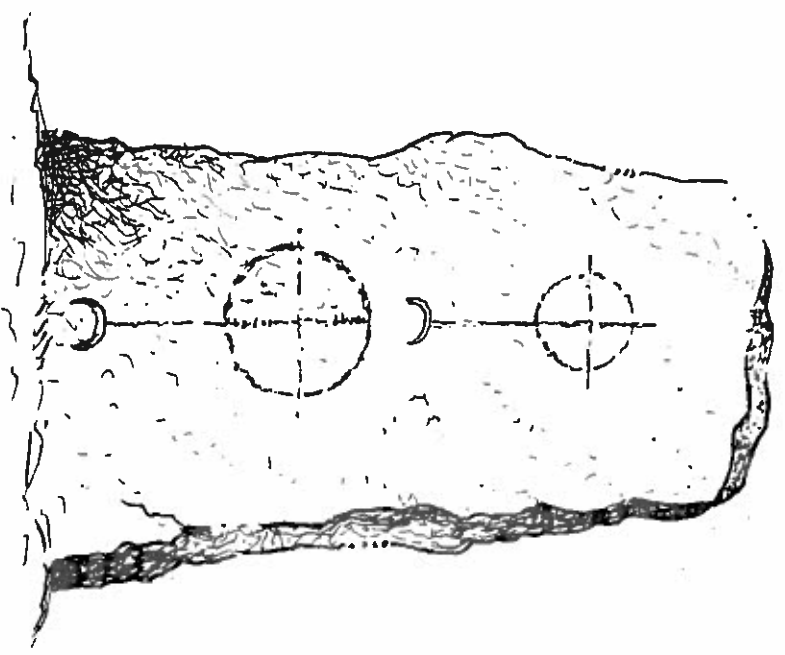


CUMANN SEANDÁLAÍOCHTA  
IS STAIRÉ CHARRAI

# JOURNAL

OF THE

KERRY ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



No. 12

1979

Published by the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society, 10, St. Peter's Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

provost and serjeants at mace, as above described, and the administration of justice for small debts, in the local court, are the only advantages conferred on Tralee by its corporation, as at present constituted. A feeling of dissatisfaction prevails among a large proportion of the inhabitants with its close and practically exclusive character. It is in fact entirely unconnected with the trading and commercial classes, and the great body of the community are debarred from all interest or participation in its proceedings.

We did not understand that the corporation was in any way obnoxious on grounds of religious difference; but the circumstance of all the individuals comprising it being of the Established Church, in a population of which the great majority is Roman Catholic, cannot be wholly left out of consideration. Such an alteration as would give the right of election of the burgesses and provost to at least an extensive class as that to which the choice of a Representative in Parliament has been confided by the Reform Bill, was stated to be strongly desired by a considerable majority of the inhabitants.

The funds vested in the corporation are obviously insufficient for the due remuneration of the municipal officers; and we have already stated the objections which occur to us to apply to the mode by which the emoluments of the provost are at present made up.

[Local Acts] 33. The Local Acts of Parliament relating to Tralee are 52 Geo. III, c. 138, "An Act for maintaining the Road leading from the City of Cork to the Town of Tralee, in the County of Kerry;" 9 Geo. IV, c. 118, (1830) "An Act for making and maintaining a Navigable Cut or Canal from a point at or near the Black Rock, in the Harbour of Tralee, in the County of Kerry, to Croompanrickard, near the Town of Tralee, in the said County, and for otherwise improving the Harbour of Tralee".

[Documents] 34. We send with this Report copies of the following Documents:

Copy of the Schedule of Tolls and Customs claimed by Sir Edward Denny, as lodged with the Clerk of the Peace of the County of Kerry, October 9th 1830.

Ditto of the Schedule of the same Tolls and Customs, lodged Nov. 1st 1830.

Ditto of the Schedule of Tolls and Customs claimed by the Corporation, lodged Nov. 1st 1830.

MAZIERE BRADY,

JOHN R. CORBALLIS.

Inquiry held at Tralee, October 16th and 17th 1833.

## BISHOP CORNELIUS EGAN'S DIOCESAN REPORTS TO ROME

REV. KIERAN O'SHEA

The two diocesan reports published here are of the same kind as those published in no. 10 (1977) of this journal. They were drawn up by Cornelius Egan, bishop of Kerry 1824-56.

Both reports are found in the archives of Propaganda Fide. The first is dated 1835, the second 1845.

Cornelius Egan was born 24 June 1780 at Knocknannon in the parish of Kilbonane.<sup>1</sup> He was the son of Daniel Egan and Joanna Mahony. He received his early education from his uncle Fr John Egan, P.P. Tralee; entered Maynooth in 1799 where he proved himself a highly intelligent student and distinguished himself in both moral and dogmatic theology. He was ordained 26 May 1804. Bishop Sughrue appointed him principal of the newly-established theological seminary in Killarney where Egan was also professor of theology. In 1811 at the exceptionally young age of thirty one, Egan was appointed parish priest of Tralee and vicar general of the diocese. As a pastor of souls he had few equals. He used to hear confessions every morning at six o'clock and continued for hours on end, a custom he maintained even after his appointment as bishop. At one stage Bishop Sughrue had to intervene and put a limit on him, of eight hours a day in the confessional.

When Bishop Sughrue petitioned Rome for a coadjutor it was only natural that Cornelius Egan should be considered for the position. He was appointed by the Pope in April 1824 and consecrated bishop in the parish church, Tralee on July 25. On the death of Dr Sughrue on September 29, Cornelius Egan became bishop of Kerry.

As bishop of Kerry he did not spare himself in the care of his people. He was a firm believer in the importance of education although he strongly opposed the schools established by the Kildare Place Society. But when the national school system was established he saw the advantages that it offered and erected numerous schools through the diocese. He urged parish priests to replace the thatched cabin-churches with more solid structures, while in Killarney itself he undertook the task of building a cathedral.<sup>2</sup>

In the early 1850s his health failing, Cornelius Egan petitioned

1. Fr Edward O.S.F., The episcopal succession to the bishopric of Ardfernt and Aghadoe (diocesan archives, Killarney) 24-36.

2. *Cork Examiner* 7 Nov. 1856; *ibid.*

Rome for a coadjutor. The Pope granted the request and in March 1854 appointed David Moriarty. He was not Egan's choice.<sup>3</sup>

For the next two years he was almost completely incapacitated, suffering greatly from gout. When the new cathedral was opened on 22 August 1855 he was unable to attend.<sup>4</sup>

Finally worn out by illness, Cornelius Egan died on 22 July 1856 and buried in St Mary's Cathedral.<sup>5</sup>

In editing these two reports the spelling and capitalisation of the originals have been followed in the Latin text. The translations are placed first with the original texts below. I am grateful to Fr Michael O'Flaherty for his help.

## I

[Archives of Propaganda Fide, *scrittura riferite nei congressi, Irlanda* 1835-8, vol. 26, ff 179-80].

Most Eminent and Most Rev. Lord:

Ten years have now passed since I have tried to render an account concerning my pastoral office — that is about all the matters relating to the state of my Church, to the discipline of Clergy and people, and to the welfare of the souls which have been committed to my care. I now set about rendering that same account.

In the Diocese of Kerry, excluding the Administrator of our mensal parish, there are forty Parish Priests, of whom practically all rule two, some three and a few four parishes. There are as many assistant priests as there are Parish Priests. In a very few parishes there is no assistant, in some there is one, in a few there are two, and in one (parish) there are three. Almost all the assistants live with the Parish Priest. Concerning the morals of the priests and their work in bringing about the salvation of souls, it is very pleasing to me to state that they are almost all worthy of praise. Concerning the laity also it can be said that many of them are pious and that they are all firmly attached to the Chair of Peter, in spite of the many gifts with which the heretics try to corrupt those who are very poor. The Catholics are in number about 270,000.

Even though almost all our priests are praiseworthy, I am

3. Rev. Kiernan O'Shea, David Moriarty (1814-77) *Kerry Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn.* 3 (1970) 95-7.

4. Rev. Kiernan O'Shea, David Moriarty (1814-77) *Kerry Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn.* 4 (1971) 118.

5. *Cork Examiner* 7 Nov. 1856.

compelled to confess to Your Eminence that four of them are now suspended, for various reasons, one Parish Priest and three Assistants. Of those mentioned above, two are, for the time being, placed, in order to do penance, under the rule of the Trappists in their Monastery, which was founded in this Diocese five years ago.<sup>6</sup> The other two are still unwilling, and so they cannot be compelled to live in a monastery.

Apart from the above-mentioned one, there are three other monasteries of women of the Presentation Order, founded for the education of very poor children, and I hope that after a short space of time two or three others will be founded for the same purpose.

In all Parishes, with a few exceptions, new churches have been built; there are many schools for the instruction of the young people of both sexes. There are, however, various parishes in which, because of the poverty of the people, they have not yet been built, even though, in the building of them, our Government supplies two thirds of the cost, and the parish [supplies] one third. On the part of the parish, the payment is voluntary, and the faith of the children is exposed to no danger, because neither Bibles nor books opposed to the faith can be introduced into the schools.

Our most Holy Father, under the date of 20 February 1831, granted to me, among other [faculties], the faculty of dispensing, either through myself, or through some other suitable ecclesiastical person to be specially deputed for this purpose, in the third and fourth degree of consanguinity and affinity, simple and mixed, even in a mixed marriage already contracted, provided only that the Catholic is able to renew the contract. This new contract is to be made without the blessing of the Parish Priest. Is it to be made without the words "I unite you in Matrimony", or without the nuptial blessing which is read in the Mass for the bridegroom and bride? I should like also to find out from Your Eminence whether the new contract is to be made in the presence of the Parish Priest, unless the non-Catholic party first promises that he (or she) will place no obstacle to prevent the offspring of both sexes, both those already born and those yet to be born, being brought up in the profession of the Catholic Faith. As I see it, hardly ever, and not even hardly ever, will it be possible to renew the contract, if this condition is pressed.

6. In December 1831, sixty-four Cistercian monks arrived at Rathmore after the suppression of their monastery at Mellerey in France. They remained in Rathmore until 1837. (*The History of Mount Mellerey Abbey* by a Cistercian Father (Cork n.d.) 7-27.

These are the matters about which I believed that an account should be rendered to the Sacred Congregation. I now beseech Your Eminence that the faculties of Formula Six be granted to me, as well as the faculty of dispensing in the degrees 2 and 2, and 2 and 3 of consanguinity and affinity, and also in perpetual simple vows of chastity and religion, and that you would deign to depute somebody who would make the visit ad limina Apostolorum on my behalf.

Meanwhile, I pray God to keep Your Eminence for a long time well and happy.

Your Eminence's most humble Servant,

Cornelius Egan,  
Bishop of Kerry.

At Killarney — 9 October, 1835.

Emmentissime Rme Dme

Decennium iam est elapsum ex quo rationem reddere conatus sum de meo pastorali officio de rebus scilicet omnibus and meae Ecclesiae statum, ad cleri populi disciplinam, ac animarum, quae meae fidei traditae sunt salutem pertinentibus. Eandem nunc reddere aggredior.

In Diacesi Keriensi, excluso nostrae parochiae mensalis Administratore, quadraginta sunt Parochi, quorum *ferè* omnes *duas*, alii *tres* et pauci quator [sic] regunt parochias. Tot sunt coadjutores quot parochi. In paucissimis Parochiis nullus est coadjutor, in aliis est unus, in paucis duo, et in unica tres sunt, coadjutores *ferè* omnes cum parochiis cohabitant. De sacerdotum moribus et labore in animarum salute procuranda, quod sint *ferè* omnes laude digni mihi dicere pergratum est; de laicis etiam dice [sic] potest quot multi sunt pii et omnes firmiter adhaerent Cathedrae Patri, non obstantibus variis muneribus quibus pauperimos corrumpere tentant Haeretici. Catholici sunt numero circiter 270,000. Licet *ferè* omnes laudabiles sint sacerdotes nostri, Eminentiae tuae fateri cogor quatuor ex his esse nunc propter varias causas, suspensos, unum parochum et tres coadjutores — ex supra dictis ad agendam parochiam duo pro tempore ponuntur sub regimine Trapistarum in eorum Monasterio quingue ab hinc annis in hac Diacesi fundato;<sup>6</sup> alii duo adhuc nolunt adeoque cogi non possunt in monasterio habitare.

Præter supra dictum, tria alia sunt monasteria faeminarum de ordine praesentationis, ad pauperimas juventutes erudiendas fundata; et spero quod post breve temporis Intervallum, duo aut tria alia ad eundem finem fuerint fundata.

In omnibus parochiis, paucis exceptis, novae sunt aedificatae Ecclesiae; plurimae etiam sunt scholae ad instruendam utriusque sexus juventutem. Variæ tamen sunt parochiae in quibus ob populi paupertatem adhuc non sunt aedificatae licet in his aedificandis duas Imperpetuum partes suppetiat noster Senatus et tertiam partem parochia. Ex parte parochiae tributum est voluntarium et nulli periculo exponitur juvenutis fides quia nec Bibliae nec libri fidei adversi in scholas introduci possunt.

Beatissimus noster pater sub die 20 Feb 1831 mihi concessit inter alias hanc facultatem dispensandi per me vel aliam idoneam personam Ecclesiasticam ad hoc specialiter deputandam in 3<sup>o</sup> et 4<sup>o</sup> gradu consanguinitatis et affinitatis simplicis et mixto, etiam in matrimonii mixtis iam contractis tantum ut pars catholica de novo contrahere valeat — hic novus contractus sine parochi benedictione est faciendus; anne faciendus est sine verbis 'Ego vos in matrim [onium] conjungo [?]' vel sine nuptialis benedictione quae legitur in missa pro sponso et sponsa. Videm etiam ab Eminentia tua cognoscere an faciendus sit novus est [sic] contractus coram parochio,

nisi pars acatholica prius promittat nullum se impedimentum illaturam quominus filii utriusque sexus tam nati, quam nascituri in catholicae fidei professione sint educandi. Vix ac me vix, ut mihi videtur, si haec urgeatur conditio unquam renovari potest contractus.

Haec sunt de quibus sacrae Congregationi rationem esse reddendam credidi. Nunc precor Eminentiam tuam ut mihi concedantur facultates formulae sexta sicut et facultas dispensandi in gradibus 2<sup>o</sup> et 2<sup>o</sup>, 2<sup>o</sup> et 3<sup>o</sup> consanguinitis et affinitis, nec non ab in votis perpetuis simplicibus castitatis et religionis et ut aliquem deputare digneris qui pro me visitet limina Apostolorum.

Interim precor Duem ut Eminentiam tuam diu sospitem ac felicem servet.

Eminentiae tuae humilimus servus

+ Cornelius Egan,  
Epus Keriensis

Killarney 9th Octob 1835.

## II

[Archives of Propaganda Fide, scripture riferite nei congressi, Irlanda 1843-6, vol. 28 ff 563-4.]

Most Eminent Prince:

As many years have now passed by since I gave an account to Your Eminence of the state of this Diocese, I consider that it will be pleasing to you if I write something now on that subject, which may show in what state ecclesiastical affairs in this Episcopate of Kerry now are. I do this all the more readily in order that, through your Eminence, the Vicar of Christ on earth may be able to learn the condition of this remote Diocese, and in order that, given this opportunity, I may be able to show my obedience and veneration towards the Holy See.

This Diocese, therefore, which belongs to the Province of Cashel, embraces about three hundred thousand Catholics, who are served by forty-three parish priests and forty-four other priests, who are regarded as vice-parochii or assistants to the parish priests. The manner of life of all of these is, in general, praiseworthy, and their zeal for souls is to be commended. There are, in the Diocese, one hundred churches or chapels, of which the majority have been built within the last few years by the voluntary subscriptions of the people. In the town of Killarney, three years ago, I laid the foundation of a cathedral church of great size, which, so I hope, will be brought to completion soon, and which will stand as a lasting monument to the faith and religion of the people.<sup>7</sup>

In all the parishes of this Diocese are to be found the so-called

7. See 4 above.

National Schools, and in some parishes four or six, in which the elements of Faith and literature are taught.

There are seven convents of those nuns who are called Presentation nuns,<sup>8</sup> in which about three thousand poor girls are very well taught in everything that relates to Faith and good morals. There is also a house of the Sisters of Mercy, whose task is to visit the sick, and to educate poor girls. Some lay-men, who are called Presentation Brothers and are bound by simple vows, have two houses, and work hard at educating the catholic youth.

In the midst of these happy conditions, it is not without sorrow of spirit that I must tell of a certain Society, which is called the Irish Society and was founded a few years ago under the auspices of a very powerful man, the Knight of Ventry, for the purpose of uprooting the Catholic Faith in this area.<sup>9</sup> It was introduced into this Diocese, and, by spending a great deal of money, which was collected by the Protestants of England, Scotland, and of certain parts of Ireland, strives greatly to entice the poor Catholics away from their ancestral faith. But since the misery is very great of those inhabitants who live near the Atlantic Ocean in the more remote parts of this Diocese, it has happened that not a few, caught by the largesse of this heretical Society, have deserted to the Protestants and have denied the Catholic Faith. But these most wretched people, when they have been relieved of their want, or when they feel themselves near to death, for the most part return to the Church. But it is greatly to be feared that their children will either be brought up without any religion or will be tainted with the errors of the heretics. As far as I am concerned I have laboured as hard as I can, and I shall continue to labour, that the Catholics may be delivered from this plague, but in this region we can hardly resist on equal terms the riches and the wiles of the heretics, and the advice of the Holy See in these matters would be of the greatest value.

These are the matters, most Eminent Prince, which seemed to be worthy of mention in relation to the condition of this Diocese. There remains now that I present to the Supreme Pontiff, through the

8. Kilarney 1793; Tralee, 1809; Dingle, 1829; Milltown, 1838; Millstreet, 1840; Cahirciveen, 1840; Listowel 1844. (T. J. Barrington, *Discovering Kerry* (Dublin 1976) 115.

9. See H. J. Monck, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society* (2nd ed. Dublin 1846); see also P. de Brian An tAinair Brastie, *Kerry, Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. 2* (1969) 41 ff.

agency of your Eminence, a document of request, and that I ask that I be absolved from the duty which falls on me this year of making my ad limina visit and that I be able to carry out this task through a procurator, since I cannot, without grave inconvenience, be absent from this Diocese.

Meantime, wishing your Eminence all the best,

Most humble and devoted,

+Cornelius Egan, Bishop of Kerry,

15 November 1845.

Kilarney, on the Feast of the Guardian Angels, 1845.

Eminentissime princeps,

Cum plures jam elapsi sint anni ex quo Eminentiae vestrae statum hujus Dioceseos exposuerim, gratum tibi futurum arbitror, si quaedam ea de re nunc scribam, quae ostendant quae ratione res ecclesiarum in hoc Kerriensi Episcopatu se habeant. Hoc autem eo libentius praesto ut per Eminentiam vestram Christi in terris vicarius statum hujus remota Ecclesiae cognoscere possit, utque haec oblata occasione obsequium meum et venerationem erga sanctam sedem exhibere valeam.

Haec haec diocesis quae ad provinciam Cashiliensem spectat, ter centum circiter millia Catholicorum complectitur, quibus inserviunt quadragenta tres parochi et quadraginta quatuor alii sacerdotales qui vice-parochi, vel parochiorum adiutores habentur. Horum omnium ratio vivendi generatim laudanda est, et zelus animarum commendandus. In Diocesi centum Ecclesiae seu capellae sunt, quarum pleraequae infra paucos annos voluntariis populi collectis aedificatae sunt. In oppido Kilarinae tribus ab hinc annis fundamentum ecclesiae cathedralis magnae molis posui, quae, ut spero, brevi ad complementum perducetur et perenne fidei et religionis populi monumentum extabit.

In singulis paraeccis hujus dioceseos scholae, quae nationales vocantur, inveniuntur et in aliquibus paraeccis quatuor vel sex, in quibus fidei et litterarum elementa traduntur.

Septem sunt monasteria monialium quae Praesentationis vocantur in quibus puellae pauperes ter mille circiter in iis omnibus quae ad fidem et bonos mores spectant optime erudiuntur. Exiat etiam domus sororum misericordiae quarum munus est aegrotos invisere nec non puellas pauperes erudire. Laici quidam qui fratres praesentationis vocantur et votis simplicibus obligantur, duas domas habent, et plurimum in juventute catholica erudienda laborant.

Inter haec fausta non sine animi dolore referre oportet societatem quamdam elapsi hinc annis quae *Societas Hybernica* nuncupatur, ad convellendam Catholicam fidem in hac regione fuisse constitutam et sub auspiciis *proparentis eiusdem viri, comitis de Ventry*, in hac diocesi introductam et magna profusa pecuniae vi, quae collecta est a protestantibus Angliae, Scotiae et quarundam Hiberniae partium, plurimum laborasse ut pauperes Catholicos a fide avita seducant — cum autem maxima sit miseria incolarum qui prope mare atlanticum degunt in remotioribus flujus dioceseos partibus, factum est ut non pauci largitionibus haereticae istius societatis capiti ad protestantes defecerint, et fidem Catholicam denegaverint — miserrimi tamen isti homines cum ab inopina sublevati fuerint, vel morti se vicinos esse sentiunt, plerumque ad Ecclesiam revertuntur sed maxime timendum ne eorum filii, vel absque ulla religione educentur, vel haereticorum erroribus imbuantur. Quod ad me spectat pro viribus laboravi, et laborabo ut ab