

MISCELLANEA—NOTES & QUERIES.

DESMOND'S AGE, AS STATED IN "LIMERICK UNDER ELIZABETH"— KILFENNY SEIGNORY.

At Page 6 of Mr. Grene Barry's paper, Gerald, Earl of Desmond, is stated to have been only 40 years of age at his death, in 1583. Reference to the State papers proves this to be a mistake. "A.D. 1536, August 9th, Limerick. Ossory and some of the Council to Cromwell. 'James Fitzjohn of Desmond has proclaimed himself Earl.'"

"1536, August 22nd, Cashel. The Council of Ireland to Cromwell. 'James of Desmond has offered to deliver his two sons as hostages for his good behaviour, etc.' " Gerald, afterwards Earl, was the eldest son, and unless he was in his 23rd year when he succeeded his father in 1558, he would not have been born in 1536. As his younger brother was offered to the Council with Gerald as a hostage at the date mentioned, I think Gerald must have been at least three years old when his father succeeded to the Earldom, which would make his age 50 years, and not 40, in 1583. In 1550 Chancellor Allen solicits the Countess of Ormond, who was affianced to Gerald, to endure "for little more than a year" the pain of widowhood.

"1550, Feb. 2nd. Instructions from Lord Chancellor Allen to his brother, Thomas Allen. . . . The Countess of Ormond's practice to marry with the heir of Desmond. Her honour first to have to husband so noble a man as she had, and after his death to have so noble a gentleman as this was, by whom she would enjoy an honest portion of living for little more than a year pain. . . . So in the end she promised me upon her honour to live sole for one year." This was immediately after the death of her second husband, Sir Francis Bryan. If Gerald was only 14 years old in 1558, he would have been only a child of five years in 1550.

"December 22nd, 1551, Lord Deputy Croft to Cecil," enclosing an order to call Gerald, son of the Earl of Desmond, and Maurice, the brother of the Earl, before him to answer for the preys they had taken from Owen McCartan and others.

1558, November 28. "The oath of Gerald, Earl of Desmond, at the doing of his homage and first admission to the Earldom after the death of his father." He certainly would not have been "admitted to the Earldom," as a matter of course, if he was not of age. The Crown would have claimed the right to his wardship and marriage, as they had done in the case of the young Earl of Ormond.

I have no doubt that Earl Gerald was, at least, 50 years old at the date of his death. I may mention I have only recalled conclusions arrived at deliberately many years ago when studying the Desmond pedigree.

GEO. JAS. HEWSON.

In the Journal of the Royal Historical and Archæological Association of Ireland for the year 1881, Canon Hayman gave the pedigree of the Geraldines of Desmond in Irish and English, taken from the copy of Michael O'Clery's Book of Pedigrees in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. At Page 413 I find "James, son of John, son of Thomas, that is the great Earl of Desmond, died on the 27th day of the month of October, Thursday exactly, and he was buried at Tralee after victory from the devil and from the world, 1558. His son Gerald, son of James, son of John, fourteen years his age then." This was my authority for the statement that Gerald was only 40 years of age at his death in 1583. Michael O'Clery was the chief of the "Four Masters." He was born in 1575, and finished his Book of Pedigrees in 1630. As he was so particular in his account of the death of James, Earl of Desmond, it was natural that I should accept his statement relative to the age of Gerald.

J. GRENE BARRY.

KILFENNY.—The Wallers of Castletown never had this Seignory, which passed to the Pigotts by marriage with Anne, eldest daughter of Sir John Dowdall. Anne Dowdall was first married to John Southwell, eldest son of Edmund Southwell, of Castle Mattress, Rathkeale. His brother Thomas, High Sheriff of the counties of Limerick and Clare, was created a Baronet in 1662. The present Viscount Southwell is his descendant. John Southwell was killed in an affray in 1641 with Oliver Stephenson, of Dunmoylan, whose father, Richard Stephenson, when High Sheriff of the County, was killed at the Siege of Kilfenny Castle, so successfully defended by Lady Dowdall in 1642.

GEO. J. HEWSON.

BRONZE IMPLEMENT.

Annexed photograph is of a cutting implement found recently by a man while cutting turf, some seven or eight feet below the surface, on the slope of Ardevan hill running parallel to Lough Derg, not far from Scariff, Co. Clare. There is a fairly well preserved cromlech not very far from the spot. The material of this implement is the usual bright, golden-coloured bronze. The weight is just under one ounce, and the size almost identically that of the photograph, viz. : length, $5\frac{1}{8}$ in. ; blade, $2\frac{5}{8}$ in., and tang $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. The blade in its widest part is $\frac{15}{16}$ th of an inch.

Colonel Wood-Martin considers it to be a tanged spear-head, and that the tang has been bent by the finder. The fact of its being tanged and not socketted traces it to a more primitive world, the spear-heads of Troy having a tang, those of Mycenæ a socket. As the finder is quite certain that the tang was bent when he found it, I consider it was more probably used as a knife. It has hammer marks all along the tang, especially on the hook, which points to its having been passed through a wooden or bone handle, and then hammered round the end. The blade is not at all unlike that of a skinning knife, and the tang would be quite strong enough in that case, though not, in my opinion, strong enough for a spear-head. The edges are still quite sharp, but not the point. The rib running down the centre of the blade continues to the point itself, and is not fined off there.

R. F. HIBBERT (Member).

