

## God's Own Country 1805

*The Stranger in Ireland, Or, A Tour in the Southern and Western Parts of that Country in the year 1805.*

John Carr

The ferry is very inconvenient and tedious, and the ferrymen have the conscience to charge each passenger one shilling. The island of Anglesea is about twenty miles long and seventeen broad, contains about two hundred thousand acres, and is washed on every side by the Irish Sea, except on the south-east, where it is divided from Caernarvon by a narrow strait called Mon, which induced the Romans to call it Mona, but being conquered by the English it was called Anglesea. It submitted to the arms of Edward I in 1277, when the natives sought shelter in the deep caves and rugged acclivities of Snowdon.

At Gwindu, which is a very comfortable inn standing alone, twelve miles from Holyhead, I passed the night, whilst waiting for a change of weather to embark. Here I met with a very amiable and elegant Irish family, who in their vivacity and affability reminded me very much of the French, and of some happy scenes which I passed in their delightful country. With an admirable harper, as blind as Cupid, though not so handsome, and a merry dance, we set the raging elements at defiance ; the wind roared and the rain lashed the casement, whilst we went laughing, dancing, and singing *vive la bagatelle* to the stormy night. Whilst I was here, I amused myself with looking at a French and English dictionary, which had passed through its ninth edition, and found under the head of " Abbreviation of English Christian Names," the following : Johnny an abbreviation for John ; Robin for Robert ; Jemmy for James ; Jenny for Jane. I looked upon these lexicographical bulls as a tolerable good preparation for those which I was to meet with in Ireland.

As the wind can always be ascertained at Gwindu, from its elevated situation and a lofty pole, surmounted by a weathercock, I advise the traveller proceeding to Ireland, if the weather be adverse, to put up at this inn, and thank Heaven that he is not at Holyhead. The distant sound of the horn the next afternoon announced the approach of the mail ; and about six o'clock, after passing some druidical remains on our right, we reached Holyhead : a violent storm came on, and the master of the packet determined upon not sailing till the morning.

Well cased in a surtout, I took a survey of Holyhead ; and although in foul weather the fairest scene looks somewhat sad, I inferred from the peculiarly gloomy aspect of this town, that in dreariness it has not frequently a parallel. There are two inns here, both of them always crowded, on account of the packets, and neither of them very comfortable. It is scarcely possible to attend to the minuter wants of such a confluence of guests. The church is seated upon a rock, close to the sea, and is dedicated to St. Kibius, who flourished here a *short time since* as a Welsh genealogist would insist upon, viz. in the year 380.

Holyhead is said to have been the principal residence of the Druids, and to have obtained the name of *holy* from the before-mentioned saint, and by the Welsh is called *Caer Cuby*. Here the traveller is assailed by those detestable, corrupt harpies, called customhouse officers, merely because the sea divides one part of the united kingdom from the other. It seems a solecism in legislation, that these rapacious and unpopular members of separate sovereignties should be permitted, after an act of incorporation, to annoy those who are quietly passing from one part of the empire to another. A receipt from the packet-master, for payment of the passage-money, ought to free the baggage of the passenger from molestation.

As this pest, however, is permitted to exist, let me recommend the traveller to provide himself with a portmanteau instead of a box, as the former is never searched. The passage money is a guinea ; and let me here also advise the passenger to take with him a little sea-store, as none, to my woful experience, is to be had on board, contrary to the usage of most packets.

In the morning, about ten o'clock, after a very tempestuous night, which prevented our vessel from sailing, we were summoned by the steward to go on board, for the wind was fair and fresh. Just as we were quitting the inn, one of the passengers, a jolly, thoughtless son of the ocean, who was going over to Ireland to take a sea-fencible command, roared out a thousand inverted blessings upon the head of a miserable little lean wretch, one of those personages of an inn who answer to the name of "boots." "Why, you little rascal, you have brought me *two right-legged boots* ; where is my other boot ? Get it instantly, or I will beat you as black as a mourning-coach." The miserable culprit went into every room in the house, but searched in vain for the brother of this unfortunate boot. In the mean time, summons after summons came for this ill-starred gentleman, who was obliged to walk down to the quay with a right-legged boot and a shoe on his feet, and another right-legged boot in his hand, to the no little amusement of us all, for it was to be classed amongst those disasters which Rochefoucault admits are more calculated to excite merriment than commiseration ; and we also could not help reflecting that some equally unlucky wight must be astonished to find himself, when he rose to his breakfast, in the possession of a pair of boots which would only suit the left leg.

At ten o'clock in the morning,

" the threaten sails,  
Borne with invisible and creeping wind,  
Drew the huge bottom through the furrow'd sea,  
Breasting the lofty surge."

The distance was only eighty miles to Ireland : the treacherous wind, at starting, promised to carry us over in nine hours, but violated its promise by, of all other causes of detention the most insipid, a dead calm, for two tedious days and nights, which was solely attributed by the sailors to our having a mitred prelate on board. Hunger succeeded sickness, and concluding, but groundlessly, that I could obtain whatever refreshment I might want on board, my situation, after some suffering, would indeed have been unpleasant, had it not been relieved by a lady, who, projecting out of an adjoining cot one of the most pleasing and sensible faces I ever saw, invited me to partake of some excellent broiled slices of mutton. The Muse of Poetry has always been celebrated for her generosity. My fair neighbour proved to be, for the honour of Ireland, lady Tuite, the accomplished and elegant authoress of several charming poems, and particularly some beautiful well-known lines in reply to Mrs. Grenville's prayer for Indifference, one verse of which, united to the act of kindness which I have recorded, will prove that her ladyship is no friend to apathy.

Shall she who, *as the needle true,*  
*Was made to turn and tremble too,*  
A gift so rare despise ;  
Shall she, intended but to please.  
Whose smile can Sorrow's bondage ease  
Shall she Indifference prize?

Do not, gentle reader, accuse me of being too prolix. I vowed upon the cabin table, with these most seasonable proofs of the fair lady's feelings before my eyes, to tell every one who

might read me, that I was relieved from a gloomy dilemma by a lady of fashion, an Irish-woman, and a poetess.

The hill of Howth is in sight.

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The Bay of Dublin Described—The Mole—Prize Pork—English Agricultural Bull—Irish Vis-A-Vis—Ancient History of Ireland Omitted—Nations, Like Individuals, Proud of Ancient Genealogy—The Fountain—Street Sounds—Jingles—A Car—A Noddy—The Important Accelerating and Retarding Words Gee and Woo Discussed—A Raw—Dublin Beggars—The Black Cart—Mendicant Wit—Dress of Low Irish.

As we entered the bay of Dublin, a brilliant sun, and almost cloudless sky, unfolded one of the finest land and sea prospects I ever beheld. “ The mountains showed their grey heads, the blue face of the Ocean smiled, the white wave was seen tumbling round the distant rock.” On the right was the rugged hill of Howth, with its rocky bays, wanting only a volcano to afford to the surrounding scenery the strongest resemblance, as I was well informed, to the beautiful bay of Naples ; whilst, nearer to the eye, at the extremity of a white line of masonry, just fringing the sea, the light-house presented its alabaster front. On our left were the town of Dalkey, with its romantic rocks, mutilated castles, martello towers, with their gay little streamers, elegant villas, and the picturesque town of Dunleary ; whilst behind was seen a line of parks and plantations, above which the mountains of Wicklow ascend with the greatest majesty. Whilst I stood enraptured with the richness of the scenery, a good-humoured Irish sailor came up to me, and, with a smile of delight, said, “ By Jasus, your honour ! you’re right there ; it’s God’s own country ;” nodding at the same time at me. In this bay, that great man, dean Swift, received the most flattering honours that a grateful people could show to their favourite and friend ; several heads of the different corporations, and principal citizens of Dublin, went out in boats adorned with colours, to welcome the dean back from England, preceded by his friend Dr. Sheridan, with the agreeable news, that his beloved Stella, who had been very ill, was recovered, and conducted him to his house amidst the acclamations of “ Long live the Drapier,” the name which he had assumed in a series of popular letters.

As we proceeded, we passed through two great sand-banks called the North and South Bulls, which prevent large ships from crossing the bar, and render Dublin very incommodious for shipping. It was upon one of these banks that an outward bound packet was wrecked a few years since, when many lives were lost. During the horror of the scene, an instance of collected presence of mind occurred, which is somewhat rare : a quaker, who was hanging in the shrouds, said to a fellow-sufferer, who was in momentary expectation of being entombed in the deep : “ Friend, should we escape death this time, cans’t thou inform me when the next Liverpool packet will sail ?”

For want of towers and spires, the capital excites but little impression of its magnitude and consequence at a distance. The harbour has been very much protected, on the south side of the river, by a prodigious mole or stone-wall, called the South Wall, formed of large blocks of mountain granite, braced with iron, and strongly cemented. This wonderful monument of human ingenuity and enterprize, which may rank with some of the finest remains of Roman magnificence, extends nearly three miles into the bay from Ringsend. From the king’s watch-house it runs to the block-house, which is distant seven thousand nine hundred and thirty-eight feet ; and from thence to the light-house, at the extremity of the wall, nine thousand eight hundred and sixteen feet. It rises about five feet above high water, is nearly forty feet broad as far as the block-house, and from thence to the light-house twenty-eight feet broad,

narrowing from a base of about thirty-two feet broad. This stupendous work was begun in 1748, and completed in seven years. As we turned the light-house, I was much gratified by its appearance : it is a round tower of white hewn granite, of three stories high, gradually tapering to the summit, on which is raised an octagonal lantern of tight windows, the powerful light of which is increased by reflecting lenses. A stone staircase, with an iron ballustrade, winds round the building to the second story, where an iron gallery surrounds the whole. It was commenced on the first of June, 1762, in consequence of a statute of queen Anne, called the ballast act. By depositing huge rocks in a vast caisson which was sunk in the sea, the ingenious architect, Mr. Smyth, has been able to raise this beautiful structure, and to give it the consistency of rock, in a situation peculiarly exposed to the raging elements. As we sailed in smooth water on the inner side of the mole, it strongly reminded me of passing by the wonderful embankments which I had seen on the sides of the Neva. Before I land, let me recommend the Union packet as infinitely the swiftest sailing vessel in the service. Our vessel was able to lie along-side of the Pidgeon-house, where we quitted that consummation of human misery, *a cabin after a short voyage* ; and, upon landing, after our luggage had again been submitted to search, and to an imposition of three shillings in the shape of a customs-house fee, we entered a long coach, drawn by four wretched horses, which attends upon the packets, and proceeded towards the capital, distant about three miles. Reader, if you love a laugh as well as I do, you will not be offended with me if I relate, that two Scotsmen, who appeared to be enthusiastic agriculturists of the modern school, committed their niece, one of the lovely daughters of green Erin (and indeed she was very beautiful), to my care in the carriage, there being no room for them ; that, finding she had a bundle, I begged and prevailed upon her to let me bear it upon my lap for her, in which situation it had not been placed above ten minutes, before it began to stream with perspiration, and proved to be, to the cost of my pantaloons, a large piece of prize-pork, which her uncles, in their rage for fattening cattle, had brought over from England as a precious relic of their favourite system. The Irish will have a fair retaliating laugh at us, when they hear that the secretary of a celebrated English agricultural society received orders from its committee to procure several copies of Mr. and Miss Edgeworth's *Essay on Irish Bulls*, upon the first appearance of that admirable book, for the use of the members, in their labours for improving the breed of cattle.

A stranger, in his progress from the Pidgeon-house to the capital, cannot fail of being shocked by a sudden contrast to the beautiful scenes he has just quitted, exhibited in a little town called Ringsend, one of the most horrible sinks of filth I ever beheld. Every house swarmed with ragged, squalid tenantry, and dung and garbage lay in heaps in the passages, and upon the steps leading to the cellars : that such a nuisance should be permitted to remain in the neighbourhood of such a city is astonishing. Upon the road we saw several carriages peculiar to the country ; that which struck me most was the jaunting car, an open carriage, mounted upon two small wheels, drawn by one horse, in which the company sit back to back, and hence the Irish, in badinage, call it an Irish *vis-a-vis* ; whilst, on the other hand, considering the position of the parties and of the coachman, who is elevated in front, I have heard it more appropriately, though less delicately, nominated the *cul-a-cul*. This carriage is very convenient and easy, and will carry six persons besides the coachman. It much resembles the Russian carriage called the *droshka*. The entrance to the capital was through one of the barriers which were erected in the rebellion over one of the canals, which form an admirable protection to the city ; and, after passing through several noble streets, we stopped at the mail-coach office, and I proceeded to the Royal Hotel in Kildare-street.

As I passed along, I could not help reflecting upon the ridiculous misrepresentations which have so strong a tendency to divide men from each other, and to perpetuate the antipathy which frequently too fatally separates one country from another. It was not above forty years since that an English nobleman, who was compelled, on account of the settlement of some

large estates, to pass some time in Ireland, ordered his *avant-courier* to hire for him one of the best houses in Dublin, and to take especial care that it was not *thatched*. In Spenser's time, the wild Irish were believed to have wings sprouting from their shoulders, and it was lawful to shoot them like any other wild winged animal ; and even to the present moment, the genuine character of the Irish is but little known to their brethren on this side of the water,

As sir Isaac Newton has set his face against the authority of tradition beyond one hundred years of age, I shall not detain the reader to inquire whether Jason and the Argonauts sailed from the Bosphorus to Ireland, or whether the neighbouring nations received their alphabets through the medium of that country, or whether the Irish are descended from Magog the son of Japhet, the son of Noah, whether O'Brien Boromhe overwhelmed and expelled the Thuatha d'ha Denan with all the artillery of their magic and, witcheries. I would disturb no people in their fancy for national antiquity and preeminence. In God's name let the Peruvians derive themselves from the sun ; let the Chinese boast of the existence of their empire eight thousand years before the creation of the world according to our calculation ; let the Laplander, uncontravened, maintain that his dusky groves, shut up for nine months in polar winter, are the most rural in the world, and that the only honest men and good strawberries, created or grown, are to be found in this country. If the Irish prefer a Carthaginian origin, and the honour of having peopled Scotland, instead of being derived from her, or from Great Britain, or any other country, let her enjoy all the happiness attached to the origin she prefers. However powerful or weak her pretensions to Milesian pedigree may be, for, being no antiquarian, I care but little for the matter ; this I know, that if she were not able to push her genealogy beyond a century, she would at least be, as the chief of her orators, Grattan, has finely said, " like some men, possessed of certain powers, who distinguish the place of their nativity, instead of being distinguished by it. They do not receive, they give birth to the place of their residence, and vivify the region which is about them."

My attempt is to sketch the modern Irish, and principally to describe what I saw. I leave Vallency, Ledwich, and Walker, to settle their dispute with Time, for having, by their learning and ingenuity, disarmed him of half his power.

Having performed those ablutions which are so doubly gratifying after a voyage, I traversed as much of the city as I could before dinner, and found myself in Merrion-square, three sides of which are composed of very handsome brick houses, and one side is occupied by Leinster-house and grounds, belonging to the duke of that name, and the only personage of that rank in Ireland. This square is planted, railed round, paved, and lighted, in a very handsome manner, and will not lose by a comparison with Cavendish-square in London. In the centre of one side of the railing is a public fountain, decorated with the statue of a fountain-nymph, under whom is inscribed, " To the memory of Charles Manners, duke of Rutland, whose heart was as susceptible of the wants of his fellow-Creatures, as his purse was open to relieve them, this fountain for the use of the poor is dedicated : at his command it was undertaken, and at his sole expence it would have been erected, had not premature death suddenly deprived the poor of their best benefactor, and the rich of their brightest example." This valuable monument, and the place of its erection, being opposite to Leinster-house, once the paternal roof of the unfortunate lord Edward Fitzgerald, brought to my recollection a beautiful and affecting rhetorical figure used by that great ornament of the Irish bar, Curran, in defending his lordship's widow, the celebrated Pamela, and her infant children, at the bar of the Irish House of Commons. " If," said he, " the widowed mother should carry the orphan heir of her unfortunate husband to the gate of any man, he would feel himself touched with the sad vicissitudes of human affairs ; he would feel a compassionate reverence for the noble blood that flowed in his veins, *that like a rich stream rose, till it ran, and hid its fountain.*"

After roving through many noble streets, similar in character and beauty to those of the better parts of London, and being frequently struck with the novel sounds of, “ Blood and ounds, make haste, Pat, “ by my faith and shoul,” I reached a jingle stand, and having heard much of this carriage, in company with a friend I mounted one, and took a drive upon a noble road for about two miles. This carriage resembles as much of a coach as remains after the doors, and the upper sides, and roof are removed, and is mounted very high upon four large slender wheels. Its motion produces a rattling noise, which furnishes its name : it is drawn by one miserable looking horse, whose fate it is frequently to pull after him, upon a smart trot, his driver and six passengers. On the road I met one of them quite full, which, at a little distance ; owing to the poor animal being enveloped in the fog of his own perspiration, made the passengers appear as if they were impelled by *steam*. The principal stand of these carriages is at the end of Bagot-street : they are numbered, and the drivers are subject to the control of the police for improper behaviour. They generally run to the Pidgeon-house, and to the Black-rock, and back again. The fare is sixpence only for each person, provided there is a complement of passengers ; so that those who will not pay for the deficiency of the necessary number, must “ sit, like Patience upon a monument,” till the vehicle is filled. These carriages, wretched as they look, are very convenient, and persons of the first respectability frequently ride in them. Away rolled Pat, my friend, and I. All the drivers, and almost every low Irish-man, is called Pat, an abbreviation of Paddy, a popular christian name, derived from St. Patrick, the tutelar saint of Ireland, who had the honours of canonization decreed to him, for having, amongst other notable things which I shall hereafter have occasion to enumerate, illustrated the trinity by a shamrock or trefoil. No one who believes in the actual and *bona fide* existence of Minerva, the guardian of Athens ; of Juno, the protectress of Carthage ; of Mars, the celestial friend of Rome : in short, no one but a most incorrigible disbeliever can doubt that the good and great St. Patrick was a tangible being. And here, for they must not be separated, let me introduce to the reader the immaculate Brigid, the virgin saint of Ireland, who, like Vesta, was formerly worshipped by her nuns with unextinguished fires ; but the modern Irish ladies approach her altars with a more acceptable sacrifice, with chastity instead of celibacy : but more of this hereafter. On the road we saw a poor jingle horse, which had been turned out to batten upon the sorry weed of the ditch, lying, as I thought, for ever removed from all the future toils of so wretched a destiny. “ Poor animal !” said I, “ he’s dead.” “ And plaze your honour,” Said Pat, “ he is not *dead entirely*.”

On the road we met several cars, which are used as common carts. This carriage, which is drawn by one horse, is very low, mounted upon wheels of about two feet in diameter, made out of one or two pieces of wood, fixed either on an iron or wooden axle-tree, which turns round with them, and will carry about the load of three English wheel-barrows. A noddy also passed us : this carriage is now somewhat rare. It is an old, battered single-horse chase, with the head up, having a seat for Pat upon the shafts, who is so placed that he retaliates upon his passenger, for the rump of the horse being placed close to his very mouth. As this machine moves, it nods ; and hence, as the Irish are always descriptive in their expressions, I presume its name : these are all the carriages peculiar to the country.

The hackney-coaches are similar to those in London, but infinitely inferior in ease and cleanliness. Some wag has written, that the hackney-coach drivers of Dublin use very long poles in their coaches, at the end of which they fasten a bundle of hay out of the reach of the horse, by which ingenious arrangement the animal advances with increased ardour in the constant pursuit of food which he is seldom permitted to taste : this picture is utterly false. The horses, however, are very poor ; and the whole establishment calls loudly for the ameliorating hand of the civil government.

It ought to be observed, that the Irish horse is singularly hardy ; and to be very high in bone is no proof of weakness. In the city, mules are very common, and they were in general in good condition. The Irish drivers set their horses in motion much in the same way as we do, by the word “ gee,” an important word which, as well as that of “ whoa,” have been too much in constant use to have had much illustration. Dr. Johnson defines the accelerating word “ gee” to be “ a term amongst waggoners, to make their horses go faster ;” but does not recur to the radical word. Ge, or geh, seems to be the imperative of the German verb gehen, to go ; a word by which, with an accompanying stroke of the whip, a horse thoroughly understands that he is to advance. The retarding word “ whoa,” we are told, was formerly applied to valorous knights and combatants in armour, or *harness*, as it was called, and hence degraded to horses *in harness*. When the king, as president at tilts and tournaments, threw down his baton as the signal of discontinuance, the heralds cried out, in the Danish language, to the combatants, “ ho,” that is, stop. When a jingle-driver wishes his horse to go to the right, he cries “ hup, hup ;” when to the left, “ wey, wey ;” and when to stop, “ phthrowh.” The jingle-drivers frequently make one pound eleven shillings and six pence by driving persons on a Sunday to the Black-rock, a distance of about five English miles from the city. When these fellows cut a horse to the flesh, which is not often the case, they call it “ *establishing a raw.*”

We had not proceeded an Irish mile, eleven of which are equal to fourteen English, before Pat stopped, and said, “ Plaze your honours, I will not drive your honours any farther, unless you give me another hog.” Knowing the word in its usual acceptation *only*, we thought proper to alight ; and having paid him what he at first demanded, which was, as we afterwards found, thrice as much as his fare, we descended, and in learning what a hog was, we obtained the nature of the currency of Ireland, which consists,

1st. Of a copious effusion of paper, from a guinea note to several thousand pounds.

2d. English guineas, seldom seen out of the north of Irdand worth one pound two shillings and nine-pence Irish each.

3d. Dollars worth five shillings and fivepence Irish each.

4th. Silver bank tokens of six shillings Irish each.

5th. Silver bank tokens, called tenpenny and fivepenny pieces, worth so much Irish each.

6th. Hogs, or shillings, sometimes called thirteens, worth thirteen pence Irish each.

7th. Pigs, or testers, worth sevenpence Irish each.

8th. Penny, half-penny, and farthing pieces, a very recent and handsome coinage.—For reasons which will hereafter appear, as long as any difference of exchange continues above par, it will be adviseable for those who visit Ireland, either to draw on England if they are know, or to take over guineas.

Although the beneficence of the country has provided so many comfortable asylums for the beggars of Dublin, they are numerous and wretched beyond conception : I think more so than in the provinces of France. Their dress is deplorably filthy, and induced a wit to say, that he never knew what the beggars of London did with their cast off clothes, till he found that they were sold to the Dublin beggars. I have heard of a wandering wretch, who in passing

over a corn-field, thought himself very fortunate in exchanging breeches with a mawkin or scarecrow, set up to frighten away the birds ; and such seems to be the condition of those mendicants. Their perseverance is generally irresistible.

Some of the police with a black covered cart occasionally go round the city to pick up such mendicants as do not disappear as the terrific vehicle turns the corner of a street, and convey them to the house of industry, from which they escape the first opportunity. They prefer a precarious crust of bread steeped in tears with liberty, to comfort and protection in the shape of restraint. In London we have many sights of sorrow before us, but they are generally confined to certain parts of the town ; whereas in Dublin they affect the eyes, and ears, and disfigure the beauty of this superb city every where. As the present arrangements are so inadequate, the legislature cannot direct its eye with too much ardour and anxiety to the subject. To that legislature the poor mendicant may say, in the language of Shakespeare,

“ You taught me first to beg ; and now, methinks,  
You teach me how a beggar should be answered.”

The native wit and humour of the low Irish is singularly happy. A beggar had been for a long time besieging an old, gouty, testy, limping gentleman, who refused his mite with great irritability, Upon which the mendicant said, “ Ah, please your honour’s honour, I wish God had made your *heart* as tender as your *toes*.” Many of these poor creatures, to secure a decent interment, respecting which the low Irish are very tenacious, with a spirit of hospitality beyond the grave, implore the aid of alms to purchase a coffin for themselves, and candles, pipes, tobacco, and whiskey for their mourning friends.

As the dress of Pat is pretty nearly the same from Dublin to Galway, and from Fairhead to Bantry, and has continued so for ages, one description will be sufficient, and I shall take it from Spenser in his Review of Ireland : It is a long loose coat, or mantle, made of woollen, of stone-colour, which Pat always wears alike in the nipping winter and the sultry summer, and of which the poet, with some bitterness of spirit, thus speaks : “ It is a fit house for an outlaw, a meet bed for a rebel, and an apt cloak for a thief : first, the outlaw beings for his many cringes and villanies, banished from the towns and houses of honest men, and wandering in waste places far from danger of law, maketh his nuntle his house, and under it covereth himself from the wrath of Heaven, from the offence of the earth, and from the sight of man. When it raineth, it is his penthouse ; when it bloweth, it is his tent ; when it freezeth, it is his tabernacle. In summer he can wear it loose, in winter he can wrap it close : at all times he can use it ; never heavy, never cumbersome. Likewise for a rebel it is as serviceable ; for in this war that he maketh (if at least it deserves the name of war), when he still flieth from his foe, and lurketh in the thick woods and strait passages, waiting for advantages, it is his bed, yea, and almost his household stuff.” The lower order of women are also very fond of a long great coat with many capes.

#### The Packets

Between England and Ireland are stationed at Dublin, Donaghadee, and Waterford, these packets belong to Great Britain, and their expence is charged upon the British revenue. No part whatever of this establishment is supported by the revenue of Ireland.

#### The Mail-Coaches

Run from Dublin to Cork, Belfast, Longford, Limerick, Derry, Enniskillin, Waterford, Sligo, and Dungannon. There are also two mail-coaches established between Cork and Limerick : one passes by Fermoy, and the other by Charliville.



## Post Towns.

There are three hundred and four in Ireland ; to two hundred of which the mails are conveyed six times in each week ; and to one hundred and four, three times in each week.

In the year 1801, there were but *four* mail-coaches in Ireland, viz. to Cork, Limerick, Belfast, and Longford. But that valuable part of the establishment, the importance of which manifests itself every day, has been considerably and *wisely* augmented, as it ensures an expeditious and secure conveyance of the public correspondence. The same system has been attempted to be extended to other parts of the kingdom ; but the insufficiency of travelling intercourse, and the bad state of the roads, defeated the intentions of the postmasters-general, and forced the contractors, after becoming bankrupts, to resign their contracts.

It must ever be the object of the post-office, so long as the post-masters-general are actuated by a desire to promote the prosperity of the department and the public interest, to increase the mail-coach system to the utmost extent, in every direction where circumstances will admit such extension.

The Black-Rock—Local Advantage of Dublin—Martello Towers—Cook-Maid, Whiskey, and The Priest—A Letter—Irish Taste—Newgate—Irish Mode of Executing Criminals—Wit—The Castle

FROM the Poddle I waded to my hotel. I mounted a jingle at the great jingle-stand, at the corner of Bagot-street ; and, after passing several beautiful villas, I reached a town called the Black-Rock, about four miles from Dublin : this town, like Richmond with respect to London, is the great summer Sunday attraction of the lower class of the good citizens of Dublin.

The proximity of this great capital to the sea gives it an enviable advantage in point of salubrity, as well as beauty. Whilst the inhabitants of most of the capitals are obliged, if health require a marine visit, to travel to a considerable distance, with much inconvenience to their business or pursuits, the Dublin people can, in their own shops, inhale the sea-breeze, and have it in their power, by rising a little earlier in the morning, to bathe in the sea, without any disarrangement to their occupations in life.

Before I approached the Black-rock, which lies to the south of the city, the bay of Dublin superbly opened to the view : it was a vast expanse of water, blue and placid as a mirror, rippling only as its flow increased upon the shores ; and, at a distance, melting into the cloudless sky which it reflected. The sails of vessels, faintly discernible alone directed the eye to the tender line of its horizon. In front, the hill of Howth re-appeared in all its majesty, the craggy sides of which the softening hand of distance seemed to have covered, as it were with a russet robe ; whilst, at the end of a long white line projecting far into the sea, the lighthouse rose, and resembled a figure of white marble rising out of the ocean : a more beautiful scene the eye never reposed upon. At low water, the sands along the Black-rock, which, are very compact, afford a sea-side ride for several miles. Upon the sides of this coast is a long chain of equidistant martello towers which, if they have been constructed to embellish the exquisite scenery by which they are surrounded, the object of building them has been successful ; and the liberality of the late administration cannot be too much commended for having raised so many decorations of picturesque beauty at the cost of several thousands of pounds, to gratify the eyes of the passengers of every packet sailing in and out of the bay, at a period when the prosperity of the country is so forcibly illustrated by the trifling amount of its debt. I believe

it would require the inflamed imagination of the hero of Cervantes to discover one possible military advantage which they possess, placed as they are at such a distance, on account of the shallowness of the bay, from the possibility of annoying a hostile vessel

Upon quitting the Black-rock, I visited the villa of a most amiable and respectable family who resided a little beyond it, within whose circle I was at all times received with that cordial politeness and hospitality, which distinguish the Irish, and by which they so strongly resemble the families of ancient descent still to be found in France.

As it happened in this neighbourhood, I may here mention a little occurrence which illustrates the habits of the lower orders of the people. At a house where I was, the cook had, for some time past, relieved the exertions of culinary toil by copious libations of that *liqueur*, so dear to the common Irish, commonly called whiskey, or “the crature.” This indulgence grievously disordered the arrangements of the kitchen. A service of twenty-four years, in a family too gentle to punish a frailty with severity, pleaded strongly for the offender ; and, instead of being dismissed, she was sent to the lodge, under the care of the gate-keeper, until she had recovered her sobriety. Upon an appearance of penitence, her master sent her to her priest (for she was a Roman catholic), who, at the next confession granted her absolution, upon condition that she would abstain from whiskey for one whole year. The letter of the catholic priest to the master of the servant breathes such mildness, and displays such a spirit of Christianity, that the doctrines of the established religion, in which I have been reared, ought to urge me rather to offer than to withhold it from the reader ; the former of which I shall do in its own unaffected language.

“DEAR SIR,

“I have been much edified by the compunction of the penitent you sent me, and by the benevolent solicitude which I see extended to the meanest part of your household. I recalled to her mind an instance of it, in the charitable tenderness which she experienced from you two years ago, when I attended her in a fever. She seems to want neither sensibility nor gratitude. The consciousness of the unworthy returns she has made for all your kindnesses, threw her into a state of agitation that alarmed and melted me. She has made a resolution, which I hope she will adhere to. Alas ! the best of us are but imperfect beings, and our wisest resolutions are frequently and easily overpowered. A conviction that we may want mercy ought to keep us in the constant observance of it ; yet, ( I trust, from the sincere repentance of this unfortunate woman that there will be no occasion for your again exercising it towards her for a similar frailty. I have the honour to be, &c., &c.”

The Black-rock and its neighbourhood are filled with the most elegant country-houses, gardens, and plantations, more numerous, and far more beautiful and picturesque, than the villas of Clapham common, to which it may in some respects be compared, and the inhabitants are very elegant and sociable. The land is very rich and valuable, and lets from ten «o twenty-five pounds an acre. Near the Black-rock, in Stillorgan park, is it noble obelisk, upwards of one hundred feet high, supported by a rustic basement, having a double staircase on each side, leading to a platform which surrounds the structure. It was erected in the year 1739 by lord Carysfort, for the purpose of affording employment and support to the neighbouring poor in a very severe winter. The view from it is superb ; and its history, which is traditionary only, for, with the characteristic of true charity, it has no inscription to tell the name of its bountiful founder, excites in the mind of a stranger an impression highly favourable to the beneficent spirit of the Irish nation. In other places in Ireland, I have seen similar monuments, which have been raised from the same benevolent motive.

In the neighbourhood of the Black-rock, and in other parts of Ireland, I saw a taste in building displayed, which is rarely exhibited in England. The drawing-room frequently opens through a large arch, elegantly festooned with drapery, into a green-house, or rather another room of glass, which is filled with rare plants and beautiful flowers, tastefully arranged, round which are walks finely graveled and at night the whole is lighted up by patent reflectors, and has a singularly beautiful appearance.

Upon my return to town, I visited the new gaol called Newgate which is not shown without a special order or letter from a magistrate. This building is erected on the north side of the city, the foundation-stone of which was laid by the right honourable lord Annaly, lord chief justice of the court of king's-bench, on the 28th October, 1773, and the whole was designed and built by Mr. Cooley, and cost about sixteen thousand pounds. It is a large quadrangular building, extending one hundred and seventy feet in front, and about the same in depth : the sides are of lime-stone, and the front of mountain-stone rusticated, and at each external angle is a round tower. On the left side of the entrance is the guard-room, and to the right are the gaoler's apartments. A little beyond the gate-way is a door that leads to the press-yards ; one of them on the left hand is for the men, from which there is a passage to the apartment in the east front, for those who turn evidence for the crown, and adjoining is a large room for the transports. The cells are in the felons' squares, communicating with the press-yards. There are twelve cells on each floor, with a stair-case to each side. Beside the cells is a gallery, terminated by the privies. In the prisoners' yards are two common halls, where they are allowed to walk, and to have fires in the winter. The condemned cells are below the east front. Water is conveyed to the different cells by an engine, from a cistern in the centre of the south side ; and on each side of the cistern is the infirmary, in which, as in every other part of the building, the sexes are separated. Over the entrance is the chapel, which communicates with the " gallows-room," in which is a windlass and machinery for raising or depressing the bodies of criminals when they are executed, which awful ceremony takes place on the outside of a grated window, even with the floor, in the centre of the front of the building, which opens upon a grating or platform of iron bars, projecting over the street, having a railing about breast high : about nine feet above this platform is a long cross-bar of iron resting upon two projecting bars ; over the centre of the cross-bar the axe of the law is represented, in iron, and below it two pullies are fixed, through each of which a cord runs from the windlass upon pullies, and which cord is fastened to the fatal halter ; upon a signal given, the executioner pulls a lever, which detaches the bolt of the grating or platform upon which the malefactor stands, who, upon its falling down upon its hinges, becomes suspended with a sudden jerk, which frequently shortens the agonies of death. Upon this machine only two criminals can be executed at the same time. As long as a mode of putting capital offenders to death, so cruel and procrastinating as that of hanging, is resorted to, the construction of the fatal apparatus in the gaols in Dublin, and other parts of Ireland, appears to be the best for that purpose.

In London, a vast square machine, containing the platform, acting upon the same principle as that of Dublin, is drawn out from the place where it is usually kept to the debtor's door, Newgate, with which it is connected by a temporary wooden building : the wretched sufferers are frequently disturbed in their midnight devotions by the sound of hammers, and the noise of workmen, in completing this stage of death ; and the expences of every execution in this manner costs the city of London a considerable sum of moneys whereas in Dublin, from the apparatus being of iron, and stationary, the cost is very trifling.

It is a gloomy subject to discuss, but I cannot help observing, that the apparatus in Dublin might be better made to answer the purpose of justice and humanity, by having a wooden box fixed under the falling grate or leaf, into which the body of the malefactor might partly descend, instead of its being so horribly exposed at such a height from the ground : there are

frequent instances of some of the miserable wretches who have been brought out to die, having been precipitated to the pavement below, from some mismanagement of the rope, by which they have, been shockingly torn and mangled before they could be finally dispatched. The subject above-mentioned is highly worthy of the consideration of the city of London. The prisoners in the Newgate of Dublin were comparatively few, and I did not see one of them on the felon side in irons ; a circumstance which must be thought highly creditable to the humanity of those who have the superintendence of the prison.

The lower classed of the Irish people have wit for every subject, even the most gloomy. When this mode of executing criminals was first introduced, a fellow said of a comrade of his, who had just been convicted of felony, “ By my faith and shoul, Pat has not long to live, he will be *off with the fall of the leaf*,” alluding to the machine which I have described, and the sickly season of autumn. This reminds one of the extraordinary talent for badinage, which terror and even the approach of death can rarely suppress in a Frenchman’s mind. During the revolution, the infliction of death by the guillotine was popularly called “ looking through the little national window,” alluding to the hole through which the neck of the sufferer was placed. At another execution in Ireland, the hangman having received a present from a malefactor whom he was about to execute, used a phrase of gratitude which was always upon his lips whenever he had received a kindness, and without reflecting that some little alteration in it was necessary upon this occasion, exclaimed, “ Ah ! many thanks and *long life* to your honour,” and immediately pulled the iron and launched him into eternity.

I was somewhat disappointed in viewing the Castle, the town-palace of the viceroy, and his court. This building was commenced in the year 1205, and finished in 1213, under the auspices of Henry de Londres, archbishop of Dublin and lord justice of Ireland : it afterwards went to decay, and the chief governors were obliged to keep their court at St. Sepulchre’s, Kilmainham and St. Thomas’s Abbey . History says, that in the reign of John it was a place of considerable strength, moated and flanked with towers. It was not used for the viceroy’s palace till the reign of queen Elizabeth. The upper castle-yard, the principal part of the building where the viceregal apartments are, is an oblong square, and much resembles, in gloom and unroyal-like appearance, the palace of St. James’s. In the southern range it is a neat edifice, called the Bedford Tower, having a front decorated with a small arcade of three arches, surmounted by an octagon steele, with a cupola. This tower fronts the viceroy’s apartments, and is connected with the building on each side by two gates, upon which are two handsome statues of Justice and Fortitude. These statues are worthy of notice, more on account of their rarity, than their superior excellence ; for Dublin is certainly very defective in statuary. It is to be hoped from the known munificence of the country, that the proposed statue to our immortal hero Nelson, about to adorn this capital, will in some measure prevent future travellers from finding cause for the same observation. Birmingham Tower, at the western extremity of the Castle, remained until the year 1775, when it was taken down, and rebuilt in 1777, and is now called Harcourt Tower. It was formerly a state prison ; at present the ancient records of Ireland are kept in it. The keeper of these archives in the vice-royalty of the earl of Wharton was his secretary, the celebrated Addison, for whom the salary of the office was raised from ten pounds to five hundred pounds per annum. I did not see any thing worthy of much admiration in the viceregal apartments ; perhaps my eye has been too much dazzled by the blaze and magnificence of the palaces in the north of Europe, to contemplate the exterior and internal arrangements of the Castle so favourably as I ought. The council chamber is a good-sized room, but little embellished ; and the throne is not so shabby as some of those seats of majesty to be seen in the palaces in England, St. Patrick’s Hall is a noble room, and its ceiling has been lately painted with appropriate allegorical subjects by an ingenious artist named Waldre. The parliament and courts of justice were formerly held in the Castle till the Rebellion of 1641, and from thence to the restoration. In the building contain-

ing the grand entrance to the Castle, are the apartments of the master of the ceremonies, and other officers of state.

It was at the gate of the Castle over which the statue of Justice appears, during the tumults in Thomas-street in the year 1803, that the amiable daughter of the upright and enlightened lord Kilwarden presented herself to the guard stationed there, half distracted with the horror of having seen her father and cousin, the Rev. Mr. Wolfe, torn from their carriage by a set of desperadoes, and mortally pierced by her side with pikes. For some time the soldier on duty, observing her without shoes, covered with mud, her frenzied eye and faltering voice, regarded her as a maniac. It was the first information of this insurrectional movement which the government received, or having received, regarded. In the lower Castle-yard are the treasury and other offices, and near them are buildings for keeping military stores, and an arsenal and armoury for forty thousand men.

The style of living of the viceroy combines ease with majesty. His levees are entirely governed by his will and pleasure. He has generally one morning levee in the week, at which the viceroy, and those who have the honour of being introduced to him, appear in morning dresses. Upon state occasions he moves with body guards, and is attended by his pages, aide-de-camps, and officers of his household. His principal place of residence is in the Phoenix-park, distant about one mile and a half from Dublin.

It has been the fate of the Irish to have had, for more than a century past, a rapid succession of rulers. Much of the ignorance which government has displayed, of the real genius and condition of the country, has arisen from the rapid changes which have taken place in the appointment of the principal minister of Ireland, the secretary of the lord. lieutenant : the hours of whose political existence are numbered the moment he lands at the Pigeon-house. During the shortness of his stay, his avocations familiarize him principally with the objects which are to be found between the Phoenix-park and the Castle.

“ Is the new secretary come over in the last packet ?” is a question very familiar to the loungers at the club-houses and general post-office. So accustomed to these changes are the Irish, that a lord lieutenant once had scarcely received from England all the packages which were necessary to his rank and comfort before an unauthorized report obtained that he was to be removed. The viceroy, on this occasion hit upon an admirable expedient for dissolving the rumour, by ordering his gardener to make him an *asparagous*-bed in the Phoenix-park garden. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that an asparagus-bed is some years before it reaches perfection.

The Stranger in Ireland, Or, A Tour in the Southern and Western Parts of that Country in the ... (1806)

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