

29/6/1841

Yesterday being the day for the election of Mayor and Sheriffs for the ensuing year, our doughty Corporators assembled in numerous array, and went through the ridiculous mummery of self-nomination with as much cool impudence, as if the Parliament had not as yet pronounced their inevitable doom. They proceeded about noon to the Exchange with mace-bearers, bailiffs, &c., bedizened in the glory of cocked hats and laced coats, and offensive Orange cockades, and exercised the ancient chartered discipline. After the usual routine fashion, little thinking apparently, that they must bid adieu for ever to the place they have so long usurped, before the revolution of another half year! We understand that the choice of Mayor fell on the second son of Lord GORT, the Hon. CHARTES VEREKER, and that the Sheriffs in esse are Mr. VINCENT WATSON, son of Alderman WATSON, and Dr. GELSTON.

Maggs,  
The Limerick Reporter

EXTRAORDINARY SCENE IN SAINT MARY'S CHURCH—DENUNCIATION OF THE OLD CORPORATION BY A PREBENDARY FROM THE PULPIT.

11/6/1841

Sunday being the first after the installation of the Mayor, and the swearing in of the new Civic Officers, under the old system, the Corporation, including its patron, Lord GORT; the patron's son, the Hon. C. S. VEREKER, Mayor; the Sheriffs, Messrs. GELSTON and WATSON; the Aldermen CHITTS, WATSON, GIBSON, &c.; the Town Clerk, the Sergeants at Mace, Bell-men and Bailiffs, attended St. Mary's church, according to custom, dressed out in all the silly pomp and idle parade of office, to hear the installation sermon, which was usually a compound of fulsome praise of their long-tryed loyalty, patience, forbearance, and above and before all, of their charity and attention to the wants and wishes of the citizens, and careful and useful disbursement of the public funds committed to their charge. They filled the gallery appropriated to their use, which, we believe, is called the Corporation Gallery, and which exactly fronts the pulpit, whence were accustomed to flow a soothing current of unctious verbage, to heal all the troublesome sores of their tortured consciences—because it was the plan to select some Churchman connected in some shape with the municipality. They looked as self-important—as inflated—as plethoric—as vulgarly proud and pompous as if they had years more to run in their course of public plunder and public irresponsibility. "The gilt buttons, with the city arms, in alt relief"—"the splendid suits of livery," purchased out of the spoliated monies of an injured and insulted community—the cloaks, in which Aldermanic corpulence was enveloped, and which, like SANCHO PANZA's blanket, are supposed to cover a multitude of sins"—"the chains, glittering from the necks of his Worship and the Sheriffs"—the tout ensemble had attractions enough for such children of a larger growth as are dazzled with wretched display, but which, to all who are aware of the means through which those who possess the paraphernalia came by them, filled the mind with disgust and abhorrence. It was a pretty raree show, and the bearing of the worthies, with the oily smoothness of political hypocrisy on their features, lent it an additional interest to the students of physiognomy—to the lovers of Lavater. They went through the service with all imaginable plausibility—so saint-like—so pious—so demure—so recollected; glorying in the anticipation of a political sermon which would blast, by its eloquent thunders, the pretensions of the new Town Council, and place the proximate Mayor in an unenviable position. As the preacher, the Rev. SAMUEL JONES, Rector of Ardcanney—a name deserving of remembrance, paced towards the pulpit, their Worships, and their suite, evinced no symptoms of trepidation—the calm yet firm appearance of the divine had no terrors for their hardened souls; on the contrary, they secretly chuckled over the delight they anticipated in a fierce tirade against Municipal Reform, and the opening of the floodgates of Popery on the hitherto well-preserved and closely-guarded domains of Corporate Orangeism, and Civic robbery. They had no misgivings—no doubts—because they were accustomed to hear the language of compliment, and eulogy, and panegyric—and why should they not now hope to hear the accents of sympathy mingling in dulcet harmony with these? The rev. gentleman having proceeded for a short time on general topics, bent his regards immediately towards the Corporation, and proceeded to deal with them as he conceived his bounden duty, and as truth dictated. He said that their hour was fast drawing to a close, and he asked them to lay their hands to their hearts and say, did they not deserve the doom that awaited them (sensation). He stood there not to flatter or to fawn but to speak the words of honest conviction, and he again asked, did not their own judgment pronounce them unfit to fill the places they had occupied for so long a period (increased sensation)? He saw that they were displeased—but he would once more demand, was not their doom a just one?—had they ever cared for the public more than for themselves?—had they rightfully performed the weighty duties of the stewardship committed to their care?—were they not laborious, and constant, and indefatigable, not in using the funds with which they were entrusted for the public advantage—but in squandering them with lavish disregard to conscience and duty, or in placing them in the pockets of individuals who grew rich on the spoliation of the people (awful sensation, during which more than one alderman turned pale). He was not there to apologise for their crimes against the community, or to sympathise with their doom. He knew that his words were not pleasing to the senses of those to whom he addressed them—but he would be false to his conscience and a traitor to the cause of religion if he did not say that in their extinction the public, he was convinced, would be the gainers (continued sensation, during which one or two of the aldermen stood up and appeared very much troubled.) They had patronage, but on whom did they confer it?—was it on the old, and worthy, and deserving of their fellow-citizens?—was it on the men of public honesty and public utility, who were trusted, and respected, and esteemed?—was it on men above the selfish considerations of private interest?—was it on men of blameless lives and honourable pretensions? Was it not on strangers and adventurers—on persons unknown to the great body of the citizens—or who, when they became known, were distrusted and contemned (continued sensation). He would ask them to look to the city and would it not tell, in plainer terms than he was capable of using, their gross betrayal of every public duty? He would ask them to look outside the walls of the venerable cathedral, in which they were then assembled to worship the Almighty Being who held the heart of man in his hands—who knew their minds and souls, and who judged their innermost thoughts—he asked them to look outside those walls, and they would see the traces of their neglect, of their spoliation, of their selfishness. They would see ruin, and wretchedness, and poverty unparalleled. They would see houses unsafe to pass by—ready to tumble down on the devoted heads of the citizens—hundreds of famishing fellow-creatures crowded together in rooms unfit for human habitations—the streets deep with ruts—squalid—filthy—abominable—the old monuments, on which they so far prized themselves to have engraven on the buttons of their civic offices, crumbling to decay, without a saving hand to rescue them from the ravages of time. They would see their Tholsel Court and their Exchange fading before their eyes—obelisks of their neglect and sordidness. They would see, in fine, the traces of their cupidity wherever they went. They were exclusive too, and in their exclusiveness they shut their doors against the citizens; they did not admit persons entitled to the freedom of the city. Why? Because it might interfere with their own immunities. The rev. gentleman continued in this strain for a very long time, driving the dagger home at every blow; and having discharged his duty in this particular, he turned his attention to the conduct of the Protestant Bishop who, he said, conferred emoluments and dignities on his own personal relatives to the injury and prejudice of hard-working labourers in the vineyard. He then lashed at the old general and the garrison in terms of unmeasured indignation and concluded a sermon, the like of which had never been heard in Limerick, we believe, amid the surprise of every one present.

DISGRACEFUL PROFLIGACY OF THE OLD CORPORATION—MORE BIGOTRY—MORE PLUNDER—SCENE AT THE COURT OF DOYER HUNDRED THIS DAY!

The sermon above alluded to, and noticed, also, in our columns elsewhere, seems to have had no effect on the hardened old Corporation of this city. The work of bigotry, plunder and exclusiveness went on this day with as blushless a front as in the worst days of corporate avarice!