

MUNCHIN (ST):

A parish, partly in the barony of Bunratty, county of Clare, but chiefly in the North Liberties of the city of Limerick, on the River Shannon, and immediately adjoining the city; containing 3883 inhabitants. This parish, which is divided into two parts by the intervening parishes of St. Nicholas and Killeely, comprises 3633 statute acres of arable and pasture land, exclusively of about 640 acres of waste and bog; excellent building stone is found within its limits. That portion of the city which stands on King's Island is chiefly in this parish, and is connected with the North Liberties by the ancient bridge of Thomond, now about to be taken down and rebuilt by the Board of Public Works. The seats are Castle Park, the residence of C. Delmege, Esq.; Ballygrennan, of Richard Smyth, Esq.; and Clonmacken, the property of the Marquess of Lansdowne, at present unoccupied. It is in contemplation to erect several respectable residences at Kilrush, in the North Liberties, in consequence of the facility of communication with the city recently afforded by the erection of Wellesley Bridge. The living is a rectory and vicarage, in the diocese of Limerick, united to the rectory and vicarage of Killelonehan and the rectory of Drehidarsna, together constituting the corps of the prebend of St. Munchin in the cathedral of Limerick, and in the gift of the bishop: the tithes amount to £276.18.6 ½., and the gross value of the prebend is £455.13.8. There is a glebe-house, with a glebe of 5 acres, but the former has been condemned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The church stands near Thomond Bridge, on the southern bank of the Shannon: it was erected in 1827, nearly on the site of the ancient edifice, which is said to have been built so early as the year 561, and to have been once the cathedral of the diocese. Tradition states that it was burnt by the Danes, in apparent confirmation of which a stratum of ashes was found on removing the foundation in 1827. The present church is a neat structure with a square tower surmounted by pinnacles, erected at an expense of about £1400, of which £900 was a loan from the late Board of First Fruits, and the remainder was defrayed by subscription. A fine view of the Shannon is obtained from the church-yard. In the R.C. divisions the parish is partly in the union or district of Thomond Gate, comprising also parts of St. Nicholas and Killeely, and containing the chapel of St. Lelia near Thomond Gate, a substantial and spacious building, erected in 1798; and a small chapel at Woodthorpe: the remainder of St. Munchin's parish is in the Limerick district. On King's Island are the remains of an ancient Dominican Friary, near which a nunnery has been established: attached is a large school for girls, who are gratuitously instructed by the ladies of the convent. Near the church is a range of alms-houses and schools, endowed by Mrs. Hannah Villiers, and erected by her trustees in 1826. The building, which is in the Elizabethan style, consists of a centre and two projecting wings, the former being surmounted by a cupola: it contains apartments for 12 poor widows, each of whom receives £30, and the mistress £25, per annum. Under a recent decree in chancery the trustees are about to establish a Protestant female orphan school, for the maintenance and education of 20 poor children. Near the north end of Thomond bridge is an ancient stone on which it is said the Treaty of Limerick was signed: it is still called the 'treaty stone'. The church-yard is supposed to have been the burial-place of St. Munchin, the first Bishop of Limerick; the church contains a monument to Bishop Smyth, who lived, died, and was buried in this parish, and it is the burial-place of the family of Smyth, ennobled in the person of the present Lord Gort.

