

# "THE DEAD WHO DIED"

## Great Commemoration at Murroe

### Archbishop Harty Unveils Beautiful Memorial

#### Limerick Defeat Tipperary in Hurling.

A great host of the Gaels there was at Murroe on Sunday last. The purpose that brought the immense and well-ordered assemblage together from all parts of Limerick and Tipperary was chiefly the unveiling ceremony of the beautiful Memorial Cross erected on the cross of Murroe to the men of the East Limerick Brigade of the I.R.A. who fell in the brave and glorious struggle of recent years to drive the foreigner from Irish soil. The memorial has taken an appropriate and beautiful form. Its position leaves nothing to be desired. Erected in the centre of a broad triangle from which roads radiate in many directions through Tipperary and Limerick, and situated on an eminence it is a landmark for miles around. Southward it looks out over the green pastures of the Golden Vale; Northwards range the beautifully-wooded Glenstal hills.

The distinction of being the designer and maker of the Cross rests with a Waterford stone-mason, Mr. William Gaffney. He, prior to 1913, made a cross after the model of the Great Cross of Monasterboice. It was a work involving thought and taste, and so impressed high ecclesiastics that it was purchased and conveyed to Lourdes on the occasion of the great Irish Pilgrimage there in 1913. Some years later Mr. Gaffney made the great Memorial Cross at Murroe—a lucid and concise Bible-history for young and old, and a masterpiece of Irish genius and Irish industry and skill. No description of the work can convey the deep impression it makes on one who sees its beauty and perfection of design. There it stands towering over twenty feet high, set on a large raised circular concrete platform with steps from ground level in the centre of the cross roads at the entrance to Murroe village, county Limerick, in picturesque surroundings.

It was cut out of a huge limestone block, and is larger and far more elaborately carved than the famous "Lourdes Cross." The Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary, as well as numerous other Holy Truths, are depicted in wonderful and harmonious order on the panels, all treated with great skill and scriptural correctness. The panels are divided and adorned by the distinctive Irish interlacing coils and spirals—with the crushed head of the serpent—symbolic of the struggles of the human race against its eternal enemy; and the victory of the woman who should triumph over him; and of the redeeming power of the Cross. The central object which strikes the eye of the beholder is the sad suffering figure of our Redeemer crucified. The arms are wide extended as to welcome all who come in love and in sorrow to His Sacred Feet. All round the Cross are carved heads with hideous grinning faces—these, in the mind of the designer, depict the world surrounded by sin and iniquity. And on the extreme top of the Cross is a spiral flame in stone, representing the flame of faith which will ascend to heaven with each prayer said at its base, or which the noble work inspires. May all such prayers a cure for the noble martyrs of West Limerick, East Limerick and Mid Limerick Brigades, I.R.A., who, in 1920 and 1921, "For God and Ireland died," and for the maker of the Cross—all spiritual needs. May these prayers also bring a blessing on all the sons and daughters of Erin at and beyond the waves, and also on their dear country.

The comparatively few High Crosses in Ireland that escaped the hands of the destroyers bear testimony to the high art and holy ideals of our Catholic forefathers in the ages that are gone. Obviously the maker of this grand new Cross proved himself a worthy inheritor of the genius of the great stone artists of the centuries when Ireland was renowned throughout the civilized Christian world for its High Crosses and carving in stone.

As is fitting, the inscription on the front panel of the base is carved in the Irish language.

On the back panel, in English, is carved a simple inscription, reading:—"Erected by a grateful people to the memory of Brigadier Sean Finn, Brigadier Sean Wall, Captain Patrick Starr, Adjutant Patrick Ryan, Lieutenant John Frahill, soldiers of the Irish Republican Army, East Limerick, West Limerick, and Mid Limerick Brigades, and the other noble dead who fell, 1920 and 1921, fighting English aggression.

They sought no honour, praise, renown. They loved and died—'tis the martyr-crown.

May the Lord have mercy on their souls.

On the side panels are carved the names of the members of West, Mid and East Limerick Brigades.

There are panels also of spiral interlacing, taken from old Irish work of the 9th and 10th centuries; and on the band of the cross is worked the eight stranded interlacing taken from the Book of Kells—which all artists admit is the most beautifully designed book in the whole world.

The margins are richly robed and beautifully worked, and the workmanship, from beginning to end, is a credit to an Irish firm, conceived and carried out as it has been, in every detail by Irish hands.

A biographical sketch of the lives of the men inscribed on the memorial, with a historical account of the parish of Murroe and surroundings, will be issued in October, 1923.

If the relatives and friends of the men of those Brigades, who died for Ireland in 1920 and 1921, would send photographs, dates of birth, and death, etc., as soon as possible to Mr. Michael Hayes, Murroe, Co. Limerick, the Memorial Committee would be very thankful.

The memorial is a splendid tribute of popular devotion and remembrance. The immense throngs of people and the representative character of the assemblage on Sunday last were equally fine in their way. One could wish for the pen of Kipling to delineate the happy, earnest throngs of young men and women moving through the village and the sport's grounds enjoying the pleasant day and consciously or unconsciously drinking in the spirit of the gathering. Here, too, one felt contact with the people—

the "hidden Ireland," as it had been finely expressed. One again might wish for the pen of Griffith or Pease to analyse the power, and to draw inspiration from the resurgent spirit that is, and ever will be, found in the hostings of the Gael. In that beautiful countryside on Sunday last gathered together the men and women—young and old—from the farmsteads and the cottages, keenly interested in all that was occurring, enjoying the national games, and taking their part in preserving the old traditions. A sober, steady, industrious Ireland, Gaelic to the core, is the hope of the future. Therein Irish strength will be found, and not in the varying moods of the city, or in the changing efforts of the politicians. The man or the party who wins the allegiance and moves the will of the people as they impressed the watcher on such an occasion as Sunday, base power on realities and may rely on sustained faithfulness. Notwithstanding the horrible things that have occurred, and the grave breakdowns in civic rectitude in too many cases, one is still filled with hope when we realise the great strength economically, the tenacity, determination, and sound instinct of the Irish countryside.

The Rev. W. Purcell, P.P. Murroe, was moved to the chair amidst loud applause. He briefly eulogised the work of the Organising Committee, and then introduced the Archbishop.

His Lordship said they would pardon him if he did little more than formally unveil this magnificent Celtic Cross which the people of Limerick had erected in honour of their kith and kin who gave their lives for Ireland. If it was a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, it was also a worthy thing to remember their glorious deeds, and to record them in lasting memorials. It was sweet to die for one's country, but the sacrifice deserved recognition at the hands of those for whom the sacrifice was made. Hence they had assembled there that day to pay their tribute to the men of Mid and East Limerick who gave their lives for Ireland's freedom. Over 700 years ago Ireland lost her freedom. Her ancient civilisation, which helped to bring Christian culture to the nations of Europe, was gradually suppressed by alien rule; her ancient laws and customs, which were christianised by St. Patrick, were supplanted by foreign traditions; her language, which stood the test of centuries, was finally almost banished from her shores; her lands were taken from their respectful owners and handed over to British settlers. Her faith was ruthlessly attacked and her churches were stolen; and her actors were laid low. Almost every branch of national life was dominated by the stranger. Ireland was, in truth, a land of sorrow, foreign armies overran her fair territory which God had blessed with grandeur, they ceased to have their rightful place amongst the nations of the earth. To the credit of Irishmen and Irishwomen, be it said that during the long centuries of suppression there was always to be found those who were ready to give their all that Ireland might be free. According to the possibilities of the times, men and women were found who fought against the oppression, ever looking forward to the day when the Irish flag would probably float over a free Ireland. There were always O'Connells and O'Neills and Sarsfields, Wolfe Tones and Davids—"True men like you men"—whose love of Ireland was supreme. In modern times, as of old, the fierce struggle for freedom went on. Those of them who were advancing in years remembered well the stormy days of the Land League. One of his earliest recollections of Irish life was of a meeting which was held on that very site to forward the advanced movement in the days that immediately preceded and prepared for the Parnellite days. Or all the efforts for freedom few were so fierce as the fight in which the men whose memory they celebrated that day gave their lives for Ireland. The atrocities of the Black and Tans were fresh in their memories. Not since the days of Cromwell were their people driven to desperation in such bare ways. Men like those of Mid Limerick and East Limerick freely gave their lives in defence of their hearths and homes. To those men they paid a nation's tribute of respect; to their memory they raised that glorious monument. Their names would never be forgotten and that memorial would help to hand on to future days the memory of men who did not fear the common foe. With deep reverence he now unveiled the Celtic Cross. It was, indeed, a glorious memorial. No more fitting memorial than that magnificent Celtic Cross could be found. While it commemorated the past it bade them look to the future. It commemorated the past because it was the symbol of sacrifice. It worthily expressed admiration of the men who made the supreme sacrifice for Ireland. So long as that Cross stood in Murroe, so long would men remember that there were brave men who died for Ireland. Their children would look lovingly on that Cross and would pray for the men who gave their lives in the noble cause. That cross also bade them to look to the future. The cross was not only a symbol of sacrifice, it was a symbol, too, of their common brotherhood. Let them learn its lesson, let them have peace in Ireland, let them all unite in common love of their motherland, let them forget the immediate past and work together for the glory of their race and nation; let no bitterness possess their souls, let them remember that these brave men who died for Ireland died, not for a party, but for the nation as a whole; let them honour them and keep their names for ever, free from mere party strife. The Cross was a symbol of sacrifice and a symbol of common brotherhood. It was also a promise of resurrection. It was in their power to fulfil that promise for Ireland. They could take up again their ancient civilisation. They could foster their native industries; they could promote their ancient games; they could study their native language; they could by their united efforts make their country once again one of the most glorious nations in the world. They had erected there that day a splendid monument to the men who gave their lives for Ireland. They could erect a still more glorious monument to their memory by uniting together heart and soul for the regeneration of their native land, which they all loved so well.

Mr. M. Hayes, secretary of the Organising Committee, read an address from the Committee to Archbishop Harty.

His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Harty, replying to the address, said:—I have spoken so much today that I am sure you will not ask me to say much more. I spoke for along time in the church this morning, and when I was unveiling this statue today, and I shall now merely express my gratitude for this address so eloquently read by Mr. Hayes. In the first place, I would like to thank the Committee for the kind words they have said about me in their address. I happen, indeed, to be a native of this parish of Murroe, and I am proud of it, and proud to belong to Murroe (loud cheers). I think that any Limerick man coming here today would have reason to be proud, because we have today commemorated the bravery of Limerick and it was not the first time that the men and women of Limerick showed bravery as well as the men. We can almost see from here an historic memorial to the bravery of the men of Limerick. I refer to Sarsfield's rock (cheers). It is an everlasting reminder of those glorious days when Irishmen were led to give their lives for Ireland, and the memorial unveiled here today will remind us that there are men at the present time who are ready to do the same (cheers). I thank you for your expressions of goodwill, and I have to thank the Committee for the kindly personal reference they made, and I may say that the kindness and sympathy of the people of Murroe and Limerick on that sad occasion were to me a very great consolation. I thank you all for those kind words you have said, and I express a fervent hope that *hinn* all future days the glories of Limerick will continue as they have been (loud applause).

The Rev. Chairman next introduced Rev. Thomas Wall as a brother of Brigadier Sean Wall, one of the Limerick heroes, whose names were inscribed on the monument just unveiled.

Rev. Father Wall, on coming forward, was greeted with applause. He briefly addressed the meeting in Irish, and then said: Your Grace, Rev. Fathers, ladies and gentlemen, I did not come to make a speech. I wish to join with you all, who are assembled here, in thanking the Committee for the work they have done. This Cross which has been erected here to-day is a Gaelic Cross, and is one of the highest Crosses of Erin of our time. The high Crosses of the Erin of other days were shattered and battered by the hands of the enemy. They were symbols of the faith of our country, and this cross, too, is a symbol of the faith of our country. The faith was united to the country in the nation's struggle at all times, but more particularly were they united in the great struggle which this Cross commemorates. It is a great honour that this is the first part to discharge the sacred duty of raising a Cross to the memory of the men who fell so recently. In the dark and evil days of long ago the people had to wait a half a century to erect memorials to the men who fell in the fight. It was fifty years after 1798 that the people of Ireland were able to raise monuments to those who fell in the struggle against the Sassenach. It shows your big heart, People of the City and of East Limerick, who have combined to raise this beautiful work of art in such a short period, and within such a recent time of the struggle. It will ever remain a cherished memorial to the people of the whole district. It is a good thing to have amongst you, it is a lesson for your children which they will read and which will sink into their hearts, and be a guiding light throughout their lives. I thank your Grace and Rev. Fathers, and all the members of the Committee for asking me to come to this meeting, and I wish to join with you in congratulating the people on their great achievement in erecting the memorial (loud cheers).

#### ALD. CASEY'S ADDRESS

Alderman Casey, who was warmly received, said your Grace, Rev. Fathers and fellow-countrymen, on behalf of the Corporation of Limerick, I beg to thank the committee for inviting us to this historic ceremony to-day. I have one regret and that is, our Lord Mayor who is a victim of the circumstances of the times we are living in, is not present to-day. I am sure that he is here in spirit, because nothing would be nearer to his heart than to take part in this great ceremony, to perpetuate the memory of those martyrs who died for Ireland (cheers). I am sure every one of you will look back with pride upon the history of all those men who laid down their lives for you, and, as the monuments of Tone, Sarsfield, and Fitzgerald inspired those men to fight for Irish freedom, so also will this historic cross inspire and urge on the coming generation to fight for the complete freedom for the whole of Ireland, which we are now fighting for (cheers). Those men have opened a new page in Irish history. They have added another page to our long sad history, and when future generations read of the doings of those men I hope they will be in an Ireland that will be free, a free All-Ireland for a free Irish people (cheers). The memory of the men who have gone will be an echo and a light for ages yet to come (cheers). I have much pleasure in thanking his Grace and the Committee for giving to Limerick Corporation an opportunity of participating in today's ceremony (cheers).

Notes of thanks to Archbishop Harty and the Rev. Chairman concluded the proceedings.

Amongst those on or near the platform, in addition to his Grace Most Rev. Dr. Harty, were Rev. Fr. Purcell, P.P. Murroe; Rev. T. Wall, O.C., Ph.D. Dromedary; Rev. Fr. O'Dwyer, O.C., Rev. Fr. Duggan, O.C., Rev. Fr. O'Donoghue, O.C., Rev. Father Humphreys, Rev. Fr. Kennedy, Messrs D. Laffan, Limerick Co. Council; A. Matkev, Vice chairman, do; J. D. O'Dwyer, Co. O; D. Hennessy, Co. O Chairman Limerick No. 1 District Council; James Ledden, President of the Limerick City Executive of Sinn Fein; Tomas de Bhra, M. O'Sullivan, etc. The Limerick Corporation was represented by the following, who were attended by the

sword and mace bearers: Ald. J. Casey, Chairman of Committee; Ald. Walsh, Councillors M. Griffin, D. Griffin, T. Bourke, J. M'Inerney, M. O'Dwyer, J. Cronin, M. Gough, M. Clancy, and O. Ryan.

#### ITEMS OF THE DAY.

The number of motor cars which reached the little village was immense. Satisfactory traffic arrangements were made by Volunteers and most of the cars were parked in the old church grounds.

Reminders of the troublous times of the past couple of years were to be found in the roofless and bullet-riddled R.I.C. barrack, and the burned Sessions' house where formerly the old Petty Sessions were held.

Large numbers attended from Nenagh, Toomevara, and all the mountain country around Newports. Everybody enjoyed the outing though the weather was disappointing and the day made things awkward.

Civic Guards are now located in the place, and numbers of them were to be observed amongst the crowd on Sunday.

Archbishop Harty, who is a native of the parish, took the keenest interest in the proceedings, and his remarks and presence added impressiveness to the occasion.

A feature of the little village is practically all the shops have the names in Gaelic characters on the sign boards.

Captain Ryan and Lieutenant Frahill are buried in the church grounds. They are natives of the parish and their graves were visited by large numbers on Sunday. They were covered by many beautiful wreaths.

It may perhaps be noted that on the occasion of the re-burial of those two officers some objection was made by the late P.P. to their interment in the church grounds. On being appealed to, Most Rev. Dr. Harty at once gave the necessary permission. Both officers fell in action during the height of the terror, on the Cork border and were temporarily interred but after the Truce the boys were brought to their native parish.

Amongst the relatives present were Mr. Thomas Starr (father) and Mr. Joe Starr, Nenagh (brother) of the late Capt. Pat Starr who fell in action and whose remains were also temporarily interred in Fermoy. Later they were re-interred in Tyone Abbey, the funeral being of a most impressive character.

An object of admiration on Sunday last was the very pretty little parish church. It was built within recent years and is a chaste and imposing structure, with a beautiful Norman porch.

The Toomevara hurling team had a trying time in their efforts to get to Murroe. The lorry in which they were travelling broke down near Birdhill and the team had to push it a considerable distance in the hope of re-starting or of being met.

After considerable delay word was sent to Murroe, and from there motors were immediately despatched to make up the team. The accident caused regrettable but unavoidable delay in the starting of the match.

Visitors on Sunday last were greatly impressed by the beautiful situation of the village of Murroe and its surroundings. It is one of the most neatly-kept and most prettily situated villages of Munster. The fine castellated residence of the Barrington family at Glenstal, overlooking the village, with its very pretty woodland scenery, added greatly to the beauty of the scene.

The Limerick Corporation, with their mace bearer and other prominent officials, attended in state, and they were accompanied by an immense following from the city.

Several bands attended, including Brass and Reed, War Pipers, and Fife and Drum. A special word of appreciation is due to the Boneyboy Brass and Reed Band for the very beautiful selections of airs which they played during the afternoon. They added immensely to the pleasure of the day.

It was very pleasant to notice the practically entire absence of drink, or of any person under the influence of drink. Stands and tents selling fruit, minerals, sweets, etc. were in large numbers, and an ice-cream vendor, with his Vanilla ices, plied a busy trade.

The inevitable three-card trick man, shooting galleries, roulette tables, under and over seven, and all the rest of the tricks to turn an honest or dishonest penny were everywhere in evidence.

The cailinn selling flags—help the Memorial Cross—plied a busy trade, and a goodly sum must have been realised for the Memorial Fund from their efforts.

A special word of appreciation is due to the efforts of the Committee and particularly the secretary, Mr. Hayes. Their labours were immense, but they were crowned with complete success. We are sure the work was a labour of love, and they have the further satisfaction of seeing their work fully recompensed.

Metropolitan and provincial press were largely represented.

Limerick beat Tipperary (Toomevara) in the hurling match.