

ADARE:

A post-town and parish (anciently a corporate town), partly in the barony of Kenry, and partly in the Eastern Division of Upper Connello, but chiefly in the barony of Coshma, 8 miles (S.W.) from Limerick, and 102 miles (S.W. by W.) from Dublin; containing 4913 inhabitants, of which number, 776 are in the town. The early history of this place, of which the name signifies 'the ford of the oaks', is involved in great obscurity. On the arrival of the English, in the reign of Henry 2, it appears to have been distinguished as having a castle and a church. In the following century it became the property of the Fitzgeralds, of whom, John, the first Earl of Kildare, founded a monastery here in 1279, which he dedicated to the Holy Trinity and amply endowed, for the redemption of Christian captives. This establishment, which is now called Black Abbey, and is situated in the town, continued to flourish till the dissolution, when, with the other religious houses subsequently founded here, it was granted by Elizabeth in the thirty-seventh year of her reign, to Sir Henry Wallop, Knight, to be held for ever in fealty, in free and common socage, at a yearly rent of £26.17.8 on condition of his maintaining two able horsemen on the premises. The remains consist of the tower, nave, and part of the choir of the church, which were fitted up in 1811 for a R.C. chapel by the present Earl of Dunraven; the tower, which is embattled, is in a very perfect state, and is one of the most massive in the South of Ireland; the prevailing style of architecture is the early English, which has been tolerably well preserved in its restoration. There are several extensive ruins on the north side, probably the remains of the domestic buildings. Another abbey was founded here, the remains of which, situated within the demesne of Adare castle, on the bank of the river, are very extensive and highly interesting; they consist of the nave, choir, and south transept of the church, which, with the exception of the roof, are tolerably entire. From the intersection rises a beautiful slender square tower; in the choir are several stalls, niches, fonts and stoups of elegant design; and on the east side of the transept, in which also are niches and fonts, are two chantry chapels, or oratories, and also one on the west side. The cloisters are nearly in a perfect state, and round them are arranged the principal offices, the refectory, and various other domestic buildings; in the centre of the enclosure is a stately and venerable yew tree, but inferior in growth to that at Muckross. The prevailing style of architecture is the later English, of which these remains display some very elegant details. A Franciscan abbey was also founded on the south side of the river, by Thomas, seventh Earl of Kildare, who married Joan, daughter of the Earl of Desmond. The remains, situated close to the bridge, consist of the lofty and slender square tower, the nave, and part of the choir of the conventual church, fitted up by the Earl of Dunraven as the parochial church; the cloisters on the north side, which are perfect, having been restored by the earl (who has erected adjoining them a splendid mausoleum for his family), and in which, and over the doorway, are several shields with the arms of Kildare and Desmond alternately; the refectory, and part of the domestic buildings, which have been recently restored and appropriated as a school-house by the Countess of Dunraven; the prevailing style is the later English, which has been carefully preserved throughout.

Sometime prior to the year 1310 the town appears, from ancient records, to have been incorporated, as in that year a grant of murage and customs was made by Edward 11 to 'the bailiffs and good men of the town of Adare'; and in 1376 Edward

111 issued a writ to the sheriff of the county and all officers connected with the subsidies, etc., prohibiting them under heavy penalties from demanding from the provost or commonalty of Adare any services or customs, until the town, which had been recently burned and destroyed by the 'Irish enemy', should be fully rebuilt and inhabited. The castle was originally erected by the O'Donovans, rebuilt by the second Earl of Kildare in 1326, and enlarged and fortified by several of his successors. When Turlough O'Brien was ravaging this part of the country, he burned the castle, which was soon afterwards repaired by Thomas, Earl of Kildare. Gerald, a subsequent earl, having countenanced the second attempt of Perkin Warbeck, was accused of treasonable practices, and the castle and all his possessions were forfeited to the Crown; but he was restored to his estate by favour of Henry, Prince of Wales, who made him his deputy-governor of Ireland. In 1519, the earl set out from this castle on his route to London, to meet the accusations of Cardinal Wolsey; and having vindicated his innocence was, on his return to Ireland, appointed Lord-Deputy, and ordered to secure the person of his nephew, the Earl of Desmond, who had departed from his allegiance and joined Francis 1 of France, and was taking refuge in the castle of Askeaton. The Lord-Deputy, on his arrival at the castle of this place, finding that the earl had retired to his strong-holds, returned to Dublin; and for this neglect, in connection with other charges, he was sent to the Tower of London, where he died in confinement; and on the rebellion of his son, better known by the appellation of Silken Thomas, this castle and the family estates again escheated to the Crown. During the wars in the reign of Elizabeth the castle was frequently attacked by the English forces without success; but in the summer of 1578 it was taken, after a siege of eleven days, and in the following year was garrisoned by a powerful body of English troops, under the command of Captain Carew. Sir John Desmond soon after assaulted it, but was repulsed with great loss by the garrison, and compelled to seek protection from his friend and kinsman, the Knight of Glin. In 1581 the castle was again besieged by the Earls of Desmond and Kerry, with a numerous and powerful army, who succeeded in reducing the garrison, and put every man to the sword. Upon this occasion the English forces, under Colonel Zouch, marched from Cork to the relief of the garrison, but arriving too late, they attacked the confederate earls, whom they defeated with great slaughter, and retook the castle. It was again besieged in 1600, when the garrison suffered greatly, being without food for many days, and obtaining a supply of water only by excavating a subterraneous passage to the bed of the river. In 1641 the castle was seized by the insurgents and held for some time, till they were at last driven out by the Earl of Castlehaven; in 1657 it was dismantled by Cromwell's orders. The remains are of considerable extent, and the walls of great strength, but notwithstanding the efforts of its noble proprietor to preserve this interesting relic of antiquity, it is rapidly falling into decay. This was the scene of much confusion and many atrocities during the prevalence of Whiteboyism in 1786, and of Defenderism in 1793; and also under the system of the Rockites many persons were destroyed near the place, on the chapel of which were posted notices, signed, 'John Rock, R.C.B., Commander-in-chief of the army in Ireland.'

The ancient town of Adare was situated on the eastern bank of the River Maigne, near the castle and the ancient parish church, which are now within the demesne of the Earl of Dunraven, and about half a mile distant from the present town, which is situated on the western bank of the river, over which is a fine bridge of fourteen arches. The bridge is quite level, and, though narrow, is generally admired; it was built by the fifth Earl of Kildare, and is still in a good state of preservation. The river here is broad, and from several artificial weirs appears like a succession of lakes, but beyond the bridge it becomes very shallow. The present town has the appearance of an old village whose growth has been gradual: it contains 114 houses, many of

which are old and badly built; several houses have been taken down already, and others will be also removed as the leases fall in, under the improvements intended by the proprietor, Lord Dunraven, which have been already commenced by the erection of an hotel, post-office, and several other substantial houses. The mail coach from Limerick to Tralee passes daily through it. A constabulary police force has been established here; petty sessions are held fortnightly; and fairs are held on 20 January, 21 February, 27 March, 27 April, 15 September, 14 October and 15 December, for the sale of farming stock and implements, which are well attended.

The parish comprises 10.202 statute acres, as apportioned under the tithe act. The land is everywhere fertile, and is under an improved system of cultivation: about two-fifths are in tillage, and the remainder is rich, meadow and pasture land; there is neither bog nor waste land. Black, grey, and porphyritic limestone of good quality abounds; the black is most esteemed for building, and the grey for agricultural purposes. The Maigue is navigable up to the town by means of a short canal, and there are two quays, one at the termination of the canal in the town, the other about a mile down the river, both constructed at the expense of Lord Dunraven. The surrounding scenery is finely diversified and embellished with handsome seats and highly ornamented demesnes. The principal seat is Adare Castle, the property and residence of the Earl of Dunraven: of this noble edifice, the centre and north wing only are completed; the style of architecture is that of the more enriched period of the later English, and when finished it will be one of the most splendid mansions in the country. It is built of hewn limestone found upon the estate, and is situated on the western bank of the river, in a very extensive and finely wooded demesne, commanding a beautiful view of the interesting remains of the ancient castle and of the several abbeys; and near the house still stands the venerable ash tree under which the family papers, with other things of value, were hastily hidden by Lord Dunraven's ancestor, on the approach of a party of marauders during the Revolution of 1688. Not far distant is Currah, the elegant residence of Sir Aubrey de Vere, Baronet, in the centre of a wide, fertile, and undulating demesne, enriched with luxuriant woods and plantations, and embellished with a picturesque lake; the mansion is of hewn limestone, with a front of beautiful design commanding the lake; there are three entrances to the park, of which the lodge at that from Adare is the most handsome. Sir Aubrey is the author of 'Julian the Apostate' and other minor poems. Near Currah is Currah Bridge, the neat residence of G. Fosbery, Esq.; and within the parish is Tuagh House, the residence of the Rev. S. B. Leonard. The farm-houses, generally small, have gardens and orchards attached, and are mostly occupied by Palatines, originally German Protestants, who settled here about the year 1740, since which time they have greatly increased in numbers, but continue a distinct body. The living is a vicarage, in the diocese of Limerick, and in the patronage of John Croker, Esq.; the rectory is impropriate in the Earl of Dunraven. The tithes amount to £ 808.5.5 of which £506.8.6 is payable to the impropiator, and the remainder to the vicar. The church, part of the Franciscan abbey, has already been noticed: there is neither glebe nor glebe-house. In the R.C. divisions the parish is the head of a union or district, comprising also Drehidarsna and Clounshire, and parts of two other parishes; the chapel is part of the ancient abbey of the Holy Trinity previously noticed. The refectory of the Franciscan abbey, adjoining the church, was restored and fitted up for a school by the Countess of Dunraven, in 1815; it is a spacious apartment lighted by fifteen windows, each of which is of a design different from the rest; and, in 1825, the countess built a good residence for the master and mistress, in the same style as the refectory, with a garden attached. There are 300 children in the school, which is wholly supported by the countess. The parochial school, in which are about 80 boys and 50 girls, is supported by Lord

Dunraven; and there is a private pay school of about 30 boys and 6 girls. A fever hospital and dispensary, with a house adjoining for a resident physician, has been recently erected by his lordship, and is supported in the customary manner. Adare gives the titles of Baron and Viscount to the ancient Irish family of Quin, Earls of Dunraven and Mountearl: the present earl constantly resides here.