

FIFTH WITNESS TO KNOCK VISION ANALYSED

Fifth Witness.

Testimony of Patrick Beirne.

Patrick Beirne was the son of the elder Patrick Beirne of Knock, I am sixteen years of age ; I live quite near the chapel ; I remember well the evening of the 21st of August ; it was Thursday, the evening before the Octave day. Dominick Beirne, Jun., a namesake of mine, came to my house, and said that he had seen the biggest sight that ever he witnessed in his life. It was then after eight o'clock. I came by the road on the west side of the church. I saw the figures clearly, fully, and distinctly — the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and that of a bishop, said to be St. John the Evangelist. Young Beirne then told what he saw regarding the Vision, just as it has been described already by several persons who were present. The young fellow showed by his hands and position how the image or apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary and that of St. Joseph and St. John stood. I remained only ten minutes, and then I went away. All this happened between a quarter or so past eight o'clock and half-past nine.

Why was there something glossed over? He claims he saw the "Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and that of a bishop, said to be St. John the Evangelist". The commission then stops recording what he said and inserts, "Young Beirne then told what he saw regarding the Vision, just as it has been described already by several persons who were present. The young fellow showed by his hands and position how the image or apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary and that of St. Joseph and St. John stood." Then his speech is recorded again. "I remained only ten minutes, and then I went away." Something is being hidden here. Patrick in later years said the images he saw on the gable were faint ones - like shapes cast by the light of the moon. That explains it! But he said, " I saw the figures clearly, fully, and distinctly." How do we know that he did? He had little or no control over the testimony. And, "I came by the road on the west side of the church. I saw the figures clearly, fully, and distinctly" could mean that he saw them so clearly when he was at a distance. Close up they could have been less impressive.

It must be noted that not one thing in this testimony indicates a miracle. He doesn't even mention the alleged bright light. And though he said later that he stayed longer than ten minutes, it seems that he really did stay only ten minutes. Impressed wasn't he? Catherine Murray stayed only a half an hour or less so it was possible he was even less interested than she was.

His, "I came by the road on the west side of the church. I saw the figures clearly, fully, and distinctly — the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and that of a bishop, said to be St. John the Evangelist" is too close for comfort to his grandmother Margaret Beirne's testimony, "I came with others to the wall opposite the gable ; I saw then and there distinctly the three images — one of the Blessed Virgin Mary, one of St. Joseph, and the third, as I learned, that of St. John the Evangelist". Plagiarism — by the commission! Or were the witnesses colluding to get their stories to match?

