

CORK CUVIERIAN AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

THE last meeting of this society for the session 1869-70 was held in the Library of the Royal Cork Institution on Wednesday evening, 13th. inst., R. R. Brash, Esq., M.R.I.A., President, in the chair.

Mr. Robert Day, M.R.I.A., exhibited and gave some account of an ancient Irish stone idol, which has lately passed into his collection. It was taken by the late Mr. Cooke, of Parsonstown, from Cloghan, a castle of the O'Moores situated on the banks of the little Rossna, about three miles to the south of the town of Banagher. The "Annals of the Four Masters" inform us that the castle was demolished "through fear of the English," A.D. 1518. The idol represents a rude female figure carved in limestone, and measuring 22 inches in height. It resembles others which occur in many of our old castles, &c., where they are supposed to have served as lucky stones in warding off the evil eye and ill fortune. For this reason they are generally found built into the walls over the arched doorways, and occur at Ballinahinch, Ballyfinboy, and Moycasky castles, Co. Tipperary. The castle of Lemanaghan, King's County, Timahoe, Queen's County, and in some few old churches that occupy in all probability the sites of early Pagan temples, to which these idols belonged. One occurs in the old church of Doroth, near Drogheda, another in the exterior of the eastern gable of the old parish church of Seir Kyran, King's County, and another in the old church of Rochestown, County Tipperary. These grotesque figures are known to the peasantry as *shela-na-gigs*. With this he exhibited a very small and perfect bronze celt, the sides of which projected above the top, and so formed a depressed upper edge. This is a peculiarity commonly met with in Italian objects of a like kind, but is of extremely rare occurrence in this country. It was found near Enniskillen.

[Taken from *Irish Builder*, Vol. XII, 1870, p.83]