John Davis White of Cashel.

By R. Wyse Jackson.

One of the most curious and interesting fragments of bibliography in Munster is to be found in the series of printed items issued by John Davis White of Cashel between 1856 and 1893. This note is published in order to give as complete a list of his publications as possible. It also, happily, allows of the reprinting of some of the original blocks from his Guide to the Rock of Cashel and other works. These have been made available by the courtesy of Mr. Andrew Finn of Cashel, who found them some years ago discarded in a stable behind the site of the old Cashel Gazette works. They are a welcome accession to the collection of Cashel topographical drawings which can be assembled—a singularly large one, for no eighteenth or nineteenth century travel book of Ireland seems to have been complete without at least one picture of the Rock of Cashel!

John Davis White, born in Conahy, Kilkenny, on May 22nd, 1820, was the son of B. N. White, deputy mayor of the corporation of Cashel City. Almost all of John D. White's life was spent in Cashel—he resided there from 1831 to 1893. He was a most versatile and enthusiastic person, and in Cashel he
filled an extraordinary number of offices. We have before us one of his earliest publications, the *Cashel Advertiser*, a four page folio, issued free during the last four months of 1861. In this, the publisher features as Treasurer of the Cashel Savings Bank; Curator of the Chapter Museum; Secretary of the Infirmary; Treasurer of the Annual Foot Races; Master Extraordinary in Chancery for the County of Tipperary; Commissioner for Oaths; Agent for the Church of England Insurance Institution, the Scottish Provincial Life and Fire Insurance Office, and the Art Union of Ireland Lottery; Honorary Secretary of the Cashel Cricket Club. These advertising columns do not complete the list, for in addition he was a solicitor; newspaper proprietor; historian, poet; honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, and Honorary Secretary of the Society for South Tipperary; Sub-Librarian of the Diocesan Library; Proctor of the Consistorial Court; and Registrar of the Diocese of Cashel.

In the thousand and first number of his *Cashel Gazette* for January 2nd, 1886, he tells that from childhood he had amused himself with writing little
magazines and newspapers. In 1856 he bought for thirty shillings an old wooden press on which the Clonmel Herald had been printed, and for his own pleasure issued a few broadsides called The Amateur Press. This old Caxton-like machine was in use for the first hundred and eleven issues of the Cashel Gazette, until in 1886 a Columban machine was installed.

Cormac's Chapel. South side.

The Cashel Gazette first appeared on May 14th, 1864, printed at 44 Main Street, Cashel, by Patrick Burke or Bourke (both spellings are variously used). The printer seems to have been an odd character, and one office row brought him into court, to be fined ten shillings. In his thousand and first jubilee number, J. D. White says of apprentices, "The Gazette... has been the means of giving a start in life to over twenty young men, many of whom would have been but for it in very different positions from those they now enjoy." Elsewhere he writes, "Some of my boys are doing well in America and Dublin, and one whom I took without a shoe to his foot is now a counsellor." In the jubilee number is a parody on Tom Hood from his pen which begins:

"With fingers weary and worn,
With body tired and sick,
The pale-faced printer stands at his case
Setting up type in his 'stick'!
Pick! pick! pick!
Letter and space and lead,
Lead and letter and space,
What wonder then that a printer had
Such a wan and dejected face.
No matter how late the hour,
No matter how tired and sick,
The jaded printer must stand at his case
Piling up type in his 'stick.'"
An interesting item is his catalogue of the Chapter Museum, the genesis of which occupied an honourable place in both The Amateur Press and in the four Cashel Advertisers. A hundred items are catalogued, of the most miscellaneous kind, ranging from stone-age celts to a Chinese umbrella, a fragment of the Rock of Gibraltar, a tarantula, and a perpetual ticket to the Limerick Theatre. It is tragic that at his death, some fifty years ago, the collection was dispersed without trace, for it contained such interesting items as fragments of ancient glass from the east window of the Cathedral on the Rock.

It is just possible that J. D. White's unique collection of fifteen hundred street ballads, begun in 1844, may survive. They have disappeared, like his museum, but should be of great value if they are ever located.

John Davis White's best work is his history, Cashel of the Kings, which has not yet had a worthy successor. Side by side with this is his attractive posthumously Sixty Years in Cashel, a book of nineteenth century gossip which will become increasingly valuable to local historians, and which contains interesting sidelights on the Famine and the Forty-eight.

The author died on the 14th of June, 1893, and is buried close to the old Diocesan Library of Archbishop Theophilus Bolton, in the Cathedral graveyard.

A note on his career, and a good bibliography of almost all his publications, is given by E. R. McC. Dix in The Irish Book Lover for July, 1915.

11th century stone sarcophagus.
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF J.D. WHITE'S PRINTINGS.


1864 (May 14th). *The Cashel Gazette and Weekly Advertiser.* Single sheet, printed on one side; no. 2 on both sides, no. 3 and subsequently 4 and 8 pages.


1884. Catalogue of Third Decennial Industrial and Art Exhibition. 11 leaves. 8vo.


1885. Midsummer supplement to *Cashel Gazette.* 3pp. of 5 cols. and 1 page of illustrations.


1892. *White (John D.): Anthologia Tipperariensis.* Being some account of the abbeys, priories, churches, castles and other objects of common interest in the county of Tipperary. portrs., illustr. pp.(8)—148. 4to. Cashel, pr. at the *Gazette Office.*

1893. *White (John D.): 60 years in Cashel.* portr. pp.(4)—64. 4to. Cashel, pr. at the *Gazette Office.*

The illustrations to this paper are printed from White's original blocks, circa 1870.—(Editor).