

CORK CUVIERIAN AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

THE last meeting of this society for the session 1867-8 was held in the Library of the Royal Cork Institution on Wednesday evening the 6th inst., Professor Harkness, F.R.S., President, in the chair.

Dr. Richard Caulfield said—During the present session, which this evening brings to a close, I have often directed your attention to original documents from the Public Record Office, London, having reference to the history of this city and county in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, all which give an insight into the fearful ordeal this country was passing through in its endeavours to resist English rule. One point of vast importance must be borne in mind, which considerably augmented this difficulty, namely, that the inhabitants generally, except those in the towns, spoke the Irish language. To the native Irish the English was an unknown tongue, and consequently we find a large amount of correspondence written in Latin, of which language many of the Irish chiefs were competent masters. I have seen some of the correspondence of the chieftains in Spanish mixed with Irish. In the following paper we have the length of Cork, 21 April, 1582; also, an account of a fearful plague, which was depopulating the city at the time, with famine. This plague seems to have been confined to the towns; the country was healthy, and the traitors had perfect immunity from the pestilence. In this letter Sir Warham St. Leger uses a curious phrase when speaking of the plague, which may involve some superstitious idea connected with this peculiar disease in the imperfect state of medical science at the time, that those that died had not on them "God's marks." What this refers to may form the subject of a curious physiological inquiry:

"My humble duty to your lordship. The experience I have of your honour's dealings and good acceptance of my former rude letters, emboldens me to acquaint your lordship with a letter I now write to the Queen's Majesty, concerning the state of this province. The copy whereof, as also a plan of my poor opinion how the rebellion may be soon ended, I send your honour here enclosed (wanting), and the cause that nurtureth our zeal for your highness service, which, by the great murders and spoils done by the traitors on one side, and the killings and spoils done by the soldiers in the service of the other, with the great imposition of cess, is become wasted as I hold it inevitable, for, by these disorders and banishing of ploughs, which should be the relief of men to live, there is such famine amongst the people here, as it is to be feared, the province will ere long be unpeopled, the mortality being such as hath not been known in the life of man. There dieth some days, in this town (being but one street, not half a quarter of a mile in length), 72,66,62, and one day with another through the week, 40, 30, and 20, when they die least. The like death is throughout all the counties in the province, as well in towns as elsewhere, saving amongst the traitors, who neither be touched with those diseases, nor yet taste of any famine, all men's goods being prey for them, enjoying continually the wholesome air of the fields, which is cause of their preserving. John Fitz-Edmond, the best subject of the Queen, hath, in these parts, had within these two months, 600 persons, in his towns and wards that he maintaineth, and hath now left alive of these 30. It is not the plague of pestilence that is among this people, for neither have they God's marlks, nor yet sores when they be dead; it maketh a speedy work with them as doth the plague, for they lie not sick above six or seven days; besides this sickness, we have here plague of famine in such sort, as were it not for the Queen's Majestie's store, we should starve; of which there is nothing these six weeks but bread and beer, and no such store as will serve the soldiers a fortnight, which spent it will not be possible for the soldiers to remain here. The county can yield nothing, all being consumed, and if there were beeves to be had (as there are not) so lean they be (by means they cannot be suffered to feed abroad) are no better than carrions. I have been in two towns besieged, and never found like scarcity as is here, God and her Majesty arrest it. If her Majesty will maintain 2,000 footmen and 300 horsemen four months

and send victuals at once for that time, she shall make an honourable end of this rebellion, besides gratifying a number of poor men that painfully suffer here. There is no way of subduing these traitors but by settling down men in their woods, which be their fortresses; that done their hearts be dead, for being beaten out of their woods, they are not able to hold up their heads. And if it be said soldiers cannot lie in the woods, believe it not, for they may as well settle themselves in the woods as in other places. It is settled garrisons that must make an end of this work, and not running journeys, for that wearie out men, and to no purpose till they be beaten out of the woods, and then following the traitors with convenient companies of footmen and horsemen, divided at two parts, they shall so hunt the traitors as they shall have the killing of them or driving them into the sea. Having no strange news, but that the rebels the seneschal and Patrick Condon the 6th of this month murdered two of the Lord Roche's sons, Tibold and Redmond, and to the number of 30 men whose deaths are greatly lamented, inasmuch as they were held good subjects, I humbly take my leave from Cork, 2nd April, 1582.

" WARHAM ST.
LEGER."

Mr. R. R. Brash, M.R.I.A., said—Having been informed by my lamented friend, the late Mr. John Windele, of the existence of an Ogham inscription on the lands of Greenhill, in this county, I examined it on Saturday, April 25th, accompanied by Mr. R. Walker, jun., and Dr. Caulfield, both members of this society. Our route lay through Whitechurch, Bottle-hill, and by Burnfort, the residence of Richard H. Purcell, Esq. The locality of the stone, as I before stated, is the townland of Greenhill, or as it is called by the Irish-speaking people of the locality, Placus. It is in the parish of Mourne Abey, about thirteen miles from Cork, and five miles from Mallow, on the old road between both towns, and will be found on a sheet of the Ordnance Survey of the county Cork. The locality is famous in the annals of our Ogham literature, as in a Rath-cave in the adjoining townland of Burnfort (Rathatotate), the late John D. Croker discovered the celebrated "Sagittari" inscription, which he presented to the Royal Cork Institution Museum, and which gave rise to a lengthened controversy between the present Lord Bishop of Limerick, then Professor Graves, of Trinity College, Dublin, and the late Mr. John Windele. (See proceedings of the Kilkenny Archl. Soc., vol. 1849, p.143). It stands on the hill-side, in an open field, about 15 yards from the fence. It is a fine pillar stone, fixed in the ground, and slightly out of the perpendicular, measuring 8 feet 6 inches in height above the ground, 2 feet 4 inches wide at the base, and varying in thick ness from 12 to 17 inches. It diminishes considerably towards the top, being almost pyramidal in shape. It is a rough, undressed stone, of the hard clay-slate of the locality, and the inscription is on one angle, commencing within 18 inches of the bottom, and ending within 6 inches of the top. The characters must originally have been broadly and deeply cut, as with all the wear of ages they are still legible, a few only requiring close scrutiny, to ascertain their value. Having had the advantage of a very favourable light I was enabled to make a correct copy of the inscription as follows, with the equivalents in English letters :- " TTG E NU. MAQ I. MUCO I. CU R.I TTI." At the commencement of the inscription there is a deep dot and a joint mark, which I don't think has anything to do with the inscription, but which I have shown. The two first letters (T), when commencing a word, have the power of D; according to Irish lexicographers (see MacCurtin and O'Reilly), it intensifies the pronunciation of the first word, which is a proper name (Dgenu). We have next the word "Maqui," the genitive case of the Irish Mac, "a son." This is the key-word of every inscription where it is found, as both before and after it we are sure to have a proper name; properly speaking there is no Q in the Irish language; the five strokes above the line represent C U, in Irish equivalent to the English Q. This word is found in various forms, such as Maqqi, Maquq, Maqqo, also Miq; Moqi, Moc,

Mac, Maccu, so that the termination i, being a latinized form, is a mistake, as all the vowels are used indiscriminately in the termination of this word—a very common occurrence, not only on these monuments, but in Irish MSS. I have also seen the form Mag used in more than one Ogham inscription—a form of Mac very often occurring also in Irish MSS. The characters next following form a well-known patronymic or tribe name, very frequently found on these monuments, namely, the word "Mucoi," one which appears to have been widely diffused through the south of Ireland as it is found in inscriptions in Cork, Kerry &c. The remaining letters of this inscription may occasion some difference of opinion. I render them CUR. ITTI, *i. e.*, a minstrel or bard (in) age. "Cur, *a-minstrel*" (O'Donovan—Sup. to O'Reilly's Dict.). "Ette s, *age*" (O'Reilly's). The vowels I and E are commutable in Gaelhelic. O'Reilly writes of these letters—"In our old manuscripts E and I were written indefinitely, one for the other." The whole inscription will stand as follows :- "Dgenu, the son of Mucoi, a bard (in) age." In giving this rendering I have neither added, subtracted, nor transposed a letter. That our Pagan ancestors should erect so noble a pillar stone in memory of a favourite minstrel or bard, is highly probable, knowing, as we do, the great consideration in which such were held. The student of Irish history will remember the dispute between the two leaders of the Clanna Miledh, Heber and Heremon, for the possession of the celebrated bard, O'Naoi. Among the Gaelhili of Erin the divine arts of poetry and music were cultivated to a remarkable extent, and as far back as history and tradition record, their chief professors held positions in the State inferior only to royalty; the habits of the people, and even the destinies of the principality were influenced by them, and almost supernatural powers were attributed to the masters of song. Ignorance of the divine art frequently excluded a man from good society, and often from State employment. In the course of time poetry and music ceased to be exclusively cultivated by a class and became a general accomplishment among the middle and upper ranks of society. Not only were the conquests of their kings, the deeds of heroes, the glories of the chase, and the delights of love recited and sung by the bards to the music of the harp, but the history of the nation, the genealogies of her ancient families, her philosophy, and the theology were breathed in poetic numbers at her public festivals and social gatherings, and in the bardic establishments professors were set apart for these various branches, according to their natural endowments and capacities while for the sustenance of these sanctuaries of the muses considerable revenues were set apart by the king or chief of the principality. Such being the estimation in which the bard, was held, the erection of the great pillar stone at Greenhill in memory of some aged master of song, whose wild numbers had rung in the court, the camp, and the foray, will not be deemed unlikely. There are several other scores on this monument, but they are sharp and recently cut, and bear no resemblance to the characters of the true inscription. Mr. Purcell has stated his intention of protecting this interesting monument from the defacement it is subject to by the rubbing of cattle, by placing a suitable fence round it.

[Mr. Brash illustrated his paper with a beautiful drawing of the monolith, showing the Ogham inscription on the edge of the stone.]

Mr. Robert Day, jun., exhibited the following :—A well-preserved cinerary urn of sundried clay. It is thickly set on the outer surface with small angular gravel, which must have materially aided in giving it cohesion. This seems to have prevented the embellishing of the urn, as only on its inner rim and round the upper and middle ledges that encircle it, are the primitive zigzag lines found. On the centre ledge are two knob-like handles; similar projections

are figured on an urn in Sir Wm. Wilde's work on "Lough Corrib," and there stated to be unique. This urn is 4½ inches high, 5½ inches in diameter at top, and tapers to 2 inches at the bottom. It was found with another in an erased tumulus, near Moville, County Londonderry, and both contained burnt bones.

A stone celt and portion of a circular pierced stone "sinker" from Lough Gur, Co Limerick. The latter was presented by John Fitzgerald, Esq., of Holy Cross, who has done so much for the archaeology of Lough Gur and its locality.

A plain hoop gold ring, weight, 9 dwt., found near Youghal a short time since, with the posey on its inner surface—"Qvi. Dedit. Se. Dedit., A.M."

From New Zealand a green jade ear-ring,

and a grotesque figure in jade. Both are worn as ornaments by the Maories, and are still highly prized. Also a square oblong box, curiously carved. The cover and end handles represent tattooed human heads, with the tongues out in an attitude of defiance, and the eyes filled in with settings of sea shell.

Mr. Day also showed on behalf of Ralph Westrop, Esq., a circular stone ornament, hollow in the centre and pierced so that a bronze pin probably passed through and so converted it into a ring brooch. Similarly formed ornaments, both in bronze and amber, are in his collection. This was found in an ancient hearth or fireplace on Mr. Westrop's property at Ravenswood, and had been evidently subject to the action of fire.

The Rev. Dr. Neligan exhibited a remarkably fine brown leaf-shaped spear; head, 17 inches long, fixed on a bog oak handle about 7 feet long. Around the socket of the spear is a band of gold a little over 2 inches in breadth ornamented with a lineal pattern alternating in perpendicular and horizontal order. This unique article was fished up some years ago from Lough Gur, Co. Limerick, and was purchased at Lord Guillamore's sale by the doctor

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