

CORK CUVIERIAN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

THE sixth meeting of this society for the session of 1867-8, was held in the library of the Royal Cork Institution, on Wednesday evening, the 1st inst.,

THOMAS R. LANE, Esq., V.P., in the chair.

Dr Richard Caulfield said—The Castle of Blarney is surrounded with so many romantic incidents that any memorials of its ancient history will be read with some degree of interest. There is no locality in the south of Ireland that is more anxiously sought after by visitors from other lands, who pride themselves in having paid homage to this old Irish castle, that still stands in dunghy majesty, one of the strongholds, in times past, of national power. The chroniclers tell of it—poets have sung of it—soldiers have celebrated it—its dungeon still exists, and those dark, mysterious caverns that fill the curious with awe—legends of good and evil report hover about it—and the stranger may often be seen gathering shamrocks on the bawn, which are here said to possess some peculiar charm when plucked bathed in the morning dew, and everyone has heard of, and many experienced the sweet and inspiring influence of the stone.

The wreck of a not very old baronial mansion, now like some gigantic skeleton, adds to the gloomy side of the picture, particularly when we hear of the scenes of splendour and gaiety that were frequent within its walls about a generation ago. When Queen Elizabeth was in the fulness of her power, Sir Cormac M'Teige M'Carthy resided in this place. His wife was Johanna Butler, and his son, Cormack Oge, heir to his lordly heritage; so having put his castle in order on the 16th June, 1583, Sir Cormac executed his will. This interesting document is preserved amongst the diocesan archives of Cork. In the disposition of his property, amongst other denominations, he bequeaths to his son the "Abbey of Inishlaynaghe, beside Clonmel, the Friary of St. Austin, Cork, of which he got a grant October 6, 19 Eliz., conteyning two acres and a church; also his evidences, a chain of gold, and such shot and powder as is in the castle, for the warding of the same on his behalf." The other places of interest mentioned in this will are Maneysther ney Moneygh, or Mourne Abbey, and Castle ney Ynshey, that fairy-land of the fishermen, about two miles above the old ruins of Iniscara Church, on the south bank of the river Lee; nor should we omit to mention that the testator's first desire is that his body should be buried with his ancestors, in the Abbey of Kilcrea. The following letters and petition from Sir Cormac to the Queen and the Lords of the Council, which I have lately transcribed from the originals in the Public Record Office, London, will show the eminent services this chief of a distinguished Irish sept rendered to the English crown at a period of great turmoil, the great confidence placed in him by the high military authorities, and the importance of Blarney Castle at that period, as a great centre of defence:—

"CORMAC McTEIGE TO THE QUEEN.
"May it please your Most Excellent Majesty to be advertised. How often I have been desirous to see your Highness, which, through the alteration of the State here, and the care I have of doing your service, have occasioned the impediments thereof, being nonstayed by the Commissioners of Munster, for the settling of this part, because the rebels doth purpose our spoiling. Whereupon presuming pardon, and craving the acceptance hereof, I am to signify to your Majesty as formerly, my ancestors were ever found loyal subjects to that crown; so for myself, according to duty and to promise I made to your Royal Highness, I shall continue in that faithful manner, as your true subject; whereof, I most humbly beseech your Highness to have for my trial thereof, true knowledge of such, your Highness's deputies, justices, and officers, as were there during this rebellion, whereby your Highness may understand the truth, and so sending the bearer, with this much of the remembrance of my duty, and that myself and all is resting at your Highness's disposition, being ready to bestow my blood in your service. Wishing your Highness long life and a

prosperous reign, with victory over all your enemies, I end at the Blarney, the xviii of Oct., 1582, &c.

"CORMAC McTEIGE."

"May it please your good lordships, lately proposing to take my journey to the Queen's Majesty, I was for the better stay of the county commanded not to depart by her Majesty's commissioners and others, having my passport, and standing in that remote part of Munster, environed every way by the rebels, the country all being waste, and nonreferring to those authorized here by her Majesty, how often I have hazarded myself, and employed myself and my tenants to her Majesty's service in this rebellion, without respect to my losses, thereby of men, or regard to our expense, continually finding of cess, and other great charges and burden of the English garrison here, for that the most charge of the whole country lies on me—albeit, I was the first that drew the enemy's blood (except James fz. Morice), and gave them that overthrow of the taking and killing of young Sir James, of Desmond, being the chiefest number of the rebels, as the Earl of Desmond, the Lord Gray, Sir William Pelham, Captain Zouche, and divers others her Majestie's officers knoweth, whereby the whole bounden sill lyeth on me, all the inhabitants under my rule, and now being brought to great extremity and necessity through cess, and the charges of the forces and men I keep for defence of myself, &c., I am brought very low, referring wholly to the bearer, Stephen Water, of Cork, my agent. I end from the Blarney, xxii Oct., 1582

"CORMAC McTEIGE"

"To the Lords and others of the Council. Petition of Sr Cormac McTeige, of Blarney, to the Privy Council To the Right Hons. the Lords, &c. in most humble wise sueth your suppliant, Sr Cormac Teige, of the Blarney, Knt. in Ireland, by his agent, Stephen Water, of Cork, where your suppliant now greatly decayed by the sundry charges which in divers ways he hath sustained in the time of the rebellion, as well as through the waste of his country standing in that remote part of Munster, and altogether burdened by the continual cess of the garrisons and soldiers at any time in the Co. Cork, which hitherto for the most part he doth bear and find: because the rest of the county lieth in effect all waste, when he ought to bear but the fifteenth part thereof, when it was best inhabited, as thereby he is at charges in erecting castles, keeping and maintaining 200 men always of his own for the better defence of the poor country under his rule, and fortifying thereof against the rebels, who seeketh daily his destruction, in that he chiefly in these parts doth resist them; and have often hazarded and employed him self and his forces, not only in the camp of the several officers and captains, serving under her Majesty in Munster, but also by himself, disregarding expense in setting forth these several journeys, or any way respecting the losses of his men, which in divers exploits and actions used by him upon the rebels he sustained. That therefore it would please your Lordships, that for the better continuance of your suppliant, and the comfort and relief of his posterity, and the poor subjects under his rule, being mortally envied by the rebels for killing young Sr James of Desmond and his company, now so grievously distressed by reason of the intolerable charge aforesaid, which of necessity this bad time for futherance of her Majesty's service do move and compel him to bear and be at, as he is ready to do, to grant unto your suppliant the under written petition, and the rather for his good service cannot but be commended by all the Lords Deputies, Lords Justices, Governors, and all other officers and captains serving in Ireland, and approved by the dutiful behaviour of your suppliant, to be the only chief servitor of these parts of Munster during the rebellion, and he shall pray for the long continuance of her Majesty's reign, according to his duty, in most prosperous tranquility. I. In consideration of his good service, that it may please her Majesty to grant him some pension or fee farm for the better continuance and help of your suppliant and his posterity, who are and will be mortally envied at the several good services your suppliant used. Also considering that hitherto he never claimed freedom nor ease of cess, till now he is decayed, he humbly beseecheth some ease therein, also when there is due to him iiii hundreds pounds sterling by several warrants, bills, and tickets for cess, beeves and otherwise, it may please her Majesty to take order for his payment, as to her Highness shall be thought meet.—xviii. Oct., 1582."

Mr. Robert Day, jun., brought under the notice of the society the discovery of a sculptured rock in the west of this county. It is on the property of R. H. Swanton, Esq., of Ballybawn, and adjoins the new line of road leading from Bantry to Ballydehob. When making this road the workmen cleared away the earth that rested on the rock, and so

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posed its sculptured surface. These cuttings consist of circles, cup-shaped cavities, penannular rings, and V-shaped markings. There are two perfectly formed circles cut on the rock, one measuring 15in. by 15in., the other 19in. by 19in., and three less perfect circles, one 20in by 18in., another 12in. by 11in., and the larger 26in. by 19in. The cup-shaped cavities are each 1½in., 2in., and 3in. in diameter. The incomplete rings are two in number, one within the other, but without either the central cup or radial grooves so well known elsewhere. The entire ring is 19in. by 19in., the inner 7in. by 5in., the opening of the inner 1in., that of the larger 2in. There are two other imperfectly formed circles, and several straight and V-shaped incised markings on the rock. Mr. George Tate, of Aillwick, has published a work on "The Sculptured Rocks of Northumberland," which he has enriched with many lithographs of similar cuttings. The cup markings, the incomplete ring, the series of circles round a central cup, and the same with a radial groove or gutter through the circles are the best known types. It was thought till lately that these could only have been made with a metal tool, but Sir J. Y. Simpson, in the appendix to the "Proceedings of the Society of Antiquarians of Scotland," vol. vi., says that on the back of a granite monolith in the Edinburgh Antiquarian Museum, on the front of which are two crescents, Mr. Paul, the door-keeper, with a flint chisel and wooden mallet, cut in two hours two-thirds of a circle. Professor Simpson then says that these ring and cup sculpturings have been found along the whole length of the British islands from the South coast of the Orkneys, and across the whole breadth from Yorkshire on the east of England to Kerry and, we may add, Cape Clear, on the west and south-west of Ireland. From this rock at Ballybawn, which is in a wild but hospitable country, may be seen Cape Clear island, the Fastnet rock and lighthouse, and the entrance of Baltimore harbour, while to the right is Mount Gabriel and Ballydehob, and in the back ground Ballybawn house, with Mount Kid rising above it. The only remains of by-gone times near the rock is a circular fort or rath, which takes its name from the estate. But from the well-ascertained fact of several feet of undisturbed earth having, up to a recent period, rested on the rock, and from the known antiquity of these markings, there can be little doubt but that they are probably of an earlier age than the fort builders. On enquiry, no objects of antiquity have been found in the neighbourhood, but this cannot be a matter of surprise, as the greater part of the land in the immediate vicinity is moun tain, and of course unreclaimed. What these peculiar markings represent is a question still unanswered, though various conjectures have been made. Professor Nilsson considers them to be of Phoenician origin, He believes that anterior to Druidism there existed a form of Eastern Solar worship, that stone circles, such as Stonehenge, &c., were raised by these sun-worshippers and not by the Druids, as temples to their sun god Baal, and that the ring markings at New Grange and Douth, near Drogheda, and at other places (Northumberland, for instance) are their work, and symbolise the sun, and probably some of the other heavenly bodies. Professor Simpson, on the other hand, says if they were Phoenician why have they not been found in Cornwall, Pembroke, or Devon, to which districts there can be but little doubt the Phoenicians traded largely for tin? But he proves clearly that they preceded the knowledge of letters and traditions, at least in England, and he connects many with the dwellings and sepulchres of archaic man, and shows that any antiquities found connected with them are of a very archaic character. Their high antiquity is therefore well established. It would be desirable, were similar rock cuttings (which occur, as in this case, Oil the natural rock surface, and in other instances on cromlechs, pillar stones, &c.) known to exist in any part of this country, or should they hereafter be discovered, that a notice of such might be sent to this society. A celt of the

earliest type, made of pure copper, but broken in halves by the finder, who thought it a more precious metal, was found last week in the entrance of a fort at Aghina, in this county, and three others very similar were ploughed up in a field at Cullinagh, near Beaufort, Killarney, a short time since, all of which were, with drawings of the rock markings, exhibited by Mr. Day.

Dr. H. Caulfield, on behalf of Hodder W. Westropp, Esq., exhibited a jade adze from New Caledonia, with its handle. The latter gentleman observes-" The following information with regard to ancient art in Peru, may not prove uninteresting. The discoveries in archaic anthropology bid fair to prove fertile beyond the anticipations of all. It is now affirmed that flint arrow-heads and other primitive weapons have been 'found in such relation to the bones of the mastodon as to imply that the animals perished by the hand of man. We have now to add some new discoveries to the list. In the guano island of Peru, far below the guano deposits many objects of ancient art have been discovered as the deposits have been removed. The formation of these deposits is exceedingly slow, and the guano has not perceptibly decreased in quantity for the last three centuries. It is almost impossible to compute the age at which the formation of these deposits began. In 1847 a curious stone slab was discovered in the North Chincha Island under eighteen feet of guano. Now, if we suppose this stone had been buried two hundred years, this would give a deposit by the birds of about one inch per year. It is said that guano is found from thirty to one hundred feet thick; and the general opinion is that it has been accumulating for thousands of years. Many interesting objects have been recently discovered. One is a wooden idol, about one foot high, representing a squatting female, with the lips crossed and the hands placed together across the heart. The ears are bored, and the lobes widely distended with ornaments, such as give to a certain class of the ancient Peruvians the name of Osegones or big ears. It was found at a great depth, firmly imbedded in the guano of the Lobos Islands, with the salt of which it is so completely saturated that it has very nearly the specific gravity of marble. Other objects, formed of thin plates of silver, and apparently struck out by dies, have been found in the Chincha Islands at a depth of thirty-two feet, representing fishes still inhabiting Peruvian waters."

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