A Visit to Knock.

BY T. O'C.

SECOND EDITION.

LIMERICK:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY T. O'CONNOR,
3, MILITARY ROAD.

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Archdeacon Kavanagh, P.P., Knock.

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CHAPTER I.

Knock is a country parish in the county of Mayo, distant from the smart little town of Claremorris about six miles. You approach Knock from the southern counties—say from Limerick city—by leaving the Limerick terminus at 10 a.m by the Ennis train, which brings you to Athenry Junction about 1.30. When at Athenry itself, the traveller may be gratified by a visit to the magnificent ruins with which it abounds, including the Donjon Keep of the De Bermingham's castle, at one time owned by Roderic O'Connor, the burying places of the nobility of Connaught in the ancient churchyard of the Dominican Abbey ; the ruins of the grand old abbey itself displaying in traceried windows, and other indications of advanced ecclesiastical mediœval architecture, much to instruct and delight the eye of the connoisseur. Here one may dwell for hours in the decyphering of inscriptions on time-worn tombstones, scarcophagoi, &c. ; and here also at Athenry one may see the old walls of the once Royal town, stretching out into fields, &c., where there had been at one period streets,

houses, and the busy hum of the Celtic tongue heard before the De Burges and the De Berminghams fought their way into its possession, and O'Connor lost his last critical battle, and gave place to the MacPheorishes, who became more Irish than the Irish themselves.

But the train for Tuam is nearly due, and as I am resolved to go as far as the Archioæpiscopal city in my first day's journey and sleep in the town illustrious in history and renowned as the dwelling-place and seat of the great Lion of the Fold of Judah, as the Liberator used to call him, I am unwillingly forced to break off my antiquarian researches and explorations, and answer to the whistle of the engine, and the bell of the porter of the station, for we leave Athenry at 5 p.m. I may mention, however, before quitting the sights of Athenry, that I was glad to see a fine new saw mill and flour mill at full work, and in the best order, the machinery driven by the water of a stream which is of ancient date, and which was used in the stirring times of the wars of the fourteenth century, to flood the moat, and do as much injury as possible to those who attacked the stronghold of O'Connor. I cannot refrain from saying another word as to the Donjon Keep; it is strong as arms and hands could make it; the aperture in one of the walls shows the immense difficulties there must have been in making an impression or an entrance before the invention of gatlings and Armstrong guns. As

I gazed upwards through a breach in the arched roof from the cellars beneath, in the recesses of which the wines of Burgundy used to be stored for the wassailers in the great hall above, when the Connacian monarch gave a banquet to his kinsmen, the words of Campbell were strongly suggested—

> "Glory, they said, and power and honour,
> Were in the mansion of O'Connor."

* * * * * *

I should also state that I took a hurried glance at the ancient market cross which stands a memorial of the past, with its weird and curious interlacings of Celtic-made fishes, animals, reptiles, &c., and the emblems of man's redemption. Indeed the market cross of Athenry deserves a better fate than seems destined for it. Time is doing its work on it with a vengeance, and unless soon taken in hands it must go for ever. How truly did Campbell, in his charming poem, give evidence of his sympathy with "O'Connor's Child' and the incidents of most memorable events in this locality :—

> Dead as the green oblivion's flood
> That mantles by your walls, shall be
> The glory of O'Connor's blood—
> Away, away to Athenree,
> Where, downward when the sun shall fall,
> The raven's wing shall be your pall.

And every remnant of the past which we meet here full of the studied care and earnest and

powerful supervision of the monarch who, in religion as well as in war, in arts of peace as well as in those of the field, held his own until overpowered by the irresistible weight of the Anglo-Norman.

The train moves on by Ballyglunin and other stations, which offer nothing particularly worthy of notice until we reach Tuam station soon after 6 p.m. Here, in Tuam, I resolve to remain for the night; but before I retire to rest I go out to see the beautiful Cathedral in which "John of Tuam" has his chair, and from which his voice has been heard for over sixty years, impressing its magic force and eloquence on Irish politics and on the interests of religion. The Cathedral is a noble structure, built on an eminence, and as I looked upon it in the light of the moon, which revealed all its beauties, though not in the same degree or nature as those of Melrose Abbey were seen by the Wizard of the North, I reflected that John of Tuam is now nearly 90 years of age, and what a wonder-worker he has been. The marble ststue of the illustrious Archbishop in front of the Cathedral is an object of art well worthy of the place and of the munificent personage whose counterfeit presentment it is. The grand roof, the Italian statuary marble Baldachino, the Stations of the Cross with their Celtic niscriptions; the whole aspect of the House of God is a monument of wisdom, munificence, courage and success of pastor and people—of

Archbishop and all who gave aid to the noble achievement. It is a matter of regret to me that I did not see the splendid remains of antiquity in the wonderful arch, and other remains of the ancient Cathedral now used for Protestant worship. The Tuam arch is one of the finest in western Europe. Outside the old Cathedral, for a long series of years, used to be seen the "Cross of Tuam"—in other words, the shaft of the very ancient Market Cross, which is known to antiquarians as one of the most remarkable of the old Celtic crosses in any part of Ireland. Portion of the base of this cross might at one period be seen close by the Catholic Cathedral; but an arrangement having been made between the heads of the Catholic and Protestant interests in Tuam, the separated parts of the cross were put together, and the cross itself may be seen in the Market Square, on a pedestal, and surrounded by a handsome iron railing. There is a very fine painted glass window in the, or now, Protestant Cathedral, which for the richness and depth of its amber colouring cannot be equalled, and which was the work of a local artist, who, however, deplorable to add, went mad, and committed sucide sometime after the work was put out of hands.

As it is sometimes difficult to obtain a seat on the two-horse car to Claremorris, unless it be pre-engaged, I took care to have my seat paid for the night I came to Tuam. We left Tuam

at 11 o'clock a.m. on Saturday morning and arrived at Claremorris at 2 p.m. The morning was fine and promised to continue so; but when about five miles within Claremorris a squall, accompanied by a drizzling rain, proved the proverbial uncertainty of the climate. We passed a small village called Miltown, which is remarkable for its market, and the quantities of literally "fat bacon," which women weigh in the scales to purchasers who stand in the street, and carry away in bags what they buy. I never beheld such "fat bacon." There is a policemen's iron hut at Miltown; it is of such extremely small dimensions that one wonders at the fact that it can afford accommodation to ten of the Royal Irish Constabulary within it. The car-driver explained in rather a remarkable way why the hut was built in that locality. "Why," said he, "a chap was shot here, and, I suppose, unless he was not the best of characters, he would not be shot;" smacking his whip, off the driver went on his way rejoicing. The country is wretched in appearance; full of hills and hollows, principally, however, cultivated by spade-tillage—oats, barley, potatoes; immense stretches of bog, with little or no cattle and few sheep; the land poor, and the people good-looking and intelligent, the real old Milesian style of face; the old men particularly are remarkably fine, The women wear cloaks of native flannel, with long locks of wool left on the woof, and dyed black with the

woad of the country. Celtic is the language most persons speak, and with a purity and distinctness of accentuation altogether different from the jargon we sometimes hear in our streets, and which is not like Irish at all. Coming through another village called Ballindyne we were met by a group of young girls carrying Briedh Oge, an old custom in the country on St. Bridget's eve. There is a post-office and police barrack at Ballindyne also. The village bears traces of having at one time been a very thriving market town. The principal street is very wide and the houses higher than ever I saw them in such a small place, some are three-storey high and slated, I asked one of the R.I. Constabulary who loitered about our car, why they were so large? His reply is worthy of note:—"At one time Ballindyne was a large well-attended market town, but the landlord of this and the surrounding country, Lord Oranmore and Brown, ejected all the small farmers for miles around it, turning the land into sheep and cattle parks. As you drive along you will find only a few herd-men's cottages between this and Claremorris." This statement I found correct, The drizzling rain beat in our faces, and the squall continued until we were near Claremorris; but the sun shone out before we came within a mile of the town. When we entered the town and stopped at the car-office our luggage was born off the car by a stout Mayo Gorsoon, to the "Imperial," one of the Claremorris

hotels. We were introduced to the little carpeted parlour, where a turf fire awaited us, lighted up by "seed" from the kitchen fire, and giving out at once a strong heat and a lively blaze, and imparting the utmost comfort to us after our long, dreary drive from Tuam to Claremorris. We dined on excellent sweet mountainy mutton chops, toast and tea, and after doing justice in this respect, we took a view of the town, with its long, wide street, its two storied high, well-built slated houses, its market square, good shops, a police barrack, a Catholic Church, over which the Very Rev. Canon Ulick Bourke, the celebrated Celtic scholar presides, with dignity and usefulness. There is a Protestant church here too of small proportions, but with a conspicuous spire; and the Midland Great Western Railway has a station close by with which we have no need of making our acquaintance, as our destination is Knock, and back again. We leave for Knock at 3.30 p,m., having first paid fare on a one-horse car—the fare no less than 7s. and driver's fees, a few shillings, for which Jehu was thankful as a two shilling fee is rather rare thereabouts. The road from Claremorris to Knock is remarkably bad—indeed MacAdam seems never to have visited that quarter. The County Surveyor whoever he is, ought to look to the bonds of the road jobbers. The country around is desolation itself; here and there large patches of water cover the unreclaimed ground, and here and there,

up and down, amid these hills and valleys, a silence prevails, affording little or no proof of human energy or exertion. We had a view of the celebrated Croagh-Patrick from the road to Knock; and as it was from Croagh-Patrick that our great patron exorcised the evil spirits from Ireland with bell in hand, when

> The snakes and frogs
> Jumped into the bogs
> To save themselves from slaughter;

we took a particular interest in viewing its vast proportions. As we approached Knock we crossed a little stream which the driver told us was one of the best trout streams in Ireland. Near this is the residence of Mr. Ruttledge, brother-in-law to the late Sir John Gray. The house is built convenient to an ancient castle. The place is called Ballahoola. There are few houses on our way, and the state of the cabins in which the people dwell, is lamentable in the extreme. The road within a few miles of Knock is in a most wretched state, cut up with cars, made mud of, and almost impassible to the thousands who make a pilgrimage to Knock, with hearts swayed by strong emotions, and in the earnestness and strength of sincere convictions. We at length reach our destination at Knock, and recognise the Parish Church from what we had previously heard of it, though we were not prepared to see that it is really the handsome, well-proportioned building that it is. Viewing it as we approach, its cruci-

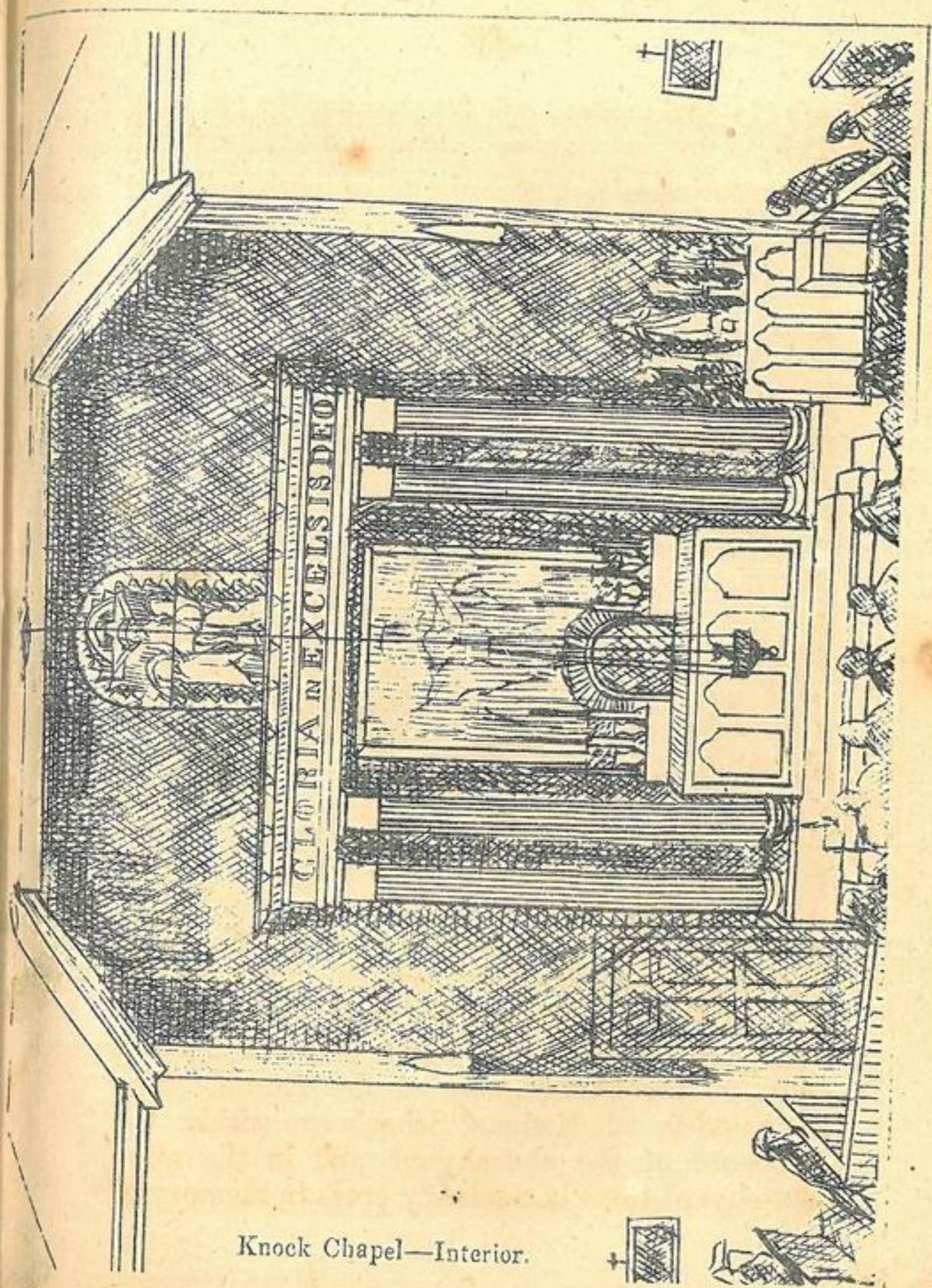
form shape, and handsome square built tower, with corners crocketted and pinnacled, and a cross rising from the apex of the roof, displaying much good taste, in its architectural features, not indeed to be expected in these remote Mayo hills. The tower is about 70 feet high, and is furnished with a full-toned sonorous bell which may be heard a great distance as it calls the people to mass. In the tower there is an aperture inside, which opens into the church, and which forms a place for a vocal choir with which the services are supplied. The height of the church is 35 feet to the top of the gable, and about 30 feet wide. The gable is topped with a plain cross of large proportions. It was on the face of the gable wall that the apparition was seen on the 21st of August. The interior of the church is rather bare ; small stations of the cross ; no benches, except a few private pews , two confessionals ; and over the altar a not very well done painting of the Crucifiction. The floor is of cement, but is now all cut up and pitted into holes, the people carrying away the cement, which renders it impossible to keep one's foot on it. The altar is a plain one—the façade supported by two fluted pillars at either side; and a stained glass window above, which is inserted in the partition that separates the sacristy from the church. *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* is the legend over the altar. A lamp always burns before the tabernacle in which the Blessed Sacrament is constantly preserved

for the adoration of the faithful. At the time we entered, the church was thronged. Archdeacon Cavanagh, the excellent Pastor of Knock was at the time in the sacristy hearing confessions, and the numbers who came to relieve their consciences of the burden of sin, was incalculable. The curate is attached to another chapel or church in the same parish, so that the whole work of Knock falls on the Archdeacon. After waiting some time I was enabled to introduce myself to the Archdeacon, to whom I had a letter to that effect, I found him to be a most gentlemanlike, amiable, and excellent clergyman, full of life and kindness , his fame is widespread all over Connaught, where rich and poor speak of him in the highest terms of praise —all to all men, and goodness personified in all his relations with the country at large. The Archdeacon is good looking, strong of constitution, between 50 and 60 years of age, energetic, active, cheerful, ever on the alert to meet every comer who wishes to see him ; his charity to the poor is unbounded—at one time he raffled his horse in order to raise funds to emigrate some poor girls who were in the workhouse. He holds the distinguished position of Archdeacon of Tuam. Having left the Archdeacon I proceeded to visit the scene of the Apparition ; and here I may say my feelings, were more intensly agitated than I can describe. Nothing, however, could surpass the inconvenienee of the ground which was all a

heap of mud, and which obliged me to secure a stone on which to kneel, as if I knelt in the mud I should find it very hard to rise. The evening was falling fast, a westerly breeze swept along and was somewhat cold. Hundreds of pilgrims were on the spot, praying in a manner such as I have never before witnessed, praying abroad under the canopy of Heaven, praying with unabated fervor, strong in faith; praying loudly, so as that the chorus of the united voices as they joined in the Ave Maria or other prayers, constituted a strength of intonation such as no music could equal of organ or attuned note. The scene reminded one of the description given by St. John Climachus in his "Holy ladder of perfection" of the deep abiding fervor of the penitents in the desert as they smote their breasts, and cried out for mercy, and begged of God the favor of grace, and besought him to take into consideration their manifold imperfections and necessities. Neither the thickening clouds which now come heaving up in the west and bearing night closely on their track, nor the wind as it came down among the hills and made the air keener, nor the impassible condition of the ground beneath their feet, had the least effect in checking the extreme ardor of their devotion. They prayed aloud to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the Infant Jesus, to the angels and the saints; they were there of all ranks and degrees, from all places, some with their vehicles, It is a curious fact that the ruts in the church

floor have been caused by the anxiety of the pilgrims to root up and possess themselves of, and convey away some of the clay which they consider invested with peculiar merit; and to such an extent has the wall of the gable on which the Apparition appeared been scraped away of its mortar and cement, that to prevent immediate mischief to the edifice of the Church, the Archdeacon has had a large portion of the gable wall wainscotted with stout deal boards about nine feet high. Even the stones of the gable wall were not safe from the hands of the indefatigable pilgrims, who were determined to carry away some token of their visit to a spot considered sacred by all the country around Knock, and far away over Connaught, and portions of Ulster up to Donegal, and Munster down to Limerick. The altar of the church has near it a small image of our Blessed Lady of Lourdes on a stand, surrounded by lighted tapers of wax. The tabernacle is made of wood with a gilt carved glory around the top. There is no ornament, except a few vases filled with flowers, now rare in winter, but the crocus peeps out, and the mountain fern, and busy hands do the pious work of having the altar and all its surroundings as cleanly and as neat and orderly as possible. There are two stained glass windows in the gables of the aisles; they indicate how anxious the parishioners have been to make the House of God worthy as a place for worshipping Him. There is no ornamentation

on the ceiling of the church, which is of plain white. The church is capable of containing a congregation of about six hundred persons; and thoroughly well packed are the people as they pour in to hear Mass. The Archdeacon gives out notices to the congregation and exhorts them in Irish—he speaks to them in English too; but they seem to love the old tongue, and the prayer for the dead in the Celtic, is something to be heard and remembered; it is deep, solemn, touching the heart and penetrating to the inmost recesses of the soul. There are two Masses on Sundays—one at 9 a.m., the second at 12 noon. On every week day there is Mass at 9 a.m., except when the Archdeacon is at the stations, at which period the Mass is at 7 p.m. The crowds have not room in the church, and they throng about the avenues, and into all accessible, and into all almost inaccessible places, and such is the position which they take that one finds it impossible to elbow his way into the church if he be not early. The choir is rather scanty in voices; it consists of only two female voices which are accompanied by a harmonium. I had the happiness of joining them in some selections during the celebration of Mass. There is always Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament after last Mass on the first Sunday of the month. The male and female National Schools are within the enclosure of the churchyard, and in the same churchyard there is a solitary cross in memory of



Knock Chapel—Interior.

the father of the previous P.P. The female children in the school, though poor, are neatly and cleanlily attired, a point on which Miss Anderson, the intelligent teacher, insists, and which seems to be settled as a rule. Owing to the kindness of a young boy named Tommy Dieguenan, who conducted us to his father's trim cottage, we were accommodated with the finest milk and butter, fresh eggs, and such bread as I have seldom seen equalled, as white as a hound's tooth, and as free from girt as possible. The civility and attention, combined with the intelligence of the Dieguenan family could not be surpassed. They spoke English with a distinctness of accentuation and fluency which made me wonder, whilst at the same time they do not neglect their native Celtic for which they have an undying love. The police barrack near Dieguenan's is a thatched one, very unusual in Ireland. There are five policemen stationed there, who were exercising under the direction of Constable Kilcommon when I was passing. The residence of the Archdeacon is a one-storey thatched house not far distant from the Church I forgot to state that attached to the gable of the Church is a rude wooden cross, on which there is an inscription to the effect that anyone who has received benefit from the pilgrimage should communicate the fact to the Archdeacon. Here there are some plastique statuettes of the Blessed Virgin, the pious offerings of pilgrims. Here too are

many crutches and walking sticks, at least one hundred in number, which have been left on the spot, in testimony of cures performed. I fear that the wainscotting will not protect the remainder of the gable from the anxiety of the people to obtain some portion of the mortar and cement. I saw a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary with sword in hand, delving and slashing at the morter, and making as earnest an effort as possible to become possessed of a relic The pilgrims come with lantern and ladder and hammer to steal away a portion of the mortar. As my visit was for a twofold purpose: to investigate facts, and to make drawings, &c. I, in the first instance, made the acquaintance of Miss Mary Byrne, a highly intelligent and respectable young lady, the daughter of the Widow Byrne, who with her two brothers and a sister, live together in a farm house about 300 yards from Knock Church. There is no mistaking the earnestness, truthfulness, and sincerity of Miss Byrne; and it is evident to everyone that she is one of the last persons who could be influenced by imagination or invent a story. She at once readily entered into a full account of the Apparition, when I informed her of the nature of my visit, and presented my credentials. She stated that on the 21st of August last at about 8 o'clock in the evening, when proceeding to lock up the Chapel for the night, in the company of Miss Mary M'Laughlin, housekeeper to the Archdeacon;

there being perfect daylight at the time; before crossing the boundry wall or ditch which separates the church meadow from their grounds, she saw the Apparition against the sacristy gable about a foot in height from the ground, on a level in fact with the top of the meadow grass. She saw three figures—The Blessed Virgin in the middle, St. Joseph to the left, St John to the right. To the right of St. John was a Lamb recumbent, behind which was an upright cross. To the right of the Lamb was what she described to be an altar; this was in the centre of the gable and extended up to the window-sill from the ground to the breadth of about five feet. She was petrified, terrified, transfixed, but taking courage she ran to call her brother Dominic Byrne, a young man of about 20 years of age, as fine a specimen of a Milesian as one could see in a day's walk, highly intelligent, and answering rapidly and clearly every question. Mary told Dominic to come and see the Blessed Virgin! Nonsense, nonsense, said he, what are you dreaming of girl? "Come, come," she replied "come and see and judge for yourself, come and see what you may see, and believe my word." He at once proceeded to see, followed by his mother, sister and brother. They passed the schoolhouse wall, and stood in utter amazement at the vision which they no longer disbelieved in. They were soon joined by others, including another Dominic Byrne, a cattle jobber, of about 30 years of age, a cour-

ageous and powerful man. As they stood gazing at the Apparition in profound astonishment, the rain began to fall heavily, and the wind to blow, but they remained where they stood, drenched with the downpour, and never leaving the spot. After gazing for some time, Dominic Byrne, the cattle jobber, said let us go over the wall, and come nearer, and see what it is all about. No says Dominic Byrne, junr., who is clerk of the Church—no, not till the Priest comes down. We shall send some person for the Priest. Let us go in at once said Dominic Byrne, the cattle jobber, what can they or she do to us; surely no harm, and if harm why we shall call out? In the name of God I'll go in, said he, here's my hat, take care of it—He then went over the wall, the others followed, gradually approaching nearer to the guide—as they approached, the figures seemed to recede back closer to the gable. When they got within two yards of the Apparition though the rain continued to come down in torrents, the ground was perfectly dry, and there was a semi-circle around the gable—the rain beat down on the gable wall above the Apparition, and stopped when it came to the figures; turning on either side it ran down to the ground, and formed a pool of water, which was collected next morning in bottles by the Archdeacon and preserved, but which he has long since distributed to the faithful. When the messenger came to the Archdeacon and informed him of the Apparition he was reading his

office at the time, and he told the messenger that it was all nonsense, he would not come, that what they saw was a reflection of the lights of the lamp before the altar. The Byrnes and others remained praying for a long time, and totally free from rain, having been within the circle on which the rain did not fall, although it came down in torrents everywhere else all around.

To the right of the Lamb was what seemed to be an altar; this extended from the ground to about a foot of the window cill of the sacristy, and like the figures it seemed to rest on the tops of the grass. It was between four and five feet wide. The base of the altar had on it what seemed to be a large heavy moulding; and on the altar there appeared to be, in rows of three, statuettes of angels or saints (Dominic Byrne could not define which). Mary Byrne could give no description of the Altar whatever. The middle row of angels and saints on the altar was apparently more numerous than the uppermost, and the lowest more numerous than the other two. All the figures seemed to have a slight fringe of silvery cloud under them; the figure of St. John was partially concealed from the knees down in the cloud; the position of St. Joseph was that of one in the act of making a profound obeisance with hands joined, and partly turned towards our Blessed Lady; the figure of St. Joseph was clothed in one garment, perfectly white, the hair and beard somewhat grey; the flesh had a natural

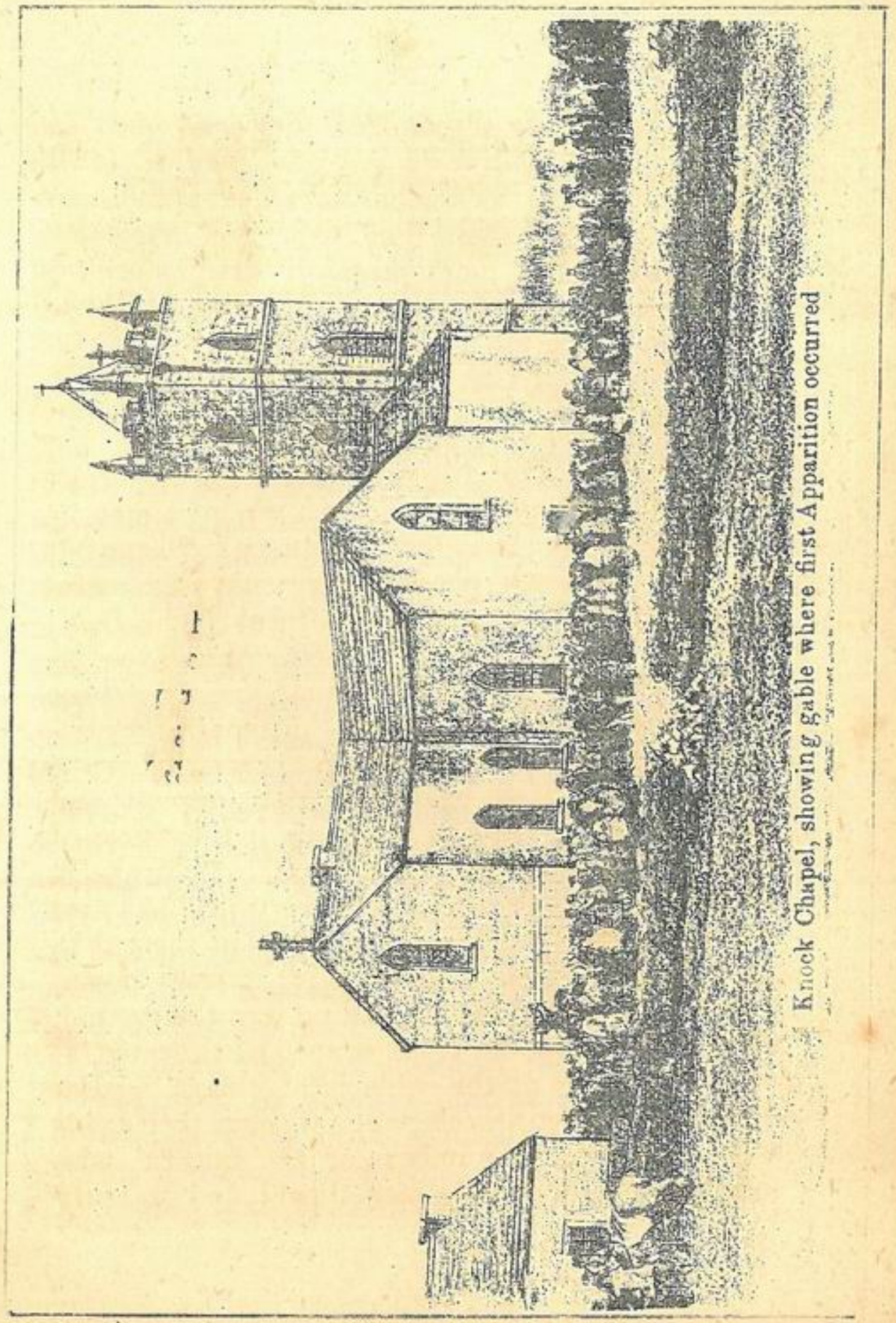
tint. The Blessed Virgin stood facing those who saw the Apparition; the figure was clothed in resplendant white; on her head was a brilliant crown, her shoulders were covered with a short mantle; the inner garment full, flowing; her eyes directed upwards, her hands raised to the shoulders, the palms turned towards each other, somewhat like a priest's when celebrating Mass. The hair fell on the shoulders and back in long ringlets; the feet were visible and covered with a sort of net work. The figure of St. John was turned partly towards the altar, and partly towards the people; in his left hand he held a large book, his eyes turned towards it as if reading; and his right hand raised as if in the attitude of preaching or confirming his words; the figure of St. John was clothed in one long garment of white, and on his head was a mitre of same colour. A brilliant light surrounded all the figures, which light, however, had not the effect of illuminating the place around or outside the circle of the Apparition; brilliant lights were seen to corruscate now and again on the gable. Dominic Byrne, (cattle jobber), after gazing intently for some time at the Apparition, took courage, and gradually approached nearer, so near as to touch the figures, which he made an effort to do. An aged female in the group, named Bridget Trench, endeavoured to kiss the feet of the Blessed Virgin, but could feel no substance. Dominic Byrne, when asked did he endeavour to touch the figures, said he en-

deavoured with the open index and middle fingers of his right hand to touch the eyes of the figure of the Blessed Virgin, but said he could feel no substance, though he covered the eyes with the tops of his fingers. After about two hours from the time the group first saw the Apparition, a messenger came to them stating that an old woman who resided near the Church, was dying—her name was Campbell—they ran off to see her—when they returned to the Church the whole place was in darkness. The old woman Campbell, however, did not die till a few months afterwards.

As related to me by Miss Anderson, the intelligent Mistress of the Female National School at Knock, a second Apparition was seen on the 2nd of January, between the hours of 11 a.m., and 12 o'clock noon. Light appeared on the gable, and out from the gable was a pillar which supported a figure, the identity of which she was unable to explain. Several smaller pillars decreasing in size from the large one, appeared on the ground towards the gable. On the gable itself luminous scrolls appeared, which were not only seen by Miss Anderson, but by Archdeacon Kavanagh and others who happened to be there at the moment. Archdeacon Kavanagh distinctly saw this Apparition. On the Epiphany, (the 6th of January). a third apparition was seen, which was witnessed by two members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, namely, Sub-Constable B. Collins and Sub-Con-

stable E. Fraher, and several other persons.

Sub-Constable Collins says:—They were going on patrol duty about midnight, and passing by the Church they saw brilliant lights on the gable; a series of three circles in regular order shone in a strong light athward the gable, and here and there on several parts of the gable were circles of light also fixed. Sub-Constable Collins candidly avows that he had not up to that moment reposed any faith whatever in the Apparitions; but when he saw the light irradiating from the circles his feelings may be imagined, they cannot be described. He states that he felt as he never felt before, impressed so strongly with the awful solemnity, and unexampled nature of the fact; that he and his comrade threw themselves instantly on their knees, and joined in prayer those who were there with them at the time; they remained in prayer for two hours; strong vigorous men, uninfluenced by imagination, earnest and decided, and in the most certain positiveness of having witnessed what Sub-Constable Collins tells. While there they also saw a very brilliant star appear in the top right hand corner of the gable, and having given out its light, it went down, rapidly disappearing, descending into the ground. Since that night the reappearance of these extraordinary lights on the gable is of almost regular occurrence; not a week passes without their being seen, and that to numbers of the faithful who assured me of having seen them; and so truly



Knock Chapel, showing gable where first Apparition occurred

are they expected that people watch and wait all night long, and are electrified or impressed with inexpressible sentiments of veneration and awe when they come, and when the people gaze on these supernatural symptoms. The Archdeacon has told me that he has seen them several times, and that he believes that they are supernatural. I think that the Archdeacon has full reason to know that these appearances are supernatural. The Archdeacon believes that these lights indicate that the Great God intends or wishes that something shall be done, of which, as yet, no other indication is afforded; but that the time is yet to come when the Creator of all things will make manifest His Will; and the Archdeacon prays and begs of all others to pray, that God's Will may soon be known. As I was engaged all day on the 2nd of February (Feast of the Purification) taking series of photographs, &c., I could not pay attention to the miracles which were stated to have occurred on that day; amongst these two persons are said to have recovered their sight, and two to have been enabled to walk—those who were blind had been so since their birth, and those who could not walk had been for a long time helpless. When I had finished my work in the evening I sought one of those who had obtained the use of his limbs in order to question him as to his cure; I found him sitting in the Church surrounded by a group of anxious enquirers. He appeared to be a labouring man of about 45 years of age. He

told me he was cured that morning just as Mass had begun; that he found a great change had come over him, and so strong was he that he was able to walk out of the church without the support of his crutch, and to leave the crutch at the gable in token of his cure. This was the first time for nearly two years that he could walk without help of the crutch. He stated to me that he had been suffering from a stroke of paralysis, which he contracted by a severe cold which he caught by leaving off his inner clothing in order to have them washed before his leaving for the harvest in England His left side, he said, was considerably affected, and even his tongue was lacerated by his teeth, not having sufficient power to move his tongue from between his teeth while masticating. His left arm had been completely useless to him also. When I was speaking to him he could speak with great distinctness, and, to use his own expression, could go through the movements of the moneen jig. I asked him to get up and walk, which he did without the slightest difficulty. The arm was not perfectly restored when I was speaking to him, but he said he did not mean to leave Knock until he was thoroughly cured, such was the strength of his faith.

The Archdeacon told me that very many wonderful cures had taken place through the application of the cement and earth at the end of the gable. One of the most remarkable was that of a little girl about 5 years old, named Gallagher,

who lives in a neighbouring Parish. She had suffered from chronic sore eyes since her birth, and to such an extent had she been affected that her Stepmother, by whom she had been brought to Knock Chapel, declared that she could never sufficiently open her eyelids to see the pupils. She was cured by the application, to the lids, of a little earth taken from the spot over which the Blessed virgin stood. *

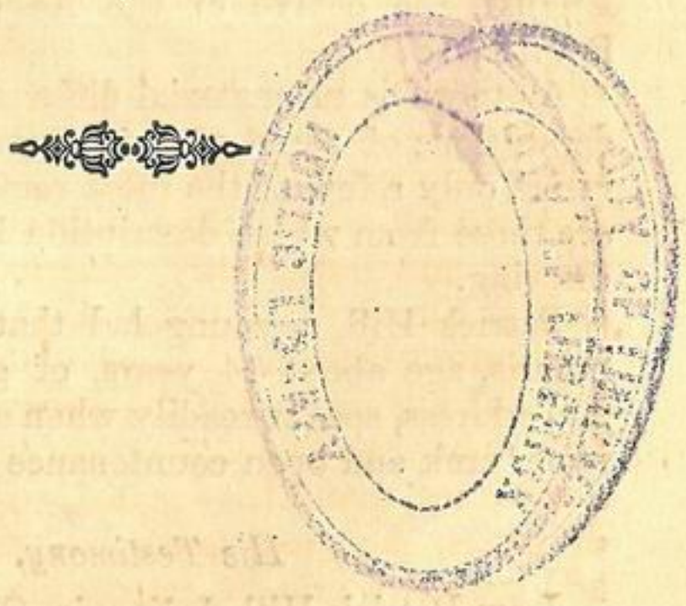
"The number of miracles I have witnessed here," said the Archdeacon to me, "both in nature and grace are most astounding and beyond counting." It has been said that these Apparitions and lights may have been produced by natural means, by projecting images by means of magic lanterns, or by disolving-view apparatus. But nothing can be more truly absurd than this idea; there is nothing in the whole circumstance of the place, of the facts, of the appearances themselves, of the particular locality, remote amid hills and bogs, to sanction the notion for one moment. The apparatus required for the production or projection of images and dissolving views, &c., has never appeared in that district, nor have persons been seen about the district with such apparatus; nor could such apparatus be worked with any degree of success. Being, as I am a practical operator in the art of projecting images by means of lime-light and other brilliant and

* I have since seen the child and to all appearance her eyes are as well as if never effected.

artificial lights; having frequently exhibited such in public halls, I unhesitatingly assert that the conditions necessary to produce images such as have been seen are entirely absent. The conclusion, therefore, is that the work has been the work of supernatural agency, of Divine power, of the Great Power which gives and takes, which makes the sun and moon and stars to show light, which gives man intellect, and which holds in the cup of His hand the destinies of the world.

As I have already partially stated my chief object in undertaking the journey to Knock was to take photographs of the place, which I have done, to ascertain all the particulars of the Apparitions, from trustworthy sources, which I have carefully investigated, and to make drawings from which I shall have lithographs printed, not only of the scene itself of the Apparitions, but of everything connected with the particulars of the Apparitions, which have hitherto been but very faintly and imperfectly described. During my stay at Knock there were other cures and other miraculous incidents besides those I have stated, but as I was engaged at the work of my profession, I had not time to make myself more thoroughly acquainted, than I have stated, with them. These drawings, &c. shall soon be published. I may add that it would be impossible to describe the extraordinary fervor and devotion of the people, and the intense interest which is taken by all the

country in the progress of the supernatural visitations and Apparitions at Knock, which are still continuing, to the inexpressible wonder of thousands of the faithful who are visiting the locality from all parts.



CHAPTER II.

WHAT THE EYE-WITNESSES SAY.

Depositions taken in the presence of the Very Rev. Archdeacon Bartholomew A. Kavanagh, P.P; of Rev. James Canon Waldron, Ballyhannis; and Rev. U. J. Canon Bourke, P.P., of Kilcolman, Claremorris, Co. Mayo, deputed by his Grace, the Archbishop of Tuam, to see into the truth of the vision alleged to have appeared at the Catholic Church at Knock on the evening af the 21st of August, the octave of the Assumption of the B.V.M., 1879.

As there is no material difference between the depositions of some of the witnesses I shall here insert only a few of the most remarkable. They are those from whose description I have made the drawing.

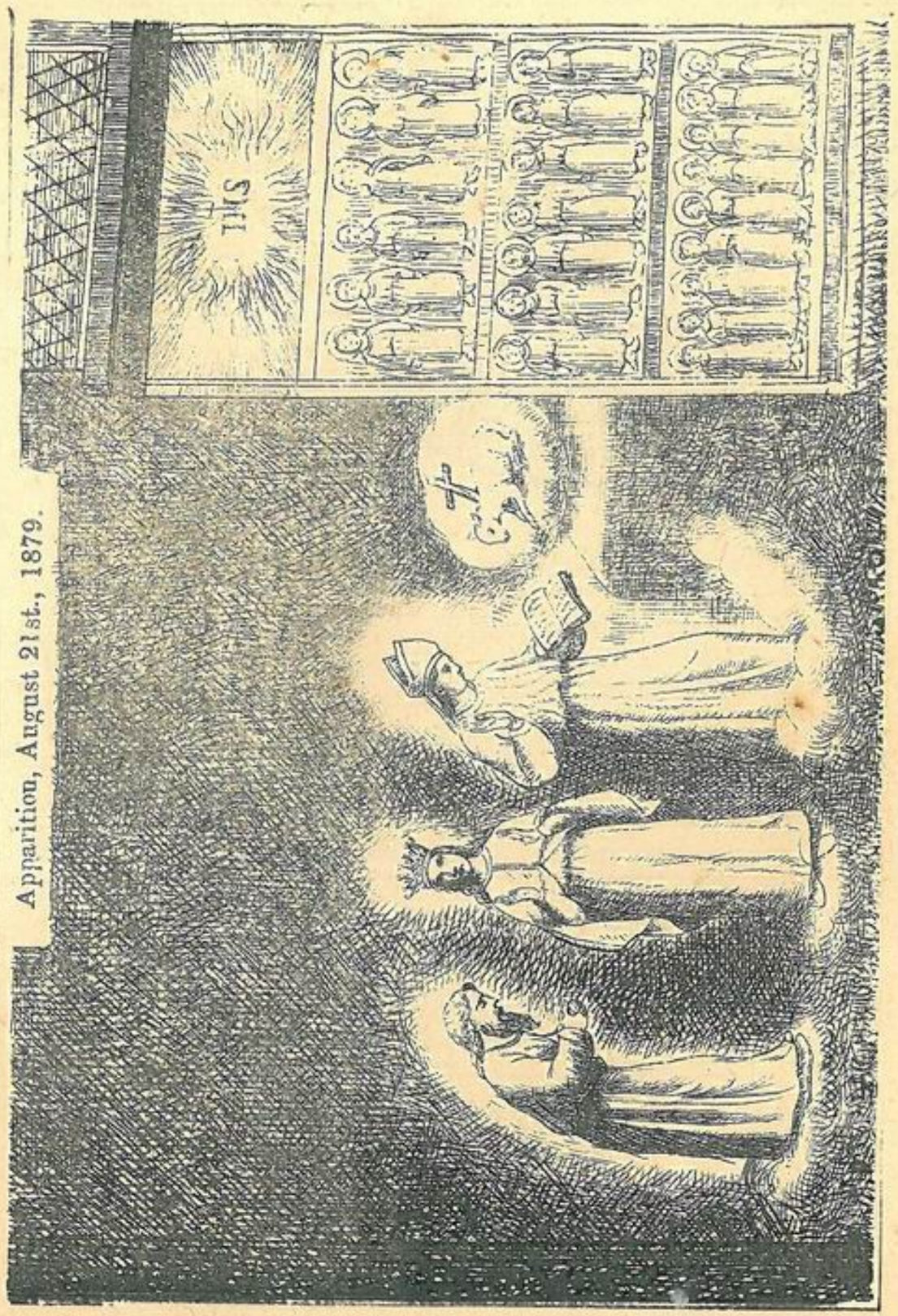
Patrick Hill, a young lad that lives in Claremorris, age about 14 years, of good appearance and address, speaks readily when asked a question, is of frank and open countenance :—

His Testimony.

I am Patrick Hill, I live in Claremorris; my aunt lives at Knock; I remember the 21st of

August last; on that day I was drawing home turf, or peat from the bog, on an ass. While at my aunt's, at about 8 o'clock in the evening, Dominic Beirne came into the house; he cried out: Come up to the Chapel and see the miraculous lights, and the beautiful visions that are to be seen there. I followed him, another man by name Dominic Beirne, and John Durkan, and a small boy named John Curry, came with me; we were all together; we ran over towards the chapel. When we, running southwest, came so far from the village that on our turning, the gable came in view, we immediately beheld the lights, a clear white light, covering most of the gable, from the ground up to the window and higher. It was a kind of changing bright light, going sometimes up high and again not so high. We saw the figures —the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph and St. John, and an altar, with the Lamb on the altar, and a cross behind the Lamb. At this time we reached as far as the wall fronting the gable; there were other people there before me; some of them were praying, some not; all were looking at the vision; they were leaning over the wall or ditch, with their arms resting on the top. I saw the figures and brightness; the boy, John Curry, from behind the wall, could not see them; but I did; and he asked me to lift him up till he could see the grand babies, as he called the figures; it was raining; some—amongst them Mary M'Loughlin —who beheld what I now saw, had gone away,

others were coming. After we prayed a while I thought it right to go across the wall and into the chapel yard. I brought little Curry with me; I went then up closer; I saw everything distinctly. The figures were full and round, as if they had a body and life! they said nothing, but as we approached they seemed to go back a little towards the gable. I distinctly beheld the Blessed Virgin Mary, life size, standing about two feet or so above the ground, clothed in white robes, which were fastened at the neck; her hands were raised to the height of the shoulders, as if in prayer, with the palms facing one another, but slanting inwards towards the face; the palms were not turned towards the people, but facing each other as I have described, she appeared to be praying; her eyes were turned, as I saw, towards heaven; she wore a brilliant crown on her head and over the forehead, where the crown fitted the brow, a beautiful rose; the crown appeared brilliant, and of a golden brightness, of a deeper hue, inclined to a mellower yellow, than the striking whiteness of the robes she wore; the upper parts of the crown appeared to be a series of sparkles, or glittering crosses. I saw her eyes, the balls, the pupils, and the iris of each—[the boy did not know the special names of those parts of the eye, but he pointed to them, and described them in his own way]—I noticed her hands, and especially the appearance of her face; the robes came only as far as the ankles; one foot, the right, was slightly



Apparition, August 21st., 1879.

in advance of the other; at times she appeared, and all the figures appeared to move out and again to go backwards; I saw them move; she did not speak; I went up very near; one old woman went up and embraced the Virgin's feet, and she found nothing in her arms or hands; they receded, she said, from her; I saw St. Joseph to the Blessed Virgin's right hand; his head was bent, from the shoulders, forward; he appeared to be paying his respects; I noticed his whiskers, they appeared slightly grey; there was a line or dark margin between the figure of the Blessed Virgin and that of St. Joseph, so that one could know St, Joseph, and the place where his figure appeared distinctly from that of the Blessed Virgin and the spot where she stood. I saw the feet of St. Joseph, too, his hands were joined like a person in prayer. The third figure that stood before me was that of St. John the Evangelist; he stood erect on the Gospel side of the altar, and at an angle with the figure of the Blessed Virgin, so that his back was not turned to the altar, nor to the Mother of God; his right arm was at an angle with a line drawn across from St. Joseph to where our Blessed Lady appeared to be standing; St. John was dressed like a Bishop preaching; he wore a small mitre on his head; he held a Mass Book, or a Book of the Gospels, in the left hand; the right hand was raised to the elevation of the head; while he kept the index finger and the middle finger of the right hand raised, the other

three fingers of the same hand were shut*; he appeared as if he were preaching, but I heard no voice; I came so near that I looked into the book; I saw the lines and the letters. St. John wore no sandles; his left hand was turned towards the altar that was behind him; the altar was a plain one, like any ordinary altar, without any ornaments. On the altar stood a Lamb—the size of a lamb eight weeks old; the face of the Lamb was fronting the west, and looking in the direction of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph; behind the Lamb a large cross was placed erect or perpendicular on the altar; around the Lamb I saw angels hovering during the whole time, for the space of one hour and a half or longer; I saw their wings fluttering, but I did not perceive their heads or faces, which were not turned to me. For the space of one hour and a half we were under the pouring rain; at this time I was very wet; I noticed that the rain did not wet the figures which appeared before me, although I was wet myself; I went away then.

(Signed), PATRICK HILL.

Witness present:—U. J. Canon Bourke,

October 8th, 1879.

*The description given by Dominic Byrne, senior, and others who saw the Apparition, differ from P. Hill's in respect to the *pose* of St. John's right hand.

From careful enquiries I am disposed to consider Dominic Byrne's as the most accurate. He says:—The right hand was not as high as the shoulder, but it was slightly extended outwards and raised, and that none of the fingers were closed

Testimony of Mary Beirne, aged about 26 years.

I live in the village of Knock, to the east side of the chapel; Mary M'Loughlin came on the evening of the 21st of August to my house at about half-past seven o'clock, she remained some little time; I came back with her as she was returning homewards, it was either eight o'clock or a quarter to eight at the time. It was still bright; I had never heard from Miss M'Loughlin about the vision which she had seen just before that. The first I learned of it was on coming at the time just named from my mother's house in company with Miss Mary M'Loughlin, and at the distance of three hundred yards or so from the church, I beheld, all at once, standing out from the gable, and rather to the west of it, three figures which, on more attentive inspection, appeared to be that of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph and St. John. That of the Blessed Virgin was life-size, the others apparently either not so big or not so high as her figure; they stood a little distance out from the gable wall, and, as well as I could judge, a foot and a half or two feet from the ground. The Virgin stood erect, with eyes raised to heaven, her hands elevated to the shoulders or a little higher, the palms inclined slightly towards the shoulders or bosom; she

The index and middle finger were as might naturally be expected little more straightened than the others.

This discrepancy may be accounted for by the position from which each person saw the Apparition. Hill being low of statue, of course, saw the figures somewhat upwards.

wore a large cloak of a white colour, hanging in full folds and somewhat loosely around her shoulders, and fastened to the neck; she wore a crown on the head—rather a large crown—and it appeared to be somewhat yellower than the dress or robes worn by Our Blessed Lady. In the figure of St. Joseph the head was slightly bent, and inclined towards the Blessed Virgin, as if paying her respect; it represented the Saint as somewhat aged, with gray whiskers and grayish hair. The third figure appeared to be that of St John the Evangelist; I do not know only I thought so, except the fact that at one time I saw a statue at the chapel of Lekanvey, near Westport, County Mayo, very much resembling the figur e which now stood before me in group with St. Joseph and Our Blessed Lady, which I beheld on this occasion. He held the Book of Gospels, or the Mass Book, open in his left hand, while he stood slightly turned on the left side towards the altar that was over a little from him. I must remark that the statue which I had formerly seen at Lekanvey Chapel had no mitre on its head while the figure which I now beheld had one—not a high mitre, but a short-set kind of one. The statue at Lekanvey had a book in the left hand, and the fingers of the right hand raised. The figure before me on this present occasion of which I am speaking had a book in the left hand, as I have stated, and the index finger and the middle finger of the right hand raised as if he were

speaking, and impressing some point forcibly on an audience. It was this coincidence of figure and *pose* that made me surmise, for it is only an opinion, that the third figure was that of St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord. But I am not in any way sure what saint or character the figure represented. I said, as I now expressed, that it was St. John the Evangelist, and then all the others present said the same—said what I stated. The altar was under the window, which is the gable, and a little to the west near the centre, or a little beyond it. Towards this altar St. John—as I shall call the figure—was looking, while he stood at the Gospel side of the said altar, with his right arm inclined at an angle outwardly, towards the Blessed Virgin. The altar appeared to me to be like the altars in use in the Catholic Church—large and full-sized. It had no linens, no candles, nor any special ornamnetations; it was only a plain altar. Above the altar, and resting on it, was a Lamb, standing with the face towards St. John, thus fronting the western sky. I saw no cross nor crucifix. On the body of the Lamb, and around it, I saw golden stars, or small brilliant lights, glittering like jets or glass balls, reflecting the light of some luminous body. I remained from a quarter past eight to half past nine o'clock. At the time it was raining.

Testimony of Dominic Beirne, (senior),

I live at Knock; I remember the evening of the 21st of August; my cousin Dominic Beirne

came to see us at about eight o'clock, P.M., and called me to see the vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary and other saints at the south gable of the chapel, I went with him. When I reached the south side of the chapel, we saw the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, having her hands uplifted, and her eyes turned up towards heaven, as if in prayer, and she was dressed in a white cloak. To her right I saw St. Joseph, and on her left St. John, just as the other persons had told me before I came. I saw an altar there, and figures representing saints and angels traced or carved on the lower part of it. The night was dark and raining, and yet these images, in the dark night, appeared with bright lights as plain as under the noon-day sun. At the time it was pitch dark and raining heavily, and yet there was not one drop of rain near the images. There was a mitre on St. John's head, nearly like to that which a bishop wears. I was there only for one quarter of an hour ; at the time I was there, five other persons were in it with me, looking on at the Apparition. All the figures appeared clothed in white , the whiskers on St. Joseph were an iron gray ; the Blessed Virgin had on a white cloak. The reason I had for calling the third figure St. John is because some saw his statue or his likeness at Lekanvey Parish Chapel.

Since the foregoing was written I have frequently visited Knock, and conversed with many persons who saw most extraordinary Apparitions,

and have been a witness of several miraculous cures, some of which I will now narate. The Apparitions of Holy Week were so numerous and of such variety as to put it beyond the scope of this little book to recount the details. The witnessing of an Apparition and subsequent cure as related to me by a young lad named Gillespy, whose father is a journalist in Castlebar, is most interesting :—

"For five years I suffered from hip disease, curvature of the spine, and contraction of the sinews. Several medical men tried their skill to effect a cure, but without avail. For the last ten months I was under the care of Dr. Thompson, in Richmond Hospital, Dublin, who, with other Physicians, used all their art to restore me. At length Dr. Thompson said he could do no more and advised me to go home. I asked him did he think I could ever get better? He replied that after some time I might be able to move about with the aid of crutches, or a stick. About this time I heard of the wonderful cures at Knock and determined to try what the Blessed Virgin could do for me. I, accordingly came here the day before Patrick's Day. On St. Patrick's Day, while praying in the Chapel, I saw the Apparition at the right hand side of the high altar. Down low I saw the figure of St. Joseph ; above him was that of the Blessed Virgin ; and over her was the Lamb of God, This I saw from five o'clock in the evening until I left the Chapel at ten. On

St. Joseph's Day. while praying in the Chapel, I heard the people exclaim that the Blessed Virgin was appearing. With the help of my crutches I succeeded in getting near the altar rails, where the crush became so excessive that I thought I should be suffocated. While looking at that part of the wall over the Blessed Virgin's altar, I saw the Sacred Heart. I was then nearly exhausted, and cried out to Robert Dieguenan, the Sacristan, who was inside the railing, to pull me in, which he tried to do, but could not succeed until he was assisted by a woman; the crutches remained outside, and I fell prostrate on the floor where I remained for a few minutes; I felt myself getting strong and asked Robert to assist me to rise until I should try to walk; when he raised me up I found my limbs so firm that I was able to walk with a little assistance; he then put me sitting down; after resting I was able to kneel at the altar of the Blessed Virgin. Some time after this I called Robert and asked him to assist me into the Sacristy, which he did; Father Kavanagh was there engaged blessing beads; I explained to him how I was cured; he told Robert to go out for my crutches and place them at the gable, and at the same time to bring me one of the sticks left there by others who were cured; when he brought me the stick I found that I was able to walk to my lodgings, without any assistance, which was at Tom Curry's, who keeps the Post Office; since then I am daily getting strength in the right

leg (which was the one affected.)"

Such is young Gillespy's story. He is one of those cases examined by the Commission of Clergymen appointed by his Grace the Archbishop, to take evidence of cures effected at Knock, for the purpose of having it forwarded to Rome. He is a most intelligent lad, is about 14 years old, and at the time I was speaking to him, April 1st, was well able to walk and exhibited no trace of spinal curvature. His right leg was shorter than the other, which accounts for the necessity of being still compelled to use a stick. He could walk without the stick but there was so much strain on the muscle of the other leg that it tired him too much. He assured me he had not the least pain since his cure. Robert Dieguenan corroborated the above statement. I was speaking of his case to one of the Constabulary at Knock, Sub-Constable Collins, who told me that he saw young Gillespy when he came there, and that he was so powerless as to be compelled, when walking to to the Chapel with the aid of his crutches, to put out one crutch first and then the other before he could move the feet after them.

Another case that came under my notice was that of a boy about ten years old, who was born dumb. His name is William Hendrick, and lives with his parents at Enniscorthy. He came to Knock with his mother and sister, and was restored the use of his hearing on Thursday, April 1st. He had been educated at a Deaf and Dumb

School, could read and write, was in every way an interesting boy, intelligent and quick. When I saw him on the day he was cured the only sylable he could utter was "papa," which fact was a sufficient proof that he had really been deaf from his birth. If he had ever been able to hear, he certainly should have been able to speak more or less. The organs of the voice and tongue were seemingly in perfect order. I conversed with him in writing, asking some questions and pronouncing some words for him. After some time I succeeded in getting him to pronounce the word "no," but in a very imperfect manner. He seemed to be almost in an ecstasy of joy at being able to hear the sound of the voice. At the time I was speaking to him it never occurred to me to try the effects of music upon him, a thing which I afterwards regretted, as, I make no doubt, it would affect him much, seeing it was the first time in his existence this charming art presented its soul-stirring strains to his sense of hearing.

Since then I received the following letter from his father :—

Enniscorthy,
May 2nd, 1880.

Mr. T. O'Connor.
Sir,

In reply to your letter, he is every day improving. He can pronounce all the Alphabet, He is in Knock at present, himself and his mother. Father Kavanagh wrote for him to go back, and

I sent himself and his mother back, as Archbishop MacHale required him there to hold a commission on him. He had to fetch a letter from St. Joseph's, Cabra, saying how long he spent there. He was four years at school and went to it deaf and dumb; he never knew what a sound was until the Mother of God opened his ears and tongue.

Yours respectfully,
WM. HENDRICK.

Another remarkable cure was that of a man named Whelan, from Manchester. He had lost the use of his eyes through some lime getting into them, about twelve months before the day he was cured, and so bad was he that, as he, himself, stated he would not know his own child. He was operated on by the Physicians in the Eye Infirmary of Manchester, but to no good effect; last March he came to Knock, and after a day or two got completely restored to sight. When I saw him he had, to all appearance, the perfect use of his eyes, and no person could say that they had ever been affected. I saw him read and write without any difficulty.

During my visit in Easter week I met with Patrick Scott, of Cleaboy, Ballintubber, who was the first person that left a crutch at Knock. He related the history of his cure to me on Friday morning. He was one of those who were examined by the Commission appointed by His Grace the

Archbishop of Tuam, to inquire into the authenticity of the miracles wrought at Knock. The sitting held on the day previous was that at which he was examined. He is about 28 years of age:—

"About nine years ago I got a pain in my groin, and was so bad for five months that my recovery was doubtful ; the following summer I was able to walk with the aid of a crutch, which I continued to use for nearly nine years until the day I was cured; during that time I could not walk two yards without it. If any boys, out of sport, took away my crutch, as they frequently did, I was obliged to crawl on my hands and knees. In consequence of the sinews contracting the leg effected considerably shorter than the other. In walking I never touched the ground with the heel, only the top of the toe tipped it ; I came to Knock on the 27th of November last, and went to pray at the gable where the Blessed Virgin had appeared; when there about five minutes I felt a kind of start in the leg, after which I went into the Chapel and prayed for a short time ; I then found it getting quite strong, so much so that I was able to walk out again to the gable and leave my crutch there ; I never used it since. I walked to Ballyhaunis that day with the assistance of a stick only. Ballyhaunis is six Irish miles from Knock. In coming here on yesterday I walked from my home, to the Railway Station a distance of four Irish miles, and from Ballyhaunis to here, making in all ten miles. I intend to walk it back again

this morning. I did not feel the least pain or fatigue since I got cured ; the leg has got considerably stronger, and is getting longer every day."

When speaking to me he seemed in perfect health and was well able to walk about the Chapel yard ; the leg effected was about four inches shorter than the other, so that he still uses a stick to assist him in walking.

I was in Knock on Ascension Thursday and the week following, during which time there were many miraculous cures ; also some Apparitions of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, St. John, Angels, and Saints. These Apparitions were not seen by all. There were also Apparitions the week before, some of which were witnessed by Father Kavanagh himself.

One of the persons cured on Ascension Thursday was a young girl from Mallow, Miss Mary Sheahan. I was present myself while she suffered violent pain in the left knee (the part effected.) It is a strange fact that nearly every person cured feel great pain when they are about recovering the use of the diseased member. Some get very violent fits. I saw one young man who was lame in both legs, he became so voilent as to require two persons to hold him. He was from Kerry and was cured the same day. Miss Sheahan had been ailing for 13 years with contraction of the sinews. She was obliged to use a crutch, this is now hanging on the gable of Knock Chapel as

a monument that speaks more forcible than the most eloquent preacher could do, of the power of the holy Mother of God.

I could relate many such cures, but they are now become so numerous as to make the recitation of them monotonous.

CHAPTER III.

The following are some accounts of the Apparitions of Holy Week.

Extract from a letter written by Miss M'NAMARA to one of the nuns of the Convent of the Perpetual Adoration, of this town :—

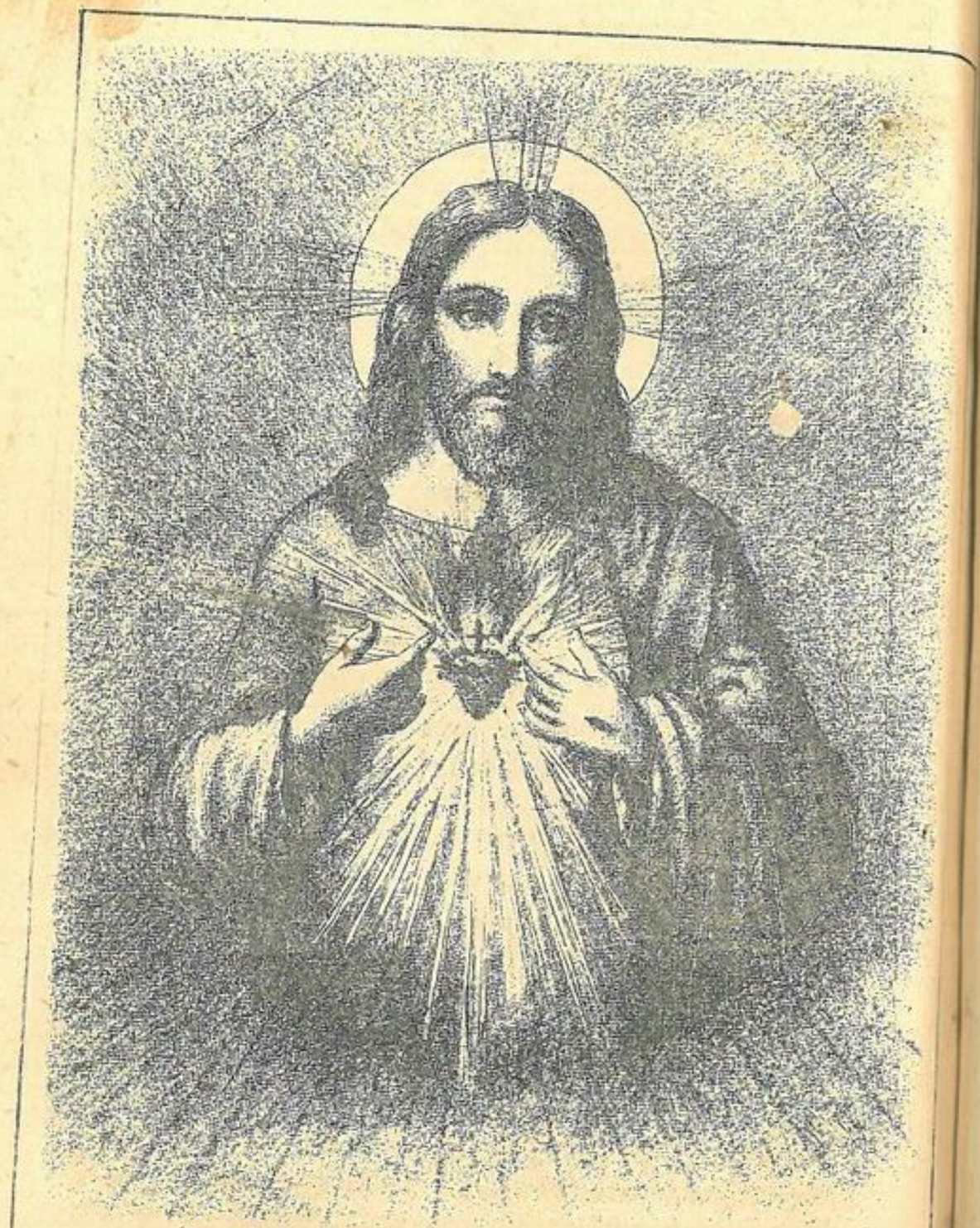
Ardagh,
Kilcolman,
March, 30th, 1880.

My very dear Str. Clare,

According to promise, I write to let you know all regarding my visit to Knock. I am proud to be able to tell you it has been a very successful one, thank Goodness. I was there early on Wednesday and until Good Friday evening, when I left. There had been many Apparitions: Wednesday, Holy Thursday night, Good Friday morning; but I saw none of these. My time had not come 'till about 30 past 12 o'clock on Friday, when through God's sweet mercy I witnessed a most beautiful one on the inside of the church, above the altar. No doubt your pious prayers obtained the privilege for me. I saw the Lamb with a part of the cross on its shoulders. I did not see the entire of the cross, but really the Lamb appeared raised a little out from the

wall—I mean to say one could feel it at least seemingly—on the same wall also I saw a figure of St. Joseph with the child in his arms, and half the face of St. Joseph was covered with that of the child's; then underneath St. Joseph, on the wall, was the figures of three angels; and I saw also one of the Crucifiction; and then appeared on the Virgin's altar, Mary in her sorrow, with our Redeemer dead in her arms, and she looking sadly on her dead Christ; behind the head of our Divine Lord appeared another, as it were, supporting the head, and lastly to me appeared a lovely shadow of our Lord, with His Sacred Heart exposed as in a picture; innumerable rays of light seemed issuing in every direction from the Heart, and a rather dark flame went upwards towards the beard which our Lord wore; next to this appeared the deficient shadow of, I think, a man. I know not what to name this last. Many were in Knock who saw nothing whatever, and some there were who saw a good deal more, but I was one of the most unworthy of all who saw. It was only out of our Lord's pure mercy I was happy enough to see that which, I trust, I'll never forget, and now be sure to supply for me in holy prayer and in adoration. I beg, oh! I beg a *special memento.*

I nearly forgot to tell you the little warts under my chin came off by the application of the blessed wax which burned under the Apparitions of Good Friday morning.



One of the Apparitions — March, 25th., 1880

There has been some miraculous cures while I was down. I saw a little girl from Liverpool cured; she was a little cripple. Two dumb persons were also cured, besides some other cases. I hope this letter will apologise now for a visit and do not forget to pray for your

Fond old friend,

MARY MCNAMARA.

Apparition on the Eve of the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25th, 1880.

As described to me by Michael O'Neill, of Colooney Street, Limerick.

When at the gable of the Chapel, on the night of the 24th of March, about ten minutes before mid-night, a young man who stood near, asked me did I see a star on the gable? I said no. He said they were visible to him, one particulary bright star appeared under the window-sill. When they disappeared we both entered the Chapel, it was very much crowded, and with difficulty we got near the altar railing. He then asked me to say the rosary with him, remarking that he saw numerous stars fleeting to and fro over the altar, particulary in that part immediately over the picture of the Sacred Heart, which hangs over the Sacristy door. These stars were seen by others who joined with us in the rosary, but not by me. The young man said to me:—"Let us watch closely, I am sure Our Blessed Lady will soon

appear in that place," pointing to where he saw the most stars over the picture, and looking at his watch, he continued:—"It is now a few minutes to 12 o'clock." As I had my eyes fixed on the spot he pointed out, suddenly I saw the Mother of God appearing immediately over the picture. I was terrified, and began to sweat from every pore; I became almost powerless and unable to utter a word. The cry raised by the immense number of persons present, most of whom saw the Apparition, sounded to me like a cheer of gladness or welcome to the Queen of Heaven. After remaining a short time over the picture to which her feet nearly reached, with her hands clasped over the bosom, the fingers interlocked, she glided upwards and to the right, until her person covered the stained-glass window over the altar. Here she paused and extended her arms in the form of a cross. At this moment a blind woman in the crowd exclaimed, "Praised be the Mother of God, I have got my sight, kneel down all and praise her." Our Lady then glided downwards and to the right until she covered or placed herself in the same position as the banner left by the Pilgrims of the Holy Family of Limerick, and appeared to comply with the request conveyed in the inscription, which is as follows):—"Our Lady of Knock bless the Holy Family of Limerick. Passion Sunday, 1880." For when Our Blessed Lady was in this place she clasped her hands as in the attitude of prayer and bent herself slightly

forward. At this moment the people made a wild rush to the spot where she stood; for she was now down low and near the platform of the altar, as if to prostrate themselves at her feet or lay their hands on her sacred person, but she disappeared and the altar rails gave way with a crash from the mass of people that pressed against it, some of whom were nearly suffocated. The young man who was with me and I had to carry out a woman who fainted from the pressure of the crowd. After going out to the end of the gable we were told by many of those outside who could not gain admission to the Chapel, that they saw the Mother of God ascending to Heaven from the gable of the church, and watched her disappearing in the clouds very high up. It was a bright moonlight night. When Our Blessed Lady appeared in the Chapel, so great was the brightness shed from her person and from the brilliant stars around her that the altar and surroundings appeared quite dark, even the candles lighting on her altar appeared to lose their light. The description of her person is as follows:—She was about 5 feet 8 inches in height, very beautiful, her hair was of a yellowish colour, and fell in tresses down her shoulders and back; her face, hands, and feet, a beautiful flesh tint; on her head or a little above it was a magnificent crown, for I could see between the crown and the head, which seemed of gold, and from which rays of light darted; she wore a short blue mantle secured across the bosom by a large golden clasp,

the inner garment was white, with a kind of lace work that extended down the bosom to the waist and around the neck, around the waist was a rosary which answered the purpose of a girdle, part of which hung down to the knees and was terminated by a cross; the rosary and cross appeared of a dark colour; the dress hung down in ample folds to the feet, which were bare and visible from the ankles. The young man said he saw an angel behind the Blessed Virgin holding the skirt or train, but this I did not see. Our Blessed Lady did not appear like a statue but like a living person, so much so that an old woman who was near me and who saw her said it was one of the nuns from Claremorris and not the Blessed Virgin, but she soon had reason to see her mistake. I could not say if the blind woman who made the exclamation, was restored to sight or not. I did not see her since as there were about a thousand persons in the Chapel at the time, and about 1,500 more outside.

The Apparitions on Good Friday and Easter Saturday.

Taken from *The Weekly News* of April 24th.

VERY REV. DEAN.—To comply with your wishes I undertake to give you, rev. father, a true and exact account of the visions I saw at Knock as far as I can remember. The first vision I saw and the first time was on Good Friday, about

One of the Apparitions seen on Good Friday

twenty minutes past three o'clock. I saw our Blessed Lord nailed to the cross, with the two thieves, one on each side of Him, His Blessed Mother at the right side, with her hands and eyes lifted up, and turned towards the people as if she was praying for them; Mary Magdalen at the foot of the cross, with her hands raised as if she was trying to put them round the feet of our dear Lord. At the head of the cross was a Lamb; away from the Lamb, at the other side of the cross, were two moons like (I mean the very shape), but of the purest white; I could not describe them better. *I saw that vision the rest of the day.* I left the church for a little time, and came back in the evening to spend the night there. About half-past eight I saw on the opposite gable of the church our Blessed Lord as if taken down from the cross. I saw all the wounds opened—with His right hand laid down on his heart—the left hand stretched out from Him, with the lamb laid on it, and turned towards the people. At first when I saw Him the crown of thorns was pressed on the forehead and raised a little from the poll. I looked at our Blessed Lord in this position for *about an hour and a half.* The next thing I could observe then was a light getting in through the gable of the church, and immediately a star appeared at the other end of the church. Then the people got awfully excited. Every time I looked at our Blessed Lord I thought his holy eyes were fixed on myself alone, until

this time when the people got excited. Then He turned away His head and looked at the people. After looking at them for about five minutes He turned to me again, and continued to do (as far as I can remember) about sixteen times successively. When he turned to me again, after the first time he looked at the people, I could see the crown of thorns pressed down on the poll, with the blood streaming down from the wound His Heart appeared to me then to be opened in two, with the Precious Blood flowing from it. I could discern also, at the left side, a large open wound. At about a foot then over our Blessed Lord's head a red door appeared; it was closed when first I saw it, and then opened. I could see nothing inside but all darkness. Then, outside was something long, but very white. This long thing moved slowly in, until it went inside the door. Then the most brilliant light shone all over his body and on the whole gable, and his sacred body appeared to me to be vanishing, by degrees, until I could see nothing but the wounds and face. His sacred face appeared then more plump and joyous looking than before. He smiled three times. I should smile myself in return. I then fainted and was taken out in the air. When I went next day to the church I could see the wounds and shadow as plain as ever.

Easter Saturday I saw our Blessed Lord and His Holy Mother, with the chalice in his hand, as if administring the Blessed Sacrament. *I saw*

that all day. Then, on Easter Saturday night, nine of us got privilege to remain in the church all night. We all knelt around the altar of our Blessed Lady. All lights were out except what were on this altar. There appeared on the crown that was on the statue, stars going round. We all got excited. At first we thought it might be the reflection of the lights, so we came to the conclusion to quench all the lights and remove the lamp that was burning opposite the altar. Then, immediately, the statue got the most brilliant white and the crown was removed from her head, and our Lady bent over us, with her hands joined together, as if she was praying for us. We then put back the lights and lamp again, when immediately the crown was put on again, and the stars appeared the same as before.

On Easter Sunday then, on the same place, appeared to me the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and the Child—about the age of twelve years, in front of Saint Joseph, with the saint's right hand on His shoulder. *I could see that vision all day.* I went out to go round the church to pay my rounds. When I came back I could see them as plain as ever. When I went to the door of the church I turned round again to know whether I could dicsern it from the door as plain as near the altar, where I had been, and I could just as plainly; but before I could turn round again I fainted and was taken away.

On Easter Monday morning, before I left for

home, I could see the shadows of each of those visions in each place, where I saw them first plainly.

I hope you will excuse any errors you may see in this writing. I may have committed some for I always get too excited when I reflect on it.

I remain, my dear Dean.

Your obedient child,

BRIDGRT HOUGH.

FIRST PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK.

The first Pilgrimage to Knock was by some fifty Members of the Confraternity of the Holy Family, Limerick, which is under the care of the Redemptorist Fathers.

The following are the notes of the Secretary, Mr. A. BOYLE, who accompanied the pilgrimage. The writer preceded the pilgrims and made all necessary arrangements for their accommodation in Tuam, Claremorris, and Knock, and also with Father Kavanagh, who was kind enough to have the Procession, Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament, &c., at the hours most suitable to their convenience.

(SECRETARY'S NOTES.)

The fame of the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock having reached the Confraternity of the Holy Family of Limerick, a Pilgrimage was resolved upon. The first step was to obtain the tacit

approbation of their Director, and next to obtain particulars of the route. A magnificent banner was given us to present. Facilities for cheap travelling were afforded by the Railway Company. The members vied with each other in forwarding the preparations, and on Saturday, the 13th March we left Limerick, having that morning attended in a body at Holy Mass in the Church of St. Alphonsus, and received Holy Communion from the hands of our Director. In two carriages we alternately recited the rosary and sang the Confraternity hymns until we reached Tuam. After a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in the Cathedral of Tuam, we proceeded on cars to Claremorris, Early on Sunday we left for Knock, which we reached about nine o'clock, Our joy at beholding this singularly honoured place, was great, indeed, tempered with a holy awe. The Chapel Yard was crowded and the Chapel filled. The gable-end and adjoining walls were denuded of mortar and partly boarded over; a row of coutches were ranged along the gahle; a wooden enclosure before it was filled with sticks left by persons who were cured; the ground, originally covered with grass, is trodden into a stiff black mud; a plaster crucifix was fixed against the gable by some pious hands, and strange to say, the lower part of the body of our Lord was torn away by the poor people in their eager piety to reach the cement, so that nothing remains but the head and bust, yet, its appearance here was more calculated to

excite devotion than if preserved under the special care of the most watchful Sacristan. The spirit of devotion grows strong under such influences, and the pilgrims seemed to realise "that the ground whereon they trod was holy." At nine o'clock we heard Holy Mass and received Holy Communion, after which we had breakfast, in one of the School Rooms, and at 12 we entered the Chapel with banner and bannerettes in procession, ranging ourselves before the altar. During Mass the fervour, attention, and devotion of the people was most wonderful; at the most solemn parts a subdued murmur was heard, at the Elevation it rose into a passionate cry, and strangers who witnessed this scene no longer wondered that the Almighty, who regards only the heart, should visit, in a special manner, these His simple and faithful people. Before the last Gospel the Ven. Archdeacon addressed the congregation as follows:

"This is a glorious day for the Church of Knock, for to-day, have come amongst us fifty men of the Holy Family of Limerick, who were selected out of a body of four thousand. These good and holy men have come all the way from Limerick and received Holy Communion here this morning. They are but the *pioneers* of other bodies who will come from all parts of the world to honour Our Lady of Knock. Thousands of others will follow, but to them belongs the credit of being the first to open the path; they have honoured Our Lady of Knock, and she will bless them and

all belonging to them. For here on the gable of this little church has appeared the glorious Queen of Heaven, accompanied by her Spouse, St. Joseph the guardian of her Divine Son, and St. John, her adopted son. No earthly Queen or Empress scarcely ever travels without being accompanied by her retinue, and so it was fitting the Queen of Heaven should come with hers. In bringing St. John she showed her love for her Irish children, St. John, who was given to her by our Lord at the foot of the cross, when he said, "Woman behold thy son." St. John, whose sublime Gospel in which he seems to soar, like the eagle, to the throne, and who is remarkable for his writing the beautiful words of the Apocalypse. It is he who was privileged to rest his head upon the bosom of our Divine Lord at the Last Supper. She has brought her retinue of angels, for they have also appeared in three tiers across the altar, and she has left them here to be the guardians of her sanctuary. They have frequently been seen in the forms of brilliant lights and stars fleeting around these altars and the gable of this church. I, myself, have beheld them. O! she is a glorious Queen, our Blessed Mother, the Virgin of Virgins, the Mother of all Holiness, the Refuge of Sinners, and the Comfort of the Afflicted. She has condescended to come down from her throne in Heaven to this little church of ours in this desert place, in this out of the way part of the world. Yes, she has come, and brought with her

all kinds of blessings. Here the blind see, and the lame and the halt get the use of their limbs, the deaf hear, and the dumb speak, and greater than all, there the marks of grace which she works in the souls of those here are beyond counting. Yes, she has come to bring many blessings and graces to us in the little church, and her blessing is now with us, and may it remain with us. For the fame of these favours have spread all over the world, North and South, East and West, and they will bring into the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church, the fold of Christ, hundreds, thousands, nay, millions of those who are outside it. For this is the first time that our Lady has appeared in Ireland, and we need not now go to France and other places where she has already appeared, to honour her."

While Father Kavanagh was sprinkling the people with holy water, one of our members had the supreme happiness of seeing an Apparition of three figures, which he described as somewhat like the group of the Holy Family in our Church of St. Alphonsus. It was seen by other persons in the congregation. After Mass we went in solemn procession round the Chapel three times, the Prefect, Mr. James O'Meara, bearing our banner, the members carrying bannerettes and processional lanterns, the rear brought up by the Ven. Archdeacon Kavanagh, and choir. The Litany of Loretto was sung and the hymn, "O Purest of Creatures." After going round the third

time we halted and, as previously arranged, the banner was placed against the gable on the exact spot where the Blessed Virgin stood. Here the "Magnificat" was then entoned by a few select voices and responded to by the entire body. Father Kavanagh appeared much affected and burst forth into fervent words in praise of Mary, styling her amongst other titles his dear mother, his own mother, &c., repeating that it was the happiest day of his life. The procession was reformed and entered the Chapel by the west door, Advancing to the altar, the Prefect, on behalf of the Confraternity, presented our banner as a token of our devotion to the Blessed Mother of God. Several hymns were sung, and the members separated for private devotions. During this period the piety of three members was rewarded by the vision of a miraculous appearance over the picture of the Immaculate Mary to the right of the altar. Many busied themselves in collecting a quantity of the cement on the gable of the Sacristy, others were studying the position of the Chapel and its surroundings, and nearly all had an opportunity of listening to the story told by the lips of those who had seen the different Apparitions. An interview with the Ven. Archdeacon in the Sacristy was the most gratifying. His firm belief in the Apparitions, his simple manners, his loving faith, and his disinterestedness, completely won the hearts of the pilgrims, and all pressed round him to touch his clothes, to obtain

his blessing, a kind word, or even look. Beads and medals. innumerable, were blessed by him, and holy water blessed in this church was carried away in gallons. At five our last public act of devotion was attendance at Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. The members joined the choir in singing the Litany and Tantum Ergo. Prayers were then offered for the Pope, the Bishop of Limerick, the Confraternity, the City of Limerick, for Father Kavanagh, and for Father Berghman, our Director, At 6.30 we left amid the kind wishes and hearty cheers of the people. The journey was well understood, for the Country people we met on the road returning, appreciated the visit as much as the people of Knock. At Claremorris we attended Holy Mass in a body on Monday morning, and the return journey was conducted in the same pious spirit which animated the pilgrims during the whole visit. We arrived in Limerick about 10 p.m. where we received a welcome from several Members of the Holy Family who thronged the platform. On the following evening we repaired to the Confraternity Room to report to Father Berghman the details of THE FIRST PILGRIMAGE TO THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF KNOCK.

Convinced as I am that these Apparitions are preternatural and that no human agency, design or operation has caused them, the question arises to what they tend? What do they signify?

What do they presage? Are they a warning to the faithful to bestir themselves, and arise from the depths of sin? Are they symptomatic of good or evil to our country? Are they the "writing on the wall which the King of old saw in the midst of his banquetings to announce to him that his hour had come, that the glory of his house had departed? Or, are they the messengers of joy and gladness to our long suffering country and people.?