

Monteagle was twice married, first to Lady Theodosia Pery, daughter of the Earl of Limerick. She died in 1839, and in 1841, he married a daughter of John Marshall, M.P. for Yorkshire. He died at Mount Trenchard on 7th February, 1866, aged 76, and was buried at Shanagolden. His grandson, Thomas Spring-Rice, succeeded to the title and estates.

\*This has now been restored and is Limerick's most treasured painting.

## JAMES ROCHE

James Roche, "the Roscoe of Cork," was born in Limerick in the year 1771. Like many Catholic youths of his day, he was educated on the Continent, whence he returned to Ireland for a short while before opening a business house in Bordeaux. He was well-known in pre-revolutionary literary and political circles in France, and, during the Revolution of 1793, he was imprisoned for his Republican sympathies, and narrowly escaped the Guillotine. On the death of Robespierre he was released on condition he returned to Ireland.

Returning penniless, Roche's business acumen soon came to the fore, and in partnership with his brother, Stephen, he opened a bank in Cork, with a branch in Limerick run by his brothers, Thomas and William. This was the most successful bank in the south of Ireland, and although like all the other banks it failed in the general financial crisis after Waterloo, it was the only southern bank to pay its creditors in full.

Left penniless a second time, Roche now adopted an even more risky profession—that of parliamentary agent in London. He was not very successful, and on the establishment of the National Bank he returned to Cork where he became one of its first directors. At this time also he was a City Magistrate for Cork.

Roche had a great talent for languages and a prodigious memory. His essays on miscellaneous subjects which appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, *The Dublin Review* and other periodicals under the signature "J.R. of Cork," were highly praised for their clarity and erudition. He prided himself on this quality and in a review of a new edition of Gibbons *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, we even find him rebuking this great author for his slipshod English. He founded many literary and art societies in Cork, and was for many years a member of the Limerick Institute and the Limerick Chamber of Commerce.

Roche did not begin to write until very late in life and his only published work, appropriately named *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays by an Octogenarian*, was written between the ages of seventy and eighty. Only one hundred copies of the work were printed, and these were distributed among his friends. In the

copy, now in the City Library, Roche wrote the words: "Presented to the Literary Institution of Limerick by the author, in respectful homage to the city, which he has ever held it an honour and a happiness to own as that of his birth, and, to the ample list of whose citizens entitled to enduring recollection for their devotion to science and literature, he indulges a fond and, he trusts, not too presumptuous hope, may be associated the name of James Roche. Cork. November 23, 1850."

Roche was married to Ann Moylan of Cork, by whom he had two daughters. He died in Cork on April 1st, 1853, aged eighty-two. His brother, William Roche, was member of Parliament for Limerick for many years.

### McNAMARA RUSSELL

Thomas MacNamara Russell, Admiral in the British Navy, was the son of an Englishman who settled in County Clare and married the daughter and co-heiress of Sheedy MacNamara, of Ballyalla. He was born about the year 1740, and inherited a large fortune at the age of five, when his father died. But by the time he had reached the age of 14, the fortune had been completely dissipated by the trustees.

He served for seven years in the Merchant Service before joining the Royal Navy as an able seaman. There can be no doubt, therefore, about Russell's starting at the bottom rung of the ladder, and from this he advanced by the gradual steps of midshipman and mate to that of Lieutenant, gained in the year 1776. He then went to the North American Coastal Service and having distinguished himself at the relief of Jersey and the capture of Charleston, he was given command of his first ship, "The Hussar" of twenty guns.

He captured several enemy ships during the American War of Independence, including the French "Sybelle," whose Captain tried to capture Russell's ship by treacherously hoisting the English flag over the French one, a sign that he was surrendering. When Russell closed with the French ship, the French sailors tried to take "The Hussar" by boarding her, but a full broadside from the English boat foiled the effort and left "The Sybelle" practically a total wreck. Russell broke the French captain's sword and reported his conduct but, as peace was being negotiated at the time, the matter was hushed up. The French captain continued to proclaim his innocence and asked Russell for satisfaction, but when the latter set out for France to meet the Frenchman—the only satisfaction recognised among gentlemen in those days—in a duel, the latter fled to Spain.