



LIMERICK JESUITS IN FRANCE

Thomas Bourke

Thomas Bourke (de Burgo), son of Thomas de Burgo and Joanna Arthur, was born in Limerick on 34 June, 1588, and entered the Society at Tournai, 6 October, 1607. He had studied humanities in Ireland and philosophy at Douai, where he graduated as a Master of Arts. After his first religious profession, his early years as a Jesuit cannot be traced. He returned to Ireland in 1615 as a priest but certainly without having completed his studies, as he was sent back to the continent to Bordeaux to do so in the spring of 1616. On his return to Ireland, he was assigned to work in his native city where he spent the rest of his life. For many years he taught humanities at the Jesuit school there. He died 12 December, 1651.

Joseph Morony

Joseph Morony was born at Ballykeefe, in the parish of Mungret, Co. Limerick, on 19 March, 1714, and was received into the Society at Bordeaux on 3 September, 1734, having already studied philosophy. After his noviceship, he was assigned for teaching humanities at the College of Tulle, 1736-38, after which he spent a year as prefect in the Irish College of Poitiers. He spent two further years of regency successively at Agen and Lucon before he entered on his theological studies at the Grand Collège, Poitiers, in 1741. Two years later, he was ordained as a priest and completed his studies while residing at the Irish College. Recalled to Ireland in 1746, he spent the first year of his ministry at Clonmel and was then transferred to the Limerick Residence, where the greater part of his missionary career was spent. At Limerick, he proved himself not only a successful schoolmaster, but enjoyed a high reputation as pulpit orator throughout Munster. According to the census of 1766, he conducted his school at Limerick in Jail Lane, near Athlunkard Street. At the suppression of the Society in 1773, he closed his school and went to Dublin and was one of the signatories, on 7 February, 1774, accepting the Apostolic Brief suppressing the Society. He died at Dublin in July, 1785. Such was the esteem in which his memory was held as a preacher that, eleven years after his death, two volumes of his sermons were published by the subscriptions of his many admirers.

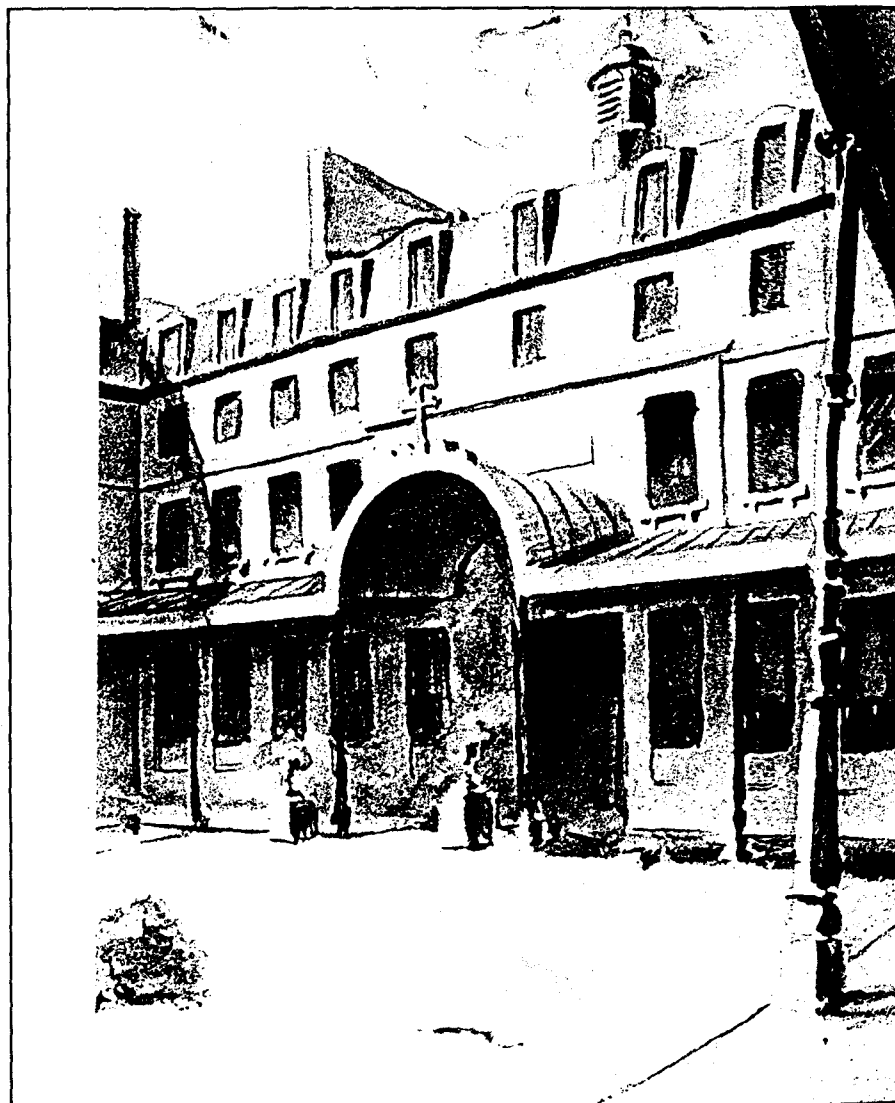
Laurence Nihell

Laurence Nihell was born in the city of Limerick, on 23 May, 1726, entered the Society in Lisbon, 31 July, 1747. Of his

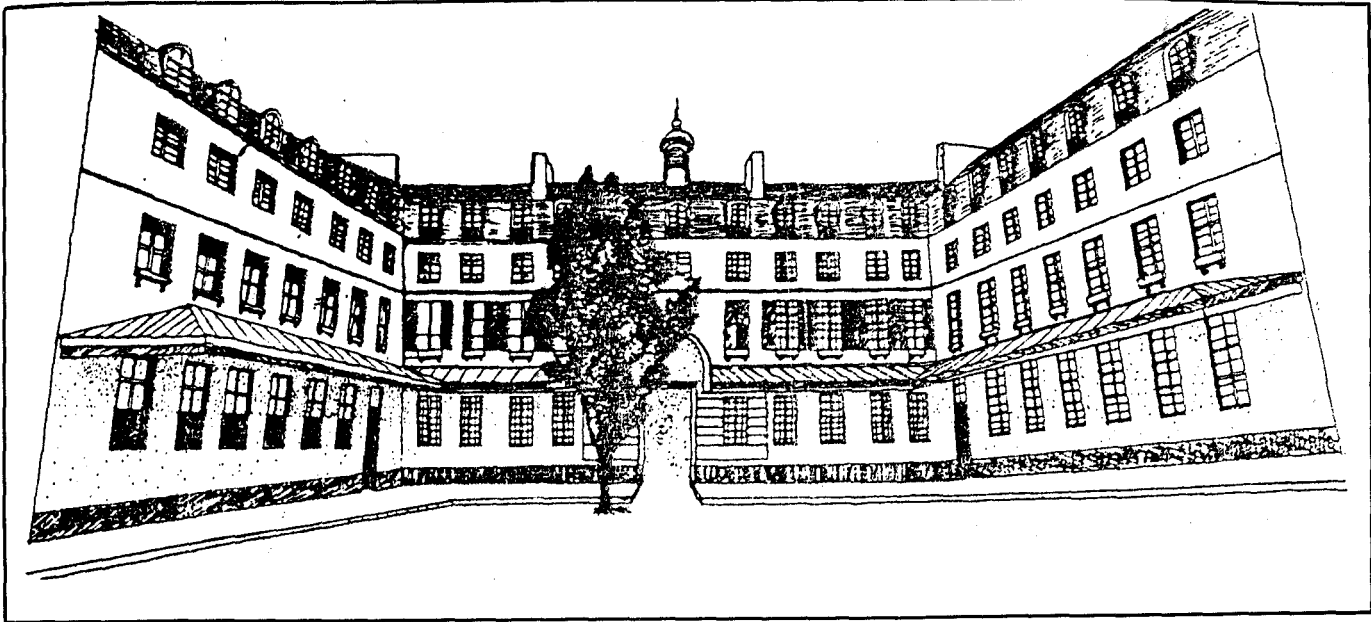
BY FRANCIS FINEGAN

career in the Society very little information has survived. He is mentioned only once in the contemporary catalogi, that of Portugal for 1749, which tells nothing of his studies previous to his admission to the novitiate. It is certain, however, that after his first religious profession, he was sent to Coimbra to continue or make his ecclesiastical studies. Some time in the spring of 1752, he wrote to the General of the Society for permission to study mathematics and controversial theology before his return to Ireland. The General, in his reply dated 30 May, informed him that the permission asked for would be granted only if, after consultation, it were decided that such studies were necessary for his future work in Ireland. The year of his ordination is also

uncertain, but he was already a priest when he arrived in the Irish College of Poitiers on 18 December, 1754. His name survives in the procurator's books until 1758, but there is no record forthcoming to show what were his duties in the college, whether as a teacher or student pursuing the studies he wished to undertake at Coimbra. He left the Society on 7 June, 1758. On his return to Ireland, he was incardinated in his native diocese of Limerick. He succeeded Father David Bourke as parish priest of Rathkeale in 1762 and, nine years later, with his bishop's permission, exchanged his charge for the senior curacy of St. Mary's, Limerick. Twelve years later, in 1783, he was appointed to rule the diocese of Kilfenora and consecrated bishop. He died on 29 June, 1795, and was buried in the chancel of the old cathedral church of his diocese.



Doorway at the Irish College, Paris, from a drawing by the Limerick artist, Maurice Quillinan.



The Irish College in Paris, from a drawing by Maurice Quillinan.

Matthew O'Hartegan

Matthew O'Hartegan was born in Limerick in August, 1600, and entered the Society at Bordeaux, 8 January, 1626. Before his admission to the novitiate, he had been preparing himself for a lay career, for, in addition to philosophy, he had studied jurisprudence for four years and had graduated as a Master of Arts. After his noviceship, he was sent for a short period of regency to the College of Agen and then commenced his theological studies at Bordeaux in 1630. He was ordained as a priest in the spring of 1633. At the end of his course, which he accomplished with distinction, he was appointed professor of philosophy at Pan. Two years later, he was transferred as minister to the College of La Rochelle in 1636 and, at the end of a year there, was recalled to the Irish mission. There is no record of his sojourn in Ireland except that he made his solemn profession in Waterford, 15 August, 1651. It is reasonable to conjecture, however, that he was known to members of the newly constituted Confederation of Kilkenny, as he was entrusted the following year by the Confederates to represent them at the Court of France. The superior of the mission duly notified the General of Father O'Hartegan's business in that country.

On 23 July, 1643, the Supreme Council formally appointed O'Hartegan and Geoffrey Baron, nephew of Luke Wadding, O.F.M., agents to the French Court. O'Hartegan continued to live in Paris until May, 1646, when, having finished or resigned his agency, he returned to Bordeaux. In the course of his business, he earned the distrust of Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I. Letters reflecting on the Queen and purporting to have been written by O'Hartegan were seized and published at London.

The forged letter, however, was a favourite weapon of counter-diplomacy, and even the Supreme Council, which was becoming more and more Ormondist and divisive of Irish interests, was not convinced that O'Hartegan was the author of the letters, the originals of which were never produced.

Two years after his return to Bordeaux, the General, Fr. Caraffa, in a request to the provincial at that city to summon a consultors' meeting to choose a priest of their province to conduct an extraordinary visitation of the Irish mission, nominated Matthew O'Hartegan to take part in the consultation. The choice fell on Mercure Verdier who, very probably, owed much of his remarkable grasp of the tangled politico-religious situation in Ireland to his discussions with O'Hartegan.

O'Hartegan was never recalled to the Irish mission. In his own province of Aquitaine, he held many posts of responsibility: he was professor of philosophy at Bordeaux, 1646-48; Pau, 1648-50; and Agen, 1657-60. He conducted weighty business for his province at Paris, and for a brief period was superior at Bayonne. In 1660, he was assigned to the Grand Collège of Poitiers, where he served as operarius until his death, 2 May, 1666.

Thady Simon O'Molony

Thady Simon O'Molony was born at Limerick, on 28 October, 1690, and entered the Society at Paris, 13 September, 1708. After his first religious profession, he studied philosophy in the same city and spent his regency successively at the colleges of Rennes and Eu. He began his theological studies at La Flèche, 1720, but, after a year there, returned to Paris to complete them at the

Collège de Louis le Grand where he was ordained priest in 1723. At the end of his studies, he made his tertianship at Rouen, 1724-25, and then resumed his long teaching career in the colleges of his province: professor of philosophy successively at Quimper, Rouen and Paris, 1725-1733; prefect of studies for the junior scholastics 1733-34; professor of mathematics at Paris, 1734-35, at Compiègne, 1735-36. About this time, he was mentioned as a possible successor to the rectorship of the Irish College of Poitiers, but his name drops out henceforth from the Irish correspondence. In 1736, he was appointed professor of mathematics and hydrography at the College of Nantes where he taught for more than twenty years. Sometime after 1757, he retired from teaching but remained on as spiritual father of the Nantes community and operarius at the church down to the dissolution of the Society in France in 1761/2. His name then disappears from the records, so that the date and place of his death are unknown.

Nicholas Punch

Nicholas Punch was born at Limerick, in 1599, and became a priest before he entered the Society at the Dublin novitiate in 1629. He made no studies abroad after his first religious profession, but entered immediately on his missionary career as a Jesuit. He worked at Limerick as schoolmaster, catechist and confessor, and later became minister and procurator at the Limerick residence. Fr. Verdier reported favourably on his humility and candour and the satisfactory manner in which he discharged his duties. After the fall of Limerick, nothing is known of him until 1658, when he turned up in the Paris province. He was then stationed by the provincial of Paris at the College of



Rennes, where he was spiritual director of the scholastics until his death in the College towards the end of 1661.

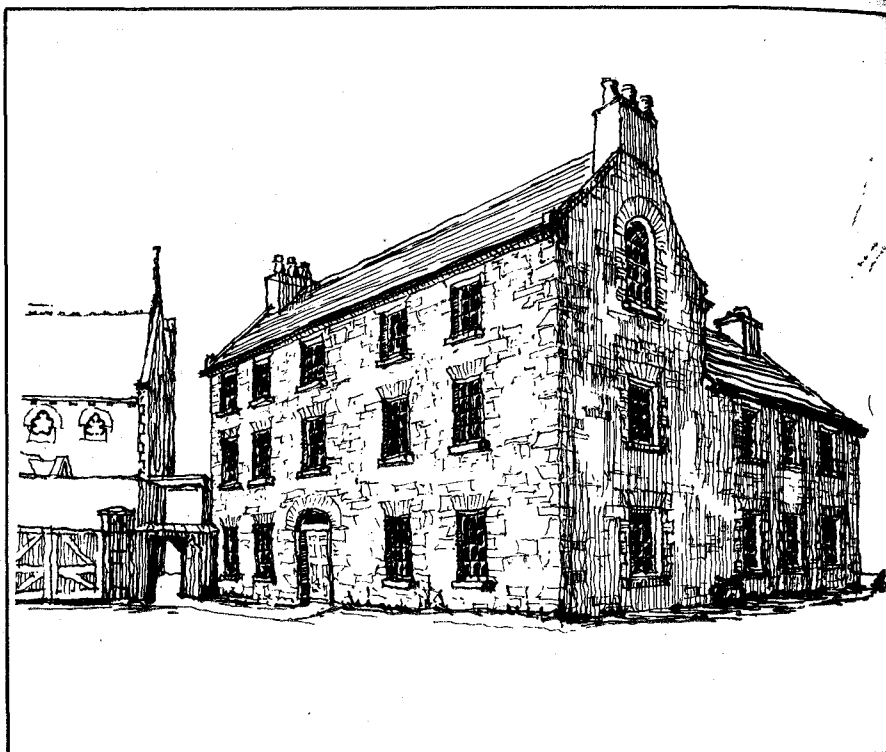
Andrew Ryan

Andrew Ryan was born in Munster on 24 September, 1724, and entered the Society at Paris on 3 October, 1741. After his noviceship, he studied philosophy for two years at La Flèche and was then sent in 1745 to Tours for his regency. On 25 September, 1750, he arrived in Poitiers from Tours. Here he studied theology for the next four years at the Grand Collège* and resided at the Irish College; he was ordained a priest c. 1753. At the end of his studies, he made his tertianship at Rouen in 1754-55. He was then appointed professor of philosophy at the College of Rouen and later professor of moral theology at the College of Nevers. On 21 October, 1760, he arrived once more in Poitiers, this time on his way to the Irish mission, but does not seem to have reached Ireland until the spring of the following year. No record of his missionary work in Ireland has survived. He was summoned to Rome in 1766 and appointed rector of the Irish College on 11 June. He held that office until 1 December, 1768. Some weeks previous to his departure from Rome, he had petitioned Pope Clement XIII for certain indulgences in view of his return to the Irish mission. His name then disappears entirely from the records. It has been suggested that he may be identical with a Fr. Andrew Ryan living at Tullybrackey (Bruff) in 1766, according to a census of the Catholic and Protestant populations made that year (no precise date given) by the Protestant clergy. This Andrew Ryan became P.P. of Fedamore in 1774 and died in 1814. (Note. The name of Andrew Ryan does not appear on the list of Irish Jesuits who accepted the Brief of Suppression).

* It is possible that Ryan finished his theology in Paris as he is mentioned in the triennial catalogue, 1754, as at the Collège Louis le Grand. The difficulty of locating him is increased by the fact that between 1650 and 1654 he was in Aquitaine and then in Paris and the yearly Catalogi (brevis) are wanting between 1652 and 1654.

Thomas Shine (Jr.)

Thomas Shine was born at Limerick, in 1733, and completed his philosophy course before he was admitted to the Society at Bordeaux on 20 February, 1654. After his first religious profession, he taught humanities in the same city in 1656-58, and then at Angoulême. He returned to Bordeaux to complete his studies, but died there, before he was ordained a priest, on 24 February, 1663.



St. Mary's presbytery, off Athlunkard Street Limerick, from a drawing by P. O Ceallacháin.



At Mass in Versailles.