

The Pope's Emigrants



ust over 140 years ago, hundreds of Irishmen emigrated to Italy or, to be more precise, to the Papal States, which were straddled across central Italy. The word emigrant was a euphemism or excuse for those Irishmen who wanted to enlist in an Irish brigade, which was being formed to fight for Pope Pius IX. The reason that they went as emigrants was because Ireland, at that time, was under British rule and it was an offence to enlist and fight in a foreign army. About 1300 Irishmen joined the brigade in an effort to defend the Papal States. They came from all walks of life, city people, farmers and even members of the police force. At least 150 of the emigrants were from Limerick.

What motivated these men? Was it the promise of a lump sum and a daily wage of three shillings a day, or was it religious fervour? If it was the latter, then some of them would soon become disillusioned.

by Des Ryan

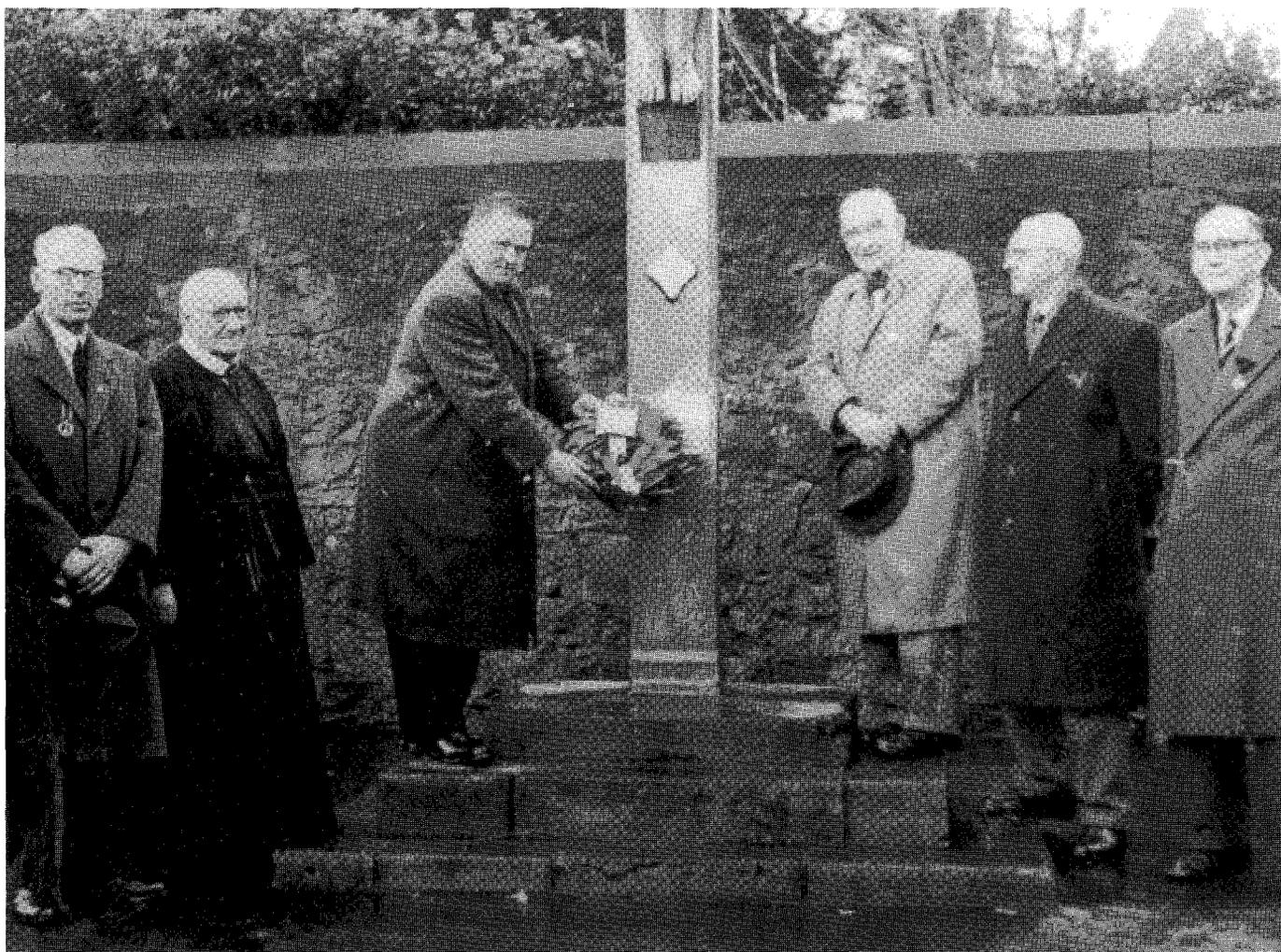
An editorial in one of the local papers, *The Munster News*, did point out that the majority of the men had higher motives and did not go for gain.¹

Italy as we know it today did not come into existence until about 1870. Prior to that it had been a fragmented nation. The wars of the 1850s and 1860s were a process in which Italy was being forged into a single nation. This essay is not an attempt to cover the war in Italy, but an effort to reconstruct how the Limerick men got there and to throw some light on what happened to them while they were there, based on the newspapers of the period. In some cases letters from the men, which were published in the papers, have been condensed.

It was on 2 May 1860 that Edward Patrick Naughton and two other

volunteers from Limerick arrived in Rome to join the Irish Brigade of the Papal Army. The following day they were presented to Pius IX, who, after blessing the men, gave them a medal with his likeness on one side and on the other, the following inscription: "The Roman citizens dedicate this medal to the Irishmen who came to Rome for the purpose of defending the rights of the Roman Pontiff, the common father of all, and there is one heart and one soul of all the multitude of the believers. Pius IX."

Meanwhile in Limerick, Fr. Timothy Shanahan, C.C. St. Mary's Parish, was in the process of finalising travel arrangements for another batch of Limerick volunteers to go to the Papal States. There was an archway in the grounds of the church where the height of the men could be measured. It is now long gone, but a photograph of it exists. The expenses of the expedition were to be paid for by a local agent, but when the time came to put



The Mayor of Limerick, Cllr. P. Kelly, placing a wreath on the steps of the memorial cross at Mount Saint Alphonsus on Sunday, 18 December 1960, in honour of the Limerickmen who served in St. Patrick's Battalion of the Papal Army in 1860.

Left to right: T.J. Smalle P.C., D.M., whose grandfather from Kilmallock fought in the campaign; Fr. Michael Cagney C.S.S.R., who knew a number of the Limerickmen who fought in the Papal Army; the Mayor, Cllr. P. Kelly; John F. Spencer D.M.; Capt. Frank Parker (O.N.E.) and Thomas Gough D.M., chairman of the Limerick Council of the Knights of Malta

(Limerick Museum)



Bank Place in the 1950s. The building at the centre (with the shop window) housed the Mechanics Institute in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Photo by Ernest Bennis.

(Limerick Museum)

the money up front, it fell through. Fr. Shanahan then approached Lord Emly of Clarina, a friend of his. Emly was a wealthy man and he agreed to provide the necessary funds. He advised Fr. Shanahan to ship his men as harvesters by way of Belgium to avoid conflict with British law.

On Monday, 4 June, the 60 volunteers got ready to march through the city to the railway station.² As crowds gathered on the streets to watch them, Fr. Shanahan called on Lieut. Ryan to bring the men to attention. As they formed into lines, Sergeant-Major Michael Enright's voice rang out with the command, 'By the left, quick march', and off they went, led by St. Mary's Flute Band and St. John's Workmen's Brass Band playing 'Garryowen'. The men made their way through Mary Street, Creagh Lane, Rutland Street, O'Connell Street, Glentworth Street and Quin Street to the railway station. As they made their way through the streets, they were followed by a multitude of people, which included their mothers, wives and children, all singing "We'll hang Garibaldi on a sour apple tree." When it was time for the men to enter the carriages at the railway station, cheer after cheer was heard for the Pope and the Irish Brigade. As the train pulled slowly out of the station to the ringing cheers of the crowd and the stirring music of the bands, the volunteers could be seen waving their handkerchiefs and hats from the carriage windows.³

A report in the *Waterford Citizen* stated that 75 men from Limerick arrived on the three o'clock train⁴ and that they boarded a ship belonging to the Milford Company. As soon as the last man was aboard, the ship moved off and the spectators who had gathered on the quay were heard to say:

"may they thrash all before them." When the ship pulled in at Passage, Fr Shanahan decided to do a roll call of the volunteers. While he was calling out their names, it was noticed that one man was missing and it was feared that he had been left behind at Waterford. As the ship was about to pull out of Passage, the missing man made an appearance. Questioned by Fr Shanahan, the volunteer told the priest that he had been taking refreshments with an acquaintance. With that, Fr Shanahan took the missing man's slender luggage and threw it into a boat that was alongside. He then ordered the man off the ship and said to him that if he was in the habit of taking refreshments, then he was unworthy of his brave companions. The man pleaded with Fr Shanahan, but it was to no avail. When he got into the boat, he was seen to be weeping like a child.⁵ As the ship made its way to Milford Haven in Wales, most of the men were sick.

It was 1.00am that night, or Tuesday morning, when the ship pulled into the harbour. At 8.00am that morning, they boarded the train for London, arriving there that night at 9.00. Comfortable lodgings were found for the night, and the next day they were told to prepare to sail for Belgium that night. By that time, they had met up with a group of volunteers from Kilfinane.

So how did the men get to Italy? Here we have to rely on a few accounts by different volunteers. It appears that the men landed at Ostend in Belgium and, as they marched from the ship to the train, some Belgians rushed over to them and pressed gold coins into their hands to buy wine or beer. This led to cases of insubordination later on in the day when

some men got drunk. In Bavaria and Austria, where the train stopped at the principal towns, large crowds turned up to see the Irish volunteers. Ladies came forward to give them bouquets of flowers, handkerchiefs and religious objects. Others brought sweetmeal, wine, beer and fruit. At one town near Vienna, over 20,000 people turned out to see them.⁶ Another volunteer, in a letter to his uncle who lived in Thomas Street, tells of visiting some of the battlefields in Germany and Austria where Napoleon Bonaparte had fought fifty years earlier. The areas where Napoleon and his generals had stood were marked out with stones or markers.⁷ It was hoped to train the Irish in Vienna but the British government lodged an objection with the Austrian authorities, which led to the men being transferred to the port of Trieste. It was here that Fr McLoughlin, a Franciscan who had served in Limerick, was appointed chaplain to the brigade. It would appear from a newspaper report that in Trieste the Limerick men were told, or found out, that they would not be kept together as a fighting unit and that they would not have Limerick men as officers.⁸ From Trieste they sailed to Ancona, in the Papal States, the journey taking two days and two nights. Thereafter Irish volunteers travelled by way of France to Civitavecchia, also in the Papal States.

In Limerick, a committee was appointed to organise a collection, which became known as the papal fund.⁹ Every parish in the city and county made a contribution. It was also noted that four policemen from Limerick had left Dublin for Italy.¹⁰ Some wit in London with a vivid imagination, in a letter to the *Limerick Chronicle*, made out that Guisepe Garibaldi was a Limerick

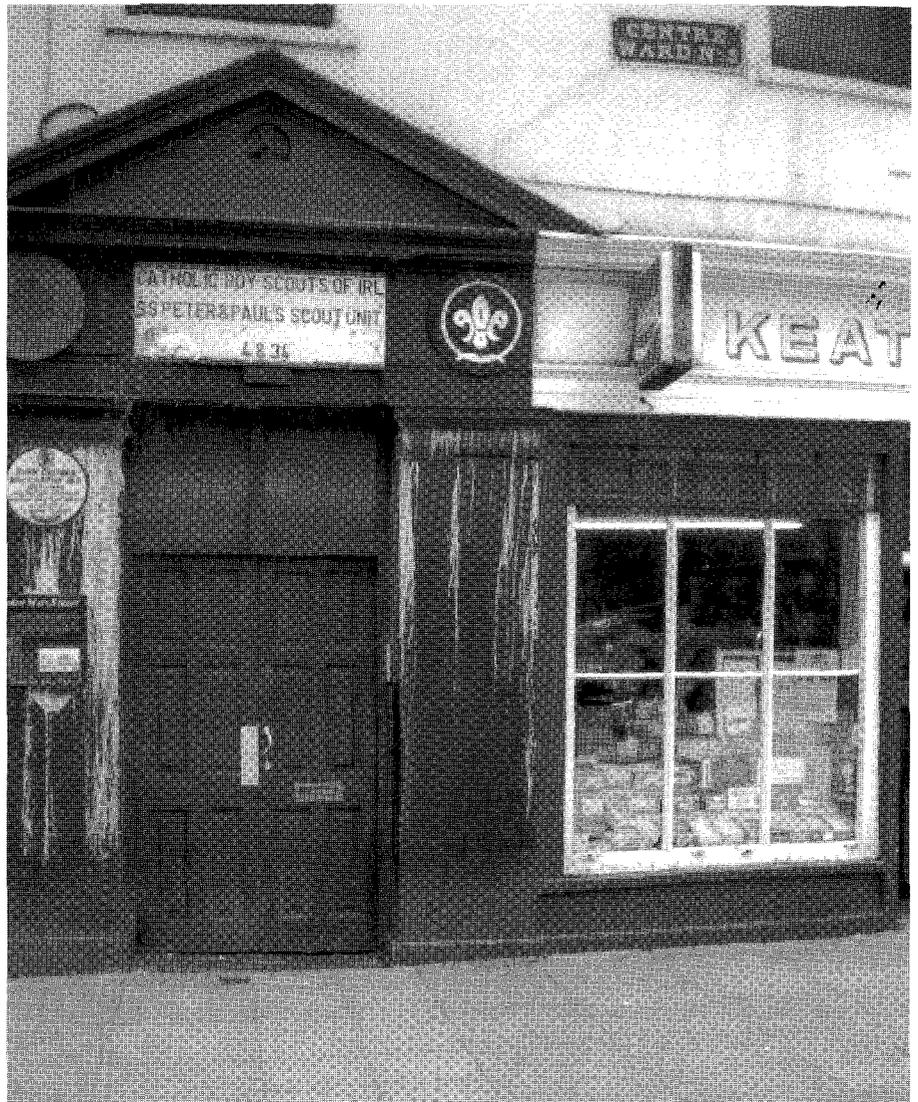
man. He related how a couple living in County Limerick had left a young son, born in 1807, by the name of Joseph Garrett Baldwin, who was sent to the Irish College in Rome to be educated. While there he became known as Guiseppe Garri Baldi. The writer alleged that Joseph Baldwin visited Limerick twice, the last being in 1846, when he stayed at Cruise's hotel. He also stated that Garibaldi's staff had heard him singing and whistling Irish tunes, one of them being Garryowen.

James Davis, from Limerick, writing to his parents, takes up the story in Italy. "After landing at Ancona, we marched to Macerata, which we reached in two days. There were 150 of us altogether in Macerata. We got our uniforms there, although the clothing for all the brigade is not yet made up. It is a splendid uniform. The dress we have now consists of red trowsers, blue cloth tunic, and slight shoes - the same as those worn by the French soldiers."¹¹ There was an incident in Macerata when some of the men, after a few drinks, went running and screaming through the streets like savages, whirling sticks over their heads and chasing and terrifying the spectators.¹² "From Macerata we were ordered to the city of Rome, which we reached after a march of eight days - all armed." The men were marched, in companies, through Folign, Spoleto, on to Ponte Felice, where they embarked on the river steamers that were to take them the last seventy miles of the journey, thus avoiding the hot and dusty tramp to the eternal city. "Rome is a splendid city, it would take two days to walk through the whole of it. The barrack we occupy here is a very fine one. Fr McLoughlin, who was lately in the Franciscan convent, Limerick, is chaplain to the brigade. There is no bounty to be had here, and the government cannot afford to give us a great deal in the shape of pay; however, I am content with what I get. The postage on a letter from here to Ireland is 10d. I have seen his holiness the Pope, in the church, and he has given me his blessing."

"This is a very warm country. The heat is now so great that the natives rise at two o'clock in the morning and have to close their shops at 12. We are not allowed out at all during in the daytime on account of the great heat. Our time for drill is from five to half past seven in the morning. We take breakfast at eight, dinner at two and supper at 7 in the evening. In the cool of the evening we are drilled for two hours."¹³

As the Irish volunteers began to arrive in Rome, the citizens and the French soldiers stationed there thought that they were Dutch, because of the similarity between the words 'Olandesi' (Dutchmen) and 'Irlandesi' (Irishmen). The man who was to command the Papal forces, the French General de la Moricicre, was a strict disciplinarian and was known to favour the use of the lash.

As soon as the men got to Rome and other parts of the Papal States, problems began to develop. Edward Patrick



Entrance to the Catholic Young Mens Society building, Castle Street, Cork, 2003

(Des Ryan)

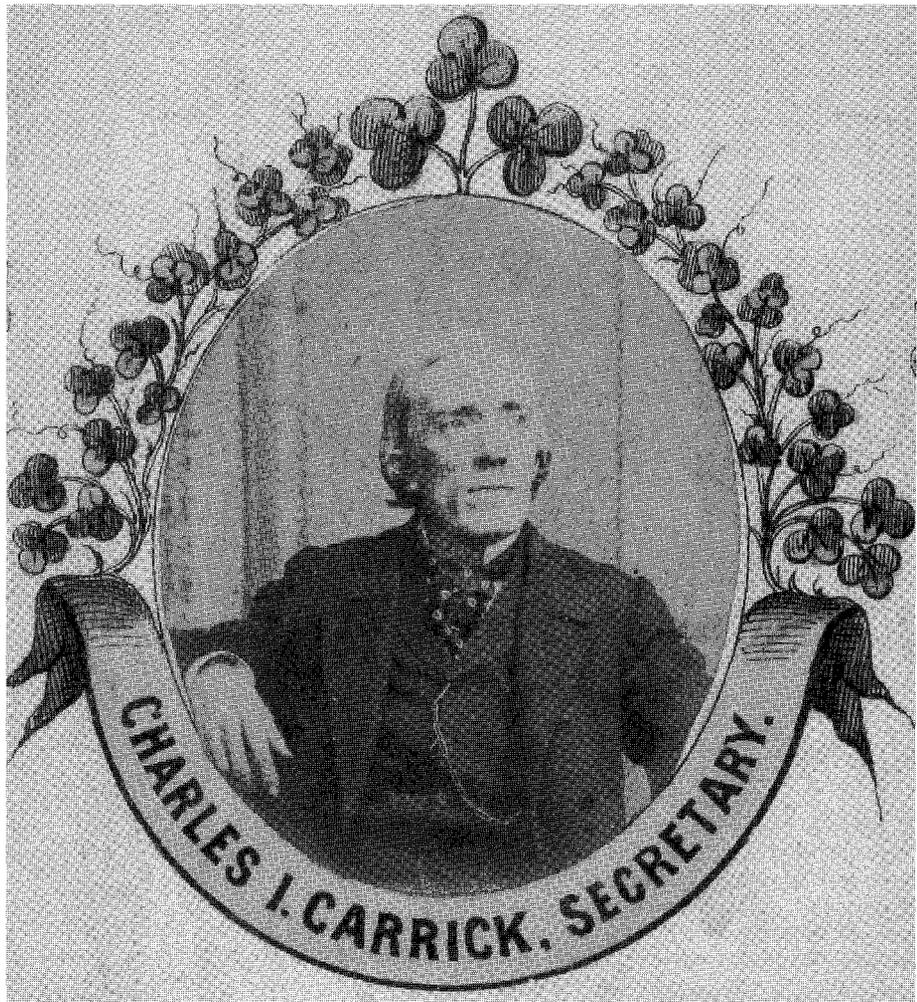
Naughton, a Limerick man who had left the Irish Brigade, relates some of the grievances that the men encountered: "The papers and the agents have deceived our men by (the) holding out of commissions to every man who wore a good suit of clothes, and telling poor men from the country that they would receive a large bounty, and 3s. per day as pay. Some of these men left aged fathers and mothers who were dependent on them for a sustenance, intending to send their bounty and part of their pay home. Others were engaged to work upon railways. There are no railways being built in the Papal States, neither is it likely there will be for years to come. The Rev Dr McLoughlin assembled all the volunteers in Rome and, after addressing them for a length of time, he produced the attestation papers, and wanted them to take the oath and to sign the papers to the effect that they had received the bounty, and he promised them on his word of honour that as soon as the money was in the treasury they should be paid. Now, he had deceived the men so often that he had lost their confidence, so every man except six sergeants turned upon their heels and walked out. Their pay is 7d. per day, 5d. of which is taken to provide them with 24

ounces of black bread, coffee, sugar, firewood and beef or buffalo. The remaining 2d. has to provide them with stockings and regimental necessaries. Captain Lawless told our men that when they got to Spoleto, they would only clear one halfpenny per day, the same as the Italian soldiers, as the remainder of the money would go for food. I must confess that we Irish have the best laws in any country in Europe. A person cannot go from one town to another in Italy or France without a passport or being watched by the police. On the 1st of July the Rev Mr Shanahan came to our barracks to take letters to Ireland from about 100 men. Now, the authorities did not want the truth to go to Ireland, so the Swiss officer at the gate drew his sword upon the Rev Mr Shanahan to prevent his coming in, upon which the men went outside and gave him the letters. I deny the assertion that the Irish in the Pope's service are satisfied. When I told the men that I was going upwards [leaving], 100 of them asked me to give them information as to how they might get home, and one of them offered me a small sum of money. However, I refused to take it. Our men were disarmed and a great many refused to get out of bed to march to Spoleto; they were driven out

at the point of the bayonet by the Belgian soldiers and were compelled to go against their will and unarmed, and guarded by an equal number of armed soldiers".¹⁴

In Rome, 150 of the volunteers were stationed at the Seristori Barrack, which was near St Peter's, another 350 at Cimarra Barrack and 150 at Spoleto. On 11 July, there were conflicting reports of an incident near the Cimarra Barrack. When the volunteers were being recruited in Ireland, they were told that those of the better classes would be made officers in the Irish Brigade. Now they found that General de la Moricicre wanted to know what military and leadership capabilities the men had and this was to be done by training and examinations for potential officers. One young man who didn't like the idea of being reduced to a private turned up on the parade ground in civilian clothes. The Irish officer in charge, a lieutenant, ordered him to put on his uniform, but the man refused. The lieutenant ordered his arrest, but a sergeant and a number of men gathered around to prevent the order from being carried out. When they were approached by other members of the brigade the men ran off and took refuge in the Irish College. After negotiations the men apologised and gave themselves up. Some of the volunteers blamed the disturbance on the strictness of drill practice and discipline ordered by de la Moricicre.¹⁵

In another account of this incident, the young man in question had been a lieutenant and was asked to do guard duty as a private, but refused. A detachment of the Belgian Legion, which was also stationed at Cimarra, was sent to arrest him. This caused a confrontation between the Irish and the Belgians, the Irish arriving on the scene with fixed bayonets. Shops in the area closed up in expectation of a battle between the two sides. Several officers of the brigade, including Major O'Reilly, who had just arrived in Rome, came on the scene and ordered the men back to the barrack. As they made their way towards the entrance, they found their way blocked by a Belgian officer and some of his men with their rifles at the ready. The Belgian officer passed a remark about the Irish, saying "Look at these fellows, they would sell the Pope and join Garibaldi in the morning, and look at them with their bayonets like sentries to terrify us." To the utter amazement of everyone, one of the Irishmen hit the nearest Belgian and put him sprawling and kicking in the dust. The Belgian officer gave the order to get ready to fire. Major O'Reilly rushed forward and put himself between the guns and his men, and at the same time, countermanded the Belgian officer's order. By this time, all the Irish volunteers in the barrack had come out and there was a free-for-all on the streets. The Irish, unarmed, wrested the guns from the Belgians, took off the bayonets and threw them up in the air. Stones were thrown, but the only injury was a minor sabre slash to one of the Irishmen. Major O'Reilly, with the help of



Charles I. Carrick, Secretary of the Congregated Trades of Limerick, 1865.

(Limerick Museum)

his officers, eventually got the men under control and by 9 o'clock that evening it was as if nothing had happened.¹⁶

Some of the Irishmen who were disappointed with the conditions of service in the Papal army applied to the British consul in Rome to help them get home. The consul refused to help them as they had enlisted under the Pope's banner and he could not be seen to be helping deserters. Another reason given was that the men could not prove their nationality, even though the consul knew that they were Irish. This was due to the fact that the men had their passports taken from them when they landed.

At Ancona, a newspaper reporter maintained that at least 20 men from Limerick had come for mercenary reasons.¹⁷

A Limerick man writing from Ancona to his parents on 24 July 1860 said that the volunteers there "protested against the treatment they were getting and that about 100 of them had been put in prison and they would have been kept there only for they all rejoined again." He also said that a few were unfit for service and were sent home. "I am quite content myself, I never thought that I was man enough to go through half of this hardship. We will surely have to fight in less than three weeks time; the symptoms of revolution are showing already in this town. The inhabitants are totally turned against us,

and against the garrison, in fact, but especially against us. There is a great preparation for a contest here in a very short time. We have the priests in the barracks every day, hearing confessions and giving scapulars and medals to men. Garibaldi is too near at hand. There is great excitement beginning to spring up amongst the inhabitants of this town and they fear us very much. Our officers tell us that they think we are giants or some unnatural beings seeing us so stiff and bold about the town when we walk out. When some of our boys would go out and drink a few glasses of rum, they'd knock one of them down on the street and wallop him as well as if was at home. I am preparing my soul, as far as in my power, for the other world, and so is every man in the regiment. There are 600 of us in this garrison, exclusive of about 600 more foreign soldiers. We were the only lot of men that got no time anyplace because they were in a hurry out with us, and they will be the same with every other man that follows us. We are beginning to get used to this place and all the men are getting quite contented, the more so because they know they will have to fight shortly. I know I am as willing to face the cannon in the morning as I ever was to go to a soiree at St Michael's Temperance Society. Just as I finish this, there are 200 soldiers marching into the barrack, from Switzerland and other places."¹⁸

Sergeant Michael Enright, from High Street, writing to a friend on 30 July 1860, had this to say about the situation at Spoleto:

"Dear John, I would have written before now but we were situated in places unprovided with beds or many other accommodations, but we are getting on very well. We are kept to drill in a very quiet way. I have to tell you I am promoted sergeant since my arrival in this state. John Brazil is a sergeant too. and his brother are leaving here for Ireland. There are about two hundred of them going home. Partly all Limerickmen, if they were men – but they should never be recognised as men. They are no better than cowards. They came out here with the intention of serving His Holiness, but when they came to the place where the war was expected, its then they got cowards. Our pay here is middling good, and easy duty. I think we will be able to meet Garibaldi in or about the 20th of October. We were inspected by General de la Moriciere; he has said of us, we were to look around us and just see the Italian and German soldiers. We may imagine ourselves men, for the tallest of those Germans are only about five feet. He also said that were he to have 10,000 Irishmen he would lay siege to the forces of Garibaldi, were they thirty to one against us. We do not know the day we may be inspected by our welcome countryman, Marshal McMahon,* as it is rumoured he is going to pay us a visit. I am sending this letter to you by one of the men that are going home, so you will get it with safety. I have sent a letter to my mother too. I am waiting to have her write to me, and then I shall send her an order for two or three pounds".¹⁹

Fighting erupted in the Papal States in September 1860, when the Piedmontese army invaded from the north of Italy. On 13 September, the town of Perugia, where there were about 145 men of the Irish Brigade, surrendered to King Victor Emmanuel's forces. On 17 September, the town of Spoleto was captured and finally, on 28 September, General de la Moriciere surrendered the seaport town of Ancona. This was the end of the Papal army and also the Irish Brigade. The Pope's temporal powers were reduced to Rome and its environs. Members of the brigade were granted an honourable discharge from their commitments to the papacy and also an acknowledgement of their heroism. A promise was also made, even if they were prisoners, to help the men get home.²⁰ In the meantime, representatives of the Italian government in London issued a letter in regard to the fate of the Irish prisoners. The letter stated that an agreement had been made between the British and Italian governments for the Irish prisoners to return to Ireland, but at their own expense, and that they would be returned soon.²¹

In Italy, members of the brigade were being gathered together at the northern seaport of Genoa. Those captured at Perugia were marched to Livorno



John Meade, Vice-President of the Congregated Trades of Limerick, 1865.

(Limerick Museum)

(Leghorn)²² and then by sea to Genoa.²³ At Ancona, there was a distinction made between officers and men when an agreement was reached whereby all captured foreign officers, including the Irish, would be taken by ship through the straits of Messina and on to Genoa, and that the men and non-commissioned officers would have to travel overland.²⁴

Meanwhile in Ireland, the *Freeman's Journal* published a letter from one of the captured Irishmen. The writer of the letter stated that the only way they could get home was with financial assistance from Ireland.²⁵ At a meeting in Limerick held in the old Exchange in Mary Street, the residents of St Mary's Parish agreed to take part in the movement to bring the men home with honour to their country. Fr Timothy Shanahan acted as chairman and a subscription list was opened, with nearly sixty pounds to start them off. A committee was formed to take further subscriptions from anybody who wanted to help at St Mary's church.²⁶

On 20 October, the Papal ship, *Byzantine*, began transporting the men to Marseilles.²⁷ By 26 October, 500 of them had arrived in Paris,²⁸ where eager Parisians who had come out to see them cut buttons from the men's uniforms to keep as souvenirs. Eventually over 900 men were assembled at Le Havre for the journey home to Ireland.²⁹ They were delayed at La Havre for a while, but finally

a ship, the paddle steamer *Dee*, was found that would take all the men. On Thursday, 1 November, the *Dee* set sail for Queens-town (Cobh). Just before daybreak on Saturday the 3rd, a fire broke out in the engine room of the ship, but was quickly put out with the help of the men.

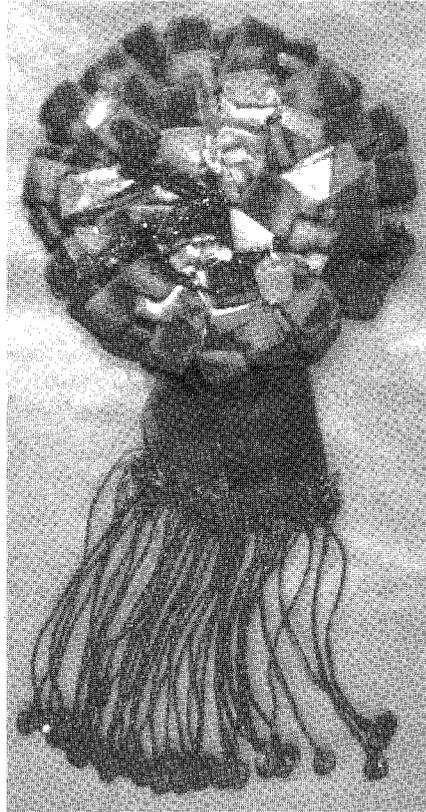
As the *Dee* made its way into Queens-town harbour, it was met by cheering crowds of onlookers who had gathered in the area. Two steamers which had come out from Cork city arrived on the scene, one flying the Papal flag and carrying the local welcoming committee plus one thousand suits of clothing and a similar amount of prepared breakfasts for the hungry men. Two bands were also on board the ships. One of the brigade members called out, in a loud voice, to one of the bands to play and they obliged by playing *St Patrick's Day*.³⁰ When the *Dee* reached Monkstown (across from Queens-town), it dropped anchor. Breakfast was served and the clothing was given out. Later in the afternoon, after they had eaten and the welcoming ceremonies were over, they were taken by smaller boats into Cork city. When they assembled on the quays, most of them were still wearing their green tunics, red trousers, loose and tied at the knee, leggings and their French-style caps, with a leaf of laurel stuck on each side. Marching four abreast through the watching crowds, they made their way to the offices of the Catholic

Young Mens Society in Castle Street.

At 4 o'clock that afternoon, the first train, with two engines, taking the Dublin contingent, left Cork city. A few hours later, a second train with the men from Limerick, Tipperary and Clare, began its journey, although some of the Limerick men stayed in Cork for the night. At every stop along the way, hundreds of people turned out to see the returning heroes. When the Limerick train pulled into Kilmallock, the men from that area were given a rousing reception. Burning tar barrels illuminated the roads. The local hotel owner, Mr O'Sullivan, laid on horse-drawn cars to take the men to their homes. When the train reached Limerick Junction, the welcoming committee from Tipperary insisted that the men enjoy the hospitality of the people and that they stay overnight in the town.³¹

Meanwhile in Limerick, news of the men's homecoming was received late in the day. People who had gone to the railway station and those who had waited on the streets, seeing no sign of the men, returned to their homes. On Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock, their heroes arrived. They were met at the railway station by the Limerick committee of the CYMS and an immense crowd of people, who had gathered at the station and on the streets to see them. From there, the men were taken to the CYMS rooms at Brunswick (Sarsfield) Street, where they were wine and dined. At a meeting of the CYMS at 8 o'clock that night, which included many people as well as the volunteers, Fr Shanahan gave a lecture praising the Papal volunteers and their bravery. He then called on the people present, excluding the volunteers, to make a contribution towards the cost of bringing them home, which a number of them did. It was agreed that some of the money would be used to pay for overnight accommodation and the rail fares of those volunteers who were staying in Limerick for the night.³²

A month later, on Monday 3 December, a banquet was given at the Theatre Royal, Henry Street (where Smyth's toy store now stands), in honour of the volunteers from the city and county, and also from the counties of Clare and Tipperary. The men began arriving in the city from early morning and were taken to the Mechanics Institute at 7 Bank Place (one of the few buildings of the time remaining in that area). Some of them were wearing parts of their Papal uniform. There they were met by representatives of the Congregated Trades of the city, who were hosting the banquet. The windows of the building were decorated with the banners of the different trades. At 6 o'clock that evening, Bank Place was thronged with people and buzzing with excitement. By 7.30 pm the brigade members, about 80 of them, had formed up on the street and, led by the St John's Amateur Band, they marched to the Theatre Royal. When they got to the theatre, the crowd was so dense that a pathway had to be cleared to the entrance.³³ Over the entrance door, jets of



Rosette worn at the civic banquet in the Theatre Royal, Limerick, on 3 December 1860, given by the citizens in honour of the Limerick survivors of the Irish Papal Brigade on their return from the Italian war.

(Limerick Museum)

gaslight surrounded by green laurel spelled out the word 'welcome.' Inside the theatre, the stage was decorated with the flags of the trades and on the stage itself was the table for the invited dignitaries, which was sumptuously furnished. On the pit floor, near the stage, were the 'brigade tables,' which were laid out with roast and boiled beef, ham, mutton and an assortment of confectionary and some flagons of ale. In all, there were dinners for nearly 500 people, with at least another 600 spectators watching from the gallery and the private boxes.³⁴

When the brigade members entered, it was as if everyone rose simultaneously to greet them. Cheer after cheer broke out, not only from those inside, but also from the crowds of people who had gathered on the streets outside. As the proceedings got on their way and the speeches began, the secretary of the Congregated Trades sounded a note of discontent when he made it known that "they had to contend against a deputation who were unfavourable to the entertainment to those brave warriors who were here tonight."³⁵ He was soon advised by some of the invited guests to confine himself to the reading of the replies from the invited guests who could not attend. When the letters were read, the secretary called for a toast to the queen (Victoria), but he was interrupted with cries of "the Pope" first. Amid shouts of "the Pope, the Pope," the secretary explained that he had to go by the

prepared list. As St John's band struck up "God Save the Queen," it was noticed that some of the people seated at the tables did not stand up. When the band had finished, the secretary called on those present to toast His Holiness Pius IX. There was cheering for several minutes and people stood up and waved handkerchiefs. There were many speeches that night, some of them with anti-British sentiments. Finally, when the invited guests had finished speaking, Sergeant-Major David O'Neill, with several members of the brigade, went to the front of the stage, where he read a prepared statement on behalf of the brigade members. In it he thanked the members of the trades association and the people of the city for the honour and reception that they had bestowed upon the members of the brigade. He went on to say that they had done their best while in the service of the Pope and "if we did not succeed, the fault was not ours, so far as fighting went." He went on to say that if the Pope ever needed them again, they would go. He concluded by thanking the president of the trades, Mr Meade, and the secretary, Mr Carrick, "by whom the movement was promoted in the parish of St Mary's to bring us home - to bring us here, where we are honoured to see so many of the good men, and the virtuous fair women of Limerick around us." The address, signed by Sergeant-Major O'Neill, was then presented to Mr Carrick, who accepted it on behalf of the trades and then, as the *Munster News* reported, "tea was served and the festivities were prolonged to an advanced hour of the night."³⁶

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