

AN IRISH COUNTER-REFORMATION BISHOP: JOHN ROCHE^{1a}

III

The four years which John Roche spent in Paris must have been full of new experience, but unfortunately it is not possible as yet to document them very closely. Archbishop Bentivoglio's diplomatic correspondence for this period is only partly edited, and I have been unable to consult even this.¹ A chance remark lets us see the nuncio admitting the Irish priest to a position of greater trust and confidence,² a position from which he could more fully appreciate the great religious revival now affecting France, as the misery of the religious wars was left behind and the country settled down under the Catholic Bourbon monarchy. It was during these years that the religious counter-reformation really got under way in France; one has only to mention a few names to realize it. The new religious orders, such as the Capuchins and Jesuits, were establishing themselves rapidly, and the older orders were experiencing revival and reform. The names of three great figures who were in Paris during this period, Francis de Sales, Pierre de Bérulle and Vincent de Paul, are sufficient to indicate what was stirring in the reformation of the diocesan clergy, the pastoral mission, indeed the whole spiritual life of the Church. True, even with all this vitality there were problems. The Huguenot riddle was still unsolved; Gallicanism was beginning to show what trouble it could cause in the future; and there were indications that the Bourbon monarchy, in its deadly struggle with the Catholic Hapsburgs, was ready to commit the

^{1a} Continued from *Irish Theol. Quarterly*, xxv (1958), pp. 14-32.

¹ The standard modern edition, based on the Bentivoglio archives in Ferrara, is de Steffani, *La nunziatura di Francia del Cardinale Guido Bentivoglio*, Florence, 1863. Cf. Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. XXVI, p. 36, note 1. Pastor adds that the letters of Bentivoglio during his nunciature in Paris are also to be found in BV, Barberini latini, vols. 5880-5888. Fr. Cathaldus Giblin seems to have found no clue to Irish material in these volumes from the indexes to the Barberini manuscripts, on which he necessarily had to rely in making his way through this vast collection (see *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. XVIII, pp. 67-71), but I feel that it is very likely that some such material exists there, in view of John Roche's position in the nuncio's household.

² AV, Processus Datariae, ed. in *Father Luke Wadding*, p. 523 (testimony of Nicholas Shea). Shea describes Roche as Bentivoglio's "auditor" in Paris. In Flanders he had been merely the nuncio's "Irish chaplain."

growing strength of France to policies which did no good to the Catholic Church as a whole. Still, at this time especially the shadows seemed accidental; there was every indication of "the flowering of a new age."

Our knowledge of the Irish community in Paris at this time is very sketchy. The records of the university of Paris show, as indeed might be expected, that these famous schools attracted many Irish clerics,¹ but we have very little information on the origins of the institution which was to be the permanent link between the Irish Church and the city, the Irish college in Paris. From what has been said concerning Douai it will be obvious that the "date of foundation" of such an institution may be difficult enough to establish. There could easily have been several false starts before anything with sufficient permanence to be truly called an Irish college appeared. Again, a passing reference in the testimony given in Roche's Datary Process allows us a glimpse of the institution and of his connexion with it. Nicholas Shea, "priest of the diocese of Ossory, aged about twenty-five years," testifies in 1623 that he knew John Roche for four years in Paris, and that both of them dwelt in the same house there.² As Shea must have been a student during the years Roche was in Paris, this house must evidently be the Irish college in the city. Again one might build something on the fact that Thomas Dease, an alumnus of Douai, appears in 1612 as professor of philosophy in the Collège de Navarre, and in 1620 as "rector of the Irish college, Paris,"³ but any inferences which might be drawn from this are very speculative, in view of the absence of any kind of corroborating evidence. John Roche's four years in Paris must for the most part be left in the obscurity which still surrounds the life of the whole Irish community there at the time.

On 11 January 1621 Pope Paul V brought Bentivoglio's nunciature in Paris to an end by naming him cardinal. On 28 January the Pope died, suddenly and unexpectedly, before Bentivoglio could receive the red hat at his hands. Nevertheless the new cardinal, at forty-two years of age, could hardly be immune from the reflection that the power which had raised him to such a height might well raise him higher. On his return to Rome he established himself in the splendid house which Cardinal Scipio Borghese had built near his uncle's summer palace on the Quirinal, and which of course was

¹ See especially Boyle, "Irishmen in the university of Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," in *I.E.R.*, series 4, vol. XIV (1903), pp. 24-45.

² Ed. cit., *Father Luke Wadding*, p. 523.

³ His term of office was a short one, for he was appointed bishop of Meath on 5 May 1621.

no longer of service to him now that Gregory XV was on the papal throne. Like all the Borghese palaces, its adornments proclaimed what a princely patron of the arts the late cardinal-nephew had been,¹ but in the end its baroque splendours became an embarrassment to Bentivoglio, whose personal fortune did not match his liberality and who did not find himself in the way of lucrative preferment under the Ludovisi and Barberini popes. Later in life, in order to meet his creditors, he was forced to cut down the number of his servants, to sell his palace and to live in hired lodgings. When he died he was penniless, and his grave in San Silvestro al Quirinale remained without monument or inscription until 1771.²

However, there was no shadow over these early "splendid years," as they may very well be called, during which John Roche came to be admitted even more closely into the confidence of his patron. The witnesses examined in his Datary Process, of whom at least the two archbishops were well acquainted with the nuances of the Roman scene, certainly give an impression of trust and close friendship, which does not seem to be merely fabricated for the record. This might be confirmed by considerations such as that Roche is now described as "theologian" to Cardinal Bentivoglio—which we may link with the fact that it was probably at this time he was made a doctor of theology. Sometime shortly after Bentivoglio came to Rome as a cardinal Roche was nominated protonotary apostolic.³ John Lynch has picked up from somewhere a statement, attributed to Bentivoglio, to the effect that if he were made Pope his first cardinal would be John Roche. It has been necessary to draw attention already to the general untrustworthiness of Lynch's account of Bishop Roche,⁴ and I know of no cross-check on the information he proffers here. There are, however, a few points in its favour. One is that the remark has the ring of Bentivoglio about it; this remarkably gifted man was no hypocrite in regard to the prospect of the tiara. Another is that if this remark were in fact made it is just the kind of thing one would expect to be remembered and to come Lynch's way. There is no reason to reject it out of

¹ Known for most of its history as the Palazzo Rospigliosi. It is perhaps best known to the visitor to Rome for its chief artistic treasure, the "Aurora," Guido Reni's ceiling-painting in the *salone*, executed at the commission of Cardinal Borghese in 1609.

² Cf. Ciaconius, *Vitae et res gestae Pontificum Romanorum et S.R.E. Cardinalium*, Romae, 1677, vol. IV, p. 455; Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastico*, vol. V, p. 125; vol. LIX, p. 164; *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique*, vol. VIII, 284; IX, 1216.

³ See AV, *Processus Datariae*, ed. cit., pp. 521-5; *Wadding papers*, pp. 23-4; Lynch, *De praesulibus Hiberniae*, vol. I, p. 355.

⁴ See above, p. 17.

hand ; if true, it would certainly imply an extraordinary degree of trust and intimacy, for just at that time a Pope's first promotion was almost automatically that of the "cardinal-nephew," the member of his family who was chosen to serve him as cardinal, confidential secretary, in a word, his *alter ego*. However, the opportunity of putting such an extraordinary declaration of confidence to the test never arose. Bentivoglio was still young at forty-four when Gregory XV died after a short pontificate of two years. At the end of the twenty-one years of the reign of Urban VIII his name was high among the *papabili*, but at sixty-five his health was failing and he died during the conclave.¹ Eight years before, John Roche had died in Ireland.

IV

Contacts with his native country grew much closer when on 14 June 1622 the Irish bishops nominated him their agent in Rome.² By this, he necessarily became deeply involved in the complex and delicate problems of the reorganization of the Church in Ireland, and here it is quite impossible to keep his personal story separate from more general issues. These issues are as yet by no means fully understood, and the attempt to grasp them is not made easier by the gaps in our documentation. The archives of Propaganda are available, but a great deal of relevant information must exist in the archives of the Holy Office, which are not. The more personal correspondence between Roche and the Irish bishops has very largely disappeared.³ Further, the background against which the whole story must be set, the reform-decrees of the Council of Trent, raises its own problems ; surprising as it may seem, the first satisfactory critical study of the Council of Trent as a whole is as yet only in course of publication.⁴ As so much of the remainder of John Roche's life is more or less directly connected with the introduction of the Tridentine reform to Ireland, I propose an attempt,

¹ In the introduction to his memoirs Bentivoglio speaks of : " mia età senile de 63 anni, età hormai cadente, ò per me piu tosto di già caduta, in riguardo alla mia languida complessione ed alla mia debole sanità, consumata piu dalle fatiche che dagl' anni." *Memorie*, p. 2.

² *Wadding papers*, pp. 23-4 ; see also *H.M.C. rep. Franciscan MSS.*, p. 74.

³ Wadding's papers are very useful here, but they can represent only a fraction of what once existed, and in evaluating their evidence it must be remembered that they have survived because they were preserved by the Franciscan, Luke Wadding

⁴ Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*, Freiburg, vol. I (1949), vol. II (1957). carries the story down to 1547 only, and the bulk of the relevant reform-decrees, belong to the closing sessions of the Council (1561-3).

brief and not very satisfactory, to outline these reforms as they impinged on the Irish scene.

In all its reforms, the Council of Trent had one over-riding pre-occupation—to ensure, in so far as legislation could ensure it, that the whole elaborate system of the Church's pastoral ministry should be purged of the abuses which in the past had seemed to divert it to almost any end except its true one of seeing that the consolations of religion were brought to the Christian people. The task of reform was so enormous that the Council had to be pretty ruthless. It sheared its way through a tangled web of special privileges conceded in the past from all kinds of motives, more often than not motives not of the highest: phrases like "contrary exemption or custom, even immemorial, privilege or indult notwithstanding" are, regularly, the final safeguard of its decrees. Before Trent, exemption and indult were given so freely that they had become more important than the law in the day-to-day life of the Church. This had resulted in abuses on so vast a scale that they could be cured only by the drastic surgery which Trent applied.

The diocesan bishop emerged from this operation with greatly increased authority. For all its divine institution, his office had suffered so much in the era of "privilege, indult, exemption and custom" that even had there been many more good bishops than in fact there were their power to reform their dioceses would have been very limited. The Council of Trent was clearly agreed that reform could not be effective unless good men were appointed bishops and given power to carry it out—no one made any secret of the fact that a great cause of the chaos which faced the Council had been too many bad bishops in the past. As a result of their legislation, the bishop was established once again as the "ordinary" of his diocese—the normal source of pastoral authority. Many complexities of privilege yielded to the formula whereby bishops were given power to act as delegates of the Holy See. Between one thing and another the position of both the bishops and the Holy See was strengthened, to the loss of the regime of special privilege which had threatened to strangle both of them.

Just as the council had emphasized the role of the bishop as chief pastor, as ordinary authority, in his diocese, so too it emphasized that the parish was the ordinary instrument to be used by him in the salvation of the souls committed to his care. In its task of restoring the parish to what it was meant to be, the council once again had to cut its way through a great tangle of privilege. The bishop was given the task of seeing that the parishes were effectively

functioning units, by defining the boundaries of existing parishes and by setting up new parishes where necessary ; by ensuring that the ministers he placed in his parishes were suitable for their task, and by keeping them suitable by regular visitation. The parish-priest is bound to reside in the parish to which he has been appointed; to know his people and be an example to them in word and work ; to preach to them and instruct them in the faith ; and, the chief pastoral work, to administer the sacraments—to admit the Christian to the Church in Baptism, to readmit him by Penance for post-baptismal sin, and to strengthen him on the eve of his parting with the Church militant by Viaticum and Extreme Unction. Trent also emphasized the role of the parish-priest in the great social sacrament of marriage, when it declared that no marriage was valid unless contracted in the presence of the parish-priest and at least two witnesses.¹

“ Quaecumque in dioecesi ad Dei cultum spectant, ab ordinario diligenter curari atque iis, ubi oportet, provideri aequum est ”²—this might be an epitome of the pastoral legislation of the Council of Trent. The bishop supervises not merely the work of his parish-priests, who are directly subject to him, but also, as chief pastor of the diocese, he exercises a measure of supervision over the work for souls of the religious orders.³ This delicate matter is carefully defined, in detail into which it is not necessary to enter fully here. The meticulousness of the council may be seen reflected in its criminal law, in which it gives the bishop only indirect authority over religious who offend outside their monastery, in that he can demand that they be punished by their superior ; but he can punish directly, by his own authority, such religious as refuse to be confined to a monastery at all. Those who refuse the obligations of monastic life cannot claim its protection.⁴ The council’s chief preoccupation in the authority it gives the bishop over exempt religious is, of course, its care for the pastoral mission, as is evident from the points on which

¹ Because of the public importance of this decree, the famous *Tametsi*, sess. XXIV, *de reform. matrimonii*, c. 1, it was laid down that it bound in each parish only after solemn promulgation there. The motive behind this provision was of course that people should not be bound by a law which of its nature applied to the great majority of them without first having ample opportunity of knowing what the law was. However, the method of promulgation laid down led to many complications, especially in a country like Ireland, where the date of publication of *Tametsi* could differ by centuries as between one locality and another.

² Sess. XXI, cap. 8. Here and in other references to the Council of Trent, the chapter cited is from the second set of decrees of each session, the decrees *de reformatione*.

³ Cf. e.g., sess. VII, c. 7, 8 ; sess. XXI, c. 8 ; sess. XXIV, c. 9.

⁴ Cf. sess. VI, c. 3 with sess. XXV, c. 14.

it enters into detail. Since it is the bishop's duty to see that the priests who minister to souls in his diocese are fit for their ministry, he has the right and duty to examine candidates presented for ordination by their religious superiors.¹ The bishop has a heavy obligation in regard to preaching the word of God—"praecipuum episcoporum munus." This he must discharge by preaching himself and by supervising the preaching of others; he must see to it that there is preaching, and preaching of a proper standard, in all churches which have the care of souls.² Finally, the administration of the sacrament of penance, the great safeguard of the religious life of the Christian people, is another heavy responsibility of the bishop, in which he controls not merely his diocesan priests, whom he approves to hear confessions either by appointing them to a parish or otherwise, but also the religious, who must have his approbation before they hear the confessions of the faithful.³

This plan for the purification of the pastoral mission of the Church reflects in a striking way the sense of calm and order which is such a characteristic of the Tridentine reforms. It presupposes, however, an ordered background, in which the Church will not have to face repression by the secular authority while she is trying to put her house in order. The fathers of the Council of Trent are thinking in terms of the One Church and the revolt against it, a revolt which they inevitably regard as something which, however serious, is of its nature temporary, as heresy has always been in the past. True, the religious revolt was showing certain signs of permanence even before the council closed. In 1555 the Peace of Augsburg had been signed in Germany, and the most detailed part of the Tridentine reform-work had been done later, in the closing sessions of the council, 1561-3. At this short remove, however, the council could not be blamed for regarding Augsburg as no more than a temporary accommodation, and in any case, while the German settlement recognized Protestant states as well as Catholic ones, it was a long way from anticipating all the complexities which had developed when the situation really began to settle down at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Ireland, as has already been noted, presented an extreme example of these complexities.⁴ The bulk of the people were Catholic, but the king was a heretic. The Catholic religion was proscribed by law,

¹ Sess. XXIII, c. 12.

² For details, see sess. V, c. 2.

³ Sess. XXIII, c. 15.

⁴ See above, p. 14.

but nevertheless the march of events was forcing the government to the realization that some of its subjects could be neither persuaded nor easily coerced into giving their allegiance to the Established Church, Catholics on the one hand and dissenters on the other. During the seventeenth century persecution shifted its emphasis: instead of a straightforward attempt to dragoon people into the Established Church, it became an imposition of civil disabilities on those who insisted on remaining outside. This position was established by the end of the century, but it was already quite noticeable as early as the reign of James I.

In Ireland, it produced a situation in which it became feasible to re-establish normal episcopal government of the Catholic Church to an extent which had been quite impossible in Elizabethan times. Naturally these bishops, themselves the fruit of a Counter-reformation training, took the Tridentine reformed episcopate as their model, and set about reorganizing the religious life of their Catholic people along the lines laid down by the Council, in place of the basically missionary regime under which the Counter-reformation had worked in Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth. By contrast, England, where the bulk of the people had been lost to Catholicism, and where the episcopal succession had been completely interrupted, remained a missionary country. In the pontificate of Gregory XV (1621-3) an attempt was made to provide England with a bishop, but the conditions there were heavily against its success, and the experiment quickly ended in failure. The Irish bishops faced problems very similar to those of their English colleague in their attempts to turn a missionary regime into a diocesan one, but conditions in Ireland were so much more favourable that they succeeded where he failed.

If we contrast their position with that obtaining in a Catholic country, say France, where the religious Counter-reformation was flooding in at just this time, the disadvantages of the Irish bishops will appear immediately. In many respects their work had to be carried out by stealth, for the government tolerated their presence only by connivance and in the face of the law. The material resources of the pre-Reformation Church had been lost to them, and the lack of benefices was a great obstacle to the restoration of parishes—it meant in effect that they had to create a new kind of parish. Finally, effective episcopal rule had been suspended over much of the country for a long time, and the new episcopate differed so much from its pre-reformation counterpart that no comparison was very useful. The real problem in the transition was rather replacing a missionary regime by the Counter-reformation episcopate.

Under the missionary regime, individual priests had worked in Ireland with faculties deriving immediately from the Holy See.¹ It is very difficult to secure details of these faculties, because they were issued by the Holy Office, whose archives are not open to research workers. However, it is obvious from the circumstances in which these priests worked that their faculties must have been very extensive. A grant of faculties by the Holy Office to the Irish Franciscans, dated 9 August 1612, has survived in the Irish archives of the order.² The faculties granted are certainly very wide; on a number of points they are incompatible with the exercise of any effective jurisdiction by a diocesan bishop. This clash of jurisdiction naturally became a more pressing question as the establishment of the diocesan episcopate grew firmer in the reign of James I. The bishops were normally willing to allow the regular clergy to undertake the care of souls, for the total number of priests in the country, regular and secular, does not seem to have been more than adequate for the staffing of a parochial system,³ but they were inclined to insist that the regulars exercising the pastoral office should be subject to their jurisdiction. One can see obvious reasons why this would not commend itself to the regular clergy, and how they could resent the attitude taken up by the bishops, especially

¹ Vicars-apostolic were nominated to Irish sees in the reign of Elizabeth, but the practice was not so consistent as suggested in Brady, *Episcopal succession*, who seems content to assume that there was a papally-nominated vicar wherever there was not a bishop. It will take much more research in the Roman archives before a definitive judgment can be made in this matter, but it seems beyond all doubt that such nominations were not made so consistently as Brady would suggest; in any case, evidence of nomination is not evidence of effectively-exercised jurisdiction. I feel it may be necessary to qualify to some extent the conclusions reached by F. M. Jones ("Canonical faculties on the Irish mission in the reign of Queen Elizabeth," in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, vol. XX, pp. 152-71, April 1953); there are reasons to think that the archives of the Holy Office could modify, perhaps very considerably, the conclusions he draws from an examination of the Secretariate of Briefs. The serious regular-secular disputes which occurred after 1620 would be impossible to explain otherwise.

² Published by Fr. B. Jennings in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. XII, pp. 73-5. The following faculties may be explicitly cited:—

"Administrandi sacramenta omnia, exceptis confirmatione et sacris ordinibus, omissis pro necessitate solemnitatibus et ceremoniis solitis, non tamen necessariis.

Dispensandi ob magnam necessitatem in secundo, et tertio gradu, etiam ante contractum matrimonium.

Has facultates aliis etiam presbyteris saecularibus Hibernis, theologis tamen benemeritis et in dignitate ecclesiastica constitutis, ad certum tempus et numerum personarum subdelegandi"

³ There were, it is true, a number of complaints that there were too many priests in Ireland, but the essence of these complaints seems to be, not exactly that there were too many priests absolutely, but that there were too many of them in the wrong places or not submitting themselves to what the complainant believed to be due ecclesiastical discipline.

in view of the missionary faculties they in fact possessed.¹

As a further complication, there was a clash of jurisdictions in Rome as well as in Ireland. After 1622, Irish ecclesiastical affairs were dealt with by the newly-formed Congregation of Propaganda. From the beginning, this Congregation, which had been founded to deal with the Church in "missionary countries," showed itself anxious to establish episcopal government in its territories as soon as possible. However, being a new congregation, it took some time before the limits of its competence were defined, and there is evidence that in some respects these limits had to be asserted against the claims of more long-established bodies, such as the Datary, which surrendered with reluctance its right to nominate to benefices, or alleged benefices, in Ireland, and the Holy Office, which was strongly disposed to continue the missionary regime, as it did successfully in England.²

The regular clergy, indeed, could muster strong arguments against the action of the bishops. It could be argued that the Irish bishops were not fully diocesan bishops. Even though they were nominated to the historic Irish sees, in contrast with William Bishop and Richard Smith, who were bishops of Chalcedon *in partibus* and vicars-apostolic of England, their faculties, until 1630, were not confined to their dioceses. There were occasions when a vicar-apostolic in Ireland could strengthen this argument by refusing to recognize the authority of the metropolitan on the grounds that he was directly dependent on the Holy See, thereby giving point to the claims put forward by the regulars based on their missionary faculties from the Holy Office. When bishops attempted to control them on the grounds that they did not live in their own religious house they could resent this as an attempt to use a situation arising out of the penal laws in order to exercise an undue authority over the regular clergy; and there was the hard fact that the parishes so far set up were not altogether stable institutions, nor were they so numerous as to exclude the possibility of people being deprived of the Sacraments and the other consolations of religion if the regular clergy were

¹ It should also be remembered that in the conditions prevailing in Ireland it was exceedingly difficult for the regular clergy to maintain any effective cloister or *domus regularis*. As this was the "exempt place" according to the letter of the law, there was every possibility of trouble if a bishop insisted on the letter of the law without any regard for the peculiar circumstances in Ireland. The essential ambiguity of the situation is clear from, e.g., the tenth decree of the bishops' meeting in Kilkenny in August 1629: "Hospitia missionariorum, quibus utuntur ad certum annorum terminum non sunt conventus regulares nec eorum omnimoda exemptione gaudent." (Printed in Moran, *History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin*, p. 436.)

² Cf. Hughes, *Rome and the counter-reformation in England*, pp. 365 ff.

excluded from the pastoral ministry. The regulars had genuine fears that they might be excluded from all pastoral work unless they were willing to become, in effect, diocesan clergy ; while the bishops had equally genuine fears that if the regulars could assert their right to a share in the pastoral ministry while at the same time they did not live in organized religious houses, many things would be outside their control which the general law not merely gave them as rights but imposed on them as duties.¹

V

The details of Roche's work as agent of the Irish bishops must, as usual, be reconstructed from evidence in which there is no lack of gaps. It will be best to begin with some account of a fairly lengthy report on conditions in Ireland which he presented at the request of Ludovisi, the cardinal protector, late in 1625 or early in 1626.² The closing section of this document summarizes Roche's recommendations as to what should be done in Ireland, but the whole text is of sufficient interest to deserve a brief analysis, because it is a document of a not-too-common type. It is, in effect, an attempt to write a history of Ireland by an Anglo-Irish townsman who has experienced the impact of the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation.

It is divided into seven chapters, concluding with a brief sum-

¹ "Episcopal faculties were in a state of great confusion and needed to be adjusted to altered conditions." So Pastor, *op. cit.*, vol. XXIX, p. 2, referring to the general problems of the Church at the time. He adds that Urban VIII, a professional canonist, set up a special congregation, drawn from Propaganda and the Holy Office, to discuss this problem. As a result, "an entirely new code of faculties" was drawn up in 1637. The Irish situation was discussed at great length at meetings of the congregation of Propaganda between 24 February 1633 and 5 December 1634.

² Cf. the testimony of Giunti, almoner of Cardinal Ludovisi, in the document from the Ludovisi archives printed by Cleary, *Father Luke Wadding and St. Isidore's college, Rome*, p. 206: "Subito che S. E. ebbe accettata la carica andò pensando al modo di fruttuosamente esercitarla et presa esatta informazione di quel regno, sue provincie, vescovati, monasteri et religiosi, che sono in esso e di tutti i suoi bisogni dal molto Rev. P. fra Luca Vading allora guardiano di S. Isidoro di Roma et alli padre Rocchi allora auditore del Emmo. Cardinale Bentivogli et agente del clero Ibernese nella corte di Roma" Roche's report is now in the Biblioteca Casanatense in Rome. It is numbered MS 2410. A good nineteenth-century copy is in AV, *Nunziatura d'Inghilterra*, vol. 30, ff. 8-43. The title is "Brevis relatio de Hibernia, eiusque statu tam politico quam ecclesiastico oblata Reverendissimo Domino Cardinali Ludovico Hiberniae Protectori. Joannes Rocchus, presbyter Hibernus." Undated, but internal references, e.g., to the recent death of Primate Lombard (Lombard died in Rome 5 September 1625) or the recent appointments of four bishops in Ulster and Connacht (Kilmore, Elphin, Down and Connor and Raphoe, all four appointed 21 May 1625) allow a reasonably accurate dating.

mary : I—basic history and geography ; II—the political regime in Ireland ; III—religious conditions ; IV—the steps by which heresy was introduced ; V—the present state of the Catholic religion ; VI—the reasons the Irish have kept the Catholic faith ; VII—recommendations for the future. From this outline it will appear that Roche's document of 1625 is closely associated with the document of 1613 already described.¹ Again one notes the assumption that the conflict of English and Irish is in effect a conflict between heresy and Catholicism. This is an attitude which John Roche could have adopted only after conscious reflection, for it was a new development in Irish affairs. It is particularly instructive to note the occasions when his instinctive prejudices break through his rationalization of the situation.

The first chapter, after a few remarks on the geography of Ireland, necessary no doubt for the cardinal protector, but of little interest to an Irish reader, gets down almost at once to the establishment of English rule in Ireland. This was occasioned by internal disputes, notably the one in which the king of Leinster sought and obtained help in England. The English, recognizing that Ireland was already tributary to the Holy See,² obtained from Adrian IV the right to style themselves "lords" of Ireland. The title of "king" was only assumed by Henry VIII after his schism, and his Catholic daughter Mary refused to use it until permitted by the Holy See, which also at this time laid down certain conditions for the exercise of English authority in Ireland. When England reverted to heresy these conditions were not observed, and great hatred arose between the Irish and their heretical rulers.

Chapter II sketches briefly the political institutions of English rule in Ireland, as a help to the cardinal in understanding the religious situation—the viceroy and his council, the administration of law, the role of the armed forces of the government. Against this background chapter III describes the results of government policy in religious matters. After a brief sketch of the reformation in England, it details how "the religion created by act of parliament"³—a vivid and accurate phrase—was introduced into Ireland. The power of the government ensured that the historic sees of Ireland, with all their dependent benefices, were filled with heretics from Scotland

¹ See above, pp. 30-32.

² See above, p 31, note 1.

³ "Elizabeth diu multumque imperio potita, eam invexit religionis normam quam parliamentariam vocant."

and England,¹ arrogant, greedy, insistent on their rights. Monastic property passed into the hands of laymen, some of them Catholics. This has presented a very complex problem, which some day will have to be cleared up.

Chapter IV describes the steps taken by the government to win the Irish to heresy. First there are the laws, dating from the first parliament of Elizabeth. Now that military resistance has been crushed they are enforced more rigorously than ever, so rigorously indeed that the choice lies between apostacy and beggary or imprisonment. Catholics who refuse to accept the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity are excluded from any public office ; more recently they have further been excluded from all civic life.²

These laws have not made the Irish apostates, but the government has produced further, and more deadly, schemes.³ First, the plantations. These are really a confession of failure to convert the Irish from the religion of their ancestors, in that they are a decision to replace them with heretics from England and Scotland. They have been carried out, in defiance of right and justice, at a time when England was at peace with the Catholic powers and so could rely on their not giving any support to possible disturbances in Ireland.⁴ As a further insurance against the Irish spared by the plantations, the government has destroyed all institutions of Catholic education in Ireland, and has set up and amply endowed a college in Dublin, the primary purpose of which is to seduce its students from Catholicism.

Chapter V outlines the state of the Catholic religion in Ireland

¹ Substantially accurate, as the Established Church in Ireland by now (1625) was well on the way to becoming the Church of the "New English," but one can detect a certain element of rationalization.

² The wording here : "inde magistratibus omnibus tam civicis quam agrariis Catholici prohibentur, advocatorum quoque greges qui multa vigilia et sumptibus in hoc munere opinionem aliquam assecuti sunt a causarum patrocinii repelluntur, nisi in Deum periuri esse velint" seems to have some kind of personal overtone. It may contain a clue to the reason why there is no trace of John Roche's lawyer-brother, Thomas Roche, in New Ross when the bishop returned to Ireland. See above, pp. 17-8.

³ "Exitiales machinae."

⁴ This attitude to the plantations may be compared with that of the Anglo-Irish in the 1614 parliament ; and, even after Cromwell, with the attitude of, say, John Lynch. Lynch clearly does not consider that the plantation of Ulster and other similar areas, of which he approves because he considers them steps towards civilization, can be in any way be compared with Cromwell's treatment of his native Galway, which is a barbarous and unlawful uprooting of an ordered world. See my article "Two contemporary historians of the confederation of Kilkenny : John Lynch and Richard O'Ferrall," in *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. VIII, p. 230 (March 1953). It is obvious that it must have taken some hard thinking on the part of John Roche before he could give even verbal assent to the view he puts forward here, and there is no reason to suspect that this assent is merely verbal.

after this many-sided attack. Catholics have been excluded from civic life, but the number of apostates has been negligible, so few that when one occurs even the heretics look on him as an impostor or a self-seeker; they are forced to admit that in Ireland "the very soil and climate, the very air and skies, are Catholic."

Chapter VI answers a question already raised and answered twelve years before—why have the Irish remained Catholic? ¹ The answer explicitly formulated here has a somewhat different emphasis: ² it stresses that from the beginning of the schism Ireland was never deprived of priests, secular and religious, who took their orders from the See of Rome; it goes on to say that at the time of writing there are two Irish archbishops, one of whom, the archbishop of Dublin, is in Ireland, ³ and five bishops, all of whom are resident. ⁴ Recently, four bishops have been appointed to sees in Ulster and Connaught: "though simple and inexperienced, they are good men, the best indeed that these provinces can offer"; ⁵ in the other dioceses there are vicars, either vicars apostolic appointed by the Holy See or vicars general confirmed by the metropolitan. Parish priests have been established all over the country, over 800 in all. As for the religious, there are over 40 Jesuits, good workers who get on well with the diocesan clergy; over 200 Franciscans, good workers too, "some, however, are contentious"; over 20 Dominicans; "several" Augustinians, some of them noteworthy because of their learning; four or five Capuchins, who are worthy of the highest praise; "quite a few" Cistercians, some of whom however cause trouble by claiming the empty title of abbot and by receiving novices too freely. All the clergy are much respected by the people, though John Roche adds rather ruefully, conscious perhaps of his happier report on this subject twelve years before, they were even more respected before the recent unfortunate ecclesiastical squabbles.

¹ See above, p. 31.

² The whole report implicitly repeats his previous judgment, namely that the Irish have remained Catholic because they are naturally conservative in all things, and their traditions impelled them to friendship with the Holy See and hostility to England. The reason why he stresses here the importance of having had a devoted clergy in the past is obviously, I think, because he wishes to go on to develop the need for a devoted clergy in the future.

³ Thomas Fleming, O.F.M., who arrived in Dublin before 20 August 1625. Cf. Moran, *History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin*, pp. 308 ff.

⁴ Ossory (appointed 1618); Limerick (1620); Emly (1620); Meath (1621); Cork (1622).

⁵ "Quamvis simplices et inexperti, boni tamen, et ex optimis quos dictae provinciae subministrant." This might be taken as a very striking instance of instinctive prejudice breaking in on rationalization until one realizes that it is of course meant to be a shot fired in the war now raging over the nomination of an archbishop of Armagh. See below, p. 121.

Chapter VII, the longest, contains his recommendations. It is vital, he says, to keep up the episcopal succession, though, for reasons which he details, too many bishops should not be appointed. The policy of Clement VIII and Paul V, of maintaining the episcopal succession in Ireland and at the same time deferring to conditions there by not appointing too many bishops, was a prudent one, and should be continued. Further, their care in selecting bishops should be studied. There is no room in Ireland for men who ambition the episcopate; secondly, those chosen should be acceptable to the clergy and to the Catholic gentry on whom both bishop and clergy depend for support; thirdly, the king should have no objection to the man chosen bishop apart from the fact that he is a Catholic bishop;¹ and fourthly, bishops should be taken from the secular rather than the regular clergy because experience has shown that regular bishops tend to be partial to their own orders. Twelve bishops, four metropolitans each with two suffragans, should be quite sufficient in the country.

Next he raises the question of the seminaries. There can be none at home, so foreign foundations are vital. Since the time of Gregory XIII the Holy See has been very solicitous in this matter, but for some unexplained reason Ireland has had only a small share in its benefactions. Propaganda at the behest of Gregory XV has recently given a very welcome small grant to the *Collegium Pastorale* in Louvain. In Spain, there are Salamanca, Lisbon and Compostella, but the Irish find the summer climate of Spain very trying. France has Paris and Bordeaux, but these institutions have no fixed income, and are far from stable. Belgium has Douai, which has sent many priests to Ireland, as well as the more recently founded Pastoral College in Louvain. The Irish have taken well to Belgium; the climate suits them, and they are helped by the many Irish soldiers there in the service of Spain; indeed, even apart from the colleges, there are many Irish students scattered through the Belgian towns. Finally, the Franciscans have a house in Louvain and the Capuchins one in Charleville. If all these were encouraged and supported it would help very much the Church's mission in Ireland.²

Finally he turns to the question he had dismissed as happily

¹ See again below, p. 121. This view had already been expressed by Archbishop Lombard. See Silke, "Later relations between Primate Lombard and Hugh O'Neill", in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, vol. XXII, pp. 15-30 (January 1955).

² It is quite clear that this report, which so stressed the needs of the colleges, was an important factor in leading Cardinal Ludovisi to consider a foundation in Rome. See below, p. 123.

non-existent in 1613—the disputes between the regular and secular clergy. He outlines the problem as follows. The religious in Ireland have very extensive faculties, which they use to administer the pastoral sacraments in places where the bishop has set up parish-priests, which leads to utter confusion and lack of all discipline. Also in virtue of their faculties they grant marriage-dispensations in cases where the bishop has refused, which has led to grave and scandalous quarrels over legitimacy, right to property, and so on. These abuses, Roche says, should be stopped, not by withdrawing the faculties of the regulars, which are abused only by a small minority, but by ensuring that they do not administer the pastoral sacraments or grant marriage-dispensations without the consent of the bishop or parish-priest; in places where there is no parish-priest there is no problem in the regulars administering the sacraments in virtue of a privilege from the Holy See. The Holy Office, in fact, has recently done just this in response to requests from Ireland, by drawing up a new formulary of faculties for the Irish bishops and regulars. This new formulary is envisaged as permanent, that is, applicable to Ireland as long as the present conditions of schism last there, and there are good hopes that the troubles will quieten down as soon as it becomes known and accepted in Ireland.

Further, religious superiors should be exhorted to send only tractable men to Ireland, and to remove the troublemakers who are there. It is a practice, Roche claims, for superiors to send men who have proved intractable in the cloister to the Irish mission. The withdrawal of a few of these—as recently happened in Drogheda—could be a salutary warning to all.

Finally, the regulars should be warned against receiving novices too freely, especially in Irish “novitiates” where, in the absence of convent, cloister and regular discipline, the novices are frequently idle and uninstructed, and some even question the validity of their profession years afterwards on the plea that they were insufficiently prepared. In this matter, the Cistercians are the worst offenders; the Augustinians and Dominicans offend also, and even the Franciscans are not immune.

In assessing how these recommendations were acted on in Rome, we are hampered by the fact that no copy of the vital document, the new faculties drawn up by the Holy Office, seems to have survived, apart from the one which is almost certainly to be found in its archives. John Roche brought a copy back to Ireland with him, ¹

¹ APF, Acta, vol. 4, f. 205, no. 7 (16 April 1627).

and it was discussed at the meeting of the bishops in Kilkenny in August 1629, as it is several times referred to in the decisions taken at this meeting.¹ However, as the bishops do not cite the document directly its precise terms can only be inferred, and the sum of exact information does not go beyond making it clear that the new faculties are restrictive of those hitherto enjoyed by the regulars: that they emphasize the jurisdiction of bishops and its territorial nature: and that they specifically require the regular clergy to have the bishop's approbation to hear confessions.

The archives of Propaganda, too, have a certain lack of precision; it seems reasonable to conclude that at this time the real decisions were still being taken elsewhere, namely at the Holy Office, and that Propaganda was in large measure limited to discussing details and urging its point of view. However, the entries in the minutes of its meetings are at least a definite indication that Propaganda, while weighing all the factors prudently, leans heavily in the direction of strengthening the authority of the diocesan bishop.² The most detailed testimony of the extent and success of John Roche's work in Rome as agent of the Irish bishops comes from one of the very few private letters which have survived. Dated 6 December 1628, it is written by David Rothe, bishop of Ossory, to Richard Smith, bishop of Chalcedon and vicar-apostolic of England, discussing problems which the two bishops have in common.³ Rothe points out that the Irish situation differs from the English one in that the Irish bishops have been appointed with the title of the ancient dioceses, and are thereby in a much stronger position than the English vicar-apostolic, especially in the approbation of religious for their

¹ Printed in Moran, *History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin*, pp. 434-6.

² Cf. APF, Acta, vol. I, f. 24v, no. 11, f. 26v, no. 8; vol. 4, f. 55r, no. 4; f. 97r, no. 11; f. 105v, no. 26. Another mandate received by John Roche from the Irish bishops may be referred to in passing, as it is not possible to supply any further detail. On 15 June 1623 the bishops appointed him their representative to the Pope and curia to guard the interests of Irish Catholics in the negotiations of James I for a marriage between Prince Charles and a Spanish princess. *Wadding papers*, pp. 25-7. A special congregation of six cardinals was set up early in 1623 to deal with the matter (Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. XXVII, p. 181). Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 159-96 for a good summary of the unsuccessful project and XXIX, 287 ff. for the successful negotiations which led to the marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria of France.

³ For evidence of the close links between the Irish bishops and the vicars-apostolic of England and Holland at this time cf. decree 15 of the bishops' meeting in Kilkenny in 1629 (Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 436): "Pia confoederatio et unio pro defensione iuris episcopalis et pastoralis cum moderamine inculpatæ tutelæ amplectenda est cum RR. coepis[copis] et confratribus nostris vicinis Chalcedonen. [vicar-apostolic of England] et Philippen. [vicar-apostolic of Holland] nosterque in Urbe agens cum eorum in Urbe agentibus consiliorum communicationem et animi coniunctionem in causis communibus ad dignitatem et iurisdictionem episcoporum tuendam et promovendam spectantibus integra fide colet et amplectetur."

share in the pastoral ministry. Further, the bishops have succeeded in Ireland in setting up a parochial organization in their dioceses, and with rare exceptions the religious have fully accepted the implications of this. He adds: "there was one thing which much lowered the authority of bishops in these parts, namely that more restricted faculties were given to them than to certain regulars through the communication of privileges: but it is provided for now and at the request of our public agent it was asked that the faculties of regulars should be curtailed and those of the bishops amplified, a thing which much honours and adorns the jurisdiction of bishops. We could hardly have hoped for this without the industry of our common agent, nor for the removal of certain other inconveniences which we had reason to fear, were it not for the fact that his vigilance averted them from us. From this we know the supreme importance of always keeping in Rome a suitable agent who with our public command manages our affairs there. And so many bishops in this kingdom have taken counsel together to select a successor to the Rev. John Roche, who for a number of years represented us at Rome, and who has lately been raised to the bishopric of Ferns."¹

VI

Two important early entries concerning Ireland in the minutes of the Congregation of Propaganda are decisions to make further nominations of bishops to Irish dioceses.² It was natural enough that the agent of the Irish bishops in Rome should be the first candidate to be considered. On 12 May 1623 the usual process of enquiry into his suitability was held by the Datary, and he was appointed bishop of Ferns on 29 April 1624.³

The see of Ferns had had a resident Catholic bishop for only a few months since the Reformation—Peter Power, appointed 27 April 1582 and arrested almost immediately in the "reign of terror"

¹ Printed in *Catholic Record Society*, vol. XXII, pp. 165 ff.

² APF, Acta, vol. I, f. 24v, no. 11 (20 December 1622); f. 26v, no. 8 (10 January 1623).

³ Datary Process in AV, Processus Datariae, vol. 2, ff. 123r-135r, ed. Giblin in *Father Luke Wadding*, pp. 521-5. For date of nomination see Gauchat, *Hierarchia Catholica*, p. 186; Brady, *Episcopal succession*, vol. I, pp. 375-6. Thomas Fleming was appointed archbishop of Dublin on 23 October 1623, the first Irish bishop to be nominated under the regime of Propaganda. His Datary Process is dated 26 September 1623.

which followed the insurrection of Viscount Baltinglass. Daniel O Druhan had been appointed vicar-apostolic by a brief of 17 November 1607;¹ he had guided, and guided well, the vital beginnings of diocesan reorganization, but he was now an old man—he died in September 1626—and the times had so improved that it was possible to consider the appointment of a bishop. Fr. O Druhan's own candidate seems to have been Fr. Walter Cheevers, who had been a student of the Irish college in Douai, but left it to join the Franciscan order.² His candidature does not seem to have been pushed very energetically, however, for what clearly seems to be the first news of it to reach Rome can be dated early in 1625,³ when John Roche, though not yet consecrated, had been appointed for nearly twelve months.

Another candidate was a Dominican, Fr. John Murphy, also a native of the diocese of Ferns, as his name might suggest. On 19 November 1626 the archbishop of Dublin, Thomas Fleming, apparently still in ignorance of Roche's nomination,⁴ wrote to Propaganda with the news that Daniel O Druhan had died two months before, and that the clergy of the diocese had represented to him as metropolitan their desire to have for their bishop John Murphy, O.P., a man of noble birth, singular learning and probity of life, "and moreover, well acquainted with the two languages, English and Irish, being an elequent preacher in both. This knowledge of both languages is most essential for the bishop of that diocese, for there are very many people there who cannot speak one word of English, while there are others who know no other language except English."⁵ On 6 August 1627 Roche Mageoghegan, O.P., wrote to the procurator of the Irish Dominicans in Rome, and in the course of detailing the interests of the Dominicans in Ireland again urged Murphy's claim

¹ AV, Sec. Briefs, vol. 425, ff. 310 ff.

² See petition of Daniel O Druhan and nine other priests, dated Ferns, 20 December 1622, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 8626, f. 23rv; for Cheevers as a student of Douai see *Exhibitio consolatoria*, ed. John Brady in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. XIV, p. 79.

³ *Wadding papers*, p. 94.

⁴ Archbishop Fleming had not been appointed when John Roche was made agent of the Irish bishops on 14 June 1622. I know of no document in which he constituted Roche his agent in Rome, and if such a document existed one would expect it to have survived in Wadding's papers. On 26 August 1629 Archbishop Fleming appointed as his agent in Rome Fr. Eugene Callanan, who had succeeded John Roche as agent of the other Irish bishops. Nevertheless he did so with considerable misgivings, and on Callanan's death he appointed Luke Wadding his agent on 12 April 1631. See *Wadding papers*, pp. 309-10, 498-9.

⁵ Archbishop of Dublin to Propaganda, Dublin, 19 November 1626, APF, *Scrittura Antiche*, vol. 14, f. 79r; another copy *ibid.*, vol. 102, f. 147r. Printed in Moran, *History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin*, pp. 347-8. Moran reads "Moechoe," which causes him some difficulties, but in the manuscript the reading is quite certainly "Morchoe."

to the see of Ferns. His letter indicates one reason at any rate for the long delay in the consecration of John Roche, for he points out that Murphy should be put forward again as a candidate "in case Roche were promoted to Armagh."¹

Peter Lombard, archbishop of Armagh, had died in Rome on 5 September 1625,² and the appointment of his successor caused a long controversy. Archbishop Lombard, a native of Waterford, had spent the whole of his twenty-four years' episcopate in Rome: in his writings he had expressed political views which the northern leaders could hardly find palatable, and from Rome—at least the charge was frequently made—he had tried to direct the affairs of the church in his native country, again along lines that the earls, especially after their defeat and exile, could hardly be expected to accept. His death occasioned a head-on clash between the two rival groups. On the one hand, the Anglo-Irish group, whom we have seen taking so prominent a part in the reorganization of the Irish Church, naturally tried to secure that Lombard's policy should be continued by a person of his way of thinking. On the other hand, the earls and the representatives of the Ulster nobility, laymen and ecclesiastics, had resented as a slur on themselves not merely Lombard's policies, but the very fact that he was archbishop of Armagh. They made known their determination that the next archbishop should be one of their own in such definite terms as to block effectively the candidates of the Anglo-Irish party, even though some of these were very distinguished names. The most distinguished, David Rothe, the bishop of Ossory, had been Lombard's vicar in Ireland since 1610.

The name of John Roche, the bishop-elect of Ferns, was also put forward. His chief commendation seems to have been his evenness of temper and his reputation for discretion and impartiality, which made him more likely to be acceptable in Ulster than many of the Anglo-Irish group.³ A copy of his own *votum* on the problem, presented to the Holy Office in 1626, has survived in Wadding's papers.⁴ There is little in it, in truth, to show that he personally ambitioned the office—even if he did, this was hardly the place to display his ambitions; the desire to be impartial, already noted, is again obvious; but so are the difficulties, also already noted,

¹ *Wadding papers*, p. 212.

² Stuart, *Historical memoirs of the city of Armagh*, p. 212.

³ "Lo spirito di dolcezza, di discretione e d'indifferenza"—*Wadding papers*, p. 120; and cf. *ibid.*, p. 175.

⁴ *Wadding papers*, pp. 141-3.

in guarding impartiality against the effects of ingrained prejudice.¹

His reflections on the vacancy in Armagh follow closely the general reflections on appointing bishops in Ireland which he had outlined in his report to Cardinal Ludovisi. His first comment is that it is very hard indeed to find out the truth about the needs of Armagh—one party is insistent that no one will do except a native of Ulster who has the approval of the earls, the other is equally insistent that the really important thing is to have a distinguished man no matter where he comes from. These views have been put forward in circumstances so clearly indicating self-interest that no objective judgment can be made on the information available; except perhaps that the self-seeking has been so unashamed that a declaration that no appointment would be made to Armagh for some time might be the most effective way of bringing people to their senses: there is no need to rush the appointment, as the see has been without a bishop in residence for thirty years. If, however, an appointment is made, it is vital that the man be really distinguished, especially because of the genuine distinction of the Protestant archbishop.² Further, the king should be able to have nothing against him except that he is a Catholic bishop—again a clear echo of Lombard and a direct thrust at the earls, who, Roche says, are to be listened to with caution, for they are in no position to help and may very easily harm. Finally, all except ambitious individuals among the regular clergy are agreed that a secular priest should be chosen. The people to approach for information are the resident bishops of Ireland, for their views will be sounder and more valuable than those of the great number of people who are writing to the nuncios in France and Flanders.³

On 27 April 1626 Hugh MacCaughwell, O.F.M., was appointed archbishop of Armagh. The appointment was a set-back for the Anglo-Irish party, for while there could be no doubt that the new archbishop was distinguished, he was a regular and the candidate of Tyrone. Any hopes that the appointment would at least end the squabbling were dashed by the unexpected death of Archbishop MacCaughwell on 22 September 1626. Immediately the debate broke out again. Again John Roche was considered as a candidate,

¹ See above, p. 112.

² James Ussher, appointed 21 March 1625. It is probably not unfair to John Roche to read into his words here the suggestion, not exactly that a distinguished man could not be found in Ulster, but that it was comparatively easy to find an undistinguished man there, a "gregarius," to use his own term. See also above, p. 114, note 5.

³ It is hardly necessary to comment that these last two suggestions, if acted on, would inevitably strengthen the claims of an Anglo-Irish candidate.

for the same reasons as before ;¹ but by now the Holy Office was convinced that no Anglo-Irish candidate would do, no matter what his personal qualities.² Roche by this time seems to have dismissed all thoughts of the see of Armagh, if he ever entertained them seriously. Some of his friends were still pushing him in that direction,³ but he himself was preparing for an early return to his diocese in Ireland.⁴

One remaining point, the origins of the Irish college in Rome, needs only a brief recapitulation, as I have already discussed it elsewhere.⁵ There is evidence that Cardinal Ludovisi was attracted to this idea from the moment he became cardinal protector of Ireland.⁶ The report which John Roche presented to him in 1625 emphasized very heavily, as has been seen, the importance of the seminaries in the hopes of the Irish Church. It seems studiously to avoid mentioning any idea of a foundation in Rome, but rather to emphasize the advantages in maintaining Irish colleges in Belgium,⁷ which must, I think, be interpreted as an attempt by Roche to direct the cardinal protector's interest and help to the dire needs of the Irish foundations there. In 1622 a new house had been opened at Lille,⁸ but three years later things had disimproved so calamitously that the creditors of Douai were threatening to recoup their losses

¹ "Pro. Discreto, di natura piacevole, indifferente, dotto, e di buona vita." So the Holy Office summary, *Wadding papers*, p. 224.

² "Contra. E Anglo-hiberno; che no si debbano ellegere Angli-hiberni per la diversità di genio e di procedere che hanno dagl' Hiberni." *Ibid.*

³ Cf. Thomas Walsh, archbishop of Cashel, to John Roche, Madrid, 14 March 1627 "For the church of Ardmagh I say if you have it not I will use all my indeavors and friends to horsse in Patrick Mactheig, to make good my letters of commendation he hath; but deer Sirr, *ioco amoto*, remember the honour you may doe to your countrie in accepting this charge, the want is of you, the mischeefs avoyded, the inconvenience exchued, the stright account you are to give too God of your backwardnes in this occasion; moreover, consider the insufficiencie of many of those which pretends the place; all of which evils can be redressed by your sole admittance of it. I will say no more in the business but promes to be one of those who will make partie against you in the generall iudgment if this busines have not his due." *Wadding papers*, pp. 243-4. Archbishop Walsh is still urging Roche's promotion to Armagh a year later, in a letter to Luke Wadding dated Madrid, 20 February 1628, *ibid.*, p. 258. Later in this year Bishop Hugh O Reilly was transferred from Kilmore to Armagh.

⁴ As is clear from several documents dated April 1627. See below, p. 123.

⁵ "The beginnings of the Irish college, Rome," in *Father Luke Wadding*, pp. 284-94.

⁶ Cf. Bishop Rothe to Archbishop Lombard, 17 September 1625, *Wadding papers*, p. 104.

⁷ See above, p. 115.

⁸ *Catholic Record Society, Douai Diaries*, vol. I, pp. 398-9. In APF, *Congregazioni particolari*, vol. 36, ff. 725-7, printed in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. XVI, p. 11, there is a reference to an annual income of 60 florins from a burse founded in the Lille college, by John Roche, bishop of Ferns. The foundation may well have been made about this time.

by selling the college.¹ Cardinal Ludovisi, however, decided to make a new foundation in Rome rather than shore up existing ones elsewhere.² This decision led to the long overdue foundation of an Irish seminary in Rome, but especially in view of the smallness of the resources the cardinal was prepared to allot to the venture³ the wisdom of the decision in the concrete circumstances might perhaps be questioned. However, once it was taken it had the co-operation of Bishop Roche and Father Luke Wadding. Wadding indeed soon had to undertake alone the task of trying to keep the establishment going on utterly insufficient resources. Bishop Roche could only encourage his work for "our little college" in letters from Ireland, anxiously, for he knew the problems and saw them getting bigger.⁴ He left Rome in 1627, it would seem in the early summer, on the first stage of a journey to Ireland which between one thing and another had been postponed over the last three years.⁵

(to be continued)

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¹ Cf. APF, Acta, vol. 2, f. 267, no. 11 (3 Oct. 1625); vol. 4, f. 65, no 32 (2 June. 1626); Ludovisi to nuncio at Brussels, July 1625, *ibid.*, Scritture Antiche, vol. 386, f. 260; Archbishop Fleming, Bishop Roche and Bishop Tirry to Cardinal Ludovisi, 4 April 1627, *Wadding papers*, pp. 246-7.

² According to Giunti, the Cardinal, immediately on being advised by Roche and Wadding, "giudicò intanto che il maggior bene che potesse farsi a quei cattolici altrettanto tenaci della sua santa fede quando agitati et depressi dagli eretici fusse d' istituire un collegio di giovani in Roma" (Cleary, *op. cit.*, p. 206).

³ Cf. "The beginnings of the Irish college, Rome," pp. 287 ff.

⁴ Cf. Bishop Roche to Wadding, January 1630, *Wadding papers*, pp. 322-3. In a list of the early students of the college (*ibid.*, pp. 282-3), there are two names, Donald Heys and Richard Stafford, which would seem to indicate natives of the diocese of Ferns.

⁵ Several documents which suggest imminent departure are dated April 1627. Cf. APF, Acta, vol. 4, f. 213v (20 April 1627); Bishop Roche to Eugene Callanan, Rome, 30 April 1627, *Wadding papers*, p. 249; Archbishop Walsh to Wadding, Madrid, 13 April 1627, *ibid.*, p. 248.