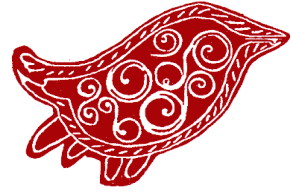


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Blessed Thaddeus McCarthy,

Bishop of Cork and Cloyne, 1490=92.

By REV. P. HURLEY, P.P.

(Concluded.)



THE city of Ivrea, about thirty miles north of Turin, is situated in a district called "Il Canavese," from the quantity of hemp (*canapa*) it produces. It is divided from Aosta by a spur of the Alps that runs eastward from Mount Iseran to the Dora-Baltea, an affluent of the Po. The country north of the city is traversed by offshoots of the Alps, forming numerous picturesque and fertile valleys. The city itself is situated on the north side of the Dora-Baltea, which is crossed by a Roman bridge of a single arch. It is very pretty; part situated on an eminence and part on the flat by the river. It is surrounded by vineyards and meadows. Formerly it had fifty thousand inhabitants; at present it has only ten thousand. It is of great antiquity. The cathedral, dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, was formerly a pagan temple dedicated to the sun. In the fourth century it was purified from idolatrous superstition and dedicated to religious worship under the title it now bears, and is known since as St. Maria d'Ivrea. The name of the city is of Greek origin, Eporedia, Ipporejia, being famous for its horses. It has several beautiful churches and monuments of antiquity. It was formerly the highway to the north of Europe by the great St. Bernard, and history records the names of illustrious persons who passed through it on their journey to and from the Alps. According to the Bollandists, St. Patrick passed here on his way to Ireland, and, on hearing of the death of the Archdeacon Palladius, was here consecrated bishop. St. Bernard in his *Life of St. Malachy*, archbishop of Armagh, mentions that the holy archbishop, in the year 1139, passing by Ivrea on his way to Rome, by his prayers restored to health the son of the man in whose house he lodged, and who suffered from a very severe illness. Finally, blessed Thaddeus, on his return from Rome to Ireland, left there his mortal remains, and has during the past five hundred years been venerated as "blessed" by its people; and recently when their devotion towards him was solemnly ratified by the Holy See, lapse of time seems to have made more intense this feeling.

Pope Gregory XIII., by briefs dated 13th April, 1584, delegated

Monsignor Angelo Perusio as apostolic visitor in Piedmont. In discharge of his functions at Ivrea he declared that in the chapel of St. Andrew, and under the table of the altar, were placed the remains of blessed Thaddeus, bishop from Ireland, who died unknown in the hospital of the poor, and whom the great God had adorned with many miracles. "(Visitatio Ecclesiæ Cathedralis die octava Aprilis.) Altare Sti. Eusebii ad quod translatus fuit titulus Sti. Andreae . . . sub cujus mensa quiescunt ossa Beati Thaddæi ut dictum fuit olim Epi. Hiberniæ qui decessit incognitus in hospitali pauperum, et Deus Optimus Maximus Corpus ipsum multis miraculis decoravit quæ facta fuere de anno 1492."

Monsignor Octavius Asinari, in a visitation made the 22nd March, 1647, besides confirming the preservation of the remains of blessed Thaddeus in the said altar, adds that on the side wall of the said chapel, on the epistle side, was painted the figure of a bishop, and written underneath:—

"This stone contains the bones of Thaddeus, bishop from Ireland, of the race of Hialar. In hoc altare dictum fuit requiescere sacras reliquias Beati Thaddæi Epi. Hybernici; qua de causa credunt in facie altaris scripta fuisse ista verba; sepulchrum Beati Thaddæi Epi. Hybernici. Et in pariete laterali ipsius capellæ ad cornu Epistolæ sub insignibus cujusdam Epi. in muro depictis leguntur ista verba; Tenet lapis hic ossa Thaddæi Presulis Hybernici geniti de stirpe Hialar."

On the 22nd August, 1742, Monsignor Michael de Villa, bishop of Ivrea, made a visitation of the cathedral church. It then contained thirty-five altars. Coming to that of St. Andrew he saw in front, on the plinth of the altar slab, were inscribed the words:—

"Cava S. Eusebii et Sepulchrum Beati Thaddæi Ep. Hybernici."

The Bishop, to make an official recognition of the remains, ordered the altar to be taken down, which was done in his presence and that of his assistants. They found a marble urn covered with a "Sarisso" stone, within which lay two bodies in such a position that the head of one was on the feet of the other, or in an opposite direction. Monsignor de Villa caused three surgeons to make a diligent examination of the remains of the body supposed to be that of blessed Thaddeus, which was found to be his after a diligent and accurate inquiry. Pieces of cloth were found, partly woollen and partly linen; under the head was a bunch of hair of chestnut colour; a pilgrim's shell; on the finger a ring with emerald stone, which the experts gave the Bishop, who had it reset, and it is still preserved as a souvenir by the bishops of Ivrea. The surgeons gave a description of the remains, and by the Bishop's instructions collected, with the greatest respect, the pieces of vestments, hair, beard; and the remains were placed in a linen cloth and deposited in a wooden casket,

which was locked and sealed with the seal of the Bishop in several places, and tied with a band of silk or satin lengthwise and crosswise, with the inscription :—

“Corpus Sti. Thaddæi Epi. Hybernæ recognitum prout ex testimonialibus diei 22 Augusti, 1742. In visitationi Illmi. et Rmi. D.D. Michaelis Victoris De Villa Epi. Ipporegien.”

It was then placed first in the chapel of St. Savinus, now of the Blessed Sacrament, and then under the high altar of the cathedral, and finally, on the occasion of the recent celebrations, was enclosed in a handsome new reliquary and placed over the altar in the chapel opposite that of the Blessed Sacrament. In the “Acts of the Process” for the confirmation of the cultus of blessed Thaddeus, p. 32, is an extract from a large volume entitled *History of the Ancient City of Ivrea*, by Father Benevenuto, of the Congregation of Christian Doctrine, pp. 578-579 :—

“Blessed Thaddæus was born in Castello Clavinensi, in Ireland, of the royal blood of Macher, and was from the county Clarch, or Clariense, and was obliged to leave his See, like another S. Auselm, in defence of ecclesiastical immunity, which is confirmed by several letters written by Pope Innocent VIII. against such attempts. Whatever be the cause it is certain the holy bishop, on his way to (from) Rome, arrived at Ivrea on the 23rd of October, 1492, without a companion—a most unusual thing for a bishop in those days—and being unknown lodged in the hospital of S. Antonio. The following night the servants saw a great light surrounding the bed where the saint lay. They ran to extinguish it, supposing it was a natural light and would consume the bed and do further injury. To their surprise they found it was a pure light which did not consume, and they saw the holy pilgrim dead, surrounded by the heavenly light. The morning of the 24th the rectors of the hospital consulted the bishop, Nicholas Gargliati, regarding the wonderful occurrence, and, to their surprise, he told them that at the same time appeared to him a venerable man, clothed as a bishop. On examination of the documents he had with him this was clearly proved. The Bishop, with his chapter and clergy, and joined by all the religious orders of the city, went in procession to the hospital, and took from thence the body, clothed in episcopal vestments; all the bells of the city ringing, and more with the pomp of triumph than a funeral procession it was brought to the cathedral, where the solemn ceremonies of the exequies were performed. As from the beginning God wished to honour the holiness of his servant by miracles, they did not wish to place the body in an ordinary tomb, but with great devotion placed it over S. Eusebius, our former bishop, and in the same urn and under the altar dedicated to the same S. Eusebius, and on the urn in the following century was read the inscription :—“Sepulchrum S. Eusebii Ep. et S. Thaddæi Episcopi Hybernæ et Martyris”; which title of martyr was given him as he died in exile and poverty in defence of the Church, like his divine Master, not knowing where at night to lay his head to rest, a title already given to other bishops by the Holy See for like causes. On the 22 August, 1742, this sacred body was found in the said altar entire, however without skin, clad in a purple robe and rochet, with a whitish beard falling on the chest, the episcopal ring on his finger, and, placed in another casket, was transferred to the *sacrarium* of relics.”

Now we have before us all the sources of information at present available concerning blessed Thaddeus. To which branch of the

MacCarthys did he belong? He is represented as "*de stirpe Hialar*." I have searched for an explanation, and am joined in my opinion by at least two very distinguished Celtic scholars—J. J. MacSweeney, esq., Royal Irish Academy, and the Rev. P. O'Leary, P.P., Castlelyons. It means of the "race of eagles," or of the MacCarthy Reagh, or R14b4c—Kilbriittain branch—which they adopted from the first who bore that name, and was of a dark or swarthy complexion. It was usual with the Irish at the period we are treating of to put fancy Latin translations on their names or sobriquets. In that way the "R14b4c" family must have adopted "*Aquileus*" as the Latin equivalent for "R14b4c." The Italian scribe must have asked some Irishman for the Irish of "*Aquileus*." The reply was "*Aquila*" was "Ḥḡḡḡḡḡḡ." Hence the scribe wrote "*de stirpe Hialar*." Again, when the MacCarthys adopted armorial bearings, "*Forti et Fideli nihil Difficile*" was the motto of the MacCarthy More; the MacCarthy "R14b4c" adopted the motto "*Fortis Ferox et Celer*," evidently referring to the eagle. This is borne out by the letter of Pope Innocent VIII., already referred to, in which, after censuring Maurice Earl of Desmond, William (Lord) Barry, and Edmund Maurice Fitzgerald, and the community of the city of Cork, and the university of the city of Youghal, and William and Edmund (Tirry), brothers, and Philip O'Ronan, he calls on, in defence of Thaddeus, Gerald Earl of Kildare, lord lieutenant of Ireland, and who was by treaty and marriage connected with the Kilbriittain MacCarthys, on Florence MacCarthy, prince of Carbery, on Thaddeus, prince of Desmond, and Cormac, son of Thaddeus, and, again, on young Donald MacCarthy, the son of Florence, who was married to Ellenor, daughter of the Earl of Kildare, and Maurice (Lord) Roche. Calling specially on them, the MacCarthy Reaghs, in the first place, shows there must be a special reason for doing so, proving the relationship.

Monsieur Lainé, in his *Généalogie de la maison de MacCarthy* (Paris, 1839), note p. 83, mentions:—

"Taig, or Thaddeus, MacCarthy, évêque de Cork et de Cloyne, pouvait être fils de Donall MacCarthy Reagh, et Dermot MacCarthy évêque de Cork en 1598, son petit fils."

I do not think he has any foundation for this statement. This would make blessed Thaddeus son to young Donald mentioned above, and would not bear the test of dates. The second statement is not correct, as Dermot McCraith, not MacCarthy, was bishop of Cork in 1598. MacGheoghegan, in his *History of Ireland*, makes the mistake of MacCarthy for McCraith, hence the error of M. Lainé. However, it is of importance in so much that he wrote from manuscript history of the MacCarthy family, and mentions the tradition in the family that blessed Thaddeus belonged to the Kilbriittain, or Reagh, branch.

Now as to the place of birth of blessed Thaddeus there is more difficulty. The Italian writer mentions his being born "in Castello Clavinensi." As the MacCarthy Reaghs had several castles it is hard to identify which is mentioned under this name—Kilbrittain, Kilgobban, Coolmain, etc. Perhaps some kind reader may, in "Notes and Queries," help to solve the difficulty. Kilbrittain castle was the chief seat of the MacCarthy Reagh. Smith (*History of Cork*) mentions:—

"When this castle was up it was a stately building, environed with a large bawn, fortified with six turrets on the walls. It was pleasantly situated on a mount between greater hills; the sea flows (almost up to it) through the harbour of Courtmacsherry."

He also mentions that it was lately taken down by Jonas Stawell, esq., and the present mansion built on its site. Portions of the old castle have been preserved in the modern building, and within the last thirty years a beautiful castellated building has been erected on the old site, perhaps on the lines of the old foundation, by Col. Alcock Stawell, the present owner. It is a fine mansion, situated in the midst of the fine old timber of the times of the ancient chiefs, and gives us an idea of the power of this branch of the MacCarthys. Their barony of Carbery was the largest in Ireland, and in placing fighting men in the field were more powerful than either the Desmond or Muskerry branches; and when Florence MacCarthy, by marriage with the heiress of the MacCarthy More, became himself the MacCarthy More, it was remarked that Florence himself had larger possessions than those he acquired by his wife. The Muskerry branch were supposed to be the wealthiest. When the Earl of Clancarty lost his property by the fall of King James, it was valued at £150,000 a year. This gives us an idea of the wealth and power of the Kilbrittain branch. Truly a "*regia progenies*," descended from the kings of Cashel and Cork, having two branches at the period we are treating of bearing the title of prince.

The changes of time and fortune have told much on the noble race, but the virtues of the holy bishop are more lasting than the power and wealth of his family. History tells us very little about him, but his memory is still fresh in the Italian town where he died. He has been venerated and invoked there as one of the holy patrons of the place, and recently, when the Holy See solemnly approved of the devotion to him during four hundred years in Ivrea, and extended it to the three dioceses in the county of Cork, the feeling evoked there was most remarkable. Italy, England, and Ireland were represented by their bishops and clergy. Fourteen archbishops and bishops and more than five hundred priests took part in the celebrations continuing over three days. The festivities in the town, the hospitality shown to those who came to take part in it, were very remarkable. The eloquent sermons

preached in the cathedral, and the majesty of the ceremonial, and, above all, the great piety of the people, who came in great crowds, will be long remembered by those who took part in it. Above all the solemn procession when, as if in triumph, the remains of the poor unknown pilgrim were carried through the streets he passed so many years ago, will not be easily forgotten.

In the early days of the glories of the Church of Ireland she sent her missionaries (saints) to Italy, like St. Columbanus, whose monastery



KILBRITTAIN CASTLE.

at Bobbio still remains to testify to the union or tie between Italy and Ireland. This was very much brought in evidence at the late celebrations. A college built quite close to where blessed Thaddeus died, by the Fathers of Don Bosco, is called the Irish college; doubtless it will bring up many young Irish missionaries to carry on their work in English speaking countries.

There is a certain resemblance between the two last sons of Ireland who are venerated as saints and blessed—St. Laurence O'Toole, archbishop of Dublin, who died in a foreign land, Bec in Normandy, on a

journey to the English king to plead the cause of his country, and blessed Thaddeus, who died at Ivrea as a poor pilgrim returning from Rome, where he had gone in defence of the rights of his Church.

Since then many sons of Ireland are deserving the Church's honour, as the late Dr. Denis Murphy, S.J., has shown in his work, *Our Martyrs*; England has done her part, why is Ireland behindhand? When the history of blessed Thaddeus was made known in 1847, Dr. Renehan and the late Dr. MacCarthy, afterwards bishop of Kerry, did their part in discovering his history. More light has been since thrown on it. May we hope that soon we may discover more.

Too much thanks cannot be given to Dr. O'Callaghan, bishop of Cork, who took the case of blessed Thaddeus in hands and brought it to a successful issue; also to Monsignor Richelmy, bishop of Ivrea, and to his chapter; but especially to Canon Soroglio, vicar-general, who made this a labour of love. I cannot conclude without mentioning, with honour, the name of Monsignor Michael Antonini, to whose able care the conduct of the case of blessed Thaddeus was placed in Rome, and which he brought to a happy conclusion within the short space of three years.

Saint Gobnata, and her Five of Bees.

BY M. T. KELLY.



SOME miles beyond Macroom, where the landscape, weird and romantic, foreshadows the wilder scenery of neighbouring county Kerry, is the hamlet of Ballyvourney, or "the town of the beloved,"⁽¹⁾ which is chiefly interesting on account of antiquarian remains within its precincts and in the surrounding country. From the bogs of Kerry flows the river Sullane, which, on its way to the Lee, passes not far from the ruined church of Ballyvourney, formerly dedicated to the patron saint of Munster, on whose name many variations have been made. Called Abigail by the English, this saint was known in Ireland as Gobnait, Gobnit, Gobinet,

(1) Dr. Joyce thinks Ballyvourney is a corruption of *Baile Mhuirne*, or "Murna's townland," this Murna being a fairy, who generally resided inside a rocky hill [Carrigmoorna] in Waterford; and he adds, "Whenever the wind blows strongly in certain directions a loud whistling sound comes from some crevices in the rock, heard half a mile distant, which the peasants say is the humming of the Lady Murna's spinning wheel."—*Irish Names of Places*.