

CORK LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC
SOCIETY.

IN the course of the President's inaugural address to, the members on Thursday evening, he referred as follows to the building in which they were assembled,;—It would be easy to enlarge upon the deficiencies which are the chief characteristics of the structure that for so long a time has borne the sounding title of the Cork Institution, and in which literature, science, and art for so many years have suffered penal servitude. But they are too painfully known to most of us, and besides you are doubtless aware that an effort is being made to house these studies somewhat more suitably in future. Art, indeed, seems to be on the eve of acquiring a new establishment where its study may be pursued with greater facility and more advantage. A word with reference to that undertaking may not be out of place here. The municipal taxation of this city amounts to about £70,000 annually. Of this taxation one penny in the pound, realising some £570 in all, is devoted to nursing amongst us the arts and the knowledge which refine life, as well as the cultivation of science, which is one of the chief motive powers of the modern world. Bear with me while I give the divisions into which this little subsidy has to be split. The figures will not delay you long, nor tax your arithmetical capacity severely. Of the amount which I have specified, £160 has to go this year to pay two half-yearly instalments to the Board of Works which, having after many delays and lengthened correspondence, and the employment of the influence of powerful members of Parliament, consented to an advance of £2,000 for the purchase of land for the new buildings, at a rate of interest which would be considered extravagant if charged by a bank to a merchant, now has to be repaid in a fashion which will enable that department to make a handsome profit out of our poor efforts at popular culture. This is part of the enlightened patronage which the effort for the diffusion of art knowledge receives. After paying £160 to the Board of Works, there will be left £410. Of this amount, the Art School, which has done such sound and excellent work under the guidance of the Christian Brothers, receives £50; the General School, £130 ; the recently-founded School of Music, £200; and the School of Science, £20. It stands to the credit of our municipality that Cork was the first city in Ireland which took advantage of the law empowering ratepayers to tax themselves in order to advance popular culture. An attempt to supplement its deficiencies by voluntary effort has been tried, and one result is the commencement of the new art school to which I have made reference. That, undertaking was a bold—some might go so far as to say a rash—one. Nevertheless, great progress has been made, and a very moderate effort on the part of the public would suffice to complete this very important branch of the institution. I take the liberty to hope that the influence of this society and of this large audience may suffice to stimulate the general interest so far in the undertaking that this part of it at least may not be an abortion.

[Taken from *Irish Builder*, Vol. XXVI, 1884, p.331]