

New Zealand Tablet



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LIMERICK.

"But when they point to our fair Isle,
And say, no patriot hearts have we—
That party stains the work defile—
My country, then I blush for thee!
But Hope says, blush or tear shall never
Sully approving Fame's decree;
When Freedom's word her bonds shall sever,
My country, then I'll joy for thee!"—*Gerald Griffin.*

N commercial importance Limerick is considered the fourth city of Ireland; but for the beauty of its situation and the glories of its history, it may rank among the first. The old city, situated on an island formed by the River Shannon, in one of the circuits of its course oceanwards, has many antiquities of deep interest to the patriotic tourist. The fine old castle that bore the brunt of Ireton's, William's, and his Dutch general's bombardments, still stands entire, casting from its lofty, time-worn walls dark shadows on the Shannon, flowing deep and strong beneath. This unconquered Irish fortress is now garrisoned by a

been removed. It is now a Protestant place of worship;—its grand old walls, undecayed and unrenewed, a few tombs with barely legible inscriptions, alone bearing witness of the past.

"The creedless, heartless robber came,
And never since that time,
Round thy torn altars burned the sacred flame
Or rose the chant sublime.
Thy glory in a crimson tide went down
Beneath the cloven hoof—
Altar and priest, mitre and cope and crown."

The sieges sustained by Limerick are of high historic renown. William had crossed the Boyne. No captured standard, baggage, or prisoners proved his victory; but James had fled, and his troops had retreated. Athlone, under the brave veteran Colonel Grace, had proved impregnable to the attacks of Douglas, so William resolved himself to effect the capture of Limerick.

Confident of success, thither he advanced; and his security waxed stronger when he surveyed the outworks of defence, "an old wall, flanked with a few tottering towers." Sarsfield's fame had gone forth; but "good generalship, conceived the Dutch-English king, can effect little without munitions of war." How-



detachment of English soldiers. The parts of the town adjoining are thickly populated. The houses, occupied of yore by the nobility, and now hourly threatening to fall in ruins on the poor, squalid inhabitants of the tenements into which they are let out, form narrow, irregular streets; the saddening air of decay hanging over them, suiting well the memories they awaken. St. Mary's Cathedral, where patriot priests prayed and sacrificed while Saxons besieged and Sarsfield defended, no longer invites, with silver chimes, hearts, true to the old faith, to come and adore. Vandal hands have renovated it; nearly all the relics of the past have

ever, his mind changed somewhat after the first fire of the Limerick gunners: he had not foreseen the fate of his new siege train, blown to pieces by Sarsfield before it could reach him from Waterford; he did not know the Limerick women, nor had he heard their rebellion against the order to retire with the children to the Clare suburb, nor their vehement declaration to fight for faith and country by the side of their fathers and brothers, or he would have been less surprised to be obliged to reckon them among the most formidable of his adversaries; discovering it to his cost when, as the Williamite chaplain relates, they rushed to the breach,