

5 1796 'There are two great roads leading from Waterford to Corke, One on the north and one on the south of the Suir. The first passing over the Suir at Carrick, from thence to Clonmell, Ardfinnan, Clogheen, Kilworth, Corke, and this is the principal road; to avoid the ferries of Dungarvan & Youghall has been repaired, and remade from Waterford to Dungarvan, at the national expence, under pretence of being a Military Road, although at the same time, there was an excellent coast road, almost as short from Waterford to Dungarvan.!!

On the south side of the Suir, one road runs parallel to, and near the river, to Clonmell; if the enemy should find opposition in crossing the Suir, at Carrick, he may proceed on the south side to Clonmell, and if there opposed, he may still keep the South side of the river, and turn over the mountain road, to Cappoquin, on the Black water, at which place another road unites from Dungarvan; and he may thus escape the difficulty of the ferries. There is a wooden bridge at Cappoquin, and a stone bridge at Lismore, two miles higher up the Blackwater.

From Dungarvan to Clonmell is 14 miles in a right line, 11 of which is taken up by the high mountains of Monavilla, over which there is no carriage road, and but one difficult horse track, about the center. If we are in force to possess these mountains, the enemy may be effectually checked, passing at either of the extremities.

From Dungarvan three roads lead to Cappoquin, in the narrow and rich vale of Whitechurch: from 4 mile water to Cappoquin, (in the road from Clonmell) it is an open mountainous road, till it reaches Ballynamult, 6 miles on this side of Cappoquin; in the midway, is the deep ravine of murdering glin, 3 miles short of Cappoquin – All this track is within 12 miles of Ardfinnan, where our great body is usually encamp[e]d, in time of war, and there are many fords & bridges to facilitate our passage over the Suir, from the North to the South side. – There is also a carriage road lately made from Clogheen to Lismore, over the mountain of Knockmeeldown: all these afford us great opportunities of hanging on the enemy's flanks in this march.'

6 1796. 'The great expedition in the last war, under the Duc d'Aquilon, was intended in part for this [Waterford] harbour, as many French officers of rank, have since assured me; they talked of the River Suir being navigable for artillery and baggage to Clonmell'.

7 1796. 'The tide rises to Carrick, and there are no fords between Waterford & Carrick, except in 4 places, and in very dry seasons, one particularly near 2 mile bridge, at Turylea Castle; but as Clonmell depends much on the navigation of the Suir, to which place boats of 4 and 6 tons are daily passing from Waterford, these fords do not long exist.'

8 1796. 'Carrick contains 3 streets of well built houses, 2 Mass houses, a Church, and is a manufacturing town of woollen cloths, it could canton 3,000 Infantry & 300 Cav[alr]y.'

9 1796. 'Clonmell is much larger. Spacious barracks for Infantry & Cavalry, have been lately erected here. The parade is our great central depôt of Field Artillery. This barrack is most absurdly situated, at the extremity and adjoining, the town; at the foot of a rising ground; surrounded by a good wall about 10 feet high, but not flanked, or any means of firing over it – if it had been built on the rising ground, and the wall flanked and crenaux'd, it would have been a tolerable post against a mob, or even the infantry of an enemy. Such will be the situation of our barracks, while the building of them, is directed by a board of Civilians. Lord Townshend added the commander in Chief and the Quarter master General to this Board, to carry into execution his plan of fortified barracks: to no effect; things go on in their usual course.

Clonmell will canton 5,000 Infantry and 600 Cav[alr]y exclusive of the barracks, it is a large inland town, and supplies the surrounding country. Two miles forward towards Corke, are the great flower mills of Mr. Bagwell.'

## An Hedge School Education: How Thomas Guerin of Aherlow Learned Maths.<sup>1</sup>

by Denis G. Marnane

### Introduction

#### 1 Family

In May 1962, Thomas Guerin an elderly Canadian of Irish descent, visited Ireland.<sup>2</sup> A retired businessman and politician with scholarly interests, from a family with distinguished service to Canada, Guerin paid a brief visit on his way home from the Vatican where he performed some duties over Easter, a consequence of holding some Papal honour.<sup>3</sup> "An ever-present pull to return" was the way he described what was one of several visits to the country from which his grandfather had emigrated a century and more earlier.<sup>4</sup> A press report in 1946 had even speculated (erroneously) that Guerin would be named Canadian High Commissioner to Ireland.<sup>5</sup> Unlike some individuals in his position, Guerin knew a great deal about his ancestors. The grandfather who emigrated, also Thomas Guerin, had been "a teacher in higher maths at one of the Erasmus Smith schools"<sup>6</sup> and in Canada, for a time, had followed the same profession, in McGill University in Montreal.

Before the Second World War, Thomas Guerin (the 1962 visitor to Ireland)) served in the Canadian army and later visited Europe and wrote about political developments for a Canadian readership.<sup>7</sup> For much of the 1940s, like his father before him, he was a member of the Quebec Legislature. After the War, he wrote one of the first scholarly books about early Irish settlement in Canada.<sup>8</sup> Guerin took an interest in Irish academic publications and made two contributions to *The Irish Sword*, the journal of the Irish Military History Society.<sup>9</sup> It was not incidental that the visitor of 1962, among many other distinctions and interests, was a fellow of the Irish Genealogical Society, indicating a passion pursued professionally: records generated within the family followed, supplemented and verified by external documentation. Incidentally, Thomas Guerin married well: Alice, a daughter of Robert J Cuddihy, a wealthy Irish American, whose magazine, the *Literary Digest*, was an influential American institution.<sup>10</sup>

#### Table- Four Generations of the Guerin Family - From Aherlow to Montreal"

- 1 Michael Guerin, Aherlow (1770-1849) m. Mary Kennedy (c.1775-1846)
- 2 Thomas Guerin, Aherlow and Montreal (1818-1887) m. Mary Maguire (1822-1906)
- 3 James John Guerin, Montreal (1856-1932) m. Mary O'Brien (1864-88)
- 4 Thomas Guerin, Montreal (1886-1963) m. Alice Cuddihy

With respect to Thomas's own father, records are plentiful. James John Guerin was born in Montreal in July 1856 and qualified in medicine from McGill University in 1878. In this field he achieved great local distinction. He also entered politics and was elected to the Quebec Legislature and was a member of the Canadian parliament in the late 1920s. His greatest political achievement was becoming mayor of Montreal 1910-12. Not bad for a son of an emigrant from Aherlow. His wife Mary O'Brien, born in Montreal but a daughter of emigrants, died very young, when her son Thomas was around two years of age. James John Guerin died in Montreal in November 1932.

This is a story of great success, frequently replicated in North America and Australia: second and third generations making their marks but never forgetting from whence they came. It has to be said that Thomas Guerin (1818-1887), the subject of this article, also achieved remarkable success in Canada, thanks in no small part to his "hedge school" education in various locations around Tipperary town. He emigrated sometime in the mid-1840s. Why he ended up in Canada or in Montreal is unclear but by 1847 "Dr" Thomas Guerin was lecturing in maths in McGill University.<sup>12</sup> Subsequently, he worked as a civil engineer and had a distinguished career as an expert on drainage and allied matters. Unlike many other emigrants to North America, from a tenant farmer background, who had to wait for the next generation to achieve comfortable professional status, Thomas Guerin did this himself, entirely thanks to his natural ability and his hedge school education.

That we know something about this education is thanks to his grandson. The point has already been made that Thomas Guerin (1886-1963) was hugely interested in history and not least, the history of his own family. To this end, in 1934 and again the following year, notices appeared in the *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*: queries from Thomas Guerin in Montreal, looking for information about relatives of Michael Guerin, dairy farmer (husband of Mary, known as Poll or Polly Kennedy), born in the district of the Glen of Aherlow and whose son Thomas had become professor of higher maths in McGill University and died in 1887. There were also references to a Huguenot colony at Clonmel which apparently came there from Cambridge.<sup>13</sup>

Typical of such pleas from abroad, this is a bit of a jumble – in a breath: the Glen of Aherlow, French protestant refugees, Clonmel and Cambridge, the stuff of family folklore and wishful thinking. Thomas Guerin devoted considerable time and energy investigating his Guerin antecedents, resulting in a small private publication *The French Guerins of the Glen* (1963) and donated a research notebook to the genealogy office of the National Library of Ireland.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps it was not surprising in the context of the Guerin family being based in French-speaking Montreal, that Thomas Guerin was very intent on finding evidence that his family had come to Ireland from France, probably as protestant refugees.<sup>15</sup> It cannot be said that he established any such connection.

As well as donating his genealogical research notebook to the Genealogical Office, at some stage the Irish Manuscripts Commission received from him a carbon typescript of his grandfather's account of his early life. Internal evidence suggests that the first Thomas Guerin was persuaded to tell the story of a young man in pursuit of an education, a narrative very much with the narrator as hero, but of great interest for what it tells us about a period before "official" educational opportunities were easily available to bright individuals like Thomas Guerin. The Irish Manuscripts Commission did not think the material suitable for inclusion in their publication *Analecta Hibernica* and in June 1965 passed the document to the National Library.<sup>16</sup>

## 2 Education

Thomas Guerin was a connoisseur of hedge schools.<sup>17</sup> He had to be. As shown in the Table below, he was just about past the age for primary education in 1831, the year when the Chief Secretary Edward Stanley established a national system of education, a revolutionary intervention, motivated by the notion that a certain kind of education would promote conformity to the state, rather than any fancy ideas about self-expression and individual need.<sup>18</sup>

When Thomas Guerin entered the market for education, it was 1823 and he was five years of age. Market is the operative word: individuals with knowledge to sell, sometimes promoted to be more than it was, and buyers, parents ready to spend or rather invest hard-won money improving the prospects of at least one son. Outside this market, there were other sources of education. Church of Ireland parishes had their own schools and various special interest groups such as The Kildare Place Society, founded in 1811, the London Hibernian Society and the Erasmus Smith Endowment, established in the seventeenth century, were in business to trade education for religious conformity.

Guerin's autobiographical fragment tells little about family life and nothing about what was going on in the wider world, but he has a great deal to say about the teachers and their schools that facilitated or sometimes hindered his march to success. As he looked back over his life from the comfort of relative prosperity in Canada, he was in no doubt that education was the golden key that allowed escape and was worth any trouble: "If I did not put up with this temporary inconvenience, it would be impossible for me to be anything more than an ordinary farmer. I looked forward to some future day when I would become a great man and I resolved that no trifling impediments would ever obstruct my course." Wanting an education would hardly have been enough and Guerin, for all his ego, acknowledged his good fortune that he had parents willing and able to pay. Indeed, pay, not just for him but for his sisters.

"Hedge schools" is the correct term. This does not mean poor scholars huddled in a ditch<sup>19</sup> but refers to entirely private and informal opportunities of education, in return for payment and very much centred on an individual teacher, often with a specialised knowledge, able to attract and hold a following of pupils. The notion of "hedge school" had little to do with place or building and everything to do with the individual teacher. Thomas Crofton Croker in his account of plain folk in Munster, a book published in 1824, mentioned the centrality of the "village schoolmaster" in the life of the community and that his "academy" sometimes had adult pupils, valuable as testimonials to the reputation of the teacher when they returned home and set up their own schools.<sup>20</sup>

**Table – Thomas Guerin's Teachers, 1823-1836.<sup>21</sup>**

Age	Year	Teacher	Location
5	1823	Barrar	Aherlow
6	1824	Fahey	Emly village
7-8	1825-26	Lorigan	Emly village
9-10	1827-28	Clark	
10-11	1828-29	Dannaher	Rathkea
12	1830	Cormack	c.Ballinahow
13	1831	Ryan	c.Ballinahow

14	1832	Casey	Shronell
14	1832	Dennehy	Kilteely
14	1832	(Same)	Lattin
15	1833	Cox	Bansha
16	1834-35	(Same)	Lattin
17	1835	Morrissey	Emly
17	1835	O'Brien	Kilmallock
17	1835	Bergin	Tipperary town
18	1836	(Cox)	Solohead
18	1836	McGrath	Cappamore
			Oola

Any view of "hedge schools" is influenced by William Carleton (1794-1869) the Tyrone-born writer who was educated at such schools and had experience as an hedge school master. In *The Hedge School*, one of the pieces in his *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, he describes a thirst for learning or more accurately, an understanding among the common people that hedge school masters were selling a commodity, knowledge, that was worth sacrifice to purchase. Carleton noted that perceptive parents with a bright son would make necessary sacrifices so that he might become a priest, a clerk or a schoolmaster. "The determination once fixed, the boy was set apart from every kind of labour, that he might be at liberty to bestow his undivided time and talents to the object before him."<sup>22</sup> This fits Thomas Guerin, as does Carleton's reference to a pupil moving from master to master, serially "draining" each master of his store of knowledge.<sup>23</sup> "There was scarcely a teacher who was not famous for excellence in some one science and pupils would resort to him to learn that particular branch".<sup>24</sup>

Ireland in the nineteenth century was one of the most inquired into places on the planet: endless commissions and committees. One such, on educational opportunity, reported in 1826 on all schools in the country, giving the names and religion of teachers, location and condition of school, income and pupil number.<sup>25</sup> At this stage Thomas Guerin had just begun his journey through the myriad schools that were available. In Tipperary town, there were some fourteen schools; in Bruis three, in Cullen two, in Emly five, in Lattin two and in Shronell three. Many of these were mud cabins, outhouses or occasionally, a "good slated house". One of the establishments attended by Guerin, had according to this source, 142 pupils in a "very bad cabin". Another official inquiry in 1835 showed nineteen schools in Tipperary town, one of which was a break-away from the Erasmus Smith school.<sup>26</sup>

#### Value

There cannot be very many first-hand accounts of the struggle to get an education in rural Ireland in the years before and just as the national school system was being introduced. There are obvious limitations with this source: like an actor on stage, the spotlight is on Thomas Guerin, so that everything else is in shadow. Given that the material was generated in Canada, presumably as a record for family members, and after many years out of Ireland, Guerin's focus is relentlessly on how he acquired an education. While this education was the basis of his success in Canada and his emphasis on how he acquired that education is understandable, a reader is struck by the absence of attention to time and place, family and

friends. All are props aiding the performance of the lead actor. Also, the use of language is at times prolix and stilted; almost at times English as a foreign language.

#### Table: Guerin farms, 1818-28

1818	Aherlow
1824	Tulla (Emly)
1825	Ballycurrane (Emly)
1827	Rahard (Co Limerick)
1828	Ballynahow (Bruis)

Some of the interesting and even unexpected points to emerge include the fact that Guerin's father moved about so much, from farm to farm, held on yearly tenancies. In 1828 he finally settled the family on a farm of around 80 acres in Ballynahow in the civil parish of Bruis. The very brief periods in occupation of some of these farms can hardly have promoted prosperity. His account, for all its emphasis on self, does make clear the importance of family (hardly a revelation); not just parents and siblings with all the usual scope for disagreements but his extended family. Like any countryman, Thomas Guerin has an acute awareness of blood ties and the way such connections could be useful.

Just as Thomas Guerin's domicile was unfixed, so were the teachers he attended. This was a system where to an extent the teacher was the school. Teaching was individual, not institutional, and while Thomas Guerin was not a typical pupil, his account gives the impression of a buyer's rather than a seller's market for a range of educational products, from English grammar to calculus to surveying. To stay with the mercantile references, Guerin's account also makes clear the lack of quality control. Anyone could set himself up as a teacher (and did) but most pupils were far less demanding than Guerin.

#### Autobiographical Fragment (MS 13,672, NLI)<sup>27</sup>

**1818** – I was born in the Glen of Aherlow<sup>28</sup> on the commencement of this year and was baptised on the 9<sup>th</sup> January: my sponsors being Patrick Reardan and Honora Kennedy (my aunt). There were then six brothers of us and three sisters.<sup>29</sup>

**1823** – My memory dates from this year. On this year I used to go occasionally with my brothers and sisters for passtime to school, kept by a teacher named Barrar who was kind to me.

**1824** – My father removed the family from the Glen of Aherlow to Tulla near Emly and here I was for the first time placed regularly at school in the village of Emly about one mile distant from our residence.<sup>30</sup> Another little boy, who was one of our neighbours, accompanied me to this school and we commenced the alphabet together. It seems I learned to know the letters more quickly than he did and I was thus much elated at my success. On one occasion I went to the Master, whose name was Fahey, to give my lesson, but he being busy with others at the time, directed one of his pupils to hear my lesson which he accordingly did. The matter appeared to me to be out of the usual mode of doing things. I related when I went home in the evening to my parents and older brothers that the master today was not able to teach me. This caused much merriment and amusement in our family circle,

they all looking at me as having already obtained an unbounded opinion of my literary acquirements.

**1825** – My father removed to another farm this year; one mile on the west side of the village of Emly, the former residence having been one mile on the east of the same village. The name of the farm being Ballycarrawn.<sup>31</sup> This year I was placed under the tuition of Mr Lorigan who kept another school in the village and my brother, about eight years older, attended with me<sup>32</sup>. At this time the country was much disturbed by faction fights, there having been two immense parties, the one denominated "Three Years" [1] and the other "Four Years" – our teacher belonged to the latter of the parties and his mind seemed to have been much taken up with the subject of fighting that he used sometimes to cause two little fellows to go at fisticuffs.<sup>33</sup> Myself and another little fellow were the two whom he most frequently caused to fight. I recollect the first day we went at it. We had what I thought to be a wonderful pommelling match. On the second occasion I would prefer being excused, but sooner than be considered a coward I went at it, and in the end I cried, which was construed into a signal of being beaten. On the third occasion, some week or so afterwards, I went through the very same ordeal. I fought and cried. This seemed to have stung my brother to the quick, as well also as a neighbour of ours who was about his age and who attended the same school: so on our way home they stated to me that on the next occasion I fought I must kick my opponent with my shoes as well as fist him at the same time. This I promised to do.

In a few days afterwards our teacher was away and the academy was without a head, so it must follow that the pupils must enjoy themselves in some other way than with ink and paper. Accordingly, it was immediately suggested that myself and my opponent should have a fight. (The fight took place. Guerin used his feet as well as his fists and won.)

**1826** – I remained this year in the same school

**1827** – My father removed this year to a farm named "Rahard" within some six miles of Tipperary on the N.W. side.<sup>34</sup> I was placed at school with a man named Clark. Two lads of the neighbourhood were my companions at this school. Our parents resided close together and our journey was through the fields, a distance of about one mile and a quarter. My brother having to remain at home to assist during the spring in putting in the crops, did not accompany me to the school at first, so that my only companions were the two little fellows already stated, their names being Treacy and O'Callaghan, the latter being of my age or thereabouts, the former about one year younger.

(At this point in the narrative, Guerin, at some length tells about "mitching" from school over several successive days, with Treacy and O'Callaghan. When Treacy's father found out, he beat his son, as did O'Callaghan's mother, her son. She was a widow. When Guerin's father was told, he did nothing, with the result that Thomas increased his respect for his father.)

The consequence of this was that I looked upon myself in a most contemptible light, while my respect for my father increased to the highest pitch. I fully resolved to go to school the day following and when I had breakfast I took up my books and started for school without waiting to hear from my companions. On my way to school I saw my two companions at a long distance away in the fields. They appeared gathering mushrooms. I

went to school and remained there until the school was let out. When I arrived home I was questioned where my two companions were. I stated I did not know. I was told they had arrived from school some time ago and that they stated I was not at school that day; I stated I was at school, but they were not. I was believed and I never deceived from that day.

On this year I commenced to learn to write. My brother came with me during the summer to this school. I recollect this year that in a class of the whole school, I gained the prize once for spelling. [5]

**1828** – My father removed the family this year to a farm called Ballinhowe, two miles west of Tipperary and four miles north of the Glen of Aherlow.<sup>35</sup> This was the last farm my father lived on. It was a beautiful place consisting of about 84 acres of most fertile land with a homestead beautifully planted with sycamore trees and crab ditches. It was here the family resided until they were all grown up.

I may state that the Glen of Aherlow is a beautiful valley situated between "Slieve Muck" Pig's Mountain on the north and the "Galtee Mountains" on the south. This valley between the bases of the two mountains is about 5 or 6 miles wide and about 10 miles long. It runs almost due east and west and throughout its whole length runs a magnificent stream or river about 20 feet in width, which abounds in salmon at certain seasons.<sup>36</sup> After leaving the Glen of Aherlow this river is called the River Suir. It has its origin in the Galtee Mountains. This valley is inhabited by what may be called small farmers holding between 20 and 50 acres each and along the slopes of "Slieve Muck" from its base to its summit, there are beautiful plantations all the way, the distance being about 2 miles. On the slope of the Galtee Mountains is an unlimited supply of peat of the best description which supplies the inhabitants of Aherlow with fuel.

In coming from Tipperary which is situated about one and a half miles on the north side of "Slieve Muck", when the traveller ascends this mountain to its summit and looks down into the Glen of Aherlow, the prospect presented to his view reminds him of Paradise itself. The little plantations are so beautifully laid out, in plots of Holly and Sycamore and other ornamental trees, with the green fields intervening, that the eye of the stranger could feast for hours together on the charming prospect which this beautiful view presents to his view.

This is the valley where I was born: this is where my 6 brothers and 3 of my sisters were born: this is where my ancestors lived for generation: and this is where the remains of my Father and Mother lie in the romantic churchyard of Clonbeg situated on the brow of the river in the centre of the Glen of Aherlow – peace be to their souls.[6]



Clonbeg Churchyard

On this year, 1828, I was placed at school with a teacher named John Dannaher, who was the son of a neighbouring farmer.<sup>37</sup> During the winter of this year, my father employed this gentleman to come to our house in the evenings to teach my brothers and me. This year I commenced arithmetic and the double advantage thus gained by the private tuition enabled me to outstrip all my school mates as I generally kept at the head of the classes to which I belonged. James commenced to go to school this year. He was idle- the troops were sent after him.

**1829** – I continued this year with Dannaher, still learning nothing but arithmetic.

**1830** – This year Dannaher got married and left off teaching, so I was placed with a teacher named Thos. Cormack, the son of another neighbouring farmer who commenced to teach school. I was still kept at arithmetic.

Cormack's family and mine had a quarrel arising from the circumstances of our cattle frequently trespassing on their lands. In consequence of this, the teacher on one afternoon gave me a note to be given to my father, informing him that he would raise the price of my tuition to some figure which was considered exorbitant. My father judging that this was a sort of petty spleen, withdrew me from the school during the summer and in consequence I remained at home. I may here state that my younger brother James and my sister Ellen, accompanied me to this school. We three remained at home for the remainder of the season.

**1831** – On this year, my father, in conjunction with another prominent farmer named Maloney, engaged another teacher to come to the neighbourhood, whose name was Cornelius Ryan.<sup>38</sup> This teacher placed me to learn English grammar and bookkeeping. He was evidently a man of no firmness and of limited knowledge, very limited. [7]

On one occasion my brother James, who was then about nine years of age, had evoked the displeasure of the teacher and the consequence was some trifling chastisement. James, feeling indignant that he should be brought to an account by such a man as this teacher, stood up and walked out, stating as he went that he should never again go to school to him. The teacher instead of compelling him to remain said: "very well my boy, you will regret this in a future day." This Cornelius Ryan was a slightly built man, he was very gentle and his pupils took advantage of it. The Irish name of "Cornelius" is "Crocheore" and in the Irish language the diminutive of "Crocheore" is "Crocheoreen" and whereas our teacher seemed diminutive both in body and mind, he was therefore known by no other name than "Crocheoreen".

On the afternoon of the day that James left the school and while at supper I related to the family what had occurred between James and his teacher, giving a minute statement of the language used on both sides. There was general laughter and enjoyment among the family circle. One of the brothers suggested that James must have said "I will never again go to school to you Crocheoreen". The addition of this last word wonderfully annoyed James, and the junior members of the family seeing this, kept it up so that it afterwards became a bye word in the family whenever any of them wished to annoy him: for it was only necessary to say: "I will never again go to school to you Crocheoreen" when James would get into a rage – and strange to say he felt the weight of that taunt until he grew to be a man.

I need not mention that notwithstanding James' quarrel with his teacher he did not remain long from school, for he attended on the day following.[8]

My sister Ellen attended this school.

I must say that my progress in English grammar and Bookkeeping was very limited, for at the end of the year I believe I knew nothing about either.

**1832** – During the spring of this year, I was placed under the tuition of Mr Casey, the son of another adjoining farmer, who had commenced to teach school in a township called Shronehill, about one mile north through the fields from my father's residence. James and Ellen accompanied me to this school. I was here learning arithmetic.

In the summer of this year, my father concluded that he would leave me no longer knocking about these sorts of schools – seeing that I had been as far advanced at the age of 12 years as I then was at the age of 14: and so he concluded to send me to a village in the county of Limerick, named Kiltely, where a grammar school was kept by an eminent man named Jeremiah Dennehy.

My father went and saw Mr Dennehy and agreed with him as to terms. He kept no boarders although he had pupils from parts some fifty miles distant. I was to stay at the house of a farmer who was a near relative and lived convenient to the village – his name was "Toad Hanley".

Accordingly, on a Sunday morning, in the month of June of this year, having received a few coppers as pocket money from my mother; my father started with me to Mr Hanley's. Our parish church being on the road to Kiltely, we heard mass on the way and succeeded in reaching the place about three o'clock. I shall never forget the welcome with which we were received by this farmer and his estimable wife: nor can I forget the marked respect with which my father was treated on that occasion by those guileless but elegant people.

My father remained until about six o'clock, but when his horse was brought out for him to drive away, then [9] my terrible moment came: I got a fit of lonesomeness on seeing him turn his back to me that drove me into the most piercing agony of mind. I endeavoured to suppress it without being observed, but I was unable. However, Mr Hanly had a nephew with whom I went to walk and he kept my mind so employed that I was enabled in a great measure to overcome it. But what particularly enabled me to overcome my great grief on this occasion was the thought that it was necessary for me to undergo this ordeal if I were to be an educated man, and if I did not put up with this temporary inconvenience, it would be impossible for me to be anything more than an ordinary farmer. I looked forward to some future day when I would become a great man and I resolved that no trifling impediments would ever obstruct my course.<sup>39</sup>

On Monday morning I started for the village and in due time I arrived at Mr Dennehy's Academy. Here there were some grown up men, pupils who had been teachers themselves, but who had come here to learn English Grammar. There were none smaller than I, except one and he was considerably advanced. After a few days, when I perceived that the grammar I had been hitherto learning of "Crocheoreen" amounted to nothing, and that this small pupil of the Grammar School was so far advanced in comparison to myself, I began to suspect that it must have been stupidity on my part that kept me so far behind, and I feared whether I should ever know as much as that little boy. Labouring under those feelings for the first fortnight, I often cried with grief at my backwardness.

I kept very quiet and endeavoured as much as possible to comprehend the explanations of the teacher with whom I became a great favourite in a short time. At the end of some six weeks, my junior school-fellow was left in the shade and I became considerably relieved of the apprehension of stupidity I had of myself, so that I considered I was not duller than others. [10]

When about two months and a half at school, I recollect on a Saturday in a class of the whole on Conjugation (sic), I got first place and kept it more or less for the remaining portion of the season. I left Killeely in the Fall of this year and remained at home during the winter; as Mr Dennehy came to my father's residence and boarded there, he having commenced a school in a place called Lattin, two miles distant, at which I attended.

**1833** – In the month of April of this year, I was placed under the tuition of Simon Cox, a mathematician who kept an academy in the village of Bانشa. This is the same village of Bانشa which has been rendered famous by the song "The Peeler and the Goat". The author of which has been a farmer named Darby Ryan who had received a classical education and who possessed much ability as a poet. This gentleman at this time was in full vigour, being perhaps about 55 years of age – Bانشa is four miles east of Tipperary.

In Mr Cox's Academy there was nothing taught but pure mathematics. The students were principally grown-up men; many of them teachers who came to advance themselves in the sciences. They were in classes of various degrees of proficiency: from Euclid's Elements upwards to Fluxions and Calculus.<sup>40</sup> In this Academy, the teacher supplied the students with the several books on science without extra charge.

In the space of six weeks, I mastered Euclid's Elements, having read it twice over and having read the fifth and sixth books three times in that space of time. I then commenced Algebra and read through the first part of that science in two different works, namely Simson and Bonnycastle.<sup>41</sup> I also read the second part of Simson: all during the season until Christmas – Cox removed to Lattin after the Christmas holidays.

**1834** – Cox's Academy having been removed to Lattin, within two miles of my father's residence, at the beginning [11] of this year, I now enjoyed the advantage of being at home. I always studied very hard at night, and I never used food over twice a day, not caring to take any lunch with me. Nevertheless, I was always stout and strong and healthy.

The priests's residence and lawn were opposite the Academy, and many of the students during the days of summer used to go inside the priests's fence and remain stretched in the grass studying all day.<sup>42</sup> I recollect one day that I was among the number when the curate came over to us, and after sauntering about for a few minutes without saying anything (he being a distant sort of man and possessed, I believe, of a considerable amount of vanity); he at length broke silence and propounded the following question.

"What might the height of a pole be, which would cast ninety feet of a shadow on May morning at nine o'clock?" After waiting for about a minute for an answer, and no one else giving him a reply, I answered and showed him how I would solve the question. I could plainly see that altho he proposed this question, he was unable to comprehend the solution of it. This was manifestly apparent from his acquiescence in everything I had said.

Well, when I had finished my explanation, he again asked me "*why it was the mind felt no satisfaction after the solution of a scientific problem.*" There being no science involved in this question, I made him no answer, but he answered me by saying that the reason

was that "*the mind was always so fond of truth.*" He then left without leaving on our minds any very great impression of his scientific acquirements. Altho I considered this a very trifling affair and not worth a moment's thought, nevertheless the story went round the neighbourhood that the priest had examined me and that I knew more than he did. My eldest brother who was then married and was residing on a farm adjacent to the village of Lattin, heard of my encounter with the priest and in due time he communicated it to my parents who were in no small degree rejoiced.

Edward emigrated to America during the spring of this year.[12]

I remained at this school until the spring of the year 1835 and during that time I studied Mensuration, Gauging, plane and spherical trigonometry, astronomy – the use of the globe, conic sections and the third part of Algebra or Algebraic Geometry.

**1835** – In the spring of this year I went to the village of Emly, about three miles west of Lattin, to learn to write well of a teacher named Morrissey, who was famous for writing and drawing. This man was a most reckless drunkard. He spent in drink every shilling he could lay his fingers on. On the first day I went to see him, he borrowed of me the few shillings I chanced to have in my possession and with those he brought me to a tavern, where he got drunk himself and made me do the same, for the first time. I left him at the end of a month.

After leaving Emly I went to Kilmallock to learn surveying of an eminent surveyor who kept a scientific school in that town but surveying was the branch principally taught. This teacher was named John O'Brien. Kilmallock is an ancient town in the centre of the fertile County of Limerick. Around it there are several old ruins of churches and monasteries which had been destroyed by the ruthless soldiers of Cromwell. There was also standing at that time a part of the old wall which formed part of the fortification that surrounded that ancient city. It was here I spent the summer of 1835, and it was here I learned surveying.

I returned home in the Fall of this year and during the winter attended a grammar school in Tipperary taught by Mr Dan'l Bergin who had a considerable amount of small talent, but was the essence of a pedant. I must say that I learned from him how to analyse the English language. This man used to pretend to teach a little mathematics, he had a pair of large globes and during a portion of my time he had a teacher from the country, a pupil of [13] his, learning the use of the globes. But he generally got me to give the lecture for him on that subject. I could plainly see that the pride of the pupil was considerably lowered by being lectured by a beardless boy like myself, but nevertheless after a short time he came to understand that he profited by the change of teachers. This gentleman's name was O'Kelly. He left after a few months; having had a quarrel with our preceptor, in which he told him what a humbug he was.

**1836** – In the spring of 1836, I returned again to Cox with the view of finishing my mathematical studies. By this time he had removed to Solohead, a village about three miles north of Tipperary. During this year I studied very hard. I boarded within a mile of the school with a family who were relatives of my own. I stayed up at night during the early part of spring and studied after the family retired to rest, and I would again be up before day. I made much progress during this season and now my name as a mathematician began to be known.

In the winter of this year I removed to "Cappa More" (sic), to a mathematical school kept by a Mr McGrath, with the view of learning Fluxions and the Calculus for which this

gentleman was eminent. After reading the first volume of Fluxious, I left, principally for the reason that I could not procure any comfortable place at which to board. This was about the month of December.

**1837** – I was now considered by myself to be well educated and being grown to manhood, for altho (sic) only 19 years of age, I was full as tall and as stout as any of my older brothers, so I considered that I ought to be able to strike out and make a commencement on my own account to earn some money.

A relative of ours named Mr Condon who taught school in the county of Cork, used to visit our house frequently. This young man was then about 25 years of age but his education consisted only of English grammar and arithmetic. He held up to me the bright prospect of success if I would only go to the town of Fermoy in the county of Cork and start a mathematical school there; that he would join me and assist in teaching the [14] junior classes such as arithmetic and so forth. He represented this to my parents and they agreed that if I thought well I could go and commence a school there. The idea of earning money and being independent, of course, was a brilliant one to me and accordingly I made preparations to start.

I called on the parish priest of Lattin, with whom my father had not been on the best of terms for some cause which was certainly the fault of the priest; for as a man of honour and integrity and understanding, my father was infinitely the priest's superior. The nature of my business with the priest was to get a sort of general letter of introduction to the clergy of Fermoy that they might befriend me in my new enterprise. I will only say that this priest refused me on account of the state of esteem in which my father held him – "De Mortuis Nil visi bonum". On that account nothing more shall be said of this priest further than praying that peace be to him and I cannot say this without praying at the same time that peace be to the noble soul of my father. I was the cause of some annoyance to this priest afterwards.

I went to Fermoy in company with Mr Condon, after having got a number of school bills printed in Tipperary so that I could advertise myself the day I would arrive. Having arrived, I called on the clergy and having seen the chief priest, I showed him my advertisement and stated to him my mission, requesting his assistance in forwarding me in my enterprise. He received me most kindly and seemed much interested in my behalf, but he stated that he would not like to interfere as there was already a teacher for whom he had a great deal of respect, in the town, and perhaps anything he would say on my behalf would tend to injure him; that moreover he was a man of family and I was young.

I remained here for nine or ten days getting introduced to one family and then another, who had promised to send me their children. I searched for rooms in which to make a beginning, but I found the terms too far above my [15] [16 missing]

There was at that time, and is still in Tipperary, an endowed academy which in point of size and magnificence more resembled a college than an academy. This institution is called "The Abbey of Tipperary" from the fact that a Friars Abbey once existed where this building now stands and one of the arches of the Abbey is still standing alone in the lawn or playground opposite the building.<sup>43</sup> It is in this institution all the sons of the gentry of Tipperary are educated, as well as those of the surrounding country and it is here they are generally prepared for the University of Trinity College Dublin and moreover many of them study here all the time during their undergraduate courses in Dublin for it is a privilege of the Dublin University that during the four years of a student's undergraduate course, he can

study where he likes, provided he attends and passes the examinations four times a year, which are held in the university.<sup>44</sup>

For this reason, several students of the University were attending the Abbey in Tipperary and it was therefore necessary for the gentleman who had charge of this institution to employ first class assistants, so as to enable his pupils to pass the regular semi-annual examinations in Dublin.

A short time after my leaving Oola where I was studying the Calculus, the mathematical master left the Abbey in Tipperary and the preceptor of the institution who was The Rev Mr Riordan, inquired for some competent person.<sup>45</sup> He heard of myself and having been informed that I was at school in Oola, he sent one of his teachers to that place to offer me the professorship of mathematics in the Abbey.

Unfortunately I had left and the gentleman who had been sent after me, not knowing where to find me, communicated his (message) to another student in Oola named Mr Agar. This latter undertook to do the business.[17]

Mr Agar was a sort of personal friend of mine (when I was learning Latin) and was willing at a moment's reflection to sacrifice me. I often afterwards found in my intercourse with the world that this feeling pervades most of the human family. Agar was brought and introduced at the Abbey and got the appointment. When I heard that Agar was appointed professor of mathematics at the Abbey, I was really astonished at his insolence in undertaking such a task.

I heard nothing of the way in which myself had been sought for and I most heartily congratulated Agar for his pluck. He used to come often to me during the week, out to my father's place, that I might teach him the science necessary for himself to teach to some of his pupils the day following: and whenever I went to town I called at his lodgings and gave him instruction there. However all this would not do. He held on until the end of the ensuing year and the students having long before discovered his inability, gave him a terrible time. They had no respect for him and he could not remain any longer.

**1840** During this year, 1840, I remained entirely at home. I was now a man, educated and doing nothing, while my father's means were not at all improving. His means were much impaired from the fact that my eldest sister married the year previously a man named Barlow, to whom my father had given some of his means as a marriage portion with his daughter and which turned out to be a bad investment.

As I was in town one afternoon, in the month of December, I met Mr Agar, who informed me that he was about to leave the Abbey, that he was going home to his people who lived somewhere in the province of Leinster or Ulster and that he would be most happy to introduce me at the Abbey, with the view of my being appointed in his stead as professor of mathematics. I was only too glad to accept the proposal and so we agreed on the day following for the intended introduction. On the day following I made ready and came and was introduced and the preceptor offered me the place. He stated that he was giving Mr Agar only £26 a [18] year, that he would give me the same for the present, if I thought well of it and that in the course of time, if he saw that I would merit more and that the institution would be in a better condition, my salary would be raised.

I was so much taken back at the smallness of this that I took until the following day to think over it but I reasoned with myself that anything at all would be better than to be a burden any longer on my family. I came the day following and commenced my duties. The

pupils, many of them thinking that they could handle me as they did my predecessor, were very soon made to see that they had a different man to deal with.

I merely heard their classes and kept them entirely at a distance. I was soon treated with the greatest respect and in fact I was loved afterwards by most of these pupils. I recollect on one occasion, a little fellow who was certainly much attached to me, wrote behind my chair on the wall, the following words, vis:-

“Mr Guerin, you are wrong  
To go to mass with the dirty throng.”

When this was pointed out to me, I enquired who did it but could not find out. I pretended to be in a terrible rage and threatened vengeance against whomsoever did it. By that means I caused such a terror as prevented a repetition of any similar remark.

My knowledge of mathematics and the great difference which was apparent between myself and my predecessor, soon brought me into great esteem in this institution. My salary was soon raised to £30 and Dr Riordan advised me by all means to enter Trinity College and take out a degree at that university. He proposed to give me instruction in Greek so as to advance me as much as possible. No doubt, I considered he had some selfish motivation in view as well as my advancement. The motive I thought to be this: that should I go to the university and take a high place in science, which I would be certain to do, the Abbey would [19] have the honour of boasting of having a distinguished pupil and thus the standing of the institution would be raised. The Abbey required some such stimulant as this, for it had been for a long time without making any name as a literary institution and it being an endowed school. A little notoriety gained by a pupil from it in the university would be a great thing for the doctor. (Because of cost, Guerin decided not to follow this course of action.)

In about one year or thereabouts, after my entrance into the Abbey, two of my brothers took it into their heads to go to Australia, there having been an exodus from our district to that country then, but I persuaded them that as one of the brothers was already in America and in a comfortable way, that it would be happy to be all together and that sooner or later it would be the destiny of us all to leave Ireland. I stated if they went to Australia, we would forever be separated and by all means if they were determined to leave, I suggested to them to go to America. This reasoning seemed to weigh with them and they remained and never left Ireland afterwards, notwithstanding that all the rest of the children did, with the exception of my oldest brother who had been then deceased. I often felt sorry that I had any hand in preventing those two boys from carrying out their intentions. [20]

**1841** – I still remained in the Abbey, though discontented, for, at the commencement of the year, I took it into my head to try my fortune in the city of Cork. I asked a letter of introduction from my employer to some person in that city, which he very kindly gave me. I went to Cork during the winter holidays and remained there for a week but failed to get anything to do and I returned to the Abbey.

**1842** – I continued this year, though still dissatisfied, in the same place. I was unable to save any money though I generally stayed at my father's house, which was a distance two miles out in the country, where of course I paid nothing for my board. During this year I

began to think seriously of going to America, although I did not mention the matter to any of my bothers or sisters. I saw that my parents were getting older and were likely to lose their farm and I knew that in my position then, I could not be able to give them anything like a decent living. Things went on in this way until the Spring of 1843.

**1843** – In the month of May 1843, I came to the conclusion that I would go to America, come what may. I communicated my secret to my youngest brother (James) and also to my sister Johanna, who was next older than I was. Those two agreed to come with me and I was to go to the city of Cork, a distance of 40 miles, some days before them to engage passage for the three of us. This was all settled on, but when it was coming to the time for me to start, James backed out, stating that he would not go until the year following. I suspected that the affection he entertained for a lover of his, was the cause of his detention.

My sister and I however, remained firm in our determination. I communicated my intention to leave the Abbey to a companion of mine named Pat Heffernan, for whom I had great regard. He was a teacher and I proposed to procure for him my place in the Abbey, but I required his note for £10. He was delighted with the offer, for he was aware that I was placing him in a position to which he would never aspire. I accordingly resigned my place and introduced [21] Heffernan who was at once taken on my recommendation.<sup>46</sup> I got the note which I was determined to send to my father before I sailed.

Towards the latter end of the month of May I started for the city of Cork to engage passage for my sister and me, leaving behind my trunks containing my books and clothes, which she was to bring as soon as she heard from me. I travelled on one of Bianconi's Jingles, which were at that time the chief mode for travelling in Ireland. There was no covering to those vehicles. During my journey, it rained all day and I had no umbrella nor any shelter except that afforded me by a lady who was near – she giving me the advantage of a portion of the umbrella she had.

The consequence of this journey was a severe cold and I was confined to bed for three or four days. However, I recovered in due course and engaged passage for me and my sister. I wrote telling her to come on but it happened that in the meantime a match was struck up with the view of getting her married to a farmer living convenient to a brother-in-law of mine. This brother-in-law being the instigator of the arrangement to be entered upon, nevertheless Johanna insisted on coming but when she was putting my trunks with her own, she was prevented by her father who did not think that I was leaving for America until then. She came to Cork accompanied by my youngest brother and my brother-in-law mentioned above and they were followed immediately by my parents, with the intention of bringing me back to Tipperary.

The sister and brother and brother-in-law arrived in Cork. The parents did not come farther than Fermoy, about halfway. My brother and sister informed me how despondent my parents felt at my leaving and that I must come back to see them, at all events to Fermoy. In the meantime, the brother-in-law, a contemptible sort of fellow, informed me of the probable good settlement that awaited my sister if she returned home and got married as was arranged. I [22] could see by my brother that he also wished me back but he did not seem to be over-anxious about my sister's marriage to the intended groom. I consented to go and see my parents but insisted on leaving Ireland and I suggested to my sister whether she would come with me. She gave me a sort of answer which gave me to understand that she would prefer to return and get married than come with me. Accordingly, I gave her all



her money and whatever besides I could spare and I immediately concluded that I would try my fortune in the city of Cork for a while and then if I failed I would go to America. (Thomas Guerin, caught between the wishes of his parents and his own inclination, prevaricated and when his trunks were not sent on to him in Cork by his parents, he returned to Tipperary. His sister did not get married and was as indecisive as her brother. He resolved to look to his own interests.)

I then concluded I would remain until the month of August when the different schools and colleges would have finished their vacations, and that I might then have a chance [23] of getting a situation in one of them. In the month of July, I saw that a mathematical professor was required in the Mechanics Institute of Liverpool, England. Also that a mathematical professor was required in the college in Galway. Also that a mathematical professor was wanted in the Portarlington Endowed School.

I wrote an application to all these places but was answered only from Portarlington. Here I offered to be examined and he again wrote offering me the place but wanting to know if I believed in the Church of England, as that was a "sine qua non". Of course this finished our correspondence and from that forth, there would be nothing but America.

I brooded day and night over this idea. I gave the note for £10 to my father, which I had previously got from Heffernan. I made every preparation but never informed anyone of my intention. I wished to come to America, knowing that my brother did not live far from that place or Montreal. So, I wrote to Cork and Liverpool to see if there was an emigrant ship for Quebec but there was none at that season. The Cork agent wrote informing me that he had a ship loading in Liverpool which would sail for New York on the 12<sup>th</sup>. This letter was brought up to my bedroom one morning by my mother. I opened it and felt the greatest compassion for my poor mother, who little knew what was going on in my mind and would have burned this letter sooner than it would come into my hands, if she only knew what it contained.

I planned that I should say that I wished to go to Cork to try my fortune and thence to Dublin. There seemed to be no great objection to this. My father's conversations embarrassed my mind heavily. He more than once suggested to me to live somewhere in Ireland, that he would live with me and did not care in what part. It was hard to overcome the feeling originated by such a proposition from a parent to his son; but then I looked to my prospects in Ireland. I saw that they were blank and that to succeed in any way there was out of the question. [24]

The text ends at this point, with Thomas Guerin on the point of decision to leave Ireland. My thanks to Liam Ó Duibhir and Danny Grace.

#### References

- 1 My thanks to the board of the National Library of Ireland for permission to publish this material.
- 2 *Irish Independent*, 18 May 1962. Guerin was born in 1886.
- 3 Guerin was prominent in the Knights of Malta in Canada and wrote a book (1949) about the order in North America.
- 4 This was his last visit. Thomas Guerin died in Montreal on 6 January 1963. See <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/deputes/guerin-james-john-3539/biographie.html> and <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/deputes/guerin-thomas-3541/biographie.html>
- 5 *Irish Press*, 12 Sept 1946.
- 6 This Erasmus Smith school was in Tipperary town.

- 7 *Caps and Crowns of Europe* (1929) appears to have been favourably noticed. The fact that some reviewers referred to the author as "French-Canadian" relates to how he saw himself and his ancestry and is discussed below. Apart from Ireland, Guerin's ties to a wider Europe were strong. In the early 1930s, prior to the Anschluss in 1938, he was honorary Austrian consul in Montreal.
- 8 *The Gael in New France* (Montreal, 1946). Unlike his father and grandfather, Guerin's academic background was in the liberal arts.
- 9 *The Irish Sword*, 1, iv (1952-53) pp. 348-52 about the American Civil War and 2, v (1954) pp. 57-61 about Irish soldiers in Canada.
- 10 S. Bermingham, *Real Lace* (New York, 1973), p 71.
- 11 Genealogical Office: Ms. 545, (NLI)
- 12 S.B. Frost, *McGill University- For the Advancement of Learning, 1801-1895*, i (McGill-Queens U.P., 1980), p.118.
- 13 *Jn Cork Hist & Arch Soc.*, 29 (1934), p 108 and 40 (1935), p.112.
- 14 This is Genealogical Office: Ms. 545, NLI
- 15 See [http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/guerin/thomas\\_guerin.htm](http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/guerin/thomas_guerin.htm)
- 16 Typescript copy of an autobiographical fragment by Thomas Guerin, of Emly, co. Tipperary, b. 1818., Ms 13,672 NLI. Reference was made to this source in D.G. Marnane, *Land & Violence* (1985) but apart from this, there appears to have been little or no use made of this unique material.
- 17 There are two monographs about hedge-schools: P.J. Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland* (Dublin, 1932), a book endlessly cited and A. McManus, *The Irish Hedge School and Its Books 1695-1831* (Dublin, 2004), a book that will be endlessly cited
- 18 A great deal has been written about this; see for example D.H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment the National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970). Incidentally, Edward Stanley, later Lord Derby was proprietor of the Ballykisteen (Limerick Junction) estate.
- 19 See account of memories of a Carrick-on-Suir teacher who described working on the land by day and in the evenings teaching by the side of the road under the hedges – perhaps telling his interlocutor what he wanted to hear., *The Nationalist*, 11 Nov 1922.
- 20 T. Crofton Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland 1812-1822* (London, 1822, and Dublin, 1981), p.326
- 21 Ms 13,672
- 22 Carleton, *Traits and Stories* (Dublin, 1830), ii, p.113
- 23 *Ibid.*, p.114
- 24 "A Constant Visitor", An Irish Hedge-School in *Dublin University Magazine*, 359 (Nov 1862), p. 613.
- 25 *2<sup>nd</sup> report of the commissioners of Irish education inquiry, 1826-27* (12), xii, appendix 22, pp. 1102-09.  
This information for the barony of Clanwilliam is reproduced Marnane, *Land & Violence* (1985) pp. 164-7.
- 26 *2<sup>nd</sup> report of the commissioners of public instruction, Ireland*, (47), HC 1835, xxxiv
- 27 Foolschap carbon copies, pp. 1-24 but with page 16 missing when the material was given to the NLI by the Irish Manuscripts Commission. Because of the delicate nature of the carbons, some words are difficult to read. Guerin could take a long time to tell a simple story. Some of the material has been summarised and this is clearly indicated. Original pagination is given in square brackets. A typescript of the full document is available in Tipperary Studies, The Source, Thurles.
- 28 Having left Ireland, Thomas Guerin carried with him an attachment to the Glen and sometimes in his narrative, describes places as being part of the Glen, when strictly speaking they were not. See his account of 1828.
- 29 The Glen of Aherlow is spread between the RC parishes of Bansha and Galbally.
- 30 Tulla is a townland of 210 acres and was part of the estate of Heffernan of Derk.

- 31 Actually Ballycurrane, a townland of 331 acres, part of the Normanton estate. Some of the versions of proper names in the document, suggest that the original story may have been delivered orally.
- 32 In the *Irish Education Inquiry* (see note 23 above), Thomas Lendrigan is listed as having a school in Emly, with 142 pupils in a "very bad cabin".
- 33 The more usual designation of these factions is "Three Year Olds" and "Four Year Olds". The mid 1820s was a period when factionalism was rife. See *Land & Violence*, p.48 for accounts of confrontations in Tipperary town in 1825 and Killeacle in 1826.
- 34 A townland in County Limerick, near Oola.
- 35 Ballynahow, a townland of 332 acres in the CP of Bruis and part of the estate of the earl of Portarlington. The Guerin farm was held from a middleman. At the time of *Griffith's Valuation* (1850), there were no Guerins in the townland.
- 36 Guerin remembers this river as more than it was.
- 37 According to the *Irish Education Inquiry*, Danagher's (sic) school was in the townland of Rathkea in the CP of Bruis. It was a thatched house with mud walls and had around 110 pupils.
- 38 The *Irish Education Inquiry* has references to teachers being provided with school rooms in return for educating the farmer's children. In Knockordon in Lattin for example, John Tierney conducted his school in a thatched out-house provided by a farmer on this condition.
- 39 All of this has everything to do with the man Thomas Guerin was towards the end of his life in Canada and nothing to do with his feelings in 1832.
- 40 Differential calculus
- 41 Actually Simpson and Bonnycastle, an advanced maths textbook of the period. See <http://www.gap-system.org/~history/Biographies/Bonnycastle.html>
- 42 Fr James Hanly was the parish priest (1827-52) and on appointment rented ten acres and spent £1,000 on a fine residence. Skehan, *Cashel & Emly Heritage*, p.282
- 43 This Erasmus Smith Grammar School, known then (and still) as The Abbey was one of three such schools founded by the Cromwellian Adventurer Erasmus Smith in 1669, the year of the charter from Charles II. The other schools were in Galway and Drogheda. See M Quane, *The Abbey School, Tipperary in Jn Cork Hist & Arch Soc.*, lxx, 201 (1960), pp. 40-75.
- 44 While it undoubtedly was a coup for Guerin to get a job at The Abbey, in telling his story he exaggerated the importance of that school. In reality, The Abbey during these years was in one of its fallow periods.
- 45 The Rev Denny Twiss Riordan (1795-1866), born in Kerry and educated in TCD and ordained in 1820. He was an assistant in the Drogheda Grammar School and before coming to Tipperary town, had a private school in Clonmel. His appointment as Abbey headmaster dated from 1831 and followed a controversial period when Roman Catholic parents withdrew their sons because of proselytism. Riordan giving Roman Catholics jobs in The Abbey was calculated to reassure such parents. Pupil numbers in the school were low: in 1835, no more than twenty nine.
- 46 That same year, 1843, the school was requisitioned by the military, leaving Riordan to cope as well as possible with his small number of pupils. Heffernan's £10 may not have been such a good investment.

© Original manuscript [Ms 13,672] relating to Autographical fragment/Thomas Guerin, National Library of Ireland.

## Kendal E. O'Brien: Fenian, Mid-Tipperary's M.P. and the Voice of Rural Labour, 1849 -1909.

by Pádraig G. Lane

This study profiles a figure who may be now largely forgotten but who, within the parameters of Tipperary's own political and social history in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, left his mark on events.

If it was Keir Hardie, that champion from Scotland of the British working class, who termed, in 1901, Kendal O'Brien, from Golden, the Nationalist M.P. for Mid-Tipperary, in the Westminster Parliament, 'a great friend of Labour', that image of O'Brien at the turn of the century has been well-nigh long forgotten<sup>1</sup>. This study seeks to fill out the details of his role as a champion of the farm labourers, in the Land and Labour Association, and in Parliament, and to also profile briefly his earlier role in the other great movements that stirred the county<sup>2</sup>.

The biographical details, that underline the influences that perhaps shaped his later public career, are, indeed, tersely summed up in both the obituaries that attended his death, in November 1909, and in the succinct entries in directories<sup>3</sup>. Of those details, the most pertinent, no doubt, for a man whose I.R.B. turn of mind lingered long after the 1867 affair, was his readiness to shoulder a rifle, at the age of 18, in his native Cullen, in support of the Fenian movement of 1867, a dedication that was followed through in the financial guarantees, given by himself and his brother, for the expenses of the O'Donovan Rossa election, in 1869, and in support for John Mitchell, in 1875, in a later by-election<sup>4</sup>.

That his Fenian principles were, moreover, still credited to his account by the I.R.B., in the years 1887 - 1889, was manifested in his defense of the I.R.B.'s takeover of the G.A.A. in 1887, in the first instance, and, later, in his selection, in 1889, on that body's Central Council, in a move to copperfasten the nationalists hold over the sporting organisation<sup>5</sup>. The exception taken, furthermore, by the authorities, in 1901, to the speech given by Kendal O'Brien at the unveiling of a monument to the Manchester Martyrs at Annacarty confirmed that the old flame still burned brightly<sup>6</sup>.

While the speech must have been the standard rhetoric of the times that were in it, the constabulary, indeed, took the sentiments expressed to be common to the I.R.B. men in Tipperary, and while no action was recommended to be taken by Dublin Castle, other than for an ongoing watching brief to be kept, O'Brien's words were deemed inappropriate for either a J.P., a magistracy that O'Brien held by virtue of his election, courtesy of the local election of 1898 - 9, to the chairmanship of Tipperary's South-Riding's District Council, or an M.P., O'Brien having been elected for the Mid-Tipperary constituency in 1900<sup>7</sup>.