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THE IRISH DOMINICAN PROVINCE (1761-1765)
WITH SOME NOTES ON ITS
MISSIONARIES IN SCOTLAND (1765-1773)

BY
HUGH FENNING O.P.

This article continues the story of *Hibernia Dominicana* in the eighteenth century, begun in this journal in 1968 and continued in 1972 and 1975. The same plan has been followed insofar as the successive provincials and their activities provide the necessary framework. Admittedly more is said of what happened in their time than of what they did themselves, just as more is said here about events outside Ireland than within it. There are two reasons for this imbalance: the poverty of our evidence with respect to developments in Ireland, and the reasonable intention of staying on the level of general history rather than slip to what is of purely local interest.

It is to be regretted that this present article covers only one provincialate, that of Michael Hoare, and merely begins to discuss that of his successor, Thomas Netterville. So the article, while having a head, cannot lay claim to a tail. Nonetheless, it does faithfully continue its three longer predecessors and will, one hopes, be completed by others in their turn. The list of missionaries sent to Ireland by the masters general is not given here as it was as an appendix to each of the earlier articles, but will be taken up again from summer 1761 in the sequel.

MICHAEL HOARE, 1761-1765

Since the chapter held at Dublin on 13 June 1761 was obliged to elect a provincial from Munster, the vocals chose Michael Hoare of Limerick, twelve years after the end of his first provincialate¹. Their

¹ For an account of Hoare's first term of office see AFP 45 (1975) 399-414. The chapter acts of 1761 are in AGOP XIII. 68095.

choice complimented the man himself while underlining the weakness of the order in the south of Ireland. Among the names of the four definitors one finds that of Patrick Bray of Waterford, later provincial. Two other future provincials, John and Thomas Netterville, were elected definitor-general and *socius*, respectively, for the next general chapter, though no such chapter was in fact to meet for sixteen years. The same John Francis Netterville was named historian of the province in succession to Thomas Burke, now bishop of Ossory, though whatever he may have written on the subject has been lost.

The four capitular ordinations were fairly humdrum, for they simply clarified a point bearing on the effects of deceased friars and made some arrangements for students at Louvain. As far back as the provincial chapter held at Sligo in 1627, it had been customary to divide the *spolia* of the dead into three equal parts: one for the convent of affiliation, one for that of assignation, and one to be applied in Mass stipends for the soul of the individual concerned. Clearly this legislation did not refer so much to clothes or books as to hard cash, and was chiefly intended for those who died abroad. The chapter of 1761 turned its attention to a situation more usual in Ireland, namely to those dying in convents to which they were either affiliated or assigned, but not both. In such a case, their property was to be divided in two, one part going to the "other" convent and the remainder applied in suffrage Masses for their souls. So far as Louvain was concerned, the chapter insisted that the students should take turns to preach on Sundays (presumably to the community) throughout the year, and that in future, as had been the practice up to 1749, they should receive no travelling expenses whatever on setting out for Rome or Lisbon. At the very least, considering how low the finances of Holy Cross actually were, the convent to which such students were sent for further studies ought to pay half the cost of their journey.

Louvain appeared again in the petitions of the chapter, but on the deeper level of jurisdiction. Strictly speaking, it was the only one of the three foreign colleges under the authority of the provincial, but the masters general had grown accustomed to appoint those who taught there, usually on the recommendation of the regent of studies. This was more a matter of custom than of law, since a former provincial, Michael Shanly, had been rebuked as recently as 1755 for not maintaining the *aequalitas nationum* on the teaching staff at Louvain². The

² AFP 45 (1975) 460.

provincial might make visitation there, but his power of assignation to or from the college did not extend to the lectors. Hence the chapter now asked that the provincial be again permitted to appoint those teaching the humanities or sacred scripture, besides the master of students at Holy Cross, as had been his right from the first foundation of the college.

Their second petition concerned novices, whom the province had been forbidden to clothe in Ireland since 1751. On this vital point, the chapter again ignored the obvious and practical suggestion made by the master general Bremond in 1754: that since the common good was at stake, each of the Irish houses should contribute towards the heavy expense involved in sending young postulants abroad³. It equally ignored the more recent insistence (April 1759) of Bremond's successor, Juan Tomas de Boxadors, conveyed in a letter to the prior of Louvain, that the next provincial chapter would have to make some arrangement for the support of novices, since they must necessarily prove a financial burden on whatever continental convents were to receive them⁴. Instead, the chapter simply renewed the capitular petition of 1757, asking the master general to prevail on Propaganda Fide to permit the reception of a single novice in each of four designated Irish convents. Failing such permission, the Irish province *iam nimis afflicta* would soon be desolate, as was patent from the list (appended to the acts) of the forty-nine friars who had died over the preceding four years.

Two further petitions asked the general to protect the rights of the order in the case then pending between the archbishop of Dublin and the Dominicans of that city⁵, and to grant a passive voice (i.e. the right of eligibility) to friars prevented by other duties from visiting their convents more than a few times every week. This final petition may be quoted in full, since it reveals a province increasingly composed of private chaplains, parish priests and curates, with its country convents, as one may well imagine, in full decline:

Cum in hac nostra provincia desolata in quibusdam conventibus praesertim ruralibus pauci sint fratres, iique communiter deputentur sacellani pro particularibus familiis vel curam animarum habent aut illius parochiae ubi existit conventus aut, ut saepius evenit, parochiarum

³ On 10 Aug. 1754. *Ibidem*, 459.

⁴ 14 and 28 Apr. 1759. AGOP IV. 231, p. 2.

⁵ The whole case is discussed in AFP 45 (1975) 476-87.

adiacentium. Insuper, ut supponitur, assumuntur ad curam animarum principaliores; hinc est ut ad negotia etiam ordinis tractanda aptiores censeantur, eaque de causa ad petitionem provinciae, a capitulo generali Bononiae celebrato anno 1748 ad vocem activam admissi sunt ⁶. Experientia modo constat religionis emolumento esse si ad passivam etiam vocem restituerentur. Qua de re humillime supplicamus Reverendissimae suae Paternitati, quatenus pro zelo suo ordinis, vere paterno, utriusque vocis gratiam curam animarum habentibus benigne concedere non gravetur, saltem iis qui curam praefatam subeunt in parochia ubi existit conventus, aut in locis vicinis, qui de facili bis terve per hebdomadam ad conventum accedere possunt, ibidemque per diem alterumve permanere, dummodo religionis negotia id exigant, idque absque parochianorum praeiudicio, cum id muneris, interea temporis, alteri religioso committi possit.

As was customary, the chapter of 1761 submitted a long list of postulations for the honorary degrees of the order, this time no less than thirty-three names, of which only eight were put forward for titles vacant *per obitum*. In fact, the total came to thirty-five, for Michael Hoare with two of the definitors signed a separate petition asking the master general to promote the *other* two who could not (being definitors) legally postulate themselves ⁷. The extravagant number of these postulations, not to speak of the inexperience or unsuitability of many of those proposed, give the Irish chapters of the 18th century the air of a "mutual admiration society", but the matter was taken most seriously by those concerned. For example, two priests of Dublin, John Ryan and Edmund Fitzgerald, complained separately to Rome about these postulations less than two weeks after the chapter closed ⁸. And all John Ryan had to complain about was that he, already a preacher general, had been put second rather than first on the list of twelve postulated for the province of Leinster!

Seldom can the acts of an Irish provincial chapter have been so coolly received by the Roman curia. In all probability, this was largely

⁶ These friar-pastors, provided they lived within the "limits" of their convents, had been granted an active voice by the master general Ripoll as early as Aug. 1745. This was confirmed by the general chapter of Bologna in 1748. The point made in the text quoted above of the non-residence of the *principaliiores* or more capable brethren of a convent, had already been made by the chapter of 1753. See AFP 45 (1975) 402, 410-11, 435.

⁷ Their undated petition is in AGOP XIII. 68095. The definitors who signed it were Th. Hope S.T.M. and Dom. Egan P.G.

⁸ These two letters, of 19 and 27 June 1761, occur *ibidem*.

due to the absence of the master general, for Boxadors had left Rome for Spain in September 1760 and did not return from that prolonged visitation until 21 May 1764, just a year before Michael Hoare went out of office⁹. For the duration of his absence, the general appointed Giovanni Domenico Villavecchia vicar general of the order. So it was with Villavecchia, and not with Father Boxadors, that the Irish provincial had to deal during his first three years in office. And Villavecchia was to show himself less helpful than his master, if indeed he may be said to have shown himself helpful at all.

To start with, Villavecchia found what he called a "substantial error" in the election itself, insofar as the scrutators when signing the document had failed to indicate the names of the convents of which they were priors¹⁰. The vicar general therefore cassated the election and declared himself perfectly free to appoint anyone as provincial; but seeing that the greater part of the electoral body had voted for Michael Hoare, he thought it best to *appoint* him provincial "as a special favour". The incoming provincial was also rapped over the knuckles for signing himself "provincial" rather than "provincial elect", a point of protocol with which Father Hoare should have been familiar "in view of the fact that he had once been provincial before"¹¹. Villavecchia ignored the petitions of the chapter, apart from the two (on the Dublin dispute and the novitiate question) which did not concern the Dominicans alone. In this respect, he promised to give what help he could: "if the procurators general of the other orders should show themselves willing to cooperate". Throughout Hoare's provincialate there was not one word, whether from Villavecchia or later from Boxadors about permitting the election of parish priests as priors of country convents. And Rome continued placidly to appoint the teachers of Holy Cross, Louvain. Indeed, Michael Hoare was called to task by Boxadors himself in September 1764, and asked peremptorily to show cause why he had infringed on the general's authority by recalling Michael Flemming to Ireland although that priest had been named lector of sacred scripture at Louvain¹².

There still remained the question of those postulated for degrees.

⁹ Mortier, *Histoire des maîtres généraux*, vol. 7 (Paris 1914) 394. The exact date of Boxador's return is noted in AGOP IV, 231, p. 31.

¹⁰ 11 July 1761. Villavecchia to Hoare. AGOP IV, 231, p. 10.

¹¹ 18 July 1761. Same to same. *Ibidem*.

¹² 22 Sept. 1764. Boxadors to Hoare. *Ibidem*, p. 33.

At first, Rome had nothing to say on the subject. When Father Hoare broached the subject after his first visitation, in the autumn of 1762, he was told it would be settled "some other time"¹³. He tried again in a letter of 17 February 1764, nearly three years after the provincial chapter, making the point that the brethren were complaining of him (the provincial) as the cause of this delay. Villavecchia replied that this would require an examination of the acts of the last chapter, and that he was in no position to weigh the merits of so many candidates. In any case, he went on, it would be better for the provincial to petition the master general, who was expected at Rome in May, with regard to the granting of degrees and the confirmation of the chapter acts themselves¹⁴. Following this advice, Father Hoare wrote to the general himself in the following autumn, only to receive a *vehementer miramur*, first of all that the brethren should have dared to complain and secondly that the provincial had not curbed their insolence¹⁵. Boxadors melted a little by March 1765, but even then (with only a few months to go before the election of a new provincial) he simply promised to take up the question of degrees at some future date¹⁶. In short, only one degree was granted during this entire provincialate: a mastership granted to Michael Peter MacMahon on 5 June 1765, the very day on which he was named bishop of Killaloe¹⁷. With quite unconscious irony, this solitary promotion was granted to a friar who had not been postulated at all!

THE COLLEGE OF LISBON, 1756-1764

The college of Corpo Santo at Lisbon, destroyed by earthquake in 1755, played no great part in Father Hoare's provincialate and would not thrive again as a house of studies until 1770. But if it played no great part, its very survival was an achievement and the story of those uncertain years may very well be told in outline here.

¹³ 30 Oct. 1762. Villavecchia to Hoare. *Ibidem*, p. 14.

¹⁴ 7 Apr. 1764. Same to same, answering his letter of 17 February. *Ibidem*, pp. 28-29. I find no evidence in this register that the acts of 1761 were ever confirmed.

¹⁵ 27 Oct. 1764. Boxadors to Hoare. AGOP IV. 231, pp. 33-34.

¹⁶ 9 Mar. 1765. Same to same. *Ibidem*, p. 36.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 37. There is an excellent article on this bishop by J. Clancy, Michael Peter MacMahon, bishop of Killaloe, 1765-1807, in *Molua* (Dublin 1940) 1-19.

Father Peter MacKeon had been rector since 1749 for two successive terms when the college fell in ruins on 1 November 1755, but (since no one else wanted the job) was continued in office until autumn 1758¹⁸. After the disaster, only three other members of the earlier community remained: Eugene MacCrohan, Dominic Delamar and a student named George Jones. Because of recurring tremors, even these brave spirits stayed with friends "or wandered about the fields" and did not return to live again at Corpo Santo until about April 1756¹⁹. They had lost their archives (and therefore all proper account of the founded Masses to which they were obliged), but on the other hand they were not entirely destitute and Charles O'Kelly set off just then for Rome, fully determined to plead for the college at a higher level.

Even before quitting Lisbon, O'Kelly succeeded in obtaining a glowing testimonial letter from the local Inquisition in favour of Corpo Santo²⁰. The document dwelt on the earlier achievements of the community, particularly on their success in converting heretics; insisted it was not only useful but necessary to the good of the Church; spoke of its present need, and recommended its reestablishment to the generosity of the faithful. Almost simultaneously, the vicar general of the order promised to say Masses for the dead of the community, while encouraging Peter MacKeon to send his subjects questing in Spain. Ferretti even asked for their names and the dioceses in which they intended to beg, so that he might give them letters of recommendation²¹. After taking part in the general chapter at Rome (July 1756) and becoming theologian of the Casanatensian library, Charles O'Kelly pursued his fund-raising campaign, and with apparent success. Working

¹⁸ On the earlier history of Corpo Santo from 1749 to 1755 see AFP 45 (1975) 445-49. On 30 Sept. 1755 the community postulated Edm. O'Reilly of Leinster as rector of the college, and the general commanded him under obedience to accept, but that priest died before 16 Oct. 1756 when the general appointed Th. Hope. Hope, however, would not leave his parish in Meath, and the general (after two years) abandoned his repeated attempts to install him at Lisbon. AGOP IV. 217, pp. 158, 166, 168, 170, 172, 174.

¹⁹ The names are given in the *status collegii* of 21 Feb. 1764 of which there is a later version in SCAR, No. 22, doc. 28. Fr. Geo. Jones was dispensed from his fourth year of theology to take his lectorate examination at Lisbon on 3 Jan. 1756. AGOP IV. 217, p. 159.

²⁰ The sealed original, dated 4 Mar. 1756, is in SCAR, No. 22, doc. 2. The full text may be found in print in Hib. Dom. 425.

²¹ 10 Mar. 1756. Vincenzo Ferretti to MacKeon. AGOP IV. 217, p. 161. At this stage the nuns of Bom Successo were still living in tents in their garden.

through cardinal Neri Corsini, protector of Ireland, who personally donated 2,000 scudi, O'Kelly obtained two papal briefs dated 5 November 1756: one to each of the ninety bishops of Spain, and the other to Boxadors, the new master general, who was to arrange the dispatch of copies of the first through his various Spanish provincials²². Benedict XIV insisted that the college be completely rebuilt, that the Dominicans of Portugal should maintain *gratis* such Irish friars as they had already received or sheltered, and that the Corpo Santo community should stay where it was, leaving the Spanish collection with all its attendant hazards to the bishops and provincials of Spain²³.

Meanwhile, that community was beginning to grow. Dominic MacDonnell appeared as procurator of the nuns of Bom Successo by August 1756, while the same priest was named their confessor and Martin Horan their bursar, both for a two-year term, on 8 June 1757²⁴. A more important newcomer was Bernard Brullaughan who resigned his priorship at Louvain in March 1756 and made his way before the end of the year to Lisbon where he had in fact been rector (1745-1749) until Peter MacKeon took office. There is no reason to doubt that Brullaughan's interest in Lisbon played a large part in the resignation of his priorship: not only did he procure a large sum of money for Lisbon while still prior at Louvain, but in changing house he took care to be assigned to Corpo Santo as "chaplain and missionary of the foundation of the noble Don John Francis Bandanucci", donor of a vineyard from which Corpo Santo drew an annual income²⁵.

Bernard Brullaughan joined the community in autumn 1756, but not in spirit and rather less in policy. Bishop Thomas Burke, a visitor there in 1770, described him as being full of "our wretched provincial

²² Both briefs, from Benedict XIV, have been printed in Hib. Dom. 425-27. There is some related material, largely drafts and manuscript copies, in SCAR. No. 22, doc. 6, 9, 10 and in Codex IV, doc. 43. In one note to cardinal Corsini, O'Kelly referred to the 28 future martyrs Corpo Santo had sent to Ireland. SCAR, No. 22, doc. 6.

²³ A month earlier still (on 16 October) Boxadors had told the rector not to allow his religious to quest and that he himself (the general) was soliciting alms on their behalf. AGOP IV. 217, p. 166.

²⁴ AGOP IV. 217, pp. 165-66, 168. Both MacDonnell and Horan had held these offices before the earthquake. Hib. Dom. 429. Hence they were not really "newcomers", but simply returned to Lisbon after a short absence.

²⁵ His resignation was accepted and his new assignation issued on the same day: 27 Mar. 1756. AGOP IV. 217, pp. 161-62.

partiality ... he tells a confounded deal of lies, tho' inoffensive but to himself. In Blarney they are fools to him. In that respect he is a proverb in Lisbon and the environs" ²⁶. A fortunate warning, because our best and practically only account of events in Lisbon is an extremely long letter of 16 August 1764 from Brullaughan to Charles O'Kelly ²⁷. His preceding letter of 1760, with whatever earlier ones he may have written, has been lost. For lack of better witnesses, one can quote only his version of events:

I have struggled almost in vain from the day I arrived in Lisbon from Flanders till this hour against all manner of enemies for the reestablishment of the ruined college. I found our Chiefs then extremely busy in rebuilding part of it, but in such a manner as evidently exposed the lives of all who would venture to dwell therein to the last danger, even without an earthquake. I immediately opposed their proceeding in a work they undertook five months before my arrival without the direction of any architect or even an able master, and contrary to Coronell Mardell's advise who assured them it could not subsist, being contrary to the King's decree as well as all the rules of art to build upon burned walls and arches reduced to limestone... yet having often insisted... all I could gain was that the works should be formed on a better foundation, and that we should rather sacrifice some hundreds of milreis spent before, than expose our lives to a certain danger.

As this expensive and ultimately useless work went ahead, Charles O'Kelly maintained his efforts at Rome. He wrote, for example, in April 1757 to a colonel French and his regiment in the Spanish service, referring to the earlier papal brief in favour of Corpo Santo: "the refuge of the retired merchant, the support of the reduced family, the recourse of the injured and the consolation of the afflicted, the security for the fidelity and honesty of numbers of young men and women of the country it has placed in respective good services ... a counterpoint to the irregularities and scandals of some abandoned creatures of the nation" ²⁸.

Peter MacKeon's responsibilities as rector came to an end after nine years when Dominic Delamar accepted the rectorship on 26 September

²⁶ Kilkenny, 18 Dec. 1770. Burke to Chas. O'Kelly. Dublin Diocesan Archives, 29/4.

²⁷ The rest of this account of Lisbon is largely based on his letter, now SCAR, No. 22, doc. 29.

²⁸ 26 Apr. 1757. A copy. SCAR, No. 22, doc. 12.

1758²⁹. Delamar belonged to the Leinster convent of Longford, so the vital *alternativa* had been respected, but Father MacKeon stayed on for some time and there was little if any change of policy. There was, however, a new Pope, Clement XIII, elected in July 1758, and to him Charles O'Kelly turned again since the earlier brief of Benedict XIV had brought no money to Corpo Santo, perhaps for want of approval by the Council of Castile. Cardinal Corsini's help was again invoked and on 22 January 1759 Clement issued two briefs: one to the archbishop of Toledo (who was to forward copies to all the bishops of Spain and the Indies) and another to the papal nuncio at Madrid³⁰. Having collected the money, the bishops were to send it to the nuncio who, in collaboration with the Irish Dominican procurator at Madrid, would see that it reached the college safely and then send an exact account of the whole business back to Rome. These papal documents complimented Charles O'Kelly by giving no small prominence to his name and status. Boxadors, the master general, offered no help at this stage, being prevented from holding a general chapter in Spain at which he had intended appealing to the order on behalf of Corpo Santo. That at least was the explanation offered to cardinal Corsini by the ever-charitable Charles O'Kelly³¹.

Returning again to Lisbon, one may take up the thread of the story from the letter of Bernard Brullaughan already quoted above:

Thus the building went on until the year 1759 without opposition, when about the latter end of July of that year, we were notified in the King's name to desist from all manner of work. This was complied with and the works suspended. From thenceforward nothing was attempted, but in the latter of said year, we were obliged to tyle part of the vaults, and make a new door and window to the cellars under the western part of our old dormitory to keep off the rain and theeves from the merchants' goods therein, who paid 24 moyders a year for their hire... Having then finished ten good rooms and the shell for four more, I insisted on getting lectors and at least four students and open our studys, as all other convents did though living

²⁹ AGOP IV. 217, p. 174. The appointment was made by the general, on whose earlier efforts to find a rector see note 18 above. It was a year later (8 Sept. 1759) before Delamar was named v. g. of Bom Successo. Ibidem, 231, pp. 3-4.

³⁰ Both briefs have been printed in Hib. Dom. 427-28. There are some manuscript copies and related material in SCAR, No. 22, doc. 21-25.

³¹ When first asking Corsini (c. 3 Jan. 1759) to approach the new pope. SCAR, No. 22, doc. 21.

in *baracas*. I had insisted on the same the year before with Father Peeter [MacKeon] and his counsell, assuring them that it was the opinion of the best of our friends... who largely gave their charity for our help and support principally for that end. Nay, that neglect was daily objected against us by our enemys.

All this went for naught. The general was informed of our poverty and incapacity of maintaining such a number of lectors and students; our debts must first be paid, etc. But with what truth or sencerity could this be adleged? ... The truth is that we spent more in extravagant treats, useless expenses and bad economy during that time than would maintain that number. Yet it was treason to censure or even notice any such.

Boxadors later came to see things from Brullaughan's point of view, probably through Charles O'Kelly's influence. At any rate, the general wrote on 7 June 1760 to the new rector, Dominic Delamar, to say that since the college was once more habitable, studies should gradually be introduced. Delamar was to write to Louvain for one student of philosophy and one of theology, while the general himself would decide which lectors to appoint³². And there the matter ended, for Boxadors went off to Spain a few months later for no less than four years. His Roman vicar Villavecchia, even when another rector should have been appointed in 1761, referred all requests from Lisbon to his absent master. The college ran into ever greater difficulties, while no care was taken to maintain the number in community at Corpo Santo. On this final point too, Brullaughan had something of interest to say:

Devenish and MacDonnell must be permitted to goe to the mission. Burke and MacHenry must change climate to save their lives, and Peeter himself must goe to see his mother in Irland. It cost Peeter his life, and Burke there finished his career, and to supply our want of them, none was sent for but Fr. Barry from Almerim, where he had been for a year before for his health... sociable enough over a bottle with those who love it soe well as Delamar and Crohon... Such then are the pillars and governors of our grand community³³!

³² AGOP IV. 231, p. 5.

³³ SCAR, No. 22, doc. 29. Those referred to here are Th. Devenish and Ter. MacDonnell, both of whom went to St. Croix early in 1761; Burke may have been Ulysses of Roscommon whose obit occurs in the acts of 1761 or Antoninus of Strade whose obit is in those of 1765; Pat. MacHenry and Peter MacKeon. I cannot identify Barry. The last two mentioned are Dom. Delamar and Eug. MacCrohan.

This reduction of the community made it more difficult than ever for Corpo Santo to meet its obligations with regard to perpetual founded Masses, not to speak of those other Masses for which stipends had been accepted (though never actually said) before and even after the earthquake. There was some confusion as to their total number, while the loss of account-books made confusion worse confounded. Father Delamar petitioned the Pope on the subject about March 1760, asking for the total suspension, commutation or condonation of about 10,000 Masses of various categories, but nothing seems to have come of this request³⁴. Many of the perpetual Masses were based on property lost in the earthquake, but there were still 577 from which they derived some benefit. Since, however, they discharged only 326 of these *per annum*, they were in default by at least 1,500 founded Masses, to say nothing of manual stipends, by 1761³⁵. On this point too, Bernard Brullaughan opposed his brethren, not simply because of their bad book-keeping or spirit of *laissez-faire*, but also because it was he who had procured one of these foundations in 1756 while still prior of Louvain. Lady Catherine Stourton gave him £ 200 to invest so that the interest might support one student at Lisbon. In return, the college agreed to celebrate two perpetual weekly Masses, while the baroness gave a further £ 100 for which the college was to say 1,333 Masses³⁶. Neither Brullaughan, nor the general at a later date, was satisfied that this particular obligation had been properly respected.

Brullaughan also took part in a stormy, frightening incident which began on 19 January 1761 when: "we were notified in the King's name by the inspector to quitt the colledge that very day without any further delay, though we had no previous advise or notice of such a change"³⁷.

³⁴ An undated copy in SCAR, No. 22, doc. 13. Delamar mentioned here that they already had a chapel and twelve cells, suitable for the common life and studies, but with an annual income of only 770 scudi so that they depended utterly on manual stipends. In the same volume, doc. 27 and 28, reference is made to the fact that Corpo Santo had earlier obtained the reduction of Masses in 1699 and 1745.

³⁵ Lisbon, 16 June 1761. Delamar to O'Kelly. SCAR, No. 22, doc. 27. This letter lists and gives details of nine separate foundations. Delamar ended by saying: "see if you can help us or ease our burden by the help of your friends in Ireland".

³⁶ *Ibidem*. Also Valverde, 12 Mar. 1764. Boxadors to Corpo Santo. AGOP IV. 231, loose fascicule tipped in at p. 20.

³⁷ Lisbon, 16 Aug. 1764. Brullaughan to O'Kelly. SCAR, No. 22, doc. 29.

They went at once to colonel Mardell, just recently appointed architect general, who told them not to worry and said that he would look into it. But:

The following morning at seven o'clock, as the first Mass was a saying, arrived the same officers with fifty or sixty workmen, fell directly to demolish the house. But as their ladders proved too short for the chapell, they in a few hours uncovered the refectory and part of the next house. We advised Mardell a second time. He immediately came and ordered the officers to suspend the work until the King was consulted. I recurred immediately to His Majesty. He sent me directly to the Count de Oures with the petition. The Count remitted me to his brother, the Secretary of State. As he was at Oures, I desired the rector [Dominic Delamar] should go along with me. We arrived at eleven the next day.

Such was the reception he gave us that we might expect a more favourable one from the Grand Seignior. We deserved no favour. We acted against the King's decree by building without his leave. We deserved to be hanged, and would be hanged in England for a less crime. We were useless to the country; served only strangers; let them provide a convent for us... The poor rector could spake but little intelligibly at best, but then was struck entirely dumb. His flushed countenance turned as pale as if death was before him, and would probably have fainted if I had not got leave to answer.

This angry exchange went on until well after two in the afternoon, in the presence of many high dignitaries of church and state; it included even a meal with the furious Secretary, though Brullaughan already felt fuller than if he had "eaten three dinners". But the "public works", which meant the new plan for the city, were not to be held up "for an hour or a day" for the sake of Corpo Santo, and the two Irishmen left Oures in sorrow. Some of those who had been present then suggested that they send another petition by different channels to the King, which they did at once: "and in twenty-four hours, by Mardell's information, orders were sent to suspend the work, to make up again what had been demolished, the street to be opened another way, and not to touch our colledge until ground was assigned for us to build a new colledge and until we had made up sufficient accomodations to live therein in a religious manner".

Dreading what might yet happen to them, Brullaughan wrote to Boxadors in Spain in the course of 1762 about "the necessity of sending us more subjects", but when the general replied "after more than a year's delay" he asked for a full account of the temporal *status* of

the college, and said that for his *final* decision on their concerns: "we should wait for his arrival at Rome. A wise resolution indeed, knowing that all correspondence was still prohibited with that court, and that tho' he sent it, perhaps we dare not make use of it. However, he sent none as yet, all which to me is a demonstration he has no love for us, our province, or perhaps the order".

The community of Corpo Santo did, however, send Boxadors a full account of their finances on 21 February 1764, and there still exists a draft of his reply (Valverde, 12 March 1764) which they certainly received, for Brullaughan mentions it himself³⁸. Boxadors tore their *relatio* to shreds, pointing out its inconsistencies and telling them of the censures they had incurred. With only four priests in the college, they necessarily fell short of their obligations by 292 Masses each year, but yet continued to accept manual stipends — sometimes as many as 3,000 *per annum* — keeping part of the stipends for themselves and bringing in outsiders to say the same Masses for two-thirds of the original offering. In short, they were trafficking in Masses; it would take them five years to clear their existing obligations; proper Mass-accounts were to be kept at once; and the general demanded to know what precisely the community had done with Lady Stourton's money³⁹.

Bernard Brullaughan, though not in the best of health, undertook to reexamine all the accounts and answer the general's questions. Despite his best efforts, Boxadors "could not but see many deficiencies therein which made him threaten us with chastisements from heaven and foretell no good success in our undertaking of rebuilding the college, or avoiding its immediate ruin. His prediction proved to our great grief too true, for the best part of our house is razed to the foundation". That was written in August 1764, so one must retrace one's steps, at least to the preceding March, to follow the events leading to the destruction of the old college. Once again, Brullaughan is our only informant.

On 19 March, "being assured by a friend at court that the college was soon to be demolished without any provision made for us", Brull-

³⁸ The chief elements of the *status collegii* of 21 Feb. 1764 survive in a later annotated version in O'Kelly's hand in SCAR, No. 22, doc. 28. The draft reply of 12 March is noted above in note 36.

³⁹ The Stourton money was invested in repairing the cellars of the old college, which were then rented out to merchants as warehouses. But this investment was lost when the college was demolished on 6 July 1764. SCAR, No. 22, doc. 28.

aughan (after three weeks' labour) was ordered by the Count de Oures to "choose a house about S. Paul's or Boa Vista for our community to live in untill the colledge was demolished and had built new accommodations on a spot of ground allotted for that purpose joining to our ancient habitation". After much searching about, a suitable house was found in that area, but the occupant refused to grant vacant possession on the grounds that the house was far too big for four friars and that, in any case, they were well-known smugglers who just wanted a more convenient spot on the Tagus. This calumny "was swallowed with pleasure. The King was informed thereof, and orders past that a house should be taken for us in the extremity of the city. Accordingly, with all secrecy, a house was taken and prepared at the expense of the publick at the Anjos, without chapell, oratory or a place to make one in but a stable".

So great was the secrecy surrounding this move, that Brullaughan himself knew nothing of it until Corpus Christi [21 June] when he heard at second hand "before the procession went out" of the whole Anjos project and "that we were to be translated there the 1st of July". So there were more petitions, pointing out the unsuitability of a site "so far distant, where we could be of no service to our countrymen", and "that it was very hard the King should deprive us of our houses and 600 milreis standing rents, yett refused us a convenient house to practise our functions in according to our institution". Finally the Count de Oures ordered him "to take any house in the whole city that had a chapell and had papers upon".

This we live in now [16 August 1764] was the only one I took them of directly; gave him an account thereof. Yet it was the 28 of June att the Ave Maria's that Mr. Rademaker who lived in said houses, and who would not leave them tho he putt papers upp to gett an abatement of the rent, was notified to quit them the next day, and we notified to be in them the 1st of July without fail. Otherwise we should not complain if the houses were thrown down about our ears... Here then we are since the said day at 12 o'clock, and I never more slept in Corpo Santo, tho' our incredulous chiefs did not come here to sleep till the 4th at night and the 5th at three in the afternoon. That whole part of the colledge by us inhabited was uncovered, and in a few days after entirely razed to the foundation. *Non reliquerunt lapidem super lapidem.* But if we changed our habitation, doe not think we altered our customs. No, my dear friend, we lead the same merry life as before, and never can goe to sleep without a hearty doze of the juice of the greap, tho' some of our heads had been reeling before.

Brullaughan ended this immensely long letter to Charles O'Kelly with an appeal for a new superior. Preferably O'Kelly himself, and if not him then someone well acquainted with Spanish. The new rector would have to bring along two or three students to form the nucleus of a better community. For any student coming alone would soon be corrupted by the bad example of those actually in charge, as had just happened in the case of Thomas Hopkins after his studies at Evora. Hopkins "would hardly take a drop of wine when he came here: is only six weeks in this house and now begins to tope it as well as the best of them". Hard words, but even harder ones have been omitted in this account, and Brullaughan himself was by no means a teetotaller.

VISCOUNT TAAFFE AND EDMUND FITZGERALD, O.P.

Michael Hoare had little if anything to do with Lisbon. It lay outside his jurisdiction and there was no point in his sending students to a ruined college. Corpo Santo, however, left him a little legacy in the person of Edmund Fitzgerald, a young priest who left Lisbon for Dublin in 1754. After three years' work in the metropolis he was elected prior of Sligo (c. 1757-1760) and subsequently appointed prior of Tombeola, a desolate spot far west of Galway, the *ultima Thule* of the province, to which three priests were assigned in 1756 but which the new prior found little to his liking. So Edmund Fitzgerald lingered on in Dublin, paying the occasional visit to his remote convent on the western coast. No doubt he was a popular preacher, well accepted by the Dominicans of Dublin, but he made the mistake of voting against Father Hoare in the provincial election of 1761⁴⁰.

As it so happened, the Discalced Carmelites of Dublin were settling into a new chapel and house in Stephen Street and, wanting priests of their own, invited Fitzgerald to become one of the community. His sermons in English and Irish drew a large congregation to a part of the city hitherto neglected, "at the very extremity of the vast parish" belonging to archbishop Lincoln. On 26 January 1762, the vicar-provincial of the Discalced Carmelites wrote to the Dominican vicar-general in Rome, obtaining permission for him to continue working

⁴⁰ Fitzgerald's history is given by Chas. O'Kelly in an undated note (about Christmas 1762) to cardinal Neri Corsini. Also by viscount Nicholas Taaffe in a letter (Dublin, 20 Apr. 1763) to the same. Both documents are in ASV, Fondo Missioni 49. See also Hib. Dom. 249.

with the Carmelites until Villavecchia should decide otherwise⁴¹. Thus Father Fitzgerald out-flanked his provincial by indirect, but nonetheless effective recourse to higher authority.

Before summer 1762, viscount Nicholas Taaffe, for thirty-three years a general in the service of Austria and a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, came from Silesia to Dublin. Casting about for a suitable chaplain, he asked for and obtained the services of Edmund Fitzgerald. Taaffe, then seventy-six years of age, was born in his mother's home, Crean's Castle in county Sligo, the very county to which his new chaplain seems to have belonged. Taaffe, for all his years, helped to establish the Discalced Carmelites of Dublin in their new home, became very friendly with Thomas Burke O.P., bishop of Ossory, and defended his own chaplain to the last. Though any one of these three causes would have sufficed, the three together raised a nest of clerical hornets which he, simple soldier that he was, could scarcely believe. He would have written to the nuncio in Brussels or Vienna, rather than directly to Rome (which he did), but that he was afraid it might hurt "our poor convents, colleges and maybe officers too, if people there knew our disunion at home. We are an unfortunate nation"⁴².

Lord Taaffe's friendship with bishop Burke irritated the archbishop of Dublin, for Thomas Burke was currently engaged in a lawsuit about a parish with one of his own priests (Patrick Mulloy) in Kilkenny, and Mulloy had appealed to archbishop Lincoln his metropolitan. Relations between Ossory and Dublin were very poor indeed. But if Dr. Lincoln was in bad humour with Dr. Burke, and with Taaffe for "intermeddling" in the Kilkenny affair, he was so much annoyed by the success of the chapel in Stephen Street that it was commonly, if untruly, said "he would be glad the chapele in Stephen Street would drop, as it lessens the income of his one grand parish". The Protestant archbishop was more irritated still, since the offending chapel stood on the very same street as his own town-house, and did all he could to pull it down. The influence of viscount Taaffe and the popularity of Father Fitzgerald (in whose favour thirty-five eminent Protestants signed a

⁴¹ 13 Mar. 1762. Villavecchia to Rob. Fitzgerald O.D.C., enclosing the necessary patents for Edm. Fitzgerald. AGOP IV. 231, p. 12.

⁴² Dublin, 12 Dec. 1762. Taaffe to Chas. O'Kelly. Original in SCAR, Codex I, vol. 2, f. 427. With regard to Taaffe's age, he said himself in a letter (Dublin, 21 Apr. 1763) to bishop Th. Burke that he was then seventy-seven. APF, SOCG 803, f. 193.

petition) kept the chapel open. The case was highly peculiar, for Taaffe was able to show in open court that the convent was not a convent at all ⁴³!

At the time the chapel in Stephen Street was establishing, I found that Mr. Fitzgerald had more friends than all the Theresians among the Catholics and Protestants, and more activity than they all had; one of them being lame, otherwise a clever man, one deaf and another very sickly. Further, the Grand Jury would make it to be a convent. I gave my word and honour to the Grand Jury, the Lords Justices and several others, that it was not a convent, but composed of three different Orders.

Michael Hoare assured Taaffe and others in July 1762 that he would leave Edmund Fitzgerald where he was: "having nothing against him". But in the very same month the provincial wrote to Rome that Fitzgerald would have to leave Dublin because of his bad moral character ⁴⁴. Rome asked for more precise details before reaching a decision, but Father Hoare seems not to have waited even for an answer to his first letter. Wishing to please archbishop Lincoln, he asked him to withdraw Fitzgerald's faculties, which Lincoln immediately did, leaving the Carmelites without their preacher and viscount Taaffe without a chaplain for his family. For all Lincoln's animosity towards friars, he was friendly with John Fottrell of Dublin, a former provincial, and Fottrell in turn (or so Taaffe said) had "a vast deal" of influence over Father Hoare.

The archbishop himself was not to blame. He never accused Fitzgerald of any crime, but simply took away his faculties at the request of his immediate superior. Dr. Lincoln did, however, treat viscount Taaffe very roughly, telling him to mind his own business and to stop meddling in church affairs. "I find there is no calming him", said Taaffe, even when he had offered to ask the archbishop's pardon on his knees if that were necessary to restore peace.

Father Hoare's position is less clear, if not actually discreditable. He knew, before bringing any accusation forward, that Fitzgerald held his assignation to Stephen Street from the vicar-general of the order. When he did accuse Fitzgerald in a letter to Villavecchia, he deprived the priest of faculties by going to the archbishop before the vicar-general

⁴³ See the letter of 12 Dec. 1762 noted in note 42.

⁴⁴ 21 Aug. 1762. Villavecchia to Hoare. AGOP IV. 231, p. 14.

could possibly have answered. And even when the accusations were shown to be false, he kept up his campaign by complaining of Fitzgerald in letters to Rome until the very end of his provincialate.

There were three accusations in fact: accusations disproved and shown to be calumnies before summer 1762. Firstly, that Fitzgerald had assisted at a clandestine marriage. Hoare was duly introduced to the Protestant minister who had performed the ceremony. Secondly, that while prior of Sligo, Fitzgerald had sold a silver vase without the consent of the community. Fitzgerald promptly produced a document signed by the Sligo community declaring their agreement that the vase (probably a chalice) should be sold to pay a debt. Finally, that he had sought employment with lay people simply to stay in Dublin, whereas in fact it was viscount Taaffe who had approached Fitzgerald and not *vice versa*. If Fitzgerald had looked anywhere for support, it was to his superior in Rome and to the Dominican bishop of Ossory.

Availing of the services of Charles O'Kelly, Taaffe asked cardinal Corsini to intervene with the archbishop so that his personal chaplain might again be permitted to preach and hear confessions. The matter dragged on until June 1763. Corsini then approached Propaganda Fide only to be told that Dr. Lincoln "had reached the end of his days" and that there was no point in writing to him at all. That was on 8 June, just two weeks before archbishop Lincoln died on the 21st of the month⁴⁵. He was succeeded by Patrick Fitzsimons, dean of the archdiocese, on the postulation of the chapter⁴⁶.

Edmund Fitzgerald had not been idle in the meanwhile, for he tackled the root of the problem by obtaining two documents from Villavecchia on 2 April 1763: acceptance of his free resignation of the priorship of Tombeola and an assignation to the Dominican convent of Dublin. Once Boxadors returned to Rome, three more complaints were sent to him from Dublin in September 1764. There was a characteristically generic one from Michael Hoare, another equally vague from Thomas Nugent O.D.C., prior of Dublin, who claimed that Fitzgerald was annoying his community, and a third from Bernard Feely O. Carm., also of Dublin, who alleged that Fitzgerald refused to repay

⁴⁵ There are two notes of this date, one by Corsini and the other an answer from a Propaganda official, in ASV, Fondo Missioni 49.

⁴⁶ There is a copy of this postulation (Dublin, 2 July 1763) at Windsor, Stuart Papers, vol. 417, no. 166. The original postulation went to cardinal York. Fitzsimon's brief of appointment (30 Sept. 1763) is in APF, SC Irlanda 11, ff. 172-74.

him a small debt of some years standing. Writing yet again, on 9 January 1765, the provincial enclosed some statements by outsiders to back up his earlier complaints about Fitzgerald. Boxadors dismissed both them and him with a lecture on how religious superiors ought to behave towards their subjects⁴⁷.

Testimonia exterorum, quae nuper attulisti contra P. Edmundum Fitzgerald omnia omnino robore destituta invenimus. Nos vero, etsi laturi non sumus, subditos impune violare legitimam reverentiam superioribus debitam, attamen superiores ipsos iuste et paterne agere, non ex arbitrio et ex passione, leviter atque imprudenter laqueos fratribus nectere, et incertis suspicionibus duci.

THE NOVITIATE QUESTION, 1760-1764

The prohibition of novitiates in Ireland continued to tell against the regular clergy throughout Father Hoare's provincialate. The number of priests in the province constantly fell, while communities grew smaller if they did not totally disappear. There was little either he or the provincial chapter could do about the problem, save to create a fund for the transport and maintenance of novices abroad. Such an idea seems never to have crossed their minds, or if it did was judged economically impossible. In any case, the provincial's hands were tied by higher authority. Two successive archbishops of Dublin, Lincoln and Fitzsimons, were opposed to novitiates in Ireland. So too was Propaganda Fide which had issued the prohibition in the first place. Villavecchia, vicar-general of the order, even when Michael Hoare brought the problem to his notice, remarked how pleased he was at the prospect of having a few good Irish subjects rather than many useless ones, insisted that the suspension of Propaganda's decree was "scarcely to be thought of", and said that the whole question might confidently be left to the providence of God⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ AGOP IV. 231, pp. 15, 33, 34, 36. The two documents for Edm. Fitzgerald were sent to Ter. O'Reilly, prior of Dublin. Viscount Taaffe was still at Dublin in summer 1764 but soon returned to Silesia. His book, *Observations on Affairs in Ireland*, was published at Dublin and London in 1766. Fitzgerald remained in Dublin, the trusted agent of bishop Burke of Ossory, until the early 1770s. The original parchment (Rome, 14 Mar. 1772) of his appointment as notary apostolic by Clement XIV is now in TA, Letters, under date.

⁴⁸ 30 Oct. 1762. Villavecchia to Hoare, acknowledging report of his first visitation. AGOP IV. 231, p. 14. The v. g. did, however, praise Hoare for strictly applying the law with respect to novices.

Others, however, did not think of providence as something to be waited for in calm passivity. Thomas Burke, bishop of Ossory, for instance, made a formal request for the reopening of novitiates on the very last day of 1760. His petition to the cardinals bore also the signature of his good friend Richard Walsh, bishop of Cork, whom the chapter of 1761 was to name *conservator privilegiorum* for Munster in preference to the archbishop of Cashel. The document was later signed (16 February 1761) by another friend, bishop Philip Phillipps of Killala, and then sent to Rome where Charles O'Kelly was to provide whatever other details the cardinals required. Propaganda managed the business quite suavely by saying that the Congregation could not change the decree without a special directive from the new pope, Clement XIII. So the secretary, after a private audience on 9 August 1761, came happily back with the papal command: "the decrees of Benedict XIV of happy memory are to be faithfully observed and the regular clergy to rest content with them".

So matters stood until both archbishop Lincoln of Dublin and cardinal Spinelli, prefect of Propaganda, died in 1763. Both were unsympathetic towards the friars of Ireland. Neither would have yielded an inch on the novitiate question. With their departure from the scene, Charles O'Kelly set out to find whether he might not have better fortune with their successors: archbishop Patrick Fitzsimons and cardinal Giuseppe Castelli. His strategy was to win the support of the Irish hierarchy first, and he began at the top with a letter of 3 March 1764 to Dr. Fitzsimons. By reputation Fitzsimons was one of the *antimonicaci*, but apart from being primate of Ireland he was also on good terms with Thomas Burke of Ossory, though the prolongation of the Kilkenny dispute was to cool that friendship fairly soon. O'Kelly devoted most of his letter to the "alarming decline" of the church in Ireland⁴⁹.

I am greatly mistaken or the decrees of Propaganda of the year 1751 forbidding bishops to ordain but a certain number, and regular superiors to receive novices within the kingdom, brings on in a great measure this visible decrement of religion, especially in country places in many of which, by what is wrote to me even by bishops, there is so great a scarcity of both priests and friars that many poor people die without the help of a clergyman and even without the sacraments,

⁴⁹ H. Fenning, *The Undoing of the Friars of Ireland: a study of the novitiate question in the 18th century*, Louvain 1972, 262-63, 271-74.

while on the other hand the parish priests in sickness or in old age can hardly get a coadjutor, or the bishop a proper subject to replace them after death.

In reality such is the remonstrance of some bishops that recur to this court for a dispensation for regulars to administer as parish priests absolutely. Again the regular superiors, having but few subjects whose help they often want to support their little convents, are destroyed when the bishops (whom they cannot deny) call these subjects to the care of souls. This want of ministers is not visible in cities and large towns wherein there will never be a scarcity of priests or friars while they can be had in the kingdom. But it must be otherwise in the poorer parts of the country while the very natives thereof, the only I may say fit for serving therein, have it not in their power to answer their call to the priesthood either as seculars or regulars, and that from a double obstacle. First the aforesaid decrees of the Propaganda, and again a moral impossibility of coming abroad as to those who depend on their daily Mass, or from the uncertainty of being admitted to profession as to those who would be received in foreign convents, national or not.

This as I apprehend, being the dismal state of the mission in many parts of the kingdom... is it not congruent, nay and necessary, that these respectable presidents conspire, and animated with zeal worthy of prelates, exert themselves to eradicate as much as possible a weed so very destructive of the vineyard of the Lord? This cannot be otherwise effected than by a mitigation of the already mentioned decrees which, if they will have sued for, will not, no nor cannot, be reasonably refused, while such measures may be taken, and such conditions enjoined as will secure the grace from all abuses.

In the event, archbishop Fitzsimons stood by the policy of his predecessor Lincoln, at least with respect to novitiates, but cardinal Castelli (who was to rule Propaganda until 1780) eventually forged a compromise with the Irish regular clergy, though Father Hoare had long ceased to be provincial before the final agreement was hammered out in 1774. In the meanwhile, all the provincial could do was to send such few postulants as offered themselves either to Rome or Louvain. Holy Cross, Louvain, being the closer to Ireland, was correspondingly less costly to reach, while its climate was also more healthy, more conducive to study than that of Rome. The three factors (cost, climate, health) combined to make Holy Cross the larger of the two, while the loss of Lisbon directed still more students to Flanders than to Italy.

HOLY CROSS, LOUVAIN, 1761-1765

Whether because cardinal Spinelli had little love for friars, or because Propaganda Fide was genuinely short of funds, the congregation made some difficulty about renewing its annual subsidy to Holy Cross in 1761. Having heard, besides, that the college had acquired considerable property since the first granting of the subsidy in 1654, the cardinal prefect wrote for more definite information to the nuncio in Brussels. The nuncio put himself to some trouble, not only by enquiring of outsiders but even by examining the college accounts. He found that the annual income of the college, allowing for maintenance and the payment of various taxes, came to about 250 scudi. Many of their regular sources of income were rather a burden than a help, since they demanded the celebration of founded Masses. Certainly, he wrote, the college would never have had enough money to survive but for the generosity of several bishops who allowed the community to quest in their dioceses from time to time. This was all the more necessary in that there were thirty-six at Holy Cross, of whom twenty-six (teachers and students) were destined for the mission, whereas there had normally been only eight or nine during the previous century. The nuncio, Molinari, was convinced that they deserved the subsidy and only with difficulty could survive without it ⁵⁰.

Despite this favourable reply, Propaganda decided to discontinue its annual subsidy of 120 scudi on the grounds that Ireland was already costing the congregation too much and that the money (sufficient, be it noted, to support only two students) was more urgently needed in Albania, Macedonia and Aleppo. Granted, Propaganda was spending 1,000 scudi a year for schools in Ireland; it maintained four Irish seminarists at the Collegio Urbano; there were also annual subsidies of 100 scudi (since 1759) to the Irish college of Douai and 240 scudi (since 1628) for the Irish Pastoral College at Louvain itself. But the prefect, cardinal Spinelli, might surely have refrained from instructing the nuncio in Brussels to suggest to the prior of Holy Cross: "that if his income does not suffice to maintain all the religious actually in the house, he is still in a position to reduce their number so that income will match expenditure" ⁵¹.

⁵⁰ Brussels, 26 May 1761. Molinari to Spinelli. APF, SOCG 789, ff. 526-27. Also APF, Lettere 198, ff. 105, 173.

⁵¹ Rome, 8 Aug. 1761. Spinelli to Molinari. APF, Lettere 198, ff. 274-75.

Having lived from hand to mouth at Louvain for much more than a century, the community was not unduly dismayed by Propaganda's decision. John O'Daly, who was both prior and first regent of Holy Cross, went carefully through all their accounts from 1627 to show just what had happened down the years to their various pensions, benefactions and founded Masses. He was thus able to prove that their income had increased by very little, and that they would be hopelessly in debt had they not been advised to quest by a former internuncio at Brussels: none other than "Giuseppe Spinelli, archbishop of Corinth, now a cardinal of the Holy Roman Church"⁵². This quest, an annual affair, involved practically the whole community during November and December of each year and effectively replaced their summer holidays. For while the University broke up in summer, classes at Holy Cross continued until the end of the harvest when both students and teachers might take to the roads at the end of October with higher hopes of success. The Austrian Netherlands were divided in two for the purpose, so that the quest went on in the dioceses of Malines, Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges and Namur every second year, leaving Liège, Cambrai, Tournai and Ypres to be visited in the years which intervened. Father O'Daly paid special tribute to one of their laybrothers from Holland, Albert Lynheer, who from 1734 had occasionally quested with great success in his own country but who by now (1762) was beginning to decline in health. This fine report was then presented to the rector of the university who came on visitation to Holy Cross and personally checked the report against the accounts, leaving the community with a glowing testimonial both to their high qualities and financial need⁵³.

Yielding to the prevailing wind, Holy Cross did not apply again to Propaganda for a renewal of the famous subsidy until shortly after the death of cardinal Spinelli in April 1763. Their case came up at a general congregation or meeting of the cardinals on 29 August following. A ten-page memorial presented for the occasion rehearsed the entire history of the subsidy since the Dominicans first asked for it in 1648, before explaining the various reasons which made it inadvisable to

The subsidy was discontinued at the general congregation of 3 Aug. 1761, no. 30. APF, Acta 131 (1761), ff. 232-34; SOCG 789, 524-31.

⁵² This most interesting report by O'Daly, dated 16 Apr. 1762, was prepared for the rector of the university and has been printed in *Hib. Dom. Suppl.* 856-58. The rector was probably acting on behalf of the nuncio at Brussels.

⁵³ On 16 Apr. 1762. *Ibidem.* The sealed original is in ASV, Fondo Missioni 60.

reduce the number of students⁵⁴. They could not send sufficient missionaries to Ireland, much less to England, Scotland and America, as they had done in the past. Of the six Irish Dominicans then in America (one presumes they meant the West Indies) no less than three were products of Holy Cross. A more telling point was that Propaganda's own decree made it essential that the Irish should have a novitiate on the continent, not to speak of a house for laybrothers, students and other religious to teach them. Louvain's primacy in this field was now more obvious than ever, since Lisbon had been destroyed and would not be repaired for many years to come. In support of their petition they produced the testimonial mentioned above from the rector of the university. But there was also a set of "reflections" on the memorial which Charles O'Kelly submitted on their behalf.

The nine points contained in these reflections add little to what we know of the situation. With respect to the size of the community, there were seven lectors and students from each of the four Irish nations (twenty-eight all told) while the laybrothers were either Flemish or Dutch. Holy Cross was far from being the least important of the many seminaries which alone kept Ireland Catholic, while "on the mission" there were a million and a half Catholics served by 1,100 diocesan priests and 450 regulars, "if in fact there are so many". Of the other points — most of which dwelt on the achievements of the college — only one is particularly interesting: namely that some alumni of Holy Cross had written books. What books these were, or who the authors, it would be hard to say, unless one were to find the letter (probably of 1757) in which cardinal d'Alsace, archbishop of Malines, mentioned the "unwearying and fruitful literary work" of the Louvain community when recommending them to cardinal Spinelli⁵⁵.

This time their appeal was heard and the subsidy renewed, but only under a condition they were not anxious to accept: the four prospective missionaries in receipt of the subsidy would first have to swear their willingness to serve the mission in England, Scotland and Ireland in complete obedience to the directions of Propaganda Fide. The de-

⁵⁴ APF, Acta 133, ff. 687-94; SOCG 801, ff. 277-84. The now misplaced memorial is in ASV, Fondo Missioni 60.

⁵⁵ Hib. Dom. Suppl. 856. Even in 1763, this letter could not be found in the archives of Propaganda. APF, Acta 133, f. 687 ff. The "reflections" are in ASV, Fondo Missioni 60, as are also three pages by cardinal Corsini making various points in favour of Holy Cross and answering possible objections.

cision might have been worse, for cardinal Galli and the secretary of Propaganda wished to include America within the formula of the oath, arguing that since the community of Holy Cross made so much of their role in the evangelization of the New World, they could hardly complain should they be sent there ⁵⁶. That was in August 1763, and no more is heard of this subsidy, nor even of the oath, until 23 February 1765 when the master general, Boxadors, absolutely forbade his subjects at Holy Cross to take it ⁵⁷.

To judge from the curial registers, Michael Hoare had little effective control over the affairs of Holy Cross and does not seem to have gone there on visitation as he was entitled to do. The appointment of teachers was firmly in the general's hands, to such an extent that the provincial was hauled over the coals for assigning one of them (Michael Flemming) to the convent of Trim ⁵⁸. Father Hoare's jurisdiction was invoked only in one unusual case concerning a prioral election. Holy Cross elected Eugene MacCrohan of Lisbon on 10 March 1763, and when MacCrohan declined to accept on 17 May, the Louvain vocals *pro hac vice tantum* renounced their active voice and asked the provincial to provide them with a prior. Treading warily, Hoare obtained the permission of the vicar-general before naming John Antoninus O'Dwyer, already regent and subprior, to the vacant priorship ⁵⁹.

O'Dwyer cannot have been a popular choice, for the community denounced him to the general almost within a year of his appointment. The fact that he was both prior and regent probably encouraged him to commit that prioral sin for which there is no forgiveness: he ignored the house-council. Strictly speaking, this referred to some building and repairs he had carried out, as also to heavy expenses incurred "with outsiders", perhaps while entertaining them. But he had also been indiscreet in speaking outside the house of conventual affairs (even of the faults of individuals), besides granting dispensations which did nothing to improve the quality of studies at Holy Cross. For all this he was duly reprimanded by Boxadors, but the master general was

⁵⁶ Dalla Propaganda, 30 Aug. 1763. Unsigned note from secretary to prefect. ASV, Fondo Missioni 57. Galli was ponens, or "exponent" of the case at the meeting. The secretary (from Sept. 1759 to Oct. 1770) was Mario Marefoschi, no great friend of friars.

⁵⁷ AGOP IV. 231, pp. 35-36.

⁵⁸ 22 Sept. 1764. Boxadors to Hoare. *Ibidem*, p. 33.

⁵⁹ AGOP IV. 231, pp. 15, 19 and loose fascicule tipped in at p. 20.

no less firm with O'Dwyer's accusers whom he told to treat their prior with respect. Shortly afterwards, the community had occasion to petition the general on another subject, but unwisely neglected to ask their prior-regent to add his signature to theirs. What they wanted was that George Plunkett should teach philosophy at Louvain rather than go to Rome as the master general had commanded. Did they really think, asked Boxadors, that their own religious superiors were in fact their subjects⁶⁰?

THE MISSION TO ST. CROIX, 1762-1765

Dominic Allen and Hyacinth Kennedy, the pioneers of this infant mission in the Danish West Indies, were already dead of fever before Father Hoare had been five months in office⁶¹. Their places were taken by two other missionaries from Lisbon: Terence MacDonnell, already on the spot, and Thomas Devenish who came over from St. Eustatius as soon as he heard of Kennedy's death (24 November 1761).

The whole mission had been the brainchild of an Irish planter, Nicholas Tuite, who undertook "to build a house, with an estate and revenues, for Dominicans of the province of Ireland, but it was also understood that two missionaries would suffice and events were to show that not even two would find adequate support. So the arrival of Father Devenish on St. Croix was not solely an act of charity but part of the contract with Mr. Tuite. MacDonnell, although "despaired of by the doctors", survived the epidemic which brought Kennedy to the grave, but in so weak a condition that he had to convalesce for a year on St. Eustatius. Fortunately, another member of the province, James Flynn, arrived quite by accident to collect the effects of a deceased brother and Devenish (knowing his "good qualities", since they had once studied together at Louvain) held on to him for service on St. Croix. One should also mention Patrick Dalton (from SS. Sixtus and Clement in Rome) who first got faculties for Nevis and St. Kitt's in February 1761, but went from there to St. Eustatius and from St. Eustatius to join two senior confrères, Dominic Lynch and Nicholas Crump, on Montserrat⁶².

⁶⁰ Ibidem, pp. 35-37.

⁶¹ For the foundation of the mission and a general bibliography, see AFP 45 (1975) 487-90.

⁶² AFP 45 (1975) 502. Dalton was on Nevis on 19 Dec. 1762 when he asked Propaganda for faculties for St. Eustatius, a Dutch island. APF, Udienze 9, ff. 423-

Thus, although one cannot be absolutely sure, Devenish and Flynn were the only priests on the island for most of 1762. Thomas Devenish, as was his nature, led the way, throwing himself heart and soul into the enterprise. His first step was to "keep regular parochial books and a vestiary book where the acts of our monthly meetings are recorded" and also to arrange for the priests to pool and equally share their income. Writing to his friend and Roman agent, Charles O'Kelly, on 25 May 1762, he acknowledged that they were working "on a sandy foundation", meaning that the mission was threatened by factions within the Catholic community, and unveiled his plan for surmounting the difficulty⁶³.

The Creols are whimsical and our community in general is much involved, so that we are surrounded with party discontents and jealousies. I pushed to get a settlement independent for us and as they are very pleased with me they granted it and each gave his instrument or obligation, which amounts to £ 3,000 currency to get us our living provided we would live in community and be governed by a common superior to avoid future dissensions, and to that purpose have made a petition unanimously, *mirabile dictu*, to your court for that purpose, to which end I beg your cooperation.

Devenish also wanted to be able to administer the sacrament of confirmation, "for there were never any in these islands confirmed" and some Catholics were determined to go if necessary to the Danish parson to get it. Then there was the problem of vagabond priests, mostly Spanish, one of whom lodged and even said Mass in a public tavern in what is now called Christiansted, the only town then on the island. The same letter referred to Mr. Tuite's private chaplain, who was to have "limited privileges" lest the Catholics should be drawn to Mr. Tuite's estate to the detriment of the church in town. One presumes that either Devenish or Flynn was the chaplain referred to, and that when Tuite applied four months earlier for the services of Luke O'Reilly of the diocese of Meath, he did so from London without Devenish knowing anything about it⁶⁴.

424. Devenish frequently criticized him for not associating with his brethren. Arch. Hib. 25 (1962) 105, 114, 118. He was still on Montserrat in June 1769. *Ibidem*, p. 122.

⁶³ This undated petition is printed in Arch. Hib. 25 (1962) 110-11. It asked for the appointment of a Dominican as "triennial vicar" and definitely implied that the only priests on St. Croix were of the Order.

⁶⁴ London, 24 Jan. 1762. Tuite to Propaganda. Signed also by Richard Chal-

The missionaries never did get permission to confirm, nor did the Holy See entrust the island to the Dominican order, but at least Villavecchia, the vicar-general in Rome, appointed Devenish superior over his confrères on St. Croix "with all the authority usually enjoyed by conventual priors and vicars of nations". This authority was to last for four years, after which Devenish would act as pro-vicar until further arrangements were made. The same document authorized him to appoint a pro-vicar of his own should he have to leave the island or feel his death approaching, as also power to chase away any other Dominicans coming to the Danish islands without proper licence⁶⁵.

By December 1762 the "pretty estate" of eighty acres was prospering daily with the help of slave labour and Devenish hoped that within two years it would be worth a thousand *per annum*. He wanted another Irish Dominican to join them, provided he was of good moral character, disinterested, well endowed with the social graces on which the new superior so prided himself. "Above all, his tongue must taste as little as possible of Irish brine". However, perhaps in the same month, several of the planters refused to honour their bonds, claiming "they had not been consulted at the time of purchase". Devenish, impetuous as always, quitted St. Croix, dropped in to see Terence MacDonnell on St. Eustatius, prevailed on him to look after the estate, and then went off in disgust to Grenada which the British fleet had recently prized from the French.

Down at Grenada, Devenish found yet another Irish Dominican, James MacNamara, who had long been working there with the French Dominicans of Toulouse. Taking advantage of the fact that the French clergy had been forced to leave, the vicar of St. Croix installed himself as parish priest of Sauterre and even envisaged the appropriation of several parishes on Grenada: "to make a little bread here for some honest young men of our province". Hardly had he set this plan in motion when he heard of the death of James Flynn (24 February 1763)

lenor, vicar-apostolic. APF, SC Irlanda 11, f. 46. Tuite said that two Dominicans were not sufficient and, invoking his right of patronage, presented O'Reilly "now bursar at the Irish College, Lille" for faculties as a missionary apostolic, promising to pay him fifty pounds a year. The affair moved slowly, for it was only on 13 July 1762 that the nuncio in Brussels sent information on O'Reilly to Propaganda. APF, SC America Antille 2, f. 12.

⁶⁵ 20 Apr. 1763. Villavecchia to Devenish. Full copies of the texts in AGOP IV, 231, pp. 16-17. He was also sent faculties for James Flynn on 27 April. *Ibidem*, p. 17.

on St. Croix and returned to the island at once. Only then did he learn that Nicholas Tuite had brought out an Irish secular priest. For Devenish it was the last straw: "a poor reward for three lives out of five".

My fatigues and labours are frustrated, my tender settlement blasted, my views foiled. Was it for this after managing the community into a desire for so happy a foundation I got their unanimous petition, *mirabile dictu*, to have that mission appropriated to the order. I laboured, I succeeded, I gained the affection and confidence of the people... I sowed seed that one day would afford a plentiful crop to our tottering province. But I fear the hand of God is not for us since he permits our enemy to attack us from behind to be sacrificed as the Irish troops at Aughrim on their rear. What has destroyed Montserrat, was it not this mixture? Had they not leave to buy and build, but a mothly clergy thought not of establishing Montserrat but rather of enriching themselves... I'll say with the Scot, the devil set his foot after them.

These final lines were an attack on old Dominic Lynch, Nicholas Crump and Patrick Dalton. Lynch, a Galwayman, was said to be worth a few thousand pounds. Devenish often criticized Dalton, the youngest of the three, as one who remained "alone upon the old establishment of doing for himself" and who never associated "with his brotherhood". All three represented the "private life", natural enough for missionaries who would have to fend for themselves in sickness or old age, but that principle was to develop ever more strongly in the "poor establishments" of the "tottering province" in Ireland itself, and Thomas Devenish is perhaps our first critic of the process. Certainly he was highly conscious of the province as a unit within which all worked for the common good, and in this respect thought the formation given at Louvain far preferable to the training of students at Lisbon. That is why he praised Father MacNamara of Grenada who "still thinks of the common interest to be promoted by just and honourable means".

So, with the arrival of a secular priest on St. Croix, Devenish resolved to let Tuite "take his own way and destroy the bauble he began". As for himself, he went straight back to Grenada to plunge anew into his negotiations with the English administration there. The estates formerly the property of French religious were to be applied to parishes, of which Devenish and MacNamara would be superiors. All this was intended to benefit Corpo Santo "and the other poor establishments at home". There is no evidence that these high-flown projects ever

came to anything. Rather the contrary, for Devenish (in March 1765), having set off for Philadelphia, took sick at Puerto Rico and then decided to "pass the small rest" of his days on St. Croix! Terence MacDonnell, of course, had "hurt the progress of our settlement very much" in his absence. And it was now more obvious than ever that "the mixing us with seculars must necessarily divide our councils" unless Devenish were named prefect apostolic! For this latter favour, which he imagined a mere formality, he sent Charles O'Kelly forty pounds. One cannot help feeling that Father Devenish had a mind like a wind-mill, but at least he attempted to build small chapels about the island so as to end the custom of baptizing and saying Mass in parlours or bedrooms.

I was for some time resolved to force our community to build, in proper distances, small chapels for the convenience of the poor inhabitants who can't afford carriages to come to town, and are either hindered or ashamed to intrude on private houses. Likewise... I thought it time... to transport the administration of the holy sacrament of baptism from a lady's bedchamber to a humble place of divine worship, and the holy sacrifice of the Mass from the tables of drunkenness and chambers hung with naked Venus's and sea-nymphs bathing in crystal springs, to altars whose poverty emblemated sobriety and chapels hung with saints' pictures whose severe countenances dumbly preached against all vice.

It is only right to let Terence MacDonnell have the last word, since he had been working away on St. Croix before Devenish ever saw the island, and had stayed on there for two years after Flynn died, while his vicar wandered about the Caribbean. "I can't help", wrote MacDonald, "being so candid as to say that if my superior was a little more steadfast it is probable that matters would answer somewhat better".

SS. SIXTUS AND CLEMENT, 1761-1765

A little study of the registers of the college in Rome shows that while there were eighteen in community at the beginning of this provincialate, there were only fourteen at the end of it: a drop explained by the death or departure of three foreign laybrothers, and by the fact that the number of novices dropped from one to none. The number of priests practically equalled that of the five or six students whom they taught. The novitiate year, to which they applied the correct and charming phrase *ad approbationem reciprocam*, was followed by

three years of philosophy and three of theology. Only four novices received the habit in these twin-convents between 1728 and 1750, but the rate of admission greatly increased once the novitiates in Ireland were closed⁶⁶. Rome could not rival Louvain, but whereas it had only one novice in 1761, there were two in 1762, three in 1763, two again in 1764 and one in January 1765. The last three, largely for economic reasons, were sent either to the Minerva in Rome itself or to La Quercia in Viterbo, both convents of the Roman province. Certainly two, if not all the students and novices, came to Rome with patents from Father Hoare and there is no indication in the accounts that any of them paid a pension to the convent. On the other hand, at least one student loaned the house a small sum of money! Here, as in Ireland too, each member of the community was entitled to his own *depositum* for private use, though such money was normally lodged with the bursar.

Prioral elections were even more difficult in Rome than elsewhere within the province. The prior of SS. Sixtus and Clement had to be a "schoolman", one who had already taught, within easy reach (to avoid travelling expenses), and above all had to belong to the *natio* or province whose turn it was to occupy the post. When John O'Neill went out of office he was succeeded quite smoothly on 14 November 1760 by Patrick Kirwan, a Connachtman already on the teaching staff of the convent. Although Kirwan was made "first regent" in September 1761, he was allowed by special dispensation to keep his priorship, just as had been done at Louvain in the case of John O'Dwyer. Combination of the two offices was a way of saving money and men. All went well at Rome until November 1763 when Father Kirwan reached the end of his three-year term. On 28 November the seven vocals unanimously elected Thomas Luke Netterville, under the false impression that the *alternativa* belonged, as Netterville did, to the province of Ulster. Netterville turned down the offer in a letter from Dublin and Villavecchia accepted his refusal on 11 February 1764.

In the meantime, three of the vocals (Patrick Kirwan, Michael Brennan, and John T. Troy) had come to the conclusion that the *alternativa* belonged in fact to Leinster and set their sights on John O'Daly, a former prior and regent at Louvain. Although they were certain

⁶⁶ H. Fenning, *The Undoing of the Friars of Ireland*, Louvain 1972, 247. H. Fenning, *The Book of Receptions and Professions of SS. Sixtus and Clement in Rome, 1676-1792*, in *Coll. Hib.* 14 (1971) 13-15; and also *The Vestiarium-Book of the Irish Dominicans in Rome, 1727-1796*, in *Coll. Hib.* 10 (1967) 60-71.

that O'Daly was a Leinsterman, the other vocals were not, so the three just named obtained a dispensation *ad cautelam* from the *alternativa* on 13 February, just one day before the second election was to take place. Due to the death of Barnaby Mangan on 15 December, there were now only six vocals, and what was to have been an election on 14 February proved a total fiasco. No sooner had the meeting started than a row broke out between the three who held for Leinster and the others (John Murphy, Dominic Colgan and Denis MacGrath) who insisted it was Ulster's turn. When, after a while, all agreed to leave the whole question to the vicar-general, Michael Brennan produced Villavecchia's dispensation of the day before. Without letting the document be read aloud, or even reading it themselves, both Murphy and Colgan denounced the paper as obreptitious and subreptitious. MacGrath simply stated, in all truth, that the dispensation had been requested behind the backs of half the voters. And so, as Troy wrote in the council-book: *re infecta, omnes e capitulo discessere* ⁶⁷.

Villavecchia revoked his dispensation, seeing how badly some of the vocals had misinterpreted it. All he wanted was to maintain the peace of the convent and the complete liberty of the voters. They should now proceed to another election, but on condition that their election would be void unless they came up with a prior for whom no dispensation would be required. One day later, on 17 February 1764, this second election was held. Three voted for O'Daly of Leinster, three for Bernard Brullaughan of Ulster, while all six (realizing just what a mess they had made of the election) appealed to the vicar-general to tell them what the actual state of the *alternativa* really was. Villavecchia refused. He would settle all doubts once they had elected a prior, and if they failed to do so within a month, he might find himself obliged to employ measures little to their liking.

A further election on 23 February, though peculiar in form, was nonetheless successful. Three, as before, voted for O'Daly of Naas, whom they believed to be at Paris. The other three of the "Ulster block" renounced their votes. The scrutiny was sent to Villavecchia who confirmed the election on 5 March and at long last (in a letter of the following day) clarified the whole basic question of the *alterna-*

⁶⁷ SCAR, No. 57. House-council book (1769-97), pp. 45-50. There are other details in AGOP IV. 231, pp. 24-25. Those who favoured O'Daly thought he was at Paris. They had also studied the archives of the house and of the order to establish to what *natio* the priorship belonged.

tiva. The proper order to be followed was Munster, Connacht, Leinster, Ulster. If this had been forgotten it was because the masters general, from 1740 to 1757, had always dispensed from the *alternativa* in prioral elections at SS. Sixtus and Clement, but such dispensations did not destroy the basic right of the four provinces to follow each other in proper sequence. Thus John O'Neill of Munster, elected in 1757, regained for Munster what it had been entitled to from 1740; and O'Neill was followed by Kirwan of Connacht without dispensation. Therefore it was now Leinster's turn and John O'Daly was the man. Or rather he would have been the man, for he wrote from Dublin on 27 March 1764 courteously refusing the priorship as Netterville had done before him.

Faced by two refusals and the looming prospect of a third, the brethren in Rome finally came to terms among themselves, deciding to vote for Patrick Kirwan, the out-going prior, again. The two necessary dispensations — from the *alternativa* and the interstices — were first obtained, and Father Kirwan was duly reelected prior on 11 May 1764. Only Dominic Colgan, the old Ulster missionary, held out to the end by renouncing his vote⁶⁸. From first to last, the whole election had taken five months.

The account-books of the convent reveal signs of financial distress towards the end of this period. Like the house in Lisbon, they depended much on the sale of wine from their vineyard "del Torione" outside the Porta Maggiore of the old city. In September 1764 they added to this property by buying an adjoining vineyard for 1,000 scudi, an enormous sum just received from the priests of S. Francesca Romana in repayment of an earlier loan⁶⁹. And yet in the following April the prior spoke to the house council about the "calamitous" situation of the community and even asked their permission to sell four chalices⁷⁰. Like Lisbon again, they were caught in the toils of perpetual Masses which in certain circumstances it was a financial loss to celebrate. Both problems, of Masses and vineyards, became acute shortly before the

⁶⁸ House-council book, pp. 50-59. AGOP IV. 231, pp. 25-30. At one stage in this long election, Colgan was encouraged to believe that he might be elected himself. St. Sixtus, 27 Feb. 1764. MI. Brennan, Pat. Kirwan and J. T. Troy to Villavecchia. A copy. SCAR, Codex V, doc. 64.

⁶⁹ House-council book, p. 62.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 66. These were chalices of which the community received one every four years from the corporation of the city.

provincial chapter of 1765, so that the community drew up two documents: the first an appeal to the chapter, and the second a letter to the man they already knew would succeed Father Hoare. Both were dated 25 May 1765⁷¹.

In essence, their appeal to the chapter was a request that the houses in Ireland should take on the annual burden of Masses which the convent could no longer bear: 264 a year for which the stipends were absolutely minimal. They enclosed their request in the following letter to Thomas Luke Netterville.

Reverend Dear Sir,

As we flatter ourselves with the pleasing prospect of your succeeding Mr. Hoare, we think it incumbent on us to trouble you herewith, praying your and your good brother's [John Francis] assistance in obtaining for us what we so reasonably demand in the annexed remonstrance. We think it needless to enumerate the many hardships which have determined us to become your petitioners, as your brother and others have been partly informed by some of us. Wherefore we shall only mention the really tormenting appearance there is, of our remaining in our distressed situation longer than we imagined, and that on account of our vineyards which have been blasted to such a degree on the 12 and 13th *ultimo* as to deprive us of any hopes of making near as much wine as is necessary for our home consumption. A circumstance truly interesting, when we consider that no inconsiderable part of our income arose from the sale of wine.

Upon the whole, as there are none better acquainted with our situation, or more firmly attached to St. Clements than you and your brother, we have reason to think your united efforts to promote its interest will be conformable to our desire, and of consequence hope they will be attended with a favourable issue. If this latter should not be the case, assure yourself of our unalterable resolution to persevere in the just opinion we have formed of your sincere affection for this poor house. We pray you to present our most tender compliments to your brother and beg leave to conclude assuring you that we will eagerly embrace every occasion of shewing you the unfeigned esteem and

⁷¹ SCAR, Codex V, doc. 101. The petition is in Latin and the copy of the letter to Netterville in English. On the question of Masses there is an interesting document, a papal decree of 15 June 1761 granting them permission to celebrate a daily perpetual Mass in return for 17 "luoghi di Monte di S. Pietro" which would bring in 51 scudi a year. AGOP IV. 231, pp. 9-10.

regard wherewith we subscribe ourselves, Reverend Dear Sir, your most obliged, most obedient and very humble servants,

St. Clements,

May 25th 1765.

This is a true copy:

Witness etc. J. Th. Troy.

Patrick Kirwan

John Thomas Troy

John Murphy

Michael Brennan

MICHAEL HOARE: A SUMMING-UP

Father Hoare's second provincialate was not a spectacular success. The Roman authorities of the order treated him as though he were a child, while the one great issue of the time — the novitiate question — was firmly in the hands of Propaganda Fide. Evidence for any contact or influence he may have had with the three foreign colleges is practically nil, nor do we know very much about his role in Ireland itself. Twice during his term of office, in the summers of 1762 and 1764, he went on visitation to various houses. Villavecchia acknowledged his report of the first, now lost, on 30 October 1762⁷². The vicar-general was pleased by what he had to say of the zeal shown by the brethren in preaching and hearing confessions, as also of their efforts to maintain regular life so far as that was possible. He was especially pleased to learn that the Irish Dominicans still kept up regular conferences on moral theology. In this first report, Father Hoare also mentioned his attempts to bring two black sheep, Dominic Quinn and Denis Houlihan, back to the order after an absence of several years. Whether he ever reported to Rome after his second visitation does not appear, but the visitation was certainly held. He signed the accounts at Athenry on 25 May 1764, as he had previously done on 29 May 1762, and also the books of the nuns of Dublin on 16 July 1764⁷³.

Some fragmentary evidence shows his interest in two other convents. In 1764 and again in 1765, he complained to Rome about the (unspecified) defects of Patrick Sheridan and Thomas Fitzsimons, both of Cavan⁷⁴. And he did his best to get Michael Flemming back from Louvain and Denis MacGrath from Rome to help the convent of

⁷² AGOP IV. 231, p. 14.

⁷³ TA, Athenry a/c book (1755-85), Recepta, under respective dates. For the detail about Channel Row (Dublin) I am indebted to Sr. Bertranda O.P. of Cabra.

⁷⁴ AGOP IV. 231, pp. 33-34, 36.

Trim which he had found *in pessimo statu* ⁷⁵. To strengthen the community in Dublin he obtained the transfiliation of Patrick Crawley from Aghaboe and John Egan from Naas ⁷⁶. Since Aghaboe and Naas were among the worst-off houses of Leinster, it is an open question whether the provincial had given them up for lost or considered them incapable of supporting more than the one or two priests already on the spot.

One can only add that he lived throughout his provincialate "at his lodgings" in Limerick, serving the chapel in Jail Lane, and stayed there afterwards until his death. The date of his death, like that of his predecessor Thomas Plunkett, is unknown. On this point the only thin line of evidence one may follow is that he was a master of theology and no one was postulated for, or obtained, this precious degree until Patrick Bray was given it on 8 March 1777: *in locum defuncti ex-provincialis P. Michaelis Hoare* ⁷⁷.

THOMAS LUKE NETTERVILLE, 1765-1769

Since Thomas Netterville and his brother John, who was to succeed him as provincial of Ireland, belonged to the remnant of the Catholic aristocracy, their entry into the order in the late 1730s was, on the one hand, greeted by the Dominicans with undisguised delight, and on the other assured them of a patronage and eventually of high office which the ordinary postulant hardly expected and seldom received. They were the sons of William Netterville of Cruiserath, county Meath, and had an elder brother Robert who inherited the paternal estates ⁷⁸. Neither William nor Robert after him enjoyed the title of Viscount Netterville of Dowth, though they must have been closely related to the principal branch of the family. Bishop Michael MacDonogh O.P. of Kilmore recommended young Thomas Netterville to the master

⁷⁵ Ibidem, pp. 33-34. Both were lectors, appointed either by the general or his vicar.

⁷⁶ 18 July 1761. Villavecchia to Hoare. AGOP IV. 231, pp. 10-11. Hoare asked for other similar changes on 18 Sept. 1764 only to be told by Boxadors that "you ought to know that we rarely grant them". Ibidem, pp. 33-34.

⁷⁷ AGOP IV. 240, p. 10.

⁷⁸ J. Brady, *Catholics and Catholicism in the 18th-century Press* (Maynooth 1965) 18, 185, 297. J. Brady, *The Penal Laws relating to Property and the Meath family of Strong*, in the *Irish Eccles. Record* (Jan. 1944) 19-20. The family background was also mentioned by Th. Burke, bishop of Ossory, in a letter (Kilkenny, 1 Oct. 1775) to Chas. O'Kelly. Dublin Diocesan Archives, 29/4.

general, Thomas Ripoll, who personally gave the habit to this distinguished novice in the church of San Clemente on 2 July 1737. Netterville kept his baptismal name (Thomas) while taking that of Luke in memory of archbishop Luke Netterville of Armagh, founder of the Dominican convent at Drogheda in 1224, the convent for which Thomas entered the order at Rome ⁷⁹.

The secretary on this occasion was Thomas Burke, then first regent of studies, a man who "dearly loved a lord" and who was to keep up his friendship with Thomas Netterville until his own death, as bishop of Ossory, in 1776. After his novitiate at SS. Sixtus and Clement — the only novice in the house and the only Irish novice received there in eleven years — Thomas Netterville made profession on 2 July 1738 in the hands of the prior, John Brett, later successively bishop of Killala and Elphin. The future provincial then began to study philosophy in the convent and on 6 April 1739 successfully passed the examination at the close of his first semester ⁸⁰. He would have taken a second examination in September to complete the year, but for the fact that one of the general's assistants held a visitation in the convent after which three were assigned out of it in August 1739: Dominic Hugh Kelly went to teach scripture at Louvain and Dominic Dillon to study theology at Ancona, while Netterville was sent to continue his philosophy at S. Maria Novella in Florence ⁸¹. Two years later he was recalled to San Sisto to study theology "at the request of cardinal Corsini", protector of Ireland ⁸². And so he remained at Rome from 8 October 1741 until 27 May 1745 ⁸³. He was thus a student at SS. Sixtus and Clement contemporaneously with his younger brother, John Francis, and was described (at least in the records of the house) as Netterville major to distinguish him from the other.

⁷⁹ AGOP IV. 217, p. 9. Coll. Hib. 14 (1971) 22-23. The Dominican bishop M. MacDonogh, under the pseudonym "William Guzman", wrote to the court of James III at Rome on 18 May 1734 recommending "two young gentlemen of the Nettervilles to serve in the imperial army. Their father will purchase companies for them... and spoke to me to have our master's letter in their favour... I protest I would not mention the affair to you only as a friend, for I know you never intermeddle in affairs of our church". The letter is partly in code and does not necessarily refer to our two Dominicans. Windsor, Stuart Papers, vol. 170, no. 86.

⁸⁰ Liber de Ratione Studiorum (1701-43). AGOP XI. 3600, f. 28^v.

⁸¹ The visitation was held by Emerich Langenwatter. AGOP IV. 217, p. 50. Netterville's assigantion on 29 Aug. 1739 is noted *ibidem*, 213, f. 73^r.

⁸² On 29 July 1741. AGOP IV. 217, p. 74.

⁸³ Coll. Hib. 10 (1967) 66.

Presumably he received clerical tonsure and all minor orders while at Florence, for his name does not appear in the records of the Roman vicariate until 22 December 1742 when he received subdiaconate at the Lateran with a host of others. He became a deacon on 21 September 1743 and finally received priestly orders on 21 December following. The ordaining prelate on all three occasions was archbishop Ferdinand Maria Rossi, vice-regent of Rome⁸⁴. Patrick Kirwan and Dominic Delamar, the future rector in Lisbon, were ordained priests at the Lateran on the same day as Thomas Netterville.

The San Sisto community gave young Netterville his viatick to Ireland in May 1745, and he may have gone there for a few months, but in actual fact he spent the next four years in Paris where he became master of arts at the Sorbonne and did not begin work "on the mission" until 1749⁸⁵. When he finally reached Ireland, well prepared after twelve years of study, he settled down in Dublin rather than in Drogheda, his convent of affiliation. Thomas Burke, formerly his teacher and still his friend, duly listed him among the community of Drogheda in 1756, but yet the chapter held at Dublin in the following year, when postulating him for the first vacant mastership in Ulster, said that he had preached "in this metropolis" for eight years⁸⁶. In all likelihood he moved to Drogheda about 1760, before the Dominicans of Dublin (in January 1761) answered the accusations of archbishop Lincoln, and before Burke's list was actually printed in *Hibernia Dominicana* in 1762⁸⁷. On 1 May 1762 he wrote from Drogheda with three other "sons" of the convent to the vicar-general in Rome, informing him that they had accepted John O'Neill of Cavan as a son of Drogheda⁸⁸. They were quickly told not to despoil one altar so as to adorn another, and that it was the responsibility of each convent to look to the clothing of its own novices. If John O'Neill were so urgently needed in Drogheda, the provincial might assign him there without transfiguration.

⁸⁴ Archivio storico del Vicariato di Roma, Liber Ordinationum (1737-42), p. 332 and Liber Ordinationum (1743-48), pp. 42, 60.

⁸⁵ A detail mentioned only by the chapter of 1753 when postulating him as bachelor or *praesentatus* of theology. AGOP XIII. 68095.

⁸⁶ Hib. Dom. 204. The acts of 1757 are in AGOP XIII. 68095.

⁸⁷ His name does not occur among those of six Dominican signatories of Dublin whose protest may be read in AFP 45 (1975) 480-82.

⁸⁸ AGOP IV. 231, p. 13. The general again refused this transfiguration in Oct. 1764, at which time John Byrne was prior of Drogheda. Ibidem, p. 33.

In the meanwhile Thomas Netterville had become a *praesentatus* or bachelor of theology on 19 July 1755 on the death of James Watson, and a master on 5 November 1757 after the death of the former provincial Bernard MacHenry⁸⁹. He was never definator at any provincial chapter, nor prior of any house (unless perhaps of Drogheda), until elected provincial on 29 June 1765 by thirty-five votes to two⁹⁰. How was it that the Irish in Rome had been able to foretell the result more than a month before the election took place in Dublin?

There is no need to delay over the acts of the chapter which made him provincial at the age of about forty-four. Since those of the preceding chapter (1761) seem not to have been confirmed, the chapter of 1765 had almost necessarily to repeat the ordinations and petitions of its predecessor. This time only one archbishop, Mark Skerrett of Tuam, appeared among the *conservatores privilegiorum* — a sign of deteriorating relations with the hierarchy — the other three archbishops being replaced by Daniel Kearney of Limerick, Augustine Cheevers O.S.A. of Meath and Daniel O'Reilly of Clogher. The new provincial's brother, John Francis, was for the second time named historian of the province. The chapter even showed some backbone by telling the master general what a poor view they took of the fact that not a single postulation made in 1761 had been confirmed. Driving the point home, they went on to postulate no less than thirty-eight for various degrees of which only twenty were vacant *per obitum*. More surprising still, most of these postulations were confirmed over the following two years. The obituary list ran to thirty names, very much less than in 1761, but it still represented an unstaunched haemorrhage, particularly grave for the smaller country convents like Rathfran which alone contributed three names to the list. These priests had to die, but at what meagre rate were they being replaced?

So far as the ordinations and petitions were concerned, Father Boxadors would not for a moment consider their request in favour of non-resident priors. Nor had he anything to say about novitiates apart from insisting that they obey Propaganda Fide and pointing out that the expense involved in going abroad to take the habit was hardly an effective argument, since the candidates (even were they to make their novitiate at home) would have to incur the same expense when going

⁸⁹ AGOP IV. 217, pp. 154, 171.

⁹⁰ AGOP IV. 231, p. 38. Netterville had, of course, refused the Roman priorship in Jan. 1764 as described above.

to the continent for their studies. Here the master general rather missed the point, which was the reluctance of parents to see their sons depart at such expense while still unprofessed and consequently uncertain of their vocation. Leaving such *minutiae* aside, one is left with the most interesting point the chapter raised. Cardinal Castelli, prefect of Propaganda, had recently written to the prior of Holy Cross, Louvain, to the effect that the Dominicans would be granted the home novitiates they had been asking for since 1751 on condition that they send some missionaries to Scotland. The provincial chapter was more than willing to comply, while somewhat doubtful as to whether the province had the men to send. All things considered, they would probably have been as willing to send a few missionaries to Bulgaria⁹¹.

MISSIONARIES FOR SCOTLAND, 1765-1773

Not even the date, much less the text, of Castelli's letter to the prior of Holy Cross can now be traced. But it is certain that Propaganda Fide and even Father Boxadors, slow though he was, were arranging the despatch of some Irish Dominicans to Scotland long before the acts of the provincial chapter arrived in Rome. The problem was that Scotland, especially the Northern or Highland district which took in the western isles, was not so much short of Catholics as of priests. One report of 1763 said that at least eight more priests were needed at once: five for the Highlands and three for the Lowlands⁹². Hugh MacDonald, vicar apostolic of the Highland district, submitted a detailed description of his territory in May 1764, from which it appeared that at least four extra missionaries were urgently required⁹³. Cardinal Castelli took a very personal interest in the case, called a meeting of Propaganda on

⁹¹ The original sealed acts of the chapter, addressed to Fr. Power O.F.M. of St. Isidore's, are in SCAR, Codex IV, doc. 45. There is a copy of the full text of the general's letter (26 Jan. 1766) confirming and commenting upon the acts in TA, Act. Cap. Prov., vol. III, pp. 95-99. With respect to novitiates and Castelli's offer regarding Scotland — an offer also extended, though in vain, to the Franciscans and Augustinians — see H. Fenning, *The Undoing of the Friars of Ireland*, Louvain 1972, 267-68. Also Hib. Dom. 180-83.

⁹² "Ragguaglio dello stato presente della Missione di Scotia" presented to Propaganda by Peter Grant, the Scottish agent in Rome. APF, SC Scozia 3, ff. 57-67. See also J.F.S. Gordon, *Journal and Appendix to Scotichronicon and Monasticon*, vol. 1, Glasgow 1867, 637.

⁹³ Preshome, 7 May 1764. MacDonald to Propaganda. ASV, Fondo Missioni 100.

8 February 1765, and decided *inter alia* to ask the Dominican master general for two religious to be sent to Scotland at the expense of the Congregation. Unlike missionaries in Ireland, all the priests of Scotland received annual subsidies from Rome⁹⁴.

The cardinal undertook to speak personally to the master general "to see how many missionaries he could supply", and in a memorial to Boxadors on 28 February, Castelli asked for four, or at least two Irish-speakers for the northern vicariate who would receive a "modest but sufficient" subsidy from Propaganda⁹⁵. Boxadors, for reasons unknown, let four months go by before assigning two Irishmen to Scotland in June: Matthias Wynne, on the completion of his studies in Rome, and Dominic Hallinan, then a young priest at Louvain. Hallinan pleaded poor health in order to escape, but the general swept his excuses aside and put him under formal precept of obedience to go⁹⁶. In fact, Hallinan never did go to Scotland. A hostile witness, writing in 1769, claimed that an Irish Dominican of Louvain, on being assigned to Scotland, was so terrified by the prospect that he lost his reason. And indeed the provincial, when listing Hallinan as a member of the convent of Ballindoon in September 1767, admitted that he had been out of his mind for the previous two years⁹⁷.

This tragic set-back was unknown to Matthias Wynne as he set off from Rome in the summer of 1765. It took him thirty-two days to sail from Civitavecchia to Spain, probably to Alicante, and there he was forced to wait seven weeks for another ship to take him to Ireland. He lost another six weeks at Dublin waiting in vain for his companion (Hallinan) to arrive from Belgium, so anxious about reaching Scotland that he did not even visit his brother or other friends. Eventually he set sail from Dublin on his own, got caught in a tremendous tempest off the Hebrides, was thereby forced to take refuge for a month on an island he called Ila (Islay?), and finally landed on Uist, the scene of

⁹⁴ This meeting of Propaganda was called a "congresso" rather than a "congregatio generalis", and there seems to be no trace of it in the archives of the Congregation. Details of the meeting are in ASV, Fondo Missioni 100.

⁹⁵ This memorial too, unnoticed in AGOP IV, is in ASV, Fondo Missioni 100.

⁹⁶ Wynne was assigned on 21 and Hallinan on 22 June 1765. AGOP IV. 231, pp. 37-38.

⁹⁷ H. Fenning, *The Undoing of the Friars*, 292, where the date of assignation is wrongly given as 2 July. The famous "Netterville List" of 1767 has been printed in Coll. Hib. 8 (1965) 92-104, with Hallinan named on p. 94.

his future labours, just two dayx before Christmas⁹⁸. His arrival, and indeed Hallinan's too, had been anxiously awaited by the vicar apostolic from the preceding August. Hugh MacDonald, bishop in the Highlands since 1731, was now a very old man and could not thank cardinal Castelli sufficiently for finding more priests. The two Dominicans would take care of the islands of Uist and Barra: "pleasant, comfortable places where destitution is unknown, where nothing is lacking to make life agreeable, distant by more than 150 miles from the fathers of the Society of Jesus"⁹⁹.

The good bishop expected two but got only one, and one may deduce that it was cardinal Castelli who caused Boxadors to write to Thomas Netterville on 21 December 1765, asking him to propose another suitable candidate for Scotland at once. The provincial took his time, or found great difficulty in choosing someone for the task, for it was not until December 1766 that the general was able to send patents *ad missiones Scotiae* for Dominic Cornyn of Sligo¹⁰⁰. In the following September the provincial listed Cornyn as being then at work in Scotland, but one feels that he went there for a few months at most, perhaps with Irish harvesters, seeing that the historians of Catholic Scotland, with excellent clergy lists and archives at their disposal, never heard of him.

So, from Christmas 1765, Matthias Wynne was the only Irish Dominican in Scotland and was destined to remain so for the next two or three years. His "station" was on South Uist and Benbecula in the Hebrides, a pair of islands so close as to be now linked by a causeway, and taken together about twenty-eight miles long by six across. Shortly before his arrival the Catholic population stood at 2,503 people, served by the coadjutor bishop John MacDonald and an aged priest named Alexander Forrester. With Wynne on the island, the bishop was able to transfer to Glenfinnan on the mainland, a much more suitable base of operation. Such references as we have to Wynne's activities

⁹⁸ Uist, 7 Aug. 1766. Wynne to Castelli. ASV, Fondo Missioni 100. The same packet contains five other documents, attestations and receipts, bearing on Wynne's departure and support.

⁹⁹ Scalan, Glenlivet, 1 Aug. 1765. Alexander Smith and Hugh MacDonald, vicars-apostolic, to Peter Grant in Rome. An Italian translation. APF, SC Scozia 3, ff. 85-89.

¹⁰⁰ 13 Dec. 1766. Boxadors to Netterville. AGOP IV. 231, p. 44. Cornyn was prior of Derry in 1777-78, and still in that neighbourhood in Aug. 1782. APF, SC Irlanda 13, ff. 205, 269-70, 500; 15, f. 239.

on Uist before 1770 are entirely favourable. In a letter of August 1766, bishop John MacDonald declared: "he is indeed a laborious and zealous man and behaves to everybody's satisfaction... He is settled in South Uist, as he wished, with Mr. Forrester, where he has enough to do, his companion being now old and infirm, so that the chief weight must be upon him, which he bears very cheerfully"¹⁰¹. Fr. William Harrison, pastor of Morar, Arisaig and Moidart, with responsibility also for the islands of Rum and Muck, spoke of him as a man "worthy of all praise" and went on to pay tribute to those earlier Irish missionaries who had preserved the faith in the Highlands and Isles after the Reformation¹⁰². Similarly, in August 1767, three of the bishops spoke very highly of Fr. Wynne when asking Propaganda to see to his subsidy; they were taking care of his needs until it should arrive¹⁰³.

After this date one hears little more of Matthias Wynne's exertions on South Uist until 1770 when he left Scotland for ever. In the interval, he wrote twice to cardinal Castelli: in February 1768 to say that he had been gravely ill throughout the previous summer (a haemorrhage of some kind from which he had fully recovered) and in August 1769 to say that everything was twice as expensive on Uist as anywhere else in Scotland¹⁰⁴. He found that the rate of exchange in Edinburgh was better than in Dublin, and that two of his letters, sent to Rome through Dublin, appeared to have been lost. The people on the island were so poor that whatever little they gave him, he felt obliged to give away again in alms. The vicar apostolic permitted him in June 1769 to visit his friends in Ireland for two months, but he delayed availing of the kindness because of an outbreak of fever among his flock and because the pastor of the "nearby island" was sick. It is this second letter which first suggests an unfortunate turn of events which would drive

¹⁰¹ Glenfinnan in Moidart, 22 Aug. 1766. MacDonald to Peter Grant in Rome. Scottish Catholic Archives (hereafter SCA), Blairs Letters, L 1766. For this and other documents from the same collection, I am entirely indebted to the courtesy of the archivist, Mgr. David McRoberts, Columba House, Edinburgh.

¹⁰² Ad Sanctum Malrubium in Arisaig, 8 Jan. 1767. Wm. Harrison to cardinal Albani. APF, SC Scozia 3, f. 92. Harrison claimed in this letter that, when all other priests had been captured after the rebellion of 1745, he alone remained to serve Moidart, Arisaig, and the islands of Eigg, Canna, Uist and Barra.

¹⁰³ Speymouth, 1 Aug. 1767. Three vicars apostolic to Castelli. APF, SC Scozia 3, ff. 95-96.

¹⁰⁴ Uist, 25 Feb. 1766 and 23 Aug. 1769. Wynne to Castelli. Both letters are in ASV, Fondo Missioni 100.

him from the island within a year. The laird of South Uist, he explained, had died as a true Catholic just three years before, whereas his heir was a Calvinist.

This heir, MacDonald of Boisdale, laird of 175 Catholic families, decided about the year 1769 that all his tenants should change their religion just as he had done himself. Their children were invited to learn English and writing under a Presbyterian teacher, which invitation they accepted until they were forced to write blasphemous and even indecent things at school. During the Lent of 1770, flesh meat was forced into the mouths of such children as refused to eat it. On hearing this, Matthias Wynne compelled the people to take their children home, with the result that Boisdale forbade the two priests to set foot on his lands or exercise their duties among the people. Not only that, but he threatened to put them both in jail unless they left the island and swore to twist Wynne's head from his shoulders should he meet him on the road.

Father Wynne stood his ground until about May 1770, for he was still on the island when Boisdale called all his tenants to a meeting before Whit Sunday, giving them the choice either of renouncing their faith or of being evicted from their holdings. As one man, the entire Catholic community of South Uist declared they would give up their lands and beg rather than sign the renunciation of faith he held out to them. Boisdale then drew back, realizing that he might well be left with no tenants at all, and asked only that they allow their children to be brought up as Protestants. Once again they refused, the laird gave them a year to think the matter over, and Matthias Wynne left for Dublin in June¹⁰⁵.

By his own account, for Wynne wrote from Dublin in October explaining matters to cardinal Castelli, he left South Uist for Ireland on the advice of both bishop and people, foreseeing that further trouble lay ahead, and with the precise intention of preparing a passage to St. John's in Newfoundland for the entire Catholic population of

¹⁰⁵ The whole incident is fully described by J. Gordon, *Journal*, 78-83, on which book see note 92 above. Also by George Hay in a pamphlet, *Memorial for the suffering Catholics in a violent persecution... in one of the Western Isles of Scotland*, [London 1771 or 1772], of which there is a copy in APF, SC Scozia 3, ff. 122-27. There is also a letter (Preshome, 23 July 1770) from three of the bishops to Castelli in ASV, Fondo Missioni 59. They were then expecting the arrival of an Irish Augustinian whom Castelli had found for them, but who accepted instead a military chaplaincy on the continent. See J. Gordon, *Journal*, 86.

Uist¹⁰⁶. At the time of writing he expected some families to reach Dublin shortly and at least 150 families in May 1771. It was essential that he should stay in Ireland to make the necessary arrangements and that Propaganda should provide him with the means of meeting these unexpected expenses. He never afterwards returned to Scotland where the bishops (in June 1771) not only regarded him as a deserter but complained of the "far-fetched and laughable things" concerning the persecution on Uist about which he had written to them from Ireland¹⁰⁷. They were very soon proved wrong and Wynne right, for 400 islanders left for Carolina in 1771 and another hundred for St. John's in the following year. Within three years of their departure, the unspeakable Boisdale, for reasons known to God alone, so far repented of what he had done as to grant unlimited freedom of religion to such few tenants as remained on South Uist.

Dominic Bragan, another Irish Dominican, had already been in Scotland for two years when Father Wynne left and was to stay there for two years more. Like Wynne, he came to the mission on finishing his studies at SS. Sixtus and Clement in Rome (July 1767) duly fortified, as his predecessor had been, by the faculties and 150 scudi given him by Propaganda Fide¹⁰⁸. He was assigned to the most northerly part of the Lowland District in Banffshire, well north of Aberdeen on the eastern coast, so that (while remaining in Scotland) he could scarcely have been farther away from his confrère in the Hebrides. The clergy lists place him at Shenval in 1768 and at Glenlivet from 1769. Thanks to the large estates and patronage of the Duke of Gordon, Glenlivet had a Catholic population of more than a thousand within the small radius of ten miles and was in fact the most heavily Catholic area in the Lowlands. It also sheltered the little seminary called Scalan, and it was precisely from Scalan that the two vicars apostolic and their respective coadjutors wrote to cardinal Castelli (29 May 1769), partly to thank him for sending Wynne and Bragan, both of whom they highly praised, and partly to ask that the two missionaries be dispensed from saying the Office of the Dead and that of the Blessed Virgin in view of their laborious apostolate¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁶ Dublin, 20 Oct. 1770. Wynne to Castelli. ASV, Fondo Missioni 59.

¹⁰⁷ Scalan, 22 June 1771. Three bishops to Castelli. Ibidem.

¹⁰⁸ His assignation (29 July 1767) is registered in AGOP IV. 231, p. 45. His receipt for 150 scudi to Propaganda (18 July) is in ASV, Fondo Missioni 100.

¹⁰⁹ Their petition was granted on 29 July 1769, and their original letter is in

One hears no more of Dominic Bragan, save that he remained at his post, until he wrote from Tombea in February 1771 to Fr. John Reid at Preshome: the letter show only that he was short of money and had a droll sense of humour¹¹⁰. By June of the same year, affected by some abdominal sickness, he was threatening to return to Ireland, but bishop Hay at Edinburgh was able to assert on 15 July that Father Bragan, despite his serious illness, had decided to remain in Scotland and had laid aside all thought of leaving it¹¹¹.

Although listed as having left Glenlivet in the summer of 1771, Bragan can have done so, if at all, only for a brief holiday, perhaps in Ireland. For in November of that year he was writing again to John Reid of Preshome, mostly about books, giving his own address at Glenlivet as "Vallumbrosa". This time he cannot have been short of money, since he offered Reid any price he wanted for a particular book they had recently spoken about, and again showed his natural charm when writing about Fr. Alexander Geddes¹¹².

Munmore join me in compliments to you and Mr. Geddis and congratulate with the latter on the victory he has gained over these two gentlemen who did call for him at his own house. They appeared as fond to see him as he was to shun them. However indeed he needs not pride himself on so shameful a victory. But after all if my good friend Mr. Geddis sends by this occasion only a few of his excellent sermons, I shall engage all my interest to restore him to the favour of his very angry friends. Being now ten o'clock at night I must conclude without either stop or comma your very humble servant Dominick Bragan.

Despite his resolution of 1771, despite even his cheerfulness, ill health forced Father Bragan to leave Scotland forever about June 1772. When explaining his decision to cardinal Castelli, to whom also he sent a medical certificate, he promised to return should his health improve. So few were the missionaries in Scotland, he remarked, "that even any old imbecile would be useful there". In the same letter he asked

APF, Udienze 10, ff. 541-47. According to Gordon, Journal, 59, Bragan was first sent to Glenlivet to assist Mr. Guthrie who had become lame as a result of bad bone-setting.

¹¹⁰ Tombea, 4 Feb. 1771. Bragan to Reid. SCA, Blairs Letters, Q 1771.

¹¹¹ Scalan, 23 June 1771. Three bishops to Castelli, with a postscript from the fourth, George Hay, dated Edinburgh, 15 July. ASV, Fondo Missioni 59.

¹¹² Vallumbrosa [Glenlivet], 17 Nov. 1771. Bragan to Reid. SCA, Blairs Letters, Q 1771.

to be recommended to the bishop of Meath, Augustine Cheevers O.S.A., in whose diocese he intended to settle until he either recovered or died¹¹³. His Scottish bishop, when asking for reinforcements on Bragan's departure, paid tribute to him as "a worthy and zealous priest"¹¹⁴.

Bishop Cheevers, then extremely old, undertook in May 1773 to find a parish for Dominic Bragan, despite the rule of *concursum* for such positions and the long queue of candidates already in line, and did in fact succeed in doing so though the name of the actual parish does not appear¹¹⁵. When the bishop became senile a few years later, his coadjutor Eugene Geoghegan took over the day-to-day running of the diocese of Meath and, apparently during 1776, deprived Bragan of the parish he "administered"¹¹⁶. Charles O'Kelly took the matter up at Rome in January 1777, but to no purpose, for the former missionary in Scotland died a few weeks later on 17 February "in the 36th year of his age" and was buried with the Franciscans of Multifarnham. From the inscription on his tomb it would seem that he then belonged to the Dominican convent of Mullingar nearby¹¹⁷.

There is no need to say very much about the last of these missionaryes to Scotland, Albert Hope. He was a member of the Roman, not of the Irish province of the order, and seems to have taken the habit at Viterbo in April 1756. To this extent he comes onto the stage rather as a Melchisedech, though the likeness is only half correct in that Albert Hope (whatever about his father) most certainly had a mother: a native of Edinburgh, a convert before 1762, a millstone round his neck both in Italy and Scotland, while being (one says so with regret) both mentally unstable and given to drink. Hope's widowed mother was already in Italy by 1762, and already in receipt of a pension from the Holy Office, when her Dominican son petitioned James III for the money necessary for her to travel back to Edinburgh¹¹⁸. The master general

¹¹³ Aberdeen, 20 May 1772. Bragan to Castelli. ASV, Fondo Missioni 59. Castelli's letter of recommendation (15 July 1772) is in APF, SC Irlanda 13, ff. 24, 33.

¹¹⁴ Undated petition from George Hay, answered by Propaganda on 11 July 1772. APF, SC Scozia 3, ff. 110-11.

¹¹⁵ 16 May 1773. Cheevers to Castelli. APF, SC Irlanda 12, f. 57.

¹¹⁶ Rome, 11 Jan. 1777. Chas. O'Kelly to Castelli. *Ibidem*, 13, ff. 23, 34.

¹¹⁷ The inscription is given by A. Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, vol. 3 (Dublin 1870) 599.

¹¹⁸ N. MacDonald Wilby, *Father Albert Hope's Mother*, in *Innes Review* (Spring 1972) 77-79. The writer prints two of Hope's letters (1761-62) from the

permitted him, on the insistence of cardinal Castelli, to go to Scotland on 25 May 1771, although Hope himself had recently asked not to be moved from Viterbo where he had recently rented a house for his mother¹¹⁹. Whatever confusion there may have been, Castelli was able to tell the vicars apostolic on 12 June that he had found another Irishman "prompt and ready" to replace Matthias Wynne¹²⁰. Prompt was the word, for Albert Hope and his mother reached Edinburgh on 13 September.

Gordon tells us that Father Hope "was suffering from ague caught at sea. Dr. Hay took care of him and kept him with himself until he was well. He was then appointed to the Shenval mission, to relieve Mr. Cruickshanks, who retired to the chaplaincy at Traquair House early in October"¹²¹. Unfortunately, the poor Dominican found his mother's conduct impossible. "To come to particulars", he wrote to bishop James Grant of Aberdeen, "I have too much reason to think that the poor woman's head is turned and crack-brained by all her actions and words". She claimed that Mass was offered to the devil and that those attending Mass were practising witchcraft against her. While he was away from home she stole his money to buy drink, besides drinking all his altar-wine "to a little sup which was only sufficient for one Mass". One can imagine how this discredited him with the people of Shenval, for his mother spoke to others, even to the local Protestants, just as freely as she did to him. Yet, after explaining this embarrassment to bishop Grant, Albert Hope went on to discuss what appeared to him an even greater difficulty¹²².

Besides all this, another thing gives me as much concern if not more, and that is how to regulate myself with some of my people that commit manifest usury, taking five per cent yearly for the *only loan* of

Stuart Papers at Windsor, but not a third (of 1772) in the same collection (vol. 459, no. 63) in which Hope acknowledges an alms of 12 scudi from Charles III.

¹¹⁹ AGOP IV. 240, p. 3. Also a letter of the general's from the Minerva (18 May 1771) to cardinal Castelli, explaining the background. Hope's mother was not actually at Viterbo, but expected to arrive there soon from Nice, and Hope felt obliged to assist her. Castelli obviously knew that Hope wanted to go to Scotland, but the general waited a week for Hope to clarify the position. ASV, Fondo Missioni 50.

¹²⁰ SCA, Blairs Letters, Q 1771.

¹²¹ J. Gordon, Journal, 88. The same book provides a long account of the "usury controversy" on which the above summary is almost entirely based.

¹²² Shenval, 9 Apr. 1772. Hope to James Grant. SCA, Blairs Letters, S 1772.

their money, and will not believe it unlawful because the law of this country permits it. And they object to all my reasons, that never any churchman, though they have had very wise and pious ones, ever before me, spoke to them in the manner I do in regard of usury.

On bishop Grant's very sensible advice, he finally decided that he and his mother should separate as soon as possible. Nor did he think it would prove very difficult to manage "had I six or seven pounds for that purpose, for then I would conduct her to Aberdeen and send her off to France immediately, if any occasion offered, or to London, where occasions are always at hand for France"¹²³. In the event she went at least to London by November 1772, leaving her son in bad health "in those frozen barren mountains" where she was convinced she would have died herself had she not reached London in time: "for it was impossible for me to resist in the excessive cold and misery that is there"¹²⁴.

So much for his poor mother, of whom we hear no more, but what about the taking of interest on a loan? He would not accept the practical advice of his kind bishop Grant, who suggested that since Rome had never condemned what was universally practised in the British Isles one might reasonably argue that she condoned it. The bishop also suggested that "if your particular delicacy cannot bear admitting people engaged in this practice to the holy sacraments, give them leave to apply to some other discreet person". The bishop also sent him a recent pamphlet by "Philopenes", *Usury explained or conscience quieted in the case of putting out money at interest*. Hope set the whole matter before Charles O'Kelly O.P., theologian of the Casanatensian library at Rome, but disagreed even with his authoritative reply and wrote again from Shenval to O'Kelly on 27 November 1772¹²⁵.

I read this treatise [by Philopenes] and found it full of false doctrine. He [bishop Grant] ...makes it lawful to take the five per cent because the government allows it, and that *absolutely* without any condition whatsoever. This is the common practice it seems to me by his letter he would have me conform to. But hitherto I have admitted none

¹²³ Shenval, 14 May 1772. Same to same. Ibidem.

¹²⁴ London, 12 Dec. 1772. Margaret Rose Hope's postscript to a letter (Shenval, 27 Nov. 1772) from Albert Hope to Chas. O'Kelly at Rome. Ibidem. Even at this date, Margaret still received a pension from the Holy Office, for which she wrote out a receipt in good Italian after her postscript.

¹²⁵ Reference as in preceding note.

to the holy sacraments that follow this practice nor never will, and consequently can be of little or no service here. Wherefore I beg you would obtain from our general my licence for returning home, for I am resolved not to stay here unless you get cardinal Castelli to put a stop to this perverse abuse by getting it condemned by the Holy See.

So far so bad, but Hope went further still by carrying his problem into print under the pseudonym "John Simple" on 1 January 1773 in the pages of a popular Edinburgh weekly. All sorts of people joined in the controversy at once and it was carried on in the same magazine until June. Even bishop George Hay contributed seven letters on the subject, all of which were signed "Michael Meanwell". One may as well let that great bishop have the last word, not only on usury, but also on Albert Hope who left Scotland for ever in May 1773¹²⁶.

The reasons he gives to me for the part he has resolved on, are that his constitution cannot bear out with the rigours of these missions, and that he cannot accomodate his mind to the practice of interest as customary in this nation. I had written him a long letter on this subject and have just now published, in one of our Edinburgh magazines, a Treatise upon it in a series of letters... All who have examined these papers are thoroughly satisfied on this head, but nothing is able to make an impression on Mr. Hope. The plain matter of fact, as far as I can judge, is, the honest man is heartily tired of our painful and laborious life, and is glad to have such a handle as this of conscience to be a pretext for leaving it. This is another instance, though I own, considering his first appearance, an unexpected one, how little we can depend upon any but those of our own country.

Father Hope went back to Italy, back to that convent of La Quercia in Viterbo to which he belonged. Certainly he was in residence there by May 1774¹²⁷. And so far as one can judge he remained there until 26 February 1777 when he was named bursar of SS. Sixtus and Clement, the house of his Irish brethren in Rome. Leaving both the bursarship and his fellow-countrymen in March 1781, he went first to Vi-

¹²⁶ J. Gordon, *Journal*, 123-25. The following quotation is taken from the full text, supplied by Gordon, of a letter (17 May 1773) from Hay to Grant, his Roman agent, enclosing a letter (not found) from Hope to Castelli.

¹²⁷ The date of his profession at La Quercia (27 Apr. 1757) and even his age — he was born about 1736 — can be gathered from two old catalogues (1769, 1780) of all the members of the Roman province. AGOP XIII. 14010. His presence at La Quercia in May 1774 is attested by AGOP IV. 246, p. 190.

terbo for a few months, then to Tivoli, just east of Rome, and finally (in February 1785) to Terracina where he was to remain until at least 1789¹²⁸. There on the Mediterranean shore, a few miles north of Gaeta, one finally loses track of Albert Hope, the last and not the most fortunate of these Irish Dominican missionaries to Scotland.

¹²⁸ SCAR, House-council book (1769-97), pp. 111-125 *passim*. His appointment as bursar is noted in AGOP IV. 240, p. 10. He reached SS. Sixtus and Clement from Viterbo on 9 Mar. 1777, and after two terms as bursar left the house shortly after a decision was taken that the bursar should have no more pocket-money than the lectors, save for one scudo a year (about five shillings) to buy shoes. For his later movements within the Roman province see AGOP IV. 254, p. 362; 256, p. 300; 258, p. 336.