



THE LONG-STONE IN THE RATH OF FURNESS (FORENAGHTS GREAT), WITH MRS. SYNNOTT
STANDING BESIDE IT.

With the natural conservatism of their race, the majority of the local carmen still cling to the use of the old name, instead of Furness.

The Parish of Forenaghts contains, according to Lewis, 765 statute acres, the boundaries, as they appear on the six-inch Ordnance Map, comprising nearly the whole of the townlands of Forenaghts Great, the whole of Morristown, and also part of the townland of Little Forenaghts, i.e., practically the whole of the modern Furness, and part of Forenaghts demesnes. The small portion of Great Forenaghts townland that is excluded is bounded on the south by the back road. Forenaghts and the neighbouring (and still smaller) Parish of Haynestown were two chapelries, or perpetual curacies, forming one benefice in the Deanery of Naas, and in the patronage of the bishop. According to Erck's "Ecclesiastical Register," James Slater was admitted Incumbent of this joint benefice in 1787, though Erck remarks that there was no church for the benefice. In MacGeoghegan's list of the ancient parish churches of the diocese, "Ecclesia de Fornoghts" is mentioned as a parish church in the middle of the seventeenth century, and it is probable that it ceased to be used for religious service after the rebellion of 1641, and the change of proprietors which took place shortly afterwards.¹

Though there is a widespread tradition in the neighbourhood that "monks" lived at Furness, I can find no ground for this belief. Neither Dugdale, Ware, Allemand, nor the anonymous compiler of "The Monasticon" based on Allemand (Stevens), mention any monastery or cell at Furness.

The old church was monastic only in this sense, that in 1210 it was granted, with the tithes, by Richard de Lesse to the Abbey of St. Thomas, in Dublin; and then there appears to have been a re-grant, incorporating a condition that William de Lesse, the son of the original donor, described as a "persona," or clergyman, should remain in possession of the church and tithes as long as he lived. It appears that in the same year John de Lesse granted to the same abbey the Church of "Fornathbeg," or Little Forenaghts.² I cannot find any further mention of this church at Little Forenaghts.

It is not mentioned, as we have seen, by MacGeoghegan, though he does mention the "Capella de Higginstown,"

¹ Dr. Comerford, "Collections," vol. i, Appendix, p. 250.

² Archdall, "Monasticon," p. 186; Harris's "Ware," vol. ii, p. 262; "Chartularies of the Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr, in Dublin," edited by J. T. Gilbert.