

**Journal of the Cork Historical and
Archaeological Society**

www.corkhist.ie



Title: Proceedings of the Society, 11th May, 1892

Author: O'Mahony, John

Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, 1892, Vol. 1, No 6,
page(s) 109-110

Published by the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society

Digital file created: June 7, 2013

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JOURNAL

OF THE

CORK HISTORICAL AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

VOL. I

JUNE, 1892.

No. 6.

Proceedings of the Society

11TH MAY, 1892.

BY THE HON. SECRETARY.

Timoleague Abbey.

Eighteenth Meeting—May 11th, 1892.

REV. WILLIAM WHITELEGGE, M.A., in the Chair.

Mr. Denham Franklin, J.P., laid before the meeting his paper on "Timoleague Abbey: its History and Description," which was illustrated by a series of interesting photographs of the present ruins. The first part of the paper dealt with the few particulars, authentic and traditional, extant, in reference to St. Molaga, after whom the abbey was called. This saint, who was a native of Fermoy district, was born early in the seventh century, and received the name by which we know him from St. David of Wales. His feast day is the 20th of January (date of Molaga fair, Kildorrery), and an interesting fact about him is that he is credited with introducing hive bees into Ireland. *Labba Molaga*, or Molaga's bed is situated about four miles north-east of Aghacross, near Kildorrery, a description of which is given by Mr. Philip Raymond, of Mitchelstown. The legend as to the founding of the site of the abbey, as tradition still has it, is to the effect that St. Molaga and his disciples endeavoured to build their settlement elsewhere in the neighbourhood, but, whatever they put up in the day fell down in the night. Judging from this that it was not the will of Heaven that they should continue building at the place, they took a sheaf of corn, and placing on it a lighted candle from off the altar, the saint prayed that God would guide it when afloat to whatever spot was compatible with His will; and accordingly having floated down the harbour for some way it went ashore to where the abbey now stands, and was then built. Several important allusions to the place, which occur in the State Papers, are referred to, in particular a battle which was fought in the district between the Hodnetts and the Barrys, in which Sir Philip

Hodnett was killed, and Lord Barrymore seized the town. Mention is made of the valuable library attached to the monastery, and old plate belonging to the church; and an account and description of the finding of portion of the latter—a silver chalice—on Cape Clear Island, is given. Several of the more important graves in the abbey are described, in particular that of Bishop McEgan of Ross, who was killed in a battle with the English, near Bandon, in 1601. In this fight the Irish were defeated, but carried off the bishop's body from the field, and buried it with episcopal and military honours at Timoleague. This encounter is dealt with at length in the *Pacata Hibernia*; and Carew, rejoicing over the bishop's death, says:—"The death of that traitorly "priest, Owen McEgan, doubtless was more beneficial to the State than to have gotten the head of "the most capital rebel in Munster;" and further on he goes on to say, "A more malicious traitor "against the State and Crown of England never "breathed." It was a charge of conspiracy with this bishop heard on inquisition before the Lord President and Council sitting at Shandon Castle, that caused Cormac McCarthy to surrender Blarney Castle as a pledge that he could justify himself from the indictment, the terms being the restoration of the castle on his proving his innocence. The architecture of the building at present was described, and attention directed to a long opening to the east, adjoining the south window of the transept, which has been recognized as the "Leper's Hole," through which unfortunate human beings afflicted with the awful disease could see the priest officiating, hear the service, and receive the Blessed Sacrament. The preservation of the abbey is mainly due to the care bestowed on it by the Travers family, the present proprietors of Timoleague. Last year Mass was celebrated in the abbey after a period of nearly two centuries and a-half, and the old chalice

referred to used on the occasion. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Father Jarlath, O.S.F., Killarney, to whom, as well as Rev. Father O'Reilly, of Dublin, Mr. Franklin expressed his thanks for much valuable information.

On the motion of Canon Moore, seconded by Mr. H. W. Gillman, the thanks of the Society were passed to Mr. Franklin for the trouble he had taken to prepare the paper.

Address to the President

On his elevation to the See of Waterford and Lismore.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LORDSHIP,—On behalf of the Council and Members of the Cork Historical and Archæological Society, we congratulate you on your consecration as successor to Saint Carthach and Saint Otteran in the Bishopric of the ancient See of Waterford and Lismore.

The Society which we represent includes among its members men of many classes, of different creeds, of various callings, bound together by a common interest in the history of our city and county, heirs all alike of its past, equally entitled to the benefit of its teachings; and we owe to you, our founder and first president, a deep debt of gratitude for the earnest energy with which you have inaugurated this society.

It is not necessary for us to speak of the mode in which you have discharged the duties imposed on you as a priest, or accepted by you as a citizen. Others have well expressed their sense of your performance of these high and honourable tasks. But, though so much of your time and energy was devoted to such onerous offices, you could still find some hours to create and foster this movement for the preservation of the records of the past, and to prove to the indifferent the utility of the work which you loved, guided, and shared.

To those who have taken in hand the completion of that which you commenced your example gives encouragement, and your influence strength.

With pleasure we review what already has been done, and gratefully remember who it was that laid the foundation-stone of an edifice which we hope will grow and endure for those who come after us.

We trust that God will grant you very many years in the wider sphere of utility in His service you are called upon to fill, and when, in the

fulness of time, you shall have rested from your labours, amongst the many reasons why your noble career will be gratefully remembered, one, at least, will be this, that you have placed in our hands a key that unlocked the treasure-house of history for us and for our children's children.

Signed on behalf of the Society,

ROBERT DAY, F.S.A. } Vice Presidents.
DENNY LANE, M.A. }
THOMAS J. FARRINGTON, M.A., Hon. Treas.
JOHN O'MAHONY, Hon. Sec.

REPLY.

BISHOP'S HOUSE, JOHN'S HILL,
WATERFORD.

To the Council and Members of the Cork Historical and Archæological Society.

GENTLEMEN,—I did not need your parting words for assurance of your kindly wishes in my regard.

My connection with the Historical and Archæological Society will always remain for me among the pleasantest memories of Cork.

The Society has been successful in the best sense, beyond the expectation of its first promoters.

You have already revived, in enduring form, recollections of a fast-fading past, full of interest for a cultured and patriotic people; you have rescued from oblivion the names of many whose learning and heroism may well form the precious inheritance of their posterity; and you have put a tongue into many a ruined shrine and castle, and made them tell the almost forgotten story of those who, through dreary centuries, held them for religion and country.

But even had it been otherwise—had it been failure, and not success—I could not but remember the unvarying kindness I received at your hands.

Be assured that the progress of your Society will always be dear to me, and that I will read in Waterford, with an interest that distance will not lessen, but only increase, the record of your labours for the preservation of all that is interesting in the history and archæology of the county and city of Cork.

Thanking you heartily for your beautiful address, believe me, faithfully yours,

✠ R. A. SHEEHAN,

Bishop of Waterford and Lismore.