

## CHAPTER L.

NEW AND OLD BRIDGES OF LIMERICK.—WELLESLEY BRIDGE.—ATHLUNKARD BRIDGE—PARK BRIDGE—BALL'S BRIDGE—THOMOND BRIDGE.—NEW AND MATHEW BRIDGE.—PROJECTED RAILROADS.—WATERWORKS.—BARRINGTON'S HOSPITAL.—STATISTICS OF TRAVELLING, &c. &c.

WITH the growth of the New Town and the augmentation of trade and commerce, the necessity arose for new bridges to span the Shannon, and docks to protect the shipping frequenting the port. In 1759, a grant was made of £3,500 to the Ball's Bridge Commissioners for enlarging the quay, building a bridge to Mardyke, and clearing the river of rocks from the quay to the pool. In 1765, a further grant of £2,500 to the Ball's Bridge Commissioners was made for continuing the new quays; but the requirements of the port and harbour at the period at which we have arrived were larger and more imperative in this respect; and accordingly, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the Wellesley Bridge Act was passed in 1823; in 1825, the Athlunkard Bridge Act was passed. In the same year, an act was passed for supplying the city and suburbs of Limerick with water. In 1826, an act was passed to make a railroad from the city of Limerick to Carrick-on-Suir, in the county of Tipperary—the first project of this kind in the South of Ireland. In 1830, Barrington's Hospital Act was passed; and in the same year was passed an act for rebuilding Ball's Bridge. It was a time of enterprise and action, and several of the projects, though numerous and of great magnitude, were carried out to successful completion, not only with speed, but with skill and science which could not be surpassed, if equalled, in any other city in the British Empire. The preamble of the act for the erection of the Wellesley Bridge—one of the noblest structures in the kingdom—set out the fact of the wealth and importance of the city of Limerick, the extension of its commerce, and the likelihood of the increase of that commerce—the want of a direct communication or passage from the west side of the Liberties, and from the counties of Clare and Galway, except by the one very old and narrow bridge—Thomond Bridge<sup>1</sup>—which was “inconveniently remote from the new and trading parts of the city”—the necessity of a canal for the passage of ships and boats above and below the projected bridge—the want of a floating dock for shipping of a sharp form, or copper-bottomed, commonly used in the trade of the Atlantic, which could not now be safely brought to the quays of the city. The act appointed the following commissioners for erecting the bridge, &c.:—viz., the Right Hon. Wm. Vesey Fitzgerald, Sir Edward O'Brien, Bart.; the Hon. Richard Fitzgibbon, Thomas Spring Rice, Bolton Waller, Thomas Fitzgibbon, the elder; Joseph Massey Harvey, Richard Bourke, George Gough the younger; John Kelly, Edward Croker, William Gabbett, Thomas Roche, William Roche, John Vereker, John Mark, William Monsell, the younger, Thomas Gibbon Fitzgibbon, John Brown, John MacNamara, John

<sup>1</sup> The Old Thomond Bridge stood exactly on the site of the present one. It was inconveniently narrow, and there was no flagway for foot passengers. It was provided with small chambers or recesses over each of the piers, that people stood in when two vehicles were passing each other, and by their means accidents were prevented.

Hartigan, Daniel Leahy, Joseph Gabbett, William Howley, Ralph Westropp, Richard Kenny, Robert O'Callaghan Newenham, Michael Furnell, John Perrott, Edward Villiers, John Connell, Robert Maunsell, the elder; Martin Creagh, James Fisher, John Staunton, John Green, John Norris Russell, Michael Ryan, Daniel Gabbett, Martin Arthur, Michael Gavin, William White, John Stephenson, Reuben Harvey, Stephen Dickson, Daniel Barrington, and Robert Keane Charles, and their successors. The place selected was from Brunswick-street across the river to the North Strand. Extensive powers were granted to the Commissioners, and among other powers given them, was one by which they were enabled to borrow a sum of one hundred thousand pounds for the purposes in question, on the credit of the tolls, rates and duties to be levied. No one applied himself more zealously to the successful realization of this project than Mr. Thomas Spring Rice, M.P. Several objections had been raised to the advance of money for the proposed Bridge; but on the 6th of February, 1824, Mr. Rice addressed a letter to the President of the Chamber of Commerce, announcing that the Marquis of Wellesley, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, had approved of the report of the Commissioners, recommending a grant of £60,000 for the intended Bridge and Docks at Limerick; and expressing his assurance that no further doubts or difficulties could arise, nor could any new obstacles be interposed to defeat a measure which would be found no less important to the unemployed tradesmen and labourers of Limerick, than to the commercial interests of the city and the adjacent counties. It was thought, in fact, that the tolls would considerably exceed the estimate of the Commissioners, and bring in a revenue of over £5,000 a year. Mr. Rice anticipated a reduction in the tolls in consequence of the revenue, and eventually the opening of a free port. In these anticipations he and the public have been completely deceived. The revenue from the tolls never arrived at anything whatever even remotely approaching to the estimate. Year after year the tolls have been decreasing, until in 1865 they are rented at £400 per annum to the eminent firm of Messrs. John Norris Russell and Sons, who have rented them for several years for about the same sum. The laying the foundation stone of this bridge on the 25th of October, 1824, was attended with all possible ceremony and eclat. The plans were drawn by Mr. Alexander Nimmo, the eminent engineer, on the plan exactly of the beautiful Pont Neuilly over the Seine above Paris, and they were carried out with faultless precision by Messrs. Clements and Son, the contractors. The bridge has five river arches, with a swivel bridge and two quay arches. The Earl of Clare laid the foundation stone, in the absence of the Marquis of Wellesley. The entire garrison were under arms on the North Strand, where the stone was laid—the artillery firing, &c. On a stone in the middle of the western parapet of the bridge is the following inscription:—

THIS BRIDGE WAS ERECTED A.D. 1831,  
 UNDER AN ACT OF THE IV. OF GEORGE IV.,  
 INTRODUCED INTO PARLIAMENT BY THE  
 RIGHT HONORABLE THOMAS S. RICE, M.P.  
 FOR THE CITY OF LIMERICK.

This Bridge is a noble ornament to Limerick ; and if it has not realised the expectations of its projectors, it must be admitted to be a structure beautifully planned and executed.

The Bridge took eleven years to build, and the Commissioners spent no less a sum than £89,061 in its completion. It was opened by the Earl of Mulgrave, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, on the 5th of August, 1835. A sum of £30,000 would have sufficed for an excellent suitable bridge.

During the years that were occupied in building the bridge, the promised dock lay in abeyance, and the commercial community were compelled to pay exorbitant dues for an unfinished bridge, which inconveniently interfered with the traffic of the port. They viewed the proceedings of the Commissioners with dissatisfaction, more particularly as the bridge and the port were different undertakings ; the bridge to benefit the landed interest, while the port was for trade and commerce.

A memorial, signed by the principal merchants and others, was presented to the commissioners in 1833 in which complaint was further made of the dangerous condition of the harbour, caused by the bridge encroachments, and of the misapprobation of the revenues of the port, which ought solely to have been applied to the construction of the promised docks.

In the year 1834<sup>1</sup> a new act was procured, under which a sum of £45,000 was raised by loan from government, and was expended upon an engineering project, which was subsequently abandoned as impracticable. This project had for its end the construction of a dam across the river, and the conversion of the stream into a large floating dock. Engineers, however, of eminence reported that such a dock would occasionally lay a great part of the city under water. The advantage derived by the city from the £45,000 thus expended was the construction of a noble line of quays. In 1847, a third act was procured ; and an additional sum of £54,000 was advanced, which was expended in the construction of the existing dock, which was opened, as we have stated in the first chapter of this work, in 1853. The dock covers a space of eight acres, and was constructed by John Long, Esq, C.E. The dock is capable of accommodating eighty sea-going vessels, large and small, and is entered by dock gates seventy feet wide. The depth is from twenty to twenty-five feet. The total cost was £54,000, a moderate expenditure on a work of such extent and depth.

When the original act of 1824 was procured, the estimate was that the income of the port would be £1,025, and of the bridge about £6,000 a year. The income from the bridge is almost nothing, but that from the port has risen from £1100 in 1825 to over £9,900 in 1856.

The Board of Public Works which has had possession of the bridge tolls and harbour dues, has kept one general account of their receipts without

<sup>1</sup> Under the powers of this Act the ancient office of Water Bailiff, with a revenue of about £1100 a year was abolished. The Water Bailiff was appointed by the Corporation, and collected his own charges off the vessels, and of which he rendered no account. His badge of office was a silver oar. He enforced all magisterial and judicial warrants against the shipping and seamen frequenting the port. £5000 was awarded him by way of compensation.

discriminating between the sources from which they were derived. On 31st December, 1862, the following is their statement of the account :—

Date of Loan.	Principal.	Principal Repaid.	Principal now Due.	Interest.	Interest Repaid.	Interest now Due.	Total remaining Due.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1824.							
25th May,.....	55,384	...	55,534	71,816	71,816	...	55,384
1832.							
24th October,...	25,000	5,723	19,278	24,709	23,937	772	20,050
1837.							
31st May,.....	40,000	...	40,000	40,482	27,062	13,420	53,420
1839.							
21st August,...	5,000	...	5,000	5,722	2,344	3,378	8,378
1848.							
23rd June,.....	54,000	...	4,000	31,214	181	31,033	85,033

By the last account rendered it would appear that the commissioners then owed the government the sum of £222,265, and this amount has not been lessened.

The merchants of Limerick have been for sometime energetically engaged, and with every prospect of success, in demanding a readjustment of this account. It was never the intention of the government or the merchants to prejudice the port at the expense of the bridge—the only thing to be said is, that the advances for the bridge had been made on an estimate that has proved completely illusory. In 1864, a movement begun by the Harbour Board and Chamber of Commerce, and which has been sustained by the representatives of the city and by the municipal corporation, was set on foot for the purpose of pressing on government the absolute necessity of readjusting the accounts. A few years previously a proposition was laid before the Corporation to make the bridge debt a liability on the rates of the city, the amount due to be in the first instance diminished very considerably by the Lords of the Treasury. The Corporation rejected the proposition by a considerable majority.

On the 26th of April, 1824, labourers were employed in opening the street from the end of Park Bridge, to communicate in a line from thence, and cross Mary-street to Quay-laue. The labourers could work only in the Abbey, (then part of the county of Limerick by charter) as the houses in Mary-street which were to be taken down had not been at the time presented for by the City Grand Jury. Ultimately the presentments were made, and Athlunkard-street was formed. James Kennedy, Esq., a banker, about twelve years before, projected a bridge from Corbally across the Shannon to Allan Court, cleared a passage through a pit at great expense, and laid a solid abutment. The project, however, was not carried through, though it had obtained general concurrence. It was at the conclusion of the session of Parliament this year that St. Francis's Abbey, theretofore in the county, by charter of James I., March 3rd, 1609, was attached to the city, and placed under the control of the city magistrates. Mr. Nimmo, the engineer, gave his opinion that a chain bridge could be thrown across the river at Allan Court for a sum not exceeding £2,000, but the idea of a chain bridge was abandoned.

The Bill for the erection of a bridge across the Shannon at Athlunkard, to make a direct communication or passage from the northern parts of the counties of Clare and Galway, into Limerick, thus became law in 1825. Before

this period there had been no means of communication between the northern and eastern parts of these counties and the city of Limerick; and Park Bridge,<sup>1</sup> a plain structure of three arches, which crosses the Abbey river a short distance above the Abbey slip, and leads to the beautifully improved suburban townland of Corbally, the greater portion of which was purchased by the late Alderman Pierce Shannon, in 1833, for £22,000, from Colonel William Thomas Monsell,<sup>2</sup> of Tervoe—led only to Corbally, where the

<sup>1</sup> Park is a townland within the municipal boundary of Limerick. Park House is the residence of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick. The inhabitants of Park are among the most thrifty and industrious in any part of Ireland. They pay from £8 to £10 an acre for their patches of land, the largest holders not renting more than from three to four acres. They cultivate vegetables, with which they supply the citizens; they rear cattle and pigs, and grow potatoes and turnips to feed their cattle and pigs, and for their own use also. They manure the land very highly, and being within the Borough they are subject to high rates and taxes. There has been much emigration from Park in recent years, of young men and young women especially. The names generally of the residents are Cunneen, or O'Cunneen, one of the most ancient names in the South of Ireland, tradition having it that it was with a chieftain of that name Saint Patrick dwelt when he visited Singland, which forms part of the parish of St. Patrick in which Park is situated; Hannan, or Hanneen, Quilligan, Clancy, and MacNamara, or by abbreviation Mac, of which there are a great number in Park. The MacNamaras are said to have settled in Park since they were driven from Clare in the wars of the seventeenth century. It was through the old road of Park that King William is said to have passed to the Shannon in 1690, when he made his inspection of the river, in order to obtain a knowledge of the passage of it, which was effected so successfully the year afterwards by Ginkle. The site of the *Ḥāṭ Ḥūṭee*, or the King's gate, which divided Park from Corbally, and from which William passed, is yet pointed out, within a short distance of the river. There are several very handsome residences at Corbally, including the beautiful one of Pierce Shannon, Esq., grandson of Alderman Pierce Shannon. The ancient cemetery of Killeen, is situated in the "Killeen field," at Corbally. It has ceased for many years to be a burying place. Recently fragments of cannon balls and human bones have been found in this field.

<sup>2</sup> Monsell of Tervoe. The name of Monsel or Moncel occurs in some of the earliest MSS. documents connected with the city and diocese of Limerick: "Dominus Robertus Moncel" is the name of one whose signature appears to a lease of certain Church lands set forth in the Liber Niger, or Black Book of Limerick in the thirteenth century. Sir Bernard Burke, however, states that the Trevoe branch of the family settled in Ireland early in the reign of Charles I. Monsell and Maunsell is the same name—and in a detailed pedigree of the Maunsell family\* which is in existence, a branch of the arms of that family are given in the pedigree, and they are the same as those borne by the Monsells of Tervoe. changes of spelling have frequently taken place in Ireland from the pronunciation of English names by the Irish tongue. The name had been evidently known in Limerick, as appears above, many ages before the period stated for the settlement of the family in Ireland, by the great authority on Irish Genealogy; † but the first mention of the Monsells in more recent ages in the neighbourhood of Limerick occurs in a history of the Siege of Ballyally Castle, near Ennis, in 1641, against the O'Grady's, to which Siege we have referred in our note on the O'Grady family, ‡ the Seneschal being William Monsell. Thomas the son of Samuel Monsell of Tervoe, married first the daughter of William Burgh, of the ancient Dromkeen family—by whom he had a son who d. unm.—He married secondly in 1751, Dymphna, sister of Edmund Viscount Pery, and speaker of the Irish House of Commons—and by her was

\* The Maunsell family has been also one of high respectability in Limerick. Richard Maunsell, Esq., represented the City of Limerick in Parliament in 1741, and died in 1770—he was grandson of Colonel Thomas Maunsell, who so gallantly defended the Castle of Maccollop, in the County of Waterford against Cromwell's forces in 1650, as mentioned in the inscription on his tombstone in the Churchyard there. This family is descended from William Maunsell, the third and youngest son of the celebrated John Maunsell, Chief Justice and Chancellor of England, Provost of Beverley, &c., temp. Henry III. Walter Maunsell held, while he lived, the Capital Serjeancy of the County of Limerick, temp. Edward II. Thomas Maunsell of Chicheley, (England), son of Thomas Maunsell who died A.D. 1582, was ancestor of all the Maccollop family and of different other branches of the family who now reside in Ireland as well as of the Maunsells of Thorpe-Malsor, in the County of Northampton. Thomas was born 17th April, 1577, and early entered the Navy, in which he distinguished himself against the Spanish Armada, he retired from active service in 1609, for in the summer of that year he received an order from the Privy Council to the Lord Deputy to all Governors, Captains &c., to furnish him with every protection and assistance in selecting a place in which to reside. The following is a copy of the order; the

† Sir Bernard Burke's, Landed Gentry of Ireland.

‡ See pp. 59-60.

|| Ferrar in his History of Limerick erroneously states that it was Colonel Richard Maunsell.

Shannon divided it from Athlunkard, in the county of Clare. Park Bridge was built about the year 1798.<sup>1</sup> The building of Athlunkard Bridge, which

father of Colonel William Thomas Monsell of Tervoe who sat in the Irish Parliament, born in 1755, who married in 1776, Hannab, daughter of Amos Strettle, Esq., and by her had, with four daughters, Dympha, married to Thomas Ellis, Esq. M.P. for Dublin; Hannab, married to Thomas Wilson, Esq., Diana, died unmarried, and Frances, married to Sir Hunt Walsh, Bart., William, his heir, Amos died unmarried, Thomas in holy orders and Archdeacon of Derry, married Jane Rae, and had a daughter Diana, and three sons, John, married to Miss Anne Waller of Castletown; William; and Charles Henry, married to the Hon. Harriet O'Brien, sister of Lord Inchiquin; William Monsell, Esq., of Tervoe, born in 1778, married in 1810, Olivia, eldest daughter of Sir John Allen Johnson Walsh, Bart., and died in 1822, leaving an only son, the present Right Hon. William Monsell of Tervoe, a member of the Privy Council, Colonel of the County of Limerick Regiment of Militia—Vice-Lieutenant and Member of Parliament for the County of Limerick, High Sheriff in 1835—Late Clerk of the Ordnance, when he reorganised the war department in conjunction with Lord Panmure, and President of the Board of Health, born 21st September, 1812, married 11th August, 1836, Lady Anna Maria Charlotte Wyndham Quin, only daughter 2nd Earl of Dunraven, and by her (who died 7th January, 1855), had issue a son and heir, William, born in March, 1841, died 1845. Mr. Monsell married secondly, 1857, Berthe, youngest daughter of the Count de Montigny, younger brother of the Marquis de Montigny, and has a son born 5th March, 1848, and daughter Margt. Tervoe desmesne contains about 500 acres, and adjoins the famous Castle of Carrigounnell, which is also on the estate of Mr. Monsell, is about three miles from Limerick, and is beautifully situated on the river Shannon below the city, from which there is a fine view of its picturesque woods, and of the excellent family mansion, of one of the most estimable of gentlemen, who in every relation of life, public and private, has won and retains the very best affections of every class and party.

original was destroyed when Joseph Maunsell's house was burned down, who resided in the County of Galway :—

*Copy of Document given to Captain Thomas Maunsell, R.N.*

“ARTHUR CHICHESTER,

BY THE LORD DEPUTIE.

Wee greete you well, whereas this gent. Captains Thomas Maunsell, is come into this Kingdome wth. entent to take a viewe and enforme himselfe of the ports and most convenient places for him to settle in, and especially in the Province of Ulster and some ptes. of Connaught, to wch. ende he brought unto us leres. of recomendatons in his behalfe from the lls. of his Matie. most honorable Privie Councell wch. wee received this day signetings his Matie. and thaire pleasures in that behalfe. These are, therefore, to wille and require you and every of you his Maties. officers, mynisters, to take notice hereof and not only to suffer and p'mitt the said Captaine above named, wth. his servants peaceable and quietlie to pass by you to and fro as he shall have occasion to veowe, searche, and enquire as aforesaid; but also to bee aydinge, comportsyng, and assistinge unto him wth. post horses and guydes from place to place in his travell, and if neede require to give him the best knowledgs and furtherance you may in you owne mons for effectinge his desire according to his Matie. and the lls. pleasure unto us signified as aforesaid whereof you and every of you may not fayle as you will answer the contrary at your p'rls., given at Melefant, this 28th of July, 1609.

To all Governours, Captaines, Maiors, Sherifes, Justices of Peace, Headborowes, Constables, and to all other his Mats. officers and lovinge subjects to whome it shall or may app'aine.

GEO. SEXTEN.

He settled in the County of Cork, at Derrivillane. John, a fourth son of his a Captain in the Life Guards and settled first in Ireland, was ancestor to the Maunsells of Ballybrood and Thorpe-Malsor. Mrs. Alphra Maunsell, the mother of a numerous family, having resided for some time in England, returned to Ireland and resided with her son John at Ballyvorheen, near Caherconlish, where she died prior to 1662. She was buried in the Church of Caherconlish where the following memorial was erected to her by her son :—

Here lyeth the Bodye of ALPHRA MAUNSELL,  
My dear Mother, daughter of Sir William Cragford of Kent;  
Here also lyeth my dear Wife, MARY MAUNSELL,  
Daughter of George Booth, Esq., of Cheshire;  
And of my sister ALPHRA PEACOCK; and of her  
Daughter ANNE PEACOCK.

Erected by me JOHN MAUNSELL, ESQ., and  
Intended for myself and rest of my family  
This 12th October, 1662.

The Maunsells fought throughout for the Royalist cause in the person of Charles I. and on the restoration obtained grants of land in the counties and liberties of Limerick, Galway, and City and County of Waterford. Thomas Maunsell of Annaghrostin, County Limerick, was one of the Commissioners of the Peace for Limerick, and appointed May 10th, 1683. He died

is of five arches, was commenced in June, 1826, and finished in December, 1830 at a cost of £7000. It has a toll gate at the city side, but the income from the tolls, which are set up each year to auction produces in the year 1865 about £200, a sum not at all equal to discharge the interest on the money advanced for the structure. There never was a toll on Park Bridge.<sup>1</sup> On a stone on the west side of the bridge is this inscription :—

THIS BRIDGE  
 WAS DESIGNED AND BUILT  
 BY  
 JAMES AND GEO. RICHD. PAINE,  
 ARCHITECTS.

Commenced,  
 June, 1826. Finished,  
 Decr. 1830.

In the year 1830 an Act of Parliament (11 Geo. IV., c. 126) was passed for rebuilding Ball's Bridge,<sup>2</sup> than which there have been few, if any, more ancient bridges in Ireland. This bridge, for which there had been three or four proposals, was given to Messrs. Paine to build at a cost of £600. It has one arch of 70 feet span, with a rise of 15 feet. It bears the following inscription on one of the parapets :—

THIS BRIDGE WAS ERECTED BY VIRTUE OF AN  
 ACT OF THE XI. OF GEO. IV.  
 THE RT. HON. THOMAS SPRING RICE, M.P.  
 FOR THE CITY OF LIMERICK.

COMMENCED TAKING DOWN THE OLD BRIDGE, NOVEMBER, 1830.  
 THE NEW BRIDGE FINISHED, NOVEMBER, 1831.

JAS. AND G. PAINE, ARCHITECTS.

unmarried and was the first of his family who was buried in St. John's Church in the City of Limerick, where the family vault has continued. He served the office of Sheriff of the County Limerick in 1697.

Richard Maunsell, Esq., who was M.P. for Limerick from 1740 to 1761, represented the family after the death of his brother, Joseph, of Cahir, Co. Galway. Richard Maunsell left several sons; his eldest son, Thomas, was senior King's Counsel, was M.P. for Kilmallock, and he left three sons, Thomas Maunsell, Esq., of Plassy, who was M.P. for Edwardstown, Co. Kilkenny, for 16 years; and Robert Maunsell, Esq. of Bank Place, whose two sons, living in 1865, Henry Maunsell, Esq., J.P., and Lieut.-General Frederick Maunsell, represent the families in both county and city of Limerick. The late Archdeacon Maunsell of Limerick is represented by Lieutenant-Colonel William Maunsell, East Kent Militia, of Northamptonshire family, where his brother, Colonel Thomas Maunsell, represented Northamptonshire for several years, and retired in consequence of old age.

<sup>1</sup> A curious clause in all the old leases of the Corbally tenants states that they shall have an abatement of £2 per acre in the rental of their lands should Park Bridge at any time go out of repair. The rents were raised when the Bridge was erected, and the landlord was obliged to keep the Bridge in repair, &c. The rental of Corbally in 1865 is £6 : 16 : 6 an acre. Since the passing of the Athlunkard Bridge Act, Park Bridge has been one of the approaches to Athlunkard Bridge, and has ceased to be a private bridge, and the roadway over it is maintained by the Athlunkard Bridge Commissioners.

<sup>2</sup> The locality of Ball's Bridge was celebrated in old times for a hard fought conflict between the O'Briens and John de Burgo, commonly called John of Galway; and less than a century ago was a fashionable promenade.

There is no bridge the origin of which, as far as I am aware, so little is known as of Ball's Bridge—even the name itself of the bridge is uncertain; in Irish it is called *Órpeibh meál* *límenebh*, viz. "the Bald Bridge of Limerick." In White's MSS. it is written, the Bald Bridge, (*bald* meaning without parapets, which it probably was), and in White's MSS it is written in

On a stone tablet on the other parapet of the bridge, is the following inscription :—

THE ANCIENT BRIDGE OF FOUR ARCHES  
WHICH OCCUPIED THIS SITE, WAS TAKEN DOWN,  
AND THIS BRIDGE ERECTED AT THE EXPENSE OF  
THE NEW LIMERICK NAVIGATION COMPANY,  
INCORPORATED 1830.

CHAS. WYE WILLIAMS, ESQ., CHIEF DIRECTOR.  
JAS. AND G. R. PAINE, ARCHITECTS.

Old Ball's Bridge was a structure of four arches, the land ones having sprung from the Quay walls. Where the abutments of the present arch stand was formerly part of the water course. During the time that Limerick was a fortress within the limit of the town wall, (it then having consisted of the English and Irish towns only) the inconvenience of the limit of ground to build on was much experienced. To meet this difficulty in part, the Earl of Shannon to whom the bridge belonged permitted the building of two ranges of houses on it, which so contracted the roadway that it was almost impassable. After the Siege and surrender of the City to King William's troops, the houses on the east side were purchased and taken down by Act of Parliament, which was a great improvement. The range on the west side, which were a good class of shops in their day, remained until the bridge was removed in 1830. The New Bridge, now Mathew Bridge crosses the Abbey river also.<sup>1</sup>

One of the great wants which the New Town continued to suffer from was that of a sufficient supply of water for domestic use, &c. Though in the immediate proximity of a superabundance of the vivifying stream, there was no means hitherto of bringing it to the houses of the citizens. Mr. R. Leadbetter, an engineer made an estimate for supplying the desideratum by means of subterranean pipes. The estimate was lodged in the office of the Clerk of the Peace on the 9th of January, in 1825, and it amounted to the sum of

Latin Pons Calvus. It is also written Baal's Bridge. It was known in the fourteenth century, and is quartered, as already stated, on the Galway arms, in reference to the battle that was fought on it in 1361, in which John of Galway was the victor. It is mentioned in the *Hibernia Pacata* as the Ye Bridge, and in old maps printed in Leyden in the seventeenth century, as the Thye Bridge. It was a quaint old structure—a sort of old London Bridge in miniature—with its old-fashioned houses on both sides, its shops, &c. Tradition speaks of it as having been originally built, in far distant time, by one Baal, whom St. Patrick converted to Christianity when at Singland. It has been frequently the subject of legislative enactment, and in the Acts of Parliament it is called Baal's Bridge.

<sup>1</sup> It should be remarked of the "New Bridge," where the Mathew bridge now stands, of which we have already treated in a previous chapter, that what was formerly called the New Bridge stood on the site of what is now called the Mathew bridge, forming a direct communication between Quay-lane and Bank-place. Previous to its erection in 1762 for some years, there was a ferry established. It was a bridge of three arches, the centre one forty-one feet wide, being so much larger than the other two particularly in height, that it was found from the steep incline of the road-way at both sides of the centre, or crown of the middle arch, not alone to be inconvenient for traffic, but in frosty weather actually dangerous. It was for this reason, (though quite sound in preservation, as the year it was finished), taken down and rebuilt. Like the old Ball's bridge, the land arches sprung from the Quay walls, so that what now forms the abutments of Mathew bridge, was formerly part of the water course of the New bridge. There were two iron lamp-posts set opposite each other on the centre of this bridge, which were made fast to the parapets. From their construction they were found to answer the purpose of a gallows, and were used by the authorities in the rebellion of 1798, for hanging purposes.