ANTIQUITIES NEAR MILTOWN MALBAY, COUNTY CLARE

By Thomas Johnson Westropp, MRIA

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Corrections incorporated in Ancient Remains Lisdoonvarna JLFC Vol 3(10):  
 I may here give corrigenda to the paper on the “Ancient Remains near Miltown Malbay,” in this Journal. Vol. ii, p. 47, and vol. iii, p. I.

Vol. iii, p. 4, line 28, for “I will not surrender, &c.” read “ I will not take the quarter of Belliaw and Sruell,”   
p. 9, correct “Telegraph,” and 10, delete “ubt”in middle sentence;   
p. 11. correct to “ Iniscathaigh,” and in line 10 read “some papers of the original partition are among.” [these changes are incorporated below]

and [Footnote 19 page 153]:

When writing on Kilmurry Ibrickan in these pages (96 supra)y I had conjectured it to be the Collebonoum or Collebououm of the 1302 Taxation. I have since found in the local name, “Ox Mount,” just beside the church, the “ Colle- bovum 55 of the epithet. It would be formally “ Ecclesia S. Marie de Colle-bovum.” This shows the importance of preserving even apparently uninteresting local names, whether Irish or English. The case of the supposed late names, Bropark, &c., near Newgrange, Co. Meath, which we have traced back to monastic times, and which probably represent the venerable “Brugh” of the Boyne, is another case in point.



Kilfarboy Church, Co. Clare. from S.E.

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ANTIQUITIES NEAR MILTOWN MALBAY, COUNTY CLARE

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INTRODUCTIONWestern Clare has for over a century enjoyed an ever widening fame for its health resorts. Kilkee, Lehinch and Lisdoonvarna have advanced from unknown hamlets to widely known places of enjoyment. Another bathing place, however, has retrograded rather than advanced. Miltown Malbay gets little attention in the popular guides, and has almost escaped the notice of antiquaries and scientists. It is, however, well worthy of a better fate. Those who have loitered in its thyme-scented fields, along its open and, at times, too stormy bay, or watched the solemn but glorious sunsets, or the mirages, from the tops of its sandhills, will agree with us as to its charm. Its very quietness, as compared with the better-known watering places, adds not a little to its fascination for those who do not desire to be in a transported Dublin or Limerick such as they find at Lehinch or Kilkee.

To deal with its neighbourhood as an antiquary is our object in this paper. Those who take an interest in the ancient remains of the place may need a hint as to where to find the most characteristic objects. We purpose to take them to specimens of the churches, castles, forts and cromlechs, and hope that, though no Clonmacnoise or Quin be found there, we may note objects of no little interest in our rambles.

Miltown village plays no part in the older history of Clare. It evidently lies where once a wild, wolf-haunted district lay, near “the white strand and ever complaining wave, sea flanked, rich in ocean’s teeming wealth,” as Macgrath described the western half of Thomond in the fourteenth century; “the land of the two invers,” the creeks of Doonbeg and Liscannor, as O’Huidhrin sang half a century later. The townland of Breffy still commemorates the savage beasts in its name, “place of wolves,” and by a strange coincidence the wolf is also commemorated near Lisdoonvarna and Kilkee. The next name, Poulavullin,

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becoming Ballyvullen, still retained in the translation Miltown, marks human settlement and civilisation. It also was found as a forgotten townland name, Poulavullin, or mill-pool.

The older history is more suggestive than definite. The great tidal wave and earthquake of 802, which spilt Inis Fita (Mutton Island) into three, heaped the coast with sand, and destroyed a multitude of people—the flight of king Torlough O’Brien, when his expelled uncle was reinstated at Clonroad by a dangerous ally, Thomas de Clare, in 1276, and he himself fled down the coast to the hospitable Teige O’Brien of Tromra, and the MacMahons, — and that of Turlough O Brien to Cathairruis, or Caherrush castle, on the southern horn of the bay, in 1573. Such are a few of these events. Still earlier there were rude settlements on the sandhills, people living on shell-fish and sea-birds, and using stone weapons. Their hut-circles and hearths lie under the harsh grass and sand of the sandhills. Miltown also claims its memories of the “great fleet invincible” in the name “Spanish Point” and the Spaniards’ graves. No wreck is recorded to have taken place on the point, but we can easily believe that the currents heaped its reefs with bodies from the wrecks at Tromra and Doonbeg.

The more interesting ruins are, however, to be found in the “hinterland” and we purpose describing those in the parishes of Kilfarboy and Kilmurry-Ibricane, together with the remains at Boulynagreina Lake on Mount Callan — all within a radius of ten miles from Miltown.

KILFARBOY

The nearest church to Miltown, in fact its ancient parish church, is Kilfarboy. The pseudo-tradition vendors long satisfied visitors as ignorant as themselves with legends of burials of “tawny men” (i.e., the drowned Spaniards) in the church, that from this circumstance took the name of Kilfearboy.(1) That this silly derivation should find any supporters in later days is indeed wonderful.The place was probably founded by St. Lachtin or Laughteen, to whom its well is dedicated. He was either the friend of St. Senan in A.D. 550, or another of the name who died in A.D. 622, probably the first. It possibly got its name from the pass of Bealach Feabrath,

1 For earlier notes see the new edition of Archdall’s ‘*Monasticon Hibernicum*’, vol. I, p. 85; Canon Dwyer’s ‘Diocese of Killaloe’, p. 505, and Mr. J. Frost’s ‘*History and Topography of the County of Clare*’, p. 147.

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where, in A.D. 740, was a monastery which was subsequently governed by a bishop named Cormac, who died in A.D. 837. The church appears in the Papal Taxation of 1302-7 as Kellinfearbreygy or Kellinfearbuygy. As in later days, in the sixteenth century we find such forms as Kilforbrick and Kilfearbaigh. In June, 1394, an important Papal letter licenses Cornelius O’Deayg, sub-deacon of Killaloe, despite his illegitimacy, to get the tonsure and the benefices of Killnafearwagy, Disert Molacala, and Kyllkady in the said diocese. The cure to be performed by vicars(2). The parishes were Kilfarboy, Disert Tola (or manawla as locally pronounced) and Kilkeedy. O’Dea rose to be archdeacon of Killaloe and bishop of Limerick. He was a man of artistic taste, an antiquary and organiser. The splendid crosier and mitre preserved in Limerick attest the first, the compilation of the “Black Book of Limerick,” and the surveys of that diocese in 1418 to 1422 attest the latter qualities. His tomb is among us in his own cathedral until this day.(3) I had no trace of the restoration or usage of the church in Tudor times. In an important survey of Clare dating about 1675, and now at Edenvale, we find the Earl of Thomond holding all the parish of Kilfarboy, 3,228 acres profitable and 4,405 acres unprofitable, including Kildeemo, Cloghanebegg and more, Killcorkerane, Ghandeine, Poulemullin (Miltown), Doogh, Legarda and Breagha, also Carrookeile, Fintraghmore and begg, Freagh of the Castle, Freagh Falline, Ballyvaskin, Island, Kilfarboy, Lackamore, Moybegg and more, with its castle, a rude sketch of the latter and a conventional one of Freagh castle appearing on the margin. In 1712 Henry, Earl of Thomond, sold in this barony—Annagh to John Stackpoole, Carhuduff to William Stacpoole, Knockliscorane to Henry Widenham, Killards to Montifort Westropp, Kilfarboy and Moygh to William Fitzgerald, and Quiltie and Trumroe, with its castle, to William Fitzgerald.

The church, an interesting little 15th century building was (at least in 1887) in apparently the same condition as when described in the ordnance survey letters half a century before. It stands on the bank of a little rivulet among low rounded hills, with a distant view of the Atlantic, a peaceful nook well suited for monastic retirement. The

2 ‘*Calendar of Papal Letters*’, vol. iv, pp. 473-474.  
3 See our notes in the ‘*Roy. Soc. Ant. (Ireland) Journal*’, vol. xxviii, pp. 41, 112, 122. The crosier is figured in ‘Archaeologia’, vol. xvii, p. 30, and in our pages, vol. i, No. 3.

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ruin measures 66 feet by 17 feet internally; the west gable had fallen before 1839. It was most probably featureless like those of most of the Clare churches, for the better security of the building against the fierce western gales of the ocean. The south wall has a very neat pointed door, 14 feet from the west, a very pleasing effect is produced by the neatness of the arching(4), the whole walls being of thin gritstone slabs. In the inner angle of the right jamb is a quaint holy water stoup, with two round headed opes like those at Canon’s Island, Kiltinanlea, Rathborney and elsewhere in Clare; the inner door arch is flat. The east and south windows have single lights with ogee heads, and are nearly alike save that the former has neat little trefoils in the angular spandrels with delicate ribbing in the leaves. The east gable is shaken and mainly supported by the vault of the Fitzgearld family, 1778. The north wall is, as usual, featureless. The Fitzgerald arms are unusual, being shown as a chevron, with two lions *counter passant reguardant* above, a cross florette below. The crest being a knight on horseback(5).

MOUNT CALLAN (O.S. Map 31)

One of the most curious problems in Clare (if not in Irish) archæology is bound up in this conspicuous mountain. The place certainly figures in early Irish legend, for we find in the Dind Senchas(6) that Eochy Garbh, son of Dua, king of Erin, made proclamation to his subjects to cut down the wood of Cuan with spears, in honour of the king’s wife, Tailtin; the clearing being called Oenach Tailtinn. Three famous rath builders had, however, neglected the summons, their names were Nas, Ronc and Alestair, and indignant at the slight, the angry queen had them arrested and condemned to death. The king, however, intervened, entreating that they might be spared, and gained them their lives on the condition of their building certain forts Nas built the great mote of Naas in Kildare, and a fort in the heritage of Gan (Connaught); Ronc made others in Dalaradia and in the heritage of Genann (Connaught), while Alestar made his fort on Slieve Collain, then Sliabh Leitrech in Sengann’s heritage, and named it Cluain Alestair.

4 The church is briefly described in ‘*Proc. Roy. Ir. Acad.*’, ser.iii, vol. vi, p. 161, the doorway and stoup illustrated, *ibid*. Plate xii, Nos. 10 and 11.  
5 Journal of Assoc. Pres. Memorials of the Dead in Ireland, vol. iii, p. 396.  
6 ‘*Revue Celtique*’, 1894, p. 317.

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The names have perished from Callan(7) perhaps the rath, stone-faced and with an artificial cave, which lay on the flank of the hill is intended.

Callan, however, enjoyed a little ancient fame till 1778; John Lloyd, a schoolmaster, then published a little shilling guide book, “An Impartial Tour in Clare,” in it he mentions the discovery of a monument with an ogmic inscription—“Beneath this stone lies Conan the fierce and long-legged,” and describes Conan quaintly—“This gentleman was a very uncouth officer and voracious eater.” Theophilus Flanagain brought the matter into full notoriety by publishing the inscription in “Archælogia,” and in the first volume of the “Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy.” The paper was read in 1785 and published three years later. It is a most brilliant specimen of the perverted ingenuity which the name “antiquary” a by-word, and helped Scott to create his delightful “Sir Arthur and Oldbuck.” Flanagan and the exponents of the famous *BELI DIUOCE*(8)inscription mark the low water of Irish archæology. The Callan ogham was tortured till it said all its tormentors desired and what it never meant to say. Flanagan read it forward and backward and upside down, and then he varied the F and N signs, and thereby extracted five readings—(a) “Beneath this stone lies Conan (Conaf) the fierce and swift-footed;” (b) “Obscure not the remains of Conan the fierce and swift-footed;” (c) “Long may he lie at ease on the brink of this lake that never saw his faithful clan depressed;” (d) “Long may he lie at rest beneath this ? darling of the sacred;” (e) “Hail with reverend sorrow the drooping heath around his lamentable tomb.”(9)

Then came the antiquaries from the four winds of heaven, and they contended with Theophilus O’Flanagan, and prevailed not. One side lauded him and his discovery, the other cried “forger” and “forgery.” No one thought of looking at the matter from a common sense standpoint of asking, why the one rational reading gave the name Conaf or Collas instead of “Conan” if it was the work of a forger. One forgery certainly existed? the passage interpolated in copies of “The Battle of Gabhra,” alluding to Conan’s assassination and burial on Callan. The

7 The names subsisting imply ancient residences, as in the case of Knockalassa and Knockerribul, or cattle pasturages like Boolinrudda, Boolynamiscaun, Boolyduff, and Boolynagreena.   
8 Found to be really a reversed EConid 1739.  
9 See ‘*Archæologia*’, vol. vii, p. 282. ‘*Transactions Royal Irish Academy*’, vol. i, *Proc. R. I.* A., vol. i., ser. ii, p. 269.

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slab was certainly a late scholastic inscription by some mediæval antiquary proud of his rare knowledge of ogham. It differs from all known inscriptions in the character and by its border, by its vowels, straight strokes crossing the stem line. Strange to say this was probably once correct, as the slope lines presuppose straight lines, and not short “dots” for the vowels. The monument is probably genuine as far as honest intention goes, but it commemorates no known person, and is certainly many centuries later than the introduction of Christianity into Ireland. O’Donovan and O’Curry dealt hardly with the literary forgery, but did not commit themselves on the question of the inscription, in 1839(10). Sir Samuel Ferguson practically set the question at rest in a paper published in the “Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy” in 1872, and we think, after careful examination of the slab in 1888, that his conclusions are most sound. He reads “*Fan lia do lica conas [collas] colgac cos obad*.” Flanagan reads “*Fan li da fica conaf colgac cos obmda*.” There were also some wild readings – Vallancey(11) publishes Flanagan’s sketch, but it reads “*Fan licsi ta conan - colgac cos fada*;” and a certain Mr. Kennedy sent John Windell a sketch, reading “*Fol lita feca terulgac cos obmda*.” Professor Brian O’Looney reads, “*Fan lia do lica conaf colgac cos obada[c]*;” my sketch, “*Fan lia do liqa col(l?)as colgac cos obata(?)*.” It is hard to say whether some of the scores are not natural cracks, making *lica* into *liqua* and *obadac* into *obata*. Clare is not an ogham district, lying blank, so far as undoubted inscriptions are concerned, between Kerry and Connaught. The oghams so-called at Bohneill are idle scorings, that at Scattery has three scores and looks old, the Knockastoolery pillar has meaningless scores, and a bead with an ogmic inscription was found at Ennis. Lewis mentions three dolmens on Callan, two remained in later days. One has been described by Professor O’Looney(12). It was a boxlike cist of four slabs with a heavy cover, and at each end were two pillars rising about a foot above the cover, like a dolmen in Ballyganner. This has been long demolished. Another still exists, and is well known from its proximity to the road from Miltown to Ennis. It has been planned and illustrated by the late

10 Ordnance Survey Letters, Clare, MSS. Roy. Ir. Acad.  
11 ‘*Archaeologia*’, vol. viii, p. 282.  
12 ‘*Proc. R. I. A.*’, vol. i, ser. ii (1872), p. 269.

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Mr. W. Chambers Borlase.(13). It is a very regular and characteristic cist, tapering eastward with two remaining side blocks and a large cover.

CARNCREAGH (O.S. Map 39)

There is another “Labba” to the east of Doolough, a dreary treeless place in a monotonous undulating country, with no good distant views. Doolough only enjoys the legendary fame of being the place where St. Senan, after defeating the horrible monster Cata on Iniscatha, or Scattery Island, deposited it in chains till the last day. Where the road past the lake turns northward we find in a marshy field on the edge of a slope a fallen dolmen, a long, tapering chamber of gritstone slabs, five to the north and three to the south. It is 17 feet 2 inches long over all, the chamber being 13 feet long and tapering from 6 feet 5 inches to 2 feet 9 inches. One cover remains, and traces of a parallel row of slabs along the northern face. It lies on the extreme edge of the long parish of Kilmaley. Carncreagh and Booleybanuff were sold as confiscated lands in 1652, to Murtagh MacMahon and Benjamin Lucas.

CAHER MURPHY (O.S. Map 48)

Near the western end of the lake a very hilly road leads from Doolough house southwards. It passes over a high boggy ridge called Gortnaneera, which rises 581 feet above the sea and commands a wide view of the coast from Moher to Beltard, and on to the silver thread of Moyarta creek and the round hills of Rehy and Caher Crocaun, near Loop Head, and “two Invers,” Mutton Island and the Kerry mountains, and “a tumbled mass of heathery hills” being plainly visible. As we go down the southward slope we see below us to the right a large stone fort on a knoll, which proves to be no mean hill when we reach it.

The fort is circular, the wall for the most part well preserved, but levelled to the north-west, near the gateway of which hardly a trace remains. The interior garth is 110 feet in diameter. The wall (as so often) is built in two sections, the inner from 4 feet 4 inches to 6 feet 6 inches thick, the outer from 13 feet to 13 feet 3 inches, or, to give the entire thickness, 17 feet 6 inches to 19 feet 6 inches. The inner face is coarsely built in layers of flagstone, but the outer beautifully pieced together in polygonal masonry, small but closely fitted, with a regular

13 ‘*Dolmens of Ireland*’, vol. I, p. 79.



Cahermurphy Castle and Earthworks, from S.W.

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curve and straight batter. This batter has the unusual slope of one in four, which was probably due to the builder’s desire to compensate for the weakness of the small material. The filling is large and the whole an unusual and excellent piece of dry stone masonry. There is an accumulation of debris over two feet deep round the base, over which the wall rises 6 feet 9 inches to the west, 9 feet 6 inches to the south and south-east, i.e., 11 feet 6 inches over the field and about 7 feet over the garth. To give some notion of the unusually small size of the stones, I found 24 courses in 9feet 6 ninches. Two small lakes lie at the foot of the hill, which latter, with the fort, forms a conspicuous object in the landscape even from Kilmihil.

Not far to the south is the earth fort of Lisduff (defaced by burials and a late wall), with an oratory-like vault on top. The remains at Kiltumper, lying about a mile east from the road to Kilmihil, are conspicuously marked on all the O. S. maps (even the key map) as “Tumper’s grave.” They have been treated as important by the authors of the O. S. Letters, and are given as a dolmen by Miss Stokes in her list.(14) They are only the base of a small cairn, with a kerbing of slabs never exceeding 3 ½ feet long and forming an enclosure 15 feet east and west by 11 feet north and south. Legend in 1839 said that it was the burial place of a Danish chief, chased from Cahermurroghoo or Cahermurphy by the Dalcassians, slain and buried on this ridge.

The castle of Cahermurphy lies on the edge of a marshy hollow, near a stream and lake south of the stone fort. Only one side remains, featureless and built of flagstones. It is only remarkable for the great earthworks. The enclosure consists of two great mounds, 10 or 12 feet high, with fosses between and outside. Thence slighter mounds enclose a shield-like enclosure with a rounded end, the longer axis lying east and west. There may have been a ring round the peel tower, but all is much overgrown, and I had little time for its examination. It measures about 355 feet east and west, and 200 feet north and south, being over 50 feet across the ditches.

The chief interest attaching to the place lies in its owners, the MacGormans, or, as they preferred to call themselves, O’Gormans. Of them was the chevalier O’Gorman, an indefatigable, if not infallible,

14 *Early Christian Architecture of Ireland*’ (1878), p. 146, and ‘*Revue Archeologique*’, (1882), pp. 19-21; both lists very defective.

antiquary and genealogist in the eighteenth century. This family, it will be remembered, were of the race of Cathaoir mor, and fled out of their old settlements in Leinster before the Norman settlers early in the thirteenth century. They were gladly received, and “planted” in Ibrickan by Donchad Cairbreach O’Brien. They were known as Ui Bairrché from Daire Barrach, son of Cathaoir mór, and had long dwelt in Slieve Mairgy in Queen’s County, and in the plain near Carlow. Mortough, son of Donchad MacGorman, probably harassed by Walter de Ridelesford, gathered the clan (as Maoilin oge Mac Brody sings) and consulted as to their prospects. They determined to divide and migrate, part to Ulster, part to Uaithné or Owney, in Limerick, and eventually to their settlement “on the edge of the world,” which was re-named Ui bracain from their tribal name. They took no prominent part in history, but lived in good repute for hospitality and trustworthiness among their neighbours, keeping for several centuries houses of free hospitality. Daniel MacGorman, for example, died in 1620, owning Cahermurchada and Drimelihy, which last he had conveyed to Daniel O’Brien in 1594. His sons Conor, Melaghlin and Caher succeeded. Melaghlin was succeeded by his son Dermot. In 1641 Sir Daniel O’Brien, Daniel MacGorman, and the latters sons held the lands. In 1688 they were held by Daniel O’Brien, Lord Clare, from whom they were confiscated, and passed in 1703 to Francis Burton, Charles McDonnell and Nicholas Westby.

As for the castle, if we can trust the “List of Castle Founders,”(15) it was built by Murrough MacFergus McCon. It is not named in the castle list of 1584, at least as published, and is named as Cathair Murchadha in 1600, when the great army of Hugh O’Donnell, encumbered with the spoils of Thomond, swept past its walls

15 Standish Hayes O’Grady ‘*Catalogue of Irish MSS*.’, Brit. Mus., p. 74.

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ANCIENT REMAINS NEAR MILTOWN MALBAY.

Part II – (continued from vol ii p. 256)

By Thomas Johnson Westropp M.A. M.R.I.A.

TROMRA CASTLE (O.S. Map 38)

This conspicuous peel tower is a well-marked object in all wide views of the low central coast of Clare. It stands out, a sharp dark speck, whether we look from the open sea, from the summits of Moher, Callan or Kinnard, or stand on the high ground at the fort of Cahermurphy. This is the more remarkable because the tower lies on very low ground and hardly deserves Canon Dwyer’s description?“Tromra castle lifts its lofty, lonely head”(1). It is neither lofty nor lonely, but of heavy proportion, and in a centre of human habitation, surrounded by the white cottages, shining as they only can shine in the clear air of the coast, and with the great coast-guard station between it and the sea.

The same writer derives its name from “Tra mor-roe,” the great red strand, but the sand is not red, nor is the name, save in modern corruptions, other than Tromra, perhaps from the fort topped low ridge beside it.(2)

It is a plain “peel tower” of that small very neat masonry that prevails in the district where the rocks are flagstones, as thin and regular as planks. Rarely are there ornamental architectural features in such castles, and Tromra has suffered not a little from the defacers, the coign stones being in many cases entirely removed. The ragged gap to the south, once an entrance doorway, leads into a little vaulted room, once the store room, now, much of the vault has fallen in. A broken stairway runs from the porch up the wall to the right and turning at the

1 ‘*Diocese of Killaloe*’, p. 214.  
2  Tromra or Tromrath, a territory in Thomond-O’Brien’s Dictionary.

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south-east angle enters the rooms on the second story. The eastern part of the tower forms, as usual, a separate wing, with several small rooms, and (to the north) a broken spiral stair. The latter leads up to the battlements and to a small turret at the angle. The rest of the building is devoted to the larger rooms. Two remain under the upper vaulting, which is also broken in the middle, and another over the vault which had a wooden roof and a trefoil-headed window looking seaward. In other respects the existing features have no mouldings or ornaments. No trace remains of the side building from which the tower was attacked in 1642.

Though the castle is evidently a late fifteenth century building, the place appears in the records from a far earlier period. In 1215 the Norman government (which had then no power in Thomond) granted to the Archibishop of Cashel, Dunmugyda (Dough or Dunmore) inver, or creek -- readers will remember that O’Huidhrin in 1420 calls Ibrickan “the land of the two invers”(3) - Idulculchy, Fumaneyn, Ydoonmal, Treanmanagh, Tromrach, two islands in the sea named Iniskereth (Iniscaoragh or Mutton Island) and Inismatail (Mattle Isalnd) as formerly granted by Donchad Cairbreach O’Brien.(4)

When we next hear of the place it was the residence of the hospitable Teige aluinn O’Brien, and with him in 1276 King Torlough mór O’Brien sought a night’s shelter as he fled down the coast to seek aid from the MacMahons, when his deposed uncle, Brian O’Brien, was restored by the power of the Normans de Clares. It is probable that Teige’s residence was in the large stone-faced rath not far from the castle.

Teige’s descendants held the isles of Aran where the lofty battlements of their castle of Inishere rise over the prehistoric dry stone walls of an early two-ringed fort. The clan was descended from Teige Glae, son of Dermot O’Brien, King of Munster in 1120. They founded a Franciscan convent on the holy ground among the churches of Killeany on the great Isle of Aran about 1460. The clan Teige might, like the O’Mailleys, their neighbours, have taken the motto “terra marique potens.” They were expert seamen, and the citizens of Galway were

3 ‘*Topography*’ of O’Huidhrin.  
4 *C.S.P.I.*, vol. i.

glad to pay the friendly power, entrenched across their bay, twelve tuns of wine yearly for protecting their harbour from pirates. The alliance lasted unbrokenly from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, then the most dreaded enemy of the city overcame its friends. “From the merciless O’Flahertys, good Lord deliver us,” ran the Galway merchant’s litany, and the fierce tribe invaded Aran late in the reign of Elizabeth, expelled clan Teige and seized on the Islands. Too late the “City of the Tribes” appealed to the Queen’s government to reinstate their friends and protectors. The Corporation, on March 30th, 1588, petitioned the Queen on behalf of the O’Briens. They recalled how from the time of Dermot More O’Brien, grandson of Teige aluinn, down to that of Murrough, son of Torlough, the chief still living, the clan had protected the city and harbour of Galway. The time was unpropitious, the great war cloud of the Armada was on the point of bursting on England, and the government had other plans to carry out with “abundant scarcity” of men and arms without enraging the O’Flahertys. Then came the terrible end, when the worn, sick Spaniards, with injured ships, poisonous water and provisions, and more deadly disallusionment, were the sport of the storms and the victims of the Irish coast and its tribes. The “Zuniga,” one of the finest of the Spanish ships, barely escaped the coast of Clare; two of her companions perished there, one at Dunbeg, the second on the reef between Mutton Island and Tromra castle.

The foundation of the castle must have taken place from 1460 to about 1490 to judge from the remains. It is not, however (to our knowledge), recorded even in the far from reliable “Castle Founders’ List”? unless it be the tower erroneously called “Inniskeeragh,” or Mutton Island(5). No castle remains or is elsewhere mentioned as on that Island, and Tromra seems to be the nearest tower which might be called after it. “Inniskeeragh” was founded by Torlough (or Shane) MacCon, his identity is uncertain, but the castle is given after Doonmore and Dunbeg, and before Liscannor and Doonagore castles, so is very probably Tromra.

The only episode of any interest in the later history of the tower took place in 1642. Edmond O’Flaherty, a man of good family, was called by the “Titular” Archbishop of Tuam and Francis Blake, of Galway, to

5 Standish Hayes O’Grady’s ‘*Catalogue of Irish MSS*.’ in British Museum.

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serve against the fort of that city. When he was free to go home, he and a number of companions went to Aran, then in the hands of his family, but finding that he wore out his welcome with the islanders, and having become, like so many others, unsettled for a peaceful life, he began to search for some more warlike career. In an evil moment for himself and others he heard that “a castle named Tromroe was possessed by one Mr. Ward, whom he heard was an honest gentleman and never heard of him before, nor knew of what religion or nation he was of;” but the latter seems hard to believe. Accordingly O’Flaherty got his friends and ships ready and set sail across the bay for Tromra.

It was the spring of the year in the last half of April, or the opening days of May, when they sailed. They reached Tromra, not unperceived, at “the beginning of the night.” The garrison fired on them and inflicted some wounds. From Sunday night to Wednesday morning the Galway men assailed the tower from a “hall” which adjoined it. The daring act had meanwhile stirred up some of the Clare men. There had been but little violence used towards the English settlers up to this time. The Earl of Thomond and Daniel O’Brien of Dough, had done their best to keep the peace. Now, however, Teige and Donough O’Brien, the Macdermotts of Tromra, Fitzpatrick, the Earl of Thomond’s seneschal in Ibrickan, and others joined forces with the O’Flaherties. Evidently plunder was the only intention of the assailants, for O’Flaherty ordered his men to spare the lives of the Wards, however it was hard to keep in check fierce men rapidly getting “out of hand” in those lawless times, who were impatient and getting exasperated by the resistance of the Wards. John, one of the sons of Peter Ward, saw that resistance was hopeless and urged his father to surrender, having taken on himself to open negotiations with O’Flaherty. Ward only replied: “I will not take the quarter of Belliaw and Sruell,”(6). The Irish let out on the Tuesday Peter Ward’s two younger sons and two daughters and an Englishman and his wife and let them go in safety. Ward, his wife and one son however held out in the tower. O’Flaherty ordered his men to spare them but to keep them constantly harassed, keeping Peter Ward awake till he chose to surrender. On the Tuesday the eldest son, George Ward, tried to come out, but he was set upon by Sorrell Folone and

6 This probably refers to the slaying at Shrule of certain persons who surrendered to Lord Mayo. The Irish gentry hurried to save the victims but arrived too late.

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fell mortally wounded with eighteen gashes, he lingered to the 20th of April and then died. On Wednesday morning as Mrs. Alson Ward looked out of a window loop she was shot and died in the room where her husband had held out for twenty-four hours after the rest of the tower was in the enemy’s hands. Ward, in his agony and despair, opened the door and struck at the men outside, one of which caught him by the arm and slew him. The seven other inmates of the castle were brought in safety to Richard White, of Kilmurry, and eventually reached Dublin without further molestation. The bodies of Peter, Alson and George Ward were buried beside the castle.

Daniel O’Brien, of Dough, who had failed to save the family, now arrived at Tromra; he removed the bodies and buried them in Kilmurry church, from which once more they were removed to the graveyard by “D. MacScanlan MacGorman, of Dunsalla, the priest of Kilmurry.”

Nemesis commenced soon after the capture. The plunder was being divided among O’Flaherty’s adherents when a quarrel arose. A certain John Browne, who had been “commandeered” as drummer by O’Flaherty, demanded a certain silver cup and was refused; he laid the slight to heart and waited his opportunity for eleven years. Under a new government Browne came forward and swore informations against O’Flaherty. Troops were sent out to search for the latter in the wild country near Renvyle. They searched in vain, and were returning wearied and disheartened when they heard an unusual croaking of ravens in a small, dark wood. They searched and dragged out from the shelter of a shelf of rock two ragged, spectral beings nearly starved to death, they were O’Flaherty and his wife, the daughter of Sir Christopher Garvie, of Lehinch, Co. Mayo. O’Flaherty was brought to Galway, tried and executed, holding to the last that his act was one of legitimate warfare. Indeed it is evident that he only sinned in open assault, tried to spare all, and saved seven, of the hapless residents of Tromra castle.

The castle had been confirmed to the Earl of Thomond in 1652 by the commonwealth, and again (under the Act of Settlement) to him, Col. Carey Dillion and Robert Dixon. It was afterwards held by Samuel Burton, and in 1712 was granted in fee farm to Mrs. Alice Burton by Henry, Earl of Thomond.



Kilmurry Ibrickan Church (with Tromra Castle in the distance)

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KILMURRY IBRICKAN (O.S. 40)

This church, as might almost be guessed from its dedication, is of no very early foundation. It is not named in the Papal Taxation of 1302-6, unless it be “Collebonoum,” which is not Kilballyowen, and is given immediately before Kilfarboy. We must note that the editor of the calendar in which the Taxation appears, among the very many wild guesses, gives Kellmolihegyn as being Kilmurry, but it is in fact Kilballyowen (eoghain) as the name and position in the list equally show

It is a long very plain building, constructed of sandstone flags, and is a familiar object as seen from the railway. It is surrounded and even buttressed by a village of vaults, and, with the distant Tromra castle, a few wind-beaten trees, and the background of the sea, the sheer Cliffs of Moher, and the surf-torn rags of Inisfitæ, forms by no means so un-picturesque a view as so ugly a ruin might be expected to make. It is 86½ feet long by 24 feet 4 inches inside. The eastern end had fallen even in 1839 and the south wall has a large gap in the middle. The latter side has a small flat-headed light near the west end and a slightly pointed door 19 feet from the west, 3 feet wide outside and 9 inches more inside. Another window like the more western slit is found 14 feet 6 inches from the door. There is a closed door 10 feet from the east end and a window with a trefoil-headed light, not “pointed” as stated in the O.S. letters. The north wall is featureless and gapped, both side walls having a cornice (or rather water table) of large flag stones. The western end is in a very shaken condition, though plastered for a ball court externally, it has a small flat topped window, slit high up the gable, and the ragged piers of a very tottering little belfry, with a single chamber, the top of which has fallen. The only ancient carving in the building is the lower part of a figure of the Blessed Virgin with the body of Our Lord on her knee, the heads of both figures and the greater part of the Virgin’s body are broken away.

The building is (as we noted) surrounded with vaults and crowded with burials, the graveyard also covers a considerable space to the opposite side of the road. Donald Mac Murcha of Tarrymon was buried here in 1603, the Wards in 1642, and the Stacpooles of Enagh from the time that their ancestor Clement Stacpoole was “transplanted”

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from Limerick city by the Cromwellian government [[22](http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/history/antiquities_mm/footnotes.htm#22)].

The type of burial place occurring in various districts has been as yet very little worked, though no uninteresting branch of study. First it is very remarkable how ancient types of the earliest origin are found. We have noticed in western Kerry graves exactly similar in all respects to the long dolmens tapering like the coffins eastward, formed by slabs set on edge, with several covers, and on top a miniature cairn. The modern box tomb of five slabs is very similar to the common type of cists and dolmens. The table slab on four or more pillars, again, is very like a free-standing cromlech. These latter types are too widely spread for specialisation. In Clare there is an archaic looking vault, common in the shale and flagstone districts, closely resembling an early oratory, but with the lintelled door to the east. It usually has a flagged, vaulted, or sodded roof, and often has an arched or square recess for a memorial tablet over the door. This type of vault is characteristic of the shale and flagstone districts, rather than of the limestone region. In the latter the large stone (laid flat on the ground or supported on a base of masonry or slabs) prevails. We of course do not consider the conventional designs of modern tombstones as having any local bearing. For example, the encircled cross, now so common, hardly existed in ancient Clare, we only recall one at Noughaval. A noteworthy fashion in crosses is found in Rathborney graveyard, the arms are each nearly square, and the shaft widens towards the base. This variety is found in the ancient cross at St. Doulough’s Church, County Dublin, and is found (as Dr. Munro shows) in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Roumania. In the latter country it may be noted that the enriched cross also occurs, and interlacings are found very similar to those in use in Ireland from the ninth to the twelfth centuries.

As to the later ornamentation of tombs in Munster we find very interesting survivals, interlaced bands forming encircled crosses and triquetras down at least to the reign of Charles I. The Crucifixion and rough figures of local saints, angels, and religious emblems, especially

7 Hardiman’s ‘*Irish Deeds*’, ‘*Trans. R. I. Acad*.’, vol. xv., the Stacpoole Papers at Edenvale, Clare, mention Clement Stacpoole’s wife, Elizabeth MacMahon, as buried with others of the family in the Kilmurry church. See also ‘*Trans. R. I. Acad*.’, vol. xxvii, p. 57, for Mr. Wilkinson’s Paper on “Sepulchral Cellce” he mentions Kilmurry.

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those of the Passion, occur. The cock crowing out of the pot is widely distributed. The earliest example known to me in Clare is in the Ecce Homo group in Ennis Abbey, made about 1460-1480. The bird sometimes stands on a pillar, but more usually on or in the pot. The pretty or grotesque forms of the legend are well known and are found all over Ireland and even in France. The thirty pieces of silver, sometimes arranged in two rows of fourteen and sixteen pieces to either side of the cross, form a not uncommon addition. The scourge, a very favourite device in the fifteenth century and later, was in little favour after 1630. The hammer, nails and pincers, the spear and the sponge, the dice, or “lots,” the crown of thorns, and the sun and moon constantly occurred. Sometimes a chalice, a skeleton, or a skull (with or without a bone or cross bones) and cherubs were introduced. Occasionally quaint figures of the Angel of the Resurrection, with skeletons and little shrouded figures rising from their tombs, are carved. Late in the eighteenth century, the fashionable pagan ornaments, urns and inverted torches, crept from the monuments of the gentry to the tombstones of the peasantry. The letters I.H.S. and I.N.R.I. are common, sometimes even by themselves; the hour-glass is very rare after 1700, though common before it.

In the times of Elizabeth, and still more during the following century, emblems of the trade of the deceased man were frequently used, sometimes arranged as a “coat of arms” on the tomb. Ploughs, coulters, pincers, hammers, squares, nails, horse-shoes, and bellows most frequently appear, or, far more rarely, a ship or boat.

The gentry, besides the pagan designs, rarely added anything save clumsy cherubim, roses and coats of arms, with elaborate “mantling,” or rather fantastic foliage, to the carvings of their tombs. In very many cases the Clare gentry, even many of the wealthiest and most influential, made plain vaults without carvings, sometimes even without inscriptions.

The heraldry after 1714 is bad, often extremely inaccurate, sometimes reversed, probably having being copied from seals.

To tabulate briefly the occurrence of monuments in this country. The cist of five or more slabs is found from pre-historic times to the present day. The flat tombstone with a cross and epitaph, from the ninth to the seventeenth century. The canopied tomb from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. The vaults rarely date before the eighteenth

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century. The Passion emblems are found from the fifteenth to late in the nineteenth century, and the pagan designs from the late seventeenth century to the middle of the last century.

MUTON ISLAND, or Iniskeeragh (O.S. 38)

There can be but little doubt that this was the Inisfitae on the coast of Corcovaskin, which in A.D.802 was broken into three by a tidal wave and perhaps earthquake, when some 2,000 persons perished and the main shore was heaped with sand and debris. It has been stated that the third fragment has disappeared since the date of Petty’s Survey, in 1657. This is not the case -- all three remain-Iniskeeragh, the central island; Mattle Island, and the reefs of Carrickaneeliwar and the Seal Rock.

Mutton Island itself is nearly cut across by bays and tunnels. The very picturesque, though low, cliffs near the Telegraph Tower, with the deep clefts full of the churning sea, one with a window-like oblong ope, another branded with the fearsome name of Iffrinbeg, or “Little Hell,” are well worthy of a visit. The antiquities are most insignificant. Senan had a church here, and one coarse, late looking fragment of the west end stood in 1887 in a garden behind one of the houses. Professor O’Looney accredits the place with a round tower(8) known neither to history, archæology, nor local tradition. On the rising ground to the north and north-east are found two small cairns and slabs partly cut to shape, perhaps fragments of a late rude cross.

KILMACDUAN (O.S. 47)

Though to some degree lying outside of the Miltown district, still as within reach of the centre I may describe two churches in adjoining parishes-Kilmacduan and Kilmihil. The first is the Cil mhic an dubhain of the fourteenth century “Life of St. Senan.” One of the many foundations attributed to him after his return to Thomond in the sixth century.

erritorial bishopricks did not exist till after the Synod of Rathbreasail, 1112; but we may conclude that the “Bishoprick” of Iniscatha, or Scattery, extended to this parish and Kilmurry, and perhaps up to the Lake of Doulough, if not to the bounds of the bishoprick of Kilfenora or the Corcomroes. The Papal Taxation calls Kilmacduan, Kilmadayn in 1302. The remains show us that a church of the eleventh or early twelfth century was remodelled or even

8 New edition of Archdall’s “*Monasticon*” under name.



Kilmacduan Church (With the east and south windows)

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rebuilt about 1480, when an unrecorded, but well-marked outburst of church restoration spread over Limerick and Clare in the vast majority of the parishes. The place has otherwise no history, being incidentally called Cil mic an dubain and Cil Mhic dubhain in 1591 by the Four Masters.

When I visited it in 1893 it was very much the same state as when described in the Ordnance Survey Letters of 1839. It stood on a little hillock rising in a green valley, among low, green shale hills, over a little rivulet. It presents a very picturesque appearance from the village of vaults round the hillock and the dark and shattered little ruin.

Only the east gable and about 21 feet of the sides remain (25 feet in 1839), the church is 23 feet 7 inches wide, and the walls have that typical cornice with neat angular corbels at intervals so often seen in Clare churches. There are two windows, the eastern is of the late fifteenth century, with an ogee head, and neatly moulded outside, and a plain flat arch and splay inside. The splay is 7 feet 4 inches wide, the light 9 inches wide with holes for sash-bars. The south windows is far older, probably dating before 1080, of well cut sandstone blocks with inclined jambs, decorated by a simple recess and chamfer; the head is not original, but though semicircular, is only rudely chipped out of a flagstone. The splay is 5 feet 3 inches wide, and the light 11 inches wide at the base and perhaps 7 or 8 inches at the top, as I could not reach it there, it is 13 feet distant from the east gable. The coign stones at the church angles are removed, it is said they were taken for the angels of Cooraclare chapel. West of the church is a village of 32 vaults forming a square and a street.

An ancient Life of St. Senan (published in Colgan’s “Lives”) gives a curious legend of Cil mic an dubhain church? “Theodrick son of Tatheus” prince of Thomond (better known as Torlough Mór O’Brien who defeated Thomas de Clare (being enraged at the monks of Iniscathaigh for permitting a husbandman to take sanctuary invaded the termon of St. Senan. The second night of the raid St. Senan appeared to the Prior of Iniscathaigh and told him that he the (the saint) was setting out to punish the prince. That same night he appeared in a vision to Theodorick and struck him on the leg with his crozier. He rebuked the prince for his sacrilegious violence and disappeared. No

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doctor could cure the wound inflicted by Senan till Theodorick died of its effects (in 1306).

The only record of later days is that Margaret, daughter of Donall O’Brien and wife of Torlough Mac Mahon, died at Cill mac dubhain, and was buried at Iniscataigh.

The old burial ground of Dromelihy lies between Kilmacduan and Dunbeg. I only notice the place to record the reason why the townland is cut up into those extraordinary long sections called after the families of Burton, MacDonnell, Westby and Westropp on the map. Some papers of the original partition are among the papers of Col. George O’Callaghan Westropp of Coolreagh. The process was curious, so I venture to abstract these documents though of late date- “Agreed between Lord Conyngham, Wm. Westby, John MacDonnell and Ralph Westropp, that the lands of Dromellighy, now out of lease, shall be divided between the several parties before April 1st next. All costs for law and survey to be borne equally, and on notice (given ten days before) the owners shall draw lots. MacDonnell and Westropp to draw one lot which they undertake afterwards to divide by lot between them. Robert Keane Charles, Esq., to act as agent for all until next May; and all bind themselves to abide by the decision and execute all reasonable deeds at advice of Counsel, under penalty of £1,000. Dated Nov. 14th, 1809.” “Map of S.W. division of Dromellehy, in the parish of Kilmacduane, Barony of Moyarta, taken for John Macdonnell, of Newhall, and Ralph Westropp, of Limerick, 616 acres, this was divided into two lots-151a. or. 3p. bog, and 156a. 3r. 9p. profitable. Fras. Coffee, Registered Land Surveyor, 1813.” “North division” (on a slip of paper). “1813 May 4th, I attended this day at Stamers, jun., in the town of Ennis where I met Mr. John McDonnell and threw lots with him for our one-third of the lands of Dromellihy according to Coffee’s map, when I drew the north division and Mr. Mc. the S. Mr. Corns, O’Callaghan wrote on two distinct papers “South division” and North division,” the latter of which is the identical paper drawn by myself, R. Westropp”(9).

KILMIHIL (O.S. 48)

This thriving village, with its wide street,

9 Ralph Westropp, Sheriff of Limerick, 1792, and Mayor, 1800-1801, third son of Ralph Westropp, of Lismehane and Attyflin.

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good shops and neat houses (a pleasant contrast to some of the wretched decayed “towns” of the west), lies inland about 9 miles from the sea, and not far to the south of Cahermurphy described in the first part of this paper. In painful and unwholesome neighbourhood to its houses lie the ruined church and overcrowded graveyard, horribly neglected and overgrown, and comparable to the worst kept and wildest in the county.

The mediæval lives of St. Senan state that he built the church here in honour of St. Michael the Archangel, who had aided him in his contest with the cata or amphibious monster that had made its den in Scattery. Over this legend Eugene O’Curry waxes amusingly angry and abusive, till, completely carried away by his own eloquence, he insults the memory of the pure, “peace-loving father” Senan, by contrasting the glorious chief of the Armies of Heaven with the founder of Kilmihil “a feeble hermit possessed of all the human frailties” (alas! poor Senan), “and who was as crazy and vindictive as he was austere and pious, though indeed a great and good man for the little and bad times he lived in.”(10). O’ Curry must have been maddened by red tape from his official superiors, or by rain from Heaven and bad lodging on earth, the evening he penned those lines.

The church is utterly defaced, ragged and broken, of flagstone masonry. The east window has been pulled down, and the other opes defaced since 1839, and I could find no carvings anywhere. The church measures 70 feet by 26 feet. The east window in 1839 had a pointed light 18 inches wide, well cut and with bar holes, the splay being 6 feet 10 inches wide. The north wall is featureless, and the west has only a low rude doorway, 3 feet 8 inches wide, and the piers of a fallen belfry on the top of the gable which has been more than once repaired and rebuilt in parts. The south wall, going eastward, has a window, once square-headed, 4 inches from the west, having a 6 inch wall light, next it was a door, pointed and of well dressed stone, outside, the weatherledge of a porch is visible. Eastward is a defaced window, the arch of the splay still remained when I saw it; then another round-headed window 3 feet 6 inches from the east end. The monuments so far as I had time to examine them were of purely local interest.

10 O. S. Letters, 14, B. 24, p. 42.

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The church is not mentioned in 1302, but stood before 1390, and was evidently much rebuilt a century later. Not far to the east is the well of St. Michael. Father Anthony Bruodin tells a curious story of its rediscovery by his relation Lady Mariana, widow of Thomas MacGorman, in 1632. She had long suffered from gout, and at length saw in a dream the great Archangel who directed her to go to his church at Kilmihil and dig at a little distance from it where she should find some rushes growing. Aided by her son, Thomas MacGorman, and the parish priest, Rev. Dermot O’Quealy, she sought for, found, opened and drank of the well and was cured. Many others coming on pilgrimage to the well were also relieved of their complaints. Unfortunately it seems to have soon lost its healing power.

There are several objects of interest around Kilmihil. Two liagauns or pillar stones stand on a rising ground called Termonroe to the south-west of the church, and possibly marked its lands, They rise conspicuously against the sky, and are plain uncut monoliths, over 7 feet high, one being 7 feet 4 inches high. Near these is a fort called Kilbride, perhaps commemorating a lost church of St. Bridget, to which they may have belonged. The defaced ring wall of Cahercanavan lies in the fields behind them to the north-west. Knockalough castle stands on a walled island, probably an ancient crannoge, in a lake, not far to the east of Kilmihil. A considerable fragment of the tower remains in the thick grove of trees which covers the islet, now only the home of coots and cranes. Cnoc an lacha is named during the deClare’s wars 1315, in the “Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh.” It was held by Thomas, son of Mortagh MacMahon, who in 1621 settled it for his own use and that of his son Murtagh and the latters wife More [[26](http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/history/antiquities_mm/footnotes.htm#26)]. It was held in 1641 by Murtagh MacMahon, John MacNamara and John O’ Gillahinane, from whom it was confiscated in 1652, and was eventually sold in June 1676, to Paul Strange, Marcus MacGrath, Donough MacNamara, Henry Ievers, Teige O’Brien, Edward Fanning and Thomas Green. The local people only know it as the castle of the notorious MacMahon, “Torlough Roe, the liar and deceiver, who by one stroke killed his wife and child.”

11 Inq. Ap. 18th, 1630.

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CONCLUSION

We are far from having exhausted the interesting objects of the district round Miltown Malbay in this somewhat rambling paper. If a school of local antiquaries arises, it will find profitable work for many years to come in the study of place names, local history, and the lesser field antiquities. The earth forts of this district are numerous, and are usually an oval or circular raised platform with a ring, mound, fosse and outer ring. The names of some of these may be here noted—Lissanure, Liscahaun, Lisballard, Rinbaun and Lissaltha near Miltown; Lisclonroe, Lissykeattry and Lisconry near Tromra; Lisnahoanshee on the bounds of Kilmurry and Kilmacduan; Lisbaun, Lisnaleagaun, a rath near Cahermurphy castle; Lisnaleagaun near the pillar stones of Kilmihil; Lissatuan and Lissycreen near Knockalough.

Of stone forts, besides Cahermurphy and Cahercanavan, which I have noted, there are Caherard, Caherush and Caherogan, now levelled or swept away by the sea.

There are hut sites, ring of stones, hearths and kitchen middens in the sandhills at Miltown and on the shore from Tromra to Dunbeg. Near the latter place is a high mound, some ten or twelve feet high, evidently once an early settlement, and a sort of crannoge, a heap of stones and middens in a marsh in Caherfeenick. The exploration of the shore settlements at Dunbeg, Miltown, Freagh, Dough and the Murrooghs has only been commenced.

Of castle, besides those already noted, only the sites and mere fragments remain in Freagh and Caherrush (a mere angle on the shore likely soon to be washed away) in Kilfarboy; Finnor, Knockanalban, and Doonogan are in Kilmurry. None are of historic importance.

The submerged bogs and forests off Killard and Lehinch are also of interest to geologists and antiquaries. The phenomenon attracted the attention of Giraldus Cambrensis seven centuries ago and is still fresh and far from being fully studied on a firm basis even in our days.

Wells, like St. Lachtin’s holy wells near Kilfarboy and Stacpole’s Bridge, are also of great interest. The last has been re-dedicated to St. Joseph since 1839. In the middle of the last century it was a centre of riot and faction-fighting at the patterns held there. St. Lachtin’s day was kept on March 19th. He was Abbot of Freshford, Kilkenny, and patron of Lislachtin Abbey in Kerry, and Kilnamona Church in Clare. The beautiful reliquary of his arm was successively preserved at the two latter places, and now rests in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy. The well is a charming spot in a little hollow overhung by bare old trees and bushes, and with the high arch of Stacpole’s Bridge in the back ground. A few poor, old people may be seen, especially on Sundays and Thursdays, making the usual devotions - two sets of rounds, each five in number, the first on the causeway round the well, the latter on a wider circuit. The devotees take off shoes, stockings, hats, and, in the case of women, shawls and bonnets, and starting from the well, “sunwards,” repeating the stated prayers, they climb up to kiss a cross on a branch of one of the ancient trees, and finally pour water from the well on their faces, hands and feet.

In offering these rough notes to persons interested in our lesser antiquities, I make no pretence of elaborate research or finality, I only hope to give an increase of interest and an excuse for wider explorations to the sojourners in the quietest, but for its very quietness (and “unfashionableness,”) one of the most pleasing of the sea-side resorts of the Atlantic Coast of Ireland.