

ABINGTON:

A parish, partly in the barony of Owney-Arra, county of Tipperary, partly in the county of the city of Limerick, and partly in the barony of Clanwilliam, but chiefly in that of Owney-Beg, county of Limerick, 7 miles (E. by S.) from Limerick; containing 7564 inhabitants. This place, anciently called Wotheney or Woney, attained considerable importance at a very early period, and was celebrated for a Cistercian abbey founded, according to some, in 1189, and to others, in 1205, and provided with monks from the abbey of Savignac, in France, by Theobald Fitz-Walter, Lord of Carrick, and ancestor of the Butlers, Earls of Ormonde, who was interred here in 1206. To this abbey King John made extensive grants of land in the kingdom of Limerick, with the advowsons of several parishes; and the abbot sat as a spiritual peer in the Irish House of Lords. The abbey, with all its possessions, was granted by Elizabeth, in the fifth year of her reign, to Captain Walshe, who erected a handsome modern house near the ancient buildings; but in the war of 1641 these estates were forfeited to the Crown. There are only some small fragments remaining, situated near the present church, and also a portion of the mansion of the Walshe family; but neither are adequate to afford any idea of their original character. The parish comprises about 32,200 acres, of which 12,920 are in the county of Tipperary, 708 are in the liberties of the city of Limerick, and the remainder in the county of Limerick: of its entire extent, 10,317 statute acres are apportioned under the tithe act. Towards its north-eastern boundary it includes a large portion of the Sliebh Phelim mountains, which rise to a considerable height, in many parts affording good pasturage for numerous herds of young cattle and flocks of sheep. The fields are generally well fenced, and the lands are in a good state of cultivation. There are some excellent meadows, mostly attached to the dairy farms; and the farm-houses are comfortable and of neat appearance. The seats are the Glebe-House, the residence of the Very Rev. Thos. P. le Fanu, Dean of Emlý; Borroe Ville, of Dr. Wilkins; Maddebuoy House, of Capt. Wickham; Balovarane, of T. Holland, Esq.; Ash Row, of T. Evans, Esq.; Farnane, of Mrs. Costello; Lillypot, of Mrs. Bradshaw; Castle Comfort, of the Rev. T. O'Brien Costello; and the Deer-Park, the property of Lord Carbery. Fairs are held on 29 May and 31 August; besides which there are fairs at Murroe on 29 April and 27 October. Petty sessions are held every alternate Tuesday; and here is a station of the constabulary police. The living is a rectory, in the diocese of Emlý, with the rectory and vicarage of Tuogh united, by act of council in 1776, together forming the union of Abington, in the patronage of the Archbishop of Cashel: the tithes amount to £650, and of the entire benefice, to £900. The church is a small neat edifice, without tower or spire. The glebe-house is situated on a glebe of 20 acres. In the R.C. divisions this parish is the head of a district, comprising also Clonkeen and a small portion of Doone. The chapel at Murroe is a large and handsome edifice, built in 1811, and enlarged in 1836; there is another old chapel at Borroe. The parochial schools are chiefly supported by the rector; there is another school of about 60 boys and 60 girls, also three pay schools. Two handsome school-houses have been erected at Kisikerk.