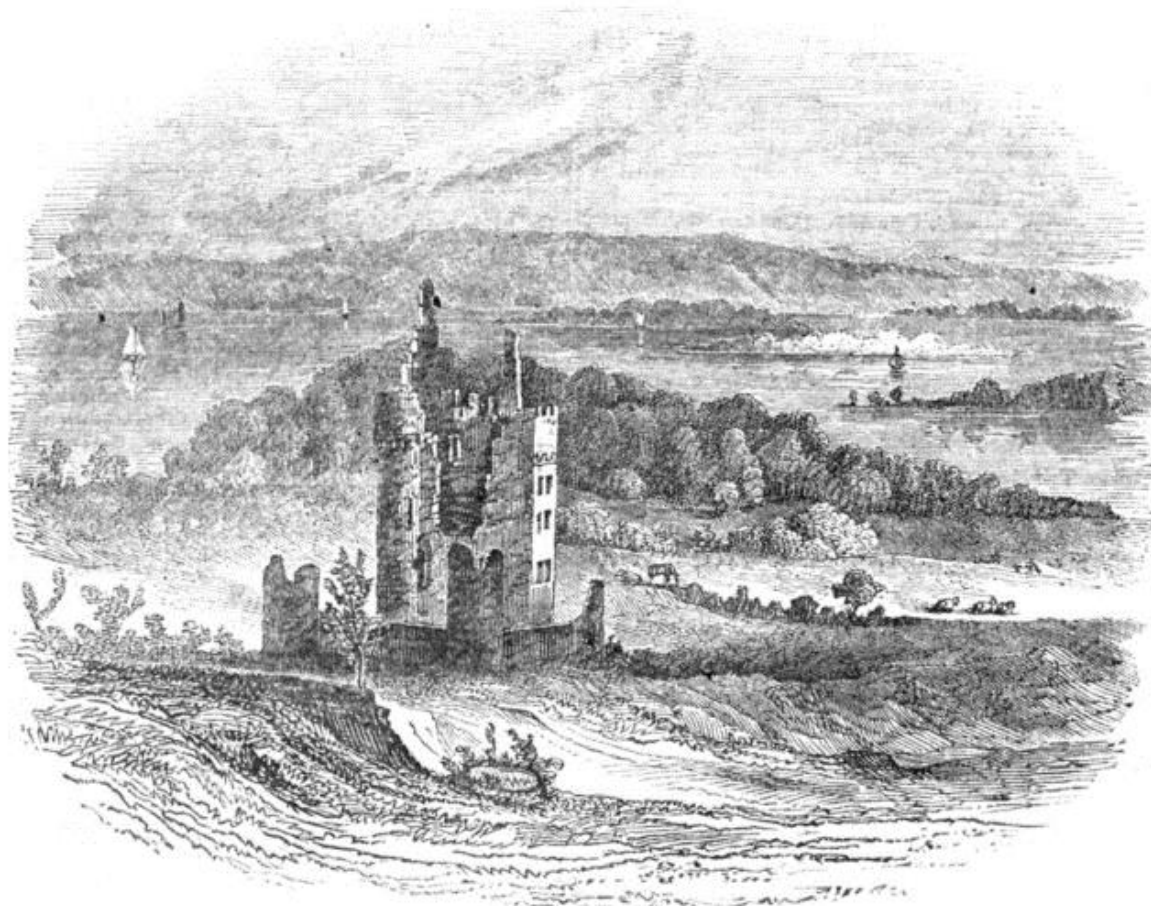


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VOLUME I.



THE CASTLE OF TERMON MAGRATH, COUNTY OF DONEGAL.

In a recent number of our journal we called the attention of our readers to the little-appreciated beauties of Lough Erne; and we now present them with another vista of that delightful locality in connection with the Castle of Termon Magrath, or Termon, as it is more usually called, which is situated at its northern extremity, in the county of Donegal. Considered as a sheet of water, the lower lake appears from this side to the greatest advantage; but its distant shores are but little improved by plantations, and consequently look comparatively bleak and barren. In the immediate vicinity of our subject, however, the scenery is of the rich character for which Lough Erne is so remarkable, the shores of the lake being fringed with the plantations of the glebe of Templecarn and those of Waterfoot, the beautiful seat of Colonel Barton.

The Castle of Termon is situated in the parish of Templecarn, about half a mile to the west of the pleasant and improving little town of Pettigoe, which, if it had a comfortable inn, would be a good station for pleasure tourists wishing to enjoy the scenery of the lower Lough Erne and that of Lough Derg, with its celebrated purgatory of St Patrick.

The foundation of this castle, according to popular tradition, is ascribed to the celebrated Malmurry, or, as he was usually called, Myler Magrath, the first Protestant Bishop of Clogher; and there is every reason to believe this tradition

correct. The lands on which the castle is situated anciently constituted the Termon of St Daveog of Lough Derg, of which the Magraths were hereditarily the termoners or churchwardens; and of this family Myler Magrath was the head; so that these lands properly belonged to him anteriorly to any grant of them derived through his bishopric. He was originally a Franciscan friar, and being a man of distinguished abilities, was advanced by Pope Pius V. to the see of Down; but having afterwards embraced Protestantism, he was placed in the see of Clogher by letter of Queen Elizabeth, dated 18th May 1570, and by grant dated the 18th September, in the same year. He remained, however, but a short time in this see, in which he received but little or nothing of the revenues, and in which he was probably surrounded by enemies even among his own kindred, and was translated to the archbishopric of Cashel on the 3d of February, in the year following. He died at Cashel at the age of one hundred, in the year 1622, and was interred in the choir of that ancient cathedral, where a splendid monument to his memory still exists, with a Latin inscription penned by himself, of which the following quaint translation is given in Harris's Ware:—

Patrick, the glory of our isle and gown,
First sat a bishop in the see of Down,
I wish that I, succeeding him in place
As bishop, had an equal share of grace.

I served thee, England, fifty years in jars,
And pleased thy princes in the midst of wars;
Here where I'm placed I'm not; and thus the case is,
I'm not in both, yet am in both the places. 1621.

He that judgeth me is the Lord.—1 Cor. iv.
Let him who stands take care lest he fall.

Harris remarks, that the Roman Catholics of his diocese have a tradition that he returned to his original faith previously to his death, and that though it was pretended that he was buried in his own cathedral, yet he had given private orders for burying his body elsewhere, to which circumstance, as they say, the two last lines of his epitaph allude. "But," says Harris, "although he was no good man, and had impoverished his see by stripping it of much of its ancient estate, yet I do not find any room to call his sincerity as to his religious profession in question, living or dying. These lines rather seem to hint at the separate existence of the soul and body." But however this may be, there is another tradition relative to him less doubtful, inasmuch as it is common to the peasantry of different creeds, namely, that he was the handsomest man in Ireland in his day!

The Castle of Termon, like most edifices of the kind erected in the sixteenth century, consisted of a strong keep with circular towers at two of its angles, and encompassed by outworks. It was battered by Ireton from the neighbouring hill in the parliamentary wars; but its ruins are considerable, and by their picturesqueness add interest to the northern shore of the lower Lough Erne. P.

THE IRISH MIDWIFE.

BY WILLIAM CARLETON.

Introductory.

OF the many remarkable characters that have been formed by the spirit and habits of Irish feeling among the peasantry, there is not one so clear, distinct, and well traced, as that of the Midwife. We could mention several that are certainly marked with great precision, and that stand out in fine relief to the eye of the spectator, but none at all, who in richness of colouring, in boldness of outline, or in firmness and force, can for a moment be compared with the Midwife. The Fiddler for instance lives a life sufficiently graphic and distinct; so does the Dancing-master, and so also does the Match-maker, but with some abatement of colouring. As for the Cosherer, the Shanahie, the Keener, and the Foster-nurse, although all mellow toned, and well individualized by the strong power of hereditary usage, yet do they stand dim and shadowy, when placed face to face with this great exponent of national temperament.

It is almost impossible to conceive a character of greater self-importance than an Irish Midwife, or who exhibits in her whole bearing a more complacent consciousness of her own privileges. The Fiddler might be dispensed with, and the Dancing-master might follow him off the stage; the Cosherer, Shanahie, Keener, might all disappear, and the general business of life still go on as before. But not so with her whom we are describing; and this conviction is the very basis of her power, the secret source from which she draws the confidence that bears down every rival claim upon the affections of the people.

Before we introduce Rose Moan to our kind readers, we shall briefly relate a few points of character peculiar to the Irish Midwife, because they are probably not in general known to a very numerous class of our readers. This is a matter which we are the more anxious to do, because it is undeniable that an acquaintance with many of the old legendary powers with which she was supposed to be invested, is fast fading out of the public memory; and unless put into timely record, it is to be feared that in the course of one or two generations more, they may altogether disappear and be forgotten.

One of the least known of the secrets which old traditional lore affirmed to have been in possession of the Midwife, was the knowledge of how beer might be brewed from heather. The Irish people believe that the Danes understood and practised this valuable process, and will assure you that the liquor prepared from materials so cheap and abundant was superior in strength and flavour to any ever produced from malt. Nay, they will tell you how it conferred such bodily strength and courage upon those who drank it, that it was to the influence and virtue of this alone that the Danes held such a protracted sway, and won so many victories in Ireland. It was a secret,

however, too valuable to be disclosed, especially to enemies, who would lose no time in turning the important consequences of it against the Danes themselves. The consequence was, that from the day the first Dane set foot upon the soil of Ireland, until that upon which they bade it adieu for ever, no Irishman was ever able to get possession of it. It came to be known, however, and the knowledge of it is said to be still in the country, but must remain unavailable until the fulfilment of a certain prophecy connected with the liberation of Ireland shall take away the obligation of a most solemn oath, which bound the original recipient of the secret to this conditional silence. The circumstances are said to have been these:—

On the evening previous to the final embarkation of the Danes for their own country, the wife of their prince was seized with the pains of childbirth, and there being no midwife among themselves, an Irish one was brought, who, as the enmity between the nations was both strong and bitter, resolutely withheld her services, unless upon the condition of being made acquainted with this invaluable process. The crisis it seems being a very trying one, the condition was complied with; but the midwife was solemnly sworn never to communicate it to any but a woman, and never to put it in practice until Ireland should be free, and any two of its provinces at peace with each other. The midwife, thinking very naturally that there remained no obstacle to the accomplishment of these conditions but the presence of the Danes themselves, and seeing that they were on the eve of leaving the country for ever, imagined herself perfectly safe in entering into the obligation; but it so happened, says the tradition, that although the knowledge of the secret is among the Irish midwives still, yet it never could be applied, and never will, until Ireland shall be in the state required by the terms of her oath. So runs the tradition.

There is, however, one species of power with which some of the old midwives were said to be gifted, so exquisitely ludicrous, and yet at the same time so firmly fixed in the belief of many among the people, that we cannot do justice to the character without mentioning so strange an acquisition. It is this, that where a husband happens to be cruel to his wife, or suspects her unjustly, the Midwife is able, by some mysterious charm, to inflict upon him and remove from the wife the sufferings annexed to her confinement, as the penalty mentioned by holy writ which is to follow the sex in consequence of the transgression of our mother Eve. Some of our readers may perhaps imagine this to be incredible, but we assure them that it is strictly true. Such a superstition did prevail in Ireland among the humbler classes, and still does, to an extent which would surprise any one not as well acquainted with old Irish usages and superstitions as we happen to be. The manner in which the Midwife got possession of this power is as follows:—It sometimes happened that the "good people," or *Dhoine Shee*—that is, the fairies—were put to the necessity of having recourse to the aid of the Midwife. On one of those occasions it seems, the good woman discharged her duties so successfully, that the fairy matron, in requital for her services and promptitude of attendance, communicated to her this secret, so formidable to all bad husbands. From the period alluded to, say the people, it has of course been gladly transmitted from hand to hand, and on many occasions resorted to with fearful but salutary effect. Within our own memory several instances of its application were pointed out to us, and the very individuals themselves, when closely interrogated, were forced to an assertion that was at least equivalent to an admission, "it was nothing but an attack of the cholera," which by the way was little else than a libel upon that departed malady. Many are the tales told of cases in which midwives were professionally serviceable to the good people; but unless their assistance was repaid by the communication of some secret piece of knowledge, it was better to receive no payment, any other description of remuneration being considered unfortunate. Some of those stories have been well told, and with others of them we may probably amuse our readers upon some future occasion.

From this source also was derived another most valuable quality said to be possessed by the Irish Midwife, but one which we should suppose the virtue of our fair countrywomen rendered of very unfrequent application. This was the power of destroying jealousy between man and wife. We forget whether it was said to be efficacious in cases of guilt, but we should imagine that the contrary would rather hold good, as an Irishman is not exactly that description of husband who would suffer himself to be charmed back into the arms of a