

Tour of The South 1824

Researches in the south of Ireland, illustrative of the scenery, architectural remains, and the manners and superstitions of the peasantry. With an appendix, containing a private narrative of the rebellion of 1798

Thomas Crofton Croker

1824

THE fashionable attractions of Paris, the beauty of the Swiss lakes, and the classic richness of Italy, are inducements of so strong a nature for an excursion of amusement, that patriotism alone can venture to recommend the Sister Isle to the tourist's notice.

It must be acknowledged, when compared with other countries, that Ireland does not afford the same means of gratification ; yet the singular character of the people, the romantic tales of their former greatness, contrasted with their present abject state, and the spirit of chivalry, which still survives amongst them, seldom fail, when aided by novelty of situation and incident, to create enthusiasm in a stranger ; but the known difficulties of travelling, and want of accommodation, are of themselves sufficient to prevent its selection for the performance of a mere tour of pleasure.

The South of Ireland, to which the remarks in this volume are confined, contains many scenes that may with justice be termed picturesque and beautiful as well as stupendous and sublime. Although the immense tracts of barren or imperfectly cultivated country, which spread in wearying extent and impress the mind with melancholy ideas of neglect and dreary grandeur, are unfavourable to the pursuits of an artist, such tracts, by dividing the beauties, probably enhance the value of the scenery where it becomes closer and more rich. The character of the coast is bold and steep, containing numerous bays and harbours formed by arms of land breasted by rocky cliffs, that proudly rebuff the angry waves which

“ Boil and gnash their white teeth on the shore.”

In a Tour through part of the counties of Cork, Waterford, and Limerick, in 1821, Miss Nicholson and Mr. Alfred Nicholson were my companions

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Charleville, Doneraile, and Buttevant.

“ Old father Mole, (Mole hight that mountain gray
That walls the north side of Armulla dale,)
He had a daughter fresh as flower of May
Which gave that name unto that pleasant vale ;
Mulla, the daughter of old Mole so hight,
The nymph which of that water-course has charge,
That, springing out of Mole, doth run downright
To Buttevant, where spreading forth at large,
It giveth name unto that ancient city
Which Kilnemullah cleeped is of old,
Whose cragged mines breed greath ruth and pity
To travellers, which it from far hehold !”

Spencer.

CHARLEVILLE is a poor town on the borders of the county Limerick, and contains many wretched cabins. It was incorporated, through the interest of the first Earl of Orrery, Lord President of Munster, in the reign of Charles II., who gave it, in compliment to that monarch, the name of Charleville, being called before, to use his lordship's own expression, "by the heathenish one of Rathgogan."

Lord Orrery held his presidential court here ; and possibly in imitation of the example of his predecessor Sir William St. Leger, at Doneraile, built the parish church, enclosed an extensive park, and erected a noble mansion, described by Story as "one of the second rate houses of these kingdoms," which suffered a fate similar to that built by Sir William, being burned in 1690 by a party of James II.'s troops, under the command of the Duke of Berwick, who, having dined there, ordered it, in the most wanton manner, to be set on fire, and remained to see it reduced to ashes. John Exham, the prophetic quaker, hereafter mentioned as the religious associate of William Penn, is reported to have predicted this destruction. A large company, on some particular occasion, was assembled at Lord Orrery's, when Exham, with a great crowd of his enthusiastic followers, stood before the door of that nobleman's house, and exhorted the guests to repentance, denouncing the judgment of the Lord upon them, should they not comply, and predicting ruin on the scene of their festivity, which should become an habitation for the fowls of the air.

The Earl's servants, supposing Exham mad, attempted to drive him from the place, but Lord Orrery interfered, commanding them to let the honest man speak. Exham, having concluded his harangue, went away, but in a short time returned, and calling the Earl aside, said to him, "Because thou hast been kind and loving to the servant of the Lord, the evil shall not be in thy days ;" the event verified his words, and not a little contributed to raise the character of Exham as a prophet.

A resident of Charleville, who appeared well versed in local history, related, with exceeding minuteness, an account of the conflagration as traditionally preserved ; and respecting the education of the poor, gave us the gratifying information, that notwithstanding the neglected and inconsiderable appearance of the town, no less than 300 boys and 400 girls were at present pupils in the poor school.

Within a short distance of Charleville are the ruins of an old church, called Ballyslough, which we visited ; and having loitered about the cemetery, we were departing, when a decently dressed man came up, and seeing our sketch books, observed, there was little worth our notice in the churchyard, except that "one M'Donald the poet was interred there ;" after some search we found his grave, cleared away the concealing nettles, and I transcribed the almost defaced inscription on a small stone that marked the narrow bed of this unknown bard.

I. H. S.

*Johanes M'Donald cogno
minatus Claraz vir vere
Catholicus et quibus linguis
ornatus nempe Græca Latino,
et Hybernica non Vulgaris
Ingenii poeta tumulatur
ad hunc Cippum obiit Ætatis
Anno 63 Salutis 1754
Requiescat in pace.*

In addition to the particulars mentioned in his epitaph, all I could learn respecting M'Donald was, that he made a translation of Homer into Irish ; and probably, from the appellative Clarah, or Minstrel, being in the Irish character, his poetical compositions were in that language.

When at Mallow, I obtained an Irish MS. written by "Shane Clarah," or "John the minstrel." It is a small thick quarto of about 400 pages, and the contents are chiefly topographical ; from this MS. I have made some quotations in the present work.

Crossing the Ballyhoura mountains towards Doneraile, the huts of the peasantry had so cheerless and deplorable an aspect as to awaken a thousand painful ideas. In the smoke and dirt of an Irish cabin, there is a great and positive want of comfort ; yet, on observing the neglected means by which the labouring classes might improve their condition, it would almost lead to the belief that they are happier in their own way than they could be made by any innovation. Much censure has been thrown upon absentee land-holders, whom I will not vindicate ; but there seems to be an inherent spirit of indolence and obstinacy in the lower order of Irish, which even the presence of their lord would with difficulty overcome, that thus enables them to live without any apparent notion of comfort or even common decency. They seem indeed to feel some degree of pride in being destitute of wants, and evidently prefer the exclusion of light from their dwellings. When a window of a foot square has been made by their landlord, they usually close it up with turf, boards, or rags, leaving perhaps a strip of an inch broad ; in many instances it is closed entirely, and the only light admitted is by the door, to which the women bring their needle work or spinning, on rare occasions of industry when they can forsake the *fascinating* smoke of their turf fires. They are consequently exposed to the weather, and have to rise whenever any inmate requires to pass, or when the pig (who considers himself lord of the mansion) chooses to alter his position ; but "it just does well enough *sure*—it answered our fathers before us *why*." They will even defend the filthy practice of having these animals constantly in their dwellings. I recollect once trying to convince a man that he might with very little trouble improve the state of his cabin, by build-ing a shed for his pig and banishing him the chimney corner ; but he coolly answered, "Sure then and who has a better right to be in it ? Isn't he the man of the house ? and isn't it he that will pay the rent ?"

Most cabins have a small patch of ground attached, where potatoes and winter cabbages are the only vegetables cultivated. An Irish labourer has no idea of planting a bush, or fruit tree, or of raising a flower ; and his ignorance renders him too stubborn to make trial of improved agricultural implements. The beneficial effects of Baronial Farming Societies, formed under the Cork Institution, are, however, obvious in many districts of the southern counties.

Doneraile is twelve miles distant from Charleville, and was described as a neat village ; the residence of Viscount Doneraile, whose mansion, surrounded by a park of considerable extent, is close to the village, and said to be worth seeing ; we were unable to judge of this fact, the porter at the park gate pleading his lordship's positive orders to admit no strangers. This was the only occasion on which we met with difficulty in seeing any gentleman's grounds, though not personally acquainted with the owner. After exploring the unpicturesque and miserable town we returned to our dirty inn. It being the 19th of July, his Majesty's coronation was celebrated by illuminations, which, considering the poverty of the place, were very respectable. Every window, even those of the meanest cabins, added their mite towards the general display of rush lights ; but a smart shower of rain about ten o'clock dispersed the crowd of admiring peasantry, some of whom had walked many miles to witness this little jubilee. This display of loyalty accorded well with the history of the St. Legers, maternal ancestors to the present noble proprietor of Doneraile, a family distinguished in Irish history for their active and persevering support of the English interest, and faithful discharge of the

trust reposed in them by that government, which was justly rewarded by titles and considerable estates. Sir Anthony St. Leger, one of the commissioners sent over for arranging the affairs of Ireland by Henry VIII. in 1537, was the founder of the family in Ireland ; and so satisfied was Henry with his conduct as commissioner, that three years after he was appointed to the important office of Lord Deputy. Under his administration, and chiefly through his exertions, an act was passed that may be said to have laid the foundation of the Union between the Sister Islands.

Since the conquest of Ireland by Henry II., the English monarchs had been only styled *Lords* of Ireland, but in 1541, a statute was country. enacted declaring Henry VIII. and his successors *Kings* of that country.

The change of title immediately appeared on Henry's Irish coinage, remarkable from being impressed with the earliest known representation of the harp, as symbolic of Ireland ; since which time that instrument has been preserved as the national arms, an emblem at once complimentary and judiciously selected, that, to use the words of a celebrated antiquary, " neither reminds us of our present dependence, nor upbraids us with our former rebellions."

Amongst the important services rendered by Sir Anthony St. Leger to the English cause, may be enumerated the inducing Con O'Neil (who still retained the dignity of a prince) to repair to England, and formally receive his possessions from the King at Greenwich, who conferred on him the title of Earl of Tyrone : his example was soon followed by other Irish chieftains. Through the exertions of Sir Anthony, the lords of most of the Irish clans, and such of the English settlers as had become naturalized, made a formal submission to the English government ; and kneeling at the Lord Deputy's feet without their girdles, skeins, and caps, acknowledged Henry as their " only true and liege lord," being the fourth general declaration of the Irish to the same effect.

At the instance of Sir Anthony, many statutes were likewise enacted, and officers appointed to carry them into effect, a measure intended to subvert the Brehon, or Druidical laws, and compel the Irish to relinquish their primitive customs, and assimilate to English manners. The attachment, however, of all nations to usages sanctioned by antiquity, and laws that have descended from their forefathers, is too deeply rooted to be destroyed at pleasure ; and, when a stigma is thrown upon peculiarities, they are often preserved with an inflexible obstinacy, proportioned to the rigor of the measures used for their suppression. Lenient and conciliating proceedings alone are capable of overcoming national prejudices, that resist any sudden, or apparent innovation, with a proud and sullen perversity.

In 1544, Sir Anthony St. Leger raised a troop of 700 Irish, by order of Henry VIII., to assist at the siege of Boulogne ; these men, we are told, mustered under the command of Lord Poer in St. James's Park, from whence they proceeded to Boulogne, where, according to Hollinshed, they performed good service.

A political dispute having arisen between Lord Ormond and Sir Anthony St. Leger, they, according to the practice of the times, mutually accused each other of high treason, and were consequently both summoned to England, where, on an investigation before the council, their charges proved to be of so trivial a nature, that a reconciliation followed, and Sir Anthony returned to Dublin as Lord Deputy. Soon after, he was again impeached by the Archbishop of Dublin, but being acquitted once more arrived in Ireland on the 11th November, 1553, as Lord Deputy to Queen Mary, having held that office under two preceding reigns ; but, to use Campion's phraseology, " sundry noblemen pelted and lifted at Sir Anthony, till they

shouldered him out of all credit ;” and being recalled from Ireland he closed his days in domestic retirement. His son, Sir Warham St. Leger, who served as sheriff of the county of Kent, and had been knighted for his conduct in that office, ten years after the recal of his father, received the appointment of Chief Governor of Munster, under the Lord Deputy Sidney, who strongly commended the zeal and watchfulness displayed by Sir Warham, in the suppression of a continental intrigue that stimulated the Irish chieftains to rebellion.

In 1580, Sir Warham was invested by commission with the power of executing martial law, which, jointly with Sir Walter Raleigh, he first carried into effect at Cork, on Sir James of Desmond, whom they condemned to be hanged and quartered as a rebel. After many services against the disaffected Irish, Sir Warham, in February, 1599, riding with a few attendants about a mile out of Cork, was attacked by Hugh Mac Guire, the leader of a small body of rebels, whom he shot, but Mac Guire wounded Sir Warham so severely in the head, that he died soon after ; and his son, Sir William, as a return for the services both of his father and grandfather, was created Lord President of Munster by Charles I. in 1627, who at the same time bestowed on him considerable possessions, in addition to the six thousand acres of the Earl of Desmond’s forfeited lands granted to his father.

During the contentions of 1641, Sir William sustained the double character of statesman and soldier with considerable credit to himself, and his personal actions afforded fine examples to the men under his command. One anecdote related of him deserves mention : when his little army was lying at Kildorary, in expectation of an attack from the Irish forces under Lord Montgarret, having suffered much fatigue and privation, and being without tents or shelter of any kind to protect them from the inclemency of the weather, a young officer, observing Sir William stretched on the bare ground under a heavy fall of snow, presented his cloak to him, and requested that he would use it. The Lord President thanked him, but nobly declined his offer, adding that he stood more in need of it himself, being less accustomed to the hardships of a soldier’s life.

Devoted to the unfortunate Charles, in whose cause his eldest son fell at the battle of Newbury, Sir William thus expresses himself in a letter to Lord Ormond, a short time before his death. “ It grieves me beyond any earthly sorrow for the great distance and difference betwixt his majesty and the parliament ; and if all the measures of the times, joined with my long and violent sickness, were not of force to subject me to the grave, yet the sorrow for these unhappy variances would crack a much stronger heart than your servant hath now left in him.”

There is much to admire in the character of Sir William St. Leger : surrounded by contentions and temptations, his principles remained unshaken ; and his bravery in the field was only surpassed by his pacific disposition and impartial administration of justice. Ambition by him was sacrificed to gratitude, and incapable of supporting the royal cause by his unaided efforts, he became a martyr to it.

Doneraile was the principal residence of this illustrious man, who held his presidential court here, and built the parish church, together with a mansion which was burned by the Irish in 1645. As the town possessed little to detain us, we set out from thence, immediately after breakfast, on an excursion to Kilcolman, the residence of the poet Spencer. We were told it was the first ruined castle to be seen from the mail coach road to Charleville, and following this direction, bent our steps towards an old tower called Carrig Phooky (or the Spirit’s Rock), which appeared in view immediately after leaving Doneraile ; but, discovering our mistake, regained the Charleville road, and, after about an hour’s walk, arrived at the object of our search.

Kilcolman Castle is distant three English miles from Doneraile, and is seated in as unpicturesque a spot as at present could have been selected. Many of the delightful and visionary anticipations I had indulged, from the pleasure of visiting the place where the Fairy Queen had been composed, were at an end on beholding the monotonous reality of the country. Corn fields, divided from pasturage by numerous intersecting hedges, constituted almost the only variety of feature for a considerable extent around ; and the mountains bounding the prospect, partook even in a greater degree of the same want of variety in their forms. The ruin itself stands on a little rocky eminence. Spreading before it lies a tract of flat and swampy ground, through which, we were informed, the “ River Bregog hight” had its course, and though in winter, when swoln by mountain torrents, a deep and rapid stream, its channel at present was completely dried up.

“ Sometimes, misguided by the tuneful throng,
I look for streams immortalized in song,
That lost in silence and oblivion lie ;
Dumb are their fountains and their channels dry.”

Judging from what remains, the original form of Kilcolman was an oblong square, flanked by a tower at the south-east corner. The apartment in the basement story has still its stone arched roof entire, and is used as a shelter for cattle ; the narrow screw-like stairs of the tower are nearly perfect, and lead to an extremely small chamber, which we found in a state of complete desolation. On ascending the highest point, I observed the word MULLA deeply scratched over an arched recess by some sentimental visitor who has thus partially realised the concluding wish of that topographer to whom so many writers are indebted for their account of Kilcolman : “ Pity it is,” says Smith, “ that some friendly stone, which might be placed at a small expense in the ruin of the castle, does not point out its (once) immortal inhabitant.” The correct Dr. Smith seems to have been inspired with a poetic spirit, and deviated from his usual antiquarian accuracy in describing the abode of Spencer, so far as to tell us that Kilcolman Castle “ is now almost level with the ground, and was situated on the north side of a fine lake in the midst of a large plain, commanding a view of above half the breadth of Ireland.”

Since the foregoing account was written, this ruin has braved the storm of more than seventy winters ; and ... its walls have still some stateliness. The “ fine lake” mentioned, I presume must have been an inundation of the River Bregogue ; and the “ view of above half the breadth of Ireland,” a prospect certainly not exceeding fifteen miles !

I consider Dr. Smith’s County Histories as the best authorities, and yet in this instance it is difficult to reconcile what I saw with his account of Kilcolman, particularly as that author writes as if he had carefully examined its lake ; he tells us, that “ the country people use the water to cure warts,” in common with “ another lake in the neighbourhood, called Lough Au Ulla, which, they say, has better success ; but there seems to be a good deal of super-stition in those sort of cures, as I could discover nothing in the water whereby they might be effected.”

Kilcolman was granted by Queen Elizabeth, on the 27th June, 1586, to Spencer (who went into Ireland as secretary to Lord Grey), with 3,028 acres of land, at the rent of 17*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.* ; on the same conditions with the other undertakers (as they were termed) between whom the forfeited Desmond estate was divided. These conditions implied a residence on the ground, and their chief object seems to have been the peopling Munster with English families ; a favourite project of Elizabeth’s, for strengthening the English influence in Ireland, by creating the tie of consanguinity between the two countries.

It is supposed that this castle was the principal residence of Spencer for about ten years, during which time he composed the works that have chiefly contributed to his fame. But the turbulent and indignant spirit of the Irish regarded not the haunts of the muse as sacred, and wrapped the poet's dwelling in flames. An infant child of Spencer's, together with his most valuable property, were consumed, and he returned into England ; where, dejected and broken-hearted, he died soon after, at an inn in King Street, Westminster.

The visits of Sir Walter Raleigh to Spencer at Kilcolman increase the interest attached to the place, and are not in the slightest degree questionable. To the advice of Raleigh the publication of the first books of the Fairy Queen has been ascribed ; and the existence of a poetical intercourse between such minds, and in such distracting scenes, is a delightful recollection that almost warms the heart into romance.

Amongst the literary pilgrims whose veneration for Spencer has prompted them to examine Kilcolman was the celebrated Edmund Burke ; nor should the imprudent and enthusiastic Trotter be forgotten ; the account given by him of his visits, in 1817, are very pleasing, though highly tinged with that fanaticism to which he ultimately became a victim.

Dr. Smith informs us, (1750) that there was “ an original painting, well-executed, of the poet Spencer” at Castle Saffron, one mile east of Doneraile, where Mr. Trotter, in 1817, commenced his inquiries respecting this interesting relic, and received the same answer as was given me two years before—that it had been removed. Soon after, Mrs. Stawell of Kilbrack hinted to Mr. Trotter the possibility of the picture having been carried to Limerick ; and immediately on his arrival there, he continued the search after it amongst a collection of paintings belonging to Alderman Vincent, “ but we sought,” says that gentleman, “ the bard of Kilcolman in vain.”

In the *Anthologia Hibernia*, (Vol. I. for 1793,) a correspondent (whom, from the signature, I take to have been one of the Ouseley family of Limerick,) writes thus : “ I have heard that, within a few years, a lineal descendant and namesake of the poet Spencer was resident at Mallow ; that he was in possession of an original portrait of the poet, which he valued so highly as to refuse five hundred pounds which had been offered for it, with many curious papers and records concerning his venerable ancestor.”

To this account I can add, from my own recollection, that a Mrs. Sherlock lived in Cork not more than six or seven years since, who used frequently to boast of her descent from Spencer ; and I have been told possessed his picture, which she had more than once refused to dispose of, though by no means in affluent circumstances.

Buttevant is four miles from Doneraile, and situated on the Awbeg river ; its name is derived from the exclamation of David de Barry in a contest with the Mac Carthies, when he urged his men on to victory with “ *Boutez en avant*,”—Push forward ;—since used as the family motto by the Lords Barrymore, who derive the title of Viscount from Buttevant.

About a mile from Buttevant the road to Mallow runs through a rocky glen called Ballybeg, the beauty of which would be considerably increased by some trees : at its opening are the ruins of Ballybeg Abbey, founded and endowed by the Barries ; and close by this building appears the stump of an ancient round tower.

Adjoining Ballybeg Abbey is a large field, called the Pigeon Field ; in digging which some years since, a vault was discovered “ lined with images.” The person from whom I received

the information added, that these images “ being *handy* to the road,” were broken up and thrown thereon to repair it. In 1815, the landlady at Buttevant, gave me an account of a curious discovery made at Ballybeg Abbey, about five-and-twenty years back, by a blacksmith named Supple, who was induced, from a dream, to dig amongst the ruins in search of money, a superstition so prevalent with the lower orders of Irish, as to cause them, like the Arabs, to excavate near almost every ancient building, in expectation of finding concealed treasure. Supple, after some laborious days spent in disturbing the bones of the old Fathers, came to a stone coffin, containing a skeleton adorned with a cross and chains of gold, and a thin plate of the same precious metal stamped with a representation of the crucifixion. These relics were carried by the finder to Cork, and disposed of to a goldsmith, by whom they were consigned to the crucible ; and the stone coffin converted to a pig-trough at the cabin of a farmer near the abbey. The accuracy of this narrative has been corroborated by a son of Supple’s, whom I met accidentally, and entered into conversation with on the spot.

Buttevant, called by Borlase “ an old nest of abbots, priests, and friars,” though formerly a town of importance and opulence, is now a poor place. It was walled, and governed by a corporation, and traces of its consequence may still be seen in the solid old walls and ruins scattered amongst the mean houses of which it is at present composed. The abbey is rapidly sinking into decay ; but the fall, about three years since, of a high square tower that stood on a light and graceful arch in the centre of the building has lessened its dignity, and covered, with a mass of confused rubbish, great part of the interior

————— “ once the seat
Of monkish ease and dark religious pomp :
There many an antique monument is found
Illegible and faithless to its charge ;
That, deep insculped, once held, in measured phrase,
The mighty deeds of those who sleep below :
Of hero, sage, or saint, whose pious hands
Those ponderous masses raised—forgotten now—
They and their monuments alike repose.”

The vault of the founder, David de Barry, is mentioned as being in the middle of the chancel, and is now only marked by some dissevered pieces of hewn stone that indicate a square enclosure. Being recently opened to inter a descendant, a man who went down with the coffin described the interior to me as lined with the figures of different saints, the name engraven under each, and having at the upper end a tablet, on which was a long inscription. On the south side of the nave is a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, of beautiful proportions, containing many tombs and inscriptions to the memory of the Barries, O’Dulins, Fitzgeralds, and Butlers. Attached to the stone cornice, a lion or wolf courant, sculptured on an armorial shield, is pointed out to visitors—with a traditional story too long and too absurd for relation. —In the nave, choir, and chancel, there are also tombs to those families, and to the Lombards and Mahers. Smith mentions the tombs of several other distinguished names, since destroyed or concealed by the ruins of the fallen tower.

Some traces of fresco painting are yet to be seen on the wall of one or two recesses in the nave : a patchwork halo of red and yellow, confined by a strongly marked black outline, and part of an orange-coloured ladder with a bit of green drapery, however the antiquary may regard them, did not give my companions very high ideas of the state of excellence attained by the monastic professors of this art in Ireland.

Sir Richard Cox states, that Buttevant Abbey was repaired by the Roman Catholics, as a place of worship, in 1604, between which date and the year 1625 the greater number of tombs and inscriptions now existing in the interior were put up. In more than one legend, about this period, the soft sounding name of Kathelina is used for Catherine ; and Redmond, Garet, Eugene, Philip, and Maurice, appear to have been the favourite names amongst the families interred here.

The naked walls of this abbey are looked upon by the peasantry with the highest reverence, and thither many still resort to perform rites of solitary devotion. A small gravestone, marked with the cross, is placed on the shattered altar ; and at the time of our entrance, an old man was kneeling before it, counting his rosary with an intense piety ; having repeated there a certain number of prayers, he went from grave to grave, and from one recess to another, observing the same ceremony, and during the time of our stay, two or three devotees performed similar pious rounds.

It is a common practice for the peasant, as an atonement for his sins, to impose on himself the saying, at particular places of reputed sanctity, a given number of rosaries, according to the supposed heinousness of the offence, and this is executed with the most scrupulous nicety ; every other business is neglected for the purpose, and long and difficult journeys are often solely made on that account.

The chancel of Buttevant Abbey, being built on a steep bank of the Awbeg, is raised to the level of the nave by three crypts or vaults, the middle of which is supported by a single pillar, so constructed as to resemble four, with fanciful and well-wrought capitals.—Close to the entrance of the abbey is a large square pile of skulls and bones, the relics of those who perished at the battle of Knockninoss, five miles distant from hence. It was fought on the 13th of November, 1647, between the English or parliamentary forces under the command of Lord Inchiquin, who was complimented by a pecuniary vote for his conduct on that occasion, and the Irish under Lord Taaffe ; the latter were completely routed, and four thousand (half their number) left dead on the field.

A party of Scotch highlanders, in the Irish army, headed by Sir Alexander Mac Donnell or Mac Allisdrum, contested their ground in the most determined and gallant manner, and were inhumanly butchered by the victors. The spot of Mac Allisdrum's assassination is pointed out by the country people to this day, who pretend to show the stains of his blood.

That wild and monstrous piece of music known by the name of Ollistrum's March, so popular in the south of Ireland, and said to have been played at Knockninoss, should not, it appears to me, be considered as an Irish air. Mr. Walker, in his History of the Irish Bards, justly remarks its similarity to the pibroch or war tune of the Scotch ; and had he more carefully perused the passage in Smith, alluded to by him, he would have had no hesitation in assigning to this singular strain its northern origin. The estimation in which it is held in Ireland is wonderful. I have heard this march, as it is called, sung by hundreds of the Irish peasantry, who imitate the drone of the bagpipe in their manner of singing it. On that instrument I have also frequently heard it played, and occasionally with much pleasure, from the peculiar and powerful expression given by the performer. " It was not without much difficulty," said the lady who gave me the annexed copy, " that I took down Ollistrum's March, from the manner in which it is played. Not one of our native musicians understand a note of music, as the pipers in general are blind, and yet the air has been handed, or rather (if I may use the expression) *eared* down, I imagine, with very little alteration, having heard numbers perform it in the same irregular way. I should find it much easier to write a piece of

music in score, than to set down the notes used by these blind minstrels, though they vary but little in all the movements and manner of playing ; however, I have done my best to retain the character. In Walker's Irish Bards, provincial cries, strongly resembling the lamentations of the Munster and Leinster women, are well given."

A little to the north-west of Buttevant Abbey, within its burial ground, and close to the road, there is a high square tower named Cullin. Its construction has been ascribed to an Earl of Desmond, but tradition is silent as to its use.

The Castle of Buttevant is boldly seated on a rock above the Avvbeg, and has been so modernized as to lose much of the contour of antiquity. A legend relates, that this castle was the chief residence of the Clan of Donegan, who rejected every offer of the English to surrender it, and repulsed every attempt made to take it ; but it was ultimately surprized and captured by David de Barry, who gained it through the treachery of a soldier of the garrison. De Barry, having made himself master of the place, put its sleeping inmates to the sword, and rewarded the perfidy of the betrayer by striking off his head also. There was a small addition to this story related to me as possessing equal claims to belief ;—the dissevered and ghastly head of the betrayer, as it went bounding down the stairs of one of the towers, yelled forth, in a sepulchral and terrible tone, the word—treachery !—treachery !—treachery !

About the year 1812, in planting part of the castle grounds the labourers discovered, a little way below the surface, a human skeleton, with the appearance of a wig on the skull, which mouldered when exposed to the air ; and apparently concealed in the caul were several shillings and sixpences of Elizabeth's : three or four of these coins are now in the possession of my friend, Mr. Samuel Richardson of Cork, and I recollect as many more being offered to me to purchase. There was no case or coffin round the body, nor was it buried in what is considered consecrated ground.

Nearly a mile to the north-east of Buttevant is a considerable mound or tumulus, probably about twenty feet in height, called Knockaneabouhilla (or the Boy Hills) ; and about the breadth of a field from it is a smaller one, called Knockanea Collihine (or the Girls' Hill), nearly half of which has been cut down to make way for a new road.

Researches in the south of Ireland, illustrative of the scenery, architectural remains, and the manners and superstitions of the peasantry. With an appendix, containing a private narrative of the rebellion of 1798 (1824)

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<http://archive.org/details/researchesinsout00crokuoft>

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