

terment in the abbey, which is still much used for the purpose.

The stile is one of the most frequented spots about the town or neighbourhood; for just withinside of it, on the margin of the meadow, lies a well, occasionally overflowing with clear and delicious water, whither the inhabitants come to draw as long as a drop is to be had. During a great part of the year the supply is ample; and the reservoir, which is about six feet deep, and long and broad enough for a bath, not only remains full to the brim, but generally sends off a little stream. But in the course of summer, the water is sure to fail many times, to the great inconvenience of the neighbouring habitations; for the deficiency of water in the town is general; and so severely felt, that the very puddle, at last, becomes an object of contention.

Fine water was one of the essential requisites for a monastic establishment; and it is possible, that the existence of this very spring, in former times, might, in some measure, have led to the choice of the site of the abbey. The full extent of the meadow lies, indeed, between the remains of the abbey and the well; but from fragments of old masonry and carved stones, which have from time to time been discovered, on the line between the abbey and the rising ground of the parish church, there is reason to believe that the whole of the interval might have been covered either with buildings belonging to this, or to other ecclesiastical institutions. The original abbey of Saint Coman might, perhaps, have stood here amongst the number.

The building now known under the name of Ros-

common Abbey, is not that which was founded by St. Coman; but one of a much later period, founded by Phelim Mac Cashel Crovdearg O'Conor,* king of Connaught, about the year 1257, that is, about eleven years before the castle of Roscommon was begun by the English Lord Justice, Sir Robert De Ufford. Like many other ecclesiastical buildings, the abbey of which the remains are now standing, does not appear either to have been built wholly at the same period, or pursuant to one uniform plan. The ruins in the meadow belong exclusively to the great church; and though there are numerous remains of old walls in the gardens and orchards belonging to the villas which have been mentioned, it is difficult to decide upon their connexion with the abbey. The entire length of the church; from east to west, is about 137 feet; its width twenty-three; the western part, measuring fifty-four feet, seems to have been an addition to the original building, as well as the transept to the north. The peculiarity of the construction consists in this latter part being connected with an aisle to the north, by means of arches, whilst no corresponding one appears to have ever existed at the opposite side. The arches of communication between the nave and the aisle, varying from fourteen feet seven inches, to fifteen feet eight inches in span, are all of the broad lancet kind, and in pleasing proportion; they are four in number; the inner pair resting upon two intermediate circular pillars; and the outer pair, on the pillars on one side, and at the other on corresponding pilasters in the

* *Crovdearg*, in Irish, "red handed," an epithet given to the monarch, from the number of bloody battles which he had fought.