

DRAT MUIRE

A DIOCESAN MAGAZINE UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE MOST
REVEREND MICHAEL BROWNE, D.D., D.C.L., BISHOP OF GALWAY AND
KILMACDUAGH, AND APOST. ADM. OF KILFENORA

Editor: FATHER LIAM POWER, C.C., Craughwell

Business Manager: FATHER MALACHY HALLINAN, Saint Mary's College

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FOCUS ON . . .

Shrule

FOR VARIOUS REASONS the Parish of Shrule holds a unique place in the Galway Diocese. In the first instance, it is the only portion of his native county of Mayo over which the present distinguished bishop holds jurisdiction, as was the case also a century ago with one of his predecessors, Doctor John MacEivilly. Then this parish, surrounded as it is on all sides by the Archdiocese of Tuam, is completely isolated from the remainder of the diocese to which it belongs. And if one were to enumerate other distinctions which might be claimed by Shrule, it could be mentioned that it is the only part of the Galway Diocese which can lay reasonable claim to have been visited by our National Apostle, and is therefore the earliest Christian foundation in Ireland's youngest diocese. There is, perhaps, no other parish which has had such a chequered career, as it belonged, in turn, to the ancient dioceses of Cong and Annaghdown, then to the Archdiocese of Tuam, and later to the Wardenship of Galway, before being finally included in the diocese which replaced that peculiar institution. Should credence be given to our most ancient legends, it might still further be added that Shrule district was the first part of the present Galway Diocese to be inhabited in pre-historic times.

The Name

The name is written as *Sruthair* by the Four Masters in the year 1570, and also by Mac Firis in his *Pedigree of the Mac William Iochtair*. The word is a variation of *Sruth* or *Sruthan*, a stream or river, and therefore the place takes its name from the Black River which runs beside it, dividing County Mayo from County Galway

there. The tradition, quoted by some historians, that it derived its name from *Sruth-fuil* or the Stream of Blood, is, according to O'Donovan, a fabrication and grammatically incorrect. A battle fought here in 1570 is given as the reason for the bloodshed but the place had been called *Sruthair* long before this battle; in fact, the first attempt at the anglicisation of the name is found in a thirteenth century document, where it is given as *Strothyr*. In succeeding centuries, it is variously presented as *Shrure*, *Shrower*, *Sruhír*, etc., but the "r" was not introduced into the name until the seventeenth century.

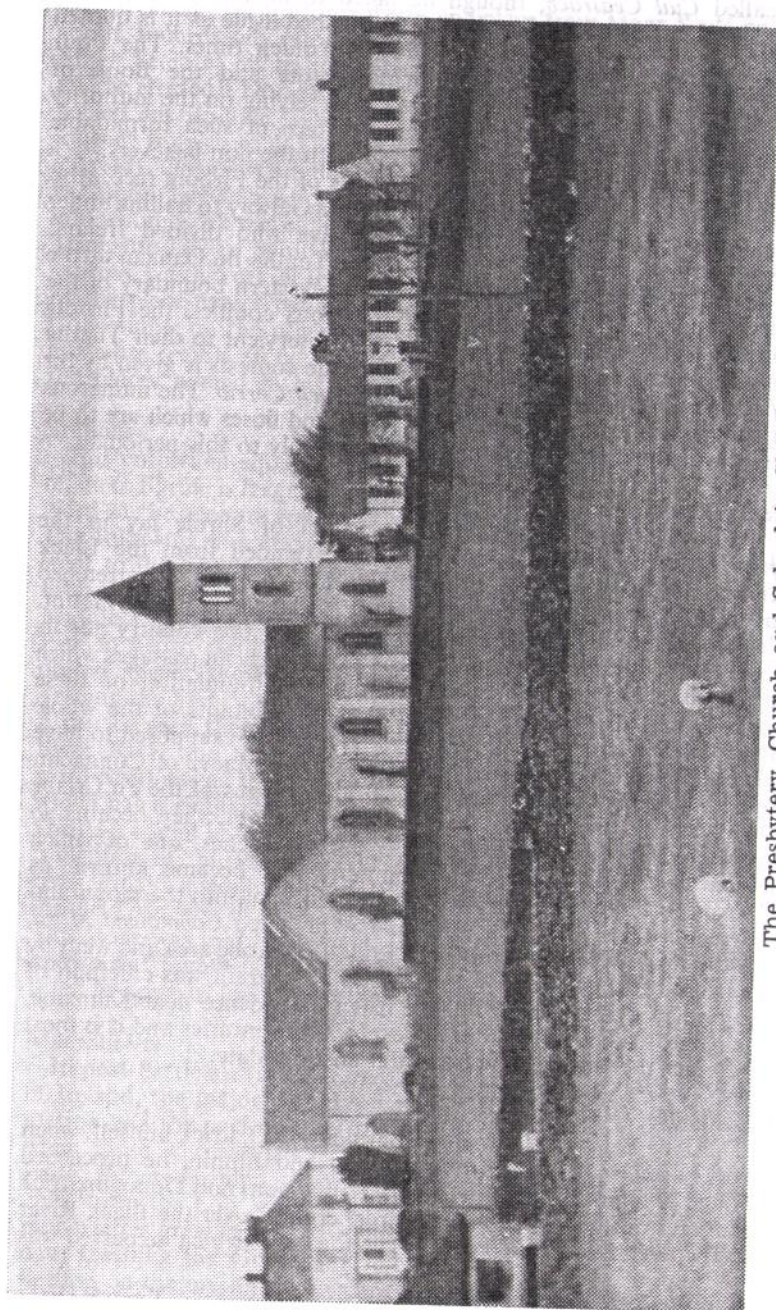
Stretching generally in a north-easterly direction along the extreme south of County Mayo and Barony of Kilmaine, the parish has the Black River as boundary for most of its ten-mile length. Minor patches north of the river, however, belong to County Galway, while a few townlands at Kinlough which lie south of the stream are included in Mayo. Some of these alterations must have occurred after the county boundaries were fixed by the Elizabethian Commissioners in 1585 and after a Royal Inquisition of 1607. To the west lies the wide expanse of Lough Corrib, which gives the parish approximately two miles of shore, while on the northern boundary are the parishes of Cong and Kilmaine. Killursa (Headford) and Donoghpatrick, both in the Archdiocese of Tuam, are its nearest neighbours on the south.

Extent of the Parish

The present parish of Shrule comprises almost 9,000 acres of good land on the whole, and it varies in breadth from about five miles at its widest, to one mile at its narrowest point. The extreme eastern portion in Dalgan and Brackloon contains bog producing excellent turf, while in the south-west there is some rocky land, part of which has been recently reclaimed and made profitable. Wheat, sugar-beet and potatoes are the main crops and are of a very high quality. Some fine sheep are raised on the uplands of Kilroe and Mocharra and in the lower stretches, especially, along the Black River, and in Ballynalty, milk production has made rapid strides in recent years, Ballinrobe separating station absorbing the supply. Progress in the farming line has been so great in the last decade that three new fairs have been established in Shrule to dispose of the increased supply of stock.

Legendary

Whether or not one accepts oral tradition, it must be recorded that it has always been related locally that the first inhabitants of Ireland visited this area. A ten-foot cairn on the summit of Knockmaa, some three miles south-east of Shrule, has been pointed out as the burial-place of the Lady Ceasair (pron. *Kassir*), leader of a band of antedeluvians of fifty women and three men. This undoubtedly prehistoric monument is known as *Carn Ceasrach* or Ceasair's Cairn, and is mentioned by O'Donovan who also states that a place nearby



The Presbytery, Church and School in Shrule.

is called *Cuil Ceasrach*, though he failed to identify it. This, our most ancient legend, cannot be lightly brushed aside as it is quoted by some of the most reliable sources on olden times. The Four Masters, MacFirbis, the Book of Ballymote and the Book of Invasions (O'Cleirigh) all record the event, relying on the authority of one of our ancient lost MSS. In the face of such formidable evidence, the burden of proof should lie with the non-believers.

The next inhabitants of the district were of the Firbolg race, who are said to have peopled the whole area from Galway to Ballina under the leadership of Geanain, one of the five who divided Ireland between them. They were attacked by the Tuatha de Danaan at the famous Battle of Moytura along the north-western boundary of the parish and, after a prolonged and strenuous conflict, the Firbolg forces were defeated and in future were subservient to their Tuatha masters. A vivid and detailed account of the contests is given by Sir William Wilde in his magnificent work *Loch Corrib*. The numerous pristine cahirs, cairns, tumuli, raths, duns and lioses which are to be seen throughout this whole area belong mainly to this period.

Celtic Administration

Under Celtic administration, the parish of Shrulle lay in the territory known as *Cuil Toladh*, which extended from the Black River on the south to the River Robe on the north, and stretched eastwards from Cong River to include Kilmaine and Hollymount. *Cuil Toladh* means the Corner of Piercing and this country got its name on account of the many caves and subterranean passages which pierce the cavernous limestone forming the foundation of these parts. About the time of St. Patrick, the inhabitants of the whole district were a branch of the *Conmaicne*, who were supposed to have descended from Fergus MacRiogh and Queen Maeve of Connacht. Some historians believe that it was another Fergus of the Fir Criabe race who was ancestor of these people. However, they became so numerous, that they separated into three branches, one of which settled in the district around Dunmore and became known as *Conmaicne Cineal Dubhain*, a second which went into the mountainous region west of Loch Corrib and were called *Conmaicne Mara*, and the third which stayed in the Shrulle-Ballinrobe area and went by the name of *Conmaicne Cuil Toladh*. O'Talcharain was chieftain of this branch and it is said that he had his residence near Kilmaine. The name, however, does not appear in later centuries and it is most likely that the sept became extinct at an early date.

Christianity

The True Faith was brought to Shrulle by St. Patrick himself, when on his western journey from Cruacha and Elphin, he proceeded through Dunmore, Cill Benein (now Kilbannon) and Donoghpatrick and then, turning sharply northwards, crossed over the Black River into the territory of *Cuil Toladh*. The ford over which he passed was

that of Shrulle, the traditional crossing place from Magh Seola on the south. Immediately prior to this he had visited the great chieftain of Magh Seola at his residence near Loch Cime (now Lough Hacket) and he erected a Domhnach or great church at Donoghpatrick where he left his disciple, Bishop Felartus, in charge. The date of this journey is given as 443 by some historians though others favour the year 441. Our most reliable authority for the saint's Connacht travels is Bishop Tirechan who wrote about the middle of the 7th. century and whose work was copied into the Book of Armagh about 808. The Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick, though relying mainly on the same sources, was a work of the tenth or early eleventh century, and many of the place-names mentioned are not now identifiable. Tirechan's Collections, on the other hand, though not in chronological order, are more readily recognised as he seemed to be more familiar with the places named in his work.

Sruthair

It is unfortunate for us, though, that the passage in the MS. which refers to Shrulle is fragmentary and we must rely on a half-obliterated word in the account for proof of Saint Patrick's visit to the parish. The following is a translation of the relevant passage:— "And he went to the country of the Conmaicne in Cuil Tolat, and put in it four-sided churches . . . air, . . . Uiscon, . . . the Little Middle Cell in which the sisters of Faila . . . another Cell of Fish in which the holy woman . . ." The rest is illegible and the dotted spaces show where complete obliterations have occurred. Tracing the Saint's itinerary from Donoghpatrick into Cuil Toladh, it can be seen that Shrulle must be the place where he crossed the Black River and there the ". . . air" must be the ending of the word Sruthair, as there is no other place-name in the entire district which has a similar ending nowadays. Further proof that he visited Shrulle is found in the Rentals of Cong drawn up in 1501 where there is mention of "St. Patrick's Hill", situated on the opposite side of the river. Finally a stone, called St. Patrick's Stone, has been pointed out in a field just west of Shrulle and was marked in the earlier O.S. Maps. This stone was said to have rested near the site of an ancient abbey, known as Cloghvanaha (Cloch Bheannaithe) — the blessed stone — listed by some as the name of an early foundation.

Monasticism

In post-Patrician years we may assume that here, as in other parts of Ireland, the major work consisted of the conversion of the population and the perfection of their Christianity, until a time arrived when those who wished to perfect themselves in their new-found Faith gathered round the existing churches to receive instruction daily from the holy men who dwelt and taught there. In this way monasteries grew up in those places where learned men spent their days teaching the Gospel and directing their pupils in solemn reflection on the mysteries of their religion. It must be borne in mind,

however, that monasteries as they existed in those days differed very much from these establishments as we now know them or as they were in post-Danish times. In the early years of the "Golden Age" they had no communal dwelling for the monks, no stone buildings apart from the church, no large refectories or cloistered arches as had the later regularised Orders which were introduced from the Continent. In the ancient monasteries the church occupied the central position and was in many cases a stone structure with either a thatched or flagged roof. It was surrounded by a cluster of the simple wooden huts of the monks, where they slept, had their frugal meals and spent their time in silent meditation on the subjects taught. The whole colony was often encircled by a strong high wall, usually oval in shape, which enclosed the monastery's entire possessions.

Cloghvanaha

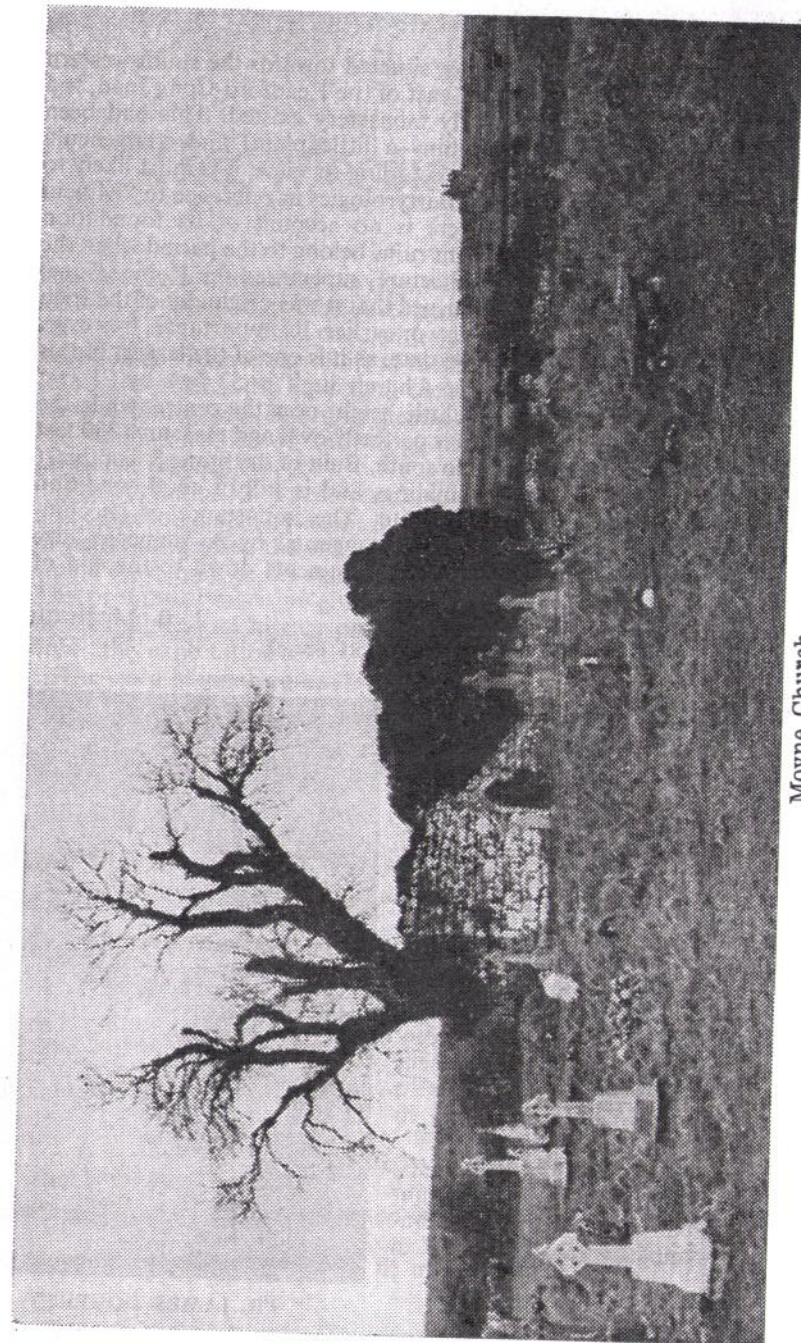
The ancient foundation called Cloghvanaha, which was situated at the south end of Church Park in Shrule, must have been one of these and probably sprang up around an earlier Patrician foundation. There is no mention of it, however, in medieval accounts and it must have ceased to function at a very early period. Patrick himself was a monk trained in the monasteries of Gaul—Lerins and Auxerre—where an eastern-type monasticism had been extensively practised. Therefore it is reasonable to infer that he favoured the establishment of monasteries of this type.

Kilmainebeg

Though not within the confines of the present parish of Shrule, Kilmainebeg cannot be omitted from any account of the district in early Christian times, as it is strongly maintained by some that this place was, at one time, included in Shrule. There can be little doubt that this is "the Little Middle Cell", (Cill Mean Beag), clearly referred to in the extract already given, and was therefore a Patrician foundation. It has been identified as being situated in the townland of Moor-gach, about two miles north of Shrule and in the present parish of Kilmaine*. It was there, as we see from the tract, that St. Patrick left the two sisters of the Bishop of Donoghpatrick. According to St. Evin, these "two virgins dedicated to God, the sisters of St. Felartus," were called Callecha and Crocha, and were placed in "Cuil Chonmaicne". The word ". . . Uiscon" has not been identified, but it is possible that it may be a portion of the name Ard Uiscon, or something similar, which would be a good rendering of an original for Fountain Hill, two miles farther north, near which there was an old church**.

*D'Alton in his *History of the Archdiocese of Tuam* places Kilmainebeg "at or near the modern townland of Kill". The ancient foundation there, traditionally St. Patrick's, is still pointed out in the townland of Moorgach, about a hundred yards to the west of the ruins of Kill "Abbey".

**The old church there was in the townland of Kilkieran, just west of Fountain Hill, and near it was St. Kieran's Well. Tradition says that there was a Patrician Church there.



Moyne Church.

Moyne

The Cashel Church of Moyne, situated towards the south-western end of the parish, a little to the east of the Headford-Cong road, is a fine example of where an early monastery existed. This had been referred to as Maigen (Maighin—a little plain) and Maigencula (Maighin of Cuil Toladh) and, according to some, it is most likely to be the place mentioned in the Martyrologies in reference to “Muicin and Eodusa of Maigen”. There is no account of its foundation available and, though the present ruins belong to the period when the Gothic style of church architecture superseded the Romanesque, about the 12th century, it is believed that it was originally of the Irish Romanesque of the tenth century or earlier. Its importance, however, is not as vague as its foundation date, as it is one of the largest of this type anywhere in Ireland. The Church itself is 52 feet by 21 feet (approx.) and is situated on a little height near the centre, while the surrounding wall of the Cashel is perfectly oval and measures 380 feet east to west and 33 feet north to south. Built of dry stone 8 feet thick, it enclosed all the monastic buildings and is still in good condition throughout nearly the whole circuit. The importance of its community or of its founder is clearly suggested by its immense size and it is mentioned in all medieval documents down to the end of the sixteenth century.

J. B. McHUGH

(Continued in next issue)

FR. JAMES DOHERTY—a native of Donegal—ordained in Derry Cathedral Christmas 1967, for Maynooth Mission to China. September 1968, appointed curate Church of Holy Family, Mervue-Renmore, Galway, and later C.C. Salthill. Died Calvary Hospital, Renmore January 11, 1969. His Lordship the Bishop, and many of the priests from the city, together with parishioners from Mervue, Renmore and Salthill were present at the removal of his remains to Dalgan Park, Navan. Buried in Dalgan January 13.

To his brother, sister, aunts, uncles and the priests of Saint Columban's our deepest and sincere sympathy. May he rest in peace!



FR. JAMES DOHERTY

THE MANTLE

FOCUS ON . . .

Shrule

Though the Province of Connacht, by Divine Providence, was spared the full terrors of the Danish period, it did not escape unscathed and it is recorded that, in the year 929, the "isles of Loch Oirbsen were pillaged by the Danes". Almost a century earlier, in 835, Tuirgeis is given as leader of a marauding band which overran Connacht and destroyed the town of Galway. These references, of course, are somewhat too general for our purpose but, taking the islands of the Corrib which would be worth pillaging, Inchaquin, Inishmacatreer and Inchagoill immediately come to mind, as they had monastic settlements in early times. Though none of these lies in Shrule waters, Inchaquin is but one mile across Ballycurran Bay to the south-west, while Inishmacatreer is a similar distance across Ballynalty Bay to the north-west. Both places had ancient monasteries, the former founded by Brendan the Navigator and continued under Bishop Moenann and Meldan, the latter is of unknown origin. This incursion of the Norsemen in 929 would account for the early decline and scant remains of both. But, as one gazes on the lonely ruined sites of Kilcronan on the mainland in Killursa Parish and of Cloghvanaha in Shrule, where only the slightest traces of foundations exist, one cannot help wondering if the fire-brand of the foreigner and not the ravages of Time, were responsible for the almost complete absence of remains in these holy places. Wondering and surmising, however, do not constitute history, but the erection of a round tower at Kilbannon about eight miles east of Shrule, and a ten-foot stump of tower at Kilcoona some six miles south, certainly indicate some immediate danger of invasion in this area at that time. We are told by the best authorities that these towers were erected generally in the tenth century and were the result of Danish raids. Built as places of refuge for the monks, they were also used for the safety of the relics and treasures of the church. The Corrib islands, and places near the shore, would have received little or no warning of the approach of the plunderers, and therefore, it is well within the bounds of possibility that some ancient monastic settlement at Moyne fell before the onslaught of the invaders. This might account for the superimposition of the second type of church architecture there so soon after the older type, if it were reconstructed after an attack.

However, these are mere possibilities and should be taken at their face value.

Episcopacy

At this stage of the narrative of Shrule's ecclesiastical history it might be most convenient to examine the early church organisation in the area. It must first be kept in mind that in the centuries immediately succeeding the fifth, episcopal jurisdiction was mainly personal and not territorial, and we cannot, therefore, assign Shrule to any particular area or diocese in those years, but it would be reasonable to suggest that the early church here would accept the rule of either Benignus of Killbannon or Felartus of Donoghpatrick, more probably the latter. Both these places, of course, obeyed the rule of St. Patrick, their founder. It is traditionally recounted that O'Flaherty, the great chief of Magh Seola where Donoghpatrick is situated, acquired control of portion of Cuil Toladh some time during those centuries and the word of kings and chieftains often defined boundaries of jurisdiction in the early church.

Cong

A monastery was founded at Cong by St. Fechin in the mid-seventh century and it gradually grew in importance, partly due to the fervour of its founder, partly to its strategic position between the two lakes, the Corrib and the Mask. Shrule, however, is not listed among the first churches to come under the abbatial jurisdiction of Cong, but by the time of the Synod of Rathbreasail the abbot had taken it into his territory. This Synod, held in 1110, did not clearly define the boundaries of dioceses but confined the number of Connacht sees to five, Cong being one.*** This arrangement was tentative and the clergy were authorised there to alter the distribution of these five sees. It will be noted that the dioceses of Annaghdown to the south and of Mayo to the north were not recognised at the Synod, though both struggled for separate survival in the ensuing centuries, and at times gained Papal recognition. It is well worthy of mention here that there had been record of a "Bishop of Sruthair" down to this Synod, but it would be wrong to infer from this that there was a diocese of that

*** The date 1110 is more generally accepted nowadays for the Synod of Rathbreasail though 1118 is also given by some authorities. The limitations of Cong Diocese were given at this Synod as follows: "from Amhian O'mBroin to north of Nephin and from Ath-an-Termain to the sea". Amhain O'mBroin must be a rendering of Abhainn Ui mBriuin or the River of Ui Briuin of Magh Seola, which would certainly suggest the Black River which runs beside Shrule. Rev. John McErlean, S.J. identified it with the Clare River, but political divisions down through the centuries, and the "Rentals of Cong" compiled by Tadhg O'Duffy in 1501 all point to the boundary of the present counties.

name. Sruthair, in this case, had a territorial implication and the Bishop must be in reality the Abbot of Cong.

Annaghdown

In the second half of the sixth century, Hugh, son of Eochaidh Tirmcharna, conferred Annaghdown "on God and St. Brendan". From then on, the ancient foundation of Donoghpatrick at the north of Magh Seola territory gave way gradually to the later but more central one farther south by the Corrib. The encroaching power of the O'Connors from Tuam on the north gave further reason for the change of centre and so, by the early twelfth century, the Diocese of Annaghdown was well and truly established in the country of the O'Flahertys. Sir William Wilde has stated in his "Loch Coirib", that shortly after the Rathbreasail Synod, the See of Cong was removed to Enaghdun and this amalgamation brought Shrule into that diocese to share in the centuries long struggle which followed.

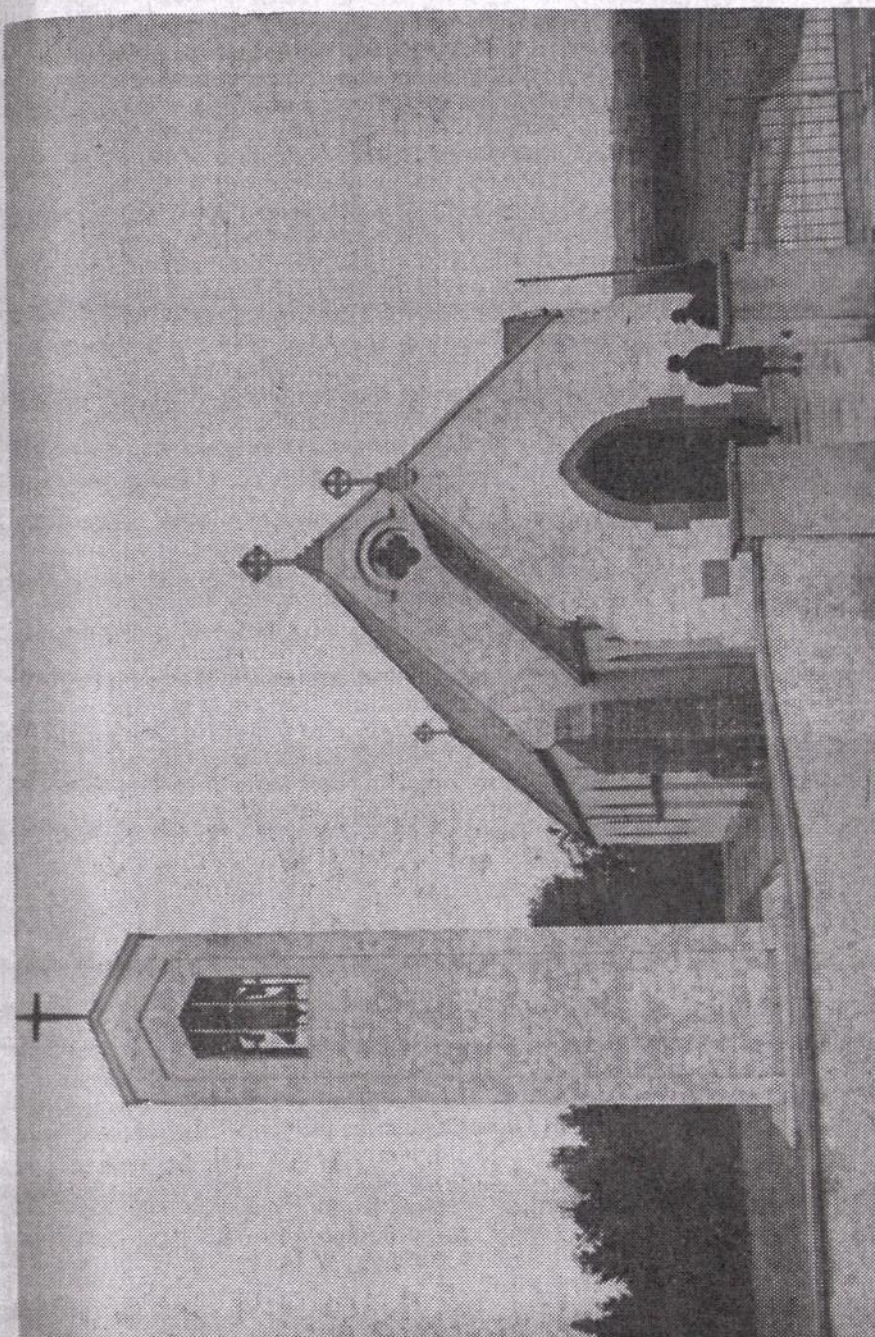
Kells

In the half-century after Rathbreasail at least ten synods of the Irish clergy were held at various times and places, but that which took place at Kells in 1152 was by far the most remarkable. Cardinal Paparo, the Papal Legate, presided over it and conferred the palliums on the four appointed Archbishops, declaring Armagh the Primatial See. Tuam, for the first time, became the Archdiocese for Connacht but again the status and boundaries of some of the other dioceses in the province do not seem to be clearly defined or understood. The result was that Tuam claimed afterwards that both Annaghdown and Mayo**** had been merged in the new Archdiocese, while they, in turn, maintained that there was no merger—that they were only united to Tuam while still retaining their episcopal status. And so, in succeeding centuries, the controversy waxed and waned, with Shrule sharing in the quandary of allegiance, while some metropolitans seemed to let the matter stand and others sought to exercise what they believed to be their lawful jurisdiction over Annaghdown. To follow further the course of events in the contest at this stage would take us far out of our context of time and therefore, it is better to return to civil affairs in the district at this stage.

O'Flaherty

During the eleventh century and the first half of the twelfth, while the clergy of the area were busily engaged in church organisation, a

**** Though Mayo received no recognition at the Synod of Rathbreasail it was the first suffragan See mentioned under the Metropolitan of Tuam at the Synod of Kells. Annaghdown was not recognised at either Synod.



Church of the Immaculate Conception, Glencorrib

state of turmoil also existed among the temporal rulers some of whom set out in quest of power. As stated already, the O'Flahertys were the ruling tribe just south of Shrule during these and previous centuries. They had come originally from north Roscommon and they traced their ancestry back to Brian Orbsen, King of Connacht in the fourth century. On this account they went by the tribal name of Ui Briuin, and about the time of St. Patrick they moved westward and settled in Magh Seola, driving the original inhabitants across Loch Coirib into the hilly country beyond. The Ui Briuin were sometimes known, in after years, as Muintir Murchadha from a later ancestor of that name and their chieftain's residence was in or near Loch Cime, now Lough Hacket. The royal family of the clan took the surname O'Flaherty in later times and, in the eleventh century, they were a force to be feared especially as they showed certain ambition towards attaining the provincial kingship. It was during this period, it is said, they held sway over Shrule and a portion of Cuil Toladh.

O'Connor

The royal tribe of Connacht shared with the O'Flahertys a common lineal descent from Brian Orbsen for four generations and therefore were called Ui Bruin Ai as they resided on the ancestral ground of Magh Ai in Roscommon. By the eleventh century they had taken the surname O'Connor from one of their earlier kings, and a certain suspicion of the O'Flaherty intentions induced them to forsake the ancient royal palace in 1049 and establish residence at Tuam on the eastern border of Magh Seola. From there they could more easily keep watch on O'Flaherty and curb his rise to power. It should be remembered here that the contest of the "Kings with Opposition" was, at this time, gaining momentum in other parts of Ireland and accounts of the conflict only urged this Connacht clan to greater effort to strengthen their hand.

Strife

The first great confrontation of these kinsmen took place in 1051 when Hugh O'Connor, the provincial king, defeated and blinded Amhalghaidh O'Flaherty, thus putting those warriors out of competent action for almost half a century. They came back, however, in 1098, with additional force and, under their new leader Flaigheartach O'Flaherty, overcame the O'Connors blinding their king, Rory (Mac Aedha), in return, and thus claiming the kingship of Connacht! Their reign was very short indeed, as, within the year Rory mustered full power to dethrone and slay the usurper. Henceforth, O'Connor ruled unmolested till his son Turlogh Mor took over in 1118. This great man reduced still further the strength of the warlike O'Flahertys and ousted them from Shrule district. Some historians have even ventured to suggest that he built a strong castle for himself at Shrule and established another residence at Cong to strengthen his claim to

the territory between these two places. At any rate he became so powerful in the country that the O'Flahertys were obliged to restrain themselves during his reign and that of his son, Ruairi, the last Ard-ri. The final expulsion did not come, however, till 1273 when Rory O'Flaherty was driven across Loch Coirib into the hills where his ancestors had driven others many centuries before.

Review

It is well here to pause and review the passing parade which Shrule has witnessed as the eventful twelfth century draws to a close. Peering through the mists of Time we have glimpsed the legendary band of Ceasair, and the hordes of the Firbolg and de Danann warriors locked in mortal combat on our border. We have got a clearer view of our Connaicne ancestors of the early Christian era. Were they the raven sails of Vikings we glanced in the bays of Ballycurran and Ballynalty? Was it in our imagination we saw Danish depredations on our soil? We have suffered domination by the haughty O'Flaherty of Magh Seola, and now, with invasion on our doorstep, we have the pompous O'Connor lording it over Shrule. On the religious scene our National Apostle, himself, passes through, spreading the Light which shall never be extinguished in Cloghvanaha or Kilmainebeg, Kilbannon or Kilquire, solemnly silent though they be for centuries. We have bowed the knee to Felartus and to the Abbot of Cong and heard their instructions. And now, as the dawn of the thirteenth century breaks, we are claimed by both the Metropolitan at Tuam and the Prelate at Annaghdown, as we ponder indecisively to whom should we go.

J. B. McHUGH.

(To be continued)

NOTE: The dimensions of the Cashel Church of Moyne in the last issue were given as 380ft. east to west and 30ft north to south. This should have read: "380ft east to west and 330ft north to south".

SHRULE

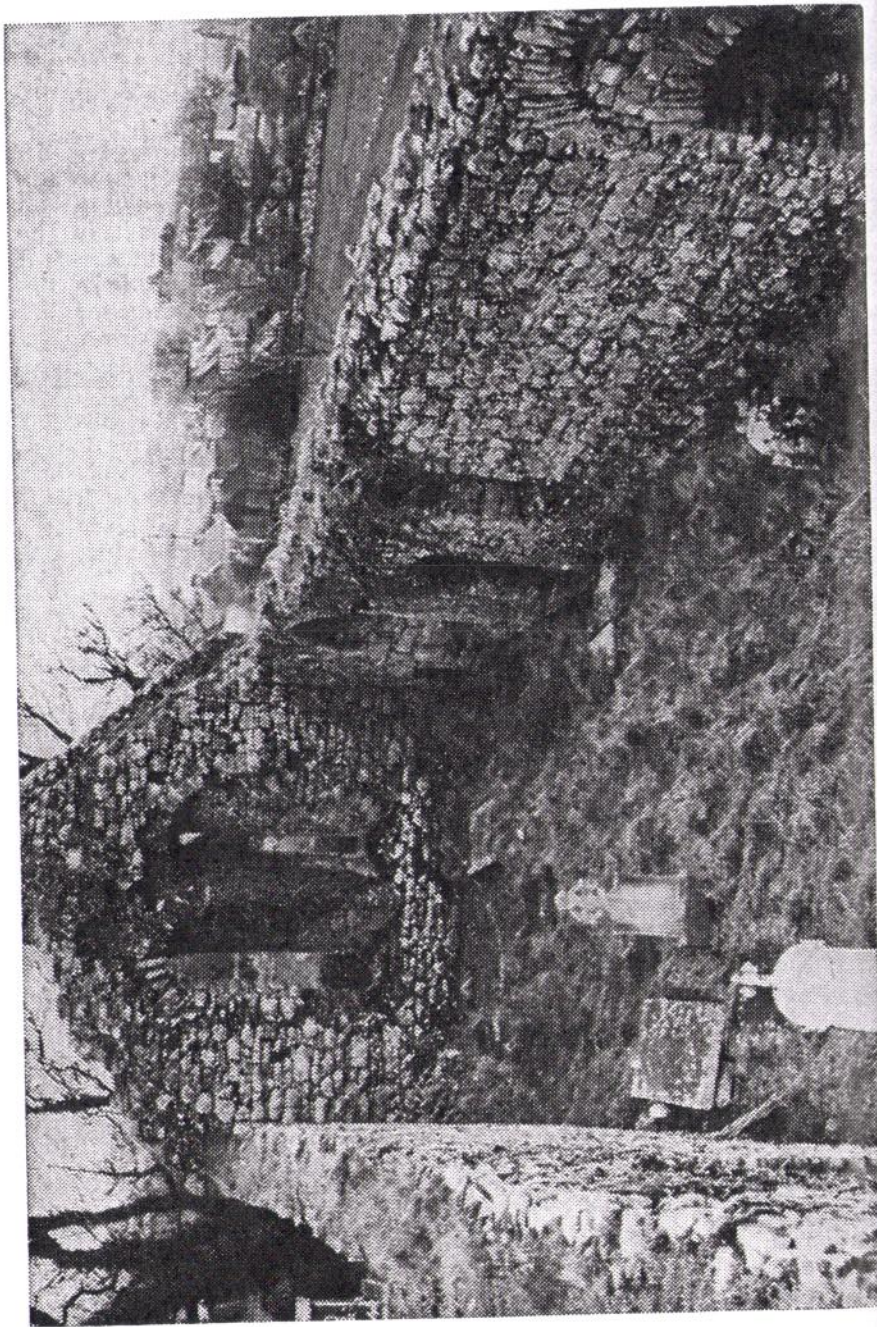
BEFORE EMBARKING on the tortuous course of our ecclesiastical history from the Synod of Kells onward we must bear in mind two facts of relative importance. The first of these is that, in those times, parishes, as the administrative units known to us, did not exist in Ireland and, therefore, it would be unrealistic to regard Shrule as being a parish of fixed boundaries as it now exists. The growth of these church divisions was gradual and belongs to a later period when local administration, both civil and ecclesiastical, became more definitely organised. Secondly, our country, in those far-off days, was much more sparsely populated than it is at present, and, indeed, we might say that the total number of people in the area now enclosed within our boundaries may have been as little as three or four score, or at most a few hundred. They were centred chiefly around the religious foundations of Cloghvanaha and Moyne, with smaller colonies scattered here and there. Towns as centres of trade were non-existent in our area and belong to the later Norman period.

Teampall Cholmáin, Shrule

Our authorities all agree that Teampall Cholmáin, situated in the present Shrule cemetery, was founded in the century succeeding the Synod of Kells, and is, therefore, a late 12th or early 13th century church. That it replaced the earlier Cloghvanaha as an administrative church seems quite certain, though evidence of the existence of the older foundation, as an abbey, will be found until 1306. Our best sources seem to disagree, however, as to whether it was an Irish foundation of O'Connor's time or an early Norman endowment. The former theory seems to be the more acceptable, as it is known that the O'Connors,*¹ the donors of Cong, were equally strong in our area. The immense size of Teampall Cholmain, 91' 10" by 24' 4", certainly emphasises its importance and places it among the great parish churches of this period, while the term "Teampall" applied to it suggests something more than a parochial function—perhaps even quasi-episcopal.*² It is of Gothic design, with no

*1. Knox, one of our best authorities, says: "It is, I think, safe to take them to be the earliest of the Gothic parish churches and to assign them to the 13th century, and to attribute them to the Irish lords of the time of Cathal Crobhdherg rather than to the first Anglo-Norman lords who set up monasteries and used parish churches to aggrandise them".

*2. Here we again quote Knox: "Struthair is a territorial name, I think, as well as a place name. It may well be that the episcopal jurisdiction over the Conmaicne Cuil Toladh and Conmaicne Mara was exercised by a bishop of the very large and important church of Shrule, who may have been really the bishop of Cong Abbey, who left the Abbey to take up a more independent position. No name of bishop of Cong or of Shrule has come down to us".



Teampall Cholmáin, Shrule

provision made for the priests' dwellings. This is rather strange for a church of its size, but the close proximity of Cloghvanaha Abbey at the time of the church foundation may have satisfied the needs of the officiating clergy. The choice of titular saint, too, seems strange as we cannot associate any of our Colmans in any way with our district. The dropping of this saint's name as patron of the parish in later years is equally inexplicable.

Kinlough Church

To the same period as Teampall Cholmáin also belongs the great church of Kinlough, which became a parish church for the western portion of our area. Though Moyne, near at hand, was an older foundation, it must have given way to the later and larger establishment across the Black River during this period of re-organisation. Moyne, of course, like Cloghvanaha, continued to function for many years, and it is given usually as Maigencula or Máighín of Cúil Toladh. The name of the titular of Kinlough Church is lost in oblivion with its inclusion under the newly-formed Wardenship of Galway in the early 16th century, as will be seen later. Its rise to parochial status may be due to the fact that the adjacent Kinlough Castle, was a "Mac William House", and, therefore, its superiority over Moyne became firmly established, even though Thomas Óge de Burgo of Moyne was the "Mac William" for two years. In this instance, as indeed in many others in our history, there is much room for conjecture.

Annaghdown Diocese

It is now our most arduous task commences, when, after the Synod of Kells, Cong Diocese was dissolved, and, according to Sir William Wilde, became integrated with that of Annaghdown which, according to the same Synod, was merged with Tuam. The Shrule churches of the time, i.e., Cloghvanaha and Moyne, belonged to the ancient "paruchia" of Cong Abbey, but, after Kells, they were transferred to Annaghdown with the said "paruchia". But then, Annaghdown's status as an episcopal church was supposed to cease on the demise of the reigning prelate! The year 1189 records the presence of Concors (Cormac) Bishop of Annaghdown, at the coronation of King Richard I, but, while it is possible that he was the reigning prelate of 1152, the next record of "H. Bishop of Annaghdown", as witness to a grant by O'Flaherty in 1200, seems to ignore or defy the synod's rulings.

To add still further to the confusion, we have the following obits recorded—1201, Conor O'Mellaigh, 1241, Muirheartach O'Flaherty, and 1250 Thomas O'Mellaigh—all styled Bishops of Annaghdown. A crucial point in an already embarrassing situation arrived in 1251, when another Concors was chosen as bishop by the chapter of the allegedly defunct diocese. The election was confirmed by Rome and assented to by the King of England, but, here the Archbishop of Tuam stepped in, seizing Annaghdown and asserting

once more the terms of Kells Synod, which seemed to have escaped notice in Rome. Despite this drastic action by the Metropolitan, which seemed to finalise matters, we have on record the death of—"Thomas, Bishop of Enaghduin" in 1263, and there, for the moment at least, the controversy appeared to end. The dioceses of Tuam and Annaghdown were now united beyond doubt, and, for the next sixteen years there was no claimant to the ancient See of Saint Brendan.

Causes of controversy

It is far beyond us to fathom our own depth in these troubled waters and we feel that indeed it should require some mental exertion on the part of our canonists to sort out the legalities of our situation from the tangled skein of recorded events. The causes of the controversy, however, may be more apparent, and may prove more interesting, than some of the unsavoury details of the contest in which we became innocently involved. In the first instance, one may blame the synods of Rathbreasail and Kells for their vagueness in defining the boundaries of the various dioceses and for completely ignoring such an ancient and well-established see as that of Annaghdown. If either a merger or a union with Tuam were intended, it should have been clearly stated in the rulings, thus putting the matter beyond contention. Turlough Mor O'Connor, King of Connacht and monarch of Ireland at the time, undoubtedly influenced the decision to confer the pallium on Tuam, his own place of residence; but, one wonders if the O'Connor enmity with O'Flaherty of Magh Seola tipped the scales against the inclusion of Annaghdown among the list of independent sees and deprived it of its status. O'Flaherty must have wondered along the same lines and his indignation must certainly have been aroused at the suspected O'Connor intrigue against his ancestral endowment. The Magh Seola chief must still have had sufficient influence in Rome to have gained Papal recognition for the various bishops whose names have come down to us, and whose election received his own sanction in the first place.

It is most interesting here to observe that, in the foregoing account of Annaghdown's struggle for survival in the century succeeding Kells, all the claimants to the see bore distinctively Irish names and further, that the emergent union with Tuam coincided with the banishment of O'Flaherty from Magh Seola to Iar-Chonnacht, across the lake. As a separate diocese Annaghdown now seemed doomed, while the Shrule churches were then definitely under the jurisdiction of Tuam.

Anglo-Norman influence

Perhaps we should state here that it is no part of our present project to relate all the unpleasant details of the Annaghdown controversy; but, as we ourselves became involved in the eventual outcome, it is necessary for us to understand, in a general way, the

trend of at least some of those events which surely must have had effect on church affairs in our area. With the disappearance of O'Flaherty from the eastern shore of Loch Corrib, towards the last quarter of the 13th century, Anglo-Norman influence on both the civil and ecclesiastical life of the whole territory became more pronounced. Their castles had already begun to rear their battlements against our skies and now we find them gaining control of church affairs. We do not wonder, then, to see, in 1279, six years after O'Flaherty's expulsion, that they succeeded in having one of their clergy, John de Ufford, elected as Bishop of Annaghdown, thus renewing the old contest but, with a new line of contenders. Obtaining royal assent to this election was, for them, mere matter of form, of course, but Papal confirmation was not forthcoming and, though de Ufford claimed to be Bishop of Annaghdown in 1282, there was no Archbishop to refute his claim as the Tuam see was then vacant. Ironically enough, it was another Anglo-Norman, namely, Archbishop Fullburn, who in 1286 silenced Annaghdown's new claim and re-affirmed the union with Tuam.

Dissension renewed

The dying embers of controversy were again fanned in 1303, when the Dean of Annaghdown made strong accusations in Rome against Archbishop Birmingham and pleaded successfully with the Pope for recognition for the see. The now-dominant Norman influence on the still-extant chapter in Annaghdown*³, and some favour at the Papal Courts were evident from the resultant separation of the two dioceses and the election of "Gilbert", a Franciscan, to wear the mitre. The Primate was the consecrating Prelate and Annaghdown, once more, enjoyed a separate existence for another quarter of a century. One of the strongest pleas made at Rome on behalf of the separation, at this time, was that Annaghdown was in Anglo-Norman territory, while Tuam was in the traditionally Gaelic country of O'Connor, and that a union of the two opposing influences would not be successful. At least the kernel of the most recent trouble now seems to have come to light.

Edwardine Taxation

To the relief of reader and writer alike, we now leave Annaghdown to its own exigencies and return to our particular sphere, where some important discoveries are to be made. Ecclesiastical taxation in the form of tithes had its origin with the crusades and, originally, these tithes consisted of one-tenth of the movables and annual income of all men, channelled into a fund to aid the crusading armies. Subsequently they were levied on the clergy only, either by Pope, himself, or by the king with Papal consent. Edward I, in 1306, received from Pope Clement V a grant, first for two years and later

*3. It would appear that, even when there was no bishop, the chapter of Annaghdown continued to function under Tuam. It comprised a Dean, Archdeacon, Canons and Official or Chancellor and even as late as the 16th century four Vicars Choral are found.

extended to seven years, of the ecclesiastical tenths within his kingdom. Consequently, the king made a thorough valuation of all the churches for the purpose of assessing the tithes. This is known now as the Edwardine Taxation*⁴ and from it we glean some interesting information regarding the number and valuation of our churches at that time. We must not, however, regard this list as an ecclesiastical survey of our area, but rather as a revenue inquiry which, for our purpose, may be defective in some respects*⁵.

Shrle Deanery

The report of the Edwardine Commission bears out our earlier assumption on the importance of Teampall Cholmáin, as their list gives Shrle as the title of a deanery comprising no less than nineteen churches, all of which were hitherto subject to Cong. With ancient titles and archaic forms of spelling, the rendering of the names of some of these churches is certainly grotesque, but, after much research on the part of our historians*⁶, they have been identified. The following list has been accepted as that covered by the original: Shrle, Kinlough, Moyne, The Neale, Cong, Innishmaine, Ballinrobe, Killosheheen, Kilmolara, Ross, Kilmainemore, Kilmainebeg, Attyrickard, Ballinchalla, Templenalecka, Moorgagach, Kilcommon, Moyrus and Omey. Let it be borne in mind, however, firstly, that this is a list of churches, not of parishes, and, secondly, that all churches in the area may not be included as smaller institutions with no taxable income were disregarded. On the whole, it will be seen that the Deanery of Shrle in 1306 was co-extensive with the ancient Diocese of Cong.

Taxation of Shrle

The reader will not be interested in the taxation imposed on all these churches, but, certainly, the taxable value of our own incomes should hold our attention. Shrle (given as Strúthair, and first on the list) is valued at £2; Kinlough (Kenlacha at 13s.:4d.; Moyne (Magenculi) at £1; and Moorgagach at £1. One can well imagine some eyebrows being raised at the inclusion of the last-named church but, it has been stated by some of our historians, that this institution was at one time in Shrle Parish. It was an ancient foundation some few miles north-west of Shrle where tradition still locates a Patrician church*⁷. Some ruins are yet to be seen there in a townland still bearing the name Moorgagach (Mur+gagach=the cracked wall). In regard to the above valuations, it would be wrong to infer

*⁴. As this taxation was granted by Pope Clement, it is also called the Clementine Taxation.

*⁵. Monasteries, such as those of the mendicant orders, having no taxable income and ancient monasteries which had lost their lands are not included in the list.

*⁶. It is principally to Knox we owe our gratitude for the research.

*⁷. It is here that D'Alton placed Kilmainbeg church of St. Patrick—erroneously, we think. This shall be discussed more fully at a later stage.

that they indicate either the size or the importance of the churches concerned. These figures were based, not on the size of the church building, nor on the number of the congregation, but on the amount of property belonging to the church. On this account, Cloghvanaha is merely mentioned as an abbey situated in Church Park (Páirc an Teampail) and, therefore, it was not taxed separately as it was already included with Teampall Cholmáin. However, it is worthy of note that it still existed in 1306 at the Edwardine Taxation.

Here, perhaps, it is better for us to pause to refresh ourselves after our sojourn in the past and to reflect awhile on the vanished glories of Teampall Cholmain, Cloghvanaha, Kinlough, Moyne and Moorgagach—names once dear to our ancestors. Perhaps, also, we may draw from their story some inspiration—to cherish more dearly that treasure which has come down to us through the agency of these holy places—the Faith of our Fathers.

J. B. McHUGH

(Continued next issue)

Shrúle

THOUGH the sporadic existence of Annaghdown Diocese may be regarded as of no great concern to us at present, the returns of the Edwardine Commission on its churches and institutions should be of considerable interest. The subsequent union of Shrúle with some of these churches, under the Wardenship of Galway, and our present-day ties with them within our diocese, combine to stimulate our interest in the constituent parts of that controversial diocese. On this account, the reader may bear with us while we take a brief glance across the arches of the centuries to scan the extent of Annaghdown as the "jurors of credit" found it in 1306.

Annaghdown's Churches

In area, the diocese corresponded to the ancestral territory of the chiefs of Magh Seola, and extended from the Black River of Shrúle to a stream south of Maree. In all, eighteen churches are listed, and they include the following: Maree, Oranmore, Oranbeg, Roscam, St. Nicholas*¹, (Galway) and Claregalway*²— all within the present Diocese of Galway. The remainder now belong to the Archdiocese of Tuam. The "Bishop of Enaghduin", himself, was taxed on the princely sum of £28, while the "Monastery de Portu Patrum" and the "Abbot and Convent of the Little Cell of Anaghduin of the Premonstratensian Order" are also mentioned*³. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, then, this was the extent of the diocese which contained the nucleus of the later Wardenship of Galway, the precursor of our present diocese.

Reunion

Contrary to expectations, Annaghdown's new-found independence was short-lived and, oddly enough, it was a native of the diocese who resolutely persisted in re-uniting it with Tuam. This was Archbishop Malachy MacHugh, a Franciscan, who was translated from the See of Elphin in 1312. He held out relentlessly against all opposition, even from Armagh, until finally, in 1324, he succeeded in having Annaghdown annexed to Tuam by Pope John XXII. Thus commenced the longest period of union between the two dioceses—a union which lasted for 66 years despite an attempt at its dissolution in 1350—two years after Archbishop MacHugh's death.

*¹—This church, of course, was the old chapel of St. Nicholas; the new church was not built until 1320.

*²—Another church, listed as Audreny, I cannot so far identify, and it may have been in the Galway area.

*³—The whole diocese was valued at £72-19s.-8d. and the tithe fixed at £7-5s.-11½d'

The Friary of Ross

Leaving Annaghdown for the moment reposing peacefully(?) in the arms of Tuam, we now shift our focus nearer home, to a place which, for four centuries had a profound effect on the Faith and Morals of the people in a great part of our own area. This was the famous Friary of Ross, locally known as "Ross Abbey", which stood on the south bank of the Black River, a few yards outside Shrúle Parish*⁴. Its foundation was laid by the above-mentioned Archbishop MacHugh, in 1348, when the terrible plague of the Black Death was rampant in these parts. The legend of the Archbishop's vision and the miraculous sign given to him by three swans, is still very much alive around Kilroe, Rostaff, Moyne, and Toorard. The friars first took up residence there in 1351 and, from the start, the Franciscans endeared themselves to the people, as extensive grants of land were made to the Friary. At least one of our townlands, that of Rostaff, was given to the friars for their upkeep, and it was here they kept their "bábhun" or haggart, for their corn. Its high walls still stand by the roadside within sight of the ruins of the Friary across the river. No doubt, our people owed much to the Franciscans for their kindness and generosity down through the years, and, indeed, the day came when the people of Kilroe district repaid that kindness by giving refuge to the friars in their hour of need. But that is another story, which must wait for another day.

The Final Years

While the Franciscan Friars from Ross aided the local clergy of Moyne and Kinlough in fortifying the faith of our forefathers, Annaghdown once again rose from its slumber. To be as brief as possible with this vexed question which kept recurring with annoying frequency, we will state simply a few facts of the last century of the diocese which so many times refused to die. Separated again from Tuam in 1393, the See of Annaghdown had at least five prelates in the final period of its existence. The names which have come down to us are: Henry Tarleton, who died 1402; succeeded by James Britt, a Franciscan; James Conery, another Franciscan, who was appointed 1421; followed by John —, whose year are unknown, and, finally, Thomas Barrett. This takes us down to 1484, when a momentous event occurred which sounded the death-knell of Annaghdown and gave rise to a concept which, in its final stage of development, gave birth to our present diocese. It is, indeed, ironical that the move which commenced the dismemberment of the See of St. Brendan came from within, and furthermore, that the prime movers in the process were descendants of the Anglo-Normans, who so steadfastly claimed in the past that Annaghdown should be autonomous.

*⁴—Though this Friary is outside our parish, our interest in it is, indeed, great as its Friars, in penal times, settled in Kilroe where they remained until the last century.

Growth of Galway

The gradual growth of Galway from a cluster of fishermen's huts at the Norman invasion, to being one of the most populous towns in Ireland by the mid-fifteenth century, was entirely due to the influx of Anglo-Norman merchants whose descendants became known later as the "Tribes of Galway". Unlike the vast majority of their compatriots in other parts of the country they did not assimilate our culture, but instead, remained strictly aloof despising the natives of the surrounding country. This aloofness was not reserved for mundane matters alone; it permeated into the realm of religion. They had erected for themselves, in 1320, the beautiful Church of St. Nicholas, patron of mariners, on the site of a smaller chapel. This new edifice, since the union of Annaghdown and Tuam in 1324, was governed by vicars, who were diocesan appointees and generally of Irish descent—a fact which the haughty inhabitants did not at all relish. On this account, there always existed, to some degree, a temperamental barrier between clergy and laity in the town and a certain amount of friction occurred at intervals.

The Wardenship of Galway

At length, the supercilious inhabitants of the town appealed to Archbishop Donatus O'Murray to release them from his jurisdiction and to establish what is since known as the Wardenship of Galway, which was to be independent of all outside control, except that of Rome*⁵. Having the best spiritual interest of all concerned at heart, the Archbishop, in 1484, acceded to their request and erected the Church of St. Nicholas into a Collegiate Church. A petition from the inhabitants was also sent to Rome and, consequently, Pope Innocent VIII issued a Bull confirming the Archbishop's action. Very briefly, the main provisions of the Papal Bull for this new institution were:

- (i) The Church of St. Nicholas was, in future, to be governed by a "college" consisting of one warden (custos) and eight vicars.
- (ii) The vicars were to be chosen or elected for life by the "sovereign, provost or mayor and equals" (pares)*⁶.
- (iii) The warden should be "deputed and instituted" annually by the vicars.
- (iv) The college should "rightly observe the English rite and custom in divine service".
- (v) The vicarage of the Parish Church of St. James at Claregalway was united to the Collegiate Church.

*⁵—It is to be understood here, that, though the Wardenship was completely independent in matters of jurisdiction, it still required the services of a bishop for the administration of Confirmation and Holy Orders, and also for other consecrations.

*⁶—At the time the Papal Bull was issued, Galway was not a city and, therefore, had not a mayor. Within a year, though, it had been granted this distinction.

- (vi) A parcel of land belonging to the Cistercian Abbey of Knockmoy was allotted for the upkeep of the new Collegiate Church.

Such was the peculiar religious jurisdiction to which our parish bowed for 330 years.

Growth of Wardenship

Though the Wardenship originally consisted of only two parishes, those of St. Nicholas and of St. James, it now appears, in retrospect, as if the thin end of the wedge had been inserted into the fabric of Annaghdown Diocese. A few more deft blows, delivered at intervals in the ensuing years, brought the hitherto unyielding structure crumbling to the ground. The first of these came in 1487, when Oranmore (Furanmore) and Ballinacourty (Meary) were united to the Collegiate Church. The following year saw the parish church of Rahoon (Rathúna) annexed, while a short time later Moycullen (Moygullyne) was also included. Then, in 1491, after an appeal by the "college", the Archbishop united the vicarage of the parish church of Skryne ("in Tome")*⁷ to the Galway institution. At the dawn of the sixteenth century, then, the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas had embraced at least seven parish churches, while the the ancient diocese to which they belonged had finally succumbed.

Digressions

It may appear to the reader, here, that we have veered very much off the course in following the fortunes of a phantom diocese which appeared and disappeared so frequently that, at times, the reality of the situation becomes dubitable; or, it may be thought that we have digressed too far in tracing the idiosyncrasies of the "Tribes of Galway" which led them into ecclesiastical isolation. If, however, we consider the implications of these events, we will see that, as our parish shared in the fluctuations of Annaghdown, and in the peculiarities of the Wardenship, we came under the influence of their clergy and so our church history was inevitably tied up with theirs. It is, therefore, of paramount importance to our story that we bear these points in mind, and that we endeavour to understand, as fully as possible, those institutions which helped to mould our spiritual life for so many centuries.

The Rentals of Cong, 1501

We now turn our attention northwards to the Augustinian Abbey of Cong, where we find a document which throws some light on the church possessions of Shrule at this time. *The Rentals of Cong* were written by Tadhg Ó Duffy in 1501, and the MS., which is in the British Museum, purports to be a copy of extracts from an old

*⁷—This must have been the Church of the Shrine which stood in Bishop Street in Tuam.

manuscript of the Abbey. In reference to our parish we find the following:

Item. The aforesaid clansmen gave . . . of the Canons of Rathmoling in the town of Sruthair to the aforesaid monastery.

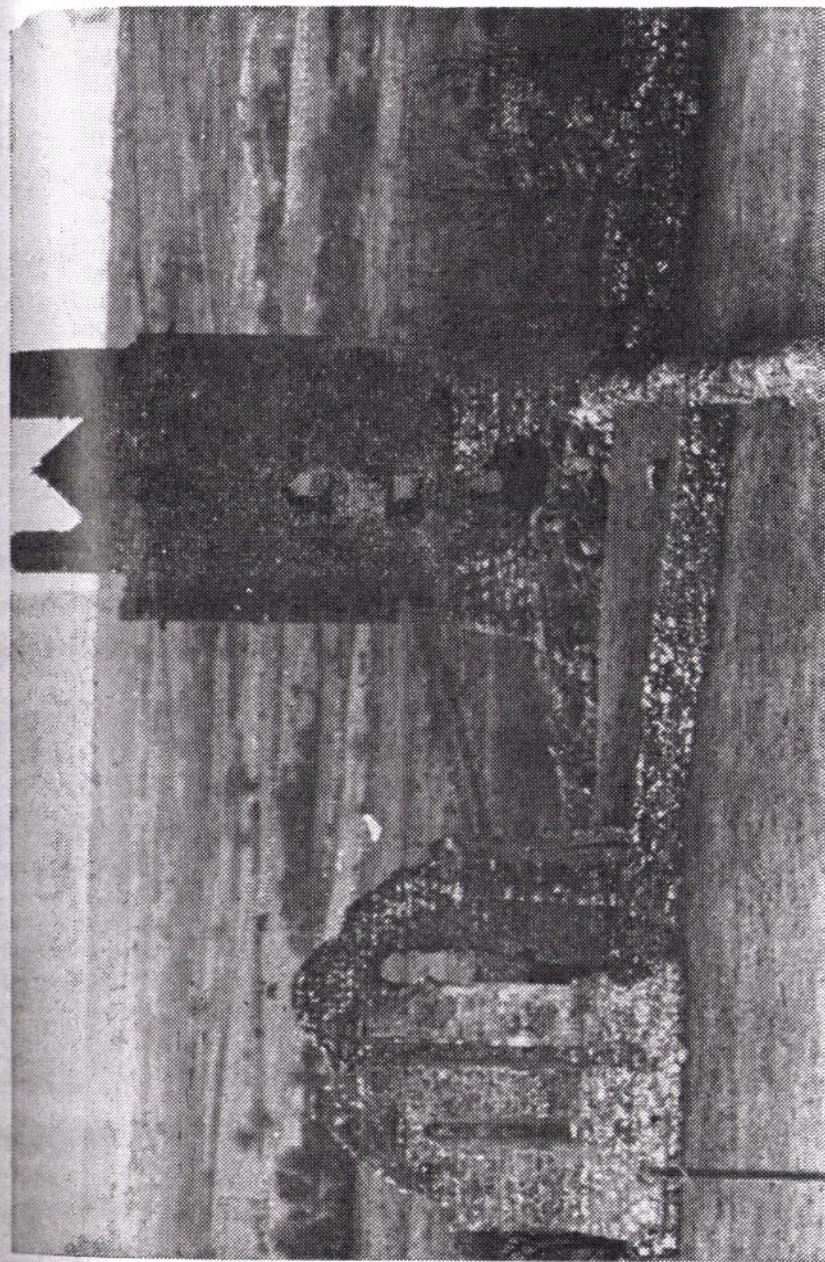
“And thus belongs to the aforesaid monastery Temple Colmain in the aforesaid town and the Wall of the same, and Killeen Coemain on the opposite side of the river, and the half quarter of land of the Hill which is called St. Patrick there*⁸.

The “clansmen” here referred to were the de Burgos, who were established in Shrule, and “Rathmoling” could be none other than the townland of Ramolin in which the present Shrule Church stands. It is difficult to understand this reference to the “Canons of Rathmoling” as Teampall Cholmain is not now in Ramolin but in the neighbouring Church Park. However, it is possible that both townlands were then known as Rathmoling. “Killeen Coemain” on the opposite side of the river must be the “Killeen Fort” marked on the O.S. maps, while the “e” of Coemain, perhaps, is an under-sized “l” and therefore should be read as “Colmain”. St. Patrick’s Hill has not been identified with any certainty, but the half quarter of land would contain about 60 acres. Let us remember here, that O’Duffy is not giving Cong’s possessions as of 1501, but as they were listed in an old manuscript of some date shortly after the Norman conquest of our area.

Shrule and Kinlough in Wardenship

O’Duffy’s manuscript was scarcely dry when Archbishop William Joyes (Joyce) united the vicarages of the parish churches of Shrule (Srower) and Kinlough (Kinlaghan) to the Wardenship of Galway. The transfer became effective from the Feast of the Assumption 1501, when the MS. was but five months old, and one cannot but wonder if the two events were not in some way connected. Could the O’Duffy document be the result of an inquiry into Shrule Church property in preparation for the transfer? Be that as it may, one seeks in vain for acceptable reasons for this union. Our two parishes of the day were totally isolated from the other parishes of the Wardenship and the Archbishop’s action seems inexplicable. But then, Archbishop Joyes, who received the mitre in 1486, was a native of Galway City and a descendant of one of the ‘tribes’, and it was he who made all the annexations to the original Wardenship of Archbishop Ó Murray. His previous additions, however, with the exception of Skryne, were all contiguous to one another, but Shrule was separated by some intervening parishes, including Annaghdown, which still had a Dean and Chapter, and Cargin Parish, which belonged to

*⁸—In the dotted space where an obliteration has occurred in MS., it is suggested that the word “tithes” may be read.



Kinlough Castle and Church, Shrule

the Archdeacon. Any attempt to transfer these to the Wardenship would meet with considerable opposition and, probably, would not be welcomed by the Galway College.

Transfer Disputed

It is no great surprise to find objections to the annexation of Shrule and Kinlough to the Wardenship and appeals against it were made, unsuccessfully, in 1514 and in 1516. In 1526, however, the matter was brought before the Holy See, when two diocesan clergy, Meiler and Thomas Mac Shonyn*⁹ laid claim there to the livings of of the two parishes. The result was that these two priests received from Rome, letters allowing their claims and they were granted full right to all the fruits, rents and profits from the vicarages. Their tenure of these livings was, indeed, very brief, as the Warden and vicars immediately charged them with concealing from the Pope the union decreed by Archbishop Joyes. On this account, both priests were accused of obtaining their Papal letters surreptitiously and the question was referred to the Archbishop*¹⁰. On the 9th of January 1526, he found in favour of the Warden and vicars, annulling the Mac Shonyn claim and confirming the previous union. Thenceforth, Shrule and Kinlough belonged undisputedly to the Wardenship of Galway until its demise in 1831.

Once again we must close the pages of the Past as time and space will not permit further progress at the moment. Our present session has just spanned 220 years of our story and brings us to the dismal dawn of the "dark and evil days" when a foreign power, in the name of reform, denied us the right to worship in our own traditional way. Before commencing to tread the thorny path of penal times, it is opportune for us to rest awhile.

*⁹—This name has been anglicised to Jennings, which is of Anglo-Norman origin.

*¹⁰—This was Archbishop Thomas O'Mullally, who ruled Tuam from 1513 to 1536. Archbishop Joyes died four months after uniting Shrule and Kinlough to the Wardenship.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. McHUGH

ADDENDA

Some readers may be interested in the complete list of Annaghdown's taxation and, therefore, we append here the Commission's findings as quoted by Knox. The identification (as far as is now possible) is our own:

Item	Identification	Value		
		£	s.	d.
1 Bishop of Enagdun	Bishop of Annaghdown	28	0	0
2 Monastery de Portu Patrum	St. Mary's Abbey, Annaghdown	2	8	0
3 Abbot and Convent of the Little Cell of Anaghduin of the Premonstratensian Order	Premonstratensian Abbey in Annaghdown	0	10	0
4 Mecheri	Ballinacourty	6	13	4
5 Foranmore	Oranmore	6	0	0
6 Foranbeg	Oranbeg	1	0	0
7 Roscam	Roscam	1	10	0
8 Galway	St. Nicholas	5	0	0
9 Clardun duwl	Claregalway	6	0	0
10 Audreny	Is this Athenry?	0	14	4
11 Anaghduin	Annaghdown	2	13	4
12 Kilgill	Kilgill	1	0	0
13 Kellthama	Kilcoona (now in Donaghpatrick)	0	15	0
14 Lackagh	Lackagh	1	6	8
15 Killeny	Killeany (now incorporated in Headford)	0	13	4
16 Kelfynfyt	Killursa (Headford)	1	10	0
17 Donnaghpatrick	Donaghpatrick	0	13	4
18 Killower	Killower (near Donaghpatrick)	1	0	0
19 Rathmyalid	Cargin (now in Headford Parish)	1	6	8
20 Sruthir in Muintircuda	Old Abbey of Kilnamanagh near Shrule	4	0	0
21 Kilkelwyll	Kilkilvery Church now incorporated in Donaghpatrick.	1	0	0

Shrule

AS HAS BEEN seen already, Edmund Albanach, son of Sir William Liath, rose to power about 1340 and established himself throughout Mayo and especially in the Ballinrobe-Shrule area. He was the first *Mac William Íochtar* and he declared his territory free from Ulster authority. In fact, in 1338, when a son of the deceased Red Earl* visited Mayo, presumably to state his claim to Connacht, Edmund caused him to be seized and later drowned in Lough Mask, thus severing for all time any connection with the Ulster de Burgos. It was then that the members of the Lower Mac William became really "more Irish than the Irish themselves", issuing the rather amusing warning that they would not tolerate further any interference from foreigners or outsiders. It is thought that Edmund himself lived principally at Ballinrobe, though it would appear that he moved around quite frequently. As Shrule lay along the southern boundary of his domain, it would be a reasonable assumption that he had this area well garrisoned.

Sir Thomas de Burgo

When Edmund died in 1375, his son, Sir Thomas, succeeded as second *Mac William*, until his death in 1401. The greater portion of Shrule Parish was included in his territory—indeed, there is no evidence that any part of it was outside his area. The castles and lands of Shrule, Moyne, Ballycurran, Ballisnahiney and Mocerha definitely belonged to his immediate descendants and Kinlough castle and lands were allotted for his upkeep. Therefore it is practically certain that, as we enter the fifteenth century, our district came to be divided among the sons of Sir Thomas de Burgo.

Sliocht Walter

Of the five sons of Sir Thomas, two are not of interest here, unless one wishes to trace the line of succession to the Mac Williamship. The other three, however, claim our immediate attention as they shared control of our land in the fifteenth century. These were, in order of succession, Walter, Edmund II and Thomas Oge, 3rd, 4th and 5th *Mac William*, respectively.** Walter, the eldest of these led his clan for the rather lengthy period of thirty-nine years,

*The more ardent student of local history may wish to record that the victim's name was Edward, given by the Irish as Eamonn na Feasoige.

**For the succession and pedigree of these and later members of the Lower Mac William clan we depend on a document entitled *Historia et Genealogia de Familia de Burgo*, of unknown origin, found in the possession of a Bishop of Clouer in the late 16th century.

until his death in 1440, at which time he had placed his sons firmly in possession of a great portion of Conmaicne Cúile, which was generally co-extensive with the later Barony of Kilmaine. In the latter half of the 15th century and all during the 16th, his descendants became known as *Sliocht Walter* (the progeny of Walter), and we can trace them to the castle and lands of Shrule and also to Cong and Ballycurran.

Shrule and Ballycurran

The Shrule line (father to son) of Sliocht Walter is as follows: Walter (1440)—Theobald I (1503)—Meyler (1520)—John II (nicknamed *an Termainn*) (1527) and finally *William of Shrule*, who was senior of all the Mayo de Burgos at the close of the 16th century. The years in brackets are the dates of death, but that of John an Termainn may not be entirely correct. Now, whether Walter, Theobald, Meyler or John resided in Shrule we cannot say for certain, but William is given in various documents as "of Shrule" and his possessions are stated to be 80 quarters*** of land which was, indeed, a considerable amount. We shall hear more of him later when dealing with the downfall of the Lower Mac William. The Cong branch of Sliocht Walter leads us also to Shrule Parish, coming through Theobald I (1503)—Thomas an Mhacaire (of the Plain) and "Edmund of Cong" who was granted Ballycurran castle and six quarters of land there in 1585.

Edmund II

We must now leave Sliocht Walter and revert to his younger brother, Edmund II, who succeeded to the *Mac William* title in 1440 and died in 1458. It would appear that he held Ballinrobe Castle and lands, and some of his descendants can be traced to Kinlough Castle on the bank of the Black River. Generally throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, this branch seems to be the most powerful as no less than eleven members attained the highest rank of *Mac William*. The Kinlough line leads us thus: Edmund II (1458)—Richard II (1479)—John I (1514)—Oliver (c. 1550)—Sir John III and Sir Richard V. These last two, who were brothers, are given as residing in Kinlough towards the end of the 16th century, but then we also know that this castle was always allotted to the reigning Mac William. On this account, perhaps, it remained in de Burgo hands longer than the neighbouring castles of Shrule, Moyne or Ballycurran.

Thomas of Moyne

The third son of Sir Thomas, Thomas Oge, or as he is so often known, Thomas of Moyne, ruled as Mac William but for two years, 1458-1460, and it is generally believed that it was he who built

***The quarter of land of the 16th century is generally accepted as being equal to the Norman vill of the 13th century, which was stated to be 120 acres of arable land with its appurtenant wood and waste.

Moyne Castle at the southern extremity of Shrule Parish in the early years of the 15th century and resided there. He is also credited with the founding of Moyne Abbey near Killala in Tirawley. Some historians suggest that he settled one of his sons in Ballycurran by the shore of Loch Corrib. It appears that he acquired the largest portion of our Parish, as his inheritance is given as "eighteen towns divided among five brothers", and it became known as *Eraght (Oighreacht) Thomáis*. Some misfortunes, however, befell his family, as one of his sons, Richard, was killed in 1469, a grandson, Walter, in 1503, and another son, Edmond, in 1507. The circumstances of their deaths are not available to us, but recurring conflicts with their southern neighbours, the Upper Mac William of Galway, around that period might be responsible. It is also given that, finally, two of Eraght Thomáis sold Moyne to Clanrickarde**** of the south. At any rate, the descendants of Thomas seem to have been extinct by the mid-sixteenth century and we find that Moyne Castle was the first in Mayo to be claimed by Clanrickarde in 1566. This claim was of course, refuted by Richard III of Ballinrobe, brother of William of Shrule, and the Mac William of the day. A few years later the occupant of Moyne was a de Burgo of a line totally different from that of either Mac William or Clanrickarde.

Clann Seóinín

In documents relating to the Divisions of Connacht, 1574, the gentleman resident in Moyne is stated to be Davy Mac Jonyn and we see two others of the same clan in Keylenemadry (Houndswood) and in Cross. These three castles are near the main road from Headford to Cong and they must have been acquired by this family in the 16th century. The Clann Seóinín, as the Irish called them, were also known as Jonyn, Joynings and later Jennings, and they were descended from a younger brother of Sir William Liath, named John, whom the Irish nicknamed Seóinín. Many of them spread throughout Mayo and especially around Kilmaine and Cross, where the name is still quite common. However, Moyne did not remain for long in their possession as the encroaching power of Clanrickarde from the south eventually proved too strong for them and Earl Ulick, in 1585, confiscated the castle and six quarters of land.

Mac Donnell Gallowglass

Though originally a de Burgo stronghold, the fifth castle of Shrule Parish, that of Mochorha at the northern end, introduces a new clan into our story, namely, the Mac Donnell Gallowglass. It will be remembered from our national history that the Gallowglasses (*Gall-óglaigh* or foreign warriors) were trained, mail-clad mercenaries in the pay of Irish chieftains as a counter-offensive measure against the Anglo-Normans in the Gaelic resurgence of the mid-thirteenth century. They were first introduced to this country from Scotland

****As the Lower Mac William Burkes had become subdivided into Sliocht Walter, Eraght Thomáis, Sliocht Ulick, etc., so also the Upper Mac William had branched off into different clans, but the ruling branch went by the name Clanrickarde after their progenitor, Richard III, father of the first Earl.

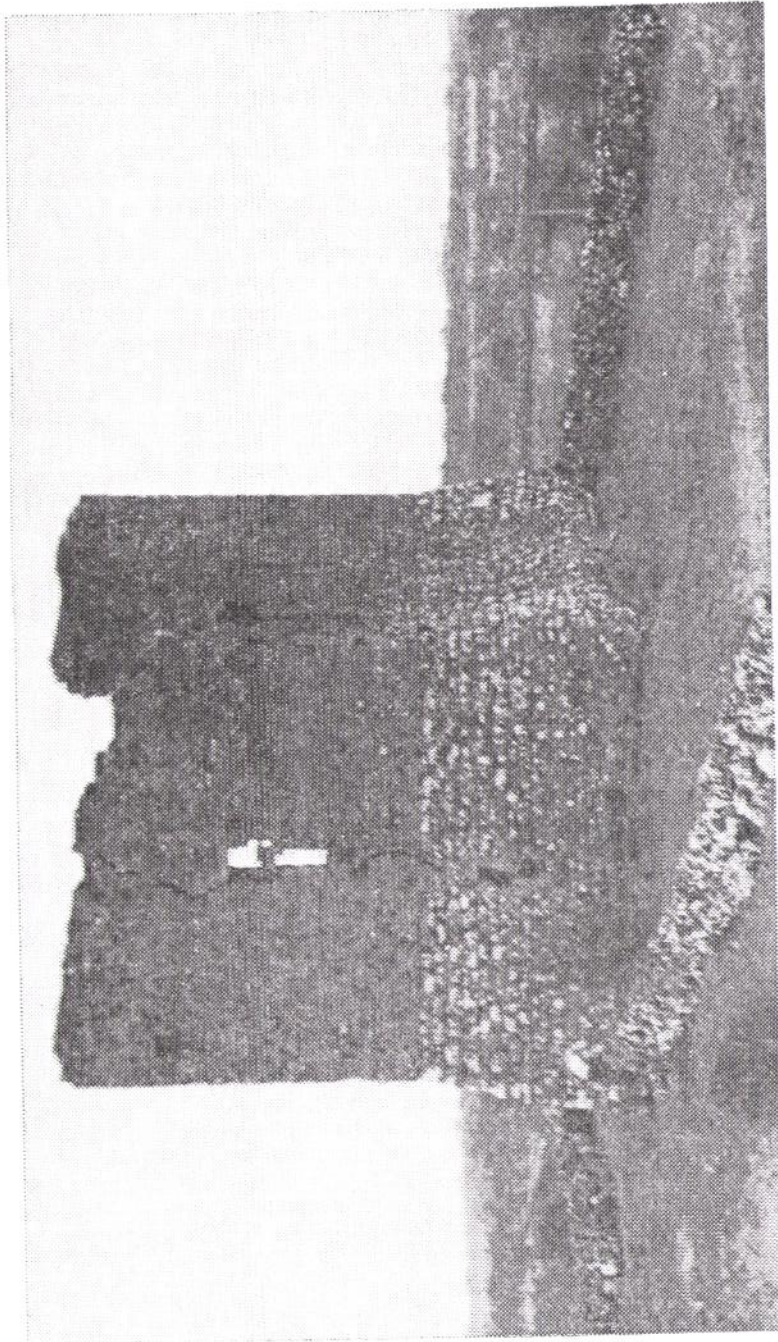
by Donall Oge Ó Donaill of Tír Chonaill to help him ward off invasion of his territory. The O'Connors of Connacht followed his example and in the 14th century we find Mac Donnell Gallowglasses fighting and dying for the royal tribe of Connacht in the O'Connor Roe v. O'Connor Don wars. These soldiers of fortune claimed descent from Alastair Oge Mac Donnell, fifth "Lord of the Isles", who was deposed by King Robert Bruce and whose sons left Scotland to fight as mercenaries in foreign fields. One of Alastair's sons, Somhairle, was the ancestor of the Connacht Mac Donnells and by the 16th century they had become so numerous that they were divided into different septs, some of whom were engaged on fee by the Mac William de Burgo and given castles for their accommodation. In Elizabethian times, three castles in Kilmaine Barony were allotted to these septs. These were: Clonine (also given as Cloneen and Clonyne) and Aghalarde, both in the Ballinrobe area, and Mochorha in Shrule Parish. Brain Boy (*Bui*) Mac Donnell is named as occupant of the last-mentioned castle in the Divisions of Connacht, while his son, Phelym, appears there in 1591. Another member of the Mac Donnells, Farragh by name, though of a different sept, was granted Shrule Castle and four quarters free in 1585, when William de Burgo was ousted and given Cloghans instead. The Mac Donnell tenure of Shrule must have been very short as we will see later. At first, of course, these Gallowglasses were ordinary tenants under the de Burgos or other lords, but they held much land also as *buannacht* fees for military service. Later on they held these lands directly from the Crown.

Ballisnahiney

The sixth Anglo-Norman castle within our ambit, though situated almost at the centre of Shrule Parish, belongs to the Parish of Kilmaine and to the archdiocese of Tuam. This castle stands in Ballisnahiney (*Baile Lios na hEidhnighe*), a townland which is completely isolated from the main portion of that historic neighbouring parish. How this peculiar arrangement took place does not concern us at the moment as we now deal with civil affairs in our own area. This was a de Burgo foundation and it is given first as in the territory of Eraght Thomáis while in the late 16th century it belonged to the "Pobble of Walter Mac Shoneen Burke". The occupant in 1574 was named William Burke and beyond these few facts it does not figure prominently in the accounts. Peculiarities in its structure, however, have given rise to various theories which will be dealt with at a later stage in our story.

Lord of the Manor

We have now traced, over three centuries, the rise of de Burgo in our area from the dubious role of adventurer to the proud position of lord of the manor. We have seen him gradually progress from speculative grants to complete confiscation of our entire property, and the six impressive and impregnable castles which rose around our borders bore testimony to the completeness of the take-over.



Ballisnahiney Castle, Shrule

So absolute was his dominion here that he regarded himself as independent of the Crown, reaching the zenith of his importance in the early years of Henry VIII. Haughty and grasping though he was, he was staunchly Catholic and he founded and fostered churches and abbeys well into the days of the Reformation. He gave many sons to the Church, some of whom won distinction in various spheres. He adopted our customs, our laws, our language and our system of succession to chieftaincy. He intermarried with our race and became one with us in all things, except one—that being his system of land tenure. In this he differed fundamentally from the old Irish king or chieftain. He was a feudal lord, owning the land of our fathers, and we were but his tenants-at-will. Our Gaelic system could not condone, nor even conceive, any code whereby a man had not inalienable and indisputable right to the land on which he made his habitation and his livelihood. No power on earth could dispossess him, according to our brehons. Neither king, council nor cleric could debar his claim to his inherited portion of God's earth. Taxes and tributes he certainly paid to his king or chieftain, but these were not given as a rent on his land but rather for the upkeep of the ruler's dignity and power. In return for these tributes, which were usually paid in kind, each landowner had the guaranteed protection of the king or chieftain against any malefactor. He could be fined, made captive or punished in other ways for non-payment of taxes, but eviction from his land was unknown and unacceptable in our Celtic code. On this account, here, as indeed throughout the country, our Norman lords, despite their adoption of our culture, remained foreigners to us to the end.

Imminent Decline

It was not the Irish, however, who brought about the decline of de Burgo in the lands of sweet Mayo, where his possessions in the 16th century were truly vast. From the Black River on the Shrule border, northwards through the baronies of Kilmaine and Carra to Cartlebar and Killala, his loop-holed castles kept vigil over our countryside. He even penetrated the stronghold of the famous *Gráinne Ní Mháille*, that indomitable sea-queen who became a legend in her own day. It is true that it was not by the sword he conquered this amazonian queen, but by the arrows of Cupid, for Richard an Iarainn de Burgo won her heart and hand and became lord of Umhall. Mac William Burke of Mayo had out-rivalled Clanrickarde Burke of Galway in the extent of his possessions and he rode on the crest of his wave. But, the declining years of the 16th century brought his decline also and very soon the lower Mac William became swamped in the tide of trickery and fraud which constituted Tudor policy in Ireland.

And now, with the editor's restraining hand on my shoulder, we must leave the story of his downfall for a long Winter's night.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH

1969-1971

FOCUS ON

Shrule

PERHAPS it was the arrogance of the Kildare Gerdines, culminating in the rash rebellion of Silken Thomas, that caused Henry VIII to devise a plan whereby he could undermine the independence of the Anglo-Norman and Irish chiefs and sap from them their power and their possessions. To do this without recourse to violent methods required some degree of astuteness, a quality which was not lacking in the Tudor brood. Therefore, in the early forties of the sixteenth century Henry cast his well-prepared bait. To all Irish or Anglo-Norman chiefs, who surrendered their lands and property to the Crown and submitted to its authority, he guaranteed a re-grant of their possessions, together with titles commensurate with their status. All this, he said, was necessary in order to legalise their rights to their property; but, what he failed to tell them, and they failed to realise, was that they were being led into complete and irrevocable subjection to the British Crown.

Clanrickarde

Many of our Irish chieftains fell for the bait, and among the first Anglo-Normans who were lured into the trap was Clanrickarde of Galway. Ulick* na gCeann de Burgo, then Mac William of the South, submitted in 1543 and received the royal re-grant of territory in Galway, along with the titles of Earl of Clanrickarde and Baron of Dunkellin. His possessions extended northwards to Shrule on the Black River, and, seeing that Mac William of Mayo, as yet, stood boldly aloof refusing to bow the knee, the new Earl, flushed from his late-conferred honours, cast covetous glances on our territory. In the few years which he lived to enjoy his titles, he managed to purchase Moyne from two members of Eraght Thomáis de Burgo, thus gaining his first foothold in Mayo. If the records are correct, Mocerha Castle and lands next fell to his bid, and then comes the surprising item, that David (Mac Edmund III) de Burgo, while he was Mac William Iochtair, let 440 qrs. of land at a rental to Clanrickarde. This letting represented an enormous area—over 52,000 acres of arable land—of which the whole Parish of Shrule would cover approximately one-fifth. It is stated that the Earl again sublet all these lands at a rental to members of his own clan, such as the Mac Sheóiníns, and also to the Mac Meylers and the Mac Gibbons—all of de Burgo origin.

* The name Ulick was a variation of William and was very common among the de Burgos.

Mac William submits

Richard III succeeded David as Mac William of Mayo in 1558 and when the young Earl of Clanrickarde claimed Moyne in 1566, asserting that his father held it, Mac William disputed the claim, stating that it was his hereditary territory. The question at issue in the dispute seems to have been—had the two brothers of Eraght Thomáis the right to sell Moyne, in the first place, without the consent of their feudal lord, the ruling Mac William? And even with his consent, would such transaction be legal without royal sanction? We must remember that the occupants of Moyne and Mocerha, like all others holding lands under the feudal system, were just tenants and were not empowered to sell. However, the dispute dragged on between the Earl and Mac William without any hope of settlement, until at last, they both agreed to refer the matter to the Lord Deputy in Dublin, pending trial. It was probably hope of the promised regrant of these and his other lands that induced Mac William to submit to Queen Elizabeth at the end of 1566. At any rate, we have no account of a trial being held or of a settlement being made in the ensuing years, but this does not surprise us when we learn of the quick succession of events which followed.

President Fitton

On a visit to Galway in the year 1569, the Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sydney, appointed Sir Edward Fitton as the first President of Connacht. This appointment was a fateful one for the province in general and for Shrule in particular. Fitton was cruel and tyrannical, having but one object in mind—the confiscation of Connacht for the Queen, and he had no qualms about using strong-arm methods to achieve this aim. For more than fifty years before this—since the Battle of Knockdoe—the whole province was peaceful, but immediately after Fitton's appointment both Irish and Anglo-Norman alike were goaded into acts of open rebellion. The Earl of Clanrickarde, however, was one exception and, in the hope of gaining further favours, he struck up an alliance with Fitton. The old question of the Mayo territory, which he claimed, must have been one of the first problems put by him to the President as, in the early summer of 1570 we find both gentlemen recruiting forces for an all-out invasion of Mayo. Fitton and Clanrickarde now intended to solve the problem by telling us that might was right. And this is how Shrule, being on the border, became the scene of a bloody battle which takes an important place in our annals.

The Siege of Shrule: 1570

The Four Masters*² give us a very detailed and vivid account of the engagement which took place in the summer of 1570.*³ It is

*² We should remember that they wrote their annals only sixty years after the battle and, therefore, there were many still alive who fought there.

*³ According to reports by Fitton, the battle was fought in the month of June.

rather too lengthy, though, to quote in full, but, their description of the forces in action at Shrule proves very interesting: "The same President (Fitton) and the Earl of Clanrickard (Richard, the son of Ulick na gCeann, who was son of Richard, who was son of Ulick of Cnoc Tuagh), laid siege to Sruthair in the summer of this year. In the President's army on this occasion were the most distinguished chiefs, heroes and champions of Upper Connacht, from Magh Aoi (Campus Connaciae) to Echtge and from Galway to Athlone. In his camp there were great numbers of captains with their soldiers, and two or three battalions of Irish giománachs, as also Calbhach (the son of Turlogh, who was son of John Carragh, who was the son of Mac Donnell), his two sons and their forces, a party of the descendants of Donall (who was son of John, who was son of Owen, who was son of Donall Oge) and Donall (the son of Morogh, son of Rory More), attended by choice battalions of gallowglasses, and likewise a battalion of gallowglasses of the Clan Dowell. He had ordnance and forces which had been brought from Galway and he had also a body of vigorous cavalry to the number of three hundred, accoutred in armour and coats of mail."

Mac William rises

Though this must certainly have been the most formidable force ever seen in Shrule, the Mayo Burkes were still undaunted, and decided to have a full-scale mobilisation of their fighting-men to pit their strength against the invaders. The annals continue: "As soon as Mac William Burke (John, the son of Oliverus, who was son of John) had heard that the President and the Earl assembled this great army around Sruthair, his heart became sorrowful and his mind confused. He immediately, however, summoned to his assistance the Lower Burkes and the descendants of Meyler Burke as also the Clan Donnell Galloglach, and Morogh of the Battle Axes (who was son of Teige, who was son of Morrogh, who was son of Rory O'Flaherty). These crowded to his standard attended by as many as they had been able to procure of hired soldiers and youths, both Scotch and Irish, and never halted until they had arrived on a hill which was convenient to the President's and Earl's camp." Our annalists then go on to describe the council of war which the Mayo men held and the plans which they made, stressing the solemn resolution which they adopted, not to disperse on any account, nor to depart from their order or formation under any circumstances whatever, even "if the son or relation of one of them would be slain."

The Battle of Shrule, 1570

The plan agreed to by Fitton and Clanrickarde is briefly given as follows: "As to the President and the Earl, they placed their ordnance, their archers, their halberdiers and their mailclad (horsemen on foot) in the narrow defiles through which they supposed the

enemy would pass, placing by their side the Clan Sweeney, the Clan Donnell, the Clan Dowell and all the other infantry of their army, while they themselves and the powerful body of energetic cavalry they had with them stood nigh ready to support the fight when occasion would require." The account of the actual combat is most descriptive and interesting, giving us details of the weapons used: "It was wrestling with peril and facing destruction for the youths of West and Lower Connacht to attempt to pass this dangerous road; nevertheless, they marched onwards, but had not advanced far before their sides were pierced and their bodies wounded by the first volley of large shot discharged at them from guns, and of arrows from elastic bows. It was not, however, fear or terror, cowardice or dastardliness that these wounds produced in them but rather a magnanimous determination of advancing directly to the contest, in which they soon tried the temper of their samthachs, the hardness of their swords and the heaviness of their battleaxes, on the heads of their enemies. Their enemies did not long withstand these vigorous onslaughts, for a numerous body of them took to wild and precipitate flight, upon which they (the others) advanced and took their places and stations. They then proceeded to kill those who stood before them and with vigour and swiftness to pursue those who fled for the distance of two miles from the camp during which pursuit they slew and disabled great numbers. As the people of Mac William Burke, while thus following up the pursuit, were passing by the cavalry of their enemy, which stood apart, they were attacked in the rear by that numerous body by whom numbers of their troops fell and a still greater number would have been cut off but for the closeness and compactness of the battle array which they had agreed that morning to preserve."

Victory or Defeat?

Despite the clear-cut victory of the Mayo men in this encounter, as given in the foregoing extract, Fitton and Clanrickarde claimed to have won the day on what might be described as a technical point. By the rules of war in those days, the victors held the battle-field on the night of their triumph to ensure that there could be no dispute as to the outcome of the day. This, Mac William Burke did not do, and that, according to the Four Masters, was his "great mistake". It appears that, though he succeeded in raising the siege of Shrúle Castle and routing the President's army for two miles, he did not occupy the camp on that night but dispersed his army quite content that victory was his. On the other hand, Fitton and the Earl returned to the field of battle late that evening with a company of the Mac Sweeneys and a party of archers. They commenced to attend to the wounded, inter their dead and pitch camp for the night. On this account they afterwards claimed the honours, stating that their enemies had fled the field in disarray. From that day forth, Fitton reported in his documents that Shrúle Castle was won by him for the Queen.

Casualties

The annals conclude their account by giving a list of the leaders lost in action that day. On the side of Mac William, they mention first, 'Little Patrick Cusack', adding that "his death was generally lamented." Then they give us the name of Walter de Burgo, who was nicknamed by the Irish as Walter Cluas le Doininn (Ear to the Tempest). He was son of John an Termainn and a brother of William of Shrúle. Randal Mac Donnell Gallowglass was also killed and two sons of Seán Erenach, two constables of the Clan Donnell of Scotland, "and countless numbers of Irish and Scotch auxiliaries of the Mac Donnells, the Mac Sweeneys and the adherents of the Burkes." On the other side, Fitton himself, was wounded and a Captain Bassenet of the English is mentioned among the number killed.

Skirmish at Shrúle, 1571

After the Battle of Shrúle, Fitton returned to Galway to heal his wounds and to issue his spurious claims to victory, while John Mac Oliverus, the Mayo Mac William, enjoyed his freedom as heretofore. In the following year, though, it was reported to Fitton that John was engaging Scots for battle. Fitton, in turn, reported this to the Lord Deputy in Dublin, adding that Mac William had indicted all gentlemen of Mayo and all their freeholders. This was probably a reference to the rebuke issued by Mac William to some of the clansmen for paying rent to Clanrickarde. Early in 1571, however, he agreed with the Deputy to pay 200 marks yearly as a fine for his late rebellion. Though he, himself, remained peaceful, his sons were not prepared to accept domination and, hearing that Clanrickarde's sons*4 had risen in arms, they also invaded Galway with a small force from Mayo. Fitton being absent in Roscommon, the Galway Sheriff repulsed their attack, drove them as far as a ford near Shrúle and "killed five or six score."*5

*4 They were called the Mac an Iarlas by the Irish and they had considerable backing from the natives.

*5 There could be some exaggeration in this account quoted by Knox, whose histories of County Mayo and of the Archdiocese of Tuam are marvels of research.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH

1969-1971

FOCUS ON

Shrule

IN 1536, ten years after the Mac Shonyn claim, a Dublin Parliament*¹ passed the Act of Supremacy declaring Henry VIII to be "Supreme Head" of the Church in Ireland. The Oath of Allegiance was also made compulsory for all those who held State positions and the country's 500 monasteries and convents were suppressed by law. The Reformation was now on the Statute Books for Ireland, but, as far as our area was concerned, this was all still "on paper" and many more years were to roll by before these measures would be implemented around Shrule. The process of enforcing these laws was slow, and it started in Dublin and the Pale, where the monks and other religious were first given the option of renouncing Rome and voluntarily surrendering their monasteries and convents to the Crown. Pensions and other benefices were offered to those who so resigned or surrendered and a generous period of time was allowed for the communities to make their final decision. The "Reformation" was to be gradual and cautious, according to the policy of Henry VIII and his minions. On this account, though there were nominal changes made in Galway and Tuam, no great inconcurrence was experienced locally by Catholics during the reign of this monarch.

Archbishop Bodkin

As the Dublin Parliament was forging its new machinery of Reformation, Dr. O Mullally, Archbishop of Tuam, died and Henry was quick to seize the opportunity of showing his lately-assumed "authority" by appointing a new metropolitan. The man he chose for the See of Jarlath was Dr. Christopher Bodkin, whom he had nominated to Kilmacduagh two years previously. It is strange that both Pope and king agreed on the choice of this man for Kilmacduagh Diocese in 1534, though at that time, Henry's relations with Rome had just reached breaking-point. No doubt, Bodkin was a highly-qualified and efficient man and was probably the most prominent candidate at the time. He was a native of Galway City, a descendant of one of the "Tribes" and extremely well educated at Oxford and at Rome. but he was rather young, as he first received

*¹ We must note here that at this Parliament, the diocesan proctors, two from each diocese, were not allowed to vote on this issue.

a mitre at the very early age of thirty-one. However, apart from his age, a man in favour with Henry VIII after that monarch's final break with Rome, was not to be translated to the provincial chair by any Pontiff. Bodkin, therefore, never received Papal sanction for Tuam, though he continued to function as archbishop for his lifetime. A major clash was probably averted by the coincidence that Dr. O Frighil, the man whom the Pope appointed in 1538, never came to Tuam, leaving Bodkin in sole command of the archdiocese.

Benefices Confirmed

It has been contended that Bodkin's acceptance of Henry's "supremacy" was purely nominal and, indeed, some of his subsequent actions bear out this contention. In 1537, the mayor and aldermen of his native city, Galway, took the oath of allegiance and renounced the authority of Rome. They did this, it is said, through fear on hearing of happenings in other quarters. We were then in the peculiar position that, though our Warden and vicars still retained the old Faith, those who elected them had subsided. In their case, too, the change must have been nominal, because, in 1542, at a Provincial Synod held in Galway, we find them requesting the Archbishop to confirm to the Collegiate Church all the benefices which it already enjoyed. Bodkin granted their request and, therefore, Shrule and Kinlough were further confirmed under the Wardenship of Galway.

Edward VI

At the death of Henry VIII, in 1547, the religious life of our parish continued unaltered and, indeed, in the other parishes under the Wardenship there was no visible change either. Henry of course had made no alteration in Doctrine apart from the supremacy issue and though monasteries and religious houses were suppressed by law, those here in the rural West, with few exceptions, continued to function as usual. On our borders, the religious were still active in Ross, Killeenbrenan (Kill) and Kilnamanagh, though, indeed, the atmosphere in these holy places must have been tense. It was Henry's son and successor Edward VI, who first issued proclamations against the Mass and the sacraments and designed a new form of services with his *Book of Common Prayer*. His reign was too short, though, for these to become really effective and it was for another matter that he left his name in Galway. This occurred as a result of a petition by the "mayor, bailiffs, co-burgesses and commonalty" of the city to his majesty, requesting him to confirm the status of the Collegiate Church in its original form, but with the king as supreme head instead of the "bishop of Rome". With this petition they expected to curry favour with the Crown and thus obtain full legal title to all their former possessions. It is strange that, in naming their "benefices, rights and appurtenances" they omitted to mention Shrule or Kinlough, though they have given "the deserted rectories and vicarages

of Ragoon, Moycullen, Foranmore and Roscam", and "the small vicarages of Clare, Kilcommen, Meary and Skryne", as belonging to the College.

"The Royal College" (1551)

In response to the citizens' request, a Charter of Edward VI dated 29th April 1551, was issued, whereby the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas was seized into the king's hands and the Catholic Warden and vicars dispossessed. The Bull of Innocent VIII was declared void and the Wardenship was re-established under the king as supreme head. The new institution was to be known as "The Royal College of Galway". Apart from these changes, the constitution of the College was practically unaltered, and its previous possessions were guaranteed under royal seal. Examination of these possessions reveals a most amusing entry in regard to our area. In listing the ecclesiastical benefices and emoluments of the "Royal College", the Charter of Edward VI gives the following: "vicariam de Srowre in diocesi Anaghtuamensi"! Well, we had been tossed from one diocese to another in the past, but now, by royal charter, we were in one which never existed—the diocese of "Anaghtuam"! The scribes of Edward VI had now, indeed, made a "reformation".*² And, to add still further to our mystery, Kinlough gets no mention in this charter!

Pole's Inquiry, 1555

The short reign of the Catholic Queen Mary made little difference here in the West where religious affairs had suffered no apparent change under Henry or Edward. The question of the position of Archbishop Bodkin in the new regime, however, was bound to arise and to determine this, an inquiry was held under Cardinal Pole in London in 1555. The result of this inquiry must have been favourable to Bodkin, as he still continued to rule in Tuam, but, in the course of the evidence taken, an interesting item emerged. Tuam is reported to have but five suffragan sees—Clonfert, Elphin, Killala, Kilmacduagh and Achonry. Therefore, Annaghdown Diocese had by now officially disappeared, though there was still a chapter with a dean, archdeacon and a number of canons, some of whom were non-resident.

Bodkin's Visitation, 1558-'59

Bodkin was still in favour with the Crown when Queen Elizabeth succeeded to the throne in 1558 and in the same year the Archbishop undertook a visitation of his Archdiocese for the purpose of recording the state of the Church therein. The document does not give a very comprehensive account of the parishes nor of the priests, as it was

*² Hardiman states that the copy of the Charter available to him must have been wrongly transcribed.

not compiled for the purpose of taxation, but it does give some very useful information about our churches. In it we read that Dermot O'Ruain was "vicar of Scrury", that the profits of the vicarage were usurped by William, son of John de Burgo, and that the rectory of Shrle belonged to Cong monastery. Continuing, it records that John Og O'Dorcan was "vicar of Kynlacha", and that the profits here were also usurped by William, son of John de Burgo. This rectory, too, belonged to the monastery of Cong. The same William de Burgo, according to the MS., "forcibly usurps the prebend of Maynkille", which, of course, is our present-day Moyne. Here, on our northern border, "John O Konayll, Vicar of Kyllynbrenayn"*³ is given, and the rectory belongs to Cong.

"Usurpation"

This question of the "usurpation" of church property by laymen at this period requires some elucidation, as it may help to understand more fully some future records of our parish. When Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne, an alteration of religion was practically inevitable and the Catholic clergy in all parts became very apprehensive for the safety of church lands and property. This was particularly true in Galway where the mayor and corporation had succumbed under the pressure of the times and the Warden and vicars foresaw that the day was fast approaching when their church lands would be confiscated by the Crown. To avoid this, they resolved on a plan whereby they leased or granted to their friends or benefactors, a great part of the possessions of the Royal College. It was expected, at the time, that with a possible future reversion of religious policy under a new regime, all those possessions could be returned or redeemed. Following on this practice, which commenced in the city parish, other benefactors of the churches in the outlying parishes reclaimed the benefices or property endowed by them or by their ancestors.*⁴ In other instances, the neighbouring diocesan clergy laid claim to some of these possessions on the contention that the donations had been made to them personally or to their predecessors. In short, the Catholic clergy hoped that, if confiscation of church lands became a reality, it might be maintained that these lands were not church property, but private possessions.

Shrle and Kinlough usurped (1568)

Shrle, it seems, was no exception to the trend of the times in this regard, for in 1568, we find the new Warden and vicars sending a petition to the President and council of Connacht against "John

*³ This is the present-day Kill, in the Parish of Kilmaine, about two miles north-west of Shrle.

*⁴ One famous instance of this was the "Blind Abbot"—a de Burgo who usurped much land belonging to churches and monasteries.

Boorke", who was then sheriff of the province, and also against "Walter and William Boorke, FitzJohn FitzMoyler." The accusation against the "Boorke" gentlemen was that they had wrongfully dispossessed the Royal College of "the profits and fruits of the vicarages of Shrower (Skryne) in Tome and Kinlough, to which they pretended title in right of Sir John McWilliam, priest, Dermot O Rowan and John O'Donoghe."*5 The "Walter and William Boorke" in question were of course, William of Shrule and his brother Walter, known as "Cluas le Doininn", who was killed at the Battle of Shrule two years later. Archbishop Bodkin, in his *Visitation*, had mentioned William as usurper of the profits of the two vicarages and also of the prebend of Moyne, but it is strange that this last-mentioned benefice is not claimed by the College, unless, of course, it had been returned to Galway in the meantime. Finally, it should be remembered here that the ancestors of these Shrule Burkes were the chief benefactors of the churches here and it may also be noted that one of the priests mentioned, Dermot O Rowan, was the "Dermot O Ruain" given by Bodkin as Vicar of Shrule in 1558. However, the consequence of this latest petition was, that the President and council issued an order that, in future, the Collegiate clergy should not be disturbed or interrupted in the possession of the Shrule and Kinlough vicarages.

The Divisions of Connacht, 1574

Documents prepared relating to the divisions of Connacht afford further evidence of the state of our churches at this period. Though intended mainly for the political divisions of the province, the lists also include "Certain Spirituall Dignyties and other Livings both Parsonages and Vicarages and Parish Churches within the County of Mayo." Shrule ("Srur") and Kinlough ("Kynlagha") are still given as being rectories and vicarages, while Moyne ("Maynkill") is listed as a prebend. Close on our northern border "Killinbrenan" is named as a rectory and vicarage also, though no mention is made of the "abbey" there. Just south-east of Shrule "Thabbay of Kilnmanagh" is included in Galway and, on the bank of the Black River in Killursa (Headford) Parish we read—"Rosriell by the gray freers", which refers to the Franciscan Friary of Ross.

* * * * *

As we close our records for the present, it is comforting to know that, after half a century of "Reformation", our churches and religious houses were still intact and continuing the work of fortifying our Faith as they did for centuries.

*5 John Og O Dorcay had been given by Bodkin and one wonders if a similarity of the surnames caused an error in manuscript.

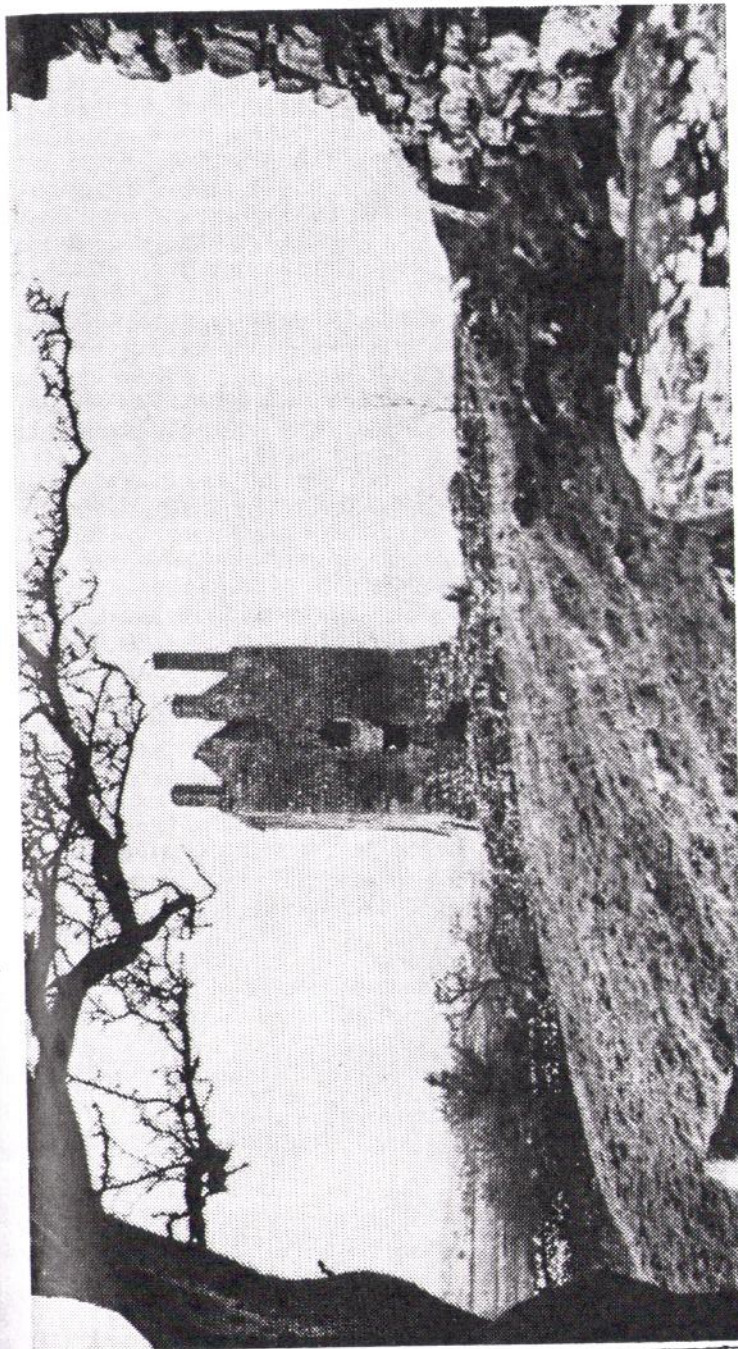
(Continued next issue)

Shrule

THOUGH President Fitton brought conflict and bloodshed to our Parish, we may be grateful to him for at least one thing—he has left us a very full account of the owners of our castles and lands during his harsh regime. Shrule inhabitants may dispute his claim of 1570 that “Shrogher Castle” was the Queen’s, especially as he added boastfully—“lately won by me in June”, and we may also take him to task for reporting at the same time that Moyne Castle and lands were Clanrickarde’s. But, four years later, in preparation for the division of Connacht, he sent to the Deputy a very detailed list of all the castles in Kilmaine Barony together with the names of the gentlemen residing in them. In it he gives us William Burke in Shrule, and names him as principal chief of all. This he undoubtedly was, as we find that he was elected “Senescal of Kilmaine” at a meeting of the clansmen in 1578. Fitton then names Davy Mac Jonyn as occupant of Moyne and goes on to list another William Burke in Ballisnahyny, Ulick Burke in Ballycurran, Brian Boy Mac Donnell in Mocerha and, finally, “Mac William” Burke, himself, in Kinlough. Contiguous to our area, he placed Gilladuff Mac Jonyn in Houndswood, Redmond Mac Jonyn in Cross and Walter Mac Jonyn in Ballybocagh. He also gave Edmund Burke of Cong as an important chief among the owners of the forty-one castles in the Barony.

Mac William in Galway, 1575

The Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sydney, visited Galway City in 1575 to assess the situation regarding the recent risings of Clanrickarde’s sons. John (son of Oliverus de Burgo) who lived in Kinlough Castle, was still “Mac William” and, in the hope of protection against any further incursions into his territory by Fitton, he proceeded to Galway to meet Sydney. The result of the meeting was that Mac William of Mayo submitted to the Queen by oath and indenture in the presence of the Deputy, and he also agreed to pay the sum of two hundred and fifty marks yearly for his country as well as to provide companies of fighting-men when required. He further consented that the Mac Donnells, formerly his tenants, should in future hold their lands of the Queen and he then requested the Deputy to appoint an English sheriff over his country. Sydney agreed to do this and when the agreement was ratified, Mac William was knighted, receiving the usual ceremonial presents. He then returned to Kinlough, newly-fledged as Sir John de Burgo, but minus the independence and integrity in which his forefathers had so much gloried in the past.



Kinlough Castle, Shrule

Divisions of Connacht, 1585

Though Fitton, during his term of office, was fairly profuse with his reports regarding the misdemeanours of Connacht chiefs, he himself, was the object of a far greater profusion of complaints by both Irish and Anglo-Normans concerning his atrocities*⁶ in the West. The Deputy ignored these for far too long, but at last, in 1579, it became evident to Dublin Castle that Fitton would continue to cause trouble and perhaps create anarchy in the West, and he was unceremoniously removed from office. His successor proved much more considerate and humane and it seemed as if trouble had made its exit from our area. A peace of sorts spread throughout the land, even though it was a peace with a certain degree of humiliation for some, both Gael and Sean-Ghall. This was the atmosphere in which a new Deputy, Sir John Perrot, in 1585, divided Connacht into its five counties*⁷. He appointed a sheriff in each county and placed Sir Richard Bingham as President of the Province.

Mayo-Galway Boundary

An inquisition held early in the next century clearly defines the boundary between Galway and Mayo as fixed by Perrot's commissioners, and, as it closely concerns us here in Shrule, it may be interesting to refer to that particular portion of the findings. The boundary of County Galway, according to this document, passes from Cong into Lough Corrib and "includes Inchevicketryer."*⁸ From that island it continues "to Carra-Inridery there that goeth out of the Loghe, on the east side, into the river of Owen-Dufferush and so to Moyne and from thence agaynste the streame to Srowher, then to Clownesheana." The names mentioned here are readily recognisable to Shrule people. Carra-Inridery still maintains its name south of Ballycurran by the lake shore. Owen Dufferush is a good attempt at Abhainn Dubh, the Black River; while Moyne, Sruthair and Cloonsheen are well-known. The only portion of this extract which might arouse controversy in the present time is that from Moyne "agaynste the streame" to Shrule. One might be pardoned here for asking—"Which stream?" With low water in summer, the Black River goes underground west of Shrule and rises

*⁶ Hardiman, in his *History of Galway*, says that he was "cruel and sanguinary in his nature" and gives instances of his "wanton severities".

*⁷ It is interesting here to note that County Clare, previously known as Thomond, was included in Connacht by Perrot. This was also done, provisionally, by the Queen in 1579, but, at the request of the Earl of Thomond, she re-united Clare to the province of Munster in 1602.

*⁸ The story of how this island, Inishmacatreer, though connected by a causeway to the mainland of County Mayo, was included in Galway, is an old one. It goes back to the days when the O'Flaherty's were driven across the lake by the O'Connors and retained possession of their islands.

again a few hundred yards east of Moyne Castle, leaving a dry bed between these two places. The present boundary between the two counties does not run along this bed, but turns sharply to the right upstream from Moyne and follows a tributary of the Black River to Cloonbanan where it again links up with the main stream. This accounts for the townlands of Kinlough, Anlacka, Cullagh, Cnockfada and Cloonbanan being included in Mayo, though they lie south of the Black River as it runs in Winter. These five townlands are, of course, in Shrule Parish.

Change of Masters

The year 1585 saw the Lower Burkes shorn further of possessions by a Royal Indenture of the Composition of Connacht. The terms of this document show that William of Shrule was dispossessed but given the lands of Cloghans instead, and we also read that Farragh Mac Donnell of Clooneen (near Ballinrobe), "in respect of his good service done on Her Majesty's side at the meeting of Shrule, shall have that castle and four quarters of his land free." So it seems that at least one Mac Donnell Gallowglass, not alone deserted his former employers in their hour of need at the battle of Shrule, but turned his sword on his erstwhile lords. And this was Mac Donnell's reward for his base act—the Castle and Lands of Shrule! The same indenture shows that Edmund Burke of Cong was given "six quarters adjoining his castles of Aquirk*⁹ and Ballycurran free, the rest subject to Composition." For some unknown reason he must have been in royal favour too. The old question of Moyne was now fixed beyond doubt because Ulick, the third Earl of Clanrickarde, is given as "seized of Moyne", while, finally, William Burke, nephew of Sir John, was left Kinlough, the last remaining stronghold of Mac William in Shrule Parish.

"Mac William", 1595

The final episode in the history of the title adopted by the leader of the Burkes of Mayo two centuries before, should be of immense interest to Shrule people, as their own recently-ousted lord played a most prominent part in it. However, before proceeding to recount the peculiar set of circumstances in which this scene is set, it is necessary for the reader to understand the system by which the de Burgos chose their leader. We remember how this branch of that widespread family absorbed the Gaelic mode of life in practically everything—language,*¹⁰ dress, customs, etc. They went further than this, though, in becoming Irish, for they adopted the Gaelic

*⁹ This was the ancient name of Castletown adjoining Shrule Parish to the north beside Lough Corrib.

*¹⁰ It is most interesting to note that the Lord Deputy, to whom Mac William submitted in 1575, reported as follows on the event: "I found Mac William very sensible; though wanting the English tongue, yet understanding the Latin. . . . He is a great man. His territory is three times as large as the Earl of Clanrickard's."

system of succession to the chieftaincy. According to this system two conditions were necessary in order to become chief. Firstly, the candidate must come from the *deirbhfine**¹¹ (or 'family') of a former chief, and secondly, he must be elected by the nobles of the clan. Therefore, after the death of a ruling Mac William, a great confederation of the Mayo Burkes was always held, where all eligible candidates attended, and at which the new leader was chosen by popular acclaim.*¹² This event was carried out with the greatest pomp and ceremony and the whole clan took a deep interest in the outcome.

Rausakeera

The venue for this convention was the site of an ancient inauguration place of Irish chiefs of pre-Christian times. It was situated a short distance north of Kilmaine at a place called Rausakeera (Rath Easa Caorach). On the mound of this rath every new Mac William was inaugurated, to the re-echoing cheers of his supporters and all sub-chiefs pledged loyalty and obedience to him. The year 1595 witnessed such a convention there and, according to accounts, it was one which aroused the greatest interest for many years, as Red Hugh O'Donnell, the "Eagle of the North", had promised to attend and perform the inauguration ceremony. O'Donnell had previously toured Mac William's country, enlisting support for the war in which he was now engaged and in which he had made alliance with the mighty Hugh O'Neill against Elizabeth of England. His promise to attend at Rausakeera was deemed an honour and the assembled multitudes anxiously awaited his arrival. While waiting, the senior chiefs of the Burkes held council and agreed that William of Shrule, lately transferred to Cloghans, was the most worthy member and they nominated him for the leadership. O'Donnell was much delayed in coming and many of the assembled, abandoning hope of his arrival, departed to their homes. *¹³ The northern chief arrived late and, annoyed that proceedings were conducted in his absence and that a large section of the crowd had dispersed, he ruled out of order all business done in his absence and he inaugurated two leaders instead of one. They were Theobald Burke and William Caoch, who was also known as the "Blind Abbot." William of Shrule who was lately deprived of his castle and lands by Elizabeth, was now deprived of his legitimate title by an Irish chieftain.

*¹¹ There were four generations included in the Gaelic *deirbhfine*, i.e., son, father, grand-father and great-grand-father.

*¹² Herein, the Lower Mac William differed from the Clanrickarde Burkes. The Clanrickarde's leader had a purely hereditary title, while the Mayo Mac Williamship was ultimately an elective office.

*¹³ It appears that the majority of those who went home were supporters of William of Shrule. This would account for the meek acceptance of O'Donnell's decision by the remainder.

Queen's Commissioners

The decision of O'Donnell does not appear to have been popular in the West, especially among a large percentage of the Burkes, and certain rumblings of discontent were felt. Fearing a new outbreak of violence at a highly inopportune time, the Lord Deputy sent two separate commissions to our area to treat for peace. The first of these, led by Clanrickarde, had to retire for want of supplies. The second, under General Norris and Sir G. Fenton, arrived in 1596 with a considerable force. While conducting their negotiations with the Mac Williams, they occupied the castles of Moyne and Kinelough, billeting their troops in the neighbourhood. The Franciscan Monastery of Ross, across the Black River from Moyne, was hastily evacuated by the Friars and a company of the soldiers found ample accommodation within its sacred walls. The Mayo leaders delayed their deliberations by saying they were committed to O'Donnell and could not negotiate a peace without him. The commissioners, however, were recalled in the meantime as the Deputy in Dublin was now planning a great invasion of Ulster and required all available troops for that large-scale operation. Once again Shrule Parish could breathe in relief—at least for the present—though, indeed, it was an uneasy calm which followed and there still persisted a deep feeling of insecurity.

Descending Gloom

The sombre sixteenth century now drew to its dreary close with darkening shadows falling fast around the de Burgos. It had opened bright and cheerful with both Mac William and Shrule at the peak of their importance, at least as far as civil life was concerned, but now, after a series of doleful events they had dwindled under the oppressor's well-laid plans. Elizabeth had resolved to break up the castle system in Ireland, thereby breaking the power of the Anglo-Norman lords. Her plans, were succeeding exceptionally well in Shrule and de Burgo was no longer regarded as the powerful 'Lord of the Manor'. Following the Kinsale disaster, the death of O'Donnell and the departure of O'Neill the first half of the seventeenth century saw the Lower Burkes finally disappear from our area after almost three hundred years of occupation.

The difficult and complicated task of tracing their origin, their conquest, their growth and their decline is now at an end and we next retrace our steps over those same centuries to examine church affairs in our Parish during that time. Should the reader stay with us, he will see that the story of the ecclesiastical life of our district in that period is no less involved than that of our civil affairs.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH

S H R U L E

THERE ARE THOSE who would have us believe that, during the first twelve years of her reign, Elizabeth I harboured a hope, however faint, that Rome might still recognize the legitimacy of her birth, and that were such to happen, she would be willing to give some concessions to Catholics. Her prohibition of the public celebration of Mass in 1568, however, discredits this suggestion; and that measure of hers must have been one of the major factors taken into consideration by Pope Pius V in 1570, when issuing his Bull, *Regnans in Excelsis*, which excommunicated the pompous queen. From then on, Catholics could not expect any quarter from the frustrated and embittered daughter of Henry VIII. Act after act was now passed venting her spleen against anyone who recognized the authority of Rome. She first struck at the clergy, banishing them from the realm by her terrible statute of 1585. By the same Act, known as 27 Elizabeth, it was declared a felony for the laity to harbour a priest, and both priest and laymen incurred the death penalty—that of the priest being a most horrible form of butchery. The full fury of persecution was now unleashed and crown officials, cowering before their irate queen, vied with one another in the severity of their treatment of the followers of the Church of Rome.

Dr. Nicholas Skerrett

Here in the remoteness of our rural parish this tidal wave of relentless persecution may have appeared, at first, very far off, but events nearer home soon brought the impact of oppression to our own threshold. While Archbishop Bodkin lived, he succeeded somehow in stemming the tide of tyranny, but on his death in 1572, his renegade dean, William Lally, was the queen's choice for Tuam. So two years after her excommunication, Elizabeth had appointed the person whom we regard as the first Protestant Bishop in the See of Jarlath. Rome pondered the situation for eight years, giving Lally ample time to show his hand, and then, in 1580, a brilliant young Galwayman was appointed archbishop by Pope Gregory XIII. He was Dr. Nicholas Skerrett, a descendant of one of the most staunchly Catholic tribes of the city and a brilliant product of the renowned Collegium Germanicum of the Jesuit Order in Rome. He had members of his family secured his release on the pretence that he was a teacher come to set up school in the city. A short time later, he moved to Tuam to endeavour to administer his archdiocese, but spies beset him on all sides and his friends eventually prevailed on him—just in time—to leave. Some assert that our hunted arch-

bishop was arrested there and incarcerated for a time in Athlone, where he suffered harsh treatment which eventually brought about his death. Again his release was arranged through secret influence, but, with his health greatly impaired, he was compelled to escape to the continent in an effort to recuperate. After a circuitous route, he eventually arrived at San Rogue in Lisbon, where he died in 1683 at the early age of 37, our first hierarchal victim of the laws of Elizabeth

Ross Desecrated

The days for temporizing on the part of any Catholic were now fast being numbered as the agents of the crown penetrated into the West, seeking out the shepherds of the flock and also the religious establishments which had been the power-houses of fidelity to papal authority down through the centuries. On our very border here in Shrule, the Friary of Ross was specially marked down for suppression. For over two hundred years, the Franciscans had loved and led many of our people, and since the days of Henry VIII they were fortunate in being under the protection of the friendly Clanrickardes, who left them undisturbed in their saintly work. In 1584, however, Elizabeth received information that the friars were still in occupation and she granted the monastery to an Englishman who forthwith expelled the inmates and plundered it of its library, books, and other valuables. Who this Englishman was is not known to us, but the destruction of the precious records and books is to be deeply lamented down to the present time. The "Poor Friars" were welcomed to the shelter of the humble homes of our people in Shrule Parish as they were also in Killursa, where they had been domiciled. For two years they were harboured in the locality until in 1586, Ulick, the third Earl of Clanrickarde, succeeded in purchasing the Englishman's interest and immediately reinstated them.

Benefices and Incumbents (1591?)

The document known as *Valor Beneficiorum* of 1584/5 ignores the Royal College of Galway and therefore we cannot find there any information regarding the state of our parish at that time. About six years later, though a list of the incumbents in these parts was compiled, and from it we can glean some confirmatory evidence regarding the status of our churches at the close of the sixteenth century. This list, the MS. of which is in the library of T.C.D., is undated, but similar lists for other parts of the country bear the date 1591. According to our document Shrule was still a rectory and vicarage, both of which belonged to the Royal College of Galway. The incumbent of the Kinlough rectory is given as "the Queen", while its vicarage goes to the Galway College. Then we find the note that the "Prebendary of Moyinchilly" (Moyne) was "John Linch", who must have been a member of the tribes of Galway. Further information given in this list about our surrounding parishes, is also a valuable guide for us in regard to the state of religion in this district then, as the names of the vicars adjacent to us are given. A

quick glance through them shows us the genuinely Irish names of O'Keanavain, O'Ceally, O'Tevnain, O'Fieghain and O'Myn. According to Knox, these were all Catholics and it is reasonable to assume that the vicars of our parish in the centre of this circle of clergy, were no different as regards race or religion. It appears as if we had still weathered the storm.

Two Colleges

We must remember, of course, that our clergy were now appointed by the Warden of Galway, while all around us we had priests of the Archdiocese of Tuam. Let us bear in mind also that, as Hardiman informs us, two colleges existed in Galway from about 1590. In the first—the official "Royal College"—were the Protestant Warden and vicars who were chosen under the charter of Edward VI; but there was also a Catholic "College" elected under the Bull of Pope Innocent VIII. We are told that the Catholic inhabitants of the city used to assemble in private to elect their own mayor, bailiffs, sherrif, etc., and these, in turn, elected the vicars of the college. Those Catholic vicars then chose their warden, who made the necessary clerical appointments to the various parishes. This means, then, that as Tuam was now both a Catholic and a Protestant Archbishopric, so also Galway had both a Catholic and a Protestant Wardenship. Such was our state as we enter the seventeenth century.

Church Lands Confiscated

The hopes which Irish Catholics entertained on the succession of James I in 1604, were short-lived and persecution of the Faith which his mother held was continued unabated by the Stuart king. The confiscation of church property seems to have been his main aim at first and here in our own area, we learn that the Cordara lands which were part of the patrimony of the Friary of Ross were granted in 1605, to John Kinge of Dublin. Four years later, the same monarch granted to the same John Kinge*2 and to another Englishman called John Bingley, the following:

1. "one moiety of the tithes great and small of the rectories, churches, chapels or parishes of Kilmainemore, Shrule, Kinlough, Kilnebrenin, Kilmainebeg,"
2. "The church, chapel or rectory, tithes, etc., of Templecolman in the town of Shrule. A small parcel of land called Ramelin in Shrule."

Other enormous properties in other parts of the province were also granted to Kinge.

Friars Expelled 1612

For the next two centuries, the time-chart of the Friary of Ross may well serve as our barometer whereby we can gauge the pressure of persecution and the intensity of discrimination exercised from time to time against the Catholics in our locality. In the annals of

*2 This man is given as the father of Edward Kinge—who was the "Lycidas" of John Milton's beautiful poem.

Ross, we find that in 1612, the friars were reported again to the Lord Deputy, Chichester, who ordered William Daniel, Protestant Archbishop of Tuam, to arrest the community, which now consisted of only six priests and two lay-brothers. Though authorized to apprehend these holy men and demolish their altars, the learned archbishop sent word privately to Ross that he was coming and advised them not to be there. Therefore, on his arrival at the deserted friary the Franciscans were safely sheltered in the houses of our parish just across the Black River where they were, in effect, outside the jurisdiction of the archbishop. For fourteen years these saintly men remained dependent on the generosity of their neighbours until 1626, when the first Stuart king was then no more.

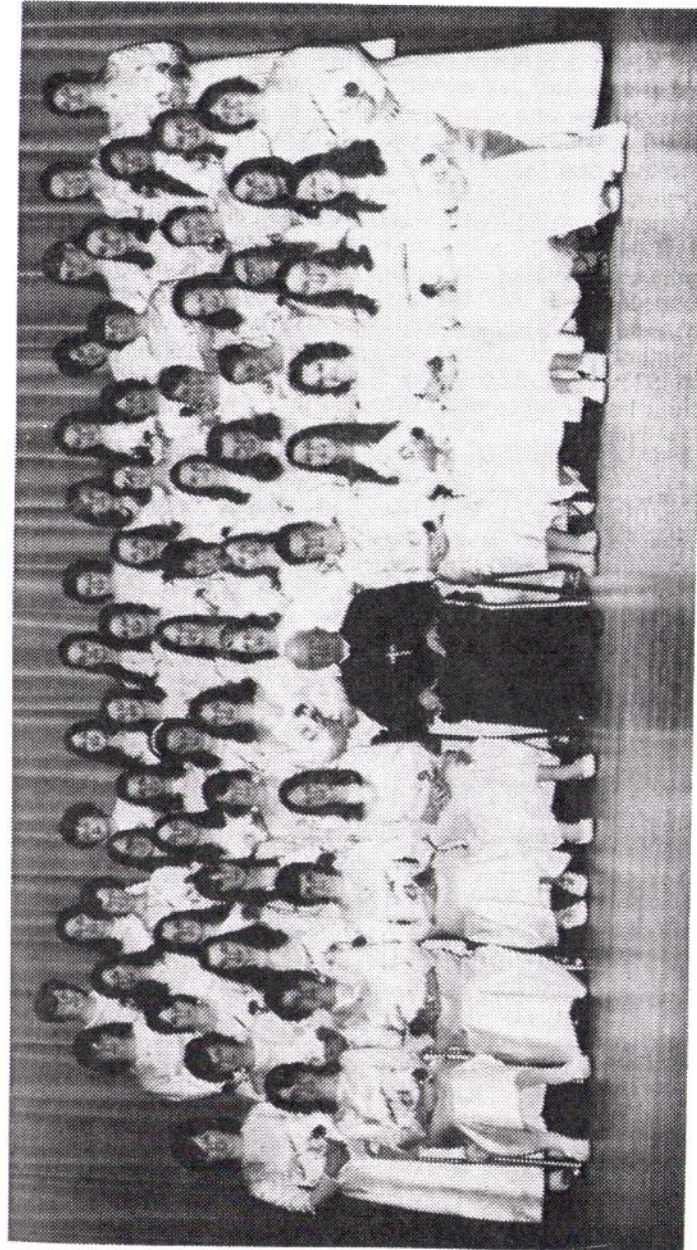
Under Charles I

The leaden sky which hung over the cold grey dawn of the seventeenth century and darkened gradually during its first quarter now brightened perceptibly on the succession of Charles I. The friars re-occupied Ross and, on the promise by the Crown of the famous "Graces" to Catholics, the atmosphere of tension throughout our parish relaxed considerably. Our clergy re-appeared from their hiding, churches were again opened and Holy Mass celebrated publicly. Once more the sun shone for the Catholic population. But, on the material side, the outlook was not so bright when Deputy Strafford surveyed the Province of Connacht to establish the king's right to its entire lands. To do this, juries were set up in all the counties to examine the royal titles and they were instructed to find in favour of the king. By 1635, Leitrim, Sligo and Roscommon had, through fear, given their verdict for Charles. and the Mayo jury, sitting at Ballinrobe in July found the king's title correct also. But the findings of the Galway jury set tempers high in Dublin, when a verdict against the crown was brought in. The sheriff, Martin D'Arcy*³, and the entire jury were arrested, imprisoned in Dublin and cruelly treated. Then in 1637 Strafford packed another jury which found the king's title to the lands of County Galway. And now the most fertile parts of Connacht were planted with Protestants at a double rate, leaving the Catholics with only half, and in some cases a quarter, of their property. This was one of the most blatant and abominable instances of legal chicanery in our history, and the Catholic population were justifiably enraged at the confiscation of their ancient inheritance. Their pent-up feelings of bitterness and resentment at last erupted into violent action against the planters and a sad instance of this forms the next part of our story.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH

*³ This man actually died in prison as a result of the harshness of the treatment,



Graduation Day in the Mercy Convent, Galway, 1971

Shrule

STRAFFORD'S SURVEY of Connacht was conducted for the purpose of the plantation of the province and from it we learn that no part of Shrule or of Kinlough belonged to the Protestant College of Galway. This is corroborated by Deputy Surveyor-General Petty in another report about the same time (1637). Two years earlier the Catholic warden had procured from Pope Urban VIII a grant confirming to the Catholic College all its previous possessions, including our own rectories and vicarages. It appears, then, that on the brink of the great upheaval which commenced in 1641, our Faith held firm and our people remained untainted by any foreign influence.

Exit Mac William

Though the Mayo Mac William Burkes suffered very serious losses during the reign of Elizabeth, it was the Stuarts who eventually forced them to make their final exit from our parish. Shrule Castle and lands, as we have already seen, were taken from "William of Shrule" in 1585 and given to Farragh Mac Donnell of Cloneen but strangely enough, in 1610 we find John de Burgo, son of William, in occupation—whether as owner or tenant we cannot say. About this time (1610), Richard, Earl of Clanrickarde got the castle and four quarters of land and he leased them to Pierce Lynch of Galway. This Lynch must also have had a lease of some land just south of the Black River in County Galway, as it was there in Shrulegrove that he built his manor house, some of the ruins of which are yet to be seen. He was in residence there in 1641, while in the same year a man named Edmund Bourke (note the spelling) resided in Shrule Castle.*¹ It is very probable that this latter character was a sub-tenant of Lynch and it is suggested that he had been dispossessed of his property further north in the county.

New Masters

Kinlough Castle was the residence of the "Mac William" in Elizabeth's time and we now find that John Burke Fitzwilliam*² owned it in 1618, but that his son, Walter, mortgaged it in 1628 to Sir Valentine Blake of Menlo, Galway. Moyne Castle and lands had

*¹ Oliver J. Burke, in his book *The Abbey of Ross*, states that this Edmund Bourke was in no way connected with the Burkes of Castlehacket. The spelling also suggests that he was not related to the Burkes of Shrule.

*² This man was probably son of William of Shrule.

been confiscated by Ulick, Earl of Clanrickarde as far back as 1585, and his successor, Richard, the 4th Earl, got a re-grant of the castle and four quarters from James I in 1610. Though Ballycurran was given to Edmund Burke of Cong, free of composition rent, in 1585, it was now granted to the same Earl. Mocharra had been purchased by the 2nd Earl from MacDonnell Gallowglass in the early years of Elizabeth's reign; and it is assumed in the absence of definite data, that Ballisnahiney also fell to him, though subsequently let to a Mac Shoneen. Therefore, as the fateful year of 1641 dawned, the whole of our area had passed from the Mayo MacWilliam Burkes, the major portion falling to the grasping hands of Clanrickarde.

Church Lands

During this same period, much of our church lands were granted to newly-arrived foreigners who were all Protestants. A great amount of Kinlough land had been previously the property of the Archbishop of Tuam and a further portion belonged to Cong Abbey.*³ All of this, at some stage, was confiscated, while the nuns of Inishmaine and Ballinchalla, who owned two qrs. of land in Moyne, were dispossessed. A further parcel of sixty acres of episcopal land in Kill was lost to the archbishop; and, as has been seen already, Kinge and Bingley were given the church lands of Shrule. We may add to all this the amount confiscated from the Franciscans of Ross, whose patrimony at one time consisted of about 1,300 acres in the townlands of Ross, Rostaff and Cordara, and whose sole wealth now, according to an official enquiry, was "a cemetery, three small gardens, and a mill which (for want of water) could work only in winter".*⁴

Desperation

Writing of this period, a century ago, one author*⁵ of Anglo-Irish extraction says: "The Irish people groaned under the intolerable weight of English rapacity". His words were just as true of our people here in the West as of those in any other part of the land. Discontent—a mild word indeed—became widespread throughout Mayo as the strong arm of Strafford descended on each Catholic, Irish or Anglo-Irish, landowner. Deep indignation followed as each new English or Scotch Protestant colonist was planted in their fertile lands. Exasperation rapidly increased as news came through

*³ The amount of church land in Kinlough is given in one place as 28 quarters, but there must be an error here, as this would be enormous property in a small parish.

*⁴ We know already that Clanrickarde purchased an Englishman's interest in some of the Abbey lands and returned them to the friars. These lands then would be counted as the Earl's property and not as church lands.

*⁵ Oliver J. Burke, of Ower, Headford, in *The Abbey of Ross*, 1868.

of the foiled attempt of Rory O'Moore to take Dublin, and daring desperation mounted as Phelim O'Neill marched through Ulster, wreaking vengeance on the planters there. Desperate men resort to desperate action and the position of our planters was now dangerous in the extreme. Such was the atmosphere in which Shrule's most horrible tragedy was enacted in the last month of 1641.

Lord Mayo and Bishop Maxwell

The first character in our unfortunate drama was Sir Miles Burke, 2nd Viscount Mayo, who resided in the Castle of Belcarra, a few miles from Castlebar. He was grandson of Richard (an Iarainn) de Burgo and Gráinne Ní Mháille, the famous sea-queen of Elizabethan days, and in him was blended some of the finer qualities of both the Irish and Anglo-Irish. Though a staunch royalist, and Governor of Co. Mayo under Charles I he strongly favoured tolerance towards all creeds.*⁶ Then we meet his son, Theobald, who was later knighted and became the 3rd Viscount. At this time he was a young man of little military experience and he became the innocent victim of a most tragic series of circumstances which eventually brought him before a firing squad in Galway. And the third character in our story was Dr. John Maxwell, Protestant Bishop of Killala, who had lately been transplanted from the diocese of Ross in Scotland to minister to the needs of the many Scotch planters now colonizing North Mayo. It is with him that our story commences.

Flight from Mayo

Early in February of 1641*⁷, outbreaks of violence throughout northern Connacht forced Bishop Maxwell to flee from Killala southwards to seek the protection of Lord Mayo at Belcarra. He brought with him his wife, three children, three servants, fifteen Protestant ministers and their retinue. The whole party numbered about sixty and on arrival they found others of their denomination already sheltering under his lordship's protection. In addition to these, Sir Miles had also undertaken to ensure the safety of the Castlebar garrison, under Sir Henry Bingham, who had been recently forced to surrender. It was now arranged that the entire company of English would be convoyed to Galway, and Lord Mayo guaranteed their safe conduct as far as the bridge of Shrule—the southern limit of his authority as Governor of Mayo. At that spot Ulick Burke of Castlehacket, brother-in-law of Sir Miles and High

*⁶ He was brought up as a Catholic and, in order to retain his property, sheltered under a conformist certificate until the Confederation of Kilkenny, when he reverted to the old Faith and became a member of the Supreme Council of the confederates.

*⁷ This would be 1642 in our calendar, as at that time the year did not end till March.

Sheriff of County Galway, would take over for the remainder of the journey. The Mayo convoy consisted of five companies of soldiers, while that of Galway was composed of two companies.

Castlebar to Shrule

On the morning of Tuesday, February 8, the whole party, numbering over a hundred, left Castlebar accompanied by Lord Mayo, his son, Theobald, John Garvey, High Sheriff of County Mayo, and five companies of his Lordship's men. Coming through Partry and Ballinrobe, they arrived at the Neale, where Bingham, being ill, stayed with his friend, John Browne. The rest of the company passed on until they arrived on a hill near Shrule on Saturday. Accounts of subsequent events vary according to the sympathies of the writers, but we prefer to accept as the most authoritative that given by the contemporary 5th Earl of Clanrickarde*⁸ in his *Memoirs*. His version is as follows:

"On Saturday the gentlemen of the barony of Kilmaine, in which barony Shrule is situated, finding themselves much burdened by the soldiers who had been quartered on the district for four nights, entreated to be eased of them by sending them to their homes, for they had brought them to the end of the County of Mayo where they were to be received by the two companies from Galway which lay that night within two miles of Shrule and had appointed to meet the party at Kill-a-monach about a mile from Shrule on Sunday morning. Upon which earnest request by the gentry, Lord Mayo dismissed four of the five companies. His Lordship, having fulfilled his part of the treaty and having seen the Bishop of Killala, his wife and children and all those who had horses, mounted, took his leave of them and, as the weather was very cold, set off for Cong where he intended to remain until his son, Sir Theobald Burke, who had taken on the task of the handover to Ulick Burke, would return to join him".*⁹

The Massacre

Clanrickarde continues: "After his departure, the party crossed the Bridge of Shrule where the Galway companies were waiting. Suddenly a shot rang out, then scattered volleys followed, and the massacre was on. In less than an hour thirty bodies were lying on the ground, while others had been thrown into a deep hole by the roadside and more had been flung into the waters of the Black River which ran red with blood.

Lord Mayo was dismounting when a messenger arrived at a

*⁸ The Earl visited Shrule some time afterwards and held a thorough inquiry into the occurrence.

*⁹ O. J. Burke says that Edmund Bourke took command of the company.

gallop and informed him that as soon as he was out of sight, the company of soldiers had wounded and stripped him, with his wife and children, murdered some people and were murdering the remainder. His Lordship went instantly to his chamber and there wept bitterly, tearing his hair and refusing to hear words of comfort."

Sir Theobald escapes

The *Memoirs* explain the flight of Lord Mayo's son: "Within a half an hour there arrived Sir Theobald who, with tears in his eyes, told of the tragedy but could not say who had been killed or who escaped. His father upbraided him for having come away, saying that he should have stayed to preserve their lives or have died with them. He answered that when they began the slaughter, they had charged at him with their pikes and muskets as he had his sword drawn and would certainly have killed him but that John Garvey, High Sheriff of Mayo, who was brother-in-law of the chief murderer, had come between them and seized him in his arms and had carried him, with the assistance of others to his horse and put him upon it. They had told him to be gone after his father as he could do no good there and would only be killed if he remained. He had then come away".

Relief

Meanwhile, relief for the survivors arrived as Captain Ulick Burke, accompanied by Father Brian Conny*¹⁰, Guardian of the Friary of Ross, rode up, stopped the carnage and took away over forty of the English, some of whom were wounded. Fr. Conny brought the bishop, his wife, children and servants to the Friary, where they were cared for until Tuesday, when Captain Ulick sent his personal surgeon, Dr. Jameson, who lived at Ower, Headford, to render medical aid if necessary. And now, the man who had been lately Protestant Bishop of the Diocese of Ross, in Scotland, was warmly entertained by the Franciscan Friars of Ross near Headford! A short time later he wrote from Castlehacket to thank those friars for all their kindnesses to himself and his family. Early in March he was escorted to Galway after he had written to the Earl of Clanrickarde in praise of Captain Ulick. In this letter he thanked God that he, himself, his wife, three children, two women servants and one man-servant were saved, "though all stripped naked, yet none wounded but myself and my man-servant, and that, blessed be God, not deadly or dangerously*¹¹.

*¹⁰ Burke, in his book on the abbey, gives this man's surname as Kilkenny, which is a translation of *Mac Giolla Cainnigh*. Franciscan historians, however, favour the name Conny as other records show a Fr. Brian Conny as Superior a few years later, whereas there is no record of a friar bearing the name Kilkenny.

*¹¹ It had been reported to Castlehacket that some of the bishop's party were in danger from their wounds.

Guilt

No motive, however grave or no provocation, however great, could possibly excuse such a horrible massacre of unarmed people*¹² as occurred at Shrule Bridge on that bloody Sunday morning. Exaggerations as to the number killed and the cruelties inflicted can be expected from prejudiced historians and the apportioning of blame for the whole sordid affair depended too often on the political loyalties of the writers in those troubled times. It is to Clanrickarde we again turn for the most balanced assessment which we find in a letter written by him, within a week of the occurrence, to Captain Willoughby of St. Augustine's Fort in Galway. The letter reads as follows:

"Captain Willoughby, I have received yesterday a large relation of the inhuman and barbarous massacre of the poor English from Pierce Lynch, my tenant at Shrule, who was an eye-witness of that cruelty being done upon and on each side of the bridge before the castle, the number of the English one hundred. He affirms that it was done by those of the County of Mayo who being before with my Lord Mayo, would fain have lodged within my castle, but neither entreaties nor threats could prevail; he also states that the Bishop of Killala, his wife and some of his company were preserved by Mr. Ulick Burke of Caste Hacket, who sent carriages to convey them to his castle being sick and almost starved; and some others were kept alive in some places thereabouts.*¹³ If any of this county (Co. Galway) had a hand in that work I shall hazard much to give them their due punishment."

Shrule not guilty

As the very misleading title, the "Massacre of Shrule" may imply to the casual reader that Shrule people were either the perpetrators or the victims of the atrocity, let us positively state that there is not a shred of evidence anywhere that the native Irish of our district took any part whatsoever in this ghastly affair. Indeed, were any such evidence obtainable, it is certain that our people would have been visited with severe punishment or reprisals. On the contrary, Clanrickarde clearly exonerates us from any complicity in the crimes and it is quite evident from the report given by an eye-witness that the blame lay entirely on Lord Mayo's men. What is not clear, though, is—who was in command of the company on that Sunday morning? It is stated by Clanrickarde that Sir Theobald had "taken on the task of the hand-over", but Oliver J. Burke, in his *Abbey of Ross*, gives us that Edmund Bourke, who lived in the castle, not only had "taken the command", but incited the soldiers "to

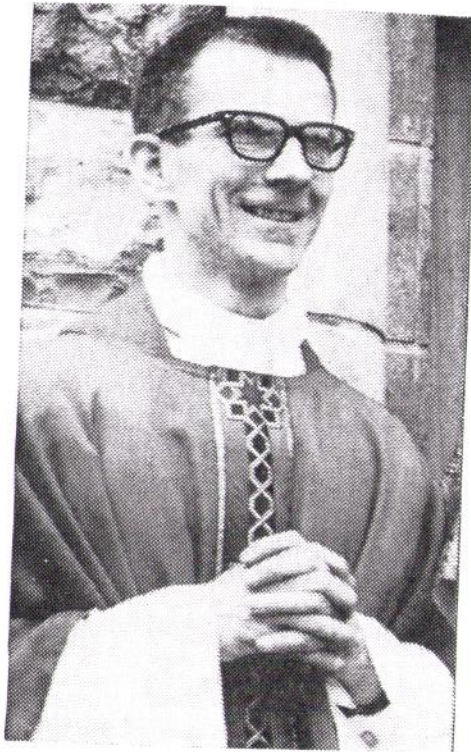
*¹² The members of the Castlebar garrison were disarmed, contrary to the terms of surrender.

*¹³ Let us note here the tact with which the Earl does not disclose their presence in the Friary, though their refuge there must be known to him.

attack those whom he was bound to protect." We remember also that the Earl had vowed that he would "hazard much" to punish the guilty if they were from his county, and Edmund, though not from County Galway, was residing in the Earl's castle in Shrile! It should be expected that Clanrickarde's threat of "due punishment" would be extended to his own tenants in Shrile—that is, of course, if complicity could be proven against them. However, it was not Edmund but Sir Theobald who was brought before the tribunal of the Cromwellian Coote, eleven years afterwards to answer for the massacre.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH



*Fr. Louis Naughton
who was ordained in
Galway Cathedral by
Most Reverend M. Browne
on 11 July 1971*

1969-1971

mortification and penance has given us an antidote, an inspiration to youth of our day that to play games, to dance and sing is normal, and to do these things and be good is normal.

God has given us His Mother. Lourdes, Rue de Bac, Fatima, are signs of heavenly providence and intervention. The attacks by TV and radio which reaches into the heart of our lives and homes, leaving nothing sacred or privileged needs an antidote.

The Church needs such organizations as the Legion as an antidote, to show people that the Christian Faith is still strong, that no one need despair but no one can presume on God.

Edel and thousands like her give us hope for this generation and proves that charity can conquer in the hearts of the people. All it needs is to be switched on by the Grace of God and their co-operation.

Gort

FR. G. QUINN

FOCUS ON

Shrule

OUR PEOPLE had scarcely recovered from the horrors which they witnessed in February 1641/2. when they received news of an outbreak of trouble in Galway. The City of the Tribes had been peaceful and prosperous for many years, but now, with rebellion rampant throughout the land, the opulent inhabitants feared for their own safety and they immediately set about reinforcing their defences. The official mayor and corporation strongly declared that they would "defend his majesty to the utmost of their power", reminding all and sundry of "the fast fidelity of their ancestors to the crown of England". But we remember there had also existed in the city, for the past fifty years or so, a shadow mayor and corporation who were Catholic. They now emerged from the shadows and, backed by the Catholic Warden and vicars, every man openly avowed "to uphold, maintain and defend, to the utmost of my power, the Roman Catholic religion; and that I will not willingly do, or suffer to be done, any harm or prejudice to any Roman Catholic that shall join in this union". Their loyalty, however, was two-fold, as their oath also included: "That our sovereign lord King Charles is the lawful sovereign, lord and king of this kingdom".

Despite their common bond of loyalty to King Charles I, and notwithstanding the grave danger in which the royalist cause now stood, these two parties in Galway, as indeed in the rest of the country, were still irreconcilable on account of their faith. The abominable Oath of Supremacy was the greatest stumbling block to conciliation.*¹ Of course, even yet, after a century of reformation, the Catholic population in Galway city greatly outnumbered the Protestant Royalists. But the Catholic tribesmen did make an alliance though in a most unexpected quarter. Murchadh O'Flaherty of Iar-Chonnacht, with a considerable force of Irish insurgents, had already risen in arms and taken Clanrickarde's castle at Aughenure, near Oughterard, and now he received an invitation from the Catholics of the city to come to their assistance. What a change time had wrought! A century had scarcely elapsed since the proud fathers of the tribes had passed a by-law "that neither O' ne Mac shall strutte ne swaggere thro' the streets of Gallway", and further, they had inscribed on their western city gate the pious supplication: "From the ferocious O'Flaherties, Good Lord, deliver us". Now, when danger threatened, their erstwhile enemies, whom they had heretofore utterly despised, were to be made very welcome within their gates! In their favour, however, let us say that their Faith remained unshaken and it eventually proved to be the common cause which brought about amity with the "mere Irish".

Confederates

While the Iar-Chonnacht contingent was still considering a march on the city, the Catholic tribes appealed to their co-religionists, both Irish and Anglo-Irish, in County Mayo, to come and join them in defence of their faith in the West. Therefore, six months before the Kilkenny parliament was established, the movement towards confederacy had begun in Connacht and the prospects of success were buoyant. When confederation on a nation-wide scale became a reality and the General Assembly of Catholics met at Kilkenny in October 1642, the western province was not lagging in its support for the cause. This assembly appointed a Supreme Council, whose six members from Connacht were: Dr. Malachy O'Queely, Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. John de Burgo, Bishop of Clonfert, Lord Mayo*², Patrick Darcy*³, Sir Lucas Dillon and Geoffrey Browne.

- * 1. For many years several men elected as mayors refused to take office on account of the oath, while others were deposed or fined for rejecting it. In the year 1612, and again in 1631, no eligible mayor could be found to take the oath.
- * 2. This was Sir Miles Burke, 2nd Viscount Mayo, who was also governor of that county, and in charge of the convoy to Shrule in 1641.
- * 3. Patrick Darcy of Galway was the most eminent Catholic lawyer of his day and a leading member of the Dublin Parliament of 1640 when Catholics had a joint share in the legislation. He presided over the General Assembly at Kilkenny in 1647 and his brother, James, was ancestor of the Darcys of Ballybocagh, Houndswood and Gurteen,—all on the borders of Shrule.

Lieutenant-General John Burke*⁴ of Mayo was given supreme command of the Catholic armies in Connacht and he lost little time in getting into action. Marching through Shrule with his Mayo forces, and adding to his numbers on the way, he arrived at Galway early in 1643. The Protestant royalists at the fort, under Captain Willoughby, were soon besieged by land and sea and forced to surrender. Willoughby and his men were ordered to quit the city and, a ship being provided, they embarked in June, leaving Galway once more in Catholic hands.

Deliverance

Our parish shared in the general rejoicing at the deliverance of our Catholic Collegiate clergy from their shadow existence. Celebrations in the city itself were exceedingly joyful. The beautiful Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas was once again in the possession of the Catholic Warden, Dr. Walter Lynch.*⁵ "Mass was solemnly sung therein, and a sermon preached by Father John Kegan, of the Society of Jesus, after a discontinuance thereof ever since the suppression". The warden and vicars were again free to walk the streets of the city and minister to the needs of their flock. Their names could now be heard publicly without fear—with the ancient tribal names still to the fore—Dr. Andrew Lynch, Dr. James Fallon, Fathers John Lynch, Patrick Lynch, Gregory Skerrett, Henry Joyce, James Fallon and Conor Fallon. For the country parishes the clergy given are: Fathers William Gormuilly, Thomas Lany, James Sheoy and Teige Davilly, though which of these four priests was assigned to Shrule we cannot say. The Franciscan Friary in the city also re-opened its doors, Mass was solemnly celebrated again and a sermon preached by the guardian, Fr. Valentine Browne. The Catholic corporation was restored and extensive improvements carried out to the several churches and monasteries which had fallen into disrepair. There was joy profound throughout the parishes of the Wardenship.

Ross revives

All around us here in Shrule the Tuam parishes also celebrated their freedom. Dr. O'Queely, the archbishop, took possession of the old cathedral again and the clergy emerged from their places of refuge. The archbishop in his great joy presented a beautiful gold chalice to the Franciscan Friars of Ross, who were now back almost to full strength and freely serving the Kilroe portion of our parish.

- * 4. This man was born in Co. Mayo but served more than thirty years in the Spanish army. He is described as "a man of great prudence and discretion" and "a brave experienced soldier". He has been at times referred to with the rank of Colonel.
- * 5. This warden, in a manifesto of 1642, styles himself as—"Walter Lynch, priest, doctor of divinitie, and of the lawes, prothonotarie apostolic, deane of Tuam and warden of Gallway".

They had, of late, gained in numbers from the suppression of other Franciscan houses whose communities often fled for refuge to the seclusion of Ross. Its relative importance around this time may be inferred from the fact that it was in this friary, a few years earlier, a presentation was made to Brother Micheál O'Clery, chief of the "Four Masters", for his wonderful work on the famous annals. Here also, in 1647, was held a chapter of the Franciscans, and it appeared that, once again, Ross was reflecting at least some of the aurora of its former glory.

Fickle fortune

But the golden glow of freedom was soon dimmed by dismal news from the north of the province. A confederate force, after capturing Sligo from the Parliamentarians in 1645, was defeated in a surprise return attack, and Dr. O'Queely, captured on the shore of Lough Gill, was cruelly put to death. Sir Charles Coote, a deserter from the royalist cause, was in command of the Puritans there and he was now rewarded by the Parliament with the presidency of Connacht. However, all was not yet lost to the confederate cause and Galway city still held out defiantly. The arrival at Kilkenny of the Papal Nuncio, Rinuccini, in the same year gave new hope to Catholics and Eoin Rua O'Neill's great victory at Benburb in the following year was a further source of confidence to them. But then fickle fortune seemed to desert them, when the nuncio, in favouring proposals of the Old Irish, incurred the opposition of the Anglo-Irish. In great displeasure, he abandoned the Kilkenny Parliament and came to Galway where he found some little support for his views. His stay in the West, however, became more unpleasant than in Kilkenny. Opposition to his dictatorial attitude became very hostile and when he tried to convene a synod in the city in 1648, he was prevented from doing so by the council. During the remainder of his stay in Galway it was at one time under consideration that the synod be held in the Friary of Ross, near Headford, but, owing to a siege of the city by Clanrickarde, this became impossible. Another suggestion, made while he was in Galway, was that a native of Flanders be made Abbot of Shrule!*6 The implication of this strange item still remains obscure, as the frustrated nuncio sailed away from the city a short time afterwards leaving matters much worse than when he arrived.

Cromwellians

The year 1649 was a most disastrous one for Ireland. The final defeat of the Royalists in England, the arrival in Ireland of the victorious Parliamentary tyrant, Cromwell, and the death of Ireland's only hope, the great Eoin Rua, would be sufficient misfortune for any one year. But, when we add to these the merciless massacres of Drogheda and Wexford at the gory hands of the Crom-

* 6. "Commentarius Rinuccianus," Vol. 3., p. 691.

wellians, we may well say that this date has been written in blood into the annals of our land. And the two years which followed, though lesser in carnage, were equal in ill-luck. One by one the cities and towns of the South fell to Cromwell or his minions. Finally, when Limerick surrendered to Ireton towards the end of 1641, all Connacht trembled at the thought of what now seemed inevitable.

Galway surrenders

Before Limerick had yet yielded to the Cromwellians, Galway had been besieged by Coote; and, encouraged by the presence of the Anglo-Irish commander Preston, whom they chose as governor, the inhabitants boldly defended their city. Further encouragement came with the news of the death, by plague, of General Ireton outside Limerick. For nine weary months the gallant Galwegians, in spite of dire privations, held out against the combined armies of Coote and Ludlow, successor of Ireton, but want of provisions and approaching famine at last forced them to submit. Even then they sought, and received, terms similar to those granted to Limerick and, finally in April 1652, Galway, the last bastion of Confederacy, fell to the forces of Cromwell. The city which had been the first in the land to declare for the king was now the last to surrender to his conquerors.

Mass expulsion

Had the articles of surrender been honourably observed by the Parliamentarians, life in the parishes of the Wardenship would have little changed from pre-war days. But, though Galway had now transferred allegiance to the new rulers of the commonwealth, oppression on a scale hitherto unwitnessed in the city became the order of the day, and our story for the next five years is the most gruesome in the history of the West. It appeared to be the aim of the conquerors to expel from the city all the old Catholic tribes and repopulate it with Cromwellian adventurers. The old corporation was extinguished and a new order made that the mayor and all other officials should be "English and Protestants" and that the "Irish or Papists" should be removed. The new governor, Colonel Peter Stubbers, a most tyrannical and sanguinary man, was now appointed mayor and it was with fanatical glee he complied with an order of 1655—"that all the Irish and other popish inhabitants should be forthwith removed out of the town in order that accommodation should be provided for such English Protestants, whose integrity to the State would entitle them to be trusted in a place of such importance". Thus began the mass expulsion of the old tribes from the city and thus also began the exodus which eventually brought, after many wanderings, the Catholic Kirwans to Dalgan Park, the Lynches to Ballycurran, the Blakes and Frenches to Moyne and Toorard, the Joyces to Kinlough—all within our parish—and the Darcys to Ballybocagh, Gurteen and Houndswood on our northern border. South of us, these stirring times also saw the Catholic

Burkes expelled from Castlehacket westward to Ower, the Catholic Pierce Lynch expropriated of Shrulegrove, and the Catholic Edmund Skerrett, late of Galway and head of his tribe, deprived of his extensive Headford estate in favour of the Cromwellian St. George. In the space of a few years the old order had gone forever and our people stood aghast at the change.

Trial of Lord Mayo

At this time Shrule again came to the forefront in the news of the day, with the trial, in Galway, of Sir Theobald Burke, the young Lord Mayo, for his alleged responsibility in the massacre of 1641. He had succeeded to the title in 1649, on the death of his father, Sir Miles, and, although eleven years had now passed since that massacre at Shrule, the Cromwellians still sought revenge. Two factors in his case were certain to arouse the worst feelings in the hearts of those adventurers. The first of these was the fact that his father had deserted the Protestant faith to become a member of the Catholic Supreme Council; and the second circumstance weighed more heavily still against him, for, in addition to his title, he had also inherited a vast and much-coveted property of 50,000 acres of the best land in Mayo. Therefore, with a predetermined verdict of guilt against him, he was subjected to a sham trial in Galway, where his defence appeared strong enough for any jury to acquit, despite the fact that he was denied the services of Catholic counsel. He submitted his defence—(1) that he was not in charge of the convoy at Shrule but was only helping his father; (2) that, when the massacre began, he rushed with drawn sword to defend the English; (3) that he lent his own horse to Bishop Maxwell to make his escape; (4) that he, himself, would have been killed for doing so had he not escaped on another horse, and (5) that Bishop Maxwell (who was now dead) had written that he (the accused) had acted most civilly towards him. Henry Bingham also gave witness that both the young lord and his father were always very kind to the English in Mayo—but all this was of no avail. Sir Theobald was found guilty, sentenced to death by Coote and executed at Galway on January 14, 1652.*7 His whole estate, including five manors, was confiscated and his little orphan allowed a miserable subsistence of thirty pounds per annum.

Religious oppression

Immediately on the take-over of Galway city by the Cromwellians in 1652, the Catholic clergy were expelled and their churches, monasteries and houses plundered. Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians and Carmelites were all given short notice to quit the country. The

* 7. Lodge, the historian, has stated that "the soldiers appointed to shoot him missed him three times, but at last a corporal, blind of one eye, hit him."

Dominican Friary was the first to be razed to the ground. The Franciscan monastery was then defaced and five years after, demolished except for the church, which was converted into a Court of Justice. A similar fate befell the house of the Augustinians at the hands of the corporation. The lovely Church of St. Nicholas was, for a time, converted into a stable for the soldiers' horses, the beautiful holy water and baptismal fonts being used as mangers and drinking troughs.*8 Clergy who had gone into hiding in the city were hunted down, and an order of 1655 tells their fate—"That the priests or fryars, now imprisoned within the town, that are above the age of forty years, be forthwith banished into France, Portugal and other neighbouring kingdoms in amity with this commonwealth; and that the rest of the priests, that are under the age of forty years, be forthwith shipt away for Barbadoes or other American plantations; and give public notice, that in case any of them return without licence they shall be proceeded against according to the laws". And only too well we know what this latter process meant! We also know that more than fifty priests were sent out to the islands of Aran and Boffin to await shipment to the West Indies; that armed troops rounded up more than a thousand people on an alleged charge of vagrancy and had them transported as slaves; and that chalices and other sacred vessels were used as drinking-cups by the soldiery, while even the tombs of the dead within the churches were opened in search of hidden treasures. And all this was done by men whose leader had written from Drogheda—"It hath pleased God to bless our endeavours"!*9

Ross desecrated, 1656

By the year 1656 the number of Catholic clergy in Galway, our ecclesiastical centre, must have been reduced to a very few priests who, somehow, evaded arrest by living incognito in the back streets of the city. It was then that the Cromwellians, under Stubbers and Hurd, set out on the trail of clergy in the surrounding country, and soon the Friary of Ross was marked down for destruction. News of the impending raid, however, was brought to the friars by a horseman who had ridden overnight from the city and the "seven score and one" holy men within the walls made a hasty departure as the early August dawn broke over Cnoc Magha. They had, indeed, expected a visit of this nature for some time, and they had some preparations made for such a contingency by removing to safe keeping many of the valuables which they then possessed. The friary had been scarcely a few hours vacated by them when the trotting troopers arrived at the gate. Enraged that their intended victims had escaped they searched frantically from belfry to mill-stream for loot,

* 8. To this day the floor around a large font in the south transept can be seen hollowed out by the stamping of the horses' hoofs.

* 9. "Cromwell's Letters and Speeches," Vol. 1, p. 456.

but found none. Then, suspecting that treasures lay hidden in the tombs, they broke open those resting-places of the dead, dragging the crumbling coffins out into the enclosure where they smashed them and left the rotting corpses in one ghastly nauseating heap.*¹⁰ Before leaving, in their rage, they dismantled the altars, broke the crosses and images and reduced the beautiful church to a shambles. Tradition adds here that, having seen the fine church of Kinlough from the tower of Ross, they went there and demolished the south wall of the building, letting the roof collapse in a crumpled heap.

* * * * *

It is with a certain feeling of relief that we here draw a veil over the dead Past. Three centuries have gone by since those horrible days of persecution. Oppressors and oppressed alike are long since departed this life and gone before the high tribunal of Heaven. Therefore, it is not for us now to determine either the guilt of one or the glory of the other. Our task is simply to state facts as we find them recorded and handed down to us; and if we gain from these some inspiration towards greater things, then our study will be well rewarded.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH

* 10. On returning later, the Friars were horrified at the sight which met their eyes, and, reluctant to move the corpses, they brought earth from their nearby garden and covered the remains of their dead. That mound of human bones can still be seen just outside the west door of the church.

Shrulle

WE HAVE ALREADY referred to the many great changes of ownership of property which were made during the desperate days of the Cromwellian regime. We have mentioned that wholesale plantings and transplantings took place in town and country and it appeared that, because Connacht—and particularly Galway—had prolonged the war, Sir Charles Coote would now make the West pay in full for its opposition. Among the many displaced persons from Galway city during those years, was the mayor, Sir Oliver French, who was robbed of his entire property in the city and transplanted to a small estate near Kilmaine, a few miles north of Shrulle, which, ever since, has been called Frenchbrook. Even the powerful Earl of Clanrickarde, a Catholic royalist, whose possessions at the time included most—if not all—of our own parish, was dispossessed of his estates in 1655 by the Cromwellian commissioners, while many of the leading tribes of Galway were transplanted to the more remote parts of Mayo.

Lynch of Shrulgrove

It was in those years that Pierce Lynch of Shrulgrove was ousted from his lands, where he had erected a mansion, which was often referred to as "Lynch's House". We noted earlier that he was Clanrickarde's tenant there in 1641, when the infamous massacre took place. A member of one of the foremost tribes of the city, he had a younger brother who became the celebrated Rev. Dr. Dominick Lynch, Rector of the College of St. Thomas of Aquin at Seville in Spain. Some people hold also that it was to this branch of the family belonged Most Rev. Dr. James Lynch, who was educated at the Irish College in Rome and who became archbishop of Tuam in 1669.*1 Pierce of Shrulgrove married, as his second wife, Anna Joyce, widow of Henry Joyce ("The White Joyce"), and it is suggested that it was this man who left his name on the neighbouring townland of Joycepark.*2

Ormsby "of Shrulle"

It appears that Lynch was replaced in Shrulgrove*3 by Sir Edward Ormsby, who was stated to be head of that family in Ireland and was usually referred to as "of Shrulle". The family name first appears in Galway City, when a Richard Ormsby was sheriff there in 1658, and the same man was later elected mayor in 1671. The last

*1 D'Alton in his "History of the Archdiocese of Tuam" gives this as a distinct possibility.

*2 This townland lies just South of the Black River in County Galway and West of the Shrulle—Headford road. The residence there is marked "River View" on the O.S. maps and was once held by E. L. Hunt, Esq.

*3 In many accounts this townland, which is locally known as "The Grove," has been confused with the townland of Shrulle. In fact, the two places are in different counties, baronies and dioceses.

mention of the name in that city was when Robert Ormsby was chosen as representative for the Parliament of 1695, and about that period they seem to have moved into Mayo. At one time Sir Edward held Shrulle by lease from Clanrickarde, but we see that, under the Acts of Settlement of lands in counties Limerick, Galway, Roscommon and Mayo, he got a grant by patent dated 12th February, 1668, which included the following item:

"Srewle, 1 qr. 157 acres in the Barony of Kilmaine, County Mayo, saving to Richard, Earl of Clanrickarde, his right of redemption to the lands of Shrewle decreed to him on 3rd August, 1663".

This grant, of course, refers to the townland of Shrulle in Mayo, not to Shrulgrove, which is in County Galway and the Barony of Clare. According to all his grants, Ormsby must have been a very wealthy man and it is most probable that he either reconstructed Lynch's house in "The Grove" or demolished it and built a more elegant mansion there. Many of the older generation still among us will remember the very extensive ruins which existed there down to the early years of this century. Sir Edward died in 1683 and according to later documents, he was succeeded by Gilbert Ormsby, who was probably his son.

The Restoration

The news of the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 brought an air of general relief throughout the West. Protestant royalists revelled in these joyful tidings, and Catholics, treading more warily, saw at least a lessening of the fierce persecution which they had experienced since the surrender of Galway. And, indeed, Charles II at first showed signs of general relaxation of the severities hitherto witnessed. His first message to Galway complimented "the ancient inhabitants, freemen and natives of our towne of Galway" for their loyalty to him during the famous "siege of nine months", and guaranteed to them all the "benefits, advantages, libertyes, freedoms, privileges and immunities" asked by them, and contained in the articles of surrender in 1652. He also promised the return of all property—"houses, estates, lands and hereditaments"—to the aforesaid natives. But in the actual implementation of his order, it was his Protestant supporters, who received priority for reinstatement. In fact, several Catholic claims to former possessions went unheeded, or were refused on the flimsiest of excuses. Many Cromwellian planters who had lately settled in the city now quietly disappeared, while others shifted their loyalty to the new powers.

Clanrickarde

Clanrickarde's claim to his hereditary possessions was gradually successful, and as noted above, the lands of Shrulle were decreed to

him in 1663. The following year the Earl was granted the Friary of Ross, and the friars, who had been expelled in 1656, now returned under his lordship's protection and commenced to repair the buildings so wantonly defaced by the Cromwellians. During their period of banishment, many of them were harboured by John Burke, who had been transferred from Castlehackett to Ower, as it was not uncommon in those days for hunted clergy to pose as servants in the houses of Catholic landowners. During the early part of the reign of Charles, Clanrickarde was also re-granted the castles and lands of Moyne and Ballycurran.

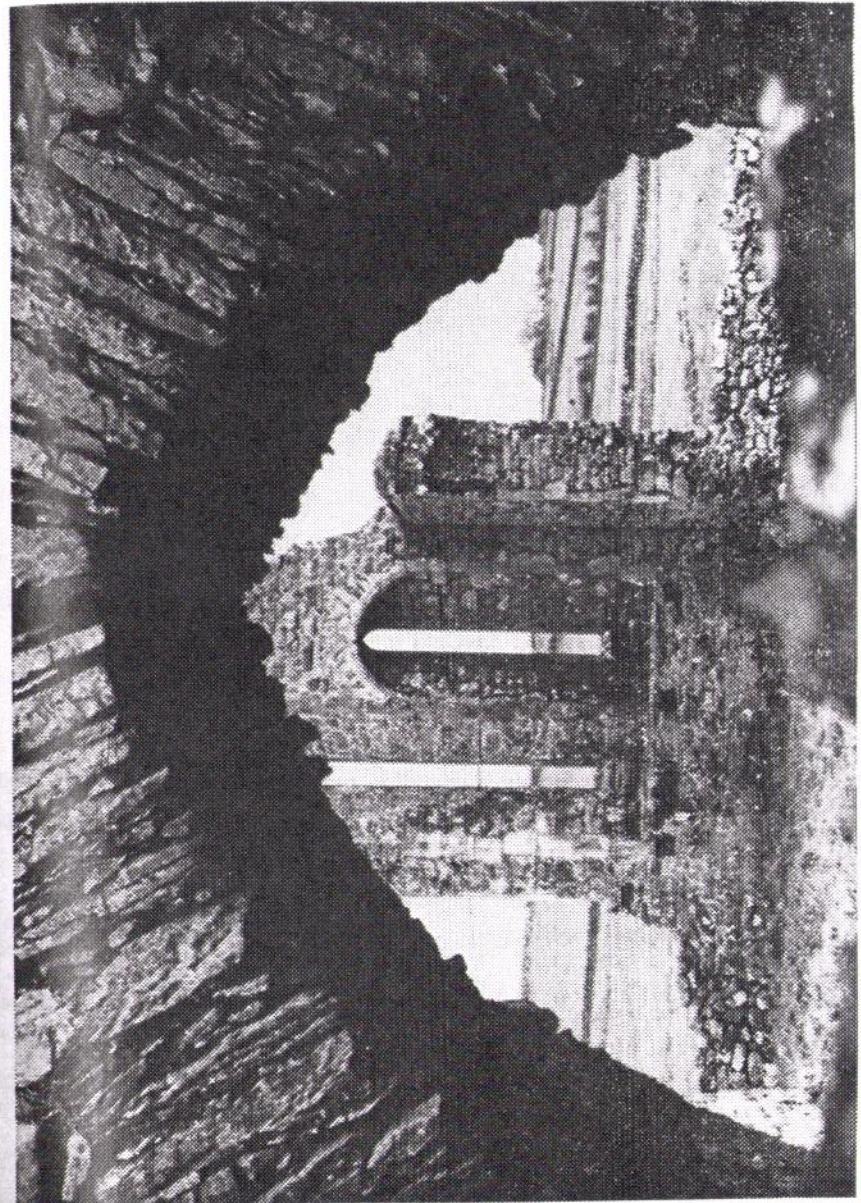
Kinlough lands

Kinlough, the residence of the Mayo Mac William in the sixteenth century, now again changed hands. We saw that Walter Burke, son of John of Shrule, mortgaged the castle and lands to Sir Valentine Blake of Menlo Castle, Galway, in 1628. Sir Valentine was one of the most prominent characters in the Galway of that period. He was mayor of the city in the reign of Charles I and was the Galway representative in the Parliament of 1639. He figured conspicuously on the side of the royalists during the Cromwellian campaign and was one of the hostages demanded by Coote at the surrender of the city in 1652. He was also one of the signatories of the articles of surrender in that year. His interest in Kinlough passed to Sir Thomas Blake, who was probably his son, and who was also a well-known figure in Galway, being its representative in the Parliament of 1634. It is most unlikely that any of the Blakes ever resided in Kinlough, as the only residence there was the old Norman castle, and those castles were generally deserted in Elizabethian times or early in the Stuart reign.*⁴ At any rate, Sir Thomas must have been an absentee owner of Kinlough as we find that in 1668, he leased it to John Darcy, and then for two centuries its story has evaded us. Further research may yet reveal details of the Blake-Darcy tenure during that period.

Blake of Moyne

Shortly after the re-grant of Moyne Castle and lands to Clanrickarde under Charles II, we find George French as occupant there in 1678, but five years later Thomas Blake got it on lease from the Earl in 1683. It must have been one of these lessees who built the old mansion house north of the castle, the ruins of which are yet to be seen. Some confusion of data here leaves us in a quandary as to which branches of their respective Galway tribes these people belonged. Confusion becomes more confused when we find that, in 1694, the widow of John Blake of Moyne married Marcus French

*⁴ The ruins of the Blake residence, picturesquely situated on the bank of the River Corrib at Menlo, Galway, can still be seen.



Kinlough Church through the Castle Door

of Rahasane, a captain in the army of James II and a descendant of the Monivea branch of that family. There were no children of that marriage and the Blakes retained Moyne until the middle of the last century. Though the various grants and re-grants to Clanrickarde mention only "the castle and four quarters of Moyne", the extent of the Blake property there in the nineteenth century far exceeded that amount. In our parish they held the present townlands of Moyne, Church Park, Toorard, Carranoughter, and Cloghmoyne, a total of 1,480 acres, while across the Black River in County Galway, the townlands of Moyne Hill (Barnaboy), Ballyfruit, and Tonroe were also theirs. They had further extensive possessions around Hollymount and Claremorris, while their last place of residence was Merlin Park, Galway. We shall hear later of the sale of these estates.

Lynch of Ballycurran

With the Lynches of Ballycurran we are on more solid ground as regards ancestry than we have been with the tribal families of Moyne and Kinlough. These were Catholic, of course, and it was on this account that they were expelled from Galway City during the Cromwellian transplantings. The Ballycurran Lynches descended from Sir Henry Lynch, first Baronet of Galway, who died in 1634. His son, Maurice, was transplanted in 1655 to Ballynonagh*⁵ near Clonbur where he received but two quarters of land in return for his vast possessions in the city. On 27th March 1679, he got a lease of Ballycurran Castle and four quarters of land from William, the seventh Earl of Clanrickarde. He died in 1684, and in the same year his only son, Joseph Lynch, got a renewal of the Ballycurran lease from the Earl. Joseph had three sons, Maurice, who inherited Ballynonagh on his father's death in 1721; Ignatius, who became a merchant in Galway, and Peter. It was neither of these, however, who succeeded to Ballycurran, at that time, but a son of Ignatius, who bore his grandfather's name of Joseph. This man died young without issue and then Ballycurran went to the above-mentioned Peter. It is with this Peter Lynch that our more immediate interest is aroused, as it was he who built the fine mansion house in Ballycurran, and was the first of the family to reside there in 1728. The house was situated near the old Norman castle in the most beautiful sylvan surroundings on a height overlooking Ballycurran Bay.*⁶ Peter died in 1760 and his son, Henry, succeeded to the estate. We shall hear more of this kind man who lived until 1820, but to continue with the story at present would take us far out of our period and we must first deal with other events which occurred long before his time.

*⁵ In the 18th century a colourful member of this branch of the family erected a large mansion at Ballynonagh and, after himself, called it the imposing name of "Petersburg."

*⁶ The ruins of this mansion still stand in Ballycurran commanding a beautiful view. The house was burned in the early years of this century.

Catholics who had hoped for considerable relief under Charles II, in the early years of his reign, were eventually to suffer severe disappointment as that monarch soon yielded to the urgings of the more bigoted of his Protestant advisers in Ireland. A document of 1674 relating to the position in Galway, informs us that several of the "popish clergy" in the town were commanded by royal proclamation "to depart the kingdom" and "that the mayor is to do his duty in seeing them transported". The alleged "popish plot" of 1678 caused intensification of the persecution throughout the country, but as observed already the number of clergy must now have dwindled considerably.*⁷ In our own area here the Friary of Ross still functioned, though it was but a mere shadow of its former self. If tradition can be credited, Kinlough had ceased administration since 1656, but it is most likely that Teampall Cholmain, in Shrule, and also Moyne church continued to serve our people.

Brief Respite

The death of Charles and the crowning of his Catholic brother, James II, in 1685, brought immediate relief to the persecuted. In Galway a Catholic mayor was elected, who was later to become Sir John Kirwan of Castlehackett; while the Catholic Earl of Clanrickarde was appointed governor of the city. Many of the old Catholic natives who had been expelled now returned and reclaimed the churches and monasteries. Prayers were offered publicly for the new king, his queen and his deputy, Tyrconnell.*⁸ The Catholic Wardenship was restored by royal charter, the warden chosen being Fr. Henry Browne, and the eight vicars elected still bore the ancient tribal names of the city. Among the declared incomes of the Wardenship at that time we find that the Parish of Shrule contributed one quarter of its tithes.*⁹ But all these changes were of short duration, for we know from our general history that James II was forced off the throne of England in 1688 by his daughter's husband, the Protestant William of Orange.

Disaster

The reader is only too well acquainted with the story of the war which engulfed our country after the flight of the last Stuart king from England. The alternate hopes and bitter disappointments; the succession of tragedies at Derry, at the Boyne, and at Athlone; the final disaster of Aughrim, and the subsequent surrender of Galway and Limerick—are all too well known to receive any more than

*⁷ At one time during this period it is stated that there were only two bishops in Ireland.

*⁸ We have a note in Burke's "Abbey of Ross" which tells that the friars there prayed for the king and queen.

*⁹ The absence, here, of a return from Kinlough as a parish seems to suggest that it had ceased to exist as such, and was amalgamated with Shrule. It might also prove the tradition regarding the demolition of Kinlough Church by the Cromwellians.

passing mention within the scope of our narrative. But the horrible scene of penal persecution in the ensuing period must provide the backdrop against which the events of the following century must be viewed if proper perspective is to be maintained. To enumerate once more the cruel enactments of that period against the Catholic faith, may indeed be regarded as superfluous in the context of our present work, but, as it is our duty to record the results of these harsh measures, it is well that we bear them in mind.

Penal Times

One very definite proof we have of the severity of persecution during the penal times is the dearth of data relating to our particular area. Indeed, so scant are the ecclesiastical records of this period, that one could almost describe the hundred years which followed the Parliament of 1695 as "the silent century". It was a time when Catholic clergy were so scarce that parish—and even diocesan—boundaries were disregarded and the few priests available administered when and where they could. Written records of their administrations—and, indeed, of their very existence—were highly dangerous to keep, and proved veritable death warrants if found. However, out of the gloom of that dreary century some stray gleanings can be made which help us to understand more fully the sufferings of our people, and especially our clergy, during that time. We know, of course, that our jurisdictional authority, the Catholic College of Galway, was proclaimed in 1691 on the surrender of the city, and the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas was handed over to the clergy of the Established Church, with whom it has remained ever since. Then, in our more immediate neighbourhood, we find the Franciscans again banished from Ross in 1697 and seeking refuge locally until 1715, when there was a slight lull in the storm of persecution, and they returned warily to their fast-deteriorating "abbey". In 1698, Dr. Lynch, the Archbishop of Tuam, was in hiding beside us in the Neale and later he was compelled to leave for France, where he died. Only one prelate could be found for the consecration of the new archbishop which took place, as the record says, "at our place of refuge". And again, his immediate successor was secretly consecrated by one bishop assisted by two priests. For several years in the first decade of the eighteenth century a hunt was on all around us for Fr. Duffy of Ballinrobe, who was secretly functioning as Vicar Foraine of the deanery. He was eventually arrested by Robert Miller of Milford and was lucky enough to be transported to Spain. From these, and many other instances, we may gain some idea of the hardships which our hunted clergy endured during those terrible times.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH

Some Experiences Of A Country Curate

TOM GILL was a publican, in the small town where I got my first appointment as a curate. He was a comfortable man who had come in from the country many years before to work in the town. And, indeed, he had worked—worked and planned with one driving ambition, to own a pub and become a man of property in the same town. His favourite boast was that no child of his ever had to slave or scrounge as he had done. We all agreed that this was absolutely true. In fact, you would need an extraordinary imagination to associate his eldest son Damian with any form of hard work, in fact with any form of work period. Yes, Damian had it soft from the beginning and looked on this life of luxury and pleasure as his very birthright. He was the life and soul of every party, a genial companion in the lounge bar, and a great favourite with the ladies. He had a fast car, fashionable clothes, an air of being superior; and, as you might expect, wherever one or two of us gathered together to air our views on our community, its virtues and, more especially, its faults, Damian Gill frequently gave us ample material to prolong the discussion.

I do not need to tell you that our Damian was not the most popular young man in our town. To tell the truth, whenever we confessed on Saturday night that we had been uncharitable again, you were tempted to wonder, God forgive us all, what had Damian been up to this time. Then one night, when Tom and the wife were sitting at the fire after a hard day in the bar, poor Tom toppled off his chair with a coronary thrombosis. We buried him with due respect, but I am sorry to record that my most vivid memory of the funeral was the obvious satisfaction expressed by the neighbours, when they repeated to each other that young Damian would have to knuckle down to the work, now that his father was gone, God rest him. But we were all wrong. Damian made no effort, as far as we could see, to follow his father's footsteps. Very soon he was back to the gay life again, tearing around the country in his fast car to one social event after another. The general verdict now was that the business would go to rack and ruin, and Damian did not seem to care. Nobody was surprised when the news spread one Monday morning that on the previous night Damian had been speeding home from some gay spree at the far end of the county, when some poor

old labourer had got in his way and had been hurled over the ditch into a nearby field. We all agreed that it was a miracle that the poor man had not been killed..

I mentioned that the accident occurred in the far end of the county. Now I got my first change soon after the accident. Four years went by and then I had to move my furniture again. Soon after coming to my new parish I did the round of the sick and infirm. I met old Matt Kelly in a wee cottage all by himself at the very boundary of the diocese. Matt was almost crippled with arthritis all because of an accident he had some years before. He had been of all things a thatcher. "Oh! a fine trade, Father, and making good money in my day," he told me. However, he was a jolly old fellow, never looked for sympathy. Again and again, he assured me: "I'm never short of anything, Father, never short of anything I fancy. Shure! haven't I the television to while away the evenings, enough to eat and even a wee drop to drink, if I feel like it. Oh! it was not a bad accident, after all". That is as much as he wanted to tell me, but he had one great worry. "Tis the case, Father; it never came up at all. Shure! you would think they couldn't be that busy after all these years. 'Tis a long time to be waiting for your bit of money." This I could not understand at all, because Matt was no miser, and he never seemed to be in need of money. Nevertheless, it was his only worry.

I got a message from Matt on a winter's evening to call to him. He was jubilant. "It came, Father", he shouted, "they fixed it up at long last." He was waving a cheque at me and insisted I read it. I must confess it was a pretty decent sum of money. "Now, Father, you will have to help me to pay my debt. 'Tis a proud man I am tonight to be able to pay back what I owe to the decent man, who crossed my path." Matt was really excited and happy. He told me now that the day after the accident, the driver of the car which hit him insisted that he should accept twelve pounds a week until such time as the case might be settled. He insisted that it might take a long time, and he did not want the old man to suffer any hardship. Now I had to do a multiplication sum for Matt and return the whole amount to his benefactor. When I had satisfied Matt that the full amount was being sent, he gave me the name and address. "Send it," he said, "to Mr. Damian Gill."—Ah! well!

"FR. DAN"

1972-1974

FOCUS ON

Shrule

AT THE DEATH of George I in 1727, the Statute-book was loaded with laws against the Catholics. Two parliaments, Dublin and Westminster, had exercised all "the perverted ingenuity of man"*1 to try to crush the Catholic Faith in Ireland. Three successive monarchs had employed all the forces at their disposal to endeavour to achieve this end, while their agents and hirelings were continually reporting infringements of their cruel measures. A grand jury of Galway, in 1715, complained that some "Popish" priests and friars had lately landed in the West and settled themselves in several places, including "Ross, near Headford". Though the government was urged to enforce the law, we have no record of any action in regard to Ross being taken at that time. The Franciscans there had for long enjoyed the protection of the Earls of Clanrickarde, but about this time the friary had come into the possession of Lord St. George*2 of Headford Castle. According to accounts, this man, although a Protestant Peer, was no bigot, and the friars, now numbering only eight, continued in occupation until his lordship's hand was eventually forced, as we shall see presently.

Catholic Majority

Though the first half of the eighteenth century saw the entire machinery of the law straining to stamp out the Catholic Faith. It is most gratifying to note that in 1747, it was reported by Stratford Eyre, the new Governor of Galway, that there were thirty "Papists" to one Protestant in the city. Five years later it was stated in the House of Commons that in Galway there were scarcely 350 Protestants out of a total population of 14,000; while again, in 1762 the Catholic majority was given as forty to one. Here in Shrule it is doubtful if one could find half a score of Protestants within our parish, although attempts had been made to plant Protestant villages south of us in Headford and north of us in Kilmaine. Perhaps our isolation from the rest of the wardenship left us in

*1 These are the words with which a famous orator described the mentality of those who brought forth the Penal Laws

*2 This was Sir George Usher-St. George, who was made peer in the year 1715 and later became Governor of Galway in return for his services in Flanders during the reign of King William and Queen Anne. He was also Vice-Admiral of Connacht.

this happy position and that this isolation had now proved itself to be a blessing in disguise. At any rate, the fact remains that though Protestant churches and rectories were established in our two neighbouring parishes, there was neither a church, glebe-house nor glebe-land in Shrule at any time.

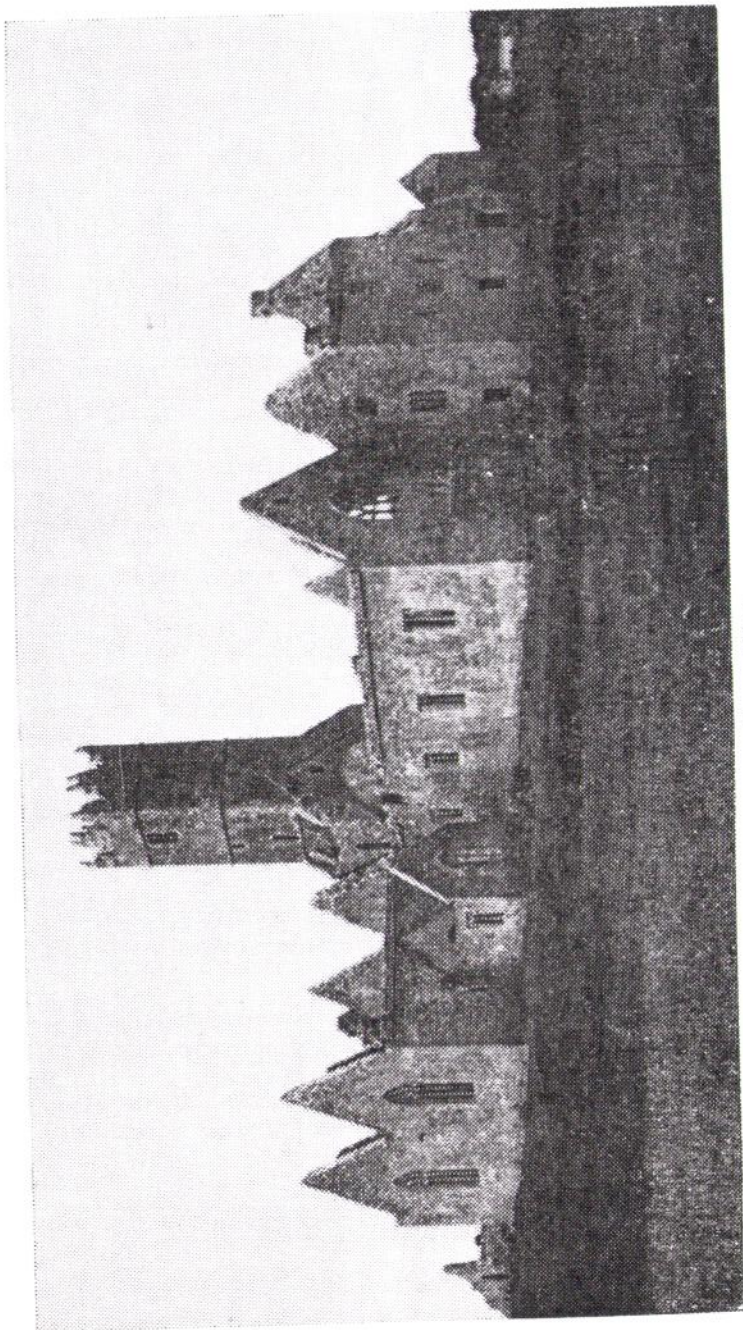
Ross Deserted

We must now record the passing of Ross as a residential house of the Franciscan Friars, and it is sad to relate that the final flight of those holy men was brought about by the vengeful spirit of a native of the West. As stated above, the friary had now passed into the hands of Lord St. George of Headford and, under him, had enjoyed the same freedom as it had under the Clanrickardes. In 1753, however, St. George had won a lawsuit against an O'Flaherty of Iar-Chonnacht, and, bent on revenge, O'Flaherty swore informations that his lordship was harbouring monks on his property and contributing directly towards their upkeep. He also added that those monks were residing in an abbey, the tower of which could be seen from the windows of Headford Castle, which, of course, was not literally true. These allegations if proven, would mean serious trouble for St. George, and the authorities resolved to investigate the matter fully. A commission was speedily sent to Ross with powers to imprison the friars, and orders to make a full report on the alleged misconduct of St. George. But his lordship must have had good friends in Galway, for news of the impending visit was brought secretly to him at Headford and he, in turn, passed the sad news to the friars. The friary was promptly evacuated and neighbouring people, many of whom were Shrule parishioners, immediately began to give the buildings the appearance of a factory. They whitewashed the interior walls and ceilings, covering the many beautiful frescoes, and they installed spinning wheels and looms in the great church and refectories. On the arrival of the commissioners from Galway, the whole place gave the impression of housing a great woollen industry, and this was the report which was duly dispatched to the authorities. Therefore once more, by Divine Providence, the friars had eluded their enemies.

Friars' Island

On this, their last lonely flight from their beloved abbey, the little group of Franciscans made their way westward by the winding bank of the Black River for about a mile. Here they came to a spot where the stream forked for a short distance to form an "island",

*3 This is no longer an island, as under various drainage schemes, the southern fork of the river was deepened, this drying up the northern branch.



Ross Abbey

rejoining further west at a place called Buola. This patch of ground between the two branches of the river was thickly covered with bushes and, for the poor hunted friars, proved a haven of solitude, from whence they could still see to the East the pinnacles of the abbey bell-tower pointing encouragingly towards Heaven. On this lonely island, far from any beaten track, they hastily constructed humble cabins—some wooden, some of stone—where they could shelter until, as they hoped, the dawn of toleration might yet mercifully break. “Oileán na mBrathar”, or “Friars’ Island”^{*3}, as it is still known, lies in the Parish of Shrule, and there, for thirty-six years, the “Poor Friars” suffered hardships and privation which can only be imagined. Our people, of course, were only too anxious to repay the Franciscans for their kindness during the days of their prosperity, and food, clothing and fuel were brought to them secretly over a wooden drawbridge across the river. Mr. Burke, the Catholic landlord of Ower, which bordered on their humble habitation, also sent them many gifts, while their greatest benefactor was the owner of the land on which they now resided, namely, Henry Lynch of Ballycurran.

Kilroe Friary

While still in hiding on Oilean na mBrathar, the friars continued to celebrate Sunday masses secretly in Ross, though some of the buildings were fast becoming dangerous. In 1789, their own cabins on the island were also crumbling and unfit for human habitation, and their wretched condition was brought to the notice of Henry Lynch, the Catholic landlord at Ballycurran, who offered them a lease of sixteen acres of land at Kilroe. The friars gratefully accepted and with the aid of local people they built there a small friary which still stands near the foot of Kilroe Hill. A narrow winding path led through a little wood to a hollow some distance away, where they built their church, well hidden from view, as penal days were not yet over. For fifty-one years in Kilroe they continued to serve the people they loved until the days of oppression were well over and the dawn of religious freedom had brightened our skies. The deep gratitude of the friars to their benefactor was shown when, after his death in 1820, they named their townland “Mounthemy” to perpetuate his memory; and the people’s gratitude to the friars was no less established when their new abode was always referred to affectionately as Coill Rua na mBrathar, or Kilroe of the Friars.

Brodullagh

While the Franciscans were thus striving, under most distressful conditions, to attend to the spiritual needs of the people in the western end of our parish, the eastern portion around Shrule was also suffering from the effects of the penal times. By the middle of the eighteenth century Teampall Cholmáin had been abandoned by

the clergy, partly because of its prominence on the height above the town, and partly because its eastern gable had cracked and was thought to be too dangerous for a congregation. Its position, also, in close proximity to the main road from Galway to Mayo would have made it a target for inspection by the military or other agents of the Crown who would pass this way frequently. Therefore, as happened in many other parts a more remote place was chosen for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, and a "chapel" was erected at Brodullagh South, about a mile to the west near the Glencorrib road. Though very little now remains of this chapel of the penal times, there is sufficient evidence that it was a somewhat quaint structure. Two low rounded arches with a portion of wall a few feet behind, seem to suggest that its appearance was intended to deceive the passer-by into believing that it was something other than a place of worship. Like other chapels of those days, it was probably a thatched building without any belfry, tower, or other embellishment which might attract undesirable attention. However, humble as it was, it served our community during the hard times when Kinlough, Teampall Cholmáin and probably Moyne had ceased to function. And it continued to cater for our congregation until later times brought some degree of toleration and a benevolent lady of the landlord class made an endowment for which Shrule people can ever be grateful.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH



The ruins of Brodullagh chapel

One Christmas Morning in the Eighties

ON CHRISTMAS MORNING in the year 1885, Father Mark Conroy, curate of the parish of Carraroe, set out from Carraroe in his little currach to offer first Mass in Lettermullen church. While nature was still in her deepest slumber and as yet, little or no sign of dawn, he crossed Great Man's Bay in a transverse direction to reach the little church in Lettermullen, a church which he himself had erected and to which he had given unstintingly much of the labour of his hands. With a stiffening north-westerly wind and in a choppy disturbed sea, his journey of four miles was for him a usual routine experience.

Having reached the shore on the opposite side and traversing a mile of rough terrain, he was once more in the midst of the devoted flock he loved so well. Confessions over; the age-old story of the Prince of Peace retold; the Holy Sacrifice offered; reassurances given to those who came to see him, and with God's blessing on all—he set out again to offer his second Mass in Carraroe.

This time, however, his return journey was much more strenuous. The north-westerly wind seemed to have strengthened somewhat, giving his frail craft a severe buffeting on the breaking billows, yet it fulfilled its mission faithfully under the skilful guiding hand of its master.

Again having offered his second Mass; the midnight angelic song and the heavenly message of peace recounted; with the sorrows and anxieties of those who sought him allayed and with his greetings and blessing to all, he set out once more in his currach to offer his third Mass in the Rosmuc parish church.

The passage by sea from Carraroe to Rosmuc is always difficult because of the many little islands. Although the darkness had now given way to the brilliance of the now rising sun, yet with the piercing north-westerly wind and the strong tidal current at Bealadangan running against him, he was overjoyed when he reached Rosmuc to offer his third Mass. Once more the Holy Sacrifice offered; the story of the newborn Infant King retold in solemn tones of affection and gripping eloquence; with the hearts of those who came to seek his advice made lighter and with his sincere greetings and good wishes to all, he set out once more to return on his five-mile journey to Carraroe.

Shrule

RECENT RESEARCH has revealed some very interesting information about our district during a period on which we have scarcely touched hitherto in our story, and, though very much out of its context at this juncture, we ask our reader to bear with us a moment while we place on record some events of considerable importance. To condition ourselves for true perspective, we must cast our minds back a century to that dismal period at the end of the eighteenth century, when age-long religious and civil oppression brought forth the desperate insurrection of 1798. News of the bloody French Revolution added further fuel to the fire which incited our suffering population and drove them into a secret oath-bound society as "United Irishmen", pledged to seek complete independence for their land by force of arms. This resulted in one of the bloodiest years in our history and the belated arrival in Connacht of the French Expedition under Humbert.

The "Races of Castlebar"

The events which followed the French landing at Killala in 1798 are too well-known to be repeated here and only that portion of the story which concerns our area is of interest at present. As the British "Red Coats" were routed from Castlebar in the famous "Races", some headed southwards towards Galway, where there was a garrison at the time. Their route would naturally have led them through Shrule, which is on the direct Castlebar-Galway road, and a contingent of military from Galway were hurriedly assembled and dispatched to aid their fleeing comrades. Having arrived at Shrule Bridge, the Galway company decided to encamp on the south side of the river near Abbeytown, wait there for the Mayo militia, and give battle to the pursuing French and Irish. Had this expected encounter taken place, Shrule would probably have witnessed a battle similar to Ballinamuck with, perhaps, as gory an aftermath. Fortune spared us this, however, as the routed Redcoats from Castlebar, in headlong flight at Hollymount, turned towards Tuam instead, where they suffered defeat at Tullinadaly.

New Recruits: Intimidation

Following the victory of the insurgents and the proclamation of the Republic of Connacht by Humbert and President John Moore, a new drive was made in the West for the recruitment of members to the ranks of the United Irishmen. It met with considerable success in many areas, including our own, and agents were soon administer-

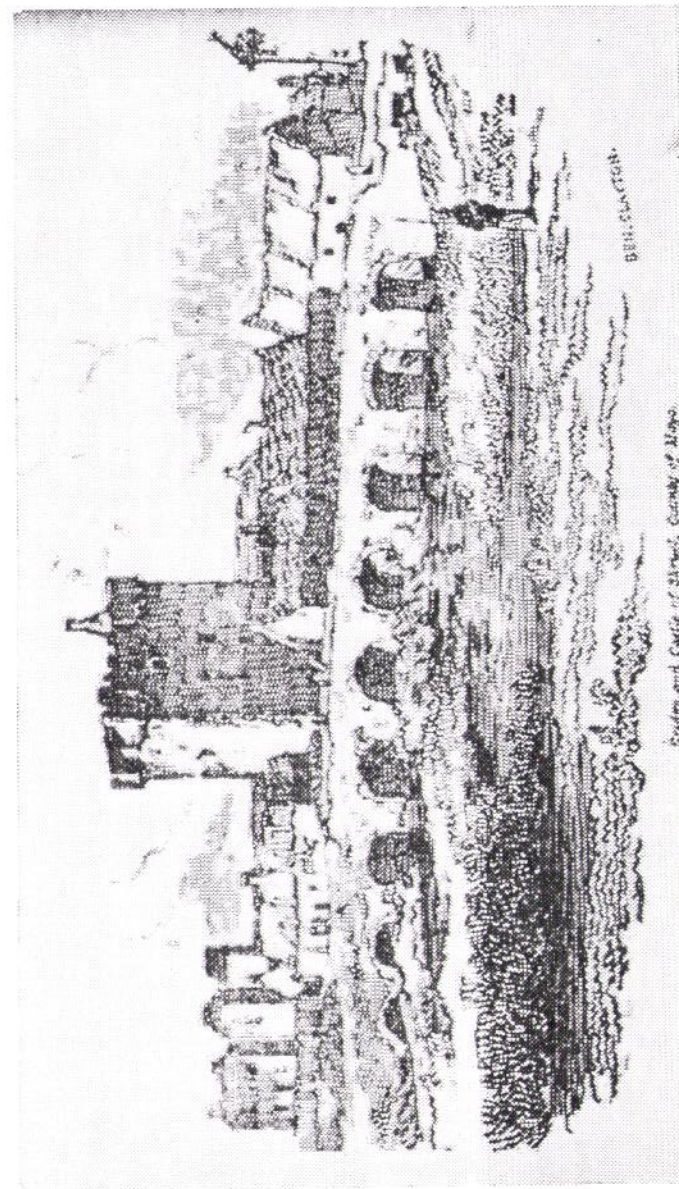
ing the Oath of Secrecy, while pikes, swords and other weapons were being forged in the more remote places. The new recruits followed the example of others in the North of Connacht and commenced a campaign of intimidation directed against all persons suspected of loyalist tendencies or of active support for the authorities. Cattle, sheep, and other animals were houghed and maimed; property was destroyed and goods forcibly taken in an effort to strike fear into the supporters of the crown. It may be said of the campaign, however, that no instance of the taking of human life has been recorded during the various raids, although the list of claims for compensation for loss of property made afterwards for Co. Mayo is certainly a very long one. Claims from Hollymount, Roundfort, Kilmaine, Dalgan and Abbeytown appear on this list and cover a variety of losses from the houghing of animals to the compulsory acquisition of weapons, clothing and food.

Courtsmartial

To deal with all those who took part in the insurrection or in any acts of violence, courtsmartial were set up by the authorities, because civil law had been suspended at the time. These courts, presided over by military personnel, showed little mercy for any of the accused brought before them and the punishment meted out for comparatively minor offences was sometimes unbelievable. Scanning the list of convictions for Co. Galway for the first six months of 1799, one is amazed to see twenty-four men sentenced to be hanged for such "crimes" as—being members of the United Irishmen, houghing animals, or "tendering Illegal Oaths". Of these twenty-four men, ten were executed at Galway, two at Tuam, one in Gort, and one in Loughrea. Of the remaining 106 charged with crimes, five were sentenced "to receive 1,000 lashes", one of whom died afterwards in prison, and many others were doomed to transportation for life.

Shrule men charged; one executed

Of the total of 130 men charged at Galway in that period, with Brigadier-General Thomas Meyrick in military command, we find seven from Shrule neighbourhood, all described as "labourers"—which would probably mean in those days that they were employed on the land. Their names, as listed were: Patt Tedders, James Boughan, Edmond Naughton, Owen Conmy, Patrick Connell, and Thomas Burke—all given as of "Shrewell, Co. Mayo", and Francis Doradan of "Killamonagh, Co. Galway". The crimes with which they were all accused were: "Houghing and taking unlawful oaths", and witnesses were produced to swear that they houghed cattle on Widow Golding of Shrule, Thomas Blake, and Timothy Sheridan—with "syths, swords, and a variety of other weapons". It was also sworn in evidence that the Oath of Secrecy was not administered by any of the prisoners, but by another man called Hughes.



Shrule Bridge and Castle, 1833

The verdict of the courtmartial was:

“The Court, having duly considered the evidence for and against the prisoners, is of opinion that the prisoners Patrick Tedders and James Boughan are guilty of houghing cattle and doth sentence them to suffer death by being hanged by the neck, and doth acquit the other prisoners and hath directed them to be discharged on their finding sufficient sureties for their good behaviour for seven years and taking the Oath of Allegiance”.

Patt Tedders was executed at Galway on March 13, 1799, his only crime, even according to the procured witnesses, being that he houghed some cattle—surely an extreme case of harsh justice. The death sentence on James Boughan was commuted “To serve abroad for life”, and on 8th May, 1799, he was sent to New Geneva barracks. Naughton, Conmy, and Connell were instructed “to find security to be of the peace for seven years”, while Burke and Doradan were acquitted and discharged. Thus ended the '98 period in our area and the Act of Union which came in the following year quenched all hope of civil liberty for a long time to come.

[**Note:** We wish to apologise to those readers who like to keep events in chronogical order, for our jump back into the past; but the information contained in this article was only recently made available to us by Mr. John J. Tedders of Shrule, to whom we are most grateful].

J. B. McHUGH

The Canon's Share

(A STORY BY TERESA WARD, CRAUGHWELL)

DAN MYLES was a handsome young Guard, just out of training. He found life in Ballyhascot, his first station, dull at first after the more congenial atmosphere of the city. But with all the admiring glances he was receiving from the nice girls and his own happy knack of making himself at home in any surroundings, he was soon enjoying himself immensely.

One evening, an invitation to an American Wake, a few miles from his station, caused him no little anxiety. He wondered if he would be free to attend. As luck would have it, he was off duty early and away he went to the party. The McCarthy's, whose youngest son was going to America, were noted for their hospitality, and, indeed, the entertainment this night was well up to expectations. There was music and dancing and storytelling to while away the happy hours and Dan, all too soon, found it was time to be on his way home again.

Shrule

WE HAVE TRACED the occupation of Shrule lands and castle to the end of the seventeenth century when we found them in the possession of Ormsby, who held by lease from Clanrickarde. We now find, in 1708, that the Hon. Michael Burke, afterwards the tenth Earl, let the castle and four quarters of Shrule to Ulick Burke of Colmanskentown, Co. Galway, with a clause for renewal. It was also stated in the letting that the castle and lands were to be held "in as full and as ample a manner as the same was theretofore enjoyed by Gilbert Ormsby and Sir Edward Ormsby or their undertenants". Thirty-seven years later, in 1745, this lease was vested in Robert Waller of Rookwood, Co. Roscommon, who then applied to the eleventh Earl for renewal, which he obtained. In the following year, however, we find Waller subletting the whole, at 7s. 6d. per acre, to Thomas Lindsay of Tuam, who neglected to take out a lease. On Lindsay's death, in 1766, his executors, Croasdaile Miller of Milford, Kilmaine, and Anthony Ormsby of Ballinamona got a lease from Waller for Waller's life. In this lease the lands were stated to measure 441 acs. 3 rds. 2 prs., which would roughly correspond to the combined areas of Shrule in Co. Mayo, and Shrulegrove and Joycepark in Co. Galway. Shortly after this, it appears that these lands were acquired by the owners of Dalgan Estate.

Kirwan of Dalgan

While the Shrule lands were thus being leased and re-leased during the eighteenth century, the adjoining Dalgan property remained steadily in the possession of the Catholic Kirwans. They belonged to that branch of the Galway tribe which had settled in Cregg Castle, Baunmore, early in the seventeenth century, and they were near relatives of the Kirwans of Castlehackett. Sometime in the second half of the seventeenth century they acquired the Dalgan lands and it is most likely that the first of the family to settle there was Edmund Arigid Kirwan, son of Patrick Kirwan of Cregg who died in 1608. Alexander, son of Edmund Arigid, has been given to us as residing there in Dalgan towards the end of that century. He was followed by Edmund*¹ and Martin, his son and grandson, successively,

*¹ A gold chalice in the possession of Very Rev. T. Canon Kyne, P.P., Shrule, bears the following inscription—"Orate pro animabus Edmundi Kirwan et uxoris ejus Margarita Kirwan qui me fieri curavit A.D. 1722." The chalice was made by Joyce, a jeweller in Eyre St., Galway, and a companion vessel is said to be somewhere in England. The date would suggest that the donor was the above Edmund Kirwan.

taking us into the mid-eighteenth century.*² The estate then passed to Martin's son, Patrick, on whose death a namesake son inherited. This last member of the family added considerably to his already high position in society by marrying, in 1808, Dorothea Mary, daughter of Col. Charles Lionel Fitzgerald of Turlough Park, Co. Mayo. This lady was grand-daughter of Lady Butler and great-granddaughter of Lady Mary Fitzgerald, sister of the Marquess of Bristol. There were two sons and four daughters of this marriage of Patrick Kirwan, who was the last of his family in Dalgan. We shall hear more presently of him and of his wife, to both of whom our parish has been indebted.

Extreme Poverty

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the number of clergy in the West had decreased very much. There were practically no new ordinations in the country and arrivals of recently-ordained priests from the continent were very few. The priests who succeeded in evading capture broke the old parish boundaries and sometimes were ministering secretly to a large area which might comprise two or sometimes three of the ancient parishes. Penal enactments had reduced the Catholic population to abject poverty and in many parts they were unable to support a priest. A record of a diocesan assembly held by Archbishop Mark Skerrett of Tuam, at an undisclosed venue in 1760, shows that the assembled clergy lamented that various parishes were so poor they could not give decent sustenance to a priest or to the archbishop. Re-organization and amalgamation of parishes might provide a remedy, but this would not be feasible in all cases. Instead, annual subscriptions by the laity were suggested as follows: every married couple should pay two shillings, marriage offerings were to be two shillings and sixpence and baptisms one shilling and sixpence. We know, however, from other sources that many Catholics were unable to pay even these small amounts. How the clergy managed to survive on these meagre

*² Hardiman in his "History of Galway" refers to a member of this family when he states that "the Reverend Marcus Kirwan, of Dalgan," was elected Warden of Galway Collegiate Church in 1749 in succession to Rev. Hyacinth Bodkin; but, because he gave "some dissatisfaction to the lay-patrons" he was replaced by Rev. Anthony Blake. This, Hardiman says, was the only instance in which any of the wardens had been dispossessed since the Reformation. It is strange, though, that we cannot find his name in the family lineage.

subscriptions is more than we can imagine, and we have no reason to believe that Shrule parish was any better off than the surrounding Tuam parishes.*³

Dispute

It was probably as a result of some re-organization done in our area around this time that a dispute arose between Shrule and Kilmaine concerning some unspecified townland. Both parishes laid claim to the village but neither the parish priests nor the laity could solve the problem. It was referred, therefore to Archbishop Skerrett who was then residing in secret near his native Ballinduff Castle, some three miles south of Headford. After some deliberation, the archbishop found in favour of Kilmaine and rejected Shrule's claim. We feel here that we must make some conjecture as to what townland caused this controversy and the first place which comes to mind is the townland of Ballisnahiney, near Glencorrib, which, though surrounded on all sides by Shrule Parish, is included in the Parish of Kilmaine. The reason for this isolation has not come down to us, though local wit is always ready to supply some amusing explanation. A second townland which poses a problem is that of Brackloon, portion of which is still in Shrule Parish and the remainder in Kilmaine. However, Archbishop Skerrett's verdict quelled the controversy only temporarily, and it was renewed with fresh vigour forty years later.

Government Inquisition, 1800

After the Act of Union had been passed in 1800, a Government request was passed to all bishops to furnish a detailed account of the state of the Catholic Church in their respective dioceses. This account was to be rendered by replying to a list of queries which included some regarding the number and incomes of parish priests, curates and members of religious orders in each diocese. Archbishop Dillon of Tuam duly dispatched the query forms to the parishes under his jurisdiction and also to the Warden of Galway for the parishes of the Wardenship. Whether this survey was really intended as a preparation for the promised Emancipation of Catholics or not, may still be debated; but it was certainly regarded by the clergy as such and, therefore, a full and faithful account was supplied as requested. Among the replies given we find that the parish priest of

*³ The position of our clergy had not improved much even fifty years later when Mr. J. C. Curwen, M.P., toured Ireland in 1813, and wrote, that near Ballinrobe he met a priest on his way to a station in his outlying parish of 500 families. He says the parish extended for fifteen miles and that the priest had to keep a horse. His entire income, Curwen says, was £30 per annum.

Shrule*⁴ was Father John Lowther and that his curate was Father Hubert McNally. It was also given that there were 406 families who paid dues in the parish, but there were some others who were unable to contribute to the support of their priests. The average annual parochial income was stated to be £30-16s.*⁵ As regards regular clergy, it was stated that there were three friars at Kilroe and the names supplied were: Fr. Hubert McNally, Fr. John McNally and Fr. John Henon. From this it may be observed that Fr. Hubert McNally served in a dual capacity as Prior of Kilroe Friary and curate of the parish. As Sunday masses were still celebrated in the deserted Friary of Ross until 1804, it may also be assumed that the regular curate of Headford Parish, as given in the Tuam report, was one of the other Kilroe Franciscans. Local tradition also bears out this assumption. Finally, there is no mention in the returns of any regular clergy in the Abbey of Kill and we also see that the ancient small parish of Moorgagach, just north of Shrule, had been amalgamated with Kilmaine.

Fr. John Lowther

The above record of our parish priest, Fr. John Lowther, is the earliest mention we can so far find of a Shrule P.P., and from other sources we have some information on him. It appears from some correspondence of that time, that he was a native of Headford area but we can find no other evidence of this surname being in that locality, though an inscription on a flagstone over a grave in Team-pall Chólmain, in Shrule, tells us that the priest's parents were buried there and that the stone was erected by him.*⁶ From a report of his death in 1839, we see that he must have been born in 1746, and, therefore, he could have been our P.P. for some considerable time prior to Dr. Dillon's report of 1800. However, we do know that he had been educated abroad, and that he was still parish priest of Shrule in 1805 when he found himself engaged in a controversy for which he received a severe reprimand.

Revival of Dispute

At this time (1805), a Fr. Burke was parish priest of Kilmaine, and Fr. Lowther revived the old dispute of forty years previously regarding the still unspecified townland, which Archbishop Skerrett had confirmed to Kilmaine. Archbishop Dillon now took up the case and established a commission to examine the question, but Fr. Lowther's representative failed to attend a meeting and state his

*⁴ The spelling was often given as Shruel around this time.

*⁵ Goldsmith's Village Preacher was "passing rich on forty pounds a year," but here, many years later two Catholic priests were expected to exist on £30.

*⁶ The inscription on this stone reads:—"Alice Tully alias Louthier deceased 12th February, 1808 aged 67 years. Lord have mercy on her soul. Erected by her son the Rev. John Louthier to her memory and her husband Luke Louthier."

case. The Archbishop then summoned Fr. Lowther*7 to meet him, at the house of a Mr. Fallon, where he warned him, in the interests of religion, to desist from officiating in that townland pending canonical investigation. In a letter, dated from Mirehill, Dr. Dillon also informed Warden Valentine Bodkin of Galway of his decision and there, as far as we are concerned, the matter rests.

Fr. Lowther Transferred

By the year 1817, we find that Fr. Lowther had been transferred from the scene of his controversy to be P.P. of Ragoon, Galway and he was also promoted Vicar (Canon) of the Collegiate Church. He was still there fifteen years later when at the age of eighty-six, he was requested to relinquish his position in Ragoon. It was then that a most unusual arrangement was made in regard to our parish. By rescript dated March 18, 1832, the first Bishop of the new Galway Diocese, Dr. George P. Browne, was empowered by the Pope "to confer the Parish of Shrewel" on Fr. John Lowther, provided that he had given up Ragoon, and he was also to receive a contribution of £35 per annum from Shrule for his upkeep. From this it would appear that the aged Fr. Lowther was just nominally our P.P. then and was merely given the parish to provide him with an income. He did not take up residence here, but lived for seven years afterwards at Quay Street, Galway, where he died on October 11, 1839, at the advanced age of ninety-three.

Fr. Patrick Monahan, 1824

We cannot so far ascertain who replaced Fr. Lowther as our parish priest around 1817, but we find, from *The Connacht Journal* of 15 November, 1824, that Fr. Patrick Monahan was then in charge of the parish. At that time O'Connell's "Catholic Association" was well established and had struck roots in every parish in the land. To finance a campaign for Emancipation a rent was levied on every Catholic household and it was usually collected at the chapel door on the first Sunday of every month. In the above issue of *The Connacht Journal*, Fr. Monahan was reported for neglecting to collect the Catholic rent in his parish. There may have been good reason for this neglect as the people of the rural West were in great straits for a few years previously. This was due mainly to exceptionally severe weather in the summer and autumn, which caused wholesale destruction of the potato crop, and for want of good nourishment the people suffered severely from hunger, typhus and dysentery. However, despite the great hardships on the people, the same newspaper in an issue of a month later, noted that the Catholic rent was now paid up in Shrule. Apart from this item, we have little more information on Fr. Monahan, except that he seems to have been at first a Dominican Novice at Lisbon and later joined the secular clergy.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. McHUGH

*7 In this correspondence the name is spelled "Lowder."

SHRULE

AS WE SAW much earlier in our story, the Wardenship of Galway came into being out of dissension and jealousy between the "Tribes" of the city and the native Irish of the area. By some strange irony, it was tension of a similar nature which brought about its demise after almost three and a half centuries of a chequered existence. We remember how the warden and vicars of the Collegiate Church were chosen by the tribal families of the city, and naturally it followed that these rulers of the Wardenship were invariably members of these families. In the long list of wardens available to us, we find an unbroken line of tribal names such as—Blake, Kirwan, French, Bodkin, Joyce, etc., and it appears as if native Irish clergy seldom, if ever, found sufficient favour with the privileged citizens in order to be elected to the highest places in that unusual ecclesiastical institution. It would appear, therefore, that it was influence rather than merit which mattered in the elections; and this, to the native Irish, both clerical and lay, flavoured strongly of discrimination. With the advent of religious liberty in the early years of the nineteenth century, this state of affairs appeared all the more outmoded and odious to the Irish clergy.

Complications

In addition to the foregoing tension, there existed in Galway also a marked distinction between the regular clergy of the city, many of whom were not of the "Tribes", and the secular "College" clergy, who ruled the Wardenship. This distinction became public in 1813, when Dr. French, a Dominican priest and a member of a tribal family, was elected warden; but, because he was one of the regular clergy, the vicars of the Collegiate Church refused to institute him in office. After an appeal to Rome, however, Dr. French was instituted and the vicars were obliged to surrender. This unhappy state could not last long and it caused much concern to the Archbishop of Tuam. But matters were further complicated when disagreement arose between the regular clergy and the vicars regarding some arrangements about funerals and High Masses. Though they succeeded in settling this dispute in 1828, the overall position was still far from satisfactory.

Galway Diocese 1831

Rome was kept informed of the situation and, in 1830, Pope Pius VIII sent the Bishop of Dromore and the Bishop of Down to consult with Archbishop Kelly of Tuam and examine the case in Galway.

After much consultation, the bishops succeeded in inducing the Warden Dr. French, who was also Bishop of Kilmacduagh, to resign the Wardenship, but to retain his diocese where he was advised to reside. Then after inducing the tribal families of the city to abandon their ancient privilege of electing the warden, the visiting bishops reported progress to Rome, adding a strong recommendation that Galway be made an independent diocese. Acting on this recommendation, Pope Gregory XVI, in March 1831, created the new Diocese of Galway, and appointed Dr. Nicholas Foran as its first bishop. Dr. Foran, however, was not destined to wear the mitre, as he fell seriously ill and never recovered. Then, Dr. George P. Browne, a priest of the diocese of Elphin, was appointed and became our first Bishop of Galway, being consecrated by Archbishop Oliver Kelly in October 1831. And so, after many vicissitudes, our parish has ever since remained peacefully under the jurisdiction of the Galway prelate.

Shrule Church

It is pleasing to note that during those years of dissension in Galway, much progress was being made at home in our own parish. This fact was mentioned at the first visitation made here by our new bishop, Dr. Browne, when he administered Confirmation to 300 children on September 5, 1832. In an issue of *The Connacht Journal* at that time, it was reported that: "Mrs. Kirwan of Shrule helped to build the fine parish chapel". Five years later, Lewis—of whom we shall hear more presently—in his *Topographical Dictionary* is more specific when he stated: "the chapel is a neat edifice in the ancient English style, with a square tower, towards the erection of which £1,300 was contributed by Mr. Kirwan of Dalgan Park, who also gave the ground: it has a handsome marble altar-piece presented by T. Martin, Esq."*1. The site was that in which the present church stands in the townland of Ramolin, and the kind donor was the Patrick Kirwan of Dalgan (already referred to), who married Dorothea Mary Fitzgerald of Turlough Park. As this marriage took place in 1808, the dates of the donation and of the building of the church must be between that and 1832—more probably nearer to the latter. It is hoped that future research may yet be rewarded with fuller details.

Fr. James Geraghty, P.P., 1832 (?)–1847

In the forementioned account of Shrule Confirmation in 1832, it is given that the P.P. was Father James Geraghty. This, of course, could not be strictly correct, as we have already seen that six months

*1 Here we depend on local tradition to tell us that this kind gentleman who presented the marble altar belonged to a local family who had a thriving woodwork and carpentry business in Shrule in the last Century.

previously, the Pope had conferred the parish on Rev. John Lowther, who resided in Galway. Therefore, Fr. Geraghty must have been acting-P.P. until Fr. Lowther's death in 1839. From other sources we have further information on Fr. Geraghty. He was born in Moylough, Co. Galway, in 1803, and ordained in 1827. Three years later, he was curate in Bohermore, Galway, and it is probable that from there he was transferred to Shrule and given charge of the parish, though at the early age of twenty-nine, it is doubtful if he would be made P.P. He remained with us until the famine year of 1847, when he was appointed P.P. of Castlegar, Galway. He died on August 30, 1864, and was buried in Teampall Cemetery, Renmore. By a strange coincidence his brother was appointed to our parish in that same year.

Shrule in 1837

Many interesting items concerning our parish in the early nineteenth century are to be found in *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, published in 1837 by Samuel Lewis. This was a gigantic work to undertake, especially in those days of leisurely travel and poor communications, and, as may be expected, some inaccuracies were bound to appear. Still in regard to our area, we cannot quibble much with Lewis, and we must leave it to him when he tells us that the population of our parish then was—"4,167 inhabitants, of which number, 507 are in the village". This, of course, was pre-famine time, when the country's population was double its present-day figure, and we see that Shrule, both parish and village, roughly correspond to the same proportion. But we must disagree with the author when he states—"This parish is situated on the river Blackwater". However, we can pardon him for confusing our Black River with three other streams of a similar name elsewhere. Our estimate of the area of our parish agrees approximately enough with his "8,959 statute acres, as apploved under the Tithe Act". And, speaking of tithes, he tells us that Shrule paid—"£264-2s.-8d. of which £183-17s.-5d. is payable to the Warden of Galway and the remainder to the vicar". This, of course, was the arrangement for the Protestant Church and it seems pretty rough justice when a parish which was over ninety-nine per cent Catholic was compelled to contribute such a sum towards an alien church while the Catholic clergy were living in poverty. We consider this all the more severe when we remember that practically all the land of our parish was owned by Catholic landlords.

Agriculture

Apart from the question of tithes, conditions generally must have been fairly satisfactory when Lewis visited us, as he continued—"The land is of good quality, and chiefly under tillage; the system of agriculture is much improved and the wheat produced here is considered to be the best in the county: the only waste land is bog

which might be easily reclaimed and converted into good pasture. Limestone of excellent quality is found in abundance, and quarried for agricultural purposes and for building". He then lists for us the resident landlords, and gives a good description of Dalgan House: "The principal seats are Dalgan Park, the residence of P. Kirwan, Esq., a spacious mansion of hewn limestone, in Grecian style, with a noble hall supported on lofty Corinthian columns and lighted by a finely-proportioned dome; Riverview, of M. J. Hunt, Esq.; Glen Corrib of A. Brown, Esq.; Ballycurran Castle, of P. Lynch, Esq.; and Houndswood, of M. D'Arcy, Esq." We notice here that he omitted to mention our absentee landlords such as Blake of Moyne, and Joyce of Kinlough though he included two gentlemen who did not belong to our parish, namely, Hunt of Riverview and D'Arcy of Houndswood.*2

Industry and Trade

On industry and trade, Lewis tells us: "An extensive brewery is carried on, and there are large corn-mills, the property of R. Golden, Esq. A market for corn is held here every Thursday, which is abundantly supplied; and there are fairs on Easter Monday, July 26, and November 11. A constabulary police force is stationed in the village and petty sessions are held on alternate Thursdays". Here again we must excuse Lewis for his rendering of the name of the proprietor of our brewery and mills—Mr. Richard Golding, with whose most respected family and business we shall deal presently. We should also mention that the above three fairs have been held regularly ever since, while four others have been added, in May, August, September and October. As is general throughout the country, the corn markets have dwindled away, and the grain is now usually collected at the farms by the merchants.

General

Continuing, Lewis refers to the Friary of Kilroe: "About five miles from Shrule is a Franciscan convent, endowed by the Lynch family with 30 acres of land, to which is attached a chapel". Of the Lynch estate he has this to say: "In the demesne of Ballycurran are the remains of the castle of that name, in good preservation; the floors are still perfect and it might easily be rendered habitable; from the summit are extensive views of Lough Corrib, Connemara, and the surrounding country".*3 Reverting once more to Shrule, he

*2 Riverview was then the name given to the house in Joyce Park which was recently occupied by Dr. E. Lee, and which is in County Galway. Houndswood is in the Parish of Cong.

*3 Here we regret to record that Ballycurran Castle has since suffered from the weight of its years and the eastern portion has now come to the ground.

tell us that: "There are three private schools in which are about 100 children. Some interesting remains of the old castle and the ancient Abbey of Shrule are still in existence". The very poor state of education in Ireland in those days can be deduced from the fact that only one hundred attended school here out of a total population of over four thousand, and those three schools, we may be sure, were no better than others throughout the land—small thatched hovels which were little better than the hedge schools of half a century before. Finally, Lewis informs us that: "The village contains 86 houses, many of which are neatly built;" but many Shrule people will certainly smile when he adds: "the salubrity of the climate is such as to render it a desirable residence for invalids. To the rear of Riverview is a hamlet called Gurtloygraph, in which are many instances of longevity".*4 With this parting compliment, we bid good-bye to Samuel Lewis, who has given us a very interesting view of our parish as he saw it one hundred and thirty-five years ago.

Golding of Shrule

A history of nineteenth-century Shrule would certainly be very incomplete without reference to the Golding family, whose impact on life in our area was considerable. The first mention of the name in Shrule—as far as we can at present find—is in the lease of a plot of land, on which the old Norman Castle stands, to Alicia and Richard Golding in 1811, the lessor being Martin Kirwan of Dalgan. Tradition tells us that the Goldings came to us from the Galway area, and we know that they held the land of Liss, near Headford, and also Shrulegrove. The above lessees were probably mother and son, and probably the first members of the family to reside in Shrule, as their earliest interment in our parish was that of Mrs. Alicia Golding (née Burke) who died in 1817, and to whom the family tomb in Shrule cemetery was erected by her son Richard. They must also have been a very devout Catholic family, as a beautiful stained glass window in Shrule Church was donated as a memorial to the above Alicia*5 Near this window also a marble plaque on the wall requests

*4 The village referred to here, under the grotesque name, is Gortlaggagh which is in County Galway.

*5 This window, which is in the right-hand aisle of the present church, is a beautiful representation of the appearance of Jesus to Margaret Mary Alacoque. The inscription reads—"In tender and grateful remembrance of Alicia M. Golding who faithfully loved the Sacred Heart of Jesus and earnestly tried to teach others to do so."

prayers for the soul of Richard Golding of Shrule who died on January 30, 1864, at the age of seventy-seven.*6 As stated above by Lewis, they established in Shrule a brewery, the ruins of which still exist at the rear of Shrule House*7 a spacious residence, it is thought they also either built or reconstructed. The brewery, however, was not destined for a very long life, as tradition tells of a visit by the great temperance priest, Fr. Mathew, who, it seems, prevailed on the brewers to discontinue production. The ruins of the great corn mills of the Goldings still remain on the south bank of the Black River near Shrule Bridge, bearing testimony to the great days of that family who brought relief to our people in times of great distress.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. McHUGH

*6 The inscription on this plaque is—"Pray for the soul of Richard Golding of Shrule who died January 30th 1864, aged 77 years. He was one of the tenderest and best of fathers, and his heart was ever open to the suffering and the poor. His children earnestly ask a prayer for his eternal rest."

*7 We are deeply grateful to the present proprietor of Shrule House, Mr. L. B. Mayer-Jones, for much of our information concerning the house and its history. We shall hear more of this distinguished gentleman at a later stage.

The article *Parents! For You*, which is written by Sr. Magdalen King of the Mercy Convent in Galway, to help parents with the religious instruction of their very little children, is held over until the next issue.—EDITOR



His Lordship, the Bishop, and Fr. Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M., with Right Reverend Monsignor Patrick Glynn, who was made a Domestic Prelate by His Holiness Pope Paul VI

S H R U L E

THE WESTERN HALF of our parish had been served for over half a century by the Franciscan Friars from their house at Kilroe; but, with the passing years, their numbers had drastically decreased until in the year 1840, only two remained of that faithful band of holy men. The senior of these, Fr. Michael Nevin, acted both as guardian of the Friary and as curate of our parish; but now, with great reluctance, the Order decided to withdraw from Kilroe and Fr. Nevin, with his companion, Fr. McNally, bade farewell forever to Coill Rua na mBráthar. It is very probable that their lease expired in that year and that the Franciscans saw no future in renewing it. However, their memory still lingers on in many traditions among the older generation in that area. One of these worth recording here concerns the kindness and generosity of those last friars on the night of the "Big Wind", January 6, 1839, when they succoured and sheltered the local people whose homes or property had been badly damaged or destroyed by the storm. The friary still stands in Kilroe, and their little church, hidden away in a wooded hollow, continued to function for Sunday masses until Glencorrib church was built many years later.

Ballycurran

We have already recorded that Henry Lynch, the landlord of Ballycurran, who leased Kilroe to the Franciscans, died in 1820; and it is appropriate at this point to insert a few words regarding his successors. On his death, his only son Capt. Peter Lynch, succeeded to the estate, which he held till his death in 1840. He had married Julia Lynch, daughter of Charles of Petersburg (Ballynonagh) and a distant cousin of his own. Peter had a large family of four sons, three of whom never married, and four daughters. His successor, in 1840, was his son, Charles, who married Helena, daughter of Walter Joyce of Merview, Galway. Their only son, Peter, died in infancy and Helena died in the famine year of 1847. Charles never remarried and proved a kindly landlord during the dark years of the last century, when others of his kind in many parts of the country were exacting rackrents from their impoverished tenants. It has been said that none of his tenants suffered severely during the dreary years of the famine. He attained a position of considerable importance in the West being appointed J.P. and High Sheriff of County Mayo. In 1849 he also showed his munificence in granting one acre of land at Kilroe, and also material aid, for the erection of a national school—the first of its kind in these parts. Tradition

tells that the friars, while at Kilroe, conducted a private school there, but when they left, the need for education was felt and Mr. Lynch then made his generous donation, although the effects of the famine still lay heavy on the land. His life almost spanned the remainder of the nineteenth century and at his death we shall hear more of his estate.

Famine, 1847

When the giant spectre of hunger stalked the land in the years 1845-'47, our parish was, indeed, very fortunate in having sympathetic Catholic landlords, such as—Lynch of Ballycurran, Dillon-Browne of Glencorrib, Kirwan of Dalgan and Golding of Shrule. These kind men, fully aware of the plight of their grief-stricken tenants, made worthy concessions in regard to the payment of rent, halving, quartering, and in some cases totalling disregarding the amount due on gale days. We were also fortunate in having in our area an abundant harvest of corn which was ground into flour and meal in the mills at Shrule, Ballycurran and Ballynalty, and at Ower, where two mills were in production. Our parish, then, did not suffer as severely from the failure of the potato crop as did more unfortunate districts throughout the West. Still, we cannot say that our people escaped entirely unscathed in those terrible years, as fever and disease were also rampant and they took their toll of our population. This would not have happened to any great extent had there been any attempt made at providing medical services in the district and we have ample evidence of total neglect in this regard. Sufficient proof of this can be deduced from one report at the time, which states that there was neither doctor nor nurse available in the whole area from Galway to Ballinrobe. How then could our people escape the nationwide epidemic of fever and cholera which was abroad in our land!

Incumbered Estates

The disastrous effects of the famine*¹ on the tenant and cottier classes throughout Ireland are too well known to be dealt with at any length here; but, in commiserating the pitiful plight of the tenant class it is often forgotten that sympathetic landlords suffered also. Rents went totally or partially unpaid for as long as five years; potato blight had infected the soil; some tenants had deserted their holdings and emigrated; new tenants could not be found, and many landlords, therefore, faced bankruptcy.*² For those whose income

*¹ Many writers maintain that there was not a "famine" in Ireland in those years as there was sufficient corn and other food in the country to feed the population, if it had been distributed.

*² Here one brings to mind the famous case of George Henry Moore of Moore Hall, Ballinrobe, a very wealthy landlord who, not alone refused to accept any rent from his tenants, but also paid their rates. In addition to this, he spent his entire fortune in purchasing maize meal in foreign countries and distributing it among his tenants.

was solely derived from their land, there was no future, but to sell out their estates and cut their losses. But, how could they sell heavily-mortgaged farms in a famine-stricken land bearing impoverished tenants? Who would purchase such large estates? To endeavour to cope with this situation, the Incumbered Estates Act of 1849 was passed, which provided for the setting up of special courts to sell these estates. In this way over 3,000 farms throughout Ireland were sold in the next eight years when twenty million pounds changed hands. The majority of the new owners were Irish and were generally described as "speculators" who hoped to be reimbursed by rent-collecting on a grand scale. Though this was the general trend in the country, we in Shrule cannot say that we had any unpleasant experience of that nature.

Dillon-Browne of Glencorrib

The first estate in our parish to fall to the gavel in the Incumbered Estates Court was that of Dillon-Browne in Glencorrib. This estate was all that now remained intact of the Mochorra Castle lands which, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were held by the MacDonnell Gallowglass. Around the time of Emancipation they were owned by Robert Dillon-Browne, who was M.P. for Mayo, and who proved himself, both in and out of Parliament, to be quite a remarkable character. The family had come from farther north in the county—though on the distaff side the Dillons were further east—and they had established themselves in a new home near the Headford-Cong road at a place which they named "Glencorrib Lodge".*³ Robert was a great friend of Daniel O'Connell and he once held a huge public meeting at Cong where his oratory amazed the multitude. He was equally famous as a duellist and always had a pistol at hand; but he imbibed quite regularly and therefore he was often in financial straits. In Parliament, he was a faithful supporter of O'Connell in his obstruction policy and he could talk for hours about any subject. On one occasion, as he continued a prolonged speech, the British members started to cough him down; but, slowly drawing a loaded pistol from his pocket, and describing a wide arc with its muzzle, he made a dramatic pause. Deep silence reigned for a moment. Then O'Connell's clear voice cut through the chamber: "Good man, Dillon-Browne! You have a sure cure for a cough—a leaden pill". However, despite his definite flair for flamboyance, he was kind and considerate towards his tenants during the Famine, and at his death in 1850 nobody was surprised to learn that he was hopelessly bankrupt.

Glencorrib Estate

Robert Dillon-Browne, M.P., was succeeded by his eldest son, Arthur,*⁴ whose inheritance from his father contained very little

*³ "Glencorrib" was a new name in this area and was probably an invention of Dillon-Browne.

*⁴ This man's name was remembered among the older people, as the entrance to his house was for long referred to as "Geata Artuir".

which was solvent. Moreover, tradition tells us that Arthur was a very simple-minded person whose knowledge of farming or of farm management was negligible.*⁵ Though he found himself heir to two estates—that of Glencorrib in the Barony of Kilmaine, and the Hollywell Estate (near Ballyhaunis) in the Barony of Costelloe—he was unable to carry on business. Then his father's creditors pressing hard on all sides, he had no option but to sell out, and this sale was effected through the Incumbered Estate Court early in 1851. We, of course, are interested only in his Glencorrib lands, which were offered for sale in six lots containing a total of over 1,947 acres. Approximately half of this was in Shrule Parish and the remainder in Kilmaine. Mochorra was his largest townland and it measured over 603 acres, while the townlands given as Ravenhill and Cahercat*⁶ totalled 304 acres. The entire valuation of his Glencorrib Estate was a little over £971 and his tithes amounted to £48-14s.-10d. payable to Shrule and Kilmaine parishes. At the sale the six lots fell to various bidders, but the Glencorrib portion eventually wound up in the hands of Capt. Fitzgerald-Higgins, of whom we shall hear more at a later stage.

The Blake Estate, Moyne

The second estate in our parish to be offered for sale by the Incumbered Estates Court was that of Charles Blake in Moyne. Charles did not reside in Moyne, but at the ancient family place at Merlin Park, Galway. His entire estates, which amounted to a colossal 6,230 acres were dealt with by the court in November 1852. They were situated in three baronies—Clare, Kilmaine and Clanmorris—while his home property consisted of Merlin Park, Dohiskey, Ballygarrane, and a house and premises at William Street, Galway. In our parish he owned Moyne, Church Park, Toorard, Carrowoughter, and Cloghmoyne, with a total measurement of 1,480 acres. Blake also had 574 acres south of us in Moyne Hill (Barnaboy) Ballyfruit, and Tonroe; but the remainder of his seventeen lots lay elsewhere in Kilmaine and Clanmorris baronies. After the sale, we find his Moyne lands in the possession of Paul Ward*⁷ who came from farther north in County Mayo.

Kinlough Lands

Kinlough Castle lands had now dwindled to a mere 516 acres, and, though they were all included in County Mayo, they stretched

*⁵ One story told locally of him relates that a ploughman working for him once charged for a team of horses because his mare had a young foal running beside her. Arthur paid him without comment.

*⁶ These two places are not marked on the O.S. maps and are not now definitely placed; but they must have been situated somewhere near the present Glencorrib Church. "Cnoc an Phreachain" is remembered by older people, but they disagree as to its location. The name on the maps for this whole place is Bunnafollistran.

*⁷ He was brother of Fr. Peter Ward, who was educated and ordained in Spain and who, while a student there, served as interpreter for the British during the Peninsular War. He later returned to the Archdiocese of Tuam.

equally on both sides of the Black River. In the past they had been held successively by Blake and D'Arcy, but about this time (1853) they passed into the hands of Pierce Joyce, of Merview, Galway, son of Walter and descendant of one of the tribes. He did not reside here, and, though full details have not yet come to hand, it appears that he did not hold Kinlough for very long. Towards the end of the last century it had passed to another family.

The Kirwans

Before dealing with the sale of Dalgan Estate, which also fell to the Incumbered Estates Court, and which caused much controversy and litigation at the time, it is well for us to make note of a few details regarding the Kirwans who were compelled to sell out in 1852. Patrick Kirwan, who donated the site of Shrule Church, was now an old man with two sons and four daughters. Charles Lionel, his heir, rose to a position of importance in the county, becoming a J.P. and D.L. and also being made High Sheriff in 1846. He had married Matilda Elizabeth, daughter of William Maitland, of Gelston, Castle Douglas, Kirkudbright, Scotland, and then assumed the additional surname of "Maitland". When he died, in 1862, his eldest son inherited Gelston Castle, where it appears, the family had moved on leaving Dalgan; but, though much water has run under Shrule bridge since, the Kirwans still are spoken of as kind and generous people.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH

SUMMER SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

AT COLÁISTE ÉINDE, GALWAY

JULY 9 - 13



Theme: THE PRIORITIES OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

- Monday:** *Religious Aspects of the New Programme of Hymns in Primary Schools*—Fr. Aodan Glynn, Spiddal
- Tuesday:** *Book Six—The People of God Series*—Fr. Murney, Dublin
- Wednesday:** *Getting Priorities Right*—Mary Purcell
- Thursday:** *Abraham, Father in Faith; Moses, Mediator With God*—Fr. Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M.
- Friday:** *Priorities in Marriage*—Fr. James Horan, Mervue

Shrulle

IT WOULD require more time and space than we have at our disposal at the moment to deal fully with the sale of the Kirwan Estate of Dalgan Park in 1852, and we will, therefore, confine ourselves to some of the more relevant facts available to us. In October of that year, it first came under the Incumbered Estates Court, sitting in Dublin, where it was strongly contested. A later sitting of the Court at Ballinasloe completed the exacting business of the sale of such a large estate, which extended over at least 5428 acres. Much of this area lay in the Parish of Kilmaine and the largest lots in the property were: Dalgan Demesne (916 acs.), Ballycusheen (765 acs.), Caherrevagh (623 acs.), and Ramolin (619 acs). The other neighbouring townlands which were included were: Shrulle, Carrowmore, the two Brackloons, Bullaun, Lisheenielaun, Gorteens, Brown's Island, Tawnagh Esat, Cloonawnagh, and Cartron. After close contest, the eventual purchaser was Francis, Duke of Bedford, who proved to be a kindly landlord, in sharp contrast to the many avaricious "speculators" who had acquired other estates throughout the country solely for the sake of profit without any regard for the pitiful condition of the tenants.

Duke of Bedford

The Duke of Bedford belonged to the family of Russell, and, though we have no evidence of any visit by the Duke himself to Dalgan Park, we find that a member of the family paid at least one visit to the place with a party of guests. The *Tuam Herald* of July 6, 1854, gives us the following item:

"Reception of New Proprietors"

"On Tuesday last the Hon. Wm. and Lady Russell arrived at Dalgan Park. On their route through Shrulle they were enthusiastically received by an immense crowd of people and an address was presented by the Rev. Mr. Pugh, P.P., to which a gracious reply was given by the gentleman. The town of Shrulle was illuminated and had a number of open houses to regale the crowds. The arrival of the distinguished party at the mansion of Dalgan was ushered in by the firing of cannon".

It is strange that the above report implies that the Hon. William was the proprietor, though it was the Duke Francis who purchased the property. However that may be, we soon find the whole estate transferred to one of William's descendants, who had inherited another title from his mother's side of the family.

Lord de Clifford

John Russell, Comm. R.N., was third son of the Hon. William, and in 1822 he married Sophia Southwell-Clifford-Coussmaker. She was granddaughter of the twentieth Lord de Clifford who died in 1801. From his death the title remained in abeyance until 1833 when the Crown renewed it in favour of the above Sophia, who then became Baroness de Clifford. Of her marriage with John Russell, there was an only son, Edward Southwell-Russell, who was born in 1824, and who became the new Lord de Clifford. In this way the Dalgan property now passed on to four generations of the Southwell-Russells who were the Lords de Clifford. It is strange that all these lords had comparatively short lives and the above Edward lived only until 1877, when a namesake son inherited. This young lord died in 1894 at the early age of thirty-nine, and it was during his time that a large portion of the original estate was sold. This sale was effected in 1881 when the Land League agitation was gaining momentum around the country and especially in the West of Ireland. It was only a year prior to this that Captain Boycott was compelled to leave Lough Mask House, a broken and dejected man; and the news of his downfall had the desired effect on many of the greater landlords throughout the country. The Gladstone Land Act further induced the landowners to dispose of at least some of their extensive properties. In addition to these circumstances, we may also add that the de Cliffords were mainly absentee landlords and heretofore had resided only very occasionally in Dalgan. Their record, though, seems to have been satisfactory and they were not at all unpopular in the area. We shall hear more of the later de Cliffords in due course.

Fr. Michael Phew, P.P., 1847-1864

The foregoing *Tuam Herald* extract refers to our P.P. of 1854, as "Rev. Mr. Pugh". This, however, is not the form of his name as given elsewhere when he is properly titled as Very Rev. Michael Phew, P.P. This priest was a native of our own parish being born in the village of Rostaff, near Moyne. He belonged to a wealthy and respected family which gave three priests to the diocese. Fr. Michael was appointed to the parish in the famine year of 1847, when he succeeded Fr. James Geraghty; and it appears that for ten years he had no curate, as we have no record of any replacement of the Kilroe Guardian in the curacy since the closing of that Friary in 1840. However, in 1857, Fr. Andrew Phew, also of Rostaff, was appointed curate to assist the P.P., who, it seems, was now unable

to attend to the whole parish. Seven years later, in 1864, Fr. Michael must have retired and probably lived at the home place in Rostaff until he died on March 7, 1866. On the appointment of a new P.P., Fr. Andrew was transferred from the parish, leaving us again without a curate.

Fr. John Geraghty, P.P., 1864-1867

Our new pastor to replace Fr. Phew in 1864 was Fr. John Geraghty, brother of Fr. James, who was a former P.P. here. A native of Moylough, he had been in charge of Spiddal Parish for two years prior to his appointment here. As noted above, he had no curate—nor indeed had either of his two immediate successors—and therefore, on Sundays he celebrated early Mass in Shrule church and another later one in the old church at Kilroe for the western half of the parish. This entailed considerable hardship in the inclement weather of winter, when it was necessary for him, between the two Masses, to ride either on horse-back or in a horse-drawn car the eight miles distance from Shrule to Kilroe. It was, perhaps, on this account that his term with us was rather short as he transferred to the Parish of Oranmore in 1867, where he spent the remaining ten years of his life. He died on January 12, 1877, at the age of seventy-four.

Fitzgerald-Higgins of Glencorrib

While the spiritual welfare of our parish was attended to by the two above P.P.'s, we have some items of considerable interest to relate regarding temporal matters in the Glencorrib area. The estate there had passed into the hands of Capt. Fitzgerald-Higgins, who now occupied Glencorrib Lodge in succession to Dillon-Browne. At the time of his purchase of the place, the Captain was fairly advanced in years and it was a son of his who made the headlines in the news of the day. This son bore the imposing name of George G. Ouseley Higgins and he eventually added to it the rank of Colonel. He had been elected M.P. for County Mayo as the popular choice and trusted representative of the people, as he had pledged himself to independent opposition in Parliament and to the cause of the poor and the downtrodden. His father, the Captain, had proved himself to be a just landlord, a trustworthy and religious man, who had a daughter, Sr. Mary Augustine, in the Convent of Mercy, in Westport. She was one of three nuns supplied by the convent to serve as nurses in Crimea during the war there; and she had distinguished herself for her great work in attending to the sick and the wounded. It appears, however, that the strain of the work there bore heavily on her health as she died shortly after returning to Westport Convent in 1855. Her brother, the Colonel M.P., though, does not seem to have inherited the better traits of the family, as we shall now see.

The Mayo Election 1857

At the general election of 1857 three candidates went forward for

County Mayo—Captain Palmer, Colonel Higgins and George Henry Moore, of Moore Hall, Ballinrobe. Palmer was not entirely unpopular, though his father was an evicting landlord and he himself had no experience of politics. Higgins and Moore had both been some years in Parliament; but because of his wonderful work for the suffering tenants of Partry and Ballinrobe during the Famine, Moore was now the more popular man of the people. Colonel Higgins, on the other hand, had more power and influence with the authorities, but it was alleged that such influence came to him as a Government bribe to wean him from his pledge of independent opposition. On this account he was accused by the clergy and laity of Mayo of betraying the people's trust and of "wholesale and unscrupulous violation of the most solemn pledges". The most active campaigners against Higgins and for Moore were Fr. Ryan of Kilmeena and Fr. Peter Conway of Ballinrobe, who was later P.P. of Headford. The result of the election showed Palmer and Moore returned and Higgins at the bottom of the poll. But Higgins was not to be beaten and he lodged an objection, alleging intimidation and undue clerical influence on behalf of Moore. After protracted proceedings a prejudicial tribunal of a Parliamentary Committee found in favour of Higgins, and George Henry Moore, champion of the poor, was unseated. This was a severe set-back for the people of Mayo, but their day of victory still came eleven years later, when the champion of famine times regained his seat in Parliament.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH

THE LEGEND OF THE LONG BLACK HAND

In olden days, when Sheamus reigned,
And plenty crowned the land,
A sprite was seen in Killeen church,
'Twas called "The Long Black Hand".
No traveller dared to pass that way
From setting sun till dawn,
But was left by this malicious elf
Half-murdered on the Bawn.

The church wherein it lay was built
By Colman—son of Duagh;
'Twas three long miles from old Tyrone
And two short miles from Clough.
And Clough belonged to Andrew Lynch,
A man of large estate.
But still he felt dissatisfied,
The church being near his seat.

Ten thousand pounds he would lay down
And thirty hides of land,
To any knight on Irish soil
Who'd slay the Long Black Hand.
And with that too, his daughter Kate,
A maid divinely fair,
Whose golden tresses loosely hung
Adown her shoulders bare.

A lovelier maid you couldn't find
Had you searched this island o'er,
And she was styled, as records tell,
The "Rose of Ballymore".
The offer large—the gift as great
As hero might demand,
To undertake for love or gold
To face the Long Black Hand.

But still the offer none accept,
For from all throughout the land
No knight so brave did venture forth
To meet the Long Black Hand.
And thus the elf was left at ease
For six long years and more,
Till Lynch's friends a visit paid
To him at Ballymore.

And with them too there also came
A bold and valiant knight
Who vowed to God he'd have revenge
On Killeen's churchyard sprite.
Now young O'Hyne from Incha-Guaire,
For so the youth was called—
As annals say, he scarcely was
Full twenty summers old;

But still he did not courage lack
To face that hellish foe
Who shed his father's precious blood

And proved his overthrow.
The guests around the table sat
And wine went round and round,
And Andrew Lynch's health was drunk,
When he did thus respond:

"My gentle sirs and valiant knights,
Why should I life resign,
While each of you've received my health
And drunk to me and mine?
But yet I feel I cannot live,
I fear the end is near—
For the churchyard sprite will surely put
An end to my career.

I've offered well to give as great
As hero might demand,
To undertake for gold or love,
To lay the Long Black Hand.
But still my offer none accept,
For up and down the land
No gallant knight has yet come forth
To meet that hellish Hand".

The old man here resumed his seat,
The tears rolled down his cheek.
They knew the cause of all his grief,
But not one soul would speak.
One would at the other gaze,
But none would raise the strain
Till young O'Hyne at length arose
And broke the silent chain.

Saying: "Now, good sir, for me provide
A steed both swift and strong,
And I'll be off to Killeen church
And search the ruins among;
And if the Long Black Hand is there,
I'll die or revenge take
Upon that murdering hellish elf,
For my dear father's sake".

His sword he grasped in his right hand,
And mounting Lynch's steed,
'Twas off he went to Killeen church
To fall if fate decreed.
Arriving at the abbey gate,

"Art thou within?" he cried;
"I am and will be soon with thee",
The Long Black Hand replied.

On hearing such unearthly sounds,
His gallant steed took fright;
His retrogressing pace to check,
He pulled with all his might.
But curb or rein could not avail,
But lo! what makes him stand?
The elf has seized him by the tail,
The hellish Long Black Hand.

Our valiant knight well knew the cause
And with one backward stroke
He cut the Long Black Hand across,
When thus the demon spoke:
"Another cut, my valiant knight,
If I survive, you'll rue".
"Oh! no," our gallant knight replied,
"I think that one will do".

He posted off without delay
And soon arrived at home,
And stabling there his dappled grey,
Whose sides were white with foam.
In haste he joins the festive train
In Lynch's genial hall,
Where rival wooers were base enough
To pray for his downfall.

Now young O'Hyne with Andrew Lynch
Went out to see the grey
And ordered out two stalwart grooms
To him with oats and hay.
But Palladore was now no more—
Old Andrew Lynch's pride;
And some would say that to his tail
The Long Black Hand was tied.

They both returned to the guests,
Our hero claims his bride,
And by Machuba's holy coarb
The nuptial knot was tied.
In peace they lived, in peace they sleep

In tombs of ample space
Within lone Killeen's churchyard walls,
That whilom haunted place.

These lines were composed by Richard Cronnelly, who was born in Newtown, Kilcolgan, about 1828. He was educated by the Brothers at Clarenbridge and became a member of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. He had access to the Office of Public Records, where he found material for his *History of the Clanna Rory*. He wrote to his friend and school companion, Patrick Keely of Arran, for the story of the Long Black Hand. Patrick sent it to him as he got it from the old people. Sometime later these lines were sent by him to Patrick Keely. He also wrote historical articles for *The Nation* under the pen-name N.K. or N. Kilcolgan (Newtown Kilcolgan).

GALWAY DIOCESAN APPOINTMENTS

JULY 1973

His Lordship, Most Reverend Dr. Browne, has made the following diocesan appointments:

Ven. Archdeacon J. Tarpey, P.P., V.F., Lisdoonvarna, to retire with the title Pastor Emeritus.

Very Rev. T. Canon McCullagh, P.P., Oughterard, to retire with the title Pastor Emeritus.

Very Rev. J. G. Canon Jennings, P.P., Ennistymon, to be Vicar Forane, Kilfenora deanery.

Fr. J. Kelly, C.C., Lahinch, to be P.P. Lisdoonvarna.

Fr. P. Eaton, C.C. St. Joseph's, to be P.P., Oughterard.

Fr. P. Considine, President, Coláiste Éinde, to be C.C. Gort.

Fr. C. Walsh, C.C., Glencorrib, to be President, Coláiste Éinde.

Fr. W. Rooney, C.C., St. Joseph's, to be C.C. Lahinch.

Fr. M. Coen, Chaplain, Merlin Park, to be C.C. Craughwell.

Fr. R. Tarpey, C.C. Kinvara, to be Professor, Coláiste Éinde.

Fr. J. O'Dwyer, Professor Coláiste Éinde, to be C.C. St. Joseph's.

Fr. E. Crosby, C.C. Gort, to be C.C. Ennistymon.

Fr. P. Callanan, Dean, St. Mary's College, to be C.C. Glencorrib.

Fr. M. Mulkerrins, Professor, St. Mary's College, to be Chaplain, Merlin Park Hospital.

Fr. W. Cummins, recently ordained, to be Dean, St. Mary's College.

Fr. G. Jennings, recently ordained, to be C.C. St. Joseph's.

Fr. T. Lyons, recently ordained, to be C.C. Kinvara.

Fr. P. Whelan, recently ordained, to be Dean, Coláiste Éinde.

July 27th:

Fr. Edward Kelly, C.C. Oughterard, to be P.P. Peterswell.

Fr. Enda Muldoon, Professor Coláiste Éinde, to be C.C. Oughterard.

Shrule

THE SALES of the Incumbered Estates of our parish during the early fifties of the last century led us farther ahead in time than we had anticipated, and we must now revert to another matter of some importance which made an unwelcome intrusion into the lives of our people at that time. We must first remember, however, that the deep depression which hung heavily over the entire country during the famine, and for many years afterwards, was more pronounced in the West than elsewhere. One of the chief causes of this was the density of population which was carried on the poorer land of Connacht. This, in turn, can be referred back to Cromwell's edict of "to Hell or Connacht", and also to later subdivisions of tenants' holdings. Therefore, the thinning out of population by famine, disease, or emigration was far more noticeable here than in less densely-populated areas. For those who survived the horrible year, life became a dull and lonely burden. They lived with bitter memories of the past, and they were in constant dread that the future would be just as gloomy. Therefore, they became languid, listless, indifferent to life, and, in such a state, they appeared easy prey for the fanatical proselytiser.

Proselytism

In those year, then, many places in the West became hot-beds of proselytising activities, and among the more important were the remote areas of Achill, Clifden, and Partry. On these places in particular there descended zealous emissaries of "The Society for Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics" to try to induce the poor and needy to renounce their Catholic Faith and accept the doctrine of the Established Church. Soup kitchens were set up where bowls of soup or porridge (commonly called "stirabout") were offered to starving Catholics who would promise to attend the Protestant church. The "soupers" who doled out the bribes were also accompanied by Bible-readers who established "reading-rooms" where the newly-converted could be indoctrinated in the new creed. These pernicious activities met with little success, and few indeed were the starvelings who sold their souls for the "mess of pottage". Those few who did submit, even outwardly, became known as "jumpers" and were despised as much as the soupers who tempted them into betrayal of their Faith. Of course, it was not regarded as a crime for a person to change Faith as a matter of conscience, but to do so solely for material gain—no matter how tempting—was especially revolting to the Irish people.

Counter-measures

In our own area we have no evidence of the soup-kitchen at work; but, in post-famine years the bible-reader from Tuam was active, and reading-rooms were opened in Shrule and Headford, where the proselytiser sought to attract new converts to his bible. Tracts were distributed to Catholic homes, bribal promises made, and their latest "dogma"—that all the misfortunes of the Irish Catholics were attributable to their fidelity to Rome—was widely publicised. One such bible-reader from Tuam who operated in these parts was so zealous in his activities that he even distributed his literature outside Catholic churches on Sunday mornings. To counteract all these intrusions on the hard-won religious liberty of a suffering population, Catholic Church missions were organized throughout the West. In 1853 Fr. Rinolphi and Fr. Lockhart conducted such a mission in Headford and also in Cong, where they warned in no uncertain terms of the dire consequences to any Catholic who might be tempted—either by threat or bribe—to surrender his precious heritage. They also emphasized the great danger of sending Catholic children to Protestant schools where proselytising was surreptitiously carried on under the guise of education. It was widely reported that the work of these two priests, who visited every Catholic home in the area, met with outstanding success and the number who "jumped" was negligible.

Shrle in a "Disturbed State"

A law case which came up at this time affords us ample evidence of the existence of the Bible-readers in our area, and also of the type of "justice" which could be meted out to the poor and innocent in those days. It was a story which made the headlines in the newspapers of the day and became widely publicized throughout the Diocese of Galway and the Archdiocese of Tuam. The case, which was brought in 1854, was an action for false imprisonment taken by a thirteen-year-old Shrle boy named James Grady, against a Mr. Hunt, who was a magistrate of County Galway at Headford. From the evidence given we learn that the boy, who was an employee of Mr. Golding of Shrle, jokingly called a man a "Jumper" one day while returning from Headford with a message for his employer. A few days later he was arrested in Shrle on a warrant of Mr. Hunt. He was imprisoned in Shrle barrack that night without fire or bed, and next day he was brought in handcuffs to Headford before the magistrate. Two friends of the boy offered bail until the next court day in the presence of the Protestant dean and another gentleman, but the magistrate would not accept this unless bail were given for three years. As this was not forthcoming, Grady was kept in Headford barrack that night, and next morning was sent, with two policemen, to Galway gaol, where he was kept for four days until bail was produced. Counsel for the boy described this action of the magistrate as "an illegal and cruel act", and went on to deplore

religious feuds, describing "Jumpers" and "Bible-readers" as "the veriest pests of society" who caused "disturbances of the public peace". It was also stated in evidence in this case that Shrle was in "a disturbed state"—though the cause of this was not given—and that a Mr. Arabin, with a large party of police, was sent there.

Principle Upheld

Bail for Grady was produced by a Mr. Coll Rochfort, who also acted as the boy's attorney at Headford afterwards. He made an able case and claimed £100 damages. A Fr. Commins of Galway was instrumental in procuring the services of Mr. Rochfort, who deposed that the object of the action was to obtain "as much as would take the plaintiff to America, and not to take costs". The case was a very protracted one which created great public interest and eventually the boy was awarded £20 damages. As the boy was an orphan, Mr. Rochfort and his three counsellors were without fees, and it was felt by the clergy that the sincerest gratitude of the people was not sufficient recompense for Mr. Rochfort's praiseworthy action. A subscription list was opened among the clergy of the Archdiocese, and a sum of £40 forwarded as a testimonial to his great service in upholding "a principle dear to every heart". In reply, Mr. Rochfort stated: "True it is that a great principle was involved in the struggle in which the widow and orphan, armed with right and aided by my feeble efforts, contended with all the force of combined as well as individual authority and party wealth—supported by all the legal talent of astute lawyers which that wealth could command". It was, indeed, gratifying for the poor to see that justice was done at last; and it is good for us to learn that not all members of the Established Church approved of the proselytising practices carried on by the more fanatical few who pestered an impoverished population in what our grandfathers often referred to as "the bad times". These malpractices, of course, dwindled away after the Disestablishment Act of 1869.

Fr. John Goode, P.P., 1867—1885

Our parish must have set a record by the fact that in the space of half a century it had three sets of brothers ministering as priests to our people. Already we had the Fathers Geraghty around the middle of the nineteenth century; then we had the Fathers Phew ministering together; and now we have the two Fathers Goode as successive parish priests. These last-mentioned were natives of Oranmore, and Fr. John, the older brother, who entered Maynooth in 1846, was ordained at Gort on November 5, 1854, by Bishop Fallon of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora. Fr. Goode was appointed our P.P. in 1867, in succession to Fr. John Geraghty. At this time, the condition of the old Franciscan church at Kilroe had deteriorated very much, as it was now almost a century old and had been abandoned by the friars for over thirty-five years. Its situation, too, was not

very central for the western half of the parish and, therefore, it was decided to erect a new church in a more convenient position. The site was chosen on the estate of Col. George Ousley Higgins at Bunnafollistran townland, which now goes by the name Glencorrib, after the residence of the donor. This new church was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, under her title of the Immaculate Conception, in the year 1876. Like his predecessor, it appears from the records that Fr. Goode had no curate, but despite the hardship which this entailed, he also undertook the reconstruction and repair of Shrule church which had been donated by the Kirwans of Dalgan some fifty odd years before. Many of our parishioners still remember the church as Fr. Goode had planned it, with its beautiful altar-piece, and the congregation facing east in the traditional Irish manner. It was highly regarded by the Shrule people of the day and their gratitude to Fr. Goode for his great work and artistic taste, was perpetuated in a marble plaque which is still to be seen on the sanctuary wall of the present church.* All the parish deeply mourned his death, which occurred on March 3, 1885, at the comparatively early age of fifty-four.

Fr. Daniel Goode, P.P., 1885—1891

Fr. Daniel Goode was appointed our P.P. in succession to his brother in 1885. He had been previously curate in the Parish of St. Nicholas West, and his short term of six years with us was relatively uneventful. Our churches were practically new and four schools were in operation in the parish—boys' and girls' schools in Shrule, a mixed school in Glencorrib which was erected in 1854, and our oldest school at Kilroe, built in 1849. Almost one-third of of the de Clifford estate at Dalgan had been sold, and the Ashbourne Land Act and brought hope. "Home Rule" had suffered a set-back and Parnell, the "uncrowned king", had fallen from favour. Fr. Daniel Goode certainly saw more peaceful times than his brother, and he was long remembered as a most gentle and lovable person.

Fr. John Conroy, P.P., 1891—1917

In the year of Parnell's death, our new P.P., Fr. John Conroy, was appointed to Shrule. He was a native of Ballyhaunis and was ordained—probably at Galway—in 1877/8. It was he who built the parochial

* The inscription on the plaque reads: "Joannes Goode sacerdos secularis Galviensis hic jacens praesidium ejus quae janua coeli est et preces fidelium implorat. In fond recollection of the virtues and paternal solicitude for the welfare spiritual and temporal of his people this monument has been erected by the grateful parishioners of Shrule to perpetuate the memory of the Rev. John Goode P.P. their beloved pastor for 17 years who died March 3rd 1885, aged 54. R.I.P."

house at Shrule in its original form—a one-storeyed structure at the rear of the church, on the site occupied by the present house. A man of the land, he was a great favourite of the farmers, who often discussed their problems with him. At first he had no curate and, like his predecessors, he celebrated one mass in Shrule on Sundays and another in Glencorrib some three miles away. After a few months, however, Fr. James Craddock, a native of Shrule, was appointed curate for a short period, and he was succeeded by Fr. Patrick Davoren, a native of Moycullen. Fr. Davoren was also transferred very soon and we were again without a curate until Fr. Martin Kealy was appointed in 1905. After three years, he was moved elsewhere and the P.P. once more was obliged to attend to the whole parish on his own until 1916, when Fr. John Considine came to us as curate. By this time, Fr. Conroy was well advanced in years and he died on May 27, 1917, at the home of his sister., Mrs Greaney, in Claremorris. He was also buried in that parish.

(Continued next issue)

J. B. MCHUGH

Confirmations 1974

St. Joseph's	March 20	Oughterard	May 7
St. Ignatius'	March 21	Lettermore	May 20
St. Francis'	March 23	Rosmuck	May 21
St. Patrick's	April 1	Kilbeacanty	May 27
Mervue	April 2	Peterswell	May 28
Salthill	April 4	Kilchreest	May 29
Barna	April 29	Ballinderreen	June 3
Moycullen	May 2	New Quay	June 4
Killanin	May 6	Lisdoonvarna	June 5