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According to tradition, Saint Brigid

(Brigit, Bridget) was born at Fochart (or Fothairt), near Dundalk of County Louth in Ulster, of a noble Irish family, which had been converted by Saint Patrick (17 Mar.). A wonderful striving for virtue was seen in her from her earliest years. Being uncommonly beautiful, she had many suitors and her father tried to marry her to the King of Ulster. At the age of sixteen, she implored Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom alone she desired as her spouse, to make her unattractive, so that no longer would anyone want to marry her. Her prayer was heard; she lost an eye, and was allowed to enter a monastery. However, on the very day that she took the veil, she was miraculously healed and recovered her original loveliness, which was now set off by spiritual beauty.

Some miles from Dublin she was granted possession of a plain called the Curragh, where she built herself a cell under a large oak tree, thence called Kill-dara, or Cell of the oak. Seven other girls soon placed themselves under her direction establishing the monastery of Kill-dara, which gave its name to the later cathedral city of Kildare. The community grew rapidly thanks to the renown of the holy

Abbess, and became a double monastery, with the Abbess ranking above the Abbot, and branched out into several others all over Ireland.

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