

THE FIRE AT CLOONCAH

News reached Athenry on Friday morning of what appears to have been a serious agrarian outrage at Clooncah, which has figured so largely in the superior courts of late, with regard to Lord Ashtown's offer for purchase of the house and lands.

Clooncah is situated about 10 miles from Athenry, and consists of a large mansion and grazing lands, with a few agricultural tenants with small holdings.

In the house a number of police and a sergeant have been stationed for over two years, for the purpose of protecting a caretaker named Laffey, who looks after the place.

Early on Thursday morning the constable on guard was aroused by the smell of fire, and soon discovered that the house was on fire in the upper portion. No time was lost by the officer in arousing his comrades. By this time the fire had gained great headway, and the best efforts of the men under Sergeant M'Gowan were directed towards saving the belongings of the police, and also the ammunition and arms.

Laffey, the caretaker, who also occupied portion of the house, was at this time lying fast asleep with some members of his family. The efforts of the police were at once directed towards saving them, and not a moment too soon, as the top ceiling came down with a crash after the family had left the room, and the fire spread rapidly and fiercely.

Laffey and his wife and family made an attempt to save some of the family relics, estate books, old silver, etc., and would have perished in their attempt had it not been for the timely intervention of the police, who saw the danger they were in.

Some valuable furniture on the lower floors of the house was saved, but a good deal of old plate and some family relics, which were greatly prized, were lost.

There was no stopping the spread of the flames, and at four o'clock it was evident that the entire mansion was doomed.

The house was a stately building of four storeys, occupying a picturesque position, and was, in its day, about one of the handsomest structures in that part of the county.

The fire had enveloped the entire building about seven o'clock, and the various floors began to fall in.

During the progress of the flames loud explosions were heard from time to time, from which the spectators drew the conclusion that the entire of the ammunition had not been removed in the panic which occurred.

The latest accounts go to show that the entire building is in ruins, and many curious conjectures are afloat as to the origin of the fire.

It seems remarkable, at all events, that the premises, which were practically and for all purposes a police barrack, should have been maliciously or accidentally set on fire.