

## HON. WM. B. EGAN.

In writing the biography of the gentleman at the head of the following sketch, my duty, as biographer, will be diminished considerably, by copying a short sketch of him from the *Chicago Magazine*, published in May, 1857 :

“WILLIAM BRADSHAW EGAN was born on the banks of the beautiful Lake of Killarny, in the county of Kerry, Ireland. His family had been for some centuries among the landed proprietors of the county, and were of the same kindred as the O’Connells. The father of Dr. Egan had to depend upon his classical education for the support of his family; and this, it will be seen, was the subsequent fate of the Doctor himself. The reason of this was that the estates of the family had dwindled away, like those of many other Catholic families, during the existence and under the operation of the “penal laws” of Ireland.

The subject of our sketch is the youngest of nine brothers, all of whom received a sound, and indeed what might be called a brilliant education, and have distinguished themselves more or less in the various walks of life. Having finished his own classical education at home, William went to England at the age of fifteen, and commenced the study of surgery and medicine. Returning to Dublin in a few years, he attended there a course of medical lectures, and then embarked for America. He obtained, soon after his arrival in Quebec, a situation as teacher in one of the schools of that city, and subsequently he taught school in Montreal and New York, and finally in the grammar school of the University of Virginia. In the latter institution he also attended the lectures of two terms. On his return to New York, he received his diploma, and for a short time practiced there with Dr. McNeven. It was at this time that he married, his bride being the daughter of an old New York family.

In the fall of 1832, he was induced to go to Mississippi, where he engaged with success in the practice of his profession. But his own family, and he himself, were not exempted from the epidemics of the country, and sickness drove him once more to the North. The low stage of water in the Ohio river com-

elled him to take the Wabash route to New York. Those were not the days of railroads, and the progress of the little party was necessarily slow and tedious. On the way they met some of the officers of the United States army, buying horses for the Sauk war. These officers had been to Chicago, then called Fort Dearborn, and their descriptions of the situation of the place, and of the prairie country in the interior of Illinois, induced Dr. Egan to determine on that route, by way of Detroit, to New York. The journey through Indiana and Illinois, to Chicago, was tedious, and accompanied by all the usual incidents of life in the back woods. One night, the party, composed of seven persons, stopped at "Baker's," on the Kankakee river, (then as now, a beautiful stream,) in a log room, it could not be called a house, eight feet by sixteen. Another night was spent at "old Kercheval's," on Hickory creek, the house having been deserted for fear of the Indian's but a short time previously. Passing the houseless ford on the Des Plaines river, where Joliet now stands, and stopping at Lawton's, the Indian trader, the party came at last to the Widow Barry's, at Barry's Point. From this place to Chicago, a distance of eight miles, the prairie was covered with water from one to three feet deep, giving it the appearance of a vast lake.

Chicago, however, was safely reached, and Ingersol's Hotel, at "The Point," or "Wolf's Point," was made the aristocratic quarters of the Doctor and his young New York wife. Chicago, at that time, it must be remembered, was but a small settlement, a mere frontier town and military station. Robert Kinzie's store, on the Point, was resonant "from early morn till dewy eve," with Indian merriment. It was the resort of all who came to hear or tell the news. The accomplished Indian chief, Billy Caldwell, was generally to be found there, and it was the usual lounging place of Joseph La Fromboise, and the good-hearted "Old Robinson." This was the triumvirate that represented the Menomonees, the Winnebagoes, and the Pottawatomies. Mark Beaubien, in those days, to use his own irreverent expression, "kept tavern like h—l, and fiddled like the d—l." Old Ashbell Steel had ventured lakewards half way down Randolph street, to where the Briggs House now raises its princely front.

The officers of the Garrison were Major Wilcox, and afterwards Major Green, Doctor Maxwell, Captain Baxley, Captain Thompson, Lieutenant Jameson, and the gallant Lieutenant Kirby Smith, whose blood has since watered the plains of Mexico. These were all agreeable gentlemen, and they gave a high tone to the social condition of the little town.

It did not take Dr. Egan long to see the future importance which Chicago must attain, owing to her situation and relative position, and he determined to make it his home. He first purchased the present Tremont House corner, of Gen. Beaubien, and built thereon a row of five houses, which were called "Egan's Row." He has always taken a lively interest in the progress and prosperity of the city, and has been among the first to devise and carry through projects for the advancement of her commerce, the development of her resources, and the comfort and benefit of her citizens. He has been honored by the people of the city as their representative in the State Legislature, and has also been chosen Recorder of the City and County.

During the sessions of the Legislature of 1841 and 1842, Dr. Egan was instrumental in accomplishing the settlement of Canal claims between the State and the purchasers of Canal lots in Chicago. The settlement of these claims may be considered as the epoch from which the city of Chicago dates the origin of her unexampled prosperity. Previous to that, real estate in Chicago was apparently of but little more value than in any other Western village; but now commenced a new order of things. Capitalists at once brought their money here for investment. The population rapidly increased. Dwelling houses could not be built quickly enough to accommodate the steady stream of new comers, nor stores put up and filled with goods sufficient for their wants. Every subsequent year exhibited a steady increase in population, in enterprise, and in real substantial wealth. From that day, the progress of Chicago has been onward, until she now stands in the proud position of the third commercial city in the Union, with every prospect of being second only to New York. All honor to the men to whom she owes this brilliant destiny!

Dr. Egan has done much, both by precept and example, to-

wards beautifying and adorning the city. His beautiful gardens in the West Division, and his magnificent park, EGAN-DALE, five miles south of the Court House, on the lake shore, are evidences at once of his refined tastes and his enlarged public spirit. He is now enjoying in affluence the fruits of his past labor and enterprise; and he is one of those true benefactors of the human race, who will leave the earth more beautiful than he found it.

In person, Dr. Egan is large and rather corpulent, but extremely active in his habits. In his disposition and temperament, he is genial, pleasant, and the very life of a social party. Possessing a warm heart, and a generous nature, he has made, in the course of an active and eventful life, troops of friends, and it may be, some enemies; as what public man has not? Years hence, when the history of Chicago shall be written, (as it will be written,) the public services of Dr. Egan will be appreciated and properly acknowledged. If the material we have here suggested shall be of any avail to the future historian, the purpose of this sketch will have been answered."

*Extract from "Illustrations of King James' Irish Army List," by John D'Alton, Esq., Barrister, Dublin.*

**CAPT. DANIEL EGAN—**

The sept of MacEgan, was territorially seised of extensive estates in Lower Ormond, County Tipperary, as well as of Clan-Dearmida, a district of the Barony of Leitrim, County of Galway, within which latter locality they had in old time some castles. They were celebrated Brehons of Connaught, as also of Munster. Accordingly, John MacEgan is chronicled as the Brehon of the O'Conor, slain at the battle of Athenry, in 1316; and the four Masters commemorate at 1378, the death of Teigue MacEgan, chief Brehon of North Connaught, "a man of learning, free from pride and arrogance, who kept a house of general hospitality." The death of Bryan MacEgan, chief Brehon of Brefney, in 1390; and, in 1399, they relate the death of Boothgalach MacEgan, of Ormond, "a man learned in the laws and in music, and eminent for hospitality." Also of Giolba-na-neer, son of Conor MacEgan, chief Professor of Laws, with many subsequent obits, similarly recording their learning and hospitality.



At the close of the 16th century, Owen MacEgan was despatched, by the Earl of Desmond from Cork to Spain, to seek aid for the meditated "rising." He was afterwards instituted Roman Catholic Bishop of Rosse by the Pope, and actively cooperated with Desmond, until, in January, 1602, he was killed on the occasion of a skirmish with the Queen's troops. In 1611, Cosmogh Mac Egan, and three other townlands in Tipperary to the Crown, to facilitate a re-grant of the same. In 1628, an inquisition *post mortem* was held to ascertain the lands and possessions of Carberry MacEgan in Tipperary.

The attainders of 1642, name Owen and John Mac Egan, of Aghmogh, in Cork, while the Declaration of Royal Thanks, in the Act of Settlement, includes Owen-oge MacEgan of that County, Adjutant. In 1679, Carberry, Daniel and Constantine Egan, passed patent for upwards of 100 acres in Clare. The first had in the following year a grant of 58 acres in Galway, as had in 1682, Flan Egan, his son and heir, of 173 acres in the same county, and James Egan of 187 more. Besides this officer, four others of the name appear on the present Army List, viz : in Lord Dongan's Dragoons, in Sir Neill O'Neills, and in Lord Galway's Infantry respectively.

The name of Captain Daniel does not occur on the outlawries of 1691; but at the Court of Chichester House, Daniel Egan, a minor, claimed by his guardian an Estate tail in County of Kildare, lands as forfeited by Thomas Egan; Margaret Egan claimed a small jointure thereof; and Elizabeth, Mary and Anne Egan, their daughters, claimed also by their guardians portions of one hundred pounds each thereout; but all these petitions were dismissed, and Thomas's estate in that county, was, in 1703, sold by the Commissioners of Forfeitures to William Hewetson of Clough, in the same county, discharged of all said liabilities.

A John Egan forfeited, in the confiscations of this time, lands in the County of Tipperary, of which Pierce Nugent, in the right of his wife, Mary, who had been theretofore wife of Daniel Egan (the above Captain Daniel, slain in the war,) claimed her jointure.

The son of Captain Daniel Egan was Boetious, who inherited the joint estates of Constantine and Daniel Egan, and who was

the father of Constantine, whose son was Daniel, whose son, Thomas, lost the estates because he would not give up the religion of his fathers. His son was James Constantine, the father of Wm. B. Egan.

The subject of this sketch left four children to mourn his death. All are respectably married, and in easy circumstances. The eldest, Emiline, is married to Henry H. Shufeldt, a respectable and wealthy distiller of Chicago; William C. Egan is married to Eva L. Rockwell, daughter of John S. Rockwell, one of the early pioneers of Milwaukee, and the founder of the handsome, growing town of Oconomowoc, in this State; Samuel Eugene Egan is married to Miss Marie Kreigh, daughter of David Kreigh, a wealthy packer of Chicago, Ill.; and Sarah Ann Egan is married to Henry F. Temple, of Chicago.

Dr. Wm. B. Egan died October 28th, 1860. He had four brothers, two of whom were Roman Catholic Priests, who remained in Ireland, and with whom the biographer was slightly acquainted. One of the brothers, Bartholomew Egan, is President of the Mount Vernon University at Lebanon, Louisiana. This gentleman shares largely in the literary talent of that gifted family, long distinguished for classical literature and public speaking; and the fourth brother, Charles B. Egan, is a leading practising Physician at Blue Island, Chicago, Ill. A sister of Dr. Wm. B. Egan's was married to Mr. Thomas Mahony, son of Doctor Mahony of Abbeyfale, County of Limerick, Ireland. Mr. Mahoney was an eminent classical teacher in the town of Killarny.\* He was well versed in English literature, and was remarkable for his agility, being an over match, in that respect, for any other student in the Tralee Academy, which was long

\* Mr. Mahony and I were school mates in a classical school, kept by Mr. Humphry Donovan, in Tralee, the chief town of the County of Kerry, Ireland. This school was exclusively classical, nothing being taught in it but Greek and Latin. Not even a single question in common arithmetic was taught in it during my time. Many of the students then in that celebrated academy attained to great eminence in after life. Mr. Jefert became Chief Justice in the East Indies. Among my associates in this school was Doctor Thomas Joy, a cousin of mine, who edited some of the classical books, read in schools, when Professor in the College of Columbia, New York. Dr. Quill, who cuts such a figure in the work of Charles O'Mally, was a pupil in the Tralee School in my time, and so were many men who become eminent at the Irish bar. It may not appear out of place to mention in this connection, that I accepted of the Professorship of Mathematics in the College of Columbia, in 1818, which, however, I soon declined to fill, having received a better appointment. I heard that the professorship was afterwards filled by Doctor Adrian, a Irish gentleman of high attainments. It is unnecessary to say that I received no scientific knowledge in the Tralee School.

celebrated for sending the best prepared classical scholars to Trinity College, Dublin. Mr. Mahoney died rather young.

The subject of this sketch was no ordinary man. He possessed great natural talent, was an eloquent public speaker, a pleasant companion, being the life and soul of every company in which he mingled. He was a man of good business capacity, and was remarkable for his untiring and high spirit of enterprise. He was always ready and willing to oblige and serve a friend, and as to his unbounded hospitality and general social qualities, he had few equals.

His death caused a blank in Chicago society, which was not easily filled up.

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### EXTRACT FROM THE HISTORY OF MY TIME.

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The following extract contains so many incidents, portraying the true national character of different classes in Ireland, that I feel disposed to give the most characteristic a place here. I beg, however, to observe, that I should like to omit many parts containing allusions to myself, which may seem to bear the appearance of egotism, but being mixed up with those incidents myself, nothing could be omitted without weakening, and in some cases, destroying the whole effect.

These observations apply to all the extracts taken from the history of my time. Part of that work is only admissable, by reason of my claim to a biography among Wisconsin men. It may be necessary for me to state that everything which appears in the extracts, complimentary to myself, comes from others, and nothing is claimed by me but truth in recording their opinions of me; and that claim I could not forfeit for any consideration. At all events, let others think what they please of the matter, I would rather hear a thousand give me a good name, than one to say that I was a rogue, a swindler, a liar, or a smart man in the common acceptation of the last epithet. When Jerry Stack Murphy,\* the eldest son of Jerry Murphy of

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\* Jerry Stack Murphy had been High Sheriff of the city of Cork, and was left a good fortune by his father, consisting of an estate, clear of all incumbrance, and the mercantile business in Cork, besides Hyde Park, which his mother was to occupy during her life time. But how uncertain are the things of this world. His father died after the marriage of Jerry to Miss O'Donahoe, and the first account I got of him was that he became a bankrupt. Some few