

Maguire's Bridge, (1)
Saturday, Nov 20th 1834

Dear Sir,

I send you the name books of Galloon, Drummully, a part of Currin and a part of Aghalurcher containing the islands.

In Galloon you will find a townland called Cloghagaddy meaning the thief's stone. The name is derived from a remarkable stone in the townland about the height of a man and terminating like a sugar loaf. The name is accounted for by a story about a thief who was stealing a sheep. He had the sheep tied on his back by a rope around his breast, and when he was passing by this stone he leaned his burden against it, but the sheep slipped over the stone and the rope slipping up to the thief's neck actually hanged him.

I refer you to the clins again, please to give them full consideration before they are engraved. The parish priest of Galloon writes Clan, and the pronunciation among the peasantry is CLUIN.

There are two topographical words of frequent occurrence in this county, which I have not met in any other, viz, CREUCH, and CREACH, the peasantry assert that they have the same meaning, viz, a mountain level. In the islands of Aghalurcher the CREACH frequently occurs. I have anglicized it Creagh, its diminutive is CREACHAIN.

Clonis is always called Clownish among the country people. They tell many curious legends about the round tower and monastery some of which I shall write as soon as I reach Enniskillen. It is now too late, and I am in no humour to write stories as I am sitting in a cold uncomfortable room.

I intend (Deo adjuvante) to go to Enniskillen tomorrow, passing through Derrybrush, where I want to make some enquiries.

Yours invariably,
John O'Donovan.

COMMENT

(1) According to the Ordnance Survey Memoirs there was no building of any note in Maguiresbridge and its inns were very inferior in comfort and accomodation. Neither did any of the 155 houses exhibit any particular architectural elegance. The town in general exhibited a poor appearance and in wet weather in particular it was very dirty. The town was noted for its horse fairs although these had gone into something of a decline. Its great horse fair was on the 12th of January each year. In the village were three blacksmiths, four bakers, seven butchers, four carpenters, two coopers, one chandler, three nailers, three apothecaries, sixteen shoemakers, six tailors, one hatter, three wheelwrights,

three weavers, two painters and glaziers, one process officer and twenty publicans and apparently no grocers.

(2) In the O.S. Memoirs, Mulligan was the name of the thief who was hanged by his stolen sheep at Cloghagaddy.

* * *

Monday
Enniskillen, Novr 24th 1834.

Dear Sir,

I arrived here yesterday at 12 o'clock and got all the extracts &c, sent up by you. The Annals throw great light on Muintir-Pheodachain and I was much pleased to find that the Mac Gillinnions were its ancient chiefs, because they are at present by far the most numerous family in the district, but have shamefully anglicized their name to Leonard. The family of Muintir-Pheodachain also exists in Fermanagh but they are fast changing the name to Swift, from some fancied signification of the name.

The following passage throws great light upon the situation of the territory:-

A.D. 1429. "Many of the men of Breifny were slain by Muintir Pheodachain or Tulach odra on Sliabh da Chon." &c, &c."

These names do not become interesting until they are connected with the present ones. Tullagh odra is yet the name of a townland in the parish of Devenish, and Slieve Da Chon is so called at this day by the Irish speaking people of the district but by those who speak the English, the Two Dogs. Slieve Da Chon signifies the mountain of the Two Dogs, and there is a wild tradition in the country that Fin Mac Cool's two famous greyhounds Sgeolan and Bran, were metamorphosed into two mountains by a witch who appeared to them in the shape of a doe. Mr. Johnston of Aghakeeran, a famous sportsman in his day, calls these two hills the "Two Beags."

They are about a mile asunder, and the larger is called by peasantry AN CHOIN MHOR, and the smaller AN CHOIN BHEAG but Big Dog and Little Dog are now the established names in the country, and the mountain district is called Sliabh Da Chon by all. (1) I send you a trace from the Grand Jury Map of Fermanagh which shows the situation of this mountain.

I can never forget the story of the two dogs or the interesting individual who told it to me and Mr. Taylor at Derrygonnelly. A Mr. Hugh O'Flannigan (Baron of Tooraa) came to Derrygonnelly about ten o'clock in the night to give me all of the information in his power about the territory of his ancestors. He made a vow against whiskey drinking (except two glasses in the day) and when we were

done with Tooraa, Hugh started for home, but finding it was after midnight he thought it a pity to leave Derrygonnelly without taking his allowance, so he returned to the village and remained in a public house until the moon got up. He had with him at the time the makings of a pair of shoes of leather, and unfortunately he forgot it in the public house, and had to search for it in vain the next day! Hugh came to me and said that he lost his leather on my account, and that Capt. Taylor or I was bound to give him the price of it. Neither of us were willing to pay the amount of the lost leather and Hugh declared that he felt the more about the loss of it, than about his ancestor's loss of Tooraa. If ever I go to Tooraa again, I must make O'Flannigan some restitution for the loss of his leather, for I could not convince him that he was rescuing the name of his family from oblivion. He thinks very little about them as they left him nothing.

You will find the situation of Ballyflanigan pointed out in Mr. Taylor's Statistical account of Inish macsaint, and a description of the beautiful ruin of his chapel in Aghamore, which was erected in 1498.

I met a very clever and enlightened Milesian in the parish of Clones, Mr. Con O'Neill, the Goban Saer of the district. He is an architect, a goldsmith, a watchmaker and a carpenter. It would be very difficult to convince Con that the round tower of Clones was older than the ruin of the monastery. He says that the country people always style it SEAN-CHLAIGHTHEACH A T-SEIPEIL (Sean-Chloigtheach?), or the old belfry of the chapel, and that there is a tradition current among the peasantry that there is a silver bell lying under the ground in a place immediatly under the tower formerly a quagmire, but now converted to a meadow and garden. The peasantry also say that this tower was built by the daughter of Goban Saer, and that when she was finishing the cone a boy looked up under her clothes, which when she perceived she leaped down into the quagmire already referred to, where she was immediatly swallowed up and lost, an example to that sex of the danger of becoming architects or masons.

It is said that a subterranean passage leads from a small river east of the town to the moat which commands it at the distance of about 50 perches, but the people believe that this had no connection with the tower or monastery.

The aboriginal families of Clones and its vicinity are the following, according to Con O'Neill, who is intimately connected with the country:-

0 O'Flannon in Maguire's Bridge.

1. Mac Alece, MAC GIOLLA-IOSA.
2. Mac Aloone, MAC GIOLLA-DHOMHNAIGE now Anglicized Mondays, but Sundays would be better.(3)
3. O'Scollan.

4. O'Creighans, Anglicized Creightons, Con tells a curious anecdote of Col Creighton and one of these.

5. O'Mulligan, now Millineaux.(4)

6. Mac Caffry.

7. Mullarky. (5)

8. Tierny, O'TIGHEARNAIGH. (6)

9. Mac Brian, now made O'Brien. (7) This family is mentioned in the Maguire MS., as one of the principal families of Fermanagh under Maguire.

10. Mac Giolla Choingle now shamefully made Cosgrove!! (8)

11. Mac Mahon. (9)

12. O'Kegly now Quigly. (10)

13. Mag Gilguns, now Gun. (11)

14. O'Gowan now Smith, very numerous. (12)

15. O'Connelly. (13)

16. O'Becan, now translated Little. (14)

17. O'Loingey, now Lynchy. (15)

18. O'Caudan now Cadan. Mentioned in the Maguire MS. as one of the distinguished families of Fermanagh, who resided at SITH MHOR BHAIU U CHADAIN. (16)

19. Mac Sgollog's now Farmers. (17)

20. Mackaroony. There is a manor now belonging to Trinity College named after this family. It extends about 6 miles in length and 4½ in breadth in the parish of Clones. It is called Sliocht Mulroony.

21. O'Monaghan. (18)

22. Sherry, in Irish O'SEARHAIGE.

23. Traynor, O'TRENFHIR. (19)

24. Mac Geehan, now Godwin!!

25. and last my old friends, the Mac Guiggins. (20) One of the names of the only atheist in the parish who believes that the devil is a bugbear got up by the clergy to make money. The curse of St. Columbkille seems to follow them to the south as Clones!

Yours invariably,
John O'Donovan.

COMMENT.

(1) The "Dogs" are now surrounded by newly planted conifer forests and in future will be difficult to see. This mountainous area between Garrison and Derrygonnelly known as The Dogs or in Irish, Slieve Da Chon, the Mountain of the Two Dogs. The hills are supposed to be the two hounds of Finn Mac Cool who were metamorphosed into adjacent hills by a witch who had taken on the shape of a doe. O'Donovan records this story but has less than a love of stories of Finn Mac Cool and the Danes. He is sick of inane stories about them and comments dryly in a letter from Maghera on September 3rd, 1834, that everything in Ireland was erected by the Danes or Finn MacCool. He traces a lot of this Finn Mac Cool and the Danes to books such as Hugh McCurtin's, History of Ireland, which had such an effect on the mind of the people that these mythical super humans took over from many of the previous associations of place in the countryside.

(2) Clones is the most ancient of Monaghan's towns according to Fr. Livingstone's, "The Monaghan Story". From the Parliamentary Gazetteer in Ireland he quotes the following figures to show how busy the town was in the early 19th century. The number of weekly carts from Clones to Dublin was 11, to Belfast 8 and to Dundalk and Newry 130. On average the sales in the town's markets during 1833-1835 were 25,800 cwt of wheat, 44,360 of barley and rye, 38,900 cwt of oats, 2,700 cwt of flax, 2,500 cwt of butter, 1,500 cwt of eggs, 3,600 sheep and lambs and 31,200 pigs plus a very extensive trade in linen.

(3) Mac Aloone is a name that originated in Tyrone according to Mc Lysaght.

(4) The O'Mulligans originated in Baylagh and Raphoe in Donegal before coming to Fermanagh.

(5) The Mullarky family were also a Donegal family before moving to Connaught. Some then have found their way to Fermanagh.

(6) Tierny is a variation on the name Mc Kernan and in Fermanagh are the descendants of Tiarnan, brother of Odhar, from whom the Maguires descended. They were probably based about Lisnarick and in time became victims of the relentless expansion of Maguires through the county. Other Mc Kernans descend either from an important branch of the O'Rourkes of Tullyhunco, County Cavan or an east Roscommon sept.

(7) Mac Brian and its variations are treated under BREEN by Fr Livingstone in, "The Fermanagh Story". He believes them to be descended from Brian, grandson of Manus from whom the Mc Manus family trace their descent. Thus this family is also related to the Maguires. The original family centre seems to have been in Aghalurcher Parish but later it shifted to the Parish of Inishmacsaint about four miles east of Belleek in the vicinity of Slavin.

(8) The Cosgrove family were prominent in the church and were herenachs of Derrybrusk.

(9) Many Mac Mahons in Fermanagh can be traced to the great Monaghan Mc Mahons but there are some who are descendants of Mahon Maguire, the grandson of Don Carrach Maguire, and who in time formed their own sept.

(10) The Quigly family were herenachs of Clontivrin and are still common in the Clones area. The name has been frequently anglicised to Fivey.

(11) The family name of Gunn was common in the Holywell region of Fermanagh and its most notable personality was Cathal Bui Mac Giolla Gunna, the Gaelic poet (1666-1756) whose fondness for poetry was perhaps only equalled by his fondness for women and drink.

(12) Smiths can be English or of the Mac Gabhann sept of Cavan or O'Gabhann from Fermanagh. This last name turns up in variations such as Goan, O'Goan, Gavin and plain Smith.

(13) According to Fr Gallagher in the Clogher Record in 1957 the O'Connelly family can have either a Fermanagh or Monaghan origin. The Fermanagh branch originated in Lurg and were related to St Mogue and were centred at Connolly's Town near Pettigo. They were herenachs of the chapel of Ballioconnell and in addition had the care of his chapel at Killybeg about three miles east of Garrison. He suggests that they gave their name to Derrygonnelly, "O'Connolly's Oakwood".

(14) Beggan or Little is a common name in the Clones, Rosslea, Donagh area. It is a British name as well as being the anglicised version of an Irish name.

(15) Lynchy or Lynch has proved a difficult name to trace. Apart from the Norman name de Lench and the Donegal name Mac Loingsigh (Mc Glinchy) there are separate and distinct families who have anglicised to Lynch in Cork, Cavan, Clare, Tipperary and Antrim.

(16) Cadans frequently anglicised to Adams. The Gaelic family were centred in the Rosslea/Clones area.

(17) The Farmers were herenachs in Aghalurcher and Rossorry and they were also common in Cleenish.

(18) The O'Monaghan family according to Mc Lysaght originated in an area between Elphin and Jamestown but they seem to have flourished in west Fermanagh and the adjacent area around Lough Derg in Donegal. In this latter area they were lay workers and tenants of the monastic lands. Fr Gallagher suggests that they may descend from the old Fir Manach or Men of Manach from whom Fermanagh gets its name.

(19) Traynor is the seventh most common name in County Monaghan and possibly comes from "trean" meaning strong and "fear" meaning man.

(20) Godwin and Mac Guiggin are variants of the same name and seem to have come from Tyrone and settled about Enniskillen and in Clankelly.

* * *

Enniskillen, November 24th 1834

Dear Sir,

I send back all the extracts from the Annals and Inquisitions, and will take the coach for Dublin on Wednesday morning. I send all my vouchers, &c. &c. I incurred no expense by travelling since my arrival in Fermanagh except two shillings which I paid to the fisherman for rowing me and Lt. Taylor across Lough Melvin. I have spent a long time in the county, but I have not been a minute idle day or night, and I have been under considerable expense in entertaining old sheanchies for whom I sent to the mountains.

The original Irish name of Aghalurcher is ACHADH URCHAIR (the name also used by the Four Masters) which means the field of the shot or cast, the name is accounted for, as usual, by a legend about the patron saint. The people disputed about the place where the church was to be erected, and they finally came to the agreement to cast a stone into the firmament by a sling (CRANN TABHAILL) and to build the church upon the spot in which God would permit it to fall. The stone was flung, and fell at a considerable distance from the place on the beautiful field not far from the eastern bank of Lough Erne, where the ruins of the old church are now to be seen. The patron saint gave this place the name Achadh Urchair (field of the shot) from this circumstance.

The mountain range called Sliabh Beatha according to the tradition among the peasantry near Clones, runs through the counties of Monaghan and Fermanagh, a distance of 24 Irish miles. It terminates in the townland of Coolnasillagh within about 5 miles of Lough Erne. It forms a great territory and the people who reside on it style themselves the inhabitants of Slieve Beatha and welcome all their guests and visitors in the chiming words of:- SE DO BHEATHA AIR SHLIABH BEATHA, i.e. you are welcome on (to) Slieve Beha.

This is the famous mountain in the large Carn, on which the Ante-Diluvian Bieth was interred by the seraglio of women who attended him. The story is given at full length in the Leabhar Gabhala and in Keating. (1)

I have the honour of being the first, who in modern times discovered the situation of this mountain of ante-diluvian celebrity, but I have been very much

disappointed in finding that, instead of Bith, Dalach is the commander in chief of its fairies. It grieves me that Bith should have lost that honour. Dalach now resides in Carn Mor the very carn in which Bith was interred, and his ancient castle is sometimes seen in the lake beneath it. I do not believe the story about the Ante-diluvian Bith, but I am satisfied that the mountain took its name from a man of that name at a remotely ancient period.

Bith, gen Baha; (Beatha?) was a man's name for a long time in Ireland and in the Irish parts of Scotland, and Shakespeare has immortalized a man of the name (Mac Beth). We have still in Ireland a family that derived their surnames from a progenitor of the name, viz. Mac Beatha now Anglicized as Mac Veagh.

There is a townland in the parish of Clones of the name Crookada. It was to a very late period called CROC EADAR DA CHREUCE, i.e. hill between two Creaghs or mountain flats. A branch of the Cassidys the ancient physicians of Fermanagh reside here yet, and hold a considerable portion of the mountain. About 40 years ago Luke Cassidy, the father of the present farmer of CROC EADAR, came to the house of his landlord Mr. Madden of Spring-Grove in the parish of Clones to pay his rent.

On coming up to the hall door Luke was met by Lord Erne, Mr Madden's brother-in-law, who asked him where he was going. Cassidy replied, "I am going to give justice." "Are you a magistrate?", exclaimed his Lordship in surprise. "No," replied Cassidy: "How is it possible that a man in your garb can distribute justice?" Cassidy: "Justice is not always given by men well-dressed! L.E. "And what sort of justice are you going to give?" Cas: "I am going to give my Land-lord his rent, is that not giving him justice," L:E: "Upon my honour it is, Sir, will you give it to me?" Cassidy: "I will sir, provided you give me a receipt and spell the name of the townland in which I live. L:E: "What is the name of the townland my gay fellow?" Cas: CROC EADAR DHA CHREUCE: Sir, now spell it for me. L: E: Cruck, addur, waw. Cassidy: No! No! it is not waw, but DHA: try it again. L: E: Cruck-eddur gaw. Cas: No! No! bee mee shoul dat wont spell it, you must give it the real (rale) ould Irish twang before I pay you me monic.

By this time Mrs. Madden came to the door and brought news to the company who were about to sit down to dinner, that one of Mr. Madden's tenants from the mountain was teaching Lord Erne how to spell! Upon which Mr. Madden himself came out and received the rent from Cassidy of CROC EADAR DA CHREUCH.

Luke often told this with great humour to Con O'Neill of Rosslea, who told it to me with great humour and Milesian wit. The name is now shortened to Cruckada, upon which spelling I have decided, though I should be very anxious to preserve the descriptive one of Crockadderdagreagh, or at least, Crockadder.