Limerick and Gerald Griffin.

By REV. M. MOLONEY.

The Life of Gerald Griffin by his brother, Dr. Dan, carries the family line back to their grandfather, James Griffin, of Corgrig, near Foynes. James Griffin is buried at the ruined church of Cnoc Padraig above his Corgrig home, in a great vault which his family shared with their neighbours, the Bourkes of Tiermore. The Griffin surname does not appear among Limerick landowners in the Desmond or Cromwellian Surveys, and the family is probably descended from the Thomond sept of O Griobhtha, chiefs of Cínel Cuailenga, who held a considerable amount of freehold in Dysart and Ruan parishes until the Cromwellian Plantation. A Murtagh Griffin remained as tenant on some of these estates after the forfeiture (Frost's Clare, 487-9), and the Kerry Griffins may well be of that family. Egan O Rahilly has some vigorous lines on a conforming Murtagh Griffin who acquired property and influence in Kerry about 1700, and the poet makes it clear that this Griffin was a newcomer from Clare—amhus tar Sionainn tháinig.

The Limerick and Kerry Griffins had branches in West Clare from the early decades of the last century, and Dr. John Griffin of Kilrush and Kilkee, kinsman of the poet, married a daughter of Counsellor Nash-Griffin of the Kerry family. The Nash-Griffins had long been Protestant, and Dr. John also conformed. The families had some tradition of blood relationship, and Miss Hickson advances a surmise (Old Kerry Records II, 229), which fits in with the view. Early in the 18th century two Griffin brothers, Francis of Glannalappa and Richard, married two Fitzgerald sisters, grand-daughters of a Knight of Kerry. From a third brother was descended the Right Revd. Dr. Griffin who preceded Dr. Graves as Protestant Bishop of Limerick. Richard was ancestor of the Nash-Griffins of Kilkee; little is known about the descendants of Francis, and it is here that Miss Hickson advances the theory which is set out here for what it is worth:

Gerald Griffin, the poet and novelist, I was, and I may say I still am inclined to believe, a descendant of Hanora Fitzgerald and Francis Griffin because of the recurrence in his family of the Christian names Daniel and Gerald, and also from his familiarity with the localities around Glin and the border district between Limerick and North Kerry in which Glannalappa lies. But, although I made enquiry in every direction where I thought it possible to obtain authentic information on the subject, I could learn little or nothing of the gifted author's ancestors in the last century.

We might add William and Peter to the names common to the Corgrig Griffins and the Knights of Kerry. Gerald's knowledge of the Limerick-Kerry border need not surprise us: he spent his boyhood at Fairy Lawn, then in Glin parish, which Glannalappa adjoins. Even after his parents emigrated in 1820, a relative continued to live there, as a P. Griffin, Esq., of Fairy Lawn, figures among the subscribers to Lewis's Topographical Dictionary in 1837. A letter from Gerald, quoted in the Life, mentions a pair of "fair cousins" who joined the poet at Glin and accompanied his party to Killarney in the summer of 1832. If Miss Hickson's surmise is warranted, it would imply that Gerald's grandfather was a son of Francis Griffin of Glannalappa, as the inscription at Cnoc Padraig shows that James Griffin of Corgrig was born in 1730. The shield bears a heraldic "griffin" with the motto: Qui vincit devincit. By Gerald's time the family had lost the tradition of native origin: his brother suggested in the first edition of the Life that the Griffins were of Welsh descent.

The ruined castle at the rear of Corgrig House had once been a stronghold of a constable of the Earl of Desmond from which he levied toll on shipping bound up river to Limerick (Ing. 33 H. 8, in Lenihan, 91). The place became the manor house of the Trenchard Estate, one of the vast properties erected by Elizabeth on the ruin of the Desmond interest. In James Griffin's lifetime the estate passed to the Spring Rice family: half a century after his death the Griffith Valuation shows his descendant, a Gerald Griffin, holding the residence and 216 acres at Corgrig from Lord Monteagle. Mr. Pat O'Brien, who now resides there, believes the house was rebuilt a century ago, and the date "1841" set in tessellated work at the rear may commemorate these alterations. Meantime branches of the family had acquired further property in the neighbourhood. A Patrick Griffin resided in 1850 at Monavaha near Shanagolden, while three or four miles farther east Griffins were established in succession to the Copleys at Ballyclogh, and the Batemans at Alta Villa. Patrick, of Ballyclogh, and Peter, of Alta Villa, would appear to have been brothers of the Gerald Griffin then living at Corgrig. Peter may be identical
with the Peter Griffin who at the same period held Foynes Island from Lord Montagle. John Singleton Copley, the father of American painting, was the son of a Ballyclogh Copley who emigrated to Boston. A portrait of Gerald Griffin, presented some fifty years ago to the Limerick Corporation, is attributed to him or alternatively to Colpogy, a Limerick artist. Neither can have painted Gerald, as both artists died while he was yet a child. Lord Lyndhurst, Chancellor of England, was Copley’s son, and it is a curious coincidence that one of the few Catholic Lords Chancellor of Ireland since the Reformation—a Naish of Ballyculleen, related by marriage to the Griffins of Corgrig—should have been an immediate neighbour of the Coples of Ballyclogh.

Corgrig may take its name (carraigreach?) from the local shelves of naked limestone that reproduce in miniature the bare terraced landscape of the Burren. At Foynes, people still recall the shipping of stone sets from Corgrig quarries for a dock scheme in Liverpool sixty or more years ago. The quarry had a water borne trade even earlier and the City Librarian has drawn my attention to an advertisement in the Limerick Chronicle of 18th March, 1801, from Gerald Griffin of Corgrig stating that blocks from his quarry there had been used in the building of the Light House at Loop Head. Orders would have been taken at the quarry, the notice said, or by Mr. Pat Griffin of Bow Lane, Limerick. Pat was the poet’s father, and we may take it that the advertiser was the same Gerald Griffin who, according to the Parish Register, stood sponsor for his famous nephew at St. Mary’s Church, Limerick, six days before Christmas in 1803. A quarter of a century later Fitzgerald and McGregor state that: “At Corgrig is the house of Gerald Griffin, Esq.”

There are two brief references to Corgrig in the Life: a mention of it as the home of Gerald’s grandfather and again in connection with a passing visit during a trip to Killarney in July, 1832. “On Monday morning early we started from Pallas, and after a broiling drive lunched at Corrig, where we listened to some sweet piano music, plucked roses, and ate fruit in the garden, talked of the cholera, and started again to the west; arrived in Glin before dinner.” Among Gerald’s Corrig cousins at that date were three girls, aged 7, 10 and 15—all destined to enter the Convent of Mercy at Limerick which was to be founded in 1835. In entering religion, they were following the example of Gerald’s youngest sister, Lucy, his companion that day at Corrig, who was to join the Presentation Convent, Youghal, four years later. The first of the Corrig sisters entered St. Mary’s in 1840, the year of her gifted cousin’s death; she survived him by only three years. In the Convent Annals she and her sisters are described as daughters of Gerald and Brigid Griffin, parish of Robertstown; the parish register of Shanagolden shows that their mother’s name was Mulvihill. Brigid (M. Emilian) entered in 1852; Maria (M. Alphonseus) in the following year. Though they both lived well into this century they saw little of each other in the religious life, for M. Alphonseus left Limerick in 1853 with the colony that founded the Roscommon community, in which, after her profession two years later, she was appointed Mistress of Novices. She appears to have had pioneer qualities as in 1857 she went as Assistant to the new foundation at Athlone. She became Superioress in 1866 and continued to hold high office until relieved through ill health in 1903, five years before her death. Meantime many of her Corrig nephews had entered the priesthood. Gerald, the last survivor of the priest brothers, died in Dublin during Holy Week this year and is buried in Glasnevin. The monument which he erected to his parents at Limerick cemetery describes his father as “Gerald Griffin, Esq., of Corrig,” who died in 1874: it was in his time that the family connection with the place was severed. Gerald’s wife was Eliza Naish, a member of the Ballycullen family, and grandaunt of the late Philip J. O’Sullivan, solicitor.

Patrick Griffin, the poet’s father, must have left Corrig as a young man. The Life, ever sparing in family detail, merely says that before settling in Limerick, Patrick, third son of James Griffin of Corrig, “dwelt several years in a lovely and romantic spot called Woodfield, on the border of one of those beautiful lakes which abound in the County of Clare.” Woodfield is the residence and property still so named on the shore of Doon Lough near Broadford. A notice of sale of the Locke Estate (Limerick Chronicle, 15th July, 1801) shows that Pat Griffin’s lease dated from 1790, and that he farmed in all 172 acres at a rent of £178. During his years at Woodfield the removal of the beer tax by the Dublin Parliament had given a great fillip to the brewing industry, and Limerick came to rank next to Dublin, Cork and Fermoy as a brewery centre. At Woodfield Griffin made his first acquaintance with brewing, as the notice of sale includes among the amenities of the place “a good mansion house with a large malt-house. The Burke
James Griffin, of Congrig,  
d. 4th Feb., 1798, aged 68.

Gerald, of Congrig md  
Brigid Mulvihill.

Gerald of Congrig, d. 1874.  
md. Eliza Naish, d. 1867.

Revd. Frederick, d. 1902;  
Revd. Carroll Naish, d. 1889;  
Revd. John, d. 1939;  
Revd. Gerald, d. 1940.

Patrick, 3rd son, md.  
Ellen, sr. of Jn. Geary,  
M.D. She died in U.S.  
c. 1831.

Ellen, 1817-43;  
Marla, 1822-1907;  
Brigid, 1825-1906;  
Sisters of Mercy.

Mary, md. Jn. Geary, M.D.

Wm. J., M.D., 1809-71;  
Mrs. Anne O’Farrell;  
James.

Ellen md.  
Ralph Westropp Breerton.

Mary,  
Sister of Mercy,  
Limerick.

Judge Ralph Breerton Barry,  
1856-1920.

Ellen, d. at Pallaskenny,  
1837;  
Patrick, M.D.; James,  
Mary Ann, and others  
went abroad.

Brigid md. Edw. White,  
at Limerick.

William, M.D., d. 1848,  
md. Lucy Hunt.

Daniel, M.D., 1801-83,  
md. Anna Leake,  
d. 1806.

GERALD  
(12/12/05—12/8/1840)

Gerald, LL.D., R.M.,  
1854-1933 md. Hilda  
Grieve.

Robert L., Gerald C.,  
both living in England.

Anne, 1805-78 (M Baptist)  
Entd. Srs. of Charity.  
Superioress at Claren-  
bridge from foundation  
in 1844;  
Lucy, 1866-44. Entd.  
Pres. Convent, Youghal.  
(M. Evangelist).

William md. Fannie  
Russell.

James, b. 1807 at  
Limerick.  
Lawyer in U.S.

5 daughters entd.  
Religion.

Senator Stephen  
Mallory White.  
California, 1853-1901.

Alice (M. Magdalen,  
F.C.J.) d. in Canada,  
1901;  
Ellen, d. 1903;  
Geraldine, 1935;  
Anna, d. 1936.  
Louisa, living at Bray.
family resides at the imposing, weather-slated mansion house, but no tradition of the malt-
house survives. The brewery which Patrick Griffin came to manage at Limerick was in
Brunswick Street (now Sarsfield Street); near it he had a house built for his growing
family. While it was under construction he resided at Bow Lane in St. Mary’s Parish,
and it was here, according to the parish register, his three youngest sons—Dan, Peter,
and Gerald—were born. At the time Bow Lane still retained some of its medieval privacy
as a Cathedral Close merely affording a convenient way for pedestrians from the Main
Street to the old harbour below the west front of St. Mary’s. In Gerald’s time shipping
had just begun to desert the Long Dock for the new quays further down the river. The
arch that spanned the lane from the Cathedral transept to the College of Minor Canons
across the way still stood, though the passage beneath had been widened in 1770. The
last Tudor arches and tracery of the ruined College disappeared in a building scheme
about 1902. The Deanery House near by had been taken as the site of the proposed city
gaol, on which actual building commenced only after the Griffins had removed to Bruns-
wick Street. While the family resided at St. Michael’s, the two youngest children, Ann
and Lucy, were born. Of the nine Griffin boys, seven grew to manhood, and there appear
to have been at least five girls. The brewing venture failed, and the Griffin family
returned to St. Mary’s while the father was building a new home at Carrowbane, near
Loughill, a few miles from his native Corrig. The second house in St. Mary’s may have
been near the Castle Barracks; at any rate, the surgeon from a military hospital across
the road from their home was summoned on one tragic occasion when young Gerald
narrowly escaped a premature end. On a Sunday while their parents were at Mass, Dan
and Gerald, coming on a case of their father’s pistols, proceeded to fight a mock duel.
The delighted laughter of their little sisters, Ann and Lucy, soon turned to tears and
tragedy when the gay showers of sparks were followed by a loud report and Ann fell
bleeding from a flesh wound. However, she was destined to survive all her child part-
ners in that domestic drama. As a Sister of Charity she was sent by Mary Aikenhead
to open a house at Clarebridge, Co. Galway, in 1844, and there she remained as Rectress
until her death in 1878. In 1836 Lucy entered the Presentation Convent, Youghal, then
recently founded; she was soon to succeed the foundress as head of the community.
In 1844 she yielded up her young life “remarkable for her great spirit of prayer and
devotion to the Blessed Sacrament” as the Convent Annals recall. I take this opportu-
nity of thanking the convent authorities at Youghal, Athlone, Clarebridge, and St. Mary’s
for the trouble they have taken in furnishing details and recollections of Gerald Griffin’s
sisters and cousins, whose fragrant memories are cherished by the communities they once
adorned.

Fairy Lawn, the house to which Pat Griffin brought his family in 1820, stands on
a hill above the Shannon estuary, with its back to the tangle of upland that rolls for
thirty miles across West Limerick and Duhallow to the valley of the Blackwater. Out of
the hills the Abha bhan comes tumbling in cascades down a gorge where Gerald often
fished and read and daydreamed. That little river sang its way into his heart and into
some of his best verse. For an exiled sister seeking new words for an old air he recalled
the Ouvane of their childhood rambles.

Know ye not that lovely river?
Know ye not that smiling river?
Whose gentle flood,
By cliff and wood.
With wakering sound goes winding ever.

Even at idyllic Fairy Lawn ill luck at business dogged the footsteps of Pat Griffin.
The roibles of his father are said to have suggested to Dickens the character of his
immortal Wilkins Micawber: from the pen picture of the elder Griffin by his son there
emerges a gentle, unworlthy figure, whose unclouded optimism in and out of season could
be a trial on occasion for his family circle. “Many a time have I seen him in those embar-
rassments, the distressing nature of which he was by no means insensible of, endeavour
to quiet the apprehensions of my mother who always felt them more acutely, by repre-
senting to her the inutility of grieving for evils that were inevitable. When reasoning
failed, he sometimes tried to laugh her out of her despondency; and it was amusing to
observe the slight toss of the head with which he gave up the contest, and the smile that
played around his countenance when he found both equally unavailing.” Perhaps the
atmosphere proved more congenial in the brave new world for which he set out in 1820,
a victim of the slump that followed the Napoleonic Wars. “They, therefore, took ship-
ping for the States, and chose for their future abode a sweet spot in Pennsylvania, in
the County of Susquehanna, about a hundred and forty miles from New York, to which, influenced by old and happy associations, they gave the name of Fairy Lawn." Even there fortune did not smile on them at first; ten years later we find Gerald helping his father from his literary earnings. A relative appears to have taken over the Loughill holding, for the 1850 Valuation shows a Patrick Griffin in possession of a residence, 130 acres, and a salmon weir at Carrowbune. The townland and those adjoining it had once been tenement lands of the ancient church at Loughill; later they became an episcopal manor, as did the similar lands at Munget, Kilmalloch, Disart and Clonshee. The Protestant bishops held the Loughill district until the Disestablishment, leasing it to the Royse family under whom the Griffins held Fairy Lawn. Gerald continued to visit the old home, and in a letter written while he lived with his brother William at Pallaskenry, he tells of his fatigue "from steering the Hip Hall boat from Loughill to Pallas right before the wind." Later the place became a parochial residence and so continued until 1918, when the parish priest went to reside at Ballylahill. Similarly Gerald's later home at Pallas was to be for many years the dwelling of the parish priests of Kilcornan, and the house at Adare, where he lived for some years, is now the curate's residence.

Gerald Griffin was fortunate in the cultured and magnanimous mother to whose inspiration and vigilant guidance he owed the fine flowering of his gifts. Ellen Geary was the sister of John Geary, M.D., the leading Limerick physician of his day. There was a double marriage, for Dr. Geary married a sister of Pat Griffin, and their son, Dr. William Geary, generous patron of city charities, was thus doubly first cousin to Gerald Griffin. There is a copy of Dr. John Geary's 1819 report on St. John's Hospital at the City Library: an account of the cholera outbreak in 1832 shows the prominent part taken in combatting it by Dr. Geary, senior, aided by his son and his nephew, Dr. W. Griffin. Ellen Geary must have married Pat Griffin before he went farming in Clare, as their grandson, James White, was born in 1807. It was Gerald's mother who committed him to the charge of Richard McElligott, that remarkable scholar and man whose career has been traced by Seamus O Casaide in the 1915 number of this Journal. As the writer shows that McElligott died in the spring of 1818 "of a lingering decline," we may assume that Richard McElligott, who had 13 pupils at Francis Street eight years later (Irish Education Enquiry, 1826) was a son to Gerald's tutor. To quote the Life, Gerald was sent from Fairy Lawn to Limerick in 1814 "and placed at the school of Mr. T. M. O'Brien, whom I have before mentioned as one of the first classical teachers in the city. Here he had the high advantage of having as an instructor one who was passionately devoted to the ancient poets, and showed a highly cultivated taste in their study." In the Enquiry already mentioned we find that O'Brien's Academy was in Thomas Street, and that in 1825 there were 15 Protestant pupils and 11 Catholic; a contemporary directory shows the school took boarders as well as day pupils. Incidentally the Christian Brothers, whose Order Gerald was one day to enter, came to Limerick two years after he was sent to be tutored by Thomas O'Brien.

Mrs. Griffin died about 1831 "and was buried on Susquehanna's side after a few days illness caught during an attendance on my eldest brother, who had left the army and was then living with them." From Gerald's niece, who has helped me generously from her store of memories, I learn that her generation had lost contact with the American branch of the family. It would appear that four of Gerald's brothers went abroad; from a letter written by Gerald as a boy at Fairy Lawn and now in the City Library, we learn that one brother was named James. There was also a Patrick, who followed the medical profession and spent his declining years at the home of his nephew, William White, in California, where he died in the early eighteen-seventies. A sketch of Gerald Griffin as a Christian Brother, published in the Educational Record for 1891, adds some information to the meagre family particulars in the Life. The mention of a Judge White as Gerald's nephew sent me back to the Life to look for White references, but the relevant pages (124, 294) afforded no more than clues owing to the author's habit of veiling the identity of his characters under initials. A glance at the Catholic Encyclopaedia under the heading "White, Stephen Mallory," cleared up the mystery. Gerald Griffin's sister, Brigid, married Edward White, and their eldest son was baptised at St. Michael's, Limerick, in 1807, as the parish register shows. Gerald's grand-nephew, Stephen Mallory White, was an important figure in the America of his day, as the following passages from the Encyclopaedia notice suffice to show:—

In 1866 the Democratic party in California endorsed him for President of the United States, but he declined to enter the contest. He was a devout though unobtrusive Catholic all his life, and died while suffering from overwork. The people of the United States have, by popular sub-
scription erected a life-size statue of Senator White in bronze at Los Angeles, where his remains repose.

Edward, pioneer Catholic, grandfather of the foregoing, born in Co. Limerick in the latter part of the eighteenth century; d. Dec., 1863. Early in the nineteenth century he emigrated to America and settled at Binghamton, New York. Here he founded and directed an academic institution for women. This school existed from 1850 until the death of Mrs. White in 1851. White had nine children. His five daughters entered religious orders; the most well-known among them was Madame Catherine White of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, author of text-books on mythology, classical literature, and church history. Of his sons, the most distinguished was the eldest, James, a prominent lawyer in New York City.

A full-length life of Senator White by Mosher, mentioned by the writer of the notice, may throw further light on the American Griffins; I have not had an opportunity of consulting it.

In 1839 Judge White's wife wrote to Gerald Griffin (cf. Educational Record, 1891) encouraging him to resume literary work. Since this notice was set in type, Mr. John F. MacDonagh has sent me some Griffin memoranda which throw interesting light on Mrs. Rhoda White and her daughter, Mrs. Jenny del Bal. At St. Francis Xavier's, New York, Father O'Driscoll officiated at the wedding of James White to Rhoda, daughter of General Waterman. An Episcopalian at the time of her marriage, Mrs. White entered the Church in 1837 when her daughter, Jenny, was already two years old. Jenny White married Bernardino del Bal, a member of one of the families of the old Spanish aristocracy of Colombia. She came to be known as the Florence Nightingale of America, and died of yellow fever on September 24th, 1867.

Meantime, Miss Griffin informs me that Mrs. Rhoda White, as a widow, visited Ireland, accompanied by her husband's former chaplain. Some years later the Judge's daughter, a Mrs. Edwards, while on a visit to Europe with her children, saw a good deal of her Griffin cousins, Gerald's nieces, in London.

The Ireland to which Gerald Griffin returned in 1827, after his London venture, lay sunk in degradation. The quest for the Dead Sea fruit of Emancipation, then in progress, could not conceal the servile reality of a teeming population squatting on sufferance upon the lands of the compact clique who owned the soil and wealth of Ireland. That he never forsaw his loyalty to seek life's glittering prizes is the mark of his nobility of spirit. For a mean-minded school of writers then coming into prominence a people's humiliation was but matter for sneer and jest. Griffin was further removed from the multitude than Banim, his contemporary, or than Kieckham in the next generation: he loved his people as did those two novelists who, however, cannot be ranked with him as literary craftsmen. Dr. Dan tells us of his brother's ambition to be an Irish Burns, but his gifts did not lie that way. "He made an attempt to reach the simplicity I speak of, but I believe he did not consider himself to have succeeded." Anyhow, the condition of his people, sunk beneath the deep ashes of political and social degradation, had more need for active sympathy than for literary analysis. Young Ireland and Father Mathew's crusade came too late to enlist Gerald's energies: a few years' reflection convinced him that he would serve his country and himself best by tending the secret springs that nourished his people's life. As early as 1833 we find him writing to his father of his idea of joining the priesthood; later he discovered his vocation for the teaching Order of the Christian Brothers. In a merry letter to a London friend, written at Cork a few months before death called him, we learn of his happiness in "enlightening the craniums of the wondering Paddies in this quarter, who learn from me with profound amazement and profit that O.K spells ox, that the top of the map is north . . . as also that they ought to be good boys . . . I feel a great deal happier in the practice of this daily routine than I did while I was raving about your great city, absorbed in the modest project of rivalling Shakespeare and throwing Scott into the shade."

Having to be in Clare during O'Connell's election campaign in the summer of 1828, Griffin was delighted at the calm, resolute attitude of the electors, "more like a set of Pythagorean philosophers than a mob of Munstermen." Gerald's father used to recall with pride his association with the Volunteers, much as he deplored their lost opportunities. And Gerald's brothers were to become the leading Young Irelanders in Limerick, as is clear from the references in Gavan Duffy's Memoirs. It was Dr. Griffin who presided at the Limerick reception of Smith O'Brien in the spring of 1848, when Mitchell's unexpected presence led to an assault on the banquet hall by the Abbey men, all staunch O'Connellites. Mitchell has left a lively picture of the incident in his sketch of Meagher. Gerald's own part in public affairs was a modest one, connected with the offer of the representation of Limerick to Thomas Moore, who eventually declined. Dr. William Griffin, Gerald's brother, had corresponded with Moore on behalf of the citizens and in October, 1832, Gerald, then on his way to London, was requested to be the bearer
of the formal invitation. The address is stated to be still in Limerick. Moore has left an account of the embassy in his Memoirs: the little man naturally played a heroic part in his own recollection of it. Dr. Dan, who accompanied Gerald on the occasion, has described the meeting in the Life; some months later Gerald wrote his recollection of the event to his friend, Mrs. Lydia Fisher.

In the demure Quaker home of the Fishers at Richmond, on the outskirts of Limerick, Griffin found the only society he cared to cultivate outside the happy family circle at Pallaskenry. There was continual going and coming between the families, holidaying at Spanish Point, journeying to Killarney, the young Fishers* coming to be tutored by Gerald at Pallas. The memory of it all is preserved in the letters between Mrs. Fisher and Gerald, a correspondence upon which Dr. Dan has drawn freely for the Life. Dr. Dan veiled the identity of the lady under the initials L.—F. of R.—d, and it is to Mr. Bennis's useful notes on the Limerick Quakers that I am indebted for her name and history. She has some literary work to her credit, including Letters from the Kingdom of Kerry, published in 1845, and she edited her mother's Annals of Ballitore, a study of rural life which had appealed to Griffin's similar vein of talent. Her mother was a Shackleton of Ballitore, one of the family at whose school Edmund Burke received his first schooling; as did Paul Cullen some seventy years later. "How I love these people for their amiable simplicity of life," Gerald wrote of the Quakers to his mother before he met the Fishers. His impressions were confirmed in the cultured home at Richmond where Gerald, usually shy and reserved, found himself in his proper element. "You are dear people, all of you, a literary oasis in what I thought a desert of utter and irreconcilable dullness! So much for my native city." And Mrs. Fisher held a place "unchanging and immovable, somewhere, I think, about the left auricle, in which they say the blood flows calmest and purest": "a poet's affection, just less than a lover and more than a friend" was another expression of his sentiment. And when the family had to leave Richmond, Gerald recalled its memories in lines that still hold their appeal for lovers of Limerick's quiet landscape:

I'll ne'er shall mark that sunset now,
Gilding dark Cralbie's healthy brow,
Blushing in Shannon's distant bowers,
And lighting Carrig's broken towers.

*When this paper was already in print, Mr. MacDonagh called my attention to two entries concerning Mrs. Fisher's family in the registers of St. Munchin's Catholic Church, Limerick. An item dated May 14th, 1832, states that "Rev. John Meehan baptised Jane (Lydia) Fisher, of James (Joseph) Fisher and Lydia Jane Leadbetter; sponsor, Lucy Maria Griffin." An earlier entry shows that on October 16th, 1836, Rev. Ed. Maloney received Anne Leadbetter into the Church in presence of the parish clerk. She must have been a relative of Mrs. Fisher; the priest who received her was an uncle of the late Dr. Huch, Archdeacon of Cloyne.

A notice of Dr. William Griffin's Medical and Physiological Problems describes him as F.R.C.S., Edinburgh; physician to Limerick Infirmary; consulting physician to the Lying-in Hospital. A list of subscribers to Downes' poems in 1833 shows that William had a house in the city; the list in Lewis four years later reveals that it was in George Street, and that Dr. Dan still lived at Pallas. Goggin's Directory in 1840 places both brothers in George Street: Dan's house was No. 45, while his cousin, Dr. William Geary, later Mayor of Limerick, lived at 52. The Griffin brothers were the leading figures in the South Western Medical and Surgical Association of Ireland at the time, William being president, and Dan treasurer and secretary. In the City Library there is a letter written by Gerald to William in 1830 on the occasion of the latter's engagement. His wife was a relative of the De Veres, and Sir Aubrey had hoped that Gerald might be tempted to a prolonged stay by the literary seclusion of Curragh Chase. Gerald did most of his writing in a rose-embowered hermitage fitted in the garden of his brother's place at Pallas. The Griffin home is now the property of Mr. P. E. Sheehan, a life-long admirer of the gentle poet whose memory hallowed that quiet retreat.

"The only authentic portrait of Gerald," his niece writes to me, "is in possession of my nephew in London. A miniature engraving of it appears as frontispiece in my father's Life of Gerald Griffin." Gerald's nephew and namesake, then living at Bellmullet, lent the portrait to the Munster-Connacht Exhibition at Limerick in 1806. It is the work of Mercier, about whom all I can find in Strickland is that John Colclough Mercier exhibited at R.H.A. from 1826 to 1831, that he did some portraits for the De Veseyes of Abbeyleix, near which place he lived. Mrs. Fisher's family came from near Abbeyleix, indeed her brother, Richard Leadbetter, lived a few miles away at Stradbally,
where he entertained O'Connell in 1836. Possibly the Fisher family formed the link between the poet and the painter. Mercier gave Gerald some of the fashionable Byronic gloom, and Gerald's brother points out that the portrait does not quite convey the sitter's wonted cheerful serenity. Otherwise it bears out Dr. Dan's pen-picture of the poet. "In personal appearance he was tall and well-formed and, though rather slender, possessed of considerable muscular strength." There is a street in the Irishtown called after Gerald, but it is his native parish which holds his most apt memorial. In the spring of 1820, while still a lad in his teens, Gerald reported for a local paper the sombre story of Ellen Hanly death, which he was later to transform into the theme of his greatest novel, The Collegians. The Courthouse in Quay Lane, an impressive little building in the severe classical style of the late eighteenth century, was superseded in 1846 by the present City Court. Father Brahan then purchased the building in which Gerald had done his youthful reporting, adapted it as a school, and brought the Christian Brothers, Gerald Griffin's Order, to instruct the boys of his parish. At the centenary of Gerald's birth, the house was raised and enlarged and dedicated to the memory of the Poet-Brother. From a niche in the added storey the bust of Gerald Griffin gazes across the Cathedral lawns to the home of his childhood under the shadow of old St. Mary's.

Of his contemporaries who paid tribute to Griffin, I shall quote one well fitted to judge him as an artist and a man. Addressing the members of the Limerick Philosophical and Literary Society on the eighth of February, 1842, Sir Aubrey De Vere gave his verdict in these words: —

Neither can I forget Gerald Griffin, whose writings illustrate so well the national character and scenery of our country: too soon withdrawn from those literary labours which have won a reputation beyond the limits of his own land, and destined to endure: a man of a most winning modesty, shrinking from praise: dreading his own gifts, lest they should not sufficiently conduce to his virtuous designs: and finally turning with conscientious firmness from the open path of fame to that better retirement wherein he might dedicate his whole heart to God.

To the same contrast of shadow and substance Gerald Griffin gave poet's utterance in lines which Tennyson was fond of repeating: —

Castle are sacked in war,
Chiefs are scattered far,
Truth is a fixed star,
Eileen aroon.

GERALD GRIFFIN'S NIECES.

(Record of Gerald Griffin's nieces, Alice, Geraldine, Anna and Lucy Leake-Griffin, daughters of Dr. Daniel Griffin and Anna Leake).

By MAIRE O'DONOVAN, B.A.

Alice Leake-Griffin (born February 23rd, 1847, died April 30th, 1901), was a nun of the Order of the Faithful Companions of Jesus. We have through the kindness of her Order a biographical note on her as a religious. "She was educated at Laurel Hill Convent, Limerick. She entered there on November 1st, 1865, and was received into the Order there on July 28th, 1869. She made her vows at the Convent of St. Anne d'Auray in Brittany on July 28th, 1872. About 1891 she went to Canada, where she died on April 30th, 1901. Mother Mary Magdalen (Alice) Griffin is remembered in the Order as "a very holy religious, witty and full of humor and as inheriting her uncle's gift of poetry." This conventual record links her with the unending line of our peregrini pro Christo and recalls in its manner and content the obituaries of religious in Gaelic annals. There is the same concentration on the things that are important in the life of the cloister and for the Hereafter.

It was from the Convent of the Order in Clarendon Street, London, that Mother Mary Magdalen went to Canada. During the end of her time in the Clarendon Street Convent, two of her sisters, Geraldine (d. March 6th, 1932), and Anna (d. August 6th,