

Image of Country

Reminiscences of my Irish journey in 1849

Thomas Carlyle

1882

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Sunday, 22d July.—Dim breezy morning. Train doesn't run to Limerick to-day ; must stay, am as well pleased !—Decide to give Duffy leave to go himself—and do so in the afternoon ; one of various notes I wrote there. To church in the meanwhile ; walk with Mr. Wrixon, Sir W. B.'s brother, a farmer on his own account, and general manager, as I can gather, at Ballygiblin ; Lady and Sir are in the big old carriage by some circuitous road. Sudden change, in passing a hedge as we walk along the highway : what is this ? Lord Limerick's estate ; ground untilld some of it, thistles, docks, dilapidated cottages, ragged men ; two years' troublous insolvency, and now they are *evicted* : “ Here is one of them ; I will just set him going for you ; turn the spigot, and he will run all day ! ” Middle-aged farmer-peasant, accordingly, takes off his hat, salutes low, walks hat in hand, wind blowing his long thick hair, black with a streak of gray. His woes, his bad usages. I distinguish little but at all turns “ *tham vagobonds !* ” He has been fellow sublessee of lands along with various other “ *vagabonds ;* ” he paid always to the nail, they not ; all are now turned out into the road together, the innocent along with the guilty ; kind neighbor has taken *him* in, with wife and children, for the time. A reasonably good kind of man, to appearance, and in the truest perplexity with laws of the truest injustice. “ And have you any notion what you are to do now ? ” — “ Not a ha'p'orth, yer honor ! ” Mr. W. can give no work, wishes he could ; the poor man will write to Mr. Somebody (the agent) at Cork, begging-passage to America, begging something or other. W. will ratify his respectability ;—and so we make away, and leave him to clap on his hat again. Sad contrast continues ; ugly cottages, unploughed lands, all gone to savagery—poor-house alone like to reap much produce from this kind of culture. Lord Limerick's method, and his father's before him. Loud and very just complaint that a Beecher should be tied to a Limerick in this way ; not left to swim the gulf of pauperism separately, but obliged to do it together ! A universal complaint ; quite tragic to see the justice of, everywhere ; Larcom and his men are doing what they can to help it ; which, practically, is but little hitherto.

Church service ; clean congregation of forty ; red-haired young Irish parson, who is very evidently “ performing ” the service. Decency everywhere ; poor little decent church with the tombs round it, and a tree or two shading it (on the top of a high rough green bank with a brook at the bottom) : service here, according to the natural English method, “ decently performed. ” I felt how decent English Protestants, or the sons of such, might with zealous affection like to assemble here once a week, and remind themselves of English purities and decencies and Gospel ordinances, in the midst of a black howling Babel of superstitions savagery—like Hebrews sitting by the streams of Babel :—but I feel more clearly than ever how *impossible* it was that an extraneous son of Adam, first seized by the terrible conviction that he had a soul to be saved or damned, that he must rede the riddle of this universe or go to perdition everlasting, could for a moment think of taking this respectable “ performance ” as the solution of the mystery for him ! Oh, heaven never in this world ! Weep ye by the stream of Babel, decent clean English-Irish ; weep, for there is cause, till you can do something *better* than weep ; but expect no Babylonian or any other mortal to concern himself with that affair of yours ! And, on the whole, I would recommend yon rather to give up “ weeping ”—take to working out your meaning rather than weeping it. No sadder truth presses itself upon

one than the necessity there will soon be, and the call there everywhere already is, to *quit* these old rubrics and give up these empty performances altogether. All “ religions ” that I fell in with in Ireland seemed to me too irreligious ; really, in sad truth, doing mischief to the people in place of good !—Our ladies joined zealously in the responses, the gentlemen too kept up a form of following, but were passive rather. Home in the carriage, good “ moral talk ” with Lady B. whose hard eyes have a good deal softened towards me. Note-writing ;—then, I think, an hour of sleep (the afternoon proved showery, with high breezes) ; at half-past six to dinner : young red parson (decent vacuity) ; *other* brother of Sir W.’s, *unhealthy* parson who has revenues and keeps a curate ;—talk of wonderful Scotchman who “ *built* Fermoy ”—that is, first made it something of a town. Anderson (I think ? perhaps not ?), a Scotch peddler boy, expanded himself by slow steady degrees ; took to trading on the great scale, to running coaches ; set up a bank ; became Bart., but *failed* (not dishonorably) ; son still lives, an *idle* undistinguished Bart., he. What the latter part of our evening was I hardly recollect at all : autobiography came on the carpet ; I spoke with Lady B., now quite softened to me, and her fears hushed, about writing down *her* life ; dry, feeble laugh of gratification in reply, and talk enough (though in quite general terms), about her life as an actress. The big picture of Juliet (of which I remembered engravings from my boyhood), hung conspicuous in the drawing-room. Bed at last, not very late ;—red parson and all have vanished in a gray sea of oblivion and sleep.

Monday, 28th July.—Some difficulty about a car for me to railway at two. Sir W. and brother at length take me in their carriage ; eight miles, not unattended with rain-showers. Commonplace green country, with weedy fields, ragged hedges, many brooks and boggy places ; here and there a big mill—the only kind of efficient manufactory one sees in Ireland, that of corn into meal. The meal, too, is *bad*, not well made generally, but quite ill : the mill, however, is *large* enough—there is surely a potentiality of good meal ! To the station just in time ; amid fierce scuds of wet, kind and polite farewell ; and the steam-horse snorts away for Limerick. “ Hah ! Sir Wm. ? ” cried a lean old spectre of a gentleman in the carriage by me ; but we were off, and there could be no interview—probably better so, I thought. Spectral old gentleman all gone but the *eyes*, set in a pair of baggy parchment cheeks ; was willing to have talked, but I wouldn’t : a Cork quasi-naval old spectral gentleman, full of windy hungry folly, after grouse just now. Silence much preferable ! Foolish gabble about Queen’s coming, and other as important topics. Green commonplace country ; remember little of it, even of the latter part which they call “ Golden Vale,” so brazen did it look in that sad humor. Remember the sound, “ Buttevant Station ! ” and sight perhaps of a barrack and some roofs on the right ; item “ Charleville,” roofs, chapel, etc., rather gray-looking ; on the left, “ Kilmallock ? ” Yes, a black old haggard ruin, some monastery or other, amid black hungry-looking houses, visible for some time on the left ; Galtee mountains on the right—actual “ Galtees ” here, big block of peaky mountain country ; Kilmallock, and onward, a Desmond country ; *à la bonne heure*. Junction of Dublin-and-Limerick Railway ; *we* are on the Cork-and-Limerick ; long jumbling to and fro, on open platform ; *put out* my cigar (in uncertainty for time), might have finished it well enough. Acquaintances of parchment spectre ; “ Irish squireens,” not of the best physiognomy. Off at last—Catholic Harmonious Blacksmith, I see, is in the train, second class ; quite affectionate he, but shy speaking much with him. Confused “ stations ; ” country green, with some wood ; hills northward, “ Slieve Phelim,” I fancy : white chateau among woods ; spectral gentleman will know whose it is—*was* somebody’s, *is* a workhouse now, sir, “ Hah, ah ! ” Symptoms of Limerick at last, in the blessed showery afternoon.

Long low street, parallel to our rail ; exotic in aspect, Limerick plebs live there. Station strait, confused ; amid rain—and poor Duffy stands there, with sad, loving smile, a glad sight to me after all ; and so in omnibus, with spectre, blacksmith, and full fare of others—(omnibus that *couldn’t* have a window opened), to “ Cruise’s Hotel.”—Cruise himself, a lean, eager-looking little man of forty, most reverent of Duffy, as is common here, riding with us.

Private room ; and ambitious, bad dinner, kickshaws (sweet breads, salmon, etc.), and uneatables. Richd. Bourke has at once followed me into my bedroom, an old London acquaintance busy here in Poor-law ; am to join him at Lisnagry to-morrow for dinner.—Strelezki and Inspector ; from them and Bourke I have rapidly had to get loose for dinner.

Wet chief street of Limerick, glimpse of harbor, with poor turf-craft, mainly through an opening on the other side. Sickly, weary ; Duffy reads *choice* Irish ballads to me—unmusical enough. Priest O'Brien, he that roused the mob against Mitchel last year ; a brandy-faced, pockmarked, very ugly man, of Irish physiognomy, comes in with wild-eyed, still more Irish younger priest, and some third party of the editorial sort whom I do not recollect at all—tea with these ; and copious, not pleasant, talk. A baddish kind of priest ; get out at last, to find Strelezki (brush-headed, bell-voiced, busy little Pole whom I have seen in London) and the fat Inspector with whom he is dining. Further end of main street—which is very solitary and dim-looking now, about ten. Find it at last ; Pole gone ; Inspector there, most civil, but little good to be got of him except *addresses* of the De Veres. Home and met O'Brien, Brandy-face, & Co. on the stairs. Good-night. Oh yes, good-night, and power to your elbows all ! Slept considerably, not sufficiently.

Tuesday, 24th July.—Towards Post-office ; rainy-sunny morning : letters had come last night ; other to-day from “ Inspector of Kilrush ;” come, oh come ! Glove shop ; Limerick gloves, scarcely *any* made now ; buy a pair of cloth gloves. N.B. Have my gutta-percha shoes out *soling* with leather, gutta having gone like toasted cheese on the paving in the late hot weather ; right glad to have leather shoes again ! Breakfast bad : confused inanity of morning, settling, etc. ; about noon Duffy goes away for Galway, and I am to follow after a day. Foolish young Limerick philosopher—a kind of “ Young Limerick” (*neither* Old nor Young Ireland), in smoking-room (wretched place), smokes with me while Duffy is packing to go ; showed me afterwards the locality of the Mitchel-and-Meagher tragi-comedy, and ciceroned me through the streets.

Engineer De Vere not in his office when I called in the morning ; does not get return call. Quaker Unthank at 3½ p.m. ; lean triangular visage (kind of “ chemist,” I think), Irish accent, altogether English in thought, speech, and ways. Rational exact man ; long before any other I could see in those parts.—At four, according to appointment, Bourke's gig, with a lad : I decide to leave De Veredom then to itself : and from Lisnagry *not* look back. Have walked about Limerick what I could ; broad, level, strong new bridge, *better* kind of ships lying below it. Government Grants and works ; hear enough about these in reference to this Shannon concern ! River broad, deep I suppose, drab-colored, by no means over-beautiful. Back street, on hill-top, parallel to main one ; here all the *natives* seem to congregate. Ragged turf-burning, turf-dealing, long narrow street ;—Irish *name* of it forgotten. Other narrow turf-dealing, potato-and-cabbage dealing poor streets ; a crowded, dingy population here ; at length turn downwards again to loft—narrowest of *lanes* (was that *here* ?) and drunk man with two poor women leading him—finally down to the river-side again ; I think, near a kind of *island* in it. Big dark-brown hulk of an edifice ; what they call Cathedral—bless the mark ! Police barrack, round fantastic kind of building, which was once something far grander—some projector's folly (ruined savings-bank ?) which I have now forgotten.—Adieu to Limerick by a broad open road, with some miserable little peat carts on it, and nearly nothing else at all. Hardy, intelligent lad ; farmer's son on Sir Richard (Bourke's father's) ground ; brother a schoolmaster ; family *didn't* famish in famine-time, having some resources ; he himself is engaged with Sir R.'s “ Scotchman” Mr. Meall (from John *Mill's* country, I afterwards found), “ to learn farming,” three years at 2s. 6d. a week. Very well.—Sir Lucius O'Brien's place ; green, with *wood* shading the road near it. Lisnagry, “ blind farmer” (only docks and nettles, pay no rents) ; one Browne's, who *will* turn them away now : “ no fear of being shot”—*was* shot at ; got policeman, humor fallen now and less fear. Very ugly this particular

spot. How a man “prints his image” here on the face of the earth ; and you have beauty alternating with sordid disordered ugliness, abrupt as squares in a chess-board ! So all over Ireland. Sir Richard, nor any Bourke, not here ; polite young Englishman visitor, in dish hat, steps out to do the honors ; at length young Bourke himself, old Bourke, two ladies (Mrs. and Miss—Scotch one of them, immemorable both) ; and the evening, in small polite parlor and dining-room, passes tolerably enough. Card from Engineer DeVere. Yes ; no matter now. Settle to abide *here* over the morrow, and, if I *can*, sleep, or at least lie horizontal all day ; next day with Bourke to Gort, and thence Galway.

Wednesday, 25th July.—Sir Richd. Bourke, a fine old soldier, once Governor of New South Wales, man of seventy-five or eighty ; rises at six, but is not visible ; has his own hours, etc. Something still military, mildly arbitrary, in his whole household government (I find), and ways of procedure. Interesting kind of old Irish-British figure. Lean, clean face, backed with sabre scars and bullet scars ; inextinguishably lively, gray bead-eyes, head snow-white ; low-voiced, steady, methodic, and practical intelligence, looks through his existence here. Bought this place on his return, thirty years ago ; a black bare bog then ; beautifully improved now, shaded with good wood, neat little house and offices, neat walks, sunk fences, drains and flourishing fields ; again the “stamp of a man’s image.” Dispensary, chapel, near the gate—already bare and unbeautiful there ; the “image” of the country and people there, not Sir R.’s image. I smoke and lounge about the grounds all morning, having breakfasted with “Master Richard,” who is off to Limerick for the day. Welcome enough solitude. The two ladies kind and polite, ditto the young Englishman ;—solitude is preferable.

In the afternoon Sir Rd., I beside him on the box, drives us. Lord Clare’s place the chief object ;—large park, haymaking ; big block of a house ; gardens very greatly taken care of—women washing the greenhouse (Lordship just *expected*) ; quincunxes, foreign bushes, whirligigs ; thought of his Lordship what he *was*, and felt all this to be a kind of painful *mockery* for a soul so circumstanced. First Earl Clare (father) a Fitzgibbon, lawyer. Chancellor did the “Union ;” a sorry jobber (I supposed) ; son of a ditto, some squireen of trading talent ; and now it has come to this, as the finale !—Old soldier as gate-keeper ; Sir R. and he salute, as old friends. To O’Brien’s bridge (by the low road—woody, with occasional glimpses of the river) ; village, white ; lower end of it pretty, in the sunshine ; upper part of it squalid, *deserted* mostly : relief-work road—*half* breadth cut away, and so left : duckwood ditches, drowned bog, inexpressibly ugly for most part, some cleared improved spot, abruptly alternating with the drowned squalor which produces only bad brown stacks of peat. Sir Rd. in mild good-humor trots gently along. Two drunk blockheads stagger into a cross-road to be alone ; are seen *kissing* one another as we pass—just Heaven, what a kiss, with the drowned bog, and gaping full ditches on each hand ! Long meagre village, hungry single street—“Castle Connell—?” Sir Richard’s man has been at a fair with sheep (“Six-mile-bridge?”), is met or overtaken here : “prices so and so, rather bad.”—Home ; wait for “master ;” dinner and evening have much sunk with me into the vague, and are not much worth recalling. Talk from Sir Richard about wonderful viaducts, canals, and industrial joint-stock movements, seen and admired by himself, done during Louis Philippe’s time. Good for something, then, that royal Ikey-Solomons ? Most things are good for *something* ;—out of a slain hero you will at least, if you manage his remains at all, got a few cart-loads more of turnip-fodder. Ach Gott ! Bed, I forgot how ; I had slept during forenoon for a little, and now slept better or worse again.

Thursday, 26th July.—Spent the morning, which was damp, yet with sunshine, in lounging about the shrubberies and wooded alleys ; expected Bourke would have been ready to set out before noon, instead of not till two p.m. or thereabouts, as it proved. Group of ragged solicitants, this morning and the last, hung about the front door, in silence for many hours, waiting “a word with his Honor :” tattered women, young and old ; one ragged able man ; his

Honor safe within doors, they silent sitting or standing without, waiting his Honor's time ; tacit bargain that no servant was to take notice of them, they not of him ; that was the appearance of it. Sad enough to look upon ; for the answer, at last, was sure to be " Can't ; have no work, no etc. for you : sorry, but have *none* !" Similar expectants in small numbers I had seen about Sir W. Beecher's : probably they wait about most gentlemen's houses in Ireland in this sad time. Glanced over newspapers ; at length out with young Bourke (who is taking the " management," I find, his father surrendering as " too old") ; went with him to the scene of Scotchman Meall's operations ; scouring a big ditch, several men up to the knees throwing out duck-weed and bog mud—once a year. Wood around, and good crops, provided you *keep* the ditch scoured. All this region, by nature, execrable, drowned bog : let the cutting of turf by measure ; turf once all cut away, attack the bottom with subsoil and other ploughs ;—water carried off, prospers admirably. Meall a good solid Angus man ; heavy Scotch qualities ; getting excellent farm-house and offices set up. Infested by *rabbits*, which eat young green-crop, young hedges (?) ; must have ferrets or weasels, and how ? Meall's laborers " do very well *if* there is one set to look at them." Hasn't yet got them trained to work faithfully alone, though making progress in that direction. Home in haste from Meall's farm and nice new gooseberry garden—off actually at last. Limerick car long waiting.

Up the river; hills of Clare, hills in Limerick County ; wide expanse, not without some savage beauty, far too *bare*, and too little of it absolutely green. Talk of Browne and his " blind farmers." Assassination of a poor old soldier he had sent to watch a certain farm ; ominous menace beforehand, then deed done, " done with an axe," no culprit discoverable. Killaloe, Bourke's house across the river among rather ragged woods. " City" (I think with some high old church-towers) standing high at the other end of the bridge, in dry trim country, at the foot of the long lough, was pleasant enough from the *outside* :—one small skirt of it was all we travelled over. Lough now, with complex wooden and other apparatus for dispersing water ; part of the questionable " Navigation of the Shannon." Questionable ; indeed everywhere in Ireland, one finds that the " government," far from stinginess in public money towards Ireland, has erred rather on the other side ; making, in nil seasons, extensive *hives* for which the *bees* are not yet found. West side of Lough Derg : pleasant, smooth-dry, winding road. Clare hills stretching up, black-fretted, and with spots of culture, all treeless to perhaps 1500 or 2000 feet, gradually enough, on the left. Greener high hills on the other side of lake with extensive slate quarries, *chief* trade hereabouts. One *Spaight* of Limerick, able active man heard of before, works them ; resides here. " St. Patrick's Purgatory !" said Bourke, pointing out a flat island, with black tower and architectural ruins : not *so* (as I found afterwards) : the Lough Derg of Purgatory (still a place of pilgrimage, where Duffy with his mother had *been*) is in Donegal ; smallish lough, some miles to right as we went from Sligo to town of Donegal. Hail shower, two policemen, on the terrace of the stony hills. A country that *might* all be very beautiful, but is not so ; is bare, gnarled, craggy, and speaks to you of sloth and insolvency. " When every place was no place, and Dublin was a shaking bog," Irish phrase for the beginning of time. " Sitting under de ditch, taking a *blast* of de pipe ;" Scotch this too, all but *ditch*, which doesn't, as here, mean *wall*-fence, but *trench* for fence or drain.

Scariff ; stragglng muddy avenues of wood begin to appear. Woman in workhouse yard, fever patient, we suppose ; had come flat, seemingly without pillow, on the bottom of a stone-cart ; was lying now under blue cloaks and tatters, her long black hair streaming out beyond her—motionless, outcast, till they found some place for her in this hospital : grimmest of sights, with the long tattery cloud of black hair.—Procession next of workhouse young girls ; healthy, clean, in whole coarse clothes ; the *only* well-guided group of children visible to us in these parts—which, indeed, is a general fact. Scariff itself dim, extinct-looking, hungry village (I should guess 1000 inhabitants) on the top and steep sides of a rocky height. Houses seemed deserted, nothing doing ; considerable idle groups on the upper part (hill-top) of the street, which, after its maximum of elevation, spreads out into an irregular wide triangular

space—*two* main roads going out from it, I suppose, towards Gort and towards Portumna.— Little *ferrety* shopkeeper in whole clothes, seemingly chief man of the place, knows Bourke by often passing this way. “ Well, Mr. (O’Flanahan, say, though that was not it), do you think we can get a car to Gort ?” —“ Not a car here, sir, to be had for love or money ; people all gone to adjourned assizes at Tulla, nayther horse nor car left in the place !” Here was a precious outlook : Bourke, however, did not seem to lay it much to heart. “ Well, Mr. O’Flanahan, then you must try to do something for us !” —“ I will,” cried the little stumpy ferret of a man ; and instantly despatched one from the group, to go somewhither and work miracles on our behalf. Miracle-worker returns with notice that a horse and car can (by miracle) be achieved, but horse will require some rest first. Well, well ; we go to walk ; *see* a car standing ; our own old driver comes to tell us that *he* has discovered an excellent horse and car *waiting* for hire just next door to Mr. O’Flanahan’s. And so it proved ; and so, in five minutes, was the new arrangement made ; O’Flanahan acquiescing without any blush or other appearance of emotion. Merely a human ferret clutching at game, hadn’t caught it. Purchased a thimbleful of bad whiskey to mix in water in a very smoky room from him. “ Odd copper, yours.” —“ Why, sir ?” and sent ardently for “ change :” —got none, however, nor spoke more of getting. Poor O’Flan., he had got his house new-floored ; was prospering, I suppose, by workhouse grocery-and-meal trade, by secret pawnbroking—by *eating* the slain. Our new car whisked us out of Scariff, where the only human souls I notice at any industry whatever were two, in a hungry-looking silent back corner languidly engaged in sawing a butt of extremely hard Scotch fir.

Road hilly, but smooth ; country bare, but not boggy ; deepish narrow stream indenting meadows to our left just after starting—(mountain stream has made ruinous inundation since) —solitary cottages, in dry nooks of the hills : girl *dripping* at the door of one a potful of boiled reeking greens, has picked one out as we pass, and is zealously eating it ; bad food, great appetite ; extremity of hunger, likely, not unknown here ! Brisk evening becomes cloudier ; top of the country—wide waste of dim hill country, far and wide, to the left : “ Mountains of Clare.” Bog round us now ; pools and crags : Lord Gort’s Park wall, furze, pool, and peat-pot desolation just outside ; strong contrast within. Drive long, after a turn, close by this park : poor Lord has now a “ receiver” on him ; lies out of human vision now ! Approach to Gort : Lord Something-else (extinct now, after begetting many bastards) ; it was he that planted these ragged avenues of wood—not quite so ugly still as nothing ;—troubled huggermugger aspect, of stony fields and frequent (nearly all) bad houses, on both sides of the way. Haggard eyes at any rate. Barrack big, gloomy, dirty ; enter Gort at last. Wide street sloping swiftly ; the Lord Something-else’s house—quaintish architecture, is now some poorhouse, subsidiary or principal ; Bourke, on the outlook, sees lady friend or cousin at window, looking for him too, and eager salutations pass. Deposits me in dim big greasy-looking hôtel at the bottom of the street ; and goes—I am to join him (positively !) at tea.

Dim enough tea ; lady is poor-law inspector’s sister, wife, or something. Poor-law inspector himself is Bishop Horsley’s son (or else grandson ?) ; Dundee man, well enough and very hospitable, not a man to set the Thames on fire. Horrible account of chief inn at Galway ; no good water attainable in Galway, no nothing almost ! “ Military ball *has* lately been at Gort ;” Gort too, in spite of pauperism’s self, is alive ;—“ surgeon of the regiment a Dumfries man ?” well and good : *ach Gott !* Home to bed ; snoring monster in some other room ; little sleep ; glad that it was not wholly none. [Be quick !]

Friday, 21st July.—Up early enough, breakfast ditto ; wait for Limerick-and-Galway coach, due about 8 a.m. (or 9 ?).—Confused ragged aspect of the market-place, on which (a second long street here, falling into the main one from westward, but *not* crossing it) my windows look, my bedroom window *has* looked. Sour-milk firkins, sordid garbage of vegetables ; old blue cloaks on women, greasy-looking rags on most of the men—defacing

the summer sun this fine morning ! Troop of cavalry in undress file in from an easterly entrance—exercising their horses ; very trim and regular they. Good woman in silent tobacco-shop ; what strange unvisited islands do, not uninhabited, lie in the big ocean of things ! Chapel ; people praying in it, poor wretches ! Coach at last : amid tumult of porters, suddenly calling me, luggage *already* hoisted in, this man to pay and then that ; Horsley too out saluting me, I do get aloft, and roll gladly away.

Some green fields, even parks and trees, though rather roughish, and with barren hills beyond ; this lasts for a mile or two : then fifteen miles of the stoniest, barest barrenness I have ever yet seen. Pretty youth mounts beside, polite enough in his air and ways, not without some wild sense ; “ Connaught young gentleman,” he too is something : on the box sits a fat Irish tourist in oilskin, beyond my own age ; eager to talk, has squireen tendencies ; no sense or too little ; don’t. Connaught Rangers, 88th, memorable to me for repute of black-guardism in Dumfries : natives proud of them for prowess here. Big simple driver, ditto ditto guard : I think we had no further company, and in the inside there was none. Stone cottages, stone hamlets, not nearly so ugly as you might have looked for in such a country—stony, bare, and desolate beyond expression. Almost interesting as the breezy sunshine lay on it : wide stony expanse, in some places almost like a continuous flagged floor of gray—white stone ; pick the stone up, build it into innumerable little fences, or otherwise shove it aside ; the soil, when free or freed of water, seems sharp and good. Parks here and there, where wood has thriven : greenest islets in the sea of stone. Martin of Galway’s representative in one ; Browne or Black (Blake) ; plenteous names these. English-Irish air in all *our* company, Redington’s (secretary) draining, trenching, goes on here ; our stage, and I see that my writing-case *is* inside, beneath a big corn-bag. Galway bay, and promontory, where Galway city is. Stones, stones—with greenest islets here and there. Oh for men, pickmen, spademen, and masters to guide them ! “ Oranmore,” with gray masses of old monastic architecture. (Clanricarde’s *Castle* this !) Silent as a tomb otherwise : not a hammer stirring in it, or a bootfall heard ; stagnant at the head of its sleeping tide-water. How on earth do the people live ? Barest of roads towards Galway : dusty, lonely, flanked by ill-built dry stone walls, poor bare fields beyond. Pauper figures, and only a few, the women all with some red petticoat or something very red, plodding languidly here and there under the bright noon ; tatterdemalion phantasm, “ piece of *real* Connaught,” with some ragged walletkins on him, at a turn under some trees. Parklets, as if of Galway merchants ; very green indeed, and wood growing bravely when once tried. Galway suburbs ; long row of huts, mostly or all thatched—true Irish houses. “ Erasmus Smith’s school ;” young gentleman knows of it ; to the right ; a big gaping house—in vacation just now. Road always mounting, has now mounted, got into *streets* ; gets into a kind of central square—Duffy visible ; hotel (all full of assize people) ; and here are letters for me, a Galway editor for guide, [1] with car ready for yoking— and we must be in Tuam this evening.

Letters read, we mount our car : straight steep streets, remarkable old city ; how in such a stony country it exists ! Port-wine and Spanish and French articles inwards, cattle outwards, and scantlings of corn ; no *other* port for so many miles of country ; *enough* of stony country, even that will make a kind of feast. Inlet of river from Lough Corrib, the Connemara country : extensive government works here too. “ Godless College,” turreted gray edifice, just becoming ready ; editor warmly approves of it :—Maynooth pupil this editor, a burly, thick-necked, sharp-eyed man—couldn’t *be* a priest ; in secret counterworks Mchale, as I can see, and despises and dislikes his courses and him. “ Give them light :” no more a *Protestant* act than that “ Maynooth grant.”

If the devil were passing through my country, and he applied to me for instruction on any truth or fact of this universe, I should wish to give it him. He is *less* a devil knowing that 3 and 3 are 6, than if he didn’t know it ; a light-spark, though of the faintest, is in this fact : if

he knew *facts enough*, continuous light would dawn on him ; he would (to his amazement) understand what this universe *is*, on what principles it conducts itself, and would *cease* to be a devil !—Workhouse, well enough for *it*,—“ human swinery ;” can’t be bothered looking much at any more of them. Model farm or husbandry school ; can’t find time for it—sorry. “ Piscatory school,” means only school *for* fishermen’s children : in the Claddagh—whither now, past old sloop lying rotting in the river, along-granite quays, government works (hives *without* bees) ; and enter the school at last, and there abide mostly. Good school really, as any I saw, all Catholics—“ can’t speak English *at first* ;” “ Dean Burke” not there, over in England ; substitute, with undermaster and ditto mistress, handy Irish people, man and wife if I remember ; geography, etc., finally singing : and substitute goes out with us—“ show you the ‘ Claddagh.’ ” Complexity of silent narrow lanes, quite at the corner of the town, and clear of it, being over the river too ; kind of wild Irish community ; or savage poor republic trying still to subsist on fishing here. Dark, deep-sunk people, but not naturally bad. We look into many huts ; priestly schoolmaster, a brisk, frank, clever kind of man, knows Irish, seems to be free of them all. Petticoats, as usual, high-dyed, however dirty ; lilac, azure, especially red. Old woman at a live coal of languid turf ; likes “ tay ;” net-weaving (though not entirely) is going on too : husbands all out at the fishing. The herrings are still here ? “ *Yes*, your riverence.”—“ Hope they *stay* till you get *ready* to catch them !” he answered. Claddagh as like Madagascar as England. A kind of charm in that poor savage freedom ; had lately a revd. senior they called their “ admiral” (a kind of real *king* among them), and priests and reverence for priests abound.—Home to our editor’s lodgings now (inn uninhabitable for assize tumult): one “ Councillor Walker” has been inquiring twice for me (editor has told me) ; I cannot yet recollect him for *Petrie’s* and A. Sterling’s “ Chambers Walker,” near Sligo, nor try much to make him out at all.

Hospitable luncheon from this good editor, Duffy’s *sub*-editor now, I think ;—in great tumult, about 3½ p.m., in blazing dusty sun, we do get seated in the “ Tuam car,” quite full and—Walker recognizing me, inviting warmly both Duffy and me to his house at Sligo, and mounting up beside me, also for Tuam this night—roll prosperously away. Duffy had almost rubbed shoulders with Attorney-general Monahan, a rather sinister polite gentleman in very clean linen, who strove hard to have got him hanged lately, but couldn’t, such was the *bottomless* condition of the thing called “ Law” in Ireland. Long suburb again, mostly thatched, kind of resemblance to “ the Trench” near Dumfries. Bad seat mine, quite *under* driver’s, won’t admit my *hat*, or hardly even my head ; Walker politely insists on exchanging when the horses change. Talk, talk from Wr. very polite, conciliatory, rational too, not very deep. Bare country ; not quite so stony as the morning’s, not quite so barren either. Romantic anecdote (murder ? ghost ? or what ?) of a family that lived in some bare mansion visible to the left—totally forgotten now. Country flattens, gets still more featureless ; “ John of Chume’s” Cathedral tower ; “ little influence John of Chume ;” anecdotes of some Roman-Irish bishop and him ;—Tuam itself, happily, and dismount, about 7 p.m. ; reverence of landlady to Duffy ; tea. Walker joining us ; walk out, McHale’s big, not beautiful Cathedral (towers like *pots* with many *ladles*) ; back of McHale premises, “ College,” or whatever he calls it, outer staircase wants parapet ; ruinous enough—this *is* St. Jarlath’s, then ? If we go into the street, the Protestant bishop’s house stands right opposite too. Across then to Protestant cathedral ; old, very good—don’t go in. Ancient cross, half of it, is *here*, other half (root or basis of it) is at McHale’s, standing on the open circuit there : “ Judgment of Solomon has not answered for *these* two mothers !” On emerging, a crowd has gathered for Duffy’s sake ; audible murmur of old woman there, “ Yer Hanar’s wilcome to Chume !” Brass band threatening to get up, simmering crowd in the street ; a letter or so written ; get off to bed—high up mine, and not one of the *best* in nature !

Saturday, 28th July.—Hostlers, horses, two rattling windows, finally cocks and geese ; these were one’s lullabies in “ Chume ;” outlook on the ugly McHale Cathedral, and inter-

vening lime-patched roofs, at present moist with windy rain :—poor Duffy, in his front “ best bedroom,” hadn’t slept at all. Hurried breakfast in the gray morning, seven a.m. ; Bill—N.B. Bill came to us at *Sligo*, unsettled still, the innkeeper said ;—and Duffy, with surprise, paid it there too, uncertain whether not a second time ! Walker is out, bound for Sligo at an after hour ; appoints us thither for Monday evening. Squabbling of lady passenger about being cheated of change by some porter or boots ;—confused misarrangement, and noise more or less on all hands, as usual ; windy Scotch mist, coming down occasionally in shower ; off at length, thank Heaven, towards Castlebar and Westport, *taliter qualiter*. Watery fields, ill-fenced, rushes, rubbish ; country bare and *dirty*-looking ; weather rather darkening than improving. Simle big Irishman on coach-roof beside me ; all in *gray-blanket*, over all ; some kind of corn or butter-trader, I suppose ; as well-dressed kind of natives are very apt to be. “ Father has taken the Ballina workhouse contract” said one (who got up, farther forward on the road) ; “ taken it,” Indian-meal at so-and-so. There is something entertaining too in a region of unadulterated professed ugliness ? Ride by no means-uncomfortable in the Scotch mist (wind to *left* and *rear*), with outlook over ill-tilled bare and ragged expanses, road flanked sometimes with beggarly Scotch firs.

Man holding up a fiery peat in a pair of tongs ; stop to change horses ; fiery peat is for the guard, who leans forward with (dodeen) pipe, *good-natured* Gorgon face, weighed down with laziness, age, and fat : smack, smack ! intense sucking, ’bacco being wet, and the saliva came in dew-drops on the big outcurled lips ; poor old fellow, he got his pipe to go at last, and returned the tongs and peat by flinging them away. What a pre-established harmony, this of the fiery peat and the Gorgon guard ! Bright through the Scotch mist of the future, this fiery peat gleams beacon-like on his soul ; there burns for him a little light of hope. Duffy is inside, lady passenger (of the cheating boots), and some poor young gentleman with the bones of his leg broken. Perhaps we didn’t change horses at the fiery peat ; but only delivered and received parcels there ? Next halt there was a change ; a great begging, too, by old sibyl woman ; a mounting of one or more (grain dealing ?) passengers with fine dresses, with bad broken umbrellas. The morning is getting wetter ; stormful, dashes of heavy showers as we approach Castlebar ; road running, and *red* streamlets in the ditches on either side. Duffy has proposed that we shall *stop* at Castlebar, and give up Westport ; overruled. “ Hollymount,” pleasant-looking mansion, with lawns and groves on the left ; letter to the owner, but didn’t think of delivering it. Lord Lucan’s close by Castlebar and on the other side of it too : has *cleared* his ground (cruel monster ! cry all people) ; but is draining, building, harrowing, and leasing ; has decided to make this ugly land *avail*, after clearing it. Candor must admit that *here* is a second most weighty consideration in his favor, in reference to those “ evictions.” First-rate new farmstead of his, Scotch tenant (I think), for peasants that will work there is employment here ; Lord Lucan *is* moving, at least, if all others lie motionless rotting. Castlebar in heavyish rain ; town-green ; confusion of confusions, at the edge of that, and looking down the main street ; while they tumble the luggage, rearrange themselves, put out the poor broken-legged gentleman at the hospital (rain now battering and pouring), and do at last dash forth towards Westport.

Wind and rain now right ahead ; prefer this to stew of inside ; Lord Lucan’s husbandry seen to each side from under umbrella,—with satisfaction, though not unmixed. Gigantic drain ; torn through a blue *whinstone* range of knolls, and neatly fenced with stone and mortar ; drippings of the abominable bog (which is all round, far and wide, ugly as chaos), run now through it as a brown *brook*. Abominable bog, thou *shalt* cease to be abominable, and become subject to man ! Nothing else worth looking at ; dirty hungry cottages, in groups or single ; bog generally, or low-lying rushy wet ground, with a storm of heavy rain beating it—till certain heights, which overlook Westport. Gorgon guard’s face pours water from every angle—careless he, as if it had been an old stone face ;—talks busily, nonsense, what I heard of it, with some foolish passenger, the only one now. Distressed gigs ; one distressed gig ;

riders and it running *clear* with wet. Tobacco remains to one ! Heights at last ; Westport big, substantial-looking (*Fronti nulla fides !*) ; “ Croagh Patrick” big mountain-cone amid tumbling cloud masses, glimpses too of the bay, all close at hand now ; and swiftly down-hill we arrive, get to our inn (flaring hôtel, fit for Burlington Street by *look*), and, in about three quarters of an hour of confused waiting and vicissitude, *get* our luggage, and begin to think of *seeing* the people I had letters for. Waiter despatched accordingly ; people gone, people etc. —One little Captain Something, an intelligent commonplace little Englishman (just about to *quit* this horrid place, and here for the second time) does attend us, takes us to Westport Workhouse, the wonder of the universe at present.

Human swinery has here, reached its *acme*, happily : 30,000 paupers in this union, population supposed to be about 60,000. Workhouse proper (I suppose) cannot hold above three or four thousand of them ; subsidiary workhouses, and out-door relief the others. Abomination of desolation ; what *can* you make of it ! Out-door quasi-*work* : three or four hundred big hulks of fellows tumbling about with shares, picks, and barrows, “ levelling” the end of their workhouse hill. At first glance you would think them all working ; look nearer, in each shovel there is some ounce or two of mould, and it is all make-believe ; five or six hundred boys and lads, pretending to break stones. Can it be a *charity* to keep men alive on these terms ? In face of all the twaddle of the earth, shoot a man rather than train him (with heavy expense to his neighbors) to be a deceptive human swine. Fifty-four wretched mothers sat rocking young offspring in one room : *vogue la galère*. “ Dean Bourke” (Catholic priest, to whom also we had a letter) turns up here : middle-aged middle-sized figure, rustyish black coat, Hessian boots, white stockings, good-humored, loud-speaking face, frequent Lundyfoot snuff.—A mad pauper woman *shrieks* to be towards him ; keepers seize her, bear her off shrieking. Dean, poor fellow, has to take it “ asy,” I find—how otherwise ? Issuing from the workhouse, ragged cohorts are in waiting for him, persecute him with their begging : “ Get along wid ye !” cries he, impatiently, yet without ferocity. “ Doun’t ye see I’m speaking wi’ the gintlemen ! Arrah, thin ! I don’t care if ye were dead !” Nothing remained but patience and Lundyfoot snuff for a poor man in these circumstances. Wherever he shows face, some scores, soon waxing to be hundreds, of wretches beset him ; he confesses he dare not stir out except on horseback, or with some fenced park to take refuge in : poor Dean Bourke ! Lord Sligo’s park, in this instance. But beggars still, one or two—have climbed the railings, got in by the drains ? Heavy square mansion (“ 1770“ architecture) : Lord Sligo going to the Killeries, a small lodge he has to the south—no rents at all. I hear since “ he has nothing to live upon but an opera-box ;” literally so (says Milnes)—which he bought in happier days, and now lets.—“ Croagh Patrick, won’t ye go to it ?” Bay—Clew Bay—has a dim and shallow look hereabouts ; “ beautiful prospects.”—Yes, Mr. Dean ; but, alas, alas ! Duffy and I privately decide that we will have some luncheon at our inn, and quit this citadel of mendicancy, intolerable to gods and man, back to Castlebar *this* evening. Brilliant *rose-pink* landlady, reverent of Duffy (proves to be a sister, daughter perhaps, of the “ Chume” one), is very sorry ; but—etc. No bells in your room ; bell often enough broken in these sublime establishments of the West of Ireland. Bouquet to Duffy—mysteriously handed from unknown young lady, with verso or prose note ; humph ! humph !—and so with-out accident, in now bright hot afternoon, we take leave of Croagh Patrick—(devils and serpents all collected there. Oh, why isn’t there some Patrick to do it now again !), and, babbling of “ literature” (not by *my* will), perhaps about 5 p.m. arrive at Castlebar again, and (for D.’s sake) are reverently welcomed.

Tea. Irish country priest,—very soft youth, wonderfully like one of our own green parsons fresh from college ; the only one I saw of that sort. Out to the Inspector’s, Capt. Something, for whom I have a letter: Strelezki there, whom we had seen at Westport too, talk-talking with his bell-voice, and unimportant semi-humbug meaning. “ Strelezki is coming !” all the natives, with inconceivable interest, seemed whispering to one another ; a man with some-

thing *to give* is coming ! This Captain, in his dim lodging, a considerably more intelligent young man (30 or so) ; talk—to breakfast with him to-morrow.

Westport Union has £1100 a week from government (proportion rate-in-aid), Castlebar has £800, some other has £1300, etc., etc. ; it is so they live from week to week. Poor-rates, collectible, as good as *none* (£28. 14 0. say the books) : a peasant will keep his cow for years against all manner of cess-collection. Spy-children ; tidings run, as by electric wires, that a cess-collector is out, and all cows are huddled under lock and key—*unattainable* for years. No rents ; little or no *stock* left, little cultivation, docks, thistles ; landlord sits in his mansion, for reasons, except on *Sunday* : we hear of them “ living on the rabbits of their own park.” Society is at an *end* here, with the land uncultivated, and every second soul a pauper.—“ Society” *here* would have to eat itself, and end by cannibalism in a week, if it were not held up by the rest of our empire still standing afoot ! Home through the damp streets (not bad streets at all, and a population still partly *clothed* making its Saturday markets) ; thimbleful of punch over peat tire or ashes, whiff of tobacco, and bed.

Sunday, 20th July.—Breakfast with Capt. *Farrar* (that was the name) ; sharp, distinct, decisive young soldier ; manfully or patient and active in his hopeless position here. On my return, Duffy has been at *mass* and sermon. Priest reproving practices on “ patron Days” (pilgrimages, etc., which issue now in *whiskey* mainly), with much good-sense, says Duffy. Car to Ballina (*Bally* is place, *vallum*) ; drivers, boots, etc., busy packing. Tuam coach (ours of yesterday) comes in ; there rushes from it, shot as if by cannon from Yorkshire or Morpeth without stopping,—W. E. Forster ! [2] very blue-nosed, but with news from my wife, and with inextinguishable good-humor. He mounts with us almost without reflection, and we start for Ballina ; public car all to ourselves ; gloomy hulks of mountains on the left ; country ill-tilled, some *untilled*, vacant, and we get upon wide stony moorland, and come in sight of the desolate expanses of “ Lough Con.”

Police-barrack, excise-barrack, in a loop of the mountain washed by the lake. Picturesque sites, in nooks and on knolls ; one ruined cottage in a *nook* (belongs to Lord Lucan), treeless, yet screened from winds, nestled among the rocks, and big lake close by : why couldn't *I* get it for a hermitage ! Bridge (I think there must have been), and *two* loughs. Inexpressible solitude, unexampled desolation ; bare gray continent of crags, clear sea of fresh-water ;—some farms and tufts of wood (one mournful ruined-looking place, which was said to be a burying-ground and monastic ruin) visible far off, and across the lake always. Clear blue sky, black showery tempests brewing occasionally among the hills. Brother car meets us, brief dialogue, among the crags ; little pug-nosed Irish figure in Sunday clothes, had been escorting a comrade, mounts now beside Duffy—proves to be a tailor, I think. Account by him, inexpressibly vague, of certain neighboring localities. “ Archb. McHale,” John of “ Chume,” was born hereabouts ; peasant-farmer's son. Given a vivacious greedy soul, with this grim outlook, vacant of all but the eternal crags and skies, and for reading of life's huge riddle an Irish Mass-book only—one had a kind of glimpse of “ John of Chume”—poor devil, after all ! Ballina ; immense suburb of thatched huts again ; solid, broad, unexpectedly handsome main street ; corn-factors, bacon-factors, land-agents (attorneys, in their good days, must have done it) ; halt at the farther end, close by a post-office, and a huge hungry-looking hotel, or perhaps two hotels ; into one of which—the wrong one surely if there was a choice—we are ushered, and in the big greasy public room find a lieut. of foot busy smoking.

“ Private room” very attainable, but, except for absence of tobacco, not much more exquisite ; in fact, this poor hotel was the *dirtyest* in our Irish experience ; clearly about *bankrupt*, as one would see. But the poor waiters, the poor people all, wore civil ; their poverty gave them even a kind of dignity—the gray-bearded head-waiter's final *bow* next day (disinterested bow) is still pathetic for me. Certain Hamiltons, inspectors ; the Captain H.

an Ulster man ; big cheeks and black *bead*-eyes ; Calvinist philanthropist ; a really good, but also really stupid, man. Write in my back bedroom ; annoyed by gusts of bravura-*singing* (Sunday not the less) from the lieut. of foot ; sorrow on him, and yet pity on him ! To workhouse, to workhouses, with Bead-eye ; *subsidiary* workhouses these ; boys *drilling*—discharged soldier : one of the drill-sergeants, begs for something of the nature of “ shoes ” when it is done. “ There is Cobden, you see ? ” said poor bead-eyed Hamilton ; discharged that man, and now he comes upon *us* ! ” Kindness *à la* Exeter Hall ; this, with strict Calvinism for life-theory, is H.’s style. A *thatched* subsidiary workhouse this ; all for the children :—really good, had the children been getting bred towards anything but *pauperism* !—pauperism in geometrical progression. Dinner of perhaps five hundred of them—girls, I think. “ Och, sur, it’s *four years* I’ve been here, and this little girl isn’t well yet ! ” Four years : what a kindness to us, to stay so long ! What she now wanted with this girl ? “ To get her taken to the salt-water ”—a small allowance for that. Brutallest stupidity can hardly be more brutal than these human swineries had now grown to seem to me. Dormitories, etc.—a street nearly all in ruins beside this admirable place ; population of it gone to workhouse, to England, to the grave. Other subsidiary workhouse ; *continents* of young women ; really whole big roomfuls of them (for it was now raining) waiting for dinner.—Home with disgust ; to have tea with Hamilton in the evening at his house.

After dinner, walk towards his house ; moist windy evening, rain has ceased. Correct little house, good and hospitable man ;—tries to convince me of philanthropy ;—pauses horror-struck.—I decide (in my own mind) that the less of this the better. He (I found afterwards) asks Duffy privately—“ if I am an atheist or what ? ” Hospitable promise to go and show us a “ country of evictions ” on the morrow ; we shall see ! and so home to bed. It was going towards his house that a man (Sundayed workman) caught Duffy’s hand, and reverently shook it with apologies.

[1] His name Edward Butler, afterwards Attorney-general in New South Wales.

[2] The present Chief Secretary for Ireland.

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