MANUS FORTIS DUCEBIT

Plate I   ARMS OF RAYMOND WALTER McKEE

Chapter I

PERSONAL NAMES AND SURNAMES

PERSONAL NAMES antedated surnames by thousands of years. The Old Testament is replete with sonorous words like Noah, and Moses, Mary and Joseph, Ruth, and Rebeccah, Japhet, Magog, David, Joel, and dozens of others. Not only are they beautiful by associated memories and sacred connotations ; they contain a beauty of sound all their own. From this singular circumstance, that so many of them are truly melodious in their very sound, we are led to suspect that those names preserved to us in the Hebrew scriptures were the vocal refinement of perhaps even aeons.

All Milesian Irish, and the McKees are in my opinion probably fundamentally Milesian Irish, must accustom themselves to the realization that their ancestors were almost undoubtedly Phœnician, that they traded among and intermarried with many races, particularly the Egyptians and Hebrews, and that they were in all probability the most advanced race on earth from the dawn of civilization. The Phœnicians had invented money, made glass, sailed the seas in ships of their own construction, formulated an alphabet and written language, and entertained a concept of a deity, when the progenitors of many other races were still almost literally swinging by their tails from the limb of a tree.

Several hundred years before the Incarnation, personal names commenced to add a suffix. In the Gaelic, *Aodh*, having red hair, is Aodh Ruadh. If his hair is black he becomes Aodh Dubh.

Aodh, pronounced " Ee " (O'Hart) was frequently used for Irish kings and chiefs. The word means *fire*, and may have had its origin in Druidical worship of very ancient times, when fire, the sun, wind, moon, water, and so on held mystical meanings and powers that needed placation and worship.

I select a few Irish personal names of frequent occurrence and give their meaning or implication, to illustrate how our people went about naming their newborn, when the race was young and few, and surnames were as yet unnecessary.

> *Aongus*, common in Scotland, compounds *Aon* (excellent) and *gus* (strength).
> *Airt*, or *Art*, signifies *noble* (Gaelic *fhear*) ; whence Arthur, Hart, O'Hart.
> *Brian*, compounding *bri* (also *strength*) and *an* (very great).
> *Cathal* (great warrior), from *cath*, a battle, and *all*, great.
> *Cormac*, equals ' son of the chariot ' ; *corb*, chariot ; *mac*, son of.
> *Cairbre*, equals *King of the chariot ; corb*, chariot ; *ri*, king.
> *Conn*, from *cu*, a hound ; figuratively a *swift footed warrior*.

When *cu* is the first syllable of a name it has this connotation. Thus *Cuchonnacht* is *swift footed warrior of Connaught. Cuchullain*, the name of the most famous ancient Irish warrior, the chief ornament of the Red Branch Knights of Ulster, means *swift footed warrior of Ulladh*, Ulladh being an early name of Ulster.

> *Domhnall*, from *domhcn*, the world, and *all*, mighty.
> *Eochaidh*, from *eoch*, a steed ; it means a horseman or knight.
> *Eoghan*, a youthful warrior.
> *Fergus*, from *fear* (a man) and *gus* (strength).

Muircheartach, from *muir* (the sea) and *ceart* (right), said to signify a leader who has established his superiority over, hence *right* to, the sea.

Muiredhach, from *muir* (the sea), and *eadhach* (a protector). O'Hart equates it with admiral.

The names selected occur frequently in the Milesian, or Heremonian line, and illustrate how early Irish personal names were chosen and constructed.

Later, much later, came a distinguishing suffix. Thus Conn Ceadcatha, the 110th Milesian ard-ri (high king) of Ireland from 174 to 212 A.D. was so named to commemorate his achievements as a warrior, for the suffix means *of the hundred battles,* or *the hundred fighter.* The appellation distinguished him from every other Conn who lived before or since. That was what it was intended to do. The descriptive additions to names were often laudatory, sometimes contemptuous. Among Ireland's Kings was Sirlam Long-handed, Conang the Undaunted, Olill Finn (Finn means white), React Red-wristed, Melga the Laudable, Conal-like-a-Pillar, Carbry Caitcheann (cat-headed), Fergus the Black-toothed, Niall Frassach (of the showers), and so on indefinitely.

Looking back into Biblical times we find a similar practice, as Jesus of Nazareth, Judas of Galilee, Simon the Zealot. The Greeks often named the daughter after the father, as Chryseis, daughter of Chryses. A son's name was frequently the father's name embellished, as Hiero's son might become Hieronymus. In Rome, the patrician families strove to preserve an index of the individual's lineage by including in his the names of several significant ancestors. For example, Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero Germanicus Caesar was the full name of the Emperor Claudius.

From the nature of the additive phrases it can readily be seen that their purpose was to set one individual unmistakably apart from others with the same personal name. Eventually, though, this either became ineffectual or tedious, because during the reign of King Brian Boroimhe (the latter word means " cattle spoil or mulct "), surnames were, by the king's edict it is said, adopted. Since tribal life still prevailed throughout both Ireland and Scotland in those centuries, and in fact continued down until late in the 16th and even early in the 17th centuries, the tribe or clan itself took a name. The O'Neills, as related in another chapter, harked back to Niall of the Nine Hostages, known as Niall the Great, and prefixing the Irish O' became O'Neills. In like manner, the O'Reillys, O'Hallorans, O'Callaghans and so on honored an illustrious ancestor by adopting a form of his name for the tribe or clan. In the chapter the *Mackays of Scotland* it will be seen how the name MacKay and MacKee gradually derived from Mac Eth and Mac Iye.

Also, another system of creating surnames arose in both countries. This was the custom of prefixing *mac* to denote son of. It seems to have commenced in somewhat earlier centuries in Scotland than in Ireland, for in the latter nation it came along much later than the system of prefixing O'. This does not mean that early Irish annals do not contain innumerable macs and mics (grandson of), but only to identify a single individual as the primary or secondary offspring of another. Finally, though, these designations turned into surnames. MacAodh was adopted in several regions, one being the MacAodh family that in early centuries owned Island Magee and was descended from one of the three Collas. This is one source of MacKee, McKee, Mackay, MacGee, Magee, and so on, but there are other sources too. In the same manner came hundreds of other Irish and Scottish surnames, as MacFergus or Ferguson, MacPherson, MacGuire, Maguire, and so forth.

What was transpiring in Ireland and Scotland in the adoption of surnames was also taking place in England and on the Continent. They usually had one of five sources :

(1) The name of an illustrious ancestor, which the tribe, clan, or sept adopted by prefixing O'.

(2) The personal name of a parent or grandparent, generally the sire, but sometimes the mother. King Muirchertach Mac Earca was named for his mother.

(3) A physical characteristic, as brown, black, short, or long.

(4) A locality, such as a city or county, London, Derry, La France, Allemand, Argyle, Kintyre.

(5) An occupation, as smith, butler, candler, draper, carpenter, ostler, steward (Stewart).

It is believed that the oldest identifiable surname in England was that of Hwita Hatte, a keeper of bees, whose daughter was Tate Hatte. As early as 1042 when Edward the Confessor took England's throne, there are records of Saxon tenants in county Suffolk with names such as Suert Magno, Stigand Soror, Siuward Rufus, and Leurie Hobbesune. This last name is said to have been the origin of Hobson, but other later sources have been defined also.

By the year 1500 surnames were universal in western Europe, England, Ireland, and Scotland. An individual sired in anonymity was adopted into a sept, clan, or tribe and took its name. England legislated on the matter during Edward V's reign in an act directed at the Irish, whom they were sedulously endeavouring to civilize with swords and halberds. It provided that " they shall take unto them a Surname, either of some Town, or some Colour, as Blacke or Brown, or some Art or Science, as Smyth or Carpenter, or some Office, as Cooke or Butler ". England was firmly determined that the " meere Irish " should adopt English manners, customs, and " culture ", even if she had to exterminate every last one of them in the process !

In Germany, in the early 1800's an edict was issued that compelled all Jews within the realm to adopt surnames, whence Gold, Silver, and similar translated Jewish names taken in haste from whatever occurred to them.

The patronym taken from the father or grandfather assumes various forms, depending on the country of origin. In Scotland the prefix Mac or suffix son prevails. In Ireland the prefix O' or Mac was almost without exception. In England the suffix *son, ing*, and *kin* were usual, anglicizations of the Norse words *sonr, ingr*, and *kyn*. The Norman prefix Fitz also means son of, but carries a definite implication of illegitimacy. In Wales *ap* as a prefix means son or descendant of the person named. Spellings tend to change over the years. Thus Apperson becomes often Epperson, Williamson contracts to Williams, Richardson to Richards, Johnson to Johns, and so forth.

Such prominent families among our Pilgrim founders as the Winthrops, Endicotts, Bradfords, Standishes, and many others bore English place or locale-designation names. Governor Winthrop's name means " from the friendly village " ; Endicott is believed to refer to the family in the " end cottage " ; Bradford to the " broad ford ", and Standish to a " stony park ". The transmutations through which a surname or place name may pass in a few centuries is astounding, however, and any reader interested in pursuing the subject under the guidance of an expert should procure and read Joyce's *Origin of Irish Names of Places*.

Accompanying a genealogical report made for an early McKee was a brief comment on surnames which seemed to me well organized. If I knew the name of its author I should give him full credit for the following quotation :

"While England enjoyed a period of comparative peace under Edward the Confessor, a fourth class of surnames arose—names derived from occupation. The earliest of these seem to have been official names, such as Bishop, Mayor, Fawcett (judge), Alderman, Reeve, Sheriff, Chamberlain, Chancellor, Chaplain, Deacon, Latimer (interpreter), Marshall, Sumner (summoner), and Parker (park-keeper). Trade and craft names, although of the same general type, were of somewhat later origin. Currier was a dresser of skins, Webster a weaver, Wainwright a wagon builder, and Baxter a baker. Such names as Smith, Taylor, Barber, Shepherd, Carter, Mason, and Miller are self-explanatory".

"Many surnames of today which seem to defy classification or explanation are corruptions of ancient forms which have become disguised almost beyond recognition. Longfellow, for instance, was originally Longueville, Longshanks was Longchamps, Troublefield was Tuberville, Wrinch was Renshaw, Diggles was Douglas, and Snooks was Sevenoaks. Such corruptions of family names, resulting from ignorance of spelling, variations in pronunciation, or merely from the preference of the bearer, tend to baffle both the genealogist and the etymologist. Shakespeare's name is to be found in some twenty-seven different forms, and the majority of English and Anglo-American surnames have, in their history, appeared in four to a dozen or more variant spellings ".

In his Introduction to the Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain[1] and Giolla na naomph O'Huidhrin[2], the antiquarian John O'Donovan, LL.D., M.R.I.A. (Dublin, 1862), commented on the propensity of the families in various localities to change their names in sometimes astonishing degrees and to variants so remote that only an expert like O'Curry or O'Donovan could possibly unravel them.

Examples :—

"The D'Exeters of Gallen, in Connacht, took the surname of Mac Jordan, from Jordan De Exeter, the founder of that family. Campion observed that the Jordans were very wild Irish in 1571. The Nangles of the same neighborhood took the surname of Mac Costello, from an ancestor Osdolbh, which seems to indicate a Scandinavian origin. The Prendergasts of Mayo took the name of Mac Maurice. Of the Kildare and Desmond branches of the Fitzgeralds were two Mac Thomas's, one in Leinster, and the other, more usually styled Mac Thomaisin, at Kilmacthomas, in the Decies in Munster. A minor branch of the Leinster Geraldines, who were barons of Burnchurch, in the present county of Kilkenny, assumed the surname of Mac Baron, and their descendants, who have since risen to importance in the county of Waterford, now bear the name of Barron, without the prefix Mac. The descendants of Gilbert Fitzgerald, a younger son of John Fitzgerald, ancestor of the houses of Kildare and Desmond, assumed the appellation of Mac Gibbon, now Fitz Gibbon, while the FitzGeralds of Ballymartyr, seneschals of Imokilly, the descendants of James, Earl of Desmond, A.D. 1420, took the surname of Mac Edmond. The De Courceys took the surname of Mac Patrick, from an ancestor Patrick De Courcy, who flourished about the year 1236".

"The Irish families who lived within the English Pale and its vicinity gradually conformed to the English customs and assumed English surnames ; a practice which was deemed to be of such political importance that it was thought worthy the interference of the Parliament of the English Pale. Accordingly it was enacted by the Statute of 5 Edward IV (1465), that every Irishman dwelling within the Pale, then comprising the counties of Dublin, Meath, Louth, and Kildare, should take an English surname. This Act, which curiously illustrates the history of Irish family names, was as follows (*Rot.* Parl., c. 16) :

[1] Died A.D. 1372.
[2] Died A.D. 1420.

' An Act, that the Irish men dwelling in the counties of Dublin, Myeth, Uriell, and Kildare, shall go apparelled like English men, and weare their beardes after the English maner, swear allegeance, and take English surname.

At the request of the Commons it is ordeyned and established by authority of the said Parliament, that every Irishman that dwells betwixt or amongst Englishmen in the county of Dublin, Myeth, Uriell, and Kildare, shall goe like to one Englishman in apparel, and shaving of his beard about the mouth, and shall be within one yeare sworne the liege man of the king in the hands of the lieutenant or deputy, or such as he will assigne to receive this oath, for the multitude that is to be sworne, and shall take to him an English surname of one towne, as Sutton, Chester, Trym, Skryne, Corke, Kinsale : or colour, as white, blacke, browne : or art or science, as smith or carpenter ; or office, as cooke, butler ; and that he and his issue shall use this name under payne of forfeyting of his goods yearly till the premises be done, to be levied two times by the yeare to the king's warres, according to the discretion of the lieutenant of the king or his deputy '. 5 Edward IV., c. 3 (Statutes at Large, Ireland, Vol. I, p. 29).

' In obedience to this law ', says Harris (works of Sir James Ware, vol. ii, p. 58), ' the Shanachs took the name of Foxes ; the Mac-an-gabhans, of Smiths ; Geals, of Whites ; the Brannachs, of Walshes ; and many others ; the said words being only literal translations from the Irish into the English language '.

" It appears, however, that the Statute referred to had not the intended effect to any great extent ; for about a century after it had passed, we find Spenser (this is the poet Edmund Spenser, author of the *Faery Queen*.—R.W.M.) recommending a revival of it, inasmuch as the Irish had then become as Irish as ever. His observations on this point are highly interesting, as throwing light on the history of Irish surnames towards the close of the sixteenth century. They are as follows :

' Moreover, for the better breaking of these heads and septs, which (I tould you) was one of the greatest strengthes of the Irish, methinkes it should be very well to renewe that ould Statute which was made in the reigne of Edward the Fourth in Ireland, by which it was commanded, that whereas all men used to be called by the name of their septs, according to the several nations, and had no surnames at all, that from henceforth each one should take upon himself a severall surname, either of his trade and faculty, or of some quality of his body or minde, or of the place where he dwelt, so as everyone should be distinguished from the other, or from the most part, whereby they shall not onely not depend upon the head of their sept, as now they do, but also in time learne quite to forget his Irish nation. And herewithall would I also wish all the O's and Mac's which the heads of the septs have taken to their names, to bee utterly forbidden and extinguished. For that the same being an ordinance (as some say), first made by O'Brien (meaning Brian Borumha) for the strengthening of the Irish, the abrogating thereof will as much enfeeble them '.—*View of the State of Ireland*, A.D. 1596, p. 108 (Dublin, 1633).

" The earliest dissertation on the subject of surnames which we know of is that given by Plutarch in his Life of Caius Marcius Coriolanus, but the names referred to by him bear more resemblance to sobriquets than to hereditary surnames ".

It is stated by Ware, Keating, and Dr. John Lynch that family names or hereditary surnames first became fixed in Ireland in the reign of Brian Borumha, A.D. 1002–1014. This assertion has been repeated by all the subsequent Irish writers, but none of them has attempted to question or prove it. The most ancient authority on this subject is found in a fragment of a Manuscript in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin (H.2.15) supposed to be a part of Mac Liag's Life of Brian Borumha, which states :

" It was Brian that endowed seven monasteries, both (in) furniture and cattle and land ; and thirty-two cloitcheachs (round towers) ; and it was by him the marriage ceremony was

confirmed ; and it was during his time surnames were first given, and territories were (allotted) to the surnames, and the boundaries of every lordship and cantred were fixed ".

That this statement is more rhetorical than correct will appear from the following alphabetical list, showing the periods at which the progenitors of various important native families flourished or died, according to the Irish Annals. The dates have been added for the most part from the Annals of Ulster, or of the Four Masters :

Fox (Sinach) of Teffia, slain 1084.
MacCarthy of Desmond, slain 1043.
Mac Egan of Ui-Maine, flourished 940.
Mac Eochy, or Keogh, of Ui-Maine, 1290.
Mac Gillapatrick of Ossory, slain 995.
Mac Murrough of Leinster, died 1070.
Mac Namara of Thomond, flourished 1074.
O'Boyle of Tirconnell, flourished 900.
O'Brien of Thomond, died 1014.
O'Byrne of Leinster, died 1050.
O'Cahill of Ui-Fiachiach, flourished 900.
O'Callaghan of Desmond, flourished 1092.
O'Canannan of Tirconnell, flourished 950.
O'Clery of South Ui-Fiachrach, flourished 850.
O'Conor of Connaught, died 974.
O'Conor of Corcomruadh, died 1002.
O'Conor of Offaly, died 977.
O'Dea of Thomond, flourished 1014.
O'Doherty of Tirconnell, flourished 901.
O'Donnell of Corco-Bhaiscin, slain 1014.
O'Donnell of Ui-Maine, flourished 960.
O'Donnell of Tirconnell, flourished 950.
O'Donoghue of Desmond, flourished 1030.
O'Donovan, slain 976.
O'Dowda of Tireragh, flourished 876.
O'Dugan of Fermoy, flourished 1050.
O'Faelain of Decies, flourished 970.
O'Flaherty of Iar Connaught, flourished 970.
O'Gallagher of Tirconnell, flourished 950.
O'Heyne of Ui-Fiachrach, flourished 950.
O'Keefe of Desmond, flourished 950.
O'Kelly of Ui-Maine, flourished 874.
O'Kevan of Ui-Fiachrach, flourished 876.
O'Loughlin of Burren, died 983.
O'Madden of Ui-Maine, flourished 1009.
O'Mahony of Desmond, slain 1014.
O'Melaghlin of Meath, died 1022.
O'Molloy of Fera Ceall, slain 1019.
O'Muldory of Tirconnell, flourished 870.
O'Neill of Ulster, slain 919.
O'Quin of Thomond, flourished 970.
O'Ruarc of Breifny, died 893.
O'Scanlan of Ui-Fiachrach, flourished 946.
O'Shaughnessy of Ui-Fiachrach, flourished 1100.
O'Sullivan of Desmond, flourished 950.
O'Tuathail or O'Toole of Leinster, died 950.

John O'Donovan was definitely of the opinion that even as late as his day (circa 1862) the Irish looked upon the prefix O' as a kind of title, while Mac was in no way a mark of distinction. As has been said elsewhere herein, O' is the same as *Ua*, and literally signifies grandson, although it has taken the far wider meaning of *any male descendant*. *Mac* means simply son of, and originally related to the bearer's father, then became the patronym. He commented, however, that the notion that bearers of names commencing with O' were of superior lineage to those using the prefix Mac was nothing more than popular error of recent origin. As a matter of fact, some of the most noble Irishmen used the Mac prefix, as for instance Mac Murrogh, king of Leinster, Mac Carthy, king of Desmond, Mac Mahon, king of Oriel, and Magennis, chief of Iveagh in Ulster. The Patent Rolls of King James I show that families of completely obscure origin boasted names prefixed O', and that conversely Macs occupied high family positions in the nation.

It is a curious anomaly that descendants of Irish clans that emigrated to Scotland and attached themselves to or founded clans in the Highlands of Scotland did not in a discernible single instance adopt the O'. Instead, they employed the Mac prefix, even though its suffix altered within the burgeoning family over the centuries ; witness Mac Eth, Mac Aoidh, Mac Kay, Mky, Mackee, and so forth. In the 1851 Census of Ireland most Irish families formerly bearing the O' had dropped it, but there appeared to be an increasing number of Macs, this latter circumstance attributable in part to Scottish colonization during James' "Plantation of Ulster" and in similar mass immigrations. Many Scottish Highland families had anglicized their names by 1862 : Mac Donald to Donaldson ; Mac Aedha or Mac Aoidh to Hughson or Hewson, and doubtless to Mac Kee, for it is thus that they are *pronounced*. It is noted that some of the descendants of the O'Brollaghan family, noted in Irish history, but many members of which emigrated to the Highlands of Scotland in earlier centuries, returned to Ulster and for obvious reasons of political and personal safety took the name Brodie. An American descendant of the family made a small bid for fame, it will be recalled, by jumping from Brooklyn Bridge.

John O'Donovan has also the following interesting information about the origin of several Irish surnames :

"The name O'Donovan, previous to the Revolution of 1688, had the O' always prefixed as an indication of descent from Donovan, chief of the plains of Ui Fidhgeinte, in the now county of Limerick, who was slain by the monarch Brian Borumha, in the year 977 ; but the Mac prefixed in the latter name is a mark of better descent, namely, from Carthach, great-grandson of Ceallachan Cashel, king of Munster, whose descendants held royal sway in Desmond before the English invasion, and who, after the fall of the Geraldines, enjoyed the highest rank in the same territory under the English Government till the Revolution of 1688.

This popular error seems to derive some countenance from the fact that the ancient Irish, for some reason which we cannot now understand, never prefixed the O' in any surname derived from art, trade, or science, (O'Gowan, from *gobhan*, 'a smith', perhaps, only excepted), the prefix *Mac* having been always used in such instances ; for we never meet with, as derivatives from *saor*, 'a carpenter', or *bard*, 'a poet', or *filidh*, 'a poet', the forms O' an tSaoir, O' an Bhaird, or O' an Fhilidh, but Mac an tSaoir, Mac an Fhilidh, Mac an Bhaird ; and surnames thus formed never ranked as high as those which were formed from the names of kings or chieftains ".

It seems to the present writer that Mr. O'Donovan should have noted further a matter of which he indubitably was aware, and that is that O' had an even wider connotation than "male descendants of", which would itself imply a *named man* rather than an individual identified only obliquely by reference to his occupation ; the wider connotation to which

I refer is " of the clan of " or " of the tribe of ". It would be an obviously puerile denomination to be surnamed " of the tribe of the carpenter ". I think we may reduce the matter to this : (1) ancient and powerful clans, cohesive and martial, adopted for their tribal name the personal name of a famous ancestor, and became O'Neills or O'Rourkes ; (2) lesser fry, wanting a surname as population increased, were first designated by others as (for example) Sean, son of Eoghan, or Sean Mac Eoghan. Then Sean's son merely took his father's name and passed it along to his son. Being definitely lesser fry, though, some of these took the name " son of the carpenter " and so forth. Possibly there was reason not to disclose the carpenter's name. It will be seen, else remembered, that Shane O'Neill, a son of Con Baccagh O'Neill, proved to the satisfaction of some English ministers of state at least that Matthew O'Neill, Shane's brother, was actually the son of a Dundalk blacksmith named O'Kelly, and that his mother's name was Alison O'Kelly ; Matthew O'Neill (O'Kelly?) was the father of the great Hugh O'Neill, who was elected The O'Neill by his tribe, and investitured third Earl of Tyrone by Elizabeth.

As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, the ancient custom of attaching *agnomina* to the personal name of a chieftain or king was practiced in Ireland, as Niall Ruadh, because he had red hair, Con Baccagh, because he was lame, and so on. Too, there was a singular facet of the custom wherein *antiphrasis* was employed : *Aedh Toinleasc*, which delicately translated would be close to " heavy in the fundament ", because of Aedh's restless activity ; *Henry Aimhreidh*, Henry the Contentious, because he was so quiet and amiable.

Many leaders, chieftains as well as kings, received *agnomina* that denoted a geographical location, such as the place of their birth, where they were fostered, or where they died in battle : " in the family of Mac Murrough of Leinster, Donnell *Cavanagh* was so named from having been fostered by the comharba, or ecclesiastical successor of St. Cavan, at Kilcavan, near Gorey, in Odea, in the present county of Wexford. The *agnomen* of this Donnell has been adopted for many centuries as a surname by his descendants, a practice very unusual among Irish families. In the family of Mac Donnell of Scotland, which is of Irish descent, John Cahanach was so called from his having been fostered by O'Cahan (or O'Kane) in the present county of Londonderry ", (formerly Coleraine).

Brian *Catha Duin*, " of the Battle of Down " was named this because he was slain in a battle fought at Downpatrick in 1260 A.D.

As regards the quaint and curious custom of *per antiphrasim* mentioned above, Sir Henry Piers wrote in 1682 in a letter to Anthony Dopping, Bishop of Meath, as follows : " . . . . . it is certain they take much liberty, and seem to do it with delight, in giving of nicknames ; if a man have an imperfection or evil habit, he shall be sure to hear of it in the nickname. Thus, if he be blind, lame, squint-eyed, grey-eyed, be a stammerer in speech, left-handed, to be sure he shall have one of these added to his name ; so also from his colour of hair, as black, red, yellow, brown ; and from his age, as young, old ; or from what he addicts himself to, or much delights in, as in draining, building, fencing, and the like ; so that no man whatever can escape a nickname who lives among them, or converseth with them ; and sometimes so libidinous are they in this kind of raillery, they will give nicknames *per antiphrasim*, or contrariety of speech. Thus a man of excellent parts, and beloved of all men, shall be called *grana*, that is, naughty or fit to be complained of ; if a man have a beautiful countenance, or lovely eyes, they will call him Cuiegh, that is, squint-eyed ; if a great house-keeper (here he means *host*, I believe. R.W.M.), he shall be called Ackerisagh, that is, greedy ".

In the early 14th century, Anglo-Norman families who had settled in Ireland built fine castles and settled down to live the lives of feudal lords. By the 17th century they had in

many cases become " more Irish than the Irish themselves ", to Elizabeth's dismay and displeasure. They spoke Gaelic, wore Irish clothing, and adopted the ancient Irish customs, even to the custom so very peculiar to Ireland and Scotland of fostering children to families of lesser stature for rearing with their own. Today, even with the growing number of day-nurseries-for-the-comfort-of-working-mothers, who cannot accommodate themselves to their husbands' earning level, we find such a custom strange and incomprehensible. We should remember that the Irish and Scottish chieftains were almost constantly at war, either with the Danes, the English, or among themselves for the pure devilment of it, and possibly used this means of rearing their progeny outside the danger zone.

After the murder in 1333 of William de Burgo, Earl of Ulster, which event for nearly two hundred years seriously lessened English power in Ireland, many of the Anglo-Norman families adopted Irish surnames by prefixing Mac to the personal name of some ancestor. The De Burgos of Connaught took the name of Mac William, honoring their ancestor William Fitz Adelm De Burgo. This family subdivided into MacWilliams of Galway and MacWilliams of Mayo, whence further subdivisions emerged, as the Mac Davids of Glinsk, the Mac Philbins of Dun Mugdord in Mayo, the Mac Shoneens, later reduced to Jennings, the Mac Gibbons, later shortened to Gibbons, the Mac Walters, and the Mac Raymonds.

The Burkes of the barony of Igrine in county Kilkenny, descended from the Red Earl of Ulster, took the name Gall, which in Gaelic means *foreigner*. The Berminghams of Connaught took the Irish surname Mac Feoris ; the Barretts of Connaught changed to Mac Wattin, with minor branches calling themselves MacAndrew, MacTomin, and MacRobert.

It will be seen from the foregoing examples that Irish names have suffered from two opposite kinds of metamorphoses, that is, first, Anglo-Norman families adopting Irish surnames, and, second, native Milesian Irish adopting under English compulsion English surnames. Of these latter, literally hundreds can be supplied, but a dozen or so should exemplify the procedures generally followed :

Fergus	to	Ferguson
O'Mulligan	to	Molyneaux
MacGillycuskly	to	Cosgrove or Costello
Mac Gillyglass	to	Greene
O'Hay or O'Hughe	to	Hughes
O'Howen	to	Owens
O'Clery	to	Clarke
O'Haughey	to	Howe
O'Linchy	to	Lynch
O'Fahy	to	Fay and Green
Mac Firbis	to	Forbes
O'Rourke	to	Rook
Magunshinan	to	Nugent
O'Byrne	to	Warren

" Among the less distinguished Irish families, however, the translation and anglicizing of names have gone on to so great a degree as to leave no doubt that in the course of half a century (this would mean by 1912, R.W.M.) it will be difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish many families of Irish name and origin from those of English race, unless, indeed, enquirers shall be enabled to do so by the assistance of *history, family documents*, or *physiognomical characteristics* ". (Emphasis supplied). John O'Donovan's Introduction to the Topographical Poems of O'Dubhagain and O'Huidhrin (Dublin, 1862), page 42.

Inasmuch as the clan MacKee was first the clan Mac Aodh and indigenous in remote centuries to Ireland, then emigrated as individuals and families to Scotland to merge in some measure with the mighty clan Mac Heth, Mac Eth, Mackay, and even perhaps help to found it, its actual paths will remain undefined forever, I fear. Members of the clan came back to Ireland in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, and there spelled their name McKee, usually. *The Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland* by the Four Masters do not mention the name McKee, but the *Annals of Ulster* do contain it *in the text*. Moreover, John O'Donovan, who translated the Four Masters, adverts to the name McKee (MacKee) in a footnote that has reference to the O'Reilly clan of Brefne. The origin of the name McKee is examined in the next chapter.