

Limerick and Louvain.

By RICHARD HAYES.

Few continental places awaken more Irish memories than the little Belgian town of Louvain. In dark days it was a haven of refuge for Irish students, and within its walls in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries were three separate Irish religious foundations—those of the Franciscans and Dominicans as well as the Irish Pastoral College, all of which were affiliated to its University. In English State Papers and elsewhere there are fitful sidelights thrown on those far-away days when the Irish nation was tried in the crucible of suffering. In Elizabethan times Drury, the English President of Munster, wrote to the English Secretary of State that “the students of Ireland who are in Louvain are the merest traitors and breeders of treachery that exist.” And there is no little pathos in the action of the poor exiled of the regiments of Tyrone and Tyrconnell as well as that of Owen Roe O’Neil when in 1635 they undertook to pay off the outstanding debt of the Irish Pastoral College. (Various Dioceses in Ireland contributed to its upkeep, among which was Limerick, which contributed yearly 100 florins).

Among the more notable Limerick students who were graduates of Louvain University were the martyred Dermot O’Hurley (archbishop of Cashel) and Richard Creagh (archbishop of Armagh); Richard Arthur, Denis Conway and John Young, all three of whom became bishops of their native diocese, and the distinguished Jesuit, Thomas Filde. A less known but equally remarkable Limerick ecclesiastic at Louvain in the 17th century was Dr. Matthew Teige (or O’Teige), who was appointed President of the Irish Pastoral College on 6 September, 1638, and who in the same year obtained his doctorate of theology at Louvain. (The surname, Teige or O’Teige, is still met with in Limerick, Roscommon and Mayo and has been anglicised into Tighe in some places. A Limerick priest, Donal O’Teige, became archbishop of Armagh in 1560 and is best remembered by the tradition of his accompanying Shane O’Neil through the lines of the latter’s army outside Armagh and exhorting the Irish soldiers to go forward to battle for their country. Returning to his native soil in 1561, he died at Lough Gur in the same year).

A few years after obtaining his doctorate of theology at Louvain, Dr. Matthew Teige became professor of Greek in the Collège des Trois Langues, and he died in the Irish Pastoral College on 9 November, 1652. He was buried in the Cathedral of St. Pierre, of which he was honorary canon. Above his place of burial—a little behind the high altar on the left—is a dark tombstone inlaid with white marble. The inscription on it is now, after three hundred years, so worn away that all that is legible is:—

..... MATHAEUS THEIGE

 LIMERICENSIS

The original epitaph on the tombstone is given as follows in *Historia Universitatis Lovaniensis* (Bax) :—

“In novam regiminis formam induxit ac statuit, et collegium ad eum nitoris apicem perduxit, ut nulli optimo constitutorum collegiorum cedere videretur, quemadmodum dicti provisores ipsaeque Universitatis testatum fecit documento quodam 8 Maji 1645 dato, quod in collegio servatur.”

Dr. Teige bequeathed 5,702 florins to the Irish Pastoral College for the foundation of burses for Limerick students. It is interesting to note that, more than a hundred years later, one of these was availed of by John Young (afterwards bishop of Limerick), whose address is given as "near St. John's Gate, Limerick."

Another Limerick benefactor of this Louvain Irish College was Rev. Thomas Hurley, pastor of the hospital of Biloke at Ghent and Canon of St. Pharailde in that city. In 1697 he bequeathed a sum of 3,200 florins to his *alma mater*.

And still another alumnus of the Irish Pastoral College is entered on its registers for the year 1769 as "Praenobilis Dominus Jacobus Rice, Limericensis." He is described as "a rather brilliant student," but he did not follow an ecclesiastical course. It seems to me that there is little doubt but he was the famous Count James Rice, who became such a notable figure of his day in Austria and France. He was of the family of Lord Monteagle, and his mother was Alicia Meade of Kilmallock. He entered the Austrian army and became one of the few personal intimate friends of Emperor Joseph II. A noted duellist, Count Rice formed a plan for the rescue of Queen Marie Antoinette from her prison during the French Revolution. He had arranged relays of post horses from Paris to the coast, where he had a boat waiting to convey her to his house at Dingle, Co. Kerry. But the plan fell through because of the queen's unwillingness at the last moment to join in the project.

Origin of the Early Marks on Limerick Silver.

By J. N. A. WALLACE.

Jackson in *English Goldsmiths and Their Marks*⁽¹⁾ published in 1905, writing of Limerick silver, states: "The earliest known example of Limerick plate is a communion flagon at Churchtown, Buttevant, Co. Cork. Its marks are, a triple-towered castle and the makers initials (I.B.), each mark being duplicated alternately. For a long time these marks remained unlocated, but the discovery by Mr. Dudley Westropp of an old Limerick toll-stamp of the early part of the eighteenth century bearing a castle of similar form, led to their identification. The toll-stamp bears the inscription "Tholsel Court Limerick."

A paten in St. Mary's Cathedral has similar marks to the Buttevant flagon, and other pieces of plate with these marks are now known. The makers mark I.B. is that of Jonathan Buck⁽²⁾ who worked in Limerick between the years 1725-1740.

Since the publication of Jackson's work many earlier pieces of silver with the castle mark have been noted,⁽³⁾ namely the Askeaton chalice and paten, 1663; the Ennis chalice, 1685; the Limerick Cathedral flagon (circa 1695), and a paten at Ballintemple (Co. Tipp.), but in addition to the castle, all these pieces have a star mark stamped on them. The dates assigned to these pieces are verified by either an engraved inscription or the stamping of a maker's mark whose period of working is known.