

ROCHESTOWN, or BALLYWILLIAM:

A parish, in the barony of Clanwilliam, 6 miles (S.) from Limerick, on the road to Bruff; containing 190 inhabitants. This place takes its name from the Roches, its proprietors, who, in the reign of Henry 7th., erected a strong castle here on a bold rock, of which the remains still form a conspicuous and interesting feature in the surrounding landscape. A monastery for Franciscan friars was founded here in the thirteenth century by the Clangibbon family, and called Bailenambratharbeg, or 'Little Friars'-town', to distinguish it from Friars'-town in the parish of Cahirvalla; at the dissolution it was granted to Sir Thomas Baird. The parish is situated on the River Commogue, and comprises 1059 statute acres, as apportioned under the tithe act: the land is of good quality; about one-fourth part is under tillage, and the remainder rich meadow and pasture; on the banks of the river are some corcass lands, sometimes overflowed, but which might be embanked at a very trifling expense. The substratum is limestone, and the western termination of the basaltic formation appears in one or two places much decomposed and assuming a columnar tendency. The principal seat is Ballynaguard, the handsome residence of J. Croker, Esq., pleasantly situated in an extensive and well-wooded demesne; there are several excellent farm-houses. The living is a vicarage, in the diocese of Cashel, and in the patronage of the archbishop; the rectory is partly impropriate in E. D. Freeman, Esq., and partly in J. Croker, Esq. The tithes amount to £60, of which £20.11.4. is payable to Mr. Freeman, £19.9.8 to Mr. Croker, and the remainder to the vicar. In the R. C. divisions the parish forms part of the union of Ballybricken. On the banks of the Commogue, near Six-Mile-Bridge, are the remains of the ancient monastery.