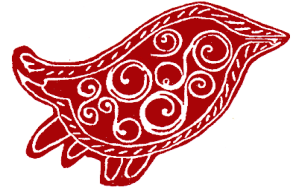


Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society



www.corkhist.ie

Title: The monastery of St. Francis at Cork

Author: Holland, Michael

Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, 1917, Vol. 23, No. 115,
page(s) 121-125

Published by the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society

Digital file created: October 20, 2014

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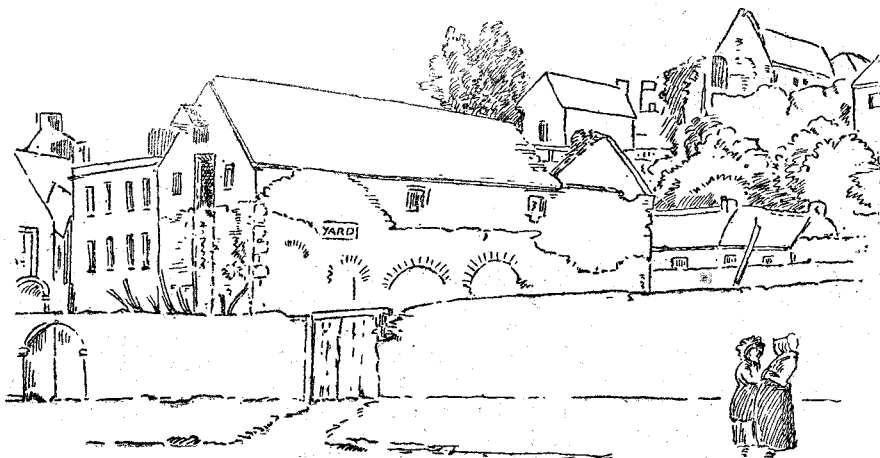
(Twenty-sixth Year of Issue.)

The Monastery of St. Francis at Cork.

By M. HOLLAND.



AN unpublished pencil sketch by Thomas Crofton Croker occurs in his annotated copy of Smith's *History of Cork*, 1st Edition, now in the possession of Mr. Daly Murray (Council Member). The drawing bears the name in Croker's handwriting, "Remains of the North Abbey, sketched May, 1831, completely pulled down May, 1836." Referring to Smith's statement that "This building (the North Abbey) stood on the north side of the City, and is now entirely demolished." Croker states: "Archdall, in his *Monas. Hib.*, repeats this assertion, which the opposite sketch will disprove." The view shown is taken from the riverside at the eastern end of the present North Abbey Square. It shows a building on the western side of the Square, a warehouse in ruins, which incorporates part of the walls of an older and ecclesiastical type of building. The sketch confirms the statement in Bishop Dive Downes' Visitation of his Diocese, 1699-1702: "The chappel that was lately built having been burnt with the Abbey was repaired by Mr. Morrison, a merchant, and is now used by him as a warehouse." This, the last remains of the ancient buildings on the Abbey Grounds, was pulled down by Mr. Herbert in 1836 to "make way for the houses erected by him at the west side of his Square."

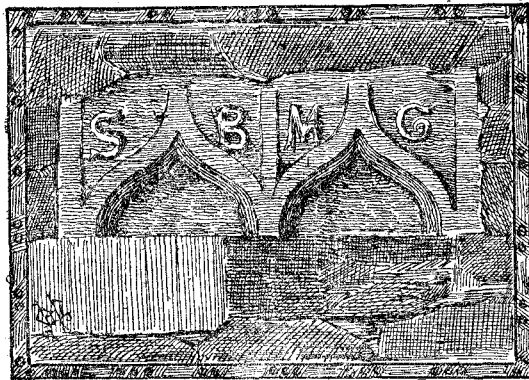


(From Pencil Sketch by T. Crofton Croker.)

As the records of the Abbey are scant and uncertain, this sketch must be regarded as important. The original Abbey and grounds extended from the western side of Wise's Hill to near North Gate Bridge on the east. An interesting document is preserved which locates, in precise terms, the site of the convent and extent of the grounds. This deed was twice transcribed, first in 1371, when the great seal of the Kingdom was appended to it, and again in 1520, at the instance of William O Maghram, the first Observantine Provincial. It reads as follows :—

“Let those present and to come know that I, Philip Prendergast, have given and granted, and by the present deed have confirmed to the Friars Minors of Shandon, in honour of the Blessed Mary and St. Francis, that tract of ground which extends in length from the grounds of the burgesses of the said township on the east as far as Tobar Brenoke on the west, and in breadth from the rock on the north to the water of the Lee on the south, together with the fishery of that river situated near the said place.” The date of the original document must be about 1240, and is probably a confirmation by Prendergast of a grant already made by McCarthy More (Dermot), who is regarded as the founder in 1220. A monument to McCarthy was erected in the midst of the choir, and it is claimed that if a copy of its inscription could be obtained all controversy with regard to the founder would be settled.

The Tobar Brenoke mentioned is well known in later times as Tubbar-na-Brinnah and Tubbar vrian oge (probably the “well of learning or eloquence”), and was situated near the foot of Wise's Hill; the site is marked by a carved stone built into the wall on the western side of the hill.



This stone was discovered near the spot, and was placed there by Mr. Wise at the closing of the well in 1810.

Caulfield, in his notes to Smith's *History of Cork*, says that the situation of “North Abbey Square has been erroneously supposed to be that of St. Francis Abbey, which stood on the ground now occupied by Wise's distillery.” As part of the distillery premises extends to the east of the well, he may be justified in this statement, yet it is definitely stated in the document quoted that the well marked the western boundary of the original holding. Croker's sketch and note indicate that the exact site of the Abbey has not been clearly identified in recent times. There is evidence, however,

that the property of the Friars extended beyond the limits of the original extent, and included the "Friars' Mill" on Rielly's Marsh to the west of Tobar na Brenoke, where the distillery now stands. The grant made in 1566, the 8th of Elizabeth, unto Andrew Skiddie, mentions this mill, and defines the house as containing "one hawle, one kitchen, one cloyster, six chambers, six cellars, also one churchyard, one little orchard, and three gardens," etc. A plan of the Abbey is given in the earliest known map of Cork, 1545, in the Tower of London, a rectangle with a smaller one at the eastern side. The description by Wadding that "the buildings consisted of a stately convent and church" (Fig. 1) is suggested by a map in Trinity College, circa 1585, which shows a roofless church, orientated, with tower and buildings at either side, the larger rectangle of the early plan being evidently the convent, and the smaller that of the church, as the eastern window is suggested. A sketch in a later map, 1600 (Fig. 2), in the *Pacata Hibernia*, differs

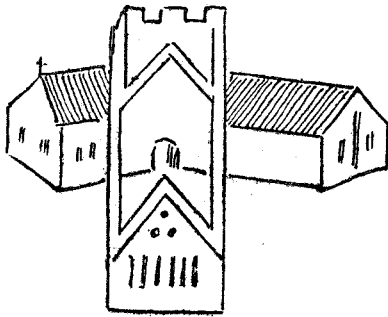


FIG. 1.

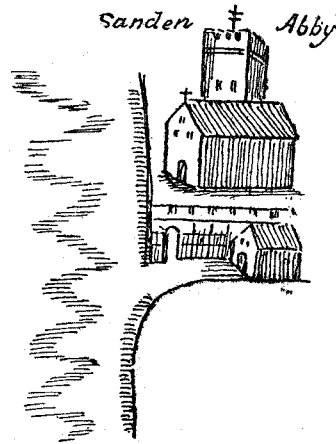


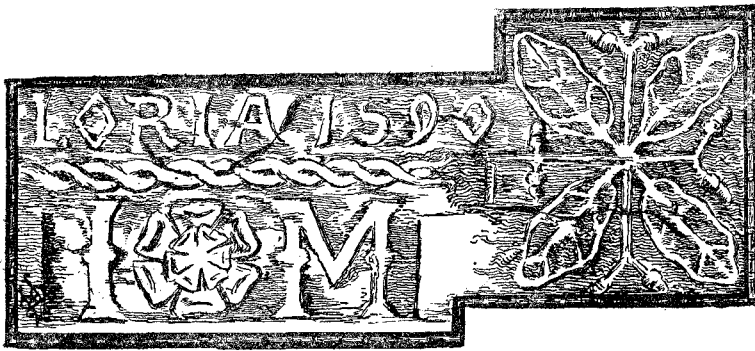
FIG. 2.

in many respects; it shows the convent on the eastern end running north and south, with the tower towards the south. The dolehouse and entrance gate are shown on the eastern side in the direction of North Gate Bridge. On removing ruins in 1804 to make room for the present brick houses on the North Mall, many stone coffins were dug up, which contained the remains of nobles, Church dignitaries, etc. Whether these remains were buried within the church or in the churchyard adjoining cannot be ascertained. A writer in 1852 makes some curious reference to these discoveries :

"On excavating foundations of present buildings several stone coffins were discovered, the edges of some of which were bevelled and inscriptions in low relief ran round the bevel edge. Not long since one of these formed the step of the door to one of those houses leading to the back yard, but whether it has been removed or not we are unable to say. In connection with these coffins a mode of sepulchre was found to have been practised, and as we do not remember to have heard of anything similar to it has been discovered in Ireland, we may mention it here. It was this: The red stone rock which rises perpendicularly at the back of the buildings had on ledges

at various heights coffins cut out of the solid stone, and the lid fitting so closely that to the casual observer it would appear to be part of the original rock. It is evident that the body must have been carried to its coffin and placed in it. We believe that some of these curious receptacles for the dead still remain. At the time the discovery of them took place it was generally supposed that the coffin was the work of the recluse during life whose body was placed in it after death, and we believe that there was some tradition to this effect, but we have been unable to trace it."

Many fragments of sculptured stone have been discovered in the vicinity, but they do not appear to have belonged to the Abbey. That on Wise's Hill, though suggestive of a window, is evidently part of a monumental structure of a period subsequent to the dissolution of the Abbey. When the building passed into secular hands it was used as a residence. A custom then prevailed of having the chimney pieces carved with ornamental devices of a symbolical character, also the initials of the master of the house and those of his wife, the date of occupation, and generally a scriptural motto. An excellent example of this is at present in the School of Art—a chimney piece dated 1585, with the initials J.F.J. and K.G., probably James FitzJames and Kate Goold, as it stood originally in the manse house granted by Philip Goold in Elizabeth's time. A stone of this kind was found near the Abbey, and is now preserved at the Christian Brothers' residence, Our Lady's Mount; being imperfect, only two initials are shown,



I.M., probably "Jonas Morris," and date 1590. A note in the Council Book of the Corporation in 1618 refers to claims made for customs "on certain merchants dwelling at St. Francis Abbey." In 1636 the Abbey with adjoining land, which appears to have been considerable, is mentioned in the settlement of Richard, Earl of Cork. "Between the Abbey and North Gate Bridge stood St. Catherine's Church, near where North Abbey Square now stands," writes Dr. Caulfield in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1864 (the Ordnance Survey map for 1840 clearly indicates this site as occupying the west side of the square). Mention is made also of the church in the Corporation Council Book in connection with building rights. We are told that this church was demolished in 1617. In the reign of James II. a new chapel was built by the Friars on part of the Abbey, but not where the former chapel stood. Whether this "former chapel," mentioned by Downes, was St. Catherine's, or the

original church of the Abbey, cannot be determined. Its site is described as "near the bridge next to the house; in the recess stood a small rude chapel, in which James II. heard Mass. Behind it were several vaulted arches, in one of which was an excellent spring." This site is to the west of the present "Man's Lane," several yards away from North Abbey Square. As we are told "some Friars lived there," we may assume that a residence was attached. In the time of the siege (1690), according to Downes, "the Abbey with the rest of the suburbs was burnt. A good strong steeple remains standing," and as already quoted, "the chapel that was lately built, having been burnt with the Abbey, was repaired by Mr. Morrison, a merchant, and is now used by him as a warehouse." Much confusion arises from the fact that the name Tubber Vrian oge mentioned in connection with the Abbey is applied to the spring still flowing at the foot of the rock and arched over, and to the well now closed on Wise's Hill. Also that St. Catherine's Church is described as the Abbey. The site of this church, as indicated in the Ordnance Survey map of 1840 and the Corporation records, agrees with the sketch made by Crofton Croker in 1831.

From the foundation of the Abbey in 1220 to the destruction by fire in 1691 the Friars appear to have occupied some portion of their original property, except during the interval between 1566 and 1608, when the Abbey was repaired by Fr. William Ferris. These buildings were destroyed in 1644, and another interval occurred during which the friars lived in the City. In 1685 a thatched chapel was erected. It is suggested that "Man's Lane" takes its name from the passage to the men's entrance to this chapel, as the custom prevailed (and still obtains in country districts) of having a division in the congregation. Whether the remains shown in the sketch by Crofton Croker are those of this rude chapel, which Downes mentions, or of St. Catherine's Church, which seems to have existed at the time, cannot be clearly determined.

History of Port of Cork Steam Navigation. 1815 to 1915.

(Continued from page 93.)

By WILLIAM J. BARRY, *Council Member.*



HE "Sirius" made a second voyage to New York under the command of Capt. Stephen Sayer Mowle, and on her departure from the latter port she was again accorded an enthusiastic send off, crowds cheering from the Battery and every available spot on shore, six steamers following her to sea cheering heartily; and on her return in July, 1838, she resumed her station in the cross-Channel trade between Cork and various English ports,¹³ until unfortunately she was

¹³ On one of her usual voyages to Liverpool the "Sirius" colided off Haulbowline with the Brigantine "Luvius," which was coming up the river. The "Luvius" belonged to Messrs. Harvey & Newsom. Latter vessel was sunk and remained 14 months on the mud, subsequently salvaged, repaired and sold, but was lost on the next voyage.