

LIMERICK, a city and county of a city in the province of Munster in Ireland. The county of the city, exclusive of the site of the town, comprises an area of 16,468 Irish acres, equal to 26,650 statute acres, of which the north liberties, consisting of 1714 acres, lie north of the Shannon, on the county Clare side, and the south liberties, consisting of 14,754 acres, lie south of the river, encompassed by the county of Limerick. The city, which is chiefly built on the county Limerick side of the river and on an island, is situated in 52° 40' N. lat. and 8° 35' W. long., and is distant from Dublin 93 Irish or 118 statute miles. The population of the county of the city in 1831 was 66,554, of which number 44,100 were in the city and suburbs.

The island on which the old town of Limerick stands was probably selected as the site of a city from the circumstance of this being the first point at which the Shannon is fordable above its embouchure. The island, called King's Island, is about a statute mile in length, by from a quarter to half a mile in breadth, and lies nearly north and south, having the main stream of the Shannon, about 500 feet in width, on the western side, and a smaller branch, called the Abbey river, of an average breadth of 200 feet, on the east and south.

The antient city of Limerick is by some supposed to be the Regia of Ptolemy. It certainly was a place of some note in the fifth century when visited by Patrick. From that time until the arrival of the Danes little is known of its history. The Danes made their first attempt on Limerick in the year 812; and, although repeatedly baffled, succeeded about the middle of that century in getting possession of the place. They appear to have been an enterprising and trading people, and to them the first effectual fortification of the island of Limerick is attributed. Towards the close of the tenth century, they were reduced by the celebrated Brian Boromhe, and rendered tributary to the kings of Munster. The effectual introduction of English government did not take place till after the death of Donald O'Brien, who was their king at the time of the invasion by Henry II. of England. [LIMERICK, County.] The first provost under the new administration was appointed A.D. 1195. King John coming to Ireland in 1210, visited Limerick among other places, and caused Thomond Bridge, which up to the last year (1838) was still standing, to be erected over the Shannon. He also had the castle of Limerick built; and established a mint in the city, to which he granted large privileges by a charter of the 2nd year of his reign. Great numbers of English settlers now arrived, and the city continued to prosper until the invasion of Ireland by Edward Bruce, who burned the suburbs in 1314, and during the winter of 1316 made Limerick the rendezvous for his Irish allies. On the termination of this war the citizens obtained a grant of murage for the further strengthening of their fortifications. The suburb of Irishtown, which had now grown up on the southern bank of the Shannon, was partly walled in, and in 1495 its fortifications were completed by the erection of St. John's Gate. A tholsel, or town-house, was erected in 1449, and in 1500 a vaulted pier, which served both as a quay and a battery, was built. Throughout the disturbances caused by the rebellions of the earls of Desmond and the other turbulent Irish potentates in the reigns of Henry VII., Henry VIII., and Elizabeth, the citizens of Limerick remained strictly loyal.

At this time the town appears, from various maps remaining, to have been remarkably well built. In addition to King John's castle, commanding the bridge into Clare, there were twenty-four towers at the several angles of the wall which surrounded Englishtown, or that part of the city which was built on the island. Dromcore Castle, in the centre of Irishtown, consisted of twelve towers connected by high walls and surrounded by a fosse and outworks, and there were towers defending the several gates in the wall which encompassed this entire suburb. The separation of the county of the city from the surrounding country took place under the provisions of a charter granted by King James I., A.D. 1609. Early in the war which succeeded the Rebellion of 1641, Limerick was seized by the Roman Catholic party under Lords Muskerry and Ikerrin, and in 1643 they considerably strengthened the fortifications of Irishtown by the erection of towers and ramparts inside John's Gate. The supreme council of the Roman Catholics having removed hither in 1646, Limerick became the scene of various commotions and outrages produced by the bigotry of those who adhered to the extreme measures of the Nuncio Rinuncini. General Ireton, at the head of the parliamentary army, appeared before the city in April, 1651. The garrison was commanded by General O'Neil, whose defence of Clonmel had already gained him much reputation, and who fully sustained his character for skill and courage during a severe siege of nearly six months. On the surrender of the city, several leading persons of the Roman Catholic party, including the titular bishop of Emly and a friar Woulfe, who had been excepted out of the terms of capitulation, were executed. Tranquillity being restored by the re-establishment of English government, a considerable influx of Protestant settlers took place; but the accession of King James II., and the consequent discountenance of those of the Reformed faith in Ireland, deprived them of their influence in the city and caused great numbers to return to England. Immediately after the battle of the Boyne and the flight of James, King William advanced against Limerick, now strongly garrisoned by the flower of the Irish army, under the duke of Berwick and General Sarsfield. He arrived at Cahirconlish on the 7th August 1690, and, after some skirmishing, opened his fire on the citadel on the 9th. Sarsfield having intercepted and destroyed the heavy artillery which was on its way from

ranges of prison buildings, and having a fine Doric entrance in front. The whole has a fine architectural effect. The lunatic asylum, opened in 1821, for 150 patients, cost a total sum of 29,856*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.* It is a plain extensive collection of buildings, also on the radiating principle.

The port of Limerick is under the control of commissioners appointed by act of parliament in 1823. Their revenue averages 1500*l.* per annum, and they have obtained loans amounting to 55,384*l.* from government for the purpose of improving the river by the construction of floating docks. The plan adopted is from a design by the late Mr. Rhodes. It is intended to construct a weir across the river at Kelly's quay, with locks at each side, and a foot-bridge above. This would give a constant depth of from sixteen to eighteen feet in that part of the river extending from a little below Thomond bridge to the proposed dam. It is also proposed to deepen the river along its southern bank west of Wellesley bridge, and to convert the present irregular series of wharfs into one continuous line of quays. The estimated expense is 53,730*l.* 10*s.* The corporation are also at present engaged in rebuilding Thomond bridge, for which purpose they have procured a loan of 9000*l.* from the Board of Works. The estimate is 12,600*l.* Wellesley bridge above-mentioned was commenced in 1824, and cost 60,000*l.* It has five elliptical arches, each 70 feet in span, and a level roadway defended by an open balustrade. Baal's bridge has been recently taken down and replaced by a beautiful structure of a single arch. The Abbey river is also crossed by Park bridge, a little higher up.

Limerick is the head-quarters of the south-western military district, and, besides the barracks mentioned above, contains an artillery and infantry barrack in Irishtown; making, on the whole, accommodation for about 2000 men.

The trade of Limerick has increased with the growth of the city, though not in an equal degree. Being the natural outlet for the produce of a great part of the counties of Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, Cork, and Kerry, it has since the termination of the civil wars been, next to Cork, the chief seaport of Munster. In 1825 the exports consisted of 2654 tierces and 258 barrels of beef, 4417 tierces and 9100 barrels of pork, 19,750 cwt. of bacon, 65,000 firkins of butter, 61,000 barrels of wheat, 364,000 barrels of oats, and 12,500 barrels of barley. In 1835 there were exported of corn, meal, and flour 49,000 tons and 15 cwt., value 380,400*l.*; of provisions, 7705 tons and 15 cwt., value 337,200*l.*; of feathers 9 tons, value 900*l.*; of wine 850 gallons, value 470*l.*; of spirits 16,640 gallons, value 4200*l.*; of beer 5640 gallons, value 260*l.*; and of other commodities to the value of 3060*l.* making a total value of exports of 726,430*l.* In the same year the imports amounted to a total value of 323,740*l.*; of which the chief items were, for tobacco 71,400*l.*, sugars 36,800*l.*, fish 25,800*l.*, tea 24,200*l.*, iron 23,490*l.*, and coal 21,000*l.* Limerick has also an ex-

tensive and increasing export trade through the Shannon and Grand Canal by way of Dublin.

Return of goods carried from Limerick and shipped at Dublin for Liverpool:—

	Wheat.	Flour.	Oatmeal.	Butter.
In 1833	187 tons	520 tons	543 tons	4,998 firkins.
1834	1,218	1,750	1,192	10,097
1835	402	5,269	533	10,771
1836	289	7,158	1,156	12,796

The gross freight from Limerick to Dublin, for grain or flour, is 15*s.* per ton, and the total distance 133 miles. There is also a very brisk passenger traffic on the same line, as well as from Limerick downwards. The number of passengers conveyed to and from Limerick by the navigation above the city, in 1836, was 14,600. The number of passengers carried to and from Limerick by the navigation below the city, in the same year, was 23,851. It is estimated that the total quantity of agricultural and other produce carried by inland conveyances into Limerick, in the year 1837, amounted to 232,000 tons, of which 60,000 tons were for exportation, and that the total quantity of goods carried by inland conveyances from the city, in the same year, was 32,400 tons, including 15,000 tons of imported goods. On the 5th of January, 1836, the number of vessels registered as belonging to this port was 71, of an aggregate registered tonnage of 5008 tons. The number of vessels which entered inwards from all parts, in 1835, was 548, of an aggregate tonnage of 66,184 tons; the number of vessels which cleared outwards, in the same year, was 592, of an aggregate tonnage of 70,327 tons. The customs for the year 1835 amounted to 142,636*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*, and the excise duties for the same year to 71,616*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.*

In 1831 there were, in the county of the city of Limerick, 9 brewers, 6 glovers, 18 paper-makers, 22 tanners, 198 weavers, 3 woolcombers, 1 bleacher, 3 flax-dressers, and 18 shipwrights. About 500 females are occupied in the manufacture of lace and tambour-work. The glove-trade, which was formerly carried on extensively, has now declined: most of the goods sold as Limerick gloves are manufactured in Cork. There are one large distillery, seven breweries, and some small iron-foundries and cooperages. The first steam-engine erected in Limerick was put up in 1818. There are twelve engines now at work in the city, of an aggregate power of 206 horse-power. There are branches of the Bank of Ireland, provincial, national, and agricultural and commercial banks, established in Limerick.

The city has been lighted with gas since the year 1824. The supply of water is from elevated tanks, to which the water is raised from the river by steam-power. The chief fuel is turf, of which 60,000 tons are annually consumed. The annual import of coal and culm is nearly 30,000 tons, but of this about one-half is for country consumption. The streets are well paved, particularly in the new town.

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	4,900	..	..	..	..	..	..	40,000
1821	Under Act 55 Geo. III. c. 120	7,208	12,419	..	..	..	28,117	30,928	59,045
1831	Under Act 1 Will. IV. c. 19	7,820	11,953	2,798	4,057	5,098	30,414	36,140	66,554

In 1834 there were, in the parishes of St. Michael, St. Mary, St. John, St. Nicholas, and St. Munchin, which comprise the city, 37 day-schools, educating 1496 males and 1139 females. Of these one is a diocesan school for males, supported by contributions from the clergy of the diocese; four are parochial schools, supported by bequests and small payments; seven are free-schools, supported chiefly by private contributions; and two are in connection with the National Board of Education. The nuns of the Presentation Convent educate 320 females in their school, and a monastic society called the Christian Brothers educates 280 males. The nuns have a grant of 40*l.* per annum from the National Board. Besides the Brothers of the Christian Schools there are fraternities of Dominican, Augustinian, and Franciscan monks in the city, whose convents and chapels form prominent architectural objects.

Since 1834 several large schools have been opened. There is a library of 2000 volumes attached to the Limerick Institution, which was founded in 1809. There are four newspapers published in the city, the number of stamps issued to which, in 1835, was 242,533.

The charitable institutions, beside the free-schools, are the county hospital: the house of industry, founded in 1774; the fever and Lock hospital, said to be the first fever hospital established in the United Kingdom, founded by Lady Hartstonge in 1781; the lying-in hospital, opened in 1812; Hall's almshouses, founded by Dr. Jeremy Hall in the early part of the last century; the corporation almshouse, for reduced widows; the St. George's widows' asylum; Mrs. Villiers's almshouses, also for widows, erected in 1826; and several other minor charities.

The grand-jury presentments for the county of the city,

Cashel, prevented the construction of an effective battery until the 17th. A practicable breach having been effected between John's Gate and the Black Battery, on the 26th, the assault was made the following day.

The besiegers twice gained the counterscarp, and were twice driven back: at the third attempt a considerable body of troops forced their way into the town. One division of these was disorganized, and to a great extent destroyed, by the explosion of a mine under the Black Battery, which they had scaled. The other division was assailed with amazing fury by a mixed crowd of soldiers, citizens, and women, and was almost to a man exterminated. The besiegers, after a loss of 1700 men killed and wounded, were forced to return to their trenches; and on the 30th of August dismantled their batteries and retired towards Clonmel. In the early part of the next year Athlone was carried by the Protestant army, and the decisive victory at Aughrim soon after compelled St. Ruth, who commanded the Irish, to draw again towards Limerick as the last tenable position which was now left him in Ireland. On the 25th of August, 1691, General Ginkle invested the town on the south side of the river; and on the 30th opened his batteries. The fire against the English town was directed from a battery of ten field-pieces for hot shot on the left, another of twenty-five heavy battering cannon on the right, and eight mortars in the centre. A fort, which had been captured early in the siege, and another battery on the south-west, cannonaded the Irish town. On the 15th of September a force was detached by a pontoon-bridge across the Shannon, to cut off the communication with the county of Clare, which being effected, and the works of the besiegers everywhere pushed close to the walls, provisions failing, and the expected succours from France not having arrived, the garrison on the 23rd of September proposed an armistice. Negotiations were now opened, which terminated, on the 3rd of October, in the signature of the celebrated treaty of Limerick, by which it was agreed that in consideration of the surrender of the place the Roman Catholics should enjoy the same privileges which they had in the reign of Charles II. The garrison were allowed to march out with arms, baggage, and colours flying, and either to embark for France, or enter the king's service, at their option. Of 14,000 men so circumstanced, about 11,000 went on board the French fleet, which, two days after the execution of the treaty, arrived off the coast. These formed the nucleus of the Irish brigade, which was afterwards so celebrated on the Continent.

The city now began slowly to recover from the effects of these repeated disasters. In 1696 lamps were put up in the public streets at the expense of the mayor. In the following year the castle in the Irish town was thrown down, and a market-house erected on its site; and in 1717 the Abbey river was partly quayed in. About 1760, besides several new roads, a canal was commenced, by which the Shannon was rendered navigable to Killaloe. A sum of 19,500*l.* was granted towards this work by the Irish parliament, and in 1768 the works were committed to a company of undertakers, who subscribed a further sum of 10,000*l.* At the same time the old walls began to be taken down to make room for the increase of the city. The communication between English-town and Irishtown had hitherto been by one narrow bridge encumbered with a row of houses. In 1761 a commodious bridge was erected between English-town and the southern bank of the main river, close to the latter. The new custom-house was next built on the south side of the main river, near the new bridge. In 1766 a further portion of the south side of the Abbey river was quayed in. In 1796 the buildings of the Irish town began to extend along the southern bank of the main river, on an open elevated plot of ground called South Prior's Land, or Newtown-Pery. This division now constitutes the best part of Limerick, and is justly considered one of the most elegant towns in Ireland.

The corporation is governed by several acts and charters, but chiefly by act of 4 Geo. IV., c. 126. The governing body consists of the mayor, two sheriffs, and an indefinite number of aldermen and burgesses elected by the common-council. The freedom is acquired by birth, marriage, apprenticeship, and the election of the common-council. The recorder is elected annually by the same body. The acts of the council are controlled by the freemen's court of D'Oyer Hundred, which is held four times a year. The president of this court is the common speaker, who is elected every two

years by the freemen. The criminal jurisdiction of the corporate authorities includes all offences, and is exclusive, the city being a county in itself. The civil jurisdiction of the recorder's court extends to all personal actions to an unlimited amount. The revenue of the corporation, arising chiefly from tolls, amounted in 1833 to 441*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*, but is variable. Their annual average expenditure, exclusive of payments in reduction of debt, is 3000*l.*

Prior to the Union Limerick was represented in the Irish parliament by two members; the representation was then limited to one; but recently, by act 2 Wm. IV., c. 88, the old representation has been restored. By this act the franchise is extended to householders and leaseholders, and the non-resident freemen are disfranchised. In 1837 the number of electors was 3186, of whom 280 were freemen. The assizes for the county of the city are held twice a year before the mayor and the going judges. The assistant barrister for the county sits twice a year for the trial of civil bills. The recorder's court and the court of conscience sit once a week, and there are also petty sessions twice a week. The police force of the city is included in that of the county. In 1826 there were committed to the city gaol of Limerick 981 males and 291 females charged with criminal offences. Of these 532 males and 41 females could read and write at the time of their committal, 60 males and 31 females could read only, and 389 males and 219 females could neither read nor write.

Newtown-Pery now forms by much the most important portion of the city. English-town has been deserted by the wealthier classes, and is daily decaying; and Irishtown, although better built and inhabited, wants the frontage to the main river, which gives the new town its great advantages. There is a considerable suburb on the county Clare side, round the old castle of Thomond, which defended that end of King John's bridge. The streets of English-town are narrow and irregular, but it still contains several important buildings. St. Mary's cathedral occupies an open space about the centre of this division of the city. It is a venerable cruciform structure, measuring 156 feet by 114, and has a square embattled tower 120 feet high. St. Munchin's church, supposed to have been the former cathedral, is situated on an elevated open plot in the north of English-town, overlooking the Shannon. The Exchange was built in 1778, and has a commodious hall and handsome portico. The city court-house stands near the Abbey river; the county court-house, which stands towards the main stream of the Shannon on the west, is a very handsome building, and was erected in 1808 at a cost of 12,000*l.* It is quadrangular, built of hewn stone, and has a fine portico of four Roman Doric columns. The castle-barrack, constructed within the remains of King John's castle, at the eastern end of Thomond bridge, consists of three sides of a square, and has accommodation for 400 men. The chief public buildings of Irishtown are the corn and butter markets, and the linen-hall and the fever-hospital. At the southern extremity of the new bridge which leads from English-town into Newtown-Pery, facing the main river, is the new custom-house, a handsome structure, built in 1769, at a cost of 8000*l.* The Chamber of Commerce was erected in 1805. East of the new bridge, on Charlotte quay, is the assembly-house, built in 1770, at a cost of 4000*l.* It has recently been converted into a theatre. West of the new bridge from the area in front of the custom-house the quays extend round a basin included between the confluence of the Abbey river with the main stream of the Shannon and Wellesley bridge, which unites the new town with the opposite or Clare side of the river. The passage for vessels is by a lateral cut at the south end of the bridge, and west of Wellesley bridge the quays project irregularly into the river for a distance of about three-quarters of a mile, terminating at Kelly's quay, beside the gas-works, which bound the new town in that direction. Back from this line of quays the new town extends in a series of wide and elegant streets, crossing each other at right angles to the confines of Irishtown on one side, and to the new barracks, which occupy an elevated site above the gas-works, at the other. A handsome square has recently been built at the southern extremity of Harrington-street; and between George's-street and the Military Walk is an elegant crescent. In the southern suburbs of the town are the new county gaol and lunatic asylum. The former was erected in 1821, at a cost of 25,000*l.* It consists of a central polygonal tower, 60 feet high, surrounded by five diverging

for the year 1835, amounted to 6311*l.* 16*s.* 4*d.*, of which 3894*l.* 9*s.* 11*d.* was for buildings, salaries, &c., 525*l.* 10*s.* 4*d.* for police, and the remainder for roads, bridges, and the repayment of government loans. The parish of St. Michael, which comprises the entire new town, is exempt from grand jury assessment. Its proportion of the general taxation is levied under the 47th and 51st of George III. The weight of taxation falls chiefly on the agricultural districts.

(Fitzgerald and Macgregor's *History of Limerick*, Dublin, 1826; Cox's *History of Ireland; Parliamentary Reports and Papers.*)