County Louth Archaeological and History Society

Notes and Queries

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more and the Yellow Ford. About three o'clock however the storm abated and the shorter drive to Emania was suggested. Some were sorry to abandon the other route, but a vote being taken, the Connor MacNessaites won the day. Mr. Garstin, in calling the vote, reminded us now we should be grateful to the rain, that it had washed the streets and walls and would disclose the fact that we were in a city of marble. It used to be a city of marble, but we regret it is now fast becoming a city of English brick and Portland cement. The drive to Emania justified its supporters. [Less than twenty-five minutes brought us out to the historic spot. Even now in its ruins it is not without its glory, its outer trenches are yet discernible and enclose a space of nearly eleven acres. Some of the embankments still retain their formidable early proportions. It was destroyed early in the fourth century, and its crumbling walls may have made mute appeal to the archæological instincts of St. Patrick. Emania truly is a royal hill, from its summit one is greeted by a panorama not easily surpassed, Benburb, Dungannon, Lough Neagh, Slieve Gallan, and even farther vistas of the brave north land. The party drove back to their hotel for tea, and returned by the 6 p.m. train, everyone highly pleased and not a few in the hopes that the Benburb district will again appear on the Society's programme of excursions. Among those present were:—Mrs. D. J. Rath, Clogherhead; Mrs. Andrew Collier, Cruisestown; J. R. Garstin, D.L., Braganstown; J. T. Dolan, M.A., Ardee; Mr. and Mrs. Turner, Demesne House, Dundalk; Miss L. Finnegan, Drogheda; Miss Tempest, Dundalk; H. G. Tempest, Dundalk; Mr. P. Hearne, Dundalk; Miss S. Comerford, Dundalk; Mrs. Charles Duffy, Dundalk; Rev. P. Lyons, S.T.L., Dundalk; Rev. P. Macardle, S.M., Dublin; Mr. J. MacNello, Ardee; Miss S. Patteson, Dundalk; Mr. H. Campbell, Cooley; Seumas O'Hanlon, Cooley; Rev. J. Quinn, Cooley; Arthur S. Coulter, Dundalk; P. J. Quinn, Carrickmacross; D. C. Rushe, Monaghan; Miss Nicholson. Keady, Mrs. Barton, London; Mr. Ellis, Armagh; Mr. Ellis, jun., Armagh; Mr. A. G. O'Loughlin, Castlebellingham; Mr. D. J. Williams, C.E., Dundalk, &c., &c.]

Notes and Queries.

Burial Place, Mullanstown, Ardee.—An ancient burial place was lately discovered near Ardee, in Mr. Townley F. Filgate's farm in Mullanstown. The field is on the left or west side of the road from Ardee to Carrickmacross about a half mile north from the north end of the town of Ardee. It rises in a considerable hill, and is known as the "Hill Field," but no Irish name remains for it, nor is there any tradition or other evidence of the spot having ever been used as a burial place.

The field has generally been under tillage, and some fragments of bones were occasionally turned up in the ploughing, but they were not complete or numerous enough to be remarkable. Between forty and fifty years ago, the then owner of the field, in excavating for sand on the side of the hill found, it is said, about four skeletons. Nothing else of interest save the casual upturning of fragments as mentioned was observed until this year. In the latter days of September, when the stubble was being turned, the plough struck some stones near the top of the hill, and a quantity of bones were exposed. This occurred again in another furrow, and Mr. Filgate thereupon got the whole of the top of the hill probed and dug and found a space of eleven yards by five closely laid with human bones. Many of these had evidently been disturbed and broken in the course of tillage years ago. There were only three skeletons complete and in shape as they had been laid, and only one skull entirely sound. In all there were estimated to be about forty skeletons. The graves were generally closely adjoining, and were divided from one another by a few rough stones. They were not very definitely shaped, and it was not very clear from the decayed state of much of the bones and their disarrangement whether many bodies had been laid each in a separate grave or not. In one there were apparently shin and thigh bones along side or on top of a skull, showing that in this case, at all events, two corpses had been left together and in different positions. Rough flat stones were laid as a cover on the heads, and in some there were stones over the body also. The graves were not more than a foot under the surface, and many of them only eight or ten inches. It is possible that the rains and the continual ploughings might have stripped some soil from this part of the hill.

Among the bones was found a spindle whorl (a small round stone), 2 inches in diameter, three-quarters inch thick, artificially rounded, with a hole of about one quarter inch diameter through the centre. It corresponds very closely to the largest of the ten or twelve whorls on view in the Kildare Street Museum. The spindle whorl was a self-threading spool for winding thread from the hank.

A round rod like a pen handle was secured at one end in the hole of the whorl and a hook on the other end was attached to the thread. The whorl was then set revolving in the air hanging from the thread, and as it gradually sank to the ground its motion wound the thread round the rod.

The spindle whorl was found by Schliemann in the ruins of Troy, and may be seen in Italy in use

to-day. There are very few articles of man's invention which have had so long a life, so the discovery of this interesting specimen among these bones gives no evidence of their age, unless someone can tell us at what period they fell out of use in Ireland.

No other instrument of war or peace was found in this burial place. Excavations made by Mr. Filgate all round this part of the hill showed that there were no more graves here; but there may be bones in other quarters of the field.

Mr. Filgate had a large pit dug in the middle of the hill, and had all the bones carefully collected and interred here. He is about to erect a cairn over them.

The opinion of different authorities who have been consulted, is that this spot was a burial place—a graveyard—not a battle pit. There are two people in the neighbourhood who heard legends years ago of battles having been fought here, but there were other old residents whom this story never reached, and it thus wants support. There were numerous battles fought about Ardee through many centuries, and the memorable engagement between the Danes under Blacair and the Irish under Muirceartach in 942 in which the Irish prince was slain took place to the north of Ardee, between the town and Clonkeen it would seem. And this field is within that space. But it is hardly conceivable that time could have been found or care taken to bury the victims of a battle in separate graves with stones between and upon each.

THE ARMS AND SEAL OF DUNDALK.

BY JOHN RIBTON GARSTIN, V.P. R.I.A., F.S.S.A., D.L., M.A.

I have lately been shown by Mr. Tempest and Mr. Redmond Magrath of Dundalk the impression of a Seal which recently came into possession of the latter, and which is represented in the accompanying illustration.

I am told that it was for a good while knocking about in the churchyard of the ancient church of St. Nicholas, or rather in the heating chamber or stoke-hole of the boiler for warming that building, and that the Sexton—Kennedy by name—thinking it only “a kind of old brass button” and, knowing Mr. Magrath to be a collector, parted with it to him, probably for a trifling amount, and that the latter would not part with it for any amount. But this is only “hearsay.”

The matrix is of brass or bronze, like most ancient ones, and, instead of the handle now associated with such, has only a “thumb-tang,” raised at the back, for holding it. It is circular, and not quite two inches in diameter. Round the seal, facing inwards, runs a Latin inscription in Lombardic capital letters of uniform height, as represented below in ordinary type, (which differs mainly in the form of the letters C, E, N and K):—

S' COMVNE : NOVE : VILLE : DE : DVNDALK

This commences, as usual in medieval seals, at the top. It is preceded by a star of six points and followed by a fleur-de-lis; the latter being merely an ornament to fill vacant space.

The inscription is quite simple. The final E of the first and second words are the equivalent of the Æ generally used as the ending of Latin words of the first declension in the genitive case. In English it would be:—

THE COMMON SEAL OF THE NEW TOWN OF DUNDALK.

Inside this “legend” is a shield of the ordinary shape bearing a coat of arms—viz., a bend between six birds, apparently martlets—that is, having no feet. Above by way of crest, but without any helmet, is a lion passant, which seems to have on his head a royal crown. On each side of the arms are quasi supporters—viz., a boar standing erect on his hind legs, and an armed man carrying a spear with a large head in his right hand and with his left on the pommel of a sword. The “tricking” of heraldic colours had not come into use when this seal was made.

The Seal is of good design, and well and boldly cut, and is in excellent preservation.

Three difficulties present themselves: (1) to fix the date; (2) to determine what the arms are, and from what family derived; and (3) to explain the meaning of the expression “new town.”

Unless one has some clue from tradition or documents it is not easy to ascertain to what family any coat of arms is to be attributed. In difficult cases one has recourse to the Office of Arms, and, accordingly, I enquired at Ulster's office in Dublin and ascertained that no arms had been officially assigned to Dundalk by “Ulster” King of Arms, but the present bearer of that office and Mr. G. D.

O

Burtchael, "Athlone," were interested as to the seal and arms and kindly referred to the records and printed books. The chief authority is now a scarce book—viz., Papworth's "Ordinary of British Armorial," 8vo., London, 1874.

This work serves as an index to armorial bearings. On turning in it to the word "bend" one finds some pages are filled with references arranged under the several "charges." Assuming the birds in the shield on the seal to be martlets and their number to be six, it was a favourite and common coat and the following families are enumerated as having borne it:—de la Mer; Furnival (quartered by the Earls of Shrewsbury); Tempest (including William, and others from Yorkshire); Luttrell; Perrot; Mounteney; Pigot; Seton; Croxden; and Goband. A bend with other birds or other numbers affords no clue.

Now, though the name of Tempest is at present honourably connected with Dundalk, we have here no name likely to have originated the arms on our seal.

In this difficulty Mr. Burtchael suggests that the bend may be a variant or a mistake for a fess which, associated with five or three martlets, represented the arms of Dowdall. The birds were originally doves and derived from the name Dove-dale, whence came Dowdall, a family of importance in this region in medieval times. Of it were the "Red Dowdall," originally of Oriel, and the "White Dowdall," originally of Glaspiestol, near Termonfeckin, Co. Louth, as to which see Burke's "Armory." The arms of the De Verdons, who were the medieval Lords of Dundalk, are quite different, and so are those of the Bellows.

The seal was probably contemporary with one of the many Royal Charters conferred by the Sovereigns on Dundalk from Richard III. See the Report of the Commissioners on Municipal Corporations in Ireland, 1835, vol. iii., pp. (folio) 889 to 908—a mine of local history. See also a paper on Dundalk Charters, being a summary in the Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland (Dundalk Meeting).

This implies for our seal a venerable antiquity. The borough was adjudged to have been a corporate town time out of mind, and so acknowledged by many of the Kings—Edwards and Henrys. This is too vague to help to fix the date, but from the style of the seal it may be supposed to be of the fifteenth century, or perhaps the fourteenth.

We have no book devoted to the Municipal Arms of Ireland, such as the splendid volume on Scotland brought out in 1897 by the late Marquess of Bute (325 copies only), of which the present Marquess gave one to Armagh Library, and another to the writer.

But Mr. Fox-Davies lately published a 4to volume, entitled "Public Arms," in which he says Dundalk has none duly authorized, but that on a sheet published by Marcus Ward & Co. it is assigned "Three falcons with Bells." This is evidently derived from the three martlets.

The three birds in a shield are shown as the "Corporation Arms" at the top of "a plan of the town of Dundalk taken in the year 1675," reproduced in D'Alton and O'Flanagan's History of Dundalk, as is one 20 years older which was made by Major Symone Garstin under a commission dated 1655 from the Surveyor General, Benjamin Worsley (not "Morsley," as in D'Alton), the precious original of which was given to me by the late Earl of Roden. In Lewis's Topographical Dictionary, published in 1837, the three birds with feet, so not martlets, are shown on a seal which is described as that of the Corporation of Dundalk.

The same arms appear on an eighteenth century tablet on the south side of the Market Square, and as martlets these birds now figure weekly in the local papers as the trade-mark of Messrs. Macardle, our enterprising brewers.

When the Louth County Council was established and needed a seal, being then on that body I was requested to devise one for them. Accordingly, as Drogheda had ceased to be a County in itself and was merged in Louth I associated its star and crescent with the three martlets of Dundalk and that having been duly adopted (and engraved by Dollard, Dublin) has since been the seal of the County.

I have no doubt that the birds are descendants of the six on the seal now under consideration, though how reduced in number we shall probably never know.

How the seal got to St. Nicholas' is a mystery. There is no mention of the ancient seal in the Report of 1835, but at page 895 it is recorded that

"The town clerk (appointed in 1826) had not the custody of the Corporation Muniments or Seal. They are at times nominally in the custody of the bailiff or deputy bailiff but in reality in the custody of Lord Roden by whose agents acting always as treasurers to the Corporation they are kept in a place called 'the office' in a house belonging to Lord Roden." This, of course, referred to the modern seal shown in Lewis.

But the seal now resurrected had evidently gone the way of the Corporation Muniments and the Guild-hall, the site of which cannot now be identified.

If there is a crown on the lion figuring as crest above the shield it may refer to some royal grant.

The quasi-supporters were before such adjuncts were granted to Peers, and were probably personal badges, but of what family has yet to be determined. Though the seal seems to have nothing peculiarly Irish about it yet it may show a *sus hibernicus* and gallows-glass of an ancient period, such as figure on some fifteenth century monuments still remaining in Ireland.

As to the question "What was Old Dundalk," suggested by the "nove ville" of our seal, it is too large a topic to be here discussed, but I expect the explanation is to be sought in the fact that the town originally lay nearer to where Castletown now is.

A correspondent asks : Was Mr. Murray correct in placing Inismott in the townland of Ballygowan near the County of Louth in his paper on the Irish Monasteries, Vol. I., page 30, and he inquires, is not Inismott situated in the townland of Mandistown in the County of Meath ? Our correspondent is quite correct in placing Inismott in the townland of Mandistown in County of Meath. As a matter of fact the boundary between the townlands of Mandistown and of Ballygowan and of the counties of Meath and Louth lies quite near to, but to the east of Inismott. It was easy to have fallen into the error that Mr. Murray has made. We went to the trouble of visiting the spot, and by inquiries made verified the correction made by our correspondent.

Mr. Biggar suggests that the story of the Drogheda Harpist Society, which Father Burke, O.P., founded in the forties in the last century, should be related in the pages of this Journal. It is an interesting story enough ; we have gathered some stray notes about the members of it which in a future issue we hope to publish. We may remark that the last surviving member of that Society died a few years ago—Mr. Peter Dowdall, the late Clerk of the Drogheda Union ; another in Mr. W. Griffin, popularly known as “ Billy Griffin,” took part in the celebration of O’Connell’s Centenary in 1875. He sat in a chair in great prominence on a raised moving platform decked out in suitable Irish costume and played his harp as his carriage moved with the processional throng.

Correction.—The English version of *ŋŋ Cŋlle Cŋeasŋ* which appeared in last year’s Journal was accredited to Ferguson ; it should of course have been Sigerson ; the copies had all been printed off before the mistake was detected.

Dundealgan.—The statement in “ Enda’s ” paper in current number of this Journal :—“ For, as pointed out long ago in the Todd Lectures . . . Dundealgan cannot come from dealg, a brooch ”—is quite inexact. The reference is to Fr. Hogan’s *Battle of Ros-na-rig*, Todd Lectures, vol. iv., p. 15, sect. 9. “ I will make a banquet,” said Cuchullain, “ in wait and in preparation for Con Chobar at the bright faced castle of Delgga.” 5.

“ Note 5, Dundalk d Delga L.U. 68b, shows that the noun is not Delg.” In the *Glossarial Index* we read, “ Delgga gs of Delga.”

All this goes to confirm O’Curry’s opinion. Indeed, the repeated use of the form “ Delgga ” in the *Battle of Ros-na-rig* may be the origin of O’C’s. idea.

“ ENDA.”

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE ANCIENT SEAL OF DUNDALK.

The same impression under two different conditions of lighting.