

**AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE
DONGAN
CLUB, OF ALBANY,
N. Y., JULY 22, 1889**

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An Address Before the Dongan Club, of Albany, N. Y., July 22, 1889 by Franklin M. Danaher

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FRANKLIN M. DANAHER

**AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE
DONGAN
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N. Y., JULY 22, 1889**

Thomas Dongan,
Second Earl of Limerick.

Governor of New York,
August 27, 1683-August 11, 1688.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

DONGAN CLUB,

Of Albany, N. Y.,

BY

FRANKLIN M. DANAHER,

JULY 22, 1889.

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A D D R E S S .

N the 22d day of July, 1686, to follow the language of the document, "Thomas Dongan, Lieutenant and Governor of the Province of New York and Dependencies in America, under his most sacred Majesty, James the Second, by the Grace of God, of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, and so forth, and Supreme Lord and Proprietor of said Province of New York and its Dependencies," by virtue of his commission and authority and the power in him presiding, granted a charter to the town of Albany, confirmed its ancient rights, gave it privileges, exceptional to the age, and made it a city.

Two centuries later, the city of Albany, still in possession of its chartered rights, hallowed by time and vivified by the gladsome light of liberty, as it had found expression in a free country, where the rulers derive their powers from the consent of the governed, and not through the parchments of men, by the grace of God, kings, celebrated the bi-centenary of the event.

It did full honor to the character and patriotism of Thomas Dongan; it held him in grateful memory, and, because of the charter, it extolled his merits and sung his praises.

Thomas Dongan.

During the celebration, the young Irish-Americans of Albany inquired into his life, examined his record as Governor of colonial New York, traced his career as a soldier and patriot, and found that he was more than a grantor of charters, and resolved to lay myrtle, as well as cypress, on his tomb, and to keep his memory fresh and perpetuate his deeds for all time, in the place which he protected as a soldier, and fostered as a governor; which he made historical by his presence, and a city by his favor.

For those reasons was this organization called the Dongan Club. It is proper that it should place among its archives some record of the life and services of this illustrious man, but the task should have been given to other hands.

To rake, amid the ashes of the burned-out fires of two centuries ago, for the facts that go to make the history of Dongan's life, would be a delightful task to one of the *litterati* or to a man of leisure; the vistas of life in the colonies, which it reveals, the insight which it gives into the character and methods of the hardy colonists and brave aborigines, the richness of soil and the profusion of nature which the search develops, are among the rewards of his industry, but to a man busy in the every-day walks of life, the task is beyond his time and I regret that I accepted the duty, even upon your kind and flattering request.

The details of Dongan's private life are buried with him; we can only form an estimate of his character and of his ability as a ruler, from the records of his acts and

Thomas Dongan.

sayings while Governor of New York. Their complete exposition would be a history of the province during his time, an undertaking both beyond my powers and your patience, so I will plead what I may hereafter say in part performance of your request, leaving to the future historian of the club, the honor and pleasure of doing a full measure of justice to this noble Irishman.

Thomas Dongan, the second earl of Limerick, was born at Castletown, County of Kildare, in Ireland, in 1634, of an ancient and representative Catholic family. The surname of Dongan is said to be of Milesian origin. It is as ancient as Ireland's history. It appears as Donnegan, Dungan and Dongan; its earliest Irish form being O'Dunnagan. The Irish Dongans are among the families descended from Heremon, the seventh son of Milesius, of Spain, from whom were descended the kings, nobility and gentry of the ancient kingdoms of Connaught, Dalriada, Leinster, Meath, Ossory; of Scotland, since the reign of Fergus Mor Mac Earca, in the fifth century; of Ulster, since the fourth century; of the principalities of Tirconnell and Tirowen, and of England, from the reign of King Henry II down to the present time.

O'Hart names the Dungans or Dongans among the families of English descent in Kildare, where Dongan was born, but places the Dongans, earls of Limerick, among the Anglo-Norman families of Limerick and Clare. It may be that the Dongans migrated to England in the early centuries and returned later to Ireland, or coming directly from England, their name, in the course of time, was Hibernicized.

Thomas Dongan.

In 1387 Dermot O'Dongan was presented by the Marquess of Dublin to a benefice within the diocese of Limerick, and in 1392 the king granted to Thomas O'Dongan, chaplain, and then an admitted Irishman, the liberty of using the English tongue and law. The old annalists speak of the ancient sept of O'Donnegan, who were extensive proprietors in the half barony of Orrery, County of Cork.

In 1395 John Dongan, a Benedictine monk, Bishop of Derry, was transferred to the See of Down; Henry IV made him Seneschal of Ulster, among other high and memorable offices; he died in 1412.

Later, John Dongan, who had been a second remembrancer of the exchequer, in the time of Henry VIII, was a proprietor in the city of Dublin, and in the Counties of Carlow and Clare. He died in 1592 and devised his estate to Walter, his eldest son and heir, with remainders on William, Edward and Thomas Dongan, second, third and fourth sons in tail male, successively.

Sir Walter, his heir, was styled of Abbottstown, County of Dublin; he was a patriot and brought four archers on horseback to the general hosting on the hills of Tara in 1593. He settled his estates in 1615, and the next year passed a patent for the manor at Kildrought (Castletown) and other possessions; was made a baronet October 23, 1623, and died in 1626.

Sir John Dongan was Walter's son and heir; he was 23 years of age at the time of his father's death and married. He was a member of the Irish Parliament