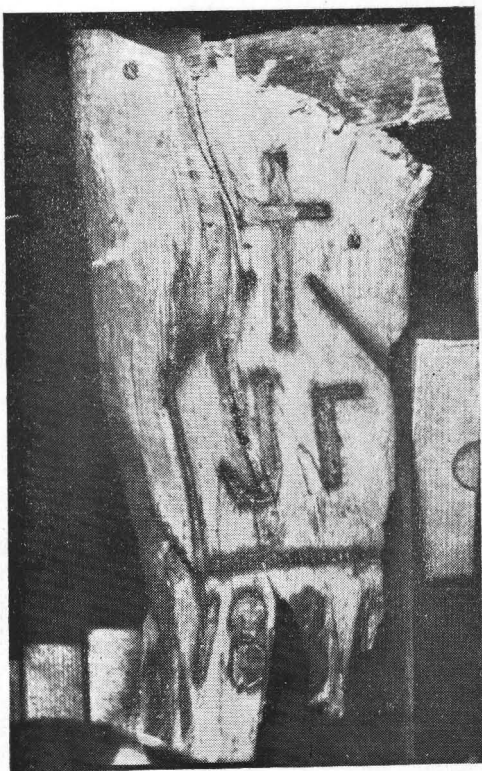


## A CURIOUS FIND.

(Note supplied by Professor J. Bayley Butler, M.B.E., M.A., M.B.,  
B.Ch., B.A.O., M.R.I.A.)

In 1945 when I was treating Enniscorthy Mental Hospital for dry rot, the then Resident Medical Superintendent, Dr. M. B. O'Higgins, was kind enough to give me an interesting specimen of a block cut from a Beech tree for fire-wood. By a curious accident the axe used for splitting the wood happened to split a cleavage plane on which an inscription had been cut. This consisted of a diagram of, apparently, a Church showing the gable-end of the roof. Above this was a cross and within the drawing were the letters "J.F." Underneath the figure, the date 1881 was clearly legible. The strange part of the incident was that the outer portion of the stem which had been separated by the split, showed identical marking in reverse, or mirror image. It was clear that this inscription had been made on the date in question and whether it had been cut through the bark and burned, or whether some black tarring material had been used for marking the letters I have not been able to find out. Part of the original markings are distinctly visible, persisting on the *external surface of the bark*, but they are not as clear as the original inscription. There were 39 annual rings between the site of the inscription and the bark, so that the tree would appear to have been felled in or about 1920.



The photograph sent herewith illustrates the inner side of the log. I have both specimens in my Museum and would be glad to show them to anyone interested, or to have any explanation as to how the inscription persisted in the bark.

J. BAYLEY BUTLER.

81, Ranelagh Road,

Dublin.

1st May, 1956.