

THE PROTESTANT HALL AND COUNTY  
AND CITY OF CORK ASSEMBLY ROOMS.

SOME short time since the committee of the Cork Protestant Association invited the Padre Gavazzi to lecture in their city, and accordingly engaged the Athenaeum for that purpose. At the eleventh hour the committee of that building retracted the engagement, and refused the hall, thereby putting the Protestant public to considerable inconvenience and disappointment in being obliged to have the lectures delivered in a small and unsuitable place. The Protestants of Cork determined thereupon to erect for themselves a hall where freedom of speech should be allowed to all. A committee was formed, subscriptions collected, and a central site secured. The plans, prepared by Mr. Richard R. Brash, architect, Cork, were committed to Mr. John Harty, builder, for execution, and the result is the building, a view of the inauguration of which, on Friday, the 12th inst., we give.

The hall was filled to overflowing, hundreds of persons having to go away disappointed. The chair was taken by the Earl of Bandon, who after some prefatory remarks, declared the Protestant Hall open for the use of all classes and creeds of the city of Cork. The secretary, Mr. Valentine Tomkins, read the report; and the assemblage was addressed by the Hon. and Rev. H. B. Bernard and the Rev. Robert Forrest, Episcopalian; the Rev. T. N. Hull, Wesleyan; the Rev. Adam Averell Ramsey, Primitive Methodist; Thos. G. French, D.L.; Thomas Ronayne Sarsefield, D.L.; and Alderman Robert Hall. The proceedings were closed by the Very Rev. Dean Newman. The National Anthem and several pieces of sacred music were sung by a choir of eighty voices, led by Mr. Smith.

The body of the hall is 100 feet in length by 45 in breadth, and 36 feet in height. It is lighted by fifteen windows, six being at each side, and three at the northern end. These windows are each 15 feet in height and 6 feet in width, semicircular-headed, with a moulded transom, supported by a slender column, with carved capital, which divides the window into two. The sashes are glazed with ground glass to moderate the light, and the jambs are finished by moulded pilasters which rest upon consoles and support a bold architrave that runs round the semicircular head.

The centre of the ceiling is flat, with a bold continuous cove all round the angles. This cove is divided from the flat of the ceiling by a broad moulded style with enrichments in the moulding, and having a continuous panel in the centre of the style filled in with a guilloche ornament perforated for ventilation. The flat part of the ceiling is finished by three richly-ornamented centres 9 feet in diameter, from which will depend the gaseliers to light the building at night.

The decoration of the walls consists of massive and boldly-projecting fluted Corinthian pilasters resting upon their proper pedestals. These pilasters are coupled, and support a highly-ornamented entablature and cornice, which is continuous all round the building.

At the southern end is placed the orchestra or platform, for it is designed to answer both purposes. It is 25 feet in depth, and runs the entire breadth of the hall. The centre of it projects in a segmental sweep into the body of the building. This portion of it is flat. The remainder consists of tiers of seats, curved, rising one over another, and affording ample accommodation for a large number of performers as an orchestra, or it can be occupied by the audience during lectures and meetings. The principal approach to the building will be from the South Mall, the present arrangement being but of a temporary nature.

[Taken from *Illustrated London News*, Vol. XXXVII, 1861, p.400]