

The Irish Builder.

VOL. X.—No. 213.

Building Contracts.



THE case of Doolin against Dixon, of which we give a report as far as it has gone, is one of more than ordinary importance, not only on account of the particular interests of the parties concerned, but of architects, builders, and their clients generally.

We have so often and strenuously urged the necessity for some change in the relations that exist between architects, surveyors, builders, and their clients, that we trust this important case will have the effect of aiding the reform we have so repeatedly advocated, and that it will be the means of calling the attention of the builders of Ireland to the necessity that exists for some more intimate union between themselves in the matter of contracts, not only to protect their own interests, but to prevent the unseemly disputes that so frequently occur between themselves and architects, on account of the unsatisfactory and unfair conditions attached to building contracts. We have on more than one occasion referred to the fact of the builders of Dublin having no association, or rules of any kind, to bind them to unity of action on this and other matters; and when we reflect on the importance of the subject, and the materials that exist for forming a vigorous and practical association, we cannot understand the apathy and indifference that exist on the subject.

In our articles on "Blind Builders," and "Contracts and Extras," we alluded to some of the unjust requirements of some architects, and which would not be attempted to be enforced on any other class of men, such as requiring 10 or 15 per cent. of the amount of the contract to remain in the hands of the employer for many months after the works are given up; and requiring the builder to make good any defects that may be found within "two years after the works are completed," as we have seen in several specifications. Another anomaly is, requiring the builder to give security for the due performance of his contract in cases where the builder should rather require security to be given to him, and where, as frequently occurs, the parties are no stake for the amount expended on their works.

We are led to those remarks by the defence set up in the case we have referred to—the non-liability of the defendants, who seek to evade the responsibility of the contract entered into by one of their body, and who have pursued the unusual course of repudiating their own architect's certificate.

As we intend to return to this subject when the case terminates, we shall for the present reserve further remarks awaiting the verdict.

THE PROVINCIAL BANK.

THE directors of the Provincial Bank announce that their new premises in College-street will be opened for business on Monday, the 9th inst.

NEW COLLEGE OF ST. JOHN, WATERFORD.

THE foundation-stone of this building was laid on Tuesday last by the Right Rev. Dr. O'Brien, R.C. Bishop of Waterford. The building, which will cost about £12,000, is being erected by Mr. Barry McMullen, of Cork, from the designs of George Goldie, Esq., architect, London. The structure forms a square, 148 feet each front; it embraces a large central court surrounded by cloisters, and has spacious class-rooms, library, refectory, kitchen, offices, commodious apartments for the professors and students, and a chapel of very beautiful design; the various parts are planned with the utmost consideration for the convenience and discipline of such an establishment.

The ceremony commenced at 12 o'clock; the place for laying the stone being marked by a wooden cross erected at one corner of the quadrangle cut 12 feet into the sloping field before a foundation was obtained. There were about 2,000 spectators present, arranged in three lines over the cutting, and enjoying a full view of the spectacle.

The procession entered the grounds in the following order:—Processional cross borne by students with lighted tapers, a long line of students in surplices walking two and two, the Professors of the College of St. John, and a large number of the local clergy and the bishop. The usual prayers having been offered, the bishop and clergy made the circuit of the ground, the bishop blessed the stone, and took the silver trowel, placing a small quantity of mortar in the bed of the stone, and in a groove cut for the purpose a bottle containing coins of her Majesty's reign and those of contemporary sovereigns, together with a parchment inscription. The trowel bore the following inscription:

Presented to
The Most Rev. Dr. O'BRIEN,
Lord Bishop of Waterford and Lismore,
by the
President, Professors, and Students of St. John's College,
Waterford.
On the occasion of laying the foundation-stone of the new
College, in the Year of Grace, 1868."

The stone was placed *in situ* by means of a winlass under the direction of the architect. The dedicatory prayers were offered, and the bishop, clergy, and students knelt and sang "Veni Creator Spiritus." The procession then returned to the house, and the proceedings terminated, as most of the ceremonies of the Church do, by a blessing to the people.

ANTIQUARIAN DISCOVERY.

THE excavations at Bristol for the branch line of railway which is being constructed by the Great Western, Midland, and Bristol and Exeter, from their terminus at Temple Mead to the Floating Harbour, have disclosed the existence of a complete network of subterranean passages underneath Redcliff parish, and branching out in various other directions. A deep cutting has been made parallel with Guinea-street, and which is to go under Redcliff-hill. At one place, where the cutting is about 30 feet deep, the men discovered the narrow entrance to a huge cavern. Further examination showed that this portion of the subterranean passage had been severed by the railway cutting, but, unfortunately, the entrance to the left hand passage is now blocked up by a fall of rock in blasting. On Monday night a party consisting of half-a-dozen gentlemen explored a portion of the underground network. Mr. J. H. F. Roberts, C.E., pioneered the party, and Mr. W. Rice, architect, took a plan of the passages. Before entering the place, a line was fastened to one of the outside supports, and each of the party carried either a torch or a candle. After creeping through a narrow, low passage, some 20 yards in length, the party came to a row of three arches, each of which led in an opposite direction. Taking the centre one, the party had to crawl on their hands and knees for about ten yards under a great rock, and then they emerged into a spacious and lofty cavern, whence there were other branches. A journey of some 200 or 300 feet further, chiefly through low narrow corridors,

brought the party to what appeared to be the grand saloon, or chief cave. It was perfectly circular in form, the roof being supported on eight columns, besides a very strong column in the centre. The cavern was some forty or fifty feet in diameter, and from six to eight feet high, the roof sloping to within a few feet of the ground. The spaces between the pillars, with the exception of the route the explorers had come, and one in a straight line with it, had been walled up all round; and this was the first piece of masonry that had been seen, the whole having been excavated from the solid rock. There can be no doubt that the place has been excavated, and that a good deal of skilled labour has been used in the work. Passing from this large cavern, the party proceeded along a wide corridor, beautifully arched overhead, and supported on each side on strong columns, the space between them being walled up. This had evidently been a chief entrance to the cavern, but unfortunately the party could not explore it to the end on account of its being walled up. Two or three branches in the same locality were tried, and found to be walled up. Altogether the party explored some six or seven branches, and most of them were either walled up or filled up with rubbish. In two or three places the further progress was stopped by huge masses of rock, which had fallen and blocked up the way. One of the passages was traced in a direction which must have brought the party very near the Floating Harbour, formerly the river Avon, and it is conjectured that the caverns might have been used at the time when Bristol carried on an extensive slave trade, or that they may have been used for smuggling purposes. According to a map of Bristol in Barrett's history, the Hermitage of St. John occupied this site in 1250. The discovery has awakened a good deal of antiquarian interest, and it is intended to take down the masonry and explore some of the passages further, when doubtless some more satisfactory clue may be gained respecting the original use of this extensive work.—*Builders' Trade Circular.*

A NEW CITY TERMINUS.

It is generally admitted that the city terminus of our railways are most inconveniently situated, and with one exception, unsuited for the public traffic. It is announced that a new terminus is to be constructed, and an extension of the Kingstown line formed to the junction of Townsend-street and Brunswick-street. We have examined the proposed site, and cannot agree with the projectors that it is the most suitable that could be had. We are of opinion that a still further extension of the line, with the terminus on Burgh-quay, close to Carlisle-bridge, would be far preferable. The proposed new terminus would occupy the space between Great Brunswick-street and Townsend-street, from Sir Philip Crampton's monument back to the lane called Tennis-court, opposite the Queen's Theatre. On this space would be erected a shed 500 feet long, with platforms for the arrival and departure of passengers, wider than those of the King's-bridge terminus. In addition there would be provided separate lines for the arrival and departure of passengers *via* Holyhead, thus separating this from the ordinary traffic. A spacious cab-yard would reach from the street to the edge of the shed, the cabs being on a level with the station. It is proposed to carry it out by an independent company, and arrange for its being worked by the Dublin and Wicklow Company. The project has been brought before the London and North-Western Railway Company and the City of Dublin Steam-Packet Company, and has met with the warm approval of both companies, who have between them undertaken to subscribe more than half of the entire cost of carrying it out. It is proposed to call the new station the "Alexandra Terminus." The engineers are Messrs. Cotton and Flemming, the consulting engineers of the Dublin and Wicklow Company.