

St Mary's not in the same

ALL previous indicators came to pass at Lansdowne Road on Saturday: Terenure are quite simply a better side than their neighbours, who have never been the same force since Paul Dean's retirement. Terenure ought to have secured promotion from Division Two of the All-Ireland League (and nobody knows that better than themselves) while two good home wins enabled St Mary's to preserve their tenuous first division status, but the discrepancy won't last much longer if this is anything to go by.

TERENURE15

ST MARY'S3

Gerry Thornley

For Terenure's part, much will depend on whether their number eight Mark Egan opts for employment in Dublin or London next season, though they survived comfortably without him being at his best on Saturday. A more influential figure is their New Zealand scrum-half Kevin Putt, who is rumoured to be receiving an offer he can't refuse, ie both captain and coach next season.

In the interim, consolation for

their bitter league disappointment could well come in the form of a Leinster Senior Cup crown though they really will have to start playing to their potential one of these days. Opposed by a witless St Mary's, Terenure adopted a minimalist approach, doing just enough to win by two clear scores in a poor match which maintained the trend of a decidedly sub-standard Leinster Cup campaign and that despite persistently excellent use of the advantage law by Owen Doyle.

One of the jewels in their performance was Brendan Clarke. A genuine open side flanker, his patrolling of the St Mary's back-line and speed to the breakdown

again emphasised the folly of not playing him against Old Wesley in their decisive league tie last January. His fellow flanker John O'Brien gave a typically storming, inspirational display as did hooker Tom D'Arcy.

St Mary's missed their inspirational flanker Noel McCarthy, who failed a late fitness test, but still their pack performed more than credibly, edging the rucks and mauls by 20-16 and the lineouts 17-16, while both sides had 11 put-ins. Given all of this it was appropriate in these days of The Great Out-half Debate (post-Smith) that the most telling difference between the sides was at half-back.

The St Mary's out-half Dermot

class as Terenure

Quigley had an undistinguished match, as did all of his back-line teammates with the exception of promising full-back Aiden White. Good possession was frequently wasted and amidst bountiful opportunities they only mounted one decent, straight move throughout the match. Vincent Cunningham has emerged as one of the main pretenders to Smith's throne but St Mary's have used five out-halves this season and in their estimation he is closer to fifth than first choice.

By contrast Terenure out-half Paul Hennebery is a born natural with fans and detractors liberally sprinkled about the place; there is little middle ground. Unceremoniously discarded by the

Leinster selectors when Smith declared for the province two seasons ago, his form has steadily declined but Hennebery has been rejuvenated since the turn of the year by the presence of Putt. His place-kicking, line-kicking, defence covering and link play have rarely been better throughout an enigmatic career.

There remains also the instinctive out-half play. With Terenure deservedly leading through his fine first-half penalty into the wind Hennebery received Putt's pass from a scrum on the St Mary's '22, 16 minutes into the second period; Hennebery shaped to pass inside, which was the intended move, and everybody bought it so Hennebery

straightened up to sprint through the ensuing gap, eluded a tackle and rounded the posts.

Hennebery converted and in response to a Quigley penalty Terenure went for the kill with Paul Haycock scoring an intercept try under the posts 10 minutes from time for Hennebery to tap over another conversion. Twelve points accurately reflected Terenure's superiority on the day

TERENURE — C Clarke, M Costello, R Browne, C Younger, M Costello, P Hennebery, K Putt, N O'Donoghue, T D'Arcy, P Bruce, L O'Dea, W Twomey (capt), J O'Brien, B Clarke, M Egan.

ST MARY'S — A White, A Gillen, V Cunningham, R Hernan (capt), A McEvoy, D Quigley, N O'Brien, C O'Brien, N O'Kelly, D Dowling, K Potts, S Jameson, P Kenny, K Egan, D Fanning.

Referee: O. Doyle (Leinster)

Double:
The Cork team were awarded two penalties in the closing stages of the match. Kiernan missed the first one and with only seconds left a Clarke move was disrupted. That was to be Dolphin's last chance and Shannon now go into yet another final against Old Limerick rivals, Young Munster.

YOUNG DOLPHIN — O O'Mahony, A McGonnell, J Clarke, M Kiernan, E Treacy, T Taylor, D Kelly-Walker, L Lannon, T Kingston, J Mulcahy, T Keogh (capt), S Kilgrew, S Holden, E Walsh, P Crowley. Subs — J Waterman for Holden (78 mins).

SHANNON — D Sheehan, B O'Shea, N O'Shea, P Murray (capt), P Browne, J Galvin, O Kiely, P McLoughlin, N Glynn, M Fitzgerald, P O'Grady, M Moylett, K Maher, M Galwey, M Fitzgibbon.

Referee: M Wallace (Munster).

Ireland finish

strongly