

LIMERICK, an inland county of the province of Munster, in Ireland, bounded on the north, except at the city of Limerick, by the river Shannon, which separates it from the county of Clare, on the east by the county of Tipperary, on the south by the county of Cork, and on the west by the county of Kerry. According to the map of Ireland published under the superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, it is situated between $52^{\circ} 17'$ and $52^{\circ} 47'$ N. lat., and between $8^{\circ} 5'$ and $9^{\circ} 22'$ W. long., and extends from O'Brien's Bridge on the north, to the Cork boundary at Knockea on the south, 35 statute miles, and from Abbeyfeale on the west, to the Tipperary boundary at Gaultybeg on the east, 54 miles. The area, according to the same map, is 479,580 statute acres, or 749 statute square miles, inclusive of the county of the city of Limerick. It is elsewhere estimated at 640,621 acres, of which 546,640 are cultivated, and 91,981 are unimproved bog and mountain; but this calculation is probably much more accurate in the relative proportion of arable and waste than in their united absolute extent. In 1831 the gross population was 248,201.

The general character of the surface of Limerick is that of an extended undulating plain, sloping with a gentle declivity towards the Shannon on the north, and surrounded on its southern and western borders by a well defined margin of mountain groups and hilly uplands. A mountainous tract occurs also in the north-eastern extremity of the county, between which and the mountains on the south the plain spreads eastward into Tipperary. The group on the north-east constitutes the southern extremity of that extensive chain which, commencing at Keeper mountain and its subordinate range in Tipperary and Limerick, runs northward to the King's County, where it terminates in the range of Slieve Bloom. The names of the Slieve Phelim and Bilboa mountains are applied to those subordinate portions of the Keeper group which spread southward into the counties of Limerick and Tipperary respectively, and it is by the declivities of these united ranges that the level district uniting those counties is limited on the north. The general direction of the Slieve Phelim hills is from north-east to south-west, and this is also the course pursued by the streams descending from them. These streams, falling into the Bilboa river, which runs westward along the foot of the mountains of that name out of Tipperary, form the Mulkern river. The Mulkern, increased by the Newport descending direct from Keeper, carries a good body of water to the Shannon, which it enters a little above the city of Limerick. The county between the western declivities of the Slieve Phelim hills and the Shannon is, towards the extremity of the county, flat and boggy, but has a pleasingly diversified surface along the banks of the Mulkern. The villages of Cappamore, Abington, and Annacotty

are situated on this river. About midway between the embouchure of the Mulkern and O'Brien's Bridge, at the extremity of the county, is Castle Connell, a well built small town, surrounded by delightful scenery. It is built on the eastern side of the Shannon, which, flowing between well-timbered banks, chiefly occupied by demesnes and pleasure-grounds, forms a series of precipitous rapids of uncommon grandeur, the principal of which is known as the Leap of Doonass. The valley of the Shannon is here contracted by the Slieve Baughta mountains on the one side, and the range of Keeper on the other, and presents features of a highly grand and striking character throughout a distance of several miles.

The principal features of the great plain of Limerick, extending from the Mulkern westward and southward to the mountains on the borders of Kerry and Cork, are the rivers Maigue and Deel, which traverse it from south to north in nearly parallel courses. The basin of the Maigue embraces the entire eastern and south-eastern division of the county. This river has its source in the high land stretching southward to Charleville, in the county of Cork, from whence it runs a little west of north to the Shannon, and pretty nearly bisects the central plain of Limerick. Its chief feeders have their sources among the mountains which occupy the south-eastern division of the county. These consist of a continuation of the great Gaultee range, and of a detached group called the Castle Oliver mountains, rising at a short distance from its western extremity. The Looba, formed by the streams descending from the northern and north-western declivities of the latter, runs westward from Kilfinnan by the decayed town of Kilmallock through a rich grazing country, and joins the Maigue near its source. The Star river, rising near Galbally, in the interval between the Gaultee and Castle-Oliver mountains, traverses a similar vein of deep pasture and tillage lands in a north-western course through Bruff, and joins the Maigue about five miles from its junction with the Looba. The Camogue, the most considerable stream of the three, rises on the borders of Tipperary in the open country skirting the northern declivities of the Gaultees, and runs nearly parallel to the Star, at an average distance of about five miles, by Hospital and Six-mile-Bridge, to a mile above Croom, where it meets the Maigue, which, five miles below the point, becomes navigable at Adare. From Adare to the Shannon is a distance of twelve miles of navigable river. The only striking feature of the plain watered by the above tributaries of the Maigue is Loch Gur, a picturesque sheet of water three-quarters of a mile in length, embosomed among romantic knolls, some of which have a considerable elevation, about midway between Six-mile-Bridge and Bruff. A cave and the ruins of a strong fortress on an island in the lake add to the interest of the scene. From the summit of Knockfennel, one of the hills forming the basin of the lake, a magnificent view is obtained of the surrounding plain, comprising the greatest extent of arable land unencumbered with bog in Ireland, bounded by an imposing amphitheatre of distant mountains. The country north of the Camogue, between it and the Mulkern and Shannon, have a more varied surface than that above described. The conical hills of Kiltelly and Knockdirk, Pallas Hill, and the hill of Knockruea, rise within a short distance of one another on the Tipperary border, about midway between the more marked mountain boundaries which limit the plain on the north and south. Several minor heights rise throughout the plain immediately south of the liberties of Limerick, which lie along the Shannon. The small town of Pallasgrean is situated on the Tipperary side of this district, Caherconlish about its centre, and Patrick's-well, towards the Maigue, on the road from the city of Limerick to Adare.

The county west of the Maigue for about two-thirds of its extent has much the same character of surface as the district last described, the remainder being included in the mountainous region stretching westward into Kerry. It is watered by the Deel, a river of nearly equal size with the Maigue, and also navigable for three miles above the Shannon, into which it falls below Askeaton. The lower portion of the courses both of the Deel and Maigue is through so flat a country that their respective valleys are scarcely observable, but in the district intervening between their sources there is a good deal of high ground, particularly about the small town of Ballingarry, in the neighbourhood of which are the steep hills of Knockferna and Kilmeedy; the former of which has an elevation of 907 feet.

The valley of the upper Deel lies between these heights on the east, and the high country towards Kerry on the west, which latter rises round this margin of the level district in a continuous sweep of upwards of twenty miles in compass from Drumcullagher, at the head of the river, to Shanagolden and the Shannon. The town of Newcastle is situated on the south-western border of the plain between the river and these mountains; and lower down upon the Deel, on the road from Adare to Newcastle, is Rathkeale, the most considerable place, next to the city of Limerick, in the county. At the northern extremity of the mountain-range the detached hill of Knockpatrick rises boldly between the town of Shanagolden and the Shannon. From Shanagolden westward the surface is rough and hilly, rising at the distance of two or three miles from the Shannon into sterile tracts of bog and mountain, which spread southward and westward into the counties of Cork and Kerry, forming altogether a mountainous area of 900 square miles. The village of Glin is situated on the shore of the Shannon under the northern termination of these highlands, in the north-western extremity of the county. The mountains which rise in a continuous ridge towards the valley of the Deel are backed by other groups running east and west, the valleys formed by which are traversed by various streams, which join the Geale and Feale rivers, running westward into Kerry. On the Feale, at its junction with the Ulahane, which descends from one of these glens, is situated the town of Abbeyfeale, in the extreme south-west of the county, and nearly in the centre of the mountainous region above mentioned.

Although the Shannon does not lose the character of a river until after passing beyond the bounds of this county, yet for all the purposes of commerce it is equivalent to an equal length of sea-coast from Glin to Limerick, a distance, including the windings of the river, of about 35 miles. With the exception of a few points, which may be improved at a small expense, the navigable channels of this part of the river are capable of admitting vessels of heavy burthen as far as the pool of Limerick, situated about two miles below the city. At present there is a great deficiency of beacons, buoys, and marks to guide vessels in these channels, and there are no suitable piers or landing-wharfs along the shore. Several such works are however contemplated by the present commission for the improvement of the Shannon, including piers at Glin and Kiltairy, of an estimated cost of 5879*l.* and 1836*l.* respectively, and quays at Foynes and Askeaton, the estimated cost of the latter being 900*l.* It is also proposed to widen and deepen the channel of the Maigue, as well as the old branch canal and basin connecting that river with the town of Adare, so as to form an inland navigation for vessels of considerable draught, of 12 miles from the Shannon. [SHANNON.]

The leading lines of road diverging from Limerick to Clonmel, Cork, and Tralee are carried nearly in straight lines over the open country. The two latter lines pass through the principal places in the county, the Cork road running by Bruff and Killmallock, and that to Tralee by Patrick's-well, Adare, Rathkeale, Newcastle, and Abbeyfeale. A new road by Croom to Charleville, and thence to Cork, is in progress. The opening of several new roads by government in 1829, through the mountainous district surrounding Abbeyfeale, has had the best effect in promoting peaceful and industrious habits among the population of that portion of the counties of Limerick, Cork, and Kerry.

A line of railroad from Dublin through Limerick, along the southern bank of the Shannon, to Tarbert in Kerry, has been recommended by the commissioners appointed to consider and recommend a general system of railways for Ireland.

The climate is remarkably good, and the least variable of that of any of the western counties of Ireland. Instances of longevity are very numerous.

Geology.—The level part of the county consists of the carboniferous limestone of the central plain of Ireland. The mountain groups and detached eminences of its eastern and southern margins are formed by the protrusion of older rocks, and the high lands on the west consist of more recent series superimposed. The Slieve Phelim and Bilboa groups, in common with the extensive range of which they form a part, consist of a nucleus of clay-slate supporting flanks of yellow sandstone and conglomerate disposed in conformable beds. Towards the south-western extremity of the Slieve

Phelim group the yellow sandstone disappears and the clay-slate is bordered by a tract of old red sandstone. Old red sandstone also forms the nucleus of the Slievenamuck chain, an offset of the Gaultees, the western declivities of which spread into Limerick above Galbally. The clay-slate reappears in the central summits of the Gaultees and Castle Oliver mountains, flanked by old conglomerate with red, purple, and green clay-slate, sustaining a margin of yellow sandstone. Old red and green sandstone, the latter supported by the former, compose the various protrusions which rise between and in the valleys of the Upper Maigue and Deel rivers, except in Knockfeernha hill, where a mass of crystalline greenstone trap supplies the place of the more general nucleus. Trap protrusions occur in twelve distinct localities in the eastern part of the county, between the embouchure of the Maigue and the border of Tipperary. Of these the most striking are the hills of Pallas, Kiltelly, and Knockdirk. The interstratification of the floetz limestone and trap rocks is here well marked, both on the large and on the small scale, the open country exhibiting numerous parallel ridges of low elevation, caused by the successive outcrops of massy beds of trap and limestone in alternation with each other, and the escarpments of the hills exposing the subordinate divisions that arise from the interposition of thinner strata of limestone in the igneous rock. The general structure of these greenstone protrusions resembles that of the hill of Croghan [KING'S COUNTY], particularly in the case of Pallas hill, which is, like Croghan, remarkable for the great fertility of its soil. Pallas hill is further distinguished by the presence of columnar basalt, which overlies the amorphous trap of its northern brow. A façade of about sixty yards in length by seventy to eighty feet in height has been exposed by quarrying. The columns incline towards the north at an angle of 75°, and are of irregular figures, chiefly disposed to the pentagonal and hexagonal forms. There are two clusters of such pillars. On the west of the hill is an outcrop of red iron claystone. Felspar porphyry occurs in various forms throughout the hills of Knockdirk, Kiltelly, and Knockruea. The mountainous district on the west of the county belongs to the great Munster coal-tract, which is probably the most extensive in the British islands. The coal occurs in troughs, as in the Killanaule district. [KILKENNY.] Six distinct beds have been observed; but the coal is usually of a slaty structure, and much softer than that of Tipperary or Kilkenny: it is chiefly used for burning lime. Owing to the undulating character of the surface and the consequent magnitude of the angle (usually from 60° to 70°) which the beds make with the horizon, the mining operations are conducted upon the same system as those of the metallic veins. The only workings within Limerick have been at Newcastle and Loughill, in the north-western extremity of the county, where the shale and sandstone repose immediately on the upper or splintery limestone. The latter is the surface-rock throughout the rough tract west of Shanagolden, between the Shannon and the bolder acclivities of the highland country. About seven miles from the city of Limerick, near the Askeaton road, is a quarry producing a fine maroon-coloured marble, which can be raised in blocks of any size, and to an unlimited extent; and in the more immediate vicinity of the city black marble, but of an inferior quality, is got in abundance, and generally used as a building-stone.

Iron, copper, and lead ores are found in various localities throughout the district occupied by the trap protrusions, but no veins are at present worked.

Soil and Agriculture.—A tract of extraordinary fertility, called the Golden Vein, stretching westward out of the county of Tipperary, occupies the greater part of the eastern plain of Limerick. It extends from the sources of the Maigue to the Mulkern, and has an area of about 160,000 statute acres. The soil is a rich, mellow, crumbling loam, and is equally suited to grazing or tillage: it is chiefly in pasture. One acre is considered sufficient to fatten the largest bullock and a sheep. A still richer soil is that of the 'Corcasses,' which extend for fifteen miles along the southern bank of the Shannon, from a little below Limerick to the embouchure of the Deel. They are similar in character to those of the opposite side of the river [CLARE], having a soil of yellow or blue clay, covered with a deep rich black mould. They yield the greatest wheat crops raised in Ireland; and their produce of potatoes sometimes amounts to one hundred barrels of twenty-two stone each

to the Irish acre. The soil of the remainder of the limestone plain is light and sweet, very good for tillage, and yielding an excellent pasture for dairy cattle and sheep. Not more than one-fourth of the level district is however under tillage. Pasture and dairy farming are the staple occupations of the people. The store-farmers are comparatively a wealthy class, and frequently have stocks of from 400 to 600 head of cattle; they usually purchase at Ballinasloe, and sell at the fairs throughout the county, which are regularly attended by Cork buyers. The sale of stock in Limerick city has latterly been inconsiderable. Great quantities of butter are made throughout the county. Limerick is the chief point of exportation, but considerable quantities find their way to Cork from the extreme south and south-west. The butter of Limerick ranks above that of Cork in the London market, but does not in general bring so high a price as the butters of Belfast and Carlow. The making of cheese is not attended to. Pigs of a very superior description are bred in great numbers by the dairy farmers. An excellent cider is made in the districts about Rathkeale, Adare, Croom, and in some other localities. The apple which produces the most esteemed liquor is called the Cackagee. The following table shows the sales of grain in the years 1826 and 1835:—

	Barrels of Wheat, of 20 Stone.		Barrels of Oats, of 14 Stone.		Barrels of Barley, of 19 Stone.	
	1826.	1835.	1826.	1835.	1826.	1835.
City of Limerick	51,555	132,608	990,957	321,326	13,533	36,953
Killinann			4,235	4,235		
Newcastle	20	25	1,542	1,667	250	281
Rathkeale	4,515	8,960	1,647	1,931	375	243
Shanagolden	1,460	2,437				
Kilmallock	2,409	6,122				
Cahirass	10,751	20,750				
Bruff	922					
Greenville			7,000	8,342		
Askeaton	3,500	7,820				

There are no returns for Glin and Croom, and those for Askeaton are deficient.

There is a small manufacture of coarse woollens for home consumption, and the bleaching of linen is carried on, but on a contracted scale. There are three paper-mills, and large and powerful mills for the grinding of corn at Cahirass, Askeaton, Corbally, Croom, Rathkeale, Kilmallock, and Greenville. In 1831 there were in the county, exclusive of the county of the city, 25 flax-dressers, 36 millers, 5 paper-makers, 15 tanners, 9 tobaccoists, 1146 weavers, and 11 wool-combers.

The condition of the peasantry is better in the grazing than in the tillage districts. The subdivision of farms and the system of con-acre have contributed, in some localities in the south-east and north of the county, to reduce the labouring population to a very low standard of subsistence. The average wages of agricultural labourers are, in winter, eightpence, and during the rest of the year tenpence per day, for 140 working days in the year.

There is a numerous resident proprietary, whose seats and demesnes afford a pleasing contrast to the generally bare aspect of the county; for, except about the residences of the upper classes, timber is very scarce. The number of large absentee proprietors is however very considerable, and they do not in general keep up establishments within the county. Among the residents are many gentlemen farmers who practise the most approved systems of green-cropping and stall-feeding. Their example has of late years led to a marked improvement in agriculture, as well as in the breed and quality of stock.

Limerick is divided into the baronies of *Owneybeg* on the north-east, containing the village of Murroe, population (in 1831) 256; *Clanwilliam*, south of Oweybeg, containing the town of Cahircornish (pop. 703); *Coonagh*, south-east of ditto, containing the village of Pallasgreen (pop. 379); *Small County*, south of the two latter, containing the town of Hospital (pop. 1131); *Coshma*, south of Small County, containing the towns of Bruff (pop. 1772), Croom (pop. 1268), and Adare (pop. 766); *Coshlea*, in the south-eastern extremity of the county, containing the towns of Killinann (pop. 1752) and Galbally (pop. 560); *Pubblebrien*, on the west of Clanwilliam, containing the town of Patrick's-well (pop. 512); *Kenry*, west of Pubblebrien,

containing the town of Pallaskenry (pop. 630); *Lower Connello*, containing the towns of Rathkeale (pop. 4972), Askeaton (pop. 1515), Glin (pop. 1030), and Shanagolden (pop. 847); and the villages of Ardagh (pop. 415), Loughill (pop. 277), and Croagh (pop. 274); and *Upper Connello*, containing the towns of Newcastle (pop. 2908), Ballygarry (pop. 1685), Drumeagher (pop. 658), and Abbeyfeale (pop. 607); and the villages of Bruree (pop. 451) and Knockaderry (pop. 351). Besides these the county contains the liberty of Kilmallock, including the town of Kilmallock (pop. 1213).

Kilmallock is an antient disfranchised borough which possessed a charter in the reign of Edward III., and appears to have existed as a corporation long prior to that time. Its latest charter bears date the 10th of January, 27 Eliz. The corporation is now virtually extinct. The town, during the 15th and 16th centuries, was a place of very considerable importance. Its walls included a spacious quadrangular area with gate-towers in each front and a strong castle in the centre. The houses of the nobility and gentry of the county, many of whom resided here, were built in the castellated style, and constituted separate fortalices. In addition to these there were numerous religious edifices of a corresponding character. The place having been repeatedly besieged during the various civil wars of which the Desmond territory was the theatre, was finally dismantled at the close of the war of the Revolution of 1688. One only of the gate-towers is now standing, with part of the old wall, and the remains of the castle in the centre of the town. The castles and mansions of the former residents are, with the exception of two, in ruins; so also are the religious houses; and a few years since, the only inhabited dwellings in this formerly flourishing place were mud cabins or portions of the ruined edifices thatched in. It has however latterly revived, and there are at present some good houses and shops in the main street. There are several handsome residences in the vicinity, the principal of which is a seat of the Coote family.

Askeaton was incorporated by charter of the 11 James I., but the corporation is now extinct, and the borough disfranchised. The earl of Desmond had a strong castle here, the remains of which still overhang the river at the east end of the bridge. It was besieged and taken by Sir George Carew in 1579, and again by Lord Broghill's forces in the war of 1642. Vessels of 60 tons burthen come up to the town, which has an increasing trade in grain and the manufacture of flour and oatmeal. A rapid on the Deel above the town affords a good water-power and salmon-fishery.

Rathkeale is not incorporated, but is a place of brisk traffic. A colony of German Protestants planted in the neighbourhood by the family of Southwell has contributed in a great measure to the prosperity of the town. Castle Matras, the seat of the Southwell family, erected in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, is the principal mansion in the vicinity. The farms of the 'Palatines,' as the German settlers are called, exhibit a pleasing contrast to the slovenly appearance of small Irish farms in general. They are usually distinguished by an orchard and garden attached to the dwelling-house.

Adare on the Mague is not a place of much importance; but it is situated in the midst of a highly improved district, and possesses great interest for the historian from the number and preservation of its ruined religious houses. Adare Castle, the seat of the earl of Dunraven, is situated on the west bank of the river close to the town. The mansion is in the later English style, and when completed will be one of the most splendid in the south of Ireland. Between Askeaton and Adare is Currah, the residence of Sir Aubrey de Vere, Bart. The demesne is extensive, and possesses a great variety of beautiful scenery. The house is a fine pile of building, 116 feet by 72 feet. Rockbarton, the seat of Lord Guillamore, and Killballyowen, another residence of the O'Grady family, are in the neighbourhood of Bruff, the former finely situated about a mile to the west of Loch Gur. The principal seats along the Shannon, including those within the county of the city of Limerick, are Mount Shannon, the residence of the earl of Clare; Roxborough, that of Lord Gort; Clarina Park, of Lord Clarina; Hermitage, of Lord Massey, and Shannon Grove, of the earl of Charleville, all in the immediate neighbourhood of Limerick; Tervoe, the residence of the Maunsell family, and Castle-town, of the family of Waller, between Limerick and the

river Deel; and Mount Trenchard, near Shanagolden, the seat of Mr. Spring Rice.

Prior to the Union, the county of Limerick returned six members to the Irish parliament; two for each of the borough towns of Askeaton and Kilmallock, and two for the county. It is now represented in the imperial parliament by two county members only. At the close of the year 1835 the constituency was composed of 2891 electors. The assizes for the county are held at the city of Limerick, where are the county gaol and courthouse. Quarter-sessions are held at Limerick, Rathkeale, Newcastle, and Bruff, where there are courthouses and bridewells. There are bridewells also at Croom, Glin, and Kilsinnan. The police force of the county on the 1st of January, 1836, consisted of two chief constables of the first class, four of the second class, twenty-five constables, 144 subconstables, and six horse of the constabulary force; the cost of which

establishment for the year 1835 was 6967*l.* 6*s.* 3*d.*, of which 3624*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.*, was chargeable against the county. At the same time there were in the county and city of Limerick one magistrate, twenty-four constables, and ninety-nine subconstables of the peace preservation police, the cost of which establishment for the year 1835 was 6,444*l.* 15*s.* 10*d.* The total number of persons charged with criminal offences who were committed to the county gaol during the year 1836 was 803, of whom 728 were males and 75 females. Of these, 161 males could read and write at the time of their committal, 114 males and two females could read only, and 458 males and 73 females could neither read nor write. The district lunatic asylum for the counties of Limerick, Cork, and Kerry is at the city of Limerick, where are also the county infirmary and fever hospital. There are four other fever hospitals and twenty-four dispensaries throughout the county.

Population.

Date.	How ascertained.	Houses.	Families.	Families chiefly employed in agriculture.	Families chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, and handicraft.	Families not included in the preceding classes.	Males.	Females.	Total.
1792	Estimated by Dr. Beaufort .	23,848	..	..	..	..	..	..	130,000
1821	Under Act 55 Geo. III., c. 120	35,201	38,746	..	..	..	108,799	109,633	218,432
1831	Under Act 1 Will. IV., c. 19 .	36,981	40,894	31,236	5,186	4,472	123,211	125,590	248,801

Prior to the arrival of the English, Limerick constituted part of the petty kingdom of Thomond, or North Munster. Donald O'Brien was prince of this territory at the time of the English invasion, and at first united with Roderick O'Connor, whom he attended to the siege of Dublin in resisting the English. Being married however to a daughter of Dermot MacMurrough, he soon after consented to receive the assistance of his father-in-law's allies in carrying on a feud which had long subsisted between him and Donald, prince of Ossory, and on the arrival of King Henry II., A.D. 1172, he was among the first to tender his homage and receive an English garrison into his city. But he did not long continue loyal, and in 1176 it was found necessary to send Raymond le Gros with a large army to recover from him the city of Limerick, which he had wrested from its new occupiers. In the next year he got the city again into his hands on pretence of a peace, but again revolted, and his territory being thus fortified, King Henry bestowed all Limerick, excepting the city and the cantred adjoining, on the brothers and nephew of Richard, earl of Cornwall. But they, being unable to get possession, in a short time surrendered their unprofitable grant. The king then, A.D. 1179, bestowed it on Philip de Braosa, at a rent of sixty knight's fees. Braosa had no better fortune than the first grantees, and Donald continued in possession till his death in A.D. 1194. In 1195 King John renewed his father's grants to the De Braosa family, and bestowed a part of the reserved territory on William de Burg, to whom he committed the custody of the city. William de Braosa having fallen under the king's displeasure, and fled to Scotland, was attainted, and his lands again reverted to the crown. A portion of the forfeited lands, comprising the barony of Ownybeg, was then conferred on Theobald FitzWalter, the ancestor of the Ormonde family, and other portions on Hamo de Valois, William FitzAdelm de Burgho, and Thomas, son of Maurice Fitzgerald, the ancestor of the great family of Desmond. These new settlers brought in a colony of English, chiefly from Bristol and Chester, who took up their residence chiefly in the city and towns near the river. The growth of the family of Desmond has been referred to in preceding parts of this work. [CORK; KERRY.] Maurice Fitzgerald, earl of Desmond, in the beginning of the reign of Edward III., had become possessed of a great part of the counties of Limerick, Kerry, Cork, and Waterford, from which he derived a revenue of 10,000*l.* per annum, a vast income in those days. His pride and turbulence led to several invasions of his territory by the king's forces, and to his own imprisonment on two occasions. Thomas, another earl of Desmond, who lived in the reign of Edward IV., and whose unrestrained authority and Irish habits had led him into frequent collisions with the government, was attainted of treason at Drogheda, A.D. 1468, and there executed.

His son was however restored to the title and estates, which continued in this family until their final forfeiture by Gerald, the sixteenth earl, in 1586. [KERRY.] The estates of this unfortunate nobleman in the county of Limerick alone consisted of 96,165 acres, which were granted among the following twelve individuals: Sir Henry Billingsley, William Carter, Edward Mannering, William Trenchard, Sir George Bouchier, Sir George Thornton, Richard Fitton, Robert Annesley, Edward Barkley, Sir Henry Uthered, Sir William Courtenay, and Robert Strowde, most of which names are now extinct in the county. The war which ensued throughout Munster forms the subject of an interesting historical work entitled 'Pacata Hibernia,' attributed to Sir George Carew, afterwards earl of Totness, in which the reduction of the various strongholds of the insurgents in Limerick, including the castles of Loch Gur, Croom, Glin, &c., is minutely detailed. On the breaking out of the rebellion of 1641, the city of Limerick and all the chief castles of the county, with the exception of Loch Gur and Askeaton, which latter now belonged to the earl of Cork, fell an easy prey to the insurgents, in whose hands they for the most part continued until the capture of Limerick by the parliamentary forces under Ireton in 1651. The forfeitures which ensued embraced almost the entire county, and introduced a numerous new proprietary. The events which followed on the accession of King James II. are detailed under the head of the city of Limerick. The war of the Revolution terminated in further forfeitures comprising 14,188 acres, of a total estimated value of 61,470*l.* 10*s.* The families of Fitzgerald, Rice, Trant, and Brown were the principal sufferers. From this time until the latter end of the last century the county continued undisturbed. A spirit of insubordination among the peasantry, arising, it is said, from the severe exaction of rack-rents, broke out in insurrectionary acts in 1762, and again in 1786 and 1793. These at the time were suppressed, and many of the ringleaders executed. The rebellion of 1798 did not affect the county; but the spirit of agrarian disturbance still continued. In 1815, 1817, and finally in 1821-2, the peasantry rose in arms and committed the most atrocious outrages. After several conflicts with the king's troops, and the loss of much life on both sides, the insurrection was at length put down by the energy of the magistracy, assisted by a special commission. Great numbers of the offenders were executed or transported, and a failure of the crops in 1823, added to the rigour of summary justice, completely broke the spirit of the insurgents. The construction of new roads, by which the mountain districts were rendered accessible, in 1829, contributed materially to the permanence of the tranquillity so produced, and since that time Limerick has remained undisturbed and comparatively prosperous.

Limerick is among the richest of the Irish counties in antiquities. There are extensive Cyclopean remains on the hill of Knockfennell near Loch Gur. The fort on the western pinnacle of the hill is a circle of 360 feet in circumference, with a wall ten feet thick composed of massive blocks of dry stone. Walls of a similar construction extend on one side to a morass, and on the other to a smaller fort which occupies the eastern point of the hill. Other Cyclopean buildings are situated on a rocky height to the east of the lake. Military earthen works are numerous in all parts of the county. The largest raths are those at Bruree, Kilpeacon, Pallasgreen, and Kilfinnan. At Carrigeen near Croom are the remains of a round tower still fifty feet in height. For the first sixteen feet from the base it is composed of solid masonry. Another round tower at Ardpatrik in the south-east of the county was standing until recently. There was a third in the city of Limerick, of which there are now no remains. The ruins of religious houses are very numerous. Adare, Kilmallock, and Askeaton are peculiarly interesting from the number and extent of their ecclesiastical remains. The river Camigue alone has the ruins of seven religious houses on its banks. Manister-Nenagh, the most considerable of these, is the most extensive pile of monastic ruins in Munster. It was founded by O'Brien, king of Limerick, in A.D. 1148. The entire number of such foundations in the county was about thirty-five, chiefly erected by members of the house of Desmond. Of the castles of the early proprietors nearly one hundred still remain. Of these the most remarkable are Croom Castle on the Maigue, from which the Fitzgerald family take their motto of *Croom aboo*, and Shanet Castle near Shanagolden, from which the Desmond branch of the same house took their motto and war-cry of *Shanet aboo*. The walls of the latter are ten feet thick. Cappa Castle, near Askeaton, was another seat of the Fitzgeralds. Part of the keep, 100 feet high, is still standing. It is remarkable for the superior style in which it is built, the quoin-stones being polished. At Castle Connel are the ruins of a noble castle, once a seat of the O'Briens, which was dismantled by General Ginkle in 1691. Carrickagonnell Castle, another stronghold of the O'Briens, is boldly situated on a basaltic rock rising suddenly from the plain to a height of several hundred feet over the southern bank of the Shannon. It was blown up by General Scravenmore in the war of the Revolution; but, although 84 barrels of gunpowder were exploded under it, two of the towers are still tolerably perfect. There are several stone circles, and other supposed remains of Druidical worship throughout the county.

The county lies chiefly within the diocese of Limerick, and embraces small portions of the dioceses of Emly and Killaloe, from the returns under which articles a judgment may be formed of its educational statistics.

The amount of grand-jury assessment for the year 1835 was 32,088*l.* 5*s.* 3*d.*, of which 16,651*l.* 2*s.* 7*d.* was for public establishments, salaries, &c., and the remainder for the construction of roads, &c., and for the maintenance of the police.

(Fitzgerald and M'Gregor's *History of Limerick*, Dublin, 1826; *Transactions of the Geological Society*, v. 5; *Report of the Irish Railway Commissioners*, 1838; Cox's *History of Ireland*; *Parliamentary Reports and Papers*.)