

NOTES ON

THE ROUND TOWERS OF THE COUNTY OF KERRY.

BY RICHARD HITCHCOCK.

AT the January meeting of this Society, two very interesting papers, by Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Windele, were read, containing some remarkable observations on the Round Towers of Ireland, particularly the paper by Mr. O'Neill, which also contained a description of the Round Tower of Aghaviller—a tower which, I may passingly observe, has been strangely overlooked by our writers on these monuments.¹ Leaving the more serious question of the real origin and uses of the towers to persons better qualified for the task of discussing it than I can presume to be, I wish to confine myself to what Mr. O'Neill justly terms the “important work of giving a description of every pillar-tower now remaining (which, he says, Dr. Petrie has not yet done), as well as of the localities in which towers are known to have formerly existed.” Having the honour to be admitted a member of the Kilkenny Archæological Society soon after its formation, it has often occurred to me as strange, that the Society did not long since embrace, among its varied archæological subjects, that most fertile one of the Round Towers. I am, however, glad to find that the Society is at length awakened to a sense of the importance of collecting and placing on record descriptions of the various towers now existing in Ireland, or as far back as it can obtain faithful accounts of them. I am assured of this, from the commencement made at the last meeting of the Society, as already referred to.²

The following excellent observations as to the importance of a systematic record of every Round Tower in Ireland occur at the end of a chapter on the Round Towers in a recent work on Ireland:—

“I would also suggest to the antiquaries of Ireland a humbler labour, but one of analogous import, and which might even prove, eventually, more conservative of the fame of these wonders of their country, than all that the hand of architecture could effect. This labour is—to get constructed an exact and minute description of every individual Tower, with careful measurements and accurate plans of the general structure of each, and of every individual part. This would not merely be a most valuable record of the actual condition of the Towers, at a particular epoch, but, by permitting a minute comparison to be instituted between each part of all of them, might even throw some considerable light on the great question of their origin and uses. It is surely discreditable to the spirit of Irish antiquarianism, that no such record as this exists; nay, that no attempt even to frame such a record has been made. As far as I know, Mr. Petrie's

¹ The fullest mention of it which I have seen is that in Tighe's *Statistical Survey of the County of Kilkenny*, p. 632.

² The Committee of the Society have always felt the importance of collecting accurate descriptions of our existing Round Towers (such as that now contributed by

Mr. Hitchcock), and will ever gladly place on record any new *facts* calculated to throw light on these mysterious structures. But the general question of their age and uses is one that demands a much more voluminous treatment than the pages of the Transactions could possibly afford.—Eds.

solitary description and delineation of Clondalkin Tower, is all that has been effected in this way. To undertake and complete a record of the kind proposed, in a spirit and style worthy of the subject, would surely be a labour of glory, and ought to be a labour of love for any Irishman. The author of such a work, when committing it to the immortality of print, might almost be justified in addressing the objects of his antiquarian love, in the language of the poet, when promising to his mistress the deathlessness of his own 'powerful rhyme':—

'When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn,
This living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.'''

It has occurred to me, that a few notes, which I happen to have by me, on the Round Towers of my native county, accompanied by sketches of the two which still remain to us, made about five years ago, may not be unacceptable to the Society. And here I am glad to be able to observe, that the county of Kerry is as rich in its quota of the Round Towers as it is in other primæval remains. Truly, the study of antiquities is a delightful one, and none can relish or love it so well as those who have been for some time engaged in collecting information by local researches.

I am well aware that few of our Round Towers have been oftener described than that of Aghadoe, which, I think, may be attributed to the circumstance of its being situate close to the far-famed Killarney. More or less accurate notices of it will be found in the following works:—Smith's "Antient and Present State of the County of Kerry" (1756); Archdall's "Monasticon Hibernicum" (1786); Vallancey's "Collectanea," vol. vi. (1804); Weld's "Illustrations of the Scenery of Killarney" (1812); "The Traveller's New Guide through Ireland" (1815); Plumptre's "Narrative of a Residence in Ireland during the Summer of 1814, and that of 1815" (London, 1817); Smith's "Killarney, and the Surrounding Scenery" (1822); Bell's "Essay on the Origin and Progress of Gothic Architecture in Ireland" (1829); the "Dublin Penny Journal," vol. iii. (1834-5); Lewis' "Topographical Dictionary of Ireland" (1837); lady Chatterton's "Rambles in the South of Ireland during the year 1838," vol. i. (London, 1839); Hall's "Ireland" (1841); the "Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland" (1844); Windele's "Historical and Descriptive Notices of the City of Cork and its Vicinity" (1848); "Annals of the Four Masters," by O'Donovan (1851); &c., &c. None of these books, however, contain any engraving of the tower; and my sketch (see Kerry Antiquities, plate 1) of, perhaps, one of the most dilapidated Round Towers in Ireland has chiefly induced me to accompany it with the present notes, believing that, if engraved in our Transactions, it may be the means of preserving to after generations the appearance of the Round Tower of Aghadoe in the year 1848. What remains

¹ Forbes' *Memorandums made in Ireland in the Autumn of 1852*, vol. ii. pp. 313-14.

to us of this tower stands at a distance of about sixty feet from the north-west corner of the old church, and in the same cincture with the church. The diameter inside is seven feet, but a great part of the facing of the outside having been taken away for one purpose or another, I did not measure its circumference. The highest part of the tower now standing is about nineteen feet from the present surface of the ground; but, as will be seen from an inspection of the sketch, the greater part of the tower is not so high. The stones of which it is built, as well as the style of masonry, seem different from those found in the adjacent old church, both being much superior. A learned friend has favoured me with the inspection of a sketch of a portion of the tower, made by him in the year 1846, showing the cyclopean structure of the exterior facing, and the rubble work of the interior. My sketch of the tower is on rather too small a scale to exhibit this feature with any effect, but still it shows it a little. It is to be regretted that the interior structure of the tower is the more visible from the fact of a deep *bohereen* (a little road) passing close by it—so close, indeed, that it must have been the means of undermining some of it. The old church, like most of our ancient ecclesiastical edifices, is built almost east and west, and still exhibits abundant proofs of its former architectural beauties, particularly in the doorway.¹ It is composed of different kinds of stone, some of which must have been brought from a distance, as none like them are to be found in the neighbourhood. A little to the south of the church, in a square enclosure, are the ruins of a *round* castle, named the “pulpit,” having a flight of stone stairs in the thickness of the wall, and indications of there having once been an immensely strong floor of wood in the middle height. The whole of these interesting remains are marked on sheet 66 of the Ordnance Survey of the county. When a person lingers, even for a short time, to behold these monuments, particularly the remains of the pillar-tower, the mind is frequently carried away to by-gone times; and then what thoughts crowd upon it! We seem as if elevated above the noise and bustle of the present world, and carried back, step by step, to the patriarchal ages, where we find the origin of all forms of worship. One of the ancient Ogham inscriptions has been found in the immediate vicinity of the Round Tower of Aghadoe, and seems to have very early attracted the attention of antiquaries—see Vallancey’s *Collectanea*, vol. vi. p. 193; and several succeeding writers have also described it. This stone is still carefully preserved, though much mutilated, in lady Headley’s garden, at Aghadoe House, where I had much pleasure in examining and making a sketch of it, in February, 1848. It will, doubtless, be engraved and described by Dr. Graves in his forthcoming work on the Ogham character. It may be worthy of remark, that Ogham inscriptions have been found in connexion

¹ There is a good engraving of this doorway on the title-page of an interesting little work on Killarney, entitled “Lake Lore.” Dublin, Hodges and Smith, 1853.

with no less than *seven* of the Round Towers, viz.—Aghadoe, Aghaviller,¹ Ardmore, Clonmacnoise, Fertagh,² Scattery Island (*Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xli. p. 85), and Tullaherin; and for all I know there may be others.

In order to render my communication on the Round Tower of Aghadoe more complete, I shall now select and bring together such of the notices of the tower, contained in the works above enumerated, as appear to me to bear most on the subject, and to be the most remarkable. Smith merely mentions the existence at Aghadoe of “the stump of one of the round towers” (*Kerry*, p. 147); but in his “Prospect of the Lake of Killarny, taken from the North,” facing p. 122 of his work, he gives an interesting view (not a drawing) of “the ruin’d church,” round tower, and round castle. The tower does not here appear so dilapidated as it is now. It may be worth remarking here, that Smith, whether through mistake or not, represents numerous tombstones at the *north* side of the church. This is remarkable, as that side of a church-yard is not considered a favourite one for interments.—See “Notes and Queries.”³ Weld has written a good deal on the general subject of the Round Towers, but has very little on that of Aghadoe. He says—“the tower of Aghadoe was constructed with hewn stone; but, exposed during the lapse of ages, on the summit of a lofty hill, to the influence of the elements, it has yielded to the shocks of time, and at present is in a very perishable state. Its shattered remains are not more than fifteen feet in height.”—p. 65. In a “map of the Lakes of Killarny,” facing p. 317 of *The Traveller’s New Guide through Ireland*, the Round Tower, the church, and the “pulpit” (round castle), are marked. The Round Tower appears as high as the gable of the church; but in the accuracy of an engraving of so small a size, and of the date (1815), we must not place too much confidence. The tower, however, is not now so high as the gable of the church. Mrs. Plumtre says—“very near the church stands a small fragment of a round-tower, scarcely twenty feet in height, and appearing in such a state of decay that it will probably soon be entirely mouldered away.”—p. 298. Bell has the following short and inaccurate account of the tower:—“This tower is a mere stump or remnant, not exceeding twelve feet in height. The bottom of the door-way is nearly seven feet from the ground, and excepting a part of one side, is the only trace of it left. The portion below the door,

¹ Mr. Hitchcock evidently refers to the Ogham monument at Ballyboodan, which is nearly two miles distant from the Round Tower of Aghaviller.—EDS.

² The inscription found in the vicinity of this tower is that on the silver brooch now in the possession of the Royal Dublin Society. It is described by Dr. Graves in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. iv. pp. 183-4.

³ At the end of an old “Description of Killarney” (1776), which I have lately got from that enterprising collector of books relating to Ireland, Mr. John O’Daly, of Anglesea-street, Dublin, there is a beautiful little plate, containing another view of the remains at Aghadoe. Here, also, the Round Tower seems pretty perfect. The whole, however, seems to be a reduction of Smith’s plate above mentioned.

was either always solid, like that of Clondalkin; or the upper part, in its fall, has filled it with the fragments of the stones, until it has acquired that appearance. It stands within about twelve feet (!) of Aghadoe church."—pp. 93-4. The writer of the article on Aghadoe, in the third volume of the "Dublin Penny Journal," gives a pretty detailed account of the Round Tower there. Amongst other remarks, he says—"the turaghan or round tower, stands fifty-four feet from the north-west angle of the church, and is called 'the pulpit' by the peasantry: all that remains of this ancient structure formed only a part of the basement, not reaching even to where once stood the door. The height is about twelve feet. It measures in its outer circumference fifty-two feet; its diameter within the walls is six feet; and the thickness of the walls three feet and a half. Its masonry is greatly superior to that of the church; the stones are large, regular, and well-dressed. The cut-stone or facing of the north-west side has been all taken away for the erection of tombs in the adjacent burying-ground. Within and without, spoliation has been at work effectually, aided by those worst of pests, the gold seekers; fellows whose unhallowed dreams are most fatal to our antiquities. This tower must have fallen before the last century, but no notice of it in its erect state has survived."—p. 222. Lewis thus mentions the tower:—"Near them are the ruins of an ancient round tower, of which about twenty feet are yet standing."—article "Aghadoe." The "Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland" contains the following:—"The turraghan and the cathedral, at the mutual distance of fifty-four feet, crown the summit, or dot the table-land, of the hill; and are surrounded by a thickly tenanted burying-ground. All that remains of the turraghan—called the Pulpit only by the peasantry—formed but part of the basement, and does not reach even to the aperture of the door. Its height is about twelve feet; its exterior circumference is fifty-two feet; its diameter within the walls is six feet; and its thickness of wall is three and a-half feet. The stones of which it consists are large, regular, and well-dressed, and exhibit a style of masonry quite superior to that of the cathedral; but they have been peeled from the north-west face for transmutation into tomb-stones; and the whole ruin wails beneath the inflictions of 'the gold-seekers,' and other prosaic spoliators of ancient buildings. The tower, to which this melancholy fragment belonged, must have fallen before the commencement of the eighteenth century, but is not noticed, in its unfallen state, in any record."—article "Aghadoe." Mr. Windele gives a very satisfactory account of what remains of the tower:—"The Turaghan, or round tower, stands sixty feet from the N.W. angle of the church, and is called the 'Pulpit,' by the peasantry. All that now remains of this ancient structure is the basement, reaching from the sill of the door downward. The height is about fifteen feet. It measures in its outer circumference fifty-two feet, the diameter, within the walls, is six feet ten inches; the wall is four feet six inches thick, which measurement



Sculptured Stone in the Old Church of Annagh.



Round Tower of Aghadoe.

diminishes on the inside, above the level of the present floor, three inches. Its masonry is greatly superior to that of the church. The stones are large, regular, and well dressed. The greater part of the facing stone of the north side has been unfortunately taken away, for the erection of tombs in the adjacent burying ground. Within and without, the spoliator has been effectually at work, aided by those worst of pests—the gold seekers; fellows whose unhallowed dreams are most fatal to our antiquities. This tower must have fallen previously to the last century; but no notice of it, in its erect state, has survived. It has not hitherto, we believe, been excavated or examined. The labour of doing so, we apprehend would be very considerable, as it is quite filled up with the debris of the fallen part, but the effort, it is hoped, may yet be made.”—p. 382.¹ In this, and two of the three last extracts, I believe the term “pulpit” is incorrectly applied to the Round Tower. In all the old accounts, written before guides were so numerous and dishonest as they now are, we find it given to the round castle; and it is to this building that I myself have heard the name applied. Dr. O’Donovan has the following:—“*Achadh-da-eo*, i. e. the field of the two yews, now Aghadoe, an old church, near which are the remains of a round tower, situated about two miles to the north of Killarney, in the county of Kerry.”—vol. v. (at A.D. 1581), p. 1756, *note c*.

I visited the Round Tower of Rattoo in February, 1848, and made the accompanying sketch (see *Kerry Antiquities*, plate 2) and note of it: the dimensions are as follow—circumference outside, forty-seven feet; height of doorway from ground, seven feet; height of doorway, five feet three inches; breadth at bottom, outside, two feet one inch; inside, two feet and half an inch; breadth at top, where arch turns, outside, one foot eight and a-half inches; inside, one foot eight inches; diameter of tower inside, seven feet four inches; thickness of wall at doorway, three feet nine inches. Round the doorway, outside, is a cornice or ornament, and just over it is also some species of ornament, both, however, invisible from where I took my sketch. Inside are three stories, or sets of stones, all around, projecting, and between each of these stories are one or more single stones, also projecting, as if for assistance in ascending. There are four windows or apertures

¹ Since communicating this paper to the Society, I have learned that my friend Mr. Windele, of Cork, is the author of the paper on Aghadoe in the “*Dublin Penny Journal*” from which my extract is taken, and that the article in the “*Parliamentary Gazetteer*” has been copied from either it or the same reprinted, with corrections, in both editions (1839 and 1848) of Mr. Windele’s “*Notices of Cork and its Vicinity*,” without even mentioning the source from which the article was derived! I trust that the extracts will not suffer from their

introduction into the Society’s Transactions. My use of the three descriptions, almost consecutively and in nearly the same words, may appear to some persons absurd; but a careful perusal of each account will, I think, show that there are a few very important differences: indeed, one of my principal objects in compiling the notes on the Kerry Round Towers is, to endeavour to show how widely some of the published accounts of them differ, and the necessity which exists for a minute and *accurate* description of all our Round Towers.

at the top of the tower, facing the cardinal points, one of which and a smaller one under it appear in my sketch. The tower stands on a sort of platform of masonry, and in the building of the tower lime mortar is visible. The doorway, I think, faces the east. This tower is, indeed, a stately looking monument, and, with its mantle of ivy, is calculated to strike the beholder with a sort of awe, which he cannot soon forget. The tower does not now stand in the same enclosure with the adjacent old church, the ruins of which, a little to the south-west of the tower, are enclosed by a high wall, built, as I was informed, by Mr. Gun, the proprietor. The enclosing of the church ruins with a wall is certainly a very praiseworthy act on the part of Mr. Gun; but we cannot but regret that he did not also include within the enclosure the noble Round Tower, and so help to preserve it from any wanton injury it may receive. The sketch shows that some of the stones from the part a little below the doorway have been already taken out, probably to make steps for ascending! I say "taken," because I do not think they could have fallen out. Let us hope for a more careful conservation of this, I may say, the only remaining Round Tower of Kerry. The church is built east and west, and is apparently an ancient one. A little farther to the east by north are the ruins of an abbey, also built east and west. All these interesting remains are marked on sheet 9 of the Ordnance Survey of the county. One of my earliest recollections, and one which I can never blot from my memory, is that of my dear father helping me, when a child, to climb up to the doorway of the Round Tower of Rattoo, our sitting on a bench or seat then inside, my looking up to the top of the interior, and his again helping me down from the doorway. It is curious, how long and tenaciously the recollections of one's childhood scenes cling to them, and with what fondness they ever after think on them.

As this tower and the fallen one of Ardfert have not been so frequently and fully described as that of Aghadoe, I trust that the following notices of them, by different writers, will not be out of place here. Smith, in his *Antient and Present State of the County of Kerry*, p. 214 (1756), the author of a *Tour through Ireland*, p. 288 (12mo. Lond. 1780), Archdall, in his *Monasticon Hibernicum*, p. 306 (1786), and Seward, in his *Topographia Hibernica*, article "Rattoo" (1795), mention this tower as standing in the church-yard in their day, so that the shutting out of it by the wall before-mentioned must have been of recent date. Lewis, in his "Topographical Dictionary of Ireland," thus mentions the Round Tower:—"There are no remains of the castle, but those of the abbey still exist, and, together with the adjoining lofty round tower, which is still entire and clothed with ivy, form an interesting and picturesque group."—article "Rattoo." The "Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland" states, that "the pillar-tower is now partly dilapidated,"—article "Rattoo;" but this is truer of many other towers in Ireland, the tower of Rattoo being almost quite perfect, having lost only a little of its conical cap. Dr. Petrie, in his

splendid work on the "Ecclesiastical Architecture and Round Towers of Ireland" (1845), gives a pretty detailed description of this tower, from which I extract the following:—"The Tower of Rattoo, which, like that of Clondalkin, is still perfect, is remarkable for being placed on a terrace or platform connected with a causeway, which extends in a line opposite its doorway, as shown in the ground-plan on next page. The Tower is formed of roughly-squared, hammered sandstone, the entrance doorway alone being chiselled. It measures forty-seven feet nine inches in circumference at its base, and ninety-two feet in height, the wall being three feet ten inches in thickness at the doorway. The doorway is semicircular-headed, the arch being formed of three stones, and it is ornamented with a flat band, nine inches in breadth. It is five feet four inches in height, one foot eight inches in width below the arch, and two feet one inch at the sill. The Tower is divided into six stories, that at the top containing, as usual, four large apertures facing the cardinal points. These apertures have sloping jambs, and are, externally, angular-headed, but are quadrangular internally. The intermediate stories between the uppermost and the second, or doorway story, are each lighted by a single aperture; but, in consequence of the Tower being enveloped in ivy, their exact situations cannot be determined, with the exception of one in the fifth story, lately exposed by a storm, and which is angular-headed, and faces the east. The lowest story is filled up to the level of the doorway. It will be perceived from the section above given, that between the floors of each of the stories, rough corbel stones project from the wall about the middle of its height; and this is not an uncommon feature in the interior of the Towers, such corbel stones, in one example—that of the Tower of Ardmore, in the County of Waterford—being sculptured with animal and human heads, and other ornaments. My late ingenious friend, Mr. William Morrison, suggested to me that these corbels might possibly be for the purpose of fixing ladders to join the stories, as shown in the annexed outline; but a more probable conjecture, to my mind, is, that they were intended as supports for shelves, on which to place the precious things deposited in the Towers."—pp. 395-6. To those who would take the trouble, it may be curious to note the difference between Dr. Petrie's measurements of this tower and mine; but of course his must be the most correct. Mr. Wilkinson, in his work on the Practical Geology and Ancient Architecture of Ireland (1845), has the following tabular remarks on this tower, which he erroneously sets down as in the county of "Clare"!—"Usual height,—conical top nearly perfect,—four large openings at top,—angle-headed outside,—square-headed inside,—door circular-headed, usual size, and usual height above surface of ground." *Construction*—"hard quartzose sand-stone,—cut stone band round the door, 9 inches wide and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch projection."—p. 78. Mr. Wilkinson has some good general remarks on the Round Towers.

The Round Tower of Ardfert no longer exists, having fallen towards the end of the last century; but I trust that the few notices of it in its erect state, and since it has fallen, which I have been able to collect, will not be wholly unworthy the attention of the Society. Smith gives the following account of the tower:—"Opposite to the W. end of the cathedral *stands* one of the antient round towers, near an hundred feet high, built mostly of a dark kind of marble; which is the first I have met with, that was not composed of freestone. The door of this tower faces the W. entrance of the cathedral, that the penitents who were formerly inclosed therein, might receive the pardon, and prayers of the congregation, as they went in and out of the church."—*Antient and Present State of the County of Kerry*, p. 203. To show that the towers were built for places of penance, Smith then refers to his works on Cork and Waterford. The Round Towers of Ardfert and Rattoo are thus noticed by Mr. Peter Collinson in the first volume of the "Archæologia" (1770):—"In the County of Kerry, still remain two ancient ecclesiastical round Towers; one opposite the West end of the cathedral [of Ardfert], near an hundred feet high, built mostly of a dark kind of marble; the door faces the West entrance of the church. Another round Tower is now standing near the ruins of the cathedral at Rattoo."—p. 306. O'Halloran, in his "General History of Ireland, from the Earliest Accounts to the close of the Twelfth Century" (1778), has left us the following notice of the tower:—"St. Brenden, of the house of Ir, and the patron saint of the O'Connors Kerry, erected at Hi-Ferte, or the Territory of Miracles, commonly called Ardfert, or Ardart, a see. His successors were sometimes called bishops of Kerry. The remains of churches, abbies, and religious houses, with inscriptions, remarkable tombs, &c. at this day sufficiently proclaim its ancient magnificence. An anchorite tower of 120 feet high, the finest in Ireland, and standing near the cathedral, fell down in the year 1771; and as, in all human probability, it fell never to rise again! I leave this memorial of it: of this noble city, the ancient capital of Kerry, no other monuments but the above remain, except its being the seat of the earls of Glendord, an ancient family of this county."—vol. ii. p. 94. The author of a "Tour through Ireland" (1780) says—"opposite to the west end of the cathedral, are the ruins of one of the antient round towers; it was 120 feet high, a *great part* of which fell down in 1771. It was built mostly of a dark kind of marble, and therefore the more remarkable, as they are more generally of freestone."—p. 286. From this it would appear that only a part of the tower fell in 1771. Archdall, in his "Monasticon Hibernicum," says—"adjoining was a round tower 120 feet in height, and esteemed the finest in Ireland; but *being neglected*, it unfortunately fell to the ground in the year 1771."—p. 300. In Gough's "Camden's Britannia" (1789) we find the following:—"Opposite the west end [of the cathedral] stood one of the antient round towers, about whose use antiquaries are so divided.

It was 120 feet high, built mostly of a dark marble: the door faced the west door of the church. It was esteemed the finest in Ireland, but *being neglected* fell to the ground 1771. Mr. Smith imagines this tower was intended for lodging penitents. It is much more probable that it answered the purpose of a Turkish minaret before bells were introduced, or perhaps of a watch-tower."—vol. iii. p. 492. From these two extracts it appears that the tower had been "neglected"—a matter to be the more regretted, as almost all agree that it was the finest in Ireland. Dr. Beaufort, in his "Memoir of a Map of Ireland" (1792), says—"the round tower, which had stood there [Ardfert] for ages, fell a few years ago, tumbling at *one crash* into a heap of ruins."—p. 92. Here it seems that the tower fell all at once. At p. 141 he states that the tower fell in 1770. Seward, in his "Topographia Hibernica," says—"opposite the end of the church are the ruins of one of the antient round towers, it was 120 feet high; *a great part* of which fell down in 1770."—article "Ardfert." O'Halloran, in his "Introduction to and an History of Ireland," published in 1803, a quarter of a century after the date of his work before quoted, writes—"near this fine church [Ardfert] was a lofty anchorite tower, which *partly fell* to the ground some years since; but from the known taste of Lord Brandon, it can hardly be supposed that he will suffer so fine a piece of antiquity, and such an ornament to his improvements, to be lost, especially as all the materials lie on the spot."—vol. i. p. 85. Here, as well as in the anonymous Tour, and Seward, before quoted, we see that *only a part* of the tower fell in 1770, or 1771, for these two dates are given; but, alas! for the credit of my county, O'Halloran's sanguine expectation from Lord Brandon has never been fulfilled, and even "all the materials" do not now lie on the spot! Sir Richard Colt Hoare, in his "Journal of a Tour in Ireland, A.D. 1806" (Lond. 1807), observes:—"But this venerable pile of monastic buildings [Ardfert cathedral] has lost much of its grandeur as well as interest, by the fall of a stately round tower [in the year 1771] of 120 feet in height, which stood near the west front of the Cathedral."—p. 63. Lewis, in his "Topographical Dictionary of Ireland," published in 1837, says—"an ancient round tower, which formerly stood near the cathedral, fell about 60 years since."—article "Ardfert." If Lewis reckons from the date of his publication, this would make the fall of the tower to have taken place in or about the year 1777. In the "Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland" we find—"near the west front of the cathedral stood a *slated* round tower, 120 feet high; but this fine adjunct of the edifice's grandeur and interest, and noble specimen of the unique class of antiquities to which it belonged, fell in 1771."—article "Ardfert." This extract is curious, as mentioning that the tower was *slated*. In an interesting article on the then apparently forthcoming, and indeed much wanted, new edition of Smith's "History of Kerry," which appeared in the *Tralee Chronicle* of May 4, 1844, the Round Tower of Ardfert is

said to have been as much as *thirty* feet higher than any of the measurements above given!—"At Ardfert, anciently the capital of West Munster, there had been one [Round Tower], which is supposed to have been the loftiest in Ireland. In the time of the late Sir Maurice Crosbie, it was found, by Dr. Pococke, to measure 150 feet in height!"¹ These widely differing accounts of this single tower, particularly of its height (100, 120, and 150 feet), show us, I think, how important it is to have, in the first instance, *correct* descriptions of all our Round Towers. One writer copies from another, and so error is often propagated. The "site" of the Round Tower of Ardfert is fortunately marked on sheet 20 of the Ordnance Survey of the county, a little to the *west* of the "cathedral," which is not built *quite* east and west, as most usual. In the same enclosure, or immediate vicinity, we find "Templenaheo" and "Templena-griffin," and farther to the north-east, in the demesne, are the splendid ruins of Ardfert abbey.

It affords me much pleasure to have to state here, that active steps are now being taken for the restoration of the cathedral of St. Brendan, Ardfert, adjacent to which, as we have seen, one of the finest Round Towers in Ireland so lately stood; and were the men who have associated themselves for this laudable purpose in existence before the tower fell, I have no doubt we should not now have to deplore its loss.²

According to the map of Ireland published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, in 1845, which I believe contains the best published list of the Round Towers of Ireland, Kerry had

¹ I have been unable to find out from whence this statement of Dr. Pococke is derived. As he was bishop of Ossory, I thought that either of the Honorary Secretaries of the Kilkenny Archæological Society could help me; but upon the Rev. James Graves informing me that he was unable to supply the required information, I addressed the following letter to the editor of the *Tralee Chronicle*, which, with his obliging reply, appeared in his paper of March 4, 1853:—

"Trinity College, Dublin, Feb. 25, 1853.

"SIR—You will much oblige, if you can inform me from whence the statement of Dr. Pococke, bishop of Ossory, as to the height of Ardfert Round Tower, which appeared in the *Tralee Chronicle* of May 4, 1844, has been derived. I cannot find it in any of his works in the College Library.

"I am, Sir,

"Your very obedient servant,

"R. НИТЯНСКОК.

"[We regret that we are not at present

in a position to give the information required by our respected correspondent, who has devoted so much of his attention to our archæological records. The article to which he refers was, if our memory serve us right, from the pen of our old and lamented friend, the late John T. O'Flaherty, whose papers, we regret to say, have either been scattered to the winds, or remain in the hands of parties who think they will enhance the value of the manuscripts by hiding them under a bushel. Probably, the library at Ardfert abbey contains some records giving at once the height of the Round Tower and the reference to Dr. Pococke.]"

² Time works changes! Whilst preparing these notes for the Transactions, I have learned that the praiseworthy design set on foot for the restoration of the cathedral has been abandoned! We yet want in Kerry a spirit similar to that which has originated and executed the noble design for the judicious repairs and preservation of the fine old ruins of Jerpoint abbey, in the county of Kilkenny.

formerly no less than *four* of these monuments—viz. Aghadoe, Ardfert, one on an island in Lough Currane, and Rattoo. The tower of Aghadoe is marked “*s*, only the stump;” Ardfert, “*f*, foundations only;” Currane, “*i*, imperfect;” and Rattoo has nothing after it. I can find no account of the Lough Currane Round Tower in any other work, nor have I noticed any remains of it on any of the islands in that lake when on some of them myself, in April, 1848. It was probably one of the “Round Towers of other days,” which can only be seen “in the wave beneath us shining.” Lewis, in his “Topographical Dictionary of Ireland,” article “Kerry,” in enumerating the Round Towers of the county, mentions only three there. His words are:—“It [Kerry] had formerly three of the ancient round towers, of which the one that stood near the cathedral of Ardfert fell in 1771; of another, at Aghadoe, there are about 20 feet remaining; and the third is still standing nearly entire at Rattoo.” The accuracy of the list published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge is questioned in Hall’s *Ireland*, vol. iii. p. 191, where it is said that it is “exceedingly incorrect,” and where a “revised” list of the “existing Round Towers” is then given, in which only *three* in Kerry are mentioned, viz. Aghadoe, Ardfert, and Rattoo. The “Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland,” however, seems to make further mention of a Celtic or pillar-tower on one of the islands in Lough Currane:—“Several islets variegate the bosom of Lough Currane; and on the largest of these, called Church Island, are some ecclesiastical ruins and the remains of what is termed a Celtic tower.”—article “Currane.” “One pillar-tower occurs at Rattoo; another in an island of Lough Currane; part of another at Aghadoe; and the site of a fourth in the neighbourhood of the cathedral of Ardfert.”—article “Kerry” (*Antiquities*).

With the exception of the list published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, above mentioned, I know of no one good list of our Round Towers. True, indeed, Ledwich, in *Vallancey’s Collectanea*, vol. ii. pp. 141-2 (1786)—Dr. Beaufort, in his *Memoir of a Map of Ireland*, pp. 138-141 (1792)—the *Anthologia Hibernica*, vol. i. pp. 90-91 (1793)—Ledwich, in his *Antiquities of Ireland*, pp. 167-8 (1804)—Hoare, in his *Journal of a Tour in Ireland*, pp. 288-292 (1807)—Bell, in his *Essay on Gothic Architecture in Ireland*, pp. 77-98 (1829)—Hall’s *Ireland*, vol. iii. p. 191 (1843)—and Wilkinson, in his *Practical Geology and Ancient Architecture of Ireland*, pp. 69-81 (1845)—give lists of the Towers; but they are anything but complete or accurate. For instance, Hoare does not mention one at all of the Kerry towers in his list, and Wilkinson sets down Rattoo as in the county of Clare, &c. ! Some few years ago, I amused myself in compiling a list of all the Round Towers of Ireland, either existing or known to have formerly existed (which, according to the list of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, number no less than 118), adding a note of any remarkable feature belonging to

the respective towers. On submitting this list, in its rough state, to the inspection of my friend Mr. Windele, he was so good as to render it more valuable, by making some corrections and adding several interesting notes. I afterwards sent the list to Dr. Petrie, for the same purpose, but have never since got it back from him, he having, unfortunately, mislaid it. I hope, however, that he may yet be able to lay his hand on the list, and return it to me.

It only remains for me to apologize for the length to which these notes have extended, and to state that I have been compelled to throw them together in a very short time, and in the midst of other labours. This will, I trust, help to account for any errors they may contain, and it may also elicit correction, which I earnestly invite, from some of our Kerry members, many of whose names appear on the Society's list of members. At all events, if my communication, dry and uninteresting as I am sure it is, shall tend to keep the importance of collecting and recording *accurate* descriptions of the Round Towers of Ireland before the Kilkenny Archæological Association, and if it shall, in any degree, however small, help to produce other and better written papers on the same subject, the chief end which I have had in view in compiling the present "notes" shall have been attained.

ON CERTAIN OBSOLETE MODES OF INFLECTING PUNISHMENT,

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF
THE ANCIENT COURT TO WHICH THEY BELONGED.

BY MARK S. O'SHAUGHNESSY, ESQ.

IN a communication made some time ago to the Society, by one of the Honorary Secretaries, respecting the "Ancient Corporation By-Laws of Kilkenny,"¹ mention was made of resort being had, for the punishment of certain offences, to an engine therein termed the "tumbrell," and also the "swingling stool" and "cucking stool."

¹ *Transactions*, vol. i. p. 47. A comparison of the ancient Kilkenny corporation regulations with some of those old Scottish laws, to be found in Skene's collection, would repay the curious reader. Take, for example, "regulationes de panibus et piscibus vendendis—de regratariis (hucksters)—de brasiatore, carnificibus et pistoriibus, &c.," among the *Leges et Consuetudines Burgorum*, editæ per D. David Regem Scotiæ ejus nominis primum apud Novum

Castrum super Tynam. In the *Statuta Gildæ* also, many similar regulations appear. The *Iter Camerarii* also contains regulations about fishermen, hucksters, cobblers, forestallers, &c., as do the *Statuta David II.* and the *Stat. Rob. III.* In the *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales*, published under the direction of the Record Commission, the prices of cows, horses, and many other saleable commodities, are regulated.