

MUNGRETT:

A parish, partly in the barony of Pubblebrien, but chiefly in the county of the city of Limerick, 3 miles (W.) from Limerick on the road to Adare; containing 3475 inhabitants. An abbey is said to have been founded here in the fourth century, prior to the arrival of St. Patrick in Munster, who, it appears, placed over it St. Nesson, who died in 551. He was succeeded by St. Munchin, nephew of Bloid, King of Thomond, who was ordered by St. Patrick, on account of his unexampled piety and extensive learning, to undertake the instruction of his converts in Connaught, and afterwards became the first Bishop of Limerick. The abbey was plundered and burned by the Danes in 820, 834, and 840, and in 934 and 1080 suffered severely by fire; it was soon after restored, but was plundered and sacked by the Danes in 1107. After its restoration from this attack, it continued to flourish till the dissolution, after which the greater portion of its possessions were granted to the bishop and dignitaries of the cathedral of St. Mary, Limerick. The Psalter of Cashel states that this monastery had within its walls six churches, and, exclusive of numerous scholars, 1500 monks, of whom 500 were learned preachers, 500 psalmists, and 500 wholly employed in spiritual exercises. The Knights Templars had also an establishment here, which, on the suppression of that order, was granted to the monks of the Augustinian abbey. The parish, which is bounded on the north by the River Shannon, comprises 5927 statute acres, as apportioned under the tithe act; the greater part of the land is under tillage, and towards the Shannon are some extensive and luxuriant meadows. The soil is fertile, and the system of agriculture improved. Near the church is a turlough of about 42 acres, called Loughmore, which in winter is an entire sheet of water, and in summer a fine common. The lands are well fenced in some parts, and in others enclosed by broken stone walls: there are two very valuable bogs, comprising together about 150 acres. A considerable portion of the parish belongs to the see of Limerick; the late country residence of the bishop, called Cunegar, situated in the centre of a fertile district, has been purchased, under the Church Temporalities Act, by Charles Wilson, Esq., and is now in the occupation of a farmer: the entrance lodge has been converted into a barrack for the constabulary police force stationed here.

The living is a rectory and vicarage, in the diocese of Limerick; the rectory forms part of the union of St. Mary and corps of the deanery of Limerick; the vicarage is in the patronage of the dean. The tithes amount to £725, of which two-thirds are payable to the dean and the remainder to the vicar. The glebe-house, belonging to the vicarage, was built in 1826; the glebe comprises 7 ½ acres, besides which are 2 ½ acres belonging to the deanery. The church, a small but handsome cruciform edifice, in the later English style, with an octagonal tower crowned with battlements and crocketed pinnacles, was built in 1822, and the late Board of First Fruits contributed a gift of £300 towards its erection. In the R.C. divisions the parish is the head of a union or district, called also Loughmore, and comprising also the parishes of Crecora and Knocknegaul, and part of the parish of Kilpeacon. The chapel, situated at Loughmore, is a small thatched building. There are three private schools, in which are about 90 children. The remains of the ancient monastery consist of the walls of the church, divided into three unequal portions communicating with each other by low arches; the eastern gable of the choir has a narrow pointed window; the nave, which is large, is lighted by windows of similar character, and at the north-east angle of the western portion is a slender, square, embattled tower. To the east

of this are the ruins of another church; and about 300 yards distant from it are the remains of a tower and gateway. About 150 yards north of the church is a massive well-built edifice, about 50 feet in length and 30 broad, with lofty walls and pointed gables, lighted by one narrow circular-headed window at the east end, and entered by a square-headed doorway on the west. There are also extensive foundations of buildings in the adjoining fields, at a considerable depth beneath the surface, and occasionally discovered by the plough. About half a mile to the north of the parish church is Temple Mungrett, around which are traces of extensive ancient buildings, formerly the hospital of the Knights Templars, and afterwards the mansion-house of the prior of Mungrett. Near the eastern boundary of the parish, opposite to Ballincurra, are the ruins of a hermitage, afterwards a hospital for lepers