Some Notable Limerick Doctors.

By Dr. Richard Hayes.

Despite various adverse circumstances in the past, Ireland has made a comparatively solid contribution to the advancement of medical science. Not only in the practical application of that science to the relief of human ills, but in its other domain of patient research, her sons have often been pioneers. Nor have their labours been confined to their own country—one thinks with a certain pride of those scattered exiles who, dowered with little but their high skill and personal worth, were chosen by kings and emperors as chief physicians at the courts of Spain and Russia and France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A certain number of Limerick men, by their renown as healers at home and abroad, helped to swell their country's roll of honour, and in these pages I shall try to give a brief survey of the careers and achievements of the most notable among them.

Down to the middle of the seventeenth century the profession of medicine in Ireland was hereditary in particular families, who were generally attached to the great houses of the time. The best-known of these families in North Munster were the O'Hickey's and the O'Lees, many of whose manuscripts are in existence and show how they kept abreast of the scientific knowledge then in vogue throughout Europe. A change came, however, as a result of political upheavals which led to the eclipse of their patrons, the territorial chieftains, as well as to the end of the Gaelic polity, and the first we meet in Limerick of what may be called modern physicians is Dr. Thomas Arthur. Belonging to the old Limerick family of the name, he was born in the city of his ancestors in 1693. It was a stormy Ireland in which his life was lived. In boyhood he saw the old Irish world go down in disaster at Kinsale. In his fuller years the new hopes that centred in Owen Roe and the Confederation were broken by faction and intrigue, and during that long summer of 1652 he heard the bombarding of his plague-stricken city by the Cromwellian guns. After his death he left behind him a sheaf of manuscripts, now in the British Museum, written by himself—he gives in some of the pages the chief events of his life. From them we learn that he went to Bordeaux for his early education and proceeded later to Paris for his medical training, and finally took his degree at the University of Rheims. Returning to his native city, he acquired within a few years a national reputation for his professional skill. His Diary, which is among his other manuscripts, is of unusual interest.

1. Thus after the Desmond rebellions we find the following entry in the Calendar Patent Rolls (James I.) for the year 1617: "General pardon for Edmund McMorrishe Ley of Ardaghwa in Limerick Co., physician."

2. Accompanying this article is a photostatic reproduction of a page of the Diary for which I am indebted to the courtesy of the Keeper of MSS. at the British Museum. The complete Diary is copied from the original into the Kilronan Archeological Journal (Vol. V.—Jan., 1867)."
we find him granted an extensive tract of land in Galway by the Lord Deputy. And in a
Petition to the King of England in 1664 he complains of the sufferings he endured from
his countrymen, who had put him in prison for calling on them to be 'loyal' and whose
clergy had excommunicated him.  

Arthur lived to a round old age, dying in 1674 in his eighty-first year. He had
amassed an immense fortune from his profession, with which he speculated heavily in the
confiscated lands of his countrymen. His Will in the Public Record Office runs as
follows:—

THOMAS ARTHUR, Doctor of Physic.

I appoint my wife, Christian Arthur, sole executrix.

I bequeath unto said wife all my lands of Tullaghey, containing two plowes in
Ormond, in the countie of Tipperarie, and the lands of Mayne, Co. Galway, and all other
my lands in sd countie of Galway now in lease to Henry Davis and enjoyed by him and
his assigns by virtue thereof for several years past. To hold the same to said Christian
for and during her life. I also bequeath and devise to my wife Christian Arthur all the
benefit and advantage which I have or may expect in any land, tenements and heredits by
virtue of any clause or proviso in the Act of settlement or Explanation in my behalf as
nominee or otherwise the same to be held by sd Christian during her life.

To my brother Richard Arthur £6 annually.

I remit and release to my son-in-law Nicholas Comyn whatever debt is due to me of
him by bond or otherwise. I further bequeath to my daughter Christian, wife of said
Nicholas, the moiety of Newstoune in Co. Carlow and the debt and mortgage thereof due
from the Duke of Ormond.

Whereas I ownd unto my son-in-law Daniel Arthur the sum of £100 which
remained of my daughter Anstace Arthur, his wife's portion, to which sum I paid by
order from said Daniel unto John Arthur of Dublin deceased, my son-in-law, and took
his bond for the same, I do hereby appoint executors to deliver sd bond to sd Daniel
Arthur.

To grandchildren, Daniel Arthur the younger, Eleanor Arthur and Anstace Arthur,
children of the sd Daniel Arthur, my son-in-law, and of my daughter Anstace dec'd., the
other moiety of said debt and mortgage of Newstoune from the Duke of Ormond to me.

To wife all other my goods and chattels.

31 Dec. 1674.

CODICIL. My further will is that William Arthur FitzJohn of Dublin, in case he
be living, be my heir, and that after the death of my wife and executrix and after the time
before by my last will limited do hold and enjoy all my estate of inheritance within the
kingdom of Ireland to him the sd William Arthur and the heirs male of his body, and for
want of such heirs, sd estate of inheritance shall descend to my grandson, Thomas Arthur
FitzJohn and his heirs male, and from want of such heirs, to Thomas Arthur of Lime-
rick Doctor of Physic and his heirs male, and for want of such heirs my said estate of
inheritance shall descend and come unto to the right heirs of me, the said Thomas
Arthur FitzWilliam and their heirs for ever. And I do declare for the several injuries
done unto me by my sonne John Arthur and my daughter Demphna his wife and her
disrespect unto me that I was intended not to transfer any of my estate upon their issue,
but by the earnest entreaty of my now wife Christian I have been enticed to make this
provision for them. I wish that my wife be recommended as by my last will and request
to the favour of the Right Honble the Countess of Mount Alexander, doubting not that
she will answer her in all her just demands and reasonable desires.

Dated 2 Jan 1674

Proved 27 Jan 1674.

4. This document was destroyed in the fire at the P.R.O. during the civil conflict of 1622. There
is a short summary of it in the 15th Annual Report, Records of Ireland (Act of Settlement Book).

5. It is generally but wrongly stated that he died in 1663, the assumption being made that the year
of his death coincided with the last year chronicled in his Diary.
Four years before Arthur’s death Limerick gave birth to an equally distinguished physician in the person of Dr. John (or Sir John) Higgins. He was the son of Dr. Patrick Higgins of Limerick and Mary Loftus (daughter of John Loftus of Annacotty, a few miles east of the city), and was a grand-nephew of Dr. Daniel Higgins, who was executed in 1652. He was scarcely out of boyhood when, in the days of his grand-uncle, the Irish cause was in 1691 once more broken in his native city, and he joined the tattered bands of “Wild Geese” who in despair hurried away in their thousands down the Shannon to France. In that country he entered the university of Montpelier, famed throughout Europe for its medical school. It was the alma mater of many Irish doctors—the majority of the English-speaking students in its halls at this period were from Ireland. After a brilliant course of studies, he took his degree in 1700. Immediately afterwards the War of the Spanish Succession began, and a great soldier of the day, the Duke of Berwick, who was generalissimo of the allied French and Spanish forces, induced Higgins to accompany him to Spain as chief medical officer of his army. In that capacity Higgins took part in the great battles and the sieges of the ten years’ conflict, in which the various regiments of the Irish Brigade played a leading role. During the strenuous days and nights of that long campaign, he must have met many of his countrymen—the Dillons, O’Mahonys, MacDonnells, Fitzgeralids and others of those “war-dogs battered and grey.” During the war, Cardinal Alberoni, Prime Minister of Spain, indignant at the seizure of Spanish vessels by England, retaliated by ordering a similar seizure of all British ships. Higgins, always warmly attached to his native country, appealed to the Prime Minister for the exemption of Irish vessels from the order, and the favour was at once granted. His repute as a physician rose rapidly, and in 1718 Philip the Fifth appointed him his chief doctor. In the following year we find Sir Peter Redmond, the ambassador of James the Third in Spain, stating in a letter to that noted Jacobite, the Earl of Mar:

His Catholic Majesty’s chief physician (Dr. Higgins), without whom he does not stir morning, noon or night, is my friend and countryman... the King and Court have a great value for him, and he really deserves it.

And soon afterwards the same writer again refers to him in another letter:

His Catholic Majesty has now declared that no confiscation nor reprisals be made on the Irish Catholics now in Spain or that may come hereafter; Dr. Higgins, his first physician, who is likewise proto medico of all Spain, has got this grace for his countrymen.

During the year after his appointment, Dr. Higgins saved the king’s life in a grave illness, which caused intense jealousy of the Irish doctor among his colleagues in the Spanish capital. This was accentuated when his Majesty again and again lauded him as the first physician in Europe. As time passed, various high distinctions were conferred on him. He was elected President of the Royal Academy of Medicine and, by the king’s order, was made a Royal Councillor. And, always a fervent Jacobite and loyal Catholic, he received a baronetcy from James the Third of England (the “Old Pretender”) in 1723. Early in that year he wrote to James Terry, a fellow Limerick man, who had gone in the wake of James the Second to France, and who at Paris was appointed Athlone Herald by his Majesty to inquire into family genealogies at the time when he was conferring titles on his adherents. Higgins in the course of the letter from Madrid to Terry (whom he addressed as “Dear Cousin”) writes:

Now friends, grasp glasses and fill up,
Let your bampers brimful be:
We’ll drink to the health of King Philip
And the Child who strays o’er sea.

6. A branch of the Loftus family of Limerick were noted bankers in Paris in the early eighteenth century.

7. These were generally Catholics, but on its registers, too, were the names of many Irish Protestant students like Dr. Robert Emmet, father of the famous Irish patriot.

8. Stuart MSS. Vol. I.

9. Ibid. It might, perhaps, be mentioned here that Philip V. showed always much friendliness to the Irish in his kingdom, placing them on the same footing in every respect as his own subjects. In Ireland the Jacobite poets sang his praises—here is a verse (translated) from an Irish poem, “Siáinte Righ Philib”:

Now friends, grasp glasses and fill up,
Let your bampers brimful be:
We’ll drink to the health of King Philip
And the Child who strays o’er sea.
"I know our family is descended originally from Connaught, and, if I be not mistaken, from the County Mayo. My great grandfather was Malachias Higgins: my grandfather was Steven Higgins, brother to the famous Dr. Higgins, put to death by Cromwell, being of the number of persons exempted from Capitulation of Limerick. I know I am near related to the Clancys of Ballybricken; to the Bourkes of Ballynarig; to the best Barrys and Dwyers of our county. My grandfather, John Loftus, was heir to the estate of Munget, near Limerick, and if I had what belongs to me, I should enjoy several considerable tenements both in Limerick and in the county. This is all the elucidation I can give you towards this affair."

At last, full of years and renown, Higgins passed away in Madrid in October, 1729, amidst the universal mourning of the Court and people. Of the many tributes paid to his memory, the finest and most lastling was that from a European notability of the day, the Duc de Saint Simon. This distinguished Frenchman arrived in Madrid in November, 1721, as ambassador of his country to Spain. In his Mémoires he has painted memorable portraits of the great figures of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, and throughout the pages of that immortal work pays tribute again and again to Higgins, with whom he had become intimately acquainted. Immediately after his arrival at the Spanish capital, Saint Simon contracted the dangerous fever of smallpox. When the news of his illness reached the Court, the king, who "with reason," says Saint Simon, "had confidence only in his chief doctor (Higgins), sent him to me with orders not to quit me until I was cured." "I had, therefore," he continues, "one of the best and most skilful physicians of Europe who was moreover capital company." A penetrating judge and acute critic of men, Saint Simon has left us a striking pen-portrait of Higgins. And, if for no other reason than that the name of this illustrious Irishman is all but forgotten in Ireland and his native Limerick, I cannot apologise for quoting at some length the great Frenchman's tribute:

Higgins, the foremost doctor in Spain, was an Irishman, a graduate of several universities besides that of Montpellier, from which he passed into Spain as physician of the armies. In that capacity his general conduct and efficiency were so marked that the king of Spain appointed him his first doctor and placed much confidence in him. This Irishman, who spoke perfect French, was an excellent doctor whose whole desire was concentrated on curing his patient. I had a happy experience of him during an illness whose details, being of interest only to doctors, would be irrelevant here. His character, frank but reserved, gentle but firm, displayed without affectation a noble mind, always intent on doing good, without any ulterior motive whatever, though he loved his family, which was large enough; and, furthermore, he was detached from all ambition, seeing intrigues at close quarters, with no desire to join in them, and always speaking truthfully to the king and queen about their health. The result was that he was highly esteemed and respected. His disposition was upright, pleasing and modest, his knowledge of literature was good, and generally he was regarded as an eminent and wise doctor, and as the only one in Spain who merited the name. He had a sound knowledge of surgery and often performed successful operations. All these accomplishments were exalted by a sage piety, enlightened and sincere. . . . His conversation was very helpful to me and taught me many things. He loved tenderly his country and fellow-countrymen, and had the keenest attachment to King James and all who supported his Majesty. His wisdom generally kept him under restraint in this respect, but on finding himself free with friends his patriotic emotion overflowed. . . . I had plenty of time to study him during the six weeks of my illness. His candour, honesty and attentions captivated me, and a great mutual friendship developed.

At this period the pursuit of medicine as a profession seems to have been hereditary in the Higgins family. We have seen that Philip the Fifth's physician was the son of Dr. Patrick Higgins and the grand-nephew of Dr. Daniel Higgins who was executed in 1652. And now, towards the end of Dr. John Higgins' striking career in Spain, a nephew, James Nihill (10) was following in his footsteps at the universities of Montpelier

10. In contemporary documents the name is often given as O'Neill, a modification of O'Neill. The O'Neill's were a branch of the O'Neals of Ulster who settled in north Munster after the disaster of Killiney. During the 18th century many of them rose to high rank in various continental armies. Laurence Nihill, Bishop of Kilfenora, was a brother of Dr. James Nihill.
and Leyden(11), and got his degree at Rheims in 1733. His uncle had intended that, on the completion of his studies, he should join him at Madrid, but the illustrious physician’s death there upset the proposed arrangement. Dr. Nihil, however, settled at Cadiz, where he practised for some time. After a few years he removed to London and published there a volume, Observations concerning the production of crises by the Pulse, which is dated for the year 1741 from “The Grecian Coffee House, Devereux Court.” Welcomed as a work of unusual merit, it was immediately translated into several European languages, and brought him the high honour of Fellowship of the Royal Society. Returning to his native city, he was engaged on some other works of a like nature when his career was cut short in 1759 by a contagious fever. (12)

The scope of this paper permits of only a passing reference to another Limerick doctor who was a fellow-student with Nihil at Leyden. This was John Martin, who returned home in 1733 after obtaining his degree. He died in 1786, and Ferrar’s History of Limerick (published the year after his death) describes him as “an eminent and skilful physician who wrote a learned treatise on Castleconnell Spa,” and further states that he was “a man of integrity, humanity and hospitality.” His Will(13), an interesting one, runs as follows:

I, John Martin, of the city of Limerick, Esq., Doctor in Physick, being of sound perfect and disposing mind, memory and understanding, do make this my last will and testament as follows: I order and direct that my body may be decently intered in my family vault in the Church Yard of the parish of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the city of Limerick with as little expense as decency will admit of. I give and bequeath to my dearly beloved wife, Alice Martin, otherwise Roche, the sum of one thousand five hundred pounds ster. in full satisfaction of any claim or demand which she can or may have to the fortune or effects which I shall die possessed of or entitled to whether by marriage articles or otherwise, and I order and direct that if she shall set up any claim or demand to and provision out of my fortune or effects save what is provided for her by this my will whether by marriage articles or otherwise, then and in such case she shall receive so much as shall with what she shall claim or recover under this my will in any other right whatever make the sd sum of one thousand five hundred pounds hereby bequeathed and no more which said sum of one thousand five hundred pounds shall be paid to my sd wife her exects. administrs. or assigns as soon as conveniently may be after my decease by my executor assigning to or in trust for her such of the securities for money due to me which I shall die possessed of or entitled to as she shall make choice to the amount of sd sum of one thousand five hundred pounds with all the interest that shall become due therefrom from the day of my decease until the sd securities shall be so assigned as aforesaid. I also leave to my said wife all my house linen of what nature or kind soever and all my china and tea equipage my silver coffee pot the pair of silver candle sticks bought at Shepherds Court two pair of large fluted plated candle sticks her watch jewels and my portraits painted by a Frenchman. I also leave her all the furniture of my bed chambers. I also give to my sd wife and her assigns and I order and direct that my nephew Thomas Bonfield of the city of Bordeaux in the Kingdom of France merchant shall pay to her yearly during her life the sum of eighteen pounds on every 25 day of December the first yearly payment thereof to be made to my sd nephew the sum of three hundred pounds ster. to be paid to him immediately after my decease and I order and direct that my sd nephew his exects. or administrs. shall at such time or times and in such manner as he or they shall think proper and not sooner or otherwise pay the sd sum of three hundred pounds with any interest for the same to or to the use of such child or children of Michael Grogan carpenter and Mary his wife as my sd nephew


12. Father McErlean, S.J., informs me that Dr Nihil was married to Miss Magee, daughter of Dr. Magee of Rylane, near Ennis, Co. Clare, who was a father of Rev. David Magee, S.J., of the English Province (1737-1788). Father McErlean has also sent me an extract from “a stray MS. note unsigned,” which states that: Dr. Nihil’s sister was married to Harold, son of – Harold (of Pennywell Park, Limerick) and Miss Galway, daughter (? grand-daughter) of Sir Geoffrey Galway, who was executed in Limerick in 1651 with Dr. Higgins and other citizens.

13. The original Will was lost in the destruction of the P.R.O. in 1922. Through the kindness of T. P. C. Kirkpatrick, M.D., D.Litt., Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin (to whom all students of the history of Medicine in Ireland are so much indebted) I am enabled to give here a copy of the original Will in his possession.
his exacts, and administ. shall think proper provided always and it is my will that my sd
epnhew shall not be accountable for the defect or insufficiency of any security or secu-
rities for all or any of the sd sums aforesaid which shall be so pointed out and made
choice of by my sd wife aforesaid. I give and bequeath to Thomas Grogan son of the
sd Michael and Mary Grogan my gold watch and gold sleeve buttons and such of my
books as my sd nephew shall not make choice of and all the rest residue and remainder
of my estate fortune and effects of whatever nature or kind so ever which I shall die
seized or possessed of or intitled to after payment of my just debts funeral expenses
and legacies hereby bequeathed and lastly I nominate constitute and appoint my sd wife
and my sd nephew Thomas Bondfield and Thomas O'Brien of the City of Limerick mer-
chant executors of this my will in witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seal
the 11th day of October one thousand seven hundred and eighty five.

John Martin.

29th June, 1786.

Contemporaneous with Nihil and Martin was Dr. John Baptiste MacMahon, who
achieved notability, not so much by his pre-eminent in medical science as by his having
founded in France an illustrious family, one at least of whose members is renowned in
the history of that country. Dr. MacMahon, who was the grandfather of the great
Marshal, was born in Limerick in 1715 and was the son of Patrick MacMahon and Mar-
garet O’Sullivan (of Bantry). (14) Dispossessed of their property by reason of their
loyalty to the Catholic and Stuart cause, his father's family, which resided at Torrodile,
Co. Limerick, emigrated to France, where other relatives had already settled. Originally
intended for the Church, young MacMahon entered the medical school at Rheims, one of
the most popular of the continental medical schools for Irishmen in the eighteenth cen-
tury. (15) He settled in practice at Autun in Burgundy, where among his patients were
a wealthy heiress and her husband. On the latter's death he married the heiress, who
was a niece of the Marquis d’Eguilly and, when the latter died, they inherited his large
estate in Burgundy. Three years later Dr. MacMahon, on proving his ancient Irish lineage,
was ennobled by Louis the Fifteenth under the title of Marquis d’Eguilly. (16) By his
marriage he had two sons, both of whom adopted military careers. The sixteenth child
of the younger son, named Patrice after his great grandfather of Torrodile, became the
famous Marshal.

Various relatives of Dr. MacMahon adopted medicine as a career in France—one
of them, Maurice, was superintendent of the Ecole Militaire at Paris. The archives of
Rheims show several of the name as students of medicine there since its foundation in
1550. And there is an Irish medical manuscript in the British Museum with the follow-
ing inscription:

Do leabharth Mathghamhna MacMathghamhna, Dochtuir leighis daithile cheithre
mblinghan deag a bParis firfhloimthna na Flainne 1728 (from the books of Mahon Mac-
Mahon, Doctor of physic, after fourteen years' study at Paris, a man of learning of
France 1728).

Before passing from the medical notabilities of the time we have been considering
(the end of the seventeenth and earlier half of the eighteenth century), a reference
should be made to two others who lived within that period. One is Charles Dupont,
regarding whose career it is difficult to get many details. He specialised in surgery, on
which subject he is credited with having written an original treatise. He died in 1750.
The other is Richard Anketille, who was in his day a leading Limerick physician, and
about whom an amusing story has come down to us. He was a student at the old Irish
College in Paris. That institution was not then exclusively ecclesiastical—it gave an
early training also to students intended for "the professions of law, medicine and the
army." In the year 1724 another Limerick student came there, John Fitzgibbon, father of
his more notorious namesake. On the day of his arrival he was allowed the usual privilege

14. Another son was Dr. Michael MacMahon, Bishop of Killaloe.

15. Dr. R. W. Smith in his English-speaking Students of Medicine in the University of Leyden
states that the manuscript registers at Rheims show that the numbers of Hiberni there exceeded
the numbers of Angli and Scoti in the ratio of 4 to 1.

16. His full title was: "Lord of Feenish, Irish, Arovan, Ian McGrath (Co. Clare), of the Island Finus,
of the Town of Reneagh (Co. Limerick); and Marquis d'Eguilly."
of spending the entire day sight-seeing in Paris, and his fellow-citizen, young Anketelle, accompanied him. Late in the evening, they arrived at Notre Dame and, overcome with fatigue, after the day (during which they partook freely of various refreshments), both soon fell into a sound sleep in a dark corner of the great cathedral. They awoke towards midnight to find all its doors locked. Gropping hither and thither, they came on the bell chains which they commenced to pull. The great bell boomed out over the sleeping city, causing widespread alarm. The cathedral doors were unlocked, and the two youths were conveyed under escort to the Irish College.

II.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century Limerick continued to maintain its reputation as a nursery for eminent medical men, and the name of Dr. Sylvester O’Halloran alone is sufficient to make it notable in that respect. Not only in the domain of science, but in that of Irish studies, his repute stood high, and his patriotic labours in both spheres have merited him an honoured place in his country’s memory. Born in the North Liberties of Limerick in the year 1728, he was the son of Michael O’Halloran and Mary MacDonnell. He pursued his medical studies abroad at the universities of Leyden and Paris, and in the latter city devoted himself particularly to a study of diseases of the eye. He wrote there before he reached his twentieth year a treatise on Catarracts, and its publication in Dublin in 1750 with beautiful engravings attracted much attention in medical circles. As a result he had not long settled in his native city till his reputation as an ophthalmic surgeon spread widely, and he restored the sight of a considerable number who were doomed to total blindness. In addition, he specialised as a brain surgeon at the County Infirmary (which he largely helped to establish), and, as faction fighting was then more or less a popular pastime locally, he had rare opportunities of expending his skill on the fractured skulls of the less fortunate combatants. He gave the results of his wide experiences as an operator there in several printed volumes—one of them, *A Complete Treatise on Gangrene*, was, it is interesting to note, published locally by Andrew Walsh, a well-known bookseller of the time.

While his professional labours and writings must have made O’Halloran’s life an exceptionally busy one, his fame to-day rests more on his historical and antiquarian studies. In these his sound knowledge of the Irish language was a great asset, and his enthusiastic but critical scholarship materialised in his well-known *History of Ireland* and some now lesser known volumes. When a young man Dr. O’Halloran seems to have been on intimate terms with his mother’s kinsman, Seán Clárach MacDonnell of Rath Luirc, the Irish poet, from whom he probably imbibed his zeal for Irish studies. Many years after the poet’s death, he refers to him as “Mr. MacDonnell, a man of great erudition and a profound Irish antiquarian and poet, whose death I sensibly felt and from whom, when a boy, I learnt the rudiments of our language. . . . I have never since been able to find how his papers were disposed of, though I am told he left them to me.”

O’Halloran’s full life ended in his native city in his eightieth year on the 11th August, 1807, and he lies buried in Kilcooly churchyard, not far from his birthplace. Three sons by his wife, Mary O’Casey, survived him, all of whom attained eminence in various spheres of the British Governmental service.

He must have been a striking and picturesque figure in the streets of the Limerick of his day. A contemporary describes him as “the tall, thin doctor in his quaint French dress, with his gold-headed cane, beautiful Parisian wig and cocked hat.” The Clare Irish poet, Thomas O’Meelahan, who lived in the lifetime of the doctor, wrote a poem in his praise—it begins as follows in the R.I.A. manuscripts:

Tomáis Míocháin chanal (ecdnit) do’n Dochtuir fir leaghardha. i. Sibheastur O hAllurain:

17. His grandfather, Hugh O’Halloran, was a native of Shanagolden, Co. Limerick, where he was born in 1650, and where he married Johanna O’Donoghue. Dr. O’Halloran’s mother belonged to the family of Seán Clárach MacDonnell, the Irish poet.

18. The old family motto of the O’Halloran’s which he revived—lothaim agus marbhaim—seems to be a rather inappropriate one for a surgeon!
Do charras fein go feas seabhac is aoirde mor mheas
easna cnuais do cheap chum ollamh oirdhearc ionnruich
is caoin 'sas cneasda ceannus caomh ionnruich
Fionnhar fleagach feasach fior clumhamuill
an tsaoil ghlile ghasda a reachd a bpriomhuighdar.
craobh do cheap ghlan cheart Ui hAlludhrain.

Though O'Halloran was zealously devoted to the history and language of his
country, he seems to have taken at least no active part in the virile national
movement that stirred Ireland so profoundly in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Two
of his medical contemporaries in Limerick, however, appear to have been connected with
the Insurrectionary movement of 1798. These were Dr. George Hargrove and Dr. Robert
Ross. The former specialised in surgery and, like O'Halloran, was prominent in the
councils of the local Literary Society which, in the latter years of the eighteenth
century, numbered many notable citizens among its members. An English traveller in
Ireland in 1791, Charles Bowden, included Limerick in his tour and states:

There are a number of gentlemen in this city of considerable eminence in polite
literature. Among these Dr. O'Halloran, Dr. Hargrove, Mr. Ously, the Rev. Dr. Maunsell,
Councillor Casey, Mr. O'Dell and Mr. Perry are said to move in the highest sphere.
Mr. Perry is son to the bishop and has been, I am informed, very particularly favoured
by the muses.

There are three newspapers here. That which is in the first estimation is called
The Limerick Herald. It is printed by one Gloster, a bookseller, from whom I purchased
a few trifles. For the superior merit of the Herald he is entirely indebted to one of
the gentlemen just mentioned—Dr. Hargrove, who practises, but in a surgical depart-
ment, with great credit and success. I remember to have read in a London paper,
of which my relative, Captain Topham, is editor, some fancy pieces, extracted from The
Limerick Herald, which a unity of genius and benevolence could only produce, and which
does infinite honour to Hargrove's pen. He possesses the talent of giving even to trifles
a something interesting and important. I am told he is sole proprietor of the Herald.

Dr. Hargrove and Dr. Ross, as has been said, were associated with the Insurrec-
tion of 1798. A few weeks after its outbreak, both were brought before a British court-
martial. They were, however, allowed to go free on giving bail of £500 each, but were
to appear when called on and were to keep the peace for seven years.

Another doctor residing at this time in Limerick, Dr. Samuel Crumpe, was widely
known for his proficiency in his profession. He wrote a volume, entitled The Properties
of Opium, which was translated into several languages, but he is better remembered as
the author of a volume on Unemployment, in which the social condition of the Ireland
of the time is ably and lucidly analysed. It is favourably quoted by Lecky and other writers
on eighteenth-century Ireland. Several members of his family were medical practitioners
in Kerry during the nineteenth century, and there is a common saying still heard in
many parts of that county, Tá sé cómh maith le Dochtúir Crumpe, which is applied to
any one showing an unusual skill in relieving human ills. Dr. Crumpe's promising
career was cut short in 1796 when he was in his thirtieth year. Walking one day along
a Limerick street, he saw a group of citizens around a poor woman who had collapsed
there. He found she was suffering from a fever and had her conveyed to a hospital, where

19. More or less contemporaneous with O'Halloran was another enthusiast in Limerick for Irish
studies—Dr. Simon O'Riordan, a medical practitioner in the city. Mr. Seumas O'Casade (that zealous
worker in the field of Irish literature and biography) has written much about him in The Irish Book
Lover. O'Riordan was one of the moving spirits in the Society for the Revival of Ancient Irish Literature
in Limerick in the early years of the 19th century. Mr. O'Casade states that O'Riordan maintained in his
house for several years Peter O'Connell, the Irish lexicographer, while the latter was engaged in com-
pleting his Irish Dictionary. Father M. Molony informs me that Dr. O'Riordan died in July 1821 at his
residence in George Street.

20. Dr. Robert Ross was married to Mary, daughter of Vere Hunt, of Friarstown, Co. Limerick. In this
connection it is interesting to note that Anne Tandy, sister of the Irish patriot leader, James Napper
Tandy, was married to George Wilkinson, of Limerick, whose family was related to that of the Hunts.
A portrait in oils of Napper Tandy was a feature of Friarstown House up to a year ago, when it was
vacated.
he attended her. He contracted the contagion himself, however, and died from its effects\(^{21}\).

Before finally passing from this late eighteenth-century period, rendered notable by O'Halloran and his contemporaries, reference should be made to Sir John MacNamara Hayes who, born in Limerick in 1750, achieved high distinction in England, where all his life was spent. He was the son of John Hayes and Margaret, daughter and co-heiress of Sheedy MacNamara of Ballyalla, Co. Clare (Foster's Baronetage further describes him as the great-grandson of Colonel Edmund Hayes). Having taken his medical degree at Rheims, he became a surgeon at first in the British naval and later in the same military forces. As such he went through the American War of Independence, in connection with which his name occurs again and again throughout the official reports of that campaign. On his return to London at its conclusion, he was appointed Physician-extraordinary to the Prince of Wales and created a baronet for his special war services, while he also filled the office of Inspector-General of the military department at Woolwich. He had the reputation of possessing much benevolence, which he particularly displayed towards his own countrymen. Lord Cloncurry tells in his Reminiscences how, when he was a prisoner in the Tower of London in 1795 and 1799 on account of his connection with the United Irishmen, his health was seriously impaired owing to harsh treatment. He asked that Sir John Hayes should be permitted to examine him and, when this was granted, Hayes was prepared to give a certificate that would lead to his liberation. This was foiled, however, by the summoning of another physician, who refused to co-operate with his colleague.

James Roche, a well-known Limerick banker, makes in his Essays of an Octogenarian a passing reference to Sir John Hayes as follows: —

This gentleman was a native of Limerick, the son of a respectable shoemaker, who gave him an education that enabled him to obtain the appointment of surgeon during the American War on board the vessel in which Prince William Henry, afterwards William IV., entered the naval service. He soon attracted the notice of the royal sailor, whose unvarying protection he long enjoyed and, from his talents and character, well deserved. After years of absence, he paid in or about 1783 a short visit to his parents, whom my father, in compliment to him, who brought a letter of introduction, invited to dinner together with him. I well recollect how much the humble but excellent couple obviously felt out of their element in unwonted society, while their son had acquired all the forms of polished life.

Sir John Hayes died in London in 1809, leaving two sons. With the death of the second of these in 1896 (he was Protestant rector of Westminster in Middlesex) the baronetcy ceased to exist.

This distinguished Limerickman lies buried in the heart of London in the Church of St. James, Piccadilly. A small mural monument on its north side under the gallery marks his grave. It bears the following inscription: —

Sacred to the memory of
Sir John MacNamara Hayes, Baronet,
Inspector-General of the Medical Department in the Ordnance,
Sir John was raised to the Baronetage
in 1797, as a reward for his services, and
died in 1809, aged fifty nine, beloved and respected
by all who knew him.

III.

Coming to comparatively modern times, we find lustre added to Limerick’s medical annals by the name of Sir Matthew Tierney (1776—1845). Born in Ballyscanlan in the middle of the county, he was the eldest son of John Tierney and his wife Mary, daughter of James Gleeson of Rathcannon. \(^{21}\) Fitzgerald’s History of Limerick describes him as

\(^{21}\) It is curious to find so careful a writer as Dr. Madden confounding (in a volume of his great work on the United Irishmen) Dr. Samuel Crumpe with another physician of the same name, Dr. Christopher Crump, of Mayo. The latter became an insurgent leader when the French came to Killala in 1798, and was subsequently expatriated.

\(^{21}\) Lenihan states that he was “born at Rathkeale, where his father kept a small shop.”
having been educated at "Mr. Buckley's school at Athlaca, at that time the most respectable in Munster." After some preliminary study at London hospitals, he entered Edinburgh University and took his degree at Glasgow in 1802. Sharp debates were proceeding at the time in medical circles regarding the efficacy of vaccination against the disease of smallpox. Tierney was an enthusiastic supporter of the new treatment, and, while at Edinburgh, heard a strong indictment of it delivered by Professor James Gregory, a famous medical savant of the day. After the lecture Tierney called on him and so influenced the Professor that the latter requested him to vaccinate his own son.

After obtaining his degree, Tierney settled at Brighton, where he was appointed physician to the household of the Prince of Wales, who a few years later selected him for his own physician. And again when the Prince Regent became king as George the Fourth, he became his medical attendant, while later he filled the same high office under William the Fourth.

It is of interest to note that he was for many years on intimate terms with an old Limerick neighbour, Count Maurice de Lacy, the illustrious Russian general. Letters show that Sir Matthew was chosen by him as an intermediary to distribute large sums of money for the benefit of his relatives at home in County Limerick.

Sir Matthew lived to a ripe age, dying at Brighton on the verge of his seventieth year. In an obituary notice The Times of October 29th, 1845, refers to him as follows:—

This eminent physician, who was one of the oldest inhabitants of Brighton, died yesterday morning at his residence, Pavilion Parade, Brighton, after a short illness arising from an attack of gout. The deceased was physician-in-ordinary to George IV., whose personal friendship he had the honour to enjoy for a great number of years, and also to William IV., and the Royal Household when in Brighton. He was born in November, 1776, and was consequently in his 69th year. In 1808 he married a daughter of the late Mr. Henry Jones of Bloomsbury Square, by whom he had no issue. He was created a Baronet in 1818 and obtained a second patent in 1834, with remainder to his brother, Mr. Edmund Tierney of Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin, a Crown Solicitor for Ireland.

This paper should not, perhaps, be completed without some notice of a native of County Limerick, whose curiously versatile career is in many ways unique. This was Mr. St. John Long who, though not belonging to the orthodox profession of medicine, attained considerable celebrity as a quack and a charlatan. He was born at Newcastle West in the year 1788 and was the son of John Long, "a basket-maker and Jack-of-all-Trades" (whose real name was said to be O'Driscol), and his wife, Anne St. John. As a boy he showed unusual talent for drawing and was sent, through the generosity of some charitable neighbours, to the Dublin Art School. He returned in a few years to his native place, and for some time supported himself by painting landscapes and portraits. (It is probable that examples of his work are to be found in old houses throughout the County Limerick). In his twenty-fourth year he went to London, where he continued his artistic work, which was praised by the critics and gained him a certain reputation at various exhibitions. Five years later—in 1827—he abandoned art for medicine and, after some effective advertising, gained a high repute, especially in the fashionable world, as a specialist in the treatment of Consumption. His house in Harley Street was besieged by titled notabilities of the day and, within three years, he had amassed an immense fortune. In 1830, when one of his patients died from the effects of his treatment, he was arrested, charged with manslaughter and found guilty, but was discharged on paying a fine of £250. At his trial the Marquis of Sligo, the Marchioness of Ormond and more than sixty other witnesses gave evidence in his favour, and the verdict, strangely enough, increased rather than diminished his clientele. He became the object of very bitter attacks, especially from the members of the medical profession, but high encomiums, too, were poured on him from many sides. One of his own countrymen, the famous humourist writer, Dr. Maginn, lampooned him in a burlesque Latin poem entitled Epitaph on a Fair Patient of St. John Long's. It begins thus:—

Hic jacet in terris
Pulchra puella;
Voluit esse melior
Dum fuit uella.
The versifier goes on to describe her ailment and the treatment, and continues:

"Quis administravit?
Sanctus Johannes!
Quibus recommendatus?
Plurimis zanies."

"Quis fuit ille
Johannes prafatus?
O' Driscoll Billy
Olim nuncupatus!

"Medicus?"—"nequaquam
Sed Pictor signorum,
In Tipperaria
Inops honorum."

Many other verses follow in a similar vein, pouring ridicule on the charlatan and his patrons.

At the height of his fame St. John Long fell a victim to the disease which he professed to cure, dying in 1834 in his thirty-sixth year. In his Will he left his "secret" to his brother, who sold it for an immense sum, and he also left £1,000 for a temple of Greek design to be erected over his grave in Kensal Green cemetery. (22) This elaborate monument is embellished with Aesculapian emblems of various kinds, and the following epitaph is engraved on it:

It is the fate of most men to have many enemies and few friends. This monumental pile is not intended to mark a career, but to show how much its inhabitant was respected by those who knew his worth and the benefits derived from his remedial discovery. He is now at rest, and far beyond the praises or censures of the world. Stranger, as you respect the receptacle of the dead (as one of the many who will rest here) read the name of

John St. John Long
without comment
Died July 2nd, 1834, aged 37 years.

22. Long published several quasi-medical works, which had a wide circulation. Among them were Discoveries in the Art of Healing and A Critical Exposure of the Ignorance and Malpractise of certain Medical Practitioners.