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KILCREA ABBEY FROM S.E.

CUMANN STAIRÉ 7 ÁRSUIÓCTA
CORCAIGE.

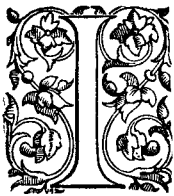
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Journal of the
Cork Historical and Archæological Society.

The Monastery of St. Brigid, Kilcrea, and the
Castle of the MacCarthys.

By THOMAS JOHNSON WESTROPP, M.A., M.R.I.A.



IN the long green valley of the Bride, hemmed in by level-topped and almost parallel ridges, lie the "Abbey" and Castle of Kilcrea. The hills are cut at intervals by deep glens, facing each other at opposite sides of the valley, and forming bold, well-wooded ravines, in pleasant contrast to the tamer scenery of the main valley. The slopes, too, are wooded in many places, and with the fine avenue of ash trees at the "Abbey" and the thick timber of the Kilcrea demesne, form a beautiful setting for the venerable buildings. The parish in which they stand forms part of the Barony of Muskerry, Co. Cork, deriving its name, Desertmore, from a hermitage, probably that one founded, in a remote unfixed past, by a sainted lady named Cyra, or Chera, from whom the later monastery took its name of Kilcrea. It is a beautiful and peaceful spot, only a few cottages, the cry of birds, and the lowing of cattle going to drink in the clear shallow stream break its loneliness and silence, save when an occasional train (an intruder from the Age of Iron) disturbs the birds in the thick ivy of the Mac Carthy's Castle, beside the railway. Very beautiful are the views about the venerable old bridge, whether its irregular arches make a foreground for the long avenue of ash trees, the confused gables and lofty belfry of the convent, or one sees from it, beyond the rippling stream, the dark square mass of the Castle against the evening light.

One recalls that the place has a position in literature through that able but anonymous poem, "The Monks of Kilcrea"—

"Three monks sat by the bogwood fire,
Bare were their crowns and their garments grey;
Close they sat to that bogwood fire,
Watching the wicket till break of day;
Such was ever the rule of Kilcrea."

The building, however, is there only the framework for the story, a lightly indicated scene behind the actors, or rather the narrators—a scene behind a scene and without details.

There was no duty laid on the poet to describe the Abbey, but it was

certainly to be expected that the local antiquaries should have done far more than they have done in that direction. Charles Smith, our first historian of Cork, only follows Ware's manuscript for its history, and draws an interesting picture of the state of the spot in about 1656. The place was "woody, bushy, very deep, and quite inaccessible, and edged on the east and west with red bogs, till about 30 years ago" (? 1626),¹ "frequented by wolves to the great annoyance of the adjacent inhabitants." Archdall and the later writers go over the salient facts of its history, but rarely describe the ruins, even in the most general way, or add anything but notes on the walls of human skulls and bones that lined the approach to the "Abbey" among the great trees. It is an interesting fact in the history of Ireland, but one as yet little analysed or studied, how slowly the practical side of archæology came to be known. In the early 18th century "antiquities" meant little more than ancient history. A "sentimental writer"—there was "nothing nobler than a man of sentiment" among the contemporaries of Charles Surface—liked to show his refinement by alluding in a very unscientific way to "hermits" and "the good old friars," or (oblivious of the forces of gravity) to Abbey towers "nodding their venerable heads." Dean Swift valued the Irish State Records at half-a-crown, and objects of the past were only "curiosities." Men like Ware, Colgan and Wadding had passed away, few even followed the steps of Dineley, and the county history was a mere oasis in a desert of contented ignorance. Considering the gloomy pages of Ireland's history from 1700 to 1790, we are little surprised when we find no detailed description even of ruins of great interest, but that over a century of revival and even enthusiasm has since passed, leaving the fine monastery of Kilcrea inadequately described is indeed astonishing. May I add a personal note expressing my diffidence and reluctance in undertaking the task at the request of Mr. Coleman, and asking antiquaries for a lenient judgment on one who in intervals of business (leaving little time to complete even papers on subjects of many years' research) went aside on two occasions eighteen years apart to study the ruins of Kilcrea. With little time for research in the Record Office, little addition can be made to the received history, though this must again be told, but the anatomy of the building is now given for the first time in considerable detail.

THE GENERAL HISTORY.

The most prolific century of the Middle Ages in architecture, so far as the buildings of Munster is concerned, is that preceding the Modern Period. The records of our province in the 15th century are scanty and unsatisfactory compared to what went before them, but a large series of castles and churches show unequivocal evidence of construction and repair during that period, and that often in a beautiful and even elaborate style. This is still more the case with the monasteries—Quin, Ennis and Clare; Askeaton, Adare and Kilmallock; Irrelagh, Lislachtin and Killaghy—show how this was the case in the counties to the north and west of Cork. A single generation saw the additions to most of these, and the foundation or rebuilding of Adare, Irrelagh, Lislachtin and Kilcrea. John Windele is,

¹ Dr. Charles Smith's "History of Co. Cork," citing an Inquisition of 1656.

however, certainly right as to the remains of the last appearing to be of far earlier date than that of its received foundation, but the survival of earlier styles to unusually late periods is a commonplace of Irish archæology, and it may account for the appearance of plain old details in Kilcrea "Abbey," though built during the later Wars of the Roses, when printing had begun its vast revolution, and the Mission of Mahomet had been proclaimed for twelve years in the Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople.

The founder of Kilcrea was of the mighty line of Mac Carthy—Cormac Mór, chief of the race, prince of Desmond—he completed in 1465 a convent and a castle near the ford of the Bride. The former he designed as a house of the Franciscans, and it was dedicated, not to the saintly Cyra, who gave her name to the spot, but to St. Brigid of Kildare, the "third patron" of Ireland. The castle was built in marshy ground, in an old fort, probably dating even from the bronze age. What time the old bridge first threw its eight low arches across the wider, and therefore more shallow reach of the Bride we have as yet failed to discover.

As the massive volumes of Luke Wadding's great work are little accessible, we may give the epitome² of his record of the foundation of Kilcrea:—"1465, in Hibernia, viii M(ille) P(assuum) a civitate Corcagiensi, in loco Kilcrea, cænobium observantibus, prope flumen Brigid (Bride), ædificavit Cormacus Mac Cartha, Musgruyensium Dynasta, quod adhuc extat, nullas ferme aliter quam regni relique cænobia hæreticorum passus injurias: ipsum enim sub sua tutela ab Anglis accepit, an. 1614, Cormacus Dermittii, loci Dominus, Catholicus, et semper protexerunt alii viri nobiles, quorum maiores sua sepulchra ibidem constituerunt. Insignes eius incolæ Matthæum Oleyn, Martyrem felicem, seu Fheilimeum Mac Cartha, Thadæum Suliuanem, clarissimos confessores, ampliori memoria hic prosequitur Annalista, sed eorum acta a nobis alibi referuntur."³ Anthony Bruodín more briefly records it:—"Conventum oppidi de Kilcre liberalissime fundavit Cormacus de Charthy Muskriæ princeps."⁴

It is singular that such skilled workmen as raised the lovely courts of Adare and Irrelagh were absent from Kilcrea; but certainly the plainness of it, Sherkin and Timoleague, despite the pleasing vistas of their aisles, is very marked. I failed to find a carved leaf or figure, a moulded door or shaft, in all the convent, and it is only in the later wing, on the site of the old sacristy, that any attempt at the more ornamental style of windows is found other than the three principal lights of the church. Father Mooney's description of "the finest materials," "exquisite workmanship," "rich marbles," and "finely turned" windows is purely rhetorical. MacCarthy reserved a tomb for himself "close to the great altar," probably in the usual "right hand" (i.e., north-east) corner beside it, where founders were usually buried. Of this tomb nothing but a plain recess is to be found, but its inscribed slab was long legible, and a copy is preserved.

We over-estimate the eventfulness of life in these ancient buildings. Probably down to the death of the founder prayer and fasting reigned in the convent, merriment and feasting in the castle, hospitality in both.

² "Epitome Annalium ordinis Minorum" (Ed. Rome, 1672), p. 356.

³ We give them infra under the years 1581 and (O'Leyn) 1599.

⁴ "Propugnaculum Catholicæ Veritatis" (1668), Liber. v. (p. 356) 99.

The Monks did not neglect the labours of the scriptorium, but only one volume from their hands is known to exist. It is preserved in the Public Library of Rennes, and is an Irish translation of that delightful but mendacious book, *The Travels of Sir John de Maundeville*, the De Rougemont of the fourteenth century. It was written in "Gillcreide Abbey" on Maundy Thursday, 1472, by Finghin, or Florence, O'Mahony of Rosbrin, in the parish of Schull, Co. Cork. Mooney found no such register of the convent existing in Elizabeth's reign as forms so valuable a comment on the more ornate buildings of Adare, but doubtless some such book was once kept at Kilcrea—

"A volume old and brown,
A huge tome, bound
In brass and wild boar's hide,
Wherein was written down
The names of all who had died
In the convent since it was edified."

The benefactors of Kilcrea are therefore forgotten of men, and we think of the solemn words of the author of *Urn Burial*:—"The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the Register of God, not in the record of man; the night of Time far surpasses the day." Quiet and timely death was the lot of the brethren, but not of their benefactor; the Prince of Muskerry descended not to his grave in peace, he fell by the hands of his brother and nephew in 1495, and was laid in his long-prepared tomb. Long afterwards men read on his slab, "Hic Jacet Cormac filius Dermitti magni McCarthy, Dominus de Musgraigh Flayn, ac istius conventus primus fundator An. Dom. 1495."⁵ Since then unnumbered members of his house have joined him in the chancel of the convent church.

The record of the place is little more than a record of their burials. In 1536 the Four Masters notice the death of Cormac oge MacCarthy, Lord of Muskerry, named "Laidir," the strong; he died at Kilcrea Castle, and was buried in the monastery. Hither, too, was brought the body of his son Teige in 1565; Diarmid, the latter's son, also chief of the district, died at Castle Inchy (Caislean na hinnse) in 1570, and was buried with his fathers. No monument remains to commemorate these.

It is probable that the seclusion of the spot, and its being in the hands of its ancient masters, protected the friars through the revolutions of the Tudors. Bound to poverty, and possessed of but little land, they were not as much a mark for greediness as those of the wealthier and more powerful monasteries. Plate and valuables were easily removed and hidden like their owners in the woods and bogs, so it seems to have been long before any step more formidable than giving the legal ownership of the convent site to some friendly co-religionist was taken against the community.

The Government, however, was tightening its grasp. On Sept. 20th, 1577, under a Commission of the previous 6th of August, it granted the site to Sir Cormack Mac Teige Mac Carthy, Knight, by a lease for 21 years, at 13s. 4d. per annum and a fine of the same amount, giving him the use of the site and possessions of the house of Friars Minors of Kilcrey, Co. Cork, in Muskrey country. In a pardon given to him and others three

⁵ Ware Manuscript, vol. 34, p. 164. Smith's "History of Cork," vol. i., p. 195.

years before, when he was Sheriff of Co. Cork, Dermot Moyle Mac Donell O'Murroughoe (Murphy), of Kilcrey, husbandman, also appears. On July 20th, 1578,⁶ Sir Cormock, being then of Blarney, obtained a grant of Kilcrea under the Queen's Letter of May 22nd.⁷ He was bound not to suffer the Franciscans to return, or to let his lands to any but Protestants.⁸ Probably, however, his conformity to the State Church was no deeper than that of the Earl of Thomond and other nobles. So the Friars lived among the people, supported by the Barretts and others, and were even able to preserve the monastery and church from dilapidation. In 1579, the year after the grant, Thomas O'Herlihy, Bishop of Ross, was buried within the walls, but no monument marks the place of his tomb.⁹

Then broke out the great rebellion of Gerald Earl of Desmond, dragging to ruin half a province; it was struggling in its last agonies after the cruel death of its leader before destruction fell on Kilcrea. The central parts of Munster had "drunk the cup of trembling" to the dregs, as the marginal notes on that terrible obituary of a tribe, the Desmond Roll, show—

"A thing of nightmare and evil seeming for its stains were the rust of the
Desmonds' slaughter,
Far to the north in their vanishing vastness black bog and forests around
were lying,
Over wild wastes the eagle, flying, saw leagues of ruin and blight and
death,
Heart break and gloom and tears and sighing, and caves of cursing and
bitter breath,
Where the rebel kerne had their hold and fastness."

The year after the hapless Earl's death (Father Mooney tells us) a band of English soldiers overran the valley of the Bride and reached the monastery. The Friars were taken by surprise, but probably escaped to the woods, for the writer tells of no slaughter of any of them at that time, but they had to leave all the sacred relics and utensils to the soldiery. The English burst into the church, "unawed by the sanctity of the place"—more probably on its account zeal was added to the lust of plunder and destruction. They smashed the images and defaced the paintings with which the now bare walls were adorned, and, swarming about the building, some one found the treasures, and a greedy quarrelling horde, all discipline at an end, flung itself upon them. "At that time the church possessed a beautiful representation of the Crucifixion, a rare work of art, indeed, for at each extremity of the cross was a beautiful medallion of the evangelists, exquisitely wrought in gold and silver." With less self-control than those ancient soldiers who "cast lots" instead of quarrelling, the plunderers started a deadly struggle. At length, out of their senses with passion, they drew their swords on each other till two fell mortally wounded, one dying that very evening, while the other only survived till the following morning. "The gold and silver glutted the impious greed

⁶ Calendar of Fiants (Elizabeth), No. 3114 and No. 2264.

⁷ Ibid. No. 3373.

⁸ Meekan's "Franciscan Monasteries" (Ed. 1869), Chapter v., quoting Mooney.

⁹ Ware's "Bishops," p. 588.

of the survivors, and that noble work of art was lost to the convent for ever."¹⁰ The place apparently was not burned; unlike those convents that had roofs of thatch or shingles, it was slated by heavy slabs, probably set in deep mortar, which rendered the kindling too troublesome for a set of men whose desire for destruction was partly appeased by the defacing of the church, partly quenched by the tragic result of their unbridled excitement.

The community, so far from dying out, like those at Quin and Ennis, even recruited its numbers. Felix or Felim Mac Carthy, to whom Wadding alludes, as given above, had taken an active part in ministering to Earl Desmond's soldiers. When a layman he won golden opinions for his charity and for his hospitality to friend and foe, but, like most warm-hearted men, he was liable to hot outbursts of passion, and in a quarrel with his own brother lost control of himself and "stabbed the unfortunate youth to death." Crushed by the brand of Cain, he fled the world, got a dispensation for his irregularity, and sought to bury his remorse in Kilcrea Convent, being eventually admitted to the habit of the Order. His piety and deep remorse, coupled doubtless with his warm and kindly nature, soon won him the love and respect of the brethren; he was ordained a priest, and living to a great age, became partly paralysed. Men, however, noted with wonder that he retained the use of his fingers and thumb sufficiently for the service of the Altar, and regarded it as a special proof of Divine favour and reward of his penitence.

Father Thady O'Sullivan well deserves Mooney's admiring record. This good man, during the horrors and hardships of the Desmond war, followed the Irish troops, teaching and exhorting them; he restrained their license and prevented many a deed of blood in those fearful times. He had many hairbreadth escapes from the English, and by his wisdom and piety became the chosen friend of MacCraghe, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork, who consulted him on all matters of importance, and, what was more, followed his advice. "An old man, broken with the storms" of war, he was a martyr to duty; he took ill and died in December, 1597. The kerne, who loved him so well, determined to bring his body to his own convent for honoured burial. The English held the province, so the Irish could only travel by night, carrying the swathed body tied on a horse. The band got hopelessly lost in the darkness and the wilds, when one of them suggested leaving the task of guide to the instinct of the horse, as so often the wonderful unerring gift of nature surpassed human reason; and the animal led them to the very precinct of the convent, as they not unnaturally believed, by heavenly guidance.¹¹

The building was again in friendly hands, for the Government, on April 12th of the previous year (1596), granted under the Queen's Letter of May 14th, 1595, the house of Friars Minors at Kilcree, in the country of Muskry, Co. Cork, to Mac Carthy, on condition of not levying coyne, livery, or such other imposts.

The Manor, with its Castle, had been confirmed to him many years

¹⁰ Mooney's account is strangely suggestive of Kingsley's fine word-picture of the plundering of Peterborough by the Danes under Hereward.

¹¹ Meehan's "Franciscan Monasteries," Chapter v., quoting Mooney, who was at Kilcrea.

earlier, for on May 2nd, 1589, we find a "fiant" of Queen Elizabeth ordering that Kilcrea, Blarney, Macrowmy and other lands be confirmed to Cormac Carty, fitz Derby, alias mac Diermod, mac Teige, Mac Carthy, and the formal grant was made under a Queen's letter of the lands therein specified.¹² The owner was probably now living at Blarney, and the "spare castle" at Kilcrea suggested to the Government that they should place there a garrison. This was a fatal step for the friars, as, instead of an occasional intrusion, a band of the enemy was permanently established in a tower whose windows overlooked the convent and rendered impossible any attempt at residence, and even an occasional service in the church a task of appalling danger. The rising of James, the "Sugan Earl," had burst out, sweeping at first all before it, so on October 9th, 1599, the Chief Justice of Munster, William Saxey, wrote to the Earl of Essex on the means to be taken to suppress the rebellion of the Geraldines; among other measures he advised that 300 foot and 25 horse should be stationed at Kilcrea, which could be victualled from Cork.¹³ A letter was also written to Cecil with the same suggestion on the 1st of the following December.¹⁴

A force of the English under (Mooney says) the Earl of Essex himself, marched to Kilcrea in pursuit of "the remnant of the Geraldines." They scared away the monks, who escaped, with one exception, Father Matthew O'Leyn, "a man remarkable for his holiness of life and in his 67th year." The English overtook and slew him as he was fording the Bride. The soldiers do not appear to have destroyed the monastery.

Whether any action was taken to garrison Kilcrea is not mentioned in the State Papers, but the place (Windele¹⁵ says the "Abbey") was plundered by O'Neill in 1601. The Carew MSS, p. 512, under 1600, give the castles held by "the Lord or Chieftain of Muskry" as Blarney, Kilcrea, Mocrumpy (so the English chose to name Macroom), and Carrignywar, in his personal possession; Castle ny Hinshy occupied by Cormock's mother; Castlemore by Kallaghan mac Teig (Mac Carthy), and Carrigdrohid Castle by Dame Johan Butler for life. Carrignymuk Castle was granted to Kallaghan and his heirs for ever, on payment by the year of a rose or a grain of wheat, an early equivalent of the later "peppercorn rent," usually paid in a little silver box for courtesy. The list was signed by Donough, son of Cormock Carty, the Chief, and endorsed by Carew as "a note of all the lands in Muskrie Clan Dermond, and what lands and duties Sir Cormock mac Teige had upon the country when he was tanist." The Government had grave doubts of the Chief's fealty; they secured him, his wife and son, sending the latter to England, a favourite device, not always successful, for anglicising the rising nobility. "Stone walls do not a prison make," and, by some friendly means, MacCarthy got away on the 29th of September, 1602. Carew was greatly annoyed; he wrote the Lord Deputy, Mountjoy, on the very next day: "Yesternight Cormock McDermod escaped, being in irons and guarded; he being preserved, all his country was secured." It was some comfort that the fugitive's wife

¹² Fiant Nos. 5330 and 5333.

¹³ Calendar of State Papers (Ireland) under year 1599, p. 181.

¹⁴ Meehan's "Franciscan Monasteries," loc cit.

¹⁵ Windele MSS. Library R. I. Acad, "Topography of Co. Cork," p. 328.

was in safe keeping, his son in England, and his castles of Blarney, Kylkrea and Mocrompe were in the writer's hands, the first two having been won by threats and persuasion.¹⁶ In fact, Kilcrea had been surrendered to Captain Slingsby, whom the President had sent to take possession.¹⁷

Cormac lived to make his peace with the English. He first wrote begging the Queen's pardon, but the Privy Council wrote to Sir George Carew (doubtless to his full satisfaction) saying that it was not safe to leave so much land in the hands of one so ill-affected to the Crown as Cormac MacDermod MacCartie.¹⁸ A step calculated rather to alienate friends than to conciliate foes, but characteristic of English rule in Ireland, was then taken. Cormac was given Kilcrea Castle, along with 30 ploughlands out of the estate of Teige MacCarthy (one of the sons of Sir Cormac Mac Teige MacCarthy). Whether the Government got more loyal support from either is discreetly passed over in silence.

More peaceable times followed the betrayal of the unfortunate "Sugan Earl" and the surrender of Kinsale by the Spaniards. King James was believed to favour the faith of his mother, and (with the unhappy, almost inadvertent art of his line for raising hopes foredoomed to disappointment) did nothing to disabuse the Irish till harm was done. His subjects, rejoicing in the death of the hated "Red Queen," proceeded to act on this fallacious idea. The Mass was openly celebrated in the cathedrals and churches, and a number of Franciscan Convents were restored in 1603 and 1604. Among the rest were Kilcrea and Timoleague. The churches were rapidly restored to the Established Church, but the monks, for the most part, were left unmolested, especially where the Irish and older Englishry held the lands round the convents. In this easier but still bitterly resented state of affairs, the monks of Kilcrea naturally sympathised with those who in any way were acting against the Government. We read,¹⁹ for example, how, in April, 1608, on Sunday 17th, a certain Bowlock, formerly serving in the Irish Army under Sir Charles Wilmot, and now an English agent, had been licensed to go to France, and thence came to Brussels. He wrote to the Government that a collection was being made among the officers and soldiers, and the money consigned to a friar named Thomas McCroft. The latter was appointed to go to Ireland to the White Knight and others, to persuade them to take arms against King James, so as to be ready to assist the Earl of Tyrone, "who will come with forces raised by the help of the Pope and the King of Spain." The friar was to start from Ostend or Calais and pass through England, crossing to Cork or some other Munster port, "and to go to the Abbey of Kilcreagh, about which place he was born;" he was a "tall, handsome man, of a black complexion and black hair, somewhat long, and of the age of 30 about." The letter closes by telling how the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell had received a favourable reception and good entertainment at Milan and Count Fuentes.

In 1613 a "Brief relation of the passages in Parliament" tells us that the Irish, "despite the King's gentle hand in restraining his ministers from

¹⁶ Carew MSS., Calendar 1602, p. 343.

¹⁷ Rev. C. B. Gibson, "History of the County of Cork," vol. i., p. 408 (Ed. 1861).

¹⁸ Carew MSS. Calendar, p. 351.

¹⁹ Cal. State Papers (Ireland), p. 653. From "Flanders," vol. 40, in Record Office, London; also Carew MSS.



KILCREA BRIDGE.



KILCREA CASTLE.

execution of the laws in matter of religion," and in contempt of the laws, "have re-edified the monasteries wherein the friars publicly preach and say Mass." Those repaired in 1603 include Ballifaunye, in Westmeath (Multifarney, Multifernam); Kilconel, in Co. Galway; Rosarol, in Mayo (Rosserk, evidently not Rosserrily, in Galway); Buttevant; Kilcrea and Timolog, in Cork; Quin, in Thomond; Ferierlogh, in Desmond (Irrelagh or Muckcross); and in the cities of Kilkenny and Waterford. The people gladly supported the Fathers, reserving for them certain ridges of all kinds of corn, "with mutton, lambs, butter and such like."²⁰ The last year, 1612, the friars of Kilcrea in Munster "had 140 muttons, 30 porks, beside butter, eggs, and such like victuals."²¹ About this time we find in Speed's map the "C (castle) of Killigray" and the "Mo (monastery) of Chylligray" marked upon the "Brid flu."

Sir Cormac, settled in his estates once more, seems to have kept on good terms with the Government, though on one occasion he, or his son, was returned as in their debt for £20 15s. 4d. He died in February, 1617, and was buried in the "Abbey" of Kilcrea, without a monument,²² being succeeded by his son and namesake Cormac, or (as the English preferred to call him) "Charles" Mac Carthy. He held Blarney Castle, his residence, the manor, castle, townlands and hereditaments of Kilcrea; Shany-cloyne; Forrygowne, containing half a ploughland, worth 6d. sterling; the lands of Knockeygrowgie of equal extent and value; Ballenvollen or Knockynwollyn, with the mill (that evidently gave the place its name), and a "weir," together with the Abbey of Kilcrea, containing half a ploughland. The jury found, when taking the Inquisition in the Old Castle of Cork, on January 21st, 1619, that these lands were held (under a grant of Queen Elizabeth to his father, Cormac Mac Dermot, on May 9th, 1589), *in capite*, in knight's service, at a rent of £5 13s. 4d. They also found that Cormac Mac Dermot Mac Teige Mac Carthy died February 22nd, 1616 (1617), and had by a deed of defeazance of a statute, shown to them, dated November 7th, 1615, settled the castle, manor and lands of Kilcrea (14 ploughlands of the same) in trust for the jointure of Lady Mary²³ O'Brien, on her marriage with his son, Charles, or Cormac, aged 21 at his father's death.²⁴ This lady was daughter of Donough O'Brien, the fourth (or "Great") Earl of Thomond, the restorer of Bunratty Castle and of Limerick Cathedral, where his mutilated effigy remains as the Cromwellians (in their hostility to Earl Barnaby) left it.

Cormac was created Viscount Muskerry in 1628. He died in London in 1640, and from his daughter, Elena, descended William Power Keating Trench, created Earl of Clancarthy in 1803, and ancestor of the present Earl.²⁵ Donough, the son of Cormac and second Viscount, commanded the King's forces against the Parliamentary Army. He married a sister

²⁰ Cal. State Papers (Ireland), p. 391.

²¹ Commissioners Report, 12 Nov., 1613, Acta Regia, P.R.O.I.

²² So Mooney *loc cit*.

²³ Usually called Margaret.

²⁴ Inquisition P.R.O.I., James I., No. 47.

²⁵ Elena, daughter of Cormac oge Mac Carthy, Viscount Muskerry, and sister of Donough, the first Earl, married John Power, from whom descended David Power, whose only daughter and heiress, Frances, married Richard Trench (died 1768). Their son, William Trench (born 1741, died 1816) was created Earl of Clancarty, 11th Feb., 1803.

of the Duke of Ormonde, and was advanced in the peerage to the Earldom in 1658. He was succeeded by his grandson (whose father fell in a sea fight with the Dutch); the young Earl died within a year. His son, Cle Callaghan, succeeded, and his son Donough, the fourth Earl, ruined himself by his loyalty to James II., his estates, worth, it is said, £200,000 per annum, being confiscated. Two of his sons successively bore the title in a foreign land; it became extinct on the death of the younger, an officer in the army of Naples, till (as we saw) it was revived early in the last century in a female line of the same blood.

To go back to the history of the buildings, the Book of Distribution²⁶ tells us little of them, and that little of but small interest. "Muskery, Desertmore Parish, 71, Killcre, owner Lord Muskery, 130 acres 3 roods 8 perches." The annotations on this book, "To Earl of Clancarthy" and "To the Hollow Swords Blades Company," tell of the restoration and subsequent ruin of the Stuarts and their adherents.

After the Civil wars, the Cromwellians dismantled most of the buildings of the "Abbey"; the friars, having taken to flight, appear to have escaped. Captain Bailey appears to have repaired the Chapter House wing and Sacristy for a barrack, placing a garrison in it; this seems to imply that the castle was more or less uninhabitable or perhaps too small. The Protector granted the land to Lord Broghill, but after the Restoration it was given back, as we noted, to its hereditary owner, the Earl of Clancarty.²⁷ In 1680 Thomas Dineley²⁸ mentions the place, but unfortunately not with that fulness and the quaint but recognisable sketches that give such value to others of his notes. "Killkrey Castle and Abbey, whose ruins are yet seen six miles distant from Cork City." He only adds that it was taken by Captain Francis Slingsby for Queen Elizabeth in 1602, and is "upon the south of the river Lee," this being inaccurate, as it is on the river Bride and eleven miles from Cork. After its second confiscation, after 1691, nothing of interest remains to be told, and it was sold with the lands to the company for making Hollow Swords Blades in London.²⁹

It is to be hoped that some one may endeavour to make out the story of the vicissitudes that befel the Friars of Kilcrea during the temporary triumphs of their friends, the supremacy of their deadliest enemies, the easy government of Charles, the favour of James, and the severity of his successors. That through all contingencies the monks held to their ancient home seems certain, for Henry, Bishop of Cloyne, on December 14th, 1731, complains, in a report on the state of his diocese, about the monks of Kilcrea. It seems that in Cloyne Diocese there was only one reputed convent, that of Buttevant—a thatched house in which two old friars had formerly dwelt and begged about the country, but that one was dead. "But the strolling vagabond friars from the monasteries of Aglish . . . and Kinsale, and those from the Abbey of Kilcrea, near Cork, and . . . from Killarney, do much mischief."³⁰ Smith gives a short account of the

²⁶ Book of Distribution and Survey, Co. Cork, P.R.O.I.

²⁷ XV. Rep. Record Comm. (1825). Act of Settlement No. 49 of Roll of xxix., Car. ii., pars 2 facie.

²⁸ Journal Roy. Soc. Antiq. (Ireland), vol. i., Ser. iii.; Consec., vol. x. (1868), p. 85.

²⁹ Ibid. Sales, 1703, Roll ii., Anne, p. 4 f., No. 39, Manor of Kilcrea.

³⁰ Cork Hist. and Arch. Soc. "Journal," vol. ii. (1893), p. 48.

place as it was about 1760, but neither he nor John Windele (? 1829) mentions the monks as resident there. The last of the guardians known to us, as named by Windele, was the Rev. E. Hogan, of Cork, living in 1832, but possibly the succession was continued, as we have shown was the case at Askeaton, Co. Limerick, till a later date. These nominal appointments, however, have little or no interest compared to the history of monks actually connected with their old home. The friars are said to have lived in the curious old house on the eastern edge of the Abbey field. Windele³¹ preserves a legend how, on the expulsion of the monks from the "Abbey," a flock of rooks took possession of the trees in the avenue and held "synods" in the belfry, but it had been more to the point had he sought for recollections of the last monks among the older inhabitants of the valley. It ought to have been feasible to have done it at the time, for as his notes seem dated 1829 (three years before the death of the last guardian), human memory might have reached back nearly to 1780. Despite the ever-increasing tendency of tradition to carry fewer facts, and those less uninjured, down a shorter length of the ladder of years, I was able to find in 1878 two people who remembered Father John Hogan, the last friar of Quin, Co. Clare. His tomb, with the pathetic text, "*Qui seminat in lachrymis exultatione metet*," shows that he had died 53 years previously, so possibly Windele might have been more fortunate in collecting traditions of the later friars of the venerable Abbey of Kilcrea.³²

THE "ABBEY" OF KILCREA.

We avoided using the term "Abbey" as far as possible in the earlier part of this paper, but (as indeed all over Ireland) local custom uses the word for all monasteries and even collegiate churches, and it has been popularly applied to Kilcrea since, at least, 1619, we will use it without scruple in future. Warning is indeed hardly necessary for Irish readers accustomed to the expression, but we have seen antiquaries from the outer world annoyed and even offended by its loose application.

As to its dates, the records only help us as to the year of its foundation; the Four Masters, Wadding, Bruodin and Ware agree in placing this in 1465 to 1470, the Annals of Ulster in 1478. The only other date of possible architectural value is that of its restoration, 1603-1608. Save in the sacristy, chiefly the upper storey and the side "scullery," we see little trace of work so late as this in the ruins, yet there are several points suggestive of after-thoughts, such as the double wall to the north of the church, the outer garderobe, and the belfry, which seem to be additions, imperfectly

³¹ MS. Topography of County Cork.

³² As a step towards the bibliography of Kilcrea we give the following:—Dr. Charles Smith's "History of Cork" (1765); "Dublin Penny Journal," vol. ii. (1833-4); Rev. C. B. Gibson's "History of Cork" (1861); Miss Cusack's "History of Cork"; Rev. C. P. Meehan's "Franciscan Monasteries" (1860); Rev. M. Archdall's "Monasticon Hibernicum"; Rev. L. Wadding's "Annales Minorum." Notes appear on the Kilcrea Souterrain, Proc. R. I. Acad., vol. x. (1864-6). On the Abbey and Castle, Roy. Soc. Antiq. (Ire.), vol. i., ser. iii., p. 85 (1868), and vol. 5., ser. ii., and vol. ii., ser. v. (1893) p. 268; Cork Hist. and Arch. Soc., vol. ii. (1893), p. 48. On the bronze celt found at Kilcrea Castle see Sir W. Wilde, "Catalogue," R. I. Acad., p. 364; W. C. Borlase, "Dolmens of Ireland," p. 681. Views and Short Accounts, Crofton Croker, "South of Ireland," p. 287; G. S. Measom's "Guide, G. S. W. Railway" (1866), p. 381.

agreeing with the original plan. The question of the transept and aisles may evoke variant answers. All we can say is that the larger windows of the first are of the same period as those of the nave and chancel. All the buildings seem to remain, despite dilapidation, the only suggestion of a lost building is the projecting side jamb of a door near the north porch. No foundations show in the field.

The Abbey consists of a church, with a transept and south aisle, divided into nave and choir by a fine belfry. There are the usual conventual buildings round a cloister to the north, as, despite the gloom of our climate, is perhaps more frequent here than in sunnier climes, and which must always have kept the domicile gloomy, chilly and damp. The architecture, as we noted, is of the plainest description, though effective, in the nave especially. The arcades of it and the transept make a series of most beautiful vistas, despite the simplicity of their design, giving the interior an air of spaciousness and beauty which otherwise would be entirely lacking in a building of the same extent. Most of the windows are plain pointed lights, or oblong ope. The recurrence of even dimensions, and the careful laying out of every part of the building on the square is very marked. In plan the ruin resembles its sister monasteries of Timoleague and Sherkin, differing much from those of Kerry, Limerick and Clare, save that it is similar, though reversed, to that of Askeaton, and closely akin to Kilmallock. The plan is that especially favoured by the Dominicans, as giving a large concentrated space at the junction of the nave and transept where a pulpit evidently stood, and the place was eminently suitable for a crowd of lay auditors outside the chancel.

THE NAVE is a few inches over 48 feet long and 23 feet wide; the north wall is for most of its extent smooth plastered, with lines suggestive of panelling here and there; it was probably painted, though some churches of the Order were panelled with wood, as at Creevakea. This probably accounts for the extensive and unlovely spaces of blank wall in so many of our abbeys and churches. The west door is plain and pointed, with a recess for a holy water stoup outside to the right. Overhead is the frame of the great west window; it had two shafts interlacing, and with heading pieces over the main lights, but, as in the other large windows of the church, all the tracery is removed. Inside there are few features; the south wall has the small pointed ope of a stoup, chamfered, and with a round basin. Beyond it is the arcade of three arches, pointed and recessed, resting on circular piers, with plain mouldings, being roughly picked. They were probably stuccoed and painted. These mural paintings were usually leaf and scroll work, with grotesque animals in dark red and black, often on a yellow ground, but of course all trace has vanished in Kilcrea. We may form some idea of the appearance of these paintings from the raised stucco work of Quin, the paintings found at St. Audoen's, Dublin, the so-called "frescoes" at Knockmoy, and decorative paintings at Corcomroe, Clare Island, Kilkenny and elsewhere; the art is usually very poor. In the north wall is a "squint," a little sloping ope, from the west staircase in the wall it looks towards the altars in the transept, and may have been used by sick brethren. I have heard a tradition that the door in the corresponding position in Quin led to a gallery for that purpose, and there is a similar "squint" at Askeaton looking from the upper west room into the transept; near the east end are two large clerestory windows over-

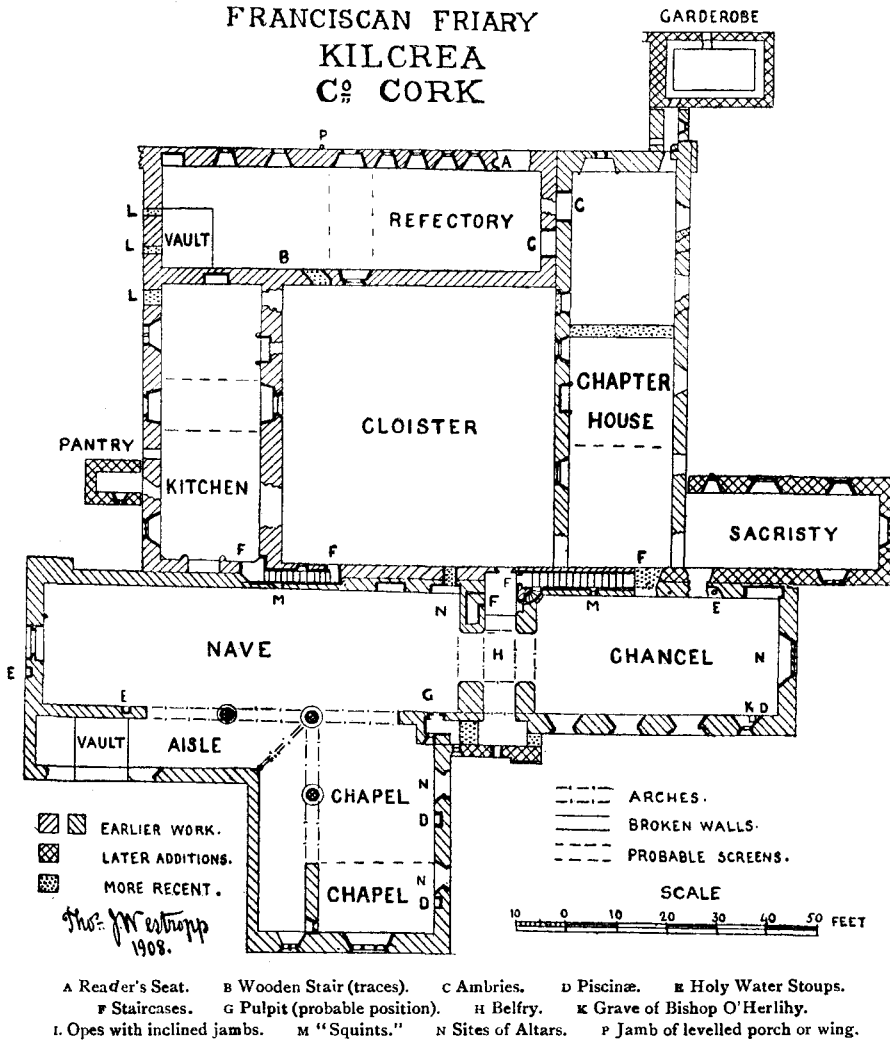


NAVE, TRANSEPT AND CHOIR ARCH, KILCREA ABBEY.



THE REFECTORY, KILCREA ABBEY.

looking the cloister. The western is closed; the eastern has two lights, the shaft gone, but the head hangs in a very precarious condition. Under each window is a deep opening into the cloister walk, the eastern is a large recess containing a slab with a Calvary cross, stepped, and with an interlaced head forming a quadruple knot. It is 6 ft. 9 in. long and over 3 ft. wide,



with a bevelled edge and no trace of an inscription. Two other tombstones, probably of the 17th century, remain near it, one set upside down, at a modern grave. The devices are, respectively, a double cross, with I.H.S., crowned by a cross, and (the other) a circle round a combined saltier and Latin cross. Opposite, between the transept and the belfry, is the deep recess of a high, pointed window; it is 6 ft. 8 in. through the wall to the light,

and 1 ft. 5 in. deep outside, on account of the curious little passage from the belfry hereafter described. Under it is the low door of the passage, the earth being much raised by burials. It led, I believe, to the pulpit, and was lit by a small window slit (suggestive of a confessional) looking into the transept.

THE TRANSEPT, or, more accurately, the south chapel (as there is no corresponding feature to the north) is $23\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide and 44ft. 10 in. deep. High up in the south gable remain the splay and side jambs of a large defaced window; from its width it probably had three shafts, and possibly resembled the east and west windows in design. It is partially built up, so may have been defaced at a comparatively early period (like the east window), and then closed to save glazing. There were evidently two chapels, with altars under the windows of the eastern wall; each had a piscina to the south, and was probably divided by screens, as the more eastern has a separate pointed entrance from the aisle along the west side. The more northern chapel was entered from the arcade. The window frames are torn out, but the splays have round heads of beautifully fitted sloped single blocks running through the entire depth of the wall. We have recently figured such a splay at Kilmacreehy, Clare.³³ Like those at Kilcrea, it possibly belongs to the latest 15th or early 16th century. The aisle opens by two large arches into the chapel; the remaining southern third of the length has a wall only pierced by the small door to the southern chapel. The end of the aisle is lit by a double light, with ogee heads, having an angular hood outside and a very flat, shouldered arch inside. A skew arch rose from the angle of the aisle wall to the junction of the two arcades; it has, however, fallen, save the springing blocks. The aisle is usually 10 feet wide; the reach beside the nave is $45\frac{1}{2}$ feet long. It had no west light, and is partly blocked by a vault, which had fallen open, displaying a charnel house with a great heap of bones, eight skulls, and a coffin. It is held in great local respect, and offerings, chiefly of bottles and vessels, are heaped at it, as at holy trees and wells. Strangely enough, it does not fill the end of the aisle, but leaves a little space 10 feet square to the west. The south wall of the aisle is greatly broken, but retains the lower part of the splay of one window in the middle of it.

Here I may note that in no other ruin examined by me in Ireland have I ever seen so many coffin plates; they project from the earth, and lie in heaps in recesses and corners everywhere, both in the church and the domicile. The inscriptions are usually legible, and if transcribed might afford a valuable substitute for a burial register, not only for the neighbourhood, but for the city of Cork, from which many families bring their dead to lay them in this holy ground—one cause of the unseemly overcrowding.

THE BELFRY. The most striking feature in the ruin is the plain lofty belfry, said to be 80 feet high, so simple, yet so great an ornament to the long fair valley and the wooded glens that look towards it. It has no large windows, only plain, narrow slits; none of the usual great opes to let out the sound of the bells, no string courses, or those bold stepped battlements that make even the plainest towers things of grace and beauty, all stern and plain, thereby gaining an unmerited appearance of massive

³³ Journal of the Limerick Field Club (1908).

strength and towering height, unbroken save by the high pitched weather ledges of the roof. It rests on four piers, and measures $14\frac{1}{2}$ feet through. The arches are low, round and plain, once smooth plastered. The piers have only a chamfer, with stopped ends at the angles. There are no corbels for a rood loft, or a recess over the arch for a rood, as at Rosserrila. The extensive space may have been painted, perhaps, as was usual in England and elsewhere, by a "Doom," or painting of the terrors of the Judgment Day, which must have been a powerful adjunct to the effect of the great "Dies Iræ," sung by the unseen choir beyond. The main arches are about 10 feet wide, the side ones $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The interspace had no vaults but floors. A spiral staircase of 15 steps, 28 inches wide, led to this at the north-east corner, and a passage, roofed and floored with slabs, led over the western arch, turning at the south-west corner, lit by slits from the nave. A staircase of 17 steps rose to a door in the south side leading to a floor in the tower; four more steps led to the door into the attic of the chancel roof. This was formerly lit by a rude slit in the apex of the east gable of the choir. By eleven more steps is reached a little interior turret resting on corbelling in the north-east corner of the tower; in it the stairs rise spirally. The tower sets back, leaving a ledge for the second floor or loft. Two more lofts were reached from the turret, 13 steps leading to the upper one, and 15 from it to the battlements—some 63 steps in all. The turret rose above the walls of the tower; the coping is all gone, but one can go round the giddy summit on the gutters which discharged the rain through plain projecting gargoyles. None of the blocks remain with mortices for the support of the great beams to which the bells were hung, such as remain in other towers. The opes in the belfry, and indeed generally through the Abbey, were turned over wicker work. Under the tower to the south is a small recess, 13 feet long by 5 feet 4 inches wide, projecting 6 feet 10 inches from the face of the building. It is only lit by a narrow slit entered from the outside to the east, and leading into the nave, as we noted under the sill of the corner window, probably to a pulpit. All its doors are built up.

THE CHANCEL. This wing measures 48 ft. 2 in. x 23 ft. 2 in., and was lit by four windows to the south and one to the east. Of the former, the eastern is alone perfect—a tall, slightly pointed light. The frame of the east window shows that it had three interlacing shafts, with subsidiary head arches, but the tracery is gone, and it is partly built up. It stood high up the wall, leaving ample verge for the high altar and altarpiece, but of these no trace remains. We have noted the plain tomb in the north-east corner; if Ware was right, the monument lay in his day in the middle of the chancel, but writers of that time were not much impressed with the importance of accurately locating the monuments noted by them, and he probably had not seen the place. The only old tombstone I found in the chancel had a cross, with fleurs de lys at the upper ends, incised on an uninscribed slab. The MacCarthy tombstone is not visible, and Windele did not see it. In the south-east angle was buried Thomas O'Herlihy, Bishop of Ross. In the north wall two broken opes (one leading to the Sacristy, has the round basin of a stoup), and a slit from the eastern staircase are the only features. There were piscinæ, now built up, in the opposite corner.

THE SACRISTY forms a separate wing, different in style and stonework from the rest of the building. Much, at least, of the upper part probably

dates from the restoration of 1603-8. It interferes with the older features of the "Chapter wing," covering one window and encroaching on another, showing that the former Sacristy was smaller; its walls do not bond into that wall, and it seems to abut against the church, the wall between them being double. It is an oblong room, 15 ft. 8 in. to 16 ft 5 in. wide, and 39½ ft. long. The lower floor has a south window of two lights, with pointed heads and an outer square hood; two similar lights (but with ogee heads) are in the north wall, and two more of the same design, one in each storey of the east end. The upper is closed by a late fireplace and chimney, probably of the military occupation. The top room has five double lights, with plain oblong opes and shafts to the south and six more to the north, with pointed heads. The three eastern are built up with red slate slabs for sills. On the ground floor at the north-west corner is a small low recess with a hollowed sill, probably like the elaborate one at Quin, for disposing of the water used in washing the altar furniture and linen, as the piscina served the sacred utensils.

CHAPTER HOUSE WING. This has been much injured; every window in the lower storey is reduced to a ragged gap; a wall built across the room and later fireplaces made at the large north window and next the cloister, probably when used as a barrack. The upper part strongly recalls the corresponding room at Quin, and, like it, has a large double light window, with a small one to the west and a door and passage leading to a garderobe tower at the north-east corner. The north window is partly closed, and in the west wall near it is a curious round recess. There are eight plain windows, with oblong lights to the east, one closed by the Sacristy; south from this and beside it a small pointed door led to the upper floor of that building. Six plain oblong lights look into the cloister westward. The lower storey of the Chapter wing had evidently three apartments. The middle one was possibly the actual Chapter Room. The upper was reached by a staircase from the belfry, hereafter described. There was no door into the upper rooms to the north of the cloister. There was evidently a garderobe in a small turret at the north-east, but for obvious reasons a larger one was built outside it to the north, and the first used for other purposes the lower part as a small cell, the upper as a well-ventilated passage. There are neat pointed doors at each end and slits to the side. The admirable sanitation of our monasteries is usually all that could be desired, even for a modern building.

CLOISTERGARTH. The centre of the convent is a court almost exactly 56½ feet square; it had no arcade, but a pent house roof rested on plain corbels and probably wooden posts; it had a water ledge above it. Chamfered pointed doors led from the walk to the various buildings round it. Over the roof there were oblong lights (five to the west, nine to the north, and six to the east) on three sides, and the two clerestory lights of the nave to the south, at which side the roof rested on the lower wall built against the church wall, as already noted. There were three doors to the east, one each to the west and north, a door to the belfry, and one to the western stairs in the south. The corbels lie ten to east, nine to north, and eight to west, with four at the eastern end of the north side. The two stone staircases are reached from the cloister, the eastern by a pointed door to the north recess, under the belfry; it is reset and evidently an after-thought; probably it was removed from some other part of the cloister,

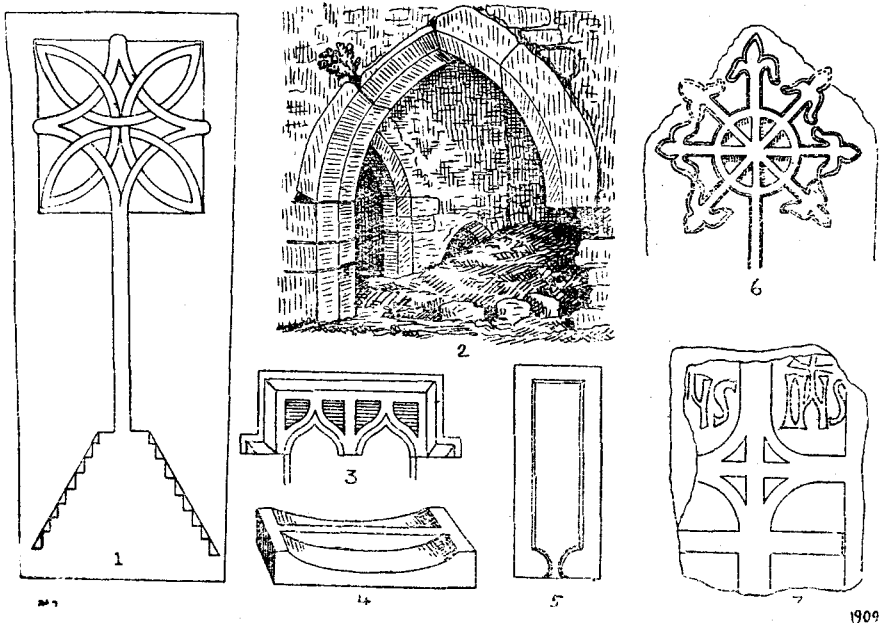


THE CHAPTER HOUSE WING, KILCREA ABBEY.



THE CLOISTER (N.W. ANGLE), KILCREA ABBEY.

being of identical size and pattern. Here we find the spiral stair, leading by 15 steps without a newel to the roof, and a lower floor from which the belfry stair was reached. A third stair ran eastward up the wall, leading by 13 steps, lit from the chancel, to a door to the upper room of the Chapter wing. Beside the spiral stair a small nearly buried arch, neatly chamfered, led probably into the usual small recess at the foot of spiral stairs. The western stairs are closely similar, the same number of steps straight up the wall rising westward, with a slit to the nave. They lead to the upper floor of the kitchen wing or west rooms.



KILCREA ABBEY.

1, 6, & 7 Early Tombstones. 2 Arches at Belfry stairs. 3 Typical ogee-headed window.
4 & 5 Kilcrea Castle, blocks of the water table.

KITCHEN WING. These rooms are much defaced and have several modern additions. Each storey has a large fireplace to the south, with slate flags for hearths; the wall sets back for the upper floor. In this room the Rev. C. Coakley unearthed several of the rudely dressed slabs of red slate, once used for the convent roof; the larger about 10 in. x 8 in., the smaller 7 in x 5 in., with one or more well picked holes for nails. They were too clumsy to fit closely, and must have been laid in thick mortar, as we have seen in some old buildings of the 18th century. Going northward we see in the west wall an inserted window (circa 1603-8), with two oblong lights; over it a projecting drain slab. Next these is an unbonded late addition or scullery, with drains for sinks; a pointed door like those in the cloister, and opposite one of them. This implies a cross passage, with two basement rooms. To complete our notes, we may add that the other features are of little interest, save the remains of another late in-

serted window of two oblong opes. In the outer face of the wall are seen three unaccountable features, apparently the inclined jambs, in two cases with lintels, of very early doors. They are probably late, but their character and use are problematic. One occurs near the north-west corner of this wing, two in the end of the next room. A large broken fireplace adjoins the cloister wall, and there is a recess in the north wall. Overhead was an entrance to the upper north rooms, at one time the only means of access to them.

THE REFECTORY WING, or north wing, is now $76\frac{1}{2}$ feet long by nearly 21 feet wide, but was once (like the kitchen wing) divided by a passage into two rooms. A later skew door at the north-west angle of the cloister led by a wooden staircase to the upper rooms. Clear trace remains of this structure on the face of the wall. Two similar doors to the north and south mark a porch or passage; near the outer one is the projecting jamb already mentioned. The large vault of the Hayes family occupies much of the western room. The eastern was the Refectory; it was about 37 feet long and had four fine pointed windows, with lights 21 inches wide. The splays were smooth plastered. This is only visible in the second, which had been built up. East of these a large ragged gap marks what was certainly a window, in which stood the Reader's desk. The curved back of his seat still remains in the west jamb. In the east wall of the room was a recess, turned over wicker, running through the wall beside it. At the other side was a similar recess through the wall of the Chapter wing, each being closed by the other wall, but the second has been broken through.

The upper storey was lit by eight oblong lights to the north, and six to the cloister. The floor rested on eleven large beams, fitting into oblong holes, and partly resting on the set-back of the wall. The west end had three small irregular slits.

The walls of this convent vary greatly in thickness. The double walls are 7 feet thick, the domicile outer walls $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 feet, the cloister walls 3 ft. 9 in., the Sacristy 2 ft. 7 in., the aisle 2 feet, and the garderobe 1 ft. 11 in. In closing this account I can only express a hope that this interesting ruin, as well as the castle, may be vested for preservation, preferably in the Board of Works, as some expert oversight is absolutely necessary, should any repairs be undertaken; for unskilled restoration, however well intentioned, is much to be deprecated, and may do untold injury, as at Sligo Abbey and elsewhere.

THE BRIDGE.

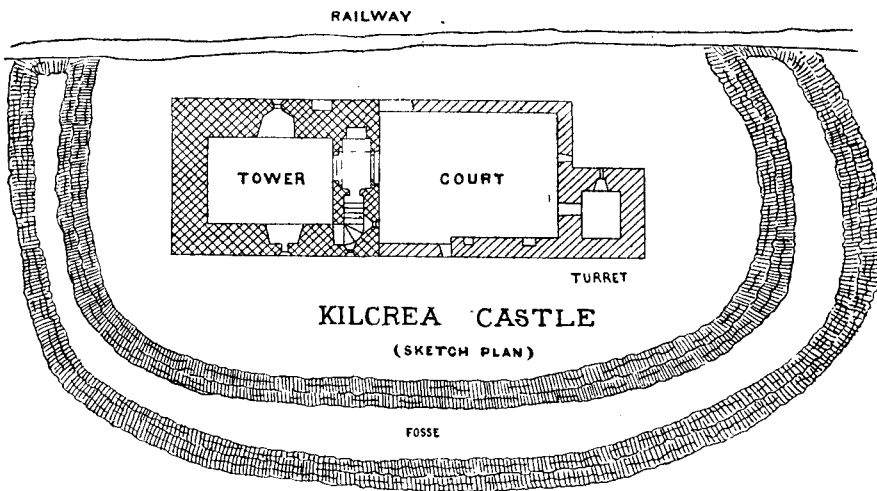
This picturesque old structure might, for any appearance to the contrary, be as old as the neighbouring ruins. The statement that Father O'Leyn was shot by the soldiers of Essex while fording the Bride in 1599³⁴ may, however, imply a later date for the structure. The local belief attributes it to Cromwellian times, and says there is a date cut on it, which Father Coakley and I failed to find. It had eight arches, as shown by Windele, and by Hall. The three northern were removed when the river

³⁴ The author of "The Monks of Kilcrea," by a happy inspiration, makes one of the guests tell how "his horse was lost in fording the Bride," an excellent touch of local colour.

was deepened, and a single arch substituted. The others are intact. The roadway is only nine feet wide, with an angular recess to the east, in which passengers could stand when carts were passing. The bridge shows the width of the river in former days, which must have greatly added to the picturesque nature of the surroundings, as its deep channel now conceals it till we reach the banks.

KILCREA CASTLE.

The Mac Carthys' Castle lies to the west of the Abbey, the railway from Cork to Macroom running about 13 feet from its walls, and partly obliterating its earthwork. The ruin consists of a peel tower, 49 feet long east and west and 36 feet wide. To the east is a small lawn or court,



44 feet by about 29 feet to 31 feet inside. These buildings occupy part of the platform of a low earthwork, rising five or six feet over the field, and about 10 feet over the fosse. There is no inner or outer ring, and the structure measures 176 feet across its enclosure, and 225 feet over the fosse taking it east and west. Judging from the old Ordnance Survey map, by far the larger portion lay to the north of the buildings before the railway was cut through.

The question as usual arises of the age of the entrenchment. Was it made as an accessory to the defences of the tower? Was it an earlier "castle" of mediæval times? Or, was it of prehistoric date? In this case one feels bound to accept the last as true, for a fine bronze celt ($12\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches over the blades, and three-eighths of an inch thick) was found within its precinct³⁵ and presented to the Museum of the Royal

³⁵ Wilde's Catalogue of the Royal Irish Academy collection, p. 364; Borlase's "Dolmens of Ireland," p. 681. It is similar to casts from an ancient mould from Spain. See Evans' "Bronze Age," fig. 515.

Irish Academy by Sir Matthew Barrington, Baronet. Though (as we long since pointed out) the mere finding of a single early object within the ambit of a fort does not prove the early date of the latter, it at least raises a strong probability of its early origin, not to be hastily set aside as some would have us to do.

The tower supports the record of its having been built in the middle of the fifteenth century, slightly earlier than the Abbey, and by the same founder, Cormac mor Mac Carthy. It is entered by a pointed and recessed door, not defended by a bartizan or shot holes, but within the porch is the usual "murder hole," no mean defence when the door was broken in and the enemies were trying to force the weaker inner doors.

The porch is 10 ft. 3 in. deep, the inner room 29 ft. 3 in. long by 19 ft. 7 in. wide. The spiral stair is in excellent preservation in the south-east angle of the tower. There are five storeys, the floors of the third and fifth rest on strong vaults. The lower room has windows with large and deep recesses to the sides and the west end, and several plain ambries or recesses. The floor over it rested on large plain corbels, and had a deep west window, with a passage through the wall southward to a slit at the angle. Thirteen steps lead to this second floor. At the 28th step we reach a cross passage at the third floor; along the east wall, at the 43rd step, is the fourth floor; at the 67th is the top room, whence a straight stair through the southern part of the east wall led by 20 steps to the battlements, which have large water tables, slightly hollowed, the joints covered by flat or neatly ridged slabs. Eight straight steps lead up the south-east turret, past which a long stone spout conveyed the water to the south gutters.

Returning to the lower storeys, we examine the third, reached through the passage in the east wall. Its three windows are defaced. A lintelled door leads to a garderobe, with loops to the north and east. The room has the usual deeply recessed windows; the south is pointed, the north broken, and a pointed door leads to the lobby. The fourth storey is closely similar, being reached by another east lobby (the marks of the wicker centres are very well preserved on its vault). It is reached by six steps up from the spiral stair. There is a little garderobe (or perhaps bartizan) at the northern end. The room had a floor resting on large beams, evidently when these rotted (being built into the wall) a new floor was laid on timbers supported by corbels to the side of the older holes. The entrance is through a pointed door from the lobby, in a deep recess, round which the "garderobe" bends. Each of these rooms has oblong end windows in deep bays. The fourth was partly lit by the lobby window, with two fairly large late oblong lights. The shaft is removed; it was placed opposite to the door.

The top or state room was, as usual, a fine apartment, lit on each side by large double windows, with ogee heads of excellent workmanship. The end ones have deep recesses under high pointed arches; the eastern frames a beautiful distant view of the Abbey. The door from the stair is pointed. A late fireplace has been inserted to the north side of the room, and there is a window in the north-east corner.

Descending again to the courtyard, we find little needing detailed description; the ivy³⁶ and dilapidation leave few features visible. The

³⁶ The ivy has been cut on the Abbey, which has been greatly disclosed by the process compared to its condition on my first two visits thither in 1890.

entrance has vanished; it may have been near the tower in the gap in the north wall. A turret stands at the south-east angle. Strange to say, it does not flank (as it could easily have been built to do) the long reach of the south wall, which extends for 111 feet. The tower has a vaulted under storey 11 ft. 7 in. north and south by 9 ft 2 in. wide. It has loops to the north and south, a second storey and a side turret on corbelling, a door leading from it to the south battlements, but the upper part is concealed by thick ivy.

We must here close these notes, apologising less for their inevitable dryness and unattractiveness to the majority of readers than for their imperfections. We have, however, a duty to perform in laying up records for future generations of Irish antiquaries. Had writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century realised this duty, our position must have been very different, and the dawn of descriptive Irish archæology might by this time have broadened into day.

[I have to thank, besides Mr. James Coleman, the Rev. C. Coakley, of Farran, for his unwearying assistance when I planned the Abbey, as well as his kind hospitality on each of my latter visits.]

Admiral Penn, William Penn, and their Descendants in the Co. Cork.

(Continued from p. 114.)

“5th (August 5th, 1645). About two in the morning arrived here a bark with provisions from Cork; being all that possibly could for the present be gleaned by my lord. The master of the bark, notwithstanding the particular engagements of wife and children in the town, yet seeing how the enemy had blocked up the harbour, refused to go in. I told him what a shame it was for him to neglect his family in so great necessity, and how much his timorousness would discourage others; yet all this would not work upon him. At last I told him (by God’s blessing) his bark, being a fitting vessel for that purpose, should go in; and if he would not adventure willingly, he should be seized to the mast, and carried in whether he would or no. At last, having considered on it, he consented to go in. I put on board of him six barrels of powder from our ship, four from Captain Phillips, and four from Captain Bray, with such oil as I had, at the request of the Governor, formerly gotten for medicaments for the wounded soldiers, which I attempted before to send in in our yawl. And for the better enabling this bark in her passage, we manned her, moreover, with four men out of each ship.⁶ I gave our men half crown apiece to encourage them; fitted them with arms, fireworks, &c.;

⁶ From this entry it is evident that the men-of-war were not actually in the harbour of Youghal, but anchored in the bay, probably opposite to where the lighthouse now stands, it being the summer season whilst they were there.