With his new-found interest in Ireland, Erasmus Smith, 'Esquire of London,' evidently concluded that "most of the sins which in former times have reigned in this Nation have proceeded chiefly of lack of the bringing up of the youth of this Realm either in public or private schools whereby through good discipline they might be principled in literature and good manners, and so learn to loath these haynous and manifold offences which when they come to years they did daily perpetrate and commit," and so he decided by indenture made on 1st December 1657\(^1\) to endow

five school-houses for the teaching of grammar and the original tongue (i.e. English) and to write read and cast accounts to be built in the places following viz.,
One in the town of Sligo. One other school upon the said Erasmus Smith's lands about Galway. One other school upon his lands in the barony of Clanwilliam in the county of Tipperary. One other school upon his land in the barony of Dunluce in the county of Antrim. Another where his lands that are deficient (which is £2,700) shall be fixed.

A total of 2,876 acres 3 roods plantation measure of profitable lands were mentioned in the indenture as applicable towards the support and maintenance of the five schools. These lands were in:

- County Roscommon: 403 a. 1 r.
- The Isles of Arran: 1,467 a.
- County Galway: 1,006 a. 2 r.

As he stated in the indenture, some of his lands were at that time "deficient"; i.e. his title to them was in dispute, and his title to others was subject to verification consequent on his extensive dealings then in progress in the lands assigned to various Adventurers under certain Acts\(^2\) passed in the reign of Charles I. After the accession of Charles II, Erasmus Smith had second thoughts concerning his educational endowment. In 1664 he sold the Aran Islands to the Earl of Ormond for his son the Earl of Arran, and by 1666 he had substituted other lands for the Islands, as set out in letters patent granted on 3 November in that year respecting the foundation of three grammar schools, and "five schooles for the teaching and instructing poore children of both sexes to speake and reade English," and the "placing of poore mens children to bee apprentices to any lawfull trades or manufactures in Ireland and with . . . . Protestant masters in Ireland." By then the Acts of Settlement and Explanation were being administered and Erasmus Smith's title to vast areas throughout the country was

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\(^1\) A copy of the Indenture of 1st December 1657 is given at pp. 440/3 of the Report of the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Commission 1885-86.

\(^2\) The first of these Acts, passed in 1640, was for "the speedy and effectual reducing the Rebells in His Majesties Kingdome of Ireland totheir due obedience to His Majesty and Crowne". This Act (16 Car. I. c. 33) was followed by 16 Car. I. c. 34; 16 Car. I. c. 35; and 16 Car. I. c. 37.
being regularised. 3 Under these Acts his ownership of lands as follows was confirmed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Ricks</th>
<th>Pounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>1,637</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's Co.</td>
<td>1,218</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>3,704</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louth</td>
<td>12,596</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meath</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen's Co.</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>1,596</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipperary</td>
<td>24,709</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gross Totals** 46,449 a. 1 r. 7 p.

At the same time the Trustees of Erasmus Smith's endowment were granted under the Acts of Settlement and Explanation certain areas forming portion of the estates to which he was entitled in the following counties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Ricks</th>
<th>Pounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tipperary</td>
<td>3,020</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>4,195</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>2,415</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>2,025</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmeath</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 12,410 a. 1 r. 2½ p.

The enrolment of these lands in the ownership of the Trustees of the endowment was effected in two stages—the first on 3 April 1667 and the second on 19 January 1670. 4

This process was in furtherance of letters patent of 26 March 1669. These letters patent, known as the Charter of King Charles II, 5 recited that:

Whereas Erasmus Smith Esquire did heretofore intend to erect five Grammar Schools within the Kingdom of Ireland, and to endow the same with convenient maintenance for Schoolmasters; and to make further provision for Education of Children at the University, which should be brought up at the same Schools, and for several other charitable uses . . . upon due consideration had of the necessity of settling a more liberal maintenance upon the Schoolmasters which shall be placed over the Grammar Schools, by making some provision also for clothing poor Children, and binding them out Apprentices, it hath been thought fit by the said Erasmus Smith to reduce the said five intended Grammar Schools unto three; and yet nevertheless to continue and settle the same lands and tenements, which at first were intended as a revenue to maintain five Grammar Schools and other charitable uses, to be a perpetual revenue for maintenance of three Schools intended to be erected, and for carrying on the several public and charitable uses aforesaid.

It will be noted that instead of the 2,876 acres assigned for the maintenance of five grammar schools, etc., in the Indenture of 1657, a total of 12,410 acres were set aside for these purposes in the "Charter" of 1669. These lands were let in 1679 at a yearly rent of £647, out of which the Governors of the trust provided for the following expenditure:

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3 The various decrees confirming Erasmus Smith in the possession of estates, lands and other hereditaments under the Acts of Settlement and Explanation were as follows: 18 Chas. II, 18 dated 20 June; 19 Chas. II, 30 dated 3 Nov.; 21 Chas. II, 35 dated 15 May; and 21 Chas. II, 66 dated 28 Decr.—16th Annual Report, Irish Record Commission, 1825, pp. 55, 214.


5 A copy of the "Charter" is set out in the Appendix to the Ninth Report of the Commissioners of the Board of Education in Ireland, 1810, pp. 224-232.
Christ Church Hospital, London £100
The Schoolmaster at Drogheda £66 13. 4.
Usher there £20
The Schoolmaster at Galway £66 13. 4.
Usher there £20
The Schoolmaster at Tipperary £66 13. 4.
Usher there £20
Hebrew Lecturer Dublin College £30
Registrar £10
Agent £30
Treasurer, 6d. per pound £15

£445

This left a surplus of £202, of which £52 was reserved for returning the money to Christ Church Hospital and other contingent charges for suits at law. There therefore remained in 1678 a surplus of rent of £150. There were considerable arrears of rent due from Richard King, Captain Coote and others, and these were ear-marked for the purchase of school-houses, or the building thereof, in Drogheda, Galway, and Tipperary. 6

The rent roll of the trust rapidly increased and on 1 May 1720 was as follows:

Mrs. Elizabeth Boles £50
Henry Bayles £40
Richard Maunsell £140 10.
Executors Percy Gethin £40
Thomas Armstrong £90
George King £450
Executors Richard Warburton £300
Trustees of the Barracks £7
Rev. Fielding Shawe £55

£1255 17. 0.

In that year (1720) the yearly payments were:

To the Master and Usher of
Galway £86 13. 4.
Tipperary £86 13. 4.
Drogheda £86 13. 4.

To Christ's Hospital London £100, expenses £10
To 20 Exhibitions in Trinity College £120
The Treasurer's salary £31
The Agent and Registrar's salary £42 10.
To him for paper £3
The quit rent of Drumbane £10 13 11½
To the Agent for going into the country to account with the several tenants and receive the rents £12 which for the present rent roll of £1255 17. is £62 15. 9.
To the Hebrew Lecturer in Trinity College £30

Incidental charges of the trust: Repairs of the Schools and School-masters' houses, Law charges &c. in Alderman Reader's account as Treasurer in the year 1681, Reg. p. 39 is computed to at least £50 which at this time cannot be less than £100

£769 19 8½

There was therefore a surplus of revenue of £485 17. 3½, and very considerable unexpended balances were accumulating yearly. These accruing funds aroused the greedy interest of the heavily endowed, but highly influential, University of Dublin. Under an Act passed in the Dublin Parliament of 1723, to regulate the disposal of the surplus rents from year to year as well as the accumulations then in the hands of the Treasurer, the establishment of three Junior Fellowships and two additional Lectureships in Trinity College was authorised. Certain annual payments to provide exhibitions in the College were also sanctioned, and an agreement which the Governors had entered into with the Hospital and Free School of Charles II in Dublin, for the reception therein of any number of boys not exceeding twenty, was ratified. Furthermore the Governors were authorised to apply any further surplus that might from time to time accrue to some public work or use in Trinity College, or in the Bluecoat Hospital in putting out children to apprenticeship, or in founding one or more English school or schools in any place or places in Ireland which the Governors should think convenient. A provision for the reduction of the outgoings authorised by the Act in the event of a decrease in the revenues at any future time, was not to be applied to the payments to Christ's Hospital, London, and the Bluecoat Hospital, nor to the provision for the three Junior Fellowships in Trinity College.

The annual payments to Trinity College had been raised to £450 under the Act of 1723, but this figure was increased by the Governors in 1763 to £940. This was one way of disposing of surplus rents; but these continued to increase and the Governors were at their wits' end to find ways of applying them. They had invested £8,000 of accumulations in government securities, and in 1750 they decided to pay £200 a year to the Charter School of Sligo—though this School was already in receipt of substantial state aid under the scheme for financing the operations of the Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Working Schools in Ireland which came into existence in 1733. At a meeting of the Governors of the Erasmus Smith Schools held on 19 May 1773 it was:

proposed that the Governors do purchase from Josias Veatch Esquire as much of the lands of Cahircallamore, Cahircallabig, Kilnakelly and Kiltie situated in the County of Clare, as will after the death of Frideswede Nixon produce a clear profit rent of one hundred pounds yearly to be applied to endow a School intended to be erected by the Governors at Ennis in the County of Clare.

And that the sum of one thousand pounds being the purchase money agreed for shall be paid to the said Josias Veatch upon his making a sufficient title to and conveying a good estate in the said lands, such as shall be approved by His Majesty's Attorney General.

7 ibidem, p. 221.
8 10 Geo. 1. (Private Act).
The proposed School at Ennis was intended to be a Grammar School, and its establishment was contrary to both the Charter of 1669 and the Act of 1723; but in the Ireland of 1773 the Governors of the Erasmus Smith endowment were a law unto themselves. At their meeting held on 5 July 1773 they:

Resolved that a School be built in or near the Town of Ennis And we do hereby authorise and empower the Right Revd. The Lord Bishop of Killaloe, the Right Honble Lord Chief Justice Paterson, Sir Lucius O'Brien Bart, and Francis Pierpoint Burton Esquire or any of them do fix upon and choose a situation for building said School in or near the Town of Ennis in the County Clare. 9

At their meeting on 16 December 1773 the Governors approved of arrangements made by Lord Chief Justice Paterson and Sir Lucius O'Brien for the erection of a School in a proper situation “adjoining the Town of Ennis” at a cost of £1,200 on a site of two acres for which they had agreed on a yearly rent of £9.2. The school building was completed in the summer of 1775, and on 12 October of that year Richard Crump was appointed Master. He was a past pupil of Drogheda Grammar School, having been prepared for entrance to Dublin University by Dr. Samuel Clarke, entering Trinity College in 1739 at the age of 17. He became a Scholar in 1743 and graduated B.A. in 1744. He was given a salary of £100 p.a. at Ennis, and in 1777 he was given an extra £50 a year to enable him to employ an usher. His appointment was however terminated in 1782 as at a meeting of the Governors held on 13 December it was “Resolved that Mr. Richard Crump, the present master of the School founded by the Governors near Ennis, be not continued in that office longer than the first day of May next and be then removed therefrom.”10

At the same meeting, Michael Fitzgerald was appointed master of the school in succession to Crump. Fitzgerald had been prepared for the University by Rev. Daniel Monsell of Limerick. He was the son of a Kerry farmer, and entered Trinity College at the age of 19 in 1775. He became a scholar in 1777, and graduated B.A. in 1779. He obtained an M.A. degree a year after his appointment as master of Ennis Grammar School.11 He was allowed £50 a year by the governors to pay an usher, and the appointment of Rev. Robert Weldon to that post was approved by them. Weldon, a Corkman, was a Scholar of Dublin University but did not proceed to a degree.

Messrs. Fitzgerald and Weldon were a successful team, and in 1785 Lord Chief Justice Paterson informed the Governors that “from the increase of scholars he found it necessary to enlarge the School Room.” The master had by that time taken Holy Orders.

Giving evidence on oath before the Commissioners appointed under an Act of the Dublin Parliament of 178812 enabling the Lord Lieutenant to inquire into the state and condition of all schools in Ireland on public or private foundations, Rev. Michael Fitzgerald on 24 June 1788 stated that he had then 52 boarders and 28 day scholars of whom about 12 were free. He stated that “Roman Catholic Boys come to him freely. Half of his day scholars are of that persuasion.” When he was appointed in 1783 there were only 7 day scholars and one boarder.

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10 ibidem, p. 287—the reason for this action has not been recorded.
11 Burtchaell & Sedleir, Alumni Dublinenses, pp. 199, 288 and 897.
12 28 Geo. II, c. 15.
The boarders pay 20 guineas per annum and 4 guineas entrance and one guinea per annum for stationery. The day scholars pay 4 guineas per annum and one guinea entrance. There was no visitor to the school, and he never had any plan of education given him by the Governors, nor any instructions whatever relative to the school. He has three classical ushers:—1st. The Rev. Robert Wedon who has £50 p.a. from the Governors and £20 p.a. from him. This usher has the privilege of keeping six boarders and educating them gratis at the School. He has one at present who pays him 24 guineas p.a. There is no house allowed for him.

2nd. Mr Denis Hays A.B. of Trinity College Dublin. He has 33 guineas p.a. from the master and his diet, but not lodging nor any other emolument.

3rd. Mr Stephen Halloran. He has 20 guineas p.a. from the master and diet only. He has never been at College.

The master pays 20 guineas p.a. to a French master and the same to a Writing master; likewise 15 guineas p.a. to a Mathematical master and diet if he chooses. The parents of the boys pay besides to the Dancing master (who has no salary) 2 guineas p.a. and ½ guinea entrance and the same to the French master. They do not pay anything extra for accounts and the mathematics. 13

Lord Chief Justice Paterson bequeathed a rent charge of £10 p.a. to be expended in premiums for the School, which was laid out in medals and premium books.

Mr. Fitzgerald supplied the Commissioners with particulars of the courses of study, &c., in his School in the year 1788 as follows:

The Latin Grammar taught in the School is the Eton Grammar. When the scholars acquire a competent knowledge of the formation of nouns and verbs, they begin to read some Colloquies of Corderius with a translation, and account for every word in the lesson by grammar rules. After they acquire some knowledge of the manner of placing the words in due order for construction by the help of the translation, they begin Willymots Corderius, which (by the help of an Index in which every word is inserted in such a manner as to lead them easily to the radix) acustoms them to the use of a dictionary. I find in general that after six months' exercise in this form, the scholars acquire such expertness in parsing and translation that they find no great difficulty in costruing an easy Latin Book by the help of a dictionary, and put into their hands either a Latin Esop or a collection of easy sentences selected from different books. In this form they begin to write Latin exercises from Clarke's Introduction, and beside the written exercise which makes a part of every day's business, they translate without writing such a portion of the exercise book as gives them sufficient employment. This makes a part of every day's business in every successive class until they get such a knowledge as enables them to translate without the help of broken Latin and to write Latin themes.

They are next taught Phodrus and Eutrophius, which in about six months they change for Ovid's Metam and Cornelius Nepos, thus far the scholars are every day taught a portion of Latin grammar. With Ovid they begin Greek grammar and prosody, and when they have learned the rules of prosody they every day write some lines of hexameter and pentameter Latin verse. Before the part of Ovid taught in the School is finished, they begin Justin and the Greek testament. After Ovid, Caesar's Commentaries and Virgil are taught, and the Greek testament is changed for the Greek Fables of Esop. In this class the scholars every day write Greek exercises from a book published by Mr Hungerford. After Esop the Dialogues of Lucian published by Mr Murphy are taught. Horace and Sallust are taught after Virgil and Caesar, and the Iliad of Homer after Lucian. Some of the Orations of Cicero and Demosthenes and a few of the Satires of Juvenal and Georgics of Virgil are in general read at the School before the scholars are removed to College. I omitted mentioning that Terence's Plays are read before Horace.

The exercise appointed on Saturday for Monday morning is, in the lower classes, a written English translation of a part of the foregoing weeks business appointed by the master, and in the upper classes a theme in Latin. An English theme is produced in the upper classes every Thursday. Saturday morning is employed in repetition in the Greek and Latin grammars and prosody, and the afternoon of Saturday in explaining the Church Catechism to the

13 The French master was Patrick Madget, the Mathematical master Donal O'Sullivan, and the Writing master David Burke—a total teaching staff of seven, including the headmaster. — Diocesan Return to House of Commons for 25 March 1786.
lower classes, and in translating and explaining some chapters of the Greek testament to the upper classes, and sometimes in reading a portion of Beathes Evidences of the Christian Religion. On every Tuesday a portion of History is appointed to be examined on the following Tuesday. The history for the lowest class reading Ovid is the Pantheon, for the second Goldsmith's Roman History, and for the third division or upper classes Stangen’s Grecian History. At the end of each term, that is at Christmas and July, the best answerer in each division is rewarded with a silver medal in value about 9/-; and good answering is determined by the greatest number of best marks during the term; a regular account of each boy’s answering and judgments is kept by the master and his assistants.

To avoid the inconvenience of giving half Thursday for play, the first Monday in every month is allowed for play, and the morning of the next day is employed by all the classes, beginning with the class in Phodrus, in repeating without book from a pulpit in the schoolroom English speeches appointed on the Saturday before. The forenoon is employed in examining again the history read in the preceding month.

The Master once in a week hears a repetition of the business of every class, and has stated days with every class. The assistants make entries of each day’s answering in books kept for the purpose which are given to the Master on repetition days, and as he can rely on the ability and integrity of his assistants, is thus acquainted with the attention or negligence of each boy during the week.

The schoolhours are in summer six in the morning, in winter seven o’clock. An hour is allowed for breakfast. The school breaks up at four which is the dinner hour. The evening, after the time allowed for play is employed, under the inspection of ushers and often of the Master in learning French, dancing and preparing for the ensuing day.

The Writing master attends three days in the week. The Mathematical master attends every day and instructs in Arithmetic, Geography, Euclid, and a branch of Mathematics or Accounts useful to the intended profession of the Scholar.

There are half-yearly public examinations at which medals are distributed for English and Latin compositions in prose and verse, History and delivery in English speech. Premiums in books are given to the best answerers in each class. The premiums are each in value 6s. 6d. This distribution exceeds the bequest of ten pounds a year given by the late Chief Justice Paterson to the School.

The examiners are the neighbouring clergy assisted by a Fellow of the College as often as the Master can prevail with the friendship of a Fellow to undertake so long a journey.

The Honourable the Commissioners will greatly serve the school by assisting the Master in erecting a detached building for the purpose of an Infirmary, as in a large School infectious disorders are sometimes to be apprehended.

Mr. Fitzgerald supplemented the foregoing general statement on the work of his school with the following more detailed particulars respecting each of the seven Classes:


2nd Class—Latin Grammar, reading English, spelling, writing and accounts continued. Additional books: Willymol's Cordery, Bayley's Phodrus and translation; vive voce from Clarke's Introduction.

3rd Class—The exercises of the former Classes continued. Additional books: Select parts of Ovid's Metamorphoses, Whettenhall's Greek Grammar got by heart and explained. On Wednes-
day select passages from English authors recited from memory. Others read and explained. Tabulous History from Boyce's Pantheon examined.

4th Class—Latin and Greek Grammar every morning alternately. Writing and accounts continued. Goldsmith's Roman History examined on Wednesday, and Declamation and reading English continued. Additional business on Wednesday—Geographical definitions, and explanations of maps. Additional books: Virgil's Eclogues, Greek Testament, Aitken's Prosody, written and viva voce translation from Clarke's and Huntingford's Greek Exercises.

In the above Classes the exercise of Saturday comprises the examining and explaining the
Church Catechism. Some chapters of the New Testament in English, and the Lessons, Psalms, Epistle and Gospel of the ensuing Sunday. In Catechism the scholars are assisted by Dr Mann's Explanation.


6th Class—Translations and the exercises of Wednesday continued and enlarged. Hexameter and Pentameter Verse required as part of each day's exercise. Sallust continued. Additional books: Three first plays of Terence, Epictetus, Cebes and Zenophon's Cyropedia, Lowth's English Grammar, and chapters selected from Horne's Elements of Criticism, Blair's Lectures and Quintilian. On Saturday a chapter or more of the Greek Testament translated and explained. Grotius de Veritate translated. Secker's Lectures. Paley's Evidences of Christianity and Porteus Lectures on the Gospel of St Mark occasionally read. In explaining the Greek Testament the scholars are assisted by Poole's Annotations on the Bible.

7th Class—The exercises of the preceding Class continued. The translations into Latin partly written and partly delivered vive voce. A fable from Aesop done into Latin verse usually twice a week. On Wednesday Antient and Modern Maps. Antient and Modern Geographical Names compared—for this exercise a chapter or more is prepared by the scholar from the short Greek Treatise of Dionysius by Wells. Additional books: Homer, Horace, Select Satires of Juvenal, Kennedy or Adam's Roman Antiquities and some chapters from Potter's Grecian Antiquities on Wednesday. Saturday's Exercise in Greek Testament &c. more forward and enlarged.

In this Class exercises in verse are written occasionally as translations from Homer &c. according to the various metres of the Odes of Horace.

From the 7th Class commonly begins the entrance at College. Those who remain are employed (beside the usual exercises) in reading Euripides, Sophocles, Livy, select parts of Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, Sallust, Lucian, Zenophon and Homer. They are also sometimes taught the first books of Euclid and Murray's Logic. The religious instruction mentioned in the foregoing Classes is strictly attended to, and other opportunities are taken to inculcate and explain religious and moral duties. Morning and evening prayers are regularly read in the family, and Divine Service attended at the parish church on every Sunday and festival. In all the Classes Writing, Accounts, &c., make a part of the business of every day, Saturday excepted. Premiums and medals distributed at the half yearly examinations.

Rev. Michael Fitzgerald had then been for five years Master of the School, and the Commissioners appointed under the Act of 1788 reported:

The School at Ennis is a late establishment, is in very high reputation, and very carefully attended to. The buildings were erected in the year 1773, at an expense to the Governors of £1,500. The Rev. Michael Fitzgerald, the present master, had fifty-six boarders and twenty-four day scholars; of the latter, twelve were free scholars.14

The Commissioners appointed by the British Parliament under an "Act to revive and amend an Act made in the Parliament of Ireland, for enabling the Lord Lieutenant to appoint Commissioners for inquiring into the several funds and revenues granted for the purposes of education, and into the state and condition of all Schools in Ireland" reported on 21 September 1809 on Ennis School as follows:

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The Rev Michael Fitzgerald was appointed Master of this School in 1782. There is no land annexed to the endowment, except the ground on which the School and house and offices are erected, and a Garden and Playground, making in the whole about two acres. The house is capable of accommodating forty-two boarders. Mr Fitzgerald had once as many as sixty; but at the time the beds were occupied by two boys, a practice which he has for some years discontinued. His number at present is thirty-one, and sixteen day scholars, of whom eight are free. The Governors allow him fifty pounds per annum for an assistant, to whom he pays fifty pounds more, besides his board and lodging. He pays another forty pounds per annum and his board. The School-room is divided into two apartments, one of forty feet by twenty for classical instruction, and the other twenty feet square for writing, &c. He pays two Writing masters, one thirty the other twenty guineas per annum, and a French master thirty guineas per annum, and they all board in his house. The situation he states to be favourable for a School, and he appears to have paid a faithful and laborious attention to his duty for a period of twenty-six years. The number of scholars he thinks would increase if the accommodations were enlarged, and he stated that a detached building for an Infirmary was much wanted. This appears to be the case in most of the Schools on this foundation. He represented also (and we think his representations well founded) that considering the smallness of his salary, a greater allowance should be made for Assistants; and that the land annexed to the School is much too small. Some of the neighbouring gentry have laudably attended to the encouragement of this School, by annual grants of from five to ten guineas for premiums to the boys at the half-yearly examinations, which are accordingly distributed in books and medals. On the whole we are well satisfied with the state of this school, of which we consider Mr Fitzgerald to be an active and meritorious Superior.

In consideration of the foregoing very favourable report, the Governors agreed to an extension of the school premises (see Plate I), and to the payment of an additional sum of £50 p.a. to Mr. Fitzgerald towards the remuneration of a second usher at the School. The number of boarders in 1810 was fifty-one. In 1829 Mr. Fitzgerald petitioned the Governors, reminding them of "his long and diligent services and praying that his son Michael Fitzgerald be appointed Master in his room." The Governors replied that however sensible they might be of Mr. Fitzgerald's services, they could not "in any case depart from the ordinary course of proceeding in respect to the appointment of masters of the Grammar Schools." Michael Fitzgerald, junior, had been prepared for entrance to the university by his father and he graduated B.A. in the previous year (1828). The Grammar Schools of Galway, Tipperary and Ennis were then declining and in March 1830, the Governors decided that "from the very small number of boarders and day scholars receiving instruction in the Schools of Galway and Ennis, the salaries of the ushers of the said schools be discontinued from 1st May next."

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16 The Governors never possessed any estate or property in the County of Clare, but in or about the year 1773 the then Governors entered into an agreement with "Josias Veitch of the county of Dublin Esquire for the purchase of so much of the lands of Cahircullamore, Cahircullabog, Kilaikelly and Kiltie situate in the County of Clare near the town of Ennis as should produce a clear profit rent of £100 after the death of his wife. The negotiation for the completion of this purchase was carried on for several years, but no conveyance was ever executed as the title could not be made out; and the purchase money was never paid."—Registry Book, Vol. V, p. 107.

14 Ninth Report (Schools founded by Erasmus Smith Esq.) of Board of Education, p. 222.

17 Registry Book, Vol. IV, p. 85. The principal reason for the decline of Rev Michael Fitzgerald's School was the rapid growth of the School opened in the town by one of his Catholic masters—Stephen O'Halloran. He had sixty-five pupils in 1824 of whom twelve were Protestants. In that year there were only twenty-seven pupils all told in the Erasmus Smith School—and seven of these were Catholics. William Hurly, a Catholic also, had sixty-five pupils in his school in Hunt's Lane, including seven Protestants; this was a mixed school. John Hurly (Catholic) had a boys' school in Mill Street with forty-eight pupils, including eight Protestants.—Second Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1826, pp. 882/3.
Rev. Michael Fitzgerald, senior, died in 1831, and at a meeting held on 24 February 1832, Rev. Luke White King, second master of their school at Drogheda, was selected by the Governors to succeed him. Rev. Luke King's appointment to Ennis hastened the decline of the School at Drogheda as many of the pupils there followed him to his new post. John Elmes, B.A., was appointed by the Governors as his usher. There were fifty-seven pupils in the school to begin with, and in view of its promising state the Master was authorised by the Governors towards the end of the year (1832) "to recommend a proper qualified person to fill the situation of second usher, at a salary of £80 p.a. late Irish currency—said allowance to be dependent on the continuance or increase of the present number of scholars."

In May 1839 the Governors "Ordered, in consideration of the flourishing state of the School at Ennis, and the establishment of premiums there by the Lord Bishop of Cashel, for the encouragement of the learning of modern languages, that fifty pounds a year be granted, as a salary for a teacher of said languages; such salary to be enjoyed only during the pleasure of his Board." 18 Em. Wespendorf was appointed to this new post.

It was customary in most of the Protestant endowed schools in Ireland, especially those of which the masters were clergymen, to employ one or more Catholic teachers as a sop to the susceptibilities of Catholic parents contemplating sending their children to such schools. Peter Lyons was employed by Rev. Dr. King as his first assistant at Ennis. 19 The Catholic hierarchy was seriously concerned because of the attendance of Catholic boys at "endowed institutions that aimed either at the ultimate perversion of the pupil or at least indifference to the Catholic Faith." Urged by some such reasons, and probably as an offset to the Erasmus Smith School, which counted many Catholic boys in the roll, there was founded in Ennis, about 1848, Springfield House School (under the patronage of the Right Rev. Dr. Kennedy, Bishop of Killaloe). 20

Rev. Dr. King was examined at Ennis on 4th September 1855 by the members of the Endowed Schools (Ireland) Commission 1855-58. He stated that he had then forty-two pupils with three assistant teachers, instead of five formerly. Twenty-six of his pupils were boarders, and of the sixteen day boys seven were free. 21 The free pupils are "in general Roman Catholics." 22 He denied that the numbers were declining, and mentioned that "although an absurd objection to men of sense, the strongest thing against our schools is the danger of the boys becoming inoculated with the Clare or Galway brogue. The very people of this town, if they can contrive it, send their

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19 This employment of Catholic teachers was prohibited by an Act of Queen Anne, Section 16 of which recited that "Whereas several protestant schoolmasters, to increase the number of their scholars, do choose to combine with such papists ... and to elude the said act do entertain such persons professing the popish religion to be ushers, undermasters, and assistants ... under such protestant schoolmasters, who frequently leave the instruction of the youth ... to ... such popish schoolmaster ... whereby popery doth continue to grow and is propagated in this kingdom, for remedy thereof be it enacted ..." 8 Anne c. 3.
20 This school was the forerunner of St Flannan's—the Diocesan College of Killaloe—Molus, 2 (1855), 16-27.
22 ibidem, Q 4120, p. 190.
children to get a Dublin accent." He stated that Catholic children were not allowed
to avail themselves of the advantages of the endowment. He had never inquired when
a boy applied to him for admission whether he was "a Protestant or Romanist." He
gladly accepted him if he were really fit for it.

Two local residents also gave evidence to the Commissioners. One, Dr. Patrick
M. Cullinan, a past chairman of the Town Commissioners, was asked:

Q 4017—You stated you considered the public had no advantage from this School; do you
think, if there were no endowment here, there would be a school of a high class in Ennis at all?
—I am perfectly sure there would.

Q 4021—Has any additional school been established here till recently?—There has always
been an excellent school here; there is Mr Fitzsimon’s School.

Q 4022—How long has that been established?—Some ten or twelve years; and there was
Mr Magrath’s before that.

Q 4023—Did Magrath’s cease?—No, it is still in existence; he is an excellent master;
he was a contemporary and class-fellow of mine. There was a private school in the town be-
fore Dr King’s arrival here, kept by a Mr O’Halloran. There were ten scholars of the university
at one time from that school together. Some of them are the most eminent in Dublin in their
several professions. Some eminent scholomasters; distinguished preachers; and some very
distinguished lawyers from that school. There were nine sizars and ten scholars in my own
time from that school in Trinity College.

Dr. Cullinan deprecated the practice of Dr. King in refusing permission to the French
and Drawing masters in his school to take boys of the town as private pupils in these
subjects in their free time, unless they were pupils of the school. "The effect of that
is this, the town is not able to afford having two masters of foreign languages; and
thus persons are either coerced to send their children to the school of Dr. King, or they
must do without this advantage. That I say is a very serious injury to the public that
is done with the sanction of the Governors. The French master may take girls, but
not boys."25

The following resolution of the Town Council of Ennis was read to the Com-
missioners:

The Town Commissioners representing generally the feelings and the local interests of the
people of Ennis and its neighbourhood, beg leave to inform the Governors of Erasmus Smith’s

23 ibidem, Q 3964, p. 187. Some Dublin Schools about this time taught "the English accent", and the prospectuses of many Protestant endowed boarding schools indicated procedures to cure the boys of "provincialisms" in speech. One boarding school assured parents anxious on this score that the teaching staff was entirely English and that only English servants were employed. One can readily imagine the kind of English accent that would be acquired by association with, and imitation of, English servants. This peculiar snobbery of a minority of the population here was alluded to by Rev John Pentland Mahaffy (later Sir John Pentland Mahaffy, Provost of T.C.D.) in his report of October 7th 1880 to the Endowed Schools Commission. He wrote on the Irish grammar Schools: "There is also a desire of having English assistants, however incompetent, on account of their accent. Of course the accent of a master has little effect on his boys, so that it must be chiefly intended to impress the outside world. It is based too on the very reasonable desire of many parents, that their children shall not be marked in after life as provincials by their speech. But to this feeling far more important objects are often sacrificed." Endowed School (Ireland) Commission 1881 Vol. I, p. 254.
25 ibidem, Q 4046, p. 194.
Schools, that the principal master of the endowed school at Ennis has done much injury to the educational interests of the inhabitants, by having ordered the French Master at the school not to teach the French or German languages to boys who are not pupils at the School. The Commissioners desire to observe that the Principal of the School contributes nothing to the salary of the French master; and that this gentleman is non-resident at the School, and is employed therein only for a few hours daily; that he is allowed to instruct a private female class, and thus engrosses a portion of public patronage as a professor of foreign languages.

That although the people of this town could support one, they are unable to support two foreign teachers; and that, therefore, many of the boys, who for various and sufficient reasons are not pupils at the School, are deprived of the means of learning foreign languages by the act of the Headmaster, unduly excising power which belongs only to the Governors, who are exclusively the paymasters of the French teacher.

The Commissioners are of opinion that the restriction imposed on the French master, and which obstructs the progress of an important branch of education in this town, is alike detrimental to the interest of the people and injurious to the character of the School, and opposed to the intentions of the Founder; and they, therefore, very respectfully request the Governors of the School will not sanction its Continuance.—carried by a majority.26

The other local resident who gave evidence to the Endowed Schools Commission was John Busteed Knox, proprietor of the local newspaper. He desired “to re-echo the sentiments Dr. Cullinan had expressed. I perfectly agree in what he has stated.”

The School was inspected by Arthur Sharman Crawford, Assistant Commissioner, on 10 May 1856, who reported:

This is the best classical school which I have visited during my inspection. I heard the pupils examined in several branches, Latin, Euclid, algebra, geography, English grammar, arithmetical and English dictation; and I thought that in all they exhibited a very fair knowledge, and that they were carefully grounded in the principles of each. Dr King, the Principal, seems to be an energetic and experienced teacher, who devotes his entire time to the School, and I learned from various sources, that although he maintains a proper degree of discipline among his pupils, he treats them in a kind and parental manner. His principle is to make classical knowledge rather subordinate in importance to that of modern languages (including English), and the sciences generally, but he does not, by any means, neglect the former. I regretted to find the schoolhouse internally in bad repair and dirty condition, except the dormitories, which were clean.

The repairs of so large a house must be expensive, and except in one instance the Governors have not contributed anything towards such repairs.27

Mr. Crawford found fifty-eight pupils in attendance—fifty-two Protestant Episcopalians and six Catholics. The report of the Endowed Schools Commissioners on the School reads as follows:

The School at Ennis was established in the year 1773, as a grammar school; although the power of the Governors was limited to founding English Schools. In 1789 the School enjoyed a high reputation; there were then fifty-six boarders and twenty-four day scholars, of whom twelve were free. The number at present on the roll is fifty-eight, and of these thirty-eight are boarders and twenty day pupils, nine of these latter being free.

At our public court at Ennis we received evidence concerning the state of this School, and examined, amongst others, the master of the School and Dr Cullinan, formerly Chairman of the Town Commissioners of Ennis. Dr Cullinan complained that the charges for instruction were quite as high as those charged by respectable private schools; so that the public received no benefit from the endowment. It appears from the report of our Assistant Commissioner

26 ibidem, Q 4072, p. 194.
that the terms are forty guineas a year (without extras) for boarders, and ten guineas for day pupils.
Dr Culman did not consider the reception of free pupils, as now regulated, a benefit, as out of the small number who had been so received, he never heard of any who had succeeded in the University. He also complained that the Board had never exercised their power of assisting free pupils by clothing them and sending them out as apprentices. The Erasmus Smith exhibitions, which do not exceed £8 a year each, are not of sufficient amount to support the pupils who obtain them.
It also appears that the Governors had undertaken to nominate free pupils, but had never done so but on one occasion. There was an inspection of the School, though required by the Charter. In 1823 seven of the pupils at the Ennis School were Roman Catholics. And it appears from the report of our Assistant Commissioner, that of the day pupils, five are Roman Catholics, and of the boarders, one. And it is also stated that there is no religious instruction of a nature to interfere with the attendance of any class of persons whatsoever, although the Charter required that the children should be taught in Ussher's Catechism.
Our Assistant Commissioner reports favourably as to the general state of the School, but notices the bad state of the schoolhouse. The master is unable to induce the Governors to execute the necessary repairs, as they conceive it is not their duty to do so, although a trust to "beautify" the school houses of the grammar schools is one of the earliest trusts in the Charter, and has priority over those relative to the English Schools on which the Governors spend so much. The pupils exhibited much proficiency in their studies, and their attention is directed to modern languages and science, as well as classics.
We are of opinion that the Governors should place the Schoolhouse in a suitable state of repair.

In 1880 Rev. Dr. King retired from the Mastership of Ennis Grammar School and was given a pension of £60 p.a. by the Governors. The post was extensively advertised, and Rev. Frederick Eldon Barnes was appointed to it with effect from 1 November 1860. He was a successful master, and in July 1872 the Governors decided that the allowance to him for assistant masters' salaries should be augmented by £100 a year. He had then more than seventy boys in his school, being a much larger number than that of the other Grammar Schools under the control of the Governors i.e. Drogheda, Galway and Tipperary. In 1874 he had a total of sixty-eight boys, Drogheda had sixty-one, Galway thirty and Tipperary twenty-one. An epidemic of zymotic disease temporarily affected the enrolment in 1876. The decline became more marked in 1877 when there were only twenty-seven pupils all told in the school. The headmaster was then warned by the Governors that they were:

much dissatisfied with the falling off in the number of the pupils, that they hope that the improved state of the school buildings, on which they have recently spent so large an amount, will remove any difficulties in his way occasioned by their former condition, but that, if this expectation be not realized, they will with regret feel it to be their duty to consider the necessity of making a change in the Headmastership.

On receipt of this communication the Headmaster resigned his post. He had been very popular in Ennis, and he had gone out of his way to improve relations between the boys of his school and those of Springfield House. He had, for instance, arranged for them to meet at games.

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28 Endowed Schools (Ireland) Commission 1855-8, Report, p. 68.
30 ibidem, p. 127.
Cricket was the popular game then, and judging from an account of a match played by the students of Springfield against the students of Dr Barnes College, the former were no mean exponents. They beat their opponents by 55 runs and one wicket to fall. The account in the paper concluded by stating that Mr Barnes, who was a very clever player, was struck on the head with a ball and had to retire.\textsuperscript{31}

On the arrest of Rev. Edward Maynard Goslett, headmaster of Drogheda Grammar School, for debt in 1863, one of his pupils was removed by his father to Ennis Grammar school. The boy—A. B. R. Young—wrote later in life the following account of his stay there:

The next stage of my life's way was entered upon on Monday August 3rd when my father and I left home for Ennis College, co. Clare. At that date the journey occupied two whole days, involving a stay of a night in Dublin. I had never been so far from home and south Munster seemed a terrible distance away, but I must admit the voyage was made as pleasant as possible by my companion. We booked rooms in the old Imperial Hotel, Sackville Street, and after a sumptuous dinner had a most enjoyable time in the old Theatre Royal, where we saw a wonderfully pathetic play, 'The Poor Nobleman', in which a then very celebrated actor, Alfred Wogan, who appeared in the name part, often moved a crowded audience to tears.

Next morning we started for the West by the Great Southern and Western Railways. Slow and sure was the motto of railways then, for we were many hours travelling before we reached the dreariest and most windswept station in all Ireland—the Limerick Junction, where we changed for Ennis which was the terminus of the system. Eventually... the train crept into Ennis at long last, where my father, having interviewed the Head, and deposited me in the College, was obliged to remain until the midnight mail brought him somewhat more quickly to Dublin...

The expression 'Term' in describing a division of school time was then not in use. This 'Half' or next 'Half' was the way in which all the day's work were described and all accounts were paid 'quarterly in advance' according to the prospectus. Thus each half had its own mathematical quarters in which we reckoned the Xmas, Easter and Summer vacations, of several four, three and six weeks duration. It will be seen that by this the Headmaster netted one quarter in the year's fees...

During my residence in Ennis I had nothing but the pleasantest time. Rev Frederick Eldon Barnes, M.A., was an astonishingly different Head from my previous pedagogue at Drogheda. He was kindness and patience (at least with me) always. I was not robust and he treated me with the greatest consideration, giving me special luncheons of oysters and 'Guinness XX' almost daily... To Mr Barnes I owe all the learning I acquired during my whole school career, little as that was. He was a strict, but just disciplinarian, and to his unwaried patience and unstinted expenditure of his leisure time given after a hard and often harassing day's labour in the classes, I owe it that, while my wildest ambition never soared above a scrape through at Entrance to Trinity College Dublin, I obtained twelfth place at Michaelmas Entrance in 1864 out of one hundred and thirteen entrants and second place of the candidates for Erasmus Smith Exhibitions at the examination on the four consecutive days after Matriculation. In this latter I was beaten by no less a competitor than William Standish O'Grady, who licked me to a frazzle in history, scoring a hundred per cent in all four histories, while I just reached twenty-five.\textsuperscript{32}

At their meeting on 1 October 1877 the Governors

Resolved unanimously that Mr J. L. Whitty, headmaster of Drogheda Grammar School be offered the Head Mastership of Ennis School at the salary of £100 a year and £100 a year for Assistant Masters. Mr Whitty who was in attendance was then called in. He stated that

\textsuperscript{31} Molua, 3(1936) 16.
\textsuperscript{32} Canon A. B. R. Young, Reminiscences of an Irish Priest: 1845-1920, Dundalk 1932, pp. 75-78.
there were two principal wants—a field for cricket and other sports, and two rooms for Assistant Masters adjoining the boys dormitories.

The Governors expressed their willingness to contribute a sum not exceeding £20 a year to provide a suitable field, and to consult their architect as to providing the desired accommodation for Assistant Masters and to have any reasonable changes carried out provided they involve no heavy outlay or structural changes. 33

When Mr. Whitty left Drogheada for Ennis most of his boarders followed him there, so that his successor at Drogheada “had to begin the work over again, and make a school for himself.” 34 There would appear to have been some resentment among supporters of the School at Ennis regarding the pressure brought by the Governors on Rev. Mr. Barnes to resign. Somewhat belatedly he was given, in recognition of his service, a gratuity of £200 by the Governors “to be applied for the benefit of him and his family—the Treasurer to communicate with him on the subject.” Nonetheless the school lost its popularity with his passing, and Mr. Whitty had only twenty boys in his school for the opening term. In the following year (1878) he had a total of forty-four of whom twenty-five were boarders and nineteen were day boys, of whom five were free. In the following year (15 January 1879) he resigned. At their meeting held a month later (14 February 1879) the Governors appointed Mr. R. H. Flynn, master of Dundalk Endowed School to the vacant post at Ennis. In 1880 there were fifty-four pupils at the School—thirty-seven boarders and seventeen day boys. Thereafter the numbers declined. In 1885 there were thirty-eight pupils—twenty boarders and eighteen day boys. In the next year the total number was thirty-three—fourteen boarders and nineteen day boys, of whom only one was free.

In his report, dated 7 October 1880, to the Endowed Schools Commissioners, Rev. John Pentland Mahaffy, who had visited the School in the previous year when there were thirty-nine boarders and eighteen day boys, stated that three of the boarders were Catholics 35 and one of the day boys. He added:

There are 3 salaried and 2 pupil assistants. I found this school in a surprisingly good state considering its antecedents. The last master left under such circumstances as must necessarily have brought the school to a low ebb. Since the new master has come, one boy’s life has been lost by an accident, and another by sickness. But he was so popular in his former place (Dundalk) that he brought all his boarders with him, and that he has since obtained others from distant parts of Ireland. He also labours under disadvantages of situation and of appointments, which are difficult to overcome. Hence his success so far is somewhat remarkable, and only attributable to his peculiar fitness for his duties.

The buildings are large and straggling—indeed too large for the requirements of the place, and requiring new plaster over the whole outside surface. A considerable outlay appears to have been made within the last few years in building useless and disfiguring walls, and in adding some unnecessary class-rooms, whereas additional bath-rooms are really needed; and still more, the levelling of the playground, which though ample in size, is so rocky and irregular as to be useless for games. The present head-master feels this to be an urgent difficulty, and when I pointed out to him that it could best be removed by turning his garden (which is level) into playground, and taking in some of the playground for a new garden, he declared himself quite willing to submit to this great temporary inconvenience. If the money laid out of late years by Erasmus Smith’s Board had been laid out with reasonable judgment all this might have been done long since. Two enormous ball-allleys have been built, whereas

34 Endowed Schools (Ireland) Commission 1881, Report, p. 80.
35 These three Catholic boarders had been pupils at Dundalk and accompanied Mr Flynn to Ennis.—Endowed Schools (Ireland) Commission 1881, Evidence Vol. II, p. 93.
one was sufficient, and if divided into proper fives-courts, would have served its purpose far better than the present extravagant erections. A yard immediately outside the school-room, surrounded on three sides by house walls, could have been covered in and lighted from the top, so as to form an excellent gymnasium at small cost, yet this was never thought of . . . The boys' diet was comfortable and they seemed cheery, and talked freely at their meals. Indeed, they were all genial and ready to talk, from which we may infer that they were happy and kindly treated. If Ennis be an out-of-the-way place, it can at least boast of very pure and exhilarating air, and great healthiness of climate.

A very brief examination showed me that in science the boys were admirably taught. The head-master is himself a distinguished science scholar, and devotes his whole time to this side of the school, accordingly the smallest boys could answer readily in mental arithmetic, and the elder understood Euclid very thoroughly. The most advanced I did not examine. The little boys also answered me well in spelling, not so well in easy geographical questions. The answering in French and German was fair, but none of them had yet got a good hold of these languages. I also examined the upper classes in Latin and Greek, and found them fairly prepared, though only one of them showed any high faculty for classics. But on the average they were not behind the boys of other schools. There is hardly any teaching as yet in natural science; but, no doubt, the Intermediate Examinations will presently produce here as elsewhere, such cramming in it as will obtain a certain amount of marks in that competition. The modern languages are taught by a cultivated German gentleman, who only knows enough English to give his lessons; and this class of teacher I have always found the most efficient for the purpose.

In addition to the levelling of the playground, there is an urgent need of a school library and a reading room for the boys. One of the class-rooms should be fitted up with proper shelves, and the Board should make an annual grant towards this object. It would be easy to persuade the elder boys to add something by way of parting gifts when they are leaving the School. This plan has been followed with great success at Marlborough and other schools in England. A detached infirmary would also be desirable. 36

For some unexplained reason however, the great things expected of Mr. Flynn as master of the School at Ennis did not materialise, and in 1888 the number of boys in his school was reduced to sixteen—three boarders and thirteen day boys. It was about this time that the boy, J. Chartres Molony, became a pupil there. Later he wrote this account of his schooldays:

Erasmus Smith, who lived well nigh throughout the seventeenth century, founded a grammar school at Ennis; and at this foundation I received the first rudiments of education . . . Our school was purely Protestant; for Catholics of the better class, education was provided by the Diocesan College, and for the children of petty Catholic shopkeepers and working men by the Christian Brothers School. If religious instruction of any kind is to be given in schools, if religious differences are to be recognised, probably small school children are best segregated in the folds of their respective churches. Suspicion of proselytism becomes well nigh a mania with Churchmen—a Church Dignitary in Ireland once smelt herey in a primer of elementary arithmetic, and it cannot be good for a child that his soul should be a bone mumbled by contending watchdogs.

And yet, if ever there lived a man to whom the Godly upbringing of young children, irrespective of sectarian differences, might safely have been entrusted, such a man was our Erasmus Smith deminie, Rev. Richard Flynn. He read or barked a few conventional prayers at the start of each day's work; he taught us to speak the truth; and he impressed fairly on our minds his own conviction that the man who proclaims himself an unbeliever also proclaims himself an ass. He was of course a Protestant, but I never heard him say a sligting word of any creed sincerely held.

Dr. Flynn was an enthusiastic schoolmaster, but at the same time an unsuccessful one. His school was tucked away in a corner, out of the way even for Ireland; and he himself was by nature unpractical, unpunctual, unbusinesslike. I do not think that he knew very much; 36

but, in his way, he had the temperament of a scholar, and a genuine love of learning in his soul. He was amusingly hot-tempered. When I read *The Hunting of the Snark*, it occurred to me that the Jubjub, who 'lived in perpetual passion', oddly resembled our Doctor. Peace to the old Doctor's ashes: we Ennis boys owe a debt to him.

The School, to the best of my remembrance, counted some half-dozen boarders and twenty or thirty day boys. With such a meagre attendance, and with an incredibly low scale of school fees, the teaching staff was necessarily of poor quality. We were too few for properly organised games; and our playground, though fairly spacious, was an unkempt medley of rocks and holes. The old Doctor endeavoured as best he could to teach us the rudiments of cricket and rugby football, but we had not the stimulus of competition to interest us. If the local Catholic schools played any systematic game of any sort, I never heard of it.

It was not that we were helpless victims of grinding poverty: allowing for the very different value of money in those days, I fancy that our parents were in quite comfortable circumstances. But the relation of education to life as a whole was not then realised even dimly. A child must be taught to read and write: convention prescribed that he should learn the elements of Greek, Latin, and French grammar, a little elementary Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic, the dates of the Kings of England, and the names of the capital Cities of the World. Unpractical Ireland forty years ago was oddly utilitarian: a child learned as a child, and as a man he 'put away childish things'. 'What is the use of these things?' I have heard my elders ask; if they thought about education at all, they thought of it in terms of modern languages. French and German were the keys wherewith to unlock the doors of worldly success...

The stuff on which our teachers had to work was unpromising. There were a few sons of 'county families': these youths looked upon their tuppenny ha'penny property as a noble heritage dispensing them from the necessity of learning anything. An English public school, where a proper sense of their own insignificance would have been kicked into them, would have done these boys a world of good. On the other hand, sons of Irish families who did receive their education in England frequently returned to Ireland utterly alien in spirit from those among whom they were to pass the remainder of their lives. The sons of the local professional men were a hopeful proposition for the schoolmaster: such at least received what was offered to them in the hope of fitting themselves to win a livelihood from the world.

The wisdom of statesmen devised for Ireland a system of 'intermediate education'. This was nothing more than an examination held yearly. Partly because teachers were inefficient, partly because the dogs of Irish political life and religious animosity were best let lie sleeping, all that was education, all that appealed to the reason, was carefully excluded from the curriculum. A certain number of dry unrelated facts were crammed down our throats: these facts we in due season spat forth. Having spat we were adjudged to have 'failed', 'passed', or 'passed with honours'. Our success probably brought pleasure and certainly profit to our masters; inasmuch as for each success the master pocketed a certain sum, as 'result fees'. Then the style of examination and the system of 'result fees' it would be difficult to devise anything less fitted to advance the cause of true education.

And yet I have cause for gratitude to the old 'Intermediate'. I had swallowed a daily tale of facts for a year or two: then at the age of thirteen, seemingly I ejected them with a force and accuracy that surprised others as much as myself. I found myself dowered with an exhibition of £20, tenable for three years; it seemed as though I, like the hero in Mr Leacock's Russian tale, might end by knowing something. So I spread my wings and flew into the larger school world of Portora.

An Irish school was a Spartan training. In Ennis I walked about three quarters of a mile every morning, winter or summer, wet or fine, to present myself *sub ferula domini* Flynn at 8 a.m.: at 9 a.m. I walked back to breakfast, and by 9.45 I had walked back to school. . . . at 1 p.m. we walked back for lunch. We were brought back again at 3 p.m., and at 6 p.m. we started on the march for the fourth time.

Our Irish schools were small, and the existence of many of them precarious. The little Ennis Grammar School has long since passed into the limbo of things dead and forgotten. . . . The schools of my early days established no tradition, no fellowship in after years among those who had gone forth from them. It may be that our Protestant schools, as the schools of a small religious minority, were not assimilable into the general life of the Irish people, that they were as branches artificially fastened to, not normally growing from, a parent trunk. But I scarcely think that Catholic schools were then more truly living than Protestant. In fact in the Ireland of those days there was little true conception of what a school should be.
I see no better augury of hope for the future than the change which has come about. In the nineteenth century the political and sectarian antagonisms of Ireland invaded even the schools. 'Christians are right and Pagans are wrong' says an old French proverb. We Protestant schoolboys stood definitely apart from the general mass of our fellow countrymen: in religion and politics we were definitely right, they were definitely wrong, there can be no doubt or question about this. Probably the Catholic schoolboys were equally silly in regard to us. The English schoolboy may be either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative; but he is taught to feel with his native land, to be one with his kind. England is great enough to include within one great unity all differences of English politics and of English creeds. The history of England is the common history of all Englishmen.

It was not so for us Irish boys. We were brought up in ignorance of what had happened in our own country in days gone by. In the present we belonged to one or other of two estranged communities. It was not worth while to study the past: for there we should find a monstrous record of our ancestors' unimpeachable rectitude, and of the wilful and perverse wrongheadedness of the ancestors of those who now differed from us. Sad that it should have been so: sadder still if it still is so. How much later bitterness, how much of later blood and tears, might have been spared, had Irish boys only been taught the truth of the Irish proverb which says 'the seal on the wave and the seal in the cave are brothers'.

The fees charged by Mr. Flynn at Ennis were fifty guineas a year for boarders and £6 to £12 a year for day boys. English and Mathematics were extras at £6 a year and French, Latin and Greek were £2 each extra. These fees were high in comparison with those paid in other Protestant boarding schools, and this fact may have been a major factor in causing the marked decline in the school.

At a meeting of the Endowed Schools Commissioners in Dublin on 11th March 1886, part of the Vice Chancellor's evidence on behalf of the Governors was as follows:

Q 2149. Now as to Ennis?—Fifteen boarders, fifteen paying day boys, and one free boy—thirty-one altogether. Mr Flynn is the Master. He has £100 a year for himself and £100 for assistants. He is a very good man—an excellent schoolmaster; but he is heavily weighted down there.

Q 2150. In way way?—They tell me it is too near Galway—there is not sufficient space to feed it. Galway is considered a better school, and draws away boys that might be expected to go to Ennis. We consider Ennis a badly placed school.

Q 2151. We find it reported before that Mr Flynn had just been removed from Dundalk, and he was so popular in his former place, Dundalk, that 'he has brought all his boarders with him, and he has since obtained others from different parts of Ireland', and notwithstanding I find Ennis has fallen from thirty-nine to fifteen?—Yes; those boarders went away, and he did not get others. We feel very much for Mr Flynn, and think he is fighting an uphill battle.

Q 2152. In your opinion it is the locality that handicaps him?—That is the general opinion of the Governors.

Q 2153. Is there a population there requiring this kind of education, that would be content to accept the conditions under which it is given?—We doubt that very much, and the wish of the Board is to get power from you under the scheme that is to be settled, to discontinue Ennis.

This public announcement of the Governors' intentions disquieted certain of the inhabitants of Ennis, and a petition on their behalf in the following terms was submitted to the Endowed Schools Commissioners:

We, residents of Ennis and its vicinity, acting in concert with influential parties throughout the county of Clare, are strongly of opinion that the maintenance of the Erasmus Smith College in a full and efficient manner is absolutely necessary for the promotion of the education of the children dwelling in the district. We emphatically declare that any diminution of its efficiency would most seriously incommode and injure an important section of the community who have no other means or place of education for their sons. We therefore earnestly request the Royal Commission now inquiring into the matter to take such steps as they consider necessary to establish and increase its utility. We hope that it will again resume its former eminent position when the present depressed circumstances of the country pass away. Passed unanimously.

J. H. Griffith, Clerk. (Chairman).

11th Oct. 1887.

At about the same time, the Town Commissioners passed a resolution as follows:

Resolved—That as we have been informed it is intended to close the Ennis Endowed College. Should such be done, we beg to suggest that the Endowment which has been heretofore contributed towards the support and maintenance of said College should not be removed from the county of Clare, but that same may be applied towards the support and maintenance of some other educational establishment in the locality for the maintenance of poor pupils therein.

Passed

John Hill. (Chairman).

The Governors of the Erasmus Smith Schools had already informed Mr. Flynn.

That a misapprehension exists as to the evidence given by the Treasurer before the Educational Endowment Commissioners as to the intentions of the Governors in respect of the Ennis School. They wish it to be understood that they have no intention of discontinuing the school at present, or until an opportunity occurs of so doing without any injury to Mr. Flynn of whom they entertain a high opinion; but that apart from the position and circumstances of the School, the continued decrease in the number of boys, and Mr. Flynn's periodic reports, they fear that the school is not likely to improve; that they desire to take the power, if they do not already possess it, of discontinuing the School, so as to be able to do so, unless a material improvement shall take place. They regret that Mr. Flynn has not had the success which he deserves, and they would be willing to take into consideration any proposal he may think it for his advantage to make in case he shall find an opportunity of improving his position.

No further action was in fact taken by the Governors till 1890. In that year Rev. Dr. Walter Brocas Lindsey, master of Tipperary Grammar School, was appointed to a post at Portora Royal School. Mr. Flynn applied for the vacant post at Tipperary and was given it by the Governors in December of that year. Mr. Flynn took his few boarders to Tipperary and the School at Ennis was closed. A resolution of protest passed at a meeting held in Ennis under the chairmanship of Rev. J. Griffith#### was considered at a meeting of the Governors held on 30 January 1891 but they saw 'no reason for departing from the resolution already passed, and feel themselves with great reluctance obliged by all the circumstances to close the School.'

The school premises were then let on lease to the Ordnance Survey Department of Ireland through the Office of Public Works. This lease was renewed in 1911 and on 1 April 1916 the Ordnance Survey surrendered possession. The re-letting of the

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premises was then placed in the hands of Mr. Michael McMahon, House Agent, Ennis, but he was unable to find a suitable tenant before the county Clare Belgian Relief Committee took over the buildings to accommodate a group of Belgian refugees who had been evacuated from their country during the German occupation of World War I. After the Easter Rising of 1916, British soldiery under Major Ball went into occupation. They surrendered possession in January 1922. The Governors were awarded by the War Compensation Court, London, payment of £65 p.a. in respect of this occupation. The buildings were next occupied during our Civil War by the military forces of Saorstáit Éireann. Our Government paid the Governors a sum of £1,000 in 1962, as compensation for the damage to the buildings caused by this occupation. Mr. McMahon was then instructed to offer the premises for sale by public auction, subject to a reserve price of £1,200. No bid was received at the auction on 25 September 1926. The premises remained unoccupied, and in December 1928 the Governors decided to advertise for private bids. Mr. Carey, Secretary of the County Council made a personal offer of £510 for the buildings and this offer was accepted by the Governors. On 16 April 1931 the Governors authorised the “conveyance of Ennis College to Thomas Byrne for this sum (£510).” The Sisters of Mercy thereupon took possession restoring the buildings for use for school purposes.

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Premium certificate conferred on Lewis Maunsell in December 1839, at Ennis Grammar School, showing the school as it then was.