

¹ MITCHELL
1565

² MITCHELL
1565

³ MITCHELL
1589

⁴ Mythe Firme
1592

⁵ O'NEILL
1601

⁶ FIORO'D
1613

⁷ Brian O'Neil m' p'halim
baeh.
1572

⁸ Syr Rago odonnayl
D n's De tyr conytl
24th June 1582.

⁹ Ragh odonnin.
1595

FAC-SIMILES of the SIGNATURES of some NORTHERN IRISH CHIEFTAINS
and ENGLISH COMMANDERS in ULSTER in the reign of ELIZABETH.

taken from Original Letters in the State Paper Office.

FACSIMILES OF THE SIGNATURES OF SOME IRISH CHIEFTAINS,
AND ENGLISH COMMANDERS IN ULSTER,

TEMP. ELIZABETH.

THE originals from which these fac-similes have been taken are in the State Paper Office, London. The "Irish Correspondence" is considered the most curious of all the collections in that depository. It extends from Henry VII's. to Queen Anne's time, and comprises very many thousand letters, besides numerous important State documents and papers, written in the stirring days of Elizabeth. Among this voluminous mass there are many letters from the Irish chieftains and English commanders in Ulster. Such letters are, as it were, photographic records, struck off in the heat of the day. They relate historic facts more vividly, and it may be with more truth, than has been done either by the English chroniclers or Gaelic annalists. They are mostly addressed to the Secretaries of State,—shrewd Walshingham, great Burleigh, and his son, astute Cecil. When written by suppliant Irishmen to such potent ministers they contain the special pleading of their suits, and are full of passages illustrative of the social and political history of the time. Letters such as these are the *pabulum* of archæologists, local and national historians, painters, romance writers, and poets.

1. & 2.—JOHN, OR SHANE O'NEILL, Chief of the Cinel-Owen, or Clan-O'Neill, and ruler of Tyrone. He was sometimes called *Shane-an-Diomais*, i.e., John the Proud, or Ambitious; but usually *Shane Donghariteach*, having been fostered by O'Donnelly. This extraordinary man's letters, composed in the Latin language, are numerous, and are highly characteristic of the writer and his country. Some of their addresses exhibit the nomad style of life of this leader of predatory and insurrectionary bands.—He dates one, "*Ex finibus de Tirconail*," when about to wage war with the neighbouring sept of O'Donnells; and another, "*Ex silvis meis*," when driven by the English soldiers into a woody fastness. The Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Sussex, in a reply to one of these letters, remonstrates at their proud tone. Their ambitious tenor bears out the *soubriquet* of the arrogant writer, and their wit and spirit shew that his mind was as vigorous as his body. He does not sign his Christian name; but "*MISI O'NEILL*."—BY ME THE SON OF NEILL!

A notice of this formidable chieftain at page 159 of this Journal may here be referred to, and the following particulars subjoined. Shane O'Neill took upon him the rulership of his clan on the death of his father, Con, first Earl of Tyrone: but, as his right was disputed by Hugh, Baron of Dungannon, on whose father that title, with right of succession to the Earldom, had been conferred by the Crown, his authority was unacknowledged by the State. His precarious power rested solely, therefore, on the attachment of those warlike swordsmen of the clan who supported his claim, and was only to be up-

held by leading them to battle and plunder. Involved in an hereditary and deadly feud with the O'Donnells, his earliest achievement was to surprise their chief, his own father-in-law, and carry him and his wife away prisoners. The lady was daughter of the Hebridean island-laird, M^cLean, and widow of an Earl of Argyle; and annalists say, that although O'Donnell was at length ransomed and released, his wife was not restored to him, but altogether detained by the lawless captor, to whom she bore several children. One of these was a son, called Hugh *Gaveleach*, or Hugh of the Fetters, because his mother was in prison at the time of his birth. The annals add that Shane's own wife, Mary O'Donnell, died of anguish and horror at the severities inflicted by her savage lord on her father before her very eyes!

Shane O'Neill is described as an immoderate devotee of Bacchus and Venus. Although his cellars at Dunderum contained some 200 tuns of excellent Spanish wine, his favourite beverage was native *usquebaugh*; of which he drank oft-times so copiously that he was customarily placed in a pit, and covered with mould to his chin, to cool his heated body!—a *panaceum* in which this mighty toper anticipated the "earth-bath" of modern empirics. His visit to Court, and the description of the strange appearance his outlandishly-attired body-guard presented in London, are well-known. One of the most curious of his letters is addressed to the Cardinals of Lorraine and Guise, desiring their influence with the king of France to induce that monarch to send an army to aid him in restoring the Catholic faith; and reminding them of a singular incident which occurred one day when they and the writer were present at a grand hunt in England, when their brother transfixed two stags with a single arrow. In the summer of 1561, Lord Sussex, renowned for his military skill, marched into Ulster with a considerable force, to chastise this rebellious chieftain; but came off with so little triumph in an engagement, as to cause Burleigh much anxiety in breaking the news of the disaster to her Majesty. [Wright's Elizabeth, vol. I. p. 67.] Sussex's atrocious attempt to procure the assassination of so troublesome an enemy is related in Moore's History of Ireland. The death of this turbulent man was at last contrived by the governor of Carrickfergus, Sir William Piers, who prevailed on the leader of a band of Hebridean Scots to come over, under the pretence of aiding Shane in his insurrectionary designs, and then quarrel with and kill him. He was murdered at Cushendun, in Glenarm, near the cliffs on which the Scots, who acted as auxiliaries in the Irish intestine wars, used to make their signal-fires for more men from Cantire. The place where he met his tragic end is thus indicated in old Norden's map: "Here Shane O'Neill was slayne."

3. SIR TURLOUGH LUINEACH O'NEILL.—Called *Luineach* from having been fostered by O'Luinigh. He was son of Neill Conallach, second son of Con More, and was nephew to the first Earl of Tyrone. During the dynasty of Shane the Proud, he acted as his "chief-governor," being his chosen *Tanist*, lieutenant, or successor-elect to the chieftancy,—to which he succeeded after the murder of Shane, Campion, writing during the life of Sir Turlough, states that it was he who practised with the Hebridean leader, Alexander oge M^cDonnell, to put Shane to death; but this surmise can be proved unfounded upon better informed authority, and is controverted by the fact that, immediately after succeed-

ing to the chieftaincy, he attacked the Hebrideans, and slew their perfidious captain. Fierce contention as to the succession arose between himself and Hugh, Baron of Dungannon (afterwards Earl of Tyrone,) but he was at length established as head of the clan:—for all the power of England could not force the clansmen to accept a chief otherwise than at their own choice. Dreading that remarkable man, whose claim was recognized by Government, and elbowed by the powerful English commanders who had recently settled in Ulster, Turlough endeavoured to strengthen his interest by alliances, and by demonstrating his military strength without risking his clan or himself. In 1567 he made an offer of marriage to the sister of Marshal Sir Nicholas Bagenal's wife; promising, if his suit were accepted, to retain six English gentlewomen and twenty English men to wait on her. The contumacious Marshal, in his hearty distaste of Celtic chieftains and their slippery connubial arrangements, declared he had rather "she were burnt!" Disappointed in his search for a *Sassenach* spouse, (in which it would have been politic to have aided him,) he threw himself into the arms of a Scottish one, allying himself with a powerful family in a kingdom then inimical to England, by marrying a daughter of the Earl of Argyle, and widow of McDonnell, Lord of Cantire. The influence already exercised by the Campbells in the North of Ireland was strengthened by this match, and was afterwards exerted much to the annoyance of Elizabeth.

In 1575, when the admirable Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, made an expedition into Ulster, Turlough Luineach, was one of the four northern chiefs who saw fit to make their submission. He would not, at first, trust his own person within the English camp, but sent his wife to meet the Viceroy; "and she," writes the chronicler Hooker, "being a woman verie well spoken, of great modestie, nurture, parentage, and disposition, and aunt to the then Earl of Argyle, was very desirous to have her husband live like a good subject, and that he should be nobilitated." O'Neill shortly after "came in" to the Lord Deputy, and submitted himself without any conditions;—a course deemed in those days a singular example of confidence. A patent was prepared creating him Baron of Clogher and Earl of Clan-Connell. He however at this period despised these titles, in the plenitude of his unharnessed rule as a Celtic chieftain.

After the political calm which ensued on the destruction of the great Earl of Desmond, and before the vigorous Sir John Perrott came over as Lord Deputy, the northern chiefs conspired to make a bold attempt to throw off the foreign yoke. Turlough was at the head of this confederacy, and in order to sound the disposition and enlist the assistance of all who might be prevailed on to join, dispatched trusty messengers to the principal lords of native birth who were inimical to the State. He assigned, as motives for the meditated revolt, certain promises he had received to be elected King of Ireland, and the smallness of the force the *Sassenach* then had in the land, with no great martialist to lead it, declaring "it were a pitie to let slip so fair an occasion." But the southern clans were found to be in so shattered a condition,—their leaders either slain, in exile, or heart-broken,—that their support could not be counted on, and the intended revolt was nipped in the bud.

It is stated in Sir John Perrott's memoirs that in the year 1585 this veteran toparch, finding

himself, through age and infirmity, unable to govern his extensive region and keep order among the insubordinate inferior chiefs, offered to surrender portions of territory to the Earl of Tyrone, and to his own son, Sir Arthur O'Neill. Government were well content with this proposal, as tending to hasten the dismemberment of the clan, and the abolition of that potent sway the "great O'Neill" had wielded for many centuries. Becoming year by year less able to rule or lead the warlike among his rude followers, or defend their possessions from attack, he leant more humbly on the State for countenance and support; and, in the words of Perrott's memoirs "the more conformable he shewed himself to obey the Government, the less obedience his own people paid him:—the people of those parts little regarding governors that are obedient to the prince, or unable to lead their stirring spirits in such actions as they were inured withal." Finding his authority thus on the decline, he entered into an agreement making certain concessions to his youthful and ambitious rival, Lord Tyrone:—but soon repented of them, and warned the officers of State that "they had raised up a whelp they would not easily pull down:"—meaning the young Earl, whose aspiring mind he well knew. Marshal Sir Henry Bagenal, who inherited from his father a hatred for the whole tribe of the Cinel-Owen, and whose fortunes were built on weakening them, and were to be enlarged by their downfall, adds this postscript to a despatch dated 9th September, 1595:—"Since writing of my letter old O'Neyle (Turlough) is dead, and the Traitor (Hugh, Earl of Tyrone) gone to the Stone to receive that name." The stone on which the chiefs of the Cinel-Owen were inaugurated was at Tullaghoge, near Dungannon. Camden writes of it as—"Ublogahell, where O'Neill the haughty tyrant of Ulster, used to be crowned in the barbarous manner of his country."

4, 5, & 6.—HUGH O'NEILL, EARL OF TYRONE.—His father, Ferdoragh, was putative son of Con, 1st Earl of Tyrone, by the wife of a smith of Dundalk. By the custom of Tanistry illegitimate sons had equal claim to be elected to the chieftaincy of their sept with legitimate, and the old Earl destined the succession to his favourite, Ferdoragh, "a lusty horseman and tried souldiour". He even prevailed on Henry VIII. to sanction his wish and the young warrior was created Baron of Dungannon by patent, with a clause making him heir-apparent to the Earldom. This provision was prejudicial to the earl's indubitable son, Shane the Proud, who, just before his father's death removed the obstacle to his own succession to the chieftaincy by slaying the Baron, declaring he was no child of *his* father, but son of the Dundalk smith.

Hugh O'Neill, when a young orphan nobleman, was protected by the State from the jealous malevolence of his father's murderer, and went over to the English Court, where he was well received, and resided in London for some time. He commanded a troop of horse in the Queen's pay, and served so loyally during Desmond's rebellion and on other occasions that he was rewarded with a yearly allowance from the Exchequer of one thousand marks. The experience he acquired in military affairs while in the royal army, afterwards enabled him to discipline his wild clan and Scottish auxiliaries, and lead them against that army to victory. During the dynasty of Turlough Luineach he was supported, as Baron of Dungannon in Tyrone, by successive viceroys, as a check upon that formidable ruler, and

persuaded them he never intended to assume the dangerous authority of a Celtic chief, but that he would comport himself as amenable to the laws as the Anglicized Earls of Thomond and Clanricard;—while all the time he covertly ingratiated himself so much with the leading men of his sept that, on Turlough's death, he was inaugurated **THE O'NEILL**—an honour he prized beyond all others, and a name “in comparison of which,” writes Camden, “the very title of Cæsar is contemptible in Ireland.” Even so early as 1592, before the death of his aged and feeble predecessor, he assumed the name of **THE O'NEILL**, and signed by that title in writing to Gaelic chieftains, sinking the *Sassenach* rank, to which he had been elevated, of Earl of Tyrone.

Moryson describes this remarkable man as of “mean stature, but strong in body, able to endure labours, watching, and hard fare; being withal industrious, and active, valiant, affable, and apt in the management of great affairs; and of a high, dissembling, subtle, and profound wit; so as many deemed him born either for the great good or ill of his country.” Moryson, whose “History of Ireland” from 1599 to 1603 is in fact a narrative of the suppression of the general rebellion headed by Tyrone, accuses the Earl of acting as a dissembling traitor, in simultaneously offering submission to Elizabeth and treating with the Spanish King for military aid. From the dispersal of the Armada to the defeat of the Spanish invaders and Tyrone's forces at Kinsale, the monarchs of Spain constantly supported the great Irish rebel as a strong instrument of offence against Elizabeth.

Tyrone came in frequent collision with Marshal Bagenal, who, as commander of the Northern garrisons and representative of Government, zealously exposed the treasonable designs of his desperate neighbour; but in one instance acted with cruel injustice in detaining letters the Earl had, before he was proclaimed a traitor, addressed to the Queen, explanatory of his conduct and offering terms of submission. Both Celtic chief and Saxon general reciprocated the bitterest animosity. The elopement of Mabel Bagenal, Sir Henry's beautiful sister, with the fascinating rebel added fresh fuel to this enmity. At the famous battle of the Blackwater, when Bagenal led the royal forces, Tyrone, full of “rage of envy and settled rancour against the Marshal,” charged eagerly into the enemy's ranks, seeking to confront his mortal foe;—but he met him not, for the Marshal had already fallen by a chance bullet. The signal routing of the English that day was long remembered by them as “the defeat of the Blackwater.” Seventeen gallant captains and eighteen hundred infantry, many of them veterans of Border and Continental warfare, were left dead on the field. Never before on Irish soil had the banner of England sustained so complete an overthrow.

“Who has not heard—while Erin yet
 Strove 'gainst the Saxon's iron bit—
 Who has not heard how brave O'Neill
 In English blood imbrued his steel,
 Against St. George's cross blazed high
 The banners of his Tanistry,
 To fiery Essex gave the foil,

And reign'd a prince in Ulster's soil?
 But chief arose his victor pride,
 When that brave Marshal fought and died,
 And Avon-Duff to ocean bore
 Her billows, red with Saxon gore."

Hugh O'Neill now exultingly announced himself the national champion, armed to avenge the wrongs of his countrymen. He roused their deepest sympathies by rallying them to recover their property and freedom, and re-establish their religion. His career is a matter of history, and too extensive a theme for our limits:—many portions of it are as interesting as they are unknown, and might be specially investigated by means of this Journal.

Tyrone, in preferring the name of O'NEILL to the title of Earl, made his choice. Elated with pride of place, he ran the fitful course of an independent Gaelic Prince, instead of fulfilling the calm duties of a subordinate peer. The work of conforming his rude people to English law and order was ungenial, and he assumed a defensive and offensive attitude—proudly confiding in the natural defences of his country and the valour of his men. This great and bold Irish falcon, though trained in the mews of the English Court, turned "haggard" on beginning to soar in native air; and then was lured from loyalty by the Continental powers, and flown at that stout quarry—England. The fac-simile dated 1613 is taken from a letter written in Rome, where he died in exile, in the year 1616.

7. SIR BRIAN O'NEILL, Chief of the Clan-Hugh-Boy, Lord of Clandeboey, and, according to the Four Masters, chief of the senior stem of the Cinel-Eoghain or Clan O'Neill.—His letter, from whence this fac-simile of his signature is taken, is a remonstrance that his territory of Clandeboey, which he declares had been in the possession of his ancestors for fourteen descents at the least, should be bestowed upon Thomas Smith. The grantee was a natural son of Sir Thomas Smith, Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth, and, on landing in 1571 to establish himself in the Ardes, was attacked and slain. Two years afterwards, Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, came over with the intention of subduing the fertile parts of Ulster, (the Queen having granted him the moiety of the seigniories of Clandeboey, Ferney, &c., *si rebelles submoverent*), and took up his quarters in Carrickfergus. He was strenuously resisted by Sir Brian, whose country was thus menaced. According to Camden, Sir Brian was head of a powerful sept of the O'Neills, and lord of a fertile and wealthy district; his own herd of kine numbering no less than 60,000 horns. A truce was entered into the following year between the Earl and the chieftain; when, to celebrate it, O'Neill prepared a grand feast, to which the Viceroy and English officers of state were invited, and three days and nights were passed in revelry:—but, in the end, Essex seized his host, slew 200 of his followers, and carried him off captive to Dublin, where he was executed.

8. SIR HUGH O'DONNELL, Chief of the Cinel-Conaill, and Lord of Tyrconnel, son of Manus, Lord of Tyrconnel, who died 1563.—The particulars of his life are given in the Annals of the Four Masters.

9. HUGH ROE O'DONNELL, son of Sir Hugh.—The signature, of which the fac-simile is given, is af-

¹⁰
H. S. Odomnell.
1601

Hagenall
1589

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Hagenall
1593

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Hagenall
1581

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Hagenall
1581

¹⁴
Malciās sive matuera ori-all
ae hugo suo filii primogeniti
1564

¹⁵
H. Mageriffe
1575

¹⁶
Paris, 28th Oct, 1582
Brane Mgeechagan

¹⁷
C. R. O'agherty
1607

FAC-SIMILES of the SIGNATURES of some NORTHERN IRISH CHIEFTAINS
and ENGLISH COMMANDERS IN THE REIGN of ELIZABETH

fixed to his submission, dated 1595. In the words of a memoir of the O'Donnells, in the appendix to the above-mentioned Annals:—"History does not present a more chivalrous and devoted Irishman than Hugh Roe proved himself to be during his short and eventful career." The cotemporary biography of this extraordinary man is one of the most interesting and instructive pieces of Irish History, and it may be hoped will be published at some future time by means of this Journal.

10. SIR NEILL GARVE O'DONNELL.—Fourth son of Con, who was excluded from the chieftainship of his clan by his uncle Sir Hugh. There is a full notice of this knight, who was called "the Queen's O'Donnell," in the above-named memoir.

11. SIR NICHOLAS BAGENAL.—A native of Staffordshire, who came into this kingdom in 1542, under circumstances related in the 3rd volume of the printed State Papers, page 439; and having at the instance of Con, 1st Earl of Tyrone, obtained pardon,* settled in the North, where he and his son became the supplanting enemies of the O'Neills. He obtained grants of a large tract in Downshire, and around Newry, a town commenced by him, and the castle of which he built and resided in. He was appointed Marshal of Queen Elizabeth's armies in Ireland, a post in which his son, Sir Henry, succeeded him.

12. SIR HENRY BAGENAL.—Son of the above. The Marshal celebrated in "Rokeby." He wrote a Description of the state of Ulster in the year 1587; the original is in the State Paper Office, and there is a copy in the Carew MSS.

13. SIR WILLIAM PIERS.—Governor of Carrickfergus. He received the reward of 1,000 marks promised by proclamation to any one who should bring in the head of the rebel Shane O'Neill. From this officer descended Sir Henry Piers, Bart. of Tristernagh, in Westmeath, who, in 1682, wrote the description of that county printed in Vallancey's Collectanea; the first of the only two of the many curious descriptions of the counties of Ireland written at the same time for the information of Sir William Petty, which as yet have been published.

14. MALACHIUS or MAELMORA O'REILLY, and his eldest son HUGH.—Their letter is addressed to the Queen, desiring to borrow the large sum of £1,169, which they engage to repay in cows. Sir Hugh O'Reilly became Chief of Breifney (part of the present county of Cavan) and died in the year 1583, when a fierce controversy arose as to the succession between his son Sir John, and Edmond an illegitimate brother of the deceased. While the bastard claimed under the Celtic custom as Tanist, or successor-elect, to the leadership of the clan, Sir John founded his claim on the English law of

*Lord Deputy and Council to Henry VIII, 7th December, 1542.—"And whereas at the repaire of the Erle of Tyrone into these parts, he made humble and earnest suit unto us to be mean to your Majesty for the pardon of one Nycholas Bagnalde, late your Highnes' servant, who by chance (as the thing is to us declared) was in company of certain lyght personnes, wher ther was slayne one of your Majesty's subjects, for the whiche the sayde Nycholas hither fledde, and hath sythens doon here very honest and psynefull servyce; and therefore, at the

humble sute of the sayde Erle, we moste lowly besече your Majesty to be so good and gracious lorde unto him as to graunt him your most gracious pardon."—In reply the king writes:—"And of our especial grace, at your like sutes, and the sute of our cousin the Erle of Tyron, have also pardoned Nicholas Bagnald; not doubting but he woll herafte use himself as apperteyneth.

State Papers, London, 4to. 1834. Vol. III pp. 439, 442.

hereditary succession to the ownership of the country. It would seem, by the above-mentioned letter, wherein the eldest son joins his father as security for repayment of the required loan, that the main line of the O'Reillys were anxious, like many others among the Celtic septs, to substitute the law of hereditary and primogenitural succession for the irregular and faction-fraught custom of election. A document describing the rents, duties, and customs, paid to O'Reilly by his tenantry is printed in the first volume of the publications of the Celtic Society, and is curiously elucidatory of the social history of the Gael.

15. **SIR HUGH MAGENNIS**—Chief of Iveagh in the county of Down; was elected one of the knights of the shire for that county in 1585; his colleague being Sir Nicholas Bagenal.

16. **BRIEN MCGROGHUEAN**, 1582.—This letter is dated Paris, whither the writer had fled after having slain his brother, as related by the Four Masters.

17. **SIR CAHILL O'DOHERTY**.—Son of Sir John O'Doherty, Lord of Inishowen. The above-mentioned annalists write of his nomination to the chieftainship in 1601 by an English general, and of his quarrel in 1608 with Sir George Paulet, Governor of Derry. His surprise of that fort and the fighting that ensued, occurring after the flight of Tyrone and Tyrconnel, led to the colonization of Ulster.

Pole-Hore, Wexford, 6th September, 1853.

HERBERT F. HORE.