

his sketch. He was forced to place the slab a century later in time than Mr. Du Noyer, as he had distinctly read the following portions of the inscription, carved in incised Lombardic capitals:—

HIC IACET TOMAS M C°C°

which brought down the date to some year in the fourteenth century. Twenty years ago the object, held in the right hand of the figure, showed no indications of terminating like a spear, but the slab was even then very much injured by time.

The following Papers were communicated:—

WHAT WE LEARN FROM WILDE'S "CATALOGUE OF THE ANTIQUITIES IN THE MUSEUM OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY."

BY THE REV. JAMES GRAVES, A. B., M. R. I. A.

IN fulfilment of my promise to bring this admirable publication again before the Members of the Society, I proceed to lay before them the section of the Catalogue which relates to the several modes anciently used in Ireland to protect the feet. The examples of ancient shoes and sandals here described and illustrated are of singular interest, as the ornamentation on some of them are identical with that to be found on undoubted works of Irish art,—such as our ancient crosses, shrines, brooches, and in the adornments of our most ancient manuscripts. Here is what Dr. Wilde says of "Shoes and Boots":—

"SHOES AND BOOTS, of what may be termed antiquity, present, upon a close examination, several curious artistic details and ingenious devices. When the Irish first learned the art of tanning, is at present unknown; but as this branch of manufacture is of great antiquity in most countries possessing any degree of civilization, it is not likely that we were unacquainted with it during historic times.¹ Most of the specimens in the collection are evidently made of tanned leather, and are also considerably worn; but a few are of untanned hide. As nearly all the antique objects

¹ " See an extract from one of the Brehon Laws relating to the penalties for stripping bark for tanning purposes, given as a specimen

of the Irish language in the fourteenth century in Doctor O'Donovan's 'Irish Grammar,' p. 448."

of skin were discovered in peat-bogs, to the tanning properties of which they were subjected for so many years, it is now difficult to state with precision whether each article was originally tanned or not.

“For the sake of arrangement, these articles of dress may be divided into the single-piece shoe or buskin, and that in which two or more pieces were employed in its fabrication. To understand the antique single-piece shoe, it is well to inquire whether anything approaching thereto is worn in the present day. In the western islands of Aran, the majority of the people wear a sort of moccasin or slipper of untanned hide, which envelops the foot for about an inch and a half all round, and is tightened by means of two pieces of cord, the one lacing up the toe-part, and the other the seam at the heel. The string from the latter passes through loops along the inside, and that in front by the outside, to the instep, round which they are then fastened like a lady’s sandal. These flexible coverings to the sole and edge of the foot formed out of the fresh hide, with the hair externally, after a short time assume a certain degree of firmness, while they adapt themselves to the form of the wearer’s foot. They are admirably suited for climbing the precipices, and progressing upon the great stone fields of these islands, and are, perhaps, the most ancient remnant of the aboriginal Irish dress which has come down to modern times. The name given to these feet-covers by the islanders is *Pampoota*, which is not Irish, nor, as might be expected Spanish, but resembles the German word ‘Pamposheen,’ a galosh or warm shoe-cover. It is, in fact, the *pantoufle*, a low shoe or slipper laced to the foot, analogous to the Latin *solea*, ‘a sandal or slipper covering only the sole of the foot, and fastened with laces.’ There are two pairs of modern pampootas in the collection, one purchased many years ago with the Dawson collection, and which have been placed for exemplification as Nos. 1 and 2 on Tray **D**. The second pair, Nos. 24 and 25, on Tray **F**, were purchased by the Author of this Catalogue from one of the islanders, during the recent ethnological excursion of the British Association to Aran in 1857. They are made of untanned calf-skin, the strings or latches being formed of fishing-line.¹

“Although vegetable material, flax, hemp, or pegs, are now used in the manufacture of boots and shoes of the strongest description, the oldest coverings for the feet which antiquity has brought to light were sewn together, and also laced to the foot with thongs or straps of leather. Sewing with a thong, however, has been in use in the manufacture of the *brog*, or rude unbound shoe of strong cowhide, commonly called ‘kip,’ up to recent years, as for such purposes it was much more durable than the waxed-end of hemp or flax; and, swelling or collapsing according to the state of dryness or moisture of the material it united, it formed a much more durable fastening than either of the latter. Both brogues and pumps,

¹ “Froissart, in his account of Edward III.’s expedition in 1326, tells us that ten thousand pairs of old worn-out shoes, made of undressed leather, with the hair on, were left behind by the Scotch on that midnight-retreat which baffled the English, and termi-

nated the inglorious campaign.’—Planche’s ‘History of British Costume.’ It does not appear that Froissart was ever in Ireland—whatever his Chronicles contain respecting this country, was derived second-hand from Henry Castide, whom he met in France.

the latter made without a welt, and turned after the sole was attached, were usually sewn with a thong.

“In the accompanying illustrations are shown two forms of thong-closed, single-piece shoes. Fig. 181, No. 6, on Tray **D**, is a large shoe of strong, tanned leather, 10 inches long, gathered round the toe in full plaits by means of a flat thong, on the principle of the pampoota; but the fulness of the gathers in front resembles the cloth or velvet round-toed shoe worn in the time of Henry VIII. The back seam is closed by a broad thong, ingeniously fastened, as shown in the accompanying cut. This very ancient shoe was found in a bog near Roscrea, county of Tipperary, and was presented by the Hon. A. Prittie to Dean Dawson, with whose collection it came into the Academy’s Museum. Of the same variety, but smaller, and evidently belonging to a different class of society,

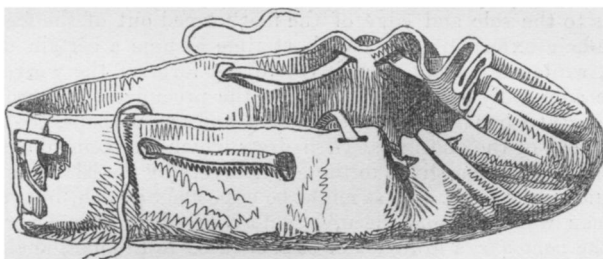


Fig. 181. No. 6.

is the single-piece, thong-laced shoe, No. 23 on Tray **F**, figured below, and found on the foot of a female discovered in a dry bog at Castlewilder, county of Roscommon. It is now $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and was laced with thong in front and behind. The front seam is elegantly plaited, and must originally have come high up on the instep. This specimen is of much thinner material than that employed in any other ancient shoe or buskin in the collection, and it appears to have been bound round the ankle with the leather thongs, which close the seams, after the fashion of the pampoota sandal. It is said that the body from which this curious relic was removed was clothed in a woollen garment, had an abundance of long, black hair on the head, and was decorated with golden ornaments. From the mystery attending this discovery, and the endeavour to conceal the body, the latter statement is not improbable.



Fig. 182. No. 23.

“Still forming the shoe out of a single piece of leather, and without any attached or additional sole-piece, a double step in advance seems to have been made contemporaneously: that of closing the seams by their flat edges instead of overlapping or intermixing them, and also of carving and

decorating the surface of the leather, as shown in the annexed representation drawn from No. 11, on Tray **D**. To effect the former object gut¹ (*ionnathar*) was introduced, and with this substance all the other single-piece shoes in the Collection, except those already shown to have been kept together with thongs, have been sewn. Moreover, this description of shoe was evidently closed upon a last, stitched by what is termed graft-

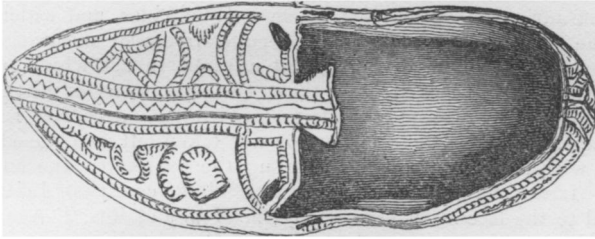


Fig. 183. No. 11.

ing, and then turned. The front seam is now so very close as to form a regular zigzag pattern, produced, no doubt, when the leather was wet, and each side drawn so tightly as to indent the opposite edge. This shoe is pointed in the toe, and has a triangular piece of the sole-portion turned up to form a round heel, which, as well as the quarter, is also decorated with a regular pattern. There are oblong holes cut out of the sides, for attaching sandals to. Nos. 10 and 13 are decorated shoes of this description, although presenting great variety in ornamentation.

“Of the double, or many-piece shoes or buskins, the two following examples will suffice. Figure 184, from No. 22, on Tray **E**, is the upper of a curiously formed and decorated shoe, 10 inches long, of dark, well-

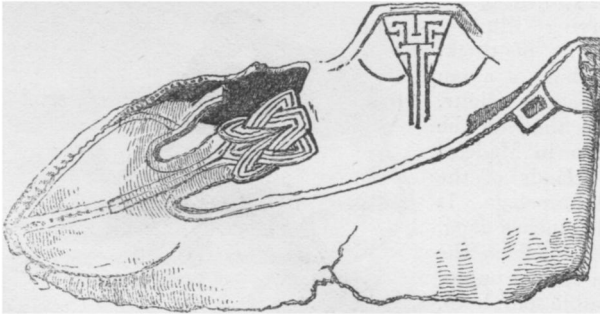


Fig. 184. No. 22.

tanned leather, and differing in shape from any of the foregoing, being cut down as low as possible in front, and rising about 4 inches over the heel. It is formed of one piece, sewn on the inside with gut, and has the longest quarter of any shoe in the Collection. The square apertures at the back

¹ “This has been proved by macerating portions of the sewing of every shoe in the

Museum of the Academy, in which it was employed.”

were intended for laces, and the upper edge of the part above the heel is decorated with an angular form of ornamentation, which is shown to advantage in the separate drawing on the foregoing woodcut. The front of the upper is cut out very low down, but has an ornamented flap $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and an inch wide, decorated with a twisted device, carved out of the substance of the leather. A comparison of this beautiful interlacement (which partakes of the character of that form of ornamentation displayed in some of our early manuscripts, crosses, and shrines, and which may be styled the *Opus Hibernicum*) with the rude, irregular decoration represented by figure 183, shows the great advance in art which had taken place between the periods when these two specimens of leather-work were made. The toe-piece presents a semicircular cut carried round in a heart-shape, where, probably, a portion was taken out, and the edges sewn together with fine gut, so as to turn up the extremity like an oriental slipper. It was found in a bog at Carrigallen, county of Leitrim, and presented to the late Dean Dawson by the Hon. and Rev. J. Agar.

"In No. 13 the toe-piece of the upper is decorated with an open-work pattern, which passes through the leather. In No. 8 we find the transition from the leather-sewing to that effected with gut, with which the hind seam is closed, while the front lacing is accomplished with a thong.

"So far as the means of closure is concerned, a third stage came into fashion, apparently long prior to the use of flax or hemp, and was that in which the seams were closed by woollen threads, of which we have examples in Nos. 16 and 17, on Tray E. Whether shoemakers' wax, or any such adhesive material, was employed in sewing leather with a woollen thread, cannot now be determined.

"Among the many-pieced, gut-sewn coverings for the feet, besides those already described, we possess two strong leather buskins, or half boots (*coisbheirt*), Nos. 19 and 20 on Tray F, the former of which forms the subject of the accompanying illustration. It is of thick, coarse leather, of a tan or dirty-yellow colour, similar to that of the boots worn in Madeira and the islands of the Canary Archipelago. It is now 11 inches long, and was formed on the plan of a turned pump, with a double sole: both, however, together with

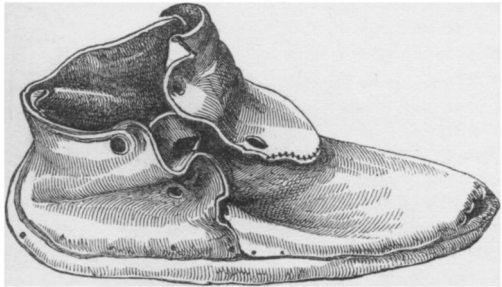


Fig 185. No. 19.

the upper and welt, being included in the same stitch. A long triangular heel-piece, carried up from the sole, is ingeniously inserted between a slit in the upper, as in some of the very rudest single-piece shoes, so as to give a comfortable rotundity to that part. A large flap overlaps the instep, the loops for fastening which still remain, and a stout piece of thong is stretched across the angle between the vamp and upper, to prevent breakage or straining. It was found in 1790 in a bog in the townland of

Belladrihid, parish of Ballisadare, county of Sligo, and—*Presented by the Duke of Northumberland*, who purchased it with the collection made by Mr. R. C. Walker.

“A fourth period in the progress of leather-working dates from the introduction of vegetable material such as flax or hemp, for closing the seams, and consequently, so far as such an artificial arrangement is concerned, brings down the art to the present time. As an exemplification thereof, the accompanying illustrations of a very curious pair of double shoes are presented, drawn from Nos. 24 and 25 on Tray F, and here shown, both in profile (Fig. 187), and upon the sole aspect (Fig. 186). These represent a pair of right and left shoes, very curiously made, and united by a double strap of the common sole, each about 2 inches long, and 1 wide. This sole consists of a single piece, and is attached to the uppers without the intervention of a welt, after the manner of a turned pump. The heel, which is the first instance of such that occurs in the Collection, is composed of several plies of leather, fastened on with pegs. The upper in each shoe is formed out of a single piece of thin leather, grooved, tooled, and embossed like cordovan; the quarters are double, the inside leathers being opened behind, and the only seam in the upper is a delicate grafting with thread along the front of the toe-piece.

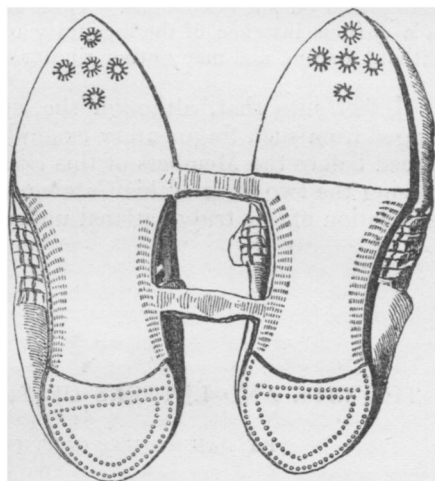


Fig. 186. Nos. 24 and 25.

This continuity of upper is well seen in the right shoe, but there are three seams in the left, apparently from a defect in the leather. In each quarter it slopes from the point above the heel, where it is 3 inches high, to its junction with the front, about the middle of the foot; and the entire border is mitred or pinked. A toe-piece, or ornamented vamp, passes all round the edge of the upper, which it overlaps, and interlaces with the back portion at its free scalloped edge. Not the least curious

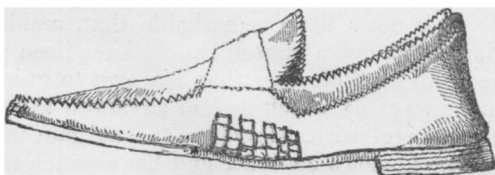


Fig. 187. No. 24.

part of these shoes is the ingenious mode by which the uppers are attached to the soles by a double thong, showing wonderful perfection in the art of stitching. These shoes were probably turned after one half of the soles were attached. Where the fronts and quarters join, at the point where the double back runs into the ornamental over-lapping of the upper, there

is an open-worked or interlaced strapping, about 2 inches long, and 1 broad. They are said to have been found, wrapped in a piece of leather, in the rampart of a fort in the parish of Kill, near Cootehill, county of Cavan, about forty years before they were purchased by the Academy, in 1843. During the interval they remained in the roof of a peasant's cabin, near the place where they were discovered. They are evidently much more modern than any of the foregoing, except the pampootas. Conjecture as to the use of these marvellous specimens of the Crispinian art might suggest the possibility of their having been used as inauguration shoes by the chieftains. Certain stones used at that ceremony in ancient times still exhibit the indentations in which the feet were placed on such occasions. These shoes are worthy of examination as a curious instance of the ingenuity of the maker, like shirts woven without a seam, and many other similar examples of handicraft."

I feel sure that, although the entire work cannot be fairly judged from such fragmentary examples, yet that enough has been placed before the Members of this Society to induce them, by purchasing the two parts of this Catalogue already issued, to aid in the completion of this truly national undertaking.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF FLORENCE MAC CARTHY.

BY DANIEL MAC CARTHY (GLAS), ESQ.

(Continued from page 246, *supra*.)

Florence was now withdrawn from the country which his adversaries had declared he alone had kept in trouble and disaffection. What effect his withdrawal had upon the calm and the loyalty of Carby and Desmond we shall shortly see.

It is not a little remarkable that, amidst so many arrests, the Earl of Clancare himself should have been passed over. Had there been no head cleverer than his own to guide him through the tortuous ways by which he had advanced to this marriage—the seeming quarrel with Florence; the bargain with Browne; the appeal for the Queen's consent, and his absence from Ireland at the time of the marriage,—Donell Mac Carthy Mor would probably have been in the Tower of London, to welcome his son-in-law; but the contingency had been foreseen, and well provided for:—at an opportune moment, five gentlemen stepped forward and deposed that they were themselves witnesses that the Earl had consented to the marriage but "conditionally." So great had been his respect for