



Further Notes From County Leitrim

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(THE proceedings at this meeting have already been reported in FOLK-LORE, Vol. V, No. 2.)

FURTHER NOTES FROM COUNTY LEITRIM.

BY LELAND L. DUNCAN, F.S.A.

When last year I had the pleasure of laying before the Society some notes from the parish of Kiltubbrid, co. Leitrim, which embodied the more general folk-sentiment of the district, I was not without hope that I might be able to extend the area covered by my researches to other parts of the county during the past summer. This, however, I was unable to do, and what I have to present to you in continuation of my first paper has all been gathered in the above-named parish.

Cut off as the place is from outside influence, one would perhaps expect to find a greater number of customs surviving, and in this respect the locality is disappointing. Fortunately, what is lacking in one direction is made up in another, and, all things considered, a place cannot be ranked as coming below the standard which supplies, besides the odds and ends here brought together, at least a dozen folk-tales in a fair state of preservation. I attribute this to the fact that little reading being indulged in by the people (save perhaps of a newspaper now and then), the folk-tale is still in request round the fire on a

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winter's night. Among the older people, too, memories of past ideas yet linger, which, though changing rapidly into "superstitions", or "pistogues", as they themselves will tell you, yet have a certain amount of credence given them.

Such, for instance, is the story attaching to Polaphuca, or Lugaphuca, a piece of disused road running past Annadale, Mr. James Slacke's residence. There are tales of phantom asses to be seen there at times, but they are paled by that told of a certain man, named O'Neil, who was returning home one night before the road was diverted further from the house. It was very dark as he rode down the slope of the hill, when suddenly a pooka jumped up on the horse behind him, and began to squeeze him to death. It was going hard with him, when he remembered a black-handled knife that was in his pocket; so he out with it, and struck behind him, and presently the hold of the creature relaxed, and he got to his own door. There, half-dead with fright, he flung his horrible burden on the heap beside the house, and went in to bed. Next morning he found nothing on the heap but a log of wood with a great gash in it.

This I was told by Francis Mulvanerty, who is nearly seventy years of age, and who gave it as the reason for the place being called Lugaphuca (the Hollow of the Ghosts).

Most of the fire-side tales relate to the doings of some (generally nameless) hero against the giants, who belong to a far-away period, having been driven out by the good people. According to the popular story, the fairies challenged the giants to fight in harvest time, and chose a cornfield for the battle. When the giants arrived, the fairies made themselves invisible, and set to work to fight with the butts of the sheaves. The giants stood this for some time, and then, finding it impossible to return the blows of their assailants, they turned and fled.

A belief in the present-day existence of the "good

people" seems fairly general. Besides the forts, "lone bushes" are declared to be specially under their protection, and in many fields is to be seen a small blackthorn bush, which it would be most unlucky to cut down. The children tell you that when the Danes left Ireland they hid their treasure and 'planted a bush over each pot of gold, so that in the event of their return they would know where to look for it.

I have collected a few more stories of the fairies and their doings. That of the "Football Players" seems to be a wide-spread tale in one form or another; here is the Kiltubbrid version, by Barney Whelan of Driny:—

THE FOOTBALL PLAYERS.

There was a man returning home one evening, when, as he was crossing a field, there met him a man on horse-back. "Will you come with me for a couple of hours?" said he. "I will," says the first; "but how will I come back?" "Oh, I'll leave you back," said the man; so he up on the horse behind the stranger, and away with them.

"Now what I want you to do is this: we've got a football match on, and you must kick for us."

"Well, I will," says he; and on that they were in the football field and the game began, and Jack wasn't long before he kicked the ball before him and kicked a goal. There was great joy among the little people, and they all set off to the big house for refreshment. Then the man who had brought Jack came and said, "You must take no refreshment here, nor take any notice of anything." So he watched them in the hall, and they had great eating and drinking.

To his great surprise, the first girl that brought in a dish was a sister he had lost three years before, but she passed without noticing him, and disappeared. After a while the man who had brought him came, and they mounted his horse and soon were back at the field whence they came. Then before he went, the horseman asked Jack what could

he do for him? "Well," said he, "I saw my sister that's been dead three years at that house, and I would like her back."

"It's a hard thing," said the man, "but I'll try and do it for you." So he went away, and in a little time returned with the girl and disappeared. There was much joy on the two of them, and they set off for home.

Early in the morning the old father was wakened by a lowing without, and he saw some cattle among his oats. So he out and hunted them, and back to bed, and he says to the wife: "There's Jack come in, and he's brought a wife with him at last."

They had great astonishment when the lad brought down his sister, and she wasn't a day older than when she died. She went out and called the cows in—for they had been sent with her—and there they are now.

The two following tales are told as facts regarding persons living within memory:—

JUDGE AND THE BUCKIES.

Judge was a young fellow who lived with a married brother. There was a fort beside the house, and of an evening as he passed this on his way home, a "buckie" used to jump on his back and take a ride until he came to the stream that ran by the door, when the little creature would fall off. One night Judge turned his coat and hat, to see what would happen, and, as he expected, ne'er a "buckie" came near him. He thought, however, that it would get him laughed at if he entered the house that way, so he turned his coat back again, when "plop" came one on his back!

They never did him any harm, though; indeed, he had one good friend among them. One day he was taking a cow to the fair at Boyle, and, leaving the beast in the byre, he went to bed. In the middle of the night he was awakened by a voice calling his name three times. Going down, he found his cow nearly strangled, and was just in

time to free her head, which had become entangled in the ropes. He knew then it was his friends the "buckies" who had called him. (Patrick McManus, Aughrim.)

JAMES DOGHERTY AND THE STILL.

On the townland of Lisdrumacrone lived James Dogherty and Ody Mahon. These two had a whiskey-still between them, but it had been lent to friends in Keshcarrigan, and Dogherty and two others went to Kesh one night to bring it home. As they went on the road they heard the noise of horsemen following, and saw a troop of the "good people" coming along, with their little swords glittering in the moonlight. As they swept by they called out three times, "Good-night, James Dogherty!"

Dogherty and his companions were somewhat scared, but went on, and when they arrived at the green at Kesh there was the company drawn up in line. They wheeled round and rode past, saying again, "Good-night, James Dogherty!" James and his friends then got the still and went home safely. He used to put a pot of whiskey in the fort for the "good people", and they in return led the revenue men astray, so that the still was never discovered. They were doubtless safeguarding its home-coming on the night in question.

Ody Mahon managed later on to incur the displeasure of the little folk, by cutting down bushes in a part of his holding where they had their playing-place. Their revenge took the shape of pelting his house after dark with little clods of earth, pebbles, etc., and finally the family had to quit the place. (Michael Lynch, formerly of Lisdrumacrone.)

A favourite tale is that of how Battle Bridge came by its name:—

STORY OF BATTLE BRIDGE.

There lived near Sheemore (a hill on the Carrick-on-Shannon road), many years ago, a farmer who had a good

many cows, and was altogether in a fairly prosperous way. One day, as he was going by a bush, he heard a voice say, "We shall have plenty of milk to day." He knew it was the good people talking, so he told his man to leave one cow and her calf always in the field, hoping that thereby he would have the friendship of the fairies. After a time bad luck came upon him, and at last all his cattle were seized for debt and driven off towards Boyle. The poor man in his misery called out in the fields to the good people, saying he had always left them a cow for milk, and now, in his evil days, they had deserted him. It was not so, however. When the party with his cattle reached the Shannon, and went to cross it, they were assailed by an invisible host which beat them without mercy, and hunted them and drove back the cattle to the farm again, and they were left in peace, none caring to interfere with them.

It is from this circumstance that the place where it occurred is called Battle Bridge.

THE FIRST TURF FIRE.

So natural does it seem to see the turf burning on the cottage hearths, that it is difficult to conceive of a time when the people were ignorant of the use of it. Most things, however, have a beginning, and this is the story of the first turf fire according to Francis Whelan of Driny, who had it from an old resident in the place :—

Before the days of Saint Patrick, the only fuel the Irish had was wood, for the use of turf had not been discovered. One day St. Patrick's servant was returning home, when suddenly a little man in red appeared in front of him. "If you will ask St. Patrick the answer to one question", said he, "I will tell you something in return."

"Well, what is it?" said the man.

"To-morrow morning at Mass ask him this question: 'Is there any hope for the fallen angels?'"

So the next morning at Mass, at the elevation, the

servant called out he had a question he wished to ask (for the celebrant must answer any question put to him that moment). When Mass was over, St. Patrick said, "Who was that wretched man who called out?" The servant then told the saint about the little man and his question.

Said St. Patrick: "You may just go and dig your own grave, for when you tell him the answer he will surely kill you, but don't forget to lay the loy and the shovel crosswise¹ over the grave when you have done, for the answer to the little man's question is, 'There is no hope for the fallen angels.'"

Then the man went and dug his grave, and he had just put the loy and shovel over him, when the little red man appeared and asked his question. When he heard the reply he tried to get at the poor servant to kill him, but as he was protected by the cross made by the loy and shovel, he could not touch him. At last he said: "Well, you have answered my question, and though it is against us, I must tell you something as I promised. Go to the bog and throw up some of the turf on it, and let it dry in the sun, and it will make a good fire for you"—and he disappeared. The man got out of the grave then, and he told St. Patrick what the little red man had said, and when they tried they found every word true, and from that day the Irish have used turf for fuel.

WITCHES.

"There were many witches in and round Ireland until St. Patrick came and drove them away"—such is the almost universal remark of the peasantry. "But," said I, "are witches yet quite gone?" "Indeed they are not", said an old woman, "and I can tell you what happened not so long ago.

"There were two boys in a parish near, and it's many a garden they robbed. There was an old woman living in a cabin in the place, and as she had the reputation of being

¹ This is done to this day when a grave is dug.

a witch, her apples were left in peace. One day, one lad said to the other that they'd see whether the woman was a witch or no. 'Do you go this night on a kalie, and talk with the old woman and her daughter, and, while you're talking, I'll take the apples, and you will soon see whether she knows what I'm doing.'

"That evening one lad set off for the house, and he sat there by the fire talking until it was late, and he thought his friend would have his work done. Then he said 'good night' to the old woman and her daughter, and went, thinking it was a good share of apples he'd be getting. When he got near home he met his companion, who bitterly reproached him for his breach of good faith. Said he, 'But the old woman talked with me the whole evening.' Then he heard the other's tale: how that he had waited until he thought the party would be gathered round the fire, and he had then gone into the garden after the apples, but he hadn't more than two or three pulled, when the old woman came out and chased him round and round the trees, and hunted him from the place, and many was the thwack she gave him with her stick. 'I declare to goodness', says the other, 'she never left my sight this evening.'

"So that shows that witches are not gone from us quite yet."

STOLEN BUTTER.

Perhaps the most favourite tales of witchery are those relating to the taking of butter, and this because there is not a person who does not believe that butter can be, and is, taken from the milk by the aid of witchcraft. I heard from several that they had "lost their butter", as the phrase is, for a month at a time; and no matter how they churned there was nothing but froth on the milk.

The tale of the absent-minded priest is the best of this class of story:—

Once there was a good priest who, as his wont was, walked out in the morning saying his office; and as he

walked, an old woman in the field hard by was gathering the dew from the long grass into her hands, saying, "Come all to me, come all to me, come all to me." Without knowing he did so, the priest said, "And half to me, and half to me, and half to me." He thought no more of the matter until he got home, when he was told that the morning's churn had given three times the usual quantity of butter. By-and-bye the neighbours came complaining to him that not a bit of butter could any of them get. The good man expressed his sorrow, but said he was at a loss to know how he could help them. Then one old man reminded him that it was May morning, and that the witches could take butter that day by gathering the dew-drops from the long grass. "Ah!" said the priest, "now I remember when I was out early this morning I saw an old woman sweeping the dew into her hands, and saying, 'Come all to me,' and now I remember I said And half to me, and half to me.'"

So he divided that morning's churning as far as it would go, and they sent to the house of the old witch, who had nothing but an old billy-goat, and found three tubs of freshly churned butter there; so that, with what the priest gave them, just made up what was wanting, and it was a merry May Day they spent that day anyway. (Ann Whelan, Driny.)

Of the means adopted to take butter, information is naturally scanty. A prelude to the operations is said to be to pull down a little of the thatch over the door of the house selected. A more curious and gruesome idea is that a hand taken from a person newly buried has this power. The story runs, that a woman in Ballinamore was suspected of this, and watch having been made, she was discovered dipping the hand in the churn, saying, "Gather far and near, gather far and near."¹

Another plan was discovered by a man who was return-

¹ Lady Wilde notes this idea, and has a story entitled "The Dead Hand" in her *Legends*.

ing home one night, and looking in at the window of a certain house, saw an old hag sitting by the fireside with a pail between her knees, and a straw rope tied on the crook, and she milking the spit and singing, "Boneen, Boneen, Boneen."

It is also generally asserted that if the washings from a churn are thrown into a stream which runs into a lough, and the "man-keepers" (newts) taste them, they will ever after take the butter from that house.

As touching "man-keepers", there is a tale of a man swallowing one whilst drinking water from a bog-hole. He found his appetite increase so that nothing would appease it, and at last he went to a doctor, who asked him did he ever drink water out in the fields. The man told him what he had done, and the doctor said he must have swallowed a man-keeper, and that he probably had by that time a whole family inside him. He told him he must eat a pound of salt, and not take a drop to drink, no matter what thirst was on him, and then to hold his head over a gallon of water. This he did, and the whole family jumped out one after another, and the last as big as a cat. The foolish fellow, however, kept his mouth open too long, and one jumped back again and could not be got out, and the poor man did not last long after that.¹

BIRTH, MARRIAGE, DEATH.

With the exception of the tales about changelings, which I have already recited, there does not appear to be any lore connected with childbirth. In some parts of Ireland there are many precautions taken to prevent children being overlooked, but they are generally adopted before baptism. Such, if they existed in Kiltubbrid, have died out there, and the only note on this subject I have come across is, that after a child was christened it was the

¹ See Dr. Hyde's *Beside the Fire* for the best version of this story.

custom by careful folk to quench a turf from the fire and sew a bit on the child's bib. This was left there for nine days, and then sewn tightly up in a piece of cloth with a cross made on it, and placed under the child's head to prevent it being overlooked.

WEDDING CUSTOMS.

Nearly all the old wedding customs have gone. The bridecake is sometimes broken over the head of the bride, and the "band-beggars" come an odd time, but otherwise the proceedings do not call for much remark. I have, however, collected the following notes on customs which I am told were formerly observed. My informant, a middle-aged woman, lived for some years with aged relatives, who were probably the sources of her lore on the subject. The customs, generally, seemed quite unknown to others in the district:—

Before going to church the bride had two ribbons pinned in a cross on her dress behind her, and if she returned without them good luck would attend her.

The groom had the besom thrown at him as he went to church, and if it fastened on to any part of his clothing it was considered lucky.

Before they went each to church the bride's mother used to give the bride a shilling, and the groom's father gave him a five-shilling piece. They each hid it in the stones at their hearth in the sleeping-room with a harrow-pin, saying they buried their bad luck.

The groomsman used also to give the groom a crooked sixpence, and the latter, having killed a magpie, slit the bird's tongue with the coin, and, leaving it therein, buried the bird with a horse's shoe under the hearth iron. This was done for good luck.

Before going to church the groom used to tie a straw on the chimney crook, and if it was all burnt before he started it was considered a bad omen.

At the coming in from church a cake, which in old time was made of oatmeal, was broken over the head of the bride. This is frequently done still.

Another small cake, made of sugar, flour, etc., used also to be made, and in this were stuck nine pound-pins (a tenth having been thrown away). This was left on the table and handed by the groom to the bride, and it was considered lucky if it broke into four quarters in her hand; but if not, something evil would happen to them within twelve months.

At the supper, the "wedding candlestick" was brought in. This held four candles for the groom's friends, and one in the midst for the bride. The candles were then lighted, and if the bride's candle burnt before the others something would happen either the bride or the groom within the year. The groom took away the ends of all the candles, placed them in his right sock tied up with twine with nine knots in it, and placed it secretly over the inside of the kitchen door of his house.

It is after supper that a visit is to be apprehended from the "band-beggars", as a band of men sometimes as many as forty in number, dressed up in straw and with blackened faces and carrying thick sticks, is called. Having settled to visit the bride's house, they come in the evening after supper, and demand admittance. This cannot safely be refused, and the captain of the band (distinguished by a broad plait on his straw headdress) then dances with the bride. Refreshment is expected by the whole band, after which they go away. Sometimes the visit is purely for amusement, but at others the opportunity is taken of the disguise to pay off old scores, especially if the groom or the bride's father is disliked. A visit is consequently dreaded, particularly by the women of the wedding party, and notice is sent to the police if there is any probability of one taking place. This, combined with the fact that a blackened face at night-time would possibly get its owner

into serious trouble if caught, is causing the practice to fall into disuse.¹

It occasionally has happened that bands arrive from different districts, having been organised unknown to one another. A fight is the result, as might be expected.

The dance at the end of the wedding day is called "dawsa bonsha" (wedding dance). This is begun by the bride and groom. After a few turns the groom sits down, and the groomsman dances with the bride. Then the bride gives way to one of the bridesmaids, and so on until all those present are dancing. The bride and groom then endeavour to steal away unobserved, their retreat being covered by the married women of the party; should, however, their going out be seen, the bride takes off her right stocking and throws it at the company, and he on whom it alights will be the next to marry.

The bride seldom goes to her new home on the night of the wedding; but that is reserved until a day some weeks off, called the "dragging home", when the groom comes for her. Any furniture she may have to bring with her is then set out, and in old times a small chair, called the Bride's Chair, was made specially to be brought along therewith. This was a small, three-legged stool, one leg of straight wood, the second of crooked wood, and the third crossing the other two. It was known as Crisa-Crossa, and was kept by the bride in her sleeping-room, but it was not intended for use.²

On arriving at the groom's house the groomsman used to throw a bottle of whiskey in the air, which was supposed to give three turns in descending, and if it broke at the third turn on reaching the ground it was a lucky sign.

Under the heading of 31st October (Hallowe'en) will be

¹ Dr. Hyde informs me that the practice extends all over Connaught.

² Gregor, in *Folk-lore of North-East of Scotland*, p. 100, states that a stool always forms part of the bride's goods.

found charms for finding the name of a future partner. Here is another recipe, which may be tried at any time :—

Take the first egg laid by a black pullet, add the full of it of salt, and the full of it of oatmeal or Indian meal. Make it into three little cakes, and bake them. Then let two girls and a boy eat one each in a bite. This done, not a word must be spoken by any of them, but go to bed. A dream of the lover will surely follow. Custom considerably allows the experimenters to place a porringer of water by their bedsides, to allay the *druth* which will inevitably assail them.

THE WAKE.

Wakes of the old type are falling into disrepute, and they would only take place in the event of the deceased having no near relatives. My remarks under this head, then, are devoted to the games which were, and occasionally are, played at wakes, and I have noted them particularly, because they are never played on any other occasion.

The most favourite game is that called "The Nine Daughters". Two masters having been appointed, nine men are sent out and brought in singly, each having chosen a trade. They are introduced to the supposed father of the daughters, with these words :

"Here comes a [tailor] so neat and so fine,
He's come to court a daughter of thine."

The father answers :

"I'll set my nine daughters down by my knee,
And it's no [tailor] will get a wife from me."

The tailor then says :

"A fig for your daughter, and a fig for yourself,
For three-halfpence more I'd get a far better wife."

The father is then persuaded to give him one of his daughters, but asks what fortune would be wanted with her. Finally he insists on giving her a good fortune, but says he

cannot pay it all at once, and asks in how many "gales" the young man will have it, always endeavouring to fix the gales at a high number. This having been settled the other trades follow. As a conclusion, each one is hoisted on the back of one of the masters, and receives for each gale of his fortune a prick with a "pound" pin, to the amusement, doubtless, of the company.

Another game, called the "Marriage", is played by an appointed master giving each girl a partner as he repeats this rhyme :

"I'm a poor widow that's come from Athlone,
I have ne'er a daughter to marry but one ;
Go away, daughter, and choose your own,
Choose a good one or else choose no 'ne."

Another wake pastime is the arrival of "Jackeen and Bessheen", a couple of lads dressed up sometimes in straw, after the fashion of the band-beggars at a wedding, but more generally in old clothes. Bessheen has a big hump on her back, made with the help of some hay and a large shawl. They play all sorts of pranks, such as Robbing the Stanen. For this Bessheen has a stool, on which are pieces of paper, and if any of the company can engage her attention and steal the paper pieces, she gets a beating from Jackeen.

"Shuffle the Bróg" (or Hunt the Slipper) is played after a rough fashion with a piece of knotted rope.

THE YEAR AND ITS SEASONS.

The following notes on the Calendar embody all that I have been able to collect as to times and seasons :—

New Year's Day.—Any *mankind* brings good luck on New Year's morn ; *i.e.*, if a male is the first to go into a house he brings good luck, but a female brings bad luck.

The first thing you eat in the morning will cure you throughout the year if you fall sick.

Hansel Monday (first Monday in the New Year).—An

unlucky day to pay for anything with money, but it is considered lucky to have a present of money on this day.

6th January (Twelfth Night).—On this night a piece of board is covered with cow-dung, and twelve rush-lights are stuck therein. These are sprinkled with ash at the top, to make them light easily, and then set alight, each being named by someone present, and as each dies so will the life of its owner. A ball is then made of the dung, and it is placed over the door of the cow-house for an increase of cattle. Sometimes mud is used, and the ball placed over the door of the dwelling-house.

2nd February (St. Bridget's Day).—On this night it was the custom to make a wide plaited cross of rushes and place it over the inside of the door of the dwelling-house. This has fallen into disuse. St. Bridget is the patron of the parish.

Shrove-tide is called Seraft, and Shrove Tuesday Seraft-Day. It is a favourite time for marriages to take place, being before Lent commences.

Cropping Days.—The Thursday before Lent people used to have their hair cut, and then not again until the last Thursday in Lent. These days were called the Cropping Days.

17th March (St. Patrick's Day).—On this day pieces of card were covered with bits of bright coloured stuff and called Patrick's crosses. These were worn by children on the right shoulder. The practice is dying out.

1st, 2nd, and 3rd April (the "Borrowing Days").—When the 1st of April came the old cow kicked up her heels, and said, "Be hanged to March!" So March borrowed three days from April, and, turning on a bitterly cold wind, shrivelled the old cow up.

Easter Monday.—On this day, until a few years ago, a cake was made by one of the "quality" and given to the people. A churndash having been stuck up in a field, the cake was placed thereon and covered with a white cloth, upon which all the company commenced to dance, and

danced until they were tired. One of the boys then took the cake and handed it to his sweetheart, and led her away to the house, followed by all his and her friends. When they arrived inside the house, the girl cut a heart-shaped piece out of the centre of the cake and gave it to the boy, and the remainder she cut into pieces, and gave a bit to each of the company. After this drinking began, and was kept up until early morning, as much as fifteen gallons of whiskey being sometimes sold.

1st May.—The old practices of this day are disappearing. Formerly no one would willingly be the first to light a fire, and many an anxious look round at the neighbours' houses was given to see if smoke was rising before the careful woman of the house would bring herself to kindle a blaze. On the other hand, no one would give fire on this day, not even to light a pipe, so that it behoved everyone to have the means of lighting one ready to hand. It was also considered very unlucky to throw out water or ash on May Day, to do so would have been to throw away the luck of the house for the year, and would especially result in a loss of butter on the milk.

These customs are still adhered to by the older people.

On May-morning the children scatter May-flowers (marsh-mallow), gathered on May-eve, before the door of their house.

The days on which rent falls due are known as Gale Days. There are two in each year, usually 1st May and 1st November, but sometimes 25th March and 29th September.

23rd June, St. John's Eve (Bonfire Day).—Fires are lighted after dusk on the hills and along the sides of the roads.

Garland Sunday (last Sunday in July).—Flowers used to be placed round wells on this day, hence its name; but the custom is falling into disuse. An adjournment to the nearest inn is apparently taking its place.

Harvest.—A little oats are grown, but the chief harvest is that of the hay, and those who have much to save are

glad of all the assistance that they can get. It is a most pleasing feature to see how entirely this mutual help is given. In the case of the landlord, word is passed round, generally by the overseer, that Mr. So-and-So's hay is to be got in, and he'd be glad if this man and that man would come. No one is compelled to come, and no money is offered or asked for, the day being called a "Thank-you Day". Early on the morning of the day selected, men arrive, some with carts, others only with forks. They are given breakfast and dinner, and, when all is completed, the day is finished up with a dance in the kitchen.

The gathering is known as a Meitheal (pron. *mè-hel*), which means a body of men brought together for work, more especially harvesting.

15th September (Lasser Day).—Pilgrimages are made to a holy well at Kilronan, in co. Roscommon, called Lasser (pronounced *Losser*) Well. For a month before these are in progress, and terminate this day, the nearest Sunday to the 15th September being the best attended nowadays, as a special train is put on for the purpose to Arigna, from whence the well is about three miles. The pilgrimages are generally in fulfilment of a vow made during the previous year, when sickness is on you, or when you are troubled with toothache. They are discountenanced by the clergy as much as possible, and in order to show how little the saints had to do with the place, one of the Roman Catholic Bishops is said to have cast the dust off his feet into the well. That night, so the folk say, lights were seen round the well, and the most heartrending sounds proceeded therefrom, which were interpreted to mean the dismay of the evil spirits at the defeat of their schemes. The attendance at the "pattern" in 1893 was, however, fully up to the average.

31st October (Hallowe'en, or more generally Holly-eve).—This night still holds its own against the incoming tide of "civilisation", and many are the tales of the doings of the "good people" thereon.

One Hallow-eve, as a young fellow was going home, he chanced to pass a fort, and heard the most beautiful music he had ever listened to in his life. As he stopped to listen, a grand castle seemed to appear before him, and he was invited to enter. Inside he found full of little men running about, and one of them came to him and told him on no account to take any refreshment there or it would be the worse for him, so, although many pressed him, he took nothing. By-and-bye he saw them all trooping out. He followed, and noticed that they all dipped their fingers in a large cask outside the entrance door and rubbed their fingers across their faces. He accordingly dipped his finger in the liquid and rubbed it over one of his eyes. In an instant there was a fine horse ready for him, and away with him and the others over the country, and over the whole world.

Towards morning he found himself lying on the butt of an old haystack, about half-a-mile from his own door, and getting up, he made his way home. The next day he had occasion to go into the market town, and whom should he see there but all his friends of the night, mingling with the people of the place, and going up and down through the market. What must he do but up and speak to some of them, and asked them how they did. Said one to him, "How can you see us?" So he told them that he had dipped his finger in the barrel before the castle door and rubbed it over his right eye. That instant as he spoke the little man struck his eye with a stick he had, and took the sight from it, and it was no more he saw either of the "good people" or anything else with that eye.

There are the usual games in the evening, such as pouring molten lead through a key into water, bobbing for apples, and ducking for money ; but the chief amusement is the attempt to find out the name of the person who will be your future partner. A cake is made called barm-breac, with a nut and a ring therein. Whoever gets the ring will be married first, and the nut brings a widow (or a widower)

if it contains a kernel; but if it is a blind nut, then a spinster or bachelor life awaits its possessor. The same is done also with a dish of mashed potato and cabbage. With regard to the last-named vegetable, the girls are led out blindfold to the cabbage garden and pull cabbages, judging by those pulled of the appearance of their future husbands. If one is pulled with a double head a widower may be expected. Later in the night the lads steal all the cabbages they can, and break them in pieces by throwing them on the roads, which are sometimes found covered with the *débris* of broken cabbage in the morning.

The girls also look out secretly for a briar-thorn which has grown over into the ground, forming a loop. In the evening, late, this must be crept through three times in the devil's name, the briar cut and placed under the pillow without speaking a word, and the dream to follow will be of the future husband.

Another plan is to throw a clew, or ball of worsted, down a lime-kiln in the evening, in the devil's name, retaining the end in the hand. This is rewound, saying, "Who holds my clew?" and the name (if any) given from the depths of the kiln will be that of the future husband. An experiment well suited for practical joking, as more than one story current testifies.

The boys gather ten ivy leaves, without speaking, and throw away the tenth. They must not be brought into the house until bedtime, when they are placed in the right sock, and this, again, under the pillow, saying these words only :—

"Nine ivy leaves I place under my head,
To dream of the living and not of the dead.
If ere I be married or wed unto thee,
To dream of her to-night, and her for to see,
The colour of her hair, and the clothes that she wears,
And the day she'll be wedded to me."

Sometimes yarrow leaves are used instead of ivy.

Others take a rake, and go round a rick nine times,

saying, "I rake this rick in the name of the devil," and at the ninth time the spirit of the future partner will come and take the rake from the hands of the operator.

At the gatherings on Holly-eve, one of the company used to cover himself with a white sheet, and run through the house holding a plate with a little lighted whiskey on it. The light from this on the sheet has a most deathlike appearance.

On this night, if the ashes of the fire are raked smooth, tracks thereon will be found next morning. If the toes face into the hearth, a stranger will come to the house before that day twelvemonth; if the toes face out, someone will leave; but if the track of a coffin is seen, then a member of the house will die within the year.

There is a common saying that the devil has the haws and blackberries destroyed after Hollandtide.

26th December (St. Stephen's Day).—On this day a wren is killed, and carried by the boys, called wren-boys, with a bush covered with coloured ribbons, etc., singing :—

"The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,
On St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze;
Although he is little, his family's great,
So rise up, mistress, and give us a treat."

The well-known story is told of the wren hiding on the eagle's back, and flying over his head as he proclaimed himself king of the birds, saying, "No, but I am the king!" Whereon the eagle gave him a blow with his wing, and knocked him down into a furze-bush, and this is the reason why the wren can never do more than flit from bush to bush.

MISCELLANEA.

Magpies.—

"One, two, or three magpies' roar,
Outside the door,
Brings money."

"One is sorrow,
Two is mirth,
Three's a wedding,
Four a birth."

Pigeons.—It is considered unlucky to keep pigeons in the dwelling-house.

Crickets.—It is unlucky to kill a cricket, or to talk of killing them, because they tell one another and come and eat your clothes.

Charm for Toothache.—Say three times night and morning, or write on a slip of paper and carry about with you :—

"Peter sat on a marble stone,
Jesus came to him alone :
'What ail'st thou, Peter, why dost thou quake ?'
'Oh, dear Jesus, 'tis the toothache.'
'Rise up, Peter, thou shalt be healed,
And all those who keep these words in memory
Of my Passion shall never be troubled with toothache.'"

Charm against Ague or Fever.—As above :—

"When Our Saviour came to the Cross,
His Body did shake and tremble.
The Jews asked of Him had he the fever or ague.
He said He had neither,
'And anyone who keepeth these words
In memory of Me shall never have either.'"

Charm to Recover a Lost Article.—Tie a piece of straw round the crook in the chimney, then take a sod from the fire and place it in the centre of the room, quench it, and the lost article will be restored to its place.

The tongs are thrown at persons going out on business, to take luck with them.

When a calf died it was the custom to cut off the fore-feet from the knee, and place them up over the door of the house, inside, to prevent the death of calves.

Some people say that if they missed a piece of a ridge

in setting the potatoes or sowing the oats, someone would die out of that house before that day twelvemonth.

There is a great objection to meeting a woman when going out to a fair or market, but especially is it unlucky to meet a red-haired one—indeed, so much so, that many people would turn back were this to happen them, as the luck would certainly be against them.

Cures for Chin-cough.—Give the child some of the milk left by a ferret after a meal ; or, Pass the child three times under and over a young foal of an ass, on which no man has ever sat ; or, Ask a rider of a piebald horse for a remedy (which will be a certain cure, whatever it is).

Cures for Warts.—Catch a black snail (which must be chanced upon), rub the wart with it, then impale the snail upon a blackthorn, and as it withers away the wart will die ; or, Chance on a stone with a sup of water in it, and bathe the wart with the water.

Cure for a Thorn.—A fox's tongue, if laid on the place, will draw a thorn.

The Evil.—The seventh boy in a family of boys is held to have the power of curing the King's Evil, if the midwife at his birth places a worm in his hand ; the hand, when the boy grows up, being passed over the place affected. The idea is that "the evil" is caused by a worm. The rope a man has been hanged with is also efficacious in cases of the evil.

The Evil-eye or Ill-eye.—Cause: If a child has been weaned, and again given the breast, the people say it will have an ill-eye.

Cure for a Beast overlooked.—Burn the alphabet on a shovel under its nose ; or, Burn, as above, a piece of the dress of the person who overlooked the animal.

A *darb* (pronounced dtherub) is a small "clock", or beetle, in water, which, if cattle swallow, makes them swell. This can be remedied by getting a piece of the clothes of a man named Cassidy, and burning it under the nose of the beast affected. The *galragorbh* (gaulragorroo) is a sort

of colic which attacks young heifers. It can be cured if the *first* person who sees the beast after it is seized takes his coat off and strikes it therewith nine times. Or you may make nine knots in a piece of cord, saying, as you make each knot, "That the pain may be slackened." There is also a knot called the gaulragoroo knot, by pulling the two ends of which the knot comes undone; this may be made over the back of the beast, and has a beneficial effect.

RUINED CHURCH OF COOLKIL.

Around the ruins of Coolkil a whole series of legends has gathered. This ruined church is near the shore of Lough Nacorrige. When it was building there came fishermen from the lough one day, and the saints who were working asked them for some fish. The request was refused, upon which the builders cursed the lake, and from that time no fish were found in it until recently. A small trout is carved on a stone inside the doorway, which is pointed out as a memorial of the above. The mortar is very good and strong, and is said by the people to have been mixed with bullock's blood.¹ The ruins are protected by an invisible power, for a man who took some of the coping stones to build his house had no luck until he brought them back.

In a field near is a stone slab under the slope of the hill, said to have been used as an altar in the days of persecution. A bush beside it is covered with rags tied thereon, though the practice of performing "stations" there has died out. There is a St. Patrick's Well close by. Stories are told of a man who was crippled for cutting bushes near the altar, and of another who was blinded in one eye for doing the same at a fort near the lough. This fort is a favourite pastime ground of the fairies, and it is said that the dew never rests on the grass there, on account of the

¹ This idea of bullock's blood strengthening mortar appears to be current in the district.

dancing which is carried on. As the people say, "if ten men and ten dogs were chasing ten hares they wouldn't take the dew off more." A horse, if left in the field in which the fort is situated, is often so dead tired that it cannot be used next morning, having been over-ridden by the "good people" in their midnight frolics. In another field hard by is a very fine cromlech, and a second, broken down, is called "Labby Ermaid" (*i.e.*, Diarmuid's Bed), a name commonly given by the peasantry to cromlechs, which were associated with the Finn legend of the Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne. I say "were", for, so far as I can ascertain, the story has now completely died out in the district, save the above name, which the people could not explain.

Such is, in brief, the story of the place as told by Mr. John Dogherty, farmer, of Drumany, who lives not far from the ruins of the church. It is difficult to account for the presence of such a building in such a spot, though doubtless the population has shifted considerably of late years. The people say that the saints who built these churches never knew themselves where the next one was to be erected, but that a little bird always appeared and took up some of the mortar in its beak, and, flying slowly away, left it down on the spot selected for the new building.

The story goes that when the Abbey at Fenagh was finished, the little bird appeared and went off towards Cloone. The men followed in single file within speaking distance from one another, as was the custom. As they approached Cloone the first man discovered he had left some of his tools behind at Fenagh, so, without taking his eyes off the bird, he called back to the man behind him, and the message was sent on this way to the last man who was just leaving Fenagh, and he brought the tools with him.

In bringing these notes to a conclusion, it will be as well to state that they are all derived from the peasantry, and I have endeavoured to put them forward here without altera-

tion, adhering as far as possible to the actual words of my informants, to all of whom I would return my best thanks. It is to be understood that those given with no name attached are generally current.

In addition to the foregoing, there also exist in the district the various legends regarding "Gobawn Saor", which I heard from Barney Whelan of Driny. The story (so well related by Croker) of the Humpback, who is cured for adding a line to the fairies' song, was also told me by several persons. Of what appear to be purely local growth, mention must be made of many anecdotes regarding a man called Cotin Deas (Handsome Coat), who is said to have been servant to Mrs. Macnamara, resident here in the early part of this century. I hope to collect all these later on, for it is just possible there may be an older substratum than would appear on first hearing them.

FOLK-TALES OF THE DISTRICT.

I have, so far, been able to write down in full, from the narrators, English versions of the following fourteen tales:—

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Whittlegaire. | } Already printed in FOLK-
LORE, vol. iv, pp. 184-194. |
| 2. Jack and the King. | |
| 3. The Glass Mountains. | |
| 4. Cul-fin, Cul-din, Cul-corrach. (A Cinderella.) | |
| 5. Cot-na-shoog, Cot-na-coy, Fesan-na-Darach. (Three monsters.) | |
| 6. Green Yarrow and Royal John. (Three-task tale.) | |
| 7. Jack Dolan. (Carrying-eagle, etc.) | |
| 8. The Little Foal. (Helpful beast.) | |
| 9. The Little Brown Bullock. (Cinderella <i>hero</i> tale.) | |
| 10. The Golden Bird. (An underworld story.) | |
| 11. Lip o' Beard. (Similar to Kennedy's Three Crowns.) | |
| 12. Hairy. (Similar to Whittlegaire, but with heroine.) | |
| 13. The Lion, the Eagle, and the Mouse. (Helping animals.) | |

14. Bundle of Rushes. (Similar to Kennedy's Corpse-Watchers.)

The following I have also heard, and hope in due course to write down in full—at present I have only notes :—

1. Clip o' the Heel. (Cinderella *hero* tale.)
2. The Earl of Benbo.
3. Giant's Juggle and Stoneheart, a tale of the Giants' Causeway.

Two other tales, "The Steed of Bells" (printed in *Hibernian Tales*) and "Florina and the Charming King" (printed in another chap-book), are also told. Whether derived orally or from the printed sources is uncertain, but I incline towards the latter.

As a further specimen of these Englished versions of Gaelic stories I select the tale of Cul-fin, a Cinderella story, first, because Cinderella is to the front just now, and any additions to the stock from these Islands are, I suppose, welcome; and secondly, because it affords some evidence (if any were needed) of the faithfulness of Mr. Curtin's versions of the Ancient Myths and Folk-lore of Ireland.

CUL-FIN, CUL-DIN, CUL-CORRACH.

Long ago there was a poor woman, and she had three daughters, named Cul-fin, Cul-din, Cul-corrach. The two elder ones were two pretty girls, but the youngest was an ugly girl, and her sisters wouldn't let her be seen out.

One morning they found that the fire had gone out, and they couldn't get it lit anyway. So Cul-fin went round the tail of the rock and met with a little cabin, and an aged woman sitting in it. She had a little counter with scales on it before her, as though she was doing business.

"Sit down", she says; but Cul-fin said she was in a hurry, and had come for a light for her fire, which had gone out, if she could give it to her.

The old woman said she hadn't any fire there, but if she would wait while she got a light she was welcome.

On the counter were three heaps of money, one of gold, the second of silver, and the third of copper, and when the old woman went out, Cul-fin took some of the gold and silver and put it in her dress. But the witch was watching her from the outside, and she came in and told the girl she might take the light and go away.

The second morning the fire was quenched too, and as Cul-fin wouldn't go for a light this time, Cul-din had to go. The old woman told her to sit down as she told the other. Cul-din said she was in a hurry, for she wanted a light for her fire, which was quenched.

The old woman said she would fetch a light if she would wait. The gold, silver, and copper were left as before in three heaps on the counter, and when the old woman went out, Cul-din took a share of the gold and silver and hid it in her dress, and the old woman looking at her. She then came in and gave the girl a light and told her to go home.

The third morning it happened that the fire quenched again. So it came that neither of the two elder girls would go for a light, and Cul-corrach had to go for it. When she came to the little house the old woman told her to sit down.

"I'm in a hurry", said she, "and would you give me a light, as the fire has gone out?" And the old woman said she would if she'd wait while she went for it.

The three heaps of gold, silver, and copper were standing on the counter, but when the old woman was out, Cul-corrach never looked at any of them, and sat still on her stool.

The old woman came in then and asked her why she never saw her going to prayers, like the others; and she replied that her sisters wouldn't let her out, as they didn't think her handsome or good enough.

"Well", said she, "when they go to Mass on Sunday come to me the very minute they step out, that I may be able to do something for you."

So Cul-corrach came on Sunday, and the old woman dressed her in the beautifullest apparel that any lady could be seen in, and made her face beautiful too, so that she was to be admired, and she put her on a grey steed, and glass slippers on her feet. She told her, when Mass would be over, to let neither girl nor man lay hold of her, but to come back to her.

So Cul-corrach came back to her with all speed, and the steed was put up, and the girl sent home in her rough apparel again.

When the two sisters came home, their mother asked them, according to her practice, "What news?" "No news, but the beautifullest lady that could be seen was in the church, and we all admired her, and couldn't keep from watching her, and the lord's son couldn't take his eyes off her."

The Sunday after, Cul-corrach came again to the old woman, and she dressed her more admirable and more to be seen than the first Sunday, and she mounted the grey steed and away to church, the old woman telling her not to let anyone get a hand on her, but to return as fast as she could when Mass was over.

So as much as the lord's son admired her the first Sunday, he admired her more the second, and said he'd do all he could to come in with her. But Cul-corrach went back to the old woman directly the service was over, and the steed was put up, and she returned home in her rough clothes. The mother asked the two daughters when they came, "What news?" and they said the lady was at church again, and that everyone couldn't take their eyes off her, and the lord's son would have her, no matter how he travelled.

The third Sunday Cul-corrach went to the old woman, and if she dressed her finely the other two Sundays, it was more beautiful and more to be seen she dressed her that day, and the lord's son took good care he kneeled by the door for fear she'd go out without his getting a hold on

her. So, as she jumped on the steed, he whipped off one of her glass slippers, and she came home in great concern, and told the old woman how she lost the slipper, but she said it made no matter.

Then the lord put up that whoever it was that the slipper would fit, be they rich or poor, or who they were, that he'd marry her, and he brought his men round to see every girl through all his country; but though he travelled everywhere he could find none whom the slipper would fit. At last he came to the cabin where the old widow was and her daughters, but the slipper would not fit either Cul-fin or Cul-din.

Cul-corrach was hid in the room, and she up and said, "Perhaps the slipper would fit me."

The young men asked who was in the room, and the two girls denied there was anyone; but the men said there was someone there, and they must see her, be she who she was.

As soon as Cul-corrach was brought up the slipper was left on the floor, for no one would go to her to put it on, as she was so ugly, but as soon as she went up near the slipper it hopped on to her foot. Then they were all surprised, and the sisters were nearly out of their mind, and the lord's son said she was the one the slipper belonged to, and he would have her for his bride.

Cul-corrach asked for half an hour before he would see her again, and she went to the old women, who dressed her in the dress she wore the first Sunday; and when she returned, they all allowed she was the lady that was at the church. She begged their pardon for a little while again, and went to the old woman, who dressed her in the second Sunday's dress; and the third time she asked to go out, and said she would go out no more. So the third time she came back in the grandest dress that she had worn the third Sunday, and with the steed, and, when she came to the door, she up on the steed. The old mother was excited to see her in her dress, but her sisters said to one another

that they would do their utmost to put her to death for getting such a noble lord. The old woman had told her to sit on the steed, and not to go in the lord's chariot on the journey, so Cul-corrach told the lord he must either take another steed or go in his chariot, and do his best to keep up with her, and she'd show she was nobler blood than he thought.

When they came to the lord's castle there was great preparation, for the like of it was never seen in that country before.

When Cul-corrach came near to her first birth, her eldest sister, Cul-fin, came to be near her, and she took the child when he was born and threw him out on the heap behind the castle. But the herdsman was out that day, and saw the infant put out, and he took the child, for his own wife had no family.

What had the sister put but a little cat in the infant's place, and when the lord came in to see his child it was a young kitten was rolled up and shown to him.

Said he, "Why, why, that's a shame; it's bad enough, but it might be worse!"

Soon after Cul-fin went home, and the two sisters were plotting what they could do next time. So Cul-fin came back the next time, and when the child was born she put it out again, and put a little pup in the child's place; and when the lord came in and saw it was a young pup, he said, "Fy, fy, that is bad; but it might be worse!" The herdsman had seen the child put out, and he took it home, so he had the two children, and the neighbours said he was doing well; but, indeed, it was the lord's children he was getting.

The sisters plotted again, that it was no use getting on that way, for the lord would never do anything to Cul-corrach. So they said they'd try the third time, and when the child was born they sent the nurse away, saying that Cul-fin was fit to mind her sister. Then they put a young pig in the child's place, and the lord said it was bad indeed,

but yet it might be worse ; for he was a good-natured man, and didn't like to hurt his wife's feelings.

The child was put out as before, and the herdsman found it and brought it home to his wife, and his wife grumbled ; but he said, "No matter, though they're not your own, you'll be paid for it yet."

Cul-corrach got sick when she saw all that was done to her, and the two sisters took her, unknown to the lord, in her bed and night-dress as she was, to the brink of the sea, but it was a bed of phoenix feathers she had, and it could not sink. The herdsman was by the sea-shore that day, and he saw the beautiful lady on the bed, sailing on the brink of the sea, and he took her in and asked what did it mean, and what was it about. Cul-corrach said it was her sisters had put her there, and she didn't know what it was for, and that the lord would be looking for her. Cul-fin, however, went and lay in the lord's bed, and let on she was sick. The lord admired her, and thought it might be his wife, as sickness might change her, but yet he scarcely knew her. That evening he met the herdsman out, who asked him how his mistress did, and the lord said, "Very poorly." The herdsman asked him had he his wife at all, and the lord said, "To be sure I have." Then the herdsman brought the lord to his house, and there was Cul-corrach, and he said, "Isn't that your wife?" And he said it was. Then he told the lord how that the two sisters had put her out to drown, and that he had got her floating on the sea, as the phoenix feathers could not let her drown.

"What became of your three children?" said he, and the lord was ashamed to tell him ; but the herdsman said he might, as he knew how everything happened.

Says he to the lord's wife, "How many births had you?" and she said, "Three." Then he brought down the three boys, and said, "There are your three children"; and the lord admired how it was. The herdsman told him he was at the back of the yard and saw the children thrown out, and had taken them home.

So the lord and his lady came home in great splendour, and their three sons with them; and they found the old woman, who first gave Cul-corrach the dresses, had come to see her, and she said she was coming to do wrong right, only the lord had found it out.

"Now", says she, "I'll not go back till Cul-fin is killed, for she is the cause of all this." So Cul-fin was put to death.

The old woman brought the lord's wife and the three children on a visit to her cabin in a chariot, and kept them for a month, till the lord came for them, as was appointed. She gave each of the three sons as much gold as they could want, and she made a present of the chariot and the grey steed to Cul-corrach.

"Good-bye now", says she, "for you may never see me again, and I wish you and your lord all sorts of happiness to live together."

So they went home, and if they didn't live happy—that we may!

NOTES.

Source, etc.—I heard this tale from Mrs. Whelan, wife of Barney Whelan of Driny townland, co. Leitrim, who heard it many years ago from one Peter Gray of Ballyfermoy, in co. Roscommon, "who had very good Irish." He was an old man then, and is, alas! now dead. I have given it here word for word as told me by the narrator. It follows very closely Mr. Curtin's story of "Fair, Brown, and Trembling", but the opening here is an addition thereto, and motivates the old woman's befriending of the heroine. The fire-fetching commencement is found in an Icelandic variant (No. 273 in Miss Cox's book). The three heaps of gold, silver, and copper may be compared with the gold, silver, and copper forests of some variants.

The changelings placed in the child's cradle are an addition to Curtin's version. They are to be found in one of Grimm's variants from Mecklenburg (see note 26 in *Cinderella*, Miss M. R. Cox), and in several early legends.

The repaying of the faithful herd is forgotten here, and probably Mrs. Whelan may have omitted other incidents, as she only heard Gray tell the tale once, and then after a long day's work.

Cul-fin (Cul-fion) = fair-haired. Cul-din (genitive of Cul-donn) = brown-haired. Cul-corrach (Cul-carrach) = mangy or scabby-head. Cull = the poll in this connection.

Although the name is not used in this tale, it is interesting to observe that in Kiltubbrid a child (or any person) who is fond of sitting close by the fire is called "Ashypet".

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18th, 1894.

The PRESIDENT (Mr. G. Laurence Gomme, F.S.A.) in the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The election of the following new members was announced, viz.: Mr. F. L. Gardner, M. Camille de Brix, Mr. C. Nicholson, Mr. J. S. Carpenter, and the Leicester Permanent Library.

Mr. H. Raynbird, junior, exhibited a number of Kolarian charms, implements, tools, and models, and explained their use. At the conclusion of his remarks he announced his intention of offering the greater number of his exhibits as a donation to the proposed museum, an announcement which was received with applause.

Mr. Leland L. Duncan exhibited a straw dress, illustrative of a wedding custom in co. Leitrim, and explained its use.

Prof. Haddon then gave his lecture on "The Western Folk of Ireland and their Lore," which was illustrated by Lantern Slides; and, at the conclusion of his lecture, was, on the motion of the President, accorded a hearty vote of thanks.

A paper by Mr. Leland L. Duncan, entitled "More Folklore Gleanings from co. Leitrim," was also read (*supra* pp. 177-210).