

1900

The proceedings throughout were cordial and unanimous, and much pleasure was expressed at the presence of Rev. Canon R. S. B. Blacker at the Vestry, and the kindly interest <sup>expressed</sup> ~~expressed~~ by him in the welfare of the parish.

W. H. Anderson

Chairman

## SEAGOE PARISH CHURCH.

### DEDICATION OF ORGAN. 1900

On the 19th inst. a special service was held in Seagoe Parish Church (of which the Dean of Dromore is the respected rector), when the organ erected in memory of the Baroness von Stieglitz was dedicated by the Lord Bishop of Down and Connor and Dromore. There was a very large congregation, the ministers present being—Revs. the Archdeacon of Dromore, Canon Kernan, Canon Barker, Canon Lett, Canon Grierson, Canon Blacker, ~~Dr. O'Loughlin~~, Dr. Quirk (curate), R. Johnston, E. W. Hobson, F. W. Austin, T. W. Clarendon, T. B. Harpur, E. A. Myles, E. Dempsey, A. R. Ryder, George P. Mitchell, E. D. Atkinson, J. J. Major, ~~G. A. Stephenson~~, P. A. Kelly, W. J. Macauley, George Daunt, J. L. Peacock, E. Storey, and E. P. Dudley-James. A description of the organ has already appeared in these columns, and it will suffice to say here that it has fully come up to expectations. Its tone is rich, pure, and powerful, and as played yesterday by Mr. Charles M. Wilson, Mus. Bac., organist of Newtownards Parish Church, the fine qualities of the instrument were well brought out. On the "La. ten" brass plate on the front there is the following inscription:—"Erected by the parishioners of Seagoe and many friends, to the glory of God and in grateful memorial of many and generous benefactions done to this Church and parish by Hester Anna Baroness von Stieglitz, of Carrickblacker, who died 23rd January, 1899. 19th day of April, 1900."

While the Lord Bishop and the clergy in surplices were walking up the nave, a hymn was sung by the choir. The service was read by Rev. Dr. Quirk (curate), and Rev. Canon Barker, and the lessons respectively by Rev. E. W. Hobson and Rev. Canon Blacker. After the apostles' creed the Bishop said:—"We dedicate this organ to the glory of God, and the benefit of His Church, in memory of Hester Anna Baroness von Stieglitz; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The sermon was preached by the Lord Bishop, who selected as his text Revelations xix., 5 and 6—"And a voice came out of the throne, saying, praise our God all ye his servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." At the outset he pointed out that the Book of Revelation was full of mystery. Most devout and expert interpreters of prophecy had on one occasion or another to acknowledge that they could not fathom the depth of its meaning. God did not force forward the course of history. He overruled it, and brought it onward to the end which He had appointed, but men moved according to the freedom of their own will, at least up to a certain extent. Though a book containing much which they could not now understand, Revelation was evidently designed for their instruction. It was like a dark sky spangled over with bright, shining stars, leading the mariner to a safe shore. The book set forth the trials and sufferings of the Church, the wickedness of men as directed against her, and the malignity of the wicked one; and it was given to preserve the Church in her faith and steadfast course. It also showed the glorious issue in which all those things would end. In the midst of the sorrows of this world what was it that comforted the Christian most of all? Excluding from his mind the anguish of heart that might

rise in the soul at the thought of deep sin, the greatest sorrow, perhaps, was that which sprang from bereavement—when a loved one was taken away, no more to be seen here. And what was the greatest and most powerful comfort they could receive? It was not altogether the thought of the perfect happiness of those dear ones who were at rest with Christ, and who, having passed into the paradise of God, were free for ever from all sorrow and temptation, but the fact that "we shall meet them again." They were not gone for ever. We would not meet them in this earth, but there would be a glad reunion, having the special quality that it was a reunion in perfection, and one never to be broken. God had given to them that blessed hope which the dark heathen possessed not and those nations of the world who rejected the revelation of Christ. It was Christ's death and resurrection that gave them the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to everlasting life—that hope which belonged to the Church, and brought such unspeakable comfort to their souls especially in times of sorrow. They were met that day with the thought present in their minds of one who had been taken away from them—one whose form was very familiar in that place, one who filled up the minds and affections of those in that neighbourhood by the excellence of her character and the beneficence of her deeds. That Church itself must ever commemorate her generosity and goodness. Owing to her, so much in the rebuilding of it, what in former days was a commonplace structure, had become one of the most beautiful churches in the whole diocese, or, indeed, in the whole of Ireland. That chancel was built by her, and that beautiful east window erected at her expense. She gave largely and ungrudgingly. She was truly a cheerful giver, and not only to the Church did she give, with all the happy consequences that flowed from the beautification of God's holy house, but to those around about her in need and suffering. They thought of her that day as they thought of her a few months ago, when her mortal remains lay in the midst of them, but they were comforted by the hope that they would meet her again with a body freed from all weakness or liability to pain or suffering and a mind perfect in its powers and regenerated and renewed by the love of its Creator. It was a happy thought when the inhabitants of that district felt they should in some way express their gratitude to her by a lasting memorial that it should be in the house of God, which she so dearly loved, and for which she had done so much, and there seemed to be but one gift still wanting in the church, and that was an organ to lead the singing. He was sure the idea entertained was a true one, that if the late baroness could have spoken out her wish it would have been that that completing gift should be bestowed upon the church. The organ was said to be the king of instruments. It combined in itself in a marvellous manner the various effects of a variety of instruments; it was capable of infinite variation and change, and its effect in public worship was partly that it directed and assisted the choir. It permeated through the whole church, and gave confidence and support to those who joined in the singing; but besides that, its own music had something mysterious and solemn about it which touched the heart, kindled the emotions, and moved the inward feelings. In conclusion, the Lord Bishop mentioned that the collection was in aid of the organ fund.

The offertory having been taken up, the service was closed by the Lord Bishop pronouncing the benediction.

Subsequently a short organ recital was given by Mr. Wilson, most of the congregation waiting.