

Furniss's Flying Visit 1892

Flying visits

Harry Furniss

1892

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Holyhead.

My dear M.,

We are off at last on tour with "The Humors of Parliament." Leaving Euston by the Irish Mail, I was rather disappointed to find that Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, Sir Richard Temple, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had only sent representatives to see me off, as I had a neat little speech ready with which to address them, à la Gladstone, from the carriage window. . . . It rather amused me to read in the papers that "Harry Furniss has packed his portmanteau and is off on tour." Portmanteau indeed! You might as well say that Irving was taking his costume basket with him, Miss Terry her handbag, or George Grossmith a musical box. I believe that Mr. Irving takes a tram with sixteen carriages, and of course George Grossmith's piano is a necessity. I only wish that I could have got the fifth part of my luggage into the space of an ordinary luggage van. Just look! You can judge yourself. The boxes on the left contain my elaborate paraphernalia, a complete fit-up and a triple reflex combination self-acting double-riveted 400 horse-power lantern, a patent collapsing up-to-date air-tight and rain-proof studio, and a new elastic-sided electro-plated writing-case, jewelled in four places; indeed, so elaborate were my belongings that the station-master, who was of an inquisitive turn of mind, and who happened to know that I was going on tour with my show, thought that I had got most of the Members hid away among my baggage, and that I was going to exhibit them after the fashion of a menagerie. . . . Mac, my secretary, travels with me, and I am accompanied as well by Professor C——, facile princeps in the art of manipulating the lantern; and apart from this he is a veritable Mark Tapley. From his aspect you might take him for a High Church parson, but there is a quiet gleam in his eye which betokens the innate sense of humor he possesses. He has travelled a good deal,—been all through America, and has "done" our own provinces time after time, and many are the tales he has to tell of his adventures; but we thought it somewhat curious that in telling us when any particular incident occurred, he used as his landmarks of time, not dates, but accidents or murders which had occurred in or about the town he was speaking of at the time. . . . I must confess that I am a little nervous about this....my début in the provinces as an independent entertainer. As you know, I have lectured a good deal in the country; but then a lecturer's audience is always assured beforehand, as he is engaged by some Society or Institute: but now that I have given up trying to make people wise, and endeavor instead to make them merry—in other words, now that I have abandoned lecturing in favor of entertaining,—it is a different matter, as I appeal direct to the public; and I am told that a London success, however great, counts for very little in the country, . . . Best wishes.

Yours, etc.,

Show Week in Dublin.

Across the Channel—"Davy"—His repartee to Dr. Tanner—From Kingstown to Dublin—
The Horse Show—Biassed Critics—How Jupiter Jumped—And how Programmes Jump.

DEAR dirty Dublin was never so dear or never so dirty as when I visited it during the Horse Show, or rather Horse Fair, week. Standing on the deck of the Royal Mail steamer *Ulster*, listening to the paddles churning up the waves with their ponderous blades, their regular beat seems to be repeating to you with a monotonous, rhythmical swing : "Cead mille failthe ! Cead mille failthe ! Cead mille failthe !" and you picture to yourself the artistic figure of Erin looking over lovely Dublin Bay, waiting to welcome you. In reality, the eye that awaits you is one of keen business ; and the first specimen of this is the humorous twinkle, albeit with mercenary intent, of an extraordinary individual with long, matted hair, and overcoat of gigantic dimensions held "iligantly" up on one side, encircling numerous bundles of the literature of the country.

This is "Davy." The first thing he hands you as you step off the steamer at Kingstown is a little advertisement of himself in book form, in which I read the following stanza :—

Davy hath a beaming eye ;
On all his customers it beameth ;
Everyone who passes by
Thinks that for himself it gleameth ;
But there's an eye that's brighter far,
And shines behind this jovial quizzness,
Leading like a guiding star,
And that is Davy's eye for business.

It is certainly a most roguish eye, and I was rather astonished when he came up and addressed me by name.

"Shure and Oi knew yez at wants from yer porthraits in the paypurs, and Oi'm glad to wilcome yez to ould Oireland. Maybe we may meet in London some day, whin Oi dhress in the hoight of fashion, wid me frackcoat, and toi, and cane. Oi always go over for the Darby, and have a pape at the House of Commons. Now ye'll be after drawin' me porthrait, won't yez, Misther Furnniss ? Ye'll not forget Davy ?"

There is no doubt that Davy has a considerable fund of native Irish wit, which I have noticed is fast disappearing from his countrymen, crushed out by the latter-day rancorous party feeling and political wrangling. Perhaps the best repartee of Davy's is one related by himself, concerning Dr. Tanner.

"How's yourself, Doctor ?" said Davy one evening, as the M.P. stepped ashore.

"Very well ; and how are you, Davy ? I see you haven't had your hair cut lately ?"

"No," said Davy ; "but Mr. Balfour will soon cut yours for you !"

If first impressions are everything, I wonder what impression a Saxon would get of Ireland by being received by this uncouth and unkempt individual !

It is particularly interesting to me to revisit Dublin, and I may be pardoned if I am personal for a moment, and settle a question once for all of national importance ; viz., whether the writer of these lines is an Irishman or not. My father was English, my mother is Scotch, and I was born in Ireland ; and lived in the country until late in my teens, when I went to England.

As a schoolboy in Dublin, of a volatile nature, and with a Robinson Crusonian disposition for exploring, I knew Dublin and its surroundings very well ; and I must say that after nearly twenty years' absence I found the "ould country" much as I left it, and this was made evident to me on our journey from Kingstown to Dublin, where I seemed to recognize the same old bottles on the beach that I pelted with stones in the days of my youth, the same old cockle-women I used to patronize, and the same old human relics of the past that used to patronize me. Indeed, John Leech's sketch of Westland Row Station, where jarveys called the Saxon tourist "Captain," "Major," or "Gineral," according to the amount of luggage he possessed, would be a fair illustration of the station of to-day.

I was disappointed on the journey up to miss a well-known porter who was for many years stationed at Blackrock. He was afterward moved to Salt Hill, but was in the habit of going along the train, calling out, "Blackrock-Salt-Hill-oi-mane ! Blackrock-Salt-Hill-oi-mane !" I wonder was he there in Leech's day ? But there was no mistaking the "Here y' are, Captain ; this is the kyar for yez !" "Git along wid yez, shure the Major's coming to me !" "What are ye blatherin' about, isn't it the Gineral himself that's after knowin' Patsey O'Hooligan has the natest little kyar in Dublin ?" and so on, until we and our luggage are rescued by an energetic porter.

It is a curious fact that in Ireland they have a propensity supposed to be peculiar to the American race ; viz., "booming." We met an Irish "boomer" coming up in the train.

"Shure ye'd be afther coming over to the Harse Show, of coorse, and it's the foinest show in the wur-rld intoirely. We've three things in this counthry that can't be bate in the woide, woide wur-rld—the foinest harse show, the foinest brewery, and, in the North, we're turnin' out the foinest ships, altho' I don't moind tellin' yez the shipbuilders ain't Oirish at all, at all, and the Harse Show is moore loike an English fair."

And, indeed, we're told from morning to night that everything in the "ould counthry" is the "foinest intoirely."

Certainly the policemen are the "foinest," but the English traveller must smile when he is told there are not finer drivers than the Irish jarveys—oh, shade of Selby !—that the Dublin shops are not to be "bate anywhere"—poor Shoolbred and Maple !—that Irish-women are the "purtiest" in the world—what does Jersey say ? But this is digression ; I must leave general matters to my next chapter, and in this confine myself to the Horse Show—the great annual carnival of Dublin.

In days gone by the Horse Show was held in Kildare Street, and was a quiet, modest annual function ; now it has grown to be the "foinest" and most famous Horse Show in the world, and is held at Balls Bridge, on the banks of the river Dodder, a stream flowing—no, not exactly flowing, but struggling—through stones, old worn-out kettles, bottomless sauce-pans, and other cast-off domestic utensils, to say nothing of defunct domestic pets. I can well recall this secluded spot in days gone by, when it was frequented only by fishers of kettles and other articles concealed among this extensive heterogeneous collection, but now all the

world and his wife patronize this district in the famous week, and multitudes of bipeds and quadrupeds mingling together fill the vast enclosures at Balls Bridge. *Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis!* But I will leave these reminiscences to the descriptive writer and moralist, and mix with the crowd, sketch-book in hand.

It is strange that, even at a Horse Show, one cannot get away from politics in Ireland, as the following conversation, which took place at the show this year, will demonstrate. There was a horse in the jumping competition named Balfour, and two ardent Nationalists were looking on as the horse cantered up to take the big stone-wall jump.

“ Arrah, Moike, this horse is called Balfour, bedad !”

“ Shure, he’ll be no good ; there’s divil a bit of jumping power in him at all, at all !”

Balfour went for the difficulty, and displaced a few small stones on top.

“ And wasn’t Oi afther tellin’ yez so ? he wint at it loike his own battherine ram.”

It so happened that very few horses in the competition succeeded in doing so well as Balfour, and the horse was trotted out with two or three others to try conclusions a second time, much to the disgust of my two neighboring onlookers.

“ Och, shure they’d throt him out agin ef he wasn’t to lave a shtone shtandin’. Just watch him now, Moike.”

The horse tucked up his legs and cleared the wall splendidly.

“ Look at that now, why he’s too ‘ cliver fur us intoirely !’ ”

And yet they say, when I, in my *Humors of Parliament*, introduce a question about a scarecrow, which an Irish member suggests was mistaken purposely by the police for a native, of the Emerald Isle, and shot accordingly, I am grossly exaggerating.

The first horse to jump on the second day was one entitled Jupiter, and belonged to a friend of mine. Whether he was purposely considerate of his fellow gee-gees, I don’t know ; but he went for that wall with an evident intention not to jump it, but to knock it down, which he in a great measure succeeded in doing, and it was interesting to note that this soft place where Jupiter jumped was selected for all the other horses to try their prowess at.

Every horse’s performance was loudly greeted by an enthusiastic and fashionable crowd, who were promenading round the enclosure ankle-deep in mud. Some had taken up their positions on a seat by the wall, veritable wall-flowers. The horsey, the clerical, the society, the juvenile, and the commercial element were all represented, and in this case placed on an equal footing for once.

The Master of the Ceremonies, Lord Rathdonnell, was conspicuous by his energy in waving two flags, red and white, in the middle of the arena. In strong contrast was another Lord R——, the inheritor of a famous telescope, who looked anything but a sportsman ; and the familiar figure of a retired military officer was very much *en évidence* in the ring. Some of the other ring-masters I shall give in my next chapter. I am disturbed in sketching them by a boy calling out, “ Jumping programmes ! Jumping programmes !” I asked him how a pro-

gramme jumps. That boy is still considering his reply, and yet they say the Irish are sharp at repartee !

Dublin.

My dear M.,

Oh, these Irish hotels ! It is no wonder the English traveller keeps away from this country, preferring to spend his money elsewhere, where he can be sure of cleanliness and something he can eat. You know Mr. A——, the ardent Gladstonian, who came over here with his wife and family, instead of going on the Continent ? No doubt it was the best thing he could do to show his interest in the country. He went to the principal hotel and sat down to dinner the night they arrived ; but the soup was untouchable, the fish might have been fresh a month or so before he arrived, and the game—well, it was about as high as the hotel bill, and that's saying something. So, being wise in his generation, he simply took the first boat back to England. I believe Mr. A—— is a Unionist now. . . The city is crammed, so we are at the mercy of the hotel vampire, who is busily sucking the gold out of the unfortunate visitors' pockets. It is well we booked rooms beforehand. I had a gorgeous bedroom allotted to me, but notwithstanding my surroundings, the first night I turned in the arms of Morpheus positively declined to enfold me. This I put down to the change of climate ; but on the second night I felt as if I were in a Turkish bath, and the night after I imagined I was being baked in an extra hot oven. My temperature was at fever-heat ; but in answer to all my inquiries they assured me that the kitchen fires were on the other side of the hotel. However, a friend of mine, also a visitor, who happened to be on the Health Committee, and who knew something about practical sanitation, was horrified to find me in such a vapor bath, and quickly rescued me, just as I was on the point of being cooked alive. It was then acknowledged that my bed-room was right over the hotel fires. Upon this I was relegated to another room, where sleep was equally impossible, owing to the noise of the stone pavements, the tramways, and the rattling of the draughty windows. After that I was removed to some box under the stairs (I will not dignify it by the name of bedroom), and eventually, out of compassion for me, my friend vacated his room—the only habitable one in the place, I believe—in my favor. . . . As you can guess, I have not very much time for festive gatherings, but I was fortunate enough to renew acquaintance with a charming lady whom I had met during the London season, who has been very kind to us here, and with whom we spent a most enjoyable evening at her quaint and picturesque country house, at Dalkey. On Sunday I had the pleasure of dining with an old acquaintance, in the person of Dr. H——, at whose hospitable house I met the genial editor of the “ Irish Times ” and other delightful representative people.

Yours, etc.,

“ After The Horse Show's Over.”

Irish Celebrities—Dublin in Darkness—“ Liberty ! ”—Typical incongruities—The permanent Lord Mayor of Dublin—The fiery, untamed athlete—Football extraordinary—Curious cricket—Enthusiastic Parnellites—Between Scylla and Charybdis.

Horse Show week over, Dublin quickly emptied. The President of the Show, Sir Thomas Butler, umbrella in hand, is to be congratulated on the success of the Show this year. I find that on the same page of my notebook is a slight sketch of the two leading lights of Ireland.

One looks like a well-to-do farmer, always jolly and rubicund ; the other seems to bear a strong resemblance to the “ sporting gent” in a modern drama.

It would be well for Dublin if its brilliancy were not confined to one week in the year, and the other fifty-one left in darkness ; for after dusk the streets are lighted, and what Dublin wants is a scavenger, an electrical engineer, and a wood-pavior. You can't see the names of the streets, and to read an address you have to go in search of a lamp-post, and climb half-way up to get any light from the scanty illuminations of the city, and you run the risk in doing so of tumbling down upon the good-natured priest who is standing underneath, endeavoring to decipher the columns of the *National Press* by the light of the “ gas-lamp dimly burning.”

The Irish are always crying out for Liberty, but the Hibernian who said, “ We don't know exactly what we want, but we mean to have it,” might well be informed the Liberty they most require is the well-known firm of that name hailing from Recent Street. It is strange that the native city of that great advocate of æstheticism, Oscar Wilde, should turn a deaf ear to the teachings of the Postlethwaitian school. The Irish, to judge from their houses, are quite devoid of all artistic taste, and it makes one shudder to see the vile decorations and furniture of the worst period of taste in the Victorian era still untouched in Ireland. In England the £30 sub-urban villa of the hard-worked City clerk would put to shame the arrangements in the houses of the *élite* of Ireland ; in fact the chief characteristic of the Irish I may venture to say is a want of *thoroughness*. They are never thorough in anything they do, individually or collectively, and this is why they must always play second fiddle to the sister isle in the British orchestra.

For example, you go into one of the principal restaurants in Dublin : everything possible is done to pander to the taste of the lover of display and splendor. The pillars are enveloped in plush and lavishly gilt, flowering plants of various descriptions are placed on every window-ledge, huge tropical ferns, standing in beautifully-finished tubs of polished wood, resplendent with fittings of brightly burnished brass, form a perfect canopy above with their wide-spreading leaves. Everything, in fact, is on a scale magnificent enough to vie with any other establishment of the kind elsewhere ; but the plush round the pillars shows a gaping seam from top to bottom, the plants in the windows are placed in old biscuit boxes wrapped round with paper, while the gorgeous tubs containing the ferns are placed upon empty rough deal wine cases.

In the Mansion House the best of banquets is provided by the best of Lord Mayors : everything is carried out to the minutest details, and the Saxon guest might almost imagine he was in the Guildhall ; but the gorgeous flunkeys, with all their brilliant finery, have not taken the trouble to button the knees of their plush breeches, and their stockings hang in wrinkles over their ankles, in contrast to Mr. White, their chief, who is known as the permanent Lord Mayor of Dublin. The banquet is gastronomically perfect, but you find a loaf of Irish bread is put by the side of your plate instead of the neat and more appetizing French roll. A well-built carriage, turned out in style, and horsed to perfection, will be awaiting you, but the coachman will have a hat green with age, and his boots will be more suited for the stable-yard. If by some odd chance the Jehu is in keeping with the equipage, probably the handle of the carriage-door has at some time or other been broken off, and is now tied up with a bit of string. But perhaps the artistic eye should not be too severe in its criticisms of a nation whose country, above all others, stands as the typical land of hospitality.

Quite recently Dublin has been receiving the Institute of Journalists and the Chamber of Commerce ; but should they ever invite the Sunday Observance Society to Ireland, I wonder

what they (the S.O.S.) would say if they chanced to stroll through Phoenix Park on a Sunday morning, the time usually selected by the fiery, untamed athlete of “ Ould O i r e l a n d ” to work off his superfluous energy. On entering the gates you are not solicited by poke-bonneted lasses to invest in the *War Cry* or a varied selection of tracts, but extraordinary wooden instruments, which I thought were boomerangs on an enlarged scale, are offered on the hire system. And if you go a little further the whole Park seems alive with holiday makers, more or less clad, and the air is rent with wild, ear-piercing yells peculiar to the sons of Erin ; in strong contrast to the comparative quiet of Hyde Park or Hampstead Heath on a Sabbath morning, Phoenix Park is a perfect Pandemonium.

The aforesaid truculent-looking clubs turn out to be Irish hockey sticks, wielded by men and boys clad for the most part in tatter-demalion attire. Whack ! whack ! whack ! they drive the ball all over the field, these immense clubs whizzing round their heads like the national shillelah, and it is an extraordinary thing that among all this banging and club swinging the majority of the participants preferred to play in bare feet. As my hat was in jeopardy, I moved on, and came across a crowd of footballers, or, more properly speaking, several crowds, for there seemed to be teams spread all over the magnificent Dublin football ground, and each side consisted of close on a hundred members. My travelling companion, who is a football enthusiast himself, nearly fainted at the incongruous mixture of attire of the different players engaged in this desperate *melée*, and spent a long time looking on in the vain endeavor to fathom the mystic rules which governed this truly extraordinary game. Cricket at another point was carried on in the same original way. The batting-side gamble at cards by the side of the scorers till their turn comes to go in, and then the fielders have to wait while “ Tirence ” plays his hand out before he takes up his bat. The more juvenile athletes were also of the fiery untamed persuasion, and their costume and antics defy description.

The following Sunday I avoided the Park, not because I was uninterested in the Sunday recreations of this human “ ollapodrida,” but because I heard that there was a political meeting in the Park, and I had had more than enough of such gatherings, so I remained in my hotel. Just when I was dressing for dinner, the more or less musical strains of approaching bands smote upon my ear, and soon music, shouting, and cheering seemed to surround the hotel. I went down, and there saw, standing in a brake and haranguing a surging mass of people, the familiar figure of Charles Stewart Parnell. He descended from the wagon at the close of his oration, and literally fought his way into the hotel, while his admirers, who had invaded the hall, clung to his coat-tails till they were summarily ejected by the hotel servants, I am thankful to say this is all I saw of political life in Ireland.

My travelling companion had a peculiar little experience in Dublin, which gives an insight into the absurd state of political feeling in that city. While walking with two Dublin acquaintances over the bridge leading into the principal street, he made some casual remark about Sackville Street not having altered much of late years, whereupon the friend on his right turned upon him with :

“ Shure, if it’s Sackville Sthrate ye’re after callin’ it, it’s dropping yer into the Liffey Oi’ll be ! It’s O’Connell Sthrate ! ”

Well, as differences of opinion with an excited son of Erin are apt to be detrimental to the symmetry of one’s features, and as the name was a matter of total indifference to my companion, he acquiesced, saying :

“ All right, O’Connell Street it is then ! ”

When the friend on his left jumped round, shillelah on high, and roared :

“ Call it O’Connell Sthrate in moi prisince, bedad, and Oi’ll hold yer head under the furst thram-car that comes along !”

My perplexed companion, in this awkward dilemma, might not inaptly be termed an English rose between two Irish blackthorns !

Dublin.

My dear M.,

Thanks for the press cuttings you sent me containing the screeching criticisms of the Irish press upon my articles in “ Black and White ” Of course I shall take no notice of them : I have only pity for their utter want of common sense. It is a very curious fact that the French and the Irish, who are par excellence the jesters of Europe, frequently making themselves the butt of their own jokes, cannot stand the slightest chaff or fair criticism. I suppose it is their having this trait in common that makes Pat and Alphonse such friends. As long as you flatter an Irishman, so long will he bless you ; but be frank with him, and he curses you. I think this was very neatly summed up by a drawing of Charles Keenes which appeared in “ Punch ” of an old Irishwoman soliciting alms from a local doctor.

*“ Wont ye give me a copper ; dochter dear ? Thry, now, if ye haven’t wan penny con-
venient ! and may the blissid saints increse ye ! ”*

“ Stand aside, my good woman. I’ve nothing for you. ”

*“ Oh, thin, the Lard presarve yer eyesight, for the divil a nose ye have to mount the
‘ specs ’ upon ! ”*

But it is a good thing that this only applies to the majority of the Irish in their own country. No one laughs more at the idiosyncrasies of his stop-at-home countryman than does the Irishman you meet in England and elsewhere ; and I am proud to say that I number among my friends a great many Irish people indeed. Some of them I have met here have laughed heartily over the criticisms you sent me. . . . It is rather flattering to find the long and highly eulogistic criticisms of my performance followed by big houses, and certainly no actor has been more honored both by audiences and press notices ; but then members of the profession show their cleverness in giving effect to the lines of others, and their duties are restricted to the boards. Should an actor be his own author, manager, and scene-painter, and at the same time fill up his spare moments by practising in another profession, journalism to wit, and should he chance to be a man out of the common who treats things he sees in anything but the stodgy orthodox twaddle of the globe-trotter, he would never visit an Irish town the second time. The people pay their money to hear me as a satirist on the platform, and they expect me to wash off the critical and satirical side of my nature as soon as I leave the boards after amusing them, just as an actor washes off his paint and removes his make-up : to use their own words, “ in that style which is peculiarly his own, the style which makes anyone who looks at one of his cartoons in ‘ Punch ’ feel that they know ‘ Harry Furniss, ’ he at once set the audience at their ease, making them feel in a much more increased degree that

they too knew the eminent caricaturist as intimately as if they had been for years his close companion. This is the charm of Mr. Furniss's manner." "The whole aim of his work is friendly satire" and so on, and so on : and yet when I amuse my English readers with equally friendly satire on the subject of Ireland, the old woman representing the Press turns round, just as the old beggar woman did to the doctor, and anathematizes me ; in the first place claiming me as an Irishman (a compliment I don't deserve), and then expressing herself as exceedingly and sincerely sorry that Mr. Furniss's rotund little body wasn't well kicked while he was here." . . . It is not my intention to worry you with a long letter, nor have I time to waste upon such stuff and nonsense ; but were I inclined to take matters seriously, I might reply in the same vein as Shelley did when he was attacked : "When we consider who makes this accusation, and against whom, I need only rebut such an accusation by silence and a smile." But, after all, isn't it sad that such balderdash should be printed ? I can tell you it highly amused me to see my portrait as painted by the penny-a-liner. Some people said I wouldn't succeed in London because I didn't come with the orthodox half-crown in my pocket, but with a substantial banking account. However, I at once got into harness with more work than I could do, or rather draw ; and I have been pulling right up to the collar ever since. So much for the facts of the penny-a- " lie"-ner !

The Professor has just heard a very good sample of an Irishism. His cabman, who met him by the early tram, remarked to him that "It's a foine thing to git up befoore ye go out in the mornin' !" Of course everyone in Dublin during this week must in duty bound go to the Horse Show, so one day I gave the Professor a ticket. In the evening I asked him what he thought of the magnificent show. He hesitated, coughed a little, and then to my astonishment said that he hadn't been there. "Ah, well, Horse Shows are not much in my line ; but I spent a very pleasant afternoon in Glasnevin Cemetery !" He also subsequently informed us that he had paid a visit to the spot where Burke and Cavendish were murdered. We are beginning to think the Professor is of a very morbid turn of mind. . . .

Yours, etc.,

Round Belfast at Pressure.

Jottings en route—The Legs of the Law—"When Constabulary's duty's to be done"—Mr. "MacMoneygle"—Off !—An Electrical Rush—Round the Town—A Mammoth Work-shop—Nearly Cremated—We are frozen, baked, galvanized, hammered, planed, tarred, and varnished—"Fleshers"—"Far from the Madding Crowd"—The Spirit of Belfast.

It is curious that a hundred miles should make such a difference in the character of a people as exists between the inhabitants of Dublin and those of Belfast. You notice the change as you travel from frivolous Dublin to money-making Belfast in the train, by means of the stranger who gets in for short journeys. For most of the distance you have the companionship of clericals of a party that now rules Irish opinion, but as you approach Belfast their places are taken by representatives of the Dissenters and Episcopalians.

The character of the people you see on the railway platforms undergoes a change ; in the South we have the open-mouthed caricature of the Hibernian and an "ould lady" of the same class ; an arm of the law (legs of the law, the R. I. C. might well be called, judging from the length of their nether limbs) stands at attention. Toward the North the people look keener and more well-to-do, and when "constabulary's duty's to be done" it is done in a more agreeable fashion than in the South. Belfast is neither Irish flesh, English fowl, nor good Scotch

herring. It is a conglomeration of various trades and nationalities, a hotch-potch thick and strong.

The cheery “Grand Juryman” welcomed us to his palatial hotel, and I spent most of my week in this comfortable hostelry, as Jupiter Pluvius, Boreas and Co. were masters of the situation, and reigned supreme out of doors. However, I managed to see a good deal of the Belfast people, and quite enough of the city. I ought to say enough of the shop and the shopkeepers, for Belfast is but a vast emporium of commerce, and its inhabitants live, move, and have their being in the sole company of their ledgers and tapes. They all worship at the shrine of one firm, Messrs. Money, Grubber and Co.

Mr. “MacMoneygle” is the true type of the guide, philosopher, and friend, and the moment I arrived, rushed into my hotel, generously throwing himself at my disposal, and offering to pilot me through the mazy intricacies of Belfast ; so, as I had only one afternoon to spare, true to the instincts of the Saxon tourist, I arranged for him to show me as much as he could of the town in that short space of time.

On the afternoon in question, a neat “janting kyar” is ready at the door to the minute ; and before mounting this vehicle in the well-known Irish sideways fashion, the worthy MacM. rushes me to an adjacent jeweller’s, and my eyes glitter at the sight of a gorgeous clock in the window, bearing an inscription to the effect that it was a present to the aforesaid MacM. on his wedding-day. “Only married last week,” explains that individual. I congratulate him, as he shoves me up on to the car, and off we go, only to pull up the next minute opposite a splendid club-house. I am dragged off the car, rushed up the stairs, shown the dining-room, reading-room, smoking-room, card-room, and billiard-room without taking breath, am introduced to the president, vice-president, secretary, and committee, and finally find myself shaking hands with the waiters and hall-porters in the confusion of this electrical rush through the club. Up on the car again, and we stop before a large factory for a few moments, in which I am rapidly told the number of windows, the height of the chimneys, the quantity of employés, and the history, prospects, and a genealogical tree of every partner in the firm. I have just time to ejaculate, “Extraordinary, wonderful, how interesting !” when we are whirled off again, only to be pulled up suddenly opposite another immense manufacturing concern. Breathlessly I take in all the details of this firm in a few seconds. “Wonderful, how very marvel !” Jerk ! I am thrown prostrate on my seat in this unwonted conveyance, as we once more dart off with lightning rapidity, and in twenty minutes I have done twenty princely establishments in this fashion, and my brain is a seething whirlpool of statistics connected with the rise or fall of each firm.

But the *pièce de résistance* has yet to come. Our headlong race against time is checked upon a bridge, and we are shown the river thronged with shipping. Vessels of all sorts, sizes, and nationalities all congregated there, huddled together like sheep ; from the imposing double-funnelled steamer and the lordly brig, to the common or garden fishing-smack, all the different means of aquatic locomotion are represented, and a perfect forest of masts rises skyward, like the quills of a gigantic porcupine. To inform me of the tonnage, build, horse-power, and speed of every boat visible is the work of a moment. Then off again, and in a couple of minutes we pull up at the offices of a vast shipbuilding yard, where the clang of hammers and the hissing of steam betokens the combination of Capital and Labor within.

We are hurriedly introduced to the courteous manager, who sizing me up from top to toe, or, in his own phraseology, from masthead to keel, accompanies a vigorous handshake with the remark, “You look bigger on the stage, Mr. Furniss ;” and, hurried on by the irrepressible

MacM., takes us in tow for a tour round the works. By a tortuous path over planks, beams, huge pieces of wrought iron and colossal bolts and rivets, we are conducted into an immense shed, where, amid the glow from the furnaces and the flying sparks from the forges, big, swarthy smiths are wielding ponderous sledge-hammers, causing the sparks to fly out from the common centre like those of an exploding bomb. These sparks we dodge, and are hurried up a ladder to the shops where the fittings of the big Transatlantic Liners are made, through the lofty sheds where all the surplus stock is stored, and where the cool air chills all the marrow in your bones, rapidly down another ladder, and finally come face to face with the blast furnaces.

For our edification the doors of these vast ovens are thrown open, and, in the red-hot glow in which we are suddenly bathed, we feel our hair frizz to the roots, a smell of scorched clothes pervades the air, and the ominous cracks from our boots portend that in another minute the soles will part company with the uppers. We realize the awful fact that in five minutes we will be cremated alive ; so before becoming sacrifices to the god of fire, we tear ourselves away from the fearful but fascinating flames. The egg-dance is undoubtedly a wonderful acrobatic feat, but it is mere child's-play to the agility we have to display in threading our way through the pieces of metal in various stages of heat that are strewn in our path.

From one busy hive of industry to another we rapidly pass, and at last, after being frozen, baked, galvanized, hammered, planed, tarred, and varnished, we emerge into the outer air, and find looming up in front of us the bare skeleton of a huge vessel, a future ocean monster, in its embryo state ; before the flesh, so to speak, is put on outside it, or the mechanism placed within.

Next to this infant is a leviathan of the same class, fully developed, ready to be launched, the Alpha and Omega of perhaps the most wonderful industry in Ireland. Our tour of inspection is complete ; we have superintended the vessel from the rough framework to the last coat of varnish ; we receive another hearty handshake and the best of wishes, as we take leave of the genial manager, our whilom guide, and still accompanied by the faithful MacM., find ourselves at last amazed, dazed, and deafened in the street.

Once more on our wild career, we are rushed through the streets, the city of business and industry passing before us like a panorama, the while our guide rattles away like the inevitable lecturer attached to the panorama, describing everything as we go. Like a little boy on a back seat who always interrupts the lecturer, I venture to ask :

“ Where is the scene of the notorious Belfast riots ?”

A word to the jarvey ; we rattle round a corner, up one street, down another ; a sudden stop.

“ There you are. That's the Police office outside of which the slaughter took place a few years ago ; now we are passing though the stronghold of the Catholic party—from this bridge you see the Orange quarters as well ; if you turn round you can make a sketch of both.”

This done, we are off again ; in half-an-hour more we are shown everything of interest remaining, and are deposited at our hotel door five minutes before our allotted time.

“ Well, good-by, Mr. Furniss ; glad to have been of service to you,” and the good-natured Mac departs.

Turning over the pages of my notebook, I find a mass of hieroglyphics which I myself cannot quite unravel, for we have gone through the city at an express rate which would have baffled the most electric of artists and the most fluent of writers ; but one peculiar word arrests my eye—"Flesher." This uneuphonious and highly disagreeable word is used by Belfast butchers to denote their calling. If this innovation spreads in Belfast, we will no longer hear of undertakers, dentists, bakers, or milkmen—they will be corpses, toothers, breaders, and milkers !

In strong contrast to the lightning guide (" lightning-conductor" I might almost call him) who showed me the Belfast of business, was my literary friend in whose company I saw the Belfast of leisure. Not far from the madding crowd runs a river which for its sylvan quietude and picturesque beauty can well compare with the lovely upper reaches of the Thames ; and on its placid bosom I spent an afternoon with a well-known literary celebrity, his charming wife, and an artistic friend, with whom I discussed literature, science, and art, interspersed with a fair amount of London society scandal, as an antidote to the conversation of the business men, or " cashers" I suppose they ought to be called, of Belfast.

The words Thackeray spoke of the Belfast people in his day had a solid foundation, for they are exemplified in the public of the present time. They are astoundingly ignorant ; I am assured they read nothing, and people whose names are household words in the outer world are totally unknown in Belfast, except perhaps a person who is a star in the commercial firmament, and with whom an acquaintance may tend to increase the balance at their bankers. Charles Dickens was a failure here. " Who the Dickens is he ?" was the joke at the time. The joke cost nothing, so they laughed.

The pests of Belfast are the street Arabs, scantily attired, bare-footed, and unacquainted with soap, who surround you and worry you to buy those advertising mediums, penny almanacs. You throw them a copper, and a free fight in the gutter results for the possession of it. It is the spirit of the place. These ragamuffins will fight their money-grubbing way upward, till at some future day, as heads of firms, they will be continuing this sordid, miserly struggle in palatial offices : Terence, Sandy, and Bill, the erstwhile struggling combatants for my copper in the gutter, are now Messrs. Flanagan, MacPherson, and Higgins ; and when under the office windows I draw pictures in colored chalks on the pavement for a living, they will pull down their office blinds and leave my proffered hat copperless on the window-sill. That is Belfast.

Belfast.

My dear M.,

I am glad you enjoy " Some Circular Notes" that I am illustrating in " Punch." They are written in X——'s best style, and no one appreciates them more than the good guide, philosopher and friend " Daubinet" himself. By the way, I did some of the drawings for them in Belfast, and Mr. " MacMoneygle" came in just as I was at work on them, and so kindly offered to take me round the town ; so it was this coincidence that made me describe my pleasant experience of MacMonagle in the manner I did, calling him Mr. " MacMoneygle" in the same good spirit in which X—— christened his companion " Daubinet."

Mr. "MacMoneygle" is probably not known to any great extent outside Belfast, while "Daubinet" is known all over the world ; and both he himself and his friends are delighted by X——'s humorous references to him in "Punch." Of course I thought I was paying MacMonagle a compliment ; but the Press is up in arms against me, and he himself is in tears. Oh, dear ! oh, dear ! is it only a Presbyterian minister that can be understood in the North ? I said that neither a Frenchman nor an Irishman could stand chaff, but in this parallel between "Daubinet" and Mr. "Mac Moneygle" Monsieur D. scores one. Of course I wrote and explained my little joke to my good natured acquaintance, MacMonagle. The Press proved just as thin-skinned, and tried to swallow me up with columns of attack and abuse, but I simply left them to themselves, knowing as an old journalistic hand that being perfectly right in everything I said they were bound in time to contradict themselves. This they have done, as you will see by the papers I send you. Their own correspondents, whom they cannot very well contradict, have written long letters bearing me out in my statements, and I have received a number of private letters fully indorsing my views. . . . The Professor is in his element on the scene of the notorious Belfast riots ; for religious, enlightened, artistic and literary Belfast must find some relaxation from its highly-refined and cultured pursuits in faction-fighting and bloodshed. The details and statistics anent these disturbances that the Professor has collected would make your hair stand on end. . . .

Yours, etc.,

PS.—This morning I came across the following in an English paper, which I offer to Belfast people as a text for their sermon on the "fiery Furniss," who had the astounding audacity to say that they were not a literary people.

"That gratitude is indeed but 'a lively sense of favors to come' would seem to be the moral of a recent incident in Belfast. It is said that upon opening two contribution boxes placed in the Free Library for a memorial portrait to the late Canon Grainger, who had presented a collection of antiquities to the Library worth £12,000, they were found to contain a number of pieces of blotting-paper, some free tickets for the Library, some other odds and ends, and five and two-pence in coppers and small silver !"

Munificent Messrs. Money, Grubber & Co. ! Where are your "cashers" now ? As the Press would say, "Comment is needless !"

CONTINUING my travels, after a fortnight's sojourn in the Emerald Isle, I left it by the North Wall route for Holyhead, at half-past nine in the morning. Although the boats of the London and North Western Railway Company are excellent, the cheap tripper is master of the situation, and it was not particularly edifying to have to witness the eccentric perambulations of gentlemen on the foredeck, who had evidently determined not to leave the land of John Jamieson without sampling the famous national beverage.

It is curious to note, when you are travelling, the number of counterfeit presentments of notable people you meet. It was at York Station, I think, that a double of Lord Beaconsfield waited upon me in the refreshment room ; in London I have frequently been driven by a spurious Mr. Gladstone, while Sir William Harcourt once cleaned my boots at a Northern hotel : so crossing from Ireland, it was gratifying to find that the captain of the good ship *Shamrock* was a genial Colonel North, and that Sir Richard Temple was manfully doing his duty at the wheel ; and when I observed this I anxiously inquired if there were any reefs or sand-banks in our course on which he could wreck the ship in revenge for my many caricatures of him.

Flying visits (1892)

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