

## NOTES BY THE EDITOR.

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During the last few months a most interesting relic of mediæval and ecclesiastical Limerick has disappeared. To the north of St. Mary's Cathedral and on the opposite end of Bow lane there existed till quite recently some considerable remains which were evidently of a high antiquity, and had formed part of the buildings connected with the great ecclesiastical establishments which surrounded the venerable Cathedral. According to Mr. Lenihan the ruins were all that remained of the College of Minor Canons, erected by Hubert de Burgh, Bishop of Limerick from 1222 to 1251. The front wall, that bounding the lane, was in a fair state of preservation, though patched and pieced beyond all recognition of the original, but the inner walls were more or less dilapidated, so that it would not have been an easy task to endeavour in imagination to reconstruct its interior. The photograph which accompanies this brief notice will give a much more adequate representation of the architectural features of the front of the building than could be conveyed in words. All this has now been cleared away and a few brick cottages occupy the site of this thirteenth century structure. The work of demolition was not at all easy, for the mortar was as hard as concrete and occasionally the limestone broke under the repeated blows of the crowbar before the mortar could be detached from the stones which it bound together. The materials will probably share the usual fate of such stone-work, but we learn that one archway at least has been preserved for re-erection at some future opportunity.

Our local antiquarians in the neighbourhood of Rathkeale do not seem to have troubled themselves very much with regard to the *cranog* situated about a mile east of the town and within a very short distance of the railway line, which thus affords a tolerably convenient mode of access. Some grubbing has been done on the surface, but no effort has been made to explore the little artificial island itself. If this task is

undertaken at all we hope it will be done scientifically and under proper supervision, otherwise it would be better to leave it as it is, quite undisturbed. Last year was not favourable for any kind of investigation involving digging in moist ground, for the place was flooded and the cranog was as effectually protected from the incursions of outsiders as it was in the days long ago, when some enterprising hunter erected it as a refuge for himself and his family. There are also some cranogs close to the eastern shores of the lakes near Dromore Castle which await the spade of the investigator. Doubtless, many more are to be found in the district watered by the Maigne and Deel, so plentifully studded with the remains of stone castles of much later date. A great part of the country is very low-lying, and the number of large earthen raths is astonishing. The district is not unnoticed in the topography of fairy legend, and perhaps some of our members might trouble to learn and preserve these picturesque tales before they have been buried in the oblivion into which so much that is Celtic has disappeared never to emerge again.

Perhaps some of our members in this part of the county would look up and send for publication in our Journal a full description of the large stone fort which is to be found west of the railway line connecting Ballingrane and Askeaton and about half way between these two places. This stone fort lies about a half mile or perhaps a little more from the banks of the Deel. It is situated in an open field, and, for all its size, is not very obviously distinguishable from the stone walls of the vicinity. It is conspicuous, however, by what looks like a chimney rising from the midst. The fort is oval in form, and the enclosing wall is from six to eight feet high, about five feet thick at the base, getting narrower as it goes upwards, and the whole enclose an oval space. No mortar was used in the construction of the enclosing walls which yet are in a fair state of preservation. Some member may, perhaps, send us the exact dimensions and a photograph or two of this interesting structure.

Have our naturalists no notes to send us? Has no member in his rambles through the field discovered a beetle that has strayed away from his fellows and got left behind in some pond or hedgerow? Are there no more "finds" to be met with to reward the observant eye and delight the heart of the discoverer? Surely some tiny vegetable growth is to be

met with occasionally—a lonely survivor, starting into life amid strange surroundings, and looking out upon a world where it is now alone, all its lovely companions being faded and gone. The “harvest of a quick eye” has not all been gathered in, and the humblest or the busiest may find something occasionally to add to the sum of human knowledge, as well as to add new pleasure to a quiet ramble. We will be glad to insert any communications that our members may send us. Does not Mr. P. J. Lynch, at the close of his presidential address, remark that “it seems strange that in the pages of our Journal there appear so very few short notes or papers of local interest on the different branches of Natural History, or bits of folk lore, family history, or family records, which might in this way be preserved ere they disappear for ever.”

The history and antiquities of St. Catherine’s Old Abbey, County of Limerick, form the subject of two papers in the March number of the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*. Mr. Wardell treats of the history of this little known but exceedingly interesting monastic foundation, which, to judge from the extent of its remains, must have been of considerable size. Mr. T. J. Westropp describes the conventual buildings with his usual thoroughness and completeness of detail. The article is well illustrated and is a valuable addition to our knowledge of County Limerick antiquities. Mr. T. J. Westropp also contributes notes of two forts near Bodyke, Co. Clare.

