

VACATIONS IN IRELAND.

BY

CHARLES RICHARD WELD.

“Cast back the lattice, let me quaff the dawn,
Let the wild wind, dew-laden from the lawn,
Scatter my fever'd heart with dewy showers,
Snatch from my brows the poppy's drowsy flowers,
With ye I'll fly, with ye,
To the woods, the hills, the sea;
Cast back the lattice, show me far away
The azure mountain-tops and torrent springs of Day!”

FREDERICK TENNYSON.



LONDON:

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1857.

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BIRR CASTLE.

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BY

CHARLES RICHARD WELD.

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With ye I'll fly, with ye,
To the woods, the hills, the sea;
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The azure mountain-tops and torrent springs of Day!”

FREDERICK TENNYSON.



LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, & ROBERTS.

1857.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM EARL OF ROSSINI

OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED



LONDON:
Printed by SPORTSWOODE & Co.
New-street Square.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM, EARL OF ROSSE, K.P., F.R.S.

Ec. Ec. Ec.

These Pages are Dedicated

(WITH PERMISSION)

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF MUCH KINDNESS.

BURLINGTON HOUSE:

May, 1857.

P R E F A C E.

I DISLIKE Prefaces; but there are occasions when, in order that the reader may understand the author aright, a few explanatory words are necessary. Briefly, then, I have to state that the following pages are descriptive of many visits to Ireland. My rambles on the Clare coast, Dingle, and the south-west of Kerry, were made many years ago; but as the natural features of those parts of Ireland have not changed since I saw them, my descriptions hold good; while, on the other hand, I have thought that a few sketches of "life" in the West, which has changed since the days of slow coaches and few tourists, may not be uninteresting.

The remaining parts of Ireland embraced in the following pages have been more recently visited by

me,—Connemara and the Carra Lakes so lately as last year. It would have been easy to enlarge my book by making the reader my companion through the north and east of Ireland; but I have preferred confining myself to the more wild and still very little travelled districts in the west of our Sister Isle, hoping that some of my readers may be tempted to follow my steps in the wilds of Kerry, Clare, and Mayo, where I promise them great enjoyment and magnificent scenery.

I have only to add, that a portion of the chapters on Lord Rosse's telescopes appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, and is reprinted by the kind permission of the proprietors of that periodical.

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VACATIONS IN IRELAND.

CHAPTER I.

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THE summer of 18— was mellowing into autumn, and all those who have the power of exchanging the din of our "province of houses" for country scenes and the babble of brooks, were either off, or going, as the phrase runs, out of town, when the question— always important to a Londoner—arose, "Where shall I spend the long vacation?" for, being a very free bachelor, the whole world was before me where

to choose my wanderings, and it only became necessary to calculate how far my finances would carry me.

I did not, however, fancy travelling alone, having more than once realised the idea thus expressed by Goethe:—"He that would in loneliness live, ah! he is soon alone. Each one loves, each one lives, and leaves him to his pain."

I was deep in the perplexities of choice when the following letter was placed in my hands, and at once relieved me from all further anxiety respecting vacation plans:—

“..... August 1st.

“MY DEAR CHARLES,—“If you are not engaged to accompany tourists on the Continent this summer, do come to Ireland, and fulfil your promise of many years’ standing to visit me. Though our country does not vie with the Alps, Apennines, or Pyrenees in grandeur, we have some mountains in Kerry worth looking at, within whose picturesque setting are lakes, let me assure you, of rare beauty. Then, if you are fond of bold marine scenery, I will take you to our Atlantic-washed cliffs and headlands, from the summit of which the sea birds

“ ‘Show scarce as gross as beetles;’

and to make amends for any disappointment in these matters, I pledge you my word that you shall drink deep of true Irish hospitality, happily not yet extinct in the far west of old Erin. So come, my good fellow, and make your cousin happy."

It will be observed that the writer of this hearty letter was related to me, and though not a first cousin, he was not, on the other hand, ninety-nine times removed. Indeed, he claimed near kinsmanship, and I was not only willing to endorse his claim, but felt honoured by his insisting on it; for my cousin *was*—alas! that I should write in the past tense—an Irish squire of the true old gentlemanly school, of good family, and of substantial worldly possessions. He was, moreover, an excellent fellow, overflowing with kind deeds, which, like the never-failing waters of an Artesian well, came bubbling up from the inexhaustible springs of his heart, vivifying and refreshing everything within their influence. At the time I write of, he had completed his education at the Dublin University, and had been by the death of his parents put in possession of his inheritance.

Altogether, it must be allowed that such a cousin was worth claiming as a kinsman. Had he been a poor relation, happily described by Elia as "the most

irrelevant thing in nature, whose preposterous shadow lengthens in the noon-tide of our prosperity," perhaps I should not have been so ready to admit the relationship; but it is equally certain that a poor cousin would not have sent me an invitation to make his house my home.

Like myself, my kinsman was a bachelor; for though many fair and plain maidens had, according to report, manifested anything but an indifference towards him, and provident parents had evinced strong partiality on the part of their daughters for his name and estates, he had somehow or other contrived to keep himself free, declaring as a reason for continuing a bachelor that, when all were so beautiful and amiable, choice became a matter of extreme difficulty, if not indeed impossible; and with respect to the personal charms of the ladies of his city, he was right, for the girls of the counties of Limerick and Clare—as the reader who has had the good fortune to see them will admit—are gifted with a very remarkable share of beauty.

With so many attractions, and so much pleasure in prospect, I had no hesitation in accepting my cousin's invitation, and a few days after having received his letter I was on my way to the south of Ireland.

If you are about visiting Ireland for the first time

for a summer tour, and purpose proceeding there *viâ* Holyhead, endeavour, if possible, to leave the latter place by the early morning steamer, which, generally speaking, arrives within sight of Kingstown as the sun gilds the tops of the picturesque Wicklow mountains; for if Neptune be gracious, and allows you to escape without paying tribute, you will come to the conclusion that the Bay of Dublin has not been praised unduly. Not that it embraces all the beauties of the lovely Bay of Naples, to which it is sometimes compared, but the scenery is undoubtedly grand and noble, combining scarped headlands, backed by the lofty Sugar-loaf and Lugnaquilla mountains, the nursing mothers of numberless brawling streams—

“Hamlet and town and pasture green,
With roads of sunlight laid between,”

and swelling hills, reflected in a clear and sparkling sea.

Notwithstanding the constant intercourse between England and the sister isle, the peculiarities of the Irish people continue remarkably unchanged since those days when visitors to Ireland were at once initiated into the mysteries of Irish manners and Irish bulls, by being landed at the now ruinous village of Ringsend. The carmen—or carboys, as they love to be called—are still full of quaint humour,

and lose no opportunity of firing off their wit and jokes. "Shure a common man would give me this!" said one of the fraternity to a friend of mine last summer, who gave him half-a-crown; which, by the way, was considerably more than his fare; thus making an indirect, though ingenious appeal, to the gentleman's gentility. Contrast this with the brutal London cabman's surly growl—"What's this?" when tendered a sum frequently exceeding his just fare.

If not time pressed, instead of proceeding direct by rail from Dublin to the South of Ireland, go by the Midland Great Western to Athlone, from whence small steamers ply thrice a week down the Shannon to Killaloe. By this course you will pass through Lough Derg, and have an excellent opportunity of seeing what Brother Jonathan would call the great water privilege of Ireland. I selected this route and was much gratified by the fine scenery which the pleasant river and lake voyage unfolded.

The rapids of the Shannon between Killaloe and Limerick prevent the steamers descending the river to the latter city, but the distance—only about fourteen miles—is quickly performed by means of a swift canal boat.

I arrived at in the evening, and found my cousin occupying a charming house, the beau-

ideal of a bachelor establishment. I need scarcely add he gave me a warm welcome, and soon made me feel quite at home, not only in his house but also in his stables, which contained a choice collection of hunters and hacks.

A party of friends had been invited to meet me at dinner. They consisted principally of young squires from the neighbourhood and garrison officers, and I was thus early made familiar with the names, and in many instances leading pursuits, of several rather fast young Irishmen. As the claret circulated, the latest brilliant hunting exploits were discussed with all the action peculiar to excited Celts; and when an English officer, somewhat more reflective than his neighbours, was observed to glance furtively at his watch, hinting at the same time at small hours and morning parade, a stentorian though not unmelodious voice broke forth to the air of Planxty Kelly—

“Fly not yet—’tis just the hour
 When pleasure, like the midnight flower
 That scorns the eye of vulgar light,
 Begins to bloom for sons of night,
 And maids who love the moon!”

Of course the Cork and Limerick belles were not forgotten. Indeed, my new friends seemed to be their devoted slaves and admirers, and I was warned

to be on my guard against their bright eyes and fascinations.

But the great talk of the night was a projected meeting in the ensuing week at a wild locality on the Clare coast, named Miltown Malbay, where it was intended to hold horse-races of various kinds, interspersed by pic-nics, balls, and other amusements. Miltown Malbay, at the period to which I refer, consisted of scattered hovels inhabited by a very wild set of people, and of a few houses called lodges, let to summer visitors. The position of the place is so grand that a speculative Limerick inn-keeper built a large hotel containing sixty bedrooms, and various other large apartments, on the verge of the cliffs, trusting that the natural beauties—or grandeur rather—of the scenery, would attract tourists. He named the building *The Atlantic Hotel*, and not inappropriately, for from its close vicinity to that ocean, the walls must have been baptized by the sea-spray long before they were crowned by a roof; and when the west wind blew strongly, no uncommon occurrence on the Clare coast, the waves, I was assured more than once, threatened the entire destruction of the edifice.

All the apartments in the hotel, which is about fifty miles from Limerick, had been taken by my

cousin and a party of gentlemen for a week. Indeed my relative was one of the principal originators of the race-meeting.

The prospect of seeing wild life in the West, and marine scenery of uncommon magnificence, induced me at once to accept my cousin's offer to join his party at the *Atlantic Hotel*, in which, with his accustomed hospitality, he had secured a room for me. I have said that my cousin kept hunters: this might be assumed as a matter of course; but it does not equally follow that he should have kept race-horses. He did, however, indulge in this expensive addition to his establishment: for Irish race-horses, though not, for the most part, exactly up to be entered for the Derby or St. Leger, are nevertheless costly appendages to a gentleman's estate.

Nor was my cousin contented with these sporting luxuries: he set up a drag, an act of extravagance which, being at that period unparalleled in his city, caused him to be regarded with very great admiration by petty squireens, who would doubtless have imitated his example, had it been in their power. Indeed, on the first occasion that I saw my kinsman handling the ribbons, which he did in first-rate style, I confess that I regarded him as a much to be envied individual. In short, I was very proud of my cousin.

True, I was thoughtless, and imagined — nay, believed — that all I beheld was real and enduring; for I was told that his fortune was large, and rumour, with her usual exaggerating propensity, had greatly swelled the amount of his patrimony; so, with the heedlessness of youth, which generally plunges into the vortex of pleasure, I paused not to inquire whether my warm-hearted kinsman was warranted in living as he then lived. But in after years, when the intelligence was communicated to me that he was well nigh ruined, and that he would have been entirely beggared, but for a noble-hearted lady, who all through his mad career of folly loved him — for he was without vice — and gave him her hand and fortune, I was vexed that, even by sharing his hospitality, I had aided in any way in spending his substance.

Never in my wildest days, when the young blood beat madly, had I been partial to horse-racing; for, although a great lover of horses and passionately fond of riding, I could never feel interested in the issue of a race without betting, and that vice, thanks to the careful education and admonitions of a loving mother, I have always held in particular detestation. So I looked forward to other amusements at Miltown Malbay besides those connected with the turf.

A party was made to proceed to the coast by the drag, and a seat was reserved for me, but I preferred descending the Shannon to Kilrush, from whence I purposed hiring a car to drive to Miltown Malbay. Accordingly, on the following Monday morning, I took passage in a river steamer from Limerick, and had no reason to repent my choice, for the trip led to an amusing adventure, and to an acquaintance which, as I was afterwards informed, created great surprise that it did not ripen to the climax of matrimony.

Having seen my luggage safely stowed, I surveyed my fellow-passengers. They were not numerous, consisting of a few farmers and peasants, and a lady and gentleman, who shared with me the after part of the vessel. The lady was young and handsome, and a brilliant specimen of a lively Irish girl; nor was the gentleman, who was considerably her senior, deficient in the usual sociable qualities of an Irishman, which his strong accent proclaimed him to be. Our ignorance of each other's names proved no bar to our entering at once into conversation, and we had not proceeded far on our voyage before I learned that the lady and gentleman were going to Kilkee, a small watering-place about twelve miles from Kilrush, and on the road to Miltown Mal-

bay. I gathered, moreover, that the lady was not married, and that her companion was her brother-in-law, but what names they bore I knew not. However, as the day wore on, our conversation became more like that of friends than acquaintances of a few hours' standing, and I really felt sorry when I was informed that we should soon part, as Tarbert and Kilrush were in sight. The thought, however, occurred to me, that as Miltown Malbay was only a few miles from Kilkee we might meet again; and accordingly I ventured to ask the lady whether she was going to the races, adding, that I was to be my cousin's guest at the *Atlantic Hotel* during the week. I found that he and many of his friends were well known to the lady and her brother-in-law, but that they did not purpose visiting Miltown Malbay. "And the ball on Thursday; will you not be at that?" I inquired. "No; but," added the lady, with marked emphasis, "I should like above all things to go." "And why, then, should you not go?" I rejoined. "Because my brother-in-law does not care about balls; besides, there is no room to be had in the Hotel, and the roads are so bad, and the distance so great, we could not return to Kilkee the same night." "Oh!" I replied, "if you can persuade your brother-in-law

to take you, let not the want of a room prevent your going, for I will give you up mine." This I said, not perhaps entirely after the Spanish fashion of offering your house to a new acquaintance in formal phraseology, but not imagining for a moment that my offer would be accepted. Nor was it at the time, for the lady merely thanked me for my kind consideration, and the steamer having now arrived at her destination, we parted.

As my object in this work is to make the reader my companion in unfrequented parts of the wild west of Ireland, I shall not attempt any description of the well-known high-ways and water-ways of that country, which are for the most part chronicled in various guide-books.

My drive to Miltown Malbay was lonely enough. The road, of a very rugged nature, passed over vast tracts of heather-clad hills, between which to the west the mighty Atlantic appeared boundless and glorious. The sun was sinking with great magnificence into the broad waters as I approached Miltown Malbay; and I had no difficulty in finding the *Atlantic Hotel*, which towered high on the edge of the cliff, and cast a broad and long shadow over the moorland. As I drove up to the door, confused and tumultuous sounds issued from the open windows

and gateway, within which stood a crowd of men gazing at the new arrival, while around them dogs and horses of all varieties were grouped. It was a strange scene, and coming upon it as I did after a long and solitary drive, seemed not unlike falling in with a fair and its motley crowd.

Among those who gathered round me, I recognised several of my cousin's friends, and presently discovered my cousin himself, who had heard of my arrival, and came to show me my room. I, of course, told him of my steam-boat acquaintances, whom he at once named from my description; and he not a little tended to impress them, or rather the young lady, more strongly on my memory, by assuring me that she would take me at my word, and dispossess me of my room on the following Thursday. "You do not know Irish hospitality yet," he added, "and particularly that of the west. When we offer our house to a friend we are in earnest, and in this light the offer is made and accepted." He then departed, advising me that it was time to dress for dinner.

When I came down stairs I found a large party assembled, consisting of a few ladies and about fifty gentlemen, many of whom were expressing in very emphatic terms, their desire that dinner might be

speedily announced. The company was decidedly more curious than select. There were aristocratic-looking men mingling freely with genuine specimens of the wild Irish squireen, who though the diminutive of the squire in the possession of broad acres, or the reputation of being their possessor, considers himself not a whit inferior as a gentleman to any squire that ever rode after fox-hounds or fathomed a punch bowl. "And is it who am I that yez wants to know?" is recorded by Lady Morgan as the answer of one of that ilk to a question put to him respecting his lineage. "I am Terence Oge O'Leary, of the Pobble O'Learys, of Giancare, county Kerry, anciently Cair-Reight, from Cairna; Luochra Macarthy, who was king of Munster, anno mundi 1525, Noah Rege, and am tributary and seneachy to the Macarthy before the English were heard of; a true Irishman that loves his country and lives in it; Irish by birth, by blood, and by descent; Irish body and soul; Irish every inch of me; heart and hand, life and land."

It is impossible to associate with almost any class of Irish without being made sensible of the high importance which they attach to their birth, and to the name and bearing of a gentleman. Nor is this feeling confined to the male sex. The women have

fully as exalted an idea of their noble birth. Bishop Berkeley mentions a kitchen-wench serving his family, who refused to carry out cinders because she was, according to her account, descended from the ancient kings of Ireland. And when it is borne in mind that many have no other possession than such reminiscences, which—however murky and unsatisfactory they might appear to be to practical Englishmen, who like to realise and not idealise—are to the warm imaginative Milesian pearls of great price, we need not grudge them the enjoyment of such memories.

At length, but not before impatience had made most noisy demonstrations, dinner was announced, and we sat down with fierce and furious appetites. It was well that the light delicacies of the French *cuisine* had not found their way into the *Atlantic Hotel*. Your Irish fox-hunting squire has, believe me, an amazing appetite; and seeing that there were some half hundred present, it may be supposed that *petit-pâtés* and such trifles would have ill-sufficed to feed the hungry crew. The repast consisted of substantial *pièces de résistance*, which were repeatedly attacked, and were only indebted to their vast size for their escape from entire demolition. The scene, indeed, was suggestive of the accounts we have of

those wonderful baronial feeds, where furious onslaught was made on beeves, sheep, and hogs, roasted whole, and when the guests —

— “carved at the meal with their gloves of steel,
And drank the red wine through their helmets barr’d.”

At first little was to be heard but the clatter of knives, forks, and plates, intermingled by fierce calls for the waiters; but as appetites were satisfied and the wine circulated, conversation became more general. It was not, however, until the cloth had been removed and the punch had warmed the hearts of the jovial squires, that their tongues were fairly loosened. The punch-drinking powers of Irishmen have long been celebrated. The impunity from sickness enjoyed by many deep drinkers doubtless set a bad example to others with weaker heads and less strong constitutions, who were, nevertheless, desirous to rival well-seasoned toppers.

I remember being present, when a boy, at a large dinner party, composed for the most part of notable persons, assembled at the castle of a hospitable Irish general, to meet Cobbett, who had just landed in Ireland. When the cloth was removed and the ladies had departed, the sturdy politician, who had been talking incessantly during dinner, was pressed by the host and others to drink a glass of wine to the pros-

perity of old Ireland. No; he would drink a glass of milk, tea, water; but, true to his anti-alcoholic habit, wine he would not touch, alleging it was neither a necessary nor a wholesome beverage. Amazed, and not a little indignant, that any man should be indifferent to the excellent wines which were circling rapidly round our host's mahogany, a gentleman apparently about Cobbett's age, but really much older, and who sat next to him, turned sharply round, and thus addressed the confirmed water-drinker:—

“I have great respect for your talents, sir; but permit me to tell you, Mr. Cobbett, I have none for your wine-abstaining principles, which are opposed to good-sense, conviviality, and hospitality. Look at me, sir: I am as old as you are, and enjoy, I venture to say, as good health as you do; and I am proud to say, I have always drunk my bottle of wine a day, and please God, I always will as long as I live.”

“Well, sir, all I can say,” replied Cobbett, gazing at his neighbour with an inquiring expression, as if calculating his proximity to death, “you have had a most wonderful escape!” “Not at all,” rejoined the jovial and well-known Irishman; and, as the sequel proved, his life did not contradict his anacreontic principles, for Cobbett was gathered to his fathers a few years after this, to me, notable dinner party,

whereas his boon companion lived beyond octogenarian years, drinking freely to the last.

But although Cobbett was in this instance distanced by the Irish squire, I apprehend few will dispute that his temperance doctrines are based on sound hygienic principles. True, we hear occasionally of deep drinkers attaining great longevity; but Democritus Junior did not draw a very exaggerated picture when he declared that men who, "*multa-bibens*, drown their wits, seethe their brains, consume their fortunes, lose their time, weaken their temperatures, contract filthy diseases — rheums, dropsies, calentures, tremor, swollen jugulars, pimples, red faces, sore eyes, heat their livers, alter their complexions, spoil their stomachs, overthrow their bodies; — for drink drowns more than the sea and all the rivers that fall into it."

But to return to the *Atlantic Hotel*. It was particularly agreeable, when stormy sporting disputes and discussions were suspended by command of the president, to hear melodious voices sing Moore's melodies. As the night advanced, however, and the punch began to tell on heads not entirely alcohol proof, the singing gave place to noisy arguments, which increased in warmth and violence as time wore on, and as they referred to subjects in

62.61.51.

which I took little interest, I contrived to slip away unperceived a little after midnight; for happily the door was not locked by a "six-bottle host," such as were wont to point with pride to a formidable pyramid of wine bottles under the sideboard, the contents of which were to be drunk before the guests could be allowed to depart. But though restraint was not used, these jovial Irish squires had evidently no idea of observing King Ahasuerus's good custom, who, we are told in Holy Writ, while prodigal of his royal wine, ordered that the drinking at his famous banquet, which endured a week, should be according to the law, appointing his officers not to compel, but to do according to every man's pleasure. No,—the president and his Vice loudly insisted on bumpers being drained to frequent toasts, which soon reduced, or rather, raised the company to the condition described by the Italian poet:

"Triplicata furore
Bacco, Apollo, et Amore."

These drinking bouts are now nearly, if not quite at an end. Ancient squires, however, in the still wild west, love to hover over the memories of deep and strange drinking scenes. I remember meeting one of these gentlemen in Connemara, who told me

that he had been present at a dinner party where the bottles were duly ranged in order under the side-board; and to make escape the more difficult, not only was the door locked, but the guests were made to take off their boots and shoes, and as the bottles were emptied, they were shattered against the door, so that to reach it you must have passed over a heap of broken glass—a feat which only a very drunken man would have been willing to perform.

The quiet and repose of my chamber was particularly agreeable, and I was well pleased to exchange the boisterous tumult of the dining-room for the boom of the Atlantic waves, which were breaking in grand tones at the base of the cliffs. With this lullaby in my ears I passed quickly into the land of dreams.

CHAP. II.

A Swim in the Atlantic. — Danger of the Waves. — Difficult Landing. — Irish Races. — Irish Race-horses. — Steeple Chasers. — My Cousin's "Nestor." — An appalling leap. — Irish Hunters. — Their wall-leaping Powers. — "A Pattern." — Potheen. — Still-hunting. — How Worms are concealed. — The "Rakes of Mallow." — Woman's Influence. — Excursion to the Cliffs of Moher. — A delightful Ride. — Lahinch. — The Hag's Head. — Liscanor Bay. — Doolin. — Moher Cliff. — Vast Precipices. — The Isles of Arran. — Tremendous Power of the Atlantic Waves. — The Isles of the Saints. — Ancient Rath. — The enchanted Island of Hy-Brasail. — Sea-birds. — Arran Rock climbers. — The Flight of Gulls. — Return to Malbay. — An unexpected Arrival.

THE following morning I rose early and repaired to a small sandy creek near the hotel. I had marked the locality the previous evening, and thought it an admirable place for enjoying a bath; but, in my ignorance of the fury and strength of the ~~great~~ Atlantic waves, and placing too much confidence in my swimming powers, I plunged into a receding wave, and was carried so far and fast out, that the unpleasant conviction became soon impressed upon me that I should find it very difficult to regain the

shore. And so it proved, for although, on several occasions, I succeeded in reaching the crest of the wave, I could not, on account of an ebbing tide, manage to effect a landing. At length, however, after having been battered and buffeted until my strength was nearly exhausted, I contrived to win foothold, whilst

— “the scream of the madden'd beach dragged down by the wave”

rang in my ears. I had gained practical experience of the might and majesty of Atlantic waves, and have ever since been careful how I breasted them.

On returning to the hotel I was not surprised to learn that I was the only member of the party who had made his appearance, the revellers of the preceding night having kept up their roystering until daylight glimmered upon them. So I breakfasted alone, and afterwards sallied out to explore the country near the hotel. A far-spreading tableland, mostly covered by short herbage and heath, treeless and shrubless; for before the fierce cutting west wind bushes even cannot make head: — such is the picture inland. I turned to the cliffs and, seating myself on a projecting rock, gazed long at the heaving ocean, and felt ill-inclined to exchange the

glorious scene for the races, which were to commence at one o'clock. However, as these were an object of special interest to my cousin, whose horses were to run, I felt bound to be present; and, accordingly, proceeded to the racecourse, about a mile from the hotel. There I found my acquaintances of the previous night, apparently not a whit the worse for their debauch, with a sprinkling of ladies and gentlemen from the neighbourhood, and all the bold "pisintry" within many miles of Miltown-Malbay. Great excitement and confusion prevailed. Horses, men, and dogs rushed impetuously hither and thither. Stewards vociferated and orders were given which were productive of anything but order. An Ascot man would have been driven crazy by the bungling arrangements, but to my inexperienced eyes the whole scene was inexpressibly amusing. From the midst of this confusion, accompanied by whooping and hallooing, which would have done credit to a tribe of very wild Indians, the horses emerged, after many false starts, ridden by gentlemen, and I think it must have puzzled the judge to say which was first when they arrived at the winning post. Then followed a steeple-chase, and here the men and horses were more at home. Irish horses are famous steeple-chasers, and though I had often heard wonderful

stories of their wall-leaping performances, I was greatly astonished by the feats that I witnessed on this occasion.

My cousin had a marvellous animal of this description, named Nestor, which distanced all competitors, and won his owner three cups at these races. The stone walls which this horse surmounted were of prodigious height, and yet he cleared them like a deer. The noble animal was as famous too in the field with hounds as when running the most formidable steeple-chase; and his indomitable spirit was so great that he was never known to shirk any wall, hedge, or fence at which he was ridden. This courage, a few weeks after his appearance at Miltown Malbay; well nigh cost him his life, and was the means of killing a favourite hunter of my cousin's, and very nearly destroying his rider. The event happened in this wise. My cousin kept his horses about a mile from his town residence, and, for the convenience of exercising them, the stables were situated close to a paddock about four acres in extent. It was a favourite lounge for my cousin and his friends to walk out and see the horses exercised, and not unfrequently some young fellows would give them a gallop round the paddock. One day a couple of high-spirited youths, who have since died in a

foreign land, were riding round the field — one mounted on Nestor, the other on a valuable hunter. It is necessary to observe, that at the opposite side of one corner of the paddock there was an old stone quarry, some fifteen feet across at the mouth, and twelve feet deep. Its sides were precipitous, but, fortunately, the field around the mouth was unbroken. A stone wall, six feet and four inches high, separated the quarry from the paddock. The youths had ridden two or three times round the enclosure, when it occurred to them to try their horses' speed. Accordingly off they set, as hard as they could go, Nestor being outside. Once they went round nearly neck and neck, but during the second course, when opposite the wall, Nestor, who probably saw no fun in this monotonous career, true to his training, to the infinite horror of his rider, charged the wall, and, in doing so, compelled the hunter, which was inside, to take it too. Over they went, but with very different results. Nestor cleared the wall and landed in the field beyond the quarry; while his unfortunate companion was precipitated to the bottom of the stone pit, breaking his neck by the fall, and very seriously injuring his rider. The appalling leap had been seen by the stable-boys, who ran as fast as they could to the scene of the catastrophe, expecting to find both

horses and men dead. On looking over the wall they beheld one of the horses extended lifeless at the bottom of the quarry, and his rider bathed in blood, apparently dead, lying at his side. As a contrast to this terrible picture, Nestor was quietly cropping the grass near his rider, who was sitting on the edge of the quarry, looking round him with a bewildered air. Examination showed that the injuries received by the young man in the quarry, though sufficiently serious to confine him to his room for many weeks, were not dangerous. I saw him when he was recovering, and with true Irish hunting pluck, his only regret was that the accident which had killed my cousin's hunter had not happened at the finish of a fine run.

Nestor's rider, though a clever horseman, had not contrived to keep his seat, and had been pitched off into the field with, fortunately, no greater mishap than being stunned by the fall. He stated that he had used every effort to prevent his horse taking the wall, but when he saw that the leap was inevitable, he did what he could to help him over, which a good rider will always attempt when a formidable leap is in prospect. Both youths were light weights; but although this circumstance was undoubtedly in favour of Nestor, yet the leap was so tremendous that for

many days after the occurrence the locality was visited by persons from the neighbourhood. It was not the height of the wall—though that would have effectually awed most English horses—nor the breadth of the quarry mouth—taken separately—which were so formidable; but their combination and respective positions rendered the leap one of the most extraordinary that has ever been successfully performed even by Irish horses, which are pre-eminently wall-leaping animals. As a proof of their accomplishments in this respect, I may mention what is probably not generally known, that at the great horse fair of Ballinasloe, the parish pound, six feet high, forms the trial leap for high priced hunters, each of which is expected to leap it before a bargain is concluded. Mr. Blaine, in his “Encyclopædia of Rural Sports,” mentions two Irish mares, one of which leaped a wall seven feet high, and the other, in a standing leap, one of six feet and a half high on the inside, and eight feet on the outside. Mr. Apperley, who is high authority on all matters connected with horses, says that “the most extraordinary fact relating to the act of leaping in horses, is the power they have of extending themselves by a second spring, as it were, when, on being suspended in the air, they

perceive something on the further side of a fence for which they were not prepared."

"Irish horses," Mr. Blaine well observes, "ought to be excellent wall leapers, for they are early trained to the work." Every horse in Ireland is a good jumper, for almost every field is fenced by means of stone walls, uncemented. Now Pat, disliking trouble, and wholly unmindful of danger, will, as we have often seen him do, force his horse (perhaps with a hay-band around his nose in lieu of a halter or bridle) over all the intermediate walls which lie between his neighbour's fields and his own. We have frequently seen this done merely to save a furlong or two distance, or to avoid the trouble of opening a gate, wholly regardless of the risks he runs, or the trespasses he commits."

As may be imagined, the great reputation Nestor acquired by his feat, caused my cousin to think but little of the loss of his hunter; indeed, he was offered considerably more for the former animal than the sum he had, previous to his leap, attached to both horses. Well would it have been for him if, at the height of his sporting fame, he had accepted the offer, and at the same time parted with all his stud.

But to return from this digression. Race succeeded

race; the jollity in no way diminishing, but rather the reverse, as the tents which were pitched in the vicinity of the race-course poured forth their punch drinking occupants; for the "pisintry" had no notion of allowing the "quality" to have all the fun to themselves, and the opportunity had been embraced of combining with the races a species of fair, or "pattern," at which, if the usual trading features of a fair were wanting, drinking, music, and dancing went hand-in-hand. Here it was that I first tasted genuine potheen in all its true creamy delicacy. Indeed, if report was veracious, all the whisky sold in the booths was illicit; but although magistrates were among us, no questions were asked, or observations made at all calculated to alarm the proprietors of the whisky stalls. Doubtless a little selfishness was mixed up with this apparent indifference to the majesty of the law, and the welfare of Her Majesty's exchequer; for it is a well known fact that Irish squires were, and probably are still, as fond of potheen as their poor neighbours.

During a fishing excursion some years ago in Ireland, I became acquainted with the captain of the district police force. He was a keen sportsman, and a lover of a glass of good whisky punch. At that time illicit distillation was much more practised

than it has been during late years;—the vigorous measures taken by government to suppress unlawful *stills*, and the equalisation of duty in England and Ireland, having rendered the manufacture of potheen more difficult and less profitable. Among the numerous duties which devolved on the police captain was that of *still* hunting. Now if there was one thing he disliked more than another, it was this; for, independently of its being a very unmilitary kind of business, his free trade notions were so broad, and so greatly in advance of the age, that he could not precisely comprehend why poor Pat should not turn a penny as well as his neighbours by distilling a little potheen in a quiet way. Besides, the mountain manufacture had the additional recommendation — no small one in his opinion — of being vastly superior to that sold in the Queen's name.

And, indeed, my excellent friend would have been devoid of gratitude and honour had he not felt a kindred sympathy for poor Pat and his stills; for on more than one occasion when we were out under heavy rain, or wading rivers thigh deep, did he conduct me to a secluded spot that almost defied detection,—the locality of revenue-destroying operations.

There, within a turf hovel, constructed in the

rudest fashion, might be seen a couple of men, occasionally a woman, with a broken table and chair, to give the place an appearance of being inhabited, while carefully screened from view in the background was a "worm," which roughly but surely performed its illicit operations. It was easy to see that the captain was at home in these dark localities by the manner he was welcomed; but with that cunning and reserve habitual to the Irish, little was said until my friend gave assurance that I was a true man; then a glass would be produced—sometimes a cup—and we drank good luck to our sport, and to other things which shall be nameless; nor did we depart without filling our flasks and leaving more than our good wishes behind us.

With this protective feeling, can we wonder that my friend and his troop should have been singularly unsuccessful in finding stills? just as Kaffir chiefs escape detection, though they are often within ear-shot of our troops. But if the truth must be told—and here let me declare that my excellent brother angler, the captain aforesaid, has long since retired from his profession—his keen eye did not overlook the objects of his search.

"Well, captain," I asked on his return from a long still hunt, "did you find any stills?" "No,"

he would answer, with a sly twinkle of his gray eye ; “not one ; but ”—and this was said *sotto voce*—“we rode over several ; however, as you know, it was not for me to tell them so.”

Until it happened to me to fall into an illicit still manufactory “unknownst,” as Paddy says, to myself, I could not exactly comprehend how a man could ride over a still and not know it ; but after that occurrence, I no longer doubted the captain’s assertion respecting his men and the stills.

I was fishing one day in a very wild part of Wicklow, not far from Lugnaquilla—the trout were numerous and rising fast, and I was intent on my sport, when, as I was taking a step in advance on the bank, which just where I stood was covered with large and knee-deep fern, I felt the ground give way, and was precipitated some half-dozen feet in a very summary and, as I thought, extraordinary manner. On looking about me when I recovered my legs, I found myself in a diminutive hut, face to face with an ancient weather-beaten crone, who was fully as alarmed as myself. I at once guessed the manner of place into which I had been so suddenly and strangely introduced. Nor was I wrong ; for after many assurances and protestations of my entire approbation of potheen, the old

lady imparted the information that a little business was occasionally done in the narrow dwelling in which we stood, which flourished all the better when not under the supervision of excisemen. There was no still to be seen; but it was not very distant, having been buried in a neighbouring bog, a common hiding-place for such little commodities. Sometimes, however, when the season of work is over, the still is cast into a river.

I remember once forming one of a large party at the house of a gentleman in the county of Kildare, when, among other sporting amusements, it was proposed that we should net the river Barrow. Accordingly we set forth one morning provided with nets and boats to catch what we could, which proved, by the way, to be a boat-load of fish. But we were well nigh catching more than we bargained for. We had reached a very wild and thinly-inhabited part of the country, and were working the nets down the river, some of us being in the boat and others on the bank, when we observed a peasant regarding our operations with intense anxiety. Presently he approached us, and just as the net was being drawn within a bend of the river, implored us not to touch that part of the stream; of course we demanded his reason for so strange a request. After a long parrying

of words, for Pat greatly dislikes giving a straightforward answer, and believing that we were not gaugers, he told us that "indeed there was a mighty illigint still in the river," which he had just thrown in "to be out of the way." He was apprehensive it might be in ours, and therefore was extremely solicitous that it should not be fished up. Greatly to his satisfaction we left the still alone, and as a reward for our forbearance, he brought us a bottle of potheen, which did no discredit to its name and manufacturers.

The day's races having been run, we returned to the hotel, where the dinner scene of the preceding day was repeated with, if possible, still more boisterous accompaniments. After dinner, hazard was proposed, in which I did not join; and I put it out of my power to lose my money by lending all I could spare to a friend, who repaid me when the danger of temptation was past.

Heavens! what wild revelry rang through the house during the midnight hours. Never, assuredly, did the *Atlantic Hotel* witness madder doings. The bacchanalian roysterers must, I thought, have been near kinsmen of those Mallow mad-caps, celebrated as

"Sporting, belle-ing, dancing, drinking,
 Breaking windows, (*hiccup!*) sinking,
 Ever raking, never thinking,
 Live the rakes of Mallow.

“ Spending faster than it comes,
 Beating (*hiccup, hic*) and duns,
 Duhallo’s true-begotten sons,
 Living short but merry lives,
 Going where the devil drives,
 Live the rakes of Mallow.”

The unfortunate waiters were scared out of their senses, and had no rest or peace; as for going to bed, poor devils, not only had they no beds to go to, but they had no time allowed them for sleep. They were eternally in request; and when the bacchanalian party succumbed, from sheer inability to keep up longer—which was not, by the way, until dawn streaked the sky, their services were required to put things in order, or at least to endeavour to do so, for the following day.

It was pitiable, and at the same time ludicrous, to see them snatching a moment’s uneasy slumber on chairs or sofas, from which, however, they were very quickly driven, as soon as discovered, by the discharge of some missile at their heads.

After participating in—or rather contemplating such scenes as I have attempted to pourtray, for the greater part of two days and three nights, I grew weary of them. More than ever was I made aware of the happy influence of women upon men, who, too

often, without their society, are brutes. True, we had, as I have stated, a sprinkling of ladies, who came with their husbands from neighbouring lodgings, but they left us early, and with them generally departed good behaviour.

As my cousin gave me liberty to do what I pleased, I mounted a horse on Thursday morning, and long before the hotel showed signs of life, was many miles away, careering over the brown moorland, and inhaling the fresh Atlantic breezes. The principal object of my ride was to visit the far-famed cliffs of Moher, about fifteen miles to the north of Miltown Malbay, which are considered to present the grandest maritime scenery on the west coast of Ireland, or indeed in the whole of Europe.

A bridle-road, rough for tender-sprunged vehicles, but charming for riding, leads you along the summit of the cliffs. Occasionally you come to a piece of deceptive moorland, which soon admonishes you to ride carefully ; but for the greater part of the distance the ground is firm, and covered by delicious sward, over which you may canter with perfect safety. Vividly, indeed, do I remember this day's delightful ride, magnificent scenery, bracing air, and joyous health, combining to make existence

“A’blessed thing, and the whole world a dream
Of undimm’d joy, without a single care.”

My horse seemed to participate in his rider’s exhilaration, for he went bounding on, snuffing the sea air through his distended nostrils, and tossing his head aloft in very sport. About five miles from Miltown Malbay, the road turns slightly inland, and crosses the estuary of the Oyne, near Lahinch. This passed, you incline seaward again, and after riding four miles, come within view of the Hag’s Head. When near this, I dismounted, and gave my horse to a gossoon (*Anglice*, boy) who had followed me for some miles, and bade him lead the animal to Innistymon, where he was fed. Then I walked to the verge of the Head, from whence I commanded a grand view of Liscanor Bay and the Moher Cliffs, which are a couple of miles to the north. The entire coast line is one vast rock precipice, from five hundred to eight hundred feet high; for, although the cliffs attain their greatest sublimity at Moher, the range from the Hag’s Head to Doolin is majestically grand. Whether you make this excursion on car or horseback, you will do wisely to send your vehicle or horse to Moher, and walk as near the cliff edge as your brains will permit, between the Hag’s Head and the Signal Tower, on

Moher cliff; and if you are favoured by a strong west wind, which will blow up the great Atlantic waves, and dash them foaming against the cliffs, you will remember that walk as long as memory remains.

The advantage of a strong west wind during a ramble on the cliffs of Clare will soon be made apparent to you; for, when it comes from that quarter, you need be under no apprehension of being blown over the precipices, which might happen if prudence did not temper curiosity and the storm-blast came from the east. The statistical account of the parish of Kilmanahun states that the height of the Moher Cliff signal tower is nine hundred and nine feet,* and that the rock to the north-east is one hundred feet higher. Eye-fathoming these mighty and awful precipices, they give you the idea of being as high as represented; but even should statistics — which seem out of place amidst this romantic scenery — err on the side of exaggeration, you will admit that the cliffs of Moher are well worth making a special excursion from Limerick to see.

Sit on a projecting buttress and gaze on the scene: see the restless Atlantic seething like a caldron around the Isles of Arran, which lie before you. Traditional Irish annals relate that these islands — three in number, Arranmore, about seven miles

long and two broad, Inismain, and Inishine — are the sole remaining portions of a vast barrier which formerly extended from Slyne Head, West Connaught, to Clare; and that the Atlantic, having burst the great natural breakwater, submerged the land which now forms the ocean floor of the bay of Galway. And, when we consider the tremendous power of the Atlantic waters, we can only wonder that the islands have not long since been overwhelmed by the waves.

“Some faint idea may be formed of the force with which the Atlantic waves are impelled by western storms, when it is known that cubes of limestone rock, ten or twelve feet in diameter, are thrown upon ledges of rock, several feet high, near Doolin; and at the same place may be seen a barrier of water-worn stones, some of them many tons in weight, cast up, above twenty feet high, across a small bay, into which fishermen used to land from their boats, and where their former quay, surrounded by huts, remains many yards from the sea: this has occurred within the memory of many living at present.”*

The Arran islands possess considerable interest apart from the sublimity of the scenery. They are known in ecclesiastical history as the Ara-na Naoimh,

* Dutton's "Survey of Clare."

or Isles of the Saints; and were resorted to, in the early days of Christianity, by holy men. The author of the life of St. Kieran informs us that "multitudes of holy men resided in these islands, in which were also interred numberless saints, too numerous to be known only to the Almighty God."

The islanders have many traditions respecting the ancient sacred nature of their dwelling-place. These are perpetuated by the numerous raths and other monuments, too old to be grasped by even shadowy history, which still exist on the islands. For these the inhabitants have such deep veneration that they will not allow the spade or plough to touch them, conceiving that they are inhabited by the spirits of the sainted dead, who are heard in the wailings of the storm-blast grieving or rejoicing over the fortunes of Ireland.

The inhabitants of these islands are a bold race; many follow the occupation of fishing, and venture far from their homes on the storm-vexed waters in rude *corraghs*, formed of tarred canvas spread on a wicker-frame, similar to the fragile barks used by the ancient Britons.

Among the many curious superstitions retained by these wild islanders, is the belief that on a clear day they can see, far ocean-ward, the enchanted island of

Hy-Brasail, which is frequently mentioned in ancient Hibernian legends, and was considered the paradise of the pagan Irish. How wide-spread is the belief in this magic isle.*

Sea birds, which abound along the stern Clare coast, seem to regard the cliffs of Moher as a most desirable habitation. Here, poised over the raging waters which have worn the schistose rocks into the most fantastic forms, you will see flocks of guillemots, puffins, razor-bills, kittiwakes, and many varieties of *Laridæ* or gulls, all of which seem to rejoice in the consciousness that they are beyond the reach of man. Not entirely, however; for the bold Arran islanders

* There is a very curious and scarce tract, printed in London in 1675, entitled, *O' Brazile, or the Enchanted Island, being a perfect Relation of the late Discovery and wonderful Disenchantment of an Island on the North of Ireland*. The writer declares that one Captain Nisbet, on his voyage to Ireland from France with a cargo of wine, fell in with a strange and unknown island off the coast of Donegal. He and four of his crew landed on the island, which they described as abounding with beautiful scenery, that they were met by an old man who told them that his ancestors had been great princes, but that the island was now under the rule of a wicked necromancer, who confined his relatives in a vast castle. The captain and his men were then shown the glory and riches of the island, and were made presents of gold and silver, with which they returned to Ireland.

occasionally pay them a visit in the rock-caverns or on the narrow ledges on which they delight to cluster when they are nidifying. The late Mr. Thompson, who visited the Clare coast, gives the following account of an Arran "rock-climber:"—

"While we were wandering about, a tall, athletic fellow from Arran, a rock-climber, so far intruded himself upon us, when we were walking towards the cliffs, as to come behind us unheard in his pompootees*, and spring high into the air for a few paces past us, in proof of his agility. We soon put this further to the test, by having him lowered over the limestone cliffs, perhaps five hundred feet in height. His manner of descent was free and easy. He sat upon a stick, about a yard in length and two inches in thickness, to the middle of which one end of the rope was fastened, the other being held by men above. When coming near his prey, he held the rope in one hand, and with the other threw a noose fastened to a rod round the birds. Several gulls so taken were brought up. When over the cliff he took pleasure in exhibiting himself, springing as far into the air from the surface of the precipice as he could do without injury to

* Cow-hide sandals, worn by the Arran islanders over woollen stockings.

himself from the rebound. He likewise performed various antics, and, with the stick as a seat, looked, comparatively with others in similar situations, quite comfortable and at his ease.*

In Clare, as in other parts of Ireland, the peasants are in the habit of regarding the flight of gulls inland as a prognostic of bad weather. In the north of Ireland this belief finds utterance in an old jingle—

“Sea-gull, sea-gull,
Sit in the sand,
It’s never fair weather,
When you come to land.”

Our philosophical angler observes on this subject:—
“I believe that the reason of this migration of sea-gulls and other sea-birds to the land is the scarcity of food. They may be observed at this time feeding greedily on the earwigs and larvæ driven out of the ground by severe floods; and the fish on which they prey in fine weather in the sea leave the surface when storms prevail, and go deeper.”†

Willingly would I have lingered on the cliffs of Moher, but the sinking sun warned me that it was time to return to Miltown Malbay. Near the

* Natural History of Ireland.

† Salmonia.

hotel, I reined in my horse, and rode slowly along, when happening to look up, I saw the young lady whom I had met on board the steam-boat. I could scarcely credit my vision, but so it was. There was no mistaking the ringlets that reflected the sunbeams like flashes of golden light. To increase my surprise, she was actually leaning out of the window of my room, and as I drew up close to the gateway, her eyes met mine.

CHAP. III.

The Race Ball. — Irish and English Girls. — Excursion to Kilkee. — My unknown Hostess. — The Leucadian Precipice. — The Irish Jaunting Car. — Arrival at Kilkee. — Milesian Hospitality. — A gathering of the "Lodges." — The Parish Priest. — "Shake-downs" on the Cliffs. — Dances on the Sward. — Moonlight Festivities. — The Charms of Kilkee. — Return to Limerick.

IF any doubts had existed in my mind respecting the identity of the lady, they would have been dispelled by her brother-in-law, who accosted me, saying he was sure I should be surprised to see him, and, probably, even more, to see his sister-in-law.

I certainly was surprised, and did not deny it; but of course I expressed myself pleased that she had accepted my offer, although by so doing I lost my bed-room, and had no hopes of securing another. However, there are few men, I apprehend, on the sunny side of thirty who would not have willingly made a far greater sacrifice than that of their bed-room for a beautiful girl; and, after all, the sacrifice was more nominal than real, for so long and devoted

were our offerings to Terpsichore that night, that I verily believe scarcely a bed was occupied. This I know, that our party of gentlemen adjourned from the ball-room to the beach, and in the bracing waters of the great Atlantic gained renewed vigour to meet the labours of the ensuing day.

But the poor devils of waiters, having no such spur to invigorate their used-up frames, were dead to all orders for breakfast; and it was literally only by storming the larder that anything was to be obtained.

I have often thought, during my wanderings in the Emerald Isle, that Irish thews and sinews are made of more enduring stuff than those vouchsafed to Saxons; at all events, I will back the physical powers of Irish against English girls, as far as dancing goes, by long odds.

By a sort of understanding among my friends, who had arrived at the conclusion that the presence of Miss — at Miltown Malbay was more due to myself than I was willing to admit, the lady was left very much on my hands; thus, during the previous night we had danced more frequently together than sedate chaperons would have approved; and before we parted it was arranged that we were to devote the following morning to a ramble on the neighbouring cliffs.

Such proceedings in England would, I am well aware, invite, and be attended by considerable criticism; but Irish girls, somehow or another, go a very long way in the labyrinthine path of love without losing their hearts, or what is worse—*forfeiting* their good names.

Eastern sages are said to have given the allegorical counsel to young persons to plant flowers rather than trees. The first grow quickly—bloom—fade—and there an end; whereas the tree is long growing, and if you have to tear it up at last, your heart-strings may be plucked away with its roots. Stripped of allegory, the advice runs—Flirt; but do ~~not~~ fall in love.

Whether I planted flowers or a deep-rooted tree, will be seen.

I have said that horse-racing possesses no charms for me, and it was natural enough, in talking over various matters during our walk on the cliffs, to express my indifference not only to the sport, but also to the many wild, and as the Irish would call them, rollicking scenes, which invariably form a considerable integral part of such pleasures, particularly when the scene is laid in the Emerald Isle. My remarks relative to these matters were followed by the question, “What then do you propose doing for the rest of the week?” to which I was utterly unable

to give even the shadow of a satisfactory answer. Indeed I was in that delightful state of uncertainty respecting my movements in Ireland during the ensuing three months, that any little accident might, I felt, sway my destiny. Otherwise, beautiful as were the lips that were fated to influence my plans, I doubt whether I should have surrendered myself so willing a prisoner to my fair friend. As it was, when the rather startling question was asked, "Will you return with us to Kilkee? my married sister will, I am sure, be delighted to see you, and we will show you all the lions of the place," I replied, having gathered experience now of the unceremonious give-and-take system of West of Ireland hospitality, that I should be very glad to see Kilkee under such pleasing auspices, if, indeed, my unexpected visit would not be considered an intrusion. Being assured that a warm and sincere welcome would be mine, and the lady's invitation having been endorsed by her brother-in-law, it only remained for me to acquaint my cousin with my new plans, which were not heard without a declaration on his part and that of his friends, that I had been conquered by the charms of the fascinating Miss ——, and that matrimonial bondage would quickly follow as a matter of course.

And, indeed, when I state that a few hours after our return to the *Atlantic Hotel*, I found myself seated on an outside car by the side of a lovely girl, whose very existence I was ignorant of a few days before, it must be considered that my cousin's prediction was not unreasonable.

The ancient Greeks, we read, when threatened with being conquered by love, which was not, as they imagined, the result of magic art, jumped down from the Leucadian promontory, which had the effect of freeing them, at once and for ever, from the impending bonds. Far more tremendous precipices than that of Leucadia were accessible to me, but I had great faith in my resolution to carry out my purpose of seeing the west of Ireland, and so I only thought the Greeks foolish in their generation, and had no misgivings with respect to a precipitous descent from the summit of the Atlantic washed cliffs. Of all vehicles that lend themselves best to the soft art of flirtation, commend me to an Irish outside car; that is, if you have the good fortune to sit next to the object of your admiration, otherwise you might as well be miles apart; but, side by side, with none to overlook you, there are ways and opportunities of improving an acquaintance which, it appears to me, no other carriage affords; so, without professing to be an adept in such

matters, I venture to say that my drive to Kilkee did not cause my acquaintance with my young lady friend to cool, for the brother had, with very proper discrimination, allowed me to sit next to his sister-in-law, while he drove from the opposite side.

But pleasant as all this was, my sober Saxon blood began to chill as we drew near Kilkee, and the question which conscience put more than once, "How will all this end?" failed to receive anything like a satisfactory answer.

Here was I on the point of entering a lady's house whom I had never seen,—from whom I had received no invitation, and who might either spurn me from her door, or perhaps—and the alternative was worse—receive me with open arms as the accepted suitor of her sister.

My fair companion must have observed sober thoughts stealing over me, for she rallied me on my silence and gravity, to which I made answer as best I could, and

—— "smiling, put the question by."

Fortunately, before much more could be said, we entered the little town of Kilkee, and in a few minutes stopped opposite a small neat house, which was the temporary abode of my new friend.

I cannot say that I was perfectly cool and self-possessed when I was presented and introduced to my friend's sister as the cousin of — ; but a glance at her face, on which was written, in unmistakeable characters, true Milesian hospitality and kindness, put all apprehensions of a cold reception to flight; and if any doubts lingered, they were fairly banished by the warm welcome which fell on my ears, and which made me feel, if I was not Miss ——'s accepted lover, I ought to have been. Certain is it, that in the course of a few minutes I felt as much at home in that small but pleasant abode, as if I had been its inmate for many months. The evening had deepened into night when we arrived, and shortly afterwards we were summoned to an elegant *petit souper*, at which we formed a merry *partie carrée*, talking over the ball and its incidents—always interesting to ladies—and planning numerous excursions by land and water. During the succeeding hours which skirted midnight, several Irish melodies were sung with great sweetness; and with these in my ears, and pleasant retrospective thoughts and anticipations in my head, I bade my amiable hostess and her charming sister good night.

Kilkee is, or was a few years ago, a very delightful

place. It may be thought that my judgment is probably warped by the circumstances under which I happened to visit it; but, apart from these, I really know few sea-side localities more desirable for a sea bathing summer residence than that small town.

It is situated at the head, and partly around a fine semi-circular bay, into which, thanks to two natural breakwaters, the Atlantic comes in shorn of its tremendous power; and apparently, weary of long agitation, sinks to rest on a beach of golden sand, which at low water affords a delightful promenade.

As a matter of course, the ostensible object of every person at Kilkee being the pursuit of pleasure, that proverbially fickle goddess is hunted in a variety of ways with more or less success. Riding parties along the summit of the cliffs, or boating expeditions which frequently involved a closer connexion with the water than was desirable, were every-day events; and the evenings were concluded by gatherings of friends and acquaintances in the small lodges, where dancing and music went hand-in-hand with the midnight hours.

But the great divinity of our festivities was the parish priest, who was, without exception, the jolliest fellow under the Pope's spiritual rule I ever met.

How he came to be a priest is an enigma that I never could explain, for he was far more fitted, physically and spiritually, to march at the head of a regiment than of a company of ecclesiastics. Portly, but not unwieldy in person, with a rubicund visage on which a setting sun seemed for ever glowing, clad in a black suit of the best broad cloth, his nether limbs encased in a pair of brilliantly polished riding boots, the heels of which were always adorned with a pair of formidable spurs, carrying, moreover, a whip, singularly like those used by huntsmen:—who, that knew Kilkee a few years ago, but must remember this sketch,—and remember, too, in all probability with grateful recollection, the unbounded hospitality of the reverend and good father? For being—rare circumstance in his profession—blessed with an independence, which made him at Kilkee, positively wealthy, it was his frequent custom and especial delight to invite visitors to the pretty watering-place, although entire strangers to him, to what he termed, “shakedowns on the cliffs,” which turned out to be cold collations on a very liberal scale, served on long tables under a capacious tent, at the head of which his reverence presided, attended by his musicians, consisting of a harper and piper. With the alteration of a word, the following lines, by our Laureate,

picture the man as he sat in jovial state on these occasions:—

“I see *his wealthy Reverence* yet,
 His double chin, his portly size;
 And who, that knew him, could forget
 The busy wrinkles round his eyes?

 In yonder chair I see him sit —
 Three fingers round the old silver cup,
 I see his grey eyes twinkle yet
 At his own jest—grey eyes lit up
 With summer lightnings of a soul
 So full of summer warmth, so glad,
 So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
 His memory scarce can make me sad.”

With that good taste which marks the fraternity of priests, — and I use the word in its most catholic sense, embracing Protestants as well as Romanists — Father ——— generally contrived to have at his pleasant parties the prettiest girls in Kilkee, to whom he showed attentions which, had he been a marriageable man, would have led to imaginings at least that he was not altogether satisfied with his bachelor state. But, I should be doing injustice to his reverence, if I omitted stating that, frequently as these shake-down parties were discussed, I never heard a word spoken in disparagement of the reverend gentleman's character; but, on the contrary, all classes and all

parties represented him as being as charitable and benevolent as he was kind and hospitable — in short, a pattern priest and a good man.

No wonder, therefore, that he was popular, and when I add that he was well educated and possessed the rare charms of sparkling wit allied to elegant conversation, it will be easily understood that he was the presiding *genius* of Kilkee. Indeed, I often think of him with peculiar pleasure, for he was — is still, if he be alive, which I hope is the case — a man whom it was at once a privilege and happiness to know.

The season of moonlight was generally selected for the cliff festivities, and I frequently formed one of a party of dancers on the velvet-sward while the moon was ribbing the broad Atlantic with silver light. All this was very poetical and delightful, and the more so as my partner, on these occasions, was generally the fair Miss —; but such enjoyment could not be permanent. Pleasures, sings the Scottish bard, are —

“ Like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed :
Or, like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white, then melts for ever.”

And I felt that having no intentions of making any

serious declarations — if, indeed, they would have been acceptable,—it was time for me to be off, and, accordingly, I took an early opportunity of announcing my intention to leave Kilkee.

I should, I apprehend, be accused of vanity were I to record how my announcement was received, and how many attempts were made to overturn my resolution,—but I remained steadfast; and remembering, that in the battle of love, the better part of valour is often discretion, I followed up my determination by leaving Kilkee the day after I had notified my intention of departing, and returned to Limerick, where the society of my cousin and his friends, who had returned from the coast, caused me—if not wholly to forget—at least to feel somewhat less the loss of the pleasant days at Kilkee. So, the reader sees, that I followed the advice of the Eastern sages, and did not plant a tree.

Let me not, however, be deemed ungrateful. The kindness and hospitality that I received from the numerous acquaintances and friends due to my Shannon steamboat adventure, are still remembered by me with pleasure and gratitude; and, be assured, that although the now almost ubiquitous *Iron Horse* has the effect of driving hospitality into far off nooks where his shrill steam scream is not yet heard, you

will still meet in the south and west of Ireland great hospitality and kindness, which will cause your cold Saxon blood to beat quick, and it will be your own fault if you are long a stranger in the land of the Celt.

CHAP. IV.

Excursion to Kerry. — Tralee. — Dingle Peninsula. — The Seven Hogs. — Ballyheige. — Unfrequented Roads. — The "Loose Gentlemen" of Kerry. — Daniel Mac-Tiege Carty. — "Irish Car-Boys." — Their Humour. — Anecdote. — Mac Gillicuddy's Reeks. — Carran-Tual. — The Iveragh Mountains. — Vast Moorlands. — Arrive at Ballinacourty. — Remarkable View. — The Black Pass. — Sporting in Dingle Bay. — Seal Shooting. — Habits of the Seal. — Anecdote of this Animal. — Seal-Catchers. — Abundance of Sea Birds. — Deep-Sea Fishing. — Encounter with a Conger Eel. — Great Variety of Fish. — The Fishing-Frog, Sea-Devil. — The Father Lasher. — Corking the Cobbler. — The Herring Fishery.

LIMERICK, with its city-wide hospitality, its very pretty girls and pleasant people, is certainly a very agreeable place: ask the officers, whose good star leads them to be quartered there, and they will, I feel sure, endorse my statement, — nay more, many of them will present you to a handsome lady, whose fascinations led a thoughtless bachelor to turn Benedict. But I had not left one city, with its whirl of dinner parties and soirées, to spend my time similarly

in another, though a smaller town ; so I made arrangements to start for the south-west coast, the exploration of the wilds of Kerry being one of the principal objects I had in view.

I was strengthened in this resolution by a pressing invitation which I received from the son of the rector of Ballinacourty, an exceedingly wild parish on the shores of Dingle Bay, to visit his family at the Glebe House. Such an opportunity of seeing the magnificent coast scenery of Kerry was not to be disregarded. Accordingly, after making some changes in my travelling equipment, I took the coach to Tralee, arrived there at noon, and hired a car to convey me from thence to Ballinacourty, — twenty-one miles. Soon after leaving Tralee I entered the peninsula of Dingle, which, to use Camden's graphic words, "shoots like a tongue into the sea roaring on both sides of it." The road winds at the head of Tralee Bay ; and, when about five miles from Tralee, you may see in clear weather Kerry Head and the Magharee Islands, or Seven Hogs, which have long had an ugly reputation among mariners. "Give these islands," says Smith, in his quaint History of Kerry, "a wide berth, for near them is the Bay of Ballyheige, infamous for shipwrecks." When abreast of Carrigaharoe Point, I diverged from the Dingle

road, and struck into one bearing south, which soon introduced me to the wilds of Kerry. The road winds among the spurs of the Slieve range of mountains; one of which, Fin-ma-Cool's Chair, is 2796 feet high. If you are fond of a wild mountain drive, you will be delighted with that across the Dingle peninsula from Tralee to Ballinacourty. You will not find it described in Guide-books; but do not turn aside from this route on that account. It is always charming in these days to fall upon unfrequented by-ways. I do not really think that the country you traverse has undergone the slightest alteration in outward appearance since those days when the Knights of Kerry travelled with a retinue of troopers to defend them from "loose gentlemen." Two centuries ago we are told that certain squires were greatly disliked by the Kerry peasants because they brought "loose gentlemen" to justice. The said "loose gentlemen" being nothing better than robbers and murderers, as may be seen by the following extract:— "Among others taken by the squires, who banded themselves together in self-defence, was one Daniel Mac-Tiege Carty, who was concerned in the murder of one Gilks, a smelter of iron, for endeavouring to defend himself from being robbed at noon-day in 1680. Also Owen Sullivan, a *loose gentle-*

man, who, in the night, ran Mr. Orpen through the body, behind his back, for presuming to recover a debt due to him from Sullivan's friend. Also Daniel Mac-Dermot and others for robbing some French refugees. Also Daniel Crowley and seven more Tories, who, in 1687, attempted to rob Mr. Orpen and his brother, but failed; their captain being shot, and, two others being wounded, were taken and executed."

It must be confessed, that escorts were needful in those days; but now the traveller in the by-ways of Ireland has but one thing to apprehend; this is, the probability that his fare will be rough, and his bed rude. True; Paddy has not quite given up the old effectual way of getting rid of his real or supposed enemies; but although, generally speaking, no lover of the Saxon, he will not harm the tourist, under whatever circumstances he may meet him, unless aggrieved, or (as you will see in the sequel) he considers himself insulted. So you need be under no apprehension if you follow my steps into the fastnesses of Kerry.

My drive was lonely enough, and would have been more so had not the driver, with that love for conversation peculiar to the race of Irish car-boys, kept up a continual fire of anecdotes and repartees, which

were only brought to a termination by the goal of our journey being attained. From an English driver the traveller gains but little information or entertainment—he has entered into an engagement to drive his fare; and, if he fulfils his compact, it would seem as if any exercise of his tongue exceeded the terms of his bargain. Not so the Irish carman, who is naturally of so loquacious a disposition that, if his passenger be grave and taciturn, he will, rather than remain silent, talk to his horse. I remember an anecdote of one of those eloquent boys who was driving a very fat and silent gentleman in an inside car. Coming to a hill, the driver descended and commenced a long horse-talk, urging his animal to get up the hill as quickly as possible. At length, however, from the combined influences of fatigue and a heavy draught, the horse came to a stand-still, upon which the driver proceeded to the door of the car, and, having opened it, closed it with a loud bang. “What is that for?” asked the heavy gentleman. “Whisht, now,” replied the driver; “shure the baste will think yees as got out;” and, renewing his eloquence, the animal recommenced his labours; though whether he did so, believing he had got rid of his heavy load or not, the anecdote does not say.

About five miles from Ballinacourty, a magni-

ificent view of Mac Gillicuddy's Reeks is obtained, — Carran Tual, the highest mountain in Ireland — the Fomies, beneath which a dark cleft appears, marking the Gap of Dunloe — Glena and Mangerton — all stand out in bold grandeur; while far to the east loom the Inveragh mountains, stretching away until their shadowy forms mingle with the clouds. It has been well observed, that ordinary travel now consists in arriving at a place, obliterating all intermediate space between the starting point and the goal; but in the wild south-west of Ireland, where railways are not, and in all probability never will be, the tourist will have abundant time and leisure to daguerreotype all these magnificent outlines on his mind.

The road still wound at the base of frowning mountains, whose weather-beaten tops evidence their battle with the storms of centuries. On, over vast tracts of moorland, sprinkled by diminutive patches of potatoes, which afford life and rags to bare-footed peasants and a bare existence to elongated pigs. The abodes of civilisation seemed past, when at length a church, which, from its extreme diminutiveness, might have been mistaken for a dwelling-house, announced the vicinity of Ballinacourty.

The night was falling fast when I presented myself

at the door of the hospitable glebe; and I must say that, although a great admirer of fine scenery, I was not sorry to exchange the prospect of mountains for the warm welcome that I received, followed by a substantial repast and a most delightful couch.

The scene that met my eyes the following morning was extremely singular. In front of the house rose a lofty mountain clothed with rich heather, and, by a singular freak of nature, a cut or glen of very narrow dimensions divided the mountain to the base, through which Dingle Bay and the distant Kerry mountains were visible. A small river ran through the glen, and discharged its waters at the head of a miniature bay, the shores of which were studded with fishing-boats.

Behind, to the north, rose the lofty chain of the Dingle mountains, that called Coom Dhuv, or the Black Pass, towering pre-eminently over its neighbours. And in the valley between these two mountain ranges nestled the small hamlet; the houses being in sociable contiguity, as if company were scarce in so remote and wild a part of Her Majesty's dominions.

One of the most characteristic features of the scene was the absence of trees. A few stunted and stag-headed shrubs were scattered here and there, but

their miserable attempts to become trees afforded no encouragement to plant others. The prevailing westerly winds are of too cutting a nature to allow trees to flourish; and it is curious to see how the bushes are trimmed by the keen blast, so as to resemble the precise formality of a Cockney's privet-hedge.

But the wildness of the scene was particularly gratifying to me, who had come expressly to the far west to see rough and savage, but still beautiful nature, and enjoy its sports with the sea-fishers, who in their homes among the cliffs —

“Hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.”

The sons of my reverend host, athletic youths, were my guides and masters; and it will not, I trust, prove wearisome to the reader if he accompany me on one or two of our sporting excursions. First, then, let me make him our companion during a famous day that we had in Dingle Bay, waging war upon seals, sea birds, and fish. Not that species of tame lake fishing sung by Waller when —

“Beneath, a shoal of silver fishes glides,
And plays about the gilded barge's sides;
The ladies angling in the crystal lake,
Feast on the water with the prey they take:
At once victorious with their lines and eyes,
They make the fishes and the men their prize.”

But rough work in rough water ; for no frail craft will do for the Atlantic. We accordingly set out in a stout boat, manned by four brawny sailors, and favoured by a westerly wind, shot along the coast until we came under the "amazing frown" of mountains, the buttresses of which dipped almost precipitously into the sea. Here we took in our sails, and approached the coast cautiously, keeping a keen look out for seals, which are in the habit of basking on the rocks. I had long desired to see these animals in their wild state, and with that innate love for sport, common, I apprehend, to most men, for man is a hunter by nature, I was also very desirous to shoot one of them,—a feat, be it observed, extremely difficult of accomplishment.

Warily and noiselessly did we approach the locality where they congregate, for the seal's organ of hearing is very acute, and it is his custom, when basking in the sun on the rocks, never to sleep long without moving,—seldom longer than a minute; then to raise his head, and if nothing alarming is seen or heard, to lie down again.

We were provided with good telescopes, and by their assistance detected a group of plump seals lying on some rocks about 400 yards ahead. With straining eyes and tingling fingers, we crept nearer and

nearer, until we were within about 100 yards of our game, when, being advised to fire, I took aim at the patriarch of the group, and being considered a good rifle shot, I fully expected on firing to see the fat beast turn over with his flippers in the air. But, alas! for my hopes; with an alacrity evincing no sign of a wound, the *moelrhon*, as our boatmen called him (from *moel*, bald, or without ears, and *rhon*, a spear or lance), with his companions flopped into the sea, leaving no traces behind but rings of foam.

Anxious to ascertain how long the animals would remain under water, I took out my watch, noting the time of their disappearance; but although we watched keenly, and waited patiently for twenty minutes, we saw them no more, so that they either remained under the sea a longer period, or, swimming beneath the surface of the water, came up at some distant locality.

In its natural state, the seal generally rises to breathe every fifteen minutes at least; but in confinement they have been observed to remain asleep, with their head under water, for an hour at a time. This remarkable power of existing without respiring for so long a period, has engaged the attention of our naturalists, and we find Cuvier, Lawrence, Home, and others, offering various explanations to account for the peculiarity.

Unwilling to be foiled, we made another attempt to capture a sea calf, observing with our glasses a number playing at a considerable distance from us. We succeeded in getting within rifle range, but although three shots were fired simultaneously, we were again disappointed. One at least had been hit, as blood tracks showed, but they all succeeded in getting into the water.

At the time I was considerably vexed by our failure, but now, looking back upon the disappointment with calm retrospection, and knowing more of the habits and nature of seals than I did at that period, I am glad that we did not kill one, and should be even better pleased if they had escaped our rifles unharmed; for the seal is endowed with a remarkably powerful brain development, and is gifted with an amount of sagacity which entitles him to take high rank even among domestic animals. He is easily tamed, and evinces a degree of attachment in domestication second only to man's most faithful friend, the dog. This is noticed by Pliny; and Cuvier describes one displaying much intelligence, and performing many tricks. Thus, when desired to raise himself on his extremity, and to take a staff between his flippers, like a sentinel, he obeyed the word of command;—he would also lie down on his

right side, or on his left, as directed, or tumble head over heels. He gave a flipper as a dog gives a paw, and protruded his lips for a kiss.

This attachment to their masters, and particularly to those who are in the habit of feeding them, may have been observed by the pleasing instance of the late seal in the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens, which, as many of my readers may have remarked, evinced a remarkable degree of activity and sense when the keeper was in sight. But probably the most convincing, as it certainly is the most affecting story of the domestic nature and attachment of the *Phoca vitulina*, or common seal, is the following story, which is well authenticated:—

“ A young seal was domesticated in the house of a farmer near the sea shore in Ireland. It grew apace; its habits were innocent and gentle; it played with the children, was familiar with the servants, and attached to the house and family. In summer its delight was to bask in the sun; in winter, to lie before the fire; or, if permitted, to creep into a large oven,—the common appendage to an Irish kitchen. A particular disease attacked the black cattle, many of which died. An old hag persuaded the credulous owner that the mortality among his cattle was owing to his retaining about his house an unclean beast,—

the harmless and amusing seal,—and that it should be got rid of. The superstitious man caused the poor creature to be carried in a boat beyond Clare Island, and thrown into the sea.

“The next morning the seal was found quietly sleeping in the oven. He had crept through an open window and taken possession of his favourite retreat.

“The cattle continued to die; the seal was again committed to the deep at a greater distance. On the second evening, as the servant was raking the kitchen fire, she heard a scratching at the door; she opened it, and in came the seal. It uttered a peculiar cry, expressive of delight, at finding itself once more at home; and, stretching itself on the hearth, fell into a sound sleep. The old hag was again consulted. She said it would be unlucky to kill the animal, but advised that its eyes should be put out, and then thrown into the sea. The deluded wretch listened to the barbarous suggestion, and the innocent creature was deprived of its sight; and a third time, writhing in agony, was carried beyond Clare Island, and thrown into the sea. On the eighth night after the harmless seal had been devoted to the Atlantic, it blew a tremendous gale. In the pauses of the storm a wailing noise was at times faintly heard at

the door, which the servant concluded to be the *banshee* (the harbinger of death in a family). The next morning, when the door was opened, the seal was found lying dead upon the threshold."

After this story, the reader will probably not be sorry to hear that we were baffled in our attempts to shoot a seal.

Formerly when these animals were more common than they are now, they were not unfrequently captured by fishermen during moonlight nights in the caves under the cliffs. The capture was not, however, effected without considerable risk and much struggling on the part of the animals; for seals are apt to take summary vengeance on their enemies by furious bites. Old seal-catchers believe that seals never relinquish their grip until they feel something crunching, and they were therefore in the habit of tying bags filled with charcoal round their arms. In case of a personal encounter with an infuriated seal, that portion of the arm protected by the charcoal-bags was presented to the animal, which, according to the seal-catchers, relaxed its hold when it felt the charcoal crumbling between its jaws.

But though disappointed in killing seals, our sporting propensities were still keen, so we turned our guns upon the sea-birds which literally darkened

the air around their favourite rock-haunts. Among these we made great havoc; and half-filled the boat with puffins, gulls, cormorants, rock-pigeons, &c. Then we rowed into a little sand-paved creek, and selecting a charming locality on the beach, spread the bountiful fare providently provided by my friends, and dined with an appetite and zest worthy the occasion.

The day was magnificent, singularly so, for Kerry; the sea lay before us, swelling in mighty pulsations as the great Atlantic waves rolled in, their summits ruffled only by a balmy sail-compelling breeze; behind us rose the bold precipitous coast, backed by lofty mountains; and over all appeared a sky cloudless throughout its azure vault.

Towards evening we drew homewards, trailing long lines from the boat, which ever and anon led to our acquaintance with various kinds of fish, which were apparently as numerous as the sea-birds. I had just re-set my line after capturing a very fine haddock, when a tremendous tug, which nearly cut my finger to the bone, announced that I had hooked some enormous fish. The evidence became strengthened as my attempts to draw the line in were resisted by an amount of force, which led me to fancy that the bait had been seized by a voracious hake, or a young

shark. Fortunately, the line was extremely strong, so I had no apprehension of its giving way; but I had less faith in the hook, which was ill-tempered, rude, and clumsy. However, there was nothing for it but to haul in as best I could; and after a considerable struggle, during which the fish had often all his own way, carrying away many yards of line, I brought him sufficiently near the surface of the water to be able to give him a name. Stretching far beneath in serpentine folds of silvery whiteness, I beheld a huge conger eel writhing in desperate efforts to dissolve the partnership he had effected with the hook. I confess the sight of my capture did not impress me very favourably; for, besides the mortal aversion that I entertain to anything of a serpentine nature that has the breath of life within it, I knew that a huge conger, as this was, is a very ugly customer in a boat. "Conger," observes the late Mr. Yarrell*, "acquire a very large size. Specimens weighing eighty-six pounds, one hundred and four pounds, and even one hundred and thirty pounds, have been recorded, some of them measuring more than ten feet long, and eighteen inches in circumference. They possess great strength, and often

* Hist. of British Fishes, vol. ii. p. 306.

prove very formidable antagonists if assailed among rocks, or when drawn into a boat on a line."

Our boatmen had evidently a dislike to the snake-like fish, for they prepared to do it battle as if their very lives were in jeopardy. Taking out their knives, two of them seized the animal behind the head, while two others held the tail as firmly as they could; but, even under these circumstances, it was astonishing to see the extraordinary muscular power of the huge eel, which evidently resolved not to surrender without a very determined struggle. But the repeated applications of the boatmen's long and sharp knives at length told upon the unfortunate fish.

It measured exactly seven feet three inches from head to tail, and was estimated to weigh eighty pounds. Within the stomach we found four small haddocks, and a variety of crustacea. I had the curiosity to examine this huge eel anatomically, and was particularly struck by the number and size of the vertebræ, to which it is evidently indebted, in some measure, for its great strength. The greatest number of vertebræ in fresh-water eels is 116, whereas those of the conger amount to 156.

Although the flesh of this great sea-snake is eaten by the lower classes in Scotland and England, our boatmen told us that the Irish peasantry "in their

parts" would not touch it. This, however, is the less surprising, as there are many varieties of far better fish to be had in the greatest abundance on the Kerry coast. On those days, which a pleasant conceit of the Romish Church calls *fast days*, I was told it was not uncommon to see as many as fifteen varieties of fish at Derrynane Abbey; I have frequently seen as many as ten at the houses of Roman Catholic gentlemen in the south-west of Ireland. Among the less common kinds of fish caught in Dingle Bay, is the "angler," also popularly known by the aliases of fishing-frog, sea-devil, and wide-gab. Ichthyological science, which is more precise, bestows upon it only one name—*Lophius piscatorius*.

I was fortunate during my stay at Ballinacourty, to see a specimen of this strange and curious fish. It is remarkable for the enormous capacity of its mouth, which is nearly as wide as the head, and for its internal economy, the stomach, which is very visible, occupying nearly all the animal's interior. The voracity of the angler is extraordinary. Mr. Couch, a great ichthyological authority, says:—"It makes but little difference what his prey is, either in respect of size or quality. A fisherman had hooked a cod-fish, and while drawing it up, he felt a heavier weight attach itself to his line; this proved to be an angler

of large size, which he compelled to quit its hold by a heavy blow on its head, leaving its prey still attached to the hook; but after the latter had been engulfed in the enormous jaws, and perhaps stomach, it struggled through the gill aperture of the angler, and in that situation both were drawn up together. I have been told of its swallowing the large ball of cork employed as a buoy to a bulter or sea-line." Another authority, Mr. Montagu, says:—"When the angler is taken in a net, its captivity does not destroy its rapacious appetite, but it generally devours some of its fellow-prisoners, which have been taken from the stomach alive, especially flounders. It is not so much sought after for its own flesh, as for the fish generally to be found in its stomach; thus, though the fishermen reject the fish itself, they do not reject those that the fish has collected. A male, measuring three feet five inches long, was suspended by the head. In this position the contents of its stomach were readily seen, and I perceived several cuttle-fish."

These extracts sufficiently attest the voracity of the angler; but as it is a slow swimmer, it would fare badly were it not provided with a very curious apparatus, which enables it to capture small fish, to which it is indebted for the name of angler.

This apparatus consists of two filaments about the thickness of strong whipcord, three feet long, attached to the animal's head, by a process resembling two links of a chain, so as to give perfect freedom of motion in all directions. The extremity of the anterior filament consists of a leaf-like membrane. The posterior filament is terminated by a point.

When the angler uses this fishing apparatus, he conceals himself generally in the sandy bed of the sea near the shore, and elevating the filaments, agitates them on the surface of the water. The effect is that small fish are attracted to them, and are immediately seized by the angler lurking beneath.

Numerous writers have borne testimony to this practice, which certainly entitles the angler to take high rank among his biped brethren of the angle.

While on the subject of queer fish, I may mention another, which, though not uncommon round our coasts, I saw in Dingle Bay for the first time. This is the father-lasher, or *Cottus bubalis*, which, though diminutive, being only about seven or eight inches long, presents a very formidable appearance from its bulldog species of head, and the multitude of spines on the body. When touched, it elevates these in a most threatening manner, as porcupines erect their quills. It is a terrible nuisance to fishermen, as it contrives

to entangle itself in the meshes of their nets, particularly during the herring fishery. It was while watching a haul of herring-nets in Dingle Bay that I saw this fish, and at the same time the punishment awarded to some of the unfortunate little animals which the fishermen call "corking the cobbler." It consisted in fixing a large piece of cork to the dorsal spine, by which means the fish was unable to descend below the surface of the water; for, although it made the most desperate efforts to get down, they only produced a series of convulsive bobbing, which threw the fishermen into fits of laughter.

After capturing several dozens of excellent fish, we wound up our lines as we came alongside of the little fleet of Ballinacourty boats putting out for the herring fishery.

The Bay of Dingle was literally alive with herrings; and as soon as our fish and fowl were cast on shore, our boat was put in requisition for the night's fishing.

CHAP. V.

Curious Superstition. — Blessing Boats. — The Holy Wells of Kerry. — Preservative against the Sorceries of Druids. — Votive Offerings. — Lough Corr.

ON looking seaward the following morning when I rose, I saw a crowd of persons on the shore. The sight being unusual, I walked to the beach, where I found four boats surrounded by fishermen and peasants, for the most part in a state of considerable excitement.

In answer to my inquiries, I learned that contrary to expectation, the preceding night's fishing had been almost a total failure. Great discussion was held respecting the probable cause of this singular circumstance, and after many conjectures, the failure was ascribed to our shooting on the previous day, which, it was alleged, had frightened the shoal of herrings so much that they had departed from Dingle Bay. Now, I remembered that considerable displeasure had been expressed by the fishermen when they saw the heap of sea-fowl we had shot cast on the

beach. Bad luck would result, they said, from our sport, for herrings did not like the noise of fire-arms. Be this true or not, and I may mention that this belief is general among Irish sea-fishers, the night's fishing had certainly turned out a miserable failure; and, as under existing circumstances but little hopes were entertained that better fortune would attend further efforts, serious deliberations were held whether some means might not be devised to bring back the good luck so suddenly lost.

At length it was determined to try the efficacy of saying prayers over the fishing-boats, and, accordingly, the priest was sent for. Presently his reverence arrived, and, as the crowd made way for him, his impressive words,—“God save all here,”—spoken in Irish, were responded to by a devout “Amen!”

Prayers were now said over the boats which had been unfortunate, and the fishermen seemed as if a load had been taken off their minds when the religious ceremony had been performed.

The scene was extremely singular, but the behaviour of the peasants was so solemn as to disarm criticism. The assurance of St. James respecting the efficacy of a righteous man's prayer was evidently with them a deep-rooted belief. They

revered their pastor, and considered him powerful in prayer.

There is no doubt, however, that great superstition is allied to the religion of the Kerry peasant. The entire population of that wild county, with few exceptions, are in the habit of resorting periodically to holy wells and places for the cure of diseases and the removal of supposed bans or curses from themselves, their relations, or their property. A very interesting letter on this subject, from the Rev. Charles O'Connor to his brother, the late Owen O'Connor Don, originally published in a pamphlet entitled "The Holy Wells of Ireland," throws considerable light on these religious superstitions. From it I extract the following passage:—"I have often inquired of your tenants what they themselves thought of their pilgrimages to the holy wells, where multitudes assemble annually to celebrate what they, in broken English, term patterns (patron's days); and when I pressed a very old man to state what possible advantage he expected to derive from the singular custom of frequenting in particular such wells as are contiguous to an old blasted oak, or an upright unhewn stone, and what the meaning was of the yet more singular custom of sticking rags on the branches of such trees, and spitting on them — his answer, and the answer

of the oldest men, was, that their ancestors always did it; — that it was a preservative against *Geasa-Dravidacht*, or the sorceries of Druids; that their cattle were preserved by it from infectious disorders; that the fairies were kept in good humour by it; and so thoroughly persuaded were they of the sanctity of their pagan practices, that they would travel bare-headed and bare-footed from ten to twenty miles for the purpose of crawling on their knees round these wells, oak trees, and upright stones, westward as the sun travels, some three times, some six, some nine, and so on, in uneven numbers, until their voluntary penances were accomplished. The waters of Lough-Corr were deemed so sacred, from ancient usage, that they would throw into the lake whole rolls of butter as a preservative for the milk of their cows against the Druids.

“The connection of this superstition with the historical traditions of the pagan Irish is so evident and so extensive, that it affords a subject of useful investigation and discovery, as it strongly illustrates the Mosaic account of the progress of population from the plains of Sennaar to the western extremities of Europe, and exposes in a very forcible manner the futility of those ridiculous systems by which Bailly and others have endeavoured to account for the origin

of man, tracing his progress from north to south in direct opposition to all the histories, all the traditions, and all the vestiges of ancient nations.”

The holy wells and stations in the south of Ireland attest how high their repute for sanctity stands among the peasantry to this day; for they are strewn with rags, shreds of all colours, little wooden vessels, &c. which have been deposited by pilgrims, who, in the exercise of faith worthy the days of paganism, believe that certain exemption from misfortune will reward them for their votive offerings.

CHAP. VI.

Excursion to Dunmore Head. — The Kerry Hobbies. — Dingle. — Ventry. — Magnificent Harbour. — The last Struggle of the Danes. — Gillymore, Prince of Thomond. — Wild Ride. — Dunquin. — Ferriter's Cove. — Carrageen. — Sibyl Head. — The Blasquets. — The Sound. — The Spanish Armada. — Wreck of "Our Lady." — The Gallowglasses. — The Western Point of Europe. — The Thunder Rock. — Valentia. — The — Skelligs. — Ladies' Chaussure. — A Pic-Nic on the Rocks. — Return to Ballinacourty.

AMONG the excursions kindly planned for my gratification, was one to Ferriter's Cove and Dunmore Head, which latter, apart from its picturesque grandeur, is interesting as being the most western land of Europe.

Mounted on ponies, we set off while yet the sun

"Flatter'd the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding bright streams with heavenly alchymy."

We were a merry party, our numbers being pleasantly increased by the company of two girls, whose spirits were only equalled by the courage with which

they rode over places which would have appalled the heart of the majority of lady equestrians. But, indeed, the Kerry pony is a wonderful bog-trotting, or rather, bog-leaping little animal, possessed at once of enormous strength, and great activity and endurance. His mountain education apparently gives him a prescriptive right, of which he is not slow to take advantage, viz., travelling over rough and soft places after his own fashion, preferring his own eyesight to that of his rider's, and as he seldom errs, it is generally better not to dispute his judgment on doubtful ground by rein, whip, or spur. Dr. Smith, writing of these ponies in 1756, says:—"The little hobbies of the country are the properest horses to travel through it; but a man must abandon himself entirely to their guidance, which will answer much better than if one should strive to manage and guide their footsteps, for these creatures are a kind of automata, or machines, which naturally follow the laws of mechanics."*

Our road conducted us through Dingle, which is the principal town of this part of Ireland. It was anciently called Dangean-ni-Cushey, or the Castle of Hussey, from a castle built here by an old family of

that name. In the time of Elizabeth it received the name of Dingle-i-Couch, traded extensively with Spain, and sent members to Parliament. From this high estate it has greatly fallen, and now presents the unhappily too general appearance of Irish towns, being ragged, dirty, and poverty-stricken.

The harbour is well adapted for vessels of moderate burthen, but is very difficult of access during a strong westerly wind, and ships failing to make it, and running to the eastward; are in great danger of being lost on Castlemaine bar.

The herring fishery was in active operation here at the time of our visit. The grass was literally covered with these fish, split and salted, and many houses were thatched with them. It was strange, amidst such abundance, to see so much distress and misery.

On leaving Dingle, we pursued a bridle road running near the magnificent harbour of Ventry, which is separated from that of Dingle by a narrow isthmus. The west point of Ventry harbour bears the name of Cahir Trant, where the ruins of a so called old Danish intrenchment may be seen. There is a tradition that this isthmus was the last ground in Ireland possessed by the Danes. The supposition is probably based on the following curious

account given by Hanmer, in his chronicle of a great battle fought at Ventry between the Irish and Danes about the time of Constantine :—

“ There were at this period several persons kept in pay, not only to defend the kingdom, but also, it seems, to travel into distant countries, where they fought several combats, and brought a yearly tribute to their country. These champions were so much envied for their exploits, that several foreigners joined to invade Ireland in different places at once. Some landed in the north part of the kingdom, and were repulsed with great slaughter by Conkedah, one of the petty kings of Ulster. A second party that landed at Skerries, was defeated at a place called Knocknegan, *i. e.* the hill of dead men’s heads, by Dermot, King of Leinster. The third company of these Danish invaders came to Ventry, *i. e.* the white strand, where the Irish being assembled from all parts, prevented their landing for seven days, which occasioned the slaughter of so many people that the sea shore was coloured red with the blood of the slain. At length one Gillymore, Prince of Thomond, being disgusted because he was ordered from the front of the battle to the rear, revolted to the enemy, and gave them notice of a proper place that was left unguarded to land their forces, which they did

accordingly, and set fire to their fleet. The place where they landed was easily defended, being an isthmus, where they refreshed their men for ten days, without the Irish being able to annoy them, during which time Gillymore headed them in several attacks against his own countrymen.

“ One day, Gillymore having washed his hands in some water, which he had discoloured with the blood of the natives, and soon after calling for a cup of wine, he was answered that there stood a bowl of that liquor upon the table; he having, it seems, mistaken the bowl he had washed in for that of the wine, drank it up, upon which a foreigner asked what kind of fellow he was who, like a brute, had drunk up his own blood? Gillymore, upon hearing this, took it so much to heart, that the next night he departed secretly, submitted to his father, and gave him a particular account of the weakness of the invaders, which turned out so much to their disadvantage in several succeeding skirmishes, that they were at last overthrown with great slaughter.”

To this story we may apply the words, “ *Si non e vero e ben trovato* ;” for whatever may have caused the traitor Gillymore to return to his people whom he had betrayed, the legend terminates happily and appropriately. Fortunate, too, were the Irish to get

rid of their tyrannical and even barbarous invaders; for we read, when the country was under Danish dominion, an ounce of gold was exacted from every householder, the non-payment of which was punished by mutilation of the nose, whence the tribute was known by the name of the nose-tax. A decree was also made, giving the chiefs of districts the bridal favour of newly-married virgins, but which the governors, at their caprice, had the power of commuting for a certain consideration in the form of gold.

Beyond Ventry, civilisation seems not to have penetrated. The ride from that place to Dunquin, six miles, is of the wildest description. You climb the buttresses of Mount Eagle—a noble mountain, which gives its big name to a very little man—and inclining south, arrive presently at Ferriter's Cove. Here the rocks have been fretted by the waves into the most fantastic shapes,—lofty pinnacles, towers, domes, airy spires;—all forms which stone assumes under the cunning hand of man are here. The historical associations connected with this part of the coast are interesting. The Spaniards had settlements in the vicinity, and fortified their abodes. The ruins may yet be traced. That called Ferriter's Castle is the most conspicuous: a stern tower hangs almost over the Atlantic, covered with lichens, and washed

by the sea spray. But most of the strongholds have crumbled to ruin.

“Where my high towers whilom used to stand,
On which the lordly falcon wont to toure,
There now is but a heap of lime and sand
For the screech owl to build her baleful boure.”

But, though the buildings are no more, the peregrine falcons and golden eagles yet wheel round the natural rock spires, more enduring than the works of man.

The peasantry are in keeping with the wild aspect of nature, and are more like savages than civilised beings. Not one in a hundred can speak a word of English, and their stare of astonishment at us gave evidence that the visit of a stranger is an event of no ordinary occurrence. We were followed by dozens of bare-footed men and women, who leaped from crag to crag with the agility and precision of mountain goats.

It was really very remarkable to witness their astonishment when I sat down on a rock and opened my sketch-book. By degrees their curiosity mastered their timidity, and they cautiously approached, until at length they clustered round in amazement, seeming to regard my simple drawing operations as connected with some strange enchantment. What they would have said or done had the broad eye of a

photographic camera been directed upon them, it is impossible to predict.

Zig-zag paths scar the face of the cliffs, to enable the population to gather the sea-rack and carrageen, or Irish moss, which are thrown up in large quantities after a westerly gale. This moss has, on more than one occasion, saved many of the unfortunate peasantry, if not from starvation, at least from the pangs of hunger; and the pine stumps which abound in the neighbouring bogs yield material for light when torn in shreds. Ray, it may be mentioned, observes, that the Scotch or pitch fir was formerly common throughout Kerry and Clare.

“Now,” said one of my companions, as we rode towards Dunmore Head, the culminating point of the marine wonders of Kerry—“stop.” I reined in my pony. He dismounted, and, drawing out his handkerchief, obtained permission to blindfold me. “I will lead your pony, and, when I give the word, take off the bandage and look.”

So, I rode on in darkness; the motion made me aware we were ascending, and the continually increasing roar of the waters told me that I was approaching some great cliff-face against which the waves were beating.

At length, for expectation was strained, my pony

stopped; and, obeying orders, I uncovered my eyes. Heavens! what a scene was that before and around me. A long iron-bound coast, indented by numerous bays, stretched away to the north, terminated by Sibyl Head and the Three Sisters. To the west the dark Blasquets appeared; a group of islands which you are told were once integral portions of Ireland, but which have been disunited from the mainland by the action of the sea.*

Including mere rocks, the Blasquets comprise about fifty islands. The largest, Innis-more, is three miles long and about half a mile broad, and affords sustenance to half a dozen families. Their ancestors had the reputation of enjoying excellent health. Dr. Smith says of the inhabitants in his day — “They are strong, lusty, and healthy, and, what is very surprising, neither man, woman, nor child died on it for the space of forty-five years before I was there, although several persons, who, during that period, came over to the main land, fell sick and died out of the island, almost in sight of their usual abode.”

Although only the largest island is permanently

* “About a mile from Dunmore Head, stands the Blasquets, called also the Blasques, probably from *Blaosg*, in Irish a scale or shell, being supposed to have scaled off the continent of Ireland.” — *Smith's Hist. of Kerry*.

inhabited by families, another island, comprising not more than a couple of acres, remarkable for its vast height and conical form, is the abode of a couple of men who have the care of a lighthouse. They are always provisioned for six months, as from the frequent storms that prevail, a boat can seldom effect a landing on the jagged rocks.

Other islands were formerly inhabited, as there are remains of ecclesiastical structures still to be seen on them ;—one, on Inishtooskert, bears the name of St. Brandon's Oratory.

The passage between the great Blasquet and Dunmore Head, called the Sound, is much dreaded by mariners who venture in these seas. The tide sets through the Sound with terrific force, baffling the most skilful navigation.

In September, 1588, part of the Spanish Armada, consisting of the admiral's ship, the *St. John*, another large ship of 1,000 tons, called *Our Lady of the Rosary*, and some smaller vessels, came into the Sound in distress. *Our Lady* struck upon a rock and was wrecked, and out of five hundred persons on board, among whom were the Prince of Asculi and one hundred gentlemen, only the pilot's son was saved.

This man, who was examined respecting the cir-

cumstances attending the shipwreck, gave the following curious evidence:—"When they parted from the rest of the fleet in a great tempest, they had seven hundred men on board, and but five hundred when the ship sunk, the rest being lost by fight and diseases. Among those drowned was the Prince of Asculi, who wore a suit of white satin and russet silk stockings. When the ship struck, one of the captains slew the pilot, saying he did it by treason. The gentlemen thought to save themselves by the boat, but she was so fastened to the ship that they could not get her loose, whereby they all perished, as did all the people in the ship excepting himself. There was on board fifty great pieces of brass cannon, fifty tuns of sack, 15,000 ducats in silver, in gold the same sum, besides plate, gold cups, and much apparel."

It seems, however, that the Spaniards held the Irish in as much dread as the rocks, for a mariner who was wrecked in another ship at the same period on the Clare coast, gave evidence that one MacLaughlin MacCob, a Gallowglass, killed eighty Spaniards with his gallowglass (a kind of pole-axe); and other unfortunate shipwrecked men appear to have shared no better fate from the Gallowglasses, as the Irish soldiers of that period were called.

But we are standing on Dunmore Head. The

ponies have been led by gossoons to pick the grass on the mountain slopes, and we are free to wander on our feet, which we prefer here, even to those of the sure-footed Kerry hobbies. I have perched myself on a ledge from whence a stone falls plump into the Atlantic, full seven hundred feet below. I believe there is not a single rock that will afford clinging-room more to the west in our quarter of the globe. So, if other ambitious aspirants are standing on the highest mountain in Europe, my brains and climbing-powers have enabled me to reach its most western point. Curious yearning is this to attain almost inaccessible and often dangerous places. You cannot see a lofty mountain without a strong desire to tread the summit, although the chances are that you will be rewarded by a mist view. You are near a precipice, and you are led by a will, not your own, to fathom its depths. Even more perhaps: you are tempted—and heavens what a temptation it is!—to take a leap into eternity.

Never was this devilish feeling stronger on me than when I stood on Dunmore Head. And it grew in intensity. So, as a safeguard, I lay down on the ledge face and grasped a projecting rock. Then with calm feelings I looked below—saw the mighty precipices and rock islands warring with the waters

which swelled, and raged, and clothed them with foam; heard too the roar of the restless waves as they lashed the *Thunder Rock** far seaward, which, like a noble spirit in adversity, re-appeared when the raging waters had passed over it apparently unchanged. Yet, no — unaltered to the eye, but not indeed unchanged. For, as the drip from the gentle fountain wears the stone — so, but to a much greater degree, do the waters of the Atlantic wear the coasts exposed to that vast and restless ocean. •

South of Dunmore Head you will catch a misty glimpse of Valentia, and if the atmosphere be very clear, you may see the Skelligs, which encounter the fury of Atlantic storms before they break on the Kerry coast. When you have photographed the scene from Dunmore Head well on your memory, descend from your lofty eyrie, and explore the neighbouring cliffs. Boys will conduct you by bird-nesting paths to the base of some of them. Be careful, however, for the rocks are very slippery from their seaweed coating, especially when the tide has recently ebbed.

Notwithstanding this difficulty and the forbidding nature of the rough and sharp crags, our explorations

* One of the Blasquets.

would, in all probability, have been more extensive and adventurous had it been possible for our fair equestrian companions to have exhibited as much activity on their feet as they did on horseback. But with that not very singular desire to set off the natural beauty of remarkably small feet, their *chaussure* consisted of delicate kid-boots, entirely unsuited for rugged rock-climbing.

This inappropriate, *chaussure* reminded me of a couple of girls whom I had met the previous year on the Montanvert. They had ridden up the mountain from Chamouni, for the purpose of visiting the Mer de Glace. On dismounting, they stood before us in sandal'd satin shoes, in which, out of keeping as they were with the proposed excursion, they would have explored the glacier had not their more prudent and less romantic papa ordered them to remain behind.

Having satisfied our curiosity with due regard to safety and the comfort of the ladies, we now sought a sheltered nook, for the wind is a rude searcher in these parts, spread our repast, and with the keen sauce of hunger, sharpened by a long ride and the sea breeze, did great justice to the fare considerately provided for us by the worthy rector's wife. And though we had no dessert or rich wines to woo us to

remain round the rock which we had made our table, the singularity of the situation and the grand features of the scenery detained us so long, that the night was far advanced when we regained Ballinacourty.

CHAP. VII.

Dingle Peninsula. — Early Christian Temples. — Excursion to the Oratory of Gallerus. — The "Saint's Road." — The Kerry Peasantry. — Their scholarly Accomplishments. — Castle of Gallerus. — Smerwick Bay. — Dunroulin Headland. — Fort-del-Ore. — Grand Cliffs. — The Oratory. — Curious Structure. — Christian Inscriptions. — The House of Tears. — Oratory of Temple Gacl. — Kilmalkedar. — Circular Stone Houses. — Irish Pagan Kings. — Saint Brandon.

THE peninsula of Dingle possesses other features of interest besides stupendous marine scenery. There, within hearing of the mighty sea-voice, Christianity set up her earliest temples in Ireland; and, while the people elsewhere walked in darkness, the living God was worshipped in that wild and rugged district.

Shadowy and mythical as all history is when entombed in the depth of many centuries, we have, nevertheless, tolerably conclusive and trustworthy evidence that, on the introduction of Christianity into Ireland in the fourth century, churches, or rather oratories, built of wood and uncemented stone,

were erected in various parts of that island. Those constructed of the more perishable material have long since disappeared, and, indeed, by far the greater portion of those built of stone have also shared the common fate of all man's works; but a few remain; and nowhere are they so perfect and numerous as in Kerry.

Dr. Smith's quaint old history of this county, which I met with in Limerick, gave me a great desire to see a specimen of these edifices; and as the most perfect example in Ireland is the so-called oratory of Gallerus, within a ride of Ballinacourty, I determined to visit it.

Favoured by a lovely day, I left my hospitable quarters at ten o'clock, my conveyance and companion being the Kerry pony on which I rode to Dunmore Head. He had proved himself on that excursion to be a willing and enduring animal; and I had no apprehension that the present trip — thirty-two miles out and home — would be too much for him.

My road led me through Dingle. Thus, should any of my readers be disposed to follow my steps in these Irish by-ways, they may start for this excursion from Dingle; the oratory, which was the special object of my pilgrimage, being only about five miles

from that small town. It is situated not far from the head of Smerwick Bay, in the parish of Kilmalkedar, near the north-west extremity of Dingle peninsula. You cannot well go astray. A tolerably good bridle-road is carried across the wild mountain slopes between Dingle and Ballynagall, a small hamlet and coast-guard station on the east shore of Smerwick Bay. Follow this for about three miles from Dingle, and then strike into a road to the left, leading to the ruins of the castle of Gallerus (built by the Fitz-Geralds, first knights of Kerry), two miles farther. Near these ruins is the oratory.

But should you miss the way, you will be pretty sure to have some bog-trotting lads at the heels of your pony; sharp little fellows full of wit and local information.* Asking one of these the way to the

* This character applies to Irish boys generally. During the late Ordnance Survey of Ireland, lads were found without difficulty to calculate trigonometrical areas at one halfpenny the triangle. Dr. Smith has left us his evidence of the scholarly accomplishments of the Kerry peasants a century ago:—"It is well known that classical reading extends itself even to a fault among the lower and poorer kind in this county; many of whom, to the taking them off more useful works, have greater knowledge in this way, than some of the better sort in other places. Greek is taught in some of the mountainous parts, generally by persons who pick it up as mendicant scholars at some English school. Neither is the genius of the com-

oratory, — “Shure,” he answered, “yee’s be on the Saint’s Road now.” Such, indeed, is the road called, as you will see by referring to the Ordnance Map leading immediately to the oratory, — strong traditional evidence of the veneration in which the building has been, and continues to be, held by the inhabitants.

I had now reached my goal ; and, leaving my pony in charge of a boy, I passed across a field, surmounted a rude stone wall, and found myself opposite the object of my pilgrimage. The situation of this monastic cell is extremely striking. Within sight and sound of the Atlantic, which rolls up the Bay of Smerwick, mountains to the east, south, and west, the recluse here was almost shut out from the world. The cliffs which terminate the headlands of the bay are extremely grand, ranging towards the west to a height of between five hundred and seven hundred feet. The west headland, which bears the name of Dunroulin, possesses historical interest. Near it, and a little to the west, the Spaniards who

monalty confined to this kind of learning alone, for I saw a poor man near Black Stones, who had a tolerable notion of calculating the epacts, golden number, dominical letter, the moon’s phases, and even eclipses, although he had never been taught to read English.” — *Hist. of Kerry.*

fought with Desmond were defeated in the reign of Elizabeth. The remains of *Fort-del-Ore*, in which they intrenched themselves, are still visible.

Without pretending to archæological lore, which however has too frequently the unhappy tendency to darken the objects it professes to illuminate, I think no one who examines the very curious structure at Gallerus can come to any other conclusion than that it is very ancient. This is proved by the circumstance that the building is wholly composed of uncemented stones. For the early Irish colonists, the Firbolg and Tuatha De Danann tribes, built their dwellings in this manner, being ignorant of the use of lime.

The oratory is 23 feet long, 8 feet 7 inches broad, and 16 feet high. The longitudinal walls, which are about 4 feet thick, run east and west, and form, with those at right angles to them, parabolic curves. Various conjectures have been hazarded respecting the manner in which the walls were thus made to converge to the apex. The general opinion seems to be that they were built over a heap of earth, which was removed when the structure was rendered self-supporting by wedging in key stones at the apex. The entrance is at the west end, and consists of a door 5 feet 7 inches high, 2 feet 4 inches at the base, and 1 foot 9 inches at the top. The interior is

lighted by a single window piercing the east wall. No ornament or carving of any kind appears on the stones; but the gables retain holes in which crosses were probably placed.

Thus, had we no other evidence than the structure itself, we might be justified in doubting that it was erected by Christians for Christian worship. But near the building a long prostrate stone may be seen, bearing an inscription in the Græco-Roman characters of the fourth century, and a cross with the arms enclosed by a circle. The inscription, which is greatly defaced, is thus read:—

THE STONE OF COLUM, SON OF MEL.

This evidence, in favour of the Christian origin of the structure, is strengthened by another stone, now doing duty as a grave-stone in the neighbouring churchyard of Kilmalkedar, which has a flowered cross on one side, and an inscription on another, indicative of Christianity. The oratory too of Temple Gael, three miles from that of Gallerus, has an upright stone near it on which a cross is sculptured.

Thus there is little doubt that these buildings were Christian temples; but their narrow dimensions—for they are all about the same size as that at

Gallerus — forbids us to suppose that they were used by an assembly of worshippers. Indeed, their original Celtic name, *Duirtheach*, means “a house in which tears are shed;” “a house of austerity, rigour, and penance.” Adjoining the oratories, ruins of circular stone houses are generally found, in which their founders are supposed to have lived. Traces of such a structure are to be seen near the oratory of Gallerus, and in other parts of Kerry. Indeed, perfect examples of these constructions yet remain. One of the most interesting is near Derrynane Abbey, and is known among the peasants as the house of St. Finam Cam, who lived in the sixth century. It is nearly circular in form on the outside, but within quadrangular, and measures sixteen feet in diameter and nine feet in height.

Mr. Petrie, whose learned Essay on the Round Towers of Ireland contains researches into various ecclesiastical buildings in that country, observes with reference to the uses of the *Duirtheachs*: — “It can scarcely be questioned that this class of buildings were originally erected for the private devotions of their founders exclusively; and if there were any doubts of this, they would be removed by the fact that in the immediate vicinity of such oratories, we usually find not only the cells, or the ruins of them,

which served as habitations for the founders, but also the tombs in which they were interred. And it is worthy of observation that in the great island of Arran, in the bay of Galway, called Ara-na-Naomh, from the multitude of saints interred there, such oratories and tombs usually belong to the most distinguished of the saints of Ireland who passed into them to spend the evening of their life in prayer and penance; and hence, I think, such structures came, in subsequent times, to be used by devotees as penitentiaries, and to be generally regarded as such exclusively. Nor is it easy to conceive localities better fitted in a religious age to excite feelings of contrition for past sins and of expectations of forgiveness than these, which had been rendered sacred by the sanctity of those to whom they had owed their origin. Most certain, at all events, it is that they came to be regarded as sanctuaries the most inviolable, to which, as our annals show, the people were accustomed to fly in the hope of safety, — a hope, however, which was not always realised.”

Although the oratory of Gallerus is by far the most perfect building of its kind in Kerry, there are, as I have said, many others in the county, and particularly in the Dingle peninsula. In the barony of Corcaguiny there is an ancient *Duirtheach* nearly of

the same size as that at Gallerus, having lateral walls converging from the base to the apex.

Such memorials of the past possess great interest:

“ Even the faintest relics of a shrine
Of any worship, wake some thoughts divine :”

And how much more, then, must our feelings be moved when we believe these structures to be the cradles of Christianity in Ireland.

Were the builders of these monuments fugitives from the Irish pagan kings who persecuted the early Christians? For we read that St. Patrick was “ sorely let and hindered in running the race that was set before him,” by the opposition he met in the east of Ireland. Under these circumstances, early Christians, or Saints as they are called, probably migrated to the west of Ireland, where, if nature was wilder, there was less persecution; and there, those pioneers of Christianity leaving home and kindred with great gnawing memories at their hearts, worked out their own salvation.

In this way the Isles of Arran were peopled by Christians; and the Dingle peninsula, from its remote and inaccessible nature, presented a desirable retreat for the persecuted servants of Christ.

It is interesting too to see how these localities are

revered by the peasants of the present day. Near the oratory of Gallerus you will be shown a penitential station, to which pilgrimages are made, and the majestic mountain which towers over this part of the peninsula to the height of 3,127 feet, is called after Saint Brandon*, whose ruined oratory may still be traced on the summit.

Looking at this grand mountain which overshadows the parish of Kilmalkedar, with its mighty buttresses descending like walls towards the Atlantic, its purple glens and cloud-robed summit, a strong desire seized me to climb it; but I had spent so much time in examining the antiquities, that when I had procured some potatoes and milk in a farm-house, the waning afternoon compelled me to renounce the inclination; and, indeed, though leaving St. Brandon's oratory unvisited, the evening had closed before I regained my hospitable friends.

* "By monkish authors Kerry is called the country of St. Brandon, who was the patron Saint, and to whom the principal church was dedicated. From this Saint a very high and remarkable mountain in the western part of the country is named Brandon-hill; and Camden calls that part of the western ocean into which the river Shannon discharges itself, *Mare Brendanicum*." — *Smith's Hist. of Kerry*.

CHAP. VIII.

Converts from Popery.—A small Congregation.—Strange Disturbance.—Assemblage of Whiteboys.—Fantastic Dresses.—An Irish Row.—Family Feuds.—Skull-cracking.—“Repale.”—A Repeal Card.—How to provoke a Fight.—Midnight Roysterers.

THE day succeeding my excursion to the oratory being Sunday, I accompanied my friends to the small parish church. The congregation consisted of about twenty individuals, among whom, as I was informed, were some converts from Popery.* My host's family were the only gentry, the rest of the assembly being small farmers, and three huge well-behaved dogs, which walked deliberately into our pew, and composed themselves very quietly to sleep on the floor.

Looking around upon the* worshippers, the words of our Saviour—“when a few are gathered together

* The “Irish Society” has been very successful in gaining converts to Protestantism in the Dingle peninsula. The Scripture readers and teachers, have gone among the people expounding the Bible in the Irish language, without which little can be done in Kerry.

in my name" — rose to mind; and I could not but trust that the blessed context would be realised in our case. How different was the scene from that of a fashionable London church during the season, when powdered footmen stalk ostentatiously up the aisles, bearing velvet bags filled with splendidly bound prayer-books for the use, or show, of their mistresses.

Yet the rude simplicity of the narrow house of God amidst the Kerry mountains, was far more calculated to dispose the mind to religious thoughts. Such, at least, were my feelings, which had taken a colouring from the place and occasion, when my thoughts were rudely broken and driven into very worldly channels by the sound of noisy fifes and drums playing a lively march, and the hum of many voices.

The prayers had just concluded when this interruption occurred; and as it would have been quite impossible to hear the preacher while the hubbub continued, two policemen were sent out to allay the disturbance, and the service was then continued.

On inquiry, I was told that the noise proceeded from a number of "Whiteboys," who had assembled from various parts of the country, and had marched to the village for the purpose of holding a jollification; and though thus prepared to see a gathering of pea-

sants, I was far from realising the extraordinary spectacle that met our eyes on leaving the church.

The little hamlet, previously quiet and peaceable, was now occupied by upwards of one thousand persons, principally men, dressed in the most grotesque manner.* A row of tents, which had been pitched with extraordinary despatch, lined the road for about two hundred yards near the church; and the numerous barrels and fires in their vicinity gave pretty sure evidence that feasting on a liberal scale was to form part of the entertainment. Fiddlers and pipers were also already in attendance to enable the boys and girls to enjoy dancing. In short, had Ballinacourty been a scene in a pantomime, Harlequin could scarcely have effected a more complete change than was now exhibited.

The "Whiteboys," who formed the majority of the assemblage, were decorated with ribbons, the prevailing colour being green, though other hues were not rejected. Their officers, for they professed obedience to certain chiefs, greatly eclipsed their men in the gaudiness of their costume. Nearly all carried

* The reader will remember that the events here described refer to past years. Thanks to improved and more liberal government, "Whiteboys," though they may exist as a secret association, no longer make public displays.

huge swords. Many "white boys," in accordance with their name, wore their shirts over their clothes, and some dozen made themselves even more conspicuous and ridiculous by wearing hideous masks, and carrying bags or bladders filled with sand affixed to a long pole, with which they belaboured the surging crowd; and when their hints to make way were inefficacious, two or three acted the parts of hobby-horses, the heads of which were armed with spikes. These, freely used, had a powerful effect in keeping off those who trespassed too closely on their ranks.

The wild crew acknowledged the leadership of a captain, who collected subscriptions for the nominal purpose of keeping up the society, but in reality to purchase whiskey, of which there appeared to be already a large supply. Parading up and down to music was the order of the afternoon, which was succeeded by dances of various descriptions, among which the jig and country dance appeared to be special favourites.

About five o'clock the motley company sat down in the tents to a substantial repast of bacon, mutton, and potatoes, washed down by brimming cups of whiskey punch, concocted with due regard to the Irish recipe. First, put in the sugar, then the

whiskey, and be sure not to forget that every drop of water added spoils the punch.

And now the fun commenced in downright earnest, and as the spirit did its fiery work on the excitable Celts, their antics and vociferations increased in violence. Nor were they satisfied by good-humoured frolic, but, as usual on these occasions, the enmity between families and clans broke forth, and heads were cracked for the honour of ancient blood. In Kerry, as well as in other counties in the West of Ireland, feuds among families of the lower orders are common, and they seem to admit of no settlement but that decided by shillelaghs. The gathering, indeed, seemed more for the purpose of satisfying old grudges, and past quarrels, than for any political motive. At the same time social questions of the day were discussed, and that of darling *Repale*, at that time in great favour, was a fertile subject of conversation by many who were less drunk than their neighbours. O'Connell, dear to Kerry men, as he was born in their county, was then at the zenith of his ephemeral fame, and of course came in for a large share of laudation; but the great cry was *Repale*. Indeed, I was informed that the meeting was attended by repeal agents, who advocated the cause. That "Repealers" were present is pretty certain, as I

picked up a repeal card, a description of which may now be considered a curiosity.

“God save the Queen” surmounts a shamrock leaf inscribed “Catholic, Dissenter, Protestant—*Quis separabit.*” Then follows—“Repeal Association of Ireland. Mrs. Farrell having paid one shilling, is enrolled as a *Repealer* on the books of the Association. T. M. Ray, Secretary.” Beneath appears a representation of the Bank of Ireland, the date 1782, printed in the centre of diverging rays, and underneath the building are the words, “*Was and shall be,*” alluding to the circumstance that the edifice was in 1782 the seat of Irish legislature, and that it would be please — the property of the people again. But the people have not pleased to dissolve the Union, and now that they are allowed to work instead of attending nonsense monster meetings, Old Ireland is becoming young, rich Ireland. It will be seen that women were enrolled Repealers as well as men; but why Mrs. Farrell was so indifferent to the honour of the membership which the payment of one shilling had conferred upon her as to throw away her card, I cannot say. Perhaps she was tipsy, and lost it.

Apart from these demonstrations the meeting had no ostensible political character; but the precautions adopted by the excellent and vigilant police effectually

checked any strong display of disaffection; so the "boys" were obliged to give vent to their excitement in other ways, the most popular being fierce party, or faction fights. The manner often adopted to raise a quarrel was amusingly efficacious. Fellows ripe for any mischief went round the exterior of the tents occupied by parties belonging to opposite factions; and when they saw a convexity of the canvas, caused by the head of some unfortunate man indulging in potations, down came the shillelagh on the protuberance with a force which made you tremble for the consequences. But Celts have thick skulls;—at least you will come to this conclusion after witnessing a faction fight; and the blow which gave you so much apprehension has no other effect than to cause the individual struck to rush out of the tent with a "whoop!" which would do credit to a red Indian warrior. Brandishing his shillelagh, he brings it down with a ringing whack on the nearest head belonging to the party opposed to his own—though sometimes he is not very particular in this matter—at the same time invoking the aid of his friends to assist him, which they are not slow in doing. Now, blows rain thick, to the chorus of fierce yells and imprecations; blood flows, and not unfrequently serious wounds are given and received.

As I had never previously witnessed such a gathering as that which changed Ballinacourty from a quiet hamlet to a pandemonium, I was tempted to remain a spectator of the savage scene until a late hour. Long before night had set in, all were more or less drunk; and when I at length retired to my room, the uproarious revelry of the maddened party came up from the little village and jarred strangely upon the ear; nor was it until morning dawned, as I was given to understand, that the roysterers reeled to their mountain homes.

CHAP. IX.

Excursion round the South-West Coast. — Proceed to Ventry. — Lord Ventry's Yacht. — The "Black Eagle." — Equinoctial Gales. — Attempt to make the Island of Valentia. — Fearful Storm. — The Devil's Birds. — Driven into Kells. — The Coast-guard Boat. — Wild Walk to Valentia. — Launch of the Ferry-boat. — Cross the Strait. — A surly Landlord. — The Noble Bridegroom.

THE time had now arrived for starting on my expedition round the south-west coast,—one of my principal objects, as I have stated, in visiting Kerry. On mentioning my purpose, I was much gratified by the eldest son of my host informing me that he wished to accompany me; and moreover, that as a great saving of time would be effected by crossing Dingle Bay to the Island of Valentia, he had no doubt of being able to procure Lord Ventry's yacht to take us across. This was good news; for, besides the pleasure of having a companion, the intimate acquaintance of my young friend with the Irish language, which alone, with few exceptions, is spoken on the Kerry coast, promised to make his society most advantageous.

Having despatched my heavy baggage to Killarney, we packed a small carpet bag with a few necessaries, and set off early in the morning for Ventry, following the same road as that which leads to Dunmore Head. Arrived at Ventry, we drove to Lord Ventry's house, where, in the absence of his lordship, we were received by his agent, who placed before us a repast which, under the unassuming name of luncheon, was promoted by us to the rank and dignity of an excellent dinner, and received the justice which its merits demanded. As events turned out, it was well that we had so fortified ourselves; but indeed it needs no persuasion on the west coast of Ireland to eat heartily on all occasions.

The equinoctical gales, which had been blowing for some days steadily from the west, had considerably increased in violence during the last twenty-four hours, so that, as may be supposed, the sea outside the harbour was not in a very placid state. Indeed, the reports brought by the fishermen who had run into Ventry for shelter during the morning were far from cheering, and gave no promise of a quick or smooth passage to Valentia; and as the result proved, it would have been far more prudent to have followed the counsel of the weather-beaten and weather-wise sailors, who strongly recommended us to postpone

our trip until the gale moderated; but as Lord Ventry's agent had unlimited faith in the capabilities and strength of the stout "Black Eagle," the name of his lordship's yacht, and as we were neither of us inclined to turn back, we agreed to dare the rough waters, which would let us off, we hoped, with wet jackets.

A short walk brought us to the pier, alongside of which the "Black Eagle" was bobbing up and down, pulling at her moorings like a wild bird eager to be flown at her quarry. Her motions, even in the harbour, were of the most erratic character, giving certain promise that our voyage would, to say the least, be extremely uneasy. It was indeed with considerable difficulty that we got on board;—this accomplished, the bow and stern hawsers were cast off, the sails partially hoisted, and we flew with great rapidity before the wind, for it served well to take us to the mouth of the harbour.

We had soon a significant hint of the storm-lashed waters we were about to brave, by flocks of petrels sweeping past us as we emerged from the harbour. They were seeking some place of refuge, for the general belief that these dusky birds love the storm blast is erroneous. Sailors, as all voyagers know, invariably associate the appearance of the petrel at

sea with tempestuous weather, and its name—the “Stormy Petrel,” with the various *aliases*, “Devil’s Birds,” “Mother Cary’s Chickens,” and “Witches”—show how closely they are bound up in Jack’s ideas with foul weather. But naturalists have, by close study of the petrel’s habits, discovered that it is in truth no lover of raging seas and fierce storms. “Petrels,” says Wilson, “are nocturnal birds. When they are seen flying about and feeding by day, the fact appears to indicate that they have been driven from their usual quarters by a storm, and hence arose the association of the bird with the tempest. Though the petrels venture to wing their way over the wide ocean as fearlessly as our swallows do over a millpond, they are not, therefore, the less sensible to danger, and, as if feelingly aware of their own weakness, they make all haste to the nearest shelter. When they cannot then find an island or a rock to shield them from the blast, they fly towards the first ship they can descry, crowd into her wake, and even close under the stern, heedless, it would appear, of the rushing surge, so that they can keep the vessel between them and the unbroken sweep of the wind. It is not to be wondered at, in such cases, that their low wailing note of ‘weel, weel,’ should add something super-

natural to the roar of the waves and whistling of the wind, and infuse an ominous dread into minds prone to superstition."

Irish sailors being in no respect less imbued by superstition than their brethren in other countries, I was prepared to find our men presaging bad luck when they saw the petrels dart over the crests of the mountain-like waves, and it would, I soon found, have been as difficult to have disconnected this bird, in their minds, with the powers of darkness, as to have persuaded them that petrels do not carry their eggs under their wings to hatch them—another strange belief attaching to this graceful sea-fowl.

"Hould on for yer lives," shouted our captain, as the yacht, bending before the fierce blast from the west, reeled to larboard on emerging from the harbour. The admonition was unnecessary, for before the words were uttered my friend and myself had clung, with vice-like tenacity, to the gunwale and shrouds against which we had been thrown. An ominous click, followed by a strong alcoholic odour, gave evidence that the first lurch had been fatal to a flask which Lord Ventry's agent had kindly filled with true Cognac, and which had the credit of having been received and welcomed into Ireland without the formalities of Excise inquisition.

Sundry drenching seas, which we shipped in rapid succession, soon dissipated the smell, and left my pocket with no further trace of what had been there but the rather disagreeable presence of broken glass.

Fortunately, we had stowed our carpet bag in the small cabin which was the only dry spot in the yacht, every other place being momentarily deluged by huge seas, which curled over her bows, and swept the brave craft from stem to stern. Now, indeed, did I realise the tremendous nature and force of Atlantic waves, which, cradled in the deep far away, grow beneath the power of the mighty wind of the west, and roll onwards with ever-swelling majesty and grandeur until they attain the proportion of hills.

As we bounded on, the "Black Eagle" was now poised aloft on the summit of one of the great water mounds, and now rushed down into a dark valley lined by walls of water crested with foam, which flew like snow flakes before the storm.

I have twice crossed the mighty Atlantic since making its acquaintance in Dingle Bay, but never, on either occasion, did I see the great waters so angry as they were on our voyage to Valentia.

Strange to say, though generally a heavy tribute-payer to Neptune, I was not ill in the "Black

Eagle." It appeared to me that I had realised in my own person the important physiological fact that the mind during a voyage may have power to triumph over the body; for I was so overwhelmed by the majesty of the scene, that all senses seemed merged in a pervading and abiding feeling of awe.

We had run about ten miles, and were about half way across the bay, when it became evident that we should have to relinquish the prospect of making Valentia ere the sun went down. For although the yacht sailed unusually close to the wind, the storm blew so fiercely that it was impossible, with even the most skilful seamanship, to gain the slightest westing, and we were therefore obliged to run for the opposite coast. This did not look very prepossessing;—nor did distance lend enchantment to the view. Lofty, precipitous cliffs, surmounted by dark Knockmatubber, frowned upon the seething waters, which ribbed the rocks with lines of foam. A nearer view only served to bring out the terrors of the iron coast more in detail. To effect a landing appeared hopeless, for no haven was in sight, and I thought that we should be obliged to re-cross to Ventry or Dingle, from which places we were now distant about twenty miles. On running, however, about three miles more to the East, we opened a

tiny bay, at the head of which we saw the little fishing hamlet of Kells.

Standing in as close as was consistent with safety, we hoisted a signal for a boat, and presently the coast-guard men launched one of the revenue boats and put off to us. If it was difficult to get on board the "Black Eagle," it was far more so to leave her, for by a singular want of sympathy between boat and yacht, whenever the first rose, the latter was depressed, and we were obliged to take advantage of a momentary level to effect our transition safely. The operation was both nervous and exciting, and more pleasant in retrospective associations than in reality.

A few vigorous pulls brought us clear of the gallant yacht, which flew homewards with our best wishes for her safety, while we made for the shore, on which we were landed about six o'clock. After paying the bold sailors handsomely for their trouble in landing us, we inquired how far we were from Valentia? "Twelve miles." Irish miles, too, be it remembered, which give good, and, to a weary pedestrian, the somewhat over-abundant measure of 2240 yards to each mile, instead of 1760, which make up an English mile. The road, moreover, was represented as mountainous and bad; but however much we might have been inclined to dry our clothes

and sleep where the storm had cast us, the total absence of accommodation compelled us to push on to Cahirciveen or Valentia, where we should find inns. Further inquiries elicited the information that the distance by the cliffs to Valentia was not longer than that by the main road which runs inland to Cahirciveen, so we determined to make for the island.

Accordingly, agreeing to bear the bag by turns, which, by the way, had not become lighter by sundry wettings it had received in the coast-guard boat, we set off right in the teeth of the furious west wind. Our route lay on the summit of the cliffs, commanding

——— “the iron-coast and angry waves;
 You seem'd to hear them climb and fall,
 And roar, rock-thwarted, under bellowing caves,
 Beneath the windy wall.”

Under favourable circumstances, our walk would have terminated in about four hours; but battered as we were by the storm, which often beat us back, our progress was necessarily very slow, and it was near eleven o'clock when we arrived at the ferry opposite the island. Proceeding to what we supposed to be the ferryman's house near the water, to which a wild moon breaking fitfully through the clouds guided us — but which we afterwards found was uninhabited — we proclaimed our presence by loud knocks at the

door, demanding at the same time to be ferried to the island; but all our endeavours to rouse man, woman, or child, were futile. Our prospects were not very cheering; but as our only chance of seeing a bed that night depended on our getting to Valentia, further exertion became necessary.

We were still in a state of uncertainty respecting our plans, when we spied a small boat lying near the water's edge. On examining her, we found that she was provided with a couple of oars, and only required launching to be serviceable. This we effected after considerable exertion; and guided by a light which my friend, who was acquainted with Valentia, pronounced to be within the hotel, we embarked in the boat, and pushed from shore. Happily the strait, here about half a mile across, was protected by the island from the westerly gale, and thus we rowed across without difficulty, and to our great satisfaction landed on the island a little before midnight. Now, thought we, as we walked to the inn, after having taken the precaution to secure the boat, our troubles and adventures for the day and night are over; but we reckoned without our host. Gaining the hotel door, we knocked with the boldness of hungry and worn-out travellers. No answer. We renewed our noisy solicitations to be admitted; but

when our thundering blows died away within the house, no voices gladdened our expectant ears. But we were determined not to be foiled; and as inns and landlords are public property — for a consideration — we opened two batteries on the door with large stones, so vigorously as to threaten its speedy demolition. Our new tactics soon produced an effect on the slumbering garrison. A voice, proceeding from a white-looking round object above us, which turned out to be the landlord's bullet head in a nightcap, demanded our business, and replied to our demand for immediate admission by the information that the house was full, and no beds were to be had. Here was a termination to our hopes, which had, in violent but pleasant contrast to our long walk over the cliffs and across the wild and lone moorland through the tempest, pictured at the end of the vista snug rooms, turf fires, supper, and a glass of genuine potheen punch. We were on the point of re-opening the conference, when further parley was put an end to by the abrupt withdrawal of the white nightcap, followed by the window being violently closed, accompanied by words which, though broken and rendered indistinct by the howling wind, were yet sufficiently clear to make us aware that they partook more of curses than blessings.

Though thus discomfited, we determined not to raise the siege; and although the odds were decidedly against us, we resolved, if possible, to gain admittance into the inhospitable hotel.

So we renewed our attack upon the door with a *crescendo fortissimo* movement, which had not been long in force when we heard another voice, proceeding from another window than that opened by the last speaker, demanding in a mild tone what we wanted. Our story was soon told, and happily with good effect; for the said voice declared that the door should be forthwith opened, and that a room would be placed at our disposal. Expressing our thanks for this promised accommodation, we waited patiently, gathering hope by hearing steps within, and seeing lights moving from room to room.

Presently the hall door was unbarred and unlocked, and we had just time to see a half-clad burly figure surmounted by a nightcap, which we surmised to be that of mine host, when a puff of wind extinguished the light, and all was darkness. The candle, however, was soon re-lighted, and in a few minutes we were seated before a turf fire, in a room which, although not precisely realising the picture of comfort we had created, had nevertheless great advantages over the dreary alternative of camping out on the island in

the schistose recesses of a quarry. But our accommodation was limited to this room. A noble peer, a few days before our arrival, had engaged the entire hotel for himself, his bride, and servants, during that period of intoxication which is generally supposed to accompany the first draught from the matrimonial chalice; and thus we were indebted to his lordship for the apartment in which we sat, for he had ordered it to be given up to us.

Had we been aware that our clamour had alarmed a lovely bride, we might have been less vociferous; but hunger, cold, and fatigue are notoriously prone not to stand upon ceremony. If our quarters for the night were narrow, we had no fault to find with our fare, which, thanks to lordly provision, greatly exceeded in excellence the average produce of the larder of a country inn. So, after an excellent supper, which stretched far into the small hours, we tossed up for the choice between the permanent bed and a temporary couch, and soon forgot our fatigue in the arms of Morpheus.

CHAP. X.

The Island of Valentia. — Spanish Merchants. — Cromwell's Forts. — The Harbour. — The Atlantic Electric Telegraph. — Jokaun Mountain. — The Slate Quarries. — Culloo Head. — Magnificent Scenery. — The Skelligs. — St. Michael's Well. — Monastery of Skellig Michael. — Pilgrimages. — The Stone of Pain. — Druidical Rites. — Flocks of Gannets. — Their Manner of Fishing. — The Irish Hare.

NOT assuredly is the contrast greater between day and night than was presented by the stormy weather during which we traversed Dingle Bay, and that which ushered in our first morning in Valentia. And had it not been for the swell, which still rolled in mountain masses, and breaking girdled the island with foam, we could scarcely have believed that the elements had been raging so furiously a few hours before. I was on the point of going out when our landlord presented himself, stating that a man wanted to see me. It was the proprietor of the ferry who had come over from the mainland in search of his boat, and having found it, and learned how it had been spirited across the strait, was clamorous for

recompense. His manner soon, however, subsided into courtesy, when I placed in his hands a far larger sum than he would have received had he been at the trouble of acting as ferryman.

We had intended leaving Valentia after breakfast, but the kindness of the noble lord, who begged that we would remain at the hotel as long as we pleased, which politeness was seconded by his bride, to whom we were introduced, caused us to alter our plans, and we accordingly devoted the day to exploring the island.

Valentia — how suggestive is this euphonious name of the days when the Spanish flag was carried into the harbours and bays on the west coast of Ireland, when the Emerald Isle sent her hides, butter, beef, and salmon to Spain, and received in return wine. “At the Rose is the best Spanish wine,” announced an inn sign lately to be seen at Dingle, with the date of 1563, and many a good ship from Spain put into Valentia harbour, laden with the purple and unadulterated juice of that grape which grew fat

“On Lusitanian Summers.”

But a change came. The “invincible” armada was shattered; civil wars ensued, during which the Valentians suffered much, and under no one more

severely than Cromwell, who ruled the south of Ireland with iron sway. The sites of the forts which he erected still bear his name, and we read that he regarded the harbour of Valentia as a most desirable rendezvous for ships of war employed to watch the Irish coast.

Recently, as will be remembered, this fine harbour, which may be generally entered with safety from the north and south, was thought of as a point of departure and arrival for English and American mail steamers. This idea is abandoned for the present; but Valentia is about to be invested with great interest in connection with America, as, should the Great Atlantic Telegraph be successful — and what may we not hope from modern science? — its rock-bound shores will be the first to receive the electrical pulsations, which, having passed through the waters of the mighty Atlantic, will here first surrender the thoughts of the west to Europe.*

* It may not be uninteresting to put on record the following extract from the first Prospectus of the "European and American Submarine Telegraph Company," for uniting Europe and America, which was placed in my hands in October, 1854, while on my voyage home from America, and was then considered *private* and *confidential*:— "The great and important project of uniting the Continents of Europe and America by a submarine telegraph cable was conceived as far back as the

Some geologists conceive that continuous land formerly existed between the west of Ireland and Madeira, and even beyond the Azores; and that the Dezertas are the mast-heads as it were of the submerged land. Be this as it may, science is weaving a chain between the two great continents of America and Europe, by means of which men's thoughts will speed far more rapidly than if they could have been borne across a continent by the swiftest wings of steam.

We visited the celebrated slate quarries situated under Jokaun mountain. They are of vast extent. The slate is remarkable for great strength and smoothness, which render it extremely useful for various building purposes, and particularly for flags. Another good quality consists in the ease with which the slate can be obtained in slabs as long even as thirty feet, four or five wide, and six to twelve inches thick. Specimens of Valentia slate, sent to the Lon-

year 1845, by the Messrs. Brett, who took out the following certificate of the provisional registration of the undertaking:—
 'I, Frederick Rogers, do hereby certify that the General Oceanic Telegraph Company is provisionally registered by Jacob Brett according to law. TITLE AND OBJECTS: To form a connecting mode of communication by telegraphic means from the British Islands, across the Atlantic Ocean, to Nova Scotia and the Canadas.'—Given under my hand and seal this 10th day of June, 1845."

don Exhibition in 1851, obtained a prize medal. The quarries give employment to about two hundred men, and are capable of being greatly enlarged.*

We now walked to Culloo Head, famous for the grandeur of the cliff scenery, which nearly rivals that of Moher. From hence we saw the Skelligs, two remarkable rocky islands; the highest is 710 feet above the ocean, where the soundings are 34 fathoms. They are about ten miles south-west of Valentia, from which they appear like gigantic spires fretted with rude ornaments. The Skelligs were formerly visited annually by thousands of pilgrims, for the sake of performing penance at the two holy wells near the centre of the largest island. We were greatly vexed that the troubled state of the sea rendered it impossible for us to attempt even to visit these remarkable rocks. The Rev. Charles O'Connor, in a letter addressed to his brother, has given such an interesting account of them, that I am led to cite it, particularly as they are, in all probability, very little known:—

* The prices of Valentia slate, delivered in London, vary according to the length and thickness of the slabs. Thus, for slabs between 4 feet and 6 feet long and 2 inches thick, the price is 1s. 4d. the superficial square foot; and for slabs between 10 and 12 feet long, and 4 inches thick, 3s. the superficial square foot.

“ St. Michael’s well at Ballynascellig, on the coast of Kerry, is visited annually, every 29th September, by a great concourse of people, some of whom bring their sick, lame, or blind friends, to be healed by the miraculous water. Now St. Michael’s festival (September 29) concurs with the autumnal equinox, and consequently with the autumnal sacrifices and Baaltinnes of the Druids; and it is observable that the largest of the Skelligs, wherein are two sacred wells, the most celebrated perhaps of all Ireland, is named Skellig Michael; that the sacred promontory called the *Scillean*, in Greece, has been also dedicated to St. Michael*, and is now called Cape S. Angelo; and that many other craggy promontories, formerly celebrated for Druidic sacrifices of human offerings made to the devil, and for lustrations and wells of Druidic worship, have been, by the foundations of monasteries on them, dedicated to St. Michael, to abolish the pagan rites and ideas which they recalled.

“ The ruins of the monastery of Skellig Michael are yet visible on a flat in the centre of the island about

* So at Mont St. Michael, off Normandy, and our own Michael’s Mount, where the god Bel was worshipped in pagan times: all curious high rocks seem to be dedicated to the Archangel Michael, the successor of Bel and the Dragon, — the saint of lofty places.

fifty feet above the level of the sea. This flat consists of about three Irish acres, and here are several cells of stone closed and jointed without any cement, impervious to the wind, and covered in with circular stone arches. Here, also, are the two clear fountains, where the pilgrims repeated stationary prayers preparatory to their higher ascent.

“The island is an immense rock, composed of high and almost inaccessible precipices, which hang dreadfully over the sea, having but one very narrow track leading to the top, and of such difficult ascent that few are so hardy as to attempt it. The Druidic pilgrim, however, having made his votive offering at the sacred wells, proceeded to adore the sacred stone at the summit of the most lofty precipice on the island. At the height of about one hundred and fifty feet from the sea, the pilgrim squeezed through a hollow chasm, resembling the funnel of a chimney, and named the ‘Needle’s Eye,’ an ascent extremely difficult, even to persons who proceed barefooted, though there are holes cut into the rock for the purpose of facilitating the attempt. When this obstacle is surmounted, a new one occurs, for the only track to the summit is by an horizontal flat, not above a yard wide, which projects over the sea, and which is named in Irish the

‘Stone of Pain.’ The difficulty of clinging to this stone is very great, even when the weather is calm; but when there is any wind, as is commonly the case, the danger of slipping, or of being blown off, united with the dizziness occasioned by the immense perpendicular height above the level of the sea, is such as imagination only can picture. When this projecting rock, about twelve feet in height, is surmounted, the remaining way to the highest peak is less difficult. But then two stations of tremendous danger remain to be performed. The first is termed ‘the station of the Eagle’s Nest,’ where a stone cross was substituted by the monks for the *unhewn* stone, the object of Druidic worship, which required the previous lustrations and ablutions of the sacred wells. Here, if the reader will fancy a man perched on the summit of a smooth, slippery pinnacle, and poised in air about 450 feet above the level of the sea, beholding a vast expanse of ocean westward, and eastward the Kerry mountains, which he overlooks, he may form some idea of the superstitious awe which such tremendous Druidic rites were calculated to inspire; and yet many pilgrims have proceeded from this frightful pinnacle to the second -- the most whimsical as well as the most dangerous that ever Druidic superstition suggested. It consists

of a narrow ledge of rock which projects from the pinnacle already mentioned, so as to form with it the figure of an inverted letter T, projecting horizontally from the very apex of the pinnacle, itself not being above two feet broad. This ledge projects so far as to enable him who would venture upon it to see the billows at the distance of 460 feet in perpendicular, and the sea here is 90 feet deep, so that the largest man-of-war may ride in safety at anchor underneath; and yet to this extreme end the pilgrim proceeded astride upon this ledge, until quite at its utmost verge he kissed a cross, which some bold adventurer dared to cut into it, as an antidote to the superstitious practices of pagan times.

“On the introduction of Christianity, the name and the festivals of the Druidic divinity, his human sacrifices and horrid rites, were abolished, and the worship of St. Michael Archangel was substituted on these lofty Skelligs in their stead, he being considered the chief of heavenly spirits, in opposition to the Baal of the Druids.

“From these historical fragments, it appears that the well-worshipping of the Irish Skelligs, inhabited by the clan Hua Bhascoine, of Southern Ireland, was derived through their ancestors the Vascons, or Biscayans, of Iberia, from the Phœnician colonies,

who stretched along the coasts of Europe to Ireland, as expressly stated in the annals of Phœnicia.

The great danger and not unfrequent loss of life attendant upon these pilgrimages, led to their gradual discontinuance, and now a visit to the holy wells is a comparatively rare event. The light of civilisation has recently been reflected from these rocks, in the form of two light-houses; a wise measure, as the losses by shipwreck before the appearance of these warning beacons was very great.

The Skelligs are tenanted by numerous colonies of sea birds, which are supposed by a fanciful poet to be attracted by the delicious verdure and remarkable sweetness of the grass which grows in the rock clefts. Assuming this to be true, he says:—

“Islets so freshly fair,
That never hath bird come nigh them,
But from his course through air,
Hath been won downwards by them.”

While we were scrambling along the cliffs near Culloo Head, I was gratified in witnessing a flock of gannets fishing. Strange to say, although these fine, bold birds are not uncommon on the coast of Ireland, they are only known to breed on the Skelligs—or, rather, on the smallest Skellig, as they have deserted the large rock since the erection of the light-houses.

The partiality of the gannet for these wild ocean rocks is of long standing, and was observed by Dr. Smith upwards of a century ago. He says, "It is remarkable that the gannet nestles nowhere else on the south coast of Ireland, and though multitudes of them are daily seen on all parts of our coast, upon the wing and in the sea, yet they were never known to alight on any other land or rock hereabouts, except on the Skelligs."

The fastidiousness of the gannet respecting breeding localities is not confined to Ireland. Thompson states that the only breeding place of this bird, on the English coast, is Lundy Island, in the Bristol Channel, and on the coast of Scotland the localities frequented by the gannet for nidification are very limited.

Among the many pleasures of a ramble on the wild and unfrequented cliffs in the west of Ireland, must be included the facility which you have for observing the habits of marine animals. Often have I concealed myself in a tuft of heather, or rock cleft on the edge of a precipice, in order to watch the graceful sea-birds

"Sailing upon the bosom of the air,"

or pursuing the finny inhabitants of the deep.

Nearly all the *Lanidæ* and *Pelicanidæ* tribe are expert fishers—and probably, among the latter, the gannet is the boldest and most dexterous. Those we observed, after they had remained poised in the air at great elevations, plunged with amazing velocity into the sea. Indeed, so rapid is their downward flight, that they are taken by fastening a fish to a floating board, which being struck violently by the descending gannet causes its neck to be dislocated; and Mr. Macgillivray relates that on one occasion a bold and doubtless very hungry gannet made a swoop at a herring lying at the bottom of an open boat, and passed through the bottom as far as the middle of its body, in which position it was retained, and thus effectually stopped the leak.

The depth to which gannets descend is prodigious. There are many instances on record of their having been captured in nets 30 fathoms below the surface of the water. Ninety-four gannets were once taken from a net at a single haul, all of which had become entangled in the meshes while pursuing fish. Stormy weather does not seem to affect their operations. High waves were running when we observed the gannets fishing, and yet no bird re-appeared near us without a fish between his bill. But he must be a successful fisher to keep pace with the demands of his

prodigious appetite. A full-grown gannet will swallow four mackerel in succession, without appearing at all inconvenienced by the meal. It was amusing to witness the attention with which the small sea-birds watched the gannets; hoping, apparently, that they would drop an odd fish now and then, which, however, they never did.

The island of Valentia, though only five miles long and one broad, is famous for colonies of rabbits, which afford excellent shooting to those fond of that kind of sport. Besides these, which we saw in great numbers as the day closed, my friend drew my attention to a hare, which he pronounced to be the *lepus hibernicus*, or Irish hare. This animal has unquestionably taken up his abode on the island, and if not molested will soon be common. Naturalists agree in considering the *lepus hibernicus* a distinct species, though the ordinary observer will probably be unable to detect any difference between the Irish and English hare. Careful measurements, however, show that the ears and tail of the English hare are longer than those of the Irish. The former, or common hare, displays greater diversity of colour on the head, ears, and body, than the Irish species; which, again, exhibits greater variety in that of the legs. The Irish hare has also been remarked to

possess much lighter-coloured fur than the English species; but those cases of white-fur met with are believed to be due only to extreme old age.

We returned to our quarters greatly gratified by our ramble, and were now quite willing to admit that, with "her most loved," Valentia is not an undesirable locality to spend some days at; and should you only own Nature for your mistress, you will find her here, adorned in glorious robes, which are even more enduring than those of the Vicar of Wakefield's bride.

CHAP. XI.

Ride to Derrynane Abbey. — A Bog-trotter. — O'Connell's Birth-house. — Remarkable Discovery of Axe-heads. — The Currane Lakes. — Ballinskelligs Bay. — Waterville. — Party Prejudices. — Derrynane Abbey. — O'Connell. — Pack of Beagles. — The Canons of St. Austin. — Hospitable Invitation. — Vexatious Disappointment. — Walk to White Strand. — A Rain-pour. — Benighted. — The Mythical Inn. — No Beds for Strangers. — A remarkable Night.

THE following morning, after an early breakfast, we crossed the ferry, and hired a couple of ponies to carry us to Derrynane Abbey, twenty miles from Valentia.

We paid four shillings for the use of the animals, which sum, by the way, included the services of a fine specimen of a bog-trotter, who accompanied us for the purpose of bringing them back. The ponies, although strong and sturdy, had no chance in rapidity of locomotion with the bare-footed lad. Amazing, indeed, was it to see with what ease and precision he leaped from tuft to tuft in bog land, where a false

step would have plunged him, waist deep, in black ooze.

We turned a little from our direct course to visit Carhen House, near Cahirciveen, the birth-place of Daniel O'Connell; but beyond the fact of the once great agitator having been born there, it presents no features of interest to arrest the traveller's attention.

A curious antiquarian discovery was made in 1840 in the bed of the Carhen river, close to the house. By Mr. O'Connell's directions (to whom all the land about Cahirciveen belonged), works were carried on in the above year to change in some places, and confine in others, the course of the river. In one locality, where the water flowed through a narrow channel, stood a large and apparently solid rock, which was used as a sort of stepping-stone in crossing the water. The removal of this rock being necessary, some men were boring the upper portion for blasting, when a labourer observed a small crevice at one side of the rock, into which he thrust a crowbar, and finding that he could move the surface, which formed a kind of slab, additional force was employed, and the slab was eventually dislodged. Underneath, and in the middle of the rock, a hollow space was found, in the centre of which a heap, composed of ashes and small bones, was discovered, along with eleven re-

markably large and handsome bronze axe-heads. The bones were ascertained to be those of a deer. There is no tradition of any kind which can give a clue to the time or occasion of depositing these axes in the locality where they were found, nor was there the slightest suspicion of the existence of the kist, as the rock appeared quite solid.

I saw the axe-heads in the very interesting museum of the Royal Irish Academy, and near them were a bronze spear-head and gold ring found in 1837, in the island of Valentia, within about four feet of the surface. The ring, when found, was as pure in colour as if it had been just wrought, but the spear was covered with a greenish scurf.

The road, after leaving Cahirciveen, skirts the sea-cliffs for about five miles, and then runs inland to the Currane Lakes, fifteen miles from Valentia, famous for the abundance and excellence of their white trout. Here we halted to refresh ourselves and ponies, and I greatly regretted that it did not enter into our plans to remain at the Lakes for some days, as a charming little inn, of the true Waltonian mould, held out great promise of comfort. My regret was the deeper, as most tantalising, and I believe not exaggerated, accounts were given of the good fishing afforded

by the Lakes, which have an immediate outlet to the sea.

A short distance beyond the Lakes the rough bridle road ascends a steep mountain, up which, in O'Connell's glorious "rint" days, the bold *pisintry* were in the habit of dragging the Liberator's carriage sledge-wise, the wheels being left behind at Waterville ready for duty when rejoined to the body of the carriage. The ride up this mountain is most enchanting, unfolding vast stretches of bold headlands extending round the capacious bay of Ballinskelligs, and terminated by precipitous walls lashed by the ever restless Atlantic.

I was steeped in pleasing thoughts having reference to present enjoyment and agreeable anticipations of the future, when my companion, who had lagged a little behind me on our way up the mountain, rode to my side, and asked whether I meditated visiting Derrynane. It is desirable to mention that, at the period to which my story belongs, it was, as many readers will remember, Mr. O'Connell's custom to welcome tourists to his hospitable mountain home at Derrynane. True, few availed themselves of his hospitality, for the Abbey was inaccessible by coach or car; but this fact does not lessen the kindness which made Derrynane an hotel of rare comfort to the pil-

grim. Indeed, it was the only locality, excepting Waterville, where sleeping accommodation existed on that part of the wild coast; for although, as will be seen, it was possible by a forced march to avoid being entirely benighted, yet the distance from Valentia to Derrynane Abbey is sufficiently long for even the most energetic tourist to hail the Abbey as a welcome resting-place.

Bearing these facts in mind, connected as they were with the contemplated pleasure of seeing Mr. O'Connell in his own house, where, all accounts agreed in stating, he invariably made all under his roof welcome and happy, I replied to my friend's question, that I not only meditated visiting Derrynane, but expected to sleep there, particularly as I had been given to understand that there was no inn within twenty miles of the Abbey east of Waterville. Greatly to my surprise, he then said, "Ah, that cannot be! at least I cannot enter Derrynane, for although Mr. O'Connell is an excellent host, yet you see, as my father is a Protestant clergyman, it is quite impossible that I could be under any obligation to a Roman Catholic who is so great an enemy to Protestantism as Mr. O'Connell."—"But," he added, "you need be under no apprehension respecting sleeping quarters, for I ascertained before leaving

Valentia, that there is an excellent inn at White Strand, which is only four or five miles from Derrynane."

Here was a damper to my hopes; for although it would doubtless have been quite possible to have allowed my friend to pursue his own course, yet I had received so much kindness from him and his family, that I felt bound to remain with him. I did not, however, yield to his political and religious scruples without a struggle. But all my arguments were futile. His naturally amiable disposition was, in this case, warped by prejudice and violent party politics. To enter Derrynane Abbey would have been, in his opinion, a crime of great magnitude; and so there was nothing for it, but to submit to my disappointment with the best grace I could. This was felt the more keenly, when, having ascended the mountain, my eyes rested on the quaint residence of Mr. O'Connell, surrounded by woods which fringe the lovely bay, at the head of which Derrynane is situated. The rich luxuriance of the scene was positively startling. The extraordinary growth of trees is due to their locality, which has a south aspect, sheltered from the west by the lofty mountain which separates Derrynane from Waterville. As we descended from this elevation, we heard the cry of

hounds proceeding from the face of the hills to the left, and presently saw men in red coats moving amongst the luxuriant heather. These were Mr. O'Connell and a party of friends, who were enjoying hare-hunting with the Liberator's famous pack of beagles.

On arriving at the base of the mountain, we came to the demesne wall and a large gate leading to two roads, designated respectively "Back way" and "Front way." As it was necessary to take one of these routes, I was proceeding along the latter road, when I perceived that my companion had made choice of the back way. This seemed to me such a sneaking mode of passing through a gentleman's estate, who liberally throws it open to all comers, that I left my conscientious friend to go as he wished, preferring myself to take the main avenue, and promising to overtake him during his ascent of the mountain beyond Derrynane. A few minutes' ride brought me to the front of the house. Dismounting, I gave my pony to the boy who had followed me, and rambled about in search of a good point of view for a sketch of the place. The mansion, though hallowed and honoured by the name of Abbey, is in reality only an overgrown farm-house, deriving its name from an adjacent Abbey, now in ruins, which was founded

in the seventh century, and occupied by canons of St. Austin. The ground about the ruins bristles with grave-stones and skulls. The latter are held in great reverence by the peasantry, who would visit any one found removing a mouldering vestige of mortality with summary vengeance. Derrynane House was formerly the abode of Mr. O'Connell's uncle, a strange creature by all accounts, familiarly known by the *sobriquet* of Hunting-Cap, in consequence of his love for hunting. But it is as having been the favourite abode of his nephew, the once great *Dan*, who, with his rattling tail, made a noise in the world for many years, that Derrynane possesses peculiar interest. Here were concocted schemes for the alleged benefit of Ireland, that, at all events, had considerable influence on the fortunes of the house of Derrynane; and here, whilst walking on the strand at the head of the little bay, shut out apparently from all the world, the mighty Atlantic alone being in view, political agitation was discussed, the results of which were felt throughout the United Kingdom.

Having explored the vicinity of the house and abbey, I had selected a favourable locality for a sketch, and had just commenced my work when I was accosted by a gentleman, who courteously invited me to enter the house and take some refreshment, adding, that unless I had made arrangements to return to

Waterville, a bed would be at my service. I replied, that I was extremely obliged by so kind an invitation, but that I was not alone, my friend having gone on towards White Strand, where we purposed sleeping; and that I had promised to overtake him in a few minutes. "Then," said the gentleman, who turned out to be a member of Mr. O'Connell's family, "you are acquainted with some one at White Strand, for there is no inn there." This announcement surprised me, as it differed entirely from what my friend had told me; and I was even more astonished when I heard that White Strand, where I was to find a comfortable and even "illigint" hotel, was not five, but eleven miles distant,—Irish miles, too, be it remembered,—the said eleven being equal to fourteen English. This intelligence, promising another wild night walk, did not, I confess, inspire me with great reverence for Irish party feeling, by the rancour of which I was doomed to suffer. To increase the magnitude of my disappointment, I heard that several very agreeable persons were staying at Derrynane, whom I should have met at dinner, if I had accepted the kind hospitality offered in Mr. O'Connell's name. It was certainly very vexatious; but having promised to join my companion, I had no alternative but to again decline the invitation; and, accordingly, after

finishing my sketch, I trudged up the mountain in no very amiable humour, and I am afraid that my manner indicated more than mere disappointment when I found my friend, who had sat down by the side of the path, awaiting me.

I have stated that the ponies we had hired were only engaged to carry us to Derrynane,—another proof, by the way, of the *Ultima Thule* nature of that place; so the rest of our journey had to be performed on foot, with—on my part, at least—no very clear idea when it would come to an end. To make matters worse, as we approached the summit of the mountain, we became enveloped in dense clouds, which blotted out the landscape and poured out heavy rain. Through this we walked many hours, the night closing upon us before the slightest indication of White Strand was visible. Fortunately, I possessed a light waterproof cape, which protected my shoulders from the torrents of rain which descended, but my companion had only a frieze coat, which descended to his heels, and acted as a sponge to the rain, becoming heavier with every additional mile of ground we traversed. The pleasant myth of a neat country inn, within about an hour's walk of Derrynane, was dispelled in the most practical manner. We had been walking three hours under continuous

rain, but still no house was visible, and it was ten o'clock. My patience and forbearance began to give way, and I expressed my opinion, in strong words, that White Strand itself had in all probability no real existence.

I was, however, assured that we should speedily arrive at it; notwithstanding which, we floundered on for another hour through bog and mire—for the path was scarcely visible—before a glimmering and feeble light gave hopes that our pilgrimage for the day was at an end. Proceeding to the cheering beacon, my friend knocked at the door of an humble cottage, and being answered by a man within, who spoke Irish, he learned that we had arrived at White Strand, and that the house, where we were to sleep, was not far distant; so we started again through the dark night, the rain coming down with a force and determination which would have done no discredit to tropical meteorology. The reader will admit that all this was sufficiently trying and vexatious, and was not likely to put me in better humour with my companion, who, to do him justice, was by this time evidently ashamed of his conduct; for, as I expected, it turned out that the much vaunted inn at White Strand, where I was to find a cure for all physical suffering, had no existence; and our hopes of shelter

from the pitiless rain consisted in first finding, and then effecting an entry into a small farm house, the proprietor of which was known to a friend of my companion's in Valentia.

After long groping in the dark we hit a low and narrow dwelling, which would scarcely have been deemed sufficiently good in England for a labourer's abode. This was the farmer's house. No light appeared. The inmates were, doubtless, fast asleep, and we had the prospect of a repetition of the prelude to the Valentia inn adventure, without its agreeable *dénouement*. Crouching beneath the eaves, we knocked, gently at first, but as no reply was heard, louder and still louder, until the voice of a woman was heard from a window above, very naturally demanding what we wanted at that time of night. This was followed by a long parley in Irish, which, of course, I could not understand, but I gathered from the storm of words that fell from both parties, that admission into the house was not likely to be quite so easy an affair as was promised. Presently, the head was withdrawn, and I was informed that the farmer had gone to Killarney to sell his corn, and that, as his wife knew nothing of us, or of the gentleman at Valentia, who had recommended us to her husband, she was adverse

to give us admittance ; and, no wonder, for although the Celt is famous for Arab-like hospitality, it was presuming rather too much on this fine part of their character, for two strangers to expect quarters in the dwelling of a couple of women in the middle of the night. So inexcusable, indeed, did our conduct appear to me, that I begged my friend to leave the lady in peace, but to this he would not consent. Accordingly, he renewed his arguments, and, with so good a result, that presently she came to the door, accompanied by a girl carrying an attenuated dip candle, and, crossing herself, invited us to enter, saying, "Well, I believe yees are gintlemin, so come in." We were shown into a room on the ground-floor, which, by the uncertain light, appeared to do duty as parlour and kitchen. A turf fire was speedily kindled, which made us better acquainted with the nature of our quarters. If any vision of a soft couch or humble pallet had risen before me, it was quickly dispelled by the intelligence that not a bed was to be had, and that we should have to spend the night in the room in which we were. Nor had we even the consolation of a good supper. Had we arrived before nightfall, potatoes would have been dug, but there were none in the house ; and the wealth of the larder consisted

of a small portion of girdle bread and three eggs, which were set before us. To this modicum of eatables was, however, added a huge jug filled with whiskey, and with these materials to appease hunger and thirst, we were left to our own devices for the night.

Our prospects were certainly not very cheering. The fire was, indeed, the only exception to the gloom pervading our narrow apartment, but presently this, too, contributed to increase our discomfort. For my companion had hung his great dripping-wet frieze coat on the back of a chair before the blaze, the result of which was that, in a few minutes, we were enveloped in warm mist, through which vision became extremely difficult, and ere long almost impossible. Another, and worse effect of this hot mist was, that it excited intolerable thirst, which, by momentarily gratifying with copious libations of whiskey and water, we rendered fiercer. Such a state of things was not likely to produce a cooling influence on mind or body, and I greatly fear that my behaviour during that night of suffering was not calculated to earn me the reputation of being blessed by a calm temperament. For, during many hours, I stormed at my companion through the suffocating vapour, heaping reproaches upon him for

having been the means of entailing such a night of misery upon me. Had he not been somewhat conscience-stricken, I think he would not have borne all my hard words so meekly; but, though they increased in warmth and vehemence as I became more fretted by the intense heat and thirst, he scarcely deigned to reply. So passed the long night hours, for it seemed as if morning would have never dawned. At length, however, to my great joy, a grey glimmer appeared in the east, and soon after we rose to depart. But, early as was the hour, our hostess was stirring, and, as we left our room, we met her descending the stairs. It is due to her to say that she urged us to remain to breakfast, which, she assured us, would be a more varied and abundant repast than the supper of the previous night; but we declined trespassing further on her hospitality, and, having deposited a few shillings on the table, we set out for Sneem, where we found a real inn and a very good breakfast.

CHAP. XII.

Kenmare.—Glengariff.—Killarney.—Innisfallen.—The Bugle-song.—Extraordinary Accident.—Sudden Decapitation.—Manner of waking the Echoes.—Tim Minahan.—His melancholy Death.—Superstition at Killarney.—Supposed Holy Earth.—Eaten by the Peasants.—The virtue of a “Wake.”—Tim Minahan’s Widow.—An “Illigint Wake.”—The “Keeners.”—The Burial at Mucruss Abbey.

It is not, as I have stated, the purpose of these sketches to interfere with the guide-book maker, but rather to draw a picture here and there as matter interesting for the pen may occur, so I shall not pause to describe Kenmare or Glengariff, at both of which places I remained some time, but proceed at once to Killarney, that region of

“Clouds, mists, streams, woods and emeraldine turf,
Bare hills and valleys full of caverns, rocks,
And audible seclusions, dashing lakes,
Echoes and waterfalls and pointed crags,
That into music touch the passing wind.”

Beautiful Killarney—queen of Irish lakes, and, in my opinion, of English lakes too—how well do I re-

member thy loveliness; for, unlike the majority of tourists, who are satisfied by a flying visit of a day or two, I have spent many weeks amongst the numerous features of interest of that charming lake-district, and there is scarcely a mountain path or valley that I have not explored.

Indeed, there is probably no locality which presents so many attractions within a comparatively small area as Killarney. By the aid of mountain ponies and well-appointed boats nearly every place may be seen, the Reeks alone requiring stout legs and enduring muscles to climb their precipitous sides. No wonder that this earthly paradise should be visited by thousands of delighted tourists every year. Spenser, who resided at Kilcolman Castle, close to the lakes, while engaged in composing his Faerie Queen, drew much of his inspiration from the lovely scenes around his abode. Look at his picture of the Island of Innisfallen:

“It was a chosen plott of fertile land,
Emongst wide waves sett, like a little nest,
As if it had by Nature’s cunning hand
Bene choycely picked out from all the rest,
And laid forth for ensample of the best.”

While staying at the Victoria Hotel, I was in the habit of frequently rowing by myself round that

lovely island, whose now ruined abbey was described, in 1180, as being "ever esteemed a paradise and a secure sanctuary." Sometimes, when the noontide heats were great, I used to spend many hours on this charming isle, wandering among the ruins of the abbey, and picturing

——— "those monks of old,—
 Their book they read, and their beads they told,
 To human softness dead and cold,
 And all life's vanity.

"Peaceful they lived, peaceful they died;
 And those that did their fate abide,
 Saw brothers wither at their side
 In all tranquillity."

But it was generally with parties in boats,

"Youth at the helm, and pleasure at the prow,"

that I explored the lakes, seeking, when the sun was high, the welcome shade of a creek o'erhung by drooping trees, such a spot as Spenser probably had in his mind when he wrote the lines—

——— "so sweete and pleasant to the eye,
 That it would tempt a man to touchen there,"

from the head of which a babbling stream flashed into daylight. In such a place, infinitely more preferable than the formal cottages built expressly for

parties, we used to pic-nic, roasting our salmon on freshly-cut arbutus skewers, and boiling our potatoes in camp style. Then, long after the herds of tourists had left the fairy region of the Eagle's Nest, we repaired thither, accompanied by a couple of buglers, who woke those matchless echoes for which Killarney is so justly celebrated. Wonderful as these are at all times and seasons, it is only on a summer's eve, when the winds are at rest, that the echoes in all

— “their sweet vibrations thrilling o'er the skies,”

can really be appreciated. Then it is that the exquisite lines of our Laureate, inspired by the echoes which they describe, are felt in all their truthful beauty: —

“The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story :
The long light shakes across the lakes
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

“O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O, sweet and far, from cliff and scar,
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!

Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

“ O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river :
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.”

But although the Lakes of Killarney are generally identified in the memory of tourists with all that is delightful, they have been the scenes of sad accidents, which have suddenly changed the voice of gladness and mirth to wailing and sorrow. I was witness to a catastrophe producing such a result, and as the story with its sequel is highly characteristic of Irish customs, I am led to relate it.

A large and happy party had started one morning from Killarney for the purpose of making the usual lake tour. About the middle of the day they arrived opposite the Eagle's Nest, and had taken up their places at the station where it is customary to remain while the echoes are roused by gun and bugle. They were accompanied by a bugler, who had provided a small cannon for the better entertainment of the party. It so happened that, when they arrived at the Eagle's Nest, two other parties were there, each of whom had planted cannon opposite the breast of the cliff producing the echoes. To these was now added a third, belonging to the last bugler, and

thus there were three cannon placed side by side, and so disposed on the sloping bank, that the head of a man standing opposite to their mouths, and a few feet below them, was on a level with them.

In accordance with a custom then very prevalent at the Lakes, these cannon had not only been charged with an enormous quantity of powder, but also filled to the muzzle with damp clay rammed down as hard as possible. This was done in order to increase the loudness of the detonation, and I must say that the result justified the means, for I never heard such small guns emit such ear-stunning reports. The effect, as may be supposed, was prodigious. It seemed as if the rocks had been rent asunder by consecutive thunder-claps. The prefatory bugle-music had been performed, and the obedient echoes had

——— “loaded the trembling air
With various melody,”

when preparations were made for the grand *coup de théâtre*. A match was lighted, and the cannon nearest to the party was fired, and the bugler, to whom the most distant gun belonged, was stepping across the slope below to fire his own piece, when just as his head was on a level with the muzzle of the middle gun, it was discharged, and the wad of

clay striking his neck, decapitated him almost as effectually as if he had been guillotined; for the head remained attached to the neck by a mere strip of skin. I reached the spot where the fearful event occurred immediately after the accident. There lay the poor mutilated bugler. The chords of life had evidently been snapped with little or no pain; for, in strange contrast to the terrible reality, a gentle smile lingered upon his face. The scene that ensued was most distressing. The party, who had a few minutes before been remarkable for their gaiety and keen enjoyment of the surrounding beauties, were now plunged into grief. They immediately returned to their hotel, and the remains of the unfortunate man were carried to a boat, and conveyed to his cottage near Killarney.

On making inquiries, I learned that the poor fellow was married, and had a large family of young children entirely dependent on him for their support. Thinking over the sad accident, it occurred to me that a short statement sent to the different hotels and lodging-houses, which were full of visitors, describing the catastrophe and soliciting subscriptions for the bereaved family, would probably be attended with beneficial results. The idea was favourably entertained by Mr. Finn, the excellent landlord of

the Victoria Hotel, where I was sojourning, and I accordingly drew up an appeal to the pleasure visitors, in which I advocated the cause of the widow and children to the best of my ability. Copies were despatched to the various hotels, and the result was that we collected 75*l.*

Unfortunately, being obliged to leave Killarney for a couple of days, I found on my return that some English gentlemen who had charge of the money had, in entire ignorance of the habits of the lower classes of Irish, given about 20*l.* to the widow to pay, as they understood, some pressing debts, but which was devoted to a wake, the "like of which," as an old Irishwoman observed, "had never been seen in all Ireland."

Killarney, with its old castles, ruined abbeys, glens, mountains, and waterfalls, is, as might be expected, a region of rank superstition, and I am afraid that it does not enter into the duties of Kerry schoolmasters to throw the light of common sense upon this darkness. Thus all religious ceremonies are clouded by superstitious rites. During my residence at the Lakes I heard of a practice which some writers on Ireland state is frequent in that country; viz., securing immunity from disease by eating holy clay, or, in other words, earth blessed by the priests

before being cast into graves. The result of my inquiries, which were numerous, among the peasantry, does not warrant me in agreeing with a writer in the *Quarterly Review* (vol. 68.), who declares that this "practice is common;" but the following extract from a communication by Dr. Picknell, physician to the Dispensary at Cork, and published in the 4th vol. of the *Transactions of the Dublin College of Physicians*, is evidence that the habit alluded to is no myth:—

"Mary Reordan, a native of Cork, was afflicted with a most surprising complaint, whereby at intervals she discharged, by vomiting, &c., quantities of insects of the beetle species, some more than half an inch long, in all stages of their existence; some as larvæ, some as pupæ, and some in their winged state, which, as soon as they were discharged, flew about the room. The doctor, in anxiety to elicit every circumstance which might tend to develop the mode of the introduction of these insects, asked the patient had she been in the habit of eating clay? Her answer was, that when she was about fifteen years of age two clergymen of her persuasion died, and she being told by some old woman that if she would drink daily during a certain period a portion of water in which was infused clay taken from the graves of

those clergymen she would be secured for ever against *disease* and *sin*. She accordingly walked to Kinsale, a distance of twelve miles, where one of the clergymen was interred, and succeeded in bringing away an apron and handkerchief full of the clay from the grave; to this she added some mugs full of clay from the other clergyman's grave, who was buried in the city of Cork. Her practice was to infuse from time to time, according to the exigency, in a vessel of water a portion of the holy clay, the mixture being always allowed to rest until the grosser particles of the clay subsided. She had been in the daily use of the water *medicated* according to this disgusting formula. The beetles discharged from the woman were principally of the *bleps mortisaga* species, which is well known to inhabit churchyards.*

Reading this, we can no longer be surprised that the superstitious ceremony of waking a body, accompanied as it is with offerings for the speedy release of the soul of the departed from purgatory, is, if at

* The capability of many species of parasitical animals to live within the human being, is well known. Experiments were lately tried in Germany on a criminal left for execution, by giving him in his food, without his knowledge, a few hours before his death, various parasitical insects. When the body was opened after execution, many of them were alive and had propagated.

all within the means of the surviving relations, conducted with extraordinary observances. To have a fine and "illigint wake" is the fond hope of the devout Celtish peasant, the splendour and glory of the ceremony consisting in an abundance of lights, an overflow of whisky, and much praying, wailing, and shouting. The desire to honour a deceased relative with an expensive wake is always increased when death has resulted from accident, and been so sudden as to give no time for the last ministering duties of the Church. To die without the priest is considered by the Irish peasantry one of the most awful circumstances that can befall a pious Roman Catholic; and when such a dreaded event occurs, it is customary to endeavour to avert or modify the terrible results by honouring the deceased, if possible, with a splendid wake.

Thus the widow and relatives of the poor man whose death has been related were particularly desirous to do him every honour in their power, and, having succeeded in obtaining a large sum of money, they laid it out in candles, whisky, tobacco, and fees to the priest for masses. For as it forms part of this death entertainment not to turn friends out of the house while the corpse is in it, the consumption of whisky and tobacco is very large.

The wake of the unfortunate Tim Minahan, for such was the name of the decapitated bugler, lasted two entire days and nights. As it is considered very important that the corpse should, on the occasion of being "waked," "be decent," great pains were taken to attach Tim's head by means of bandages to his neck; but as the blood-vessels had been emptied his face presented a particularly ghastly spectacle, which, combined with the awfully sudden and strange death, made the wake peculiarly impressive. I believe I do not err in saying that not only nearly all the inhabitants of Killarney, but also a large proportion of the population within many miles, were present.

The Keeners, who were more numerous than usual, wailed with terrible energy; and when the unearthly cry was taken up by the widow, relatives, and friends of the deceased, the effect was awful in the extreme. Meanwhile whisky and tobacco were freely circulated among all comers, and serried ranks of candles blazed round the corpse. As the hour drew near for the burial, the excitement and cries of lamentation increased. I was present at the last scene, and I much doubt whether the ruined aisles of Mucruss Abbey ever echoed such cries as attended the interment of the unfortunate Tim Minahan.

CHAP. XIII.

Ascent of Mangerton. — Startling Echoes. — Summit of the Mountain. — How to find your way in a Mist. — Excursion to Carran-Tual. — The first Ascent of the Giant Reek. — A Long Ride. — The Kerry Reeks. — Rough Guides. — Pat Denny. — The Approach to Carran-Tual. — How Kerry Peasants Catch Salmon. — Savage Gorge. — The Hag's Bath. — The Devil's Ladder. — A Tough Climb. — The Cone of Carran-Tual. — Prospect from the Top. — Golden Eagles. — My Guide's Sister. — Emigration to America. — The Flora of Carran-Tual. — The Purple Mountain. — Wild Mountain Goats. — Agricultural Produce. — The Tourist's Lodge. — A Welcome Repast. — Return to Killarney.

As a matter of course, I ascended Mangerton,—the lady's mountain *par excellence* of Killarney. If you are a wheezy sexagenarian, you will probably be glad to avail yourself of a pony for the ascent; but if strong and active, you will prefer using your own legs, which will enable you to take advantage of short cuts up the mountain impracticable for quadrupeds.

If fond of echoes, do not leave the summit of Mangerton without rousing those within the concavity of the cliffs surmounting the Punch Bowl. I was

fortunate to hear these last summer under singularly favourable advantages. Four buglers, who had accompanied a large party from Kenmare, ensconced themselves within a rock recess at the margin of the black pool opposite the cliffs, and for an hour they made the echoes resound in the most wonderful and beautiful manner.

The summit of Mangerton is remarkable for the vast tract of bog table land of singular softness which rests upon it. From this dense vapours rise, which frequently shroud the mountain top and render it extremely difficult to avoid straying from the track. A relative of mine happened, under these circumstances, to be on the summit of the mountain with a party, when after walking a long way their guide confessed that he could not find the path. But he did not despair. Taking off his coat, he turned it inside out; and putting it on again, started in full confidence that he had now dissolved the misty spell, and that he would be able to guide his party aright through the fog. But the coat-turning, which is believed in Kerry to be a charm of potent influence to enable a lost man to recover his way, proved worthless, and my relative and his friends had hard work before they found the path of which they were in search.

If Mangerton be the lady's mountain of Killarney, Carran-Tual may be claimed by gentlemen. Not that this monarch of Irish mountains is very much higher than the neighbouring Reeks, which rise in wild and picturesque confusion between the lakes of Killarney and the Atlantic; but its buttresses are so precipitous, that the labour of surmounting them is likely to be remembered for many days.

This difficulty, combined with the circumstance that Carran-Tual is a long way from Killarney, causes it to be rarely ascended. Indeed, it was only at the beginning of this century that its picturesque crags were made known to the public by my late brother, in his very interesting work on Killarney. Before that period (1812) the few tourists who found their way along the rugged roads to Killarney were quite satisfied, believing, that having ascended Mangerton, they had surmounted the highest mountain in Ireland. They were led to this conclusion by Dr. Smith, who, in his History of Kerry, ranks this mountain as the highest in Ireland. At the same time he frankly admits that Macgillicuddy's Reeks "seem higher to the eye;" but he adds, "most hills which are conical, and terminating in points, appear higher at a distance than those mountains which have a large surface on their tops." My brother, who was

sceptical on this question of height, determined to ascend one of the rocks, which the peasants declared to be the loftiest of the range. He accomplished the undertaking after considerable toil, but was not a little disappointed when he found his view towards the Atlantic intercepted by a peak considerably more lofty than that on which he stood; and, on returning to the valley of Cariguline, he was confirmed in his impression that he had not surmounted the loftiest Reek. For, says my brother, "on recounting the adventures of the day, and boasting of having been on the highest ground in Ireland, an old grey-haired man who stood by expressed some doubts of the fact; adding that if we had really been on the most lofty point of the Reeks, it would have been impossible for us to have returned before night. The difficulty of ascending Carran-Tual was represented to us as very great, and no stranger, we were told, had ever attempted it. This was but an additional incentive to undertake the enterprise, and the old man having offered his son as a guide, the next day was appointed for the expedition."*

That this description of the difficulties of ascending this Reek may not be thought exaggerated, I may mention that my brother left Killarney at five o'clock

* Scenery of Killarney.

in the morning, and did not return to that town until ten o'clock at night, the expedition having occupied seventeen hours, during the whole of which time he only enjoyed one hour's repose.

The ordnance survey, which has robbed many heights of the proud elevation which they enjoyed by local reputation, and exalted others, has crowned Carran-Tual with the distinction of being the highest mountain in Ireland. The height of the Reek is 3414 feet, whereas Mangerton is only 2756 feet, a difference which makes it difficult to understand how it could ever have been supposed higher than Carran-Tual.

Thanks to improved ways, my excursion to the summit of this peak was not so arduous a task as my brother represents it to have been in his day, but it is sufficiently toilsome and even dangerous in some places as to merit the application of the Swiss phrase, "*une grande course.*"

I was sojourning at the Mucruss Hotel last summer, when I made the ascent. Unable to meet with a companion, and unwilling to be at the expense of a car, for which fifteen shillings was demanded, I hired a pony, which I mounted at seven in the morning, and by dint of a rather free use of spurs — a pair of which, by the way, you should not forget to take

with you to Killarney if you purpose riding — I found myself at ten o'clock some miles to the west of the gap of Dunloe. The road beyond the entrance to the gap dwindles to a mere bridle-path, and intersects a vast tract of bog, from which to the south rise the precipitous Reeks. The view of these great rock pinnacles, steeped in purple gloom, is extremely grand. The greater number present strange weird forms, and their dark sides are rent by numerous fissures worn by the storms of ages.

It has been well observed by more than one tourist familiar with the loftiest peaks of continental Europe, that our remembrance of them rather augments than weakens the pleasure with which we contemplate the more humble mountains of the British Isles. For, after all, the emotions caused by elevation are always more due to the form of the mass than to the actual height of the mountain. Thus the Jungfrau and Wetterhorn impose more awe than Mont Blanc; and the cone-tipped Kerry Reek, with its precipitous buttresses, stirs many feelings of admiration and wonder which dome-shaped mountains of double the altitude fail to arouse.

One Reek towers so considerably above its neighbours in the range, that I conceived it to be Carran-Tual. This impression was strengthened by a pea-

sant, who assured me that it was the highest point; but, as I afterwards discovered, he was in error, for Carran-Tual is not visible from any part of the road leading to Kilgobnet. Having pursued this road, which runs at the base of the Reeks for about three miles, I turned to the left, and was soon in the midst of an amphitheatre of mountains, which rose grandly before me. The way now became so rough, bad, and indistinct, that I was rather puzzled, in the absence of a guide, respecting further progress, and was doubtful how to proceed, when I saw a couple of peasants rushing towards me down a slope. They were as wild as the country they inhabited, and although, eager to enter my service as guides, were of little use to me, as their acquaintance with English was limited to a few words. They were, however, not long without rivals, for in a few minutes I was joined by other peasants who came trooping down the hill-sides. Some of these spoke English, and all soon made me aware that they were desirous to guide me to the summit of Carran-Tual. In fact, my arrival had evidently created a sensation among the peasants, who had forsaken their agricultural labours in hopes of acting as my guide. Addressing myself to a pleasant-looking fellow, who protested that he knew every inch of the Reeks, I demanded his charge

as guide up Carran-Tual. "Five shillings, yer honour." "Five?" I replied; "that is far too much." "Arrah, yer honor, shure we earns half-a-crown wid de hook." "Well," said I, to cut the matter short, "I will give you three shillings, and no more." And for this sum my man undertook the office of guide, and swelled with importance as he bade the boys go home who were at my heels. Having seen my pony housed in a small cabin, with a comfortable allowance of food, I commenced the ascent of the mountain at eleven o'clock, the weather giving good promise of a clear view from the summit. Crossing the Giddah, which brawls through a rocky gorge, we followed a herd-path skirting the mountain torrent. Observing with an angler's eye that this stream, rock-chafed as it is, settles frequently for a space into tranquil pools, I asked my companion, Pat Denny—who, by the way, I beg to recommend to the reader who may visit the Reeks with an intention of ascending Carran-Tual, and desires an able, and at the same time entertaining guide—whether there were fish in the Giddah? "By dad, there are, yer honour, and salmons too;" thus, by special mention of this noble fish, showing the great respect which he entertained for it. "And I suppose you catch one now and then?" "Troth we do, yer honour." "With flies?" I de-

manded. "Ah, not at all, but wid a hook." "Oh, with worms?" "The divil a worm." "No, yer honour, we just goes to the smiddy, and gits a hook made about as long as yer hand, and we ties it to a pole, and grips the salmon when they do be jumping." "Do you catch large ones?" I asked. "Faith, an we do sometimes." This avowal contrasted strangely with the narrow dimensions of the mountain-stream, now, from long drought, attenuated to a mere thread; but the well-known instinct which leads salmon at certain seasons to ascend rivers, and even brooks, is sufficient guarantee that my guide probably told the truth. For, having no fear of water-bailiffs, and holding the government license to fish for salmon in sovereign contempt, the peasants of the Reeks are not slow to take advantage of the periodical good fortune which visits them in the form of lusty salmon which ascend the Giddah *viâ* the Laune.

Having passed over a wilderness of rocks, extending for three miles above the defile, we entered the Hag's Glen, where a witch of evil is reputed to exercise very prejudicial dominion over the flocks and herds which pasture on the mountain slopes. You are shown her bath, a dark inky-looking lake, where she laves her contorted limbs in companionship sometimes with his Satanic majesty, who, however, has a similar-hued

lough assigned to his special use ; and that you may have an impressive idea of the magnitude of the said hag, your attention is drawn to a huge rock jutting from the mountain side, at a considerable elevation, which you are told is one of her teeth.

On, still on, over chaotic *débris* of mountain-masses, the defile narrowing as you ascend—darker and more grim frown the precipices, and bolder are the mighty ribs of rock which gird the sides of Carran-Tual. And now further progress seems arrested, for before you rises a mighty precipice, closing the glen to the south. Scan its rugged face, and you will be puzzled to know how it can be surmounted. Yet the way to the cone of Carran-Tual lies up the face of this steep. As you draw nearer you will see a green streak fringing a water-course which has fissured the precipice, and which descends in a series of miniature waterfalls. This is the "Devil's Ladder." For superstition* having accorded extensive dominion to his Satanic majesty, in exalted as well as unfathomable places, his name has been given to this remarkable cleft ; and certainly, in accordance with the general rule that unlovely objects and ugly localities should bear the foul fiend's name this precipitous rock staircase is appropriately named.

The head and limbs familiar with dizzy Alpine heights, will consider the ascent of the "Devil's Ladder" not a difficult undertaking; but it will, nevertheless, be found sufficiently laborious, and even dangerous, to give zest to the ascent of Carran-Tual, for this great natural rock-ladder is 800 feet high, and during more than half the ascent you will be glad to take advantage of the auxiliary assistance of your hands.

Having gained the top of the Ladder, we came to a saddle-shaped ridge, not unlike that on Snowdon, very narrow, and sloping precipitously on the south side. The cone of Carran-Tual rises to the west, an extremely steep climb, which occupied us nearly an hour. The top of this picturesque and grand mountain is composed of weather-worn masses of feldspar and pale-red porphyry, covering an elliptic area of about twenty feet in the longest axis. On all sides except that on which you ascend, the cone falls away in abrupt precipices. The centre of the summit is surmounted by a lofty cairn, a memorial of the labours of the Ordnance Engineers, who made Carran-Tual the centre of their geodetic operations in Kerry. But your vision will soon embrace a wider range, and if you are favoured by a clear atmosphere, you will not be unwilling to assent to the general opinion that

the view from Carran-Tual is among the finest of mountain prospects. To the east, a wilderness of peaks, within whose dark breasts lie tiny tarns, which gleam like molten silver; beyond these, but more to the south, the soft outline of Kenmare river and Bantry Bay appear. Lackabaun, the boundary mountain between Kerry and Cork, and the wild district of Gougane Barra, the nursing-mother of the fair river Lee, will be pointed out in this direction by your guide; and, if he be a good Roman Catholic and a believer in St. Patrick, he will tell you that it was from the heights of Lackabaun that the Saint blessed Kerry. To the south-west, more peaks, among which the Glencar mountains and many of the Reeks are conspicuous; Cape Clear, a shadowy form in the distance; to the west, Dingle Bay, terminated by Dunmore and Kerry Heads, and the Blasquets; and to the north, the Shannon bays and estuaries, fringed by a thin white line, marking the Atlantic where it chafes the cliffs. If you are as fortunate as I was, you will see all this; and should mists curl upwards and wreath Carran-Tual in their folds, your impressions of the grandeur and vastness of the scene will be increased. Indeed, you must not expect very fine unclouded weather on Carran-Tual, for not unfrequently

—— “heaven’s rack, ’twixt earth and sky,
Hangs like a shatter’d canopy,”

and then rushes through the dark gorges of the surrounding Reeks.

Here, amidst these gusty peaks, yet undisturbed by man, is the home of the noble golden eagle, once common throughout the west of Ireland, but now principally confined to the fastnesses of Kerry, Clare, and Mayo. For, although naturalists state that the golden eagle permanently inhabits several of the most lofty mountains in Ireland, it is but too certain that this magnificent bird has become very rare. Yet you will probably see one or more sailing majestically over the Reeks. I have seen many during excursions among the Kerry mountains; and once I had the good fortune, while lying amidst the heather, near the summit of the Purple Mountain, to witness a magnificent fellow wheeling in continually decreasing circles, within easy rifle-shot, and gradually dropping towards the ground, until he suddenly made a swoop, and disappeared in a gorge. His purpose was soon apparent, as before I reached the brink of the defile the eagle re-appeared, grasping in his talons what I supposed to be a hare; and scared by my sudden appearance went off over the mountain tops, screaming and yelping. The rapacity of the

golden eagle is well known to the Kerry peasant. I have heard amazing stories of the destruction, by this bird, of poultry, rabbits, hares, lambs, and kids. His strength is proverbial. Was not Daniel O'Rourke borne by one to the moon? O'Flaherty relates that in the west of Ireland "there is a kind of large black eagle, which kills the deer by grappling him with his claws, and forcing him to run headlong into precipices."* This was written in 1684, when both eagles and deer were more numerous than they are now. In a note appended by the editor to Martin's Western Islands, it is stated "the black eagle fixes his talons between the deer's horns, and beats its wings constantly about its eyes, which puts the deer to run continually till it falls into a ditch, or over a precipice, where it dies, and so becomes a prey to this cunning hunter. There are, at the same time, several other eagles of this kind, which fly on both sides of the deer, which frights it extremely, and contributes much to its more sudden destruction."

A few years ago Mr. Pattinson, of Belfast, disturbed four golden eagles on Mangerton preying on a full-grown sheep, which he conjectured had been killed by the eagles, as a large quantity of fleece lay scattered on the ground.

* West Connaught, p. 12.

Golden eagles have been seen to course hares, flying a short distance above the terrified animals, and beating the bushes in which they took refuge, in order to force them to leave the shelter. This sporting propensity, generally largely indulged in when eagles have families to provide for, has been turned to account by cunning Paddy. Dr. Smith relates that a poor man happened to find the nest of one of these birds, which contained two eaglets. Availing himself of the absence of the parent birds, he clipped the eaglets' wings, and attached collars round their throats to prevent them swallowing. Then, visiting the nest daily, he found "stores of good provision, such as various kinds of excellent fish, wild-fowl, rabbits, and hares, which the old birds constantly brought to their young."

Thomson relates that, acting upon this suggestion, "a peasant in the county of Antrim placed one of a pair of eaglets, taken from a nest, in such a way that its parents during the summer supplied it with rabbits and hares in such abundance that its owner obtained, in addition to what the bird required, a sufficiency of animal food for himself and his family. The old birds did not alight with their prey, but, circling for some time above the eaglet, apparently

calculating the distance, they dropped the food within the limited reach of its chain.”*

While musing on eagles, my guide, having fulfilled his pioneering duties, was lying down at full length, smoking his dhudeen in silent enjoyment. The pipe finished, he was eloquent in praise of the extensive view. “Why, yer honour, I’m tould if yez good eyes yez can see Meriky.” — “Not quite so far, I think.” — “Well, thin, ’tis myself would like to see it, any how.” — “Then you have friends there?” — “Troth I have, yer honour, and relations too.” Then he proceeded to tell me of their emigration and prosperity in the great country; and how one of his sisters had become a grand lady, wearing silk dresses, which puzzled him much, as she was only a factory girl. Ascertaining that she was at Lowell, near Boston, I told my guide that I knew the place where his sister worked; upon which he started to his feet, and besieged me with numberless questions respecting her occupation and the locality where she was living. It appeared that she had promised to send him money to take him out to America, and he was daily expecting a remittance; though how she could manage to effect this, seeing that she was only working in a

* Nat. Hist. of Ireland, vol. i. p. 5.

cotton mill, was beyond his comprehension. I bade him have faith in her promise, assuring him that the young ladies of Lowell had means to do many things besides adorning themselves in silk and satin.

No traveller in Ireland, and particularly through the western counties, can fail being struck by the yearning spirit which generally prevails among the peasantry to emigrate to America — and no wonder. For although agricultural wages are higher than they were a few years ago, yet the condition of the Irishman in the United States and parts of Canada is still very superior to that of his brother in the old country. My guide informed me that more than half the population of the parish in which he resides have emigrated; and that, although accounts are occasionally received of a surplus of labour hands in America, still the sums of money sent home, to enable persons to join their relatives in the States and Canada, are so large as to remove all doubts respecting the wisdom of crossing the Atlantic.

Of this I have had more than once ample confirmation, when sojourning at the houses of magistrates in Ireland. The law requires that all money-orders on a bank in Ireland, drawn by emigrants in favour of their relations in Ireland, should be indorsed by a magistrate before they are paid. Thus it is no

uncommon sight to see at the hall door of a magistrate wretched-looking peasants, rag-clothed, bearing money-orders, from two pounds to twenty pounds in amount, which they have received to enable them to cross the Atlantic.

The botanist will find a rich harvest on Carran-Tual. For though the cone of the mountain presents, generally speaking, a stony exterior, yet a profusion of plants nestle between the stones. *Saxifraga umbrosa*, London Pride; *Hedypnois Taraxaci*, Alpine hedypnois; *Lichen islandicus*, Iceland lichen; and *Erica cineria*, are very common. This lovely heath is common throughout the Reek district, but its favourite haunt seems to be the Purple Mountain, near the upper Lake of Killarney. The peculiar tint of this mountain is increased in intensity when the heath is in flower, but its permanent colour is due to the stone of which it is composed.

On our way down we saw great troops of goats balancing themselves on giddy ledges overhanging grim precipices. These animals abound throughout the Reeks, and are so wild as to require the aid of dogs to bring them within the fold. Numerous as they are, the flocks have decreased since the improved condition of the roads has enabled the peasant to find a market for butter made from cows. When

my brother visited and explored this district all the traffic was carried on by means of horses, and it was, he says, no uncommon sight to see twenty horses or more in a string following mountain paths. Each horse carried two casks of butter; the exceptional case being when a peasant, having only one cask to send to market, slung a stone on the opposite side to the cask as a counterpoise. Now all agricultural produce is carted to Killarney, and conveyed from thence by railway to Waterford, Cork, or Dublin.

On reaching the cabin where I had left my pony, I was accosted by a farmer, who invited me to a lodge where he said I should find refreshment. This lodge, consisting of a couple of rooms, was built by the late Mr. Blennerhasset, a large landed proprietor, for the accommodation of shooting parties and tourists. It is kept by a farmer, who, on the arrival of strangers, lights a fire, boils potatoes and eggs, and places them, with bowls of delicious milk and wedges of butter, before the tired tourist. The absence of any inn or tavern renders this entertainment most welcome; and the speed with which I reduced the proportions of a hillock of mealy potatoes evidenced my appreciation of the farmer's provident fare.

Having recruited and refreshed the "soul case," which was rather exhausted by surmounting the

breezy heights of Carran-Tual, I demanded from a sturdy and stout-ankled girl, who had waited on me, how much I had to pay. She would send master to me, for she could not tell. Presently the farmer entered the room. "What am I indebted to you?" "Oh, what you plaze." Was there no fixed charge? None; visitors were few and far between, and they gave what they pleased. If there were more the lodge would be opened daily, but, as it was, he only lighted a fire when tourists arrived. Under these circumstances, and understanding that the farmer had fed my pony, I placed a couple of shillings on the table. This payment elicited earnest and grateful thanks; so I pray you, wealthy reader, do not raise the farmer's tariff by making a lavish payment for his hospitality, should you climb the Reek.

Mounting my pony, I now rode home. Leisurely, however, for, as I rode beneath the Reeks, it was pleasant to contemplate their fantastic cones, and feel that, having stood on the summit of the loftiest peak, I had made their acquaintance, and that they were mine for ever. Mine at all times and seasons; for, when wrapped in the dusky folds of the great city, I can again, in memory, stand on Carran-Tual, again look down into the dark recesses of the Hag's Glen, and again see the blue Atlantic fretting the

bold Kerry coast. And that I might be the more impressed by the scenes around me, the great Nature Painter had now flooded the mountain masses with blue haze and glowing sun-light, which streamed in golden glory from beneath mighty curtains of dusky purple clouds which hung in the west.

CHAP. XIV.

“Moutonnière” Tourists. — Excursion to the Carra Lakes. — Killorglin. — The Siege of Ross Castle. — Transport of Ships. — General Ludlow’s Scout-Master. — The Stronghold of Desmond. — Curious Letter of Queen Elizabeth. — Passions of the Celts. — Execution of Murragh O’Brien. — The “Head Act.” — The Cromwellian Trooper’s Legacy. — Landing of a Spanish Force. — Sir Walter Raleigh. — Barbarous Execution. — Spenser the Poet. — Death of the Earl of Desmond. — View of the Carra Lakes. — The Headly Arms. — No Accommodation. — Post-Office Quarters. — Fishing in the Glinsk. — Charming Trout Stream. — White Trout. — Spoon-bait. — My First Night at the Post Office. — Trumpet-throated Cocks. — A full House. — How to obtain Quiet.

ALTHOUGH the Killarney Lakes are now as much frequented as the Rhine or any other of Nature’s show-places, yet there, as elsewhere, tourists are a race *moutonnière*, pursuing, year after year, the same beaten track. How few of the many thousands who annually visit Killarney know aught of the scenery beyond that reflected by the lovely Lakes! Assuredly, only a few enterprising men — sketchers, pro-

bably — who, having exhausted — if, indeed, you can exhaust — the views in the vicinity of Killarney, explore the neighbouring mountains and valleys in search of fresh subjects for the pencil.

This mill-round infatuation, which harmonises so pleasantly with *dolce far niente* touring, is the more to be condemned at Killarney, because there is scenery of very great beauty and grandeur within a day's drive of the Lakes. And it is in the belief that some readers, who may contemplate a trip to Kerry, will thank me for introducing them to new scenes, that I purpose devoting a chapter to the Carra Lakes, which I visited last summer.

A car, which leaves Killarney at seven o'clock every morning for Cahirciveen, will convey you to Rossbegh, twenty-six miles from Killarney, where there is a small inn. Write for accommodation, and take the precaution before you start to ascertain that you can be accommodated, otherwise you may have to rough it, as I had, of which more anon.

The road, as far as the bridge over the Laune, is the same as that to the gap of Dunloh; but, instead of crossing that river, you follow the right bank until you reach Killorglin, a small town thirteen miles from Killarney, charmingly situated on an eminence commanding the Laune. The town is

mentioned in histories of Cromwell's Irish wars as the sea-port where the ships used against Ross Castle were landed. Cromwell found this castle far more difficult of reduction than he had supposed. The siege was entrusted to General Ludlow, who had a force of four thousand men; but this, in consequence of the manner in which the enemy, numbering five thousand horse and foot, were entrenched, proved unavailing. Under these circumstances, General Ludlow advised Cromwell to furnish him with large boats, as he called them, each capable of containing upwards of one hundred men. These were constructed; and Ludlow, in his account of the capture of Ross Castle, attributes his success to them, and adds that they were conveyed over the mountains. If this had been effected, covered as the country then was by forests, and traversed by roads probably little better than mere bridle-paths, the undertaking would have been highly enterprising, and impracticable without a great expenditure of time and labour. A search in the Council Books in the Castle of Dublin revealed the following letter, giving some interesting particulars respecting these ships. The letter was communicated to me by my brother, and has not, I believe, been published. It is addressed to General Ludlow by the Rev. Dr. Henry Jones,

who signs himself "Scout-Master General to the General Ludlow:"—

"Kinsale, June, 1652.

"Dear and Honoured Sir,—Upon advice taken here of the best way to furnish you with boats and other necessaries for the present service, we find that the most expeditious course that can be taken is to provide as many materials as may be had here, and send them by sea to the nearest place they may be conveyed, for the purpose you intended; to which end there is prepared keels, planks, and other materials, and workmen necessary for the making of two ships to carry two pieces of ordnance in the head of each, manned each with fifty men, which pinnaces are so prepared, that they will be set up in two days. We intend, likewise, to send five or six boats more ready made, to land or transport men; each of such boats will carry fifty men. Besides, we send materials for making twelve more on the place, if need be; all which we are advised here, by such as know the place very well, that the best way and place to land them in is in Mange Bay, on the river Laune, flowing from the north-west side of the Lough, at a place called Killorglin; and to which place the boats and other materials may be conveyed by water: all

these will be under sail to-morrow, if God will permit, or before Monday morning at farthest; but there will be no coming on the shore till it appears that your forces are ready to receive them; and, therefore, we desire that, upon their arrival, of which you shall have notice, you send such a party as may countenance their landing and conveyance to the Lough. The *Expedition*, one of the Parliament ships of twenty-eight guns and one hundred and twenty men, shall come along to convoy this vessel, and shall stay till the provisions be landed. You will have sawyers, carpenters, smiths, seamen, gunners, and all other necessaries mentioned by you or the Lord Broghill; and the captain that you desired is to come along with them, together with all other necessaries we could be advised were necessary, with some other provisions, we hope may be of use to you. The care of all this business we commit to Captain Chudleigh*, who we find to be able and fit

* Captain Chudleigh does not appear to have died in these wars. The church at Kinsale contains a monument with this inscription:—

“ Here lies the Body of Mr.
Thomas Chvdleigh, Ship
Wright, who deceased
the 21 March, 1706,
Aged 67 years.”

for this service. He doth come along with the ship.
Not having more,

“Your servant,

“H. JONES.”

The pinnaces mentioned in this letter were put together at Killorglin, and dragged by men up the Laune into the lower Lake of Killarney, and, as we have seen, effectually served the purpose for which they were designed.

As far as Killorglin the drive is extremely picturesque. Take care, however, to secure a seat on the near or left side of the car, as from thence you have a magnificent prospect of the Reeks swelling from rolling plains, while the Laune, now grown to the dignity of a salmon river, flows by your side.

Beyond Killorglin we entered the vast district of wild fastnesses characterised on the map accompanying Smith's Kerry as a great tract encumbered with vast mountains, bogs, and rocks, from the Reeks to the river of Kenmare. This description, which applies to the middle of the eighteenth century, holds good now; and the eye wanders over dreary moorland stretching from Dingle Bay to the Reeks, unbroken but by a few hovels surrounded by patches of potatoes. This wild and unreclaimed district is historically interesting, as having been, when covered

by forests, one of the principal strongholds of Gerald, sixteenth Earl of Desmond, who gave his name to a considerable portion of Kerry, and whose deeds stand out prominently among those of the great war-chiefs of Ireland.

He commenced his restless career by successfully opposing his half-brother Thomas in his pretensions to the earldom, and soon afterwards gave evidence that his possession of one of the largest territories in Ireland was insufficient to satisfy his inordinate ambition.

Coveting part of the possessions of his great rival in power, the Earl of Ormond, a fierce dispute arose between the two earls respecting certain back rents and lands. A battle was consequently fought between these chiefs, which carried devastation through a large portion of the west of Ireland. Queen Elizabeth was so incensed against them, on account of their constant warfare, that she wrote the following strange letter of anger and remonstrance, with her own hand, to Sir Henry Sidney: —

“ Harry, — If our partial slender managing of the contentious quarrel between the two Irish Erles did not make the way to cause these lines to passe my hande, this gibberidge should hardly have cumbered

your eyes; but warned by my former fault, and dreading worse hap to come, I rede you take good heed that the good subject's lost state be so revenged that I hear not the rest be won to a right by-way to breed more traytor's stocks and so the gole is gone. Make some difference between tried, just, and false friends; let the good service of well deservers be never rewarded with loss, let their thanks be such as may encourage new strivers for the like, suffer not that Desmond's daring deeds, far wide from promised works, make your trust for other pledge than either himself or John for gage. He hath so well performed his English vows, that I warn you trust him no longer than you see one of them. Prometheus let me be, and Prometheus hath been mine too long. I pray God your old strange sheep, late as you say returned into fold, weare not her woolly garments upon her woolfy back. You know a kingdom knows no kindred, '*si violandum jus regnandi causa,*' although to harm is perilous in the hand of an ambitious head. Where might is mixed with wit there is to good an accord in government. Essays be oft dangerous, especially where the cup-bearer has received such a preservative, as what may soever betide the drinker's draught the carrier takes no bane thereby. Believe not, though they sware that they

can be full sound whose parents sought the rule that they full fair would have. I warrant you that they will never be accounted of bastardy, you were to blame to lay it to their charge; they will trace the steps that others have passed before. If I had not espied, though very late, legerdemain used in these cases, I had never plaid my part; no, if I had not seen the balances held awry, I had never myself come into the weigh-house. I hope I shall have so good a customer of you that all under officers shall do their duty among you. If aught have been amiss at home I will patch, though I cannot whole it. Let us not, nor no more do you, consult so long till advice come too late to the givers; when these shall war with the deeds, when all is spent in words. A fool too late bewares when all the peril is past. If war still advise wee shall never do; thus are we ever knitting a knot never tied; yea, and if our web be framed with rotten hurdles when our loom is well nigh done our work is new to begin. God send the weaver true prentices again; and let them be denizens ¶ pray you, if they be not citizens and such too as your ancientest aldermen you have or now dwell in your official place have had best cause to commend their good behaviour. Let this memorial be only committed to Vulcan's base keeping without

any longer abode than the leisure of reading thereof ; yea, and with no mention made thereof to any other wight. I charge you, as I may command you, seem not to have but secretaries' letters from me your loving maistres,

“ ELIZABETH *Regina.*”

The secretary having esteemed his royal mistress's letter worthy other keeping than that of Vulcan's, we see how greatly vexed she was by the irascibility of the Irish lords. Unable, on account of conflicting testimony, to come to any satisfactory decision in England respecting the chieftains, commissioners were sent to Ireland to investigate their disputed claims. These, after much trouble, succeeded in effecting a reconciliation between the two rival earls, who entered into recognisances of 20,000*l.* to keep the peace. But the reconciliation was of the most unsubstantial nature ; and, indeed, the ceremony observed on the occasion afforded pretty strong proof of the hollowness of the professions. The earls, we are told, were conducted into the chapter-house of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, and a hole having been made in the door, they shook hands through the aperture, each fearing to be poignarded by the other.

Shortly after this patched peace, the Earl of Desmond raised an army, and re-commenced his predatory incursions on his neighbours. These were accompanied by great barbarity, and led to frightful slaughter and much suffering. The passions of the Celts seem to have raged during these wars with terrible fury. Spenser, the poet, who witnessed many scenes of this period, relates that he saw the Irish, in seasons of blind wrath, drink the blood of their slain fellow-creatures. At the execution of Murragh O'Brien, a notable traitor, "I saw," he says, "an old woman take up his head, whilst he was quartered, and suck up all the blood that runne thereout, saying that the earth was not worthy to drink it; and therewith, also, steeped her face and breast, and tore her hair, crying out and shreeking most terribly."*

* "View of the State of Ireland," p. 44. The Irish had certainly every reason to dread and hate the Saxons at this period. The infamous "Head Act," ordained that any Milesian or Irishman, coming or going, having no faithful man of good name and fame in his company in English apparell, may be stopped by any English settler, and that it shall be lawful to take and kill him, and to cut off his head without any impeachment of the sovereign. "And if any head so cut off in the county of Meath, that the cutter and his ayders there to him, cause the said head so cut off to be brought to the portriff,

Cromwell's followers were also greatly struck by the pugnacity of the Celts. A Cromwellian trooper, named John Langley, gave the following directions in his will: "My body shall be put upon the oak table, in my coffin, in the brown room, and fifty Irish shall be invited to my wake. Every one shall have two quarts of the best aqua vitæ, and each a dirk, or knife, laid before him; and when the liquor is out, nail up my coffin and commit me to earth, whence I came: and this is my will."

As John Langley was not remarkable for his love of the Celts, he was asked why he desired to treat them to so much liquor. "Why, for this reason," replied the sturdy trooper; "the fellows will get so drunk at my wake that they will kill one another, and so we shall get rid of some of the breed; and if every one would follow my example, in time we should get rid of them all."

But to return to Desmond. His excesses at

to put it on a stake or spear, upon the castle of Trim. And that it shall be lawful for the said bringer of the said head to distrain and levy by his own hands (as his reward), of every man having one ploughland in the barony, twopence; and of every man having half a ploughland, one penny; and of every man having one house and goods value forty shillings, one penny; and of every other cottier having house and smoak, one half-penny."

length were such as to lead the English governor to offer a reward of 1000*l.*, and an annuity of 40*l.*, to whoever should place him in his hands alive; and 500*l.*, and 20*l.* a-year pension, to anyone producing his head. The devotion and fidelity of his adherents were so great that it was found extremely difficult to capture him. However, after some very remarkable escapes, intelligence was received that he was hiding in a wood near Kilmallock. The Queen's troopers were immediately sent in pursuit of him, and succeeded in surprising forty-five of his attendants, who were engaged boiling and eating horseflesh. These they slew, but the Earl again contrived to elude them. Misfortunes, however, now gathered thickly round him, and he was obliged to have recourse to the most subtle devices to conceal himself from his pursuers. At this juncture a body of Spaniards, seven hundred strong, landed on the Dingle coast, at the mouth of Smerwick harbour, in aid of Desmond. This small force was, of course, wholly inadequate to be of any signal service to the Irish chieftain; but an attempt was made to strengthen this aid by spiritual power. On being summoned to surrender by the celebrated Sir Walter Raleigh, the captain of the Spaniards declared that they held Ireland for the Pope and

the King of Spain, to whom his Holiness had given the kingdom. But neither this bravado, nor the surrender of the feeble Spanish force, availed to save them from destruction. Orders arrived from Dublin that they should all be put to the sword. The instructions were executed to the letter. Historians state that this wholesale butchery greatly displeased Elizabeth, and it is certain that considerable infamy attached to Sir Walter Raleigh* and the poet Spenser—the first, as being the officer who superintended the massacre; and the latter, as assisting in the Council where it was devised. Spenser was evidently not disposed to be lenient to Milesians. He regarded them, in fact, as little better than wild beasts. Alluding to their disaffected state, he says: “What bootes it to breake a colte, and to let him straight run loose at randome. So were these people at first well handled, and wisely brought to acknowledge allegiance to the kings of England; but being straight left unto themselves and their

* Sir Walter seems to have taken to this Irish service solely for the purpose of recommending himself to Elizabeth's notice. In a letter to the Earl of Leicester, he says that “were it not for his hopes that way he would disdain such a service in the commonwealth of common woes” (as he called Ireland) “as much as he would to keep sheep.”

own inordinate life and manners, they eftsoones forgot what before they were taught, and so-soone as they were out of sight by themselves, shook off their bridles and began to colte anew, more licentiously than before." And he thus excuses the massacre of the Spaniards: "They were no better than Rogues and Runnagates. Specially coming with no license nor commission from their own King. So as it should bee dishonorable for the Lord Deputie, in the name of his Queene, to condition or make any terms with such Rascalls, but left them to their choyce, to yeeld and submit themselves, or no: whereupon the Coronell did absolutely yeeld himself and the Fort, with all therein, and craved only mercy; which it being not thought good to shew them,—for danger of them, if, being saved, they should afterwards joyne with the Irish, and also for terrour to the Irish, who are much emboldened by these forraigne succours, and also put in hope of more ere long,—there was no other way but to make that short end of them as was made."*

The destruction of his Spanish allies terminated Desmond's hopes of retrieving his fallen fortunes. But although his power was gone, the government

* View of the State of Ireland, pp. 5. 75.

held his name in such dread that they were determined to capture him. Infirm, and hunted from lair to lair amongst the wild fastnesses of Kerry, he still continued for a long time to elude the keen pursuit of his enemies; and it is probable ~~that he~~ would have held out much longer than he did had he not been betrayed by a member of the Moriarty family, who gave such information as led to his apprehension. The unfortunate Earl was discovered in a small house in ruins, crouching near a fire. A soldier smote off his arm, and regardless of his entreaties to be spared, cut off his head. This was forthwith despatched to the Queen, in London, who ordered it to be fixed upon London Bridge. Dr. Smith, in his History of Kerry, states that the Moriarty family were in his day still in disgrace among the Irish for having brought about the death of Lord Desmond; and Sullivan, in his History of Ireland*, affirms that the place where his blood was shed continued to be red in his time.

And now, having endeavoured to break the monotony of the drive across the dreary waste which originally formed part of the palatinate of the proud Desmond, let us see what lies beyond it. We have

* Published at Lisbon in 1621, under the title of *Historiæ Catholicæ Hiberniæ Compendium*.

surmounted a considerable hill, and then, gleaming on the left, the brighter when contrasted with the dark impending mountains, are the Carra Lakes, or rather, the Lower Carra Lake, for the waters of the Upper Lake wind far within the folds of the dusky mountains which bound the view to the south. A mile beyond, and we are at the base of the hill, crossing the river Carra, which wears a most fishy look, as it struggles amidst huge masses of rock to its outlet; and then we drive along a rough road across a table land, from whence we command peeps of Dingle Bay and the mountains. Two miles more, and we came to a small house on the right of the road, which I recognised as our halting-place, as a sign proclaimed it to be the Headly Arms Hotel. But apart from this there was nothing to denote that the house was one of entertainment for man or beast, as no inn-like bustle ebbed and flowed near its doors. The solitude was neither cheering nor promising; and my apprehensions respecting accommodation were confirmed, when, after sundry knockings, the landlady made her appearance, and at once accounted for my chilly reception by announcing that the "hotel" was full of anglers. She had written to me, announcing the fact; but not having waited for an answer to my letter, I was, of course,

ignorant of the plethoric prosperity of her house. "Was there no shake-down to be had?" "No." Five gentlemen had contrived to pass the preceding night on three sofas; and as there was not another sofa on which such a packing experiment could be even tried, any hope of accommodation was at an end. The intelligence was distressing, inasmuch as there was no other inn within a dozen miles, and I had no inclination to return to Killarney. But having unlimited faith in the invention of woman, I entreated the landlady, who kindly took an interest in my fate, to think whether a bed might not be obtained in a neighbouring cottage. At length, after much consideration, she thought it possible that I might obtain a room at the Post-office: she would send to inquire; and accordingly, a bare-footed girl was despatched on this errand. Accommodation at the Post-office sounded promising,—quite as promising as a sofa, in partnership with strangers, at the "hotel" (all taverns and roadside inns in Ireland are "hotels"—so, although the "Headly Arms" is called an hotel, 'tis in truth but a roadside inn); and I considered myself highly fortunate when the messenger returned stating that I could have a bed. But my prospects of comfort underwent considerable modification when, having followed a boy, who carried my bag, about half

a mile, he stopped opposite a rude mud cabin and announced that it was the Post-office. A view of the interior was not more satisfactory. The door gave admission to a room, a corner of which, lighted by a couple of panes of glass, was railed off and devoted to H. M. mail-bags, and another inner room contained a rickety bedstead, two chairs and a table in a deplorable state of infirmity, and literally on their last legs. The prospect was not inviting, and was even more dreary, when I rather unwisely instituted a comparison between it and the comforts of an English village fishing inn, where you fare well and sleep in sheets which have lain in lavender. However, there was no choice, and so, putting the best face on the matter, I agreed, for the payment of one shilling a day, to become proprietor of the room—it being understood that the postmistress's daughter, a stout, thick-ankled girl, was to fetch supplies from the inn.

Matters being thus adjusted, I secured the services of a boy to accompany me to the river Glinsk, which I resolved on fishing during the afternoon. This stream is fed by several mountain lakes, and brawls down a rocky valley, forming during its course a succession of charming trout pools. I put up my rod at the bridge, about a couple of hundred yards from the Post-office, and fished up the stream.

Below the bridge the water soon merges into the tideway. The weather was not propitious for fishing, but I nevertheless caught, during about three hours, a very handsome dish of white and brown trout, and should in all probability have had better success had I used a small spoon-bait, which I heard was much liked by the white trout; but, being spoonless, I was limited to artificial flies.

And who that is a true lover of the angle will use bait if flies are at all successful. Half the charm of salmon and trout fishing consists in the management of these cunning and pretty lures. The Kerry white trout flies are particularly gaudy: bright fiery brown or blue bodies and gold-colour necks are the most attractive and killing.

On returning to my humble quarters I found that my landlady had made sundry alterations which improved the appearance of my room, and with my trout, which were delicious, excellent potatoes, and a beef-steak from the inn, I made a very satisfactory repast. The night hours were not so cheerful; for I soon discovered that my couch had other tenants beside myself, and when these ceased to molest from satiety, a trumpet-throated cock crowed shrill blasts in the adjoining room, where he was confined with his large harem. As this state of

things gave but a sorry prospect of sleep, for I have no sympathy with Racine's philosopher, who

——— "fit couper la tête à son coq, de colère,
Pour l'avoir éveillé plus tard qu'a l'ordinaire,"

I rose to see if the noisy fowl could be emancipated to salute the rising sun *en plein air*. Opening the unsubstantial door which divided me from the adjoining room, I peeped in, and beheld a sight which I have only seen equalled in the lodge of a North-American Indian. The post-master, his wife, a visitor — whom, by the way, I had turned out from the inner room — a girl, a couple of full-grown gossoons, three dogs, one cat, and a large cage full of fowls in a state of restless anxiety, were huddled together, some on a kind of shelf which half roofed the room, others on the floor, while besides them the space was encumbered by a heap of domestic articles. More wonderful still was it to see the non-feathered bipeds fast asleep, the cock-crowing seeming to act as a lullaby. Such is the force of habit. Do not riveters fall asleep within a caldron while blows are struck on the metal within a few inches of their ears which would almost rouse the dead? As it was not at all likely that chanticler's clarion would have any soothing influence on me, I

determined to turn him and his wives out of doors—trusting that no predatory fox would whip one up for his breakfast. Opening the door gently, I uncaged the fowls and had the gratification to see them leave the house cackling with delight as they went forth into the morning air. Then I crept back to bed, and slept until the sun streamed into my narrow apartment.

CHAP. XV.

A Day on the Carra Lakes. — A new way of baling a Boat. — Large brown Trout. — The “taking Fly.” — Channel between the Lakes. — Charming Scenery. — Remains of the ancient Forests. — Ferns. — The Reeks. — Fishing in the Upper Lake. — Ospreys. — Cormorants. — Their fishing Skill. — Kingfishers. — Row down the Lakes. — Drung Hill. — Dingle Bay. — Natural Sea-tanks. — Sea Anemones. — Fish the Carra River. — White Trout. — Eel Preserves. — Cloon Lough. — Salmon fishing. — Numerous Lakes. — Kerry still very little explored.

A BATH in the neighbouring river, and the delicious bracing morning air, banished all feeling of lassitude, and having breakfasted well, I set out on a fishing and exploring expedition to the Carra lakes. I had taken the precaution to secure the only boat belonging to the inn, for the use of which and two men I paid five shillings, and, provided with provisions, drove to within half a mile of the place of embarkation. As usual in Ireland, the boat being unprotected by a boat-house was half full of rain-water, and, of course, there was no bowl or other vessel to bale her: but Paddy has generally a peculiarly

original way of overcoming difficulties. My boatmen whipped off their brogues, which they declared would do the business "illigantly," and I am bound to say that their united efforts had the effect of very speedily baling out the boat. A flat stone was now sought, to lay at the bottom, on which a lighted lump of turf was placed for pipe-lighting purposes, and we then pushed off from the shore. From information gleaned at the inn I confined my fishing to brown trout; for although the Carra lakes communicate directly with the sea by means of the Carra river, which is frequented by salmon and white trout, yet, as I was assured, these fish are not caught in the lakes—probably because they make at once for the head rivers, in which they are found as well as in the tidal river.

Anglers may be glad to know that a rather large fly, with grouse-wing and orange body, was the most efficacious lure at the period of my visit (September). Strong tackle is also necessary, as the trout run large; fish of four pounds are not, as I am informed, uncommon, though I must honestly confess that I did not catch one of this weight. Of course I was told by my boatmen—one of whom evidently knew something of the gentle art—that the day was adverse to "good luck;" but when did the angler on

strange water ever fail to hear the weather blamed when the sport was not good. I believe, however, that although September is declared to be a good month for fishing the Carra lakes, it is really too late, and that June, July, and August are better seasons. However, at the end of about two hours I had caught a good basket of trout, averaging half a pound each. My expedition having a two-fold object, I now allowed my line to trail, and bade the men row me to the upper lake in order to see the head-waters. The scenery, which is rather tame at the end of the lower lake, increases in picturesque ruggedness and grandeur as you ascend. A channel, which will remind you of the long range at Killarney, leads from the lower to the upper lake. Here, too, an Eagle's Cliff, more lofty than its namesake at Killarney, is pointed out as the home of that fine bird. The richness of the woods is a striking and interesting feature of the scene, as there is every reason to believe that these, as well as the Killarney woods, are the remains of the vast forests which overspread Kerry, and Ireland generally, in former days.* Indeed, there are

* There is an ancient Irish rhyme which may be thus rendered —

“Ireland was thrice beneath the plough-share;
Thrice it was wood, and thrice it was bare.”

many features in the scenery of the Carra lakes to remind you of Killarney —

“ The wild spreading woods, the mountain’s green pall,
The mellow-toned bugle, the dip of the oar ;
Sweet sounds, and sweet sights, on your spirit will fall,
And wake you to gladness and music once more.”

Desire your boatmen to row gently along the east shore of the channel, and you will see the lovely ladyfern in all its coy beauty ; for although not rare in more exposed localities, only in moist glens is it thoroughly at home. Sir Walter Scott, who was greatly charmed with the variety and beauty of the ferns at Killarney, thus happily paints the favourite locality of the ladyfern : —

“ Where the copse wood is the greenest,
Where the fountain glistens sheenest,
Where the morning dew lies longest,
There the ladyfern grows strongest.”

Impending crags, fissured and scarred, gaudy with lichens — patches of emeraldine sward — gushing streams — and, over all, the mighty Reeks, their roots steeped in the head waters of these wild lakes — such are the principal features that you will see on entering the upper lake. These charms will in all probability be greatly enhanced by sunshine and

mist, now illumining and now robing the mountain peaks, as the clouds open and the wind sweeps fitfully through the mountain gorges. For though the air be at rest on the plains beneath, the Carra lakes are rarely unruffled. During the day I spent on them, we were forced to take shelter from a fierce storm, which in a few minutes converted the peaceful waters into ocean waves, and drove the foam like snow-flakes across the lake. We took advantage of our haven to dine, lighting a fire and roasting our trout in a highly artistic manner. They were excellent — so good, indeed, that I was induced to replenish the basket.

The result of my day's experience was that I found the fishing better in the upper than in the lower lake, and this appeared to be the opinion of numerous ospreys and cormorants, who were fishing very diligently in the head waters. I was extremely pleased to see the osprey in the Carra lakes, because it is generally supposed to be confined to Killarney. Thompson says: — "In but one instance has the osprey in a wild state come under my observation in Ireland. This was in 1834, on the lower lake of Killarney." At that period the sea-eagle was greatly molested by gunners, but during late years Mr. Herbert, of Muckross, has given strict orders to his gamekeepers to protect this bird, consequently it is

now less rare. During the past summer I never passed near the Osprey Rock in the lower lake without seeing from two to eight sea-eagles on it watching the fish.

Cormorants have always been abundant in the Kerry lakes. The great cormorant nidifies not only on marine rocks, but also on wooded islands in fresh-water lakes. Lord Shannon's gamekeeper, at Castle Martyr, declares that he counted one year upwards of eighty cormorants' nests on lofty Scotch fir-trees.* The curiously indented mid toe of the cormorant serves the two-fold purpose of enabling him to grasp a slippery fish and the bough of a tree. Milton was evidently aware of the tree-perching habits of this bird, for he thus pictures Satan:—

——— “ up he flew, and on the tree of life
Sat like a cormorant.”

All the fishermen on the Kerry lakes bear this greedy fowl a grudge; and no wonder, for he has prodigious stomach capacity, and can easily dispose of half his weight of fish in a day.

It is a curious sight to see a flock of cormorants sitting in a row on projecting rocks, after successful fishing, drying their outspread wings. This is the

* Proceedings Zool. Soc., 1847.

time to add a specimen to your museum ; for, like an alderman replete with turtle, he is disinclined to stir ; at least, I have frequently succeeded in getting within shot of them under these plethoric circumstances.

While in a zoological mood, let me do homage to the lovely jewelled kingfisher which I met on a stream running out of the Carra lakes. This is a rare bird in Ireland, but, as I was informed, you may occasionally meet one in this part of Kerry during the summer and autumnal months. This habit of frequenting localities near the sea during these seasons seems to have been observed long ago. Old Belon writes under his cut of the Halcyon, in the *Portraits d'Oyseaux* —

“ Le Martinet-pescheur fait sa demeure
En temps d'hyver au bord de l'océan,
Et en esté sur rivièrre ou estan,
Et de poisson se repaist à toute heure.”

I was prepared to hear from my fishing attendant that this gaudy bird is regarded with considerable superstition by the Kerry peasants, who suppose it to be endowed with many marvellous attributes. Among these the belief yet exists that a kingfisher in full plumage is an antidote against certain diseases,

and, when stuffed and suspended by a thread, its bill points to the quarter from whence the wind blows. This superstition was current in Shakspeare's days; for in "King Lear" Kent declares that slaves —

——— "turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters."

Another curious belief by the Kerry peasantry, though not confined to them, is, that the fat of the heron killed at full moon is a specific against rheumatism.

Most enjoyable was the row down the Carra lakes in the evening; for now —

"The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the woods and on the deep
The smiles of Heaven lay."

Surely, thought I, the time is not far distant when all this loveliness will be better known. But the "Headly Arms" must first assume the accomodating dimensions of an hotel; for tourists will not like to run the risk of roughing it in a mud cabin, though dignified by being the Post-office. In England such a locality as the Carra lakes would have been provided long since with large and handsome hotels. However, the iron horse has entered the Kerry

mountains, and where he sets his foot a change comes over the scene. Not that it is at all to be desired that the railway should be extended to the Reeks, but its influence, which has reared a huge hotel at Killarney, may, and probably will, cause some enterprising innkeeper to build a comfortable hotel on the shores of the Carra lakes.

The following morning before breakfast I took a walk to Dingle Bay, along a charming road winding beneath the wooded headland of Drung Hill. Your vicinity to a vast ocean is made apparent by the majestic waves which break on the sands at the head of the bay. The deep blue Atlantic may be seen at a distance between the Iveragh and Slievh mountains. If you are curious in natural marine aquaria, you will be well rewarded by extending your walk to the base of the cliffs south of the bay. I have seldom seen a lovelier tribe of sea anemones than those blooming in the natural sea-tanks of Dingle Bay. The common anemone, to which naturalists have given the hard name of *Actinia Mesembrianthemum*, the "daisy," the "gem," the "cave-dweller," robed in opalescent hues, the "snowy," with their wondrous apparatus of tentacles and equally wondrous discs, were there, besides colonies of various other animals of scarcely less curious forms.

I also observed tufts of the *Chonarus crispus*, or Carrigeen moss, which is used for jellies when dried, and has been extensively consumed during seasons of scarcity. The difference presented by this plant when growing under favourable and unfavourable circumstances is extraordinary. Unrefreshed by sea-water it is puny, of a pale olive tint, and destitute of beauty; but when found in natural marine aquaria, the fronds are large and the leaves reflect refulgent azure hues.

After breakfast I started to fish the Carra river, having great hopes that I should hook a salmon, as some gentlemen who were staying at the inn had killed two of these fish the preceding day. But, though I fished carefully for three hours, I did not see a salmon's fin even; so I changed my flies, and caught a dozen and four white trout — the largest about two pounds — and many brown trout.

The angler who loves a bounding river with deep brown pools dappled with foam, will rejoice in a day on the Carra river, though his sport be limited to white and brown trout. That there are salmon is evident by the existence of a formidable salmon weir about five miles from the mouth of the river, provided with the necessary contrivances for taking these fish; but this was no hindrance to my chance of

sport, as the nets had been removed on the 1st of August. The Carra is also celebrated for eels, a fact of which I had ocular demonstration. While fishing below the weir I was invited by my attendant to come and see "more fish than I had ever seen together before." Proceeding to a large tank, constructed of wood, on the brink of the river, through which a stream of water flowed, I saw a writhing mass of eels. They were for the most part about eighteen inches long, and were destined, as I was informed, for the London market when duly fattened. To fit them for the honour of rivalling the Holland eels, which constitute the main supply at Billingsgate*, they were carefully tended, and had become quite tame. This confirms Ellis, who, in his *Polynesian Researches*, says -- "In Otaheite eels are great favourites, and are tamed and fed until

* "There are two companies in Holland who supply the London market with eels. Their vessels are built with capacious wells, in which large quantities of eels are preserved till wanted. One or more of these vessels may be constantly seen lying off Billingsgate; the others go to Holland for fresh supplies, each bringing a cargo of 15,000 to 20,000 lbs. weight of live eels, for which the Dutch merchant pays a duty of 13*l.* per cargo for his permission to sell. Eels and salmon are the only fish sold by weight in the London market." — Yarrell, *Fishes*, vol. ii. p. 285.

they attain an enormous size. These pets are kept in large holes, two or three feet deep, partially filled with water. On the sides of these pits they generally remained, excepting when called by the person who fed them."

Had my Post-office quarters been better, or had I been able to obtain a bed at the inn, I should have felt inclined to remain longer in this part of Kerry. There are many lakes in the barony of Iveragh which would well repay the angler for the trouble of visiting them. The landlord of the inn at Glanbegh told me that he had sent two of his best fishermen to Cloon Lough, one of the head waters of the Carra, about eighteen miles from Glanbegh. Fishing from the shores of this wild lough — for they were unprovided with a boat — they hooked, during a few hours last summer, eighteen salmon, and killed three. There is no road to the lake, and it lies amidst the mountains, facts which account for the immunity the fish have enjoyed from all lures. The great number of lakes in the south-east part of Kerry which communicate with the sea is extraordinary. The Ordnance Survey of that county shows that the area of these inland waters in the barony of Iveragh alone comprises 4553 acres — only 1679 acres less than the area of all the Killarney lakes. As there

are, generally speaking, no roads to these wild mountain-meres, the best and, indeed, only way to fish them well is to camp near them. A bog-trotting gossoon may be easily found to fetch supplies for the commissariat from Glanbegh; and, with an india-rubber boat and one or two congenial companions, a most delightful excursion might be enjoyed, combining good fishing and the charms of exploration.

My own experience of Kerry is full of pleasant memories, for in that most picturesque of Irish counties —

“ Along o’er many a mountain top,
 Along through many a glen,
 With nature holding fellowship,
 I journeyed far from men ; —

“ Now suddenly a lonely tarn
 Would burst upon my eye,
 And then from out the solitude
 Would come the breezes’ cry.”

Indeed some of my happiest hours have been spent in riding excursions through the wilds of Kerry, and be assured that there are few counties in our kingdom where you may enjoy a “well-filled” day more than in this region of lakes and mountains.

CHAP. XVI.

The Bogs of Ireland. — Their vast Extent. — Uses of Peat. — Excursion to the Irish Peat Company's Works. — Kilberry. — Nature of Peat. — The bursting of Bogs. — Description of the Peat Works. — Paraffine. — Gigantic Furnaces. — Black Pigment. — Deodorising Properties of Peat. — Manufacture of Candles. — Price of Paraffine.

THE traveller in Ireland, let his tour be ever so limited, cannot fail to be impressed by the vast extent of bog over which the eye ranges for many miles without a break. The grouse-shooter on these inland plains carries a pocket-compass to guide him across the unchequered area; and on more than one occasion, when shooting over Irish moors, have I been indebted to the magnetic-needle for safe pilotage.

It would probably startle many tourists in Ireland, were they told, when traversing vast bog-districts in that country, that those dreary places may, before long, be converted into shining lights, which will go forth to irradiate the halls of beauty. And were it

not that chemistry is a marvellous worker, in comparison with whose magic wand that wielded by the necromancer of old was but a contemptible affair, scepticism, if not entire disbelief, might very naturally follow such an announcement. But the chemist is a mighty man;—at his bidding, substances disclose properties and assume appearances stranger than the wildest dreams could imagine; and it is one of his especial merits and triumphs, that by combinations which may be almost pronounced endless, he is enabled to make his knowledge applicable to the most useful purposes. One of these high achievements has been accomplished within the last few years. Dropping metaphor, candles of the most exquisite transparency, rivalling the best wax-lights in brilliancy of combustion, have been produced from the bogs of Ireland; and so successfully has the experiment answered, that works on a very large scale have been erected, for the purpose of manufacturing candles from peat, which are expected to realise a good profit, and to be of great benefit to that part of Ireland where they are situated.

I was on my way to visit Lord Rosse, at Parsonstown, when, happening to hear of the existence of these peat-works, I devoted a day to their examination. They are situated at Kilberry, about eight

miles from Monasterevin, and four from Athy, and are very accessible by means of the Dublin and Athy railway. But, before describing what I saw, it may be well to say a few words respecting the nature of bogs. These Irish fuel mines, for hitherto they have been chiefly valuable as fuel, are estimated to extend over 2,900,000 acres. They differ greatly in their exterior nature, being sometimes soft and spongy, sometimes firm and hard. Occasionally they undergo great and rapid changes, and, with little warning, swell and burst. A remarkable case of this kind occurred in the autumn of 1835, when the Sloggan bog, in Antrim, which occupies an area of 11,000 acres, burst. The bog, at the point of rupture, was observed to rise gradually, during the morning of the 17th of September, until it attained a height of thirty feet, when about five in the afternoon a loud noise, like that of a rushing wind, was heard, and the morass suddenly opening discharged a great quantity of mud and water. The eruption, with slight intermission, continued until the 28th of September, overflowing the country to the distance of many miles, and doing incalculable damage. The loss of property would have been much larger than it was but for the circumstance that the river Maine, which falls into Lough Neagh,

diverted the progress of the mud flow, which was carried down the river, causing it in some places to overflow. When the eruption ceased, which occurred suddenly, the bog sank, at the point of the outbreak, twenty feet below its original level, and a small circular pool of water occupied the hollow caused by the depression.

But however bogs differ in their exterior nature, in one respect they are similar, for all contain a great quantity of a peculiar substance called peat, of the average thickness of twenty-five feet, nowhere less than twelve, and never exceeding forty-two. This substance varies materially in its appearance and properties, in proportion to the depth at which it lies. The upper portion contains vegetable fibres, chiefly of the *sphagnum palustre*, or bog moss, considerably decomposed; while below, the colour of the peat changes from light brown to black, and the substance is much more compact. When dry it assumes the appearance of pitch or bituminous coal, having a conchoidal fracture in every direction, with a black shining lustre, and being capable of receiving a high polish.

Now, chemists long ago informed us that peat might be made to yield sulphate of ammonia, acetate of lime, naphtha, paraffine, and oil; and they also

stated that paraffine is an admirable substance for making candles. If we inquire what paraffine is, the truth of this statement becomes evident. Turning to Brande's Chemistry, we read, under this head: "When beech-tar is distilled, three liquids pass into the recipient—1, a light oil; 2, an aqueous acid; 3, a heavy oil. The heavy oil is subjected to several re-distillations, and then sulphuric acid is gradually added to it, till the mixture becomes a black and thin liquid, and if it does not spontaneously rise in temperature to 212 degrees, it is to be heated up to that point. The mixture is then kept for twelve hours or more at a temperature of about 122 degrees, when a colourless oil will be found floating upon its surface. This is to be carefully poured off, and, on cooling, paraffine concretes upon its surface."

I may add that the name of this curious substance is derived from *parum affinis*, on account of its inertness as a chemical agent, or want of affinity: resisting the action of acids and alkalies. It, however, readily dissolves in oil of turpentine and in naphtha.

From this account, it is evident that if peat can be made to yield paraffine at a remunerative profit, a new and vast field of commercial enterprise is at

once opened. As to the feasibility of the undertaking, considered without reference to financial returns, no doubt exists. The only question was, whether paraffine could be manufactured at a remunerative cost.

On reaching the works, which are visible from a great distance, towering over the vast expanse of moorland, I inquired for Mr. Reece, the intelligent and scientific manager of the establishment. He was at home, and undertook at once to conduct me over the premises. The first objects to which my attention was directed, were four huge furnaces of the form of inverted cones, each capable of consuming no less than twenty-five tons of peat in eighteen hours. When filled, the furnaces are closed, and a fierce hot-blast being driven through the mass of turf, ignition is rapidly effected. The smoke evolved escapes through a pipe leading from the upper part of the furnace to a condenser. The magnitude of this condenser may be estimated by the fact that it will contain 8,000,000 cubic feet of gas. Here the first change in the conversion of peat into paraffine occurs, the smoke being condensed, and precipitated in the form of tar. The lighter, or more gaseous portion, is conducted by pipes to another reservoir.

The result of many experiments shows that 100 tons of peat yield as much tar as will produce about 350 pounds of paraffine, and 300 gallons of oil. But to obtain the paraffine, many delicate chemical operations are requisite. For a long time it could not be extracted without using ether, which made the process far too costly for commercial purposes. At length—for what will not chemistry achieve?—Mr. Reece discovered a less expensive mode of proceeding, which is at the same time fully as efficacious as when ether was employed. Sulphuric acid is the principal agent used: the tar being boiled for about half an hour, with three per cent. of this acid, becomes decomposed, and all impurities fall to the bottom of the vessel. Oil and paraffine now remain, which, after undergoing the process of distillation, separate. The paraffine then appears in crystalline flakes; but is of so dark a colour, and emits such an unpleasant odour as to be quite unfit for use. The processes of bleaching and deodorising are next performed, and it is really most startling to see the dusky and foul-smelling compound issue from powerful hydraulic presses, steam baths, and the action of chloro-chromic acid, pure, scentless, clear, and perfect paraffine.

The combustion of this beautiful substance is

precisely like that of refined white wax; and, bearing in mind how it is obtained, you will admit that chemistry is a wonder-worker. Well and wisely wrote old Ashmole respecting chemistry, that " 't is an universal and all-piercing science and spirit: which spirit a true artist knows how so to handle (though its activity be as it were dull'd and streightly bound up in the close prison of grosse and earthie bodies,) as take it from corporeity, free it from captivity, and let it loose that it may freely worke."*

And do not imagine that when the paraffine is extracted all that remains is valueless; for independently of oils from which gas may be generated, and which in the Irish peat-works is used as fuel for the steam-engines and other purposes, several highly valuable commercial and agricultural products may be obtained from the residue.

Indeed, the various substances which may be extracted from peat are extraordinary; among others, it yields excellent black pigment, darker than ivory black, and by an ingenious process of distillation, eight gallons of powerful spirit have been obtained from a ton of peat.†

* Thea. Chem. Brit.

† Nor should the antiseptic property of peat be overlooked. Professor Davy, of the Royal Dublin Society, who has made

As may be supposed, four huge furnaces, each of the capacity described, require a great supply of turf to keep them going. To meet this demand, canals to the extent of five miles have been cut through the bog adjoining the works, and about two hundred persons are kept constantly employed in cutting and conveying the turf to its destination.

At the last annual meeting of the shareholders of the Irish Peat Company, held in December of the past year, a very favourable report of the progress of the works was made. Various improvements have been effected in the mode of cutting, drying, and drawing turf, by which the cost of feeding the furnaces will be considerably diminished. "With regard to the manufacture of paraffine," says the Report, "great improvements have taken place, and are still continuing, though less perceptibly, and to such an extent that whereas, previous to August, the average produce of tar per kish of turf was about half a gallon, that of the whole period since the improved workings began is one and one-third gallon per kish; and for the last six weeks one and one-half gallon per kish: by this we have gained still further expe-

many experiments on the deodorising effects of peat, declares that its disinfecting properties are superior to those of wood charcoal. — *Essay on the Use of Peat*, Dublin, 1850.

rience, and ascertained that with our present number of furnaces not more than about 2300 kish, or 200 tons, can be burned to procure its adequate products, which now are nearly double that obtained when twice the quantity of peat was consumed. The result of the last six weeks' workings to Nov. 30, has been such an average produce of oil that your directors consider may be fairly calculated to continue; add to which, from improvements made by Messrs. Field in purifying paraffine, they have been able to enter into a contract with those gentlemen to supply them with all the paraffine produced in a brown state, which at last realises the hopes of the original projectors. The candles made from this substance equal wax, and there is no doubt will come into regular consumption. From a very careful statement made of the selling price of all their products when realised, and deducting the real expenses paid, of wages, repairs, &c., during that period, with the *pro-rata* amount of rent, salaries, and other fixed charges, they will yield a profit of not less than 75*l.* per week, from which alone the interest on the loans and advances to the Company would have to be taken."

It further appears, from the Report, that in consequence of the improvements which have been made

in the manufacture of paraffine, the substance now, in its brown or unrefined state, sells for one shilling per pound, which is as much as the Company anticipated realising by their purified paraffine.

At the proposed rate of consumption, vast as is the area of bog near the works at Kilberry, it will be exhausted in the course of a few years. This, however, will not affect the establishment, as there are other large bogs in the neighbourhood; and it must not be forgotten that one of the advantages held out is, that the very destruction of the bog will develop a soil available for the purposes of the agriculturist.

All friendly to the prosperity of Ireland must desire that the expectations of the Irish Peat Company may not be disappointed. I know that their managers have laboured zealously to establish the works on a sound and at the same time profitable basis. It is a good sign that no advertising puffing has been used to dispose of the shares, which, I am informed, have been taken up mostly by practical men. This augurs well for the success of the undertaking, and the Irish tourist may yet see the fitful will-o'-the-wisp, which haunts Irish bogs, spirited by the chemist's potent wand into the substantial reality of brilliant candles, and thus realise the hope that the bogs of Ireland are her California.

CHAP. XVII.

The Golden Age of Ireland. — Gold Finds. — The Treasures of the Irish Academy. — Gold Torques. — The Hill of Tara. — Gold Ring Money. — Manillas. — Ecclesiastical Bells. — Superstitions respecting holy Bells. — Ancient Crosses. — The Cross of Cong. — Ancient jewelled Case. — Old Copy of the Gospels. — Saints' Work. — The "Fire Cover." — Its supposed Virtue. — Bouchal. — Hidden Treasures in Bogs. — Habitations of the ancient Irish. — Discovery of an old House. — Hunting Horns. — Bells. — Speculations respecting these Objects.

IF, however, Ireland be not destined to find an Ophir or a California in her bogs, we must not forget that she has enjoyed a golden age, when the precious metal was apparently as common as iron. Even now, there are rare gold-finds in the Emerald Isle, which by their extraordinary richness drive poor Paddy almost mad with excitement.

Indeed, so numerous have been the discoveries of gold and jewelled ornaments in Ireland, that the poetical description of the lady wandering through Erin arrayed in rich and rare gems is not mythical. The archæological interest of these relics of a past

race is so great that I purpose devoting this chapter to some account of the most remarkable objects which have been brought to light during recent years. I am the more induced to do this because no book, as far as I am aware, contains any description of the treasures of the Royal Irish Academy, which the visitor to Ireland should not leave unseen.

In that Institution you will see a dazzling variety of ornaments, enclosed within glass cases, and reposing in imperial dignity on purple velvet, for the most part composed of pure gold, compared to which that of which modern gold ornaments are made is but dross.

These glorious vestiges, more than whole libraries of ancient black-letter folios, reflect those days when Ireland was indeed the great light of Europe. But it is not to the scholar and antiquary only that the art-treasures of the Irish Academy, and those in the hands of private individuals, have charms.

“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,”

and in the Academy's museum are numberless “things” of exquisite form—graceful vases, cups, rings, and bells, radiant with jewels—ornaments of known and unknown uses in pure gold; and, in short, an endless variety of forms, evidently created

by artists of high æsthetic taste. Those who had the good fortune to see the Dublin Exhibition of 1853 will remember the extraordinary richness and variety of Irish antiquities then brought together; but, numerous as they were — for they amounted to more than 60,000 objects — I am assured that they did not represent the precious metal wealth of ancient Ireland, much of which is in the hands of private individuals.

Perhaps the most remarkable, certainly the most magnificent, gold objects, are the torques. Two were found some years ago on the Hill of Tara, the residence of the Irish monarchs, anterior to the sixth century. One of these (now in the possession of the Queen) is five feet seven inches long, and weighs 27 oz. 9 dwts.; the other is five feet six inches long, but weighs only 12 oz. 6 dwts. These torques are of a screw or spiral pattern, and the workmanship is of great beauty. Torques of similar size to these have not been unfrequently found in Ireland; they are generally accompanied by bracelets of the same description of workmanship; many specimens of which may be seen in Dublin. The term torque, by which antiquaries usually designate these ornaments, is one of frequent occurrence in classical works. The word is derived from the Celtic *torc*, a twisted collar;

or perhaps, more correctly, a twisted circular ornament of any kind, as the ancient Irish called a collar, or neck chain, *mun torc*. The torques found in France and Wales are precisely similar to the Irish. Some extremely fine specimens are in the hands of Welsh families.

It has been supposed by many antiquaries that the use of these ornaments was derived from the Romans. But the great number of torques discovered in Ireland is opposed to such a conjecture, and we may, with far greater propriety, refer them to a Celtic origin. They were not originally worn by the Romans; and the very appellation *Torquatus*, which was bestowed on Titus Manlius, from the golden torque taken by him from a Gaul whom he slew in the year of Rome 393, and which was continued as a surname in his family, seems to indicate that the torque was not familiar to the Romans at that period.

The gold ring-money is another very striking evidence of the former abundance of this precious metal in Ireland. The great variety and richness of the specimens found is extraordinary, and every year discloses fresh hoards. Recently a remarkable collection of rings was discovered in Clare. As usual, the peasants made off with a large portion of the treasure before it could be secured, but the Academy

fortunately obtained possession of several rings. One of these is valued at forty pounds, and others are nearly as valuable.

The similarity of the Celtic ring-money and the African manillas is curious. In that country, such ornaments have long passed as a money medium, and it is well known that articles of this description are largely manufactured in Birmingham for export to Africa.

The manillas were probably introduced into Africa by the same people who brought them to Ireland; and as the negro nations have changed but little, they still pass as money by their old Phœnician name.

The collection of bells form another feature of great interest, both on account of their artistic beauty and richness of ornamentation.

Ecclesiastical bells were formerly esteemed so holy in Ireland, that they gave their names to places; as, *Carnaclug*—Head of the Bell. Women, during pregnancy, were accustomed to drink out of bells reputed to be holy; the idea being entertained that a draught administered from a holy bell was possessed of peculiar virtue in diminishing the pains of childbirth. Indeed, there is evidence to prove that in St. Patrick's time, and subsequently, the bells which were consecrated by the first teachers of Christianity

in Ireland were used for various superstitious purposes. Such bells were generally of a quadrangular form, and were enshrined in cases of the most costly materials and elaborate workmanship. The bells themselves were frequently decorated with jewels, which, being fastened by rivets, of course destroyed the tone; but this seems to have been of less consideration than the beauty of the bells, for even where gems are wanting the metal is deeply incised with very rich tracery, and gold bosses are attached to the sides.

As may be supposed, the collection of crosses is large and rich; so large, indeed, that their enumeration alone would occupy a voluminous catalogue. One, however, of singular beauty and interest, must not be overlooked. This is known as the Cross of Cong, from the circumstance of its having formerly belonged to the abbey of Cong, in the province of Connaught. It is a most interesting memorial of the period preceding the English invasion, and shows a very high state of art at the time of its fabrication, which was the early part of the twelfth century, in the reign of Turlogh O'Connor, father of Roderick, the last of the native kings of Ireland. This date is supplied by the Gaelic inscriptions, extremely clear and well cut, which cover the silver edges of the

cross, and which, besides giving the names of the king and of contemporary dignitaries of the Church, preserve that of the artist himself, who was an Irishman. The following inscription intimates that this reliquary once enclosed a portion of the true cross:—

Hac Cruce . Crvx . Tegitur . qva . Passvs
•
Conditor . orbis.

This circumstance will account for the veneration in which the Cross of Cong has been held for ages, though, unfortunately, it was not sufficient to protect the relic from injury; much of the ornamental work having been removed, and part of the inscriptions torn away. Notwithstanding these depredations, it is a splendid monument of ecclesiastical antiquity. The arms are thickly studded with precious stones. A crystal in the centre, within which the piece of the supposed true cross was probably set, is surrounded by an elegant ornament in gold, and the entire cross on both sides is adorned with rich interwoven tracery which Irish artificers in metal were so fond of executing. This ornament is of solid gold; the inscribed edging of silver; and both are separated from the wooden frame by plates of copper; the whole being held together by nails, the heads of which represent the heads of small animals. The shaft also termi-

nates in the head of an animal, which is large and finely executed. The end is hollow, to admit a staff by which the cross was carried like the crosier of a bishop.

As a pendant to this exquisite cross may be mentioned a rich box or case, found at the end of the last century in the ground among the rocks in the Devil's Bit Mountain, in the county of Tipperary. The peasants who discovered it were induced, by their hopes of profit, to tear off the gold plate on one side, and to pick out the lapis lazuli with which it was studded; but a representation of the Passion of our Saviour saved the other side from similar injury.

Although this displays considerable artistic skill, yet the tracery is far more beautiful than the image in the centre. The chief interest, however, of the case lay in its contents, which consisted of a Latin copy of the Gospels, written upon vellum in the Irish character. The period of the writing does not appear, but it is conjectured to be anterior to the Norman Conquest.

Traditionary evidence assigns the workmanship of the box to a saint. This belief is, however, not uncommon, for so highly was gold and jewelry work esteemed and venerated in Ireland, that we find many

beautiful artistic objects were called "The Saint's Work."

This appellation was given to the remarkable object known now as the *Barnaan Cuilawn*, or the fire cover of Cualen, which was found in the parish of Glankeen in Tipperary.

This curiosity consists of wrought iron covered by brass, inlaid with gold worked into beautiful Runic knots. It is twelve inches high, about eight inches long, and four inches broad. The supposed use of the vessel was to burn incense, but tradition attaches strange power to it. Thus we are told that "a Mrs. Dunn, to whom the *Barnaan Cuilawn* descended as an *heirloom*, was in the habit, until recently, of earning a livelihood by hiring it out for people to swear upon. When anything was stolen, the *Barnaan Cuilawn* was sent for; and on the messenger paying one shilling to Mrs. Dunn, and swearing on the vessel that he would safely return it, he was permitted to bear the relic away in a strong leathern case (kept for the purpose) to those who sent him. On the arrival of the *Barnaan Cuilawn*, the persons suspected were obliged to purge themselves of the accusation by swearing upon it; while, with all the solemnity of a religious rite, they at the same time touched it with a hazel wand

or rod. He who refused to do this was stigmatised as a convicted plunderer. Women would never touch it; and so great was the awe in which this ordeal was held, that many, who would perjure themselves if the gospels had been presented to them, swore the truth upon the *Barnaán Cuilawn*.

If, however, a man was rash enough to swear falsely, he was, according to tradition, immediately punished by his head being twisted on his shoulders.

There was lately living, in Ireland, a man who was reputed to have fallen a victim to the dreaded supernatural influence of this piece of antiquity. This person, afterwards named the "Loaf," having been accused of stealing some bread, protested upon the *Barnaán Cuilawn* that he was not guilty; and immediately, by a contraction of the muscles, his mouth was drawn close to his left ear.*

A *bouchal* or crozier found in Clare, and which formerly belonged to an old woman in that county, was made for a long time to do similar duty to the *Barnaán Cuilawn*; and other ecclesiastical relics might be adduced which were held sacred by the peasantry, and endowed with miraculous power.

The custom of concealing treasure in bogs doubt-

* Trans. Roy. Irish Acad. vol. xiv. p. 37.

less accounts for the rich finds in these localities, which are to this day made the temporary depositories of articles which, if not so intrinsically valuable as gold and silver, are yet precious to their owners. However, apart from the corroborative evidence in favour of the former abundance of gold in Ireland, as shown by the gorgets, torques, rings, bracelets, brooches, &c. which have been discovered, all writers on Ireland agree that she was formerly rich in the precious metals.* Donatus says that Hibernia was "*insula dives opum, gemmarum, vestis et auri.*" Saxe Grammaticus mentions that "Dublin, in 814, was filled with riches;" and in Delarne's History of Caen it is stated that when treasure was exacted from the British Islands, after the Norman Conquest, the tribute from England was 23,730 marks of silver, and from Ireland 400 marks of silver, and no less than 400 ounces of gold.

But the bogs and soil of Ireland contain other

* The "Annals of the Four Masters" make distinct mention of the Wicklow gold mines. At the close of the last century these mines were worked by Government for about two years. The quantity collected was 945 ounces, which was sold for 3675*l.*; but it has been calculated that at least 10,000*l.* was paid to the country people for gold collected before the Government took possession of the works. — *Kane's Indus. Resourc. of Ireland.*

secrets of the past, besides those which are revealed by gold and silver ornaments. The Transactions of Irish Archæological Societies record many "finds," fully as curious as those of the precious metals, and more valuable in an historical point of view, because they throw more light on the manners and customs of the ancient Celts. We know so little respecting the habitations of these people, that the discovery of a house in a bog possesses peculiar interest. This relic, a perfect model of which may be seen in the Irish Academy's museum, was found a few years since in the county of Donegal, by peasants who were searching in Drumkelin bog for bog-timber, by probing the soil with long iron rods. In the course of this operation the house was struck, about sixteen feet below the surface of the bog. The first part exposed was the roof, which was quite flat, and composed of broad oak planks, varying in thickness from one inch and a half to three inches. These planks had evidently been split with wedges out of solid barks. The interstices appear to have been filled by a cement composed of grease and fine sea-sand, and the floors of the house were carefully stanchied with the same composition. The building was twelve feet square by nine feet in height, and divided about half way by a second floor, making

two rooms, each four feet high in the clear. The narrow dimensions of these apartments has led to the conjecture that they were intended for sleeping places; and this is strengthened by the fact that vestiges of wood-work were found, which are supposed to have formed part of a more extensive building. Near the house, the stump and roots of a large tree were met with. These were in more perfect preservation than any part of the dwelling. A pathway, paved with small freestone flags, was traced some distance from the house; these flags rested on a foundation of hazel bushes and birch-wood. Within the house lay a great quantity of nut-shells, and near these a piece of leather sewed with a leather thong.

A minute examination of the ground adjoining the house led to the discovery of the ends of oak planks, which protruded through the bog; also of several pieces of timber similar in shape to those which composed the main framework of the more perfect house, and two doors or gates, one quite perfect, cut out of solid logs of oak four inches thick, two feet seven inches broad, and four feet six inches long, with a piece of the solid wood protruding angularly at each end, as pivots or hinges for the door to work upon. Contiguous to these a number of rough spars were

found piled one upon another, and secured by stakes from eight to ten feet long. The tool-marks on the wood indicate that it was wrought with the rudest implements, and the labour bestowed on it must have been immense. The interior of the dwelling was a solid mass of bog. This came away without adhering to the wood, scaling off from the greasy surface of the floor, and leaving the print of the fibrous texture of the wood clearly impressed on the turf.

Antiquaries are of opinion that this house formed one of a village which was situated in a forest. It is well known that the early dwellings of the Irish were built of wood, in which respect they followed the example of Greece; and bearing in mind the perishable nature of the material, it is no less extraordinary than interesting that so perfect a specimen of such a structure should have been discovered. We read that the Egyptians erected "ingenious dwellings of canes and reeds interwoven;" and, not to multiply examples, we are told that Henry I., when he visited Dublin, constructed near the site of St. Andrew's church a palace of smooth twigs or wattles, *after the Irish fashion*; and in this structure the English sovereign held his Christmas, and feasted all the princes and nobility of Ireland who had done homage to him.

Another curious discovery was made a few years ago in a bog on Lord Rosse's estates in the King's County. Peasants were probing for bog-timber, when, about four feet from the surface, the rod struck some hard substance, which, on being exposed, was found to be a large bronze vessel of great flexibility, containing a vast number of antiquarian relics. Among the contents were thirteen hunting-horns of various sizes, made of bronze, provided with a lateral embouchure; thirty-one bells of different dimensions, from two to six inches long, were also found in the vessel; they are fitted with loose clappers, and many of them have apertures to allow sound to escape more freely. The bronze of which they are made is very hard, and has almost entirely resisted decomposition. These bells are supposed to have been attached to cows and sheep, when dense forests overspread the island. Thirty-one celts, and seventy-nine spear-heads, of exquisitely beautiful workmanship, were found with the bells.

Such a collection as this naturally excited the attention of antiquaries, and elicited various hypotheses on the occasion of the vessel and its contents being exhibited before the Irish Academy. Dr. Robinson, who is high authority in all matters

relating to Celtic antiquities, conceives that the collection was the stock of some travelling merchant or pedlar, who, in consequence of his heavy load, became entangled in the bog he was crossing, and so perished.

CHAP. XVIII.

Proceed to Parsonstown.—Visit Lord Rosse.—The Castle of the Parsons' Family.—Besieged by King James.—Leap Castle.—Lady Parsons' leaden Cisterns.—Description of the present Castle.—Lord Rosse's early Telescopes.—His numerous Experiments.—Determines to construct a six-foot Speculum.—Speculum Metal.—Great mechanical Difficulties.—Manner in which they were surmounted.—Lord Rosse's Workmen.—Polishing Specula.—Construction of the gigantic Tube.—Mode by which it is suspended.—The great Galleries.—The Observatory.

I STATED that I was on my way to visit Lord Rosse when I turned aside to see the Irish peat-works. The consequence of this diversion has been a desire to show that, however dull and monotonous bogs may be to the eye, they contain things of great interest, and are, in fact, repositories of much wealth and of highly curious and valuable archæological information.

Now, getting out of bog-land, I purpose giving some account of the greatest mechanical wonder of Ireland, and introducing you to the temple of science from whence it emanates.

On the borders of the King's County, and very nearly in the centre of Ireland, stands the castle of the Parsons' family, the head of which is represented at the present day by the Earl of Rosse, known in his early life as Lord Oxmantown, the title of the eldest son of the earls of Rosse.

The castle is a large and substantial edifice, with walls yards thick, as they needs must have been to have withstood successfully a siege of many days directed against the stout building, in 1690, by the forces of King James. The artillery left sundry marks of their hostility in the shape of cannon-balls, which are still to be seen embedded in the walls. The lord of the castle at that period was Sir Lawrence Parsons, a zealous and determined Protestant, who, with Jonathan Darby, of Leap Castle, in the same county, also a Protestant, fell under the king's displeasure, and, on pretence of harbouring and protecting so-called traitors, or, in other words, Protestants, were tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged. Political considerations prevented the execution of the sentence; but the king determined to destroy Sir Lawrence's castle, and was only frustrated by the desperate and gallant defence made by the gallant garrison. There is a very interesting manuscript journal of the siege preserved in the

castle, which was written by Sir Lawrence, in which it is recorded that the besieged were reduced to such straits for the want of ammunition, that "they cut up and melted a large leaden cistern used by Lady Parsons for salting beeves, and sufficiently large to hold five at a time." Considerable satisfaction is expressed at the slaughter committed on the besiegers by the bullets made out of the leaden cistern, which, however, it is added, was not given up by Lady Parsons to the gallant garrison without considerable reluctance.

The wings of the castle and the basement on the town side are the sole remains of the original structure: a fire, originating in the carelessness of the housekeeper, destroyed the central portion of the edifice during the absence of the family, fifteen years ago. It has, however, been rebuilt, on an enlarged scale, in a style to correspond with the ancient part of the building, and the castle is now an imposing edifice.

Having been, on more than one occasion, a guest within its walls, I can assert that the hospitality of Lord Rosse's ancestors, which the capacious salting beeve cistern eloquently proclaims, has descended to the present nobleman; and I am certain that the castle at Parsonstown yields to no noble habitation

in the elegance and comfort which reigns throughout its vast and numerous halls.

Were I a disciple of the school of writers who set the courtesies of hospitality at defiance, and write of their entertainers as if they were publicans and their houses inns, recording, in vulgar detail, table-talk intended only for the private circle, I might fill more than one chapter with the conversations I have had the privilege of hearing at Parsonstown; but holding that all reporters of such private matters should be held up to public indignation and pilloried, if such a wholesome punishment were still in force, I shall draw a veil over the domestic economy of Lord Rosse's establishment. And I think that the reader will have no cause to regret my reticence, for it is in a far higher and more interesting point of view that I purpose introducing him to the Castle at Parsonstown.

From a very early period of life Lord Rosse turned his attention to the manufacture of telescopes for astronomical purposes. At first his experiments were directed to the improvement of refracting telescopes, but after various extremely ingenious essays in making fluid and other object-glasses he found that, although the improved manufacture of glass afforded the means of constructing larger discs of

tolerably perfect glass than was formerly practicable, they still wanted that exact homogeneity and those optical properties essential to any great increase of power. He therefore came to the conclusion that there seemed to be but little chance of effecting anything really important in astronomy, except by improving the reflecting telescope.* To that object every effort of his mind was directed; and we cannot but regard with amazement and admiration the results which have been created, particularly when we remember that Lord Rosse has parliamentary and

* Dr. Robinson, of Armagh, a high authority in all matters relating to astronomy and astronomical instruments, entirely agrees with Lord Rosse in his preference for reflecting telescopes. In a recent publication he says — “There is a boundless harvest of astronomical discoveries to be yet reaped, even in this hemisphere of the sky. It can only be thoroughly explored by large reflectors, for though the achromatic possesses great advantages in some respects, yet it falls short in others. As to matching a six-foot reflector, that is out of the question. Besides, could discs of glass be procured of sufficient size? They would be liable to bend, and have double refraction from pressure, as they could only be supported at the circumference; and the cost of such object glasses would be enormous. It is therefore to be hoped that the reflecting telescope — British by invention, by all its subsequent improvements, and by its most glorious applications — will continue to attract the attention of our countrymen, so that they may keep their present lead both in making and using it.” — *Nichol's Physical Sciences*.

other pressing and important duties attached to his high station, — particularly with reference to his office of Lord Lieutenant of the King's County, — which have required and received great attention and a large expenditure of time.

It is almost unnecessary to say that such a man must possess a rare combination of optical and chemical science, when, to use the words of a distinguished philosopher, "he has given us the power of overcoming difficulties which arrested our predecessors, and of carrying to an extent which even Herschel himself did not contemplate the illuminating power of his telescopes, along with a sharpness of definition scarcely inferior to that of the achromatic." And all this, be it remembered, has been effected single-handed, and in a country in no way celebrated for its mechanical manufactures.

It would be wearisome were we even to glance at the numerous experiments which Lord Rosse made before he achieved the glorious and unparalleled feat of casting a speculum six feet in diameter. The extraordinary brittleness of speculum metal renders it extremely difficult of manipulation; for although considerably harder than steel, the slightest percussion, or the mere increase by a few degrees of its temperature, will shiver it to atoms. To overcome

this disastrous tendency to discerptation, the admixture of an increased proportion of copper was tried by early experimenters, and with such a measure of success as to render the speculum metal less brittle; but the remedy on one side led to a fatal evil on the other. The speculum no longer presented that brilliancy which is so essential for astronomical purposes; and, independently of this defect, it became much more liable to tarnish.

It was evident, therefore, that no departure could be made from the best proportions of metals for the construction of specula, which Lord Rosse finds to be 126·4 parts of copper to 58·9 of tin. Another vexatious feature of this highly intractable alloy is its porous nature. Of this fact Newton, who made several specula with his own hands, was fully aware, and he records that he considered the porosity a very serious defect.

Lord Rossé at first endeavoured to conquer the difficulties of constructing large specula by making them ~~in~~ several pieces, and soldering them to a back of alloy of zinc and copper, which were expected to expand and contract in the same proportion as speculum metal. After various trials he completed in this manner specula of three feet diameter, which answered very well for stars below the fifth magni-

tude; but above that they exhibited a cross, formed by diffraction at the joints, and were consequently rejected.

In the course of these experiments it was ascertained that the difficulty of casting large discs of speculum metal arose from the unequal contraction of the material. This discovery led to the inference that if the fluid mass could be cooled throughout with perfect regularity, so that every portion should be of the same temperature, there would be no unequal contraction in the progress towards solidification. To effect this, it appeared only necessary to make the lower surface of the mould of iron, while the remainder was of dry sand; but on carrying this into practice, it was found that the speculum metal cooled so rapidly that air bubbles remained entangled between it and the iron surface. The manner in which this new difficulty was overcome is strikingly illustrative of Lord Rosse's high mechanical talents. He constructed the lower part of his mould of hoop iron, six inches broad, packed edgeways in a strong frame seven feet in diameter and supported by strong transverse bars below. The upper surface of this mould was turned to a convex segment of a sphere 108 feet radius, and then ground smooth by a frame filled with concave blocks of sandstone. This contri-

vance answered admirably. The air escaped through the interstices of the hoops, and the metal which came in contact with them was chilled at once into a dense sheet about half an inch thick. It now only remained to prevent the rest of the speculum cooling unequally, and for that purpose it was placed in an annealing furnace, and left there till cold.

The success which attended these operations, and the subsequent grinding, polishing, and mounting specula of three feet diameter, induced Lord Rosse to attempt the arduous task of constructing one of six feet.

The first disc of this gigantic size was cast on the 13th of April, 1842. Three iron crucibles, each containing two tons of speculum metal, were used. On this occasion, besides the engrossing importance of the operation, its singular and sublime beauty can never be forgotten by those who were so fortunate as to have been present. Above, the sky crowded with stars seemed to look down auspiciously on the work; below, the furnaces poured out huge columns of nearly monochromatic yellow flames; and the ignited crucibles, during their passage through the air, were fountains of red light, producing on the towers of the castle such accidents of colour and shade as might almost transport fancy to realms of enchant-

ment. Nor, as we are informed, was the perfect order and arrangement of everything less striking: each possible contingency had been foreseen, each detail carefully rehearsed; and the workmen executed their orders with a silent and unswerving obedience worthy of the calm and provident self-possession with which they were given.

Allusion to the workmen leads us to mention that all the operatives in Lord Rosse's establishment have been and are Irishmen trained by himself. They are under the immediate superintendence of a foreman, also educated by Lord Rosse. He has proved an apt pupil; and his manipulatory skill and knowledge of mechanics are of so high an order that he could construct and mount a six-foot speculum in the absence of his master. The actual casting of the gigantic mirror is represented as having been a magnificent spectacle. For several minutes the metal rolled in heavy waves like those of heaving quicksilver, and broke in a surf of fire on the sides of the mould. The disc was then placed in the annealing oven, where it remained for sixteen weeks, during the first three of which the exterior of the building was sensibly warm.

The operations of grinding and polishing were next performed, and here the aid of steam-power was

employed. It was long believed that specula could only be polished successfully by the hand, or, in other words, that perfect results could only be obtained by *feeling* the action of the polisher.* Lord Rosse, however, contrived a mechanical apparatus, which not only grinds but polishes specula without the intervention of the hand. His first experiments of this nature were directed to specula of three feet diameter, and having succeeded in giving a beautiful figure and surface to these discs, he undertook to grind and polish the large speculum in the same manner.

The speculum is placed in a trough of water, care being taken to maintain it of an equal temperature during the entire process. The grinding-plate, which is of the same diameter as the speculum, is slightly convex. It is intersected by transverse and circular grooves, which divide it into portions of about half an inch superficial area. Prepared emery-powder is then introduced between the two faces, and the

* It is worthy of mention, as I was informed by Lord Rosse that, until the art of polishing specula by steam-power became known, the only person in London who could grind and polish specula efficiently was a blind man, named Cuthbert. He polished all mirrors literally by feeling, using no machinery in the operation. But his specula did not exceed four inches in diameter.

speculum is made to revolve very slowly, while the grinding-plate is drawn backwards and forwards by one eccentric or crank, and from side to side slowly by another. The process of polishing differs very essentially from that of grinding; in the latter, the powder employed runs loose between two hard surfaces, and may produce scratches probably equal in depth to the size of the particles. In the polishing process the case is very different; then the particles of the powder lodge in the comparatively soft material of which the surface of the polishing-tool is formed, and as the portions projecting may bear a very small proportion to the size of the particles themselves, the scratches will necessarily be diminished in the same proportion. The particles are thus forced to imbed themselves, in consequence of the extreme accuracy of contact between the surface of the polisher and the speculum. But as soon as this accurate contact ceases, the polishing process becomes but fine grinding; it is absolutely necessary, therefore, to secure this accuracy of contact during the whole process. Several very ingenious devices have been suggested to render the art of polishing independent of the process of grinding. Among others was a proposition by Mr. Barton, of turning the speculum with a diamond, constrained by very delicate machinery

to move in the proper path, and with so slow a motion that the grooves produced by the diamond should act on light as a polished surface. The extreme accuracy required in an operation of this nature being, however, so great that the error of figure amounting to but a small fraction of a hair's-breadth would destroy the action of a speculum, it was not to be expected that such a process could succeed in practice, nor, indeed, any other contrivance which has not, like that of grinding, a decided tendency to correct its own defects, and to produce results in which the errors may be said to be infinitely small in comparison with those in any of the previous steps from which they are derived.

It would occupy more space than I can command to enter into the detail necessary for the comprehension of all Lord Rosse's beautiful and delicate processes by which he has attained all the important desiderata in the manufacture of reflecting telescopes. It will, however, give the reader a very good idea of the perfection to which this ingenious and enterprising nobleman has brought polishing machinery, when he learns that he can polish a six-foot speculum in the brief space of six hours. The focal length of a three-foot speculum being so much less than that of a six-foot, Lord Rosse was enabled to test the

accuracy of the parabolic curve by the following method, — A series of trap-doors were constructed above the speculum, which, being opened, commanded a view of a flag-staff placed on the summit of a tower one hundred feet high. Watch dials with their faces inverted were attached to the flag-staff, and an eyepiece being adjusted at the proper focal distance, the observer was at once enabled to ascertain the state of the speculum. The six-foot speculum could not be submitted to this test, but it was ground and polished so truly and well, that on trial it was found to differ only one inch from its focal length, which is fifty-three feet. I had the good fortune to see one of these gigantic mirrors polished. It would be impossible to conceive a more gorgeously resplendent surface than the face of the speculum presented when the operation was completed. It was indeed, as an eminent astronomer observed, “a broad bright eye” of intense lustre and brilliancy, undimmed by any flaw or scratch.

With provident wisdom Lord Rosse cast a second six-foot speculum, which he ground and polished with the same success as attended the polishing of the first; and thus, when the speculum in use requires to be repolished, the telescope does not stand idle.

The construction of the tube, and the various

clever contrivances for suspending and working it, occupied the greater portion of a year. And here again we have numerous evidences of the master-mind of the noble director of these interesting works at Parsonstown. The great comparative lightness of a three-foot speculum enables it to be mounted equatorially; that is, in a manner permitting the tube to be turned to any part of the heavens. But as the six-foot speculum, with its supports, weighs no less than eight tons, and the tube for the gigantic mirror several more, it became evident that excessive if not insuperable difficulties existed to mounting such a ponderous telescope equatorially.

It is of paramount importance that the movement of a telescope should be perfectly easy and free from tremor; and when the vast surface of such an instrument as that under consideration is borne in mind, it follows as a matter of course that the action of a gale of wind on it would render the telescope unsteady were it erected in the manner employed in the three-foot speculum.

Lord Rosse therefore determined to confine the range of observation to the vicinity of the meridian. There the stars are at their greatest altitudes, and atmospheric influences affect our vision of them least; their places can be determined with most

accuracy, and an equatorial movement, so essential to micrometric measurements, can be easily obtained.

His first step was to erect two enormous walls on the lawn in front of the castle, and about three hundred yards from it. These walls are constructed of limestone, with a very solid foundation; they are seven feet thick and sixty-five high, and are castellated to correspond with the architecture of the castle.

The tube, which hangs between these walls, is constructed of Memel timber, well-seasoned, and bound by iron girders of great strength and thickness. The length of this cylinder is fifty-six feet, the diameter eight feet in the middle, but tapering to seven at the extremities—a height sufficient to allow the tallest man to walk through its tunnel-like proportions. The tube is attached at one end to a very massive universal joint of cast-iron, resting on a pier of stonework buried in the ground, in order to ensure perfect stability. On the universal joint is firmly bolted a cubical wooden chamber about eight feet wide, in which the speculum is placed; and this leads us to one of the most beautiful mechanical arrangements of the whole instrument.

The uniform support of a reflector over its entire extent is a point of the last importance to its optical

performance. A distortion of figure by flexure, which in the object-glass of a refracting telescope would produce no appreciably injurious effect, would be entirely fatal to distinct vision in a reflecting one. When even the small speculum used by Sir John Herschel, only eighteen inches and a half in diameter, was supported by three points at the circumference, the image of every considerable star became triangular, throwing out long flaring caustics at the angles; and when he placed the speculum on a flat board and stretched a thin packthread vertically down the middle of the board, so as to bring the weight to rest on this as on an axis, the images of the stars were elongated in an horizontal direction to a preposterous extent, and all distinct vision completely destroyed by the division of the mirror into two lobes. But we have stranger and stronger evidence than this of the extraordinary sensitiveness of speculum metal, even when existing in ponderous masses like that composing the six-foot mirror, which is nearly six inches thick, and weighs six tons; for the mere pressure of the hand at the back of such a speculum produces flexure sufficient to destroy the image of a star! It is obvious, therefore, that the slightest inequality in the supporting apparatus of a speculum is fatal to its correct performance. Sir

John Herschel, who gave this subject great attention when mounting his small speculum and who tried an infinity of experiments, came to the conclusion that his mirrors answered better when they were bedded on woollen cloths; for he considered each fibre of wool as a delicate coiled spring of almost perfect elasticity, and considered that no artificial arrangement of metallic springs could attain such perfection. But, in the case of Lord Rosse's gigantic reflector, it was found necessary to employ a system of levers to afford it an equable support. The levers present a combination of three systems in every respect similar. Each system consists of one triangle with its point of support directly under its centre of gravity, upon which it freely oscillates. Each triangle carries at its angle three similar points of support for three other triangles, and they again at their angles carry, in a similar way, another set of triangles. As there are three systems, there are, therefore, twenty-seven triangles, each of which carries at its angles three brass balls; so that the speculum rolls freely on eighty-one balls. It is evident that a speculum, supported in this manner, must be practically free from strain while in a horizontal position, provided the due action of the levers is not interfered with by any disturbing force. Indeed, it will be very much

in the same condition as if it were floating in a vessel of mercury. But when the speculum ceases to be horizontal new forces come into play, and part of the weight must then be resisted by pressure against the edge. Four very strong segments of cast-iron, each above one eighth of the circumference, are adjusted to the edge by screws, the segments bearing upon the massive castings which sustain the three primary supports of the lever apparatus. These mechanical arrangements have answered well, and the mirror has given a very good definition. When not in use the speculum is covered by a cap of wood coated with lime to prevent oxidation. The tube carries near its upper extremity a small Newtonian mirror, which receives the reflection of the object from the speculum.

The suspension of the huge telescope is effected by a series of chains passing over pulleys, and terminating in counterpoise weights. The weights are constrained to descend in quadrants of circles by chain guys attached to the frame which bears the declination pulley. The mechanism of this portion of the instrument is so admirable, that the gigantic tube is moved with the greatest facility, and is perfectly steady, even in a violent gale of wind. The meridian motion is regulated by a cast-iron arc of a circle about eighty-five

feet in diameter. The arc is composed of pieces five feet long, each adjusted independently in the meridian by a transit instrument and secured to massive stonework. A strong bar, provided with friction rollers, is connected with the iron arc. The tube is attached to the bar by wheel-work, so that a handle near the eye-piece enables the observer to move the telescope on either side of the meridian, and thus examine any object before or after it has passed across the meridian. The range is half an hour on each side of the meridian for a star at the equator.

A clock-movement acting upon the eye-piece has been recently added to the instrument with a special view to photographic purposes, and Lord Rosse contemplates constructing a more elaborate clock to move the telescope itself. The present machinery rings a bell when the tube is exactly on the meridian.

The western wall supports the stairs and galleries for the use of the observers. As high as 42° of altitude the telescope is commanded by a light, prism-shaped framework, which slides between two ladders attached to the southern faces of the piers. The framework is counterpoised and may be raised to any required position by a windlass; the upper portion affords support to a railway, on which the

observing gallery moves about twenty-four feet east and west, the wheels being turned by a winch within reach of the observer. Three other galleries rising above each other, reach to within 5° of the zenith. They are attached to the summit of the wall, and each is carried by two beams which run between pairs of grooved wheels.

Each gallery is capable of containing twelve persons, and the mechanism is so simple and easy, that even when the galleries are full one man can easily work them. The spectator, standing in the highest of these galleries, when it is suspended over the chasm sixty feet deep, cannot fail to be struck with the enormous size of the apparatus which meets his eye. The mighty tube which reposes beneath him in its cradle of massive chains might be mistaken for one of the famous round towers which had sunk down from its ancient foundations. Some idea of the prodigious mass of machinery may be formed from the fact, that it contains more than one hundred and fifty tons of iron-castings, all of which have been executed in Lord Rosse's workshops.

All around is on so colossal a scale that stranger postilions and coachmen may be pardoned for having on several occasions, when driving visitors to the castle, conducted their horses to the opening of the

enormous castellated walls, mistaking them for the portals to the castle itself.

Within a short and convenient distance of the telescope is an observatory, with a revolving dome roof, containing large and very superior equatorial and transit instruments which have also been constructed by Lord Rosse. Independently of these the observatory is fitted up in the usual manner, with clocks and all the apparatus necessary for astronomical purposes. Attached to the observatory are rooms appropriated to the workmen, two of whom are always on duty, to guard the telescopes from injury.

Close to this building stands the three-foot reflecting telescope, which, before the construction of the leviathan instrument, was regarded as a wonder of mechanical ingenuity.

CHAP. XIX.

Revelations of the Telescope. — The Nebulæ. — Extreme Stars. — Power of the Telescope. — Magnificent appearance of the Planets. — Newton's Telescope. — Dr. Robinson's Tribute to Lord Rosse. — The Royal Society's Medal awarded to Lord Rosse.

HAVING in the last chapter given some account of the construction of the great telescope, I shall now proceed to show the manner in which it is used, and then briefly notice a few of the extraordinary celestial wonders which it reveals. As soon as the evening shades prevail, the observatory staff, consisting of an astronomer and four men, prepare the instrument for observing. The eye-pieces, and micrometers for measuring the stars and nebulæ, are carefully cleaned and adjusted; and should the night prove propitious for observing, the telescope is at once set to work on the task assigned to it, which is the highest in the whole range of astronomical observation.

In the infancy of science, when astronomers, for want of instruments, only saw the outworks, as it

were, of the starry firmament, the invention of the telescope revealed thousands of brilliant orbs, hitherto unseen because invisible to the naked eye. As this invaluable instrument became improved, new wonders burst on the sight; but it was reserved for the Herschels to introduce us to systems in sublime perspective, vastly separated in space, and apparently unlimited in number, and far beyond the region of the so-called fixed stars. These are the *nebulæ*, a term of modern date, for the word *nebulous* was formerly applied only to clusters of small stars. With the aid of reflecting telescopes, the two Herschels examined nearly 3000 *nebulæ* and clusters of stars, an elaborate catalogue of which is given in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society. I do not mean to affirm that these distinguished astronomers were the first to make us aware of the existence of *nebulæ*; but the superior power of the instruments which they employed enabled them to add wonderfully to our knowledge of the construction of the heavens.

Nebulæ, as their name imports, are dim and mysterious-looking objects, as viewed through ordinary telescopes; but powerful instruments resolve several of them into stars; while at the same time every increase of telescopic power brings fresh and

unresolved nebulae into view. These facts, combined with the circumstance that a vast number of the nebulae catalogued by the Herschels are represented as mere patches of milky light, led Lord Rosse to determine on re-examining those nebulae, as he had little doubt that the superior power of his large telescope would resolve many which were irresolvable by the instruments used in their former examination. The justice of this conclusion will be evident, if some idea be conveyed of the relative power of the telescopes employed by the former distinguished astronomers.

The extreme stars which are generally visible to the naked eye are those which are styled the sixth magnitude; some persons, however, gifted with very acute vision, may penetrate into space, under favourable circumstances, as far as those of the seventh. If we take *Sirius*, which is the most brilliant star in the heavens, and adopt magnitude for distance, it follows, according to the above range of human sight, that it would appear as a star of the sixth magnitude, even if it were removed to twelve times its distance from us. If the same star were removed to a distance seventy-five times as great, or, in other words, to the 900th order of distances, it would be visible in the twenty-foot reflector used by the

Herschels in their surveys; but by the assistance of Lord Rosse's telescope, we should see it if it were removed to the 3436th order of distances. In other words the great reflector reveals celestial objects at such bewildering and inconceivable distances that light would be nearly 20,000 years travelling from them to the earth, though constantly speeding at the known rate of 192,000 miles in a second of time. The extraordinary power of Lord Rosse's telescope is admirably described in the following extract from some observations made on the occasion of Lord Rosse reading a paper on the nebula numbered 25 in Herschel's catalogue:—

“ Sir John Herschel declared that he could not explain to the section the strong feelings and emotions with which he saw this old and familiar acquaintance in the very new dress in which the more powerful instrument of Lord Rosse presented it. He then sketched on a piece of paper the appearance under which he had been accustomed to see it, which was a nucleus, surrounded by a ring-shaped nebulous light, with a nebulous curve stretching from one part of the ring to nearly the opposite. This had very strongly suggested to his mind what our system of stars, surrounded by the milky way, dividing into its two great branches, would appear if seen from a

sufficient distance. But now this nebula is shown in such a way as greatly to modify, if not totally to change, former opinions. In the first place, under the examination of the more powerful instrument, the nucleus became distinctly resolved into its constituent stars, which his telescope is not powerful enough to accomplish; and it now turned out that the appearance which he had taken for a second branch of the ring, was a nebulous offshoot, stretching from the principal nebula, and connecting it with a neighbouring much smaller one. This was to him quite a new feature in the history of nebulæ. The general appearance of the nebula, as now presented, strongly suggested the leading features of the shell of a snail rather than a ring. He felt a delight he could not express, when he contemplated the achievements likely to be performed by this splendid telescope; and he had no doubt, by opening up new scenes of the grandeur of the creation, it would tend to elevate and ennoble our conceptions of the great and beneficent Architect, the raising of our thoughts to whom should be the aim of all our researches; as the advancing our knowledge of Him, and the grateful tracings of the benefits and blessings with which He had surrounded us, is the noblest aim of all that deserves the name of science."

. The prophetic language of Sir John Herschel has been in a great measure realized. The profundities of space, hitherto wholly inaccessible, have been sounded; and not only have many nebulae been discovered, but such peculiarities of structure have been observed as, in Lord Rosse's words, "seem even to indicate the presence of dynamical laws, which we may, perhaps, fancy to be almost within our grasp."

It is exceedingly difficult to curb the pen into sobriety of expression, when dwelling on the aspect of some of the marvellous objects revealed by the gigantic telescope. My first view through the mighty tube was at one of the most brilliant nebulae, known by the name of the "Dumb-bell," from its resemblance to the shape of that object. I shall never forget the breathless interest with which I entered the lofty gallery and took my stand before the object-glass. The field of vision was sown with myriads of stars, but as I gazed there came a dawn of stronger light, which increased in brilliancy as the nebula rose to view, and when it occupied the field, the spectacle which it presented was gorgeous in the extreme. The second nebula that I had the gratification of seeing was that of *Orion*. This nebula is

peculiarly interesting to astronomers, and to philosophers generally, on account of its relation to Sir William Herschel's nebular theory. That distinguished observer, from certain peculiarities which he detected in some of the unresolved nebulae, was induced to imagine that "many of the milky spots were not remote galaxies, but, on the contrary, accumulations of a shining fluid akin to the cometic, and probably located, at no great remoteness, amid the inter-stellar intervals of our heavens."

In some instances the shining matter was chaotic, and presented no definite structure; but in the midst of other masses there seemed a gradual alteration of this amorphous form, and it was conceived that the constitution of nuclei might be detected, around which the matter appeared gathering.

The nebula of *Orion* was regarded as a test, in some degree, of Herschel's hypothesis, and to that remarkable object the large telescope was early directed.

The night on which it was first observed was far from favourable; and it was found impracticable to use more than half the magnifying power which the speculum bears. Yet even under these disadvantages it was plainly seen that all about the trapezium was

a mass of stars—that the rest of the nebula also abounded with stars, and that it exhibited the characteristics of resolvability strongly marked.

Subsequent observations, under more favourable circumstances, have confirmed in all respects this first impression. The extraordinary object—“the glory and wonder of the starry universe,” as it has been styled,—has been distinctly resolved; and what was thought to be a mottled region of light, turns out to be a blaze of stars. Viewing all this glory during the silent night-watches, the words of Holy Writ came strongly to mind: “Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him? Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus, with his sons?”

The number and variety of nebulae is astonishing. The firmament literally swarms with them. Those denominated spirals are among the most remarkable—sending out their long streams of stars from a brilliant centre. They vary in extent, aspect, brightness, and resolvability, but a certain degree of sphericity is indicated by their being generally

brightest towards the middle. Astronomers have proposed to class nebulæ into:—1. Clusters, where all the stars are readily distinguishable. 2. Resolvable nebulæ, or such as there is every reason to believe consist of stars. 3. Nebulæ properly so called, which no telescopic power can resolve. 4. Planetary nebulæ, possessing circular or slightly oval discs. 5. Stellar nebulæ, approaching to the appearance of stars; and 6. Nebulous stars, or nebulæ connected with very small stars, which might be classed together. These may be subdivided into annular, spiral, knotted, or other forms. Lord Rosse is in the habit of calling all nebulæ spirals, in which he detects a curvilinear arrangement not consisting of regular re-entering curves. He has discovered several of these during the last two years. Drawing nebulæ is an exceedingly delicate and difficult operation. For when the nebula is faint, the feeblest amount of lamp-light must be employed to depict the object; and even this light almost entirely unfits the eye of the observer for deep and steady vision.

The reader will now understand why Lord Rosse has selected the nebulæ for the nightly task-work of his unparalleled instrument. They carry the mind into the highest region of astronomy; and though to

grasp, by mental efforts, the magnificent unity of that wondrous system of worlds, of which our own globe is but as a molecule, is not given to man, yet it may be ours to soar, with steadier wing and more sustained energy, far beyond the flights of our forefathers. The noble astronomer of Parsonstown is indeed a true type of Thomson's philosopher:—

“Not to this evanescent speck of earth
 Poorly confined—the radiant tracks on high
 Are his exalted range;—intent to gaze
 Creation through, and from that full complex
 Of never-ending wonders to conceive
 Of the **SOLE BEING**•right.”

This branch of our subject may be appropriately concluded by citing Sir John Herschel's words respecting nebulae and the nebular theory:—

“The nebulae furnish, in every point of view, an inexhaustible field of speculation and conjecture. That by far the largest share of them consists of stars, there can be little doubt; and in the interminable range of system upon system, and firmament upon firmament, which we thus catch a glimpse of, the imagination is bewildered and lost. On the other hand, if it be true, as, to say the least, it seems extremely probable, that a phosphorescent or self-luminous matter also exists, disseminated through extensive regions of space in the manner of a cloud

or fog, now assuming capricious shapes, like actual clouds drifted by the wind, and now concentrating itself like a cometic appearance around particular stars, what, we naturally ask, is the nature and destination of this nebulous matter? Is it absorbed by the stars in whose neighbourhood it is found, to furnish, by its condensation, their supply of light and heat? or is it progressively concentrating itself, by the effect of its own gravity, into masses, and so laying the foundation of new sidereal systems, or of insulated stars? It is easier to propound such questions than to offer any probable reply to them. Meanwhile, appeal to fact, by the method of constant and diligent observation, is open to us; and as the double stars have yielded to this kind of questioning, and disclosed a series of relations of the most intelligible and interesting description, we may reasonably hope that the assiduous study of *nebulæ* will, ere long, lead to some clearer understanding of their intimate nature."

Such are the objects which we, with our finite senses, have termed *nebulæ*. It may be the good fortune of future astronomers to fathom the mysterious nature of these bodies; but should they fail in this high task, we shall not err in ascribing to their laws of matter and motion the same Almighty

wisdom which we find pervading everything created by Jehovah, and with which we are permitted to become acquainted.

Of course it is impossible to perceive how far into the depths of space the march of science may lead us. As with the microscope, so with the telescope; every improvement in those instruments which increases their magnifying power, or renders their lenses or mirrors more transparent or more reflective, introduces us to new creations; and it appears probable that it is only the excessive remoteness of certain celestial bodies, and the want of penetrating power possessed by our telescopes, that cause them to appear to us as mere glimmers of light.

Sir William Herschel, as the inscription on his monument finely says, "broke through the enclosures of the heavens;" and although he retreated when he found himself among depths whose light could not have reached him in much less than four thousand years, yet his successors, armed with keener and more space-penetrating vision, may advance beyond former bounds, and inform us of varieties of splendour of which we have no comprehension.

Descending through the strata of celestial space, we come to what are called the fixed stars, but which doubtless only seem unchangeable in their position

on account of our limited vision. Those eyes of Providence, as they were entitled by ancient astronomers, are glorious objects viewed through the large telescope. Their brilliancy and infinite number startle and bewilder the beholder. Some notion may be gathered of their multitude from the fact that Lord Rosse's huge cyclopean orb renders stars of the 2016th order of distances visible. As with the nebulae, so with the fixed stars, mile-measures utterly fail to convey anything like a just appreciation of the remoteness of these objects. The star 61 Cygni, which is one of the nearest to us, has been computed to be 62,481,500,000,000 miles from the Earth. Such distances as this place these orbs utterly beyond our ken; but they are not without their use to us. They have been well described as the landmarks of the universe; for amidst the endless and complicated fluctuations of our system, they seem placed by an Almighty and All-wise hand as guides and records to erring man.

It is, however, after all, when we enter upon the comparatively proximate region of the planets, that the great and searching power of Lord Rosse's large instrument becomes fully apparent to us. Indeed it is difficult to avoid the risk of being suspected of exaggeration, writing of the moon as it appears in a

favourable condition of the atmosphere, when viewed by the telescope. The seemingly simple "ring mountains" of our satellite, as she is familiar to us, exhibit as much diversity of outline and structure as the large terrestrial volcanoes. Vast lava currents, huge rocks, frightful precipices, are everywhere apparent, demonstrating that the history of the moon is that of the past, for all is now dead on her face.

Saturn is another extraordinary astronomical object. His wonderful rings are seen with amazing distinctness, and the satellites themselves are orbs of great glory and brilliancy. How different are all these revelations to those enjoyed by our forefathers! Such was the imperfection of early instruments, that Saturn, from the date which we attach to the creation, made one hundred and ninety revolutions before the beautiful appendage of his rings became revealed to the eye of man. When Galileo discovered that the figure of the planet was not round, but oblong, his telescope was so weak that he could not discriminate the rings; and subsequent observers stated that when Saturn was "beheld with some great telescope he was seen with anses or arms fastened to the two sides of his disque."

But while it is a subject of congratulation that science has so greatly increased the power of astro-

nomical instruments, and particularly that of the reflecting telescope, it should not be forgotten that this gauger of the heavens, with all its original imperfections, did good service to astronomy from the first date of its invention. Among the scientific treasures in the possession of the Royal Society, there is none more highly valued than a small pasteboard tube, nine inches long, fitted with a speculum two inches and three tenths in diameter. Nor will the lover of science be surprised by this statement when he learns that this is the original reflecting telescope, and that it was invented and constructed by the immortal Newton, in 1671. Insignificant as this humble instrument appears, when contrasted with Lord Rosse's leviathan, yet we find its illustrious maker stating, in a letter to the Royal Society, dated March 16, 1671, and which is in their possession: "With the telescope which I made, I have sometimes seen remote objects, and particularly the moon, very distinct."

I cannot conclude this imperfect sketch of one of the most interesting and wonderful objects in these islands, without adverting to the zeal manifested by Lord Rosse in the cause of science. Not satisfied with the triumphant feat of having constructed the largest telescope in the world, his nights, during the

astronomical season, are spent in his observatory, from whence he is summoned to the galleries of the telescope when any novel object is revealed to the working observers.

Unfortunately the climate of Parsonstown is far from being propitious for astronomical observation. Unclouded nights are rare, and frequently I have seen the entire vault of heaven shrouded in the course of a few minutes by dense vapour, which blotted out all stellar objects. This meteorological change is, of course, very vexatious, particularly when interesting astronomical objects happen to be within the field of the telescope.*

But these long, and often unfruitful night-watches, though harassing and laborious, do not damp his lordship's ardour, nor materially interfere

* Our unpropitious astronomical climate led the Royal Society to recommend Government to erect a telescope similar to that at Parsonstown in the southern hemisphere, where, besides the great advantage of a highly transparent atmosphere, celestial objects invisible in Europe might be observed. Lord Rosse, who was President of the Royal Society when the recommendation was made, offered to construct a speculum for the instrument and send a competent person to superintend its erection, but, although the cost was estimated at only 6000*l.*, Government declined to enter upon the undertaking. While these sheets are passing through the press, the gratifying intelligence has been communicated to me that the colonists

Far beyond where giant Saturn girds him with his wondrous
 ring,
 Where remote his faint attendants sadly guard the Titan king ;
 Far beyond the farthest spangle seen in night's unclouded sky,
 Or the palest speck of glimmer ever traced by gifted eye ;
 Far almost as thought can venture, which immensity scarce
 bars,
 Deep in that unfathomed ocean, all whose isles are heavens of
 stars.
 Hail, thou peerless ! Truth and wisdom are the champions of
 thy power ;
 Fame, unless *they* twine its garland, withers with the passing
 hour.
 Skill and strength in potent union, drew thee from the depth
 of earth ;
 Art inventive, conquering nature, gives thee now thy fiery
 birth.
 Genius, led by wary Science, shall unveil thy face to light,
 Like the spirit that has formed thee,— true and stainless, firm
 and bright.*
 No base hopes or mean concealment clouds thy maker's
 generous deed,
 Purest, noblest were his motives, lasting, glorious be his meed.
 Many a bright and starry wonder, hid since time its course began,
 Many a secret of creation now shall be disclosed to man ;
 Many a vain and daring system at thy touch in shivers fall,
 Many a proof of matchless wisdom lead us to the Lord of all.
 Him the heaven of heavens contains not, though He loves in us
 to dwell ;
 Who like thee can trace His marvels ? who like thee His glory
 tell ?

* The four requisites of a good speculum are ensured by Lord Rosse's inventions.

May His power fling around thee all that crowns the good and
just,
May thy proud achievements flourish when thy giant frame
is dust!
On, then, to thy heavenly office, while the best of earth
acclaim,
Honour to thy Master's nation, praise undying to his name."

Nor has the scientific world been slow in testifying their high appreciation of his lordship's eminence as an astronomer and a mechanician. A Royal Medal has been awarded to Lord Rosse by the Royal Society for his scientific services; and it cannot fail to interest the reader to see how these are appreciated by the body over whom he presided for six years. On the occasion of presenting the medal to his lordship, he was thus addressed by General Sabine:—

"It falls to me to present to your lordship this Royal Medal—merited by researches, not more remarkable from the universal interest which they inspire, or the brilliant and unexpected results which crown them, than from the rare combination of industry, patience, inventive genius, and scientific power, to which they owe their success. You have re-opened a field of investigation which seemed almost exhausted by two of the most illustrious observers of this or any age; and have added another

proof of the great truth, that wide as is the range of human intellect, the wonders of Divine Wisdom lengthen out, without limit, beyond that range on every side.

“Your lordship’s researches have disclosed an arrangement even more astonishing and more suggestive than any which had previously been ascribed to nebulae;—that spiral conformation which prevails in so many instances, occasionally displayed with all the graceful precision of a geometric curve, but most frequently seen obliquely, and causing the appearance of curved luminous or dark bands. It is found connected with single or multiple centres, clusters, or stars; with rings, probably of stars, and even may be traced in ordinary clusters. What are the conditions of which it is the result? If the astronomer finds it hard to conceive the laws which can maintain the permanence of a uniform globular cluster, how much enhanced is the difficulty, when to the perturbing forces which exist in that simplest case, are added others, such as the vortex-like character of these marvellous forms!

“All this would have been much had it been achieved by one who sought the means of fathoming the depths of the sky in the workshops of Munich, Paris, or London; but it is much more when he not.

merely uses, but has himself created that transcendant explorer, whose possible existence would, a few years since, have been regarded with incredulity. You, my lord, have not only overcome the difficulties which had deterred professional opticians, by a course of costly experiments, continued with consummate skill and science for many years, but have made it a special object to communicate the knowledge so laboriously obtained, for the public use.”*

Would, for the sake of science, that the example of this truly great nobleman were in some degree followed by his brother peers! He has devoted many thousand pounds to the advancement of knowledge; while, alas, scores of so-called noblemen hazard their fortunes on the contemptible ambition of winning a horse-race, on the issue of which hangs, perhaps, the ruin of hundreds of men!

* Proceedings of the Royal Society, Dec. 1851.

CHAP. XX.

Again to the West. — Excursion to Connemara. — My Companions. — Galway. — “The Sons of Suck.” — City of the Tribes of Merchants. — The West of Ireland Fishing Company. — The upright Galway Merchant. — Tragical Story. — “Dead Man’s Lane.” — Claddagh. — Leave Galway. — Picturesque Peasants. — Oughterard. — Irish Pearls. — Mode of fishing for them. — The twelve Bens. — The Irish Highlands. — The Cervus Megaceros. — Glendalough. — The Recess Hotel. — Fishing Prospects. — Connemara Rain. — Derryclare Lake. — Fishing Regulations. — Fishing Party. — Our President’s Racy Stories. — Tear Fox Featherstone. — The Orangeman. — The Immortal Memory Toast. — Angling Stories. — The Major’s Story. — A wonderful Salmon. — The Castle Connell Touch. — How a Fish beat three Men.

Ho, again for the west! I have made you my companion in Kerry; now I propose an excursion to Connemara. This will rank among the pleasantest memories attaching to a ramble in Ireland, unless, indeed, you have the misfortune to be steeped in the mist of the Atlantic during your wanderings in the ancient province of Connaught; for, as you will doubtless remember if you have been there, and probably experience should you go there, the Atlantic

has a powerful effect on the meteorology of the west of Ireland. Rain pours in frequent torrents, and mists robe the mountains. Be not, however, dissuaded by these truths from making acquaintance with the "bays of the ocean" (such being the Celtic signification of Connemara); and if you are prepared for a fishing coat life, you will not regret an occasional "juicy day," which will be all the better for angling; and here I may as well at once declare that although I purpose in these Connemara chapters to gossip of many things in the far west, yet I shall have something to say anent fishing, particularly white trout fishing, which is, during favourable seasons, particularly good in Mayo.

The railway to Galway renders access to Connemara very easy, as in a few hours after leaving Dublin you are on the threshold of the scene of your tour. Flying glimpses will be caught of Ballinasloe, the Irish Novgorod, with the lazy river Suck creeping through well cultivated estates, whose punch drinking owners in ancient times were pleasantly designated the "Sons of Suck;" and you will see Tuam, with its vast Roman catholic cathedral. Ask who built the mighty pile, and you may hear in answer—

"Pater Deo, John de Tuam,
Fecit hic, cathedram suam."

If not time pressed, you may spend a few hours pleasantly rambling about Galway, particularly in the old parts of the town, which still present many traces of Spanish architecture and relics of former greatness, for Irish historians dwell with great pride on the commercial prosperity of Galway in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Henry Cromwell and the Privy Council of Ireland declared that “for the situation thereof—voisinage—and commerce it hath with Spain, the Strayts, West Indies, and other places, noe town or port in the three nations (London excepted) is more considerable;” and a map of the city, constructed in 1651, bears some rough Latin verses, which Hardiman thus renders:—

“Rome boasts seven hills, the Nile its seven-fold stream;
 Around the pole seven radiant planets gleam;
 Galway, co-nation Rome, twice equals these,—
 She boasts twice seven illustrious families.
 Twice seven high towers defend her lofty walls,
 And polished marble decks her splendid halls.
 Twice seven her massive gates, o'er which arise
 Twice seven strong castles, tow'ring to the skies;
 Twice seven her bridges, through whose arches flow
 The silv'ry tides majestically slow.
 Her ample church with twice seven altars flames;
 An heavenly patron every altar claims.
 While twice seven convents pious anthems raise
 (Seven for each sex), to sound Jehovah's praise.”*

* Hist. of Galway, p. 25.

History records that the commercial prosperity of Galway was principally due to the energy and integrity of her merchants, whose strict adherence to truth and love of impartial justice were proverbial. A very remarkable story, illustrative of this uprightness, resting apparently on good evidence, is related in local histories. Divested of superfluous details, it runs thus:—In 1493 the city was ruled by James Lynch Fitzstephen, who was elected mayor on account of his great mercantile wealth and probity of character. At that period, the “City of the Tribes of Merchants,” as Galway was originally styled, carried on extensive commerce with Spain, and Fitzstephen had long been connected by mercantile transactions with that country. This connexion was strengthened by a visit which he paid to Cadiz, where he was hospitably entertained by a merchant of the name of Gomez. Desirous of reciprocating the kindness of his host, he requested that Gomez’s son, a youth of engaging manners and high character, might be allowed to return with him to Ireland. This was acceded to, and the Galway merchant introduced the young Spaniard to his family, which consisted of a wife and an only son, whose prepossessing person made him an especial favourite with the fair sex. Unhappily, however, his passions were ill regulated; but his father hoped

that a marriage which his son purposed contracting with an extremely beautiful and highly educated Galway girl, and the companionship of the young Spaniard, would have the effect of reforming him. And there was every promise that these hopes would be realised, when the hot young Celt conceived that his betrothed smiled on the Spanish youth. Madened by his suspicions, he roughly upbraided her with falseness, while she, indignant at being suspected of the slightest inconsistency even, was too proud to deny a charge which had no manner of foundation.

The lovers parted in anger. The lovely Agnes concealed her sorrow; but young Fitzstephen, who could never curb his temper, now fired by jealousy, determined to take speedy and terrible revenge for his imaginary wrong. Accident contributed to strengthen his resolution. Passing by the residence of Agnes the night after he had quarrelled with her, he saw the Spanish youth leave the house, to which he had been invited by her father. The opportunity of revenge was unhappily too great to be resisted. The supposed rival was followed, overtaken on the edge of the city by his frantic pursuer, and, after a short struggle, poignarded and cast into the sea.

The first impulse of the assassin after having committed the dreadful deed was to fly Galway; but,

having concealed himself during the night in a neighbouring wood, remorse for his atrocity impelled him to give himself up to justice. In the meanwhile, the body of the Spaniard had been cast up by the tide on the shore, recognised, and a body of troopers ordered to scour the neighbourhood, in hopes of discovering the murderer, when just as they were leaving Galway young Fitzstephen surrendered himself their prisoner.

The astonishment and grief of his father when he heard his son's appalling confession, may be conceived. As chief magistrate of the city where the crime had been committed, and having the power of life and death in his hands, he saw that in the exercise of the stern and uncompromising justice that characterised him, his son's execution was inevitable. The struggle between parental love and duty was fearful; but the heart-broken father never wavered from duty. He ordered his son to be secured and imprisoned, presided over his trial, which was brief—for confession allowed no legal subtleties to warp the course of justice—and sentenced him to death. The cup of misery was now full; and the execution of young Fitzstephen was alone wanting to complete the awful tragedy, which in a few short hours had steeped the long happy home of the prosperous merchant in

gloom and despair. The wretched parent might have averted the last blow, but he remained the upright judge. His brother merchants implored him to alter his sentence, or at least to grant a reprieve. The populace demanded that the young prisoner should be liberated; and when this was refused military force alone prevented them destroying the prison. Night fell on the excited multitude, but they would not return to their homes. Apprehending under these circumstances that young Fitzstephen would be rescued, his father formed the terrible resolution to be at once his gaoler, and if necessary, executioner. The awful vigil of that night can hardly be paralleled. A priest who was present, and who has given an account of the last act of this tragedy, states that "the wretched father entered his prisoner's cell with a lamp, locked the grating carefully, held fast the keys, and seated himself in a recess of the wall. His son drew near, and with a faltering tongue, asked if he had anything to hope. 'No,' answered the father, 'your life is forfeited to the laws, and at sunrise you must die. I have prayed for your prosperity, but that is at an end: with the world you have done for ever. Were any other but your wretched father your judge, I might have dropped a tear over my child's misfortune, and sued for his life, even

though stained with murder. But you must die, These are the last tears which shall quench the sparks of nature; and if you dare hope, implore that heaven may not shut the gates of mercy on the destroyer of his fellow-creature. I am now come to join with this good man in petitioning God to give you such composure as will enable you to meet your punishment with becoming resignation." Then, as if fearful of relapsing into his natural benevolence, and of forgetting the great duty he had imposed upon himself, he requested the priest to proceed. They knelt down, and he administered the rites of the Church to the unhappy criminal to fortify him for the approaching catastrophe. The young man's native spirit seemed gradually to be restored; he joined fervently in prayer, sighed heavily from time to time, but spoke of life and its concerns no more; and thus, with intervals of silence, the terrible night passed. At earliest dawn the soldiers on guard were summoned to attend the execution. The last dreadful scene of this tragedy now seemed dear, but the stern father was doomed to another trial. His relatives, and those of his wife, entreated him to relent; and when he still remained inflexible, they appealed to their townsmen to arm, and rescue the young man. The appeal found ready response. Excited crowds

rushed to the prison, crying that they would kill their chief magistrate if he refused to comply with their wishes. The soldiers, too, moved by the tears of the distracted mother, now no longer endeavoured to keep back the infuriated populace. To attempt to reach the place of execution, which was some distance from the prison, was, under these circumstances, out of the question. The wretched father might well have been excused if, after having acted so far the part of an upright judge, he had consented to the unanimous wishes of his fellow-citizens. But he felt that justice could only be satisfied by the death of his son; and, as he well knew not one of the thousands around him would be his son's executioner, he resolved to act this part himself. Turning to the youth, he bade him prepare for death, entreated him to pray to God for mercy, as he had but a few minutes to live, and, embracing him for the last time, led him to a window overlooking the street; then, attaching one end of a cord to an iron bar projecting from the wall, he fastened the other end round his son's neck, and launched him into eternity.

The populace were so astonished by the severe justice of the parent, that although he expected to have been torn to pieces by them, he was allowed to depart unharmed. The unfortunate Agnes is said to

have died of grief. The house in which the tragedy took place still exists in Lombard Street, which is known as the "Dead Man's Lane." The execution is commemorated by the representation, in black marble, of a human skull with two cross bones. The date, 1624, is supposed to mark the erection of the memorial by some descendant of the family.

Although the peculiarities with which guide-books have invested the suburb called Claddagh (an Irish word, signifying sea-shore) are considerably effaced since the railway has been extended to Galway, yet a walk through that still singular district will interest you. The colony, numbering about 3000 souls, is devoted entirely to fishing, and has from time immemorial been ruled by one of their own body, whose decisions are decisive. They generally intermarry among themselves at an early age, and are remarkable for high morality. Like the majority of sailors, they are very superstitious, and are great observers of all religious festivals of the Roman Catholic Church. They hold the anniversary of the nativity of St. John in particular veneration, and celebrate it with much pageantry.

Formerly they rarely started on a fishing cruise without the company of a priest, who blessed the Bay of Galway; and even now they consider it un-

lucky to go to sea without salt, ashes, and oat-cake, to which they attach peculiar veneration. Among their superstitions is the belief that a crow flying over their fishing boats is a good omen; the appearance of a hare the reverse. Their mode of courtship is very singular. The lover seats himself near the fireplace, and throws sparks of fire at the object of his affections. If she favours him, she returns the fire; if not, she manifests her indifference to her suitor by walking away. Antiquaries, who love to trace in curious customs lingering remnants of ancient observances, conceive that this fire-throwing is a vestige of Pagan fire worship.

Most of the men bear ichthyological *sobriquets*, such as Bill the Cod, Tim the Turbot, Jack the Flounder, Dennis the Salmon, Pat the Sole, &c.

Their fishing regulations were so ill calculated to secure profitable returns, that many attempts were made to induce them to fish with greater skill. These, however, were unattended by any great amount of success until the famine year, when stern necessity roused the starving Celtic population to exertion; and now the Claddagh men, having learned the advantages resulting from the application of modern skill, no longer confine themselves to antiquated methods of capturing fish.

Some of them, indeed, have departed so far from their early prejudices as to serve in the fishing boats belonging to the West of Ireland Fishing Company.

This Association, by the way, is full of promise, and well merits a few passing words. Formed for the purpose of taking advantage of the great quantities of fish on the west coast of Ireland, its peculiar features are the employment of steam vessels as carriers from the fishing grounds to the railways, the manufacture of fish manure, or fish guano, and the extract of fish oil from the vast quantities of inedible fish and offal.

The fishing fleet is ultimately to consist of at least two screw steam carriers of about 150 tons, six welled ships of about 90 tons, and six of about 50 tons. There will also be store vessels for keeping fish and lobsters alive, and several boats of from 30 to 35 feet long for seine and drift net fishing.

With respect to the manufacture of fish manure, or fish guano, the prospectus of the Company states that "it is an established and incontrovertible fact that fully one half of the fish taken either by trawl or line fishing is inedible or unsaleable, and heretofore the greater part has been thrown overboard. In addition to this, it is also known that by the use of proper appliances an unlimited quantity of every

description of coarse fish and crustacea may be readily procured on the coasts of Ireland.”

These, and the offal of marketable fish, the Company purpose converting into guano by a similar process to that employed at Lowestoft. There the animal matter is pulverised, and sold as manure in a state of dry powder. Analysis of a sample of dog-fish and herring manure gave the following results: moisture, 8·75; nitrogenous animal matter, 65·24; oil and fatty matter, 9·22; phosphate of lime, 9·24; sulphate of lime, 1·94; alkaline sulphates and muriates, 4·58; sand, &c., 1·03.

The principal fishing station of the Company is at Galway, the bay of which teems with a great variety of excellent fish. The Directors propose, however, to sweep the entire western coast, purchasing fish from the local fisheries as well as fishing themselves, and such good success has already attended their undertaking, though only commenced last autumn, that there is every reason to hope and, indeed, believe, that at length the great ichthyological wealth of the Irish seas will be turned to good account. Deep-sea surveying operations have made us aware of the extraordinary quantity of fish which inhabit the water around our western and northern islands. Sir C. Lyell says, “A continuous deposit of sand

and mud, replete with broken shells, echini, &c., has been traced for upwards of twenty miles to the eastward of the Faroe Islands, usually at a depth of from forty to one hundred fathoms. In one part of this tract (lat. $61^{\circ} 50'$, long. $6^{\circ} 30'$) fish-bones occur in extraordinary profusion, so that the lead cannot be drawn up without some vertebræ being attached. This *bone-bed*, as it was called by our surveyors, is three miles and a half in length, and forty-five fathoms under water, and contains a few shells intermingled with the bones." *

Although Galway is admirably situated for maritime commerce, yet various attempts to create a direct trade between that city and America have failed. The days, too, are gone, seemingly never to return, when 1200 tuns of wine were annually landed here from Spain.

Having slept at Galway (the new Railway Hotel is excellent), I proceeded the following morning on one of Bianconi's cars to Connemara. My companions were a gallant major, learned in all the subtleties of fly-fishing, and a lawyer friend, who made up for any deficiency of skill in the gentle art by great patience and indomitable energy.

On leaving Galway, the change from town to

* Elements of Geology, seventh edit., p. 745.

country is effected in a few moments. One of the new colleges, a huge stone building, alone breaks the transition; that passed, and you are in the wilderness. For, although the district of Jar-Connaught, the ancient seigniory of the once dreaded O'Flaherties*, is no longer in the wild state described by Roderick O'Flaherty, the famous topographer, yet, compared to the east of Ireland, and particularly with English counties, it wears an extremely savage appearance. As we drove on we met peasants on their way to the Galway market; the women wore red petticoats and blue hoods, and carried rolls of serge which they had woven in their cabins. This serge, dyed, forms the material of the petticoats, which would be deemed fashionable by certain rather fast ladies of the present day.

As far as Oughterard there is little remarkable. There we parted company with Bianconi, preferring to perform the rest of our journey on a private car. We wished to visit some lakes *en route*, and being three in number, journeyed as economically as we should have done by the public conveyance,—a fact you will do well to bear in mind, should you travel

* The inscription, "From the ferocious O'Flaherties, good Lord deliver us!" was formerly visible over the west gate of Galway.

in Ireland with companions. A short distance beyond Oughterard we entered Connemara proper. This district was originally occupied by a warlike people, denominated the "Chief Tribes on the Great Sea," and in later times the territory was held for many years by the celebrated Martin family. The road now traverses seemingly boundless tracts of bog land, dotted by cultivated patches near hovels, from which issue troops of girls and boys bearing worsted socks for sale, knitted by the light of turf fires during winter. Some carry pieces of rock crystal and quartz, and occasionally you will be offered pearls. These are found in mussel-shells taken out of the rivers in Connemara, but they are not peculiar to that district. A very curious paper in the "Philosophical Transactions for 1693," by Sir Robert Redding, states that, at that period, an extensive fishery for mussel-shell pearls was carried on by the natives living near the rivers in the west of Ireland. After enumerating these, Sir Robert says: "The manner of their fishing is as follows: the poor people in the warm months, before harvest is ripe, whilst the rivers are low and clear, go into the water; some with their toes, some with wooden tongs, and some by putting a sharpened stick into the opening of the shells, take them up. And although by common estimate not

above one shell in a hundred may have a pearl, and of those pearls not above one in a hundred be tolerably clear, yet a vast number of fair merchantable pearls, and too good for the apothecary, are offered for sale by those people every summer assize. Some gentlemen of the country make good advantage thereof, and myself saw a pearl bought in Ireland for fifty shillings that weighed thirty-six carats, and was valued at 40*l.*, and had it been as clear as some others produced therewith, would certainly have been very valuable. Everybody abounds with stories of the good Pennyworths of the country, but I will add but one more: a miller took out a pearl which he sold for 4*l.* 10*s.* to a man that sold it for 10*l.*, who sold it to the late Lady Glenanly for 30*l.*, with whom I saw it in a necklace; she refused 80*l.* for it from the late Duchess of Ormond."

Sir Robert adds that "the natives, though very foul feeders, will not eat the fish, which is the more extraordinary as at their last Lenten Fare, horseflesh dead of diseases, and the blubber of a whale cast on the shore by chance (when it would fly upon the opening of the bung-hole of the barrel like bottled beer), were sought for and begged for food, so lazy and improvident many of them are."

The same dislike to these mussels among the lower

orders of Irish seems to exist at present; at least, I could not hear of the fish being used for food.

The monotony of the scene beyond Lake Shindilla gives place to undulations, the first earth waves, which increase in magnitude as you proceed westward. Follow them with your eye in that direction, and you will see lofty mountains terminating in picturesque cones, wreathed probably by folds of mist. They are the twelve Bens, or Pins, as they are more generally called, the highest mountains in Connemara, and nearly the highest in Ireland. To the north more mountains, all cradling lakes teeming with fish. But you need not explore the dark recesses of these Irish highlands to be made aware of the vast extent of the inland waters of Connemara. About six miles from Oughterard you will see these wildly picturesque meres on either side of the road, lake succeeding lake until their number becomes perplexing; and if you are an angler you will admire them the more from the fact that some are tenanted by salmon, and all by brown trout. I can vouch, by personal experience, for the existence of the latter fish in these tawny-hued waters, for, having stopped the car near these promising lakes, we always caught trout round the rocks fringing their shores. But the great feature of the landscape is bog—bog. Looking across

these great wastes, now treeless and shrubless, it is difficult to realise the fact that here as well as in other parts of Ireland forests formerly clothed the land: indeed, there is a tradition that a very old peasant, not many years dead, remembered the existence of dense woods between Clifden and Oughterard. The bogs in Connemara abound, however, with evidence that no metaphor was employed when Ireland was called the "Island of the Woods," for they everywhere reveal timber, and frequently boles of huge forest trees.

Remember, too, as you traverse these bogs, that when our planet was many centuries younger than it is now, the magnificent *Cervus Megaceros* roamed through the primeval forests. No precise period can be assigned when the remains of this huge antlered deer were first discovered; but as they are always found in marl under the bog stratum, it is conjectured that the specimens brought to light were not numerous until the advanced state of agriculture had created a demand for marl as a manure.

We are indebted to Baron Cuvier for correcting the erroneous supposition that the bones of the *Cervus Megaceros* are the same species as the moose-deer, or elk of North America. The latter is, comparatively speaking, a small animal, whereas the

Cervus Megaceros is gigantic. The antlers of a skeleton of this deer, found at Rathcannon, and now in the museum of the Royal Dublin Society, are nine feet two inches from tip to tip, while those of the moose-deer never exceed four feet; the length of the spine of the Irish deer is ten feet ten inches, and that of the moose six feet.

Imposing indeed must have been the spectacle of these majestic animals stalking through the forests. Whether, however, man inhabited Ireland during their existence is uncertain. Some persons conceive that the circumstance of a human body having been found in gravel under eleven feet of peat, clothed in rough garments made of deers' hair, is conclusive evidence that man was contemporaneous with the *Cervus Megaceros*; and another case, in which a rib of this deer was discovered with an oval opening, supposed to have been caused by a sharp-pointed instrument, is also adduced in support of this supposition, and further, as is alleged, leads to the conclusion that this large deer supplied the ancient inhabitants of Ireland with food and clothing.

Portions of the *Cervus Megaceros* have been found in Yorkshire, Essex, and other parts of England, the Isle of Man, Germany, and various localities in Lombardy. But although the *Cervus Megaceros* was pro-

bably not indigenous to Ireland, that country seems to have been its favourite abiding place; for nowhere else have so many portions of this interesting extinct animal been found. Scarcely a day elapses without bringing portions of the bones or antlers to light. Indeed, so common are these, that peasants have used the antlers for field-gates and bridges over rivulets; and, on one occasion, a large quantity of bones found in Antrim were burnt in a bonfire lighted to celebrate some national rejoicing.

The shades of evening were falling as we came in sight of Glendalough, a charming sheet of water, on the north-east shore of which stands the Recess Inn, backed by a grove of trees—a rare sight in Conne-mara. Here we had planned to remain some days, and were therefore not a little solicitous to know what accommodation we could have, for in the Irish highlands the inns are neither remarkable for their great number nor vastness. Fortunately one double-bedded room remained untenanted. Of this we took immediate possession, not doubting that the resources of the establishment were equal to providing a shake-down for one of our party. Lot consigned the major to this makeshift, which was set up in a room through which the servant-girl had to pass in order to enter the apartment honoured by the appellation of coffee-

room ; thus his prospects of undisturbed repose were not very cheering, for though the waitress did her ministering noiselessly, seeing that she was bare-footed, he was fated to have companions. Indeed, his first night seems to have been spent in a manner by no means calculated to refresh the tired body.

Having made our arrangements for the night, while supper was preparing, we strolled out to investigate our fishing prospects. They were not good. The weather had been singularly fine during the past three weeks ; no rain had fallen, and the rivers had shrunk to mere brooklets, which babbled among the rocks. Under these circumstances it was hopeless to expect to catch white trout in the neighbouring lakes, for until rain fell and the rivers swelled, these fish would not enter the lakes from the sea. "But," said an ancient weather-wise peasant, after calmly scanning meteorological appearances, "we shall have rain soon, and when it does come there will be mighty illigint fishing." We doubted the first part of his prediction, for to our eyes the weather seemed settled ; but he was right, for before midnight rain fell, and the morning broke through such a water-pour as can only be seen near a mighty ocean. The sight, doubtless far from pleasant to tourists intent on scaling mountains, was particularly agreeable to

us. The major, who was a great adept in the art of tying flies, spent the morning in preparing bright lures for white trout, which learned entomologists would have been sorely puzzled to have classed with any entomological species. The lawyer and myself, not being similarly skilled, resolved, after having long gazed at the still pouring rain, as idlers do through inn-windows, to go out for a change; accordingly, wrapping ourselves in Cording's waterproofs, we sallied forth, rods in hand, thinking it possible that we might catch a dish of fish for dinner.

Heavens! how it did rain; the Atlantic rushing through sieves could alone have equalled it: the watercourses on the roadsides were rivulets; the brooks of yesterday, rivers; the rivers, furious torrents, sweeping down in rich brown masses crested by foam, where torn by dividing rocks. Looking at the rushing waters, which, as we gazed, raged and swelled under the influence of innumerable mountain torrents, we wondered how fish could stem such a flood, and much more how they could make their way against it. Yet there were probably shoals of fish heading against the mighty torrent before us; actuated by that remarkable instinct which causes them to ascend rivers during floods.

Fishing in such a tumult of waters was of course

out of the question ; so after a wet, though not uninteresting ramble, we returned to our quarters fully satisfied that we should have glorious fishing on the morrow. Towards evening the rain abated, and we strolled out to make the necessary preparations for spending the following day on Derryclare Lake. If you desire to fish this or other lakes in the neighbourhood, you must hire a boat from Mr. Robertson, who leases the Ballinahinch fisheries. The charge for a boat is five shillings a day, not including boatmen. Two of these are necessary. They are generally paid half-a-crown each per day, though they will tell you that gentlemen frequently give them more ; but besides this pay, they will look to you for dinner, and an unlimited supply of whisky and tobacco. Thus, if you happen to be alone, a day's fishing on the Connemara Lakes is rather expensive ; and while on financial subjects in connexion with fishing, I may here warn the reader, who may have some idea of trying his luck on Irish waters for salmon or white trout, that by the Act of Parliament, 11th and 12th Vic., cap. 92., a government license, when angling for these fish, is necessary. This document, which is issued by the conservators of Irish fisheries, costs ten shillings, and entitles the possessor to fish during one season for salmon or white trout, with a

single salmon rod, in the open sea and tideways from the 1st of February to the last day of August; and in rivers or lakes above the tideways from the 1st of March to the 29th of September.

I have heard, on good authority, that since the enactment of the law rendering a fishing license necessary to angle, salmon and white trout have greatly increased in many rivers and lakes in Ireland. This is exceedingly probable; for next to the wholesale capture of these noble fish by netting at the mouth of rivers, idling poaching fellows have been their greatest destroyers.

On regaining the inn, we found a meal served, more remarkable for abundance than the delicacy of the viands, which did duty as a late dinner or early supper. You must be prepared in all fishing inns in Ireland to eat in the company of your brother guests. No snug parlours are obtainable, for the very good reason, that, with few exceptions, none exist in such inns. But though this herding in common may not be so congenial to your English habits, it is not without advantage, for you will see more life, and will probably meet one or two characters,—racy Milesians, who fire off strange stories belonging to past days, which take colour from the depth and strength of their potations.

Such a character was amongst the party we met at the Recess. Long past the *mezzo cammino* of life, he was a happy illustration of the French proverb, “On est jeune et vieux à tout age.” By acclamation he was elected our president. Well and worthily did he fill this office; but it was chiefly after dinner, when the punch was introduced, that he shone as a genuine humorist and teller of stories. These generally referred to the days of his youth, in connexion with which he had pleasing memories. Of one sporting hero bearing the *sobriquet* of “Tear Fox Featherstone,” he had many anecdotes, characteristic of the rough manners of the old Irish squires. Among others, he related that Mr. Featherstone, who had acquired his strange appellation by his excessive love for unearthing foxes, was one day at his favourite amusement, when a young English gentleman happened to be standing near him. Mr. Featherstone’s arm was buried to the shoulder in the fox earth, when he was asked by one of the hunting party, who were looking on, whether he felt the fox. “Whisht!” replied Mr. Featherstone. “He’s got howld of my thumb!” Presently his fortitude and energy were rewarded by turning the tables on Reynard, who was brought to light. “Who,” demanded the youth fresh from the Saxon isle, “is that gentleman?” “Mr. Tear

Fox Featherstone," was the reply. When the hunting party met at dinner, the Englishman, full of admiration of Mr. Featherstone, watching his opportunity, requested that he might have the honour of drinking a glass of wine with Mr. Tear Fox Featherstone. "With all my heart," replied the fox-catcher, looking at the youth with an inquisitive eye. The glasses were filled, and the wine was drunk.

Presently, Mr. Featherstone took a piece of butter on the end of his knife, and thus addressed the Englishman, who was near him:—"Now, young man, you tuk a liberty with my name just now, and by —— I'll take one with you!" and he popped the butter into his breast-coat pocket. "You'll remember now that my name is not Tear Fox Featherstone." Had the youth been a Celt, a duel would have been the result; but as it was, he pocketed the insult—and the butter. Perhaps he had received a gentle hint that he might have to do with one of those fire-eating, roaring boys, whose greatest apprehension in the morning was that the names of the parties quarrelled with the night before might be forgotten.

One of our party was a violent Orangeman, and as we were all Protestants, he displayed his colours on every occasion. "Come, gentlemen," said he one night, when we were gathered round the table, and

had filled many bumpers to various patriotic and political toasts, "let us drink the immortal memory ;" and without pausing for approval, he thundered forth the terrible toast, which you will happily now rarely hear in Ireland, and which you may even never have seen in print. I am not, indeed, certain whether I give it in its integrity ; however, what follows is quite sufficient to show that Orangemen are not endowed with a very Christian spirit ; that is, if the drinking of this toast forms a necessary part of their party faith :—

"The glorious, pious, and immortal memory of the great and good King William, who delivered us from Popery, slavery, brass money, wooden shoes, and warming-pans. May he who refuses to drink this be rammed, and damned, and double-damned ! and crammed into the great gun at Athlone, and fired up into the elements, and blown to smithereens to make sparrow-bills for Orangemen's shoes ! May his soul be in the Pope's belly, the Pope in the devil's belly, the devil in hell, hell in flames, and the key in the Orangeman's pocket—and a fig for the Bishop of Cork !"

But our conversation, as is generally the custom among anglers, happily ran often in fishing channels. Wonderful stories were told of the capture of his

fish — the last achievement always outdoing its predecessor. Many were worth preserving, but perhaps none more than the following, in which, however, the victory was not on the side of the angler. The Major was the spokesman, and here is his story : —

“ I do not think that in any river in Ireland, salmon attain such a size as they do in the Shannon. I have never had the good fortune to be engaged with one of the monsters of that river, but I have seen specimens from time to time during my long fishing experience, which an angler might even feel proud of exhibiting, as trophies of his skill. Among others, I well remember a salmon which weighed 42 lbs., taken by a relative of mine a few years ago at Castle-Connell. I was not present at the capture, but, from the graphic and animated account of it given by the successful sportsman, I can well imagine that the scene must have been one of rare excitement. My relative had hooked his fish from the bank, in a deep and rapid part of the river, above and below which were ledges of jagged rocks, over which the water tumbled in foaming cataracts. If the salmon passed either barrier he must inevitably have escaped, as the angler could not have followed the fish up or down stream; the spot where he stood being a jutting point from which there was no egress but at the place where he had entered. In such a

situation, and with an antagonist of so much weight and strength, both greatly increased by the rapidity of the current, nothing but the most consummate skill and the utmost strain of good ash, gut, and silk judiciously applied, could have gained the victory.

“But even this splendid salmon is quite thrown into the shade by one which was hooked four seasons back, higher up the Shannon between the fords of Meelick and Banagher, and which formed the great topic of talk among the fishermen in the neighbourhood for many a day. The manner of it was thus:—One morning in June, about five o’clock, a professional fisherman residing in the last mentioned town, was plying his craft on his own account, not happening just then to be engaged by any of the amateur anglers who visit those fishing waters. At one of the favourite ‘stands’ he rose and hooked a salmon, but as it took the fly under water, he could form no just estimate of its size. But he had not long contracted an alliance with his fish when from its peculiar play, well understood by the experienced angler, he felt assured that it was a heavy salmon. He therefore made up his mind that the conflict would be long and arduous, more especially as he was alone in his boat, not an easy thing to manage, by the way, while playing a vigorous salmon. However, as my friend Davy was no novice

in the art, he set to work systematically and coolly, giving line or winding up as occasion might require, and every now and then rowing strenuously in order to keep as nearly as possible over his fish. This exercise he maintained steadily for about three hours, never once obtaining a view of the salmon, which, as generally occurs with very heavy fish, obstinately persisted in working near the bottom of the deepest part of the river. By this time the salmon had made his way up stream close to Banagher, more than two miles and a half from where he was hooked. Having gone thus far, he stopped, and retracing his course downwards progressed in the same steady and determined manner, exhibiting not the slightest weariness or diminution of strength. Not so Davy, on whom the continuous and anxious exertion was beginning to tell. He was in fact nearly 'dead beat,' when a most opportune ally appeared on the scene. This was his brother, in the employment of Capt. W—, an English gentleman who was residing at a fishing-lodge near Meelick, and who had sent him on an errand to Banagher; in the execution of his orders he was rowing up the river when he fell in with his brother Davy, 'sorely bested' by his tussle with the big fish. With such odds the gallant salmon might now well have been looked on as doomed to the gaff, and

certainly so thought the two brothers. With a fresh hand at the tackle, and the boat properly guided, they felt confident of a speedy victory. But they were mistaken. The game went on as before, steadily, heavily, doggedly. Another hour or more passed; Davy's brother could stay no longer, his errand had already been too long delayed; so, handing the rod back to Davy and getting into his own boat, he left the affair just as he had found it. Another long rough-handed bout had Davy, when after the lapse of another hour or two the brother on his way back from Banagher found him still at work, and apparently without having come a whit nearer the desired conclusion. Having relieved him of the rod just long enough to permit him to rest himself, he hastened home to Capt. W——, to whom he related what he had seen, and obtained permission to return to his brother's assistance. The amazing powers and endurance of the salmon were now most severely tested, as the two brothers relieved each other alternately, and adopted a system of aggression and persecution which compelled the fish to exert himself much more frequently and strenuously than he had been inclined to do hitherto. Like most very large salmon when hooked, he had trusted mainly to his *vis inertiae*, and sinking to the bottom of a deep pool, he

sulked and defied all attempts by the rod and line to draw him thence. Now, however, his pertinacious enemies provided themselves with large stones, which they dropped down over him, and even strove to dislodge him by the application of a long pole. In a paroxysm of rage or terror occasioned by some such poacher-like malpractices, he forgot himself so far as to afford his persecutors the first distinct view of his silvery proportions. With a sudden rush he made the check-wheel scream, as the line hissed through the water for some thirty or forty yards, and he leaped up several feet in the air, falling back with a clap and a splash which were heard at a great distance. Throughout the day, this protracted struggle attracted numerous spectators. All the anglers left their sport to watch the progress of the conflict, and all in turn becoming wearied retired, until at nightfall the two brothers and the salmon had it all to themselves. Capt. W—— was sitting after dinner with some brother sportsmen who were his guests, and the bottles had performed sundry rapid gyrations round the table, when the host proposed that the party should sally forth and see what hand those bunglers were making of their salmon. The move being voted by acclamation, a boat was ordered, and a lanthorn provided. The brothers were soon found, as they had

again worked up with the fish a distance extending three miles, and were near Capt. W——'s lodge. 'Come, my lads,' cried the Captain, 'what will you take for the rod? You'll never kill that fish if you were after him till next Christmas. I'll give you a good deal more for your chance than you'll ever get for the salmon, for you don't know how to catch him.' After some chaffing a bargain was struck, and Capt. W——, having scrambled into Davy's boat, received in his hands the rod he had just purchased. Steadying himself as well as he could upon his legs, which he kept well apart, 'Now, you lubbers,' he shouted, 'I'll show you how to do the trick. None of you here know how to handle a salmon. Watch me, here goes for the Castle-Connell touch!' and suiting the action to the words, he bore with all his strength on the rod; for a moment the tough ash strained, then straightened with a jerk and flew backwards, whipping the line out of the water, which had snapped at the middle of the foot-link, causing W—— to assume suddenly and with a terrible bump a sitting position, in which he remained some time, not seeming to understand exactly what had happened. As may be supposed, the weight of the fish was variously estimated by those who had attained a view of him when he leaped out of the water, but all agreed that they had never seen his equal."

CHAP. XXI.

Auspicious fishing Weather.—Proceed to Derryclare.—Beautiful Scenery.—Rough Craft.—Embark on the Lake.—Excellent White Trout Fishing.—How to cook Trout.—Preserving Fish.—Pic-nic on an Island.—Magnificent Views.—The *Erica Mediterranea*.—Produce of the Day's Fishing.—Return to the Recess Hotel.

THE following morning broke most auspiciously, the rain clouds had passed, and in their place light masses of vapour drifted across the heavens, impelled by a fresh breeze from the south-west. What more could the most fastidious angler desire? Before breakfast I strolled down to the river which flows into Glendalough, close to the inn. The water was in splendid order. At the second cast I hooked a lovely fresh run white trout. This was encouraging; I hastened back to my friends with my prize — hurried the breakfast, at which my white trout appeared with great credit to his species — and at ten o'clock we were off to Derryclare, having previously dispatched a boatman to the lake with a basket of provisions.

The walk to the lower end of this lake is charming.

Glendalough on your left, with its wooded shores ; on your right the Ma'am Turk range of mountains, and before you the mighty Bens, which we shall see better presently, as some of their roots are steeped in the waters of Derryclare. Full of pleasant anticipations, we walked fast, and in about an hour arrived at our place of embarkation. Do not expect trim or comfortably-cushioned boats in Connemara, or you will be sadly disappointed. The craft destined for us was rough in the extreme, ill-shapen, and ill-finished ; but what was wanting in elegance was abundantly made up in solidity and evident power to successfully combat squalls, which suddenly sweep down through the mountain gorges. So, being well prepared to rough it in boats as well as in inns, we put up our rods and embarked. The wind, still blowing from the west, wafted us towards the head of the lake. The boatmen rowed gently, and when we were about two hundred yards from the shore, they drew in the long sweeps, and, assuring us that we were on a good "white trout course," said we might commence operations. On this announcement our lines, which had been undergoing the necessary ordeal, technically termed "wetting," were withdrawn from the lake and cast again on the water. "Artistically, of course." Not exactly, for at the

very first throw we were made aware that we had undertaken a very difficult feat, viz., to cast within little more than a yard of each other without fouling our lines. At all times, and in all places, fish-hooks have a wonderful and provoking tendency to effect alliance with everything but that most desired; but this tendency seems to be greatly increased when you are fly-fishing from a boat with two companions. Indeed, I know few things more temper-trying than just when you have got your line well out, in certain expectation of covering a fish which you know by the "rise" to be large, you find that your neighbour has by a very unskilful cast effected a union between your line and his own, which costs you many weary minutes to dissolve, your vexation being greatly heightened by seeing the large fish, which you regarded as your own, rising freely while your boat is drifting fast beyond reach. How often this calamity befell us during our fishing companionship on the Connemara Lakes I care not to tell; but I am proud to be able to record that though we did, by provoking entanglements, lose many chances of catching fish, we did not lose our temper. For we were pretty well agreed that these mishaps were more due to adverse gusts of wind than to our want of skill.

But indeed we were so fortunate in our fishing on this, our first day on Derryclare Lake, that it would have required many cross things besides lines to have ruffled us. At almost every cast we rose or hooked fish. The lake was alive with the silvery beauties, which were evidently enamoured, after their trip from the sea, with the gaudy costumes and graceful figures of our ephemera in masquerade.

How strong they were! Three-pounders rushing like large salmon, and carrying away many yards of line before they were at all disposed to halt. In the course of a few hours we had captured upwards of four dozen fish, averaging two pounds each; and having thus fairly earned our dinner, we were unanimously of opinion that it would be wise to cook and eat it. Accordingly we selected a lovely wooded isle for our operations, and, having secured our boat in a little creek, landed and disembarked our provisions. But those which we had providently brought from the inn were now very lightly esteemed in comparison with our trout. In order to broil these, we made a huge fire on the lee side of a rock near the water, and when the ashes were about four inches thick, and of a glowing red heat, we placed green sticks propped on stones over them. On the sticks we laid our trout, which had been split and cleaned,

taking care to turn them from time to time until the silvery hue changed to a rich brown tint; and whether we were extremely hungry, or that the fish were delicious, or both, we agreed that we had never dined more luxuriously. Eaten thus, you will, I think, agree with me that white trout should never be boiled when they can be broiled. If, however, you prefer the former method of cooking them, and that you are fishing in or near a tidal stream, and purpose dining *en plein* air, make your gossoon procure a pot from a cabin and crimp your trout, which, by the way, should also be done in the broiling process. Then, filling your vessel with sea-water, let it boil furiously before you put in your fish. Crimping salmon and white trout is necessary if you wish to preserve the curd of the fish. Hear the philosophical angler on this subject:—“The fat of salmon between the flakes of the muscles is mixed with much albumen and gelatine, and is extremely liable to decompose, and by keeping it cool, the decomposition is retarded; and by the boiling salt and water, which is of a higher temperature than that of common boiling water, the albumen is coagulated, and the curdiness preserved. The crimping, by preventing the irritability of the fibre from being gradually exhausted, seems to preserve it so hard

and crisp that it breaks under the teeth; and a fresh fish not crimped is generally tough."*

While on the subject of preparing fish for cooking, I may mention that should you have good fortune on the Connemara lakes, you may preserve white trout effectually for a long time by splitting them longitudinally, strewing salt, pepper, and a *soupeçon* of sugar over them, and then allowing them to dry thoroughly. Treated thus, I have carried salmon and white trout long distances, and have had the satisfaction of seeing them highly appreciated at my breakfast-table.

Pleasant memories rise vividly connected with these dinners on the isles of Derryclare. Cradled amidst mountains, we seemed shut out from the world. For although keen anglers, we were also enthusiastic admirers of the grand panorama around us. Reclining on a bank gaudy with heather and wild flowers—tiny wavelets lapping the rocks at our feet, we had before us the solemn and imposing group of the twelve Bens, their bare heads lighted by the afternoon sun, and their gorges steeped in purple gloom. Far-reaching and winding among the roots of these fine mountains gleamed the waters of Derryclare, broken by islets, all clothed with trees, supposed

* Sir H. Davy's *Salmonia*, fourth edit., p. 103.

to be the remains of the primeval woods. No prim villas, not even a cabin, breaks the spell of nature's dominion, for Derryclare is not on the beaten track; you must turn aside to make its acquaintance. Although the islands are wooded, owing, probably, to their comparative inaccessibility, the shores of the lake are destitute of trees. The great abundance of heather atones, however, in some measure for the want of these. — This shrub revels in the soil of Connemara. Not far from Derryclare lake the *Erica mediterranea* exists. The discovery of this still rare plant was made in 1830. Before that period it was not known as being indigenous to Britain or Ireland. It grows on a declivity near a stream in boggy ground at the foot of Urrisbeg mountain, occupying a space about half a mile long, and a quarter of a mile broad. The Mediterranean heath is also indigenous to Portugal, from whence it appears to have been first introduced into our gardens, and it is the principal heath of Corsica.*

After indulging in the *dolce far niente* for an hour, we resumed our fishing, which was not so good in the afternoon as it had been during the morning. This was made practically apparent to us on more than one occasion; so we came to the conclusion

* Loudon's Mag. of Nat. Hist. vol. iv., p. 167.

that white trout dine early, information which you will do well to remember should you visit the Connemara lakes on an angling excursion in August or September. However, although our sport fell off as the sun sank in the west, we nevertheless killed a great number of very fine trout, and we were really startled when at the close of the day our boatmen displayed our spoil on the shore. We bade them carry a few of the heaviest fish to the inn, the rest and by far the largest portion became their perquisite.

Then, winding up our lines, we crossed the south flank of Lioughter mountain, starting a few grouse as we strode through the deep heather, and came down on the Recess Hotel as the glimmering landscape faded on the sight.

CHAP. XXII.

Lough Inagh. — Grievance of an Irish Salmon. — Pike. — The Pike Fly. — The Pike of the Gap. — Capture of a large Pike. — Ballinahinch. — The late Mr. Martin. — His love for blasting. Agricultural Improvements. — English Settlers in Connaught. — Fishing at Ballinahinch. — Clifden. — Drive to Kylemore. — The Pass. — Fish on the Lake. — The Killeries. — Romantic Scenery. — Bengoon. — Leenane. — The Devil's Mother's Range. — The Joyces. — Big Jack Joyce. — Shawn Nabontree. — Old Irish Poem. — Irish Harper. — The Irish Harp. — Ancient Irish Harpers. — Respect paid to them. — The Kings and their Harpers. — Tom Moore's Harp. — Brian Boroihme's Harp. — Drive to Maam. — A lively Trout Stream. — Rich Flora. — The Hen's Castle. — Excursion on Lough Corrib. — Drive to Westport. — Ascend Croagh Patrick. — Belief in St. Patrick. — The Summit of the Reck. — Penance Stations. — How Penance is performed. — Magnificent Prospect. — Clew Bay. — Natural Breakwater. — Penumbra of the Cone.

As I am not writing a book exclusively devoted to angling, I refrain from chronicling numerous fishing expeditions which followed that to Derryclare. But as my pages on fishing may be taken by some friendly reader as a guide to the waters described, I think it right to state that we had no such sport

as that on the day succeeding the heavy rain. White trout evidently still abounded in the lakes, but they rose sluggishly; the fresh-water seemed to dull their appetites, as it certainly dimmed the silvery glory in which they shone when caught fresh from the sea; and we had no longer those fierce rushes accompanied by the music of the whizzing reel, denoting the hooking of a strong and heavy fish. So, if you are wise, you will make the most of a day after heavy rain.

We caught a few salmon in Lough Inagh, a lovely head-water lake, and in Ballinahinch river; but the lessee of the fishery had played such havoc with his nets, that apparently few salmon were left for the angler.* How difficult it is for these fish to obey the instinct of their nature is happily shown in the following letter addressed to the great receptacle of all wrongs and grievances, which I extract from that pleasant work entitled "The Erne: its Legends and its Fly-fishing."

* Various ancient records attest the former great abundance of salmon in Irish rivers. A document preserved in the State Paper Office (Carew MS.), states that "the Foyle river belonged to O'Donnell, who was styled best Lord of Samon Fishe in Ireland. He exchanges fishe allwayes with foreign merchants for wyne, by which he is called in other countries King of Fishe."

To the Editor of "THE TIMES."

(FROM AN IRISH SALMON.)

"SIR,—I hope you will do justice to Irish salmon by letting your readers know how we are treated, and how very little protection is afforded to us by the laws of the land.

"My consort and I wanted to pass up our native river this year to breed. She was in a very interesting state, and in a hurry to deposit some 17,000 eggs in a secure place. However, we put off the perilous ascent to the latest time, and remained in the sea much to our discomfort. We fetched the bar of the Blackwater, county of Waterford, on the 20th of August, having narrowly escaped some execrable engines called bag-nets, the jaws of which yawned wide. Two porpoises met us mid-channel, as they were floundering out to sea; one of the brutes ran open-mouthed at our dear companion, and she was forced to fly into shallow water; there, three fellows were hauling in a draught-net—however, she made a leap over the corks, and was soon again by my side.

"We swam together up the stream for some miles, running the gauntlet of about twenty of those villanous contrivances—stake nets; and dodging in

and out between them to escape from one of our old enemies, a seal, who was on the look-out for all comers, and was swimming round the chambers of the nets, *faisant l'eau dans la bouche* at some younger brothers of mine caught in them, who were not up to trap.

“We lay by for Sunday, when the duke must open his traps in the Lixmore weir, and that night got safe through. All these dangers past, we remained tolerably safe for some weeks in a well-known hole under Ballymacatchem, prudently abstaining from several nice-looking flies, and also from a minnow, suffering apparently from vertigo. My spouse was ‘expecting’ about the end of next month, and as she was growing ‘heavy’ wished to get over the mill weirs while able to jump. These we cleared during floods, spite of some scheming miller’s men, with their gaffs, and at last arrived at our native bed of gravel, on the night of the 30th of October.

“I set to work at once to root up a trench with my snout. Suddenly a light shone from the bank, and alas! before I could warn my poor partner of the danger, I heard the horrid splash, and an atrocious Celt had transfixed her with his spear.

“Not a single *salmo salar* of the feminine gender

has yet come up to these parts. Oh that my too, too, solid flesh could melt! What is to be done? I fear they have all eloped with the rising generation to Newfoundland.

“What has become of all the good old laws for our preservation? Are they stinking fish? You British men talk of Magna Charta, but cold-blooded creatures like us boil at the violation of its provisions.

“May all bad fish-law makers be hooked, gaffed, priested*, crimped, gutted, grilled, and served with sharp sauce.

“Your obedient servant,

“AN IRISH SALMON.”

Before parting with the attractive subject of fishing in the free waters in the west of Ireland, I wish to tell the pike fisher that he will find rare sport with this fish in most of the lakes, and in many of the rivers in Mayo, where it attains a great size. The upper waters of the Shannon near Banagher and Meelick also abound with enormous pike, which have been caught as heavy as fifty pounds.

This is a great weight, but you will be told that there are even heavier pike in that river. When I was in its vicinity last year, I heard of one which

* Shannon salmon, when *in extremis*, are generally killed by a small wooden mallet, called “a priest.”

must be— if half the stories told of him be true—the grand, or rather great grandsire of Irish pike. In fact, the Patriarch of the *Esox Lucius* tribe. His favourite haunt—for I am informed that he has not yet been captured—is a deep, large pool, below the Queen's Salmon Gap at Meelick. There he levies black mail on the shoals of salmon fry as they endeavour to pass through the gap, besides indulging in occasional trout and other fish.

During many seasons, almost every angler who visited Meelick has tried to catch this huge water-monster, always, however, with the same result—loss of tackle. Numberless have been the encounters; but, like a giant guarding an enchanted pass, the “great pike of the gap” sent back all his assailants shorn of their tackle and honours. For he was no craven, but stoutly met each new foe, adding continually to the list of his triumphs. The spoils of these must be rather uncomfortable decorations, if there be any foundation for the assertion solemnly made, and corroborated in the most impressive manner by a discomfited angler, who declared that “if any one took that pike he might set up a fishing-tackle shop with all the hooks and gimp adorning his jaws.” The same angler stated that on one occasion when he had hooked this pike he

saw his vast proportions, for he had contrived to get him alongside of the boat from which he was fishing. Being asked why he had not gaffed him, he replied, "Oh, 'tis easy to say 'gaff him,' but when I desired my attendant to perform that operation the fellow funked, and swore that the pike would upset the boat, and in the meantime the brute dived down like lightning, and carried away my tackle." This angler and a brother officer actually journeyed to Dublin for the sole purpose of procuring tackle of extraordinary strength and peculiar construction to capture the "pike of the gap."

A relation of mine, a skilful and experienced angler, was tempted to try his luck with the big fish. Accordingly he constructed trolling apparatus such as is not to be seen every day. It consisted of three large Limerick hooks; but as they were not large enough, my relation had two more constructed, under his own superintendence, by an intelligent country smith. On these five hooks, tied on the strongest gimp, he mounted as bait a trout *above two pounds weight*, and attached the whole to a stout hemp line wound on a large wooden reel, the concern being far too heavy to be managed by a rod. Thus equipped, he went forth strong in the belief that he was destined to kill the monster pike. Directing his boatman to row

slowly backwards and forwards across the pool he kept moving his hand, feeling gently as he trolled the line. Suddenly he felt a violent jerk, which, from its unyielding nature, he conjectured was occasioned by striking rocks of which the pool was by no means free. However, the shock was but momentary, and he drew in his line to see if all was right; when he found, with feelings which a brother angler may realise, that his bait was gashed across in four or five places quite to the bone; in fact, regularly 'crimped,' and one of the large hooks was broken off at the bend.

Irish waters seem indeed to be particularly congenial to the propagation and growth of pike. The fine and picturesque lake in Lord Rosse's demesne is full of these fish*, which, although they have large shoals of roach and dace to feed upon, lose no opportunity of indulging in a plethoric meal on a brother in distress.

With the view of obtaining some roach and dace for bait, drum nets were set over night in the lake here referred to; on taking them up in the morning, from two to six enormous pike were found in each net, with about half a dozen other pike averaging three pounds each, all more or less mangled by the large pike which had entered the nets to prey on their

* One captured a short time before I visited Parsonstown weighed 57 lbs.; two others, 47 and 43 lbs. respectively.

small kindred, which had in the first instance been doubtless attracted to the nets by the roach which they had devoured.

Each attempt to catch small fish for bait resulted in the capture of pike, which, however, were so large and powerful as to speedily reduce the drum-nets to a condition of inefficiency. The notorious sporting voracity of Master Jack at certain seasons and certain days when—

“Das Wasser rauscht, das Wasser scholl,”

should lead you to regard him as worthy of being artistically fished for. On such days at least as he is on the feed eschew base baits, and substitute that wondrous lure known by the name of the pike-fly—to which the gaudiest and most extraordinary salmon-fly is tame and colourless in comparison. With such a fly, scarlet bodied, two big bright beads for eyes, wings of flaunting peacock's feathers, and carrying at its tail *sauce piquante* in the shape of enormous hooks, you will, on auspicious days and in good pike water, have rare sport.

I have felt the rush of a large and strong salmon, and declare that that of a twenty pound pike when he has seized a fly and discovered his mistake is nearly if not quite as exciting. I was fishing one day from a small skiff in the lake on Lord Rosse's estate with a

pike-fly of enormous size, the day being very rough and the waters high; when just as I had worked the fly up close to the boat, and was making ready to cast it again, I beheld a vast pair of green-hued cavernous jaws issuing from the water near the boat close to the fly; and with a rush that made the big salmon wheel scream, away went the great fish to the water depths, carrying out without a check fifty yards of line. Nor did he stop then, for, having no more line to give him, he actually commenced towing my little skiff, which was just large enough for one person; and so strong was the fish, that I was quite unable, for upwards of half an hour, to recover a yard of line; and when at length I succeeded in bringing him to a pause, he repeatedly manifested his disinclination to make my acquaintance by tremendous rushes, comparable only to those made by a large first run salmon or white trout, when they carry out all the line. It was well that this and my rod were very strong, otherwise the pike would soon have effected a divorce with the tempting fly; but as it was I had no apprehension of a rupture of the tackle as long as I could keep clear of weeds near the shore. This, however, was difficult; for when the pike took a fancy to make a rush I was obliged to hold the rod with both my hands, which were thus unable to control the boat by the use of

the oars. It was only when my captive remained quiet that I was at all able to manage the boat, an operation rendered additionally difficult by the high wind which was blowing. In this manner upwards of an hour passed, and I began to despair of getting my pike. My only chance was in landing in a locality free from weeds; but even then I knew that I could not kill the pike unassisted. At length I saw a labourer approaching the lake, and by shouting made him hear that I wanted a gaff. While he was absent procuring this I succeeded in rowing the boat close to a favourable part of the shore, retaining the butt end of the rod between my knees, and allowing the line to run out so as not to disturb the pike, which had gone to the bottom. On the arrival of the man with the gaff I leaped on shore, and now, having solid ground under me, and great faith in the strength of my tackle, I commenced a new series of operations, which terminated by the pike becoming my prize about two hours after I had hooked him. He weighed twenty-seven pounds, and was in admirable condition. Strange to say, he was very slightly hooked, at the bony edge of his upper jaw, and consequently suffered little inconvenience from the hook, which cannot be the case when the cruel bait system of angling for this fish is practised.

So with reference to angling for pike as well as for other fish let your creed be *aut Musca aut nullus*, to which you will assent if you be a gentle angler. And indeed the pike probably has a worse character than he justly deserves. There is an anecdote related of one of these fish which, if true, and it bears the impress of veracity, entitles pike to take high rank among intelligent animals. I give it verbatim as it appears in the "Proceedings of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool."

"Dr. Warwick, a visitor, detailed some remarkable instances of instinct, or of intelligence, in animals which had come under his personal observation.

"When he resided at Dunham, the seat of the Earl of Stamford and Warrington, he was walking one evening in the park, and came to a pond where fish intended for the table were temporarily kept. He took particular notice of a fine pike of about six pounds weight, which when it observed him, darted hastily away. In so doing it struck its head against a tenterhook in a post (of which there were several in the pond to prevent poaching), and, as it afterwards appeared, fractured its skull, and turned the optic nerve on one side. The agony evinced by the animal appeared most horrible. It rushed to the bottom, and boring its head into the mud whirled

itself round with such velocity that it was almost lost to the sight for a short interval ; it then plunged about the pond, and at length threw itself completely out of the water on the bank. He (the Doctor) went and examined it, and found that a very small portion of the brain was protruding from the fracture in the skull. He carefully replaced this, and with a small silver tooth-pick raised the indented portion of the skull. The fish remained still for a short time, and he then put it into the pond again. It appeared at first a good deal relieved, but in a few minutes it again darted and plunged about until it threw itself out of the water a second time. A second time Dr. Warwick did what he could to relieve it, and again put it into the water. It continued for several times to throw itself out of the pond ; and with the assistance of the keeper the Doctor at length made a kind of pillow for the fish, which was then left in the pond to its fate. Upon making his appearance at the pond on the following morning, the pike came towards him to the edge of the pond, and actually laid its head upon his foot. The Doctor thought this very extraordinary, but he examined the fish's skull, and found it going on all right. He then walked backwards and forwards along the edge of the pond for some time, and the fish continued to swim up and down,

turning whenever he turned; but being blind on the wounded side of its skull, it always appeared agitated when it had that side towards the bank, as it could not then see its benefactor. On the next day he took some young friends down to see the fish, which came to him as usual; and at length he actually taught the pike to come to him at his whistle, and feed out of his hands; with other persons it continued as shy as fish usually are. He (Dr. Warwick) thought this a most remarkable instance of gratitude in a fish for a benefit received; and as it always came at his whistle, it proved also what he had previously with other naturalists disbelieved, that fishes are sensible to sound."

I leave the reader to give what credence he pleases to this curious story, and shall merely remark that the Doctor is rather hasty in coming to the conclusion that fish are "sensible to sound," if by that expression hearing be meant. Fish, however, as the experienced and observant angler knows well, feel vibration, and he is careful, when at the river-side, to follow Christopher North's advice, not "to blow his nose like a bagman, nor to tramp up and down the bank like a paving machine."

Melancholy memories cling to Ballinahinch. When I first visited Connemara, Mr. Martin was alive. I

asked mutual friends for letters of introduction to him. "You will need none," was the reply; "if you call on him he will give you a hearty welcome." They were right. For although I deemed it more courteous to present a note of recommendation, I was soon made aware that I should have been welcome unprovided with such a document. I found the king of Conemara a short distance from his house, clad in a flannel coat, superintending extensive blasting operations. In these he took especial pleasure. For fifteen years he woke the echoes of the Big Bens by the thunder of his blasts, and by steady perseverance succeeded in clearing fifteen acres around his house. This is at the rate of an acre a year, progress which would not suit Jonathan in his primeval forests. So great was Mr. Martin's love for extirpating even the deepest-rooted rocks, that he imported, at one time, no less than eighteen tons of blasting gunpowder. This large quantity invoiced to one person alarmed Government, and he was applied to by revenue officers to state what the powder was wanted for. No wonder that in those days of Irish agitation, when spirits were unquiet, Government was alarmed by eighteen tons of gunpowder being consigned to one individual. But Mr. Martin was a peaceful man, and much loved by his people. There is a story

told of his having declared that his tenantry would feel his death so much that they would "cry over his bones in his grave." The hand-book to the Irish highlands states that this prophetic observation was remarkably verified. An old woman was crying and wailing bitterly. Being asked what ailed her, she replied—"I am crying over Tom Martin's bones in the clay. I am a poor widow, and he never harassed me while he lived; but my only cow was driven for the rent to-day, and I have no support left for my poor orphans."

The manner in which the vast possessions of the ancient family of the Martins* passed into the hands of a London corporation, is a curious instance of the great mutability of Celtish affairs. But however much Mr. Martin's memory may be honoured by the people, I believe that they have no cause to complain of their new landlords, who are, by judicious measures, greatly improving their estates. Indeed, everywhere in Connaught, signs of agricultural improvement and prosperity are apparent. A local paper stated at the close of last year—"Every week

* The pedigree of the Martin family relates that Oliver Martin was the first of the name that settled in Ireland, — that he was a follower of Strongbow, and that the name was derived from *Martius*, "Warlike."

we receive applications, from persons who are anxious to settle in Connaught, for advice and assistance. The applicants now include a number from Ulster, who are also anxious to invest their capital in less densely populated districts. While we by no means discourage the new comers, we have reason to know that strangers perfectly unacquainted with the agriculture of the West are liable to experience many disappointments, and several of our English settlers evince intentions of removal. During the last ten years the number of settlers who have obtained leases of farms in the West, or become purchasers under the Encumbered Estates Court, is considerably larger than most people would be willing to admit. We are bound also to concede that wherever a *bonâ fide* purchaser has settled, the neighbourhood has been more or less benefited. Notwithstanding some reverses, the tide of invaders from Saxondom continues to flow towards Connaught, and though a few of them will in a short time imbibe a relish for the 'wild sports of the west,' and perhaps become eventually 'more Irish than the Irish themselves,' we have hopes that the examples of industry and frugality, generally set by the strangers to whom we allude, will be productive of permanent good, especially as settlers have been for the most part the

architects of their own fortunes, and not the inheritors of pecuniary property."

All this results from better management, and a better understanding between capital and labour, the master and the workman.* Irish peasants, too, are beginning to understand, and what is better, duly appreciate and value, the brain-power, judgment, and, above all, indomitable perseverance and energy, of Saxons. So that no longer is England branded as an island full of wrath, hatred, and oppression towards Ireland, but rather as the

" Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar looking down ;
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And king-like, wears the crown."

At the same time it cannot be denied that Ireland has frequently suffered from English misrule. Cromwell seems to have been conscious of this when he uttered these remarkable words, the fruition of his Irish experience: "What is to hinder poor Ireland from flourishing, if you will do the truth to

* The statistics of pauperism attest, in a very satisfactory manner, the increasing prosperity of Ireland. On the 1st of January, 1856, there were 73,083 paupers in the Poor-houses ; on the 1st of January, 1857, 56,094 ; a decrease of 16,989, or 23·3 per cent.

it, and speak the truth ; instead of doing the falsity, and speaking the falsity."

The waters as well as the land at Ballinahinch have latterly been very profitable. During last season 30,000 pounds of salmon and white trout were caught, all of which were potted on the spot.

My friends were obliged to leave me at Ballinahinch, but I was determined not to return to Dublin without extending my tour to the west. I left Clifden at eight o'clock in the morning for Kylemore. The day was most propitious. Large masses of fleecy clouds floated high, capping only the loftiest mountains, while the lower ranges stood out clear in the morning sun. Five miles across a vast moorland, and then the grand pass of Kylemore yawned before me. Drive slowly through this romantic gorge, if you are a lover of nature's hues, for the sides in August are robed in gorgeous colours ; bright heaths, among which you will find the large belled *Erica Dabeoci*, and a multitude of wild flowers and gaudy lichens.

Beyond the pass—in which Lamh-Dearg, or the bloody-handed, an ancient Irish king who flourished A.D. 360, is said to have fought a terrible battle—you will see the lake of Kylemore, a fine sheet of water, the shores of which are still clothed with oak,

birch, and holly, so that the name Kylemore — great wood — is still happily appropriate.

At this lake I paused, having been kindly offered the use of a boat by a gentleman who possesses a charming cottage on the shores. Three hours' fishing gave a result of fourteen brown trout, averaging one pound each. The fly in most requisition was a large alder, but the water was very rough. When merely ruffled by a light breeze a smaller fly, as I was informed by an old fisherman, should be used.

On landing I found that the care-taker of my friend's cottage had prepared a most acceptable dish of potatoes, which, with butter, eggs, and fried trout, did the duty of dinner admirably. This concluded, I continued my journey to the Killeries, a romantic estuary walled on the north by the steep sides of Bengorm, which rises 2224 feet above the dark sea waters. Here nature remains undisturbed. No hamlets on the mountain-slopes — no sail upon the waters. You might imagine that the fiord wears the same aspect that it did when bold sea-rovers turned the prow of their barks inland, curious to see where the sinuous estuary would lead them.

My afternoon at Leenane, where I slept, was spent climbing Mulrea, from whence I took in the entire length of the bold, beaked promontory, eter-

nally exposed to the breaching battery of the Atlantic. Besides extensive views of bold mountains, the Devil's Mother's range lording over those to the north-east, I saw a gorgeous sunset. Lowering clouds were sweeping with majestic strides across the dark purple ocean, and through these, the sun sank in great glory, flooding the horizon with golden hues.

“If the mountain sides of the Killery were wooded,” says Inglis, “it would be almost unnecessary to travel into Norway in search of scenery.” Indeed, there are few spots in Europe, of a similar nature, so remarkable and at the same time so grand as the Killeries.

Leenane, in olden time, was the residence of the Joyces. These descended from an ancient English family, allied to Welsh and British princes. Thomas Joyes, the first of the name, landed in Ireland in the reign of Edward I., acquired large landed property in Connemara, and founded the family. While on his voyage to Ireland his wife was delivered of a son, whom he named *Mac Mara*—Son of the Sea. The youth extended his father's acquisitions, and from him descended the sept of the Joyces; a race of men remarkable for extraordinary stature, who for centuries past have inhabited the mountain district in Connemara called *Duthaidh Sheodhoigh*, or Joyce

country. Hardiman, from whose history of Galway this account of the Joyces is abridged, says that a very curious pedigree of the family is recorded in the Office of Arms.

The glory of the Joyces is set. Big Jack Joyce, as he was called, is dead, but you will see descendants of the Joyces in this part of Connaught, no longer great chiefs—though fine stalwart fellows, giving their name to a portion of Connemara. And although the clan has fallen from its high estate, a chief bearing the name of *Shawn Nabontree* is still recognised. I met him on the road to Maam, riding a little pony, whose back bent under the tremendous weight of its rider; but, apart from his colossal stature, there was nothing to mark the chief in the dress or features of the huge Milesian.*

Connaught seems to have long enjoyed a reputation for big men. A curious poem, descriptive of Ireland, composed by Alfred, son of King Oswy of Northumberland, who was exiled to Ireland in 685,

* Since the above was written, Shawn Nabontree has been gathered to his fathers. A Connaught newspaper recording his death, which occurred last winter, states that he was a man of extraordinary athletic symmetry, seven feet high, and weighed over twenty stone. No wonder the little pony bent beneath him. — He has left four stalwart sons.

contains a stanza, of which the following is a literal translation: —

“ I found in Connaught justice, affluence,
Milk and fish in great abundance,
Hospitality, and men of might and vigour.”

Connaught, or at least Connemara, also retains the reputation which it seemingly enjoyed in the seventh century for fish. During my wanderings in this part of Ireland, I almost lived on fish; but many dishes were the produce of my angling excursions.

My ramble over, I returned to the little inn at Leenane, where I had ordered a late dinner. When this was served, the dark-haired maid who ministered to my wants requested permission, on the part of an aged harper, that he might be allowed to play during my repast. Assent being given, an ancient man entered the room, bearing a small Irish harp, such as were common in olden days, when harpers were attached to all families of note, and the harp was common in every household. *

The music produced was for the most part plaintive and slow, and the tones particularly soft and melodious.

* “In every house,” says O'Halloran, “was one or two harps, free to all travellers, who were the more caressed the more they excelled in music.” On this circumstance Moore founded “The Legacy.”

These are indeed the chief characteristics of the Irish harp. Moore, in his exquisite Irish melody, "The Origin of the Harp," alludes to this in these lines:—

"Hence it came that this soft harp so long has been known,
To mingle love's language with sorrow's sad tone."

The genuine Irish harp was immortalised, in more than one poem, by the sweet bard of Erin; and his poetical predecessors, who sang the arts of the Emerald Isle, figure largely in Celtish history. Vicentio Gallilei, in his "Dialogo della musica antica e moderna," says that the harp, that most ancient instrument, was brought to Italy from Ireland, where, he adds, harps are excellently made, and in great numbers, the inhabitants of that island having practised on them for many ages. According to Walker, "no harp hath the sound so melting and so prolonged as the Irish harp."* Handel, who styled Carolan the Irish Orpheus, declared that he would rather have been the author of *Ellen-a-roon* than of all the music he had ever composed. "Even," says Mr. D'Alton, in his interesting and learned *Essay on the Ancient History, Learning, and Arts of Ireland*,

* "Irish Bards," p. 166.

published in 1828, "in this age, when music, like the gilded statue of Lysippus, has lost all its simplicity in foreign embellishments, he who has an ear left for the untutored songs of nature, may yet, in the *terræ incognitæ* of Erris and Connemara, catch strains whose flowing melody and thrilling pathos will strike at his heart and excite an interest, a sympathy, that flippant science and heartless execution never can effect."

The great respect paid to ancient Irish harpers in their own country is a strong proof of the honour in which they were held. A very curious passage in "Froissart's Chronicle" states that a certain knight, named Richard Seury, who had accompanied Richard the Second to Ireland, was directed by that king to observe the manners and customs of the four Irish kings who had submitted to the English prince. The result was a long report, in which, among other peculiarities which struck the knight, he observed that "Quand ces roys estoient assis à la table, et servis du premier mets, ils faisoient seoir devant eux leurs *ministriers* (harpers) et manger à leur escuelle, et boire à leurs hanaps; et me disoyent que tel estoient l'usage du pais, et qu'en toutes choses, reserve le lic, ils estoient tous communs."

This equality shocked the knight so much, that

being authorised by his king, he ordered the harpers to sit below the salt; at which, says he, the monarchs "furent tous courrouces, et regardoyent l'un l'autre et ne vouloyent manger; et disoyent qu'on leur vouloit oster leur bon usage auquel ils avoyent esté nourris."

Instruments of the size and figure of the ancient Irish harp are still sold in the Dublin music shops; but, as I am informed, there is very little demand for them. An interesting specimen of the national instrument may be seen in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy. It was made for Thomas Moore by Egan, of Dublin, and presented to him by some friends on the publication of the celebrated "Irish Melodies," and after the poet's death, was given, with a collection of Moore's books, to the Royal Irish Academy by his widow. When I saw the instrument last autumn, every string of the twenty-nine which it originally possessed was broken but one, thus rendering singularly prophetic the bard's lines in the melody, "My gentle Harp," wedded to the air of "The Coina."

"Oh, who can ask for notes of pleasure,
My drooping harp! from chords like thine?
Alas, the lark's gay morning measure
As ill would suit the swan's decline."

While harping on harps, I may mention that the ancient Irish harp had more than twenty-nine strings. My friend, Mr. Edward Clibborn, the learned Curator of the Royal Irish Academy, informs me that he possesses the brass or bronze mountings of a harp, found on the estate of a relation of his in Ireland, with thirty-six pins for strings attached. "The same number," he observes, "are to be seen on the harp called Brian Boroihme's, which, by the way, was not made till he was dead about 400 years at the least. This harp in my hands has, unfortunately for those antiquaries who would put every thing found in Ireland, which is not evidently modern, at least 1000 years before our day, a very respectable HHS upon it. These letters probably connect the instrument with the time of Henry VIII. It has also a beautiful pattern upon it." The love for itinerant minstrels and ballads, particularly the "heart home lays" of their venerated bards, is strong amongst the Irish. Probably no people are more influenced by poetical compositions than the Celts.

"To the present day," says Mr. Hardiman, "the rural Irish dread nothing so much as the satirical severity of their bards. Many a man who would kindle into rage at the sight of an armed foe will be found to tremble at the thought of offending a

rhymer. One of the latter I have seen, his name was *Brenan*, and though he might not be called a 'fellow of infinite jest,' yet he was a ready versifier in his native tongue, and had wit enough to keep two large districts in the west of Ireland for many years amused by his rural songs, and in dread of his broad local satire. He bore some faint resemblance to the ancient bards. He knew no settled residence. Whatever house he chose to stop at, and he seldom selected the poorest, became his home during the time of his stay. Thus he lived to a good old age, feared for his satirical powers, but respected for his virtues."*

From Leenane I journeyed to Maam, at the head of Lough Corrib. Here I remained for a couple of days, one of which I devoted to angling in the lake for large trout. But although these are numerous I was not fortunate. The boatmen, as a matter of course, attributed my bad luck to unpropitious weather, which may be described by Burns' line—

"Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms."

But I believe the true cause of my indifferent success was want of proper trolling tackle; for three gentlemen, who landed opposite the inn at Maam in the

* "Irish Minstrelsy," vol. ii. p. 342.

evening, captured several extremely large trout, by trolling with strong tackle, in the course of the day, one of which weighed eighteen pounds.

Though disappointed in making personal acquaintance with one of these lusty fellows, I had some success in the Beal-na-brack (the river of the trout's mouth), which falls into the north-west extremity of Lough Corrib. In about four hours I caught a dainty dish of trout, which I very philosophically argued were much more delicate than their large brethren. The Beal-na-brack is a pleasant, prattling, lively trout-stream, on the banks of which you may, if blessed with the

“Mens sana in corpore sano,”

spend a very agreeable day.

Freedom from weeds is a great charm of the Conne-mara rivers, which you will duly appreciate if you have not acquired the art of dropping a fly between weeds where a trout is feeding, some fifteen yards from you. Weedy rivers are frequently favourable for the propagation and preservation of trout, but the misfortune is that in such streams you generally find more weeds than water, particularly since that terrible plant the *anacharis alsinastrum*, or Canadian waterweed, has invaded our English rivers.

The moorland around Maam is particularly rich in wild flowers and shrubs peculiar to marshy ground. The pale bog violet, yellow asphodel, bog bean, myrtle, and the fly-trap, besides many species of graceful grasses, are common. These, interwoven, form the well known bog tufts, by means of which an expert bog-trotter is enabled to cross the wettest swamps, an art only acquired after making knee-deep acquaintance with the intervening black sloughs.

Though you may not be a Waltonian, you should nevertheless pause for a day at the snug little inn at Maam, built by Mr. Nimmo, for his residence when he was laying out the roads in Connemara. If the weather be propitious, spend the morning in rambling over the shoulders of the mountains overhanging the inn, and hire a boat in the afternoon to convey you to the Hen's Castle, a picturesque ruin on a tiny islet near the head waters of Lough Corrib.

You will probably be told a strange story by your boatman respecting this ruin. Traditional history runs that it was one of the strong-holds of Grace-o'-Maley, better known by the name of Grana-Uaile, who rendered her name famous by her depredations and desperate and successful hostility against the English in the middle of the sixteenth century. The castle on Lough Corrib was held for her by an

O'Flaherty, who acquired the *sobriquet* of Na Cullagh, or the Cock, for his love of fighting with the Joyces. After many battles he was surprised in the neighbouring mountains and slain, by that Sept who imagined that the castle would now easily fall into their hands. But Na Cullagh's wife was found as hard to vanquish in the fortress as the Cock, and she defended it so well and long, that it became known by the name of the Hen's Castle, or Kuishlane-na-Kirca, which it retains to this day.

From Maam I went to Westport, starting early in the morning in order to have sufficient time in the afternoon to ascend Croagh Patrick. I stopped the car at the small village of Morisk at the foot of the mountain, and was on the point of inquiring for a guide, when my driver volunteered his services in that capacity. He had often ascended the holy mountain, and "shure he knew every foot of it." Having no reason to doubt his sincerity, I accepted his services, and we set out for the Reek, the ascent of which commences near the village. The climb to the true and loftiest summit is by a species of narrow gorge called the *Kessaun Cruagh*, or the footway of the Reek, and resembles the worn channel of a mountain torrent. But here the abrading process is the annual pilgrimage of thousands of feet which climb Croagh Patrick

by this route. Toilsome and difficult it assuredly is, but not more so than is necessary to make the pilgrimage to the summit properly appreciated; for the believing pilgrim who reaches the top, considers that he has performed a devout deed, entitling him to the favourable consideration of St. Patrick, whose name is associated with this mountain. And no wonder, if a tithe only of the miracles which are said to have been performed by the saint on it be veracious. That his saintship did abide amid the fastnesses of Croagh Patrick for forty days and forty nights, spending the time in devotional exercise and fasting, is asserted by Matthew of Westminster, Probus, and other ancient writers. And all histories of his life relate that after this severe discipline his fame and sanctity increased greatly; for, wherever he went, "Christianity beamed and churches sprang up around him."

But the great result of the saint's mortification in Paddy's eyes—the churches being gone—was the power that he acquired of banishing the serpents for ever and ever from old Ireland—power so felt and obeyed by the cursed race, that at each ring of the saint's bell, countless thousands of ophidians, big and little, went rolling down the precipice in convoluted confusion, mixed with toads and all manner of noisome things, and never ceased falling until they were

precipitated into the sea. 'Tis an old myth, but you will do well to cast no ridicule on it here, for your Roman Catholic guide is serious in his belief of the legend. Should you express scepticism, he will ask you, "Where are the sarpints, thin? for shure I hear there's a power of them in England, and the divil a one in Ireland:"—a fact, by the way more curious than easy of explanation, for even learned ophiologists are puzzled to account for the circumstance.

But should you persist in unbelief, you will be told that you may see the veritable saint's bell near Cong, which is yet endowed with such power, that any person laying his hand upon it would turn black in the face if he spoke aught but "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Why do not our bankruptcy and criminal courts endeavour to obtain this talisman?

But we are on the summit of the holy mountain. Let us look around. Everywhere near us, rude uncarved stones—some gathered into heaps, others forming walls and altars. All these structures have their uses. They are the holy stations, visited by thousands of peasants, who toil slowly and painfully on bare knees from altar to altar, saying Paters, Aves, and Creeds. Irish Molochism here indeed rules with terrible sway. You will be shown stones

worn smooth by soft but superstitious flesh. Hear what an eye-witness of these doings says:—"After the pilgrims have done their rounds at the lower stations they proceed to the top of the peak, which is about 900 yards; and in this ascent you might as well walk on a pavement of oyster-shells with their sharp edges up: and so enthusiastic are they in their devotions that you never hear them complain. When they reach the top, every pilgrim who can afford it takes another glass, and then proceeds to prayer. On a flag on the top is the sign, as tradition says, of St. Patrick's knees; but it appears more like a hole scooped out by a mason. However, here lies the rub, to see who will have the honour of kneeling in the fancied knee-print of the saint. Here may be seen a species of diabolical delusion. On their bare knees they say seven Paters, seven Aves, and a Creed, in the place where it is supposed the saint performed his morning devotions. They proceed from thence on their knees to the altar, which is a rude heap of stones about twenty yards distance from the place where they first kneel. This altar stands at the end of a small hut, about twenty feet long and ten or eleven broad. To this they creep on, their bare knees bleeding as they proceed; every knee-print is marked with blood. When they reach

the altar, by paying a penny to the clerk they get leave to kiss the precious furniture of the altar, which consists of a small wooden crucifix and a piece of sheet-iron folded together. These, the crafty clerk tells the poor creatures, are the relics of St. Patrick. When done at the altar, they proceed to the second principal station, which is about twenty yards' distance from the altar; say the same number of prayers; then, as at the first, they begin to go round the circular space of the long station, which is four hundred yards in circumference. This they go round fifteen times, each time saying a Pater, an Ave, and a Creed. Any persons who wish to save themselves the whole number of rounds, or who have committed more sin than an ordinary station can account for, go the whole round on their bare knees. I have seen four persons go round in this manner, and three of them women; and although at every step fresh streams of blood gushed out of their lacerated knees, not one word of murmuring escaped their lips. There is another station on the north side called Patrick's bed. All the devotees do not go there—none but those that are barren: and the abominable practices committed there ought to make human nature in its most degraded state blush. This station course is forty yards in circumference. Round

this they go seven times; then enter the bed, turn round seven times, take up some small pebbles, and bring them home in order to prevent barrenness, and to banish rats and mice. The greater part of those who go through this station stop upon the hill all night, that they may sleep in the bed.*

This frightful discipline, as may be imagined, could not generally be endured without great mental excitement. The Rev. James Page and others declare that the quantity of whiskey drunk during these penance pilgrimages is astounding; so much, indeed, as to have given rise to the witty remark, that if St. Patrick drove down devils from the mountain in the form of poisonous reptiles, he raised spirits to its lofty heights. But all the spiritual benefits derivable from a pilgrimage to the summit of Croagh Patrick may be enjoyed without any personal inconvenience. For a consideration you may obtain a peasant to perform *Dhurrus* for you. This is doing penance by proxy, a pleasant and easy manner of compounding for sins, conceived by many to be fully as efficacious as if the sinner himself were to perform all the painful acts of penance.

The custom of attaching shreds of garments to

* "Ireland: its Evils traced to their Source," by the Rev. James Page.

holy places as votive offerings is observed on Croagh Patrick. You will see the so-called altars gay with many-coloured rags fluttering in the wind which sweeps from the broad Atlantic. It was very refreshing, after contemplating the altars of superstition, to look beyond them over the mountain-tops, fathom the distant purple glens, scan vast Clew Bay with its many isles immediately beneath, and ranging westward, catch the restless waves which fret the cliffs of the Isle of Clare. Hill and valley, plain and water, are all spread map-like beneath you; for Croagh Patrick is a giant among the mountains of Mayo, towering to the elevation of 2510 feet, according to the Ordnance Survey. Should you ascend it when the sun is dipping westward, you will have an excellent opportunity of noting the form of the mountain by seeing a beautifully-defined cone on the breast of Slieve Mahanagh, to the east of the holy mountain. I was quite startled by the geometrical precision of the penumbra of the gigantic quartz cone; for of this substance is Croagh Patrick composed. The geological features of the view from Croagh Patrick are very striking. The primary and secondary formations seem to struggle for pre-eminence. Thus while the bed or bottom of Clew Bay consists of floetz limestone, apparent by the

numerous limestone islands, which dot its waters, lofty promontories of primary rock appear on each side. Observe, too, the remarkable natural breakwater which stretches across Clew Bay from Newport to Croagh Patrick. Mr. Bald, in his report to the Board of Public Works in Ireland, says of this vast rampart:—"The bar which forms the harbour is a natural breakwater of a mile and a half in length, on which is situated the Isles of Doreinch Mon and Doreinch Beg. This natural breakwater slopes seaward, in some places one in thirty; but inside, facing the harbour, its natural slope is one to one. It is formed of boulders. This breakwater is, perhaps, one of the most remarkable hydraulic works that exists in Europe, and is well worthy the attentive study of professional men. Its mass is greater than that of the breakwater at Plymouth, or that of Cherbourg in France. To form such a work would cost more than two millions of money." The entire panorama from Croagh Patrick landward and seaward is most striking; and if fortunate in the weather, the ascent of the holy Reek will remain among the most cherished mountain memories of a tour in Ireland.

The evening fell rapidly as we drove round Clew Bay to Westport, where the more than usually comfortable accommodation of Robinson's excellent hotel

gave me practical evidence of the march of improvement in Mayo, and that the days are over, let us hope never to return, when the Connaught boys, according to Arthur Young, were in the habit of "allowing their dunghills to accumulate till they became such a nuisance, that they moved their cabins in order to get away from them."

CHAP. XXIII.

Westport. — Ramble through the Town. — Money Difficulties. — Drive to Newport. — Adventure with a drunken Farmer. — Challenged to fight. — Connaught Boys. — Proceed to Achill. — A wild Drive. — Gubacorry. — Cross Achill Strait. — The Bull's Mouth. — Arrive at the Protestant Settlement. — Dugort. — Former State of the Peasantry. — Terrible Superstition. — Improved Cultivation. — Cost of reclaiming Moor Land. — Excursion to the West of the Island. — Slievemore Eagles. — Abundance of Foxes. — Their great cunning. — How a Fox ran away from Death. — Gigantic Heather. — Flocks of Sea-Birds. — A Play of Gulls. — The Herring Gull. — Ascend Croghan Mountain. — A steep Climb. — Tremendous Precipices. — Inniskea. — Duvillaun. — Black Sod Bay. — Innisgloria. — Curious Belief with respect to this Island. — Cromlechs on Slievemore. — Return to Dugort.

NIGHT is a great deceiver. Charmed by the superior nature of my sleeping quarters, I fancied, having no ocular proof to the contrary, that the hotel was a type of the town. Alas! no; for although Westport is called, and I believe enjoys the reputation of being one of the cleanest towns in Ireland, I thought it dirty. Clean it assuredly ought to be, for a clear full stream runs through the town, and the principal

streets are steep, and slope down to the river. There was soap enough too in the town at the time of my visit to cleanse it from all impurities. Small tables covered with lumps of this article and salt — the first sold by weight, the latter by measure — were opposite almost every door. It seemed as if all Westport dealt in these commodities — soap and salt, nothing else. An ante-breakfast ramble revealed a somewhat better state of things in the high town; but, after all, the glories of Westport centre in the hotel. On regaining my quarters, I found a fashionably dressed gentleman in fierce argument with a pert driver, who, greatly to the gentleman's surprise and indignation, declined receiving a sovereign in payment of his services. Not that he conceived twenty shillings insufficient, but he took objection to the sovereign itself, alleging that it was valueless in Connamara. In vain did the Londoner, as the gentleman turned out to be, assure him that the coin was good gold, and that he had obtained it with others from his bankers just before he left London. "Well, may be, yer honour, 'tis good goold, but I'd rather have a bit of paper;" so to satisfy the driver's scruples, I gave the gentleman a one pound note for his sovereign, and advised him to exchange his gold for Irish bank-notes as soon as he could. In many parts

of Connaught, as also in the west of Kerry and Clare, you will find great difficulty in persuading the people to take your sovereigns. Those bearing the dragon are refused, or only taken at a discount.

After breakfast, I drove on the mail car to Newport; distance eight miles, fare ninepence. You may travel by Bianconi cheaper, but it is worth a penny or two more to travel with H. M. mails. On this occasion, however, my choice was not fortunate, as I was well-nigh falling into the hands of angry Connaught boys, who would doubtless, had they had an opportunity, have made me feel the weight of Irish shillelaghs. A lady and myself occupied one side of the car, on the other were seated two passengers, the luggage being as usual piled between us. All went well for a couple of miles, when our driver stopped to take up a drunken fellow who, judging by his dress, seemed to belong to the class of small farmers. With considerable difficulty he succeeded in scrambling on the car between the two passengers behind me, and we then continued our journey. We had not, however, proceeded far before we were made painfully aware that we had a troublesome neighbour. For being totally unable to retain his balance, he swayed to and fro so violently as to impel a particularly sharp-edged trunk with great violence

against the back of the lady next to me, so as nearly to unseat her. And no sooner was the article restored to its proper resting-place than it was shot, bolt-fashion, out again. This back-bruising operation having been repeated several times, although strongly remonstrated against by me, I bade the driver stop. Having obeyed my directions, I told him that neither the lady nor myself would proceed with the drunken fellow, and desired that he should be left behind. No sooner were these words uttered than the whiskey-full farmer jumped down from his seat with surprising alacrity, and rushing round to me exclaimed: "What's that yez said? Is it drunk I am? Drunk, by J——, I'll lit yez know I'm not drunk—the divil." Here he seized his voluminous coat tails with his left hand (an invariable prefatory act with the Celt when he means mischief), and taking a convenient grasp of his shillelagh measured me for a blow; but the whiskey befriended me, for when he raised his arm he staggered and fell. "Drive on," I exclaimed, and although our driver was evidently not disposed to leave the fellow behind, I so strongly insisted on his proceeding without him, declaring that I would inform his employer of his conduct in carrying a drunkard, that he complied. But we had not advanced many yards

when my enemy was up and close to us, foaming with rage. The accusation of being intoxicated maddened him. With terrible imprecations he called on me to fight him, with pistols—swords—shillelaghs—anything so that I would give him an opportunity of killing me by fair means: if not he and “the boys” would, by all the blessed saints in heaven, murder me somehow or another. I made no reply, hoping that we should soon leave him behind: and so we did, and I flattered myself that the little adventure was over, when after driving about a couple of hundred yards we met a farmer on horseback. Looking back, I confess I was a little astonished, and somewhat disconcerted, at seeing the equestrian, after a parley with the drunken farmer, dismount, and endeavour to assist my enemy into the saddle. The attempts at mounting were ludicrously abortive, reminding one of the clowns at Astley’s, who are particularly clever in showing the possibility of riding on every part of a horse but that where the saddle is placed. As long as we could discern the fellow, he made the most desperate efforts to climb on his friend’s steed—now he had gained leg-hold of the saddle, but only to come down with a run. Undaunted by repeated failures, he still laboured to mount and ride in hot haste after me,

and although success at length crowned his efforts to mount—for the last we saw of him was rolling in the saddle—he failed to overtake us, and we arrived at Newport without his companionship. But though fortunately relieved from his society, my fellow travellers did not think it at all safe for me to venture out alone in the streets of Newport; and, to say the truth, the character I heard of the man rendered it not improbable that he would collect a few of the “boys” he had darkly hinted at, and take summary vengeance on me, should I still refuse to give him honourable satisfaction; for I had evidently picked a quarrel with a descendant of those Galway and Mayo Fire-eaters who enjoyed such *sobriquets* as *Blue-blaze Devil Bob*, *Nineteen Duel Dick*, *Hole-drilling Blake*, *Hair-trigger Pat*, *Feather-spring Ned*, &c. Accordingly, conceiving that this was a very fitting occasion to exercise the old adage respecting discretion and valour, I acted on the advice I had received, particularly as it had been strongly endorsed by the landlord and car-driver, and remained in the hotel during the evening, where I experienced no molestation.

The following morning I started for Achill, on a one-horse stage car, driven by a very original character, who, having been lately promoted to the

dignity of carrying H. M. mail-bags to the Achill colony, had evidently a very exalted idea of the importance of his new office. This was apparent by the conspicuous manner in which he carried the bags, which were strapped round his waist. An old battered brass horn hung from his shoulder, on which he was perpetually blowing fiercely discordant blasts.

A wild drive is that from Newport to Achill. Along the sea marge, north of Clew Bay, where the bountiful supplies of wrack render cultivation easy and profitable, you will find a scanty population; but inland, on the great mountain slopes, there is absolutely nothing but bog, bog, bog. Clew Bay, however, to the south, with its varied isles, and the grand mountain ranges of Claggan, Bengorm (1912 feet), Slieve Alp, and Cuscamacurrough (2412 feet), with their precipitous sides, dark gorges, and cloud-capped summits, more than atone for the monotony of this great brown vegetable vesture which clothes so large a portion of Mayo; there being, according to official returns, 425,124 acres of bog out of a total acreage of 1,355,048.

We arrived at Gubacorry, on the strait separating the main land of Ennis from Achill, at twelve o'clock, and immediately embarked in a rough but weather-proof ferry-boat for the island. Happily the sea was in

a most tranquil mood; for though the distance across the strait is only half a mile, yet when the wind blows hard from the north-west a nasty sea tumbles through the "Bull's Mouth," a name suggestive of roaring winds and foaming billows. On landing we resumed our journey, and in an hour and a half arrived at the village of Dugort, about nine miles from the ferry, famous as being the spot where Protestantism set up the flag of religious liberty, under circumstances of very great difficulty, and where it still waves. The history of the Achill colony has been often written, and therefore there is no necessity to repeat it here; but this I must say, that having had an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the founders of that colony, — Mr. Nangle, Mr. Low, Dr. Adams, and others who have taken part in the heavy labour attending its establishment, — and having heard from them what they have done and suffered, I feel persuaded that full justice has not been accorded to those excellent men. With great sincerity are the words which St. Paul applied to himself applicable to them; for assuredly "in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils by their own countrymen, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, and in watchings often," was the Achill Protestant colony established.

At first, when the settlement was young and the

visitors few, they were received and entertained by the clergyman or Dr. Adams; but in 1844, when prosperity had so smiled upon the mission that the income of the colony during that year amounted to 1545*l.*, a small inn was built, where tourists find comfortable accommodation, and have the satisfaction of knowing that all profits arising from their sojourn benefit the colony.

I spent a day examining the various departments connected with the establishment, which are extremely interesting, and indicate a high state of civilisation. For it must be borne in mind that the founders of the Achill settlement had literally to combat the prejudices and superstitions of people scarcely better than heathens. They found some of the peasantry living in darkness, worshipping images. This is a grave assertion, but here is my authority:—

“ The peasants of Inniskea (an island near Achill) have a wooden idol there, left by a holy priest, who said that as long as it was preserved with reverence no loss of life by shipwreck would happen to any of the islanders, who always worshipped the idol before venturing to sea. This idol was once stolen by smugglers, who supposed that they carried their palladium while they kept this wooden saint on board; but from the day they stole it until it was

returned, which, with all repenting speed, they hastened to do, they were persecuted by a revenue cruizer, and vexed by storms, and driven up and down on the ocean; for how could they have luck when they had no grace, and stole from the Inniskeans their teraphim, their little god?"*

Besides this terrible superstition, little cultivation, and that of the very worst kind, was to be seen; and now, by dint of strenuous exertions, they have turned a wilderness into a comparative land of plenty. The crops I saw growing on reclaimed land were remarkably fine. Dr. Adams told me that he fed two horses on carrots during the winter months; the cost of producing which was only ten shillings. Here is a copy of the estimate which was given to me of the expenses of improving an Irish acre of moor land:—

First year, draining, trenching, and sowing with potatoes:—

	£	s.	d.
Paring and burning	1	5	0
Digging and spreading ashes	1	0	0
Seed 180 stone, at 2¼d. per stone	1	13	9

* "A Tour in Connaught," by the Rev. C. Otway. The author states that the above was related to him by a party who had been to Inniskea.

	£	s.	d.
Cutting and planting	0	7	0
Trenching	0	15	0
Digging the potatoes	1	10	0
Picking ditto	0	3	0
Lime	1	13	4
Draining	4	0	0
First year, total expense	12	7	1
Produce, 12 barrels (of 96 stone) at 18s.	10	16	0
Loss first year	1	11	1

Second year, potatoes again:—

Expense	5	8	4
Produce	16	4	0
Profit	10	15	8

Third year, oats:—

Expense	2	4	0
Produce	6	0	0
Profit	3	16	0

The rent first year, 5s.; after, £1.

At this rate, if only a very small proportion of the area of Achill, estimated at 36,037 acres, is reclaimable, a considerable profit would be realised.

My second day at Achill was spent amidst the mountains. Accompanied by one of the settlement schoolmasters, I started at seven o'clock in the morning, taking care, as you must if intent on a long

exploration on the Achill mountains, to breakfast well before I left the colony.

Our route lay up the sea-side of Slievemore, a picturesque mountain rising over Dugort to the height of 2204 feet. The crags and glens of Slievemore are favourite resorts of eagles and foxes. The former, which abound in Achill (the Irish for eagle), are strong and daring; frequently, as my intelligent guide assured me, swooping down on the colony, and carrying off quacking ducklings and other fowl.

The foxes, too, steal furtively from their holes on propitious nights, and constantly surprise roosting hens. One sly Reynard, which had carried off many a napping bird, was watched, and observed to come generally at the same hour and by the same path. One evening he captured a plump goose which a colonist intended for some particular festive occasion. Vexed at the loss of his bird, he determined on revenge, and accordingly watched the fox with murderous intent; but, strange to say, the wily beast was never seen again. The craftiness, or "cuteness," as Paddy calls it, of the Achill foxes was a subject of great wonder to my companion, who assured me he had more than once seen them simulate death when placed under circumstances where escape seemed impossible. This remarkable

instinct, which is not however confined to foxes, is well illustrated by the following pleasant anecdote related by Mr. Mudie, of how a fox

“Ran away from death by dying.”

A clergyman, inhabiting a wild district in the highlands, was very fond of society, and very hospitable. Accordingly he endeavoured to provide for his numerous guests all the good things which his glebe land, on field or on hill, could afford.

A well-stocked poultry-yard is an essential requisite in such cases ; but here foxes were so numerous, and their covers so near, that a poultry-yard was out of the question, and it was sometimes necessary to employ boys to “hoo, hoo” the fox, even after the parson’s pullets were turned out to range the fields. A poultry-house was thus requisite, and the reverend gentleman prided himself not a little in having constructed one which was completely fox-proof ; and for a long time it had been impregnable to Reynard, so that the doctor’s pullets and eggs were known far and wide for their excellence, their abundance, and the liberality with which they were given to every one who courted the very agreeable society of their owner. A friend of ours had spent the night in the clergyman’s hospitable abode ; and while fresh

salmon from the Beauly, dressed in very delicious steaks, formed one article for the breakfast-table, new-laid eggs from the stronghold of the hens were, of course, to form another.

Christine, the purveyor in these cases, took the key, and marched off, basket in hand, to bring the supply; but when she opened the door a scene of the most direful havoc presented itself. Every perch and nest-hole was bedabbled with blood; dead hens lay in dozens on the floor; and in the middle was a full-sized fox stretched out at full length, and apparently a sharer in the common mortality. The maid never doubted the death of the fox, but attributed it to a different cause, namely, that he had so gorged himself on the poultry that he had burst. Here were three causes to rouse the mingled wrath and contempt of Christine. The fox had, by some means or other, shown that the place was not impregnable. There had been terrible havoc among the hens, and the fox had been gluttonous even to the death. She pronounced his funeral oration in certain most expressive Gallic phrases, which we shall not quote, and will not translate; and then, without further ceremony, gave him a resting-place, which, she said, was worse than a dog's burial. She took him by the tail, and swung him with all her might into the receptacle

in which were accumulated the requisites for garden comfort.

The fox fell safely, and rose again speedily; and, like Curl the bookseller in the *Dunciad*, he "scoured and stunk along" until he gained the cover of the woods, leaving Christine in utter consternation, and the minister minus both his pullets, and the glory of his impregnable hen-house.

The entrance to this place was by a stone some feet from the ground, with a little hole over it; and by this the fox must have gained admission. He had killed every fowl that he could reach; and he must have slain them so silently and so suddenly, that no noise or complaint on the part of any one had in the least alarmed the others. This is the most striking peculiarity of the fox on his predatory excursions, and is strongly illustrated by this story. There were perches so elevated that no fox could reach them; and as the pullets were in the habit of taking to them in other cases of alarm, of course they would have done so on the invasion of the fox if his deeds of slaughter had been attended with any noise.

The numerous *bonne-bouches* in the shape of domestic fowl, which, with few exceptions, are not confined in poultry-houses, or even poultry-yards, by the Achill colonists, doubtless prove irresistible

attractions to the island foxes, which had, as I was assured, with great good sense migrated from the more barren fastnesses of the Croghan and other mountains, to within easy distance of the settlement.

As we had ambitious projects of ascending Croghan, the highest mountain in Achill, we contented ourselves by passing over the shoulder of Slievemore. The cliffs of this picturesque mountain, though inferior in height to those at the back of the island, are remarkably fine. A valuable bed of limestone has been discovered at their base, which will be of great use to Achill for building purposes.

Nowhere in Ireland will you see more gigantic heather than that which robes the sides of Slievemore. The *Erica Dabeoci* flourishes luxuriantly, and may be easily detected by its large light pink bells. It is very remarkable that this elegant *Erica*, which is indigenous to the South of Europe, and seems to be particularly partial to the West Pyrenees, should be found in so remote a part of Ireland as Achill. This is another proof of the extreme mildness of this Atlantic-washed island; not, however, confined to the western portion, for in the county of Wicklow myrtles attain the height of thirty feet, and verbenas, and even olive-trees, live unprotected in gardens throughout the winter.

Looking seaward, we saw vast flocks of cormorants and gulls; the latter crowded together, like isles of snow on the sea, while others wheeled in graceful circles over them. Such a congregation is called "a play of gulls," but what is sport to them is death to the fish, for these gull parties are a sure indication of the presence of fish. The herring, or silvery gull (*Larus argentatus*), is a great lover of shell and other fish, and is, moreover, a very good angler. Mr. Thompson relates that one of these birds has been seen to attack a young codfish; and, on another occasion, to strike at and cut, as if with a knife, a large sea-trout taken in a net. Captured mullet are not unfrequently found much injured, and sometimes rendered unsaleable by pieces being eaten out of them by herring gulls. These birds abound round Achill. You will be sure to see serried ranks of them perched on narrow ledges over dizzy precipices, from whence, when disturbed, they go screaming off to sea. Indeed, the ocean seems to be the favourite resting-place of the herring gull. O'Flaherty in his description of West Connaught says:—"Here are gulls which never fly but over the sea, and therefore are eaten on fasting days; to catch which people go with ropes tied about them into the caves of cliffs by night, and, with a candle light, kill abundance of

them." Seals are also common among the rocks fringing the coast; my companion's practised eye drew my attention more than once to these animals basking on rocks at the base of the cliffs.

We now braced our nerves for the great work of the day — the ascent of Croghan — or the saddle mountain which forms the great western buttress of Achill. This grand headland, which you will be told is 3000 feet high, has been dwarfed by the matter-of-fact Ordnance Engineers to 2392 feet; but its precipitous nature will cause you to regard it with becoming respect, that is, if you scale Croghan by the most picturesque path, which is steep; but if you are not in climbing order, you can attain the top more easily by a circuitous route. We chose the most arduous path, and toiling steadily, reached the summit in about an hour and a half.

Conceive a huge rampart, 1000 feet high, sloping inland, but dipping seaward precipitously, so precipitously that your head reels as you look down the great rock face, at the base of which the Atlantic eternally heaves and dashes, wreathing the rocks with foam. Clouds, impelled by a strong west wind, came surging over and round us, now blotting out the ocean, and now revealing the dark blue waters as they swept past. These aerial forms were full of

mysterious meanings, for no great stretch of imagination was required to see, while gazing at them —

“Rocks, torrents, gulfs, and shapes of giant size,
And glittering cliffs on cliffs, and fiery ramparts rise.”

Sitting on the edge of the precipice, our feet dangling over the abyss, we scanned the mighty panorama. Before us, the boundless ocean, to the north Black-sod-bay, with the rocky isles of Inniskea and Duvillaun; and to the south, the islands of Clare, Innisturk, Innisbofin, and Innishark, advanced guards of the Connemara headlands. Eastward, mountain peaks in endless confusion. My companion, who had a keen and far-seeing eye, pointed out the island of Innisgloria, a dusky spot in the Atlantic north of Achill, and west of Mullet. Assisted by my telescope, I saw this island, which is only remarkable on account of its being regarded with very great veneration by the inhabitants of Mayo. The belief is pretty generally entertained by the Roman Catholic peasantry that bodies buried on the island see no corruption, and undergo no change beyond a growth of the hair and nails. This superstition leads many who dread returning to dust to exact a vow from their relatives that they will lay them in the holy ground of Innisgloria; but as this island is separated

*

from the main land by storm-swept waters, it not unfrequently happens that, from the impossibility of reaching the island, dead bodies have already obeyed the inviolable law of mortality before they can even have a chance of becoming candidates for incorruptibility. This strange belief is very ancient. An old Latin poem has these lines:—

“Cernere Innisgloria est Pelago, quod prospicit Irras,
Insula avos, atavos solo post fata sepultos,
Effigies servare suas vegetisque vigere,
Unguibus atque comis, hominum caro nulla putrescit.”

While musing on the sublime scenery, two magnificent sea eagles (*Falco ossifragus*) swept past,—one so near us that we heard the rustle of its plumes, and saw its restless eye. You may see the cliffs, where they build inaccessible eyries, overhanging the Atlantic. This bird apparently possesses the instinct of nidifying in places almost, if not quite, unapproachable by man.

We were now obliged to retrace our steps; but after descending Croghan, we varied our route home by returning along the south side of Slievemore. We made a slight detour to visit a cromlech on the slope of this mountain. Tradition asserts that many monuments of this nature formerly existed on Slievemore, and that they were destroyed by the peasants.

The Achillians have a legend that these cromlechs were erected by the Danes; but in the absence of any trustworthy evidence to this effect, you may speculate as you please on their origin. This is certain, that a "people who walked in darkness" have left many signs of their existence along the wild west of Ireland; and the zealous archæologist will be often tempted to turn aside to visit monuments which have, and will doubtless continue to baffle all attempts to satisfactorily account for their existence.

We now walked rapidly, for night was falling fast, and the cheerful lights were shining through the windows of the snug cottages of Dugort when we came within sight of the settlement.

THE END.

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