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Title: Biographical sketches: VIII, Dr John Baptist Sleyne, Bishop of Cork and Cloyne, 1693-1712

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*Biographical Sketches of Persons Remarkable  
in Local History.*

VIII.—DR. JOHN BAPTIST SLEYNE, BISHOP OF CORK AND CLOYNE, 1693—1712.



As appears from the letters of his appointment, he was a native of the diocese of Cloyne—I suspect from the neighbourhood of Midleton. In the parish of Temple-

michael there is a townland called Ballymacsliney. However, this is mere conjecture, but strengthened by the fact that in the list of priests registered in 1703 he, on two occasions, is mentioned as having conferred orders at Carrig-wohill, the only place outside the city of Cork he is represented as having done so, except on one occasion in Blarney.

There is no account I know of regarding his parentage and education.

At the time of his appointment he was vicar-capitular of Cloyne, also dean, and had the simple benefice of the Priory (Augustinian) of St. Thomas the Martyr, at Ballybeg, Buttevant. This latter he retained on his elevation to the episcopate. He was nominated by King James II. to the united sees of Cork and Cloyne, being then fifty-four years of age, master in theology, doctor of Sorbonne, lector of moral theology in the College de Propa-

ganda Fide at Rome, and director of the Ursuline nuns in that city. He was preconized in the consistory of the 9th of March, 1693, appointed on the 13th of April, 1693, and consecrated in the church of the Irish

Franciscans, St. Isidore's, Rome, on the 19th April, 1693. The portrait which is here reproduced is a copy from a fine picture taken at the time, and preserved at St. Isidore's until 1870, when it was brought to Dublin, and is now in the Franciscan convent in that city. I believe it to be the oldest portrait in existence of any Catholic bishop of Cork.

He obtained the administration of the diocese of Ross also at the nomination of King James on the 6th of October, 1693. He succeeded Dr. Peter Creagh, who was translated to Dublin, and of



whom it is related that a witness was to swear against him in Cork; the floor of the courthouse—the Queen's Old Castle—gave way, killing the informer, and carrying into the cellars beneath all save the bishop and the judge, who remained in their seats as if in the air, that of the judge supported by an iron

bar, and that of the bishop by a beam ; and the judge declared that heaven itself acquitted the bishop.

That the bishop lived in troubled times we see by the Grand Jury records :—

1698. April 10th. Presented “that P. Morrrough, titular vicar-generall, and Dr. John Slyne, titular popish bishop of Cork, remain in this county contrary to the late Act.”

1698. June 4th. John Slyne, titular bishop of Cork, was sought after by the authorities as a person hurtful to the Protestant interest.

1700. The Cork grand jury presented “that John Slyne, titular bishop of Cork, is still at large, and exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction contrary to the late Act.”

1701. August 13th. The Cork grand jury presented “that John Slyne, titular bishop of Cork, remains still in this kingdom, exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction contrary to the late Act.”

Notwithstanding the action of the grand jury, and the other authorities, we find Dr. Sleyne active in his duties ; he ordained several priests, as we see from the above-mentioned list of registered priests, and also in 1693 he consecrated Dr. Edward Comerford to the see of Cashel, assisted by Dr. Robert Pierce, bishop of Waterford.

On the 27th of October, 1703, Dr. Sleyne wrote to the Propaganda announcing his arrival in Lisbon, where he had been exiled by the heretic magistrates of Cork, after he had suffered many years in prison, and in places where he had been concealed to escape arrest. He was destitute of resources, and the Propaganda on June 11th, 1703, sent him aid through the Nuncio.

In October, 1710, it was stated that news had arrived a few months ago of the death of the bishop of Cork, at the age of about eighty years, in Portugal. By letter, dated from Lisbon December 4th, 1707, Bishop Sleyne appointed Dr. Donatus MacCarthy to be his vicar-general for Cork and Cloyne, and Dr. John Kenneally to be vicar-general of Ross.

On the 22nd January, 1712, he signed a petition to have Donatus MacCarthy for coadjutor, with right of future succession, and at the same time he resigned his see of Cork and Cloyne, and the administratorship of Ross, into the hands of his Holiness. The bishop dated from the Dominican Convent of Buon Successo, near Lisbon. He died on the 16th of February, 1712, and was buried in the same convent of the Irish Dominicans.

J. HURLEY.

## In “the Good Old Times” of Seventy Years Ago.

**I**T may be no harm to recall to the memories of our older citizens, and carry back the thoughts of those upon whom the marks of age have not yet left their imprint, to the pleasures of travel upon the high roads and the high seas which then existed.

We had then three mail coaches leaving Cork daily for Dublin. The first, we are informed by advertisement, “sets out for Dublin by Clonmel from the mail coach office, Winthrop Street, every morning at eight o’clock, changing guard and dining at a quarter past three in Clonmel, and arrives at eight the following morning. Carries four inside and four outside passengers. Fare for inside, £2 5s., being allowed 30 lbs. luggage; fare for outside, £1 2s. 6d., and 20 lbs. luggage; all over this weight to pay 2d. per lb.”

The next was—“The mail coach for Dublin by Cashel starts from the same office at half-past four o’clock every evening, changing guard at

“Caher, breakfasting next morning at Abbeyleix, and arrives in Dublin at half-past two. Is due every morning in Cork at eleven. Inside fare, £1 18s.; outside fare, 19s.”

Another route was *viâ* Limerick, leaving Cork every morning at five minutes before six o’clock.

Then there were the Youghal coach, the Waterford mail, the coach for Limerick, *viâ* Fermoy, Mitchelstown, Galbally, etc., etc.; the Kanturk and Mallow day coach, leaving Cork at two, and arriving in Mallow at half-past five; “The Rakes of Mallow” coach, which accomplished the distance in three hours, and was in more recent times driven by Johnson; the Skibbereen mail coach, *viâ* Bandon and Ross, and the Skibbereen day coach, on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; “The Lady of the Lake,” which, I presume, was between Cork and Killarney; the Macroom car; the Fermoy coach, which we remember in later times as Grubb & Brown’s, starting from the corner of Winthrop Street, in Patrick Street, and