

A PIOUS GARLAND
BEING THE
DECEMBER LETTER
AND
CHRISTMAS CAROLS
OF
LUKE WADDING
BISHOP OF FERNS, 1683-1688

With an Introduction by Thomas Wall

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LUKE WADDING

LUKE WADDING was a member of an old Anglo-Norman family settled in Co. Wexford. The chief castle of the Waddings was at Ballycogley, where Luke was born. In 1686, a short time before his death, he made a careful inventory of all his possessions in a long ledger-shaped volume which is now preserved in the Franciscan Library, Killiney. Amongst these he mentions a small precious bottle containing what he said was reputed to be a drop of Our Saviour's blood, brought back by one Gilbert Wadding, who was at the taking of Jerusalem by Godfrey, Duke of Lorraine. This, he recorded, had been in Ballycogley since his ancestors first came there. From his ancestral castle he had also managed to save an old missal and a breviary, which were amongst his most treasured heirlooms.

The Wexford Waddings had always been staunch Catholics and were the parent family of the Waddings of Waterford, who had given many eminent sons to the church in the seventeenth century, including the great Franciscan, Luke Wadding; the celebrated mystical theologian, Michael Wadding, S.J., better known in Mexico where he laboured as Miguel Godinez; and Peter Wadding, S.J., who became Chancellor of the University of Prague.

After the Cromwellian wars the extensive properties of the Waddings in Wexford were confiscated and the family banished to Connaught. Little is known of Luke at this time. He may have been already abroad, or as a priest he may have been exiled. In his verse he speaks of two banishments imposed upon him. He seems to have been educated in Paris and was, according to Walter Harris, a doctor of the Sorbonne.

The bishop of Ferns at this time was Nicholas French, a sturdy champion of the rights of his church and country.

He had gone abroad in 1651 to seek help from the Duke of Lorraine, and because he had given offence to the Duke of Ormonde, he was not allowed to return even after the restoration of Charles II. Wadding was his first cousin and in 1668, despairing of ever returning again, he asked Wadding to go back to his diocese as his vicar-general. Wadding was then in Paris where he must have been for some time, for he mentions in his manuscript inventory (to which I shall have often to refer) that a benefactor, whose name I am unable to read in the fading script, and who had been his scholar for three years, promised on his taking leave of him that he would give him 100 livres during his life, 'which he did perform and much more in gifts and tokens.'¹ Back in Ireland he took up duty as parish priest of New Ross and vicar-general of Ferns.

In 1672 he received letters, through Dr. French, appointing him coadjutor to French, with right of succession. He was reluctant to accept the appointment, hoping against hope for the return of French, to whom he was very devoted. He was very poor, he says: "I am so poor that I cannot support a servant, or indeed anyone else." But if it must be he is ready to obey and writes:

"If you can spare a pectoral cross, have the kindness to send it to me. I can procure a ring here. Send me the mitre, the crozier, and all the violet vestments, with everything else necessary for a pontifical Mass, for nothing of the sort can be had here."²

But on second thoughts he decided, with the approval of Dr. French, to defer his consecration during the lifetime of the latter. It proved to be a wise decision for it not only

¹ It is not clear whether this was an annual grant or an outright gift, but Wadding's gratitude was very evident, for he piously records, with a prayer, that this good benefactor died on 18 June, Corpus Christi day, 1679.

² L. F. Renhan: *Collections on Irish Church History*, vol. ii, p. 27.

left him free to carry out his pastoral duties as a priest, but it also saved him from banishment in 1678. And it was because he was a secular priest and not a bishop, on friendly terms with Protestants, lay and clerical, that he was able to build a public chapel in Wexford in 1674. It must have been in a back yard, for he records in his account book that he had to remove a great heap of dung to lay its foundations ; but it was within the walls, which was a great privilege at the time, and near one of the ramparts. He gives details of its building, thatching, ceiling ; paving, glazing, making of the altar rails, confessional, etc. It cost him more than fifty-three pounds, of which his friends contributed more than eight. Their names, he says, are recorded in the special chapel book, which does not now seem to be extant. The altar, pictures, and other ornaments cost him a further forty pounds.

He was deeply attached to this chapel where he was able to pontificate at ceremonies after his consecration, preach, and maintain in a modest way the dignity of his office. The great monasteries of his diocese, Dunbrody and its sister Cistercian Abbey, Tintern, and Clonmines of the Black Friars whose last prior, Nicholas Wadding, had been a member of his own family, and Selskar of the Austin Canons in Wexford town, were now but picturesque and romantic ruins. The castles had gone down before Cromwell (who, foolish man, made no distinction between old Irish and Anglo-Irish) or had changed hands after the wars. The town walls had been breached by the Protector's cannon and could never again be relied upon for shelter. All these things had meant much to the Anglo-Normans, who had by this time become Anglo-Irish, and, thanks to Cromwell, had begun to merge into one nation with the Irish, whom formerly, in the shelter of castle and fortified town, they (burghers and castle-dwellers and colonists in a strange land) had tended to despise.

Religion was now reduced to a thatched chapel in a back yard, and so it remained for more than a century. Sometimes

in his verse Wadding's nostalgia for the spacious times of the past finds veiled expression :

“ They laboured much, they took great pain
They spent much money all in vain,
In churches, chapels, steeples, bells,
In altars which the rest excels,
With fair vestments and rich robes,
Golden chalices and precious copes ;
And like Aaron, their priests must be
Adorned in pomp and majesty.
They esteemed nothing too rich
To build and beautify the Church ;
And if they could the walls should be
Of precious pearl and porphery.”

His love of the beauty of God's house (though it were but a thatched one, a Mass-house, and he had known great cathedrals) is as manifest in his last will and testament as in his verses. He cherished liturgical decorum and had a great veneration for the holy sacrifice of the Mass. He took care that altar, chalices, vestments, cruets, etc., should be seemly. He himself had more than one chalice. His great silver chalice, which he used in his own chapel, he left to the parish priest of Wexford, David Roche; a small chalice in a black case, which he had brought from Paris, he bequeathed to his brother Peter in Bristol; a chalice of silver in Ross he left to the chapel of his cousins Nicholas and Patrick White in that town. He had pewter chalices also, silver cruets, silver and pewter oil-stocks, a beautiful crucifix in alabaster, pyxes, candlesticks, etc.

Of vestments too he had a goodly store. His vestments, red, green and violet, with his best black ones and antependia and altar cloths he bequeathed to the parish priest of Wexford. His second black vestments with an alb and missal he left to the Franciscans of Wexford, “ to pray for me.” Perhaps it was of these he was thinking in one of the spells of persecution, when he wrote in a garden which

had formerly been a chapel, to the tune of *What time the groves were clad in green* :

“ Our priestly vestments, white and red,
 Our violet and our green,
 The black which we keep for the dead
 No more are to be seen ;
 No pulpit for the sacred word
 To give the spiritual bread,
 Our preachers which did that afford
 Are sent away or dead.
 Our bells no more are heard to ring
 To call us to the choir,
 No organs left to help us sing,
 No incense for our fire.”

The Mass was often the burden of his song, as when he grieved that the Christmas of 1678 was not really Christmas, because there was no Mass. That matins were no longer chanted in choir and that the liturgical splendour which he had known abroad and perhaps at home during the Confederate period was now suppressed was also a great sorrow for him. The meanness of the latter day religions, Protestant, Puritan, Quaker, etc., contrasted with the opulent glory of the old Catholic days, was a constant theme for his muse. And he was able to use it to good effect in his controversial verses,

“ No silver lamps now left to shine, no tapers to give
 light,
 No Mass by day here can we find, no matins here by
 night.”

Charles II had been restored to the throne in England, but his restoration brought no great relief and little restoration to his father's Catholic supporters in Ireland. Cromwell's men were not ousted to any great extent and Clarendon's maxim, “ Make much of your enemies, your friends will do you no harm,” seemed to be the guiding

principle of the much travelled monarch. By 1673 it was no longer likely that there would be legitimate children to inherit the throne, so that it should pass to the Duke of York, a Catholic. A reversal of fortunes was thus threatened, and tensions abounded, culminating in 1678 in the infamous Titus Oates plot, when Catholics were again exposed to fierce persecution.

Dr. French died on the 23rd of August 1678 and was buried in the Cathedral of Ghent. Wadding now ceased to be vicar-general, and though he was bishop-elect and was elected vicar-capitular by twenty-one votes, he was able to evade banishment by pleading that he was neither bishop nor vicar-general. The banishment applied to archbishops, bishops, vicars-general and all regular clergy; they were to leave Ireland by 20 November 1678. He seems to have been detained for a while and to have been in danger of being exiled, for in one of the most doleful of his compositions he lamented the 20th of November, the day of his parting drawing near (to the tune of *Farewell fair Armedia*):

“ Why twice I was banished the cause is most true
 For rendering to God and to Cæsar their due ;
 When first I was banished no cause could they bring,
 But I was subject to Charles my King,
 What for him I suffered, the cause gave content,
 'Twas for him and with him away I was sent ;
 For suffering with him I could not complain,
 One thought of his sufferings did ease all my pain.”

When the hysteria of the plot had died down and conditions had eased somewhat for Catholics—Oliver Plunkett had died at Tyburn in the meantime—Wadding resumed his pastoral duties in Wexford, but only as parish priest. In 1683 he had to write to the Congregation of Propaganda explaining why his consecration was so long deferred. He tried to make clear the dreadful conditions in Wexford which before the sack of Cromwell numbered some 20,000

Catholics and was now reduced to some 400, to whom he alone and unaided endeavoured to break spiritual food; but he was directed to proceed without further delay to his consecration.³ Of where he was consecrated there is no information, or when, though it may be presumed that it was in 1683 or early in 1684.

The first edition of his *Small Garland* seems to have been published at Ghent in the first year of his episcopate, 1684. In the inventory of his possessions before his death he lists a stock of "small garlands of pious and godlie songs printed in Gant in 1684" to the value of two pounds, and he adds that he had already distributed amongst the faithful at least ten dozen copies of the same little work. We may take this to refer to his own composition. Walter Harris, who was the first bibliographer to note it, gives its title as *A Small Garland of pious and godly songs for the solace of his friends and neighbours in their affliction*. And in the catalogues of eighteenth century Catholic booksellers it is generally called *Wadding's Small Garland*. Though now exceedingly rare there were many editions of this little work, a Catholic classic of the penal days. The title of the 1728 edition reads as follows:

A Pious garland, compos'd by the Reverend Father Luke Wadding, Bishop of Ferns. Which he compos'd for the solace of his friends and neighbours in their afflictions. To which is added a choice collection of divine poems.

*The sweet and the sower,
The nettle and the flower,
The thorn and the rose
This Garland compose.*

London: Printed for J. C. Bookseller, MDCCXXVIII.⁴

³ His letter to Rome is reproduced in *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, vol. ii, pp. 264-5.

⁴ Who J. C. Bookseller was is told in the colophon or advertisement in the final page, 64, of the little book: "All sorts of English, Latin and Greek school books, with most sorts of the spiritual books that are most commonly used in this Kingdom, and good ink and paper, sold by James Connor, Bookseller, in West Street, near West Gate, Drogheda.

The first two poems are of the "posy" type, so popular with poets of the seventeenth century. In the first he gathers a bunch of flowers on Our Lady's day :

" In your garden a posie of flowers I will compose
Of mary-gold, of lilly, of violet and of rose."

All these are symbolic of St. Mary :

" She is the mary-gold which doth observe the sun,
And doth her leaves unfold as his swift course doth run;
She is the violet, the first flower of the spring,
With low green leaves beset, a sweet and humble thing."

In the second he gathers flowers in a place where once there was a chapel and he laments (to the tune of *What time the groves were clad in green*):

" In silent sadness I sat down on new green banks of
grass,
With cherry trees environ'd round where once a chapel
was."

This is followed by three written for the solace of poor distressed gentry cast out of their patrimony and estates. Being of that class himself he naturally had for them deep sympathy and they were the object of his constant charity and thought. Next is a poem, set to one of his favourite tunes *What time the groves were clad in green*, on St. Mary Magdalen. It is curiously reminiscent of Richard Crashaw's verses on the same subject in "The Weeper," though without the glowing imagery of Crashaw. It begins :

" The full fair eyes of Magdalen
Like heavenly spheres do turn,
And from their crystal globes are seen
Swift showers of pearls to run."

After the cycle of Christmas verses here, with one exception, reproduced, comes a group of three rather long

ones relating to the author's friend, the Jesuit, Stephen Gelosse. Fr. Gelosse was perhaps the most celebrated and successful Catholic educator in Ireland in the second half of the seventeenth century. To the famous classical schools of Peter White of Kilkenny, Alexander Lynch of Galway, John Flahy of Waterford, and others, Ireland owed a great debt in the early part of the same century. Their students, who could speak Latin like their vulgar tongue, went abroad to foreign universities and were at no disadvantage there. Many of them, like the Waterford Waddings already mentioned, and the nephews of Luke Wadding, O.F.M., Bonaventure Baron of Clonmel and Francis Harold of Limerick, earned fame by their writings in foreign colleges ; and they were happy to pay tribute to the Irish schools where they had begun their education.

After Cromwell, with the Puritans in complete control of the towns, it was perilous to attempt to continue those urban schools. One of the great sorrows of John Brennan, archbishop of Cashel, close friend of Oliver Plunkett and contemporary of Luke Wadding of Ferns, was that it was almost impossible to maintain any Catholic school at all.⁵ But Father Gelosse was a man of rare courage and began to teach furtively in New Ross ; he gradually succeeded in establishing a large college, attended by Protestants as well as Catholics. Pupils had all the usual exercises of piety and learning, acted plays on the chief square of the town, and may even have sung carols at Christmas time. In times of persecution the school was temporarily closed, to re-open at the first favourable opportunity. But Puritan pressure caused its final suppression in 1670. In a poem, "The lamentation of the scholars presented to the Master, S.G., at the dissolving of the school in Ross (to the tune of *Fortune my foe*)," Wadding, with many classical allusions and floral images, expresses his grief :

⁵ P. Canon Pauer : *A Bishop of the penal times. Being the letters and reports of John Brennan, Cork, 1932.*

“ The damask rose, the white and blushing red
 Look pale to see us thus disordered ;
 The pretty pansy and the gentle pink
 Conform their colours to our darkest ink,
 The five-leaved blossom and the marygold,
 Lie closely shut not willing to behold
 With open eye how our Appollo is sent,
 With all his muses into banishment.”

This is followed by two long and rather charming letters in verse to Gelosse, written in the time of the Plot. The author avows that he is not well informed about international affairs. He knows :

“ no news of foreign lands,
 How the great Turk or Persian stands ;
 What happened the Muscovite of late,
 How Prestor John preserves his state,
 Nor what doth pass in Italy,
 In Poland, Denmark, Tartary ;
 Or whether Portugal will again
 With all his forces trouble Spain ;
 What hopes there are to end the wars
 'Twixt English, French and Hollanders.”

But what news of Ireland he knows—this seems to suggest that Gelosse was then in exile—is not good :

“ And for Church news this December,
 Some account each one may render ;
 For we have a proclamation
 To banish wholly from this nation,
 All Popish prelates with their friars,
 And send them to attend their choirs,
 To say their Masses in France and Spain,
 And never to return again.”

After this he launches into a discussion of the religious controversy of the time and, with gentle mockery, after the manner of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, pretends to see the good sense of the comfortable new religion which does not demand penance and good works. He affects to be somewhat bewildered by the splintering of Protestantism into Puritans, Presbyterians, Quakers, etc., and this gives him an opportunity to indulge in some sly ridicule of the principle of private judgment. Tailors, shoemakers, cobblers, chirurgeons, physicians, lawyers, clerks, bakers, turnspits, cooks and seamen are all perfectly entitled to take a hand in mending and reforming the old religion. Why should not the tinker, so skilled in mending old things, or the brewer, be able to settle the religious problem?

“ And they can religion settle
As well as deal with pan or kettle ;
The brewer's faith, like his March beer,
Must be renewed once each year.”

This presentation of a summary of the religious question in pleasant verse, and with some humorous mockery of the worldliness of the new religions, was probably one of the factors which accounted for the popularity of the *Garland* in the penal times, when controversial literature was greatly relished. The circumstances of his times compelled him to speak ironically, with his tongue in his cheek, as it were. He was well informed on the wretched Titus Oates plot of 1678 which made infinite trouble for the Catholics. In his library was a pretty full documentation on the plot in the form of the tracts, “ informations ” and pamphlets which were issued in its wake. Amongst these were pamphlets by Sir Roger L'Estrange, who had to flee from England because he exposed the Plot ; and trials, condemnations and last speeches of some who were judicially murdered for their alleged implication in it. His collection included the trial of Oliver Plunkett, his last speech, and a work,

probably in manuscript, called "Oliver Plunkett's Ghost." When one appreciates how well informed he was on this subject, and remembers his affection for at least one Jesuit, Stephen Gelosse, one has to read between the lines of his apparently hearty condemnation of Jesuits and their plots in the verses on Christmas Day, 1678 :

"Some news each post doth bring of Jesuits and their
plots,
Against our sacred King, discovered first by Oates ;
Such plotters we may curse, with bell and book at
Mass."

One feels that he intended "invented first by Oates" for "discovered first by Oates" and that this was understood by his readers.

"In all the poems," wrote Dr. Renehan, "the thoughts are instructive and pious, but the language and versification merit no special praise." This may be admitted, though Dr. Renehan may not have taken into account the Gaelic influence in Wadding's internal rhymes and in his use of assonance. The bishop's purpose was instruction and edification and he set his verse to the airs of folk songs of his period, Irish and English, so that they might appeal to the popular mind. That they did not lack a singing quality is evinced by the fact that a few of his carols are still sung traditionally in the seaside church of Kilmore in the Barony of Forth. He was fond of music himself, had various musical books in his library, and was attached to his bass viol which in his will he left to his cousin, Antony Talbot.

In 1685 Dr. Wadding acquired a house in Wexford convenient to the chapel. He must have reconstructed it rather extensively—perhaps it still bore scars of the siege—for he mentions all the men who worked on it, John Stafford the smith, Pat French the labourer, James the glazier, Robert the mason, and others, with the amount

each received for his labours. The population was very low in those years so that workmen could command a good wage. According to the historian of Wexford, Philip Herbert Hore, writing in 1911, this residence of the bishop "was the large house adjoining the entrance of Mr. T. S. Redmond's beautifully secluded residence, Clarence House. Here the succeeding bishops, excepting two Franciscan prelates, who resided at the Friary, lived." ⁶

This house he had decently furnished, obtaining furniture and appointments from Bristol where his brother, Peter, probably a merchant, represented him; from Rotterdam where his cousin, Frank Rooth, who must have been in a substantial business, for he gave the bishop a valuable gold cross as a present, looked after his affairs; from St. Malo, a trading centre with many Irish connections, from Dublin, and from Wexford. Fortune was unwontedly kind to him in 1685. James II had just ascended the throne and ordered a pension of £150 each to be paid to Irish bishops. So he was able to lay in a respectable stock of pewter dishes, pewter and silver spoons, wooden trenchers, gridiron, tongs, spits, etc., which he scrupulously listed, with their respective values. It is a pity that his song, so long accustomed to the tune *Fortune is my foe*, does not extend to this brief spell of security and happiness. The obsession of "the Plot" seems to have consumed his muse. And by this time he was an old man, making his will in the following year and making provision for his successor more than for himself.

For himself and for his priests he had assembled in Ross and in Wexford an excellent library of books. It was not a large library, no more than some 224 works, but it was a choice one, and besides the theological tomes of St. Gregory the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, Bellarmine, Baronius, etc., it contained many of the English classics

⁶ *History of Wexford*, vol. vi, p. 324. According to Hore, Wadding's chapel stood in the yard at the rear of the *People* printing works in High Street.

of the century, the *Religio Medici* of Sir Thomas Browne, Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, *The Holy Court* translated into English by Sir Thomas Hawkins, and the writings of Sir Kenelm Digby. That one finds the poems of George Herbert listed twice under different titles is not surprising to one familiar with the tenor of Wadding's own verse. He shared with the gentle Anglican poet of *Steps to the Temple* a love of the sanctuary and of everything pertaining to it, as well as an inclination to retired meditation. Nor is one surprised to find the poems of Dr. Donne on his list, for there are evident traces of the influence of Donne and the "metaphysical" poets in Wadding's own verse, for instance, in the final stanza of his short carol for Christmas Day :

" Heaven's great treasures are now but small,
Immensity no extent at all."

The same conceit of " Immensity confined and in a stable shut " is further developed in his long carol for Christ's Nativity :

" Now infinite height is low, and infinite depth is shallow,
The greatest length is short, the greatest largeness
narrow."

Some of the items in Wadding's library had a contemporary interest, those relating to the Titus Oates plot and, further back, some tracts concerned with the famous " Affair of the Irish " in the University of Paris. This had been inspired by a good friend of the Irish in Paris, St. Vincent de Paul, then generally known as Monsieur Vincent, who in 1651 had secured the signatures of twenty-seven Irishmen, students and priests of the university, to a declaration against the teachings of the Jansenists. This declaration, a simple statement of faith, had infuriated the Jansenists and caused the greatest excitement in the Sorbonne. The presence of these tracts in his collection may suggest that Wadding himself was in Paris at the time.

To the title of each volume he appends the price he paid for it and marked at the end of each item the person for whom it was intended after his death. "Lett the clergie," he writes, "say masses for what bookes they receive, and lett them and the laitie pray for their servant, Lu. Waddinge" (the name he always spells with a final "e"). His cousin, Father Michael Rossiter, who became his successor in Ferns, and Father David Roche, parish priest of Wexford, were his executors.

Various odds and ends had come into his possession in his office as bishop and these he felt bound scrupulously to account for and to make a disposition of them. A rather curious one was part of the skull of Monk Furlonge, in a yellow case. This he directed to be kept carefully by his successors and not to be given to anyone else, as those who had it before it came into his keeping distributed it in little pieces.

He was a zealous disseminator of little popular books of doctrine and devotion, most of which he imported from the Continent: six dozen Christian diurnals by Nicholas Caussin, author of *The Holy Court*; eighteen copies of *An Introduction to the devout life*, by St. Francis de Sales; 100 dozen small Christian Doctrines by Bellarmine and Ledesma, etc. Objects of piety he also imported and distributed freely, including some gross of rosary beads. Apart from these more ordinary beads he mentions particularly "a fair pair of jett beads each graine having engraven on it the face of Our Saviour"; a beautiful pair of amber beads from St. Malo, which he gave to his good friend, Mary Wiseman, and his own which hung near the head of his bed, with the gilt holy water pot.

I am deeply grateful to Father Joseph Ranson of Ennis-corthy for having made available to me his copy of the 1728 edition of the *Garland*, an exceedingly rare little book. Father Ranson is an authority on every aspect of the history of the diocese of Ferns and anyone interested in the tradition of carol singing in Wexford must read his

valuable paper on the Kilmore carols in the organ of the Ui Ceinnsealaigh Society, *The Past*, No. 5 (1949). I am very grateful too to the Reverend Father Benignus, O.F.M., librarian of the Franciscan Library, Killiney, for allowing me to read the inventory and will of Luke Wadding as well as for giving me the freedom of his beautiful well-regulated library.

The preservation of this document in the custody of the Franciscans is probably due to the happy relations which always existed between the friars in Wexford and the diocesan clergy. A few years after Luke Wadding's death his chapel in the back yard fell, and the Catholics were not allowed to rebuild it. They had to turn to the friary which had been restored to the Franciscans in 1688. The Franciscan church became, in effect, the pro-cathedral of Ferns. As the historian of Wexford, Philip Herbert Hore puts it "For nearly two centuries the Bishops of Ferns, bereft of cathedral or palace, found in the old convent a welcome in life and a pillow in death."

THOMAS WALL

SHORT CAROLS FOR EACH DAY OF CHRISTMASS

All to the tune of *I do not love 'cause thou art fair*

FOR CHRISTMASS

This Christmass day you pray me sing
My carol to our new-born King,
A God made man, the Virgin's Son,
The Word made flesh, can this be done ?
Of me I pray no more require,
Than this great mystery to admire.

Whom heaven of heavens cannot contain
As scripture doth declare most plain,
In a poor stable is born this day,
Lay'd in a manger wrapped in hay :
Of me I pray no more require,
Than this great mystery to admire.

Heaven's great treasures are now but small,
Immensity no extent at all,
Eternity's but one day old,
The Almighty feeleth the winter cold :
Of me I pray no more require,
Than this great mystery to admire.

FOR ST. STEPHEN'S DAY

Saint Stephen had an angel's face,
All full of virtue, full of grace,
By the false Jews was stoned to death
For Jesus Christ and for his faith ;
But for these stones in heaven he found
Of precious pearls a glorious crown.

The Jews do falsely him accuse,
And in their council him abuse,
Their furious rage without delay
Make stones their arms him to destroy ;
But of those stones in heaven he found
Of precious pearls a glorious crown.

The most sweet saint with his last breath
Doth pray for those who seek his death,
And leaves not off while life doth last,
As thick as hail their stones they cast ;
And for those stones in heaven he found
Of precious pearls a glorious crown.

FOR ST. JOHN'S DAY

Saint John did lean on Jesus's breast,
Jesus loved John more than the rest,
Our loving Jesus St. John did love,
His Gospel doth it clearly prove ;
Then let St. John be loved by us,
Who was beloved by our Jesus.

Divine mysteries locked under seal
To St. John Jesus did reveal,
His secrets did to him impart,
Made him the treasurer of His heart ;
Then let St. John be loved by us,
Who was beloved by our Jesus.

He was disciple, evangelist,
Apostle, prophet, what he list ;
To him, His most darling friend
Jesus His mother did commend ;
Then let St. John be loved by us,
Who was beloved by our Jesus.

FOR INNOCENTS' DAY

The angel saith to Joseph mild,
Fly with the Mother and the Child,
Out of this land to Egypt go,
Our heavenly Babe will have it so ;
For that His hour is not yet come
To die for man's redemption.

Proud Herod, he doth froth and frown,
Feareth to loose kingdom and crown ;
Full of disdain and full of scorn,
He must destroy this young King born ;
But stay, His hour is not yet come
To die for man's redemption.

Herod, forbear this cruel flood
Of the most pure innocent blood,
To thee a crown this Child doth bring
To make thee happier than a king ;
From highest heavens along He's come
To die for man's redemption.

FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY

Sweet Jesus was the sacred name
Of the sweet Babe who to us came,
Angels and men this Name adore
Both now and then and evermore ;
A saving Name, this Saviour He
Doth save us for eternity.

Good God, how precious is this Name !
He gave His blood to gain the same ;
To honour it all knees bow down
In heaven and earth and underground ;
And every tongue confess that He
Doth save us for eternity.

Then Jesus I adore Thy Name,
And ever shall adore the same,
Thy Name be graven on my heart,
Live always there and ne'er depart ;
My prayers day and night shall be,
Save us Jesus, Jesus save me.

FOR TWELFTH DAY

Behold three kings came from the east,
Led by a star of stars the best,
Which brought them where they did espy
The King of Kings and Saviour lie ;
With gold and myrh and frankincense,
They did adore this new-born Prince.

It's strange what did these three kings see
That might by them adored be,
A tender Babe laid on the ground,
Yet they submit, sceptre and crown ;
Their gold, their myrh, their frankincense,
For to adore this new-born Prince.

Then let us with those three kings bring
Our gifts unto this new-born King,
Our sense, our will, our wit, our heart,
And all that e'er we can impart ;
Our gold, our myrh, our frankincense,
For to adore this new-born Prince.

CAROLS FOR THE SEVERAL DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

FIRST ON CHRIST'S NATIVITY

To the tune of *Neen Major Neal*

An angel this night doth to the shepherds bring
Most rare and joyful news to move all hearts to sing :
A Saviour from heaven unto the world is come,
And God is now made Man for man's redemption.

The shepherds in haste unto the stable run
To see this precious Child, the eternal Father's Son ;
Without a father born, His Mother a pure maid,
By whom this heavenly Babe is in a manger laid.

Now let us with the shepherds unto the stable go,
Those miracles and wonders for to adore and know,
With humble wit and will and open eyes of faith,
We shall believe and see all that the angel saith.

But wits of men and angels cannot conceive this bliss,
No heart can full resent it, no tongue tell what it is,
Wits must admire and marvel and hearts astonished be,
And tongues with joy be silent in this great mystery.

Here all the hopes of earth and the delights of heaven,
The joy of all the angels and the great price of man,
The ransom of all sinners, all captives to set free,
How can we but rejoice and all must merry be.

How can we but rejoice to hear what now is done,
The Son of God made man and man made God's true Son :
God doth appear on earth for to raise earth to heaven,
What cause of greater joy could ever happen men ?

Now infinite height is low and infinite depth is shallow,
 The greatest length is short, the greatest largeness narrow,
 Eternity by time is measured and closed up,
 Immensity confined and in a stable shut.¹

The increated Person is now created Man,
 The Creator made Creature, who shall these secrets scan?
 Who made all things of nothing, a nothing is become,
 Our God most high and great is a poor Virgin's son.

His greatness is made humble and all His might is weak,
 His glory is obscured, His wisdom doth not speak,
 His pleasures do suffer, His treasures are in want.
 He made and rules the world and yet He's bare and scant.

But 'tis to strengthen us His might is made so weak,
 'Tis for our faults and folly His wisdom doth not speak;
 For to correct our pride in humble sort He lies,
 And for to make us rich, most poor He lives and dies.

The angels may admire how these strange things can be,
 And all the devils may tremble, their terrors for to see;
 But sinners all on earth may well rejoice and sing,
 To thank and praise and glorify their Saviour and their King.

Then glory unto the Father Who ordered all things thus,
 Glory unto the Son Who gave Himself for us,
 Glory to the Holy Ghost Who did this work of heaven,
 Glory unto Them now and evermore. Amen.

¹ This is probably an echo of Dr. Donne's lines addressed to Our Lady,

"Thou hast light in dark, and shutt'st in little room
 Immensity, cloistered in thy dear womb."

This stanza, perhaps because its theology is vague, is omitted from the carol as it was traditionally sung in various parts of Co. Wexford. For the traditional music see *The Past*, no. 5 (1949), p. 88.

ON ST. STEPHEN'S DAY

To the same tune *Neen Major Neal*

This is St. Stephen's day, his feast we solemnize,
 From him we learn to pardon and love our enemies.
 He's the first Christian martyr who passed from earth to
 heaven,
 By suffering hate and envy and injuries of men.

More just than the just Abel, this prince of martyrs died,
 His blood not for revenge but for God's pardon cried ;
 For fury and for rage he did remission crave,
 For malice he had mercy and love for hate he gave.

This soldier of the Cross, armed not with iron but faith,
 Doth not assault but suffer all that man doth or saith ;
 On bended knees with hands and eyes fixed on the skies,
 With humble heart he prays for murdering enemies.

He closed not up his lips whilst he enjoyed his breath
 To gain for them a pardon who did procure his death ;
 Pardon, good God, their rage, this holy saint doth pray,
 Lay not unto their charge whate'er they do or say.

This champion of the Cross to conquer death doth die,
 Sufferings are his triumphs, death is his victory ;
 The stones like showers of hail, the Jews on him did cast,
 Become pure crowns of pearls and palms which ever last.

He saw the heavens all open, his throne of glory drest,
 His Saviour Christ prepared to place his soul in rest.
 Then let us daily pray for those who us offend,
 That with St. Stephen we may enjoy a blessed end.

ON THE CIRCUMCISION, OR
NEW YEAR'S DAY

This first day of the year Jesus to us doth give
His pure and precious blood, that we in Him may live ;
A most rare New Year's gift, a greater none can have,
A gift more rich and precious none can desire or crave.

This gift brings us great joy and makes us all admire,
It proves His love for us to be all flames and fire,
And for our sake this day Jesus is His sweet name,
A name which cost Him dear, His blood spilt for the same.

This name doth cost Him dear by circumcision's knife,
For it this day He bleeds and after gives His life ;
Covered with costly red, in His own blood He lies,
Prepared to give the rest when on the Cross He dies.

Both heaven and earth admire and do adore Jesus,
To Himself this day severe, and merciful to us ;
As soon as He's made man, and being but eight days old,
For us He gives His blood, more precious than all gold.

But how can circumcision with Jesus's name agree,
The true mark of a sinner to Saviour joined be ?
If circumcised how Saviour, if Saviour why circumcised,
Why should this mark of sinners to Saviour be applied ?

What's done on this great day by circumcised Jesus,
Is comfort and delight, wonder and joy to us ;
Who never had beginning, He by whom all begun,
Begins this day the work of our salvation.

Blessed be this New Year's Day, blessed be the name of
Jesus,

Blessed be this day of grace and mercy unto us,
Let's all put on new hearts to give to our Jesus,
No other New Year's gift doth He require from us.

ON CHRISTMASS-DAY IN THE YEAR 1678,
 WHEN THE CLERGY WERE BANISHED
 IN THE TIME OF THE PLOT

To the tune of *Bonny Broom*

This is our Christmass day, the day of Christ's birth,
 Yet we are far from joy and far from Christmass mirth ;
 On Christmass to have no Mass is our great discontent,
 That without Mass this day should pass doth cause us to
 lament.

The name of Christ-mass must changed and altered be,
 For since we have no Mass no Christmass have we ;
 It's therefore we do mourn, with grief our hearts are prest,
 With tears our eyes do run, our minds and thoughts want
 rest.

As Jeremy sadly sat with tears for to lament
 The temple desolate, her gold and glory spent ;
 So we do grieve and mourn to see no priest at Mass,
 No lights on altars burn, this day of Christmass.

No Mass heard this great day, no matins sung last night,
 No bells to call to pray, no lamps, no taper light,
 No chalice, no rich robes, no church, no chapel dress,
 No vestments, precious copes, no holy water blessed.

King David in his days before the Ark did dance,
 With music and with praise its honour to advance ;
 But we our sad eyes fix to see laid on the ground
 Our ark, our crucifix, our tabernacle down.

Our pictures daily open as books before our eyes,
 To read what we hear spoken of sacred mysteries,
 They now are laid aside and cast out of their estate,
 Themselves from us they hide in darkness and disgrace.

But if church walls would speak and old times to us tell,
If the dead those graves could break where thousand years
 they dwell,
If that they could arise to preach what practised was,
We should have priests always, our altars and our Mass.

Most pure and precious things were given in those times
By emperors, queens and kings, with gold and silver shrines;
They deemed nothing too rich that through their hands
 could pass,
To beautify the church and to set forth the Mass.

What those first Christians left us, written by their pen,
What learned Fathers taught us, great saints and holy men,
What in their times was done and practised in each place,
As clear as shines the sun, doth shew they still had Mass.

Some news each post doth bring of Jesuits and their plots
Against our sacred king, discovered first by Oates ;
Such plotters we may curse with bell and book at Mass,
By them the time is worse than e'er we felt it was.

God bless our king and queen, long may they live in peace,
Long may their days be seen, long may their joys increase,
And those who do not pray that Charles in peace may reign,
I wish they never may see priest nor Mass again.

A NOTE

When I wrote the introduction I did not know that the monk Furlonge mentioned there (p. 17) was one of the heroes of the Counter-Reformation in Ireland, and the following information about him I owe to Fr. Ranson. William Furlong, a native of Wexford town, was a convert from Protestantism who studied at Salamanca and became a member of the Carthusian community of Nogales in Galicia. Recalled to the Irish mission (with special permission from Rome) he became an apostle to the Anglo-Irish, thousands of whom he brought back to the Catholic faith. He died about 1615 and was buried in Wexford. The thaumaturgus of his age in the south-east, it is no wonder that relics of him were eagerly sought after and that Wadding felt bound to safeguard the part of his skull which remained intact.

It is interesting to speculate on what may have happened to this interesting relic and indeed to wonder where are now the other treasures which Dr. Wadding listed. Someone may be fortunate enough to possess a first edition of John Donne with the bishop's name inscribed upon it or a piece of seventeenth century silver with his initials traced thereon. His pectoral cross, enclosed in a larger one, is still used by his successor in the diocese of Ferns.

I should perhaps explain that the December Letter mentioned in the title-page is only reproduced in part, and some of it in paraphrase, in the introduction (pp. 12-13). Apart from the amount of space a long controversial letter would take its full inclusion might not fully accord with the feelings suitable to the season of Christmas, not to mention the mood and temper of our ecumenical days.

T.W.