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In the Days
of the
Laggan Presbytery

**IN THE DAYS OF THE LAGGAN
PRESBYTERY.**

IN THE DAYS
OF THE
LAGGAN PRESBYTERY.

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BY THE
REV. ALEXANDER G. LECKY, B.A.,

AUTHOR OF

"The Laggan and its Presbyterianism."



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PREFACE.

THE favourable reception given to my former book by Laggan folk and others at home, and the delight with which it was received by many Lagganeers whose homes are now beyond the sea, has encouraged me to enter a second time the field of authorship.

The matters dealt with in the following pages are, for the most part, of but minor and local interest; but their old-world flavour, and the fact that they are mainly the doings of our forefathers—and doings, too, of which we have no need to be ashamed—should make a brief record of these events of the olden time not unacceptable to their descendants; and it is to be hoped that a perusal of them will help to deepen and strengthen the loyalty of Presbyterians to their Church, and to those principles of civil and religious liberty for the establishment and maintenance of which, in this land, our fathers suffered much. Besides, these every-day transactions give us a clearer picture of some phases of the social and religious life of by-gone times than would a record of the more important events with which the historian deals.

I have drawn largely on the manuscript Minutes of the Presbytery of the Laggan, now in the library of the Magee College, and in the numerous extracts given from these unpublished records I have kept to the old spelling and diction of the Minutes, feeling that any attempt to dress them up in more modern phraseology would rob them of much of their quaintness and old-world charm; and as this book is not intended for scholars, but for ordinary people, I have not been careful to give exact

Author
Laggan
1871/2

references to the sources from which many of the occurrences recorded therein are drawn, believing that to do so would only be perplexing to most of the readers into whose hands this book is likely to come. The spelling in the extracts from the Laggan Minutes may be a little puzzling to some, but if the reader will bear in mind that "y" stands for "th," as "ye" for "the," "yt" for "that," "oyrs" for "others," "yr" for "their," &c., and that "q" stands for "wh," as "qt" for "what," "qth" for "which," "qr" for "where," &c., the other peculiarities will be easily understood. It will also be observed that M. in several places stands for Meeting, *i.e.*, the Presbytery; and that a minister in these days was not styled "Reverend" but "Master."

I have to express my deep indebtedness to my old friend, the Rev. W. T. Latimer, for the use of his copy of the first volume—which comprises the greater part—of the Laggan Minutes, made by his own hand, and which, from comparison with the original, I can testify to be a true and accurate copy down to the minutest detail; to Dr. M'Master, Librarian of the Magee College, for the use of the second volume; to Captain John Riky, J.P., of Mount Hall, for the loan of an interesting manuscript volume written by his grandfather, Samuel Crawford, Esq., of Ballyshannon; and to Mr. A. Albert Campbell, of Belfast, for his assistance in seeing the book through the Press.

ALEXANDER G. LECKY.

BALLYLENNON, *July, 1908.*

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE place that had the distinction of giving both a local habitation and a name to the second Presbytery established in Ireland, is not, as might have been expected, situated in either of the ultra Presbyterian Counties of Antrim or Down, but in dark and distant Donegal. It should be remembered, however, that there are two Donegals—an outer and an inner. The former, which is almost wholly Roman Catholic, and from which the County to a large extent takes its character and complexion in the eye of the public, consists of the extensive mountainous districts that lie along the western seaboard, and at some points run far inland. The latter consists of the more flat and fertile country that lies between the mountains and the river Foyle—the eastern boundary of the County. It is largely Protestant, and from a very early period in history has been known as the Laggan, *i.e.*, the low or level country. In the days of the Ulster Plantation, from 1607 onwards, this district, on account of its fertility and also from the fact that the undertakers or persons who obtained the grant of estates in it were chiefly Scotchmen, was largely peopled by immigrants from Scotland, whose descendants, unto this day, till the fields their forefathers then acquired, and keep to the Presbyterian principles they brought with them from their native land.

We know but little of how these rude forefathers of Presbyterianism kept up the worship of God during the first fifty years of their settlement in the Laggan. During

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the greater part of these years they were able to worship in the parish churches without violating their convictions, or sacrificing their Presbyterian principles. The two first Protestant Bishops of Raphoe—Montgomery and Knox—whose episcopates covered the years between 1605 and 1630, were both Scotchmen, and had, no doubt, been born and bred Presbyterians. On this account, and because of the unsettled state of affairs in the Church as well as in the State, these early Bishops, adopting the method of following the lines of least resistance, did not insist very urgently on rigid uniformity in the observance of the peculiarities of English Prelacy; and so it came to pass that in the early days of the Plantation Scottish ministers officiated in the parish churches, and received the tithes and other emoluments connected therewith; and as their congregations would be almost wholly made up of their own countrymen, they appear to have conducted public worship much in the same way as that to which they had been accustomed in the Church of Scotland.

This harmonious state of matters, which, if it had been wisely managed, might have won over the great bulk of the Lagganers to the Established Church, was not permitted to continue, though the first serious interruption of it in the Laggan was not brought about by the Prelatic, but by the Republican party under Oliver Cromwell. In 1649, when Charles the First was beheaded and a Republic set up in England, the Established Church was overthrown both in England and Ireland, its worship everywhere suppressed, and the bishops driven from their sees and the incumbents from their parishes. By this action the Presbyterians were, for a time, deprived of the facilities for worship which they had in many places hitherto enjoyed.

Almost ten years before these troubles came upon them, the Protestants of Ireland, both Episcopalian and Presbyterian, suffered grievously when the native Irish,

in 1641, rose in rebellion for the purpose of driving Protestantism out of the country. Many of the Scotch settlers, both ministers and people, foreseeing and dreading what was coming, had gone back to Scotland, and so escaped this terrible massacre in which thousands were murdered under circumstances of the greatest cruelty. It would appear, however, as if the Laggan people, feeling comparatively secure under the protection of the famous Laggan forces, who were themselves almost to a man Presbyterians, had remained in the country, as there was a large number of Presbyterians in the Laggan in 1644, when the Solemn League and Covenant was administered to great multitudes at Taboyn, Ray, Raphoe, Ramelton, and Letterkenny; at all of which, and at other places besides, congregations then existed, though they were not formed into a Presbytery till ten years afterwards.

The earliest referrence that we have regarding the establishing of a Presbytery in the Laggan is found in "Adair's Narrative," where we are told that "the Presbytery, having commissioners in the Laggan, gave a commission to them, with the few ministers settled there, to meet in a committee with proportionable ruling elders to consult of the affairs relating to the Church and covenant there, and return their diligence to the Presbytery." This was in February, 1649, and the court here called "the Presbytery" was the first Presbyterian ecclesiastical court set up in Ireland. It was formed at Carrickfergus on the 10th of June, 1642, and consisted of five ministers and four elders. The ministers were the chaplains of the Scottish regiments that had been sent over to put down the Irish rebellion, and the elders were officers of these regiments, who were elders of the Church of Scotland. This court was known as "The Presbytery," and for a time had the oversight of all the Presbyterian congregations in Ulster. Adair tells us that from time to time it sent down brethren "to the Laggan

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nigh Derry to water these parts, there being few ministers yet planted there." The only ministers in this part of the country at that time were Robert Cunningham, at Taboyn; Hugh Cunningham, at Ray; William Semple, at Letterkenny; Thomas Drummond, at Ramelton; James Wallace, at Urney; and David Gamble, whose congregation is not known. In 1654 "The Presbytery" divided into three sub-Presbyteries, or "meetings," as they were called, viz., Antrim, Down and Laggan, and three years afterwards these were further subdivided, two additional ones being formed, viz., Route and Tyrone.

We know nothing of the proceedings of the Laggan Presbytery during the first eighteen years of its existence, though it is evident that a record of its meetings during these years was kept, for the old Minutes, which are still happily to the fore, and which date from the 21st of August, 1672, begin with the words, "A continuation of the Register Book of the Presbyterie of the Lagan." What became of the Minute Book of which the existing one is a continuation we cannot tell; it was probably lost during the times of trouble and persecution that the Church passed through in after years, or perhaps it met with the fate which the old volume that still exists once narrowly escaped. In the year 1681, the High Sheriff of Donegal was eagerly seeking for it, in the hope that it might contain some entries that would incriminate certain members of the Presbytery who were at this time on their trial for keeping a public fast, and for which offence they were imprisoned for eight months in Lifford gaol. The Sheriff's quest was disappointed by the energy and prudence of Mr. Trail, minister of Ballindrait, in whose hands this book then was, and who being at a meeting of the Presbytery in St. Johnston, and hearing there that the authorities were searching for it, mounted his horse in all haste, and riding home, had it conveyed to a place of safety. Had the lost volume escaped the ravages of

time, it would no doubt have told us of some interesting events that must now be for ever untold, and of some good men whose names and memories are now unknown.

It is evident that there was not any lengthened interruption of the meetings of the Presbytery between the time covered by the lost volume and the opening of the existing one, such as was afterwards between the years 1681-90, as we find in the Minutes of the meeting held at St. Johnston, on the 10th of August, 1672—the first of which we have any official record—references to several appointments made at the previous meeting: amongst others, “Master John Heart reports that by reason of the straits of the poor of his own congregation, he could not bring in the collection formerly appointed by the meeting.” From this date onwards, for almost ten years, the meetings of the Presbytery were held without interruption and with the utmost regularity, up till persecution in 1681 put a stop to them for almost the next ten years, during which time even meetings for public worship were suppressed and most of the ministers compelled to fly from the country. When peace was again restored after the siege of Derry and the wars of the Revolution, and the Presbytery was once more able to resume its sittings, it met at its old meeting-place of St. Johnston, on the 30th of December, 1690. The few members who came together on that December day, now nigh 220 years ago, would find many changes, not for the better, in that old town with which they were so familiar. The entire surrounding neighbourhood, owing to its proximity to Derry, suffered severely, both by loss of life and destruction of property, during the famous siege of that city. The besieging army had its headquarters for a time in St. Johnston, and when King James’s baffled troops were compelled to raise the siege and depart they doubtless left it a heap of ashes. We are told that they pillaged and burned everything that

lay along the route of their retreat between Derry and Clady, where they crossed the river Finn. The members of the Presbytery, we may be sure, would find that some of their old friends who used to welcome them when they met in St. Johnston had perished, and that some who were formerly well-to-do were now reduced to poverty. Of themselves, three of their number, viz.: Robert Wilson (of Strabane), John Hamilton (of Donagheady) and David Brown (of Urney) had perished in Derry during the siege, others had fled for safety to Scotland, so that only six members, all told, put in an appearance at the first meeting held after the Revolution: they were the Revs. Alexander Ferguson (of Burt), Robert Craghead (formerly of Donoughmore, and now minister of Derry), John Rowatt (formerly of Omagh, now minister of Ballindrait, who passed unscathed through the horrors of the siege), and Neil Gray (formerly of Clogher, now minister of Monreagh), together with Robert Cowan (elder from Monreagh) and John M'Crea (elder from Ballindrait). The Revs. Wm. Liston (of Letterkenny) and Jas. Alexander (of Convoy) were probably in the country, as they are entered in the Minutes as being absent. We no longer meet with the name of Mr. Hart (of Monreagh) who had been a most diligent and useful member of the Presbytery from its beginning. He had been ordained minister of the parish of Hamilton, in Scotland, so far back as 1642, and came to Monreagh in 1654. Mr. Hart did not find the land of his adoption a peaceful one; he spent close on seven years of his Irish ministry in prison, and now his spirit had passed "to where beyond these voices there is peace," and his wearied bones were resting in the churchyard of the parish in which he had ministered so long and faithfully. Mr. Hart died on the 8th of January, 1687.

Nor do we again meet with the name of William Trail (of Ballindrait), one of the most worthy and amiable

of men; his family were known in Scotland as the "evangelical" Trails, and its Irish representative worthily upheld that name. Mr. Trail was much persecuted here and fled to Scotland in 1682, where he spent the remainder of his years as minister of the parish of Brothwick. Mr. Gordon (of Glendermot) by whose advice the gates of Derry were closed, was also in Scotland, and though his congregation were very anxious that he should return to them, he did not, but became minister of the parish of Cardross. Mr. Campbell (of Ray) had also fled to Scotland and was not returned at this first meeting, as Alexander Rodgers, from the parish of Ray, appeared at it supplicating for supplies in Mr. Campbell's absence. Donoughmore was now without a minister, and John Eliot appeared from it asking supplies; also a letter was read from the people of Ardstraw, requesting the Presbytery to assist them in getting back Mr. Adam White, their former minister, who was now "in the parish of Billie in the Rout."

The Presbytery, after the resumption of its meetings, was kept busy in endeavouring to build up the waste places and heal the breaches that had been caused by the wars and privations through which they had passed, and in trying to get a modest maintenance for its ministers from a people who, we may be sure, had trouble often in keeping the wolf from their own door.

Under the benign rule of William the Third, the meetings of the Laggan were held uninterruptedly and in peace, and a few new congregations were formed. In June, 1697, the Synod of Ulster decided to divide the Presbytery of the Laggan into two Presbyteries, viz.: the lower Presbytery of the Laggan, comprising the congregations of Ramelton, Ray, Letterkenny, Lifford, Donaghadey, Glendermot, Londonderry, Taughboyn, Burt, Donnogh, and Attevil (perhaps Merville); and the upper Presbytery of the Laggan, comprising the

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congregations of Sligo and Moyn, Donegal, Ballyshanny, Rapho, Donnoghmore, Orney, Straban, Omagh and Inniskillen.

In accordance with this injunction, at its meeting in the following September, "The Presbrie now resolve to divide into two distinct presbries according to the appointment of the Synod at their last meeting, and appoint the presbrie of the lower bounds to meet at L.-Derry, the first Wednesday of October, and that of the upper bounds at Straban, the second Wednesday of October next, and resolve to meet together in one presbrie the first Wednesday of December next." This separation continued for only one year, during which the lower Presbytery held its meetings sometimes in Londonderry and sometimes in St. Johnston, and the upper in Strabane or Castlefin, and two or three times they found it necessary to meet conjointly. The repeal of the union that had existed so long amongst the brethren of the Laggan was not popular; there was a union of hearts amongst them that could not easily be repealed; accordingly we find that at the next meeting of the Synod, which was held at Antrim, on the 1st of June, 1698, it was enacted that "The dividend of Presbytrys made & determin'd by the Synod was observ'd, but now the Presbytrys of Lagan upper & lower, by them design'd the Presbytrys of Derry & Strabane, finding, as they say, inconveniencies in dividing, & desiring liberty to reunite in one Presbytry as formerly: this Synod grantes their desire, leaving it to them to unite or continue separate as they find most convenient." The Laggan brethren, who were never in reality sundered—in the existing Minute Book, the proceedings of the Upper Presbytery are recorded on one page, and those of the Lower on the opposite one—quickly availed themselves of the liberty granted by the Synod, and met together in their old meeting-place of St. Johnston, on the 27th of July following. The Presbytery

then goes on without any breach till June, 1700, when the Synod erected a new Presbytery at Enniskillen, and the congregations of Sligo, Moyne (Killala), Donegal, Enniskillen and Omagh are put under its care. At the next meeting of the Laggan it was agreed—we may be sure with regret—that the presence here of the ministers of these congregations is no more expected, and all the affairs of these places are referred to the cognisance of the said meeting. Notwithstanding this certificate of disjunction, the brethren of the Laggan had the pleasure, shortly afterwards, of the presence, of at least some, of these old friends. The Presbytery at Enniskillen did not succeed in accomplishing the end for which it was founded, which was to endeavour “to plant the upper country about Inniskillen with the gospel, doing what in them lies to spread & propogate the Gospel in Purity both as to Doctrine & Discipline according to the Principles & rules agreed upon by this Church.” At the next Synod it was agreed that as “the making Inniskillen the Ordinary Seat of a Presb: was not like to take effect in planting the country thereabout with the Gospel which was the end design’d in giving it.” It was therefore overtured that this Presbytery be dissolved and a new one erected, “Clownis to be the ordinary seat of their meeting,” and Donegal, Moyne and Sligo restored to the Laggan.

Two years after, viz. : in June, 1702, the Presbyteries of the Route and the Laggan were divided into three Presbyteries, whereof one was to sit at Londonderry, another at Coleraine and the third at Convoy. From this time the name of the Laggan is no longer found in the ecclesiastical nomenclature of Irish Presbyterianism.

CHAPTER II.

THE MEETINGS OF THE PRESBYTERY.

THE Presbytery generally met in St. Johnston, only a very few meetings were held in other places. This is all the more remarkable seeing that there was no place of worship in St. Johnston till long after the Laggan Presbytery had ceased to exist. The reason why the brethren held their meetings so often in this town was probably because it was the most central and convenient place for the greater part of the members. Most of the congregations of the Presbytery were within easy reach of it, though a few of them were a long distance away. One is at a loss to know in what building these meetings were held. When the Presbytery met at Ray, or Monreagh, or other place, as it occasionally did, the meeting was usually appointed to be held at the minister's house, but as there was no place of worship in St. Johnston at this time there would be no minister's house there in which the brethren could meet. It is more than likely that these old worthies met in whatever kind of inn or house of entertainment St. Johnston could at that time boast of. It was no uncommon thing for Presbyteries to meet in such places down to comparatively recent years. We find the Presbytery of Letterkenny meeting in a public-house in Castlefin, in the beginning of the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Dill, in Donoughmore, which would be in the early years of the past century. Though this would appear very unbecoming to us of the

present day, yet when we consider how cold and comfortless any church buildings that then existed were, we cannot much condemn these sorely-trying brethren on this account. Still there may have been some other place in St. Johnston in which these meetings were held, for on one occasion it is mentioned that the religious exercises, that were an important part of every meeting, were conducted *coram populi, i.e.*, in the presence of the people, which would lead us to suppose that the meetings were held in a place capable of holding more or less of an audience in addition to the members of the court.

At any rate, St. Johnston was the favourite meeting-place of the Presbytery. So loath were they to leave it, even for a single day, that upon one occasion they changed the time of a meeting rather than change the place of it. The meeting, which was appointed to be held in St. Johnston, on the third Tuesday of April, 1674, was adjourned for a week, and "that because of the great fair which fell to be at this place on the third Tuesday of the month." Nothing short of the clash of arms and the din of war could drive them from this old town. At a meeting held in Derry, on the 19th of May, 1691, it was stated that "this meeting should have been held at St. Johnston last week, but because of the confusion of the times by the soldiers marching, it is altered to this day and place by some of the brethren and the thing is approved."

The journey that some of the members had to undertake in order to reach their meeting-place was both an arduous and a dangerous one. The only mode of travelling at this time was either on foot or on horseback. Mr. Taylor, the minister of Enniskillen, who resided within two miles of that town, would have a long and weary seat in the saddle when he attended, as he often did, and the ministers of Ballyshannon and Killybegs—what a cold and dreary ride they would have through

the wild gap of Barnesmore, fording the Finn and the Dale, past the towns of Ballybofey and Convoy and Raphoe. They had not even the accommodation of a good road by which to travel. As they would draw near to their journey's end, their way would lie along the slopes of the hills of Lettergull and Binion, where in some places may still be traced the old bridle path that served for a road in these primitive days, the existence of which is preserved in the name by which the fence that bounded it is locally known, viz.: "the Allaway dyke"—*i.e.*, the auld highway dyke. And in addition to the length and toil of their journey there was the danger of it. We find Mr. Henry, the minister of Donegal, excused for non-attendance once on account of "the length of the travel and the danger of the way." In the year 1694, Mr. Alexander, minister of Convoy, gave as his reason for not going to preach in Sligo as he had been appointed, "that it has been, ever since he was first appointed, dangerous travelling, till of late, by reason of Reperrees (robbers) on that rode."

But the toils and dangers of the way being over and their destination reached, we may be sure these brethren from a distance, whether ministers or elders, would receive a kindly welcome, and good entertainment, both for themselves and their wearied horses, some doubtless at the house of good Master John Hart, who was for upwards of five and twenty years the Father of the Presbytery, and who, from the position he occupied in its proceedings, was evidently a fine specimen of a learned Christian gentleman; some in the hospitable home of Robert Cowan, a very regular member of the Presbytery, and who during part of the time that King James spent in the Laggan vainly besieging the Maiden City, had the honour of entertaining the King, though from what we know of Mr Cowan he would, in this case,

be more pleased to speed the parting than to welcome the coming of his royal guest; others would be welcomed at the house of Matthew Lindsay, of Altaskin, another Taboyn elder, and one of the very few persons who, in the year 1665, paid tax on more than one hearth; and others at the house of William Macky, of St. Johnston, another elder who took an active interest in the business of the Presbytery. This hospitality on the part of the good people of St. Johnston and the neighbourhood was not uncalled for, for occasionally the meetings of Presbytery extended over two days, and when that occurred it would be necessary for the far-off members to spend more than one night away from home.

But though the difficulties in the way of attending were great, and though the meetings were held very frequently—one almost every month of the year, the attendance of both ministers and elders was remarkably good. For many years there was no fixed day or date for holding the meetings. At the end of the Minutes of almost every meeting there is an entry like this: “The next dyet of our meeting is aptd. to be the first Wednesday of October, at St. Johnston.” This arrangement continued down to September, 1694, when it was enacted “that the country be not disappointed for the future it is appointed that the last Tuesday of every month be the time of meeting, save only Novr. Decr. Jany. and Feby., during which space it is thought convenient that the presbyterie sit but once in two months, viz.: the last Tuesday of December and of February, and that all attend the meeting precisely at 10 of the clock before noon on these days.” The people of those days believed in the practice of early to bed and early to rise, and when the proceedings of the Presbytery extended into a second day they began at 8 o'clock in the morning. Attendance at meetings of Presbyteries was regarded as a duty that *should not be neglected without good and sufficient cause.*

and great care was taken to secure a regular and punctual attendance both of ministers and elders. The ruling elders were not slighted or overlooked in the Laggan; there was an enactment to the effect that the meeting appoints each minister to bring an elder with him to the meeting to sit with him in it. As early as the year 1674, a resolution was passed that "the meeting because of the too frequent absence & late coming of severall of the brethern doe resolve & enact it, that hereafter they will remove those that have been absent or sero (late) & if after hearing of their reasons, any brethren shall be found to have been absent or sero without sufficient & revalent cause these such brethern shall be judicially rebuked by the M[eeeting]"; and also that "none go away before ye dissolving of ye M. without liberty asked and given from ye M.," enactments which go to show that these old time meetings were conducted with great decorum. Strict enquiry was made regarding the causes of absence, the usual causes were the storminess of the weather or want of bodily health. Once Mr. Liston, of Letterkenny, is excused because "he is so valetudinary that he is unable to ride." At another time because "his body was infirm, his servant sick, and his sister's son on his death-bed in his house." The excuse of the minister of Convoy on one occasion was not considered a valid one—"Mr. Sam. Halliday's excuse for his absence at this time sent unto us because of his taking of physick is not accepted."

The "Dyets" of the Presbytery were not wholly taken up with the transaction of matters of business, very diligent heed was given to religious exercises. At the 3rd session of the meeting held on the 25th of November, 1673, it is stated, "This M. does appoint the Dyet of the next M. to be upon the first Tuesday of January next, at St. Johnston, at 10 o'clock, & resolve to spend a good part of the Wednesday after in fasting

& prayer." They also observed periodically a function that was known as "private censures," a custom that in after times was kept up at the annual meetings of the Synod of Ulster. Entries like the following are of frequent occurrence in the Minutes:—"The severall brethern here present were removed successively & their life & conversation inquired into by the rest, & each of them approven & encouraged in their duty." "Because the private censures were omitted at the last meeting, therefore the meeting does now first fall upon it, & the severall brethern that were present being removed, were approven, & nothing objected against their carriage." Another function that was observed at every meeting was called "the presbyteriall exercises," and the time set apart for it was an hour. At the November meeting, of 1677, "Mr. Robert Rule is appoynted to have ye exercise and addition upon Hebrews 3rd & 12th himself alone at ye next Dyet, & afterwards two to be joynd in that work for making & adding according to ye ordinary way." The subject dealt with in these exercises was a verse or two from the Book of Hebrews, and the performance of them was strictly enforced. Mr. Taylor, of Enniskillen, asked to be excused on one occasion, "because he could get no time for it because of diversions," but the meeting was not satisfied with his excuse. On another occasion when the subject of the exercises was Hebrews 4th chapter and 3rd verse, "The first speaker (Mr. Henry) is approven, but the M. is not satisfied with the doctrine of the second speaker (Mr. Liston) about the day of grace ending with many in this life, & about the marks of that case & do judge that part of the doctrine not sound, as it was expressed by him & they appoint Mr. John Heart, Rot. Rule & Rot. Craghead to speak with him about this matter privately."

In the records of ordinations that are given in the Minutes we see how careful the Presbytery was that all

things should be done decently and in order. The earliest record of an ordination, in which any details of the mode of procedure on such occasions are given, is that of Mr. Holmes, who was ordained in Strabane on the 21st of December, 1692. It is as follows:—"This day Mr. Rot. Craghead preached upon 1st Tim. 4. & 16. according to appointment at Strabane and after sermon having proposed the ordinary questions to Mr. Will. Homes that are useall before ordination, he with the rest of the ministers then present, and that are written in the sederunt did ordain the sd. Mr. Will. Holmes by imposition of hands and solemne and serious prayer to God they solemnly sett him apart to the ministrie in the congregation of Strabane."

The most lengthened and minute account that we have of an ordination is that of Mr. Thos. Craghead, who was ordained at Ballintra, as minister of Donegal and the surrounding districts, on the 6th of July, 1698, which is as follows:—"Mr. Alexander preached at Mount Charles last Lord's day and served the edict of Mr. Craghead's ordination as he was appointed. The session being called and enquired if they do adhere to their call formerly given to Mr. Thos. Craghead, they answer that they do unanimously adhere to it; they are asked also had they resolved to settle their meeting-house; their answer was that they resolve to continue their meeting-houses as they are until next spring, viz.: one at Mount Charles, and another at Ballintra, and that they resolve if Mr. Craghead shall then find it convenient so to do to build one meeting-house in or near Donegall where the whole congregation may ordinarily attend. They promise also that they will take care to provide Mr. Craghead in a farm seasonably, and build necessary houses for him upon it, and that they will take care to *perform* whatever else they promised to the meeting for *Mr. Craghead's* encouragement among them. John

M'Clure and Thos. Armstrong elders are sent to the congregation of Donegall now convened in the meeting house at Ballintra to give publicke intimation that the presbytrie resolves within a little to proceed to Mr. Thos. Craghead's ordination and requiring them that if any of them know anything to object against the same, they forthwith repair to the Preby. now sitting at Ballintra and give in their objections; these two return and give account that they did as they were appointed.

"The Presby. having waited a considerable time and none appearing resolve now to proceed to his ordination. The Presbytery appoint their next session after noon.

"Sess. II. After prayer *sederunt qui supra*, together with Mr. Thos. Craghead now ordained. This day Mr. Thos. Craghead was ordained and separated to the work of the ministry in the congregation of Donegall, etc., with fasting, prayer and imposition of hands, Mr. ffisher having lectured and Mr. Alexander preached and preceded in the action according to appointment."

Like care was taken in the selection and ordination of elders. At the meeting of Presbytery held on the 3rd of January, 1693, Urney supplicated that their session be increased, upon which they are appointed to give in a list of such as they judge most suitable for the office of ruling elder within the bounds of their parish, and three members of the Presbytery were appointed to enquire into the life and conversation of those men which Urney shall propose, and make return of their diligence to the next meeting. Elders were at this time usually ordained by the minister of the congregation, thus we find Mr. Winsly, of Donagheady, giving in a list of persons that were judged fitting for the eldership in his congregation, and he was directed to ordain them "as he should have clearness."

Visitation Presbyteries were not so regularly observed then, as they are in our day, partly owing, no doubt, to

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the difficulties with which the holding of all kinds of meetings were beset in those times of trouble, and also partly because there was not great necessity for such meetings. The Presbyterial exercises and private censures that were so diligently attended to at almost every meeting, the strict discipline that was meted out to all transgressors who were brought before the Presbytery by any of its sessions, and the minuteness with which pecuniary matters were enquired into covered most of the ground that is usually taken up at our meetings for visitation. The earliest record that we have of a visitation being held by the Laggan Presbytery is in the year 1681. At the meeting held in St. Johnston, on the 9th of March, in that year, the following resolution was agreed to:— “The Meeting appoint a visitation of the congregation of Taboyn at the next presbyterial meeting, and they resolve to visit other congregations afterwards as they have opportunity.” In the Minutes of the next meeting, which was held on the 20th of April, not in Taboyn, but in St. Johnston, we find the following brief report of this visitation, which is interesting as being, probably, the oldest record we have of a visitation of any congregation of our Church, “The elders of the congregation of Taboyn were called upon & enquired at severally concerning their minister’s doctrine, conversation, exercise of discipline, visiting the sick, & other parts of ministerial work; they did declare both their own satisfaction, & the satisfaction of all the congregation about the diligence & faithfulness of their minister, Mr. John Heart; who also gives a good testimony of the elders; & the elders are appointed to give an account of their minister’s maintenance at the next meeting.”

In the Minutes of the meeting held in the following May, it is stated “Presbyterial visitations of congregations are delayed for a while”; and little wonder that they *were, for in the Minutes of the next meeting which was*

held on the 28th of June, after giving the names of half a dozen members who were absent, it is added, "besides those four brethren who are at present detained in Dublin, viz. : Mrs. John Heart, Rot. Campbell, Wm. Trail and James Alexander." This was the clerk's delicate way of saying that these four brethren were in gaol, for the offence of having, with their co-presbyters, appointed and observed a day of prayer and humiliation, on the previous 17th of February. Not only were Presbyterian visitations delayed for a while, but times became so bad, on account of wars and persecution, that ordinary meetings of Presbytery, and also meetings for worship in public were almost wholly stopped for close on ten years, and not till almost fifteen years after this visitation in Monreagh was there another held. It was at Convoy, on the 27th of May, 1696. The record of it in the Minutes is as follows:—"This day Mr. Ja. Alexr. preached in his ordinary and is approven, and being removed and the elders called in, they are asked if this be Mr. Alexr's. ordinary and usuall way of preaching, which they say it is, and being asked concerning his life and conversation and all other questions ordinary upon such occasions relating to their minister being put to them; they answer that they can object nothing against him in any particular; they say also that the people gives both him and them due reverence. They also give acctt. that they have payd. to Mr. Alexr. of sallary from May .94 to May .96,—41lb. 03s. 0½d., due to him for the above said time 10lb. and that they have given him in corn for the time above said 52 brls., the meeting requires them to give dilligence to pay up all arrears against next Meeting. The people being cald. declare their satisfaction both with their minister and session.

"Mr. Alexr. being cald. in the meeting demand a sight of ye Session book which being produced and found much out of order, they are required to put it in better

order with all convenient speed." After this time visitations are held frequently, one or two every year, and were conducted much after the manner of the one at Convoy. The people were usually asked "if this was their minister's ordinary text, and if he usually so preached among them?" Enquiry was also made if the elders visited the sick, held prayer meetings, and kept session days, and regularly attended same.

CHAPTER III.

THE EDUCATION AND CHARACTER OF ITS MINISTERS.

THE Presbyterian Church has always stood up for an educated ministry. It has, in all times and in all places, required of those who aspired to the office of the ministry not only a walk and conversation in keeping with the Gospel, and a special training in theology, but also a competent knowledge of those branches of learning which go to form a liberal education, according to the ideas and circumstances of the age. We would not, however, have thought it strange, or a thing that they could have been much blamed for, if the founders of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, considering the difficulties and exceptional circumstances in which they were placed, had, for a time, relaxed the strictness of the law, and been satisfied with a lower standard of scholarship than that which was required under ordinary circumstances. At this time there were many parts of the country recently settled with immigrants from Scotland, where the people were very desirous of having a congregation erected and a minister settled amongst them, and where they would not have been hard to please in a minister, but the Presbytery did not yield to the wishes of the people in this respect, but exercised a strict supervision in regard to the fitness of *all ministers* and candidates for the ministry, both as to

their personal piety and their scholarship; and also as to the manner in which they obtained entrance into the ministerial office. At the very first meeting of which we have any record we find that a petition from several people of Sligo and about it, desiring advice concerning William Paterson, who preaches and baptises among them, requesting that he might be ordained and continued among them, and that meekness may be used towards him, was read, together with a letter from Captain Charles Colines. The reply given to this was—"The Presbyterie having received information and advice concerning William Paterson's scandalous practices have appointed the Moderator to write to the people in and about Sligo and to inform them of the sinfulness and danger of William Paterson's practices in usurping the ministerial calling without the trial of his gifts and ordination, and that therefore they ought to avoid him as an intruder." Mr. Semple was appointed to write to Captain Colines to the same purpose and to draw up reasons from the Word of God why Wm. Paterson ought not to be owned as a minister of the Gospel.

These old presbyters would not receive everyone who came to them with certificates and testimonials of his fitness for the ministry, and some who came, probably, as they thought, well provided, did not succeed in their quest; thus at the meeting held in January, 1673, we read that "the brethern having seen Master Robert Kenedie his testimonialls did advise him to bring more full testimonials from Scotland to the next Committee that with the consent of these brethern they might with ye more clearness admit him to tryalls." At the meeting held in the July following we read, "As for Master Rot. Kenedie and his testimonials the meeting finds themselves not concerned to meddle any further with him and them."

Licentiates coming from a distance had to produce *satisfactory testimonials* as to their character, before being

allowed to preach in any of the congregations of the Presbytery. "John Hamilton & Wm. M'Millan expectants in the County of Down & other expectants are to be enquired after, and a particular character of them to be privately required from some particular brother in these bounds."

The ministers who settled in the Laggan in early times were all Scotchmen, and educated at one or other of the Scotch Universities, but although they were licentiates of the Established Church of Scotland they were required to give satisfactory proofs of their piety and scholarship before being ordained. In the account given in the minutes of the Presbytery of the settlements of Mr. Trail, who was ordained minister of Lifford (Ballindrait), on the 29th of January, 1673; and Mr. Hampton, who was ordained in Burt, on the 15th of October, in the same year, we find these entries: "Master William Trail is appointed to exercise and add. on Heb. 3. 3. at the next meeting, and to handle that controversie *de justificatione per solam fidem* agst. the Papists at the meeting following, and that he distribute his theses. when at the next meeting." "Master William Trail having delivered his popular sermon before the brethern is approven, and being putt to ye rest of ye pairts of his tryalls & is approven in all & judged qualified for the ministrie in that place & to be ordained at the next meeting, and Master Thomas Drummond to preside in his ordination." Mr. Hampton was required "to deliver his exegesis in Latine & sustain his disputes in questioning trials, & trials of languages (& psalm 14th in Hebrew) and to have his popular comon upon Mat. 11 & 12 at the next meeting."

At this time and for long afterwards it was impossible for a student of the Presbyterian faith who desired a collegiate training to get the like in Ireland, and consequently young men studying, either for the

ministerial or medical professions, resorted largely to Scotland—chiefly to the University of Glasgow—for their education. At an early period in the history of Irish Presbyterianism an attempt was made to provide a home training for candidates for the ministry. There are several references in the Laggan Minutes all approving of “the school of Philosiphy at Antrim under Master Thomas Gowan’s inspection,” one proposing that “something to be done to the youths that have ended their course of Philosiphy at Antrim by the Masters & Ministers, overseers of the school, in lieu and stead of Laureation, as some publicke declaring them to be fit to teach the liberall arts or some such things as they shall see meet.” But wherever young men received their education, the Presbytery exercised a close but kindly supervision over their studies, and encouraged them in every way that they could. Thus at the 3rd session of a meeting held in October, 1678, we find that “Masters John Heart & Rot. Rule having been yesternight appd. to confer with Victor Ferguson about his reading & studies did so, and give a satisfying report thereof to the meeting who now for present only desire him to continue his studies and to read some polemick Divinity and the M. do resolve after a while to call for him again if he be long a coming to us.” Also in September, 1680, “Mr. Rot. Cambell gives account that Mr. Alexr. Marshall is diligent in his studies, and Mr. Wm. Liston reports that Mr. Francis MacKemy desires some more time, & that he is diligent, & Mr. John Scott also is to be minded & encouraged by Mr. Campbell & Liston who are desired to take some inspection into his studies.”

Before being licensed, students were subjected to rigid tests both as to their orthodoxy and their personal character. Thus we find that Robert Simpson, in October, 1676, in the course of his trials, delivered a discourse on *Acts v. 31*, which did not fully satisfy the Presbytery,

and they gave him Galatians ii. 20, in order to try his gifts and faculty of raising doctrines and observations and application, and in it he did not answer the design and expectation of the brethren. Mr. Simpson would appear not to have been a satisfactory student, for at the same meeting "he is by the Modr. in the name of the meeting admonished and reproved for some things offensive in his conversation." In another reference to Mr. Simpson's trials, it is said "he was required to give a proof of his knowledge of the Greek *ad aperturam libri*, and of the Hebrew upon psalm 17 and of his knowledge of catechetical questions or questionary trials." Mr. Simpson satisfied the Presbytery so far that "after advice & admonition the Presbytery doe open his mouth and licentiat him to preach the Gospell publickly in our bounds as he shall be called thereunto," but he would appear not to have been a success as a preacher, for almost two years after he was licensed we find that "Master Rot. Campbell is appoynted to show to Mr. Rot. Simpson that his letter to this M. was very dissatisfying & that they would have him to appear before ym. at yr. next m. for getting his talke of doubts discussed." And afterwards it is recorded "that a coppie of his letters is by the clerk to be sent to Scotland for information of friends yr. anent his principles & way."

The brethren were also very faithful in dealing with any of themselves who departed from the paths of rectitude. Mr. Homes, minister of Urney, was suspended for "unseemly carriage" in the house of Mrs. Rowatt, but was afterwards restored and continued minister of Urney till his death, almost fifty years afterwards. Mr. Will, of Glendermot, was deposed in 1697, "on the report of the elders of Glendermot who had witnessed several things scandalous in the life and conversation of Mr. John Will, their minister." We also find the Presbytery holding a lengthened and minute investigation

regarding a number of very grave charges brought by John Semple, a merchant in Letterkenny, against Mr. Liston, the minister there, charging him, amongst other things, with being "a briber causing poor people to stand publicly for scandalls in ye congregation, & taking bribes from the rich, that he was the instrument of the ruin of his mother's familie, that he calls his elders rogues, bears and knaves to their faces, and hath cruelly robbed orphans of their worldly interests." After examining a large number of witnesses on both sides, the Presbytery judged "Mr. Semple censurable as guilty of gross slander in reference to Mr. Liston, and therefore appointeth the Mod. in their name to lay his sin before him and sharply to reprove him, which was accordingly done."

Though the times were rude, and many things passed unnoticed then, that would be severely censured now, the ministers of the Presbyterian Church were expected and required to walk circumspectly and to be diligent in the discharge of their duties. On one occasion a charge was brought by the Presbytery of Tyrone against Mr. Taylor, of Enniskillen, to the effect that he was "a disorderly walker." Mr. Taylor's offence was that he had preached in a place which the Presbytery of Tyrone regarded as under their jurisdiction, without their permission. When this matter was brought under the notice of the Laggan Presbytery, they evidently considered that their co-Presbyter had done nothing worthy of blame, for they decided, "that he was orderly settled there in Fermanagh and that of necessity he came to that place where he now is, and therefore he is not a disorderly walker; and that this aspersion of his being a disorderly walker, must either be put out of the book, or that his letter must be noted there." Mr. Taylor did not come so well out of a charge of a different kind that was brought against him some time after. This worthy

man appears to have had a weakness for dabbling in medicine, and to have picked up some knowledge of the healing art; and as doctors would be few in his day, there would probably be many willing to avail themselves of whatever skill he had in this line. In much more modern times, and when there was less need or excuse for the like, it has occasionally happened that a clergyman who had acquired the reputation of being skilful in the treatment of the sick, did a large practice in amateur doctoring, and thereby usually made himself very popular with the surrounding community, without rebuke or censure from any Church Court. But it was not so with the minister of Enniskillen, for the Presbytery censured him in the following terms:—"We discharge him from meddling any more with the practice of Physick or Medicine to the hinderance of his ministerial labours, and of giving himself wholly to the work and service of the ministry."

When the people of Enniskillen and its neighbourhood were deprived of the services of Mr. Taylor as their medical man, they would appear to have resorted to a much more objectionable method of getting healed of their diseases. We find in the Minutes of the Presbytery for November, 1699, that Mr. M'Quachin, Mr. Taylor's successor at Enniskillen, "desires advice what he shall do with persons that use charmers and charms in curing of their sick. He is appointed to preach against it, and to expect the further consideration of it at next meeting." In the following January, "Mr. M'Quachin reports his diligence in repressing the practice of charms in his congregation, wherewith the meeting is satisfied, and appoints him that if any of his people fall guilty of the like again, to look upon such as scandalous persons, and to proceed with them accordingly."

We find another instance of how strictly the Courts of the Church dealt with any brother who failed to walk

circumspectly in all things, in the action of Mr. Liston of Letterkenny. When William of Orange ascended the throne of England, Mr. Liston seems to have thought that the millenium had come, or at least that Presbyterianism was henceforth to be the established religion in Ireland, for having been sent by the Presbytery to supply the congregation of Ray, he and the people there forcibly expelled Mr. Lesly, the rector, from the Parish Church, and held their meeting in it. It is also said that Mr. Liston took possession of the Episcopal Church in Letterkenny and preached in it for a few Sabbaths. Another way of the story given in *Presbyterian Loyalty* says, that one Sabbath when Mr. Nathaniel Cooper, the rector of Letterkenny, went into his church, and before he had begun Divine service, some few women (not one man being amongst them) went and spoke to him, and bid him forbear, because Mr. Liston was to preach there; and while they were talking together he got between them and the church door, and the women moving towards the same door, pressed him out without touching him with their hands; but Mr. Liston getting information of this, sent for the people that were to be his hearers to Castlebane, where he preached to them that very day, and Mr. Cooper preached in church, without any further molestation; and where Mr. Liston preached in any church, the meeting-house was either quite ruinous or very much out of repair. Be the story as it may, Mr. Liston and any others who may have acted, as he is said to have done, were soon given to understand that such conduct on their part was not approved of by their brethren, and would not be permitted. At a meeting of the Synod held in Belfast on the day after the battle of the Boyne was fought, this matter was under consideration and this resolution passed:—"The Brethren here met from all our several Meetings, being informed that some of our *Brethren* (in remote corners of the Country, and under

some extraordinary circumstances) have for some few Sabbath-days made use of some Churches, by law belonging to the Prelatical clergy; and considering, that as this is illegal in itself, spoken of to the Reproach and Prejudice of our Interest by our Adversaries, and unsuitable to our former Commendable Practice; so likely to create great offence to the Government, and may give occasion for evil thoughts of us and of our Way: Have thought fit hereby earnestly to advise all the several Meetings and Brethren in them to abstain from all such practices in time to come, and every such thing or practice whereby reflection may be justly cast upon our way as Invaders upon the Law, or Rights of any Subject. And further to declare, that it is their judgment that if after intimation to the several Meetings of this our Advice, any Brother shall insist in these or the like Practices, that they are in that Case liable to a civil Punishment by the Law of the Land, so to Ecclesiastical Censure, as giving great Scandal and Offence thereby."

From all that can now be known of the members of the Laggan Presbytery we are warranted in saying that they were men of education, tolerant and enlightened for the age in which they lived, and not the ignorant and narrow-minded fanatics that hostile writers have tried to make out the first ministers of the Irish Presbyterian Church to have been. Unlike several of the men—some of them Bishops who attained to their dignity by means that no honourable man would stoop to—who spoke slightly and contemptuously of them, these humble preachers of the Cross, amid much persecution and many discouragements, remained faithful to the Church of their fathers and of their convictions, and refused to abandon their principles for the sake of preferment. Even the author of "Paradise Lost" so far forgot the dignity due to the exalted position to which his great genius had elevated him as to speak of the Irish Presbyterian

ministers of his day, as "blockish Presbyters," "insolent upstarts," and "wolves in sheep's clothing."

Though the details of the life and labours of the men who were members of the Laggan Presbytery, that have survived to our day, are but meagre, still they are sufficient to show that they were enlightened and scholarly men, and some of them had as good blood in their veins as could be found in broad Scotland. The first ministers of Taboyn and Ray—Robert and Hugh Cunningham were no upstarts, they were scions of one of the most respectable families in the West of Scotland, and in their career as Presbyterian ministers in Ireland they maintained the position they were born in. The contents of their wills and the seals appended thereto show that they occupied the position of gentlemen, both were uncles to Mr. William Stewart, of Ballylawn, from whom the Londonderry family is descended. The lineage of several families of position in Ireland can be traced back to men who were ministers in the Presbytery of the Laggan. Mr. Craghead, who was minister of Donoughmore for thirty years, and afterwards of Derry from 1691 till his death in 1711, was no "blockish Presbyter"; he did not hesitate, when occasion arose, to enter into controversy with such a formidable opponent as Dr. William King, the Bishop of Derry, and afterwards Archbishop of Dublin. Dr. King published a pamphlet entitled—"A Discourse concerning the Inventions of Men in the Worship of God," in which he tried in a very plausible and apparently friendly way to convince the Presbyterians that their modes of worship were mere human inventions and without any warrant from Scripture, while those of the Episcopal Church were alone founded on the Word of God. Mr. Craghead published a reply to the Bishop's pamphlet in which he refuted his arguments and showed that many of his statements were either greatly *exaggerated* or altogether erroneous. Amongst other

charges that he brought against his former co-religionists—for the Bishop had been born and brought up a Presbyterian—was that they undervalued and neglected the Lord's Supper, celebrating it only at very distant intervals. In replying to this charge Mr. Craghead said, "It's rare to celebrate it more seldom than once a year in any congregation of our communion, where the congregations are brought to any tolerable settlement. I grant the time was that the people of our persuasion, both ministers and others, were so pursued by bishop's courts, because of their meeting together, and adhering to their sound principles, that some were imprisoned, many excommunicated, and their families broken, others hunted as partridges on the mountains, and especially if they were found celebrating the Lord's Supper; if these be the times that the author chargeth us with the guilt of seldom celebrating, it is not fair, for he knoweth, as well as I, who were to blame, and I know where the Righteous God placeth the guilt." Mr. Craghead was also the author of at least three other publications, viz., "Advice for Assurance of Salvation," "Walking with God explained by Scripture rule and pattern and proved to be the duty of all to endeavour it," and "Advice to Communicants." The latter of these products of Mr. Craghead's pen has been republished in Scotland no less than five or six times. The minister of Donoughmore was evidently no "wolf in sheep's clothing"; neither was Mr. Campbell of Ray, who was the author of a volume of sermons entitled:—"A Directory of prayer for a gracious King." In the preface of this work, written by Nicholas Blakey, minister of Coleman Street, London, evidently an old friend of Mr. Campbell's, he says, "his public administrations were bedewed with tears of joy and sorrow, as occasion called for; so filled with goodness as made him ready to communicate; so humble that he looked on himself and work not worthy to come abroad

in such a critical age, yet thinks his mite may do good to some by reason of its plainness." Mr. Trail of Ballindrait was, as is shown by his evidence before the Privy Council regarding the Fast kept by the Presbytery in 1681, an able and honest man. When asked why he had not taken the oath of supremacy, he replied that he had never been asked to take it, adding "that he considered it juggling with the King and much more with God to take an oath that is capable of a sound sense, and yet to keep that sound sense in his mind, but let the sense be written down together with the oath, and that will clear the matter." "Besides," said he, "I lie under the punishment imposed by law for refusing the oath of supremacy." When one of the Committee asked—"What is that?" Mr. Trail replied, "I want all preferment." Whereupon Lord Lanesborough asked, "Would you take it if they would give you a good benefice?" and Mr. Trail replied, "No, my Lord, I have not said that yet. I am content to be as I am without that." Mr. Hart of Monreagh was minister of the Parish of Hamilton, near Glasgow, before he came to Ireland, and Mr. Rule of Derry, who was brother to the celebrated Gilbert Rule, principal of the University of Edinburgh, was minister of Stirling before coming to Derry. Mr. Halliday of Convoy was a man who appreciated the value of learning, for when his son had passed through the University of Edinburgh, he sent him to the continent of Europe to study still further at the University of Leyden. Mr. Gordon, of Glendermot, was the man who advised the apprentice boys of Derry to shut the gates in the face of Lord Antrim's "redshanks"; and, happily for us, they took his advice, and disregarded that of Bishop Hopkins, who was urging the citizens to admit these Popish troops, and telling them that it would be nothing short of the rankest rebellion to refuse to *do so*. Mr. Kelso, minister at Enniskillen, rendered a

like meritorious service to the Protestant cause in that town. When Captain Corry and the magistrates there were in favour of admitting King James's troops to garrison the town, Mr. Kelso opposed their policy, and the townsmen took his advice, he "showing example himself by wearing arms, and marching at the head of them when together."

These grey fathers of Presbyterianism in the Laggan, though they had little opportunity of keeping to "Life's more cultured walks," were men respectable in literary and theological attainments; and amid most trying and unfavourable surroundings, they laboured with a faithfulness and diligence beyond all others of their day, in preaching the Gospel, and in laying the foundations of pure and undefiled religion in what was then a most distressful country.

In addition to giving faithful and unwearied attention to the duties that were more closely connected with their ministerial office, the members of the Laggan Presbytery, from its very earliest years, showed themselves to be broad-minded and public-spirited men. This is specially seen in the care which they took to preserve a record of the events of their own times for future generations, and to set forth a true account of their own doings and of the principles and the faith for which they so earnestly contended. So early as the 23rd of October, 1672, we come across the following entry in the Presbytery's Minutes:—"The brethren appoint Master Thomas Drumond to make a collection of such things as he is able to give an account of before the warrs, that may conduce to the historie of the church for that time; and to Master Will Semple and Master James Wallace of occurrences since the warrs relating to the church, and that each brother may note what he has observed." Whether these brethren carried out these instructions or not, we cannot tell. If they did, the collections of the

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events of their times which they made, have long since perished. Had they survived the ravages of time, they would doubtless have been interesting reading, and have told us of some events connected with the coming of our forefathers to this part of Ulster that are now unknown. I expect Mr. Semple, who was settled in Letterkenny in 1648, would, when giving an account of the wars, have much to tell of the great battle which was fought on the banks of the Swilly, close to that town, on the 21st of June, 1649, in which the forces of the Irish Chieftains were so completely overthrown that the land had rest—as far as open warfare was concerned—for forty years, no battle having been fought in Ulster after this one till the wars of the Revolution.

From the interest that the members of the Laggan Presbytery took in the projected history of the Church which was at this time in contemplation, it is not improbable that the collections of events made by these brethren were sent to Mr. Patrick Adair, minister of Belfast, and embodied by him in that very valuable and interesting Narrative which is still in being, and which records several events that took place in the Laggan in these times. The commissioners who were sent by the Presbytery to the General Committee in August, 1675, were directed to inform the committee that “it is the desire & advice of this M. that the business of the longed for history be vigorously carried on & promoted by the brethren of Down & Antrim as they best can, any assistance of papers we can give from this bounds shall not be wanting.” Very frequently entries like these occur in the Minutes:—“The business of the history is again minded,” “Papers relating to the history of the Kirk are to be sought after by the severall brethren.” In June, 1676, Mr. Will. Trail is appointed to write to Mr. Patrick Adair and give him a list of what papers *relating* to the history of this Church and belonging to

this Meeting are in his custody, and to offer him the use of them, and be required to give a note of his receipt of them, and also to write to the Meeting of Antrim that they "do think it fitt that ye business of ye History shall lye upo' Mr. Patrick Adair." In the July of the next year—"Mr. Rot. Cambell is appointed to send to Mr. Jo. Heart all the papers he has by him qch may make for ye intended hystorie yt yei may be revised by him & sent to Mr. Patrick Adair with all expedition."

The breadth of the outlook of these pioneers of Presbyterianism in the Laggan is also seen in the care they were at to secure and transmit to posterity a fair and faithful record of their own proceeding as a church court. Thus in September, 1699, it was agreed that, "Mr. ffisher, Mr. Henry, senr. & Mr. Halliday are appointed to take care in overseeing the recording of the Presby's minutes from the first meeting after the late revolution unto this time, by a clark with a fair hand, in a convenient book, and what of these minutes has not been revised, they are to be revised, & to have Mr. Pringle with them when his minutes are revising. These or any two of them together are impowered to perform this work with their first conveniency." This revised copy of Minutes, made upwards of 200 years ago, and for the making of which the ministers of the Presbytery paid fourteen pence each, is now in the library of the Magee College, having been presented to it by Sir Edward Reid when he was Mayor of Derry. From the handwriting it is evident that two persons took part in the work of transcription, and they both deserve the appellation of "clerks with a fair hand," as the writing is very neat and easily read.

Almost the only proceedure of the Laggan Presbyters that could give any countenance to the idea that they were intolerant or narrow-minded men, are some references to the Quakers that occur in the Minutes of the Presbytery. A few adherents of this new sect appeared

in Ulster about the time that the Presbytery was founded, and were very zealous in preaching their peculiar doctrines, which consisted largely in denouncing all existing forms of Christianity, especially the evils of what they called "steeple-houses," and the blasphemy of testifying by an oath. The authorities and the people in general regarded them as hare-brained fanatics and disturbers of the peace. As we would naturally expect, such staid adherents to the old paths as the Laggan ministers were did not regard with approval this new-fangled craze, and the task of refuting these heresies and putting the people on their guard against them appears to have been laid upon Mr. Hart of Monreagh. Thus under the date of May 14, 1673, we read that "Mr. John Heart's former appointment to write against the Quakers is continued, and the Meeting will at their convenience take leisure to hear it." In the following November "Mr. Heart read draft of a paper against the Quakers which was approven, & he encouraged to proceed in it." It would appear, however, as if the worthy minister of Monreagh made but slow progress with this work, for in July, 1678, it was recorded that "Mr. John Heart is appointed to enlarge qt he hath written to the Quakers, & Mr. Craighead and oysrs qo have seen his papers to give yr advice qt he shall further treat upon on yt subjecte, and Mr. James Tailzior is desyred to bring down to him ye Quakers C-fession & catechism."

We can well excuse the slowness with which Mr. Hart progressed in this work, when we consider how great were the difficulties with which the pursuit of literature was surrounded in those days. Mr. Thomas Gowan, the minister of Antrim, was at this time writing on the same subject as Mr. Hart was, and in July, 1680, we find this entry in the minutes—"As to Mr. Gowan's Book agt the Quakers, this M. desires to see it before it be emitted, *they appoint Mr. John Heart to write to Mr. Gowan to*

desire him to send us a copy of that whole book if he can, or we will give what shall be agreed upon as a reasonable price for copying it there, or that he would send it to us here, & we will cause copy it & restore the principall copy." It is not probable that Mr. Hart's treatise ever attained to the dignity of appearing in print. No copy of it is known to exist, nor is it mentioned by any writer in the past. The printing press was still but in its infancy, and printing was then a costly process; besides, it was a dangerous one. If a Presbyterian ventured on printing any production of his pen, his safest course was not to append his name to it, especially if it cast any reflections on the Government or on the Established Church. Thus when Kirkpatrick's "Presbyterian Loyalty" was published in 1713, it was issued from the press without either name of author or printer appended. Printers feared that if they produced any work that gave offence to the authorities, either of Church or State, a troop of soldiers would be sent to smash up their type and press, or else steps would be taken in some other way to injure their business.

The difficulties in communicating with persons at a distance by means of letters was another hinderance in the way of receiving or spreading information. There was no penny post till long after these times, and we find several references in the Minutes of the Laggan Presbytery to the inconvenience the members were often put to when they wished to communicate with brethren at a distance. In October, 1672, we find Matt Lindsay reporting that "Master John Heart's & Master Will Semple's letters had been sent to Sligo according to appointment." In early times the export and import trade of the districts along the North Western coast was to a large extent carried on through the port of Derry; and before the Finn Valley Railway was made, long trains of carts passed almost daily through St. Johnston, laden with

merchandise, on their way to Donegal, Ballyshannon and Sligo. Before the days of carts, this business was carried on by means of pack horses, and Mr. Lyndsay of Altaskin, who was one of those elders whose names and memories deserve to be honoured and held in remembrance because of the voluntary services that they so ungrudgingly rendered to their Church, was probably engaged in commerce, and had opportunities of forwarding letters by these carriers, a method that was generally availed of for this purpose in these primitive times. Once we read that a letter was to be sent to Mr. Henry when he was in prison in Dublin, "with the first convenient occasion." Sometimes we find that a letter was not sent "because of the want of a bearer," and sometimes a letter was directed to be sent "by express." On only two or three occasions do we find that the post was made use of. When Mr. Taylor was imprisoned in Enniskillen because he could not produce a certificate showing that he was an ordained minister, the clerk was directed to send him a certificate to this effect by post, and on another occasion he was directed to write by post, to Mr. Patrick Adair, "about the history papers."

CHAPTER IV.

MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.

THE question of ways and means was always an urgent and anxious one in the Laggan Presbytery, but its acuteness was probably less felt during the first six or eight years of the Presbytery's existence than it was in after years. When the Presbytery was established in the year 1654, Oliver Cromwell ruled in England, and though the Presbyterians refused to recognise his government as a lawful one, and ministers, to a man, refused to sign a form of oath that was strongly pressed upon them, called "The Engagement," in which they were required to swear to be "faithful to the Commonwealth of England as now established without a King or House of Lords," still when Cromwell saw that the Presbyterian ministers did not favour any insurrection against his government, and were willing to live quiet and peaceably, he offered to any of them that would accept it, a salary from the funds of the State such as was paid to the Independent ministers who were appointed by the Republican government to officiate in many places in Ireland. According to the account given by Reid in his "History of the Presbyterian Church," only six Presbyterian ministers accepted of this offer, but Hill in the Montgomery Manuscript says that a much larger number did so, and gives the names of several not mentioned in Reid's list.

From the reports of the Civil Establishment of the Commonwealth for Ireland, between the years 1655 and

1661, it would appear that Cromwell's government endowed all the Laggan ministers very generously. Hugh Cunningham of Ray received £100 a year, James Wallace of Urney £100, Thomas Drummond of Ramelton £100, Wm. Semple of Letterkenny £100, John Wills of Glendermott £100, John Heart of Taboyne £150, Adam White of Fannet £80, Wm. Moorcroft of Ardstra £100, John Crookshanks of Raphoe £100, Wm. Keys of Strabane £140, Robert Craghead of Donoughmore got the tithes of his parish. Several other ministers in the Laggan received payment from the State at this time, and doubtless, most, if not all, of them were Presbyterian, though their names are not any place recorded as such. The Laggan ministers would appear to have been more ready to accept of the generosity of the Republican government than their brethren in other parts of the country were. In an interview that a number of ministers had with the Council of State on the subject, they give utterance to their unwillingness to accept of this payment because they thought it was designed "to bring ministers under an undue dependency on the State for their livelihood," and "desired that they might have the legal maintenance belonging to their respective parishes." To this the Council answered that they would not allow them any other way of maintenance than by salary, "according as some of their profession in the Laggan and Route had already." The reason why the Laggan ministers were more ready to accept of State payment, than were their brethren in the other Presbyteries, was probably to be attributed to the fact that they had adopted the views of the party in Scotland who were known as Protesters. At this time the Church of Scotland was much divided over the question as to whether Royalists and the enemies of the religious rights of the Kingdom should be admitted into places of civil and *military trust in order to unite all classes in support of the*

claims of Charles the Second to the throne. Those who favoured these views were known as Resolutioners, and those who opposed them—and they were in general the most zealous ministers and elders—were called Protesters. At the time that this controversy was being waged, Messrs. Hugh Cunningham and Wm. Semple were in Scotland, having fled thither to escape the persecutions they were exposed to at home. They adopted the views of the Protesters, and on their return they easily drew to their opinion “other two who had lurked in the country,” who in all probability were Messrs. Drummond and Hart.

This State salary ceased when Charles II. came to the throne, but for about two years the Laggan ministers appear to have received the tithes of the parishes in which they ministered. We have evidence of this in the will of Hugh Cunningham of Ray, which is dated the 27th of August, 1661, in which he mentions as part of his assets—“this years tythes as it shall arise to be due by the Parishioners of Raymohey & Leck, and arrears of my last year’s salary for which I have a bond upon the farmer of the Parish of Raymohey, and upon the farmer of the Parish of Leck.” And also in the will of Robert Cunningham, the first minister of Monreagh, who describes himself as “minister of Taboyne parish,” and in the will of his wife who describes herself as “widow of Robert Cunningham sometime clerk of Taboyne.” This lady was treated very kindly and generously by Cromwell. In the Commonwealth Order Book under the date of the 27th of April, 1659, there is an order to the effect that £20 16s. yearly for two years be paid to Frances Cuningham, widow of Mr. Cuningham a minister, to enable her to apprentice her son Robert to a merchant.

As soon as King Charles felt himself securely seated on the throne of England, the High Church party were restored to all their former privileges and power, and the Presbyterian ministers were ejected from their

churches, deprived of the emoluments of their parishes, and forced to rely on the voluntary contributions of the people for support, a burden that they were ill able to bear on account of their poverty and the oppressions from which they suffered. If the first seven years of the Laggan Presbytery's existence were fat years, the seven that followed were lean ones. Adair, speaking of this period, says, "The people generally, for seven years together after their ejection, forsaking them as to maintainance, even when they were living among them, and doing what they could for them; only, it is not to be denied that they had the people's affectionate respect, and some small accidental kindnesses from some particular persons, which, however, amounted to very little to the support of their families." "Throughout the year 1662 the poor afflicted ministers in the country continued in performance of what duty they could to their people, as the times would permit, & in peaceableness & loyalty to the magistrate." At this time, those of the gentry and landlord class who had hitherto adhered to Presbyterianism, were so harassed by the government, and ostracised on account of their religion, that many of them deserted their old faith and joined the Established Church, a fact which tended to still further weaken the cause of Presbytery at this trying time.

The subject of ministerial support—one that seems destined to be always with us—was often before the Presbytery, and the members found it necessary to give more time and attention to this necessary but uncongenial question than they would have liked, and, like the Apostles, they felt that it was not reason that they should leave the Word of God and serve tables. We hear an echo of this feeling in a resolution passed at the meeting held in September, 1675:—"The presbytery although they find it a necessary duty lying upon them to concern themselves *in some collections* for the supply of some poor orphans

and scholars, and in those things that relate to the maintainance of their several brethren of their meeting, yet they judge it neither needful nor expedient to record these things particularly in their Register Book and therefore they appoint their clerk henceforth to insert no more of these matters in their book, but to enter them in a paper apart by themselves." It is pleasant to find the elders coming to the aid of the ministers in this irksome labour. At the following meeting they requested the Presbytery to write to the several elderships in their bounds urging upon them the necessity of looking more closely after their minister's maintenance, "and this because of the straits of the times."

A Laggan Pastor in these days was expected to be passing rich with even less than forty pounds a year. The amount promised by a congregation was in most cases thirty pounds, but in several instances it was less. The only congregations that offered more were Derry, which promised seventy pounds per year, and Taboyn, sixty. The latter was in early times a very large congregation embracing the present congregations of St. Johnston, Ballylennon, Newtowncunningham and Crossroads, and being situated close to the city of Derry, the district was largely peopled by Scottish settlers at an early date. A ministerial income of thirty pounds a year was not, as one might at first sight imagine, a very glaring case of that scandalous maintenance, which, Matthew Henry says, makes a scandalous ministry. This sum was worth a great deal more then than it is in the present day. Dr. Reid, writing in 1834, says that ten pounds in 1660 was as good as one hundred pounds in his day, but this seems an exaggerated estimate of the value of money in the olden time. It is true that many commodities, especially the necessaries of life, were very cheap, but others, such as manufactured articles of various kinds, were not so cheap. In 1613, the prices of

provisions in Ulster were, for a cow or bullock, 15s. (about one half-penny per pound) a sheep from 16d. to 2s., a hog 2s., barley 11d. a bushel, oats 4d. a bushel, strong beer 16s. per barrel. In Derry market in 1616, "a very long salmon could be bought for 4d., 6d., or 8d."

At any rate, £30 a year was regarded as a competent maintenance for a minister in these impecunious times. In the year 1673, "Mr. Robert Gordon as commissioner from the people of Drumholmes, Ballyshanny and Ballick does show that they are in some case and readiness to give a competent maintainance (thirty pounds of good payment for present) to a minister to labour amongst them in the work of the Gospel, he being to preach one day at Gragstown, and the other betwixt Ballick and Ballyshanny." In addition to the money he received, the minister in all cases got a free house and farm, and also a not inconsiderable payment in kind, usually a certain number of barrels of oats, and as oatmeal was always a staple article of diet with Scotch people, no doubt in the *res angusta domi* that would be characteristic of ministerial households, it would be upon this plain but wholesome fare that his family would chiefly be fed. In a call given by Sligo and Moin Water to Mr. Henry, Moin promises £20 and 20 barrels of corn, and Sligo £20 and his diet accommodation, etc., till such times as he takes up a family of his own. The people of Cappagh (Omagh) promise Mr. Rowatt £12 10s. and 20 barrels of corn and to labour his land, and the people of Monterlony will add 40s. to make it up to £14 yearly if Mr. Rowatt stay with Cappagh as formerly and not give Termon one half of his labours. On the principle of giving what was plentiest with them, the people of Dunfanaghy, in the year 1679, "offer to engage for £20 for a minister's maintainance, and they will furnish his house with fish for all the days of the year." Enniskillen promises "Mr. Tailyor £20 and a convenient house and

a piece of land for his cattell." Urney promises Mr. Halliday £30 "and to take on lease for him Wm. Brown's house & land in the Sion." In 1673, Donagheady promised to build a house for Mr. John Hamilton, their minister, at Ballyheather, "if they get not a more convenient place for it." In the following year, Robert Morton and John Kenier appeared before the Presbytery as representatives from Donagheady and reported that they had paid Mr. Hamilton £10 for last year, and that they offered him a convenient house at Moyagh to dwell in. The Presbytery appointed Mr. Hampton of Burt "to tell the heads of families in Donaghadey that in case Mr. Hamilton goe to dwell at Moyagh that the M. do desire them to pay 4 or 5 pounds of the yearly rent of Moyagh for Mr. Hamilton's ease, especially seeing his maintenance is so small. The M. also do appoint Mr. Hampton to expostulate with them about their very great deficiency in the matter of their minister's maintainence, & to require them to help it speedily & to give an account to the next meeting." Mr. Hamilton, who afterwards perished in the siege of Derry, was threatening at this time to leave Donagheady on account of his poverty. It is strange that Donagheady was such a poor charge, seeing that it lies in a fine country along the Tyrone side of the Foyle, close to the city of Derry, and then embraced the present congregations of Second Donagheady, Donemana, Leckpatrick, Magheramason, and the Covenanting congregation of Bready. This side of the Foyle would appear not to have been as thickly peopled with Scotch settlers at this period as was the Donegal side in which the congregation of Taboyn lay. In July, 1674, "Matthew Rae and Wm. Birnie of Donagheady were at the Presbytery to show that they have done something further for their minister's maintenance and encouragement and that they have payed much of what is due before Hallowday last & they

promise to perfect the rest of it against the next M. & that some particular men amongst them are engaged for payment of what is due in the future, and that they have taken a house & provided turf for him, & they promise to keep him free in that house, & to give him, besides the house & garden, an acre of meadow & two acres of corn, & grass for a horse & two or three cows & as much more of the land for payment for his use as he pleases."

Not unfrequently it happened that the promise made to the minister was handsomer than the performance; the £30 was not looked upon as the irreducible minimum, and sometimes the Presbytery was reluctantly compelled to resort to strong measures, in some cases to the extreme measure of disannexing the minister from his congregation, or declaring him "transportable," which meant that he was at liberty to leave his congregation and accept of another charge. In these days a minister was not at liberty to resign his congregation at any time he pleased, and leave from the Presbytery for him to do so was not easily obtained, and was often refused. In February, 1675, "the people of Omagh were desired to send some one of their number to the next meeting to give in their reasons, if they had any, why Mr. John Rowatt should continue his labours amongst them, and that the Presbytery will be necessitated to declare him transportable, if they continue to be deficient in his maintainence." And in the following year, we find "that the Presbytery having laid to heart Mr. Robert Wilson's case in Strabane and finding small appearance or hope of their being able to give him a competent maintainence there, we do therefore declare him transportable from Strabane and do judge him not necessarily obliged to stay there." The cause of Presbyterianism would appear to have been weak in Strabane in these days, and that is all the more strange since Strabane is spoken of in plantation times as a *Scotch settlement*, whilst Ballindrait, situated on the

opposite side of the river in a district that is specially mentioned as having been set apart for English settlers, was at this time a comparatively strong congregation. Indeed, before the days of the Ulster Plantation there was a numerous colony of Scots in Strabane. In a "Description of Ireland," published in 1596, it is said that Strabane, "which was the place where the last O'Neill had his residence whose wife being a Scottish woman drew great repair of Scottishmen thither insomuch as at this present there are above 3 or 4 score Scottish families inhabiting there."

The weakness of Presbyterianism in Strabane at this time may perhaps be partly attributable to a circumstance referred to in a letter written by the Bishop of Derry to the Lord Chancellor in the year 1629. In it he says, "Sir George Hamilton since he got part of the Earl of Abercorn's grant of the Barony of Strabane has done his best to plant Popery there, and has brought over priests and jesuits from Scotland." The Bishop also states in this communication that "all the Hamilton lands are now in the hands of Papists." At any rate the congregation of Strabane was so weak in 1674, that for that year, it paid only £17 of Stipend, and Mr. Hamilton of Donagheady was appointed to preach in Strabane and "to deal smartly with the people in this matter." In the April of the following year, it is stated that "for the future they can promise no more than 25lb. yearly and that because 10 men pay the most of it. They desire that the half of the parish of Leck, and that part of the parish of Ardstra which lyes contiguous to them upon the east side of the river Morn may be stirred up to joyn with them."

Five and twenty years afterwards, viz., on the 25th of June, 1700, Mr. Love, an elder from Strabane, reported to the Presbytery that "they had taken pains about the augmenting of their minister's maintainence, & that they intend hereafter to pay Mr. Homes £35 yearly while

the present subscribers live, but when any dies, they fear this quota be diminished, yet hope even then to discharge what was formerly furnished. With this account the meeting is well satisfied, & the Session & Town of Strabane are comended for their diligence, but it is recomended to the country part of that congregation to give yearly some corn." It is pleasant to know that the fears of these kindly but faint-hearted old-time dwellers in the town by the Mourne were not realised, as ever since Presbyterianism has flourished in Strabane and its neighbourhood and continues to do so in the present day.

It was but seldom that the pleasant task of commending a congregation for its liberality devolved upon the Presbytery, more frequently it was the irksome one of rebuking some congregation for deficiency in regard to its minister's maintenance, and failure to do what it had promised; a lash under which every congregation came not once, but many times. We have almost innumerable cases of rebuking and exhorting on this matter recorded in the Minutes. "The people beyond the mountains" did not fulfil well their undertaking "of good payment," for in December, 1674, they are represented as "exceedingly & shamefully deficient in this matter and the M. appoint Mr. Rot. Rule to write to Squire Caldwell; & Mr. John Heart to write sharply to the people." In 1678, "John Paterson from Killybegs, Killachti & Inver reported that they had promised Mr. Thomas Wilson £12 and had paid about two years but with many deficiencies." The meeting seriously recommended unto them the case of his maintenance, "as they tender the keeping of the Gospell amongst them, and desires them to stir up themselves to be more dutiful unto him." In November, 1673, "Mr. Rot. Craighead is appointed to write to those of Raigh in reference to the maintenance of their minister, the letter to be directed to

Corkie to Francis Stewart, & Mr. Antony Thompson & others." Cappagh pleads as their excuse for not paying the land rent which they promised to pay for Mr. John Rowatt, "that Mr. M'Clenochy did only promise that they would pay it conditionally, viz., if the country should be better planted by the British, which has not come to pass but contrariwise." In January, 1673, the people of Letterkenny report that "all they can do for Mr. Semple is to make sure of 30lb. yearly if they remain without a breach among themselves." If there was not any breach among themselves, and there is no mention of the like, there was a considerable breach of their promise to Mr. Semple, for in July, 1674, Mr. John Boyd states "as to their minister's maintainance for the last year ending in May past, there is not yet 10lb. gotten and little hope of getting 20lb. of the 30lb. that is due." It would appear as if this congregation had got a bad name in regard to the way in which they had treated their minister, and that this evil report had spread as far as Scotland. When Letterkenny was vacant owing to the death of Mr. Semple, "John Glen and Francis Colhoun appeared before the Presbytery and presented a letter showing that they of that congregation were not deficient in their duty of maintaining their late minister according to their ability & engadgment; wherewith the meeting are satisfied & appoint Mr. Rot. Rule to write on their behalf to Mr. Gabriel Cuningam & Mr. Ralph Rodgers in Scotland & vindicate them from the reproach & calumny which they have been under in this matter."

It is to be feared, however, that the members of the congregation of Letterkenny did not thoroughly purge themselves from the reproach and calumny that they considered had been unjustly brought against them, for upwards of twenty years afterwards, in August, 1697, we find the following record in the Minutes, "Letterkenny presenting a supplication for supply and help to be

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settled with a minister, the Presbytery appoint these several persons from other congregations to go through the severall qrs. of that congregation in regard the elders of the said congr. have been at much toyle in dealing with the people without desired success, viz., Wm. Dunbar and John Porter to go through Auchnunshan, Thos. Best and Will Gregg through Kilmacrenan and Gartan, Jas. Purvence and Wm. Blackwood through Leck, Redmont O'Hanly, David Curry and James Cowden through Conwall and Letterkenny town, who are appointed to take a particular acct. of the inhabitants of these severall qrs. of what they will do for the maintainence of the Gospell amongst them, which this commissionants are to represent to the next meeting."

During the seven years that preceded the siege of Derry, the few Presbyterian ministers that remained in the Laggan must have been bereft of almost all support, and even when peace was again restored, and the ministers who had fled to Scotland returned, and began to take up their duties once more, their incomes, on account of the poverty to which the country had been brought during the wars, were for some years very small. In the records of the Presbytery we find the congregations are frequently called upon to give an account of what they have done for their minister's maintenance, and generally these accounts are far from satisfactory. In March, 1691, we read that James Galloway from Ray gives account that "they have payed Mr. Campbell four lib. nine shill. in money and 20 barrels of corn, and will pay what remains when Mr. Campbell comes from Scotland." In February, 1692, "The Clerk is directed to write to Letterkenny and signifie that their quota is not a sufficient maintainance for Mr. Liston, and that they be at the next meeting to give an account of what they will do in the future for Mr. Liston's encouragement." In the March of the following year, "Will Walker from Ramelton gives acct. that they

have payed of Mr. Liston's salary for ye yeare 1693, 8lb. 12sh. 2d. They are desired to give diligence that what remains in arrears of what they promised be payed up as soon as conveniently they can." For a few years at this time, Letterkenny and Ramelton, on account of the low state to which they had been reduced by the troubles of the times, were unable, each, to support a minister, and consequently Mr. Liston ministered to both places.

In August, 1693, it is stated, "Letterkenny does yet fail to give account of their minister's maintainance. Mr. Alexander is appointed to write to the people giving them to understand that the meeting is dissatisfied with their negligence, and that they are appointed to appear at next meeting to give a particular account of this matter." At the same meeting, we find that Strabane is appointed to appear at next meeting to give account of their minister's salary, meeting-house and dwelling-house. .

In March, 1693, "it is reported by John M'Cre of Lifford that they had paid Mr. Rowat only £18 since November, 1691, whereupon they are appointed to appear at next meeting to give account of what they are willing to allow Mr. Jo. Rowat above what they have promised, viz., 22lb. 15sh. 3d. which is not judged to be a competency, and also that they give account that what they are in arrear be paid up." At the same meeting, Alex. Stewart, elder from Raphoe, being required to give an account of their minister's maintenance, declares that he can give no distinct account of this matter; the meeting being dissatisfied with this return appoints Raphoe to appear at next meeting, better provided to give satisfaction in this particular; or to show cause why Mr. Alexander's relation to Raphoe may not be dissolved. Patrick Wilson from Donoughmore states that they have paid Mr. Fisher for the year 1693, 13lb. 17sh. 2d., and in corn 29 bushel and a half. In the following year, John Elliot, an elder

of this congregation, who very often represented it at the meetings of the Presbytery, "desires advice what they should doe to make up differences as are occasioned by the removal of many out of the parish." The plain unsophisticated men who composed the Laggan Presbytery could not put these people upon any new way of paying old debts, not knowing anything of bazaars, or raffles, or even a special sermon with a band of collectors gathered from far and near, but believing that God helps those who help themselves, they gave them this good honest counsel, viz., "The meeting having considered their desire, advise that either those that are most able among them be stirred up to contribute among themselves to the making up of such defects; or that the collectors go through their respective qrs. & desire all to add to the summe promised by each of them, that the totall may be made up." The total sum required would be looked upon as a small matter by most congregations in the present day, but it must be remembered that money was a very scarce commodity in those days, and when the Duke of Berwick and his troop of horse, who had their headquarters within a stone's throw of Donoughmore Church during the siege of Derry, rode away, they would leave behind them but little goods of any kind, that could be carried off, and any homesteads that had not been pillaged and burnt to the ground would be bare and desolate ones. A couple of years before this there is mention made in the Minutes of "Donoughmore's sad and desolate case." However, like good Presbyterians, they carried out the Presbytery's advice, and at the next meeting it was reported that "John Eliot & John Morson went through the whole parish & obtained subscriptions for £3 4s. towards ye making up of the £4 deficient in the last lists they gave in to the meeting." At the same time, the Session, with the sanction of the Presbytery, in order to put themselves in a better way of working, and lessen the danger of falling into

any defects of this kind in the time to come, appointed collectors for the different districts or quarters, as they are called, as follows, viz., "for Ballybun qr. Jo. Wallace & J. Wilson, shoemaker; for lower part of Ballyarell qr. Geo. Wilson & Zach. Dickie; for upper part of Ballyarell qr. Jas. Nelson & Rot. Wilson; for Maghareagh qr. Sam Cuberson & Jas. Smith; for Machriashanvally Jo. Crawford & Will Wily; for Carnoan qr. Gasper Fulton & Pat Rikie; for Churchlands qr. John Gibb & Jo. Blaire for Laught qr. Jas. Timin & Jas Wilson; for Cavan qr. Robert Murry & Richd. M'Clure; for Castlefin qr. John Morson & Hugh Johnston."

As the country began to recover from the effects of the Civil War, the circumstances of the ministers became somewhat bettered. In 1695, we find Ardstraw promising Mr. Halliday £30 and 20 barrels of corn of yearly salary, and undertaking that they will give all diligence that what is promised be duly performed. In a call to Mr. John Harvey, Glendermot promises "£40 stipend and some corn, but cannot promise a certain quantity, and as to a dwelling-house they promise to build one as soon as a convenient place can be had to set it on, likewise that Glendermot shall keep up the salary above said, though Cumber and Muff should fall off and not joyn with them."

In the same year, Ballindrait promises Mr. Pringle £30 of yearly salary and that they will build him a house where the meeting shall require it, and that they will provide him with a convenient one for the present. Whether the congregation of Ballindrait promised more than they were well able to perform or whether it was that they and Mr. Pringle did not pull well together, there soon arose serious trouble about the payment of Mr. Pringle's stipend, and the fulfilment of the other obligations into which they had entered, and these defalcations were several times under the consideration of

the Presbytery. In April, 1699, James Somervail and John Broggan, commissioners from Ballindrait, admitted before the Presbytery that "the victual for last year is not fully cleared, and that Mr. Pringle's house was not thatched nor turf sent him, or provided for him." At the same time they stated "that they had resolved to pay of their minister's maintainance for the by-past year 6 score pecks of meal and promise to pay the 4lb. with some odds they are behind in money as soon as possible." This breach between minister and people, from whatever cause it arose, was not healed, and the result was that Mr. Pringle received and accepted a call from Moyn (now Killala) in the Co. Sligo, and the people of his new charge were directed "within 20 days to send down men and horses to carry up himself, his family & effects thither." Some of the Ballindrait people carried this unpleasantness so far that they would not allow their minister to take his departure from them in peace. It was stated at the meeting of Presbytery held on the 30th of January, 1700, "that the people of Moyn having sent down one, David Scot, with men & horse to transport Mr. Pringle and his effects according to appointment, & he having received evil reports of Mr. Pringle from the congregation of Ballindrait went away abruptly without him." Mr. Scot was rebuked by the Presbytery "for his wilful and disorderly behaviour in the matter of Mr. Pringle's transportation," and it was the month of June before he was installed in Moyn. When Mr. Pringle left Ballindrait, the congregation there owed him some stipend, and the Presbytery refused to give them any supplies until they discharged this debt, a thing which they were very slow in doing.

During these years, *i.e.*, from 1689 onwards, the Laggan ministers, in common with their brethren in other parts of the country, enjoyed a small endowment from *the state*—though it is remarkable that there is no special

reference in their Minutes to the King's generosity in granting them this seasonable aid. The only reference to it are two incidental ones upon the occasion of the Presbytery nominating commissioners to go to the King in Flanders "to supplicate for our legall liberty and for his allowance & to supplicate the government here for a redress of our particular grievances," when it was agreed "that the commissioner to be appointed have his expenses towards his preparation for his journey, etc., out of the first qr. of ye K.G." [King's Gift]; the amount allowed him was 6s. 8d. per day. The necessity to supplicate the King for his allowance arose from the fact that it had not been paid for the previous year on account of the opposition of the High Church party. This gift—the beginning of the *Regium Donum*—was granted by King William to the Presbyterians as an acknowledgment of the loyalty with which they had supported his cause, and of the sufferings that they had endured on his behalf. It amounted to £1,200 a year, and when divided amongst the ministers, gave each a yearly allowance of 10 or 12 pounds, though during the first few years, on account of the small number of ministers then in Ireland, it would doubtless be more. But even this very modest bounty was greatly begrudged to the Presbyterians by the dignitaries of the Established Church, and they tried every means they could to have it withdrawn. Bishop King, of Derry, as soon as he heard of King William's death, wrote a letter to a brother Bishop who was then in London, in which he said, "The government ought to keep the disposal of the fund in their own hands, and encourage those only by it that comply as they would have them. By which means every particular minister would be at their mercy; and it might be so managed as to be an instrument of division and jealousy amongst them." He also sent another like mean and bigoted epistle to the Chief Secretary, in which,

amongst other things, he said, "You may remember that they had £1,200 per annum settled on them out of the treasury. But I hope this will fail them for the future. I may tell you their insolence has much increased, particularly assuming to themselves the privileges of celebrating marriages."

In the preface of a pamphlet written by Mr. M'Bride, minister in Belfast, in reply to publications by Bishops Pullen and Synge, speaking of Presbyterian principles, he says, "Episcopal grandeur, jurisdiction, or revenues, are not demanded for their ministers or by them," and their bitterest enemies, we may safely add, could not say of them that they were "such as for their bellies' sake creep and intrude, and climb into the fold."

CHAPTER V.

CHURCH EXTENSION.

DURING the years that the Laggan Presbytery had the oversight of the cause of Presbyterianism in the North-West of Ulster, the population was increasing every year by a continuous immigration from Scotland; and the many applications made to the Presbytery for the establishment of new congregations would go to show that these newcomers did not leave their faith behind them when they left their fatherland. At almost every meeting of the Presbytery urgent requests were made from different, and often far distant, places asking the Presbytery to try to procure a minister to settle amongst them, and until such times as they would be able to do so, to send one of their number to preach to them occasionally, either on a Sabbath or on a week-day. The anxiety and urgency of the people on this score is testified to by the frequency with which they made these applications.

A part of the country from which frequent applications of this nature came, was that part of the Co. Donegal which has been spoken of as outer Donegal, that is, the districts lying around Ballyshannon, Donegal town, and Killybegs. Considering the remoteness of these places we would have expected that at this early period of the plantation few Scots would have penetrated so far; but it should be remembered that Killybegs and Donegal, along with Londonderry, were the places at which

the Scottish settlers who came to Donegal, principally landed; and no doubt it was through the two former of these ports that the people who were now applying to the Presbytery for Gospel ordinances, reached Ireland. Besides, Bishop Montgomery, the first Protestant Bishop of Raphoe, himself a Scotchman, and also a very energetic man in the management of his worldly affairs, encouraged his countrymen to come and settle upon the see lands of his Bishopric that lay largely in that part of the County. We are told that he made proclamation in the Scottish ports from Glasgow south to Largs, "at how easy rents he would set his church lands, which drew hither many families." We may presume that it was not because of any love that he had for the religious views of his own kith and kin that the Bishop was led to offer these inducements to them to come to Western Donegal, but because he knew that they would make peaceable and industrious tenants. The fewness of Presbyterians in that part of the County in the present day, is probably largely due to the inability of the Laggan Presbytery, and its successors, to supply these early comers with gospel ordinances such as they had been accustomed to in their native land, and so in the course of time they would naturally drift into the Episcopal Church. There is no part of the Co. Donegal in which Methodists are so numerous as in these parts. Could it be that the descendants of the Scottish Presbyterians who settled here, had still such a taint of Puritanism in their blood that when John Wesley's preachers appeared amongst them they left the Episcopal Church and joined the new community? At any rate, in the early days of the Plantation there was a considerable number of Presbyterians in these distant parts, in which they are now so few. An action of theirs—a rather unusual one too, and one that would go to show that there was a strong tinge of muscular Christianity in their religion—is related in the Montgomery

Manuscripts, where we are told that Alexander Montgomery, a kinsman of the Bishop, who was prebend of Doe, "was debarred by ye Presbiterians to use the Word," whereupon the prebend, exchanging the gown for the sword, "valiantly wielded the same against the Irish, and he gott a command in which he served divers years in ye begining of ye Grand Rebellion & never turned taile on ye King's cause, nor was Covenanter."

In the Laggan Minutes, the district lying along the western seaboard is frequently spoken of as "beyond the mountains," a name by which it was known in the Laggan down to recent years. Thus we find Joseph Henderson, a Convoy elder, in the year 1673, presenting a request from the people beyond the mountains of Barnesmore desiring a supply and visit; and in the same year, Master Samuel Halliday, the minister at Convoy, "presenteth a letter from the people of Dunigall, etc., to ye meeting returning thanks for the brethren's care of them and desiring another visit before the next meeting, against which tymes they hope to have things in some order for the maintainance of a minister amongst them." A little afterwards we read that "William Noble, from Belleek, Bellieshannie, Drumhome and Killynard presenteth a call to Master Adam White from the people of these places to come and labour among them in the work of the ministrie, and desired the meetings concurrence with them therein." At the same time, Robert Delap reports that the people there are going on to countenance the gospel and their number increasing; and the Presbytery in reply states that it is well satisfied to see the willingness and forwardness of this people in the matter. Mr. White did not accept this call, but shortly afterwards Mr. Wm. Henry was ordained minister of this extensive district. The two places that he was appointed to preach at were "Ballike and Gregstown, one and a half miles from Donegal."

The settlers in Killybegs, Killachti and Inver made frequent applications for a minister. In January, 1673, Matthew Lindsay, an elder in Monreagh, and John Menzies presented a call from these people to Mr. Duncan Campbell, promising £26 a year of stipend with the promise of "a more ample call" afterwards. The Presbytery urged Mr. Campbell to accept this call "seeing God had shutt the door on him to labour in Scotland," or at least to remain with them "till God opened a door for him in Scotland." Mr. Campbell laboured for some time at Killybegs, but soon returned to his native country, after which Mr. Thomas Wilson was minister here till near the Revolution. After the troubles of that time the congregation appears to have become extinct.

In April, 1676, William Wallace, from Clondevad-dock, presented a petition to the Presbytery "desiring some visits and supply to that desolate country side," and at the same meeting Robert MacKemy, commissioner from Killygarvan, desires a visit and supply to that people. Mr. Campbell, minister of Ray, was appointed to visit these places and to enquire into the case of the people there, as to their willingness and ability to embrace and sustain gospel ordinances in purity. In districts where the people were so few in number that they were unable to support a minister, the Presbytery frequently sent one of its members to preach there, and to spend a week-day examining the people. Once it is recorded that Mr. Alexander, of Convoy, and Mr. Fisher, of Donoughmore, "kept the communion at Mount-charles as appointed." Amongst the places that looked to the Laggan for the means of supplying their spiritual wants, were Enniskillen, and two places in its neighbourhood, called Monea and Magherybuoy. Even parts of Connaught cried to the Laggan to come over and help them. In October, 1673, it is recorded that Lieut. *Wm. Vas*—doubtless an officer in the Laggan forces, and

an elder in the congregation of Letterkenny—"reports that there are divers people in and about Sligo & Roscommon who desire to have the Gospel purely preached unto them, and to have some visits and supplies from the meeting." The Presbytery was not in a position to be able to comply with this request, but they sent these people an encouraging and a sympathetic answer, viz., "The Presbytery are glad to hear of that people's desire after the gospell & allow Mr. Vas to write to them for their encouragement in this matter, & to stir them up to prosecute it." Amongst the applications from this Province there was one in 1693, "from a person of quality in Longford requesting (in name of the people there) that a visit may be allowed by one of the ministers of the Presbytery in order to their being planted with a minister of their own." In reply to this request, Mr. Ferguson, of Burt, was appointed to visit Longford. From Omagh and the districts around it commissioners frequently appeared before the Presbytery seeking for a supply of Gospel ordinances. There was a congregation at, or near Omagh, from an early period called Keppy (Cappagh, the name of the Parish), but as that part of the country was not much resorted to by Scottish settlers till after the siege of Derry—there were only twelve householders in Omagh in 1666—the few Presbyterians there found it difficult to procure the services of a minister of their own faith, and so we find the people living in the Parishes of Drumraar, Longfield and Termon-MaGurk often seeking for a part of the labours of Mr. Rowatt, the minister of Keppy. At one period the arrangement was that Mr. Rowatt should be three Lord's days at Keppy, a fourth at Termon-MaGurk, and a fifth at Longfield.

In May, 1673, "John Wark comsn. from the Landward of Templemore (Burt) comes desiring a visit & furdur answer to what they gave in last to the M."

And in the following November, "Commissioners from Burt, Inch and Elagh come desiring to know what share of Mr. Hampton's labors these of Inch shall have. They desire a third of his labours in the winter, and are content of less than the third Sabbaths preaching amongst them in the summer." Two years afterwards Mr. Hampton is directed "to visit those of the lower end of Elagh now & then as he can." In August, 1675, "John Armstrong, from Stranorland, desired a visit and some supply for that people who now become of late more willing and ready to desire and receive the Gospel than before." This unwillingness to desire and receive the Gospel on the part of the people of Stranorlar and the neighbourhood should not lead us to think that they were sinners above all others who dwelt in the Laggan, but should rather, I would suppose, be attributed to the fact that they lived within what would then have been considered not an inconvenient distance from two Presbyterian places of worship, viz., Donoughmore and Convoy. They would appear, however, to have been not unwilling to save their own pockets as much as possible, for the following year they requested that the meeting would write to their brethren in Dublin that they deal with their landlord, Mr. Basil, that he may assist them in providing a maintenance for a minister. Perhaps Mr. Basil did not come to the aid of his tenants in this matter, for no congregation was established here, though the Presbytery sent them supplies frequently, till 1729. In 1792, the congregation was only able to pay £9 of stipend, and the Synod had serious thoughts of dissolving it, but did not.

But the labours of the Laggan brethren to provide for the spiritual necessities of their co-religionists extended far afield. At a meeting held in St. Johnston, on the 26th of November, 1673, they ordained William Cox as minister of Clonmel, and William Liston as minister of *Waterford*, and in addition to thus caring for their

dispersed brethren in Ireland, they did not turn a deaf ear even to requests that came to them from the uttermost parts of the earth. Under the date of the 28th of August, 1678, we find the following quaintly spelled entry and the cordial but cautious response given to this request from afar:—"Mr. Wm. Dennistoun came before the M. prosecuting the business of the plantation of a Godlie minister in Barbadoes according to Capt. Archibald Johnstoun's desire signified by letters to some of ye members of the M. The M. is well pleased wt. the motion & very willing to entertain it, & to doe qt in ym lys for effectucting so good a desyne, especially hearing from ye sd. Mr. Dennistoun qt libertie & encouragement in yt place for the Gospell of Chryst, but yet yei find it not expedient to proceed further untill Mr. Johnstoun give them a more full & particular account of the encouragement qch may be expected for inclyning & persuading a minister to goe setle yr, and yr—for yei appoynt Mr. Jno. Heart & Rot. Craighead to write to Mr. Johnstoun ye meeting's mynd anent ye affaire yt qn his ansr. shall be returned yei may proceed yrin as providence shall call and encourage ym thereto." Also in December, 1680, "Collonell Stevens from Maryland beside Virginia his desire of a Godly minister is represented to us, the meeting will consider it seriously & do what they can in it, Mr. John Heart is to write to Mr. Wm. Keys about this, & Mr. Rot Rule to the Mgs. of Rout & Tyron & Mr. Wm. Trail to the Meetings of Down & Antrim." It is supposed that it was in response to this latter request that Francis M'Kemy, a licentiate of the Laggan Presbytery, went to America, and was the first English-speaking Presbyterian minister to settle in the new world.

Apart from these distant applications, the members of the Presbytery had sufficient work within their own bounds to keep them busy. Besides ministering to their

own congregations, they were very frequently called upon to officiate in what were called desolate places, that is districts in which no congregation had yet been established, or in congregations that were vacant, either on account of not being able to procure ministers, or on account of their ministers being in Scotland, which means that persecution had waxed so hot that they were compelled to fly from this country. At the first meeting held after the siege of Derry it is recorded, "This day appeared from the parish of Rye, Alex. Rogger desiring a visit to that parish in Mr. Campbell's absence, the meeting appoints Andrew Fferguson to preach to them upon a week-day, and to see what is done for Mr. Campbell's encouragement to return unto that people." The members of the Presbytery were very zealous in doing all that they could to meet the many demands that were made upon their services. We find the minister of Letterkenny appointed to preach at Sligo, and the minister of Ballindrait at Doe and Fannett, and almost innumerable other like appointments all involving much travel and toil, and often danger. It was no doubt for the safety and protection of the minister that it was enacted by the Presbytery that when one of their number went to preach at Enniskillen, "the people there should send down some of their number to guide them." For a time Mr. Rule, of Derry, and Mr. Wilson, of Strabane, were for special reasons exempted from taking their share of these duties, but when a like privilege was asked for Mr Hart, of Monreagh, it does not appear to have been granted. At a meeting of Presbytery held in February, 1676, "Mr. Ball in the name of the eldership of Taboyn desires that their minister may be spared from so frequent riding to supply other congregations, and that because of his age and the greatness of his charge. The meeting wave an answer to this at present." It is not to be wondered at if some of the brethren felt the weight of *these long* and arduous journeys, and occasionally desired

to be relieved from them, but that relief evidently was not readily granted as the following enactment shows:— “Its concluded that qnever any brother is appointed to goe for supply to any vacant congregation, he shall speak his reasons in short, and if not sustained he shall ynafter make no debate.” We also find the press and urgency of this work given as the reason why the Presbytery did not send the usual representatives to the General Committee. “The brethren considering the great burden that lies upon them in supplying desolate places that daily call for their help cannot visit Bellemone by two of their number according to the Committee’s overture.” The members of Presbytery were always rejoiced when a minister or licentiate came to them either from Scotland or elsewhere, and did all they could to encourage young men to come and settle amongst them. In November, 1673, it is stated, “Mr. Duncan Campbell returns to this country and Meeting, and the M. doe give him welcome, and doe desire him to go & visit the people beyond the mountains of Barnesmore & also of Fermanagh if he can with conveniency.” In July, 1676, “The Presbytery in order to the supply of several vacant congregations within their bounds with Godly & able ministers hearing good reports of severall worthy ministers in Scotland, of Mr. James Hay, Mr. David Brown, & Mr. Duncan Forbes students of divinity have thought fit to call over from Scotland these youths to visit this meeting, & the desolate congregations thereof, as they shall be advised by the Meeting.” There was evidently great demand for the services of any young preachers that were available, and considerable rivalry amongst the Presbyteries as to which of them would secure their services. In the previous May the Laggan Presbytery proposed to the Committee, “that it may be enacted that none of the Meetings shall hereafter labour to intercept any minister or expectant who is on his way to another Meeeting & has a prior invitation from them.”

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The people also took an active part in trying to secure ministers for themselves. Thus in the year 1675, Urney appointed Mr. John Boyd to go to Scotland to try to get a minister, and asked letters of recommendation from the Meeting to Mr. Gilbert Rule that he may direct their commissioner to pitch upon some person fit for them. At the meeting of Presbytery held on the 5th of May, 1692, John Paterson, Thomas Best and Rot. M'Kimie, commissioners from Ramelton and Rathmullan, requested the Presbytery to write to Scotland to Mr. Seth Drummond—probably a son of their former minister—asking him “to come and reside in this country to follow his book, and that soon as it shall be judged convenient he be entered on tryals in order to preach the Gospel, that so they may be capable to give him a call for their minister with the first.” In the following March, William Dumbare, commissioner from Ramelton, renewed this request. After a long wait the Ramelton people obtained their desire; Mr. Drummond after finishing his education in Scotland and being licensed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, came to Ireland and was ordained in Ramelton on the 16th of December, 1696, the people promising him £40 of stipend, with 20 barrels of oats, for the first year, hoping to do better afterwards, and promising to build him a dwelling-house. The vacancy in Ramelton at this time was in all probability a very lengthened one. We do not know anything about Mr. Drummond, senr., after the persecution in 1681, when the Presbytery was broken up, whether he fled, like many others, to Scotland, or remained and ministered secretly to his congregation. During the latter years of the vacancy, Mr. Liston, of Letterkenny, preached in Ramelton as well as his own congregation. This was no uncommon thing for some years after the Revolution. Owing to the desolation that had been brought upon the country by the civil war and the consequent poverty of the

people, and the scarcity of ministers, in several localities one minister had the charge of two or three congregations. For a few years after the siege of Derry, the minister of Ballindrait, in addition to his own congregation, had also charge of Donagheady and Strabane. In December, 1692, Mr. Halliday, formerly of Convoy, but now in Scotland, received calls from no less than four parishes, viz., Ardstraw, Urney, Donagheady and Omagh. When the subject of these calls came before the Presbytery it was resolved that, "this meeting having with all seriousness and tenderness to each of these parties, considered the whole affair, after calling upon God for His direction, have now determined that Mr. Saml. Halliday settle in Ardstra as their minister, and the said inhabitants of Ardstra do promise to pay unto Mr. Halliday one half year's stipend for his transportation from Scotland, and that the time of it shall commence at Allsaints last, that they will build him a house and provide him a farm, and that they will agree in their Meeting House, etc." In the following February, "John Crawford, from Ardstra, gives account that since Mr. Halliday came amongst them they had given him eleven pound, eight shill. for his transportation and twenty barrels of corn."

The congregation of Donoughmore having tried in vain in several quarters to get a minister, made a bold, but unsuccessful attempt to wile Mr. Campbell away from Ray. They gave him a call, and the meeting of Presbytery held on 8th of February, 1692, "having taken the case of this transportation into their serious consideration and having considered the answers by Ray to the reasons of Donoughmore, do find these reasons fully answered by Ray; have voted and concluded that Mr. Campbell do abide in Ray and be not transported to Donoughmore."

As long as the Laggan Presbytery was in being,

its members had but little leisure. They were at all times kept busy in trying to supply with Gospel ordinances the vacant congregations that were within its bounds, and the districts that were getting peopled with new arrivals from Scotland, and where there was room and need for a new erection. The appointments made at two meetings will show how full the hands of the ministers were. In November, 1693, "Mr. Will Homes is appointed to supply Sligo, etc. Mr. Gray Donagheady, Mr. Fisher and Mr. Alexr. Lifford, Mr. Rowat being sick. Mr. Halliday Omagh, Mr. Halliday, Mr. Fisher & Mr. Harvey Strabane, in Mr. Will Homes his absence, Mr. Ferguson Innishowen, each of them one Lord's day before next meeting." In September, 1699, "Mr. Pringle is appointed to supply Derg one Lord's day, Mr. Homes of Orney on a week day, Mr. Campbell & Mr. Alexr. Letterkenny each one Lord's day & Mr. Drummond on a week day, Mr. Ferguson & Mr. Pringle Innishowen each one Sab. & Mr. Wm. Gray Burt in Mr. Ferguson's absence, Mr. Wm. Craghead Pettigo one Lord's day before the next meeting." From localities desirous of having congregations established in them we find numerous applications in the last years of the 17th century. In May, 1697, Mr. Homes, of Strabane, reported that he had preached at Clare as appointed, and the Presbytery appointed "John Crawford and Andrew Spruel for Ardstra, Andrew Semple and Andrew Mitchell for Termontomongan, John M'Cay and William Kelso for Longfield, Joseph Lyon and John Fulton for Urney to meet this day eight days and condescend on the place for the meeting house and make report to next meeting." In July, 1699, "Mr. Homes of Urney signifies there is considerable prospect of a congregation to be formed at Derg providing a part of his congregation and Mr. Halliday's (Ardstra) were joined to them." At a *subsequent meeting*, "Ardstra desired that their congrega-

tion may not be rented, but if the meeting will have these people joined to Longfield for encouraging the new erection that then they be allowed to be only ordinary hearers there, and obliged to pay one half of the maintenance they give in money & corn to their minister & still continued under his care and inspection as formerly. Their desire is granted provided that these 30 families who desire to be joined with Longfield give under their bonds faithfully to pay the one half of their maintenance in money & corn to the minister of Ardstra, and that the other 50 families adjacent to Clare give under their bonds to attend ordinances in Ardstra as constant members of that congregation, faithfully discharging all duties necessary to uphold the work of God in that place." In July, 1698, we find Wm. Rankin and John Richie from Moville seeking a minister and offering £25 a year of stipend, which the meeting considers too little, whereupon they propose to join with Carndonagh, and be satisfied with half the services of a minister. Carndonagh had been trying for some time past to get a minister, and though Mr. R. Neilson, a licentiate, had been officiating there for some time, he left without having been ordained, as the people were not able to give him a support. At this time they were giving a call to Mr. Hans Stewart, but it was not accepted. In 1701, Mr. Thomas Harvey was ordained here as minister. In July, 1699, James Robinson and James Templeton, from Pettigo, desired that the people there should be formed into a congregation; the Presbytery thought they were too few as yet, but promised to supply them as often as they could. In June, 1700, "John Campbell, of Kilmacrenan, supplicated for advice what course they shall take to get the Gospel settled among them."

CHAPTER VI.

CONGREGATIONS AND HOUSES OF WORSHIP.

THE men who laid the foundation of Presbyterianism in the Laggan were all Scotchmen, and it is evident that in founding congregations, they tried, as well as they could, to follow the system to which they had been accustomed in their native land, that is, to have a congregation in every parish, and to call it by the name of the parish, a practice which, if it had been adhered to in after times, would have saved considerable ill-feeling and expense in the present day. In the beginning, in some places, where the country was as yet but sparsely peopled with families of the Presbyterian faith, they found it necessary to join two or more parishes in one congregation, but we do not find two congregations in any parish, with the exception of that of Templemore, the parish in which the city of Derry is situated. In it there was, at an early period, in addition to the city congregation, another at Burt, which was called the landward of Templemore.

In the earlier years of the Ulster Plantation, there would not, we would imagine, be any difficulty—as afterwards there often was—in getting a site upon which to put up the very modest structure that then served for *God's house*. The landlords, or “undertakers” as they

were then called, whether themselves Presbyterians or not—and most of the Laggan undertakers were Presbyterian—would be anxious to have a Presbyterian place of worship on their estate, as that would be a strong inducement for Scotchmen to settle on it, and they were regarded as the most desirable tenants. The Bishops, as we would naturally expect, opposed the erection of Presbyterian houses of worship, and where they could they prevented the like. This was the reason why the Presbyterian Church of the parish of Raphoe was built at Convoy, and not at Raphoe, a more central and important place, where the Bishop resided, and where he was all powerful.

The Presbyterians of Derry were not permitted to have a place of worship within the walls for many years; till after the days of the siege they had to go outside the walls when they worshipped God in public. During the siege they were permitted as a favour to hold their meetings for worship in the Cathedral, at an hour when it was not required by the Episcopal congregation. In a pamphlet published shortly after by Mr. Boyse it is stated, "In the Cathedral in the forenoon, when the conformists preached, there was but comparatively a thin auditory; in the afternoon it was full, and there were four or five meetings of dissenters in the town besides." The intolerance of the bigotry that would not allow the voice of Presbyterian praise or prayer to be lifted up within the precincts of the city may be inferred from the following account of the inhabitants of Derry, given by the surveyor-general of customs, in the report of an official visit that he paid to Derry in the year 1637. He says, "I find that the English there are but weak and few in number, there being not forty houses in Londonderry of English of any note, who for the most part only live; the Scots, being many in number and twenty to one for the English, having prime trade in the town and country, thrive and grow rich; but the Irish for the most

part beg, being the reward of their idleness." Thirty-five years after this good report of the Scots of Derry was written, we find the Right Rev. Robert Mossom, D.D., the then Bishop, bitterly opposing the desire of this large and useful class of citizens to build, out of their own pockets, a house in which they and their children might appear before God. It is recorded in the Minutes of the Laggan Presbytery, under the date of the 18th of September, 1672, that Alderman John Craig, representative elder from the congregation of Derry, stated, "that the late difference between the Bishop and them was referred to his Majtie. by the Lord Lieutenant, and that they were advised to forbear there meeting-house within the walls until his Majestie's pleasure were known." The Presbytery of that day was evidently thankful for small mercies, for it is recorded in the Minutes that they "desire to bless God for putting a stop to the Bishop's designs against them." It is to be feared that the Presbytery had not much to bless God for in this matter. It is probable that the wishes of the Bishop on this point were so powerful that he was able to influence even His Majesty, and the Presbyterians had to forbear their meeting-house within the walls for many years. Not till after they had so gallantly risked, and in many cases, lost their lives and their fortunes in defending these walls, and thereby preserving the kingdom from the thralldom of tyranny and Popery, were they permitted to worship within them. Under the date of the 24th of February, 1691, it is stated in the Laggan Minutes, "The reason why this meeting was altered from St. Johnston to Londonderry was upon the request of the inhabitants of L.Derry, they having the meeting to consult about their meeting-house building." The building referred to here was erected on the site on which the First Presbyterian Church now stands, which was built in 1780 on the site, *we are told, of their former church.*

The houses in which the Presbyterians worshipped at this time were very humble and unpretentious structures. They were in general, no doubt, of the same style as the meeting-house at Antrim, which Lord Massareene, in replying to the charge which had been brought against him of frequenting the Presbyterian house of worship, described as "a thatcht house, without the town, at a distance from the highway, and never used in the time of the Church service." A moderate degree of comfort in a house of worship was scarcely thought a desirable thing in those days by many people. The congregation of Ray were, in 1699, directed by the Presbytery "to put their meeting house in better order, & make it waterfast." Indeed the houses of worship of all denominations, except in the more important towns, were wretched places. Bishop Leslie, in a charge to his clergy in the year 1638, said—"most of the churches are in no better keeping than hogstyes," and Bishop Mossom, in corresponding with the Irish Society regarding the state of the churches in his diocese, in the year 1670, said—"not one except that within the city, was in repair, and accommodation fit for God's worship; neither were the inhabitants, such was their extreme poverty, anyways able to rebuild or repair them; so that the holy offices of God's public worship were, for the most part, administered either in a dirty cabin or in a common ale-house."

The Presbyterian churches would appear, in several places, to have been too small for the congregations. A writer of the time says that while the Episcopal churches were attended only by a few people, the Presbyterian congregations overflowed into the fields. In August, 1672, it is stated that "Master John Rowatt did represent to the meeting that the people of his congregation were much straitened for the want of rounge in their meeting house by reason of the frequent resort of the people of Drumraar and desire the meeting's advice

thereanent." The reply given to this request was, "The Presbyterie appoints Master John Rowatt to show the people of Drumraar that it is their advice that they should build ane isle for themselves in that house, and that both for their own accomodation and easing the people of Keppie." This suggestion would appear not to have been regarded as a satisfactory solution of the difficulty, for in November following the Presbytery writes to the people of Cappagh to desire their consent that another place of meeting may be erected for the people of Drumragh, and to the people of Badoney that they resort to these two meeting-places, Master John Rowatt being unable to preach among them as formerly. It was also stated that this new meeting-house was to be built "in or near the Omev" (Omagh). In 1691, it is recorded in the Minutes of Presbytery that "the people of Faan (Fahan) agree to build an isle to the meeting-house in Burt for their own convenience, and to pay Mr. Fferguson £10 a year." The congregation of Donoughmore were also evidently much straitened for the want of room in the year 1694. In the February of that year, it is stated that the Presbytery, being informed that the meeting-house of Donoughmore is so small that it contains not above the third of the congregation, they are therefore appointed to enlarge their meeting-house with all convenient speed. From the next entry in the Minutes regarding this business, it would appear that the people of Donoughmore had resolved to build a new house. In the April of the following year, it is stated, "as to their meeting house they have cut timber to build it, but have not yet condescended upon a place to set it in. It is recommended that they build their meeting house with all convenient speed, & that they set it as near the place of the former as they can, anywhere except upon the churchlands." The Presbytery evidently considered that the Donoughmore *people were not as expeditious in getting on with this*

proposed new erection as they should have been, for in May, 1695, it is recorded, "The Presbytery is much dissatisfied with the people's negligence, and strictly enjoin them to set about the building of their meeting house, in some convenient place out of the church lands, before next meeting." Notwithstanding this strict injunction, next month, John Fulton, from Donoughmore, appeared and stated that they had done nothing as to their meeting-house. This congregation would not appear to have been in a flourishing condition at this period of its history, for Mr. Fulton also stated that they were £6 14s. in arrear with Mr. Fisher before November last. They were directed by the Presbytery to give diligence to clear with Mr. Fisher, and to set about building their meeting-house. At the October meeting of Presbytery, John Burnsyde, elder from Donoughmore, said "as to their meeting house, he can give no account of it." When this long-delayed erection was put up we cannot tell, as there is no further reference to it in the records of the Presbytery.

Upwards of twenty years before this, in the year 1672, Alderman John Craig and Mr. John Fisher, of Derry, with Mr. William Cunningham, of Burt, had applied to the Presbytery to divide the parish of Templemore into two congregations. This was done, and Burt, Inch and Elagh mentioned as the district to be included in the new charge. There was some difference of opinion amongst the people of these districts as to where the new place of worship should be built. On the 18th of September, in this year, three members of the Presbytery were appointed to view the places in debate and to determine the meeting-house to be where the body of the people may most conveniently meet; they decided, "after conference with the people, ye place of meeting to be at Cavanamadie, as being most convenient for ye bodie of the people."

This division of the parish into two congregations would appear to have been a cause of inconvenience to some of the parishioners, and at that time people were not at liberty to attend any congregation they pleased, but had to attend that in whose bounds they resided. Three years after this division was made, commissioners from the people of the lower end of Elagh appeared before the Presbytery showing "the inconveniency of that people ordinary coming to Bert in the winter time for hearing and therefore seek leave from the M. to go to Derry meeting house in the winter time; also they desire to know whom the M. appoint to take the charge of them, professing a willingness to subject themselves to Gospell ordinances." This contention amongst the parishioners of Templemore was a long continued one, for we find that at a meeting of Presbytery held on the 14th of October, 1696, "The session of Derry complaine by their commissioner, John Cowan, that severall of ye members of their congregation do withdraw from them; they are appointed to summon them to appear before next meeting to give reason why they do so." At the next meeting, "appears the inhabitants of Elagh, Cosquin and Belonegalagh offering reasons why they do not join with the congregation of Londonderry," and in the following May, the people of Burt are called on to give what proofs they have of their allegations concerning the inhabitants of the bounds which L.Derry claim being of their congregation." Afterwards the Presbytery fixed "the liberties of the city of L.Derry on that side the water whereon the city standeth shall be the bounds of the congregation of Derry." This claim did not give satisfaction to all parties, for Charles Stewart, on behalf of Elagh, etc., protested against the people of Elagh being joined to Derry, and Thomas Cunningham, from Burt, appealed to the Synod.

Where there was a parish in which there was no

congregation, the adjoining parishes generally had a contention as to how this neutral territory should be divided. There was no Presbyterian place of worship in the Parish of Leckpatrick till long after this time, and in 1699 we find that "the Session of Strabane, by their commissioner, John Love, supplicate for determining the bounds between them and Donaghadey's congregation in Leckpatrick parish; Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Niven are appointed to perambulate the bounds between these two congregations, with two elders of each congregation, and to bring report thereof to next meeting." Their report was that the limits between Strabane and Donaghadey continue as formerly they were, that is—Ballymagory, Miltown, Artigarvan and Ballee belong to the congregation of Donaghadey and part of Greenlaw. In some places, doubtless on account of the discouragements caused by persecution and poverty, the people were slow in building houses of worship. When in the year 1676, Mr. Robert Wilson, the minister of Strabane, was threatening to leave that congregation on account of the poor support that he had there, and when the people were anxious that he should remain, it was stated at the June meeting of the Presbytery, in this year, that "Mr. Rot. Wilson deferred his positive answer to ye people of Strabane's demand about him till such time as they should conclude about & secure ye preaching house which was granted unto him." At the August meeting, "Mr. Trail is appointed to speak to ye people of Strabane & try qt. they have done about ye preaching house & report it to ye next meeting." In the next month, "Mr. Trail is again appointed to speak to ye people of Strabane about ye preaching-house qt was to be set up." No doubt there would be some kind of preaching-house set up in Strabane at this time, but it was probably destroyed when the town was burnt by King James' army in 1688, when Mr. Wilson perished in the siege of Derry. In September,

1693, "Robert Carson, ruling elder from Strabane, gives account that their meeting-house will be finished within 14 days, that they have not built a dwelling-house for Mr. Homes because he is yet uncertain where he would have it built, but promises to take care that it be built as soon as may be convenient; and in the meantime that they will provide him in suitable accommodation." Whenever the inhabitants of a parish set about the establishing of a house of worship in their midst, there was sometimes a considerable difference of opinion amongst them, before they could—to use the current phraseology of the time—condescend upon a place whereon to set it.

The people of the Parish of Urney had a long-continued contention about the most suitable place in which to build their house of worship, which probably had its origin in the fact that the parishes of Urney and Ardstraw for a time were united in one congregation. This union was dissolved by the Presbytery in August, 1676, whereupon the Urney Presbyterians found it necessary to build a house of worship in their own parish, but could not agree amongst themselves as to where it should be located, and we find Capt. Robert Hamilton, James Monteith and John Stevenson appearing before the Presbytery and referring the settling of the site to the Presbytery, because they could not agree upon it amongst themselves. The Presbytery appointed "Mr. Robert Rule, Wm. Trail & Jo. Modderell, commissioner from Strabane, to tryst upon Tuesday next at Strabane with Captain Robert Hamilton and William Hamilton, of Ballyfatton, and to endeavour to bring ym to an agreement about ye same, presuming yt if they two agreed all ye rest would be satisfied." This commission was not able to bring the people to an agreement, for in the following August the Presbytery referred "the *settling* of ye preaching-house of Urney to ye determina-

tion of John Stevenson, John Templetown, John M'Arthure, Wm. Stevenson, and failing John Templetown by sickness, to Rob. Montgomery, four men of your own number, after measuring of ye ground in length & breadth." The Urney people were very stiff about this matter; neither the Presbytery nor their own men could bring them to see eye to eye. Mr. Rule, minister of Derry, who was appointed at the October meeting to preach in Urney on the Wednesday of the next week, thought that he had settled the question; for he reported at the November meeting, that, "after sermon, at length they agreed that the meeting-place be removed a little further upwards to the quarter land of Urney, and built in Spring next."

But Mr. Rule's sermon did not end the strife. In June, 1679, commissioners from several quarters of the congregation of Urney appeared before the Presbytery, desiring that some remedy might be thought on by the meeting for removing of debates in the congregation about their meeting-house. After the matter was debated, we are told that "they all agreed that it should be built upon Babington's land according as they had formerly condescended unto, and in order to Mr. Babington's satisfaction & obtaining of his leave Mr. Robert Rule is to obtain liberty of the Prelat of Derry to build it there." Mr. Babington, I would suppose, was the Bishop's agent, and like all other land agents of the old school, he was more intolerant than his master, for at the next meeting of Presbytery, "Mr. Rule reported that he did speak to the Prelate of Derry about his allowing of Mr. Babington to give leave to the people of Urney to build their meeting-house on his land, which he obtained of the Prelate; and yet Mr. Babington will not grant them liberty to build on his ground." But the Urney people were as obstinate as Mr. Babington was, and the Presbytery found it necessary to send Mr. Trail to represent to them "the power of

ministers and elders to determine the conveniency of places of worship, and to show them that its the M's. mind, that both ends of the parish should promise a submission of their controversy to the meeting, and to tell them that the M. will determine the place as soon as they can find convenient time for it, and that in the meantime till then they should continue to meet at the old meeting-place." Mr. Trail fulfilled this appointment, but still the breach remained unhealed; whereupon a deputation consisting of Revs. Gray, Hamilton and Craghead, with Richard M'Clure, an elder from Donoughmore, were appointed "to determine the controversie amongst that people, and to call for the assistance of such gentlemen & elders as they shall see needful in that business." Finally, a meeting of Presbytery was held at Urney, on the 29th of October, 1679, at which "the people from both ends of the parish of Urney being called in, the Moderator did represent unto them the sadness of the rent that has been and is among them about their meeting-house, and the ineffectualness of all means hitherto used for removing it, & the power of the meeting in order to these things; & did desire two or three of each side to speak together amongst themselves to see if they can agree upon any overture for peace to propose to the meeting. The meeting, after consultation and advice, find it not meet to remove the meeting-house out of that townland where it now is; & yet they find it meet to remove it out of the place where it now stands; & they appoint the Moderator, Mr. Samuel Halliday & Mr. Wm. Henry & Joseph Henderson, John Kilgour & Rot. Crawford, ruling elders, to go out & view this townland, upon which the meeting-house now stands, & advise and agree about the most convenient place in this townland to build the house upon, and to take alongst with them Wm. Hamilton of Clady, & James Young & *Wm. Stevenson* of the upper end, & Wm. Hamilton of

Ballyfatton, John Stevenson, the carpenter, & Wm. Fulton of the lower end of the parish, for their assistance in this matter; which accordingly they do; & do determine the place on which the meeting-house is to be built; & declare it to be the meeting, which the meeting approves of."

Whether the house was built on the site agreed upon or not, is uncertain; it is probable that the people of the lower end of the parish carried the day, for in September, 1680, "Mr. Gemble comes from Urney & reports that they have built a meeting-house in Tillymoan; & supplicates that the M. would appoint their minister to go to it, & preach there. After sending another deputation "to call together the whole parish & enquire who are dissatisfied, & to endeavour a healing of that people, the Presbytery advised Mr. Brown to go and preach at Tillymoan, & accordingly he did so." All of which goes to show that stiffneckedness is not a new feature in the character of Presbyterians. During the time that this deplorable strife was being waged, we find David Shiels appearing before the Presbytery in November, 1678, and desiring "in the name of the upper end of the parish that Mr. David Brown may be appd. to preach now & then upon a Lord's day in the upper end of the parish of Urney at Drumdoit. The meeting cannot grant this." The meeting-house of the neighbouring parish of Ardstraw, which was united with Urney up till now, must have been more centrally situated, or else the people more agreeable amongst themselves than the Urney people were, since the only reference we find to it in the Minutes of the Presbytery is under the date of July, 1695, where it is said, "their meeting-house is rebuilt in the place where it has been these years past."

In Letterkenny there was a controversy over even a smaller matter, viz., the place in which the pulpit should be set. We find Lieutenant Vance, in April, 1680,

desiring in the name of that people that a brother may be sent to help them to order their affairs about their meeting-house, and requesting that Mr. Hamilton, minister of Donagheady, should be sent for this purpose. Mr. Hamilton was appointed, but apparently did not settle the matter in dispute, for at the following September meeting, "The clerk is appointed to write to the people of Letterkenny to tell them that we hear of their differences about their meeting-house & that we desire them to refer it to the meeting, & that we will send some of our number to consider the case & determine it." At the next meeting, John Wilson, commissioner from the people of Glen Souilly in the parish of Conwall, comes and presents to the meeting a submission of their differences about their meeting-house. Revs. Rule and Hampton were appointed to go to Letterkenny and there to hear and determine (with advice of the minister of the place) the difference amongst them about the situation of the pulpit. These brethren went to Letterkenny and determined the difference about their pulpit. They were requested to give in their determination in writing, which evidently settled this small matter, as we hear no more of it.

In the times of trials and poverty that followed the wars of the Revolution, the people in some districts would appear to have been disheartened on account of the many evils with which they had to contend, and in congregations that were long vacant, with apparently little hope of getting a minister, it is not to be wondered at if the lowly houses of worship, in which the voice of the preacher was so seldom heard, were falling into decay. In order to counteract this evil, as well as they could, and lead their poor afflicted people to still trust in the Lord and hope for better times to come, the Presbytery, at its meeting held on the 31st of May, 1693, enacted that the ministers *appointed to supply* the desolate congregations within the

bounds of this Presbytery, are to inform them that they are appointed to build and keep in constant repair their meeting-houses, as they expect to be supplied.

There is no reference in the records of the Laggan Presbytery to pews in any of its churches down to the last year of the 17th century. Until about this time, the only seating accommodation in them would be some rude forms or benches, and any who desired to make sure of a seat had to bring one with them, as Janet Geddes did when she went to worship in St. Giles, Edinburgh, on Sabbath, the 23rd of July, 1637, and so far forgot herself as to throw the cutty-stool she had brought with her at the head of the newly-appointed Dean, when he ascended the reading desk and began to read the service of the Episcopal Church—at this time an attempt was being made to foist Episcopacy on Scotland—exclaiming, “Villian, dost thou say mass at my lug?”

Any family desiring the luxury and distinction of possessing a pew had to erect it at their own expense, the session giving them so much space upon which to set it, the highest stipend payers getting what were considered the best positions. In 1699, directions were given to the Session of Ardstraw—“that their seats be settled according to the payments of particular families,” and in the same year Widow Ewing, of Burt, “claims the benefit of the common rules of payment in settling of her pew.” The location of their pews was evidently a frequent source of unpleasantness between members of a congregation; we find Mr. Campbell, of Ray, complaining to the Presbytery that some of the people of his congregation have been disorderly and unruly about their seats, and desiring they be admonished in this and other duties, and on the 10th of January, 1699, “Will Porter, of the congregation of Burt, supplicates for a redress of ane injury done him, as he supposes by Jo. Cunningham and Wm. Bratton in removing his pew out of its proper place in the meeting-

house." In March, 1700, "Wm. Stewart of Urney appears before the Presbytery and says a single seat is not enough for him, unless Mr. Young's family be removed, which if the meeting will do, he'll be content to sit in the appd. place with as little room as any single seat has in the meeting-house, otherwise to grant him sufficient ground for a double seat." At the same time, "Jo. Brown of Urney complains of ye injustice done him by ye settling of one Mr. Stewart's seat before him in the ground determined to Mrs. Homes' seat by the men appointed to settle all the seats. The meeting, therefore, with much deliberation, examining this affair on all hands, and orders Mrs. Homes, for peace sake, to reassume her place again, and Mr. Stewart, who possessed that ground by exchanging with Mrs. Homes, to remove where he was before, & Mr. Hamilton, who sat with Mrs. Homes, is allowed either to fix a seat in the ground that was appointed to her, or to sit with Mrs. Homes, as they both shall think fitt. Lastly, it is ordered that Mrs. Homes go no further back with her seat than the middle of the cuple that separates her ground from Mr. Brown's."

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHARITY OF THE PRESBYTERY.

THE relief of the poor and the afflicted was a duty that the Laggan ministers and people did not neglect. Though in general poor and oppressed themselves, they did not overlook those who were still poorer and more oppressed. Coming as most of them did from Scotland, they brought with them, and carried out as well as their circumstances would permit, the practice of the Church of Scotland in this matter. The duty of caring for the poor was enjoined on Paul and Barnabas when they were sent forth to Christianize the heathen, and from the earliest period of her history the Scottish Church looked upon this duty as specially entrusted to the Christian churches. It was a duty that the Scottish Reformers and their successors regarded as part of Christianity itself, and which they took particular care to see fulfilled. In the first Book of Discipline, published in the year 1660, it is enjoined that "every several kirk must provide for the poor within itself." It was a comparatively easy task for the kirk sessions of the Scottish Church to make provision for their poor, as they were empowered to levy a rate or "stint," as it was then called, on all the property of the parish, but their brethren in Ireland had no such power, and so were compelled to rely on the voluntary

contributions of the people. When we consider that there were no Poor Laws in existence in those days, and no Board of Guardians, nor other source, except the Churches, to which the destitute could apply for aid, we see that this duty was not an uncalled for one, and from the number of persons applying for charity or "supply," as it was usually called, and the frequency with which collections were ordered for destitute people of every class, it was not a light one, especially for a community who, as we are in one place told, "were not able to bear further burdens, both lying under the weight of an army and paying tithes to the Commissioners."

We, of the present day, are apt to imagine that Orphan Societies, Widows' Funds, Old Age Funds and such like charitable organisations are the creation of our more enlightened age, but though these names were not in vogue in the days of the Laggan Presbytery, still the duties which these societies now attend to were not neglected by our forefathers. The records of a single meeting—that held on the 8th of September, 1674—show how mindful they were of the orphan, the widow, the poor and the prisoner. "Raigh sends in 4s. for the poor to be at the M's. disposal which the M. sends to Wm. Henry of Letterkenny by Master Wm. Semple. Mary Heustoun got eleven shill. & 8d. sent to her by and from the last meeting. Taboyn, Letterkenny and Raigh each of them brings in 4sh. & 6d. for Francis Simpson. Letterkenny brings in 4 shill. to the poor, wherof the M. sends two shill. to John M'Naught's widow, and two shill. to John Lyndsay, prisoner in Lifford, by Master Wm. Trail. A letter from Wm. Martin, prisoner, to the M. is read wherein he shows his sad case. Master John Heart is appointed to write to him for his encouragement, and all the congregations that have as yet done nothing for *his supply* are desired to do what they can against the *next M. for his supply.*"

The orphan had their peculiar care: we find frequent reference to collections brought in for John Kinked's child, and for Francis Simpson, who is usually referred to as Master Simpson's child. He was probably the son of Gilbert Simpson who had been minister of Ballyclare. The commissioners sent to the General Committee in July, 1675, were directed "to desire the other meetings to take the burden of him off the Laggan and that because he is more theirs than ours, and we of this meeting have hitherto borne much more than our proportionable share of the burden of his maintainance." The other Presbyteries recognised the reasonableness of this request, for there is an entry on the Minutes to the effect that "the committee at Machryhochil (Ahoghill) has sent 20 shillings for the supply of Master Simpson's child at Strabane till May." At this time he was living in the family of Mistress Stewart in Strabane, who was paid three pounds yearly "on account of his Dyet." A minister in these days could make but slender provision for his family, and if he was cut off while they were young, they would in general be but poorly provided for. In this case, and doubtless it was not the only one of the sort, his father's brethren in the ministry not only saw that their deceased brother's orphan lad was "warmed and clad," but they also saw after his education. Mr. Wilson, the minister of Strabane, was appointed "to take an account of his proficiency in learning," and his report of him was "that he is a very hopeful boy and prudent and sober and diligent in his studies." We also find the Laggan ministers taking an interest in a son of Mr. Crookshanks, the first minister of Convoy, who perished in the battle of Rullion Green in Scotland, fighting on the side of the Covenanters. They were, however, happily relieved of this burden, as Mr. Crookshanks' friends, who lived in Derry, undertook the care of their young relative.

The Presbytery also cared for the widow, thus, "the

case of a poor gentlewoman, Mary Howstoun (Rot. Cuningam's relick), in Ramelton parish with her family who want bread is recommended to the severall brethren to doe what they can for her supply, and whatever the brethren can get in their severall congregations to be brought to the M. to be disposed upon by the M. according as shall be found most convenient." Also, "a motion being made by a member of the meeting on behalfe of two distressed widows that some reliefe might be allowed them, the meeting appoints each member to bring in somewhat for their reliefe." At the next meeting it is stated, "these parishes according to appointment brought in for the reliefe of the two distressed widows as followeth— Rapho 5s., Burt 6s., Donaghadey 7s 6d., Strabane 10s., Letterkenny 10s., Ramelton 6s., from a private person 5s., Derry 14s., Ray 9s."

Help was generously given, as far as possible, to all kind of deserving persons. We find a collection ordered for "Captain James Forbes of Letterkenny, and one for James Gallaway, who often sat in the Presbytery as representative elder from Ray, and also upon the representation of John Cambel's case of distress through poverty and oppression, each congregation is directed to send him at least one shilling and that Taboyn shall add as much as makes up 24 shill. to him." The Presbyterian people of these times must have been of a very charitable and kindly disposition, else they would have wearied of the many applications that were made to them by all sorts and conditions of people who were unfortunate or distressed. For example, we find that "Shaun O'Murren, a poor honest man in the congregation of Ramelton, having presented a supplication to the Presby. for some relief in his great distress which is testified under the hands of many persons of known credit, both in respect of his extreme poverty and especially of his children *who have been long under the hands of phisitians and*

remains uncured, having exhausted anything he had, the Presbty. earnestly recommends it to the severall congregations to do for him what they can." And also, "three families in ye Paroch of Rapho lately smitten with ye stroke of fire are appointed to bring a particular account of ye case to be consrd by ye next M." Also, "Isobel Jamison, a monstrous"—which probably means a deformed—"person in Donoughmore, comes and supplicates for relief, the M. thinks it fit that she should be supplied and that every parish should give her yearly 3 shillings or at least half a crown."

There was a class of oppressed people who looked to the Presbytery for help, who bore oppression's load in a way in which none of us in these more happy times in which we live are called upon to bear it, viz., prisoners. Prisoners not because they had been guilty of some criminal action, but because they had in some way fallen foul of the High Church party and brought themselves within the jurisdiction of the Bishop's Court. It was easy for an honest man to lose his liberty and find himself an inmate of a gaol in these persecuting times. At a meeting of Presbytery held in October, 1678, "Mr. Neil Gray, from the meeting of Tyrone, doth propose unto the meeting in order to getting of some supply for them the cases of Wm. Stevenson, prisoner in Dungannon upon excommunication for his refusing to be a church-warden, also he presents to us the case of the jaylor of Dungannon, as also the case of Wm. Douglas. This M. resolves to doe something for the relief & supply of the foresaid persons." A man was liable to be fined and imprisoned for refusing to attend the Established Church, and when a Bishop imprisoned a person, it was not a sentence of fourteen days or a month that he imposed, but the unfortunate prisoner once committed to gaol might lie there till the day of his death unless some person of influence interested himself on his behalf, and if his

friends did not provide him with food he might starve. Consequently there are several entries in the Laggan minutes, especially during the reign of Charles II., like these:—November, 1673, “The M. think it needful to do what they can for William Martin’s encouragement and sustenance in prison.” And in the following April they appoint Mr. James Wallace and Mr. Rot. Wilson “to visit and encourage him.” And in January, 1673, “Mistress Wallace in Lifford having petitioned for supplie, the brethren did bring in their collections for her supplie.”

The Presbytery also encouraged learning by providing a bursary for young men studying for the ministry. The sum allowed the bursar—a very liberal allowance for that time—is thus stated in one place in the Minutes—“This Presbrie having taken John Hampton as their bursar, about two years agoe, resolve now that as soon as he shall goe to ye colledge, they will allow him £10 per annum during the time of his stay there.” At one time there was some discontent as to the way in which the recipient of this coveted prize was chosen. On the 1st of January, 1679, we find that “Mr. Rot. Rule and James Cuningam from the congregation of Londonderry report that they agree to the collection for the Presbyterie’s bursar; only they desire it to be marked in our book that, if they have afterwards one fit for it, he should be accepted from them as readily as from another congregation; and they desire that they have their turn of a burser, maintained by the Presbytery; and they complain that three out of Taboyne have been successively bursers, to the meeting, etc.; and they say they will not contribute to Nathaniel Graham, except their desire and complaint be marked in our book. The M. having considered what the minister and ruling elder of Derry have reported from their Session, doe resolve *that, for the future, previous advertisement shall be given,*

by all the brethren of the meeting, of any person whom they have in their respective bounds that are fit to be entertained as bursers, and this some considerable time before the bursery shall be determined to any person; and that out of all those who shall be proposed, he shall be chosen and accepted who shall by the M. be judged the fittest person and that the person proposed by the congregation of Derry shall be first considered."

In addition to these numerous benefactions, the Laggan congregations also gave pecuniary aid to deserving young men to enable them to pursue their studies at school and college, *e.g.*, "David Fairly, a young boy from Letterkenny, supplicates help to defray charges at college." "The brethren being petitioned for supplie to John Scott to help him to follow his studies, and hearing a good report of him, appoint each brother to bring in 4sh. for his supplie and recommend him also to the people of Derrie." John Semple is recommended to the Committee as a hopeful youth to be supplied by them, and collections for him are to be sent to John Crawford of Clady. Doubtless this is the John Semple in whom Mr. Wallace of Urney, who died in November, 1674, took a deep interest, and to which we find the following reference—"The brethren are desired to represent to their various elderships that it was Mr. James Wallace his desire on his deathbed that the M. should take on them the case of supplying and helping John Semple in his studies, and to desire their severall congregations to doe what they can conveniently in this business."

The Presbytery's charity, though it began at home, did not end there, and it is to be feared that their generosity was sometimes imposed on. The time and place of the Presbytery's meetings would appear to have been well known to all the vagrant train, and the members, for the protection of themselves and their

people against the sturdy beggars who visited them, found it necessary to undertake the duties that are now discharged by the Charity Organisation Society. At the meeting held in January, 1673, the Presbytery re-enacted an old resolution that had evidently fallen into abeyance, viz., "This meeting considering how much they are oppressed with strangers renew their former art of not supplying any such without sufficient testimonials." Notwithstanding the re-enactment of this rule, the Presbytery had a very narrow escape from being victimised by a member of the begging letter fraternity, bearing the not uncommon name of John Smyth, before the year was up. Perhaps honest John had heard of the stringent resolutions recently passed by the Presbytery, and determined that he, in his contemplated descent upon it, would come with testimonials that could scarcely be deemed anything but sufficient; accordingly, at the meeting held on the 25th of November following, we are told "John Smith's petition, and the Lord Lieutenant's recommendation of him to all ministers and preachers for charity being read, it is recommended to the severall brethren to intimate a Sabbath collection for him, and to send it as soon as they can to Wm. Macky at St. Johnstoun." But, alas! "the best-laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft a-gley," and Mr. Smyth's scheme appears to have shared this not uncommon fate, for at the Presbytery held on the 6th of January following, it is recorded, "The money collected for John Smith, merchant, because of a report that he is a cheater, is to be returned to the severall congregations, to be kept till furdur clearness in that matter."

Even this unpleasant experience did not lessen the flow of these good people's charity. Almsgiving would appear to have been one of their besetting virtues, and the members of the Presbytery—good easy men—could *not find in their hearts to say no to any son or daughter*

of affliction who sought their aid, for whilst they doubtless chid their wanderings, they also relieved their pain. We find them still doing things that tended to perpetuate the evils of indiscriminate charity, such as giving to certain individuals "a general recommendation for charity," and when "Will Kelso, an indigent youth," came begging to them, instead of telling him that he should be ashamed of himself, and ordering him to lay down his hands and work, "he is recommended to the severall congregations of the meeting as an object of charity." But who would blame these kind-hearted men, who, out of their own poverty, ministered so generously to those who were in distress? Must we not say that "e'en their failings leaned to virtue's side."

CHAPTER VIII.

TROUBLES AND PERSECUTIONS.

DURING almost the whole of the half century that the Presbytery of the Laggan was in being, those who adhered to it, both cleric and lay, were subjected to many vexations, annoyances, and cruel persecutions. The principles of religious toleration were little known in those days, and they who had the power used every means—foul oftener than fair—to compel all to think and act as they did in spiritual matters. In Ireland the Established Church was clothed with almost unlimited power, and its dignitaries and officials seldom failed to use this power to its utmost extent, and often in a most tyrannical way. Owing to the large ingress of Scotch people, the Protestant population of the Laggan, as well as of some other parts of Ulster, was almost wholly Presbyterian, and the clergy of the Establishment were, not unnaturally, annoyed to see the large numbers that waited on the ministrations of the Presbyterian ministers, while their own churches were very sparsely attended, and so they, from time to time, raised the cry of “The Church in danger!” and tried to show that all who did not conform to the Established Church were enemies to the State and to the Protestant cause. The Bishops used the great power they had in the Irish Parliament to have laws made that bore heavily on all Dissenters, and deprived them of the common rights of citizens. Facts that have never been *denied* abundantly prove that they—one and all—*harrassed and trampled* them down in every way possible,

tried, both by frowns and favours, to draw them away from the Church of their fathers and blot out from the land the very name of Presbyterian, and the wonder is that they did not accomplish much more in this direction than they did. The Bishops were very jealous of any who had the audacity to aspire to the office of the Christian ministry, or to preach the Gospel, or administer its sacraments, without Episcopal ordination. They regarded all such as intruders and schismatics, whom it was their duty to put down with a strong hand. They were the prime movers in having laws enacted that imposed the penalty of a fine of one hundred pounds on any Presbyterian minister who administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to his people, and even any who preached or conducted public worship, either in their own churches—if they had the like—or anywhere else, were liable to imprisonment or banishment as intruders into the parishes of the Episcopal clergy. It is true that these laws were not always strictly enforced, but they were on the statute-book of the nation, and the Episcopal party always bitterly opposed every attempt that was made to repeal them, or to grant legal toleration to Dissenters, in order, as Dr. Tobias Pullen, Bishop of Dromore, said, “that they may still have it in their power to show their tenderness to their dissenting brethren; and may prevent or repress the misdemeanours that some Non-conformists may possibly be guilty of, if they had a legal toleration.”

We know but little of the troubles that afflicted the Lagganeers in the years prior to the Restoration, but from some glimpses we get of their lives, it is to be feared that from their very first appearance in the Green Isle, they were not permitted to keep the noiseless tenor of their way along the cool, sequestered vale of life, as they would doubtless have desired.

The persecution of the Presbyterians by the

High Church party started in the County Down in 1631, when Bishop Echlin deposed Livingstone of Killinchy and Blair of Bangor, and this spirit of intolerance began to show itself, soon after, in the Laggan. Adair tells us how William Kennah, of Strabane, was fined in five pounds for lodging for one night Mr. John M'Clelland, an excommunicated person from the Co. Down, and also how Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, being in Strabane, asked the Provost of that town about a young merchant in Strabane who was a Non-conformist, what kind of a person he was? The Provost answered, "he was a young man, a merchant in the town." The Bishop replied, "a young man! he is a young devil." At this time an oath, which was known as the Black Oath, was being rigorously enforced. It bound all who took it to yield unconditional obedience to everything which the King might choose at any time to enjoin, whether in ecclesiastical or civil matters. The Presbyterians refused to take this oath, and on this account suffered many hardships and much loss of worldly goods. Adair says "some hid themselves or fled, leaving their houses and goods; and divers were imprisoned and kept in divers gaols for a considerable time." He also tells of the narrow escape from arrest, for refusing to take this oath, three Laggan gentlemen, the Laird of Leckie, Major Stewart and John Semple, had in Newtownstewart, where they had met about their affairs. When in the inn there, "it was presently told them that three pursuivants were at the door, upon which Major Stewart mounted John Semple on his horse, and gave him his hat, who, being mounted, and riding by the pursuivants, inquired whom they were seeking? They said, 'if you will tell us where they are whom we are seeking we will give you a reward.'" He answered, "it *may be I will.*" "Then," said they, "we are seeking the *Laird of Leckie and John Semple.*" Then, putting spurs

to his horse, he answered, "I am John Semple, you rogues." While they were calling others to help them to follow him, the Laird took his horse and escaped, and Major Stewart also. The pursuivants being disappointed said, "All the devils in hell will not catch these rogues."

About this time, a little before the breaking out of the rebellion of 1641, a meeting was held in the Episcopal Palace at Raphoe, which boded no good to the Presbyterians. It was attended by the two Leslies, Bishops of Raphoe and Down, by Maxwell, Bishop of Killala, "and others of their sort, together with Cullenan, Popish Bishop of Raphoe." Adair tells us that "their clandestine consultations were kept close, concerning which, Sir William Stewart did propose some necessary queries to the Bishop of Raphoe, in the name of the country, at a meeting of commissioners of the country, which were never yet answered." Whatever consultations might be amongst them, it is certain there was in those times more fellowship and intimacy between the Popish clergy and these bishops with their curates, than could well consist with Protestant principles. "Amongst those who were apprehended at this time was worthy Mrs. Pont, wife of the minister of Ramelton, who remained prisoner nigh three years, and her husband, escaping, was forced to flee the country."

The Lagganeers would appear to have escaped to a large extent the horrors to which their co-religionists in many other parts of Ulster were exposed during the terrible massacre of 1641. This immunity was due to the protection afforded to this district by the Laggan forces, a body of yeomanry under the command of Sir William and Sir Robert Stewart which, in its day, did much for the maintenance of civil and religious liberty, and for the preservation of their friends and neighbours from the destruction which the Irish inflicted on multitudes of the

English and Scotch settlers; but in the civil war which was waged between the Republican party that had arisen and Charles I., during the latter years of his reign, the Laggan suffered severely. There was a siege of Derry in 1649, lasting for five months, which has almost been forgotten, being eclipsed by the second and more celebrated siege of 1688. In this conflict the Presbyterians were on the side of the King, and the Laggan forces laid siege to Derry, which was held by Sir Charles Coote for the Republicans, but finding that the prelatical party were dealing treacherously with them, and getting the upper hand in the management of the affairs of the State, they abandoned the siege in disgust. Coote supported his garrison by plundering the surrounding neighbourhood; his troops burned St. Johnston, Newtowncunningham and Carrigans, and in a short time the Republicans, under the vigorous leadership of Oliver Cromwell, were masters of the entire Kingdom.

During the first few years of the Commonwealth, the Presbyterians were harshly dealt with, because they refused to recognise the lawfulness of Cromwell's government and vigorously denounced the beheading of King Charles as a judicial murder. The Presbyterian ministers were told by Colonel Venables, who was at the head of affairs in Ireland, "that since they would not carry themselves submissively to the present government they must be gone, and that they could expect no favour." Many fled to Scotland, and "those that stayed in the country, though they could not exercise their ministry orderly as formerly, and though their stipends were sequestered, yet, changing their apparel to the habit of countrymen, they frequently travelled in their parishes, and sometimes in other places, taking what opportunities they could to preach in the fields, or in barns and glens, and were seldom in their own houses. They persuaded

the people to constancy in the received doctrine in opposition to the wild heresies that were then spreading, and reminded them of their duty to their lawful magistrates, the King and Parliament, in opposition to the usurpation of the times." However, in a short time, when Cromwell and his advisers saw that the Presbyterians were inclined to live peaceably and give no trouble to the authorities, the restrictions imposed upon them were relaxed and a liberal salary given to any minister who was willing to take it, and the free exercise of the ministry permitted to all, Fleetwood, the Lord Deputy of Ireland at this time, being, as we are told, "no enemy to the Presbyterian party, and a man of much charity to all who had profession of Godliness." "This was," Adair says, "in the year 1654, when this poor church had a new sunshine of liberty of all ordinances, and much of the blessing and countenance of God concurring therewith in those congregations where ministers had been planted." The Presbyterians were now for a time free from the oppressive hand of the High Church party. When the Republican government came into power the Established Church was overthrown, the Bishops driven from their palaces and from their sees, and the clergy who refused to abandon the use of the prayer-book in their services, were shut out of their churches and deprived of their incomes. A few complied with the terms of the government and received salaries from the State, and others who did not were not ungenerously treated. The Bishop of Raphoe received a pension of £100, afterwards increased to £120, "on account of his distressed condition and numerous family," even though he had fought against the Republic as long and strenuously as he could. After all other castles and places of strength in the North West had surrendered, Bishop Leslie, we are told, defended the Castle of Raphoe with great bravery for a length of time. In a diary kept by Captain Finch, it is recorded

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under the date of the 13th of August, 1649, "Raphoe Castle summoned, but rejected the summons," and under the 14th, "A party of our own horse and foot, and some of O'Neill's, marched with three pieces of ordnance to Raphoe Castle to beleagure it."

But though the Prelatical party had not now the power to persecute, still they did not love the Presbyterians any better than they did in former times. Adair says "the old Episcopal party, who, now when the power was out of their own hands to afflict the Presbytery, did insinuate on those who had power, as they did now with the sectaries, to incense them against the liberty the ministers had, and against their discipline and public solemnities at communions, etc.; besides, suggesting that these their meeting were dangerous to the State, and that they had therein consultations for strengthening their own faction." The peace and freedom now enjoyed by the Presbyterians lasted only for a short time; it came to an end when Charles II. ascended the throne. They had great hopes that when the King would come to his own again, all would be well with them, for had not the Presbyterians done more than any other section of his subjects to bring about this consummation, and had not Charles sworn the solemn League and Covenant in which he bound himself to uphold Presbytery and discountenance Popery and Prelacy? But as soon as this perfidious monarch, who, like his grandfather, James I., evidently considered Presbyterianism no religion for a gentleman, was seated on the throne, he forgot his fair words and solemn promises, and Prelacy was in a short time as powerful and intolerant as ever, and within a few months all the Presbyterian ministers in Ireland, sixty-one in number, were deposed from the ministry. Reid says, "Had the Bishops deprived them only of their *churches* and maintainence, and cut them off from *connection* with Episcopacy, they would never have

complained. But when they found themselves debarred from the exercise of their ministry, and forbidden, under heavy penalties, to preach, baptize, or publicly exhort their suffering people they felt their situation to be peculiarly distressing." Adair says: "The old enemies became bitter and triumphed, and kept a searching and severe eye over the outed ministers that they might get some advantage of them. For generally they did reside in some places of their parishes, being excluded not only from their maintenance, but from their houses that the parishes had built for ministers; except those houses that were built by themselves and were their own property. They did also, as the danger and difficulty of that time allowed, visit the people from house to house, and sometimes had small meetings of them by parcels in several places of the parish in the night-time." During these dark days "the brethren about the Laggan had more ease than those of Down and Antrim," but Robert Leslie, who now filled the see of Raphoe, did not permit them to enjoy that quiet long, for as Adair tells us, "envying that little ease and quiet of the ministers," he summoned four of them to his court, viz., Messrs. John Hart, of Monreagh, Thomas Drummond, of Ramelton, William Semple, of Letterkenny, and Adam White, of Fannet, and, without trial, excommunicated them and committed them to prison. "They were by the Bishop appointed for the common gaol in Lifford; but through the indulgence of the Sheriff, they were permitted to dwell together in a house in the town and all their friends had access to them." This was in the year 1664, and for six long, weary years these four ministers were kept in confinement, for no other offence than that of preaching the Gospel and otherwise ministering to their poor afflicted people. It was not till the month of October, 1670, that they were released, though their friends had tried every means they could devise to obtain their freedom: they petitioned the Lord Lieutenant and obtained

an order for their release, "but it was obstructed by the Bishop of Raphoe;" they procured a "habeas corpus" to have their business tried before the Court of King's Bench, but there they had no relief; they next removed their business into the Court of Chancery, but there they met with nothing but revilings from the Chancellor of this Court, who was the Archbishop of Dublin. Nothing could move Bishop Leslie to have compassion on these poor prisoners. So great was the power of a Bishop in those days, and such was the influence that he could wield, that he was able to override the decisions of the highest courts of the realm, and the cruel prelate, in this case, was filled with such rage and animosity against these imprisoned ministers that nothing could induce him to set them free. Lord Roberts, who was Lord Lieutenant for a short period, and who, like his namesake in the peerage of the present day, was a good and kind-hearted man, interceded with the Bishop in vain; and also Sir Arthur Forbes, a staunch friend of the Presbyterians, who was married to the Bishop's niece, interposed frequently on their behalf, but nothing could move him to have pity on these lowly Presbyters. Nothing short of the King's command was powerful enough to open their prison doors, once the Bishop had shut them. We are told that the King having been informed that these ministers had suffered for him during the Commonwealth, and were now suffering under him, he ordered their release. This unhappy prelate's end was, according to Adair's account, a melancholy one. He says, "Bishop Leslie, as he did inherit his father's persecuting spirit, so in these times he became a mere epicure, giving himself excessively to eating and drinking. Whereupon, being of a robust body, he became so fat and heavy that he could not go out alone, but as men supported his arms. He shortly afterwards, in 1672, died suddenly, *and with great horror of conscience.*" A tradition still *lingers in the neighbourhood* of Raphoe, which describes

the latter days of one of the Bishops of that place, as being like to this sad record of Bishop Leslie's last days.

We do not know how it fared with the other members of the Laggan Presbytery during the years that these four brethren were in bonds, but we may be sure it was not well. However, the heat of persecution had cooled so far that in 1668 they began to hold meetings for worship, and also meetings of Presbytery, more publicly than they had done since the Restoration; though the laws declaring such meetings illegal were still in force, but enlightened people were beginning to see the folly of harassing with fines and imprisonment people who were loyal and industrious, as the Scotch settlers were; and to grow ashamed of countenancing the like. Besides, such a tyrannical and senseless procedure was fast driving the country to desolation.

"The present legal churchmen became more and more distasteful to the people of all sorts. Men of estates found their tenants oppressed, impoverished, and rendered unable to pay their rents, through the covetousness and draining of the superior clergy by their rents and tithes, but especially by the official courts, which were a heavy plague upon the people; and through their cruelty and unreasonable exactions for Nonconformity—arbitrarily governing all—their lust, covetousness, and power, being their only rule, especially where they knew anything was to be had." The prelatical party also harrassed and annoyed the Presbyterians in other ways besides by fine and imprisonment. One way by which they tried to stamp out Presbyterianism was by preventing the ordination of ministers, and consequently an ordination had to be kept as quiet as possible and conducted in secret. We find the Laggan Presbytery at its meeting, held on the 18th of June, 1673, appointing Messrs. Hart and Rule "to go to the ordination of Archibald Hamilton in Armagh at William

Douglas his house in Benburb, on Tuesday next at night."

Another matter about which the Established Church tried to give annoyance to Presbyterians was the solemnisation of matrimony. Its dignitaries have attempted, more than once, to induce the State to declare all marriages that were not solemnised according to the ritual of the Establishment to be null and void. At this time marriages had to be gone about in the Laggan in a very unobtrusive sort of way, and with few outward signs of festivity or rejoicing. At the meeting of Presbytery held in November, 1673, the following resolution was agreed to—"Because of some difficulties about marriage the meeting thinks fit by a letter to the several meetings to seek to know their way and practice as to the manner of solemnising marriage, and doe that because the prelates here call marriage by Non-conformist ministers, fornication, and are persecuting some here upon that account, and they appoint Mr. Robert Rule, the Moderator, to write to the several meetings about this; and to show them that this M. inclines to solemnize marriage publickly, & to proclaim publickly amongst ourselves, besides publicke proclamation with the curates; only we would be at a uniform practice with our brethren in this matter." At the meeting held in the January following it is recorded—"By letters from some brethren of the meetings of Rout, Antrim & Tyrone, we are certified that almost all our brethren doe proclaim persons to be married publickly in their congregations and solemnize marriage in the face of their severall congregations publickly; the M. doe resolve to follow the practice of their brethren and conclude that they will proclaim persons to be married publickly in their congregations."

Even public baptism was not unattended with danger in those days. On one occasion when Mr. John Rowat was *in the act* of baptising a child in the congregation of *Drumragh (Omagh)* he had to flee, without finishing the

baptism, "being allarumed wt. ye furious approach of one Mr. Eakin coming to apprehend him." As for observing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that was a hazardous thing for any Presbyterian minister to venture upon, as he thereby, according to a law passed in 1665, rendered himself liable to a fine of one hundred pounds. In June, 1677, it is recorded, "Mr. Rot. Cambell having proposed to ye meeting whether or no as the case now stood with him, he might freely and safely set about the giving of the communion in the Parish of Raigh in as public a manner as before. The brethren thought it fitt that he should goe about it just as he had done before; nevertheless, if he thought it expedient to delay it till after harvest, they would consent to it, but would not at all, either enjoin or advise him to that."

Under the date of March, 1676, it is recorded that in one parish eight score were summoned before the Bishop's court, that many were excommunicated, others taken with writs, and that the people were exhausted with paying sums of money. We do not know what John Orr's offence was, but at the meeting of Presbytery held in August, 1675, "a letter from John Orr of Letterkenny is read, & the M. appoint to write to my Lord Mazarine that he interpose his moyen with the prelate of Rapho to make him surcease his further persecuting of the said John Orr." Mr. Orr was probably an elder in the congregation of Letterkenny, as a person of that name occasionally attended the meetings of Presbytery as representative elder from Letterkenny. The Prelate of Raphoe was the Rev. Ezekiel Hopkins, who had been a Non-conformist in England before he was elevated to the bench, and the Lord Massarene of that day was himself a Presbyterian and a warm friend to the Presbyterian cause.

In the year 1677, we find Mr. William Henry, minister of Donegal and Ballyshannon, in gaol in Dublin. Mr. Henry's imprisonment came about for ~~conduct that~~

most people would look upon as very inoffensive. At the meeting of the Laggan Presbytery held in November, 1676, "A petition from some well-affected Christians in Connaught is presented & read wherein they earnestly desire some Gospell supplies & visits by preaching; in answer unto which petition the Presbytery appoint Mr. Samuel Halliday and Mr. William Henry to visit that province as soon as they can with conveniency, & to continue amongst them for several Lord's days preaching the Gospell unto any willing people that are there." These brethren carried out this dangerous and laborious duty that was laid upon them, in the very depth of the winter. In the record of the meeting held at St. Johnston in the following January, it is stated, "Mr. Samuel Halliday & Mr. William Henry did visit Connaught according to appointment; the report of their diligence is appoven & comended, and Mr. William Henry being necessitated to return to Connaught in the Spring because of some trouble from the Prelate of Killaley, Mr. Samuel Halliday is appointed to go with him in his return to Connaught."

This Prelate with whom Mr. Henry got into trouble was the Right Rev. Thomas Otway, D.D., Bishop of Killala, a man who was evidently not mild in either word or deed. He seems to have maintained an establishment somewhat similar to that which the Marquis of Argyll kept in his Castle at Inverary, where Captain Dugald Dalgetty was so shocked at the sight of a huge block on which lay an axe smeared with recent blood, and a gibbet on which hung the bodies of "two Sassanagh bits o' bodies that," as a retainer of the Marquis' informed him, "wadna do something that M'Callum More bade them." In the Report of the Commissioners on Historical Manuscripts it is recorded, that on one occasion, when a captured Tory (robber) was brought into the Bishop's palace, he ordered *the prisoner* to be beheaded on the spot and without trial. *Whether the Bishop* was an advocate of the principles of

Jeddart justice, where it is said they first hang a man and afterwards try him, or not, we cannot tell, at any rate this misdemeanour of the Prelate of Killala was not regarded in these good old times as a very grave departure from the ways of uprightness on the part of one who was so high and mighty as a Bishop, and did not hinder his prospects in the Church, for a few years afterwards he was promoted to the Bishopric of Ossory. Bishop Otway did not behead Mr. Henry, but as the following extracts from the report which he sent to the Lord Lieutenant show, he did everything that he could to shut Mr. Henry's mouth, short of cutting off his head—"I am forced to be a petitioner to your Excellency," the Bishop writes, "for the few Protestants in these parts, that they may be saved from the Scotch Presbyters who ramble up and down to debauch the people in their religion and loyalty, . . . Two of these Geneva calves (Cleveland's bulls is too big a tittle for these sucking Presbyters) were lately sent stragling into these parts. One named Hendry of Gragstown, in the County of Donegall, the other called Halliday of Raphoe. . . . Whereupon I apprehended Hendry, and found about him many scandalous papers about Prelacy, the Common Prayer, and the ceremonies, . . . I most humbly beg your Excellencies' commands for prosecuting of Hendry, if your Excellence thinks it fitt, and to know whether I may not indite hime for sedition for his rambling preaching contrary to law and for his seditious papers."

This trouble with the Prelate of Killala led to Mr. Henry being kept a prisoner in Dublin for about a year and a half, without being brought to trial. At the meeting of Presbytery held in April, 1668, a letter from him was read, in which he asked the advice of the Presbytery about giving bonds to be of good behaviour, without the giving of which, he said, there was no probability of his relief. He hesitated to give the security required, lest the discharge of

his ordinary ministerial duties might be regarded as a breach of this bond. The Presbytery advised him to petition the judges again that his business might be brought to a trial, and also that he should petition the Lord Lieutenant that he might have his liberty upon such bonds as other ministers had given. Mr. Henry appears to have regained his liberty in the Autumn of 1678, as he was present at the meeting of Presbytery held in the October of that year.

At this time Mr. Liston, minister of Letterkenny, was a prisoner in Lifford. We do not know the exact crime imputed to Mr. Liston, but it was probably some trouble with the Prelate of Raphoe. At the meeting of Presbytery on the 14th of April, 1678, a letter from him was read, in which he asked the advice of the Presbytery as to whether, in order that he might have an early trial, he should remove himself to Dublin by a "habeas corpus," or continue where he was till the next assize. At the July meeting it was stated that Mr. Liston was desirous of giving bonds for good behaviour before the coming assize, whereupon, "the M. cclude yt. if he be clear to give it yei will not be agt. it, nor stumble at him for so doing; but yei cannot give him positive advice about it, all qch yei appoint Mr. Trail to show him." In August, in reply to Mr. Liston's request for further advice, three members were appointed to go to him the next day to find out "qther or not he be free in law to preach, qther he thinks it safe for him to preach w.hin the countrie or not, and qt shall be done wt. Letterkennie in case he be to goe out of the countrie, as also qt debts he is under at present, & yr anent to give an account to the next meeting." At next meeting it is reported, "as to Mr. Wm. Liston's business ye brethren appoynted went to him & inquired anent his worldlie condition, but found it expedient not to *proceed* any further with him." In the following October, *Mr. Hampton*, of Burt, who had been appointed to preach

in Letterkenny reported that he did not go there because Mr. Liston came home to Letterkenny. A special meeting was held in St. Johnston on the 24th of April, 1679, on account of "the Moderator and Mr. Rot. Rule having got letters from Mr. James Tailyior showing some difficulties in his case, & that he is now in restraint at Enniskilling & fined also in 5lb. upon pretence of his wanting a written certificate of his being an ordained minister." Persecution had once more grown very hot, and few ministers escaped trouble. In April, 1678, we find it recorded, "that this M. doe advise Mr. Samuel Halliday to continue preaching at the parish of Longfield, & if he shall be troubled yr yt he take advice of friends here & at Dublin how he carry in it." At this time we find the Laggan Presbytery writing to the other Presbyteries, "anent what they have done, or resolve to do anent the supplies of these our suffering brethren." And also, "Mr. Rot. Rule wrote and spake to the brethren of the Rout about their sending some supply to the suffering brethren of our M. & we yet wait for their further answer."

In the latter years of Charles II. the condition of the Presbyterians was deplorable in the extreme, and in 1681 matters came to a sad pitch in the Laggan. The Presbytery had appointed the 17th of February to be observed as a day of fasting and prayer, with the result that for doing so four of the ministers, viz., John Hart, of Monreagh, Robert Campbell, of Ray, Wm. Trail, of Ballindrait, and James Alexander, of Convoy, were summoned to appear before the magistrates at Raphoe on the 3rd of May following, and were afterwards taken to Dublin and closely examined there by the privy council about the appointing and keeping of this fast, and bound over to stand their trial at the next assizes in Lifford, where they were fined in £25 each, and ordered to enter into a bond not to offend in a like way again. This they refused to do, and were consequently kept in prison for upwards of

eight months, when on payment of costs they were liberated and the fines remitted. After this the persecution waxed so hot that no regular meetings of Presbytery were held for almost ten years, viz., from the 13th of July, 1681, till the 30th of December, 1690; the Meeting-Houses were closed and the public exercise of worship by Presbyterians interdicted, and the penalties of recusancy inflicted on both ministers and people with unwonted severity. Some of the ministers fled from the country, others remained in hiding, and amid much danger, ministered to their people as best they could, and also probably met together in secret, to comfort one another and consult regarding their sad condition, and consider what they should do for the best. In the Minutes of the Presbytery of Antrim it is recorded that in the year 1684 the few ministers that were in the Laggan intimated to the other Presbyteries their intention of removing to America, whither some of them had been already invited, "because of persecutions and general poverty abounding in those parts, and on account of their straits and little or no access to their ministry."

We get a glimpse into the nature of these abounding persecutions in an incident that is recorded regarding Mr. John Forward, of Newtowncunningham, ancestor of the Wicklow family. This gentleman was high sheriff for Donegal in 1686, and was reported to Government as a zealous Protestant and famous priest-catcher. As this description would not have tended to have gained him any favour with the powers that then were, who favoured Romanism, the Lord Lieutenant tried to take the sting out of it by stating, that "the occasion which draws this reflection on Mr. Forward is, because at a quarter sessions held at Raphoe, the 24th day of April, 1684, he, with other justices of the peace then upon the bench, was active in putting in execution that statute made in the Kingdom, *the second of Queen Elizabeth*, for the uniformity of the *common prayer*; which the said justices intended princi-

pally against the Non-conformist Protestants who swarm much more in that county than the Roman Catholics."

During the years that the Presbytery was unable to meet, the Maiden City had been again besieged, the battle of the Boyne fought and much havoc wrought throughout the whole country, of which the Laggan, on account of its proximity to Derry, had its full share. When the Presbytery resumed its sittings and the Presbyterians were beginning to get their heads once more above the water, William the Third was King; and though he was a great champion of civil and religious liberty, yet such was the power wielded in the Irish Parliament by the Bishops and their party, that the obnoxious laws that pressed so heavily on a large section of the King's most loyal subjects, remained unrepealed; and though they were not put in force so rigorously by the executive as they had been in King James's day, still all who refused to conform to the Established Church, were, in a large measure, treated as if they were outcasts and enemies. Presbyterians and Episcopalians, who had fought in the same ranks against their common foe, were not unmindful of this companionship in arms, and were disposed to live together in amity, and in maintaining the happy settlement of affairs that had been achieved. One man who did much to disturb this friendly feeling in the Laggan was Dr. William King, the new Bishop of Derry, always an implacable foe of the Presbyterians, and though he had himself tasted the bitterness of persecution, having been imprisoned for six months by King James, this did not lead him to deal more gently with those who differed from him. It was at this time that he wrote his inopportune and insulting pamphlet in which he denounced the doctrines and worship of the Presbyterian Church as idolatrous and unscriptural, and to which Mr. Craghead, now minister in Derry, so effectually replied. Professing to be anxious for the spiritual welfare of the Presbyterians in his diocese,

whom he looked upon as little better than idolaters, Dr. King tried by means of plausible arguments to win them over to the Establishment; but when they declined to walk into the Bishop's parlour, he was not above trying what sterner methods could do. In the Minutes of the meeting of Presbytery held in February, 1692, it is recorded—"This day Mr. William Crookes, Commissioner from Rout Presbytery, presented some grievances concerning the proceedings of ye Bishop of Derry in persecuting several people by excommunication and punishment." All the relief that the Presbytery could give was to instruct ministers to "send in their respective grievances to Mr. Craghead & that he send them to Mr. Robert Henry of Dublin to be by him represented to ye Government." The poor man referred to in the following entry in the Laggan Minutes under the date of October the 25th, 1692, was doubtless one of Bishop King's victims—"This meeting appoints each minister to bring to the next Presbytery, six shill. according to the appointment of the Synod, for Mr. John Galt of Coleraine, who layed it out, for a poor man, to defend him from ye official court."

Amongst the pamphleteers who came to the assistance of the Bishop of Derry in his endeavour to discredit and harass the men who had so recently taken such a prominent part in preserving the Kingdom from the thralldom of Popery, and to sow dissension among these, who, if left to themselves, were, at this time, desirous of sinking their differences and living together as brethren, was Dr. Tobias Pullen, formerly rector of Tullyaughnish (Ramelton), and now Bishop of Dromore. This Prelate had a project for dealing with these troublers of Israel, which, if he could have got it to work, would have banished Presbyterianism out of Ireland as completely as St. Patrick banished snakes. In a pamphlet that he wrote, in reply to one written by Mr. Boyse, a Presbyterian minister of Dublin, in which he *set forth* the claims of his co-religionists for legal

toleration, Dr. Pullen said :—" For the protection of the public peace and safety of the nation, 'tis advisable that we should deal with their preachers, at their first coming over, as 'tis usually done with those that come from a country infected with the plague ; they should be obliged to perform their quarantine, and undergo some religious tests and probations, before they be publickly allowed to preach in their conventicles." This same Bishop evidently had not a very exalted idea of the solemnity of the act of partaking of the Lord's Supper. An intolerant law, which was now being rigorously enforced, required every one who held any office of trust or emolument in the State to take the Communion in the Established Church at any time that he was ordered to do so. Rather than submit to this mean and impious requirement, fifteen members of the Corporation, who were elders in the Church in Derry, some of whom had taken part in the recent siege, and who frequently attended the meetings of the Laggan Presbytery, resigned their seats on the city council. Speaking of this odious law, Bishop Pullen asks, " Why should the State employ those who refuse to give so trivial and inconsiderable a mark of compliance with its orders ? "

On account of King William's frequent absence from England at the continental wars in which he was engaged, the administration of affairs at home was largely in the hands of his ministers, and they were not as well disposed towards the Presbyterians as the King was. At the Presbytery held on the 2nd of July, 1695, " it was agreed that a commission be sent forthwith to Flanders in order to supplicate the King for our legal liberty, and for his allowance and supplicate the government here for a redress of our particular grievances." Mr. Campbell, of Ray, was nominated as one of the three commissioners who were to go on this errand, and they were directed to go through Scotland and consult Secretary Johnston and Mr. William Carstairs, and crave their assistance and advice in managing

said affair. In the following October, "it was resolved to request the Committee to consider what means may be most proper in order to the bringing in a bill before the parliament for our religious liberty." It was but little of the light of religious liberty that the Laggan Presbyters saw in their day: the great protector of the Presbyterians, King William, died in March, 1701, and in the following year the Laggan Presbytery ceased to be.

CHAPTER IX.

FASTS.

A FUNCTION that occupied a more prominent place in the religious life of our forefathers than it does in ours, and one to which the Laggan Presbytery attached much importance, was the appointing and keeping of days of humiliation and thanksgiving, or, as they were called, fasts. The observance of these days not unfrequently involved the Presbytery in serious trouble; sometimes they suffered for keeping them, and sometimes because they refused to keep them. In these troublous times, when religious meetings were, in general, few and far between, and when there was no religious literature in circulation, these gatherings would help to comfort and encourage both ministers and people amid the many difficulties and drawbacks they had then to contend with, and to stir them up to greater zeal in maintaining and adhering to the principles of civil and religious liberty; they would be a public and visible acknowledgement of God's goodness and mercy, and, doubtless, would be found also to answer other like good ends.

We get a glimpse into the way in which these days were observed in the evidence given by Mr. Trail, of Ballindrait, when he was examined before the Privy Council in Dublin regarding the fast kept in February, 1681, and which turned out so disastrously for the Laggan Presbytery. When Mr. Trail was asked if he had preached to his congregation on the subject of this fast, and enjoined on them to abstain from their labours on that day, in replying to this question, he said that "fasts being no strange things

with us, the people know that abstinence from their ordinary labours doth belong to their keeping of a fast, and they commonly and generally abstain from their labours on fasting days." In replying to further questions put to him, Mr. Trail said, " We do not make the time holy when we keep a fast, but the day is our own when the fast is over, but it is not so on the Lord's Day for that is holy. The time is holy and the worship waits upon the time ; but in our fasts the time waits upon the worship." To this the Archbishop of Dublin, a member of the council, answered, " it is even so on the Lord's Day and it is all one, the time is no more holy on the Lord's Day than upon a fast day." The minister of Ballindrait did not agree with his Grace's view regarding the sanctity of the Sabbath, for he replied, " if this were a fit place for dispute, I would endeavour to prove the contrary."

The chief reason why the government objected to the appointment of these days by Presbyterians was because they regarded doing so as an encroachment on the prerogative of the State—that no one had any right to make such appointments but the Sovereign ; they also looked askance on all assemblages of Presbyterians, professing to believe that the only object of such gatherings could be to plot mischief, and stir up ill-feeling towards the powers that be. When Mr. Trail was asked if the Presbytery had enjoined this fast upon the people, he replied, No, but we tell them that we think it is the will of God that they should fast and pray, and set a day apart for the public and joint performance and exercise of this great duty, and we exhort them to it and they voluntarily come. When asked as to whether the Presbytery admitted that the King had the power of appointing fasts and enjoining them, he replied, " that the King has power to appoint fasts we do not deny, but acknowledge ; yet every man has power to appoint a fast to himself, and a master of a family to his family, and *so every society within itself.* I grant I see not how a

national fast can be kept well over a whole kingdom or nation, without the consent of the Supreme Magistrate." Whereupon, the Archbishop said, "but yours was a public fast, and not in a corner." Mr. Trail, looking at a great map of Ireland that was hanging at the back of the table, replied, "What is the Laggan but a small corner of the King's dominions."

The Presbytery of the Laggan got into trouble at a very early period in its history over this subject of fasts, and at a time and from a quarter from whence one would not have expected trouble to arise on this head, viz., during the reign of the Commonwealth. Their trouble at this time arose not from their appointing and keeping fasts, but for refusing to keep fasts appointed by the Republican government. Though Cromwell had treated the Presbyterians very generously in the matter of providing salaries for their ministers, yet they would not render to him an obedience which they did not regard him as justly entitled to, "especially as to these solemn appearances before God." In the year 1658, Mr. Hart, of Monreagh, was sent to Dublin along with Mr. Greg, a minister from the County Down, "to endeavour to allay the present fury of the governors, especially of Henry Cromwell and did plainly tell them that they could not in conscience join with them in these fasts and thanksgivings, and that it was no worldly consideration but conscience that kept them at that distance." We are told that after this came divers orders for keeping these days upon urgent occasions, which the brethren still waived. This, it is said, was the special difficulty that the brethren then met with from the ruling powers.

After the Restoration, the authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, looked with grave displeasure on the appointing of such days by Presbyterian Church courts, regarding them as thereby taking upon them an authority that they had no right to; accordingly we find the brethren of the

Laggan acting very cautiously in this matter. At first they only ventured to keep private fasts among themselves. At the first meeting of Presbytery of which we have any record it is stated, "The last Committee having overtured that the brethren of the severall meetings should appoint a private fast to be kept among themselves, three or four of them meeting in one place; the brethren appoint Masters John Heart, Samuel Halliday & Robert Craighead to meet for this at Master Craighead's house. Masters James Wallace, Robert Wilson, John Hamilton & John Rowat at what place themselves shall think fittest. Masters William Semple, Thos. Drummond, Adam White, Rot Campbell to meet at Letterkennie, on Wednesday, the fourth of September next ensuing for the same end."

Before venturing to keep a fast in a more public manner, the brethren thought it right to make enquiry as to the risk they would run in doing so, accordingly we find that at the meeting held in November, 1672, it is stated that "Master John Heart did write to Master Campble about the observing of public fasts, who did acquaint them that the brethren in other places did observe them without offence of authorities."

Being encouraged and emboldened by this report, the Presbytery in the following July, "appoints Thursday next, being August 7th, to be kept as a fast & day of public humiliation through the several congregations of its bounds, & that because—

I. Of the excessive and unseasonable rains which threaten the destruction of the fruits of the earth.

II. The small success of the Gospell in converting & reviving of souls in our severall congregations.

III. The abounding of profaneness; and petitions to be put up for (1) the preservation of the Protestant religion in the Reformed Churches, (2) the propagation and *prospering* of the Gospell in the world and (3) in order to *that, the calling* of the Jews and fulness of the Gentiles,

and the ruine of the Turk and Antichrist, the Pope of Rome, & particularly the purging of those kingdoms of Popery & superstition.

IV. To pray that the Lord would pour out much of His spirit upon the King's Majesty and upon inferior Magistrates."

The seasons of 1673-4 would appear to have been inclement ones in the Laggan, and threatened to be disastrous ones for the farmer. In addition to "the excessive and unseasonable rains that threatened the destruction of the fruits of the earth," referred to in August, 1673, in the September meeting of the next year it is enacted that "The M. doe resolve to keep a private fast with the Godly of their severall parishes, & that because of the great rains which threaten the corns, they think Thursday come 8 days the fittest day for it." The Lord of the harvest gave ear to the supplications of His people, and disappointed their fears, and the good people of the Laggan were not unthankful to God for His goodness, nor did they neglect to give public expression of their thankfulness, for at the meeting held on the 13th of October following, we find it was agreed to that "The Presbytery doe think it fit that the ministers & elders of the severall congregations in their bounds shall upon the ending of their harvest in their severall parishes appoint a Sabbath of solemn thanksgiving unto God for the good harvest he has granted them."

The weather and the crops were, on several occasions, "the humbling cause," as it is termed, of the fasts that were kept by the Laggan Presbyterians. Thus in August, 1680, we find "the meeting apt. this very next Lord's Day to be kept in our bounds as a publike fast day of humiliation, because of the threatening weather & season, & these that cannot get their congregations advertised so soon, are to keep it on the Lord's Day come 8 days, or on a week day if the people & eldership desire it." At the

next meeting, which was held on the 29th of September, it is recorded—"The fast was kept according to aptmt., & the Lord was pleased to send good weather immediately after, & a sweet seasonable harvest." Whilst a sweet and seasonable harvest would be a great blessing to the whole community, it would be so in a special degree to the Presbyterian portion of it: an old record tells us that the Scots who came to Ulster were "much given to ploughing, thinking that no profit could be made out of anything else," and their descendants in the Laggan in the present day are of the same way of thinking. They are great tillage farmers, and like their forefathers, their motto is, "Speed the plough." The English who settled in Ireland were not of so hardy a nature as the Scotch, and were more given to pasturage and the rearing of cattle, and it is said that the people would often have been in danger of starvation had it not been for the abundant crops of corn that the Scotch raised and reaped on Irish soil.

The members of the Laggan Presbytery could not justly be charged with setting up their own fasts in opposition to those appointed by the government, or of showing any disloyalty towards lawful authority, by slighting State appointed fasts, for in the Minutes of the meeting of Presbytery held in November, 1678, it is recorded, "The M. resolve to indct. a fast to-morrow fortnight, being Nov. 28th, throughout all the congregations of their bounds, but if the Magistrate shall appt. another day of the week, or any day preceeding this day apptd. by us, to be kept as a day of fast, that then we will keep the day apptd. by the Magistrate, and not Nov. 28th, & if the Magistrate shall after Nov. 28 appoint either fast or thanksgiving to be kept upon the account of the discovery of the Popish plot, then we will also observe that day apptd. by the Magistrate."

In 1680, religion was at a low ebb everywhere *throughout the Kingdom*. On account of the favour shown

to Romanism by Charles II. and his advisers, Protestantism—Episcopalian as well as Presbyterian—had fallen upon evil times, the highest positions in the State were filled by the vilest of men, and wickedness and profanity of every kind abounded to an alarming extent amongst all classes. The Laggan Presbytery, at all times watchful for the welfare of its people, took alarm at the condition of the country and the threatening aspect of affairs, and in November, 1680, it was resolved that “the M., considering the horrible profanity committed in severall congregations of our bounds, think it meet that a public solemn fast & day of humiliation be kept in these congregations, or some of them where the greatest outbreaking of profanity hath been, before the next mg. & that the congregations of Rapho & Letterkenny shall begin & keep this publike fast before the next mg. & that this profanity be mentioned as the proper cause of the publike fast; & the mg. will advise at their next dyet about prosecuting this fast in other congregations of our bounds.” In the following March, it was resolved to proceed with these congregational fasts, not all upon the same day, but separately, as soon as they can with conveniency, “and that because of the very bad season and stormy weather, & because of this profanity of the country here & hereabouts.” At the meeting next month it was stated that “the fast was generally observed by the severall brethren in their congregations, & it pleased the Lord immediately after to send more favourable & seasonable weather.”

But though the weather improved, the profanity, alas! waxed worse. At the meeting of Presbytery held in the following December, it is stated, “the mg. find that there is cause for a publike fast, & they desire to have the concurrence of the other mgs. therein; & in the meantime they resolve to do something privately in their severall congregations on Friday come 8 days.” Messrs. Rule and Trail were appointed to correspond with the ~~other~~

Presbyteries regarding this contemplated public fast, when it was found that "Rout & Tyrone have kept a publike fast already" and the Meetings of Tyrone and Down considered "that as matters now stand it is not fit to have our fast all in one day throughout the five meetings." Accordingly, the Laggan meeting appointed the 17th of February for its fast, and kept it at St. Johnston on that day. The reasons for keeping this function, drawn up by a brother—probably Mr. Hart—and approved by the Presbytery, and which testify to the loyalty of the Lagganeers of that day, both to the Gospel and to the State, were as follows:—

"Causes of Humiliation at a Publike Fast to be kept on February 17, 1680-1:—

I. Sins. (1) The Atheism & Blasphemies openly abound in many places of these nations, which are the cursed root of all the abominations & prophanness that overflows us.

(2) Horrid apostasy & perjury in slighting & breaking our solemn & personal engagements, covenants & vows to the Living God.

(3) Our desertion & backsliding from the faithfulness & zeal we formerly owned & professed for the blessed work of the Reformation.

(4) Unparalleled profanity; particularly the crying sins of horrid swearing, Sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, drunkenness, covetousness & oppression.

(5) Our stupidity under all the threatenings of wo & desolation imminent, & the lamentable security & unfruitfulness among the best, notwithstanding our plenty & purity of Gospell-ordinances.

II. Judgments. (1) The mystery of iniquity & hellish Popery prevailing, & the readiness of many through *their ignorance* & indifference in the matters of God, to *embrace it*.

(2) The great danger we are and have been in, of a bloody massacre by the Anti-Christian party.

(3) The dangerous & lamentable condition of the Protestants all over Europe, especially in Great Britain, France & Ireland.

III. Petitions. (1) We are humbly to beg that the Lord in His tender mercies would grant repentance & pardon to all ranks of people, for these abominations we stand guilty of.

(2) That the Lord would oppose & stop the inundation of Popery, idolatry & superstition that overflows these lands.

(3) That He would revive the work of Reformation, & the hearts of the people.

(4) That He would preserve the King's person & his people from bloody counsels, plots & conspiracies of Papists.

(5) That He would continue pure Gospell ordinances amongst us, and bless us with much fruit & success."

There would not appear to be anything in this document to cause alarm to any government that professed to be Protestant, nor would we suppose that the men who drew it up and signed it were rebels or enemies to the Church or to the State, but such was the bigotry and intolerance that prevailed in those days, that they were regarded and treated as disloyal men, and disturbers of the peace.

This fast was largely attended and appears to have attracted much attention at the time. Bishop Mant, in his history of the Irish Episcopal Church, says, "a solemn day of fasting and humiliation was soon afterwards kept at St. Johnstown in the County of Donegall, and barony of Raphoe, where were assembled sixteen Presbyterian ministers, and six or seven thousand persons from that barony and neighbouring counties of Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh." The Bishop goes on to tell us that "the Lord

Lieutenant knew by experience the mischief of such meetings, and took effectual care for preventing their continuance and evil consequences." One instance of his Excellency's effectual care that the Bishop tells us of was the arrest of a man named Nathaniel Johnson, who offered to make some discoveries on an assurance of pardon, and who before he could be removed to Dublin had to be kept some days in custody under a strong guard, for fear of being killed by the Presbyterians who were apprehensive of their secrets being revealed by him. If this be so, it is little wonder that the Bishop of Raphoe of this time described the Presbyterians of his diocese "as desperate and bloody as any the world had."

It is to be feared, however, that this Nathaniel—unlike his namesake of the Gospel—was not a man in whom there was no guile. He turned informer, and no doubt was an impostor from first to last. The Bishop, who evidently is not anxious to give a good report of the Presbyterians, goes on to tell us that "from this man the government received such intelligence as proved the means of keeping in awe and subjection the unquiet and turbulent spirit of those sectaries; and of giving a proper direction to the vigilance, which the Lord Lieutenant constantly employed, and which enabled him to silently and without alarm to intercept whatever designs were formed for raising disturbances in that quarter of the Kingdom." There was another instance of the effectual care the Lord Lieutenant took for preventing the continuance and evil consequences of such meetings, which the Bishop does not notice in his history, viz., the imprisonment for eight months of four members of the Laggan Presbytery.

But, notwithstanding that the issues of the Fast of February, 1681, were so disastrous, the Laggan Presbytery did not abandon the regular keeping of these functions. *After the Revolution*, when times had become more peace-

ful, and the Presbytery was able to resume its meetings, we find frequent references to the appointment and keeping of days of humiliation and thanksgiving. Thus, in 1692, "The meeting agrees that the last thursday of february be kept a day of public fast and prayer, begging God's blessing upon the seed time, and direction to the parliament now sitting." During part, if not during the whole, of the reign of William 3rd a quarterly fast would appear, from the following entry in the Laggan Minutes, to have been ordered by the government:—"July 2d, 1695, the quarterly fast is appointed to be observed according to the publike proclamation, viz., the 12th of this current." The last day of this kind kept by the Laggan Presbytery of which we have any record is under the date of the 17th of August, 1700, viz.: "The M. considering the abounding iniquity everywhere through the country which threatens the displeasure of God at this time, and that the harvest is now approaching thinks fitt to appoint a fast to be kept on Thursday come a fortnight in every congregation within their bounds."

CHAPTER X.

DISCIPLINE.

ANOTHER matter which, like the keeping of fasts, was more minutely and carefully attended to in the days of the Laggan Presbytery. than it is in the present day, was the exercise of discipline; that is, censuring and punishing persons guilty of immoralities, or of actions that tended to bring disgrace on the name of religion. In its earlier years the Laggan Presbytery, having itself no legal protection, and existing only on sufferance, did not find itself in a position to keep to that strict order of discipline which was a characteristic of the mother Church of Scotland. In Scotland the Church kept very rigid watch over the morals of its people, taking notice of, and inflicting censures and punishment for offences which are now, in general, lightly passed over; or, if taken notice of at all, it is the civil law that judges and punishes them, and which, if the Courts of the Church tried to deal with, their decisions would receive but little respect in many cases. We find Mr. Trail, when he was examined before the Privy Council in 1681, declining to give an opinion as to the King's power and the Church's power in the appointing of fasts, on the ground that he was a young man, and since he had entered the ministry the Presbyterian Church had not had the free exercise of discipline, and consequently he had little occasion to be well acquainted with these controversies.

However, from the very beginning of its existence, *the Presbytery*, as we would expect, used its influence

for the promoting of peace and morality amongst the people under its care, and for composing differences and disputes amongst the members of the various congregations. At the second meeting of which we have any official record, held on the 18th of September, 1672, it is reported that "John Cunningham of Manorcunningham, Thomas Sutherland, Thomas Meehan, and David Colhoun in the Parish of Raymochie appeared before the Meeting, who being informed of their scandalous differences, were exhorted to follow peace with one another, and to take the most Christian way for composing of their differences, and to advise with Masters William Semple and John Hamilton there anent." We are not told whether these Ray men took the good advice the Presbytery gave them or not; we would fain hope that they did, and shook hands like sensible men and lived ever after in peace and friendship.

At its meeting in the following November, the Presbytery tackled a more difficult and delicate case, and one which, it is to be feared, they were not able to bring to a satisfactory issue. In the Minutes of this meeting it is stated that "the brethren being informed by letters from several ministers in Scotland that Daniel Carmichell had deserted his wife & familie and desiring that he might be dealt with by them to returne; the brethren appoint Mr. Rot. Cambell (in whose parish the said Daniel is said to reside) to warne him to attend the next meeting, & show the reason of his deserting his wife." The said Daniel came to the next meeting, and with apparent show of obsequiousness and penitence, "desired private conference with some of the brethren & promised to write to Scotland for his wife & to cause bring her to him." But this promise was not kept, for at the meeting held in the following May it was requested that "any brother that can find Daniel Carmichell in his bounds is to call on him to appear before the meeting

to answer for himself anent these things we are informed concerning him by new letters from Scotland." Carmichell had in the meantime betaken himself to Fannet, which he probably looked upon as a more inaccessible region than Mr. Campbell's parish was; but Mr. Adam White found him in his bounds in Fannet, and desired him to come to the next meeting, but "he came not." Mr. Hart afterwards wrote to Scotland by direction of the Presbytery, but there is no evidence in the Minutes that would lead us to suppose that the said Daniel returned to the bosom of his wife and family. The Presbytery felt the wisdom of trying to have matters of dispute and scandals settled as quietly and privately as possible; accordingly we find that at a meeting held in October, 1674, the following judicious resolution was passed, viz.: "As to scandals in generall, the M. appoint every brother to do what he can privately for clearing them, before he bring them to be cognosed upon by the meeting."

The brethren of the Laggan Presbytery would appear to have been always careful to act towards their brethren of the other four Presbyteries that then existed, in an honourable and a brotherly spirit. We find them on one or two occasions complaining of what was termed "separate actings" on the part of some of these Presbyteries, such as "keeping of days of fast and thanksgiving upon public account without the knowledge and concurrence of the other meetings, or without so much as advertising the other meetings." On one occasion the Laggan wrote to the Presbytery of Down to the effect that "they would not go on in separate actings in things of common concernment." Accordingly, when the Laggan brethren felt the need of having their hands strengthened in the matter of maintaining discipline, they, in accordance with their principle of doing all things decently and in order, directed the two members who were appointed to *attend the meeting* of the General Committee held in

August, 1675, to bring forward the following resolution, viz.: "We being desirous to have the exercises of discipline restored in its full vigour, & not being willing to enter on it without the advice of our brethren doe desire that the comittee may represent this to the severall meetings, that each of them from their first sederunt sygnify unto this meeting their mind about this matter." The Presbytery also acted very cautiously amongst themselves before taking any decided steps in this rather ticklish matter. In the April of the following year it was stated: "About the restoring of the public exercise of discipline, after some consultation and debate, the M. think it fit that the brethren that are to meet at the comn. of Raigh shall consider and debate this further, and report their conclusions to the next M. and that every brother of the M. confer with his eldership about this matter, and also bring his thoughts of it in writing to the next meeting." And in the next month we find the following recommendation given: "Every brother shall set about the publicke exercise of discipline gradually, as he can win to it in his congregation with conveniency, & that there shall be a mutual forbearance of judging one another in this matter."

We do not read of many persons being cited to appear before the Presbytery for scandals or offences till after the Revolution. Before that time the position of the Presbytery was a very precarious one, and a refractory culprit by representing, or more probably misrepresenting, their action in summoning him to appear before them, might easily have landed the members of the Presbytery in very serious trouble. After the Revolution, and when William of Orange was on the throne, the Presbytery felt the ground more sure under its feet, and any who strayed from the paths of virtue were strictly called to account. Thus we find the Presbytery of Tyrone writing to the Laggan Presbytery

about "Margt. M'Naught a scandalous person in Raigh, her being warned to appear before the Mg. of Tyrone," and Mr. John Will and Mr. Wm. Trail appointed "to enquire for a scandalous person dwelling beside Ninian Cochrane." Occasionally a delinquent was slow in responding to the summons of Session or Presbytery. On February 28th, 1693, it was reported to the Presbytery that "Robert Drew did not attend the session of Ardstra according to appointment, his appointment is renewed." This man was very dilatory in coming to repentance, for it was not till the 30th of July, 1695, that the Session of Ardstraw reported that "Robert Drew had stood two Lord's days publickly in that congregation in order to the removall of the scandall he lys under, and that the session is satisfied with the ardcy of his repentance. The Mg. appoints the sd session to absolve him." In general, the people showed due respect to the authority of their Sessions and of the Presbytery in this matter; thus we find the Session of Taboyn reporting that "Patrick Henderson did appear before them according to appointment, and that he is obsequious; he is appointed to attend sd session till next meeting and they to proceed with him as is ordinary in such cases." All offenders did not submit to the authority of the Courts of the Church as submissively as Patrick Henderson did. We find the Session of Ray reporting to the Presbytery that they had taken much pains on John Lawrey, a disorderly and disobedient person in their congregation, who deserts public ordinances and reflects on his minister, and finding him still obstinate and contumacious, refers the case to the next meeting, to order what course shall be taken with him. At a subsequent meeting, Mr. Campbell, minister of Ray, is allowed, on his own desire, to take the confessions of *John Lawrey*, privately, for his misdemeanours, and is *ordered to rebuke him sharply for them.* But neither by

public nor by private admonition could this stiff-necked Ray man be brought to repentance, as we find that at the meeting of Presbytery held in August, 1700, Mr. Neil Gray was appointed to preach in Ray, and to declare John Lawrey publicly a scandalous, obstinate person, and none of our communion. Another scandalous, obstinate person, a member of Taboyn congregation, named Robert Smith, who admitted before the Presbytery that he was guilty of the sin of adultery, refused to stand up in the congregation and be publicly rebuked for his sin; a thing that was in those days required of all transgressors. In another similar case in Ballindrait, the Presbytery had declared it to be the duty of the person who admitted his guilt "voluntarily to rise up, without being called upon, in the congregation and acknowledge his guilt." Mr. Smith, rather than do so, left the Presbyterian Church. It is afterwards recorded by the Presbytery: "Robert Smith having deserted us the affair relating to him is layed aside." During all the years that have passed since the days of the Laggan Presbytery down to our own day, many have deserted us from causes similar to that which caused Robert Smith to turn his back on the Church of his fathers. It is a well-known fact that all along the history of our Church multitudes have, over this head, left our communion and joined other communions where matters of this kind were more lightly looked over. A guilty person before he was absolved, that is, restored to full standing as a member of the Church, had to acknowledge his sin, and give sincere evidence of repentance. In the case of John Semple, a merchant in Letterkenny, who grossly libelled his minister, and who was very tardy in coming to repentance, it is recorded: "Mr. John Semple who stands, *in retentis*, as under scandall, does this day voluntarily appeare and desires to be reconciled to the meeting. The meeting having laid home his guilt to him but finds his acknowledgement only general, their answer

is that they cannot be reconciled to him until he take such a way by a more particular acknowledgement as may remove the scandal.”

It is evident that the Laggan brethren were at all times in favour of keeping the membership of the Church pure, and doing all things in an orderly and a lawful way. We find the following entry in the Minutes in the year 1679: “Beotius Fitzgerald said he was admitted to the Lord’s supper by some of the brethren of Down and Antrim. This Meeting wonders that it should have been done before he had made a publicke renunciation of popery, and we desire to know the truth of this matter.” Congregations were also expected to give due respect to their ministers, and also to the Presbytery; thus in the year 1695, we find that the people of Convoy came under censure, principally on account of the large amount of arrears of stipend that they owed their minister. “The meeting is much dissatisfied with their negligence, and appoint Mr. Ferguson to signify to them that if they be not more obsequious to the meeting’s appointment, and more dutiful to their minister the meeting will be forced to remove Mr. Alexander to some other charge.”

Though houses of worship were far apart, and many members of every congregation would have a long Sabbath day’s journey in order to reach the house of God, still they were expected to attend with due regularity. At a visitation held in Ray, it was stated that those who did not attend public worship would be observed by the Session, and would be regarded as scandalous persons and debarred from sealing ordinances. In some cases, we of the present day would be inclined to say that the discipline of the Church was unduly strict; thus we find John Robinson, an elder in Urney, charged before the Presbytery with “having in his custody and using as his *own*, a straying sheep, and the sheep having been *challenged* he is pursued at law, and the matter left

unclear"; which obviously means that the case was dismissed for want of evidence, but when the Presbytery enquired into the matter they adjudged that Mr. Robinson was free from scandal.

The walk and conversation of ministers and the way in which they ordered their households was also closely looked after in these times of strictness. In the year 1700 the Synod passed a resolution very similar to the good counsel Polonius gave his son Laertes, when, laying his hand upon his son's head, he said :

“Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy ;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man.”

The Synod's enactment was that “there were some Ministers, their Wives, & Children are too gaudy & vain in their Apparel & some too sordid, therefore that it be recommended to the severall Presbyterys to reform these Faults in themselves & theirs, & study Decency & Gravity in their Apparel and Wiggs, avoiding powderings, vain cravats, Half-shirts, & the like.”

Considering the meagreness of the incomes of the ministers, one would expect that extravagance and undue hospitality would not have been among their besetting sins ; yet in some cases they were so much given to hospitality, that the Church Courts found it necessary to intervene in order to suppress the exuberance of this Scriptural qualification of a bishop, and it was enacted that “sumptuous Dinners like Feasts on Mundayes after Communiones, be forborn in Minister's houses and none entertain'd that Day but their Guests who lodged with them, & also that sumptuous Prodigal Dinners at ordinationes be forborn.”

APPENDIX.

WILLS.

The wills of the first ministers of Taboyn and Ray are interesting, being probably the oldest records in existence of the wills of Irish Presbyterian ministers.

ABSTRACTS OF WILLS PROVED IN IRISH PREROGATIVE COURT.

(1.) Pre Will made 25 May 1654. Proved 5 July 1654.

Master Robert Conynghame, Minister of Taboyn parish co. Donegal, bequeaths all his property of all kinds including his lands money lent on bond, my arrears due to me by the Parliament of England for my services in the Army, or any arrears due by them to my brother, I being his heir or Administrator to my wife Frances Conyngham for her life then for their children as any 3 of the overseers may appoint.

Wife sole Executrix.

Overseers wife's brothers John Conyngham and Hugh Conyngham and Testator's sister Jeane Conyngham and brother Hendry Conyngham.

Wife's brothers are John Conyngham of the Hill of Byth and Hugh Conyngham, Minister of Ray.

Signed at Corncammil 25 May 1654, R. Conynghame.

Witnesses, William Davidson, Jo. Fisher, Alex. Houstown.

Administration granted to widow and sole executrix,
Mrs. Frances Coningham at Londonderry 5 July 1654,
by the commissioners of the Revenue of Ulster.

Philip John Reeves, Wm. Squire,
Owen Wynne.

Dated 8 Feb 1670.

(2.) Pre Will made 27 Aug 1660. Proved 21 July
1661.

Hugh Cuningham, Minister of Raymochy,
Mentions—

This years Tythes as it shall arise to be due by the
Parishioners of Raymochy and Leck.

Arrears of my last years salary for which I have a
bond upon the farmer of the parish of Raymochy and
upon the farmer of the parish of Leck.

Arrears as Minister of my Lord of Glenkeen's Regi-
ment.

My lease of Balliachen of the lands of Iraty.

Mortgage on Iraty and the Ballioe Machymore
possessed by John Sutherland.

Interest in lands of Tilliererash and Drumconnelly
in Omagh barony, and in $\frac{1}{2}$ lands of Garnony and Relatti.
All his property some absolutely the rest for her life to his
wife Rebecca Cuningham al. Hamilton ass he cant per-
form her marriage settlement.

Nephew Hugh Cuningham a minor son of Mr.
Robert Cuningham late minister of Taboine.

Nephew William Cuningham son of Mrs. Frances
Cuningham.

Sister Frances Cuningham and her children.

Brother-in-law John Cuningham merchant sometime
of Glasgow and his children by Elizabeth Hamilton his
present wife.

Brother Henry Cuningham and his children.

Nephew John Craig and his children by Elizabeth Cuningham his wife, Nephew William Stewart of Ballylawn.

Guardians of said Hugh Cuningham.

Nephews Wm. Stewart & John Craig & brother Henry Cuningham.

Executors. John Cuningham of Ballighan.
William Hamilton of Priestfield in Scotland and of Benburb in Ireland.
Nephew John Craig brother Henry Cuningham and wife.

Debts. Owed to John Craig, John Morrison, John Patrickson.

£40 to Archibald Thompson of Calderath.

£9 to Stephen Meshelwise of Munimore.

Money owed by Archibald Hamilton of Ballygawley George Walker sometime minister of Cappie.

40s due by John Hamilton of Moyack.

39s due by John Will. 38s due by Mr. John Crookshank.

Money due by William Lennox of Woodheid and by my brother John Cuningham of Hill of Beight and by my brother-in-law John Cuningham.

Witnesses. Alexander Hebron John McKnight.

Probate granted 27 July 1661 of will of Hugh Cuningham of Irrartie co. Donegal & Raphoe diocese to his widow and executrix Rebecca Cuningham Mr. Hamilton John Cuningham esq & John Cuningham gent, 3 other Executors having renounced & she having been sworn under commission dated 1 June 1661, directed to John Lesly, Wm. Lennox Archibald Thompson & Robert Hamilton.

(3.) Pre Will made 9 Dec 1663. Proved 9 May 1666.

Frances Cuningham of Corncamon a.l. Rose Cuningham widow of Robert Coningham sometime clerk of Taghboyne to be buried in Taghboyne. Executors &

educate children. Property consists of Lands of Corn-camon & Drumlogher. Also "The Debenture lands in Fannet now in my possession and laid off to me in lien of my said husband's arrears" also a mortgage or claim on the lands of Sir David Connyngham in Scotland.

Executors my brothers John Conningham of the Hill of Beith in Scotland & Henry Conningham of the Rash in Ireland & my nephew William Stewart of Bellilane and my son in law John Craig of Londonderry and my sister in law Jane Connyngham and my son William Connyngham, and my friend John Burnsyde of Londonderry & John Fisher of Drumlogher any 3 to act and distribute the property among my children but giving a double portion to my eldest daughter Elizabeth Conyng-ham spouse to said John Craig. Executors to undertake the care and charge of my niece Margaret Cuninghame and pay her £30 sterling after the said Debenture lands have been received.

Men. There is £11 due to my Aunt Jane Cuningham al. Galbraith widow of Lieut. Colonel Galbraith deceased.

Witnesses Hugh Rankin, James Rankin, Alex. Houstoun.

Probate to William Cuningham son & executor, saving the rights of the other executors.

FRANCOIS MCKEMY.

As the name of Francis MacKemy has become celebrated as the father and founder of the English-speaking branch of the Presbyterian Church in America, the references to his student day that are found in the Minutes of the Laggan are of interest. Mr. MacKemy was probably a native of the parish of Killygarvan (Rathmullan), though he is in one place spoken of as from Ramelton, and was introduced to the Presbytery by Mr. Drummond, of Ramelton; but there was no minister in Rathmullan at that time, as we find him on two or three occasions presenting a petition from the inhabitants of Killygarvan, supplicating for a minister to be settled amongst them. It is not unlikely that his neighbours would avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by young MacKemy's visits to the Presbytery, to get him to bring their wishes before the reverend court. On two of the occasions on which he appeared as a student, petitions are presented by a person bearing the same name. On the 19th of May, 1680, "Mr. Francis MacKemy presents a petition from the people of Ramelton in prosecution of their former call to Mr. James Tailzior and promise £30 of yearly maintainance and are content that his only preaching place be at Ramullan, and say that the people of Clondevadock have consented to this"; and on the 7th of July, "Mr. Francis MacKemy presents a petition from Killygarvan in prosecution of their call to Mr. James Tailzior."

The references to Mr. MacKemy's appearances before the Presbytery as a student are as follows:—

"St. Johnston, January 28th, 1680. Mr. Francis MacKemy comes with a recommendation from Mr. Thomas Drummond to the Meeting. Mr. John Heart and Rot. Rule are aptd. to speak privately to him & enquire into his reading & progress in his studies."

On May 19th, 1680.—"The Mtg. appoint Mr. Rst.

Campbell & Wm. Liston to speak to Mr. Francis M'Kemy & Alexr. Marshall & to enquire about their studies, & to encourage them in these & to make report to the Meeting."

July 7th, 1680.—"Mr. Francis M'Kemy and Alexr. Marshall are recommended to the Brethren that are to be at Raigh comunion to speak to them about their studies & knowledge in the Body of Divinity; & also these brethren are to call them to an account for afterwards."

August 11th, 1680.—"Mr. John Heart and Rot. Campbell are aptd. to take some inspection of Mr. Alexander Marshall's studies, & Mr. Thomas Drummond & Wm. Liston to do the like to Mr. Francis M'Kemy."

September 29th, 1680.—"Mr. Wm. Liston reports that Mr. Francis MacKemy desires some more time & that he is diligent."

December 29th, 1680.—"Msrs. John Heart, Rot. Campbell & Wm. Liston are aptd. to meet together & to try & examine the progress of Mr. Alexander Marshall & Francis MacKemy in their studies, & if they finde them fit to be presented to the meeting for trials, that then they desire the young men to be at the next meeting."

March 9th, 1681.—"Upon the good report we got of Mr. Francis MacKemy & Mr. Alex. Marshall the Meeting think fit to put them upon trials in order to their being licentiated to preach, and the name 1 Tim. 1, 5 to Mr. Francis MacKemy & Titus 2, 11 to Mr. Alex. Marshall, as texts for their private Homolies, & Mr. Rot. Campbell is to advertise Mr. Alex. Marshall of this."

April 20th, 1681.—"Mr. Alex. Marshall upon Titus 2, 11 & 12 & Francis MacKemy upon 1 Tim. 1, 5 delivered their privat Homolies & were approven. The Mg. appoint Matth. 11, 28 to Mr. Francis MacKemy & Rom. 8, 6 to Mr. Alexander Marshall as texts for their private Homolies to the next Mg. & also comon-heads *de Antichristo*, to Mr. Francis MacKemy *de regimine ecclesiae contra Erastimos* to Mr. Alex. Marshall."

May 25th, 1681.—“Mr. Francis MacKemy delivered his privat Homily on Matth. 11, 28 & is approven. Both he & Mr. Alexr. Marshall are to give in their Thesis (which they now do) & at the next Mg. they are to have their comon head & sustain their disputes.”

July 13th, 1681.—“The meeting see it fit to lay aside their ordinary business, at this extraordinary meeting; only we will, if time permit, hear the exegeses of the two young men who are upon their trials.”

At this time persecution had waxed so hot that meetings of Presbytery were discontinued and none held for almost ten years; we consequently lose sight of MacKemy and his young companion Marshall. At this time many Ulster Presbyterians fled to America in order to escape the tyranny to which they were subjected at home. Amongst these emigrants was Francis M'Kemy. He settled in Eastern Virginia, and in 1706 was one of the most prominent members of the first Presbytery founded in America. What became of Alexander Marshall, who was in all probability a native of the Ray district, and whose name was so closely associated with M'Kemy's in their student days, we cannot tell.

During the time the Presbytery of the Laggan was in being the following congregations were under its care, and were ministered to by the men whose names are here given. The figures indicate the years over which their pastorates extended.

Taboyn (Monreagh).—Robert Cunningham, 1644-54; John Hart, 1655-1685; Neil Gray, 1689-1714; William Gray (Assistant), 1699-1721.

Ray.—Hugh Cunningham, 1647-61; Robert Campbell, 1671-1722.

Donoughmore.—Robert Craghead, 1658-1690; Joshua Fisher, 1694-1706.

Lifford (Ballindrait).—William Trail, 1672-82; John Rowatt, 168—94; James Pringle, 1695-99.

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Raphoe (Convoy).—John Crookshanks, ————1666;
Samuel Halliday, 1664-1677; Jas. Alexander, 1678-1704.

Burt.—William Hempton, 1673-88; Andrew Ferguson,
1690-1725.

Letterkenny.—William Semple, 1647-1674; William
Liston, 1677-95.

Ramelton.—Thomas Drummond, 1654-168—; Seth
Drummond, 1696-1740.

Omagh.—Samuel Halliday, 1664-88; James Maxwell,
1699-1750. John Rowatt was minister of Cappagh, in
the neighbourhood of Omagh, 1672-82.

Ardstra.—William Moorcroft, ————; Adam
White, 1672-92; Samuel Halliday, 1692-1724.

Urney.—James Wallace, 1654-74; David Brown,
1677-1688; William Holmes, 1696-1734.

Strabane.—William Keys, ————; Robert Wilson,
1659-89; William Holmes, 1692-1715.

Fannet.—Adam White, 1654-72.

Derry.—Robert Rule, 1672-88; Robert Craghead,
1690-1711.

Glendermott.—John Will, 1654-79; James Gordon,
———1692; John Harvey, 1696-1731.

Donaghadey.—John Hamilton, 1658-88; Thomas
Winsley, 1699-1736.

Enniskillen.—James Taylor, 1675-81; Robert Kelso,
———; John M'Guachin, 1695-1720.

Donegal and Ballyshannon.—Wm. Henry, 1674-81;
Thomas Craghead, 1698-1714.

Sligo.—Samuel Henry, 1695-1727.

Moywater (Killala).—James Pringle, 1700-1707.

RULING ELDERS AND COMMISSIONERS.

The following are the names of the men who attended the meetings of the Laggan Presbytery between the years 1672 and 1700, as ruling elders or as commissioners, together with the names of the congregations which they represented. They were doubtless the leading men in the districts in which they lived, and their names deserve to be held in remembrance on account of the part which they took in laying the foundations of Presbyterianism in the Laggan, and for the services which they so cheerfully rendered, without fee or reward, amid much persecution and many difficulties, in maintaining a preached gospel in troublous times. In all of these congregations there are still to be found families bearing these honoured names, and in many cases they are, no doubt, the descendants of these good men—a fact of which they have no reason to be ashamed, but good reason to be proud of.

TABOYN (now Monreagh).

Matthew Lindsay, John Aikine, Alex. Houston, Robert Cowan, Archibald Alexander, Robert Scott, Wm. Mackie, Wm. Bell, Robert M'Clellan, Richard Armstrong, David Harvey, Alex. Bettison, Richard Moor, John Kilgour, Wm. Inglis, John Gay, John Harvey, Henry Bole, David Paterson, George Brown, Walter Paterson, Robert Moor, James Moor, James Marshall, John M'Kean, John Graham.

RAY.

Captain John Cunningham, Robert Hamilton, Peter Lindsay, Wm. Morton, John Davidson, James Galloway, Andrew Warnock, Alexr. Hepburn, John Stuart, Alexr. Ewing, Alexr. Rogger, Robert Meehan, Wm. Moore, John King, John Kyle, John Greg, Wm. Mitchell, Henry Hamilton, Captain John Thompson, Hugh Moor, John Torrence, Wm. Dinning, David Colhoun, Wm. Crawford, Thomas Moore.

RAPHOE (now CONVOY.)

Joseph Henderson, Edward Hervies, William Mills, Michael Henderson, Daniel Henderson, Robert Anderson, Michael Pyper, Patrick Bell, Robert Dick, Alexander Stuart, William Ramsay, James Laird, James Cowden, Robert Gray, Robert Walker, John M'Clure, Arthur M'Clure, James Flemmine, Robert Gray, Richard M'Clure, John Sproul, Alex. M'Connell, Wm. Bene.

DONOUGHMORE.

Robert Wilson, David Craig, Archibald Millar, Thos. Brown, John Colhoun, John Parker, Thomas Gillespie, Alex. Fulton, Wm. Porter, John M'Henry, Alex. Rodgers, Wm. Ewing, Wm. Kelso, James Wallace, Robert Holmes, William Craig, James Waddell, John Burnsyde, William Gronie, John Gibb, James Mason, John Elliot, William Grey, John Fulton, Captain John Henderson.

LETTERKENNY.

Lieut. William Vaus, John Stevenson, Alex. Cunningham, John Boyd, Robert Porter, John Glen, John Colhoun, Alex. Saars, Alex. Ramsay, John M'Farson, John Or, Robert Hutcheson, Alex. Mitchell, John Black, Walter White, John Russell, John Wilson, John Bilsland, James Cunningham, Wm. Meehan, Walker Davy, James Pinience, Daniel Gaily, William Tacy, David Fairly, Wm. Gouge, Wm. Blackwood, Lieut. Alexander Weir, John Ramsay, Francis Colhoun.

LIFFORD (now Ballindrait.)

Robert Blair, Joseph Bampton, Patrick Wallace, John Wallace, Ninian Steel, Robert Stevenson, John Millar, Patrick Or, Robert Porter, James Hamilton, John Or, *John Boyd*, John Cunningham, Andrew Stilly, John Keis, *John M'Cre*, Jas. Somervail, Rogger Keis, John Caldwell,

Jas. Allen, John Broggan, Robert Young, John Crawford, John Laurie, James Stilly, Robert Denistone, Andrew Crawford, Captain Francis Wilson, Wm. Caldwell, John Russell, John Deniston, William Crag.

LONDONDERRY.

John Craig, John Campsie, William Rodger, James Fisher, William Regh, Robert Scott, James Wilson, Hugh Davy, Robert Harvey, Adam Murray, William Kyle, Henry Loge, Horace Kennedy, William Macky, Edward Brooks, John Harvey, James Lennox, William Smith, John Cowan, Alexander Lecky, William Davidson, Robert Pot, John Burnside, Hew Ardie, John Fisher, James Dennie, William Lennox, — Campsie, Frederick Cunningham, James Wallace, George Henderson, James Cunningham.

BURT.

William Cunningham, William Bryce, John Elder, Robert Bredin, James Rankin, Thomas Bratten, Patrick Bredin, James Donald, John Carswell, John Wark, Robert Johnston, John MacNite, Alex. Dine, James Roulstone, John M'Clure, Patrick Moore, John Barry, Walter Davy, Arthur Paterson, Francis Beggs, Joshua Anderson, James Porter, David Bredin, William Brittain, John Addamy, John Surgeone.

GLENDERMOTT.

Edward Irwin, Robert Nevin, Robert Nutt, Robert Hall, John Irwin, William Nevin, Marmaduke Cochran, John Henderson, Andrew Carson, Adam Murray, John Hall, John Cochran, James Murray, John Smith, Thomas Stevenson, Robert Robertson, Wm. Ross, Ninian Cochran, James Burn, Peter Cochran.

DONAGHADIE.

Robert Morton, Thomas Poak, Robert Cowan, Robert Simson, Lieut. John Lesley, Wm. Allen, John Armstrong,

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George Keneir, William Birnie, Matt. Rae, Will. Elliot, Robert Morton, Robert Sproul, James M'Cree, Andrew Carnwath, James Kerr, James Kilgour, Robert Speir, William Hutchison.

STRABANE.

Thomas Wilson, John Motherwell, James Ritchie, Alex. Ramsay, Robert Carson, Nathaniel Patterson, Patk. Caldwell, William Maxwell, John Brown, Hugh Shaw, James Wilson, Thomas Wray, John Graham, James Hamilton, William Love, Daniel Broadly, William Marshall, John Love.

URNEY.

Matthew Semple, John Wallace, Robert Gamble, John Stevenson, John Burnside, Robert Allison, William Paton, Wm. Stevenson, Robert Wyly, Michael Simson, John Swan, John Smith, William Waker, Wm. Rodger, David Shiels, John M'Arthur, Alex. Wylie, Joseph Lyon, Captain Robert Hamilton, John Monteith, Robert Pont, Robert Orr, John Hamilton, John Holmes, John Fulton, John Robinsone, H. Noble, James Brown, Samuel Simple, James Brock, Robert Wilson, Robert Smith, Joseph M'Crory, John Hemphill, Robert Riddell, Robert Neyley.

ARDSTRAW.

John Boyd, Robert Fleming, Thomas Carmichael, William Hay, William Keyes, John Crawford, William Lindsay, John Kelso, James Leich, William Selchridge, Andrew Brown, Alex. Taggart, James Wilson, Alex. Delap, Ensign Matthew Robertson, Francis Crawford, Robert Patrick, John Johnston, James Kenny, Thomas Stewart.

RAMELTON.

James Black, Patrick Macky, Gilbert Grier, William Modderell, Thomas Fulton, William Playfare, James Grier, John Patterson, Archibald Heron, Robert Algoe,

William Walker, Thomas Best, Robert Mortimer, William Dunbare, Alexander Starrat, Robert Pont, John Hewstoun, William Young, Thomas Moore.

KILLYGARVAN (Rathmullan.)

James Rankin, William Rankin, Lieut. Thomas Wallace, Andrew Boggs, Francis M'Kemy, Robert M'Kemy, Gabriel Andrew, John Boggs, John Hutchison.

FANNET.

Major Alexander Stewart, William Wallace, William Cuthbert, George Campbell, Matthew Lin, Geo. Henderson.

DONEGAL AND BALLYSHANNON.

Walter Stewart, John Hall, Gilbert Shankland, David Crawford, John Vance, John Bratton, Hugh Stevenson, Alexander Love, Robert Delap, William Noble, Robert Gordon, James Earle, John Menzies, James Turbet, George Bayly, Alexander M'Clurg, Lieut. Scot, James Crawford, Lieut. M'Ilwain.

INNISHOWEN (Donagh, Movice, Culfad, Red Castle).

Hugh Moor, John Wallace, John Parker, John M'Kaules, William Moore, John Baird, John Cadecorn, William Fulton, Da. M'Corkle, Robert Riddell, William M'Kee, Michael Johnston, John Campbell, Andrew M'Coule, William Lindsay, James Colhoun.

OMAGH (Drumra, Termon M'Gurk, Longfield, Cappagh, and Badoney).

George Pirrie, Alexander Crawford, John Carmichael, Thomas Carmichael, William Noble, Gawin Dudgeon, John Turner, Patrick Moore, John M'Collum, James Denny, Robert Henderson, Robert Calbreth, John M'Farlane, William Cratte, Francis Little, John M'Car.

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John Craig, Thomas Little, Alexander Moore, Robert M'Coslan, William Crawford, Hugh Moore, William Law, David Flemon, Andrew Mitchel, Andrew Brown, John Crawford, John M'Coi, William Mure, James Rodger, Alexander Hunter, John Brein, Robert Johnston, Da. Kennedy, Robert Finig, Robert Paul, John Reid, John Weir, Edward Couper, Robert Crawford, David Turner.

INNISKILLEN.

Matthew Semple, James Nesbit, Edward Darling, Robert Gordon, George Ratson, Thomas Greg, Andrew Pickins, James Trotter, Robert Howdoun, Robert Greg, Thomas Mercer, Thomas Armstrong, Richard Elliot, Archibald Elliot, Thomas Dunlope, William Reid, Robert Finlay, Da. M'Oustion, Alex. Arthur, James Lindsay, John M'Cree.

SLIGO.

Robert Ramsay, Robert Lindsay, Francis Early, William Finlay, John Eikin, Captain Lindsay, Ensign Alexander Greddin, John Todd.

STRANORLAR.

John Armstrong, John Ferguson, Archibald Harper, Andrew Stevenson.



