

KILFENNY:

A parish, in the Eastern Division of the barony of Upper Connello, 4 miles (S.W.) from Adare, on the road from Croom to Ballingarry; containing 1136 inhabitants. This parish comprises 2361 statute acres, of which 1650 are apportioned under the tithe act; about 320 are common and 90 bog, and of the remainder, about two-thirds are under tillage, and one-third in pasture. The surface is uneven, rising in some places into hills of considerable elevation; the soil is in general fertile, and the system of agriculture improved. Fairs are held on the common on 15 May, 14 July, 12 September, and 22 December, chiefly for cattle. It is in the diocese of Limerick, and is a rectory and vicarage, forming part of the union of Nantinan and corps of the prebendaryship in the cathedral of Limerick: the tithes amount to £134.18. In the R. C. divisions it forms part of the union or district of Croagh and Kilfenny; the chapel is a small edifice. There is a private school, in which about 140 children are instructed. There are some remains of the old church, in which is a tablet to the Pigot family; and near it are the remains of Ballynkill House, which, having been converted into a barrack, was burnt by the Rockites in 1822. At the foot of a hill are the remains of Kilfenny Castle, built by Cormac Mac Einery in the reign of King John; it afterwards belonged to the Kidare family, by whom it was forfeited in the reign of Elizabeth. It was besieged by the Irish under Colonel Purcell, in 1641, and resolutely defended by the widow of Sir John Dowdall for some time, but ultimately surrendered. Near the boundary of the parish are the picturesque ruins of Finnitterstown castle, which was also forfeited by the same family in 1598.