

Irish History and the Earliest Irish Friends

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THERE was no soil in which the Reformation, in its religious aspect, could take root and grow in Ireland. For centuries the monasteries had been not only centres of culture, piety and learning, but had provided refuge for the people in time of war and in time of sickness. Their abbots were the natural protectors of the ordinary folk, who turned to them when in trouble and who shared with them their times of festival and rejoicing. The dissolution of the monasteries, and the passing of monastic property into secular hands was to the Irish peasantry not only a desecration of their Church but an uprooting of their very way of living. There had never, in Ireland, been manor houses as in England. Towns and villages were widely scattered. Community life was centred in the hamlets and cottages around the great monastic centres. Religion was traditionally ingrained in the simple people, and though the Mass was said or sung in Latin it brought to their unquestioning minds a sense of harmony, beauty, and holiness in vivid contrast to the squalor of their daily lives.

Bewilderment at the novel and unacceptable idea of a secular head of the Church in the person of Henry VIII was succeeded by dismay at the gradual recession of civilization, the extinction of the great house of Kildare (virtual Kings of Ireland and beloved by the people), the conferring of the title of King of Ireland on Henry and the gradual confiscation of lands of the nobility who did not conform to the new order. Thus were sown the seeds which germinated one hundred years later in the tremendous rising of the Catholic gentry and people of Ireland in 1641, which was later to embarrass England at a crucial period of the Civil War. The seed bore its fruit in animosity and frustration which lasted for nearly 300 years. The pity and desolation of the times is conveyed in Frank O'Connor's beautiful lament for one of the great houses of Ireland whose people were friends to the countryside:

What shall we do for timber?
 The last of the woods is down,
 Kilcash and the house of its glory
 And the bell of the house are gone,
 The spot where her lady waited
 Who shamed all women for grace,
 When earls came sailing to greet her,
 And Mass was said in that place. . . .
 No sound of duck or geese there,
 Hawk's cry or eagle's call,
 No humming of the bees there,
 That brought honey and wax for all,
 Nor even the song of the birds there
 When the sun has gone down in the west
 Nor a cuckoo atop of the boughs there,
 Singing the world to rest.¹

Risings, rebellions and petty wars between chieftains marked the whole Elizabethan period in Ireland and precluded both the scientific advancement and the critical approach to religion and learning which were growing in England. Puritan ideology scarcely touched Ireland from within, though indeed the foundation of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1592 may have had a Puritan angle.

The flight in 1607 of ninety-nine of Ireland's leading men, headed by two great earls, led to the plantation by Scots and English settlers of Ulster, in the reign of James I. Their descendants are there to this day, and they are the stock from which many Friends in Northern Ireland have sprung. In the South a sort of quasi-toleration took place, interspersed with penalties and fines for recusancy. Priests and friars who had been sent abroad for education crept silently back, sheltered and aided by rich and poor alike. The letters passing to and fro from Rome, Louvain and other Continental towns reflect the fierce zeal which neither threat nor fine nor imprisonment could quench. The English government showed a degree of tolerance, but the Council in Dublin was adamant in enforcing orders against "Popish" practices. A letter written in 1629 tells of the Mayor, Protestant Archbishop, Recorder, Alderman and soldiers who came to a chapel in Dublin, and broke open the doors, pulled down pictures and pulpit, seized vestments and chalices and arrested the priests.

¹ F. O'Connor, *The fountain of magic*, 1939, the poem entitled "Kilcash," pp. 65-66.

Thus, in Ireland, there arose that cry, later to become so very familiar to Friends—Liberty of Conscience, liberty to worship God according to the dictates of the heart, not fettered by man-made ordinance. By 1641 the land was aflame, the Catholic gentry and countrymen had risen in arms in a crusade for the defence of this liberty, for causes so very far removed from the Puritan plea for tolerance in England. A letter¹ from Hugh Bourke, Commissary of the Friars Minor in Germany to Luke Wadding in 1642 states: "The war is merely for liberty of conscience and the defence of the royal prerogative against the Puritans." Thus is all too briefly defined the policy which was to disrupt the country for years to come and plant in Cromwell's supporters the hatred which devastated the land.

The complex situation, with a Protestant King to whose Catholic consort the Irish Confederation freely appealed for help, in reality formed part of the great European struggle for power, and its political aspect has been amply portrayed by historians. It first touches Quaker history when money was appealed for to subdue Ireland. Among those who adventured their wealth in this cause, known later as the Adventurers whose claims were to be satisfied by lands in Ireland, were many men who later became followers of George Fox and his testimony of peace. Not the least singular amongst the names which thus appear is that of Gulielma Springett, who became the wife of William Penn, and that of Isaac Penington.²

Politicians, soldiers, sailors, men of rank and wealth and humble yeomen and husbandmen alike claimed their share. The soldiers and sailors were paid their arrears in land on which they settled, or (in many cases) sold their shares to others. Among the lists of those so satisfied one finds names which are familiar to us in Irish Quaker history. Some were men who, before 1649, had fought for the King. Most were Parliamentarians. A very few, as William Barcroft, refused their title to land on the grounds that it was the spoils of

¹ Hugh Bourke to Luke Wadding, Brussels, January 29th, 1642: *Report on Franciscan manuscripts* (Historical MSS. Commission, 65. Dublin, H.M.S.O., 1906. Cd.2867), p. 121.

² Probably Alderman Penington. 15th Report, Record Commissioners, Ireland, 1824-25, pp. 233, 424.

warfare. John Gay,¹ the friend of Penn, became entitled to some of the rich land of Meath, as well as property in Dublin. Robert Cuppaige and his friend, Thomas Holme, settled in Wexford and later became surrounded by a group who made the large early settlement of Quakers in that county. Holme was in Barbados when the lot was drawn in his name by a man, Charles Collins, in trust for him. On this land, at Corlickan, was to be the first Quaker burial ground in Wexford. In an assessment for Poll tax made in 1660 we find the name Corlickan and its chief tenant, Charles Collins. One could enumerate many who thus took up their land and remained in possession for many years as peace-loving Friends.

STEPHEN RICH (d.1667)

I have, however, for the purpose of this paper, chosen two men who became only slightly connected with Friends, in order to illustrate what manner of men our earlier Quaker settlers mixed with, and to help to unravel some of the mystery surrounding these two names in our earliest writings and records. The first is Captain Stephen Rich, at whose house we are told by Wight and Ruddy² (the Irish Quaker historians), by Sewel, and by Besse, the earliest Friends coming to Ireland were wont to meet and to lodge, and who appears to have had easy access to the house of Henry Cromwell, then Lord Deputy in Ireland. The second is Nicholas Kempston, on whose land a group of Friends took farms in 1655 in order to make a living testimony to their belief that payment of tithes was wrong.

Stephen Rich lived at Lazy Hill in the eastern suburbs of Dublin, on the point of the elevated ridge known as Lazy or Lazer's Hill where his wife, Rebecca, was apparently in the habit of providing lodging for weary travellers, whose journey from Chester or Holyhead may have taken up to five days, though with following winds it was accomplished in a matter of hours. Ships disembarked their passengers at Ringsend at the point of the narrow neck of land running out to sea, and the alternative to a circuitous and uncertain

¹ For John Gay, see Penn's *My Irish Journal* (ed. Isabel Grubb), 1952, p. 68.

² Thomas Wight, *A history of the rise and progress of the people called Quakers in Ireland*. Now revised and enlarged by John Ruddy, 1751, p. 116.

journey by an inland route was to hire a primitive vehicle known as a Ringsend car which, with two passengers precariously perched on the rear seat and a driver sitting well to the front, travelled rapidly and uncomfortably over the intervening track of muddy slob land to the nearest point at Lazy Hill. Early in the eighteenth century this slobland was reclaimed and no trace of Lazy Hill remains, its site now being the flat street known as Townsend Street.

It is fairly certain that this method of arrival in Dublin was that of our earliest Friends, and glad indeed they must have been to find welcoming hospitality at the house (probably, I think, the first one on Lazy Hill) of Rebecca Rich. It is a pity that there is no record at all about Rebecca, except that in 1660 she was imprisoned for frequenting Meeting.¹ Of the activities of her husband, Stephen, there is a great deal to be found and it is interesting that a man of his character and calling should be one of those influenced by our early Quaker preachers.

His name first appears after the reduction of Chester by Parliamentary forces in the Spring of 1646 (an important feat for it was the last remaining port by which Irish aid might have been brought to the King's forces). The Wynn Papers in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, record other events until he appeared off Beaumaris by the 8th June, 1646. Negotiations for a peaceful surrender of the town were going on, but Rich landed arms and ammunition at dead of night and threatened the townspeople. Some of his officers "abused a gentlewoman of very good quality." Rich, in letters from aboard his frigate, *Rebecca*, spiritedly denied any hostile intentions and offered his apologies. He suggested that the gentlewoman who had suffered abuse should come aboard and identify the man who had insulted her.² By August of that year Rich, after the seige of Conway, engaged to take the captured Irish and "set them swimming whence they came."³ This has a sinister sound when one remembers that the Parliamentary captains of the era were said to tie their prisoners back to back and heave them overboard. A few months later the Parliamentary forces in Ireland,

¹ Besse, *Sufferings*, 1753, II, 466.

² Calendar of Wynn (of Gwydir) Papers, 1515-1690, in the National Library of Wales and elsewhere, 1926, nos. 1771, 1776, 1783-88, 1796.

³ *The Tanner letters*, ed. Charles McNeill (Irish MSS. Commission), 1943, p. 226.

marching hungry and weary to Dublin, were met with the news that Captain Rich's boat had arrived with £1,500 aboard, which was "something in the present distresse, and is to be valued as an earnest of the Lord's care of his people."¹ This was possibly the ship ordered on 19th November, 1647, to be ready to take money from Chester to Ireland.²

For the next eight years he was employed by the state in service around the coast of Ireland and across the Irish Sea. It is in these years that names familiar to us as Friends begin to appear in the State papers as Adventurers and soldiers. It well may be that some of them were transported by Rich and discussed with him their doubts and the difficulties confronting them. His recorded activities were far removed from the religious sphere. He transported guns and ammunition from Carrickfergus to Strangford³, cruised off the coast in his frigate *Jacob* to protect trading vessels, pressed seamen for service, took charge of the repair of ships at Wexford, and sailed between there and Dublin. It was probably during this time in Wexford that he found the property afterwards consigned to him, and to which he later retired. This was a small slate-roofed house, with a yard and a quay, part of a large lot in the tenure of a man called Hooper and his wife, formerly the Lady Colville.⁴ While there, he had charge of fitting the frigate *Fleetwood* for sea, and was worried by the fact that her masts, rigging and sails were all stolen.⁵ He transported salt to the Isle of Man and searched for spies in vessels coming from Scotland. In short, he was indispensable. During 1648 and 1649 he was in charge of the Irish packet boat and got into serious trouble for not transporting State packets.⁶ This was at the instigation of Evan Vaughan, former Irish postmaster, and spurred Stephen Rich to his only known literary effort which has now come to light in a rare pamphlet in the library of Christ Church, Oxford.⁷

¹ C. P. Meehan, *The Confederation of Kilkenny*, New edition, 1882, 314.

² *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, 1647-1660* (1903), 766.

³ *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, 1633-1647* (1901), 571.

⁴ P. H. Hore, *History of the town and county of Wexford*, vol. 5, 1906, index under Rich.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ J. W. Hyde, *The early history of the post in grant and farm*, 1894, 198.

⁷ *The Answer of Stephen Rich*, [n.p., 1649], 4to. See W. G. Hiscock, *The Christ Church supplement to Wing's Short-title catalogue, 1641-1700*, R 1365+.

It deals with Rich's period as postmaster and has little bearing on this paper. It does, however, emphasize his personality as one of vigour and resolution not prone to take injustice calmly, nor yet to counter-attack an adversary. Vaughan had accused him on seven counts of mis-handling important State documents, even accusing him of opening one to his own advantage.

To the first charge, Rich replied that as he had not been appointed postmaster at the time mentioned he could hardly be held responsible. This was a quibble, as the letters complained of had been carried on his barque. All the charges related to the period in which he was engaged between Holyhead, Chester and Dublin. In his support are letters from Colonel Michael Jones, Colonel Waller, and a group of Chester and Wirral men who warmly commend the valuable part he played in the capture of Chester by the Parliamentary forces, fitting and making serviceable an old hulk at his own expense and even maintaining a bridge of boats across the river. But all this was before his earliest connection with Friends.

We know from Ruddy's *Rise and Progress* that by 1655 Rich was already receiving Friends in his house at Lazy Hill, where sometimes meetings were held. In that year Barbara Blaugdone landed in Dublin, being blown in after an effort to reach Cork. She lodged at Rich's house, and after she had visited the Deputy Henry Cromwell, Stephen came home and said that "the Deputy was so sad and melancholy, after she had been with him, that he could not go to Bowls, or to any other Pastime."¹ How, we wonder, had this bluff sea captain such easy access to the house of the reputedly austere Deputy? In 1657 Thomas Loe preached through the Dublin streets from St. James's Gate to Stephen Rich's house,² that is, from the extreme west of the city to the extreme east. Was it his magnetic personality (also felt by William Penn), which brought Rich into sympathy with the little band of early Irish Friends? In the same year Francis Howgill wrote from Ireland to Margaret Fell: "We had a meeting at Capt. Rich's house and another at

¹ W. Sewel, *History*, 1722, p. 111.

² T. Wight, *History*, 1751, p. 116.

Capt. Aland's. They are loving the captains but not much in them."¹

That Rich was still active in the service of the government is clear from the Commonwealth State Accounts, for he was paid £100 in 1657 for his extraordinary service in commanding the frigate *Lambay Catch*, and for his part in repairing and refitting it at Lazy Hill.² Here his connection with the state ceases, as far as I can find, but he was still at Lazy Hill in 1660 and appears there in an assessment for Poll tax in the "Census of Ireland."³ Rich actually sold his Dublin property in 1655, for there is in the Registry of Deeds, Dublin, a recitation back to that year saying that he had done so, the purchaser being one Robert Robbins.⁴

Stephen Rich's death appears in Quaker records for Wexford as taking place in 1667, and his wife died in the same year. His will is in the Irish Genealogical Office. He left his property to his only son, Job, failing whom to Wexford Quakers. Among the legatees was Solomon Richards, former Mayor of Wexford (or perhaps his son of the same name), Robert Phair, Commonwealth Governor of Cork, and friend of William Penn, reputed to have attended Friends' Meetings, and John Nicholls, his neighbour at Lazy Hill, whom I think more research would prove to have a connection with Friends. Also named are brother, Richard, whose daughter was Mary.

Who was Stephen Rich? I have been quite unable to trace his antecedents. I found, however, in the Genealogical Office in Dublin his application for a coat of arms in 1647, which was granted. He claimed it

as a reward for the service he rendered at the capture of Chester in 1646 when he was Commander of a ship of war, the

¹ A. R. Barclay MSS, CXVIII (Friends House Library); see *Journal F.H.S.*, xlvi, 123-4; in modern English. Aland was a soldier who had received land at Passage, co. Waterford, and a house in Dublin; see 15th Report, Record Commissioners, Ireland, p. 403.

² *Analecta Hibernica*, no. 15: (Irish MSS. Commission), 1944, p. 292.

³ *Census of Ireland*, c.1659. Ed. S. Pender. (Irish MSS. Commission), 1939.

⁴ It is of interest to note in Hore's *History of Wexford*, that the owners of the Wexford land (Hooper and Colville) had considerable difficulty in gaining actual possession. The grant had been made in 1655, but the government was responsible for repairs and these were not done and the transfer did not take place until 1659. I suppose Robbins just had to wait, or perhaps he came to live with Rich.

Rebecca, of 300 tons and during the siege of Chester commanded certain frigates and therewith maintained the waterguard, also commanding a squadron of twelve ships for the reducing of the Isle of Anglesey, now resident in this kingdom [of Ireland].

His arms, which most closely resemble those of the Earl of Warwick, were confirmed in respect of the fact that he was descended from an ancient family of that surname in Essex. Was he then a kinsman of the Earl of Warwick,¹ the Royalist turned Parliamentarian, who was in 1642 given command of the Parliamentary Navy, and whose family name was Rich, of Essex? I think this must be so (though such a flight of fancy is one of the pitfalls of the amateur historian). It would explain Stephen's easy entry to the court of Henry Cromwell, whose sister a few months later married the Earl's grandson. Nepotism was a common trait of the age, and Warwick was not above it. Here we leave Stephen Rich, a warrior influenced by the growing peaceable beliefs of Friends.

NICHOLAS KEMPSTON (d. 1676)

Our narrative next takes us to the neglected and sparsely documented county of Cavan, in Ulster province, now one of the 26 counties of Eire. In 1656 William Edmondson, the pioneer of Irish Quakerism, left shopkeeping followed by him since his arrival three years previously in Ireland. He had by this time established the first Irish meeting in Lurgan, Co. Armagh, where he lived. He was a man of integrity and courage, who had been a soldier under Cromwell. He felt that a living testimony was needed to witness against the corrupt practice of tithe mongering, and with his brother, John, and the brothers, Richard and Anthony Jackson, and others, leased farm lands in a remote part of Cavan, from a certain Colonel Nicholas Kempston.² Edmondson's *Journal*, the basis of much Irish Quaker history, tells something of this little community and their hard life—oft-times lying on straw, with little comfort and much persecution and imprisonment. He states, however, that "Truth was much spread, and Meetings settled in several Places, many being convinc'd and brought to the knowledge of God."³ For over three years

¹ Robert Rich, 2nd Earl of Warwick (1587-1658), *D.N.B.*

² W. Edmondson, *Journal* (Dublin, 1715), pp. 25-26.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

they lived thus, Edmondson travelling much through the countryside and meeting with rebuffs, fines and imprisonment, once being put in the stocks at Belturbet, the neighbouring market town.

No hint of the location of these farms nor of the reason for their choice, is given in the *Journal* nor in any subsequent history; it remained a secret until two years ago when a "who dun it spirit" persuaded me to unravel the mystery. The landlord, Col. Nicholas Kempston, "who was convinced of Truth, though did not join with Friends", is described by Edmondson as a hard man, who only by friendly persuasion was induced to let his land to this adventurous band. The experiment was terminated in 1659 when he refused to confirm Friends' leases,¹ and a number of them, including William Edmondson and Richard Jackson, drove their cattle a distance of some 80 miles to Rosenallis near Mountmellick where they farmed. Anthony Jackson remained and subsequently moved a short distance to Oldcastle. The names of William Edmondson, Richard Jackson and another well-known Friend, William Barcroft, occur next year in the Poll tax return as principal landholders in the townland of Rosenallis, which we know was thenceforward Edmondson's home.

The sources for Irish local history are limited owing to the destruction of much material in 1922, and the source materials for seventeenth-century land tenure are sparse. Copies of the unique maps made by Sir William Petty between the years 1654-7 remain. This was the first large-scale map in the world to be surveyed *on* the land, and was designed to record the confiscations of the Cromwellian period. Coupled with these there are the books of Survey and Distribution of the period which show the proprietors of land in 1641 and the names of those to whom it went by the Act of Settlement, 1666—but not, of course, sub-lettings. The manuscript book for Cavan is in the Public Record Office, Dublin; there is a certified contemporary copy (which I used) in the Royal Irish Academy. The XVth report of the Irish Record Commission contains abstracts of some of the property grants, as well as a numbered list of Adventurers and Soldiers which corresponds with the numbered list of lands granted. This forms a tedious but profitable research. The Registry of

¹ W. Edmondson, *Journal* (Dublin, 1715), pp. 32, 35.

Deeds, Dublin only dates from 1709 but is often found to contain recitations back which reveal the ownership of land at earlier dates. The State Papers for Ireland are in London but a microfilm is in the National Library, Dublin, and an adequate calendar was made in the last century. These are my main sources.

The first clue came from the State Papers of 1660 where there is "a humble petition" of Luke Dillon¹ for the restoration of his land. The Book of Survey and Distribution for Cavan shows that Luke Dillon, a Catholic, was the owner of several lots of land in that county, including Trinity Island, Drumurry, the two Derries, Clonlasken and Manory, all of which except the last went to the Earl of Anglesey in 1666. All lay in the diocese and parish of Kilmore.

Trinity Island, which had a long and interesting ecclesiastical history and on which was housed the last Catholic bishop of the era,² held out as a last stronghold of the Irish Army until March 1653 when it was finally captured by Colonel Robert Barrow.³ The land must have been left to the disposition of Ralph Fenwick, a Justice of the Peace in the neighbouring town of Belturbet, as Dillon states in his petition that Fenwick had given it to Nicholas Kempston for £60, whereas it was worth £300. It seemed obvious that this was the land on which our Friends settled, but the final proof was missing. At last, in the Registry of Deeds, I found a recitation back of a deed in 1717 of John Kempston, son of Col. Nicholas, stating that the Earl of Anglesey had leased to his father the lands of Trinity Island, the two Derries, Clonlasken, Dromore, Blenacup and the rest—all of which were named in Dillon's confiscation in the Book of Survey.

My husband and I went to Cavan where we gleaned more information of Dillon and of Trinity Island, but no one could tell us where it lay. Finally, we were recommended to ask a certain publican-cum-historian, Mr. Gough, in the town. (Fortunately, it was in the off hours.) To my surprise he produced a copy of Petty's Down Survey map of the barony of Loughtee, and to his surprise I quoted to him various names from Edmondson's Journal, which he said were still

¹ Calendar of the State Papers, Ireland, 1660-1662. Ed. R. P. Mahaffy, 1905, p. 55; dated about 20th October, 1660.

² Philip O'Connell, *The diocese of Kilmore*, 1937.

³ Robert Dunlop, *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, 1913, ii.323.

extant in the district today. The man who lived on the closest piece of land to Trinity Island was Mr. Jackson! He may still prove to be a descendant of Anthony, but this is the object of another search. Anthony had three sons one of whom, Isaac, was progenitor of the great Jackson clan in America. The other two are unrecorded in our registers. We made a friend of Mr. Jackson and it was a curious sensation to arrive at the remote and very beautiful spot by the lake and stand looking across its waters to the island, feeling sure we were at the spot where those early Quaker pioneers had made their homes. The intense quiet of the place, broken only by the shrill cries of seabirds, so far from the coast, made us feel as if there had been a continuity in the peace and quiet which pervaded all, as if our early Friends had left a sense of harmony to continue through the ages. On a later visit we were taken by the kindness of Mr. Gerald Latham to the Island and he pointed out to us all the lands I have mentioned surrounding the lake in calm silent beauty.

On the island are the ruins of an abbey which was founded by the French Premonstratensian community in 1237, being an off-shoot of a similar one on Lough Ce in Roscommon. In 1570 their lands (which, being surveyed, included all the land I have already listed) were conveyed to Hugh O'Reilly chief of the kingdom of the Brennye (i.e. Cavan) who appears to have hoped he might eventually restore them to the Canons. This did not come about, and by the fiat rolls of Elizabeth in 1586 the lands were leased to one Lucas Dillon, whose family retained them until 1653.¹

¹ All this property lies in the Diocese of Kilmore whose Protestant bishop at the beginning of the Catholic Confederate War was the very famous Bishop William Bedell. Of his saintlike qualities you may read in the two contemporary lives written by his son and son-in-law. He was loved in the neighbourhood by Catholic and Protestant alike, was the translator of the Old Testament into Irish—"for", he said "these people have souls which ought not to be neglected until they can learn English—" and was noted for the quiet unostentation of his way of life. Though a staunch unwavering Protestant he stated "wheresoever saving truth in an outward assembly and profession calls men to God there I account is a visible Church." He befriended all in the few months of his life after the outbreak of the rebellion, and his funeral was attended by members of both parties and religions, one being heard to say "May my soul be with Bedell's." Among his friends was Luke Dillon who offered him asylum when the Bishop's house was taken by the rebels. Surely this man must also have left an aura of good which did not easily die out in the quiet district even in those terrible times.

Nicholas Kempston comes into prominence first in 1647 at which time he was a Lt. Col. of Robert Lilburne's regiment of foot, playing a part in the rising of officers against Cromwell, by which he lost his commission but retrieved a command by raising a force of men to serve in Ireland. His home was later at Drumurry, close to Trinity Island.

In the year 1655 he was in trouble. His first wife was the sister of Major General Edmund Ludlow, the regicide whose memoirs are a fruitful source for the history of the period. Ludlow (whose forfeited lands all went later to the Earl of Anglesey) used his brother-in-law as agent and in various other capacities, and it may well be that the Cavan land was Ludlow's, but held in Kempston's name. Both men were stout republicans, strongly opposed to the return of the Stuarts or to government by any single person. In 1655 General Ludlow fell into disgrace by reason of his strong criticism of the assumption of power by Oliver Cromwell. He was refused permission to leave Ireland where he held the post of Lt. General of horse but, evading this order, set sail from Dublin in October. Nicholas Kempston, by now suspect because of his relationship with Ludlow, was amongst the large number who accompanied him to the place of embarkation and was promptly arrested and imprisoned.¹ Ludlow writes: "Colonel Henry Cromwell having notice that Col. Kempston who married my sister had assisted me . . . committed him to prison where he was used with equal severity as myself." On the 19th October the imprisonment was ordered to be continued² (no place of confinement being given), but there is no date for his release though in the following March a pass was issued for him with two servants and one horse. This was in England. It was probably early in 1656 that William Edmondson and his brother interviewed Kempston in his house in Cavan and in view of his difficulties he must have been glad to find tenants. In the Journal he is described as a hard man who only accepted their terms with protest after walking awhile in his orchard to consider them.

Of the trials of the next few years we have only Edmondson's short account. In our manuscript records there is but one brief mention of the time. John Douglas found it in a

¹ The Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow (ed. C. H. Firth, 1894), i.428-9.

² Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 19th October, 1659.

list known as "An Account of those who have backslidden from the truth out of the Meeting of Cavan." It was written in 1682, six years after Kempston's death:

Nycholas Kempston who had an estate in the County was convinced of the Lord's truth, did invite several Friends to live upon his lands, and received several meetings at his house at Drumurry, and afterwards broke covenant of their bargains and declined from truth, who before his death his speech was taken from him, and many times the plainest words he spoke was oaths.¹

No explanation has ever been given for the so-called breaking of covenant. A consideration of the chaotic conditions in Ireland as well as in England in the months after the death of Oliver Cromwell, coupled with General Ludlow's part in this period puts a new light on the incident. The Army, to which Ludlow belonged, revolted against the policies of Parliament of which he was a member. The position in Ireland was highly confused and Ludlow who was re-instated as Commander in Chief in Ireland in 1659 found himself with duties in England interfering with the obvious need for attention to duties in Ireland. His brother-in-law was again given command of a regiment, but was also entrusted with Ludlow's private affairs. By 1658 Mrs. Kempston had already begun to get anxious. This was small wonder, for no Act had been passed confirming the validity of Irish leases. In June she wrote to her brother:

how long it may contenuu in it we know not, for there is dayly changes in it . . . & many delays and put offs are mad . . . desiere that you and we may prepar for the worst & labour after resinged up hearts to the will of our wise & loveing father. . . . Land is grown very cheap now: the reason is thought to be becaus of soe many clams that are granted; men begen to grow weary of the trouble of it & many great taxces upon it though they can mak nothing . . . My husband is willing to let Will Coll have the graseing of his stock whill he have any land in his own hands, which I fear will be too long.²

Again, in October she writes to Ludlow: "If there are any forest lands to be sold, get a convenient place if you can for my husband and me to live in when we come to England."³

¹ MS. Great Book of Tithes (Society of Friends, Dublin), p. 246.

² June 9th, 1658; printed in Ludlow, *Memoirs*, 1894, ii.444-5; see Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1658-9 (ed. M. A. E. Green, 1885), p. 56.

³ Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, 1647-1660, p. 673.

So the break of 1659 was anticipated, and the men living on Kempston's land can hardly have failed, even in so remote a spot, to be aware of the tumultuous happenings of this pre-Restoration year. It is possible that Edmondson and Richard Jackson with the help of their friend, William Barcroft, had already acquired the property near Mountmellick to which they finally went. They were realists and remembered the battle of Worcester in which some of them, including Edmondson, had participated.

On 13th December, 1659, Kempston made the mistake of allowing himself to become involved in the plot of a small group of Army officers to seize Dublin Castle. Considering the fact that at the time he was occupying General Ludlow's rooms in the Castle during the latter's absence in England, and that he well knew the difficult position of his brother-in-law, it seems almost incredible that he weakly fell in with the wishes of the officers concerned and put his name to a declaration which, on his own admission, he hardly understood and with which he was not satisfied.¹ The repercussions of this plot belong to England's political history. By the following March, Mrs. Kempston had gone to England, but not to the forest land she wanted. Her husband was employed by his brother-in-law to try to tidy up his personal estates and affairs, a thankless task for by 23rd May, 1660, all Ludlow's estates were sequestered. We only know for certain that Kempston's fortunes were at a low ebb; the tenure of Irish land still lacked legal security and the imminent restoration of the King left men uncertain of the future.

So the history of Irish Friends was affected by the history of the times. Mountmellick became one of the most important centres of the Society in William Edmondson's life time. One curious fact emerged from this research. Anthony Jackson (who may well have been the Royalist of that name captured and imprisoned after the battle of Worcester and released in 1655) was persecuted by a clergyman, Ambrose Barcroft, whose services for the Commonwealth had been rewarded by the gift of the church and tithes of Urney and Annaghcliffe in the parish of Kilmore² four miles from Trinity Island. His brother, William Barcroft

¹ Ludlow, *Memoirs* (1894), ii.185-88.

² 15th Report, Record Commissioners, Ireland, 1824-25, pp. 404, 520.

of Mountmellick, was ancestor of one of the best known Quaker families of Northern Ireland.

Of the tithes which our Friends were expected to pay, some information may be gleaned from a document owned by Lady Nugent of Mount Nugent, Co. Cavan, and now published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission.¹ In 1737 the tithes of Kilmore parish were the subject of a legal action, and witnesses called were asked to carry their memories as far back as possible. There emerged details such as:

For every milch cow 9d., for every cow not having calved that year 4½d., for every married person 4d., and for unmarried 2d., every merchant or seller of small ware 2/6d. per annum. For lambs, kids and pigs, if more than 7, one in kind to be paid; for every hen 2 eggs, and for every cock 3 eggs. The 10th measure of corn to be paid for every mill, wind or water, and for a horse mill 2/6d. per annum. For a garden for private use 1d. and if the produce is sold one tenth is to be paid in kind.

These tithes were "as they were paid from time immemorial," and included Trinity Island and the adjoining land. It seems a burdensome tax and one which must have been difficult to pay in the years after the war.

The first mention of tithes in Cavan in Besse's *Sufferings* is in the year 1660, but the manuscript "Great Book of Tithes" in Dublin supplies us with earlier data. In 1657 William and John Edmondson because, for conscience sake, they could not pay £1 10s. demanded for two years' tithes, had goods worth about £18 taken from them by Andrew Weare, Robert Snookes and Henry Waldrum, tithemongers, and the said William for the same tithes was committed to Cavan gaol and put in a stinking dungeon for 14 weeks. Richard Jackson had a cow, a bull and horse, bridle and saddle, in all worth £7, taken from him. From William Parker a brass pan worth £1 was taken by Jacob Knowles, tithemonger. In 1659 William Parker was sued by Jacob Knowles at the Sheriff's court for 9/- demanded for tithes. George Spicer, the judge of that court, gave an order to the bailiffs (before the jury gave their verdict), and they took from the said William one mare, bridle and saddle worth £4 10s. In 1659 William Parker faced a demand for 2/-, and lost his riding coat worth 10/- to one Dun, tithemonger.

¹ *Analecta Hibernica*, no. 20. (Irish MSS. Commission), 1958.

The first date given would point to the fact that it must have been very early in 1656 if not at the end of 1655 that Friends took up their land. This would agree with the date of Kempston's imprisonment in October, 1655.

After the Restoration the troubles of Irish Friends did not diminish, but things did begin to assume a more settled form.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let us turn for a moment to 1669, a notable year for Irish Friends. George Fox arrived in Dublin, presumably on a Ringsend car. He searched for five hours before he could find Friends, going four times through the Customs and thinking the city smelled of corruption. He wrote a letter, a copy of which is preserved at Friends House which differs slightly from the account in his Journal.¹

In the course of the voyage, the cook fell overboard and was drowned:

the cook in the ship fell overboard & was lost through carelessness, but his spirit came to me about an hour afterwards, & I saw he was well—they drew him about the ship with a rope . . . & the rope slipped, and a careless man went to take hold upon him, & he took hold upon his foot, & he let the rope go, so he was lost, it being about the 12th hour in the night. And I was so that I could not eat nor sleep for two nights . . .

There were customs posts at every gate to the city of Dublin, which explains the four times passing them. I think that Fox and his companions must have got lost by walking via the quay (where, may I be so bold as to suggest it, part of the smell was real, being caused by the tide being out—even to this day we occasionally recognize this smell). Fox and his companions probably turned off the quays and came through the western entry to the city at Wormwood Gate, and turned down High Street at Newgate to come out of the city proper at Dames Gate. They were lost. Had they but known, many Friends lived on the south side of the walls about Bride Street and Bride's Lane, close to the Polegate, where that same year was built Dublin's first meeting house, to which in that year also came William Penn. The deed of this Meeting House turned up not long ago wrapped round an old minute

¹ Dublin, 11.iii.1669; Friends House Library, Portfolio 15.138.

book and a little research proved that it was built on the site of the garden of an old castellated house with a courtyard and base court. This property was in the possession of a widow, Elizabeth Mayne,¹ who married John Burnyeat in 1683, and it was here at Baron's Inn (for so the house and garden were called) that Jonathan Burnyeat was born in 1686. After the year 1669 Meetings were settled in Dublin and throughout Ireland on the usual plan and our first minute books, which I hope you will come and see, date from the year 1670.

¹ For John Burnyeat (1631-1690) and Elizabeth Burnyeat (d. 1688), *née* Mason, see Cambridge *Journal*, ii.418.

When a study of Jacob Boehme's influence in seventeenth-century England appears, those interested in Quaker history are led to hope that it will offer some clarification of the part Boehme's teaching played in forming early Quaker ideas. From this point of view Serge Hutin's *Les Disciples Anglais de Jacob Boehme aux XVII^e et XVIII^e Siècles* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 1960) is disappointing. Hutin gives little space to the Quakers and his comments on their possible debt to Boehme derive from earlier studies, notably those of R. Barclay, R. M. Jones and W. Struck, rather than from fresh investigations. This treatment is characteristic of the book which, instead of closely analysing such problems of influence, offers a general introduction to the cross-currents in spiritual religion connecting Boehme's thought with Isaac Newton, Jane Lead, William Law, William Blake and others.

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