

THOMAS BARNARD

ONE of the most colourful of the distinguished residents of 104 Henry Street, was Thomas Barnard, who succeeded to the Protestant See of Limerick on the death of William Cecil Pery in 1794.

Barnard was a fine writer, and his output was prodigious, but, alas, the main subjects of his labours were sermons - several books of them. When these were first published they were well received, and were the subjects of favourable comment and recommendation by the literary critics. However, the word 'Sermons' was enough to remind one of the monotonous tedium of church sermons - Shakespeare's 'Parson's saw' and now, like their writer, are all but forgotten.

He was one of the select members of Dr. Johnson's unique circle of academics which included Goldsmith, Garrick, Reynolds and Burke. He was born in Derry where his father was bishop, and on one occasion when Johnson intimated that he wished to visit Ireland Barnard expressed some misgivings about the visit, suggesting that his fellow countrymen might suffer the same severe criticism as did the Scots. However, Johnson reassured him: "Sir, you have no reason to be afraid of me. The Irish are not in conspiracy to cheat the world by false representations of the merits of their countrymen. No sir; the Irish are a fair people - they never speak well of one another."

The members of the famous club, particularly the literary giants, Johnson, Goldsmith and Barnard often resorted to verse when eulogizing or criticising their fellows. On an occasion after Johnson and Barnard had

engaged in a very heated argument as to the merits or otherwise of life after forty five: the latter summed up with a brilliant piece of delicate irony:

*Johnson shall teach me
how to place*

*In fairest light each bor-
rowed grace;*

*From him I'll learn to
write,*

*Copy his clear familiar
style;*

*And by the roughness of
his file,*

Grow, like himself, polite.

Goldsmith, in his suggested epitaphs for his friends in his humorous poem, "Retaliation", did not forget Barnard:

*Here lies the good Dean
re-united to earth,*

*Who mixed reason with
pleasure and wisdom with
mirth.*

*If he had any faults he left
us in doubt,*

*At least in six months I
could not find them out.*

*Yet some have
declared, and it can't be
denied 'em,*

*That sly-boots was curs-
edly cunning to hide 'em.*

Barnard was married to Ann Brown, and after her death - as if to throw off the weight of his seventy five years - he married the 22-year-old Jane Ross-Lewin who died a few months afterwards from consumption. Nothing daunted, the daring bishop began making plans for a third marriage when old man time cut him down with one deft swipe of his sickle on June 6th, 1806.

Charles Warburton

Charles Warburton succeeded Barnard in 1805. He had been Dean of Clonmacnoise. He was once a

Catholic and came from a Catholic family. This circumstance may have been responsible for the great hostility shown him in Limerick. Turn-coats were especially reviled at that period, and long afterwards.

A few months after his appointment his party was attacked on the Mountshannon Road a few hundred yards from Annacotty as they were returning from the big house where they had been entertained by Lady Clare. Warburton received wounds to his head and shoulder from a shot-gun blast. He recovered after some months to an uneasy and frightened existence.

In 1820 he was translated to Cloyne and died there six years afterwards.



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