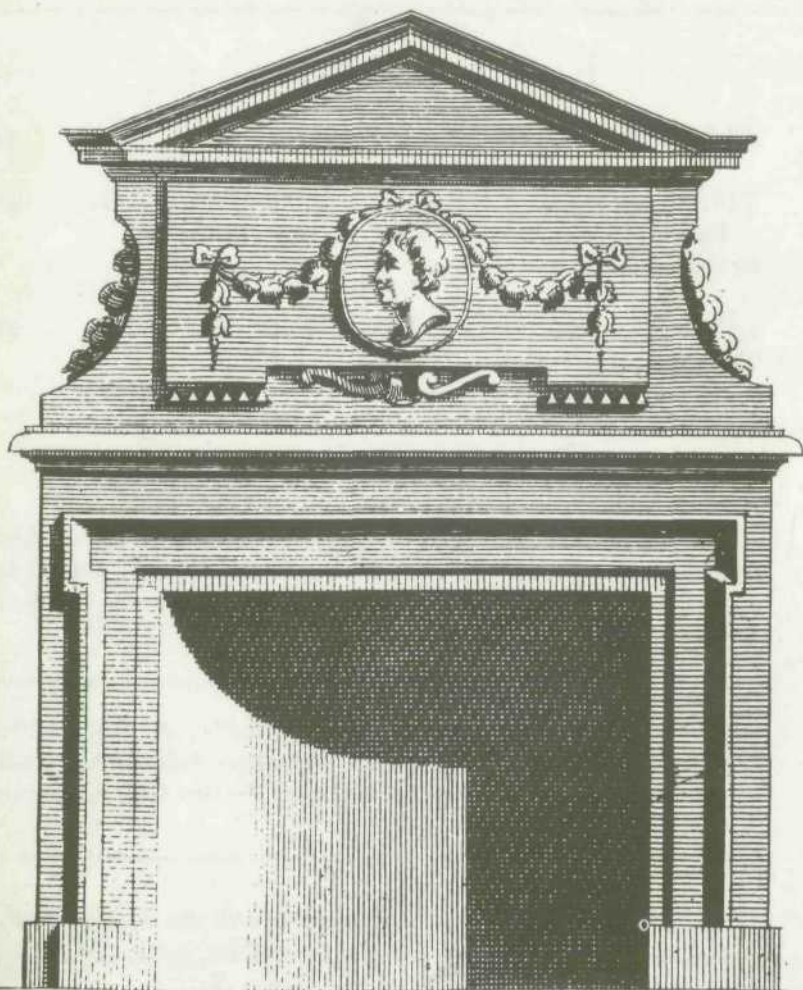


IRISH GEORGIAN SOCIETY



April - December 1964

QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF THE
IRISH GEORGIAN SOCIETY

VOL. VII, NOS 2-4

APRIL-DECEMBER 1964

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The cover is taken from a chimney piece in James Gibbs' *A Book of Architecture*, London, 1728, p. 95. It was directly copied by Pearce or Castle at the Parliament House, now the Bank of Ireland, Dublin, and is still extant.

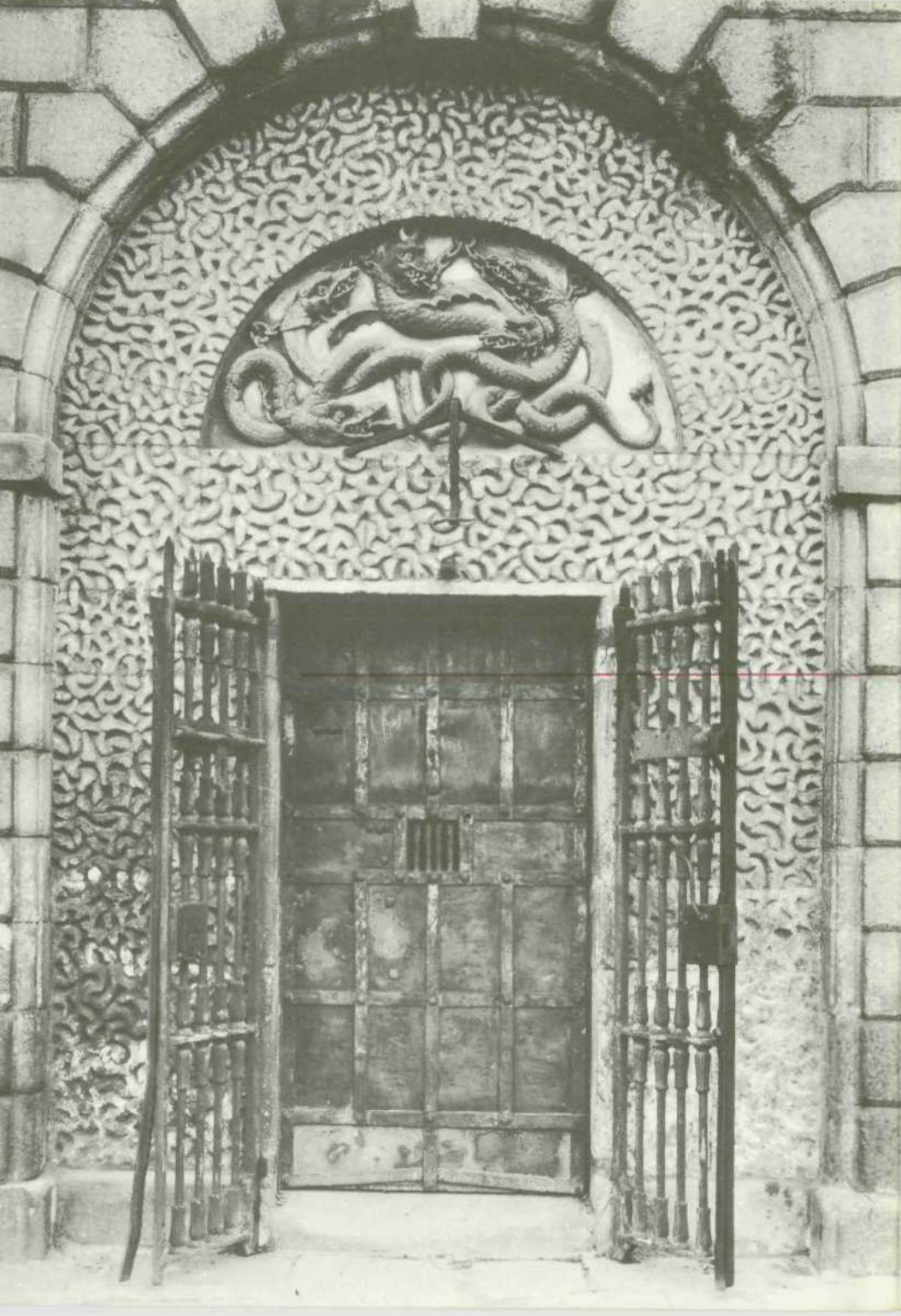
Application for membership (£1 annually, which entitles members to lectures, expeditions and other functions) should be made to the Irish Georgian Society, Leixlip Castle, County Kildare.

The Bulletin is sent free to all members of the society and is available from the Society and all booksellers, price 12s. 6d. for four issues, post free (U.S. Subscription \$3).

PRICE NINE SHILLINGS

ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 Kilmainham Gaol, entrance (*Green Studio*).
- 2 Riverstown House, dining room (*Lord Rossmore*).
- 3 The Dromana Gateway (*Hugh Doran*).
- 4 The Black Church (*Irish Times*).
- 5 Gill Hall, the front door (*Lord Rossmore*).

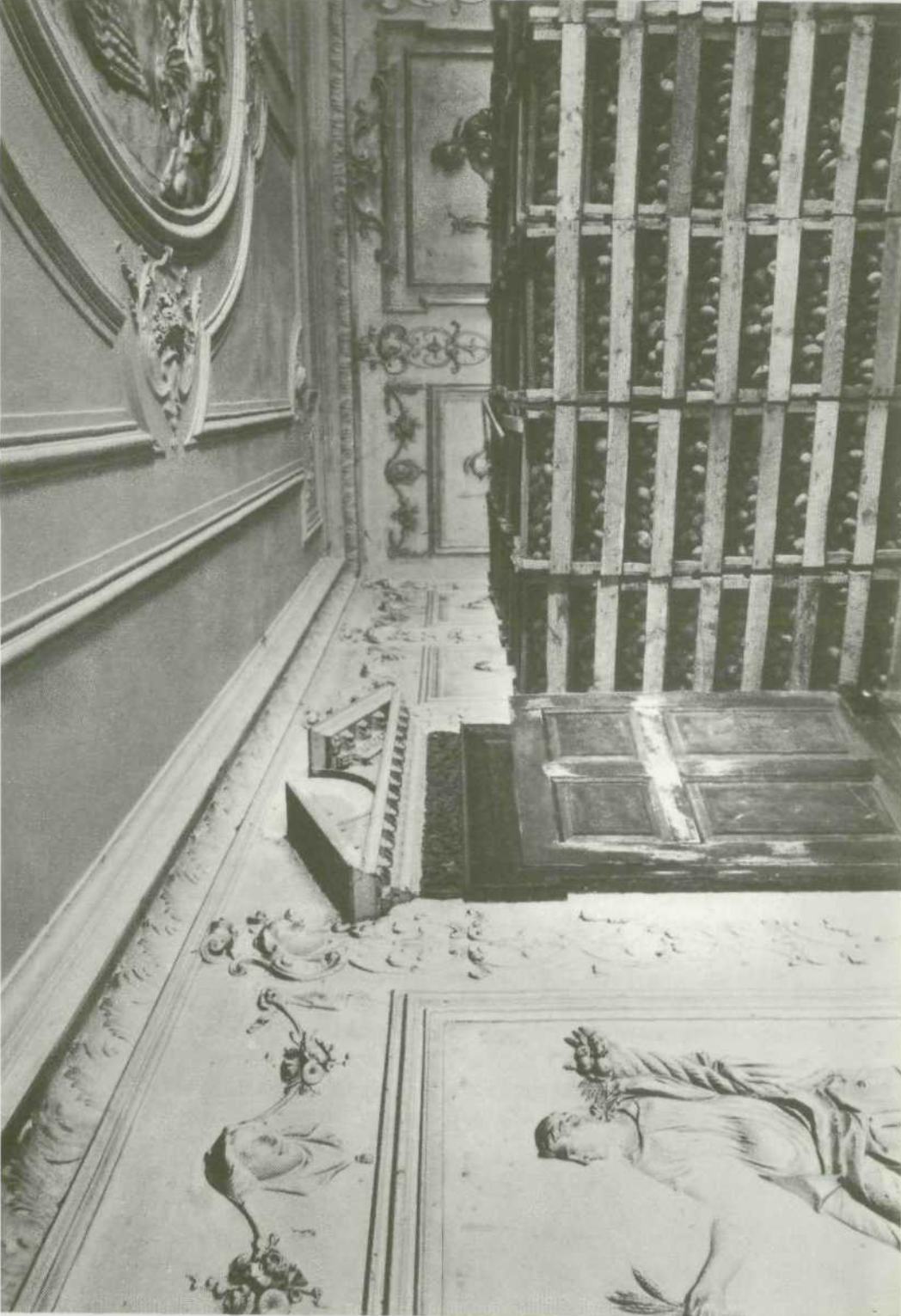


PRESERVATION IN IRELAND

The Irish Georgian Society apologises to its members for sending three Bulletins in one, and for the lateness of its arrival. The savings effected in 1964 by *not* sending out Bulletins, together with a huge increase in membership, £150 won by our Prize Bonds, and generous donations from Lord Pembroke, Mr. John Nicholas Brown, Mr. Charles de Beistigui and others have enabled us to put £2,000 on deposit. We do, however, intend to issue all four Bulletins in 1965 if possible. On account of increased postage costs, overseas members will in future receive their lecture notices with their Bulletins, even if they are out of date; they should therefore get in touch with us if they come to Dublin to find out what is going on (telephone Celbridge 280430).

LOWER FITZWILLIAM STREET, Dublin. The battle over Fitzwilliam Street appears to be over, as the Minister for Local Government has given his approval to the demolition of the sixteen houses. He gave it on the day before the new Local Government (Planning and Development) Act came into force. Lord Pembroke, the ground landlord, has most generously given us £500, representing half the sum he received when the lease was forcibly bought out.

THE MOUNTRATH COURTHOUSE, Co. Leix has been completely demolished. The only distinguished building in the town, the Irish Georgian Society and Bord Failte sought to have it preserved and various possible uses for it were discussed. We tried several times to have the roof mended, but in spite of promises no one would do the work. "Mountrath



people want it razed," said the *Carlow Nationalist*, 26.6.64. The *Leinster Express* devoted two columns to the fate of the Mountrath Courthouse on 1.8.64. Under the sub-headings "An urgent need" and "Where, oh where?" they pointed out that "a public toilet was urgently needed, particularly in view of the fact that Mountrath was the halfway bus-stop between Dublin and Limerick". "Some of the old records were worthy of note . . . which have been taken away for 'sifting'." No doubt they will one day come in handy.

KILMAINHAM GAOL, Dublin. Voluntary work on this extremely interesting **building** has been going on for some years (Plate 1). The Irish Georgian Society was among the **first** subscribers, and it is reassuring that hatred for the *ancien regime* can sometimes lead to preservation!

The time will surely come when the State will preserve what is worth preserving for the sake of the building itself, irrespective of its associations. Until it does, this kind of local enterprise is of the first importance.

CONOLLY'S FOLLY, Co. Kildare. Stage II of the restoration began in October 1964, but owing to the Builders' Providers' Strike was soon discontinued. The pineapples are all four in the stonemason's yard at Naas, with the eagle and other new stonework, and the job will be finally completed in 1965, thanks to a most generous grant from the Minister for Local Government.

RIVERSTOWN HOUSE, Glanmire, Co. Cork contains a room with some excellent early Francini plasterwork (Plate 2). Moulds of it were taken to decorate the President's house in the Phoenix Park, where the Francini's spirit is somewhat lost in the vast, plushy, nineteenth-century interior. Riverstown was built in 1745 by Dr. Jemmett Browne, Bishop of Cloyne, and the Francini brothers decorated one room only, the dining-room. There is a figured ceiling (Mr. C. P. Curran has pointed out that it derives from a ceiling painted by Poussin in 1641, "Le Temps

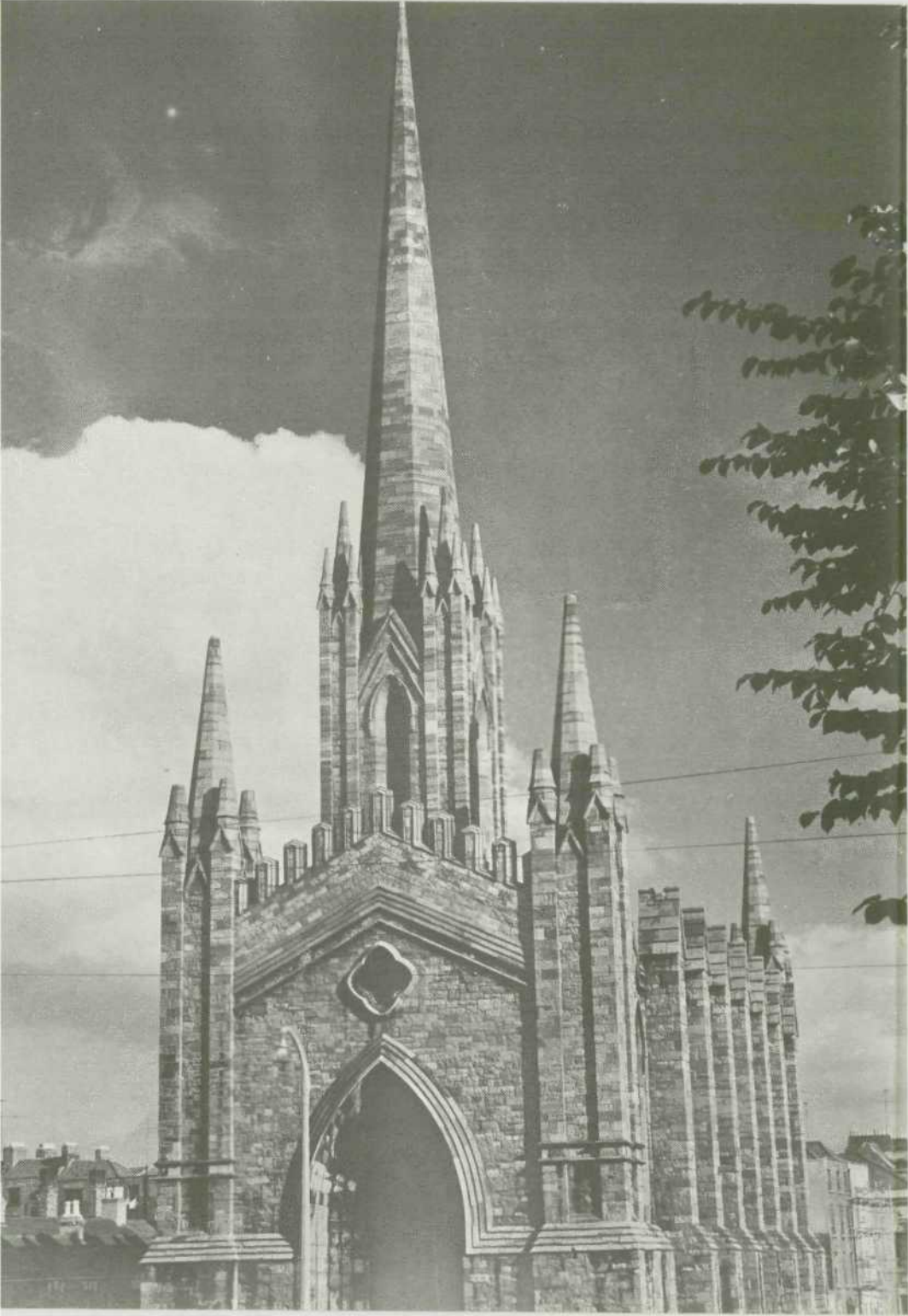


soustrait la Verité aux atteintes de la Discorde et de l'Envie") and on the walls are eight panels with classical and allegorical figures, surmounted with busts and floral swags. Potatoes, fertilisers and the like are at present stored there, as Riverstown now belongs to Mr. Dooley, Mayfield, Cork, a market gardener. He has very kindly consented to allow the Irish Georgian Society to restore the room and has agreed to remove the contents (though needing the space). He will permit the public to use the elegant semicircular entrance hall through which the plaster room is reached, which is most generous of him. Riverstown is three hundred yards from the main Dublin-Cork road, and signs will show the way there when the restoration has been completed. Contributions towards the cost will be *most* gratefully acknowledged.

DROMANA GATEWAY, Co. Waterford (Plate 3). An estimate for £550 has been accepted and the Lismore builder has been given the go-ahead to start work. So far £282 has been raised, so further donations are needed.

THE BLACK CHURCH, St. Mary's Place, Dublin. John Semple's masterpiece (1830), with an amazing interior constructed in the form of a gigantic parabolic arch, is in danger of demolition (Plate 4). It has been closed for two years, and the problem is to find a use for it so that it can once more be of service to the community. Any solution would be better than demolition and Mr. John Betjeman, An Taisce, the Old Dublin Society, the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland, and the National Monuments branch of the Board of Works have all joined in our protest. Mr. Frank Duff, one of the founders of the Legion of Mary, has offered £1,000 on its behalf to the Church of Ireland for the premises, but the offer has been rejected. The Irish Georgian Society is prepared to maintain the building (which is structurally sound) until a suitable use can be found for it, but so far there has been no reaction to our offer.

THE TAILOR'S HALL, Back Lane, Dublin, the well-



known eighteenth-century Guildhall where the Dublin Society of the United Irishmen met, is to be pulled down in spite of having had a Preservation Order put on it. As there are all too few meeting and exhibition halls available, the Dublin Corporation who own it could surely restore it for some such use?

MOUNTJOY SQUARE, Dublin. Eleven houses have now been bought by the Friends of Mountjoy Square, some on the square and some just off it; our intention is to restore them and do our best to bring the square gradually back to its former beauty. We have applied for a Preservation Order, so that any new *façades* on the square will be automatically of a Georgian pattern. Anyone interested in investing in one of these houses should contact the Irish Georgian Society, Leixlip Castle, Co. Kildare.

GILL HALL, **Dromore**, Co. Down, one of the most haunted houses in Ireland, has stood empty for many years now (Plate 5). Panelled throughout in the seventeenth century, it would seem a "natural" for the Northern Ireland National Trust, as houses of this date are so uncommon. In the hope that someone will one day rescue it from its present abandon, the Irish Georgian Society is seeking permission to repair the roof, so that it will have more chance of survival. Should we obtain the necessary permission, an appeal will be sent out in 1965. (See also p. 68).

D.W.G.



ILLUSTRATIONS

by Hugh Doran

- 1 Patrick Byrne, Architect (1783–1864)
- 2 Royal Exchange, Dublin; water-colour by Patrick Byrne (courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland).
- 3 Glasnevin Cemetery, entrance gates.
- 4 St. Paul's, Arran Quay (1835).
- 5 St. Paul's, Arran Quay, interior.
- 6 St. Audoen's (1846), part of the city wall; the medieval church of the same name.
- 7 St. Audoen's, High Street, Dublin.
- 8 St. John the Baptist, Blackrock (1842).
- 9 The Liberator and Fr. Canavan in effigy beside the entrance to St. James's Church (1844).
- 10 St. James's Church, Dublin.
- 11 Our Lady of Refuge, Rathmines (1850).
- 12 The Church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar.
- 13 Arklow Church.
- 14 Arklow, plasterwork.

THE LAST OF THE TRADITIONALISTS

Patrick Byrne 1783–1864

by *Patrick Raftery*

*"Who was this Patrick Byrne who so excellently improved
this occasion?"*

Maurice Craig, *Dublin* 1660–1860.

Patrick Byrne died only a century ago, leaving his work clearly etched on the skyline of Dublin, yet he is completely forgotten; his remains lie unmarked in the cemetery to which he was architect for thirty-four years. His is the fate of many architects, whose skills are appreciated only while they are alive. The building remains as a first monument, but its creator lies in dust and oblivion long before it is reduced to rubble.

Dublin would be so much the poorer without the simple bell-tower of St. Pauls, Arran Quay, gracefully offsetting the Four Courts; the church with the curious title—from an old inn—"Adam and Eve's", is very dear to many Dubliners; the silhouette of Rathmines Church seen from Charlemont Street Bridge against the golden setting sun; each of these should evoke memories of Patrick Byrne.

This essay is an attempt to rescue from obscurity a diligent, skilful architect of consummate good taste, who built in his long life more than a dozen Catholic churches in Dublin and Wicklow, and whose work may be considered as the last in the great tradition of Dublin Georgian architecture.

The time and place of Patrick Byrne's birth are unknown; a search of records has yielded nothing except that the register of Glasnevin cemetery states the day of his interment and that

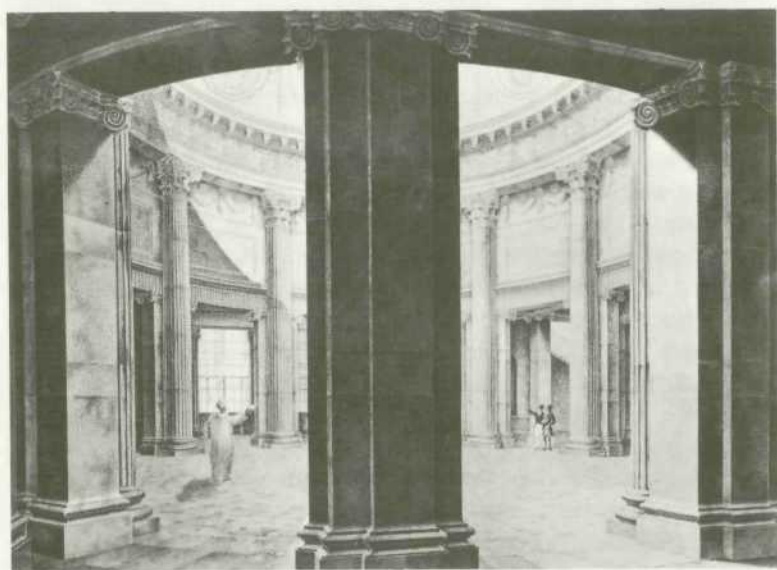
he was aged eighty-one years. A long and laudatory obituary with a heavy black border appeared as an editorial in the *Dublin Builder* some days later, indicating that he was much esteemed in his own time. It throws no light on his origin. He was survived by his son Hugh, who was City Architect, Patrick J. another son who assisted him in his practice, while another son John, who also assisted him, predeceased his father. On the day of his burial his son-in-law Mr. Richard Harkin, a civil servant, died. Byrne's death occurred on 10th January 1864 and if his obituary is to be believed he was thus born in 1783.

He practised for the greater part of his professional life at 10 Mabbot Street, off Mecklenburgh Street (later called Foley Street). The buildings in these streets have long since been demolished, and replaced by Corporation flats. He later removed to 27 Talbot Street, an area where many tradesmen had set up their premises. It abounded in stone-masons' yards, carpenters' shops, joinery works and bricklayers' sheds. Many architects and engineers—to be close to these skilled tradesmen—had their offices here. Talbot Street was also the home of solicitors, accountants, doctors, teachers, and other professional men. At the time of his death he was residing at 41 Lower Gardiner Street. His widow, Frances, moved to 4 Bath Avenue, Beggars Bush, but survived his death by only some sixteen months, and was interred in her husband's grave on 26th May 1865.

Had the subject of this short article a less common name than Byrne, it might indeed narrow the field of speculation as to his beginnings. The fact that Patrick Byrne first showed his skill as an artist or draughtsman when three prints drawn by him appeared in 1818, might infer that he was a connection of one of the many engravers and artists of the same surname who flourished in Dublin in the early nineteenth century. One family of engravers worked from Essex Quay, while yet another Byrne was a noted miniature painter. The patronage by the Church might suggest that there was some relationship with Edward Byrne, a rich Dublin merchant and chairman of the Catholic Committee. One of the competitors for the design of the Royal Exchange, won by Cooley in 1769, was a John Byrne.



I



2

A very fine water-colour of the interior (Plate 2) of this building, executed by Patrick Byrne in 1834, has led to the speculation that he may have been a connection of the eighteenth-century architect. Could the drawing have been part of an exercise by Byrne when studying under Baker, Cooley's successor at Dublin Society School? The clues are faint, the conclusions only conjectures.

The first public evidence of the talents of Patrick Byrne came in 1820 with the appearance of a monumental volume by William Monck Mason entitled *The History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick near Dublin*, containing two clearly drawn prints by Byrne; one a view of the Choir, the other the south-east exterior view of St. Patrick's; both were published in 1818. "A View of Tallagh" drawn by C. V. Fielding from a sketch by P. Byrne is amongst the Joly print collection in the National Library. It too was executed in 1818.

It has often been said of Daniel O'Connell that he could drive a coach and six through any Act of Parliament, and seldom can a metaphor have been so close to literal accomplishment than in the matter of Catholic burials. Although the penal laws had been slackened and the Relief Act of 1793 heralded a long line of statutes of relaxation, Archbishop Magee was insisting that there could be neither Catholic nor Dissenter prayers said in a burial ground controlled, as most were, by the Established Church. This lack of consolation had led to disedifying and embarrassing scenes at funerals that were most undignified. The need for a non-sectarian burial ground was so imperative that it could not be long denied. Nine acres were purchased for this purpose, at Glasnevin, by the Dublin Cemeteries Committee. Byrne had been appointed their architect and had executed some work at Golden Bridge Cemetery, Inchicore. The new site lay between the turnpike roads to Finglas and to Old Glasnevin. "It was represented to O'Connell that the heavy tax imposed on carriages by the toll-keeper would retard the success of the new enterprise. He got rid of the difficulty by making a new road to the cemetery immediately between the



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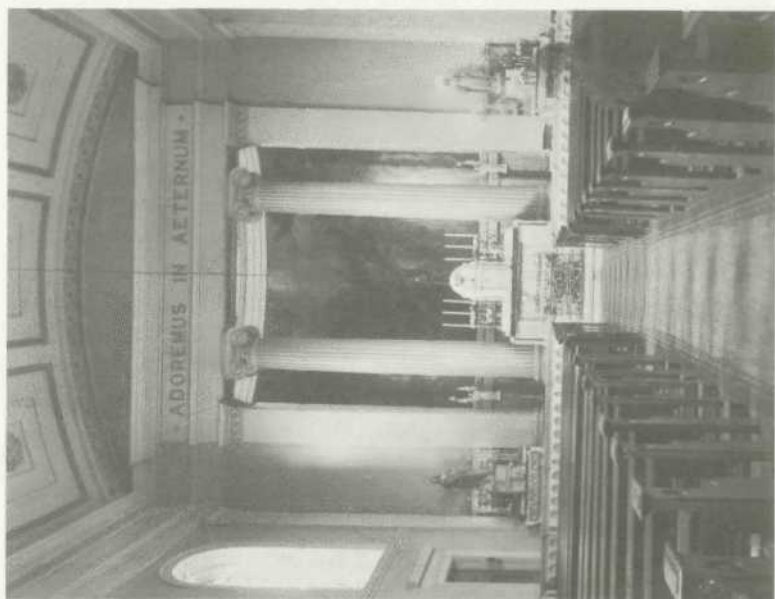
two old thoroughfares and a few yards from both turnpikes."

The arched entrance gates (Plate 3) surmounted by a crucifix, and flanked by the sexton's house and office at Prospect Square, are Byrne's work. The little Doric church in the Chapel Circle erected in 1842 at a cost of £487 6s. 11½d. was also designed by him. It was taken down for £20, thirty-seven years later, in 1879, after the main entrance had been moved to Finglas Road.

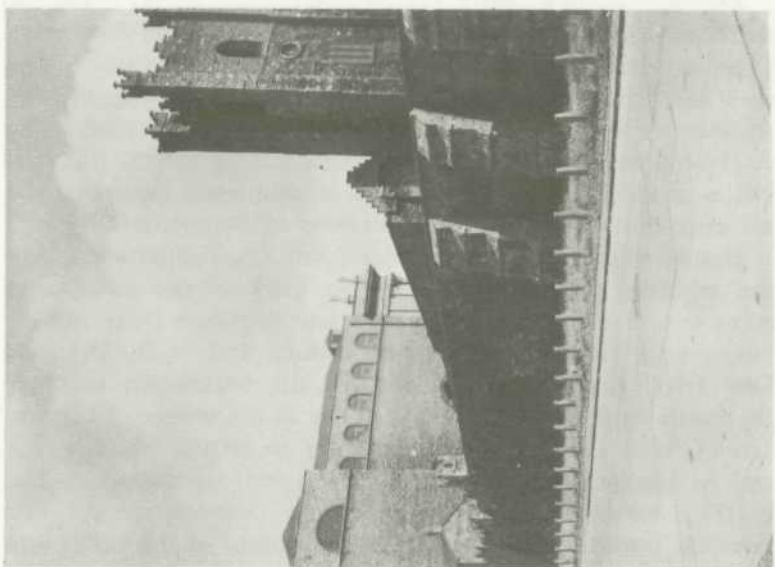
The granting of emancipation was to release a flood of Catholic church-building in and around Dublin, and Byrne was to ride high on this tide. The next thirty-five years were to see him active in designing replacements for the Mass house, as the Catholics emerged from the backstreet and alleyway. As Dublin was spreading beyond the canals, Byrne was also to blueprint many churches to serve the parishes in the new suburbs. The demand was for dignified places of worship, but funds were not plentiful, so that restraint in style and resources was to dictate the form and structure of most of Byrne's earlier ecclesiastical work.

The building of a church for the Franciscan Fathers to replace the old Mass house called "Adam and Eve's", off Rosemary Lane at Merchants Quay, was Byrne's first commission. The nave and transepts are part of the work begun in 1830, but the ambulatory apse behind the altar is a recent addition. The original dome has also been replaced. Enlargements, the provision of aisles and chapels have not completely destroyed the evidence of the characteristic simplicity of Byrne's initial hand.

Hardly was the church on Merchants Quay completed than the building of another on the far bank of the Liffey was commenced. The old chapel at the rear of Arran Quay was no longer large enough for the congregation, and on St. Patrick's Day 1835, Archbishop Murray laid the foundation stone of St. Paul's on the recently acquired site at the corner of Lincoln Lane (Plates 4 and 5). The sensitivity to setting which Byrne was to display throughout his career is well illustrated in this, his first church to be erected for the diocesan clergy. The riverside portico and the graceful proportions of the belfry and



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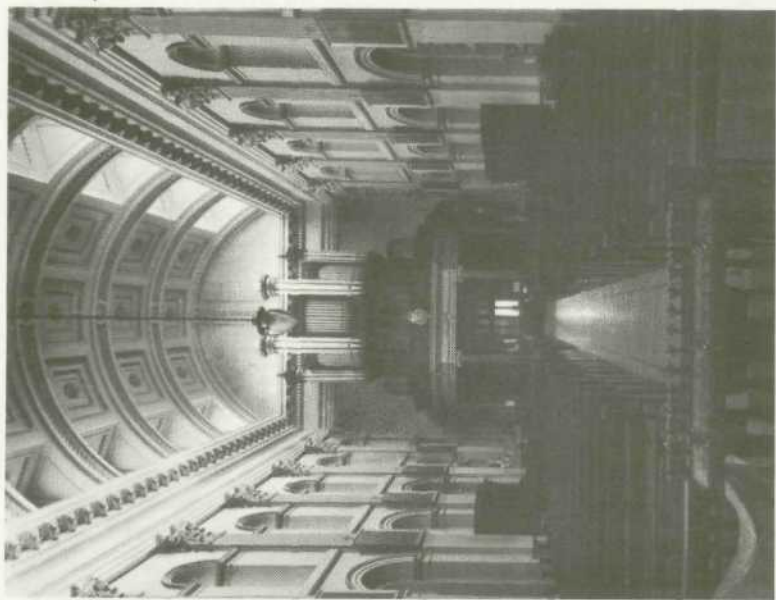


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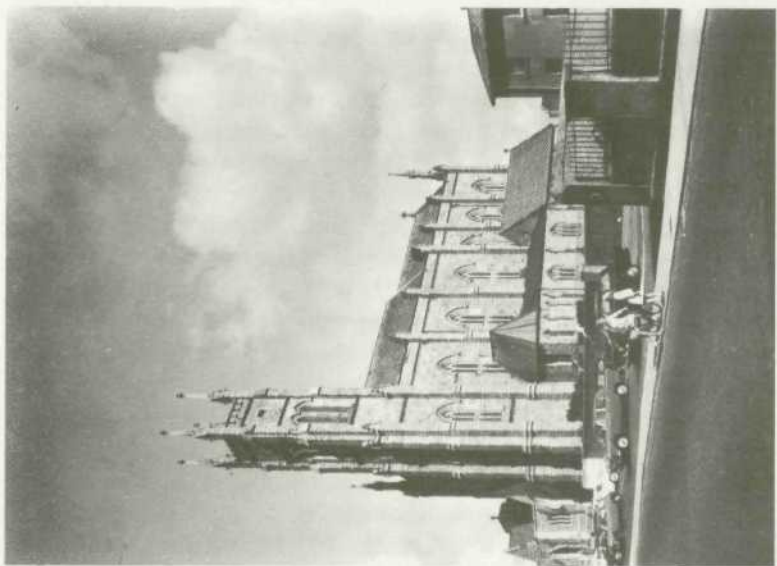
cupola form an admirable prologue to the western approach to the Four Courts. Many of the side elevations of Byrne's classical churches are just flat, unadorned walls. When built these were mainly concealed by adjoining houses. The buildings to the west of St. Paul's have been removed and today from down river one sees the incongruity of a mock grotto encrusted on to the wall. The interior is simple; an oblong nave with an apse illuminated by concealed top lighting. A most striking feature is the great altar-piece, a copy of Rubens' "Conversion of St. Paul", 25 feet long by 20 feet high. This work, flanked by two Doric pillars, gives a very pleasing dimension to the interior. The copy was executed in 1863 by Barff of Dublin, but the insertion at a later date of an incongruous figure in the centre of the canvas has greatly detracted from its effectiveness. The largeness of gallery and organ loft was dictated by necessity rather than artistic grace, and gives the feeling of having been thrust into the body of the church. The finely carved altar is by Sir Thomas Farrell.

An appeal sermon delivered by Rev. Dr. Miley in 1841, in the presence of a distinguished audience including O'Connell, for funds to provide a church to replace the chapel in Bride Street, is most revealing on the plight of the Catholic community within the Old City. The offerings of the poor, with the support of the moderately well-to-do merchants, were to provide the very slender resources to build St. Audoen's. The site was difficult, hemmed in by an ancient burial ground, the historic ruins of a medieval church, squalid little dwellings and with a short frontage on to High Street, yet Byrne was to erect what in the opinion of many is a masterly and most accomplished work. St. Audoen's "looks like some impregnable fortress of the faith, its rugged calp masonry, battered like that of a medieval castle to its base, pierced only by the windows at the very top, and crowned with the cross which breaks the silhouette against the sky. It is superbly dramatic, too in its relationship to that other great mass, the domed block of the Four Courts, which faces it across the river down the wide vista of Skipper's Alley. Below it is a straggling fragment of the medieval city wall

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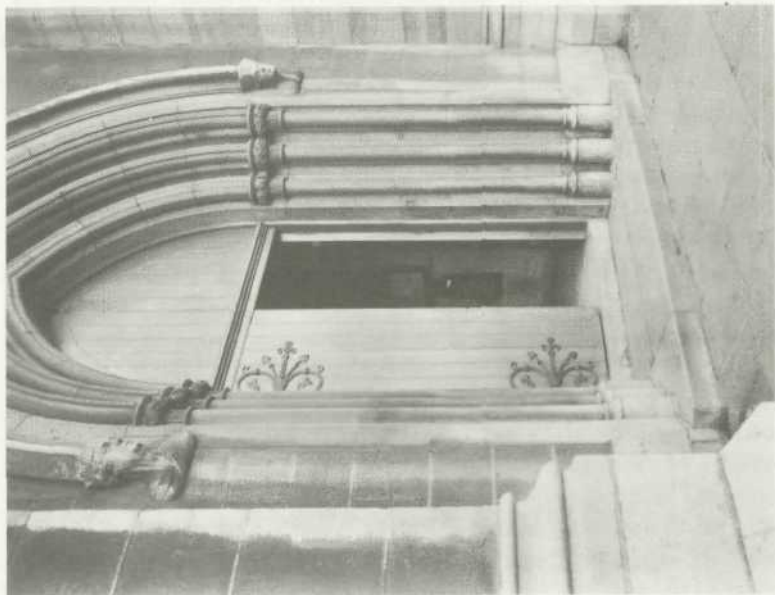
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(Plate 6), and the roofless aisle and chancel of the ancient St. Audoen's, whose battlemented tower completes the scene," writes Maurice Craig (*Dublin, 1660-1860*) in praise, but when he adds, "It is a composition which owes as much, perhaps, to accident as to design," I think that he is being less than fair to Byrne whose most marked trait throughout his career was his flair for composition, so well displayed at Enniskerry, St. Paul's Arran Quay, Rathmines and Arklow.

The interior is softly lighted by lunettes (Plate 7) beneath a barrel-vaulted, and delightfully plastered, ceiling. The dome over the crossing collapsed in 1884 and the present flat plaster replacement is incongruous. The church was dedicated in 1846, but the Famine and subsequent depression delayed the erection of the portico until 1898. This was carried out under the supervision of Stephen Ashlin and W. H. Byrne and is generally thought to be as the original architect intended it to be. Though W. H. Byrne and his son Ralph were to complete, alter and add to much of their namesake's work, they were in no way related to him.

The Gothic revival and the writings of Pugin were to have their effect on ecclesiastical buildings in Dublin. Byrne, trained in the traditional and strictly classical Dublin Society School, was to demonstrate his adaptability to changing moods when he was selected to design a new church at Blackrock. The opening of the Dublin-Kingstown railway in 1835 ushered in an era of expansion and development adjacent to the line. The parish of Booterstown was to provide a new church on a site presented by Lord Cloncurry, at Blackrock, beside his residence, "Maretimo". The church of St. John the Baptist (Plate 8) is claimed as one of the first Gothic Catholic churches to be built in Ireland since the Reformation. So impoverished was the parish that the work on its erection, commenced in 1842, was carried out by direct labour. One P. J. Byrne who gratuitously supervised the work was probably the son of the architect, who eventually succeeded him in his practice. Over the west side of the tower will be found the inscription, now partly obscured by an added porch, "To the Honour and Glory of God this



9



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Church of St. John the Baptist in gratitude for the blessing of Temperance by the Priests and people of Blackrock A.D. 1842 D.G." The great apostle of Temperance, Father Theobald Matthew preached at the laying of the foundation stone on the patron's feast day in 1842. The fiery enthusiasm of the parish priest Canon Ennis for the crusade may be judged from the words of his return on parish matters in 1839: "Easter was neglected only by a few, principally out of Stillorgan—a brewery rendering it a drunken village and no school in the neighbourhood."

The style is Perpendicular Gothic and the church is said to have been modelled by Byrne from Pugin's writings and drawings for Stanton St. John's Church, Oxfordshire. Many additions and annexes have somewhat detracted from its unity, and today its principal attractions lie in its lofty chancel and the remarkable variety of stained-glass work. In the chancel are to be found two paintings, one of St. John and the other a copy of a "Madonna" by Murillo made by Amelia, John Philpot Curran's eldest daughter. Besides a fine memorial window to Canon Ennis, executed in England, the Irish school of stained-glass workers is represented by Earley and Clarke and in the aisle is to be found one of the last works of Evie Hone, a three-light window of Our Lady, St. Brigid and St. Patrick. Sculptured heads of St. John and Archbishop Murray mark the terminals of the hood mould over the east window on the exterior wall—a quirk of Byrne's which was to be repeated in other churches.

Though Byrne may not have preceded Pugin in introducing the Gothic style into Catholic church architecture in Ireland, he was at least building contemporaneously. While the master was busy at Killarney Cathedral, St. Patrick's Maynooth, and Enniscorthy, Byrne was completing Blackrock and attentively engaged at James's Street. The old Mass house near the corner of Watling Street and now part of Guinness' visitors' reception room was beyond its usefulness when a site beside squalid buildings at the corner of Echlin Street was acquired. The foundation stone for the Church of St. James in James's Street was laid in 1844 by Daniel O'Connell, but misfortunes and



11



12

famines were to delay the solemn dedication for ten years—when the ceremony was performed by Archbishop Cullen in June 1854, followed by a sermon delivered by Dr. (later Cardinal) Manning. Byrne's gentle sense of humour is manifested by the label mouldings over the principal doorway being supported by corbel heads of the Liberator wearing an Irish crown and of Fr. Canavan the Parish Priest (Plate 9).

As at Blackrock, at the terminals of the hood mould over the window are the heads of the parish patron, St. James on this occasion, and Archbishop Murray. The interior, recently redecorated, is not exceptional, but the balance between the triforium and clerestory show how adroitly Byrne adapted himself to designing in a strange medium. The centre altar is too large for the size of the sanctuary and even dwarfs the huge east window by O'Connor of London above it. Each of the aisle windows represents a Station of the Cross.

A mortuary chapel was added at a later date, and both the front and the bold side elevations have been wantonly obscured by the erection of a red brick parochial hall.

The designing of these two churches by a man adopting a style alien to his training, when in his sixties, displays a remarkable adaptability. More was to come. Byrne built three churches in the Gothic style, all within the parish of Clontarf. The parish has since been divided so that today St. Assam's Raheny, St. Pappins Ballymun, and the Visitation, Fairview are each a parochial church. A site for a new church had been obtained at Fairview Strand in 1847, but the Famine postponed its erection for eight years. The exterior is undistinguished except for the very high pitch of the roof and, within, the lofty, exposed queen-post trusses add a sense of medieval sanctity. The mortuary, like the porch, was added later and has a fine piece of stained-glass work from the Clarke studio. While the erection of the parish church was being deferred, a small and unpretentious church of ease was erected in 1848, on a site given by the Domville family at Ballymun, which is today the parish church of St. Pappin. When the modern church of Our Lady, Mother of Divine Grace (from the drawing-board of Louis



13



14

Peppard and Hugo Duffy) was opened in 1962 the church of St. Assam, across the road alongside the old village of Raheny, was converted into a school. This little Decorated Gothic church with single belfry fitted delightfully into its rural surroundings, and it is a pity that Byrne did not live to see its completion in June 1864, for he had died just six months earlier.

If Byrne's excursions into the Gothic were to evidence his versatility, his commissions in the parish of Rathmines were to emphasise his dexterity and his enduring patience. The plan of Our Lady of Refuge, Rathmines, is unique in Ireland (Plate 11). The idea that it should be in the form of a Greek cross seems to have sprung from the mind of Dean Meagher who, in a thirty-page address announcing the proposal to build a new church, declaimed: "Accustomed myself from earliest youth, to devote a rather unusual share of attention to the principles of ecclesiastical architecture, and having enjoyed lengthened opportunity of maturing my ideas in the subject by familiarity with the great masterpieces of the art scattered over the Catholic countries of the continent; feeling also, that, when prepared by suitable previous reflection, a clergyman is, in general, the person most likely to comprehend aright the requirements of the divine worship in any particular locality and best fitted to devise the properest means of providing them—for all these reasons, I entertain . . .". Many of his demands were impracticable and Byrne appears to have had much trouble both here and at Rathgar in satisfying them. If the Dean's request to have the altar beneath the crossing had been adhered to, it would have anticipated contemporary trends by a century. An accidental fire damaged Rathmines in 1922 and it was rebuilt to the design of Ralph Byrne. The present resplendent dome replaces a more subdued saucer-shaped one. The introduction of a baldacchino over the high altar is a feature out of keeping with the original conception of Palladian refinement. The church was commenced in 1850 and took some six years to build. The parish was large, stretching from Harolds Cross to Milltown; the population was growing as residences were being built in Belgrave Square and along the Rathgar road, which had been

constructed in the year of Waterloo, 1815. Kenilworth Square was nearing completion when an unexpected and specific bequest compelled Dean Meagher to build a church of ease, to serve the wants of this growing population, in the Rathgar road. The Church of the Three Patrons has a curious interior, an ambulatory around the nave which has a blind chancel (Plate 12). The baptistry and sacristy as well as the altar and marble surround were provided after it became a parish church in 1882. The present *façade* was erected some twelve years later, and is the work of W. H. Byrne. The original plans had shown a campanile. It would be most unfair to judge Patrick Byrne or to assess his worth from this church alone, for it is impossible to know what his contribution to it was. His obituary in referring to these two churches says, "we believe it but simple justice to state *that*—as in the case with many other architects *likewise*—he had to yield his own taste and experience to the fancies of his reverent clients".

In Co. Wicklow, Byrne was to build the village church at Enniskerry. The small Gothic edifice with bell tower is simply set in delightful surroundings. The interior has recently been most tastefully redecorated. It was built from very meagre resources. The *façade* of the church in Arklow (Plate 13) shows what Rathgar might have been. The interior here also has recently been redecorated, again in very good taste. The plasterwork over the crossing, with the heads of the evangelists, is most attractive (Plate 14). This church, like Raheny, was completed after Byrne's death under the supervision of his son Hugh.

Additions, alterations and extensions have been made on many, if not most of the churches designed by Byrne. Changes in custom demanded the provision of mortuaries, growth of population necessitated extensions, and lack of funds at the time of erection delayed the provision of such features as porches, belfries and *façades*. These necessary changes have in many cases taken somewhat from the original deft conceptions of Byrne, and he has suffered in reputation. There is one case, however, where nemesis has allowed Byrne to improve on a predecessor's work. The church of St. Nicholas of Myra,

Francis Street, was commenced to the design of John Leeson in 1829 and completed by 1834. The architect had intended a short spire over a classical porch. Twenty-six years later Byrne was, in 1860, to have erected over a portico of his own design a bell tower with a pudding-bowl dome. He even added his own touch of whimsy by placing on the face of the tower a sculptured medallion showing the head of Dr. Matthew Flanagan, connoisseur, accomplished sculptor and parish priest.

Byrne's fruitful career was drawing to a close when he was offered the commission to design a new church on a site at Donnybrook. Alas, he was now too old and the work was entrusted to George Ashlin and Edward Pugin. Though most of his ecclesiastical work was done for the Dublin diocesan clergy he was also employed by the Irish Christian Brothers at O'Connell School, and by the Franciscan Fathers in Wexford. Of his commercial practice or work done for private patrons I have been able to find little except that a drawing in the National Library shows that he designed a boundary wall, entrance gate and lodge at Great Brunswick (now Pearse) Street, Dublin, for the Turf Gas Company. Among the plans drawn up by Sir Charles Domville for the landscaping of lakes and ponds on his estate at Santry, there is a sketch of a tower, signed Patrick Byrne, which does not appear to have been executed. To have accomplished so much church building he could have had but little time for a wider practice. In his later years it would seem that he was greatly assisted by his three sons, Patrick J., John and Hugh, the City Architect. This Corporation post was not full time and it is possible that father and son worked in conjunction with each other, for they are listed together in Thorn's Directory as practicing from the same premises.

Byrne was held in high esteem by his professional colleagues and was in 1852 made a Vice-President of the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland. He had been a member since the body was founded in 1839. Until the Institute was reconstituted in 1863, the office of President was held by a lay patron, so that Byrne held the highest honour the profession could bestow. When the Royal Hibernian Academy obtained its new charter

in 1861, Sir Thomas Deane, Sir Charles Lanyon, William Murray and Patrick Byrne were admitted as architect members. He was made a member of the council in the same year, as well as showing three water-colours at the annual exhibition. One of these "A south-east view of the Custom House", is lost, but the other two, "The Interior view of the Royal Exchange (1834)" and "The Portico of the House of Lords and View of part of Trinity College 1813" were purchased by the National Gallery in 1913, and are on loan to the Civic Museum. The date of the latter picture would suggest that it was executed by Byrne when a student at the Dublin Society School, to illustrate Gandon's deliberate use of the Corinthian order on the portico to harmonise with the *façade* of Trinity College. The drawing of the Royal Exchange (Plate 2) shows it as it was before being altered and adapted, by his son Hugh, as the City Hall. Both drawings are done with a clear line and fine classical draughtsmanship. He was a foundation member of the Society of Irish Artists in 1842.

A man of quiet disposition, mild of manner, patient and full of whimsical humour, he was surrounded by a loyal family. Of medium height, slight build, with an oval face, he was a man of "honesty of purpose and unswerving integrity of character." He was to build in a time when famine depressed the land, cholera ravaged a city and when his patrons were the poor with their pennies; all this was to prevent the full flowering of his ability, for none of his works could receive the finish which is so marked a trait of the truly accomplished artist. He was a fine craftsman and if circumstances had allowed him to demonstrate on the edifice the same care and ability he evidenced in the use of his sites he would have been one of the greatest of Ireland's church architects. Yet he added a grace and elegance to a fading scene, and when his cortege passed under the portal of his own creation at Glasnevin, the last glimmering light in the Georgian twilight was quenched.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. C. P. Curran I am deeply indebted for encouragement, kindness and guidance.

The Director, The National Gallery of Ireland for permission to reproduce the water-colour.

The President, Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland for permission to reproduce portrait of Patrick Byrne.

Except for reproduction of water-colours, all plates are from photographs taken by Hugh Doran, E.F.I.A.P.

Much help has been given by the Staff of the National Library in locating drawings.

Invaluable assistance was received from the Staff of the Print Room and of the Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

To Mr. Maguire of the Dublin Cemeteries Committee particular thanks is due for obtaining minutes and records.

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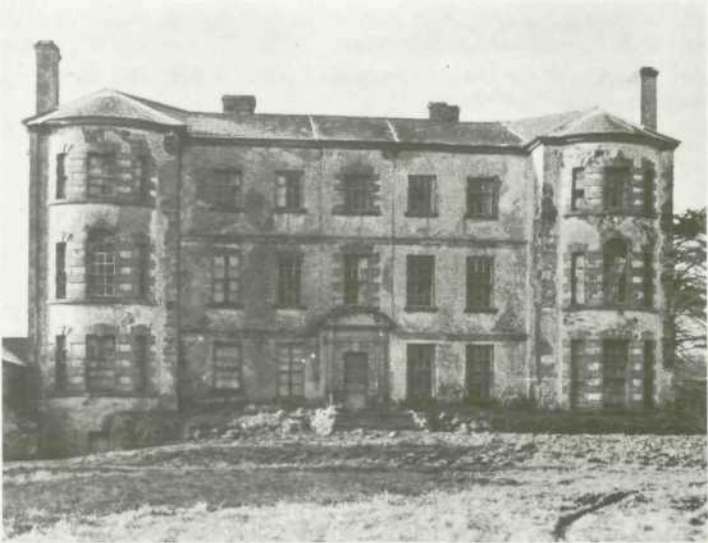
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LIFE IN THE IRISH COUNTRY HOUSE

by John Scott, 1st Earl of Clonmell (*d.* 1798)



*"With blackest moss the flower pots
Were thickly crusted, one and all."*

The misfortunes incident to the luxurious indulgence of a country house are innumerable. I never knew any nobleman, gentleman, or wealthy tradesman and merchant who was ruined in his fortunes, except those undone by play, which one night can accomplish, that did not owe it somewhat to a country house; or more accurately, I have very seldom seen any description of gentleman who resided in a country house, especially

in Ireland, upon whom or upon whose family that country residence did not bring beggary and *misfortune*; if not in one generation, by the superior and extraordinary talents and exertions of a rare individual, upon the second generation it brought inevitable destruction. How can it be otherwise? It is a prison, unless you have society; and that society are the instruments of the landlord's ruin. The establishment of servants become an absolute band of robbers; the men thieve and plunder, and sometimes ingratiate themselves dangerously and scandalously into the favour and affections of their superiors in the house, the wife, the sister, or daughter; the women servants, in the same manner, pilfer and pillage, and constantly debauch the master, the sons, and the relations, and frequently seduce the male children, sometimes even to disgraceful marriages, oftener, disorder them, and at times, by pimping and intrigue, sell the daughters to swindlers, fortune-hunters, and vagabonds. The company that are invited, or invite themselves, are often more dangerous, from their nearer approach to equality with the master and mistress, from the number and variety of their passions and of their entertaining accomplishments, and from the innumerable opportunities that a country residence affords in riding, walking, drinking, dancing, reading, acting plays, attending the little infirmities of small complaints, with ten thousand other uninterrupted familiarities and invitations to every vice, especially gambling for want of business, lewdness, drunkenness, and debauchery of every nature and kind: and therefore, if the landlord is not a knave, a designing engineer, or eternally on the watch, he is a dupe, a fool, or a sot, generally all three; he borrows money at an usurious interest from his tenants, and makes them improvident leases; he is taken in by their sly civilities and gross flatteries, and grows vulgar and ill-mannered. It is a monstrous error, therefore, to say that the country is the theatre of innocence, though it may be of *folly*; in a metropolis there is more show of vice, but there are too many spies, and more emulation and incentive to exertion and ambition.

A friend of mine has assured me, and I have reason to believe

him, that he never passed a fortnight with a family in a country house that he had it not in his power to do mischief of some sort, or did not see somewhat injurious or dishonourable going on, either to the family or their guests, to their property honour, consequence, or quiet.

What then shall a wise man do? Answer: If he has a town house, entertain his friends there in winter, and live with them, if he can, in the summer; but if he *must* have a country residence, let it be a villa as near town as will furnish him with fresh air, and as small as is consistent with his rank, situation, and convenience. The English nobility are so fatally convinced of the above truths, that most of their great country houses and demesnes are deserted and decayed, and they fly to water-drinking or bathing places in summer, not more for air than company, and a kind of society, which costs them little, and is not exposed to the above stated and many more mischievous consequences that arise from intimacies, intoxications, quarrels, low and rough manners, and a million of rural plagues.

IRISH GEORGIAN SOCIETY

The Irish Georgian Society would like to thank the editor of "BLACKMANSBURY" for help in publicising the Conolly Folly and Dromana Gateway appeals, with copious illustrations.

BLACKMANSBURY is a bi-monthly journal of notes and queries for the art and architectural historian, genealogist, etc., and is obtainable at 8/- per issue from: The Bridge Place Press, Canterbury, Kent.