

## **THE LATE REV. DENIS RYAN, OF BARCALDINE.**

### **MONUMENT TO A GOOD PRIEST.**

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

READERS of the FREEMAN will doubtless remember that it is not quite a year ago since Father Ryan passed away. The love that surrounded him in life and in death went another step, and erected in reverent remembrance a splendid monument to his memory over his grave. But his monument is already erected in the hearts of the people. His big heart, his love of sacrifice, his patriotism, his piety, and his faithfulness to every duty made him loved by all creeds and classes. His word was his bond. Whatever came, his word was his entire principle. It is no wonder, therefore, that we should witness the fruits of his labours amongst his people and amongst even those who were not of his fold. The 10th of last month was the day appointed for the unveiling of the monument, but it was decided to have a Solemn Requiem Mass for the repose of the good priest's soul in the church which he built, and adorned with his life and character. The altars were, as usual, draped in mourning. Before the altar was a catafalque, on which were placed the sacerdotal vestments. Seats were placed round the catafalque for the Hibernian Society, who were present in full regalia. The seats close to the sanctuary were occupied by the children of the convent school, under the care of the Sisters of Mercy. At 9.45 the Solemn Requiem Mass commenced, the Rev. Fr. Lorretucci being celebrant, Father M'Carthy, of Blackall, deacon, and Father M'Donough, a lifelong friend of the deceased priest, sub-deacon. The choir, under the very able conductorship of Miss Lobie, rendered the Gregorian chants faultlessly and with exquisite feeling throughout. Master Hugh Savage assisting on the violin. At the conclusion of the last Gospel, the Rev. Father Lorretucci delivered a most eloquent and truthful sketch of the life of the late Father Ryan, which brought tears to the eyes of many of the deceased priest's friends.





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**UNVEILING THE MEMORIAL.**

The ceremony of the unveiling of Father Ryan's monument took place in the cemetery at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, as announced in the papers. Before the appointed time, and in waiting, was a large number of people to witness the unveiling. At a few minutes to four o'clock, the carriages with Fathers M'Donough, Lorretucci, and M'Carthy arrived. Miss Ryan, sister of the deceased, was also present. The clergy, with acolytes, moved in procession from an appointed portion of the cemetery to the grave, and Father M'Donough having given the signal to four of the Hibernians, the veil was drawn down from the monument, which stood a beautiful structure for the admiring assembly. He then solemnly blessed the monument, and appropriately and eloquently addressed those present, bringing tears to many friends, and particularly to Miss Ryan, who stood close to her brother's grave. Her many lady friends showed her much kind sympathy, and helped to cheer her as she listened to the testimony to the life, labours, and the love and esteem in which her dear brother was held.

When Father M'Donough had finished speaking, Father Lorretucci, present pastor of Barcaldine, introduced Father M'Carthy, of Blackall, to the assembled mourners, and he thus addressed them:— "It is with a mixture of feeling that I stand in your midst. The occasion, my friends, is one never to be

midst. The occasion, my friends, is one never to be forgotten by you. With tears in your eyes you have come here to-day to mourn the death of a beloved priest. With all my heart I join you. The monument which you have erected to his memory you come to solemnly unveil ; it is something to be proud of. In this I rejoice with you. Another feeling I have, and that is one of high compliment in being asked to address you on this occasion by Father Lorretucci, Father Ryan's very worthy successor. Bear with me for a few moments. To-day you heard detailed from the altar the parentage, birth, and native place of Father Ryan. Father Lorretucci eloquently depicted the dignity of the priesthood, and placed the young Father Ryan in bold relief before your eyes ; how he might have worked at home in the vineyard of the Lord and be beloved by all, but how he rather chose to come in your midst for your salvation sake. All this was beautifully told you, but I can see still

another feature in our young Australian missionary. I can fancy him in college, ever seeking information about the home of his adoption ; ever taking counsel as to the best means of promoting the spiritual advancement of his future people. In the lecture hall or on the recreation grounds, during study hour, or perhaps in the course of a mere chat, something about Australia, something about Queensland, something about the Catholics of this colony, would suggest itself to him. He would note it down ; it would help him on his mission. I can see the young ecclesiastic, too, wrapped in prayer for the people of his future charge. I can see him on the day of his Ordination, glad--beaming with delight--because he is now no longer a servant to but a friend of the Almighty, to labour for Him in this colony of Queensland. I can see him on the day of his departure from home wrestling with nature, and abiding by grace. He has to tear himself from a father's strong and fond arms, from a mother's dear embrace. The tears and loud cries of his brothers and sisters follow him, and ring in his ears as he journeys 16,000 miles across the seas. Nevertheless, he is a man—a priest to do God's work in your midst, and in true spirit of the Gospel left all for God's sole sake. I cannot adequately detail his labour as a priest in your midst. You, his own beloved people, know better than I do his long and tedious journeys, his many disappointments. You know that danger did not daunt him, disappointment did not dishearten him. A generous heart was often stung by gross ingratitude, a kindly nature was often hurt. Nevertheless, Father Ryan had open arms for all ; ever on his lips was the dear old "Cead Mille Failthe." He richly deserves

dear old "Cead Mille Failthe." He richly deserves the beautiful monument which to-day you have unveiled to his memory. It is mounted not only by the Cross of Christ, but by the dear old Celtic Cross; the two are one—emblematic truly of Ireland's adherence to the Faith, and beneath that Cross lies a typical Irish priest; and of that Irish priest I shall say, in the words of Ecclesiasticus, "He made an everlasting covenant with him, and gave him the priesthood of the nation, and made him blessed in glory."

Father M'Carthy then seconded a vote of thanks, proposed by Father M'Donough, to Rev. Father Lorretucci and committee for the earnest, quiet, and great work they had completed.

The memorial is in the shape of a shaft, surmounted by a Celtic Cross, the inscription-plate being of marble with lead lettering. The monument cost over £35, and is a creditable piece of work from the establishment of Mr. G. H. Jenkins, of Rockhampton. The memorial is a conspicuous object in the cemetery, and will catch the eye of passers-by either by road or rail, and will serve to remind them of the good, faithful, and noble hearted priest.