



Cottage opposite Friar's Island, Killaloe

(Photo by the author)

was to give faithful service to one's employer, and help one's fellow-men when possible, and never bother unduly about the future, which was never as black as it looked. And I agreed with him that trouble always came butt-end first, and that, after it had passed, it frequently dwindled to a pinpoint - the which has been said in verse somewhere, by Sam Walter Foss I think, but I can't put my hand on it.

We got back to Castleconnell just as

the fishermen were coming in, and it was far from empty-handed they were this time. The array of salmon stretched out on the floor of the bar, when they had all arrived, was a very noble one. And everybody stood around and looked at them proudly, and told of the enormous flies that had been used, and how one monster had whipped the boat around and towed it right down through the rapids, and lucky it was that the water was high or it would

infallibly have been ripped to pieces, but the boatmen kept their heads and managed to get it through, and when the salmon came out in the quiet river below and found itself still fast, it gave up and let itself be gaffed without any further fuss.

And again after dinner, we saw the familiar sight of the catch being wrapped in straw to be sent by parcel post back to England, as proof of the anglers' prowess; and I can guess how those battles on Shannon water were fought over again when the angler got back to the bosom of his family. As for me, I have only to close my eyes to see again that noble stream sweeping along between its green, flower-sprinkled banks, foaming over the weirs, brawling past the rapids, hurrying between the quays of Limerick, and widening into the great estuary where it meets the sea.

Into the West, where, o'er the wide
Atlantic,
The lights of sunset gleam,
From its high sources in the heart of
Erin
Flows the great stream.

Yet back in stormy cloud or viewless
vapour
The wandering waters come,
And faithfully across the trackless
heaven
Find their old home.

(From *The Charm of Ireland* by Burton E. Stevenson, John Murray, London, 1915).

Two opinions of Limerick

By chance these two short but contrasting opinions of Limerick were encountered on the same day. The first is from "Green & Silver," a description of a canal tour of Ireland undertaken by L.T.C. Rolt and his wife, which was first published in 1949. The trip to Limerick was by bus from Killaloe. They did not wish to come any further down river by boat because the high banked Head Race offered no scenic views. The second is much earlier and is taken from "Dyott's Diary 1781-1845" edited by Reginald Jefferey and published in 1907. In August 1781 Staffordshire born William Dyott joined the 4th Regiment of Foot as an ensign. At the time the Regiment was based in Ireland and in late December 1782 he, now a lieutenant, and the regiment passed through Limerick on the way to witness the execution of deserters in Cork. In early January the following year the regiment returned to Limerick where it stayed for about 7 weeks before marching off to Ennis-killen. The excerpt given below is the only entry for his time in Limerick.

by Brian Hodgkinson

"There are two Limericks. The traveller passing through the town in course of a journey as we had done on our arrival sees the spacious Georgian city of O'Connell Street and its neighbours, streets which boast of many houses that rival those of the Dublin squares in their elegant proportions and beautiful doorways. But on this occasion we were able to go further afield, and thus we saw Limerick of the slums. After that, even O'Connell Street seemed to have changed for the worse. Our perspective of the city had altered, and Georgian Limerick now resembled a thin fancy crust on a very unsavoury pie. There may be slums as bad or worse in Dublin, but if there are we did not see them even though we did penetrate into some mean quarters of that city. It is only fair to add that we saw evidence that much slum clearance work has already been done in Limerick, and doubtless much more would have been accomplished had it not been for the "emergency". In this matter of slum clearance, Ireland would

seem to be about a quarter of a century behind England, for I have childhood recollections of slums in our cities as bad as those in Limerick today".

"Sunday February 23rd (1783)

Morning packing up, paid visits and dined with T. Grady, S. Grady, and mess at Knight's. In the evening went to take my last leave of my dear Susey. The parting was as dismal as I ever experienced, but true lovers must part sometimes. I stayed at Mrs Ross's till two o'clock; and on Monday the 24th February we marched about eleven o'clock from that dear place Limerick, a town that I shall ever hold in my highest esteem, and where I received more civility than ever I experienced. It is without doubt the best quarter in the world. I was told by several people that there never was more real grief shown by the inhabitants of Limerick to a regiment leaving it than to ours. The concourse of the people in the streets as we marched through was immense. We arrived about three o'clock at a small town called Newport, nine miles from Limerick. Tom & Hardy Grady accompanied us to that place, but we were not at all in spirits".