

CHURCH OF
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION,
ENNISKEAN, CO. CORK.

WITH our present issue we give an illustration of the new Catholic church, the erection of which has just been commenced by the Rev. Dr. Coveney, P.P., at Enniskean. The style, which is Early Pointed, is treated in a bold and simple manner, and with a decidedly Irish feeling in its details, as indicated by the entire absence of buttresses, the high-pitched gables, and flush barge copings, &c. It is cruciform on plan, the nave and chancel being the same breadth and height throughout, measuring 110 ft. long by 30 ft. wide; the transepts, north and south, being 61 ft. by the same width. The "ladye chapel"—which, owing to the dedication of the church, has had bestowed upon it a larger amount of ornamentation than the rest—is to terminate at the east end with a semi-octagonal apse, and is. To finish internally with molded stone arcade over the windows, supported on shafts of Cork red polished marble, with carved capitals. This chapel runs parallel with the chancel, with which, as also with the south transept, it will communicate by large arched openings. The tower occupies the corresponding angle, formed by the south transept and nave; it will be surmounted by an octagonal broach spire—total height, 110 ft.—the lower portion forming an ample porch, through which will be the principal entrance. There will also be a large doorway in the western end, and another in the north transept, each protected by a porch. An, ample sacristy and a separate vestry for acolytes completes the arrangement, which is a very convenient one, and in, every way suited for the purpose of a country parish church, affording accommodation to about 900 persons, so that they may all both hear, and see the officiating clergyman. The carving is to be confined to the principal doorways, on the tympana of which "the Immaculate Conception," and the various symbols of the Blessed Virgin will be executed in alto-relievo. All the dressings and masonry will be exclusively of local material, a quarry of a light warm-tinted sandstone of sound, good quality, and easily worked having been found in the neighbourhood. The roof is to be open timber work, wrought and varnished. The design is by Mr. Richard Evans, of Cork.

The interesting ceremony of "laying the foundation stone" was performed on the 8th inst. The *Cork Examiner* has been so happy in its description of this event, that we are induced to make a lengthened extract from our contemporary's report; and we most cordially wish the Rev. Dr. Coveney every success, and a happy termination to the spirited undertaking which has commenced under such favorable and gratifying circumstances.

"Rarely have so many circumstances combined to make such an event one of unmitigated jubilee. The season was such as to cause the narrowest nature to expand with irrepressible gratitude to the Most High for the manifold benefits—the wealth of nature and of grace—which he lavishly bestows upon his creatures. The scene was one teeming with incentives to delight and rejoicing; and the holy work to be inaugurated commanded the sympathy and approval, of all men, while it gave joy and glory to Heaven. It was a work of special interest, notably to the pious Catholic, but to the lover of our ancient and historic land. It carried back the memory to the days when Kinneigh (the original name of the parish) was a bishop's see, the site of a cathedral, and the seat of an ancient monastery, to which the people flocked for education. It revived, too, the recollection of our people's martial patriotism, when from this part of the country the clan O'Mahony was led by its chieftain Keane O'Mahony (from whom Enniskean takes its name) to the plain of Clontarf, where it singularly distinguished itself in the final expulsion of the Scandinavian invaders. Of this historic incident we find a remarkable memorial still extant in the parish, for at Kinneigh there exists, in a state of perfect preservation, a unique specimen of the ancient round towers of Ireland, professedly erected to commemorate the part taken by the people of the district in the great victory over the Danes. Unhappily, this is the only remaining evidence of the ancient greatness of this famous locality. The Cathedral Church, if we except the mined doorway, lives only in the imagination of the antiquary, or the ecclesiastical records of the country; the monastery, to which students crowded from remote places, is a thing only of tradition. With such reminiscences was the parish invested when the Rev. Dr. Coveney became its pastor: and, from the time of his appointment, it has been the earnest object of his ambition, to see a temple reared in its midst, at once befitting the worship of the Almighty, and worthy of the character of the district. Untiring zeal and labour have at length had their fruition in the commencement of a church which will be in keeping with the great architectural revival going on in the country, and at once a monument of the piety and devotion of the pastor and his people. The Rev. Dr. Coveney has been singularly fortunate in obtaining a site for the new church. His Grace the Duke of Devonshire most munificently presented him with a plot of seventeen acres of valuable land in the most suitable situation, and contributed, besides, a sum of £250 towards the cost of the building. Local cooperation has been most generously afforded, the Protestant residents seeming to vie with the Catholic parishioners in their generous support of the meritorious undertaking; and thus the good work was fairly started, the inauguration of which it was our happiness yesterday to witness. The site of the new church is on a plateau, slightly raised above the general level of the rich and extensive valley on the northern side of which it stands. The mail coach road passes within a few hundred yards of it, and it is a conspicuous point in the landscape as viewed from the railway. The eye roams with delight over the vast expanse of verdure which stretches east and west, and is led up, irresistibly, to the northern slope, on the breast of which the new church will stand, a glorious back-ground of luxuriant woodland closing in the picture. Yesterday, this charming landscape glowed in all its fresh luxuriance under a brilliant summer sun, and a pleasant breeze, murmuring musically in the light young foliage, wafted hither and thither odours that seemed the exhalation of nature's gratitude to the Creator, while it bore aloft the joyous homage of a pious and simple-hearted people. Access to the scene of the ceremony was rendered easy and convenient by special arrangements, of a liberal character, on the West Cork Railway. Additional liveliness was imparted to the event by the presence of four excellent bands—from Dunmanway, Bandon, Togher, and from Upton Reformatory, which played with singular success some admirable selections of national and popular music. The immediate preparations for the ceremonial were of a most tasteful and happy character, and had their fruition in a spectacle of extraordinary picturesque ness and even splendour.

The trowel used, by his lordship was of silver, handsomely engraved (manufactured by Mr. James Hackett, Patrick-street, Cork), and bore the following inscription:—

Presented

To the Most Rev. Dr. Delany,
By the Rev. Dr. Coveney, P.P.,
On the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the
Church of the Immaculate Conception,
At Enniskean, on Sunday, the 7th May, 1871.

[Taken from *Irish Builder*, Vol. XIII, 1871, p.126]