A Journey from Cork to Limerick in December 1790

SÍLE NÍ CHINNEIDE

The French scholar Charles Etienne Coquebert de Montbret who was appointed as consul in Dublin by Louis XVI in 1789 kept a record of all he saw and heard during his travels in Ireland, and from these rough notes, jotted down for his own information and amusement, much can be gleaned about local affairs in this country towards the end of the eighteenth century. Having examined in detail the social, economic and cultural life of Cork and Kerry over a period of four months, predictably the consul felt that his next duty was to visit the second largest city in Munster, and undeterred by the prospect of travelling on bad roads at the worst season of the year, this he proceeded to do in December 1790. In the following pages we accompany him step by step on his journey from the Lee to the Shannon.

"I left Cork," he writes, "at nine o'clock in the morning on December 27th in a hired carriage belonging to Mr. Hamel of Hammond's Marsh." While admitting that this method of travelling is neither cheap nor fast he considers it very suitable for anybody anxious to get to know the country, apart from the fact that it is the only method of travelling in Ireland outside the fixed routes such as those from Dublin to Cork, Dublin to Limerick and Dublin to Belfast.

The first part of the journey passes without incident and making their way by Bottlehill, or Battlehill, Ballynamona and Lord Muskery's house, now destroyed, the party arrives in Mallow in time for lunch at one o'clock. This lunch break must have been brief for all that is noted about the town is that many people come there to drink the waters, especially during the summer months, and that these waters (very much the same as those in Bristol) are superlative for chest diseases, consumption and such-like ailments.

Up to this point travelling conditions must have been relatively safe for the first mishap recorded occurs on "the steep slippery hill leading out of the town." It began when a beggarman attempting to stop the carriage got into an altercation with the postilion. Pushed aside, the affronted beggar overwhelmed the travellers with curses with the result that when shortly afterwards the horses refused to move the driver made no effort to urge them forward. "See how the beggar's curses are following us!" he wailed, "we shall never get out of this." Then, apparently as discouraged as their driver, the horses began to slip backwards and were on the point of being hurled down the slope when, thanks to the "never failing helpfulness of the Irish peasantry" and to the efforts of a man of more importance who came especially from Mallow, the danger was averted with no worse consequences than a delay that forced

1 Most of the observations here recorded are to be found in a manuscript listed in the Catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, as Nouv. Acq. XXIII, Irlande iii, feuillets 164 vers — 188 vers. The original text is in French and the writer's spelling of placenames has been retained throughout.
the party to spend the night "in a thatched house in a rather miserable village called Buttervant."

**Buttervant**

Surprisingly enough under that humble roof, the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Casey, provided good beds, a good fire and quite a good supper of snipe, teal, wild-duck, etc. "What more could we need?", asks Coquebert, adding that this was not the first time when expecting nothing he was better served than elsewhere. From his host he learns that the town is owned by Lord Barrymore; the parish priest is a Father Roche and the Protestant minister is a Mr. Hamilton.

To imagine our travellers relaxing for long hours in the comfortable beds of the O'Casey family after the hard going of that first day would be to underestimate the indomitable Coquebert. Anxious to see all that was to be seen, he and his friends appear the following morning before dawn at the near-by abbey where "crows and other birds, now the sole inhabitants, frightened by visitors at such an early hour awoke and fled in every direction." Close to the western entrance they find a cubic mass of piled-up bones said to have been placed there after a battle, and through the loopholes of a vaulted "souterrain" under the church (with another tier above) they get a fine view of the River Awbeg passing almost at their feet. Nothing more than a roof, Coquebert reflects, would be needed to put the church into use again. And in fact, two monks are still fairly well housed on the lands of the convent where they say Mass in fine weather, 9 "the celebration of the office in the ruins being well calculated to maintain the devotion of the people." A Cork merchant named O'Connor tells the visitors how arriving there in the depth of winter he found a number of people assembled in prayer. Anxious as always to gather information from those in close contact with the local inhabitants, Coquebert calls to the house in which the monks are living only to be told by "a large buxom woman suitable for looking after two Franciscan friars" that the priests are away from home, having gone into the country to hold stations and to make their Christmas collection.

Other places in the district that excite his interest are the former abbey of Ballybeg and the village of Doneraile. If the local stories are to be believed, Ballybeg Abbey ceased to function before the dissolution of the monasteries because "a monk summoned to Rome sold his soul to the devil in order to travel more quickly and as a result the place was cursed by the pope." Amused by this sample of local lore, the party decides to visit Doneraile, their curiosity inspired by Smith's statement that in his time Doneraile was the most beautiful village in Ireland. Nothing is said to confirm or to contradict Smith's assessment. All that is noted about the place is the existence of marble quarries and the fact that very fine pottery had formerly been made there from clay resembling that of Carlingford. The last place viewed on this excursion from Buttervant is Castle Saffron "a castle so named from the saffron once cultivated there for use by the ancient Irish."

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9 Earlier Coquebert found a 'monk' at Muckross which, together with this entry, shows that friars were still operating from their ancient foundations in Munster during the late eighteenth century.
Charleville

Back on the main route the road leads through a limestone region towards the Ballyhowry mountains, steep on the eastern side with gentle slopes to the west. At the foot of these mountains road conditions deteriorate to such an extent that on a bare patch still covered with ice from the frost of the night before, the carriage comes to a halt. Not for long, however, as the "ever-helpful Irishmen" soon appear on the scene once more to hoist the vehicle to safety, after which the grateful passengers entertain their rescuers to a drink. "I should advise anybody who travels in Ireland", writes Coquebert, "to take tobacco and brandy with him in order to acknowledge services rendered; for most Irishmen appreciate small gifts like these far more than double their value in money." On this note of mutual goodwill, rescuers and rescued party company as the travellers resume their journey to Charleville where they now intend to spend the night.

Charleville, "formerly known as Rath Eoghan," turns out to be little more than one long street with a market place in the middle. To find accommodation the group has to sleep in a couple of inns, Coquebert and his small son securing beds at the widow Flemming's place. From there, as was his wont, the father decides to call on the parish priest. Indeed, the friendly rapport this rather cynical French scholar establishes with the Catholic clergy all over the country is one of the most remarkable facts to emerge from the pages of this diary. The fact that so many of them had been educated in France may account in part for the warmth with which Irish priests greeted a visitor from that land. And that he for his part came to respect their way of life and to understand their problems is clear from such entries as: "although many family bursaries are available at the rue du Cheval Vert, students at the Lombard College have to be kept for three or four years at the expense of their people at home until they can earn some money for saying Mass." Nothing then from his previous experience of clerical attitudes to foreigners prepared him for his strange encounter with the parish priest of Charleville. The incident is best recounted in his own words:

I got a boy at the hotel to bring me to the house of the parish priest, a man named Garret Morris, requesting the lad to inform the priest that a Frenchman passing through the town would like to speak to him. As I waited at the door the wily old fellow, no doubt suspecting a request for alms, began by abusing the boy for bringing along visitors. Then, just as I was about to depart, out he came himself, breviary in hand, "Sir", he said very brusquely, "you see that I am saying my office, a priest's first duty, therefore I cannot receive you". "But, monsieur", said I, "suppose I were a person in need of some advice, or a man seeking spiritual or temporal assistance?" "It would make no difference" he answered, still more abruptly, "my breviary comes before all else"; and with that, he shut his door. I found it extremely drole that a priest from whom I was asking nothing should slam the door in my face, while the evening before — and indeed that very day — simple countryfolk had given us every help with so much warm-heartfulness, refusing to accept any compensation for their trouble.

This incident amused Coquebert as it also amused his friends in Cork and Limerick. Nor was the Rev. Garret Morris the only strange character encountered in Charleville. At the hotel the newly-arrived had already heard about a pilgrim living in the vicinity,

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4 Coquebert's ten-year-old son, Ernst, was his constant companion during his travels in Ireland.
5 In Paris, later known as rue des Irlandais.
and not wishing to dine alone he decides to contact this individual. What he had already learned about the "hermit" who lived for many years at Muckross 'Abbey' probably aroused his curiosity concerning the existence of such peculiar people in the Irish countryside. His meeting with the Charleville specimen reads as follows:

I sent for a sort of pilgrim called Hogan who had been described to me as a bon vivant. He was a man of about sixty years of age with fiery eyes and a long grey beard. He wore a cloak on his shoulders, carried a gnarled staff in his hand — all the appurtenances of a pilgrim of St. James. A bottle of wine soon set him talking and the good apostle laughed heartily at the hypocrisy of the curé — professional jealousy. He had lived, he said, for fifteen years on the charity of good people. He treated me to a long discourse on his illustrious ancestors, Milesian on his father's side and Strongbowian on his mother's. He is descended, he appeared, from the Hogans of Tipperary, the most important family in the kingdom who ruled Ormond and defeated the Danes under Brian Boru. This fellow with his bragging, his pious slanders and his counterfeit tone of piety and inspiration amused me for an hour or two in a town that offered little of interest. As we were leaving he made my son go down on his knees to receive his blessing. I bade farewell to him with a good bottle of wine in his stomach and six shillings in his pocket.

As a student of human nature, Coquebert obviously enjoyed his meetings with these two irascible characters in Charleville but the only features of the town itself that merit his attention are its cavalry regiment and its protestant school. Luckily the following day's itinerary gave promise of better things. From Brooke's Gazette, Dublin 1776, Coquebert has learned that Kilmallock was once an important place, "described by some geographers as the Balbec of Ireland." And arriving there on the morning of December 29, he feels that the ruins support the view that it was a town of some consequence at one time. It would appear to have been surrounded by walls flanked by towers, and the many well-built houses of grey limestone (from old abandoned quarries on the outskirts of the town) stand in strange contrast to the miserable hovels nearby. Some of these houses are embellished with a pointed arcade running all along the cornice of the first story, but the arches of the doors are rounded, none en ogive. Many churches are to be seen, including the abbey which Coquebert cannot explore because the entrance is cut off by an overflow of water from a nearby stream. Over the gates still standing are two kinds of fortresses, one of which is now being used as a prison. That these ruins should send two members to the Dublin parliament puzzles a foreigner. The only inhabitant mentioned is the parish priest, a Monsieur Font, and it was probably he who warned the travellers that the only inn in the place was a very bad one but that they would find two excellent hotels at Bruff, just four miles farther on.

Even the short drive from Kilmallock to Bruff does not pass without some measure of excitement. On this occasion the carriage is held up by the presence of a crowd assembled to gaze at the body of a sailor found lying on the road. The victim, it appeared, was a man who had just obtained his discharge and his throat had been cut by two comrades with whom he had been drinking the night before. In spite of this gruesome sight, the diarist finds time to comment on some of the more noteworthy places to be found on the River Maigue — Croom, once the property of the O'Donovans and later held by a branch of the Fitzgerald family, from which the family took its device, 'Crom Abu,' and Bruree where, according to O'Halloran, the bards continued to hold their concourses up to 1740. That there are no longer such meetings in Ireland is also noted, although they are still held in Wales.
In addition to its two inns, Bruff has also a church and a chapel. Bruff belongs to a Sir Henry Hartstonge but the land on the other side of a stream called Cavour, or Morning Star, is owned by Lord Carbury (Evans). Bruff is in the barony now called Small County, formerly Aos Greine from the mountain of Knock Greine up to Limerick, and Aos Traimage from Owny to Limerick. The first part was the patrimony of the O’Commings, now O’Connells, who have given their name to the castle known as Castle Connell.

Leaving Bruff the travellers are now within twelve miles of their destination and the last stage of their journey is described as follows:

The road from Charleville to Kilmallock is very flat as is also that from Kilmallock to Bruff, but beyond one approaches a chain of mountains of strange broken and picturesque form. This is the part of our route best worth seeing. To the right, two or three miles from Bruff, is a bare grey limestone mountain called Ordun Reagh forming part of a chain of low hills high enough to command a good view of this very flat region. A castle of the Lords of Desmond guards the pass. Our road takes us past a pretty lake a mile and a half (half a league) in circumference lying between fertile hills. According to the Dublin Magazine, p. 288, 1764, the waters of this lake become disturbed and fetid at the approach of bad weather. O’Halloran holds that there was a town called Cahir quite close by on the main route from Cork to Limerick, the remains of streets and other traces having been found there. Harris places ‘Monastere na Gallach’, or na Callach, near the lake, a monastery of the canonesses of St. Augustin — des caillites. A mile beyond is the ruined castle of Loughguir held by the Desmond branch of the Fitzgeralds in 1600. In this place are two large circles about 150 feet in diameter formed by great blocks of stone, and, to the right further down, two clusters of stones of the type known as “kernan”.

Unfortunately for Coquebert, and for us, the jours courts of winter cut short a personal exploration of the Loughguir district, forcing the travellers to press on to where a black limestone bridge, almost in ruins, is being repaired. This is Sixmile-bridge beyond which is an abandoned castle believed by the diarist to be Rockstown Castle.

As the snow has lasted for only one day, the whole countryside is exposed to the travellers’ view. After Mallow little broom is to be seen and the fields are full of cattle, cattle that in the French consul’s opinion are of little benefit to the country, considering the fine crops this fertile land could produce. But what really horrifies a stranger is the condition of the many wretched dwellings confined to the roadside to avoid breaking up the pasturage. Nobody, he feels, travelling through Ireland could witness such misery unmoved, a misery accentuated by the sumptuous style of living enjoyed by the seigneurs. And it is even a greater shock to find that the people living in these hovels near Limerick city are paying a combined sum of between £800 and £1000 yearly in hearth money. The blacksmiths’ shops alone, where they are to be found, are very picturesque. The same cannot be said of large sculptured yew trees seen in a minister’s garden beside an isolated church two and a half miles from Ballineety. These, strangely enough, are viewed with disgust, “the kind of bad taste seldom encountered in Ireland.” Two miles from the offending yews, the city of Limerick comes into view with the mountains of Clare beyond.

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*Six-Mile-Bridge, Co. Limerick, is shown on the map attached to The Post Chaise Companion, published in 1803, together with the note that it is near Grange, “the beautiful and well improved seat of Standish Grady, Esq.”*
Shannonside

Coquèbert's description of Limerick City, its buildings, streets and cultural life, already published in an earlier edition of this Journal need not be reproduced here. However, since the French consul's interest was not confined to the city itself, and since his scattered notes contain more about the Shannon region than is to be found in the previous monograph, some further observations made after his arrival in the city are worth recording. Most of his information comes from a Mr. Arthur and a Mr. Roche, Limerick merchants who are in close touch with rural life. Arthur, married to a sister of Sir Lucius O'Brien, lives on his wife's patrimony, situated half-way between Limerick and Killaloe. This estate consists of 300 arpents of land, together with 200 arpents of forest (old plantations) and more than that amount of woodland along the river at Crathalagh. Roche's domain, also acquired through marriage with an O'Brien, lies near the river two miles from Askeyton. This branch of the O'Brien family has died out on the death of Mrs. Roche's brother in the Austrian service. From these facts we can assume that female members of the old aristocratic families whose men-folk had departed for military service in foreign lands were well content to marry into the rich merchant class of Limerick City.

Turning first to the notes on Co. Clare, we learn that Clare cattle, unlike the small black beasts of Kerry, are fairly large, with curved horns sometimes twisting right back to their mouths. They have long tails, are well furnished with hair below, and usually have thick curly coats. As little of the land is suitable for fattening cattle it is mostly used for breeding, and although the winters are mild, the animals of poor tenants are often in grave danger. On the other hand, the best wool in Ireland is reputed to come from the Burren. Unfortunately, high prices are now being paid for English bulls, cows and rams, and English sheep admired for their short legs and round bodies, are doing serious harm to Clare wool. Everybody, it seems, agrees that this is so.

The flat coastal regions of Co. Clare are very thinly populated and, apart from a few catches of herrings, very little fishing is done there. Limerick City is supplied with fish from Kinsale, Youghal and Dungarvan. On the other hand, Burren oysters now being sent to Dublin are a valuable source of wealth. Oysters from Kenmare Bay are sold in Cork City for six shillings a hundred, but those from the Burren fetch even a higher price. Oysters, however, can be bought locally from people on the roadside for twenty pence a hundred, though these may well have been an inferior type, also mentioned, that are taken from the bed of the Shannon.

A visit to Quin Abbey provides an interesting link between France and Co. Clare. There the many memorials commemorating members of the MacNamara family remind the French visitor of the valuable service that family has rendered to France. He recalls that the parents of John MacNamara (+1747), vice-admiral of the French Navy and commandant of Rochefort, who was awarded the Grand Cross of St. Louis, had their property in the baronies of Burren and Tulla. And this man's nephew, Henry MacNamara, not only became a vice-admiral in his turn but was also made a count by Louis XVI. It was this Henry MacNamara who brought back the ambassadors of Tipoo. A note, obviously added at a later date, states that Henry MacNamara

has been put to death at the Ile de France. 8

Bela, at the mouth of the estuary, lies in Co. Clare, and good anchorage is to be had at Carrigaholt, Foynes Island and Kilrush. Other features of the lower part of the river mentioned are Inis Gotha (the Windy Island), “Inis Scattery today” and an escarped rock, “Ile Rocal,” so resembling a ship that it has often been mistaken for one. The Shannon current is swift, though a swimmer informs Coquebert that it is not as strong as the current in the Garonne. The account of the salmon weirs owned by the Corporation has been published elsewhere 9 and need not be quoted again beyond a note that further clarifies the price at which salmon are sold. Limerick salmon, the biggest in these islands, cost from six-pence to twelve-pence a pound in winter, but are to be had for two-pence in the season. Herrings appear in the river from June to August; a few are caught even in December, and Coquebert recalls that he has eaten herrings in Cork in the month of November.

Tarbert is to Limerick what Cove is to Cork. Ships halt there when the wind makes it difficult to mount or to descend the river, and it is there that the Customs Bureau is situated. Ordinary tides at Limerick are eight feet, spring tides sixteen feet. Ships of 500 tons stop at Pool, one mile from the city; those of 350 tons come to the dock on the Clare side of the river and the others, needing only 13 or 14 feet of water, dock at the Customs House. Prior to Coquebert’s arrival twenty-four ships had been held up for several months, five in the port and nineteen outside. The reason for this hold-up is not given. Cargoes on these vessels include coal and salt from Liverpool, slates from Valencia, wine and fruit from Lisbon, kelp in transit from Galway to Belfast, and oats from Clare bound for Liverpool. The city has little direct trade with the Indies — most of the traffic is with England. Limerick itself has only about eleven or twelve ships of about 150 tons and a few sloops, some of which go to Killybegs to fish. A Mr. Nesbitt of Ballyshannon has been making £5,000 a year from fishing whales which frequent the N.E. coast from May to the end of August.

Ballisbridge (damaged some years previously) should be called Baldbridge, being a translation of the Irish name Drochadh Maol, maol meaning a bald man or a cow without horns. The bridge was so named because it was without a parapet. Another bridge of fourteen arches, all different, is astonishingly flat and solid. This bridge has existed for five or six hundred years. Although sometimes covered with water, it survived even the frosts of 1740. Near it are a few old towers. Clare begins at the bridge. One mile beyond, on the road from Irishtown, there is a quarry of beautiful black marble. This road is very neglected and there is very little contact between the two towns — Baile Gall, la ville anglaise, and Baile Gaoidheal, la ville irlandaise, “see Cogadh Gaoidheal re Gallaibh, lingua Gallica, ouvrage excellent.” At Partine, a village near an island one mile from the city, there are weirs, a castle built to protect them and a beautiful house owned by Mr. Quinn. Mr. Bruce has built a number of small dwellings suitable for artisans at Castle Connell, by means of which he hopes to attract workers.

Limerick has three or four thousand houses, all very crowded. The population in 1760 was 32,196, but since the ramparts were removed the place is not longer un-

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8 The support of Tipu, Sultan of Mysore (1782), was constantly sought by both France and England in their struggle for supremacy in India. News of the French Revolution having reached Ile de France, Madagascar, the inhabitants ordered Henry MacNamara to put the new laws into force, and, on his continued refusal to do so, he was finally hanged on the 4th of November, 1790.

healthy. Some old houses, like those in Galway, have survived — the curious Thomond House in Great Street, one near the quay, one near the former post office and one near Mr. Roche’s house. The lighting system has not operated for three years but there are six night-guard posts. The only garrison is a regiment of infantry lodged in the former citadel. The city bank is that of Thomas Maunsell & Co., founded in 1789. The two hotels are the Black Swan at Thomond Gate and Taylor’s New Inn in Irish-town. For entertainment the citizens have two cafés (one for gaming) and two salles de Comédie. The Menonites have a library near the Court House. The only promenade a very dirty one in winter, is along the canal to the Shannon. In his professional capacity as French Consul, Coquibert is unhappy to find that port-wine is ousting the wine of Bordeaux from the Limerick market. Of the 36,000 pipes of wine produced in Portugal, 20,000 pass into British territory. This new preference for port he explains by the fact that it is as strong as brandy, and as people do not switch from robust to delicate beverages, once they become accustomed to the emotional effect of strong drink they are forced to continue using it. One of the local wine merchants is John O’Bryen, and other traders mentioned are Michael Rochfort, John Arthur and the Quakers, Fisher and Harvey.

The addiction of upper-class men and women in Limerick to strong drink, especially whisky, an addiction unmatched in other parts of Munster, is remarked upon more than once and it is clear that Coquibert takes a rather poor view of the rich inhabitants’ way of life. “They eat and drink too much, wasting their time.” It would be difficult to believe that all the wholesale merchants were “wasting their time”. However, Coquibert explains that there are only eight or nine such merchants in the city, while he is told that the attorneys (procureurs) number about four hundred and that the advocates are still more numerous. It seems that these lawyers share about £500,000 a year between them, money they spend as fast as they earn it. In the light of such affluence the mayor’s allowance of 20/- a day appears surprisingly low, a disregard offset perhaps by the fact that following his year of office he becomes “a Justice of the Peace, and a member of the Corporation”. The Protestant bishop enjoys £3,200 a year as compared with the Catholic bishop’s income of £200. La Touche’s grandfather was a wool (?) merchant in Francis Street. The son became associated with the bank of alderman Keane, or Kane, in Dublin, hence his rise to fortune. La Touche controls the exchange through the national bank. This bank remits money to the absenteees at a fixed rate of ½ or 1 per cent which produces a profit of £8,000.

However convinced Coquibert may have been of the irresponsibility and extravagance of the upper classes in Limerick, his carnet leave us with the impression that he met more congenial spirits in that city than in any other place visited during his various tours in Ireland. Nowhere else did he contact so many men of learning in such a short period. The fluent French spoken by most of his new acquaintances must have helped him to plunge straight into the vigorous cultural life of the city. Confined to the house by a freak storm of snow, hail and lightning during his visit to the Arthurs, he and the Arthur family pass the time reading with cynical amusement the new highly romantic novel Caroline that has just arrived at Glennamarc. And reading of more lasting interest is put at his disposal by friends in the city. For further reference, no doubt, he makes a list of works concerning the history of Ireland in—

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10 It was at Taylor’s that Coquibert lodged during his stay in Limerick.
11 This entry supports the view of certain critics that Caroline de Montmorency, a Tale Founded on Fact, is incorrectly included in all our major bibliographies of eighteenth century English novels. The fact that it was in the hands of Coquibert’s friends four years before its publication in England (1794) proves it to have been a translation of a French novel.
cluding those of Harris, Curry, O'Halloran, Hutchinson, Parker, Archdale, etc.,
together with some rare volumes published on the Continent such as *Hibernia resurgens
contre les persecutions des irlandais* by Donat Roik, Rouen 1621, *Sculis hiberniae
restitutis* by Jean Ponce, irlandais, Paris 1660, and Allemand's *Histoire monastique
d'Irlande*, Paris, 1690. 'Chez Arthur', where a *rotation au café* is to be had for twopence,
he discovers a very comfortable place in which to read.

But it is from the treasures stored in Mr. Ralph Ousley's house that the French
scholar derives the greatest satisfaction. Mr. Ousley has a singular collection of newspa-
pers from all over the world including papers from Calcutta and Bengal in which
some of the information is printed in English, some in Persian and some in an Indian
vernacular. More interesting still is Ousley’s fine collection of archaeological finds,
the first Coquebert has seen in Ireland. Fascinated by the one hundred strange ob-
jects exposed to his gaze, he applies his knowledge of classical antiquities in an effort
to grasp the nature and purpose of the various items, and for further reference he even
jots down an extract from Ousley's catalogue, an extract that reflects the collector's
intelligent approach to his subject since it records not only the date of each find but
also, where possible, the place where it was discovered. The extract from the cata-
logue of more than one hundred items reads as follows 18:

Fifteen spurs.
Three trumpets *de cuivre*, stitic or trompettes à porte, found in the bog of Carrick O
Gunnell, County Limerick, May 1787. *V. Colligiones* no. 13, p. 43. Walker's *Irish Bards*, pp. 109
appendix 18. One weighs 3 lbs. 7 ozs.; two, with the mouthpiece in the middle, weigh 6 lbs.
4½ ozs., described in the *Transactions of the Academy. Thirteen darts and javelins from Roscommon, Clare, Ballinrobe, and a place near Ath-
lone.
Three swords *de cuivre*, one 16½ inches long, weighing 14 ozs., near Limerick, Co. of Clare, April 1785; another 23½ inches, 22 ozs., from the bog of Raigh, near Dunmore, Co. Galway, 1778. These swords, a mixture of copper, iron and a little zinc, are rust-resistant, could be
very sharp, and take a good polish.
Five halberds (hallebards).
A brass halbert, 10½ inches, 12 ounces, near Limerick, 1781.
A bit, *de cuivre*, for a horse, 15 ozs., from the bog of Culfough, Co. Galway, 1779.
The rings (anneaux) found near Athlone.
A togh eolas, or druid's chain, 1½ inches in diameter, 1 oz., found at Curnagelah, near
Brideswell, Co. Roscommon. Another of the same type, 5 ozs.
Celts, at least 12.
A tuagh naigite, or chopping axe, 1 oz.
A neat bodkin, 4 inches long, Co. Waterford.
3 drachmes.
A petrified wasps' nest from Willsborough, Co. Roscommon, weighing 6 ounces.
A logue bun scrieb, or *soulier irlandais*, found near Mone a Furr, near Dunmore, Co.
Galway, 1766, 12 spits deep. Another from Knock Glass, Co. Roscommon, 1782.
A large spoon *de cuivre*, 14½ inches long, found in a fort at Dundermot, Co. Roscommon,
1774.
A seal, near Limerick.
A mesh purse.
The two silver brooches of Clonmacnoise, King’s County. See Walker.
A silver ring from the ruins of Athlone Castle.
A statue *de cuivre* found in the bog of Cullen, Co. Tipperary, 1789, weighs 6 ozs.
A figure of a woman *de cuivre*, 3½ inches, weighs 6 ozs.

18 The extract from Ousley's catalogue is to be found in *Nouv. Acq.* XXIII, Irlande III, 20.000,
feuillet 171 revers, 178 avers and revers, a copy of which is now available in the National Library of
Ireland.
the Ancient and Modern Irish, and a Memoir on the Armour and Weapons of the Irish*, 2nd edition,
Dublin 1818—in volume II, pp. 205-209, is a chapter consisting of a letter dated 4/4/1788 from
Ralph Ousley, in which he lists some of the objects in his collection.
It is matters such as these that best illustrate Coquebert's contribution to our knowledge of cultural activities in Ireland towards the close of the eighteenth century. Nowhere else in contemporary descriptions of our island by foreign visitors do we find any worthwhile mention of this aspect of Irish life. Everywhere he went, as in duty bound, the French Consul made a survey of local trade and industry, taking note in the towns and cities of streets, buildings, and the number and way of life of the inhabitants. In this respect Limerick was no exception. What was exceptional about his visit to that city was the opportunity it offered to study the past history of Ireland as well as the contemporary scene. To have gathered so much information in such a short space of time was no mean achievement, dites toujours que vous restez peu de temps. In fact it was on December 29 that our traveller caught his first glimpse of the Shannon, and the last relevant entry in this section of his carnet reads: partie de Limerick 11 janvier, 1791.