

Dungannon -

BISHOP GEORGE MONTGOMERY (1569 – 1621)

HELEN MEEHAN

THE ACT OF UNIFORMITY

The maxim "Cuius regio euis religio" prevailed in post reformation Europe. Elizabeth I succeeded to the English throne in 1558 and in 1560 the Act of Uniformity and Supremacy restored the protestant faith there and in the parts of Ireland where the Queen's writ could be upheld.¹

A protestant archbishop had been appointed to Armagh after the reformation but the changes didn't apply to much of Ulster where the Gaelic Chiefs still held sway. The Elizabethan administration in Ireland, however, was determined to extend religious as well as temporal control over the whole island of Ireland. Toward the end of the Nine Years' War, which was waged in Ulster from 1594 – 1603, Henry Docwra, Chief Commander and Governor of the Crown forces at Lough Foyle, established bases behind the Irish lines at Culmore and Dunnaalong.²

In March 1601 Docwra's forces surrounded a house in Cumber where the Catholic Bishop of Derry, Dr. Réamonn O'Gallagher O.F.M. was staying and hacked him to death. The Armagh see was vacant from the death of Dr. Edmund McGauran in 1594 and Clogher had no Bishop from the death of Cornelius McArdle in 1592.

In 1604 the King nominated a bishop to the vacant diocese of Derry and Clogher. He also included Raphoe where the Catholic bishop Niall O'Boyle, who was under the protection of Rory O'Donnell Earl of Tyrconnel, still ministered to his people. The nominee was George Montgomery, then Dean of Norwich in England.³

THE MONTGOMERY FAMILY⁴

Montgomery is a toponymic – the place from which it derives being a town called Montgomerie in the Southern part of the Diocese of Lisieux in Normandy. A Roger de Montgomerie was Count there in the ninth century. A descendant, also named Roger, was second in command to William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. William created him Earl of Shrewsbury and he got lands that were

- 1 Helen Meehan in "The Early 17th Century and Rory O'Donnell" in *Donegal Annual* 2006, p. 57.
- 2 Docwra H, narration of the services done by the Army employed to Lough Foyle under the leading of Me Sir Henry Docwra Knight. Docwra's relation of service done in Ireland. B. L. Mss.. No 357.f.. 235, b
- 3 Helen Meehan in "When Raphoe First had two Bishops" in *Donegal Annual* 2002, p. 83.
- 4 Helen Meehan in "The Montgomerys, The Sinclairs & Drumbeg House" in *Donegal Annual* 1992, p. 52.

known as Montgomeryshire until recently.

A Philip de Montgomery went to Scotland with David I and there he married the daughter of the Earl of Dunbar. A descendant, Robert de Montgomery, got the lands in Eaglesham, Renfrew from Walter, First Sheriff of Scotland in the latter half of the twelfth century.

In the fourteenth century a descendant named John married Elizabeth, daughter and heir to Sir Hugh Eglinton, and thus the Baronies of Eglinton and Ardrossan came into the possession of the Montgomery family. Alexander was made a Lord of Parliament as Lord Montgomerie in 1448-49.

Robert, a brother of Alexander the second Lord, inherited from his grandfather the first Lord, the Lairdship of Kyle in Ayrshire. He was the first Laird of Braidstone. The fifth Laird, Adam, married his kinswoman Margaret, daughter of John Montgomery of Hessilhead. Two of their family – Hugh, the eldest, and George, who entered into Holy Orders, played a leading part in laying the foundation of the family's fortunes in Ireland.

The eldest son, Hugh, became Lord of the Ards, Co. Down, the second, George, became first Bishop of the Established Church in the North West.



Portrait in the Vestry of Clogher Cathedral by permission of
Rt. Rev. Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher, C. of I.

GEORGE MONTGOMERY⁵

George was born in Braidstone about the year 1569. He attended a university, possibly Glasgow College, where his eldest brother had spent some time, and had graduated by March 1596 when James VI identified him as a 'magister' or university graduate, and asked Queen Elizabeth of England to endenizen him as one of her subjects.

In 1598 he was appointed Rector of Chedzoy or Chedder in Somerset. George spent a lot of time in London and was frequently in

⁵ Helen Meehan *Donegal Annual* 2002, p. 84.

touch with James VI keeping him informed of all matters at court which might have effect on James' succession to the English throne. When Elizabeth died George and brother Hugh were in the party that travelled from Scotland to London with James, his family and his court. James appointed him one of his chaplains and provided him with a living of £200 per annum. He also appointed him Dean of Norwich in England in June 1603. In the Montgomery Manuscripts these times were justly referred to as "Happy Days".⁶

Because of the close connections which Dean Montgomery had with the King at that time the Church of Ireland archbishop of Armagh, Dr. Ussher, and a number of his Episcopal colleagues, employed the dean as their agent in James' court.

On the 15th February 1604 the King appointed George as Bishop of three dioceses in North West Ulster – Derry, Raphoe and Clogher.⁷ But George didn't leave London en route to Ireland until August 1606. During this time Arthur Chichester, who was appointed Lord Deputy in February 1605 and was an aspirant to the proposed Presidency of Ulster, as well as Sir John Davies (Solicitor General for Ireland (1603-1606) and Attorney General from May 1606); were complaining of his delay in coming to promote "the spiritual welfare of his diocese and its peoples". Indeed, Davies expressed the pious hope that George would be a new St. Patrick among the Irish.

Bishop George took up residence in Derry in October 1606 and immediately set about recovering the church land from anyone – Irish or English – who had possession of them with such energy that those who complained of his delay in coming had cause very soon to report their zeal in this matter.⁸

SURVEYS

James I was most anxious to extend the Established Church to Ulster. One of Bishop George's first tasks was to do a survey and make recommendations to the King. The full title of the work:

"The present estate of the Primacy of Armagh, and of the Bishopricks of Derry, Rapho, and Clougher, and of Kilmore, in the province of Ulster within the Kingdom of Ireland, with certayne motions unto his majesty, for restoring the sayd Byshopshricks, erection of parish churches and seminaries of learning withing the sady province, and the reasons moving thereunto"...

6 Hill, Rev. George. The Montgomery Manuscripts (1603-1706) compiled from family papers by William Montgomery of Rosemount, Esquire. Edited with notes by Rev. Hill. Volume 1, Belfast 1869, p. 19. William was a grand nephew of Bishop George. Parts of the Montgomery manuscripts were presented in the Belfast Newsletter in 1785/86 and again in 1822.

7 H. A. Jeffries in "George Montgomery First Bishop of Clogher" in *Clogher Record* 1999, p. 127.

8 Helen Meehan in *Donegal Annual* 1992.

is usually shortened to Montgomery's Survey. The Diocese of Derry, unlike Clogher, is fully surveyed. The survey in Raphoe concerned the clergy and their linguistic abilities, or lack of them. Rory O'Donnell is listed among the important men in the diocese – this shows that the survey was compiled before the Flight of the Earls, which occurred on 14th September 1607.⁹

The Bishop then submitted six motions to the King. His first request was that all of the former church lands be awarded to the Church of Ireland Bishops. Secondly, he wanted church lands which had mistakenly been declared as forfeit to the crown since the attainder of the Irish lords be awarded to the bishops. Thirdly, he asked the King to endow all of the parish churches in the escheated counties with a convenient glebe derived from non-church lands confiscated by the crown. Fourthly, he recommended that the offices of rector and vicar be united in each parish so that the incumbent would enjoy two thirds of the parish tithes, the remaining third to be retained by the bishop, in order that the minister would have a sufficient income from the tithes and his glebe. Fifthly, Montgomery asked that the British undertakers and the 'natives' be obliged to pay their tithes in kind, 'due to the church by the law of God and man'.

His final proposal was the grammar schools should be established in suitable places in Ulster for students who could not afford to attend Trinity College in Dublin. These were to be supported by grants of land at the Plantation.¹⁰

The Bishop also provided the King with eleven reasons to adopt his motions- the more interesting of them being-

5 – It wilbe the King his honor as well as the good of the church that the Prelats being Barons of Parliament lyve not in want and misery, which will force them to use base and undue meanes for their maintenance, and make them abiect and of lesse authoritie with the people, having no convenient meanes to mayntayne hospitalitie according to the dignitie of their places, which is much expected and esteemed by the natives if that contrey, and is of much force to wym them, whereof I have had good experience.

8 – The King hath also a grater interest in those Church lands then in any other temporall lands granted to undertakers, the disposition of them being still in his owne hands after the death or translation of any Byshop, whereas the temporall lands, by

9 George Montgomery in "the ancient estate of the bishoprics of Derry, Raphoe and Clogher" in T. F. Colby (ed) *Ordnance survey of the county of Londonderry*, i, Templemore Dublin 1837, p. 51.

10 Hill, Rev. George - *A Historical Account of the Plantation in Ulster at the Commencement of the 17th Century (1601-1620)* Belfast 1877, p. 105.

the first grant unto the undertaker, is absolutely passed from the Crown for ever, unless by attainder they revert."

THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE PLANTATION¹²

Bishop George industriously pursued his objectives of getting back all church lands mentioned in his motions to the King. He joined the Commissioners of the Plantation in Derry both at Coleraine and Limavady in August 1609. At Dungannon on the 23rd of that month he noted that in Tirone (Tyrone) "*The proportion of land thought fit to the allowed unto parishe Churches for glebe of Tirone is 96 balleboes, and the whole ecclesiastical land in that countye is but 300 balliboes, to be devyded between the Primat of Armagh and the Byshops of Derry and Clougher*" while the temporal land in the county exceeded 1200 balliboes. One of the principal aims of the commissioners was to differentiate between the temporal and ecclesiastical or termon lands in the escheated counties of Ulster.

After leaving Derry the Commissioners went to Liffer (Lifford) and during September they also visited Fermanagh and Cavan. The Church lands of Fermanagh were awarded to the Bishop of Clogher while the Bishop of Kilmore got the Church lands of Cavan.

After the Commissioners returned to Dublin they were ordered to London to report to James I. Montgomery travelled to a conference in London and on 16th March 1610 he answered questions on behalf of Dr. Ussher, archbishop of Armagh and the other bishops. He was able to satisfy the conference on his proposals for the church lands – indeed he was said to have more interest in the matter than the Primate himself.

The final document was signed on behalf of the Church by Bishop Montgomery and by Mr Ussher, son of the Primate. Among the signatories on behalf of the King were Sir John Davies, Treasurer of War Sir Thomas Ridgeway and Sir James Fullerton.

CHURCH LANDS¹³

The church in Ireland from ancient times owned substantial amounts of land – its income was used to support clergy and what we today would call parochial purposes. The erenagh or herenagh was in charge of these lands and was responsible for their management. This position was hereditary and often the same sept held the office in a particular parish for centuries. Many of the clergy were drawn from this class as well as from other land owning septs. Some of the land of each parish belonged to the Bishop – this was known as See Land – land for the upkeep of the parochial clergy is usually called Glebe land in Plantation documents and in the Calendar of State Papers. In the troubled

11 George Montgomery in "The Ancient Estate of the bishoprics of Derry, Raphoe and Clogher" in ordnance survey of the County of Londonderry (Dublin), p. 54.

12 George Hill in *The Plantation of Ulster*, pp. 170-171.

13 Helen Meehan in *Donegal Annual* 2002, p. 86.

conditions of the late 16th century and early 17th century much of the Church lands and the income from them had fallen into the hands of opportunistic officials, both Catholic and non Catholic.

Bishop George immediately set about recovering these lands. He sued Sir Cahir O'Doherty of Innishowen for tennison lands that O'Doherty held beside Lough Swilly in the parish of Fahan. He issued warrants to Rory O'Donnell who had been promised custodian of the lands of dissolved monasteries in the patent issued to him by the King in February 1604. Rory never got any of the monastery lands.

In his efforts to regain the church land he claimed from Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, the Bishop got assistance from Donal Ballagh O'Cahan. O'Cahan entered into an agreement with Bishop Montgomery, offering to reveal to him the church lands in Tyrone's estates, on condition that Montgomery would secure him against O'Neill's vengeance, and assist him in obtaining a grant of his own lands from the crown, thus relieving him in future from that chieftain's power.

During his proceedings of this purpose, Tyrone remonstrated, saying "My Lord, you have two or three bishopricks, and yet you are not content with them, but seek the lands of my earldom." "Your earldom" replied Montgomery, "is swollen so big with the lands of the church that it will burst if it be not vented."

Montgomery complained to the King that the Earl of Tyrone laboured to swallow up the whole Bishopric of Derry. In May 1607 Tyrone wrote to the King of how *His majesty had restored him to such lands and he and his ancestors had enjoyed in her late Majesty's and her predecessors' times, excepting sir Henry Oge O'Neill's country and Sir Turlough M'Henrie O'Neills country, and certain other parcels of land reserved to His Highness. But now there are many that seek to deprive him of the greatest part of the residue; for the Lord Bishop of the Derry not only claims for himself lands whereunto none of his predecessors ever made claim, but also sets on other to call into question that which never heretofore was doubted to be his (Tyrone's) and his 'ancestors'.* He concluded by begging the King to direct the Lord Deputy and Council, and his other officers and ministers, that he may be permitted to continue in such possession as he enjoyed before the last general troubles in her late Majesties time, until by ordinary course of law he shall be evicted.—Mellifont, 26 May 1607.¹⁴

In July 1607 the King informed O'Neill and O'Cahan that the case would be heard in London during the Michaelmas term. This was one of the events which precipitated the Flight of the Earls which took place on 14th September 1607.¹⁵

Meanwhile the Bishop was busy seeking the return of church lands

14 George Hill in "The Montgomery Manuscripts".

15 James I to Chichester, 16 July 1607 (Cal. S.P. Ire., 1606-8, pp 220-22).

from English settlers. Captain Basil Brooke had detained a grange at Inch in Innishowen and also church lands in Clonmany and Conleigh. Captain Brooke had to surrender the lands. Captain Henry Vaughan detained the land at Clooney in Derry which he also had to surrender to the bishop.

The Bishop claimed the church lands of Derry – which included the site of the cathedral, parochial church graveyards and the Bishop's residence from Sir. George Paulet, Governor of Derry – Paulet however had bought these lands from Sir Henry Docwra who had captured Derry after landing at Lough Foyle in May 1600 – this landing and Docwra's strategy of dividing the Irish sub-chiefs marked the turning point in "The Nine Years War". See John McGurk's *Sir Henry Docwra-Derry's Second Founder* (Dublin, 2006)

Derry was intended to be the main British stronghold in the Plantation and both the Lord Deputy Chichester and Earl of Salisbury – Chief English Minister of James I did not want a confrontation on the issue. They recommended to the King that Montgomery be given the diocese of Meath in the more affluent and more Anglicised province of Leinster and a more amenable bishop be appointed to Derry.¹⁶

The success of the Bishop's endeavours to amass lands are to be seen in the following figures. In G. Hill's *Plantation of Ulster* we find the following "Note of the Number of Acres allotted to the Bishops and Incumbents" which in some points are not altogether correct according to later historians of the Plantation.

	Acres
<i>In Tirone</i>	— 18,275
<i>The bishops have ...</i>	
<i>The incumbents have, after the number of 60</i>	
<i>Acres for each 1,000 acres</i>	— 5,880
<i>In Coleraine</i>	
<i>The bishops</i>	— 6,390
<i>The incumbents</i>	— 2,040
<i>In Tirconnell</i>	
<i>The bishops</i>	— 12,752
<i>The incumbents</i>	— ??
<i>In Fermanagh</i>	
<i>The bishops</i>	— 3,022
<i>The incumbents</i>	— 1,920
<i>In Cavan</i>	
<i>The bishops</i>	— 3,366
<i>The incumbents</i>	— 2,340
<i>In Armagh</i>	
<i>The bishops</i>	— 2,480
<i>The incumbents</i>	— 4,650
<i>In all- Bishops, 5</i>	— 45,905
<i>Incumbents, 310</i>	— 23,940

16 Henry A. Jeffries "George Montgomery First Protestant Bishop of Derry (1605-10)" in H. A. Jeffries and C. Devlin (eds.), *History of the diocese of Derry from Earliest Times* (Dublin 1999), p. 157.

According to the Carew Manuscripts: "Church lands escheated to the Crown in Ulster, which the Bishops claim as their demesnes in possession, amount to 39,921½ acres, viz., in Tyrone, 18,725 acres; in Coleraine, 6,090 acres; in Tirconnell, 9,168 acres; in Fermanagh, 3,022 acres; and in Cavan, 3,366 acres. Of these lands the Bishop of Derry claims as belonging to his three bishoprics of Derry, Clogher and Raphoe, 27,280 acres, viz., in Tirone, 9,000 acres; in Coleraine, 6,090 acres; in Tirconnell, 9,168 acres; in Fermanagh, 3,022 acres; besides, in Monaghan, he claims at least 5,000 acres – making in all 32,280 acres". In the foregoing note there are no termon or herenagh lands mentioned in connection with the county of Armagh, but it is not, therefore, to be inferred that the primate had no share in this great spoil, for in his diocese there were no fewer than 27,120 acres". The following statement on this subject is preserved among the Carew Manuscripts:- "The Quantity of the Bishops' demesne and mensal lands, and of the Errenagh and Termon lands within the escheated counties of Ulster. Demesne and mensal lands, viz. The Archbishop of Ardmagh, 3,390 acres; the Bishop of Derry, 428 acres; Raphoe, 3,728 acres; Clogher, 320 acres; Kilmore, 120 acres. The Erenagh and Termon lands viz. in the diocese of Armagh, 27,120 acres; Derry, 17,619 acres; Clogher 6,625 acres; Raphoe 6,378 acres; Kilmore 3,204 acres; and Ardagh, 24 acres. In all, 68,956 mensal, termon and herenagh lands".¹⁷

Bishop George was also anxious to obtain the Church's share of another source of wealth in the early 17th century – fisheries. According to the Project of Plantation the Lord Bishop of Derry claimeth one day's fishing, viz., the second Monday after Midsummer Day in the river of Bann, and likewise the fishing of the Wear (weir) or Ballimasse, near Bushmills. As well as the lands of the Archbishop of Armagh and the Bishop of Derry the fisheries of Lough Foyle were also mentioned at the Inquisition at Dungannon (23rd August 1609). The fisheries of the Foyle and the Bann were a source of periodic quarrels between successive Derry Bishops and the Honourable Irish Society, which with the London Companies got huge grants to create the new shire of Londonderry.¹⁸

PLANTATION

George Hill in his *Plantation of Ulster* wrote: whether the Primate, or the Bishop of Kilmore, made any efforts in bringing 'Britons' to Ulster, we cannot discover, but it is only justice to Bishop Montgomery to state that his zeal in planting his termon and herenagh lands was in proportion to their great extent, and that it continued as long as he lived. The Bishop thought that settling protestants on his lands was the best means of bringing civility and "true religion" to Ulster.

¹⁷ Calendar of Carew Manuscripts, sixth series, p. 40.

¹⁸ George Hill in "The Plantation of Ulster", p. 101.

In this the Bishop was using the same means as his brother Hugh, who had got possession of the third of the estate of Con O'Neill of Clandeboy in April 1605. Hugh had lost no time in settling his new land. He brought over many of his kinsmen who got estates and he also brought over many tenants. He had successfully colonized his lands before the official Plantation in 1609. Indeed it is said that the success of Hugh's Plantation was not lost on James I and his ministers, who realised that this method of plantation on an intensive scale seemed more likely to succeed than the earlier unsuccessful plantation of Laois/Offaly in the 1550s or the Munster Plantations of 1585-86.¹⁹

The Bishop had posters put up in many parts in Ayrshire as well as in Glasgow and Greenock telling at how easy rents he would set his church lands and this drew many families to the ports that traded with Scotland – Derry, Donegal and Killybegs. Many of his own kindred followed him to Ireland.

He appointed his kinsman Alex Montgomery as a prebend of Doe in the Barony of Kilmacrennan. Alexander belonged to the Hesselheid branch of the family. Its arms are on his tombstone at Doe. This Alex was the ancestor of several of the Irish branches of the family such as the Montgomerys of Beaulieu, Ballyleck, Bessmount, Braidrim and Convoy.

The Bishop appointed Hugh of Derrybrock receiver of his rent in part of Clogher diocese in Co. Fermanagh. Hugh was a son of James, second son of Adam John, 4th Laird of Braidstone. Hugh was ancestor of the Montgomerys of Blessingbourne.²⁰ Likewise, the ancestors of Field Marshall Montgomery of World War II fame were settled on church land in Killaghtee in South Donegal very early in the 17th century and thus availed of the Bishop's new measure to induce settlers to come. To further encourage planters on church lands the Bishop obtained the King's orders that all 31 year leases should not be taken from the planters or their posterity at the expiration of this term but renewed by paying their Bishop one year's rent for a renewal of their lease. As George Hill wrote "Thus by the Bishop's industry in a few years the plantation was forwarded and church revenues increased greatly".²¹

RELIGION

To fully understand the impact of Bishop George on Religion we would need to compare his "modus operandi" with other Bishops appointed by the Crown in the early 17th century and also see how he was viewed by the various denominations of the time. In the early 17th century there was no marked difference between the Established

19 Helen Meehan in *Donegal Annual* 1992, p. 53.

20 Helen Meehan in "The Montgomerys of Croghan and Convoy" *Donegal Annual* 2000, p. 77.

21 Helen Meehan in "Montgomery of Alamein and The Montgomerys of Moville" in *Donegal Annual* 1995, p. 9.

Church and dissenters – the first regularly constituted presbytery did not meet until 1642 at Carrickfergus.²² The ecclesiastical historian Professor Finlay Holmes summed up Bishop George's episcopacy in his *Irish Presbyterian Heritage*; "Montgomery was more energetic in providing for the temporalities of the church than in evangelising its Irish inhabitants – he took more pains to make the land protestant than the people".

His part in taking over the herenagh lands – many of the clergy came from the herenagh septs – made him unpopular with the Catholics. The Bishops co-Religionists were his severest critics. Sir John Davies found when in Monaghan in 1606 that all the buildings were in waste and that all the parishes were occupied by popish priests, at least some of whom would be ready to conform. However, he placed the blame for the state of affairs on George Montgomery, the bishop, and he commented:

*"When we had received this particular information, it was thought to meet to reserve it, and to suspend and stay all proceedings thereupon until the bishop of Derry, Raphoe and Clogher (which three dioceses comprehend the greatest part of Ulster, although they are united for one man's benefit) shall arrive out of England, whose absence, it being two years since he was elected by His Majesty, hath been the chief cause that no course hath been hitherto taken to reduce this poor people to Christianity."*²³

There was no great improvement in Clogher by 1622 – there were only nine protestant clergy in the diocese shortly after Bishop George's death.²⁴

Chichester also criticised the Bishop for being too much addicted to worldly affairs. However, Chichester himself had temporal interests as well as spiritual – when visiting Derry with the Commissioners in September 1609, he spent a weekend surveying Inishowen for which he received a patent in February 1610 and in Tyrone he received "the Manor of Dungannon, with the fort, castle, town and lands, water mills and water courses or Dungannon, alias Drumcoo ... Kenemele ... Gortmarron, Moycashell ... Mullaghmore, Mullaghedun ..." and twenty five additional townlands. Also "the house of the Franciscan Friary (founded by Con O'Neill in the fifteenth century) and four townlands belonging to it; Mullinahaye, Anagh, Mullaboy, and Killenamaddy."²⁵ His patent authorised him to continue Hugh O'Neill's Thursday market, and to hold two fairs, one on the Monday after the

22 W. R. Hutchinson in "Tyrone Precinct A History of the Plantation Settlement of Dungannon and Mountjoy to Modern Times", Belfast 1951, p. 51.

23 P. Livingstone in "The Monaghan Story", Enniskillen (1980), p. 106.

24 H. A. Jeffries in *Clogher Record* 1999, p. 129.

25 G. Hill in "Ulster Plantation", p. 173.

feast of the Apostles Phillip and James, and the day after" and the other "on the Monday after the feast of St. Michael the Archangel" with a court of pie powder. By the end of 1610 Chichester owned 144 townlands in Ulster, including Belfast where he built the splendid manor house of Joy Mount.²⁶

Chichester had already issued a proclamation (July 1605) which insisted that all conform to the established religion, that all priests and Jesuits leave the country and that the Book of Common Prayer be translated into the Irish language.

Bishop Brutus Babington was appointed to Derry in 1610 when Montgomery was transferred to Meath. Babington complained that Montgomery had not even introduced the Book of Common Prayer in Derry. For a short time after the O'Doherty Rebellion (1609) Bishop George had turned his attention to religious matters near his home in Derry where mass was still being celebrated in the Dominican Friary. He tried hard to persuade Sean O'Lynn, the very elderly prior, to embrace Protestantism and to use the Book of the Common Prayer. When his efforts at persuasion failed he warned the friar not to celebrate mass again – or he would have him hanged! Prior O'Lynn was indeed hanged in Derry later that year, as was his brother Liam, another Dominican.

His attempts failed and we have no reports of any further efforts being made there to change either priests or people. Maybe he was too busy seeing to the temporal affairs of his dioceses to do so. Or maybe he realised that it would take a long time to reduce the people to 'civility' and that acculturation would be a long drawn out process.

Montgomery, a lowland Scot of Norman descent, was not a Gaelic speaker and so had great difficulty communicating with or preaching to the natives.²⁷

According to the Montgomery Manuscripts, the Bishop spent much of his time in Dublin attending the King's council. On his transfer to Meath he had the parish church at Ardraccan re-roofed but there was no increase in the number of protestant preachers in his diocese.²⁸

Appointments of all Irish Protestant bishops were vested in the crown and many were appointed for political reasons rather than religious reasons. In the 18th century all protestant archbishops of Armagh were Englishmen. Three of them; Hugh Boulter (1724-41), John Hoodly (1742 – 46) and George Stone (1746 –64) acted as Lords Justices and were the mainstay's of the English interest in Ireland in the absence of the Lord Lieutenant and thus had little time to devote to religious affairs. Montgomery's contemporary in Kilmore and Ardagh also sought the restoration of church lands later in the 1620's.²⁹ Dr.

26 W. R. Hutchinson in "Tyrone Precinct". p. 41.

27 Helen Meehan in *Donegal Annual* 2002, p. 91.

28 H. A. Jeffries in *Clogher Record* 1999, p. 128.

29 M. Wall in "The Penal Laws" (1691 – 1760) Irish History Series No. 1, Dublin (1976), p. 4.

Spottiswood – Montgomery's successor in Clogher – busied himself seeking the recovery of more see lands and thus improve his revenue.³⁰

So Montgomery was not alone in being rather too much addicted to the cares of the world – other prelates of the Established Church were guilty of that fault as well. It seems that Montgomery, an organiser of remarkable ability was more successful at obtaining land and on the political stage than most others, so he is thus better remembered.

HIS LAST YEARS³¹

On the King's recommendation Montgomery was appointed Bishop of Meath in 1610. On August 4th he resigned as Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. He retained the diocese of Clogher which is now included in the erenagh lands of Co. Monaghan and the estates of the monastery at Clogher. In September 1614 he resigned as Dean of Norwich and was then given a promise by the King that he would have the Rectory of Trim when it next became vacant.

In 1598 George married Susan Steynings from a gentry family in his parish in Somerset. She died in 1614 and is buried in Ardracran where the Bishop built their new home on his transfer to Meath. Their one surviving daughter married Nicholas St. Lawrence, the 23rd Baron Howth and, the Bishop gave her a dowry of £3,000.

Bishop George married secondly Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Brabazon who was raised to the peerage in 1616 as Baron of Ardee. They had no surviving children. After his death Elizabeth married Sir John Brereton and died in 1639.

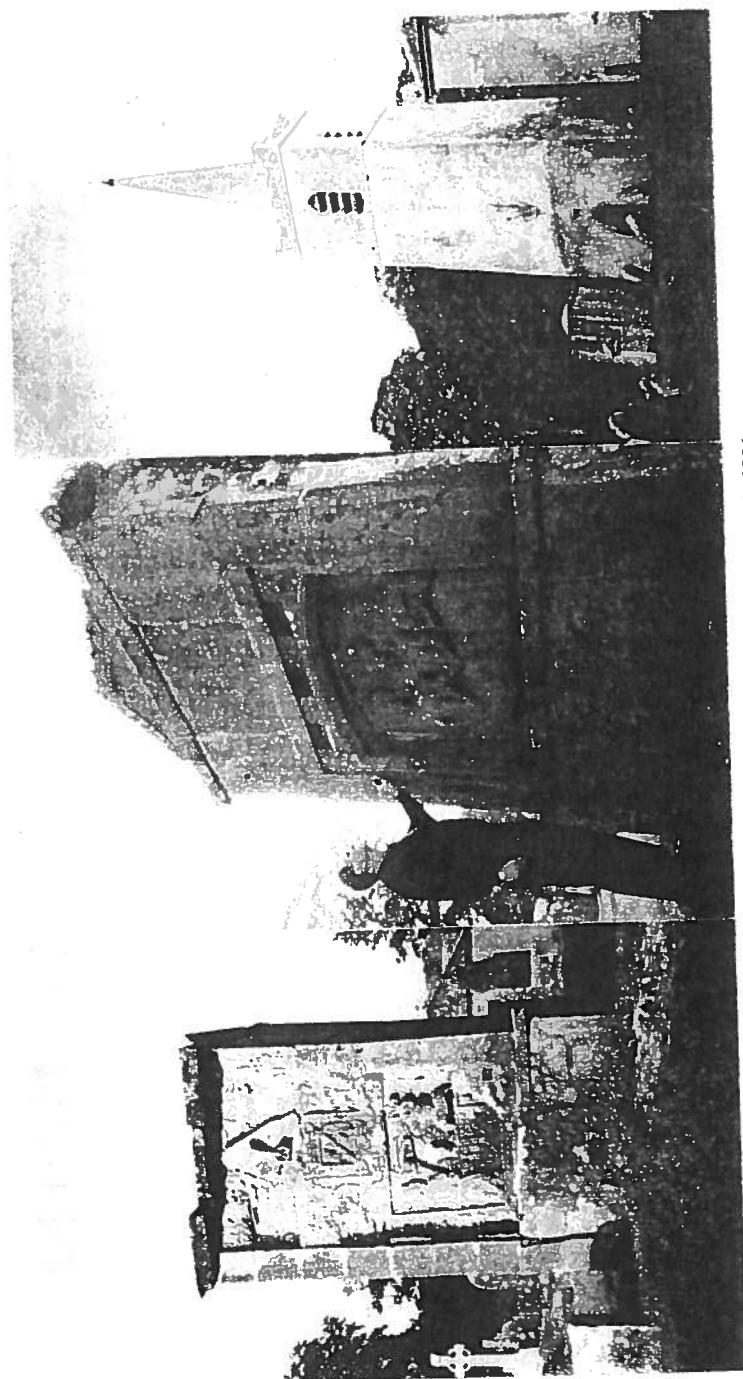
The Bishop died in London on 15th January 1621 and his body was brought home for burial in Ardracran.. A portrait of the Bishop can be seen in the Church of Ireland Cathedral in Clogher.

Montgomery certainly established the Reformed Church on a sound financial footing hence he can rightly be regarded as one of the founding fathers of the Established Church, not alone in Ulster but on the island of Ireland and that largely by his engrossment of lands. Perhaps, had he devoted less time to temporal affairs and more to his spiritual and pastoral duties he may have gained a greater religious congregation for the established Church than he had in fact.

Had he devoted less times to worldly affairs he would not have gained for the Established Church – so much land but we have no way of knowing if he'd thus have gained for it any more religious followers.

30 Canon George Leslie in "Clogher Clergy" Enniskillen (1929), p. 10.

31 Helen Meehan in *Donegal Annual* 2002, p. 90.



Montgomerys Tomb, Ardbraccan Church, Co. Meath, 2006.