

History and Archaeology.

Commendatore Boni.—The celebrated Italian Antiquarian, whose name is so intimately connected with the recent excavations and discoveries in connection with the Forum, visited Ireland a year or two ago, and on his return to Rome, delivered an interesting and learned discourse on the Antiquities of Ireland, more especially in their relation to the life of ancient Rome. The lecturer considered that much light is thrown upon Roman archæology by the vestiges of ancient Hibernian civilisation and traditions. The lecture was largely based on Signor Boni's Irish tour of the previous year. The connection between Irish Antiquities and Ancient Rome is a subject that has not hitherto been referred to at length.

Building of St. John's Square, Limerick.—Some time after the last siege and surrender of Limerick that part of the town wall which extended from St. John's gate towards the west was demolished, and a wide space left unoccupied on the west side of St. John's Church. Upon this ground, it was proposed, in the year 1751, to build houses in the form of a square. The originator of the scheme was John Purdon, a member of the family of Tinerana near Killaloe. Mr. Purdon associated with himself Edmund Sexton Pery, afterwards Viscount Pery, who was lord of the soil; the Rev. Henry Smyth, William Monsell of Tervoe, and the Rev. William Cecil Pery. It was arranged between them that a house should be built for each of the three last-named, and that five other houses should be erected at the joint expense of Purdon and Pery. All were to be constructed of a uniform size, at the same cost, and upon the same plan. Messrs. Smith, Monsell, and Cecil Pery got each his own habitation by contributing his share to the common purse. The buildings were constructed under the superintendence of Purdon, and after everything was completed it was found that each house had cost £630. Mr. Sexton Pery retained one for his own use, and the other four were let to the following tenants, namely:—1, Mrs. Dorathea Crump, widow of General Crump, who afterwards became wife of the above-named Rev. William Cecil Pery, subsequently raised to the peerage as Viscount Glentworth;

2, Mrs. Catherine Fitzgerald, widow, who soon transferred her title to George Rose; 3, Alexander Franklin; and 4, Richard Borough, who belonged to the family of Borough of Querin in the County of Clare. The rent was a uniform one, viz. :—£32 a year. The house kept by Mr. Edmund Pery for his own use did not remain long in his hands for he sold it almost immediately to Ambrose Wilson of Caherconlish.

All these houses were large and commodious, and for many years continued to be inhabited by wealthy county families. Towards the end of the century, the Glentworths, the Dicksons, the Vere Hunts of Curragh, the Monsells of Tervoe, the Tuthills of Faha, the Wilsons of Caherconlish, the Roses, Franklins, Boroughs and others were found to have made them their winter home. Owing, no doubt, to the closeness of their intercourse, the residents, in several instances, intermarried. In those days rents were high, landed proprietors were prosperous, in their social habits they were proverbial for hospitality, and St. John's Square partook of the general well-being of the country. The roads were so bad that travelling far from home was out of the question, so that people had to be content with the next town. I have heard it related that, when Madam Burton of Buncraggy, Co. Clare, the mother of Lord Conyngham, had occasion to visit Dublin, no less than twelve men were sent on before her to clear the Cratloe mountain road of boulders and make a free passage for her carriage. In circumstances like these, provincial towns became the refuge of county families, and Limerick was no exception to the rule, seeing that apart from St. John's Square, the winter residences of many of the gentry of the counties of Limerick and Clare were scattered in various other parts of the city.

JAMES FROST.

Royal Society of Antiquaries.—Clare engaged the attention of the Meeting of the Royal Society of Antiquaries held last February. Mr. T. J. Westropp, Vice-President, read a paper contributed by Dr. George W. Macnamara, on "The Lisdoonvarna Bronze Pot," which was found in a bog near Lisdoonvarna. There was no idea as to what period the pot belonged, but every indication appeared that it was an ancient one. A picture of the vessel was shown by means of the lantern. Mr. Westropp next read a Paper on the subject of "A Day's exploration in Burren, County Clare," which was copiously illustrated by beautiful lantern slides of places in the neighbourhood, including a picturesque view of Inchiquin Lake and ruins of remains of forts.