

Across The Water 1845

*A Summer's Jaunt Across the Water.*

*Including Visits to England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Etc.*

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1846

April, 1845.

Return to Belfast—Find my companions of the ship— Ride to Dublin—Appearance of the country—Absentees—Sir Henry Pottinger—Mr. Mucready—Police—Homeliness of the people—Dundalk—A market-day—Paddy and his pig—Fashions—Donkey-carts—Neddy—Sweeping up manure—Railroad to Dublin—Regulations—Cars—Efficient police at stations, &c.—Rain.

I retraced my route to Belfast with as much speed as possible, anticipating that our ship might have to put in there during the gales which continued to prevail ; I was not disappointed ;— the ship was at anchor, and all our cabin passengers but one were at the Donegal Arms. Finding it in vain to sail against the easters that had so long prevailed, the captain, after giving his passengers another good dose of sea sickness in a fog and gale of greater severity than before we left him, was driven by stress of weather to this resort. A steam-tug was procured, their luggage taken to the Custom-House, which I had entirely escaped, and they were delayed a day longer still, while I was ready to proceed to Dublin ; first visiting the principal objects of interest in Belfast ; among these no one should omit the Botanical Garden, which is in the most beautiful order.

The ride from Belfast to Dublin is one of great interest, exhibiting in strong colours the peculiarities of Ireland. Much of the way we found a remarkably fine, cultivated country, in parts, a perfect garden ; near Newry every possible spot was under tillage. There are many large proprietors, mostly absentees, but there are several benefactors of the poor, who remain at home and distribute their money in improvements ;—fencing and planting on an immense scale. Indeed there are evidences, in a vast many places, of attention in these respects, leaving an impression of an advance of prosperity in this section of Ireland, highly encouraging to Irishmen who love their green island. If the incubus of a hereditary land-ownership were broken down, a large standing army dismissed, good and wholesome, laws enacted, the people instructed in the arts, and given even a common education, this fine country might be the garden of the earth.

I forgot to mention that at our hotel in Belfast we had for a fellow-lodger. Sir Henry Pottinger, of Chinese treaty memory. He came over from Glasgow the day of our arrival, nearly sick with the feasting the Scots have been giving him, and about to enter again upon a similar course in Ireland. Belfast is his native town, and his arrival created no little excitement. He was to receive the compliment of a public dinner in a few days. In appearance he is a modest, plain man. Another distinguished man, better known in America, was also there, announced to perform a round of characters before the “ nobility, gentry, and garrison ;” no less a personage than Mr. Macready, whose Hamlet, Werner, and so on, were posted all over the town.

The things that strike us most, as strangers, are the efficient police every where, the jaunting cars, the bare feet, the *tout ensemble* of the buildings, and the homeliness, generally, of the people ; add to this the presence of a standing army, the red coats seen at the towns, in the roads, &c., and you will imagine us in a country exciting novel sensations. We began well, with Ireland first, and shall go on through higher and higher grades.

Dublin, May. 1845.

Too much fatigued by a long stroll to attempt the night coach for the south, I have a part of an evening to devote to my correspondents, and will continue my epistle from this beautiful city. One scene on our road from the north escaped me in the last letter : it was a market-day at the considerable town of Dunkalk, a place of some commerce. The main street through which we drove was occupied for more than a quarter of a mile by hundreds of town and country people exchanging their little wealth. Here stood Paddy in humble garb, holding for sale a three months' pig in his arms, as we hold a baby, and coaxing it not to cry ; next to him a merchant with bedsteads all put up complete, made of very rough materials, for five shillings ; coarse wooden-ware seemed to have a brisk sale ; it was raining, and the *ladies* walked home with their small tubs inverted over their heads to save the hoods of their quite smart blue cloaks and their white caps, which garb is eminently fashionable ; nine out of ten of the more respectable have this outfit, while the men sported coats of one uniform gray, cut in the style of Addison's day in England ;—with small clothes of the same period ; their appearance was to our eyes singular and grotesque. There were pigs of all sizes and ages, scanned and bargained for with as much care as if they were horses at fifty pounds each. Tin-ware, bread, groceries, vegetables, especially young cabbage-plants, tied up in circles containing a dozen. and in short, every conceivable commodity adapted to the middle and poorer classes.

A great portion of this merchandise was brought to market in donkey-carts, geared not with modern leather, but ancient, which snapped and broke as the little Neddy jumped on hearing the shrill horn of our post-guard. The people of Ireland buy these little animals, only larger than a good sheep, sometimes as cheap as a dollar, and call them “ the poor man's charger !” They serve a good purpose ; we saw them first in Belfast, where they draw market-ing, and appear to be under complete control. A number of women in old clothes, without bonnet or shoe, were constantly employed in the middle of the street with a broom sweeping the manure and depositing it in baskets or donkey-carts, and by this means they live.

Between the last-named city and Dublin a railroad has been commenced, and is finished about twenty-two miles at each end ; great difficulties have occurred in determining the situation for the remainder of the route, rival interests wishing it to approach their property respectively. The bill is before Parliament now. The regulations on these few miles are in some respects admirable : among these is the mode of cheeking the ticket-seller. Each ticket is printed on thin coloured paper, and stamped daily with the date of the month ; it is cut from a book as sold, always leaving a margin with a corresponding number, so that the cashier who stamped it knows precisely how many are to be accounted for. At every station and crossing, a policeman, well dressed and badged, stands ready to prevent animals or bipeds trespassing on the road, incommoding passengers, or creating any confusion. They are civil, and direct the traveller in any difficulty. The coaches are admirable, divided into three classes, the second being as comfortable as those between New York and our city, and a vast deal cleaner ; the third are by no means uncomfortable, except when it rains, as it does daily !

Yours, etc.

Dublin, May. 1845.

Atmospheric railway—Prince Albert's prize beef—The Queen's share—A present—Library of Dublin University—Its appearance and contents—The students—Ignorance respecting America—Failure of the U. S. Bank not heard of—A situation under Van Buren—Buffalo sporting at Philadelphia—Good humour of the people—An Irish wag—Beggars—How treated—War with America—Ireland friendly—Relieving guard at the castle—Good music—Drum majors—Idlers—The 44th regiment—the 32d.

ONE of the first places to which my friends took me (on arriving at Dublin, was the Atmospheric Railway, connecting with the Kingston ; its commencement is seven miles from our Imperial Hotel in the great thoroughfare of Sackville Street Its terminus is at Dalkey, a distance of one mile and three-quarters, which we ran in the unusually slow time of four minutes : the route has been frequently traversed in one minute and three-quarters, or sixty miles an hour, on an ascending grade, and with a weight attached of seventy tons. You know the mode of exhausting the pipe by a steam-engine of one hundred horse power, and inserting a piston in a cylinder in the centre of the track ; the opening in the fifteen inch tube is immediately closed by a wheel running over plates of iron, about five inches long, and replacing them in a slight bed of luting, such as is employed to grease cart-wheels or of that consistence, but by no means in such quantity or so fluid as I had imagined from the descriptions. We ascended a grade, recollect, of seventy-six feet, in less than two miles. It is considered here a successful invention and likely to be generally introduced. A committee of Parliament reported favourably on it last week. The Americans must take up and improve this plan. No railroad should be now commenced in the United States without ascertaining fully the benefits and economy of this important invention. Various charters for this improved mode have been granted in England, and many routes are now in progress, with prospects of complete success.

Dublin has at this moment some beef on sale which is exciting great interest : it is the enormously fat flesh of Prince Albert's two prize oxen, which have just competed with the Irish at their cattle-show and carried off the honours. They were each sold for seventy guineas, and the purchaser, one of the wealthiest men of Ireland, is retailing the best pieces at fifty-five cents the pound. The Queen ordered the cut called the "baron ;" my friend asked him if he was going to charge her Majesty "Surely I will indeed." "Well, now I'll tell you what," says my companion, "you present the beef to the Queen, and I'll give you thirty pounds sterling for whatever she returns you." The idea seemed novel to the Irishman, and the compensation *in esse*, has, I am persuaded, induced him to send it "free gratis for nothing," except expectations, which will, they say, consist of a valuable return. I felt surprised that the "royal consort" should take not only the prize but the money for the sale, but subsequently ascertained he presented the proceeds to the Dublin Agricultural Society. The market accommodations here are not convenient

Having gratified the first friend to whom I delivered a letter by seeing the beef and the railroad, I made my way in search of my own hobby, a fine library. This I found at the Dublin University, where I was most kindly shown the collected treasures of this rich literary institution. The University is in the heart of the city, but in itself is, for all purposes of free circulation of air, in the country, standing in a "Green" of thirty acres. The buildings are very handsome and substantial. Founded by Henry Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, by Royal Charter from Queen Elizabeth, in 1591, it has been from time to time richly endowed. In the reign of James I. a number of livings were forfeited to the crown by the rebellion of O'Neil, seventeen of which were bestowed upon Trinity College, and it now numbers twenty-one in its gift, and returns a member of Parliament

There are three spacious quadrangles ; the grand front is three hundred feet in length and of the Corinthian order. The second is the Library square, two hundred and sixty-five feet long, by two hundred and fourteen broad ; the library occupies the entire fourth side. It was first opened for the reception of the books in 1731, exactly the period when the Philadelphia Library was founded. At the head of the stairs the Library is entered by large folding-doors, and the first view is particularly striking.

Between the windows are lofty oak cases at right angles to the walls, on both sides of which the books rest on well-filled shelves ; the fronts of these cases are terminated by fluted Corinthian pillars of carved oak, connected at the top by a broad cornice, surmounted by a balustrade, also of carved oak, forming the front of a gallery which is continued quite round the room. In front of the book-cases are pedestals with beautiful white marble busts of ancient and modern philosophers, historians, and poets. A second apartment is beyond, containing the twenty thousand volumes of the Fagel family of Holland ; removed to London in 1794, upon the invasion of that country by the French, and purchased by the University for 40,000 dollars.

The illuminated manuscripts of this Library, if not numerous, are very ancient ; one of the most valued was found in a bog enclosed in a copper case of curious workmanship embellished with precious stones ; it is one of the Gospels. The books are rare and valuable, many, very many of the one hundred and thirty thousand such as we have only heard of in America. The rooms are open daily from eight to two, for the use of students and members of the University. Some recent thefts by a student or two, have obliged the regulation to be enforced by which no youth is allowed to enter the recesses. As I looked out of a window on the park, some of the boys were very actively employed at cricket, while others were sauntering about the very green grass in dresses many of them much the worse for wear. I shall not detain you with details of refectory and hall.

I have mixed pretty freely with the classes of natives of the Emerald Isle in whom I might fairly expect an average, at least, of intelligence ; on very many points, they are possessed of an amount of information creditable to their country ; but I was scarcely prepared to find them ignorant of some of our prominent topics. At a dinner-party, for instance, not one of the gentlemen knew of the failure of our United States Bank ; it had made no impression on them if they had read of it, because Ireland has little money to lend ; the capital is in the sister isle. On top of a stage-coach a young gentleman informed us, very gravely, that he was going to America, where a friend had promised to get him a place under Van Buren ! Another asked me whether there was good buffalo-sporting about Philadelphia ! and a gentleman of the bar in Belfast inquired if there was any large city with us but New York !

The good humour of the poor is a pleasing feature. A wag of the real Irish blood, in a rail-car, called every body he saw to him, and cracked a joke with inimitable fun : to the first he saw on halting, “ I say, ugly fellow, what’s your name !” Here he failed, for the reply was out before he had done.—“ The ugliest name, your honour, ever you heer’d.”—“ Well ! what is it ?”—“ Oh ! sure I mostly disremember it !” The second hit caused the laugh to be on our side. “ Buy some fine oranges, yer honour ?”—“ Are they good ?”—“ Yes, yer honour.”—“ That’s right, my good fellow, always keep the best and you’ll command the top of the market !” The discomfited vender laughed, and was about to depart, when the wag relented and made a purchase.

A beggar, one of the many who beset us on stopping at Drogheda near Dublin, beseeched the handsome gentleman in goold spectacles, and the beautiful lady with such blue eyes, to pity her poverty. When she found we made no answer, “ Heck !” she cried, “ I’m wasting all me wind and getting nothing to take its place !” and walked off to another window. The

respectable part of the community never look at or answer an appeal from a beggar ; the moment they get you to answer, it's all over, and a coin only will drive them away ; it is a great comfort on such occasions when the carriage or car moves you beyond earshot. We saw very few beggars from the Causeway to Drogheda ; there they made amends by a powerful array, but they all looked smiling, and seemed to think it was a joke, to judge from faces. The North, where we have been, has a preponderance of Protestants and Scotch ; here, and at the south, the reverse is the case, and beggary increases.

The last news from the States looks a little threatening, say the British papers ; I have not read the Parliamentary debate in full, but a war with America is a topic which is freely discussed, and many do not hesitate to say that Ireland, or rather Irishmen, would join us. But first, the red-coats must be dismissed, before the Irish can well raise a hundred muskets.

The relieving guard at the Castle daily at eleven o'clock exhibits the precision and neatness of the British drill. Before the above hour has fairly done striking, little squads of soldiers assemble in the open court before the Lord-Lieutenant's door, with a fine band of thirty musicians, who play the overtures from the operas.

When the whole guard is assembled for the relief of those on different stations, they go through some trifling evolutions, and disperse, along with the ragged boys, and about a thousand idlers, strangers like ourselves, or loungers with no occupation, and the affair is over. The 44th, the celebrated regiment lately returned from Affghanistan, with thirteen men out of nine hundred who went out, has been recruited, and is now quartered here ; the few survivors of this band of soldiers receive great attention, and marked interest attends their parades. The 32d, too, is popular with the crowd ; a suit of colours was presented to them a few days since with great ceremony, and, in the evening, they gave a grand ball to the " nobility and gentry." There would seem to be an intentional parade-policy on the part of the government to awe the people of Ireland with the show of power. A collision is dreaded by all of both sides, and is believed by many some time to be inevitable.

Clonmel, Ireland, May, 1845.

Pleasure of travel—Set out for the south of Ireland—Crying and laughing climate—Appearance of the country—Watering-pot—The landscape—Park—Deer—Ivy—The passengers—Information—No way-passengers—May day—Syatem—The guard and coachman—Bianconi—Kilkenny—Duke of Ormond—His cattle—Hus marriage—Parties—The beggars—Erroneous opinions of Ireland—Want of employment—Wages—Servants—Clonmel—Gas in Tipperary—Pig market—The family estate—Flouring mills—Domesticated at Clonmel—Security of the people—Gentry—Dinner—Gardens.

A VAST portion of this country is so highly cultivated, and the stage-coach routes are so good, that it is a pleasure to travel, notwithstanding the crying climate. I left Dublin for Kilkenny, intending to return and make further explorations among its ancient institutions, and, therefore, went off with only a carpet-bag, horse blanket for the lower limbs, overcoat, and umbrella, the morning as fine as could be ; a cloud rolled . over us in half an hour, and down came a pitiless storm, accompanied by a high wind, dashing the rain-drops into my face with great force ; there were on the, top of the coach a well-dressed woman, and another flauntingly decked in silk. I made great preparations to receive the storm, and expected the others to be quite alarmed—my tucking up excited no attention ; the ladies quietly drew up their hoods—no remark passed—the driver did not seem to be aware of a change, but dashed on at his regular pace. In five minutes we were in a clear sunshine again, and thus we coached all day, amidst a country cultivated in every part, and in the most beautiful manner. Cut down *all* the trees in all Chester county, divide the hill and valley into small fields ; *fence* them with

stone walls, hillocks of earth, or thorn, as you fancy ; dig it all with a spade ; let the sun shine and the rain descend alternately five minutes apiece, for a month in spring ; then ascend a hill and survey your garden ; you will have just such views as I have enjoyed all day. This raining puts one in the place of a flower-bed, over which a florist delights to hold his watering-pot

Intersperse the round towers at rare intervals, a low old abbey, in ruins, and covered with the last growths of the ivy, ambitiously rising at the peak of the gable, and entering the stone windows ; put a gradually rising hill on one side, cultivated to the top, but in deep shadow from a cloud, raining from one portion of its circumference ;—on the other hill let a fine May sun be shining with all its riant effects—a little further on, turn a slight corner of the foot of the hill ;—on one side you have instantly a high stone wall, built half a century ago, and brown with age wherever you can see it, for it is covered with ancient and most luxuriant ivy for half a mile or more ; paint in a back-ground, viewed through trees of various ages, a large mansion, in the style of a castle, but indistinctly seen ; an entrance lodge of exquisite taste, (this not always the case,) surrounded with old evergreens of little height ; as you whirl past all this, don't forget the other side of the road—it is a deer park of five hundred acres—*there* is a herd of five hundred, and the owner has thousands in it ! besides those in the neighbourhood of the house. Yonder you think you see a dozen young fawns, but the guard of the coach assures you they are hares.

Such are, as nearly as I can paint, the landscapes of to-day. The belts of trees inside the walls of the parks are sometimes the width of one of our squares, and half of the trees at least have ivy growing to their tops ; their old coats are covered, where visible, with moss ; though they have not attained the size of some of our monarchs of the forest, they look as if they were older, and certainly they are occasionally very venerable.

As to the deer, for whose pleasure so large a park is provided, they are smaller than our noble rangers of the woods, and a little more picturesque than a flock of sheep. Those in Phœnix Park, Dublin, the first I had approached very near, were quite small, and had a mangy, goaty look ; probably they are not as well cared for as Col.—'s are ; they were fat, of various colours, from white to fawn, and minded our coach, as it flew by the top of the wall, no more than sheep would.

The people who ride on the tops of coaches here do so for economy, and are not the best qualified by education to give correct information. I depend on them for little more than for names ; having established a good understanding with the guard by talking about America, where he is sure to have relations, I ride inside awhile, and gather what knowledge of the country is to be found there ; it differs entirely from that above, in its kind, and is occasionally accurate. The travellers on this route seem to be all on the move from necessity ; they are booked on for a hundred miles at a stretch, rarely descend to the ground when we stop to change, and no way-passengers have been taken up the whole distance. The arrival by sound of horn at an old town, with narrow streets, is greeted by hosts of boys and youths, as in old times on the frontiers of American civilization ; this is more the case now, perhaps, because the horses are all decked out with flowers and ribands for May-day, as is usual throughout the kingdom.

It is a cold May, but flowers, such as tulips,, have been pressed upon us in small bunches for sale, and, when all have refused to pay, have been thrown at us, “ because it is May.” Bianconi, known to all travellers in Ireland, is very neat in his arrangements on this route. The English system of mail coaches, nearly destroyed there by rail-roads, is here presented to my view in its perfection ; it is no wonder that all our former tourists have spoken of it in terms of admiration.

The perfect system arrived at is admirable ; the guard knows his place and his duty—he opens the door, assists passengers to alight, and takes care of the luggage ; the driver has nothing to do but nod to the lasses, answer my questions, and drive ; he often does not descend from his elevation, when horses are changed with a speed and rapidity quite remarkable : and all this is “ away in Ireland,” near the borders of Tipperary, too, that wild land of savage man as you read in books.

At Kilkenny, where I stopped, is the magnificent newly improved castle of the Duke of Ormond. The guard talks much of the good hotel, “ the Club,” where the grand Hunting Association assembles from great distances.

The castle of the Duke of Ormond is on a little run, (here called a river, but very little wider than the front of a house,) and commands the old town of Kilkenny. On its ancient walls the late Duke built a true Gothic Castle, of great size and beauty ; it has fine old trees on one side, but the interior is the object of attraction ; the picture-gallery being one of the best in Ireland. The present Duke, only twenty-six years of age, was lately married. On this occasion he gave a series of grand parties, at the castle ; the first to the nobility and gentry, the second to the middle classes, the third to his tenantry ; a fourth was given by the house-keeper, so that the whole populous vicinity had a treat ; he is very popular in the neighbourhood, a good landlord, in the opinion of his tenants, and mixes freely with the people ; but he spends much of his time and money in London. Beggars innumerable are crowding round us to ask for a penny. I have put to all these all kinds of questions ; the most frequent from travellers is, “ Why don't you go to the poor-house ?” This they get over as well as they can To-day I asked them to give *me* a penny ! One of a group instantly pulled out one, and said, “ That's all I've got in the world and a baby to feed, but if yer honour is in want, you shall have it,” and she pretended to pass it into my hand ; the whole group had a hearty laugh, and all joined in imploring a sixpence “ to divide among them, for the blessing of God.” Further on the western coast there is a poorer population ; here there are strong evidences of wealth surrounded by poverty.

The most erroneous opinions about Ireland prevail in America ; I had believed that much of its surface was untilled, whereas, every nook which fell under my observation bears its produce for man ; the majority *are* poor ; they are, however, in the midst of plenty ; if manufactories were introduced, to keep in the island the wages paid to England for goods, and the people were set to steady employment, there would seem to be no impediments to prosperity, for her resources would then be great. The wages of labourers hereabouts are very low in the estimation of an American, a shilling a day, for a labourer, and when steady employment is guaranteed, less. [1] A contractor for railroads assures me he paid twenty cents a day in the grazing districts. A man-servant can be hired by the year for fifty dollars, but then his knowledge of the metaphysics of American house-keeping is very limited ; he probably considers himself very learned if he can say “ yes, Sir,” and wait on table ; as for cleaning boots, carrying a basket to market, driving the horse, washing the pavement, and waiting on “ the mistress” besides, he would scorn it, and if he did not scorn it, he would never learn to do the work of a black, unless he was caught very young indeed. As we procure our supply from Ireland, the time for having good servants in the United States will, I fear, never come ; we must, therefore, simplify our habits, and wait on ourselves.

Clonmel is a large town, having twenty thousand inhabitants, on the river Suir, full of queer old houses and people, but prosperous because of the presence of flouring mills of great capacity. The town, is lighted by gas—think of that in America—an Irish town in Tipperary lighted with gas. When I arrived it was pig-market day ; such men and women as you only see in the lowest employments in Philadelphia, are driving the pig to the large mall, where he is to be sold for ready money, to pay the rent. The wife is not willing to trust her

lord alone with so important a commission ; she therefore accompanies him with a stick to drive, while Paddy holds on to the hind leg, by a wisp of straw, to prevent the family estate from running away. Prices just now are good ; the pig-market is therefore crowded, but it would require a Hogarth to describe it The dresses of the people are curious and antique ; I begin to believe the story told by somebody before, that the old clothes that won't sell in London, are all shipped off here, where they serve two or three generations of pig-feeders. There are many capitalists in Clonmel, who purchase grain and cattle for export, and who sometimes make large profits. The flouring mills are as large as most in America ; but as far as my travels have extended, they are the only ones I have seen since leaving Belfast, the grain being generally exported.

Having been domesticated at the house of a gentleman of family and fortune, in the county of Tipperary, I have learned a little of the fashions and ways of the people. I was not prepared to learn the fact that in this lawless country, as all England pronounces it, a private gentleman never takes his large quantity of silver for security to his safe, at night, nor removes it from his sideboard. He has in use five thousand dollars' worth of plate, which is always at hand in the spacious dining-room. He never fastens his back gate, while his exquisitely beautiful grounds are particularly easy of access. The Tipperary boys are worst at times of election, and they do shoot a man sometimes, when he crosses the path of their interest ; a traveller, and an inoffensive rich or poor resident, are just as safe as in any part of America.

The style and comfort of the higher class of gentry here, is very handsome and agreeable ; every household department is perfectly filled by servants who know their separate duties, and perform them well. The gardener's son, in the morning, goes over the grass-plot and cuts out the weeds, depositing them in his little basket, for they are very few. The hostler has his department as neat as a parlour, and is, as I inspect the harness, employed in rooting out a little grass just sprung up between the stones. The young ladies and gentlemen, in morning dishabille when I arrive, are punctiliously dressed for the important dinner at six. The neatness of the gardens, surrounded with high evergreen shrubs, such as will not bear our cold winters, forms a feature, one look at which would compensate you for a voyage across the Atlantic.

I have now seen a very large surface of Ireland, from the north to the south, and shall retrace my steps to Dublin by a different route.

Yours truly, &c.

Cashell, Ireland, May. 1845.

A traveller's experience — Servants—Brogue—Straw for mats—Old hotel—Description—Curtains for flags—Furniture—Moss and grass—Stage-coach breakfast—Antiquity—Dogs—Donkeys—Donkey cart and lady passenger—A gentleman's residence—Dinner—Conversation—Manners—Railroad mania—The lines sanctioned—Nearest route to America—Hospitality to Americans—Start fur Casbell—The car—Bianconi—Rock of Cashell—Round tower and caslle—Antiquity must be seen to be appreciated—Ruins of monastic establishments.

A TRAVELLER gets by degrees accustomed to the ways and appearances of a country, till he loses those first impressions which struck him as so novel and different from what he has been used to. I detected in Dublin the different manners of the servants, who always repeat the catchword of your question or order : “ the coach is it “ “ Sackville Street ?” “ the post office ?” as you inquire for each of these ; the brogue, too, is strong, and a little offensive to the ear,—but what sounds disrespectful, is not so meant.



In Tipperary all this becomes worse, but I have got a little used to it ; not so with the mats at the front doors of the stage-houses ; they are nothing more nor less than a bundle of wheat straw, strown clean every day or two inside the door. This is a useful invention where the streets are muddy and passengers not very neat. The very old hotel where I lodged last night, is a low double house, where half a dozen coaches stop for breakfast ; its doors seem to have been taken from various former mansions about a century ago, for there are no two that match ; the locks have been mended, with knobs and keys of patterns in fashions of half a century apart, and they move with very peculiar motions. The handle of the key of my bedroom door was nearly as large as the lock itself, and so long was the shaft, that it was a dangerous experiment to walk about when the poor tallow candle was extinguished. The bed had the usual calico curtain, heavy quilt, and small pillow, to which I was glad to add my own, brought from the ship, and to replace the covering with a comfortable wadded dressing-gown. The red curtains of the common breakfast room had once been drawn through the dirty street during a fracas at an election, when this tavern was the castle of some candidate opposed to the populace, who filled the rooms with paving-stones torn from the streets, and raised the curtains aforesaid for a flag ; they are still preserved for ornament !

The furniture is of various patterns, but so substantial that it will be in use for the next century and a half at least, having already served, beyond question, the wants of many successive generations. The outside of the house resembles nothing you ever saw ; moss has planted itself at some points of the irregular wall ; a window is boarded up, and the grass is growing on the sill here and there ; the floor under the entry straw is worn thin with long usage ; the dining-room carpet has seen successive thousands trample it into tatters ; the doors of the out-houses are, half of them, off their hinges ; the oddest lean-to's are used for the housekeeper and the scullery ; and this is the principal stopping-place for the admirable mail-coach between Dublin and Cork ; successive horns every half hour announced a new arrival for a meal, as I sat at an old oak table in one corner and sketched a letter to my American friends, with one eye on the street to watch the motley groups. I have been an observer of the table customers, who partake of a substantial traveller's breakfast : it consists of ribs of beef roasted the day before, good bread, batter, eggs, with tea or coffee, the latter the only inferior article on the table, if we except the set-out, which consists of tools and plates, made at different ages of the world's history. The turret of a church opposite, was built in 1269, as is declared over the door of the repaired edifice, and some of the things in the dwelling I was so busy in gossiping to you in, are only a little more modern. This must serve you for an hotel-picture of the interior of Ireland. Some people live as well as our wealthiest inhabitants, within a stone's throw of the scene I have truly but imperfectly painted.

Dogs are very rarely seen ; they would consume the value of enough food to satisfy the simple appetite of the useful donkey, contented as he is with furze and the little grass he can pick up from the side of the earthen fence. No cattle are to be found in the roads any where, without a caretaker to see that they do not eat the grass opposite another man's homestead. The thatched hovel very frequently in Tipperary has no window whatever ; the light comes down the chimney or through the open door ; the lady-inhabitant who can afford the luxury of visiting the neighbouring town in a donkey-cart is a happy woman ; if some that have seen thus paying morning calls would exhibit on the stage in America, they would make as great a sensation as Fanny Ellsler. The donkey is extremely diminutive for his species, the cart the size of a street hand-barrow ; the driver fills it entirely with a sprawling cloak ; but she looks the picture of contented independence.

You are coursing a good tumpiked road, surrounded by cultivated acres, where the women are planting potatoes in large fields, the latter having the appearance of being dug with a spade ; there are hovels on each side, when suddenly you turn into a handsome gate ; at the entrance is a neat lodge with Portugal laurel in the greatest luxuriance ; you are whirled into

the demesne of a gentleman, whose butler welcomes you at the door ; the demesne is perfect in all its appointments ; the dinner is all that you could desire ; the state of Ireland, O'Connellism, and the etceteras are discussed by gentlemen possessed of the latest debates in Parliament, and O'Connell's last speech at the Repeal Association, held every Monday at Conciliation Hall ; you hear much of railroads ; the ladies take wine and join in the conversation with more naïveté and gusto than with us, and on their retiring, the punch is freely circulated ; the gentlemen thaw out, cigars are introduced of very strong and very dear quality ; you join the ladies about ten, hear a little music, shake a cordial farewell, and are soon in the room with the long-handled key.

This country is alive with projects for railroads. I have made particular inquiries respecting them, and find that in some instances the stock is already double its first cost. The Board of Trade have sanctioned that between Waterford and Limerick ; an extension of the Dublin and Cashell to Cork, from Cork to Bandon ; from Cork to Fermoy and Youghall. Not passed by the Board of Trade, are Dublin to Galway, and a branch of the Dublin and Cork to Limerick, from Cork to Killarney and Valencia. O'Connell, who has some interests at Valencia, wants a road from Dublin to that place, as one of the best and nearest routes to embark for America. There can be no doubt that the route to America will ultimately be thus shortened of the ship and steam navigation. Our own case is a striking but not uncommon one : had there been a railroad from the nearest coast of Ireland, we might have been in England in twenty or twenty-one days ; we were really twenty-five or six to Belfast harbour, and then we should not have had the troublesome and expensive landing there, and trip to Dublin ; in a commercial view this would have been most important ; to you it would possibly have saved my tediousness about the interior of Ireland, for, but for the taste of its beauties acquired thus unexpectedly, I should have been for some days past in London ; but I am so much pleased with the appearance of the country, its hospitality, and its antiquities,—I am passed from hand to hand, as an American, with such warmth of feeling, that I have to break forcibly off from engagements, and make my way as fast as possible to Liverpool, where I hope to receive letters from home.

I could not, however, by universal command of my friends, leave Tipperary without visiting the very old town and Rock of Cashell, pronounced on all hands the greatest curiosity in the south of Ireland. I therefore paid my bill at the old inn, and took my passage for Cashell by the morning route.

*Cashell.* On repairing to the coach-office at an early hour, I found I was to cross the country in a very curious machine ; it was an Irish jaunting-car of antique build, so constructed as to carry a vast amount of luggage ; on the whole, it looked more like an old Philadelphia fire-engine than any thing else ; the driver's box, where I was to sit, was mounted in the air, to make a place for carpet-bags, and represented the top whence the water of the engine is discharged. I was by no means gratified with the equipage provided by Bianconi, and the horses were still more objectionable, to say nothing of a pair of extra wheels, which were mounted on the extreme centre, between the backs of the passengers ; the horses had been evidently worn out in the service of a main route ; they were now destined to do duty on a cross-trip of less importance.

We dashed through Clonmel with tolerable speed, but at the first ascent the wagon ran back, the horses giving out. All hands walked up ; the coach followed slowly, rain fell in abundance, and we passed again a fine country, landing in Cashell in time for dinner at another rustic inn, situated in a town of mud-huts at the foot of the far-famed Rock of Cashell, commanding the whole country on every side, its top occupied by a magnificent old Castle, and one of the best round towers in all Ireland.

Bianconi, the coach-owner on many important routes, is an instance of rapid rise from poverty. A poor Italian boy, he carried his pack through Ireland ; observing that the people had imperfect modes of travelling, he commenced with a single horse and car ; from small things to great was a rapid stride. He is now a wealthy man—could probably retire from business with fifteen thousand dollars a year income—but, still more important, he has been elevated by the good-will of his townsmen to be mayor of Clonmel.

I have inspected the celebrated Round Tower, the ruined Castle, as well as the old Cathedral, all standing together on the top of a high natural rock, and I would give much if some of my friends whom I think of could have passed half a day with me in wandering about its old walls. The Cathedral was either founded or restored at the beginning of the tenth century ; adjoining it are the ruins of Cormac's Chapel, built in 901 by Cormac Mac Culinan, at once king and archbishop of Cashell ; this was the royal seat and metropolis of the kings of Munster, and the stone is shown on which, according to tradition, they were crowned. The Round Tower is perfect even to the roof ; its origin or date, like all the rest, is still a matter of conjecture.

Books had failed entirely to convey to me an idea of the present state of such a magnificent ivy-clad pile ; I dare not attempt a description of square towers, battlements, covered ways, port-holes, and openings over stair-cases, to pour hot lead upon invaders if they attained the first story ; if you want the idea, you must come for yourself and see. The partly unroofed Cathedral has been put in some repair lately by the rector of Cashell ; the rubbish of the floor is cleared up, and some remarkable sculptures of the middle ages brought to light ; they are inserted in the interior walls ; numerous skulls and bones were reinterred, but many hastily tossed into an old crypt, may still be handled. The interior and the outside is used by the neighbourhood for a burying-place : the Penefather family, whose fine domain I saw this morning, have many monuments here, and they still inter in it. This town has seven ruined monastic establishments ; I have passed a most interesting day among them, surrounded by rafts of the very poorest people yet encountered.

Yours, &c.

Dublin, May. 1845.

Cultivation—Ireland's misery—Resident landlords—Ivy—Lord Portarlington's domain—Its miserable state—A thin post-master—The small mail—A mud hovel—Wretchedness—Alas! poor Ireland !—Dublin—St. Patrick's Cathedral—Antiquity—Repairs—Dust of ages—St. Patrick—Statues—Dean Swift—His bust—Stella—The Four Courts—Lawyers—Wigs—Ludicrous appearance—One worn in Philadelphia—Sir Edward Sugden—His salary—Baron Penefather—The Castle—The Lord Lieutenant—Salary again—The Castle Chapel—Busts—Phoenix Park—Post-office.

MY route back to Dublin was again through a well-tilled country ; some portions resembled what I had pictured as the finest parts of England ; there were, however, evidences of one at least of the causes of Ireland's misery. We passed two or three estates of resident landlords, without titles, but possessing large domains, whose object it seems to have been to make their tenants happy ; more comfortable dwellings for the poor it would be hard to imagine ; the interiors were well lighted and clean, having two stories, while the outside was ornamented with roses and other plants, trained to the white wall. Every evidence of rural happiness surrounded these fine domains ; the most luxuriant ivy mounted the trees to their tops, and then festooned itself in a giant head ; the excellent walls were also thus surmounted ; meadows with cattle grazing, and happy, well-dressed people, were objects which the eye delighted to

take in, after the view of five thousand paupers in the town of huts I had so lately left. Immediately after, we came to the immense tract of land belonging to Lord Portarlington, a ruined spendthrift submitting to the degradation of being supported by a former mistress. There was plenty of land as good as the former, but every thing was in ruins ; the poorest houses you can conceive of were tumbling down ; every thing, from the men and women to the donkey and the fences, appeared to be going fast to decay. A post-master, looking like Shakspeare's starved apothecary in countenance and lankness, handed up a mail-bag about as large as a reticule ; this contained the correspondence, if, indeed, there was any thing in it, of ten miles square. The agent had driven off every thing for the rent, which goes to pay gambling debts. The next heir, it is believed, will do nothing for his wretched tenantry. I inspected a mud hut, without windows, fire-place, or chimney, and only eight feet by three and a half, and five feet six high ; in this hovel dwelt two human beings ; at least it was their only home, though really they could hardly huddle under the peaked roof except to lie down.

I entered many huts in Cashell where there was no window, and no chimney ; in all were children, from babes to fifteen years old ; the annual rent is seven dollars, paid by one of the occupants, the pig. Wretchedness can little farther go. Not a well-dressed person did I see during the whole day in the populous town. Cannot something be done for this poor, but, considering their condition, moral population ? here is strength for dozens of manufactories, yet there are no employers ; water-power in abundance every where, but no mills ; finely tilled land, but the labourer who works it partakes not of the produce, except a scanty pittance of potatoes and salt—tasting meat but once a year. Bear with me when I repeat that he is surrounded by plenty, but that food, which he by Nature's law is entitled to, is exported ; it feeds the soldiers, twenty-one thousand of whom are quartered upon the land ; it nurses the police, stationed every few miles over the whole country, to keep the inhabitants, down to starving point, from committing felony. One must exclaim constantly,—“ Something surely is wrong !”—Alas, poor Ireland !”

It is cheering, after riding for some hundreds of miles through even the finest country, to be welcomed back to the thicker haunts of men. Dublin again reached, I employed some time in the inspection of those parts which I had not yet seen.

Saint Patrick's Cathedral, originally built in 1190, dedicated to the celebrated Apostle of Ireland, stands on the site where stood a chapel, built by the Saint himself in the year 448. Here is antiquity without actual neglected decay. Its first appearance puzzled me ; was it an imitation of age, or actual age ? If it was imitation it was exaggerated, for surely no materials could be so dilapidated and hang together ; it was the eating tooth of time which had taken the mortar by slow degrees from between the stones ; the gothic pinnacles looked as if they would fall. If they were put up *few* hundred years ago only, it must have been rude hands and poor mortar that were employed. The exterior is most remarkable, and cannot be described by either pen or pencil.

The church is again undergoing repairs, which it greatly requires very often ; it looked worse than usual from the presence of materials strewn on its floors ; but the dust on those statues, and pictures, and helmets, is the accumulation of hundreds of years. Near the west end of the north aisle is the image of Saint Patrick, discovered when making some repairs half a century or so since, but in a mutilated state, the fractures repaired, and standing on a projecting corbel from the wall, and bearing the *modern* date of “ 1190.” Various other queer statues and projecting ornamental mural tablets of subsequent dates arrest the eye, together with one or two white marble full-length sitting figures of modern divines, ornaments of Trinity College, here interred. They look as much out of place as a belle in white muslin at a funeral.

The American visiter is attracted here by a bust, resting on a column fifteen feet above the pavement, of Dean Swift—the Dean of St Patrick’s best known to us, with an inscription in Latin, expressive of that hatred of oppression and love of liberty which his other writings breathe, for it was written by himself. The bust was placed there in 1776, by Faulkner, the original printer of his works. Near by, but divided by a pavement, emblematic of Swift’s cold attachment to Stella, is a white marble slab, to the memory of Mrs. Hester Johnson, on which is this inscription : —

“ Underneath lie the mortal remains of Mrs. Hester Johnson, better known to the world by the name of STELLA, under which she is celebrated in the writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of this Cathedral She was a person of extraordinary endowments of body, mind, and behaviour. Justly admired and respected by all who knew her, on account of her many eminent virtues, as well as for her great natural and acquired perfections. She died, January 27, 1727-8, in the 46th year of her age, and by her will bequeathed one thousand pounds towards the support of a chaplain to the Hospital founded in this city by Dr. Stevens.”

Thoughts and memories crowd upon the mind as you stand opposite these two inscriptions, the likeness of the Dean quite perfect before you, and Stella’s bones mouldering beneath your feet.

One of the handsomest buildings in Dublin is the Law, or Four-Courts. I was taken there by a member of the bar, as we should style him in Philadelphia, at one o’clock, when the rotunda in the centre presented the appearance, as to numbers, of the New York Exchange at ’change hour, with this marked difference, that the merchants present were traders in cases, but not cases of silks or tea ; they were the active members of the profession, all dressed in wigs, giving them a great uniformity of appearance, and an odd look like theatrical performers by daylight. It was my first view of this head-dress, and its appearance was ludicrous rather than solemn. There are a thousand of these professional men admitted to practice, but many do not attend the courts. Those present bustling about in little coteries, communicating on business, passing a joke, and so on, much as you see our members of the bar in the Law Library, but, being in such numbers, and so dressed, in a place of great size, and all at ease in their queer frizzled whalebone gray wigs, they made an impression which I shall not soon forget. [2]

The court rooms, notwithstanding the size of the building, are all extremely small ; here was the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Sir Edward Sugden, whose salary is double that of President Polk ;—his brother—and Baron Penefather, with many other distinguished men less known to fame. The expense of this building was about a million of dollars, but why the court rooms are stuck in little corners, entered by raising double red curtains, would puzzle a “ Philadelphia lawyer.” There are numbers of offices attached.

The Castle is well worth visiting ; it is the winter residence of the Lord Lieutenant, in a quadrangle, and with uniform buildings on each side, occupied as offices by the government officials, such as the Master of Ceremonies, and the Aides-de-Camp to his Excellency, at present Lord Heytesbury, formerly Sir William A’Court.

The salary of these chief governors of Ireland is one hundred thousand dollars per annum ! Is it any wonder that the people are poor, when they have to support such titled gentry and a standing army of twenty-one thousand men, not including the police met with every where ?

The Castle chapel is the handsomest room of the kind I have yet seen ; the exterior is ornamented with no less than ninety heads formed of dark marble, including all the sovereigns of England. The great entrance is surmounted by a fine bust of St Peter holding a

key, and above it, over a window, is a bust of Dean Swift, who with Edmund Burke among the moderns, and Saint Patrick of the ancients, are the great names of Dublin. The Saint and Brian Boroihme, King of Ireland, are also commemorated in the chapel. The interior is beautiful in the extreme ; it consists of a choir, without a nave or transept, finished in the richest style of Gothic architecture. Between the buttresses springing from grotesque heads, are pointed windows, surmounted by labels, while the east window over the communion table is adorned with stained glass ; the subject is Christ before Pilate. The thrones for the Lord Lieutenant and the Archbishops, are luxurious and costly.

A drive round Phoenix Park, where the Wellington testimonial towers in inelegant grandeur, is not to be forgotten. There may be seen a poor attempt at a zoological garden, a number of mangy-looking deer, and the summer residence of several of the official officers of highest rank and salary.

The Post-office, opposite our hotel, the great Nelson Monument before it, is a magnificent building adorning Sackville Street ; the mail-coaches for the interior of Ireland assemble in the hollow square every evening, and having received their meagre bags, set out on their different destinations. A quarter of a minute before eight the door is begun to be unbarred, and at the first stroke of the clock the gate is opened, when one after another issues in quick succession, with its red-coated guard, passengers, and luggage, and hampers piled up, and with sound of the merry bugle. This regularly attracts a great crowd ; one coach this evening, the very last, was delayed about a minute, and as it came lagging out, was hooted for its dilatoriness. Two or three painted little cars for the new rail-road stations, were among the number, with their red guards and horns ; but they looked, with all their gaiety, shorn of their dignity by modern improvement. In a very short time railroads will mainly destroy this animating spectacle. Yours, &c., truly.

[1] In Kerry, sixpence a day in summer, and nothing in winter.—*Wm. Howitt*.

[2] I purchased a lawyer's wig in Dublin, and brought it home ; a member of the Philadelphia bar had courage enough to wear it in open court, to the no small amusement of all present ; a grand ha! ha ! broke out from every corner of the room. What is worn as a mark of dignity in Great Britain became ludicrous in America ;—such is the effect of habit and training. The judge was obliged to request the wearer to “ take it off, and not make his court ridiculous !”

Summer's Jaunt Across the Water ...: Including Visits to England, Ireland ... (1846)

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