

CORK CUVIERIAN AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

THE third meeting of this society for the session 1869-70 was held in the library of the Royal Cork Institution, on Wednesday evening, 1st inst. JAMES BUTLER BRENNAN, Esq., V.P., in the chair.

Dr. R. Caulfield exhibited a tracing of a crannóg, or lake dwelling, which he made from a manuscript volume of ancient Irish maps and drawings, preserved in the Public Record Office London, and beautifully executed on large sheets of vellum. His attention had been called to this collection, in July, last by Mr. Hans C. Hamilton. The plans appear to have been made about the year 1609. The crannóg in question is called the "Forte of the Eogher." The island on which it is constructed is an irregular parallelogram. Its margin is closely fringed with pointed stakes, through which rivets are driven so as to secure others. These double stakes are fixed on the north and west and part of the east side, while a strong castle with a rampart stands on the south. A causeway similarly fortified with sharp stakes runs from the land into the middle of the island on the west. Within the island are residences resembling thatched cottages, and from the south-west angle a piece of ordnance projects. This plan is extremely interesting, as showing the progressive development of lake fortresses from an early period down to the beginning of the seventeenth century. In earlier times a reedy swamp in the middle of an inaccessible lake afforded shelter to the Celtic chieftain and the chosen of his clan—the hollow trunk of a tree for a boat was his mode of egress and ingress from his insular fortress. Here we have the position strengthened by a comparatively modern castle, the ruins of such as are to be everywhere seen in the present day. In the "Annals of the Four Masters," we have frequent mention of these crannógs, viz., under the years 1247, 1436, 1452, 1455, 1500, and even down to the year 1603. Crannóg is derived from the word Crann, which signifies trees, the trunks of trees being driven down into the mud, on which planks were placed, and on these the rude dwellings of the inhabitants. Dr. Todd enumerates twelve fortifications in his "Invasion of Ireland by the Danes," (p. 141, note, clx.,) and amongst them occurs "Dun Eochair Maige," which is most probably the crannóg here depicted, and which the writer translates, "The fort of the bank of the (river) Maigue," probably now Bruree, County Limerick. This place must have been of considerable importance so as to have entitled it to the notice of the English officers in the commencement of the reign of James I., and its antiquity must be considerable when we find it mentioned in reference to the Danish invasion of Ireland. In another document in the Record Office, dated 1567, we have accurately described the mode of attack. A pontoon was constructed, on which armed men sailed over to the island, the mode of destroying was by fire-works, and the place (near Armagh) was said to be "thickly bearded with stakes" that otherwise it could not be taken. The fire-works, however, failed, having got wet from the overcrowding of the pontoon, and the attacking party had to retire after some loss. Most of these lake fortresses were destroyed by fire, either from attack or accident. The charred stakes are still visible in some places, and even burnt corn, and stone and bronze implements are not unfrequently dredged up from their foundations in the lake.

Mr. Robert Day, jun., F.S.A., exhibited the following:—An oval pierced hammer, of quartzite, from Island Magee, Co. Antrim; a boat-shaped pierced hammer, of sand-stone, from Denmark, and one of felspar, diamond-shaped, from Sweden; these are all highly finished and well-preserved. Also, from Denmark, a flint

chisel, 8 inches long by 5/8 inch wide, polished on four sides; and a flint gouge-shaped implement, with a fine cutting edge. This and the chisel may be assigned to the later stone period, and the hammer to the early iron age. He also shewed some bronze implements and weapons from Ireland, among which were a chisel of great rarity, a leaf-shaped dagger, 8½ inches long, having two large bronze rivets for hefting; a socketed five-spear head, 11½ inches long, with loops in the lower parts of the blade. Both these weapons are from Bushmills, Co. Antrim. He also exhibited a winged palstave, or adze, from Coote Hall, Co. Roscommon, and another from Dublin.

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