

This historic picture tells the story of the chairing of Spring-Rice.

WE have been asked to decide an issue that is the subject of a bet—namely, to state the name of the artist who executed the famous historical painting in the possession of the Chamber of Commerce, known as the "Chairing of Spring-Rice."

Since the name of the artist is not, contrary to custom, on the picture, it is not just possible to name the painter with absolute certainty.

Some authorities say that it is the work of William Turner, a famous London artist of the period (1820); others hold that the artist was John St. John Long, a Newcastle West man, who gained considerable notoriety in his time not only as a portrait painter but as a medical quack as well. Indeed, much more interest surrounds Long than that of the picture itself.

#### GRAND DESCRIPTION.

An excellent description of the Spring-Rice picture, together with an account of the conditions that led up to it was published in the North Munster Antiquarian Journal of 1945. It was written by the late Mr. Bob Herbert, who had made a closed study of the period when the Verekers had Limerick by the throat, followed by their overthrow, due in large measure, to Thomas Spring-Rice, who became member of Parliament for the City and, later, the first Lord Montagu.

Spring-Rice—he was born in Mungret Street—was given a

tumultuous reception by the citizens in recognition of his great work in breaking the Vereker stronghold.

The picture — "The Chairing of Spring-Rice" — purports to depict the wild scenes of joy and jubilation that were witnessed in Limerick on that historic occasion. There can be little doubt in any case that the painting is one of Limerick's cherished possessions.

The late Bob Herbert suggested that the artist was William Turner, but, in all truth, he had little to go on. An exhibition of paintings held in Limerick in 1821 contained twenty-four pictures by Turner and sixteen by Long.

#### FIRST OR LAST?

It was stated in some obscure advertisement that the first two pictures on view (one being the "Chairing of Spring-Rice") were painted by Turner, but no evidence is available to establish beyond doubt which pictures were first and which were last.

Again, Turner was never known to be in Limerick and, to make matters more confounding, there were, in fact, two English artists by the name of Turner at that time.

Is it not a more reasonable assumption that the painting was executed by the Newcastle West man, Long, who was a frequent visitor to the city, where he moved in high society?

John St. John Long was a colourful figure. That fact and

many others are gleaned from a very interesting article, entitled "Some Notable Limerick Doctors," written by the late Dr. Richard Hayes just thirty years ago. He was a T.D. for Limerick for a period and later held the office of Film Censor. Long, wrote Dr. Hayes, though not belonging to the orthodox profession of medicine, attained considerable celebrity as a quack and a charlatan.

Long, born in Newcastle West in 1798, was the son of a basket maker. As a boy he showed unusual talents for drawing and was sent, through the generosity of some charitable neighbours, to the Dublin School of Art.

After a few years he became highly accomplished as an artist and earned his living by painting portraits and landscapes in Co. Limerick.

#### BORN IN NEWCASTLE WEST.

Long went to London at the age of twenty-four and continued there his artistic work, which was highly praised by the critics and gained for him a very high reputation as a painter.

However, in 1827, Long put away his palette and took up, instead, the study of medicine. By means of effective advertising he became recognised in fashionable quarters as a specialist in the treatment of consumption. His house in Harley Street was besieged by titled nobilities and it is claimed that he had amassed a huge fortune by

1830, when he was arrested and convicted of the manslaughter of one of his patients.

#### A FAMOUS TRIAL

At his trial evidence was given for him by the Marquis of Sligo, the Marchioness of Ormond and more than sixty other society people. In the end Long was discharged on paying a fine of £250.

At the height of his fame, Long fell a victim to the disease that he professed to cure. He died at the early age of 37 years, bequeathing to his brother his "secret cure" and which, it is said, the brother sold for an immense sum. He also left £1,000 for a temple of Greek design to be erected over his grave in Kensal Green Cemetery, London.

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

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

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## HINTS FOR THE HOME

(By MARY HARDING)

Don't forget to sort out all the china, glasses and silver you will use over Christmas and give them a good wash and polish the day before. Put out tablecloths, napkins, traycloths and spare sheets and see that you have plenty of clean clothes for washing up.

Be extragagent with the electricity just for once. replace dim

## Santa Claus Legend Makes Christmas A Children's Feast

THE five little boys and girls went off happily to bed with one thought uppermost in their innocent minds: "Will Santa come to-night?"

served in Ireland as the friend of every child in every street.

Those organisations which assist in the collection of toys for distribution among children, and those

## G.A.A. ANNUAL RECORD

LAST year G.A.A. followers all over the country acclaimed with delight the "Cuchulainn Annual." This attractively finished seventy-two page magazine, with its glossy three colour cover, was an immediate sell out. Hailed by the experts as an outstanding publication, the phenomenal value this Annual offered is far surpassed by this year's publication.

Still priced at 2/-, it is bigger and better than ever and covers every facet of Gaelic games. N.A.C.A. athletics, N.C.A. cycling, and Irish dance.