SOME IRISH RELIGIOUS HOUSES.[1]

By IAN C. HANNAH, M.A.

The Christianity of Ireland was largely monastic from its very earliest years. This is extremely clear from a study of primitive conditions in the Island of the Saints itself, still more so from a consideration of the Celtic missions in Scotland, in England, on the continent of Europe and elsewhere.

Monastic in constitution, at least to a great extent, were the once world-famous schools of Ireland, such as Bangor on the sea, Armagh inland among the low hills of Ulster, Glendalough amid the wooded valleys of the Wicklow mountains, and, greatest of all, in the centre of the island, Clonmacnoise, with its two round towers and numerous churches rising on an 'esker'[2] by the marshes of the Shannon (fig. 1).[3]

The arrangements of a Celtic monastery were of the very simplest kind. A bank of earth or stones shut the community in from the world or fortified it against outside attack; or perhaps this was still more effectively accomplished by the remoteness of the situation. The buildings were detached, the bee-hive huts in which the monks lived, the small rectangular stone churches in which they prayed; perhaps a round tower rose high above them all.[4]

The numerous little oratories of stone (occasionally the traditional seven in number, but far more often less or more), some of them with massive Cyclopean masonry and 'antae' recalling the Levant, here and there with double

[1] Read before the Institute, 31st March, 1915.

[2] One of the gravel ridges which here cross the country.

[3] All the drawings which illustrate this paper are by Edith Brand Hannah. The photographs were taken by the author excepting where acknowledgment is made to another source.

[4] From Adamnan's *Life of Columba* (ch. xv) we learn that as early as the sixth century there was at Durrow a lofty 'monasterium rotundum,' which formed the 'great house' of the convent, and it is tempting to find in it at least the embryo of the round tower. St. Benedict at Monte Cassino used to sleep in the topmost chamber of a tall tower overlooking all the buildings and courtyards of the monastery. His guest Servandus once occupied a lower story of the same tower, and the disciples of both slept below.

FIG. I. CLONMACNOISE: CROSS, O'RORKE'S TOWER AND TEAMPULL DOOLIN.

roofs of stone and chambers for the priests between, the tall wheel-crosses with their striking carved reliefs, above all the battering round towers with their conical caps of smooth wrought stone, are peculiar features which combine to give to an Irish holy place an atmosphere absolutely unique. One of the most interesting of these ancient oratories is the church of SS. Colman and Cronan at Tomgraney, co. Clare (plate IV, no. 1). The original part is 36 feet long by 21 feet 6 inches wide. The west door has the usual sloping jambs, being 3 ft. 5 ins. wide at the base and 3 ft. 2 ins. wide at the top: its height is 6 ft. 5 ins, and the lintel is 7 ft. 4 ins. long. It is still in use, and its building is recorded in the 'Chronicum Scotorum' of A.D. 964.[1] A. C. Champneys[2] says this is 'the oldest existing church, so far as I can discover, to which a date can be assigned with something like certainty,' but the cathedral church at Clonmacnoise seems to be an exception as it is dated by a similar reference in the 'Four Masters' forty years earlier.

Although, as in the East, there were married secular clergy (St. Patrick's own grandfather was in holy orders), there appears in the ancient Celtic church to have been little distinction between monastic and other houses of prayer. None of the older words for a church make any difference between a building served by secular and one served by regular clergy[3]; organisation was ever the

[1] 'Cormac Ua Cillin of the Ui Fiachrach Aidhne, comarb of Ciaran and Coman and comarb of Tuaim-greine, by whom the great church of Tuaim-greine and its cloigtech (i.e. round tower) were constructed, a wise man and old and a bishop, fell asleep in Christ.'

[2] *Irish Ecclesiastic Architecture*, 1910, p. 37.

[3] *Ceall* (*kil*), originally a hermit's cell, is usually applied to a church connected with a saint; *teampull*, commonly used for an ordinary place of public worship, a parish church of later days; *eaglais*, usually applied to the body of church members, but occasionally employed for the building; *daimliag*, unlike the others, is a purely Irish word, and signifies a house of stone, generally employed to denote a large and important church. In days when Celtic tradition was gradually giving way before continental influences a new word, *regles* (*regularis ecclesia*), was coined to denote a purely monastic church. In the following passage from the chronicle of the 'Four Masters' the distinction is very clear. '1179: Armagh was burned, as well churches as regleses, excepting only Regles Brighde and Teampull na bh-Fearta.'

This superb chronicle was compiled as late as 1632–1636 and was chiefly due to the learned Franciscan, Michael O'Clery of Louvain, born in Donegal, c. 1580. His helpers were all members of the same order, the other three masters being Farfassa O'Mulchoury, Perigrine O'Clery and Peregrine O'Duigenan. An accurate and painstaking chronicle, compiled from the best original authorities, it is not in the same class as the sagas of Iceland for human interest, though far more replete with facts. Its impartiality in particular is beyond all praise. Though living in an age of fierce and bitter controversy, the masters conscientiously transcribed such passages as the following, which they must have known (whatever be the precise signification) would be seized upon by their religious opponents: '1129. Ceallach, successor of Patrick, a son

weakest point of the Celts; this particularly applies to their church, but although there was no attempt to give the different church-buildings the sort of classification and status upon which Rome has always insisted, in a sense they were all monastic.

The service rendered to mankind by the schools of these monasteries has never even yet been adequately told. Here, almost alone in the whole of western Europe, was learning kept alive through the dark ages between the fall of Rome and the days of Charles the Great. While many Christian students were sitting at the feet of the early Moslem scholars, others were getting a not inferior education at the hands of devoted monks in Ireland.[1]

The atmosphere of the eastern church is strongly recalled by the only detailed description we possess of an ancient Irish church in use, that of the convent of Kildare, contained in the *Life of St. Bridget* by Cogitosus, a work of the ninth century. This is the building

in which repose the bodies of bishop Conlaeth and the holy virgin St. Bridget, on the right and left of the decorated altar, deposited in monuments adorned with various embellishments of gold and silver and gems and precious stones, with crowns of gold and silver depending from above. For the number of the faithful of both sexes increasing, the church was built covering a spacious area, and elevated to a menacing height, and adorned with painted pictures, having within three oratories large and separated by partitions of planks under one roof of the greater house, wherein one partition[2] [evidently corresponding to an eikonostasis], decorated and painted with figures, and covered with linen hangings, extended along the breadth in the eastern part of the church, from the southern to the northern wall, which screen has at its ends two doors. Through that on the right the summus pontifex with his chapter (regulari schola) enters the sanctuary to the altar. Through that on the left only the abbess with her faithful girls and widows goes to receive the sacrament. Another wall from the west wall to the

of purity, and archbishop of the west of Europe, the only head whom the foreigners and Irish of Ireland, both laity and clergy, obeyed.'

The standard edition of this work is *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to* 1616, edited and translated by John O'Donovan, published in Dublin by Hodges and Smith in 1851. The critical notes are of great value. The Erse and English texts are printed on opposite pages.

The ancient chronicles of Ireland are largely accessible in English, and they are of the very utmost value to the student of architecture. It does not seem that they have been by any means exhaustively gone through. I have myself sometimes found passages which appeared to give the exact dates of existing buildings which I have never seen printed in accounts of the structures themselves.

[1] There is an interesting article on the *Irish Monks and the Norsemen*, by Sir Henry H. Howorth, in *Proc. Royal Historical Society*, vol. viii, 1880.

[2] Cormac's *Glossary* defines *caincell* (chancel) as a latticed partition forming a division between laity and clergy after the similitude of the veil of Solomon's temple.

screen divides the floor into two equal parts. The church has many windows, and on the south an ornate door for males, another on the north for women. Thus in a very great basilica a multitude divided by walls in different order and ranks and sex but one in mind adores Almighty God.

The appearance and arrangements of this building must have closely resembled a Coptic church at the present day; and we may rest assured that if we could see the ancient churches of Ireland, cleared of the ivy and elder and hawthorn that so frequently block up their interiors, and restored to the condition in which their builders left them, we should be reminded rather of the small shrines

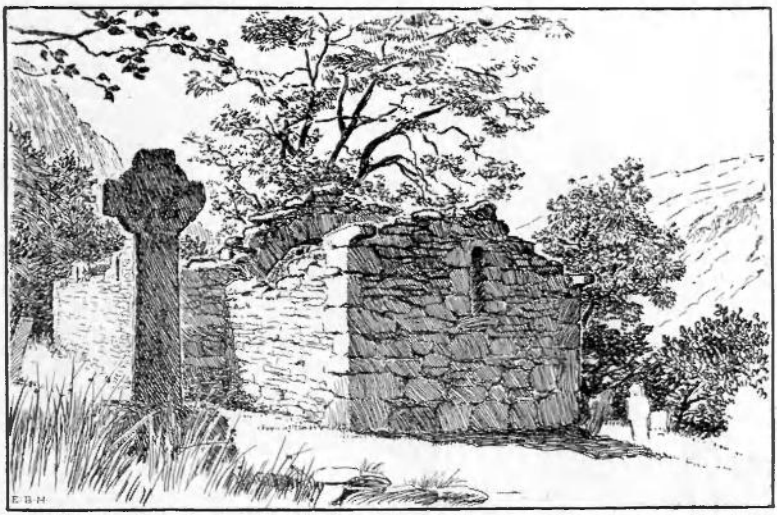


FIG. 2. REEFERT CHURCH, GLENDALOUGH, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.

of Athens and some of the other eastern European towns than of anything we know in the West. A very interesting and characteristic example, that of Reefert (fig. 2), looks down through trees on to the upper lake at Glendalough.

The native style of Irish architecture culminated in Cormac's chapel on the rock of Cashel, whose consecration by a synod of clergy the 'Four Masters' record under the year 1134. It is one of the most interesting and distinctive buildings in the whole of Europe, with its little transept towers, its gorgeous arcading, its radiant Romanesque detail, its sumptuous portals, its lofty chambers between the tunnel-vaults of nave and chancel and the steep

FIG. 3. CORMAC'S CHAPEL ON THE ROCK OF CASHEL.

soaring outer roofs of stone, its mysterious heating flues[1] and its strange shallow square sanctuary projection that takes the place of an apse.[2] It is the climax of the ancient Irish style, the most beautiful of all the examples we possess, though in detail strongly influenced by foreign art (fig. 3). It was perhaps surpassed in grandeur by the great church of Tuam raised by O'Hoisin, abbot from 1128 till 1150, when he was called to sit in the archbishop's chair. But of that no more remains than the triumphal arch, the rude tunnel-vault of the quire and the three east windows.[3]

It would, however, be very rash to pronounce either these buildings or any others to be the last of the old true Irish work. For many years to come humble churches still rose in the ancient style, but no new features are displayed.[4] Undoubtedly inspired by Anglo-Norman

[1] For this purpose Petrie, Brash, Miss Stokes, Champneys, and other writers, have supposed the channels in the stone-work to be intended. The last discusses the subject at length in one of his appendices (pp. 229–230). I have myself felt grave doubt as to whether the flues could have been made to work, and Mr. Arthur Hill, of Cork, writes to me :— 'A row of beams was placed over the vaulting like floor-joists : a longitudinal piece was spiked to the ends to take the thrust of the vaulting while green. All these timbers have long since decayed away leaving only the holes.' I am rather inclined to agree with this opinion, strengthened as it is by that of Mr. P. M. Johnston, but the matter is by no means free from doubt, and the arrangements for heating the dorter and other rooms in the Irish monastery at Saint-Gall in Switzerland are a strong argument on the other side. They are detailed in a plan of the ninth century attributed to Einhard by Mabillon, who discovered the document in the monastic library during the seventeenth century : see James Ferguson, *History of Architecture* (1865) bk. iv, ch. ii (i, 562–565).

[2] The complete unwillingness of the ancient Irish to build apses is extremely interesting from the universal use of such features in early Christian churches elsewhere. The basilica erected by Constantine (or St. Helen) over the grotto of the Nativity at Bethlehem, the oldest large church we know, has round apses ending both transepts and quire. However, the little rock-cut chapel in the Ostrianum Catacomb at Rome has a square east end, and it may confidently be stated that no Christian place of worship can be proved to be earlier. The ancient churches of Ireland in fact represent the very earliest Christian architecture that we know, before the conversion of Constantine caused the erection of great basilicas for the worship of the new faith. They are in some ways, at any rate, the most remarkable collection of really primitive churches in the world. The subject is dealt with at some length with references to Freeman and others in Lord Dunraven's *Notes on Irish Architecture.*

[3] How it is that we possess no more we are not left in doubt. The 'Four Masters' record that the Connacians burned Tuam and other churches to prevent the English quartering in them during 1177 ; the *Annals of Kilronan* remark the falling of the great church of Tuam, both roof and stonework, in 1184. West of the quire and incorporating it has been raised a new cathedral from the designs of Sir Thomas Deane ; one looks through the plate glass of the east windows into the large chapel (now the chapter-house and library) that was added in the fourteenth century (p. 128).

[4] Just as in England many churches with Saxon features were built after 1066. Mr. Hamilton Thompson, in *Memorials of Old Lincolnshire*, 1911, pp. 79, 80, has shown that this was so in the case of the tower at Branston in that county. I think I have done the same in my *Heart of East Anglia*, 1914, for the Saxon churches of Norwich.

forms, though Irish in the main, are the details of the lovely little Relig-na-Cailleach, or Church of the Nuns (built in 1167, as the 'Four Masters' relate), with its ornate west door displaying eagles' beaks and grotesque heads and chancel arch of varied chevron, resting on eight shafts.

No real historic continuity is to be remarked in passing from the very humble ancient churches of Ireland to the far more ambitious fanes that rose on her soil in later days, beginning with the Cistercian abbey of Mellifont. The essential features of Irish work suddenly disappear; we find buildings far larger and of quite different type, modelled on those of England. The architectural tradition was broken more completely than when in England herself Saxon structures were ousted by Norman ones. Left to themselves the Irish would have developed their architecture on totally different lines, and the world is unquestionably poorer that they did not have the chance. There is little doubt that they would have succeeded in working out something more interesting and more beautiful than the architecture which was eventually evolved on Irish soil from the forms that the English brought.

In the living stone itself we seem to read the contempt that the builders of the new felt for the builders of the old. Mediaeval craftsmen generally had little respect for the work of those that went before, but as a rule they showed no contempt. The Anglo-Normans in Ireland did. Numerous small Celtic chapels, deemed unsuited to a grander ritual, were ruthlessly torn down that much larger, though far less interesting, churches might be raised on their common site. Thus at Kilkenny and Armagh one great bishop's church has supplanted a cluster of oratories; elsewhere, as at Killaloe, a little and more venerable chapel[1] still stands in the cathedral yard. On the rock of Cashel the fine old chapel of Cormac is cramped and deprived of its sky-line by the not very skilful—one might almost be tempted to call it the exceedingly clumsy—jamming against it of the quire and south transept of the thirteenth-century cathedral church, which, in further contempt of the past, utilises the aged round tower as

[1] It seems likely that the older building may be that erected by the famous Brian Boru in 1010, as recorded by the 'Four Masters.' If not, it is certainly later, though a much higher antiquity has been claimed for it.

the north-east turret of the other transept. It is a very noble church indeed, with all the glories that the thirteenth century so well produced, with tall lancets and clustered banded shafts and mouldings deeply cut, but the great central tower and the western one (which in strange defiance of all traditions formed a fortified house for the archbishop) are so slightly parted by the puny nave that they group very badly with each other, and still worse with the three elder steeples.

As in England, however, the builders of later ages seemed reluctant to tear down Norman doors, so in Ireland, as a rule, a vague respect protected the round towers,

FIG. 4. ROMANESQUE CAPITAL, ST. SAVIOUR'S CHURCH, GLENDALOUGH.

so unlike anything known elsewhere.[1] Usually, as at Kildare, Kilkenny, Cloyne, and Kells, later churches were decorously built a few yards away.

While there is certainly a break of historic continuity in the sense that the new and much larger structures in

[1] No doubt round towers, detached towers, battering towers, conically capped towers, towers with both military and ecclesiastical uses, may be found elsewhere than in Ireland, but, in their combination of all these features and in their wide distribution through the land, the famed round towers of Ireland are truly and entirely unique.

Champneys seems to me to go too far in questioning the exclusively Irish character of Ireland's own round towers: see his chapter iv.

the pointed style did not grow out of the little Romanesque churches, but were introduced from overseas, yet a good many features of considerable importance were carried over from the old native style to the newer forms, whose incongruity to the soil was softened by the influence of Irish ideas and beautified by Irish details. Carved features continued very largely to consist of the coils and intersecting bands so characteristic of Celtic work, though even these were not indigenous to Ireland, as Dr. Hyde has pointed out.[1] These beautiful patterns are sometimes produced rather ingeniously by intertwining human hair among the legs and tails of beasts, or by some such strange device.[2] Another interesting survival of old national ideas is the fact that apses, which are extremely unusual between Norman and Tudor times in England, are in Ireland almost entirely unknown.[3]

Again the Irish builders vindicated their independence in all sorts of unexpected ways. For instance their turret-stairs are almost invariably without the usual central newel-shaft,[4] consisting either of rough rubble corkscrew vaults or of corbelled steps surrounding a narrow little central well. Stability depended very much on the good quality of the mortar employed. Excellence of cement has always characterised the structures raised on Irish soil: at Mellifont abbey a wall fell years ago on to the corner of the warming-house and it still remains, over-

[1] M. Salomon Reinach, J. Romilly Allen and others, have shown that these coils are never found in ancient Celtic works of the continent, nor in the pre-Christian antiquities of Ireland, such as the stones of New Grange; they came with so much else into Ireland from the east of Europe. Their origin is to be discovered in the architecture of Byzantium. See Douglas Hyde, *Literary History of Ireland*, p. 454. If this work were better known to English readers (and to the Irish themselves) many problems would disappear.

[2] An excellent example of this is in the sculptures of the chancel arch belonging to the monastic church of St. Saviour, a beautiful ruin of late twelfth-century date that stands half a mile below the round towers of Glendalough. The capital here drawn crowns a shaft, one of three on the southern side (fig. 4).

[3] One of the very few exceptions is Christ Church cathedral at Dublin, whose remarkably rude rubble crypt seems to be the original work of the Danish king, Sigtryg Silkbeard, by whom the church was founded in 1038. The apse is an astonishingly clumsy piece of building, having three unequal sides. A longer square-ended quire had been substituted in the church above during the fourteenth century, but in restoring the cathedral soon after the disestablishment, Street took the most unwise liberty of destroying this to rebuild the original apse from the evidence of the crypt below, but he made it quite regular with the eastern wall, wide enough to be pierced by two lancets, the narrower side ones having but one each. The effect is by no means satisfactory.

[4] This is the more remarkable as Cormac's chapel has a regular newel-stair in the south tower to approach the priest's chambers, p. 93.

grown by plants, forming a bridge across a space several feet wide; we learn, too, from Harris' *History of the County of Down* that when the round tower at Maghera fell over, it lay like a great cannon on the ground.

In later years Irish architecture swerved away very considerably from English, and went far towards the evolution of a national style. This is apparent to some extent in buildings for all purposes, but it is especially striking in religious houses, particularly friaries. Not only in architecture, but also in organisation, Irish monasteries after the Conquest present many features of great interest, entirely different from anything to be found elsewhere. Although many of these are owing inevitably to Celtic traditions, there are others entirely unconnected with them.

The last of the old[1] and the beginning of the new are closely connected in time. While an exile from his kingdom, a pilgrim at Lismore, Cormac MacCarthy made the acquaintance of St. Malachy of Bangor, the friend of the renowned St. Bernard of Clairvaux, by whom his life was written. Lord Dunraven suggests with fair probability that to this connexion may be due some of the Romanesque detail of the chapel of Cormac at Cashel. Mellifont abbey, founded in 1142 by Donough O'Carroll, lord of Oirgialla, under the influence of the same Malachy, the de-Celticising primate, has nothing Irish about it, but follows exactly the same lines as the Cistercian houses in England that were rising at the same time.

The Great Monastery, as it is frequently called in the annals, stands beside the stream of Mattock, not far from its junction with the Boyne. It is a fair spot, exactly such a lonely wooded dale as the Cistercians liked to find, connected with the outer world only by one rough track leading to the higher lands above. It was founded in 1142, while the first Anglo-Norman invasion was in 1168, facts that are important as showing that the task of bringing the old Celtic church into line with the custom of the

[1] The ancient architecture of Ireland has been fairly fully described in the well-known works of Brash, Petrie, Lord Dunraven and Champneys. Fergusson has some interesting observations, but he never could take much interest in buildings whose size seemed to him insufficient for proper architectural display.

rest of western Christendom had proceeded far before the English came.

Across the valley stand the low ruins of the church; it could never have been extended to the east without burrowing into the hillside, nor to the west without embanking the river. It seems undoubtedly to have been the original structure consecrated in 1157; the quire is very short, the transept has aisles and extends three bays to the north, but southward only two, with a sort of passage beyond, probably connected with the night stair. We know from excavations seen by Sir Thomas Deane that four of the chapels were apsidal. It is clear that during the fifteenth century the central tower was rebuilt with semi-octagonal responds plastered against the earlier shafts; at the same time a substantial stone screen was built across the western arch, suggesting that the whole nave was assigned to the 'conversi,' if they survived to so late a date, as is most unlikely.

The most perfect part of the ruins is the very beautiful fourteenth-century chapter-house, which has a vault in two bays resting on far-projecting shafts, dog-tooth mouldings and two-light 'decorated' windows. The floor is laid with ancient tiles, incised with leaves and fleurs-de-lis. A few pieces of thin brick are used in the rubble walling, the only ones which either Petrie or the present writer ever remembers to have seen in the mediaeval buildings of Ireland.

The arrangements appear to have been quite normal, except perhaps for the very striking octagonal lavatory, which opens from the south walk of the arcaded cloister and stands in the ample garth that was much wider north to south than east to west. The lavatory is open on every side by a shafted round arch, and the birds and leaves that beautify the caps sometimes remind one of Byzantine detail. The outside corners have strange fluting, and above the vaulted roof is a much broken upper room with windows of single lights. Only very slightly does this fair and rather mysterious octagon resemble the fountain with its queer bas-reliefs and double shafts which stands in the centre of the 'paradise' of the Cluniac priory of Much Wenlock in Shropshire.

There is but little definitely Irish character about this wealthy and rather aristocratic house, save that the warm-

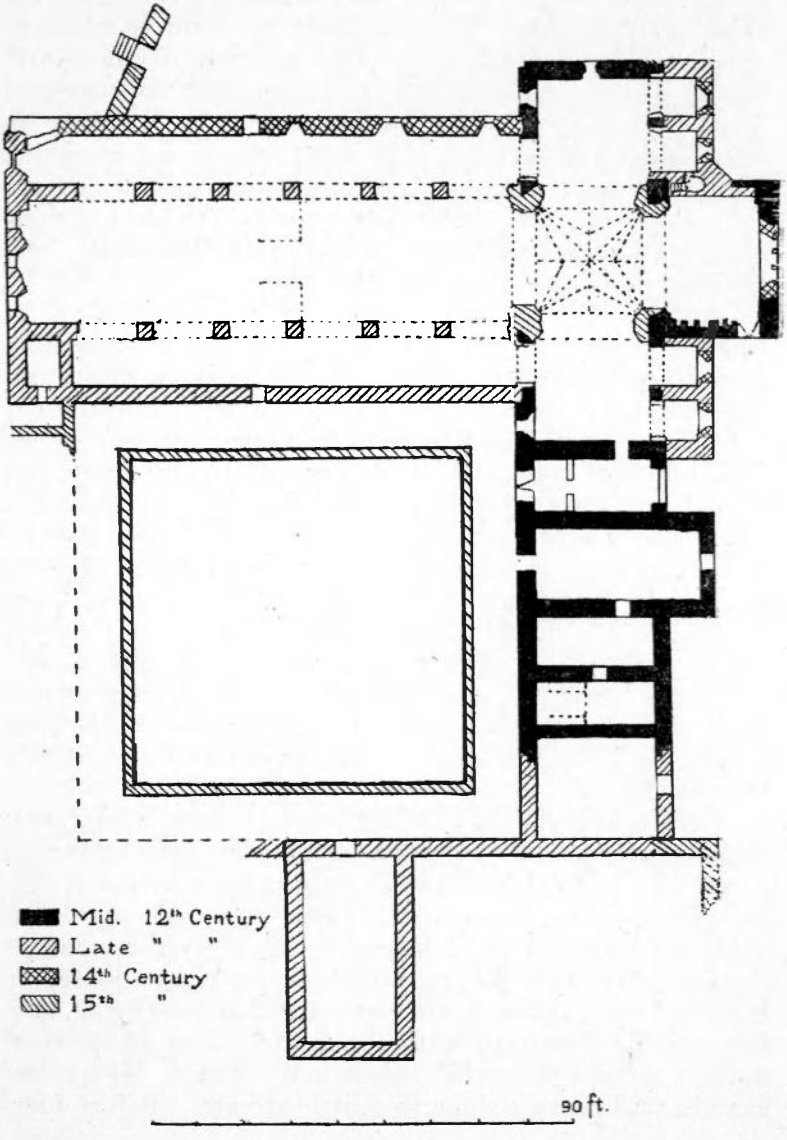


FIG. 5. SKETCH-PLAN OF JERPOINT ABBEY.

ing room is covered by a very rude barrel-vault of the old Celtic form, roughly turned with unshaped rubble stones, then grouted with liquid cement to form a concrete mass, stability depending upon the goodness of the mortar used. The place was in fact very thoroughly appropriated by the conquering race: statutes passed at Kilkenny in 1310 and 1322 ordered that none should be professed within the walls who could not swear that he was of true-born English blood. A little later, however, at a general chapter of the Cistercian order such legislation was branded (not inaccurately) as damnable.

Another Cistercian abbey (fig. 5) whose ruins are of singular beauty and high interest is Jerpoint, on the rolling grass-lands by the river Nore, midway between Waterford and Kilkenny. It is but little newer than Mellifont, for it must have been founded between 1148 and 1165[1]; but Irish influence among its builders was evidently strong, for, though it follows generally the usual plan of the Cistercians, the small transept windows have sloping jambs, being wider at bottom than at top, while the little square presbytery and sundry chambers on the east side of the cloister are covered with rude old Celtic vaults. That of the chapter-house starts practically from the ground on either side, and in no house of the whole order can the debates of the monks have been held in a room more suggestive of solemn gloom, nor more in accordance with the primitive simplicity that St. Bernard would desire.

Rather later in the twelfth century were added two chapels east of either transept, opening by pointed arches, covered by pointed barrel-vaults, the capitals here as in the nave being carved largely in the Celtic way. The nave and aisles are hardly later, if indeed at all, than the transept chapels. On thick pillars, round, or bevelled square, or furnished with corner-shafts, rest pointed arches (fig. 6), and through the clerestory walls above the pillars are pierced round-headed lights, while others look through the doorless western wall down a slope to a little stream. Before 1200

[1] The evidence for this is well given by Champneys (loc. cit. pp. 232-234). Richard Langrishe, in a paper read to the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland on 30th May, 1905, argues from the architectural evidence that the quire and transepts must date from about 1125, but it seems to me most unlikely that so un-Irish a plan should have been made use of at so early a period. Help from his plan of the church is gratefully acknowledged.

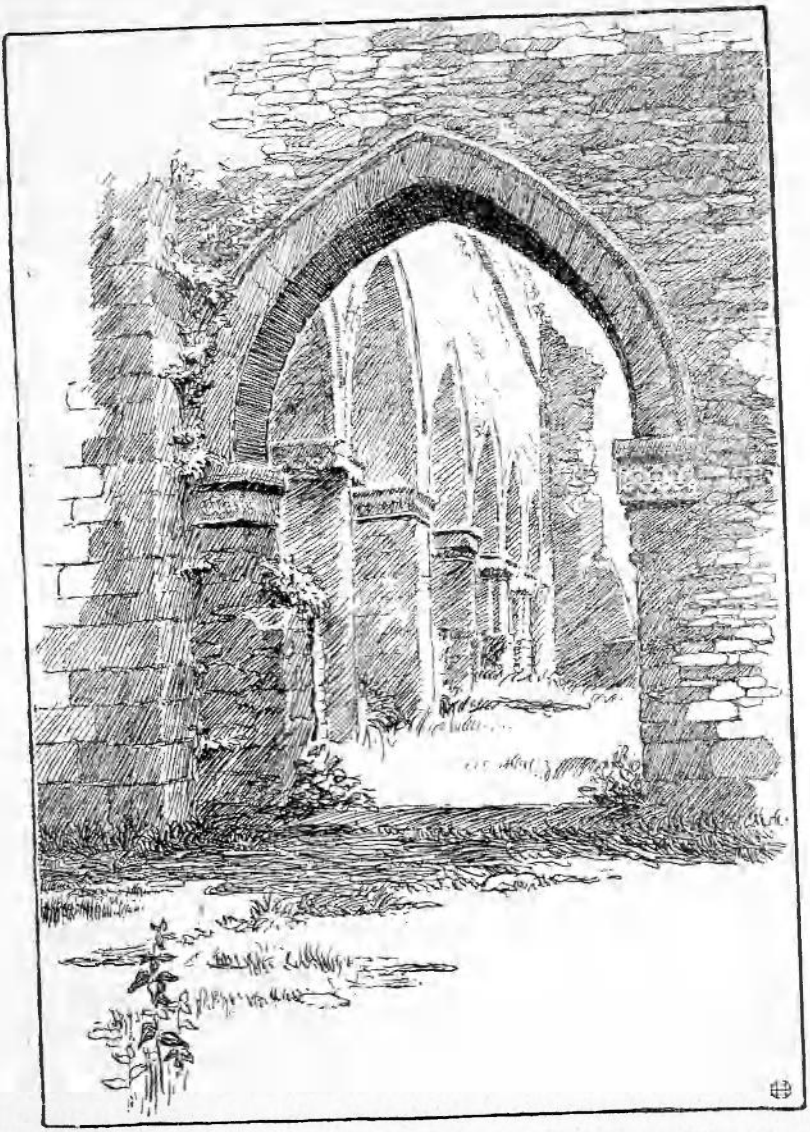


FIG 6. JERPOINT ABBEY: NORTH AISLE OF NAVE FROM TRANSEPT.

was raised the long dorter (with night-stair) over the Celtic tunnels of the eastern range, and southwards of the 'paradise,' at right-angles to the church, was built the frater, of which one lancet still survives. The fourteenth century saw traceried windows, the central one with ball-flower and a wheel, pierced through the east walls of quire and transept chapels, and the north nave wall was heightened or rebuilt. Over its door projects a corbel-lintelled, machicolated bartisan,[1] and toward the west, not quite at right-angles, is a flanking wall to guard the main approach. In the extreme corner of the house, south-eastward of the cloister square, rises a small fortified tower.

Within the nave may still be seen, in the third bay from the west, the ruins of the stone screen pierced by a doorway in the centre, a deep altared chapel on either hand. Something of this nature was a very usual arrangement in large churches of every kind. Thus, as at Jervaulx and elsewhere, the quire of the 'conversi' was separated from the monks' quire by a stone pulpitum having a raised altar on each side. In front of the pulpitum, a bay westward, was the rood-screen, with an altar in the middle and a doorway on either side. This was presumably of wood, which seems to have been the usual arrangement. A thick low wall connected the pillars at the sides of the quire of the 'conversi.' A row of modern cottages has usurped the site of their dwellings along the west cloister walk.

During the fifteenth century the half-foreign character of this house was largely changed by the erection of a new tower and cloister of peculiarly Hibernian type. The broad 'paradise' was enclosed by small open round arches springing from bell-capped double shafts, rude work sometimes with animals or men between (one dragon has considerable spirit), but nothing of this arcade remains save what of recent years has been raised from the fragments lying round. The middle tower still lifts up, clearly defined in grey against the sky, the noblest example that exists of Irish step-battlemented parapets with square pinnacled turrets at the corners (fig. 7). The exceedingly satisfactory lines of these Irish battlements, recalling work at Florence and elsewhere

[1] Sir Walter Scott appears to have coined this word owing to a misconception, but it is too convenient to be given up.

in Italy, form a most pleasing variety from the sometimes rather monotonous parapets that crown contemporary towers in Great Britain. Beneath the tower is the only ribbed vaulting that the building ever knew (transepts, nave and aisles were roofed with wood); some of the corbels from which the arches spring have never had their mouldings cut but still remain in block. The stairway to the top gives access to chambers above the roofs of chapels and quire.[1]

FIG. 7. TOWER OF JERPOINT ABBEY FROM THE NORTH-WEST.

In 1272 archbishop David McCurville of Cashel, who is said to have dreamed that the Benedictine monks were trying to cut off his head, removed them without much ceremony from the far-famed rock. Secular canons were installed in the cathedral. But on the damp flats below

[1] Rather mysterious and unaccountable alterations are not infrequent in Irish houses, and here, not long before the dissolution, the southern arcade was blocked up and the aisle thrown into the north walk of the cloister. A long alley-chamber was evidently required for some purpose or other.

the primate of Munster raised another house where the Cistercian rule should be obeyed, the abbey of St. Mary of the rock of Cashel, more shortly Hore, as it is usually known to-day (fig. 8). It is a structure of Cistercian simplicity; the cruciform church has the usual pair of chapels eastward of each arm of the transept. The cloister was on the northern side; almost the only part that has survived is the rectangular chapter-house with enriched banded shafts to frame the lancets turned towards the rising sun. Apparently about the middle of the fifteenth century

FIG. 8. HORE ABBEY FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

there was raised a new middle tower, its vault most ornately ribbed but unbossed. It can hardly have been much later that, apparently in the interests of defence, great alterations were made to the whole house; the work gives the impression of having been much more remarkable for the haste than for the neatness with which it was carried out. The large lancets of church and chapter-house were built up, except for small openings of 'perpendicular' character left to admit some light; the transepts and all but the two east bays of the nave without their aisles were walled off from the quire, the west end of the nave was divided into three stories, the chapter-house into two, all being re-windowed on a somewhat grudging scale. A wall that seems never to have been finished half fills the west tower arch, as if it had been

decided still further to cut short the poor remnant of the church.

The great parent Benedictine order was but slightly represented in Ireland, for by the time continental influences were seriously making themselves felt there the day of the offshoots had come. Its noblest Irish convent stood on high land just west of the city of Downpatrick, overlooking the muddy estuary of the Quoile and the ancient rath or dun that gives the town its name. Here, according to 'tradition,' rest Ireland's holiest saints, buried in one tomb, Patrick, Bridget, and Columba of Scottish fame.[1] Their effigies stand in three niches under the eastern gable of the cathedral. The whole had gone to ruin when at last, in 1790, the quire of the venerable fabric was restored

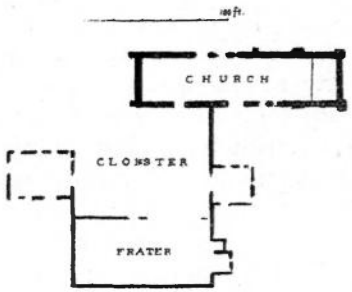


FIG. 9. SKETCH-PLAN OF THE CATHEDRAL PRIORY, NEWTOWN TRIM.

to become the mother church of the diocese once more. It consists simply of nave and aisles of five bays; block piers support moulded arches and the capitals of the single jamb-shafts are superbly carved with animals and leaves, the date apparently about 1400. Even with the plaster vaulting and other bastard Gothic details of the end of the eighteenth century, the interior is one of the most impressive

[1] Unhappily Cogitosus (p. 92) says that Bridget was buried at Kildare; St. Bernard says St. Patrick was entombed at Armagh; the grave of St. Columba is still shown at Iona. The discovery of the triple grave at Down in 1185 is described by Giraldus Cambrensis (*Topographia Hibernica*, iii, c. xviii; opera, v, p. 163). The *Office for the Translation of the Relics* (first printed at Paris in 1620), abstracted by Dr. Lanigan (*Eccles. Hist. of Ireland*, iv, 274 f.), describes how St. Malachy, bishop of Down, while praying in the cathedral, saw a light like a sunbeam which moved to the spot where the bodies were. The tale seems to have been worked by Sir John de Courcy and the English to enhance the dignity of the place that had recently fallen into their hands.

of all Irish churches. From old prints it is clear that the walls of aisles and clerestory are original, but the ruins of nave and cloister have absolutely vanished, and the ground-plan seems to depend almost entirely on guess-work.[1]

Most Irish cathedral churches were always served by secular canons, but another monastic one stands in ruin on the banks of the Boyne at Newtown Trim, and it is interesting from the unusual arrangement of the cloister, which, instead of joining in the normal style, is pushed away to the west, so that its north-east corner is about the middle of the church's southern wall, while its north-west angle is far beyond the west façade (fig. 9).[2] The church was founded in 1206 by an English bishop of Meath, Simon Rochfort, who moved the throne hither from Clonard. It is a fair structure in the fashion of that time, having tall lancets framed by richly-banded shafts, ribbed vault growing out of the moulded capitals of wall-shafts. The plan is aisleless and long, slight modifications having been made as the builders slowly worked from east to west. It was served by Augustinian canons of the congregation of St. Victor[3]; in 1397 an effort was made to substitute a secular dean and chapter, but this was successfully resisted by the regulars.[4] The cloister stood on meadow-land rapidly sloping to the river's edge. The frater seems to be contemporary with the church, and under it was a chamber with round arched windows, looking on to the Boyne. The chimney is ingeniously enclosed in a pilaster buttress, but it is broken into by a clumsily inserted fifteenth-century window. On the west side of the cloister are somewhat scanty ruins of a three-storied building with a corkscrew stair.

In the town of Trim hard by was another Augustinian house of the institution of Arrouaise, dedicated in honour of St. Mary. Its sole remains, a detached tower rising 120 feet, was battered half down by Cromwell's guns (if local

[1] The plan is given by J. J. Phillips in *Proc. R. Soc. Antiq. Ireland*, 1905, 308.

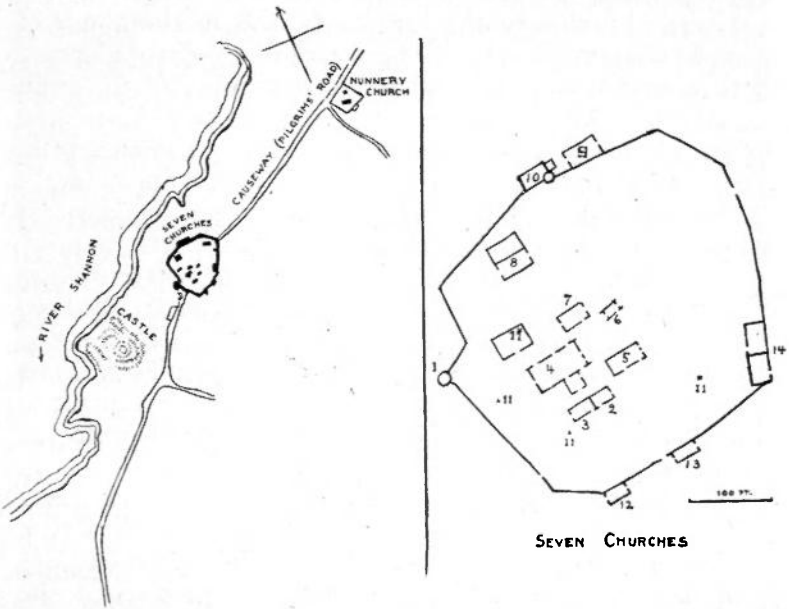
[2] At the Premonstratensian house of Egglestone in Yorkshire the short nave did not extend so far west as the cloister, but there the church is cruciform, and the transept consequently prevented the cloister extending any further toward the east.

[3] So also between 1163 and 1541 was Christ Church, Dublin. Its conventual buildings, south of the nave, seem to have been normal.

[4] *Cal. Papal Letters*, v, 74, 75.

tradition be true); it is widely seen over the woods of Meath and known as the Yellow Steeple.

At Rathkeale, co. Limerick, are ruins of another house of the same order, whose little thirteenth-century church is remarkable for a four-light east window with simply intersecting mullions, a rather early example of what in Ireland (as elsewhere) became extremely usual in later work.



1 O'Rorke's Tower
2 Temple Hurpan
3 " Doolin
4 Cathedral
5 Temple Ri
6 " Kieran
7 " Kelly
8 " Conor
9 Temple Killen
10 " Finghin
11 Crosses
12 Temple Gauny
13 Bishop's Chapel
14 Houses

FIG. 10. PLAN OF CLONMACNOISE.

A largish arch appears to have opened from church to cloister both here and at Bective (p. 129); it was possibly closed by some sort of woodwork in winter.

Strange things must have struck the mediaeval pilgrim who, having tasted the hospitality of the chief monasteries of western Europe, turned aside into the byways of Ireland. At several great houses he could hardly fail to be impressed

by the very close geographical proximity of secular and regular priests, and also by the survival of the very crude arrangements of the Celtic church. Thus at Clonmacnoise (p. 89) he might visit a world-famed Augustinian house so very rich that almost the half of Ireland was said to be within its bounds, so very holy that all who were at rest within its yard were sure of a speedy flight to Heaven, which yet had not even a cloister, while the largest of the scattered churches in the very midst was in the hands of a secular chapter (fig. 10). The detached and chaotic nature of their own dwellings, and the great number of the little chapels that they served, must have made the lives of the Austin canons of Clonmacnoise very different indeed from that of their fellows in any other European land.

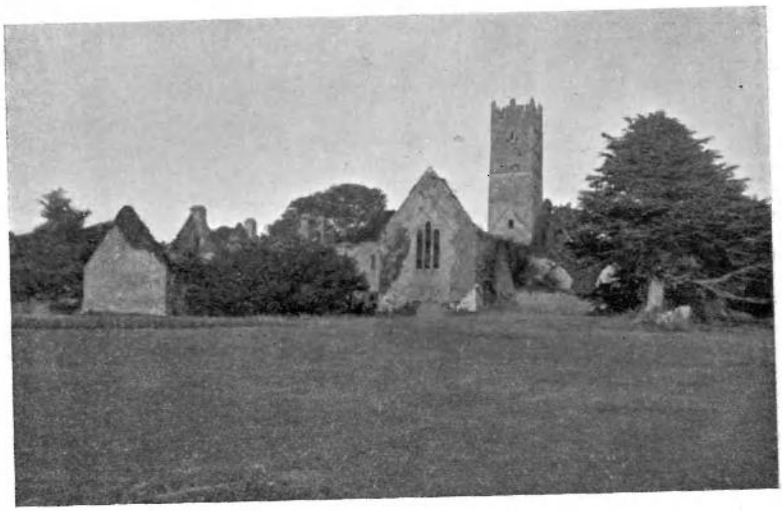
At Glendalough, so very famous in earliest days, it does not seem that there was ever much prosperity in post-conquest times, though the line of abbots lasted till the whole place was granted by king John to the archbishops of Dublin in 1214. The statement of Archdall that the city then " not only suffered by decay, but insensibly became a receptacle for outlaws and robbers " seems difficult to understand in view of the number of well-preserved buildings that survive to this very hour.[1]

At Kildare still stands a tall round tower and traces of the separate buildings so characteristic of all Celtic settlements. In one of these, traditionally at least, was maintained that sacred fire whose origin is probably to be sought in the conversion of some venerable community corresponding to the vestal virgins at Rome. In 1220, just before the building of the existing cathedral church (p. 128), an unimaginative Englishman, Henry of London, archbishop of Dublin, had the fire put out as a relic of heathendom, but before long it was rekindled by the successor of St. Bridget, and it did not die again till the reformation was sweeping the land. An abbess was in charge of the holy fire; for many centuries an abbot also presided over a community of monks as part of the same establishment, but even in this time-honoured seat of

[1] Stevens' (Alemand's) *Monasticon Hibernicum* says the cathedral was served by regular canons, but does not give any authority. I have found fifteenth-century records of secular ones in the *Cal. Papal Letters*.

W. Temperley, phot.

NO. I. MOUNT GRACE PRIORY CHURCH, FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.



NO. 2. FRANCISCAN FRIARY, ADARE, FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

monasticism we find the cathedral in the hands of a secular chapter.[1]

More architecturally interesting on the whole than the houses of the monks, certainly more characteristically Irish, are the dwellings that were raised by the friars, not only among the buildings in the streets of towns but also beside far-off rocks and lonely tarns. In England the remains of the friaries are exceedingly scanty and the reason is not far to seek. They were all situated in towns which in almost every instance have otherwise disposed of their sites. Only here and there, either because the towns were small and did not grow, as in the case of the Austin friary at Clare in Suffolk, or because their buildings were acquired for other purposes by the city, as with the Black friary (St. Andrew's hall) at Norwich, or the Grey friary at Chichester, may their remains be studied to-day.

In Ireland very many friaries still remain, and in several cases they would require little beyond carpentry to restore their original appearance. The Irish towns as a rule did not grow or seriously covet the land that the friaries held : many of the religious houses are in the open country, and some continued to be occupied by friars till long after the time of Henry VIII. Friars became exceedingly popular in Ireland, so much so that before very long they had pretty fully occupied the towns, their proper sphere of labour, and spread into the smallest villages and even the woods beyond. In such spots it was almost impossible for them to discharge the functions for which their orders had been instituted, and they must have become practically indistinguishable from the monks ; their dwellings are very largely known as abbeys.

Even with so many openings at home we get sundry hints that in later years Irish friars sometimes flowed over into England, where the native supply was less. Thus from an inventory of Henry VIII's commissioners at Shrewsbury we learn : 'As touching the Austin friars,

[1] It seems that the dean supplanted the abbot ; Archdall's last mention of an abbot is in 1160 ; after the building of the cathedral the *Cal. Papal Letters* have several mentions of the dean and chapter. It stands in the same yard as the monastic ruins ; in a quoin of the south transept is a hole through which St. Bridget is fabled to have thrust her arm (after the manner of later women) to prevent herself being dragged away from Kildare.

Vols. v to x of *Cal. Papal Letters* are exceedingly rich in documents bearing on Irish ecclesiastical history.

there were no more but a prior and two Crysche friars, and all utensils gone, and no thing there to help the friars, not so much as a chalice to say mass; and no man durst trust the prior to lend him any, so that all that was in all the house could not be praised at 26s. 8d; no bedding nor meat, bread nor drink. Wherefore the said visitor discharged the said prior of that office, and assigned the two Cryschemen into Ireland, into their native convents.'[1]

Most of the friary churches are on the same general plan. The quire or 'capella' is literally separated from the 'navis ecclesiae'[2] by a thin middle tower, through which passes what is hardly more than a tunnel. Sometimes the nave has aisles, or transepts west of the tower, giving a rather singular ground-plan. This form of church was not exclusively for friars; it may be seen at the Carthusian priory of Mount Grace in Yorkshire, where the nave has two (added) shallow transepts, not quite at its eastern end, and a narrow (inserted) tunnel tower separates it from the quire (plate 1, no. 1). The cathedral of St. Lazarian at Leighlin, co. Carlow, Ireland, is also on the same lines, though it has been served by a secular chapter since it was built in the twelfth century.[3] The nave has eastern transepts and a narrow tower is built over the west end of the quire, though it seems doubtful whether this last is an original feature or was inserted when the church was largely rebuilt by bishop Saunders, 1529–1549.[4]

In the Irish friaries the tower usually rises from an oblong space of the full width of nave and quire, but from east to west of much more restricted dimension. In some examples, for instance the Blackfriars' church at Cashel, the tower is carried up its full height as a simple rather ugly oblong, but it is pierced only by a mere tunnel, opening

[1] *Chapter-house Books*, no. 309, p. 83 (quoted in *Monumenta Franciscana*, Rolls ser. i, xxi, of Prof. J. S. Brewer's preface). I have copied the extract as printed, but I feel no doubt that *Crysche* should be *Erysche* (Irish). C and E in mediaeval documents are readily confused, and there is no reason to suppose that these were Crutched instead of Austin friars.

[2] These terms are used in an old register of the Friars Minor in London preserved in the Cotton library (Vitellius, f. xii), printed in the Rolls series, *Monumenta Franciscana*, i, 493–543. It is on paper, in a hand of the fifteenth century, and gives disappointingly little information architecturally valuable.

[3] An Austin priory of St. Stephen which the chapter had founded was extinguished by them in 1432.

[4] The tower as it stands has a quite late character, but it may have been rebuilt. This form of church is not very suited to modern use, but it has been imitated to some extent in St. Bartholomew's, Dublin.

from quire to nave. Apparently, however, this oblong form of tower was soon voted a failure, as indeed it was, and then the problem arose how to make it square and still preserve the oblong space that was desired in the church below. Usually this was done, as in the Greyfriars' church at Adare (plate 1, no. 2), by the simple expedient of springing side arches between the long walls, just beyond where they were pierced by the opening between the nave and the quire, and these being without proper abutment (joining the sides, not the ends of walls) had necessarily to be fairly substantial. In this normal case the tunnel under the tower is open to nave and quire by tolerably lofty arches; north and south lower arches open to deep recesses, which are sometimes lighted, and not seldom one of them gives access to the cloister by a door.

Something of the kind was usual in English friaries, but there was far more variety than in Ireland as to the form of steeple that rose above. In the Austin friary at Atherstone (which is now the parish church) there is a low and well-proportioned octagonal tower. A much taller hexagonal tower rises over the central arches of the Blackfriars' church at King's Lynn; and at Richmond, Yorkshire, the tower of the Greyfriars' church is square and rather ornate; these two towers on their open arches being nearly all that is left of the churches. At Coventry, where the Greyfriars' steeple is incorporated in Christ Church, a structure of the early Gothic revival, the narrow arches sustain one of the famous three spires of the city. While in Ireland the tower is most often thin and lofty with the plainest battering walls, an ineffectual crown to a not very striking group of buildings.

Sometimes, however, the Irish friars desired to have rather wider arches opening from nave to quire and still to preserve the square form of the tower above. In Drogheda at the 'abbey of the Bear' (Sancta Maria de Urso, so known from the founder Ursus de Swemele), the difficulty was surmounted in the fifteenth century by building within the oblong space between the wide arches that open to the nave and quire three segmental arches at right-angles both north and south, each higher and nearer the centre than the next, so that the upper ones, on which the square tower stands, have no other abutment than the sides of the large

arches. The work is so substantial that it has not suffered from this very unstructural plan; a squalid street now passes up the centre of the venerable church, and jaunting-cars rumble and jolt over the muddy stones under the arches of the ancient tower.[1]

At the Magdalen Steeple[2] in the same town the same problem is solved by a much less ingenious scheme, in a manner characteristically Irish. The north and south walls simply bend inwards, and so roughly framed is the rubble masonry that it is really difficult to say whether the structure should be deemed an example of corbelled work, each course projecting a little further than the last, or as the two sides of an arch of which the tower forms the majestic key-stone. At any rate one is reminded of the old Irish corbel-roofs of very lofty pitch, which gradually and, if one may judge from the masonry of St. Columba's house at Kells, almost unconsciously, landed the builders in tunnels formed by very pointed arches.

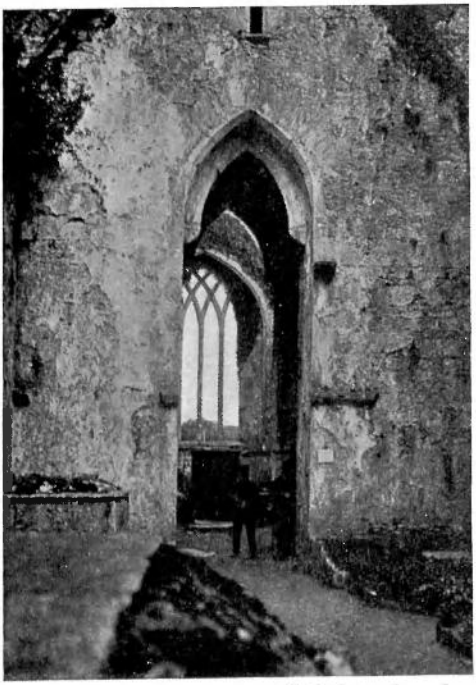
Within the churches of the friars these tunnel-towers were further blocked by the insertion of very ample rood-lofts. As a rule these were structures of timber resting on corbels that still survive.[3] Besides completely dividing the tunnel-chambers with floors, they frequently projected east and west to form galleries both in nave and quire. At Irrelagh (Muckross) this gallery was entered in the north wall of the quire by a door leading out of the dorter (p. 116). At the Greyfriars' church in Waterford the door is in much the same position, but it is reached by a stair whose lower entrance is in the north-east corner of the tower. A window looking over the cloister roof in the Austin church at Adare (p. 125) was clearly pierced in order to light the rood-gallery in the east part of the nave.

These tunnel-towers became the recognised form for the churches of friaries to take in England and Ireland (there are, of course, exceptions) from the least to the greatest. The very large Dominican church in Norwich

[1] There is some doubt as to the early appropriation of this priory or hospital, but the Crutched friars were certainly in possession at the time the church was built.

[2] A Dominican house founded in 1224 by primate Luke Netterville. This tower is all that has survived.

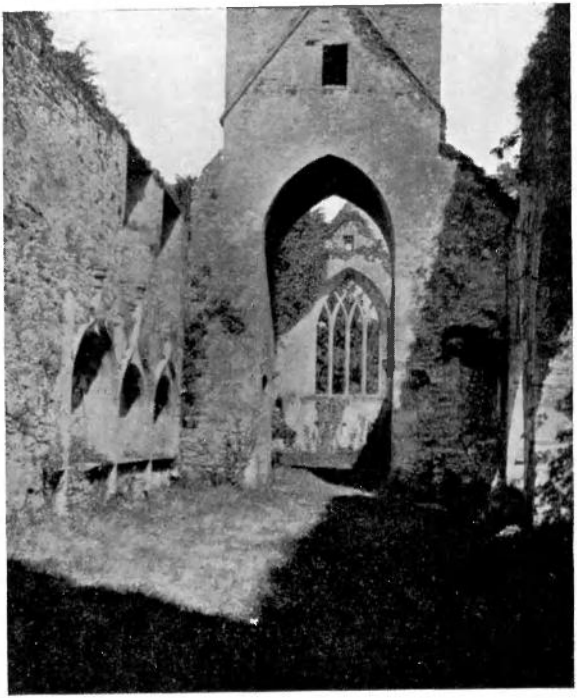
[3] At Ross abbey the rood-loft under the tower is supported on a stone arch; at Sligo a vaulted structure projects into the nave. I have not been able to visit them. Champneys publishes a good illustration (p. 180).



[*W. Temperley, phot.*

NO. 1. IRRELAGH (MUCKROSS) ABBEY CHURCH : INTERIOR, LOOKING EAST.

PLATE II.



NO. 2. FRANCISCAN FRIARY, ADARE: INTERIOR, LOOKING EAST.

To face page 115.

(now St. Andrew's hall) evidently had something of the kind, but the tower fell in 1712. This tunnel-plan does not seem, however, to have existed (at any rate commonly) on the continent of Europe.[1]

A very accessible and a most characteristic friary is that of the Franciscans at Waterford. The 'Four Masters' record its foundation in 1240 by Sir Hugh Purcell; the quire with its fine lancets, three in the eastern wall, evidently belongs to that date. The tower was inserted during the fifteenth century; it is pierced by a mere tunnel, and this was blocked up by a very large rood-gallery that came out a whole bay into the nave. The nave was very much changed when, in 1545, it was floored over to form the hospital of the Holy Ghost. The whole is open to the sky to-day, and some of the post-dissolution grave-stones and mural tablets are interesting, either for presenting us with illustrations of all the objects connected with the Passion from the thirty pieces of silver to St. Peter's cock, or as commemorating some of the forebears of Lord Roberts.[2]

By no means the least remarkable thing about many of these Irish friaries is the remoteness of their sites. From a manuscript description of Kerry written about 1750, and preserving a much older tradition (now in the library of the Royal Irish Academy), we hear that during the fifteenth century MacCarthy More, lord of Desmond, was warned in a vision that he must not place the monastery that he planned to found elsewhere than at Carraig-an-chiuil. As he knew of no such place within his principality he sent out his servants in search of it.

[1] The quire is widely open to the nave in every friary I can think of on the mainland from the fourteenth-century Franciscan church at Stockholm, which is now the Riddarsholms-kyrka, containing the ashes of the Swedish kings, to the sixteenth-century Franciscan church at Gibraltar, which is now the king's chapel and echoes with the lusty singing of British troops. Of course the arches of many Norman central towers block the view quite as much as those of any 'tunnel-tower,' only this effect was not deliberate—the reason for such narrow arches was structural.

[2] Of the Dominican convent in the same town hardly anything survives save that the church tower still lifts its Irish battlements high over the rather squalid dwellings of the slums. A more beautiful example of much the same type of building is the friary of St. Francis at Kilkenny, where the roofless thirteenth-century quire still stands in mute protest beside a brewery that occupies the cloister site. Seven fair lancets under a single arch pierce through the eastern wall (plate III, no. 1). From Clyn (*Annalium Hiberniae Chronicon*) we learn '1347: item incepit confraternitas fratrum minorum Kilkennie pro campanili novo erigendo,' but the present tunnel-tower certainly seems at any rate to have been finished about a century later.

They had entirely failed and were returning home in despair when, by the eastern pass, in glorious scenery on the shore of Lough Leane (or the lower lake of Killarney) they heard, issuing from a rock, music of the most enchanting kind. This they correctly judged must be the sought-for Carraig-an-chiuil, or the rock of music. Here the convent was built, known of old as Irrelagh, but called Muckross to-day. The story would not be in the least specially remarkable if the proposed religious house were to have been occupied by Cistercian monks instead of by Franciscan friars.

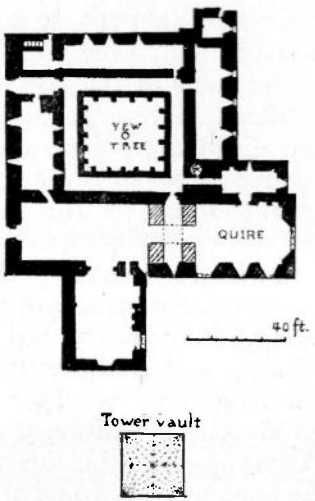


FIG. 11. PLAN OF IRRELAGH (MUCKROSS) ABBEY.

The building is extremely compact, and was evidently designed with some eye to defence (fig. 11); every important door has deep holes for a large wooden bolt. Although the plans were evidently modified a little during the progress of the works, it does not appear that there are any important differences in the dates of the various parts. It was begun in or about 1440. The church has an unusually narrow tunnel-tower (plate II, no. 1), inserted shortly after the rest was built; east of it is the quire with a three-storied sacristy on the north, westward is the nave with a large south transept opening by a doorway and an arch. The tower has a rather elaborately ribbed vault, almost the

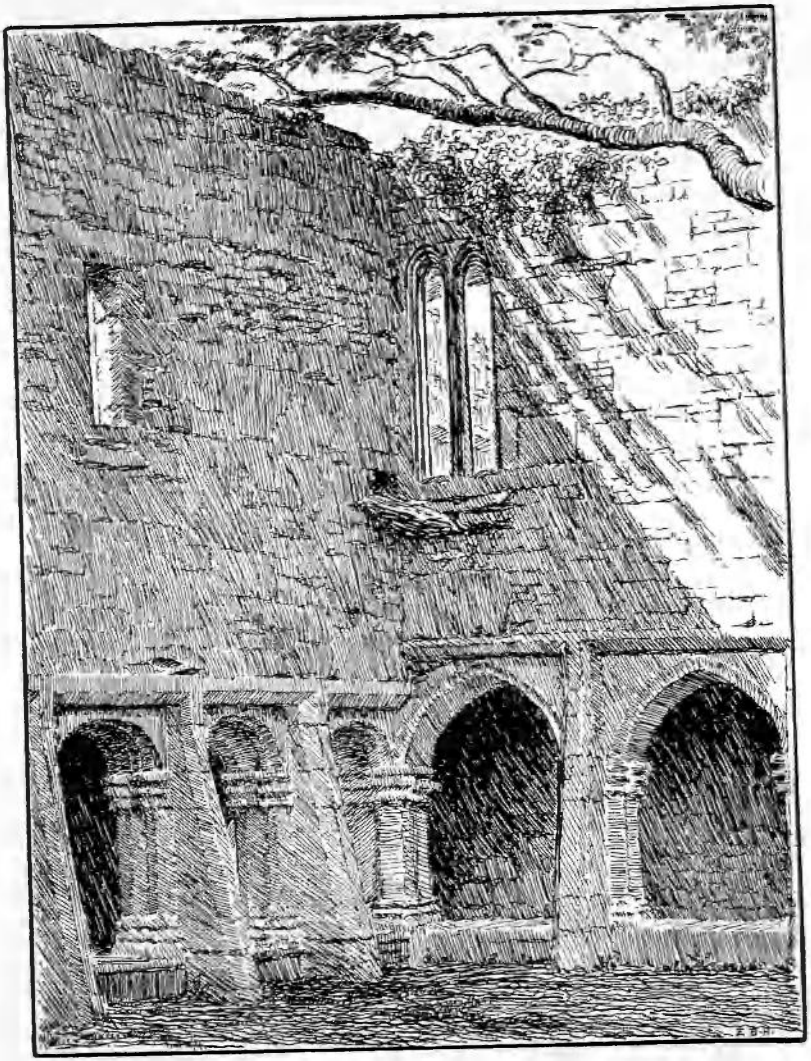


FIG. 12. IRRELAGH (MUCKROSS) ABBEY; NORTH-WEST CORNER OF CLOISTER.

only part of the convent that is not perfectly plain; a doorway through its deep little recess on the north leads into the corner of the cloister.[1] From the dark and tunnel-like vaulted walks[2] six little round arches west and south, five larger ones, slightly pointed, east and north, open into the narrow and solemn 'paradise' whose religious gloom is deepened by the fact that the high walls rise straight over the arches all around, and a huge yew tree in the centre spreads out its branches over the tops of the walls and excludes the sunlight (fig. 12). The arches rest on double shafts, whose details are of the plainest kind, and sloping buttresses against the piers hold up lintels above the arches[3] to prevent their being crushed by the walls. On the ground floor there are only vaulted rooms for stores; a stair from the passage to the sacristy leads straight up on to the floor of the dorter over the eastern side, above chambers and cloister walk. Over the north are the frater and kitchen, with large fireplaces back to back. The west part has more numerous chambers with a squint to the nave of the church. A long alley extends over the southern walk. It is extremely usual though by no means universal that the cloisters of Irish friaries should extend under the buildings, instead of forming aisle-passages against their sides.[4]

Most of the windows at Irrelagh are of normal 'perpendicular' type, but from the frater one may look into the shadowy 'paradise' through a pair of lancets with a mullion between (fig. 12). By the fifteenth century the Gothic style was visibly breaking up after having for more than two hundred years maintained a uniformity through the whole of western Europe that on the whole was surprising, despite very considerable local diversity. The English happily declined to follow the French into the extravagances of 'flamboyant,' and developed a more

[1] It seems to have been the usual practice to have the conventual buildings of friaries on the northern side of the church, probably to help mark the difference between them and the dwellings of monks. Of course there are many individual examples of monks' cloisters on the north side of the churches, though they are exceptional.

Hardly a stone of Irrelagh is out of place to-day, but not a stick of the timbering remains.

[2] Tunnel-vaulting on the south, quadripartite of the roughest kind on the three other sides.

[3] In this respect resembling a well-known principle of Roman construction.

[4] This was also often the case in England, an excellent example being the Blackfriars' convent at Norwich.

sober and reasonable form of late Gothic. The Scots refused to adopt it[1]; the Irish preferred to have a style of their own, characterised chiefly by the revival of features of earlier years, especially lancet windows and round arches. But even at first glance they do not look more ancient than they are; indeed in some cases they are more likely to be taken for the work of the early nineteenth century than for that of the thirteenth.

Candour compels one to admit that this national Irish style, so well exemplified in the friaries, is one of the thinnest, baldest and least striking in all Europe. A greater contrast there could hardly be than between the massive, richly-adorned and deep-moulded little churches of the Irish Romanesque and these large, flat-featured and skinnily-worked structures that rose after four centuries had passed.

The style is best displayed by the friaries, presumably because they were the most important buildings that were going up at the time. They are quite as beautiful as the ordinary secular churches of Ireland, which in contrast with English ones are as a rule exceedingly plain. Good examples in the fourteenth century are the cathedral at Cloyne, associated with the memory of Berkeley, and the very similar collegiate church at Youghal, close to which Raleigh first planted his potatoes. The Irish friaries show but little of the spirit that caused brother John Naverius in the thirteenth century to deprive a friar of his hood at Gloucester, because he had decorated the panels of a pulpit with pictures.[2]

Nor is this Irish style without great beauties of its own. The rather feeble towers of most of the friaries were clearly matter of choice, and not necessitated by any lack of skill. The west tower of the monastic church at Slane (p. 132) is an admirable piece of work, quite equal to an average English 'perpendicular' tower of about the same size and date. It rises unbuttressed at the west end of the church and is very plain, except that the top stage has corner turrets produced by sinking the walls a few inches, each

[1] Except in some individual cases such as Melrose abbey and Corstorphine church.

[2] Thomas of Eccleston, *de Adventu FF. Minorum in Angliam* (*Monumenta Franciscana*, i, 29).

side pierced by a couple of lancets (fig. 13). An exceedingly beautiful feature of Irish work is the tendency for dripstone corbels to consist not merely of a head or boss, but of foliage spreading over quite a space of wall. A good example is in the east window of the aisle of the Austin priory, now the parish church at Adare (p. 125); others may be seen on the stout ashlar walls of the old Lynch house at Galway.[1] In some cases, as at Irrelagh, battering plinths instead of buttresses have a very substantial looking and pleasing effect.

FIG. 13. TOWER AT SLANE.

Among delightful meadows by the Maigue, near the pleasant little village of Adare, there are three large friaries in the open country, and their great and far-seen chapels form a striking contrast to the small and towerless parish church.[2] Thus the 'Four Masters' record the foundation

[1] Other examples are illustrated by Champneys, pl. cv, p. 188.

[2] This simple Romanesque structure was in use till 1806, when the Austin friary took its place. In its yard is an interesting detached chapel called by old residents the earl of Desmond's chapel of ease, and remarkable for having had an original west gallery (or dwelling-room) with seats in the west window. The Trinitarian friary was restored in the early nineteenth century for the Roman Catholics. The Grey friary with the old churchyard and the striking ruins of the castle by the river are in the singularly beautiful demesne of the earls of Dunraven.

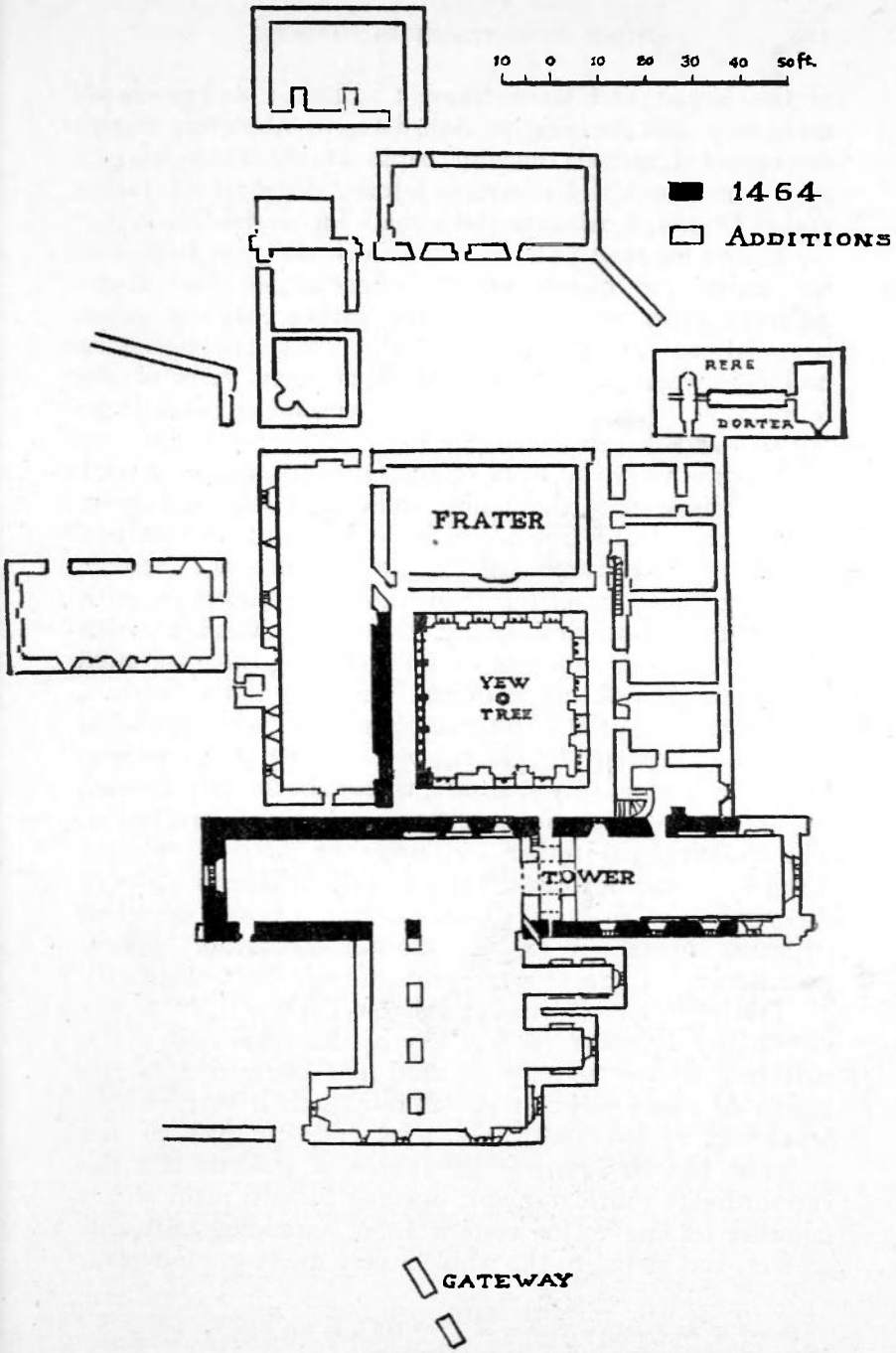


FIG. 14. PLAN OF FRANCISCAN FRIARY, ADARE.

of the largest and latest house : '1464 : a Franciscan monastery was founded at Ath-dara, in Munster, in the diocese of Limerick, on the banks of the river Maigh, by Thomas earl of Kildare, and Joan, daughter of James earl of Desmond, who erected a tomb for themselves in it.'

From a manuscript in the Franciscan library at Louvain[1] we learn the names of the benefactors by whom different parts were erected, and gather that the tower as usual was an afterthought, also that the necessary buildings were provided within about forty years of the foundation, the quire also being lengthened and large transept and chapels added (fig. 14).

In some ways the work of the founders, the west walk of the cloister, with the double arches and octagonal shafts so characteristic of Ireland, and the nave and west part of the quire with three tall lancets piercing the western wall, are more beautiful than the later additions with their rather featureless arches, their large windows with plain intersecting mullions or uninteresting square-headed openings. The chambers on the west side of the cloisters, presumably the prior's house or guest-halls, are remarkable for some striking fireplaces, one having a projecting horizontal arch of fifteen stones, whose abutment is formed by large corbels ; on its cornice are a lion and two leaves. The buildings are rather scattered, the purpose of some being by no means clear. There is no provision for defence except that (of all parts) the rere-dorter, a nearly detached structure north-east of the cloister, is rather poorly crenellated. A yew-tree grows in the middle of the garth.

The lofty tunnel[2] through the tower (plate II, no. 2) was blocked by a timber rood-gallery of the usual style ; the battering steeple above rises thin and ineffective to the height of about eighty feet. The church is very rich in sepulchral recesses with pinnacles and canopies of the plainest, but its strangest peculiarity is undoubtedly the extraordinary south transept, opening by two plain arches (another leading to its western aisle), extending outwards 48 feet, and giving to the whole a very queer ground-plan.

[1] *History of the Franciscan Convents in Ireland*, by Donatus Mooney, 1617, quoted in Lord Dunraven's *Memorials of Adare*, 1865.

[2] This is 24 feet high, but only 9½ feet in width.

Two chapels of unequal length extend from the transept toward the east, while from its western aisle a most unusually-placed south chapel projects towards the west.

Transepts oddly placed and frequently of somewhat undue length are very characteristically Irish. The most interesting example is the late twelfth-century cathedral church at Limerick, which, by the reckless addition of transepts, has become a quasi-five-aisled church, most confused and unsatisfactory in plan. The Arthur chapel, finished after 1500, is larger than the original transepts, but with its great height and huge triplet, opening as it does only by two of the original arches and clerestory windows to the middle aisle, it would not be easy to exaggerate the sprawling and meaningless appearance it presents.

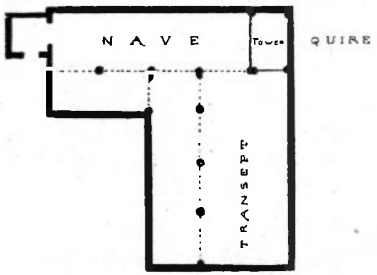


FIG. 15. SKETCH-PLAN OF THE BLACK ABBEY, KILKENNY (not to scale).

The black abbey at Kilkenny, restored about fifty years ago by the Dominican order to which it originally belonged, is a very striking example of this tendency to transeptal eccentricity. The church consists of a nave with southern aisle and south transept wider and of about equal length, having its aisle on the west (fig. 15). That the transept is later than the nave is apparent from the fact that its arcade ends in a respond clumsily plastered against an older pillar; evidently the builders hesitated to put the whole thrust of the new arcade on to a single and none too massive shaft. Similarly an arch thrown across the old aisle in the line of the wall of the new one has a second pillar raised unconformably against another one of the old arcade. The explanation seems to be that soon after the church was finished (or possibly before) it was desired to

enlarge it; and the west porch with chamber above, each open to the nave by a large round arch and each tunnel-vaulted (the lower at right-angles to the axis of the church), prevented extension to the west, while the conventual buildings forbade the erection of more than a single transept.[1]

The confusing appearance of this remarkable building is greatly heightened by the walling-off of the oblong tower which once gave access to the quire, but nothing of this remains. The tower opens by a narrow arch into the transept, instead of, as is usual, being to the east of it. To nave and quire it was open by arches as wide as well could be; the usual tunnel plan is not found here. An inscription on the arch that once led to the quire proves the date of the tower to be not far on either side of the year 1500. A prayer is asked for James Shorthals, lord of Ballylorcan and Ballykyfe, likewise for Katherine Whyte his wife, 'who gave the builders of the tower their daily pay from the beginning to the end.' Their tomb was made in 1507. There are indications that this tower was covered by a very Spanish-looking vault similar to those that still remain in the cathedral churches at Kilkenny and Leighlin, which are to be attributed to the influence of David Hacket, bishop of Ossory 1460–1479.[2]

Another friary having an open tower is the white abbey, or Trinitarian house, at Adare.[3] The tower is of massive fourteenth-century work (plate III, no. 2), and contains several of the little wall-chambers so common in the military architecture both of Scotland and Ireland. The turrets

[1] The building is of the thirteenth century, but it was much altered and provided with large decorated windows in the fourteenth. The Benedictine (now cathedral) church at Chester presents an obvious transept analogy on a vastly larger scale.

[2] He built the tower-vault in his own cathedral of Kilkenny. That of Leighlin is clearly copied from it: probably also that of this house.

[3] Lord Dunraven quotes Lopez, *Noticias Historicas del Orden de la Santissima Trinidad* [*por la*] *Redempcion de Cautivos en Inglaterra, Escocia, y Hybernia*, as authority for its foundation in 1230 by Gregory of Dunbar, earl of March, in gratitude for the redemption of his two nephews from Algerine pirates by friar Cummins, who became the first prior. The first earl of Dunbar to call himself earl of March was Patrick, who succeeded in 1289. There is no Gregory in the list, but George, third earl of March, who succeeded in 1368, suits the date of the existing building.

I cannot help thinking that Lopez, whose work was published in 1714, has some connexion with a manuscript in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, known as 'Historia ordinis SS. Trinitatis.' This manuscript was copied by Father Hay of Roslin, and many inaccurate particulars have at different times been quoted from it: see Dowden, *Bishops of Scotland*, ed. J. Maitland Thomson, p. 376.

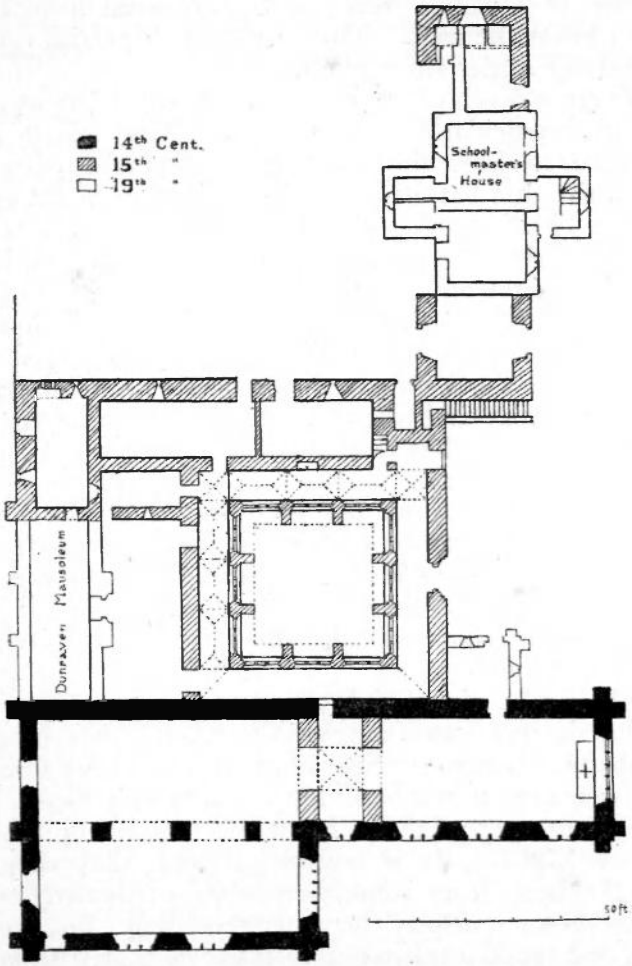


FIG. 16. PLAN OF THE AUSTIN FRIARY (PARISH CHURCH), ADARE.

and parapet must be almost entirely modern, as they do not appear in an old print of 1810, published by Lord Dunraven. The arches within are as wide as they could be, but the position of a piscina shows that there must have been a screen across the west. The simple quadripartite vault has little heads under the corbels.

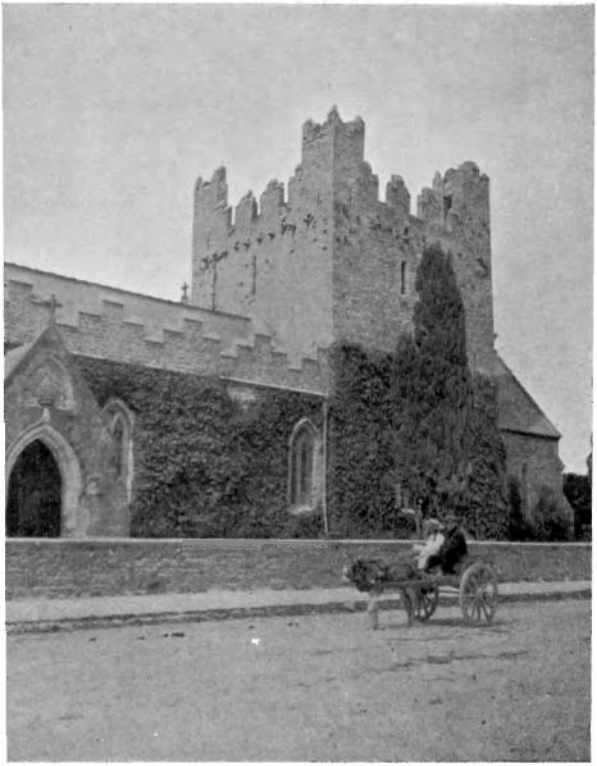
There is much of interest in the Austin friary at Adare, (fig. 16), particularly in the fact that, being still in use, it enables us to realise the very ungainly original appearance of one of the thin battering tunnel-towers, stuck through the roof.[1] The charming little cloister-garth departs from the usual Irish plan by having mullioned windows, instead of arches, three on each side, opening from the walks into 'paradise.' The frater (now the school for Church of Ireland boys and girls) is raised on tunnel-vaulted rooms and over the northern walk; the others have flat concrete over their stone-arched roofs. All these features are of the fifteenth century, but the church, nave, quire and southern aisle, was built about a hundred years before, not all at the same time. Nearly all the windows are of the common intersecting-mullion type, which in England was in vogue for a time at the first birth of tracery, about the end of the thirteenth century, then was not known again till Tudor and Jacobean times. In Ireland it seems to have had a continuous history.

The sedilia of the high altar are of great beauty, displaying the water-moulding with trefoiled arches rising from the shafts. Left to the light of nature and in the absence of documents one would be almost certain this work was earlier than about 1315 when the house was founded by John first earl of Kildare. It is possible, indeed, that they were brought here from somewhere else, particularly as the piscina does not display the water-moulding; but the more likely and simple explanation seems to be that Irish masons, being animated by a deep respect for the past and influenced by a laudable conservatism, declined to move with the times. If they coiscientiously thought the earlier mouldings more beautiful than those in vogue at the time, who will dare to say they were wrong?

[1] The beautiful tower of the Austin friary (now parcial) church at Atherstone is also rather spoilt by the awkward way in which it rises through the tiles of the roof.

[*P. M. Johnston, phot.*

NO. I. ST. FRANCIS' ABBEY, KILKENNY : QUIRE.



NO. 2. TRINITARIAN ABBEY, ADARE: TOWER FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

To face page 127.

The whole appearance and character of many Irish religious houses have been changed in later times by the provision made for their fortification, so much so that in some cases what in truth was an abbey is now universally called a castle. It is not flattering to the Pax Britannica to realise that in early days such defences were not deemed necessary (Mellifont appears originally to have had no fortifications of any kind), but that in the late fourteenth and in the fifteenth centuries, after many years of supposed English rule, a great many religious houses were more or less elaborately crenellated.

Fortified monasteries are by no means confined to Ireland, or even to Europe, or indeed even to the Christian faith. And one might travel all the way from Ireland to the Far East, through Greece and Palestine and Tibet, visiting some sort of fortified monastery or church or temple every few days of the journey. Many and very interesting are the fortified convents of England. In the strongly-placed house of St. Etheldreda at Ely the Saxons under Hereward made their last stand against the Norman conquerors. The defences of St. Mary's abbey at York form a most impressive adjunct to the walls of the city which they join. The cathedral priory at Norwich was fortified long years before the city was walled. The *Paston Letters*[1] tell us how on 6th April, 1452, a lawless age, the defences of the Carmelite friary in the same city preserved certain folk, who may be presumed to have been innocent, from the attack of forty thieves. At one of the gates of St. Edmund's abbey the saints could defend the church by being pushed from their niches on to the heads of assailants, so unmasking loop-holes for arrows that had thoughtfully been provided behind.

But while in England fortified monasteries rested secure behind stout walls and were not architecturally affected, in Ireland it was the claustral buildings themselves that put on the garb of war, and for better defence there was a tendency to prevent the buildings from straggling beyond the single square. It cannot be said that fighting came

[1] Gairdner's ed. (1872) vol. i, no. 179, p. 238, and no. 201, pp. 278–279. Neither of these documents is exactly a letter. No. 179 is headed (by Gairdner) 'A.D. 1452: information of outrages'; and no. 201 'A.D. 1454: information against Robert Ledham.'

altogether unhandy to the Irish; their ancient saints themselves sometimes took up arms. Celtic religious houses were not infrequently fortified, and the round towers had undoubtedly been raised as citadels, though that was not their only use.

The military architecture of Ireland is little less interesting than the ecclesiastical, and the two are often blent. We have already glanced at the fortified west tower of Cashel, standing in a spot defended both by nature and by art (p. 97); the middle tower itself has unmistakably a most aggressive look. The early fourteenth-century chapel added eastward of the ancient quire at Tuam (p. 95) has far-projecting parapets on heavy corbels that would be far more in place on a castle.[1]

The cathedral church at Kildare (p. 110) actually has parapets with machicolations resting on arches that spring from buttress to buttress,[2] making the shrine of St. Bridget look almost as much like a castle as a church, an appearance not altogether unsuited to a place of worship for the Curragh camp, but that in this case serious defence was hardly aimed at is evident from the fact that the communications between the different parapets are open flights of steps over the gables, across which whosoever travels would be an easy mark indeed for any attacking force.

At Mellifont fortification seems to have been confined to a lofty and extremely plain round-arched tower, apparently of the fifteenth century, under which doubtless passed the mediaeval track, though the modern road is on one side (p. 99). A much earlier example of a fortified religious house is given in 1266, when, as the 'Four Masters' tell us, Maelpatrick O'Scannal 'primate of Armagh,'[3] cut a broad and deep trench round the church of the Friars

[1] From Vatican manuscripts quoted in Moran's *Archbishops of Dublin* we learn that it had been used as a fortress by the neighbouring gentry without any service for 300 years, when Christopher Bodkin, who became archbishop in 1555 (and took the oath of allegiance to Elizabeth), restored it to its proper use by force, as is recorded in a letter from David Wolfe, papal delegate to the cardinal protector of Ireland, dated at Limerick in 1561.

[2] There is a marked tendency to reproduce such arches in modern churches, for example St. David's, Exeter, and Liverpool cathedral church.

[3] There is plenty of ancient authority for such an expression, though it hardly seems correct. One would suppose it better to describe the ecclesiastic in question either as archbishop of Armagh or as primate of Ireland.

Minor, having himself brought the order into the city. Not a vestige of trench or church is to be seen.

The abbey of Bective (' de beatitudine '), a Cistercian house founded by Murchard O'Melaghlin, king of Meath, in the middle of the twelfth century, stands on the Boyne, not far from Tara. The buildings are extremely interesting from having been entirely reconstructed during the fifteenth century with a single eye to defence. The west end of the early fourteenth-century church was taken down and a very plain new wall erected in line with the claustral buildings on that side, a purely military piece of work,

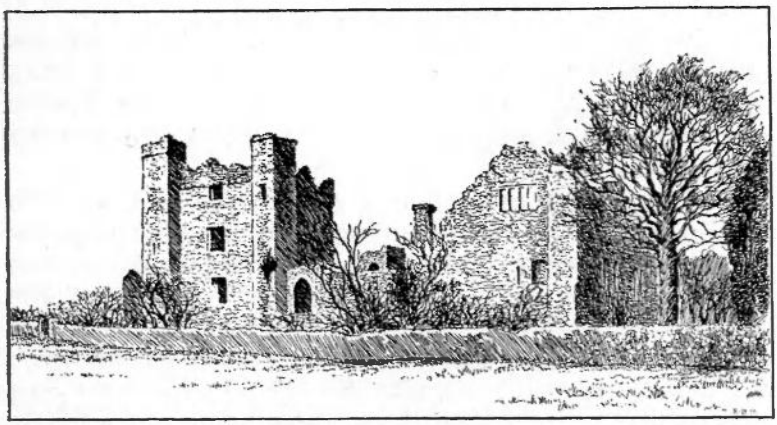


FIG. 17. BECTIVE ABBEY, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.

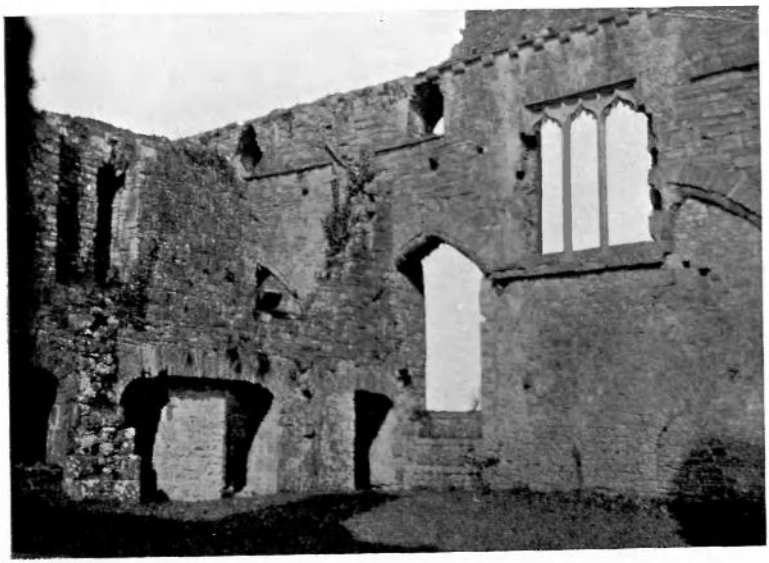
pierced with splayed arrow-slits. The south arcade of the church was walled up and large ' perpendicular ' windows were clumsily pierced to look into a little new ' paradise ' very much like a castle court, cloister walks only west and south (plate IV, no. 2). These meet each other under one corner of a huge square tower with large square turrets and small square windows, whose far sides are exposed to the fields without. This great tower rises high over everything else and seems to proclaim the convent a fortress through the country far around (fig. 17). The two

cloister walks have arches so heavy and flat and badly planned that but for new supports they would long ago have slipped down. Over the southern walk extends the frater, approached by an outside stair of stone, closely watched by a little guard-chamber in a corner of the great tower. The usual arrangements of the order of St. Bernard were evidently much interfered with, and on the east side of 'paradise,' about where one would expect to find the entrance to the chapter-house, a vast chimney projects. The lower fireplace is in a dark square chamber whose gloomy rubble vault rests on an octagonal pier, with round base and square cap; it was probably either the kitchen or the warming-house. The fireplace above belongs to a large hall which may be presumed to have been the dorter, as it touches the transept of the church. Nothing remains of the quire or the northern aisle; they were perhaps taken down when the reconstruction was carried out; at any rate nothing that survives is allowed to project beyond the square save a military outwork on the west.

An interesting example of a religious house that, with its appearance, has changed its modern name is the priory of St. John Baptist of the Crutched friars, to-day known as the 'castle' of Newtown Trim. It stands on the Boyne a little lower than the old priory (p. 107), and although its fortifications are far more conspicuous than any other part, it is remarkable for the possession of a long thirteenth-century church,[1] into which no tunnel-tower was ever thrust. The east wall is pierced by three lancets contained under a segmental arch, and the little northern chapel still retains its tunnel-vault, semi-octagonal responds on the south, neat corbels on the north. Its east window has the double splay that in England is characteristic of Saxon work, and a doorway pierces the northern wall at the very eastern end. This church is on the south side of a long rectangular uncloistered court, whose northern side along the Boyne is formed by a series of flattish vaults, over which rises a tower, and resembles in a general way some of the fortified dwellings of Scotland. At the west end of the court, facing the road, is a regular keep with two great turrets, projecting to the north and south

[1] 119 × 24 feet.

NO. I. ANCIENT IRISH MASONRY AT TOMGRANEY CHURCH.



NO. 2. BECTIVE ABBEY: NORTH-WEST CORNER OF CLOISTER COURT.

from the north-east and south-west. The lower stage is roughly tunnel-vaulted, the two upper have corbels for floors of wood. In this house, too, the fortifications seem to belong to the fifteenth century.

Some idea of the destination of the different parts may be gathered from the inventory taken at the surrender to Henry VIII by Laurence White, the last prior, on 16th July, 1539, when the house is described as 'containing a church, two towers, an hall, storehouse, kitchen, brew-house, two granaries, a pigeon-house and haggard.'[1]

How far in this distressful land went the idea that spiritual men must frequently wage carnal warfare is apparent from a grant made in 1378 by Richard II to the Carmelite friars at Leighlin 'in consideration of the great labour, burden and expence which the priors of this monastery have and do sustain in supporting their house and the bridge contiguous thereto against the king's enemies.'[2] In other words a harmless community of friars became a more or less recognised royal garrison, whose duty it was to keep open communications by guarding an important bridge over the Barrow. After the dissolution the friary was maintained as an ordinary stronghold, known as the Black Castle; the existing remains by the weedy river, facing the half-ruined town of Leighlin Bridge, show that the friars lived behind a stout curtain-wall, and a heavy oblong tower still speaks of the lawless past.

An interesting example of a very late religious house abandoning all architectural traditions, actually detached from the church and indistinguishable from an ordinary fortified dwelling, may be seen at Slane, looking over the Boyne to the plain of Meath from a ridge of wooded hills. It is a very ancient site of monastic worship, and the 'Four Masters' record in 948 how 'The belfry of Slaine was burned by the foreigners, with its full of relics and distinguished persons, together with Caeineachair, lector of Slaine, and the crozier of the patron saint, and a bell the best of bells.'

[1] *Rot. Pat.* E. A. Conwell, *Hist. and Arch. Ass. of Ireland*, 1874. The house was granted to Robert Dillon.

[2] Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum*, 1786. However, possibly the meaning is simply that the priors had the burden of maintaining a body of armed laymen to hold the bridge.

The long and very narrow ruined church[1] is not specially remarkable, except perhaps for the three rude pointed arches whose rough rubble masonry starts prac-

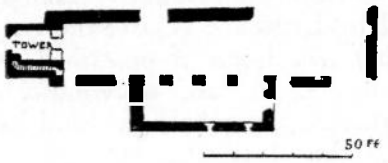


FIG. 18. SLANE FRIARY CHURCH.

tically from the ground, opening (with another smaller arch) into a south aisle (fig. 18).

In 1512 the convent was refounded by Sir Christopher

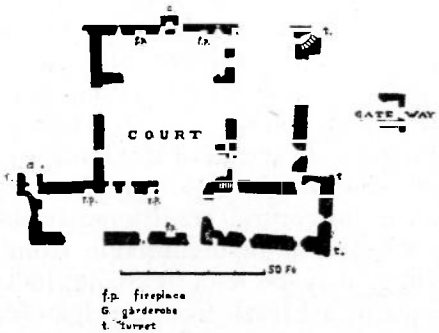


FIG. 19. SLANE FRIARY.

Fleming, and the present roofless house evidently dates from that time, though not all erected at once.[2] The small

[1] Its later west tower has already been mentioned (p. 120).

[2] This is very evident from the irregularity of the plan; the two parts of the south side are not in a straight line. There seems, however, to be very little difference in date.

uncloistered court has buildings on the north and south and east, but only a wall on the west (fig. 19). Turrets and fragments of parapets with remains of a gateway to the east show that some care was taken for defence; the fireplaces and transomed windows with two very well arranged garderobes show that some attention was paid to comfort. One lower room retains a tunnel-vault, a shelter for cattle to-day, for all is in neglect.[1] The original inmates of the house were Franciscans of the third order, which properly consisted of laymen who did not leave the world, but maintained the same sort of organisation for good works as the famous confraternity of the Misericordia at Florence. The first two orders were for friars and friaresses. It seems that some observed the full vows of the order, but nevertheless in their modesty refused to claim the stricter profession. From the great comfort of the buildings here one might be tempted to guess that perhaps it formed a training place for laymen, who came for a season to prepare for the work they had to do in the world, but I know of nothing whatever to support the conjecture.

Fortified churches were still built in later days on the unpeaceful Irish soil. The parish church of Antrim, dated 1596, an interesting example of the Gothic of that time, has its mullioned windows placed high in the thick and well-built walls, which below them are loop-holed for musketry.

Much of value has been written about the history of monasticism in Ireland, but very little about its special architectural arrangements. Many famous houses are not mentioned, because I have been unwilling to depart from my strict rule to set nothing down but from personal observation, but I trust enough has been said to show that many things in Ireland were very different from anything to be seen elsewhere, and also that much light may be thrown from the other island on the arrangement of friaries in England. Earlier students were apt almost to make it an axiom that certain not inconsiderable dimensions

[1] For the plans of this house I am indebted to Mr. T. J. Westropp, whose excellent works in the publications of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland are well and most favourably known.

were essential for architectural effect. We now see that a little wayside shrine may have more significance to the investigator than a cathedral of a hundred times its size. If what I have written helps to send English antiquaries wandering through the byways of Ireland the work will not be altogether in vain.