

Maurice J. O'Shaughnessy Of Glin

THE old Glin Emmets Football Club was founded in 1898, and soon attracted to its ranks some of the best men that ever played football. They were so good that had they been able to complete the 17 with men of even half their football calibre the team would have certainly made the mark the prowess of the leading figures earned for the parish.

The noted men were M. J. O'Shaughnessy, the subject of our sketch this week, and rated by many enthusiastic old-timers as perhaps best centre-field man Ireland produced in his day — fast, heavy, powerful, knowing and playing the game to the limit; M. J. Fitzgerald and his brother, Paddy, both of them brothers of the great Con, who captained Commercial's to their second great All-Ireland success; Ned Dore, Mick Feury and P. J. McCoy—the unsurpassed leader of men.

Born at Ballyanne, Rathkeale, Maurice became a respected "citizen" of Glin by virtue of the fact that he resided there from his early schooldays.

Very popular all he came in contact with, he was a well-liked figure even amongst his school companions. Consequently, when the Glin Football Club came to be formed and Maurice threw in his lot with the original organisers, the idea progressed by leaps and bounds, and under his direction and that of a few kindred spirits, the club quickly grew to a combination not only noted for its high standard of football but for its spirit of sport and fair play.

NEVER DESCENDED TO DISORDER
Boasting many men of fine

physique, the team was quickly recognised as a team of giants and athletes who always played a strong, fast game. They kicked hard, charged their opponents with resoluteness and direction, and fought every exchange with grim determination, yet never descended to disorder or to the use of mean or petty tactics in an effort to gain an unfair advantage.

Then regarded as one of the very best mid-field players in the county, Maurice, a man of splendid physique, was a sight worth seeing as he ranged the field, for he gave centre-field a very wide interpretation — falling back in defence when the occasion demanded, and being as prominent in attack when play veered the other way.

Maurice had capable aids on that fine Glin team. Although Con Fitzgerald gave the magnificence of his football to the glamour team of the early football days — the renowned Commercial's—there is no doubting the soft spot he always held in his big, noble and generous heart for his native Glin, and no man got greater pride from the formation of the Emmets Club than he did.

He had reason also for pride in the service his two grand brothers gave to the Glin colours — for in Maurice and Paddy Fitzgerald the club had two stalwarts who were worth their weight in gold.

Paddy Fitzgerald and Ned Dore made two half-backs that were almost impossible to pass — terrific men, heavy, powerful, extremely fast, scientific, cool and resourceful.

Then there was Mick Feury, one of the best all-round men of his

day in athletic fields, and

quite capable of taking prizes in the high-class company of some of the great elite of our athletic history—Kieley, Horgan and Paddy Leahy, to indicate but a trio of the star-studded company of those memorable and unforgettable days in Irish athletics. Feury was a very heavy man, although a champion sprinter.

"THE BEST OF GOODS IN SMALL PARCELS"

P. J. McCoy, the captain, was not of the same heavy mettle, being a medium-sized man who, however, proved the adage of "the best of goods in small parcels," for he was one of the most spectacular and scientific of Glin footballers and was an ideal wing-forward. He was, too, like so many other members of the team, a famous runner and an all-round athlete, who made up for difference in weight by unconquerable grit and a fierce determination that whenever he set his mind on a thing he saw it through to a successful conclusion.

There were some other really good men, though not so outstanding physically. There was Mick Moore, who played a fast, stylish game behind the heavy mid-field men, and Jack Dunne, a hard forward to beat, who was to captain the team in later years.

The team had more athletes of great strength than was to be found in any combination of the period, and it speedily went to the front in West Limerick and North Kerry.

After a short time there was no serious rival left but Abbeyfeale, then enjoying the ardent support of their patriotic and devoted parish priest, the renowned Father Casey—a real man of the people and a sterling Gael, who did trojan work for native games in West Limerick.

Glin and Abbeyfeale had some homeric tussles for the championship of the west and on one special occasion it was only on a technicality that Abbeyfeale were awarded the distinction.

Had it been otherwise, Glin would have met Commercial's in the county final, and the latter being then at their zenith, under Captain Con Fitzgerald, a match of matches would surely have ensued that would live in football history.

NO MEETING RESULTED

But it was not to be. Glin did challenge Commercial's to play a series of games to decide a supremacy the West lads were bent on disputing, but no meeting resulted—for the Co. Board gave the Glin lads a "rap on the knuckles" because the challenge did not go through the proper channels.

Maurice J. O'Shaughnessy was soundly national in family tradition, very becoming to one that was the nephew of "John the Fenian" of Ardagh, and of Charles O'Shaughnessy of Killfinane, six of whose "young men" were out in '67.

Maurice was an early Sinn Féin and headed the poll at a ballot election of Committee of the Glin Volunteers in 1916.

Well over half a century ago the then Knight of Glin, Maurice O'Shaughnessy, and D. M. O'Leary started the original Glin Coursing Club and were first President, Secretary and Treasurer. The three owned good dogs and competed for the Irish Cup and other prominent stakes. Maurice was Secretary of many other social and sporting events and undertakings and lived to be recognised as the most popular and personally-liked man in Glin, possessor of a big heart and an open hand.