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The Catholic Parish Churches of Cork.

(Plate IV, 1, 2, 3).

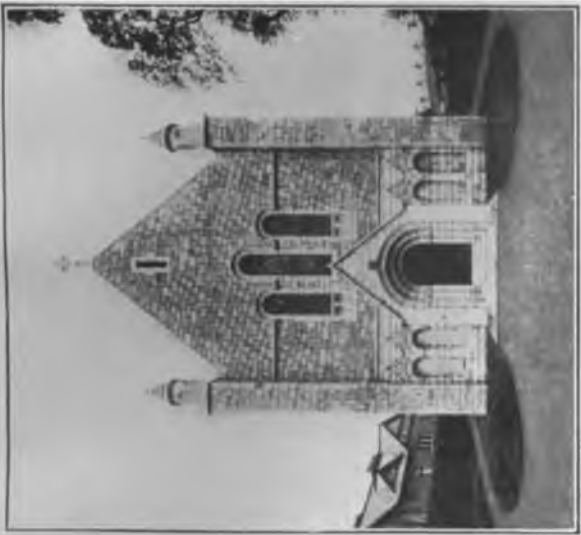
By Rev. P. CAHALANE, C.C., M.A., S.T.L.

St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral. (Pl. IV, 1).

The church commonly called the "North Chapel" is St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral. It is the fourth church or chapel in the parish of which we have record since the Reformation. The first is described as a baptismal church and existed in 1635. Its site has not been identified, but was probably in Coppinger's Lane. The second church was built about 1700, near what is now called Old Chapel Lane, by Donogh McCarthy, afterwards Bishop of Cork and Cloyne. It is described as a large, convenient Mass-house. It was probably converted into a school when the next church was built. The third church was built in 1730 by Bishop McCarthy Rabagh (from whom Rabagh's Lane, now Eason's Hill, is called), but on the site of the present Church of St. Mary's. In the *Report on the State of Popery* of 1731, it is described as "built about a year past on a fine eminence, in a large sumptuous manner in the north suburbs, on a new foundation, near old St. Mary's Shandon churchyard." This church was usually referred to as the "Bishop's Chapel." In the north transept of the present edifice are two stones inserted in the wall (one inside and the other outside) bearing the inscription—17 30/T. McCarthy. The existing Church of St. Mary's was built in 1808 by the Bishop, Dr. Moylan, on the site of the third church referred to. The sermon on the occasion was preached by Dr. McCarthy, then P.P. St. Finnbarr's and Auxiliary Bishop of Cork.

The style of the church is the pointed Gothic. It is not known who the architect was. In 1820 the building was injured by fire, and George Pain, architect, who had come to Cork about 1818, then took the internal renovation, and possibly, too, the re-construction, in hand. The complete plan of the church has never been carried out. The tower, however, was built during the time of Canon Dan Foley, Adm. (1862-7). The bells (9) were subsequently installed, as the inscription shows—"J. Murphy, Founder, Dublin, 1870."

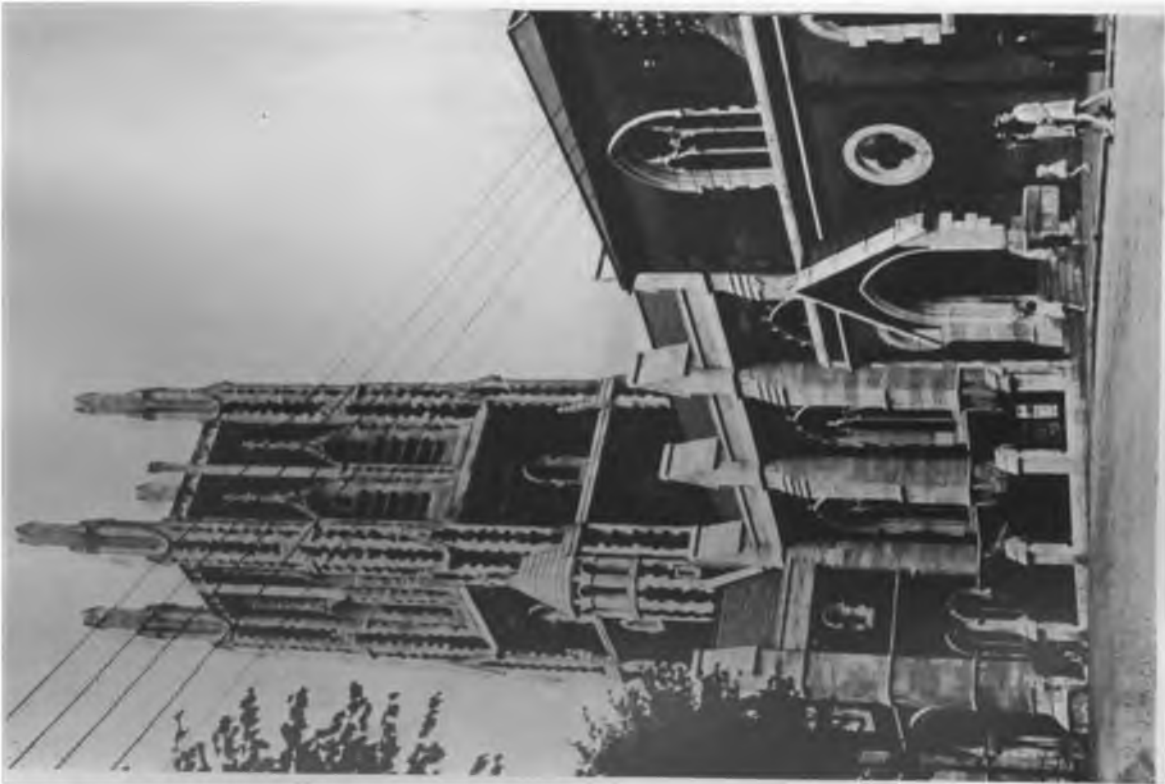
The past still hangs round the church and its precincts. Moylan's bust by Turnerelli, London (1818), is in the church; Murphy's library (a remnant) is in the presbytery; and Delaney's statue (J. Lawlor, 1889) is in the forefront of the church. The church has a vault in which priests of past times have been interred. Bishops Moylan, Murphy, and Clancy of Ortense lie there (Dr. Delaney was interred in the Ursuline Convent burial ground, Blackrock). The corner house in Chapel Street on the opposite side of the road from the presbytery is a relic of an ecclesiastical college, dating from the time of Moylan, with which Dr. England, afterwards Bishop of Charleston, U.S.A., was intimately associated. The records of baptisms and marriages, dating from 1748, are well preserved and are now a priceless source of family history. Amongst the many chalices preserved are three of some antiquity—the Verdon, 1610; the O'Hurly, 1633; and the Keaghly, 1731.



2.—Honan Chapel (Western front)



3.—Honan Chapel (from N.E.)



1.—St. Mary's Cathedral

In post-Reformation times, the Coppingers claimed the right of presentation to St. Mary's. The origin of the claim was pre-Reformation. The Coppingers were the patrons of an old church in the parish, called Lisgorman (unidentified). There was in post-Reformation times a house in Coppinger's Lane, probably donated by that family, where Mass was celebrated. The claim was successfully resisted by Dr. Murphy (1815-47), on the ground that in pre-Reformation times the presentation would be to the Rectorship, but in post-Reformation times the presentation would be to the Bishopric, as the Bishop happened to be the Rector of St. Mary's.

St. Finnbarr's South.

The church commonly called the "South Chapel" was so called because after the Reformation there were only two baptismal churches in Cork—the "North Chapel" and the "South Chapel." The present church is the fourth of which we have any knowledge. The first existed in 1635 and was ruinous in 1702. The site of this is not known, but may have been in the Cat Lane district. About 1702 the second was built near Douglas Street, in the precincts of the South Presentation Monastery. This was a thatched church which was burned in 1727. On the same site the third church was built in 1728. It is described in the *Report on the State of Popery* (1731) as "a slated Mass-house in the south suburbs." The present edifice was built in 1766 by Daniel O'Brien, O.P., who was P.P. at the time. He retired from active work to his convent in 1774, and died in 1781.

The South Chapel, originally a Mass-house consisting of a nave and chancel, was built in the Georgian style of the period. Whether the north transept was built at the same time is not known: the masonry is identical with that of the nave. The south transept was built in 1809, and its dimensions do not coincide with those of the north transept.

The altar contains the Dead Christ, by Hogan, the noted Cork sculptor. The Crucifixion, behind the altar, is said to have been painted by another Cork artist—John O'Keeffe. A well-executed monument to the memory of Dr. McCarthy is in the south transept. It is in white marble and represents Dr. McCarthy as lying on the death-bed and receiving the Viaticum from a bishop (Dr. Moylan).

In this parish we have the old and the new in architecture—St. Finnbarr's, the most ancient of Cork's post-Reformation Catholic churches in time as well as in style, and the Church of Christ King, the most modern. The Church of Christ King was solemnly blessed for Divine Service on October 25th, 1931, by Most Rev. Dr. Cohalan, who took a keen interest in the architecture. The style is modern, based on functional utility. It is built of re-inforced concrete in the shape of an ellipse to secure for the faithful the unobstructed view of the central function of a church—the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass. The architect was Mr. Barry Byrne, Chicago; Mr. Boyd Barrett, supervising architect; and Mr. John Buckley, the builder. The original idea of the church, built to accommodate 1,200 adults, is carried out in the furnishing, even in the smallest details. The Stations of the Cross, executed by Messrs. Egan and Sons, Patrick Street, are a feature of the church. Over the main entrance

door is the massive figure of Christ King, designed by John Storrs, a noted American sculptor, and executed by John Maguire.

SS. Peter and Paul's.

The Church of St. Peter and Paul was solemnly blessed for Divine Service by Dr. Delaney, Bishop of Cork, on June 29th, 1866; Dr. Moriarty, Bishop of Ardfer, being the preacher on the occasion. It stands partly on the site of an older church, called Carey's Lane Chapel, which was built about 1786.

The central parish church of Cork was designed by E. W. Pugin, and built by Barry McMullen. It is regarded as one of Pugin's best Gothic works. The marble altar, in harmony with the scholarly Gothic of the church, was designed by Mr. G. C. Ashlin and executed in Samuel Daly's workshop, Cook Street. It was solemnly consecrated August 10th, 1874. The ornamentation of the great western window, now a feature of the grand edifice, was completed in 1935 by the substitution of stained glass for the cathedral glass in the lower portion of the window, in harmony with the symbolism of the upper part originally executed.

The purity and richness of Pugin's plan can be seen only in the complete drawing. At present the church is incomplete in its exterior. It is said that the completion of the tower and spire, contemplated since the building of the church, had to be abandoned because of foundation difficulties. The position of this gem leaves much to be desired; it is stifled amid surrounding drab buildings; its direction is a compromise with space; and altogether the atmosphere of Carey's Lane hangs round it still.

The church shall always be associated with one of the most romantic ecclesiastical figures the diocese of Cork has produced—Fr. John Murphy, its administrator, who made its building the great purpose of his life. Born in Cork on the 23rd December, 1796, of the family of Murphy's, Distillers, he was sent to school in England at an early age. He became in early life a midshipman in the *Charles Grant*, and visited China. Back in London later, he became involved in a financial venture and was declared a bankrupt (he later paid all who lost by his adventure). He worked for the Hudson Bay Trading Co. of North America, and in his travels joined the Red Indians by whom he was made chief with the title "The Black Eagle of the North." Returning to the Hudson Bay Co., he cashed in his possessions and made his way to Rome. There he studied for the priesthood and in due time was ordained a priest, probably for the English Mission. While his uncle, Dr. Murphy, was Bishop of Cork, he continued to minister at Coppera's Hill, Liverpool, and while there secured for the use of his flock a Methodist chapel, to which, it is said, he had been taken as a schoolboy. In 1847 he was admitted to the Diocese of Cork by Dr. Delaney. In 1848 he was administrator SS. Peter and Paul's, and soon set about his *magnum opus*—the building of a church that would be a credit to the city of Cork and to God. How well he succeeded, the church itself will tell. Many episodes are related in the life of this romantic churchman, but they are not sufficiently authenticated to be recorded here. He was grand-uncle to General Sir William Hickie. In 1874 he was made

Archdeacon of Cork, and retired into private apartments at St. Vincent's, Sunday's Well. He died March 10th, 1883, and was interred in the family vault at Carrigrohane.

St. Patrick's.

The Church of St. Patrick was built in 1836 as a chapel-of-ease to St. Mary's (*supra*). It was elevated to the dignity of a parish church on July 1st, 1848. The church was designed by George Pain in the Corinthian style of architecture. The campanile is said to have been selected from three original drawings of Pain. The church was extended in 1894 and as a result the internal proportions are imperfect. The church was originally called the Brickfield Chapel because of a brick factory near the site.

The last obsequies of the Rev. Francis O'Mahony ("Father Prout") took place in this church, 28th May, 1866, in the presence of Dr. Delaney and a large number of clergy and faithful. The mortal remains were then taken for interment in the family vault at Shandon graveyard.

Church of the Immaculate Conception (St. Finnbarr's West).

On Sunday, December 11th, 1881, within the Octave of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Church of the Immaculate Conception was solemnly blessed by Dr. Delaney, Bishop of Cork. It was built as a chapel-of-ease to St. Finnbarr's (South) of which the great Dean Neville was then P.P. In 1890, April 4th, the church was elevated to the dignity of a parish church—St. Finnbarr's West. The 1881 church, designed by Mr. G. C. Ashlin, and built by Barry McMullen, was Romanesque in style.

In 1929 this church was extended and provision made for 1,400 worshippers. The architect was James McMullen, and John Sisk was the builder. The Ashlin idea is preserved throughout, but, as one might expect, beauty of design in the original is sacrificed to utility in the extended church.

In the parish is the Honan Chapel, dedicated to St. Finnbarr. (Pl. IV, 2, 3). It was built 1915–16 and is modelled on the Hiberno-Romanesque 12th century Cormac's Chapel at Cashel. The architect was James McMullen, and John Sisk the builder. The decoration and furnishing are gems in artistic work. A booklet written by Rev. Sir John R. O'Connell in 1932 supplies an admirable historical guide.