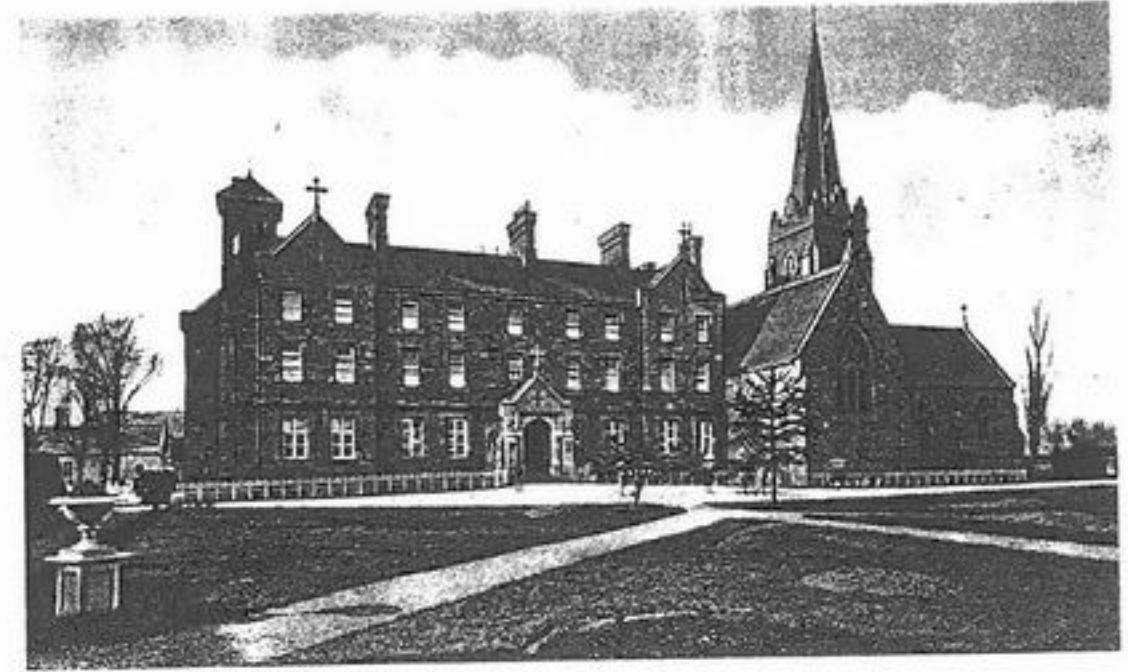


1—Mount St. Vincent Industrial School. 2—Chapel, Mount St. Vincent. 3—Part of outside of Chapel. 4—In the Grounds, Mount St. Vincent.



CONVENT, MOUNT ST. VINCENT.

MOUNT ST. VINCENT.

On the 5th April, 1850, a branch house was opened at a place known at the time as Mount Kennett, situated on the south side of the city. The object in view was to establish an orphanage.

Since St. Vincent de Paul is the patron of orphans, the place was dedicated to him and has since been known as Mount St. Vincent. The Sisters first occupied an old house which in after years became the residence of the caretaker. Some few orphan children who were, at a great inconvenience, put up *pro temp*, at the House of Mercy, were transferred to the Mount and located in out-houses and sheds, made as habitable for them as was possible. They enjoyed the fine fields about the place—a pleasure they did not have when at St. Mary's.

Early in 1851, Mr. Peter Arthur, a descendant of a family of wealthy merchants long identified with Limerick, was attended in his death illness by the future kind Bishop—then Father George Butler, C.C., St. Michael's. Mr. Arthur had before this time the intention to found and endow an orphanage in the city. Father Butler advised him to prop and sustain the one now established. He at once arranged his affairs, leaving a considerable sum of money to the Mount, which enabled them to get on with a new building; he also left a yearly income derived from property in Arthur's

Quay. Immediately before this took place, the "Ecclesiastical Titles Bill" and the "Bequest Act" made by the British Parliament, on the Pope's creating Dr. Wiseman a Cardinal, came into force. By the latter law "no landed property could be recovered if left for Catholic charities unless the testator survived for a term of three months after he had signed the will." Mr. Arthur's anxiety to outlive that specified time was very great indeed. He had the prayers of the Sisters solicited for that intention; happily, his days were prolonged to the wished for term. Outside on the western wing of the Orphanage a stone slab, having the name of Peter Arthur as a benefactor, is fixed in the wall. It is graven also on the marble tablet in the chapel, which contains a list of subscribers to the orphanage. The houses in Arthur's Quay were not very valuable subsequently, as the locality was unattractive.

The foundation stone of a new convent at the Mount was laid in July 15th, 1851, through the munificence of the Most Rev. Dr. Ryan, who gave a good sum towards its erection; throughout the diocese the clergy cordially co-operated with the Bishop in this.

In 1852 the front part of the convent and orphanage was sufficiently advanced to accommodate the Sisters and the orphans. They gladly removed into it on July 19th. The old convent became the residence of the caretaker.

In order to help to pay off the debt still due, the Bishop allowed a "charity sermon" to be preached annually at St. Michael's. The preacher on the first occasion was the great convert, Dr. J. H. Newman, afterwards Cardinal.

In 1858 a "Fancy Fair" was held in the school room. It was well attended and realised the sum of £600. In this year also the foundation stone of the convent chapel was laid. Most Rev. Dr. Ryan gave £500. It was not completed till 1863. Three years later it was painted and decorated; much of the decoration in the sanctuary was done by the Sisters. It was dedicated in 1867 by Most Rev. Dr. Butler. Two years later, 1869, the orphanage was registered as an Industrial School under the grant which Parliament had given for orphans and unprotected children. Many of those in the establishment came within the provisions of the Act. Those who did not remained to be supported from other sources, as they had been hitherto.

About fifteen years prior to 1872 a connection was formed with the Board of Education; it ceased after a short time owing to some misunderstanding with regard to the undenominational character of the school. This year, however, it was renewed and the school once more organised as an National School. Children from the surrounding districts came, and still come there. The usual number on roll is about one hundred and twenty.

In 1877 an addition was commenced to enlarge the orphanage for a greater number of children.

Sir John Lentaigne, Lord Emly, Mr. William Spillane, and Dr. O'Shaughnessy proved themselves friends of the community on an occasion when a difficulty arose about the Mount children having been sent to the Workhouse for treatment when seriously ill. They took an interest in all connected with the Industrial School and its inmates. In 1883, at the suggestion of Sir John Lentaigne, Industrial Inspector, Sisters in orphanages elsewhere came to see the working of the one at Mount St. Vincent.

In 1887 the Papal Nuncio paid a visit. He was accompanied by Most Rev. Dr. O'Dwyer, his Secretary, and others. He was very pleased with everything. The

Papal Blessing was given to the Sisters and children.

In 1908 the Government Inspectors arranged a competition in domestic science between the Female Industrial Schools of Ireland. The subjects in which the children were examined were cookery, housekeeping, laundry and needlework.

The two local schools, St. George's School, in Clare Street, under the Good Shepherd Nuns, and Mount St. Vincent, under our Sisters, were amongst the first five schools in all Ireland. Silver medals for distinguished answering in the above subjects were given.

Early in November, 1908, a dreadful calamity befell the orphanage. To our human way of thinking such it seemed, but, no doubt, in the inscrutable designs of Providence it was a "Celestial Benediction that assumed the dark disguise." To us it is not given to penetrate the secrets of the Divine Mind, but we know that "all things work together unto good to them that love God"; and it may be that the good, darkly veiled in the sombre shadow of the great cross, was the salvation of the young souls taken in their youth and innocence, who, perhaps, would have suffered defeat in the hard battle of life on which they must shortly have entered had they been spared.

As a calm and smiling landscape becomes overcast and the storm clouds breaking overhead suddenly change the whole face of nature, so swiftly was the happy scene of childish life and merriment changed into one of the deepest gloom and sadness.

It was the evening of November 3rd. About 5 o'clock one or two children complained of sickness and headache and were sent to bed; others followed suffering in the same way, until between 9 and 10 o'clock those ill numbered twenty. Vomiting attended the severe headache, and all cases were alike. The doctor was summoned and considered the illness due to some form of poisoning, but, as there were no alarming symptoms, he went away, having given directions as to treatment which he expected would counteract the attack. But as the night wore on, child after child took ill, so that by morning sixty or more were affected.

As the gravity of the situation did not appear until some time after the Sisters had retired, Mother M. Joseph, then in charge of the orphanage, not wishing to disturb or alarm them, remained up all night with only one Sister and the resident trained nurse.

Who can picture the consternation among them all next morning when at about 7 o'clock death claimed its first victim. The priest was with the poor child just before community Mass.

Soon all the medical men in the city were in attendance, and several trained nurses, each doing all in the power of medical skill to allay the sufferings of the poor stricken ones, and taking preventive measures with those not yet attacked. The scenes in the dormitories—now changed into wards—can better be imagined than described. Sisters accustomed to hospital duty said they never witnessed such suffering. The poor children were writhing in the agony of excruciating pain. The intensity of suffering rendered them unconscious of what was going on around them. Many of the city priests visited the scene, anxious to give all the help and comfort they could, both to the Sisters and the children. On the 4th the situation was so alarming that it was deemed better to administer the Last Sacraments; two priests went round from bed to bed and anointed sixty-five. Ere the dawn of the 5th seven young souls had passed to God. All had been to Confession and Holy Communion for the Feast of All Souls the day previous to the sad occurrence. Extra Sisters were sent from St. Mary's to help, and one and all worked day and night in a spirit of heroic sacrifice in constant attendance on the poor little sufferers.

About 6 o'clock on the evening of the 5th Rev. Father N. Dillon, O.F.M., visited the dormitories. He was taken to several bad cases and prayed by the bedside of each. Then he knelt in the middle of the dormitory and prayed aloud. He was considered by everyone to be a Saint, and the Sisters believed it was owing to his prayers that several whom they thought could not possibly survive were spared. Later another child passed away. This brought the death roll to nine; then the hand of "Death" was stayed.

Professor McWeeney, the eminent bacteriologist was sent by the Local Government Board to investigate the case and arrived from Dublin about 10 p.m. on the 6th. He was conducted through the orphanage by the doctors and was highly pleased with the efficient method in which everything connected with the sick children was carried out.

A Protestant military doctor, who kindly proffered his services, remarked that in the twinkling of an eye the whole place was turned into a hospital as perfect as any of their military hospitals. Nurses all commented on the wonderful order and discipline that prevailed throughout, and that anything and everything called for was provided on the spot. The nine bodies were laid out in pale blue habits, and a more touching scene could scarce be witnessed.

There were two funerals—five bodies were interred first, the remainder later on. Letters of heartfelt sympathy poured in from all quarters. A telegram was received from Rome conveying to the community and children the blessing of our Holy Father the Pope.

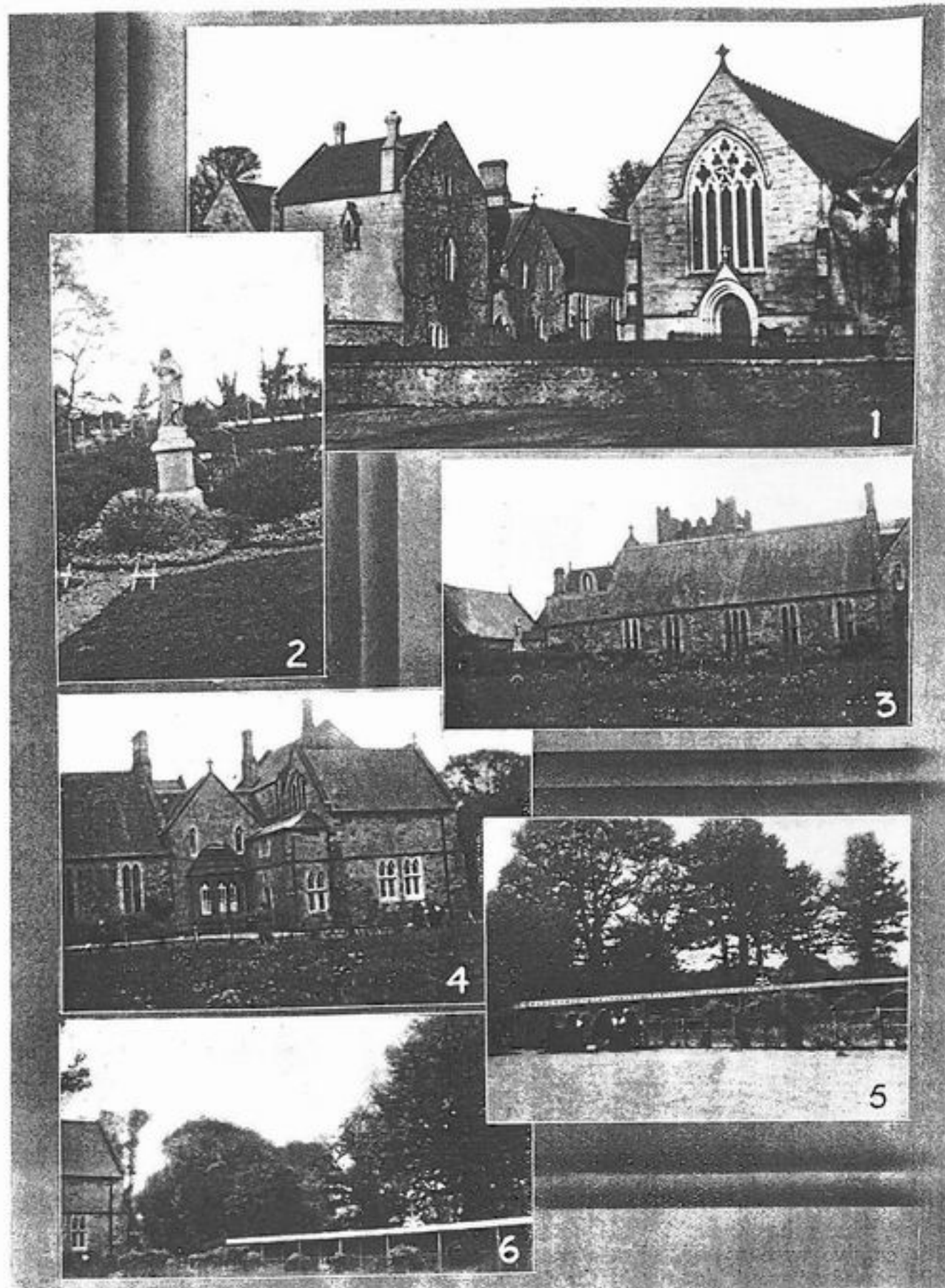
The Verdict was: "Died from 'Cholera Nostra' due to meat poisoning, and we are further of opinion that at the time of cooking the unsoundness of the meat could not be detected."

Throughout the years beginning at 1872, when a "Diary" of everything important and exceptional began to be kept in accordance with the Industrial Rules, the reports of District and Head Inspectors, beginning with Sir John Lentaigne in the above year, have been most satisfactory. The work goes on steadily.

There is accommodation for one hundred and eighty children; fifty of this number are not on the Industrial Roll, they are Nationals, and are paid for from other sources. A spiritual retreat is given each year for three days. It is usually conducted by one of the regular clergy.

The grown girls are occasionally allowed to the pictures.

Fire drill was taught a few years ago by an American gentleman, in accordance with an order sent by the Industrial Board. All from the very youngest up, were trained to get down from the top storey and out in three minutes after a given signal.



1—Ainre Church, showing Convent at back. 2—In the Convent Grounds. 3—Side Wall of School and Tower of old Franciscan Abbey. 4—Back view of part of Convent. 5—In the Grounds. 6—In the Convent Grounds and showing sheltered walk.

As a rule the Mount girls do well after they leave. The Sisters keep in touch with them by regular correspondence, so that a knowledge of how each is getting on is ascertained. Many like to come back, when on holidays, and spend a few days. A welcome always awaits them.

Our Lady's Abbey, Adare, 1854.

"Oh, sweet Adare; oh lovely vale;
Oh, soft retreat of sylvan splendour;
Nor summer's sun, nor morning gale,
E'er hailed a scene more softly tender."



Widows Home at right of Chapel, Mount St. Vincent.

THE WIDOWS' HOME.

Some time previous to 1860 Rev. Father O'Meara, O.S.F., had contemplated establishing a "Home" for respectable widows. He visited Mother M. Elizabeth and had an interview with her on the matter. The outcome was that he left funds for its establishment and also endowed it. Those funds became available in 1861, so that the building was raised in the grounds of Mount St. Vincent beside the chapel.

The admission of widows, as well as the financial part of the business were placed in the hands of the Bishop and some others who formed the trustees.

There is accommodation for sixteen; a private bedroom, nicely fitted up, is allotted to each. A general maid does the cooking as well as seeing to their other needs. The Mount Sisters visit daily, and at a fixed hour all the widows gather together in the house oratory for the recital of the Rosary.



Two Widows, one 92 years of age, the other 96.

The ancient Abbey of the Trinitarians was restored about 1811. Valentine Quin was then Lord Adare; later he became first Earl of Dunraven; he was a Protestant. Edwin, third Earl, who was a Catholic and died in 1871, gave the portion of the ruins which was converted into the convent and school in 1854. The Earl did not allow that the school should be connected with the National Board till 1864. He first intended that the Christian Brothers would occupy this building and teach there. However, he afterwards saw the position was more suitable for nuns, and built a monastery outside the village for the monks, who could with less inconvenience come a distance to daily Mass. The place was not quite finished when Mother M. Elizabeth fixed a day for opening. She went there with four Sisters who were to remain; the Earl visited them at once; he waited to see the lamp put up before the Tabernacle and later sent a handsome carpet for their little choir. The following day he and Lady Dunraven came to visit and welcome the Sisters.

The convent was dedicated to Our Lady under the title of Our Lady's Abbey. In a few days the schools were opened; the children numbered about three hundred. The convent was enlarged in 1864 by the Earl; a new wing, consisting of domestic chapel and community room was added, but care had to be taken that it should be quite in keeping with the old style of the rest of the building.

There is a small tower in the convent where, it is said, some of the Trinitarian monks were martyred when the monastery was suppressed in the 16th century: the north wall of the cloister of the monastery forms the south wall of the school.

In the convent garden is the dove-cot belonging to the monastery, of low circular form; the conical stone perforated roof of which is still perfect.