

The Butlers of Kilcash

JAMES MAHER

When in Kilcash recently it was pleasant to learn that the historic Castle has now many visitors during the tourist season. It might be helpful to clear up the natural confusion concerning the three Bishops associated with the Castle. No fewer than five Prelates named Butler were members of the Irish Hierarchy:—

1 Edmund Butler, son of the Earl of Ormonde, who became Archbishop of Cashel in 1527, died in 1550 and is buried in Cashel Cathedral.

2 John Brennan, who became Archbishop of Cashel about 1676 died in 1692. His reports to Rome, published in the "Irish Ecclesiastical Record," were addressed from Kilcash Castle, where he was a refugee.

3 Christopher Butler, heir-presumptive of the Great Duke of Ormonde, was son of Walter Butler of Kilcash Castle. He was born in Garryricken, Callan, in 1673, and became Archbishop of Cashel in 1712. He died in Westcourt, Callan, in 1757, and was buried in Kilcash.

Archbishop Christopher Butler had an unusual claim to be regarded as a member of the Church Militant, for (in July, 1848) "Young Irelanders," on the march to join Smith O'Brien in Mullinahone, raided Kilcash and removed the leaden mitre from the Archbishop's effigy for casting into bullets.

4 James Butler I became Archbishop of Cashel in 1750 and died in 1774. He was perhaps the first Archbishop to reside in Thurles.

5 James Butler II, son of James Butler of Ballyragget, CoKilkenny was born in 1742, became Archbishop of Cashel in 1774, and died in 1791. He was author of the famous "Butler's Catechism" (first printed about 1777, and of the beautifully phrased "Prayers before Mass."

6 James Butler (Lord Dunboyne) was Bishop of Cork in 1775. He resided for a while in the so-called "Bishop's House," Wilford, near Mullinahone. He died in Dublin in 1800 and is buried in the Augustinian Abbey, Fethard. The Dunboyne

Establishment, Maynooth, owes its origin to a bequest of this Lord Dunboyne.

7 James Phelan, Bishop of Ossory and Chaplain to the Butlers of Kilcash, is mentioned in the famous Gaelic "Lament for Kilcash" ("The Bishop and Lady Iveagh"). Lady Iveagh (locally Lady 'Veagh) was wife of the Hon Colonel Thomas Butler of Kilcash.

It is now many years since my first visit to Kilcash Castle. My very small "guide" on that occasion said: "Lady 'veagh was a very kind lady. She used to put food in the fields in Winter for the birds to eat. So, when she died, all the little birds gathered on the top of Slievenamon to go to the funeral."

James Hoban

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Mention (in "This Day: August Memories") of the burning of Washington DC, by the British in 1814 recalled the career of James Hoban, architect and builder of the first and present "President's House."

James Hoban, son of Edward and Martha (Bayne) Hoban, was born in Callan (in neighbouring Desart, according to local tradition) in 1762. He was a pupil of Thomas Ivory of the Dublin Society in 1780 and was awarded a special medal for architectural drawing.

He was afterwards concerned in the erection of such noted Dublin buildings as the Royal Exchange; the Bank of Glendower, Newcomen and Company built in 1781; and the Custom House, begun in 1781. He spoke of himself as "universally acquainted with men in the building line in Ireland."

In 1785 Hoban emigrated from Callan to Philadelphia, where he advertised that "Any gentleman who wishes to build in an elegant style may hear of a person properly calculated for the purpose, who can execute the Joining and Carpenter's business in the modern taste."

In 1792 Hoban won First Prize — a lot in Washington and 500 dollars — in an open competition for designing the first "President's House," the corner stone of which was laid by President George Washington — assisted by James Hoban — on