

The Parish of Aharney and the Marum Family

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THE name Aharney comes from the Irish “Ath Charna” meaning “The Ford of the Heap.” Canon Carrigan explains the name as follows: The men of Upper Ossory went on a plundering expedition against the men of Central Ossory. On their way back with a great herd of cattle they were overtaken by the men whom they had plundered and a fierce battle ensued at Knockroo Hill close to Aharney church. Here they were defeated and lost not only their prey but many of their party as well. During the heat of the conflict the wounded on both sides parched with thirst through loss of blood struggled as best they could to reach the ford in the hollow where Bouladuff and the Rath Field meet each other at the bounds of Tinnaslatty. But having once laid down to drink at the stream they had not strength to rise again, thus it happened that several of them were drowned there and their bodies lay in a heap at the ford.

The parish of Aharney was formerly known as the parish of Aghteyr and the parish church was Barony Church.

After the Reformation it was transferred to Aharney. South east of the church is St. Brigid’s Well, a holy well which was the scene of many pilgrimages and patterns down to the beginning of the 19th Century.

In the field to the west of Aharney House bordering on Ballykealy was a rath called Rathpatrick and in former times a monument bush called “Sceacharawsh” translated as “The Bush of the Race or Flight.” Whenever a funeral passed this spot it paused while the De Profundus was said and “such,” says Carrigan “has been the custom as far as memory or tradition can go back.” The custom is no longer observed nor can the bush even be identified.

As a reason for this custom he suggests the following incident. Thomas, son of Pierce Ruadh, Earl of Ormond, was killed in 1532 in his flight from a conference held in Ballykealy between the Butlers and Fitzpatricks. A document preserved among the Ormonde Manuscripts records — “His enemies fell upon Thomas Butler being alone and threw him from his horse and most cruelly murdered him.”

Aharney was Fitzpatrick territory. John McTeige Fitzpatrick forfeited the townland in 1653. The Fitzpatricks intermarried with a Catholic family, the Clarkes who lived in Aharney in the 18th century.

Thomas Clarke of Aharney joined the Irish Brigade in the service of France, became a Colonel but died comparatively young. His son, Henry James Clarke became famous as Duc de Feltre, was Minister of War to Napoleon I, a Marshal of France, Governor of Berlin, etc. He was a noted art collector and on his death bequeathed his collection to the Municipal Gallery in Nantes where the family had settled. The street in which the Gallery stands was called after him in recognition of this gift. He died in 1818 having been exiled to Rouen on the fall of Napoleon.

The Marums arrived here about 1690 according to Carrigan from the banks of the Shannon. Another authority says they were one of the seven septs of Leix who were banished to Tarbert in Kerry in 1608 by the English. They returned however in 1653. The septs were the O'Moores, the O'Deevys, O'Dorans, O'Dowlings, O'Lalors, O'Kelly's, McEvoy's.

Wherever they came from the Marums settled down beside Barony Church where most of the early members are buried. The earliest tomb is of Richard Marum 1716—1803, probably either the son or grandson of the original settlers. He had seven sons namely :

- 1—Edmund of Seskin, 1746—1834. He built Aharney House in 1807. The front part was added by his grandson, Edward P. Mulhallen Marum in the latter half of the century. He is buried in Barony Church.
- 2—William of Galmoy.
- 3—Richard of Newpark. A Fennelly tombstone in St. Patrick's graveyard Kilkenny was erected by Richard Marum of Newpark. The inscription records that Brigid Fennelly had married Richard Marum of Newpark. She died June 1810.
- 4—Rev. Pierce Marum died when P.P. of Freshford in 1824. Buried in Freshford graveyard but no monument marks his grave.
- 5—Daniel of Kilkenny City, a woollen merchant died 1811.
- 6—John of Rathpatrick and Mount Stopford, who was murdered under tragic circumstances in 1824. Buried in Galmoy churchyard.
- 7—Kieran who became Bishop of Ossory and died in 1827. He is buried in St. Mary's Cathedral. His remains were transferred from the old Cathedral to the Episcopal Vault in the new Cathedral in 1857.

The family were obviously prosperous. The Aharney farm at present comprises 400 statute acres of good land but may not have been so large when Edmund built his house. His son, Richard is described on his tomb as Richard Carroll Marum, suggestive that his mother was a Carroll, possibly one of the Carrolls of Parksgrove nearby who were connected with the



Carrolls of Leap Castle. Richard married Elizabeth Mulhallen, daughter of John Purcell Mulhallen of Malcolmvile, Co. Carlow, and their son also retaining his mother's name became Edward Purcell Mulhallen Marum. The Purcell name came from the Loughmore family with whom they were connected.

Edward P. Mulhallen Marum is probably the most notable member of the family, but before dealing with his political activities I will mention something about the other members of this rather remarkable family.

Daniel, the Woollen Merchant does not appear to have left many descendants and the name appears to have died out in the City. Pierce, who became a priest and Kyran the bishop were both educated at Burrell's Hall and Salamanca University. Pierce is described as a quiet unassuming man entirely taken up with his clerical duties. He was P.P. of Freshford when he died on March 27th, 1824, eleven days after the murder of his brother, John at Knockrinshaw.

It was fortunate for Kyran Marum that his brother was also at Salamanca for he was sent there at the very early age of 13 years. He was born in 1773, 27 years after his eldest brother and from his earliest days appeared to have a great love of the classics, so much so that he was known to his classmates as "Little Horace." He was ordained in 1797 and then returned to his native diocese where he was appointed Professor of Theology at the Catholic Seminary and curate of St. John's, Kilkenny. He was always interested in education and in promoting educational facilities for Catholics for which reason he was entrusted by the Bishop with the task of organising the Maudlin Street Seminary and became its first President. He was also President of the Birchfield College which was placed under the patronage of St. Kieran and was now for the first time called St. Kieran's College. On the death of Dr. Lanigan in 1812 he was the unanimous choice of the clergy for their Bishop, but owing to the imprisonment of the Pope by Napoleon the appointment could not be made. It was not until October 26th, 1814 that the Papal Bull finally arrived and he was consecrated Bishop on St. Kieran's Day, 1815. He died on December 22nd, 1827 and is buried in the Episcopal Vault of St. Mary's Cathedral.

John Marum was an extensive landowner in the Galmoy area. A dispute arose between him and some of the neighbours apparently over a new road Marum proposed making as a short cut to his house. The details of the dispute are difficult to ascertain now, but apparently tempers became very hot. On the evening of the 16th March, 1824 when he was riding home from a new house which he was building in Rathpatrick a shot was fired at him from behind a hedge, he was knocked from his horse and stabbed to death. The horse carrying his young son who was with him took fright and galloped away thus

saving the boy. The gun from which the shot was fired burst and a piece was found on the scene of the murder by the police. This fitted a gun found in a house nearby by the police and was used as evidence in the trial which followed.

Six men were arrested and their trial caused a sensation in Kilkenny at a time of great unrest when murders were almost an everyday occurrence. The reason for this may have been the prominence of the family and the fact that the murdered man was a brother of the Bishop of Ossory. There appeared also to have been some doubt as to the identity of those involved. All produced alibis but only one was accepted. The jury could not agree at first but having been sent back again eventually produced a verdict of guilty for the remaining five. This produced shrieks and lamentations in the court and on the streets and police were used to keep the crowds back while the prisoners were being brought up James's Street to the gaol. They were brought in separate cars to the place where the murder had taken place and there all five were hanged. This spectacular and heart-rending execution of justice was customary at the time when murders followed by multiple hangings were a frequent occurrence.

Edward P. Mulhally Marum was born in 1822. He was educated at Carlow College and London University where he took degrees of M.A. and LL.B., and was called to the Bar at Kings Inns in 1846. He became a J.P. and a Magistrate for Kilkenny and was elected Nationalist M.P. for Kilkenny County from 1880 to 1885 and for the Northern Division in 1886. He continued to represent the county until the date of his death in 1890.

With Fathers Tom O'Shea and Matt O'Keeffe, known as the "Callan Curates" he was responsible for the organisation of the Tenant Right movement. That the stand he took required considerable courage in those days is evident. To give some idea of what it meant, I will quote an extract from his obituary notice which appeared in "The Kilkenny Journal," September 24th, 1890 :

"The country has undergone such a revolution within the last ten years that it is difficult to go back and recall a true picture of Ireland as it stood when the Tenant Right Movement was initiated in Kilkenny. The promoters of the movement were at first treated with contempt and contumely and subsequently with the most bitter opposition and unrelenting animosity. Landlordism was then in the zenith of its power, it was riding roughshod over the tenantry.

"It was at this juncture that a few men entered the arena and set themselves the task, Herculean as it was, of waging war against this goading despotism. One of the foremost of the most active and persevering was the late lamented member for North Kilkenny.

"In conjunction with the late Mr. William Kenealy, he organised the county from north to south and on public platforms and in the columns of 'The Kilkenny Journal' was unceasing in his advocacy of the tenants

claims. The power of the Kilkenny Tenants' Defence Association soon made itself felt. It became a factor in Irish politics which it was impossible to ignore and as years went on its power increased until finally it became dissolved in the wider movement of the Irish Land League."

A story is told by Mr. James Delaney, which illustrates his fiery and courageous spirit. When the railway was first brought to Kilkenny, a luncheon was held on the platform to celebrate the occasion. When the time came to drink the toasts and the health of the Queen was proposed, Marum refused to honour the toast and crashed his glass on the table in protest. This gesture was applauded by the more patriotic minded among the onlookers, but was not, we may be sure, welcomed by the dignitaries present or the officials in charge of the occasion. Mr. Delaney's grandmother, who was present with her nurse, witnessed Mr. Marum's defiant gesture.

His personal popularity was now very great with the people, as may be judged by the fact that at the 1885 election he received 4,084 votes to 147 for his opponent — a victory which was loudly and enthusiastically acclaimed in the Nationalist Press.

His death came suddenly and dramatically. He had gone to Listowel to speak at a meeting held to encourage co-operative farming methods among local farmers. Also to speak at the meeting was Horace Plunkett, who was later to achieve fame as the organiser of the co-operative movement. The meeting was to take place on a Sunday evening. While at Mass that morning in the local church Mr. Marum was seen to fall forward in his seat. On being taken from the church he was found to be dead. The meeting was abandoned and the remains were brought back to Aharney House. All business ceased in Ballyragget, the whole neighbourhood turning out to pay their respects when the funeral arrived. The principal landowners were present at Ballyragget station and the tenants from the Marum estate lined the route to Aharney House.

He was buried next day at Aharney churchyard, adjacent to the house. A memorial fund was started by Bishop Brownrigg, apparently with the intention of giving financial aid to his family, who had suffered through his political activities. The election expenses of candidates for parliament were to a large extent borne by the candidates up to that time. Before the 1885 election, Mr. Marum had stated that he was unable to meet the expenses of the election and offered to resign. The Party Committee however, refused to accept his resignation and declared that in future parliamentary expenses should be borne by the county.

Bishop Brownrigg opened the memorial fund with a donation of £5. The next contribution came from Mr. M. M. Murphy, Solicitor, Kilkenny, who also acted on the committee

appointed to administer the fund. Contributions and tributes came from all over the county.

At the election to fill his seat in parliament Sir John Pope Hennessy was selected to represent the Tenants' Defence Association and was elected, but the nationalist cause was then involved in all the bitterness of the Parnellite split.

Mr. Marum had married Miss Mary Anne Brennan of Woodview, Castlecomer, whose mother was Mary Sullivan of Kilkenny, a sister of Richard Sullivan, M.P., and William Sullivan, M.P. This Brennan family was the last of the O'Brennans, Lords of Ui Duach. Another daughter married Staunton of Seskin House and the two families maintained close relations.

Mr. Marum left two sons and a daughter, Elizabeth or Lily. This daughter and the younger son, Gus, died tragically during an epidemic of diphtheria; the elder son, William, went to America but later returned and married locally. He died, however, five months after the marriage. There was no issue of the marriage. He never lived at Aharney House after his marriage, but in the village of Lisdowney, since he had apparently committed the unforgivable offence in those days of marrying out of his class. His mother lived on in the house for some years. I don't know for how long. When leaving she presented a William and Mary table and a cut glass celery bowl to Mrs. Cahill of Ballyconra. Some time before the first World War it was bought by my uncle, Loughlin Harte of Castletown. He sold it to Mr. John Staunton of Freshford, who sold it to the Land Commission in 1973.

There was said to have been a chapel in the house but this may be confusing it with Woodview near Castlecomer, the Brennan home inherited by Mrs. Marum. The Marums lived there sometimes and Mrs. Marum may have gone there after she left Aharney House.

Pamphlets written by E. P. Mulhallen Marum include :

Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland; its Cause and Cure.

The Right of Irish Tenants under the British Constitution to fixity of Tenure vindicated.

A Reply to Vaticanism by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

Reply to the Duke of Argyll 1885.

The Increment of Land Value and the Appreciation of our Monometallism.

The Temporal Power. etc. etc.

Marum Tombs in Barony Church :

Richard Marum 1716--1803.

Edmund Marum of Seskin 1746--1834.

Richard Carroll Marum.

Elizabeth Marum nee Mulhallen died 16th June 1846 aged 83.

Her ashes lie interred at Aharney Church where her son has erected a tomb to the best of parents.