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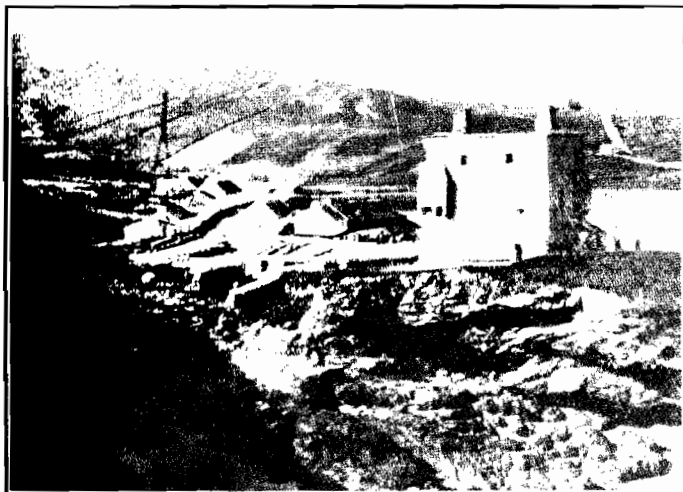
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# GRANIA UAILE

By

MOST REV. DR. HEALY, LL.D.,

*Archbishop of Tuam.*

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## Grania Uaile.\*

EVERYTHING connected with Grania Uaile, the famous Queen of Clew Bay, ought to have a very special interest for the good people of Westport and its neighbourhood, for she is, so to speak, one of yourselves, and her memory ought to be for you a glorious inheritance, which you can fairly claim as your own. Her old castles around Clew Bay still plead haughtily, even in their ruins, for glories that are gone; the living traditions of her achievements still linger, like the mists on the slopes of Croaghpatrick, around your shores and islands, where she lived, and fought, and died. She was, as I shall show, famous in her own time as the warrior Queen of Clew Bay; and she still continues to be by far the most famous Irish heroine known to our island story. To find her equal at all in Ireland we must go back to the far-distant past—to that famous Queen Meave of Rath Cruachain, who flourished about the beginning of the Christian era. They were somewhat alike in war, diplomacy, and love, and both seemed to have ruled their husbands as well as their subjects. In her own times we can find no lady to compare with Grania except it be Queen Elizabeth of England, and although the Saxon Queen filled a higher place in a far wider sphere, I doubt very much if she were superior in any royal qualities to the warrior Queen of Clew Bay, and certainly, in some respects, she was much her inferior.

### HER NAME.

Her proper name in Irish, as you all know, was Grainne Ni Mhaille; Grania Uaile is the popular form; and Grace O'Malley is the polite English form, which, I daresay, the lady herself never heard.

It is strange we find no reference to Grania in what may be called our National Annals. Neither in the *Annals of Lough Ce*, nor in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, nor in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, do we find the slightest

\*Lecture delivered in the Town Hall, Westport, on the 7th January, 1906.

reference to Grania, because I daresay the official chroniclers would not recognise any female chieftain as head of her tribe. It is to the State Papers we must go to get authentic information about Grania—that is to say, to the letters written to the Policy Council in Ireland or in England, by the statesmen of Queen Elizabeth who visited Connaught. Above all, we have one invaluable document, written in July, 1593, containing Grania's answers to eighteen questions put to her by the Government about herself and her doings, the authenticity of which cannot be questioned, and which gives us the most important facts in her personal history. It is on these documents I base my narrative this evening. I cannot gather at present the floating traditions of Grania around Clew Bay, not because I undervalue them, but because I had not time to collect them, nor would I at present have time to narrate them.

#### HER PARENTS.

"Her father was," she tells us, "Dubhdair O'Mailley, at one time chieftain of the country Upper Owle O'Mailley, now" (in 1593) she adds, "called the Barony of Murrisk. Her mother was Margaret Ni Mailley, of the same country and family." The O'Malleys had from immemorial ages been lords of the Owles, or Umhalls—that is, the country all round Clew Bay, now known as the baronies of Burrishoole and Murrisk. It is said they derived their descent not from Brian the great ancestor of the Connaught kings, but from his brother, Orbsen; and hence they are set down in the *Book of Rights* as tributary kings to the provincial kings of Connaught. In the middle of the thirteenth century they were driven out of a good portion of the northern Owle by the Burkes and Butlers, but still retained down to the time of Grania some twenty townlands, or eighty quarters in Burrishoole, and held more of it as tenants to the Earl of Ormond. The Burkes had also in Burrishoole some twenty townlands or eighty quarters, and the Earl of Ormond had ten quarters or forty townlands, which were usually set on lease either to the Burkes or to the O'Malleys. Grania also tells us that O'Malley's barony of Murrisk included all the ocean Islands from Clare to Inisboffin, making in all, with the

mainland, twenty townlands, or eighty quarters of fairly arable land, not counting the bog and mountain.

#### BIRTH AND FOSTERAGE.

We do not know when or where Grania was born, but as her father was at one time chief of his nation, it was most likely at Belclare, which was one of the chief castles of the family, and she was probably baptized at Murrisk. As Bingham describes Grania in 1593 as the "nurse of all rebellions in Connaught for the last forty years," she must have been born about the year 1530, before Henry VIII. had yet changed his religion.

It is highly probable that Grania was fostered on Clare Island, which belonged to her family, and it was doubtless here she acquired that passionate love of the sea, as well as that skill and courage in seafaring, which made her at once the idol of her clansmen and the greatest captain in the western seas.

#### PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

"*Terra Marique Potens*," was the motto of her family, and Shane O'Dugan tells us that there never was an O'Malley who was not a sailor, but not one of them all could excel Grania in sailing a galley or ruling a crew. This open-air life on the sea, if it did not add to her beauty, gave her great strength and vigour. Sydney, the Lord Deputy, who met her in Galway in 1576, describes her, when she must have been about middle age, as "famous for her stoutness of courage, and person, and for sundry exploits done by her by sea." Whatever literary education she got in her youth she probably received from the Carmelite Friars on Clare Island, but I suspect, although she was afterwards married to two of the greatest chiefs in the West, that Grania knew more about rigging and sailing a galley than she did of drawing-room accomplishments. Sir S. Ferguson, in a fine poem, gives eloquent expression to her feelings while she dwelt on Clare Island, and sailed over the wide waters of the noble bay that spread around her, "where Clew her cincture gathers isle-gemmed"—

" Oh, no; 'twas not for sordid spoil  
Of barque or seaboard brough  
She ploughed, with unfatiguing toil,  
The fluent, rolling furrow:

Delighting on the broad-back'd deep,  
 To feel the quivering galley  
 Strain up the opposing hill, and sweep  
 Down the withdrawing valley.

“ Or, sped before a driving blast,  
 By following seas up-lifted,  
 Catch, from the huge heaps heaving past,  
 And from the spray they drifted,  
 And from the winds that tossed the crest,  
 Of each wide-shouldering giant,  
 The smack of freedom and the zest  
 Of rapturous life defiant.

“ Sweet when crimson sunsets glow'd  
 As earth and sky grew grander,  
 Adown the grass'd unechoing road,  
 Atlanticward to wander,  
 Some kinsman's humbler heart to seek  
 Some sick bedside, it may be,  
 Or, onward reach, with footsteps meek,  
 The low, grey, lonely abbey.”

#### HER FIRST MARRIAGE.

It is not unlikely that Grania was an heiress, and though she could never, according to the Brehon Law, become “the captain of her nation,” especially after marriage, she still seems to have always retained the enthusiastic love and obedience of her clansmen, especially in the islands. She must, of course, get a husband, and so they chose a fitting help-mate for a warrior Queen in the person of Donall an Chogaidh O'Flaherty, of Bunowan, in the barony of Ballynahinch. He was in the direct line descendant of Hugh Mor, and was acknowledged as the Tanist or heir-apparent to Donall Crone O'Flaherty, who claimed to be the chief of his nation, but Donall Crone had been set aside in 1569 by Queen Elizabeth, so that Donall the Fighter had no longer any claims as Tanist.

But when Donall of Bunowan, about the year 1550, sought and obtained the hand of Grania Uaile, he was the acknowledged heir to the headship of all the western O'Flahertys, and certainly after the death of Donall Crone ought to be the Chief Lord of all Connemara, although Teige na Buile contested his claims.

This alliance, therefore, united in the closest bonds of friendship the two ruling families of Murrisk and Bally-

nahinch, with nothing but the narrow estuary of Leenane Bay, or rather the Killery, between them. Moreover, it made the united tribes chief rulers of the western seas, so that when Grania sailed away from her island home, with the sea-horse of O'Malley and the lions of O'Flaherty floating proudly fore and aft from the mast-heads of her galleys, the young sea-queen must have been a happy bride, and expected happy days in her new home at Bunowan Castle.

#### BUNOWAN.

Bunowan was at that time the chief castle of the O'Flahertys of Connemara. It was built near a small stream on the shore, and close to the old church of Ballindoon. There was an excellent harbour near at hand, sheltered from the west by the Hill of Doon, with deep water and good holding ground—just what Grania wanted. No doubt there were dangerous rocks and currents all round the entrance, but all these were well known to the natives, who could avoid them, but they were perilous to stranger craft, which would hardly venture to approach them, for there is no wilder coast all round the shores of Ireland, and there were then no lights either on Slyne Head or the Aran Islands. Hence, too, hostile galleys rarely ventured to approach that perilous rock-bound shore.

Regarding this marriage, Grania herself tells us in a business-like way that her first husband was called Donall “Ichoggy” O'Flaherty, and that during his life he was chieftain of the barony of Ballynahinch, containing twenty-four towns of four quarters of land to every town, paying the composition rent. After the death of her husband, Teige O'Flaherty, the eldest son of Sir Morogh O'Flaherty, entered into Ballynahinch, and ignoring the rights of the widow and her sons, “built therein a strong castle, and kept the same with the demesne lands of Ballynahinch for many years, until he was slain in the last rebellion of his father.” This was a hard hit at Sir Morogh na Doe, especially as the facts were undeniable.

#### HER CHILDREN—MURDER OF HER SON.

By this her first marriage with Donall an Chogaidh, Grania tells us she had two sons, Owen and Morogh. Her eldest son, Owen, was married to Catherine Burke,

daughter of Edmund Burke of Castlebar, by whom she had a son, Donall O'Flaherty, still living when she wrote. This Owen, she said, was always a good and loyal subject, in the time of Sir Nicholas Malby, and also under Sir Richard Bingham, until the Burkes of McWilliam's country and the Joyes began to rebel. Then Owen, for the better security of himself, his flocks and his herds, did, by direction of Sir R. Bingham, withdraw into a strong island. At the same time a strong force was sent under the lead of Capt. John Bingham (brother of Sir Richard) to pursue the rebels—the Joyes and others. But missing them, they came to the mainland—right against the said island—where her son was, calling for victuals, whereupon the said Owen came with a number of boats, and ferried all the soldiers over to the island, where they were entertained with the best cheer that could be provided. That very night Owen was apprehended by his guests, and tied with a rope together with eighteen of his chief followers. In the morning the soldiers drew out of the island 4,000 cows, probably by ropes, 500 stud mares and horses, and 1,000 sheep, leaving the rest of the poor people on the island naked and destitute. The soldiers then brought the prisoners and cattle to Ballynahinch, where John Bingham halted. The same evening he caused the eighteen prisoners to be hanged, amongst whom there was an old gentleman of four score and ten years, Theobald O'Toole by name. The next night a false alarm was raised in the camp at midnight, when Owen O'Flaherty, who was lying fast bound in the tent of Captain Grene O'Molloy, a follower of Bingham's, was murdered with twelve deadly wounds, and so miserably ended his life. Her second son, she adds, Morogh O'Flaherty, is now living, and is married to Honora Burke of Derrymacloghney, of the Maghera Reagh, Co. Galway.

This murder of Owen O'Flaherty, eldest son of Grania Uaile, is one of the ugliest deeds of Bingham's black record in Connaught. It was not directly his own doing, but it was the doing of his brother and agent, Captain John Bingham. It was one of those utterly cruel and treacherous deeds which still tend to preserve bitter memories in the hearts of the western Gael.

Mr. Knox, in his paper on Grania in the Galway Archæological Journal, thinks that this isle of tragedy was Omey. I am inclined to think it was rather Innis-

turk, near Omey, for Omey could at any time be reached dry-shod at low water, or even at half-tide, but Innisturk has always a deep narrow channel between its shore and the mainland. The English account describes this channel as a "gut" of the sea, which is accurate enough.

#### CLARE ISLAND.

After the death of her husband, Donall O'Flaherty, Grania probably returned to Clare Island, where she felt most secure and most at home. Her sons were likely at fosterage, and it is probable she took her young daughter with her, for Bingham expressly tells us that the Devil's Hook of Corraun, their near neighbour in Clare Island, was her son-in-law. She doubtless made Clare Island her headquarters, and either built or strengthened the castle which still stands on a cliff over the little harbour. It was admirably situated close to the beach, on which her galleys were drawn up under her own eyes, so that when opportunity offered they were easily run down to the shore, and she would thus be ready to make her swoop on any part of the western coast without difficulty. With the Devil's Hook at Darby's Point or Kildavnet, and her cousins or nephews at Murrisk, and she herself at Clare, Grania held a very strong position against all her foes. But she was not content with one or two strongholds; she had at least half a dozen. At this time the Castle of Belclare was not in her hands. It belonged first to McLaughlin O'Malley, chief of the name, and then to Owen Thomas O'Malley, who dwelt there in 1593. There is reason to think that Grania had also the Castle beyond Louisburgh at Carramore, of which only traces now exist. It would be a useful stronghold to secure her passage to and from Clare Island. Then tradition connects her with the castle of Kildavnet, which she probably built to secure the passage through Achill Sound. It was thoroughly suited for that purpose, with deep water and secure anchorage against every wind and sea. Moreover, she took care to ally herself closely with the lord on the other side. This was Richard Burke, whom the Dublin officials called the Devil's Hook, which was an attempt at translating his Irish nick-name, Deamham an Chorain, the Demon of Corraun, because he was lord of that wild promontory, and I daresay, always

ready for any wild deed. Grania gave her daughter in marriage to this Devil's Hook, so between them they were well able to hold command of Achill Sound and Clew Bay. It is likely she gave him the ward of the Castle of Kildavnet. But she was not content with commanding the south entrance. From her castle of Doona, which, it is said, she seized by stratagem, she held control of the whole of Blacksod Bay, for Doona was situated on the seashore of Ballycroy, close to the Ferry, looking out over the noble Bay, due west, to where the Blackrock light house now stands. Doona is now the mere remnant of a ruin, with its stones scattered amongst the sand hills by that desolate shore.

#### HER SECOND MARRIAGE.

But Grania was not content with all these castles. She also got possession of Carrigahowley—more politely called Rockfleet—in this way. It appears that it belonged to Richard Burke, as sub-tenant to the Earl of Ormond, commonly called Richard an Iarainn, or as the English writers call him Richard in Iron, because he always wore a coat of mail. His mother was an O'Flaherty, and so he was closely connected with the family of her late husband, and he resolved to marry the young and enterprising widow; nor was Grania unwilling, for so she would become mistress of Carrigahowley, which suited her well. She became, in fact, both master and mistress, for Sir Henry Sydney, the Deputy, tells us, that when he came to Galway in 1576, there came to visit him there "a most famous feminine Sea-Captain called Grania O'Malley, and she offered her services to me wherever I would command her, with three galleys and 200 fighting men, either in Ireland or in Scotland. She brought with her her husband, for she was, as well by sea as by land, more than master's mate to him. He was of the Nether Burkes, and now I hear is McWilliam Eighter, called by nickname Richard in Iron."

The Deputy clearly saw that Grania was master both on land and sea, but he made a knight of Richard in Iron, which greatly pleased that worthy himself, and Grania also, for she was now Lady Burke, although we never heard of her being called by that name, either in history or fiction.

#### HER GALLEYS.

This passage also shows that Grania had several large galleys, capable of carrying sixty or seventy men each, with twenty or thirty oarsmen to work them. At that time there were plenty of oak woods at Murrisk, which supplied material in abundance, and she doubtless had also skilled shipwrights to work it. Then she had at Carrigahowley an excellent harbour, the best on Clew Bay—safe, deep, and well-sheltered; and Grania fully appreciated these advantages. With such a fleet at her disposal, well manned, and well equipped too from the spoils of the sea, Grania was more than able to hold her own against all comers, even against the much larger English vessels which dare not follow her into the creeks and island channels of Clew Bay. I am inclined to think that she and her seamen were not very scrupulous in differentiating their enemies; in fact she tells us herself, in reply to the Government interrogatories, that her former trade for many years was what she calls "maintenance by land and sea"; that is, she lifted and carried off whatever came handy on sea or shore from Celt or Saxon. We know for certain that she raided Aranmore more than once, and even the great Earl of Desmond's territory at the mouth of the Shannon.

#### TAKEN PRISONER.

But there she came to grief, for having landed a party apparently near Tarbert on the Shannon, to raid the Earl's country, she was taken prisoner by the Earl, who first put her in his own dungeon, and then handed her over to Drury, the President of Munster, by whom she was imprisoned, in all for nearly eighteen months. She was then sent on to the Lord Deputy, who met her at Leighlin Bridge, from which he sent her on to Dublin, but when he came himself to Dublin he released Grania, for whom he felt some admiration, and allowed her to return once more to the West. The Lord Deputy on this occasion describes her as governing a country of the O'Flahertys, which is probably a mistake for the O'Malleys, for Grania was certainly at that time the wife of Sir Richard Burke, but they lived mostly apart—he warring on the land, and she chiefly on the sea.

## CARRIGAHOWLEY CASTLE.

Grania was not long returned from her Dublin prison when she began again to raid her neighbours from her castle of Carrigahowley, whereupon Captain William Martin was sent with a strong body of troops by sea to besiege the castle. This was in 1579. They set out on the 8th March, and spent three weeks before the castle, but the gallant Grania beat them off, and was very nearly capturing the whole band. There is probably, we may infer from this, some truth in the popular tradition that Grania held the castle for herself, and sometimes drove away even her own husband from its walls. The castle was finely situated on the bank of a small stream at the very head of the Bay, so that at high water the tide flowed over the rock on which it stood, and lapped its very walls. If Grania was hard pressed on the land side, she could easily escape by sea, and retreat to Clare Island or elsewhere. And if pursued closely on sea, she could retreat to her castle, from which the foe would keep a respectful distance, for it was protected by heavy guns mounted on its battlements, which her devoted clansmen knew well how to use, as Captain Martin learned to his cost.

## GRANIA POLITIC.

Yet Grania was politic, and was always ready to pay her respects in person, and yield fitting obedience to the Deputy or his Governors. Sir Nicholas Malby, the Governor before Bingham, came down here to Westport, and put up at the Castle of "Ballyknock," which I take to be the old castle of Baun, near Pigeon Point. Iron Richard was in trouble at the time, and fled to some of the islands, where the Governor could not reach him, but Grania with some of her kinsmen visited Malby, promised all submission and obedience, and got off both herself and her husband with flying colours. Two years later, in October, 1582, the same Sir Nicholas Malby writes that "McWilliam (her husband) and many other gentlemen and their wives, amongst whom is Grania O'Malley, who thinketh herself no small lady, are at present assembled to make a plot for continuing the quietness." Malby was a kind-hearted Governor, and they were not disposed

to cause him much trouble. Next year Theobald Dillon went down to Tirawley to collect the Government rents which McWilliam had agreed to pay when he was knighted. "McWilliam," Dillon says, "and his wife, Grania ni Maille, met me with all their forces, and did swear that they would have my life for coming so far into their country, and especially his wife would have fought with me before she was half a mile near me." They yielded, however, when they saw the 150 horse with Dillon, and gave him his rent and also 30 beeves, with other provisions, for the soldiers. Moreover, McWilliam and Grania both went off to meet Sir Nicholas, and agreed to pay him the £600 arrears due upon their country, which, adds the writer, "they had never thought to pay." Small blame to Grania to evade payment if she could; but she was as politic as she was brave, and was always ready to temporise in presence of a power superior to her own—and, in my opinion, she was quite right.

## AGAIN A WIDOW.

It would appear that Iron Richard, Grania's second husband, died in 1583, and was succeeded as McWilliam by another Richard Burke, described as "of Newtown" in Tirawley. Grania was now a second time a widow, and, as she bitterly complained seven years later, got no share of the lands of either of her late husbands, "as by the customs of the country the widow was entitled to nothing but the restitution of her dower," which very often could not be recovered at all, because the dower itself was spent, and the security for its repayment was worthless. But she was by no means without resources. Her sons of the second marriage, to whom she appears to have been greatly devoted, were doubtless at this period at fosterage with some of the Burkes, and caused her no anxiety or expense. The eldest son was called Theobald or Tibbot na Long, so called because he was born at sea, perhaps during one of his mother's many raids in the western seas. It would appear that later on his mother brought the youth to London to visit the Queen, and also with the hope of procuring a peerage for him—for was he not as good a Burke as the Earl of Clanrickard, or any of the peers of the Pale? And as a fact the peerage was conferred at a later date, not, how-

ever, by Elizabeth, but by Charles I., when Tibbot of the Ship became first Viscount Mayo, the ancestor of an illustrious but unfortunate line.

#### GRANIA IN REBELLION.

Grania being again a widow was once more free to set up at her old trade, and lost no time in doing so. It would appear she now made Carrigahowley her headquarters. The cruelty and greed of Sir R. Bingham drove the Mayo Burkes into rebellion in 1586; and the murder of her eldest son, already described, caused Grania to give her sympathies, and, to some extent, her help to the rebels. Her own statement is that after the death of her last husband "she gathered together all her own followers, and with 1,000 head of cows and mares she departed" (no doubt from her husband's residence), and became a dweller in Carrigahowley at Burrishoole, parcel of the Earl of Ormond's lands in Connaught (which she or her late husband rented from him). After the murdering of her son Owen, the rebellion being then in Connaught, Sir Richard Bingham granted her letters of protection against all men, and willed her to remove from her late dwelling at Burrishoole, and come and dwell under him (somewhere near Donomona or Castlebar). In her journey as she travelled she was encountered by five bands of soldiers under the leading of John Bingham (who had already caused her son to be murdered), and thereupon she was apprehended and tied with a rope—both she and her followers; at the same instant they were spoiled of their said cattle, and of all that they ever had besides the same, and brought to Sir Richard, who caused a new pair of gallows to be made for her last funeral, when he thought to end her days; but she was set at liberty on the hostage and pledge of one Richard Burke, otherwise called the 'Devil's Hook'—that is, Richard of Corraun, her own son-in-law."

"When she did rebel," she adds, "fear compelled her to fly by sea to Ulster, and there with O'Neill and O'Donnell she stayed three months, her galleys in the meantime having been broken by a storm. She returned then to Connaught, and in Dublin received her Majesty's gracious pardon through Sir John Perrott, six years ago, and was so made free. Ever since she dwelleth in

Connaught, a farmer's life, very poor, bearing cess, and paying her Majesty's composition rent, having utterly given over her former trade of maintenance by land and sea."

This was written in July, 1593, when Grania must have been well over sixty years of age; nevertheless, she wrote a letter later on to Burghley asking him to procure "her Majesty's letter under her hand authorising her to pursue during her life all her Majesty's enemies by land and sea." This was, no doubt, a bit of a bounce for the old widow, who merely meant to gain favour with Elizabeth. We do not know the year of her death. It was probably about the time that Elizabeth herself died, in 1603.

There are three points connected with the history of Grania Uaile which are more open to discussion than any of the afore-mentioned authentic incidents, and these are: (1) How far was she responsible for the murder of any of the shipwrecked Spaniards of the Armada cast away in Clew Bay? (2) Did she really visit Queen Elizabeth at Hampton Court? (3) Did she really carry off the heir of St. Laurence of Howth, and restore him only on conditions?

#### THE WRECK OF THE ARMADA.

With reference to the first point, I can find no indications in the State Papers that Grania in any way maltreated the shipwrecked Spaniards, or handed them over to be butchered by Bingham. We are told by an eye-witness that one great ship was cast away in the estuary of the Moy near Killala; 72 of her crew were taken prisoners by William Burke of Ardnaree, who treated them badly; most of the rest were either slain or drowned; and one cruel savage, Melaughlen Mac an Abb by name, boasted that he killed 80 of the shipwrecked men with his own axe. Another ship was driven ashore at Ballycroy, where her crew, to the number of 400 or 600 men, began to fortify themselves apparently in the Castle of Doona; but they were taken off by one of their own ships shortly afterwards. Another great ship was wrecked on Clare Island; 68 of her crew were drowned or slain, "probably after landing, by Dubhdaire O'Malley, chief of the island, and his followers." The author of *A Queen of Men* makes this Dubhdaire Roe a nephew of Grania, which is probable enough; but



Grania herself appears to have had nothing whatever to do with this abominable crime ; nor does it appear that she was on the island at the time. Another account says that Don Pedro de Mendosa and 700 men were drowned in that wreck off Clare Island, and that Dubhdairé Roe O'Malley put, not 60, but 100 of the survivors to the sword. Comerford, the Attorney-General of Connaught, on September 13th wrote to Bingham that he stayed within view of another great ship at Pollilly by Torane, that her consort was wrecked and waterlogged close by, but the great ship after some delay took off her crew, and made sail to the south-west, having on board, it appears, the greatest man on the expedition, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the first noble of Spain, who succeeded in reaching Santander. The ship that grounded had on board, he adds, a store of great pieces—guns and other munitions—with wine and oil. This Torane appears to be the townland of Tooreen near the Old Head, and it would appear that the Duke's great ship was able to ride out the fierce storm of September 10th under shelter of the Old Head. No word of Grania here except one that would imply that she helped the Spaniards, not yet at Burrishoole, where two more of the Spanish ships were wrecked on the sand banks, and their crews either drowned or reserved for Bingham's shambles ashore. He caused 200 shipwrecked prisoners taken in Connemara to be butchered in Galway in one day, Saturday, and he rested on Sunday, "giving thanks to Almighty God for our deliverance."

#### THE VISIT TO LONDON.

It is quite clear from the State Papers, although not expressly stated, that Grania did visit London, and had an interview with Queen Elizabeth, probably in 1593. In July of that year she had petitioned the Queen and Burghley for maintenance, and begged the Minister to accept the surrender of her sons' lands—that is her sons by both husbands—and grant them a patent for their lands on surrender. She also asked her Majesty's license to prosecute all her Majesty's enemies with fire and sword—a bold demand for an old lady over sixty, with sons and grandsons ; but she knew it would please the Queen, and if granted would give her once more a

free hand on the western coasts. It was at this very time that Bingham, in a letter to the Privy Council, describes Grania as "a notable traitress, and the nurse of all the rebellions in the province for forty years." Grania renewed her petition to Burghley two years later (in 1595), "to be put in quiet possession of a third of the land of both her late husbands." She certainly went to London in 1593, in the month of August, as Bingham's letter of September 19th shows, and if she went to London, no doubt she saw the Queen and her Minister, for nothing else would or could have induced her to go there at all. Then Elizabeth and her Court would, no doubt, be very glad to see the rival Queen of the West in all her barbaric magnificence, accompanied by her wild attendants appparelled in native style. Unfortunately we have, so far as I know, no authentic account of this famous interview at Hampton Court. Popular writers, like the Halls, give free reign to their imagination in describing it, but it is all pure imagination. The two queens at this time were about the same age, and neither of them could be vain of her personal charms, for both were in the sere and yellow leaf. We may be sure they eyed each other with great curiosity, and took wondering note of each other's queenly raiment. The dialogue, too, must have been interesting, though doubtless carried on through an interpreter, for as Grania's husband, the late McWilliam knew no English, but was well skilled in Latin and Irish, we may fairly conclude that Grania, too, had no Beurla. There is reason to think that the English Queen granted Grania her requests, and sent her home rejoicing.

#### ABDUCTION OF THE HEIR OF HOWTH.

Grania, as she always preferred, travelled by sea, and on her homeward voyage landed, it is said, at Howth, no doubt to procure supplies. Tired of the sea, and perhaps hungry too, she sought admission to Howth Castle during the dinner hour, but she found all the doors closed, and was not admitted to the Castle. This was not the Irish hospitality that Grania was accustomed to in the West, so she was wrathful, and happening to meet the young heir of Howth with his nurse in the grounds, she carried off the boy to her galley, and made all sail straightway for Clew Bay. The Lord of Howth,

great nobleman as he was, found it necessary to come to terms with Grania, and the child was restored, not on ransom, but on condition of the Lord of Howth promising to keep his door open during dinner, and have a cover always set for the chance wayfarer by land or sea. More power to Grania for teaching them that lesson of hospitality! Such is the story, of which the strongest proof is the fact that this custom has been for centuries undoubtedly observed at Howth Castle, and that a picture in the Castle Hall depicts the whole scene of Grania's exploit; but there is no really authentic evidence of the truth of the story. Mr. Knox in his paper declares that it is borrowed from a really authentic incident recorded by McFirbis in his Great Book of Genealogies. McFirbis though writing only some 60 years later than Grania's time, makes no reference to this alleged abduction of the heir of Howth by Grania, but he does narrate the fact that Richard O'Cuairse Burke, who was McWilliam from 1469 to 1479, "carried off the Lord of Benn Edair that is Howth, and brought him away to far Tirawley, and there nought else was required for his ransom but to keep the door of his court open at dinner time." Mr. Knox thinks this authentic story was transferred from the McWilliam of the fifteenth century to Grania at the end of the sixteenth. Yet, after all, why should not both stories be true? Grania might have heard her husband who was great great grandson of Richard O'Cuairse, tell the story of that chief's exploit, and that knowledge would just naturally induce her to follow his example in similar circumstances.

I think I have given you all the authentic information obtainable concerning the Queen of Clew Bay, except perhaps one incident recorded by Bingham in 1590, when, he says, at the instigation of the O'Flahertys, "with two or three baggage boats full of knaves," she landed on Aranmore and spoiled two or three tenants of Sir Thomas Le Strange—who, we may add, had most unjustly got a grant of the island. But Bingham adds that "he heard the Devil's Hook, her son-in-law, had her in hands with a view to induce her to restore the spoils and repair the harms."

There are, as you know, many living traditions about Grania and her doing still lingering about Clew Bay, but I cannot now refer to them in detail. I should

greatly wish, however, to see them collected and embodied in a consecutive narrative. It is not quite certain where she was buried—some say at Burrishoole; others say in the old Abbey on Clare Island, which is more probable, and the islanders, as you know, still point out her grave there.

I cannot undertake to say that she was a paragon of virtue or piety; but she was a good mother and faithful wife, and her frequent raids on her enemies would not at all prevent her from being recognised as a good Christian in those wild days. At any rate she had all her castles near to some church or religious house. Murrisk Abbey was not far from Belclare or Carramore, and was founded by her ancestors for the monks of St. Augustine, so early as the middle of the thirteenth century. The "lone grey abbey by the sea," on Clare Island was also founded by her ancestors for the good Carmelites about 1224—and it was only a short mile or so from the castle on the beach. Then she had the Dominican Convent of Burrishoole, founded by the Burkes, quite near her castle of Carrigahowley; and she had the old church of Kildavnet, near her castle on Achill Sound. So when Grania wanted spiritual advice and absolution she had not far to go to find a confessor, and one, too, who would not be too hard on her for pillaging the Saxons and their adherents. It is fully 300 years since she died, but her memory still lives around the shores and islands of Clew Bay, and will outlive the memory of all her contemporaries. Every guide book tells some more or less fantastic stories about her; every tourist wishes to see her castles, especially on Clare Island and Carrigahowley. She has been the heroine of at least three novels by distinguished writers; one of the greatest of our Irish poets, Sir Samuel Ferguson, has left us a fine poem descriptive of her life on Clew Bay; our antiquarians write papers about her history; and grave prelates like myself make her the subject of popular lectures. I might have hesitated myself to take Grania as the subject of this lecture, but a greater Archbishop of Tuam made Grania the subject of a very stirring poem of which at least some stanzas may be found in the life of the illustrious John McHale by O'Reilly. The latter describes John of Tuam as pausing awhile from his battles with recreant statesmen and false patriots, for-

getting the sorrows of the past and the portents of the present, to call up and sing the praises of the heroine who faced and braved Elizabeth's wrath in London—he might have said more truly who for forty years had faced and braved Elizabeth's wrath on the shores of Clew Bay. Grania Uaile is no unworthy representative of what Ireland once was, and still might be, if she could once more launch her vessels on the main. Here are some of the Archbishop's stanzas about Grania :

One night as oppressed with soft slumbers I lay,  
And dreamed of Old Erin oft thought of by day,  
With the long, wasting wars between Saxon and Gael,  
Up rose the bright vision of fair Grania Uaile.

Old Erin's green mantle around her was flung,  
Adown her fair shoulders the rich tresses hung,  
Her eyes like the sun of the young morning shone,  
Whilst her harp sent forth strains of the days that are gone.

Of Erin's fair daughters a circle was seen,  
Each one with her distaff surrounding the Queen,  
Whose sweet vocal chorus was heard to prolong  
The soul stirring anthems of harp and of song.

To Erin what shame and lasting disgrace  
That her sons should be crushed by a vile foreign race,  
Who have banished her priests and polluted her fanes,  
And turned to a desert her beautiful plains!

The great Archbishop then, by a large stretch of poetic license, represents Grania as denouncing the payment of tithes, and foretelling a brighter future for Ireland :

When the dark reign of terror had come to its close,  
And a period is put to its crimes and its woes,  
Not leaving a record its trophies to tell,  
But the cairn of rude stones where the Tithe Demon fell.

I am proud to note that my illustrious predecessor felt a similar interest to that which I feel in the great career of Grania Uaile. In her own person she typifies the unending struggle for Faith and Fatherland which ever goes on in Ireland. In her own day, and with her own weapons by land and sea, as Bingham said, for more than forty years she fought a stubborn fight on the shores and islands of Clew Bay. Her memory still clings as close as their sheltering ivy to the old castles that she built. No student of the past will ever sail over

the glorious expanse of Clew Bay without thinking of Grania Uaile, and I honestly believe that when the statesmen and politicians of our own time are dead and forgotten, the memory of the Queen of Clew Bay will still be green in the hearts of the men of the West ; yea, as long as the holy mountain of St. Patrick stands in its place of pride, looking down like a guardian angel on that beautiful bay with its myriad islands, which Grania kept so stoutly and loved so well.

Almost everything around Clew Bay is associated with her memory. Her undying presence still haunts its shores and islands. In the words of a great poet, slightly changed, it may be said that :—

The waters murmur of her name,  
The woods are peopled with her fame ;  
The silent abbey, lone and grey,  
Claims kindred with her sacred clay ;  
Her spirit wraps the dusky mountain,  
Her memory sparkles o'er the fountain,  
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,  
Rolls mingling with her fame for ever.

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