

MISCELLANEA.

Literary Notes.

Royal Society of the Antiquaries of Ireland.—Since our last publication Part 4 of Vol. XLI., has been issued. In it Mr. H. T. Knox concludes his valuable paper on Connacht Rath and Motes. In connection with this subject Mr. P. J. Lynch contributes a note on the great Mote at Kilfinane, with plan and section, prepared from measurements and levels; also some fine photographs by Dr. George Fogerty. This is, undoubtedly, an ancient earthwork, and both the mote and outer defences, appear to be portions of the original design, the level of each fosse being higher, as you approach the mote. It is mentioned in the Book of Rights as one of the ancient seats of the Kings of Cashel. We read :

“Druim Finghin of the wood,
And with it Treada-na-riogh.”

Coill Finghin (Coill means a wood) would be anglicized Kilfinane, and with it Treada-na-riogh, which means “the triple fossed fort of the kings.” This description seems to locate it pretty clearly, and connect it with pre-Norman times; and leaves something to be explained, for those who hold that all such motes were of Norman construction.

Mr. T. J. Westropp continues his paper on the **Prehistoric remains in the Burren, County Clare**. It is a pity we have not more labourers in this field at present, as very soon these remains will in many cases be built into fences or covered up in drains. Mr. Westropp laments how little is being done by County Councils, or any authority, to preserve ancient monuments. We fear he is like a prophet crying in the wilderness.

St. Colman's Oratory in Burren is the subject of an interesting paper by Mgr. Fahy, D.D., but the author is mistaken in believing the present building to be the remains of an ancient oratory. In its masonry and details it bears evidence of a later construction.

Lord Edward Fitzgerald's Dagger.—Mr. James Grene-Barry contributes a paper on the identity of the dagger with which Lord Edward Fitzgerald defended himself when arrested in 1798. A dagger, or midshipman's hanger, in the possession of Mr. Barry, was at one time supposed to be the one; but another plain dagger, about 12 inches long, which is now in the possession of Mr. T. P. Le Fanu, of Abington, Bray, has a more interesting history. His grandmother removed it from the house of Major Swan, by whom it was exhibited as the dagger used by Lord Edward; she being a sympathiser with the United Irishmen, did not wish it to be shewn as a trophy. The romantic story, as related by Mrs. Le Fanu is introduced by Sir Bernard Burke into his book on "The Rise of Great Families," and included in Mr. Barry's very full notes on the subject. Neither of these daggers corresponds with the description of the actual dagger used by Lord Edward, as given in his life by Thomas Moore, and still further described and corroborated in Madden's "Lives of the United Irishmen." This was a short dagger, about the length of a case knife, with a *wavy blade*, suitable for carrying about concealed on the person. It is shown in some of the engravings of the scene, which were published early in the last century. This is different from the weapon with a wavy blade which Mr. Barry has also in his possession; this, from the photograph of it, has been recognised as a Malay *crise*, and differs essentially from the dagger of the United Irishmen. The original dagger, Moore states, was given by Major Sirr to Lord Clare, who gave it to a Mr. Brown. Brown had been trying to get evidence against Lord Edward from Murphy (Brown's tenant, for the house in which the tragedy occurred), while he was in prison. Brown, who was alive when Moore wrote his biography, described this dagger to Moore as having a wavy blade, and stated it was stolen from him soon after he received it; as Madden remarks, "it was not destined to ornament the museum of any of the old man-hunters of the reign of terror in Ireland." To believe this well authenticated, and in every sense reliable, story of the historians Moore and Madden, does not necessarily cast discredit on Mrs. Le Fanu's clear and interesting statement, every word of which is doubtless true; but it does impugn the veracity of Major Swan. Reading the description of the scene on that eventful day, as related by an eye witness, it would appear that Major Swan played a very

poor part in it ; after entering the room with a soldier, Lord Edward resisted arrest, and slightly wounded him in the hand ; Major Swan fired a pistol doing no harm ; he then assaulted Murphy, who was present, and left the room, Captain Ryan taking his place. Murphy states—"Major Swan ran to the street, and I think he never looked behind him until he got out of danger, and he was then parading up and down the flags, exhibiting his linen, which was stained with blood." Major Sirr, who was in the room when Lord Edward was wounded and disarmed, would be the most likely person to retain possession of the dagger ; but Major Swan appears to have been just the class of man to glorify himself over the event, and exhibit to his friends "the dagger by which he was wounded," which may have been found on the premises, at Lord Edward's residence, or elsewhere. It is significant that Major Swan raised no great alarm in the household when he found he had lost it, and made no accusation.

This sad episode in our country's history is one on which but few care to dwell. To our society the question is of special interest, the two daggers under notice, being in the possession of County Limerick families. Considering all the evidence carefully, we believe with Madden, that the real dagger has been removed from the purview of the antiquary and collector, and it is probable it will never be discovered. Mr. Barry's notes have awakened a new interest in the details, as given by Madden in his *Lives of the United Irishmen*.

We have dwelt so long on this number of the *Journal* by reason of the many interesting contributions in it from our members, and of local interest, that we have space only to note the fine photographs and details of Clonfert doorway by Mr. H. S. Crawford, and the paper on Promontory Forts in Mayo by our fellow member, Mr. T. J. Westropp, in Part 1. Vol. XLII.

Cork Historical and Archæological Society.—In No. 92, vol. XVII., we notice a paper by our fellow member, Rev. Canon J. F. Lynch on Oenach Clochair. It is mainly a reply to some notes on the location of the ancient cemetery, known as Oenach Culi, by Mr. P. J. Lynch, in vol. II. part 9 of our *Journal*, who will most likely follow up, this interesting question. No. 93, vol. XVII., is a very good number but contains no matter having special reference to our district.

Waterford and South East of Ireland Archæological Society.—The notes on the depositions relating to Waterford in the Civil War, 1641-1653, and the incidents from a "Carrick Man's Diary," are continued in the current numbers. The last number issued (No. 2, vol. XV.) contains an interesting memoir of Patrick Lynch, secretary to the Gaelic Society of Dublin, by SEAMUR UA CAPAIOE. Lynch was born at Quin, near Ennis, in 1754, and died in Dublin in 1818. He carried on a classical school in Carrick-on-Suir for many years, and afterwards went to Dublin, where he became connected with the Gaelic Society. He was also employed in the Record Office. The author has collected many interesting facts connected with the life of this talented writer and Gaelic scholar.

The Kerry Archæological Magazine.—The last number issued in April is very readable. The Bishop of Limerick, Dr. Orpen, with our fellow member, the Rev. W. E. Bentley, have been industriously noting some of the antiquities in the vicinity of Annascaul. One an inscribed cross with a crozier-like finish on the upper member, is curious. A somewhat similar finish is found on a cross inscribed on a stone lying on the banks of the river near the bridge of Killorglin, and could not be considered as derived from the Chi Rho monogram, though this one may have been.

The Irish Book Lover is as attractive as ever. The number for May contains a short review of two brochures by Mr. E. R. McC. Dix, on early printing in Limerick, and Ennis, the former, published by Guy and Co.; the latter by Hanna and Neale. The earliest record of printing in Limerick is 1690, as on a Paris reprint of the translation of a Latin poem (by a Capuchin priest) now in the British Museum, we read: "Imprimee a Limerik des mois de Juillet, 1690." The first newspaper printed in Limerick, "The Munster Journal," was published by Andrew Welsh in 1738. There is no specimen of printing in Ennis earlier than the "Clare Journal," which was founded by John Busteed and George Trinder in 1778. Such like reviews, biographical notes, gossip, notes and queries, etc., enrich this very useful monthly publication.

P. J. L.