Manuscript Notes by H. W. Russell

Edited by Robert Herbert.

The ms. notes of particular events made in this book by Hampden William Russell are in some instances more or less connected with his family; much of the information being traditional, and derived from his father, Hughes Russell, who, if now living, would be considerably over 100 years of age. He took a particular interest in old local historical events, and often narrated to the writer circumstances in connection with this work, which not alone occurred in his own time, but also in in his father's and grandfather's. In some instances references to files of old local newspapers have assisted much in compiling these notes, which are on various subjects, and may be viewed as thoroughly reliable in all they relate. The writer, who is now in his 70th year, has also been assisted by a very clear and distinct recollection of most of the events.

—Hampden Wm. Russell, 1884.

Editor's Note—Russell gave Lenihan much material for his History, and some of the episodes related in these ms. notes have already appeared, almost verbatim, in the latter's history. I have omitted these in editing the manuscript for publication in our Journal.

THE RUSSELS OF LIMERICK

The following extracts relative to the Russells of Limerick are taken from the local newspapers giving an account of the opening of the Public Park in memory of Richard Russell on the 21st of August, 1877: —

The Russells of Limerick are an old Protestant family that for centuries have held a good position in the city. The 9th and 56th Mayors of Limerick were Russells, and several of the name filled the office of Bailiff and Sheriff. By inscription on front of the Old Exchange it appears it was rebuilt in the year 1777, Walter Widenham being Mayor and Francis Russell and Charles Sargent, Sheriffs. Since then, which is exactly a century, nine members of the family have filled the office of Sheriff of the City, namely, Francis, William, Philip, Abraham, Francis Philip, Hughes, John Norris, Richard and Thompson, and for nineteen years the city was represented in Parliament by Francis William Russell, who was returned one of the members at the contested elections of 1852, 1857, 1859, 1865 and 1868. On the 30th August, 1871, his sudden death took place at his residence in London, the day after the death of his brother, Richard.

In former years there was a branch of the Russells in Limerick who were of this family but the connection was remote, having descended from the brother of one of the progenitors of the present family, Philip Russell, born in 1650, being the year that Cromwell's troops laid siege to Limerick. They have long since left Limerick, and until within the last few years, were represented by the late Venerable John Russell, Archdeacon of Clogher, whose eldest sister was married to the Right Reverend Charles Dickinson, Lord Bishop of Meath.

The first extension of the city outside the walls, when it was a fortress, was in the year 1766, West Watergate having been then taken down and Charlotte's Quay formed, on which a range of houses, at present standing, was built by George, Francis, John and William Russell. The Russells have
added more to the city in buildings than any other family that ever resided in it, a great part of George Street, as also part of Mallow Street, Glentworth Street, Henry Street, Catherine Street, Thomas Street, Shannon Street, Broad Street, Mungret Street, John Street, Lock Quay, Sir Harry’s Mall and Charlotte Quay, having been built by them. And prior to the siege, part of Nicholas Street, Mary Street, Old Francis Street, which was called after Francis Russell, and the place known as the Abbey. The name of Russell appears identified with the ancient Cathedral of Limerick so far back as the year 1272, Henry Russell being one of the Canons of the Cathedral at that period. The burial place of the Russells is Saint John’s, in Limerick, where for many years they used to inter in the interior of the old Church, until such interments were prohibited by Act of Parliament. The last person whose remains were interred in the interior of the old Church was the widow of a Philip Russell, Miss Fosbery, of Clorane, who was niece to George Fosbery, High Sheriff of the County Limerick in the year 1744. Consequent on her decease having taken place a short time after the passing of this act, her remains were interred outside the Church in the morning, and at night, with the sanction of the Vicar of the Parish, who was a particular friend of the family, they were secretly removed and placed in the tomb near the remains of her late husband. This tomb was situated under the passage leading from the communion table to the vestry room in the old church, on the site of which the new one has been raised. The foundation stone of this edifice was laid by John Norris Russell the year he was sheriff. On the organ loft in the new church is a handsome wheel window with richly stained glass, in the centre of which are the arms of the family. There are now four vaults and a mausoleum in the burial ground outside the church belonging to different branches of the family. One of them has some few years since become extinct by the decease of Francis Philip Russell of Saint Thomas’s Island.

The decease of Richard Russell, who held the Commission of the Peace, was President of the Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the various public bodies of the city, took place at his residence, Plassy, on the 29th August, 1871, to the deep regret of his fellow citizens, who subscribed £1,400 to erect a memorial, which was appropriated to the forming of the beautiful Public Park now formally opened to his memory. The entrance to the park is artistically designed of cut stone in the Doric Order. Over the centre archway are finely cut in high relief the Russell Arms with the following inscription: —PERY SQUARE. This Public Park was formed by subscription in memory of Richard Russell, the land being given by the Right Honorable the Earl of Limerick.

There have been from time to time, and are at present several of the name of Russell residing in Limerick unconnected with our family.

—H.W.R., 1884.

THE TREATY STONE.

The Treaty Stone of Limerick which is at present, by way of improvement, perched up on a cut-stone pedestal, was one of the acts of very bad taste of what is termed, THE REFORM CORPORATION. It was some few years since resting on the ground opposite its present position, where the old Ennis Mail Coach road, which then went through the middle of Cratloe Woods, turned to the right immediately at the Clare End of Thomond Bridge.
If the Treaty of Limerick was signed on this stone—which is very doubtful, how truly is its historical interest lost and spoiled by removing it from the actual place where this memorable parchment received its signatures. This ill-judged removal of the stone to its present elevated position—it appears by inscription on the pedestal that sustains it—was during the year a Mr. Tinsley was Mayor in 1865.

It is, however, very doubtful that the Treaty was ever signed on this stone, which from its formation, is something like a step, and in its original position was near an Inn called The Black Bull, kept by a man of the name of Murty Eagan in Thomond Gate, where it was found useful for women mounting and dismounting from what in olden days were called pillions.

A pillion was an upholstered seat with a rest for the feet suspended from it by two leather straps, and was placed on a horse behind a man's saddle. In this way the animal carried two comfortably, the man in front and the woman sitting sideways behind him. When first introduced, they were used by the better class, and were handsomely made of scarlet cloth, then rather costly. After some time they were only used by the farming class, and were made of drab cloth, being less expensive. They were very much in use, hundreds of them appearing in olden days at the races of Newcastle, near Limerick, which was a brilliant gathering, as, along with good running, there was a very large assembly of handsome carriages belonging to the gentry of City and County Limerick and the County Clare, including many four-in-hand coaches. There was always present a military band, a large number of tents, and to prevent faction fights, a troop of dragoons and a company of infantry, which added much to the gay appearance of the course. In the good old times referred to, the National dress of the women of the lower class was very usually a scarlet cloth cloak, and a nice white cap, which was an additional attraction to the picturesque appearance of Newcastle Hill, where they were inter-mixed with the large crowd always assembled on it during the races.

All this cannot occur again, as the gentry and their carriages have vanished, as have also the pillions and scarlet cloaks. How sadly changed are the Limerick Races, now held in the Ballinacurra Course.

THE OLD IRISH TRUCKLES.

The common cars used for bringing farming produce into market, and for all other usual carting purposes in years long past, were called truckles. They were rudely constructed cars, very like what are at present used in Limerick for carrying kishes of turf, their great peculiarity being their primitive plan of wheels, which had no spokes, being made of solid wood, cut out of a board about two inches thick. They were small, not exceeding about two feet and a half in diameter, and were shod with iron. Instead of revolving on iron axle trees they were permanently made fast to wooden ones, about four inches in diameter, made of tough timber, which revolved with the wheels. The writer of this recollects seeing a few of them in his very youthful days, about 1820, when the last of them were going out of use. In the first Directory of Limerick, dated 1768, all duties, tolls and customs, with few exceptions, were computed by horse loads and truckle loads. In those days all small quantities, termed horse loads, were brought to town in two baskets, one at either side of a horse, suspended from two wooden pegs, made fast in what was called a straddle; and large quantities were called truckle-loads. In Dublin now, the common cars for goods
traffic are of a very superior description, provided with springs, which, no doubt, will after a little become more general. These, compared with truckles, are one of the many improvements of the last hundred years.

DOCKS OF LIMERICK

The first dock that was ever formed in Limerick was of very old date, being in existence long before the Siege of Limerick in 1650 by Cromwell’s troops. This was known in later years as the Long Dock, and was situated where the Potato Market at present stands on Merchant’s Quay.

By an old map of the city, when it was a fortress, it appears the dimensions of this dock were: length, 250 feet; width at entrance, 100 feet, gradually growing smaller at the end.

In very early days this was almost the only accommodation for shipping. The number of ships that frequented Limerick then were few, and of a very small class of coasters, almost invariably brigs and sloops, few of which now enter the port, their place being taken by schooners and brigantines, these latter being found more handy at sea and better sailors. This dock must have been considered of great importance when Limerick was a fortress, its entrance being then defended by two batteries, one on each of the pier-heads. The one on the south pier of the docks mounted six guns, and had an underground passage to it from Quay Lane, where there was a flight of stone steps leading down to it.

On the 12th of February, 1693, this tower fell in the daytime, causing, by the concussion, the explosion of a very large quantity of gun-powder, which was stored in it. It appears, however, more probable the fall of the tower was caused by the explosion of the gun powder, from some unknown cause. Both were simultaneous, and it may reasonably be assumed, this battery having been built for the defence of the dock, was so strongly constructed as not to be likely to come down without some violent disturbing cause. This be as it may, the result was most disastrous, the number killed and wounded being very large, some of them by the falling of stones, which were blown a mile outside the city. The Governor of the Forts, Colonel St. James Simpson, had a narrow escape, and among the killed was one of City Sheriffs, Mr. Bowman.

The writer recollects, before the Wellesley Bridge was built, this dock and the Custom House Quay being much frequented by ships.

In 1843, the Long Dock was filled in for the purpose of forming the Potato Market. This caused no inconvenience to shipping as all trade in the old part of the town had ceased, the seat of business being now removed to the other part of Limerick.

The next Dock that was constructed in Limerick was a small graving dock, known as Kidgel’s Dock, which had its entrance where there is a kind of slip on inclined plain in part of the steamboat quay, used at half tide as a convenience for loading and unloading the river steamers. This little dock, which was nicely built, was constructed in the early part of the present century, and in the course of time it got into disuse, and was for many years without tide gates. The last ship that was repaired in it was a brig called the Waterloo, shortly after which she was lost, having foundered.
This dock was filled in at the time the fine line of quays which now extend between the Wellesley Bridge and the Floating Dock was completing.

When the Wellesley Bridge was building, commenced in 1824, a project was unfortunately undertaken for the forming of a floating dock in Limerick under an Act of Parliament, passed in the year 1823, which, after wasting a large sum of money, was abandoned, and should never have been commenced. In connection with this work, the present useless tide-basin at the Wellesley Bridge was formed, with the water course or canal leading from it to Honan’s Quay. This work has been executed in massive cut-stone masonry, and the quantity of filling that was necessary was very great, as all the works at the North Side of the basin and water-course were formed on what was formerly the bed of the river, along with which a large quantity of filling was required for the south-east side of the water-course, it being also made ground.

The writer recollects when the tide flowed and ebbed nearly up to the corn store at present in occupation of Mr. William Boyd, these premises having formerly been part of Wilkinson’s Brewery, the large square chimney of which stood opposite Henry Street in a yard now used as a veterinary establishment and partly built on by a range of houses in Brunswick Street.

The intention was to connect the present works at the North-East side of the water-course, where there is a roadway, with an inclined plane just after crossing the swivel-bridge, to the south-east point of the Custom House Quay, where the small branch of the river, which passes under the Mathew Bridge joins the Shannon, and then erecting flood-gates at the entrance of the tide-basin, and also in the water-course leading from it, and by this means damming in the tide at high water, so as to form a floating dock at Honan’s Quay, Arthur’s Quay, and the Custom House Quay; but after all the expense was gone to, forming the present useless works, the project was abandoned for two reasons. First, it was then ascertained that the depth of water in the dock would be so insufficient as to make it totally useless; and secondly, it was apprehended that the escape of water under the new works, the bed of the river where they were to be formed being all shingle, would cause the water in the dock between the fall and rise of the tide to be so reduced by leakage as to defeat the desired end of having floating water for shipping. When the tide basin was finished the water was dammed in at the entrance and at the head of the water-course, with the view of testing its capability to hold water; but it was found to escape so freely through the shingle under the new works at the river side, as to make it hopeless to use them for their intended purpose. Had the shingle been removed between the walls and then properly puddled it might possibly have obviated this. While it required perhaps the experience of the failure of the tide basin to enlighten the engineer who projected the work as to the difficulty, from the nature of the bed of the river, to make the dock staunch, there appears to the writer to be no excuse for his not ascertaining before the work was commenced that the depth of water in the dock would be insufficient to make it useful. The present unmeaning-looking tide-basin and water course, are, in the writer’s opinion, a great spoiling to the good appearance of the noble bridge, which would have a much finer effect if there was merely a pier, which would be necessary, for the working of the swivel-bridge.
The class of shipping that formerly frequented the Port of Limerick, forty years ago, was quite different from the class of shipping that frequents it at present. It had then a large export trade, and a small import. It now has a large import trade and a comparatively small export, which is easily accounted for. Limerick being sixty miles from the sea with a fertile country of great extent around it, was formerly famous for its large export of grain, a considerable portion of which was wheat of a superior quality. It had also a large export trade in provisions and butter, along with shipments at times of flour to London and Glasgow. This was prior to railway communication being established in 1848 with the city. Since then the greater part of the tillage land has been laid down in pasture, its produce being now cattle and butter, both of which are sent by rail to Dublin, Cork and Waterford, for transit by Cross-channel to England. The large quantity of provisions made up in Limerick are also now sent by this route so that the necessity for coasting vessels has nearly ceased, except for a couple of months after the harvest is saved. And then there are some cargoes of oats shipped from Limerick. Formerly the coasting vessels were berthing two and three outside each other along our fine line of quays. Now except for a couple of months after the harvest produce first comes into market there are rarely more than twelve or fourteen coasters at any one time in the port, and sometimes there are not half that number. The vessels that frequent the port at present are foreign ships of large tonnage, usually steamers and generally laden with wheat for millers' use, as also Indian corn. The origin of this was the potato blight of 1846, followed by the famine. Prior to this the food of the working class in this country was almost invariably potatoes which proved wholesome and nutritious as those who used them were strong and healthy, with daring spirits and able to endure great hardship. During the Peninsular War, Ireland was much the nursery of Wellington's Army, and braver or finer soldiers could not be found. In all his brilliant engagements they took their part and did their work well.

On the failure of the potato crop, which continued for some years bread, made both of flour and Indian meal became the food of the people, and has since continued, making a requirement for the import of vast quantities of grain.

The large ships, laden with corn, for many years could not come up to Limerick as they would in all probability strain if they took the ground. Consequently, at great expense and inconvenience, they had to unload in deep water down the river, the cargoes being brought to Limerick in boats.

This pointed to the necessity of having a floating dock in the port, which is also much frequented by foreign vessels laden with flour, timber, petroleum and ice, the latter being much used in a cooling process for the curing of bacon and hams, which is our staple trade.

From the position of Limerick it is a great centre for the supplying of food and other articles of commerce to the large district that surrounds it, a great facility for which is given by the many railways that radiate from it. The actual necessity for a floating dock being manifest, an Act of Parliament was passed for its formation in 1847. The place selected for the dock was the south side of the Shannon, at the western extremity of our fine line of quays, and was attended with some difficulty in its formation,
from the nature of the ground. The south side had to be excavated nearly the entire depth, and is formed on a limestone stratum which dips rather suddenly towards the centre of the dock, while the walls on the north or river side of the dock are built on piles which are driven from 15 to 20 feet into the mud.

This work was commenced in 1848 by the driving of the piles, and took five years to complete, being finished in 1853, when it was formally opened for commerce by the Lord Lieutenant, Earl St. Germans. The estimated cost was £50,000 and the actual cost £68,000. The docks have been ill-constructed, two very great errors having been made in its formation, first as regards its proportions, and second as regards the entrance. Its average width being quite unnecessary, making it more a floating basin than a floating dock. If, instead of being 780 feet long and 450 feet broad, it was 1,200 feet long and 250 feet broad, which would be wide enough for every requirement, the quayage would have been increased, with the same water area, from 2,170 feet to 2,750 feet, being an increase of 580 feet, along with which the cost and difficulty of construction would be considerably less. The second great error was in placing the entrance at the wrong end of the dock. It is not easy to imagine what was the inducement to place the entrance in its present position near the north-east angle, which makes it necessary for vessels coming up the river and entering the dock to swing round the pier-head and change their course diametrically opposite to get into the dock. From the great length of the large ships which now frequent the port this is always attended with loss of time and inconvenience which is increased to an actual difficulty when there are heavy floods in the river causing a downward current—even at high water—which is very much increased at ebb tide. This difficulty is added to when the wind is blowing at all fresh from the east or north-east. The same difficulty which presents itself as regards the entering of vessels into the dock is experienced also on their leaving it.

Had the entrance been made at the other end of the dock near the north-west angle, vessels coming up the river and entering it need very little change their course, and could get docked without loss of time or inconvenience. This arrangement would give equal facility to vessels leaving the dock also.

A considerable portion of the river wall at the eastern end slipped some few years after it was built, and had in 1864 to be taken down and re-built with a batter and apron on piles specially driven for the purpose. Portions of the North-West Wall of the dock, and wall at the river face of the western end of it, are at present in an unsatisfactory condition, and would be the better of being rebuilt. This, however, would be very costly piece of work, and they may never become worse than at present.

On Friday, the 6th of July, 1849, the first stone of the floating dock was laid by the Mayor, John Boyse. On this occasion there was a grand procession in which the military of the garrison took part, which consisted of the Royal Horse Artillery (4 guns), two troops of the King’s Dragoon Guards, the 3rd Buffs and the 7th Highlanders, along with a large force of police, many of them being drafted from the outposts for the occasion. There was also present the Corporation in their robes, the Chamber of Commerce, County and City High Sheriffs, and Congregated Trades with 13 stand of colours. The Mayor was presented at the ceremony with a silver trowel with the Limerick Arms engraved in it, as also an inscription stating
the first stone of the Floating Dock of Limerick was laid by John Boyse, Esqr., Mayor, on Friday, 6th of July, 1849.

The Mayor then laid the stone. All the ships in port were decked with flags, and the Cathedral bells rang out a merry peal. For this work the Treasury made a grant of £50,000, which proving insufficient, had to be supplemented by a further sum of £18,000.

On the 26th of September, 1853, the Floating Dock was formally opened by Earl St. Germans, then Viceroy of Ireland. At 2 o'clock, there was a grand procession, which moved to the pier at the Wellesley Bridge, where the Steamer Rose was in waiting, and received His Excellency, accompanied by his Staff, with the Mayor, Representatives of Public Bodies, and Members of Parliament for the County and City. The Rose then steamed slowly into the Dock, and on entering it, the artillery fired a salute and the military band on board played the National Anthem. On landing at the West side, His Excellency declared the dock opened for the trade and commerce of the city. The Royal Artillery then fired a salute of 21 guns.

The appearance of the dock on this occasion was very gay, being surrounded with military, the different guilds of trade with their banners, and the Corporation in their robes. The Military who took part in the opening of the dock were the General and his Staff (of the Limerick district), the Royal Horse Artillery, two troops of the 7th Dragoons and their band, and the 14th Regt.

The forming of a floating dock for Limerick made a requirement for a graving dock also, as it was found in many instances the large ships which then frequented the port required repairs, which could not be accomplished unless they were dry-docked.

To meet this difficulty the Harbour Board instructed their engineer to prepare plans and specifications for a graving dock which, when completed, were lodged with the Board of Works, and, meeting with their approval, an Act of Parliament was applied for and granted in 1867. In the accomplishing of this Francis William Russell, then M.P. for the city, took a great interest. The place selected for the graving dock was at the east end of the floating dock and the work was commenced on the 27th of November in the same year that the Act for its construction was passed.

On removing the surface to the depth of some few feet, which was earth and clay, the under stratum was found to be a solid formation of limestone, which had actually to be hewn out for the entire extent of the basin. This was a work of great labour, but when accomplished, it formed a splendid dock, creditable to Mr. Long, the engineer who designed it and had the work carried out. Its entrance is provided with a caisson, which is a floating gate made of a framework of iron sheeted with iron plates on both sides, and ballasted with water so that it can be floated from the entrance in an erect position for the admission of ships, and can with equal facility be floated back to its position at the entrance of the dock, where it is going to be pumped out. In accomplishing this there are powerful pumps worked with a steam engine, equal to pumping out 10,000 gallons of water per minute, completely exhausting the water in the dock so as to run it dry in three hours and a half.
The estimated cost of this dock was £20,000 and the actual cost £21,328. The work was completed in six years and was formally opened by Earl Spencer, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, as also the Mayors of Waterford and Kilkenny being present, on the 13th of May, 1873.

The address to His Excellency was read by Mr. William Carroll, Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce and Harbour Board. At its conclusion the Lord Lieutenant made a speech, and the caisson being opened, the dock was entered by the Government Express steamer, Imogene, being a beautiful three-master schooner, and by the handsome cutter yacht, the Queen, belonging to Mr. Spaight, the President of the Chamber of Commerce. The Band of the Lancers played the Overture to Auber's opera, The Crown Jewels.

Quite near the two docks has been erected a handsome clock tower, which was designed and built by Mr. William J. Hall, the Harbour Engineer. It is in the Italian style of architecture, and is a fine specimen of work in cut lime-stone, the quarries of which, of a superior quality, about Limerick are inexhaustible.

THE BRIDGES OF LIMERICK.

The New Thomond Bridge is a plain structure, but bold and massive. It spans the Shannon with seven arches and is erected exactly on the site of the old historic bridge. During the taking down of the old bridge, and building of the new, a temporary wooden bridge for foot passengers was formed about a hundred yards higher up the river, nearly opposite the Widows Alms House, which gave convenient access to both sides of the river.

The new Thomond Bridge, which took about two years to build, was finished in the early part of 1840, and on its completion a stone was set in the Eastern parapet with an inscription thereon stating the bridge was completed A.D. 1840. Sir Richard Franklin Mayor, Robert Hunt and Thomas Sexton, Sheriffs. Thos. and G. R. Payne, Architects.

However, in three years after the old Corporation ceased to exist, and what was termed the Reform Corporation came into office, one of their first acts was improperly to remove this stone and place another in its stead, stating the bridge was built in 1840 at the expence of the Corporation and that this tablet was there placed by an Order in Council, A.D. 1843. Martin Honan, Mayor; John F. Raleigh, Town Clerk; Francis John O'Neill, Treasurer.

The reason assigned by the Corporation for this act was very miserable. They admitted the bridge was built by the Old Corporation, but said the new would have to pay for it. This was not the case. The bridge was paid for by the citizens at large, it merely having devolved on the New Corporation (as an ordinary duty) to declare the rates and have them levied for payment.

The Wellesley Bridge, which is the finest in Ireland is a noble and handsome structure, connecting the city with the North Strand on the Clare side, and consists of five arches of equal span crossing the river, as also a swivel bridge for the passing of ships, and two land arches for the convenience of quay traffic. The foundation stone of this bridge was laid by the Earl of Clare on the 25th of October, 1824, and had hermetically sealed in
it a parchment relative to the laying of the stone, and the naming of the bridge, after the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; as also a copy of a Limerick newspaper, and a gold, silver and copper coin of the Realm of that period. The procession on this occasion was of great pomp and very imposing. The troops of the garrison took part in it, which comprised Major General Sir John Elly and his staff, two troops of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, two infantry regiments (one of them the 19th) and the Artillery (84 (?) guns) in command of Colonel Thornhill. There was also present the President and members of the Chamber of Commerce, six Protestant and twenty Roman Catholic clergymen of the City, The Free Masons with their attractive decorations, and the different Guilds of Trades with banners and badges. The leading gentry of the surrounding counties also attended. In the procession was carried a beautiful model of the intended bridge, and on a crimson cushion was borne before Lord Clare, a silver trowel with an inscription.

The proceedings terminated with a volley from the infantry and a salvo from the artillery at the North Strand, where the stone was laid. This bridge which took eleven years to build was opened for traffic by the Earl of Mulgrave, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, on the 5th of August, 1835, and cost nearly £90,000 for its construction.

The designer was Alexander Nimmo, an eminent engineer who also designed the beautiful pillar in the centre of Pery Square, on which the statue of Lord Monteagle stands.

The parapet of the bridge at the West side was originally much handsomer than at present, being then in uniformity with the parapet at the east side. The change was consequent on the terrific and disastrous storm of the 6th of January, 1839. Some of the vessels made fast to the quays broke loose from the storm posts. One of them, light in ballast, was lying on her beam ends in the centre of the river opposite the ferry slip, partly water-logged, and others drifted to the Wellesley Bridge, completely destroying a great portion of the Western parapet and breaking a great number of the handsome balustrades, the cost of repairing which led the Commissioners to adopt the more economical plan (which is to be regretted) of supply their place with was iron termed sparrow-picked stone. This bridge, which was subject to toll, was named after the Marquis of Wellesley, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1824, who used his important interest in getting the grant of money for its construction from the Government.

In 1883, very much through the influence of parties unconnected with the Corporation of Limerick, this bridge was made free of toll.

On this being accomplished, the Corporation held an irregular meeting of their Council, and assumed the power of changing the name of the bridge, subsequently placing a tablet in the centre of the east parapet, styling it Sarsfield Bridge, giving also the year it was freed from toll with the following names: — Jerome Counihan, Mayor; William Boyd, High Sheriff; Alfred C. Wallace, Town Clerk.

I think I may add that both the acts referred to with regard to the Thomond and Wellesley Bridges were not creditable to the Corporation many of whom are of the National League and Home Rule type, who desire a severance of the Union.
What was formerly called and known as the New Bridge, having been taken down in 1844, and re-built in 1846, the Corporation styled it the Mathew Bridge, in compliment to a Roman Catholic Clergyman of that name. This cannot be viewed as their other very objectionable acts just referred to regarding the bridges. The Mathew Bridge was completely a new structure, and named after a very worthy man who did much good for the city and many other parts of Ireland in the cause of temperance, his work having proved a blessing to many thousands of the people to whom he administered the pledge.

THE MEMORABLE STORM OF THE 6th OF JANUARY, 1839.

Some sketch of the memorable storm of the 6th of January, 1839, referred to in a former chapter, may be of interest here, having been, it is supposed, the most fearful and disastrous that ever visited Ireland. It was on a Sunday night this destructive hurricane occurred; during the previous day there was nothing to indicate its approach. It was comparatively fine and calm, with rather a dull close atmosphere; but it was observed towards evening the quicksilver suddenly dipped below the very lowest mark on the barometer; and at about 8 o'clock the wind suddenly got up and blew with rapidly increasing force from the West North West, soon becoming a raging hurricane.

The best built houses trembled, while those that were old and in exposed situations were violently shaken and rocked.

All the public lamps were quickly extinguished, while the crashing of window glass was incessant, and the destruction of property from the falling of chimneys and roofs, particularly in the old town, was very great. More than half the slates on the New Barracks were blown away, and the roof of St. Mary's Cathedral was so stripped that Divine Service had to be suspended for more than a month. Several families that were apprehensive of their houses falling took shelter in their turf vaults under the street, but were repulsed in some instances by the inflow of water through the sewers from the unprecedentedly high tide.

The hurricane, which shifted some points south, reached its greatest fury between 11 and 12 o'clock, it being the high water. The night was very dark, but at times lit up by frequent flashes of vivid lightning, which was succeeded by loud and awful peals of thunder, with a peculiar crashing sound.

The angry water of the Shannon, in which was running a high and broken sea, rose several feet over the quays, and flowed far up the side streets leading from the river. At the time there was a very large number of coasting vessels frequenting the port, consequent on there being then, and for several years after, no transit of goods by rail; and Ireland being at that period a corn-growing country the quantity of wheat, barley and oats brought into Limerick from the surrounding counties was very great. There was also a large business done in beef and pork provisions for the Royal Navy; and the bacon and butter trade was large. Coupled with this there were no sea-going steamers frequenting the port, consequently all the produce referred to was shipped in sailing coasters from the quays—there being then no floating dock in Limerick. Much of this coasting trade was carried on by a beautiful line of fast-sailing schooners belonging to Limerick merchants, which were so well got up and kept—due regard being paid to their carrying capacity—that they were more like fine yachts than
trading vessels. With the exception of vessels that lay above the Wellesley Bridge at Honan's Quay, the Custom House Quay and the Long Dock (now filled in and where the present Potato Market stands) the vessels in port lay between the Wellesley Bridge and the steam-boat quay, frequently berthing, from want of quay-room, three and four outside each other. When this fearful hurricane came on the port was full of shipping, and from those below the bridge having fouled each other, and in many instances broke loose from their fastenings, they became completely unmanageable, the result being disastrous in a fearful degree. Imagination can, perhaps, better picture the wild dreary and ruinous spectacle of the city and river the morning after the hurricane, which was calm and fine, than any descriptions can narrate. I shall now give some details of the mischief done to the shipping of the port by this fearful gale.

The John Wevel was a vessel light in ballast after discharging a cargo of timber, and was lying near the ferry slip. She broke loose from her berthing outside two other vessels which were between her and the quay, and immediately went on her beam ends, after which she filled through the hatches and settled down in the middle of the river with loss of top-masts and yards. Others drifted against the Wellesley Bridge doing great damage to the Western parapet and balustrades. The Magnes had her bow and stern stove in, and was dismayed. The Wasp lost her bowsprit and had her counter and quarters carried away. The Martha's stern was stove in and her main boom broken. The Arbutus had her bows and stern stove in, her stancions carried away and her main top mast gone. The Idea had her cut water and several stanchions carried away, and lost her bowsprit. The Arab was chafed and had her rigging much damaged. The Jane had her stern stove in and lost her main boom. The Triton had her bows and stern stove in and lost her bowsprit and top masts. The Hotspur was cut down and dismayed, the stern being stove in. The Anne was chafed through and otherwise damaged. The Oxonian lost her cutwater and figurehead. The Harmony had her stern stove in and quarters damaged, the Universe had her stern stove in and several stanchions carried away. The Transit lost her main mast and was cut down. The Amity had her bow stove in and fore-mast gone. The Packet lost her masts and bowsprit and had her stern and one of her quarters injured. The Traveller had her stern stove in and lost some of her yards and bow sprit. The Jane was chafed through and had her stern broken. The Martha had her bow and stern stove in and main boom broken. The Robert Henry received general injury. The James lost her topmasts and main boom and had her stern injured. The Julia received considerable injury in hull and rigging. The Raven was much damaged and lost her cutwater, and the Richmond Lass also lost her cutwater, with other injury. From the fouling of this mass of shipping, there was a great destruction of other small boats, in many instances so crushed as to be quite beyond repair. Several other vessels lying below the Wellesley Bridge escaped with comparatively slight injury. The following vessels which were above the bridge escaped uninjured, The Pearl, Helm, Abbey, Alarm, Prince William, Malvina and Bellana. A lighter of 40 tons burthen was lifted over the quay at the Custom House, and the next morning was found high and dry up close to that building.

The river flowed over the embankment between Limerick and Tervoe, rushing in torrents over the fields, deluging the country to a vast extent, destroying numbers of sheep and other farming produce. The Lansdowne-
enbankment, which was only a short time made, suffered much, being broken and ravelled in several places. Inside the Coonagh enbankment three lives were lost, a father and his two sons. The mother was swept away by the current, which landed her on a hedge, saving her life by this fortunate circumstance.

At the time of this fearful hurricane, the only fuel that was burned in kitchens in Limerick—there being no ranges—and by the lower class of the inhabitants of the city was turf. Consequently a large number of sailing boats were employed in bringing it up from Kilbaha, Carrigaholt, Querin and Kilrush; and it was estimated on this occasion thirty of them, in most instances with all hands, were lost.

On the evening of the fatal night ten vessels could be seen at anchor in Tarbert, but on the next morning only two of them were visible, eight of them having dragged their anchors and went ashore on the Clare side of the river. There were several vessels at anchor in Scattery roads, but the sea ran so high it swept their decks carrying away their small boats, and obliging them in most instances to slip their cables and run before the wind. Five of them were stranded at Islevarro, namely the Undine, the Tarr, the Swan, the Providential, the Dart and the George.

The Undine was one of the most beautiful Limerick schooners, commanded by Robert Paterson, who was giving a friend of his, Mr. Andrew Mahony, of Limerick, a trip, as intended, of pleasure to London in his vessel, but sad to say, they were both lost, as also two of the seamen. They were not drowned but killed by the swinging of the main boom and other moveable matters on deck. A large vessel, the Grecian, which put into the Shannon in distress and was undergoing repairs at the Custom House Quay, Kilrush, was torn from her berth and capsized in the creek.

The destruction of trees all over the country was very vast, and the loss in the city caused by the injury to buildings was very great.

The damage to shipping in the port was estimated at £30,000 and sixteen lives were lost, principally seamen.

No storm that we since have had, in the slightest degree equalled in violence the memorable hurricane of the 6th of January, 1839, or, as is probable, ever preceded it. The money loss all over Ireland caused by this disastrous visitation could not be estimated, even anything approximating to it could not be found.