

AN IRISH COUNTER-REFORMATION BISHOP : JOHN ROCHE

With the accession of James I to the throne of England in 1603, his dominions began to share the change in the religious and political climate already being sensed in Europe. Though it will not be finally admitted until after the blood-bath of the Thirty Years' War, Europe is settling down to accept the Protestant Reformation. Religious issues no longer dominate international politics, and the pattern of Catholic states and Protestant states is coming to be recognized.

One of the kingdoms of James I did not fit neatly into this pattern. The Tudor religious programme had failed in Ireland, but the political programme had succeeded. In consequence, a non-Catholic—or to give him the more forceful title which his contemporaries would more easily have recognized—a heretical king ruled a Catholic country. Yet in practice the Catholic Church could expect a greater toleration than had been possible in the reign of Elizabeth—not a toleration guaranteed by law, which was a long way off yet, but a toleration sufficient in practice to allow the Church to reorganize after the Tudor onslaught. This reorganization was carried out in literally unprecedented circumstances. The Tridentine legislation, on which it was based, presupposed either that Catholicism was the established religion or that the country was a missionary one. In Ireland, the Catholic religion was proscribed by law, but nevertheless from early in the seventeenth century the diocesan episcopate existed on a firm footing in a country overwhelmingly Catholic. These diocesan bishops had to apply the *ius novissimum* of the Counter-reformation Church to a situation which it was not quite designed to fit. There were many difficulties in the process, and necessarily a certain amount of trial and error. It was fortunate for the country that these bishops of the early seventeenth century—in a true sense they are the first Counter-reformation bishops in Ireland—were a rather unusually gifted body of men. They emerge from the background of the Irish seminaries in Europe. A number of these had

been founded in the last decade of the sixteenth century, and were soon supplying the Irish mission with priests trained for their task as no group of Irish priests had been trained for a long time before, disciplined in the Catholicism of the Counter-reformation by the seminary system, which acted as a major stabilizing influence on clerical formation as the Tridentine law on the matter was gradually put into practice.

What I have undertaken here is a strictly biographical study of one of these bishops—John Roche, bishop of Ferns. I have used the biographical approach because in view of the fragmentary nature of the sources it is difficult, as yet at any rate, to attempt any over-all judgment on the work of re-organizing the Catholic Church in Ireland at the beginning of the seventeenth century. I have tried to collect every available piece of information on the life of Bishop Roche, partly of course for its intrinsic interest, but also in the hope that seeing one figure of the period in the round, so to speak, will be an advance towards a more definitive judgment on wider problems. Even within these limits, there is no need to point out the gaps in the documentation—the reader will note them easily enough. In this kind of investigation, however, it is impossible to be final—a new document may turn up at any time from the most unexpected quarter, and there is something to be said for attempting a study when enough has been brought together to plot out the general framework of things. It should also be obvious how much I am indebted to very many people in collecting evidence from scattered sources.¹ They are so many, indeed, that I feel it would be invidious to mention names at all.

I

A certain amount of unnecessary questioning concerning the early life of Bishop Roche has been raised by an entry in the Historical Manuscripts Commission *Report on Franciscan Manuscripts*, which lists among candidates proposed for the see of Armagh in 1626: "John Roche, priest, Anglo-Irish, prothonotary apostolic in the town of Ross in the diocese of Ferns and province of Dublin, born in Spain and educated in France."² It seems rather unlikely, on

¹ I have used the following abbreviations for sources frequently cited: AV—Archivio Vaticano; BV—Biblioteca Vaticana; APF—Archivio di Propaganda Fide.

² P. 87.

the face of it ; and a reference to the original manuscript¹ provides a lesson in how *not* to calendar a document. The manuscript reads : “ Dominus Joannes Rocheus, sacerdos, Anglo-Hibernus, prothonotarius apostolicus, in oppido Rossensi diocesis Fearnensis provinciae Dublinensis natus, et in Hispania et Gallia educatus,” and the repositioning of the comma allows us to set the future bishop against a more likely background. Several reliable contemporaries have preserved the name of his father, Walter Roche, and his mother, Joan.² His father died, comparatively young, it would seem, on 6 November 1603.³ The exact date of his mother’s death is not known ; she survived her husband by a number of years, but was dead by 1623.⁴

Lynch describes Walter Roche as “ iurisprudentiae municipalis scientissimus,”⁵ and his legal activities may be traced from a number of entries in administrative records. He is probably the “ Walter Roche, lawyer ” named in a commission of 1573 ;⁶ he is certainly the “ Walter Roche of New Ross ” mentioned in 1586 ;⁷ as receiving a commission to determine a suit in chancery in 1587 ;⁸ and as “ justice of the peace in county Wexford ” in 1590.⁹ Like many a lawyer of the time, Walter Roche combined the administration of an anti-Catholic law with a deep attachment to the old religion. When there was a conflict of loyalites it was generally the law which suffered. “ The ungodly lawyers are not only sworn enemies to the truth,” the reforming Bishop Brady of Meath wrote to Cecil as early as 1564, “ but also, for lack of due execution of law, the out-throwers of the country.”¹⁰ The government had no option but to leave the

¹ Dún Mhuire, Killiney, MS. D. 4, f. 644, edited in the original Latin in Jennings, *Wadding papers*, p. 175.

² See especially AV, Processus Datariae, where three of the four witnesses called to give testimony of Roche’s fitness for a bishopric in 1623 speak of his home and family from their own personal knowledge. Roche’s Processus has been calendared by Giblin in *Father Luke Wadding*, pp. 521-5, and is our most detailed evidence on this point ; see also Lynch, *De praesulibus Hiberniae*, vol. I, p. 355. There is no reference to his mother’s maiden name. It may possibly have been Rothe. Bishop Rothe of Ossory describes himself as “ consanguineus ” (Rothe to the secretary of Propaganda, 12 July 1636, APF, Scrittura Antiche, vol. 106, f. 51r, printed in Moran, *Spicil. Ossor.*, vol. I, pp. 211-2). Bishop Rothe’s mother was Lettice Rothe from New Ross (Carrigan, *Ossory*, vol. I, p. 86).

³ Cf. Inquisition taken at Wexford, 22 April 1623, *Inquisitions, James I*, Wexford, no. 38 ; Hore, *Old and New Ross*, p. 294.

⁴ AV, Processus Datariae, ed. Giblin, loc. cit.

⁵ *De praesulibus Hiberniae*, vol. I, p. 355.

⁶ *Cal. fiantis Ire., Eliz.*, no. 2345.

⁷ Memoranda Rolls of the Exchequer, transcript in Hore MSS., Wexfordiana, vol. 8, p. 229.

⁸ *Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Eliz.*, p. 118.

⁹ Memoranda Rolls of the Exchequer, cit., p. 386.

¹⁰ Brady to Cecil, 14 March 1564, printed in Ronan, *The reformation in Ireland under Elizabeth*, pp. 103-4.

local administration of law in the hands of men like Walter Roche, which made it very difficult to put any consistent pressure behind the laws against the Catholic religion.

Walter Roche, then, was a "recusant," refusing to move with the times in this respect. He was, indeed, moving against them; Catholic priests ministering in the neighbourhood of New Ross were always sure of welcome and hospitality in the Roche household, and they continued to receive the same welcome from Joan Roche after the death of her husband.¹ This picture of a family loyal to the old faith and gradually being led to a deeper loyalty and fuller understanding by the "seminary priests" whom they sheltered is of common occurrence in the Irish towns at the end of the sixteenth century; and the Roche family, like many others, made its own contribution to the ranks of the priests who were bringing Counter-reformation Catholicism to Ireland.

We know of "brothers and sisters" of John Roche who were alive in 1623.² The names of his sisters have not been preserved, but his brother Thomas, who succeeded to his father's profession, was born in 1577.³ Lynch describes him as older than John, but to complicate matters he adds that Bishop Roche died in 1638 at the age of 62,⁴ which implies that he was born in 1576. In fact, Lynch is wrong in regard to the date of the bishop's death. He died in 1636, so that if the age of 62 is correct he was three years older than his brother Thomas. However, much of Lynch's short notice of Bishop Roche is very inaccurate, and is evidently based on hearsay evidence. There is in fact no clear evidence as to the exact date of Bishop Roche's birth.

Thomas Roche, again according to Lynch, was on two or three occasions sheriff of county Wexford.⁵ In the list of High Sheriffs of Wexford compiled by Hore,⁶ Thomas Roche is returned as sheriff in 1604 and 1631, though in the case of a name so common among the Wexford families as that of Roche it is difficult to be certain of exact identity.⁷ There is no mention of Thomas Roche

¹ See the testimonies of Archbishop Matthews, Nicholas Shea and William Barry in AV, *Processus Datariae*, ed. Giblin, loc. cit., pp. 522-4.

² Testimony of Nicholas Shea, loc. cit., p. 523.

³ Cf. *Inquisition of 23 April 1623*, cit., "Thomas Roche, son and heir of Walter Roche, deceased 6 November 1603, aged 26 at his father's death and married."

⁴ *De præsulibus Hiberniae*, vol. I, p. 355.

⁵ "Bis terve in Wexfordiae comitatu nomarcha"—Lynch, loc. cit.

⁶ Hore MSS., vol. 37, "Pedigrees of co. Wexford families, vol. I," pp. 271-2.

⁷ The Thomas Roche who is sheriff in 1604 seems to be connected in some documents in the Revenue and Equity Exchequer Orders (transcript in Hore MSS., *Wexfordiana*, vol. I) with the principal family of the name in the county, Roche of Rochesland, but the head of that family, Walter Roche, became a Ward of Court on

or his family after the return of Bishop Roche to Ireland in 1629, and the name seems to have died out in New Ross by 1641.¹

It seems quite certain also, in spite of some difficulties in the identification, that Matthew Roche, chiefly distinguished for his turbulent career as vicar-apostolic of Leighlin, was a brother of Bishop John Roche. Bishop Ram's report on the diocese of Ferns in 1612 lists among the "Popish priests" "Sir Matthew Roche, living in New Rosse, sometimes at the house of his brother, Luke Roche, and sometimes in the house of Matthew Shaw, alias Shea, in the same townne."² Three years later, the Royal Visitation confirms that "Sir Matthew Roche, a seminary priest" is ministering in New Ross.³ Within the next few years he had become vicar-general of the diocese of Leighlin⁴ and he was appointed vicar-apostolic of that diocese on 15 January 1622.⁵ He seems to have been a man of uncontrollable temper, and he met the problems of reorganization of the Irish diocesan system with a violence which made his life a continuous storm. In 1628 the complaints are beginning—the first in a letter from the archbishop of Cashel to Luke Wadding, expressing itself in the guarded and allusive language

being left a minor on the death of his father, John Roche of Rochesland, in 1602. In consequence, he was ordered to be educated at Trinity College, "in the English religion and the English apparel until he shall complete his eighteenth year." Cf. *Cal. fiantis Ire.*, Eliz., no. 6602; *Cal. pat. volls Ire.*, Eliz., p. 626; *Alumni Dublinenses*, p. 711. This apparently had no lasting effect on his loyalty to his ancestral religion, for he took a prominent part in the confederate wars on the Catholic side (cf. Hore, *Wexford*, pp. 28, 255) and is listed as an "Irish papist" in *Civil Survey, Wexford*, pp. 108, 109, 112. The similarity in Christian names might suggest relationship between the Rochesland and New Ross families. If this existed, it would explain the connexion with Rochesland of the Thomas Roche, sheriff in 1604, but I have not pursued investigations sufficiently far to make it more than a guess. On the origins of the family of Roche of Rochesland see St. John Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny*, pp. 145 ff.

¹ There is no proprietor named Roche in New Ross according to the *Civil Survey*, and a piece of property in the possession of Thomas Roche and William Bennett in 1623 (Inquisition of 23 April 1623, cit.) is in 1641 in the possession of James Rooth and William Bennett (*Civil Survey, Wexford*, p. 250).

² Printed in Hore, *Enniscorthy*, p. 260. This may give us the name of another brother of Bishop Roche, but "Luke" may equally well be a slip for "Thomas" on the part of Bishop Ram or his informant. The reference to Matthew Shea might explain the familiarity with the Roche household shown by Fr. Nicholas Shea (cf. AV, *Processus Datariae*, ed. Giblin, op. cit., p. 523). Shea was a priest of the diocese of Ossory, but New Ross is of course on the borders of Ossory and Ferns. Indeed, Matthew Roche may have helped to nurture Shea's vocation; in 1623 Shea is described as "aged about twenty-five years" and so would have been a boy of about fourteen in 1612.

³ "The Return of the Jesuits and other seminary priests who were appointed by the Pope and doe now reside in this kingdom," B.M. Add. MS. 19,836, f. 281.

⁴ The exact date is uncertain. Luke Archer, O. Cist., was appointed vicar-apostolic of Leighlin 27 February 1614, and Roche had certain exchanges with him after his own appointment. Cf. Moran, *Spicil. Ossor.*, vol. I, p. 128; *Triumphalia monasterii S. Crucis*, pp. 284-6.

⁵ AV, *Secretariate of Briefs*, vol. 656, f. 230; Gauchat, *Hierarchia Catholica*, p. 218.

which we seem to find friends of John Roche using in speaking of the misdeeds of Matthew.¹ His violence was primarily concentrated in attacks on the religious in his diocese. In 1630 he forbade the people of Leighlin to attend any religious function performed by them, or to support them in any way.² Twelve months later he is trying to remove the religious from his diocese by much more direct methods,³ and it was probably the disturbances he raised which led the government to arrest him and bring him to Dublin for questioning.⁴ They also led to demands for his removal from office, not merely by the religious,⁵ but by some of his own clergy, who seem to be instigated, it is true, by the Franciscan archbishop of Dublin.⁶ The Congregation of Propaganda, on receiving this latter petition, decided to make enquiries from the archbishop of Armagh. The archbishop's report must have been a severe indictment, and the Congregation accepted his recommendation to supplant Roche as quietly as possible by appointing a bishop of Leighlin.⁷ What happened next is uncertain. No bishop was appointed in Leighlin until 1642; but no representative of the diocese was present at a provincial synod held in 1640, from which might be concluded that Matthew Roche was either dead or had been got rid of in some way. There is no evidence as to the exact date of his death, though according to one lurid account he was tried as a heretic by Archbishop Fleming in 1644 and handed over to the secular authority for public execution.⁸ The source of this information is, at the least, suspect. The book in which it appears, published thirty years after the alleged

¹ Thomas Walsh, archbishop of Cashel, to Luke Wadding, Antwerp, 1 September 1628: "quando allá llegare [fray Eduardo Sherloc], preguntele vuestra paternidad del proceder de Matheo [Roche] h[ermano] del Fernense, de quien ha mucho más de dezir que de Diego Meagh de Corcke; por resto, padre fr. Lucas, dico por lo que passó en Meagh y passa en Roche, de mala gana [yo] recomendo naide a la sede apostólica para vicariatos generales, los quales me parecen mucho mejor proveidos por los ordinarios, por quien pueden ser removidos y depuestos quando no cumplen bien sus officios y deveres." *Wadding papers*, p. 272.

² *Wadding papers*, p. 401.

³ Cf. Thomas Fleming, archbishop of Dublin, to Wadding, Dublin, 20 July 1631, *Wadding papers*, p. 557; James Barron, O. Cist., to the Cardinal Protector, Dublin, 21 August 1631, *ibid.*, pp. 563-5; Cardinal Protector to James Barron, undated, *ibid.*, p. 566.

⁴ Patrick Comerford, bishop of Waterford, to Wadding, Waterford, 30 October 1631: "Matthew Roche is carried to Dublin to answer to many objections; quien tal haze tal pague. Fernensis is not very healtie, and is much grieved." *Wadding papers*, p. 610. Again one senses in the words a reluctance to pain Bishop Roche by being over-explicit.

⁵ E.g., Thomas Strange, O.F.M. to Wadding, Waterford, 10 September 1631, *Wadding papers*, pp. 579, 582.

⁶ APF, Acta, vol. 8, f. 303r, no. 15 (16 September 1633).

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 12, f. 12v, no. 42 (14 January 1636).

⁸ Cornelius O Molloney (ps. Anthony Bruodin, O.F.M.), *Anatomicum Examen*, Prague, 1671, pp. 223-5.

execution, is part of a slanging-match between Thomas Carve and Anthony Bruodin, O.F.M., in which the rivals were prepared to make any statement, however preposterous, in order to score off one another.¹ Bruodin was quite capable of inventing this incident, as he invented so many others,² and it seems incredible that such an event should have taken place without leaving any other historical trace. Carve's reply does not deny the allegation, does not in fact even mention it,³ but this can hardly be interpreted as a tacit admission. Neither party to the debate was interested in argument, or even in facts, but solely in scoring off the other by any means.⁴ But that such an allegation could be made is an indication of the reputation which Matthew Roche had left, and helps very much to explain the reluctance with which his name was associated with that of his brother John, who was the most discreet and the mildest of men, and who quite probably had at least helped the advancement of his brother in the diocese of Leighlin.⁵

II

The date at which John Roche left New Ross to seek a seminary education in Catholic Europe cannot be determined exactly. His name occurs in the two extant lists of the students of the Irish college at Douai,⁶ which had been founded by the Meath priest, Christopher

¹ Cf. Wall, "Bards and Bruodins," in *Father Luke Wadding*, p. 446.

² His most remarkable inventions concerned the Irish martyrs, on whom he was accepted as an authority for 250 years. "Bruodin missed the opportunity of becoming a first-class authority on our Irish martyrs. He is one of the few Irish writers who even thought of preserving their memories. But . . . given merely a martyr's name, he could construct all further details with the greatest facility—early biography, details of arrest, speeches, execution, and even subsequent miracles." Fr. B. Jennings, "The Irish Franciscans in Prague," in *Studies*, vol. XXVIII (1939), p. 220, cited by Wall, *op. cit.*, pp. 447-8.

³ The title well indicates the tone of the controversy: *Responsio veridica ad illotum libellum*, Sulzbach, 1672.

⁴ Cf. Wall, *op. cit.*, pp. 448 ff.

⁵ John Roche, as will be detailed below, had entered the service of Archbishop Bentivoglio, nuncio in Flanders, in 1607. He quickly became Bentivoglio's trusted adviser in matters relating to England and Ireland. In 1621 Bentivoglio was created Cardinal and returned to Rome; Matthew Roche became vicar-apostolic of Leighlin in 1622. It is curious, however, that no mention is made of him in the *Processus Datariae* of 1623, in which the qualifications of John Roche for the episcopate are detailed, including, as has been seen, a full account of his family background. One would expect his brother the vicar-apostolic of Leighlin to be mentioned, especially as there is no indication, nor indeed likelihood, that by 1623 the latter's reputation was such that he was more charitably passed over in silence.

⁶ *Cal. Carew MSS.*, 1603-24, p. 286; *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. XIV, p. 75.

Cusack, in 1596.¹ However, a passing, but well-informed, reference speaks of Roche as having spent some time at Louvain as well as at Douai, and adds that he read his philosophy and theology in the latter University.² This would suggest that he arrived in the Low Countries some time before Cusack's foundation of Douai in 1596. It was natural that he should turn to Louvain,³ which was the chief Irish centre in the Low Countries before the college at Douai was organized;⁴ indeed, young Irish students were to be found scattered in various towns which offered an opportunity of clerical education, living as best they could. It would seem that we can place John Roche among the first group of students who were gathered in Douai, where, in this first Irish seminary in the Low Countries, they could enjoy the benefits of life in an Irish community, instead of having to make their own way, as they had before.

Cusack's plans were not confined to Douai: he was planning similar establishments in other places. In each of them he placed a superior who was termed a "prefect," while he himself remained in charge of the whole enterprise, with the title of "president." Sometime about the beginning of the year 1601 David Rothe, the future bishop of Ossory, and, as has been seen, a cousin of John Roche, is described as "prefect" of the Douai college,⁵ and in all probability he had held this office since 1596.

Though the young Irish students, and John Roche in particular, could feel more at home in their own house at Douai, life was still austere enough, because there was never quite enough money to meet expenses. Christopher Cusack's private means seem to have been the sole support of Douai for the first six years of its existence,⁶

¹ Cf. Ware-Harris, *Antiquities*, p. 252; Bentivoglio to Borghese, Cambrai, 5 October 1611, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 6805, f. 153r (another copy, from the Bentivoglio archives in Ferrara, is printed in Belvederi *Guido Bentivoglio diplomatic*, vol. II, pp. 217-8); Brady, "Fr. Christopher Cusack and the Irish college at Douai," in *Measgra Mhicil Uí Chléirigh*, pp. 98-107.

² Bentivoglio to Borghese, 9 April 1611. BV, Barberini latini, vol. 6804, f. 11r.

³ Unfortunately, the records of Louvain are missing between the years 1569 and 1616.

⁴ Douai was a comparatively new university, formally inaugurated in 1562.

⁵ A letter of Kellison, president of the English college in Douai, to the nuncio in Flanders, dated 1622 (Ware-Harris, *Antiquities*, p. 252) can be misleading, for it speaks of "one Mr. Roche, then president of the said college, and now bishop of Ross." In the calendar of Barberini latini vol. 5848, 161rv (*Archivum Hibernicum*, vol. XVIII, p. 92) the name is read as "David Roche," and from another copy of this letter, AV, Fondo Borghese, series IV, vol. 209b, f. 26, the name is printed as "David Rosas" (*Archiv. Hib.*, vol. IV, pp. 227-8). The reading in Barberini latini 5848 seems definitely "David Rojas," and he can be identified with David Rothe from the Salamanca admission lists (manuscript in Maynooth College, printed in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. II, p. 9) and Archduke Albert to Don Hieronimo Capata, Brussels, Sec. Etat et Guerre, vol. 20, f. 100v, edited by Rev. B. Jennings in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. X, p. 167.

⁶ Kellison, in Ware-Harris, *Antiquities*, p. 252; Bentivoglio to Borghese, Cambrai, 5 October 1611, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 6805, f. 153r and Belvederi, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 217-8.

and as the numbers seeking admission to the college grew its resources became more and more insufficient. Early in 1601 David Rothe set out for Spain to seek help from King Philip III, and in the summer of that year the king granted him 2,000 escudos a year for two years.¹ This journey to Spain, apparently, was only part of a wider plan to seek funds, for on 14 July 1601 we find Rothe getting a letter of recommendation from the nuncio in Spain to the Pope, in connexion with "business which he intends to transact in Rome."² The business in Rome did not produce any direct financial support for the college, but it did strengthen papal interest in the project.³ It may be that Rothe found his negotiations in Rome rather long-drawn-out; in any case he remained there until he came back to Ireland in 1610.

John Roche's ordination to the priesthood probably took place about the time of David Rothe's journey to Spain, though again there is no documentary record giving the exact date. There are indications that within a very short time of his ordination he had to undertake at least part of the work of administering the college at Douai, as a result of the absence of David Rothe. The management of the various Irish houses established in Flanders must have been a heavy burden on the available resources of men as well as of money; something of a crisis, or at least a very thorough reorganization, is apparent in February 1604, when Christopher Cusack assembled nine Irish ecclesiastics, of whom John Roche was one, who "proceeded to elect prefects and co-adjutors to the several colleges in Flanders."⁴ We are not told who was elected in each college, but John Roche is described as "prefect" of the college at Douai in a document of 1606,⁵ and it may reasonably be inferred that he was appointed at this meeting in 1604.

In later life Roche is referred to as a "doctor of theology." He did not receive this degree at the University of Douai, however;

¹ The documents giving information on this journey are those detailed above, p. 21, note 5.

² Nuncio to Cardinal secretary, Valladolid, 14 July 1601, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 5848, f. 161rv; another copy in AV, Fondo Borghese, series IV, vol. 209b, f. 26, printed in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. IV, pp. 227-8.

³ Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. XXVI, p. 216, note 5, refers to six papal briefs issued between 10 October 1605 and 12 September 1608 to civil authorities in Spain and the Low Countries urging their support of the Irish college at Douai. A series of similar documents, dated 1596-7, is printed from the state archives in Brussels by Fr. B. Jennings in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. X, pp. 164-7.

⁴ "Chapter-book of the Irish college at Douai" (now lost,) quoted in Ware-Harris, *Antiquities*, p. 252; and cf. Brady, art. cit., in *Measgra*, pp. 101-2.

⁵ Cf. Archduke Albert to Don Francisco Vaca de Benavides, Brussels, 31 July 1606, edited by Rev. B. Jennings in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. X, p. 168 from Brussels, Sec. Etat et Guerre, vol. 23, f. 395v.

it was conferred on him at Rome, possibly on the occasion of his first visit there in 1616, possibly on his second in 1621.¹ In any case, anything in the nature of academic theological studies must have come to an end when he assumed charge of the college of Douai, if only because of the demands made on him in keeping the institution solvent. The two years' grant which David Rothe had secured in Spain was renewed in 1603 for a further two years, but this in turn expired in October 1605 and the position was desperate. John Roche petitioned Philip III to continue his grant indefinitely, and a royal mandate to this effect was issued on 24 April 1606 and registered in Flanders on 31 July.² If this grant had been regularly paid it would have removed much of the financial anxieties, but there is plenty of evidence to show that it was not. However, the affairs of the college at Douai did not remain Roche's immediate responsibility for long more. Sometime towards the end of 1607 he entered the service of the newly-appointed nuncio in Brussels, Guido Bentivoglio, archbishop of Rhodes.³ We shall probably never know what chance brought together these two young men—both about thirty years of age—but for the lawyer's son from New Ross it meant a tremendous widening of his experience of the Counter-reformation Church, as over the next twenty years his association with the Italian aristocrat from Ferrara grew into a bond of mutual respect and finally of firm friendship.

The Bentivoglio family may perhaps have stretched the evidence when they claimed descent from Enzo of Sardinia, the natural

¹ The earliest reference to him as "doctor of theology" is to be found in the pamphlet *Exhibitio Consolatoria*, ed. Rev. John Brady in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. XIV p. 75. This pamphlet, as Fr. Brady shows, went to press sometime before 14 January 1622 (*ibid.*, p. 67). A document in *Wadding papers*, p. 23 dated 14 June 1622, also speaks of him as "doctor of theology." The depositions of the Processus Datariae (ed. Giblin, *Father Luke Wadding*, pp. 521-5) are unanimous in saying that Roche received this degree in Rome. It must be remembered that at this period the doctorate was looked on as a kind of public honour complementing the licentiate rather than as an academic degree of a higher grade than it, and was comparatively rarely conferred. That there were some outstanding qualities in John Roche's academic career at Douai is suggested by a number of considerations, e.g., the trust the nuncio Bentivoglio reposed in him in theological matters—in 1623 he is described as "theologian to Cardinal Bentivoglio" (Processus Datariae, loc. cit.). This source also speaks in language which may suggest that he had received the academic degree of licentiate at Douai. Lynch's (*De praesulibus Hiberniae*, vol. I, p. 355) "in Italiae celebrioribus collegiis philosophiam docuit, doctoratum in theologia Bononiae adeptus" must, I think, be dismissed as fancy.

² Archduke Albert to Don Francisco Vaca de Benavides, Brussels, 31 July 1606, ed. Fr. B. Jennings, *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. X, p. 168.

³ Bentivoglio was appointed nuncio 12 May 1607 (Belvederi, op. cit., vol. I, p. xxi). He arrived in Brussels early in August (cf. Beaulieu to Trumbull, 5 August 1607, *H.M.C. rep. Downshire*, vol. II, p. 31) and very shortly afterwards Roche entered his service (BV, Barberini latini, vol. 6804, f.111r, Bentivoglio to Borghese, 9 April 1611).

son of the Emperor Frederick Roger, who had been captured after the battle of Fossalta in 1249 and imprisoned in Bologna until his death in 1272. The name of Bentivoglio does not occur in the records of the early struggles of the Guelf and Ghibelline factions who plagued Bologna until the city accepted the overlordship of Pope John XXII in 1326. During the Avignon exile and the Great Western Schism the papal overlordship weakened, and in the fifteenth century the Bentivoglio family rose to supreme power in Bologna, in circumstances apparently very parallel to the rise of the Medici in Florence. Like the Medici, they were princely patrons of the Renaissance, especially the great fifteenth-century figure, Giovanni Bentivoglio "the Magnificent." The independence of Bologna ended when Giuliano della Rovere, bishop of the city since 1483,¹ became Pope as Julius II. This warrior "pontefice terribile" was determined to resume the papal overlordship effectively, and he made himself master of Bologna in 1506. Giovanni the Magnificent fled to the French at Milan, but the majority of the Bentivoglio family found refuge with Alfonso d'Este at Mantua or Ferrara.

During the sixteenth century Ferrara, by slower and less drastic means, was also absorbed into the papal states, and in the process the Bentivoglio family came to terms with the papacy.² Guido, born in Ferrara in 1579, inherited the fire of the communal struggles of the fourteenth century and the refinement of the fifteenth-century Renaissance, tempered now by the sober religious preoccupations of the sixteenth-century Counter-reformation. After a brilliant academic career he became nuncio in Flanders at the age of twenty-eight: "the Pope's new nuncio is arrived here," wrote an English observer, "being very jolly and gallant and only thirty years of age."³ The observation has the ring of accuracy, except that it would be wrong to mistake the gallantry for levity. Archbishop Guido Bentivoglio's rapid promotion was justified by his subsequent career. He was one of the leading diplomats of the age, shrewd, talented, an aristocratic and cultured patron of art and letters. Pastor speaks of "the extraordinary spell he cast over all who came into contact with him"; he was made a cardinal in 1621, and enjoyed the particular confidence of Pope Urban VIII; his death took place on 7 September 1644, during the conclave for the election of Urban's successor, "at the moment when the tiara, for which he

¹ Eighth of the thirteen sees he held before becoming Pope.

² The Palazzo Bentivoglio in Bologna was rebuilt in the sixteenth century in the via delle Belle Arti on the site of the building destroyed by Pope Julius II.

³ Beaulieu to Trumbull, 5 August 1607, *H.M.C. rep. Downshire*, vol. II, p. 31.

had so long striven, was actually hovering over his head."¹

For the next fifteen years the diplomatic correspondence of Bentivoglio is our main source for the events of the life of John Roche. Much of it is still inaccessible ; even that part in the Vatican Archives is scattered in several collections, by no means thoroughly explored for Irish material. A great deal, largely unedited, is in the Bentivoglio family archives, now in the Biblioteca Communale at Ferrara.² Still, enough material can be collected even at this stage to give a reasonably representative picture of these fifteen years. The chief service which Roche could render the nuncio in Flanders lay, of course, in his knowledge of the English language and the political and religious background in England and Ireland,³ and before long Bentivoglio was calling on this knowledge in regard to affairs at a high diplomatic level. While the documents which have so far turned up evidently represent only a small part of what exist or once existed, one incident of the year 1609 may be taken, I think, as a fair sample. In a letter of 16 May of that year⁴ Bentivoglio informs Cardinal Borghese at Rome that two days ago he received a copy of "the English king's book"⁵ from a person "who must have it back to-day." In the meantime, he writes, my Irish chaplain has been working night and day to prepare a Latin summary for the cardinal secretary's immediate information, though, he adds, it is expected that the king will shortly circulate a full Latin version.⁶ Even in regard to this one incident it is clear that much of the correspondence has not yet been located, but in a letter of 29 August 1629⁷ Cardinal Borghese commends Bentivoglio for his zeal in securing four theologians to refute James I's book. The theologians are not named, beyond saying that two of them are Jesuits and two secular priests, but it might reasonably be concluded that John

¹ Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. XXV, pp. 341-3. Pastor here refers also to the van Dyck portrait of Bentivoglio, now in the Pitti at Florence : "a speaking likeness of the great statesman. The features appear small but they are distinguished ; the forehead is lofty ; the beard thin and pointed ; the slender fingers loosely hold a sheet of paper. The portrait may well be described as the world's noblest painting of a cardinal."

² Belvederi, *Guido Bentivoglio diplomatico*, Rovigo, 1947, has edited two volumes of diplomatic correspondence from this source.

³ Cf. Bentivoglio to Borghese, 9 April 1611, B V, Barberini latini, vol. 6804, f. 111r, in which he commends Roche's services in regard to English affairs, English being his native language, though he can speak four or five other languages as well.

⁴ Printed in Belvederi, op. cit., vol. II, p. 138.

⁵ *An apologie for the oath of allegiance*, published in 1609, first in English, shortly afterwards in Latin.

⁶ Which he sent with a letter of 20 June 1609, Belvederi, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 138-9.

⁷ Borghese to Bentivoglio, Rome, 26 August 1609, AV, Fondo Borgese, series I, vol. 914, ff. 25-6.

Roche was one of the two latter. At any rate, within two years Bentivoglio was writing to Borghese praising Roche's services in regard to English affairs, and asking the cardinal secretary to allow him to reward them by bestowing on him a canonry in the church of St. Peter at Douai, which was in the Pope's gift and had just fallen vacant. The canonry was worth a little more than a hundred crowns a year, which Bentivoglio said he considered not really enough to reward Roche's services, but the position was an honourable and pleasant one in the university town.¹ No doubt all these advantages, not forgetting the hundred crowns Bentivoglio made so light of, were appreciated by the impecunious exile.²

Mention of money, or rather lack of money, seems to provide a natural transition to the affairs of the Irish college at Douai. As nuncio, Bentivoglio made regular visitations of the seminaries in the Low Countries, and though Roche is not mentioned explicitly in any of his despatches concerning the affairs of the Irish college at Douai, it is clear from other correspondence that he was still closely linked with Christopher Cusack and his circle in 1613,³ and two other letters which have survived show that he acted as the nuncio's agent in regard to certain troubles in the English college at Douai in the same year.⁴ Bentivoglio made his first visitation of the Irish college in 1609. There is no hint of any troubles; his report merely says that he exhorted the seminarians to cultivate learning and piety to enable them to have a fruitful ministry in Ireland, and notes that the seminary was maintained by the king of Spain.⁵ After a visitation in 1611 he writes at greater length,⁶ praising Christopher Cusack's work in the college, which has already ordained 134 priests. On both occasions on which he has visited the college he has found everything as it should be, but on this latter occasion the president has had a serious talk with him on financial matters. The Spanish subsidy is paid very irregularly, but the many students in the college have to exist on this subsidy and equally

¹ Bentivoglio to Borghese, 9 April 1611, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 6804, f. 111rv.

² That the canonry was actually conferred on John Roche appears from *Wadding papers*, p. 23.

³ See below, pp. 28-9.

⁴ Cf. Bentivoglio to Borghese, 31 August 1613, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 6809, f. 59r; Borghese to Bentivoglio, 21 September 1613, AV, Fondo Borghese, series I, vol. 914, f. 622v. Again, it is impossible from these two letters, which are the only ones which have so far turned up, to determine the details of Roche's part in the business.

⁵ Bentivoglio to Borghese, Arras, 28 May 1609, AV, Fondo Borghese, series II, vol. 98, f. 119; printed in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. IV, p. 263.

⁶ Same to same, Cambrai, 5 October 1611, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 6805, ff. 153r-154r. Printed, from another copy in Ferrara, in Belvederi, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 217-8.

intermittent help from Ireland. Cusack asked the nuncio to seek financial help from the Holy See, and Bentivoglio, who had seen the poverty of the place for himself and had been struck by the work it was doing and the personal qualities of Cusack, did put in a strong request. However, it does not seem to have had any effect, for two years later he has turned once again to the Spanish government in Flanders to urge payment of their subsidy, which he describes as "suspended at present."¹ The following spring he has to write that there are further troubles in the Irish college at Douai, which have brought in the bishop of Arras at the behest of the civil authorities to settle quarrels between the "Old and New Irish."²

These quarrels were only an extension to the students of Douai of disputes which were already widespread among the Irish in the Low Countries. Every Irish community naturally followed events at home in Ireland with a very keen interest.³ In these communities too Irishmen of different racial origins were being brought together more closely perhaps than ever before, just at a time when the Irish of Gaelic origin were conscious of the threat of destruction hanging over their traditional way of life after the flight of the Earls and the plantations of James I, and conscious also that the Irish Catholics of English origin were escaping relatively lightly. This bitterness was nurtured by the comparatively cool reception given by the Catholic powers of Europe to the exiled earls, and the increasing willingness of the Anglo-Irish Catholics to accept the plantations and the attainder of Tyrone and Tyrconnell in return for some guarantee of their won position.⁴ In these circumstances, it was scarcely avoidable that the Old-Irish party should feel touchy and suspicious, and the ecclesiastics among them might be tempted to raise the question whether the Anglo-Irish search for guarantees from the English crown might not be an unlawful trucking with heresy, and to contrast this with their own fight for religion, which had left them despoiled of everything. In 1612 there is evidence that a group of Irish Catholics in the Low Countries was trying to bring about a reconciliation between the earl of Tyrone and the English govern-

¹ Same to same, 4 September 1613, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 6809, ff. 78-9.

² Same to same, 12 April 1614, AV, Fondo Borghese, series II, vol. 99, f. 135; printed in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. IV, pp. 284-6.

³ An interesting sidelight on the close connexions of this particular community with events at home will be found documented in AV, Fondo Borghese, series III, vol. 124c, f. 84, printed in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. II, pp. 316-7—a letter from Christopher Cusack to Peter Lombard, 21 June 1603, enclosing a letter to himself from Patrick Roche, Irish merchant just arrived from Waterford, giving an account of events in Ireland immediately after the accession of James I and of the final peace-negotiations between Hugh O'Neill and the government.

⁴ As they did in the 1614 parliament.

ment.¹ It was probably not very well-advised ; their moves were greeted cautiously by the English ambassador, and they aroused sharp hostility among some of the Old-Irish exiles. The trouble became serious when one of these latter, a priest named Gelasius Lorcan, who obviously resented the fact that Catholics of Anglo-Irish extraction were in control of the Irish seminaries abroad,² made his way to Rome and in the course of his business there lodged a serious complaint against the Anglo-Irish group in Flanders. The complaint was that John Roche was abusing his confidential position in the nuncio's household to pass on information to "the Englishman, Thomas Shelton,"³ who in turn retailed it to the English authorities ; and that Christopher Cusack paid Roche and Shelton for these services out of alms received from the Spanish king.⁴

In fact, it would seem that there was already more than a suspicion in the Low Countries that Lorcan would cause some trouble in Rome, and Bentivoglio had already warned Cardinal Borghese of this.⁵ The Cardinal promised to be on his guard, but when he heard Lorcan's story he seems to have accepted it, and wrote to Bentivoglio to take drastic and effective action.⁶ This seems to have led to a minor inquisition in Flanders, as a result of which Bentivoglio wrote that the stories told of Cusack, Roche and Shelton were calumnies invented by Lorcan. In regard to John Roche especially he wrote that he had been his chaplain now for more than five years and that he had too many proofs of his goodness and trustworthiness to give any credence to such calumnies ; and in his case and in that of the other accused, Cardinal Borghese could find confirmation of the nuncio's

¹ Cf. William Trumbull to the English secretary of state, 13 February 1612, *H.M.C. rep. Downshire*, vol. III, pp. 236-7. He speaks of the efforts of "some of the Irish living in these parts, especially Thomas Sheldon and Captain Rathfert." Shelton appears to be the central figure, but attempts to disentangle the negotiations are not made easier by the fact that there seem to have been two people of this name in the Low Countries at the time. Certainly a Thomas Shelton can only be described as an agent of the English government (cf. *H.M.C. rep. Downshire*, vol. II, pp. 68, 69, 196) but there are reasons for thinking it unlikely that he is the Thomas Shelton referred to in the nunciature correspondence detailed below.

² He was in Rouen in 1609, attempting to establish a community of Irish students. Cf. Cardinal Joyeuse to Cardinal Barberini, 12 October 1609, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 7949, f. 93r.

³ Shelton was in fact from Meath, but to Lorcan's eyes he may well have appeared an Englishman. Lorcan may also be deliberately confusing him with an English Thomas Shelton.

⁴ Borghese to Bentivoglio, 26 January 1613, AV Fondo Borghese, series I, vol. 914, f. 531 rv ; and cf. Brady, art. cit., in *Measgra*, p. 104.

⁵ Cf. Borghese to Bentivoglio, 12 January 1613, AV, Fondo Borghese, series I, vol. 914, f. 526r.

⁶ Same to same, 26 January 1613 AV, Fondo Borghese, series I, vol. 914, f. 531rv.

opinion from testimonials to their character which he enclosed.¹ The nuncio's judgment, confirmed by the testimonials, which were signed by prominent Irishmen of both the Old-Irish and Anglo-Irish groups, were enough to discredit Lorcan in Rome,² but they did not end the dissensions. In 1614, as has been noted, the troubles had spread to the students at Douai. The students of Old-Irish stock accused Cusack of partiality and demanded that the college be divided into two sections, each under an independent superior. An enquiry was held by the bishop of Arras on orders from the civil authority, and though the bishop could find nothing but good to report of Cusack he recommended that in view of the existing dissensions the college should be divided. This however was successfully opposed by Bentivoglio, on the grounds that it would lead to the ruin of the college and perpetuate the dissensions, which he claimed had been begun by persons of no consequence whatever.³

Whatever be said of Bentivoglio's assertion that the troubles were caused by persons of no consequence, there is no questioning his judgment that a division of the college would replace one struggling institution by two even more struggling ones, and might quickly lead to no college at all. The disputes, however, were not brought to an end simply by pointing out how dangerous they were, because they were too closely bound up with the different interests among the Catholics at home in Ireland, which were becoming very apparent in the years between the plantation of Ulster and the 1614 parliament. These greater disputes, in turn, were dangerous, and the history of the next forty years was to prove them fatal, but they were nevertheless so ingrained in the Irish of both parties that even those who wished most to mend them could not avoid having their outlook influenced by them to some degree.

On 6 April 1613 Bentivoglio forwarded a report to Rome on the various countries under the care of the Flanders nunciature, and there is good evidence that the Irish section of this report was in

¹ Bentivoglio to Borghese, 16 February 1613, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 6808, ff. 73r-75r. Two of these testimonials are to be found elsewhere in the Barberini papers, both dated 15 February 1613—attestation of Richard Stanhurst in favour of Christopher Cusack, John Roche and Thomas Shelton, BV, Barberini latini, vol. 8626, f. 53rv; attestation of Eugene Matthews, Bonaventure Hussey, Hugh MacCaughwell, and Robert Chamberlain in favour of Christopher Cusack, *ibid.*, f. 11r.

² Borghese to Bentivoglio, 9 March 1613, AV, Fondo Borghese, series I, vol. 914, f. 547rv; Brady, *art. cit.*, p. 104.

³ Bentivoglio to Borghese, 12 April 1614, AV, Fondo Borghese, series II, vol. 99, f. 135, printed in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. IV, pp. 284-6. From the documents from the state archives in Brussels printed by Fr. Brendan Jennings in *Archiv. Hib.*, vol. X, pp. 170 ff. it appears that these troubles had begun in the college as early as 1610 and were not ended by Bentivoglio's decision of 1614.

fact drawn up by John Roche.¹ A longer report on the same subject, signed by Roche in his own name, which can be dated 1625, exists in the Vatican Archives, and a comparison leaves no doubt that the same man was responsible for both documents; the 1625 report only develops at greater length the ideas of the earlier one. Both reports show the author anxious to think in terms of Ireland as primarily a Catholic nation,² but also show—here the 1625 report, on account of its greater length, is more informative—how the real distinctions between the two civilizations which were now in the process of being fused into the Irish Catholic nation could leave their mark on the expression, and even on the thought of an author who was clearly anxious to play down these differences.

We may take the report of 1613, then, though it is signed by Bentivoglio, as indicating John Roche's reflections on his country at this date. What strikes him principally is the common factor of the Catholic religion. Almost every Irishman is a Catholic, and most of them profess their faith openly. It has not been possible to introduce in Ireland the full rigour of the laws in force in England. Irish Protestants are to be found only in the largest towns, and even here they are comparatively few in number and face popular hostility. In the country districts a Protestant is a rare exception, and the people are well-disposed to Catholicism, even though many of them are very ill-instructed. The nobility and gentry are almost all loyal to the old faith, and the fruit of this universal loyalty is evident in the numerous Irish vocations to the clerical state.

He then lists the strength of the clergy on the Irish mission—800 diocesan priests, 130 Franciscans, 20 Jesuits, a few Cistercians and Dominicans. The Franciscans, he says, have always been specially venerated in Ireland; in many parts of the country they now wear the religious habit, recite the office in choir, and observe every detail of their religious rule. In regard to the clergy in general, he notes, one could in many cases wish they had more capacity and learning,³ especially those of them who are ordained at home with-

¹ AV, Fondo Borghese, series I, vol. 269-72, ff. 89v-91v, printed in Bentivoglio, *Relazioni del Card. Bentivoglio in tempo delle sue nunziature di Fiandra e di Francia*, first editions Antwerp 1624, Cologne 1630, Paris 1631; translated into French, and later into English by the earl of Monmouth, *Historicall Relations of the United Provinces of Flanders, written originally in Italian by Cardinal Bentivoglio*, London, 1652. The report on Ireland (pp. 84-5) is a free paraphrase rather than a translation but is substantially accurate.

² As was the Anglo-Irish archbishop of Armagh, Peter Lombard. Cf. Silke, "Primate Lombard and James I," in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, vol. XXII, p. 128 (April 1955).

³ "Habilità e dottrina."

out any proper preparation. However, this defect is being remedied by the seminaries abroad, at Douai, Bordeaux, Lisbon and Salamanca.

Next, he asks the question: why have the Irish remained Catholic? His answers have the intrinsic worth of a well-informed and reflecting contemporary, and comment will suggest itself naturally. First, he stresses that the Irish have always inclined to the Catholic faith and the see of Rome: he mentions especially, as he did later in his report in 1625, that even before the Norman invasion the Irish had made their kingdom tributary to the Holy See.¹ Secondly, he states simply and without qualification that the Irish have always greatly hated the English—a rather surprising comment from an Anglo-Irish townsman, indicating perhaps personal experience rather than a grasp of history. Lastly—and here he may be on more solid historical ground—he says that the Irish are a simple and rugged people, averse to innovations and tenacious of old usages.² In one parliament after another—it is natural for an Anglo-Irish priest writing in 1613, especially a lawyer's son, to plot the resistance in terms of parliaments rather than of battles—the Irish have resisted the introduction of penal legislation on the English model. The framework of a heretical church has been imposed, the episcopal sees are in the hands of heretics, but the people of the country are Catholic.

Finally, he enumerates the archbishoprics and bishoprics of Ireland, noting that of the four archbishops only the archbishop of Cashel is in residence, the archbishop of Armagh being in Rome, Dublin in Flanders, and Tuam in Spain. Everywhere, however, the dioceses are governed by vicars nominated by the ordinaries or by

¹ Cf. Gwynn, "Ireland and the continent in the eleventh century," in *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. VIII, pp. 196-7 (March 1953): "Finally, there is the well-known incident of the pilgrimage of Donnchad, last surviving son of Brian Boromha, who lost his kingdom in 1064 and went as a pilgrim to Rome in company with Echmarcach, king of the Isle of Man. This last pilgrimage has been chronicled in all the main surviving Annals (AU, AI, AT, CS); and Mageoghegan's picturesque translation of the lost Annals of Clonmacnoise preserves what seems to be the earliest version of the legend according to which 'Donnogh mcBrian Borowa was king, some say, and was deposed again (and went to Rome) . . . and hee brought the Crown of Ireland with him thither, which remained with the Popes until Pope Adrean gave the same to king Henry the second that conquered Ireland.' The contemporary chronicle of Marianus Scotus gives us more trustworthy information in its statement that these two exiled kings died at Rome in 1065."

² Loc. cit., f. 90v: "Le raggione che si possono addurre sono queste: l'essere stati sempre inclinatissimi per se stessi i popoli d'Irlanda alla fede Cattolica; l'haver essi portato in ogni tempo un particolare amore alla Sede Apostolica, alla quale fu già fatto dono di questo regno; l'haver i medesimi popoli ritenuto continuamente un odio grande contro gli Inglesi; e l'essersi mostrati sempre alienissimi da ogni novità, non meno di religione, che di costumi, essendo gli Irlandesi gente semplice e rozza, e che tenacemente ritiene tutte le antiche usanze."

the Holy See. The religious orders have their own superiors, and he notes as praiseworthy that the disputes between regular and secular clergy, which have been so disturbing in England, do not exist in Ireland. This was a matter on which he certainly had to revise his optimistic judgment in the years ahead, notably in the case of his brother Matthew.

On 24 October 1615 Ascanio Gesualdo was appointed nuncio in Brussels, and in December Bentivoglio and his household left Flanders. In February 1616 he was in Ferrara, and he arrived in Rome on March 26. Even Bentivoglio was struck by the transformation of the city during his absence of nine years, by the new streets and spacious squares built by the energy of Paul V and his nephew, Cardinal Scipio Borghese. The new buildings caught the eye everywhere; the façade of St. Peter's proclaimed the glory of Paul V and the house of Borghese; it also proclaimed that admiration of splendour and size so characteristic of this period, when the Baroque style began to displace the Renaissance as the hall-mark of Rome, directed by Maderno and his successor Bernini, who was to execute his first major commission at the Villa Borghese just three years later at the age of twenty-one. If the new Rome surprised Bentivoglio, it must have amazed his Irish chaplain, who, notwithstanding his experience of nine years in diplomatic circles in Brussels, was, in his own words, sprung from "una gente semplice e rozza."

His stay in the papal city was a short one. On 15 July 1616 Bentivoglio was nominated nuncio to France in succession to Cardinal Ubaldini, and he arrived in Paris on 15 December.¹ With the ending of the civil wars and the stabilization of the Bourbon monarchy, France was already showing signs of displacing her rival Spain as the leading Catholic power. In the realm of international politics, Bentivoglio's new nunciature dealt with much the same questions as his previous one, though looked at from the opposite side of the boundary between France and the Spanish Netherlands; there was less to do with the affairs of England and Ireland, which were mainly transacted through the nunciature in Brussels. Paris, however, had its quota of Irish exiles; its schools attracted Irish ecclesiastics, and just at this time the Irish college in Paris was making its beginnings. The city was to be John Roche's home for the next four years, until his patron was made a cardinal on 11 January 1621, when he returned with him to Rome.

(to be continued)

PATRICK J. CORISH

¹ The dates here and in the preceding paragraph are taken from Belvederi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. xxiii, and Pastor, *op. cit.*, vol. XXVI, p. 35.