

LIMERICK AND ITS VICINITY.

LIMERICK is a city and county of itself, the see of a bishop, and a considerable commercial port, 120 miles s.w. from Dublin, 84 n.w. from Waterford, 64 n. from Cork, the like distance n.e. from Tralee, 53 e. from Kilmish, and 75 e. from Dunmore Head, an extreme apex of Clare county, protruding into the Atlantic Ocean. This ancient city, eligibly and delightfully situated on the eastern bank of the noble Shannon, is supposed to have been founded by Yuorua, in the year 155, while, by some writers, it is said to have been the Regia of Ptolemy. It was called *Rosse-de-Nailleagh* in the Annals of Multifernan; and is believed to have been the place described under the name of *Lumneach*, as forming the western extremity of the southern half of the island, as divided A.M. 2870 and 3970, which name is supposed to have been modified to its present designation. Saint Patrick is said to have visited it about the middle of the fifth century; but the first authentic records of Limerick notice it as a Danish settlement; by that people it was first plundered in 812. The Danes of Limerick did not embrace Christianity until the 11th century, and in the following one they elected their first bishop. Before this period, however, it was a place of commerce, and was much frequented by foreign merchants. The English took possession of Limerick in the year 1174; and, as a proof of the early importance of the city, in the year 1197, and in the ninth year of the reign of King Richard, he granted a charter to the citizens to elect a mayor, which honour was not obtained by the citizens of London till ten years after that period; nor had Dublin and Cork a mayor till the 13th century. The city was originally walled, and deemed the strongest fortress in this kingdom, having the advantage of not being commanded by adjacent heights, and it has sustained some memorable sieges. In the year 1690 King William brought his forces against it, but withdrew them without accomplishing its reduction; in the following year it was again invested by General Ginckle, who, after an obstinate resistance, compelled the garrison to surrender, on honourable terms of capitulation. During the siege the Irish fought gallantly, and repulsed the English several times; but the garrison was grown weary of the war, and on the 23d of September, 1691, an amicable intercourse was opened between the two contending parties. In 1703 an act was passed excluding Roman Catholic strangers from residing in the city, and requiring from the permanent inhabitants of that persuasion sureties for their allegiance under pain of expulsion; but in the year 1724 these illiberal and arbitrary restrictions were removed. In 1760 Limerick was declared to be no longer a fortress, and the dismantling of its walls and other defences was then commenced and proceeded with, as the extension of the various improvements rendered the removal of old buildings necessary. On the breaking out of the American war, the loyalty of this city and district was manifested by the alacrity with which the volunteer corps were embodied under the names of the 'Limerick Union,' the 'Loyal Limerick Volunteers,' and the 'Limerick Volunteers.' After the termination of the contest with America, the improvements in, and extension of the city, were renewed with energy, unretarded by the occasional alarms of insurrection, which distracted some of the neighbouring districts. In 1803 a design was formed, by those engaged in Emmett's conspiracy, to take the city by surprise, and with so much secrecy was the plan conducted, that it was unknown to the military commandant until the evening preceding the day of intended attack, when the proper measures were taken to frustrate the design. The most correct idea of this city, as to its scale when enclosed with walls and fortifications, may be formed by a comparison of its then contracted state with its present extent, population, and magnificence, as no town in the kingdom has so much increased in size and splendour, in the same period, as the city of Limerick, and its improvement is still progressive. This city is now composed of three parts, named the Irish Town, English Town (the latter situated on an island formed by the river Shannon), and Newtown-Pery, which latter may with propriety be termed the court end, as in this quarter of the town the streets are spacious, uniform, and elegant, intersecting each other at right angles,

and the houses are finished in the neatest style of modern architecture. This portion of the city was erected by the exertions of the late Lord Pery, whose name it bears, and it is the fashionable as well as favourite residence of the opulent.

The public structures, for the most part, are handsome and commodious, and some elegant and ornamental. The Custom House is a fine building of hewn stone; its front is embellished with fluted pilasters and capitals, and on each side is a piazza. The Court House is also a spacious noble building, with a handsome portico in front. The Commercial Buildings, situated in Rutland-street, are large and elegant. The Chamber of Commerce, in George-street, is an elegant and convenient edifice, in which are the news-rooms, library, offices, &c. of the body so called. This institution comprises in its members the principal merchants of the city; was formed in the year 1808, and incorporated, by royal charter, in 1815, 'for the promotion and protection of the trade of Limerick.' The corporation consists of president, vice-president, and members. The Exchange, which was erected in the year 1778, is a spacious handsome building, in which is a fine council chamber, the entire supported by seven stone columns of the Tuscan order. The County Gaol is generally considered to be one of the most complete prisons in Ireland. It consists of a large centre, containing the governor's apartments, a dispensary, a chapel, a committee-room, and five detached prisons, each communicating with the chapel on the second floor, by ornamental cast-iron bridges; belonging to each compartment of the prison are two fine airy yards, the whole of which are overlooked from the centre building. The County Infirmary, facing the gaol, is a spacious and convenient structure; so is the County Hospital, on the Cork new road. Barrington's Hospital, at St. George's quay, is a highly ornamental building, and cost £4,000. It was founded by Sir Joseph Barrington and his sons in 1829, for the relief of the poor of their native city; was opened for patients in 1831, and is the only general hospital in the city. The Wellesley Bridge, called after the late Marquess of Wellesley, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, was commenced in 1821, and opened to the public, by the Marquess of Normanby, in his lord lieutenantancy in August, 1835, when his excellency was the first person who passed over it on horseback: it consists of five large arches, and of a swivel drawbridge at the south side; it is a very handsome stone structure, and cost about £80,000. There are barracks for cavalry, artillery, and infantry, all commodious and in airy situations. The city is the head quarters of the Limerick military district and of the constabulary force. A list of the several public buildings and institutions, religious, charitable, &c. of Limerick, with their officials, is appended to the directory of the city at page 278.

The TRADE and COMMERCE of Limerick are very extensive. Vessels of eight hundred tons can lie within four miles of the city, and those of three hundred tons can discharge their cargoes at the quays. The imports are very large and various, consisting principally of timber, coal, salt, sugar, tallow, tobacco, soap, iron, sulphur, pitch, tar, hemp, teas, wines, dye-stuffs, &c. The number of vessels inwards, with cargoes, in the year ending December 31st, 1844, was 508, and their registered tonnage 66,616 tons. Imports estimated at 53,000 tons annually, and £350,000. value. The gross produce of the customs duties, in 1843, was £155,335. The exports in the year ending 1st Sept. 1844, were—

	Cwts.	Tierces	Firkins.	Barrels.	Packs.
Beef .....	....	11	....	52	....
Pork .....	....	5,084	....	8,968	....
Butter .....	....	....	58,193	....	....
Bacon	48,718	....	....	....	....
Lard	9,768	....	....	....	....
Hams	11,889	....	....	....	....
Wheat .....	....	....	....	135,007	....
Oats .....	....	....	....	507,893	....
Barley .....	....	....	....	11,090	....
Beans .....	....	....	....	1,411	....
Rapeseed .....	....	....	....	1,574	....
Flour	45,130	....	....	....	....
Oatmeal	20,980	....	....	....	....
Feathers .....	....	....	....	....	1,500

Directory.

LIMERICK, &c.

Munster.

The number of vessels with cargoes was four hundred and sixty-one. Annual estimated value of exports £800,000. About a mile distant from the city, the vessels anchor in the Pool, from which is a most delightful view, very deservedly admired by strangers. On one side is seen the new town, with the Bishop's and the Earl of Limerick's gardens close to the river, and on the other a number of villas belonging to the wealthy citizens, and a full front view of the city, the whole forming an interesting panoramic picture. The mayor is admiral of the port, with jurisdiction from the sea to three miles above the city. The domestic trade of Limerick, carried on by the shopkeepers, is extensive—the shops are handsome, and their stocks comprise articles of fashion, necessity, and luxury. The linen and woollen manufacture has almost disappeared, but has been succeeded, within the last twelve years, by the lace manufacture, which has become famous throughout the United Kingdom for its beauty and elegance, and in which a vast number of the young female population is employed. Limerick has also been famous for its beautiful gloves for nearly a century; and it has lately established an extensive manufacture in brushes, which are sent in large quantities to the English market. The Bank of Ireland, the Provincial Bank of Ireland, and the National Bank, have each a branch here, and there are numerous assurance agencies. The hotels, of which there are many, are of the first grade. Two newspapers are published weekly—the 'Limerick Chronicle' and the 'Limerick Reporter'; they are talented journals, and, as such, are well supported by their respective subscribers.

The early municipal consequence of Limerick has already been noticed—its corporation existed both by prescription and charter. The city received privileges, franchises, and charters, from the early date of 1199, when John, Earl of Morton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, granted it various rights and 'free customs' down to the reign of James II. The provisions in the charter conferred by that monarch remained in force until the act of the 4th of George IV, called the 'Limerick Regulation Act,' partially remodelled the powers of the corporation. The corporate body—styled the 'mayor, sheriffs, and citizens of Limerick,' consists of ten aldermen and thirty councillors, elected from out of the five wards into which the city is divided, under the provisions of the late act. The corporation holds a court of pleas of debt to any amount, and a court of conscience for adjudicating claims under 40s. The assizes for the county, and county of the city, are held twice a year by the judges for the Munster circuit and the mayor; the court of quarter sessions is held before the mayor, recorder, and other justices, and petty sessions twice a week, before the mayor and some of the civic magistrates. The assistant barrister for the county sits twice a year for the trial of civil bill cases. The city returned two members to the Irish Parliament, and so it continues to be represented in the Imperial Parliament—the gentlemen at present sitting are John O'Brien, of Carnely, Clare, Esquire, and James Kelly, of Errina House, Castle Connell, Esquire. The members for the county are given at page 149. The 'Limerick Bridge Com-

missioners' have the controul and regulation of the harbour, and have much improved the port by extension of the quays, &c.; but the great desideratum of docks for the shipping is not as yet supplied. The commissioners are entitled by their act of incorporation to levy tolls on all shipping frequenting the port, likewise on all imports and exports, and they realize a revenue, from these and other sources, of more than £4,500. per annum.

The See of Limerick was united to that of Ardfer and Aghadoe, or rather, the latter was added to the former in the year 1660. The churches in Limerick are not remarkable for external beauty. Saint Mary's, or the Cathedral, is entirely of the ancient Gothic, and may be admired for its noble simplicity, but is distinguished by a tower, one hundred and twenty feet high. There are seventeen arches in the aisles and choir, besides the great eastern window, under which the high altar was placed before the Reformation. The bishop's throne, and the stalls of the dignitaries, exhibit some curious carved work, and at the communion table is a handsome Gothic screen. Besides this there are five other Protestant churches, four Roman Catholic chapels, three friaries, and a nunnery. One of these, called the Dominican Convent and Chapel, is deserving of notice: it is a very handsome building, in the Gothic style, and was erected by the exertions of the Rev. Joseph Harrigan, then prior, in the year 1815. The Augustinian chapel, George-street, once a theatre, is very elegantly embellished, and a fine scriptural painting adorns the altar; it is also furnished with a good organ. The charitable institutions in Limerick are numerous and extremely well conducted, particularly in the medical and surgical departments. The Infirmary, Fever and Lock Hospitals; the Magdalene and Lunatic Asylums; the House of Industry, and Foundling Hospital, are prominent features of benevolence. The 'Limerick Institution,' founded in 1809, for promoting and sustaining literature and science, is supported entirely by voluntary subscriptions. The library contains four thousand volumes, embracing classical and scientific literature, and the various reviews and other periodicals. Connected with the institution is a museum, and there are spacious reading rooms, furnished with the principal journals. Lectures are delivered by professors of eminence and celebrity, to which the admission is gratuitous. This city also abounds in institutions for the instruction of the poor, which will all be found particularized in the list of 'Academies and Schools,' page 271. The markets, which are held on Wednesday and Saturday, are abundantly supplied with all the necessaries of life, and at remarkably reasonable prices. Fairs Tuesday in Easter week, July 4th, August 4th, and December 12th. There is a privilege annexed to the August fair—namely, that no person can be arrested within the precincts of the liberties, on any process issuing out of the tholsel court of Limerick, for the space of fifteen days. The population of the several parishes, collectively within and without the precincts of the city, by the parliamentary returns for 1841, was 57,755, of which number 48,391 were inhabitants within the limits of the city.

POST OFFICE, RUTLAND STREET, LIMERICK.

PATRICK MACNAMARA, Esq. Post Master.

The Mail from DUBLIN arrives every morning at thirty-three minutes past eight, bringing the ENGLISH and FOREIGN letters, and is despatched thereto every afternoon at four, taking letters for the following places, viz.:—CASTLECONNELL, NEWPORT, KILLALOE, NENAGH, MONEYGALL, ROSCREA, BURROS-IN-OSSORY, MONTRATH, MARYBOROUGH, EMS, KILDARE, NEWBRIDGE, NAAS and RATHCOOLE.

The CORK Mail arrives every afternoon at half-past three, and is despatched every morning at nine, taking letters also for BRUFF, KILMALLOCK, CHARLEVILLE, BUTTEVANT and MALLOW.—The WATERFORD Mail arrives every morning at half-past five, and is despatched thereto every night at eight, taking letters also for TIPPERARY, CAHER, CORK, CLOMEL, CARRICK-ON-SUIR and PILLTOWN.

The GALWAY Mail arrives every afternoon at half-past three, and is despatched thereto every morning at twelve minutes before nine, taking also letters for BUNRATTY, SIX-MILE BRIDGE, NEWMARKET, ENNIS, GORT, ARDRAHAN and ORANMORE.—The Mail from CLOMEL arrives every afternoon at ten minutes before three, and is despatched thereto every morning at ten, taking also letters for CAHERCONIST, PALLAS, TIPPERARY and CAHER.

The TRALEE Mail arrives every afternoon at twenty-five minutes past three, and is despatched every morning at ten minutes past nine, taking also letters for PATRICK'S WELL, CROOM, BALLINGARRY, ADARE, RATHKEALE and NEWCASTLE.—The LISTOWEL Mail arrives every afternoon at ten minutes past three, and is despatched thereto every morning at ten minutes past nine, taking also letters for CLARINA, PALLASKERRY, ASKEATON, FOYNES, STRANAGOLDEN, LOUGHILL and TARBERT.—The TULLA Mail arrives every afternoon at half-past three, and is despatched every morning at ten minutes past nine, taking letters also for BRADFORD.

The Office is open from half-past five in the morning till eight in the evening.