



St. Mary's, Kilkenny

M/McElroy

Two Butler Monuments in Old St. Mary's

Margaret M. Phelan

THERE are five Butler Monuments in old St. Mary's. The two here sketched for us by the Wexford artist, Mai McElroy, are very attractive and fine examples of the sculptor's art. The material of course is the durable limestone for which Kilkenny is famous, the Kilkenny "Marble"

Something is known of the people commemorated and it seemed fitting to add these notes.

Monument (1) commemorates Michael Butler, printer, 1779, who seems to have had a tragic end, for his marriage is recorded in April 1779 in the Hibernian Magazine, and his death occurred a month later. His wife was a Miss Maher, daughter of Dominic Maher of Irishtown and he himself must have been a brother or cousin of Catarine Finn (of Finn's Leinster Journal) who was born Butler. The nearness of the slab to that of the Finn slab, on the South-East end of the graveyard lends probability to this assumption. (Information from Mrs. Mary Kenealy, historian of the Finn family).

Monument (2) must have been inside the Church until the shortening of the Chancel there in 1820. At that time, many monuments including the very prestigious one of John Rothe Fitz Piers (founder and builder of Rothe House) were placed in the graveyard. This Butler monument now stands at N.E. part of the cemetery near the boundary wall and commemorates Dr. and Mrs. Butler and their son who lived in the Bridge House (now 89 John St.) which house was originally the property of the Earl of Arran (brother of 2nd Duke).

The elder Doctor Butler was regarded as the foremost medical practitioner of his day and was appreciated greatly and beloved in Kilkenny, not merely for his skill but for his humour too and involvement with the people. He is one of the principal characters in John Banim's novel "The Fetches" (written 1825) and Michael Banim adds further biographical details in his notes in later editions of the story. It has long been a tradition in Kilkenny that



St. Mary's, Kilkenny



this Butler family were hosts to Maria Edgeworth and Sir Walter Scott during the great days of the old Kilkenny Theatre (1802—1819).

Neither tomb has a makers name but it seems very likely that Colles of Maddoxtown made this Butler monument. It is very similar to that which is erected to William Colles in 1770 and which is now also outside the church on the wall of the South transept.



GRAVEYARD INSCRIPTION FROM CO. WICKLOW

NUNSCROSS, Parish of Killiskey, Barony of Newcastle, County of Wicklow. Memorial tablet within the Ch. of Ireland church :

TOTTENHAM, " Sacred to the memory of Robert Tottenham Esqr of Annamult Co. Kilkenny, second son of Charles Tottenham Esqr of Ballycurry. His body lies in the family vault attached to this church. He died 22nd August 1858 aged 47 years in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection."

(The Tottenham family were prominent landowners in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the Newcastle / Ashford area of Co. Wicklow.)

PRICES OF PUBLICATIONS '77-'76

O.K.R. 1978 — £1.25; O.K.R. 1975 — £1:00; Back copies — 75p. Rothe House 50p, Kilkenny Castle 50p, Graignamanagh 25p, High Crosses 50p, Thomastown 50p, St. Mary's Cathedral 25p, James Stephens 15p, Butler Family History 50p, Journal of Butler Society £2.00, Churchyard Sculpture 75p, Transactions of Ossory Arch. Soc. 20p.

CARDS

Rothe House (coloured) 7p, Rothe House Photograph 10p; Greeting Card with envelope 10p; Maps (Hang-up) £1.25, Maps (Roll-up) 85p.