

THE HISTORY OF IRELAND, ed. John Mahony (NY: Haverly 1857, 1866).

MEMOIR OF THE REVEREND GEOFFREY KEATING, D. D.

by Michael Doheny

THE materials for a memoir of Doctor Keating are meagre and unreliable. No two of the fragmentary accounts of his life, heretofore published, agree even in the date of his birth or the place of his education. This seems discreditable to Ireland. That so distinguished a scholar and eminent a divine has undoubted claims to a high place in the annals of the country, and a grateful recognition in the memory and traditions of the people, admits of no question. He has done eminent service, and yet no one can point to where he was born or where he lies. Nor is this apparent forgetfulness owing to a want of appreciation in his own time or afterwards. The ruthless hand of "British civilization," laudably zealous to eradicate every vestige of "Irish barbarism," and especially the Celtic tongue, destroyed with diligent haste every relic of national literature it could clutch. The remainder were, for the most part, hid, where they were inaccessible for generations, or buried, where they never have been, and never will be, seen. Long before then, the "Statute of Kilkenny," in its wisdom, provided and enacted, that the Irish alphabet was a "felony," and the teaching thereof "præmunire." We are not informed how many, or whether any, incurred the dreaded penalty of "præmunire," but this may be owing to the difficulty of finding "facile judges," and "well affected juries," for the "Statute" was long before the time when that notorious casuist, Sir John Davies, learned the true value of these "institutions." In his day, it may be safely inferred, that to frame an indictment under the "Statute," would baffle even his ingenuity, for no one was left who could identify the "felony," or remotely comprehend what constituted "præmunire." Those who cherished the Irish tongue, taking with them whatever literary treasures they possessed, hid themselves in the depths of the forests, with wolves for their companions, where British "civilization" went howling on their track as if they were veritable beasts of prey.

Hence it is that we know so little of Geoffrey Keating, who was himself compelled to quit the haunts of men and take refuge with the beasts of the woods. Hence it is, too, that good men of a later day, unable to discover the sources of his information, have rejected his authority. Even Moore discredited it, mainly on the ground, that its early sources flow in confluence with the fabulous and impossible. This objection is the chief one urged against him; and yet it lies with greater force against Livy's grand hymn of Roman Story, against Herodotus, the father of profane history, and against the fountain of Grecian literature and first source of Grecian history, the matchless song of Homer, wherein truth and fable, fact and miracle, wrestle with each other even as men wrestle with the Gods of Olympus. It may be urged against all history of ancient origin. The shadows of Romance becoming instinct with tradition coloured the early literature of the middle ages and imparted to it its most attractive charm. Even in our own time, and in this hard republic, the traditions and superstitions of the red man begin to tinge our historic literature.

Perhaps this topic is unsuited for discussion here. It is introduced to shew that the objection is untenable. Doctor Keating merely gives as current traditions what modern criticism rejects as fabulous; and such traditions, fabulous or not, are indispensable to the true understanding of the character and customs of a people — and the true delineation of their history.

But the objection is not of so much importance in itself as in its tendency to discredit the historian when he comes to deal with facts. Some of these facts, seemingly improbable, were disputed with vehement zeal. But the contradictions have been of late refuted by positive proof. Through the generous efforts of the Archeological and other kindred societies, Irish manuscripts, of great age and undisputed authority, have been brought to light which prove incontestably many of the disputed facts in Keating's history. Modern Irish learning is now so ripe in discernment, that it can distinguish the age of a manuscript by its style. Some, of these mentioned, are cotemporaneous with occurrences deemed fabulous in Keating, and they fully corroborate him. They not only prove his accuracy, but attest his vast erudition and application; for to translate, to collate and compare, so as to make them a

chain of conclusive evidence, has for a quarter of a century tasked the energies, not of one, but of several of our most eminent scholars and assiduous workers. If we further consider their facilities, their leisure, their advantages and opportunities, and the circumstances which surrounded Keating, our astonishment at his achievement must be indeed great. Those circumstances, as will appear, account for the confusion that, in many places, characterises his narrative. It is evident such confusion results from a defect of accurate data. But his sincerity is unimpeachable, and so well established is his authority that in reconciling any slight difference between the "annalists," John O'Donovan, the most gifted Irish scholar of our day, or perhaps any other, reconciles them by quoting Doctor Keating. This is especially so with regard to the annals of the four Masters, which were concluded in Doctor Keating's time. It is impossible he could have seen them, and yet nearly all their facts and his are identical, and where they are not, there are in many instances higher authorities on his side.

There is no doubt then, that when the history of Ireland comes to be written in its fullness, Doctor Keating's authority, where he speaks positively, will be unquestioned.

It is now time we should say what we can of the subject of this memoir personally. Doctor Keating himself traces his lineage to the distinguished family of that name, whose various branches held high rank and large possessions in the Counties of Wexford, Kildare, Carlow, Waterford, Tipperary and Cork. According to the traditions of the family, adopted and, so to say, legalised by the books of Heraldry in Ireland, the founder of the house, whose original name is now unknown, was one of the pioneers of the Norman invaders, who kindled the beacon fire that lit the way of Fitzstephens into Cuan and Bhanilch. The story goes, that as he lay by his watchfire, a wild boar chancing to prowl that way, was proceeding to attack him, until frightened by the sparkling of the fire, when he fled in dismay. The watcher, thus providentially saved, adopted for his crest a wild boar rampant, rushing through a brake, with the motto, "fortis et fidelis," and his name became, we are not told how, Keating or Keting, from the Irish words, "Cead tinne," "first fire."

As early as the year 1179, only ten years after the landing of Fitzstephens, we find the name "Halis Keting," a subscribing witness to a grant to Dunbrody Abbey by Henry de Moutmorencie. This fact, in the absence of other evidence, would be sufficiently conclusive, against the assumption that Keating was a corruption of the Norman name, Etienne, for no such corruption had taken place at that early date, nor did the invaders hold familiar intercourse with the Irish.

As Dermid Mac Murchad arrived in Ireland, from his exile, a year before the landing of Fitzstephen and was accompanied by Welshmen, and as he was anxiously expecting the arrival of his auxiliaries, nothing would be more natural than that one of those Welshmen should be employed as a watcher for their coming, and, on his success, should be rewarded by the perfidious prince himself with the title and distinction of "Cead tine."

"Halis Keting" was undoubtedly the founder of the house. He received large grants of land. His principal estate and residence was Baldwinstown, in Wexford. His descendants, being in connection, if not kindred, with the Geraldine, extended their sway over many counties, and were distinguished for hospitality and courage.

Narraghmore in Kildare, the residence of one of the family, has remained famous to our own day for its "Cead mile failte," which was known all over the Island. Kindling the fire, that lit the foeman's way, was by no means a cherished title to Irish gratitude. But, in process of time, many of the Normans, as was proverbial of the Geraldines, became nationalised, and in defiance of the "Statute of Kilkenny," London edicts and other devices of "British civilisation," entered into honored relations of fosterage and gossipred with the Irish. Nay, sometimes they went the audacious length of intermarrying, being so rude of taste as to prefer some "silver tongued" Irish beauty to the haughtiest Norman dame. Among these were the Keatings, who, on many an occasion, proved themselves opponents to London law and King bishops.

In the reign of Henry VII., James Keating, Prior of Kilmanham, stormed Dublin Castle, and held it for months against the Government. He was afterwards dislodged and attainted, and Parliament, in furtherance of civilization, enacted and ordained that no person born in Ireland should ever thereafter be Prior of Kilmainham; a salutary enactment which became a precedent in practice with the English

garrison in Ireland ever since. During the “rebellion” of the great Earl of Desmond, the Keatings of Carlow did such good service in his cause that the whole Sept, branch and name, were attained. How it fared with the Tipperary families, with whom the Doctor is more immediately connected, we have no record of. Possibly that, being under the protection of Ormond, and holding their estates in his palatinate, they took no part for or against their kinsman of Desmond.

Geoffrey Keating was born when Gerald of Desmond held regal sway in his “Kingdom of Kerry,” and opened asylums for monk and priest in his manifold strongholds, in open defiance of the “Statutes in such case made and provided,” and in still more daring defiance of the frowns and menaces of his “well beloved and gracious mistress.” The date of Keating’s birth is fixed by some at 1570 and by some at 1581, and his birthplace at Burgess and Tubrid respectively. Both places are in the parish of Tubrid, near Clogheen, and not far from Nicholstown or Shanbally, the principal seats of the Keating family in Tipperary. The exact locality is of little importance, and the date 1570, may be assumed as correct, for otherwise he would have been but a mere child when sent away from Ireland, and it would be impossible for him to have acquired a perfect knowledge of the Irish language. His parents, we are told, were in affluent circumstances. But the fact, that their names have not been preserved, leads to the conclusion that the “reformation” extended its civilising influence to them and that they held their possessions in a quasi incognito.

Geoffrey Keating was sent to school at a very early age; but his proficiency at that time, or what were his particular studies, we are without any account of. As, however, the Irish and Latin were the languages of the “schools,” it is to be presumed he first mastered the difficulties of his native tongue and became familiar with its complex construction. His works, too, considering that he spent the best years of his youth and manhood abroad, abundantly testify that study of Irish engaged his earliest attention. His opportunities for acquiring a thorough knowledge, not only of Irish but of the classics, were, in his part of the country, numerous and easy of access. The Irish schools yet flourished in despite of the destructive tendencies of the “reformation.” There was, at that time, a famous school at Cahir, protected, perhaps, by one of the Ormonds, who had his residence there, where, in all likelihood, young Keating spent his early years. In the absence of any testimony, of his progress, let us glance briefly at the Irish school, as an institution of the country at that day, and for ages before.

The early literary history of Ireland stands out in proud distinction from that of any other country in Europe. While the revel of the Goth profaned the Roman forum, and he stabled his steeds in the Coliseum, the pilgrims of learning, from every darkened land, found shelter, sustainment, and inexhaustible sources of information, in Ireland. When this noted distinction of hospitality and learning took its date, we are not precisely informed. Bede, the truest British historian, does ample justice to the superior claims of Ireland in that regard. Long before his time, he asserts, such was the fame of the Irish schools, that when a person of note was missed from Great Britain or the continent, it was concluded, as a matter of course, that he had “gone to Ireland in search of learning.” This was long anterior to the discovery of the art of printing, when even a limited scholarship bespoke a life of toil and assiduous devotion.

Originally, the school was, in Ireland, a state institution. It had wide foundations and an ample inheritance. The teachers were held in high estimation and ranked next to royalty. In process of time the Church lent its influence to the advancement of learning. Every monastery was a college, where pupils, from all lands, received not only a solid education but sumptuous entertainment. It mattered not whence they came or whither they were bent. The college hall and college hospitality were open to all comers.

These institutions flourished at the time of the invasion. They attracted the attention of the most refined of the Normans, and, after a while, commanded their support. They endowed abbeys and gave large grants for the maintenance of education. The secular clergy too, were, according to the new system, obliged to dispense a third of their incomes on purposes of learning. No doubt the Norman monks and professors perverted their office in many an instance, by ignoring the Irish tongue and defaming the literature of Ireland. But the schools flourished; and, when the nobles of the Pale entered into relations of gossipred and marriage with the natives, the schools once again became nationalised. In the reign of Edward VI., nothing was more common than monasteries of English

foundation, from which the English tongue was excluded. Hence, the Norman youths found it indispensable to learn the former language.

On this state of things supervened the "Reformation." Its natural effect was, to make the schools more Irish. So also did it affect the lords of the pale, who remained faithful to the old religion. For the old faith and tongue, at once proscribed alike, they risked land, liberty and life. But when the abbeys were confiscated and Queen's bishops usurped the sees, the schools, though at first stoutly defended, were in many places driven from their ancient seats to find shelter in the desert. The bold Earl of Desmond long upheld them in their integrity. Ormond, too, although the inveterate foe of the Geraldine, permitted, or at least connived at, them in his palatinate; not as of yore, connected with monasteries, or as state institutions, but scattered over the country in buildings, erected by individual bounty on the model of the ancient College Hall. These were numerous in Tipperary when Keating was a boy.

It did not need then, or thereafter, that the student should confine himself to a school near his home. He may proceed whither he pleased, where the fame of the teacher, in the science or language he studied, invited him; and he was sure to be, not only the welcome, but the prized guest of whatever family he honored by accepting its hospitality. Often, long thereafter, when the pale parliament made and ordained it "treason," was this hospitality religiously observed. The Irish student, in the darkest days, found a home and a school — were it even in the bowels of the earth — to fit him for a ministry, in the fulfillment of which he had to brave death on the scaffold.

France, Spain, Italy and Germany, either opened and endowed colleges, or allowed them to be founded on their territories by Irish princes for the Irish ecclesiastical student, wherein his life was consecrated to a mission of martyrdom in his native land.

Geoffrey Keating having acquired the necessary information in the Irish school, was at the age of sixteen (1586) sent to one of these foreign colleges--we are not with any certainty informed which — to complete his studies and be admitted to the priesthood.

Even through the long and desolating period of persecution, then begun, the Irish school survived. In many counties, as late as the end of George III's reign, there were famous classical schools in which the English tongue was never heard. And down to our own day, literary hospitality continued unimpaired. The ablest masters, classical and scientific, have taught thousands of students, who for years were entertained with the most lavish kindness in the houses of the farmers in the districts around the school, of late a barn or deserted dwelling of mud wall and thatched roof. In Tipperary, Waterford and Limerick, it was usual to have two of those "scholars," living for four and five consecutive years with a family, and treated with extreme courtesy and tenderness. Such was the devotion of this class not only to "scholars," but scholarship, that in the first cycle of this century there was scarcely a farmer of any competency who did not give one son, and sometimes all his sons, a classical education, without any reference to their intended professions or pursuits.

But what nor persecution, nor war, nor confiscation, nor the scaffold, had been able to effect, has been accomplished by the poor law of 1842 and the famine of 1846-7. The true Irish schools and the honored custom of hospitality attendant on it, under the baneful influence of London law and London pestilence, have passed away. Charity has become mercenary, and hospitality warped, under the pestilent influence of "British protection," now, alas! not only endured but begged for.

This is, perhaps, digressive; and yet it seems needful as illustrative of the system of education in which Keating took his first lessons, and in the spirit of which, his work is conceived. The perils that beset the school in his time, and the destruction that afterwards swept over it, sufficiently account for the fact that so little is known of his early life and studies. Nor can he, his works, or the circumstances of his time, be thoroughly understood or estimated, without tracing somewhat in detail the marked events in the progress of "Reformation," giving color and vitality to the thoughts and efforts of the era. They were contemporaneous with Keating's youth, manhood and age, and must have stamped their impress on his feelings and aspirations. No doubt he was informed of the more hideous atrocities that darkened the track of "reform" and no doubt they influenced his generous design to preserve the monuments of Irish learning which the besom of "reformation" was so busy in

sweeping from the face of the earth. Let us therefore leave the student to his studies for a time, to follow the march of “reformation” and “British civilization.”

The former owed its birth in England to Henry VIII. He had been styled and ordained “defender of the faith,” for the Pope, who conferred the distinction, paid no attention to the warning, “put not your faith in princes.” Like many another guardian, Henry betrayed his word and abandoned the faith he “defended,” for a faith that defended his crimes. He was not, however, a fanatic or a bigot. He changed his religion to suit his lusts, with the same indifference with which he would change his dress. His reign, his life, his death, were one round of licentiousness. He did little in Ireland, save to cause an act to be passed, “suppressing” the monasteries. But this seemed intended as a bait to the turbulent lords of the Pale, whom he hoped to conciliate by the prospect of a division of the abbey lands, as the monasteries flourished even as though they never were “suppressed.” Theretofore, his ancestors held dominion in Ireland as a fief of the Pope; and now, as the Pope refused to minister to his infamies, he resolved to cast off, at the same time, his spiritual authority and the title which his predecessors, Kings of England, usurped in his name. Accordingly, his Parliament duly enacted him “King of Ireland,” upon nine-tenths of which neither King nor Parliament dared to set foot.

There was scarcely anything done towards “reforming” the Irish, in the reign of Edward VI. His counsellors confined their operations to “reforming” the book of Common Prayer, the orthodoxy of which his Parliament duly enacted. Edward reigned but a few years, and was a mere child; and on Mary’s accession the acts affecting the Catholics were immediately repealed. Thus, when Elizabeth came to the throne, which event, so auspicious to Ireland, crowned the glory of the year 1558, there were no penal laws on the Irish Statute book.

Of all the turbulent times through which “Reformation” sped its mission, the reign of Elizabeth was emphatically the red reign. It was the reign of rapine, tears and blood. It trafficked in treason and generated the spy. It governed by subornation, fraud and lies. It stimulated “rebellion “ for the pleasure and profit of crushing it in its own blood. It sowed turbulence to reap confiscation.

The spirit of Elizabeth was dark and daring. She was equally crafty and inexorable. She, at first, affected to conciliate the Pope. The Pope and College of Cardinals had promulgated a decree, pronouncing the marriage of Henry and her mother null. Her dearest object was to procure the reversal of this terrible judgment, for she knew that in the minds of almost all the sovereigns of Europe at the time, the throne of England was, in her person, occupied by a bastard. Her overtures to the Pope were earnest and pressing, but finding that he rejected them, she resolved to overthrow an authority she could not suborn. For this project Ireland presented the fairest field, for while eradicating “popery” she may be able to carry her conquests over the whole of the island. Her ambition, capacity and daring were boundless, and were well seconded by the craft of her counsellors. At the same time, her acts were frequently distinguished by queenly generosity. She loaded with her bounty the Irish princes who abdicated their chieftancy and patrimony to take estates and titles at her hands. She pardoned with grace and distinguished by princely favours those who had defied her power. In granting titles and estates to an Irish chief, she imposed no condition and suggested no change of religion. These details she left to her counsellors. If vengeance she entertained, it was for them to execute it. They were men of no faith and no scruples. They did the dirtiest work with a relish. They sent the spy around to suborn the petty chief and submit to him the dazzling allurements that awaited his treachery to his rightful prince. And sure was she to receive him graciously and bestow on him precious favours as well as broad dominions, as the

meed of his treason. Thus, while treachery was the life-blood of her power and the sole means of extending her conquests in Ireland, she invested it with munificence and a captivating generosity.

Her success in subornation was not equal to her ambition. It halted far in rear of her impetuous desires. If a degenerate sire took a beggarly earldom at her hands, many a time did he right sorely rue it; for his son or some other having good title to the wand of chieftaincy, clutched the sword and truncheon to assert the privilege of his clan. She therefore determined to try confiscation. Accordingly, she summoned a Parliament, and Sydney, the very man who two years previously presided over the Parliament that exultingly repealed all previous penal enactments, presided also over this one, that enacted laws far more penal. Elizabeth's Parliament, held in Christ Church, Dublin, in 1559, "provided" that the "reformation" should be established in Ireland, six counties of which were at the time governed by the Queen — that he or she who refused to renounce any "foreign power," that is the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, should, for the first offence, forfeit land and goods; for the second, incur the penalties of "præmunire", and, for the third, those of high treason. This Parliament was chiefly remarkable for the fact, that it proscribed itself; for most of the members, being Catholics, had three times, at least, asserted the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, for which crime, according to their own law, they should be hanged and quartered.

The truth is, no one supposed the law would be enforced, and there is reason to believe that assurance was given to that effect. However this may be, as soon as the policy of subornation began openly to fail, prosecutions were commenced against priests and priest harbourers, which Gerald of Desmond would not brook in his domain. He would shelter, save and honour, priest and bishop, at his own good pleasure, so help him God and his trusty blade. Vicissitudes of a startling nature followed, until we find Desmond in open revolt for the liberties and religion of the pale. The fortunes of this war we have not space to relate. Enough to say, that after various successes, ruin overtook the champion of Catholicity at last, and the cause he espoused set — at least in the South — in blood.

When the banner of Desmond went down, and his head, cut off by vulgar hands, was staked on London bridge — where it long grinned at Saxon churls and upstart prelates, who came that way to gaze at the ghastly spectacle — the Queen's minions and "undertakers," among whom were parcelled the broad lands of Desmond, began to work their wicked will in Ireland on priests and people.

Witches and priests were the special objects of the persecution. The former, Coxe informs us, were condemned by "the laws of nature;" but whether it was by the laws of nature, or man, or beast, the latter were doomed, he does not condescend to tell. We know, indeed, that the laws of the pale were sound on such business; for did they not "make and provide" that it was high treason "a third time" to deny the divine authority of Elizabeth as the head of God's church on earth? But to wait for the third denial was work too slow in these days, and so the executioners decided that the first denial was, in "intendment of law," the third, and thus were enabled to hang, quarter, and disembowel for the first offence. Patrick O'Hely, bishop of Mayo, and Cornelius O'Rourke, a priest, were put to the rack, had their hands and feet broken by hammers, and needles thrust under their nails, (though for these more refined tortures the law neglected to make special provision,) and finally they were hanged and quartered.

John Stephens met the same fate, "for that he said mass for one Teigue McHugh." The priests of Munster fled to the mountains, where they ministered to their flocks in caverns, and where ruin often overtook them at dead of night and in the midst of the sacrifice, for British "Christianity" prowled round their watch-fires and baptised them of the new creed in their own blood. Dermot O'Hurly, of Cashel, having been consecrated by the Pope on the apostasy of Myler McGrath of that See, endeavoured to fulfil his functions by secreting himself at the residences of the chiefs

and nobles, who whatever may be their outward professions were true to the old creed and old cause. While O'Hurly was sojourning with the baron of Slane in Meath, he was espied, "recognised," the English books say, by the chief justices (spies were high functionaries at that time), who swiftly informed Adam Loftus, then Chancellor, of the prey he had set for him. The baron hearing his guest was betrayed, either connived at, or effected, his escape; but receiving a message from the Chancellor to deliver the bishop to him in irons, such was his terror that he pursued the fugitive, and overtaking him at Carrick on Suir, arrested, and delivered him up with his own hand. And needful it was for him to do so, for otherwise his head would give ghastly warning to all "priest harborers," from the summit of Dublin Castle. Threats, tortures, and offers of rewards, were in turn tried on O'Hurly, but tried in vain. After about a year of imprisonment and torments on the morn of holy Thursday, ere it was yet dawn, he was hanged outside the city walls. Terrible retribution for the act of that other archbishop of the same see, Donchad or Donatus, who was first to recognise the spurious title of Henry II. to the unfortunate Kingdom of Ireland.

When the current of murder ran the reddest, there pined in the dungeons of Dublin Castle a kidnapped youth — red Hugh O'Donnell — who longed for the hill sides of Tirconnell and the head of those clans that followed the banner of his race. There was a Queen's O'Donnell in his stead, who exercised false sway under a perjured title. But well the young chief knew, that in the first glance of his eye, the traitor's hold would melt like snow in the glance of the summer sun. Before he was twenty years of age he made good his escape through a sewer to the Liffey, thence to the Wicklow mountains, where one of his comrades perished of cold and hardship; and thence, over flood and field, to Dungannon Castle, where red Hugh O'Neil was already meditating vengeance on the accursed foreigners. Short was the O'Donnell's stay to recruit his wasted strength. He hied him to Tirconnell, where high festival and rejoicing greeted the rightful chief, who was at once invested with his wand of chieftaincy. They who harbored the English and countenanced the "Queen's O'Donnell," soon felt the edge of his steel, and, in a single campaign, not a traitor was left within the broad borders of Tirconnell. The Deputy and Council, then so busy in murdering the priests of Munster, did not find it an easy matter to make shire land of Tirowen and Tirconnell, while the flags of the "red hand" and the O'Donnell waved above them; and many a time did the banner of England go down by the Black-water and Lough Swilly. After years of raid and rout and vengeance, done on disloyal chieftains; after a truce or two, and battles fatal to the Queen, her forces, greatly augmented of late, under command of Bagnall, met those of Tirowen and Tirconnell, led by their princely chiefs, at Beal an atha buidhe, near Portmore. O'Neil had vengeance of his own to wreak that day, and O'Donnell burned to brand on the Queen's minions the indignity her jailors' fetters had marked on his youthful limbs.

The armies clashed, and fierce and hot was the encounter. Bagnall fell, his host was utterly routed, and left some thousands dead on the field. Tirowen and Tirconnell now owned no stranger lord, and their rightful chieftains held high festival in their ancient halls, and their rightful clergy ministered, in church and abbey, of the ancient faith.

On O'Donnell's return home, Hugh of Tirowen marched 7,000 men across the Pale on a pilgrimage to the Holy Cross in Tipperary. Small fear was there that any

pimping chief justice would spy the prelates in his train. At the Holy Cross he met James Fitz Thomas, whom he created the Desmond. The real object of O'Neil's visit was, to inspire the Munster chiefs, who were then making feeble head in the fastnesses of Muskery, under the lead of O'Neil's Desmond and McCarty More. But Tirowen needed her good swords to defend her own borders, and Munster was left to its fate and the tender mercies of Sir George Carew. Sad fate surely, this! for Sir George was of the true stamp of a British civilizer. When baffled on the field, craft and falsehood did for him instead. The "Sugan Earl," as he with great unction styles

the Desmond, repeatedly defeated his armies and burned his castles. Having tried all means to endeavour to persuade the Earl's Irish followers to betray him, he had recourse to this notable expedient. When the fortunes of the Earl waned, he was in the neighbourhood of one Dermond O'Connor, who was married to his sister. Carew addressed a letter to the Earl, in which he congratulated him on his returning loyalty and besought him, that as a proof of his sincerity, he would bring him O'Connor, either living or dead. The letter, as it was intended, fell into the hands of O'Connor, who was so enraged at what he supposed treason, that he contrived to get the Earl into his hands, and kept him in one of his strongholds in chains. Sir George, indeed, says in his "Pacata Hibernia," that the whole plot was concocted between him and O'Connor, through the management of Lady Margaret, O'Connor's wife. He was afterwards rescued, and O'Connor's castle of Lyshin was sacked. But the fortunes of Fitz Thomas do not concern the subject of this memoir.

The Spanish auxiliaries, so long expected by the northern chiefs, and promised by the King, were now at last prepared to embark. Unfortunately for Spain and Ireland, the command of this force was conferred on Don Juan d'Aguila. The Irish chiefs urged the necessity of secrecy and despatch, and above all insisted upon the landing being effected in the north, where a junction could be formed too formidable to be attacked, and where the allied armies might become accustomed to each other and their respective discipline and mode of warfare. These reasons would seem to leave no choice to the Spanish commander. His own safety and that of his command, as well as the exigencies of the object in view, alike demanded it. Yet was he not alone indifferent to these considerations, but, either through treachery or vanity, or perhaps both combined, he so conducted his operations that it was, thoroughly known, not only to Sir George Carew, but to the English Council, that his destination was Kinsale. So satisfied were both of his intention, that they concentrated a force of over four thousand men near that town.

All this time the northern chiefs were not informed of D'Aguila's purpose.

They were not even aware that the expedition was prepared. They heard nothing from or of Don Juan, until he arrived at, and was surrounded in, Kinsale. On his first landing he took possession of Dunbuoy, the castle of Kinsale, and the islands in the Bay, in the name of the King of Spain. To this his operations were confined. He then suddenly shut himself up in the town.

When the news reached the northern princes, although conscious of the fatality of Don Juan's course and the desperate position in which he was placed, they flew at once to his assistance. By unexampled marches in mid-winter, they made their way south. The President attempted to intercept O'Neil, and sent a large force to oppose him. A sudden frost enabled O'Neil to traverse the mountains in the north of Tipperary, and both chiefs arrived together before Kinsale, in sight of the English camp. An engagement was precipitated by misdirection or mischance, only the second day after a forced march of near three hundred miles. It occurred at break of day, and only half the Irish forces were engaged, when a rout took place in the confusion and darkness. O'Donnell took no part in the action; and such was his chagrin, and indignation at Don Juan's conduct and inactivity during the combat, that he took advantage of the presence of a Spanish brig then in the harbor, to embark for Spain and impeach Don Juan before the King. He left his brother in command and proceeded on his way, never alas! to return.

Both armies reached the north in safety, and such was the terror inspired by the name of O'Neil, that it was left to him to dictate the terms on which he would accept pardon and a coronet from the English Queen.

D'Aguila at once surrendered not only Kinsale but the other fortifications which he had received from the Irish chiefs. The castle of Dunbar had, however, a small garrison of Irishmen who

refused to surrender. The desperate defence made by this little band, and the savage ferocity that marked the sack of the place, are unexampled in history.

And here ended the Liberty of Ireland, her nationhood and her name. But ere the closing scene, indeed before his coronet was given to O'Neil, Elizabeth was called to her last account, and James of Scotland had mounted her throne.

Early in James' reign (1610); Geoffrey Keating returned to Ireland. War and fagots had then given place to facile judges and suborned juries, under the guidance of that renowned casuist, Sir John Davies. By this time Keating was forty years of age, twenty-three of which were spent in a foreign college, most likely Salamanca. Other places are mentioned, but the great probability is, that he studied, and, as it is asserted, taught, at Salamanca; for the intercommunication with Spain at that time was more frequent than with France. Spain was, in fact, the principal refuge for the exiled Irish, and his opportunities for preserving his practical knowledge of his native tongue, were far greater there than elsewhere out of Ireland. It is probable, too, that he there, from time to time, received old manuscripts from bards and shannachies, who shared the flight of the O'Donnell or followed him into exile. This would account, in some degree for the general accuracy of his history, for we are told, that in his researches through Connaught and Ulster, the bards who had stolen to the hills to live with wild beasts, repulsed him, as owning a strange name and belonging to the race of the hungry undertakers who then preyed on the green fields of their inheritance.

Although James had in 1607 revived Elizabeth's conformity act, it does not appear that the Catholics of Munster, at least in that part under the sway of the Ormonds, suffered any actual persecution. Indeed, so far back as 1602, Sir George Carew held an assize at Limerick, Cashel and Clonmell, where he did vengeance on the restive of these parts whom he could lay hands on. But he found that a great number had fled to the Ormonds, two baronies in North Tipperary; and meeting the Earl of Ormond at Clonmell, he did move him "to go with him into these parts to assize them at his leisure there." But "the Earl did entreate him to satisfie himselfe concerning that busines, for he would undertake it." He did not undertake it, however, and the great pacificator thus communes in that regard: "which I thinke had beene immediatelie performed had not the immature death of his most vertuous lady (the lamentable tydings whereof were brought to him at Clonmell, oppressing his aged heart with immeasurable sorrow) caused the same for a time to be deferred."

Immediately on Keating's return he was appointed curate to the very reverend Eugene Duhy, in his native parish. On the first Sunday of his ministry, as he was proceeding to vest himself, the vicar requested him to delay mass. After some time he asked the cause, and was informed it was to accommodate a wealthy family who had not yet arrived. He refused to sanction this practice, and proceeded with the sacrifice. He was glad to learn thereafter, that the family were of his own kindred, who took good care to be punctual in future. How long he continued fulfilling the duties of the ministry in Tubrid, we are not informed. His fame as a preacher extended far, and numerous and even fashionable audiences gathered to hear him. The building of the church at Tubrid engaged his care, and under the circumstances of the time, this labor must have extended over years. He also wrote during his mission a theological treatise, called "cochair sgiath an aifrinn," a Key to the Shield of the Mass, a work it is said of rare merit. He wrote at the same time, a treatise on practical piety, called "Tri bir ghaoithe an bhais," the Three Winged Shafts of Death. These works are not translated, and we have no doubt they would be valuable accessions to the description of literature to which they belong.[1]

Had not his missionary labors been interrupted, the probability is, that "Keating's History" never would have been written. The duties of the priest would not allow the necessary leisure to the historian. The circumstances that compelled his flight are variously related. One version is, that in a sermon fashionably attended, he so severely reprov'd a certain vice, that a Mrs.

Moklar, a dashing beauty, resented it as a personal exposure of her criminal levity. Burning with rage, she flew to the President, who was one of her admirers, and invoked at his hands the vengeance of the "conformity act." Another version is, that while he was absent in search of materials for his history, a squire of his neighbourhood seduced the daughter of a parishioner, whom Keating denounced unsparingly on his return, and thus incurred the peril of the law.

That which is certain is, he fled. It is equally certain, he was protected from the blood-hounds of the law. Fidelity among the Irish people is a virtue often sorely tested and never found wanting. This and this alone accounts for the magnitude of the task he accomplished under circumstances of so much peril. "British civilization," though it had then made rapid strides, did not reach that acme of perfection in espionage it has since attained. The forests were large, and in many instances inaccessible, and filled with bold outlaws whom nothing but an army would dare to encounter. And notwithstanding the devices of "artful Cecil," the country then lacked that noblest institution of the nineteenth century, a rural police. In fact, therefore, he might, as is alleged, have written or completed the history in Aherlow woods, now one of the loveliest mountain valleys in Ireland. The glen of Aherlow, as the place is called, extends along the northern base of the Galtees, a distance of twelve miles from the village of Bansha to Galbally. It is sheltered at the north by the low range of the Clan William mountains. It was theretofore the asylum of "Rebels," who mayhap had thrice denied the spiritual supremacy of Elizabeth, which, on one occasion, they sorely rued, for they received a friendly visit from Carew and his retinue of hangmen, the object and achievement of which he thus describes:

"The president directed his forces into east Clan William, and harassing the country, killed all mankind that were found therein; thence we came into Arloghe woods, where we did the like, not leaving behind us man or beast, corne or cattle."

Aherlow was accessible from the Tubrid side through the gorges of the Galtees, and no doubt a man sentinelled as Keating must have been by the fidelity of his people, might live there for years, not only in safety but comparative comfort. Nor were its solitude and quiet unsuited to the labour of the historian. There is no good reason then to question the story that hallows the scene. The tradition has long survived the wood, and all traces of the hiding place. The rich sheen of the meadow and the golden hue of the harvest gladden the Glen of Aherlow now. But those who dwell there, love to recall the gloomy memories of that gloomy time, and by many a fireside is whispered lowly in the olden tongue the bloody raid of Carew's gallows tree, and then, more loudly and exultingly, the inviolability of Keating's retreat. This fact has become like "genius loci" or spirit of the spot, and even though we could dissipate the spell with which it has invested that lovely vale, where so oft we roamed exulting in the strife and freedom we had fondly hoped for, we would not touch with disturbing hand a tradition so characteristic of those mournful times. But there is no reason to doubt its truth, and we hold that Doctor Keating either wrote the whole or a great part of the "Foras feasa ar Erin," in the woods of Aherlow. Being unable to fix the date of Keating's separation from his duties or that of the commencement of his history, or whether he ever again returned to the ministry, we shall glance briefly at the history of his family from his time downward.

Early in the reign of Charles I., Sir Edward Everard or Fethard was married to the daughter of John Keating, of Nicholstown. His brother Richard Keating's daughter was married to Wall, of Coolnamuck, on the right bank of the Suir, two miles from Carrick. The sole male representative of these Keatings died at Annapolis, in Maryland, towards the close of the last century. Cotemporaneous with them was Michael Keating, of Shanbally, who was married to Lord Dun-boyne's sister. John Keating, his son, was married to Miss Kearney, of Kappagh. He was cotemporaneous with the Doctor and his nearest relative. This John was called the "baron" and "knight of the fleece." He had issue Michael, Maurice and Bryan. Michael married the sister of Lady Ferrand, and left issue one son, who was Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin; but whether he

left any issue we cannot say. Maurice married Miss Mandeville of Ballydine, on the left bank of the Suir, above Coolnamuck. The name of Mandeville is on the muster roll of William of Normandy and that of the barons of Runnymede, and in the family Ballydine was an inheritance for 600 years. Whether Maurice Keating has left any male issue, we cannot say. Bryan Keating was married to Ann, the daughter or grand-daughter of Roger Sheehy, of Dromcoloher. He had issue John, Roger, Henry, William and George Sheehy Keating. John left no issue, Roger only one daughter, the late Mrs. Nixon, of the county of Meath. Henry married a Miss Singer, sister of the fellow of that name of Dublin College. He joined the army and rose rapidly. He commanded the attack on the Isle of Bourbon; and on the news reaching England, was made major-general. He was afterwards appointed governor of the Isle of France, created baronet, and invested with the order of the Bath. He died recently, and left two sons, James Sheehy Keating, captain in the guards, and Henry Sheehy Keating, M. P. for Reading.[2] This gentleman is unquestionably the truest representative of the family now living, for fame speaks him fair and faithful to the kindly and generous attributes of his race. George left one son, Henry George, who lately lived near Mallow, and if alive is perhaps the only male representative of the family in Ireland. William, the youngest of these brothers, fell in a duel. Bryan Keating's daughters, Ann, Jane, Catharine and Theodosia, were married — Jane to Mr. Therry, whose eldest son is now judge in Sidney; Catharine to Morgan O'Dwyer, of Cullen, whose eldest son is John Keating O'Dwyer, of Limerick, and Theodosia to Edward Sheehy, of Ballintubber, whose eldest son is Roger Sheehy, of Liskennett, county Limerick. Robert Keating of Garranlea, claims a relationship with this family, but what it is, or whether he has any, does not appear.

Thus there seems but doubtful conjecture, that there is, at least in his proper rank and position, one representative of the male line of the Keatings in Ireland. The Doctor's History, after all, is their noblest monument. It is, in truth, "perennius ære."

But what is stranger, the high families that entered into alliance with the Keatings of old, are nearly extinct. The Everards held princely sway in their feudal hold at Fethard, whose walls, yet standing, attest its strength and their grandeur. The last of this race was the Archbishop of Cashel, who died in 1823. The Mandevilles are seen no more at Ballydine, and that ancient patrimony has passed away from the name for ever.[3] The last of the Kearnys fell in a duel at Cashel nearly a century ago, and Coolnamuck lately passed into the hands of John Sadlier, the suicide. The last of the Dunboynes was Bishop Butler, who abandoned creed and crozier to take a wife and title. He is buried in the old Augustinian Abbey, in Fethard. His monument is extremely simple, but extremely beautiful. It is a mournful record of his times, for it testifies that he repented of his "reformation," and renounced the new creed and title on the bed of death.

Of Doctor Keating's later life or death, no record remains, except the inscription on the old ruins at Tubrid. The date, as will be seen, in the copy given below, is 1644. This inscription indicates that Doctor Keating was never parish priest, for the designation "vicar" is added to the Rev. Mr. Duhys name. But we are left to conjecture whether the date is that of the consecration of the church or of the inscription. If the latter, then it may be possible that Doctor Keating lived, as Mr.

O'Donovan is inclined to believe, until 1650. Otherwise it is undoubted that he was dead in 1644, for beyond all question he was dead when the inscription was written, although by some incomprehensible mode of reasoning, the author of the life prefixed to Halliday's translation concludes, that the request to pray for his soul and those of the others, whose bodies day buried in the church, was conclusive proof that he was then living.

We are informed that the church was built by "leave of Parliament," and this "leave" must have been obtained in the early part of Charles I.'s reign; and assuredly the church must have been finished before 1644, when Cromwell's generals were desolating the north with sword and flame; and when that desolation surged in blood over the devoted fields of Tipperary, it left the

church in Tubrid, like other churches, a blackened ruin. For a time, between 44 and 46, Cromwell's banditti were checked by the band of Owen Roe O'Neal. Once again the flag of the red hand dawned on the gladdened fields of Tirowen and the flood of the Blackwater. He met Munroe at Benburb, and with a force inferior in numbers to that general's veterans, utterly routed him. Munroe's retreat was a flight, and he left nearly four thousand of his "roundheads" dead on the field. O'Neil was preparing to pursue him, when, fatal order! he received the Nuncio's commands to repair to Kilkenny. In 1647 or 8, he was marching at the head of the confederate army in pursuit of Cromwell, then on his way to Clonmell, when at Tandaragee the bowl of the assassin laid in death this last hope of Erin. Had Doctor Keating lived in these times, he would leave some record of the ruin that swept over Munster.

In his preface, he says that he was then an old man. In the manuscript copy from which the following translation has been made, and for which the translator is indebted to the kindness of Mr. Michael Sheehan, now of New York, and, late of Kanturk, Co. Cork, Ireland, a postscript is appended, dated 1629. This date clearly establishes 1570 as that of his birth, which would leave him then nearly sixty years of age. There is reason to believe, too, that Mr. Sheehan's manuscript is very old, and is a copy of the original, and was very carefully compared with it. It has been traced to the possession of the Revd Mr. O'Keefe, nearly contemporary with the historian.

In closing this brief and uncertain memoir, let us be permitted to hope, that those who may be in possession of authentic records relative to Doctor Keating, will communicate the same to some person who can use it, so as that they may fix such facts and dates in reference to the great historian as can be known.

We subjoin the Tubrid inscription, most fervently joining in the prayer it invokes.

New York, July 4th, 1857.

INSCRIPTION.

Orate pro animabus Rev. Pætris Eugenii Duhuy, vicarii de Tubrid. et D. Doctoris Keating, hujuscesac elli fundatorum nec non et pro omnibus aliis tam sacerdotibus quam laicis, cujus corpora in eodem jacent. A. D. 1644.

Pray for the souls of the Reverend Father Eugene Duhy, vicar of Tubrid, and the learned Doctor Keating, the founders of this church; and also for those of all others, whether lay or clerical, whose bodies are therein interred. A. D. 1644.