

LIMERICK SPORTSMEN

213-DAN DUGGAN Of St. Michael's

(By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH)

recent passing of Dan Dugan removed the last remaining with Limerick's first County Football Final, and with events which led up to the winning of the first All-Ireland Senior Football title by the famed Limerick Commercial Club.

The sad event also recalled nostalgic memories of the big part St. Michael's Temperance Society played in the G.A.A. affairs of the early days, reminding us of stirring events when the Association was in its infancy. The record of "St. Michael's" is a proud one, and well worthy of the many famous figures that graced the arena in their colours.

St. Michael's gave to the G.A.A. some of its best players of the infant days, and a few who were destined to hold high office in the Councils of the Association. They are one of the great clubs of old who have drifted away from the G.A.A., and I think of no greater tribute the members of to-day could pay to the memory of men who built the Temperance Society and the G.A.A., than the resolve to again field hurling and football teams in the coming year's competitions.

a draw. Michael Joyce captained the St. Michael's team.

The re-play took place in the Island Field, and resulted in a victory for Shamrocks, which led to their being challenged by Kincora, a North Tipperary combination. The challenge was accepted, and the match played at Ballina, before a tremendous gathering of excited spectators. The result was a win for Kincora, and the reception given the Limerick team created a lasting impression.

RETURN MATCH.

The return match was played at Rosbrien, in March, 1884, when Kincora repeated the victory. The multitude that followed the teams from the city to the field, marching in their club colours, and headed by the Boherbuoy Brass and Reed Band—champions of Ireland at the time—and a splendid fife and drum band from Tipperary, constituted a sight that never could be forgotten.

The match was very vigorously, but honourably, contested. Excitement ran to fever heat, and the enthusiasm created what may be called the hurling epidemic. The existing clubs could not provide places on their teams for prospec-

Captain; McNamara and O'Shea (Crecora).

The hurling rules were very peculiar in those early days and the different devices used to take the best advantage of them gradually led to the revision of the rules. When, for instance, the ball crossed any part of the "over" line, all the defending team had to get behind that line until the "puck out" was struck, when the ball, if struck out in the ordinary way, was wholly at the mercy of the opposition.

SOME DEVICES

To combat the difficulty here, Jack Malone, who had a powerful puck, used drive the ball as high as possible, that his men may be out by the time it reached the ground.

The goalkeeper of St. Michael's team, whom the Liberties met and defeated in the final for that tournament, adopted another device for dealing with the "puck out," and it was this—he'd strike the ball a short distance so that his own men would be on it before the opposition got in. This succeeded for a while until John Ryan, the full-forward of the Liberties, saw an opportunity of displaying his marvellous speed, and rushing in from the regulation distance he almost swept the ball off the goalkeeper's hurley, banging in the first goal of



St. Michael's Football Club, 1887:— Back row—Wm. Troudsell, E. O'Connor, R. Gleeson, W. Gleeson, A. Kearney, P. Trehy, Ml. Joyce, J. Duggan, P. Stapleton, T. O'Donnell, T. Prendergast, N. Kickham, M. Danaher, P. Barrett, J. O'Reilly. Front row—E. Kearney, M. Tuite, J. O'Connor, D. Duggan, E. O'Dwyer (Captain), D. McNiece, J. Hennessy, W. O'Connor, J. Fitzgibbon.

WOULD BE VERY HAPPY OCCASION.

It would be a return for St. Michael's to an arena they graced in the past, and a very happy occasion for the G.A.A. to welcome back a unit which played such a noble part when the G.A.A. was far from the powerful organisation of to-day, and when it badly needed friends to propagate its ideals and preach its policy.

St. Michael's were a G.A.A. force when it was not popular to have anything to do with the "Gaelic thing," and for the part it played then the Association owes a debt it cannot repay.

We find mention of the St. Michael's Temperance Club as one of the very first clubs to be affiliated to the G.A.A. in Limerick. At that time they were already in existence for some period, so it could be said that they were actually founded before the G.A.A. itself, their efforts to revive Gaelic games being an important factor behind the move to establish an organisation to fulfil that purpose on a nation-wide basis.

HAD OVER FIFTY HURLERS.

At the time of their affiliation, the club boasted over fifty hurlers, amongst the most prominent of whom were Dick Gleeson, T.C., who afterwards filled the post of Treasurer of the Association; William Gleeson, later of Fedamore, who became Chairman of the County Board, and gave to hurling some renowned sons; Michael Joyce, who represented Limerick in Parliament; Thomas Prendergast, who filled the post or Sheriff with distinction for many years, and Dan McNiece, later the popular Secretary of the Limerick Harbour Board.

FIRST HURLING MATCH IN LIMERICK.

The first hurling match played in Limerick City was at Rosbrien, between St. Michael's and Shamrocks, with Tom Prendergast as referee. The Shamrocks Club was composed of members from the City and Liberties, and was captained by the very popular Tom Guina, one of the first, if not the first, to pioneer the pastime in Limerick City. This game was played late in the year 1882, about two years before the G.A.A. came into existence, and after a most exciting contest the match ended in

diverse competitors, with the result that some members broke away from their clubs and formed the nucleus of new ones, which were started all over the city and in some parts of the county. In May of that year the South Liberties formed their club, when Jack Malone, one of the most popular players of the Shamrocks, was made captain.

GENERAL GROWTH OF ACTIVITY.

There was a general growth of activity all over the country in 1884, towards the end of which a meeting was held in Thurles, at which the G.A.A. was founded. No sooner did the laws, rules and objects of the Association become known than vigorous opposition was encountered. All the anti-Irish elements united in trying to kill in its infancy the new movement. Archbishop Croke rallied to the aid of the G.A.A. in no uncertain fashion, and his famous letter, which became the charter of the G.A.A., gained for the Association the adherence of all that was good and national in the country.

Affiliations began in 1885, and tournaments were started in many places, as well as sports under the G.A.A. rules. Meanwhile, the famed Limerick Commercial were blazing a trail in football, and we find mention of St. Michael's as one of their hardest games in the early days.

FIRST BIG LOCAL HURLING TOURNAMENT.

St. Michael's competed in the first big hurling tournament played in the county, which took place at Brown's Field, Ballyneety. The other competing teams were South Liberties, Crecora and Shamrocks. Liberties were making their first appearance and surprised all by their splendid play, to defeat St. Michael's in the Final, and secure a valuable silver cup.

The far famed athlete—Big Ned O'Grady of Ballybricken, was referee, and outstanding players were: Jack Malone (capt.); Kirby, Woods, Ryan (of the Stream), Brien, Hayes, Rahilly (from the New Street), Johnny Leonard, and Coll, the runner, all of South Liberties; William Gleeson, Michael Joyce and Dick Gleeson, of St. Michael's; Jim Fitzgerald (Shamrocks) and Ned Dundon,

his afterwards brilliant career.

Next week, the first great county final and the surprise success of St. Michael's will be amongst the matters reviewed.

PART I

GREAT LIMERICK SPORTSMEN

No. 213-DAN DUGGAN Of St. Michael's

(CONTINUED)

(By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH)

ST. Michael's were one of the Limerick clubs to be represented at the second annual All-Ireland Congress of the G.A.A. held at Hayes's Hotel, Thurles, on Saturday, February 27th 1886.

The St. Michael's delegates were Michael Joyce and Dick Gleeson. Dan H. Ryan represented the Limerick Commercials. Mr. J. K. Bracken, of Kilmallock (father of Brendan Bracken, who held an important Ministry in Mr. Churchill's War Time British Government) one of the founders of the Association, and its then Vice-President, was also in attendance.

The Secretary, Mr. Michael Cusack, in his report to Congress, said the following clubs were affiliated from Limerick — St. Michael's Temperance Society, Commercials, Rathkeale, Castle-town Conyers, Shamrocks, Ballylanders and Bruff. Branches were subsequently formed in several other districts, and nineteen clubs flourished in Limerick City before the end of 1886. They were: St. Michael's, Shamrocks, South Liberties, St. Mary's, Treaty Stone, Carmen, Clan na Gael, St. John's, Wolfe Tones, League of the Cross, Sarsfields, Henry Grattan's, O'Connell's, Smith O'Brien's, Glencore, Lord Edward's, Slashers, St. Patrick's and Commercials. Sad to think that only four survive of that pioneer band.

ST. MICHAEL'S FIRST INTER-COUNTY GAME.

St. Michael's played their first inter-county game at Birdhill in March, 1886, losing to Nenagh after a hard fought struggle. Mr. E. Darcy, of Killaloe, refereed.

St. Michael's were again represented at a special meeting of the Association, held in Thurles on September 27th, 1886, and at which the President, Mr. Maurice Davin, said it was proposed to add a rule that persons playing under rugby or any other non-Gaelic rules cannot be admitted as members of any branch of the G.A.A. The same rule applied to hurling.

Mr. Michael Joyce (St. Michael's) took exception to the proposed rule, inasmuch as athletes were allowed to play other games, such as cricket, under English rules.

The President said that the Association made no rules for cricket, and as regards the games they catered for, they were determined, in accordance with the spirit which had prompted the starting of the Association, that the games should be played under old Irish rules.

The rule was then adopted.

THE FIRST LIMERICK CONVENTION.

The first Limerick Convention was held at the City Hall on Saturday, January 15th, 1887, Mr. Anthony Mackey, Castleconnell, presiding. Chairman appointed was Mr. Paddy O'Brien ("Twenty") of the Clan na Gael Club, with Mr. Michael Looney as secretary.

Championships were immediately organised, and the first senior hurling and senior football finals of Limerick County were decided at the Grocers Field on Sunday, July 17th, 1887, before the largest throng

of people that had yet marked the popular interest in the Gaelic pastimes.

The football game was played first, the contestants being St. Michael's and Commercials. The teams had met before, when the G.A.A. was but in its infancy, and the Commercials then scored a decided success. Since then Commercials had been the premier team in Munster, having preserved throughout an unbroken record in different matches with crack teams and others.

HOTLY CONTESTED GAME.

It was, consequently, something of a surprise when St. Michael's won by five points and one forfeit point to one forfeit point for their opponents. The game was hotly contested all the way, a right dour struggle, fought at a tremendous pace, with the wily Commercials representatives all the time battling strenuously and gamely against a side that countered every move with skill and precision, to score a great if unexpected success.

M. Tuite, E. O'Dwyer, P. Stapleton, T. Prendergast and M. Danagher were the stars of this fine St. Michael's side, the full teams reading:—

St. Michael's—R. Gleeson, W. Gleeson, A. Kearney, P. Trehy, M. Joyce, J. Duggan, P. Stapleton, T. O'Donnell, T. Prendergast, N. Kickham, M. Danaher, P. Barrett, E. Kearney, M. Tuite, J. O'Connor, D. Duggan, E. O'Dwyer (captain), D. McNeice, J. Hennessy, W. O'Connor, J. Fitzgibbon.

Commercials—F. Fitzgibbon, E. Nicholas, E. Casey, T. McMahon, Phil Keating, P. S. Reeves, J. Muiqueen, M. Slattery, P. Kelly, T. Kennedy, J. Hyland, R. Normoyle, D. Corbett (captain), W. Gunning, W. Cleary, R. Breen, T. McNamara, P. J. Corbett, Malachi O'Brien, Tom Keating, J. Kennedy.

AN OBJECTION.

Commercials subsequently objected to the constitution of the St. Michael's team, alleging that seven members of same had played rugby. Dan Duggan, and his brother Joe, were amongst those mentioned in the complaint, which was upheld, and a re-play ordered.

When I discussed the objection with Dan a few years ago, the old veteran still harboured a grievance concerning same.

He maintained that it was the work of followers of the beaten team, rather than of the players, and blamed the fact that these had lost a considerable sum of money arising out of the defeat of the strongly fancied Commercials twenty-one.

The match had aroused remarkable interest in the city and many were the side bets placed. The Commercials supporters were cocksure of victory and gave generous odds. They were, consequently, very sore when their men were defeated, and immediately looked for some way to save their money.

COULD HAVE OBJECTED BEFORE THE GAME.

Fire came into the old timer's eyes when he summed up the situation with the remark: "They knew

us all and could easily have objected before the game took place, and not wait until they were beaten. But, of course, they thought they had the beating of us, after their big run of victories over the leading teams of the South. They were all big, hefty men, whilst our lads were much lighter."

It was easy to understand Dan's chargin, when one realises that Commercials were then capable of defeating the best teams in the land, and proved it in the successful campaign which subsequently brought them the first All-Ireland senior football title played in the annals of the G.A.A. And Commercials won that initial Gaelic football Blue Riband with the exact same twenty-one as figured against St. Michael's in the drawn game.

THE RE-PLAY.

The re-play took place on a Friday evening in late July in St. Michael's Field at Corkanree. St. Michael's had to find substitutes for five of the seven men named in the objection and this materially affected their prospects.

The new combination had not the experience to stand up to the fine combination of the Commercials, and although they battled bravely and gave a fine account of themselves, the determined work of the "Drapers," and a storming finish turned the tables on the gallant St. Michael's.

Dan was a spectator at that match, and he holds that St. Michael's would have again emerged triumphant had they a man to mark the smallest player of the forty-two, Malachi O'Brien, who gave one of the greatest displays of a wonderful career. In fact, it was Dan's opinion that no player, before or since, outshone O'Brien in the brilliance of his football. He was the finest player he saw in his long lifetime.

Part 2

GREAT LIMERICK SPORTSMEN

No. 213—DAN DUGGAN Of St. Michael's

(CONTINUED)

(By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH)

THE successful organisation of the 1887 Championships, and the enthusiasm aroused by two well contested finals, rallied strong support to the G.A.A., with the result that by the end of the year the number of affiliated clubs in Limerick City and county had reached the splendid total of ninety.

Trouble, however, was also close to the horizon. The idea of founding a Gaelic Athletic Association was originally inspired by sources closely allied with the struggle for national independence.

The failure of the Insurrection of 1867, and the transportation of many of the Fenian leaders, left the road clear for other influences whose objects were to wean the youth from thoughts of separate nationhood as far as Ireland was concerned.

INFLUENCE OF THE I.R.B.

Thinking men, realising the impossibility of any action towards re-organisation of national thought on a political basis, decided that something would have to be done to save the youth for the nation, and the I.R.B. were quickly won over to the idea of establishing an organisation for the revival of Gaelic games and athletics as a first step towards the national resurgence that had then become an urgent necessity, if the nation was to be saved.

The I.R.B. could not openly sponsor the establishment of any organisation, but it was with their full approval and blessing that Michael Cusack first approached the venerable Bishop of Clonfert, Most Rev. Dr. Duggan, with the proposal for the establishment of a national athletic organisation.

The patriotic Bishop, who had faced a British judge and jury for his activities in the Land League struggle, was wholeheartedly behind the project and it was from his recommendation that the aid of Most Rev. Dr. Croke was sought and secured.

SPREAD LIKE A PRAIRIE FIRE.

The G.A.A. had a very small beginning. Only seven men attended the inaugural meeting, but powerful influences were at work behind the scenes and despite strong opposition from anti-national elements the new movement spread like a prairie fire throughout the country.

This popularity had its dangers, and it was soon apparent that different influences inside the Association were at work attempting to gain control of what, in a very short time, had grown to a most powerful organisation.

The third annual Congress of the G.A.A., held in the Courthouse, Thurles, on November 9th, 1887, was a very stormy affair, the most historic in the annals of the Association, and marked by incidents of unparalleled excitement.

There were many circumstances which invested the proceedings with unusual interest. The Executive had aroused a good deal of hostility owing to its vigorous action in suspending clubs and individuals who had refused to obey its rulings. These suspended members were naturally determined to overthrow the governing body at the first opportunity that presented itself; and were supported by strong articles which appeared in certain newspapers denouncing the administration.

EXPULSION OF R.I.C.

The expulsion of the Royal Irish Constabulary, though the body was then very unpopular with masses of people, was regarded by some weaklings as introducing the political element into what was claimed to be a purely athletic organisation; and the "non-politicians"—those who were too meanly shoneen to identify themselves with a purely national movement and all too cowardly to

openly oppose it—did all in their power to bring about the overthrow of the Executive.

The fact that men who made no secret of their desire to wipe out "the British name and nation" in Ireland, were identified with the Association gave the organisation a complexion which made many timorous people uneasy and aroused the hostility of a large number of clergymen. In addition, the Gaels of Tipperary, then the strongest Gaelic county in Ireland, had grievances of their own against the Executive.

It may be stated that there never was a governing body against whom was arrayed so many influences, and, on the other hand, it must be admitted that no governing body ever had behind it more loyal and enthusiastic supporters. The strong nationalist views of the Executive, their vigorous action in crushing insubordination, and their earnest efforts to maintain discipline, appealed to thousands of Gaels in all parts of the country, and accounted for the fact that they were able to withstand the attacks of the most powerful critics and the most insidious foes.

MISTAKES OF STRONG MEN.

Looking back now calmly on the work of the Executive, it must be admitted that the members of the governing body made some mistakes, but they were the mistakes of strong men with strong views, determined to make the Association what it is to-day—not only a powerful athletic body, but a great national organisation.

Over eight hundred clubs were represented at this unforgettable Congress, each by two delegates. When the proceedings commenced the Courthouse was densely packed. The whole place was seething with excitement, and there were all the elements of a lively meeting.

Mr. Maurice Davin, the outgoing President, was not in attendance, and the first big dispute of the Congress concerned the appointment of a chairman to the meeting.

Ald. Horgan (Cork) proposed P. N. Fitzgerald for the position, and was seconded by P. T. Hector.

Rev. J. Scanlan, C.C., Nenagh, put forward the name of Major Kelly, Moycarkey, who, it was immediately explained, was a suspended member of the Association.

HEATED WORDS.

The fight for the chair went on for over an hour, during the course of which many heated words were exchanged. At some periods things got very threatening, and the delegates swayed backwards and forwards in the seething excitement.

Eventually Father Scanlan, followed by over two hundred delegates, left the Courthouse and held a congress of their own.

At the Congress proper, and included in the members of the outgoing Executive, were three Limerickmen—Pat Hassett, Treasurer; Frank B. Dinneen, Handicapper, and Anthony Mackey. F. B. Dinneen was re-elected Handicapper, and A. Mackey succeeded P. Hassett as Treasurer. Edward Cahill, Kiltteely, and John Hurley, Ballysimon, took a prominent part in the discussions.

DR. CROKE TO THE RESCUE.

Following the dispute at the Congress a split in the Association seemed inevitable, but was avoided through the intervention of Most Rev. Dr. Croke, who, in consultation with Michael Davitt and Maurice Davin, secured agreement to the holding of another Congress in the following January, County Conventions to be held in all areas in the interval to regularise the selection of delegates for same, and for the appointment of new offices, etc.

The Limerick Gaels met on

December 30th, thirty-one clubs being represented. The divisions evident at Congress were also experienced at this gathering and some heated discussions took place.

When Paddy O'Brien ("Twenty"), a member of the Clan na Gael Club, and a man of advanced national views, was re-elected Chairman, by seventy-one votes to fifty-nine for Bob Coll of Maidstown Castle, a prominent athlete, who was a Justice of the Peace and later Chairman of the County Council; a number of delegates, led by Very Rev. Eugene Sheehy, P.P., left the meeting and held a second Convention, at which arrangements were made for running championships counter to the official ones.

RECONSTRUCTION PROPOSALS.

Meanwhile, the I.R.B. had the question of the split in the ranks under review, and instructions were issued that the Association must be preserved at all costs. With this object in view, the reconstruction proposals were supported and no obstacle placed in the way when a new executive was being appointed.

This Executive, at a meeting on April 30th, 1888, considered the position in Limerick, and decided that as both Boards had completed rival championships the winners under each body should play off for the County finals, the successful ones in this test to be recognised as representing the Board to act for inter-county purposes.

St. Michael's was one of the teams to qualify for this great test, details of which will be part of our story in next week's issue.

PART 3

No. 213—DAN DUGGAN Of St. Michael's

(CONTINUED)

(By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH)

I have explained how a split took place in the County Board through the difference of opinion between the majority section, who supported the properly elected Chairman, Paddy O'Brien ("Twenty"), and a break away group, led by Rev. Father Sheehy, which put the Limerick clubs into opposing camps.

In order to test supremacy for 1888 County honours it was ordered by the Central Council that both groups, under their respective leaders, try out their separate issues and the victors in each try conclusions.

This resulted in St. Michael's and Commercials being returned football winners—the former under Father Sheehy's Board, the latter owing allegiance to the O'Brien administration. Similarly, in hurling, the respective winners were Murroe and South Liberties.

As the reader may understand, the coming together again of such famous and well matched teams, under all the conflicting circumstances, created excitement bordering on sensation, and preparations for the fray were quickly intensified—men, women and children getting interested.

The first indication of the referee's determination to enforce his will was seen when, in no lady-like fashion, he forced the world's champion weight thrower, big Ned O'Grady, from a position which he had taken up.

THRILL FOLLOWED THRILL.

After that incident the ball was set in motion, when everybody forgot everything else except to watch its lightning speed amidst a furious onslaught. From the outset, thrill followed thrill, the ball frequently travelling from end to end of the pitch without touching the ground, and players flinging themselves against each other like battering rams, while the clashing of ash sounded like a battle charge.

The spectators were kept spellbound, and just as followers of the respective teams would be ready for an outburst, at what should appear an imminent score, back came the ball from the gallant defenders, to raise the frantic cheers of the other side. So went on the historic game, with grim determination and truly sporting behaviour.

The half-time whistle finding both teams as they started—no score—helped to create additional excite-

tense, a legacy of the first great county final meeting of the previous year's championship, when St. Michael's won on the field the initial county crown, but lost that verdict in the Council chamber.

The fact that Commercials subsequently went on to capture All-Ireland honours only added to the grief of the St. Michael's representatives, who were firmly convinced that, but for the unfortunate objection, they, not Commercials, would be wearing the Blue Riband.

A STORMING FINISH.

Bent on proving their contention, they went in determined fashion to Croom, where they met, however, a vastly improved Commercials twenty-one, who had gained immensely from the campaign for All-Ireland honours, and were now a compact and well knit combination, knowing each other's play to a nicety, and giving every indication of having profited in science, experience and confidence from their clashes with the cream of the Irish football world.

St. Michael's did amazingly well to hold them to almost level terms for threequarters of the hour, but in a storming finish the All-Ireland title-holders drew away, to win as they pleased in the final stages, 2-8 to 0-1—anti climax to a strenuously fought struggle that gave the crowd their monies worth, and left many a spectator without a voice for several days.

ST. MICHAEL'S HURLING CLUB, 1887



Back row: E. O'Connor, J. Clancy, T. McDonald, E. Kearney, P. O'Sullivan, R. Gleeson, William Gleeson, E. O'Dwyer, J. Collins, M. Danaher, E. O'Reilly.
Second row: J. O'Connor, M. Tuite, W. Troundsell, T. Fitzgibbon, Michael Joyce (afterwards M.P.), captain; T. Prendergast, J. Hennessy, P. Barrett, W. O'Connor.
Front row: J. McCarthy, P. Stapleton, M. Bourke, T. O'Donnell, J. Fitzgibbon.

ELABORATE PRECAUTIONS

The match was fixed for Croom, and elaborate precautions were taken to ensure that the games would be played in strict accordance with the rules, and the Central Council appointed John Cullinane of Bansa—who was a power in himself—to act as referee.

To the credit of Croom, it must be said that so perfect were the field arrangements and so well marshalled was the record gathering of people and, indeed, so completely was order maintained, that it was that day sowed the seed of popularity for that historic venue, where superb arrangements, good order, and fair play are so characteristic when important issues await decision.

Under a blazing mid-day sun (the date, May 15th, 1888) the hurling teams were first to line out on the well trimmed pitch. The Murroe lads, all wearing sparkling white shirts, looked as fine a picture of manhood as one could wish to see, while the South Liberties-wearing green and gold jerseys, although a much lighter team, did not take from the beauty of the picture which the dazzling sun left sparkling before the eager multitude.

SIX SPECIAL TRAINS FROM LIMERICK.

The dimensions of the crowd may be gauged by mentioning that six special trains arrived from Limerick. These were all a Commercials and Liberty following, as the others travelled by coaches.

Were it not for the capital device adopted by the orderlies on the field in directing the first five lines of spectators to lie, kneel or sit down, half the people could not see the play.

The parish priest of Donoghmore, Very Rev. T. Halpin, who accompanied the Liberties, and was mounted on horseback, paraded up and down the margin between players and spectators at one side of the field, whilst the Rev. Father Sheehy occupied a similiar position on foot at the other side.

ment. When the play was resumed it soon became evident that determination to achieve victory led to a keenness that called for the intervention of the referee, whose commanding influence obliged both sides to understand that they should play the game, and from that onward he had to watch the ball.

A SCENE BEYOND DESCRIPTION.

The play kept growing fast and furious, while anxiety on the part of the spectators kept increasing with the fast passing time. Only eight minutes play remained, and with the entire assemblage preparing themselves for the one apparent verdict—a draw, the fortunes of war smiled on the Liberties.

Johnny Connell got possession and like lightning passed to Con Sheehan, who with a marvellous shot from an acute angle scored the only flag of the game, a point, amidst a frantic outburst of cheering, and a scene which is beyond description.

When the excitement subsided play was resumed and Murroe, naturally, made superhuman efforts to score, but determination ruled supreme on the Liberties side also. Minute after minute passed, and when, at last, the referee's whistle not alone signalled time up, and victory for the Liberties, but was a signal for a scene of jubilation never to be forgotten.

THE FOOTBALL GAME.

The magnificence of the hurling whetted the appetite for the football game to follow, and the huge crowd awaited with impatience the spin of the leather.

Commercials had only a fortnight earlier won the first great All-Ireland senior football championship organised under G.A.A. rules, and were at the peak of their power and glory.

St. Michael's proved worthy foemen, and the game was a thriller—a vigorous battle of fast, robust football, contested with a considerable skill and a grim determination, evident on the set faces of every man of the forty-two.

Rivalry between the pair was in-

A SPECIAL LIMERICK CONVENTION.

The Central Council summoned a special Limerick Convention for June 11th, and sent their Treasurer, Mr. R. J. Frewen, to preside. Great interest centered in the gathering and well over two hundred club delegates were in attendance.

In a bitterly fought battle for the Chair, Paddy O'Brien ("Twenty") of the Clan na Gael Club, was elected by 123 votes to 86 for Rev. Fr. Dunworth. When the result was announced, Rev. E. Sheehy, P.P., and other priests, with their supporters, left the convention. A complaint regarding its constitution was subsequently made to the Central Council by Rev. Fr. O'Mahony, Killeedy, but the governing body upheld the legality of the election. Other officers appointed included D. H. Liddy as Secretary, and Frank B. Dineen as Handicapper.

PART 4

No. 213—Dan Duggan Of St. Michael's

(CONCLUDED)

(By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH)

THE two Limerick Boards were represented at the annual congress of the Association, held in Thurles on January 23rd, 1889, but Very Rev. E. Sheehy, P.P., and about thirty delegates left early in the proceedings and held a rival meeting, at which a motion (seconded by John Ryan, a Limerick delegate) was carried calling for the abolition of the Central Council owing to the expense of maintaining same—the work of the G.A.A. to be carried on, in accordance with the existing rules, by the various County Boards. At the Congress proper, Anthony Mackey, of Castleconnell, was elected Treasurer of the Central Council and P. B. Cleary of Caherconlish became Secretary. P. D. Grogan was elected as the Limerick representative on the Central Council.

The entries for the 1889 hurling and football county championships were very considerably reduced from the fine total of the two previous years. St. Michael's were narrowly beaten by St. John's in the Senior Football County Semi-Final. St. John's only appearance in a Limerick decider was a memorable one. Played at Derryknockane in September, 1889, with Paddy O'Brien, Chairman of the County Board, as referee, it was a splendid tussle for supremacy, spoiled by a dispute arising over a goal claimed by the Commercials and disputed by St. John's. The result was an unfinished match, the score standing at cessation of play: St. John's, 0-6; Commercials, 1-0 (disputed).

COMMERCIALS AWARDED THE TITLE.

The County Board ruled in favour of Commercials, who were awarded the title. St. John's challenged the Commercials to prove their title to the championship, and the teams agreed to meet again at Derryknockane, with Maurice Moynihan, Tralee, as referee. St. John's won on this occasion, the score in their favour being 7 points to 2, but Commercials remained official champions, as this latter match was not played under County Board auspices. St. John's subsequently figured against the Clare champions — Kildysert William O'Brien's — at Ennis, and were again victorious, this time by 4 points to two.

South Liberties won the Limerick Senior Hurling title that season, and were later defeated at Newport by the Tulla Emmets, Clare champions, in the Munster championship. The Clare lads subsequently reached the All Ireland Final, in which they lost to the Dublin Kickhams, 5-1 to 1-6. Playing with the Kickhams on the occasion was W. J. Spain, who scored three goals. He was a member of the Limerick Commercials team that won the first All Ireland Senior Football championship and became the first player to win dual All Ireland honours. Spain emigrated to America the following April where he established himself as a most enterprising and successful business man.

THINGS GAELIC THEN AT A LOW EBB.

The St. Michael's Club disbanded in 1890, in common with many other Limerick combinations and things Gaelic were at a very low ebb during this and the following year. The entry for the 1891 Co. championships were the smallest ever, and it did not take a lot of preliminaries to reach the Co. Finals, which were played at Loughmore, Mungret, on July 17, 1891. In senior hurling Treaty beat South Liberties, and in senior football, St. Patrick's were successful over Commercials. Treaty were assisted by seven members of the disbanded Saint Michael's Club, and Jack Connors, a former Liberties goalkeeper, was also included in their line-out. South Liberties were aided by several members of the former Mungret Club.

A couple of the Treaty players who had just won the hurling championship, including Dan McNeice (afterwards Secretary of the Limerick Harbour Board), turned out and won the football championship with St. Patrick's immediately afterwards.

Limerick teams failed to survive the opening round of the All-Ireland Inter-County Championships. In senior hurling Treaty met Ballyduff (Kerry) and won by a point, but Ballyduff objected on the grounds that time was up when the winning point was scored, and to the surprise of all the objection was upheld and a replay ordered which Ballyduff won. The Kerry men afterwards became champions of Munster and later of Ireland—the only All-Ireland hurling title ever won by the "Kingdom" Gaels. In football, St. Patrick's conceded a walk-over to Dungarvan (Waterford).

THE ANNUAL CONGRESS.

At the annual congress of the Association held at Thurles on January 13th, 1892, only six counties (which included Limerick) were represented. It was reported that the number of affiliated clubs had decreased from nearly one thousand in the early days of the Association to 220 in 1891. Political dissension was largely responsible for this regrettable position. At the Limerick Convention, held on February 3rd, J. Sheehy, Secretary, reported having written to seventy-nine clubs in the County asking them to support the County Board and prevent disunion. Only sixteen clubs had affiliated as against thirty the previous year.

No County Championships were organised in Limerick for 1892, and the County did not compete in the All-Ireland ties. Only three counties (Dublin, Cork and Kerry) sent delegates to the annual Congress that year, and

Limerick, not having ten affiliated clubs, lost its right to a representative.

St. Michael's was one of the first clubs to respond to the invitation sent out by the County Board, seeking the return of the olden clubs, and although short some of their former stalwarts they reached the County hurling final, played at Croom, on October 29th, 1893, and which proved a runaway victory for their opponents, Bruree, who won 8-1 to 0-1.

PLAYED UNDER CENTRAL COUNCIL AUSPICES.

The game was played under the auspices of the Central Council, owing to the absence of a County Board in Limerick, and F. B. Dinneen, Vice-President, was directly in charge. Very Rev. E. Sheehy, P.P., Bruree, and Rev. Fr. Carroll, C.C., Croom, were prominent amongst those attending. D. S. Lyons refereed, and the Croom Band was present and rendered a selection of national airs during the interval. The football championship lapsed this year owing to lack of entries.

The County Board was re-formed at a convention on November 11th, 1894, at which W. H. Trousdell was appointed treasurer and R. A. Gleeson, T.C., one of the re-organisation committee. Both were members of the St. Michael's Club.

By early 1895 most of the old clubs had responded to the re-organisation drive, and field activities were soon back to close on that of the early years. At the annual congress held in Thurles on April 7th, 1895, F. B. Dinneen was elected President of the Central Council and R. Gleeson, T.C., became the Limerick representative on that body.

The Limerick championships were in full swing by April 14th and St. Michael's hurlers beat Smith O'Briens and Nationals in successive weeks. In the semi-final, played on June 23rd, St. Michael's were leading South Liberties when the latter team left the field following a goal scored by St. Michael's, which Liberties disputed. St. Michael's were awarded the match.

The county decider took place at Corkanree on August 18th, in which St. Michael's beat Boher Nationals 2-3 to 0-1. It was a bad game, spoiled by frequent squabbles. The St. Michael's players were — J. Ryan, T. Hogan, W. O'Connor, R. A. Gleeson, J. O'Sullivan, T. McMahon, P. Kelly, J. O'Brien, J. O'Donoghue, J. Heath, P. Stapleton (captain), E. O'Dwyer, D. McKnight, J. O'Driscoll, D. McNeice, T. Real, J. Wallace.

LIMERICK HAD A DOUBLE SUCCESS.

Limerick had a double success in the inter-county championship games played at Mallow on November 30th. In hurling St. Michael's beat Kilmoyley (Kerry), 1-2 to 0-4, and Commercials footballers beat Ballymacelligott (Kerry), 5-6 to 1-1. The Limerick hurling representatives were — Thomas Reals (captain), E. O'Dwyer, M. McKnight, W. Sheehan, Denis Murphy, Thomas Murphy, J. O'Driscoll, C. O'Donoghue, W. O'Connor, J. Sullivan, J. Heath, T. Hogan, T. McMahon, J. Ryan, J. Lane, E. O'Connell, T. Markham.

The Munster finals took place at Kilmallock on February 23rd, where Tubberadora (Tipperary) overwhelmed the St. Michael's representatives, 7-8 to 0-2, and Arravale Rovers had a narrow win from Commercials, 0-5 to 0-3.

St. Michael's participated in the opening game for the splendid Murphy Hurling Cup, and on December 15th, 1895, at Croom, beat Ballyagran, 1-7 to 0-2. In the semi-final, played at Kilmurry some time later, St. Michael's beat Mungret, 2-9 to 2-4. Mungret objected, and the County Board ordered a replay, which, to the best of my knowledge, never took place as St. Michael's shortly afterwards went out of existence, never to return as a vital force in Limerick G.A.A. ranks.

REMAINED A KEEN FOLLOWER OF HURLING.

Dan Duggan continued for many years a keen follower of hurling and witnessed all the great games played by the grand Limerick

team under "Tyler" Mackey and was again an interested spectator when "Tyler's" son led Limerick to All Ireland success some twenty years ago.

His active participation in the games ended, however, with the passing of his beloved St. Michael's—the final spot of glory connected with this famed Club of early G.A.A. days being the appearance of two of its members—R. A. Gleeson and W. O'Dwyer, as players with the Munster hurling team which beat Leinster, 5-7 to 2-8, at Stamford Bridge, London, on Easter Monday, 1896, in the first of the Interprovincials.

Part 5