by Bingham, who had got possession of her by means of a treacherous lie. He erected a fine new gallows for her in Castlebar, but just as she was about to take a swing on it, the Devil's Hook turned up and offered himself as a pledge and hostage for her good behaviour. Bingham set her free; but he stole all her cattle and horses and every other kind of property he could lay his hands on.

On another occasion when she was imprisoned at Galway, the Lord Deputy gave a great ball, and some of his guests being curious to see the famous feminine Sea Rover, Grainne was sent for and invited to dance with some of the gentlemen. She haughtily refused to take part in any foreign capers, saying that if she danced at all it would be the dances of her country. Being pressed to give an exhibition, she performed a jig and a reel; then saying that she felt faint she asked to be taken into the open air. An officer gave her his arm and led her outside, but no sooner were they over the threshold when they were surrounded by a party of Grainne's men and rushed down to the Cladac where a galley awaited them.

Grainne was now getting pretty old, and for a long time she gave up her "trade of maintenance by land and sea"; but the old longing and the old spirit, were still there, so later on we find her writing a letter to Lord Burghley asking him to procure, "Her Majesty's Letter under her hand, authorising her (Grainne) to pursue during her life, all her Majesty's enemies by land and sea." Not bad, says you, for an old lady well past sixty years of age! Needless to say, Grainne wasn't bothering too much about the queen's enemies. All she wanted was an excuse for starting out again on a fresh career of piracy. The question of who were the queen's enemies, was likely to be given a pretty wide interpretation by Grainne O'Malley.

So far as is known, Grainne paid two visits to Queen Elizabeth. It is certain she went to London and had an interview with the Queen in August 1593, and the

amiable Bingham, in a letter to the Secretary of State at the time, describes her as "a notable traitress, and nurse of all rebellions in the Province for 40 years!"

It is said that while she was chatting to the Queen—in Latin, for she had no English—Grainne wiped her nose with the back of her hand. Turning to one of her ladies-in-waiting, Elizabeth said, "Give Lady Burke a handkerchief, girl." So the lady handed her own handkerchief, a dainty thing of lace and cambric, to Grainne, who having blown her nose with a blast like the last trumpet, pitched the thing in to the fire.

"Faith, that's queer country manners," said the astonished Queen, "To go and heave a lady's handkerchief into the fire." "And what else would I do with it?" says Grainne. "In Ireland t'is our custom to throw away any dirty thing; but maybe in England you'd preserve it as a keepsake." Anyway she got what she asked for from Elizabeth, which was a widow's portion, of one third part, of each of her two former husband's estates.

After leaving London, she sailed down the channel and up the Irish Sea on her way home. Passing the Hill of Howth, she dropped anchor off the castle and went up to pay her respects to the Earl, and ask for some fresh provisions for her crew. She found all the gates closed, however, and in answer to her summons the janitor put his head out over the battlements and bawled, "Who are ye, and what do ye want?"

"I'm Grainne O'Malley," says Grainne, "and all I'm asking is the common hospitality due to a stranger."

"Faith we were thinking it might be yourself," says the janitor, "t'is often-times we heard of you before. Well, you'll not come in here," says he, "His Lordship is at his dinner anyway, and he's not to be disturbed."

Grainne never answered a word, but she turned away in black and bitter rage. Walking back to the shore she met a serving woman leading a beautiful child by the hand.

"Whose boy is that?" asked Grainne.

"He's the heir of the Lord of Howth," said the woman.

"Ha!" said Grainne, and snatching up the child she carried him off to her galley; got the anchor, and away she sailed for Clew Bay and her stronghold of Cashlaun-na-Cearc.

Well you may be sure there was a fine towrow and tallyhoo when the news became known up at the Castle! Everybody roaring and screeching at the one time!

"Put out the boats and row after her!" bawls her Ladyship. But yerra, what boats had they was able to catch the like of her? And sure, the very name of Grainne Uaile was enough to frighten every vessel on the coast into harbour.

Well, there was nothing they could do, so the Earl of Howth, great nobleman though he was, had to make terms with Grainne.

The boy was restored, not on ransom, but on the word of Howth that never again would the doors of Howth Castle be closed at dinner time, and that a place should be set everyday at the high table for any chance wayfarer by land or sea. And that rule is observed at Howth down to the present day.

In 1590 Sir Thomas Lestrange took possession of the Arran Islands, to Grainne's indignation, as they had always belonged to her people. So she collected a force of O'Malleys, Burkes and O'Flahertys in three galleys, and overran the interlopers in a very damaging manner, destroying their dwellings and seizing their moveable property.

In 1601 she was in action with a British sloop of war off the Donegal coast, which pursued her towards the land, and then sent boats to capture her galley, a powerful vessel of thirty oars and a hundred musqueteers (vide the English Captain's report). After an hour's hard fighting one of the Queen's boats had been captured and destroyed; but the sloop managing to get within artillery range, the Irish were compelled to fall back, losing their galley. Grainne was at this time well over 70 years of age.

Grainne died about 1603, the same year as Queen Elizabeth. She is buried at Clare Island where her grave may still be seen.

She was the present writer's ancestress, through Tibbód-na-long.

Grainne was also known in song and story as Grainne "na gcearbhach" (na garra) or "Grainne of the gamblers," because she kept a troop of professional dicers and gamblers among her attendants (vide Sean O'Doherty's panegyric about 1598).

I have already referred to some of the fantastic legends about Grainne and her son Tibbód which are still current in the West. Most of them are unworthy of notice but here are one or two which may amuse you.

- (1) The story of the Red-headed Smith.
- (2) The story of Tibbód cutting off the head of the first man he met on Monday morning.
- (3) Tibbód saving the life of a poet on the gallows at Ballinrobe.
- (4) Tibbód and the marrow-bone.

It should be remembered that names like Rickard Burke, Tibbód Burke, Donal O'Flahertie, etc., etc., are very common in Connacht, and the exploits of one hero of the name are very liable to be handed on to another of a succeeding generation.

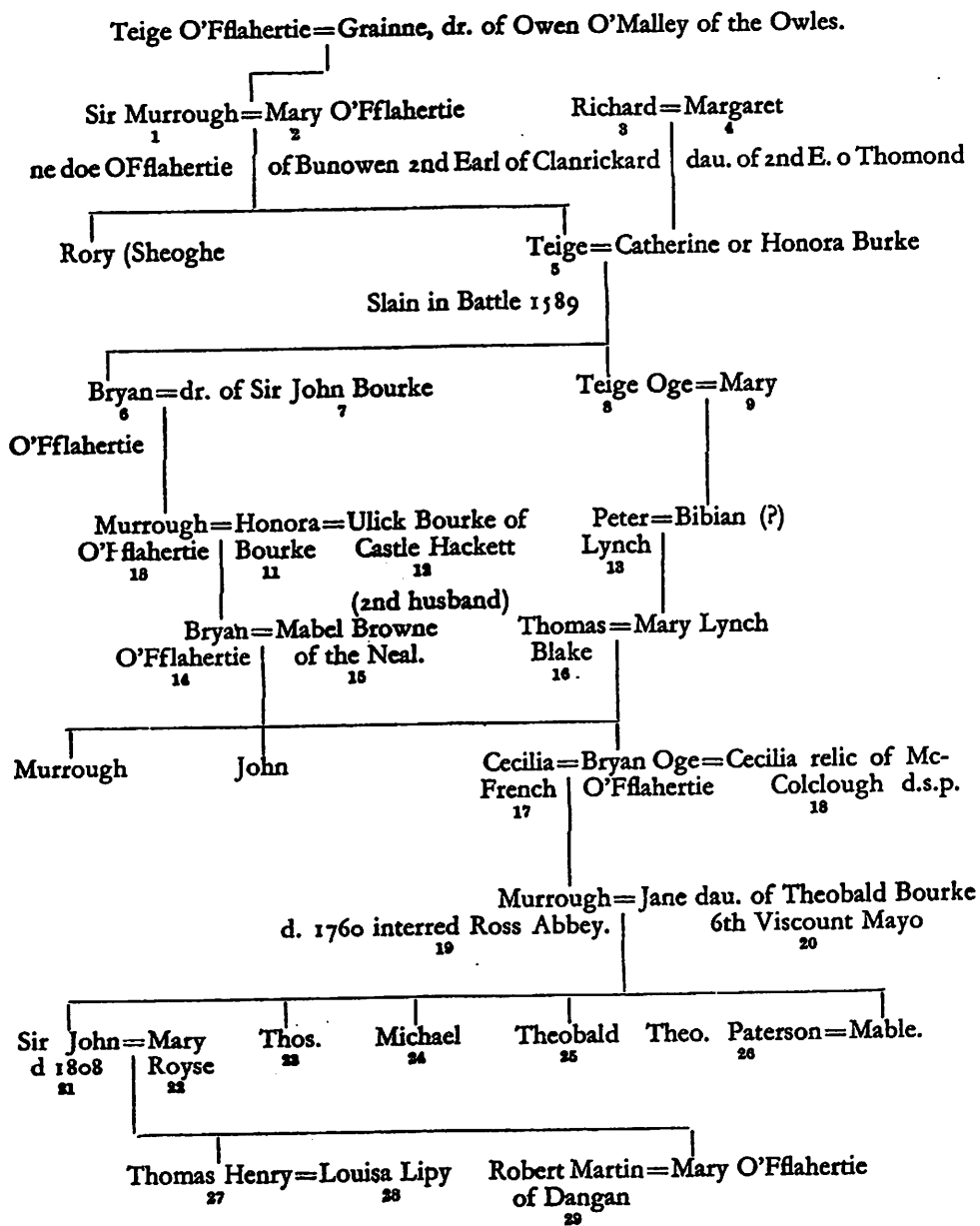
Grainne left a number of descendants by both her husbands, and I have here the pedigrees of at least some of them.

It is interesting to note that the Duke of Argyll and the Earl of Coventry are descended from our heroine through "the beautiful Gunnings."

It is curious that about 100 years after Grainne's time another redoubtable female pirate made her appearance on the West Coast and ravaged both French and English trading vessels. She was eventually taken by the French frigate Ceres and duly hanged at the yard arm, with two of her companions to keep her company at her own request.

In conclusion I should like to express my gratitude to Dr. Delargy, Mr. O'Sullivan, and very particularly to Miss Maire O'Callaghan of the Folklore Commission for the generous and willing help I received from them when compiling this paper.

DESCENDANTS OF GRAINNE O'MALLEY BY HER FIRST HUSBAND

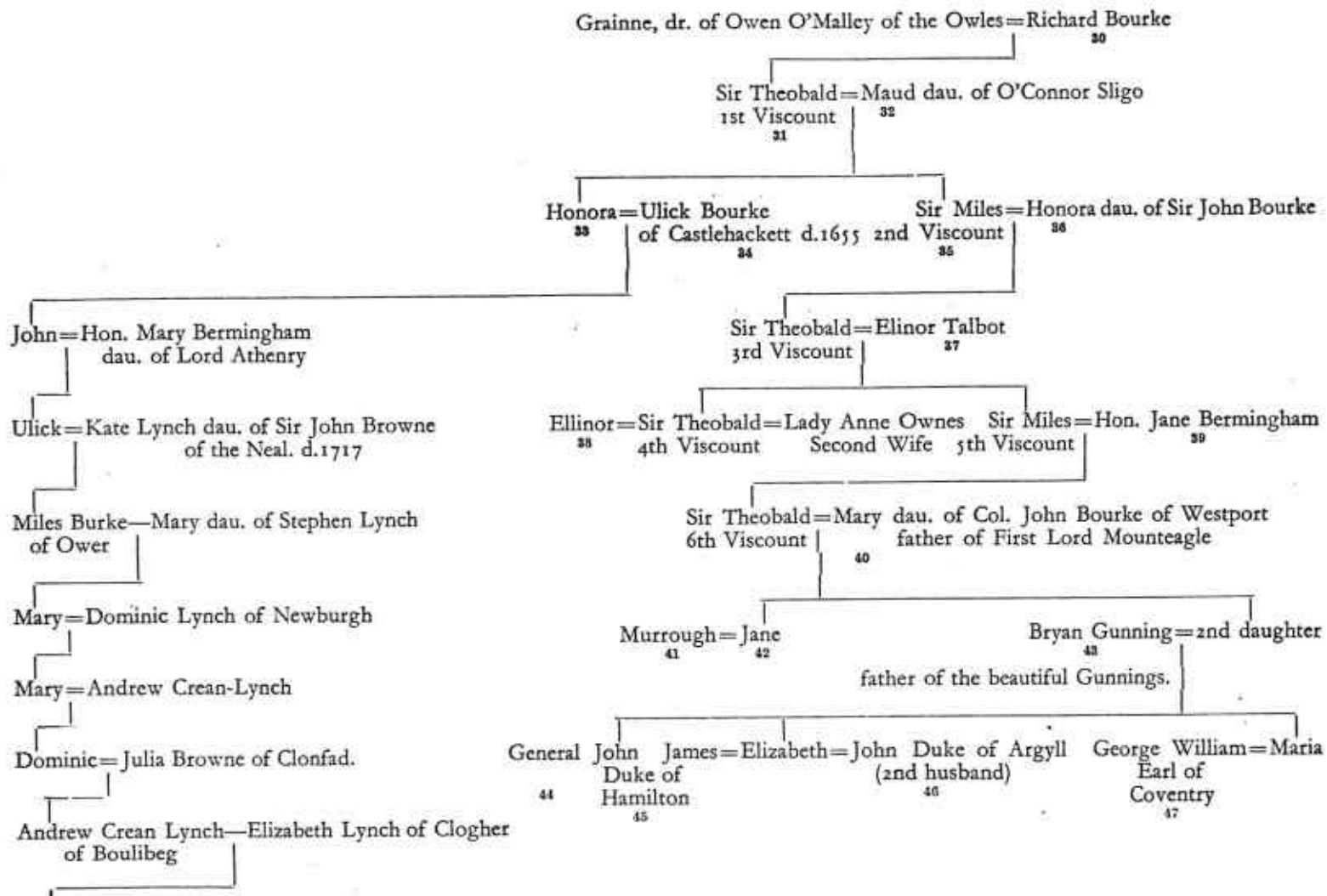


NOTES ON THE PEDIGREE

1. Sir Murrough-ne-doe of Aghenure Castle surrendered to Queen Elizabeth all his Castles and Lands, Title and Chieftainship *etc.*, and had them regranted. See Patent 30 Eliz. enrolled 1609. Attended Queen Elizabeth's Parliament in 1585, see Annals of Four Masters. Will dated 3 day of Feb. 1593. Probate granted 3 of May 1594. See Prerogative Office.
2. Mary, daughter of Sir Murrough-na-more O'Fflahertie of Bunown and Ballinahinch Castles in Connemara.
3. Richard, 2nd Earl of Clanrickard, son of Ulick, 1st Earl by Maud de Lacy, his second wife. Margaret, daughter of Pierce, Earl of Ormond, Sir Ulick's first wife, died without issue.
4. Margaret, daughter of Donogh, 2nd Earl of Thomond, by Ellen, daughter of Pierce, Earl of Ormond and Ossory.
5. Teige, slain in battle 1589.
6. Bryan, born in 1586, died 1633.
7. Daughter of Sir John Bourke of Derrymaclohney. Castle, Knight.
8. Teige Oge, born in 1587. Lived at Kilbride.
9. Mary, daughter of ——— Martin. Marriage Settlement dated 15 Feb. 1646 in possession of Sir John Blake of Menlo Castle, Bart., (in August 1821).
10. Murrough-ne-doe, a trustee to his Uncle Teige Oge's Marriage Settlement 15 Feb. 1646.
11. Honora, second daughter of Sir Theobald Bourke (same lady as No. 33).
12. Ulick Bourke of Castlehackett, Esquire, second husband.
13. Peter, son of Sir Robert Lynch of Castle Conne, County Galway, Bart.
14. Bryan Och Sauvaght. Marriage Settlement dated 19th October, 1681.
15. Mable, 4th daughter of Sir John Browne of the Neal, Bart, ancestor to Lord Kilmaine. Sir John was married to Mary, daughter of Sir Dominick Browne, of Galway, Knight.
16. Thomas, great-grandson of Valentine Blake of Menlo Castle, who was created a Baronet of Ireland, 10th July 1622.
17. Cecilia, daughter of James French of Portcanen, County Galway, Esquire. Married April 1707.
18. Daughter of Relict of Colclough died without issue.
19. Murrough, died in 1760. Interred at Ross Abbey near Headford.
20. Jane, eldest daughter of Sir Theobald Bourke, 6th Viscount (same lady as No. 42). Married 28th Aug. 1727.
21. Sir John, born the 24th June 1728. A Captain in the 65th Regt.; a Justice of the Peace for the Counties of Galway and Limerick; Deputy-Governor of County Galway, and served Office of High Sheriff in 1800. Died 9th May, 1808 at Lemonfield and interred at the old Church of the Parish of Kilcumin.
22. Mary, daughter of the Revd. Thomas Royse, of Nantinan, County Limerick. Born 10th September, 1738, married 18th July, 1764, died 1st October 1826.
23. Thomas, born in 1734. J.P. of the Counties of Kilkenny and Galway. Father of John Bourke O'Fflahertie, M.P. for Callan in Irish Parliament.
24. Michael, born in 1746. J.P. County Galway. Commission dated 15th January, XIX George III.
25. Theobald, went to West Indies in 1765. Was at Saint Christopher in 1782.
26. Theobald Patterson, Captain 69th Regt.
27. Thomas Henry, born 3rd June 1777. Appointed Captain of Lemonfield Corps of Yeomanry 31st October 1796. A Justice of Quorum.
28. Louisa Lipy, daughter of Theobald Richard, who was 2nd son of Thomas above. Married 23rd July 1820.
29. Robert, second son of Robert Martin of Dangan, Esquire, and step-brother of Col. Richard Martin, M.P., County Galway.

DESCENDANTS OF GRAINNE O'MALLEY BY HER SECOND HUSBAND

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Major Patrick Crean-Lynch = Marcella dau. of
D.L. of Clogher and Hollybrook (Boulibeg) | Sir Michael Bellew

Elizabeth = Antony MacDermott of Ramore
(co. heiress) | Co. Galway

Antony = Evelyn Goodridge

Antony Diarmuid, Maire, Doireann

NOTES ON THE PEDIGREE

30. Sir Richard Bourke, Mac William Eighter, called also Rickard an Iarainn, second husband.
31. Sir Theobald, 1st Viscount Bourke of Mayo, called Tibbód-na-lung (or of the ship) because he was born at sea. Created Lord Viscount Bourke of Mayo 21st June 1627 by Charles I. Died 18th June 1629.
32. Maud, daughter of Charles O'Connor of Sligo, Esquire.
33. Honora, second daughter.
34. Ulick Bourke of Castlehackett, Esq., second husband.
35. Sir Miles, 2nd Viscount, took his seat in Parliament, November 4th, 1634.
36. Honora, daughter of Sir John Bourke of Derrymaclohney Castle, Knight.
37. Elinor, daughter of Talbot of the County of Yorke, Esquire.
38. Ellinor, daughter of Sir Arthur Loftus, of Rathfarnham, Knight.
39. Jane, daughter of Francis Bermingham, Baron of Athenry.
40. Mary, daughter of Colonel John Bourke, of Westport, County Mayo, father of the first Lord Mounteagle, and great-grandfather of the 1st Marquis of Sligo.
41. Murrrough, died in 1760. Interred at Ross Abbey near Headford. (Same person as No. 19.)
42. Jane, eldest daughter, married 28th August 1727.
43. Bryan Gunning of the Temple, Esquire.
44. John, a General in the Army.
45. James, Duke of Hamilton and Brandon.
46. John, Duke of Argyll, second husband.
47. George William, Earl of Coventry.

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(O.S. Letters, John O'Donovan, Galway Vol. I, P.P. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.) (Irish Folk-lore Commission's MSS.)