

GLIN:

A market and post-town, in the Shanid Division of the barony of Lower Connello, 12 miles (W.) from Askeaton, and 117 (S.W. by W.) from Dublin, on the mail coach road from Askeaton to Tarbert; containing 4790 inhabitants, of which number, 1030 are in the town. This place, with the adjacent territory, was granted by Henry 2nd. to John Fitz-Thomas Fitz-Gerald, Lord of Decies and Desmond, whose descendants, the Earls of Desmond, were by succeeding kings of England created princes palatine in Ireland, with the power of making tenures in capite and creating barons (by which authority they created the Knight of Glin and others) and were entitled to royal services and escheats. The manor, with all its honours and privileges, though forfeited for a short time in the 18th. of Henry 8th., and also in the 11th. of Elizabeth, was restored in 1603, and has since descended through an uninterrupted succession in the male line, for more than 600 years, to John Fraunceis Fitzgerald, the 19th. Knight of Glin, its present proprietor. During the rebellion of the Earl of Desmond in the reign of Elizabeth, the castle was besieged by Sir George Carew, the Lord-President of Munster, assisted by the Earl of Thomond, and after two-days' resolute defence by the Knight of Glin, was taken by the English. The besiegers having obtained possession of the lower part, ascended to the battlements, where the remnant of the garrison, about 80 in number, made their last desperate stand. A sanguinary conflict took place on the staircase, every step of which was fiercely contested; but the English were successful, and the Knight and his gallant band were either put to the sword, or leaped into the river and were drowned. The town, which owes much of its improvement to its present proprietor, is beautifully situated on the southern bank of the River Shannon, which is here nearly three miles in breadth; and contains about 280 houses, several of which are well built and of handsome appearance. Among the more recent improvements is a handsome terrace, built by John Hamilton, Esq., and commanding some fine views over the Shannon, which abounds with beautiful and interesting scenery; a new line of road from Askeaton to Tarbert, completed at a very great expense; and a road through the mountains to Abbeyfeale, a distance of 12 miles, which was opened in 1836. In the summer the town is much resorted to for the benefit of pure air and the advantages of sea-bathing, and is admirably situated for carrying on a very extensive trade, the river affording great facilities for intercourse, and secure anchorage for vessels of any burden. The surrounding scenery is richly diversified, embracing a fine view of the opposite coast of Clare, the island of Scatterry, and the fertile promontory of Tarbert, with its lofty and handsome lighthouse. This place is the great depot of the salmon fishery of the Shannon and its tributary rivers, of which large quantities are annually shipped for England; oysters of very superior flavour and other fish are also taken in abundance. The manufacture of linen and cotton checks is carried on to some extent, and there is a considerable trade in corn and butter, which are shipped to Cork and Limerick. The market is on Saturday; and fairs are held on 8 June, the first Wednesday in September (O.S.) and 3 December, for cattle and pigs. A constabulary police force is stationed here; a manorial court is held every third week, for the recovery of debts to any amount, with extensive jurisdiction; and petty sessions are held every alternate Saturday. There is a substantial bridewell, containing six cells, two day-rooms, and two spacious airing-yards.

The parish, also called Kilfergus, comprises 14, 637 statute acres, as apportioned under the tithe act, of which about one-third is under tillage, one-third mountain or bog,

and the remainder pasture and demesne land. The land around the town is very fertile, and in several parts of the mountains, which everywhere afford good pasturage for young cattle, very good crops of wheat are raised. There are several large dairy farms; a large butter market is held in the town, and great quantities of butter are made here and sent to Limerick and Cork for exportation. The system of agriculture is rapidly improving; an abundance of shell manure of excellent quality is either raised in the Shannon or brought from the opposite coast; and limestone is sometimes brought from Foynes Island and burnt for manure. There are some quarries of hard compact clay-slate, used for building; and flag-stones of superior quality and of very large size are found in several parts of the parish. The mountains are of silicious grit and indurated black clay, in which are several strata of coal: of these, only the upper stratum has been worked, and in a very inefficient manner; the only workings now in progress are at Cloghgough. Ironstone of very good quality is also plentiful, but has hitherto been applied solely to the making of roads. The principal seats are Glin Castle, the spacious and elegant mansion of the Knight of Glin, finely situated in a richly planted and highly embellished demesne; Westwood, of Lieutenant Hyde, R.N.; Shannon View, of the Rev. R. Fitzgerald; Shannon Lawn, of D. Harnett, Esq.; Fort Shannon, of J. Evans, Esq.; Ballydonohoe, of T. Fitzgerald, Esq.; Eastwood, of the Rev. E. Ashe; Cahara Lodge, of Mrs. Johnston; Villa, of J. Hamilton, Esq.; Glin Lodge, of Mrs. Standish; Clare View, of the Rev. R. Fitzgerald, Gardenville, of Miss Sargent; and Cahara House, of R. Q. Sleeman, Esq. The living is a vicarage, in the diocese of Limerick, and in the patronage of the vicars choral of the cathedral of Limerick, to whom the rectory is appropriate; the tithes amount to £337.10., of which 225 is payable to the appropriators, and the remainder to the vicar. There is neither glebe-house nor glebe. The church, a very neat edifice in the early English style, with a square tower, was erected on an eminence close to the town, in 1815, by a gift of £600 from the late Board of First Fruits. In the R.C. divisions the parish is the head of a union or district, comprising also the parish of Loughill, the chapel, near the church, is a large plain building, and there is a chapel at Loughill. About 70 children are taught in a school to which the R.C. clergyman annually contributes; and there are six private schools, in which are about 250 children; a Sunday school, and a dispensary. About half a mile to the east of the town are the ruins of the ancient church of Kilfergus, or Glin, situated within the parish of Loughill, to which that and the adjoining townland continue to pay tithes; within the ruined walls is the family vault of the Knights of Glin. The old castle, with the exception of the roof, is still nearly entire; it consists of a massive square tower on a rock, in the bed of a small river, close to its junction with the Shannon. Near it is an ancient bridge, where was the only pass over the river, which the castle was most probably built to protect. There are numerous ancient forts in the various parts of the parish, five of which are within the demesne of the Castle Glin; and at Flean, in the mountains, are the remains of a very ancient church, of which the history is unknown.