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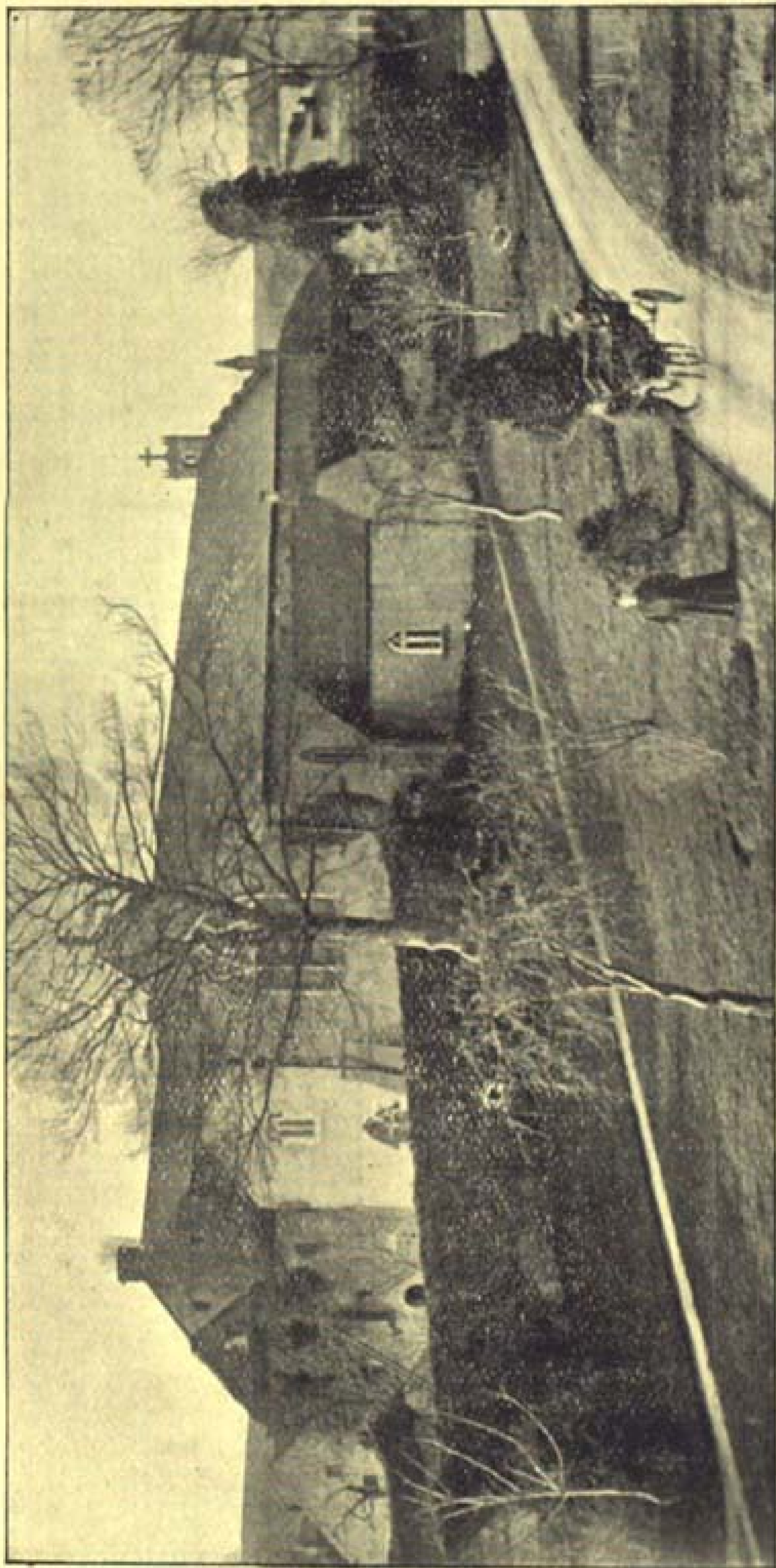
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THE ABBEY AND OLD MONASTERY.

FETHARD:

ITS ABBEY, ETC.

“It would be easy to know from the books which the Saints wrote, and the songs of praise which they composed in Gaedhlic, that they themselves, and their Churches, were the centres of the true knowledge and the archives and homes of the manuscripts of the authors of Erinn, in the olden times.

“Sad evil! short was the time until dispersion and decay overtook the Churches of the Saints, their relics and their books; for there is not to be found of them now, but a small remnant, that has not been carried away into distant countries and foreign nations; carried away so that their fate is not known from that time hither.”

From MICHAEL O'CLERY'S, O.S.F., *Preface to the*
“BOOK OF INVASIONS.”

PERMISSU SUPERIORUM.

BY

REV. J. A. KNOWLES, O.S.A.,

THE ABBEY, FETHARD, CO. TIPPERARY.

Dublin:

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DEDICATION.



To

HIS GRACE THE MOST REV. DR. FENNELLY,

ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL AND EMLY,

WORTHY SUCCESSOR OF

AILBE, CORMAC, HURLEY, AND CROKE,

Illustrious names that illumine the historic page of these ancient Sees,

This Little Work

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

The Author humbly prays that the Pastorate of His Grace, which, on its threshold, gives such bright promise of a glorious and successful future, may be blessed with length of days and productive of untold temporal and eternal benefits to his dutiful and loving spiritual children.



LETTER

FROM

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL.



The Palace, Thurles,

April 22nd, 1903.

MY DEAR FR. KNOWLES,

I have read the proof sheets of your "HISTORY OF FETHARD" with great interest and with much pleasure, and I have to thank you most sincerely for connecting my humble name with your interesting volume.

Every Tipperary man, and particularly every Fethard man, the world over, will read with pride and profit the secular and ecclesiastical history of the ancient town and parish of Fethard ; and, though its civic and ecclesiastical

status has been obscured by oppression and spoliation, let us hope that your graphic recital of those wrongs will stimulate her present day children to co-operate, by every legitimate means, in reviving, and, to some extent, in rivalling, the glories of the past.

As an earnest of my desire that the good work you have done for Fethard should be done for every historic centre in Tipperary, I ask you to send me twenty copies of your book, for which, please, find herewith an adequate enclosure.

With best wishes,

I am,

My dear Father Knowles,

Very faithfully yours,

✠ THOMAS FENNELLY,

ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL.



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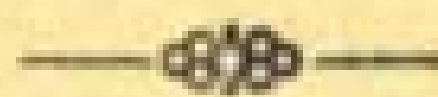
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INTRODUCTION.



THE ruined Churches and Monasteries of Ireland have ever been objects of loving veneration and tenderest care to her warm-hearted and deeply religious children. They are, to them, so many golden links with her glorious past, when she was, in all truth, the Island of Saints and Scholars. Clad in their warm mantles of ever-green ivy, they give living testimony to the strong, ardent, and practical faith that has, ever and always, brightly burned within the Sanctuary of Ireland's great Catholic heart. They proudly stand as unconquerable victors of the hundred and one battle-fields of the Faith, on every one of which she triumphantly carried off the palm

of victory from her innumerable enemies who vainly tried, by fire and sword, to wrest from her strong grasp, her priceless heritage of Catholic belief. The triple crown of victory, adorned, securely and deservedly, her fair brow; confusion and defeat were the bitter portions of those who had the hardihood to cross swords with her in the sacred cause of Faith and Fatherland.

In those days, when the sword is sheathed, and the peaceful and undisturbed practice of our Holy Religion is the happy lot of her children, magnificent Cathedrals, beautiful Churches, and Monasteries of noble architectural design, are thickly studded over the face of our own Green Isle.

We proudly point to them as evidences of the depth of faith and munificent generosity of a people thoroughly Catholic to the heart's

core. They afford practical proof, if such were wanting, that the descendants of those noble heroes of the past, who so valiantly and strenuously held aloft in days of peril and persecution the banner of the Faith, left behind them children, worthy successors of their unconquered and unconquerable Catholic forefathers.

Much though we value and prize these treasures of our Faith, the creation of our own peaceful century, we have still a warm corner in our hearts for those ivy-covered gables, roofless churches, and crumbling monastic walls, in which the valiant men and women of old piously gathered for worship, and in which the cowled brethren of the Monastic Orders sang their *Matin* song. What sweet and hallowed memories crowd in upon us, as we look upon those storied relics of a past, that is written in letters of blood

on the dark and sorrowful pages of Ireland's history!

They are, truly, a compendium of the history of the Catholic Faith, and its almost miraculous preservation in Ireland. Standing within those ruins, in fancy we can see the throngs of reverent and attentive congregations listening to the burning words, in their own expressive Gaelic tongue, of some Irish Bossuet or Massilon. Those old cloisters again echo to the footfall of the monks of old, whose piety and learning attracted the noble youth of their own and far-off lands to those Sanctuaries of religious fervour and highest culture.

The preservation from destruction and decay of those dismantled Churches and Monasteries is a work dear to every Irish heart. The hope is fervently expressed, on all sides, that an era of restoration may soon take place. It would

fill the sorrow-laden Catholic heart of Ireland with joy unspeakable, were those time-worn walls of her Churches once more to vibrate to the tuneful peals of the organ and the grateful *Te Deums* of overflowing congregations. What a glory and lawful pride would be hers, if her eyes, undimmed by tears, could, once again, see those fast-decaying monastic institutions filled with noble bands of followers of the learned and pious monks that once threw the halo of their saintly lives and far-reaching and exalted learning around them. Their work has not been uprooted, but merely interrupted, by the savage persecutions and exterminating tactics of her godless enemies.

Some little has been done to realize the fervent wishes of Irish Catholics in Ireland and beyond the seas. A few Churches have been restored to something of their pristine splendour;

and some of the Monasteries have come into possession of their rightful owners. In recent years, it will be of interest to learn such a work of restoration has been brought to a successful completion in the town of Fethard, in the County of Tipperary.

In these pages will be found a history, brief and crude perhaps, we confess, of what has been done, in a small way, to rescue from utter destruction the Abbey that forms a centre of attraction in that interesting town. May we express the hope that our narrative of the good work done here, may serve as an incentive to others, more capable of doing something in the way of restoration, on a larger and more magnificent scale, for those stately ecclesiastical ruins of Ireland, that once were justly the crown and glory of a race that generously helped to erect them to the honour and glory of Him, of Whom

they have ever been the favoured children. If these pages, happily, attain, even in a small measure, the object for which they were written, our labours will have met, indeed, with a reward "exceeding great."

FETHARD:

ITS ABBEY, ETC.



CHAPTER I.

FETHARD.

THE town of Fethard is pleasantly situated in the centre of a rich agricultural district, in the South Riding of "Gallant Tipperary." Fethard is the anglicised form of the Irish *Fidh-ard* or *Fiodh-ard*, which means the "High Wood." It owes its name to the "Oaken Grove" or wood, once the property of the Everard Family. The modern name of the hill and townland is "Grove." It has a population of about 1,600 inhabitants, and depends for its prosperity on the industrious farming com-

munity, that form the bone and sinew of the Premier County. Its markets are frequented by buyers from all parts of the kingdom, who feel sure of finding here stock of the highest class, to suit the markets of the British Isles. It can be easily reached by those on business or pleasure bent, as it is only about 14 miles from Thurles, and 7 miles from Clonmel, by the branch line that forms the connecting link between the Waterford and Limerick, and the main line of the Great Southern and Western Railway.

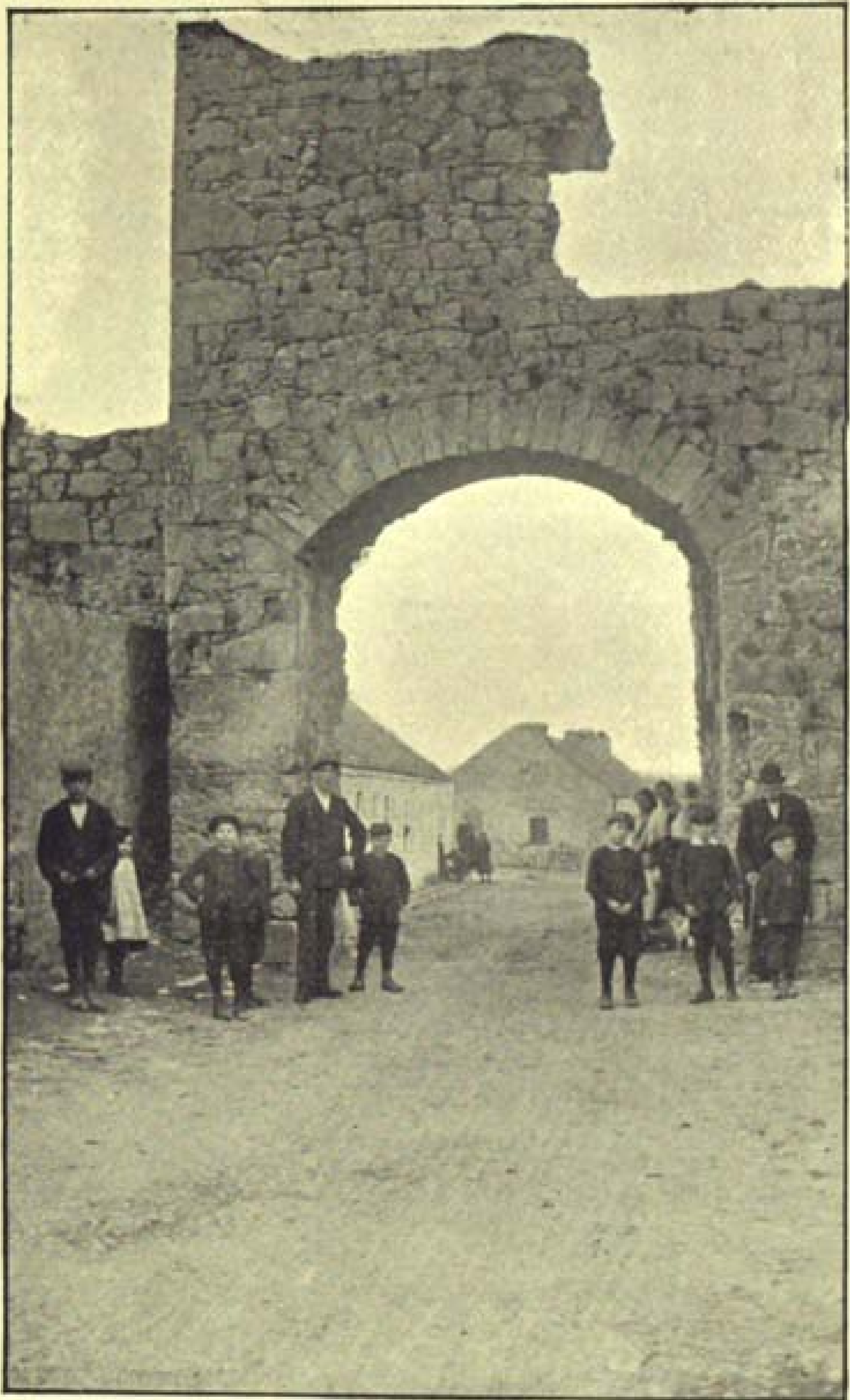
Like most towns in Ireland of its size, owing to many obvious reasons, it is not blessed with any of those industries that are to be found even in smaller towns in more favoured England and Scotland. Most of our Irish towns are forced to lead a hand-to-mouth existence, though nature has endowed them with re-

sources which, if developed, would raise them to an independent and opulent position. They must bide their time, until a more kind and generous hand is extended to them than that which, at present, gives them but a sorry pittance.

It may astonish some of our readers to learn that Fethard can boast of being one of the few towns of its kind that has a very good installation of the Electric Light. There are a few buildings worthy of note. The Military Barracks is a spacious and solidly built establishment. The Munster and Leinster Bank is a very handsome structure. The old Tholsel, now used as a Court-House, and, at times, for more congenial purposes as an entertainment hall, attracts the attention of the seeker after the faded glories of our Native Land.

The Protestant Church is a very interesting and historic structure. It was built, long centuries back, by Catholic hands for the Canons Regular of St. Augustine; and dedicated to the Most Holy Trinity. The Church was almost of cathedral proportions, and of very beautiful design. The portion, now used by its present owners, gives a good idea of what the sacred building must have been, in point of architectural beauty, when in its complete and original state of preservation. It was the parochial church, wherein, faithfully and lovingly, the members of the illustrious order, so rich in foundations in Ireland, ministered to a fervent and grateful Catholic people. The massive tower, surmounting the present edifice, contains four large bells which, in Catholic days, had sweetly summoned the congregation to the celebration of the Divine Mysteries. Many





OLD GATE—TOWER ENTRANCE TO TOWN.

efforts were made to obtain them for larger and more important churches of the Protestant Faith, but fortunately to no purpose. They are perfect in tone, and unsurpassed, with one celebrated exception, for their mellow softness and sweetness, in the length and breadth of Ireland. Some very interesting monuments are to be found in the Church and the burial ground adjoining it. No visitor to Fethard should leave the town without paying a visit to this most interesting memorial of the good old Catholic days.

The Parish Church is a commodious building, but has no pretensions to architectural beauty ; it is very tastefully decorated and fully furnished in the most modern fashion within. It affords ample and comfortable accommodation for the immense congregations that assemble for Divine Service inside its sacred walls. The

high altar is a very handsome and beautiful piece of Irish workmanship. It is composed of many and varied kinds of marble, tastefully and artistically arranged. Great credit is due to the Dublin firm, whose handiwork it is. The panel is very finely carved, and proves that Irish hands have not lost their cunning in the use of the sculptor's chisel and mallet. Taken as a specimen of Irish art, and as an imposing and massive work of its kind, it would adorn any of our great cathedrals and add to the beauty of their ecclesiastical furnishing. Through the medium of the Very Rev. Dean Kinane, P.P. of Cashel, and for many years the beloved and revered Pastor of Fethard, this gift was made to the Parish Church by Mrs. Coyne, a native of the town, and a generous benefactress to the parochial charities.

Through the energy and zeal of the present

Pastor, the Venerable Archdeacon Jones, the Church has been made a sanctuary well worthy of the sacred purposes to which it is devoted. It is his pious desire to still further improve his church, and thus make it not the least of the many beautiful parochial churches in the great Archdiocese of Cashel. He has furnished it with a splendid installation of the electric light, which is much appreciated by those attending the Services there. He has certainly done a good work for the parish that has the honour of having his zealous and energetic labours at its disposal.

The Convent of the Presentation Sisters is certainly a gem of its kind, and reflects great credit on the artistic taste of those who were instrumental in building it, for the good nuns who labour in the fine schools hard by. For fifteen years these devoted daughters of the

Presentation Order had been living in very unsuitable and restricted accommodation. They have found the reward of these long and trying years, so patiently and uncomplainingly borne, in the beautiful, thoroughly modern, and convenient building they now inhabit. It is one of Fethard's many beautiful architectural triumphs. The schools to which their zealous labours are devoted, are excellently built and ventilated, and afford ample accommodation for the large numbers of children who have the happiness of receiving a pious and practical training at the hands of the good Sisters. The Brothers of St. Patrick take charge, in their usual efficient manner, of the rising generation of the male branch in their schools on the Rocklow Road, just outside the town. The people of Fethard are to be envied in having their children so well looked after, in their religious and secular

training, by the Presentation Sisters and the Patrician Brothers, both Orders deservedly popular in Ireland and elsewhere for their zeal in the education and moral training of Catholic youth. The revival of the sweet, melodious language of the Gael has found enthusiastic and warm supporters in the good Sisters and Brothers. Irish classes find a foremost place on their educational programmes, and Irish songs delight the heart of the visitors who have the privilege of visiting their schools. The Brothers have been wonderfully successful in the large percentage gained by them at the Gaelic examinations, which have been held in their thoroughly efficient schools. Both Orders have gained unstinted praise from the examiners for the high level to which, in a short time, they have brought their classes in the good old tongue of the Gael.

The principal street is very long and wide, and contains a number of well stocked shops, which evidently do a steady and thriving business, if we may judge from the comfortable appearance of their proprietors and families, and their generous response to the charitable appeals made to them for national and religious purposes. The principal hotels are excellently managed, and, on the score of cleanliness, comfort, and cuisine, visitors have no cause for complaint.

During the hunting season of the famous Tipperary hounds, of which Fethard is the home, the hotels cater in almost metropolitan style for the followers of the pack of Mr. Richard Burke, an ardent and enthusiastic sportsman and best type of Irish gentleman. Lovers of the sport of kings come here from Cross-channel and the Continent to enjoy a



MEET OF THE "FAMOUS TIPS." MAIN STREET, FETHARD.

day's outing across the lovely country and stiff fences after wily reynard, who finds a shelter and retreat in the woods and groves that contribute so largely to the scenic beauty of this part of the county of Tipperary. One need only look at the healthy appearance of the *inhabitants* to conclude that the invigorating and life-giving breezes, that sweep down from Slieve-na-mon, do not blow in vain, but scatter their health-gifts plentifully, as they come and go.

It is, however, to the days that are gone that Fethard points with joy and pride. Few towns, if any, in this country can boast of such interesting, almost fascinating, records of the past. Many more important centres of population would feel elated to be able to recount the glories that once were the inheritance of this town, now unhappily bereft of most of them.

An immense wall of great thickness was

built round the town, at a very early period, for purposes of fortification. Five gateways or tower gates gave entrance into the town. The remains of one of these may still be seen. This wall must have cost an enormous sum of money. The permission to build this wall proves what an important and valuable possession our English masters considered Fethard to be from a commercial and strategic standpoint.

The first charter was given to the town by Edward I.; and it was during his reign that permission was given the town authorities to begin and complete the work of fortifying their town. Part of the walls still remain; and certainly they were built in a very substantial and costly manner. It would be interesting to learn what amount of time was taken in completing this gigantic undertaking, and what sum of money came from the town revenues to defray the

heavy expenses incurred in making Fethard a fortified town.

The next charter dates back to the year 1553, in the reign of Edward VI., by whom it was granted. It confers on the Burgesses all the immunities and liberties similarly granted to the city of Kilkenny. It was confirmed and extended by James I., and has been in existence up to the present day. Fethard must have held an important position in the eyes of these monarchs and their successors, as the liberal and exceptional terms of the charter amply testify. The town must have been one worth possessing from the fact that no less a personage than the Earl of Desmond set his greedy eyes upon it. In the fight that ensued between him and the two young sons of the Lord of Ormond, Edmond and Edward, many a brave soldier went down on both sides.

The young nobles, to whom the Earl of Ormond had committed the safe keeping of his possessions during his absence in England, had under their command a strong body of cavalry, select battalions of gallow glasses and giomanachs (horse-boys). The Earl of Desmond, with the trained eye of the soldier, on seeing the serried ranks of the formidable retainers of the Butlers, did not give immediate battle. He enticed them along to a place called Knockgraffon, where he suddenly turned the whole strength of his army on them, and a scene of great slaughter and carnage ensued. Though the stand made by the troops of the young commanders was worthy of the best traditions of their race, they were overpowered by the veteran troops of that masterly campaigner, the Earl of Desmond. On the side of the Butlers there fell one whose death was the

cause of universal lamentation, Colla, the son of Mulmurry, son of Donnell Oge M'Sweeney, chief constable of the Butlers. On the other side, an equally lamented warrior bit the dust that memorable day, Gerald, the son of John Oge, son of John, son of Thomas the Earl.

Cromwell, with part of his army, arrived outside the fortified walls of Fethard late at night in the midst of a terrific thunder storm. He and his followers took refuge in the Old Abbey of the Augustinians, and some houses adjoining that venerable pile. The next morning the keys of the town were handed to him by the Governor, Sir Pierce Butler. He left some of his special favourites to seize what they could lay their hands on, and make merry over their spoils. He gathered his troops together, as soon as the articles of capitulation had been



duly signed, and hurried off to seek fresh and more abundant conquests.

The Burgesses were now left in peace to enjoy the immunities and privileges of the charter of James I. By virtue of that charter the Corporation consists of a Sovereign, twelve chief Burgesses, a Portreeve, and an indefinite number of Freemen, assisted by a Recorder, Town-Clerk, Sergeant-at-Mace, and other officers. The Sovereign, who is also Coroner and Clerk of the Markets, is chosen annually from the Burgesses by a majority of that body ; and he may, with their consent, appoint a Vice-Sovereign, who is also a J.P. within the borough. The Burgesses, as vacancies occur, are chosen from the Freemen by the Sovereign and his Burgesses ; the Portreeve is annually elected from the Freemen by the chief Burgesses ; and the Freemen are admitted only by favour of the Corporation. The

Recorder is chosen by the Sovereign and chief Burgesses, and holds his office during pleasure. The Town-Clerk is appointed either by the Sovereign or chief Burgesses, and the Sergeant-at-Mace by the Sovereign. The Corporation had the power of returning two Members of Parliament until the Union, when the Borough was disfranchised, and a sum of £15,000 given in compensation to Cornelius, Lord Lismore, and T. Barton, Esq. A Tholsel Court, besides the ordinary Petty Sessions Court, was held by the Sovereign, assisted by two chief Burgesses, for the recovering of debts to any amount incurred within the Borough.

Now-a-days many, if not all, of the foregoing privileges have been abrogated by the enactment of more modern Municipal Legislation. The Charter of James I. goes to show the important commercial position occupied by

Fethard, and high standing and ability of the Burgesses to whom the finances and material prosperity of the town were entrusted.

The Knights Templars of St. John possessed a very large and strongly built residence in Fethard. The ruins, now all that is left of that once noble building, are in a state of very good preservation; and afford us some idea of the extent of the property held by that famous Order, once the pride and glory of our beloved country. The Canonesses of St. Augustine had a fine and commodious convent, and ministered to the sick in a splendidly equipped hospital in the centre of the town. Another hospital, or rather Convalescent Home, was established in a most health-giving part of the property of the Augustinian Fathers. Thus two hospitals were maintained in Fethard for the cure of those ills which afflict our weak, fallen nature.

Fethard can claim the honour of having been the birth-place of many illustrious men, who have risen to the front rank in the various walks of life of their choice, in which they developed to their fullest extent their great natural and cultivated abilities. To the Church this important centre of Tipperary has supplied many zealous and highly learned ecclesiastics.

The Archdiocese of Cashel treasures, with zealous care, the name of Dr. Everard, who held the crozier of Cormac for all too brief a period, and who has left behind him lasting memorials of his pastoral solicitude and care for the spiritual needs of the Archdiocese which he for a period so wisely governed. Dr. Everard was a lineal descendant of Sir John Everard, Knight, who possessed the town of Fethard "for ever," as the records attest, and also several castles, towns, and lands in the immediate neighbourhood.

His parents lived in the town-house of the Everards in the Market Square, and it was in this palatial residence the future Archbishop of Cashel first saw the light somewhere in the year 1752. His early education having been completed in the Grammar School of Fethard, he was sent by his pious parents to the great University of Salamanca, in Spain, to study for the priesthood. He won the highest distinction in the gift of that world-renowned seat of learning, crowning his curriculum by gaining with honours the degree of Doctor of Divinity. It is worthy of note that he had amongst his fellow-students three future Archbishops of Irish Sees: Dr. Murray, of Dublin, Dr. Kelly, of Tuam, and Dr. Laffan, of Cashel. He left Salamanca with the intention of seeking his native shores, and devoting himself to missionary duties amongst his own countrymen in his native country. But

Providence wisely ordained other plans for his future life-work.

He went to Bordeaux to pay a visit to the Barton family, so intimately connected with his own by social and commercial ties. The Bartons owned the property of "Grove," to which allusion has already been made, and Dr. Everard's father looked after the administration of this famous estate of the Bartons, whose real home was Bordeaux, whence they migrated to Ireland. The President of the Irish College there at that time was a very feeble old priest, by name Dr. Glynn. He was much struck by the gentlemanly bearing and high culture of his fellow-countryman, Dr. Everard. His length of years and infirm health warranted for him repose and rest from the trying duties incumbent upon him as head of a great ecclesiastical establishment. He saw in the young Irish Priest, with

the manners of a courtier and the learning of a savant, one quite capable of taking the reins of government from his enfeebled hands, and conducting the Irish College on French soil safely and securely on the road to unqualified success and highest proficiency. He appealed to the Archbishop, Monsignor De Ceci, to prevail on Dr. Everard to remain in Bordeaux and devote himself to the teaching and training of the young Levites for the Irish Mission. Happily for the College, Dr. Everard consented and remained for ten years watching over the studies and spiritual preparation of numbers of young Irishmen for the Mission-fields of holy Ireland.

The greatest testimony of the esteem and reverence in which he was held by the Archbishop and clergy of that great diocese is the fact, that whilst a young priest of only a few years' standing in the ministry he was appointed

to the highest dignity short of the Episcopate, the Vicar-Generalship of that vast and flourishing diocese. This was a singular and most unprecedented honour for a young priest, not much over his thirtieth year, and a stranger in a strange land to boot.

Stirring and exciting times were in store for the young Vicar-General, to test the metal of his fine courageous Celtic nature. The Revolution broke out in its mad, fiendish, bloodthirsty fury over the fair Catholic land of France. The Church and her devoted ministers were the primary objects of attack and brutal assaults of the revolutionaries, who, in the sacred name of liberty, committed the vilest excesses and hellish abuses, thus disgracing and discrediting the highest and noblest privileges and inheritance of the human race. The blood of Bishops and Priests was shed to satiate the hatred of

those incarnate demons of all persons and things consecrated to God's service. The venerable and saintly old Priest, Dr. Glynn, was dragged through the streets and cruelly and inhumanly butchered to make a revolutionary holiday. The Archbishop had to flee to Protestant England for safety. The young Vicar-General stood manfully at the helm of his adopted diocese during the long night of this fiendish storm that threatened to engulf the Catholicity of France, the eldest daughter of the Church. There he stood, proudly and defiantly, directing and stimulating the clergy and people of his charge, until sacrilegious hands were left upon him. His escape was miraculous. They seized him by his soutane, which, fortunately, was torn in their eager grasp, leaving Dr. Everard free to escape, and a portion of his clerical garb in their hands as the only reward of their murderous capture.



TOBIN MONUMENT.

He fled to London, far from the meshes of his sworn enemies.

On the advice of his friend and admirer Edmund Burke, the prince of Irish orators, he opened a school for the sons of the Catholic nobility in Ulverston, in the Lake country of England. The high-class character of his school may be judged by the very large pension, ranging from £200 to £400 per annum, paid by the students. There were, on an average, nearly one hundred who availed themselves of Dr. Everard's high standard of education. It was here that he amassed that large sum of money which he utilized afterwards so beneficially for his native Archdiocese and other charitable objects. Hearing that the Archbishop of Bordeaux was in London living in abject poverty, he hastened thither to find his beloved superior. He supported him in a manner befitting his

exalted position, until he was enabled to return to the peaceful possession of his Episcopal See.

A vacancy occurring in the Presidency of the great Catholic College of Maynooth, Dr. Everard was immediately chosen by the Irish Bishops for that exalted position. Owing to the very indifferent state of his health he retained it for the short period of two years.

Dr. Bray, the Archbishop of Cashel, was in need of a Coadjutor to assist him in the administration of that great Archdiocese. Dr. Everard was appointed, receiving the title of Bishop of Malta. On the death of Dr. Bray he succeeded to the Archbishopric of his beloved diocese of Cashel. His health, for many years in a most precarious condition, did not permit him to long enjoy the honours that so richly and deservedly crowned the winter of his useful life. But three months after the death of Dr. Bray

the new Archbishop was called to the reward of his many labours for Church and Fatherland. His venerated remains were interred in "Cashel of the Kings," a fitting resting-place for him, who claimed descent from a noble Irish house, and whose learning and culture bore the princely stamp and hall-mark. His name and good deeds are perpetuated for all time by the foundation of the great Ecclesiastical College of Thurles, which owes its origin to his princely munificence. The beautiful Chapel within its walls has been furnished and decorated to preserve the memory of this great Archbishop.

It is the touching and beautiful testimony of one of the noblest and most illustrious of his successors, the ever-to-be-lamented Dr. Croke, and Priests of Cashel and Emly, to the worth and esteem of one whose name is writ large in the glorious annals of the See of Cormac. Under

the beautiful marble bust of Dr. Everard in the College Chapel, a tablet commemorating the event bears the following inscription: "This Chapel has been furnished and decorated by the Archbishop and Priests of Cashel and Emly in the year of grace 1889, in memory of the Most Reverend Dr. Patrick Everard, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, by whose magnificent bequest this College of St. Patrick was mainly founded, A.D. 1837."

The Most Rev. Dr. Bray belonged to a family of that name much respected in and around Fethard. He was a very gifted and talented ecclesiastic. His elevation to the See of Cashel gave great satisfaction to the priests and people. He fulfilled the sacred trust committed to him with singular success, and added lustre to the name and fame of the occupants of the Archdiocese, that can proudly point to a

long line of learned and pious men who have been its chief pastors.

The first president of the College was the Very Rev. Dr. O'Connor. As the College owed its birth to a native of Fethard, it seemed, in the fitness of things, that a fellow-townsmen should preside over its infancy. Dr. O'Connor laboured, in season and out of season, to complete the great work for which Dr. Everard had left a substantial legacy. He was a man of deep learning and fervent piety. He was appointed Parish Priest of the important parish of Templemore. He was beloved by priests and people, for his unvarying kindness and gentleness to all. As a Pastor, he won all hearts by his tender solicitude for his flock, and went down to an honoured grave, as a true priest and kind father of his people, who loved him for his sterling worth and revered him for his many virtues.

Another educational establishment of which the Archdiocese is justly proud is that magnificent institution for the higher education of Catholic youth, Rockwell College, about eight miles from Fethard. It has won laurels of fame in the educational arena, and still goes on adding to its trophies in the highly practical and cultured training its staff of eminent professors impart to the large numbers—between two and three hundred we believe—of youths, who have the advantage of their varied knowledge and fatherly care and attention.

The higher education of Catholic youth of the gentler sex is in the capable hands of the Ursuline Nuns in the town of Thurles. It is not too much to say that their honour-roll of past and present pupils is second to none of any educational establishment in this country. The secret of their phenomenal success in the

training of the young seems to be their happy blending of the ornate with the practical: for whilst cultivating to the highest point the mental faculties of their pupils, they do not neglect to train them in more prosaic, but not less useful domestic duties, incumbent on their sex. Young ladies from Dublin, Cork, and other large centres of Ireland are sent to this famous Convent by far-seeing and practical parents, who appreciate, either from their own experience, gained within its walls, or from what they have witnessed as the result of the training received there by others, the sound, thorough, and eminently efficient education imparted to the young by the zealous disciples of St. Ursula.

Another ecclesiastic, whose brow, though not adorned with the jewelled mitre of the episcopate, yet was decked with a still more

exalted and enviable adornment—the crown of the martyr,—was born near the town of Fethard. The mere mention of his name, Father Nicholas Sheehy, is sufficient for the student of Irish history. His name and fame are as widely diffused as the race, of which he was so noble and courageous a son. It is not too much to assert, that, in the years to come, when many stirring and striking events in the eventful history of our country shall have been erased from memory's page, the life story and cruel fate of Father Sheehy shall remain as fresh and as verdant in the minds and hearts of the Irish people, as if the episodes of his priestly career and its tragic ending were facts of contemporary history.

He was born of very respectable parents in Barrettstown, a short distance from Fethard. His early training was received in a school in

that town. Having selected the ecclesiastical state, as his choice in life, he was sent to France to pursue his studies. It is said he received the Sacred Priesthood in Rome, as a special wish was expressed by him to be ordained a priest in the Eternal City. Homeward now he wends his way, to labour amongst his down-trodden and oppressed fellow-countrymen, writhing under the lash of the barbaric penal laws. What a contrast between the feelings and emotions that filled the mind and heart of the young priest, Father Sheehy, and those that happily take possession of the imagination and heart of the levite of our day returning to labour in the vineyard of Catholic Ireland ! Father Sheehy could not look forward to that open demonstration of affection and reverence of relatives and friends, so fittingly bestowed on the newly anointed minister of God's Church

to-day, or to the peaceful and undisturbed exercise of his holy office amongst a warm-hearted and generous flock, free and unfettered in the performance of their religious duties and Catholic practices. He had to steal into his own beloved island in the silence of the night, and in the garb of an ordinary layman. The welcome of his relatives and friends must be accorded him in the secrecy of his own home, unseen by and unknown to the sleuth-hounds of the law, who almost scented the oil of unction on the consecrated hands of the newly-ordained priest, and made them thirst and hunger for his life-blood. Instead of a peaceful and joyful settling down to the pleasant and consoling, though arduous, round of parochial duties among a faithful people, the darksome and terrifying picture of long days and nights of almost superhuman privations and dangers, with

a gibbet for the back-ground, presented itself to his youthful gaze.

Within that, seemingly, frail and delicate body of his there beat a heart as full of courage and daring as ever spurred the heroes of the world's battlefields on to deeds of valour, that have won for them imperishable laurels of fame and renown. He faced the Calvary of his brief and useful life with a stout heart, ready to do and dare all in the fulfilment of the duties of his Sacred Office. He, though a priest of the Archdiocese of Cashel, spent his days in the neighbouring diocese of Waterford, where priests of his noble type were required in those days.

Having served as a curate in a few places, his sterling worth, as a priest and a patriot, was awarded by his appointment to the important parish of Clogheen. His activity and zeal were

soon to fire up to white heat the bigotry and hellish hatred of the foes of his country and creed. He was arrested, and tried on charges of sedition and incitement to rebellion of the flock, who were to him as the apple of his eye and the most treasured and beloved of his warm Celtic heart.

He was acquitted of these ill-founded indictments, though tried by partial judges and a packed jury. His triumph over his enemies was of short duration. A plot, begotten of the infernal regions, and matured in the foul and loathsome brain of the renowned Bagwell, the priest-hunter, and his associates, was set on foot. He, with a few others, relatives and friends of unimpeachable character, were charged with the murder of a man, named Bridge, a member of the Whiteboy Society. Father Sheehy was persuaded by his friends to leave the country;

for well they knew that his doom was already sealed. He scorned the idea of fleeing before the face of his enemies, though fully convinced that the penalty of his refusal was death :—cruel and ignominious in its enactment, but glorious and triumphant in its endurance.

He went to Dublin and delivered himself up to the Town Major of that city, Major Sirr, the kind and amiable father of that other Major Sirr, whose name stinks in the nostrils of all honest and upright men. He was brought, against his will, to Clonmel, to stand his trial. He had some chance of gaining a modicum of justice in the capital; but not the slightest prospect of a shadow of it in the happy hunting-ground of the Bagwells and others of that ilk. The most degraded witnesses, perjured up to the very lips, were produced against him. Into the scales of justice, evidence, strong, con-

vincing, and undeniable, given by witnesses whose veracity could not be impugned, was thrown in his behalf. But all to no avail; for it was revenge, not justice, his accusers sought. As was expected, sentence of death was passed upon this amiable, holy, and zealous pastor of the Church. His execution took place in Clonmel; and was witnessed by a drunken, infuriated mob of Orange and bigoted soldiery and civilians, who took a fiendish delight in the sacrifice of one of Ireland's noblest sons and most exemplary priests. His own grief stricken people, who gathered, in silent groups, to receive the last blessing of their beloved pastor and benefactor, sent up to Heaven a prayer, that threw wide open, to his pure soul, the golden gates of an endless Paradise; and brought down on his accusers and their paymasters the swift and awful vengeance of an angry God,

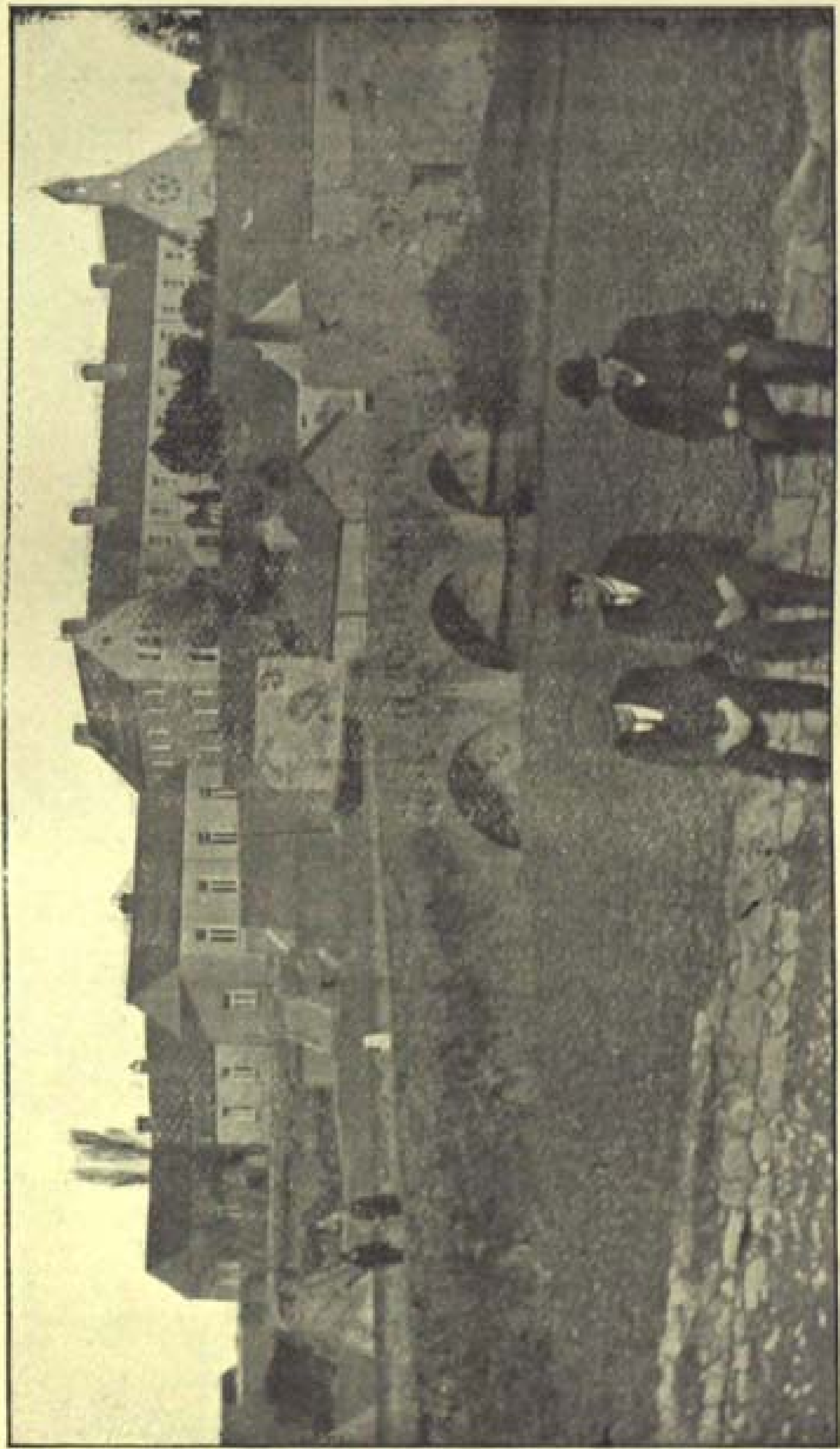
which swept them, with lightning rapidity, off the fair earth they had too long encumbered with their loathsome presence.

The witnesses died miserably, either by foul disease, or sudden destruction. Not one of the jury, who found him guilty, died a natural death, after pronouncing their false and unjustifiable verdict. Bridge, the man alleged to have been murdered by Father Sheehy and his companions, was found to be alive and well in far-distant Newfoundland, having gone thither to avoid arrest, as a member of the Whiteboys' secret Society. The head of Father Sheehy was exposed, outside Clonmel Jail, for nearly twenty years: a grim reminder of as bloody a tragedy as ever stained the annals of a Christian land. After repeated entreaties, it was given to his sister, Mrs. Burke; and buried, with his remains, in the graveyard of

Shandraghan. A tombstone, erected by faithful and loving hands, bears the following inscription :—

“ Here lieth the remains of the Rev. Nicholas Sheehy, Parish Priest of Shandraghan, Ballysheehan, and Templeheney. He died March 15th, 1766, aged thirty-eight years. Erected by his sister, Catherine Burke, alias Sheehy.”

The patriotic spirit of the inhabitants of Fethard found a fitting exponent in the person of their beloved fellow-townsmen, Major-General Thomas Francis Burke, of '67 fame. His admiring townsfolk have paid a graceful tribute to his memory, as a lover of his country and a noble example of that sterling, practical Catholicism, so characteristic of the people of Fethard, by calling one of the principal streets of the town, General Thomas Francis Burke Street.



PRESENTATION CONVENT AND SCHOOLS.

He was born in 1840, within a few doors of the Augustinian Abbey. He emigrated, at the age of twelve, with his parents to the United States. His father settled down to his trade of house-painter in New York. Young Burke followed the same trade as his parent. When the Civil War broke out, the martial spirit of the sons of Tipperary asserted itself; and forced young Burke to lay aside the brush for the sword. He fought on the Confederate side, under General Patrick Cleburne, who died in his arms. On the termination of the war, he again sought the home of his parents in New York, ranking as a Brevet-General in the Army—a reward of his gallantry in the field. He also brought back with him a shattered limb and an impaired constitution—legacies of many a hard-fought engagement and the hardships incidental to warfare.

He did not sheathe the sword, but renewed its keen edge for future work in a cause, sacred to him—the freedom of his native land. The history of the Fenian movement and its short-lived existence are matters of recent history; and need not be recapitulated in these pages. Suffice it to say, that Burke played his part in that ill-advised and abortive attempt to free Ireland by force of arms, made by many good, true, and sterling patriots, in the belief of ultimate success and realization of their fervid dreams. To Burke was given the organization and command of his native county of Tipperary. He was speedily arrested but a short while after coming to Clonmel, his head-quarters. He was put upon his trial for high treason; found guilty as a matter of course; and had the extreme penalty of the law passed upon him. His speech from the dock showed him to be a

man of high education and refined literary tastes, and an orator of the first order. His sentence was commuted to one of penal servitude for life.

We make no apology for giving in full two letters written by him, when awaiting the execution of the dread sentence of the law passed upon him, a few days before. Their perusal will amply justify his claim to be numbered amongst the many edifying and thoroughly Catholic children of the Church to whom Ireland has given birth. To his mother he thus writes, from the condemned cell, with the grave almost open to receive him:—

“On last Easter Sunday, I partook of Holy Communion at a late Mass. I calculated the difference of time between this longitude and yours ; for I knew that you and my dear sisters were partaking of the Sacrament, at early Mass,



on that day as was your wont; and I felt that our souls were in communion together."

To the priest, who was his Father-confessor in Clonmel, he sends the following touching letter:—

" KILMAINHAM JAIL,
4th, Month of May.

" DEAR REVD. FATHER,

"I am perfectly calm and resigned, with my thoughts firmly centered, with hope, in the goodness and mercy of that kind Redeemer, Whose Precious Blood was shed for my salvation; as also in the mediation and intercession of His Blessed Mother, who is my star of hope and consolation. I know, dear Father, I need not ask you to be remembered in your prayers, for I feel that in your supplication to the Throne of Mercy I have not been forgotten. . . . I have only one thought which causes me

sorrow, and that is that my good and loving mother will break down under the height of her affliction ; and, O God ! I who loved her more than the life that animates the hand that writes to be the cause of it ! This thought unmans and prostrates me. I wrote to her at the commencement of my trial, and told her how I thought it would terminate, and spoke a long and last farewell. I have not written to her since ; it would break my heart to attempt it ; but I would ask you, as an especial favour, that you would write to her and tell her I am happy and resigned to the will of God, Who has given me this opportunity of saving my immortal soul. I hope to hear from you before I leave this world. Good-bye, Father, and that God may bless you in your ministry is the prayer of an obedient child of the Church.

“ THOMAS F. BURKE.”

As an instance of a very graceful and generous action on the part of the Barton family, it is but proper to mention that the site for the present Parish Church was given gratis by W. Barton, Esquire, a Protestant, and proprietor of that valuable property of Grove, a short distance from the town. The value of this gift will be fully appreciated, when we call to mind the bigotry existing amongst the landed gentry in those days. Catholics were merely permitted to live; and were thoroughly under the heel of Protestant squires, who hated everything Catholic with an intense and blind hatred. Mr. Barton, regardless of the criticism and social ostracism he was sure to suffer from men of his class, less generous and liberal than he proved himself to be, gave this valuable site in the best part of the town for the erection of the Parish Church. He also gave a very

generous offering towards the erection of the sacred edifice.

Grove is now in the hands of Richard Burke, Esq., Master of the Tipperary Hunt, a Catholic gentleman, who gives large employment to the working classes, and is a most kind and thoughtful employer. Many families have reason to be thankful for his residence amongst them, and it is the earnest wish of all that he may long be spared to enjoy his ardent love for horse and hounds.

A few reminders of the past glories of Fethard are still extant. One of the five tower-gateways is in a fair state of preservation. The street by which Cromwell is supposed to have entered the town is still shown to visitors ; it is looked upon by the inhabitants as a street of ill omen : for none of their dead are carried through it to their last resting place.

We have given but a brief sketch of the the ancient and modern history of the town in which the famous Abbey of the Augustinian Fathers is situated. It will have struck the reader, no doubt, that the people of Fethard in the days that are gone were particularly generous and open-handed in the support and beautifying of the Temples in which they gathered together for worship, and in the maintenance of institutions for the assistance and relief of those suffering from sickness and infirmity.

The Abbey and Parish Church have always been recipients of many and rich favours from the good people, many of whom, alas! sleep beneath the sheltering shadows of those hallowed temples of prayer. It is consoling to think that they have left behind them successors ready and willing, when called upon, to emulate

the practical Catholicity and generous instincts of their progenitors. As we have seen, the beautiful high altar in the Parish Church was the gift of a Fethard lady, Mrs. Coyne. The sweet-toned organ, in the same Church, was given by the late Mr. Carroll of Rocklow. The Burke family, of Grove, have given, generously and often, to the Abbey and Parish Church. And other families, whom it would be invidious to particularize, have done admirably and well for religious and charitable works in town and country.

There are many outlets yet remaining for the manifestation of the character for generosity in church affairs which the people of Fethard so proudly bear. And may it not be fervently hoped that those, in our day, blessed with wealth, may find one or other of these channels by which they may send on to posterity names

as honoured and revered for Catholic munificence as their forefathers have left behind them, a shining and stimulating example for all time.

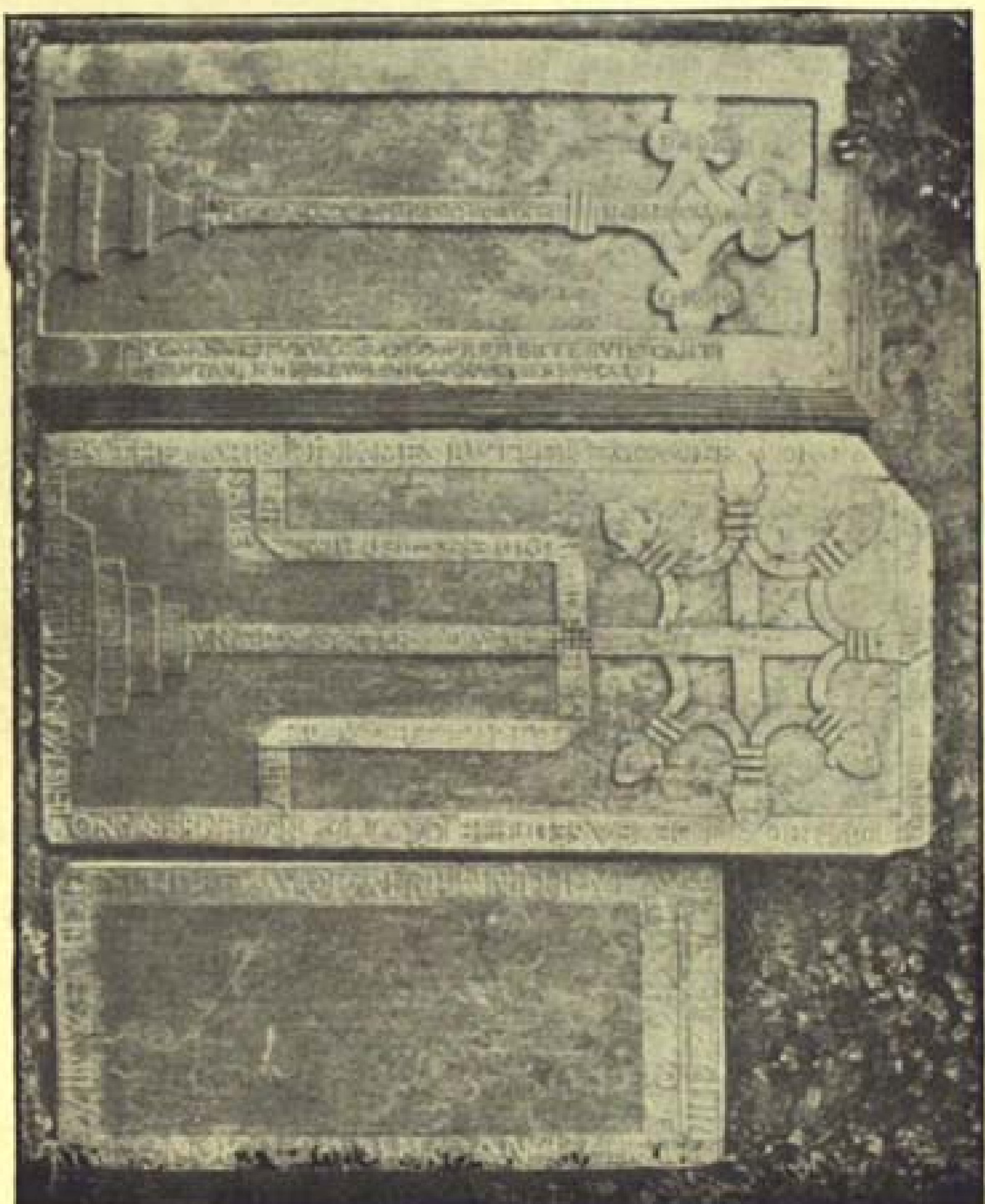
Before concluding this Chapter we must express a sense of sorrow and regret that a town, once a centre of active commercial life and prosperity, is now reduced to the ordinary humdrum existence and industrial stagnation so characteristic, unfortunately, of so many towns in Ireland. It is well within the recollection of many old inhabitants, that there were some flourishing industries in their spring-day of life, in the town of their birth. All! all have gone; and none have taken their place.

Nature has given to Fethard many facilities for the starting of lucrative and thriving industries. For miles round about it, tracts of the most fertile land in Ireland stretch out in broad productive acres. There is a splendid

flow of water, sufficient to make mill-wheels of many factories sing their rhythmic music to the enchanted ears of a prosperous and thriving population. A long pull and a strong pull by those possessed of a little capital and spirit of prudent speculation, would soon make the town what nature intended her to be—a hive of industry and enterprise.

An example of what may be done has been given by a gentleman from the North of Ireland who has selected Fethard as a site for his laudable project of introducing the electric light into the smaller towns of Ireland. Fethard possesses exceptionally good railway facilities for the carriage of her manufactures, when that happy and long wished-for day of her prosperity arrives. The town is connected with the great centres of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford by railway communication.

Sites for the erection of factories may be had almost for the asking; and willing workers to receive remunerative employment within them will be readily found. The earnest wish of the writer and the many friends of Fethard is that in the near future Irish brains and Irish hands will set in swift and lasting motion here the wheel of progress, which has been too long inert and silent.



ANCIENT TOMBSTONES IN ABBEY.

CHAPTER II.

THE ABBEY AND MONASTERY.

WHOEVER may be desirous of studying the varied and beautiful architectural designs, beloved of our forefathers in good old Catholic days, will find a wide field and ample scope for his investigations in almost every square mile of Irish soil. There is no country in the world that contains, within an equal compass, so many relics of temples raised to the honour of the Most High, and of monasteries devoted to the cultivation of those virtues that truly make man in the eyes of his Maker "a little less than the Angels." Turn where you will, your gaze is attracted by some grey

old ruin that once stood proudly on the hill or plain, dedicated to the service of the "King of kings." On examining it, you find that time has left sufficient indications of the pious uses which it had for long years served. It was a Church wherein our forefathers assembled to praise the "Giver of all good gifts." Perhaps it is all that remains of some monastic institution that you now look upon. Time was when the sons of some saintly founder dwelt within its walls, following closely the footsteps of Him "to serve whom is to reign," and breaking the bread of charity amongst the throngs of the poor and needy, who ever found a welcome here. Every one of these memorials of the ages of Faith and Catholic fervour has a history sufficiently interesting to command a willing ear from all who love their religion above all other possessions. But who shall tell it to us? Would that those

old time-worn stones had tongues! Alas, they have not. When was that Church built? Who ministered there to devout congregations? Who lived in those Monasteries and Convents, the cradles of so many saintly men and women, and the founts of such deep and varied learning?

These are questions that involuntarily we ask ourselves, as we wonderingly and, of necessity, feelingly look upon the ancient religious memorials of a glorious past. The records, so faithfully kept by the monks of old, like all things else that were worth preserving in Ireland, fell into the hands of those demons in human shape who laid waste everything that the fervent Celtic and Catholic heart held dear. Had these records been spared the sad fate that unfortunately befel them, what a wonderful store-house of entrancing and delectable Irish Catholic Ecclesiastical

history would have been our inheritance to-day. Well may we bewail the loss of those precious and priceless documents ; and fervently may we anathematize the sacrilegious iconoclasts who destroyed them.

The writer who wishes to trace the history of these Churches and Monasteries labours under many disadvantages. Thanks, however, to the indefatigable researches of many gifted sons of Ireland, by aid of the historical documents that survive to tell the sad tale of destruction, some light has been thrown on the cavernous darkness that has so long enveloped the old Churches and Monasteries so thickly studded over our Island.

The Convent and Monastery of Fethard have come in for a fair share of historical research, and much that is of interest and importance about them is happily ours to-day. We need

not then indulge in wild conjectures as to their antiquity, or mere guess-work about the good men and true who erected and gave them into the pious keeping of the zealous and learned sons of the greatest Doctor of God's Holy Church, St. Augustine. That the Augustinian Fathers established themselves in Fethard at a very early period of that town's existence is beyond all question. Owing to the absence of documents to prove the foundation of the Order in this town, it is impossible to fix the precise date, or even to conjecture in what particular century it took place. Certain it is, however, that it must have been considerably anterior to the early part of the fourteenth century, in which, beyond all doubt, the present ancient Church and Monastery came into existence. This much we know as an indisputable historical fact, that as far back as the reign of Edward I. a full and

free pardon was granted by that monarch to the Friars for having acquired, contrary to the Statute of Mortmain, some land for re-building their Monastery, which was fast crumbling to decay. From the evidence we possess of the very substantial and time-defying manner in which our forefathers built their habitations, both secular and religious, we may fairly conclude that the Monastery, about to give way to a newer and more modern edifice, had withstood many a cold winter's blast, and suffered from the burning rays of many a summer's sun. It must have been a very old building, and who can tell the weight and length of years that at last brought it to decay? The Friars must have been very popular with the people when they called upon them to assist them in the great task of helping to build their Monastery and Church, to thus firmly establish themselves for

centuries to come in the midst of a thoroughly Catholic population.

From the fourteenth century downwards the historian's task is comparatively easy; for he has certain dates and established facts on which to build up his story of the ancient Church and Monastery. Walter Mulcot was the generous donor who, of his own free gift, founded the Abbey and the Monastery, now the proud possessions of St. Augustine's sons in this twentieth century. Nothing definitely can be found to indicate who and what this Walter Mulcot was. That he was a lover of his Faith and an ardent admirer of the hermits of St. Augustine, his princely donations amply attest. From the rich and costly architectural structure of the Abbey, and the spacious and elegantly built Monastery adjoining, it is safe to conclude that he was a gentleman possessed of more than an ordinary

share of this world's goods. But his munificence did not end here. He was desirous that the good and zealous Fathers should be above the petty cares and worries incidental to the up-keep and expenditure necessary for the maintenance of a Community in becoming respectability, and the preservation and care of the splendid Abbey in which they zealously ministered to devout congregations. He left a large amount of property in their hands to serve this dual purpose. We find that before the suppression of the Monasteries took place in the iniquitous reign of Henry VIII., of evil memory, the Augustinians of Fethard were the owners of the following properties, viz.:—a cemetery, and orchard, two gardens, twenty-eight messuages, nine acres of land, one acre meadow, with a mill and bake-house. These were in the immediate vicinity of the Abbey. Outside the

town they possessed the following, viz.:—eight acres of land, with forty-nine of pasture in Cross roads, and sixty-three acres of arable land in Ballyclowan.

That Walter Mulcot, their more than generous patron, bequeathed most, if not all, of this valuable property seems a very reasonable conclusion considering the anxiety he displayed in providing the Friars with such a beautiful Church and substantial dwelling in the heart of his own beloved Tipperary. It is more than probable that he left them a large sum of ready money to enable them to meet the initial expenses incurred in a new foundation.

The Hermits of St. Augustine must ever hold in grateful remembrance the memory of him whose generous purse was theirs to command ; and who proved his affection for them and their holy Institute in such a generous, practical, and

open-hearted manner. "Not words but deeds" might fittingly be inscribed on his armorial bearings.

It was in the year 1306 that the foundation of both Church and Monastery took place. This fact we have on the testimony of no less an authority than that of Ireland's renowned historian and archæologist, Sir James Ware, in his "Lives of the Archbishops of Cashel." He mentions the fact, in speaking of the celebrated Maurice MacCarwill, Archbishop of Cashel, under whom the land was immediately held, and who most willingly and graciously gave his consent. He was a very remarkable and able churchman; he was Dean of Cashel, when elected to the Archiepiscopal see. He was noted for his almost lavish charities, and his powerful eloquence. It was he, who, in the Cathedral of St. Canice, Kilkenny, pronounced,

in vehement tones, the anathema against the infringers of the statute enacted in that Parliament, in the presence of such high dignitaries as John Wogan, Justice of Ireland, Richard de Burge, Earl of Ulster, John FitzThomas afterwards Earl of Kildare, John Barry, Maurice de Rupe-forte, or Rochford, and a very great number of the rest of the Irish nobility.

In the reign of Henry VIII., the Abbey, Monastery, and possessions pertaining thereto, were confiscated, by order of that desecrator of all things sacred. He certainly was generous in distributing the property of the Church he vainly sought to destroy. The most valuable possessions of the Church were handed over, at ridiculous sums, to men of his own kidney. Wholesale sweeping away of monastic institutions, and the destruction and desecration of the churches so dear to the Irish Catholic, were the

imperative orders of this monster in human shape. He could, it is true, root up from the soil of Ireland those sacred edifices that had been consecrated to the service of God, years before he disgraced a throne, and tarnished the glory of a crown. It was not in his demoniacal power to barter away or eradicate the living faith that finds an impregnable fortress in the hearts of the Catholic people of Ireland. When he had gone the way of all tyrants, the lamp of faith burned as brightly, if not with a more ardent flame, on the fertile plains and green hills of Erin.

Fethard came in for a large share of the attentions of this licentious ruler. The valuable properties of the Augustinian Fathers, Abbey, Monastery, and lands, were handed over to Sir Edward Butler for ever at a head rent of five shillings and fourpence (5s. 4d.) Irish

money. This belted knight had reason to be thankful to such a liberal and superabundant benefactor, as was his master King Hal. Whether his bargain proved beneficial to this usurper of the property of the Church, we have no means of knowing. It is more than likely that he, like so many others of his kind, had reason to regret the day he laid sacrilegious hands on what belonged to the service of Him, whose Sword of Justice rightly and swiftly smites the desecrators of all things consecrated to Him.

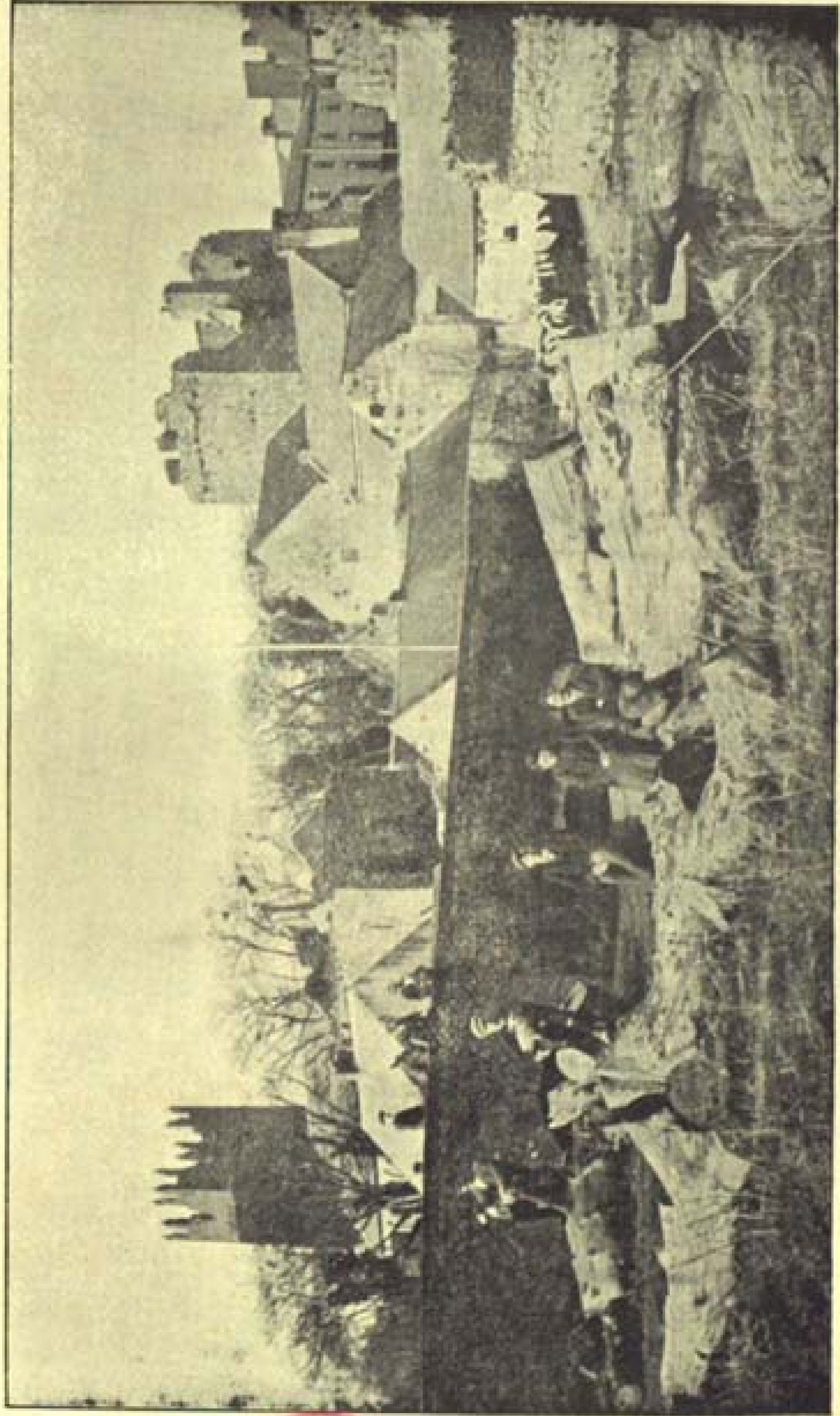
The long dark night of cruel and relentless persecution of Ireland, because she clung with the tenacity and affection of a mother to her offspring, about to be torn from her arms by the hands of another Herod, had now set in. The history of those long centuries of desolation and sorrow is almost a sealed book to us.

The murderers shut out the light, that, if possible, heaven itself might not see their work of carnage ; obliterated all evidences of their barbarous deeds, that generations, yet unborn, might not live to curse these emissaries of the powers of darkness. A heavy veil is drawn over these evil days when our beloved country sat "in darkness and the shadow of death." From the wreckage that strews the many battlefields on which many a fierce and, in most cases, unequal combat took place for Faith and Fatherland, we gain some glimpses of the terrible and appalling nature of those scenes of butchery. From generation to generation, in one continuous, unbroken lava stream of tradition, many of the unspeakable deeds and hellish fury of these English hordes have been recorded on tablets more lasting than stone or marble, the hearts and minds of the persecuted

children of the Irish race. Round the winter fire the snow-haired patriarch recounts, with affrighted look and almost bated breath, tales he had heard from those now reposing peacefully in the "Garden of Sleep," that make the blood run icy cold in the veins of his eager listeners. If not so much by documentary evidence, at least by a means not less serviceable and effective, by word of mouth, the veil is lifted over these centuries of oppression and suffering, and glimpses of a past, we fain would forget, are afforded our horrified gaze.

What Ireland felt most keenly was, not so much the loss of her material wealth, or even the brutal murder of her faithful children, as the banishment of her beloved priesthood. If in those moments, when the heavy footfall of her enemies resounded through her peaceful valleys, the Soggarth Aroon could be there as in the

olden days, to pour the balsam of consolation into agonizing hearts, and extend the hand of forgiveness over the bowed heads of her faithful Catholic children, there would have been a silver lining to her darkest cloud of sorrow and suffering. These dispensers of God's good gifts were there, but not in numbers sufficient to cope with the work the hand of the persecutor made for them in his merciless extermination of the Irish race. France, Italy, and Spain were the shelters afforded the young Irish Levite, until he had received the fulness of power to minister to his stricken kith and kin in Ireland. In various disguises they came back to their native land ; and heaven alone knows the hardships they endured and the dangers they ran in breaking the bread of life to their flocks, left to the tender mercies of the enemies of their creed and race. When a beloved and zealous



TRINITY CHURCH AND CASTLE OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS.



minister of the Altar had fallen into the hands of the Priest-hunters, and had nobly earned the triple crown of Martyrdom, another, equally as daring and devoted, took his place to meet, no doubt, a like glorious ending to a life of sacrifice and privation.

It may well be conjectured that many a son of St. Augustine, true to the traditions of his holy Institute, sought shelter and refuge in the groves and woods round Fethard, anxiously awaiting an opportunity to feed his flock with the Bread of Life, the all-powerful and eagerly sought-for food of the Irish Catholics when the shadows lay thick and heavy over their fertile land.

Slieve-na-mon, the mountain that forms such a picturesque background to the enchanting scenery round and about the town of Fethard, was often trodden by the footsteps of some

Augustinian Friar, on his way to comfort a departing soul, or to offer up the Holy Sacrifice, perhaps his last on earth, in some deep recess or sheltered fastness of that famous mountain, the subject of many an Irish songster's tuneful verse. No doubt, when opportunity offered, he stole out of his hiding-place to feast his eyes on the old Abbey and Monastery of his Order; and thus gain new strength and renewed zeal and fervour in the angelic work it was his to perform.

He drank in new courage and inspiration when he thought of his brethren, in days gone by, and of the noble and heroic deeds they accomplished for the Old Faith and the Old Land:—those sad, yet glorious, days of yore, when Ireland sent up her martyred children to their true home to swell the mighty legions of those who, with palms in their hands and

jewelled crowns on their brows, sing the praises for ages unending of the "Lamb that was slain."

Enough of this pleasant, though I hope not tiresome, lingering over days that are written in letters of gold on the heart of every true Catholic child of Holy Ireland. We must descend once more to the dry facts, that willing hands have stored up for us in the archives of history. Meagre and few though they, unfortunately, are, they enable us to see how faithfully and tenaciously, in days of storm and stress, the good Fathers of St. Augustine clung to the Abbey and Monastery they had once peacefully possessed.

The last Prior of Fethard, before the suppression of religious houses in the reign of Henry VIII., was Father William Burton. We have no account of him in any available

documents. That he fought bravely to retain the property of his Order, may be truthfully asserted, from what history tells us of the firm and united stand made against the despoilers by the religious of the many different Orders planted in the congenial soil of Holy Ireland.

We have to let slip almost two centuries before we can again take up the thread of authentic and definite historical fact. Coming down to the closing years of the eighteenth century, the Records of the Order tell us that the Rev. James Slattery was its representative in Fethard in that period. He supported himself, by acting as curate in the parish, for over thirty years. For a considerable portion of this time, he had the able assistance of a Brother Augustinian, the Rev. Father Funesy. On the demise of these two estimable religious,

they were succeeded by the Revs. John and Thomas Farrel; and, later on, by the Rev. Patrick Tierney.

These clergymen were highly esteemed and beloved, the Annals assure us, by the people of Fethard and surrounding parishes, to the spiritual welfare of whom their best energies were directed and the halcyon years of their lives devoted. They kept, we may be sure, a vigilant eye on the old Abbey and Monastery, once their own; and carefully watched for an opportunity to regain possession of them. Their hopes were not realized, before these zealous men were called to their reward. In God's good time, the happy consummation so ardently desired by many a noble follower of the rule of St. Augustine was witnessed by their overjoyed brethren of the same glorious Father and Founder.

In the year 1820, the venerable ruin came into the hands of its rightful owners. The Prior, who had the good fortune to fill the office in that memorable year, was the Very Rev. Thomas Condon. The property was then in possession of a family, named Lowe. A Mrs. Lowe, a widow, had a life interest in it, under her husband's will, with a reversion to his nephew, a Mr. Latham, at her death. It was from this Mr. Latham that Father Condon received what, by every right and title, belonged to the body of which he was a worthy member. We are not able to discover the price paid for it.

The Venerable Archdeacon Laffan, the Parish Priest at that time of Fethard, gave every assistance and encouragement to Father Condon in the good work of fitting up the old Abbey for the religious purposes to which it

had been dedicated long centuries before. This Venerable Ecclesiastic was the idol of his people during the long years of his administration amongst them. A beautiful marble tablet adorns the inside wall of the Parish Church, erected and subscribed for by a grateful people. It summarizes the good deeds of this faithful Pastor and records in simple, yet expressive words, the esteem and veneration in which his parishioners cherish his sainted memory :—

“Erected by the grateful people of Fethard and Killusty to the memory of the Ven. and Very Rev. Archdeacon Michael Laffan, who was Parish Priest of Fethard and Killusty for 38 years, and died on the 7th day of June 1861, aged 70 years.

“Archdeacon Laffan was gifted by the Almighty with a high order of talents and a rare eloquence, which he devoted to the sacred cause of Religion, and the instruction of his

flock. As a Patriot he threw himself, heart and soul, into the struggles for freedom of his native land ; and in evil days inspired courage and independence into his down-trodden countrymen. In an age of great Irishmen in Church and State, Archdeacon Laffan was a prominent figure as Priest and Patriot.

“The Collectors for this monument were:—

“JOHN M‘CARTHY, T.C., Fethard.

“JAMES O‘CONNELL, Killavalla.

“HENRY BLACKMORE, Rathcool House.

“MICHAEL WALSH, Senr., Fethard.

“MICHAEL MURPHY, *Hon. Sec.*, Fethard.

1884.”

There is another very handsome marble tablet erected to the memory of a revered and well-beloved Pastor to whom the people of Fethard owe a debt of gratitude for his many good works during his years amongst them. The name of the Very Rev. Dean Cantwell will be long cherished and gratefully remem-

bered by the people of this town, as that of a kind pastor and energetic minister of the Sanctuary. The tablet bears the following inscription :—

“ Pray for the Soul of the Very Rev. Walter Cantwell, Dean and Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Cashel and Parish Priest of Fethard for seventeen years, who died 13th January, 1878, in the 66th year of his age and 40th of his Sacred Ministry.

“ This monument was erected to his memory by his sorrowing Parishioners and other friends, in testimony of his prudent, active zeal in the cause of Religion, and his noble exertions in the education of his people.

“ He was the Founder of the Presentation Convent, and introduced the Brothers of St. Patrick into this Parish.

“ May he rest in Peace. Amen.”

Mention must also be made of another Pastor of Fethard, the Venerable Archdeacon

Ryan, D.D., P.P. He read a very distinguished course at the University of Salamanca, and gained the coveted honour of Doctor of Divinity. During his missionary career, over twenty years of which he spent in Cashel, he was noted for the energetic and zealous discharge of his sacred duties. *Ill health* became his daily portion during his short pastorate of seven years' duration in Fethard, and prevented him from continuing his active labours in the sacred cause of religion and benevolence, so dear to his kind, gentle heart.

The state of wreck and ruin to which the Abbey had been reduced by the hand of successive bands of Cromwellian marauders and others of that ilk, as, also, by the ravages of time and climatic changes, requires no great stretch of imagination to conceive. Willing hearts and hands can overcome many diffi-

culties and obstacles, that seem, at first sight, absolutely insurmountable. These Father Condon found, in more than sufficient numbers, amongst the good people of Fethard. They threw themselves into the work with a zeal and heartiness worthy of the days when their forefathers built the magnificent churches and monasteries, the ruins of which are so venerated and religiously guarded by their successors to-day.

Having put their hand to the plough, they did not look back. They rested not, until a good portion of the Abbey had been roofed in, and the interior sufficiently renovated for Divine Service. What a glorious transformation! After the venerable building had been left to the sport and frolic of the wild winter's blast, and defiled by uses it was never intended to serve, the Holy Sacrifice of the

Mass was offered, as in days of yore, in the presence of a grateful and reverent assemblage. Truly the ways of God are wonderful, and surpassing all understanding.

Considering the years which the Abbey could number, since the first Mass had been celebrated within its hallowed walls, its preservation in such a fairly good state of repair was simply marvellous. The eastern window—probably one of the best of its kind in Ireland—seemed as if fresh from the finishing touches of some master-hand. Two other windows, equally beautiful in design and workmanship, escaped the blows of time's destructive hand.

There was a tower at the Western end, or front entrance, of the Church. This was taken down, it is alleged, to widen the street in front of the Abbey. It must be said that the

removal of this handsome tower was a very ill-advised and lamentable occurrence. It was a noble crowning to as perfect and as neat an architectural design as any to be found within the four provinces of Ireland. A new cut stone façade was erected, surmounted by a small belfry, in place of the old front and tower taken down, for the useless purpose, it seems to many, of widening the street that leads down to the Abbey.

With this one alteration and the lowering of the pitch of the roof, the Abbey, as it now stands, is identically the same as when it was first erected by the generous benefactor, Walter Mulcot, on the threshold of the fourteenth century.

Father Condon's successor, in the Priorship of Fethard, was Father James Lonergan. For over half-a-century he faithfully discharged

his ministerial duties in the Abbey that he loved so well, and amongst a people who held him in the highest esteem. A marble tablet marks the spot, within the sacred precincts, where he sleeps his last sleep, awaiting the reward of a life well-spent in the service of his Master. Another venerable companion of his, Father John Wall, sleeps in the same hallowed ground.

In the year 1835, the Very Rev. John Furlong, D.D., was appointed Prior. This zealous son of St. Augustine had the remaining portion of the Abbey roofed in, and the interior and exterior considerably improved. He collected a large sum of money; and judiciously expended it in a work that was near and dear to his heart. During his term of office, he manifested an untiring and ceaseless energy in improving and bettering the condition of the

properties, of which he was the custodian. He deserved well of his Order ; and has earned the grateful remembrance of the Catholics of Fethard.

In 1855, a man, young in years, but old in the knowledge of business pursuits and habits, Father Henry Allen, was appointed Prior. Great things were expected of him by his superiors ; and he did not disappoint their hopes. The Fathers were living in a wretched hovel, facing the Abbey. Part of the grounds round the Abbey and a very fine house were in the hands of a family, not of "the household of the Faith."

To Father Allen is due the purchase of this property, and the transferring of the Fathers' residence from a thatched cabin to, what was then considered, the best and most commodious private residence in Fethard. He was a man gifted with a ready wit and geniality peculiarly

his own. His amiable and winning personality gained many warm and generous friends for the community over which Father Allen presided. He was thus enabled to make many necessary improvements in and around the Abbey. His twelve years of office were spent wholly in the interest of the sacred ground committed to his care.

The people of the town showed their appreciation of his worth, as a priest and a gentleman, by electing him to a seat on the Board of the Town Commissioners. It was he who had the privilege, as the minute books of that corporate body testify, of seconding a resolution calling on the Government to grant a Catholic University to Ireland. Thus at that early period was that important question prominently before the people of this mis-governed country of ours.

He was sent by his superiors to Australia, at the expiration of his work in Fethard, to collect funds for the building of St. Augustine's and John's Church, in Dublin. He was singularly successful in his arduous and unpleasant mission. The Right Rev. Dr. Goold, O.S.A., Archbishop of Melbourne, who had the highest opinion of his worth, obtained leave for him to remain on the Australian mission field, where "the harvest was great, and the reapers few."

When the Fathers of his Order obtained a foundation in Echuca, in the neighbouring diocese of Sandhurst, Father Henry, as he was lovingly called by priests and people, resigned his prosperous parish of Castlemaine, and came to spend the winter of his life amongst his brethren, who heartily welcomed such a gentlemanly and genial companion.

The writer had the pleasure of spending some

years in his genial company in the land of the Southern Cross ; and he cherishes the memory of them as of days the happiest and brightest it has been his good fortune to know. But a few short years ago, this true type of the Soggarth Aroon was laid to rest in the little cemetery of Echuca, sincerely lamented by his brethren and the inhabitants of all creeds and classes of that far-distant thriving town " 'neath sunny Southern skies."

His successors continued to exert their energies in the maintenance, in a condition worthy of its sacred uses, of the old Abbey of their Order ; and in improving the property belonging thereto.

It would be certainly a very incomplete history of this historic place, if the name and record of the labours of the Very Rev. James Anderson, O.S.A., were passed over in silence.

As the Rev. Father is still happily amongst the living members of the Order, any mead of praise bestowed upon him, by our humble pen, might sound like fulsome flattery ; it is best to let his good, lasting, and herculean work for the Abbey speak for itself.

It is a well-known fact that a building of such venerable years requires a continuous stream of heavy expenditure to keep it in a suitable state of repair. But Father Anderson did more than meet the constant drain on the slender exchequer of a small community, in a struggling country town. He set himself the task of completely refurnishing and beautifying the interior of the Abbey ; and providing it with all modern requirements for the more efficient and decorous service for which pious hands had erected it.

The floor of the Church was strewn with

very ancient stone slabs, or monuments, placed there in older times by the friends of the many families interred within its precincts. The lettering and carving of family crests and mottoes were being gradually obliterated by the constant tread of the large congregations over them at the services in the Abbey. He had them carefully removed, and placed in secure positions, round the exterior of the Abbey, thus saving them from the destruction that threatened them in the interior. A solid wooden flooring replaced them and the damp, unwholesome earthen pavement, in which they were embedded.

It would have been a thousand pities to have allowed these historical evidences of the antiquity of the Abbey, and the many records of the noble families buried within its walls, to become effaced, as undoubtedly they would have



DUNBOYNE MONUMENT.

been, had they been left there much longer. As it is, some of them have suffered much from the wear and tear consequent on being constantly trodden upon by many feet. They form a very valuable collection of interesting facts and data connected with the old building, wherein they were placed by our ancestors.

A side-chapel, called the Dunboyne, was, exclusively, given up to the burial uses of that noble family. A very large and handsome monument blocked up a view of the Chapel; and, practically, cut it off from connection with the main portion of the Abbey. This also was removed, and placed in a prominent position in the old gable of the Abbey, that forms such an interesting picture in the cemetery immediately adjoining. A very fine arch, perfect in design and execution, was discovered, which the monument had hidden from view. A

sacrarium was also found in a state of splendid preservation.

A smaller archway was also brought to light, which is highly prized by students of archæology, as an excellent specimen of ecclesiastical architecture of days long past.

The Chapel was thoroughly over-hauled, re-decorated, and transformed, from its former sombre uses, into as devotional and handsome a shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel as can be found in this, or any other country. The old lancet window, at the back, has been filled with beautiful and excellently executed pictures, representing the Virgin Mother and Child, St. Nicholas of Tolentine, and St. Clare of Montofalco, well-known Saints of the Order. The generous donor of this window prefers to be known simply as "a Client of Our Lady of Good Counsel."

A very pretty marble altar was erected by the zealous Prior. The necessary furniture for it, such as candelabra, etc., was provided by that much lamented and generous Catholic lady, the late Mrs. Richard Burke of Grove, the beloved wife of Mr. Richard Burke, to whom allusion is made in the preceding Chapter. The oil-painting of Our Lady of Good Counsel is set in an open-work brass frame, and is the work of Rome's famous portrait painter, Signor Gagliardi.

The Chapel was comfortably seated, and made a secluded little sanctuary, where one insensibly feels that the Virgin Mother, under this consoling title, has set up a veritable throne of grace. The old wooden high altar was replaced by a really handsome and rich marble one, the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. John Mockler, members of a family who have

ever proved themselves fast friends and benefactors of the Augustinian Fathers.

An organ gallery was also erected, and from it a very fine organ by Telford, the gift of the Augustinian Community in Limerick, sends forth the sweet cadences of the Kyrie, and the strong, joyful tones of the Gloria at the Sunday Masses.

Cathedral glass was substituted for the old and time-worn material that had, formerly, given but a poor and dim light to the building. The seating of the Church was another item amongst the many necessary and useful improvements effected during the priorship of Father Anderson. He took away the uncomfortable and out-of-date seats, that had done service for many a long year, and replaced them by very substantial modern benches of pine-wood.

In the requisites for the due and becoming services of the Abbey, his taste and neatness were fully displayed. Many other changes for the better are due to his untiring energy. He practically made a new Church of the Abbey, without, in the least, altering or even injuring the original effective and handsome design.

The grounds, in the immediate vicinity of the Abbey, were planted and beautified, in keeping with the grandeur of the sacred structure they enclosed. A very fine ornamental iron railing runs the full length of the Abbey grounds, facing the side street that leads down to the entrance to the Church. A well-flagged side-path is laid down in front of it for the greater security and comfort of the large congregation that attend the religious services in the Abbey, morning and evening.

To accomplish these several works and necessary improvements, a large expenditure of money was, of course, required. The question naturally arises, where did the funds come from? They were supplied by Father Anderson's friends, not only in Fethard, and elsewhere in Ireland, but also in the States and far-distant Australia.

The number of his friends may be calculated, and the warmth and sincerity of their friendship proven by the fact, that he received from them the very generous and noble sum of £1,600 to complete the work into which he threw himself, heart and soul, from the very first week of his residence in Fethard. It is only due to him to say, that he merits all the praise and thanks that have been, and still are, abundantly poured out upon him by the people of this town, who were witnesses of

his arduous and trying labours for the improvement and beautifying of the Abbey they dearly love and venerate.

His successors did their part in keeping up to the high standard he had set them. Suffice it to say that the Abbey, with its belongings, is not the least of the many splendid establishments of the Order in Ireland.

The present Prior is the Very Rev. E. O'Leary. Father O'Leary has collected, with persevering energy, all the documentary and other evidence relating to the Abbey and Monastery, upon which this history is founded. Possessing a great love for archæological lore, he has, with a patience all his own, collected and deciphered the inscriptions found on the old monuments, of which we speak in the next Chapter.

The writer would not have attempted the

compilation of this little book were he not encouraged by the collection of facts and data, strung together by the Reverend Prior. The photographs illustrating this little volume, and enhancing any value it may possess, are the productions of his skill and taste as an ardent lover of the camera.

A word or two may be said about the old Monastery. A great portion of it, now sheltered by a mantle of ivy from the desolating hand of time, stands as a fitting companion, in its venerable old age, to the Abbey which it adjoins. It is certainly a quaint and interesting ruin. How solidly, and with an eye to permanency, did those gone before us lay stone on stone. The walls are of great thickness, and as hard and lasting as adamant.

After such a great lapse of years since it left the builder's hands, it would take more

than any ordinary strong man, with a stout pick, to shake or displace one of the stones that compose it. It must have been a very spacious and commodious building, from what remains to indicate the large proportions of it, as it existed in days gone by. It is entered by a stone archway from the present garden.

On the right was the refectory, a very fine room with vaulted roof. The dormitories were airy, and sufficient to accommodate a large community. Beyond the refectory there is a narrow, stone staircase, leading up to what must have been an infirmary, or room for the old and infirm Fathers, unable to descend to the Church for Choir purposes, or the other services performed there. There is a window looking into the Church, so that those unable to come down to the Abbey might hear

Mass, or participate in the religious functions that took place in that venerable edifice.

The kitchen remains in a very good state of preservation. The ceiling is a perfect stone mosaic; and looking at its noble arch and studying the symmetrical manner in which the small stones are inserted into a bed of solid mortar, one wonders why we call this century of ours an age of progress and advancement.

It may well be queried whether the work here before our eyes could be improved on or even faithfully reproduced by the skilled hands of modern builders and masons. A room, the door of which is now walled up, is said to have been used by the Fathers as a secure hiding-place in the dark and troublous penal days.

It is an unbroken and well authenticated tradition amongst the people of Fethard, that

the Friars were at their post of duty, looking after the spiritual welfare of their persecuted brethren, in those times of peril and desolation when love of country was called treason, and the practice of the Catholic Faith a capital offence.

It is said that the supply of Priests was well maintained by the Superiors of the Order. As soon as one Father succumbed to the inroads of some mortal malady, or gloriously won a martyr's crown at the blood-stained hands of the priest-hunters, another was immediately sent to fill the vacant place. Little wonder that the Irish Catholics have such a deep and whole-souled love and veneration for the Religious Bodies, who stood faithfully and valiantly at their side when the hand of the oppressor was laid heavily upon their beloved land, and what they valued above all

else, the Faith that had come down to them through the long avenue of centuries from the Apostolic hands of St. Patrick.

The pity of it is that we know not the names or number of these heroic sons of St. Augustine, who sealed with their life's blood their testimony of the Faith, of which they were no ornamental ministers, so that they might be added to the long and noble glory-roll of the Martyrs of the Irish Church.

The Abbey and its grounds, perhaps, would have received another claim to veneration and reverence from the martyrdom of many a saintly member of the Order of St. Augustine, done to death by impious haters of their creed and race in those hallowed and sanctified precincts.

Another tradition, equally well-founded and substantiated by the testimony of some of the

oldest inhabitants, who say they saw it and roamed through it in their young days, states that an underground passage exists between the Church, once the property of the Canons Regular, now the Protestant Church, and the Abbey. The location of this means of communication between the two establishments cannot be discovered owing to the transformation that has taken place in the locality by the erection of new buildings on the ground where the opening to the passage is said to exist.

There are many more matters of interesting detail, that might be mentioned, in connection with the building of which we confess we have given but a meagre description. Before closing this Chapter, it may be well to inform our friendly critics that every effort has been made to collect every item of historical evi-

dence pertaining to the Abbey and Monastery that could throw the faintest ray of light on their absorbingly interesting past.

The best authors, who treat of their history, or who, in their writings, in any way, make allusion to them, have been closely studied. It is not too much to claim for this little volume the merit of containing, within its covers, all that can with certainty be known about the Abbey and Monastery of the Augustinian Fathers in Fethard.

CHAPTER III.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS.

THE traditional love and veneration of Irish Catholics for the sacred places in which, during life, they assisted at the great act of Catholic worship, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and offered up their fervent prayers to the Most High, are not extinguished by the hand of death.

When the shades of that unwelcome visitant fell thick and fast around them, they gave expression to the fervent wish and desire of their Celtic hearts that their tenantless remains might be laid to rest within the shadows of the Church where they had learned the secret

of preparing for the coming of the reaper whose scythe respects not the head that wears a crown nor the most menial and lowly amongst the children of men.

It was a pious and reasonable wish expressed by the parched lips of the departing Christian about to wing his flight to a realm more joyous and congenial than the transitory one, where it had borne the heat and burden of the day, this side of the grave. The dying Catholic well knew the value of intercessory prayer for the souls of those "who die in the Lord."

Not in some elegantly laid-out cemetery, filled with costly and gaudy monuments, triumphs of the sculptor's chisel, should all that was mortal of him be laid, to await the final summons to a glorious resurrection. His memory might soon be forgotten there amongst the grandeur and pomp displayed in these

marvels of the sculptor's art, erected to mark the spot where some of earth's favoured children had sunk to rest.

In that poor and lowly graveyard, sheltered and caressed by the shadows that fell from some old abbey church, it was his ambition to be buried. He craved no stately monument or sculptured sarcophagus over the place, where loving hands and grief-laden hearts had placed his remains in that consecrated ground,

A simple slab commemorating his death, and a pious appeal to those left behind to pray for the repose of his immortal soul, were all that he asked from those left to mourn his loss. He was convinced that, for long years, his memory would thus be kept green, and his purgatory shortened by the many and fervent prayers for mercy and compassion offered by his brethren amongst the living.

The people, coming from the Sunday Mass, would, of necessity, pray for the souls of the faithful departed whose monuments confronted them like so many spirits from the world beyond; and reminded them of their obligations to the "Prisoners of the King." The little children, in the intervals of their play there, whose simple prayers pierce the clouds, and bring down mercy in copious abundance, would lisp a prayer for the dear departed, as they had been taught by their pious teachers.

Within the sacred edifice, the Priest, who perhaps had been God's Angel of Mercy at their death-beds, and his successors would undoubtedly pray at Mass for their release from the tortures of their fiery prison. Their supplications from the tomb do not appeal in vain to the sympathetic hearts of the race whence they spring. Prayers innumerable, and

Masses without number, ascend, like sweet incense, before the Throne of God, to make intercession for them, that they may be released from their sufferings, and enjoy the Beautiful Vision they so ardently desired to behold.

It is not a matter of surprise, then, to find all the old ruined churches and graveyards surrounding them filled with monuments to the memory of those who "sleep the sleep that knows no wakening" in such places, hallowed by a thousand pious and sacred memories.

The Abbey of Fethard in the old days was a favourite burial-place of rich and poor alike. It has a wealth of monuments of all kinds, costly and otherwise, to prove its selection as the last home of some of the greatest of its public men and benefactors. They form a

very interesting link with the days of long ago when Fethard was a town of great importance, and a centre of commercial life and prosperity.

Considering the wear and tear to which they have been subjected for years upon years by the constant tramp of many feet, they are in a wonderful state of preservation. Many, it is true, have succumbed to the ravages of time and rough usage, consequent on the derelict state of the Abbey during the long night of persecution.

The monuments consist of long lime-stone slabs on which, in old English characters, the names of the deceased are carved, forming a border for the monument. There are on some armorial bearings, very well executed, telling of the noble birth or distinguished lineal descent of those who lie beneath. One and

all, certainly, merit more than a passing notice. Time and labour have not been spared to ascertain, from all available sources, the interesting history of the many families, whose remains are buried within the Abbey grounds, and whose memories are recorded on these time-worn tablets, placed there long centuries ago.

One of the oldest monuments at present, preserved in the collection, now to be seen in the Abbey Cemetery, is that of the Le Buttler family. It must be understood that this is the oldest, or rather the one bearing the remotest date, at present extant.

There are many fragments of monuments lying round, but, unfortunately, we have no clue as to their antiquity, as the letters are merely the faintest traces or outlines of those cut in the stone centuries past. It is impossible

to decipher them; and we must be satisfied with the very probable conjecture that they date back to a period long in advance of the dates we are luckily enabled to place before our kind readers. The following is the inscription on this tomb of the Le Buttlers. It is in Latin, and is thus literally translated for the sake of convenience of, we hope, our many readers :—

“Here lies Thomas, son of Edmund Le Buttler and Johanna, daughter of Dermot O’Mulryan, A.D. 1524.”

This stone is in a fragmentary condition; and the preceding portion, we have translated, is all that can be deciphered on it. This is one of the many monuments erected by the Butler family to the memory of the several members of that historic branch buried here.

The ancestors of the Butlers came originally

from Normandy. They followed William the Conqueror to England. Fitz-Walter is the name by which this family was known before they settled in Ireland. Theobald Fitz-Walter came to Ireland with Henry II. He received the office of Chief-Butler of Ireland. It was the duty of the owner of this title to hand the first cup of wine to the newly-crowned King of England at the Coronation Service. From the high office bestowed on this distinguished family by their Sovereign, they changed their Norman name to that of Butler, by which they have ever since been known.

King Henry II. bestowed the properties of the subjugated Irish nobility with a lavish hand on the Butlers. The rich and fertile lands of Tipperary and a goodly share of the adjoining county of Waterford were their reward for assisting this monarch in his work

of spoliation. Titles appertaining to these vast and rich possessions were literally showered upon them.

They evidently held a high position in the estimation of their royal patron, and were rewarded more liberally than most of that monarch's retainers for their services in the conquest of Ireland.

The old Irish families in whose veins the blood of a kingly race freely coursed, were reduced to a state of poverty that these Norman invaders might be elevated to a position of opulence and social status that their origin in no wise warranted. It must be said, however, in favour of this family, that they were amongst the many of alien blood who became in time "*Hibernicis ipsis Hiberniores.*"

The family burial-place of the O'Mulryans is within the Abbey walls. The O'Mulryans

belonged to the old Celtic stock of landed proprietors. They can trace their pedigree away back to the halcyon days when Ireland, in the truest sense, was Irish to her heart's core. No grasping foreigner had set his foot on her green shores to fatten on the best fruits of her prolific soil, plundered from their lawful owners. The O'Ryans or O'Mulryans were chieftains in the baronies of Owney in Tipperary, and Owenbeg in Limerick.

The monument of the O'Meagher family is very well preserved, and the lettering round it is very clear, and easily deciphered. Time has dealt kindly with it, considering the many years that have passed since it was erected :—

“Here lie Thaddeus Owns Meagher and Honora Keeghan, his wife, who erected this monument before their death, A.D. 1540.”

The Meagher family had attained to the

highest social rank and position long before the English hordes descended on our shores. They were chieftains of their clans, and possessed large tracts of lands in the County of Tipperary. Like their kinsmen, they were robbed of their properties, and made way for the usurpers, to whom their estates were handed over by the monarch whom they served in his work of devastation and plunder. The O'Meaghers settled down in the neighbourhood of Fethard. The Abbey was the chosen spot where their dead were laid to rest.

A descendant of this illustrious family, John O'Meagher, was buried in the year 1839 in the Abbey graveyard. He was the leading merchant of Fethard at the time, and was held in the highest esteem by his fellow townsmen, as a man of whom any locality

might well be proud. The O'Meaghers of Cloneen and Kilburry are lineally descended from the same stock.

Another monument belonging to the same family is in a state of very good preservation. The letters are very legible and distinct:—

“Here lie Thadeus Donall O'Meagher, of Balliduil, and Anastasia Purcell, his wife, who caused this monument to be erected, the 20th day of May, A.D. 1600.”

There is a third monument erected to the memory of other members of this very extensive family of the O'Meaghers. The inscription runs thus:—

“Here lie Thomas O'Meagher and his wife, Eliza Carran, on whose souls, O Lord, have mercy. This monument was erected by their son. . . . 1642.”

The name of the son cannot be deciphered, as the letters are almost totally obliterated.

A monument that attracts the attention of all visitors to the Abbey is that of the Tobin family. It is inserted in the wall of the Chapel of our Lady of Good Counsel, and is very much admired as a splendid specimen of this class of the sculptor's art. It undoubtedly owes its preservation from the fate of many of its companions, to having been always under cover, and thus protected from the destructive power of the elements.

It will be seen from the accompanying photograph that it bears not a single trace of decay, which one would expect to find in a monument that has a few hundreds of years to its credit. Looking at it, as it is to-day, one could never imagine that it had been erected so far back as the year 1634. The

inscription gives no trouble to the visitor. The lettering is done in old English characters. The same style is followed in the inscriptions on all the other tombs in the Abbey, with one or two exceptions. On the top corners of the slab the Coat of Arms of the family is clearly cut; and the inscription is as follows:—

“Pray for the souls of Edmund Tobin of Brisclagh, Gentleman, and Margaret Tobin, his wife. Thomas Tobin, their son and heir, and Jane Tobin, alias Marrinel, the wife of Thomas, who are interred here, and by whom this monument was erected, A.D. 1634.”

The Tobin family were amongst the many settlers who followed King Henry II. to Ireland, and were rewarded with possessions in the County of Waterford. They gradually extended themselves into the neighbouring County of Tipperary. Brisclagh was the

ancient name of the residence of the Tobin family of Kyleneagranagh, the old foundation of which is still extant, and is called by the neighbours, "Shanaclogh," or old stone.

Edmund Tobin, to whom the monument was first erected, was cousin-german to Tobin of Kilaghy, styled Baron Tobin. Mention is made of members of this family in the Army List of King James. They were evidently amongst the number of those who adhered to the Old Faith in times of persecution and trial. They valued that Faith as their most priceless treasure, and hence they did not fare, in a worldly sense, as well as their fellow-settlers, who sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. Judging by the expensive and handsome monument erected by the family to the memory of its deceased members, they must have had a goodly share of this

world's goods, and have held high social rank.

A member of this distinguished family was Mrs. Dwyer, *née* Tobin, who gave such material help to Father Condon in roofing in the old Abbey Church. She sent her horses and men a long distance to cut the wood, and cart it into Fethard for the roofing of the Church where her forefathers were sleeping the sleep of the just. She was a near relative of Messrs. John and Thomas Russell of Clonmel.

The late Very Rev. Father Tobin, a well-known and distinguished priest of the Diocese of Liverpool, was a direct descendant of Edmund Tobin, whose name is inscribed on the tomb in the Lady Chapel.

The monument of the Kearney family is wonderfully well preserved, and owing to the clearness of the lettering, no difficulty

presents itself in deciphering the inscription.

The residents of Fethard in those far-off days evidently valued highly the honour of being on the Burgess Roll of that town. They made it a point to have the fact inscribed on their tombs, that future generations might know that they were amongst the honoured families of Fethard, and esteemed it a privilege to be numbered amongst its Burgesses.

This is the inscription on the Kearney family tombstone :—

“Here lies Bernard Kearney, Burgess of Fethard, son of Maurice Kearney, also a Burgess. Bernard died the 27th day of April, A.D. 1687, in the 38th year of his age.

“His wife Catherine Kearney, *née* Dwyer, erected this monument, A.D. 1687.”

It is mentioned in the old records that this



Erit jacens. Richardus. Walle. de Rasth
 R. yny. generosus. H. Catharina. Walle
 als. Cartan. Filia. Rasth. Catharina
 demobartnan. eius. Uxor. qui. hoc. mon
 umntum. sub. st. et. stibus. in. stibus
 de. Corpore. For. yny. Ex. cunctibus. prior
 utique. pntibus. Fieri. Fecerunt

Georgina. amnis. stibus. propitius. et. in. stibus
 Dat. m. d. c. lxx. Fibriar. g. Anno. salutis. 1635

Bernard or Bryan Kearney and his father Maurice occupied, at different times, the high position of Sovereign, or Mayor of Fethard.

A very interesting monument is that of the Wale family. It has a very lengthy inscription, and the lettering is easily read. It is as follows :—

“Here lie Richard Wale of Rathkenny, gentleman, and his wife Catherine Wale, *née* Carran, daughter of Malachy Carran of Mobarnan, who erected this monument for themselves, their offspring, male, and their descendants.

“Pray for the repose of their souls.
Erected the last day of February in the year of Salvation 1635.”

The ancestral home of the Wale family is still extant, and in a state of good repair. The family name, Wale, gradually developed into

the better known "Wall." None of the descendants of this once highly respectable and opulent family can be traced.

As it often happens in families, on whom the sun of prosperity has shone for long years, a change for the worse in their fortunes took place. Owing to this change, the junior members were forced to seek a living in distant lands; and thus the family links are broken, and the name, at least in their own land, is blotted out.

The Carran family of Mobarnan, or, as they are now called, Carey, were very wealthy and much respected by their neighbours. They had a beautiful residence and large possessions in lands. In the vicissitudes that befell many of the well-to-do families of that time, others became possessed of their extensive properties. In the Army List of King James, Matthew

Carran is represented as a man held in the highest repute.

A family that seems to have been of the number of those that were representative of the aristocracy of their day, was that of the Dungans. O'Hart, in his "Irish Pedigrees," says that this family was of English extraction; and settled down first on the fertile plains of Kildare. The Dungan or Donegan family, as the name is now pronounced, as time went on, branched out into other Irish counties. In the County of Tipperary they established themselves, and fortune evidently smiled upon them. This monument, after such a lapse of years, is in a very good state of preservation. The inscription is lengthy and the lettering very distinct:—

“Here lie Thomas Dungan of Ballynecloy, gentleman, and his wife, Margaret Carney, and

their son, William Dungan, gentleman, of the same place, who caused this monument to be erected to the memory of themselves and their heirs male, on the 1st day of April, A.D. 1627."

The armorial bearings of the family were cut on a stone slab; they are almost obliterated. On most of the monuments there are the distinctive badge or crest of the families buried beneath. Some of them can be delineated, but most of them are but the faintest traces of the originals. The wonder is, considering the severe usage to which they were subjected when the Abbey was in a state of ruin, that so many of them bear but little trace of the rough and destructive handling they received.

There is a large fragment of a monument of a family named Vin. On the Burgess Roll of Fethard preserved in the Town Hall, the

name is to be found. This family evidently belonged to the wealthy and respectable portion of the inhabitants of that town. The following is the part of the inscription that remains on the fragment of what must have been a very large and elaborate monument:—

“Redmund Vinn, who caused this stone to be erected to the memory of himself and his children. 24 December . . .”

It is much to be regretted that copies of these inscriptions were not taken when the monuments were in a perfect state of preservation. It may be that such copies were taken; but, like most ancient records, were lost or destroyed in the days of social and political turmoil that Ireland has but too often experienced in her sad and eventful history.

Within the Abbey many of that great,

illustrious, and pre-eminently Catholic family of the Everards are laid to rest. They were the owners of very large and valuable properties in and around Fethard. The splendid demesne of the Oaken Grove, or "Grove," as it is now called, belonged to them. They suffered considerable pecuniary loss on account of their steadfast adherence to the Old Faith. They would have undoubtedly parted willingly with all their worldly interests rather than surrender their proud inheritance of the Faith of their forefathers.

Sir Redmond was possessed of some of the richest lands about Fethard. The Cromwellian Freebooters were rewarded for their vile services with some of these valuable holdings. At the Restoration, the officers of the Royalist party were given a large share of what was left for their faithful allegiance to their Sovereign. In

this iniquitous manner the properties of the Catholic gentry passed into the hands of a very undesirable class, who have taken, unfortunately, deep root in our country.

Sir John Everard, son of Sir Redmond, was second judge of the King's Bench during the reign of James I. He was a most devout and ardent Catholic. His enemies endeavoured to have him removed from his high office on account of his Catholicity.

The King, in his letter, speaks in the most flattering terms of Sir John. In this letter to Sir Arthur Chichester, dated 27th June, 1603, he thus writes of him :—"Though otherwise commended for his knowledge and upright carriage, and one whom for his good parts he would not publicly disgrace." He advises Sir Arthur Chichester to counsel him to send in his resignation as one of His Majesty's Judges.

This Sir John refused to do. He was allowed to wear the ermine for some years, as no successor worthy of that exalted position could be found amongst those who were loudly clamouring for his removal.

They succeeded at last in depriving the Bench of one of the greatest—if not the greatest—of its luminaries. Though removed from a position he adorned for long years, he returned to his practice at the Bar. As the judges in those days held office only during the King's pleasure, they could, on being dismissed or removed for any cause, resume their practice at the Inner Bar.

“The Judge removed, though he's no more, My Lord May plead at Bar, or at the Council Board.”

Sir John soon obtained a lucrative practice in his profession, the natural result of his high

legal attainments. He was elected speaker of the House of Commons by the Catholic Party, who thus showed their admiration for him and their displeasure at his removal from the Bench, of which he had been the chief ornament.

Sir John married Catherine Comerford, leaving his widow and three sons surviving. He died in 1624. He left his property to his eldest son, Nicholas. Richard, his second son, was created a baronet in 1622. His son and heir, Redmond, married Elizabeth, daughter of Colonel Butler, of Kilcash, only brother of James, Duke of Ormonde. In this way the Everard family became connected with the great house of Ormonde. Sir Richard Everard resided at Everard's Castle in the neighbourhood of Clogheen. He was the proprietor of very large estates in the Barony of Iffa and

Offa West, County Tipperary. These possessions of Sir Richard's family were parcelled out between "two pretended adventurers," and Sir Thomas Stanley, an officer in Cromwell's Army. The third baronet, Sir William, fell in the famous battle of Aughrim, gloriously fighting for his beloved country, and valiantly upholding the best traditions of a noble Catholic race.

As we have mentioned in a former chapter, the splendid mansion, now the Officers' Quarters, in the most central part of the town of Fethard, was built by the Everard family. They formed the bone and sinew of Catholicity in the South Riding of Tipperary, and were remarkable alike for their devotion to their Faith and their liberality to those less favoured with the riches of this life. Well may the people of Fethard cherish the memory, and

glory in the good deeds of the bearers of that honoured name.

The Abbey, we may confidently affirm, was not forgotten, when their well-stocked purse was frequently opened in the cause of Religion and Charity. They selected a spot endeared to them by many ties, as the last resting-place of the noble scions of their thoroughly Catholic and charitable race. The only tomb that has survived the wreck of time, and the many destructive causes that have blotted out many of the valuable monuments that once stood within the walls of the famous Abbey, is that of Edmund Everard. The inscription runs thus :—

“Here lies Edmund Everard, Gentleman,
A.D. 152 . . .”

This is all that remains of the monument in the Catholic Church. The following is to be

found in the Church of the Holy Trinity, now the Protestant Church :—

“ Here lies Don James Everard, Burgess of this Town, who died in December, 1667. His wife, Anastasia Donoghue, erected this Monument 1667.”

The Rev. Father Everard, C.C., SS. Peter and Paul, Clonmel, a well-beloved and highly-respected Priest, who has won the esteem and regard of all creeds and classes in that important town, is a lineal descendant of the great and noble Catholic House of Everard.

We give a very true photograph of the most famous tomb in the Abbey. It is the burial place of that great and noble branch of the Butler family, the Lords of Dunboyne. Were the date of its erection—or to speak correctly—its renovation not clearly visible on it, we

should be inclined to doubt the number of years that has passed since it was first erected. There is no symbol of Catholicity engraven on it. We must conclude, then, that this branch of an ancient and illustrious race had gone over to the more fashionable and comfortable religion, that they might possess in peace the lands they had received from the Sovereign they followed to Ireland.

On all the Catholic monuments the familiar signs of the Catholic belief of those interred beneath them are not wanting. Prayers are asked for the repose of their souls; some Scriptural text is found relating to the belief of Catholics in a middle state. Nothing but the cold and formal inscription graces the Dunboyne monument.

The Abbey evidently was not in the hands of the Friars at the time this sacred place was

chosen as the last resting-place of the members of this aristocratic family. They certainly would not have permitted the burial even of these exalted personages within the very sanctuary of the Abbey, who had bartered their Faith for the things of earth.

The Dunboyne family spread themselves over many counties in Ireland, as the records of the family attest. Tipperary, however, was their stronghold. They held possession of the fairest and most extensive pastures in this wonderfully fertile county. One branch of this noble family lived in Kiltinan Castle, a few miles from Fethard. Another branch resided at Shangarry Castle, or Wilford, near Mullinahone. In the returns made to the Government of all those holding lands in the different counties of Ireland, mention is made of Lord Dunboyne of Kiltinan Castle, as holder of large

tracts of land in that part of Tipperary in the year 1641.

The monument is really a work of art and in the highest state of preservation. The lettering of the inscription is as clear and fresh-looking as if the sculptor's chisel had but recently formed it. The Coat of Arms surmounts the top of it, and the family motto is given in the Latin text. There is also the war-cry of the Butler family in the Gaelic tongue. It must have cost, in those days, a goodly sum for its workmanship and erection. It is now placed in the old gable of the Abbey, which stands covered by a thick mantle of ivy, in the historic cemetery where most of the old monuments have been placed. The inscription runs as follows :—

“This ancient Monument of the most illustrious Barons of Dunboyne was restored to its present state by Dame Ellen Geraldine

Lady Dunboyne, daughter of the Count of Desmond, in memory of her husband, Edmund Butler, Lord Baron of Dunboyne, who died the 17th of March, 1640."

EPITAPH.

"Here lies Edmund, under the cold marble pure and undefiled,

My whole world lies beneath where he sleepeth."

It is stated by some authorities on the matter that the founder of the Dunboyne establishment is buried somewhere in the Abbey grounds. The exact place of his interment cannot be determined, as no trace of any memorial raised to his memory can be discovered. This Lord Dunboyne, as our readers may be aware, was for some years Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Cork. In order to preserve the family estates, he threw aside his Episcopal Office and became a member of the

Protestant Church, making open profession of his new faith in the Protestant Church of Clonmel. For thirteen years he conformed, at least outwardly, to the tenets of that Church, until he was stricken with a malady that proved fatal. In these solemn and awful moments, the Old Faith, which was not dead, but merely slumbering, awoke within him, and he loudly clamoured for the ministrations of a Priest of that Faith.

He had many years before made the acquaintance of that good and venerable son of St. Augustine, so well known for his sermons and other works of piety, Dr. William Gahan, O.S.A., of John Street, Dublin. He had kept up a constant and most friendly correspondence with this learned Augustinian divine. Hearing of the serious illness of his friend, and fearing a miserable ending to what had promised to be

a bright and useful ecclesiastical career, he went with all haste to the dying prelate's death-bed, in Shangarry Castle, near Mullinahone.

Lady Dunboyne gave strict orders that no Catholic Priest should be admitted beyond the threshold of the Castle. It is said that Father Gahan, disguised as a physician from the capital, gained admittance through the aid of some Catholic servant in his Lordship's service. He fully reconciled this erring son of the Church, and fortified him for his last sad journey with all the rites and consolations of our holy religion. A full recantation of his former errors, and a sincere expression of deep sorrow and penitence for the great scandal he had given to his flock, signed by his own hand, was forwarded to the occupant of the See of Peter, the Pastor of Pastors. He left a large sum for the endowment of that celebrated

institution in Maynooth College that now bears his name.

It will be within the knowledge of the readers of these pages, that the will was unsuccessfully contested by Lady Dunboyne and others, who were beside themselves with rage and chagrin when they found that the Apostate Bishop had died in the Catholic Faith, from which he had seceded for a while under the influence of a strong and mighty temptation.

Father Gahan was imprisoned for contempt of Court by Lord Kilwarden, who tried the case, because of his refusal to answer some questions, which, without a breach of the seal of Confession, he could not possibly answer. He was, however, liberated after a very brief incarceration. It is stated that Father Gahan attended the funeral obsequies of the reconciled Bishop in the Abbey of Fethard.

We cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of the statements about the burial-place of Lord Dunboyne. His reception before his death into the Church he had abandoned for a time, is a fact well beyond the region of doubt. It is very probable that his remains were interred in the ground where so many members of his illustrious family are buried. If Shangarry Castle is the place in which his demise took place, it is more than probable that the Abbey of Fethard is his last resting-place, for it is only eight or nine miles from the ancestral home of the Dunboynes.

There are other monuments lying around the cemetery belonging to different branches of this great family of the Butlers. A very large monument, now in a state of dilapidation, bears the following inscription :—

“Here lie Peter Butler and Norah O’Quinn,
‘or Kenny,’ who erected this Monument.
Peter Butler died XI day of Jan. A.D. 1571.”

Another monument of large dimensions, the property of the same extensive family, is preserved in very good condition and is inscribed as follows:—

“This monument reserves the corpse of James Butler, Esquier, son to the Lord Baron of Dunboyne, deceased the last day of November, A.D. 1619, whose mourning wife, Dame Ellen, daughter of Sir Walter Butler, Earl of Ormonde, erected him the same.”

Dame Ellen was a daughter of that great champion of the Catholic Faith best known as Sir Walter of the Rosary. He certainly maintained intact the Faith which had come down to him from his Norman ancestry.

There remains a fragment of a very fine monument to the memory of Theobald Butler of Darreloskan. On it are inscribed the words :—

“Here lies Theobald Butler of Darreloskan, gentleman, and Catherine.”

Another very ancient monumental stone is that erected over the grave of the noble house of Nugent, Barons of Delvin. The inscription is in old English :—

“Here lyes Christopher Nugent, Lord Baron of Delvin, whoe died the 15th day of April in the yeare 1672.”

The Nugent family came originally from Meath. They were created Barons of Delvin, in that county, by Henry II. As the family increased, the younger members sought other fields for their enterprise. The rich lands of

Tipperary seem to have had a particular charm for the scions of the great houses of the English Pale.

They either bought, or rather received from their masters whom they had faithfully served, the choice portions of this favoured county, which the Irish chieftains had brought to a high state of luxurious cultivation. Tipperary was singled out by these grasping gentry as an ideal place in which to amass the wealth upon which their greedy hearts were set. The old families of the Celtic race were thus gradually supplanted by those whom their monarch had dignified with titles in lavish profusion.

Many of these families intermarried with those of the natural owners of the soil, whose pedigrees can be traced back to the days of Milesius, king of Ireland. It must, too,

be said to their credit, that they were in most cases valiant defenders, and generous benefactors of the Catholic Faith in the country of their adoption and love.

A very interesting and curious monument of very large size deserves mention amongst the many which are to be seen in the Abbey of Fethard. It differs from all the others in this particular, that it is literally covered over with large letters, the signification of which it is not in our power to make out. Rubbings of the inscription have been sent to those well versed in this special department of archaeological research, but without result. All have given it up as something beyond their ken.

We can easily decipher the Latin verse and the Scriptural text in the same language. This is the inscription :—

(.)

“Hi quamvis tumulo saxoque premente quiescant
Tu tamen his requiem quam petiere vove.”

“Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.”

On the cross, in high relief, extending from top to bottom of the stone slab that forms the monument the latter are engraven. They are M.M.M.M. S.V.A.M. N.S.M.S. M.M.D. O.M.D.M.M. It would be a matter of great interest to know for certain what these letters signify. The Latin verse has been done into English thus :—

“Although beneath this Tomb in ashes now they lie,
Still grant them Thou, O Lord! the rest they
craved, on high.”

These are some of the more important and interesting memorials erected in the Abbey to perpetuate the memory of those of noble

and gentle birth, as well as those of less exalted origin, whose ashes repose beneath these specimens of monumental sculpture of centuries long since engulfed in the vortex of time.

If we have not already over-taxed the kind consideration of our patient readers, we shall give a few copies made from the tombs to be seen in the Protestant Church of Fethard, once, like many of its kind, the home of Catholic belief and practice.

There is a very romantic and deeply interesting episode attaching to the first one of our selection. It is called the Jolly monument. It is refreshing to find one with this appellation amongst the number of these sombre relics of an almost forgotten past. It is erected to the memory of Robert Jolly, an Englishman, the story of whose romantic marriage to a young girl

of Fethard is well authenticated. The following inscription appears on the tomb in old English :—

“Here underfoot lyeth interred the body of Robert Jolly, formerly of Theobalds in Herefordshire in England, and late of Knock-kelly, Esquire, who died the 20th day of August, 1709, and in y^e 52nd yeare of his age.”

This Robert Jolly was a private in an English regiment of horse stationed for a time in Fethard in the year 1680. He formed an acquaintance, which ripened into early affection, with a young orphan girl named Ellen Meagher. This young girl was under the guardianship of a Mrs. St. John. The young couple soon entered into a promise of marriage at the first favourable opportunity.

Their hopes for a long and happy wedded life were suddenly shattered. The young soldier was ordered off on Foreign service, with the rest of his company, at very short notice. Miss Meagher sought change of scene, as her native town had lost all charm for her. She accompanied a young English lady to London either as companion or attendant. The great metropolis proved more friendly to her than it usually does to so many of her compatriots, who eke out an existence there amongst the millions of all creeds and races who people her vast and expanding areas.

An old Jew of fabulous wealth conceived a great fancy for this Tipperary colleen. To prove the extent of his riches he had, in his house, a large sow with twelve piglings, cast in solid virgin gold. Miss Meagher married this Jewish millionaire. He died a couple of

days after making her sole heiress and executrix of his princely fortune.

She soon made a great display of the wealth into which she had come. She drove, it is said, the most costly equipages in the streets of London. Passing one day by a barrack in London, she noticed a soldier on guard, whom her quick eye readily recognised as her quondam lover. She questioned him about his stay in Fethard, and thoroughly made sure that he was the Robert Jolly to whom, in that quiet town of Fethard, she had plighted her troth.

All questions being satisfactorily answered, she revealed her identity to him; and having purchased his discharge from the army, she gave him her hand in matrimony. After their marriage, they brought their riches to Ireland, and made Knockelly Castle, near Fethard, their future home.

They had three daughters, who married into some of the best families of the county; one of them to Mr. Gahan of Coolquil Castle, near Kilenale; another to Councillor Meagher of Kilmore, near Clonmel; and a third to Mr. O'Callaghan, ancestor to Lord Lismore. As no heir was born to them, the name of the fortunate son of Mars, Jolly, is extinct in this part of Ireland, where the heroine of this romantic sketch first saw the light.

The tomb of a family of ancient lineage and highest respectability is to be found in the Church of Fethard, now in the hands of the Church of England. It is the Kearney Fitzmorris burial ground. This family is a branch of the great O'Kearney stock. They lived in great splendour at their lordly residence, Killy Castle.

They had other residences of equal magnifi-

cence in different parts of the country. Barretstown Castle, Cappaghmore, near Cloneen; and Knockinglass, near Kilenale, belonged for centuries to different off-shoots of the good old O'Kearney genealogical tree. It is traditionally recorded that St. Patrick, in his missionary pilgrimages through this country, was the guest at dinner of the O'Kearneys of Knockinglass.

It is said that in token of gratitude for many acts of kindness received at their hands by our Patron Saint, he gave the family a golden cross. Whilst this remained in the family, health, wealth, and benediction would be their portion. This cross came into improper hands, and was sold for a paltry sum to a goldsmith.

Tradition dates the social downfall of this once rich and important family to the passing of St. Patrick's gift out of the hands of the

family to whom it was given. The last representative of this family died many years ago in the house of James Kennedy of Cappaghmore in a state of abject pauperism. They were ever noted for their stanch adherence, in fair weather and in foul, to the faith of their forefathers.

The inscription reads thus:—

“Here lyeth y^e body of Michael Carney Fitzmorriss, who died in his house at Killosty, y^e 12 of June, 1729, aged 70 yeares.

“May he rest in peace. Amen.”

The Cleare family were extensive landed proprietors in Kilbarry and Milestown, and ranked very highly amongst the gentry of the South Riding of Tipperary. The family vault in the Fethard Church is covered with a long inscription recording the deaths of mem-

bers of this great house of Cleare. There is no emblem of Catholicity upon it. They belonged to the Church of England, and thus they were left in peaceful possession of their vast estates.

The inscription is written in quaint old English style:—

“Here lyeth y^e body of Thos. Cleare, son of Tho^s and Esther Cleare of Milestown, who departed this life y^e 13th day of December, A.D. 1691, and in y^e 11th yeare of his age.

“Here lies Edward Cleare’s son, who departed this life y^e 21st day of December, 1691, in y^e 9th yeare of his age.

“Here lyeth y^e body of Thos. Cleare of Kilburry, who deceased y^e 9th of January, 1705.”

On the death of the young boy of 9 years of age, named on the tomb, who died of small-

pox, the property passed out of the hands of the Cleare family. His only sister was married to Sir L. Parsons, ancestor to the Earl of Rosse. The Earls of Rosse fell in for all the estates of this opulent family of the Cleares.

Another family of great wealth and social standing in their day was that of the Henes, or Heynes, or Heney. They were of the old Celtic stock, and faithful to the religion of their ancestors. They were the owners of large tracts of land in Coleman and Market Hill, near Fethard.

This is the record on their family tomb:—

“Here lies Richard Henes, who died the 29th December, 1615. His son Thomas and his wife, Anastasia Archer, erected this monument.”

This Richard Henes mentioned was the

father of Thomas Henes, who went down from Fethard to join the Confederate Catholics in Kilkenny in 1646.

A very old and much respected family connected with Fethard for centuries, is that of Cooke, representatives of which are living near the town at the present day. They are the descendants of a family of that name, who first settled, on their arrival from England, in the County of Waterford. They were rewarded for their services to the King of England, by grants of land in that county, and, most likely, in Tipperary also.

The following record appears on their burial-place in the Church of Fethard:—

“Here lyeth the body of Anne Cooke, alyes Langly, y^e wife of Peter Cooke, Burges in Fethard, who departed this life y^e 12 of February, in y^e y^r. of oure Lorde 1680.”

There is to be seen in the same Church a large portion of a monument over the grave of Redmond Nash. The following is the inscription upon it:—

“Redmond Nash who died A.D. 1629. His son, Edmond Nash, and Ellen Everard, his wife, erected this to his memory.”

This Ellen Everard belonged to the distinguished family of that name, the history of which we have previously given. This is a Catholic monument, as the members of the Everard family, as also that of the Nashes, were ardent followers of the Old Faith.

In this Church also there are the tombs of the Higgin, Hackett, and Morgan families. The Higgin tomb bears the inscription:—

“Here lies John Higgin and his wife, Ellen Morrisis, who erected this Monument, A.D. 1627.”

The Hackett monument is thus inscribed :—

“Here lie John Hackett, Burgess, and his wife, Elicia Sall, the latter died on the 21st day of May, 1613.”

The Morgan family have a very large monument erected to the memory of its deceased members. It records the deaths in this manner :—

“Here lies Peter Morgan, B.F. (Burgess of Fethard), son of John Morgan and Catharine Mulrony.”

The Latin verse is thus put into English :—

“Pause here, O Pilgrim, and think of thy lot with sorrow,

As I am dead to-day, so thou shalt be to-morrow ;
If in thy tender heart be aught of clemency,
Pour forth, O friendly reader, pious prayers for me.”

“A.D. 1671.”

We have lingered among these memorials of the dead at, perhaps, to our readers, a tedious and wearisome length. We had a laudable object in view in thus tarrying amongst these rather depressing reminders of our mortality. It was our endeavour not to pass over in silence any of the monuments that might prove of interest to those who, in some way, may claim descent from those whose names are inscribed on them. Again there is a local interest attaching to each and every one we have selected for publication out of the many that are to be seen in both the Abbey and the Church, now devoted to the services of an alien Faith.

Most people like to know who were the persons who formed the aristocracy and held the lands in and about the place of their nativity or maybe adoption. The graveyards and their weather-beaten and moss-covered memorial

stones are the pages that tell, in simple and truthful language, the history of a country, and record the names of those who, in their day, were the leaders and princes of the people. There is some sort of a fascination about these ancient monuments, that makes it difficult to tear one-self away from them without a longing desire to soon re-visit them, and study the lesson they tell of the vanity of man's worldly greatness, and the short-lived glory of all that is human.

It may be well to mention a few remarkable works of art preserved from the wreckage of many art treasures which Ireland, in her days of peace and prosperity, gathered within her four seas. She was ever the fond parent of the arts and sciences. These works that remain to us of the handicraft and penmanship of the olden days have never been equalled, and

certainly not surpassed in any country in the world.

The Dublin Museum contains a store of priceless treasures that are at once the admiration and the envy of countries that make open boast of the civilization that was theirs in the centuries that are gone and past for them. Carving in oak was a famous artistic achievement of the Irish people. All over our land we find many relics of the high standard reached by the skilled hands and trained eye of Irish sculptors in wood. They had a special predilection for religious subjects on which to display the artistic gift that, beyond doubt, was theirs. The carving of images of the Saints, especially of the Mother of Him, the King of all those blessed souls, was their delight, for to this class of work their best efforts were put forth and their fame established.

In the Convent of the Augustinian Fathers, here, a beautiful statue in oak of the Mother of God holding the Infant lovingly in her arms, may be seen. In what century the work was completed, it is impossible to say. It certainly bears traces of its antiquity, that makes it safe to say, that some centuries have come and gone since the final touches of the artist were put upon it. The face of the Virgin is beautifully executed. It portrays that sweet maternal expression which the pious Catholic always associates with all devotional representations, in marble or on canvas, of the Blessed Mother of God.

Every detail is executed with a care and skill that leave an impression that the artist wished this statue to be known as his masterpiece. He succeeded in producing a work that even the great Grindling Gibbons might have

been proud to call the production of his magic and world-famed genius.

It must have been the object of tender devotion, and the stimulant to many a fervent prayer to her whose intercession is never sought in vain. Its history cannot be ascertained, as no record of its author, or of the date when it left his skilful hands, can be found. It may have adorned some special, retired nook in the old Abbey, to which the faithful came, when the burden of life lay heavily upon their shoulders, to seek relief from her whom it represents, in such a devotional manner.

When the sweet month of May came round, many a garland of choicest flowers may have been hung around it by the angel-hands of little children, to show their love of their warm innocent hearts for her, whom they loved to call their Queen. Whatever be its history, it is



SHEELAH-NA-GIG.

piously treasured by the Fathers, in whose safe keeping it remains to-day.

Amongst the photographs illustrating this modest work is one that certainly may be provocative of a quiet smile. It is the last of the group of these very true and artistic productions. It is inserted in one of the walls bounding the Abbey grounds. What it is intended to represent is truly a puzzle, the solution of which has not yet been discovered. Some say that it comes down from Pagan times, and represents a divinity much in favour with the people of those remote days.

We have yet to learn that our Pagan ancestors adored, in their worship, stocks and stones. The contrary, we believe, is the fact, backed up by the testimony of all writers on the subject of the nature of the Paganism cultivated by the early inhabitants of Ireland. We may

throw aside, as of no account, the opinion of those who would elevate this rather unprepossessing figure to a seat amongst the gods. There is another figure, almost a twin-brother to this, to be seen a couple of miles away at Kiltinan.

Perhaps, in the farrago of guesses or conjectures about the real character of this peculiar-looking piece of figure-carving, it may be safe to accept the opinion of a facetious gentleman, on seeing it for the first time. Having examined it closely, he solemnly gave it as his strong conviction that it was the original design for the central figure of a widely-advertised article of domestic use, that will do everything, but wash clothes.

We make a present of it to the students of archæology upon which to exercise their brains, so well stocked with the mystic lore of the

dead past, in their moments of leisure and recreation from more serious and momentous subjects.

On a slab, inserted in the front wall of the Tholsel or Market House, formerly a monastery, the following interesting inscription is to be found. It appears to have been set up there by Lady Everard, daughter of Mr. Roche, of Ballinard Castle.

The Roche family had large possessions in the vicinity of Fethard. The male line having failed, the properties passed to the Lindsay family, their successors by the female line.

This is the inscription translated from the Latin original :—

“Madame Everard, alias Roche, widow of John Everard, Junior, erected these ensigns of our Redemption, which the Everards, the founders, designed to be set up for the Patrons

of this Monastery, and being prevented by death, their names could not be affixed to this."

Madame Everard died the 12th of August, 1646.

We now leave this little volume confidently in the hands of our critical, yet indulgent, readers. We sincerely hope they will not be too severe or exacting in their judgment of its merits. It may modify the severity of their censures if they will kindly take into account, that it is the Author's first attempt in this difficult and intricate domain of historical and archæological research.

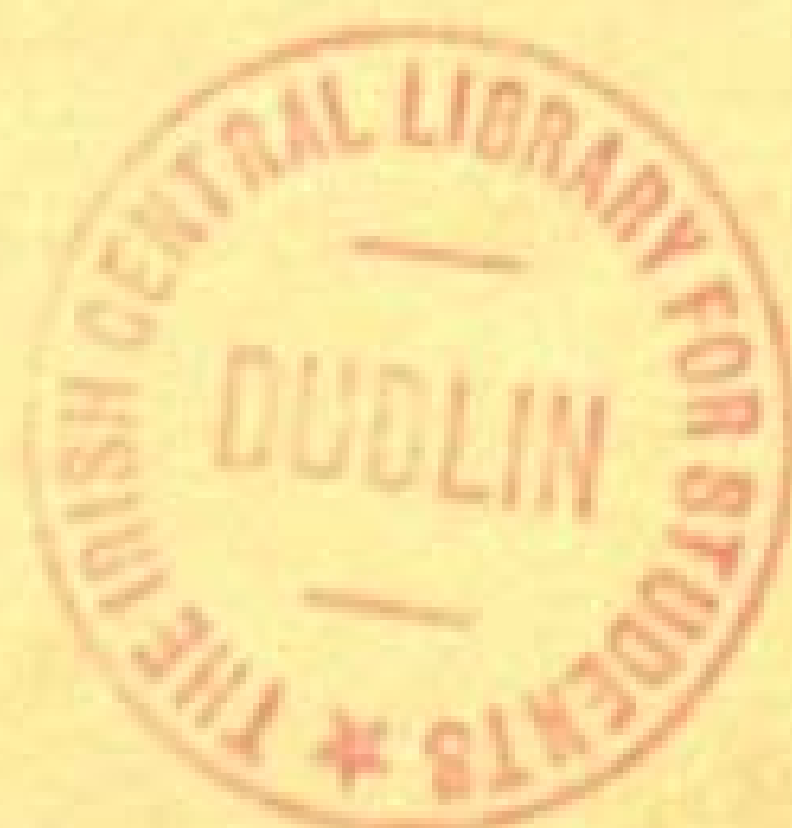
It must be borne in mind that his hands are tied to a great extent, and his field of operation considerably limited and confined, owing to the meagre nature of the material, documentary

and otherwise, placed at his disposal. He can truthfully say that he has done his best to search every nook and corner where there was a possibility that some important evidence, or well-substantiated fact might lie concealed.

In conclusion, he sincerely expresses the hope that his readers may experience some of the delight and pleasure, in perusing these pages, which he, so abundantly, enjoyed whilst examining the records of the glorious days of the past, concerning the old Monastery and Abbey of his Order in the quaint and venerable Irish Town of Fethard.

THE END.

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