

John George Augustus Prim 1821 - 1875

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JOHN George Augustus Prim, fourth son of John Henry Prim, Solicitor, of Kilkenny City, and Johanna Anderson, was born in 1821. Three further sons and four daughters followed, one of these latter, Eliza, lived until 1914. Our subject traced his ancestry back to one John Prim, a Colonel in the army of James I, who purchased an estate at Castle Eve, near Callan, and who with fifteen of his children was massacred in the Rebellion of 1641. An infant son, Mark, survived the slaughter, and all the Prim family of County Kilkenny, which is to say all the Primms in Ireland, descend from him.

The biblical dimensions of that episode are commented on by G. D. Burtchaell in this fashion: "No such Colonel is known to have existed, and his purchase and building of Castle Eve are as mythical as himself. The first of the Prim family known to have settled in County Kilkenny was Abraham Prim, who paid 2s hearth money for a house in Buollicomin (Ballycommon), Parish of Rower, in 1664."¹

One Abraham Prim, of Columbkille [1728—1807 (?)] was plaintiff in a suit heard at the Court of Exchequer in January 1764.² He therein stated that he was son of Abraham (d. 1729), who was son of Mark Prim of Johnswell (d. 1745). If this Mark were the survivor of the 1641 massacre, it would have made him 104 years at his death, and no suggestion exists anywhere that he reached so great an age.

If Abraham Prim, who paid hearth-money in 1664 (assuming he was then 20 years of age), were the father of the plaintiff in the afore-mentioned law-suit—who was only one year old at his father's death—it would have meant that he was 84 years old when his son was born. This places the matter in the realms of improbability.

To deal with one further speculation in the Prim pedigree: When Marshall Juan Prim of Spain was assassinated in December 1870, John G. A. Prim prepared a paper for the Royal Historical and Antiquarian Society³ in which he stated that the very commonplace and unromantic patronymic which he bore was not known to be rejoiced in by anyone in any

¹The Manor of Erley, or Erlestown, County Kilkenny. Journal R.S.A.I. 1906.

²Family history supplied by Lieut.-Col. A. L. B. Anderson, Yeovil. 314 July, 1871.

country but those who were blood relations of his own. He went on to speak of a family tradition that two sons of Mark Prim (first distributor of stamps for Co. Carlow) emigrated to Spain, where they engaged in the wine trade. When Red Jack Prim of Ennisnag was marrying Miss Nixon of Brownsbarn in about 1780, a gift of a pipe of wine came from the young Prim in Spain, arriving in a Spanish vessel at the port of New Ross, and thence transported up the River Nore as far as the bride's home at Brownsbarn. That wedding gift was the last communication the Prim family received from Spain.

Whatever its lineage, Prim is a very common patronymic in Catalonia today. There are more than two dozen entries under the name in the current Barcelona telephone directory. The word Prim in Catalan means "thin." These facts, while not adductive to a direct link with the Noreside family, form an interesting aside.

The Primms were a prototype of the Anglo-Irish class, intermarrying with their cousins, Andersons and Denroches, engaging in duelling — at a party in the Hole-in-the-Wall, Barnaby Prim, in passing the wine to Lewis Watters, made some pun on the latter's name which caused offence. An apology was spurned, so they met next morning. Watters, a dapper little man, was a noted pistol-shot; Prim, tall and large, had never been out before. After the first discharge, to the general astonishment, Prim was unhurt, while Watters was stretched, shot through the brain — hunting, shooting, even getting shot at — as Arthur Prim was in 1847. While in charge of a considerable amount of Government money, he was set upon by a gang of ruffians at Shortalstown. He gamely defended himself with grand-uncle Barnaby's pistol before he was overpowered and murdered, as was Constable Yates, his escort.

"The Kilkenny Moderator" of 28 August, 1847, reported that "On Wednesday last Larkin and Daniel underwent the extreme penalty of the law in front of the county prison for the murder of Arthur Prim and Constable Yates. Their graves were dug by Thomas Brown and Patrick Shea, who were also charged with the murder."

That news item was very probably written by John G. A. Prim, then aged 26, and a reporter on "The Moderator." He had the good fortune to grow up in Kilkenny with a group of talented peers, all of whom were passionately interested in the history and lore of their native place — James Graves, Paris Anderson, Kyran T. Buggy, James Leckey. They wrote poetry and stories based on local legends. Buggy struck a patriotic note with his rousing verse, "The Saxon Shilling." Scott and Byron were the great literary figures across the water; at home, the novels of the Banim Brothers and the poetry of Thomas Moore had a more immediate impact.

The long-neglected, ruined churches and castles, in which County Kilkenny was so rich, exercised a fascination over the young men. Their chief delight was to ramble through the countryside, to Jerpoint, Gowran, Kilfane, clearing the ivy from memorial slabs, copying down inscriptions, sketching armorial bearings. Prim set out in methodical fashion to describe the principal archaeological ruins in the county. His manuscript, *Kilkenny Book No. 2* (c. 1840—50), now in the Department of Irish Folklore, University College, Dublin, indicates the extent of the preparatory work done on a History of the County, which was a long-nurtured ambition of his.

Templemartin Church, for example, is therein described :

“ In the Old Church of St. Martin’s are two table monuments, ornamented with cresses of 8 points, with interlace shafts. (The inscriptions follow). The Church is very much ruined; the entrance is through a pointed doorway, and the chancel and choir communicate by a Gothic Arch in the partition gable. At the Crossroads of Templemartin, there is a large square stone with a whole (sic) in its top. It appears to have been the base of a monumental or market cross, most probably the latter, as there are fairs held here (space) times a year.”

Canon Carrigan, following Prim’s footsteps half a century later, describes the ruin in more professional terms and with greater detail, but time’s defacing hand had in the interval obliterated the large square stone, for Carrigan makes no mention of it.

Prim, as already stated, became a reporter on “*The Kilkenny Moderator*.” “Laffan,”⁴ writing a memorial sketch for “*The Irish-American*”⁵ on Prim’s demise, depicts him :

“ We at this time in early boyhood, remember young Mr. Prim -- as he then used to be almost always spoken of -- when he was about at the beginning of his regular connection with the editorial department of *The Moderator*. As we thus recall him, very distinctly, we bring to reflection his tall, graceful form and prepossessing appearance, and his modest, gentle, winning manners. He did not appear to be of very robust constitution, but he seemed to love work and never tire of occupation. Outside of his strictly professional labours -- and, we should mention he was then regarded as the factotum of the ‘*Moderator*’ office, editor, reporter, proof-reader and all -- he did brave work, chiefly with a view of awakening in the educated classes of our native county an active interest in its history. We were very proud of his department of ‘*Nooks and Corners of our County*’ -- to which he was kind enough to invite our youthful attention.”

“*The Kilkenny Moderator*” had been established on 1st January 1814 by Abraham Denroche, then a young politician of 24 years. It was a staunch supporter of that powerful triad :

⁴The identity of “Laffan” remains obscure, unless he was William M. Laffan, b. Dublin 1848, who in 1875 was a reporter on the *Baltimore Daily Bulletin*.”

⁵Reprinted in *The Kilkenny Moderator*, 29 December, 1875.

the British Crown, the Tory Party, the Anglican Church. Denroche was sole proprietor of the paper until 1855, when, evidently, John G. A. Prim took over the running of the paper. Three years later, he married Denroche's daughter, Mary (Minnie), who was his second cousin and the widow of Alexander Pope McCrea. By her first marriage, she had a daughter, Lucinda (d. unmarried 1872). The marriage to Prim resulted in eight children, viz. Henry James (1861—1939), James Graves (1865—1906), John Denroche (died infancy 1866), John Albert (1868—1949), Margaret Jane (1860—'67), May Olympia (1862—1916), Carlyon Olyvia (1863—1953) and Anna Julia (1871—1892).

When J. G. A. Prim died on 2nd November 1875, his widow was left to support six children, ranging in ages from 14 years to four years. The following February the newspaper was sold to M. W. Lalor, of "Leinster Express," thus ending its sixty years' link with the Denroche-Prim family.

In the popular mind, the fame of John G. A. Prim rests on two monoliths: the founding with James Graves and others in 1849 of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, and his joint authorship, again with James Graves, of "The History, Architecture and Antiquities of the Cathedral Church of St. Canice, Kilkenny" (Dublin, 1857).

Less known is the extent of his published papers; they run to 45 titles, the bulk of which appeared in the periodical originally called Transactions of Kilkenny Archaeological Society, and subsequently undergoing changes of nomenclature. These papers encompassed a variety of topics: Olden Popular Pastimes in Kilkenny; Notes on Kilkenny Inns and Taverns; Ancient Fleming Colony in Kilkenny; The Way-side Crosses of Kilkenny; The Kilkenny Canal, etc., etc.

The immediate success of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, its appeal to the discerning mind, its ability to transcend political and religious divisions, gratified the heart of John G. A. Prim. Despite the misgivings of Abraham Denroche, who felt it damaged "The Moderator's" readership, 7½ columns — in a newspaper containing 24 columns — were devoted to the proceedings of the second meeting of the Society. Immediately following the report was an editorial⁶ which pardonably indulges in some trumpet blowing:

"The sentiments put forward in the resolutions passed, the papers read and the observations made at this meeting, would render it a work of supererogation on our part to enter into any explanatory remarks upon the aim and objects of the institution. But we must say that we look with pride as well as pleasure upon the formation of this Society, as we believe that without laying ourselves open to the charge of overweening

⁶The Kilkenny Moderator, 7 April, 1849.

vanity or presumption, we may in some degree attribute the immediate success of the undertaking to the result of our own labours for some years back, having always made a great and special object in the editorship of this Journal, the inculcation of a taste for Archaeological enquiry, and the preservation and investigation of the national monuments and notable memoirs of our county. The good work which we commenced almost unaided and alone — for a period we feared unsympathised with — has at length borne abundant fruit, and we now find it received into the hands of men fully competent from talent and research to advance the cause which they have undertaken to support, and under their fostering care we have good hope to find not only our existing treasures of antiquity preserved and illustrated, but new memorials of the past every day brought to light and carefully investigated . . .”

The most attractive quality about Prim was his gift for making friendships and retaining them all through life. Family ties bound him to Paris Anderson and Rev. James Graves — they were both second cousins of his — but in other cases his natural warm-heartedness overcame barriers of religious or political differences. The editorials which he wrote for “The Moderator,” taken together, were bitterly opposed to the sentiments of the majority of the population of Kilkenny. The tone, to the present-day reader, seems stridently anti-Catholic and anti-national. Yet among Prim’s life-long friends were Fr. Philip Moore, and John Dunne of Garryricken.

Fr. Philip Moore (1812—1888), a native of Columbkille, Thomastown, was a sensitive, introspective, impulsive and scholarly man who was drawn to Prim by their mutual love of their native county. He was one of those who encouraged Graves and Prim in establishing the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, and to him fell the honour of writing the very first article in the first number of the Transactions, “Giants’ Graves” (Read at Meeting, 3 April 1849).

Writing to Prim from Johnstown (2 January 1871), he begins:

“This is to wish you a happy New Year. It is long since I heard from you or since you heard from me. Still my feelings are always the same, always the same old feelings of good will and friendship as existed in ’46, ’47 &c. when we wrote almost daily to each other. Though sad times for Ireland then, yet I felt a great pleasure in your elegant ‘Nooks and Corners of our County,’ and in poor Anderson’s ballads, poor Lecky’s also. My boat also on the Nore and Barrow gave me great delight.

This monstrous place, no society, no one to talk to makes one very dull and flat. Years too tell heavily on the imagination and poetic feelings. They bring on cold stone realities in this place. However, as far as I am concerned, I was always whining, complaining, lamenting some by-gone period of my past life . . . On yesterday 50 years!!! Lord Carrick entertained the people of Thomastown and the neighbourhood to a grand dinner &c. I remember that day as well as yesterday. It was a fine, soft day, no rain or frost or wind.”

Returning on the mail coach to Johnstown after one

meeting of the Archaeological Society, a benevolent idea grew in Fr. Moore's mind. Impulsively, he wrote next day:⁷

" My dear Mr. Prim,

A thought occurred to me on the way home. It arose from asking the grant of 70 or 100 a year for the Society's museum &c. All fair, but this first. I think James Graves deserves more a 'Literary pension' than the Society does a grant. As for a testimonial coming after the other tho' due in all conscience, it would hardly take. So let us go to work to get a pension of even 50, 70 or 100 a year from Mr. Gladstone for Graves as an author and a painstaking and unoffending Archaeologist. I will write to Bryan, you to Agar Ellis and so on. If we are any good we will succeed. I will wait for your answer & suggestions. Mr. Tighe of Woodstock would have some influence with the Lord Lieutenant & others. It was a real inspiration. No one even suggested it to me and I feel it will be a success. John Shearman could speak to Lord Howth. Do not let it go out till we mature some plan. I will not write to Graves at all on the subject, but a deputation of 7, or 8 or 9 Irish members would carry the point. I was delighted yesterday with meeting you & Graves & indeed with all the proceedings. Tell Graves that you & I have agreed for very cogent reasons not to petition the Government yet for a subsidy to the support of the Museum &c."

Graves did indeed get a pension of £100 on the Civil List, but not until 1878 when Prim was already dead and unable to enjoy his cousin's good fortune.

John Moore, bachelor brother of Fr. Philip Moore, was another good friend of John G. A. Prim. His letters show him to have been a droll fellow, more attracted to archaeology and history and collecting lore or ballads for Mr. Prim than to farming, which occupation he followed at Columbkille. He sent fragments of an urn which was found in the neighbourhood and, in response to Prim's enquiry, replies:⁸

" Your very humble servant John Moore writes to say where he got the fragments of the 'urn' he gave you — they were got the 16 of March on the lands of Columbkille (William Flood, Esq. landlord). On the townland of about 500 acres, there are 57 cairns or tumuli or, as my poor father would call them in Irish, 'tullawns,' one 'leacht' between Columbkille and Kiljames . . . The 'urn' found was large, would hold more than a stone of potatoes. He who found it (Tom Conway) was digging a potato trench; the earth looked like ashes. He dug and dug, about two feet deep, ashes all around or burnt clay. The 'urn' had a light flag on top, no stones round it, filled with ashes and small bits of burned bones. The only bones I could find in the ashes the day after were the 'scull' bones, the largest piece not bigger than a shilling. It was nearly the highest part of a high field, a little sloped, looking to the west. He after keeping it over a night private after killing a black cat to appease the spirit or sentinel; all could not change the dust to gold, so he broke it up in the fragments you got . . ."

The Great Dublin Exhibition of 1853 was an event John Moore could not miss. He was intoxicated by the novelty and

⁷Fr. Philip Moore to J. G. A. Prim, 3 April, 1861.

⁸Jchn Moore to J. G. A. Prim, 25 June, 1853.

variety of exhibits and spent five days there absorbing its multifarious attractions. He wrote⁹ enthusiastically to Mr. Prim, explaining why he went :

“to be a boast, a story, a joy for life, and if not for any or all them reasons, there was reason enough to go, if it was only to spite damned poverty. Well, I did go, the morning of the 12 (July). I saw going to the Park, horse, foot and artillery, coach, gig and dogcart, ladies ribbons and nodding plumes . . . five days dazzled and drunk with wonder . . . (Then) I went to friends to Liverpool, to Wales & c & c. Now at home, forever reaping, sowing, digging, delving.”

One project that occupied much of Prim's time was the collecting of ballads connected with Kilkenny. In this enterprise his most enthusiastic aide was John Dunne, school-master, of Garryricken (1814—c. 1893). Dunne is described¹⁰ as wearing “a low Carline hat, black-and-white spotted neckerchief, side whiskers, under-chin whiskers. Features were longish, presumably oval. He wore a frock coat. Salary from the Ormonde family was £10 per annum, supplemented by 1 penny per week from the scholars, or 1/- per quarter. The Ormondes built his house—where he conducted school for the tenants' children—before the erection of Poulacapple School, when he taught there. He was a stern, reserved dominie. He used to interview clients on Prim's behalf at James Maher's corn-store in Green Street, Callan.”

Periodically he supplemented his income by sending local news items to “The Kilkenny Moderator,” lyrical descriptions of the harvest home on the Ormonde estate at Garryricken, visits to the area by the Marchioness, the distribution of an ox among the tenants at Christmas. There was none among the tenantry more loyal to the Butler family than John Dunne. He had a poetic mind, was an outstanding Gaelic scholar, and an indefatigable collector of songs and ballads for John G. A. Prim. One ballad that took much tracking down was a traditional Irish lament on the “Death of Father Richard O'Shea, Parish Priest of Killamory and Kells in the Diocese of Ossory, who died the 17th day of the month of July in the year of Our Lord twelve years and three score on seven hundreds on a thousand.”

John Dunne sent the Irish lament, with much annotation and his own translation of the dirge to Prim, explaining that it abided by the strict rules of Conachlann, a description of versification in high esteem among the old Irish. According to these rules, the last word, or sometimes two or three words of a verse, commence the succeeding one, and so on to the

⁹Same to same, 31 July, 1853.

¹⁰James Maher, Mullinahone, to Thomas Wall, quoting Katie Vaughan nee Lawrence, 30 November, 1951.

end, the last words of the whole poem being exactly the same as the opening phrase of the first stanza.

"It gratifies me very much," he wrote¹¹ "to think that it is at length safely in your hands, and consequently rescued from oblivion. It has had a narrow escape for its fate depended on the life of an old widow, now bowed down by sorrow, the same who had welcomed Revd. Mr. Graves and yourself in her homely way, sixteen years before, on my conducting you to her house at Killamory in order to see the scattered fragments of a flag on her floor. After diligent enquiry I am of opinion that no other person now living has a verse of it together. I wanted her to sing it as her father used, but she got so affected that she could not proceed."

The effort to get another almost forgotten ballad from an old woman at Ballykeeffe involves an itinerary of Homeric dimensions.¹²

"I was engaged on some necessary business of my own and had not sufficient time to make enquiry at Nine Mile House at to whether I might get a special car to take me to Ballykeeffe on Friday morning next. When car owners foresee any chance of even a few passengers, they are unwilling to have a car out all day with only one . . . If he refuse, I hope to procure one in Callan and, with that view, shall leave home at dawn, the days are so very short and I do not know the woman's capacity at wording, for some, who would go on very well if the pencil could keep pace with singing or humming time, get embarrassed and forgetful when obliged to dictate in words or phrases which must be often done in order to catch the full meaning, in consequence of idiom, synonymy and corruptions. In my humble opinion, the most effectual way to proceed would be for you to drop a note by one of the Callan cars tomorrow evening to Mr. Doyle, requesting if he conveniently could, to call on the woman, in the evening or on Thursday morning, that she might have her memory refreshed, for peasants often get confused when taken by surprise, and some time is necessary in recalling to mind old songs or dirges, which are seldom either sung or repeated nowadays . . . If she has the dirge in full and that I shall have to trespass a good while on her time and attention, I shall feel it my duty to hand her a florin or thereabouts for snuff or tobacco."

Mundane cares obtruded themselves on the visionary world of John Dunne:¹³

"Miss Ellen M. Corr, administratrix of the late Mrs Corr, Callan (who was a good woman) has just sent me a process for a balance of 8/8d I owed the latter, and the process is to be entered on Thursday next in order to be despatched with others of the kind to the Clogheen Quarter Sessions, which are to open on the 21st inst. I cannot get my half year's salary at the hands of Mr. Monck until the 30th of the present month, so that I have been unexpectedly 'short taken,' as I happened to have no change on hands and there is a general scarcity in the rural districts. If you will kindly please to send me eight shillings and eight pence in postage stamps to rid me of an urgent creditor, I shall leave so much back for you on Mr Monck's hands on the last day of the present month."

¹¹John Dunne to J. G. A. Prim, 26 November, 1864.

¹²Same to same, 2 January, 1865.

¹³Same to same, 16 June, 1867.

Three days later, he writes again in lines that bespeak the selflessness of John G. A. Prim:¹⁴

“Your very kind note duly came to hand on Tuesday, the 18th inst. enclosing a post office order for Ten shillings for which I feel deeply grateful, as also for your kindness in declining to accept the sum until the arrival of a season of more plentiness in every respect. I sincerely regret the protracted illness of your children — the death of your little daughter and your fears as to the little boy. May God restore him to health to you and to his mother, and may he live to realise the fond hope which induced you to name (him) after your worthy friend the Revd. James Graves . . .”

(The little boy did recover and later emigrated to America, where he died in 1906).

The social conditions of the district are underlined in a letter John Dunne wrote to Prim¹⁵ saying that his health has been impaired by the unusual severity of the winter (1866/67) and the “constant attendance during that season of a number of grown-up boys and girls, belonging to the small farmer class, who seeing no prospect of a livelihood in their native land, make a great effort in winter to be able, at least, to write their own letters in the land of the stranger.” The following year, there is destitution. “The poor have no potatoes and Indian meal is up to 1s 8d a stone, and where can the unemployed poor get the price of it? Indian meal was not so high since the year of the Public Works.”¹⁶

John G. A. Prim’s collection of Kilkenny songs grew until he saw it in terms of a volume. He sketched the format the book would take:—

- Chap. 1.** The City of Kilkenny. Begin with general remarks on taste for poetry & songs. Nothing like the old songs connected with Ross & Waterford but curious old songs in Red Book of Ossory. “Da da nobis nunc.” Reference to the song posted on the gates of Kilkenny. The Kilkenny Beauties. The Boys of Kilkenny. Ormonde family — any poems to be got? The Nore is Long — 2 versions. “High on the Shelving Banks of Nore.” Reference to the Theatricals, Prologues & dialogues Squibs and Satires. The Canal &c. The Beauties of Kilcreene. Kennyswell.
- Chap. 2.** Various County Illustrations. The Ormondes at Garryricken & Kilcash. Reference to the Lady Ivagh & the Star of Kilkenny printed by O’Daly. A Welcome to Young John Butler. Ld. Mt. Garrett’s heir. The Bryans of Bawnmore. The Men of Tipperary? The Kilkenny Bull. Ballyspellan Spaw. Lament for Oliver Grace. Lady Kathleen Ponsonby.
- Chap. 3.** The Walsh Mt. Songs generally with introduction as to Walsh family.
- Chap. 4.** Songs & lays having special ref. to John McWalter Walsh with intro. about John himself.
- Chap. 5.** Political Songs. Whiteboy remains with account of that conflict. The Battle of Newmarket. English version of do. Cursed Ballyragget

¹⁴Same to same, 19 June, 1867.

¹⁵Same to same, 13 April, 1867.

¹⁶Same to same, 27 January, 1868.

(Irish) Do. do (English). The Slitting of Genl. Shee. The Shooting of Roger Shasty.

Chap. 6. Political compositions. Croppy songs & songs in reference to Volunteer Copp (?). Holt & His Men. Byrne of Ballymacus. The Croppy Boy. Fr. Murphy ballad. Wright's Acrostic on Fitzgerald. The Callan Yeomanry fragment. The Kilfane Volunteers fragment. Slievenaman. The Crow of Kilkenny 2. The Boys of Ballagh.

Chap. 7. Political Songs contd. Whiteboy lyrics with introductory notice. The Battle of Carrickshock. Two street ballads — Release the Men of Kilkenny. The Kilkenny Girl's Farewell. Caravat & Shanavest songs. Advice to Caravats. Caravat fragments. Kells factions.

Chap. 8. Sporting Songs. Introd. as to sporting. Robt. Roe's hunt. Young Power of Kilfane. The Knockmoylan Pup. The Boys of Galmoy. Capt. Dower (Irish). The King's Co. Hunt (John Moore). The Kilkenny Hunt. The Kilkenny Hunt Forty Years.

Chap. 9. Illustrative of obsolete social usages. Funeral Dirges. Tigernah Cuffe. Lament for Fr. O'Shee. Fights at funerals (fragment). Duelling. Butler & Perry. Honours popularly paid to highwaymen. Bold Capt. Freyne. Gallant Capt. Grant. Arthur Prim's Murder Lament.

Chap. 10. Abduction Songs. Byrne & Strang etc. Bride Sweetman. Lamentation of Power. Mary Kineely. Garret on the Mare.

Chap. 11. Festive Songs. The Blackthorn Stick. Dialogue between a Toper & Publican. Discussion between the Poets. Lord Carrick's Dinner. The Windgap Landlady. The Browncub's (?) Soldering.

Chap. 12. Miscell. The Spalpeen Song. The Star of the Fountain. The Tinker Ballad. Welcome to Geo. IV.

If ill-health, pressures of business and domestic cares had not combined to shorten John G. A. Prim's life, what a priceless addition that book would have made to Kilkenniana. There is an added irony in that the one popular work which should have borne his name and enlarged his fame is irredeemably credited to his cousin, Paris Anderson — "Nooks and Corners of County Kilkenny."

A reprint of that quaintly charming amalgam of travelogue and history was made by the Kilkenny People Printing Works in 1940. The title page reads: Nooks and Corners of the County Kilkenny by Paris Anderson. Published originally in the "Kilkenny Moderator" in 1848.

There follows a Preface which is the same wording as the introduction to the first instalment of "Nooks and Corners" which appeared in "The Kilkenny Moderator" on 14th July, 1847. It reads in part: "We intend publishing from time to time when our columns are not otherwise occupied a few jottings which we have made during visits to several of the sacred and interesting localities in this county."

Five instalments appeared in "The Kilkenny Moderator" between July and December 1847. Nos. 6 to 12 appeared during the following year. A few copies were printed off to form a volume before the type was distributed. One of these, which belonged to John Francis Shearman,¹⁷ bears an inscription

¹⁷John Francis Shearman. B. Kilkenny 1830. Ordained Maynooth 1860; died P.P. Moone 1835. Author of "Loco Patriciana."

in Shearman's hand, date 1860: "The writers were the Revd. James Graves, A.B., John G. A. Prim, Esq., Ed. Moderator, assisted by the valuable notes and revisions of the Revd. Phillip Moore C.C., Rosbercon."

James George Robertson in the beautifully illustrated "Antiquities and Scenery of the County of Kilkenny" (Kilkenny, 1851) states that his description of Grennan Castle has been abridged with the kind permission of Mr. J. G. A. Prim from No. 13 of his papers upon the "Nooks and Corners of our County."

Fr. Moore, writing to Prim in 1860, said:¹⁸ "If you could continue now, in the absence of Parliamentary news, your 'Nooks and Corners' or publish the fine ballad poetry of Lecky and Anderson, it would be a great acquisition to our county history and literature."

None of the existing evidence points to Paris Anderson as the author of "Nooks and Corners" and it would be of interest to know what prompted the affixing of his name to the 1940 edition.

Before concluding a memoir of John G. A. Prim, reference must be made to the Prim papers in the Public Record Office, Dublin. A calendar of these papers appears in the Fifty-eighth Report of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records (1951). It runs to 112 items, all of them referring to the History of Kilkenny or genealogies of prominent families like Shee, Rothe, Colles, Langton, Knaresborough, Bibby, Archer, Comerford, Cantwell, etc.

Like some unfinished statue by a great sculptor that collection of papers is a testimony to John G. A. Prim's dream of writing a complete history of his beloved city and county. How his last illness must have been haunted by the thought of so much to do, so scant a time remaining. This tribute to his memory is of no avail if the reader fails to realise that John G. A. Prim's name belongs with the most distinguished and most noble of Kilkenny men.

¹⁸Fr. Philip Moore to J. G. A. Prim, 27 November, 1860.

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