Reviews of Books

LIMERICK PRINTERS AND PRINTING. Compiled by Robert Herbert, City Librarian.
Published by the City of Limerick Public Library. Price, 2/6.

This fine booklet of 62 quarto pages forms Part One of the Catalogue of the Local Collection in the City of Limerick Public Library. The nine sections of this part include:—
a chronological list of Limerick printers with the location of (or authority for) all the known specimens of their printings, a chronological list of books printed anonymously in Limerick, and, a chronological list of Limerick newspapers with the location of existing copies. Other sections deal with Limerick paper mills, Limerick Bookbinders and Limerick booksellers.

Every page will be read with pleasure and profit by bibliographers and by students of local history. The biographical information about Limerick printers—obviously the result of much research—is particularly valuable, and very well represented.

Part Two of the Catalogue will treat of books by Limerick authors and, Part Three, of books about Limerick. They will be eagerly awaited.

The City Librarian (Robert Herbert) will, I am sure, be glad to receive notes of addenda et corrigenda for a new edition of Part One, or for inclusion in an appendix to Part Two or Three.

Here are a few notes which may be helpful:—


The Limerick 1795 edition of Tadhg Goadhlaich is a myth. The first edition of his Irish Pious Miscellany was printed in Clonmel in 1802.

In the wall of the north aisle of St. Mary's Abbey in Howth, a slab of black marble bore the following inscription:—

To the memory of

ANNE FLIN.

A friend that lov'd thy earthly form when here,
Erects this stone to dust he held most dear;
Thy happy genius off his soul reviv'd,
Nor sorrow felt he till of thee deprived:
Peace to thy gentle shade, and endless rest
To thy fair soul, now numbered with the blest!
Yet take these tears—mortality's relief,
And, till I share thy joy, forgive my grief:
These little rites—a stone, a verse—receive,
'Tis all a father, all a friend can give!

Deceased, September 18, 1766,
Aged near 21 years.

Whitelaw's History of Dublin (1818) says: "Mr. Flin who composed the above affecting epitaph on his daughter, was a bookseller in Limerick, and a native of Howth. His family are supposed to have come over among the first English adventurers, and established themselves on this spot; they are possessed at present of two houses in the town of Howth, which are insulated spots in the centre of Lord Howth's property, supposed to be reservations made to the ancestors of this family, and held as a tenure coeval with that of the family of Tristram."

I have a complete copy of the Sermons of the late Reverend Silvester Goonan of the City of Limerick. They were printed by Pat Wogan in Dublin in 1796. The subscribers were mainly from Limerick. Father Goonan died suddenly on the night of 14 July 1796 in his 48th year. My copy of the Sermons has on the cover the gilt premium stamp of the Feinagillan Institution, Dublin, and was won by David Lynch, a Catholic pupil (circa 1825) who became Judge of the Landed Estates Court.

My copy of the first and probably only issue of the Limerick Monthly Magazine for March 1830 has the rare printed yellow wrapper, which shows inter alia that it was published by C. O'Brien, bookseller, 108, George's Street, Limerick, but printed by Joseph Blundell, 187, Great Britain Street, Dublin. The price was 2s. 6d.
I have also the Analysis of the late Election of Limerick, printed by (M ?) Clancy, Denmark Street, Limerick, in 1852.

It may be well to note that Dix's pamphlet on printing in Limerick to 1800 was published in 1907, with a second edition in 1912, and that his "Printing in Limerick in the 19th Century" appeared serially in the Irish Booklover (1930-1933).

The section dealing with Limerick newspapers has been very carefully compiled, and will be a very welcome aid to research workers.

The location "C.O." is presumably the Limerick Chronicle Office.

The National Library has a good run of Maurice Lenihan's very interesting newspaper, The Limerick Reporter.

With all their limitations, local newspapers are a very important source of local history, although the only known copy of the earliest Limerick newspaper—The Limerick Newsletter of 4th May, 1716—has only the following item in its "Domestic News": "Yesterday the Honourable Cap. Brown, of the Royal Scotch Battalion, set out from hence to Rose-Gray to the great regret of the ladies of this City."

The appearance of the Catalogue reflects credit on the Limerick Leader printing office.

Limerick is to be congratulated on having as its City Librarian such an efficient and enthusiastic bibliographer and local historian.

SEAMUS O CASAIDHE.


This bulky volume—of which the last 300 pages are an exhaustive Index of Persons and Places—is one of the most important yet issued by the Irish MSS. Commission. It contains the full text of what has come to be known as the Petty Census of 1659, hitherto available to historians only in the transcript made by the late W. H. Harding and lodged by him in the Library of the R. Irish Academy. The original Ms. now printed comes from the Library of the Marquis of Lansdowne—Petty's descendant—at Bowood, and it was a private Ms. of Petty himself and not a public document prepared under Government auspices, is abundantly apparent. It contains an estimate of the population of Ireland by Counties and Baronies prepared by Petty in or about the year 1659. The Counties of Cavan, Galway, Mayo, Tyrone and Wicklow are entirely missing, as are four baronies of County Cork and nine of County Meath—otherwise the returns are complete for the whole country. The nature and contents of this invaluable Ms. have already been examined by Harding in a well known paper printed in the Transactions of the R. Irish Academy, vol. 24 pp. 317 seq. and are here again examined by Mr. Pender in an interesting and exhaustive introduction. It has been suggested that the Ms. is really a return compiled not as a Census proper but rather as an aid to the payment of the Poll Money Ordinances of 1660/1, which are both printed in extenso as Appendices to the Volume; incidentally it may be noted that the Poll Money Ordinances here printed, preserve the names of the "Sovereigns," High Sheriffs, and leading Englishmen in the various counties and towns as of their date, who are here nominated as collectors. The editor does not incline to this opinion and his reasoning appears sound, there being abundant proof that this is rather a private document of Petty compiled for his own ends rather than one perfected under Government direction and paid for by public monies. The contents are of very great interest both to the national and local historian. They must aid the latter in particular in the elucidation of many obscure problems of the troubled years 1641 to 1660. There is first an estimate of population for each County, then for each barony, then for each parish in the barony, and finally for each township in the parish. For each unit there is given a division of population under the headings "English," "Irish," "Scottish," etc., so that it is possible to see in the area the effect of the Cromwellian confiscation and the complete failure of the "To hell or to Connaught" policy. For in every area the Irish outnumber all others in the proportion of seven or ten to one and in many cases in much higher proportion. In addition, the number and names of the Irish families in each barony appear at the end of the barony lists so that it is possible to see how many of the old freeholders of the Civil Survey of 1641 were still left on their native fields in 1659, and it is possible to find others transplanted to other areas in Clare or Connaught. Besides all this the names of the "Titladoses" or chief landowners are given under their appropriate townlands and so it can be seen, not only how many of the Cromwellian grantees of the 1654 Ordinances had "sat down" on their new properties in 1659, but also many of the old proprietors were still untransplanted. The Editor writes that the Ms. for the most part (indeed except Co. Cork) "is in a well preserved condition, the script throughout being clear and legible" and the suggestion is made that the
returns were compiled on the spot by Petty’s Surveyors in various areas. This is difficult to understand as many of townland and even parish names have been distorted almost out of recognition, a fact on which the Editor surprisingly makes no comment. Thus in the barony of Upper Ormond in Tipperary (p. 319) the parishes of Ballyvibbon, Kilnamave, and Ballinaclough appear as “Ballynbun, Killinamise, and Bally McCoghny”; Letteragh is given “Lafersagh,” etc. This is all the more surprising as Ballinaclough appears in its proper form on p. 321.

There are some surprising figures. Thus Limerick City had a population of only 3,165, of whom 819 were English. The County Limerick population is returned as 21,872, of which only 1,182 were English, by which is understood “new” English, excluding the “Sear Ghall,” Co. Tipperary, in spite of all its alleged Cromwellian blood, contained in 1659 only 1,924 English persons against 24,760 Irish. Clare had only 440 English persons against 16,474 Irish. All these figures are proof that the Cromwellian confiscation policy only effected a transfer of the title to the land of Ireland as distinct from the actual use and possession of the land itself, and that the alleged objects of the policy were a complete and absolute failure. That is the true significance of this Ms. and its greatest importance to the general historian. For the local historian the Ms. contains abundant facts, figures and problems. Thus many townland names appear which are not found in the Civil Survey (1654), in the Hearth Money Rolls (1655/6) or even in the Books of Survey and Distribution (1663/5) and vice versa many townlands in these records are not found here. Of items of local interest, the Editor mentions the presence of Scotch in “the parish of Agha” in Lower Ormond as a matter of interest in the Introduction. If the record is properly printed (p. 299) the “Scotch” appear also in the townland of “Fyagh” (new Flahmone and Fiahtbeag) in the parish of Uskane, near the present town of Borrisokane. Agha corresponds to the united parishes of Nenagh and Dromineer according to the Civil Survey. It is perhaps worthy of mention that the presence of many persons denominated “Uitaghs” or Ulstermen appear in these and other Ormond areas in the Hearth Money Rolls of 1655/6 printed for Tipperary by Laffan. If there were Scotch in Agha parish it is not unlikely that they were in the train of the soldiers stationed near Nenagh under Colonel Abbott, who was Governor of the Castle there in 1656, although the returns for Nenagh town appear separately on p. 298. Many of the “Titulado” names are of much historical interest. Thus in the townland of Clounta West in the parish of Iniscailtra, barony of Tulla, in Co. Clare, the “titulado” is given as “The Poore Lord of Kilmallock,” showing us that Sir Thomas Hurley, son of Sir Maurice, had been transplanted there. His sufferings are described by Prendergast in his book on the Restoration period.

The whole is a Ms. of the very first importance. It has been very competently produced and edited, and Irish historians must be for ever grateful to Mr. Pender for the amount of time and labour he has given to it, which will be evident to even the most casual examiner. It is no doubt a fault of the Editor that although the imprint gives the date of issue as 1936, the volume has not seen the light until 1942. The price is high and puts the work outside the purchasing power of the ordinary reader or historical student who will have to depend on libraries for a sight of it. This seems a great pity and must handicap the usefulness of these valuable publications as an aid to the spread of Irish historical research.

D. F. G.

PREHISTORIC ENGLAND. By Grahame Clarke, F.S.A., pp. 120. Bateford, 1940. 8s. 6d.

At last we have a book for the general reader from the able pen of the author of “The Mesolithic Settlement of Northern Europe,” Dr. Grahame Clark, F.S.A.

In his preface, he aptly quotes Dr. William Stukeley, the great 17th century archaeologist, in his animadversions on the difficulties which beset the path of him who would so handle archaeology as to make it agreeable to the lay mind.

These difficulties have been most brilliantly overcome by Dr. Clark, whose lucid introduction and admirable plan of dividing his description of the activities of prehistoric man into heads such as The Food Quest, Dwellings, Handicrafts, Communications, etc., immediately catches the attention of the un instructed reader, and is such a refreshing change from the usual complicated and turfled approach of the average scientific writer, through the mazes of the Lower, Middle and Upper Paleolithic, and on through the corridors of mesolithic, neolithic A & B and so on, which tend to make all but the most hardened archaeologist shy from what is after all, one of the most fascinating and absorbing subjects in the world.

The introduction carries one through English prehistory until the late Iron Age, and the succeeding chapters deal with the varied facets of the daily life of prehistoric man, described and illustrated with the results of excavations of many sites which are household words. The book is exceptionally well, even lavishly illustrated with photographs of sites and objects, and also with line drawings. The numerous air-photographs (more than 20), give one an idea of the enormous strides which have taken place in England in the archaeological survey of the
country, a means of rapidly and accurately gathering otherwise unobtainable information as to prehistoric sites, which has been almost entirely unused in this country, and which we can only hope will make great strides here in the future.

Perhaps one may hope also that the photographs which are no doubt constantly being taken by our Air-Force may be placed at the disposal of students after the termination of the present emergency.

Contrary to Hawkes, the derivation of gold lunulae from the jet necklace is accepted here, but more space might have been devoted to its Irish affinities, without which its prehistory cannot be fully explained in a work such as this.

As may be expected from a work issuing from the press of the publishers, Messrs. Batsford, the standard of the production is very high, indeed entirely incomparable with its low price, the quality of reproduction of the illustrations being particularly good.

E. O. F.