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LIFE of the AUTHOR [by William Holliday]

Transitory and perishable are the fame and honours of this world; many a genius of antiquity, whose works have survived the recollection of his name; many, whose glorious fame is now buried in oblivion; and although the Author of the Work here presented to the Irish nation, spent a great part of a toilsome and laborious life in elucidating and recording the history and genealogies of his countrymen, yet few, indeed, and scattered are the memorials at present existing, respecting himself, even amongst those of the same name and the immediate descendants of his family, still residing in that part of the country in which he was born. The reader is therefore entreated candidly to accept of the following sketch, chiefly taken from a life of our Author, which the translator some few years ago had drawn up in Gaelic for his own use.

Geoffrey Keating was born in the reign of queen Elizabeth, about the year of our Lord 1570, near as small village called Burgess, ten miles to the southwest of Clonmell, in the county of Tipperary. [ii]

His ancestors by the father's side were, as he himself informs us in the preface to this Work, of old Norman extraction. Our Irish heralds say that the Keatings were originally a branch of the Kildare family; "two of whom having landed near Feathard, in the county of Wexford, before the other Anglo-Norman invaders, explored the country around, and lighted a fire as a signal for the rest to disembark: for Keating, say they, is the same as Céad tine (*cead tinne*) which, in the Irish language, signifies the first fire. It is further added, that while the two invaders were kindling the fire, a wild boar rushed out of a neighbouring thicket, and would inevitably have devoured them had he not been terrified by the fire. This occasioned them to assume for their arms a boar rushing out of a brake.

But before this derivation be admitted, we must allow that the invaders, whose names are all Norman, spoke the Irish language, an opinion by no means probable. Perhaps the family's founder may have been named *Etienne* by the Normans; Fitzstephens by the English, and by the Irish *Mc Etienne*, or *Cetienne* or Keating, by omitting the M, as was the case with respect to the Cannons, Codies, Kennies, &c. originally, nay even still in some parts of Ireland, called Mc Cannons, Mc Codies, Mac Kennies, &c. with the word Mac, in Irish mac (pronounced like *mock*) a son, prefixed to each name.

From some written documents of the twelfth century, it is evident that such of the family as accompanied the Anglo-Norman expedition here, were called Keting, Keytinge or Keating; for so many various ways the name was spelt. Thus we find Halis Keting was one of the subscribing witnesses [iii] in a charter granted by Henry De Montmorency, Lord De Marisco, to the Cistercian Monks of Donbrody-Abbey, an edifice whose venerable ruins still arrest the traveller's attention, in the county of Wexford, nearly opposite the river Suire's confluence with the united streams of the Neore and Barrow, between Ross and Duncannon Fort. By this instrument it appears, that among many other immunities conferred by Marisco on the Abbey, he granted it also. the privilege of being an asylum or sanctuary for the protection of malefactors, &c. It is dated so early as the year 1179, that is about ten years' after Marisco's

arrival there. And can it be supposed that those intelligent Monks would permit any adventitious nickname, deduced from a frivolous occurrence of a few years existence, and consequently not yet fully established by common usage, to be annexed as a witness to their charter? This family's chief, in common with the other invaders, soon obtained grants of extensive estates. The above Halis, or Haley Keting, got possession of Baldwinstown, in the county of Wexford.* Other branches of theirs, perhaps his descendants, were proprietors of the estates of Kilcowan and Tulloghbardie, in the same county. From those sprang the various septs that afterwards spread themselves over the neighbouring parts of Leinster and Munster.

* Of the same house was baron Keating, of Kilmananane, Co. Wexford, who was summoned to parliament in 1360. vid, Rot Bermingham Tur.

In the turbulent reigns of Richard the 3d [sic] and Henry the 7th, some of the family distinguished themselves by their opposition to the English government. James Keting, Prior of Kilmainham, rendered himself peculiarly obnoxious in this particular. He usurped the government of Dublin Castle for many years: and on being accused of alienating the lands and sequestrating the property of his priory, had one Lumley appointed in his place; but Keating kept possession of Kilmainham, and cast Lumley into prison; [iv] notwithstanding his cause being espoused and himself patronized by the then Archbishop of Armagh, by the Principals of the Order, and by the king of England. Keating after associating himself with Lords Kildare, Killeen and others, against the crown, was outlawed and exempted from the terms of the general amnesty, granted in 1482 to Killeen and most of the rest; because "he was the chief incendiary in instigating and abetting Lambert Simnell's rebellion." It was also provided by Act of Parliament that "none but an Englishman should be ever after appointed prior of Kilmainham,"

Of this stock there were many respectable branches in the county Carlow, at Cloonagh, &c. as also at Ballymullen, in the Queen's county. In this latter shire they must have been formidable opposers to Queen Elizabeth's government, as in 1591, "the whole sept of the Keatings in that county was attainted."

Narraghmore in the county of Kildare, celebrated for the *céad-mile failte*, "or hundred thousand welcomes," of Irish hospitality by foreign tourists, this century past, is the family mansion of another branch of the name. Maurice Keating, Esq. its present representative, is equally distinguished for similar virtues.

It was in the county of Tipperary, however, that this family was most numerous, previously to Carew's presidency over Munster. The Nicholstown family survived that desolating era, for even in the reign of Charles the first we find a daughter of Richard Keating, Esq. married to a representative of the ancient family of the Walls of Coolnamuck, in the county Waterford; and two years after, in 1638, a daughter of John Keating of Nicholstown, allied to the Everard family, near Feathard, Robert Keating, usually stiled Baron Keating. [v]

Keating, was the representative of this house about the middle of the last century. He was son to John Keating, who in his youth embraced a military life, and died at Annapolis in North America, in 1718.

Of this family's other spreading branches, the most reputable, about the commencement of the 16th century, were those of Shanbally,* Cloghardan and Ballymooney, in the same county: and those of Ballinchollig† in the county of Cork. who were at that period equally distinguished for their virtues, as for their various alliances by marriage to the most respectable families in Munster and Leinster.

*Michael Keating of Shanbally, Esq. had by Lord Dunboyne's daughter, John, who was married to Miss Kearney of Cappagh, a cousin to Lord Ormond, by whom he had issue, Michael, Maurice and Bryan, with a daughter married to Mr. Butler of Kilcommon, grand-son to the celebrated Sir Theobald Butler, and nephew to Lord Cahir. Michael married Miss Burgh,

sister to Lady Viscountess Ferrard, lived at Mellicent in the county of Kildare, and was member of the Irish parliament till his death. Rev. John W. Keating his son, is dean of St. Patrick's at present.

Maurice Keating, Esq. married Miss Mandeville of Ballydine. This is a family mansion pleasantly situated on the left banks of the river Suir, nearly half-way between Clonmell and Carrick-on-Suir, of which with the extensive domain attached to it, the Mandevilles have enjoyed an uninterrupted possession these 636 years past. Their progenitor in this country was descended from a Norman chieftain, who came to England with William the Conqueror. His eldest brother was among those patriotic barons who wrested the great charter of liberty from king John at Runnymede.

Mr. Maurice Keating lived at Durrow in the county of Kilkenny, and had by Miss Mandeville many children, of whom Miss Alicia was married to Edward Bushell, Esq. Miss Men married first to Mr. Kellett, and now to Hen. Young, of the City of Dublin, Esq. Francis who died young; Michael is yet unmarried in Dublin; and Bryan married to Miss Keilly of Youghall, grand-daughter to Robert Sheehy of Ballincholligh, county of Cork, Esq.

† Bryan Keating the youngest of John's sons, married the daughter of the above Roger Sheehy, and left issue Robert Sheehy Keating, Esq. the present proprietor of Bailin-Chollig. [viii]

From [sic] of this memoir, whence he derived his information, he candidly acknowledged that it was only from vague hearsay. The tradition, however, among aged persons about the place of his nativity is, that he studied in France. 'This is irrefragably ascertained by a cotemporary, yet anonymous author, in an octavo volume written against Dempster, the Scottish kidnapper of Irish saints, and entitled *Hiberniae sive antiquioris Scotiae vindiciae adversus immodestam Parechesin Thomae Dempsteri per GF*, or "A vindication of more ancient Scotia, or Ireland, against the shameless fabrication of the saint-stealing Dempster."*

*This work was printed in octavo at Antwerp in 1622.

The author of this work, who "with; good reason" according to the learned continuator of Ware, "is supposed to be David Rothe," the catholic bishop of Kilkenny, a man even in archbishop Usher's opinion of uncommon erudition; in enumerating the learned men of Ireland that then flourished, particularly mentions Doctor Keating as "an Irishman of singular distinction in literature, and as a Doctor of either Thouloss [Toulouse] or [ix]

all extraneous objects for rendering the memorative faculties more efficient, there were no windows for the admission of light, but a candle was introduced at a seasonable time, as occasion required. The students were discriminated into classes, according to the genius and progressive improvement of each. 'To each class a theme was proposed which was to be ready at a certain hour on the next day, brought in, read, commented on, rectified, and submitted to the rigid examination of each of the higher classes, till its merits were finally appreciated by the professor, and another subject of greater difficulty given in return for next night's composition: and contemplation; 'after the completion of these severe exercises the students dined together; here too there was a display of youthful talents, as they were to sustain a poetical conversation during meals, or be altogether silent.

On Saturdays and festival eves the students went to the neighbouring gentlemen's seats, where they were cordially received and hospitably entertained till they were summoned back to resume their studies. Besides gratuitously entertaining the students during the vacations, the nobility and gentry considered themselves (such the moral influence of man) particularly obliged to send in all sorts of provisions to the school, so that the "professor was AEA G remunerated by perquisites as well as by landed property.*

In the country schools of such parts of Munster and Connaught as have not experienced the ill effects of party faction, rack-rents or military law, many vestiges of these customs. still exist; thus young men from eighteen to thirty years of age resorted from Connaught, Leinster, and the north-west of Ulster, as well as from the contiguous counties of Munster itself, to the classical academy of a Nunan, a Macorteen, a Donaghan Charrin, in the county of Clare; a Cantlon, an O'Sullivan, and a Mullain, in the county of Cork, as well as to the mathematical schools equally celebrated in the same districts. So numerous and so able bodied indeed were the

students of these academies, that they often contended in burling matches with whole parishes, and were generally crowned with victory. Though they were usually branded with the appellation of poor scholars, they were by no means such in reality. They were the sons of wealthy and respectable farmers, who after learning the rudiments of Greek and here were mostly filled with Englishmen, or such as studied in that country. Since the reformation, it was also the policy, though an university was established here, to exclude all such of the native Irish as conformed not to the established religion, from all classical learning at home; it subjected Greek, Latin and Hebrew teachers to the rigors of the penal laws. In this predicament the young priests of Ireland were necessitated to complete their collegiate studies in the universities of Spain, France, Italy or Germany. . As from the perils and privations the young clergyman was to undergo for the spiritual edification of his countrymen, he was considered as the property of the public, consequently when initiated into orders, he was permitted to celebrate Mass in every part of the diocese; and be his parents ever so well able to afford him pecuniary aid, the various congregations collected a sum of money to enable our young missionary to go abroad and prosecute his theological studies. The reader will feel the necessity of the present digression, as thereby he will be enabled to appreciate many customs still prevailing, which to the superficial tourists will appear barbarous, savage and inconsistent with Civilization

* Vide dissertation prefixed to Clanrickard's Memoirs.

[ix]

of Bourdeaux. His words are “*innumeri sunt alii ob singularem doctrinam, in primis academicis enumerandi ex quibus aliquos hic adjiciam quales sunt; Robertus Barry, Geoffridus Ketin: Mauritius Daley, Petrus Butler, &c. &c. Burdegalenses et Tholosani Theologiae Doctores. Vind. Hib. page 35; which imports that ‘there are many other Irishmen equally illustrious for their profound learning; and worthy of being ranked with the first academicians, such as Robert Barry, GEOFFRY KETING, Mau. Daly, Peter Butler, &c. &c. Doctors of divinity, who obtained their academic honors at the universities of Bourdeaux and Thoulouse.’”*

On the Doctor's return to his native country, about the year 1610, he was sent on the mission to the parish of Knockraftan, between Cashel and Cahir. Here, he gave unequivocal proofs of his impartiality and zeal. In various parts of Ireland there are some time-serving priests who delay the public service on Sundays and festivals, as long as they can,

[xii; x-xi missing in bound edn.]

consistently [sic pag.] serious matters; he afterwards, on many occasions, found himself at a great loss, as he had ‘to negotiate business of national importance with gentlemen who were far less intelligent in the English language than he was in the Irish: On such occasions he would use the same methods which he took with the titular bishop of Clogher, the great favorite of Owen O' Neil, and successor to that general in the command of the Ulster forces. This bishop he brought over to the king's interest, and gained his entire confidence by a conversation carried on between both parties in private[. “The Duke always spoke in English and the bishop in Irish, as neither understood the language of the other so as to venture upon communicating his sentiments in it with any degree of accuracy ‘or precision.’”

To hear one of the Doctor's sermons there came a lady whose maiden name was Laffan, then married to squire Mocler, of Mocklerstown near Knockraffan, an easy, good natured man. She, intoxicated with the vain praises lavished on her by designing debauchees, [xiii] for her personal charms, excited such suspicions among her censorious neighbours, as caused her to be the common topic of conversation in that part of the country. The priest's discourse happened to be on conjugal fidelity, and whether by accident or purposely, is immaterial, the eyes of the congregation were directed towards this lady during the sermon. This so irritated her that she, thinking the clergyman pointed at her particularly, vowed vengeance against the preacher. Among her admirers was the earl, who was then lord president of Munster; he was at that time in Limerick, to him she hied and tendered her complaints against the devoted but innocent

preacher so strongly that horse and foot were in motion to bring him in; whereby the doctor was necessitated to withdraw from the mission to avoid the impending storm.

To oppression or adversity we are indebted for the most celebrated literary productions of ancient and modern times. Homer's indigence necessitated him to sing his immortal rhapsodies in detached poems; what but the loss of his farm roused the energies of the Mantuan bard? Ovid's exile, Bacon's degradation and Raleigh's confinement were, in their consequences, beneficial to the literary world. Content with the temporary applause of a popular preacher, doctor Keating would have been probably consigned to everlasting oblivion had not a price been set upon his head by the president of Munster; whereby he was obliged to relinquish his professional duties, and withdraw for a time from the Catholic mission.

The Doctor, instead of wasting his time in the sequestered glyn of Aherlagh, near Tipperary, as has been erroneously stated in the LIFE above alluded to, "changed his garb and name, and in that disguise went, according to the dissertator's account, to the schools and habitations of his favorite bards," to whom [xiv] he was a welcome guest from his profound knowledge in the ancient language of Ireland, as well as from the celebrity he already acquired by his Irish elegiacal poem on the death of lord Decies; his satyric poem of the burlesque kind on his servant Simon, whom he compares with the illustrious heroes of ancient times: and also from his two larger and more serious works in Irish, one partaking of the polemic east of the times, against the late reformation in religion, entitled *Eochair sgiath an Aiffrinn*, "A key to the shield of the Mass," or a defence of the catholic religion; a title seemingly adopted from St. Jerome's preface to the bible, which he denominates "Prologus Clypeatus." To these may be added his other moral work on practical piety entitled, the "Three-winged shafts of Death," *trí biorghaoithe an bháis*, nearly on the model of the "Imitation of Christ," attributed to Thomas a Kempis; all which the Doctor wrote with some other lighter compositions before the history.

Among the bards and seanachies, he began to collect materials for this work; nor was he confined to the bards alone, for some very aged clergymen of his own persuasion informed a friend of the translator's who lived many years in Cashel, that during this persecution the Doctor found the most unsuspected and safest asylum, even among the president's most intimate Protestant friends in and about that city, while employed in perusing and translating from the various records both in their own and in the Catholic libraries then existing there; and that they afterwards generously recommended him to the protection of their literary friends in Dublin, with a request to afford him a similar asylum, and facilitate his admission to the college manuscripts there. After some stay in Dublin he travelled through the various other provinces in Ireland, during which tour, [xv], His "Anglo-Norman extraction," as Abbé Mc Geoghagan observes, "was no small obstacle to his undertaking, for notwithstanding his being a Catholic, and a clergyman of their own communion; yet such were the prejudices entertained against him, that many, especially in Ulster and Connaught, refused to aid or communicate with him, or afford him any documents; a privation which has prevented his history from being so complete as it otherwise might have been."

The anonymous Dissertator, who took every opportunity of depreciating the Doctor's work, and preventing its publication in English, as being the great magazine from which he intended to draw materials for a substitution of his own on the same subject, informs us that the Doctor spent only two years writing it; so short an interval, however, seems too inadequate for travelling through the ether parts of the nation, consulting original works in various languages; transcribing, arranging, and methodizing materials and completing the whole. The truth is, it was not so precipitately compiled. In his preface to the work he informs us that he "was advanced in years;" and from the work itself it is evident that he wrote it in 'the reign of Charles the first.

Subsequently to Sir Carew's removal from the presidency of Munster, the Doctor was a coadjutor to Eugene O'Duhy, vicar of Tubrid, adjacent to the place of his nativity, between Cahir and Ballyporeen; as is ascertained from an inscription over the door of the parish church, which imports that "Eugene O'Duhy, vicar of Tubrid, and Doctor Geoffry Keating, built that chapel in 1644," and that with the permission of parliament, as is mentioned in a letter from the Rey. John Heron, p. p. of that place, with a fac-simile of the inscription in 1801. This singular indulgence from a parliament, [xvi] then after the insurrection of 1641, busily employed in imposing pains and penalties on the Irish Catholics, must have been, without doubt, obtained through the interference of some of the Doctor's friends high in power.†

† Perhaps the permission may have been granted by the Irish parliament, or supreme council then sitting in Kilkenny, With

Of Tubrid he afterwards became parish priest. The life of a Catholic clergyman on the country mission in Ireland, however laboriously spent and incessantly employed, in ushering infants into the church, instructing the growing youth, marrying the adult, hearing confessions, administering the sacraments, officiating on Sundays and holidays, imparting spiritual comfort to dying persons, and reading his breviary at stated hours, is necessarily attended with such a similar round of duties, as can neither interest the biographer, nor entertain the reader. Even in these respects we have no further particulars respecting the Doctor.

The time of the Doctor's death is equally uncertain with that of his birth. The Rey. Peter Walsh, the author of the Irish remonstrance, who lived near his time, says the Doctor finished his history in his old age, and died a little after Charles Ist had been proclaimed king, which happened in 1625. This, however, is a mistake, as the inscription in Tubrid shews he was alive in 1644. Collier, in his biographical dictionary, says he finished his work in 1640, and died in 1650. With him nearly coincides the author of the dissertation, who says 'that he might live till 1650.'

The Rev. Mr. Hearn, parish priest of Tubrid, in his communication of 1801, says, the Doctor's remains were buried in Tubrid church, but after the most minute inquiries, of his sepulchre he could find no trace."

[Bound copy text is missing pages xvii-xxiv; resumes xxv]

With knowledge of Irish: the want of this has rendered most of the etymological explanations of Martinius, Vossius, Junius, Menage, Aldrete, Littleton, Bail and Johnson, respecting the derivations of Greek, Latin, Italian, French and English words contemptible, ridiculous and absurd. This is now fully acknowledged, yet, how is it possible that the Celtic branch of the French national institute, or the patriotic members of the Gaelic Society of London, or of the Highland Society, or those of the *Irish Academy* of this nation, can obtain any knowledge of a language still inclosed within the sooty envelopes of moth-eaten, half rotten -and illegible manuscripts?

Though this inconvenience has been often felt and lamented since the invention of Printing, yet little has been done through the agency of the press for the Irish Language. The present work will tend to remedy that complaint: This, with the aid of the Grammars of the Language, especially those lately published, and a complete Irish Dictionary now nearly ready for the Press by the Author of the following translation, will form a complete apparatus for facilitating the study of this ancient Tongue, the acquisition of which is far from being so difficult as some have erroneously supposed. All scholars "from Ganges to the Mississippi's mouths" have heard of the revered general Vallancey's profound knowledge of the Irish Language.

Without any acquaintance with the vernacular Irish; without the assistance of proper elementary books; several gentlemen of this City are allowed by good judges who know it both by precept

and practice from their infantine age, to have attained such a critical knowledge of this ancient Tongue as has astonished many of the more intelligent Irish Scholars.

[xxvi].

Of the translation the Editor takes leave to observe, that had his view been solely directed to the ostentatious agrandizement [sic] of his name, by exhibiting his Author's original in the meretricious decorations and captivating embellishments of stile, he might ensure some degree of praise; but could not render the work useful to such philologers as himself, who may wish to make the Language the subject of their study .and investigation: He has therefore presented the Public with an English translation which may be depended on for accuracy, precision, and a strict adherence to the verbal interpretation of his Author.

The Inscription over the Door of the Church of Tubrid. Original Latin: [lit. trancription]: Orate pro Aib9 P. Eugenii Duhuy de Tybru et D. Doct Gali. Keating huj9 Sacellil undato u nec non et pro oib9 alijsTa sacerd. quam laicis quo u corpa in eod jacet Sa. A°Doni 1644.

Standard Latin: 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.

Thus in English. Pray for the souls of Father Eugene Duhuy vicar of Tybrid, and the learned Doct. Goeffry Keating, of this Chapel the founders; and also for all others, as well as clergy and laymen whose bodies in this Chapel lye interred, 1644.