There is a marble Madonna by the Italian Benzoni in the sanctuary. This imposing neo-Gothic building was begun on May 1, 1854, to the design of Thomas Hardwicke, and a huge procession of citizens, carrying the banners of their trades and headed by the mayor and members of the Corporation, attended the laying of the foundation stone.

The cathedral, still unfinished, was opened for worship in July, 1861. As we come out we see evidence that its erection was linked to a deep sense of Catholic nationalism in this area. There is a shamrock motif in the gate and railings, and a bronze statue of Patrick Sarsfield adorns the cathedral grounds. Alas, the saint commemorated in Portland stone over the west door has lost an arm. Going out the gate turn

Garryowen

right, then right again, and walk along Garryowen, made famous by its rugby football club, which has given the name of the district to a strategic kick in that game. The name literally means "John's gardens" and gardens here were owned in mediaeval times by the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, but by the eighteenth century these had become public pleasure gardens, and later they formed the background to part of "The Collegians". Heading straight through modern Garryowen, passing the sports ground on our right, we eventually come to a junction with

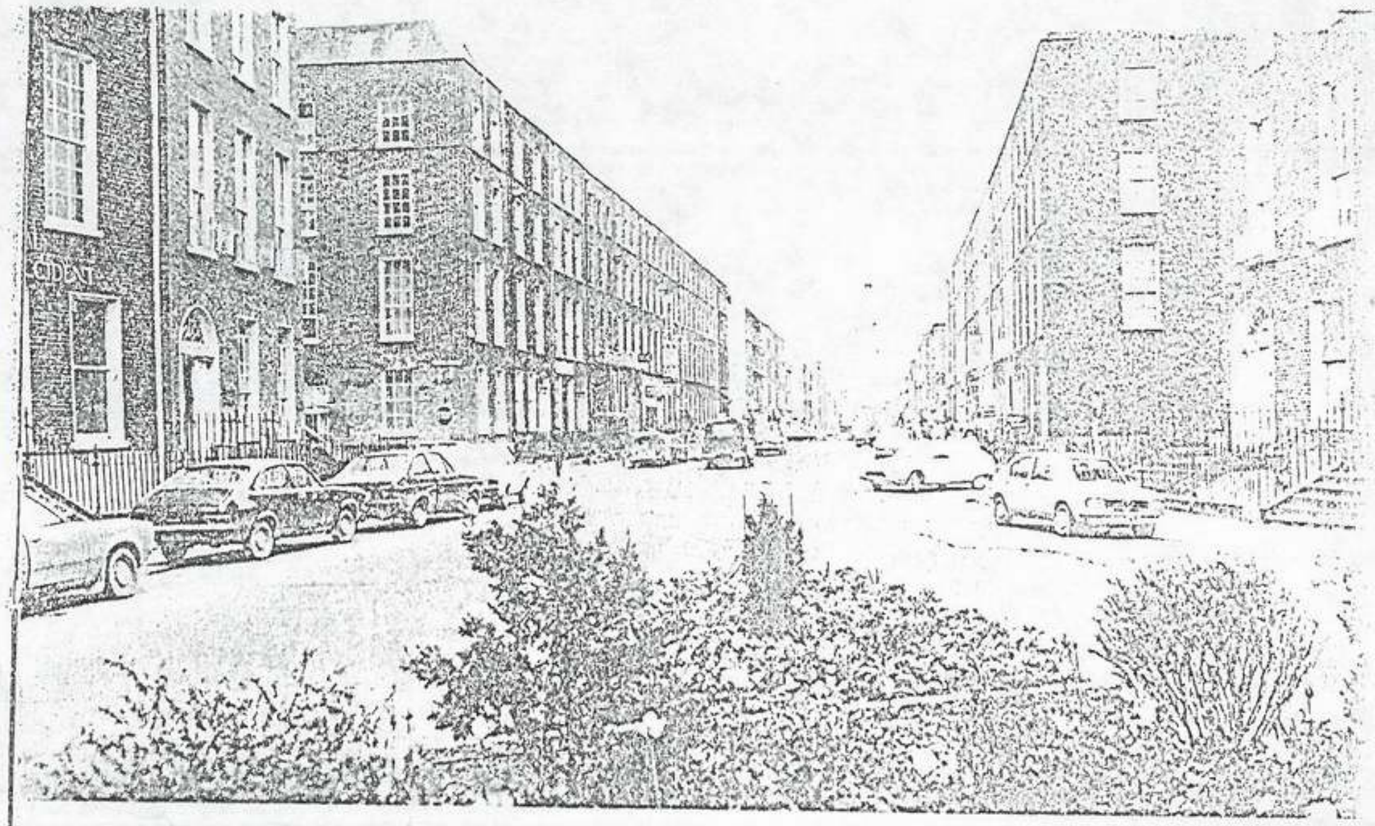
Calamity Ave."

Blackboy Road, which is a continuation of Mulgrave St, unkindly referred to at times by Limerick people as "Misery Row" or "Calamity Avenue" since it contains a prison, a cemetery and two hospitals, one of them for psychiatric cases. Ahead of us is the junction of the Waterford and Kilmallock roads, and at this junction was the city's fair green, actually a little outside the city limits, where the "Colleen Bawn" murderers were hanged on a public gallows.

In the fork we see a monument bearing the name "O'Grady", which is shaped like a huge weight, complete with lifting ring, supported on four stone spheres. This commemorates John O'Grady, who was born in Ballybricken, Co. Limerick, in 1892 and died in Limerick in 1934, and is described on the stone as the world's champion weight thrower. Across the way is the main entrance to Mount St. Laurence cemetery, and by going out a little to the junction of a side road we see an impressive memorial to Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, the Manchester Martyrs of 1867, in the form of a Celtic cross and a weeping figure of Ireland, accompanied by a wolfhound. Coming back to town on the cemetery side we pass the gates of St. Joseph's Hospital set in a long stone wall. The central stone two-storey block of the hospital, built in 1825, is flanked by diagonal wings. The design is partly the work of the noted Francis Johnston. The construction, mostly limestone and brick, originally cost £30,000, and when it opened in 1826 it was simply called the Lunatic Asylum, in the style then acceptable. It catered for patients from Cos. Limerick, Tipperary and Clare and early accounts speak of these patients as living in cells.

Boru House

Opposite the wall of St. Joseph's a strange redbrick house of 1880 catches the eye. Called Boru House, it has two storeys and six bays, one of which is extended towards the road. From the flattened apex of the extension a stone arm rises to the sky, brandishing a dagger. In 1880 this was a county villa, though adjacent to the city. Novelist Kate O'Brien, whose best-known book is "Without my Cloak," was born in it



O'Connell St, main thoroughfare.

in 1897, the daughter of horse trader Tom O'Brien, a celebrated nationalist to whom the house's unusual decoration must have appealed. The house, the 1895 redbrick Grattan Villas nearer town and others relieve the sombre greyness of the locality, but across the road a little way down from the hospital we have inspected, are the forbidding wall and grim, studded gate of Limerick Prison, the gate surmounted by a heavy limestone arch. As we go past its city end a modern concrete security look-out is seen, some way back. The jail was designed by James Pain and erected between 1817 and 1821 at a cost of £23,000, the boundary wall being two feet, six inches thick. Later about £2,000 more was expended on a kitchen, laundry and treadmill-house, and it is interesting to note that among the early tasks of prisoners in the treadmill was the scutching of flax. Directly facing the prison gate is the three-storey grey central block of the other hospital which completes the justification of the sarcastic nickname "Misery Row" on this street.

Turn left into Roxborough Rd and right into Sexton St, with its pleasant modern Presentation convent schools. In Sexton St also is the City Theatre, which has changed hands more than once. Several older Limerick Theatres have disappeared, including one built by Tottenham Heaphy in Cornwallis St, off Gerald Griffin St, in 1770, where such players as Mrs. Siddons and Garrick appeared, one built in George's St, now O'Connell St, in 1810, on the site of the present Augustinian church, and one built in Henry St in 1841, called Joseph Fogerty's Theatre, which was burned down in 1922. This last was a timber structure. Two left turns at the end of Sexton St bring us along Parnell St to the front of the railway station, a handsome but not imposing edifice reached by steps. The two-storey grey stone station

City Theatre

working in their own houses. Going back along Lelia St we come to the New Road. Facing us, a row of cottages gives way to the wall of the 1780 St. John's Hospital. And behind the buildings of Lelia St on our right a long, high, ragged section of the old Irishtown wall runs off at an angle. Being a little away from the public thoroughfare, this is sometimes missed by visitors, but once the end of it catches the eye it is easy to appreciate its mass, and especially its thickness. It is the largest segment of the fourteenth century fortification of this part of Limerick remaining. The demolition of the walls in Irishtown began in 1766. If we cross to the hospital wall and follow it around to a blue-arched gate, which we enter, we see a surviving gatehouse of the town wall on our right, and to the left another pierced section, grass growing along its top, but without the clinging vegetation of the longer section we saw outside. If we pass under the gate on the right, which still has accommodation overhead, we can still find the portcullis slit, a little way in. Beyond the front of the hospital is the spot where King William's artillery breached the walls on August 27, 1690.

These walls had been praised by travellers as being among the best in Europe, but at times were allowed to fall into disrepair. They were in a poor state when William took up his position outside them on August 9, 1690, supposedly causing him, or someone near him, to say that they could be knocked over with roasted apples. William's army numbered 36,000 and there were 25,000 Irish Jacobite defenders. But William needed more cannon, and a siege train was on its way from the east to make up the deficiency when it was blown up at Ballyneety by Patrick Sarsfield and a troop of horse, who had crossed the Shannon at a secret ford near Killaloe. The blast was heard in Limerick and gave heart to the defenders, but William waited, and a substitute siege train from Waterford enabled him to make the assault that broke through the walls on the 27th. This led to carnage. It was impossible for many of the Williamites to force their way through the solitary breach, and they had no ladders with which to scale the wall, so that those who got through were sadly without support. Not only were they attacked by Limerickmen, but by Limerickwomen wielding broken bottles. The Brandenburg regiment suffered the worst slaughter, at a place called Black Battery, near the west door of the present St. John's Catholic cathedral, which we will see in a moment. Here a powder store exploded, sending men and stones alike flying into the air. In all, 2,000 Williamites and 400 Jacobites were killed. On the last day of August, with torrential rain falling, William decided that the siege was futile and departed. The Williamite army came back to Limerick the following year, as we have already seen.

St. John's Hospital stands on the site of the former St. John's Barracks, and was the first fever hospital founded in the then British Empire. Its foundress was Lady Hartstonge, wife of Sir Henry Hartstonge, and she took over the barrack and re-designed its interior for the accommodation of patients. The institution was at that time known simply as the Fever and Lock Hospital. It was helped by donations from the Hartstonge and Pery families, and an Act was introduced in the Irish Parliament by Sir Henry Hartstonge empowering the government to allocate funds to it. In 1787 the barrack was replaced by

a purpose-built hospital block.

Across from the blue gate of the hospital the church and churchyard of St. John (Church of Ireland) form a walled island. This church, measuring 63 feet by 60 feet, was founded when the fortifications of this part of Irishtown were completed, in the early fifteenth century. It was largely altered in 1763. It is no longer used as a church. Beyond the island, between it and the end of Gerald Griffin St, is a most exquisite little stone Georgian square, which seems to have strayed from Newtown Pery, or possibly from Edinburgh. Those familiar with the Scottish capital are accustomed to this use of dark stone in Georgian domestic architecture. To Irish eyes, more used to seeing similar houses in brick, long rows or "circuses" of it are sometimes oppressive. But in isolation, such as here in St. John's Square, it has great charm. The square was built by Edward Sexton Pery, once Speaker of the Irish House of Commons and the man for whom Newtown Pery was named. He completed it is 1760, when he began laying what is now Gerald Griffin St to connect the square with his other Georgian developments. Davis Ducart, already mentioned, was probably Pery's architect for this square and also for the design of Newtown Pery. Ducart's real name, incidentally, was Daviso de Arcort. St. John's Square

The square's ten houses, each three storeys above a basement, occupy three sides, one side bisected by the end of Gerald Griffin St. In place of the usual Georgian fanlights over the halldoors are rectangular panes, on all the houses except one, which has a semi-elliptical fanlight. Much restoration has gone on in the past few years, and the city museum has moved from Pery Square to here, to a house on the right of the entrance of Gerald Griffin St. Among the museum's treasures are two "indeximus" scrolls of Charles II and Cromwell, certifying that they had inspected the city charter. The Charles II scroll has its original base seal. Also here are a George I silver civic seal, a civic sword of 1575, a sheriff's chain of 1820 and four silver mayoral maces of 1739, probably made by John Robinson, a noted Limerick smith. Each mace head bears an insignia of harp, rose and thistle, fleur-de-lis and the arms of Limerick. Civic seal

Bearing right on leaving the museum, over towards St. John's Cathedral, look back towards the rear of the last Georgian house you pass, noticing that an extension has a double curvilinear top in the Queen Anne or "Dutch Billy" style, and looking strange in stone. It was inspired by houses in the style which formerly were common in Englishtown. In the space in front of the cathedral railings is a drinking fountain, which no longer works, put up in 1865. An inscription asks residents of St. John's parish to protect this facility from injury. The request went unheeded and the fountain is mutilated.

The commanding spire of St. John's is one of Ireland's tallest, at 280 feet from the ground. The grey limestone cathedral has a striking air of interior space and tallness, but not a sense of exposure. There is good stained glass in the five lancet windows in the apse, and the pulpit has a beautifully carved canopy. The greatest treasures inside are the intricately worked fifteenth century mitre and crozier of Bishop Cornelius O'Dea of Limerick, but these are not on public display. They were made by Thomas O'Carryd, possibly of Dublin, in 1418. Tallest spire