

IRISH NATIONAL MONUMENTS.

The report of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland for the year ending 31st of March, 1876, has been printed. We find under the head of National monuments that fifteen most interesting groups of ruins have been taken possession of by the Board. The list includes the Rock of Cashel, the Churches and Round Towers and Crosses of Devenish, Donoughmore (Tyrone), Monasterboice, Donaghmore (Meath), Killala, Killamery, Kilkieran, Kildespeen, Glendalough, St. Columba's House, Kells, the Cathedrals of Ardmore and Ardferit, and Gallarus Church.

The Board has given strict orders to its officers to carefully preserve these ruins, but not in any way to make any attempt at restoration.

We miss from the list a great number of structures of the first interest, and especially note the absence of the beautiful monastic ruins with which Ireland is so rich.

The monuments are a treasure which every Irishman should prize; and the following item of news relative to them, which came by one of the late mails, is calculated to afford pleasure:

"At a general meeting of the Royal Irish Academy, the President, Dr. Stokes, delivered an inaugural address, in the course of which, after referring to several of the most interesting papers read before the Academy during the last session, he said he sincerely hoped that Sir John Lubbock's Ancient Monuments' Bill would be passed during the next session of Parliament. No effort should be spared by Irish members in support of the measure. He would strongly urge on the Academy the desirability of recommending a uniform administration and consolidation of funds for the preservation of ancient monuments in Ireland, and that the direction and administration of this work should be left in the hands of the Irish Government. He also desired to draw attention to the extremely defective character of the list of ancient Irish monuments now before the Church Temporalities Commissioners, a list which only specified twenty monuments. Of the one hundred and twenty-five Round Towers which were noticed as in existence at the close of the last century, only seventy-five were now standing. The great Crosses, which exhibited the most ancient and perfect examples of sculpture in the country, and a much larger number of the most important and ancient churches, could be included in the list. Dr. Stokes added that the work of preservation, rather than restoration, already achieved at Cashel and at Ardmore, gave the best hopes for the cause of this department of archaeology."

What Irishman, at home or abroad, but will feel grateful to Dr. Stokes for his enlightened and patriotic efforts to preserve from destruction the ancient monuments of Ireland? The statement is saddening that "of the one hundred and twenty-five Round Towers which were noted as in existence at the close of the last century, only seventy-five are now standing." It will be truly a shame if, through the neglect and carelessness of the present generation, they are allowed to perish after having for centuries so nobly resisted the wasting power of Time! The verses of Dennis Florence McCarthy on "The Pillar Towers of Ireland" contain a mute appeal for their preservation. We may be permitted to cite the first two stanzas:

The Pillar Towers of Ireland, how wondrously they stand
By the lakes and rushing rivers, through the valleys of our Land;
In mystic file throughout the isle, they lift their heads sublime,
These gray old pillar temples—these conquerors of Time!

Beside these gray old pillars how perishing and weak
The Roman's arch of triumph, and the temple of the Greek;
And the gold domes of Byzantium and the pointed Gothic spires;
All are gone, one by one, but the temples of our sires.

We earnestly hope that effective measures will be taken to preserve these relics of Ireland's past greatness. The preservation of her ancient language and literature will be the surest means of keeping alive the spirit of nationality, and of transmitting from generation to generation that love of country for which her children have been remarkable.—'Boston Pilot.'

A WELL DESERVED SENTENCE.

THE learned and honorable Order of the Jesuits, which has always preserved the chivalrous spirit of its soldier founder, vindicated itself from a foul aspersion and a vile calumny in Paris towards the close of last week. About two months ago an examination was held at the Sorbonne for admissions to the Polytechnic School, and in the course of the proceedings it leaked out that some of the candidates had been informed of the questions to be put to them and their correct solution. The Radical journals, the 'Republique Francaise' (Gambetta's paper), 'Les Droits de L'homme,' 'La France,' the 'Tribune,' the 'Peuple,' and the 'Bien Public,' at once accused the Jesuit Fathers of being the delinquents, and forthwith launched forth into the most violent tirades against the Jesuit school in the Rue des Postes and its Superior, Father du Lac. The Fathers protested their innocence and defended the credit of their school, and the matter excited such indignant interest on both sides that two Government Commissions were issued to inquire into it. The evidence taken by the committee proved that the disclosures were made in other educational establishments, but the newspapers named abated not a jot of their violent and libellous language against the sons of Loyola. The honor of his order, the existence of his college, at length compelled the long-patient Father de Lac to defend himself publicly, so he summoned the proprietors of the papers named before the Ninth Chamber of the Police Correctionnelle, and the result is, that after hearing the evidence and briefly consulting, the Judges returned into court with a sentence against the journalists, inflicting on each a fine of £80 sterling. The sturdy example of the Jesuit Fathers was followed by the parents of the boys maligned, and a similar fine was imposed in each case on this accusation. The liberty of the Press should be preserved with jealous care, but this is not a

case in which it was at stake. It was here the bigoted fury of the partisan that was arraigned for punishment. The calumny against the Jesuits, like many another, was spread all over the earth and into places where, perhaps, the news of its being a vile concoction may never penetrate. And these are the weapons which the godless teachers of youth would use to undermine the structure of secular and religious learning built up age after age by the true Church!—'Ulster Examiner,' August 5.

THE LABORS OF THE FRANCISCANS FOR ART.

(From 'MacMillan's Magazine'.)

To the Franciscan monks, who exercised a popular influence on Italian literature before Dante, we must also give the glory of having, in the basilica of Assisi (dedicated to the founder of their order), begun the first and most important change of Italian art, that of its emancipation from the conventionalities of Greek or Byzantine artists in church painting. Byzantine church painting had its day; excellent specimens of its merits are numerous all over Italy, more especially at Rome, Ravenna, and Venice. But its types were no longer suited to an age whose appreciation of beauty increased with wealth, luxury, and intercourse with other countries—an age, in fact, which marked the first manhood of the Italian people and the Italian mind. The Byzantine figures breathe vigor and simplicity, and sometimes a certain majesty of design; but the disposition of the groups is extravagant, the details are incorrect, the outline dry, and no knowledge of perspective is evinced. Profusion of gold everywhere, especially in the ground on which stand forth the figures of the Redeemer or of the Creator. On some crucifixes you would suppose mummies had been suspended with feet disjointed, while wounds pour out large rivulets of greenish blood; black, stern madonne, with long, stiff fingers, round eyes, and rough child; in general, long figures, vulgar heads, and want of expression are the characteristics of Byzantine art. It has imagination without grace; richness, but no purity of design; rigidity, but no power; talent, but no genius. It is, in fact, a style of transition, which soon became one of decline, when, having adopted several immutable laws, art was reduced to a mere mechanism, which any monk could copy and reproduce with little trouble or expense. It is in the basilica of Assisi that Guido da Siena and Giunta da Pisa emancipated themselves by degrees from their Greek masters. The golden ground we see first substituted by azure besprinkled with golden stars. The figures become more animated, the expression more ideal, the dryness of the outline and grouping is softened, the immobility of the attitudes gives place to a more natural disposition; in fact, art makes the first steps in its new life. Guido da Siena and Giunta da Pisa are followed by Bonamico, Parabuvi, Diotalvi, and by that Duccio who is placed by some above Cimabue, and finally by Cimabue and Giotto, who completed the revolution. Among the many paintings inspired for the new style of art by the founder of the Franciscan order, every one who has been in Assisi must have seen Giotto's fresco representing the wedding of St. Francis with Poverty, in her ragged clothes, with a slender figure and thin face, but still preserving the features of a most beautiful woman. A dog barks at her, two children throw stones at her, and place thorns in her path; she, calm, happy, and radiant, stretches out her hand to St. Francis. While Christ Himself joins their hands, the Eternal Father, accompanied by angels, appears in the midst of clouds, as if heaven and the universe assisted at the happy wedding. There is nothing here which has the slightest association with the Greek manner. All is new, and free from school conventionality. And if you read the hymn of Dante to St. Francis, and the songs of St. Francis himself, and of Jacopone in praise of poverty, and then look at the fresco of Assisi, you will see in the Franciscan order the same source of inspiration, the same sign of popularity.

In its issue of the 6th July, the 'New York World' (says the 'Manchester Guardian') attempts to estimate "the cost" of the storm of pyrotechnics with which the Fourth has this year been celebrated. The attempt was manifestly premature, as the New York journalist at the time he wrote could have had before him only a most imperfect record of the two days' casualties to life and property. He admits this, and contents himself with an estimate for the whole Union, which is based upon the loss suffered over a very limited area. At Philadelphia one fire, caused by an incautious use of gunpowder, involved a loss of 200,000 dollars; while a single explosion killed four men. But it is with New York itself that the 'World' specially concerns itself. During the two days covered by the celebration the casualties directly traceable to that patriotic demonstration were four killed or fatally injured, and forty-one seriously, and twenty-nine slightly, wounded. This for a city is a sufficiently formidable list, but there can be little doubt that if all the cases of injury were reported the catalogue of disasters would be found still heavier. As the figures stand, however, the calculation of our contemporary is that if these celebrations were a thing of every-day occurrence, affecting the rate of mortality like dysentery, or typhoid, or measles, then in the course of a year one New Yorker in every 1,609 would lay his life on the altar of his country, and one in every 154 would be severely injured. Or, to take the whole Union, if the glow of patriotism throughout the States is but half as vivid as it is in New York, the Centennial cannot have been done at a cost of less than 80 killed and 1,400 wounded. New York, seems to have been more fortunate than the Quaker city in the matter of fires. During the two days eighty buildings were fired through the careless use of explosive and inflammable materials; but the aggregate loss does not exceed the trifle of some £4,000. Of course, if the Americans are satisfied with this sort of thing, it is not for foreign critics to intervene with narrow-minded remarks about the lunacy of a good deal of the Centennial merry-making.