

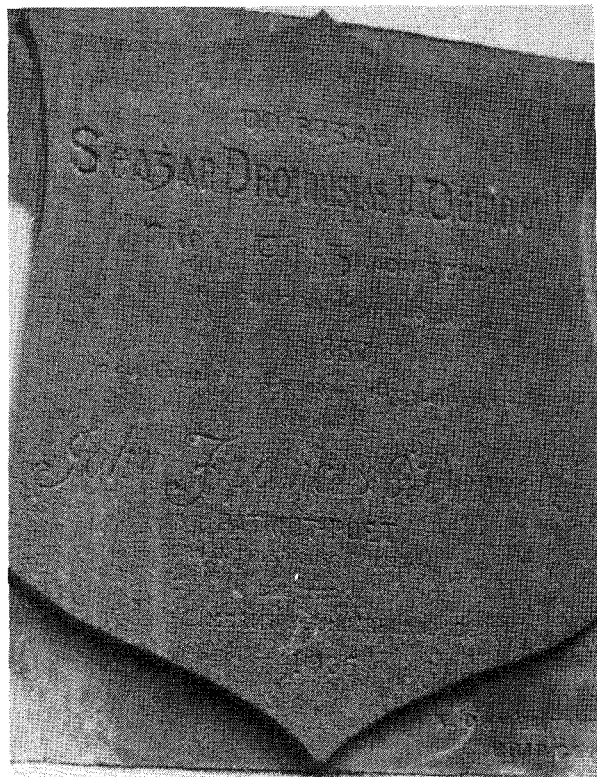
on the ramp

Cheerily rings the boatman's song
 Across the dark-brown water;
 His mast is slant, his sail is strong,
 His hold is red with slaughter—
 With beeves that cropped the field of Glynn,
 And sheep that pricked their meadows,
 Until the sunset-cry trooped in
 The cattle from the shadows.
 He holds the foam-washed tiller loose,
 And hums a country ditty;
 For, under clouds of gold turned puce,
 Gleam harbour, mole, and city.
 O town of manhood! maidenhood!
 By thee the Shannon flashes—
 There Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
 To blossom into ashes.

St. Mary's, in the evening air,
 Springs up austere and olden;
 Two sides its steeple gray and bare,
 Two sides with sunset golden.
 The bells roll out, the bells roll back,
 For lusty knaves are ringing;
 Deep in the chancel, red and black.
 The white-robed boys are singing.
 The sexton loiters by the gate
 With eyes more blue than hyssop,



John Francis O'Donnell



The O'Donnell plaque, at Griffin's, Lower Gerald Griffin Street.

A black-green skull-cap on his pate,
 And all his mouth a-gossip—
 This is the town beside the flood—
 The walls the Shannon washes—
 Where Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
 To blossom into ashes.

The streets are quaint, red-bricked, antique,
 The topmost storeys curving,
 With, here and there, a slated leak,
 Through which the light falls swerving.
 The angry sudden light falls down
 On path and middle parquet,
 On shapes weird as the ancient town,
 And faces fresh for market.
 They shout, they chatter, disappear,
 Like imps that shake the valance
 At midnight, when the clock ticks queer,
 And time has lost its balance,
 This is the town beside the flood
 Which past its bastions dashes,
 Where Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
 To blossom into ashes.

ART: Limerick

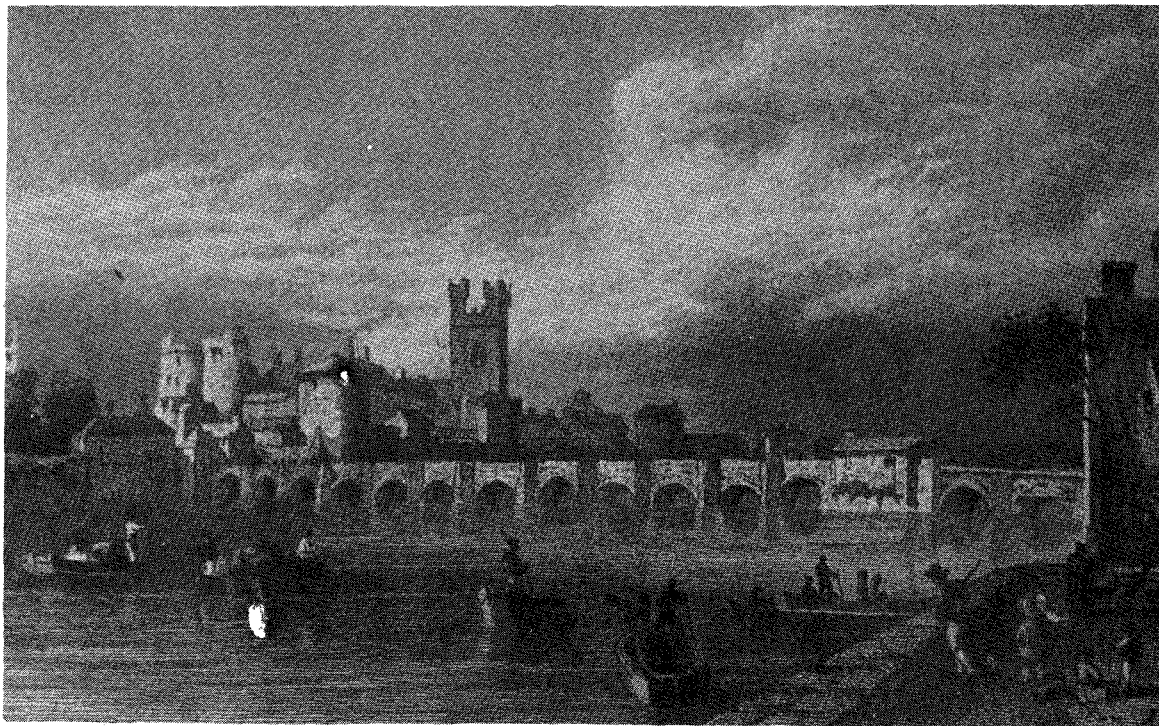
John Francis O'Donnell

Oh, how they talk, brown country folk,
Their chatter many-mooded,
With eyes that laugh for equivoque,
And heads in kerchiefs snooded!
Such jests, such jokes, whose plastic mirth
But Heine could determine—
The portents of the latest birth,
The point of Sunday's sermon,
The late rains and the previous drouth,
How oats were growing stunted,
How keels fetched higher prices South,
And Captain Watson hunted.
This is the town beside the flood
Whose waves with memories flashes,
Where Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
To blossom into ashes.

How thick with life the Irish town!
Dear gay and battered portress,
That laid all save her honour down,
To save the fire-ringed fortress.
Here Sa' sfield stood, here lowered the flag
That symbolised the people—
A riddled rag, a bloody rag,
Plucked from St. Mary's steeple.

Thick are the walls the women lined
With courage worthy Roman,
When, armed with hate sublime, if blind,
They scourged the headlong foeman.
This is the town beside the flood
That round its ramparts flashes,
Where Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
To blossom into ashes.

This part is mine: to live divorced
Where foul November gathers,
With other sons of thine dispersed,
Brave city of my fathers—
To gaze on rivers not mine own,
And nurse a wasting longing,
Where Babylon, with trumpets blown,
To hear distinctly, if afar,
The voices of thy people—
To hear through crepitating jar
The sweet bells of thy steeple—
To love the town, the hill, the wood,
The Shannon's stormful flashes,
Where Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
To blossom into ashes.



Old Thomond Bridge