

## THE TARA BROOCH.

AMONGST the various objects of Ancient Irish Art in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, besides those to which we have already referred, we shall confine ourselves to one of special interest. It is of world-wide fame, and is better known as the Tara Brooch. The title is suggested by the principle "*Lucus a non-lucendo*." It has no connection with Tara. It was found in 1850 by the children of a poor woman, whilst they were at play on a strand near Drogheda. It was sold by her for a trifle to a watchmaker in Drogheda, from whom it passed by purchase into the possession of Messrs Waterhouse of Dublin. It bears no inscription, so that its date must be fixed by a comparison with similar remains of Celtic art. O'Neill and Petrie are here at variance. The former holds that "The Tara Brooch belongs, at the latest, to the early part of the Christian era, if—which is more probable—it be not a relic of heathen times." For Mr O'Neill as a mere artist we entertain the highest respect, and therefore we take, with fullest confidence, his estimate of the artistic excellence of the brooch. But his knowledge of the history of Irish art is not to be compared to Petrie's; hence we incline much more to the date assigned by the latter, who says:—"The form and general character of this brooch are Celtic, and, perhaps, Moorish; while they may belong to the most remote antiquity, yet the arts shown in the workmanship of the details are those which belong to that period when such arts were carried to the greatest artistic perfection in Ireland—namely, the eleventh century." The minuteness of elaboration in the tracery of the Tara brooch is amazingly beautiful. O'Neill tells us that—"The brooch is formed of white bronze as a basis, which is covered with a variety of ornaments in gold, silver, niello, variously-coloured glass, and enamel. . . . No language can convey an idea of the wonderful delicacy of the workmanship of this relic." It is now (1863) being exhibited in the South Kensington Museum, and a writer in the 'Times' has said that it is "more like the work of fairies than of human beings." We have ourselves heard the most practised and able jewellers say, "that so wonderful is the workmanship, that they cannot be imitated exactly at the present day. They have been executed in a peculiar manner, unknown to modern times.—'Irish Ecclesiastical Record.'

## THE NUNS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, MELBOURNE, AND THEIR MISSION.

THE sanctity of the Catholic Church has always been manifest in the multiplicity and variety of its good works. These are fruits which in all ages have borne witness to its Divine origin. That charity which in the Church is a vital principle of its existence, is an active one in every clime and among every people. In its dispensations it knows no distinction of race, creed, or class; it adapts itself to every unhappy circumstance in which the human being may be placed, and there is no vice or disease, however odious or repellant, from which it withdraws its helping hand. Of these facts there are illustrations innumerable in the Church, but for the purpose we have in view it is only necessary for us to refer to one or two bright examples of the kind. Some eleven years since a band of the Good Shepherd Nuns arrived in this Colony, and settled down at Abbotsford, where their convent is. Their mission, more especially, was to rescue from the streets those fallen creatures who lead a life of sin, shame, and wretchedness, and to that work the good Sisters have since devoted themselves with unflinching earnestness. They have made a sacrifice of their lives to the services of the Good Shepherd, and their only reward is, that they have brought to His knees many—very many, penitent Magdalens. They have brought peace to many souls distracted by remorse, and hope to many hearts weighed down with shame and despair. The co-operation which was indispensable to them has been generously rendered, not alone by the Catholic community, but also by members of other creeds, who held in just and liberal appreciation the great Christian work accomplished at the Abbotsford Convent. With the help of a generous public, the good Nuns have been enlarging their premises, and extending the benefits of their institutions to vastly-increased numbers. They have never been deterred by the ordinary embarrassments from throwing open their door to an applicant for admission, and they have never yet missed an opportunity of drying a penitent tear and pouring balm on a wounded heart. Ministers of grace they have ever been when the fallen sister wished to return to the fold of the Good Shepherd. Their confidence in the Divine help has never been disappointed, and they do not fear that it will be now. Relying upon it, they have largely extended their accommodation for those erring children who are committed to their care, and whom they reform and train up on sound religious and moral principles. For that purpose they have just erected a large, substantial brick building, at a cost of £5000. It forms three sides of a square, at two sides of which it is two storeys high, and on the third three storeys, the highest floor in the latter case being used for storage purposes. The second floor is employed for dormitories, and being spacious, lofty, and well ventilated, is admirably fitted for that purpose. On the ground floor are two large school-rooms, a work-room, and refectory, besides other smaller apartments, such as infirmary, laundry, dressing and bath-rooms, the fittings in all being so arranged as to contribute to the health and comfort of the inmates, and to facilitate an observance of the system of management that prevails in the office—a system which is as mild as it is strict, as anyone must perceive from the cheerfulness of the children who are so well trained under it. The erection of this fine building has heavily involved the community, as they are now in debt about £4000. On Tuesday, the 27th instant, a bazaar will be opened at St. George's Hall, the proceeds of which will be applied to a reduction of the amount, and it is with the object of urging the public to come generously to the assistance of the good Nuns in this undertaking that we refer to the large amount of good they are effecting. It is now two years since a bazaar has been held on their behalf, and if they could possibly avoid it, they would now refrain from appealing to the public. But the appeal is absolutely unavoidable.

Although the community have expended many thousands on the erection of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, and children from all parts of the Colony are sent to them by the magistrates, the only grant for building purposes they have ever received from Government was one for £1000. They are allowed 5s. per head for each child, and they are obliged to show an expenditure of 7s. 6d., whilst for each child in the other Industrial Schools of the Colony the expenditure is at the rate of about 13s. per head. In Ireland the cost is 5s. per head, and the Abbotsford Nuns do not receive a penny more. A child cannot be supported here as cheaply, and the Nuns are obliged to find the additional amount necessary. It is idle, as an excuse for this injustice, to say that the children taken by the Nuns will be received into the other Industrial Schools, if desired. They are at least as well treated at Abbotsford, and why should they not be paid for on the scale of cost elsewhere? Under an arrangement illiberal, but not so flagrantly unjust as that in force, their allowance should be equal to the cost of maintenance in the other schools, and it is below it. Then, again, they are not paid for teaching the children; and why this should be so, no just or impartial person can explain. Several of the thirty Nuns in community devote their whole time and attention to the care of the 217 children in their Industrial and Reformatory Schools, and surely some allowance should be made for the services of these ladies. The number of inmates in the Magdalen Asylum is about 130, and so the bazaar will be an appeal of 347 persons who are much in need of Christian sympathy and charitable assistance. For it is in the interest of these people the Nuns labor, and it is for their support and protection the bazaar will be held. If the object is kept in view, the result will be satisfactory; and the Nuns of the Good Shepherd will be considerably relieved from the pecuniary embarrassment which they have encountered from the highest and most disinterested motives.—'Advocate.'

## SPURGEON ON THE QUACKERY OF CEREMONIALISM.

THE writer of the following letter has requested us to publish it in the TABLET—ED. N.Z. TABLET.

(To the Editor of the 'Ross Guardian'.)

SIR—As your extract from Mr Spurgeon is going all the round of the papers, I think, as a subscriber of yours, I have one right, to at least your columns, which Mr Spurgeon has not. I claim then to be allowed to say a word on this popular cutting from his letters.

If Mr Spurgeon is a Mason, he must have received a severe castigation from his Worshipful Master long before this, for speaking disparagingly and contemptuously of a matter which intimately concerns a noble craft that deeply reveres their ceremonies as a sacred and integral part of their institution; if he is not a Mason, he, no doubt, deprecates the loss of the Marquis of Ripon, late Grand Master of English Masons, to the ranks of Protestantism, as a sad consequence of being too proficient in the ceremonies of the lodge. Dr. Ceremonial must, indeed, be a mighty clever fellow to catch such a large and knowledgeable fish as a Grand Master of English Masons must be. But Mr Spurgeon, I suppose, pronounces the Marquis a fool. What a fool, too, must that Russian Prince be, William Radzinel, who has of late joined the flock of Dr. Ceremonial, with the certain penalty of forfeiting all his property. Mr Spurgeon wonders at the defection of a host of others, lay and cleric, willing dupes to the magic rites of the same fascinating doctor. "This quack, facing the East, drives a good trade," Mr Spurgeon says, addressing himself to the West London folk. I don't know whether the doctor is very particular about East or West but I know that Mr Spurgeon will not think of looking East, as it is too poor and too filthy. He knows better than to think of coming to Whitechapel or Bethnal Green. He drives a first-class trade in the West, and does not envy Dr. Ceremonial, in his courts, lanes, and alleys.

Mr Spurgeon calls himself a Christian, and quotes scripture by the yard, and yet his conclusions are lamentably in contradiction with whole chapters of the Bible. Now, Mr Spurgeon, I want you to swallow one of the doctor's large pills. Give me your Bible. Look here; I find in it that God commanded Moses to take the shoes from off his feet, in respect for Mount Horeb, which He solemnly pronounced to be holy ground; I find Jacob trembling at Bethel, whilst he declared the spot, where he had seen the vision of the ladder, to be the House of God and the Gate of Heaven; I find that God allowed no one within the Holy of Holies except the high priest, and even him but once a year; I find God visiting the Bethsamarites with a plague for daring to look at the Ark of the Covenant, and a Prince of Judah struck dead for merely touching it, &c., &c.; and now tell me, Mr Spurgeon, how could you be so blasphemous as to laugh at the possibility of one place or thing being holier than another; and how are you justified in putting the religion of the chosen people of God on a low footing with the idolatry of Western Africa, called fetishism? I read in the same Bible, in the twenty-fifth and following chapters of Exodus, &c., minute details entered on by God Himself, for the decoration of the Tabernacle, and the clothing of its ministers:—"Ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue and purple and scarlet; and then the ephod, with its gold and purple; and the robe of the ephod, with its seventy-two golden bells, and as many artificial pomegranates, &c., &c.; all according to the dictation of God Himself? Does Mr Spurgeon laugh? God sets apart certain days of the year, reckoned by the moons, as times of special prayer; and Mr Spurgeon keeps holy the seventh day, although it is not the real Sabbath mentioned in Holy Writ. What say you, Mr Spurgeon? I read that Christ *breathed* upon His disciples, and said to them: "Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them;" and that He cured a deaf and dumb man, employing such ceremonies as taking him aside, putting His fingers into his ears, touching his tongue with His spittle, looking up to Heaven and groaning, and, in fine, using the word *Ephphetha*. Well, Mr Spurgeon don't you think Dr. Ceremonial has got some reason on his side? Again, in the garden, Christ *fell on His face* when He prayed, and He said the self-same prayer *three*