

copy, now in the City Library, Roche wrote the words: "Presented to the Literary Institution of Limerick by the author, in respectful homage to the city, which he has ever held it an honour and a happiness to own as that of his birth, and, to the ample list of whose citizens entitled to enduring recollection for their devotion to science and literature, he indulges a fond and, he trusts, not too presumptuous hope, may be associated the name of James Roche. Cork. November 23, 1850."

Roche was married to Ann Moylan of Cork, by whom he had two daughters. He died in Cork on April 1st, 1853, aged eighty-two. His brother, William Roche, was member of Parliament for Limerick for many years.

McNAMARA RUSSELL

Thomas MacNamara Russell, Admiral in the British Navy, was the son of an Englishman who settled in County Clare and married the daughter and co-heiress of Sheedy MacNamara, of Ballyalla. He was born about the year 1740, and inherited a large fortune at the age of five, when his father died. But by the time he had reached the age of 14, the fortune had been completely dissipated by the trustees.

He served for seven years in the Merchant Service before joining the Royal Navy as an able seaman. There can be no doubt, therefore, about Russell's starting at the bottom rung of the ladder, and from this he advanced by the gradual steps of midshipman and mate to that of Lieutenant, gained in the year 1776. He then went to the North American Coastal Service and having distinguished himself at the relief of Jersey and the capture of Charleston, he was given command of his first ship, "The Hussar" of twenty guns.

He captured several enemy ships during the American War of Independence, including the French "Sybelle," whose Captain tried to capture Russell's ship by treacherously hoisting the English flag over the French one, a sign that he was surrendering. When Russell closed with the French ship, the French sailors tried to take "The Hussar" by boarding her, but a full broadside from the English boat foiled the effort and left "The Sybelle" practically a total wreck. Russell broke the French captain's sword and reported his conduct but, as peace was being negotiated at the time, the matter was hushed up. The French captain continued to proclaim his innocence and asked Russell for satisfaction, but when the latter set out for France to meet the Frenchman—the only satisfaction recognised among gentlemen in those days—in a duel, the latter fled to Spain.

Mayors file.

46

After the peace with France, Russell went to the West Indies and commanded "The Vengeance," a large ship of 74 guns, at the sieges of Santa Lucia and Trinidad. In 1805, he was promoted to be Vice-Admiral, and in 1807, made Commander-in-Chief of the North Sea Fleet. Having taken part in the war against Denmark, during which he captured the Danish colony of Heligoland, he was promoted to be Admiral on 12th August, 1812.

In 1793, he married a Miss Phillips but had no children. He died suddenly while travelling in his carriage in the south of England on 22nd July, 1824.

EDMOND SEXTON.

Edmond Sexton, ancestor of the Sexton-Perys, was Mayor of Limerick in the year 1535. He came of the family so long prominent in the civic affairs of Limerick which many times provided members for Limerick's most important civic office. He was born in the city, but when still young was sent to the English Court and became sewer in the King's Chamber. Hence he became the friend and confidant of Henry VIII, and at the dissolution of the Monasteries, the land and property of two Limerick houses, Holy Cross and St. Francis's Abbey, were granted to him.

According to the Arthur manuscript, Sexton, during his Mayoralty, discovered a plot by Lord Leonard Grey to slaughter the citizens and, with great bravery, foiled it. He was arraigned before the Council of Ireland for high treason, and it seems that the very citizens whom he saved were his chief accusers there. One of the charges read: "That he is an Irishman of blode, and useth himself according to his nature so as in respect of his Irish blode and corrupt affection to traytours, they saye they doe not trust him." However, the charge against Sexton was dismissed, and as a proof of loyal favour he was granted the property of St. Mary's Priory in the year 1539.

Sexton worked hard in Henry VIII's interests, and acted as envoy between the latter and Sir John of Desmond, the O'Briens and many other Irish chieftains. He fought at the taking of the castles of Knockgrafton, Dungarvan, Carrigounnell, etc. He slew O'Connor Sligo, the rebel who threatened to burn Limerick. He burned the "towne and castle in the island of Ellanrighane, etc., etc. He was as active and successful as a soldier as he was astute as a diplomat. He was also a keen business-man, and converted the gardens of the confiscated Franciscan Abbey in Limerick into a tanyard, an industry which continued there until the 19th century."

45

To add to all these qualities, Sexton was, in addition, an author—though of what merit we cannot now say, for his manuscripts are all lost. At the command of Henry he wrote a book "for the reformation of these parts," and among his papers was a list of all the castles, lands, rivers, creeks, etc., on each side of the Shannon to the sea. In it he states that the merchants of Limerick lived at Scatterry, and had castles and store-houses there. He also mentions that there was still an image of Saint Senan held in veneration on the island, and a great old church wherein woman never went since the time of St. Senan. Another of his manuscripts, containing a list of Mayors of Limerick has been used by Ferrar and Lenihan, the Limerick historians.

There is no record of the death or burial of this once active Mayor of Limerick.

SIR MICHAEL SEYMOUR.

Sir Michael Seymour, Admiral, was the third son of the Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, already noted in this series, by his wife, Jane Hawker. He was born on 5th December, 1802, and entered the British Navy on board the Hannibal, with his father, at the age of eleven. However, the Hannibal was paid off in the following year, and as his father retired for a few years' rest, Seymour was sent to the Naval College at Portsmouth.

After two years here he returned to the Navy, and having served with the Mediterranean Fleet, he was promoted Lieutenant in 1822 and saw service under Sir Samuel Brooke at Algiers. Two years later he got his first command, the Brig, Chameleon, in the English Channel, and the following year he was posted to South America.

When his father was given command of the latter station in 1832, Seymour joined him as Captain of the Challenger, which was wrecked by an abnormal current on the return journey to England. Seymour was court-martialled, but instead of being punished he was completely exonerated and highly praised for his gallant conduct after the wreck. For a time after this he served as Flag-Captain to Sir John Ommaney and Sir Francis Austen, and in 1849 he was commissioned to visit France and report on all the dockyards, arsenals, etc., there.

It was in 1854 he was appointed Rear-Admiral and Second in Command of the Baltic Fleet, and shortly afterwards lost the sight of one eye when a sea-mine, which he was examining, exploded in his face.

In 1856 he took command of the Chinese Station and was highly successful both in his negotiations and his naval actions against the rebelling Chinese. In the words of his authorities, this can be attributed to his calm foresight and careful attention to the minutest details. Shortly after his return to England he was rewarded with a G.C.B., and was promoted Admiral.

In 1829 he married Dorothea, the daughter of Sir William Knighton, and had two daughters. He entered Parliament for Devonport in 1859 and resigned his seat again in 1863, preferring the hazardous life on the ocean to the dirty sea of politics he found himself involved in. From then until his death he was commander-in-chief at Portsmouth, Britain's most important naval port.

He retired from active service in 1870 and died on 23rd February, 1870. His portrait has been painted by A. de Salome and from it an engraving was made by F. Holl the elder.

MICHAEL HOBART SEYMOUR.

Michael Hobart Seymour, controversialist, was the sixth son of the Reverend John Crossley Seymour, Vicar of Caherelly, by his wife Catherine Wight, daughter of the Reverend Edward Wight, Rector of Meelick, both parishes being close to Limerick City. He was born on 29th September, 1880. Aaron Crossley Seymour, the hymn-writer, was his brother, and the British Admiral, Sir Michael Seymour, was his first cousin. He claimed to be in direct descent from Jane Seymour's brother.

Seymour was educated at Trinity College, where he graduated B.A. in 1823 and M.A. in 1832, afterwards proceeding to Oxford to continue his studies. In the meantime he had been ordained and acted as Minister in the Church of Ireland for several years as well as being secretary to the Irish Protestant Association. However, he was so bigoted an anti-Catholic that he became extremely unpopular in Ireland and had to flee to England. Here he acted for ten years as Secretary to the Reformation Society, and was an extremely popular preacher and public lecturer—mainly on Anti-Catholic questions.

In 1844 he set out with his wife on an unbeliever's pilgrimage to Rome, and then began the first of his written attacks on the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. These appeared in two volumes in 1848 and 1849 under the titles "A Pilgrimage to Rome," and "Mornings Among the Jesuits at Rome." Seymour's rhetorical style made his books very popular among the bigots and they ran into many editions. However, the saner Protestant critics belittled his flamboyant phraseology and accused him of dishonesty in argument and inaccuracy in his facts. Seymour was undeterred and followed up his doubtful