

*Reminiscences of my Irish journey in 1849*

Thomas Carlyle

1882

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Monday, 30th July.—Worst of Irish beds, worst of Irish nights (noise, etc.), does finally end. At breakfast Hamilton is punctual and appears : “ Not me, thank you kindly,” and the rest also didn’t go—or only Forster of the rest, and at some other hour. Through the streets with my two inspectors (Hamilton and his cousin the “ Belmullet” inspector, a simple watery man with one arm, Mrs. Dr. Evory Kennedy’s brother), towards the workhouse. “ The Scotch Shop,” so called ; a Glasgow thing, has propagated itself hither from Sligo ; dull Scotchman, “ Never so bad a trade as *now* ;” building, furnishing of workhouses, always some money going till now ; his brother has taken a farm hereabouts (rent seemed *high* with such pauperism) ; his shag tobacco (nearly unknown in Ireland) is very dear and very bad ; adieu to the Scotch Shop, and him ! Dulse in Ballina street market ; comes from Belniullet, I hear, gathered there, carted hither, forty-two miles ; sold for *2l.* here ! Wretched huckster, who has no better industry, subsists his garrun upon the wayside, lodges with some fellow-poor man ; goes his eighty-four miles, on these terms, and takes to gathering new *dulse*. Was such industry ever heard of before in this world ? Not this poor huckster is to blame for it, first of all ; not he first. O heavens ! innumerable mortals are to blame for it ; which quack of us is *not* to blame for it ?—Look into the *areas* of the workhouse with bead-eyed friend ; then, for his sake and for my own, I decline to go farther ; return to inn, where at least is a sofa, where tobacco and solitude are possible. Car is to go about two o’clock, and I am due at Sligo tonight. Duffy, finding certain “ Dillons” here, decides finally to stay ; Forster too stays, flying about in an uncertain way. Col. Something, a great “ exterminator” hereabouts, and a great improver also ; that is he, riding into town : stubborn, uncultivated, big red-haired face, and solid military figure, from fifty to sixty ;—not the worst of Ballina men he. Glimpse of Bourke, with note from somebody (from the Tralee gentleman it was, who had been “ absent at Valentia”)—glimpse of Duffy and Dillons ; away then, away !

First part of our route, moory, at first some symptoms of plantation and improvement, by-and-by none. Col. Something (Gort’s ?) evictions, long ghastly series of roofless cottages visible enough ;—big drain, internal, was not visible : poor groom sitting by me on the car was eloquent as to Col.’s “ cruelty ;” Col. himself, I understand, asserts that his people went away voluntarily, money and resource being wholly run out. Beggar cottagers need to be supported by public rate ; whether the rate is paid them in cottages or in workhouse is really not so material as the second question, “ What becomes of their land, they having *ceased* to cultivate it ? Gort and Lucan answer ? Their land becomes *arable*, will be ploughed in all coming years ! Not so bad, surely.—My groom gets off ; his master most humane thrice-excellent old Dublin gentleman, driving up now with son-in-law, daughter, etc., in gig ; “ no evictions” there, no, no ! Son-in-law, fat young gentleman, had a dish-hat, as usual ;—dish-hats drab-colored, black, brown, and even green universal wear of young gentlemen here, and indeed in all country parts (Scotland and England too) at present. Flat, flat, waste of moor ; patches of wretched oats—then peat bogs, black pools ; the roofless cottages not far off at any time. Potatoes—poor cottier digging his little plot of them, three or four little children eagerly “ gathering” for him : pathetic to look upon. From one cottage on the wayside issue two children, *naked*, to beg ; boy about thirteen, girl about twelve, “ naked” literally, some

sash of rag round middle, oblique-sash over shoulder to support that ; stark-naked would have been *as* decent (if you had to jump and run as these creatures did) and much cleaner. *Dramatic*, I take it, or partly so, *this* form of begging : “ *strip* for your parts, there is the car coming ! ” Gave them nothing.

Stage : “ Dromore ” (?), little hamlet ; country alters here ; sun too is out ; beautiful view of the sea, of Sligo Bay with notable mountains beyond, and high (limestone) dry hills on our right too ; much indented coast, circuitous road for Sligo, but decidedly a pleasant region, with marks of successful cultivation everywhere, though still too *treeless* (and full of *beggary* below board, as we afterwards found). Small young lady from Dromore going on visit to Sligo, her parasol a little interrupts my view ; “ bay of ” something ( “ Ballisadare, ” it would seem) on this side of Sligo Bay : high fine hill between the two—north side of that, it turns out, is Walker’s house. Sligo at last ; beautiful descent into it, beautiful town and region altogether. Down, down, to the river-bunk, then halt a little to right ; Mr. Walker, with servant and nice neat car, is waiting : how charitable to the dusty, heart-broken soul of a pilgrim from his car ! No host can do a kinder thing than *deliver* a poor wretch in these circumstances, save him from porters, inn-waiters, and the fatal predatory brotherhood !—Up, some three miles ; then on a pleasant shelf of the big hill or mountain “ Knocknarea, ” dividing Sligo from the other bay ; a trim fertile little estate, beautifully screened and ornamented (or soon about to be so) ; a neat little country-house, and elegant welcome : thanks, thanks ! Elaborate dinner, however, *no* dish of which *dare* I eat ; salmon, veal, lamb, and that is *all* ! Cold beef supplies every want. Excellent quiet bedroom ; to bed utterly done, almost sleeping for an hour before I got away.

Tuesday, 31st July.—Fine morning, fine outlook over Sligo, bay, city, mountain ; around *us* pretty walks and garden, with farm improvements fast progressing, behind us the mountain rises trim and green, on the top of it an ancient *cairn*, conspicuous from afar—which Petrie asserts gravely to be the “ Grave of Queen MAB, ”— some real old Irish “ queen, ” who had grown in the popular fancy to be this ! Good Petrie, he is much loved here, but there was no chance of warning him of *me* in time.—Drive to Sligo now ; find Duffy and Forster just arrived, and eating luncheon at their inn ; go along to visit workhouse, to visit Lough Gill : they two to dine with us at night.—Whether Duffy went with us to Lough Gill ( “ Wynne ” of Hazelwood) I don’t recollect ; rather think yes ; but if so, he stayed behind us, and came up with Forster ? [Important indeed !] Dinner was altogether polite and pleasant ; Forster went about 11 ; then bed, and hospitable Walker will have us in town before six to-morrow, on our road towards Donegal, where these tourings are to *end*.

Beauties of Hazelwood (where Forster *meets* us in a car of his own) are very considerable ; really fine lake (the Lough Gill itself), wide undulating park, umbrageous green-swarded, silent big house ; pleasure-boats on lower *arm* of Lough, and queer little windmill pump ; very good indeed. “ Wynne, Esq. ; ” who has this day been stirring up a row among the butter-merchants, breaking *their* monopoly, and stirring up their noise. His tenants complained, “ 6d. per lb. a dreadful price : ” get your firkins ready, full of *good* butter, and *I* will give you real Liverpool prices : *hinc lachrymæ* ; what the issue was, I never heard.—Of workhouse, eighteen hundred strong, say nothing : heavy, fat-flabby but solid English ex-military man for manager ; wide (idle-looking) school : group of wandering gentlemen ; (one of Rathmullen, on Lough Swilly) to whom we had a letter, a dark-yellow, lean long figure ; “ most anxious, ” etc., *if* we will come ; but till Saturday he cannot be at home, and none knows whether that will answer.—Sligo and cholera ? *Telluric* or atmospheric the influence : by no means a *dirty* town ; the reverse, *in comparison*. Talk of the “ Cevigna Mines, ” rich in coal and iron, say *richest* ; not worked, company once, first manager—*shot* ; second manager sent to Chancery ; mines sleep till “ Government ” make some canal or do something. Relief-

works in Sligo ; steep street a little levelled ; what to do with the *mould* ? Throw it into the river ! “ Upon *my* salmon ? ” eagerly objects one. It is at last *carted* far away.—Elder Walker one of the Presentment Justices in relief time ; we voted away £28,000 *one* morning (“ English have plenty of money ”) ; terribly indignant now that they should demand payment of *one half* of it ; “ had we known that ! ”—a miserable business this of the famine works and relief works altogether ;—sad proof that in Ireland is *no* organic government, and in England no *articulate* ditto : a ditto, presided over by Lord John Russell only and the element of parliamentary palaver !—Part of Sligo belongs to Lord Palmerston ; I didn’t learn, or ask, which part.

Wednesday, 1st August.—Up at five, forwarded in all ways by kind, hospitable Walker (to whom, farewell kindly), car at the car-stand in Sligo, before six of the sunny morning.—“ Gavogne ” (dammed up here ?) gurgling past as a considerable stream, and breweries, etc., on the other side. Beggars, beggars ; only industry really followed by the Irish people. “ For the love of God, yer Hanar ! ” etc., etc.—“ Wouldn’t it be worth your consideration, whether you hadn’t better drown or hang yourselves than live a dog’s life in this way ? ” They withdrew from me in horror ; did at least withdraw ! Judicious confusion of loading luggage. Car full to overflowing. Sligo wit—“ Go home, and shave yourself ! ”—“ Sure, I’m not so ugly as you, shaved or not ! ” (Fat gross fellow—some bacon-dealer, I suppose, got this wit-arrow, ohone !) Away at last ; all jammed together ;—steep ups and downs ; horses hardly *can*, won’t at one place, and we have to dismount. Bacon-dealer next me, Duffy on my right, tall old cleanly peasant jammed under Forster and driver beyond ; Sligo Bay, and bright sea, with moory mountainous capes in front of *us*. Lord Palmerston’s country ; *some* draining visible ; *much* had been heard of ; ugly, bare, moory country ; would one were out of it all, as we now soon shall be ! Donegal Mountains blue-black over Donegal Bay far westward to Teelin Head. Dingy, desolate-looking country, in spite of the fine, calm morning. “ Killibegs, ” and some coast-guard station, the only sign of inhabitancy. Cleanly peasant, at sight of some new locality, “ breaks out into narrative ; ” is, at least was, a coast-guard ; had *once* a notable adventure seizing, or trying to seize, some smuggler there—minute particulars of it ; for thirty years seems to have done nothing else but merely “ look out, ” the one peopled point in his old memory. Particulars from him of coast-guard discipline and ways ; well-done excise ; when a thing is to *be* done, it can be done.—Bathing lodgings, getting ruinous many of them (potato-failure has stopped supplies) ; good shore for bathing, and individuals (to one’s envy) are now seen swashing about in the act ; blue brine and sandy shore, etc., in Leitrim County ; said once, for a moment, to be “ in Fermanagh ” (mistake probably ?). Ruined Castle (where ?), “ Four Masters ” did their compilation there ; recollect the old black hulk of ruins—think it might be in Donegal County, further on. Bathing hamlets, ditto houses, lodges (*once* ornamental) ; lime and whitewash, very abundant, cannot hide ruin. “ Bundoran, ” cleanish, high-lying village, headquarters of bathing ; bacon-dealer—runs to see a sick friend. Car waits for him ; drink of water ? *Effort*, by shopkeeper or car clerk—think I got it, though after despairing. Sea, and Donegal, and Killibegs abroad ; moory raggedness with green patches near, all treeless—nothing distinct till steep narrow street of “ Ballyshannon ; ” mills, breweries, considerable, confused, much whitewashed country town. Breakfast, as if for the king’s hundred, near the higher end. Tourists, quasi-English, busy at our table already : silent exct. waiter, doing his swiftest in imperturbable patience and silence. Car gone ; we have to climb the steep, at the top it will wait for us. And so to the road again, quitting Ballyshannon ; only Duffy, Forster, and I, of our car, did breakfast there.

Day now growing hotter, road dustier ; remember nothing or little till Donegal : a Mr. Hamilton (?) has embanked some lagoon, saved many acres, gives real symptoms of being busy as a king of tillers in that quarter. Country improving ; hedges even, and some incipencies of wood shelter and ornament. Donegal a dingy little town ; *triangular* market-

place ; run across to see O'Neill's old mansion ; skeleton of really sumptuous old castle—*Spanish* gold, in Queen Elizabeth's time, had helped : by one of the three *angles* (there is a road by each) we got away again ; dropping Forster, who will see the lagoon-embanker (didn't find him), will then by Glentier to Gweedore, and meet *me* there. Duffy is for Derry, and we part at Stranorlar ; I, by appointment, am for Lord George Hill's, and have a plan of route from Plattnauer.—Bare miserable country ; dingy Donegal has *workhouses* building, *pitch* employed there, no other masonry ; *sleepy* valley with some trees and green patches spreading up into the sleepy mountains ; high ground towards Gap of Barnesmore becomes utter peat. Barnesmore I remember well ; nothing of a " Gap" to speak of ; Dalveen Pass, and several unheeded Scotch ones, far surpass it in " impressiveness : " important military pass, no doubt. Moor, moor, brown heather, and peat-pots ; here and there a speck reclaimed into bright green—and the poor cottier oftenest gone. Ragged, sprawling, bare farmstead, bright green and black alternating abruptly on the grounds and no hedge or tree ; ugly enough.—And now from the moor-edge one sees " Stranorlar " several miles off, and a valley mostly green, not exemplary for culture, but most welcome here. Down towards it—Duffy earnestly talking, consulting, questioning ; pathetic, as looking to the speedy *end* now. Down into the valley ; fat heavy figure, in gray coarse woollen, suddenly running with us, sees me, says " all r-right !" It is poor Plattnauer, who has *come* thus far to meet me ! we get him up ; enter through the long outskirts of " Stranorlar," up its long idle-looking street, to coach-stand ;—and there Duffy stretching out his hand, with silent sorrowful face, I say " Farewell," and am off to Plattnauer's little inn ; and consider *my* tour as almost ended. After an hour, of not very necessary waiting (lunch, smoking, etc., provided by the kind Plattnauer), we get the car he has hired for me from Letterkenny, and proceed thither.

Fourteen miles ; a tilled country mostly, not deficient here and there in wood ; ragged still, though greatly superior to late wont ; recognize the *Ulster* dialect of carman, Ulster practice of the population generally. Talk—burdensome, had there been *much* of it ? Mountains about Gweedore, details (eulogistic, enthusiastic) of Lord George Hill ; three men (officialities of some kind),—excise or other, with dish-hats, before us in their car ; road now rapidly winding downwards ; pass them at last ; can bethink of *no* other road-fellow whatever. Country greenish, for most part, with gnarled crags ; I should have expected ferns in the ditches, but don't remember them. Mill-pond at the bottom of our descent, then long slow ascent up Letterkenny Street—broad, sometimes rather ragged-looking, always idle-looking—busy only on market-days, with corn and cattle, I suppose. Hôtel at last, and carman satisfied ; a grateful change into Lord George's car. To Ballyarr then ! Now towards six or seven o'clock. Long, mile—long, straight, steep ascent ; then complex cross-roads " to Rathmelton," to etc. ; country commonplace, hill-and-dale, not quite bare. At length Ballyarr, clump of wood ; high rough hedges, gates, farm-looking place ; and round the corner of some offices we come to an open smooth kind of back court, with low piazza at the further side : from below piazza,—then at the back entrance (the only handy one to his mansion). Lord George himself politely steps out to welcome us. Handsome, grave-smiling man of fifty or more ; thick grizzled hair, *elegant* club nose, low cooing voice, military composure and absence of loquacity ; a man you love at first sight. Glimpse of Lady (Georgina ?) Hill, a nunlike elderly lady, and of one or two nice silent children ; silent small elegant drawing-room ; a singular silent politeness of element reigns ; at length refection in a little dining-room (*tea*, I suppose ?)—and, in a bare but clean and comfortable room, presided over by the Great Silences, one sinks gratefully asleep. Gweedore on the morrow like an *unopened* scroll lying before.—I bethink me, we walked out, too, that evening. Lord George, Plattnauer, and I, with pleasant familiar talk ; and for *supper*, after our return, he ordered me Irish stirabout, a frightful parody of " Scotch porridge" (like hot *dough*), which I would not eat, and even durst not, except in *semblance*. Deep ditches, *gross* kind of crop ;—potatoes, turnips, " Egyptian wheat" (so called, grown from wheat found in *mummy*) ; land has originally been, much of it even lately, flat bog.

Thursday, 2 August.—Dim, moist morning ; pleasant breakfast (Lady Augusta (?), who has a baby, not there); paternal *wit* of Lord G. with his nice little modest boys and girls in English, German, French ; Plattnauer to go with us to Gweedore. Big new mill ; big peat stacks ; carriage-house, some three nice sleek wiry horses, “ all kept at *work*,” and able for it. Air of gentleman farmer’s place, and something more ; car about eleven and swift firm horse, rain threatening—which came only to a heavy Scotch mist now and then, with brief showers. Tattery untrimmed fields, too small, ill fenced, not right in any way. Wretched, puddly village, “ Kilmacrennan,” like an inverted saddle in site, brook running through the heart of it (?) ; miserable raree “ caravan” stationed there, amid the dirt, poverty, and incipient ruin. Road heavy and wet, past many ill-regulated little farms. Dunghill of one, “ I have admonished him *not* to let it run to waste so,”—but he doesn’t mind ! Road (is all very obscure to me ; cardinal points, at the time, not well made out, which is always fatal to one’s recollection)—road, leading N.-westward, begins mounting, is still a little cultivated, very *steep* side road to north, Letterkenny to Glen and Carrickart (I suppose) ; mounts, mounts, occasional mist-rain a little heavier, day calm and silvery, bleared glimpses had of the moor.—“ National school” high up. I descend and enter. Lord George waits cheerfully, but won’t ; the worst of all conceivable “ national schools ;” poor, dreary, frozen-alive school-master, and ten or twelve ragged children :—“ Parents take them all away in turf-time ;” they learn *nothing* at any time. Wrote in this book a *disapproval*. Protest against these schools ; Catholics can do little, don’t always do it ; a difficult affair for Macdonnel and Whately ! Ghastly staring “ new Catholic chapel,” true Irish “ Joss-house,” on the moor to left ; the image of ennui, sore throat, and hungry vain hope of dinner ! Peat further on ; foolish old farmer and his forces at work in peat-stack, *pack-horses* instead of carts ; a scandal to behold. Moor mounting ever higher, getting very black and dreary ; cannot much *remember* the coming of Letterkenny and Dunfanaghy road ; do remember scandalous black muddy moors, all gleaming wet as a sponge, with gray rugged mountains (close to us on the left), with crags, rain, and silent black desolation everywhere ; the worst of it, however, I think, was further on.

“ Glenbeagh Bridge ;” turning round a sharp corner of a muddy peat-hill, we are upon it, and see Lough Beagh, “ the prettiest of all the Donegal lakes”—no great shakes, no great shakes ? Hungry improved “ farmstead” (some glimpse of slate and stone I do remember in it) with drowned meadows by the lake-side, to left. Lake narrow (outlet of it “ Owencarrow,” running from left to right of *us*) ; high stony steep of mountains beyond it ; *far* up to the left bright-green spaces (or stripes and patches), with woods, appearance of an interesting *pass* through the mountains ; more Highland-looking than anything I saw elsewhere ; one “ Forster” owns it.—At the beginning of our journey, and almost up to this point, there were large effectual long *main-drains* visible, just cut ; a young Lord Something’s property—sorry I cannot recall his name ; he, and his “ Government money” and beneficent extensive work were the most *human* thing I saw. Begins at Kilmacrenan, perhaps earlier. Here at Glenbeagh Bridge was a “ relief convnc. road” (very conspicuous intended improvement on our left), but lying, as usual, with a wall at each end of it. Mount again ; black rocky “ Dooish” (where are eagles, *seen* as we *returned* this way) on our left, and road rough, wet, and uneven. “ Calabber” stream (not ditto “ bridge”), I have a distinct recollection of that ; cutting down through the *shoulder* (you would have said) of a considerable hill ; “ Half-way House,” and the still heathery glen that led towards it (Calabber stream *this*, at a higher point of it, running towards Owencarrow ? Alas ! I had no *map* of any value ; I had no time, no patience or *strength* of any kind, left !). All at the Half-way House, which is a coarse, dark, weather-tight cottage—a *rebuilding*, I imagine ; drink for the horse ; good-humored poor woman *will* have “ a drop of potheen” when you return. Lord George knows all these people ; speaks kindly, some words in Irish or otherwise, to every one of them. Excellent, polite, pious-hearted, healthy man, talk plentiful, sympathy with all good in this Lord G., candid openness to it ;

fine voice, excellent little *whistle* through his teeth as he drove us—horse performing admirably. After Half-way House, view of some wretched quagmire, with a lakelet by it, and spongy black bog and crag all round, which some Irish “Dublin lawyer” has purchased, and is improving : Lord pity him, send *more* power to his elbow ! I never drove, or walked, or rode in any region such a black, dismal twenty-two miles of road. *This* is the road Lord George drives every week these seventeen years, drives or rides, through these dismal moors—strong in the faith of something higher than the “picturesque.”—Mount Arrigal, a *white*-peaked very sandy mountain, *roof*-shaped and therefore conical from some points of view, beautiful and conspicuous from all (2462 feet, map says),—lay a little *west* of this Irish lawyer : we cross by the southern side of it,—and suddenly out of the black moor into view of a lake (“Lough-na-Cung”) stretching northwestward round *that* side of Arrigal ; and at the head of this Lough-na-Cung comes the prettiest patch of “improvement” I have ever in my travels beheld. Bright as sapphire, both grass and woods, all beautifully laid out in garden-walks, shrubbery-walks, etc., and all shrunk for us to a tidy fairy-garden ; fine trim little house in it, too, with incipient *farms* and square fields adjoining ; to our eye and imagination, drowned in black desolation for fifteen miles past, nothing could be lovelier. A Mr. Something’s, lately deceased (to Lord George’s deep regret) ; I think, a Liverpool merchant ( ? ) : widow lives here, and Lord George’s doctor at Gweedore (I learn on the morrow) is to marry one of the young ladies : very well ! “Lough-na-Cung” (I *heard* no name to it, but take this from the map) stretched away northward, bending to west ; a narrow *crescent* lough, of no farther beauty ; and from the *Clady* river, which traverses Gweedore and comes out at Bunbeg. Here now *is* Lord George’s domain, and, swiftly descending (by the *back* of Arrigal, which hangs white-sandy very steep over us) for about a mile, we are in said domain. “Hundred thousand welcomes !” (Irish phrase for that) said Lord George, with a smile. Plattnauer and I *had* smoked our third pipe or cigar ; “You can do it in three pipes”—*Head* of Lough-na-Cung I remember too ; stony dell amid the high mountains, mounting in *terraces* of visible rock ; like some *Cumberland* pass, new to me in Ireland.

The back of the Clady, stretching out from this Lough five or six miles, and *flattening* itself wide towards the sea, is Lord George Hill’s domain. Black, dim, lonely valley : hills all peat, wet and craggy heather, on each side ; hills to right are quite vacant wet moor (*though* less craggy in appearance, and lower). River-side mostly waste quagmire of rushes ; *can* become fat meadow, and has here and there : river sluggish brown-colored ; hills to left (as *we* enter ; hills to north, that is) ; are of gentlish acclivity, but stony beyond measure ; sprinkled in ragged clusters here are the huts of the inhabitants, wretchedest “farmers” that the sun now looks upon, I do believe. Lord George’s improvements are manifold : for instance, each man has his “farm” now all in *one*—not in twenty, as heretofore, one long stripe of enclosure (dry-stone wretched wall, or attempt at wall, and cottage in or near it) ; each cottage, too, has now some *road*. But “improvements” all are swallowed in the chaos ; chaos remains chaotic still. Hill road from Dunfanaghy, descending on the right—not *yet* quite travelling, I think. New farm of Lough-na-Cung (Liverpool *widow*) ; “improvements ;” Ulster peasant in it ; has really been endeavoring ; house is built, slated ; stones, like a quarry, torn out everywhere ; trenchings, feeblest symptoms of turnips springing, potato plot (ruined *now*, alas !) is really growing ; gray bony man stands looking, with what hope he can. Cottages now of Lord George’s ; dry-stone fence half done along the road ; has hung so for years, in spite of his encouragements to get it *whole* done. Black huts, bewildered rickety fences of crag : crag and heath, *unsubduable* by *this* population, damp peat, black heather, gray stones, and ragged desolation of men and things ! Boat is on the river, fishy but *unfished* till now ; “Gweedore Inn,” two-storied white *human* house with offices in square behind, at the foot of hills on right, near the river : this is the only *quite* civilized-looking thing. We enter there, through gateway, into the clean little sheltered court, and there under the piazza at the back of the inn Forster waits for us, and is kindly received.

Rain has ceased, two p.m. or three ; but the air is damp, bleared, cold. Mount along the hillside ; certain fields already saved out of it, not bad fields, but a *continent* of haggard crag-and-heather desolation, with its swamps and rivulets still remaining. Over the Clady something like an incipieney of a modern hamlet, and patches of incipient green ; bridge thither, too far to go ; chapel and school (Protestant Orange, no doubt) on this side the river ; signal-staff flag now *mounted*, his Lordship being *here*, and accessible to all creatures. Dinner in our little inn. Lord George's *surgeon* (from Bunbeg ; of whom mention was already) joined us, I think, in the evening. Manager of inn (for Lord George, I think) an Ulster man, solid, clever man of forty-five. Aberdeen-awa' man, chief-manager, a hook-nosed, lean, slow-spoken man of like age : " What do you think of these people ?"—" Oah-h ! a whean *deluidit* craiteurs, sir : but just ye-see—!" Walk, with this man in company in the evening, to the new farm-house he is getting built for himself, and new fields he is *really* subduing from the moor ; pure peat all ; but lime is abundant everywhere, and he does not doubt, and will certainly prevail, he. Some five or six Aberdeen and Ulster men ; nothing else that one can see of human that has the smallest real promise here ; " *deluidit craiteurs*," lazy, superstitious, poor, and hungry. 7. 6. no uncommon *rent*, 30. about the highest ditto : listening to Lord George, I said, and again said, " No hope for the men as *masters* ; their one *true* station in the universe is *servants*, ' slaves' if you will ; and never can they know a right day till they attain that." Valley, if it were cultivated, might really be beautiful. Some air of stir and population and habitability already on it ; huts, ragged potato-patches ; nearer there, by the river-side, oat-patches (lean cows, I suppose, are on the hills) ; *south* side of river is, as before, nearly or altogether vacant of huts. Return to our inn, after arrangements for the morrow. How these people conspired to throw down Lord George's fences, how they threatened to pay no rent, at first, but to *shoot* agent if compelled, and got their priest to say so ; how they had no notion of work by the day (*came* from eight to eleven a.m.), and shrieked over hook-nosed Aberdeen when on Saturday night he produced his book and insisted on paying them by the *hour* ;—how they are, in brief, dark barbarians not intrinsically of ill dispositions—talk and commentaries on all this. Small close room, with the damp wind and wide moorland outside ; polite " stir-about" again, to me useless : finally to bed, with pathetic feelings, gratitude, sorrow, *love* for this noble man, and *hope* as if *beyond* the grave !

Friday, 3d August.—We drive to Bunbeg (must be far briefer to-day !). Valley spreads out into flat undulations ; still crags and moor everywhere ; blue sea with islands and much *sand* ahead ; brisk, sunny forenoon. Visit new parsonage (Oh Orange Protestantism !); parson, young fat Dublin Protestant, enters ; has a drawing-room with " scrap-books" and *wife-gear* (wife doesn't appear) : not a beautiful big fat young Protestant ; but, alas, what better can be had ? To Bunbeg ; village (of perhaps three hundred or more) scattered distractedly among the crags, sprinkled along, *thickening* a little towards Clady mouth, where are the storehouse, mill, harbor, all amid crags for evermore ! Crag had been blasted away for *sites* ; rises yet abrupt behind the walls in that quarter, paths climbing over it. Big excellent mill—proved most useful in famine time—silent at present, till harvest time. Ditto, ditto, storehouse, or " shop" of innumerable wares ; nearly *empty* now, waiting for a " practical shopkeeper" that would undertake it. Harbor landing-place built by Ulsterman of the inn—" *well done*," as I tell him. Big rings for warping in ships—the General Commissioners of Light-houses (?) did that, after entreaty.—Aberdeen fisherman ; excellent clear-eyed, brown-skinned, diligent-sagacious fellow ; excellent wife of his (*before*, in a house that wouldn't " turn rain," but was all whitened, etc., and clean and hearty-looking), from whom a drink of buttermilk for me.—Fisherman went with us to the old mill and its cascade (queer old ruin, and gushing loud waterfall), when some of his men try the net to no purpose.—Ancient Irish *squire* actually " begging" here ; follows about in blue camlet cloak, with always some new cock-and-bull story, which Lord George, when unable to escape by artifice, coldly declares in words that he can't listen to. Strange old squire ; whiskey all along and late failure of potatoes have done

it ; gets no rent, won't sell, " a perfect pest," the fisher calls him. School (Prott.) better or worse—children all *clean* at least ; some twenty or more of them, boys and girls. Sun now is *high* ; we mount, turn into Bloody-Foreland road ; bay on our left hand, blue water ; and immensities of sand, *blown* hereabouts in great lengths over the land (as I can see from the distance),—remind me of the mansion and park *sanded*, (name ?) and nothing but the *chimney*-tops left, on these coasts ; straggling wretched hamlet, when a fair is (monthly or annually ?) ; go into the baker's shop (Aberdeen, he too) into a kind of tavern now under the carpenter's, where Lord George at first lodged on undertaking this affair ; bare craggy moor still, still ; desolate savagery ; Lord George and his Aberdeens *versus* Celtic nature and Celtic art.—Call on the Catholic priest ; poor fellow, he looked suspicious, embarrassed, a thick heavy vulgar man of forty-five ; *half* a peasant still, yet on the *way* towards better ;—good growth of turnips round his cottage, cottage some approach to civilization ; a book or two—unfortunately only mass-books, directories, or the like : we evidently lifted a mountain from his heart when we took ourselves away. " One man of these natives that doesn't lie." Send for him ; rides with me a bit—rough, clayey, bearded old man ; clothes dirty and bad, but still whole ; can't well understand him, or make myself intelligible (for he neither reads nor writes), so send him away with good wishes. We are now driving, by a *back* road, towards the inn. Farm cottage, with potato and corn patches as we go. " Rent," none in famine year ; uncertain ever since ; trifling when it does come, for nobody's rent has been raised at all : Aberdeen fisherman only clear immediate source of revenue, (*Ice*-house for him ; prices now being bad *here*.) People won't fish, or can't : lobster-pots given, and method shown—avails not. Have had to *buy* out innumerable rights, " right of fishing," " right of keeping an inn," right of etc., etc., £500, £300, etc., to keep peace, and do indubitable justice—*after* purchasing the property. People won't work (in all, or, I fear, the majority of cases) day's work for hire, if they have *potatoes* or other means of existing. Winged scarecrow breaking stones (on the other road) this morning, with his scandalous ragged farm close by, is an instance : wouldn't three months ago ; went to some island of *Gola*, where was a cousin with potatoes and good heart ; ate the potatoes out—and *now* he works ; his dress gone to the " tulip" form. May the devil pity him !—On the whole, I had to repeat often to Lord G. what I said yesterday ; to which he could not refuse essential consent. His is the largest attempt at benevolence and beneficence on the *modern* system (the emancipation, all-for-liberty, abolition-of-capital-punishment, roast-goose-at-Christmas system) ever seen by me, or like to be seen. Alas ! how *can* it prosper, except to the soul of the noble man himself who earnestly tries it, and works at it, making himself a " slave" to it these seventeen years ?

Lunch at the hotel; inscribe in the " book ;" with difficulty get packed ;—roll away (Forster and all) in the sunny fresh afternoon : road seen a *second* time, not lovely still ; Half-way House potheen (didn't taste it, ! ?) ;—Kilmacrenan again, and fields more and more with hedges ; we leaping down, had *walked* a great deal. House was excellent ; but dark twilight, very cold to *us*, had now settled down ; and all were glad enough to get within doors, to a late cup of Christian tea. Lord G. lights fire too, by a match ; very welcome blaze : presents me two pairs of his Gweedore socks. Bed soon and sleep.

Saturday, 4th August.—After breakfast, to visit a certain rough peasant farmer of the neighborhood distinguished as being " rich." Rough as hemp, in all respects, he proved. *Sluttish*, sluttish, anxious too for " improvements," good terms to be given for reclaiming bog, etc.—This was a *brother* of the peasant who had " made the money ;" the latter was now dead : made by " thrift," not industry ; worth little when made ? A civil-natured man too, and with a kind of appetite for something cleaner and more manful than this scene of dung-heaps ; poor old fellow, towards sixty, and had " tended the cows" till this *throne* became vacant for him. Home by the offices again ; Lady A. with the children in the garden : a delicate, pious, high and simple lady ; *sister* of Lord G.'s former wife. White sand (like



pounded sugar) from *Muckish* Mountain (I forget if this is the name that signifies “Pig” Mountain—which animal one mountain does really resemble?). Proprietor wouldn’t, at a *fair* rate, allow the Belfast glasshouses to help themselves to this sand; therefore they at no rate meddle with it.—Coach yoked; hasty kind farewell, and go. Lord George driving, I on the box beside him; one of the finest of days. By pleasant fields, shady or otherwise agreeable roads, to Ra’ Melton, or rather past the one side of Ra’ Melton.—Town lying over the river (river “Lannan,” it seems); chiefly a substantial white *row* along the quay (with respectable show of ships). *Our* road (on the *west* side) being up a steep hill; wood abundant, really a pleasant active little town. Barilla manufactory (*kelp* carts passing in met us) near it; small, but precious the like of it, and rare in Ireland.

By pleasant roads still, of the same sort to Rathmullen. Old Abbey (or Castle?) there, close by the sea; quite at the end of the white, quiet, rather steep-lying village; view across Lough Swilly (properly a *frith*) not bad, though too bare. To Mr. Something, a retired merchant of full purse, our intended host’s father-in-law. Showy, newish house and grounds, overhanging the sea near by; retired merchant not at home, his wife (poor Mrs. Sterling’s dialect and manner were recalled to me) greatly flattered by Lord G.’s call, will give lunch, etc., will do all things but *speak* a little less.—We withdraw to her daughter’s, to see our adventure, which doesn’t look too well, to the *end*. End is: intended host has not *come*, or given any notice; will “probably” be here to-night. Helpmate, a thick, stubborn-looking lady of forty, childless, and most likely wearing the breeches (to judge by appearances): she invites, etc.; but there is clearly only one thing to be done—get across to Derry, and take one’s ease at one’s inn. Conveyed by Lord George; meet “retired merchant” and his son; use him for getting ferry-boat secured (ferry is *his* by county law); off, in the bright windy afternoon; a really pathetic and polite farewell from his Lordship and poor Plattnauer. In all Ireland, lately in any other land, I saw no such beautiful soul.

Red-haired ferrymen, effectual-looking fellows; forts on Irish Island, etc., five or six artillerymen in each: (on Derry side); Innishowen hills on other; *bare* country as before, as *always* in this island, but with a Scotch aspect rather than Irish, beggary and rags having now become quite subordinate. Across soon; to Derry soon, by a high-lying, bare, “too populous” country. Many hungry-looking clusters of cottages (slated here, but visibly *hungry*); a ruin or two; several attorneys’ country-seats (prosperous attorneys), of which the architecture was not admirable. Seven miles:—at length, turning suddenly a corner, Derry is there to the south of us, close at hand; rising *red* and beautiful on elevated hill or “bluff” (it must have been once).—Foyle moderately supplied with ships, running broad and clear past the farther side of it. The prettiest-looking town I have seen in Ireland. The free school; a big old build-ing in fields, to right of us before we enter. Two or three *mill* chimneys (*not* corn-mills all of them, a linen-mill or flax-mill one at least visible); coal-yards, appearance of real shipping trade; suburbs, gate; and steep climb by the back of the old walls; Imperial Hotel, in fine—“one of the best in Ireland,” says report; one of the dearest, and not the best, says experience. Very indifferent bed there (wretched French bed, which species may the devil fly away with out of this British country!); and for lullaby the common sounds of an inn, augmented by a very powerful *cock* towards morning.

A Dr. McKnight (editor, pamphleteer, etc.), warned by Duffy, came to-night; led us through the city wonders, the old cannon, etc.; gave us, unconsciously, a glimpse into the raging *animosities* (London companies *versus* Derry town was the chief, but there were many) which reign here, as in all parts of Ireland, and, alas! of most lands;—invites us to breakfast for Monday; an honest kind of man, though loud-toned and with wild eyes, this McKnight; has tobacco too, and a kind little orderly polite wife (a “poverty honorable and

beautiful"). Surely we will go. Steamer is to sail on Monday at one p.m. for Glasgow ; Scotland ho !

Sunday, 5th August.—Hot, bright day ; letter to Lord Clarendon (farewell, I don't *come* by Dublin) ; Captain Something, a chief of Engineers (surveyors, map-makers in these parts), comes to take us out to " Temple Moyle," an agricultural school, and to show us about. A clean, intelligent, *thin* little soul ; of Twistleton's introducing? Long wooden bridge, rather disappoints, not *better* than Waterford : viewed from the other shore (height to the south, which our Captain makes us ascend), is very pretty in the sunshine. "*Grianan of Aileach*" (old Irish King's *Palace*, talked of by McKnight last evening), site of it is visible six miles off to north. Good enough country, *part* well cultivated, part ill ;—to London agent of Fish-mongers' (Mercers' ?) Company, a brisk, impetuous managing little fellow,—who escorts us to Temple Moyle—" Mr. Campbell," the Scotch manager, is overtaken by us on the road. Temple Moyle—very good indeed, so far as *cultivation of the ground goes* ; questionable, perhaps, on its *human* side ? A dozen of the boys. Catholics, and very ugly, were at dinner. The " teaching," our brisk Londoner indicated, was rather in a staggering way. " Acre of turnips *better* than one of potatoes," testifies Campbell, " and *easier* to cultivate if you do both *well*." Londoner's sad experience of Ireland ; tries to promote emigrating, to buy tenants out, very sad work. " The Company's rents £4000, don't get £1500 net. If I had an Irish estate, I would sell it ; if I couldn't, I would give it away." Look, in returning, at the attempted futility of an " Embankment of the Foyle ;" Railway to Newtown-Limavaddy was to embank Foyle ; £80,000 (?) spent. No railway done, none was or is *needed* ; no embankment, only heaps of barrows, waste flat diggings, and some small patch of ground (inconceivably small) saved out of the wreck till *new* money be subscribed. Very ugly distracted looking flat. Home. Oh, let us home ; for the evening, too, is getting gray and cold ! Captain to dine with us ; a weary evening—sofa, back garden, smoke ;—walk in the Diamond by moonlight; respectable old city. Walker's Memorial ; Prison Gates, Bishop's House. Trade terribly gone, all say ; much poverty. Eheu ! to bed, and leave it to the gods !

Monday, 6th August.—Breakfast at McKnight's ; sunny hot morning ;—small room full (got up the window of it, with effort !) : big Derry Protestant clergyman. Ex-mayor " Haslett ;" weighty set of men. Emphatic talk to them ; far too emphatic, the human nerves being worn out with exasperation ! " Remedy for Ireland ? To cease generally from following the devil : no other remedy that I know of ; one general life-element of humbug these two centuries ; and now it has fallen *bankrupt*. This universe, my worthy brother, *has* its laws, terrible as death and judgment if we ' cant' ourselves away from following them. Land tenure ? What *is* a landlord, at this moment, in any country, if Rhadamanthus looked at him ? What is an Arch-bishop ? alas ! what is a Queen—what is a specimen of the genus *Homo* in these generations ? A bundle of *hearsays* and authentic appetites ; a *canaille* whom the gods are about to chastise, and to extinguish if he cannot alter himself ! etc., etc." Derry aristocrats behaved *well* under all this. Not a pleasant breakfast ; but, oh, it is the last ! Off to pack, and get on board.—Shameless tumult on the quays, which continued long ; cattle loading, and three hundred finest peasantry ; McKnight to take leave, and another and another ; and the roar of wild men and cattle, and the general turmoil of (Irish) nature not yet ended ! Yo heave ho ! at last ; and, with many heelings and edgings (water *scant* in some places of this Frith of Foyle), we quit Innishowen Head, Malin Head, and the rest, and issue hopefully into the open sea. Bare, not uninteresting coast ; Glasgow steamer going bravely, afternoon bright. Port Rush, our mooring there ; last Irish crowd. Adieu, my friends, a happy evening to you. Port Rathlin Island, with many intervening rocky islets, grim, basaltic.—Robert Bruce, Esq., once in Rathlin. Giant's Causeway ; tourists dabbling up and down about in boats ; Heaven be their comforter ! We seem to be quite near it here, and it isn't worth a mile to travel to see.

Poor old woman, who *has* no money for fare, shall be set out on the beach : “ My son in Glasgow Hospital !” probably enough a fib ; but the cabin people club, and pay her fare. Beautiful boat, but not interesting passengers—the reverse of that. “ Fair Head” (or forget which) ; combination of crags on it which they call “ the Giant ;” other more distant cape growing ever dimmer ; and shortly, on our right, looms out high and grim the “ Mull of Cautire,” and we are on the *Scotch* coast ! Much improved prospects, directly on opening the west side of the Mull ; comfortable fenced crop-fields ; comfortable *human* farms. Isle of Arran ; Sandy Island ? ( ? Beautiful blazing lights, beaming in the red of twilight) ; Ailsa Craig ; Campbell-town Bay ; and now, unhappily, the daylight is quite gone, and the night breeze is cold ; sofa in little cabin, and stony fragments of sleep. Awake, still and confused ; on quarter-deck are finest peasantry (hitched forward out of their place) ; but on the left, two cotton-mill chimneys, and Glasgow is close by. Euge ! Dark City of Glasgow, pulses of some huge iron-furnace (“ Dickson’s Blast,” so named by mate) fitfully from moment to moment illuminating it ; excellent skipper, terribly straitened to land ; do at last (two a.m.), and with difficulty got into a big, dark, nautical inn ; no nobby, barrow, or other vehicle to convey us to a hotel. Sleep in spite of all ; huge mill roaring in at my open window, on the morrow at eight. Remove after breakfast ; look at Glasgow (under David Hope’s escort) ; Commercial Capital of Britain *this* ; thank Heaven for the sight of real human industry, with human fruits from it, once more ! On the morrow, home by rail to Scotsbrig. The sight of fenced fields, weeded crops, and human creatures with whole clothes on their backs—it was as if one had got into spring-water out of dunghill-puddles ; the feeling lasted with me for several days.  
*Finis* now.

This is my whole remembrance, or nearly so, of the *Irish Tour* ; plucked up, a good deal of it, from the throat of fast-advancing oblivion (as I went along), but quite certain to me once it is recalled. Done now, mainly because I had before-hand bound myself to do it ;—worth nothing that I know of, otherwise ;—*ended*, at any rate, this Wednesday, 16th October, 1849. And now to-morrow ?

THE END.

Reminiscences of my Irish journey in 1849 (1882)

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