

Ireland rocks a little

*Tour in England, Ireland, and France : in the years 1826, 1827, 1828 and 1829 ; with remarks on the manners and customs of the inhabitants, and anecdotes of distinguished public characters. In a series of letters*

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(A German Prince)

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I have had a bad night, a high fever, bad weather, and rough roads....took the road to Holyhead, where I arrived at ten o'clock.

My usual ill luck at sea did not permit me to sail,—the night was so rough that the packet went off without passengers. I staid behind, not very unwillingly, to take another day's rest in a comfortable inn.

*August 10th 1828.*

Ill and languid as I am, an excursion to the newly built light-house, four miles from hence, has given me extraordinary pleasure. Although the Island of Anglesea appears very flat, its picturesque craggy rocks rise on the western shore to a very considerable height above the sea. On one of these rocks, which stands out to sea, abrupt and isolated, is placed the light-house. This indescribably wild cliff is not only perpendicular the summit actually projects several hundred feet beyond the line of the base ; so that it appears rather as if blasted by powder, than the work of nature. Treading on a thick carpet of yellow dwarf broom and crimson heath, you reach the edge of the precipice: you then descend four or five hundred steps, roughly hewn in the rock, till you come to a little bridge suspended on ropes ; across this, holding by its net-work sides, you swing, as it were, over the chasm which separates this rock from the main land. Thousands of sea-mews wheeled around us, uttering their ceaseless melancholy wail to the storm. The young ones were just fledged, and the parent birds took advantage of the rough weather to exercise them. Nothing could be more graceful and interesting than these flying lessons. The young were easily distinguished by their gray colour and their yet unsteady flight ; while the old ones hung poised sometimes for the space of a minute without moving a wing, as if upborne motionless by the storm. The young ones often rested in the crevices of the rocks, but were soon driven out to fresh exertions by their inexorable parents.

The light-house is exactly like that which I have described to you at Flamborough Head, on the eastern coast of England, only without the revolving lights. The neatness of the oil-vessels, and the wonderful brightness of the mirror-like reflectors were here, as there, most admirable. I remarked an ingenious sort of rough-weather window, which may be opened in the hardest gale, without trouble or danger of breaking ; and a vertical stone staircase, like a saw, which saves much room. But I cannot make you understand either without a drawing.

*Dublin, Aug. 11th.*

A more unprosperous voyage it is hardly possible to have. I was ten hours tossed about, sick to death. The heat, the disgusting smell of the steam-boiler, the universal sickness,—it was a frightful night—a picture of human misery, worthy of Carl of Carlsberg. In a longer

voyage one gets hardened, and many new sources of pleasure compensate for privations ; but short voyages, which show only the dark side of the picture, are my greatest aversion. Thank God it's over, and I once more feel firm ground under me; though I sometimes think Ireland rocks a little.

*Evening.*

This country has more resemblance to Germany than to England. That universal and almost over-refined industry and culture disappears here, and with it, alas ! English neatness. The houses and streets have a dirty air, although Dublin is adorned with many magnificent palaces and broad straight streets. The lower classes are in rags ; those somewhat higher want the English elegance ; while the variety of brilliant uniforms, which are never seen in the streets of London, still more strongly remind one of the continent. The environs of the city have no longer the accustomed freshness ; the soil is more neglected, the grass and trees scantier. The grand features of the landscape, however, the bay, the distant mountains of Wicklow, the Hill of Howth, the amphitheatrical mass of houses, the quays, the harbour, are beautiful. Such, at least, is the first impression.

I find myself, in the best inn in the city, less comfortable than in the little town of Bangor. The house is large, but seems silent and deserted ; while I remember that there, only during my dinner, I saw fifteen carriages arrive, all of which were necessarily sent away from the door. The influx of strangers is so great along the high-roads of England, that waiters in the inns are not hired, but on the contrary, sometimes pay as much as 300*l.* a year for their places. They make a handsome profit, nevertheless, from the fees they receive. In Ireland, we return to the continental custom.

As soon as I had a little refreshed myself I took a walk through the city; in the course of which I passed two rather tasteless monuments. The one represents William of Orange on horseback, in Roman costume. Both man and horse are deformed : the horse has a bit in his mouth, and head-gear on, but no appearance of reins, though the king's hand is stretched out exactly as if he were holding them. Does this mean that William wanted no rein to ride John Bull ?

The other monument is a colossal statue of Nelson, standing on a high pillar, and dressed in a modern uniform. Behind him hangs a cable, which looks more like a pack-thread. The attitude is devoid of dignity, and the figure is too high to be distinctly seen.

I afterwards came to a large round building, towards which the people crowded, keeping watch on the outside. On inquiry, I learned that the yearly exhibition of fruits and flowers was held here. They were just taking away the former as I entered ; notwithstanding which, I saw many fine specimens. In the midst of the flowers, which formed a sort of temple, there was an enclosed space railed round for the fruits, which twelve judges ate with great gravity and apparent satisfaction. They must have been a long time in coming to a decision ; for rinds of melons, pears and apples, fragments of pines, stones of plums, apricots and peaches, lay in mountains on the table beneath ; and although the flowers were all gradually removed by the proprietors, I did not see that any of the fruits found their way out of this temple of Pomona.

*August 12th.*

As I knew not what else to do (for all the ' notables' who inhabit the town were in the country,) I visited a number of ' show places.' First the Castle, where the vice-King resides, and whose miserable state-apartments with coarsely boarded floors do not offer anything

very attractive.—A modern Gothic chapel, the exterior of which is a deceptive imitation of antiquity, is more worth seeing : the interior is decorated with splendid painted glass from Italy, of the fifteenth century, and richly ornamented with modern carvings in wood, of truly antique beauty. The whole chapel is heated by pipes of hot air ; and a passage, warmed in the same manner and carpeted, connects it with the Lord Lieutenant's apartments.

In the extensive and beautiful buildings belonging to the University a student acted as my cicerone. These young men, when within the precincts of the college, are obliged to wear, over their usual clothes, a black mantle, and a strange high cap with tassels three-quarters of an ell long, which gives them a rather grotesque appearance. This dress is as rigorously adhered to, as at one time a pig-tail and powder were by Saxon staff-officers.

The young man took me into the Museum ; showed me the burning-glass with which Archimedes set fire to the Roman fleet ! Ossian's harp ; [1] a stuffed Indian chieftain with tomahawk and spear ; and some fragments of pillars from the Giant's Causeway, which could not be more accurately formed by the hand of man, and which ring like English glass. ' Je vous fais grace du reste.'

In the great hall in which the examinations are held, (the student told me this with a slight shudder,) stands a Spanish organ, built for the grand Armada.—Much more interesting are the portraits of Swift and Burke : both physiognomies express the known qualities of the men. The one has an expression as acute and sarcastic as it is native and original : the other, full of intellect and power, somewhat blunt, but yet benevolent and honest, announces the thundering orator who contended sincerely and without reserve for his opinion, but never glossed over his own interest with affected enthusiasm for others.

After visiting the Courts of Justice, the Custom-house, and other magnificent buildings, I was going home, when I was tempted by the advertisement of a ' Peristrepic Panorama' of the battle of Navarino. This is a very amusing sight ; and gives so clear an idea of that ' untoward event,' that one may console one's self for not having been there. You enter a small theatre, the curtain draws up, and behind it is discovered the pictures which represent, in a grand whole, the series of the several incidents of the fight. The canvas does not hang straight down, but is stretched in a convex semicircle, and moved off slowly upon rollers, so that the pictures are changed almost imperceptibly, and without any break between scene and scene. A man describes aloud the objects represented ; and the distant thunder of cannon, military music, and the noise of the battle, increase the illusion. By means of panoramic painting, and a slight undulation of that part which represents the waves and the ships, the imitation almost reaches reality.

The first scene represents the bay of Navarino with the whole Turkish fleet in order of battle. At the opposite extremity of the bay is seen Old Navarino and its fortress perched on a high rock ; on the side of it the village of Pylos, and in the foreground the city of Navarino with Ibrahim's camp, where groups of fine horses, and beautiful Greek prisoners surrounded by their captors, attract the eye. In the distance, just at the extremity of the horizon, the allied fleets are faintly descried. This picture slowly disappears, and is succeeded by the open sea, —the entrance to the bay of Navarino then gradually succeeds. You distinguish the armed men on the rocks, and at length see the allied fleet forcing the passage. By some optical deception everything appears of its natural size ; and the spectator seems to be placed in the Turkish position in the bay, and to see the admiral's ship, the *Asia*, bearing down upon him with all sails set. You see Admiral Codrington on the deck in conversation with the captain. The other vessels follow in extending lines, and with swelling sails, as if ready for the attack ; —a glorious sight ! Next follow the separate engagements of the several ships, the explosion

of a fireship, and the sinking of some Turkish frigates. Lastly, the engagement between the Asia and the Egyptian admiral's ship on the one side, and the Turkish on the other, both of which, as you know, sank after an obstinate defence of many hours.

The battle is succeeded by some views of Constantinople, which give a very lively idea of Asiatic scenes and habits.

In the evening I visited the theatre ; a very pretty house, with a somewhat less rough and obstreperous audience than those of London. The actors were not bad, though none of them rose above mediocrity. Numerous uniforms were intermingled among the ladies in the lower tier of boxes, which seemed to be elegantly filled. The higher classes, however, as I am told, seldom visit the theatre here, any more than in London.

*August 13th.*

Having seen enough of the city, I have begun my rides in the neighbourhood, which is much more beautiful than its appearance at my first approach, on the least favourable side, led me to expect. A road commanding charming views,—first of the bay, which is intersected by a mole five miles in length, and bounded at either extremity by the two light-houses of Dublin and Howth, rising like columns in the distance ; then of the mountains of Wicklow, some clothed with wood, some rising like sugar-loaves high above the others ; and lastly, along an avenue of noble elms by the side of a canal,—brought me to the Phoenix Park, the Prater of Dublin, which in no respect yields to that of Vienna, whether we regard its expanse of beautiful turf for riding, long avenues for driving, or shady walks. A large but ill-proportioned obelisk is erected here to the Duke of Wellington. I found the park rather empty, but the streets through which I returned full of movement and bustle. The dirt, the poverty, and the ragged clothing of the common people often exceed all belief. Nevertheless they seem always good-natured, and sometimes have fits of merriment in the open streets which border on madness ;—whiskey is generally at the bottom of this. I saw a half-naked lad dance the national dance in the market-place so long, and with such violent exertion, that at last he fell down senseless amid the cheers of the spectators, totally exhausted, like a Mohammedan dervise.

The streets are crowded with beggar-boys, who buzz around one like flies, incessantly offering their services. Notwithstanding their extreme poverty, you may trust implicitly to their honesty ; and wretched, lean, and famished as they appear, you see no traces of melancholy on their open, good-natured countenances. They are the best-bred and most contented beggar-boys in the world. Such a little fellow will run by your horse's side for hours, hold it when you alight, go on any errand you like ; and is not only contented with the few pence you give him, but full of gratitude, which he expresses with Irish hyperbole. The Irishman appears generally more patient than his neighbours, but somewhat degraded by long slavery.

I was witness among other things to this :—A young man had pasted up a wrong play-bill: the manager of the theatre came up and hit him a slap on the face, and otherwise ill-treated him, without his making any resistance ; an Englishman would have made instant reprisals.

I passed the evening in the family circle of an old acquaintance, a brother of the Lord-lieutenant, who was just come to town for a few days. We talked over old times, as we had been much together in London. He has a remarkable talent for imitating the late Kemble, whom he resembles in person. I thought I saw Coriolanus and Zanga again.

*August 14th.*

Another friend, of yet older date, Mr. W——ts, to whom I had once an opportunity of rendering some service in Vienna, paid me a visit this morning, and offered me his country-house as a residence.—He had scarcely quitted me, when I was told that Lady B——, an Irish ‘peeress,’ and one of the most beautiful women in the country, whose acquaintance I had cultivated during the last season in the metropolis, was in her carriage below, and wished to speak to me. As I was still in the most absolute ‘negligée,’ I told the waiter, (a perfect ‘Jocrisse,’ whose ‘Irish blunders’ daily amuse me,) that I was not dressed, as he saw, but that I would be ready immediately. He announced the state of my toilet ; but added, ‘de son chef,’ that “my Lady had better come up.” Imagine my astonishment when he came back and told me that Lady B—— had laughed very much, and had bid him say that she would willingly wait, but that to pay gentlemen morning visits in their chambers was not the custom in Ireland.

In this answer appeared the cordial, frank, and good-natured character of the true Irish woman, which I had already learned to love and admire. A prudish Englishwoman would have driven away in high displeasure, and perhaps have ruined the reputation of a young man for such a ‘qui pro quo’ as this : for in English society people do not only stumble at things which in other countries produce quite a contrary effect ; but the ‘it is said’ in the mouth of an influential person is a two-edged sword. ‘He has a bad character’ is sufficient to shut a hundred doors against a stranger. An Englishman is much less guided by his own observation than is generally imagined : he always attaches himself to some party, with whose eyes he sees.

In the afternoon I went to dine at my friend’s villa. The road was very agreeable. It began with the Phoenix Park, and followed the course of the Liffey, the river which flows through Dublin, where its beautiful quays, stone and iron bridges, add so much to the embellishment of the town. Here it has a rural and romantic character, bordered with the broad leaves of the tussilago, and enclosed by soft hills and verdant thickets. I asked a beggar whom I met, how far it was to W—— park, and whether the road continued equally beautiful all the way. ‘Long life to your honour !’ exclaimed he, with Irish patriotism, ‘only keep right on, and you never saw anything more beautiful in this world !’

The entrance to W—— park is indeed the most delightful in its kind that can be imagined. Scenery, by nature most beautiful, is improved by art to the highest degree of its capability ; and without destroying its free and wild character, [2] a variety and richness of vegetation is produced which enchant the eye. Gay shrubs and wild flowers, the softest turf, and giant trees festooned with creeping plants, fill the narrow glen through which the path winds by the side of the clear dancing brook ; falling in little cataracts, it flows on, sometimes hidden in the thicket, sometimes resting like liquid silver in an emerald cup, or rushing under overhanging arches of rock, which nature seems to have hung there as triumphal arches for the beneficent naïad of the valley to pass through. As soon as you leave the glen, the enchantment suddenly ceases : the rest in no respect answers your high-raised expectations. Scanty grass, stunted trees, and thick stagnant water, surround a small Gothic castle, which looks like a poor scene in a play. In it, however, you find some interesting objects :—among others, some good pictures ; and the best and most cordial host that one can desire. I must also mention a curious ‘pavilion rustique’ which is built in a suitable spot in the ‘pleasure ground.’ It is hexagonal, three sides solid, and fashioned of pieces of rough branches of trees very prettily arranged in various patterns ; the other three consist of two windows and a door. The floor is covered with a mosaic of little pebbles from the brook, the ceiling with shells, and the roof is thatched with wheat straw on which the full ears are left.

August 15th.

Although my chest continues to give me pain, and my doctor sometimes makes solemn faces, I go on with my expeditions, which afford me great pleasure.

I had already fixed a longing eye on one of three hills, four or five miles from the city, on the summit of which stand three distinct upright masses of rock, from which it takes its name, 'The Three Rocks.' The view from it must needs be beautiful. I got up, therefore, earlier than usual, that I might reach the top in good time. I asked repeatedly in the villages through which I passed, which was the best way, but could never get a distinct answer. At length I was assured by the inhabitants of a house at the foot of the hill, that I could not ride up, and must dismount. This in the present state of my chest was not practicable ; but as I have long learned what people's impossibilities are, I took the path they showed me, on horseback, without hesitation. I could safely trust my little compact mare, for the Irish horses climb over rocks or walls like cats. For sometime I followed a tolerably beaten foot-path, and when this ceased, the dry bed of a mountain stream, along which I rode without much difficulty for about two miles. I now found myself on a large and naked 'plateau,' and saw the three rocks, like witches' stones, rearing their heads before me. The intervening space, however, seemed an impassable bog. I tried it very cautiously, and found a shingly bottom at about eight or ten inches under the boggy soil. This continued all the way ; till after some time I reached firm ground, and stood upon the highest point. The wished-for prospect lay before me : Ireland, like a map ; Dublin, like a smoking lime-kiln in the green plain, (for the coal-smoke did not allow me to distinguish one single building ;) the bay with its light-houses ; the boldly marked headland of Howth ; and on the other side, the mountains of Wicklow, stretching away to the horizon, lay beneath me bathed in sunlight, and rewarded me for all my fatigue.

But the scene was yet further animated by a sweet-looking young woman, whom I discovered in this wild solitude, busied in the humble employment of straw-platting. The natural grace of the Irish peasant-women, who are often truly beautiful, is as surprising as their dress, or rather their want of dress ; for though it was very cold on these hills, the whole clothing of the young woman before me consisted of a large very coarse straw hat, and *literally* two or three rags of the coarsest sackcloth suspended under the breast by a piece of cord, and more than half disclosing her handsome person. Her conversation was cheerful, sportive and witty ; perfectly unembarrassed, and in a certain sense free ; but you would fall into a great error if you inferred from that, any levity or looseness of conduct.

The women of this class in Ireland are, almost universally, extremely chaste, and still more disinterested. If one of them ever strays from the path of virtue, she is very rarely seduced by those considerations of gain, which are so degrading, and, in such matters, so unnatural.

After I had descended the mountain on the other side, leading my horse, who scrambled after me as well as he could, I reached the high-road, and came upon an open park gate, (for in this also Ireland resembles the continent, where every proprietor, from the king to the humble country-gentleman, enhances his own enjoyment by sharing it with the public,) and rode in. I soon gave up the enterprise, however, on seeing two gigantic capuchins with gown and cross cut out of painted boards, standing in a cross-way, and each of them holding a book on which was written—"To the Pheasantry," "To the Abbey." Such bad taste is rare here.

In the street I met a London 'dandy,' who called out to me, (for I did not recognize him,) laughed heartily at our meeting 'in such a horrid place,' ran on for some time in a satirical vein on Dublin society, and at last concluded by informing me, that through the influence of

his family, he had just obtained a place here, which, indeed, brought him in 2000*l.* a year, and gave him nothing to do, but which compelled him ‘pro forma’ to pass a part of every year in this ‘shocking’ abode. With such, and even much richer sinecures, are the younger sons of the English aristocracy provided in countless numbers, and in all parts of the empire. I think, however, that even here, the pitcher will not always go to the well without breaking ; though I must confess that these defects in the English government, compared with the arbitrary power exercised in other states, are but spots on the sun.

I of course entirely except Ireland, which appears to experience, in almost every instance, a step-mother’s care ; which contributes largely to the power and splendour of the English nobility, without receiving back the smallest portion of those advantages of which England receives so much.

*August 18th.*

Your letters are still so melancholy, dear Julia . . . . .

You see, then, that it is not events themselves, so much as your own view of them, which years have tinged with a more gloomy colour. But alas ! this is the most irremediable of all evils ! We are not what we were ; and the one eternal and universal error remains—that we think we can help ourselves by an exertion of strength, when the strength is no longer there : as soon can we be or look young again ! I too begin to feel traces of this but only there, where the world lays its fetters around me ; when alone with God and nature, the gloomiest horizon has no power to darken my inner sun.

I accompanied Lady B——, of whom I have already spoken, to breakfast to-day at the country-house of a much admired young lady. The master of the house excused himself on the plea of headache, and I was therefore left to take a long walk in the grounds with the two ladies alone. On our arrival at the gate which was to lead us to one of the most beautiful parts of the wood, it was locked—no key to be found ; and according to the report of the old gardener, the lady’s maid had gone in, and taken it away with her. A servant was ordered to jump over the wall, and to seek the offender : he came back, however, without any tidings of her. I now got a ladder, and helped my laughing companions to climb over the wall ; they professed great awkwardness, but acquitted themselves most gracefully. After walking a quarter of an hour we met the unfortunate lady’s maid, and as she thought herself safe—not alone : it may be imagined in what company. A mute domestic scene followed : and as I am too good natured to laugh, it really grieved me that my ladder had been the cause of such distress. I declined staying to dinner, and hastened back to town to call on Lady M——, to whom I had a letter of introduction, and who had already sent me a polite invitation which I had not been able to accept. I was very eager to make the acquaintance of a woman whom I rate so highly as an authoress. I found her, however, very different from what I had pictured her to myself. She is a little, frivolous, lively woman, apparently between thirty and forty, neither pretty nor ugly, but by no means disposed to resign all claim to the former, and with really fine and expressive eyes. She has no idea of ‘mauvaise honte’ or embarrassment ; her manners are not the most refined, and affect the ‘aisance’ and levity of the fashionable world, which, however, do not sit calmly or naturally upon her. She has the English weakness,— that of talking incessantly of fashionable acquaintances, and trying to pass for very ‘recherché’ to a degree quite unworthy of a woman of such distinguished talents and she is not at all aware how she thus underrates herself.

She is not difficult to know, for with more vivacity than good taste, she instantly professes perfect openness, and especially sets forth on every occasion her liberalism and her infidel-

ity ; the latter of the somewhat obsolete school of Helvetius and Condillac. In her writings she is far more guarded and dignified than in her conversation. The satire of the latter is, however, not less biting and dexterous than that of her pen, and just as little remarkable for a conscientious regard to truth. You may think that with all these elements two hours flew rapidly away. I had enthusiasm enough to be able to utter some ‘ à propos’ which pleased her, and she treated me with marked attention : first, because I happened to have a distinguished title ; and secondly, because she had seen my name as dancing at Almacks, and as present at several ‘ fêtes’ of the great leaders, of Ton—a circumstance which appeared so important in her eyes, that she repeatedly recurred to it.

*August 20th.*

Yesterday evening I was engaged to a ‘ soirée’ at Lord C——’s, the head of a new family, but one of the oldest ‘ wits’ of Dublin. I was invited to accompany his friend lady M——, but was prevented by a tragi-comical incident. I had ridden out to visit Mr L—— at his country-seat (a trouble which between ourselves neither he nor his family deserved), and it was late when I set out on my return. To save time, I took my way across the country, ‘ à la Seidlitz.’ For some miles all went on capitally, till just at twilight I came to a very wide ditch, the opposite bank of which was considerably lower than the one on which I stood, and surrounded a broad meadow. I leaped into this enclosure ; but on trying to get out on the other side, my horse refused, and all my efforts to bring him to obedience were vain. I alighted to lead him, mounted again to try to leap him at another place,—tried fair means and foul ; all equally in vain : till at length he made an awkward attempt at a leap, fell with me into the muddy water, and with some difficulty scrambled back again to the inner and lower bank. All hope of getting out of the enchanted spot in which I was caught as in a mouse-trap, was now lost :—it was become quite dark, I was wet through, and extremely heated ; and was at last obliged to come to the determination of leaving my horse, getting over the fatal ditch, ‘ tant bien que mal,’ on foot, and seeking help and shelter where I could. The moon came kindly from behind the clouds, and aided me with her welcome light. After a most toilsome walk of half an hour over ploughed land and through high wet grass, I reached a miserable hut, in which every body was already asleep. I walked in, (for the houses here are never fastened ;) a couple of pigs grunted under my feet, and near them lay the master of the house. With some difficulty I made him understand my request, which I enforced by jingling some silver close to his ear. This universal language awakened him more effectually than my invocations ; he sprang up, called a comrade, and went out to my ‘ Didone abbandonata.’ Irishmen are never at a loss for expedients ; they found a broken and deserted wooden bridge near at hand, laid it across the ditch, and I at length found myself on the high road with my liberated steed. I reached home so late, and in such a plight, that I desired nothing but rest, and was sorry to hear that lady M—— had been to fetch me, and had driven away in great vexation an hour ago.

The next morning I went to make my excuses. She pardoned me graciously, but assured me that I had lost *a great deal*, for that all the rank and fashion of the town were there. I assured her with great sincerity that I regretted nothing but the loss of her society, out that I hoped to be indemnified for that as soon as I had made my ‘ sentimental journey’ to the county of Wicklow, for which my German romantic soul ardently thirsted, and which I intended to commence the following morning on horseback. The conversation became very gay,—for she likes that ; and at last ended so petulantly, that she exclaimed, ‘ Finissez !’ when you come back I shall receive you just like an elder sister : to which I answered, laughing, ‘ That I cannot agree to ;—je craindrais le sort d’Abufar.’ Addressed to Lady M—— this was certainly rather a ‘ fade’ joke.



The continuation of my adventures you will receive from the midst of rocks and mountains. Adieu ! may heaven send you serenity and peace, and may every word of my letters whisper to you ‘ true love till death.’  
Your L——.

LETTER XXIX.

*August 22nd, 1828.*

BELOVED JULIA,

ABOUT noon I quitted Dublin entirely alone, comfortably established on my good steed. I left my carriage and people in the town, and sent a little travelling bag, containing my most necessary effects, before me by the stage-coach. Unfortunately, however, this was changed by mistake ; and though I waited for it a whole day and night in Bray, only twenty miles from Dublin, it did not overtake me ; rather than go back or wait longer, I bought a Scotch cloak and some linen in Bray, and entered on my tour quite after the fashion of a student. I supped with a young parson of good family, who made me laugh heartily at his orthodoxy in matters of religion, interspersed with talk which was by no means remarkable for severe decorum or virtue. But such is the piety of Englishmen,—it is to them at once a party matter and an affair of good manners ; and as in politics they follow their party implicitly, through thick and thin, reasonable and unreasonable, because it *is* their party ;—as they submit to a custom for ever because it *is* a custom ; so they regard their religion, (without the least tincture of poetry,) in exactly the same point of view: they go to church on Sundays, just as regularly as they dress every day for dinner ; and regard a man who neglects church, just in the same light as one who eats fish with a knife. [ 3]

Accompanied by the young divine, who was travelling the same way for some distance, I left Bray at five o’clock in the morning. In a most lovely country we passed Kilruddery, a newly built seat of the Earl of Meath, in the style of the houses of Elizabeth’s time ;—in this case the masses are not sufficiently large to produce a good effect. The park is not very extensive, but long and narrow ; the gardens, in the old French taste, are very celebrated ; but, probably owing to our unpretending appearance, we were most discourteously denied admittance. In England this is common enough, but rare in Ireland, and gave no very favourable impression of the philanthropy of the possessor. My companion, who is an adherent of ‘ la grace efficace,’—that is to say, who is firmly persuaded that God, from all eternity, predestined his favourites for heaven, and others who pleased him less for hell,—made no doubt ; in his wrath, that the Lord of Kilruddery belonged to the latter category. “ It is a disgrace to an Irishman !” exclaimed he, angrily ; and I had some difficulty in making him understand the duty of tolerance.

A second park, Bellevue, the property of a worthy old gentleman, readily opened its gates to us. Here is a summer-house which seems to hang in the air, and overlooks the ‘ Glen of the Downs,’ a deep valley, behind which two extinct volcanoes rear their conical heads. The summer-house had just been prettily covered with purple heather. A less happy thought was a stuffed tiger, lying as if alive in the ante room.

My travelling chaplain here quitted me, and I rode alone to the vale of Durwan, where, in a narrow romantic pass, stands a rock eighty or a hundred feet high, shaped in the rude outline of the human figure. The country people, who relate many wondrous stories about it, call it the Giant. Not far from it are the ruins of a castle, so entirely overgrown with ivy, that you must approach very near to distinguish it from the surrounding trees. At the end of the valley the path winds over meadows to a considerable height, which command a most exquisite

view. I looked across the sea, and saw, almost with a feeling of home sickness, the Welsh mountains in the blue distance.

After having refreshed myself with bread and milk in a little country inn, I took my way to the ‘ Devil’s Glen,’ which merits the name it bears. The wild scene opens with a Gothic castle, whose blackened walls rise above the surrounding wood : you then plunge into a glen whose sides gradually rise higher and higher, and are more and more contracted, while the moaning breeze rustles louder through the dark thicket, and the torrent roars more fearfully. I rode on with difficulty over the slippery earth, incessantly annoyed by the overhanging boughs, and suddenly found the path terminated by a magnificent cascade, which plunges headlong over lofty crags, and disappears foaming in the bottom. If not the devil himself, it is at least Kühleborn.

Most agreeable is the change from this awful glen to the lovely sylvan valley of Rosanna, where I ate my mid-day repast under the shade of high ash-trees. I found two regular English tourists, armed with *hortus siccus* and hammers. They had resided here for some weeks, during which time they had had the clean table-cloth removed from the dirty table, and remained sitting an hour at dessert, with exactly the same punctuality as in a London coffee-house, though they had miserable sloe-juice instead of claret, and roasted apples instead of ripe fruit.

At seven o’clock I mounted my horse again, galloped ten miles along the main road, and just before sunset reached the exquisitely beautiful Avondale. In this paradise every possible charm is united. A wood which appears of measureless extent, two noble rivers, rocks of every variety of picturesque form, the greenest meadows, the most varied and luxuriant shrubberies and thickets ; in short, scenery changing at every step, yet never diminishing in beauty. The last time I traversed the valley it was moonlight, and I should have found my way with difficulty but for a young man who was returning from shooting ; with true Irish kindness and courtesy he accompanied me at least three miles on foot, far beyond the most intricate parts. The night was extremely clear and mild, the sky as blue as by day, and the moon lustrous as a gem. Though I lost something in extent of view, I gained perhaps more by the magic light which was diffused through the atmosphere ; by the darker and more fantastic ‘ contours’ of the rocks,—the thought-pregnant stillness,—and the sweetly-awful loneliness of night.

At ten o’clock I reached the end of my day’s journey, Avoca Inn ; where I found very tolerable accommodation, kind and hearty attendance, and moderate charges. I met another English tourist in the eating-room : but this was a high spirited and interesting young man, who fully sympathized in my rapture at the enchanting country, and with whom I talked away a very pleasant hour at tea, before I sat down to write to you. But now good night, for mountain travelling demands early rising.

[1] Probably presented by Macpherson himself.—EDITOR.

[2] *Character*, in England, means (most *characteristically*, in a country where *appearance* has more weight than in any other,) not the result or sum of a man’s moral and intellectual qualities, but his reputation, what is said of him. EDITOR.

[3] The common people in England put the knife as well as the fork to their mouths. The higher classes, on the contrary, regard this as the true sin against the Holy Ghost, and cross themselves internally when they see a foreign Ambassador now and then eat so ;—it is an affront to the whole nation.

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