

County Louth Archaeological and History Society

Louth Ordnance Survey Letters. (Continued)

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Louth Ordnance Survey Letters.

(Continued from 1922 Journal)

[This is the first letter written by Messrs. O'Keeffe and O'Connor, from Louth, hence the preliminary paragraph. As we are publishing them here in order of place, not of time, the letters that followed this in date treating of Drogheda and the coast parishes, appeared in the previous numbers.

Monasterboice,

Drogheda,

19th December, 1835.

Sir,

We came into Drogheda at 11 o'clock on last Thursday, 17th inst., we got accommodation with Hugh Mc'Cormick in West Street where we as yet remain. On yesterday we called to the Post Office expecting to get the extracts, and a map of the County, without which we cannot possibly proceed to any advantage. As we did not get these necessaries on yesterday, we felt very uneasy, especially when no person who was recommended to us as an ancient trustworthy, and intelligent traditionist could speak Irish,—under these circumstances, we enquired how far Monasterboice was from the town, and finding it was but a short distance, and hearing with what importance the generality of the neighbouring people regards that noble Monastery in ruins, we directed our journey to it, in order to find how far back in time the people could trace its origin and to get likewise the pronunciation of the names of the townlands in that Parish, every one whom we asked for any information, told us to go to a Patrick Sarsfield, a respectable farmer, and a very intelligent man, living about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile distant from the Old Monastery. We went into the cemetery burial ground and looked for old inscriptions on the tombstones, but we found none except on one very old stone, but it is entirely effaced and we could not make out the letters. O Keefe took a very deep interest in searching out for old inscriptions, viewing with enthusiasm the magnificence of the Round Tower, and examining with care three splendid crosses, which stand within the graveyard, on one of which he found the following inscription, of which he made this copy:—

O DO MUIREDOCH 1 / nDERN / RO

Monasterboice is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant from Drogheda towards the North side, 4 from the Boyne, towards the North, and is situated on the Western side of the road leading from Drogheda to Belfast, about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile from

the road leading through Collon to Ardee. It gives name to the Parish called the Parish of Monasterboice in English and *parairte mmonirtir-buitin* in Irish. The burial ground contains about $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre, and is at present made use of for the same purpose. The stones (tombstones) lying on the graves by their form and size each not exceeding the breadth and length of a coffin, bespeak antiquity, and are many in number, but no legible inscriptions can be found on them, for they are entirely effaced by the plane of time. Modern tomb-stones are lately erected within it. On the North-western side is a tower (so called by the people) having on the South side of it, about 4 or 5 feet from the ground, a door or entrance about 6 feet in height, and above that about 20 feet from the ground another small opening in which is said to have been a bell accustomed to be rung whenever any king in Ireland, proclaimed war against another; and on some other solemn occasions, which are not now remembered: it was heard over throughout all Ireland when rung on such occasions. What became of it is not known. The structure of the tower is grand and magnificent, the abstersive rains have not as yet washed away much of its cement from the stones, each side of the door is constructed with square stones, and the door case is made of (or what seems to be) stones cut out for that purpose. Stones of the same form and shape with those in the large door, are used in constructing that part in which the bell is said to have been. The people know no other name for it than tower in the English language, and steeple in Irish—but Mr. Sarsfield calls it *claieteas* and says he heard it always so called. About 7 feet of the top, on the W. side, seem to be demolished. On the south side of it, at the distance of about 10 feet are the walls of a chapel (now so called) which are much injured by time, which gnaws away all things, and by destructive storms. It is about 17 or 18 feet broad, and somewhat more than twice that number in length; the side walls are about 8 or 10 feet in height, and the gables partly demolished—On the side wall towards the south-west, is a window of Gothic form, in which glass is said to have been used, which is scarcely credible.—The cement is almost entirely washed away by the storms. Some persons are interred within its walls. And farther to the south-west, are the old walls of a chapel, said by some to have been used as a church by Protestants some say that when Catholics had the upper hand, both church and chapel were suffered to be within the same churchyard. This is somewhat broader than the other but not so long, there is an arched entrance on the southern side wall, the condition of the walls are almost the same with the others.—On this cemetery are three crosses erected, which, tradition says, were brought by a miracle from some place abroad, (some say it was from Rome) and placed within the walls of this burial ground. They are said to have been seen lying on the sea shore, by a herdsman (or as the people say, by a herd) and then they were found to remove to Monasterboice, and seen lying one evening each where it now stands, and were found raised the following morning, in the same manner as they now are. One of them called Boyne's? cross (*crois buitin*) stands next the *claieteas*, about 11 feet high, bears on its side facing the tower the image of St. Stephen, and the images of the people stoning him to death, O'Keefe says—O Halloran makes mention of St. Boyne's? cross near Drogheda, please inform Mr. Petrie of it, that he may know if this be the St. Boyne's? cross alluded to by that historian. Another called Patrick's cross (*crois patruic*) placed in the south side bears the following images cut on the part facing the south, viz., 2 lions fighting, one having the other's tongue in his mouth Adam and Eve offering him the apple—Cain killing Abel—The Israelites going through the Red sea—Herod destroying the children—And above this, on the same side are—The good and the wicked weighed in scales—Christ going to suffer—the woman holding a cake of bread in her hand, who anticipated to bake Mondays bread on Sunday—the images of the martyrs on the side facing Collon—east side (but really north) according to Sarsfield, and under that is the Inscription as copied by O Keefe—which

signifies, Sarsfield says, օրօսացիմ (by him pro. օրօօմ) յա քրօրրա օ'Էրիմ, Anglice—I direct these crosses to Ireland, (his translation)—This cross is the same height with Boyne's—a third stands in the east side (the three form a triangle) which is said to have been broken by Cromwell and his adherents, its height does not exceed seven feet, it is placed in a stone, the cavity of which the cross does not fill altogether, by which means water is continually lodged therein—This water is said to prove an effectual cure to any person, to whom warts are an inconvenience, provided he does not come intentionally, or for the very purpose of applying it, but if he chance in passing by the place to meet with it—This cure is ascribed as a miracle to the water contained in this stone ; but I have heard persons, who never knew of this, recommend others to wash their warts, if perchance anyone complained of the disagreeableness of having them on their hands or feet, in water which they might meet with accidentally in the cavity of any common stone. Such an illusion may perhaps be irrelevant to the intended purpose of this letter—The whole of the description hitherto given excepting this last allusion, is given to us by Sarsfield. He says, there is no tradition respecting who the founder of the Monastery was, but a very frivolous, and insignificant story, among the illiterate people, which story he could not credit. The story runs thus—That Goban Saor and his daughter erected all the building, that when the daughter was finishing the tower (it is never called round tower by the people) she got ashamed of a little boy or some person who looked up at her, and that in consequence thereof she leaped down leaving the tower imperfect as it is this day—He says, that it is handed down by tradition, that, Գուրն (bween) was the saint who was head of that Monastery shortly after Saint Patrick. It is not said he was Abbott. The old original walls which environed the Monastery, were level almost with the ground and horses, pigs, cows, etc., had access inside the walls—but Sarsfield being a brave and forward man—went to a vestry, which was held to regulate the church cess of the Barony of Ferrard, and made a courageous and warlike speech, for which he got as much money as sufficed to rebuild the old walls, which he got done, himself being overseer. Protestants are not buried in Monasterboice. No more information than what is already stated, can possibly be found concerning Monasterboice, for the people remember no more about it—The Four Masters speaking of Mainister Buithe state the following :—

Anno Domine 521—" Saint Bute (Buithe) son of Bronagh Bishop of Mainister, died on the seventh of December."

" Buite (Buithe) of the lasting fame, come each time to my protection,

" Thou of the fair house, of the musical voice, and of the white
" knee, good son of Bronach—son of Balor."

and in *Acta Sanctorum*, page 190, Col. 2—the authority of the Four Masters is adduced thus—A.D. 521 "Saint Boetius, son of Bronagh, Bishop of a Monastery in the
" County of Breagh,—died 7th December."—F. M

Now there is nothing remembered about Bronagh or Balor, nor is it remembered that the country, or any part thereof went at any period under the name of Breagh. Neither are the names Buithe nor Boetius nor Bute remembered but the name Գուրն only (Bween) which is said to be the name of the Saint of Monasterboice (Մանուրժիք Գուրն) (pro. muinistir ween).¹ He is said to have ruled that Monastery after the time of Patrick, some say, it was not built at so early a period. Sarsfield does not know

(¹) It is hardly necessary to point out that Գուրն is a diminutive of Գուրե and was anglicised "St. Boyne." Perhaps it was the influence of this "oy" sound that produced the corruption Boice from Գուրե.—Ed.]

anything about the time of its being built. So much for Monasterboice. If *búirtin* be rendered into Latin it can be neither Buteus nor Boetius but Buthinus : is there a saint of the name ? Cordoogan—the name of a townland in the Parish of Monasterboice, is so named, as Sarsfield says it is handed down by tradition, from a Pagan, whose name was Corr and surname Doogan. He was converted to Christianity and tradition says that he was a very good and generous man and expended no small share of his property helping Buithin to erect the Monastery and tower (*κλειστερεά*). When he died, the recompense extended to him for his past expenditure and labour, was that the Monks of Monasterboice would not allow him to be interred in the burial ground attached to the Monastery. They kept an old white horse, whose employment it was to carry bread and other necessities to the Monastery for their own use. White horses are in general stubborn, untamed, and cross-grained. There is an Irish phrase which is applied to persons of a stubborn mind, and abrupt in answer,—*Ṭḁ moṛḁan ṽḁn ṡeapṛán ḁan an or innce* (fem.) lit.—there is too much of the white horse in him or in her), (alluding to the stubbornness of the mind). It may be naturally supposed that white horses were not more civilized at the early period here alluded to than in more modern days. The white horse was cunning and made some breach in order to relieve himself from the constant and severe office of cadging bread and such other materials and in addition, perhaps, it might be that he would not let the messenger ride him either out of home or on his return. However the case may have been, whether it was to punish the old horse for his stubbornness, or out of hatred to Corrdooogan, the poor fellow was placed on the white horse's back, (or thrown across his back as Sarsfield says) and the important office of burying him was imposed on the white horse. They put Corrdooogan on his back, in order to have revenge for his horse's former faults, by wearying him out of patience, for as often as he kicked and threw the dead man off his back, he was put up again, because the monks knew he could not kill Corrdooogan, (it may be supposed he was tied on the horse's back). He at length found some means of pitching him into a Marl Hole, in the townland now called Corrdooogan from that circumstance. The water was drained away from the pit by Anthony—Jack—and Laurence Kierans, who are tenants of that townland, and there is no trace of it remaining now. If this tradition have any particle of truth in it, it may be inferred from the first part that *búirtin* was the founder of the Monastery, but this is the only instance in which he is pointed out as its founder.—Please submit this name to Mr. O Donovan : is Corr a man's name ? There were no surnames at that early period. O'Reilly's Dictionary gives the word *Corḁ* signifying weir, or dam,—could it bear a similar meaning in the name of this townland—and signify—the pool of Doogan, i.e., in which a man named Doogan was drowned ? This is the exact pronunciation *Corṽouḡan* as Sarsfield gives it without *ḁ* between *ṽ* and *ṽ* or *ḁn* after *u*. If this be right, the orthography would be *Corḁouḡan*—(*ḡan*) in the termination is not attenuated according to the received accentuation.

Ḃḁḁun—Sarsfield showed us a *Ḃḁḁun* (bawn) lying at the rear of his house from which little enclosure bawntaffe takes its name—Taffe is a family name in this County. Within the limits of this bawn, is contained very nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of ground—Sarsfield knows the limits of it—it is now divided into two small gardens, and a street before the door of a farmer's house. The former use of *Ḃḁḁun*, was to serve as an enclosure for cows, etc., hence it seems to be compounded of *Ḃḁ* cows and *ṽun* enclosure (*mur*) or from the verb *ṽunaim* I enclose, imper. *ṽun*—enclose thou—Bawntaffe is also called *Ḃḁḁḁḁḁḁ*.

[We have got some names of places in the parish of Monasterboice which were not inserted in the Name Book. We insert them here ; perhaps they may seem to explain something difficult in future time.]

ΚΝΟC ΔΗ ΟΙΡΕΔΕΟΥΔΙΗ, hill of the congregation (now called Pleasure hill) adjoining Bawntaffe, was so named because the Friars, or Monks, of Monasterboice were wont to frequent it very often (Sarsfield). ΚΝΟC ΜΑΝΤΑC, so called because all the inhabitants were stammerers (Sarsfield).

Padock. The name of a townland in Monasterboice parish, pronounced ΡΕΑΤΟC, by Sarsfield, who says it signifies a Deer Park, and is called by that name as often as by the name Padock. Did Mr. O'Donovan meet with such a name? is this the signification of the word?

Tullyosker. A hill in the parish of Monasterboice, part of the townland of Tully-esker (Tullaghosker) in Ballymakenny, gives name to that townland. It is so called from a great giant who was called Osgar, and was guarding the harbour of Drogheda, being buried on it. His grave, however, is not visible now. He was such a huge monster (*monstrum horrendum ingens*, etc.) that he could, sitting on this Tullagh, stoop and take a drink out of the streamlet which flows at the distance of about 100 perches from it.

The rivulet bears no name, Sarsfield says that every Tully in Ireland signifies a burying-place, and is so called from some giant's grave. He is convinced the word Tully signifies a burying-place; but he is far from having himself persuaded to the belief that any giant was of such a huge size as Osgar is reported to have been. His pronunciation of it is ΤΥΛΑΙC ΟΥCΑΗ, not ΤΥΛΑC or ΤΥΛΑ, and the termination ΔΗ is not attenuated: his spelling of it is Tullyusker, according to his own accentuation. The people do not remember any other name for the County, but the County of Louth, and in Irish CONOA LUZH, this is the exact pronunciation and Sarsfield says he never heard any other name for it. Nor is the river Boyne known by any other name than Boyne, and BOINN, any of the queries about it met with no answer, Sarsfield says that the people say ΒΑΗ BOINNE, and BUN-BOINNE, the former is applied to where it empties itself into the sea, 3 miles E. of Drogheda, and the latter where its source commences. He says that the Boyne was never called by the name of ΙΝΒΕΑΗ COIΡΑ, but that another river was so called, in some part of Ireland, it may be 100 miles away! he does not know where.

He says ΣΙΔΒ ΘΡΕΑC (pron. ΘΡΕC) is below Dundalk, near ΣΙΔΒ ΞΥΙΛΙΝΝ, when we arrive there, we will make every enquiry respecting it.

The principal or mostly prevailing family names in the parish of Monasterboice are, viz. :—

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Most numerous | McCullough..... | ΜΑC-CU-ΥΛΑC (prou. ΜΑC-CÚΛΑΜ) |
| 2nd | Divens..... | ΔÚΙΒΕΑΝΑC. |
| 3rd | Cooneys | CÚMΝΑ. |
| 4th | Branagan..... | ΒΡΑΝΑΓΑΝ. |
| 5th | Mullens..... | ΜΑΟΙΛΑΝ. |
| 6th | Maguire..... | ΜΑC-ΥΙΘΙΗ (pron. ΜΑC-CÚΙΘΙΗ). |
| 7th | Skelly | SCÁΙΛΑΙC? |
| 8th | Sarsfield | ΣΕΑΗΡΑΙ. |

These are the most remarkable names in the parish, both for their number and respectability.

Patrick Sarsfield, who gave us so much information is to the highest degree extolled by W. H. Teelin in his History of '98, for his hospitality and intrepid soul. He gave us an account of his pedigree as far as he could, beginning with his grandson, whom he was holding in his arms.

Patrick Sarsfield, aged 1½ years, son of—
 James Sarsfield, near 40 years, son of—
 Patrick Sarsfield, near 80 years, son of—
 Thomas Sarsfield, near 65 years, son of—
 Thomas, brother of General Sarsfield, of Lucan.

This Thomas's throat was cut at the time of the Battle of the Boyne "imeabail," in Shop Street, Drogheda. He left after him a wife and one child, who is the progenitor of the family of the Sarsfield's, of which Patrick is one.

He has in his possession an old gun bayonet and a sword, which were used at the Battle of the Boyne. He showed us the sword—it is curved, not so long as the swords over Mr. Petries parlour door, in good preservation (actually bright). We enquired of him, would he sell it, he first consented, and in an instant he retracted, and said he would not part with it on any account because, said he, the trifle I may get for it will leave my hands in a short time, and moreover, these antiquities are preserved in our family this long time, and I'll not part with them during my life.

We cannot possibly get on without a map of the county, to shew the relative situations of the parishes. We also want Quills and Paper, for this kind is not strong or durable enough for preserving what may be entrusted to it.

Ἐερῖν Ἐερῖς. Called Red-gap-hill, by Sarsfield. A place so named in the townland of Bawntaffe, alias Cawan Riach, in the parish of Monasterboice. It took its name from a battle fought there between Cromwell's men, in which much blood was spilled. Providence caused a dissension between them for the violation of Monasterboice by them—the carrying off of the sacred things—and their breaking one of the crosses, of which mention has been made above. We got the Name Books and Extracts: we got many names for little places—parts of Townlands which are not inserted in the Books, such as names of hills, gaps, etc. Will we take them? All worth notice that we met with hitherto are stated here. We are well aware of the different divisions of Parishes. Townlands, farms, etc., which prevail among the people. We fear that this letter is too long—we will be more acquainted with the method of condensing for the future. The people are not willing to give information, suspecting it may be connected with Tithe affairs, but when we meet a sensible intelligent man, it is easy to persuade him to the contrary. We hope it will be made known to us, how far this letter be satisfactory, or if there be anything alien to our purpose said, in order that we may avoid such for the future; also what opinion Mr. Donovan may have of it; how far it may satisfy him. We cannot for a few days finish any one Name Book perfectly, because the Parishes contained in them are too far distant from one another. We must take them in order, as soon as we can we'll send it, we will write to-night about Drogheda.

Your humble Servants,
P. O. KEEFE.
T. O'CONOR.

Drogheda, 21st Decr. 1835.

Sir,

This day we directed our tour to Ballyma Kenny, about 2½ miles N.E. of Drogheda, and got the names of the Townlands in that parish, and of the townlands in the parishes of St. Peter and Philipstown. I was not very laborious to get the names in Philipstown, for itself called the parish of Philipstown, is the only town in the parish, Patrick Jones, of Tullyoskar, in parish of B-m-Kenny, who was born in that townland pronounced the names in Irish for us, and explained the signification as far as he could. He says that in old times Philipstown (Ἐαίτε Ἰῖνῖ) Cotlerstown (Ἐαίτε Κοτλῖν) and Tullyeskar (Τυτῖς ὀρῖς), composed one parish called the parish of Philipstown, and hence it is that this town still retains the name. He understands what Ἐαίτε is applied to, but does not know the signification of Κοτλῖν, (this must be the proper name of a man). He tells the same fable about Tullyoskar, which Sarsfield told us.

He says he has the right to know it well because he lives at the foot of the hill called Tullyoskar. This circumstance could not make him know it, but, however, his relation of the fable concurs with that of others. He says he cannot believe their foolish stories about Osgar, because Fionn-mac-cumhail was but 8 ft. 10 ins. tall, and how could Osgar be so long as to sit on *ṭutais* and drink of the streamlet which flows at the distance of a hundred yards from it, whereas Fionn was a far better man, even of greater fame, and he only 8 ft. 10 ins. tall. He says by the word *ṭutais* the people understand a cave in the hill called a grave, we enquired if Osgar's could be seen, no indeed said he, and the people said that his bed was there too. We asked if he at any time saw it, no said he, nor any other person. They understand, as far as we can find out, the grave of a giant by the word *ṭutais* (Tully). Some say it signifies a burying place; but when a further enquiry be made, they say, a giant is said to have been buried there.

Carntown. (*ḃaite Ḃairne*) a townland in the parish of BallymaKenny (pron. *ḃaite mic Eánnais*), the *Ean* pron. *En* and the two *nn* as *n*. In this townland are the ruins of an old castle, a description of which we reserve for our next letter when we will get more information concerning it.

Green Batter. Called in Irish (*Ḃana Ḃlar*, pron. *Ḃan Ḃlar*) green lane, the name of townland in the parish of St. Peter.

Yellow Batter. (*ḃotar ḃurœ*) lit. yellow road a townland in the said parish—in both these names the word *Ḃana* (pron. *Ḃan*) in the former, signifying a lane or narrow road, and the word *ḃotar*, signifying a road in general—are Anglicised into Batter—is there an example of this before?

Jones remembers to have heard when a young man, the county of Louth, called *maḡ mairceimne* by an aged man. He also remembers to have heard the Boyne called *inḃear Coḡpa*: but can say no more of them. The people remember none of these names, except those who read Keatings History, or who heard it from persons who read it, the Boyne to have been called *inḃear Coḡpa*. He also heard of *Sliabh guilluinn*, *Sliabh Breagh*, and *Sliabh ban* (white mountain) is it in this county?

The principal family names in the parish of B-m-Kenny are, viz. :—

- 1st. Jones—*maḡ reoin* or *reonaḡ*. (Is this name mere Irish, they in general call them *Ḃlann Ḃlomin*: Jones says they are called boids. Jones is a Welsh name some say).
- 2nd. Lynns—*Ḃlann mic uí Ḃlomin*, *Ḃlinn* pron.
- 3rd. Kirks—(birds) *Ḃlann mic ḡiolla Ḃirce*.
- 4th. Healys—*Ḃlann uí it* pron. (ee-eel pron. *ḡmaḡ iolteirce*. Sing *maḡ it* pron. (mace-eel).
- 5th. Lyons—*maḡ uí Ḃaoḡain*.
- 6th. Reed (Patrick)—*ḡarœ Réio* (Raeid).
- 7th. Marrys (not Murrays)—No Irish, neither John nor Jane Murray.
- 8th. Moonans—*ḡunain* sing. *ḡunan*.
- 9th. Corrans—*Coḡrain*, sing. *Coḡran*.
- 10th. McCullions—*maḡcuilinn*.
- 11th. Lamb—*Ḃáan*. *Ṭoirœatḃac uá Ḃáan* (Terence Lamb).

We write these names from the mere pronunciation in order that by retaining them and having them Anglicised, we may hereafter attain to the development of the same Irish names, which are disguised under a far other veil in the different parts of Ireland. If the mere orthography was given—the pronunciation would follow the method peculiar to every province: and the utility arising with respect to the discovery of the corrupt Anglicising of names of families would be totally annihilated.

Is this method considered useful—if not, we will discontinue it. Throughout this letter a man's name is generally prefixed to the surname to shew whether *mac* or *ua* coalesces with it.

The Barony of Fethard is, by the people called *Ḃaruntac̃t̃ f̃neard̃ar̃ou*. (pron. n. *Ḃarant̃t̃ eḂar̃a*)—But they do not know the signification of *f̃neard̃ar̃ou*.

Jones says there is a tradition that the daughter of Goban Saor built the town at Monasterboice with an apron full of stones, but he could believe no such impossibilities. He says it was a Saint named *m̃aoiṇ* (Mween) that built the whole Monastery and as a proof of this he told us that a woman invoked the Saint *m̃aoiṇ* to punish one of the soldiers of Cromwell, who, she saw acting outrageously in destroying the Monastery, and violating its sacredness (*videbat commiscendum divinis humana*) crying out *Ḃ m̃aoiṇ Ḃuair̃iḂ f̃neard̃ar̃iḂ teas̃ an m̃ar̃caḂ* (pron. by him *Ḃ m̃aoiṇ Ḃuair̃oḂa, f̃neard̃ar̃a* etc.) O Mween (Moyne) triumphant worker of miracles, throw down the rider. As soon as these words were uttered the horseman was raised aloft and dashed (to pieces) against the ground with such violence, as deprived him in an instant of his life. This is another instance in which the name of the Saint of that Monastery concords with the other received name in its terminational letters, the initial change is thus caused.

When the woman invokes the Saint—the name is put in what grammarians call the vocative case, now the first received name is *Ḃuirc̃ṇ* (bween) the last *m̃aoiṇ* (*m̃uirc̃ṇ*), in the state of addressing or speaking to *Ḃ* and *m̃* become aspirated (as writers of Irish primers lay down) and are pronounced like *w* in the English language, *Ḃuirc̃ṇ* and *m̃uirc̃ṇ* (Bween and Mween) would be pronounced in such case *ween*. In restoring the name to the state to which it had been commuted, *m̃* instead of *Ḃ* is adapted by some—hence the corruption of *Ḃuirc̃ṇ* into *m̃uirc̃ṇ*.

(Continued on Tuesday 22nd).

Ardee, January 27th 1836.

Ardee Town is called in Irish *Ḃair̃te-ḂḂa f̃ṇ Ḃiadh̃*, pronounced *Ḃair̃' Ḃ m̃iadh̃* (*ṇ* broad) for which name the people account thus; Fionn Mac Cumhail, they say kept his castle at Hacklim (*m̃uirc̃ṇ Ḃiadh̃*) the Fear dhiadh hearing of Fins fame came to challenge him to single combat which Fin was aware of by chewing his thumb to the marrow, his usual way of knowing what was going on and was to happen, and at the Fear dhiadh's approach got into the cradle, having previously acquainted his wife with the whole matter, that he (the F-dh) supposing Fin to be only a child might be deterred from encountering with his father, to whom the F-dh's imagination would give a size proportionable to the father of such an offspring. The day was very stormy, the wind blowing against the door of the house; when the F-dh approached, he enquired whether any of the men were at home—no, says Fin's wife, for if they were I would not suffer so much from the storm, as one of them would turn round the house, and prevent the wind from blowing in upon us; this made the F-dh cool upon the business. He asked for something to eat, and she made a cake with the griddle enclosed in it; he ate hard as he was very hungry, after which he called for a drink; the woman told him that her men would not be content with any quantity of water that could be conveyed to the house, but went themselves to the *Ḃt̃* there below and satisfied themselves. The Fear-dhiadh accordingly went, but as he was drinking Fins wife by preternatural means sent an enchanted poisoned dart (*Ḃabut̃Ḃ*) after him, which despatched him on the spot; from this circumstance the *Ḃt̃* (ford) was ever after called *Ḃt̃ f̃ṇ Ḃiadh̃*, or the Ford of the Fear-dhiadh.

James Dolan, a native of Ardee, went with us to the Ford, and pointed out where F-dh. was killed, and also his grave which is about 14 yards long and about 9 or 10 ft. broad ; about 2 yards of the tumulus, in the middle is cut away so as to be level with the ground,—it lies immediately to the West of the river Dee, about 80 perches W. of Ardee.¹ Dolan told the story of his death thus ; when the Fear-dhiadh flourished Conchabhar was King of Ulster, he lived near Armagh, his territory extending to near Drogheda, Conall Cearnach was his grand-master, or defender of his territory, and Cuchullen's was his Lieut. Grand-master. Cuchullen's was at Castletown (and called in Irish *ṁun ṁeatsam*) near Dundalk ; he (Cuchullen) encroached upon or did some injury to the territory of the Queen of Connaught (*Measṁba an Ṃruadain*) who employed Fear-dhiadh, though an intimate friend of Cuchullen's, to revenge the injury on him. They met at the place now called *ḁt ṁṁṁṁṁṁ*,² within 80 perches off Ardee, to the West, where an engagement took place between them, in which the F-dh. was overcoming Cuchullen ; but Cuchullen had with him a dart called the *ṁa-butṁ* with which he was accustomed to make an unerring aim when standing up to his middle in water. His page who was brother to F-dh's page was now busily employed in stopping the ford, (*ḁt*) so as to raise as much water in it as would reach Cuchullen to the waist, but not having it done speedily enough to avert the danger in which his master was, Cuchullen cut off his head, and with it dammed the water so as to suit his purpose. He then gave Fear-dhiadh a mortal wound with the *ṁa butṁ* of which he immediately died : whence the ford is called *ḁt ṁṁṁṁṁṁ*, and the town *baile-ḁṁa ṁṁṁṁṁṁ*.

ḁt ṁṁṁṁṁṁ is mentioned in the Annals of the Four-Masters at the following years.

A.D. 941. Muircheartach na gcochal gcroicean (of the mantle of skins or hides) the son of Niall Glundubh, (of the black Knee) Lord of Oileach, the Hector (hero) of Western Europe in his time, was killed at Athfirdiadh by Blacaire, the son of Gofradha Lord of the Danes on the twenty-sixth day of March.

A.D. 985. The shrine of Patrick was carried away by Maolseachlain from Ath Firdiadh, to Athsighe on account of the War with Mac Cairelain.—They afterwards concluded a peace, and Maolseachlain, raised a tribute (by way of restitution) from all Meath, both from ecclesiastics and laity to be paid to Patrick (i.e. his comharba) and this tribute consisted of a feast to the comharba, etc. And Maolseachlain himself gave a general feast, and paid also seven cumals (or seven times three cows) and became amenable (to the comharba) in like manner.

A.D. 1075. Toirdhealbhach O'Brien (the son of Brian) marched at the head of an army, composed of the men of Meath, the men of Connaught, the Danes, the men of Leinster, the men of Ossory, and the men of Munster, till they reached Athfirdhiadh, to demand hostages from the Airghialians and the Ulidians. The Nobles of the country rose up against them, and they were face to face with each of them and the battle of Ardmonann was fought between the people of Airghiall and Muircheartach the son of Brian, (O'Brien ?) the heir apparent of Munster, in which Muircheartach was routed and a bloody slaughter of his men followed,—and those nobles retired to their homes, without hostages or pledges at that time.

(¹) All trace of this mound has since disappeared—perhaps in the clearing of ground for the building of the workhouse, which is near this site. An unreliable and unsupported tradition suggests another site on the opposite—the north—bank of the river.—Ed. L.A.J.

(²) The Townland yet retains the name—it is called in the name-book—Aréa—O'K., O'C.

A.D. 1132. Conchobar, the son of Lachlain, led an army to Athfirdhiadh and Tighearnan O'Rourke came into his camp and gave him hostages.

A.D. 1128. A victory was gained by the horsemen of Conchobar, the son of Lochlain, over the horsemen of Tighearnan, O'Rourke, at Athfirdhiadh, in which many were slain in revenge of the violation of the reverence due to Patrick.

A.D. 1159. Roderick O'Conor, attended by the men of Connaugh, etc., marched into Meath till they reached the lake of Semhdide—and they went from that to Athfirdhiadh.

At the same time Muircheartach the son of Lachlain, marched another army composed of the nobles of Cenel Chonaill and of Cenel Eoghain and of the Northerns likewise to the relief of Oirghiall to Athfirdhiadh.

A.D. 1452. The Earl of Ormond and the Lord Justice of Ireland after various transactions are said to have marched to Fabhar and Maghmaine, and the O'Reilly's came and made submission to them. From thence into Machaire Oirghiall, (Co. Louth) when MacMahon submitted. After which he marched against the sons of O'Neill, etc., etc.

After which they marched to Baile-Atha—Fhirdhia—mic—Damain, where they remained between the two vigils of the B.V. Mary, (i.e., from the 15th August to the 8th September) having performed the entire expedition in half a quarter of a year.

A.D. 1539. O'Neill (Con) and O'Donnell (Magnus) actuated by one mind and sentiment marched an army into Meath and plundered and burned before them as far as Tara, the possessions of all those who refuse to submit to them. * * *

After having laid waste and destroyed Ardee, and Nua-Chongbhail, they carried away from them several spoils consisting of gold, silver, copper, iron and every sort of goods and riches.

A.D. 1575. Intense heat and drought prevailed in the summer of this year, there was no rain for one hour by night or day from the 1st of May to the 1st of August. By this heat were generated many loathsome diseases, viz., the plague which raged virulently amongst the Irish and English, in Dublin, Naas, of Leinster, Ardee, Mullingar and Athboy. In consequence of this plague many a castle was left without a guard—many a flock without a shepherd and many a noble corpse without interment.

O'Flaherty writes thus concerning the name—

“Septemdecim annorum erat Cuculandus, Octennis ante caput arae
 “Christianae cum praedam Cualgnian insectands primum virtutis
 “suae specimen exhibuerit In illo bello Cuculandi manu cecidit
 “Ferdia, filius Damani e Damnoniis Connactiae, a cujus excidii loco Ath
 “firdia, nunc contracte Ardee, seu Atherdea, alias de Atrio Dei oppidum
 “inter Louthianos nomen sumpsit.” Ogygia Domestica p. 280.

In Ardee town there are three Castles, respecting the erection of which no one could give us any information. One of them is now used as a session house, Court, etc., the other two are occupied by private families, one of these is on the borders of the town. Ardee Parish is called in Irish *parairte baite áda fírdia*. The Patron-day is the 15th of August, the festival of the Assumption of the B.V. Mary.

The principal family names in the Parish are :—

Callans.....these before.
 Boylans.....na Ḃaoiḡeallan.....S. abaoiḡeallan.
 Keenans.....na Cionanaiḡ.....S. a Cionan.
 Millens.....na Mallain.....S. Mallan.
 Hayles.....na héalaḡ.....ḡ. héalaḡ.
 McKitricks.....ctoin mic Sícruc.....ḡ. mac Sícruc.
 Lees.....na líḡḡ sing. líḡeac.....S. lí.
 Hatches.....na Hatchaiḡ.....S. Hatch.
 Ruckstons.....na Rucrtónaiḡ.....S. Rucrtón.
 Barrons.....Hib. idem.....Hib. idem.
 Norriss's.....na Norair,.....S. Norair.
 Dolans.....na Ḃaoilain.....ḡ. Ḃaoilain.
 Swinburns.....Hib. idem.....Hib. idem.
 Peppers.....na Píobairaiḡ.....Seamur Píobair.
 Corrigans.....na Corraḡan.....a Corraḡan.
 McCannas.....Cian Ceana.....Mé Ceana.
 Currans.....na Corrain.....Corrain.

Dawsons Demesne Town Land, in this Townland is in the immediate vicinity of the town of Ardee, and about 25 perches north of the road from Ardee to Dunleer is a moat called Dawson's Moat and in Irish moḡa an Dawsonaiḡ : it is called Castle-Guard also.

Ragora Townland, in Irish Raḡ ḡuairḡe : in this Townland there is a moat called by the Irish speaking people móḡa Raḡ-ḡuairḡe.

Mullanstown Townland, (baile-maoláin). In this Townland is a fort which is nearly defaced ; it is about 40 perches S,W. from the road from Ardee to Carrickmacross ; the call it uor eirpin.

Riverstown Townland, (baile na habna), in the S.W. part of this Townland about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile N.E. from Ardee is a small fort called the Liss, (an uor).

On Wednesday the severity of the weather prevented us from going out, but on that day we got some of the information in this letter, and commenced writing it, on yesterday (Thursday) we went to Kildemock Parish, and got the names of the Townlands from Thomas Meath, whose house is on the road near the old Church. This day being continually raining and stormy and snowing at intervals, we could not venture out ; we only finished this letter. For the remainder we will employ ourselves in settling the names we have received.

Your obedient humble servants,

P. O'Keeffe and T. O'Conor.