

# Rambles in Ireland



THE HURLEY PLAYER

John D. Mott

# Robert Lynd



Irene Dwen Andrews

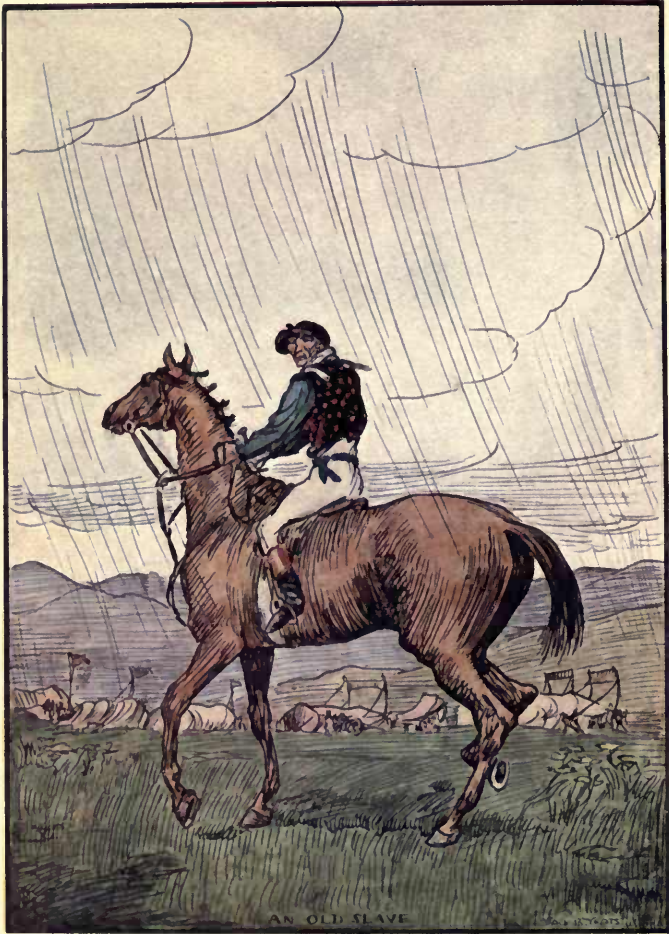
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RAMBLES IN IRELAND







AN OLD SLAVE.

*Drawn and coloured by Jack B. Yeats.*



# RAMBLES IN IRELAND

BY

ROBERT LYND

AUTHOR OF

"HOME LIFE IN IRELAND" "IRISH AND ENGLISH"

WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR  
BY JACK B. YEATS  
AND TWENTY-FIVE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

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TO  
ANNIE LYND

2060822



## PREFATORY NOTE



I HAVE to thank Mr. J. B. Atkins as author, and Mr. John Murray as publisher, for permission to quote the ghost story, near the beginning of Chapter IV., from the admirable "Life of Sir William Howard Russell." I am exceedingly grateful, too, to Mr. Jack B. Yeats for permission to make use of some of his illustrations of "Life in the West of Ireland," and to Mr. Paul Henry for allowing me to reproduce his "Old Age Pensioner."

R. L.

*August 1912.*

ERRATA

The following are the errors which have been discovered in the proof of the above-named work, and which have been corrected in the present edition. The errors are given in the order in which they occur in the text, and are accompanied by the corrections which have been made. The errors are given in the order in which they occur in the text, and are accompanied by the corrections which have been made.

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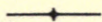
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# RAMBLES IN IRELAND



## CHAPTER I

### GALWAY OF THE RACES

GALWAY is a grey city set among abounding waters. It gives the impression, at any rate, of a stony permanence that refuses to be destroyed though the tides of sea and river swirl about it and, as you cross the outer bridge, seem to be rushing through its foundations and gushing out of its walls. Historians of the old-fashioned sort tell you that Galway is not an Irish city. It is true enough that it first appears in the records after the Normans had come to it with their energetic genius for towns and systems. But nothing remains of the Normans now save dust and stones. It was in vain that they wrote up on the western gate of this medieval fortress of theirs the fantastic prayer: "From the fury of the O'Flaherties, good Lord, deliver us." The

O'Flaherties, or what the O'Flaherties stand for, are its supreme distinction now.

I do not mean that the Irish have made Galway a positive expression of their genius, an imaginative and symbolic city. Fortune has seen to it that that was impossible. But I do mean to say that amid the solid ruins of this city, amid this scene of abandoned greatness, the Irish have found their most interesting encampment on a large scale. Galway is Irish in a sense in which Dublin and Belfast and Cork and Derry are not Irish but cosmopolitan. Its people, their speech, their dress, their swarthy complexions, their black hair, their eyes like blue flames, excite the imagination with curious surmises. Galway city—technically, it is only Galway town—is to the discoverer of Ireland something like what Chapman's *Homer* was to Keats. It is a clue, a provocation, an enticement.

Not that it has preserved itself inviolate from respectability and shoddy and the invasions of twentieth-century commonplaceness. There are plenty of dull shops in it, besides the older houses with the towering grey walls, severe in their ruins. The main street through which the creeping tram winds is, in spite of an occasional piece of surviving majesty, unimpressive enough. And I am sure that besides dull shops and dull streets Galway has its share of dull people. One hears a good deal of the petty social snobbishness that

divides the genteeler part of the inhabitants into rival clubs in which, as a local man put it to me, "twopence looks down on three-halfpence," after the manner of the civilised.

Many travellers, I am afraid, are disappointed in Galway when they arrive and find it so full of houses one might see anywhere and people one might see anywhere. It does not meet one with the open-bosomed generosity that one had learned to expect from descriptions of it as an historic Spanish city with streets of courtly marble houses. It is a "wild, fierce, and most original town," said Thackeray; but, when you visit it, you find that it is wild, fierce, and original only in pieces, and those not the most immediately obvious pieces, and you have at first a feeling of disenchantment. You look round you again, eager to see those wonderful-looking people of whom Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall wrote: "The dark features and coal-black hair of the people indicate their Spanish descent; and they are, for the most part, so finely formed, so naturally graceful, that almost every peasant girl might serve as a model for a sculptor." Ah, well; you turn your eyes to the wrinkled old woman who sits huddled in her shawl on the pavement by her basket of dulse and halfpenny oranges, and you see that she has very little hair of any sort at all, and that her figure is as graceful as the gnarled body of a tree. And the next woman you meet

is a barefoot pedlar who tries to sell you cockles or, in default of that, to joke a beggar's penny out of you, and you notice that the skin of her face is inflamed, that she breathes spirits, and that her teeth are yellow. The next moment, a young woman passes you, and she is so respectable that her clothes seem like a uniform: if she has coal-black hair, there is no beauty in it, for she has made herself as lifeless, as empty of glow, as a wooden figure. And so, though pretty women are numerous here above most towns, you go from depth to deeper depth of disappointment. Such is the penalty of living in an age of realism. If one woman in a thousand is beautiful, if one street in a city channels some tide of loveliness and colour, philosophers learn to be grateful and to say that the world is good.

When last I arrived in Galway it was the day after a bank holiday and the day before the races. Our reception at the railway station was certainly such as was likely to give strangers the impression that they had arrived at a "wild, fierce, and most original town." It was one of those scenes of indiscipline which are common in a country where the people are not allowed to make law and order for themselves, and therefore seem to look on law and order as a foreign and superfluous thing. We got out of the train into a crowd where men were pushing hither and thither with the turmoil of cattle in a panic. To attempt to reach the

luggage where it had been pitched on to the platform was like thrusting one's way into a football scrimmage. Tall wild men—self-constituted porters—battled over to it with sticks, and English visitors shoved towards it with damnings and indignant faces. One of the tallest and wildest of the men managed to tug our luggage out of the middle of the fight, and, calling up an ally to take one of the bags, he set off ahead of us for the hotel where we intended to put up.

At the door of the hotel stood a stout man in a cap, a sociable-looking man with a grey moustache, obviously the landlord.

“Go mbeannuighidh Dia dhuit,” said I, as he nodded to us; “teastuigheann seomra uainn.”

“Eh?” he said, bending his head forward and looking uncomfortable; “eh?”

“Teastuigheann seomra uainn,” I repeated: “nach bhfuil Gaedhilg agat?”

His eyes shifted nervously, as though he would have liked to escape.

“I don't know much Irish,” he muttered in an absent-minded way; and, looking down the hall, called, “Mary! The fact is,” he went on, “I'm not sure—I never like to turn away a Gaelic Leaguer—it's the week of the races, do you see, and we have to charge extra for the rooms. Mary!” again; then to the men who were carrying our bags, “Put those down a minute. We'll see what can be done, Mr. ——.” He

raised his voice inquisitively to learn my name. I told him; then he went off to see what could be done. In a minute or two he came back and told us that if we were willing to pay something extra—I forget how much—we might send our bags upstairs.

The hotel had not yet become a house of confusion. It was filling rapidly, however, mostly with muscular young men in caps, who went upstairs into the dusty air of the dining-room and waited patiently, reading dusty old numbers of illustrated papers, till one of the girls in the house would bring in an overloaded tray of ham and eggs and fresh bread and jam and tea. Our luggage was taken up to one of a row of box-bedrooms arranged along a passage—boxes divided from each other by thin wooden partitions, and with doors that would only keep shut if you put a chair or a bag up against them. The bed was in need of clean sheets. The room gave the impression that a minimum of labour and of thought had been wasted upon its bareness. Probably it would not be in use, except during the time of the races, from one year's end to the other. From the festal untidiness of bedroom and eating-room we soon escaped into the dusty streets—the dustiest in Ireland—with their sprinkling of hands-in-pockets expectant idlers. . . .

St. Nicholas' Church seemed the best place of refuge from the immediate century. Grey and stumpy, and aspiring to no beauty save that of



age, crowned with a belfry capriciously set there like the final ornament on a child's house of bricks, it looked like a little Thibet of challenge to the explorer approaching its ring of rubble wall. From inside the church came the sound of a harmonium. Not a sacred or even a sentimental sound, but the sound of a harmonium being used as a toy, or at least as a puzzle. Two little girls in wide-brimmed hats moved a yard or two away from the instrument self-consciously when we entered, and a small lively man, wrinkled and merry-eyed like a sailor, ceased lifting mats and dusting pews and came over to us. Like other people, I often resent the insistent friendliness of sextons. But in St. Nicholas' the sexton is a boon. Without him one would miss a good many of the significances of the place. Not that there is not a great deal of public and accessible history in the stones of the building. In so far as it is the mortuary of the Tribes, for instance, he who runs may read. Everybody knows how, soon after Galway was walled in about 1270, it was settled in by a number of exclusive families and came to be called after them the City of the Tribes. The names of the tribes, Norman and Welsh and Saxon in origin for the most part, are immortalised in the unmusical and unimaginative rhyme—

Athy, Blake, Bodkin, Browne, Deane, Darcy, Lynch,  
Joyce, Kirwan, Martin, Morris, Sherrett, French.

Here in this bare old church is a house of monuments to these long-since Irishised families. Them you can see for yourself, even without the presence of the sexton, with his running commentary of "the antiquaries say." But, rich as they are, these are not the secret treasures of the church.

Of all the tombs which the sexton points out to the stranger, the most interesting to me are the flagged graves let into the floor, where the dead business-men of a more bustling Galway are buried with the emblems of their trade or of the Resurrection—scissors and boots and crowing cocks—carved on the stones. For most of these you have to look under the mats where, on Sundays, the feet of the infrequent worshippers tread. Look at them closely, for they are one of the vindications of Ireland. Politicians try to persuade us that Belfast is the only part of Ireland where industry and commerce are natural. This is, of course, not true, as the visitor to historic Galway will soon discover. The enterprise, the spring-time vigour, of Belfast are splendid. But we must remember that Belfast and the neighbouring part of Ulster are the only places in Ireland where enterprise and spring-time vigour were not suppressed by law. If Belfast linen had been put under the same penalties as Galway wool, we should have had no populous thriving Belfast to praise to-day. There is an idea abroad among those who do not know Irish history, that the





LYNCH'S HOUSE, GALWAY.

[Lawrence.]

Gaelic Irishman is born without the virtues which enable a man to labour and to pay his bills. So persistent has been the defamation of Ireland, indeed, that even since Mrs. Green has given us the facts, in her great study of the medieval civilisation of Ireland, *The Making of Ireland and its Undoing*, people go on writing as though Ireland had never produced a race of craftsmen and merchants of her own, but had been a mere precinct of religion and cattle-thieving except for the industrious invaders who settled behind the walls of her towns and created beautiful and useful things, to make the name of the country known in every port of Europe. . . . Well, the industry of the invaders was soon suppressed, from London, too. But Mrs. Green has proved very clearly that the old Irishman and the new Irishman fell in an equal ruin in Galway and the other towns when the great Imperial laws against work were put into operation.

The one world-famous man whose bones lie in the Church of St. Nicholas was not an old Irishman, but a new Irishman, and his memory lives not because he was a great trader but because he slew his son. This was Mayor James Lynch Fitzstephen, a commercial prince of the fifteenth century, by whose labours trade and hospitality were greatly increased between Galway and Spain. He would probably have lived unknown to history if he himself had not made the voyage

to Spain and brought back with him a young Spanish gentleman, the son of one of his hosts, on a visit to Ireland. Lynch had a son of his own, impulsive and riotous. Between the latter and the Spaniard a jealous quarrel broke out about some woman, and it ended with young Lynch giving a stab to his rival, so that he died. He at once surrendered to justice, and his father was the magistrate who tried him and sentenced him to death, in spite of the prayers of the townspeople, who seem to have liked the young man well. Nor was this the whole of the elder's iron righteousness; for, when no one could be found in Galway to carry out the sentence, Lynch hanged the boy with his own hand.

On the wall which encloses the churchyard, a stone marks the spot where this ancient piece of justice was done. It is aptly carved with a death's-head and crossbones, and under these the motto: "Remember Deathe, Vaniti of Vaniti. And Al Is But Vaniti."

If you let the sexton take you up to the bell-tower and show you Galway and its streets from that height, you will as likely as not get the impression that you are looking out upon a city where the very houses are death's-heads. Skulls of lofty mansions, the windowlessness of which gives an appearance as of empty eye-sockets, line the streets in graveyard ruin. Other buildings lie in stony masses, like bones heaped and mixed

together in an old tomb. No one who has not seen Galway from a height like this can realise to the full what an air the place has of a town awaiting a blessed resurrection. Little of the grand life has been left here. Emptiness sits in the places of abundance. Tall and smokeless chimneys rise everywhere, giving the town at noonday the appearance that other cities have at dawn. So hollow of joy and vigour does this grey town look from the tower of St. Nicholas that it has been likened fitly enough to a scooped-out egg-shell. Flour-mills, factories—how many were there even thirty years ago that are now silent behind cobwebs and broken windows! The old sexton gave us figures, and they stay in my memory—for unhappily I have not the genius for note-taking—as a ratio of about twenty to three. As he told us of the decline of the population of the town, Catholic and Protestant alike, a funeral procession moved across the bridge by the gaol, with mourners riding after it on slow horses under the branches of the trees.

When we came down from the tower, we went round some of the ruined streets, past many a modern house with an old stone bearing some tribal coat-of-arms let into the wall over the door, and climbed the steps of an ancient broken castle, in which a man and a small boy were busy among cases of type, setting up the pages of a weekly newspaper. But, as I have said before, I

do not want to give any one the impression that Galway is all dead. There are tobacconists' shops and grocers and drapers and public-houses, and a book-shop where you can buy *Jane Eyre* (in a sixpenny edition) and the novels of Mrs. Henry Wood. . . .

In the evening the hotel became a house of crowds, and crowds within crowds. As each new train arrived, ones and twos and threes of men and women, with their coats and sticks and baggage, seemed every minute to be projected into the already overcrowded dining-sitting-room, with the air of bewildered sheep. They sat down, as they came in, at the disordered tables, where pieces of broken bread, knives, forks, spoons, empty unwashed glasses, stains, bottles of sauces, and the remains of earlier meals gave the appearance of a battlefield where hunger had been worsted, but not without casualties. Pots of tea, bottles of stout, glasses of whisky,—or rather bottles of whisky, for the guest was decently given the bottle to help himself,—rashers of bacon, fragments of fowl, steaks, loaves, jam-dishes, rattled in on loaded trays as the new guests arrived, and at each of the tables and corners of tables a mumbled conversation would begin.

In crowded hotels—at least in some parts of Ireland—the conversation often begins in this muttering shyness. Here and there a loud voice rises courageously, from the first bite, but, as a



rule, people are too self-conscious—too conscious, rather, of the presence of neighbours with a possible gift for satire—to talk freely till their blood has been warmed. Even excited and angry arguments are carried on, with an infinity of facial expression and gesture, in the voices of conspirators. Thus, in an Irish hotel, a stranger often might well feel that he was in the midst of a plot—that each corner of the room was conspiring against him: for though every one resents the curiosity of his neighbour's ears, his own eyes are continually darting glances of curiosity all round him. Solitary persons occasionally come and look through the door, and shy of so many eyes, slip quietly off to the less dreadful discomfort of their bedrooms.

For myself, I am always in these places wishing the floor would open and swallow me. . . . It is an awful thing to go to bed at ten. But amid the murmuring plots of a hotel sitting-room it may be even a more trying ordeal to sit up. One had to fly somewhere out of that prison of constraint and low voices. Consequently, to bed—to bed in the little wooden box where the door would not keep shut.

To bed, but not to sleep. Everywhere, as well as in the sitting-room, these mumbled conversations seemed to be going on, broken now and then by the voice of some confident fun-poking young man, a girl's titter, and little bass growls of

laughter. People stopped just outside one's door and entered into conversations that seemed to last for hours. The clock struck, the clock struck again, and still the house was a house of subdued narratives, excited as a school that is going to break up the next day for the summer holidays. As time wore on, we would hear good-nights interchanged, and a last call of "See you in the morning," and the leap of heavy boots up the stairs, or their tramp along a corridor would be the preliminary to a lull. But new sturdy ghosts would arrive, and the conversations would go on. Gradually, towards the small hours, the good-nights increased in frequency, and with each of them one seemed to be let down another step towards silence. Where men mumbled before they now spoke in whispers. Soon the creaking of boards under huge boots became a startling interruption. It affected the imagination like the tramping of the warder past a corridor of prison cells—a tramping and banging to an end of silence. One ceased to hear the whispers save as the fall and ebb of little, lulling waves. Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. Door-bang. Again the little, lulling waves, waves. Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. Door-bang. The little waves are lapping my face. They are rising above my ears. The tide is nearly full. Tramp, tramp, tr—— Even Galway ghosts can keep me awake no longer.

Next morning was filled with sun. It was one

of those happy, gold mornings when the farmer's daughter dresses in white. Galway rose to greet it in a garment of dust. Her streets, Sabbatic-looking with all the principal shops closed, had none the less a certain keen vitality, as country-people came in to view them before going to the races, and young racing enthusiasts ran about looking for a newsagent's or a barber's. Within a few minutes of the arrival of the Dublin train, there was hardly a paper to be had. Small energetic boys refused to sell you an *Independent* for a halfpenny to-day. It was Galway's one chance in the year of selling in the dearest market; and even the halfpenny paper was raised to a penny. Near the newsagent's shop a barber's pole slanted out over the pavement, and with a file of other bearded pards I went in to get shaved.

Every chair in the place had already an occupant being violently lathered or scraped in front of a mirror. The long bench against the wall was filled with young men, smoking and reading papers or yawning post-alcoholic yawns, and at the far end of the form, in contrast to us all, sat a peasant in a tam-o'-shanter, lean-faced, dark, wind-inured, with long hair pouring over his ears—a man from the Aran Islands, I think, in an ungainly grey homespun coat and yellowish-grey trousers—a man who, with his eagle nose and his thrust-out chin, had a curious look of Dante. As I sat waiting, I was especially fascinated by one

of the five or six barbers who were performing their lightning labours with more energy than skill or gentleness on the faces of their patients. He was a stout, round man who, as he set to his work with his shirt sleeves rolled high up, looked more like a blacksmith than a barber. Or perhaps I should say like a butcher. Or perhaps a stableman. Possibly he did actually belong to one of these professions, and had only taken to barbering in order to meet an emergency. Anyhow, he used the soap-brush and the razor like a man who was playing a mischievous game rather than a professional. If he pushed the soap into a nose or eye or ear, he began to shake with cheerfulness : his puffy red cheeks, his big rough moustache, his comfortable stomach, all appeared to be sharing in some secret merriment. As for the razor, he used it as though he were currying a horse. He made one drag across the face from ear to chin, and another drag down the throat, and after about four drags sponged off the soap and the blood and said "Fourpence, please!" with a genial twinkle, as though you, being a sportsman, could feel no offence because of a few wounds contracted in honourable battle. One young man rose from the chair and looked in the mirror at the torn skin of his cheek and the blood pouring from a great gash in his chin.

"I'll remember you this day month," he said to the barber, as he wiped his face with a towel.

“What do you mean?” said the jolly fat barber.

“I say I’ll remember you this day month,” repeated the other grimly. “You’ve left your mark, never fear.” And he paid the barber what he owed him and probably a little more.

“No offence,” said the barber gaily, pocketing the money; “thank you, sir,” and the young man went out. “Bloody fool!” said the barber, looking round us with a laugh.

I will confess that I did not laugh. My own turn had not arrived yet, and I dreaded to come under the razor of this good-humoured butcher as I would dread being charged down and mutilated by Cossacks. As a matter of fact, when my turn did come, and this particular barber said, “Next, please!” invitingly, I was dishonest enough to look the other way while an impatient stable-boy unscrupulously dashed for the empty chair. I am afraid he was pachydermatous and did not suffer as he ought for his greed.

Meanwhile a lean young barber at the other end of the room was looking with dismay at the shaggy mane of the Aran man.

“Hair-cutting’s sixpence to-day,” he said warningly, wishing probably neither to cut the islander’s hair nor to let him in for the double prices of the day.

The islander twisted his gloomy, beaked face into an “Eh?”

“Hair-cutting’s sixpence to-day,” repeated the barber in deliberate tones, as though speaking to a deaf man or to one who did not understand English.

“Sixpence?” the other repeated, a puzzled and threatening look coming into his face; “go ahead,” and he settled himself, a little offendedly, into his chair.

After that, luckily before the stout barber had finished with his last victim, another chair was empty, and a little spry barber was apologising to me and asking for the loan of my paper “just for a second,” before beginning to shave me. He was an averagely good barber—as good as could be expected when one is being shaved, as it were, in a tumult. But when I got out into the air again I breathed deeply and gladly, like a man who has escaped from a tight corner.

Galway was by now filling with cars from the ends of the earth. Everybody was getting ready to go to the races. Youths in caps stood round the steps of our hotel and welcomed noisily any new friend who came up to join their group. One youth, with his cap over his eyes, would scrimmage into the group on his toes, like a footballer, while his arms embraced all the necks near him, and he demanded musically—“Has anybody here seen Kelly—K—E—double L—Y?” Then another figure, hands in pockets, would come up to shouts of “Paddy!” “Hilloa,

Paddy!" "Where the bloody hell have you been, Paddy?" And Paddy, closed in by questioning faces, like the examinee in the game of Oranges and Lemons, would confess with a grin of imitation shame: "Bejusus, I haven't been sober for a week."

His confession would be received with mighty interest and chaffing interrogations on his adventures, until Billy hove in sight. Then the cry of the pack would go up: "Billy!" "Hilloa, Billy!" "Where the bloody hell have you sprung from, Billy?" And so ancient friendships would be exuberantly renewed and old meetings on half the racecourses of Ireland be recalled.

Everybody was now flying or making ready to fly to the racecourse, which is about two miles to the east of the town. Every man who owns a vehicle of any sort in that part of Ireland, even if it is only a dilapidated and out-of-fashion side-car inherited from a long dead great-grandfather, brings it to Galway at the time of the races and excitedly sells seats on it for as much as he can get for them. Monstrous brakes that must date from the old days before railway trains, and that appear never to have had the dust and mud taken off them since—the very reins and harness seeming to be an affair of patches and pieces of string—rumble into Eyre Square at one corner and out again at another. Little low dirty cars

with sloping backs, and drawn now by a horse from the plough, now by some old pensioner from the stable, with all its bones showing, follow in the dusty procession, and are as sure of clients as the brisker cars with the well-fed and sinewy animals. Endless seems the line of these vehicles that marches down the hill, while the hoofs of walking horses kick up the white dust from the broken road, and drivers, cars, and horses, one by one, get to look as if they had come from the yard of a busy flour-mill.

Thinner and thinner became the population of the town as holiday-makers with excited eyes, after shouting bargains with the extemporised jarveys, leaped on the long chain of cars or scrambled into the brakes. The air was full of thrills. Aged paupers leaned against the railings of the Square gardens, twisted sticks propping them up or tucked under their arms, and watched the bold youths and the gay white maidens drive off, a multitudinous pilgrimage to a multitudinous paradise. My landlord, standing on a doorstep and making introductions like a master of ceremonies, looked out on the gaiety of it all, contented as a pigeon watching a river go by. He wasn't going to the races himself, but all his family was going.

“You're driving to the field, Mr. Lynd?” he asked me.

I told him we were. He nodded intelligence.



“I’d advise you, Mr. Lynd,” he said in a kindly voice, “to get a seat on one of them brakes. There’s less chance of accidents. A horse in a car would be more apt to stumble.”

One could certainly imagine the horses in the cars stumbling or bolting or playing any sort of wild destructive tricks in those exciting streets. Many by this time had made the circuit to and from the course several times already, and patterns of sweat were showing on their bodies under the harness, and the wind was roaring in a few broken specimens as in the throat of an old man. Our only chance of getting a car—for our landlord’s luxurious gloom was not to intimidate us—was to go and meet the vehicles as they came into the town.

“How much?” a bristly-chinned man in a white coat would ask an approaching driver, who would lean over, his face thrust forward greedily, and say—

“A half-crown apiece.”

“Guess again,” the man with the bristly chin would reply, his eyes wandering to the next car.

“I’ll take you for two shillings,” the driver would offer.

“I wish you may get it,” says the man with the bristly chin, and turns to his haggling with the next carman.

We got on the side of a car and began our rush for the field. We stopped to take other passengers

up before long, and soon even the well of the the car had a young man with a briar pipe sitting on it. Off we dashed out of the town and up the long hill after all the horsed vehicles of Connacht, swaying and swinging past the stone walls of the fields and the grassy roadsides thick with a low rain of dust. Our speed was only limited by the speed of the car that went before. It was our glory to come so near it that our horse's mouth would be within biting distance of the hindmost occupant of it. If possible, we refrained from passing it—just kept the horse's muzzle boastfully threatening the dangling legs of some poor fellow who dare not take his eyes off it even for a moment's look at the scenery. Now and then, to be sure, a motor-car would toot by, and, following a bad example, we too would pass a less impetuous neighbour; but on the whole we followed the ancient fashion of politeness till we arrived at a gap in a wall which admitted us across a quarter of a mile of fields to the racecourse.

The racecourse, with its grandstand and its hurdles and banks and wall-jumps, lies, a crooked loop, on a hillside. It is a very beautiful world of grey and blue that you see from it—grey of stone and gull and cloud, blue of sky and hill-bound bay with the white island lighthouse rising among the waters. Going over the fields, one sees a long line of emptied cars along the sky-line returning to Galway by another route,

and the clear air is full of the murmur of holiday—of bookmaker and fruit-seller and showman with cocoanut-shies and Aunt Sallies. Some cars drive over the fields and take up their stand near the bookmakers opposite the winning-post. Here high iron railings cage the democracy on one side of the course, while on the other side the grandstand is full of the movement of fashion and field-glasses. About a hundred yards from this, at the bottom of a slope, the cheap lemonade sellers and mirth-providing showmen have pitched their tents, and between this and the course itself constant rivers of the aimless, the older men in tail-coats and wideawakes, are wandering. The bookmakers who have fixed up their stands like a thousand auctioneers in a clump near the railings draw all eyes and a good many pockets as the time for a race approaches. They are on the whole a serious and business-like-looking set of men. There are none of the comedian sort of bookmakers here such as I have seen on an English course. They do not, however, avoid checks in the pattern of their clothes, and they have, most of them, the air of men who take a materialistic and cunning view of life.

“Six to four against Marcella! Six to four against Marcella, and five to one bar one!” rose the clamour from them, like the barking of dogs round a pond; and, as the clerk registered each innocent bet in his long ledger, the odds

against the favourite would come down, and the master-bookie would make a change on the board of prices with a bit of chalk. "Five to four against Marcella! I'm giving five to four against Marcella!" he would drone monotonously, allowing himself no quirks of humour or fancy.

One of the bookies, a big round-whiskered man with a crimson face, check trousers, a coachman's broad black hat, and with a case of field-glasses slung round his shoulders, bawled the words apoplectically. Another, narrow of temples, dull of eye, with a fan of fallow nose intensifying the lean appearance of his solemn face, contrived to speak the words with almost no expression at all: he was more colourless than his dust-coat, much more so than his pale brown hat. Another, at once respectable and boozy-faced, with a pink flower in his velvet-collared coat, offered the odds sulkily but energetically from his fat mouth. And country boys moved in and out among them smilingly but withholdingly, having no florins to risk on blood horses. An occasional lady, masterful in a tweed hat and jacket, came forward and got a receipt for a bet, and the population of the town billiard-rooms nipped up by ones and twos and backed their own cunning against the cunning of the furtive-eyed bookies. When the horses came out and began cantering down the course with little swift trial thuds, the bookies raised their voices to a higher note and began

shouting feverishly like prophets. It was as though they were calling to the crowd to repent while there was yet time.

Out would come a jockey in a costume, half cherry-coloured and half blue, with an orange-peaked, chocolate-coloured cap, and would bolt down the course with head lowered on the back of a huge bay. The crowd began to rush to the railings to get commanding positions, to look over hats and shoulders, to struggle into rifts in the human mass, to leap on to the few cars that had come up there, to fly from the bookies who clamoured like a lot of gulls as they offered a last chance of a bet.

“Evens on Marcella! I’ll take evens on Marcella!” they shouted, as though the end of the world might happen the next moment and it would be a good thing to have put money on Marcella before you died. Red, yellow, orange, blue, green, indigo, violet—purple, mauve, maroon, grey, black, white, brown—stars, stripes, bars—jockeys in costumes of every colour and every pattern now flocked on to the course, looking like a school of circus boys, and, after a preliminary breather, ambled back up the hill with humped shoulders. Then, as grey-shawled women elbowed their way forward to the railings and old men in tam-o’-shanters with smiles on their wrinkled faces made room for them, the animals gathered at the starting-post and curveted and

champed and turned their heads, waiting till the bell rang.

The bell rang. The horses broke away like a whirl of autumn leaves and swept past us thunderously. As soon as the bell rang, the clamour of the bookies died away like a sound in a dream or like a wave that had broken. It was as though the world were filled suddenly with an intense silence, though now and then, as Marcella leaped a bank with the grace of a hare or Jumping Jehosaphat, bundling in her wake, scrambled over a stone wall, you would hear a grunt, a sort of stenographic soliloquy, coming out under the field-glasses of some bookie, and buzzing arguments would begin and cease among the crowd as to whether it was Marcella that was leading after all, or whether it was *Lame Duck*, whose rider and Marcella's wore scarcely distinguishable colours. Ten thousand eyes clung to the leaders of the straggling line of horses that galloped the ups and downs of the long course, clearing gate and bank and green-branched hurdle, lessening in number as an occasional rider might despair and fall out, disappearing from sight behind some hillock, coming into view again in a new and exciting order, a royal line of gay colour and lovely movement. It was through a crowd intent like this upon thrilling events that a barefooted woman moved with a basket of fruit on her arm, offering plums for sale in the shyest voice im-

aginable. She was sad-faced under her shawl. "Anny plums?" she intoned in a singsong voice, her eyes moving from indifferent face to indifferent face; "anny plums?"

It was a note of sweet music in the buzzing atmosphere. It was business, but, like the selling of sweet lavender in the streets of London, it was business to a tune. "Anny plums?" she almost whispered, as though it were possibly indecent—and it was—to suggest that a man might want to eat plums while the fate of his half-sovereign hung in the balance. Then she was out of sight in the crowd. But still, ever and anon, her "Anny plums?" rang out like a little muted bell. Then it was drowned in the rising growl of a crowd shouting the names of horses near the winning-post into the air. Or rather I should say of the sporting minority of the crowd, for the average Galwayman—at least, the Galway peasant—is little ruffled by the excitements of a flash-past of horses whose names he has learned for the first time from a neighbour's racing-card. He watches it critically as he might look at a neighbour's pig. He seems to bring his quiet subliminal self, not his tumultuous surface self, to the contemplation of these steeplechasing circus boys. And it is no wonder, for, with the big cage of railings in front of him and a disappearing racecourse to right and to left of him, he can only follow a race in fragments. That is

why so many of the crowd gradually get tired and dander down the slope towards the booths and stands of the uproarious showmen.

Here tents had been set up with a two-days' licence to sell liquor. Other stalls were heaped with halfpenny cakes with a snow of red and white caraway seeds on them, rocks of vile yellow sweet-stuff, penny packets of biscuits—such biscuits!—penny bottles of lemonade, and all those other gaities of the stomach which are only tolerated because they are associated with holiday. While we were standing at one of these places buying biscuits, a dirty-cheeked baby leaned over from the arms of a beggar woman and held out a half-chewed pig's foot towards the mouth of my companion.

“Ah, ma'am,” said the mother, with a proud smile, “he's mad for mate. You could never tire him giving him mate. Tell the lady,” she said, giving him a hugging shake, “what a terror you are for mate, Michael.”

I confess to a certain squeamishness as I watched the baby filthying its mouth with that odious piece of carnality, but at the same time by an irresponsible association of memories the latter called up a summer day ten years before when on a Twelfth of July holiday I had marched with the Belfast Orangemen (not as one of them, alas, but as a stranger!) out to the field of assembly, and there, amid the colours and excited din of



loyalty, had seen a stall of trotters bearing the motto: "Liberty, Equality, and Pigs' Feet." After that, I looked more tolerantly on the infant and the pig's foot it was sucking.

There were pitches of recreation as well as refreshment on the Galway racecourse. Painted wooden images of men rose in little companies in front of a screen of sacking and leered invitation at one, while viragoes with red faces, thick necks, and touzled lint-coloured hair screamed at all present to come and have a shy at the wooden figures, which collapsed at the hinged middle if struck hard with a ball between the eyes. If you have never seen a tinker woman scream, you can have no idea what a grotesque symbol of hubbub she makes. She begins by throwing her lawless head back, with her hands on her hips, and shouting "Ha! ha! ha!"—not as a laugh, but as three distinct heaven-splitting syllables—or hell-splitting, if you like, for it sounds like the mirth of the damned. "Ha! ha! ha!" she yells; "ha! ha! ha! Come on, come on, come on. Come on, all you Galway blazers and sportsmen. Three shots a penny. A penny for three shots. Here you are, young gentleman!" she goes on, never lowering her voice, as a country boy takes three balls from her hand. "Here you are. Three shots at the old man's cocoanut. And *mind the baby!*"

One really has to underline the woman's humour

in order to give an impression of its hysterical shrillness.

“Ha! ha! ha! you’re a divil at it! Ha! ha! you’re a divil at it,” she keeps yelling as the balls begin to fly. “One shot more, and a man’s down! And mind the baby! Ha! ha! you’re a divil at it! Ha! ha! ha!”

No doubt this pseudo-frenzy produces its effect. If you have from half a dozen to a dozen women and men howling at you in rivalry the information that you’re a divil at something or other, and appealing to you with wild cries to mind the baby, you can scarcely help being drawn into a little ring of excitement, and, once you are there, a terrific show-woman will as likely as not either blandish or shame you into trying to knock down her painted dolls and win her poisonous cigars.

But there were other games besides the various sorts of Aunt Sallies and the kindred cocoanut-shies. There were card games and trick-o’-the-loop games, and there was the game in which you throw rings at a stand full of walking-sticks and attempt to win one of the latter as a prize.

The game around which the greatest crowd had gathered was one that I had never seen before. Here a man knelt on the grass a few yards from you, his face disguised in blackness and grins, his head stuck with feathers, like a cheap imitation of a Red Indian, and allowed you to throw things

at him at two shots a penny. His friend, a dark-faced little fellow with a twinkling eye, in a peaked cap, took the money and gave you the balls to throw while he tried to keep too enthusiastic sportsmen from overstepping the mark. I do not think the balls in question were anything harder than rolled-up stockings, or that the game was more cruel than a pillow-fight. But I have seldom seen a game enjoyed more furiously. Two sportsmen were allowed to throw at a time, and it was the black man's duty by dodging and ducking and catching the balls in his hands to prevent his face from being hit. The crowd, gathered up into the shape of a tortoise, swayed and swung round the combatants and laughed uproariously as a blow just missed the feather-surrounded face. Occasionally the throwers, getting excited, would run in over the mark and attempt to punish the man at close quarters. But the little smiling fellow in the peaked cap always brought them back in the best of humour with the phrase, "Fair's fair," and, as soon as either of the balls was out of play, he thrust it at some one in the crowd, saying: "Come on, boys, come on. Keep the divilment going."

He was the only showman in the place who was not shouting. As he stooped, picking up the balls, in the thick of the eager crowd, he seemed to be giving the impression that we were playing a secret game which might be stopped by the

police at any moment. He contrived in this way, as he bounded about after the balls with constantly bubbling laughter, to make his innocent game as exciting as cock-fighting. He seldom winked up with a "Keep the divilment going!" but some victim fell into his merry snare.

Not far off, in a space between two tents, an old countryman in a faded high hat was the centre of a group of boys who seemed to be getting ballads out of him. Unfortunately, he was rather drunk, and they were beginning to be tipsy too, so that there was more handshaking than singing done. He sang to them mournfully in Irish, and they shook hands with him and with each other over that. He sang—or rather alternately moaned and skirled—a scarcely recognisable version of "The Boys of Wexford," and at the end of almost every line he had to stop to shake hands with the young fellows one after the other in an exaggeration of the country fashion. As soon as he had slobbered one song out of his scraggy and ulcerous face, a volley of demands for a dozen other songs showered down on him. One big, square-headed boy, with red hair and freckled face, remains in my mind with especial vividness, as he kept insisting with self-conscious awkwardness to the singer: "Give us 'The Men of the West.' Give us 'The Men of the West.'"



THE TREASON SONG.

*Drawn and coloured by Jack B. Yeats.*



I do not wish to give the impression, however, that Galway was a scene of much drinking on the day of the races. I never saw a soberer holiday crowd anywhere. Compared with a bank-holiday crowd on Hampstead Heath, for instance, it was almost Sabbatarian in its decorousness. In Ireland, however, one drunk man is as conspicuous as a thousand sober ones. Drunk, he forgets his shyness; he asserts his individuality. But he is, comparatively speaking, a rare bird and an exception for all the show he makes. I stress this point because the next scene to which we moved on had another tipsy man for its central figure.

He was a middle-aged farmer in a blue tail-coat and a bowler hat, and a long reddish beard seemed to connect him with respectability. He was standing at one of the Aunt Sally pitches where sticks were used instead of balls to hurl at the figures, and when the showman, red-nosed and whitened like a clown, but in an ordinary bowler hat and blue suit, went in his shirt sleeves to collect the used sticks at the back of the stand, the farmer signalled to him with imperative good-humour to remain where he was and become a living target. The showman got behind one of the figures and grimaced out provocatively. The farmer flung a stick at him; the head ducked and bobbed out, a second after, all smiles. The farmer went to the corner of the roped-in pitch

and made faces and threatening gestures at the showman, who put his five fingers to his nose insultingly. Two sticks were swiftly and successively hurled from this point of vantage, the clown just escaping the second by the skin of his teeth—or rather by the skin of the tip of his ear. The farmer, highly delighted to have come so near his aim, bought some more sticks from the showman's wife, who looked a little uneasy and disinclined to give them to him, and he then began a new policy of lobbing them up into the air so that they might drop on the man at the other side of the figures. At this the showman twisted his face into more exaggerated contortions than ever. Putting his thumbs into the arm-holes of his waistcoat and getting down into a sitting posture, he hopped in and out among the figures like a dancing dog. The farmer, with a childish laugh, stepped over the cord, and he, too, got into a sitting posture and hopped like a dancing dog towards his enemy, his coat-tails dragging on the grass. The showman hopped towards him, grinning, and put his hands above his ears like the horns of a cow and wagged them. The farmer, with a drunken imitation of the other's grin, also gave himself a pair of horns or donkey's ears—or whatever his hands were meant to represent—and wagged them. In this way, they hopped, one hop at a time, round and round each other, till the farmer took the showman's



hat off, as though he were doing a funny thing, and the showman took the farmer's hat off, as though he were doing a funnier thing still. After this, the farmer got excited, and it was time for the friends of both parties to step in and prevent a quarrel.

When we came away, they were both standing in the middle of a clutching crowd, the farmer gesticulating wildly and the showman parodying each excited gesture in an extravagant way that amused everybody but the farmer, who was certainly hard to please.

By this time most of the crowd were straggling back to various points beside the course in order to see the race for the Galway Plate, which is, I believe, the great race of the meeting. Priests in their rook-black garments moved among peasants in their grey tail-coats or white woollen jackets—bawneens, as they are called—and horsey men in leather gaiters hurried with whisky-bitten faces past slow-moving country-women in heavy grey and brown shawls. Ordinary people like you and me made for our places, a many-coloured mob in all sorts of overcoats and serges and tweeds and bowlers and straw hats and slouch hats and caps. We gathered in knots on every little prominence on the hillside, and got our foreheads tight up against the high bars of the railings, or hung and hustled on the backs of those who had in good time seized the front places

near where the bookies bellowed. Here men, women, and children now darted in every direction and cross-direction, like flies in the sun, one to lay a bet, another to whistle and push after a friend, another to get a place. The bookies were once more screaming like seagulls. The big round-whiskered man with the crimson face and the check trousers alone did not seem to have redoubled the vehemence and shrillness of his shouting. It was not for want of will, however. He was still apoplectically offering odds with a facial earnestness worthy of a better cause. He was redder than ever and, as he addressed the crowd, he kept clenching and swinging his fist in an angry gesture of helplessness. But, struggle as he might, he no longer brought forth a huge mountain of a voice as he had done earlier in the day. His "I'll take six to four! I'll take six to four!" had dwindled into a little hoarse husky squeaking mouse. You saw it rather than heard it as it issued from that labouring, perspiring, check-breeched frame. "I'll take six to four! I'll take six to four!" It was like a whisper, a death-bed saying, a strangled confession. No one, having seen the slow martyrdom of the man, could ever afterwards look on bookmaking as an idle trade. The other bookmakers, however, hurled a stormy sea of voices about us to make up for the soundlessness of this one. Beggars, slipping through the clamour and bustle, would

beg you for a penny for the love of God, and fruit-sellers still sought a market for their plums and oranges with modest voices. One of the beggars in especial, a woman with Gorgon locks of iron-grey hair flaunting on a head that had once been black as night, made herself noticeable. Her shoulders covered with a brown Galway shawl, she had a hard though beautiful face and the evil eye of the insane. Her skin was yellowish-brown and weather-softened. As she begged, she had a voice as gentle as the light in a church, and it was as good as being in church to hear her mingling her thanks with holy names. But a gauche big farmer's son in a white coat, with a party of two young women and a boy watching the races from a car, had strode past her roughly on his way to a shouting bookmaker's, and had answered her without manners as he pushed his way back past her insistent "I ask your honour in the name of God to help a poor woman." I do not know what he grunted at her under his ill-tempered moustache, but it brought the evil out in her face very markedly, and she began to abuse him in many words I do not remember and many others I dare not print. It was the very pollution of a disordered mind that she poured over him as he stood sheepishly and resentfully at the side of the car and damned her into himself and said nothing. Crooking two of her fingers, she put them into her mouth and cast a spittle

at him with a gesture, cursing him, turning a tributary stream of abuse on "the lady on the car," and winding up with shrieking what seemed to be either an accusation or a prophecy of grossly immoral conduct on the part of the young farmer.

Luckily, the bookies were making such a noise that you couldn't have heard all that was going on unless you had had a thousand ears. Even so, when the woman moved away from her victim, muttering and shouting by turns, and came up against me, and asked me in a gentle voice for a penny, I consulted my safety and bought her silence. It only encouraged her, however. She began to praise my personal appearance loudly, in the most embarrassing way, and then she began to praise the personal appearance of my companion too. She shrieked out a most damaging comparison, on the score both of good looks and generosity, between the young farmer and his friend on the one hand and my companion and me on the other. I confess I am as greedy of flattery as any man living, but this witch was not using the other man as a pedestal for me: she was using me as a knobby stick for the other man. I was rejoiced when the horses in the big race came out on the course and were the signal for a feverish uproar among the bookmakers, who were ravenous for the last bets before the horses started. So many things were being growled, shouted, whanged and husked at this time, that you could hear none

of them distinctly at all. Amid the noise and shock of the cavalcades of shouting, the crimson-faced man in the check trousers could no longer be heard even as a whisper. He was now simply an inflammation and a death-rattle.

I will not attempt to describe the race that followed, because it did not mean anything to me. There were about a dozen horses in it, and, as to which was which, before I would have been able to learn the marks and the jockey-colours of half of them, the race could have been run twice over. The only way in which I have ever been able to get any plan or sense in a race is to back some one horse and to follow its fortunes single-mindedly till the winning-post is reached. It is only by doing this that I have ever been able to appreciate the logic as opposed to the æsthetics of horse-racing. As I was an observer, not a gambler, at the Galway races, I missed this interest. The race was to me simply like the bolting of a number of horses with curiously-coloured boys on their backs.

Ah no. That is not quite true. I loved the beating of the ground under their hoofs as they swept past from the starting-place. I was excited enough a minute later, when one of the curiously-coloured boys lost his seat and tumbled to the ground with a skelter of hoofs flying away from him. I was sick with alarm as half a dozen men ran out and gathered the boy up and half carried

him, half helped him to limp, towards the grandstand. "They say he's never sober," I heard a voice beside me commenting. "He's destroying himself with drink," said another contemptuously. "Divil the smarter jockey in Ireland," continued the chorus, "if he could keep off the drink." When the jockey had been taken into the enclosure and the gates shut after him, and we could turn our attention to the race again, his horse, rid of its burden, had dashed in front of its rivals, and was leading the way nobly. Whoop, it was over a fence, and galloping like a hare towards the next jump. One by one the others rose and fell in its wake, up and down like little dark, silent waves, and off at the gallop after their riderless leader. People began to jeer, to cheer. Was it going to finish the course by itself and come in first in the race? Another hurdle was leapt. Then, before it had galloped much farther, the horse seemed to question itself. It broke into a trot; it looked about it; it turned; it questioned the world. It began quietly to trot back in the direction from which it had come, till some one ran out, caught it by the bridle, and led it back to the stable.

As for the other horses, they bounded past us this time with a fiercer thunder, the race being twice round the course. It was then a case of Amber Dick and Pollyoolley getting ahead of the rest, and tugging turn by turn into the first place,

like squalls overtaking each other on a rough sea. Or you might compare Amber Dick, as he shot ahead, to a wave's tongue darting up the strand. And you might think of Pollyoolley as sweeping after him remorselessly like an argument that is better than another. The one took his jumps, clawed up like a crab; the other, sprawling. They were only the same in hanging on to each other's breaths breathlessly, down the slopes, along the levels and up the hills. Then they disappeared round a corner, a clump of seven other horses rolling at their heels. When next they came into view they were making straight for the winning-post, and the excited elements of the crowd had poured like a sudden froth out of the enclosure, out of the stand, and over the bar to meet them. They were like an advance-guard of ancient Britons rushing out wildly to challenge a Roman legion. They were shouting, waving hats, standing on one foot, cramping up their bodies as though the straining of their sinews could give speed to their favourites. They had their arms in the air; they had their mouths open, yelling. One of them, a cane in one hand and a bowler hat in the other, had his arms stretched out to their full extent, and beat a kind of frenzied time with them like the leader of an orchestra. If frogs exercised with dumb-bells, they might, I imagine, go through some of the same sawing, circling, and squatting movements

as did this young man's arms and body. Then suddenly his hat was flung high, and he was lashing the ground with his stick, as a shrill shout went up into the air and drove all the larks helter-skelter half a county away. It was a roar as from a relieved city. Amber Dick had won, and amid disconsolate jockeys, sweating horses, and tempestuous friends, was mobbed, gravely pacing to his stable.

Then began the rush to the bookmakers for payment of debts, and the hurry across the fields to where two dusty cavalcades of vehicles were preparing to take us back along either of the rocky roads to Galway at a considerable reduction on the fare for the outward journey.

Car swung after car down the ruts in white clouds, and brake thundered slow thunder after brake, while ragged children stood in the ditches and cheered us as we went by. It would be in keeping with the traditional accounts of such occasions if I described the procession bolting down the road to Galway at breakneck speed, but it would not be true. The cars did not drive particularly fast for Irish cars. They jolted along at an honest pace enough, and if any of the horses were apt to stumble, it must have been through weariness or age, not through reckless driving.

We were in the advance-guard of those who got back to the town. Most of the people seemed to





THE SPORTSMEN.

*Drawn and coloured by Jack B. Yeats.*



be staying for the last race, and, if we hurried away, it was only because we loved food more and sport less than the vast majority of the men and women who went to the races on the hillside. When we got back to the hotel, a squinting woman with a handkerchief round her head and with a bulging wet sack lying on the ground at her feet was beginning a heated argument with the landlord. It seemed that she had sold a two-stone bag of cockles to an English visitor at the hotel, who, having indulged a little too freely in the wine of the country, had flushed into a generous mood and had bought the entire sack from her. This done, however, he had bumped precipitately up the stairs to bed, leaving her to store the cockles where she could. She, of course, was for setting them down in the hall of the hotel. But the landlord, rightly surmising that an Englishman sober might have some difficulty in finding a use for an enormous load of cockles that he had bought when drunk, sent her off to the railway station, advising her to put the sack in the gentleman's name in the left-luggage office. She trudged off, sickle-shaped under her dank load, but apparently the clerk in the station eyed her load with the same suspicion as the landlord, for ten minutes later she was back at the hotel, a trader doing her best under difficulties to deal honestly by a client.

“ Well, would he not take them ? ” said the

landlord in apparent surprise as the cockles were once more flung on his doorstep.

“It’s perishable goods he says they are,” replied the woman in the high voice of a fishwife. “It’s no use, sir, I’ll have to leave them here. There’s no other way out of it.”

“And what—what reason did he give for refusing to take in the cockles?” asked the landlord, dumbfounded by the railway company’s insolence.

“Amn’t I after telling you,” retorted the woman, “that he said cockles was perishable goods? ‘It’s no use,’ says he, and he seemed to think it was trying to play a trick on him I was. ‘I’m not going to have them here,’ says he, ‘for to go bad on me and raise the divil’s own smell through the whole station.’ An’ that’s the way it is, your honour. If I can’t leave them here, I don’t know what to do. Ah, now, there’s room plenty in the hotel,” she went on, picking the bag up and making towards the door with it.

“Wait, wait!” cried the landlord, putting up his hand. He looked back along the hall and up the stairs as though half expecting to see help coming from that quarter. “I don’t know, I’m sure,” he muttered. Then, half to himself and half confiding to me: “It’s an English gentleman,” he said, “who has come to Galway for to see the races. The fact is, he has been enjoying himself—he has—he’s a little bit fresh.

I can't for the life of me make up whatever he bought these cockles for. Maybe it's a taste for cockles he has—for by all accounts they have a taste for a strange lot of things in England that we wouldn't put up with in Ireland—or maybe he'll have forgotten all about it by the time he wakes up, and then I'll have to get a young lad to carry the stuff off the Lord knows where, for it's not so easy as you might think to get rid of a sack of cockles that would be going worse every minute."

"It was a fair purchase," the woman broke in shrilly. "Call the gentleman out and ask him wasn't it a fair purchase."

The landlord took a step or two out, and looked up into the blue sky where wings of cloud were gathering.

"Didn't I tell you," said he, with his eye on the clouds, "that the gentleman required a little rest after his long journey?"

"Ah, well," observed the woman resignedly, "he paid for the cockles anyway, and I'll leave them here for him." And she flung them against the wall of the hotel. "I'm tired looking at them," she said.

The landlord was an obliging man and capitulated on terms. If the woman would carry the cockles inside, and leave them at the back of the kitchen door, he would see what could be done. So we made way, and the woman once more took

up her wet burden, and dragged it up the step and down the hall and out of sight. And what the last end of those cockles was I do not know under heaven till the present day.

Soon, cars and brakes were unloading themselves all around us, and young men and maidens were promising to see each other again at some church bazaar, announcements of which were swinging on scrolls across the streets. For ourselves, we decided, when we had had a heteroclite meal, to go out on the tram to Salthill—the watering-place suburb which lies about two miles along the north side of Galway Bay. It was not an easy job to get on to the cars, however. Everybody who was not going to the bazaar or going home was going to Salthill. Each tram as it came up was seized by a lawless crowd, and, though there was a great notice in the windows,—IN ORDER TO PREVENT OVERCROWDING IN THESE TRAMS, WHICH IS CONTRARY TO LAW, DURING THE GALWAY RACES THERE WILL BE NO FARE LESS THAN 3D. BY ORDER,—everybody took for granted that the tramway company was only putting up its prices like all the other concerns in the town as a matter of good business, and we broke the law in such regiments that it is a wonder we did not break the horses' backs too.

In Salthill itself, when you get there, there is little to do. There are new stuccoed houses in it and a long cement walk above the sea where the

wind can blow mighty cold after the sun has gone down. The chief distinction of the place is the number of old women who sit out under the gable-ends of some of the houses in companies. They look like some scene of Dutch life as they take the evening air in their wealth of petticoats and dark knitted shawls, sewing, talking, getting amusement out of some broken-down singer who pauses to sing them inappropriate songs. These clumps of old people are, I believe, not residents, but country folk who come from all parts to get health from the waters and the briny air of Salthill. I do not know whether Salthill is now the resort of all classes to the extent to which it used to be, but the poor still seem to flock to it. Miss Callwell, in *Old Irish Life*, tells of the martyrdoms that used to be undergone in order that the ailing poor might be brought to this health-giving shore. "One poor man," she writes, "carried his wife, who was recovering from a severe illness, nearly fifty miles upon his back, to bring her to the sea, supporting her and the children who accompanied them by begging from house to house along the road. 'Och, but he dearly earned me,' said the wife afterwards, when happily she was restored to health and strength." Salthill looks as though to some of its pilgrims such heroisms were still possible. . . . It was wet and windy enough that night to kill anybody but a confirmed invalid. . . . We crowded

inside the tram on our way home. A man at the far end became violent against the conductor, who wanted to prevent him from smoking his pipe. The conductor was young and nervous, as well as officious, and gave in. . . .



## CHAPTER II

### THE PATH TO CONG

THE second day of the races was in a sense a wasted day. It was a day on which we tried hard to get to Cong, and we did not succeed in getting to Cong. According to the railway-guides, a steamer left Galway for Cong every afternoon some time about three o'clock, so we dawdled away the morning looking over bridges and sauntering past the Claddagh, that ancient thatched village of fishermen about whose succession of kings all the world has heard, and revisiting the old streets of grey steep houses—idling cheerfully, in fact, till three o'clock should come round. It was difficult to find any inhabitant of Galway who had ever been to Cong or who knew where the Cong boat started from. There was a small boy in the hotel, however, who knew all about it and who arranged to take our luggage to the boat on a wheelbarrow in good time. Consequently, we settled ourselves down to contentment, taking a long noon's enjoyment out of the dusty and deserted town.

Practically everybody else had gone to the races again. We did not dare. As I have said, it was our one purpose in life to catch that three-o'clock boat to Cong.

It was about half an hour before the boat was due to start that we set off from the hotel accompanied by a small boy wheeling a great load of bags on a barrow. It was only a step to the river. There was no sign of life when we came within view of it. It lay still as a deserted lake in the palace grounds of some sleeping beauty. Rather it moved stilly on its way to the weir, after which, no doubt, it plunged and gushed like a young thing towards the sea.

The only trace of man to be seen was a distant high-kneed figure lying back against the white wall of a house, smoking and enjoying the sun. As we passed on our way to the landing-stage for the Cong boat, this figure suddenly busied itself to its feet and hailed us across a little quadrangular inlet of water.

At first we could not hear what the man said : he was simply a vain shout and a pipe waved vigorously in the air. Then we caught the words—

“ Are yous for the boat ? ”

We told him we were.

“ There'll be no boat to-day,” he told us.

“ There's no boat leaves here till to-morrow.”

We refused to believe such a thing after all

those hours of waiting and with the barrow of luggage beside us. What was the matter? we asked him.

“The captain’s gone to the races,” he called back, “and there’ll be no boat leave here till to-morrow.”

We protested that no public announcement of this earth-shaking change had been made in the time-table of the Cong steamer.

“Well,” declared the man, who had evidently no sympathy with our indignation, “they always stop work for the races. You’ll see wonders if ever you see the Cong boat leaving and the races going on.”

In case the man with the pipe might be suffering from hallucination, we bade the boy wheel the barrow on as far as the landing-stage, where a sort of a tug was lying as if awaiting the last trump. One could go aboard her and walk up and down and shout down every hole or hatchway, but there was not even an echo of response. It was as eerie as examining a derelict. It was no occasion for artistic emotions, however. With the feelings that most people translate into oaths we turned and marched back with the small boy and the wheelbarrow to the hotel.

I felt in the mood for writing a pamphlet. It would have traced back the inertia of the Cong boat during the race-meeting to Strongbow’s invasion of Ireland. Here, I told myself, was the

culminating incident of seven hundred years' disorganisation of national habits and culture. For the successors of Strongbow were able almost to destroy a civilisation in Ireland, but they never were able to build a new one in its place. Event followed event in confirmation of the theory elucidated in that unwritten pamphlet. First, when we went to the railway station to make inquiries about other ways of reaching Cong, we were told that the only way we could get there even by the early part of the next day was to take a train away back into the heart of Ireland to Athlone, then to take another train up towards Roscommon, to change somewhere into yet another train for Ballinrobe, where we would arrive in time for bed, and from which we could take a car to Cong the next morning. It was an extravagant way of getting at Cong, but we were desperate. We had by now developed a passion for reaching Cong which would not be gainsaid. So we bade the girl at the booking-office write out our tickets. The guard examined them before the train left and at once informed us that we were going on an unnecessarily roundabout journey. Why hadn't we booked *via* Athenry to Ballinrobe—which was very much shorter and cheaper?

I felt that the girl in the booking-office, who had told us that the only way to Ballinrobe that evening was by Athlone, was a serpent. I dared

not leave my seat to tell her so, however. If I had, the train would have gone on without me. When we were getting near Athenry, I suggested to a ticket collector that we might change at Athenry and go to Ballinrobe by the rational way, but he assured us that, if we did, we would have to get new tickets, and pay extra, for a different company owned that part of the line. I have always believed in the nationalisation of the Irish railways, but never quite so fiercely as at that moment. I sat in the train, indeed, and damned private property in railways till I began to feel quite cheerful again. "Oh for one hour of Sidney Webb!" I cried to the stones in the fields.

But perhaps Sir Horace Plunkett is better still. He stands above all for organisation, whether it is organisation of business or organisation of social life. And it is exactly organisation that foreign influence has killed in the west of Ireland. Sentimental people are apt to become enthusiastic over this disorganisation when it appears in the life of peasants. It is regarded as peculiarly picturesque and Irish. When it expresses itself among the middle classes, however, as bad business and bad manners, we all lose our tolerance. . . . But it may be that the affair of the tickets made me unusually resentful of that young man with the little cap and the black pompom of hair falling over his lean face and the abounding black bow and the knickers and the yellow boots, who lit

his race-meeting cigar without asking any of the women in the carriage (which was not a smoking carriage) if they objected.

There were chocolates at Athlone, and an old bright-eyed man with scanty white hair who could speak Irish was in the carriage on the way to Claremorris with his young wife and his amazingly young child. He was an old child himself to look at—not a patriarch at all, but a happy child. Then there was a ruddy-faced conversational man in checks and a dust-coat who got into the train that took us from Claremorris to Ballinrobe. He had just got back from Galway races, and told us how much he had made at them. Not only this, but how reasonably, considering the crush, the hotel had charged him—how much for supper, how much for bed, how much for breakfast. He brought out his bill to show us the details. He was more interesting when he began to talk about the industrial revival in that part of the country, and how many thousands of pounds' worth of Irish homespun and friezes went from factories in the neighbourhood—to Selfridge's, I think it was. . . .

Ballinrobe Station, when we arrived there, seemed to be the porch of the outer darkness. We had been given the name of a hotel, and, when we mentioned it, a lean giant fell out of the darkness upon our luggage and marched us off into a night that was without stars or peep

of any lamp. He said the hotel wasn't far and that there was no horse at the station, so off we walked with him, stumbling in the ruts of an unseen road, until the sound of running water close to us and the murmur of trees stirring overhead made us wonder if we were not being conducted on some fearful errand to a castle in the heart of a bloody wood. Suddenly, however, a gate was dashed backwards, and we were passing through a dimly lit hall into a room adorned with huge imitation fishes in glass cases and all the other symbols of a hotel for anglers.

Here was quietness and even luxury after Galway. Here was the silence of comfort, not the silence of desolation. . . . If I were a fisherman, I should certainly find my way back to Ballinrobe and the hotels for anglers in that part of the world. There is a great deal of nonsense talked about the discomforts and bad cooking of the hotels of Ireland. The worst Irish hotels, of course, are adventures in the unspeakable. But then the worst are very rare, and they are seldom to be found, so far as my experience can be trusted, in the fishing districts.

Ballinrobe, indeed, is a fine bright town, as we discovered the next morning when, having deliberately missed the early morning mail-car to Cong, we strolled out in its sunny streets with their pleasant house-fronts washed in manycolours. Not that there are not banks and other worthy

institutions to dignify the place, but the occasional house-fronts that, instead of being white-washed, are yellow-washed or blue-washed, seemed to me to give it its distinctive note. It looks prosperous enough, but, like most Irish towns, it is only a relic of its old self. I see from a guide-book that it has now 1544 inhabitants. Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, which was published in 1851, gave the population at that time as 2604. That is a measure of the way in which the towns of Ireland have managed to progress backwards under the Union.

It was a muscular man with cheeks as red as a lobster and hair cropped close to the skull who came to drive us to Cong. He was a dark man, and his Adam's apple hung like a dewlap under his blazing face. He wore a peaked cap down on his over-white eyes, and his wide mouth curved in obliging, if somewhat cynical, smiles. More than middle-aged, he had seen the world and could not help feeling discontented at the fate which had ended in making him a jarvey among these fields of slumber. As he drove, he kept spitting into his hands each time he gave a tug at the reins, and shaking his head over the condition of Ireland.

Out on the high road our car sailed along, a fly in the sun, and gave us every moment a larger view of the bluebell-coloured mountains piled up in beauty on the far side of Lough Mask. It was a country to evoke enthusiasm, but the driver,



spitting vigorously into his hands, did not find it so.

“There’s a heap of money going about,” he declared, with a wink which was half a grimace, as he offered his personal diagnosis of the condition of Ireland—“a heap of money that nobody knows where it comes from. Did you ever read any Irish history, sir? I’ve often heard them tell the story that seven or eight hundred years ago the English Queen Elizabeth sent over one of her biggest generals to this part of Ireland to bate the Irish. But the Irish were the best soldiers in the world then, and, good and all as he was, the Englishman could do nothing against them, and they slewed him. Well, that makes Elizabeth angry, and she sends over her next best general, and they slewed *him*. And the next best after that, and they slewed *him*, till in the end of the story the Queen says till herself, says she: ‘It’s no use. England’s done,’ says she. ‘We may as well admit we’re bet.’ With that, the cleverest Englishman that was living at that time ups and says he can tell the Queen a most potent way for dealing with the Irish. ‘I know Ireland well,’ says he, ‘and it’s no use your trying to bate them at fair fighting. There’s only one way,’ says he. ‘Let you send me over among them with an odd bag of gold,’ says he, ‘and I’ll dash a bit of money about amongst them, and see if I don’t have them fighting like a lot of game

cocks in less than no time !' Well, that was the first Englishman that ever knew how to bate the Irish, and he was made a Duke or an Earl for it. 'Dash a bit of money about amongst them,' says he, and be damned if they have been doing anything else ever since."

I suggested that it was robbery, not bribery, from which Ireland had suffered most.

"Well," said he, spitting rapidly into one hand after the other, "say what you like, but there's queer goings-on. I tell you there's men going about here and there all over the County Mayo, and some people gets money, and some gets none, and the money must come from somewhere. Oh, there'll be exposures one of these days, sir," said he, with a leer of satisfaction, "and don't forget I told you. There's money slipping from this hand to that, I tell you, this present day just the same as ever there was."

Even the bluebell-coloured hills which lured us from beyond the low-lying lake paled in comparison with this gorgeous version of Irish history. And yet, though it had the form of a fairy-tale, it had, like so many fairy-tales, an indubitable soul of fact. Was it not Bacon who commended the "princely policy" of Elizabeth in weakening the Irish by "dividing the heads"? As for the modern corruption of which the driver spoke, I imagine he was thinking of some spending institution such as the Congested Districts Board

—one of the Balfourian inventions for killing Home Rule with doles. If these were what his mind was in such jumbled revolt against, I agree with him. Much good as they have unquestionably done, they have done it in the way which least encourages the spirit of self-reliance and independence among the people. But then I think the whole system which makes the people turn their eyes to London instead of to themselves for help is an incitement to servility.

Most people would conclude from the driver's conversation that he must be something of an extreme Nationalist. But the truth is, he had no more politics than the horse, and his phantasmagoric beliefs and prejudices were quite independent of any logical creed. I found this out when I asked him about Captain Boycott, the land-agent whose name gave a new word to the English language thirty years ago owing to his bad relations with the tenantry in this neighbourhood. The circumstances of the Boycott affair are, perhaps, worth recalling. Parnell had advised the tenant-farmers at a great meeting in Ennis in the summer of 1880 to cease to pay rack-rents to the landlords, but to offer them what they thought was a just rent instead. Captain Boycott, who was agent for the Earl of Erne, got into some trouble with the labourers and tenants at the time, and took steps to evict the latter for their impudence. Parnell,

however, in his speech of a month before, had suggested a new method for countering evictions. This was to put into Coventry, as the English say, any man who "grabbed" or took possession of an evicted tenant's farm. This system was now put in operation against Captain Boycott. His labourers fell away from him. His servants escaped from his house as though he had been a leper. Blacksmiths, shopkeepers, washerwomen—everybody suddenly found some excuse for refusing to have any dealings with him, and he and the British Constitution were left like two little cockleshells in peril amid the tumultuous seas of agrarian war. The Orangemen of the north, who have so often been misled into believing that the Irish of the south and west are criminals of the rack and thumbscrew order, resolved to do battle for a land-agent who was at least a Protestant, and fifty of them boldly set off to Mayo to gather in the crops of Captain Boycott, and to raise the banner of the Lord against the idolators once more.

I confess I like to think of that little band of Orangemen. They were as wrong as anybody, Protestant or Catholic, who ever fought for sectarianism instead of liberty, but they had at least the courage of their wrongness. They were fighting in a lost cause, however, and though, with the help of an army of police and redcoats, who threatened the countryside with their

field-pieces; they saved the Captain's crops to the value of £350, they did so at a cost of ten times that amount, and Captain Boycott, finding the game not worth the candle, at last packed his trunk for England. It is said to have been the local priest, Father John O'Malley, who invented the verb "to boycott" as a help to an American journalist who could think of no word but the pallid "ostracise" to describe what was being done in the neighbourhood of Lough Mask.

"That was a man was never treated fair," the carman assured us, when we asked him about Captain Boycott's Castle. "There was no justice in the way he was used at all."

But he could give no reasons for his opinion except in such vague phrases as that the Captain was "a nice gentleman."

Frankly, I think that boycotting is a very questionable weapon. It is so capable of abuse in the hands of men who have personal, not social, ends to serve. But, before we become self-righteous in condemning it, we must remember that Parnell proposed it, not as you propose a desirable law, but as the alternative to the horrors of crime which make land wars bloody like Imperial and religious and civil wars. Oppression breeds crime in a normal human society as surely as filth breeds pestilence. Parnell wished to reply to the crimes of oppression, not with other crimes of retaliation, but with a

militant trade union of the Irish farmers. Looking at the whole business impartially as a piece of history, we can only say that his methods were successful and his ideals such as most men have come to think right. Both the English political parties have conceded as much—the Liberals in Mr. Gladstone's Land Act of 1881, and the Conservatives in Mr. Wyndham's Land Act of 1903. Both of these Acts were simply adaptations of the policy of the Land League.

"I'm surprised to hear you praising Captain Boycott so much," I said to the driver at the end of his tirade of praise. "Do you not think Michael Davitt was a finer character?"

"Ah, Davitt was a fine man, too," he replied. "If it wasn't for Davitt where would the poor farmer be? Will you tell me this—who has a better right to a farm than the man that farms it? And wasn't it Davitt that made it worth a farmer's while to be living at all? I tell you what it is, we need another Davitt badly."

And he proceeded indignantly to relate how some one had refused to sell him a small field that he wanted for his horse, and he seemed to think that, if Davitt were alive, he would bring in a law compelling the other man to make the sale.

"And I tell you who was another fine man," he went on, nodding dogmatically over his reins—"Sanders."

"Who was he?" I asked.

“Sanders. He was a Member of Parliament. He was from the north.”

“You don’t mean Colonel Saunderson, the Orangeman?” said I.

“That’s the man,” he declared. “He was a fine man, that.”

Really, I could not hope to keep pace with politics so elusive and swift-footed, and I was relieved when he drew our attention to a curious stone structure—a thing like a grandstand of stone slabs with a sign or weathercock of some sort on the top—standing behind the wall of an estate.

“Do you know what that is?” he asked us.

I guessed it was some funeral monument.

“Not at all,” he said contemptuously. “That’s where they used to sit and watch the cock-fighting—ah, it would be seven hundred years ago, maybe.” He had a taste for good stiff numbers.

He then began to question us as to our visit to that part of the country, and lamented when he heard that we were the merest birds of passage. If we had been staying any length of time, either he could have put us up himself or could have introduced us into some nice country cottage in the district.

“The mistake everybody makes,” he told us, “is going to them robbing hotels. Sure, what attraction is it for visitors when, every time they

go to bed and sit down to their breakfast it means maybe half a sovereign or more out of their pockets? That's a nice hotel you were staying in, but what's the use of paying pounds when shillings would do. If ever you're coming back this way, sir, let you send me a postcard and I'll find you a nice clean room where you can have all you want for fifteen shillings a week—there or thereabouts—is that too much, ma'am? Of course, it would be simple cooking—a chicken or a piece of roast-beef, or maybe a salmon out of the lough, and an apple pie or a rhubarb pie to follow. Plain, simple cooking, ma'am, and no dhrawin'-room dishes, but maybe you'd be better without them."

And so he flowed on and on and on, shaking his head and jiggling the reins and spitting into his hands, as the car rattled us on down towards one of the very capitals of Irish history. As we came to a modern stone gateway just outside the entrance to the little town, he turned round and pointed his whip at the place.

"Many's the stone you and me helped to put into that wall, ma'am," he said with a grin.

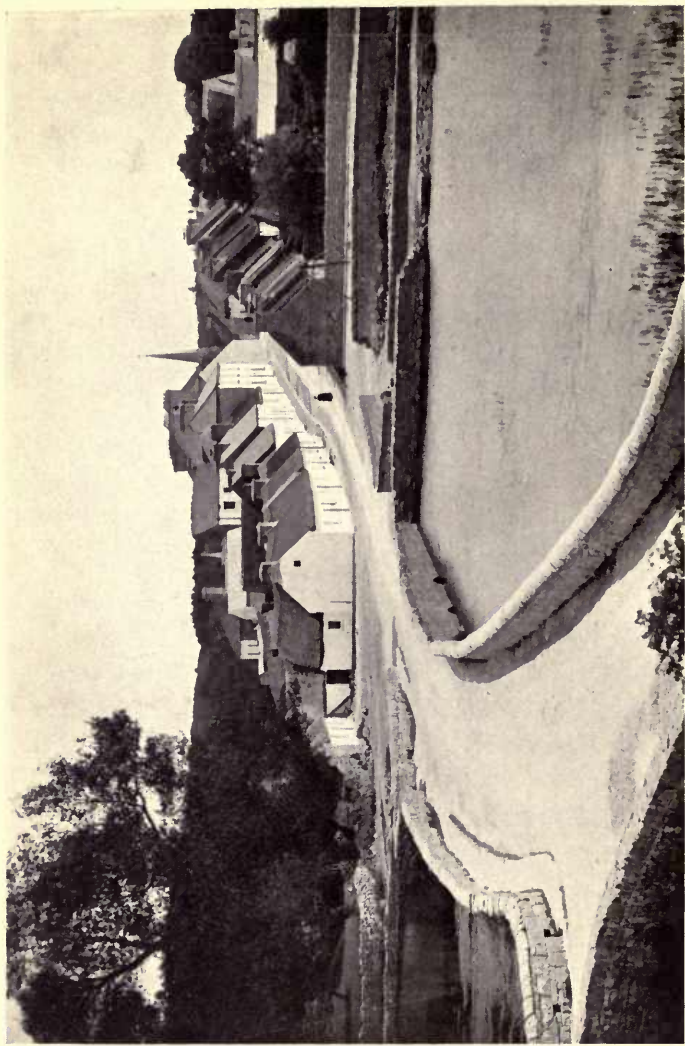
"Oh?" said my companion, rather puzzled.

"That's Lord Ardilaun's place," he explained, enjoying his joke—"him that owns Guinness's brewery. Everything you see there was once bottles of stout. Hupp, horse!"

And it was not very long now till we were







Lawrence.

CONG.

mounting past the dumpy little stone cross that guards the middle of the main street of Cong, and alighting stiffly at the door of the something-or-other Arms.

Here in this grey and green land between the waters of Mask and Corrib is a scene of many significant memories for Ireland. It was on the great plain of Moytura outside Cong that, nineteen hundred years before Christ, and two hundred years before the Gaelic Irish had set foot in the country, the fair godlike race of the Tuatha Dé Danaan contested with the short dark Firbolg people for the sovereignty of Ireland. The Firbolg (or Bagmen, as their name has been translated) had been rulers of the country for less than half a century. They had come from Greece where the Greeks had used them as slaves and had, says the legend, compelled them to carry clay in leathern wallets on their backs up the terraces of the rocky hills to make them fertile and rich. Escaping to Ireland, they had but a short reign of triumph there, for they met with more than one conqueror.

But even to-day, it is said, it is the children of the Firbolg, not the children of the Gael, whom you see in the poorest stretches of the west, guarding their little fields of stones with a tenacity of affection which company-promoters and the other efficient children of civilisation do not understand. One hears it said, too, that it is

among these small, swarthy, blue-eyed people, with the prominent Adam's apples, that the only really Celtic element in the population of Ireland is to be found. On questions like this I can speak with no authority, but I believe it is a growing opinion among students of race that the Gaelic Irish, though speaking a Celtic language, are not a Celtic people—that they are a northern people, indeed, akin to the Germanic races, and that they came from the shores of the Baltic and the region of the Elbe.

As for the Tuatha Dé Danaan (“the Hosts of the Gods whose mother was Dana”) who overthrew the Firbolg on the plain outside Cong, they were a tall, fair, and beautiful people, who are also said to have dwelt in Greece, where they were famous as magicians. Some say that they reached Ireland by way of Scandinavia, Scotland, and the north-east of Ulster, alighting “in the midst of dark clouds, so that the sun was hidden for the space of three days and for three nights also.” Others, however, have declared that the Danaan people came direct to Ireland from heaven. “They had no vessels. . . . No one really knows whether it was over the heavens, or out of the heavens, or out of the earth that they came. Were they demons of the devil . . . were they men?” Whatever they may have been by birth, they too, it seems, have survived on into modern Ireland. For, when they finally

went down before the Gael at Teltown in County Meath, they betook themselves under the hills, where they dwell in palaces that the eye cannot see, and drink the ale of youth and feast upon immortal dishes, and men speak of them as the Good People, the Gentry, and the Fairies (or Sidhe). Their golden presences, moreover, have never ceased to flash out into the business of the world when Ireland has gone out to battle or been in straits. And their descendants are said to be among us also in the grosser human form. "Every one," MacFirbis has declared, "who is fair-haired, vengeful, large, and every plunderer, professors of musical and entertaining performances who are adepts of Druidical and magical arts, they are the descendants of the Tuatha Dé Danaan."

Naturally, those who like their history and legend moralised translate the ancient conflict between the two peoples on the stony fields of Cong as a battle between intellect and ignorance. This interpretation, however, hardly fits in with the fact that Eochaidh (Yohee), the Firbolg king (the place of whose fall and death was till recently marked by a cairn many miles to the north of the battlefield<sup>1</sup>), was the ruler who first

<sup>1</sup> Eochaidh fled northwards; "but was overtaken and slain on the great strand of Trawshelly near Ballysodare in the County Sligo. . . . He was buried where he fell, and a cairn was raised over him on the strand. This cairn stood till the year 1853; and, though it did not rise high over the level of the strand, the tide never covered it, and

introduced law into Ireland. "He reigned ten years," says M. D'Arbois de Jubainville; "during his time there was no rain or tempestuous weather in Ireland, the land being watered by dew. In his reign law made its first appearance. No year passed without judgment being given; all war ceased, and spears, being no longer of any use, disappeared from the land." It was the herald of a peaceful people, then, who went out from the camp of the Firbolg to demand of the Tuatha Dé Danaan the cause of their coming to Ireland, and we are told that his two spears were pointless, while the two spears of the Danaan herald were sharp-pointed and light as javelins. The heralds talked together in Irish and exchanged spears, and, before they parted, the herald of the newcomers made a proposal that Ireland should be divided in two, and that the Firbolg should take one-half and the Tuatha Dé Danaan the other. Peace-loving though they were, the Firbolg refused, and the others, being alarmed at the sight of the heavy pointless (and, as they thought, superior) spears of the enemy, made a precipitate retreat, but were overtaken on the Plain of Moytura. Nuada of the Silver Hand, the Danaan king, again proposed the division of the island between the two races, but once more Eochaidh

never could, as the old records had it, and as the peasantry firmly believed till the last day of its existence."—See Dr. P. W. Joyce's *Wonders of Ireland*.

would not hear of such a thing. Consequently—for they were a gentlemanly people in those days—Nuada asked them when they would be ready for the battle which must follow.

“We must have time,” replied the others, “to make ready our spears, and burnish our helmets, and sharpen our swords; then we should require spears like yours, and you, also, spears like those we have.”

So both sides agreed to an armistice of a hundred and five days, after which—another brave incident—they decided to settle the business, not by a stupid conflict between huge and impersonal armies, but by a series of daily combats between equal numbers of chosen warriors. They fought in this way for four days, beginning on the 5th of June, and each day the Danaan champions won. On the fifth day, the Firbolg proposed that three hundred warriors on each side should meet in a final engagement, and whichever side won should be accounted the victor. To this suggestion the Tuatha Dé Danaan replied by offering to leave the whole of Connacht to the Firbolg as their kingdom. The Firbolg wisely accepted this arrangement and gathered into the west out of the other provinces. It was the Firbolg, by the way, who first divided Ireland into provinces and gave them their names. It is also worth noting, before we pass on from the battle of Moytura, that it was on this occasion that Nuada

of the Silver Hand earned his name. His hand having been cut off in the fight, one of the magical craftsmen who were so numerous in his camp made him a new hand of silver. He was to lead the Tuatha Dé Danaan some years later to another great victory on another Moytura—the victory over the Fomorian savages and pirates on Moytura of Sligo.

Those who are susceptible to fairy influences or imaginings will do well to wander by Lough Corrib. For myself, I confess I am too much of a sceptic, and perhaps too little adventurous, to have any traffic with this phantom population of the air. So, while I was in Cong, I sought the traces not of these warrior ghosts—ghosts for whose objective reality an enthusiastic American, Mr. Evans Wentz, has recently advanced some plausible arguments—but of kings and saints and such opaque creatures. One cannot go to that grey bleached ruin of the Abbey hidden so gently from the world down there by the quiet water without getting the reflection of a vision of the old scholarly and missionary Ireland which built its little cities in almost every beautiful nook of the four provinces. The Abbey has to some extent been restored in the last century; honestly restored, however, and only sufficiently to keep its ruined fragments from falling in a heap.

Hither to this secret garden, still one of the



greenest places in the world, as the ivy springs from it up over the face of the old church, and as its high trees give a shadow to the birds that sing victories over the ancient graves, Rory O'Connor, the last King of Ireland, came in search of pious forgetfulness, when the hosts of the Irish broke against the mailed fist of the Normans. There had been a church here for five hundred years before that, a church founded by St. Fechin, and as recently as a century and a half before Rory O'Connor, the penitential bed of the saint had been the scene of a miracle, for out of the earth beside it in the hour when Brian Boru died after his victory over the Danes on the shores of Dublin Bay a well of blood suddenly poured.

It was King Rory, according to some authorities, who brought to Cong Abbey the beautiful cross of many metals which has made the name of Cong famous wherever people care for the art of the Middle Ages. The Cross of Cong, which is now in the National Museum in Dublin, is said to enshrine a fragment of "the Cross on which the Founder of the World suffered," but that is not the reason why people nowadays speak of it with enthusiasm. It is treasured chiefly because in its golden traceries, in its delicate beauty of silver and copper and enamel and bronze, is a challenge to all the world to consider the civilisation that Ireland had built up within herself before the Normans

had ever set fire to a church within her shores.<sup>1</sup> It announces the culture of medieval Ireland to us as surely as a statue of Pheidias announces the culture of Periclean Athens. It is only a tiny instance, of course, of the many remains of the medieval arts and crafts that have come down to us, and to me, at least, who am no professor of jewellery, it means a good deal less than a story or even an illuminated manuscript. Still, even if the old civilisation had been wrecked to such an extent that nothing had survived out of it but the old processional Cross of Cong, we would still have a proof that it was no territory of barbarians that the Normans set out to loot in the twelfth century.

The present Abbey of Cong, I believe, goes back to that century. We know that an older Abbey was burned in 1114, and it was to the new monastery which was built after the fire that King Rory withdrew from his defeats. Though he died here, however, he does not lie in the Abbey graveyard, for his body was taken to Clonmacnoise, and a sadly inexact inscription written over it: "Rory O'Connor, King of all Ireland, both of the Irish and English."

If the shadow of the old monkish king still paces these cloisters, muttering over the tale of his sins and weighing each of them in turn against

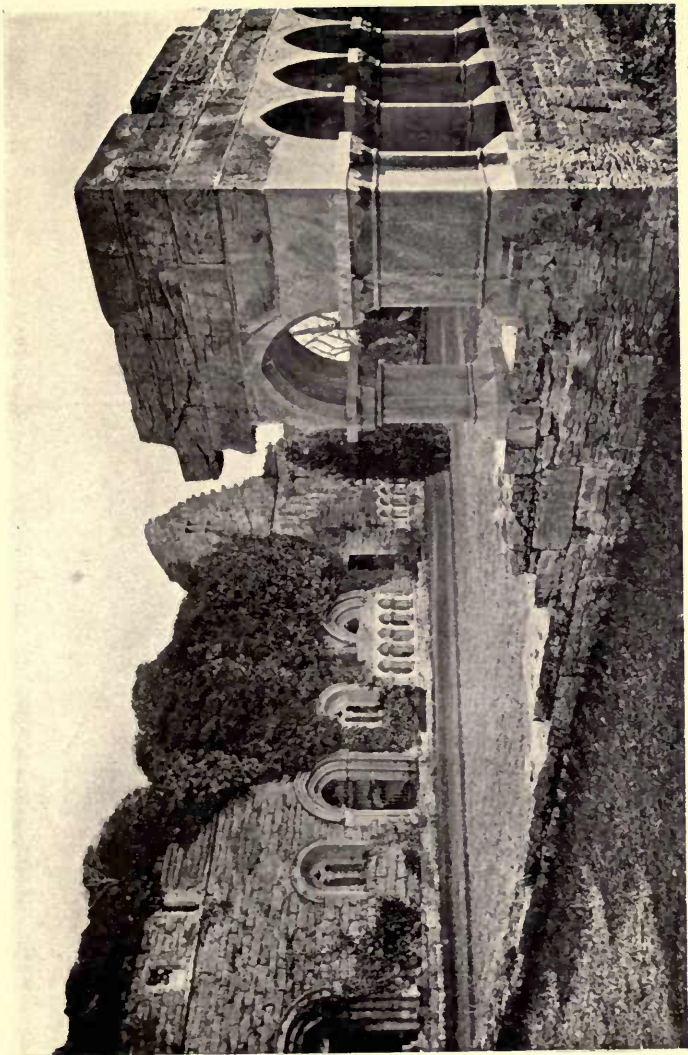
<sup>1</sup> Not that the Gael always behaved like a twentieth-century Sunday-school teacher.

the throne from which he was an exile, he does so under the eye of Lord Ardilaun, or, at least, of Lord Ardilaun's attendant. For Lord Ardilaun has undertaken to look after the ruin which his father repaired with excellent national spirit, and a locked bridge now connects the Abbey and Lord Ardilaun's grounds, while a paid attendant of his tracks you round the ruin as though he suspected you would be robbing the tombs. I do not resent unduly the presence of caretakers in churches and such places, but I hold that they should be something better than detectives, and should have some ornament of eloquence or humour or learning, however inaccurate, in keeping with the atmosphere of the place. Perhaps the silent and rather somnolent boy who guarded the Abbey when we visited it was only a temporary substitute. Whether this is so or not, he was utterly immune from the romance of the place: one might as well have tried to get sad stories of the death of kings from a stone. He was as unatmospheric as a guide-book, and he did not seem to know even bare guide-book facts. I would suggest to Lord Ardilaun, and to all others indeed who have charge of ancient monuments, that they should institute an examination in myth and history and natural raciness for would-be caretakers. Every caretaker who is not something of a talking book by nature ought to be locked up in a library for at least an hour a day

till the resurrection of the dead world and the dead imagination becomes an accomplished fact in him.

Indeed, there is no reason that I can see—if this is not too much of a digression—why these caretakers should not develop into the librarians of the villages, and become much-needed centres of learning and imaginative revival.

It was a hospitable friend from the village and not the official caretaker who led us to the ivied tower of the Abbey, and to the chamber that is heaped high with bleached skulls and thigh-bones—I wonder why no one buries them—and who showed us the isolated and wired-off grave of some one who had, if I remember right, been wicked, but may really have only been unpopular. And it was he who took us to the little ruin of the Monks' Fishing Lodge which runs out into the water, a tiny jetty, and where I lay and smoked and watched the trout jumping out of the smooth running water through the long sunny hours of an afternoon. I do not think that I have ever seen a more beautiful solitude than this. The place breathed retreat. The robin in the high willow sang silence. The trout that leaped out of the water every now and then with a little silver flash seemed like a visitor to the very confines of the world's stillness. The water scarcely murmured as it flowed past the jetty—only an echo of a whisper against the stones. I



[*Lawrence.*

CONG ABBEY.



tell you I almost envied King Rory brooding over his sins and defeats, as I lay there while the sun blazed down out of a blue sky and the trees hid us from the hills. Here, I felt, I too could have discovered holy and comforting thoughts as I caught my Friday's dinner. Here amid men who wrought a new beauty into the pages of the Gospels in gold and colour, and who praised the Lord with crafts and with learning between bell and bell, even a kingdom might come to seem but a little unstable eminence like a wave in the sea. But, all the same, Rory, I'm sure that you must often have wished that your prayers were swords, and that you might have borne your cross as Brian did at the head of an army, and have seen your enemies going down before you like the trees in a burning wood.

I pray I may survive to visit Cong again, and on a propitious day. I am afraid the Abbey proved too charming to us to allow us to see much else of the place. Of course, we could not avoid seeing the foolish, dry, boulder-strewn bed of the canal that was cut to connect Lough Mask and Lough Corrib more than half a century ago—the canal which, after it was made, was found to be unable to hold any water owing, as the guide-book says, to “the porous and permeable character of the stone”—but monuments of ineptitude like this are one of the least inspiring features of modern Ireland. It was at the time of the

Great Famine that this canal was begun,<sup>1</sup> and, though the scheme was such a failure, it was at least more sane in its intention than those other Manchesterised methods of relief, according to which starving peasants were told off to dig holes in the ground and fill them up again for fear more useful work might compete with the private enterprises of men of capital.

I have heard it said that good engineering might even yet make something of the canal, but I know nothing about that. At present, Lough Mask pours itself into Lough Corrib through a chain of underground caverns, where, to judge from the descriptions of others, there are some pleasant weird sensations to be had. But we could not tear ourselves away from the Abbey to visit them, and, when we did at last get back to the hotel, we were sun-surfeited, and, besides, there was a tipsy knickerbockered commercial traveller with an eye like a fish at the same table with us for tea, whose conversation would not come to an end.

In the evening, to make up for an hour of balderdash—— But I can give you no impression of the hospitable evening we spent in that pleasant house on the top of the hill, where we talked of the Fenians, and the Wildes, and the Dublin poets, and all things and persons between heaven

<sup>1</sup> According to one authority, but I have heard it contradicted on better.



and Ireland. It was strange out here in a little burning centre of Nationalism to meet those who had known Oscar Wilde in his Irish days and remembered his charm, and it was stranger still to think that Wilde could have lived among these enchanted lakes and hills—his father, Sir William Wilde, famous as an antiquary, had a house not far out of the village—and could have missed finding here the true Greece of a modern Irishman. It has been suggested that, if he had been born twenty years later, the Irish literary revival would have given his genius a foundation upon which to build imperishable things beyond anything he succeeded in fashioning in his idle exile. This seems to me to be scarcely disputable. But then I am a bigot on the matter of nationality and genius.

Next morning broke with a thin shivering sun, and it was a cold drive we had down to the pier where the Galway steamer—the steamer that should have brought us from Galway two days before—was waiting to take us down Lough Corrib with its long family of islands. We had heard strange rumours of the lake. It was said to be so shallow in parts that the steamer had a way of running its nose on banks of mud, whereupon all passengers would be ordered to the stern so as to seesaw the bow into the air while the boat was backed into safety. There were tales of unknown rocks, too, that

jagged black spires up towards the surface of the water. Certainly, the Lilliputian steamer looked an adventurous craft to trust to the chances of nearly forty-five thousand acres of islands and water. Out we beat, however, under a captain who seemed bigger than the boat he commanded, and I would not ask a pleasanter voyage than along the marked and winding channel of the lake on a golden day. It had turned grey now, unfortunately. Even with the islands and the distant hills and broken castles in lonely fields here and there guarding the memories of the shore, there was little beauty in the day. Cong itself might have seemed a mere affair for an antiquary on such a day as this. I was hoping—for I had studied my map badly—to see the famous Hen's Castle, said to have been built by a cock and a hen in a single night, on our way out of Cong, but this old foundation, as we learned, lies in the water along another of the northern arms of the lake. Here are memories, not only of King Rory, but of Grace O'Malley—Granuaile, as we call her—the woman admiral of Clew Bay, who was ready to face the fleets of Queen Elizabeth, and who was damned as a pirate and a thief for her genius. Lady Wilde has left it on record that Hen's Castle (or, in Irish, Caislean na Circe) is also a place of ghostly influences. "Strange lights are sometimes seen flitting through it, and on some particular midnight a crowd of boats gather

round it, filled with men dressed in green with red sashes. And they row about till the cock crows, when they suddenly vanish, and the cries of children are heard in the air. Then the people know that there has been a death somewhere in the region, and that the Sidhe (fairies) have been stealing the young mortal children, and leaving some ill-favoured brat in the cradle in place of the true child."

Inchagoill—Inis an Ghaill Chráibhtigh, or the Island of the Pious Foreigner—is another of the many islands that attracts at least by the romance of its name, and it lies not many miles out from Cong with its dismantled churches and its trees. But the steamer is a business, not a pleasure, venture, and did not offer to stop here. Inchagoill is said to contain the gravestone of Lugnath, who was Patrick's sister's son and a mariner. But whether the Lugnath who is buried there is the saint's nephew or not seems to be a debated matter.

It began to rain before we had achieved many of the twenty-seven miles of the lake, and tail-coated farmers and grey and brown and blackshawled women with egg-baskets and umbrellas stood in huddled groups like the fowl in a farmshed on a wet day on the several piers at which we stopped with groaning sides, and pushed their way aboard us till the captain would cry out to some distracted woman, who seemed to want to

be ashore and on the steamer at the same time, "If you can't behave yourself more quietly, I'll not take you at all."

And so we went through the islands—as in so many Irish lakes, there is said to be exactly an island here for every day in the year—and collected the countryside for the Galway market. Here from an island which was a tuft of pines a boat would push out with a man and a crooked stick for us, and there half a village of people would be waiting for us on the pier. One would wonder where so lively a population could come from on these deserted shores. Probably there were few people in the boat who did not speak Irish. There was a fashionably dressed priest talking volubly in it with a little group around him at the back of the boat. In obedience to one of the ten commandments of the Gaelic League—"Dheamhan acht Gaedhilg ins an nGaedhealtacht," which, being translated, is "Nothing but Irish in the Irish-speaking districts"—we too were dumb in any language but this—no small piece of self-denial to one who is so poor a linguist as I am.

On a box beside us an old farmer was sitting, his hands gathered on the top of his stick, a drip on the end of his nose, and, as the rain poured down upon him, overcoatless as he was, he gazed into emptiness with a twinkle in his eyes, and indeed all over his lean and ill-shaven whiskered face. He found great amusement in the way in which

a red, shy, foxy-faced neighbour kept ducking here and there behind boxes and people and trying to light his stump of a clay pipe out of the wind. And the scraps of Irish he heard from us served for his entertainment in the intervals during which the other man in exhaustion gave up his efforts. Then, borrowing the other's pipe and smoking it quite successfully for himself, he began to tell stories of how he once caught out a Gaelic League priest. He had asked the priest to tell him what was the Irish for Galway, his idea in doing so being that, as in some places it is pronounced "Galyiv" and in others "Galye," he would be able to tell the priest he was wrong, no matter which answer he gave, and to hold up the other pronunciation as the right one. He looked back on that victory over the priest with great satisfaction. Then he gave us another anecdote at the expense of the Irish revival. There was a man from his part of the country—a piper, I believe—who was taken to Dublin to play at an Irish concert there. And before it began the man of the concert said to him: "We want you to give us a keen."<sup>1</sup> "Well," replied the Mayo man, "let you bring a corpse and lay him down before me, and I'll keen him for you. What would be the sense of keening without a corpse?" Thus the old man garrolled on, getting a deal of amusement out of the Irish

<sup>1</sup> Lament.

revivalists, though, like most of the country people nowadays, he agreed with their aims.

He was especially interested to know what they called various things like telegraph-poles, and even in Irish he knew no word but "steamer" for a steamer. I told him the word I had got out of a grammar—"galtán." "That is it," he said, nodding agreement; "'gal' is smoke or steam. 'Galtán'—I never heard that word before, but I know it's right."

And, careless of the rain and of the scenery that was blotted out of all colour and wonder, we talked on through the crooked straits that connect the two great spaces of the lake, and across the second great space till we made direct for what seemed an impenetrable forest of tall rushes, and found the mouth of the river Corrib, from which we steamed down past Menlough Castle, which had a short time before been burnt one disastrous night, and, a little weary of all the stoppages and the wet air and the crowded deck of the steamer, we were soon carting our bags down a grey street of Galway again in the end of a little procession of ambling women with egg-baskets and farmers in weather-beaten hats of grotesque shapes—all making towards the settlement of carts and donkeys and pigs and noisy hens that to them for the day was Galway.

## CHAPTER III

### THROUGH LISDOONVARNA

It was the merest accident that we went to Lisdoonvarna. Our ambition was to get from Spiddle (a little desolate village about ten miles outside Galway, where we had been attending the opening of a summer school of Irish) to Killorglin, which is in County Kerry, in time for Puck Fair. As we left Spiddle on Monday morning and the Fair (according to the railway-guide) began on Wednesday, there would be little time except for jolts on cars and other jolts in railway trains in the interval. If we made the journey by Lisdoonvarna, it was partly because this involved the passage of Galway Bay by steamer to Ballyvaughan—for who can resist these little local steamers on a holiday?—and partly because a clerk in a ticket office had expatiated on the beauties of the Cliffs of Moher, which are the wonder of County Clare as Slieve League is the wonder of County Donegal. It had not often occurred to me before that time to go anywhere in Ireland purposely to see what is

called scenery. I do not like that ticketed and public sort of beauty. Going to see scenery always seems to me to be like taking an introduction to some famous man, not for the sake of a reasonable conversation, but for the sake of having met him. Perhaps it was just because I was full of all these prejudices that the clerk's suggestion seemed like the offer of a novel experience. And as it involved that sea-journey across Galway Bay, car-journeys across half (or what looked like half) of the County Clare, and made possible another long voyage on a local steamer up the mouth of the Shannon from Kilrush to Limerick, we yielded as a child yields to a bribe of sweets.

We reached Galway from Spiddle—we seemed to have been doing nothing but reaching Galway for a week past—in time for lunch. Then there was an hour for a smoke and a talk with the landlord of the hotel, who had boasts of knowing Mr. T. P. O'Connor, an old Galway student, and who before long was taking my address and promising to send me a box of shamrock on the next St. Patrick's Day—a box of shamrock, alas! which, as we journalists say, never materialised. Comfortably sighing out memories and promises, our host then accompanied us down to the quay, and, kindly, stout, conversational and sad under his little grey cap, he made the pace as easy as possible, always chiding our nervous desire to



hasten with a "Plenty of time, plenty of time!" that made one feel that one was in a land of lullaby.

Just as we left the hotel—at least it seemed like that—the air grew curiously still. It was as though all the winds had suddenly paused on tiptoe to hear a watch tick, or some other tiny sound. High up in the west, images of clouds like ghosts of the Brocken were mounting, ashen and here and there golden-edged and of the colour of dirty water. There was silver in the air, but no sun shining, at least not openly. The light dazzled one, and at the same time there was no genuine brightness in it. One had an eerie feeling that terrible things were trying to burst out upon the world. At one moment it was as though goblins had been at work turning all the metals into a multifarious liquid brew, and yonder in the sky we had a great molten sea of the stuff washing the feet of unearthly towers. The next moment it was as though all the colours except the colours of the rainbow had broken loose and occupied the heavens. In other words, it was one of the weirdest days you could see. No wonder that our host, hand in pocket, gazed at it in a kind of awe and said: "That's a curious sky. Surely, Mr. Lynd, that's a curious sky. I don't ever remember seeing a sky like that before. It's a curious sky, a curious sky. I wonder what it means."

That was the plain prose of it.

“I wouldn’t be a bit surprised if it thundered,” he went on; “you know, I wouldn’t be a bit surprised if it thundered. It’s a curious sky. I wonder what can be the meaning of it at all. I hope to God——” And then he suddenly checked himself, as though what he hoped to God were something too terrible to mention. After a moment’s pause, “I must ask the captain,” he said, with decision. And, in a heavy silence, our eyes fixed on the horror of that looming sky, we arrived at the quayside.

I do not know whether he asked the captain or not. If he did, he was much too considerate to communicate the result to us. Or, perhaps, it was that he had left very little time for parting sighs. In a few minutes, the prelude of shouts and banging gangways and bells was over, our good-byes spoken and our little two-decked tub of a steamer churning out into the desolate bay. Here, as we made our way out through the becalmed fishing-smacks, it was even stranger than on land. Under the sunless light the water was still and white, like an immense lake of milk—a lake of milk, however, in which reflections were curiously clear. Every tarry ship stood upon an image of itself, which hung down into the water as black as judgment. There were reflections from the land, reflections from the buoys in the water. Galway Bay was a mirror

of the fears that day. Then, suddenly, a monstrous piece of blackness broke through the surface, and, sailing a little triangular fin, made for us, and disappeared. Everybody on the boat began asking about it. "It's a porpoise," said one. "I never saw a porpoise in a calm like this," said another. And a fisherman, with a jacket over his blue jersey, spat into the sea, and said: "It's a shark." Then in another moment there was the same rising of the shape out of the water, only a little nearer this time, the same pirate fin, the same retreat under the sea, leaving us with the feeling that some sinister unknown power had been casting the evil eye on us. I understood then the superstition of sailors who believe that for a shark to follow a ship portends the death of some one aboard. That beast, as it came after us, seemed as inevitable as doom, breaking as it did into the stilly world in which our boat was the only thing that moved. . . . It was with some relief that we ultimately shook ourselves free of it and saw it swerving off towards the fishing-smacks, among which it could be seen rising now and then upon its peeping inky games. And then we saw no more of it. . . . Behind us slumbered Galway, grey and without smoke: out at sea the Aran Islands were black stains at the mouth of the bay: across in County Clare, whither we were going, the rocky hills rose from the water, scarred and barren and forbidding. . . .

On the quay at Ballyvaughan a row of wagonettes and cars was standing; they could have found room for at least thirteen times as many people as the steamer had brought across. Nearly all of them seemed to come from the hotels at Lisdoonvarna, which was ten miles off by the nearest road. We had already picked our hotel at a guess from a list we had seen in a railway-guide, and after some shouting we found the car that was connected with it. Then we got up and drove off till we came to the first public-house. It seems to be a ritual with drivers of cross-country cars to stop at the first public-house, or the one after, even if it be only a few yards away. All the cars and wagonettes pulled up either here or a door or two farther on. Then we started on our journey up into the grey and gloomy hills. One of Cromwell's generals is said to have declared of this part of the county—the barony of Burren, as it is called—that it didn't contain wood enough to hang a man, water enough to drown him, or earth enough to bury him, and certainly these introductory rocks reach an extreme pitch of desolation and wildness. Grey as a dead fire, they rise in the imagination as the field of old battles of the Stone Age, when small men rushed from their hiding behind the boulders and swung their little axes with murderous cries above the heads of their enemies. Corkscrew Hill, as the road is called which winds right and left, and left and

right, and right and left, till one is finally safe on the great plateau which absorbs so much of the county, is, so far as my experience goes, one of the wonderful roads of Ireland. To go along it in the dark, I imagine, would be to wander among the companies of the disembodied. The majority of people leave the cars to tug along on the round-about way, and themselves take short-cuts across the rough grassy patches that lie between bit and bit of the road up the face of the hill. Here at every step up the terraced slopes we seemed to be getting farther into a world of twilight and hilly mysteries. The greatest of the heights about us lay upon the land like the huge boss of a Titan's shield, a round of greyness.

Then, on the upper plain, we got on to the car again, and listened to the discourse of the red-whiskered driver on the demerits of the country, the foxes that creep among the unfenced hills, and the ancient stories of the County Clare. "Did you ever hear of Maighread Ruadh?" he asked. "She was a terrible woman. She lived—do you see the hill yonder in a line with the white house I'm showing you with the whip? Well, it's near that she had her castle, and there was a cross-roads near it, and they say she kept a gate at it, and, any traveller that came that way, she wouldn't let him past till he had paid her a toll of all she asked him. And, if he wouldn't pay, she would string him up: she would give him a

terrible doing, anyway. Well, for all she was cruel, there was one was crueller, and that was her husband. However it came about, one man wouldn't do her, and when the husband was away one time, what did she do but bring her lovers, twelve of them, into the castle, and had them waiting on her at the table dressed up as young girls. That went on till the husband got wind of it, and after that he hurries home and kills the twelve of them, and he takes Maighread Ruadh and—ah, he was a devil—ah, ma'am, begging your pardon, he cuts the breasts off her. Maybe it's only a story that's in it, but I always heard it told as a true story. They say it's hundreds and hundreds of years since that happened. . . .”

And with such stories of a medievalism that seems to have put forth its crimes and its sanctities abundantly in Ireland as elsewhere, the road slipped behind us. Here on the plateau the country stretched away mile after level mile with nothing to be seen on either hand but purple bogland silent and pathless, and no moving thing but the cars stringing out on the road ahead and behind us. Evening was deepening. We were soon caught in the fringes of slowly moving clouds, and rain began to patter. The clouds trailed over the hills, now coming lower, now parting and revealing to us faintly a square-shaped mountain far off on our left, Slieve



THE OLD-AGE PENSIONER.  
*From the painting by Paul Henry.*





Callan, which, the driver assured us, could be seen from any part of the County Clare. Mile after mile we jolted on through the solitude, till darkness had fallen and only a faint reddish light showed in the west. Then the road began to descend sharply. The horse stepped more briskly. Sudden lights appeared in the blackness, and with a sense of discovery we rattled down the hill into the settlement of hydropathics and hotels which is Lisdoonvarna, dropped into the twisted hollow of the town, and climbed a last little hill that took us to the hotel we had chosen so casually.

When we got off at the door, it was as though we had landed into the beginnings of a house-party—a house-party in which nearly every guest was a priest. The grey-haired lady in black who received us in the hall seemed more like the hostess of a country-house than the proprietor of a hotel; and, indeed, though there was business intelligence as well as the spirit of welcome marked in her face, it was as a hostess rather than a business woman that she went among her boisterous guests while we were there. We arrived just in time to get the last room in the hotel, and just in time for tea—for the arrangement of the meals here, like everything else, was in the correct Irish fashion, with tea instead of dinner in the evening. Priests were in crowds in the hall and passed one on the stairs, one humming a tune, another talking nonsense to a lot of

girls, another aloof and quietly smiling and entering into the high spirits of the place by proxy, like the elderly ladies from Limerick who sat with their knitting in the corners and looked on. The two or three boys who were there were romping about among the priests' legs, tugging at sticks with them, and playing all sorts of noisy scrimmaging games. Girls in high-necked blouses chattered, not with each other, but with groups of the clergy, in every square yard of the place, and the male laity in the persons of a few young men were thrust into a wallflower loneliness.

The gong for tea sounded, and we went in and sat down at one of the tables. In to the same table, a few minutes afterwards, came two young priests, one of them stout and tra-la-laing till he sat down, whereupon he stopped suddenly and said "Good evening." He guessed before long that we had not come to Lisdoonvarna to drink the waters. "I'm sure I don't know who does," he said, as he covered his bread thickly with jam. "They say there are more people ruin their health than get it back at Lisdoonvarna." "How's that?" said I. "Diversion," he replied. "Lisdoonvarna's a terrible place for diversion. Croquet and other exhausting games all day, and dancing and gaiety all night—I tell you, after a fortnight of Lisdoonvarna, it's only the strongest constitutions can do without a holiday." "Well,"

said the other priest, "the last time I was in Lisdoonvarna I stayed at the ——," naming one of the other hotels, "and it was about as dull a place as I ever knew." "That's true," said Friar Tuck; "down at the —— they do seriously try to cure their rheumatism and old age with doses of sulphur." "They're a stiff, formal lot," said his companion. "I never knew anybody to go there twice," Friar Tuck admitted. "Now nobody ever comes to this hotel that doesn't want to come back again. This is known as Liberty Hall — Liberty Hall," he repeated, rattling the knife on the edge of his plate to call the attention of the maid-servant and get her to bring round the teapot and fill his cup.

Naturally, it was only a matter of minutes till he discovered that we were Gaelic Leaguers.

"Ah!" he said. "Bó—a cow: I got that far. It's a terrible hard language. Do you think will it ever be spoken again? Bó—a cow. Hilloa, here's your man," he exclaimed, as a fair boyish priest came and sat down at the other side of us. "Here are two Gaelic Leaguers, Father ——, and I haven't a word for them but bó—a cow."

I do not think it was merely because he was a Gaelic Leaguer, or because he knew some of my friends, that I liked Father —— so warmly from the first. Nor was it altogether because he had so much the air of a liberal-minded young

Presbyterian minister (though, I will confess, I counted that to him for a virtue). But he was one of those men who radiate character ; he was at once intensely human and a fighter for ideas, as it were, with his fist. When you get a young Presbyterian minister like that, you usually find him struggling under the dead hand of his elders. When you get a young Catholic priest like that, it is not improbable that he is struggling under the dead hand of his Bishop. Our new friend with the bright hair and the boyish eyes was one of the victims of the war of a few years ago between the Bishops and the Irish people on the question of the place of Irish in the National University. The people, it may be remembered, demanded in ardent public meetings and through their County Councils that the Irish language should be an essential part of the curriculum in the new University. The Bishops, who apparently wanted the University to be a Catholic institution, attracting Catholic students from all parts of the English-speaking world, issued a decree through their Standing Committee in favour of leaving Irish an optional subject. Everywhere over the country the younger priests had been joining with the people in demanding fair treatment for a language which was known to at least a thousand times as many of the inhabitants of the country as any other language except English. The Bishops, who had declared the subject

a matter for fair argument, now began nearly everywhere to muzzle the pro-Irish priests. Dr. O'Hickey, the Professor of Irish at Maynooth, who championed the popular side, was requested to resign, and, when he refused, he was dismissed from his post. Those who talk about Ireland being Rome-ridden, if they were open to conviction, would see in this war between the Hierarchy and the Irish people and in the ultimate victory of the latter the clearest disproofs of their theory. Unfortunately, though the cause won, the priests who had fought for it did not. Many of them were not only temporarily silenced, but either lost promotion or were transferred to less important positions. Something like this had happened to our neighbour. Probably the officialdom of the Church did sincerely regard him as a crank, a hothead, and an unsafe person: official churches cannot be expected to look on ideas and enthusiasms except with suspicion. The young priest did not, on the other hand, put it that way. He was as merry as a saint, and was much too busy reviving games and education in his new district to grumble.

In so mysterious and desolate a countryside it was natural that the conversation should turn at one time or another on the supernatural beings with which the human imagination peoples such regions—on fairies and ghosts and those who have seen them or who believe they have seen them.

It was while we were discussing ghosts, and the question whether ghosts are ever audible and visible at the same time, that the priest told us about the only ghost he had ever seen—and heard. This had been at a funeral at which he had noticed a curious little grey priest in the procession. And this little sad-faced man had come and stood at his elbow by the graveside, and he had been struck by the beautiful silver tone of his voice and the melancholy expression of his features, as well as by the rather shabby clothes he was wearing. When the service was over, he turned to another priest and asked him who it was had been standing beside him at the grave.

“It was I was next to you,” said the other in surprise.

“No,” he had declared; “I mean the little grey-headed priest who was standing between us.”

And when he described the latter, he was told that there had been no priest answering that description at the funeral, but that the last priest of the parish in which they were had looked and spoken exactly like that, but he had died some time previously. The priest could not make up his mind whether he had seen a ghost or not. . . .

It was only weariness that kept us from going down into the village to see a travelling circus that evening. But this hive of gay priests, this black garrison of the clergy on their holidays,

was, as it turned out, worth a hundred such conventional pleasures. Personally, I had long known something of the merriments of the clergy of other denominations when they gather in companies round a fire and set their pipes going. But I had never before seen the Catholic clergy disporting themselves *en masse*, as it were. Here they were like a crowd of boys on a holiday. One of them walked up and down the hall flirtatiously with a girl on each arm, a challenge to the laughter of the others, who smoked him for a playboy. Others, no less flirtatious, jested and gesticulated on the crowded sofas to the immense admiration of laughing groups of girls and benign old ladies, who smiled on the fun from their corners. Another, a little man with a face like a laughing moon, who rose on the tips of his toes as he walked with an exaggerated straight back, tried to chase the laity into the drawing-room, where they were to dance and to have songs. We allowed ourselves to be driven in through one of the two doors that led out of the hall into the drawing-room, and found ourselves on a settee in the middle of the room. The little laughing priest before long got enough girls together for a set of lancers, and then he went out in search of young men to be their partners. Two shy youths, a tall and a short one, both in flaming yellow boots, he dragged in by the sleeves, but still he had not enough men. Then, for the second time, he besought me to do

my duty. He got down on one knee and spread his arms in supplication. I, however (being incompetent), was obdurate. He made a gesture of despair.

“Girls in dozens pining to dance, and no boys to dance with them,” he exclaimed, as though the end of the world had come. “And this—is—Lisdoonvarna !”

He succeeded in rooting another young man out from somewhere, however, and soon the lancers were going, and the two shy young men in yellow boots were losing all their shyness ; indeed, they went through the galloping and whirling parts of the dance later on as riotously as they had before been timid.

The dance ended, the little moon-faced priest brought in another little stout priest, who was the melancholy double of himself, to sing a song. And of all the songs on the earth, what do you think he chose to sing ? “Scenes that are Brightest !” You know the thing.

“Scenes that are brightest

Ma-a-ay la-ast

A-a-a whi-ile.”

He sobbed that song. He poured it out of his bosom like an old-fashioned operatic tenor with his eyes fixed on the ceiling. He was crimson with emotion. He rose into the air with it on the high notes. At length, I dared look at him no more. I watched instead the old ladies with



their knitting, beaming entranced. I watched the crowds of young priests standing in and behind the doors, and they too smiled as though they were enjoying themselves. Then when it was all over, we all clapped our hands and said "Thank you," and the little stout priest took his broken heart over to a chair near the wall and sat down. And I, in dread that this might be followed by "We met—'twas in a Crowd" or "She wore a Wreath of Roses," slipped out of the room.

If I went to the bar, it was not because the song had depressed my spirits beyond ordinary remedies, or because I was particularly thirsty, or because I am not in theory and largely by habit a teetotaler. I went there simply because there was such a crowd of cheerful people in the hall, and I felt a nervous stranger among them.

When I got into the bar, Friar Tuck was there, discoursing with another curate.

"You'll have a drink with me," he greeted me. "What will you have?"

I told him I would have a small Jameson.

He looked round till he saw a bottle of Jameson, took it down from the shelf, made the barmaid give him a corkscrew, put the bottle between his knees, and opened it, and in a minute was flooding whisky into a tumbler for me as though I could drink it by the half-pint.

"Easy," I told him. "I said a small one."

"Ah," he observed knowingly, continuing to

fill my tumbler till it was as full as he thought was good for me, "there's one good reason for drinking small whiskies : you can take more of them."

When I got back into the hall again, the priests were still crowding about the drawing-room doors, not dancing themselves, for apparently they are not allowed to do that, but encouraging, nay, compelling, everybody else to dance. Irish priests are pictured by a good many of their modern critics as a saturnine company. Perhaps there is something in the air of Lisdoonvarna which turns them jovial. Perhaps stern human nature here takes a little holiday of irresponsible gaiety as it did in the Middle Ages when the Abbot of Unreason, or Lord of Misrule, was so important a figure in the Church year. Certain it is that in this hotel, set in the middle of the bogs of Ireland, a whole host of Father O'Flynn's were foregathered as if determined to live up to the portrait in Mr. Graves's song. Soon the dance was ended, and I went out into the air, and a priest's voice reached me through the window, roaring a comic song to the other priests and the beaming Limerick ladies. And, as behind two little town-boys who were amusing themselves out in the moist darkness I tried to peep past the sides of the blind into the golden light of the room, I caught snatches of lines like—

"Oh, boys, oh, my heart is growing grey ;  
I'm the hardest-featured man in Petravore."



*Lawrence.*

ON THE COAST OF CLARE.



Then there was another dance. I was dragged in to see it because it was an Irish dance—some kind of a jig—the Lord knows I know nothing about dancing. After this everybody came into the coolness of the hall again, and crowded the seats. But they were not so crowded that a blooming young lady with clusters of chestnut hair and a sea of joy in her eyes and lips could not find room on a sofa, as with a challenge of “Make way for the Kilkee gang!” she plumped herself down in the middle of its occupants. The few children of the place still played violent eel-like games among the legs of their elders.

Suddenly a hush fell. Some one inside the room had begun to sing “Sing me to Sleep,” to sing it as though her soul was in the singing. The Kilkee girl kept silent, too, till it came to the chorus. Then she announced to the entire hall, “That song always makes me feel sea-sick,” and she began buzzing a kind of bass accompaniment. She was an irreverent girl. Then, just as we were getting back into the hush of sentiment, a little chit of a girl, who was trying to tug a walking-stick from a decorous middle-aged priest, broke the spell again with a loud, “Ah, Father Healy, you’re a terrible tease!” I think a waltz came after that—a wretched London musical-comedy waltz. I am afraid I agree with Byron about the waltz, though the young men in the yellow boots unquestionably danced it with the

greatest discretion. Then my fellow-traveller sang. An Irish country song. When she had finished, the moon-faced priest, who was master of the ceremonies, came up to me where I was standing at the door and grasped my arm eagerly. "Is that your good lady?" he asked. "It is," I said. "You should be proud of her," he declared, reaching up and patting me enthusiastically on the shoulder—"you should be proud of her." "I am," said I. And with that he was off into the room again and standing beside the piano, with rosy face, singing "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms" with all his muscles, till the sweat came out in beads on his round smooth brow. . . . By the time the song was over, old priests, middle-aged priests, and young priests, with a few inconspicuous laymen, were flapping their mackintoshes and closing their umbrellas and wiping their feet on the mats in the porch. Some of them apparently had been to the circus. "Rotten," declared one grizzled holiday-maker. "That was the worst clown I ever saw," observed another. "It was a poor show," said a third. "Ah!" exclaimed a young man, embracing the whole population of the hall in his glance, "you had good sense not to stir from the hotel, so you had."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CLIFFS OF MOHER TO KILLARNEY

If you want to get out of Lisdoonvarna, you must do it by car—unless you have an unnatural taste for walking. If you take a direct cross-country road you will fall in with the County Clare railway system—it is far more like a steam-tram system—at Ennistymon, about nine miles away. But if you want to see the Cliffs of Moher which, says the leading guide-book, “form some of the most sublime objects of the western coast,” you will have to go a long roundabout journey and join the train farther on at Lahinch.

There are benches alongside the ditches near Lisdoonvarna, and valetudinarian ladies were sitting out on them with their restive granddaughters as we drove out of the village. Burly parish priests were exercising their constitutions by tramping along the roadsides. There was a gigantic peace over the land. Compared with Galway, this seemed to be a county of flowers peeping out among the grass—mostly grass, of

course, but wild flowers instead of stones. Like the day before, it was a day of curious light. When we came near the coast and, looking out over the sea, saw the Aran Islands lying to the north-west, they were still but dull shadows of islands, unromantic rocks. The car-driver, an intelligent, practical young fellow, with a sandy moustache, was, rather to my surprise, an Irish speaker, and I am afraid I lost some good conversation by listening in that language instead of allowing myself a day off in easy-going English. I felt something of a hypocrite, indeed, when, on reaching a field-path, he told us to get down, and gave us directions as to how to reach the cliffs and join him about a mile farther on down the road. For I had only gathered the vaguest impression of his story of easts and wests when we broke away from him and out of sight across the grass towards the cliffs.

The mist had come down in walls over the sea: the cliffs themselves rose an immense wall of blackness, at the foot of which a greenish-black tide broke in a thousand whitenesses and made a far noise, a noise as distant as an echo. Those who measure their admiration with a foot-rule will tell you that the precipice of Moher, being 668 feet high, is only a trifle compared with the cliffs of Achill and the cliffs of Donegal. But the Cliffs of Moher are sufficiently exciting. I think most people will feel a strange in-



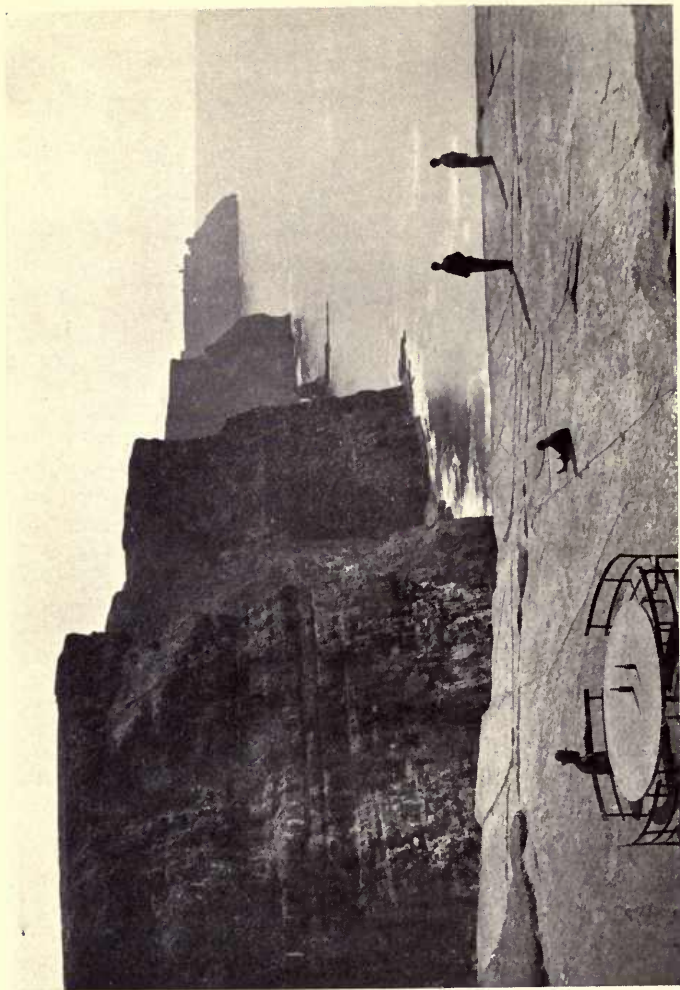
toxication, a strange terror almost, as they stand near the edge of the cliff and look down at the sea-gulls flying about its hard breast with tiny, distant cries. I do not think I ever saw rocks of so pitchy a blackness as the sea washes against here. Perhaps the weird light was the cause of it, and the contrast of that brood of sea-gulls which clung to the rocks so clamorously half-way down and streamed them with an occasional whiteness. One felt small and giddy as upon the edge of an abyss as one looked down below at the sea which, ever so far down, cast its perpetual chains of pearls at the rocks, and withdrew them with an army of mutterings.

Here on the point of the cliffs is a broken-down tower where red and white cows shelter in the deserted hall, and many visitors will no doubt feel a quickening of romance at the sight of it till they look at the date-stone and see that it is no older than the nineteenth century. It was built, indeed, by a neighbouring landlord, Cornelius O'Brien, M.P., in 1835, as a hostelry for visitors, and it was he, I believe, who also put up the wall of flagstones along the cliffs and the stables which now lie in ruins near the road. Those who have read Mr. J. B. Atkins's finely-made biography of Sir William Russell, the Irish journalist who invented war correspondents, may remember that the latter visited Corney O'Brien at his residence near this at the time of

the Famine in 1846, and heard from his lips an authentic and blood-curdling story of the O'Brien ghost that haunts these terrible cliffs. Russell having during dinner expressed his admiration of the scenery of the Hag's Head at the far end of the cliffs, Corney later on bade his piper—he seems to have kept a piper in the house like an old Gaelic chief—retire, and he said to his guest: "You like the Hag's Head? Well! I would not go there now if you were to give me a hundred pounds, and it's not but I want the money." He then told him how he had come into the property, a stranger to the place, and on his arrival went for a walk to the cliffs with the parish priest with whom he was dining that evening. He had heard a tradition of an old lady of the family who, while out on the cliff with her grandson and heir, was "whisked into the sea by a sudden puff of wind"—a natural enough danger in the place. As Corney stood looking down at the waves, he was horrified to feel that he was going over, too. "I gave a shout," he told Russell, "and Father Michael caught me, or I'd have been in the sea!"

One would have thought that he would have been rather nervous of the cliffs after that. But no: that very night he visited them again. But the story of this nocturnal visit and what happened in the course of it is best told in Corney's own words to Russell.





*Lawrence.*

THE CLIFFS OF MOHER.

“Well,” he declared, “as I was driving home from Father Michael’s, I thought that as it was a beautiful moonlight night and a good breeze was blowing from the west, I would take a look at the breakers—they were roaring like artillery. So I got out of the gig and told the boy to go home and bid a servant to wait up for me. I struck across the sward straight for the Hag’s Head. I had got within seventy or eighty yards of it when I saw on the very edge of the cliff a white figure. It was moving; alive and no mistake. At first I thought it was a sheep, but getting nearer I perceived that it was a woman in a white dress with a white cap on her head. Then I remembered there was some talk at dinner of a lunatic girl who had escaped out of the asylum at Ennistymon. I made sure that it was she, and I thought that I had just arrived in time to save her life, poor creature! My plan was to creep quietly behind her, seize her in my arms, drag her as far as I could from the edge, then secure her and haul her somehow to the road. I had got close and was just about to lay hold of her, when ‘the thing’ turned on me such a face as no human being ever had—a death’s head, with eyes glaring out of the sockets, through tangled masses of snow-white hair! In an instant, with a screech that rang through my brain, ‘the thing’ fell or threw itself over the face of the cliff.

“It was some seconds before I recovered the shock and horror. Then trembling I crept on my hands and knees to the verge of the cliff. I looked down on the raging sea. As I was peering down over the Hag’s Head I saw in the moonlight some white object coming up the face of the cliff straight towards me. I am not superstitious or a coward. I tried to persuade myself it was a seal or a great sea-gull, but presently arms and hands were visible—it was crawling hand over hand up the cliff. I jumped to my feet and ran for my life towards the house. As I ran the yell ‘the thing’ gave when it disappeared over the cliff was repeated. Looking back, there was the dreadful sight. It came over the green meadow in pursuit of me, came nearer, nearer, not two hundred yards behind. I bounded

like a deer up the avenue, and the door was opened by my man. Again the fearful sound close at hand. 'Shut! shut the door! Do you hear that?' The man heard nothing. I went up to my room; looked at my face in the glass; it was pale, but it was not that of a madman.

"The windows of my bedroom looked on a large walled garden; the blinds were drawn and the light of the moon fell through them. I was nearly undressed when a shadow was thrown on the counterpane of the bed from one of the windows. There was some one on the sill! The scream was repeated. A brace of double-barrel pistols lay on the table by my pillow. I fired the barrels, bang! bang! bang! at the window as fast as I could pull the trigger. I ran downstairs to the hall. We called up every soul in the house, searched every inch of the garden—there was soft soil under my window—not a trace of a footstep or a ladder. I had my horse saddled at once, and rode to Ennistymon, and knocked up the priest. The first question I asked his astonished reverence was, 'Tell me, was I drunk when I left you?' 'No, you were as sober as you are now, Mr. O'Brien!' And then I told him what I have told you. 'I never,' said his reverence, 'heard of any one but the O'Briens hearing or seeing *her*, and they have her all to themselves. I can't make it out.' Nor can I either, Mr. Russell. I had a rail put up at the edge of the cliff where you get the best view of the cliffs. I have been there, now and then, on a fine day, with people—but after sunset—never! never!"

Russell declared that he had a very bad night after hearing Corney's story. "I slept but little till morning," he said, "and then, as I was dozing off, I was startled by an awful cry. It proved to be the preliminary of a flourish by the piper for the skirl before breakfast."

When one has got back to the road again and

driven some way down from the heights, one comes on the showiest holy well I have yet seen. It is in a kind of grotto in a garden beside an inn, and outside the grotto-like building stands a little shrine. The walls of the grotto are thick with holy pictures, abominations of colour representing various saints, and each of them is signed with the name of some beneficiary of the blessed properties of the waters. Other visitors had made presents of rosaries, which were hung here and there from nails. If you read the inscriptions on the pictures, you will be surprised to see how many of the donors are Americans. A barefooted woman with a skin tanned like a Red Indian's and a head of glossy black hair greeted us as we went in, and asked us if we would have a drink from the well. We said we would, and she rinsed out a tin and filled it from the running water and handed it to us. And as, having given her some money, we went out, she called earnest blessings after us.

The well is named after St. Brigid—"the Mary of the Gael," as she has been called. St. Brigid of Kildare, according to the scholars, owes a good deal of her honour in Ireland to a popular confusion of her with an earlier Brigid, who has been identified with Dana, the mother of the Celtic gods. Brigid was the goddess of fertility and poetry, and the sacred fire, which the Christian Brigid's nuns kept alive in the shrine in Kildare

—a fire which no male might approach, and upon which no male might breathe—is, we are told, an inheritance from the old goddess. There is no need to argue that these wells of the saints which spring from every crack in Ireland also date back their holiness centuries before the coming of Christianity. No doubt, they cured people then. Certainly, they cure people still. Rationalism has turned the clearness of a thousand of them into mud, and the rags of thank-offering are no longer tied so profusely on the thorn-bushes that grow beside them or the little cairns of gratitude piled up with a stone from every one who passes. Even to-day, however, as at St. David's well near Enniscorthy, lame men are to be found throwing away their crutches and walking away whole, having tasted and washed in the sacred water; and the holy pictures hung about St. Brigid's well were all, I believe, thanks for miraculous cures. Still, this well was suspiciously picturesque. One could not help feeling more of a tourist than a pilgrim while one was there.

Indeed, I had an uneasy feeling that it was a part of the inn garden. I asked the driver to come into the public-house and have a drink before he went on, but he pointed to a badge in his buttonhole, and told me that this pledged him either not to touch liquor at all or to take no more than two bottles of stout in the day. The young men of the west of Ireland seem to take a curious pleasure



in wearing badges of one kind and another, and the temperance badge, I'm glad to say—for I believe in none of the anti-Puritan nonsense—is one of the commonest. When we drove down into Lahinch later, past the wide stretch of sandy golf-links, on which a rare knickerbockered man, his weapons borne by his page, was marching very importantly in the wake of a ball, we noticed badges of one kind and another in the buttonholes of many of the boys who loafed about the railway station.

It was only by the skin of our teeth that we caught the train. Had we missed it, we could not have reached Limerick—by the Kilrush steamer, at any rate—that night. As we had been driving since breakfast, we were beginning to feel hungry, but there was not even a refreshment bar at the station. Our carman generously made a dash from the station to some near-by shop, and was able to thrust a few pence worth of chocolate in by the carriage window before the train shook itself and crept out of the station. My chief memories of the long journey down the Clare coast to Kilrush are that I had nothing to eat, and that every now and then, as we looked down at the misty sea, an island called Mutton Island rose out of a cloud and mocked us. I do not remember exactly how many hours it took us to reach Kilrush, but it felt like half a day. There has been a strike on the Clare railway

since we were there—for Irish wages are the lowest possible—and I see no reason why the whole of the county should not go on strike against so irrelevant and rambling a system. When we reached Kilrush at last, two small boys, the elder of whom looked about ten, seized our bags and bore them off, till I became alarmed lest they might rupture themselves with so heavy weights. Luckily, they had not gone thirty yards when a big loafer with a cudgel came up and dragged the bags out of their hands, and gave me a good excuse for paying them off. “Ah, what right have they to be carrying luggage,” he protested indignantly. “Their father’s a retired policeman, and he with his pension, and they’re in no want of money. It’s pure begging. They ought to have more shame than to be robbing the poor of their odd pence.”

I hoped when we got on board the steamer there would be nothing to do but loosen a few ropes and speed off up the Shannon towards Limerick, and, as the captain told us there would be no food to be had till the boat started, we were especially anxious to be gone as early as possible. But, alas! we were just feeling sure that we must be on the point of going, when the advance-guard of a regiment of pigs ran grunting on to the quay. Then there was a great scene of penning in and beating with sticks and squealing, and a few pigs would be herded rebelliously into a little truck

and shut in, and the pulley would begin rattling as though it were out of breath with effort, and a truck would be hoisted in the air and swung round and lowered into the hold of the steamer, a thing of terror, odour, and disharmony. It was the slowest possible business transferring the pigs from the quayside into the boat, and when one regiment of the poor dirty beasts was finished, another came down with silly ears to take its place. Ultimately, we got tired of pig, and, if it had not been for the growing smell of them, we might have enjoyed the time well enough looking over at rare Scattery Island, which lies a mile or more out in the water with a round tower rising amid its ruined churches. It was St. Senan, a native of the county, who, having retired with his monks to this lonely mile of island, first built a religious foundation there. Living in the sixth century—he died about 560—he earned fame, like St. Kevin of Glendalough, for the strictness of his discipline. Like St. Kevin, he would allow no woman, however saintly, to set foot within his precinct, and, even when the holy virgin St. Cannera, who was a relative of his own, prayed to be received on the island, he replied forbiddingly—

“Quid feminis

Commune est cum monachis?

Nec te nec ullam aliam

Admittemus in insulam.”

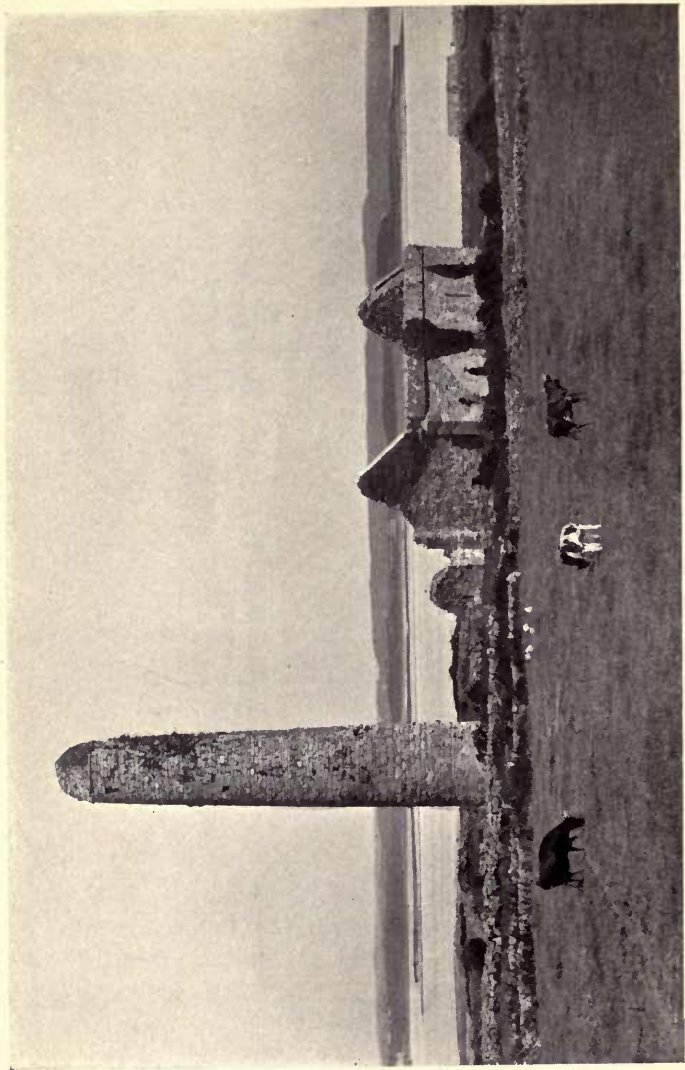
Moore has written some of his flirtatious nonsense about the affair, suggesting that

“had the maid  
Till morning’s light delayed  
And given the saint one rosy smile,  
She ne’er had left his holy isle.”

As a matter of fact, St. Cannera was on the point of death at the time of the visit, and only came to the island to receive the viaticum from her holy cousin, which when he learned he behaved like a human being, and permitted her to go ashore.

Scattery Island, however, is famous not only as the scene of the anti-feminist St. Senan’s great dilemma, but as the retreat whither the remnant of the Danes fled after Limerick had been burned over them by Brian Boru, and Mahon, his reigning brother. That was the occasion of the spoiling of Limerick when the conquerors acquired as their booty “beautiful and foreign saddles ; jewels, gold and silver, and silks ; soft, youthful, bright girls ; blooming, silk-clad women ; active, well-formed boys ”—when they slew every captive who was fit for war and enslaved the others. The pagan Danes seem to have thought that a violent Christian like Brian would regard a place of churches like Scattery Island as a sanctuary. Brian, however, was not such a stickler for ecclesiasticism as they imagined. When Mahon was treacherously murdered, and he succeeded him, he forgot everything but vengeance. He





SCATTERY ISLAND.

*Laurence.*

was not, as his chronicler puts it, "an egg in place of a stone, or a wisp of hay in place of a club," and his first fierce deed was to direct his fleet to this same Scatterry Island and overthrow the Danish power there in bloodshed. That was in 977, about four centuries after St. Senan.

Six centuries later, in 1588, another wild tragedy occurred in these waters. This was when seven ships of the Spanish Armada that had been hurled and rolled and broken round the coasts of Scotland and Ireland sailed out of the storm into the mouth of the Shannon and made piteous efforts to get some of their men ashore at Kilrush, so that they might obtain water, for they were dying of thirst, having had no fresh supply of water since they left Spain. It was the order of England, however, that no mercy should be shown to the Spaniards, and though, in their extremity, the Spanish captains offered a butt of wine for every cask of water, and indeed most of the wealth of their ships for as much as would satisfy their needs, they were sent away empty, and, setting sail again, were soon back among the storms and being dashed to pieces on the merciless rocks of Clare. . . .

To steam up the Shannon on a day of wide prospects is, I am sure, a delightful experience, though even on the best of days I would rather make the voyage on a steamer that did not carry pigs. It is not that I do not like pigs: I love the

shape of them, and they make a very soothing music except at times of emotional crisis. But the odour of a thousand of them is something never meant to be concentrated in the hold of a single vessel. In the hold? Alas! no, it escaped from the hold and wrapped the boat in a kind of cloud that there was no getting away from. The day was sultry, with roaming mists, and even when a hidden sun turned the fogs into a soft gold there were seldom more than a few hundred yards of world to be seen in any direction. In other words, it was just such a day as gave the pigs possession of us. It gave our noses to them, and it gave our eyes to them, for there was often nothing else to see. Down in the body of the ship they huddled in terror, their backs all scarred with cuts where their owners had put their marks on them. I believe decent people have been protesting against the cruel way in which these identification marks are made on pigs, and indeed those of us who insist upon living on the corpses of animals might very well force a stoppage of a good many cruelties of marking and transit and slaughter. I will say this for my own sensibility of heart that, after seeing that mass of squalling pigs crying out for a kinder world in the Limerick steamer, I did not touch bacon for—well, for two days.

Here a poor porker would make a dash for liberty only to be seized by the tail by a big



excited man with a stick under his arm. There a filth-stained beast would resolutely lie down, having taken a notion that it could sleep out the day of judgment, and would risk being trodden over by its fellows, till the big excited man came along and dragged it erect again by the ears, occasionally dropping an ear to hit it a blow with the stick, and raising a hullabaloo infinitely more violent than the screechings of the pig. Snorting, snapping, biting companies of the animals would gradually resign themselves to the beginnings of slumber, curled up cheek on bristled back and nose on buttock, the grunts diminishing into little grunts and the little grunts into lesser grunts, till the bliss of silence seemed about to descend on them. Then some mischievous intruder, a hairy animal and young, would approach, shaking his ears in contempt and grunting damnation on them for a race of slaves. While the big man with the stick was looking away and very patiently relighting his empty pipe, out would dart the jaw of the newcomer, and a pig roused from its sleep would be squealing aloud over a bitten leg. Stumbling up, it would incommode another pig, which would bite another pig, which would lurch into another pig, which would give another pig some other cause of bad temper. And the whole herd would be awake and rebellious again, and the big man down among them, swearing and fighting for order with his stick.

It was the mists, I am sure, that concentrated our senses on these indecencies. Every now and then, however, the mists rose, and showed us fair little peeps of sunny landscape, warm and rich and comfortable-looking, with at intervals a fine whitewashed farmhouse standing in the middle of a field. At least, from a distance, many of the farmhouses look as if they were plump in the middle of fields, so comparatively rare are gardens. On the Limerick shore to the south, too, you get a look at some of the old castles in which Ireland—at least the south of Ireland—is so romantically plentiful. There is the Castle of Glin, for instance, dominating the shore with its air of nobleness blasted and shattered, when you have got well past the voices on the pier of Tarbert. The Knight of Glin is one of the many romantic names that conjure up the vision of Elizabethan Ireland. It was in this castle that, in the summer of 1600, he and his men were burst in upon and slaughtered by Elizabeth's very capable exterminator, Sir George Carew. The Irish say that women and children were massacred after the fight, and Carew's capacity for robust deeds of the kind is shown in many a page of the British State Papers. Carew was the honourable and pious gentleman to whom Cecil entrusted much of the murderous work that needed doing in those days in behalf of civil and religious liberty. It was to Carew that Cecil

wrote, in regard to the difficult Fitzgerald known as the Sagan Earl: "Take this from me, upon my life, that whatever you do to abridge him, which you shall saie to be done out of providense, shall never be ymputed to you as a fault." It was Carew again who seems to have arranged for the poisoning of Red Hugh O'Donnell when, after the wild night of Kinsale, he fled to Spain to get help for Ireland. "O'Donnell is dead," wrote Carew to Cecil, ". . . and I do think it will fall out that he is poisoned by James Blake, of whom your lordship hath been formerly acquainted. At his (Blake's) coming into Spain he was suspected of O'Donnell because he had embarked at Cork, but afterwards he insinuated his access—and O'Donnell is dead." On another occasion he employed "one Amyas an Irishman" to murder Florence MacCarthy More. But, after all, Carew in all this was doing no worse than his forerunners and companions in adventure. Sussex had attempted to poison Shane O'Neill, and Perrott bribed a poisoner to put an end to Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne. Indeed, as Dr. P. W. Joyce says, "during the reign of Elizabeth assassination was not merely a thing of occasional occurrence, but a recognised mode of dealing with Irish chiefs." It would hardly be worth stressing the point if it were not for the fact that good-hearted British novel-readers are so shocked by poor Catharine de' Medicis and the Borgias. In

Belfast, too, I am afraid, we know a good deal more about the Borgias than about the Elizabethans, who were really quite as skilful. There's a subject of meditation for you if you ever find yourself looking out over the fat lands of Limerick from a Shannon steamer.

But, indeed, as you drift up this old river, there are more modern subjects of meditation for the practical mind. Here we have a greater river than any other in Ireland, or in England either, and yet it seems to flow in a perpetual Sabbath of idleness, a desert for ships. The voyage from Kilrush to Limerick took us longer, I think, than the train journey from Liverpool to London; yet, in all that time, we met but one lonely ship that was being tugged seaward, and that came suddenly upon us out of the mist like a lost ghost of the Fighting Téméraire, and, ghost-like, passed on again into the mist.

The coming and going of that lonely three-master seemed only to make the solitude more profound. It was like being in a backwater rather than on a great river. Here we had a wealth of river flowing amid a wealth of fields, a kingdom of rich land for the conquering; yet it was barren, lifeless, and unprofitable as the land through which Childe Roland fared on his quest of the Dark Tower. Not ugly like that, or leprous. The beauty of the place was its tragedy.

As we got nearer Limerick, and past the islands

in the mouth of the great inlet that goes up to Ennis—"Ennis of the Hundred Pubs," as the irreverent call it—the sun was looming out of the mist behind us like a red-hot ball, and orange shadows were spilling themselves over the surface of the river. By the time we came within view of Limerick itself and the dark hill behind, the evening was falling, dim and lilac-coloured: a busy population was promenading up and down the river-bank; and the nearest thing that we had seen to a manufacturing city in this part of Ireland rose gloomily beside the water with peeping lights.

Now, as the ballad says, "Limerick is beautiful." Seeing her in good circumstances, one thinks of her as a retired queen of the four civilisations—Irish, Danish, Norman, and English—in Ireland. She has terrible memories of Brian Boru, who, as I have mentioned already, stormed her after the battle in the woods of Sollohod, and put her Danish defenders to the sword, except the non-combatants, who were enslaved. Hither three centuries later came Robert and Edward Bruce to root out the Anglo-Normans, but in vain; it was on the return march—you may call it a flight—from Limerick through many a wasted county that Robert Bruce is related to have halted his whole army till a poor washerwoman, who had suddenly been overtaken with the pains of childbirth, was fit to be moved—a symbol of the

gentleness that tempered the barbarity of those days. To most people, however, Limerick is the Limerick of the Williamite wars, the city of Sarsfield, the City of the Broken Treaty. It is curious that the two sieges which live most vividly in the Irish memory—the one appealing chiefly to the Nationalist imagination, the other the chief glory of the Unionists—should both have occurred in the same futile war in which the Catholic Irish fought for an incapable Englishman who was distrusted by the Pope, and the Protestant Irish fought for a capable Dutchman whom a Pope had subsidised. There is, of course, no reason why Derry and Limerick should not shake hands now, forgetting their old differences and remembering their old heroism. No Orangeman, I imagine, of however forcible politics, will be able to resist a certain pleasant thrill as he reads of how Sarsfield, the De Wet of the Irish, rode out of Limerick at night and cut off the siege-train that was coming up to help William to storm the city. Lauzun, who was very depressed during his absence from France, had said of Limerick that it could be captured by a bombardment of roasted apples, but brave men proved the contrary in 1690 when William III. had to retreat defeated from its walls. William himself blamed his defeat on the weather, and Macaulay echoed him, but investigation has shown that the floods, which according to William

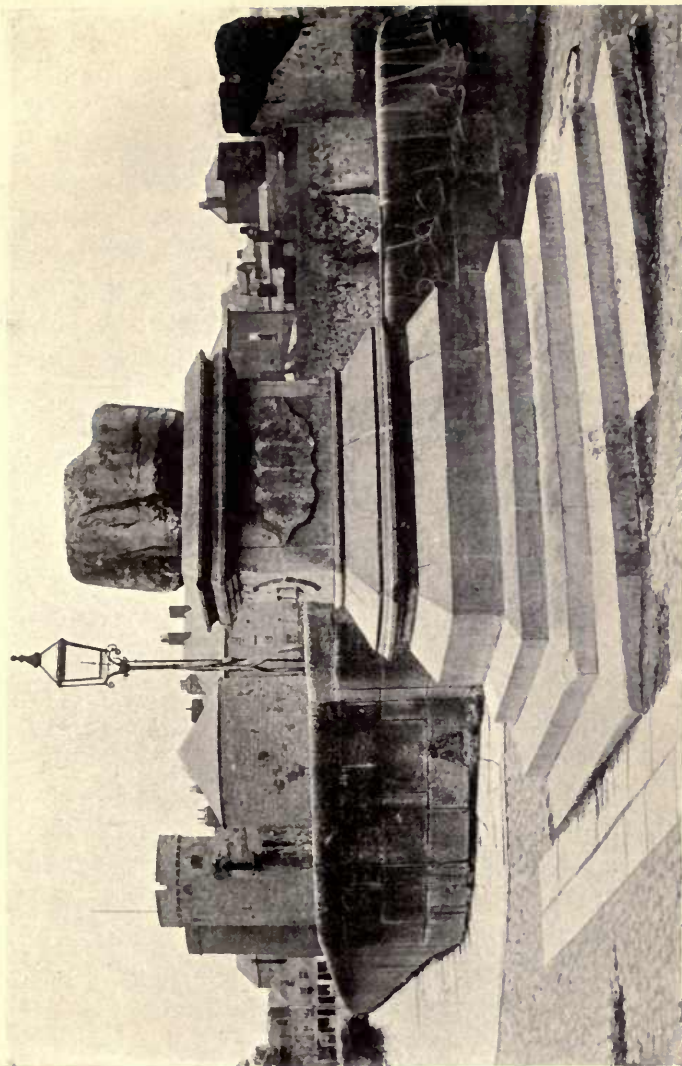
lost him Limerick, were mere inventions of his brain. The second siege of Limerick, which took place after the battle of Aughrim—Ireland's Culloden, as it has been called—was less fortunate for the defenders. Ill-armed, exhausted, despairing of help from France, they at length consented to honourable terms of surrender, the English guaranteeing civil and religious liberty to the Irish people, besides arranging that the garrison should march out with drums beating, colours flying, and matches lighting. That was in October 1691, and an enormous stone at the end of Thomond Bridge still marks the place where the treaty was signed. No sooner was it signed than the French relief expedition arrived in the river. But it was too late. The Irish leaders had already pledged their honour, and to that they remained faithful. Sarsfield has often been blamed since for sacrificing Ireland to his personal honour on this occasion, but I cannot help thinking that he bequeathed to Ireland a far finer thing in that example of a great soldier's truthfulness than the mere machinery of freedom won by a lie could ever have been. That, of course, may only be cant. But I am quite sure that it is because of their stainless honour that Sarsfield and Emmet have found a place in the daily imagination and affections of Ireland such as has never been given to the cleverer and more effective, but shifty, Shane O'Neill.

There have been few more distressing scenes in the history of Ireland than when the Irish soldiers sailed from the Shannon, leaving their crying women behind them on the shores, soldiers of fortune henceforth and a race of exiles,

“Fighting in every clime  
For every cause but their own.”

It was part of the terms of the surrender that the Irish soldiers might either depart into exile or join the English colours. On a little height outside the city two flags were planted, the royal standard of France and the flag of England. The Irish regiments were to march out under their colours till they reached this spot, and then wheel round to the right or left towards the flag under which they wished henceforth to serve. The first regiment of guards, it is said, wheeled round to the French flag in a body, only about seven men going over to the English colours. But Lord Iveagh's regiment, which came next, wheeled in its turn to take service under William, who offered a bounty and good pay to those who would fight for him. There were about 13,000 Irish fighting men sailed for France in the end of the year, and about 5000 entered the army of England. Ireland has been above most countries a nation of emigrants ever since. As for the way in which the Treaty of Limerick was violated by King William—whether voluntarily or under pressure





THE TREATY STONE, LIMERICK.

*Lawrence.*



from his Parliament does not matter—it is one of those “deeds that won the Empire” to which Dr. Fitchett has not yet devoted a chapter. Instead of the religious liberty which was promised and pledged to her, Ireland got the Penal Laws.

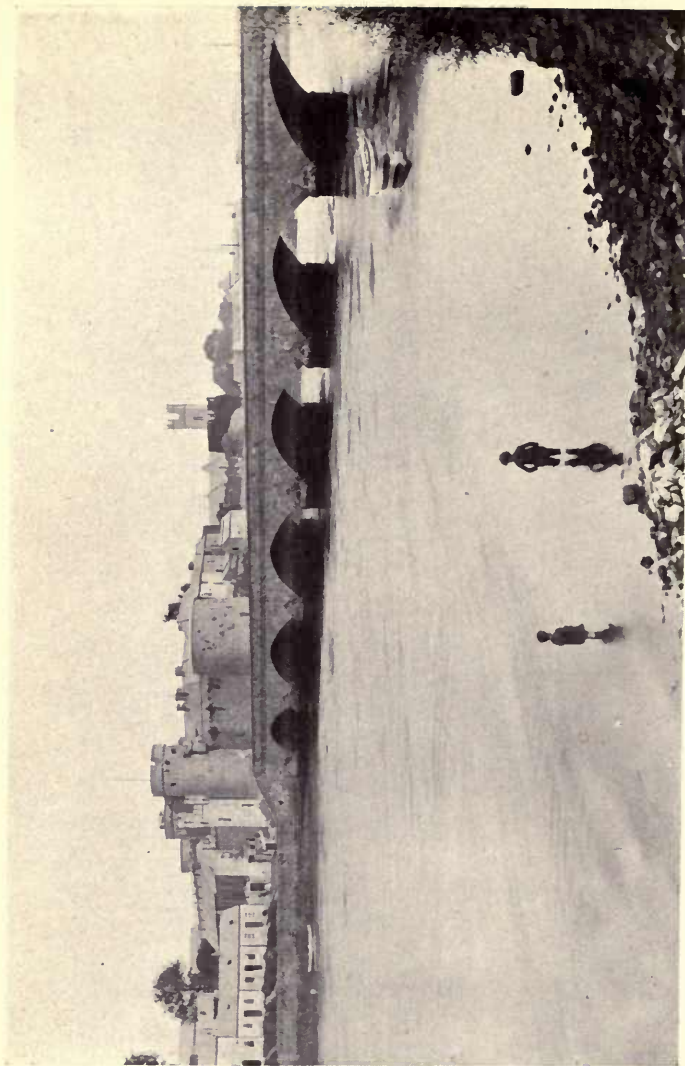
But, frankly, Limerick delighted me most that evening, not with its fierce past, but with its busy democratic present. I do not suppose it is really a busy or democratic city, as modern cities go. But after the ruralism of Connacht and Clare, I confess the sight of working men walking about briskly in caps made my heart leap, as though I had suddenly come upon a piece of Belfast in a desert. Munster is far nearer to Ulster in its life than Connacht is, though Munster is the “farthest south” of Ireland; Limerick has its artisans like Belfast, and its slum children playing on the steps of houses, and indeed it is a good deal less dead to look at than an Ulster city like Derry. In the evening the streets fill; the lamps gleam above the river; the soldiers step out of the barracks in King John’s Castle and take the air with such girls as will walk with them; the little shops that sell candies and patriotic ballad-sheets in the poorer parts of the town shine humbly behind their windows; O’Connell Street (or George Street, if you would rather call it that) keeps what it can of its eighteenth-century air of gentility and mellowness about it as the citizens pace it, disturbed by no noise of tram or

traffic ; the bridges of the city and its idle quays are a continual wonder. I meet a great many people who think Limerick a dull and ugly place. It seems to me to be a city with a gracious and, in a way, remote life of its own. I will not say that St. Mary's Cathedral is beautiful, though it is historic, and gives you a mighty beautiful view from its tower. Even King John's Castle and all that battlemented part of the town, which has stood the assaults of ages, looms, perhaps, romantically rather than beautifully over the river. But the city has the beautiful secret of charm, like some fine-mannered person of an older generation. . . .

On the occasion of this particular visit, however, Limerick was a mere place to rest and sup rather than a city to see. Puck Fair was still urging us to make haste if we would be in time, and this meant catching a train at six o'clock the next morning. Even so, there was time for an hour or two's tramping about the streets and renewing one's memories. I had time, too, for a late walk with a friend—perhaps it was he who made me love Limerick so well—to see the Sarsfield monument beside the Catholic Cathedral. “He should have been on a horse,” said my friend, as we peered through the darkness at the statue with nothing but the stars lighting it ; and the thought was both romantic and right.

The waiter at the hotel promised to put a boy





*Lawrence.*

KING JOHN'S CASTLE, LIMERICK.

to sit up all night so as to have us stirring by five in the morning. He was a genial man of that exceptional appearance which is always welcomed by Englishmen as "typically Irish." When we had stayed at the hotel before, he had told me all about his family. "I have a little brigade of eight, sir," he had said—"four Irish men and four Irish women, all learning Irish or going to learn it. And isn't it a strange thing, they to be growing up knowing the language of their country and I not to have a word of it, but 'Turrum pogue.'<sup>1</sup> I'm not an Irishman at all, sir." I asked him now how the eight were getting on. "They're nine now, sir," he said, with a twinkle, as he cleared away some spoons and forks to make room for the dish of salmon-steaks.

Next morning, we were up before the cows, and slipping out of the town by six o'clock. The fields were bright in the early sun, with little local mists wandering among them as on the previous day, and, as the morning grew older, the mists and the sun fought in mid-air and the mists won. There is a comfortable lush beauty about the County of Limerick that makes it very pleasant to travel in after the desolation of Connacht. It is no wonder that the invaders spoiled this patch of river and towers and trees so determinedly, for it must be one of the richest parts of Ireland. I have even heard it said that it

<sup>1</sup> Tabhair dhom póg (Give me a kiss).

is too rich, and that more choice butter comes from the milk of cows that have pastured on leaner soil. But I know nothing about that. Originally, we had intended to leave the train at Listowel and take the monorail to Ballybunion, the Kerry watering-place which lies at the mouth of the Shannon. The name of the place, of course, is against it: nothing could show the incompatibility between English and Irish better than the way in which charming Irish names are made ludicrous in their adoption into the new tongue. Baile Bun Dhá Abhainn—the Town at the Mouth of Two Rivers—is attractive and musical, if you know how to pronounce it. Ballybunion is, from its name, the sort of place you would expect to find Matt Hannigan's Aunt of the song spending her Easter Monday.

I forget whether it was at Tralee or at a later junction that I was foolish enough to ask a railway porter if we were all right for Killorglin. "No," he replied; "hurry up. Your train's over there." And he seized our bags, hustled us across to another platform, and banged us into a nice newly-varnished train with corridor carriages, which almost immediately rolled out of the station.

I marvelled at the luxury and the fresh-paintiness of a train in a little local railway in the County Kerry, but I did not for a long time realise that a horrible accident had befallen us.



After awhile, however, I noticed that the names of the stations we were passing had an unfamiliar look. I turned to a map to find an explanation. The map told me at once. We were in the wrong train. We were doing what I had prided myself I had never yet done: we were going to Killarney. That wretched porter had listened only to the first syllable of the name I had given him. He had taken for granted that Killarney was the only Kill in those parts that any stranger would be likely to ask about. I groaned as I foresaw that the fair at Killorglin would be over by the time we arrived there, and here we were being borne miles away from it to a miserable tourist resort that people sing about in the music-halls. There is a real Killarney, I know, where real people live and work and tell stories round the fire, and think more of the Irish revival than of travellers' tips, but that Killarney I would have no chance of seeing from a hotel. The Killarney the train was bearing us into was the Killarney of the lakes and dells, the Killarney of the tune you hear so often from the man who plays the dulcimers outside public-houses. There was no doubt about that as soon as the train stopped, and a mauling mass of hotel-touts in peaked caps gathered round our carriage door, waving little bills of prices—Bed and breakfast, 5s. 6d. Bed and breakfast, 6s. Bed and breakfast, 6s. 6d. Tea, with bread, butter, jam, and two boiled

eggs, 1s. 6d.; and so forth—into our faces. One man would clutch my bag; another would clutch the rugs; another would clutch anything that was left; and another would clutch me. They seemed to be shouting the name of every hotel in Ireland at us. I kept shouting back at them as loud as I could, "I don't want to go to Killarney!" Either they did not hear me, or it made no impression on them, for they still kept jabbering about the conveniences and cheapness of their respective hotels. Then I smiled at them, and said, in a quite determined everyday voice, "I don't want to go to Killarney." They looked puzzled at first, and then they gathered closer with craning necks, as though to get the best view possible of the lunatic who was standing on the platform of Killarney station and resolutely saying that he didn't want to go to Killarney. "Where is it you want to go?" one of them asked at last, when he had got the better of his amazement. "We want to go to Killorglin," I explained. "We want to go to Puck Fair; we were put into the wrong train." "Are yez going to the Puck?" "They're going to the Puck." "Is it to the Puck yez are going?" came in a score of voices in all sorts of surprise, and the touts all began grinning, as if it were the best joke in the world.

"The Puck doesn't begin till to-morrow," a freckled, red-headed man assured us. "I'll be

running a party over from the hotel in the morning. Won't you have a look at the lakes while you're here, and I'll drive you over in the morning ? ”

Perhaps we thought he was lying. But, even if we had believed him, it is possible we would not have stayed another moment at Killarney. For one thing, there was this saturnalia of touting which was our introduction to the place. And, for another thing, the day was leaden, and all the colour had been dulled out of the hills. On such a day, even the loveliest places in the world would have been like a beautiful woman's eyes hidden behind smoked spectacles, or like jewels lying at the bottom of a basin of dirty water. Hills are not hills except in exquisite lights, and lakes are no more wonderful than circles drawn by an infant, unless there are fine and curious skies over them. So there were really any number of reasons why we, having been brought by destiny to Killarney, would not so much as look at Killarney. But, probably, base temptation would have overcome us, and we would have allowed ourselves to be trotted and paddled round the lakes even as other men and women, if it had not been for the vision of the many-voiced, many-coloured fair melting into nothingness in the streets of Killorglin.

Killorglin, we discovered, we could not reach till evening if we put ourselves into the hands of

the railway company and made back for the junction again. But if we could get a car, and were willing to face a drive of some fourteen miles, we might strike across country to it. "I'll take you for a pound," says one carman, when he heard that we proposed to do this. "I'll do it for eighteen shillings," cried another. A little fellow broke through the legs of the company. "I know a man who'll do it for ten," he said. He then caught up everything he could lay his hands on, and made for the exit from the station, and hoisted our luggage on to a car outside, till the driver of it came up protesting that he at least had never consented to go over to Killorglin for ten shillings, and he was certainly going to do nothing of the sort.

"Here," called a black-visaged young fellow in the car next to him, waving his whip to us, "I'll do it for twelve shillings." That, with a tip, seemed a reasonable proposal, and our luggage, straps, and books were once more hauled and tumbled from hand to hand. It was at this stage of the journey, I think, that I must have lost the fourth volume of Frazer's *Totemism and Exogamy*, a book that I had been trying to read in snatches amid the distractions of Galway races. I often wonder who found that odd volume. Reader, if it was you, be a Christian and return it, and I promise to send you a copy of St. Bernard on *Consideration* in exchange.

So eager were we to be on the way that we did not even wait to take lunch, though we had been fasting since our five-o'clock breakfast. We sent in to a grocer's shop for some biscuits, and while we were sitting outside on the car a fellow, who took us apparently for a honeymoon couple, came up and tried to sell us white heather. It was wicked not to buy it, but we were really very angry with Killarney. The fellow was equally angry with us. For, after going a few yards away, he turned round and yelled "Good luck!" at us with a most satirical vehemence. I nodded gratefully. "Good luck!" he repeated violently; "good luck!" People began to look at us curiously out of the shop-doors. "Good luck!" he shouted again. Fortunately, at that moment our driver appeared with the biscuits and his own dinner and a feed of oats for the horse to put in the well of the car, and in another minute or two we were trotting gaily out of the town and out past the gateways of the big hotels for the motorists, and peeping over a hedge or a wall at a glimmer of one of the lakes. It was a narrow escape, a very narrow escape.

## CHAPTER V

### PUCK FAIR

KILLORGLIN, a precipitous town, is for a day, or perhaps even two days in the year, the most interesting place in Ireland. Puck Fair occupies for an interval every August the hill upon which the main street is built, and a puck, or goat, is throned at the head of the town high above the Kerry men and women who wander in confused black herds among the streets. It is this goat which gives its name and its chief distinction to the fair. Like an object of worship, it stands on its lofty two-storied platform of boards, a creature of monstrous horns, a prisoner bound with cords for all the clumsily-arranged laurels and green things that are there to do it honour. The platform is a solid affair mounted on poles as high as the mast of a ship, and it is on the top storey, near the level of the roofs of the houses, that the eponymous Puck stands and accepts the shouting and the laughter of the fair.

A number of red storm-lanterns hang among the decorating leaves to give a country illumination

in the darkness, and the whole steep little town wears an air of country festivity.

Across every entrance to the place, as we drove in on our car, hung an arch of greeting, with an Irish motto of morality or welcome. *Go saoradh Dia Éire* (God save Ireland), *Éire gan meisce, Éire gan spleadhachas* (Ireland sober, Ireland free), *Ri na gcnoc go deo* (The King of the Mountains for ever), *Céad míle fáilte go h-aonach an phuic* (A hundred thousand welcomes to Puck Fair), *Sinn Féin, Sinn Féin ambáin* (Ourselves, ourselves alone)—these were some of the signs that gave one a welcome not only to the fair but to an awakening Ireland.

When we arrived in the town, Puck Fair was, as it were, beginning to move. The next day, everybody said, was to be the big day, but already the street on the ridge of the town was full of rushing horses—horses torn by the halter pell-mell through the shifting crowd with excited bargainers hanging on to their flanks. Selling and buying were engaged in like hostilities. Beneath the trees on the muddy station road, the prospective buyer would make his offer under his breath to the man with the halter, and the latter, shouting inarticulately and with excited eyes, would dash his horse off recklessly through the encircling crowd of spectators, looking as though he had received an insult which nothing but the shedding of blood could wipe out. The buyer

stood still for a moment, staring after his adversary with perplexed brows, and then, lifting his stick, he called after him the invariable Kerry summons, "Come here, I want you"—a summons always pronounced rapidly with the effect of a single word. The owner of the horse, however, was still beating off with an indignant back showing, and it was with apparent reluctance that he allowed himself to be brought to a stop by some volunteer go-between. Then the murmur of conversation that you could not catch would begin again, negotiations would once more be broken off with a shout, the crowd would make way for a departing beast, and the whole comedy be rehearsed again till one of the bargainers got tired of it, and the horse was either finally bought or finally refused at the price offered.

Killorglin and that part of Kerry is at first sight a disappointment to strangers. For one thing, there is no fantasy in the dress of the people, no local fashion, nothing, indeed, but the poorest imitation shoddy. Occasionally women wear the grey Galway shawl, but the thing is not part of a ritual here. In Galway, in Mayo, in Donegal, one seems at moments to be walking amid the outward and visible signs of a distinct Irish civilisation. In this peninsula of Kerry, the old civilisation has clothed itself in cheapness and colourlessness: it has an air of crooked forgetfulness.



There is a proverb which describes Kerry as being the county of big men and little cows, but though the little black and red cows were there in plenty, the men at the fair seemed scarcely to justify the proverb.

But then I was in a prickly mood. I had lost that volume of *Totemism and Exogamy*, and had been taken against my will to Killarney, and had been up since five, and there was an atmosphere about which was neither gloom nor shine, but was as though the air needed washing and a leaden sun were trying dully to break through it on a shabby world. Then, in the train of these things, my vanity got a blow. I noticed a public-house with a long poem in Irish scribbled in paint along the face of its upper storey. I went inside and asked for something to drink in what I believed to be the Irish language. The woman of the house, thin of face and dark of brow, looked at me suspiciously. "What is it you want, sir?" she said. Crushed, I repeated the order in the Belfast dialect of English. When she had given me what I wanted, I thought I would try to practise my Irish again, so I said to her in the best Ollendorf: "*Nach labhrann tu Gaedhilg?*" (Do you not speak Irish?). She looked at me curiously again, as she wiped the lead-covered bar with a soaking clout. "*Labhrann*" (I do), she said shortly: then with a sharp directness, she demanded: "Are you English,

please ? ” “ No,” I said ; “ why ? ” “ I thought by your accent you must be English,” she declared. After that I gave it up. I remained in the shop in silence for a minute or two longer to finish whatever I was drinking, and then, raising my hat with chill dignity, went forth into a clouded world.

Puck Fair began in earnest the next morning. One awoke to a confused clamour of human voices and cattle roaring and the cracking of sticks on hides and the hurry of herds through mud (for it had been raining in the night) and horses pulled up suddenly by their riders—a noise of selling and buying in which were mingled the voices of the mountebank, the cheapjack, the seller of dulse, and the beggar at his prayers.

The beggar was especially uproarious. He spent a good part of the day on his knees on the road outside our hotel. He was a powerful blind man with a wisp of grey beard—grey that had once been a Tartarean black—and he carried about a bottle of straw with him and knelt on this on the muddy footpath or road whenever he felt moved to lift his voice in prayer. Round his neck hung a printed sign with the legend : “ Pray for the repose of the departed souls of your friends.” It was by the proxy of this blind beggar, however, you were expected to perform this office. Baring his head and lifting his corpse-like face towards the sky, he shouted out a long

rigmarole that was half a petition to the passers-by and half a prayer to the Almighty. "I ask you for the love of God," he called out, emptying his lungs in a great Cork brogue. "Give a penny to a poor stone-blind man and he without sight."

Then his brows got a knitted earnestness, and he raised his voice higher, as though feeling that Heaven was far off.

"That God may bless you," he cried, "and that Jesus may bless you, and that the Blessed Virgin may bless you, and that St. Joseph may bless you, and the holy saints, and that God may save the soul of your father and the soul of your mother and the soul of your sister and the soul of your brother." Then, changing his voice again, sometimes even dropping it to common conversation, "I ask you for the love of God. Give a penny to a poor stone-blind man and he without sight." And the same flow of petitions would go on over and over again, while the mingling crowds went by slowly and with irregular feet. His was evidently a lucrative profession. I saw a priest stop to put a sixpence in his hand—a thing worth mentioning, perhaps, for those who can see no good in the priests make a dogma of the statement that no priest ever gave a poor man so much as a penny.

I spoke to the old fellow when he was resting from his prayers, and, like everybody else in

Killorglin, he lamented bygone times when Puck Fair was something like a fair.

“ I remember the time,” he said, like a man telling of departed glories, “ when there would be five or six blind men like myself at this fair.”

“ Where are they now ? ” I asked.

“ Ah ! ” he sighed, “ the maxim of the old people is gone out of the country.”

But whether they had gone in coffins or the emigrant ship he did not say.

I heard the same story of falling-off in a little low-doored bread-shop where I went to buy a paper. There was a gentle woman sitting behind the counter-load of loaves, a woman of that patient and pervasive kindness which hangs like an emanation round so many Irish mothers. Seated there in the low light, she was a figure of a kind of still religious beauty. She had sleek hair as black as coals and eyes as black as coals looking gently out on the stir of the world. Her lament over the past, however, like most Irish laments, was not entirely gentle. At least, it had none of the whining sort of gentleness ; hers was the gentleness of the warrior woman. She recalled days when Puck Fair was a scene of thronging, thrilling life—days when the tinkers invaded the town like an army and possessed it for a week.

“ Ah ! ” she said admiringly, patting the head of a five-year-old child that toddled up to offer her a nail or a button or something, “ they used

to be the strong, rough people, the tinkers. They were the life of the fair."

"And do they not come here at all now?" I asked, my spirits falling, for I had looked forward to the congregation of the tinkers.

She assured me that there had not been a tinker seen in Killorglin since the Boer War.

"They say," she declared, unable to resist the temptation of a fine story, "that all the tinkers went to the war and got killed. . . . They were great people for a fight," she went on, with lit eyes, as she remembered the better days. "You would see them with the sticks up and their faces bleeding, and, the minute after, they would be going off for a drink together." She shook her head pensively. "The tinkers were a forgiving people," she said. "They were good people now, were they not, to be so forgiving?"

It was the woman in the bread-shop who gave an explanation of the origin of the goat ceremony at Puck Fair. A puck, she said, was the first thing sold at the first fair that was held at Killorglin, and ever since then the fair was called after it. The puck used to stand on the top of the old castle in the middle of the town during the fair. The old castle was pulled down some years ago to make way for a bank, and since that time they had put up a scaffolding for the goat to stand on. They used to put Puck up three or four days before

the fair, she said, but there had been a great falling-off.

Outside in the streets, opposing rills of lads and their golden girls, of eager-faced sellers with sticks, and housewives with respectable hand-baskets, met and flowed through and past each other. For those who had no experience of the older days, and who had quieter tastes in drama than raised sticks and bloody faces, the scene was sufficiently lively. There were tinkers there, too, to belie the Boer War legend of the woman of the bread-shop.

One of them stood at the corner of a road leading past the market-square. Horseless carts, boxes, and all sorts of things lined the gutter, and this big fellow had found an upturned barrel, on the end of which he spread out the four aces of a pack of cards as a preliminary to a gamble. He was a most winning rogue, not swarthy like a gipsy, but dark like a western Irishman; he had irresistible blue eyes and a laughing face, as he called on the passers-by to come and stake their money. The game was to guess which suit would turn up when the pack was cut: he gave you two to one against any suit you liked.

"It's a fair game," he kept crying, as he shuffled the cards. "It's a fair game—the fairest game in Ireland."

I said the tinker was irresistible, but the country people who crowded round and looked at the four

aces over each other's shoulders apparently did not find him so, for they allowed him to go on shuffling the cards and soothing that it was a fair game, the fairest game in Ireland, without making any move to test it.

At length, a little old farmer in a low hat, an old fellow with a coarse suit hanging on his body and coarse whiskers bushing from his cheeks, a shrewd, sandy, boorish old fellow with an ash-plant under his arm, who was standing on an empty box and cutting tobacco for his pipe, fumbled for a while in one of his pockets and brought out a penny, which he put down with a deliberate carelessness on the ace of spades. The tinker offered him the pack to cut, and sure enough he cut a spade. The tinker brought out a handful of coppers and gave him two along with the penny on the ace of spades with the air of a man who really enjoyed handing out money.

"Come on," he appealed to all the bystanders, "now's your chance to make your fortune. Two to one against any card on the table. It's a fair game, I tell you, it's a fair game. It's the fairest game in Ireland."

The old farmer, whose rocky face had almost quivered into a smile when he was handed the threepence, carefully put down a penny again on the ace of spades. So intensely did he seem to come alive for the moment that one felt as though one had suddenly come on a small duel—

a duel between Beauty and the Beast. There was even the shadow of a shade of excitement as the old farmer cut the cards again, and showed us a diamond.

“Turn about’s fair play,” said the tinker, putting the penny in his pocket. “Try again. There’s no deception about this game. I tell you, this is the fairest game in Ireland.”

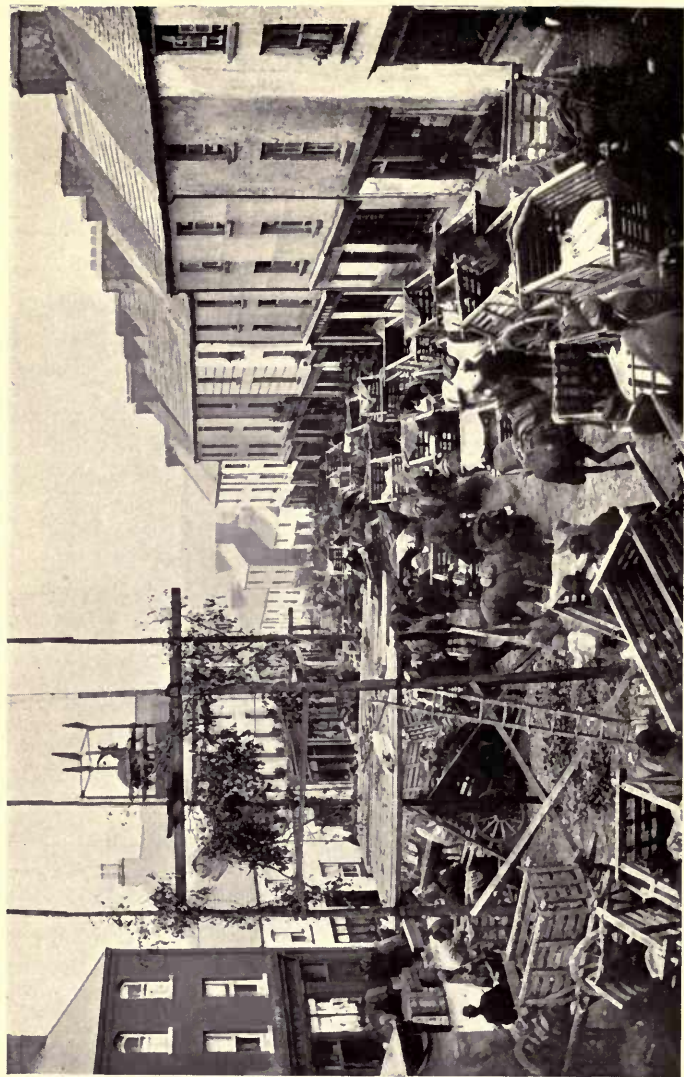
He looked up hopefully at the old man, but he had not reckoned with the thrift of the peasant. No one looking at the grave and grumpy figure on the box, cutting tobacco once more with a penknife, would have thought that he was even conscious of the card-game which was going on beside him—much less that he had, only a moment before, been caught in the net of gambling. He had become individualised for a moment into a sportsman, but he had sunk again into a piece of nature, and was no more to be appealed to than the sea or the stones in the road.

“Revenge is sweet,” the tinker wooed him. “Now’s your chance.”

But the farmer did not even look as if he heard ; he slowly rubbed the tobacco in his hands with the abstracted air of a Presbyterian elder who did not quite approve of the gaities of the fair. Then, when he had his pipe filled and lighted, he came stiffly and gingerly down off the box, and without looking at anybody made his way off through the crowd, a triumph of caution, a man







*Lawrence,*

PUCK FAIR.

who would henceforth have the winning of a penny from a tinker to add to his autobiography. Luckily the tinker had a sense of humour. He had ground of complaint against the old man for unsportsmanlike conduct ; but the little comedy of prudence had been too exquisite to leave any room for resentment. Waves of laughter broke in the tinker's eyes ; he laughed and we all laughed. We laughed until the tinker remembered the serious business of the fair, and in the midst of his laughter began once more to call out his invitation to the world in general : " This is a fair game, ladies and gentlemen—the fairest game in Ireland."

I will not tell you how much I lost to that hearty young man just because he had an irresistible sense of humour.

All down the street, wherever there were not people, there were booths or roulette tables or shooting-ranges or some other crowded institute of gambling. Right at the top of the hill, just under the horned puck, an auctioneer of old clothes was standing on a platform with trousers, waistcoats, shirts, saddles, overcoats, waterproofs, and all other manner of human necessities scattered at his feet or hanging on a huge sort of clothes-horse at one side of him. He stood in his shirt sleeves, a square-shouldered, red-moustached, hair-oiled young man, a man with a loud gold watch-chain running across his waist-

coat. He had a somewhat fiery look, but his business demanded a constant flow of good-humour and auctioneer's wit, and good-humour flowed out of him like water out of a spring. It flowed out of him, too, in an indefinable much-maligned accent which made men in the crowd turn to their neighbours and nod knowingly: "He's from the north."

He was trying to sell a tweed overcoat which he had slung on his arm, and somebody had just made a low bid for it. The auctioneer listened derisively.

"Seven shillings?" he repeated, with simulated incredulity. "The shirt you'll wear at your wake will cost more than that. And I hope," he added, with a satirical nod at the bidder—"I hope the corpse will look better than the patient."

While the crowd was laughing, he took up a long white waterproof coat and gave it a slap of approval.

"Here's the greatest bargain of the fair," he said. "If you saw that coat in the window of a draper's shop, you'd see a ticket on it marked one pound seven and sixpence: divil a lie! The drapers, I tell you, are worse robbers than the landlords. I say the drapers are worse robbers than what the landlords were. They're worse extortioners. It's the truth. I'm offering this handsome gentleman's waterproof coat for twenty shillings. Twenty shillings, do you hear? I'm

at my old fault. I sell too cheap. Here, maybe you can't get a right view of it there. I'll put it on to show you."

Talking away the whole time, he put the waterproof on, buttoned it up and turned round and round so as to let us have a view of it in every aspect.

"Is there any of you thinking of getting married?" he asked. "If a young fellow was thinking of getting married this coat would mean a thousand pounds extra to the fortune."

Peeling the coat off him, he again invited bids for it.

"Twenty shillings!" he shouted, slapping it hard; "twenty shillings, and I'll take any money but matrimony! Nineteen shillings"—with another slap—"eighteen shillings"—with another—"seventeen and sixpence"—with another. "Here, I don't think you people understand. This is a coat made of fine india-rubber—a coat made of the purest indiarubber."

He stooped and thrust it at a spectator.

"Smell it, man, smell it," he insisted. "It will do you more good than a week at Ballybunion"—a seaside resort; "it's more strengthening, refreshing, and invigorating. Seventeen shillings." He hit the coat a hard slap again. "If I struck one of you people as hard and as often as I'm striking this coat, you'd be killed altogether. Sixteen shillings. It wouldn't let

through the rain, if it was raining for a month. Fifteen shillings and sixpence. If it was a wet day to-day, there'd be plenty of you wanting it. It's not raining now. I can remember the time it was. Fifteen shillings. Going, going at fifteen shillings. Fifteen shillings. Fifteen shillings. Fifteen shillings. What's come over you? I never was in such a crowd of people before in my life. You've neither manes, brains, nor understanding. Fourteen shillings and sixpence?"

Not an offer from the crowd. Just a sea of faces waiting for the next jest and gibe, everybody taking a thorough pleasure in the names that the red man was calling them.

At length he threw down the waterproof in disgust.

"I might as well," he protested, "be standing in the graveyard selling clothes to the dead."

He turned from the indiarubber coat which nobody wanted and took up a saddle instead. But this scarcely gave him so good a subject for his eloquence.

"This," said he encouragingly, holding up the saddle to the eyes of the crowd, "is what you call the farmer's friend. If you want to go for the priest or the doctor in the middle of the night, this is what you turn to. The farmer's friend—who'll show his decent rearing and his common sense by making a reasonable offer for it?"

He paused.

“Come on, all you dogs of war and lovers of peace!” he bullied us, hitting the saddle a thump with his free hand. “What offers for this fine saddle?”

Again he paused and again everybody gaped and said nothing. He threw down the saddle and, as he looked round the crowd, he folded his arms in an attitude of melancholy bitterness.

“Silent, O Moyle, is the roar of thy waters!” he misquoted, with a pitying look at the crowd.

His failure to thump and shout the crowd into a purchasing humour, however, could not depress such virile spirits for ever. As we moved off, feeling that the best of the performance must be over, he was engaged in announcing the glories of a suit of boy’s clothes, and we could hear him suddenly break off to rebuke some one in the crowd: “It’s no use your winking at me, ma’am. I’m a married man.”

That is a jest that seldom fails in the country.

Up along the middle of the street just then a crier with a bell in his hand was coming, and he paused and began to ring the bell slowly as he took up his position at the nearest corner. Bent-kneed, stiff-backed, eagle-nosed, grey, he rang on steadily till a small crowd had gathered round him, after which he paused and lifted up a good middle-aged voice and proclaimed in the tones of a herald: “Take notice, take pertickler notice. I wish to inform ye that the auction of a pony and

trap belonging to Mrs. —— will take place this afternoon at two o'clock outside the Bank."

Having announced further auctions of bulls and other things, he seemed to raise his voice slightly.

"Also," he continued in recitative, putting an almost threatening emphasis on the second syllable of the word, "that the Clerk of the Workhouse asks me to inform ye that, if any of ye has not paid the last quarter's rates, as soon as this fair is over ye will be prosecuted. Also," he added, without a pause, as the people looked at each other and smiled, "that a pig weighing a hundredweight and a half went astray at yesterday's fair, and if any of ye will bring me tidings of the pig, I will pay him a half-crown to-morrow."

As he reached the last words of the sentence, his words fell to the ordinary tones of conversation, like a ballad-singer's when he has reached the last line of a song. And, ringing his bell, he went on his way.

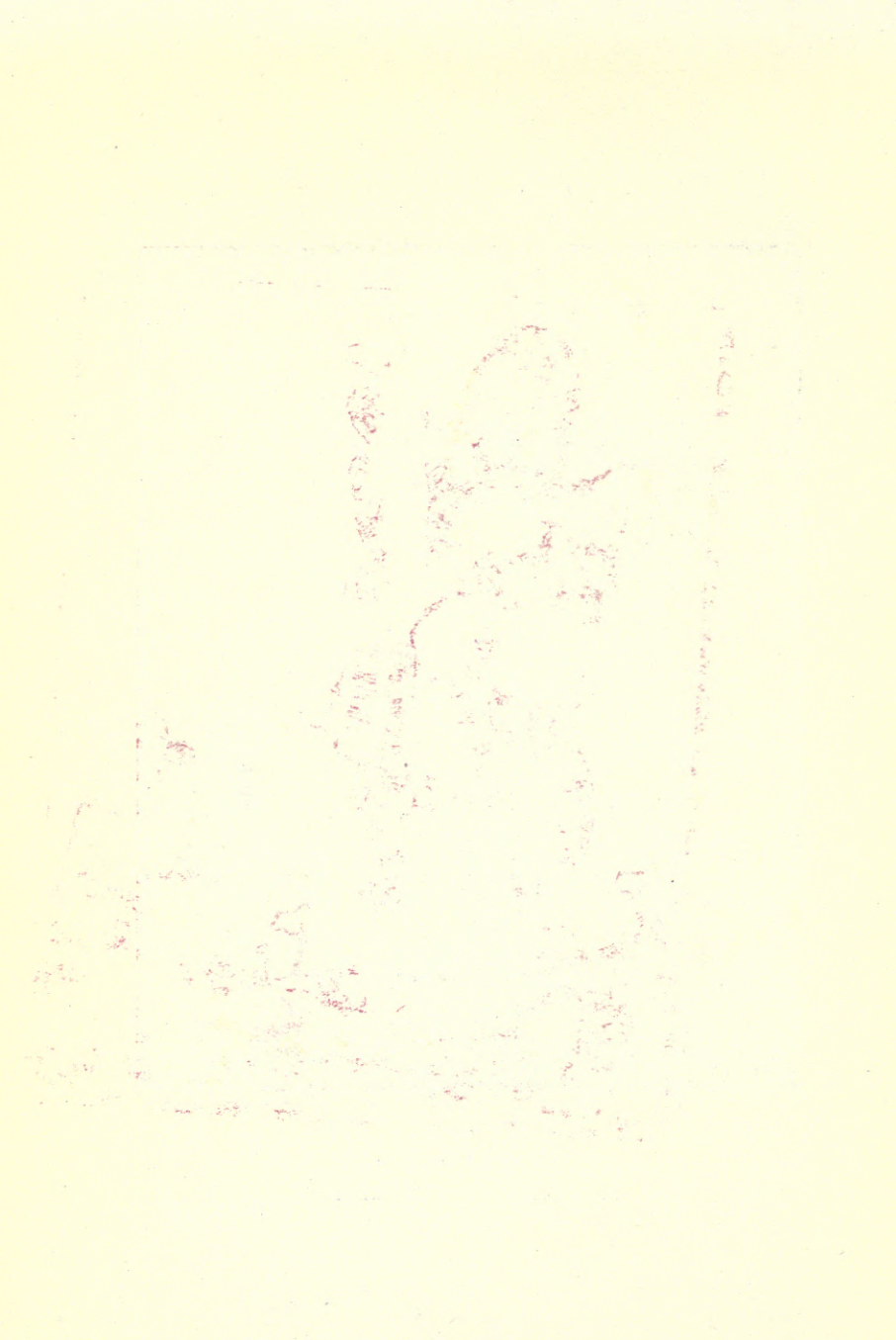
As the day wore on, the noise and the crowds increased, and all the gambling games which lined the gutter down the hill were surrounded by crowds of eager faces. I noticed in particular one audacious old scoundrel with a humped back who was running a penny draw with a dirty box of gimcracks in front of him. He, too, kept forbidding the female sex to wink at him on the





THE BALLAD-SINGER.

*Drawn and coloured by Jack B. Yeats.*



ground that he was a married man. But his jests were of the feeblest. He had no humour beyond the official humour of his class. He was selling bits of cardboard about half the length of your finger at a penny apiece. You drew one of these at a venture out of a small box he passed round, and on it the name of your prize was written. The old man took the scrap of cardboard from the purchaser and read out the inscription. "A lady's gold ring," he would announce, and with great solemnity would hand a ring that had once been in a lucky-bag over to the winner. Or it might be a lady's brooch, or a photograph frame, or a necklace, all of them mighty lucky-baggy and mighty showy for a penny. Or he would read out impressively, "A pair of gentleman's bootlaces," and would present the prize to the winner, beaming congratulation. It was a lottery in which there were no blanks. The poorest prize I could see was a ballad. I would not call a ballad a poor prize in ordinary circumstances, but this old man did not give his victims ballads in the ordinary form. He had simply cut the ballads out of a cheap ballad-budget, and his prizes were only these clipped snippets. In any case, "Paddy Hegarty's Ducks" is no ballad in the country sense of the word. I never heard the words of it before, but old Ananias read the first verse out to us with unction as he distributed the prizes.

Killorglin is a town of several streets, and every

square inch of it was filled with the fair. In better days, I believe, the fair used to overflow out along the country roads, but even in our own degenerate times there is enough of it to tire one. On wandering down towards the bridge at the bottom of the hill I met the man who had driven us over from Killarney the day before, and he had already had a surfeit of it in the shape of small whiskies.

“We didn’t get to bed last night at all, sir,” he told me, in explanation of the antic movements of the limbs and face of his companion. “It’s only a drop of dynamite that keeps the life in us.”

Sitting near us on the window-sill of a public-house, watching the crowds and the red and the black cattle go by, was an old grumble-faced farmer, a heavy-nosed, whiskered old fellow with an enormous mouth. He passed some remark about the time of day, and it was not long afterwards that he passed some remark on a girl that went by.

“This should be a good place to get a woman,” he suggested dully.

I looked at his face to see if I had misheard him ; but not a muscle of it moved to tell me.

“You bawdy old wretch,” thought I, not giving him the benefit of the doubt, “how dare you sit there in this land of innocence and think such things !”

“It’s grand, man,” said the young drunk chap,



*Lawrence.*

VALENTIA HARBOUR, CO. KERRY.



putting a friendly hand on his shoulder, "to be sitting at the door of a pub all day, taking a good look at all the fine girls that do be coming into the fair."

Old heavy-nose grunted.

"It's good to be looking at them," he agreed; "but," he added gloomily, "it's better to be hugging them."

By this time the sun had begun to shine, and, better still, I had been directed to a shop where I could get a certain paper I wanted. When I arrived at the shop—not far from the bridge—the proprietor, who was standing in the doorway, said that the paper had not arrived yet, but he was expecting it every minute. Meanwhile, in case I would wait for it, he offered me a stool that he had brought out and placed outside his door on the footpath. He was a middle-sized hard man of rounding stomach, with close curly hair all over his face; he wore a brown bowler hat, and a grey suit of clothes that would take no harm from the flour in his shop. He talked for some time on all sorts of topics, especially on his travels to London and one or two occasions on which he had seen English monarchs and lord-lieutenants. I did my best to keep the conversation on humbler planes, but this little gentleman had an extraordinary interest in royal families, and seemed to think that I, being a stranger, maybe a tourist, must be both an authority on and an enthusiast

for these things. When he had told me all he himself knew of royalty, he asked me if I had seen Queen Alexandra's picture-book. I confessed I had not, and when he said he would go in and bring it out to me, I couldn't for the life of me throw cold water on his kindly and hospitable intentions. I took the book in my hands and began to turn the pages over sadly, glancing at portraits of royalties dressed as soldiers, sailors, and Highlanders. At last, in sheer weariness, I left the book lying open on my knee, and, as luck would have it, King Edward in a yachting-cap smiled out from the page.

"Grand man that!" said my host, tapping a freckled finger on the royal portrait.

"Do you not think," said I, resolved to turn the conversation at all costs, "that Parnell was a better man?"

I would hardly have said it, if I had guessed it would have ruffled him so.

"Parnell?" he barked, in an incredulous voice. "O God, no. Oh, my God, no," he said, as though the very suggestion choked him with disgust. "I can tell you," he declared, his eyes dancing, as he snapped Queen Alexandra's photograph-album out of my hands, "there's damned little nationality in my bones. Maybe there would be," he glared, retreating into the door of his shop, "if it paid me."

When he came out again after putting away



the album I led the conversation timidly to the question whether nationality does not after all pay, and asked him to name me any country in which a successful movement for political independence or the revival of a national language had not resulted in industrial and agricultural progress. He was quite reasonable, and admitted that what was good for Bohemia and Hungary and England and Greece might be good for Ireland. But I saw that any reference to the respective merits of King Edward and Parnell would be wind to a flame again, and I avoided making the national question a personal matter. By the time *The Irish Times* arrived we were excellent friends, and, before I left, he emphasised the fact again and again that he might believe in nationality if it paid him. . . .

I was getting a little weary of the fair and its thousand incidents—as weary as the old puck who stood, with bound horns, on his mast-high stage and looked down at us through a wall of green leaves. So I escaped from the town along a country road, up which broken companies of small cattle and their drivers moved continuously, and men rode home adventurously on their horses towards the mists that still hung in dull veils over the faces of the Kerry hills.

## CHAPTER VI

### TOURISTS IN KERRY

TRAVELLING in the train from Killorglin to Cahirciveen in the late afternoon, one was still in the atmosphere of Puck Fair for many miles of the way. Caravans of horsemen and cattle and carts and cars poured out along the road that runs beside the railway, and in their disordered hurry homeward had an air of flight—of a miniature retreat from Moscow. The train, too, was full of the holiday. Boys were stamping their feet, thumping the sides of the compartments, and singing boisterously; girls were laughing in the next carriage as they only laugh on days of crowds and excitements; half-bodies were stretching out of windows and hailing other half-bodies farther along the train.

There was a very charming girl in the carriage with us, wearing a flowered hat that looked strange to this part of the world. She was sitting between two younger sisters who had shawls over their heads, and who looked at everything, including her, with smiles of wonder. She was just back





[Laurence,

O'CONNELL'S BIRTHPLACE, CAHIRCIVEEN.

from America, she said, where she was in service ; and she was going to go out there again. She could not settle down at home after having been in America. There was nothing to do on the farm. She would die of dullness. It was nice enough in the summer, but nobody who had ever had to stay on a farm through the winter would be content to settle down in the country. The two dark sisters with the brown eyes listened to her in shy admiration, smiling under their shawls as though they too had seen the vision of America.

It is an odd fact that in many parts of rural Ireland America seems far more real and far nearer to the people than any Irish city. Men and women who know as little of Dublin almost as they do of Berlin talk to you of New York as though it were just round the corner, a paradise of crowds and lights. Obviously, the fault of this lies to a great degree with the schools, which have always taught geography and history on the principle that Ireland is, in the vulgar phrase, the last country God made. You may be brought up in a garden, but if your are taught to look at all the flowers in it as weeds, to be bored even by their names, and to dream of other distant gardens as the only places where really wonderful flowers grow, you will feel homesick for the intenser beauty, and you will continue blind to the loveliness around you. Luckily, politics and sport have served to keep some local enthusiasms

burning here. The railway carriages testify to this with their bescribbled walls. "Up Kerry," "Up Murphy," "Down So-and-so, he's a grabber," are mottoes very plentifully pencilled over the railway trains of Kerry. . . .

Cahirciveen was at the end of that glorious railway journey, which took us now among the mountains and now high above the shore, with riders trooping along the road low down between us and the sea. Like the days that went before it, it was a poor day for seeing the hills, but Dingle Bay shone below us with a million refreshing waves, and the horsemen riding along the shore made the scene as exciting as a ballad.

We had no intention of staying in Cahirciveen. It was simply to be a place where we changed on to a mail-car for Waterville. The mail-car for Waterville, however, though it was in the railway guide, was not in Cahirciveen when we got there. Nor would it leave Cahirciveen till the next morning. Further, the porter at Killorglin had put our luggage into the wrong train. That is how we came to spend the night in Cahirciveen, a little town, shaped like a catapult, which lies along the side of a hill where the stones gleam like jewels in the sun.

I do not curse the author of the railway guide, and I do not curse the porter. On the contrary, I am grateful to them, for Cahirciveen is a real place, not a tourist resort, and that hotel a little

above the railway station is a house of comfort, cleanliness, and honest tariffs.

On the next morning the sun rose with a lion's strength. Every rock in the hillside was shining, and brown floods were pouring down the river into the blue sea-water that comes up Valencia Harbour towards the town, and in the fierce light the tide swirled copper-coloured, while blue-jerseyed fishermen dragged their brown nets through it up among the boats on the shore below the bridge.

Cahirciveen is not only beautiful in its situation but interesting in its memories, for it was a little to the west of the town that Daniel O'Connell was born. The ivy is now growing through the windows of the ruined house, which lies behind a locked gate in a field where cattle browse. It was on the way to the house that we met an old slim-headed farmer mending the road and trusting to William O'Brien to regenerate Ireland. He was especially eager that Mr. O'Brien should rescue him from the clutches of his landlord, who had refused to let him sell the turf off his farm.

"If it was myself owned the farm," said he, leaning on his long spade, "and had the right to sell the turf off it, do you think it's here I would be, mending this damned road?"

I asked him wasn't his landlord—a famous English gentleman—an absentee.

"I don't know what he is," he asserted

vehemently. "I know he's a tyrant. That's what he is."

I comforted him by assuring him that the day of the landlords was nearly over.

"Ah!" said he, spitting on his hands, and ladling stones into a hollow of the road, "I'm in dread they'll be brought to their knees yet. There was O'Connell now, he was a great man, and there was Parnell, he was a great man, and there's William O'Brien, and I'm thinking if it wasn't that they had treated O'Brien badly, they would have got rid of them fellows long ago. Conciliation—that's what they call it. That's what O'Brien wants, and treating Catholic and Protestant fair and fair alike. Isn't a Protestant just as much an Irishman as a Catholic? That's what O'Brien says, and he's right. In the name of God, what's to divide them, once the land belongs to the people?"

O'Connell is commemorated in Cahirciveen, not only by his ruined birthplace, but by an ambitious new memorial chapel, the foundation-stone of which was sent by the Pope. Other and older ruins—a castle of the McCarthies and a circular stone fort—lie beyond the river.

There used to be a motor char-à-banc which took you from Cahirciveen round the coast of Kerry, but this so bruised and smashed the soft roads that—as far as Waterville, at any rate—it had to be supplanted by the old horse-vehicle



again. When this drew up at the door of our hotel, a little foreign lady was uttering a shrill monologue to the driver, who smiled sheepishly. The driver, it seemed, had brought her in from Waterville that morning for the train to Dublin, had put her with her bags into a carriage which did not belong to the train at all, and the train had steamed out shortly afterwards without her. She was able to get no satisfaction out of the stationmaster or the porter, and the driver evidently thought that if he smiled long enough, he, too, would prove himself guiltless. The little shrill lady was doing her best to peck him into realising the enormity of his offence. She at last broke off in exhaustion.

“Driver, bring me a brandy,” she commanded sharply, and when she had swallowed this she began to pour out her grievances against the driver with renewed volubility. She said she would make him take her back to Waterville for nothing, anyway.

Farther on, we picked up two other ladies. They sat directly behind us, and talked at the top of their voices. Both of them were going to Waterville. They had evidently never met before, but they were soon talking like old friends, for they both had the same interest in the English Royal Family and the aristocracy. One of them praised a certain royal lady.

“Ah yes,” admitted the elder of the two;

“good, but such a bore! So different from Queen Victoria! Queen Victoria was such a dear, lively old thing—so fond of company. She simply couldn’t bear any one who was dull to be in the same room with her. Queen Mary? Ah yes, charming, charming. And so good to the poor. And so clever. Lord —— told me that he considers her one of the cleverest queens we have ever had.”

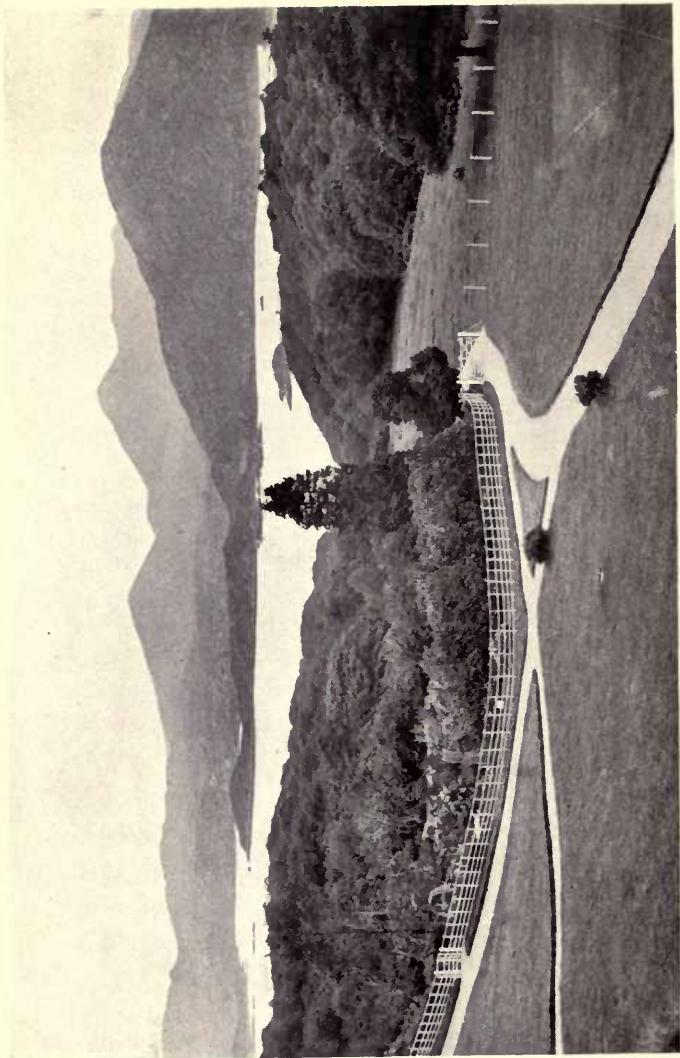
The younger lady, in a shy voice, corroborated this on almost as aristocratic authority.

“Ah!” exclaimed the other—she spoke commandingly from the pit of her throat, as dowagers are made to do on the stage—“You know ——, do you? Then you probably know Lady ——?”

The younger lady did not, but she had friends who knew Lady —— very well, indeed.

“Delightful woman,” declared the dowager. “Oh, you must meet her some day. Do you know, the Duke of Connaught said that she was the wittiest woman in Ireland. That was when he was Commander of the Forces. She was invited to Dublin Castle with Lord —— to meet him, and, as luck would have it, she got a raging toothache that day, and one side of her face was quite swollen. So, when she was taken up to be presented to the Duke, she said to him, ‘You must only look at this side, your Royal Highness. The other cheek’s at home in bed.’ The Duke





*Lawrence.*

HOTEL GROUNDS IN GLENGARIFF.

was greatly charmed with her ; she's so full of fun. He said afterwards that she was the wittiest woman in Ireland."

From that the talk drifted to Waterville, its hotels, beauties, and inhabitants.

"The most charming peasantry in the world," was the elderly lady's verdict on the last of these ; "so good-mannered, and witty, and obliging."

The other lady said she knew some people who were very fond of the northern Irish. Her companion hummed and hawed at that ; the north, she said, had no manners and had not the southern brightness and humour.

"I have heard it said," the other suggested timidly, "that they're very thrifty."

"Ah !" the dowager admitted, with a fine touch of scorn in her voice, "thrifty, if you like ; but thrift's not everything."

It was at this point that I suddenly came to a firm resolution : quite loud into myself, "I'm blessed if I'll stop at Waterville at all."

No, Waterville lies beside a wild bay and has a lovely lake behind it. But those ladies had conjured up a week-end atmosphere about the place by the time we reached it, and the ugly, clean, reddish-brown model houses inhabited by the servants of the Cable Company that has a station there were like a cry to us to go on farther to Parknasilla, which, at least, has a beautiful name.

At Waterville we gave up horses and took to a covered motor-vehicle driven by a little sulky chauffeur from London. To hear him talk—and I will say this for him, that any of the passengers who asked him questions found it difficult to get more than a grunt out of him—was to exchange the magic of Kerry for the magic of Holborn. While this little screw-faced man was running about in his brown mechanic's suit and with a cigarette sticking to his lips, even the most determined sentimentalist must have found it difficult to persuade himself that he was in a land of colleens, shillelaghs, and wakes. One Irish—or alleged Irish—characteristic the chauffeur had. He was a magnificently reckless driver. But, after all, he may have learned that when driving motor-buses in London. He certainly took the sharp, sudden corners of the Kerry rocks in a spirit of blind faith that made me expect every minute to be plunging into the ruins of an ass-cart or to be hurled over the side of the road—which in places hangs on a kind of cliff-edge, with only a little futile wall dividing it from the abyss. It runs in a multitude of curves, its future ever unseen behind a threatening jut of stone. Round these we swept with something of the gay carelessness of a switchback railway. The chauffeur clearly acted on the assumption that Kerry was a privileged motor-run with no native population—none at least that was likely to be travelling the

coast-road. Perhaps he was right. Kerry—this bit of it, at any rate—has an air of wilderness beyond any other part of Ireland I know. It looked all ragged and deserted in the dull misty light that afternoon, its boasted mountains like shapeless piled-up heaps of green and stones. No wonder the tourist who judges Ireland by the wildest parts of Kerry, and only knows these as they can be seen from a rushing motor-car, gets an exaggerated idea of Irish desolation and poverty.

Here he sees an untidy little farm hanging among the rocks of the hillside, and here an excited ragged man trying to keep a terrified ass from backing into eternity at sight of the motor; and here a long barefooted boy, a youth of sixteen or so with wild hair, coming up with a parcel to be posted, tugs his forelock and calls the chauffeur "sir" (How sick that made me feel!). Ireland lies about us, no doubt, but this is not Ireland that we see from the tourist motor. Why, the motor is even roofed in such a way that we cannot get a full view of the hills! We are cooped in and protected from the rain and reality.

A lady with two or three children and a load of wooden spades, who sat beside us, did nevertheless induce a number of Irish thrills in herself as we rumbled along. We were passing a small house where a number of people were sitting on the wall outside and moving about the door. It was

obviously a funeral party or some such thing. But the lady romantically jumped in her seat and cried to her husband, "Look! It's an Irish eviction. I'm sure it's an Irish eviction."

Her husband said "Humph!" and went on smoking his cigar with the look of a man who would say, "Those damned Irish, they are always being evicted."

I could imagine those two laying down the law about Ireland after their return home.

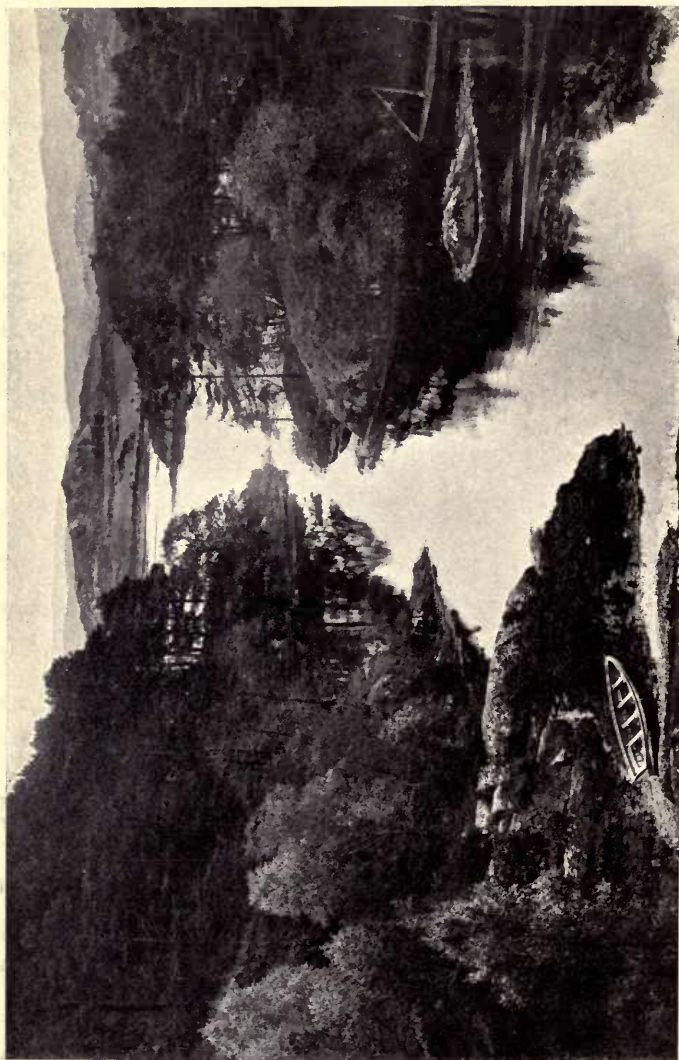
"My dear, have you ever been in Ireland? We have. If you knew the people, you would not talk like that. The last time we were there we saw an eviction, and I can assure you it made me realise the Irish question as I had never done before. Poor creatures—I felt sorry for them. But to put the loyal and prosperous north under the heel of such people! Squalid, superstitious, and half-starved! My dear, if you had ever spent any time among the southern Irish, you would not talk of such a thing."

Past Derrynane, O'Connell's old home, a wooded estate running into the sea, we flew, and through the town of Sneem, which had a mildewed look in the clammy misty light. And after that it was not long till we were rolling up the drive through the paradisiacal grounds in which the hotel of Parknasilla stands.

Parknasilla is, I am sure, an ideal hotel for the rich tourist. Originally the palace of a bishop,







[*Lawrence.*

GLENGARIFF, CO. CORK.

it lies in a beautifully wooded estate, and plants grow about it in a tropical luxuriance. Close to the sea, it has its own boatmen and fishermen, and its shore of rocks with little inlets of the sea running up among them—rocks rich in wrack and seaweed, and with bridges leading from the woods to them—the woods and the sea both so fragrant. Here is a retreat from business and poverty—like a hothouse set in a congested district. Even though the evening was wet, it was pleasant to wander among the tangle of the trees, as in a forest of silver birches with rich undergrowth, and to watch the sea, slow and quiet, filling the little bays among the rocks, and the wrack moving in the inward and outward wash.

This was all good. But I confess the hotel itself overwhelmed me. It was a place of huge respectable silence, a haunt of the boredom of the rich. Ladies in evening dress sat reading novels in the large drawing-room in chilling groups. Here one had all the exclusiveness which is supposed to be the special mark of English life. As I looked round that company of the well-dressed, sitting on their chairs and sofas, all silent and all damned, I'd have given my second-best pair of boots to be back in Lisdoonvarna, with its boisterous and hospitable welcome. Doubtless these were human beings in the hotel at Parknasilla, but they were pretending not to be. No doubt they were enjoying themselves, though

they evidently thought it good manners to conceal the fact. They seemed to carry little prisons of starch about with them—to be resolved to keep as aloof as the kings and queens of some savage tribe. It was not that they suffered from the shyness of strangers; they had simply the standoffishness of people who did not care for the human race outside their own little social group. They were the most extraordinary spectacle I had yet seen on the west coast of Ireland. Decent people, kind people, good people, I'm quite sure, Heaven bless them, but you might as well have tried to feel brotherly to a lot of walruses.

The next day we fled from the place. We felt that we must get back to Ireland, and we eagerly climbed the motor that gets you to Kenmare in time for lunch, to Glengariff in time for tea, and to Bantry in time for the Cork train. And what a journey that is, even when taken in a rush on a day of wet wind and flying mists! That climb up the steep and winding mountain-roads between Kenmare and Glengariff, with the mists now cutting us off from the underworld as though we were up in a dirigible above the clouds, and now disclosing distant valleys of poverty far down below us and eager peaks rising above and around us like shapes in some monstrous war, leaves a mighty exciting memory behind it. It is as though one had found a motor-road up the

Brocken in a dream. And though, when one has passed through the rock-tunnel at the top, a woman comes out of a lemonade shanty by the roadside with a tray of picture post-cards for sale, one remains immune from disenchantment.

And Glengariff, too, with its islets lying golden in the sun that comes after rain, dwells by a fairy sea. Glories of pines, glories of bay, glories of hills are here in so rich a loveliness that the tourist is lost among them. . . . And by the time one has reached Bantry one is in Ireland again—Ireland of the cows and the whin ditches, and the fields of daisy and buttercup and benweed, and the human beings.

## CHAPTER VII

### KINSALE

“THE TOWN of Kinsale is a large, stinking, filthy hole,” wrote the Reverend Richard Allyn, chaplain of H.M.S. *Centurion*, in his journal in 1691. “I was glad to leave so vile a place, though indeed I was somewhat sorry to part with Parson Tomms and the two only fit men for Christian conversation beside himself in the whole town—viz. Mr. Stowell, the mayor, and Parson Mead.” Kinsale is no longer large or stinking or filthy, if it was ever any of these, and as I went there in search not of Christian conversation, but of quietness and the site of a battle, I cannot say whether Parson Tomms and Parson Mead and the mayor have left any worthy successors. I deny upon oath, however, that it is or ever was a vile place.

Kinsale is one of those quaint and still southern towns which look almost as though they had been forgotten at the bottom of a motionless sea of air. Its narrow streets wind without the rumble of many carts round a crook of water,

and behind them rises, as it were, a cliff of ruinous dwellings and ruinous walls—a high terrace of the poor dropping gradually towards the mouth of the Bandon River. It is a town of steep places going up from a central labyrinth, and, though it has the most modern of post offices and some fine enough new houses, these things do not make the local atmosphere. One remembers Kinsale chiefly for the bygone fashion of its houses—the old-fangled round projections of their upper storeys and their wavy fronts of dark tiles. One remembers it, too, because of the women who move so quietly about its streets, bending forward against the wind in their dark hoods and cloaks. Personally, I do not like the southern Irish cloak. I prefer infinitely the grey patterned shawls of the west. The cloak, however, for all its stains and dustiness, has a curious impressiveness as of an heirloom. It is like an inheritance of grandeur fallen upon evil days. It gives poverty a past, and suggests that out in the future the pride of life will one day be brought back again to the quayside of Kinsale on foreign ships. Meanwhile, on the backs of the poor, it is a misfit, an incongruity. Grey-haired women, with an irregular patch of face showing through its ample gathered hood, have the appearance at times of professional mourners as they pass you on the road.

We did not stay in Kinsale itself, but went out to one of the numerous coves which lie along the

side of the long serpentine water known as Kinsale Harbour. Here a steep little road of neat houses falls to a landing-place for boats, and at the far side of this another steep road rises towards the flagstaff of a coastguard station, a handful of threatening cannon, and an old grey fort that is inhabited by modern soldiers. This, to my inexpert eye, appeared as though its loop-holes and bastions might be a place to defend in time of war. It looks back, on the one hand, two or three miles over a round peninsula to Kinsale, and, on the other, gazes along several miles of Kinsale Harbour towards the ocean beyond and passing ships. Of military values, however, I know nothing. This stumpy grey fort, which is so ugly that it could only justify its existence by being indispensable, is by all accounts fit only to be the barrack that it is.

It was built by the Earl of Orrery in the time of Charles II. of England for the protection of Kinsale, and by him was called Charles Fort—a name it earned, for it stood out loyally for the Stuarts in 1690 against William of Orange's Danes and Englishmen. The siege began on the 3rd and 4th of October, when Sir Edward Scot, the Governor, on being called on to surrender, declared, that "it would be time enough a month hence to talk about surrendering." The Governor of Kinsale town had already threatened to hang a trumpeter who had made a similar demand on



him, and, firing the town, had retreated to Old Fort on the round peninsula I have mentioned, where he had been forced to surrender after the slaughter of two hundred of the garrison.

Charles Fort, we are told, contained at the time a garrison of a thousand men, and provisions to support them for a year—including “one thousand barrels of wheat, one thousand of beef, forty tons of claret, and great quantities of sack, brandy, and strong beer.” Unluckily, the walls did not last as well as the provisions, and the guns and bombs of the besiegers were so effective that by the fifteenth of the month hostages were exchanged and the garrison consented to surrender on condition that it “should continue in the Fort the 16th and march out the 17th with bag and baggage, drums beating, colours flying, lighted matches and bullet in mouth, and to have a safe convoy near Limrike.” It is interesting to remember that it was the soldier who was afterwards the great Marlborough into whose hands the keys of the fort were delivered.

It was on the sheltered side of Charles Fort that we looked for rooms, and we could have got these at the first house at which we called, only that the woman of the house was unable to guarantee us Christian food. She asked hesitatingly what we would want to eat. We gave her a list of simplicities that might have done for a

hermitage. We mentioned eggs, for instance, as an easy country food.

"We couldn't give you any eggs," she said, shaking her head gravely.

We said that fish would do.

She shook her head again.

"I doubt if we could get you any fish," she said.

We thought this very extraordinary, and asked her what she herself proposed to give us.

She did not answer directly. "Would you have any objection to condensed milk?" she asked. "I'm afraid there may be some trouble getting milk for you."

In amazement, we asked for an explanation of this mysterious famine of eggs and milk in the heart of a country district.

"We're boycotted," she said, with a worn look, and recommended us to try some more comfortable house, promising to take us in if we could get rooms nowhere else.

The circumstances of this boycott, as we heard the story afterwards, were peculiar. The trouble was connected with a farm from which a tenant had been evicted nearly thirty years before, and which had afterwards been taken by an immigrant from England or Scotland. Now that the land war was over, the evicted tenant had returned from America with money in his pocket, and demanded to be allowed to buy back his farm. Naturally enough, the new occupants would not

budge : they too had, by this time, their associations with the farm. It was the opinion of the neighbourhood, however, that the "wounded soldier of the land war"—to use the phrase of the orators—had the first claim on the fields, and all the common services of life were quietly withdrawn from the later comers—people who, though everybody recognised their honesty and decency and the difficulty of their case, stood in some measure as symbols of a dead system which had robbed half the fields of Ireland of their rightful owners.

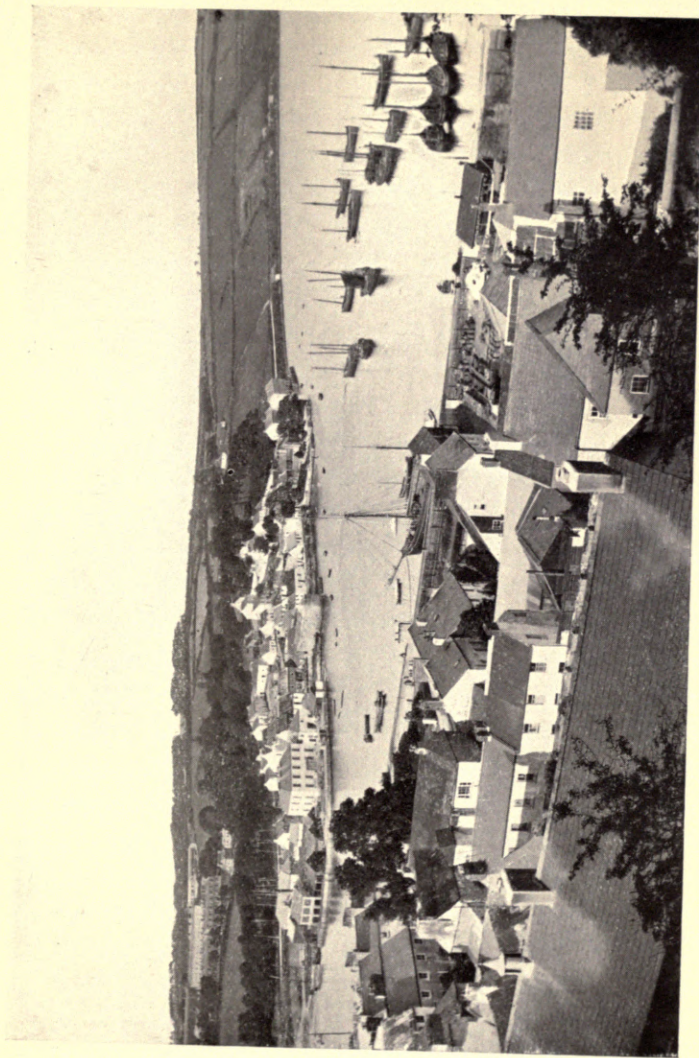
It was the kindness of the boycotted woman which sent us back up the hill to a house on the edge of the street where a landlady beyond praise mistook us for army people and allowed us in. I was not in sight myself at the time she consented to admit us : even the most generous imagination would have some difficulty in finding anything soldierly about either my dress or my figure. Our landlady afterwards told us frankly, however, that it was well she thought we either must belong to the army or had come off a yacht lying out in the harbour, for otherwise she might never have taken us in.

"I don't take everybody as lodgers," she said, wagging her netted head. "Oh, Lord bless you, child, no."

She was a woman of good size, with head bent forward between her round shoulders, and arms

swinging little short swings in front of her as she walked. Her face had character, worldly wisdom, and kindness; she had a good Roman nose, and mobile lips that were constantly twinkling into smiles along with her ageing eyes. She had two enthusiasms—one for British officers and one for the north of Ireland—though in politics she was, I believe, a Nationalist, and in religion a Catholic. She was essentially one of those women who are interested in the motherliest way in whatever environment they are placed in, and the best part of her life had been spent as a stranger among the people of the north, while, since she had returned to Kinsale, she had been letting the best rooms in her house to a succession of officers in the Kinsale garrison.

I cannot tell you how sad I felt at first when Mrs. Dermott brought in the plates at meal-times, and held the floor through the entire meal and for an hour afterwards, while she told us anecdotes of officers and officers' wives who had stayed in her rooms. She had had wounded officers from the Boer War, and militia officers during the summer training, and ordinary officers belonging to the permanent garrison which is cooped up in a great barracks over the town of Kinsale. If we asked for honey, she once knew an officer who was a great one for honey, and if we praised the air of the headland, she once knew a sick officer, who had come there so white and weak



*Lawrence.*

A VIEW OF KINSALE.



—“Child of grace, I was sure he was done for in this world, and he looking more dead than alive,”—but in a fortnight his cheeks were as brown as brown,—“and eat? Child, he could eat three of you!” Similarly, when we had no drink at our meals, we were supported by numerous precedents of abstemious officers, and, when the washing was brought back, I had a lecture on the airing of underclothing, with a tragic tale of a young officer lodging in these rooms who had once put on a woollen undershirt without airing it, and had caught a chill on his kidneys and died.

Every evening Mrs. Dermott talked the sun out with these and similar memories, talked till the breath left her and she stood over us in the quarter light, her lips shaking as she waited for it to return. Her turns of speech, however, her acute intelligence, her immense brooding kindness, her deep humanity, made even her army gossip not only bearable but in the end desirable. Perhaps my liking for her grew because she lifted her hands in praise of the north of Ireland even higher than in praise of British officers.

“I always say,” she declared—that was when she was telling us how cheaply she could get us a section of honey, for which we, as visitors, might be charged a higher price—“that the north of Ireland people are the honestest people in the world. In the north of Ireland nobody ever would take advantage of a stranger.”

I knew that even in the north there are exceptions, but none the less I did not deprecate the praise.

“No,” she went on; “in the north of Ireland”—she always gave the full phrase and pronounced it almost like “de nort’ of Ireland” in the old-fashioned way—“in the north of Ireland nobody will try to put upon you, and nobody will be put upon. They won’t stand it,” she declared, raising her voice vigorously. Her eyes twinkled at the sides of her Roman nose. “See here.” She spread an example before us. “In de sout’ of Ireland a poor man can’t get married without he paying a pound, two pound, three pound, to the priest. I say to a priest one day, ‘You should go to the north of Ireland and try putting them charges on the people. The people in the north of Ireland would show you mighty quick. You don’t catch the north of Ireland people paying you two and three pound, and they not able to afford it.’ Oh, I told him out straight, I did, and I don’t know if he liked it, but it was the truth, child.”

Kinsale Harbour, in spite of all the talk about officers, and of the fact that you could not go out on the road without meeting some soldier posting along in putties and with a gun, and occasionally the half of a khaki regiment, was a place of entrancing gentleness and beauty. When once you have left the town and climbed the steep roadway known as Breakheart Hill, and reached



the high level road between field-walls made of what looked like petrified faggots of wood, you have the stretch of a gay world of blue under you, pouring round the headlands into the distant colourless waste of the ocean. After passing Charles Fort, you need the road no longer, but turn down a slope with a makeshift plot of coastguards' graves in the middle of it and some targets for rifle practice farther on, till, crossing a crumbling bridge, you come to a path along the border of the water. It is a world of heather and brambles and bees and an infrequent tethered goat and rocky passages that you find here down by the sea. Then, after less than a mile of circuitous walking, you come on a little white cove of fishermen's cottages, with a tide of children pouring out of the door of one of them and dogs lying flat in the neighbourhood, half asleep and half on guard. Down below on the pebble beach the boats are lying idle. Two soldier-boys are stooping and picking up stones to skim along the surface of the water. . . .

This is the third day we have wandered here. We pass round a bend in the path, and see a hundred yards in front of us an old woman labouring along with a red handkerchief tied round her head and a sack humping her shoulders. She staggers a pace or two behind the back of an aged man, who creeps along on little stiff bow-legs, and they seem to be screaming at each other

like gulls through the wind—those gulls which are clamouring in the wake of disappearing porpoises out in the bay. You would swear that the man and the woman were quarrelling with each other; at least, you would think that the woman was shrilly nagging at the stiff old back in front of her, and that the man was crawling home vanquished, and only able to utter an intermittent squeak in answer. As we come nearer, however, we find that the old man—a very perfect gentle fisherman—and the woman are exchanging gossip and grave thoughts in the friendliest way in Irish, and that the shrillness is but a piece of age and a result of walking and talking in single file in a high wind. The man and woman turn round to greet us in the name of God. She looks round at us from her bent shoulders and surveys us from strong dark eyes and a deep-ridged brow with strands of grey-black hair parted over it. Ah, she declares, after we have been talking for a while, there used to be plenty of Irish, good Irish, spoken in these parts, but the most of it was dead with the old people. From the language we go on to talk about the songs. She shakes her head gloomily.

“*Ní raibh abhrán ar bith agam ariamb*” (I never had any songs), she called out in her loud sad voice into the wind. “*Bhi me ró-dhubhchroidheach i gcomhanaidhe*. Do you understand what I’m saying? I never had any songs,”

she translated for us. "I was always too down-hearted."

She went on shaking her head and sighing as she stumbled forward.

"It's only this present year my man died," she told us, "and he sixty-nine years of age. If he had lived till November next, he would have qualified for the pension. He was a pilot. He took the sway of all the pilots in Cork Harbour. I had four sons to him, and two of them died, and they just after getting appointments under the Government, and the others went to America. Up in that white house at the end of the road," she went on, nodding to a lane that broke away from the coast-path, "they were all born. And now I'm living in it all by myself with nobody at all keeping me company except Almighty God and His Blessed Mother."

The old man turned round and, apparently not having heard all this, said in a shrill, cracked voice—

"Her husband was a pilot, sir. They say there was never his equal to be found in this part of Ireland."

"Well," the woman went on, following her own trend of thought, as she adjusted the burden to her back, "the pensions is a great blessing to the poor."

"They are, they are," piped the old man. It was Friday, and they had just been in to get them

at the Kinsale post office. "You've seen the forms, sir?" And he brought out what looked like a book of five-shilling postal orders, and turned and handed it to me with an air of pleasure.

"But, God knows," said the woman, "they try to get it back out of you in rates. Ten shillings they want to charge me on that house of mine, and when I went in to speak to Mr. — in Kinsale about it, and asked him what I got for it, he said it was for the roads. 'The roads!' I said to him, 'and me living a mile away from any road at all in an old lane between two hills of furze! If you charge me for roads, why don't you make me a road up to my house so that I won't be having to tramp through a bog of mud where you wouldn't drive a cow?' Ah, well," she said suddenly, "it's here I turn off. *Beannacht leat, a dhuine uasail! Beannacht leat, a bhean uasal!*" And with a sad face she took her sorrows and her sack off along the muddy path up the hillside.

Every day of our visit we had come round the coast-path, and the old man had on each occasion welcomed us as a friend. He lived here in the cove from which the old woman's path went up the slope—he and his son and his son's children. He was one of those old men whom to know is a religious experience. Old age, I suppose, is beautiful in all places where the people do not spend their vigorous years in bawdy thoughts. In Ireland the percentage of simple and pleasant

people among the old must be as high as in any country in the world. One of my friends argues that the old people in Ireland are beautiful because they are pagans, but ordinary observers will with better cause relate those grey and gentle folk to the saintly sort of Christianity. They are of the Christian type that you find in the fables and short stories of Tolstoy. Theirs are the heads of men and women who have become as little children: they are gracious spirits, blessing God for sunny days on the shores of want.

Sentiment in those who write is a dangerous and at times a damned thing, but this old, blue-jerseyed man, living in the cottage under the hillside, made one feel childishly happy. He asked us into his house, before which his sailor son was sitting on a low wall, carving the model of a small boat, and setting it in relief in a box to serve as a sort of wall-picture for the children. The daughter-in-law, a shy woman with a head of hair like a consuming fire, was washing things in the kitchen, where the fire on the floor had gone out. "Keep your hat on, keep your hat on," the old man said to me, as I ducked under the lintel and took my hat in my hand; and a couple of small children, shyly hiding in their mother's skirts, gazed at us with more wonder than happiness. He gave a grandfather's laugh at their nervousness, and began to feel in one of his pockets. "Is this what you're expecting?" he

asked, producing a penny packet of Jacobs's Niagara wafers and tearing the top off it. "Ha, boy, you were expecting this." And he began to dole out his biscuits to the two solemn children—a big-headed, red, sulky boy, and a girl with curls as fine as a baby's hair. The children munched the biscuits inattentively, still keeping their eyes and their thoughts on us. They always, he said, expected him to bring them back a bag of biscuits on Friday when he came back from the post office with his old age pension.

He had also brought home with him a share of knowledge about us and our family—knowledge which he had gathered in a public-house from some one who knew us. "I take the one drink in the week," he explained, in regard to the public-house. "When I draw the pension on Friday, I always have a pint of stout: it's good medicine."

He wanted to give us tea while we were there. We were anxious to go round to the point of the headland that day, however, so we could not wait. Our host showed us out, lingering to look at some gutted fish which were drying on the grass opposite his house on the other side of the path. Those were skad, he told us,—good to eat,—and he would have some parcelled up for us by the time we came back from our walk. Porpoises were playing in the bay, coming up like great black surges, with a constant flutter of shrill birds rising and alighting over them on the look out

for fish. The old man did not know them as porpoises. He was willing to compromise and call them grampuses, but he had another name for them, like packers. He went on to talk about the strange things of the deep. There was a cave somewhere in the bay, he said, where you could see the seals bobbing up and down—kind gentle creatures that would do you no harm. Did we know the Irish word for a seal—rón? Did ever we hear what sailors say about the seal; that “if a seal comes on a drowned body in the water it won’t leave it, or let any injury come to it, but will stay by the drowned man, keening him, till his friends come and take him away”? Our friend had little lore, however. He believed that the Danes had been on the Old Head of Kinsale and fought a battle there, and he gave us a bald version of the story of how they made ale from the heather—a story that one seems to meet everywhere in Ireland. Even when he directed us towards the end of our journey—an end with the suggestive name of Hangman’s Point—he could give us no details about the history of the name. “They say,” he related vaguely, “it was a man who used to put up false lights to wreck ships. It was at the point they hung him. That would be hundreds of years ago.” He said he could get us a history book from a schoolmaster he knew, which would tell us all about Ireland and the Danes and the Spaniards. . . .

It was a day of the enthusiasms of the air—a day upon which bird and bee seemed to swing through the air with a swift delight and ease. After we had left the cove, the coast-path was less marked and earthy; it now followed the edge of the low rocks, a green track, leading nowhere. One passed round a curve and saw the wide sea at the mouth of the bay; one went farther, and the bay seemed to be landlocked once more. Down among the rocks, the waters splashed into a thousand gullies, a million little waves advancing with a million little voices and breaking into fragrance and laughter. One dark rock stood out some little way from land, a grotesque of nature. Now it was hidden as the height of the water bore over it, and now the hollow sea fell from it and left it dripping. It was shaped in such a way that, amid the rise and fall of the swirling tide, it looked for all the world like the exsurgent head of a baby bear—a bear washing its screwed-up face with a circling paw, and taking advantage of every breathing-space to scrub its cheeks vigorously and dash the water from its eyes. Outside, the bay flowed dark blue and a desert for ships—for, owing to a strike, even the fishing-boats did not trouble to put out. There was nothing to disturb the lifelessness of the place save those swarms of birds, clustered like bees here and there above the water, where a porpoise would suddenly curve with his slimy back out of the deep, only to charge



downwards immediately again, a bull of the sea, after his prey.

One can spend hours watching these beasts appear and reappear with an astonishing excitement. It appeals to all the child that survives in us, the child to whom the world, instead of being an engine of universal law, is a perpetual game of miracles. Sitting out of the wind, one has a miniature of the same excitement as one watches the divers breasting the small waves and suddenly sending up their tails and precipitating themselves under the water. But the porpoise is so much more volcanic in its appearance, so irresistible in its monstrous energy, that one awaits its coming with a happy awe as well as with a delight in surprises.

Nature was all at sport on this day of sunny tumult. High up in the air half the gulls of the world seemed to be flying, coursing upwards on the slow beat of their wings, and then allowing themselves to hang like kites with wings outspread and still. Over the water now and then came a dark streak of humour, when a wild duck, leaving the scrimmage of gulls that screamed along the track of the porpoises, would suddenly make off for some shoreward destination, looking for all the world like a small boy on a bicycle on an express errand. The wild duck, as it flies, has an air of almost fearful responsibility. Whether it is the shape and size of its wings, or whether it

is that they sprout from so high up its back, it always seems to fly with anxiety. Its long neck extended like an inexpert swimmer's as he makes in wild scuffling haste towards the ladder, it surely has a faster and at the same time stiffer beat of the wing than any other bird of its size. Having thought of these birds as messengers of the air, one took a new interest in them as one saw single spies of them being dispatched at repeated intervals from the porpoise groups in the bay, and beating away across the peninsula with their tidings.

It was our intention to reach Hangman's Point before turning homewards, but really the porpoises and the wild ducks hung on our tracks and made game of us. We were soon out on a mountain-side high above the sea, where sheep moved away from our path on a little wind of fear and then were borne back towards us on a little wind of curiosity. Passing a cliff and clambering round a breezy corner, we found ourselves suddenly in the midst of the other half of the gulls of the world, which with a cry broke into the air and left us the kingdom of their grey rocks and falling green as a possession. Here, when the birds were gone, we seemed to have reached the absolute silence, the silence of undiscovered countries. Down below, far down, the very sea seemed to be breaking itself against the rocks with a veiled murmur. If a man had appeared anywhere down yonder, one

would have suspected him like a stranger on a desert island.

It was our doom never to reach Hangman's Point. We skirted what must have been the last bay on that side of Kinsale Harbour, and were walking on the edges of our boots along a high slope of green, when the dry spitting sound of rifle-fire reminded us that this part of the headland was a practice-ground for the soldiers, and a little farther on a red flag struggled in the wind and warned the deaf of danger. That decided us. We returned slowly along the high slope of green, and past the sheep that moved away from us on a little wind of fear and turned their faces back to us in a little wind of curiosity, past the porpoises and the wild ducks and the gulls and the divers and the rock that washed its face in the waves like a baby bear, and at the end of an hour or so we were back in the cove again—the cove of the old people and the children. How beautiful and yet how mean the little hamlet looked as we came round the corner into view of it again! There was no deep comfort of thatch roofing the houses. The best of the cottages were under dull slates: others of them stared blindly upward in a horror of corrugated iron. I do not know who is to blame: some Dublin Castle Board, I believe, for the old man told me that the Government was his landlord. As for himself, he was infinitely picturesque—grizzled and blue and generous with

smiles—as he stood at the gate of his cottage with its three square yards of garden walled off before it, amid the huddled dreariness of the village, and waited for us with the parcel of skad in his hand. (Here I may say that we ate some of the skad when we got back to our rooms, and that a meal of pieces of string preserved in salt would have had about the same taste, and been about equally digestible. How in the world people who live largely on this sort of thing through the winter—how the children who live on it—survive and even keep cheerful, I do not know. Enemies of social reform should all be made to live on skad and tea for a year to enable them to see at least one of the reasons why the world needs changing.)

It came out in the course of our conversation with the old fisherman that he had never been outside the bounds of the County Cork. His most memorable adventures had consisted in rowing parties of gentry and officers up the Bandon River: he glowed at mention of these old labours as a boy glows when he relates how he showed the way to a famous man or picked up a parcel for a beautiful actress. His son, with a breaker of red hair curling over his forehead, seemed less satisfied with so limited a field of experience. Courteous and kindly, as he carved away at his wooden bas-relief of a boat, he spoke as a man with a restless spirit in him.

Perhaps, however, it was only the enforced idleness of the fishermen's strike that gave him this air.

Other people spoke to us, and other people's dogs barked at us, as we returned through the village. On a ragged patch of green near the end of it an old sailor with a Kruger whisker round his throat lay on his stomach, and, as we passed, called out that it was a fine day. He was on his feet an instant afterwards and beside us for conversation. He was a low-sized man with something of a stage Irishman's face, wizened and freckled and scabbed and keen. He and the fisherman might have stood as twin types of experience and innocence. Every freckle on his face seemed to be a letter in the alphabet of mischief. His red-rimmed eyes looked as though they had in their time seen the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He was wearing a jersey and an old sea-hat, and was chewing a head of grass. As he put his hand towards his mouth, you could see that one of his fingers was missing. When he spoke his mouth skewed up one side of his face, like a gurnet's.

He told us that he had seen us passing through the cove before, and speaking to the people at the other cottage. "Ah!" he said, twisting his face and moving his shoulders in a pitying way, "decent people! decent people! But them that has never travelled, what have they to talk

about? A man that has never been away from home hasn't much conversation."

An obvious question brought out the fact that he himself had been in the British Navy and, after that, had voyaged in fishing-boats round all the shores of Ireland. Hearing what part of Ireland I came from, he went through the catalogue of all the northern harbours, naming them one by one as though each name itself conjured up some glory of a life of adventure. Greenore, Belfast, Larne, Portrush, Burtonport, Westport—these are a few of the places he had laboured past in his long harvesting.

"It was in Belfast," he said, holding up his mutilated hand to us, "I was in hospital the time I had to lose my finger. It was a dog-fish bit me. Did you ever see a dog-fish, ma'am? Like a small shark it is; and the most painful thing! Still and all, the pain I could endure. I don't think there's any man living could endure worse pain nor I can and say nothing. No, it was the lying idle in hospital, and the sick and the dying and the dead all around me, and nothing to do all day but turn from my side on to my back and from my back on to my side—well, I tell you I used to lie there and let groans out of me like the dying. 'Have patience!' says one of the nurses one day, when she heard me, 'have patience, man!' 'Patience!' says I. 'Woman, if I had to have patience, I would be dead long ago! If

you were out in a storm, and the ship in danger, what good would patience be to you then? It's the activity of the sailor,' says I, 'keeps the ship from going down.' No," he went on, with cocky self-satisfaction, "I never was a patient man. . . . It would be a nice day, sir, to go back by boat for a change. Did the ——" (naming the people in the fisherman's cottage) "not offer you a boat to take you home in? It's queer they wouldn't have offered to row you over: twenty minutes would do it. . . . I have a boat down on the beach."

Certainly there was allurements in the sun and in the innumerable serpent tides—and in the sailor! But then the wind swept across the water like charging hosts, and, over on the far side of the bay outside Sandy Cove, seemed to be conjuring flights of snowy birds out of the bosom of the sea. The old man assured us, however, that there was no danger . . . admitted there would be danger going over to Sandy Cove, and swore he wouldn't take a boat over there if he was offered five pounds for it. He knew the sea, he declared, and rowing round close to the shore would be as safe as walking.

Easily persuaded, we went down to the beach, with a black dog following us, while the old sailor scuffled off to one of the cottages for his rowlocks. With a push we had the boat into the water—and the wind. With quick movements and a trampling

of boards, the sailor had got himself between the oars and was pulling us out, an uneasy cockleshell, into the gurdy sea. He was now as merry as a midget. He was triumph in miniature who, having met an easy victory in two simple strangers, now went forth against the mighty Ocean itself.

“What age would you take me to be, ma’am?” He sent a voice of pride and high spirits into the wind.

Smiling, we refused to guess.

“Eighty-three, ma’am,” he declared, with a great tug at the oars—“eighty-three on my last birthday.”

“Good God!” I thought to myself, as the stern went deep in a wave and the wind whirled the nose of the boat round towards the shore, “and to an old man of eighty-three we have entrusted our lives.”

“I was nearly running in the pensioners’ race at the Sports on Monday,” he bellowed, for the wind made talking difficult, “but at the last minute I turned back. Ah, I could have won it. But I wasn’t going to be laughed at!”

The Irish sense of humour, in the decadence of the last hundred years, seems to have found something especially delightful in the grotesqueness of age. Possibly it is because there have been such a disproportionate number of old people in the country, and because in the very poorest and most illiterate of them there is such a strain of



wild individuality. Whatever may be the reason of this mingling of humour with antiquity, these old age pensioners' races have been a popular feature during the last year or so at Irish Sports, and there had been such a race at the bank holiday sports in Kinsale.

Out in the bay coming in an opposite direction to ourselves was a boat crowded with soldiers in khaki. It seems to be a usual thing for the soldiers to row part of the way to the practice-ground instead of walking by the road. They were making only the poorest progress in this instance against the difficulties of wind and tide. Half a dozen oars were out and half a dozen soldiers were tugging at them. Each soldier, however, seemed to be pulling in a different direction. The oars were all up and down with the irregularity of sticks in a *mêlée* at a fair. In the result, the boat was proceeding now sideways, now backwards, every way indeed except directly towards the cove we had just left. Now it advanced like a crab with half its claws broken; now it went round and round like a dizzy hen. The old sailor, with his eye sweeping over the sea, watched the helplessness of the soldiers cheerfully.

"Ah," he commented, with a grin at their uneven splashing, "you might as well have a lot of pigs in a boat as them fellows!"

As for ourselves we were going forward and with a kind of straightness, but each swirl of the tide

seemed to lift us sideways a considerable distance towards the edge of the rocks. I watched those rocks drawing nearer with an uneasy fascination, and began to wonder whether even one of us would be saved, or whether our infant child would be left a complete orphan. Evidently the old fellow read my thoughts, for he looked over, scanning me closely, and said: "Well, if I was asked my opinion whether you or the lady had the most courage, I would award the prize to the lady!"

I admitted her superiority.

"An'," said the eighty-three-year-old, making a general reflection, as the boat was lifted on a windy wave another ten yards nearer destruction, "them that hasn't the courage should stay on the land. The fearless man will come through a storm where the heartless man will be drowned."

The words had hardly been spoken when we got into calmer water, and the old fellow was soon pulling us along under the grey walls of Fort Charles and round to the boat-slip that meant home to us, and, before we knew, we were clambering out of the swaying and pitching boat and the sailor was staring at the coin which I had given him as though it were excessive, which it was not.

"Well," he said, with a chuckle, "asking's getting. And the ——" (naming our other friends) "might have had ye, if they only had to

have my spunk. Good-bye, ma'am. Good-bye, sir. Thank ye. The blessing of God on you!" And with a twirl of his hat, he was down between the oars again, and throwing himself back into the wind, as vain as Alan Breck, as freckled as a turkey egg, as merry as a midget, as heroic as any one who ever went out and wrestled with Proteus amid shifting and violent seas and overthrew him.

At Kinsale we spent but little time in wandering over old historical places—the object but for which we never should have visited this town by the narrow waters at all. I had eagerly longed to go to Kinsale ever since I read the story of the siege of 1601, when Don Juan del Aquila sailed up the harbour with 3500 Spanish men-at-arms and held the town "for Christ and the King of Spain."

This siege is one of the most maddening incidents in Ireland's maddening history. Ireland fell at Kinsale disastrously through a kind of accident. It was after Kinsale that Red Hugh O'Donnell, the flower of lovely courage and fire, crossed to Spain, to be pursued by the assassin-delegate of Sir George Carew, President of Munster and friend of the great Cecil. "God give him strength and perseverance," writes Carew of the murderer to Mountjoy, Elizabeth's Deputy. "I told him I would acquaint your lordship with it."

It was Kinsale that dashed Hugh O'Neill, the third soldier in Europe of his age, according to

Henri Quatre, so hard to the ground that, before three years were up, he was the chief figure in the Flight of the Earls from Rathmullan in Lough Swilly—that sea sorrow of which the Four Masters so finely said: “It is certain that the sea hath not borne, and the wind has not wafted in modern times, a number of persons in one ship more eminent, illustrious, and noble, in point of genealogy, heroic deeds, feats of arms, and valiant achievements, than they.”

Ireland may be said to have perished at Kinsale for a generation. And what offends one most is that she had victory in her grasp, had Hugh O'Neill had his way. The Spaniards were besieged in the town, the English having captured from them the castles of Rincorran on the east of the bay and of Castle-na-Pairc, still surviving in a fragment on the round little peninsula, on the other side. Soon the English were themselves besieged, for Red Hugh O'Donnell hastened down from the north and sandwiched them in between his army and the Spaniards and the town. To keep them there, and let famine and sickness do their work, was all that the Irish had to do, as Hugh O'Neill saw, when he arrived with fresh troops on the 21st of December. Already 6000 of the English had perished in the three months of the siege, and, though Don Juan made restive demands from within the town, O'Neill was in favour of leaving it to General Hunger to

finish the campaign. Unhappily, Red Hugh O'Donnell, ever a glutton for action, took his stand with Don Juan, and at a council of the chiefs, O'Neill's Fabian policy was swept aside.

On the night of January the 3rd, 1602, a pitchy night of storm and rain, O'Neill set out with his men to surprise the English forces and effect a junction with del Aquila. Misled by their guides, blinded and buffeted, they arrived at the English lines, only to find them in battle order. It is said that Brian MacMahon, an Ulsterman, finding Carew courteous enough to send him a bottle of whisky for which he had asked, was so inflamed with gratitude that he returned him warning of the attack that was in preparation. Whether or not this part of the story is true, we know that, on finding the surprise had failed, O'Neill made to retire until O'Donnell and Tyrrell joined him, and that, in the confusion, helped by the storm and darkness, panic took command. O'Neill put forth all his mighty courage to rally his men, and O'Donnell and the others, coming up later, fought like tigers to retrieve the situation. But Mountjoy had seized the key of the fight, and there was no recovering it. Don Juan, who was a brave man, but had little brains for fighting, surrendered, and became a warm friend of Carew's. "Surely," was his comment on the Irish whose national liberties

his incapacity had thrown away—"surely Christ never died for this people."

It would be ungenerous, however, not to be grateful to all the decent Spaniards who died round the walls of Kinsale for Ireland. Some people will, of course, contend that the war was a religious war, and not a national war at all. Fundamentally, however, it was not a war of religions. The Earl of Clanrickarde was one of the most insatiate of the Queen's soldiers, and like many another of them was a good Catholic. "He killed," says Dr. P. W. Joyce, "twenty men with his own hand in the pursuit, and he gave orders that all Irish prisoners should be killed the moment they were taken." What a siege! What a battle! What a (if the word is permissible) mess-up!

"It was a terrible business," said a young Kinsale man in a shop to me one day; "and it seems to have put such a damper on the people here that they have been depressed ever since."



[Lawrence.

ST. PATRICK'S BRIDGE, CORK.





## CHAPTER VIII

### CORK AND MALLOW

IF you want to feel enthusiastic about Ireland, you should go to Cork on a fine day. Even if you go there as we did in a time of mixed sun and thunder, you will scarcely find Cork other than beautiful. Like Dublin and like Limerick, it has escaped a great deal of the ugliness of the modern world. Though it has its industries, it is not offensively industrial. Patrick Street, which is the heart of the city—a curved street of excellent, low, stucco-fronted shops—has a leisurely air, as though it possessed the custom of people who were living on pensions and inherited fortunes. Even the electric trams which swing through the broad streets to places with names like Blackpool and Tivoli are leisurely, and no more think of hustling than would the dancers in an old-fashioned minuet. Perhaps it is because I was brought up in a tradition which ignored when it did not actually disesteem the south of Ireland, that cities like Cork and Limerick and Kilkenny and towns like Mallow and Ennis-

corthy now in their different ways perpetually bring me something of the enthusiasm of unexpected discoveries. Cork, a fair island-city lying among rivers, with its patriotic statues, its bridges, and the inside-cars, or jingles, that run through its streets with something of the exotic mystery of palanquins, may have very little to show in its buildings that is lovely in detail, but the general effect is certainly entrancing.

But Cork did not treat us fairly. It hid itself under a deluge during a great part of the time that we were there. Hardly had we arrived at the top of a steep hill to look out over the city on Sunday morning than a thundercloud began pouring out its violence and its rain till we had to hurry into a porch for safety. That is why I saw Cork only in flying peeps. Indeed, the only thing that remains to me of that vision from the hill is the piebald church-tower in which peal the bells of Shandon, half of it white and half of it red, or, to quote the poetic description of it,

“Party-coloured, like the people,  
Red and white stands Shandon steeple.”

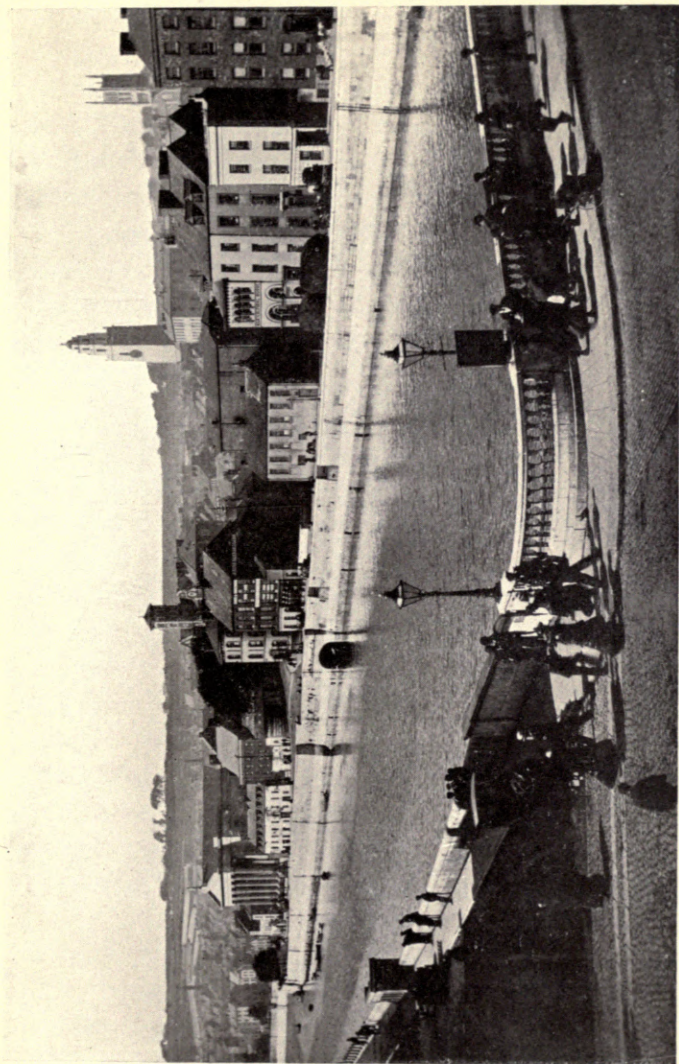
That is the chief curiosity in the landscape of Cork. From what I could gather from a Corkman, an even more striking curiosity of the city is its pre-eminent brains. Cork is quite satisfied of this. Corkmen do not argue the fact: they merely explain it. They tell you that the province of

which Cork is the capital has never lost the traditions of the old Irish culture—that even a century ago the bards of Munster were producing scholarly and human poetry. And, if you want a more modern explanation than this, they will attribute their intelligence to the influence of the Christian Brothers' schools—excellent lay institutions which have flourished especially well in this county. Cork has unquestionably a reputation for taste and intellect. One hears it asserted even to-day that there is no quicker audience for the drama to be found anywhere. It was said in the eighteenth century that the god of music seemed to have taken a stride from the Continent over England to Ireland, and that in Cork “a stranger is agreeably surprised to find in many houses he enters Italic airs saluting his ears; and it has been observed that Corelli is a name in more mouths than many of our lord-lieutenants.” Perhaps even to-day Corelli is a more popular name in Cork mouths than the Lord-Lieutenant's. But it is Corelli with a difference.

As you go through the streets of Cork in this present century, you certainly see no signs of that impassioned culture which amazed former generations. Even outside the best book-shop in the city—and it is a very fine Irish book-shop—you will see a great display of coloured picture-postcards with a gallery of colleens and pigs and all the other pseudo-Irish paraphernalia. It is

these and not the histories of Keating or the poems of Owen Roe O'Sullivan that summon you to attention. I have heard it said that it is not the people of Cork who are to blame for the pervasiveness of these idiocies, but the multitude of tourists who include Cork in their tour to Killarney. I myself saw a tourist in the hotel where we stayed addressing at least fifty of these pig postcards during a wet hour in the afternoon. What visitors to Ireland find to attract them in these intolerable colleens with head on one side and arms akimbo, who exchange fatuities about kisses with turnip-faced young men in tail-coats, is a mystery to the mere Irishman. Perhaps it adds to one's sense of adventure to see the inhabitants of a country in which one is travelling as grotesque and as unlike one's own friends and relations as possible. Or perhaps it is that the average civilised man always prefers unreality to reality—wish-wash to realism. Add to this the fact that one likes to believe in the existence of otherwise nice people who do not take regular baths and who sleep in the same room with the pigs. It is a kind of flattery to one's own efficient self to believe that such persons are upon the earth. . . .

It was the rains of Cork that prevented us from seeing a championship hurling-match while we were there. The Irish games have remained alive in Munster more generally than in any of the



[Lawrence,

SHANDON STEEPLE, CORK.



other provinces, and this was expected to be the great match of the year, so it was something of a misfortune for us that a deluge kept falling for hours so that the game had to be put off.

We went out, instead, along the river promenade which is called the Marina, opposite which rises a wooded hill thickset with the houses of the rich and respectable. But here a thunderstorm broke out of the sky above us, and we hailed a ferry-boat to take us over the low muddy river to the tram-line on the other side. . . .

But, when I started out, I did not really intend to see much of the big cities. I set far more store by little places like Cong and Killorglin and Kinsale than by capitals like Cork. And of the small towns there was none to which I looked forward more eagerly than Mallow. I wanted to go there, not out of veneration for the memory of the Rakes of Mallow, immortalised in the song, but because the prophet of all that is best in modern Ireland was born there almost a hundred years ago. This was Thomas Davis.

I expected to find Mallow very conscious of its glory in having given birth to so great a man. Expected, but in vain. It has called one of its streets after him, and the name of the street and of William O'Brien Street, which is a continuation of it, is up in Irish. But the waiter at the hotel had never heard of him all the same.

I asked him where Davis's birthplace was, but

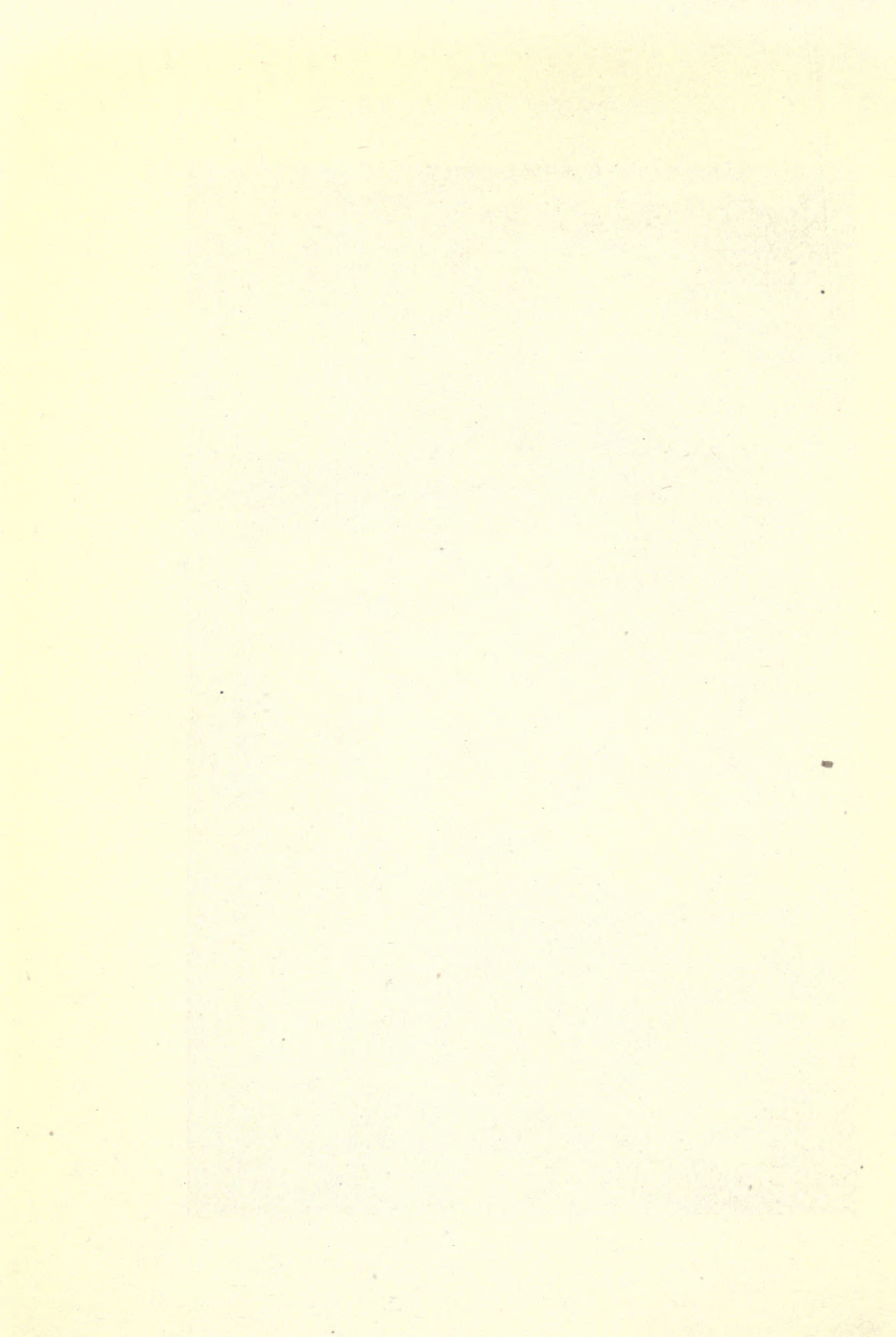
he shook his old white whiskers, said that he did not know the gentleman's name, and that he must have lived in Mallow before his time. I asked an old workman in the street, and he showed me a renovated public-house and said it was there, but the people of the public-house knew as little of Davis as of Dionysius the Arcopagite, and though the landlady, with immense hospitality, sent out to various gentlemen to find out what we wanted, while she told us how Mallow had been ruined by the coming of the railway, and discoursed hostilely on Sir Horace Plunkett's co-operative movement, we could get nothing from anybody except opinions, opinions, and opinions. I am not really fond of looking at houses where great men were born, but Davis's birthplace is different. I have enough veneration for Davis to be excited by coming on the least trace or signature of him. Even to be in Mallow, with its quaint old bay-windowed houses, its ghost of an old spa, and its air of having been left over from the coaching days, was exciting, for had not Davis idled in it as a boy? Wild wind was blowing about the streets—it blew our umbrella inside out—as we prosecuted our search for the house, and prosecuted it in vain, though we called to our assistance an innumerable host of inhabitants of the place, from solicitors to stonebreakers. The stonebreaker knew where a Miss Davis lived just outside the town, but knew nothing of Thomas ;





*Lawrence.*

THE MARDYKE, CORK.



he guessed he must be some relative of Miss Davis's.

As a good many readers may be almost as ignorant of the great Irishman as the people of Mallow were, it may be as well to record a few of the facts of his life. Born here on the 14th of October 1814, the son of a surgeon in the English army, he grew up especially proud of two things—one, that his father was in some sort a soldier; and the second, that his mother, Mary Atkins, had in her veins the blood of the house of O'Sullivan Beare. Soldierly as Davis ultimately was, and proudly Irish as he became in every fibre of his body, however, it is difficult to say at what period in his life he grew to be like the Davis of history. We are told that in his childhood he was delicate, that at school he had no taste for the boisterousness and games of those around him, and Sir Charles Gavan Duffy quotes one of Davis's relations as saying that "when he had grown up, if you asked him the day of the month, the odds were he could not tell you. He never was any good at handball or hurling, and knew no more than a fool how to take care of the little money his father left him. He saw him more than once in tears listening to a common country fellow playing old airs on a fiddle, or sitting in a drawing-room as if he were in a dream, when other young people were enjoying themselves." At Trinity College he seems to have been for a

long time a silent and undistinguished student, whom the most brilliant among his contemporaries regarded with a touch of patronage as a rather dull person. It was at Trinity, however, that he met Wallis, the talker, the arm-chair philosopher, the "Professor," as he called himself, "of things in general and Patriotism in particular." Wallis himself never did anything of great note in the world—he would be despised by most people, indeed, as a mere talker, like Turgénieff's Rudin—but he apparently served his purpose in life by showing Davis the way. Davis's soul, one imagines, was dimly seeking after Nationalism from a very early age. His tears while he listened to the old country fiddler and the emotions of which he sings in "A Nation Once Again" go to prove this. But Wallis, no doubt, helped him to realise himself, his destiny, and his duty to the Irish nation. "I loosed," said Wallis, with, perhaps, an exaggerated egotism, "the tenacious phlegm that clogged Davis's nature and hid his powers from himself and the world."

To us one of the most interesting facts about Davis as a student is that he left College a lover of liberty and a lover of Ireland, though his love of liberty and love of Ireland had not as yet been fused into a passionate Nationalism. He was as yet a Liberal, and his first-published work was a pamphlet attacking the British House of Lords,

and proposing, not its abolition, but its reform. It was three years later than this, in 1840, that his Presidential address to the Historical Society made his friends and contemporaries realise for the first time that they had in Davis a comrade of strange passions and a strange philosophy—the passions and the philosophy of a patriot. In unselfish patriotism alone, he warned his hearers in this address, lay the only means of making democracy a blessing and not a curse to the world. “On the shore of democracy,” he said, “is a monstrous danger; no phantom is it, but alas! too real—the violence and forwardness of selfish men, regardful only of physical comfort, ready to sacrifice to it all sentiments—the generous, the pious, the just (victims in their order),—till general corruption, anarchy, despotism, and moral darkness shall rebarbarise the earth.” Education—education of the heart as well as the intellect—was the road he pointed out towards the service of one’s country, as well as to the annihilation of a selfish materialism.

It was in the next year, when he was nearly twenty-seven, after having contributed various patriotic papers to the press, that he made his well-known defence on purely national grounds of the bigoted and backward Royal Dublin Society against the British Government.

At this time, he and his friend Dillon were full of schemes for the revival of the spirit of Nationality

among Protestants, both Whig and Tory, and they were lucky enough to persuade the proprietor of the *Morning Register* to give them control of his paper for a limited period, in order to prove whether or not there was a public to listen to their sanguine theories. The experiment was a failure. The circulation went down instead of up. The year is memorable, however, because in it Davis definitely attached himself to the national and popular cause, and became a member of the Repeal Association. It is memorable, too, because in it Davis first met Duffy, and thus began a friendship and union which was to give Ireland *The Nation*, the greatest national journal it has ever known—to give Ireland more than this, a new national soul. Not that Duffy immediately warmed to Davis. He tells us frankly in his *Life in Two Hemispheres*, that he was more pleased with Dillon at first. Davis, he says, “was able and manifestly sincere; but at first sight I thought him dogmatic and self-conceited—a strangely unjust estimate, as it proved in the end.” This is only one of the several proofs that Davis, for all the fascination and enthusiasm of his nature, did not charm every one or make them all fall in love with him at first sight, as Nationalists are sometimes inclined to picture him as doing. His were the deep and generous qualities which do not necessarily attract immediately.

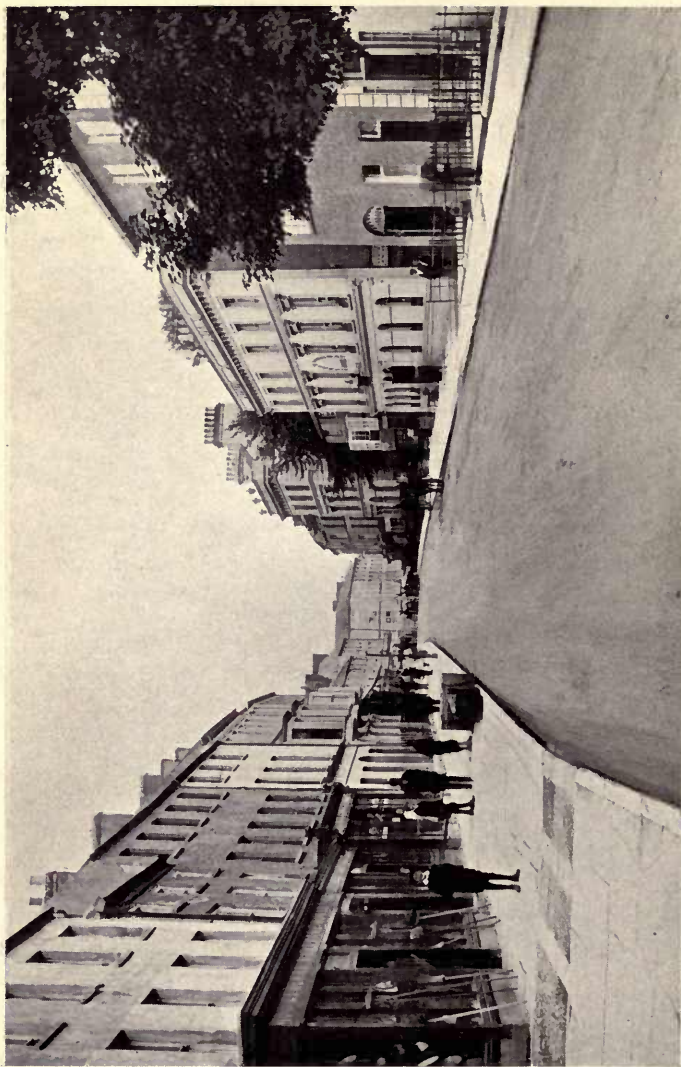
With the first number of *The Nation*, published in October 1843, began a new life for Davis. From this till the proclamation of the Clontarf meeting, a year later, was the period of his most unbounded enthusiasms and his highest hopes. Seeing O'Connell's tremendous influence among the people, seeing how disciplined the nation showed itself in its magnificent temperance crusade under Father Mathew, amazed and delighted by those large meetings where something like a million Irishmen could meet and disperse in perfect dignity and order, rejoiced not only by the adhesion of the Catholic Bishops and of many of the educated Protestants, but by the belief that the "Protestants of the lower order," to use his own phrase, were now neutral, he saw Ireland in his imagination preparing for another 1782. Davis has been called "the saint of Irish Nationality." This is true, but it is only a half-truth. He was also the soldier-statesman of Nationality. One is constantly struck, in reading his poems and letters, with the thought how capable he was of becoming the Washington of Ireland. "I am for the sharper remedies," he wrote in one of his letters to a friend, though he went in for no foolish worship of bloodshed. His attitude to the Federalists is worth recalling in these days when talk of Federalism is again in the air. He believed that England would yield a measure of self-government to O'Connell in com-

bination with the Federalists, as she had yielded an independent Parliament to the Volunteers. This was his deepest hope, and for this purpose he desired to see the Federalists growing into a strong party, holding that no party which believed in the nation, however limited their conception of nationality, could be anything but a blessing to Ireland. He wrote to Maddyn: "If you can quietly get a Federal Government, I shall, for one, agree to and support it. If not, then anything but what we are."

During all this time we find him pressing forward the necessity of making Ireland's cause known before the world, and cementing friendships with France and America, and trying to win *Tait's Magazine*, an organ of British Radicalism, to the Irish cause. During this year, indeed, as ever, we find Davis acting both as a great fighting man and a great conciliator—a combination which we reverence in Mazzini, in Abraham Lincoln, and in most of the noblest figures in history. Even in his most enthusiastic moods, however, he was always returning to the thought which inspired his address to the Historical Society—that to patriotism must be added education before the greatest things can be accomplished. At the same time, it is probable he was not more disturbed by the low state of education in the country than by the vacillating policy of the national leader, Daniel O'Connell.







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When it was suggested, for instance, that a Council of Three Hundred should meet in Dublin as a *de facto* Irish Parliament, Davis, who had been going here and there in the south to discuss the matter with representative men, wrote to Duffy : " If O'Connell would prearrange, or allow others to prearrange, a decided policy, I would look confidently to the Three Hundred as bringing the matter to an issue in the best way. As it is, we must try and hit on some medium. We must not postpone it till Parliament meets, for the Three Hundred will not be a sufficiently fine or brilliant thing to shine down St. Stephen's and defy its coercion. Yet we must not push it too quickly, as the country as far as I can see is not braced up to any emergency. Ours is a tremendous responsibility, politically and personally, and we must see where we are going." This letter, I think, is significant of many things in the politics of Davis. It shows him ready and even eager for action himself ; at once questioning the wisdom of O'Connell and recognising the fact that unless they were ready to work with O'Connell, with all his limitations, Nationalists had no prospect of succeeding in their cause ; clearly perceiving the great need for education among the people, but determined to do with them the utmost that circumstances would allow.

There is no need to go into the mere chronology of Davis's biography. His true biography is, after

all, the story of his thought and spirit. So I will not take up space in reviewing his attitude to O'Connell's acquiescence in the prohibition of the Clontarf meeting, or the events leading up to his differences with O'Connell over the Queen's Colleges two years after. It is only necessary to say that during all this time his insistence upon the need of a national system of education kept growing stronger, his plans for furthering education became more detailed, and many of them were put in practice. It was his educational enthusiasm that impelled him more than once to make the attempt to withdraw from political journalism for a short time in order to write an Irish history; and it was only the eager entreaties of his friends, who realised that this would be the work not of months but of years, which kept him to his task at the *Nation* office. "Beside a library," he exclaims in one place, "how poor are all the other greatest deeds of man—his constitution, brigade, factory, man-of-war, cathedral—how poor are all miracles in comparison!" Knowledge, he held, was the key to national force, and it was the ambition of his life to add to the knowledge of Ireland—a knowledge which, he believed, would bring the best gifts of freedom in its train.

Again and again he projected the establishment of a monthly magazine in the pages of which it would be possible to make a fuller and more

intellectual appeal to the thoughtful classes than was possible in the columns of a weekly paper. His purpose, through all his later life, one might say, was to make the intellect of the country national, and to make the nationalism of the country intellectual. Education, he held, was a necessary part of even the most active policy, as may be seen in a letter he wrote to Maddyn, when the latter had introduced a character-sketch of him into one of his books. "I am," wrote Davis, "but one of many, as resolved as a river is to descend, to lift the English rule from off Ireland, and give our country a career of action and thought. For this purpose much action and thought through a series of years must be used by us. Action, even in a military sense, is not mere cutting, firing, and even charging. Organisation, education, leadership, obedience, union, are all action too—the best and most mature action in some cases—in ours, I think, for instance. There is as much action in the depôt as in the service companies, as any soldier can tell you." His passion for education led him to welcome both the National Schools and the Queen's Colleges, though he welcomed them critically. The National Schools, he said, "are very good as far as they go, and the children should be sent to them; but they are not *national*, they do not use the Irish language, nor teach anything peculiarly Irish." Consequently, he

advised that "until the *National Schools* fall under national control, the people must take diligent care to procure books on the history, men, language, music, and manners of Ireland for their children." Had Davis's advice been taken by the people of Ireland, these schools might have become an enormous blessing to Ireland instead of, as they have been, a three-parts curse. His attitude on the Queen's Colleges was equally sane. He saw clearly that they must be modified so as to get rid of the objections of the Catholic Bishops to them that they were "godless" colleges. But he strongly differed from the uncompromising attitude of John Mitchel, who tells us in *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)*, that he detested the Colleges as much as the Archbishop of Tuam, but for a different reason—not that they were "godless," but that they were British. Davis, however, saw that it would be possible to alter the constitution of the Colleges, so that they would neither be necessarily "godless" (in the Bishops' meaning of the word) nor British. The prospect of a popular university, says Duffy, was to him "like the unhoped-for realisation of a dream. To educate the young men of the middle class and of both races, and to educate them together, that prejudice and bigotry might be killed in the end, was one of the projects nearest to his heart. It would strengthen the soul of Ireland with

knowledge, he said, and knit the creeds in liberal and trusting friendship. He threw all the vigour of his nature into the task of getting this measure unanimously and thankfully accepted." He even prepared a petition from the more influential citizens of Dublin, asking for amendments in the Bill establishing the new Colleges. In regard to the Queen's Colleges, as in regard to the National Schools, Davis's attitude was surely in the main right. The Irish nation might in both cases have done much more than it did to get control of such instruments for instructing the young in the broad truths which underlie Nationality and the life of a free people.

Davis believed not only in using every single educational institution, however imperfect, which the British Government could be got to pay for out of the Irish taxes, but in doing everything possible to put knowledge within the reach of everybody in Ireland, of whatever rank or age. "Knowledge and organisation," he wrote in an article in favour of Repeal Reading-Rooms, "must set Ireland free and make her prosperous. If the people be not wise and manageable, they cannot gain liberty but by accident, nor use it to their service. An ignorant and turbulent race may break away from provincialism, but will soon relapse beneath a cunning, skilful, and unscrupulous neighbour. England is the one—Ireland must not be the other. If she is to be

self-freed, if she is not to be a retaken slave, she must acquire all the faculties possessed by her enemy, without the vices of that foe. We have to defeat an old and compact government. We must acquire the perfect structure of a nation. We have to resist genius, skill, and immense resources; we must have wisdom, knowledge, and ceaseless industry." Hence it was the duty of Repealers never to pause in their labours until there was "a reading-room in every village." In the same article Davis goes on to remark upon the national backwardness in literature and military knowledge, and on the general industrial ignorance which is "the leading economical difference between England and Ireland"; and he then says: "We are not afraid of all those things, nor do we wish to muffle our eyes against them. We want a brave, modest, laborious, and instructed people. It is deeper pleasure to serve and glory to lead such a people. It is a still deeper pleasure and honour to lead a race full of virtue and industry and a thirst for knowledge. But for a swaggering people who shout for him who flatters them, and turn from those who would lead them by plain, manful truth—who shall save them?" Davis, it will be seen, was neither a foolish optimist nor a foolish pessimist. He was willing to recognise every dismal and depressing fact in the Ireland of his day, as well as all the cheerful ones, but he was one of those inspired men who



know that the human soul is greater than a world of temporary facts—that, granted a sufficiency of souls inspired by the same high courage as he felt in his own breast, nothing could withstand them. Courage, knowledge, discipline—these were the three main lessons which he taught to his fellow-countrymen. His soldierly instincts told him that without discipline success was impossible in anything.

His hatred of indiscipline surpassed that of any national leader we have ever had. He saw that noisy indiscipline was one of the vices of which as a nation we had to get rid, and he detested it and denounced it even when it took the shape of rowdiness on behalf of national things. It was his scorn of indiscipline that made him at one period call to order those “scolding mobs” which met in the present O’Connell Street in Dublin every evening to hoot the foreign-made mail coaches which had taken the place of the old Irish-made vehicles. Davis attacked the giving of the coach contracts out of Ireland, but, when once the mischief was done, he had no patience with those who would go out merely to create a disturbance without the least hope or idea of undoing the evil. “‘I hate little wars,’ said Wellington,” he wrote in reference to these scolding mobs. “So do we; and we hate still more a petty mob meeting without purpose, and dispersing without success. Perfect order, silence,

obedience, alacrity, and courage make an assemblage formidable and respectable. We want law and order—we are seriously injured by every scene or act of violence, no matter how transient. Let us have no more of this humbug. If we are determined men we have enough to learn and to do without wasting our time in hissing and groaning coaches.”

It was his hatred of indiscipline—indiscipline in the form of carelessness about the truth—which inspired his defence of the Duke of Wellington against the belittlements of O’Connell. “In reference to popular faults,” he wrote, “we cannot help saying a word on the language applied to certain of the enemy’s leaders, especially the Duke of Wellington. We dislike the whole system of false disparagement. The Irish people will never be led to act the manly part which liberty requires of them by being told that [the Duke], that gallant soldier and most able general, is a screaming coward and doting corporal. We have grave and solemn work to do. Making light of it or of our enemies might inspire a moment’s overweening confidence, but would ensure ultimate defeat. We have much to contend against; but our resources are immense, and nothing but our own rashness or cowardice can defeat us.”

Davis could hate the English Government of Ireland, and yet give credit to Englishmen or

Hiberno-Englishmen for such virtues as they possessed. He always made it clear that the quarrel of Irish Nationalism was with the English Empire, not with the English people—with England as a tyrant, not with this or that English person as a human being. He could hate wrong : he saw too deep ever to hate humanity. That is why he neither underrated the English nor wished to belong to their Empire. “ Is Ireland to share in the criminal profits of the Empire ? ” he demanded. “ Are the Irish people so forgetful of the common cause which binds them to the Indian and American as to give their flexible genius, their valour, and their passions, to holding down the subject races—regardless too of the crimes against themselves of the partner of such a career ? We repeat, again and again, we have no malice against—no hatred of the English. For much that England did in literature, politics, and war, we are, as men, grateful. Her oppressions we would not even avenge. We would, were she eternally dethroned from over us, rejoice in her prosperity ; but we cannot, and will not, try to forget her long, cursing, merciless tyranny to Ireland ; and we do not desire to share her gains, her responsibility, or her glories.” We find the same clear refusal to be either pro-Imperial or anti-English in another passage of his writings which runs : “ It is not a gambling fortune made at imperial play Ireland wants :

it is the pious and stern cultivation of her faculties and virtues, the acquisition of faithful and exact habits, and the self-respect that rewards a dutiful and sincere life. To get her peasants into snug homesteads with well-tilled fields and placid hearths; to develop the ingenuity of the artists, and the docile industry of her artisans; to make for her own instruction a literature wherein our climate, history, and passions shall breathe; and to gain conscious strength and integrity, and the high post of holy freedom: these are Ireland's wants. These she will not sacrifice to pursue the chance of being allowed a third or half even of the offices, profligacy, and oppression of the British Empire. Peace with England—alliance with England—to some extent; and under certain circumstances, confederation with England; but an Irish ambition—Irish hopes, strength, virtues, and rewards for the Irish.”

To Davis, with his high ideas of virtue and discipline, outrages were abhorrent as a method of attaining one's ends. How clean-handed he would always have kept the people in their struggle for their rights may be seen in his denunciation of the Munster agrarian outrages. Davis never could be got to idealise the man who shot his fellow-man—even if the fellow-man were a landlord—as a national hero. It is one thing to acknowledge that agrarian crime is often the

crime of a brave and generous man who has been goaded into it by injustice and oppression. It is another thing to argue that the crime is really a virtue to be praised and imitated. Davis was not the man to go murdering landlords or bailiffs himself. This being so, he would not advise other people to do it. There is, of course, a good deal to be said on both sides in regard to political crime. I doubt, however, if the national soul of Ireland has really gained from all the long generations of political crime which are commonly supposed to have disestablished the Episcopalian Church and brought about the Land Acts. I do not, of course, include an incident like the Manchester rescue among political crimes; the Phœnix Park murders, on the other hand, are the sort of crime which a school of Nationalists educated in the lofty principles of Davis could only commit if they were driven temporarily mad.

Crime separates men and makes them suspicious of each other. Virtue, if it is not too much mixed with self-righteousness, unites and conciliates. Conciliation itself is a virtue, as Davis said, and not always the easiest to practise. Longing for union among all classes, he preached conciliation as "a fixed and everlasting duty, independently of the political results it might have." "If Irishmen were united," he writes, "the Repeal of the Union would be instantly and quietly granted." So conciliatory was Davis that

Duffy contends that “ he set an undue value . . . on mere social sympathy and the dilettante nationality which grew enthusiastic over the Cross of Cong or a Jacobite song of the later bards, but was indifferent to the present sufferings and hopes of the people.” Davis, however, realised that it is often on the dry-as-dust industry of these antiquaries that the truths of history must be built.

This is not meant to be a complete and balanced estimate of Davis. It is only a scattered reminder to those who are interested in Irish Nationalism of how many-sided, how heroic, how unbending, was Davis’s national philosophy. Davis did not believe in any short cut to Nationhood. He saw that nations were built from within—that they were the results of faith, of vision, and labour. He had an enthusiastic battlefield imagination which would have made him glad to die fighting for Ireland, or indeed, as one of his songs says, “ for any good cause at all ” ; but he did not love fighting for fighting’s sake. Righteousness and liberty were his passions. He was not, moreover, one of those who care for liberty only in their own country, thus making Ireland little better than a province or a parish. His belief in liberty was of a religious quality. Therefore he longed for its coming all the world over. His “ Ballad of Freedom ” is not great poetry, but it expresses a great spirit :—

“Russia preys on Poland’s fields, where Sobieski reigned;  
And Austria on Italy—the Roman eagle chained—  
Bohemia, Servia, Hungary, within her clutches gasp;  
And Ireland struggles gallantly in England’s loosening  
grasp;

Oh! would all these their strength unite, or battle on alone,  
Like Moor, Pushtani, and Cherkess, they soon would have  
their own.

Hurrah! hurrah! it can’t be far, when from the Scinde  
to Shannon

Shall gleam a line of freemen’s flags begirt with freemen’s  
cannon!

The coming day of Freedom—the flashing flags of  
Freedom

The victor glaive—

The mottoes brave,

May we be there to read them!

That glorious noon,

God send it soon—

Hurrah! for human freedom!”

Davis’s gospel—his gospel of righteousness and  
liberty—was true for Ireland because it was true  
for the world.

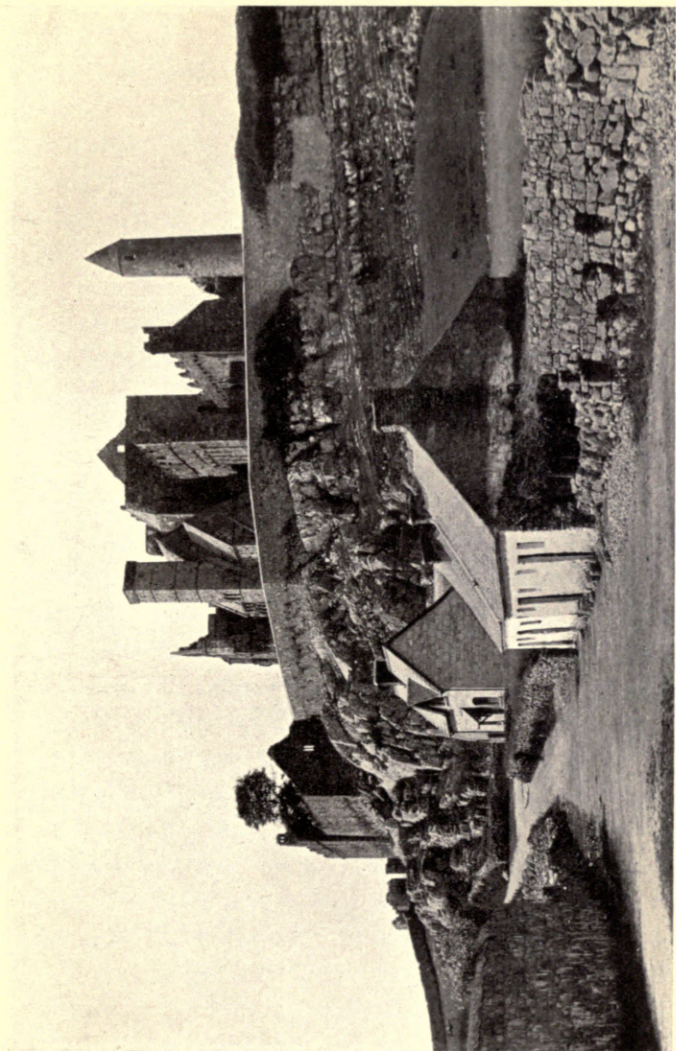
## CHAPTER IX

### CASHEL OF THE KINGS

THE train approached Cashel in the light of a misty moon. Suddenly, as we looked out of the window over the monotonous level of the fields, a miracle happened before our eyes, and a castle in elfland rose out of the air. It silenced one like a revelation ; it was as though we had burst into a new world. As the train curved round into the station, we were like passengers on a ship arriving in harbour in some country of the imagination. Here, after long expectation, was the Rock of Cashel, the most memorable height in southern Ireland—the rock upon which the floods of slaughter and foreign war broke through the centuries, and which is now desolate in the plain, a rock left behind by the tide.

Cashel is still a retreat of that spirit of loneliness which was abroad in these parts of Ireland in the devastating days of Elizabeth, when the Four Masters wrote that “ the lowing of a cow or the voice of a ploughman could scarcely be heard from Dunqueen in the west of Kerry to Cashel.”





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THE ROCK OF CASHEL.



Since then, the cows have come back into the fields, though the ploughman has not. But Cashel still seems to be dazed from the shock of so vast a silence.

The next day was Sunday, and we were eager to be out and to see whether there was any reality in the vision of the night before. I had got it into my head somehow or other that a part of the ruin on the rock was still, in the beautiful everyday phrase, a place of worship, and served as a Protestant cathedral. Consequently, I was looking forward—resignedly, perhaps, rather than hopefully—to spending my morning on the rock like an orthodox churchman. When I went into the low breakfast-room in the hotel, decorated as nearly all such rooms are with photographs of the proprietor's relatives and with cheap reproductions of meaningless landscape paintings, I found an old white-bearded gentleman who looked like a Hebrew prophet at the table, and, supposing him to be still more of an orthodox churchman than myself, I asked him at what time the service in the Cathedral began.

"I don't know," he said—a little shortly, I thought—as he lowered his beard towards his egg. He filled his mouth with egg, and wiped a corner of his moustache suddenly with his napkin. "I don't know anything about it," he repeated.

"I must ask the girl when she comes up," I said.

He wiped his mouth again.

“ I have no interest in any of the churches,” he declared, looking straight before him, “ Catholic or Protestant. I haven’t been inside a church at service-time for between fifty and sixty years, and I don’t expect ever to be in one again.”

That sounded uncompromising. He looked more and more like a Hebrew prophet as he warmed to his speech. Narrow-eyed, Roman-nosed, with bushy white eyebrows, he had a lean old face not unlike General Booth’s. He had not General Booth’s inches, however ; he was a small man.

“ No,” he continued, a steely look in his eyes ; “ I was brought up in a strict Methodist house, where we were taught that God would send us to hell if we went for a walk through the fields on a Sunday, and that our Roman Catholic neighbours were so infernally wicked that He would send them to hell whether they went walking in the fields on Sunday or not. That’s the kind of house I grew up in. It was all punishment, punishment, punishment. God was the great punisher. According to the Bible, God was love, but there was nothing to show it. It was worse than being in a reformatory. At last I could endure it no longer. I ran away. I was a boy of seventeen then. I got as far as Queenstown, and there I hid myself away in a boat for America, and didn’t show my nose on deck till we were a good many miles out

in the Atlantic. And when I landed in New York, do you know what I did? I just got into the country and walked right ahead for five days. I had no money, but I felt so free that every step I took seemed like dancing. It was the first time I had ever known what happiness was. I could have gone on for ever. Those were the happiest days of my life. At last I got some work to do on a farm near a place called —, and after that I got a post in a school. And I've never regretted it. I can worship God still, but not in a church. There's more religion to me," he said pugnaciously, "in a cow chewing her cud in a field than in all the churches of Ireland. But there"—and he raised his hand deprecatingly—"every man has a right to his opinion, and, if anybody feels the better of an hour spent in church, I'd be sorry to interfere with him. But I'm blowed if I'll go myself"—and he laughed cunningly into his napkin—"unless they drag me there in a coffin after I'm dead. And that will be against my will."

I told him I thought he would find less severity among Irish Protestants than he used to do.

"I don't know," he said, unwilling to give them any virtues. "I think they're just as bad as ever. I spent my holiday two years ago in —, in the County Cork, and one day, when I was out painting in a field, a parson comes up to me and says, 'Have you been here long? I didn't see

you at church on Sunday, did I?' 'No,' said I, 'I'm too old, far too old, for that sort of thing.' Fancy that now! Just because he was a parson, he actually thought he had the right to question me about my movements and to interfere with the way I wanted to spend my Sunday. They're just a lot of officious bigots—that's what the clergy are so far as I have met them. I don't like the breed."

I expressed surprise that he should have come back to a country with which he had so many unpleasant associations.

"You might think so," he admitted. "It may be partly that the country has a tug on any one who was born in it. And then, I'm a painter. If you were a painter—and you may be for all that I know—you would never wonder what brings any one back to Ireland. The clouds—perhaps you hate clouds and rain, but they're meat and drink to me. Every alternate year I come over and hide myself in some quiet part of Ireland, like Cashel, for the summer, and it's my notion of a well-spent day to get away out after breakfast with my stool and paint-box and to forget myself among birds—you have birds in Ireland—and clouds and flowers till I can't see to paint any more. I'm an old man, as old as I look, and my beard's white, as you see, and I'm rheumatic and dyspeptic and all sorts of things—I've had a feeling of a red-hot poker in my chest

since I overate last night of that soda-bread on the plate in front of you—but I forget all that when I get out into the Irish light. But, if you listen any more, you'll be late for the Cathedral. Well, I'll go and see about my box, and try to lose myself out in the country; and I hope you'll enjoy your service as much as I will mine."

After listening to the old gentleman, I felt rather as if I had had the sermon already. And indeed it was not in our destiny to hear any other sermon that day. We learned from the maid that the Cathedral had no connection whatever with the rock, and that the rock was ancient ruins and nothing else, and no holy songs rising from it any more. So, as there was no service on the rock, we had no service at all.

The Rock of Cashel is one of the most unexpected things in Ireland. There is no excuse for this wonderful pile rising out of such a poor little town as Cashel, and there is no logic in the appearance of three hundred feet of rock in the middle of an immense flat plain. Naturally there is a reason in folklore for it. The devil, who has had so widespread an influence on the geography of Christian countries, was one day pursuing an enemy across the County Tipperary, when, feeling hungry, he took a great bite out of the hills to the north of Cashel. But, feeling even more angry than hungry, instead of swallowing it, he spat the piece out after the runaway, and

it still lies where it fell, the world-famous Rock of Cashel. Standing on the rock, you can still see the mighty tooth-notches in the hills, and there is no better known landmark than the Devil's Bit in the County Tipperary. However the huge crag may have come there, it must have suggested itself as a suitable place to fortify as soon as man had escaped from the Golden Age into militarism. It is said that a King of Munster was led by the dream of two swine-herds, who saw an angel blessing the rock, to build a fort on it in the fifth century; but the dream seems unnecessary. In any case, there was apparently some kind of royal residence on the spot by the middle of the fifth century, when St. Patrick arrived there in the course of his extraordinary bloodless mission through Ireland. It was here that St. Patrick converted King Angus, and it is in his sermon to the King and his people that he is said to have chosen the three-leaved shamrock as a symbol of the Trinity. His conversion and baptism of the King are also memorable as having given an occasion for a fine act of stoical endurance on the part of the new convert. During the baptismal ceremony, Patrick struck his crozier into the ground, not seeing that, in doing so, he was impaling the King's foot. The King said nothing, and the ceremony went on till the end, when Patrick saw blood flowing on the ground and realised what he had done. Questioned as to his



reason for not speaking about the accident, the King innocently declared that he had thought it was part of the ceremony, symbolic of the sufferings of the Cross. This crozier of the saint, by the way, was reputed to be a staff that had once belonged to Jesus, and Pope Celestine had given it to Patrick to support him in his mission in Ireland. Naturally, so popish a relic stood a poor chance amid the futurism of the Reformation, when it was destroyed—one hopes not out of malice.

Even to-day the Rock of Cashel is inhabited by the visible memories of all these things. As soon as the Board of Works caretaker unlocks the gate for you, and you go inside the walls, you see an old weather-worn cross standing on an old weather-worn stone. On one side of the cross is an episcopal figure, said to be St. Patrick himself, and on the other is a crucified Christ fully clothed, as one is told was the rule in early carvings. It was on the stone which is now the pedestal of the cross that Angus and the Kings of Munster of his time were crowned. Possibly, the great slab that lies on the ground beside it also links us with very ancient times : it is said to have been a Druid altar.

But the glory of Cashel does not consist in its associations with the Druids or with St. Patrick or with stoical kings. One thinks of it with especial affection because it is one of the undestroyed

monuments of the civilisation that was taking shape in Ireland before the Norman invasion. In another hundred years—perhaps even in another fifty years—there will be no need to emphasise the fact that Irish civilisation was a real and living thing before ever a Norman, or whatever you like to call him, set foot in it. It is still necessary, however, to remind ordinary readers that pre-Norman Ireland possessed a literature, an ecclesiastical art, and a culture which gave her a far from despicable place among the nations of the time. Here on the Rock of Cashel a heap of buildings bears witness to the reality of that civilisation. The high-pointed stone roof of Cormac's Chapel, raising its little towers so sturdily by the side of the central mass of the buildings, may not strike you as beautiful—I for one should not dream of calling it so—but it is at least the covering of a strong and faithful piece of work, a shrine of some very honest-eyed art. It used to be thought by some that this chapel was built in the time of Cormac MacCullinan, who was both Bishop of Cashel and King of Munster at the beginning of the tenth century—a scholar in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Danish as well as in Irish, whose famous “Glossary” is said to be “by far the oldest attempt at a comparative vernacular dictionary made in any language of modern Europe.” It seems to be generally agreed nowadays, however, that the Cormac of



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CORMAC'S CHAPEL, CASHEL.



Cormac's Chapel was a King-Bishop of about two hundred years later, and that the chapel was built within the half century before the arrival of the Normans. The inside of the building, which is as solid as a gaol, gives one a greater impression of fancy and life than the sharp angle of the stone roof. Here, as soon as one has passed the many-arched doorway, one is in a shrine of humour as well as religion. Obviously, the ornamentation of the church was the work of holy men with a sense of fun. Everywhere that it was possible to stick in a human head as an ornament, a monk's face grins or prays, and one feels that one has here from the hand of an artist of kindly and satiric genius a gallery of portraits of the sweet-hearted and naughty men—for, clearly, there were both sorts—who fed and feasted and prayed against the world's sins on the rock eight hundred years ago.

Delightful a niche of the past as Cormac's Chapel is, however, with its traceries and carvings of animals and men, and its suggestions of walls once a wealth of colour, one has to go on into the main mass of the buildings in order to find the magic and essence of Cashel. The great rock cathedral is now roofless—it was unroofed in the eighteenth century by the soldiers at the bidding of Archbishop Price, who was tired of holding services in so incommodious a place—but it is still the most impressive church building in

which I have ever been. From the outside, its rubble ruins of walls give an impression of towering largeness rather than loveliness as they crown the promontory of the rock; but, as soon as you stand under the great central arch of the old cathedral—an arch of extraordinary beauty—and submit yourself to the influences of the grey stones around you, you begin to enter into a field of thrilling experiences. I cannot exactly define the nature of those experiences; but I will put the matter this way. I believe that if an imaginative man wished to write a novel about early or late medieval Ireland, he could not do better than go to Cashel and haunt the ruin on the rock and become haunted by it. It is bound to affect a sensitive imagination, as St. Mary Redcliffe in Bristol affected Chatterton. I do not know if ghosts walk, but this rock with its cathedral aisles open to the sky is surely a meeting-place of the shadows of kings and monks and a great throng of feasters and fighters. Presences, taller and more majestic than life, still seem to move through the quiet air. The walls are burrowed with secret stairways and passages, and little children come out of these and cry out little boasts over dangerous heights; but one can fancy that this is but an accidental sign of life—that the real intense life of the place is going on imperceptible to the ear or the eye. Climbing to a grassy square over the doorway of the church,

and looking out over the plain, one can easily fill the green miles with the conquering music of the old armies of Munster as they swung home, gallant as young hurlers, from grips with the Danes.

Cashel of the Kings the town is called ;—and Brian Boru built a royal house on the rock, and there he seems to have married, or at least to have made a mistress of Gormlaith—Gormlaith, the stirrer-up of strife, whose greed of husbands is condemned by the Four Masters in the words—

“Gormlaith took three leaps,  
Which no woman shall take to the Day of Judgment :  
A leap at Dublin, a leap at Tara,  
A leap at Cashel of the goblets higher than both.”

It was Brian's descendant, Donal, who is said to have built the great Cathedral on the rock, squeezing it into the space that was left between Cormac's Chapel and the round tower on the one hand, and the royal house and the edge of the rock on the other. If so, it is only another proof that Ireland, between the defeat of the Danes and the coming of the Normans, was a country of revival rather than a country of recession, as it is usually described.

Henry II., when he came to Ireland in 1172, appreciated the significance of the rock—which in regard to royalty was a southern Tara, and in regard to the Church was a southern Armagh—

and it was there that he called together the Synod of Cashel in order to make the Irish clergy good Catholics, as the Pope had enjoined upon him when giving him possession of the island. This again was the place where Edward Bruce chose to hold his Parliament when he became for a brief interval King of Ireland. Cashel, indeed, may be described as the Acropolis of Munster. For hundreds of years it was at once a summons and a challenge in the political and religious world. Fire and sword swept round about it again and again. In 1494 the Cathedral itself was burnt by Gerald, the great Earl of Kildare. This is one of the famous incidents in the history of Cashel. Gerald, we are told, was summoned to appear before King Henry VII. and explain his conduct, the Archbishop of Cashel being present to accuse him. The Earl did not deny having committed the sacrilege, but defended himself on the ground that he never would have burned the Cathedral unless he had thought that the Archbishop was inside it. This answer, it is said, greatly tickled the King. It is an example of Irish, or Anglo-Irish, humour, one would think, that might have tickled anybody—even the Archbishop. Unfortunately, the anti-Irish historians are not, in the vulgar phrase, out for humour but for scalps. They take the excellent Bernard Shawism of the Great Earl with an almost fanatical seriousness, and ask us to see in



it yet another proof of the cruelty and barbarism of old Irish life.

The only conspicuous tomb that lies out of the sun in the church wall is to the glory of another Archbishop of Cashel, who is also one of the most famous converts—or, if you look on it in that way, perverts—in Irish church history. This was the Archbishop Miler M'Grath who, having been consecrated by the Pope in Rome, allowed himself to be arrested by Queen Elizabeth's men when on his way to Ireland, and was soon either persuaded or bribed to become a Protestant. The chapter in which O'Sullivan Beare tells the story of the Archbishop in his *History of Catholic Ireland* is ingeniously romantic. Miler, having become a Protestant and been inducted into the diocese of Cashel, straightway set out to prove the thoroughness of his conversion by wedding "in unholy union," as the historian puts it, Anna Ni Meara. Having married her, however, he found to his astonishment that she would not eat meat on a Friday. "Why is it, wife," he asked, "that you will not eat meat with me?" "It is," she replied, "because I do not wish to commit a sin with you." "Surely," was his natural retort, "you committed a far greater sin in coming to the bed of me, a friar!"

On another occasion he found her weeping, and asked her why. "Because," she told him, "Eugene" (a Franciscan friar), "who was with me

to-day, assured me by strong proof and many holy testimonies that I would be condemned to hell if I should die in this state of being your wife. I am frightened, and cannot help crying lest this be true." "Indeed," replied the Archbishop—and you may be sure her complaints had exhausted the last ounce of his patience—"if you hope otherwise, your hope will lead you much astray, and not for the possibility but for the reality you should fret."

Not long after this, we are told Anna died consumed with grief. But the Archbishop had not yet been cured of uxoriousness. O'Sullivan Beare, writing a few years afterwards, told the world, as Mr. Matthew Byrne translates him in *Ireland under Elizabeth*: "The wicked Miler married a second wife and now lives sinning, not in ignorance but wilfully. He does not"—and this is surely a very fine acquittal on one score from an enemy—"hunt priests nor endeavour to detach Catholics from the true religion."

How admirably this tolerant and worldly and amorous friar would fit into the portrait-gallery of Anatole France! It is to be feared that he did little service to the cause of Protestantism in Cashel, for a report written by two Irish Jesuits at the beginning of the reign of James declared that at that time "in the metropolitan city of Cashel . . . there was one solitary English heretic," and that, "fearing to be well scorched,

he made himself a Catholic, whereupon the townsmen burned his house, so that even a heretic's house should not remain in their city."

The distrust on the part of the Cashel people of "English heretics" was not unjustified. Probably they cared little for theology, but they cared a great deal about being conquered and robbed by foreigners. At least, so far as one can judge from the general record of Irish tolerance in the matter of religion, anything that Protestants have ever suffered in Ireland has been suffered only by men who were invaders and robbers of the people's land. Protestants do not seem to have been injured because they were Protestants. In Cashel especially, the greatest record of crime must be assigned, not to Irish Catholics, but to government troops. The sack of Cashel on the 4th of September 1647, by Lord Inchiquin's troops, was one of those events that spread horror through Ireland. Inchiquin offered to let the garrison in Cashel march out with all the honours of war, if they would pay him £3000 and leave the clergy and citizens to his mercy. They, naturally, refused, whereupon Inchiquin's men stormed the rock, massacring soldiers and priests, men and women, till the place flowed with blood. Inchiquin, it is said, having made his way into the Cathedral after the slaughter, put on the Archbishop's mitre and declared gaily that he was now Governor of Munster and Archbishop of Cashel

as well. As an epilogue to the butchery, the statues and crucifixes were broken in pieces to make a soldiers' holiday, and the sacred vestments used as horsecloths or worn by the soldiers in mockery. The vessels of the altar and the other spoils were sold to the people who had gathered in from surrounding parts "as if to a fair."

There is no less bloody-looking place in the world than Cashel now. The rock has long since been washed of its stains, and the town which flows up to it is much too poor and unawake to tempt even a Cossack with thoughts of plunder. Probably there was stir and gaiety in it till the railways came; it lay on the old coach-road between Dublin and Cork. But if the designers of the railway system had purposely set out to isolate and starve the towns in the south of Ireland, such as Cashel, they could scarcely have succeeded better than they did. Almost everywhere that a good town stood they avoided like a pestilence. Thus they did not take their main line round by Kilkenny, and they ran it several miles to the north of Cashel. Cashel has never recovered from the snub. It has moped and moulted in its corner ever since. It still possesses its palace upon a rock, and finds it a useful place to send the children to play on Sunday afternoons, and a convenient place to bury its dead by the old holy well out of which one is now forbidden to drink. At the same time, for all the widow's

weeds in which it has clothed itself, it retains memories of pride. "I have reared twelve children in the City of the Kings," a woman half wailed, half boasted, in the course of our visit, as she stood on the railway platform, and saw the train go off with a load of emigrants, "and there's the last of them gone from me." It was a dirge sung over a royal place. "There will soon be no Irish left at home at all," she cried. "The hedges and ditches will soon be emigrating out of Ireland." Certainly, Cashel is a deserted city. But the rock and the world that you see from the rock—how they make the city itself negligible! As you stand under the central arches of the Cathedral, and see the columns springing up to meet each other with the grace and spontaneity of wild daffodils, you enjoy one of the most beautiful things in Ireland—one of the few lyrics in stone, indeed, of which Ireland can boast. So let no Irishman miss seeing Cashel and spending a long day in the clear light of the ruined Cathedral on the Rock.

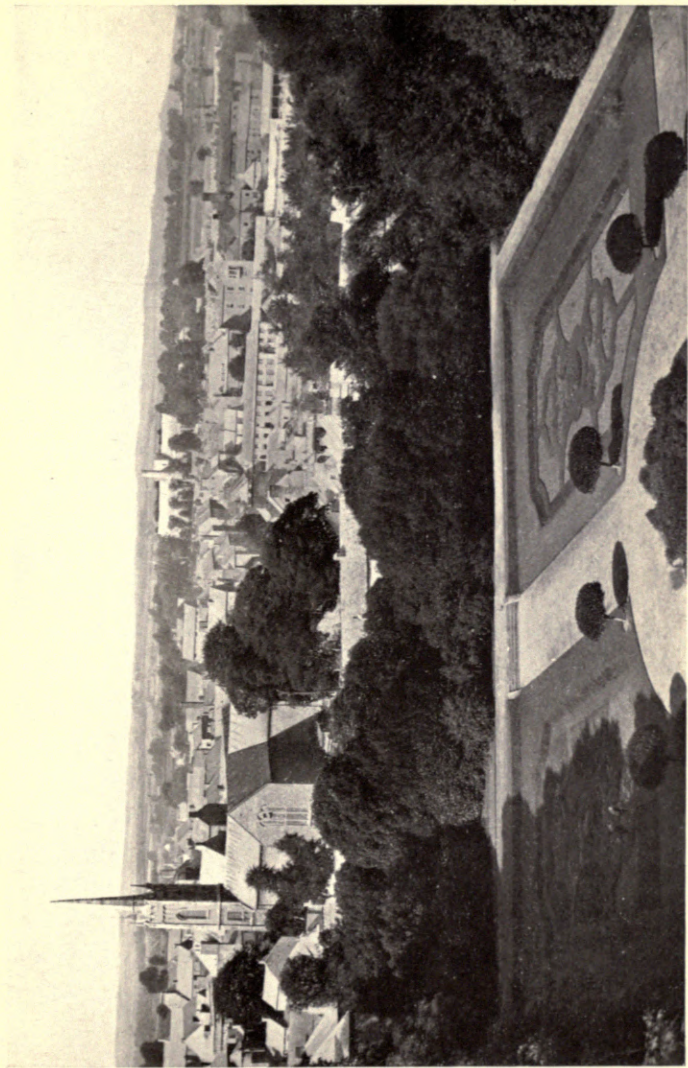
## CHAPTER X

### THE MAN FROM THURLES

I MET the man from Thurles in Kilkenny as I was going up to the station from the Imperial Hotel.

He was old and shuffling, a ragged creature that once was a man and now humped from town to town with a spotted red handkerchief in his hand, gathering the needs of his belly from among those things that we others do not require for our dogs. He was as hairy and weather-beaten as a sailor, but he was like a squeezed and shrivelled sailor. His dark hair and beard were as limp as weed. His eyes, which looked like the eyes of a blind man, with the lids falling down on them as if in deadly weariness, might have belonged to one who had been captured by Algerian pirates in his youth and who had lived in dungeons. He was wearing a tattered wideawake, a symbol of homelessness, and as he walked he seemed to put his feet down with uncertainty, like a drunken man.

I stopped him to ask whether a church set up



KILKENNY.

*Lawrence.*





high among gravestones by the side of the road was the Black Friary—I think that was the name of the place.

He made me repeat my question, and then in a monotonous voice told me—what I could see for myself—that it was a graveyard in there, mumbling something about Protestants and Catholics both being buried in it—“side by side,” he added for the sake of euphony.

Obviously, he had not heard my question or did not know the answer to it. But that did not matter. I really did not care twopence about the Black Friary.

He went on to say that he was a stranger in Kilkenny, and (without ever raising his fly-blown eyes) that he had only arrived there that day after a walk of thirty miles.

I asked him what part of the country he was from.

“Thurles,” he said, his voice seeming to come from a fuller chest, as he gave the name of the town its two syllables; “did you ever hear tell of Thurles?”

I told him I had been there about a year before.

“It would surprise you,” he commented, “the difference you would find between the people of Thurles and the people belonging to Kilkenny.”

“How was that?” I asked him.

“Well,” he replied, “in Thurles, and indeed

I might say in all parts of the County Tipperary, everybody has a welcome for a stranger. For instance," and he pointed a hand half-hidden under a long sleeve at me, "you're a stranger, and" (touching his own coat) "I'm a stranger, and if this had to be in the County Tipperary, and one of us wanting a bed, we would have no trouble in the world but to go up to the door of the first house, and there would be as big a welcome before us as if we had to come with a purse of gold. But here," and his voice grew bitter, "they would prosecute you if you would ask them for as much as a sup of water."

Suddenly his appearance changed; his bold Jekyll collapsed into a whining Hyde.

"Is that a pólisman I see coming?" he asked, laying his trembling fingers on my arm and steadying his eyes to look down the road. "If it's a pólisman he is, you won't let him come interfering and asking me questions. You wouldn't let him do that, sir. But in the name of Almighty God," he demanded, battering himself into a kind of rhetorical courage, "what would a pólisman want cross-examining the likes of me? Did I ever steal anything, if it was only taking a turnip out of a field? Did I ever—tell him not to interfere with me!" he quavered; "tell him not to interfere with me!"

I should not have been surprised if he had put his hand into mine for comfort like a frightened

child. He held in his breath as the policeman, a bold-boned figure in dark green, trod past. Then he let his breath out again.

“They’re tyrants, them fellows,” he said, “and the lies they would tell on a poor man might be the means of getting him a week or maybe a month in gaol, and he after doing nothing at all but only going quietly from place to place. And thieves and robbers running loose that would murder you on the roadside and no one to say a word.”

“Do you mean tinkers?” I asked.

“I do not, then,” he said. “I mean soldiers—milishymen.”

I asked him to come into a public-house for a bottle of stout, but he said that a bottle of stout would make him light in the head. At length, however, he said he would come and have a glass of ale if I was sure I could keep the police from annoying him. I gave him my promise and we went in.

“What do I mean?” he said, when I brought him back to the militiamen. “This is what I mean. I had a fine blackthorn stick one time,”—he called it a “shtick”—“a stick I had cut from the hedge with my own hands, and seasoned and polished, and varnished till it was the handsomest stick ever you seen. Well, I was walking along the road in this part of the country one day, when who should meet me but two of these

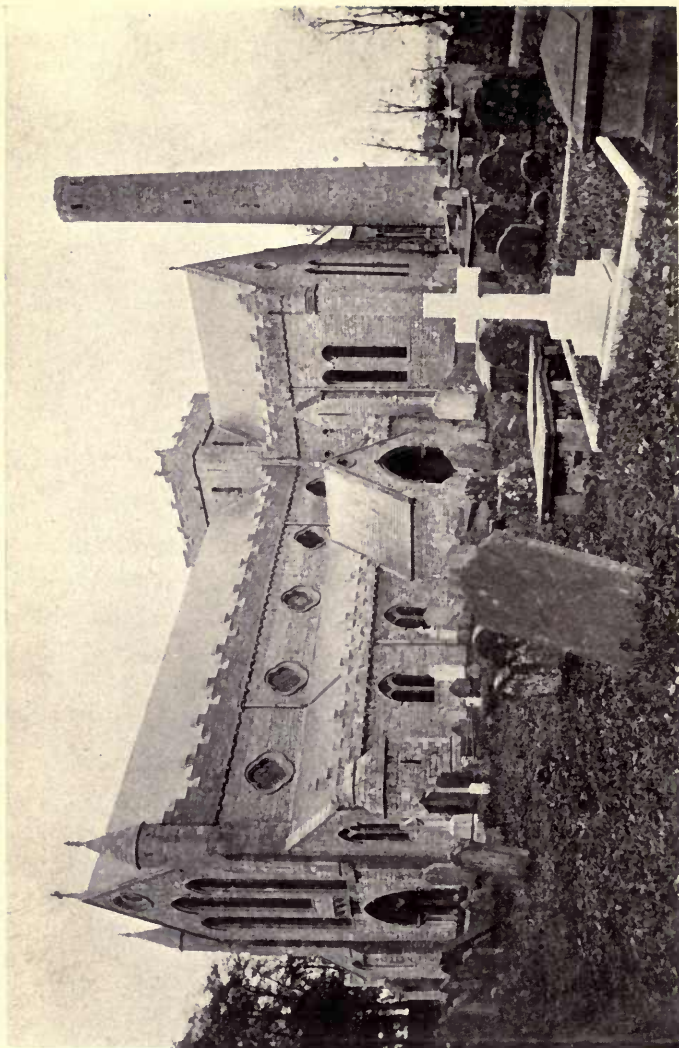
milishymen. 'Give us baccy,' says one of them, —that's what he called tobacco. 'I have no tobacco,' says I. 'You lie,' says he, rising his fist to threaten me. 'It's the truth,' says I, putting up my arm to protect myself."

He cowered behind his arm, and shrank as from a blow at the recollection.

"'If you haven't tobacco, you have money,' says the milishyman. 'God knows I have neither money nor tobacco,' says I. And with that he made a rush at me and took the stick off me, and threw me into a bed of nettles and began to beat me with it. 'Would you have my murder on your souls?' says I; but they only laughed and began searching me to see if I had anything worth stealing. There was nothing but only a few crusts of bread I had tied up in a handkerchief, and they took them out and pitched them over the hedge. They would have murdered me, I tell you, if they hadn't heard somebody coming. But that scared them, and they set off down the road. 'Won't you leave me my stick?' I called after them. 'Don't you see I told you the truth, and what use could a rotten ould stick be to the likes of you?' And one of them shouted back that I could go to hell for my stick, and he threatened me, if I was to say a word about it, he would find me out and beat me till there wouldn't be a whole bone left in my body."

The old man half lifted the glass with his





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KILKENNY CATHEDRAL.

withered arm to his lips, and half stooped his withered face to the glass. Having drunk, he wiped his mouth on his sleeve.

“Now wouldn’t you feel lonesome,” he whimpered, his lips against his sleeve, “after a stick that you had cut and polished yourself, and that you had been used to have with you wherever you went? And many’s a good offer I had to sell that stick. But I would as soon have thought of selling an arrum or a leg. I wouldn’t”—he paused and his imagination took a leap into great sums—“I wouldn’t have taken a shilling itself for it.”

To him a shilling was something considerable. It represented life for two days; he could exist, he told me, on sixpence a day, in a place like Kilkenny. Twopence was the price of a bed in straw on the floor, where the rats ran across you till you dreamed you had fallen in the middle of a fair and that all the beasts were trampling over you. Then in the morning there was a penny for tea, a penny for a slice of bacon, a penny for bread, a halfpenny for sugar and a drop of milk, and a halfpenny for the loan of a can to make the tea in and a share of the fire. If he had bed and breakfast, he said, he did not mind about the rest of the day. He never felt hungry, as long as he had his cup of tea in the morning.

Sunk to the hovels though he was, he had the rags of a finer past about him. He used to be

the best slaner, he assured me, in the north of Tipperary. Did I know what slaning was? It meant cutting turf, and he used to be so good a hand at it that he could earn enough by two or three days' work to keep him the entire week.

"There's a man I was at school with in Thurles living in this town," he went on, adding proof to proof of his original respectability, "a rich man, and, what's more, a giving man, and you'll think it a queer thing, but I have only to walk up to his door and ask is he in to get all I want to eat and drink, and money, too, maybe sixpence, into my hand, and I going away, to put me a bit along the road. But I wouldn't go near him."

"Why was that?" I asked him.

He made no sign of having heard me.

"If I was to walk up to his door, and he in at his dinner," he went on, like a man describing a vision of Paradise, "he would bring me in and sit me down by his side at the table, and I tell you it would be a table for a feast. There would be roast beef, or mutton, or a shoulder of lamb, or maybe a chicken. There would be ham and"—his imagination seemed to pause on the outer edge of its resources—"all a man could eat and he in a dream."

"And why do you not go to him?" I asked again.

"I wouldn't," he said briefly; and then, returning to his vision, "every sort of vegetable



there would be on the table—potatoes, and turnips,”—he went over their names in a slow catalogue, dwelling on each as though the very words had magic juices for an empty stomach,—“and carrots, and cabbage, and peas, and beans, and parsnips, and curlies, and—and all. I tell you none of the hotels in this city could do you better.”

“But why don’t you go and see him?” I persisted.

He shook his head.

“I wouldn’t,” he said helplessly.

There was something puzzling about the old man. It may have been merely his timid and indirect spirit. I doubt if he had the heart to beg—at least openly—either from a lifelong acquaintance or from a stranger. He was going out of the public-house without asking me for a penny. I stopped him, however, and put a sixpence into his hand to see him over the night. He peered at it for a moment, and slowly took his hat from his head. Raising his sand-blind eyes, he let them dwell on me. He drew in a long breath as though about to deliver an oration. Then, straightening himself into a kind of majesty, he said with the air of a man uttering the supreme benediction: “You’re the best bloody man I’ve met since I left Thurles.”

And having paid me the most magnificent compliment in his power, he put on his hat, and wobbled in front of me out of the bar.

## CHAPTER XI

### DUBLIN

It is not without significance that the two best-known ports of entry into Ireland should be called Kingstown and Queenstown. Every time I land at Kingstown for Dublin and see the tall pillar which stands there in memory of King George iv.'s tipsy visit, I feel an ironical satisfaction that this heavy comedian of a monarch should have been chosen as the symbol of English rule in Ireland. He came to Ireland in the first year of his reign with a world of promise in his eyes. The Irish Catholics, many of whose leaders had been cheated into supporting the Union by a promise of Catholic Emancipation, looked to him as a liberator, and he smiled and smiled and played the part of the leader of the Irish race at home and abroad till he was safely out of the country. It was at Dunleary on the south side of Dublin Bay that he embarked for England again—Dunleary, which has been known as Kingstown ever since in honour of the event.

O'Connell, who could never miss an oppor-

tunity for a theatrical turn, followed him to the edge of the dock with a laurel crown, and men say that he tumbled into the water as he made one of his obeisances of premature gratitude. But I do not believe that, though O'Connell became capable of anything when he was enthusiastic. The whole affair of the royal reception disgusted every one who felt that slavery of the soul was a greater curse than being without a vote. Byron, who was a good enough Home Ruler from the first to denounce the Union between Great Britain and Ireland as "the union of the shark with its prey," sat down in anger and wrote "The Irish Avatar," berating the Irish people for the way in which so many of them had grovelled to "the fourth of the fools and oppressors called George," as he described the King in the most famous line of the poem.

Dublin, a city set upon a plain, is a grave and aristocratic witness to what Ireland was beginning to do for herself in the pre-Union days. I say grave, though Dublin has been credited with almost every other virtue and vice but gravity. She is popularly thought of as the boon-companion among cities. She is supposed by many foreigners who enter her to be symbolised by the red-eyed whimsical old man who sells the papers on Kingstown platform as you step off the boat in the morning. "*Irish Times! Christian Herald! Winning Post!*" he calls monotonously as he walks

up and down with an air at once sheepish and cunning; and then he goes on to some other ridiculous collocation: "*Ally Sloper! The War-Cry! Ally Sloper! Irish Times! Christian Herald! Freeman's Journal! The Pink 'Un!*" He does not care so long as he makes the English visitors turn to each other at the doors of the waiting train, and say after him as if repeating a good joke—which they had travelled hundreds of miles to hear—" *Irish Times! Christian Herald! The Pink 'Un!* D'you hear him? Good old Ireland!" It must be inspiriting to find at the outer gate of a strange country a figure who is a proof that all your preconceptions about the country were right. In a land of jokes to be met at the very water's edge by a jocular paper-seller is to have adventured not in vain.

In spite of King George iv. and jocular paper-sellers, however, I insist that Dublin is a city of grave dignity. It is a national capital, a place of leisure and statues and wide streets and squares, with brick-faced venerable houses which in the radiance of sunset have a colour at times as beautiful as old wine. As one walks its pavements, one is always, as it were, under the shadow of history as of some high wall. Here in the evening, as one passes under the colonnade of the Parliament House—now the Bank of Ireland—one is back in the sonorous and stately eighteenth century, with its fine worldliness and its fine rebellion



[Lawrence,

OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE, DUBLIN.



against worldliness. It is not that other towns do not recall the eighteenth century as well as Dublin. But Dublin, unlike other towns, seems to have settled down in the eighteenth century and to have gone little further in the next hundred years. Dublin of the eighteenth century is more real than Dublin of any generation since.

Not that even Dublin of the present day does not impress itself on the imagination in spite of the fact that in one respect it is an English fort and in another a provincial town to which the number-one touring companies take the musical comedies from London. Notwithstanding all the soldiers who fill O'Connell Street at night with their red tunics and the London plays which are so enthusiastically welcomed in the theatres, no intelligent Englishman can feel that in Dublin he is in a British city. An English lady who recently visited it for the first time told me that on going into the Shelburne Hotel she quite naturally found herself addressing the servants in French. Dublin, too, is doing nothing to minimise the differences between herself and the cities beyond Ireland. She is not yet an Irish-speaking city, but she at least tingly foretells the day when she will be, by writing up the names of so many of her streets in Irish as well as English. The hard-headed do not like this. They even become as the turkey-cocks now and then as they look up and see those Gaelic characters insulting the twentieth-

century street corners. The practical man—"a bore in blinkers," some one has called him—thinks that few greater calamities could happen than that Ireland should become interesting to Irish men and women again. He believes first of all in the living he himself earns. After that, his Irish creed may be summed up as dullness in the country, dullness in the towns, and dullness in the schools. He has been supreme in Ireland for a good many years now, and, God knows, besides driving population and manners and laughter and industry out of the country, he had very nearly succeeded in making it a very wild of dullness, from Belfast to Cork, from Ireland's Eye to the Aran Islands. Then a few years ago a handful of sentimentalists appeared who felt that, if it profited a man nothing to gain the whole world and lose his soul, it must profit a nation still less to lose the whole world and its soul as well. . . .

Irish though it is to-day, it is by no means as an Irish city that we always find Dublin standing out in history. Dublin was Norse and Danish in its early years. Iseult, as students know, was a Danish king of Dublin's daughter. Having defeated the Norsemen in Carlingford Lough in a great battle for the rule of Ireland in the middle of the ninth century, the Danes seized the fortress which their rivals had already built at Dublin, and founded a monarchy there with Olaf the White as king. Dublin remained a Danish



capital for about a century and a half after that, when Brian Boru broke the power of the foreigners for ever at the battle of Clontarf. I believe there is some debate about the site of the battle of Clontarf,<sup>1</sup> but if you take a tram along the north side of Dublin Bay, you will find a dreary flat of brick dwellings by the sea with the name of Clontarf ennobling it. It was on Good Friday, 1014, that the aged Brian, directing the battle from his tent, and praying to the God of the Christians for the victory, drove the heathen stranger into the tides. Thus in 1914 it will be exactly nine hundred years since the greatest national victory in the history of Ireland took place. In 1914, it is interesting to note, a measure of Home Rule for Ireland will, if some accident does not happen, be sent up to the British House of Lords for the third time and automatically become law. It is surely a noteworthy achievement on the part of the Irish people to have come through those nine hundred years of turmoil, persecution, and defeat, with their purpose of liberty still unextinguished.

<sup>1</sup> "The battleground extended from about the present Upper Sackville Street to the Tolka and beyond—along the shore towards Clontarf. The Danes stood with their backs to the sea; the Irish on the land side facing them. Malachi and his Meathmen stood at the Irish extreme right, on the high ground probably somewhere about Blessington Street. The hardest fighting appears to have taken place round the fishing-weir on the Tolka, at, or perhaps a little above, the present Ballybough Bridge; and indeed the battle is called in some old Irish authorities, 'the Battle of the Weir of Clontarf.'"—Dr. P. W. Joyce's *Short History of Ireland to 1608*, p. 217.

One finds a memorial of the old Danish Dublin in Christchurch Cathedral on the south side of the river. Here the Danes who survived Clontarf, having become converted to the victorious religion of Christ, built the Church of the Blessed Trinity, and, rightly or wrongly, tradition assigns the crypt of the present building to the original church. One visits the church nowadays, however, less for the sake of the Danes than to see the tomb of Strongbow, pioneer of English decivilisation in Ireland. An old man shows you round the mysteries of the place. He shows you Strongbow in stone in knightly armour and with a shield on his left arm, and, beside him, the body of his son cut off at the middle—the son whom he slew for cowardice in battle. He shows you a fragment of Eva, Strongbow's wife. For sixpence a head, he takes you down into the crypt, where the electric light sheds its baleful glare along the forest-like vistas of the arches, and shows you a mummified cat chasing a lost rat trapped in a living tomb and preserved behind the organ-case, and only discovered many years afterwards, a death's comedy for the amusement of sightseers. He shows you—and this is his special pride—the bust of a philanthropist's orphan, set in a niche, and, lighting a match, insists upon your taking a close look and seeing a tear making its way down the orphan's face. What are the Danes to him? How does Strongbow come home to his

business and bosom? The tear, on the other hand, like the mummified cat, is a miracle for simple eyes. "Do you see it? Do you see it?" he asks eagerly as he holds up the match to the bust. He would not feel that he had given you your sixpence-worth unless he showed you that orphan's tear—that and the dead cat.

I do not know if any one calls the discoloured Gothic cluster of Christchurch beautiful. I imagine not—at least on the outside. And, if you want to think it beautiful inside, you must go there when no service is in progress. If you go there at the time of a service, you will be struck by the extreme nakedness of Irish Protestantism. Irish Protestants have felt it so urgent a matter to disown the Pope that they have disowned a good deal of beauty—which is no more the Pope's than anybody else's—as well. Consequently, though in occupation of elaborate cathedral churches, they fill them with no elaborate ritual. Here no candle burns its little Popish flame; and this is symbolic of the way in which the whole service seems to be trying to avoid the very appearance of Popery, instead of following along beautiful and fitting lines on the merits of the case. . . . I do not know, however; I am a Protestant of Protestants myself, and suspicious of any but simple services. Probably, the real flaw in Irish Protestantism has little to do with its ornaments or want of them. It is that

Protestantism has existed in Ireland too much as a negation. It has been a negation of the Pope, on the one hand, and of Ireland, on the other. It has stood for contempt and ascendancy, not for brotherhood. Though it has produced its saints in thousands, it has never stood for saintliness, or even common justice, in the national life. For the first century of its history in Ireland, a Protestant meant an Englishman and an Englishman meant a criminal. It may be retorted that it was a Protestant, Bishop Bedell, who translated the Bible into Irish in the days of the first Stuarts. That brought him no honour from his own Church, however. Primate Ussher, afraid to offend the authorities, censured him for attempting to win Ireland to what he believed to be the true faith of Christ by using the language which the Irish people understood. Of course, intolerance in religious and national matters was a common thing in these parts of the world in the sixteenth century, but nowhere more than in Ireland was Christ's name used as an excuse for murder, theft, and every sort of cruelty. Protestantism came to Ireland as a land-grabbing invasion, not as a gospel of glad tidings.

Its spirit must have been seen in Christchurch on that day in 1627 when George Downham, Protestant Bishop of Derry, preached before the Lord Deputy and the Council on the subject of the "graces" that were being asked from King

Charles and in support of the contention of twelve Bishops, with Ussher at their head, that (in a few words) the toleration of Catholicism was a grievous sin. Having read out the decision of the Bishops, we are told, he requested the congregation to say Amen, and "suddenly the whole church almost shaken with the great sound their loud Amens made." The Protestants of those days, to tell the truth, were anxious neither to tolerate nor to convert the Irish Catholic. They preferred that he should remain an intolerable Catholic in order that they might have an excuse for seizing his land. They wished the Bible to be an excuse for, not an alternative to, the sword. As for the state of the Irish Protestant churches in those critical days, I need only quote the testimony of that unbending Protestant and Unionist historian, Mr. Richard Bagwell.

"One parish church in Dublin," he writes in *Ireland under the Stuarts*, "was the Viceroy's stable, a second a nobleman's residence, and a third a tennis-court where the vicar acted as keeper. The vaults under Christchurch were from end to end hired to Roman Catholic publicans, and the congregation above were poisoned with tobacco smoke and with the fumes of beer and wine." The communion table in the middle of the choir was "made an ordinary seat for maids and apprentices." It will be said, perhaps, that other churches of other creeds

were as lax. But that does not affect the point.

Christchurch, though it is an especially historic place for English-speaking Irish Protestants as being the first church in Ireland where the English version of the Bible was read in public and left open for all to read, has a more national interest for Irish Christians in general, as the repository of the casket which contains the heart of St. Lawrence O'Toole, the statesmanlike churchman who is perhaps the most dignified and attractive figure in Ireland at the time of Henry II.'s invasion. Lawrence O'Toole, the first Irish Bishop to be consecrated in Dublin, stood for national revival in the Irish Church. Hitherto, the Church had been divided owing to the practice of the converted Danes of sending their bishops to be ordained at Canterbury. It was St. Lawrence, by his sweet and diplomatic spirit, who finally brought the two branches of the Church into union again in allegiance to Armagh. He is sometimes criticised by later politicians for having been a party to the surrender of Ireland to Henry II., and for having gone to Windsor and Normandy with a loyal knee. But, so far as we can judge, he was an unselfish student of the honour of his country as of the honour of his Church; and his life—Mrs. Green describes him as “feeding the poor daily, never himself tasting meat, rising at midnight to pray till dawn, and ever before he

slept going out into the graveyard to pray there for the dead"—was the life of a saint. It was St. Lawrence, the last of the saints, who in this very church conducted the funeral service over Strongbow, the first of the Normans.

It is to Christchurch and not to the more popularly known St. Patrick's Cathedral—which is only a step away, as they say—a step into a slum—that one goes in search of the rich associations of history. It is unfair, perhaps, to say that St. Patrick's, with its battlemented walls and its blackened tower, stands any longer in a slum. For Lord Iveagh, a patriotic Irishman in everything except his politics, has displaced many picturesque hells of poverty and disease in the surrounding parts by huge barracks of inimitably ugly brick—model tenements for the poor—which are no doubt much pleasanter to live in than to look at. Consequently, as one comes out of the church on Sunday, one no longer feels that one is invading a subterranean world of narrow streets where—for this was a fine ragged Sunday market only a few years ago—the house-fronts are in dingy holiday behind their curtains of sleeves, trouser-legs, and other pieces and patches of old clothes. The poor of Ireland have gathered round this ancient church,—which has been saved from ruin by stout as Christchurch Cathedral was saved by whisky,—but they do not go to it. They wear St. Patrick's flower on his

holiday, but they cannot persuade themselves that he was really a Protestant, or that they ought to become Orangemen for his sake. He is, by the way, claimed as a Catholic, Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, according to the prejudices of those who write about him—in other words, he is a genuinely national figure, satisfying all creeds and classes.

St. Patrick's Cathedral gets its name from the fact that it is built on a spot—originally an island in a stream—where the saint is supposed to have called a holy well into existence in order to baptize Alphin, the King of Dublin, and a multitude of other converts. Apart from this, St. Patrick's relations with Dublin seem to have been slight. His ghost does not haunt Dublin as the ghost of St. Lawrence O'Toole does. His dim church, indeed, with its coloured monuments and its moth-eaten military banners, recalls the fiercely fretful presence of Dean Swift far more than that of St. Patrick himself.

Dean Swift, one of the fathers of modern Irish Nationalism, and by far the most distinguished clergyman who ever was in charge of St. Patrick's, lies here beside Stella, his simple and at the same time mysterious friend, under a brass plate a little to the right of the porch where you enter. It is a common thing in these times to defame the memory of Swift, making out that he was merely an embittered English clergyman



who repaid a government that banished him to Dublin by rousing the Irish mob to the mood of rebellion. There is a sort of party politician who always finds an excuse for his own lack of generous idealism by proclaiming that the leaders of movements for political righteousness are self-seekers, humbugs, and sinners in the various other schools of iniquity. Swift's passionate championship of the cause of Ireland was no doubt the expression of a mixed nature. Swift was ambitious, vain, and overbearing as well as sensitive to public injustice and the sufferings of his neighbours. His politics, however, were, in the last analysis, the politics of charity, not the politics of hatred. So charitable was he by nature, we are told, that, when he was Dean of St. Patrick's, he lived on a third of his income, gave another third away, and saved the remainder to leave in charity at his death. "With the first five hundred pounds which he possessed," says Sir Leslie Stephen, "he formed a fund for granting loans to industrious tradesmen and citizens, to be repaid by weekly instalments. It was said that by this scheme he had been the means of putting more than 200 families in a comfortable way of living. He had, says Delany, a whole 'seraglio' of distressed old women in Dublin; there was scarcely a lane in the whole city where he had not such a 'mistress.' He saluted them kindly, bought trifles from them, and gave

them such titles as Pullagowna, Stumpa-Nympha, and so forth."

Naturally, Dublin adored him, though Dublin Castle did not. He arose, a big-hearted and fearless leader of the people, when a leader was most needed against oppression from abroad. His fight against the importation of Wood's Halfpence is as important an event in Irish history as was the men of Boston's fight against the importation of some objectionable tea in the history of the United States. It does not matter, as some critics of Swift seem to think, whether Wood's Halfpence were good halfpence or not, any more than it matters whether the tea thrown into Boston Harbour was good tea or not.

The point was that Ireland was being exploited by a foreign government which had sold Wood the right to dump his base coin in the country, he having paid £14,000 for the privilege, and another £3000 to the Duchess of Kendal, the King's mistress, for helping him to secure the patent. It was against this indecent incident of foreign rule—a symbolic incident—that Swift wrote those lashing political tracts, *The Drapier's Letters*. "If his copper were diamonds," he wrote of Wood, "and this kingdom were entirely against it, would not that be sufficient to reject it?" It was in the fourth letter that he made his famous enunciation of the root-principle of Irish freedom: "All government without the consent of the

governed is the very definition of slavery." "By the laws of God, of Nature, of nations, and of your own country," he told the people of Ireland, "you are and ought to be as free a people as your brethren in England."

By the people of Ireland, of course, Swift meant the Protestants of Ireland, but, though his ideal was a Protestant nation, it was an Irish Protestant nation. His spirit was essentially the spirit of a Nationalist, as may be seen in the verses he wrote on the sudden drying up of St. Patrick's Well in 1726. In these verses he impersonates the saint, and puts into his mouth a renunciation of a people who would not struggle, as other nations did, for their liberty. "Oh!" he cries in a concluding outburst of passion—

"Oh! had I been apostle to the Swiss,  
Or hardy Scot, or any land but this;  
Combined in arms, they had their foes defied,  
And kept their liberty, or bravely died;  
Thou still with tyrants in succession curst,  
The last invaders trampling on the first;  
Nor fondly hope for some reverse of fate,  
Virtue herself would now return too late.  
Not half thy course of misery is run,  
Thy greatest evils yet are scarce begun.  
Soon shall thy sons (the time is just at hand)  
Be all made captives in their native land;  
When for the use of no Hibernian born,  
Shall rise one blade of grass, one ear of corn;  
When shells and leather shall for money pass,  
Nor thy oppressing lords afford thee brass,

But all turn leasers to that mongrel breed,  
Who, from thee sprung, yet on thy vitals feed ;  
Who to yon ravenous isle thy treasures bear,  
And waste in luxury thy harvest there ;  
For pride and ignorance a proverb grown,  
The jest of wits, and to the court unknown.  
I scorn thy spurious and degenerate line,  
And from this hour my patronage resign."

This may be political rhetoric rather than poetry, but at least it is eloquent with a vehement Nationalism which was as sincere as any belief that any Dean of St. Patrick's ever held. Those people who speak of Swift's Nationalism as though it were mere crabbedness, can, I am sure, never have read the Irish tracts and verses. There it appears as a very storm of righteousness and good sense. It was only an accident of birth that made Swift an Irishman,—he was born at 2 Hoey's Court, not far from the Cathedral,—but it was an accident which gave Ireland one of her most Promethean children. Even though he was, as it were, a fortuitous and often an unwilling Irishman, he was the greatest Irishman of his time, and did more than any other man to lay the logical foundations of Grattan's Parliament.

Dean Swift stands for the realism of Irish politics. For the romance of Irish politics, one turns to Lord Edward FitzGerald and Robert Emmet, generous messengers of the French Revolution, one of whom died on the scaffold and the other fell of a mortal wound not far from

St. Patrick's, in gloomy, crooked Thomas Street. The house where Lord Edward made his last stand, a victim of informers, those ever-sinister agents of the will to misrule, is now the office of some kind of agricultural society; but a tablet on the wall reminds the passer-by that in 1798 it was a place of events.

Lord Edward is one of the gallant men rather than the great men of Irish history. There is a picturesqueness about his character, as well as a selflessness in his devotion to Ireland, that has endeared him as a popular hero. A melodrama about his rebellious end even to-day makes the small gallery boys in their greasy caps emit loud whistles and interruptions of delight—except in Belfast, where the play is treated as a party question. I have sat in a window opposite the Belfast Opera-House while *Lord Edward* was being played, and so little were the audience agreed in regard to the sentiments of the piece that all through the evening you could hear a continual wild rivalry of “The Boys of Wexford” and “Rule Britannia” being sung by the opposing factions in the theatre, while at intervals a number of excited men would be tumbled violently out of one of the doors, cursing and with an occasional cracked head.

There have been times, indeed, when the heroes of patriotic melodramas have had to die with one eye open in the Belfast theatres, for

youthful defenders of the Union have on occasion brought an ingenious assortment of missiles to hurl at the impersonators of men who were ignoble enough to give their lives for their country. On the only night on which I ever saw *Lord Edward* myself, the disorder was the disorder of enthusiasm, but the riots of 1898 revived the sporting instincts of the Shankhill Road, and after that for a time, when a patriotic play came to the town, the theatre was a scene of faction-fight. . . .

On a platform made of boards and barrels in the middle of the road, nearly opposite St. Catherine's Church, within a few yards of the house in which Lord Edward was captured, Robert Emmet—"the darling of Ireland," as the song calls him—was hanged like a dog in the year 1803. "This," proclaimed the hangman, holding up the severed head to the gaze of the multitude, "is the head of a traitor, Robert Emmet." It was a lie. Never was there a more loyal and gentle redeemer of his country than Robert Emmet, whose blood dripped on the road that day, when brave men and women came forward and dipped their handkerchiefs in it for remembrance, and the dogs gathered to lick it up. He was only twenty-five when he died; and his slight and boyish figure has ever since been beautiful in the popular imagination with the golden lights of youth and martyrdom. Not that his fame has lived without question. "Never," exclaimed

O'Connell, the shocked politician, "was there a more rash or foolish enthusiast." But we know how the formulæ of rashness and folly are always applied to the hero who fails. That Emmet was far from rash or foolish is shown by the fact that, in spite of that genius for spying which has been always among the glories of Dublin Castle—the Lord Lieutenant had an allowance of £6000 a year for secret service money—the Government could learn in advance nothing of his plans for seizing their citadel. The attempt on the castle failed, as all the world knows, but the important thing is that it was made and that Robert Emmet died for it. His speech from the dock, with its strange, youthful rhetoric that seems to belong to another world than ours, must surely always have a place among the fine things that rebels have said at the mouth of death. Never has any speech won its way into the Irish imagination like this which ends in that solemn music—

"I am going to my cold and silent grave—my lamp of life is nearly extinguished—I have parted with everything that was dear to me in this life, and for my country's cause with the idol of my soul, the object of my affections. My race is run—the grave opens to receive me, and I sink into its bosom. I have but one request to ask at my departure from this world, it is the charity of its silence. Let no man write my epitaph; for as no man who knows my motives dare now vindicate them, let not prejudice or ignorance asperse them. Let them rest in obscurity and peace, my memory be left in oblivion, and my

tomb remain uninscribed, until other times and other men can do justice to my character. When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written. I have done."

There are few better farewells than that in the literature of the dock—which, by the way, is exceedingly good literature from Socrates onwards. Its beauty is intensified for those who know how easily Emmet might have escaped his tragedy had he been willing to go away after the defeat of his rising without saying good-bye to Sarah Curran. The circumstances of his sacrifice have a fascination that makes not the Nationalist only but the Orangeman eager to listen to his story. Tom Moore, who was his friend, and whose verses on Emmet and Sarah Curran are known to thousands who have never heard Emmet's name, has left it on record that the Duke of Wellington heard the praise of Emmet from him with interest. Lord Norbury, when he was condemning him to be hanged, and denouncing him for the crime of having associated with "hostlers, bakers, butchers, and such persons," had assuredly no idea that he was face to face with one of the martyrs of history—a man whose death would do more for Irish nationality than an army with banners. But every generous Irish boy who reads about Robert Emmet to-day would rather be he than the emperor of the world.

The revolutionary figure that dominates the



atmosphere of Dublin for me, however, is not Robert Emmet, but Wolfe Tone. I seldom walk past the pillars of the old Parliament House on a night when the moon is up without an image of Wolfe Tone in his college cap and gown sauntering by. I think a scene out of a play is responsible for this deception of the imagination.

Wolfe Tone is to my mind the most fascinating character who ever studied or avoided learning behind the unpretentious walls of Trinity College, and this is no small claim, for many of the world's geniuses, including Burke and Goldsmith, have endured professors there. Goldwin Smith found a parallel for Tone in Hannibal. "Brave, adventurous, sanguine, fertile in resource, buoyant under misfortune," Tone, he wrote, "was near being as fatal an enemy to England as Hannibal was to Rome." And Wellington was filled with admiration at the way in which this "extraordinary man," the son of a Dublin coachmaker, went to Paris "with a hundred guineas in his pocket, unknown and unrecommended . . . in order to overturn the British Government in Ireland," and all but succeeded.

It is, however, his genius as a man not less than as a statesman of rebellion that gives him such a place in men's affections to-day. There is a Shakespearean breadth about his character which attracts thousands who are insensitive to Emmet's almost lyrical appeal. He had about him a

touch of the swashbuckler. He was as gay and excessive and daring as any soldier of fortune who was ever set down as a typical Irishman. His journal—which Mr. Thomas Seccombe, in *The Age of Johnson*, assigns a place in literature—is one of the most spirited autobiographies in the English language.

Respectable persons turn aside from Tone as a heavy drinker, though I imagine he was no worse a drinker than that idol of the respectable, William Pitt. Tone himself jotted down all the evidence of his insobriety in his diary in a playful-sad spirit that you will find in some of the letters of Charles Lamb. But, grant that he drank ever so much, does that prevent him from having had virtues as well? I think there must be something wrong with the soul of a man who can read Wolfe Tone's journal and still go on levelling petty accusations at him as though these were the whole story. Tone was a combination of gay dog and hero, and to miss the hero in him is to be dull to the heroic in history.

His last days are full of the grand play of heroism. When, having arrived with a French fleet in Lough Swilly in October 1798, he saw his hopes once more scattered by the storms and an English squadron bearing down like a company of doom on the French ships, he was urged by the French officers to escape now that the fight had become hopeless, as capture would mean a rebel's death

to him, while they would be safe as prisoners of war. Tone refused to go. "Shall it be said," he asked them, "that I fled when the French were fighting the battles of my country?" Like the hero of a novel, it may be thought. And indeed Tone was always something like the hero of a novel.

When he was recognised by his captors on the way to Dublin, and the General ordered that he should be put into irons as a traitor, Tone indignantly tore off his French uniform with the cry: "These fetters shall never degrade the revered insignia of the free nation which I have served." Then, becoming calm again, he offered himself to the irons. "For the cause which I have embraced," he assured his captor, "I feel prouder to wear these chains than if I were decorated with the star and garter of England."

Before the court-martial which tried him in Dublin he refused to make any defence. He deliberately and proudly avowed everything of which he was accused. He had engaged in the service of the French Republic, he declared, "with a view to save and liberate my own country."

"For that purpose I have encountered the chances of war amongst strangers; for that purpose I have repeatedly braved the terrors of the ocean, covered, as I knew it to be, with the triumphant fleets of that power which it was my glory and my duty to oppose. I have sacrificed all my views in life; I have

courted poverty; I have left a beloved wife unprotected, and children whom I adored fatherless. After such sacrifices in a cause which I have always conscientiously considered as the cause of justice and freedom, it is no great effort, at this day, to add the sacrifice of my life."

The only favour that he asked of the court was that he might be given the death of a soldier, as the French allowed in the case of rebel *émigrés*.

"I ask," he said, "that the court shall adjudge me the death of a soldier, and let me be shot by a platoon of grenadiers. I request this indulgence rather in consideration of the uniform I wear—the uniform of a Chef de Brigade in the French army—than from any personal regard to myself."

When this was refused, he resolved that at least his enemies should not have the pleasure of hanging him, and in the barracks where he was imprisoned he cut his throat with a penknife. The doctor who was hurried in to attend him declared that, as he had missed the carotid artery, there was hope that he might live—till the execution.

"I am sorry," was Tone's comment, "I have been so bad an anatomist."

Lying between life and death, he was one day told by the doctor that he must not attempt to move or speak, as it would mean immediate death.

"I can yet find words to thank you, sir," said Tone, with a slight movement; "it is the most welcome news you give me. What should I wish to live for?" and, falling back on his

pallet, he died. Some people will not accept this story, but believe that Tone was murdered in prison. But Irish history is a sufficient banquet of horrors without that. . . .

There are a hundred other names that one might mention of the great men of Ireland who have been hanged or imprisoned in Dublin; but the list would run far beyond a chapter. I doubt if there is any other capital in the world where nine out of ten of the heroes of the people have been at one time or another branded as criminals.

Yonder, not very far from Trinity College, stands the statue of Smith O'Brien—with its recent inscription in Irish on the pedestal—and reminds us how a brave Protestant gentleman was turned by the horrors of the Government-created Famine of the forties from a Liberal into a rebel. He was not an efficient rebel, because he acted as though a rebellion could be carried on without bloodshed or any of the incidents of war, but it is a poor business laughing at the end of his brave little adventure in the cabbage-garden at Ballingarry.

O'Connell, who gazes from an elaboration of bronze down the street which is sometimes called after him but is still officially known as Sackville Street, was never sentenced to death as Smith O'Brien was, but none the less he, too, graduated in dock and prison. He has been

blamed for not rebelling as often as Smith O'Brien has been blamed for rebelling. Had he refused to yield to Dublin Castle, it is held, when it proclaimed the great meeting at Clontarf in 1845, he would have had a million determined men at his back to sweep foreign rule out of the country. O'Connell, however, shrank from such an orgy of bloodshed as a rising would have involved; and he was no coward. Unfortunately, he suffered from eloquence. He said melodramatic things about his "dead body," and the Young Irelanders who were really prepared to see their dead bodies made the foundations of a free Ireland were cast into the depths of gloom when they found that this leader of the people had only been playing the orator. At the same time, it is a mistake to underestimate the fascinating combination of hero, bully, and jester, which we know as Daniel O'Connell. It was O'Connell and Fenianism between them that raised the Irish Catholic from the servitude of generations and revived in him the spirit of a free man. And Parnell, whose two-coated statue by Saint-Gaudens looks towards O'Connell's from the far end of a long line of similar monuments, finished the work—Parnell, another criminal by the grace of England.

Parnell, the sphinx of Irish politics, was perhaps the most effective leader the Irish people have ever known off the field of battle. He was a realist, rather than an idealist, in politics. He

took the material he found to his hand, whether it was the machine of a Parliamentary party or the almost religious republicanism of the Fenians, and used it with the strategy of genius to wring from England the end he desired—an Irish National Parliament.

He was not a separatist, but wished to see Grattan's Parliament restored. And, when he perceived that all the arguments and forces at his disposal could not persuade Mr. Gladstone to admit the rights of the Irish nation except in a compromising sort of way, he accepted the middle course of Home Rule rather than that Ireland should be without a resident legislature. It was a perfectly frank and open compromise. It was the compromise of a man who believed in the excellence of liberty in whatever form it came. He has no place among the prophets. He had no vision of Utopias. Like Swift, he was one of those who were inflamed less for ideal justice than against real injustice. Thus, there was about him more of the avenging spirit than of the conciliator. He saw the evil tree of landlordism and the evil tree of foreign rule spreading disastrous shadows over the land. He decided that to strike at the roots of these monstrous plants was the only way to save the Irish people from starvation of body and soul. If the English Government would not interfere with him in his work, he would do it like a gentleman. If the English

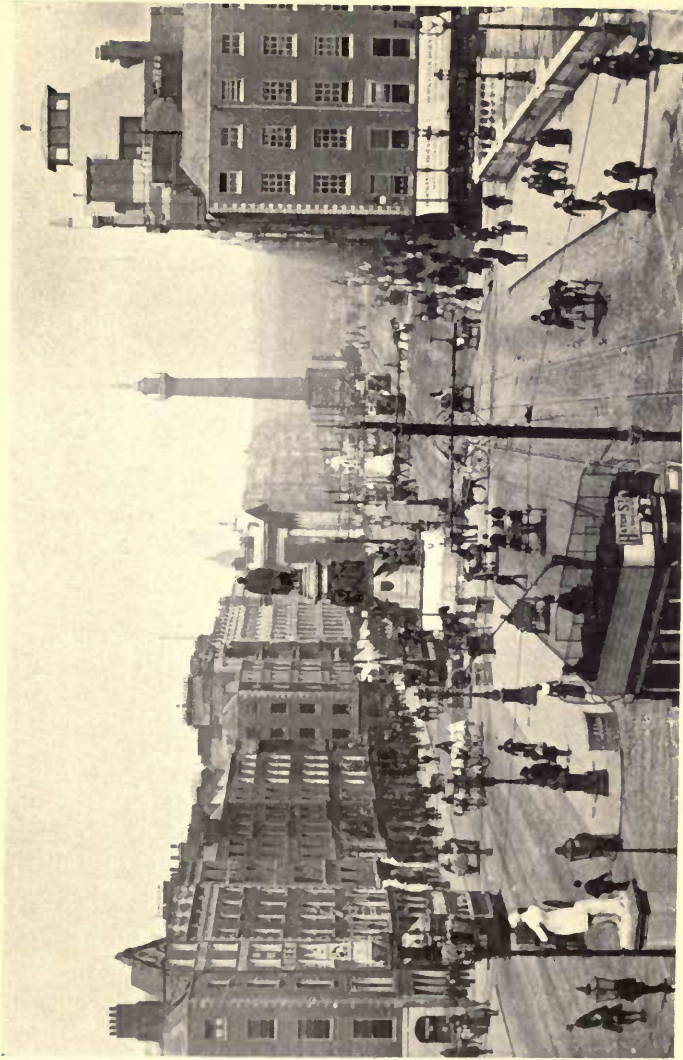
Government chose otherwise, however, and used the old gaoler's weapons against him, then, rather than see the work remain undone, he would not lift a finger to prevent the less gentlemanly Captain Moonlight from doing it after the manner of his kind. . . .

That was what made Parnell the most hated and terrible figure who ever stood on the floor of the British House of Commons. He believed, like the American general, that war is hell—and land war no less than any other war—and with that fierce calmness of his he was prepared to use the hell of war in order to destroy the hell of slavery.

O'Connell Street is truly a very Thames of memories, with statues rising like masts from its broad bosom—so broad that the quick-eyed men and women who hurry past the fronts of its shops, hotels, and offices seem but diminutive specks in comparison. On its tide are borne along the memories of two centuries of Ireland's struggle against her chains. From the Rotunda, indeed, to Dublin Castle (which is a good way beyond the end of O'Connell Street, not far from the Parliament House) there is not an inch of ground which is not exciting with history.

Of Dublin Castle itself I know nothing save that it exists in a sort of hiding off the main road, and that over its gate a statue of Justice stands with its back significantly turned on the city. Also I know that it is the place where the jobs





[Lawrence.

O'CONNELL STREET, DUBLIN.



come from, and that, ever since the Normans entrenched themselves there, it has been a grey distillery of poisons. Thomas Drummond, who was Under-Secretary when Queen Victoria came to the throne of England, tried to make it otherwise, and the Irish people put up a statue to him—the only time this compliment has been paid to a British official in Ireland. But even a dynasty of Drummonds could have done nothing good with Dublin Castle except abolish it.

The Rotunda, on the other hand, ugly little pot-bellied building though it is, has been the scene of many a glorious and fantastic drama. Perhaps the most gaily theatrical thing in its history was the arrival there of the mad Bishop of Derry at the Volunteer Convention in November 1783. This Bishop, who was Earl of Bristol and a Hervey of England, has been denounced as a blasphemer, a debauchee, and an insane egoist, and by the various other titles by which any democrat who is less than a saint is commonly assailed. All we can be sure of in regard to him is that he distributed church livings from his castle at Downhill mightily honestly for a bishop of that time, that he was liked to the point of enthusiasm by the Catholics and Presbyterians of his diocese, and that he was as cheerfully ready for bloodshed as a schoolboy for a fight with snowballs.

“We must have blood, my lord; we must have blood,” he had once observed to Charlemont,

the trimmer ; and he was ready to see a good deal of it spattered over the walls and pavements of Dublin in order to make the new Parliament—Grattan's Parliament, which had won its independence from the English Parliament a year before—really democratic. It is unfortunate for Ireland that this mad Englishman did not get at least part of his way. It was unfortunate for England, too. But Grattan, Charlemont, and the rest were so intoxicated with the sense of having achieved the freedom of the Irish Parliament that they felt like resting on their oars.

The situation is full of irony as we look back on it. The Volunteers—that national body of sturdy Protestants, with Belfast as their capital—had been praised to the skies so long as they used the quiet threat of their guns to make the Irish Parliament a free Parliament. They now began to be frowned at as rabble when they—or the most determined spirits among them—looked like using those same guns to make the Irish people a free people. For a moment it was doubtful whether the revolutionists or the Whigs among them would win. “Open thou our mouths, O Lord, and our lips shall show forth thy praise,” was the inscription which hung across the mouths of the cannon of the Dublin Volunteer Artillery as they rattled along O'Connell Street on the day of the Convention, with Napper Tandy in command. This was the humour of the best of them. It

was as the chief and regal impersonation of this sentiment that the Bishop made his memorable appearance in the procession that day.

What a picture he made as he swept into the city may best be gathered from the description of Froude. "The Bishop," Froude writes, "entered Dublin with the state and manner of a monarch, as if he expected to be chosen King of Ireland. He sat in an open landau, drawn by six horses, magnificently apparelled in purple, with white gloves, gold-fringed, and gold tassels dangling from them, and buckles of diamonds on knee and shoe. His own mounted servants in gorgeous liveries attended on either side of his carriage."

It has been hinted that the Bishop did really fancy himself, as the saying is, as King of Ireland, and, if he had ever achieved the position, there is no doubt, judging from his record as a Bishop, that he would have been one of the most practical and beneficent monarchs of his time. He did more than any other man to try to save Ireland for democracy in 1783. If he had succeeded, there would have been no rebellion in 1798, and, if there had been no rebellion in 1798, there would have been no Union in 1800. Instead of accepting democracy, however, the politicians disbanded the Volunteers. Thus ended the Nationalist career of one of the most fantastic Englishmen who ever went to Ireland—a unique member of a unique family, for did not Chester-

field once say that God had created men, women, and Herveys ?

It is suggestive of the way in which Irishmen of all creeds rally to any tolerant leader who works for the general good that, when a monument was put up to the Bishop after his death, both the Catholic bishop and the Presbyterian minister of Derry were among the contributors. . . .

Of the ten thousand other incidents steeped in colour and drama of which Dublin has been the scene, I like to remember three in especial as I walk its streets. The first is the visit of Art MacMurrough and the three other Irish kings to Richard II. at the palace the latter had built for himself in College Green—then called Hoggin Green from the little hog-backed hills that surrounded it and are now smoothed into clamorous streets.

Richard had come to Ireland with by far the largest army that had ever landed on its shores, but, even so, he achieved no victory that was not writ in water. Froissart quotes Richard's English chief assistant in looking after his new liege-men to the effect that the four kings submitted "more through love and good-humour than by battle or force."

The reception of the four kings at Hoggin Green is, therefore, interesting, not as a passage in the history of Irish subjection, but because it throws into vivid contrast certain features in the

civilisations of the Irish and the invaders. The gentleman-butler who was told off to attend upon the guests in the "very handsome house" assigned to them, and who described the whole business to Froissart, looked on the kings, of course, as a perplexing sort of savages. "When these kings were seated at table," he related, as a shocking example of their barbarous manners, "and the first dish was served, they would make their minstrels and principal servants sit beside them, eat from their plates, and drink from their cups. They told me this was a praiseworthy custom in their country, where everything was in common but their bed."

Nowadays, this Irish civilisation of equality and culture seems to the majority of intelligent people a far from inferior alternative to the feudal civilisation of inequality and militarism. But those who have sought to justify the presence of England in Ireland have always done so only by assuming that because Ireland was different from England, it was therefore uncivilised, even criminally so. John Stuart Mill saw that there were not any other two civilisations in Europe which differed more than the civilisations of England and Ireland. But he saw in this a reason, not for the domination of one over the other, but for leaving each to work out its salvation along its own lines.

In connection with the visit of the four kings,

an interesting difference between Irish and foreign chivalry is also worth mentioning. Richard wished to make the four kings knights, and his intermediary was profoundly astonished when he was told that they were knights already, and that in Ireland a king's son was made a knight and trained in the elements of chivalry at the age of seven. The kings were induced, however, out of deference to their host to allow themselves to be re-knighted. It was in Christchurch Cathedral that, on the eve of the ceremony, they kept their all-night vigil.

This was on the occasion of Richard's first visit to Dublin. His second expedition cost him his crown. While he was feasting in Dublin, a rival had arisen in England and made himself King Henry iv. . . .

The second of the three scenes I spoke of took place not many yards away from the feast of the four kings. This was the coming of Grattan from his sick-bed to plead with the Irish Parliament to stand firm against the Union which Pitt, with a mixture of force, fraud, and corruption, was trying to carry through, and to preserve that independence which had already done miracles for the advancement of Ireland. Grattan, white and worn with illness and a long journey, has been accused of theatricality in the business of this scene. His tottering entrance, his request to the Speaker to be allowed to address the House from



his seat, have been disparaged as tricks to put posterity into the melting mood. For myself, I could as soon doubt that Hamlet was sad as that the pillared eloquence of that great farewell of Grattan's in the last of his speeches was sincere. Every one knows its prophetic close—

“Yet I do not give up my country. I see her in a swoon, but she is not dead. Though in her tomb she lies helpless and motionless, there is on her lips a spirit of life, and on her cheek a glow of beauty.

‘Thou art not conquered: beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks;  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.’

“While a plank of the vessel holds together I will not leave her. Let the courtier present his loyal sail to the breeze, and carry the barque of his faith with every wind that blows; I will remain anchored here; with fidelity to the fortunes of my country, faithful to her freedom, faithful to her fall.”

In those sentences Grattan foretold the coming of a new Irish Parliament. He afterwards moved, a ghost of his old self, about the lobbies of the English House of Commons, and his body lies abroad in Westminster Abbey. But the Grattan whom the world remembers is the Grattan of Grattan's Parliament—the Grattan of Ireland.

The third of the coloured events took place in Green Street Court-house—the court-house in which, at near ten o'clock at night, Robert Emmet had been condemned to the death of a traitor.

John Mitchel, perhaps the greatest Irish prose-writer of last century—a good, strong-jawed traitor from Ulster—stood more than forty years later in the same dock on a comparable charge, and was defended, it is interesting to remember, by Emmet's brother-in-law, Robert Holmes. Mitchel was openly and frankly a revolutionist. "Above all," he had exhorted his countrymen in the columns of *The United Irishman*, "let the man among you who has no gun sell his garment and buy one." I do not think that Mitchel was a great revolutionary leader. But he was more than that : he was a great soul. He planned an insurrection, but he was so much in love with the impossible that he planned it, not in the secrecy of conspiratorial meetings, but in the columns of a weekly paper. The horrors of the Famine, however—when the country stank with discoloured corpses, when, in Mitchel's words, "maniac mothers stowed away their dead children to be devoured at midnight," when starving creatures were transported for seven years for stealing a few turnips and parsnips—did not create an atmosphere conducive to the patient sort of conspiracies. None the less, even those of us who believe that Gavan Duffy showed more political wisdom than Mitchel in those critical days cannot deny our enthusiastic reverence to that caged lion of genius who attempted to roar Ireland into revolution when she was nearer the

feebleness of death than she has ever been within the memory of man. Never did the intense passion of Mitchel burn more fiercely than in the last scene in the Green Street dock, as he doubled his treason by calling on his countrymen to imitate it. "I do not," he proclaimed—

"I do not repent anything that I have done, and I believe the course which I have opened is only commenced. The Roman who saw his hand burning to ashes before the tyrant, promised that three hundred should follow out his enterprise. Can I not promise for one, for two, for three, ay, for hundreds?"

We are told that immediately passionate voices from all parts of the court responded to him: "For me! for me! promise for me, Mitchel! and for me!" The friends who stood near him reached over the dock to clasp him by the hand. And though Dublin did not rise to rescue him as he had expected, and brought down upon itself his scornful denunciation as a city of bellowing slaves and genteel dastards, John Martin and the others who gave their promises that day kept them very well.

If one goes to Dublin to-day, one finds that the living influence out of the past is not John Mitchel, but his far more constructive and conciliatory contemporary, Thomas Davis. There is a statue to Davis in the Mount Jerome Cemetery at Harold's Cross—not far from the place where

Robert Emmet was captured—but I could not find his grave, though I have twice looked for it and asked the gardeners of the tombs whereabouts it lay. His statue looks out over that field of graves amid which the misty stones rise with their genteel and Protestant memories, and to any Nationalist it must seem as though this missionary of kindness in politics were claiming his brother-dead for the sweet and reasonable kingdom of the love of Ireland. He is the symbolic figure of constructive Nationalism, the Nationalism of love, as Mitchel is the symbolic figure of destructive Nationalism, the Nationalism of hate. He was the first of the nation-builders. That is why to the Gaelic League and other movements which aim at uniting men of all churches and politics he is something like a patron saint. There are few country gatherings of Gaelic Leaguers where somebody does not quote a verse of his propagandist poetry—especially his appeal for the national brotherhood of all creeds:—

“What matter that at different shrines  
We pray unto one God—  
What matter that at different times  
Your fathers won the sod—  
In fortune and in name we’re bound  
By stronger links than steel;  
And neither can be safe nor sound  
But in the other’s weal.”

Obviously, it would be foolish to argue that this

is poetry. It is, however, very effective and very noble political journalism.

But you will never see a crowd round the Thomas Davis statue in the Mount Jerome Cemetery. Hither no tourists are jarvied as to one of the exciting places of Ireland. Not that the people do not love a cemetery in Dublin as in other parts of the world. The Glasnevin Cemetery at the opposite end of the city, with its thronging and chimneyed monuments, marking the graves of so many of the great men of Ireland—the grave of O'Connell boastfully, and the grave of Parnell quietly, like a haunt of peace—is a crowded resort. Not long ago I was there on a Sunday afternoon to see the monument to John O'Leary, the most picturesque of Fenians, being unveiled. The occasion was especially interesting because the authorities of the cemetery at first refused to allow the descriptive words, "the Fenian leader," to appear on the monument. Not that the words were not the exact truth, but that the Fenians—who suffered badly at the hands of priests and bishops—ought not to be allowed to obtrude their revolutionary title among respectable tombs. However, public opinion and common sense won in the end, and the monument is allowed to speak the truth.

Sunday appears to be the great popular day in Glasnevin. But, of course, the multitudinous holiday-ground of Dublin is not the cemetery, but

Phœnix Park. Phœnix Park, with its lawns and woods and meadows, is one of the rich gifts of Dublin to the stranger, though the stranger as a rule drives out to it, not to possess himself of its riches, but to be shown the exact spot where a political murder was committed some thirty years ago. The "exact spot" appears to be preserved in the public memory by some benefactor of the car-drivers, who keeps a mark scraped at the side of the walk where Mr. Burke and Lord Frederick Cavendish met their end. This little scratch of earth, with the Viceregal Lodge peeping out towards it through a lawn of trees, is probably the most gazed-at thing in Dublin—at least so far as visitors are concerned. And indeed the Phœnix Park murders have filled an extraordinarily disproportionate place in a good deal of political thought—or, rather, talk—about Ireland. It became an obsession with some Unionists that they were a representative Irish deed, and I have heard a Scottish Presbyterian clergyman in my father's house declaring that he would not set foot in Ireland an inch outside the province of Ulster—"Parnell's country," he called the barbarous ogre-ridden wilderness beyond the border. I remember, too, when I was a child on my first visit to Dublin, how I expected to find murderers among the fauna of the Park when I was taken out there to see the beasts in the Zoological Gardens.

The truth is, the imagination of the world has been filled ever since Elizabeth's day with the defamations of Ireland, and it is only at the present time that ordinary people in many places are beginning to realise that Ireland is inhabited by human beings and not by comic criminals with a taste for melancholy songs. When one remembers this, one cannot but honour the nobleness of Lady Frederick Cavendish, whose husband was one of the victims of the Phoenix Park tragedy, and who none the less never wavered in her belief in the Irish people and in their right to be free in their own land. . . .

But there is no use in trying to sum up the interest and meaning of Dublin in a chapter. To write about Dublin is to write about Ireland: it is to write about the Gaelic League and the Abbey Theatre, and A. E. and Sir Horace Plunkett, and Sinn Fein and Parnell and the Fenians and Young Ireland, and Emmet and Ninety-Eight and Grattan's Parliament, and Swift and William of Orange and James II. (who, good Englishman that he was, was not at all pleased when the Irish Parliament that was loyal to him declared itself independent of the English Parliament that was rebelling against him), and Cromwell and Strafford, and Red Hugh O'Donnell and Elizabeth's land-pirates (who were as cruel and as daring as any pirates of the sea), and Trinity College (which was meant to

make the Irish Protestant, but may be destined to make the Protestants Irish), and Silken Thomas (who put his guns on Howth Head against the invaders), and Lambert Simnel (who was crowned King of Great Britain and Ireland in Christchurch Cathedral), and Art MacMurrough (who levied tribute on the English Government), and Edward Bruce (who came from Scotland and laid the Englishry of Ireland waste, and encamped with his brother Robert where Phoenix Park is, and, crowned with the crown of Ireland, was defeated at last by famine), and Black Monday (when the O'Byrnes and the O'Tooles swept down from the hills upon the Bristol folk holding Dublin for King John, and most bloodily spoilt a public holiday at Cullenswood in Rathmines), and Dermot of the Foreigners (who let in the Normans, a savage man who mutilated a dead enemy's face with his teeth on the field of battle), and Brian of the Tributes (age-worn conqueror of the Danes, who saw the great battle of Clontarf as it were a host of men felling the trees of a wood), and a thousand years and more before that again when the bright children of the hills were doing those things which have been the matter of the heroic legends and the folk-tales ever since.

I have already said in this chapter that St. Patrick had very little to do with Dublin, but it was in Dublin—Baile Athe Cliath, the Town of the Ford of Hurdles, as the Irish have always



called it in memory of an exciting incident which you may read of in the story of the Vengeance of Mesgedra—that St. Patrick was brought face to face with Oisín, the last of the pagans, when Oisín wearied of the Paradise of the Gael, which we know as the Land of the Young, and revisited the glimpses of the moon that shines over Ireland.

It was in the fifth century that Patrick came to Ireland, while it was in the third century that Oisín and the Fenian warriors had lived and died. The story of the return of Oisín, tall and beautiful and strong as men no longer were on earth, into a Christian world in which Finn MacCool and Oscar and the rest were mere husks of names, is one of the most appealing of the Irish legends. Here, as it were, in the many imaginative dialogues which record the conversations between the saint and the returned hero, the golden youth of Paganism fights a running duel with the grave and terrible sanctity of the Christians. “Oisín,” says Patrick in one of these dialogues, “unless you let me baptize you, you will go to hell where the rest of the Fenians are.” “If,” retorts Oisín in scorn, “Dermot and Goll and Finn were to go to hell, they would bring the devil and his forge up out of it on their back.” And, when he hears from St. Patrick that all the inhabitants of hell had been condemned because of the eating of a single apple, he bursts out, with pagan common sense,

“ If I had known that your God was so narrow-sighted that He damned all those people for one apple, we would have sent three horses and a mule carrying apples to God’s heaven for Him.”

Obviously it was Oisín of the battles and not Patrick of the prayers who was surrounded with a divine light in the hearts of the tale-maker who invented this. And, indeed, though Oisín in the end lets himself be baptized, the poets usually give the best of the argument to him and not to St. Patrick. Perhaps it is because the natural man resents the way in which hell is opened to receive the enormous warriors of Finn. Our sympathies leap out to Oisín as, mindful of those companies of warriors who had once been the nonpareil of the earth, he attempts to conceive this new and potent God.

“ If my son Oscar and God,” he cries in a song translated by Dr. Douglas Hyde in *The Religious Songs of Connacht*, “ were engaged hand to hand on the Fenians’ Hill, and I were to see my son on the ground, I would say that God was a strong man.” He tells Patrick, too, that all the virtues which the clergy say are commended by the King of the Stars were in the Fenians of Finn already. And when we remember that among the maxims given by Finn to one of his captains was, “ Two-thirds of thy gentleness be shown to women and to little children that creep on the floor, and to poets ; and be not violent to the common people,” we

seem to be on the entrance steps of a civilisation in which culture and gentleness counted for not less than bravery in battle. Legend has it that it was by St. Patrick's orders that the stories of Finn and his companions were taken down from the lips of this ravenant from the youth of the world—a giant world in which, so Oisín assured his hearers, the leg of a lark was as big as a shoulder of mutton in the later degenerate time, and the berries of the wild ash were as big as sheep, and a leaf of ivy was as broad as a knight's shield. . . . Alas! Oisín himself was but a withered thing and a ghost by this time, for he had broken the command which had been put upon him in the Land of the Young not to dismount from his white horse or to touch the earth during his wanderings among men. He was at Glanismole, near Dublin, one day when, seeing some puny moderns labouring to raise a huge stone on to a cart, he stooped to aid them in pity for their feebleness, and suddenly the white horse flew away from him in a mist, and the golden-looming immortal of an instant before was struggling up from the ground, an ancient, skinny man, without strength, without beauty, wrinkled and feeble and grey. It was this ghostly figure that St. Patrick had brought to him where Dublin now is, and with whom he had so many talks and heated words about the old times. . . .

I will say farewell to you now, Dublin of the

bridges, though it should be in the middle of a paragraph. I will say farewell to you, but not before I have put my curse upon those who have called you dirty and have not noticed except condescendingly that you are beautiful. Perhaps you are dirty, but I have not yet found any city that was clean enough to justify boasting. The Liffey that flows through you in that ugly stone tank—for surely those deep dungeony walls you gave it are unnecessarily joyless—is, I admit, a test of faith, and that baby-food advertisement which curves in letters chosen from a mean and monstrous alphabet with one of your bridges over the sluggish tide is something that a finer civilisation would make as impossible as an auction from a cathedral pulpit. But then you have other waters besides the Liffey, and other bridges. You are in a girdle, as it were, of canals and streams, and from every grey little bridge that rises and falls over them there is a prospect of hills that mount up in shining green terraces to the glens of Wicklow.

There is surely no city in which it is easier to get out into the unlabouring world of grass and the perpetual Sabbath of the cattle than Dublin. Even those residential parks on the skirts of the town, that have fallen into disuse and cheapness, seem to house the silences of the primeval forest as their wild loose-fingered trees murmur in the sun in their kingdom of untended grass. Those

huge grey walls, too, which line so many of the long dusty roads, and make one feel at times as though one were walking past a rich man's gaol, enable one soon to get the impression of a desert solitude. I do not like those excessive blind walls myself. They are forbidding to the point of being inhuman. If they do not imply that an ogre lives behind them, they imply that they may one day be besieged by ogres. They are monuments of mistrust. They are out of harmony with the enchanted laughter that fills the Dublin streets—the laughter that ripples in rags along the kennels of the Coombe, and indeed wherever two or three are gathered together on the shores of Dublin Bay, from the fairy promontory of Howth, a warrior's headland, to Dalkey of the seas and the Sunday bands.

This reminds me that I read lately of a visitor who found Dublin the saddest city he had ever known. The Dublin of my experience is different. Its leisurely crowds, not yet slaves to the tailor, and its knots of talkative and good-humoured persons among whom the great policemen move, seem to me still to retain some of the old vitality that made Dublin famous for gaiety and wit. It will seem a sad city to those who like to see the streets crowded with lorries of merchandise and busy with the rush of men with narrow money-making faces. For Dublin is no city of quick fortunes and quick lunches. I am of those who

do not entirely regret this, and yet I know very well that Dublin to-day is only leading a bath-chair existence compared to the leaping energy of life that will be hers when she is a capital in liberties and duties as well as in name. When the Irish Parliament is reopened—— But it would require another book to tell what Dublin will be like then.



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