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COMMUNICATIONS, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

THE following sketch of a little excursion from Belfast to Derry, is perhaps too trifling to offer for insertion in the Belfast Magazine; but if any of your readers derive the smallest amusement from the perusal, I shall think my time has not been mispent, in copying the hasty and unconnected remarks which occurred after my return home.

THE improvements and planting on the road from Belfast to Carrickfergus, have so frequently afforded themes for admiration, that I may be considered deficient in taste, if I venture to object to them. The planting is too formal, and too frequently placed so as to exclude the houses from a view of the sea, to accord with my ideas of elegance in ornamental improvements. I was much amused at the whimsical affectation of taste, displayed by some gentlemen in colouring the outside of their houses, and by others in placing the front of their houses so near the road, that the inhabitants are compelled to "breathe clouds of dust, and call it country air," instead of enjoying the salubrity of the sea breeze, and of contemplating the ever-pleasing prospect of the sea. The view of the County Down across Belfast lough is very fine, when the tide covers the mud-banks. Cave-hill is also a very fine picturesque object. I felt great pleasure

in observing a house which was lately built for the education of the poor, near the little village of Whitehouse.

Carrickfergus is a very ancient looking town; the repairs made on the old Castle have given it a very singular appearance, as in some parts it looks nearly new, and in others, as if it were fast going to decay. At Carrickfergus I had the pleasure of seeing a number of poor children returning home from school, but I do not know whether they were taught according to the Lancasterian, or to the old mode of education.

After leaving Carrickfergus, we lost sight of the sea, until we came within view of Island Magee. The scenery, on approaching the town of Larne, is very fine. I did not much admire Larne; the streets are very narrow, and many of the people seemed, for want of better employment, to entertain themselves with staring at our party, very much to our annoyance.

The scenery along the coast, from Larne to Glenarm, increases every mile in grandeur and sublimity. We preferred walking up a mountain, over which we had to pass, before we reached Glenarm, and after viewing with high delight "the ocean scene sublime," and a distant view of Scotland on one side of the road, and fine mountain scenery on the other, I was beginning to feel a little fatigued, when we began to descend the mountain, and on a sud-

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den turning in the road, the town of Glenarm, situated on an arm of the sea, in a glen between two mountains, came suddenly to view; I forgot my fatigue in admiring the fine prospect which was in view. The sun, which was partially hid by a cloud, while it shone in full splendour on Glenarm, made the mountains around appear darker, and increased the beauty of the landscape. The contrast between the side of the mountain which we had just ascended, and the side which we were descending, was very striking: I have seldom felt more pleasure in contemplating any scenery, than I did on looking at Glenarm from the top of the mountain. When we arrived at the town, I found my imagination had pictured it as much more romantically situated than it was in reality.

We took a short walk in Glenarm park, and saw a little of the inside of the Castle; the fine old oak staircase, and the ruinous condition of part of the house, but ill accorded with the fashionable furniture in the drawing-room; it reminded me of Miss Owenson's description, in the *Wild Irish Girl*, of the incongruous furniture in the Castle of Inishmore.

After leaving Glenarm, the scenery along the coast increases in wild sublimity. The mountains are lofty, rugged, and precipitous; and the contrast between the brilliancy of a small species of rose, heath, and other mountain plants, which were in full bloom, and the grey rocks, which were frequently without the smallest appearance of vegetation, was very fine. The views along the road from Carnalloch to Garraun-point are exceedingly grand and interesting; I was almost constantly reminded of Penmaenur in Wales. I viewed with enthusiasm and delight, the

“ Dim distant isles in ambient ether seen,
And stormy peaks, and deep-retiring bays,
Foam-crested breakers, and the scanty green
Streak'd by the transient sun's swift glancing ray;”

while, at the same time, I felt that

.....“ 'mid crags and mountains drear

“ Great nature rules, and claims with brow austere,
The shudd'ring homage of the inmost soul.”

At Redbay we saw three caves on the sea shore, which extend to a considerable distance under a hill; one of the caves was occupied by a blacksmith as a work-shop; another by a poor family, who, I thought, would suffer from want of air, and a chimney, if, unfortunately, the habits of many of the poorer classes of people had not made them dislike ventilation, and accustomed them to live in dirt and darkness. But perhaps living even in this wretched condition may contribute to their comfort, as every person, according to his situation in life, forms different ideas of comfort.

The third cave is too damp to be inhabited; we were told of much larger caves at Red-bay castle, and at Cushendon, but we did not visit them.

Cushindall is a very small town; it is now generally called Newtown-glens: I prefer the former name, as I have a kind of prejudice or prepossession in favour of old Irish names.

From Cushendall to Ballycastle, the road was mostly over a dreary mountain. Near the top of this mountain, I was highly delighted with a specimen of true hospitality, and kindness of heart: on entering a miserable-looking cabin, to request a drink of water, a very poor old woman regretted, in terms of sincerity and kindness, not having milk to offer instead of water; she entreated us, al-

ways to call with her when we went over the mountain.*

As we approached Ballycastle, we had a fine view of the sea, and of the Island of Rathlin. The town of Ballycastle is prettily situated; the view from the sea-shore, which is at a little distance from the principal part of the town, is very fine. The sea dashes against the beach with great force, and a distant view of the island of Rathlin, and of the promontory of Fairhead, affords objects which are always highly interesting.

I cannot describe the impression made on me, by visiting the promontory of Fairhead; the stupendous and perpendicular pillars, rising 400 feet above the level of the sea,

* Instead of dwelling on the dark shades in the human character, how much better is it to "praise where we can?" Instances of true kindness are frequently found in our intercourse with the world. Mungo Park, in his Travels in Africa, eloquently says, "It is impossible for me to forget the disinterested charity, and tender solicitude, with which many of the poor Africans sympathized with me in my sufferings, relieved my distresses, and contributed to my safety. This acknowledgement, however, is more particularly due to the female part of the nation; among the men, my reception, though generally kind, was sometimes otherwise; it varied according to the various tempers of those to whom I made application; the hardness of avarice in some, and the blindness of bigotry in others, had closed up the avenues to compassion; but in all my wanderings and wretchedness, I found women uniformly kind and compassionate, and I can truly say, as my predecessor Mr. Ledyard said before me, 'To a woman I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. If I was hungry, or thirsty, wet or sick, they did not hesitate, like men, to perform a generous action. In so free, and so kind a manner, did they contribute to my relief, that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest draught, and if hungry, I eat the coarsest morsel with a double relish.'"

presented a grand and sublime sight every other object in view, even the ocean which "wildly roll'd skirted with foam," appeared insignificant.

On our road from Ballycastle to the Giant's Causeway, we went to see Carrick-a-rede bridge; the fishermen go across this bridge of ropes very expertly, but the swinging of the bridge, on walking over it, makes it very dangerous to persons unaccustomed to it. I did not see the bridge and the precipice beneath it, in all their terrific grandeur, as a slight rain made the descent through the fields so slippery, as to prevent me from going very near them.

When we arrived at the Causeway, the rain had ceased, and the plants with which the rocks near the path leading to the Causeway were mostly covered, looked so refreshed and so green, and our party were all so willing to admire the scenery around, that we approached the Causeway with very highly raised expectations of the gratification we should receive from beholding that great natural curiosity: nor were we disappointed in our expectations. The Causeway, extending from the foot of a promontory, to a considerable distance into the sea, and composed of perpendicular pillars of basalt, standing close to each other, was an object which inspired feelings of admiration and astonishment.

The pillars are separable at unequal distances, into convex and concave joints; there is seldom any space between these pillars, but I observed, in a very few places, that a space would have occurred, if a stone, in the form of a wedge, and which is also separable into joints, had not been interposed between the pillars.

The basalt pillars at the Causeway and at Fair-head are extremely different; at the former place they

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frequently appear without joints, and often exceed four feet in breadth; at the Causeway, they are about a foot and half, or two feet broad. The basalt pillars, and the whin-dykes, are not confined to the sea-coast, or to the Causeway, as we frequently saw them at the sides of hills, and different places, at a distance from the sea.

The promontory of Pleaskin forms a fine contrast to Fairhead. Nature seems in one place to exhibit her power on the great and majestic scale, and in the other on the diminutive and romantic. Fairhead is bold, magnificent and sublime; Pleaskin, picturesque and beautiful. While we were admiring Pleaskin, the sun, which was shining in full splendour, made the contrast between the dark basalt pillars, and the red clay between the pillars and the rocks, even more picturesque. Near Pleaskin we saw eight or nine women going down a frightful descent to the shore, to gather sea-weed, to manufacture into kelp: one of the women had a little child on her back, but she did not seem to be alarmed lest it should fall; she, and her companions, bounded from rock to rock with the greatest quickness, talking and laughing all the time.

Returning from Pleaskin, we took another view of the Causeway, and climbed over some large rocks to get a view of the inside of a cave on the sea-shore; we then proceeded to Dunluce Castle.

"That proud pile, which rears its hoary
head
"In ruin vast, in silence dread,"

is situated on a rock which projects into the sea. The only entrance to the Castle which now remains, is by a side wall of a bridge. The deep precipice on each side of the side-wall, appears very terrific; I found much advantage in not look-

ing down the precipice, until I had got to the other side. We did not find much to repay us for the trouble of going to the Castle, except a fine view of some lime-stone rocks, from two windows which overlook the sea. The unsparing miner, Time, has not been inactive at Dunluce Castle, as the walls are, in many places, fallen to ruin. We were shown a room built in the wall, which our guide informed us, was always kept clean by the ghost of an old woman called Mave Roe; whether it was owing to my unbelief on this subject, or that I did not stoop low enough in going out of the room, I hit my head such a severe blow, that I had cause to remember Mave Roe for many hours after I left Dunluce Castle.

From Dunluce we proceeded to Colerain, mostly by the sea-shore, as far as the little village of Portrush. Colerain is a neat looking town. The planting along the river Bann contributes very much to beautify the scenery around Colerain. After seeing the salmon-fishery, we recommenced our journey to Derry, by way of Down-hill, the residence of Sir Henry Harvey Bruce. We looked at his large collection of paintings, mostly brought from Italy, by the late Bishop of Derry; some of them are extremely fine, but they did not please my taste;

"To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art."

My attention was particularly arrested by one picture: an *old man* is represented as attempting, with great force, to divide two clouds; at first view, I thought of the picture in the beginning of Campbell's beautiful poem, the Pleasures of Hope, where

"Andes, giant of the western star,"
is represented as looking "from his

throne of clouds o'er half the world;" but, to my great astonishment, I was informed, that the picture was intended to represent the Deity dividing light from darkness; however fine the painting may be, I cannot but think it impious for man to attempt to form the Deity after his own image. I left Down-hill, without suffering myself to feel strong admiration, either of the magnificence of the building, the richness of the furniture, or the variety of costly paintings.

Leaving Down-hill, we passed the rocks of Magilligan, which are truly grand and sublime. The sea dashing with great force on the level strand, the distant view of Inishowen-point, partly obscured by a fog, and the high rocks in the back-ground, formed a fine scene.

From Magilligan to Derry, by Newtownlimavady, the country is pretty, and well cultivated, but the grand and romantic scale, on which the ocean scenery and the mountains are exhibited along the coast, was too fresh in my recollection, to permit me to admire cultivated lands, and scenes which were more indebted to art than nature. The rivers Foyle and Bann appeared too placid and insignificant, in comparison with the ocean.

Derry looks very pretty at a distance; the banks of the river Foyle are adorned with planting and neat houses; the long wooden bridge adds very much to the ornament of the town. The wall, which formerly surrounded the whole of the town, is in good repair, and is a very pleasant walk; the town now extends far beyond the wall. I was very much pleased with the neatness and excellent arrangement of an hospital near Derry; very great attention appears to have been paid in building the house to secure the best mode of ventilation; the rooms were very

clean and airy, and the sick and infirm appeared very comfortable.

There is also a large school-house near Derry, which will contain a large number of scholars. The school had not been opened, but I viewed the house with much pleasure, as I always rejoice to see attention paid to the education of the poor.

ERIGENA.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

A LETTER in the *Alfred* of the 3d of December, 1812, became the subject of conversation lately, when I was present. The discussion was interesting to me; and I thought it not improbable, that it might appear equally so to you. On referring to the letter above mentioned, you will see mention made of a Latin play performed by the students of Westminster school.

My imagination was forcibly struck by the idea of a classical play, performed under the eye of the learned master of the school. I could not refrain from expressing myself with some warmth of admiration in the enthusiasm of the moment. I figured to myself the various advantages that I conceived must result from a classical play, classically presented. I have often myself experienced the difficulties in classical authors, occasioned by terms of art, music, dress, &c.; and concluding as a matter of course, that the illustration of all these things, as far as can now be done, and as far as the play required and admitted it, was the leading object of the representation, I expressed much regret, that I could not promise myself the pleasure of even enjoying so delightful a mental repast.

There are many things, which, in the course of a classical education, are difficult to boys; some utterly