

ART. II.—*The Travels of Sir Guilbert de Launoy in the North of England and elsewhere, 1430.* By COLONEL OLIVER H. NORTH, D.S.O.

Read at Carlisle, April 15th, 1920.

AFTER the Armistice I was quartered at the Château d'Auvaing, Hainault, Belgium, the residence of the Comte de Launoy, Master of the Household of H.M. the Queen of the Belgians. Among other interesting things, he showed me the old French [MS. of the diary of his ancestor, Guilbert de Launoy, a great traveller, statesman and soldier.

In 1430 Sir Guilbert passed through Cumberland and Westmorland, coming from Scotland, and took boat at Cockersand, near Glasson Dock, for Ireland on a pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory. The Count has kindly copied the following extracts relating to the journey, with a biographical notice, which I think will prove of interest.

Guilbert de Launoy, born in 1386, began his career at the age of 13 in an expedition against the Isle of Wight; and hardly a year passed, until his death at the age of 76, without some event of military or diplomatic service. In 1401, on a second expedition against England, he was shipwrecked near St. Malo, and then for two years was travelling in Palestine, Egypt, Turkey and the Greek islands. After serving in the war on Liège in 1404 he went through two campaigns against the Moors of Spain; and in 1410 he was fighting the English in France. In 1413 he joined the Teutonic Knights in their attack on the Lithuanians and Esthonians, and was knighted in the August of that year.

In 1414 he made his first attempt at a pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory, a shrine which attracted many devotees from the middle of the 12th century to 1497, in the belief that the mystical experiences there undergone would afford them remission of their sins. The place was a cave on an island in Lough Derg in the west of Central Ireland, then a very wild country and to be reached only by a journey of the most arduous and adventurous kind. The experiences, after long prayer and fasting, were said to be at least awe-inspiring, if not dangerous; it was reported that some of the penitents never returned from the cave. But the efficacy of the rite was so widely accepted that people ventured from all parts of Christendom to attempt this hazardous purification. In 1497 the cave was destroyed by authority from the Pope; but annual pilgrimages were subsequently made to the site, and became scenes of disorder. In 1623 the Lords Justices ordered the demolition of all buildings on the island and the cult was transferred later to another island in Lough Derg where the ceremonies were re-established in the "Prison Chapel" of St. Patrick and the confessional chapel of St. Mary.

On his first attempt Sir Guilbert was captured by the English, and ransomed by his prince, Jean Sans Peur, Duke of Burgundy. He was wounded and taken prisoner again at the battle of Agincourt, 1415, to be ransomed a second time and to serve through the war which followed, but now on the English side to which the new Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, was an adherent. At the close of the fighting Sir Guilbert was sent to England to share in the negotiations for the Treaty of Troyes, by which Henry V. was recognized as King of France and his marriage with the French princess Catherine was arranged.

De Launoy was then created first chamberlain to the Duke of Burgundy, and in 1420 he was sent to the East

to collect intelligence for the duke and the two kings on the harbours and defences of Egypt and Syria, with a view to a new crusade. He returned in 1422 with his report, one copy of which was addressed to Henry V., whose death prevented the prosecution of an enterprise which might have had far-reaching effects on the history of the Near East. That copy of the report is among the Hatton MSS. in the British Museum; another copy, bought many years ago in Flanders, was described by Granville Penn in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, vol. I.

Sir Guilbert then served in Holland against the Duchess of Gloucester, and went on a mission to Germany in 1428. He was one of the original knights of the Golden Fleece in 1429, and next year made the successful pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory which is here described, followed by another pilgrimage to Santiago in Spain in 1437. After acting as ambassador to the German Emperor and to the French Dauphin, he and his brother were entrusted with the revision of the statutes of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Later, he reported as adviser to the duke on a proposal for a Grand Council or parliament. He made one more voyage to Palestine in 1459, and carried out negotiations at various European capitals for a combined attack on the Turks, which resulted in a series of naval victories during a campaign of three years.

Sir Guilbert de Launoy, captain of l'Ecluse, lord of Tronchiennes, Wattignies, Willervale, Beaumont, Wahagnies, la Motte and Maugré, died on April 2nd, 1462, and was buried in the church of St. Maurice at Lille. His celebrity as a traveller, diplomat and observer of men and manners, gives an especial interest to the brief record of his journey of 1430, though it adds to our regret that the details he has left are so meagre. They show, at any rate, the routes available to a stranger in the early half of the fifteenth century, and pay in passing an

interesting compliment to "merry Carlisle," where the Arthurian tradition was evidently a matter of local pride.

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On March 4th, 1430, Sir Guilbert de Launoy left l' Ecluse [Sluis, near Bruges] on an embassy to the king of Scots, intending also to go on pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory in Ireland. Landing at Sandwich he passed through 'Hunditon' [Huntingdon] a walled town; 'Doncastre,' a large unfortified town on the river Don; York, a walled town with castle and archbishop's seat on the Ouse. Then by the port of Hull to Newcastle, a walled town with a castle on the Tyne; and thence to 'Bambourg' a very strong castle, with a village and priory upon a rock overlooking the sea, and Berwick, a walled and well garrisoned town with a strong castle on the Tweed which forms the boundary between England and Scotland. The town is on the Scottish side but belongs to the English.

Thence to 'Donbar,' a town ruined by the wars but possessing a strong castle on the shore of the sea; and to St. Andrews, a good town, not walled, with a fine church dedicated to St. Andrew, a fine castle, and the best bishop's seat in Scotland. Thence to 'St. Jehanstoen' [Perth], a good un-walled town with a Carthusian monastery on the Tay, and to Stirling, a fairly good market town, un-walled, on the Forth, which is crossed by a bridge. Here there is a very strong castle on a rock, built, they say, by king Arthur. He stayed next at Dumfries, a good town, un-walled, on the Nith which falls into the Irish Sea at a distance of four miles.

Thence to Carlisle, a very pretty little town, enclosed with walls and possessing a very fine castle and cathedral. Here, it is said, King Arthur held his court and had his palace. The distance from Carlisle on the Irish Sea to 'Bervich' on the Flemish Sea is sixty miles the one to the other.

Thence to Lancaster, an un-walled town with a large castle, fairly fine, on the Lune; the tide comes up to the wharves, and this is the seat of a duchy. From hence to 'Conequessant' [Cockersand], an abbey of regular canons.

On May 22nd he crossed to Ireland and landed at 'Drouda' [Drogheda], a walled town on the Boyne three miles from the sea; the distance from Lancaster to Drogheda is 100 to 120 miles. Thence to Kells, a town very poorly fortified but still within the pale of the king of England on the frontier of the wild Irish;

here there is a poor abbey. Thence to 'Cavaen' [Cavan], a poor and unwalled town belonging to king 'Auraly' [O'Reilly] who lives in a poor tower above the town. Thence to 'Coloniensy' [Clones], a little village, going on foot through the forest because horses could not pass among the fallen trees, and as far as a great lake [Lough Erne] where the lordship of king Auraly ends and that of king 'Magmir' [? Maguire*] begins. It is said that this lake includes 160 islands, and empties itself into the North-western sea [Donegal Bay]. Thence to a village and an island named 'Rousseaux-Moustier' where dwells a chief who possesses 1500 boats, called Macanienus [? Macguinness*], a subject of king Macmir. He lent us a boat to go to St. Patrick's cave, and we visited several islands, very poor places with little ancient churches and poverty-struck abbeys, before reaching the island of St. Patrick's Purgatory, where there is a chapel of St. Patrick and four or five cottages. At twelve miles from this island there is a port for great ships, on the North-west, in the country of king 'Adrinlyoris' [? O'Clery*], king of the wild Irish, and this part is named Asroe [Assaroe, Ballyshannon].

From the cave of St. Patrick we returned to Drogheda and at a distance of 36 miles further we reached Dublin, a walled town with a very fine castle, square in plan and with waterless ditches. Here is the seat of justice for the king of England, who is the overlord of the Irish.

Thence by sea to Chester, a very good town, walled and with a very strong castle and keep on the Dee; to Lichfield, a very good little town, unwalled, but there is a cathedral very well secured at night and the most beautiful church in England, with a bishop's seat. Thence to 'Conventry' [Coventry], a very good market town, to Daventry, to Dunstable, to Saint Albans and to London. Thence we paid a visit to Queen Catherine [widow of Henry V.], who was at 30 miles distance from London in a pleasure-house named Plassiet [Pleshey, Essex], where there is a deer-park. We returned to London and thence travelled to Dover.

* These identifications are kindly suggested by Canon James Wilson, Litt.D.