

## Paris Anderson

By MRS. W. J. PHELAN

THE year 1849 saw the birth of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society. The Irish Archaeological Society had been founded in 1840 and given an impetus to historical research. From 1840 onwards, three Kilkennymen had been most anxious for their Society to come to life. Two are well known to all, James Graves and John G. A. Prim, but there was a third with them, a cousin, Paris Anderson, not so well known, yet, perhaps, equally learned and certainly as much in love with his native county and its antiquities. This is my apology, if one is needed, for giving his life the immortality of the typed word.

His strange name, Paris Anderson, is familiar to those who are interested in Kilkenny history and seek enlightenment on it. His two books, the "Warden of the Marches" and "Nooks and Corners of County Kilkenny," are, as the moderns say, a "must" for any local historian. His poems the "Market Cross," "Kennyswell," the "Mass Bush at Kilmacow," the "Well of Kathleen Ryder," the "Baron of Cluan," may not contain first-class poetry, but they swing along easily and tell their story simply, and it is always the Kilkenny story, Kilkenny traditions, ways and customs. They could only have been written by a Kilkenny man, and one, too, who was well acquainted with and loved his own historic background.

Paris Anderson was born in 1819 in Prospect, Dunbell, in the house now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Edmond Mulrooney. His people were much respected and had long been resident in Kilkenny. The first we meet in old Dunbell is Roger Anderson, who had married a Martha Paris in 1710 and acquired this property (possibly from the Worths). The Andersons owned Nore Cottage and Glen Cottage, too—Col. Anderson has architects' plans of these drawn up by William Robertson, c. 1817. These were the great-great-grandparents of our Paris, and thus, Martha handed down her surname as a first name to many succeeding generations. Our Paris was the fourth to bear the name. His great-

grandfather, Henry Anderson, married Joanna Watters (these two were victims of a robbery by Freney), and his grandfather married Margaret Edmonds, thus uniting the Andersons with two important civic families. His father was Lewis Anderson, Sheriff of Kilkenny from 1805 to 1840; his mother, Eliza Carpenter, was Dublin-born, and very clever. These two ran a school in John Street, which is listed in Canon Carrigan's 'Kilkenny Schools of 80 Years Ago,' as Protestant and charging £5 per pupil.

Joanna Anderson, Paris's aunt, was the mother of Rev. James Graves, Paris's beloved and remarkable cousin. Graves was born in 1816 and, therefore, was three years the older. They were both at school together, perhaps, first at Richard Graves' School in Wellington Square, and later at Kilkenny College.

#### GOOD-LOOKING, ATTRACTIVE

Paris was as good-looking and attractive as Graves was plain. Arthur MacMahon describes him as "tall, well set up and broad-shouldered, with the most expressive pair of blue eyes." Michael Banim, in his "Notes on the Boyne Water," describes Paris's father, Lewis, and his uncle, Paris, who were a pair of identical twins and derived much amusement from the fact. Banim says: "they were tall, shapely, remarkably handsome fellows; one might imagine that nature, pleased with her handiwork in one case, had cast the second in the same mould as the first." So, too, was Lewis's son, Paris, our poet; his charm and good looks contributed to his undoing. (Lewis Anderson, Paris's father, was author of "The Breakfast Club").

Jane Edmonds, cousin of Paris (born 1825) who spent two years in Prospect, Dunbell, as a child, and attended school in Kilkenny, gives a description of the family life in Dunbell.

"The father was easy-going and fond of pedestrian pursuits (apparently hiking is no new discovery), and the mother was buried in books and learning, and in a foolish admiration of her children's good looks and talents. They were remarkably clever and musical, too. There were four brothers, Paris, Lewis, Albert and William, and one sister,

Olympia (this name has also persisted in the family). There are still many known Andersons, but this branch is extinct. Lewis died as a young medical student; Albert went with Paris to Cincinnati, U.S.A.; Olympia went with her brother, William, to Australia, and these two were heard of no more.

### LOVE OF FRIENDS

Paris was lucky in his parents and cultured home life, luckier in his companions and cousins, luckiest in his love and appreciation of his surroundings. His letters, the copies of which Arthur MacMahon made, breathe his love of his friends, Jack Prim, Jemmy Graves, Kieran Buggy, James Lecky, James Ryan, Budd Tresham, and express his joy in their company. It was the pleasure of this clever group to roam through the country, and visit all the castles and abbeys and collect all the facts about them, to re-erect and clean any fallen monuments, doing all this from sheer delight in unfolding the historic tale. They were building, though they were perhaps then unwitting, the background of the future Archaeological Society. All these Kilkenny-men and the two Banims, Michael and John, had a deep interest in history, literature and the drama, and from early manhood were writing poems, dramas and novels.

### JOURNALISM

Paris Anderson was writing for the local papers long before he was 20 years old, especially for the "Moderator," of which his cousin, Abraham Denroche, was then the Editor. In 1835, the "Dublin Penny Journal" published a short story of Anderson's, called "The Bridal." Paris was then only 16, but the little story is dramatic, and shows Paris's clear grasp of the Kilkenny scene. It deals with the marriage of John Grace, Baron of Courtstown, with Catherine Archer, and the murder of the bridegroom on his return from the wedding by a jealous Cantwell, a vanquished rival. The spot where this tragedy took place is still called "Grace's Stone" and is on the road to Tullaroan, at the gate of Lacken. This is the earliest printed work I have been able to find of "P.A.'s."

About this time, i.e., 1835, Paris and his family, or some part of it, seemed to have moved to 13, Belvedere Place,

Dublin, and Paris considered going on the stage, and indeed did so, against the advice of his cousin, James Graves. Paris was not of the stuff to make an actor and the discipline and hard work of the stage was not for him. He began to drown his disappointments.

In 1838 he writes to Graves (no address) :—"My dear Pickwick: I have been going to the D. lately, but mean to reform about the 16th of the month, as on that day I leave the theatrical scene for the Summer season. In sober sadness I am doing very naughty things, but mean to join the temperance on the 16th. I am very glad you are coming up. You will find me religious and reformed—on the 16th. —Your prodigal cousin, P.A."

#### HIS LIFE IN ENGLAND

In 1839 Paris went to England as a school-teacher, to Warrington in Lancashire, and through his letters to James Graves (the copies of which are in Arthur MacMahon's manuscript) we follow his life there. In 1840 he went to Stockport as a tutor and manager of a training school, and he was the most disconsolate of all emigrants. A letter to Graves is dated July 25, 1840:—"My dear Jemmy—I had hoped for a letter from you, seeing that I have nothing to write about unless it be to curse this most infernal of all earthly purgatories. Did you ever read Dante's 'Inferno'? Did you ever read Milton's description of Hell? Yes; well I can tell you, my dear cousin, they could not both, joined together, have described Stockport."

All his letters are not so bitter. In 1840, he writes to congratulate "Cousin Jemmy" (i.e., Graves) on his ordination, "the blessing of God be with you, helping you and guiding you." In 1840, he sends this important advice: "I write now to encourage you in your very laudable design of rescuing the antiquities of your native town from oblivion. Don't forget Maudlin Street Castle, in fact, sketch everything, and then turn your attention to the county. You will be amply repaid there, albeit, Courtstown, Inchmore and Castle Howel are gathered to the earth. There is a list of castles in Belvedere Place (Paris's Dublin home), and a map of the county, both by Lecky. If Dick will go there (Dick

was James Graves' brother) he will get the map and list in one of the little set of drawers which stand in my bedroom. They will be of great service to you."

Arthur MacMahon speaks as if he had seen this map, and says it was beautifully executed. "A map of Antiquarian Kilkenny being marked on it, the exact locality and position of every ruined castle, abbey and church, and every other object interesting to the archaeologically-minded in Kilkenny." This must have been a great gift to the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, about to be formed.

### ANOTHER LETTER

In 1840, Paris (April 29) writes again to Graves: "have written Lecky to let him know that you are sketching the antiquities of our faire citie, and requesting his assistance for the letterpress. I am beginning to anticipate a book that may be published between you and Jack Prim. Don't get lazy on it. I know it takes a long pole to stir up your sketching talents." Apparently Graves doubted his own ability both to write and to sketch. It is not too much to lay at Paris's feet that he encouraged him and gave him confidence. This means that to-day we have the sketching and writing of Graves that makes the first numbers of the K.A. Journal and the history of St. Canice's so very interesting and, indeed, delightful to his Kilkenny descendants.

The letters of Paris to Graves continue on through 1840, '41 and '42, breathing the love and confidence he had in his cousin, the sharing of their tastes. Many of their letters contain poetry, which might be too tiresome to read. All have nostalgic references to the Kilkenny of his childhood: "Our researches after the picturesque and antique have been, since early boyhood, incessant and unwearing, the halcyon days of our boyhood were neither few nor infrequent."

One moonlight night inspires him to send a poem:

*"Oft on a night like this I've stood  
Upon the bridge of good St. John,  
And watched beneath me the calm flood,  
Flow in the moonbeams on."*

This friendship of Graves and Paris seems to us impossible—two young men in their twenties writing poetry to each other and describing their sights and walks. It is a glimpse to us of a life of quiet days and quiet ways, now very difficult to imagine.

In 1840, Paris was made Editor of a paper in Macclesfield and he begs Graves as a philosopher, naturalist and poet, to contribute to it and to ask Johnny Prim for his Irish stories. It is doubtful if this paper was successful or if Paris had the stamina to continue with the work of it. He was back in Kilkenny on a visit in 1841 and later writes of a walk he took in Johnswell with John Prim. "I was delighted," he says, "with the beauty of some of the little glens, particularly one that some pious hand had wooded. I think if the county about here were wooded it would equal Wicklow in beauty. The village of Johnswell is really picturesque. The course of the stream, the Cantwell, is beautiful from above the village to the Castle. It runs through a singular bed near the Church of Rathcoole. Everything is on a very small scale."

Still in Macclesfield in September, 1841, Paris acknowledges a letter of Graves which the latter had written from Tramore, describing Dun Isle and Grannagh Castles. What a subject for a historical romance Grannagh would make, considers Paris. He is still writing himself, "The Castle Hunters," whose scene he lays at Inch House on the Sion Road, and of which he begs Graves for a sketch, and his old friend, Jack Prim, for contributions for his magazine. He mentions he has had a letter from Lecky advising him to buy a good and copious English grammar to make himself a master of English construction. Paris was still a schoolmaster all this time and he writes rejoicing that he has house, coal, a model school and a yearly salary of £60.

### THE FAMINE

I lose Paris from 1842 to 1846 and what happened his paper and his school I do not know. I find him again as the Secretary of the Barony of Kilkenny Relief Committee on the 9th November, 1846. The awful famine had descended

upon Kilkenny and the good and decent people were trying hard to alleviate its agony. Typhus fever had already attacked his mother and father, perhaps in their little school in John Street. One died in December, 1846, and the other in May, 1847. They are buried in St. Mary's Churchyard, but their graves are not to be found. His uncle John and wife Jane Gore (or Denroche) are buried in Kyle Churchyard.

I have some photostats of the cards requesting members to attend the Kilkenny Relief Committee, sent to me by Col. A. P. Anderson and he has written in the attendances on the back. The meeting of the 9th November, 1846, was attended by Lord Ormonde, in the chair, Very Rev. James Ryan, P.P., Wm. Wheeler, W. P. Leech, C. James, Thomas Purcell Thomas Bradley, Robert Goslin and P. Dullard. At the meeting of the 10th November, 1846, William Wheeler was in the chair and Richard Smithwick, Esq., M.P., Edmund Smithwick, W. P. Leech, R. Goslin, C. James, T. Little and T. Bradley were present. These lists are very interesting in themselves, showing as they do, the people who were actively interested in relieving the famine. A good many of the descendants of these folk are still with us, whose joy it will be to read of the good deeds of their forefathers.

Paris had time, perhaps, on his hands as Secretary of the Relief Committee. He used some half printed cards to sketch on, and also his poem, the "Market Cross," was started on one.

#### "MODERATOR" ARTICLES

The "Nooks and Corners of Co. Kilkenny" appeared in serial form in the Kilkenny Moderator of 1848, so presumably Paris was still in Kilkenny then. About this time must have occurred his quarrel with Aby Denroche, his cousin, and Editor of the Moderator.

Paris, writing to James Graves of Luggalaw adds this verse:—

"Oh by the by, I sang a song that day,  
I'm sure you'd like again dear coz to hear it,  
Tho that wise Editor the great Aby,  
Swears 'tis trash the public could not bear it,

Because he always like with verse to cater,  
 For the good readers of the Moderator,  
 Farewell then Moderator, Farewell bards,  
 Farewell dear Editor, farewell all.  
 I find amongst you I can't play my cards,  
 Because you give me no fair play at all,  
 I must go over to some sheet diurnal  
 Or try a line in the Kilkenny Journal."

This rather bitter cry is the last I have heard of Paris in Kilkenny, whether he tried the Kilkenny Journal or not I do not know.

The "Warden of the Marches" that I own was not published by the "Moderator" until 1884, many years after Paris's death. In 1851 the poem "The Market Cross" was published in the "Moderator" and Paris may still have been in Kilkenny. When exactly he set out for America I do not know either, but go he did and with him his younger brother Albert. He found regular work in a newspaper there and also wrote for the New York papers and became Secretary of the Irish American Association in New York. When Col. Anderson's father visited New York in 1881, Paris's memory was yet green.

### HIS DEATH

We have the date of his death and Obituary Notice in the Moderator of February 18th, 1857. Here it is:  
 PARIS ANDERSON: The Author and Poet was the eldest surviving son of Lewis Anderson (1782 and twin to Paris) and Elizabeth nee Carpenter his wife. Vida Church Register of St. Mary's Protestant Church, Kilkenny, Paris was baptised 6th May, 1819. He died 1856 or 7, see Kilkenny Moderator, February 18, 1857:—"We learn with feelings of deep regret that a private communication to a friend in our city, received by the last American Mail, has brought tidings of the death of Mr. Paris Anderson, at Cincinnati. Mr. Anderson was a native of our city and filled the office of Mayor's Secretary under the Corporation of Kilkenny for some years, during which time he was recognised as a man of considerable literary ability of which he gave proof by frequent contributions of poetical effusion and essays of

great merit to the local newspaperpress. Since he emigrated to America he made literature his profession, having been engaged on a journal published in Cincinnati, but at the same time largely contributing Irish tales of generally acknowledged power and excellence to the New York Periodicals. At home and abroad, however, he has been most unfortunate, and like poor Clarence Mangan, whom he also largely resembled otherwise, his last sigh, we are sorry to learn, was breathed in a public hospital. It is still the old story of wayward genius, convivial tastes gradually indulging habits of excess, and resulting in premature decay. The deceased was one of a literary coterie of young Kilkenny men, whose early promises held out bright hopes for future fame for themselves and honour to their native city. James Leckey, Kyran Buggy, John Scott, Joseph Ryan and Paris Anderson, the last not the least gifted, nor least promising of these young friends whose community of tastes and talents had drawn them together in boyhood, and for whom their sanguine relatives and admiring townsmen looked forward to a brilliant future. Not one of them has survived early manhood nor left any striking record of his great natural gifts whereby posterity may recognise his name. The last survivor was, however, the most unfortunate and ill-fated of all. It is truly melancholy to reflect that such should be the end of one apparently formed by nature to adorn the social circle and gain for himself an honourable position in Society."

It is not my aim to assess the literary merits of Paris's two published books, "The Warden of Marches" and "Nooks and Corners," nor perhaps have I the ability, but to a student of local history, they are both extraordinarily interesting. The "Warden" resurrects the Kilkenny of the 14th century and gives all the old names a life and a meaning. It paints the dilemma of a man who has sworn a vow to go to the Holy Land, and the Lady who prevents its performance. Never again after reading this story can one look at the "Cantwell Fada" in Kilfane and see just the bare lifeless stone. Paris Anderson has seen to that.

"Nooks and Corners" are too long winded, I am sure, but breathe an extraordinary knowledge of the countryside,

and contain many of its legends now nearly forgotten. It was published originally in "Moderator" in 1846, again by the "Moderator" about 1916 and repeated by "People" in 1946. A friend told me, who is now a keen lover of local history, that it was reading "Nooks and Corners" which first aroused his interest and his love for old Kilkenny.

The poems have never been collected, but they show again his love for the County and its traditions. I have given a list at the beginning of this talk and I repeat it here: "The Market Cross," "Kennyswell," the "Well of Kathleen Ryder," the "Mass Bush at Kilmacow," the "Head of the Outlaw Den," "The Baron of Cluan." You will see these are all very simple subjects indeed. The poems are composed with rhythm and a historic sense that makes them enjoyable to read and instructive to remember. Every Kilkenny historian since Anderson's day has included some or other of these poems, Fr. Healy, Canon Carrigan, May Sparks, William Pilsworth. In doing so, our historians have raised a fine monument to Paris who has no brass nor stone to his memory in this county, whose history and traditions he loved so well, and which gave him all the inspiration he ever needed for his books and poems.

Everything that is left to us of Paris's works is about Kilkenny, its story, its past, its present, its beauty, its antiquity. Not one of her sons ever loved her more sincerely.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For these notes on Paris Anderson, I wish to acknowledge many debts to many kind people. First to Mr. W. E. Dobbs, our member, who helped and encouraged me and put me in touch with Col. A. L. B. Anderson, a collateral descendant of Paris. His was invaluable help. Col. Anderson sent me the family tree, the copies of the Edmonds' letters and the cards of the Barony of Kilkenny Relief Committee, and never ceased to answer my letters for more and more information.

Again I acknowledge with gratitude the use of the manuscript journals of Arthur MacMahon from the Library of St. Kieran's College, through the offices of my kind friend

Father Clohosey. These journals contain the copies of the letters that Paris wrote to Graves from England, and helped me to follow the life of Anderson and aims there.

These letters were in the keeping of James McCreery and lent to Arthur and show a side of Paris's life that otherwise I could not have glimpsed. I would like to thank the Mulrooney family, the present occupiers of Prospect, Dunbell, for their kindness and courtesy.

The files of the old "Moderator" were at my service always, thanks to Mr. Keane of the "Kilkenny People" for this great help.

The Prim family were also very kind and lent me a printed book on the Andersons. Alas! Paris being a "black sheep," is not mentioned in it.

NOTE—A letter from Col. Anderson on reading this paper states that he does not consider Paris was born at Dunbell—but perhaps in Kilkenny.