

mented. A portion of praise goes a long way and makes hard work worthwhile. At home consider a clean-up and a clear-out. Make

Paperwork proves vital, you may ultimately prove your greatest protection. Get things in writing rather than relying on a vague word.

have enough commitments already.  
★ LIBRA (October 31 - November 22): Tell someone what to do and

could miss out on an important and once-off opportunity.

# My Limerick

A weekly series by  
**KEVIN HANNAN**

## Bishop John Young (1796 - 1813)

JOHN Young, was born in John Street, Limerick, in March 1746. His father was a provision merchant of some considerable means and his mother was Mary Cahill. Though the severity of the Penal laws was much relaxed at this time there was a denial of proper education facilities for Catholics, but John was given the best available. When he afterwards expressed a wish for the priesthood he was sent to Louvain where his many talents were developed and polished to a fine degree. He was a brilliant student, and secured his M.A. and D.D. degrees with apparent ease.

At the age of twenty five he returned, a young priest, to commence his missionary work in his native parish. Afterward during his labours in several parishes throughout the diocese his prudence and scholarship so impressed his elders that he was marked out as a future leader.

His time came in 1793 when he was appointed Coadjutor to the ailing Dr. Denis Conway, his great friend, on whose death in 1797 he took over the complete control of the diocese.

While he was one of those who worked hard towards the establishment of

St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, his mind was full of the idea of founding a college in his own diocese.

To this end he purchased a house in Palmerstown and opened his seminary there in 1796, the year of his appointment as bishop. It is of interest to note that this house was still standing at the corner of Palmerstown and Old Francis Street up to 1936 when it was demolished in conjunction with the great slum clearance at that time, when the inhabitants of this run-down area were rehoused in the Island Field. This was the poor beginning of the Diocesan College.

After a short time the seminary moved to a better house adjoining the Franciscan chapel in Newgate Lane, and then again to Peter's Cell. As a result of substantial charitable donations the bishop was able to Purchase Park House in 1809.

This was a splendid house in its own grounds, and during the century and a half as a most useful property of the diocese it served as college, bishop's residence and presbytery for St. Patrick's parish.

This was a time of great intrigue, strife and unease in the country. The United

Irishmen, led mainly by patriotic non-Catholics, were building and undercover military force whose primary task was to relieve the injustices under which the Catholic population were suffering. Then you had the renegade Limerick man, John Fitzgibbon, fomenting the ill-fated insurrection that was to copper-fasten the Union of Great Britain and Ireland - the culmination of all his ambitions!

Dr. Young has been blamed for standing idly by in Limerick while those suspected of being 'disaffected' were either hanged or otherwise cruelly treated at the hands of the two sadistic sheriffs, Lloyd and Webb. History informs us that the victims of this savagery were innocent of any offence, criminal or political.

Yet the bishop might be forgiven: he could not have stopped this savage regime, and if he publicly denounced the reign of terror, or inveighed against it in any way he would have encouraged and incited other to become victims of a movement which he knew was doomed to failure. No doubt his stance on the side

of the establishment was prompted by the example of the horrors of the French revolution and its aftermath.

The bishop's courage and strength of character came to the fore during the calmer days after the crushing of the insurrection when the Chief Secretary, Viscount Castlereagh, offered a stipend for the clergy in return for a guarantee of 'loyalty'. Without hesitation Dr. Young refused to have any part in the implementation of this measure which he regarded a sell out of the independence of the clergy, while the bishops of the country expressed agreement with the revolutionary proposal.

In the days following this remarkable impasse Dr. Young wrote as follows to Dr. Bray, archbishop of Cashel: "I think the government well intended, but it may destroy confidence in the flock, create contentions, and open a door of government patronage, intrigue and simony."

On the whole, as far as I can see, I am against it either for all or for nay, even the needy; so is Dr. McMahon (Bishop of Killaloe)."

Shortly afterwards, in another letter to Dr. Bray, he remarked: "A government

proclamation has opened my eyes about the pension. I see now it is a douceur to carry the Union, and though not perhaps so decided against that measure as some of my colleagues I will never take a bride to annihilate Ireland's independence.

Afterwards he was the strongest opponent of the government's proposal to allow the English King a veto in the appointment of bishops. When his proposal was afterwards withdrawn after much discussion and litigation Dr. Young wrote to Dr. Copping: "I hope the question of the veto is now put down for ever and I believe from the unanimity with which it was carried that the resolution against the veto was suggested by the Holy Ghost."

All through this serious discussion and litigation on the pension and the veto Dr. Young did not neglect the affairs of his diocese. He done much work towards the education of the poorer classes, and brought out a catechism in Irish and English.

He was altogether and outstanding prelate who was unfortunate to hold office in a most difficult period in the history of his country but who proved more than equal to the task.

He did at Park House on the 22nd. of September, 1813, and was buried, by his own choice, in the tomb of his great friend and predecessor, Dr. Denis Conway, in the ancient churchyard of St. Patrick's now utterly destroyed beyond restoration, by vandals, where the following inscription can be seen on his tomb:

This monument was erected at the expense of the parish clergymen of the diocese to the memory of the Right Rev. John Young R.C. Bishop of Limerick, who separated this life on the 22nd day of September,

1813, in the 68th year of this age and twentieth year of his Episcopal dignity

His life was truly exemplary and Apostolical,

He was remarkable for his piety, charity and profound learning. Humble and mortified in

his manner of life he sought only the honour and glory of God, not the things of his life.

He did regretted by all his clergymen to whom

he was a faithful instructor, and lamented by to whom he was a parent and protector.

May his soul rest in peace.