

STREETS OF IRELAND

bulrush (*scirpus triquetra*), which is unknown elsewhere in Ireland, and in England grows only in a few southern estuaries. Our route goes right along Newenham St, but first pass its corner and see, opposite the Shannon Arms hotel, seven terraced three-storey houses, built of stone and with a subdued castellated aspect, and mock-Tudor windows set in pairs. It is an example of Limerick's variety of domestic architecture, but back around the corner in Newenham St is a rarer one, on the right near Henry St corner. Look at the redbrick houses. Nos. 8, 9 and 10, with the name Carrick Villas spelled out across their fronts in yellow glazed brick, and other yellow brick decoration, a highly imaginative but garish Victorian concept. But what really stops one in one's tracks is the size of No. 10. It is four yards wide.

At the top of the street we are back at the Crescent, whose centre-piece is an excellent bronze statue of the Liberator, Daniel O'Connell, by John Hogan, on a base of granite, put up in 1857. The vivid redbrick facade of the Crescent church, the Jesuit one of the Sacred Heart, contrasts with the duller shades around. The Jesuits had had a college and chapel nearby at the corner of Hartstonge St since March, 1859, and opened the church we see now in 1868. For many years the Crescent college was beside it. The church site had been occupied by Crescent House, owned by Mr. Richard Russell J.P., who was said to have kept his blinds drawn since the erection of the O'Connell statue, and awaited the first opportunity to sell and get out. The width of his garden attracted the Jesuits, who bought the house in 1862, later taking in adjoining premises. The church's classical facade in brick is highly unusual, basically two-storey with four limestone Corinthian pilasters in the upper storey, and windows in the interpilasters. There are striking ornamental reliefs in brickwork in the pediment. Inside, the sanctuary, which includes parts of the transepts, is punctuated by brown marble Corinthian pilasters. The church's architect was William Corbett, and he had the high altar made in Rome, giving rise to an erroneous story, still repeated, that it was made for "some church in Rome" but did not harmonise with its surroundings. Halfway along the church is noticed to change levels, and this may be a legacy of the shape of the sensitive Mr. Russell's garden.

Looking along O'Connell St, much of whose eighteenth century character remains despite ground floor alterations for shops and offices, we are reminded of how much Limerick owes to Sexton Pery, who incidentally had earlier in his career installed water pumps at St. Peter St and near the site of St. John's Cathedral for the benefit of the people of Englishtown and Irishtown. O'Connell St leads straight to Patrick St and is about three-quarters of a mile long. This stretch contains Limerick's two best-known hotels, the 1850 Royal George, where Queen Victoria was a guest, and which was demolished in 1961 and rebuilt in a modern form which does not suit its surroundings as well as the old, and Cruise's, established in 1791. The Royal George is named after an old Shannon steam ferry.

William Makepeace Thackeray stayed in Cruise's, whose frontage has not changed greatly since the days when its sign read "royal mail coach hotel", though the interior has been altered and robbed of character, a circular barroom adding nothing to its appeal. The hotel retains the

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word "royal" in its title. O'Connell St also contains Gleeson's literary pub.

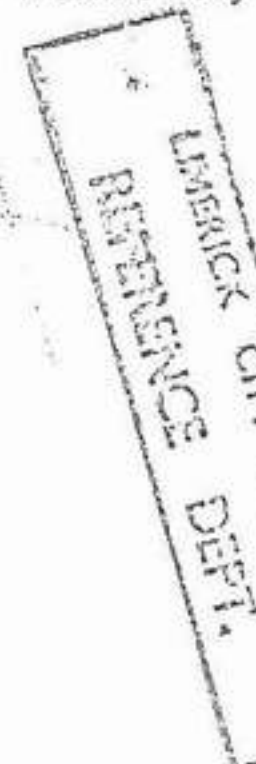
Going along this pleasant street we pass the corner of Glentworth St on our left and see in the Georgian fanlight of No. 97 the unusual sign "Protestant Young Men's Association 1853". No. 99, now the premises of Rooney's auctioneers, was the home of a banker and M.P. named William Roche, who erected a huge hanging garden at the back, which became known as Roche's Folly and spanned the present laneway to continue to Henry St. The grandiose thing was completed in 1808. Roche first built a series of arches of varying height, under which was storage space for 2,000 hogsheads of wine or spirits. The lowest arches were in the middle, 25 feet high, the tallest, at 40 feet, being at the sides. He then laid his terraced garden, complete with classical statues and flue-heated glasshouses, on top, the average depth of soil being five feet. Here he grew grapes, peaches, melons, cucumbers, cabbages and other produce, but his success or otherwise with oranges and pineapples is not on record. The Henry St end of this amazing layout, which covered more than an acre, faced the residences of the Earl of Limerick and the Protestant bishop, who cannot have been pleased to note that the top of the highest terrace wall was 70 feet from the street. The garden was drained into the street by lead pipes concealed in the arches, and in dry weather the water could be retained and diverted into pipes under the suspended earth by valves. The nature of the structure provided an even temperature under the arches, so the government leased the stores from Roche at a down payment of £10,000 and an annual rent of £300, compensating him for the cost of construction, £15,000.

Further down, across the street beyond the corner of Roche's St, is the 1941 neo-Romanesque Augustinian church, replacing one of 1823. Its gabled facade contains a large round-headed window divided by the shaft and arms of a large stone cross, and inside the church are chevron-ornamented arcades on clustered grey marble columns. The facade contains a stone from the lintel of an Augustinian chapel established in 1633 in Fish Lane, after the community was expelled from its monastery in Adare. The Regular Canons of St. Augustine had had a monastery on Scattery Island, founded by St. Senan, in the fifth century.

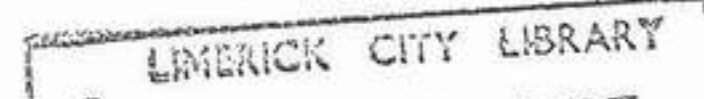
The tasteful modern clocktower of Cannock's department store becomes our landmark as we continue our tour. It replaces one of 1888; the store was founded by George Cannock in 1832. Before we reach it we turn left into Sarsfield St and go on to the corner of Henry St, where we look left to see the magnificent Corinthian facade of the Franciscan church, completed in 1879. Its four pillars are unusually tall and slender, and support an unadorned pediment which is surmounted by statues. In the limestone church are twin rows of pink marble Corinthian columns, and the apse is crowned by a fresco of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin surrounded by angels. The Franciscans originally had a monastery east of the city, founded in the thirteenth century by William Fion de Burgo. Further along Henry St is the exotic redbrick towered Presbyterian church of 1901, now a library.

Leaving the church, notice the elegance of the house across at the corner of Sarsfield St, with its half-bowed three-storey front and

Roche's Folly



Augustinians



Crescent church

Cruise's Hotel