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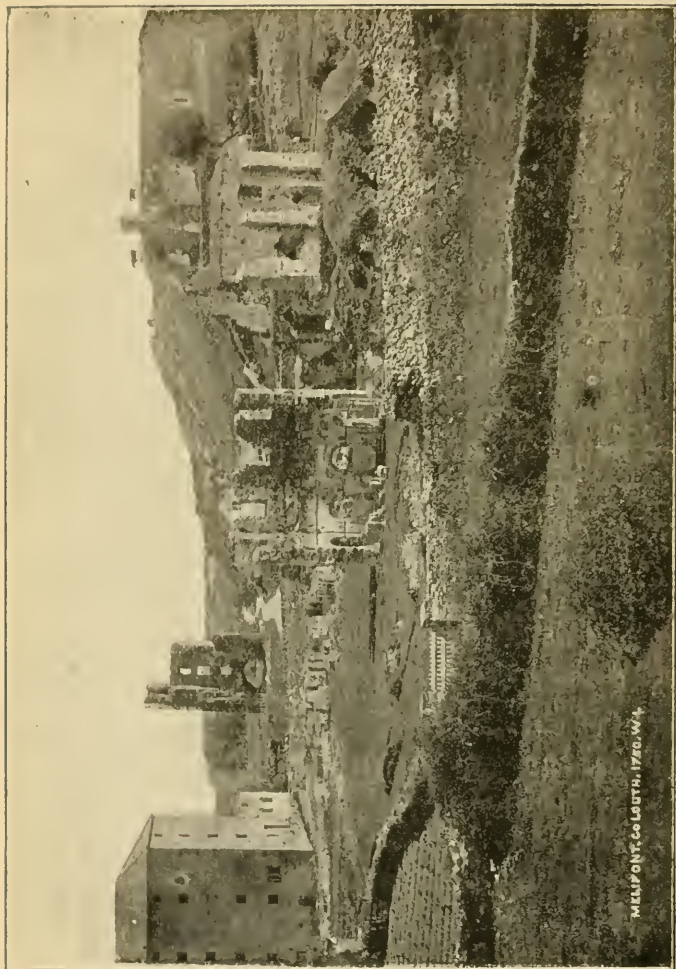




Irene Owen Andrews

Wellesfont Abbey

July 1926



MELIPONT, CO. LOUTH, 1720. W. L.

From Photo

GENERAL VIEW.

by W. Lawrence, Dublin.

MELLIFONT ABBEY,
CO. LOUTH :

Its Ruins and Associations,

A GUIDE
AND
POPULAR HISTORY.

“ A house of prayer, once consecrate
To God’s high service—desolate !
A ruin where once stood a shrine !
Bright with the Presence all divine !”

(W. Chatterton Dix.)

Permissu Superiorum.

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INTRODUCTION.

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IN the following pages an attempt is made to describe the ruins of Mellifont as they now appear, and to explain the uses, or probable uses, that the buildings yet remaining must have served when the monks dwelt there. Obviously, some important structural alterations were made when changing the venerable Abbey into a fortified residence; nevertheless the ruins exhibit, on the whole, the characteristics of the primitive plan and style in which Mellifont, as well as all the Cistercian monasteries both in this country and on the Continent, were built. The explanation is founded on reliable authority, being gleaned from most authentic sources, such as, *Les Monuments Primitifs de La Règle Cistercienne*, which is a copy of the Rule drawn up by the Founders of the Order; the *Monasticon Cisterciense*; *Violet Le Duc*; *Jubainville, Etudes sur l'Etat intérieur des Abbayes Cisterciennes au XII. et au XIII. siècle*; *Meglinger, Iter Cisterciense*; *La Vie de Saint Bernard*, by Vacandard, etc.

As no Records, or Chronicles of Mellifont now exist, the historical part of the compilation has been derived from different sources, chiefly from our old Annals—*The Annals of the Four Masters*; those of *Boyle*, of *St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin*; *Clyn and Dowling's*; and of *Clonmacnois*; *Ware's Bishops*, etc.; *the Miscellany of*

the Archaeological Society; Ussher's *Sylloge*; Morrin's *Calendars of Patent Rolls*, etc. The part relating to disciplinary subjects was drawn principally from Martène's *Thesaurus Anecdotorum*, Vol. IV., which contains the Decrees of the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order, also, from the *Constitutiones et Privilegia*, *Menologium*, and the *Fasiculus Sanctorum Ordinis Cisterciensis*, by Henriquez; *Originum Cisterciensium*, tom. I, Jan-auschek; *l'Histoire de La Trappe*, Gaillardin, etc. The vindication of monks in general, from the aspersions cast on them by their enemies, and the facts appertaining to the Rebellion of 1641. are borrowed exclusively from Protestant sources,—Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, Tanner's *Notitia Monastica*, Maitland's *Dark Ages*, Leland's *History of Ireland*, Temple's *History of the Insurrection, 1641*, Tichborne's *History of the Siege of Drogheda*, Carte's *Ormond*, etc.

These by no means exhaust the list of authors consulted and utilised, but they show how far apart the pieces lay which have been stitched together to form a consecutive narrative. The compiler has endeavoured to compress the matter into the smallest possible space in order to make the little book accessible to all at a moderate price; and he has preferred to allow others to speak rather than to thrust his own opinions on the reader. Finally, he has borne in mind throughout, the trite saying, *Magna est Veritas et prævalebit*.

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MELLIFONT ABBEY,

CO. LOUTH :

Its Ruins and Associations.

CHAPTER I.

THE RUINS.

“Look, stranger ; where these stones in ruin lie.
Here in the old, grey times a holy thing
Rose up—a cloistered pile ; but time swept by
And smote the sanctuary with his reckless wing.”

(From the Swedish, by J. E. D. Bethune.)



OF the many historic ruins which dot our country and attest its former greatness, few attract so much attention, and invite so close a study as our monastic remains, pre-eminent amongst which are those of the ancient historic Abbey of Mellifont. In countless pages of our Annals the name appears. In the records of sieges, battles and insurrections, from the day on which a colony of St. Bernard's monks from world-famed Clairvaux, came and settled in its tranquil valley, till having passed through many vicissitudes, as an abode of piety and wide-spread beneficence, it became a baronial residence, and finally lost its prestige as the site of a mill, whose remains contrast incongruously with those of such a precious memorial.

And what was Mellifont? It was the first house of the Cistercian Order in Ireland ; founded, endowed and enriched by native princes and saintly prelates ; the mother

of saints and scholars ; and at one time, the admiration of our land, as a gem of rare architectural beauty.

Before going back to the shadowy past, let us endeavour to trace amongst its ruins the outlines of the ancient buildings, and to explain the special use and meaning of each in the monastic economy, when white-robed monks trod its cloisters, and knelt and prayed before the altars in its church. Each of the Cistercian churches and monasteries was built upon a uniform plan, with some slight modifications, arising perhaps in all instances from peculiarities of site and local difficulties. Around the whole pile of monastic buildings, and girdling an area of some thirty acres or more, comprising gardens, orchards, meadows, ran a high wall, called the "Enclosure Wall," which served to isolate the denizens of the cloister, and prevent as far as possible all ingress of the world. Entrance within the precincts of the monastery was obtained through a spacious and lofty gate-house occupied by a trusty Lay-Brother, whose duty it was to receive visitors, and dispense hospitality to the poor and the way-farer ; thus he formed a connecting link between his brethren within and the world without, from which they were cut off. Extending on either side of this gate-house, or "Porter's Lodge," as it was known in monastic language, was a range of buildings for the exclusive use of strangers of every grade. There were the Hospice proper, an infirmary for the sick poor, with stabling also, in the immediate vicinity, for the horses of travellers :—

"Whoever passed, be it baron or squire,
Was free to call at the abbey and stay ;
No guerdon or gift for his lodging pay,
Though he tarried a week with its holy choir."

The old tower which is passed as one approaches the ruins of Mellifont, was the "Porter's Lodge," and right

under it ran the avenue which led to the abbey, but which was converted into a mill-race when Mellifont had reached its last stage of degradation. The present roadway was constructed in order to give access to the mill. The remains of old walls can still be traced stretching on both sides of the tower, and prove its ancient purpose in connection with Cistercian usage, as described above. Some gate-houses of Continental monasteries, which have till now subsisted intact from the eleventh or twelfth century, bear a striking resemblance to this one at Mellifont. That of Aiguebelle, in particular, near Grignan, in the Department of Drôme, France, most closely resembles it.

There can be no doubt that a pile of buildings once occupied and enclosed the whole space from the old gateway to the church, forming a rectangle, of which the church was the fourth side. The precise purposes these buildings served at Mellifont can now be only conjectured; for, in different monasteries, local wants determined in a great measure the allocation of this site to uses which varied with the circumstances of each community. That is not, however, to be understood of what are called the "Regular Places;" for these were held to be indispensable, and occupied almost the same position in every monastery. The intervening space here between the gate-house and the church is now covered over with the debris of ancient buildings, which local tradition says once occupied the side of the hill on which, and about where, a few modern cottages now stand.

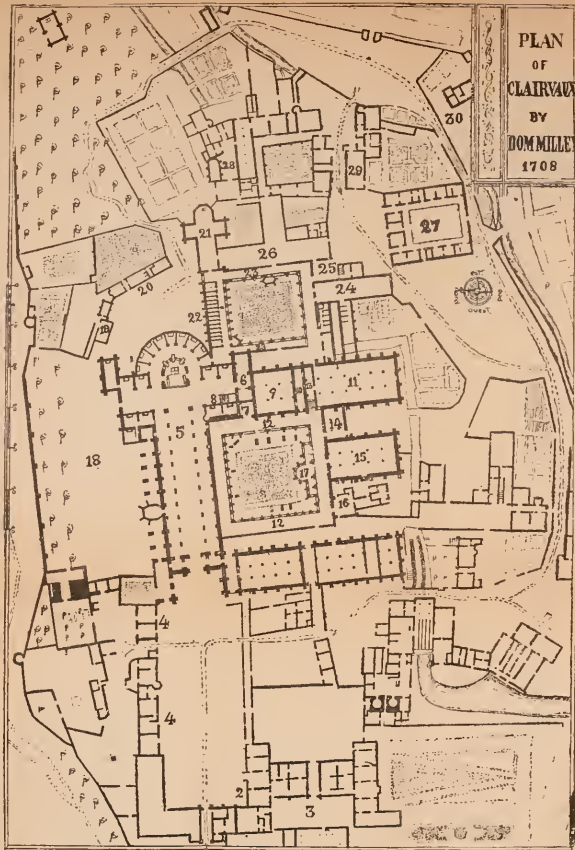
Approaching nearer to the ruins, a modern mill obtrudes itself upon the scene, and one cannot help wishing it transported beyond the plane of his observation.*

* The "Tourist Company" have recently fitted up a compartment of the old mill, where a cheap and substantial lunch can be had by visitors who may desire it.

Arrived at what is now the entrance gate, the visitor beholds in front of him the four remaining sides of what was once an octagonal building, and somewhat nearer on his left, a small roofless edifice. These are commonly, but erroneously, called the "Baptistery" and "St. Bernard's Chapel." Their true purposes shall be explained further on. Immediately at his feet now, extend the sites of the church, and of the once magnificent cloisters. Of these latter not a trace remains, except a mere outline on the green sward, and a few squares of concrete to indicate the position once occupied by them. The plan of the church extends to right and left: the western portion of the nave running towards the river (see Plan), and the entire length is dotted at intervals with blocks which mark the sites of the piers. These concrete blocks were laid by order of Sir Thomas Deane, under whose direction the excavations were made here some few years ago. The length of the nave cannot now be ascertained with certainty, but judging from the position occupied by some very old walls at the south-western side, it may be roughly stated to have been 120 feet; while 54 feet 6 inches was the width of the whole church, including the aisles. These latter were each 10 feet wide. The nave had seven bays, and like all Cistercian churches, it was divided into two parts by the Rood-loft and Choir-screen, which stood about midway. This Rood-loft served a twofold purpose; on it was a lectern, where the Lessons of the night-offices were read by the monks in rotation, and thereon the Abbot announced the Gospel proper to each festival, chanting or reading it, according as the office was sung or merely recited, after which, with crosier in hand, he gave his solemn benediction. It answered, too, as a partition between the choir of the monks and the stalls of the Lay Brethren; the former on

PLAN
OF
CLAIRVAUX
BY
DOMMILEY
1708

Scale of 1/10000 Feet of French Measure

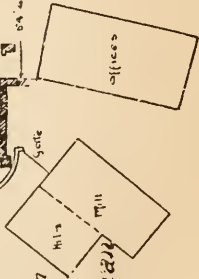
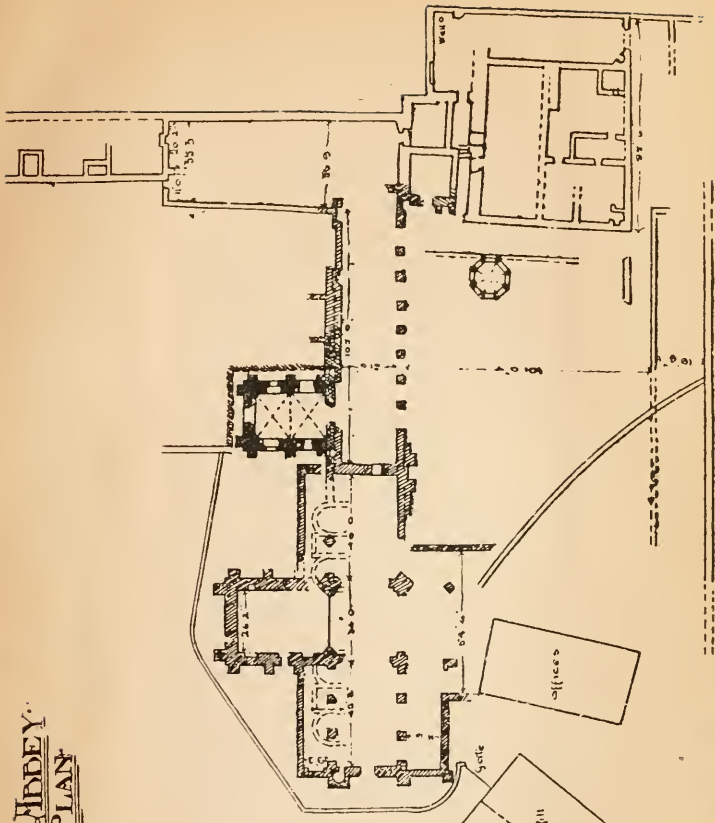


1. Entrance.
2. Abbot's House.
3. Guest House.
4. Stables.
5. Church.
6. Sacristy.
7. Cell for Books (Common Box).
8. Stairs leading to Dormitory.
9. The Chapter-House.
10. Parloir.

11. Former Novitiate.
12. Cloisters.
13. Stairs to Dormitory.
14. Cellaefactory.
15. Refectory.
16. Kitchen.
17. Lavabo (Octagon).
18. Cemetery.
19. St. Bernard's Cell.
20. The Prior's Chambers.

21. Chapel of the Counts of Flanders.
22. Scriptoria.
23. Lesser Cloister.
24. Hall for Treas.
25. Theological School.
26. Infirmary.
27. Common Room of the Infirmary.
28. Novitiate.
29. Abbot's Council Chamber.
30. Garden.

MELLIFONT ABBEY
GROUND PLAN



A. Scott & Son
ARCHITECTS
Drogheda & Newry

Scale 80 feet to an inch. 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200 feet

the eastern, the latter on the western side of it. This Choir-screen formed a sort of reredos to the two altars, which were invariably found in this position in the churches of the Order. On these altars were offered up daily Masses for living and deceased benefactors—a practice which continues in the Order and which dates back to the foundation of the Cistercian Institute. Further west was a tribune or gallery, where guests and the dependants of the monastery assisted at Divine Service, Office and Mass. Inside the Rood-loft, was the Choir proper, which extended thence to the Chancel, or “Presbytery Step,” as it is called in monastic parlance. A small space was provided between the Choir and the Chancel, in order to allow a passage to those who proceeded from the Sacristy to the High Altar within the Chancel. Two rows of stalls ran down on each side the length of the nave. These stalls were generally of carved oak, and were artistically finished. The outer rows were for the novices, and the backs of their stalls formed the desks used by the professed monks, whereon they rested the ponderous tomes containing the sacred psalmody. During the High Mass the stalls next the Chancel were used, and the place of honour, that is, the first stall on the Epistle, or south side, was given to the Abbot. The Prior, as second superior, occupied the first on the opposite, or Gospel side. The other monks according to seniority occupied the stalls on either side. On the other hand, at Matins and at all the offices, except that in connection with High Mass, the Abbot’s and Prior’s stalls were farthest from the Chancel, and next the Rood-loft, and the order of the monks was reversed. In token of his jurisdiction the Abbot’s crosier was fixed at his stall. The Cistercian monks call this Rood-loft the “*Jubé*,” from the first word spoken by the reader when

he asks the blessing before commencing the Lessons. The whole nave here at Mellifont seems to have been paved with beautiful tiles; a few of which may yet be seen in their position near the great pier on the north side. At the intersection of the transept with the nave, is the space called the "Crossing," or "Lantern." Over this rose the bell-tower, which was supported on solid piers, from two of which sprang the Chancel arch, and from the two others, that of the nave. These piers were formed of clustered columns, but their remains (about five feet high), vary both in dimensions and in style, manifesting, thereby, the partial renovation that took place from time to time. The material of which the whole building was constructed is a buff-coloured sandstone not found in the vicinity of Mellifont, but brought, it is said, from Kells, some twenty miles away; a thing not very difficult, seeing that the river is so convenient. Some, again, are of opinion that the stone was brought from Normandy; which seems to be improbable.

The total length of the transepts is 116 feet; the width 54 feet. The northern one is some four feet longer than the southern. They seem to have had aisles, an unusual arrangement in churches of the Order. In the northern transept were six chapels, the piscinas of which are still to be seen in the piers adjoining. The number of these piscinas cannot fail to strike one as something very singular. Their presence is accounted for in this way. At the date of the foundation of Mellifont and for centuries later, it was the custom for priests of the Order to wash their hands at the foot of the altar before commencing Mass, the server pouring water on his hands, which he dried with a towel that had been previously laid on the altar. The water used was then cast into the piscina. It was also the custom with them, at that time,

to descend from the altar when they had consumed the Sacred Species out of the chalice and to wash their fingers over the piscina.

This northern transept seems to have been a favourite spot for interments; for during the excavations numerous skulls were found there. At Clairvaux, the corresponding site was strewn with the graves of bishops, who selected it as the place wherein to rest after life's weary struggle. No record or memorial of these survives, or of any of the dead interred at Mellifont, to point out the occupant of a single grave. In the northern wall of this transept is a beautiful door-way with jambs of clustered columns. Hard by, the wall was pierced to make a loop-hole when Mellifont was transformed into a fortress. On one side of the door-way are the remains of what must once have been a superb chapel; on the opposite side are a few steps of a spiral stair-case, formed in the thickness of the wall, which led up to the tower, as is to be seen at Graignamanagh, Co. Kilkenny, and other houses of the order in Ireland. The level of the floor here is some five or six feet lower than the adjacent road-way which was raised by the accumulated rubbish of former buildings that extended along the hill-side where the cottages now stand.

The southern transept may have had its six altars also. The aisle seems to have been built up, and when the alterations which took place in the whole fabric in the fifteenth century were made, a large portion of this transept would appear to have been allocated to the uses of a sacristy. No trace of a sacristy remains elsewhere, and this would be a very convenient place to utilise as one. The remains of some walls lead us to suppose such an arrangement probable. In Cistercian monasteries, a stair-case in this transept near the cloister led thence to the dormitory, but no remains of such a stairs have been

discovered at Mellifont. When Sir Thomas Deane had the earth and rubbish, or, as he calls it, the "grassy mound," removed, he discovered the foundations of two semi-circular chapels in each transept, in a line with the site occupied by the High, or principal Altar. (See the dotted lines in the Ground Plan). Describing them, Sir Thomas writes: "Within the circuit of the external walls are the foundations of an earlier church which indicate four semicircular chapels, and two square ones between. Of this church we have no distinct record, but the bases of semi-detached pillars would indicate the date given for the erection of Mellifont." These four semi-circular chapels in line with the High Altar, formed an exact counterpart of the church of Clairvaux which was erected in 1135, and which by St. Bernard's express wish, served St. Malachy as the model for Mellifont.

The chancel terminated in a square end, and was 42 feet deep by 26 feet wide. It was raised about six inches over the floor of the nave, and a slab of limestone extended the entire width with which the tiled pavement was flush. Almost in the centre of the chancel, that is to say, nearly midway between the two piers, are two sockets sunk in sandstone blocks. What uses they served cannot be affirmed with certainty. However, it may be conjectured that they served to receive the supports on which a violet curtain was suspended during Lent, screening the "Sanctuary." This curtain spanned the space from pier to pier. The custom is still preserved in the Order. Here on this central spot, a lectern was placed, at which the sub-deacon at Solemn Masses sang the Epistle. Here, too, the celebrant of the Community Mass on Sundays blessed the water with which he sprinkled the brethren, who presented themselves two by two before him. It was here, also, that the Abbot blessed the

candles, ashes, and palms, on Candlemas-day, Ash Wednesday, and Palm Sunday respectively. This was called the "Presbytery Step," and the whole space within the chancel, the "Sanctuary."

The basis on which the High Altar was built still remains. It is distant some few feet from the eastern wall, in order to allow a passage for the monks, who on Sundays and Festivals received Holy Communion at this altar, after which they walked around it in single file, and passing on by the Gospel, or northern corner, returned to their stalls in the nave. The basis is ten feet long by three and one half feet wide. On the Epistle, or southern side, are the piscina surrounded with a dog-tooth moulding, and the remains of the sedilia or stalls, which were occupied by the celebrant, deacon, and sub-deacon at High Mass. Under these sedilia a tomb was discovered during the excavations. A skull and some bones, together with a gold ring, were raised from their resting-place; the bones were replaced and covered with the slab of concrete now seen at this spot, but the ring was sold by a workman and could never be recovered. No inscription or tradition identifies the occupant of the hallowed grave. Could it have been that of the famous Dervorgilla? She was certainly buried at Mellifont, but unfortunately, we do not know the spot where her remains were laid when "life's fitful fever" was over; or it may have been the resting-place of Thomas O'Connor, or of Luke Netterville, both, successively, Archbishops of Armagh; for they, also, were buried at Mellifont.

On the opposite, or Gospel side, is an arched recess having an ornamental moulding around it. This would seem to have been the Founder's tomb, or rather, the remains of it. In the Cistercian Constitutions no special place was allotted for the tombs of Founders, and only the

indefinite permission was given, that they, kings and queens, bishops and such like exalted dignitaries, might be buried within the churches of the Order. A general custom, however, prevailed in Ireland of appropriating to the Founder's tomb a space in the northern wall of the chancel, and directly at right angles with the High Altar. Others, besides Founders, were buried on the north side in the chancel. Thus, in the Annals of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, we are told that Felix O'Ruadan, who had been a great benefactor to that house, was buried in the chancel of the abbey church, on the north side. And Felix O'Dullany, the first Abbot of Jerpoint, and afterwards Bishop of Ossory, was interred on the north side of the High Altar, at Jerpoint.

The door on this side of the chancel is a puzzle, as in no other church of the Order is one found in this position. There is no evidence of a building having adjoined with which this door communicated, so that its use is unknown. Quite close to this door there is a shallow recess in the wall, which may have been a provision for the Abbot's throne, when he officiated pontifically, as that is the site usually occupied by it. Some five or six feet high of the chancel walls is all that is left standing; and, though not up to the window level, what remains of the cut stone and water-tabling gives an idea of the beauty of the whole, and what a loss we have sustained by its destruction.

In the original church, that is, the one erected in St. Malachy's time, there were ten altars we are told, but on the ground plan seven only are shown. Two more at least were in front of the Rood-loft or *Jubé*, and the remaining one very probably was in one of the aisles. The church of Mellifont was remarkable, not so much for its vast dimensions, as for its architectural beauty; yet,

in this it was surpassed by St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin. Sir Thomas Deane writes: "From the fragments of the church which remain, it is easy to trace the vicissitudes the building underwent. I have great doubt that any portions of the structure above ground are those of the earliest church erected on the site, or date as far back as 1157, which is given as the year of its consecration. . . . The details of the piers (the older ones) are in my opinion a century or more later in date. They still indicate a foreign type, and the arrangements and obvious plan show that the transepts as well as the nave had aisles. . . . Portions of the piers discovered are of the fifteenth century, other parts of the church of the fourteenth. . . . A second portion dates probably from 1260, another from 1370, and another from 1460. I am not prepared to follow from the history of the Abbey the causes of such restorations; but it is certain that rebuildings of portions of the church occurred from time to time, and that violence or decay was the cause." Neither to violence nor to decay can the alterations be attributed, which the church underwent at the three periods mentioned by Sir Thomas, but rather to the practice then common to the whole Order, chiefly in the monasteries of Great Britain and Ireland, of adopting the advancing changes in the Gothic style, and to the laudable efforts of the monks to make the House of God worthy of Him as far as art and skill could be made subservient to that purpose. Thus in the Annals of Fountains and Furness, there are abundant proofs of this constant change going on in those monasteries even down to the date of their suppression. One Abbot considered the eastern window too low and narrow, and had it enlarged; another thought the tower rested on too slender a basis, and he built substantial piers and flanked them on the outside with buttresses, and so with others.

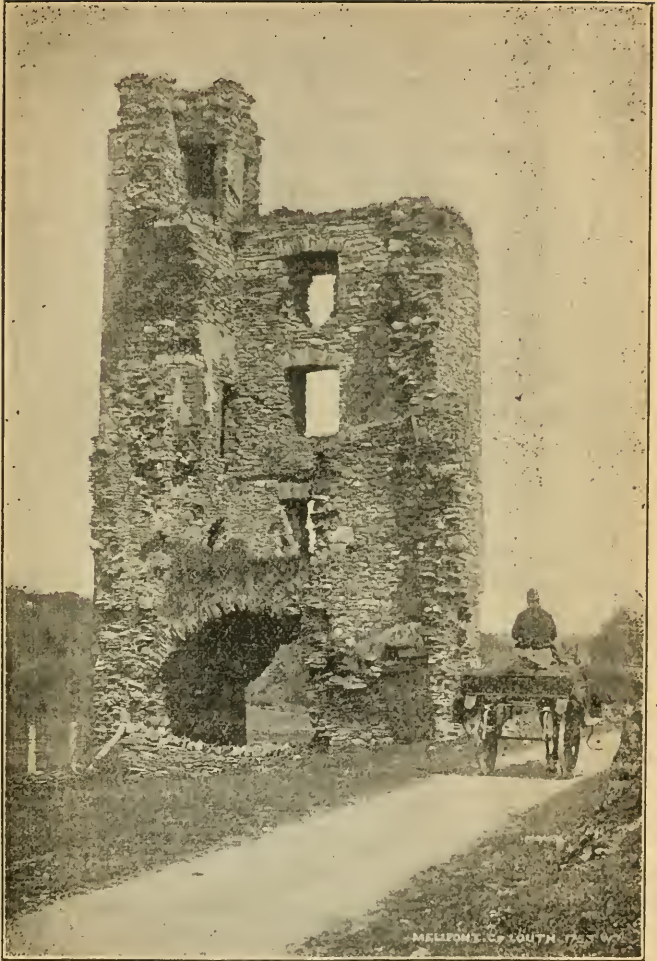
To better understand the surroundings, it will be necessary to bear in mind the general plan on which all Cistercian monasteries were built. On this subject there is a good deal of misapprehension, even on the part of those who seem to have given close attention to the matter. The church and buildings necessary for large communities were so arranged as to form a square, thereby combining simplicity with economy. It is said that the monks borrowed this idea from the form of a Roman villa. The church formed the first or northern side (for in temperate and cold climates the other buildings, as they lay to the south, were sheltered by the church.) The sacristy, chapter-house, and other halls were on the east; the calefactory, refectory, and kitchen on the south; and the *Domus Conversorum* completed the square on the west. Within this square were the cloisters, always contiguous to the main buildings, and forming a communication with all the parts of the monastery. They were a sort of covered ambulatory, whose roof rested on the one side against the main buildings, and on the other was supported by open ornamental arcades, which, however, in these climates were glazed. The cloisters were often vaulted in richly moulded stonework, and were fitted up with benches for reading, chiefly on the side adjoining the church. The space or quadrilateral area enclosed by them was called the Cloister-Garth, in the centre of which a statue or handsome fountain stood.

The cloisters were generally entered from the church by the south aisle, at the point where it adjoins the transept; but here, at Mellifont, the entrance was direct from the south transept itself. This a glance at the ground-plan will show; though it may have been otherwise in the primitive church; for, when it underwent altera-

tions, the transepts were widened by the addition of an aisle to each ; and, the cloister being thus encroached on, a change was necessary in it also.

Adjoining the transept, and at right angles with the cloister, on the left, was a narrow hall or cell which contained books, chiefly the Sacred Scriptures, and the writings of the Fathers. This cell, which had no window, was called the "Armarium Commune," or "Common Box;" for its contents were common to all the monks. Its situation was convenient to the reading-cloister, which lay along the south wall of the church. In this cell the monks were provided with an abundant supply of good books, but treatises on the Canon and Civil Laws were forbidden to be kept in it: the Prior was charged with the custody of these. Behind this cell, and communicating only with the church, the Sacristy was placed; but, as before observed, there is no trace of one here. Some writers on monastic ruins, confidently assure their readers that this cell was a prison, and that it was called the "Lantern;" casting upon the monks all responsibility for the name, and supposing them to have formed it on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, seeing the cell was dark. The error was all their own; for the Lantern, as has been already shown, was in the tower over the crossing of the church; and the true use of this cell has just been stated above.

Here (at Mellifont), in close proximity to the transept, is the ruined two-storied building we saw as we approached, and which, from its present striking appearance, must have been one of the most beautiful within the ancient abbey's precincts. This is commonly, but erroneously, known as "St. Bernard's Chapel." Why it was reputed to have been a chapel, must be from the close resemblance it bears to one. It was, in reality, the



From Photo

by W. Lawrence, Dublin.

GATEWAY (PORTER'S LODGE.) See page 2.

Chapter-house. That it was, is quite evident to anyone who has studied the plans of Cistercian monasteries: (a), from the position it occupies, and (b), from the internal arrangement and decorations such as are found in other like edifices of the Order in Ireland. A stone bench ran around the inside of the building, and which, when covered with a rush mat, served as a seat for the monks. In Graignamanagh Abbey, Co. Kilkenny, the ancient Chapter-house still remains, closely resembling this one at Mellifont, both in style and ornamentation, as well as in dimensions. The historic Chapter-house of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, which was unearthed a few years ago, exhibited in every detail a striking resemblance to this also. That at Graignamanagh was remarkable for its beauty. At the entrance to it from the cloister, was a magnificent arched doorway, containing within it three smaller arches of blue marble, beautifully carved. A grand central column, called by the inhabitants of the district, the "Marble Tree," supported the roof. It stood eight feet high from base to capital, whence the branches spread to meet the corresponding ribs on the groined roof.

Sir William Wilde describes the Chapter-house at Mellifont, as he saw it in 1850. He says: "It must have been one of the most elegant and highly embellished structures of the Norman or Early English pointed style in Ireland." He calls it a Crypt; for it was overlaid, and surrounded up to a high level by heaps of rubbish. He goes on to say: "It has a groined roof underneath another building evidently used for domestic purposes, and was probably part of the Abbot's apartments. The upper room, which contains a chimney, must have been a pleasant, cheerful abode, and its windows commanded a charming prospect down the

valley, with a view of the distant hills peeping up from the south-west. The building is 30 feet long, by 19 feet wide. There are no remains of mullions or tracery of the east window. At present, there are two lights on each side; but upon a careful examination of the masonry both within and without the building, it is, we think, apparent that in the original plan, the upper window on each side alone existed, the others being evidently subsequent innovations. The original windows* are still beautiful, deeply set, and, though their stone mullions are rather massive, each forms, with the tracery at the top, a very elegant figure. The internal pilasters, which form an architrave for the northern window, spring from grotesque heads, elaborately carved, and which appear as if pressed down by the superincumbent weight. A fillet of dog's-tooth moulding surrounds the internal sash. A projecting moulding courses round the wall, about two feet from the ground, which, while it dips down to admit the splayed sill of the upper or original windows, continues unbroken by the lower ones, an additional proof that the latter did not exist in the original plan of the building. Three sets of short clustered columns, four feet high, one in the centre, and one in each angle, spring from this course, and terminate in elaborately carved floral capitals, which differ slightly one from the other. The centre rod of this cluster descends as far as the floor. From these spring the ribs, which form the groining of the roof. . . . The grand architectural feature, and most elaborate piece of carving, was the door-way, formed of a cluster of columns, very deeply revealed on the inside, but apparently plain on the outside. . . . Nearly the whole of the western end

* See Illustration, p. 19.

has fallen, so that nothing but the foundations of this very splendid door-way now remain. A figure of it has, however, been preserved in Wright's *Louthiana* (reproduced here),* published in 1755, where we read that it was 'all of blue marble, richly ornamented and gilt,' but 'which,' the author adds, 'I was informed was sold and going to be taken to pieces when I was there.' All the pillars and carved stone work of this building were at one time painted in the most brilliant colours, the capitals light blue, the pillars themselves red; portions of this paint still remain in the curves and amongst the foliage."

The Chapter-house † is little changed since Sir William Wilde penned the foregoing, and time seems to have dealt leniently with this magnificent ruin. One of the windows has had its mullions restored under the Board of Works; a number of curious objects—capitals, corbels, and portions of arches and cut stone, flooring tiles, etc., has been collected there, and a gate to guard them has been erected by Mr. Balfour, the owner of the ruins and surrounding property. It is very dubious that the upper story ever served as a part of the Abbot's lodgings, as these are generally found further east. This room may have been the muniment room. It has two port-holes remaining, relics of the days when Mellifont was turned into a fortified castle, and the cry of fierce, contending men was heard on this hallowed spot, over the graves of the sainted dead. In the first volume of *The Dublin Penny Journal*, there are very interesting articles from the pen of a Mr. Armstrong, a native of the locality. He tells us that this Chapter-house was converted into a banqueting-hall by the Moore family, and that in his time (1832), it was used as a pig-sty.

* See Illustration, p. 23.

† See Illustration, p. 35.



From Photo

by W. Lawrence, Dublin.

NORTH WINDOW OF CHAPTER-HOUSE. See p. 17.

Another account of the fate of the beautiful arched door-way of blue marble is, that it was lost at a game of piquet, and the lucky winner, whose name, unfortunately, has not been handed down to us, had it removed to his mansion, and set up as a chimney-piece. The floor of the Chapter-house is now laid with some of the tiles which were found in the church during the excavations, in order to preserve them from destruction or appropriation by "relic-hunters." Abbots, generally, chose the Chapter-house of their abbeys for their burial place; but, as no grave was found here, when the rubbish was removed, during the excavations, we may conclude that the Abbots of Mellifont were buried either in the church, or in the cemetery with their monks.

The glazed tiles and their manufacture were a specialty with the old Cistercians, in these countries. Similar tiles are seldom met with amongst the ruins of other churches. Here at Mellifont, those found are red and blue, and the vast majority have the legend *Ave Maria* inscribed on them; others are impressed with a Fleur de lis, a cock, or some typical device. It is well known, that specimens of tiles found at Fountains, in Yorkshire, bear a close resemblance to these. There, the motto of that monastery was impressed on the tiles discovered—"Benedicite fontes Domino,"—"Ye fountains bless the Lord." No doubt, here, too, some bore the motto of Mellifont, if only they could be found.

A very pertinent question arises now: how could this small building give sitting accommodation, not only to one hundred and fifty monks, which this monastery is said to have had, but even to a third of that number? It seems impossible. It may be that, on becoming numerous, they used as Chapter-house some other building no longer standing. At Graignamanagh, the

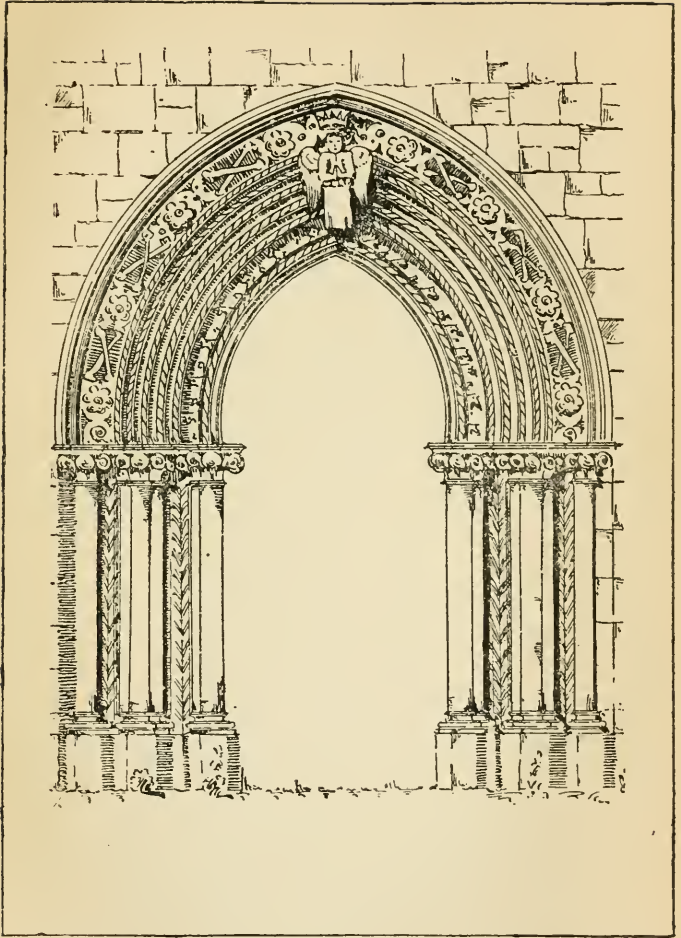
monks, finding their Chapter-house too small, converted the eastern window of it into a door, and built a large and spacious hall, as a new Chapter-house, the old one serving as an ante-chamber to it. No such addition had been made here; for the window remains intact.

What a change has come over this grand old Chapter-house since it saw its Abbot, who ranked as a peer of the realm, walk up its centre with solemn and stately tread, and mount the steps which led to his seat, on the east; and the grave assemblage of white-robed monks enter in silence, and take their places on either side, while one of them sang at the Lectern, the Martyrology, and a chapter of St. Benedict's Rule! From this custom of having a *chapter* of the Rule sung there every morning, this apartment derives its name. In the interval, between the singing of the Martyrology and the chapter of St. Benedict's Rule, one of the priests gave out certain prayers, to which all responded. These prayers were chiefly petitions to the Lord, that He would deign to bless and guard them during the coming day; for the hour of chapter, or of the assembling of the Brethren, was generally about 6 A.M. The Abbot then explained the chapter which had been sung, dwelt on the obligations incumbent on his hearers, by their profession, to observe the teaching which St. Benedict inculcated by his Rule; then called for the public self-accusations of breaches of monastic discipline (external faults only), and imposed penances commensurate with each transgression. The Chapter-house was the hall wherein were held the deliberations or councils relative to the administration of temporalities, and here novices were elected or rejected by secret ballot.

On leaving the Chapter-house one finds himself again on the site of the eastern walk or alley of the Cloister, as

it is called, and proceeding along it southward, one sees a wall some seven or eight feet high without door or window of any sort. It is doubtful that this was portion of the ancient building; for then Mellifont would not have followed the general plan of all the houses of the Order. That it was not one of the original buildings is probable, both because the masonry is more modern, and the remains of an old building running at right angles with it were found when the excavations were made a few years ago in the potato garden, at the rere of this wall. That old structure measured about fourteen feet wide. It is shown on the ground plan. In the plan of Clairvaux, of which Mellifont is said to have been a counterpart, a long narrow hall ran off the Cloister here, parallel with the Chapter-house. It was called the "Auditorium" or "Parlour." It was there that each choir monk's share in the manual labour was assigned him every day by the Prior. There, too, confessions were heard, and the monks might speak to the Prior or Abbot on necessary matters; for the adjoining Cloister was a place of strict silence. As at Clairvaux, the novitiate was placed further south where the novices were trained in their duties by a learned and experienced monk, who, according to St. Benedict, "would know how to gain souls to God."

Over the buildings on the ground story, that is, over the Sacristy, Chapter-house, Parlour, and Novitiate, was the Dormitory, which was entered by a stair-case, in the south-eastern angle of the transept, on one side, and by another stairs at the junction of the east and south walks of the Cloister. When the monastery at Mellifont was changed and remodelled after Clairvaux (for this latter underwent a substantial change in 1175), the monks may have used the old Parlour as a passage leading to other buildings which covered that plot of ground beyond the



A. Scott & Son,

Architects, Drogheda.

DOORWAY OF CHAPTER-HOUSE. See p. 18.

Chapter-house, now a potato garden. In the plan of Clairvaux, all the space in that direction is covered with buildings. (See plan of Clairvaux.) In the general view of Mellifont, given in frontispiece, the plot whereon these buildings stood is that where the man is seen tilling the garden. But if one ascend the hill, keeping close to the ruins, it will be evident how suitable a place it was for building on, and the remains of walls peep up here and there over the surface. The level at that spot is, indeed, much higher than in the Cloister, or Chapter-house, but that is partially caused by the debris of ruined buildings which has accumulated there.

At the extreme end of this eastern walk of the Cloister and at right angles with it, are the remains of what was once a spacious building. It had a fire-place at the eastern end, and a door which led out into another building that formely adjoined it. It is 96 feet long by 36 feet wide. No idea can be formed now as to its original use. In some monasteries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, chiefly the more considerable ones, there was a spacious room or hall located as this was, and furnished with benches and writing-desks, where the monks studied and wrote. It was called the "Lectorium" or Reading room. It must not, however, be confounded with the Scriptorium, which was the official quarters of the copyist. It is well to remark here that the plot of ground lying north of this building was not dug up during the excavations, but only skimmed over in order to trace the course of some walls which at intervals appeared above the surface; but, even this slight investigation was sufficient to reveal the outlines of numerous buildings that once extended in that direction and covered that whole area. Again comparing the site with Clairvaux, we find that the Infirmary and its surroundings would lie in that direction.

At the extreme end of the eastern walk of the Cloister where it joins the southern one, are the remains of a stairs, which formerly led up to the Dormitory from this part of the monastery, as at Clairvaux. Near it is what is commonly called a vault, an arched chamber measuring sixteen feet by fourteen. It has a chimney, and it would seem to have had a narrow window also on the outer or southern end. Here is where the Calefactory stood in almost all the old Cistercian monasteries. This Calefactory was heated by a stove, at which the monks warmed themselves after their long vigils in winter; but their stay there was restricted to one quarter of an hour. Pope Eugenius III., when a monk at Clairvaux, under St. Bernard, had charge of the stove there, as was commemorated by an inscription over the door of the Calefactory. A son of the King of France discharged the same lowly office afterwards at Clairvaux, as the Annals of the Order testify.

Adjoining this vault is a covered passage, having an entrance into the next building, which runs parallel with it. Its purpose cannot now be known. It may be that the vault or Calefactory had been converted in later times into a store-room for necessaries which were brought thence by this covered way into the Refectory, which is the next building. The Refectory measures 48 feet by 24. A few coarse flags remain in their original position, from which it may be inferred that the whole floor was once formed of them. In its western wall was the turnstile, through which the food was served from the kitchen that adjoined the Refectory on that side.

Now, we come to the great puzzle, the remains of the octagon building, which was commonly called the Baptistery. Sir William Wilde, who saw it as it was in 1848, calls it the oldest and by far the most interesting

architectural remains in the whole place; and he goes on to describe it: * “This octagonal structure, of which only four sides remain, consists of a colonnade or series of circular-headed arches, of the Roman or Saxon character, enclosing a space of 29 feet in the clear, and supporting a wall which must have been, when perfect, about 30 feet high. Each external face measures 12 feet in length, and was plastered or covered with composition to the height of 10 feet, where a projecting band separates it from the less elaborate masonry above. The arches † are carved in sandstone, and spring from foliage-ornamented capitals, to the short supporting pillars, the shaft of each of which measures 3 feet 5 inches. The chord of each arch above the capitals is 4 feet 3 inches. Some slight difference is observable in the shape and arrangement of the foliage of the capitals, and upon one of the remaining half arches were beautifully carved two birds; but some Goth has lately succeeded in hammering away as much of the relieved part of each, as it was possible. The arches were evidently open, and some slight variety exists in their mouldings. Internally a stone finger-course encircled the wall, at about six inches higher than that on the outside. In the angles between the arches there are remains of fluted pilasters at the height of the string-course, from which spring groins of apparently the same curve as the external arches, and which, meeting in the centre, must have formed more or less of a pendant, which, no doubt, heightened the beauty and architectural effect. Like the pillars and stone carvings in the Chapter-house, this building was also painted red and blue, and the track of the paint is still visible in several places. The upper story, which was lighted by a window on each side of the octagon, bears no architectural

* See Illustration, p. 43.

† See Illustration, p. 47.

embellishment which is now visible." He then adds, how Archdall, in his *Monasticon*, asserted that a cistern was placed on the upper story, whence water was conveyed by pipes to the different parts of the monastery; but shows how such an arrangement would have been impossible, on account of the weakness of the walls, and the position of the windows.

This building was known, in monastic terminology, as the "Lavabo." A fountain of water issued in jets from a central column, and fell into a basin, in which the monks washed their hands, before entering the Refectory for their meals. It is quite easy, from the construction of the roof, to imagine a number of branches springing from the capital of the column, and meeting the ribs of the groined roof, in the same manner, as the "Marble Tree," in the Chapter-house of Graignamanagh. Drains in connection with this building were discovered when the excavations were made, and Sir Thomas Deane is of opinion, that it was surrounded on the outside by a wooden verandah, or shed. Certainly, in the plan of Clairvaux, a low building is shown, adjoining the Lavabo, at its east and west ends; but no use is assigned it. Very probably it was the Lavatory. Petrie thinks the Lavabo may have been built as far back as 1165, but that can hardly be held; for Clairvaux had not been remodelled till 1175, and it had no such ornamental structure in the time of St. Bernard. He remarks, too, that fragments of bricks were discovered in the building, and says they were never employed earlier in any other building in Ireland. It is now certain, that it was the monks of Mellifont who first manufactured bricks in this country. This Lavabo was not isolated or detached from the Cloister, but, as at Clairvaux, a door led from one into the other, opposite the entrance into the Refectory;

and, since the excavations, portions of the door-way are visible. Some small shafts and their bases remain. Even at the present day, in one of the most recently constructed monasteries of the Order (near Tilburg, Holland), what might be termed a semi-octagonal Lavabo, having its fountain and basin, has been built. It answers the same purpose as those in ancient times.

By keeping the Lavabo before one's mind, one can form an idea of the Cloister itself; which, consisting of arcades, closely resembled this in every detail, except that these were glazed, and in all probability its walks had a lean-to roof. The site of the east walk of the Cloister is easily traced, and the places occupied by the piers being now concreted, mark their positions. This eastern walk was 21 feet 6 inches wide. The opposite, or western one, was some 19 feet 6 inches; that on the south, 14 feet; and the north one, adjoining the church, and which was usually the Reading-Cloister, may also have been 14 feet. Thus, we would have an enclosed space or Garth, 100 feet square.

Beside the Refectory lay the Kitchen, which was a small building, and around it are the ruins of smaller structures, which may have been store-rooms in connection with it. Under the Kitchen ran a copious stream of water which carried off all the refuse. It is remarkable that at Clairvaux similar remains are found in exactly the same position relatively to the Kitchen there. With the Cistercians, the Kitchen was always square; with the Benedictines, it was round. To the rere of the Kitchen, and almost directly opposite the covered passage, is the old well which was covered over for a long time, but was discovered, and re-opened in 1832. Near it a portion of the old wall fell in, but the masonry, owing to the singularly cohesive character of the mortar, holds together despite the action of the elements.

Of the western walk of the Cloister no trace remains, and only a tottering wall of the *Domus Conversorum*, which once adjoined it, is standing. There is no trace either of the northern walk, though this was the most important of all. There the monks read and copied, in cells called "carrols," which were placed near the windows. When not employed in chanting the Masses and Offices in the church, or busied with domestic concerns, or working in the fields, the monks passed all their intervals here occupied with study. The Abbot had a chair here also; and, from a raised pulpit opposite it, one of the monks read aloud every evening, the lecture before Compline, at which the whole community assisted.

Turning westward and approaching the River Mattock, we enter, at the left, an enclosed space, bounded by the river on one side, and by the remains of the outer wall of the *Domus Conversorum* on the other, we find ourselves in a potato garden, which, on close observation, appears strewn with pieces of bones. This was "God's Acre" at Mellifont, the cemetery of the monks. Some forty or fifty years ago, a Scotchman, who then rented the mill and a farm adjoining it, perceiving that the clay of this old cemetery was particularly rich and loamy, dug a spit off it a foot deep or more, and carted it out on his fields for top-dressing. Amongst the stuff so carted were human bones of all kinds, skulls, etc.!!! This was done in a Christian land, and no protesting voice was raised against the horrid profanation!! The cemetery is shown in the general view at the extreme left, where the plot of ground appears laid out in ridges and surrounded by a wall.

The River Mattock flows peacefully still by the old abbey as it did over seven centuries ago, when its course being first arrested, it was harnessed and compelled to take its share in many useful and profitable industries.

One old solitary yew tree casts its shadow on its water and bears it company amid the surrounding ruin and desolation—sad and sympathising witnesses of Mellifont's fallen greatness. No bridge now spans the river here, though formerly it was probably arched over, and the slopes upon the Meath side were laid out in terraces and gardens. The present mill was built over one hundred years ago, together with some out-offices; the latter, being situated almost midway in the nave of the church, were removed when the excavations were made. The mill has not been worked during the last thirty years. When Mr. Armstrong wrote his interesting papers on Mellifont, in the *Dublin Penny Journal*, 1832-33, a few cabins nestled under the shadow of the old ruins.

The last building that deserves notice is the small ruined edifice on the hill, which, after the suppression of the monastery, was used as a Protestant place of worship. Sir William Wilde was of opinion that it dates from the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The western gable which rises in the centre into a double belfry contains a pointed door-way, and above, but not immediately over this, is a double round-arched window. One small narrow light occupies the eastern gable. At a few paces in front of this building there stood, at the time Sir William examined it, two very plain and very ancient crosses, one having a heart engraven on it encircled by a crown of thorns, and the other having a fleur de lis on the arm. The latter cross has disappeared, but the former can still be seen prostrate on the ground, in that half of the old cemetery beyond the road-way, that is, on the side to the south. After the suppression, this was used as a Protestant burial-ground, though the presence of Catholic emblems would go to prove that it was once Catholic. Of late years the interments here have been but few. We are

nowhere told, nor does any tradition still linger to indicate the former use of this ancient building, but it is most probable, that it was the church in which the tenants and dependants of the Abbey assisted at Mass and other religious functions—in a word, that it was the parish church of Mellifont, which was *served by the monks*. This seems to be the most likely explanation; for the law of “Enclosure,” that law of the Church which debarred females from entering within the monastic enclosure, (“*Septa monasterii*” as it is called), was in full force at the Dissolution of monasteries, as appears from the Decrees of the General Chapters of the Order about that time, and also from the Episcopal Registers of some of the English dioceses which have lately been published. In these latter are found reports of the bishops, who, either officially or by delegation, visited some monasteries and adverted to the law of enclosure as an important point of monastic discipline. This old structure, then, would have been constructed purposely outside the wall for the use of the tenants. Such a chapel is still to be seen outside the enclosure at Bordesley Abbey, an old Cistercian monastery in Worcestershire, of which we are expressly told, that it was the place in which the monks, tenants, domestics, etc., attended Mass. Another purpose may be assigned to this old chapel at Mellifont, as that attached to the College, or Seminary, which once flourished there. The surrounding hill is locally and traditionally known as College-Hill, and the old road which passes over it and leads to Townley Hall, is called the College Road.

Little more remains to be said of the ruins or of the site itself. Standing on this hill and looking into the valley beneath, we are struck by its singular natural features. It would seem as if the waters of the Mattock had been suddenly dammed up, and that the pent-up

waters, bursting their barriers, hollowed out this sheltered little valley, after the angry element had cleared away the rocks and other obstructions; and having swept it clear of the rubbish, made it a fit and proper place whereon to rear a temple to the true God, in which praise and sacrifice might for ever be offered to Him. No buildings seem to have been constructed on the Meath side, as no traces of them remain. In this, Mellifont differed from Clairvaux, whose buildings filled the valley and spread out wings high up the hills on either side of the River Aube.

Just due south from where we have been standing, on the hill, and distant about a few hundred yards, the Guide will show a singular earth-work, shaped like a moat, and having an elevated mound in the centre. From the presence here of old conduits built with masonry, there can be no doubt that this was a reservoir to contain a copious supply of water which flowed from wells on the hill. Lower down than this moat, that is, at the rere of the Chapter-house, lies buried beneath some feet of soil the Abbot's house, where Mellifont's puissant rulers received their guests, and whose hospitable board was honoured by the presence of kings and bishops, as well as chiefs and warriors bold in all their pomp and panoply. It is doubtful that any vestige of the enclosure wall remains, nor can it be conjectured even, what, or how much, space it embraced. As we ponder over the scene, Keats' words find an echo in our hearts:—

“How changed, alas! from that revered abode
Graced by proud majesty in ancient days,
Where monks recluse those sacred pavements trod,
And taught the unlettered world its Maker's praise.”

CHAPTER II.

ST. MALACHY FOUNDS MELLIFONT.

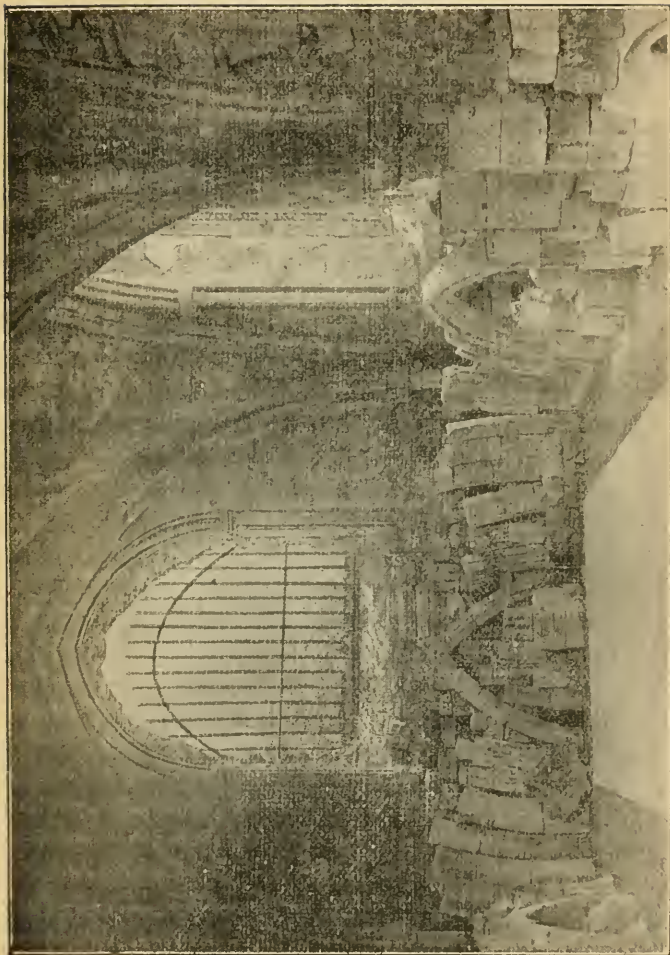
“Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day,
 For what are men better than sheep and goats,
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
 For so the whole round earth is every way
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

(Lord Tennyson.)



AT the time that Saints Robert, Alberic, and Stephen Harding were laying the foundation of the Cistercian Order, in the dense forest of Cistercium, or Citeaux, whence the Order derives its name, or to be more precise, in 1098, a lovely little boy eight years old, with golden hair and dove-like eyes, and with nobility of birth stamped in every lineament of his features, was playing in his father's chateau at Fontaines, near Dijon, in France. This child of predilection was the great St. Bernard, who is justly styled the Propagator of that Order which was then in a struggling condition. It has become a proverb, “that the child is father of the man,” and a very clever writer exclaims—“Blessed is the man whose infancy has been watched over, kindled, and penetrated by the eyes of a tender and holy mother.” It was St. Bernard's singular privilege to have such a mother, one who sedulously watched over his youthful

days, and inspired him with a love of all virtues. Hence we are told, that even in early childhood, he evinced a love of piety that was remarkable, and that he constituted his mother the grand model which he was bound to copy. He considered it the summit of his ambition to do all things like his mother—to pray like her, to give alms and visit the sick poor like her; for this noble lady was wont to go along the roads unattended, carrying medicine and nourishment to the indigent. He distinguished himself at the public school where he received his education, and returned to the paternal mansion where he soon after experienced his first great sorrow in the death of his loving mother. He was now approaching manhood, and he must needs select a state of life befitting his high birth. At that time, only two professions were worthy of the consideration of young noblemen—the Church or the Army. With Bernard's distinguished talents, a bright and rosy future presented itself before his youthful imagination, and then the eloquent persuasions of his relatives, who promised him their powerful patronage, were not wanting to arouse his ambition; but, the image of his saintly mother dispelled all dreams of promotion, and her pious instructions, which sank deep into his young heart, acted as potent antidotes against the allurements of worldly pomp and short-lived honours. After much reflection he made up his mind to renounce all honours, and to become a monk. By his irresistible pleadings he gained over his four brothers, with other relatives and friends, to the number of thirty, and at their head, presented himself at the gate of the Abbey of Cîteaux, where St. Stephen Harding joyfully admitted them. Two years later we find him leaving that monastery as the Abbot of a new colony, on his way to found Clairvaux, being then in his twenty-fifth year. Here, his light could



From Photo

INTERIOR OF CHAPTER-HOUSE. See p. 18.

by W. Lawrence, Dublin.

no longer remain hidden, but burst forth into a luminous flame whose splendour aroused and powerfully influenced the whole Christian world. The Bishop of Chalons, in whose diocese Clairvaux was situated, was the first to discover the transcendent abilities and eloquence of the youthful Abbot. At his request, St. Bernard consented to deliver a course of sermons in the churches of his diocese, which were productive of incalculable good, and spread the fame of the zealous preacher. Priests as well as laymen, attached themselves to him and accompanied him to Clairvaux on his return from those missions. One of the Saint's biographers cries out—"How many learned men, how many nobles and great ones of this earth, how many philosophers have passed from the schools or academies of the world to Clairvaux to give themselves up to the meditation of heavenly things and the practice of a divine morality." His fame reached even to Ireland, and we are told that in this country the little children were wont to ask for the badge of the Crusaders which the Saint distributed. In a word, his voice was the most authoritative in Europe. Kings and princes dreaded him, and accepted him as arbitrator in their quarrels. Even Popes themselves sought his counsel. In his lifetime, his own disciple, Bernard of Pisa, occupied the Chair of Peter, as Eugenius III. It may be truthfully said, that St. Bernard reformed Europe and infused a new spirit into the monastic orders. Even Luther does not hesitate to place him in the forefront of all monks who lived in his time; of him he writes: "*Melius nec vixit nec scripsit quis in universo cœtu monachorum.*"

Whilst the Church in France was reaping the benefit of the holy Abbot's preaching and example, a zealous Irish prelate was actively and successfully engaged in eradicating vice which sprang up in this country, as a

consequence of the long-protracted wars with the Daues, and the demoralising effects of intercourse with that people. Nevertheless, Ireland had then its saints and scholars, and the ancient seats of learning, such as Armagh, Bangor, Lismore, Clonard, and Cloumacnoise were once more inhabited by numerous communities. This saintly prelate was St. Malachy, who, being on his way to Rome, heard of the sanctity of the great St. Bernard, and would fain pay him a visit. This visit would St. Malachy have gladly prolonged; for then and there sprang up a mutual affection, which, writes our own Tom Moore, "reflects credit on both." St. Malachy was so enamoured with what he witnessed at Clairvaux, and particularly with the wise discourses of the learned Abbot, that he determined to become one of his disciples. Innocent II., who then ruled the flock of Christ, on the Saint seeking his permission to retire to Clairvaux, would not hearken to his request, but giving him many marks of his esteem, appointed him his Legate in Ireland, and commanded him to return thither. If St. Malachy might not live at Clairvaux in the midst of the fervent men whom he there beheld earnestly intent in the great work of mortification and expiation, he resolved, at least, to have a colony of them near him in his own country, that by their prayers and example, they might promote God's glory, and in a measure, repeat the glorious traditions of the ancient monastic ages in Ireland. In furtherance of this happy project, he singled out four of his travelling companions, whom he gave in charge to St. Bernard, with these words: "I most earnestly conjure you to retain these disciples, and instruct them in all the duties and observances of the religious profession, that, hereafter they may be able to teach us." On receiving an assurance of a hearty

compliance from St. Bernard, he took cordial leave of his friend and returned to Ireland. Not long after he sent more of his disciples to join those whom he had already left at Clairvaux, and on their arrival, St. Bernard wrote as follows: "The Brothers who have come from a distant land, your letter and the staff you sent me, have afforded me much consolation in the midst of the many anxieties and cares that harass me. . . . Meanwhile, according to the wisdom bestowed on you by the Almighty, select and prepare a place for their reception, which shall be secluded from the tumults of the world, and after the model of those localities which you have seen amongst us." The place selected by St. Malachy as the site of the future monastery, was the sequestered valley watered by the River Mattock, situated about three and one half miles from Drogheda, Co. Louth, and much resembling Clairvaux, which, too, was located in a valley, shut in by little hills on all sides. Donogh O'Carroll, Prince of Oriel, the lord of the territory, freely granted the site to God and SS. Peter and Paul, munificently endowed the monastery with many broad acres, and supplied wood and stone for the erection of the buildings. This grant was made in either 1140 or 1141. The charter of endowment by O'Carroll has not been found.

It would appear from another letter of St. Bernard to St. Malachy, that he had sent some monks from Clairvaux to make preparations for those who were to immediately follow, and that already their number was augmented at Mellifont by the accession of new members from the surrounding district, who had joined them on their appearance in that locality. In this same letter St. Bernard writes: "We send back to you your dearly-beloved son and ours, Christian, as fully instructed as was possible in those rules which regard our Order, hoping,

moreover, that he will henceforth prove solicitous for their observance." This Christian is commonly supposed to have been archdeacon of the diocese of Down. He was certainly first Abbot of Mellifont, and his name shall turn up in connection with important national events later on. With Christian came a certain Brother Robert, a Frenchman, a skilful architect, who constructed the monastery after the model of Clairvaux.

That these were the pioneers of the Cistercian Order in Ireland cannot for one moment be doubted, both from the very important fact, that the Abbot of Mellifont took precedence of all the Abbots of his Order in this country, and also, because it is an historical fact, that St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, the other claimant for priority, did not exchange the Benedictine for the Cistercian Rule till, at earliest, 1148, when the Abbot of Savigni in France, with the thirty houses of his Order (Benedictine) subject to his jurisdiction, were admitted into the Cistercian family by Pope Eugenius III., who presided at the General Chapter of the Cistercians that year. St. Mary's was founded from Buildewas, in Shropshire, and this latter was subject to Savigni.

Various reasons are assigned for the adoption by these ancient monks of the name Mellifont, which signifies "The Honey Fountain." Some are of opinion it had a spiritual signification, and had reference to the abundance of blessings which would flow, and be diffused over the whole country from this centre, through the unceasing and fervent intercessory prayer of its holy inmates; for next to their own sanctification, their neighbour's wants claimed and received their practical sympathy. Like divine charity it gushed forth from hearts totally devoted to God's service and interests, and this zeal would be halting and incomplete did it not embrace the spiritual

and temporal concerns of their fellow mortals. Others derive the name from a limpid spring which supplied the monks with a copious, unfailing stream of sweet water, which had its source in Mellifont Park about one quarter of a mile distant, and which was conducted by pipes through the various parts of the monastery. This seems a very plausible account, and as the spring rose at a high level, it had sufficient pressure to obviate the necessity of a cistern as was erroneously supposed in connection with the Lavabo.

It was customary with the old Irish Cistercians to give their monasteries symbolical names at their foundation, and these names often denoted some local feature or peculiarity. Thus, Newry was called of the "Green Wood," from the abundance of yew trees around the monastery there; Corcomroe, Co. Clare, was known under the title of the "Fertile Rock;" Baltinglas, Co. Wicklow, as the "Valley of Salvation," etc.

It is said that the "Honey Fountain" had its source in Mellifont Park, but it seems that few of the present generation living in the vicinity of Mellifont know or appreciate its virtues. In the Ordnance Survey, it is stated that it rose in Mellifont Park, which was formerly a wood, and that to the north of the well, a few trees still remained at the time of the Survey, when the farm belonged to a Mr. James Curran.

CHAPTER III.

AN EPITOME OF THE RULE OBSERVED AT MELLIFONT AT ITS FOUNDATION AND FOR ABOUT A CENTURY AND A HALF AFTERWARDS.

“ Here man more purely lives ; less oft doth fall ;
 More promptly rises ; walks with stricter heed ;
 More safely rests ; dies happier ; is freed
 Earlier from cleansing fires ; and gains withal
 A brighter crown.”

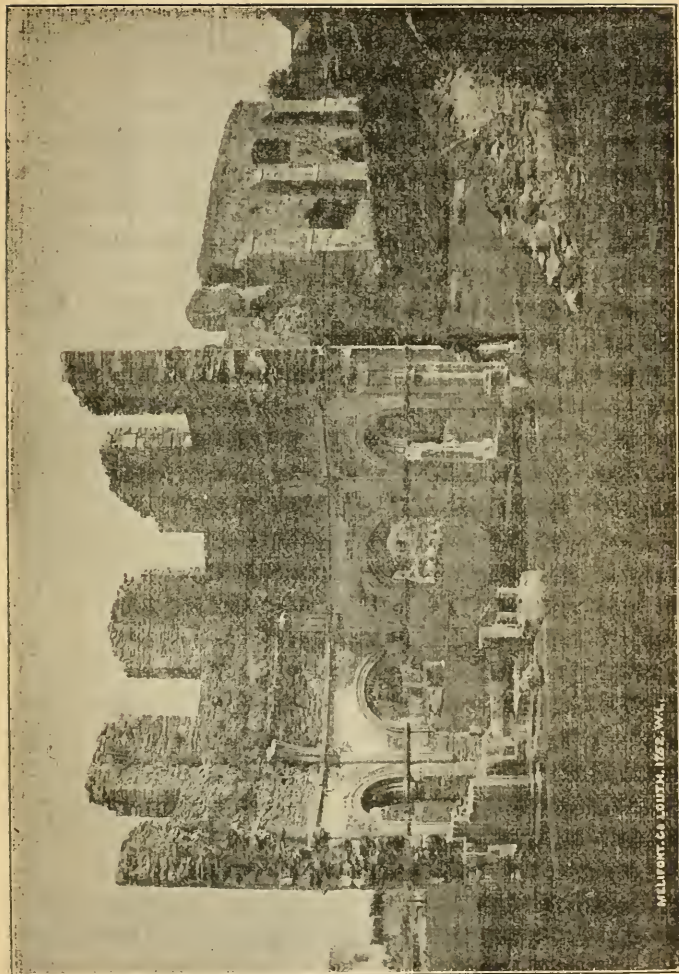
(*Saint Bernard.*)



IN the foregoing verses St. Bernard summarises the manifold advantages accruing from the profession and practice of the rule which he and his fellow abbots drew up for their followers. In that age of chivalry and wide extremes, men's minds were profoundly moved by the world-wide reputation and discourses of an outspoken, fearless monk, who confirmed his words by incontestable and stupendous miracles. Then, it was nothing unusual to see the impious sinner of yesterday become a meek repentant suppliant for admission into some monastery to-day, where he could expiate and atone for his former grievous excesses. The innocent, also, sought the shelter of the cloister from the contaminating influences of a corrupt and corrupting world ; and in the spirit of sacrifice presented themselves as victims to God's outraged justice. At that same period, that is, about the middle of the twelfth century, there was witnessed an unwonted movement towards

monasticism in its regenerated condition, as the Church Annals abundantly testify. This happy tendency was mainly due to St. Bernard's influence and popularity, and was well illustrated by the saying of the historian: "The whole world became Cistercian."

In essaying to reform St. Benedict's Rule, the first Fathers of the Cistercian Order sought only to restore its primitive simplicity and austerity, but they, nevertheless, added some wise provisions which established their reform on a firm basis, and which the experience of ages proved to be indispensable. First of all, it was ordained, that all houses of the Order should be united under one central controlling power, and that all the Superiors should meet annually for deliberation on matters appertaining to the maintenance of discipline and the correction of abuses. This assembly was called the General Chapter, over which the Abbot of Citeaux presided as recognised head of the Order. Till then, no such institution existed, and an Abbot General, as we may call him, had it in his power, from incapacity or any other cause, to disorganise a whole Order. Under the General Chapter such a catastrophe was impossible. Besides this wise enactment, St. Stephen drew up what he called the "Chart of Charity," by which it was ordained that the abbot of a monastery who had filiations (that is, offshoots or houses founded directly from that monastery) subject to him, should visit them annually either in person or by proxy, and minutely inquire into their spiritual, disciplinary, and financial condition. The abbots of those filiations were bound to return the visit during the year; but they did so in quality of guest and not as "Visitor," the official title of the Abbot of the Parent House; or, "Immediate Father," as he is called. Thus the bands of discipline were kept tightly drawn, and harmony, with



MELIBERT, Co LOUISIA, 1852, WA.

From Photo

INTERIOR OF LAVABO (OCTAGON.) See p. 26.

by W. Lawrence, Dublin.

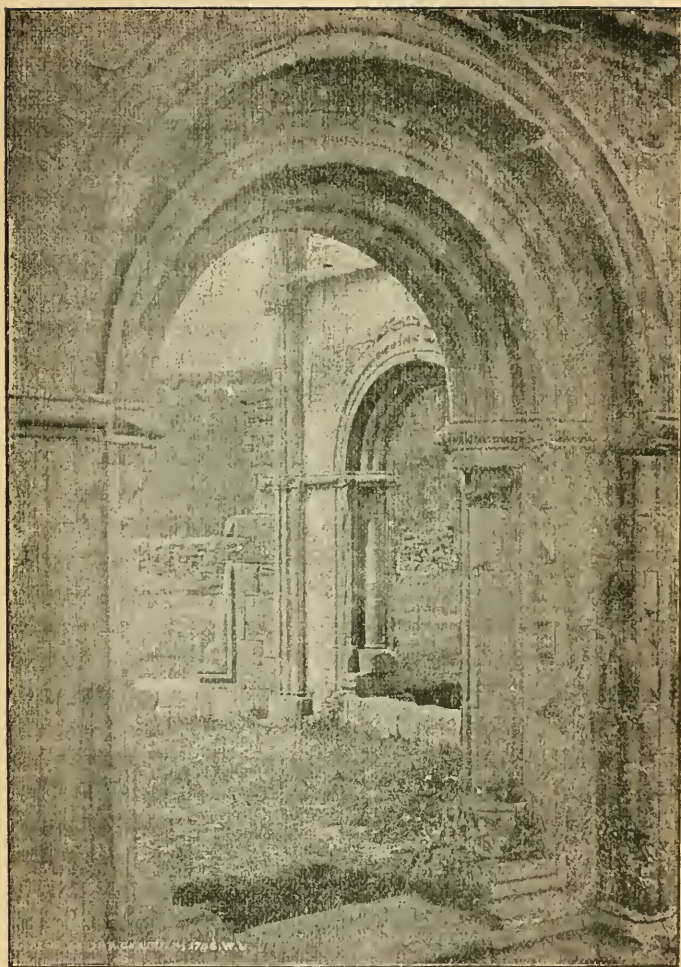
uniformity of observance, was maintained throughout the entire Order.

The denizens of the Cloister at that time consisted of two great classes, who, indeed, enjoyed alike all the advantages of the state, but differed in their functions and employments. One was busied with the cares of Martha, the other was admitted to the privilege of Mary. The former were employed chiefly in domestic duties, and various trades, and were entrusted with the charge of the granges or outlying farms. These were the Lay Brothers. Frequently their ranks were augmented by the noble and the learned, who, unnoticed and unknown till their holy death, guided the plough, delved the soil, or tended the sheep and oxen in the glades of the forest. The other class resided in the monastery and devoted their time to the chanting of the Divine Office, alternating with study in the Cloister and manual labour in the fields and gardens. These were the choir monks. Their dress was white. By vigorous toil and strict economy, these good old monks wrested a competency from their farms, and freely shared their substance with the needy and the stranger. They exhibited to an astonished world a practical refutation of its corrupt maxims and habits. Thus by their very lives, they preached most efficaciously; for by their contempt of worldly honours and pleasures they gave proof abundant of the faith that enlightened them to recognise the sublimity of the Gospel truths; of the hope that sustained them to courageously endure temporal privations for the sake of future rewards; and of the charity that prompted them to liken themselves to Jesus Christ, their Master, who, being rich, became poor for their sakes. Some may be inclined to consider all this as the effect of monkish extravagance, weak-mindedness, and folly; but

modern investigation, instituted and carried to a successful issue by honest Protestant writers, has brushed aside such calumnies as hackneyed catch-words, and has proved that beneath the monk's cowl, there were found hearts as warm and minds as broad as in any state or grade of society. It must also be remembered, that for centuries the monks were the teachers who moulded and fashioned the youth of the upper and middle classes.

Two o'clock A.M. was the usual hour for rising, when the monks, obedient to the Sacristan's signal, rising from their straw pallets and slipping on their sandals (for they slept fully dressed, as the poorer classes of the time are said to have done,) they left the Dormitory by the stairs that led down to the southern transept, and proceeding noiselessly, they reached the Choir where they immediately renewed the oblation of themselves to God. Then the Office of Matins was commenced, and it with Lauds occupied about one hour. On solemn festivals the monks rose at midnight, and the Office lasted over three hours; for then the whole of it was sung. Matins and Lauds over, they proceeded to the Reading-cloister to study the Psalms, or Sacred Scripture, or the Fathers: some prolonged their devotions in the church; where with clean, uplifted hands, they became powerful mediators between God and His creatures; too many of whom, alas, ignore their personal obligations. At that time, too, the priests might celebrate their Masses, as the ancient Rule gave them liberty to select that hour if they felt so inclined. We do not know how many priests were amongst the Religious at Mellifont soon after its establishment, but they must have numbered about twenty, since there were ten altars in the church. And judging by the number of priests in other monasteries of the Order at that period, this figure is not too high. We know that in

1147, there were fifty priests at least at Pontigny, one of the four first houses of the Order. About five o'clock the monks assembled in Choir for Prime, after which they went to Chapter, where the Martyrology and portion of the Rule were sung, as has been already explained. Chapter over, they entered the Auditorium, where they took off and hung up their cowls, and each went thence to the manual labour assigned him by the Prior. In winter, nearly all went out to work in the fields, grubbing up brushwood and burning it, and so preparing the ground for cultivation. After some hours spent in labour, they returned to the monastery where they had time for reading; they then went to Choir for Tierce and High Mass. During winter the Mass was sung before going out to work. In summer they dined at 11.30, after which an hour was allowed for repose, and None being sung they resumed their labour in the fields. In winter, dinner was at half-past two; the evening was spent in study and in chanting the Offices of Vespers and Compline, and at seven they retired to rest. In summer the hour for repose was eight o'clock. The Office of Completorium or Compline always closed the exercises of the day, and all passed before the Abbot, from whom they received holy water as they left the church. Each went straight to his simple couch where sweet repose awaited him after his day of toil and penitential works. His frugal vegetable fare, without seasoning or condiment, barely sufficed for the wants of nature, and even this was sparingly doled out to him; for during the winter exercises, that is, from the 14th of September to Easter, he got only one refectio daily except on Sundays, when he always got two. Wine, though allowed in small quantities at meals in countries where it was the common drink, was not permitted here, but in its stead, the monks used beer of their own



From Photo

by W. Lawrence, Dublin.

ARCH OF LAVABO (OCTAGON.) See p. 26.

brewing. Their raiment consisted of a white woollen tunic of coarse material and a strip of black cloth over the shoulders, and reaching to below the knees, gathered in at the waist with a leathern girdle. Over these, when not employed in manual labour, was worn the long white garment with wide sleeves, called the cowl. The tunic was the ordinary dress of peasantry in the twelfth century, and was retained by the reformers of St. Benedict's Rule, partly because it was the prescribed dress of the monks, and partly as an incentive to humility; a mark of the perfect equality which reigned in monasteries, and which removed all distinction of class.

Such was the ordinary routine of life led at Mellifont, but then certain officials filled important offices which necessarily brought them in constant contact with the outer world. Such, for instance, was the Cellarer, who had charge under the Abbot of the temporalities of the monastery, and catered for all the wants of the community. Some were deputed to wait on the guests and strangers, while others cared the sick poor in the hospice with all charity and tenderness. For the maintenance of the sick poor large tracts of land or revenues arising from house-property were very often bequeathed by pious people, and the monks were then their almoners; but, with or without such a provision from outside, the monks did maintain these establishments from their own resources.

The Abbot entertained the guests of the monastery at his own table, dispensing to them such frugal fare as was in keeping with the Rule; for meat was not allowed to be served, except to the sick. He had his kitchen and dining-hall apart, but in every other respect, he shared in all the exercises with his brethren. Though he occupied the place of honour and of pre-eminence in the

monastery, yet he was constantly reminded in the Rule, that he must not lord it over his monks, but must cherish them as a tender parent. His object in all his ordinances should be to promote the welfare of the flock entrusted to him, for which he should render an account on the last day.

From this relation of the manner of life at Mellifont, we see that it was in strict conformity with St. Bernard's definition of the Cistercian Institute, when he writes: "Our Order is humility, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Our Order is silence, fasting, prayer, and labour, and above all, to hold the more excellent way, which is charity."

CHAPTER IV.

MELLIFONT TAKES ROOT AND FOUNDS NEW HOUSES OF THE ORDER.

“ Even thus of old
 Our ancestors, within the still domain
 Of vast Cathedral or Conventual church,
 Their vigils kept ; where tapers day and night
 On the dim altars burned continually,
 In token that the House was evermore
 Watching to God. Religious men were they ;
 Nor would their reason tutored to aspire
 Above this transitory world, allow
 That there should pass a moment of the year
 When in their land the Almighty’s service ceased.”

(Wordsworth.)



THE history of Mellifont may be justly said to reflect the concurrent history of Ireland. It is so intimately connected and interwoven with that of our country, that they touch at many points, and we can collect matter for both as we travel back along the stream of time and observe the footprints on the sands, where saint, and king, chieftain, bishop, and holy monk, have left their impress and disappeared, to be succeeded later on by the baron and his armed retainers. How different the Ireland of to-day from the Ireland that Christian, the first Abbot of Mellifont, beheld when he and his companions settled down in the little valley, in the land of the O'Carroll! How many changes have passed over it since, leaving it the poorest country in Europe, though one of the richest in natural

resources! But these considerations appertain to the politician; they do not lie within the scope of the present writer. Next to building their church and monastery, the first care of the monks on their immediate arrival at Mellifont, was to prepare the soil for tillage; for, judging from the nature of the surroundings, it must have been overrun with dense brushwood, unbroken, save at distant intervals, by patches of green sward. Most houses of the Order in Ireland had to contend with similar conditions at their foundation; of Dunbrody, Co. Wexford, we are expressly told, that the monk sent by the Abbot of Buildewas to examine the site of the future monastery, found on it only *a solitary oak surrounded by a swamp*. But these old monks were adepts in the reclamation of waste lands, and soon the hills rang with the instruments of husbandry. Pleasant gardens and fertile meadows rewarded their toil, and their example gave a stimulus to agriculture, which, till then, was neglected by a pastoral people. At the same time, they manufactured bricks in the locality, and employed them in their buildings. Then rumour on her many wings flew far and near, and spread the fame of the new-comers to that remote valley, and soon the monastery was crowded with visitors intent on seeing the strangers and observing closely their manner of life. The sight pleased them. The ways of these monks accorded with the traditions handed down of the inhabitants of the ancient monasteries, before the depredations of the Danes, and the hearts of a highly imaginative race, with quick spiritual instincts, were attracted towards St. Bernard's children. Immediately began an influx of postulants for the Cistercian habit, and every day brought more, till the stalls in the Choir were filled, and Abbot Christian's heart overflowed with gladness. In consultation with St. Malachy, Abbot Christian

decided on founding another monastery, as his own could no longer contain the now greatly-increased community. A new colony was sent forth from it, and thus in two years from the foundation of Mellifont, was established "Bective on the Boyne." Some say that Newry, which was endowed by Maurice M'Loughlin, King of Ireland, at St. Malachy's earnest entreaty, was the first filiation of Mellifont. The charter of its (Newry) foundation happily has come down to us, but it bears no date. However, O'Donovan, who translated it into English from the Latin original in MS. in the British Museum, says it was written in 1160. As it is the only extant charter granted to a monastery by a native king before the Invasion, a copy of the translation is given in the Appendix.

Under the patronage, then, of St. Malachy and the native princes, and by the skill, industry, and piety of its inmates, Mellifont rose and prospered, and merited an exalted place in popular esteem. The monastery was in course of construction, and their new church nearing completion, when a heavy trial befell the monks in the death of their unfailing friend, wise counsellor, and loved father, St. Malachy, which took place at Clairvaux, in the arms of St. Bernard, A.D. 1148. St. Bernard delivered a most pathetic discourse over the remains of his friend, and wrote a consoling letter to the Irish Cistercians, condoling with them on the loss they and the whole Irish Church had sustained on the death of St. Malachy. He, later on, wrote his life, and willed, that as they tenderly loved each other in life, so in death they should not be separated. Their tombs were side by side in the church of Clairvaux, till their relics, enshrined in magnificent altars, with many costly lamps burning before them, were scattered at the French Revolution, and the rich shrines were smashed and plundered. Portions of

their bodies were, however, preserved by the good, pious people of the locality, and their heads are now preserved with honour in the cathedral of Troyes, France. The writers of the Cistercian Order claim St. Malachy as having belonged to them; for, they say that being previously a Benedictine, he received the Cistercian habit from St. Bernard during one of his visits to Clairvaux. They add that St. Bernard exchanged cowls with him, and that he wore St. Malachy's ever after on solemn festivals. The Saint's life is so well known that it needs no further notice here. Before his death, he saw three houses founded from Mellifont, namely, Bective, Newry, and Boyle.

Two years after St. Malachy's death, that is, in 1150, the monks of Mellifont experienced another serious loss when their venerated Abbot, Christian, was appointed Bishop of Lismore, and Legate of the Holy See in Ireland, by Pope Eugenius III., who had been his fellow-novice in Clairvaux. Christian's brother, Malchus, was elected to the abbatial office in his stead. Malchus proved himself a very worthy superior, and Mellifont continued on her prosperous course, so much so, that in 1151, or nine years from its own establishment, it could reckon as many as six important filiations, namely, Bective, Newry, Boyle, Athlone, Baltinglas, and Manister, or Manisternenay, Co. Limerick.

In 1152, St. Bernard passed to his reward, after having founded 160 houses of his Order, having edified Christendom by the splendour of his virtues, and astonished it by his rare natural gifts, which elevated him far above all his contemporaries. From the moment that he accepted the pastoral staff as Abbot of Clairvaux, till his death, that is, during the space of forty years, he was the figure-head of his Order in whom its whole history was merged

during that long period. In fact, he became so identified with the Order to which he belonged, that it was often called from him, Bernardine; or, of Claraval, from his famous monastery; and it was in a great measure owing to his influence, and in grateful acknowledgment of the splendid services which he rendered the Church in critical times, that Sovereign Pontiffs heaped so many favours on it. He was the fearless and successful champion of the oppressed in all grades of society, and all looked up to him as their guide and instructor. And yet this paragon of wisdom, this stern judge of the evil-doer, was remarkable for his naturalness and affectionate disposition. On the occasion of his brother Gerard's death, he attempted to preach a continuation of his discourses on the Canticle of Canticles, but his affection for his brother overcame him, and after giving vent to his grief, he delivered a most touching panegyric on his beloved Gerard. To the last moment of his life he entertained a most vivid recollection of his mother, and cherished the tenderest affection towards her memory. It may be doubted, that any child of the Church ever defended her cause with such loyalty and success. One stands amazed on reading what the Rev. Mr. King writes in his *Church History of Ireland*, where he taxes St. Bernard with superstition, because the Saint relates in his Life of St. Malachy, how that holy man wrought certain miracles. So evident were St. Bernard's own miracles, that Luden, a German Protestant historian, calls them "incontestable." 'Twere supreme folly to accuse a man of St. Bernard's endowments and culture, of the weakness that admits or harbours superstition, which generally flows from ignorance, or incapacity to sift matters, and to test them in their general or particular bearings. On the whole, Protestant writers speak and write approvingly of him.

In that year (1152), a Synod was held at Mell, which, according to Ussher, is identical with Mellifont, though now a suburb of Drogheda is known by that name. Other Irish writers say that this Synod was held at Kells. At it Christian, then Bishop of Lismore and Legate of the Holy See, presided. In the *Annals of the Four Masters* it is related, that a "Synod was convened at Drogheda, by the bishops of Ireland, with the successor of Patrick, and the Cardinal, John Paparo," etc. O'Donovan, quoting Colgan, tells us that Mellifont was known as the "Monastery at Drogheda."

In this same year occurred the elopement of Dervorgilla, wife of Tiernan O'Rourke, Prince of Brefny, with Dermot M'Murchad, King of Leinster. She is styled the Helen of Erin, as it is commonly supposed that her flight with Dermot occasioned the English Invasion. When O'Rourke heard of her departure, he was "marvellously troubled and in great choler, but more grieved for the shame of the fact than for sorrow or hurt, and, therefore, was fully determined to be avenged." It is mentioned in the *Annals of Clonmacnois* that O'Rourke had treated her harshly some time previous, and that her brother M'Laughlin connived at her conduct. Dervorgilla (which means in Irish, The True Pledge), was forty-four years of age at the time, whilst O'Rourke (who was blind of one eye) and M'Murchad, were each of them sixty-two years old. O'Rourke was the most strenuous opponent of the English at the Invasion, and was treacherously slain by a nephew of Maurice Fitzgerald at the Hill of Ward, near Athboy, in 1172. He was decapitated, and his head hung over the gates of Dublin for some time. It was afterwards sent to King Henry, in England.

From 1152 to 1157 the monks attracted no attention worth chronicling; for during these five years they

passed by unnoticed in our Annals. It is, however, certain that they were busily engaged in the completion of their church and in making preparations for its solemn consecration. And what a day of rejoicing that memorable day of the consecration was, when Mellifont beheld the highest and holiest in Church and State assembled to do her honour! This ceremony far eclipsed any that had been witnessed before that in Ireland. What commotion and bustle filled the abbey, the valley, and the surrounding hills! A constantly increasing crowd came thronging to behold a sight which gladdened their hearts and aroused their piety and admiration. For, there stood the Ard Righ (High King) of Erin, surrounded by his princes and nobles in all the pride and pageantry of state, the Primate Gelasius, and Christian, the Papal Legate, with seventeen other bishops, and almost all the abbots and priests in Ireland. Then the solemn rite was performed, and many precious offerings were made to the monks and to their church—gold and lands, cattle, and sacred vessels, and ornaments for the altars, were bestowed with a generosity worthy of the princely donors. O'Melaghlin gave seven-score cows and three-score ounces of gold to God and the clergy, for the good of his soul. He granted them, also, a townland, called Fiunabhair-naninghean, a piece of land, according to O'Donovan, which lies on the south side of the Boyne, opposite the mouth of the Mattock, in the parish of Donore, Co. Meath. O'Carroll gave sixty ounces of gold, and the faithless but now repentant Dervorgilla presented a gold chalice for the High Altar, and cloths for the other nine altars of the church.

Mellifont looked charming on that propitious occasion, and presented a truly delightful picture, with its beautiful church and abbey buildings glistening in the sun in all the

purity and freshness of the white, or nearly white, sandstone of which they were composed. Yet, beautiful as were the material buildings, far more so were those stones of the spiritual edifice, the meek and prayerful cenobites, who were gathered there to adore and serve their God in spirit and in truth. From that valley there arose a pleasing incense to the Lord—the prayers, and hymns, and canticles, which unceasingly resounded in that church from hearts truly devoted to God's worship, and dead to the world and themselves.

CHAPTER V.

MELLIFONT CONTINUES TO FLOURISH UNDER SUCCESSIVE
EMINENT SUPERIORS.

“ This is no common spot of earth,
 No place for idle words or mirth ;
 Here streamed the taper’s mystic light ;
 Here flashed the waving censers bright ;
 Awhile the Church’s ancient song
 Lingered the stately aisles along,
 And high mysterious words were said
 Which brought to men the living Bread.”

(*W. Chatterton Dix.*)



AFTER the consecration of their church the monks settled down to their ordinary quiet way. The erection of the monastic buildings had hitherto kept them occupied ; now that these were completed, they devoted their attention to the improvement of their farms, which they tilled with their own hands, and to the embellishment of their immediate surroundings. Even at this early period of her history, Mellifont was a hive of industry where all the trades flourished and many important arts were encouraged. At that time hired labour was sparingly employed by the monks ; for they themselves bore a share in the work of the artisans as well as in the ordinary drudgery of tillage. Labour placed all on a footing of equality whilst it gave vigour to the body by healthy exercise in the open air. Perhaps, this healthy exercise was one of the secrets of the longevity for which the monks were remarkable.

Regularity of life continued for years contributes to a state of health which dispenses with physicians. Wherever monks settled down they immediately erected mills for grinding corn, for preparing and finishing the fabrics of which their garments were made, etc. St. Benedict enjoined on his monks the necessity of practising all the trades and arts within the walls of the monastery, so that they need never leave their enclosure for the purpose, or under the pretext, of having their work done by externs.

Eleven years passed without Mellifont receiving any notice from our native chroniclers, and then at the year 1168, it is recorded, that Prince Donogh O'Carroll, the Founder, died and was buried in the church there. Ware tells us that his tomb and those of other remarkable personages had been in the church. As it was an almost general custom in Ireland, that the Founders of religious houses were interred on the north, or Gospel side of the High Altar, so it may be justly inferred that he was buried within the chancel, and that the recess on the north side is where his monument was erected. Thus, King Charles O'Connor's tomb occupies the same place in Knockmoy Abbey, Co. Galway, of which he was Founder. So, too, in Corcomroe Abbey, Co. Clare, the tomb of Conor O'Brien, King of Thomond, grandson of the Founder of that abbey, is still to be seen in a niche in the wall on the north side of the High Altar. No doubt they were buried under the pavement. The ancient Statutes of the Order permitted kings and bishops to be buried in the churches, but assigned no particular part as proper to them.

In 1170, a monk named Auliv, who had been expelled*

* The *Annals of Ulster* simply state "for the monks of Ireland did banish him (Auliv) out of their abbacy, through lawful causes." The *Four Masters* tell us it was the monks of Drogheda who had expelled

from Mellifont, instigated Manus, the King of Ulster, to commit an "unknown and atrocious crime," as the *Annals of the Four Masters* call it; that is, to banish the monks whom St. Malachy brought to Saul, Co. Down, and to deprive them of everything they were possessed of. Instances of wicked men deceitfully entering monasteries, at that time and at other periods of monastic history, are given, but invariably the guilty party is severely censured, and it is related that his fellow-monks rid themselves of him. St. Bernard himself was deceived by his secretary, Nicholas, who afterwards left the Order. "He went out from us," said the Saint, "but he did not belong to us."

The Order was spreading rapidly in Ireland, and the filiations from Mellifont in their turn sent out new filiations, till most of the picturesque valleys in this country sheltered and nurtured thriving establishments; so much so, that O'Daly tells us "there were twenty-five grand Cistercian abbeys in Ireland at the Invasion." But then a new era dawned on this unhappy nation, and might usurped the place of right, cruel unending strife and fierce jealousies were imported into the country, and it became one vast battle-field. Ireland would have assimilated the two contending races, but their amalgamation would have been detrimental to English interests in this kingdom, and hence by statute, by bribe, by all means available, the representatives of that Crown only

him from the abbacy for his own crime. A writer in the *Dublin Penny Journal*, 1835-36, says this Anliv was Abbot of the monastery of St. Mary de Urso, near the West Gate, Drogheda. He quotes some old Annals without particularising them. And Dalton, in his *History of Drogheda*, tells us that Anliv had been Abbot of that same Abbey of St. Mary's, Drogheda, and was expelled. Dalton evidently confounds this monastery with Mellifont. No Cistercian Community had power to depose their abbot, such power being vested in the General Chapter of the Order.

too successfully kept the feuds alive. Fain would they have made the Church an instrument for the furtherance of these ulterior purposes, but, whilst she stood firm as an integral part of Peter's Rock, neither English bribes nor English wiles could subjugate her. True, Englishmen were appointed to the richest benefices within the Pale to which the English kings had the right of presentation, and these strove, with as much zeal as the knight or baron, to extend the boundaries of the shire-lands. But the Irish prelates, by their disinterestedness, and their personal and episcopal virtues, saved the Church from the degradation that imperilled her. We shall see the result of this policy as we proceed.

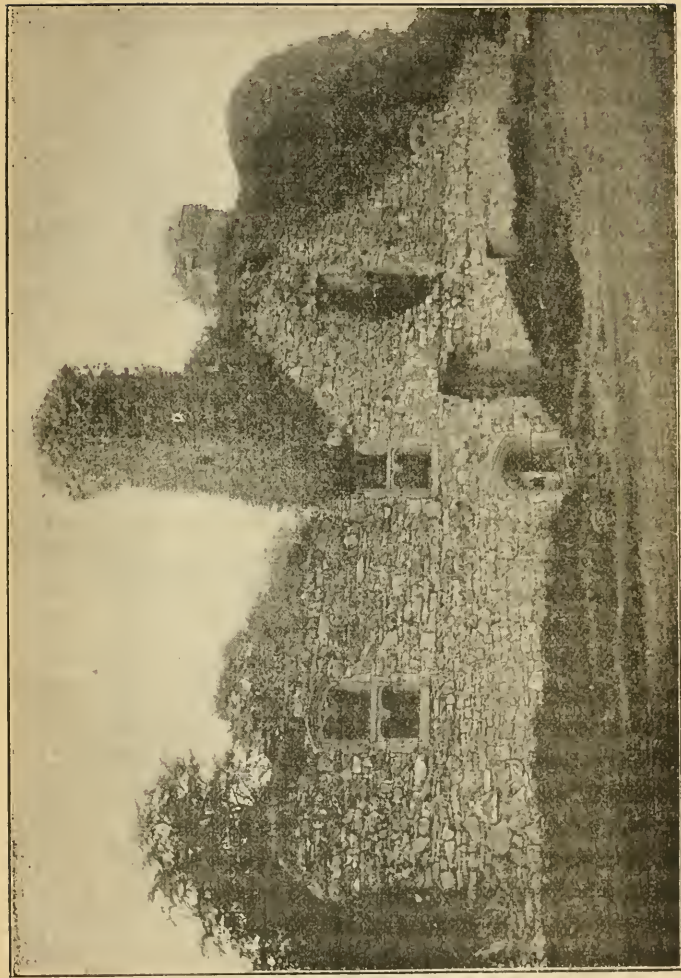
Judging, by analogy, from the progress of society in other countries, and from the relative number of monasteries founded in them and in Ireland before the Invasion, it may be conjectured that the monastic system in all its branches would have produced in this country the same fruits in agriculture, in learning, and in the arts, as are attributed to it in the history of other nations; and, in a special manner, it would have helped, by the unity of government enforced in Religious Orders, to bind together the discordant elements of society. Quite different, however, was it in Ireland; for the sphere of action of each monastery was cramped, and confined within a certain radius, beyond which its influences were not felt, nor regarded otherwise than in a hostile spirit, or at best as an object of suspicion.

In 1172, the Abbot of Mellifont was sent to Rome on an embassy by King Roderic O'Connor. We are not told its nature.

In 1177, Charles O'Buacalla, then Abbot of this monastery, was elected Bishop of Emly, where he died within a month after his consecration. In 1182, King

Henry II. granted to the Abbot and community of Mellifont a confirmation of their possessions, and three years later, King John, at that time styled Lord of Ireland, renewed the confirmation while he was residing at Castleknock, during his brief visit to this country, in 1185, the thirty-second year of his father's reign. A copy of the Charter may be seen in the Miscellany of the Archæological Society, Vol. I., page 158. The original, which is one of the earliest of the Anglo-Irish documents that have come down to us, is preserved in Trinity College, Dublin. By this Charter King John confirmed to the monks of Mellifont the "donation and concession" which his father made to them. By it he confirmed to the monks "the site and ambit of the abbey, with all its appurtenances, namely, the grange of Kulibudi (not on the Ordnance map), and Munigatinn (Monkenewtown), with its appurtenances, the granges of Mell and Drogheda (in Irish Droichet-atha, that is, bridge of the ford) and their appurtenances, and Rathmolan (Rathmullen) and Finnaur (Femor), with their appurtenances, the grange of Teachlenni (Stalleen), and the grange of Rossuarrigh (Rossnaree), with their appurtenances, the townland of Culen (Cullen) and its appurtenances, the grange of Cnogva (Knowth), the grange of Kelkalma (not known now), with their appurtenances, Tuelacnacornari (not known), and Callan (Collon), with their appurtenances, and the grange of Finna () with its appurtenances." He also confirms the grants of two carucates of land made to the monks by Hugh de Lacy, viz., of Croghan and Ballybregan (?), and also one carucate of land given by Robert of Flanders, called Crevoda, now Creewood, two miles west of Mellifont.

In 1186, St. Christian O'Connarchy, or Connery, who had been the first Abbot of Mellifont and afterwards



From Photo

SOUTH WALL OF LECTORIUM.

by W. Lawrence, Dublin.

Bishop of Lismore and Legate of the Holy See, died, and was buried at O'Dorney, Co. Kerry, a monastery of his Order, which was founded in 1154, from Manister-Nenay. He had resigned all his dignities six years before, in order the better to prepare himself for a happy death. He was enrolled in the Calendar of the Saints of the Cistercian Order, and his festival was kept in England in pre-Reformation times, on the 18th March. In the eulogy of him in the Cistercian Menology it is said, "that he was remarkable for his sanctity and wonderful miracles, and that next to St. Malachy, he was regarded by the Irish nation as one of its principal patrons," even down to the time that that was written, A.D. 1630. An Irish gentleman who visited Italy in 1858, wrote from Venice to a friend, that he had seen amongst the fresco paintings which covered the wall of the beautiful church of Chiavalla, the first Cistercian monastery founded in Italy, a painting of St. Malachy; also one entitled, "*S. Christianus Archieps. in Hibernia Cisterciensis*"—"St. Christian, a Cistercian monk, and Archbishop in Ireland." The error in ranking him as Archbishop probably arose from his having succeeded St. Malachy as Legate. It was in his Legatine capacity that he presided at several Synods, chiefly the memorable one convened by King Henry at Cashel, in 1172.

About the same time, there died at Mellifont, a holy monk named Malchus, who is said to have been St. Christian's brother and successor in the abbatial office, as has been related above. Ussher, quoting St. Bernard, positively asserts that he was St. Christian's brother. And Sequin, who, in 1580, compiled a Catalogue of the Saints of the Cistercian Order, mentions Malchus in that honoured roll, and styles him "a true contemner of the world, a great lover of God, and a pattern and model of

all virtues to the whole Order." He says, "he was one of St. Malachy's disciples in whose footsteps he faithfully followed, and that he was renowned for his sanctity and learning, as well as for the many miracles he wrought." His feast was kept on the 28th of June.

In 1189, Rudolph, or Ralph Feltham, Abbot of Furness, died and was buried here. And in the same year, died Murrough O'Carroll, cousin of the Founder, near whom he was interred.

In 1190, Pope Clement III. issued a Bull addressed to the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order, dated July 6th of that year, enrolling St. Malachy in the Calendar of Saints, and appointing the 3rd of November for his festival.

At that same General Chapter, it was decreed that the Irish Abbots be dispensed from attending the General Chapter annually, and it was decided that they should be present every third year; and a few years later, the Abbot of Mellifont was charged to select three of their number who should repair thither every year.

In 1193, Dervorgilla died at the monastery of Mellifont. The *Annals of the Four Masters* and other Annals simply relate the fact of her having died there in the 85th year of her age, without alluding to the place of her sepulture.

In that year, also, portions of the Relics of St. Malachy were brought to Mellifont and were distributed to the other houses of the Order in Ireland. Several of our Annals say that the Saint's body was brought over from Clairvaux, but that is obviously a mistake; for until the French Revolution, the bodies of St. Malachy and St. Bernard occupied two magnificent altar-tombs of red marble within the chancel, at Clairvaux. A charter, dated 1273, is still extant, whereby Robert Bruce, the

rival of John Baliol for the Scottish Crown, conveys his land of Osticroft to the Abbot of Clairvaux for the maintenance of a lamp before St. Malachy's tomb in that church. And the General Chapter of the Order held in 1323, when raising the Saint's festival to a higher rank, expressly mentioned that his body "rested" at Clairvaux. Meglinger, a German Cistercian monk, who visited Clairvaux in 1667, and wrote a description of that famous abbey as he beheld it, says that he was shown the heads of Saints Malachy and Bernard, which were preserved in silver cases. He also mentions the superb altar-tombs of the two Saints. Later on, the two celebrated Benedictine monks, Dom Martène and Dom Durand, when in quest of MSS., called at Clairvaux, and were shown the tombs and heads of the Saints. It is scarcely necessary to remark that this respect and veneration were entertained for the tombs only because they contained the bodies of the holy men.

In 1194, Abbot Moelisa, who then governed Mellifont, was made Bishop of Clogher.

CHAPTER VI.

MELLIFONT IN TROUBLOUS TIMES.

“ But I must needs confess
 That 'tis a thing impossible to frame
 Conceptions equal to the soul's desires ;
 And the most difficult of tasks to keep
 Heights which the soul is competent to gain.”

(*Wordsworth.*)



SIXTY years of uninterrupted prosperity have passed over Mellifont, during which period it has been honoured by princes and people alike, and even the English Kings have marked their esteem for it by heaping fresh favours on it. It was still flourishing in 1201, when Thomas O'Connor, Archbishop of Armagh, whom the Annals of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, style "a noble and worthy man," chose it as his burial-place, and was buried there with great honour. He was brother to Roderick O'Connor, King of Connaught. It was at his instance that Joceline wrote his Life of St. Patrick.

In 1203, King John "of his own fee" granted a new charter confirming that given by his father some years before, and also giving the monks free customs, together with the fishery on both sides of the Boyne.

In 1206, Benedict and Gerald, monks of Mellifont, were deputed by Eugene, Archbishop of Armagh, to wait on the King and to tender him, on the Archbishop's behalf, three hundred marks of silver and three of gold for

restitution of the lands and liberties belonging to that See. It was the King's custom to appropriate the revenues of the vacant bishoprics, and on the confirmation by the Pope of the bishop-elect, he issued a writ of restitution of the temporalities, or episcopal possessions and rights. The King, in order to keep the temporalities the longer, often refused his "*congé d'elire*," without which an election was invalid by the civil law. Soon after the Invasion, King Henry II. held in his possession, pending the appointment of new prelates, one archbishopric, five bishoprics, and three abbeys, here in Ireland.

In 1211, Thomas was Abbot, and seven years later, Carus, or Cormac O'Tarpa, Abbot, and presumably immediate successor to Thomas, was made Bishop of Achonry, which See he resigned in 1226, and returned to Mellifont, where he died that same year, and was buried there. Some two-and-one-half miles north of Mellifont, and one-half mile east of Collon, between that village and Tinure, there is a crossing of the roads still popularly known as "Tarpa's Cross." Local tradition has it that this Cormac O'Tarpa, when Abbot, was wont to walk daily from the monastery to this spot.

About that time, or in 1221, Mellifont, from some unrecorded cause, fell from its first fervour, but only for a very brief period; for the remedy applied effected a thorough reform. In the Statutes of the Order for that year, the General Chapter authorised the Abbot of Clairvaux to set things right by bringing in monks from other monasteries, and so, as it were, infuse new and healthier blood into the monastic life there. As no further mention is made of the matter, the trouble, whatever its nature was, must have been permanently removed.

In 1227, Luke Netterville, Archbishop of Armagh, was

buried here. It was he who, three years previous, founded the Dominican monastery in Drogheda, of which, now, only the Magdalen Tower remains. And in that year (1227), Gerald, a monk of Mellifont, was elected Bishop of Dromore.

In 1229, the King granted to the Abbot and Community of Mellifont a Tuesday market in their town of Collon.

In 1233, the General Chapter authorised all the Abbots of the Order to have the Word of God preached on Sundays and festivals, to their servants and retainers, in some suitable place. And in 1238, the King gave a new confirmation to the monks of Mellifont.

In 1248, the General Chapter granted permission to the English and Irish Abbots of the Order, to hold deliberations on important local matters in their respective countries. The Abbots of Mellifont, of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, and of Duiske, Co. Kilkenny, were empowered to convoke all the other Irish Abbots of the Order for consultation; the assembly thus somewhat partaking of the nature of a Provincial Chapter.

In 1250, no Englishman would be admitted to profession at Mellifont. In 1269, David O'Brogan, who had been a monk of this house, and afterwards Bishop of Clogher, was buried here. In 1272, Hore Abbey, near Cashel, was founded from Mellifont. In 1275, the General Chapter decreed that in the admission of novices into the Order there should be no question of nationality.

Hitherto, the Cistercians confined themselves, in discharging the offices of their sacred ministry, to their guests, servants, and the sick poor in the hospitals at their gates; but now, the altered circumstances of the times demand a change in their usages and impose fresh burdens on them, for which they get no credit.

The new Orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic had settled down in this country, and were attracting a large percentage of the young men, who, till then, entered the ranks of the Lay Brethren, and managed the granges, or outlying farms, under the Cellarer. In consequence, therefore, of the insufficiency of their numbers to work the farms profitably, it was found necessary to lease these granges to tenants, and hence the origin of many villages and towns that, in several instances, arose on the site of the granges. The chapel attached to the grange (for every grange had its chapel for the use of the Brothers in charge) was converted into a parish church for the new population that clustered around it. Of this church the monks became the pastors, except when it lay at too great distance to be served from the monastery; in which case, the monks employed secular priests. They built schools also, where the children of the tenants and dependants received *gratuitously* from the monks themselves, an education similar to that at present imparted in our primary schools.

Though the study of Sacred Scripture, Theology, and Canon Law was encouraged in the Order from its foundation; yet it was not until 1245 that studies were fully organised by drawing up a curriculum that should be obligatory. In that year it was ordained by the General Chapter that in every Province there should be a central monastery to which the monks should repair to read the prescribed course of studies under members of the Order, who had graduated at some university. We are not told which of the Irish monasteries was selected as the House of Studies; but, in 1281, the General Chapter decided and decreed that in all the larger abbeys such Houses of Studies should be established.

There is an entry in the Annals of St. Mary's Abbey, at

the year 1281, giving the price of cattle at that time. As it is interesting it is given here: viz., twenty shillings each for a horse, a cow, or a bullock.

In 1306, Mellifont first experienced the baleful effects of racial jealousies and bickerings; for the monks could not, or would not, agree to elect an Abbot; and during their dissensions, the King seized the possessions of the monastery. We are not informed how matters terminated on that occasion.

In 1316, the General Chapter ordered that the English, Welsh, and Irish Abbots should send some of their monks, in proportion to the number in their respective monasteries, to the University of Oxford, to be educated there. A few years previous, the Earl of Cornwall endowed at Oxford the College of St. Bernard (now St. John's), for the Cistercians. How far the Irish monks availed of this college cannot be known; probably those within the Pale did largely benefit by it. One who obtained an unenviable notoriety by his intemperate invectives against the Mendicant Orders, was educated there—Henry Crump, an Englishman, and monk of the Abbey of Balinglas. But it is very dubious that the "*mere* Irish" ventured to cross its threshold. They would abstain from doing so from prudential motives.

The fourteenth century was ushered in by the repetition of feuds between the Anglo-Irish and the Irish; and, as it grew older, the former fought amongst themselves, with Irish auxiliaries on both sides. It may be here remarked, as a curious historical fact, that it was the Irish who fought the battles for the English Crown in Ireland; it was they, too, who retained their country subject to that dominion, according to Sir John Davis (*Discoverie*, p. 639); for no army ever came out of England from the time of King John, except the expedi-

tionary army of Richard II. The few forces subsequently sent over, until the twenty-ninth year of Queen Elizabeth, were to quell the rebellions of the English settlers.

The most disastrous calamity in Ireland in this century, next to the great plague of 1348, or the "Black Death," as it was called, was Bruce's invasion in 1315. Friar Clyn tells us in his Annals, that Bruce and his followers "went through all the country, burning, slaying, depredating, spoiling towns and castles, and even churches, as they went and as they returned." As a result the country was visited by a dreadful famine, and, moreover, the Pope, writing to the Archbishops of Dublin and Cashel in 1317, alludes to scandals, murders, conflagrations, sacrileges, and rapine, as following from that invasion. Though Bruce failed in his object to overthrow the English power in Ireland, yet he so far succeeded, that he weakened it considerably.

In the year 1316 (according to Ussher), O'Neill addressed his famous Remonstrance to Pope John XXII., in which, amongst other complaints, he remarked, that the religious communities were prohibited by the law from admitting anyone not an Englishman into monasteries within the Pale. In response to this, the Pope sent two Cardinals to investigate the matter, and also wrote a letter to King Edward II., exhorting him to adopt merciful measures towards the Irish. The letter had not much effect, and the cruelties and injustice continued; but, about twenty years later, there was exhibited an unprecedented tendency on the part of the Anglo-Irish and the Irish towards incorporation. The Irish people clung to the great Geraldine family with a romantic affection which that chivalrous race fully reciprocated. So, too, did they lean towards the rivals of the Geraldines, the Ormondes, and to other Anglo-Irish barons, who, likewise,

had adopted Irish customs and surnames. English power in this country had grown to be regarded as merely nominal, and the administration of the law and the office of Lord Deputy could no longer be committed to one or other of the two principal families (the Geraldine or Ormonde), to whom the Deputyship had been usually entrusted. To preclude the danger of these haughty noblemen attempting to arrogate the state of the independent native chieftains, and to firmly establish the English power, a Parliament, which assembled at Nottingham, in the seventeenth of Edward III. (1343), enacted laws for the reformation of the Irish Government. A few months previous to the sitting of this Parliament, Sir Ralph Ufford had been sent over as Lord Deputy, to stamp out this incipient spirit of independence, and to impede the fusion of the two races. This nobleman, by rigid and cruel measures, executed the nefarious intentions of the English Parliament. He appropriated the goods of others, plundered, without discrimination, the clergy, the laity, the rich and the poor; assigning the public welfare as a pretext. He broke down the pride of the Earl of Desmond, and for a while seized his estates; but, on Ufford's recall to England and the appointment of Sir Walter Bermingham as his successor, Desmond was restored to royal favour. Gradually the old animus was revived, and old dormant jealousies between the two races were awakened, until, in the year 1376, the "Statute of Kilkenny" threw the whole nation into a state of commotion and chaos, and aroused a fierce hatred between the Anglo-Irish and the later arrivals from England, who were styled by that Act, "the English born in England." The latter despised the former and called them "Irish Dogg;" the Anglo-Irish retorted, giving them the name of "English Hobbe," or churl. These bickerings were

reprobated by the said Statute, which, at the same time, banned the whole race of the native Irish. Sir John Davis writes of it: "It was manifest from these laws that those who had the government of Ireland under the Crown of England intended to make a perpetual separation between the English settled in Ireland and the native Irish, in the expectation that the English should in the end root out the Irish." And another Englishman writes of this Statute: "Imagination can scarcely devise an extremity of antipathy, hatred, and revenge, to which this code of aggravation was not calculated to provoke both nations" (Plowden, *Historical Review of the State of Ireland*.) The foregoing summary of the condition of affairs in Ireland in the fourteenth century has been given, in order to illustrate and explain the bald historical facts handed down to us having reference to Mellifont during the same period.

It will be remembered that in the year 1316, O'Neil complained to the Pope that Irishmen were by law excluded from entering monasteries within the Pale; accordingly, we read that in 1322, the monks of Mellifont, amongst whom the English element then prevailed, would admit no man to profession there who had not previously sworn that he was not an Irishman. Cox, who derives his information from some old document in the Tower of London, tells us that in 1323, the General Chapter of the Order strongly denounced this pernicious practice, but there is no such decree, nor is there any allusion to it in Martène at that date. That spirit seems to have been gratifying to King Edward II. ; for, in 1324, he complained to the Pope of the violation of the law of exclusion, and Nicholas of Lusk, who was then Abbot, was superseded ; very likely, was summarily deposed, for the infraction of it.

At that very time, some of the other Cistercian monasteries under the protection of the native chieftains, and totally composed of Irishmen, were in a most prosperous condition, and merited the genuine esteem of princes and people. Thus, the Abbey of Assaroe, or Ballyshannon, under the fostering care of the Princes of Tyrconel, attained celebrity by the regularity of its monks and the learning and sanctity of its Abbots, three of whom were made Bishops at no distant intervals. Of Boyle Abbey, Co. Roscommon, the same can also be said; for it thrived and flourished without royal favour or charter. On the other hand, Mellifont had a plethora of charters, for which the monks there must have paid dearly. But, surrounded as it was by covetous and not over-scrupulous neighbours in lawless times, such safeguards were decidedly necessary. So, in 1329, Edward III. granted them a confirmation of all former privileges, together with the right of free warren in all their manors; and again in 1348, he gave them a fresh confirmation, with the right to erect a prison in any of their lands in the Co. Meath, and also the power to erect a pillory and gallows in their town of Collon. The Abbot then, as a temporal lord over his own manors, had power of life and death over his vassals therein; but he never exercised the authority so vested in him by condemning anyone to death, nay, even, he refrained from adjudicating on civil matters, as is seen by dispensations granted by Popes to Irish Cistercian Abbots freeing them from the obligation of acting as Justices.

It is recorded that in 1329, in the battle in which the Louth men killed their new Earl, John Birmingham, "there fell Caech O'Carroll, that famous tympanist and harper, so pre-eminent that he was a phoenix in his art, and with him fell about twenty tympanists who were his

scholars. He was called Caech O'Carroll because his eyes were not straight, but squinted; and if he was not the first inventor of chord music, yet of all his predecessors and contemporaries, he was the corrector, the teacher, and director."

How it fared with Mellifont during the fearful pestilence that ravaged all Europe in 1348, is not related. Friar Clyn, the Franciscan Annalist, wrote of it:—"That pestilence deprived of human inhabitants, villages and cities, and castles and towns, so that there was scarcely found a man to dwell therein." The mortality in the religious houses was very great, and in some instances, only a few monks were left out of large and numerous communities. It is said that in these countries the religious Orders never recovered from the loss of the best and most learned of their members who were then swept away.

In 1351, Abbot Reginald was charged, as if it were a crime, and found guilty, of having within two years collected of his own money, and from the Abbots of Boyle, Knockmoy, Bective, and Cashel, and of having remitted the sum of 664 florins to the Abbot of Clairvaux, while war was being waged between England and France. But there was no treason or treasonable intent in that; for the money was to defray the current expenses of the Order, and was levied off every monastery in proportion to the resources of each. Richard, Cœur de Lion, Alexander II. of Scotland, and Bela IV. of Hungary had, in their day, contributed largely to this fund.

In 1358, the Abbot of Mellifont made good his claim to three weirs upon the Boyne, at Rosnaree, Knowth, and Staleen; but, in 1366, he was indicted at Trim, for erecting an unlawful weir at Oldbridge, when the Jury found against him, and he was ordered to reduce the weir

to a certain breadth and space, and he, himself, was sentenced to a term of imprisonment; but, on his paying a fine of £10 to Roland de Shalesford, the sheriff of the Co. Meath, this sentence was commuted. Ten years later, John Terrour, successor to this Abbot, was sued for obstructing the King's passage of the Boyne.

In the years 1373 and 1377, the Abbot was summoned to attend Parliaments held at Dublin and Castledermot respectively. In the former Parliament, one hundred shillings were ordered to be levied from him, as his portion of the subsidy granted to the Lord Justice, William de Windesore, by the same Parliament. In 1380, the King gave a special mandate that no *mere* Irishman should be admitted to profession in this abbey. In 1381 and 1382, the Abbot attended Parliaments held in Dublin, and in 1400, the King granted a royal confirmation of all the land, manors, and liberties, bestowed on the abbey by former charters; and in 1402, he pardoned the Abbot and monks for their having admitted Irishmen to profession. However, they were mulcted in the sum of £50. In 1415, Leynagh Bermingham, William Davison, and John D'Alton were committed to the custody of the Abbot to be kept by him as hostages for the allegiance of their respective fathers. In 1424, the Abbot, with the Archbishop of Armagh and Nicholas Taaffe, was appointed Justice and Conservator of the Peace for the Co. Louth.

The allusions to Mellifont during the remainder of this century are very few and uninteresting. Whether, or not, it shared the fate of many other Irish monasteries at that time and had no regular Abbot, but one who was called Abbot *in commendam*, is not known; but the presumption is that it had not a regular Abbot. These Abbots *in commendam* were not monks, or members of

any Religious Order; but secular clerics, not necessarily in Holy Orders. Sometimes, especially when the abuse had reached its greatest height in the fifteenth century, they were even laymen; nevertheless, they enjoyed the revenues of the abbeys committed to them, with the style and title of Abbots, but exercised no spiritual jurisdiction in their abbeys. This latter was confided to regular Priors who were selected by their own Religious superiors. When laymen held the abbeys *in commendam* they commonly resided in them with their wives, families, retainues, servants, etc., to the distraction and interference with the monks in their regular observances, and finally, to the complete subversion of discipline. At that very time this pernicious practice had brought the whole Order to the brink of ruin; for we find the General Chapter on several occasions deploring the injuries inflicted on religion, and lamenting the havoc wrought by it, and they decided to send three of their number to Rome to implore the Pope's protection against the growing evil. Still, it survived, more or less, in these countries till the Reformation. Scotland suffered more from it, apparently, than Ireland did, as can be seen from the lists furnished by Brady in his *Episcopal Succession*.

In 1476, the Abbot of Mellifont complained, that "owing to oppressions and extortions within the County of Louth and Uriell, his monastery was greatly indebted and impoverished." Certain it is, that for some time previous, it had fallen from its former regularity and fervour; but, through the zeal and tact of Abbot Roger who then governed it, it regained its wonted prominence amongst the most observant monasteries. In 1479, this same Roger having set forth to the King that he had "Jurisdiction Ecclesiastical of all persons within his lands, as well secular as ecclesiastical, the King, out of his love

to the Cistercian Order, granted to the Abbot and his successors, the *Jus de excommunicatis capiendis*, and episcopal jurisdiction," (Stat. Roll. 19 Ed. IV., c. 5.) The former privilege refers to the concession made to the Church by the first clause of the Statute of Kilkenny, and which had been confirmed by subsequent Parliaments for centuries after its first enactment. Under the heading—"The Church to be free—Writ *De Excommunicato capiendo*," the clause proceeds to ordain, "that Holy Church shall have all her franchises without injury, . . . and if any (which God forbid) do to the contrary, and be excommunicated by the Ordinary of the place for that cause, so that satisfaction be not made to God and Holy Church by the party so excommunicated within a month after such excommunication, that then, after certificate thereupon being made by the said Ordinary into the Chancery, a writ shall be directed to the Sheriff, Mayor, Seneschal of the franchise, or other officers of the King, to take his body, and to keep him in prison without bail, until due satisfaction be made to God and Holy Church, etc." By episcopal jurisdiction is here meant the civil rights and privileges appertaining to the episcopal office, and enjoyed at that time by bishops over their subjects, lay and clerical. And as to the spiritual, quasi-episcopal jurisdiction—the Abbots of the Order had that as well as exemption in relation to their own monks from the very foundation of the Order; but by a Decree dated 28th September 1487, Pope Innocent VIII. granted to all Cistercian Abbots quasi-episcopal jurisdiction over their tenants, vassals, subjects, and servants. By this Decree, the Pope "took all the Abbots, Abbesses, Monks and Nuns of the Order under his special protection, together with all their goods, vassals, subjects, and servants, and exempted and freed the same from *all jurisdiction*,

superiority, correction, visitation, subjection and power of Archbishops, Bishops and their Vicars, etc., . . . and subjected them immediately to himself and the Holy See." This Decree is given in full in the *Privilegia Ordinis Cisterciensis*, p. 179.

That the Abbots of the Order exercised that privilege in this country cannot be doubted. We read an instance of it in the *Triumphalia*, so ably edited by the late Father Denis Murphy, S.J., where, even after the Council of Trent and so recently as 1621, a certain secular priest, who had been appointed by the Abbot of Holy Cross to the pastoral charge of the parish attached to that abbey and of one or more outlying parishes subject to the same Abbot, denied after some time, that he had his faculties from the said Abbot, but rather from the Archbishop, or his Vicar. The controversy lasted long, but finally, it was decided in the Abbot's favour, and Dr. Kearney, then Archbishop of Cashel, acknowledged the Abbot's title. And again, in the *Spicelegium Ossoriense* there is a letter from Dr. O'Reilly, Archbishop of Armagh, written to the Propaganda in 1633, in which he complained that the Cistercians claimed the privilege of "*Visitation, Correction, Summoning to Synods, Approbation to hear confessions, together with entire and absolute episcopal jurisdiction.*" And a further proof in favour of the practice is found in the fact that laymen who acquired the suppressed monasteries of the Order claimed and exercised that same privilege. Thus, in 1622, Archbishop Ussher in a Report of Bective parish said it belonged to Bartholomew Dillon, Esq. of Riverstown, his Majesty's farmer of the impropriate property. "This church belongeth to the Abbey of Bectiffe, in the possession of the said Mr. Dillon, who pretendeth to have an exemption from the Lord Bishop's jurisdiction, and doth prove wills

and grant administrations." And in 1744, Harris writes of Newry, where once was a Cistercian Abbey also: "A mitred Abbot formerly possessed the lordships of Newry and Mourne, and exercised therein Episcopal Jurisdiction, which after the dissolution of the Abbey was done by the temporal proprietor, and at the present Robert Needham, Esq., to whom the town and manor belong, enjoys an exempt Jurisdiction within the said manors, and the seal of his court is a Mitred Abbot in his Albe sitting in a chair, and supported by two yew trees with this inscription: '*Sigillum exemptæ Jurisdictionis de Viride Ligno alias Newry et Mourne.*'" Which in English means, the seal of the Exempt Jurisdiction of Newry and Mourne. Verily! this savours of Popery; for, it was from the Pope the monks received their exemption. A modern example of this Papal concession, exercised in the Anglican Church, is to be found in the case of the Dean of Westminster who is immediately under the jurisdiction of her Gracious Majesty the Queen, and consequently exempt from that of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is as successor to the Abbot of Westminster that he claims and is allowed that privilege of exemption; for the Abbot was immediately subject to the Pope in pre-Reformation times.

The Abbot of Mellifont was implicated in the rebellion of Lambert Simnel; for in 1488, he received pardon from the King for his offences in that connection. The close of the fifteenth century found Mellifont recovering and maintaining its old prestige amongst the Religious Orders of this country, and with the dawning of a new century, it had regained its former level, from which a host of circumstances had conspired to drag it down and to degrade it. These circumstances have been already detailed and need not be here repeated.

In civil matters, Ireland in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, presented the same, or nearly the same, condition as she did more than three centuries before, when the English first landed on her shores. The Pale was literally bounded by the Liffey and the Boyne, and the old feuds, the long-protracted wars between the Anglo-Irish and the natives still subsisted. The regular administration of the law was limited to the four counties adjoining the capital, called the "Four Obedient Counties." It seems incontestable that religion was in a flourishing condition in this country during the period; for an unwonted activity and fervour animated both clergy and people, as can be inferred from the number of religious houses established; the frequency of Synods held denoting zeal and regularity on the part of the prelates convening them; and the common practice, so much then in vogue, of visiting, through a spirit of penance and devotion, the Holy Places at home and in far-off countries. Our Annals prove this to demonstration. But, it must be borne in mind that the spirit of exclusion was still in full force amongst the Anglo-Irish clergy, and no Irishman was eligible for benefices within the Pale. Learning, which is ever the handmaid of true piety, found its home as in ancient times amongst the two classes of the clergy, the secular and regular. The number of learned works published at that time clearly proves it. Amongst the many eminent men who then adorned the Church in Ireland, Maurice O'Fihely, Archbishop of Tuam, ranks foremost. His biographers, for he had many, inform us, that he "was eminent for his extraordinary knowledge in Divinity, Logic, Philosophy, and Metaphysics," that he published a Dictionary of the Holy Scriptures, and was styled by his contemporaries at home and abroad, "The Flower of the World." He had been a Franciscan Friar

before his promotion to the See of Tuam, but did not long survive his appointment.

Now, capital has been made by some writers out of a description of the Church in Ireland taken from the State Papers, Part III., Vol. II., pp. 15, 16. If it reflected a true picture, a Reformation would indeed have been needed, but not the kind introduced by Henry VIII., nurtured by Edward VI., and propagated with fire and sword by Elizabeth. The Report states: "Some sayeth, that the prelates of the Church and the clergy is much the cause of all the mysse order of the land, for there is no arch-bishop, ne bysshop, abbot, ne prior, parson ne vicar, ne any other person of the church, high or lowe, greate or smalle, Englysh or Irishe, that usythe to preach the worde of Godde, saveing the poor fryers beggars." "Some sayeth"—Who were these "Some," or what was their assertion worth? Were they parties who benefited by the disturbance of the old order of things at the Suppression, and so suspected of having been partial, and eager to seek any and every palliation for the State Church as by law established. Now every student of Irish history, as contained in our Annals, knows that that anonymous statement is unwarranted by fact. It will suffice to take two instances, as we find them recorded in Dowling's *Annals* about this time, to show the fallacy of the accusation of wholesale neglect of preaching the Word of God. Of Nicholas Maguire, Bishop of Leighlin, 1490-1512, Dowling (Protestant Chancellor of Leighlin) writes: "When he was Prebendary of Ullard, he preached and delivered great learning with no less reverence, being in favour with the King and nobility of Leinster, who, together with the Dean and Chapter, elected him Bishop of Leighlin." And of Maurice Deoran, or Doran, who a few years later succeeded him in Leighlin, Dowling again

writes: "He was a most eloquent preacher." It cannot be denied that at that time some Church dignitaries affected the airs and magnificence of worldly magnates, nor that they gave scandal to their flocks by their absenteeism. Other abuses, no doubt, existed, but the watchful providence of God had made provision for their removal through His authorised ministers. But, alas! a new condition of affairs shall soon arise. The most powerful political engine ever fabricated for the extension of the English power in Ireland shall be introduced, one which shall eventually break up the tribe lands, annihilate the sway of the ancient chieftains, and reduce their impoverished descendants to the condition of serfs and menials. And this shall be called reforming the Church! Even in this revolution, Mellifont shall play her part, and become revolutionized and misappropriated.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SUPPRESSION OF MELLIFONT.

“No more shall Charity with sparkling eyes,
 And smiles of welcome, wide unfold the door,
 Where pity listening still to nature’s cries,
 Befriends the wretched and relieves the poor.”

(Keats.)



THE Religious Orders, which succeed each other in the Catholic Church, are subject to laws similar to those that govern the productions of nature. They grow from feeble and imperceptible seeds, increase, flourish, and bear fruit; then decrease, fade, and fall to the ground. But they have produced a fruit, which contains within it the germs of a new seed-time, and which bursts forth vigorously from the decaying sheath to reproduce its never-failing kind. This work of reproduction and subsequent expansion is aided, directed, and encouraged by him, to whom is divinely committed the government of the Church; and when pseudo, self-styled reformers essay the difficult task, their true character is unmasked in the inevitable ruin and desolation which follow, instead of the order and rehabilitation which were promised. Bluff King Hal, or the Merrie Monarch, as Henry VIII. was familiarly and affectionately called by his loving subjects in the beginning of his reign, was in need of money to squander on his passions and pleasures. In his newly assumed character, therefore, of Head of the Church in his dominions (which, by Act of

Parliament, he made it high treason to deny), he suppressed the lesser monasteries whose annual income did not exceed £200. This was done, forsooth, in the interests of religion!!! The proceeds of the confiscation were soon dissipated, and the wily Cromwell, whom the King had appointed his *Vicar-General*, suggested the suppression and appropriation to the King's uses, of all the monasteries within the realm. Again it is his zeal for the promotion of God's glory that is pleaded as his motive for the nefarious deed. Three years before, when addressing the Houses of Parliament in behalf of the measure for the suppression of the lesser monasteries, he publicly gave thanks to God, that in the large commuities "religion is right well kept and observed." And yet, what a metamorphosis in such a short space! All had now fallen away, and had inexplicably sunk into all manner of iniquity! Spelman, in his *History of Sacrilege*, tells the mode adopted by this model Reformer to carry his motion for investing in the Crown the property of all the Religious Orders. "The King sent for the Commons," he tells us, "and informed them he would have the Bill pass, or take off some of their heads." This they knew to be no empty threat; and pass the Bill they did on that memorable day of May 13, 1539. The Lords, as a body, voted for it; partly through a feeling of jealousy towards the Churchmen, who enjoyed no inconsiderable share of the monarch's confidence and favour, and so they rejoiced at whatever promised to destroy this good understanding between them; and partly through cupidity, for they hoped for a share in the booty. The Bishops at that juncture are blamed for their weakness in complying with so unjust a proceeding; but they were divided in their councils; some considering it the less of two evils to sacrifice the Religious houses, in the hope that the

misunderstanding between the King and the Pope would be soon adjusted and the monks restored, yielded to the King; others, unworthy of their office, as it must be admitted, worldly men, courtly prelates, who dreaded the King's displeasure, obsequiously obeyed his mandate.

Besides his greed for gold, the King had another potent motive for suppressing the monasteries, one that gave a zest to this disgraceful act: he wanted the further to spite the Pope by inflicting such an unheard-of injury on religion. Other motives, too, were not wanting, such as state policy, so the King alleged, and the want of constant affection towards his person on the part of the Religious, particularly in his new capacity. This, Lord Herbert (who was no friend of the monks) admits in his *Life of the King*. His Lordship writes: "The monks were looked upon as a body of reserve for the Pope, and always ready to appear in his quarrels." Perhaps, their opposition to the King's assumption of spiritual power precipitated matters. At all events, one of them, zealous for God's law, had the courage to reproach him to his face in a sermon preached at Greenwich before the King's marriage with Anne Boleyn. This fearless champion of justice, this intrepid son of St. Francis, thus addressed the dissolute monarch:—"I am that Micheas, O King, whom you will hate because I must tell you truly that this marriage is unlawful; and I know that I shall eat the bread of affliction and drink the water of sorrow; yet, because our Lord has put it in my mouth, I must speak it." And when he and another faithful brother friar were brought before the King's council, who rebuked them, and declared them deserving of being shut up in a sack, and thrown into the Thames, for the boldness of their language in the matter of the King's marriage, his companion smiling said: "Threaten these things to the rich and

dainty persons, who are clothed in purple, and fare deliciously, and have their chiefest hope in this world; for we esteem them not, but are joyful, that, for the discharge of our duty we are driven hence; and, with thanks to God, we know the way to heaven to be as ready by water as by land." (Stowe, *Church Chronicle*.)

It was not, then, for dissoluteness of morals, nor for illiteracy, nor for backwardness in preaching the Word of God, nor yet for being drones in society, that the monks were turned from their peaceful homes. The true cause was, that the King knew, and his criminal advisers also knew, that the monasteries were as impregnable fortresses, which in defence of truth and justice, would hold out firm against seductive bribes, and the most appalling threats; hence they must be swept away under plea of general corruption of morals, etc., and their properties held up as a bait to draw over proselytes to the new order of things. The historian, Lingard, writing of the attitude of the monks towards the King's supremacy in spiritual matters, says: "Secluded from the world, the Religious felt fewer temptations to sacrifice their consciences to the commands of their Sovereign, and seemed more eager to court the crown than to flee the pains of martyrdom."

Here, in Ireland, one of the King's advisers counselled him to suppress some of the monasteries, and to convert them into residences for young noblemen, who would promote and defend the King's interests. Patrick Finglas, created by Henry VIII. Chief Baron of the King's Exchequer, and afterwards Lord Chief Justice, wrote a book entitled: "A Breviate of the getting of Ireland and of the decay of the same," in which he recommends the suppression of the monasteries bordering on the Pale, "because they were giving more aid and supportacion to the Irish than to the King." "Let the Abbeyes," he goes

on to say, "be given to young lords, knights, and gentlemen out of England, which shall dwell upon the same." This advice seemed good to the King, and it was literally carried out, but to far greater extent than this astute lawyer had anticipated.

Mellifont, in common with the other Religious establishments in Ireland within grasp of the King (for in Ulster, they were free from molestation under O'Neil and O'Donnell), must have heard with dismay the rumours afloat about a general suppression, and grief and consternation must have filled the hearts of the monks. Was it possible, they asked, that the King, whose person they respected, whose laws they obeyed, would drive them forth, wanderers over the world, which many of them had renounced in early youth; and now, without adequate provision, were they, in their declining years, to perish by the roadside? Were their beautiful church, their loved cloister, their shady groves, no more to shelter them, and were they to sever connection with a spot endeared to them by so many holy associations? Yes, it is true, alas! for the Abbot of St. Mary's, Dublin, being nearer authentic sources of information, has heard it and has sent word, that sentence is passed on all, and their doom has sounded; for the following Royal Commission was forwarded to the Deputy, with peremptory orders to have it executed forthwith:—

Royal Commission directed to John Allen, Chancellor; George, Archbishop of Dublin; William Brabazon, Vice-Treasurer; Robert Cowley, Master of the Rolls; and Thomas Cusacke, Esq.; reciting, "That from the information of trustworthy persons, it being manifestly apparent that the monasteries, abbeys, priories, and other places of Religious or Regulars, in Ireland, are at present in such a state, that in them, the praise of God and the welfare of

man are next to nothing regarded; the Regulars and nuns dwelling there being so addicted, partly to their own superstitious ceremonies, partly to the pernicious worship of idols, and to the pestiferous doctrines of the Roman Pontiff, that unless an effectual remedy be promptly provided, not only the weak, low order, but the whole Irish people, may be speedily infected to their total destruction. To prevent, therefore, the longer continuance of such Religious men and nuns in so damnable a state, the King (having resolved to resume into his hands all the monasteries and Religious houses, for their better reformation, to remove from them the Religious men and women, and to cause them to return to some honest mode of living and to true religion,) directs the Commissioners to signify this his intention to the heads of Religious houses; to receive their resignations and surrenders willingly tendered; to grant to those tendering it liberty of exchanging their habit and of accepting benefices under the King's authority; to apprehend and punish such as adhere to the Roman Pontiff and contumaciously refuse to surrender their houses; to take charge for the King's use of the possession of those houses, and assign competent pensions to those who willingly surrender." (*Patent and Close Rolls, Chancery, Ireland, Morrin, 1539-40, April 30, Henry VIII., 30^o, p. 55.*)

Most marvellous, indeed, and sudden, and quite unprecedented in history, was this utter decadence from godliness to "idolatry and the pestiferous doctrine of the Roman Pontiff" on the part of 100,000 persons within the space of three short years! But, behold! the godly monarch will reform them (supposing they needed reform) in the fashion recorded in the old English proverb: "The devil amended his dame's leg; when he should have set it right, he brake it quite in pieces."

That the Deputy, Lord Gray, did not consider the monks and nuns an effete body, addicted to evil practices, will appear evident from the letter he addressed to Cromwell, and which was signed by his Council. It bears date 21st May 1539 :—

“May it please your honourable Lordship to be advertised, that by the report of Thomas Cusacke and others repaired lately out of the realm of England into this land, it hath been openly bruited the King’s grace’s pleasure to be, that all the monasteries within this land should be suppressed, none to stand. Amongst which, for the common weal of this land, if it might stand with King’s most gracious pleasure by your good Lordship’s advertisement, in our opinion it were right expedient that six houses should stand and continue, changing their habit and rule into such sort as the King’s grace shall will them: which are namely, St. Mary’s Abbey, adjoining Dublin, a house of white monks (Cistercians); Christ Church, a house of canons situated in the middle of the City of Dublin; Grace Dieu Nunnery, in the County Dublin; Connell, in the County Kildare; Kenlys or Kells, and Jerpoint (this latter Cistercian also), in the County Kilkenny. *For in these commonly, and in others such like, in default of common inns, which are not in this island the King’s Deputy and all others his Grace’s Council and Officers, also Irishmen and others resorting to the King’s Deputy in these quarters is and hath been most commonly lodged at the cost of the said houses. Also, in them, young men and children, both gentlemen’s children and others, both of man kind and woman kind be brought up in virtue and in the Englishie tongue and behaviour to the great charge of the said houses; that is to say, the woman kind of the whole Englishie of this land, for the most part, in the said nunnery, and the man kind in the other houses.*”

And the Abbot of St. Mary's, petitioning soon after for exemption from the general suppression, pleads in a letter to the same Cromwell: "Verily we be but stewards and purveyors to other men's uses for the King's honour, keeping hospitality, and many poor men, scholars and orphans."

All petitions are unavailing; the King is inexorable; and St. Mary's and Mellifont, and the others included in the original list must go down before the despot's unholy will, untried, unheard, but with the nation's regret, those alone excepted, who thirsted for and shared the sacrilegious booty. Before the lamp of piety and learning be extinguished for ever in Mellifont, let us take a parting glance at it, so that the contrast may be the more marked as we note its vicissitudes later on.

In that bright July morning (1539), when the bell summoned the monks of Mellifont to matins for the last time, the sun rose over as fair a picture as could well be conceived, when its brilliant rays shot floods of light through the woods and valley, and gilt the quivering tree-tops with lustrous gold. And the enormous piles of white masonry looked whiter for the glinting of the sun-beams, and many a fantastic shadow was cast on the tessellated pavement in the church by the "dim religious light" of the gorgeous stained glass windows. The statues of the Twelve Apostles looked down patronisingly from lofty pedestals, and bore the minds of the beholders aloft, to where the guerdon awaits the faithful soldier of Christ when his term of service here below shall have expired. Loud rose the rhythmic measure of the majestic Gregorian Chant rendered by over one hundred full-voiced singers on that beautiful morning, ere yet the skylark shook the dew-drops from his wings, or intoned his early carol o'er the meadows by the Boyne. The

pealing of the organ sounded loud and louder as they chanted their solemn Mass, but to many who then took part in that sacred function, its plaintive notes presaged the speedy end of their time-honoured establishment, which at any moment may receive the fatal visit of the Commissioners. In its internal economy it was wisely and worthily governed, its community numbered 150 Choir monks, besides Lay Brothers and familiars, its schools were prosperous, and from their widespread reputation, merited the title of "famous" which was accorded them. The children of the monks' tenants received a free education here; moreover, the monks conducted a school, which we would now call a seminary, where gentlemen's children and others were taught the higher branches suited to prepare them for their career in after-life. Their peaceful valley was screened on every side from wintry blasts by tasteful plantations, useful and ornamental; for a thickly planted orchard, chiefly of apple and pear trees, which covered both sides of the River Mattock from the mill to where the bridge now spans the river, survived till within the memory of many still living who describe it as having been so dense that one could cross the valley on the tops of them. The grounds surrounding the monastery were laid out with commendable taste; the lands yielded plentiful crops, and supported numerous herds of cattle. The hill south-east of the abbey was covered over with oak of gigantic size—the growth of centuries—and on the Meath side were screens of valuable timber. Their tenants were contented and prosperous; for the monks were indulgent landlords. Their rents were paid in kind, and for the rest, they found a ready market always at the abbey, where a huge supply of provisions was constantly needed for the strangers and the poor who sought and found a ready welcome there.

The spiritual wants of the tenants and dependants were attended to by one of the monks, John Byrrel, whose name occurs first in the list of those belonging to Mellifont to whom pensions were granted. He is styled Parson of Mellifont. It is probable, too, that others of the abbey priests ministered to Tullyallen parish (though it is scarcely probable that the present parish is conterminous with the old one), to Monknewtown and Donore; for in the English Episcopal Registers, twelve volumes of which have been recently published, it is noted that their brethren in England served the parishes in the immediate vicinity of the monasteries; and, moreover, we find in the list of pensioners of other Cistercian houses in Ireland, the names of three or more, in the same monastery, who are called parsons. Medical advice and medicine were dispensed gratis at the Abbey. The sick poor were visited and cared for in their homes by physicians employed by the monks; they were also admitted into the hospital at the gate. On fixed days weekly, the poor of the locality came for and received loaves of bread which were specially baked for them, and meat in abundance, with beer, was distributed to them. In those days there were no poor laws; for the monks provided for all the wants of the indigent. The monks were in constant touch with all classes of society, at least the principal officers were, and they were the advisers, as well as the instructors, of all. The History of the English Abbeys of the Order, or the fragments that have survived the vandalism of the Dissolution, and which have been published by impartial Protestants, clearly prove that this picture of far-reaching and ungrudging beneficence is by no means fanciful. (*See Ruined Abbeys of Britain, by Frederick Ross.*) The Abbot of Mellifont took a prominent place in the

councils of the nation. He ranked as a Peer, and had a seat in the House of Lords before all the other Religious superiors, twenty-three more of whom were privileged to sit there. He was bound to supply a certain number of horsemen for the King's musters, and to maintain them at his own charge. Tradition has it that he could ride on his own territory from the sea at Drogheda to the Shannon at Athlone, but this requires confirmation. He owned some 4,000 acres at the suppression, extending on the south side of the Boyne from Drogheda to Rossnaree, and on the north, to Slane, including the fisheries and five salmon weirs on the river. He rented the fishing of sixteen corraghs at Oldbridge, for which he got £13 13s. 4d. annually. The *town* of Tullyallen belonged to him. It was then in a flourishing condition, but has fallen since from its rank as a town to that of a mere village, composed of a few scattered cottages. The district was then populous; for another village grew up near the Abbey occupied by tradesmen and dependants who were constantly employed by the monks. It was called Doagh. It is now level with the field. It stood a quarter of a mile north-west of Mellifont, beyond the Mattock. Its site is an elevated plateau, locally known as the Doagh Meadows. The entire annual revenue of the Abbey was estimated at £316, which, allowing for the difference in value of money since, would be equivalent to an income of close on £4,000 at the present day. On that the monks maintained themselves and a large staff of servants, "kept hospitality, and many poor men, scholars, and orphans." The Abbot entertained his guests daily at his own table in a spacious building apart from the monks' quarters, and was a man of light and leading, unlike the helpless imbecile portrayed by Scott in his novels. The Abbot was chosen, often from some distant monastery, for his

aptitude "in governing souls," which was the paramount consideration with St. Benedict in the selection of a superior. He should be learned, and sound both in doctrine and morals, to be entrusted with such a charge. It is only too true that unworthy persons, contrary to the Canons, were sometimes intruded into the position by powerful relatives, and they, alas! generally brought disgrace on religion.

As to the spiritual condition of Mellifont at the time of its suppression, it was certainly on a high level. No charge was brought against that community, on that score, even by its worst enemies; none but the general ones mentioned in the Commission. In truth and in fact, the observances then in force at Mellifont were identical with those introduced by Abbot Christian and practised at Clairvaux by St. Bernard and his saintly companions. If they were "idolatrous," and "superstitious," and savouring of the "pestiferous doctrines of the Roman Pontiff," so must have been the ancient practices of the Cistercians; and wonderful indeed was it, that till King Henry and his advisers discovered it, our ancestors, for four hundred years at least, approved of and took part in these same practices without a suspicion of the "pernicious" errors they were now found to contain! In the matter of discipline alone was there any decadence, and then the altered conditions of the times demanded some modifications. The use of flesh meat three days in the week was introduced, and instead of manual labour, other duties were substituted, such as teaching, copying, study, etc. In their daily lives, we are told by Rev. Dr. Gasquet, O.S.B., perhaps the greatest living authority in such matters, that the Cistercians at that time differed little from the Benedictines.

Such was the condition of Mellifont on that fatal day,

the 23rd July 1539, when the Commissioners, with an armed band, demanded admission and surrender, in the King's name. Remonstrance with them was vain, and the usual formality was gone through. They seized on the charters, registers, ledgers, etc., together with the keys of the treasury and store-rooms; took an inventory of all the possessions of the monastery, and sealed the Library and strong room. They, then, summoned the Abbot and all the monks to the Chapter-house, to sign the Act of Surrender. In the Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls, Chancery, Ireland, Henry VIII. (edited by James Morrin), the synopsis of it is given as follows at p. 135:—"Surrender of the Abbey or House of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Mellyfount, in the County of Louth, by Richard Contoure, Abbot, with the consent of the Convent; and of the church, belfry, cemetery, manors, lands, and all its possessions in the counties of Dublin, Kildare, and Carlow, with all charters, evidences, muniments, goods, utensils, ornaments and jewels."—July 23, 31^o. (1539). "Endorsed on the preceding surrender is a memorandum that the Abbot and Convent, assembled in the Chapter-house, voluntarily acknowledged the preceding surrender, delivered it into the hands of the Lord Chancellor, and prayed it might be enrolled in Chancery, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*. Witness, George, Archbishop of Dublin; Wm. Brabazon, Vice-Treasurer; Robert Cowley, Master of the Rolls." July 23, 31^o.

How often have these "voluntary" surrenders been flaunted by writers hostile to the monks, as if the farce of signing the document which made them beggars were a free act! They were anxious, forsooth, to shake off the burden of their religious obligations, through the facile dispensation so liberally accorded by the new Head of the Church, in the flush of his accession to ecclesiastical

supremacy! The late scholarly and liberal-minded Dean Butler, Protestant Rector of Trim, wrote thus on the subject:—"The form of surrender then executed omitted no property which could belong to the house. . . . There were added their charters, evidences, writings and manuscripts, their goods, chattels, utensils, ornaments, jewels, and debts, all these were granted to the King, to be disposed of at his good pleasure, without appeal or complaint, and the unhappy men *were forced to declare*, that they thus deprived themselves of house and home *of their own free will*, and that they put an end to a venerable institution, to which they were bound by so many solemn obligations, certain just and reasonable causes thereto moving their minds and their consciences." (*Register of the Priory of All Hallows*. Preface, p. xxix.)

The next step was, there and then, to auction off all the moveables of the monastery, except the jewels of the rich reliquaries, chalices, and other sacred vessels, with the plate and bells, which formed the King's special perquisite. The whole artistic woodwork of the church (choir and wainscotting) was smashed in pieces, and even the very tombs of the founders and others interred there, were sold and carted off. For a description of the work of destruction, as related by an eye-witness of such vandalism at the suppression of an English Cistercian monastery, see *The Irish Cistercians*, p. 45. The sale realised £141 7s. 3d., but no detailed account is given of the sum that each article fetched. According to another Commission addressed to John Allen, Chancellor; William Brabazon, Vice-Treasurer; and Robert Cowley, Master of the Rolls; dated May 20, 1539, the proceeds of such sales were ordered to be allocated "to pay the officers and servants of the Crown." When the church and monastery were

dismantled, and every article of value, no matter how trifling, had been removed, the order to clear out the monks was promptly given and executed; and the gates were shut behind them. Whither they went nobody cared, and whither to go was a problem to themselves difficult to be solved; for without money or provision, they were in a worse condition than the most destitute of beggars. The hoary old walls caught up their groans and lamentations on that day, as with breaking hearts they looked upon each familiar spot for the last time. This is one of the secrets the old stones of the few remaining buildings yet withhold from us. Mellifont beheld many moving spectacles during the four centuries of her existence, but none, perhaps, so deeply affecting as when her 150 children, amongst whom were the aged, tottering on the brink of the grave and leaning for support on some younger brethren, turned their back upon their happy home where they enjoyed an anticipated paradise. As the sad procession slowly gained the top of the hill, many a time they turned to take a last farewell look at their beloved monastery, till it faded from their view for ever. A few shillings each were allowed them for their immediate wants, but of that multitude only thirteen and the Abbot received pensions. This grant was fixed for them three days after their expulsion, after which they all disappear from the scene as effectually as if the Boyne had engulfed them.

The following entries are found in the Patent and Close Rolls Calendar, Henry VIII., pp. 59, 60: "Pension of £40 Ir. to Richard Contour, late Abbot of Mellyfount, payable out of the parishes of Knockmohan, Donowre, and Monkenewton, with clause of distress."—Sept. 10, 1539. And at p. 60, *ibid.*, "Pension to John Byrrell, late parson of Mellifount, £3 6s. 8d.; to Thomas Bagot,

£4; to Peter Rewe, 40/-; to Thomas Alen, 53/4; to William Norreis, 40/-; to Robert Nangle, 40/-; to Patrick Contour, 53/4; to William Veldon, £3 6s. 8d.; to Patrick Lawles, 40/-; to John Ball, 40/-; to Clement Bartholomewe, 20/-; to Phelim O'Neil, 20/-; payable out of the rents and lands of the parishes of Knockamowan, Donower, and Montnewton" (Monknewtown), 26 July, 1539.

Thus, then, were these fourteen provided for, but, of the others, not one received a single shilling, except, as has been said, a mere pittance that sufficed to procure them a few nights' shelter. This is no picture drawn from fancy; it is a well-authenticated fact, that where a peaceful surrender was not given or signed, no provision whatsoever was made for those who so refused. They were given a trifle at their expulsion, and turned adrift to swell the army of beggars, or to perish, as they did in hundreds, of hardships to which they were unaccustomed. The imagination cannot now well conceive the heartless, wanton cruelty then practised on the expelled Religious; who, if they had betrayed their consciences and taken the oath of Supremacy, might have staved off, at least for a time, the calamities that befell them. But only for a time; for in some instances where the monks, through mistaken notions, obeyed the Royal mandate, they shared the fate of their more steadfast brethren, owing to the insatiable rapacity of the King and his advisers. To those of the expelled who were priests, the hope was held out to them, in case of "free surrender," that they should be promoted to the first vacant benefices. As not one of the Religious expelled from Mellifont is enrolled on the list of those promoted to vacancies during that or the subsequent reigns, it is obvious that they held fast to their principles, and denied the King's Supremacy, an acknowledgment of which was indispensable before pro-

motion. All honour to them for their generous sacrifices, which made them worthy to be the last who saw the venerable institution reel and fall beneath the despot's blows. Their noble attitude was befitting the close of a work which was inaugurated with such splendour amid a nation's rejoicing. Like the setting sun, Mellifont disappeared in a halo of glory.

CHAPTER VIII.

MELLIFONT BECOMES THE HOME OF A NOBLE FAMILY—IS SOLD, AND IS DELIVERED UP TO RUIN AND DECAY.

“ Mute is the matin bell, whose early call
 Warn'd the grey fathers from their humble beds ;
 No midnight taper gleams along the wall,
 Or, round the sculptur'd saint its radiance sheds.”

(Keats.)



THE long line of distinguished men being thus rudely and abruptly terminated at Mellifont, with the suppression of the monastery, all memorials of their history were lost, and no trace of them has been left. Not a book, nor cross, nor chalice, register, nor chartulary remains. It appears that Mellifont had its Annalist and its Annals like *all* the other monasteries of the Order in Ireland ; for Bishop Nicolson, who wrote his “ Irish National Library ” in 1724, says: “ The Annals of Ireland from the foundation of this Abbey in 1142 to the year 1500, are, or were lately, in the hands of some of the learned men of this kingdom.” He does not tell us the name of the compiler, but only

the fact that they had been written at Mellifont. These are not cited by later writers, so they, also, must have perished long since. At the suppression of monasteries, the archives, chronicles, and registers were carefully sought by the Commissioners, because they contained correct information on the value and extent of the possessions of each house respectively; and the more extensive these were, the more sedulously were the records sought for. Hence it is that because the Cistercian Order had large possessions, the manuscripts were all seized and handed over with the monasteries to the grantees. The monks could not possibly take one away with them. So their history is now derivable from other sources, which, at best, are very meagre. Mellifont, which occupied so prominent and respected a position during its career, would not be found inferior to other houses of the Order in the number of its learned and remarkable men, were its ancient documents now available; and, judging from the long roll of distinguished men, who in every department of knowledge rendered the Order illustrious in other countries, we may safely allot a respectable quota of the same to Mellifont. De Visch compiled his *Writers of the Cistercian Order* in 1656, and Sartorius published a large tome in 1700, each containing notices of the illustrious men of the Order. No less than sixty-three large folio pages of this latter work are occupied with the names of the learned men, and the dates at which they flourished. He places all in distinct categories, and so we have St. Bernard heading the list, after whom come the Grammarians, next follow the Poets, Orators, Historians, Philosophers, Mathematicians, Astronomers, Musicians, then Doctors of Canon and Civil Law, and Doctors of Theology; finally, Professors in universities, and others, whose general attainments precluded classification. As

these works were written after the suppression of the monasteries in these countries, the materials relating to the Irish and English monasteries having passed into hostile hands or been destroyed, were no longer accessible. Ireland was ever remarkable for the thirst for learning displayed by her children, and for the singular proficiency attained by them, when the opportunity for it was afforded ; we may, then, justly conclude that learning and the polite arts found a home at Mellifont. For this latter branch, the beautiful buildings would, of themselves, suffice as an argument in favour of an advanced state of culture and refinement.

It is worthy of note, that neither the Irish people, nor the representatives of the Government in this country, brought, much less substantiated, any direct charges against the Irish monks, prior to the suppression. Hence it is, that their maligners had to import, for use against them, the staple arguments commonly used in England, and there only by venal scribblers, and those who profited by the downfall of the monks. To such the learned and impartial Protestant historian, the Rev. Doctor Maitland, adverts, when after giving credit to the monks for their having been benefactors to mankind, he writes in his preface to the *Dark Ages*:—"In the meantime, let me thankfully believe that thousands of the persons at whom Robertson, and Jortin, and other such very miserable second-hand writers, have sneered, were men of enlarged minds, purified affections, and holy lives, that they were justly revered by men, and, above all, favourably accepted by God, and distinguished by the highest honours which He vouchsafes to those whom He has called into existence, that of being the channels of His love and mercy to their fellow-creatures." And in our own time, the *Guardian*, an English Protestant newspaper, when re-

viewing the Rev. Doctor Gasquet's, O.S.B., learned work, *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries*, approvingly cites, amongst others, the following paragraph:—"The voices raised against the monks were those of Cromwell's agents, of the cliques of the new men and of his hireling scribes, who formed a crew of as truculent and as filthy libellers as ever disgraced a revolutionary cause. The later centuries have taken their tale in good faith, but time is showing that the monasteries, up to the day of their fall, had not forfeited the good will, the veneration, the affection of the English people." Mr. Lecky, too, with his usual candour and liberality, writes:—"Monastic institutions were the only refuges of a pacific civilisation; the only libraries, the only schools, the only centres of art, the only refuges for gentle and intellectual natures; the chief barriers against violence and rapine; the chief promoters of agriculture and of industry." (*The Political Value of History*, p. 14. London, 1892.)

The monks being now expelled, Mellifont was delivered up to desecration and ruin; the silence of the tomb reigned supreme, and the voice of prayer was heard no more; no longer did the bells from the tower send forth their cheering notes over the surrounding district to raise the hearts of the toiler to Heaven. These sweet toned bells, the gift of some princely benefactor, had been, with all the other moveable property, carried off by the spoiler. The Abbey, with all its spiritual and temporal possessions, was given, in 1541, to Laurence Townley, for 21 years. They passed by reversionary lease to — Brabazon, in 1546. In 1551, they were leased to the same for 21 years more, and in 1566, they came by reversionary lease to Edward Moore, the founder of the Drogheda family, who, at that time, came into Ireland, as a soldier of fortune. (*Appendix to the Report of the Deputy-Keeper of the Rolls and Grants of Elizabeth.*)

This Edward Moore, who was accompanied by his brother John, the founder of the Charleville family (now extinct), was descended from an ancient Kentish House. He fixed his residence at Mellifont, changing the church into a dwelling, which he strongly fortified against the attacks of the Ulster Irish. The statues of the Twelve Apostles, which once occupied places in the church, he caused to be removed to the hall, clad in red uniforms, with muskets on their shoulders, as a protest, no doubt, against "Popish idolatry." It is even said that he suffered the Founder's tomb, and those of others, or such portions of them as still were left, to remain as part of his domestic arrangements, without his being disturbed by such solemn surroundings. He was knighted by the Deputy, Sir Wm. Drury, and dying soon after, was succeeded by his son, Sir Garret, to whom Mellifont, with six other dissolved monasteries, and all their spiritualities (that is, the revenues of them, right of patronage, etc.) and temporalities, were granted in fee. By these means, was adhesion to the Crown purchased and services to it rewarded—services, which bore no equivocal meaning ever since the Invasion, as the Irish knew by long and bitter experience.

At this time, the Church, as by Law Established, became part and parcel of the State, and its most obsequious servant. Its ministers looked to the civil power for patronage, and even hoped for promotion through the officials of the Court; but only in a few instances were the livings worth the asking, as the greater part of their temporalities were bestowed on laymen, favourites of the Queen. We have a picture of the state of that Church in Ireland, soon after the suppression of monasteries, drawn by the Lord Deputy himself, in a letter to Queen Elizabeth. They who would fain believe in the blessed advantages which flowed from the Dissolu-

tion of Monasteries, and the introduction of the new religion, may take to heart the lesson it teaches. Sir Henry Sydney wrote to the Queen in April, 1576, on the condition of the diocese of Meath:—"There are within this diocese," he writes, "224 parish churches, of which number, 105 are impropriated to sundry possessions; no parson or vicar resident on any of them, and a very simple or sorry curate for the most part appointed to serve them; among which number of curates, only eighteen were found to be able to speak English, the rest being Irish ministers, or rather, Irish rogues, having very little Latin and less learning and civility. . . . In many places the very walls of the churches are thrown down, very few chancels covered; windows and doors ruined and spoiled. There are 52 parish churches in the same diocese which have vicars endowed upon them, better served and maintained than the others, yet badly. There are 52 parish churches here, residue of the first number of 224, which pertain to divers particular lords; and these, though in better state than the others commonly, are yet far from well." He concludes by saying:—"But yet your Majesty may believe it, that upon the face of the earth where Christ is professed, there is not a church in so miserable a case." Lord Grenville, in his *Past and Present Policy of England towards Ireland*, when commenting on Sydney's letters, from one of which the above is an extract, writes:—"Such was the condition of a church which was half a century before rich and flourishing, an object of reverence and a source of consolation to the people. It was now despoiled of its revenues; the sacred edifices were in ruins, the clergy were either ignorant of the language of their flocks, or illiterate and uncivilised intruders; and the only ritual permitted by the laws was one of which the people neither comprehended the language nor believed the doctrines;

and this is called establishing a reformation." That this condition of affairs was not confined to any particular diocese, but rather was the state in all, is evident from the sketch given by Spenser in his *View of the State of Ireland*. "They" (the ministers), he says, "neither read the Scriptures nor preach to the people, nor administer the Communion . . . only they take the tithes and offerings, and gather what fruit else they may of their livings. . . . It is a great wonder to see the zeal between the Popish priests and the ministers of the Gospel; for they spare not to come out of Spain, from Rome, and from Rheims, by long toil and dangerous travelling thither, where they know peril of death awaiteth them, and no reward or riches are to be found, only to draw people to the Church of Rome." Such were the immediate fruits of the Reformation as admitted and described by Protestant contemporaries.

One of the first proprietary acts of Sir Edward Moore, on his acquiring Mellifont, seems to have been to cut down and sell some of the magnificent timber planted by the monks. The old wooden house, so long an object of curiosity in Drogheda, and which was taken down in 1824, was chiefly composed of oak obtained from Mellifont Park. It was situated at the angle formed by the junction of Laurence Street and Shop Street, and was erected by Nicholas Bathe, as an inscription in raised characters, each six inches in length, testified. This inscription was on the Laurence Street side. "Made. Bi. Nicholas. Bathe. in. the. ieare. of. our. Lord. God. 1570. Bi. Hiu. Mor. Carpenter."

In 1592, Red Hugh O'Donnell, fleeing from Dublin Castle, where he had been detained a close prisoner, was received and kindly treated by Sir Edward Moore, at Mellifont. His reception is thus related in the *Life of*

Red Hugh, edited with notes by the late Father Denis Murphy, S.J. :—" After crossing the Boyne near Drogheda, Red Hugh and his companion mounted their horses, and proceeded about two miles from the river, where they saw a dense bushy grove in front of them on the road they came, and a large rampart all around it, as if it was a kitchen-garden. There was a fine mansion (called the great monastery), belonging to an illustrious youth of the English, by the side of the wood. He was much attached to O'Neil. . . . He (O'Donnell) went into the house and was entertained ; for he was well known there especially more than in other places."

In 1599, according to the family pedigree, Sir Garret Moore and Sir Francis Stafford were the only English house-keepers in the County Louth ; all the lands being wasted by the Ulster rebels. The next important event at Mellifont was the great O'Neil's surrender there to the Deputy, Lord Mountjoy, on the 24th March, 1602. The Lord Deputy sent Sir Garret Moore, as an old acquaintance of O'Neil's, with Sir Wm. Godolphin to parley with him, and O'Neil returned with them to Mellifont, where (on his knees, it is said by English writers,) he made his submission to the Deputy. Here, again, we have further proof of what has been stated before, that it was Irishmen who retained this country for the English Crown ; for when Sir George Carew sat down before Kinsale, where O'Neil was defeated, his army consisted of three thousand men, of whom two thousand were Irish.*

Five years later, that is, in 1607, O'Neil was again at

* It is not generally known that it was an Irishman who, on the fatal day of Aughrim, as St. Ruth rode to victory waving his cap, pointed him out to the gunner whose faithful shot deprived St. Ruth of his head and the Irish Army of a valiant General.

the "fair mansion of Mellifont to bid good-bye for ever to his good friend, Sir Garret, the fosterer of his son John." He tarried two days with him, and then said farewell. Having given his blessing, "according to the Irish fashion," to every member of his friend's household, he and his suite took horse, and rode rapidly by Dundalk on his way to Lough Swilly, where a ship awaited him to bear him from his native land for ever.

By an Inquisition taken on the 14th June, 1612, the possessions of this Abbey were found as follow:—"The site, a water-mill, a garden, an orchard, a park called Legan Park, the old orchard containing two acres; the silver meadow, nine acres; the wood meadow, ten acres; and the doves' park; 80 acres of underwood; Killingwood, being great timber, containing twelve acres; Ardagh, twenty acres, being the demesne lands; and the grange and town of Tullyallen," etc.

In 1615, July 20th, Sir Garret was created Baron Moore of Mellifont, by King James I. In 1619, Baron Moore obtained a royal grant of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, from the same King; and in 1621, he was created a Viscount, with the title of Viscount Moore of Drogheda. St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, passed from the family some fifty years later.

As has been said, no trace of the expelled religious remains after the suppression of Mellifont. It, however, may be assumed, that some few of them lingered around the hallowed spot to which their affections clung, and that they shared the labours and dangers incident to the Catholic missionaries of the period, as is well known their brethren in other parts of Ireland did after their expulsion. It cannot now be ascertained whether, or not, an unbroken line of titular Abbots of Mellifont was maintained after the dissolution of the Abbey; but, in

1623, an oratory in Drogheda, belonging to the Cistercians, was served by five or six Fathers of the Order under Patrick Barnewall, who had been appointed Abbot of Mellifont by the Pope; and in 1625, he received the abbatial benediction in the church of St. John, in Waterford, at the hands of the Most Rev. Thomas Fleming, Archbishop of Dublin. This Patrick Barnewall belonged to the Bremore branch (Co. Dublin) of the ancient and illustrious family of that name. After having studied the Humanities, Philosophy, Theology, and Canon Law in the Universities of Douay and Paris, he was ordained priest, and discharged missionary duties in Drogheda. In a sketch of his life given by a fellow-labourer, it is related, that one night as he lay awake, St. Bernard appeared to him and told him he would be a monk of his Order. Though he relished the idea, yet he did not immediately correspond with his inclinations till he was grievously afflicted with a severe sickness, when he remembered the vision, and being urged by his two sisters, who had consecrated themselves to God, he entered the Novitiate of the Order in Kilkenny, and was at once restored to health. Soon after his profession he was appointed Abbot of Mellifont by Apostolic authority; and he admitted novices into the Order at his "hiding-place" at Drogheda, whom he sent to be educated at the Cistercian College, Louvain, and to other Continental Colleges. He was a very learned man, particularly in Canon Law, and was consulted as an authority on this subject. During the siege of Drogheda, in 1641, his goods were seized and himself cast into prison, but through the influence of some powerful relatives he was liberated. He died in his father's house in September, 1644, and was buried in the church of Donore, which formerly belonged to Mellifont. John Devereux, a native

of the Co. Wexford, who had been educated at Louvain, was appointed by the Pope, Abbot of Mellifont, in 1648. He, with Father Luke Bergin and Father Patrick Grace, both natives of Co. Kilkenny, Father Malachy O'Hartry, a native of Waterford, Father John Bryan, a native of Drogheda, and Father Plunket, constituted the new community of Cistercian monks under Abbot Patrick Barnewall, when he opened the oratory in Drogheda, in 1623. Whether all or any of them perished in the general massacre of Drogheda, under Cromwell, we cannot tell, but they disappeared thenceforth, and John Devereux seems to have been the last titular Abbot of Mellifont.

In the Rebellion of 1641, Mellifont and its owner, Lord Charles Moore, son of Garret, the first Viscount, became involved. On the 21st November, just a short time after the outbreak, the rebels under Sir Phelim O'Neil, when on their way to besiege Drogheda, made a halt at Tullyallen, and "sent a party of 1,300 foot down to Mellifont, the Lord Moore's house, which their design was suddenly to surprise; but, contrary to their expectation, they found there twenty-four musketeers and fifteen horsemen, who very stoutly defended the house as long as their powder lasted. The horsemen, when they saw themselves beset so as they could no longer be serviceable to the place, opened the gates, issued out and made their passage through the midst of the rebels, and so, notwithstanding the opposition they made, escaped safe to Drogheda. The foot having refused to accept of the quarter at the first offered, resolved to make good the place to the last man; they endured several assaults, slew one hundred-and-forty of the rebels, before their powder failed them; and at last they gave up the place upon promise of quarter, which was not kept, for some of them were killed in cold blood, all were stripped, and two old

decrepid men slain, the house ransacked and all the goods carried away."

The above is from Sir John Temple's *History of the Irish Rebellion*, and it has been quoted by Catholics and Protestants alike when alluding to Mellifont; they each add, however, a little spice to suit the palates of their respective readers. Of this attack on Mellifont we have no less than four versions, two of which deserve but little credence, viz., that already given, and that of Dean Bernard. The account given by the latter is fuller, and enters more minutely into detail, so that some particulars tax the capacity of the most credulous; as, for instance, when he tells us that twenty-four musketeers killed one hundred-and-forty rebels though they had only "six shots" of powder, "some only four," and that they rammed in six bullets together, and how each shot killed several. Verily, every bullet had its billet there! That be sharp practice without doubt! He also tells, how the loss on the part of the garrison was thirteen killed, "whom a *Friar was so forward for deed of charity as to procure them burial in the church adjoining.*" Thank goodness, he has the grace to credit even a Friar with some remnant of humanity! He does not say that the rebels stripped all. They could not have done so; for eleven escaped to Drogheda. These godless Papists capped their iniquity in this holy man's estimation when they "threw a fair church Bible into the mill-pond." The last charge on the sheet is—"Their best language to them all was 'English dogs,' 'rogues,' etc."

Before producing the other two versions, let us examine the characters of both these witnesses as drawn by Protestant writers. Sir John Temple wrote his *History* in 1656, from the "Depositions" preserved then in Dublin Castle, but which are now in Trinity College. These "Deposi-

tions" comprise the list of murders, burnings, etc., said to have been perpetrated by the Irish on the English Protestants during the war, and fill thirty-two volumes. He was some time Privy Councillor, but was removed by Ormonde, and Carte tells how "two traitorous and scandalous letters against his Majesty written by Temple were read in Committee." And Dr. Nalson, another Protestant writer, accuses him of having been in league with the Parliamentarians, whom Ormonde describes as those who became the "murderers of his (the King's) royal person, the usurpers of his rights, and destroyers of the Irish nation; by whom the nobility and gentry of it were massacred at home, and led into slavery, or driven into beggary abroad." In 1674, Temple protested that the work was published without his knowledge, as appears from *State Papers*, Dublin edition, p. 2.

Dean Bernard was Primate Ussher's chaplain, and like his master, was a Puritan. During the siege of Drogheda he watched over the Primate's library lest the rebels should attack the magnificent palace which *had been built with the fines from the recusants*. He was afterwards Cromwell's chaplain and almoner, in either of which capacities, it would be quite unreasonable to expect justice to the Irish from him.

As to the "Depositions" themselves, they are summarily dealt with by the Rev. Dr. Warner, another English Protestant historian of that Rebellion. "There is no credit to be given to anything that was said by these Deponents which had not others' evidence to confirm it." And again, the same Dr. Warner, who went through the drudgery of perusing and examining these "Depositions," says: "As a great stress has been laid upon this collection in print and conversation, and as the whole evidence of the massacres turns upon it, I spent a great deal of my

time examining the books; and I am sorry to say, that they have been made the foundation of much more clamour and resentment than can be warranted by truth and reason." It was in them that Temple found the story of the ghosts of the murdered Protestants, in the River Bann, at the Bridge of Portadown, shrieking for revenge, and one in particular, who was seen there from the 29th December to the end of the following Lent!!! He sets down the number of English and Protestants who were "murdered in cold blood, destroyed some other way, or expelled out of their habitations in two years by the Irish, as exceeding 300,000," though, according to Petty, there were not at the outbreak of the Rebellion 20,000 English Protestants in Ulster, where nearly all the murders were said to have been committed. Dr. Warner also tells how he saw in the Council books at Dublin, the letter which the Commissioners of the Irish Parliament wrote to the English Parliament, urging them to show no mercy to the Irish, but rather, to revenge the murders and massacres committed by them. They tell them, "that besides eight hundred-and-forty-eight families, there were killed, hanged, burned, and drowned, six thousand and sixty-two." Dr. Warner considers 2,000 about the correct number. A prodigious number to be sure, but how far less than Temple's 300,000. Warner says, finally, at p. 296 of his work so often cited: "It is easy enough to demonstrate the falsehood of every Protestant historian of this Rebellion."

The Rev. Mr. Carte, an English Protestant clergyman, who wrote the celebrated *Life of the Duke of Ormonde*, tears all Temple's assertions in pieces, and demonstrates from indubitable authority the falsehoods of his statements. Writing of these "Depositions" he says, at Vol. II., p. 263: "Anyone who has ever read the examinations

and depositions which were generally given on hearsay, and contradicting one another, must think it very hard upon the Irish, to have all those without distinction to be admitted as evidence." And in the Preface to the collection of Letters affixed to the Life he alludes to the "uncertain, false, mistaken, and contradictory accounts, which have been given of the Irish Rebellion, by parties influenced by selfish views and party animosities, or unfurnished with proper and authentic materials and memoirs."

It is obvious from the first pages of Temple's History what the scope of the work is. It is a gross libel on the whole Irish nation from the earliest times. In one page, he twice applies to them the epithet of a beastly race, and, no doubt, worthy to be rooted out, to make room for Royalists of his type, who worshipped the rising sun.

Carte, in his *Life of Ormond*, Vol. II., p. 135, gives an account of the attack on Mellifont as follows:—"This detached body of the northern rebels appeared on November 21st in sight of the town of Drogheda, within four miles of it, presuming (as was imagined) upon some party within the place. Sir H. Tichburne, Governor of Drogheda, had the week before sent a party of fifteen horse and twenty-two foot to Mellifont (formerly an Abbey of Bernardine monks, founded by Donagh O'Carroll, prince of Ergall, about A.D. 1142, but then an house of the Lord Viscount Moore's, three miles from town), as well as to secure that place from the incursions of roving parties, as to keep abroad continual sentinels and scouts, that might inform him of the rebels' motions. His orders were not well observed, nor his party so vigilant as they ought to have been; for on the 21st, the rebels on a sudden encompassed the house, and (after the soldiers' powder was spent) took it with a loss of some one hundred

and twenty of their own number (among which were Owen M'Mahon and another captain), and eleven of the soldiers, with most of the arms. As the Irish were breaking into the house on all sides, the troopers causing the great gate to be opened, sallied out, and opening themselves a way through the body of the rebels, got safe with the rest of the foot soldiers sore wounded to Drogheda." This may be accepted as a true, unvarnished account of this much magnified attack; especially as Tichburne himself, who cannot be accused of partiality towards the Irish, and who was Governor of Drogheda at the time of its occurrence, seems to have been Carte's authority for it, as appears from a reference to a letter written by Tichburne to Ormond, but not given in the collection of Letters mentioned above. There is no question here of quarter given, or of faith broken; no cold-blooded murders, no gruesome picture of gory corpses unburied, nor of fiendish glee on the part of rebels dancing round their watch-fires in presence of their stark and naked victims strewn around!!! Pity such absurdity should be believed or repeated in our time, when it should have been relegated to the same lumber-heap as the story of the ghosts of the Bann!

We have yet another account from a paper or Report published in London by two parties who only give their initials, T. A. and P. G. It was "printed by Edward Blackmore, at the Angel, in Paul's Churchyard, in 1642," and is now to be found in the *Contemporary History of Affairs in Ireland*, so ably edited by Sir John Gilbert, at Vol. I., Part II., p. 420. There is a discrepancy in the dates, but that is immaterial, as only one attack is said to have been made. It tells us, "That on the same day (April 30), three or four hundred rebels came before Mellifont, three or four miles from Drogheda, where Lord

Moore had left on Tuesday before a garrison of four-score foot and about thirty horse; the rebels plaid hotly upon them until the horse were ready within; but as soon as the horse were ready, they, with the foot, sallied out, and killed about thirty of the rebels." This cannot be far from the truth, as it seems to be free from the exaggerations in which Tichburne dealt, when recounting the numerical strength of his and the enemy's forces, ascribing to the latter poltroonery and cowardice in action, and crediting them with excessively heavy losses.

The predisposing cause, why the Ulster Irish were ready for rebellion was the misery the native inhabitants endured since the Plantation of the six forfeited counties, some thirty odd years before. Even the remnants of the estates allowed them by the Crown were filched from them by the greed and cunning of unscrupulous Commissioners, who enriched themselves on the ruin of the Irish. Prendergast (*Cromwellian Settlement*, pp. 49-50,) thus describes the condition of the old Irish nobility and gentry then:—"Little they (the Planters, who got the forfeited estates) thought or cared how the ancient owner, dispossessed of his lands, must grieve as he turned from the sight of the prosperous stranger to his pining family; daughters, without prospect of preferment in marriage; sons, without fit companions, walking up and down the country with their horses and greyhounds, coshering on the Irish, drinking and gaming and ready for any rebellion; most of his high-born friends wandering in poverty in France and Spain, or enlisted in their armies." The immediate cause of the Rebellion is thus stated:—"A letter was intercepted coming from Scotland to one Freeman of Antrim giving an account that a Covenanting army was ready to come to Ireland under General Lesly, to extirpate the Roman Catholics of Ulster, and leave the

Scots in possession of that province; that resolutions to that effect had been taken at their private meetings, as well as to levy heavy fines on such as would not appear at their kirk for the first and second Sunday, and on failure the third, to hang at their own doors without mercy, such as remained obstinate" (Carte's *Ormond*, Vol. I., p. 160). This notion prevailed universally amongst the rebels, and was chiefly insisted on by them as one of the principal reasons of their taking up arms.

The Rebellion broke out, then, on the 23rd October, 1641, and the actors in it were a "tumultuous rabble" as Ormond called them, intent chiefly on plundering and driving off the English settlers, yet before the end of the month the principal towns of the North were in their hands. Leland, a Protestant historian, writes:—"That in the beginning of the insurrection, it was determined by them that the enterprise should be conducted in every quarter, with as little bloodshed as possible" (*History of Ireland*, Vol. III., p. 101). At p. 131, the same historian writes:—"The Lords Justices might have stamped out the insurrection at once had Ormond's advice to levy a large number of troops been attended to; for the Irish were then formidable only in numbers, and not six hundred of them had proper arms. But their purpose was rather to fan it, in order to gratify their personal greed by extensive forfeitures." Warner, who has been so often quoted before, writes at p. 176 of his *History*:—"It is evident from the Lords Justices' letter to the Lord Lieutenant that they hoped for an extermination, not of the mere Irish only, but of all the old English families who were Roman Catholics." They issued a most truculent order to Ormond "to burn, kill, spoil, waste, destroy, the rebels, their relatives, houses and property." One of these Lords Justices is thus referred to by Carte:

“He was a man of mean extract, scarcely able to read and write . . . plodding, assiduous, and indefatigable, greedy of gain, and eager to raise a fortune; which it is not difficult for a man of indifferent parts to do, when he is not hampered with scruples about the ways of getting it” (*Ormond*, Vol. I., p. 190). This same Lord Justice, with three members of the Privy Council, was put under arrest for disobedience to his Majesty, King Charles, and for complicity with his enemies, the Parliamentarians of England. The Lord Justice was deposed and imprisoned, but he retained his ill-gotten property.

As has been said, the rebels became masters of the principal towns in the North without meeting any check, when they attacked Mellifont. Lord Moore was then in Drogheda with Sir Henry Tichburne, the Governor, with whose policy and methods he, both before and afterwards, identified himself; and, as an active agent of the Lords Justices, he was specially odious to the Irish. During the siege of Drogheda, he more than once, by his alertness and personal bravery, saved the town from falling into the hands of the besiegers. With the exception of Lord Moore and a few of the older families, both the Lords Justices themselves (who governed the country in the absence of the Lord Lieutenant), and their ruthless instruments were men of no fortune; or, were such as became enriched by the plunder of the Irish. Tichburne, in a letter to his lady, alludes to one of the commissions entrusted to him for execution, in which fiendish work Lord Moore was associated with him. After his return from the burning of Dundalk,* which he left a smouldering heap of ruins, he describes the results:—“There was neither man nor beast to be found in sixteen miles,

* The Puritans admitted that Sir Phelim O’Neil did not commence his alleged massacres until after the sacking and burning of Dundalk.

between the two towns of Drogheda and Dundalk; nor on the other side of Dundalk, in the County of Monaghan, nearer than Carrickmacross, a strong pile twelve miles distant" (Tichburne's *Siege of Drogheda*, p. 320). And in the same page he says, all this magnificent ruin and desolation were inflicted on the peasantry "without one penny of charge to the State, and that for the space of seven months, all under his command subsisted on the spoils" taken from the unfortunate people in that district. "The country and fields about Dundalk," he says, "were abounding in corn, which I allocated to the several companies, etc." The ghosts of the Bann must have been gluttled with vengeance!!!

And now Lord Moore's career is drawing to a close. After having been engaged in many successful skirmishes, raids, and minor actions, he burned with a desire for the honour of measuring swords with the great Owen Roe, who had defeated all the forces hitherto sent against him, and, according to O'Neil's Diary, he affected to despise O'Neil. He was therefore dispatched with a body of troops to dislodge that consummate strategist from a position occupied by him at Portlester Mill, within five miles of Trim. Borlase tells us that Lord Moore was killed in that engagement, August 7th, 1643, "through the grazing of a cannon bullet which he foresaw, yet took not warning enough to evade." The Author of the *Aphorismical Discovery*, who is commonly supposed to have been O'Neil's secretary, gives another account of his death. It is right to mention that this author was by no means a monk, nor was he a clergyman at all, as is evident from his apology in the Introduction, where he tells the reader that he was by profession a "sworde carrier," and that it was "alienat" to that profession to aspire to literary avocations. "The General" (O'Neil), he writes, "not well pleased with his

gunner, for he perceaved he shootted too high, and did little hurte, the peace was charged, the Generall tooke a perspective glasse, and saw wheare my Lord Moore stode. It being charged, the Generall did levell the same against Moore, gave fire, his aime was soe neare home, that he hitted him a little above his corpise, wherupon all dismembred, presently fell dead, the trunke of his bodie fallenge downe, and some of his members whisling in the aire to take possession by flight in some other field, or make such speede to accompany his soul to hell to be assured for winter quarter next springe.”

Lord Moore was succeeded by his son Henry, who, when Governor of Dundalk, in 1645, was more than suspected of plotting with the Parliamentarians to deliver up that town to Monroe. He was relieved of his charge by Ormond, who was then Lord Lieutenant, and being a minor, was sent by him to England (out of harm's way), to the Court, where he was kindly received by the King, who ordered livery to be granted him of his father's lands (*Carte*, Vol. IV., p. 154.) Lady Alice, his mother, was, it appears, inveigled into a plot at the same time to deliver up Drogheda to the Scots; for a wax impression of the keys of the gates having been given her, she caused the gunsmith of the troop, which Lord Henry commanded, to make false keys; but, being discovered, her ladyship, with others, was sent to Dublin. There, on examination before the Council, they confessed all. (*Ibid.*) Her Ladyship's end was a tragic one, as we read in Lodge's *Peerage*. “Lady Alice, younger daughter of Sir Adam Loftus, Viscount Elye, who broke her leg near the fort (Drogheda) by a fall from her horse (occasioned by a sudden grief arising from the first sight of St. Peter's Church, Drogheda, where her dear lord lay buried), on Wednesday, 10th June, 1649, and dying the 13th of a gangrene, was that night buried by him in the family tomb.”

There is another entry at the same place in Lodge. "Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Moore, sixth son of the first Viscount Mellifont, and brother to Lord Charles who was killed at Portlester Mill, who was an officer in the army for the reduction of Ireland, and in 1654, had a pension from the then Government of 10/- a week, and five of his brother Charles' children had £3 17s. a week in 1665, out of the district of Trim" (Lodge's *Peerage of Ireland*, Vol. II., pp. 99-100). This Francis Moore had been an officer in the King's army, but soon after the arrival in Ireland of Jones, the Parliamentarian General, he went over to him and took the Dundalk troops with him. It was from Cromwell's government he had his pension, but the pensions granted to Lord Charles' children were continued to them after the Restoration, and Lord Henry mentioned above, was created Earl of Drogheda, in 1661,—thus confirming the historic truism, that the ungrateful Stuarts heaped favours on their enemies and treated their best and most devoted adherents with cold indifference. As an illustration of this we have the instance of one of the chief actors in those troublesome times, Sir John Clotworthy, changing sides three times:—first, fighting in the King's name and commission against the Ulster Irish; next, siding with the Parliamentarians, his Majesty's deadliest enemies, and going over to England as the spokesman of a deputation sent to the Parliament of England to protest against the return of King Charles II., on rumour of peace and terms being negotiated between them; again, on King Charles' arrival in England, hieing over to tender his homages and congratulations—and lo! the reward of his fidelity and loyalty (?)—he was created Viscount Massereene. It is only one instance of several hundreds that may be cited. The unfortunate rebels whose banner bore the legend, "*Vivat Carolus Rex*"—

“Long live King Charles,” and who remained faithful to him to the last, were, by an irony of fate, robbed and banished by the Cromwellians, who were put in possession of their estates and confirmed in them by Charles II.!!!

In the foregoing pages, the authorities quoted are Protestants, and all, without exception, hostile to the Irish. Their testimony, nevertheless, is favourable to the rebels, save where the question of religion crops up, then their prejudice blinds their judgment, and hurries them into most glaring absurdities. One more fact about that saddest page of our history. Before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1641, there were 1,200,000 Irish Catholics in the country; at its close in 1652, the number had fallen to 700,000, and these were ordered under pain of death to transplant to Connaught—the remnant of a broken and plundered race!!!

Henry, the first Earl of Drogheda, did not long enjoy his honours; nor did his son and successor, Charles, who was succeeded by his brother Henry, the third Earl, who, on the eve of the ever-memorable Battle of the Boyne, entertained a party, amongst whom was one of King William's highest officers. On the morrow, July the 1st, the booming of King William's fifty pieces of “dread artillery” echoed along the hills and the valley of the Boyne, and shook the old abbey walls to their very foundations; and on that night, the oaken rafters of Mellifont rang to the cheers and toasts of the “glorious, pious, and immortal memory” of the Prince of Orange, on whose side Earl Henry commanded that day a regiment of foot. It may be interesting to mention here, that on the morning of the battle, the Irish Catholic soldiers wore scraps of white paper on their caps—emblematic of the livery of France; the followers of the Prince of Orange wore green boughs torn off the trees.

Charles, Lord Moore, son of Henry, the third Earl, married Jane, heiress of Arthur, Viscount Ely, who received as her portion the suppressed Abbey of Monasterevan, a Cistercian monastery founded by O'Dempsey, in the 12th century. It was called Rosglas by the Irish, and the Valley of Roses, in the list of monasteries of the Order in Ireland. When it came into Earl Charles' possession, he changed the name to Moore Abbey, and made it his residence. The sons of this Lord Charles, Henry and Edward, became earls successively, and Edward, the fifth earl, having settled down permanently at Monasterevan, sold Mellifont and some of the property in its immediate vicinity to Mr. Balfour of Townley Hall, in 1727.

The condition of Ireland at that time was truly deplorable. The Penal Laws were in full force against the unfortunate Catholics, who were reduced to a state little better than slavery. Dr. Johnson wrote of them some fifty years later:—"The Irish are in a most unnatural state; for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no such instance, even in the ten persecutions, as that which the Protestants of Ireland have exercised against the Catholics. Did we tell them we conquered, it would be above board; to punish them by confiscations and other penalties was monstrous injustice" (Boswell, at 1773).

With the Moore family departed also the very shadow of Mellifont's diminished greatness, and "time's effacing finger" almost completely obliterated what was once a gorgeous national monument, which stood out clearly as a finger-post on the ways of time. Gradually the fabric fell into decay, the owl hooted on the landing of the grand stair-case, and the daw and martin flitted unmolested through the deserted halls. The gardens and walks and

bowers disappeared beneath a crop of tangled brushwood, the product of neglect. Soon the roof fell in, the walls became seamed with many rents and toppled over with a crash; then Mellifont, the "Honey Fountain," the Monasthir Mor, or Great Abbey, as it was called, the foundation of saints and kings, the abode of the pious and the learned, the house pre-eminently of prayer, the asylum of the poor and friendless, became a shapeless accumulation of rubbish. True, a mill was erected about 100 years ago close to the site of the church, and, no doubt, it was told to strangers who then visited the ruins by people who professed to know all about monks, that it had more activity and exhibited more of the bustle of life than when the silent, slumbering monks dwelt there. But a mill in that hallowed spot was a huge incongruity and a wanton disregard for all its honoured associations. In 1884, the few remaining ruins became vested in the Board of Works, and the excavations which revealed the plan of the church, as described in Chapter I., were carried out. It only remains to be said that in Mr. Balfour of Townley Hall, the estimable gentleman who now owns Mellifont and some of the property formerly belonging to it, his tenants have found a liberal and generous benefactor, who enjoys the merited esteem and respect of all who know him.

As one ascends the hill over Mellifont, and, pausing on its summit, gazes on the lovely scenery around him, particularly along the valley of the Boyne, which Young called one of the completest pictures he had ever seen, then glances at the quiet valley beneath him, and remembers what prominent parts those who once trod that favoured spot played in our country's chequered history, his soul is filled with solemn thoughts too big for utterance. There, came the firm and gentle, yet daunt-

less, Malachy side by side with Oriel's proud Chief, and hand in hand, they knelt and prayed and consecrated it to the living God for ever. Thereon, rose up the magnificent temple on which neither cost nor labour was spared, that it might be worthy of Him Who deigns to dwell in tabernacles made by man; and generation succeeded generation of monks, who calmly dwelt in that peaceful valley, which, by their skill and enterprise, they converted into a garden of delights and a terrestrial paradise. The bishop and the king found there a resting-place when life's weary struggle was over, and their end was sweetened by the cheering hopes of a glorious immortality. The poor man and the homeless found there a welcome and a shelter, their wants being liberally attended to; and the blessings of a free education and of spiritual consolations were diffused on every side from that centre of learning and piety. The knight and baron came, the belted man of war made his home there, enjoyed his ephemeral honours, but he, too, is gone, severing all connection with it both by name and title, leaving no trace behind. The king and the knight have been brushed aside; and the old chess-board, Mellifont, alone remains. Impressed with these reflections, we take a glance beyond the grave, and there, we behold these actors pass before the great, most just, and supreme Judge, to receive the requital of their deeds, and to each is meted out reward or punishment according to his deserts. We, too, the spectators, are hastening towards that same goal; our future is indubitably in our own hands, according as we do or do not now live up to our convictions, and the dictates of our consciences.

And, now, we cannot help asking ourselves, what shall Mellifont's future be? At present it is a blank; but, shall the lamp of piety and learning be rekindled, and

the light burst forth anew there as in the days of its splendour? We know not; but we do know that, although God's ways are inscrutable, His wisdom and power are infinite. To Him be all glory for ever and ever. Amen.

APPENDIX I.

LIST OF ABBOTS OF MELLIFONT.

Saint Christian O'Connarchy, Founder and first Abbot,
Bishop of Lismore and Legate of the Holy See, 1150.

Blessed Malchus, brother of preceding.

Charles O'Buacalla, 1177, made Bishop of Emly.

Patrick, term of office not known.

Maelisa, appointed Bishop of Clogher in 1194.

Thomas, 1211.

Carus, or Cormac O'Tarpa, elected Bishop of Achonry in 1219,
resigned that See in 1226, returned to Mellifont where he died.

Mathew, 1289.

Michael, 1293.

William M'Buain.

Hugh O'Hessain, resigned 1300.

Thomas O'Henghan.

Radulph, or Ralph O'Hedian.

Nicholas of Lusk, 1325.

Michael, 1333.

Roger, 1346.

Reginald, 1349.

Hugh, 1357.

Reginald Leynagh, died 15th August, 1368.

John Terrour, 1370.

[There is no record of the names of Abbots in this interval.]

Roger, 1472.

John Logan.

Henry.

John Warren.

Roger Boly.

John Troy, 1486-1500.

Thomas Harvey, died 20th March, 1525.

Richard Conter, the last regular Abbot, pensioned in 1540.

As will be observed, the line of succession is incomplete between the years 1370 and 1472; and it is impossible now to fill in the gaps. The List is taken from Ware's *Cænobia Cisterciensia in Hibernia*, and Dalton's *History of Drogheda*.

APPENDIX II.

THE CHARTER OF NEWRY,

Copied and translated from the Original in the British Museum, from a copy given by John O'Donovan in *Dublin Penny Journal*, 1832-33, p. 102.

Maurice M'Laughlin, King of all Ireland, to all his Kings, Princes, Nobles, Leaders, Clergy and Laity, and to all and each the Irish present and to come, GREETING.

Know ye that I, by the unanimous will and common consent of the Nobles of Ultonia, Ergallia (Oricl), and O'Neach (Iveagh), to wit of Donchad O'Carroll, King of all Ergallia, and of Murchad his son, King of O'Meith, and of the territory of Erthur, of Conla, King of Ultonia, of Donald O'Heda, King of O'Neach (Iveagh), HAVE GRANTED AND CONFIRMED, in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Patrick, and St. Benedict, the Father and Founder of the Cistercian Order, to the monks serving God in Nyvorcintracta (Newry) as a perpetual and pure donation, the land of O'Cormac, whereon was founded the monastery of Athcrathin, with its lands, woods, and waters, Enancratha, with its lands, woods, and waters, Crumglean, with its lands, woods, and waters, Caselanagan, with its lands, woods, and waters, Lisinelle, with its lands, woods, and waters, Croa Druimfornac, with its lands, woods, and waters, Letri, Corcrach, Fidglassayn, Tirmorgannean, Connocol, etc. THESE LANDS with their MILLS, I have confirmed to the aforesaid monks of my own proper gift, for the health of my soul, that I may be partaker of all the benefits of masses, *hours* (*i.e.* vespers and matins), and prayers that shall be offered in the Monastery itself, and to the end of time.

And because I have founded the Monastery of Ybar cintracta (Newry), of my own free will, I have taken the monks so much under my protection, as sons and domestics of the

faith, that they may be safe from the molestations and incursions of all men.

I will also that, as the Kings and Nobles of O'Neach (Iveagh), or of Ergallia (Uriel), may wish to confer certain lands on this Monastery, for the health of their souls, they may do so in my lifetime, while they have my free will and licence, that I may know what and how much of my Earthly Kingdom, the King of Heaven may possess for the use of His poor Monks.

The Witnesses and Sureties are:—

Giolla MacLiag, Archbishop of Armagh, *holding the Staff of Jesus in his hand.*

Hugh O'Killedy, Bishop of Uriel (Clogher.)

Muriac O'Coffay, Bishop of Tirone (Derry.)

Melissa Mac in Clerig-cuir, Bishop of Ultonia (Down.)

Gilla Comida O'Caran, Bishop of Tirconnell (Raphoe.)

Eachmarcach O'Kane, King of Fearnacrinn and Kennacta
(now Barony of Keenaght, Co. Londonderry.)

O'Carriedh, the Great; Chief of Clan Aengusa, and Clan Neil.

Cumaige O'Flain, King of O'Turtray (Antrim.)

Gilla Christ O'Dubhdara, King of Fermanagh.

Eachmarcach O'Ffoifylain.

Maelmocta MacO'Nelba.

Aedh (Hugh) the Great Magennis, Chief of Clan-Aeda, in
O'Neach Uladh (Iveagh.)

Dermot MacCartan, Chief of Kenelfagartay (Kinelearty.)

Acholy MacConlacha, Gill-na-naemh O'Lowry, Chief of Kinel
Temnean.

Gilla Odar Ocasey, Abbot of Dundaletglass (Downpatrick.)

Hugh Maglanha, Abbot of Inniscumscray (Iniscourcy.)

Angen, Abbot of Dromoge, and many other Clerics and Laics.

APPENDIX III.

INVENTORY OF ESTATES OF MELLIFONT.

Richard Conter, the last Abbot of Mellifont, was, on the 23rd July, 1539, seized of two messuages, 167 acres of arable land, 10 of pasture, 5 of meadow, and 5 of pasture in Clut——, with a salmon weir; £13 13s. 4d. annual rent, arising from 16 fishing corraghs at Oldbridge, together with the tithe-corn of the same, all of the annual value, besides reprises, of £27 18s. 8d. ; also a messuage in Shephouse, with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £4 17s. 8d. ; three messuages, 120 acres of arable land, 20 of meadow,—a fishery, and a boat for salmon-fishing in Komalane, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £15 3s. ; 3 messuages, 2 cottages, a water-mill,—a fishing-weir, 120 acres of arable land, 3 closes, containing 6 acres of mountain in Schahinge, together with the tithe-corn, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £12 6s. 8d. ; 2 messuages,—20 acres of meadow and pasture in Donnore, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of 115/4; 2 messuages, 8 cottages, 46 acres of arable land, and 2 of meadow in Doo——, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £5 ; 4 messuages, 18 cottages, 39 acres of arable land, and 3 of meadow in Glassechalyine, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all the reprises, of £5 18s. 8d. ; —— 124 acres of arable land, and 10 of meadow in Graungethe, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £14 19s. 4d. ; a messuage and cottage, 45 acres of arable land, and 15 of meadow and pasture, in ——, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £3 8s. 4d. ; 4 messuages, 9 cottages, 64 acres of arable land, and 4 in meadow in Balranny, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value of ——, —— messuages, with 19 acres

of arable land in Kordoraghe, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of 16/-; 7 messuages, 10 cottages, 186 acres of arable land, 8 of meadow, and 40 of pasture and brushwood in ———, with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £12 3s.; a messuage, two cottages, 120 acres of arable land, a fishing-weir, called Bromey's weir, and the fishery there, a water-mill in ———, with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £16 5s.; 7 messuages, one cottage, 227 acres of arable land, and 10 of meadow in Ballyfadocke, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of ———; 4 messuages, 20 acres of arable land, and 4 of meadow in Kinoyshy, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £10 3s. 8d.; 4 messuages, 46 acres of arable land, and 4 of meadow in Kellystone, with the tithe-corn thereof, besides all reprises, of the annual value of £4 5s. 4d.; 2 messuages, 3 cottages, 60 acres of arable land, 6 of pasture, and 4 of meadow in Oracamathane, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of ———; 4 messuages, 8 cottages, 124 acres of arable land, a salmon-weir, called Monkstone, a water-mill in the town-land of Rosmore, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of ———; 3 messuages, 6 cottages, 126 acres of arable land, 6 of meadow, and 6 of meadow in Gyltone, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £6 4s. 8d.; 5 messuages, 8 cottages, 141 acres of arable land, the fourth part of an acre of meadow, and 6 of common pasture in Dromenhatt, otherwise, Newton of Knockamothane, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £8 9s.; 6 messuages, 140 acres of arable land, $4\frac{1}{2}$ of meadow ——— in Radrenage, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £7 12s.; 3 messuages, 8 cottages, 120 acres of arable land, 6 of meadow, 6 of pasture in Calm, together with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual

value, besides all reprises, of £6 17s. ; 3 messuages, 60 acres of arable land, 60 of pasture, and 4 of meadow in Starenaghe, with the tithe-corn thereof, of the annual value, besides all reprises, of £5 5s. 8d.; the tithe-corn of the townland of —inserathe and Balregane, near Donnore and below the parish of Mellifont, of the annual value of £2 ; the tithe-corn of the town of Monamore, of the annual value of £2 13s. 4d. ; the rectory of Balrestore, of the annual value of ——— ; and the chapels of Grangegeythe and Knockamothane, parcel of the rectory of Mellifont, of the annual value of ——— all the said rectories being appropriated to the Abbot and his successors, and, together with the said lands, etc., are lying and situated in the Co. of Meath. The Abbot was also seized of a small house in the town of Drogheda, in the tenure of Thomas Tanner, annual value 13/4, and also of another house in the tenure of Roger Samon, of the annual value of 8/-, with 2/-rent from the Mayor and commonalty of Drogheda.

The above is from the *Monasticon Hibernicum*. It by no means contains a full inventory of the possessions of Mellifont at the time of its suppression, only the property belonging to it in the County Meath. In the same *Monasticon* we read, “By an inquisition taken 14th June, 1612, the possessions of this Abbey were found as follow :—The site, a water-mill, a garden, an orchard, a park called Legau Park, the old orchard containing two acres, the silver meadow 9 acres, the wood meadow 10 acres, and the doves’ park; 80 acres of underwood; Killingwood, being great timber, containing 12 acres; Ardagh, 20 acres, being the demesne lands, and the grange and town of Tullyallen, containing 27 messuages and 260 acres; Der-veragh, 5 messuages and 213 acres; Mell, 2 messuages and 60 acres; Ballymear, alias Ballyremerry, 2 messuages and 60 acres; Sheepgrange, no tithe, 8 messuages and 245 acres; Little Grange, 4 messuages and 62 acres; Beckrath, 2 messuages and 63 acres; Cabbage, 4 messuages and 103 acres; Ballygatheran, no tithe, 6 messuages and 132 acres; Salthouse, 7 messuages and 238 acres; Staleban, 11 messuages and 160

acres; Vinspocke, 6 messuages and 90 acres; Morragh, no tithes, 11 messuages and 120 acres; Ballypatrick, 8 messuages and 120 acres; in Collon, a water-mill and 23 acres, £6 13s. 4d. annual rent out of the said town, and the tithes thereof; Ballymacskanlan, a castle, no tithe, and 120 acres; Cruerath, Ballyraganly and Donnore, in the parish of Mellifont, with the tithes and altarages, all in this county" (Louth). Here follow the possessions belonging to the Abbey in the County Meath, and which have been given.

THE END.

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"City Laboratory, Municipal Buildings, Cork Hill,
Dublin, 16th March, 1897.

"I have examined a specimen of Bread submitted to me for that purpose by MR. PETER LYONS, of Drogheda. I found it to be free from adulteration and impurity. It contained in 100 parts 33.15 per cent of water—much less than is usually met with—0.84 per cent of Ash, and 66.0 per cent of Albumen Starch, and it was very white, and evidently made from the very best quality flour. It was properly fermented, uniform in texture, and well baked.

"CHARLES A. CAMERON."

CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS.

"Analytical Laboratory, 11 & 12 Great Tower Street, London, E.C.,
28th November, 1895.

"I hereby certify that I have carefully examined, both chemically and microscopically, specimens of the Cakes manufactured by MR. PETER LYONS, Drogheda, and I can express a very favourable opinion as to their wholesome, digestive, and dietetic properties. They have been judiciously prepared from the choicest materials, are particularly inviting to the taste, and have been carefully and thoroughly baked.

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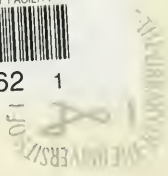
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