

ST. FIN BARRE'S, CORK.

THE committee to whom is entrusted the important work of rebuilding the Cathedral of St. Fin Barre, Cork, state in their recently issued report that great progress has been made in the erection of the cathedral since the last report was published in October, 1867. The amount of Messrs. Cockburn's contract is £22,300, towards which the treasurer has received £15,758. To meet the balance, pay architect's fees, and provide suitable church furniture, &c., it is calculated that a further sum of £12,000 will be required.

The architect's last report to the committee on the state of the works is as follows :

TO THE BUILDING COMMITTEE OF THE ST. FLN BARRE CATHEDRAL.

GENTLEMEN—At the close of my last visit to Cork on march 7th I left the works at the Cathedral proceeding in a very satisfactory manner. The contractors, Messrs. Cockburn and Sons, had raised the outer walls to the level of the cap of the aisle windows, *i.e.* about 18 feet from the line of the floor.

The nave pillars had also been raised to very nearly the same height, but those in the apse had not yet been set, although nearly all the bases were worked and in the yard.

The four great piers were very forward and as high as the side walls. The difficulty of obtaining great stones for the caps of the western portals has rather delayed that portion of the work, but these stones were then being procured and in a short time I expect this part of the building to be as forward as the rest.

In conclusion, I beg to observe that the contractors have intimated to me that they were quite willing to press the work on quicker than at present should it be desired, but as this would involve a question of funds, the decision appears to rest rather with yourselves than with me.

WILLIAM BURGESS.

While on this subject, we cannot do better than lay before our readers some portions of a statement recently made by Richard Caulfield, Esq., LL.D., at a meeting held for the purpose of raising funds for the completion of the edifice:

"Over 1,200 years have passed away since the first cathedral was erected on the site of the church now in process of erection; but the structure of this early edifice was of a very different character from the buildings we are now accustomed to worship in, and it may be interesting to you to know of what materials these early churches were built. Now we learn from Bede, a distinguished ecclesiastical historian, who wrote about the close of the seventh century, that Finan built a church in the Island of Lindesfarne, the Episcopal See, "and after the manner of the Scots he made it not of stone but of hewn oak, and covered it with reeds." Now the ancient Irish were called Scots, as is agreed on by all historians, and we may fairly presume that the first Cathedral of Cork was a building of this nature. There is a primary association connected with this church which should give it a prominent place in your affections, namely, that it was the origin of Cork. A city, we are told, grew up around the cathedral, and it flourished until a great fleet of foreigners arrived in Ireland, burned it—as we are informed by the *Annals of the Four Masters*—in 1012. These foreigners were supposed to have been Northmen or Danes, who, according to the same authority, had a fortress in Cork in 846. To the Danes, however, we must confess this great city owes its present commercial prosperity. These Danes were a mercantile as well as seafaring people, and, after the destruction of the old city, established themselves on the low marshes—the locality now occupied by the North and South Main streets—as being convenient to the river for trade and navigation. Subsequently the cathedral was rebuilt, but in style altogether different from the ancient fabric. During the demolition of the late building some curious carved stone heads and other remnants of a very early church were found, which may be attributed to this period. These heads are preserved in the Library. This city owes its origin to the cathedral. We possess no drawings of the building previous to 1735. I examined all the old plans in the

Bodleian Library, the British Museum, and State Paper Office; and while we have many of the city, we have no reliable drawings of the cathedral previous to 1735. There is a map of the city in 1650 in the British Museum by a French artist, but, while it is most elaborately executed and elegantly tinted, it merely represents a castellated edifice, while embattled towers are affixed to all the churches. An ancient round tower once stood in this locality, but its site has long since been lost. On the map of the Paccata Hib., printed 1602, we have a watch or round tower marked. From the fact of a ladder leading to the entrance, it has been presumed that it may have been the round tower, but this is as conjectural as the theories that have been advanced regarding their original object. Nor must we forget the siege of Cork, 28th Sept., 1690; the gallantry displayed by the troops of the Duke of Marlborough, under Lieut. Townsend, who occupied the tower of the cathedral, and that of the Irish under General O'Neil, who held Elizabeth Fort. During the removal of this tower, about two years ago, the cannon ball which was fired from the fort, and which was said to "have shook the tower exceedingly," causing much dismay to the soldiers, was found embedded in the wall. It was a 25lb. shot. This interesting relic is now in the possession of Mr. T. R. Lane, who intends to have it restored to the cathedral. Another object of interest to us here is the library; it contains many valuable works of the Fathers, others of Medieval literature, scholastic theology, ecclesiastical and civil antiquity, history, and the Republican and Royal editions of Walton's Polyglott, 1657, showing the alteration in the preface when the page relating to the munificence of the Protector was excised, and another introduced after the restoration, falsely ascribing the credit of this great work to Charles n. Now, while the church itself possesses these interesting associations, the cemetery around has its own peculiar ones in an eminent degree. Here lie many divines, warriors, and men eminent in various departments of literature. In the crypt with many distinguished military officers are the remains of six prelates. Two of these are amongst the highest ornaments of the Irish Church in their day, Bishop Lyon and Bishop Peter Browne, both benefactors. The name of Bishop William Lyon adorns the annals of this See, which he occupied during one of the most stormy periods of Irish history—hunted out of Cloyne, burned out at Ross, he built the See house of Cork, where he lived and died. I will read for you a passage from a letter written from the Lord Deputy to Burghley, dated Dublin Castle, 12th Feb., 1588, which I copied last summer at the Public Record Office, London. The letter was written on a most important occasion, namely, the celebration in this diocese of the thanksgiving for the dispersion of the Spanish Armada :—"And now, having received several certificates from the bishops, chiefs and sovereigns within the Pale touching the numbers and names of such as assembled themselves to celebrate the general thanksgiving for her Majesty's happy success against the Spaniards, albeit it appeared thereby that the people near about us here have for the most part been as far off from performing the duties of God and loving subjects, &c. Yet hath it pleased God for our comfort so to counterpoise the same with his exceeding blessing upon the people of the remote parts as that of Carbery, Kinsale, &c., where the church was not able to receive all the people that came thither, but that great numbers were enforced to stand without who hung upon the walls and windows to hear the sermon; also at Cork when the Bishop preached, there was congregated 2,000 people to hear the sermon; likewise at Ross there was assembled to hear the Bishop's Chaplain 600 persons." With my own hands I removed the bones of Bishop Lyon, and deposited them in the crypt, alongside of the remains of his successors. There is a name associated with this cemetery, which it would be unseemly here to pass by. Many of you may have never even heard of him, but a little unscrubbed obelisk still marks his resting place. I allude to John Bernard Trotter, author of "Walks Through Ireland,"

the secretary and bosom friend of Charles James Fox. Trotter was a man of cultivated mind, high honour, warm sensibilities, and liberal endowments. After the death of his patron he endured much privation, and terminated his existence in a decayed house on Hammond's Marsh. During his last illness he was attended by the Dean of Cork, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, and grandfather to the present Dr. Magee, who is so worthily filling his place. The following account from a Cork paper of the time describes the termination of his career :—"After a fit of temporary aberration he called for his writing materials, as if some thought struck his mind which he wished to preserve. He made a vain and ineffectual effort to write, but the pen fell from his hand, and the black ink streamed upon the sheet and tinged his pallid cheek; he seemed shocked, clasped his hands upon his breast, and, uttering a deep groan, sunk back exhausted on the pillow. This was the last effort at intelligent communication, and, in a short period "after, he expired on the 29th September, 1818, in the 43rd year of his age." I trust these few historical narratives will be sufficient to point out some of the many remarkable and endearing associations that are linked and entwined around the memory of our cathedral, that they will excite us to use all diligence and exertion that no impediment shall stand in the way of its speedy erection. I believe that I am not out of the way in asserting that our island will not contain a fairer structure.

Taken from *Irish Builder*, Vol. X, 1868, p.108]