THE HISTORY OF THE GREAT DOMINICAN ORDER IN LIMERICK

IMPRESSIVE STORY OF GLORY AND TRIBULATION

How Torture And Repression Failed In Their Purpose

ACCOUNT OF A FAMOUS STATUE OF OUR LADY

Important Paper By Rev. L. J. Taheny, O.P.

The history of the great Dominican Order in Limerick was the subject of a very important and interesting paper read by Rev. L. J. Taheny, O.P., St. Saviour's, Limerick, at a recent meeting of the Old Limerick Society. The paper provided a most impressive story of glory and tribulation, showing how torture and repression failed in their set purpose of destroying the Friars Preachers and what they stood for. By way of preface, Father Taheny gave the following brief sketch of the foundation and early history of the Dominican Order:—

The Order, founded by St. Dominic Gusman, a Spaniard, at the beginning of the 13th century, was formally approved by Pope Honorius in 1216. It spread rapidly through Europe, reaching England in 1221, the year of the Saint's death. Three years later Dominicans came to Ireland. Their motto: "To praise, to bless, and to preach," taken from the Preface of Our Lady's Mass. They considered their work the right building of the word of Truth, by doctrinal preaching based on Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and Tradition. For this reason they went to large centres of population, preferably university towns, where they could meet all classes of thought and expound to all men the dogmas of the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The following is Father Taheny's paper:—

Let us briefly review the coming of the Order to Limerick. The Friars naturally landed first in Dublin, then went to Drogheda, Kilkenny and Waterford all within three years. The fifth town they came to come to was the City of Limerick, and after two years they went to Cork, later to Multyfarnham, Athenry, Cashel and Traice. Kilmallock was the twenty-fourth place that they went to, and that after being 70 years in Ireland. Kilmallock was the only place they got to in Co. Limerick.

The man who invited them to come to Limerick was the Prince Thomond, Donoch or Donat O'Brien, known also as Donach Cathery O'Brien. At the time he invited them to come, the new invaders, or the Norman, as they were called, were only 36 years in the city, and although they now owned the city, the O'Brien family were allowed free entry and exit, both the O'Brienn and Norman sides of the river and within the walls, where they were recognised as foreign Lords over all Clare and were given the title of Earl.

King John of England had a castle built at this time. It was only 17 years old when the Dominicans came, King John's successor on the throne of England, King Henry III, being a Catholic, gave them a piece of ground near the old Walls on which to build their Monastery. On that title alone the Kings of England claimed to have brought us here, and that claim has a good foundation. It is not possible that they built the place for the Friars preacher. The O'Briens, or the old Irish Chieftains, did their part in building the church, supplying the craftsmen with building material gratis; that is why they also claimed to be the founders of Limerick Priory and Donach O'Brien ordered in his last Will and Testament that his body should be carried down to Limerick and be buried there in the church he founded. We can imagine a stone coffin lying in the Aisle of the Church, with a lid similar to the one now in St. Mary's Cathedral. My father's coffin and on top of the coffin was a stone sculptured image or statue of Lord O'Brien in full flat. This image was left intact for hundreds of years and was not destroyed until the Cromwellian soldiers hacked it to pieces as they attempted to do to the other piece of sculpture in St. Mary's Cathedral.

COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON CHARITY OF THE PUBLIC

When the Friar Preachers came to Limerick, they were completely dependent on the charity of the public; probably they walked all the way from Kilkenny or from Dublin, as horses or any wheeled accommodation were forbidden them in those early days. Once they settled down they had to provide all necessary furniture and equipment for the house and Church. Fortunately we have a most detailed record of what happened at another monastery—that of Athenry. There the wealthy Burgesses contributed either in kind or else paid for the instalment of all necessities. One man sent 2 pipes of wine in order that the windows would be repaired; another gave one-tenth of his profits from commerce to support students, and donated to each of them a Clerical cape made of English cloth. Some gave annually a pipe of fish at Lent and Advent; some paid for the transcription of Missals, gave brass candlesticks, wax, irons for making brands, Chalices and silk vestments. One person supplied 2 sets of vestments in 6 different colours—red, yellow, green, white, black, and cloth of gold with flowers and leaves in silver embroidered thereon. Others gave kitchen utensils—such as roasting spits, etc. One man built a tower as far as the Church roof level, and another man paid for the rest of the way. Sometimes a small parcel of land was donated, such as 3 acres, and even rattle were sometimes given. A stone bridge would be erected to accommodate the Friars going to their mill. We read of one man paying 100 marks for fixing a broken Crucifix and a broken statue of St. Dominic. Another brought personally one-tenth of his harvest earnings to the Friars' garden because the Friars themselves were busy on that occasion. Another, in his Last Will and Testament, ordered that his body should be brought back from Bristol to be buried in the Friars' Church. If an Irish Chieftain were killed in battle, a group of Friars would go all the way across the country and accompany the remains back to the Monastery that he founded.

LIMERICK REGISTER OF BENEFACTORS.

We may take it that similar things happened in Limerick, although the Limerick Register of Benefactors is very scant in detail. All the Monasteries kept such Registers, noting down what was given by everyone and what their intentions were. At the Reformation many of these records were lost or destroyed. At the request of an Englishman interested in old Monasteries—Sir James Ware the Prior of Limerick, Father Thomas Quirke, in 1627, made a transcription of what was left of this old register. This account is very short and is kept in the British Museum; it gives a list of those buried in the Church. There are 19 Bishops buried there, 2 are Bishops of Limerick, 2 of Killaloe, 1 of Emlyn, 1 of Cashel, 3 of Kilfenora in St. Clare, and 1 unidentified Bishop. Besides some of the Chieftains of the O'Brien's, the McNamaras, Roches, Ryans and the Fitzgeralds are buried there.

The site selected on the City Walls was unusual, but it may have given them fishing rights, as the river probably passed near the gardens in those days. Most Monasteries were situated near rivers or lakes, as fresh meat was totally forbidden in the early monastic days. In the middle ages, the Dominicans adopted total abstinence from meat, and this may account for the gift to third of the Salmon Weir, known as the Lax Weir, so that they might have fish daily. The Island adjacent was probably called after St. Thomas Aquinas, and they may have lived there during the summer months. Across the river at this point is Monabrather (now Long Pavement), meaning the Friars Bog, whence all their fuel was drawn.

ACTIVITIES OF THE FRIARS.

As to what they did. They probably maintained a college, or some educational establishment, as a document in the British Museum containing 279 pages once belonged to Old St. Saviour's. This manuscript consists of historical texts, religious tracts and other material taught to students in those days. The late Dr. Robin Flower, Curator of the Irish Manuscript Section of the British Museum, considered this to be the best specimen of literature as current in Ireland in the early part of the 14th century. Others of the priests did Church work, or went about in twos preaching at the various Irish village crosses, as there were then no formal Chapels as we know nowadays. The priests would then proceed to the next settlement or castle and do likewise. A special district would be mapped out for the activities of each Priory—for instance, the Limerick Priory area may not have gone further than Croom in one direction, as the Kilmallock Priory may have extended to that point. On special occasions the Friars would go about preaching the Crusades that were then on the move to defend the Holy Land from the Inroads of the Turks. At Cashel they were entrusted with the keeping of the Papal Bulls issued to the Prelates and people of Munster. Sometimes, as during the Black Death, they suffered many reverses, just like the civil population. For 300 years they maintained this life until the monasteries were broken up by King Henry VIII. The Earl of Desmond got possession of the Old Monastery, which consisted of a church, a steeple—more like a Norman tower than a steeple—as we can see from the map of 1590. This map gives us a perfect picture of the place as it was handed over to the Earl. The Church contained three large relic canes ornamented with precious stones.

CHALICES MELTED DOWN.

Their chalices were melted down by the Commissioners and sent over to Henry VIII to pay for his gambling, feasting, etc. In Dublin they were allowed to retain only one chalice. That practice explains why we have no silver or gold chalices from those times. There were also a few small gardens covering an acre and a half. To the credit of the Earl of Desmond it must be said that he returned his ill-gotten goods at the time of Queen Mary, whose reign lasted but for 5 years. Queen Elizabeth expelled them again, and for the 40 years of her reign, the priests were hunted down like wolves, in fact 15 was the price of a wolf's head, and it was also the price of a priest's head. There was scarcely a monastery, even in the remotest parts, that was not unroofed during her reign. The ranks of the clergy were thinned down by exhumation and pursuit. They were driven out of Munster into Connaught, and even later on they had to retire into the fastnesses of Ulster, where the O'Neills and O'Donnells were still in power and afforded them protection. The Earl of Desmond also gave protection in the mountains of Kerry. At this point there is a pathetic letter to Rome from the Provincial, saying that there are only four communities out of the thirty-eight in the whole country—probably Derry, Coleraine, Newtownards and Traice are the four in mind. It is said that out of the 500 priests alive at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, only four were left at her death. It is very hard to certify this, but it is quite probable. At this point, too, it was decided by the handful of priests left, to send students to Spain—a new experiment. Very few were sent at first, but by the year 1600 there were enough of them there to take a [illegible] their interests.

With the death of Queen Elizabeth, the work of the Friars had to be started all over again. There was good hope for peaceful times and toleration, as the new King, James, was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, who was imprisoned and executed for being a Catholic. He was a Catholic in theory, at any rate, and even if he did not practice he would, it was hoped by hosts of Catholics. Therefore, with the passing of Elizabeth the Catholics took forcible possession of the Churches built by their forefathers, expelled the Ministers and restored Catholic worship, as heretofore.

POSITION THEN OF THE ORDER IN LIMERICK

The position of the Order in Limerick at this time was: There was one priest, a Father Hallgan, and perhaps another, Father Clancy, in residence, but not in the City. They found refuge at Brittas Castle, near Boher, where the owner, Sir John Bourke, was foremost in protecting priests and in promoting Catholic religion. At this time, in the whole of Munster there were only five members of the Order, as we know from the Statement of the Papal Envoy at Brussels, who looked after the affairs of England and Ireland.

To get back to Sir John Bourke, we may take it for granted that he and his small retinue of soldiers were busy in taking over the old Priory and restoring it to Father Hallgan. We have a contemporary account of his activities in this direction, and because of them he was arrested by order of Lord Mountjoy and lodged in Dublin Gaol, where he spent at least a year, and was released only because a plague raged in Dublin, whence all the citizens had fled. There in prison [illegible] themselves.

Returning to Limerick, he again contacted Father Hallgan, but from now on Sir John's activities were under close inspection by Government spies. No coward soul was he. On the contrary, he became a most active member of the newly-established Rosary Confraternity, fitting out the large banqueting hall of his Castle as a public Chapel and inviting the people to pursue their devotions there. These matters were noised abroad, and on the instructions of Chichester, Sir Henry Brounkard, the Deputy Lieutenant, sent out a small platoon in the early hours of a Sunday morning in October with instructions to demand admittance in the name of the King. On the approach of the soldiers the people fled in all directions; Sir John appeared on the rampart wall and inquired the business of the Lieutenant in command. The Mass had just been completed by Father Clancy, and the small private army maintained there—140 in numbers—did not think it fair to set upon the small group of soldiers. Seeing that there was no answer, and no admittance would be allowed, reinforcements were sent out, and for three days there was a state of siege. Attempts were made to burn them out.

ARREST AND TRIAL OF SIR JOHN

At this point Sir John and the Chaplain retired to a specially constructed hiding room with the sacred vessels tied up in sacking. As resistance was considered hopeless they contrived to emerge at nightfall, hoping that they would not be noticed. Unfortunately the river bank collapsed and a fall of clay into the river Mulcair gave the alarm to the soldiers' night-watch. Sir John outdistanced his pursuers and when at a safe distance he reverently placed the sacred vessels in a bunch of weeds and nettles, where they would be safe and could be collected later on. He reached the City of Waterford, but was unsuccessful in obtaining a passage by ship to Spain. Retracing his steps he wrote a letter to Father Hallgan telling of his plans. While at Carrick-on-Suir, on the way back, he was recognised and betrayed by a woman. A warrant for his arrest was put into operation, and he was drawn on a hurdle through the streets of Clonmel and thence to Cork on a trial of treason. This trial should have been conducted by Sir George Thornton, but then Sir George's daughter, Grace Thornton, was the wife of Sir John Bourke. Sir John Burgh was then deputed to take the unwilling role of Judge, as the trial was a foregone conclusion. At it Sir John refused to speak much, only repeating that he could not serve two masters. This mild behaviour was afterwards called insolence and bearing, and rebellion. Five military witnesses gave depositions in the English and Irish languages and four civilians gave evidence against him. One of them was Bernard Agnew, who described him as an old and conscious traitor. He was condemned to be hanged, drawn and quartered at Gallows Green, Limerick. Half of his lands were confiscated and part was given to Captain Philipworth in lieu of services rendered; the other part to the Earl of Salisbury. With a guard of ten horsemen, Sir John was sent to Limerick and there executed. Through the influence of a friend the mangled body was not submitted to any further indignity, but peacefully laid to rest in the old churchyard of St. John's. This miscarriage of justice was redressed later by the pardon of the judge, who gave the Dominicans the statue now known as Our Lady of Limerick, and the chalice inscribed with his name.

RENTED HOUSES NEAR THE ABBEYS

To pass on to the activities of the Friars, small groups landed on the coast and proceeded to rent houses near the old abbeys. After many years the numbers landed allowed 2 or 3 of those old abbeys, or their counterparts to be reoccupied. There make a claim that Limerick must have been one of the first two or three, as we have to Trinity College, Dublin, a report from a Limerick spy called Fitzgerald, that there were three Dominicans in residence there that same year, along with four Franciscans and seventeen secular priests. Twenty years later, eight places were occupied, and so things became normal, at least on paper. But we must not forget that the priests and people were so used to persecution that it was second nature to them. Any little lull was regarded as great toleration. At the same time, religion could be practised only in a very subdued form and behind closed doors. We may take it that we did not get possession of the Old Abbey for the first forty years of the 17th century. Not until the Confederate Forces, under Hugh O'Moore, Owen Roe O'Neill gave the people freedom and a feeling of the old place.

FATHER TERENCE O'BRIEN

The most representative man of this time was Father Terence O'Brien, born near Limerick. He was often Prior here and later was put in charge of the whole of Ireland. His great talents definitely marked him out as a leader of the people. The Pope's Envoy was attracted to him, and in a letter to the Cardinals he describes him as a man of great prudence and sagacity. He recommends him strongly for the Bishopric of Emly because he was an immediate source of merit for the Catholic Cause, and as he says, "I cannot find a better man." He was consecrated in Waterford by the Pope's Envoy, Rinuccini, but could not visit his small Diocese for one year owing to the state of desolation inflicted on it by the troops of Cromwell. We all know the spirit he put into the Defenders of the City at the Siege by Ireton. He was specially excepted from any quarter, on account of this and on account of he being a Bishop.

Another Dominican inside was also excepted. He was Fr. James Woulfe, an old man, well known as a preacher. A third Dominican who was excepted was Father John Collins. Father Collins was most active in combating the tactics of the enemy, and even before they came up to the City he went outside the Walls and spied on their movements. We are assured of this by his contemporaries—he is described as being very small in stature and very agile, and leading the storming of Bunratty Castle with crucifix in hand. So active was he that his personal appearance was circulated on the hue and cry. Father Collins knew full well what to expect from the Cromwellians, seeing their record at Drogheda and at Wexford, and knowing what was at stake he did all in his power to help the besieged. Those three priests were executed.

A FAMOUS PECTORAL CROSS.

Here I am concerned with the story of Terence O'Brien. A Dominican who attended him wrote a book describing the last days of those martyrs. Unfortunately this book is now lost; except for a few extracts we do not know its contents. This Dominican was allowed freely to go and come in the condemned men, as the Cromwellians respected the dying request of their victims. But here tradition comes to the rescue. Terence Albert saw his mother shortly before he was about to die and gave her his Bishop's Cross, telling her to keep it until her death, and then return it to the Dominicans. We do not know if the Dominicans ever actually repossessed it, but it is certain that the O'Briens kept it for the last 250 years in their family, regarding it as a very treasured heir-loom. We did not know that they had it in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, until the year 1802, when a description of the cross was printed by the Cork Archaeological Society. A Father Walsh, O.P., of Dublin, contacted a Mr. Thomas O'Brien, who was to send it to Dublin by his nephew. Unfortunately, Father Walsh was sent to the Continent looking for documents about the martyrs and in the meantime Mr. Thomas O'Brien died (1908) leaving the cross to his nephew, a Dr. O'Brien of Redding, England. Father Walsh wrote to Dr. O'Brien asking for particulars and the doctor sent him photographs of the cross back and front. The World War started and Doctor O'Brien joined the Army Medical Corps. He packed his bags and told them aside, informing Father Walsh that he would donate him the Cross, as he (Dr. O'Brien) was the last member of his family, and it was the dying wish of the Bishop that when the family became extinct the Cross should return to the Order.

MIRACULOUS ESCAPE.

Dr. O'Brien could not find time to carry the Cross personally to Dublin. He was drafted to India, and in an engagement there escaped miraculously from a German raiding ship that appeared in the Indian Ocean (was it the Emden?). Normally they should have all been sunk, but Dr. O'Brien, who carried the Cross on his person, appealed to the Sacred Martyr to protect them, and thus he attributes their escape to safety. He returned to England, where he married an Irish girl called Mary O'Shea. They lived at Aldershot. His cases were left unpacked and the Cross was in one of them. He had rented surgical instruments from a London Agency. One day in 1918 he was operated on unsuccessfully, and on hearing this the London Agency sent their courier, a Mr. [illegible], to Aldershot to collect their unpaid-for instruments, books, etc. Mrs. O'Brien, who lived in an hotel near the Camp, and who never saw the Cross, was so stricken with grief at the loss of her husband that she gave the key to his cases to [illegible], thinking that all was well, as he was concerned. After a few hours he returned the keys and returned to London. It was only when she started unpacking the doctor's personal effects that she noticed the Cross. She wrote to Mr. [illegible] and he disclaimed that he ever saw it. In the meantime, Mr. [illegible] found papers of Father Walsh to Dr. O'Brien, and he wrote to Father Walsh offering to sell him a valuable Cross which was left him, so he claimed, by the late Dr. O'Brien. He wanted £100 for it. This money could not be got, and he refused. Mr. [illegible] wrote to the Curator of Dublin Museum offering to sell the Cross, saying that Father Walsh had offered him £100 for it. The Curator asked [illegible] to send him the Cross for inspection, which he did, and it was in Dublin Museum for one year.

FITTED IN WITH TIME AND BACKGROUND.

The Curator in Dublin photographed the Cross and sent the photographs to the Kensington Museum, London, to date it. Their verdict was that it was Spanish and mid-seventeenth century, which just fitted in with the time and background of Bishop O'Brien. The Cross was returned to [illegible]. Mrs. O'Brien emigrated to America; her brother, a solicitor, said that there was no claim in law against Mr. [illegible], who was an opportunist, and that if he could be induced to come to Ireland with the Cross in his possession a case might be made out. Mr. [illegible] was invited to Dublin but he would not come. It was not until the year 1927 that Mrs. O'Brien instructed Mr. Skinner, a Mitchelstown solicitor, to buy the Cross direct from [illegible] paying £10 for it. Mr. Skinner, who is a very old man, and is still alive, often saw the Cross in the house of the late Thomas O'Brien, and he at once recognised it, so did the Dublin Museum, which photographed it, and the photographs of Father Walsh that were given him by the young doctor going to the war here testimony that it was the same Cross. Thus it has come again into our possession. The British Museum authorities who have seen the photographs say that there is nothing against the traditional date and information. The silk cord around it was put there by a Bishop John O'Brien of Cloyne, who lived in the 18th century. This Bishop had to fly for his life to France, and died at Lyons in the middle of that century.

STATUE OF OUR LADY OF LIMERICK.

A few words about the statue of Our Lady of Limerick.

It is disputed whether it was made in Belgium or in Bavaria. It is oak and hollow. The wide folds in the drapery, the free piece of the Child and the Angels' heads point to the 17th Century. It was hidden, probably in vaults in the City, at various periods. Doctor Carbery probed into this matter in the years 1860 to '70 and the oldest people then associated with Fish Lane held that it was buried in St. Mary's Convent Grounds by the priests, and not by the people. A valuable testimony was that of Margaret Treacy, born 1800, who knew Father Harrigan well and was the first person to be publicly received as a Tertiary in Fish Lane Chapel in 1818. It is really a miracle that we have the Statue at all, as it must have been very difficult to conceal it in the various raids and searches of the Penal Times.

First of all the statue was placed on its pedestal in old St. Saviour's, nine years before the Cromwellians came. During the Siege a strange vision was seen over St. Mary's Cathedral—an Apparition of Our Lady and St. Dominic. We would be inclined to attribute this to hysteria in a doomed city, were it not curiously corroborated by an English soldier who saw it from outside the walls and recorded it in his diary.

Archdeacon Begley says in his history, that during the occupation of the city by the Catholic forces, we went back to the Old Monastery.

REIGN OF TERROR & SEVERE PERSECUTION.

Immediately after the Siege an outbreak of typhus took a heavy toll of life. Three of our priests died while ministering to the plague-stricken. Another was deported to the Barbadoes with the Irish slaves sent there. A reign of terror and severe persecution marked the rest of Cromwell's period. We have on record that the priest in charge here—a Sligo man—took refuge in the hills round Limerick and died there. The vast majority of the priests escaped to the continent.

The streets of Belgian cities were flooded with Irish exiles, civil and religious in those days. Our great benefactors in Belgium were three brothers of the name of Joyce, hailing from Galway, who built us a large college, in the centre of Louvain. A similar college was donated through the munificence of a Portuguese Duchess in Lisbon, said to have cost £40,000. But even these two colleges were not sufficient for the vast numbers landing weekly on the continent. Of all the European peoples, the Spaniards were the most generous. The Belgian people were also good to us, and the French people of the West Coast. The Spaniards did not mind educating students for Irish needs, but they found it difficult to place the large numbers of refugee priests.

FAIR SHARE OF RECORDS.

There are in Trinity College a group of papers captured during this time in Dublin after a raid on the rooms of Father Reynolds, O.P. This correspondence pours a flood of light on the situation in Spain. We have a fair share of records dealing with this period, and on paper it would seem that things were quite normal. This conclusion would be false, because we have a case of a Fr. O'Farrell, O.P., three years in Dublin gaol, begging the Duke of Ormonde to release him. His health had been completely ruined, and he begged for an extra three months' grace in Ireland, if released, as the weather was too severe to emigrate. A Father Moore, O.P., died in a Dublin prison. In our library here we have a book on Our Lady which was snatched from the hands of the heretics in the first year of King James's reign.

We now come to the Siege of Limerick and its aftermath. For six years after the Siege the priests and the exercise of religion openly were tolerated. King William III. had given his word of honour that he would implement the Treaty of Limerick, and even got more favourable terms for the Catholics. In the summer, 1697, after six years waiting, there came a bull from the blue in the shape of an edict, ordering all Religious, Priests and Bishops out of the country. They were given twelve months to fix up their accounts and make arrangements on the Continent for their reception. The Government would supply the necessary ships at certain Ports. They would be allowed to take all Sacred Vessels with them, if needed. We must remember that King William had taken violent possession of the Throne of England, and this would not be recognised by the Continental Powers until he had shown that he could peacefully maintain Law and Order. It took six years to refurbish this claim, and then the King found that he could use a strong hand in dealing with Catholics and reveal his true mind on the matter.

WHAT HAPPENED IN LIMERICK.

In Limerick the statue of Our Lady was buried and most of the priests went to France, Italy and the Low Contries. Some of them became chaplains in the Irish Brigade, some chaplains to hospitals, some took on parochial work, others became professors in theological schools, but behind it all there was a very marked and abject poverty both at home and abroad. Only a small proportion of the refugees could take up the positions I have mentioned, the rest of them went struggling throughout the continental towns begging for lodgings and clothing. King John V of Portugal was informed of this intolerable state of affairs by Bishop Slyne of Cork and by Father Carroll, O.P., of Lorrha, and he used his influence with the other Catholic Powers to instruct their ambassadors to obtain some mitigation of all this misery. Pope Clement especially thanked the King for his help. At home in Limerick the affairs of the Dominicans were watched over by four priests who remained in spite of the edict, Father Dominic Carroll of Lorrha being in charge. Of the four, one died after a few years, another fades from the picture as far as records go, the third man's death is recorded many years after. No documents could be kept on account of the constant raids. Priest-catchers were very zealous at their work; they were so much hated by the people at large that they could not appear in public without being shaved. Later they were provided with irons, and like highwaymen they pounced on their victims. A Portuguese Jew called Garcia appeared in Dublin in the year 1718 and posed as a priest. His victims included Father Maguire, O.P., two Jesuits, one Franciscan and three Secular priests all of whom were arrested and transported.

King George I, who was a German Prince of Hanover, and who could not speak English, came on the Throne in 1714. He could not understand the attitude of the bigots, and declared his mind was for merciful toleration. Where he came from—Hanover—which was ruled by the Protestants, the Catholics were allowed open practice of religion, because of their great numbers. The Protestant State of Hanover even allowed an Apostolic Vicar from Rome to reside in the city. This declaration of the King helped to ease matters a little.

PRIEST DRAGGED FROM THE ALTAR.

In the year 1744 Alderman William Aldrich of Dublin arrested a Dublin curate of St. Paul's Church while he was saying the Preface of the Mass. After forcibly dragging him from the altar he placed him in a public coach, which was drawn through the streets, and landed him in gaol. Two Dominicans were taken from an adjoining chapel and likewise imprisoned.

At this new outburst all the priests went into hiding. There was an increased price for catching them. £200 was given for any person informing who harboured them. The result was that Mass was said in the stables of horses, in the top storeys of rickety old buildings; in fact anywhere in back alleys out of public gaze. Thus it was that Father Fitzgerald of Meath was killed in 1745 along with nine of the congregation. Just as the people stood up for the Last Gospel, the roof caved in and pinned them to the floor. Touched by this, the liberal Magistrates of Dublin City declared that as from St. Patrick's Day, 1745, all chapels may be opened, and this, remember, at the time that the Catholic claimant to the Throne of England, Bonnie Prince Charles, was fighting his way through England. The chapels have never been closed since that memorable day. This toleration in Dublin was not, unfortunately, to be extended to the rest of the country as Dr. Bourke, O.P., Bishop of Kilkenny, says: "I have been years resident in Dublin, and I have seen the secular and regular chapels constantly open, with sermons and even some High Masses—all done very quietly, of course; while in Waterford, Kilkenny, etc., religious communities were dispersed. I attribute this to the local Magistrates. In Dublin the Justices are not inclined to such small affairs, and the Viceroy is most merciful." In Kilkenny the Dominicans, who are four in number, are allowed to retain their chapel, say Mass and preach, but they are not allowed to live in the one house. As a result they have to take up the position of curates in the other churches. In Limerick we may take it for certain that we maintained some kind of a public chapel as from the year 1745, and that the Statue was again unearthed and installed there. I would imagine that the chapel was situated in Gaol Lane, also known as Thomas Lane, as we are recorded as living there 20 years afterwards. Very probably we lived in Thomas Lane for about 20 years. It was not until very late in the century that we went to the Hanover building in Fish Lane; John Ferrar, who lived at the end of Fish Lane and the Sand Mall, records that the exact date that Fish Lane Chapel was opened was in October, 1780, and it was in pursuit of a new Act passed two years previously. All who registered under that Act were given certain advantages. The Franciscan and Augustinian Chapels in their respective lanes were opened within a year or two of ours.

A BRIEF GLANCE AT THE 18th CENTURY.

The priest in charge, Father Carroll, who hovered round Limerick in the first decade of the century was especially decorated by the European Delegates of the Order at their Convention in Bologna (1707). There is a student recorded in Louvain for the year 1701—John Ryan. He must have been the same person who died in Limerick about 1750. A lay-brother was received at Athenry for Limerick in 1712. The first two boys to offer their services to the Order were sent to the Continent in 1722 and 1723. Later on they were especially rewarded by the Dublin Authorities for their zealous preaching in the English and Irish languages. At this time (1722) Father Stapleton, O.P., formerly of Cashel, was P.P. of St. Munchin's. The first 20 or 30 years of the 18th century will present an insoluble mystery to the religious historian. Woe betide the priest that kept a particle of evidence that would betray him as a member of a Religious Order. From the middle of the century onwards we have fairly complete lists of the Communities. One Limerick man was for eight years in charge of the whole country. Another became Bishop of Killaloe and had a long reign of 42 years.

As to what they did? A Manual for Missioners issued in Louvain (1736) 2nd Edition Metz (1747) describes the practices of the priests. On the first Sunday after Easter they left their house to preach and hear confessions in the countryside: from 9 o'clock until 12 noon they taught catechism. After that they said Mass and preached a sermon. During the winter they gathered the children and adults every evening into the house in which they were staying to instruct them in christian doctrine for a couple of hours. On Sundays and festivals the catechism was taught twice, first before Mass and afterwards at 3 P.M. In the summer this ministry was an open-air one, as the chapels could not accommodate the crowds that came.

COVENANT FOR PLOT OF GROUND.

The next priest worthy of mention is Father Harrigan, born, very probably, in St. Mary's parish. Seeing the old chapel in Fish Lane was decaying, Simon Joseph Harrigan on March 25th, 1815, made a covenant with the Right Honorable Edmund Henry, Earl of Limerick, for a plot of ground, formerly known as South Friars Land, the property of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine in pre-Reformation days. This was a vacant plot, as is clear from the description in the indenture. Where the present Priory stands there was a plot of ground owned by Henry Hannan in 1813. The Presbyterian Church now McKerns Printing Works was erected 1813. Dominick Street was then in course of erection and was not named. But called "a New Street." Griffith Lane, at the back, did not exist, but provision is made for it by cutting off 8 ft. from our side and 7 ft. from the piece of land then unbuilt on, now known as "Taylor Street."

The first payment on the plot was due in 1817, September 29. The Church was finished in 1816, but was not consecrated until July 6th, 1817. The architect was Mr. Payne; builder, Mr. Wallace. It is not so well known that Father Harrigan also built a new priory, as it is asserted that the building was three before the Church was built. By examining the two indentures that of Father Harrigan and that of Nicholas Hannan, it is clear that the whole plot was unused. It must have been a very rare event to have a Church consecrated in those days.

CONSECRATION SERVICE.

The consecration seems to have gone in abeyance, and for a long time there was no evidence forthcoming that it was consecrated until Dr. Leahy, the Bishop of Dromore, remembered that he was present as a boy and remembered that the congregation was ordered out of the Church while the ashes were spread on the floor. The sermon of the consecration service was preached by the Prior of Cork, Fr. John Ryan, who was a native of Limerick.

Father Harrigan was a most influential priest. He built and paid for the Church within two years. He was as well known in England as in Ireland. There he met Dr. Moriarty, who was later to become Bishop of Kerry. He wrote a catechism. His book on The Rosary, published before 1821, is in the City Library. Father Harrigan died after a painful and protracted disease in February, 1838.

The means of sustentation availed of in those days were grand oratorios and sermons, and the "Limerick Chronicle" each year has quite a list of them in aid of the "Grand and Elegant Dominican Chapel." The Statue was probably not removed until 1818 owing to the unwillingness of the people to part with it. It was removed silently at night and did not leave its pedestal for 100 years, that is until 1918, when it was carried through the streets during the anti-conscription campaign, June 9th of that year, a Sunday known as "Limerick's Women's Day." A procession of Limerick women headed by the Mayoress, Mrs. Alphonsus O'Mara, brought the Statue to St. John's Square, where it was placed on a temporary platform amid an immense throng of people. Father Connolly, Adm., and Father Hayes, C.C., said the Rosary, after which the Statue was brought back.

OTHER LIMERICK MEN OF NOTE.

Another Limerick man of note belonging to this first half of the 19th century was Patrick Griffith of St. Mary's Parish. He was chosen as the first Bishop of Capetown when South Africa was a tractless wilderness and when there were no resident priests. He was accompanied there by the Franciscan Guardian, Father Bourke, who built the present Henry Street Church in 1826. His sister went out from St. Mary's Parish to teach catechism to the children.

I cannot pass over the second half of the century without saying a few words on Brother Peter Daly, the first lay-brother for over 100 years. His fought as a civilian with the Limerick Militia against the French at Ballinamuck in 1798. He is described by a contemporary as wearing "a long swallow-tail coat, a high collar, cravat, knee breeches, silk stockings and shoes with buckles." He was certainly in residence in 1829, as he is registered pursuant to the Emancipation bill. He died in 1861, aged 100 years, and is buried in St. Lawrence Cemetery.

Father William Carroll comes next in the list. He was born in Broad Street in 1826. One of his grandparents was a Quaker, George Shepherd, who lived in Mary Street. Here I have to thank Mr. Benoik for his valuable help and information. Father Carroll spent only three years in Limerick. Afterwards he was appointed in charge of the American Dominicans for four years. Then he went to the British West Indies, where he was consecrated Coadjutor Bishop of Port of Spain. He died 1880 and is buried there.

FATHER JOSEPH CARBERY

He was succeeded in Limerick by James Joseph Carbery, born in Mullinger. Father Carbery was first assigned to Newbridge College. When he went to Carlow to interview the Bishop, Dr. Haly, he offered him the Presidentship of Carlow College, which he refused. After a short time he went to Cork and spent 10 years there. In 1860, he came to Limerick and spent 15 years here. He found the Church and Priory built over 40 years previously in a very bad state of repair. He changed the wooden and decayed windows into stone ones. He increased the length of the Church by 20 feet and added a Chancel. He removed the music organs from the side altars and had the pictures of St. Dominic and St. Catherine painted and placed over them. He cut off the unsightly projections from the galleries that went round the Church and improved the seating accommodation. We must remember that in the side aisles in those days, and for many years afterwards, there were no seats. Even the centre aisle, which is called the sanctuary aisle, had very few benches, so we find in the account book for 1861 that six new benches were got in that year. The next year six more new benches were procured.

The design for the chancel stained glass window was competed for by the first five houses in the United Kingdom. Three London firms, one Birmingham firm and one Newcastle-on-Tyne firm submitted designs. Father Carbery called in a council of local artists and some Cork artists to help him decide, along with the other priests, which design would be most suitable. The design they selected was that of Messrs. Wailes, Newcastle-on-Tyne, which cost £250, scaffolding included. The reason they selected it was that "the treatment of the subject, the quality of the glass, the security of the glazing, the elegance of the colours and the lowness of the price" seemed to them to be the best. This stained glass window was finished by Christmas Day, 1864. Besides erecting marble side altars, he got a carved wood and decorated Statue of St. Joseph from Messrs. Mayer of Munich.

For this period Father Carbery constantly notes that he is thankful for the bounty of the people, especially the poor. The greatest benefactor was Mrs. Christina Hogan, who gave the high altar and many a generous bequest.

CHURCH RE-MODELLED.

In the year 1870 it was proposed to re-model the church according to the plan of George Goldie. The church was unroofed from May 8th until October 7th. Mass and evening devotions being celebrated every Sunday without a roof. Only on one Sunday night was there a shower of rain. Granite pillars were bought at Aberdeen quarries and delivered here for £300. Thirty-six new benches were got for the centre aisle. Great credit was due to the loyalty of the mechanics in having the work done in a record time. The summer of 1870 was an unusually hot one, and it was agreed to give a pint of porter or milk at 12 noon to the mechanics and labourers. Great credit was due to Maurice Hennessy of Messrs. Cox, the superintending architect. Armorial bearings of families who contributed to the cost of the granite pillars (£50 each) were pointed on shields and placed on the capitals of each pillar. The names of the families were: Spillane, Quinn, Roche, Hogan, Kelly, Walsh, O'Donnell.

The architect of the improvements in the 1880's was J. J. McCarthy, the builders were Messrs. McCarthy and Guerin. During May devotions, 1884, four poor women presented a splendidly embroidered communion cloth for the new communion rail; other poor people presented a set of vestments in cloth of gold for the Blessed Virgin Altar.

The architect of the re-modelling and enlargement of the Church in 1870 was George Goldie of London. The builders were Messrs. McCarthy and Guerin.

In 1871, Thomas O'Brien and his wife, Henrietta, presented the Stations, reredos, etc., to the Blessed Virgin Altar, made by Messrs. Mayer of Munich, at the cost of £160.

NAVAN WOMAN'S GIFT.

A Miss Bridget Brady of Navan, was passing through Limerick, November, 1872. She admired the Church and expressed her desire to see St. Joseph's Chapel completed. She said that she was never in Limerick before and never expected to be here again, that she never spoke to a Dominican, nor had seen the habit, but that she wished to show her great devotion to St. Joseph. A reredos with statues was proposed. She accepted provided a statue of St. Bridget was included. This was agreed to. After a week a letter came from Dublin to Father Carbery enclosing the cost. Messrs. Geoeyn of Louvain, Belgium, supplied it for £210.

In view of a statement in the "Leader," I give this bit of information belonging to the 20th century, viz., that the statue was crowned by Fr. F. J. Powell, O.P., Prior, February 10th, 1918. He placed a silver and gold crown set with large topazes and crystals on the head of Our Lady; who the donor was is not stated.

In 1880, Father Carbery left the city for Rome where he was appointed advisor in the affairs of Ireland and England. After a few years residence there he was consecrated Bishop of Hamilton in Canada. It was on the return visit, while en route to Rome, that he died suddenly in Cork. His dying words were: "Bury me in Limerick, my heart is with Limerick and my dear old friends—the good people of Limerick."

As his niece says in her biography: "This City indeed was his heart's home; the seat and centre of his affections."