

The Promised Landscape 1813

Observations on the state of Ireland, principally directed to its agriculture and rural population : in a series of letters, written on a tour through that country

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Castle Isle, Sept. 9, 1813.

THE valley of Limerick, so celebrated for its beauty and fertility, is much indebted to the latter for all it possesses of the former, as it is a flat, plain surface, of considerable extent, stretching with few interruptions to the southward, from the borders of the Shannon to Newcastle. Slovenly and bad as was the management of the land before our arrival in Limerick, on our departure, as far as we had an opportunity of observing, it was equally censurable ; nor do I conceive I hazard being unjust in supposing it to be a fair sample of the agriculture we shall meet in this most fertile level.

A great number of orchards very agreeably presented themselves, in which the trees were heavily laden with fruit. This was no less a pleasing than an uncommon sight, and must, in the spring of the year, when the trees are in blossom, highly contribute to that beauty which the valley is reputed to possess. As orchards add considerably to the comforts of all classes, it is matter of surprise they are not more generally introduced in Ireland, as they yearly produce a crop with little more trouble or expense than that of harvesting their produce.

Although we had frequently in our view, and especially in the neighbourhood of Limerick, a number of gentlemen's seats, many of which seemed to possess considerable domains, and to be ornamented with stately timber and extensive plantations ; yet the general level surface, though gratifying to the observation of a farmer from the richness and fertility of the soil, wanted something more to afford entertainment to the eye, which can luxuriate only in the bold and diversified features of nature.

Opulence, in the vicinage of large commercial places, is ever conspicuous in the neatness and elegance which characterize the competence or wealth of the respective possessors, in the decorations of their country retirements, and costly relaxations from the labors of business ; yet here the cabins under their windows, instead of partaking in the general good which fortune so liberally distributes, seem to suffer in an inverse ratio to her splendid dispensations. This opinion cannot be more accurately confirmed than by stating that on the examination of one of these wretched abodes, which was no worse than its neighbours, we found its floor one foot below the surface of the road, from which it is entered by a door only three feet high ; the inside, from the bare ground to the top of the roof—four feet ; the length of the side walls nine ; the width six. This area, wholly destitute of all earthly comforts, gave shelter to two rational beings, and was their only house, though scarcely fit for the den of a wild beast. The plenty which surrounded this deplorable hut, and the sumptuous display of other men's habitations within its view, did but aggravate the melancholy feelings inspired by this scene of human misery ; on every side of which the most luxuriant crops were ripening for general use, yet denied to these individuals, whose labors, perhaps, had contributed to their production. Let the pleasures derived from passing through an interesting country be what they may—let the bounties of Providence be ever so abundantly spread before the eye—yet, if these fail to promote the general welfare of our fellow-creatures, the charms of Nature, or decorations of art, however entitled to admiration, become clouded, or entirely obscured.

We stopped to breakfast at Adair, fourteen miles on our way from Limerick. The noble woods and extensive ruins that surround the site of Castle Desmond, convey lofty ideas of the splendor which preceded the misfortunes of the Desmond family, whose efforts, about three hundred years ago, made so conspicuous a figure in the annals of the country.

The architecture of the religious houses is in a superior style of Gothic to any thing we have hitherto met with in Ireland. The chapel of one of the monasteries has been recently repaired by Lord Adair, and reflects great credit on his Lordship's taste and liberality. On the death of the Earl of Desmond in the year 1583, the title and patrimonial property, consisting of five hundred and seventy-four thousand acres, were forfeited, at which time estates amounting to two hundred and thirty-seven thousand acres were granted to Sir William Herbert, Charles Herbert, and others, with a reserved rent of two thousand three hundred and seventy-two pounds eighteen shillings and six-pence. During the unfortunate rebellion, which was the destruction of this noble family, the number of cattle which at times were taken by adverse parties seems incredible : on one occasion two thousand cows, four thousand sheep, and one one thousand garrons (horses), are reported to have been carried off by the conquering army.

The appearance of this spot infused more favorable ideas of the improvements in the country than the specimens which we had already seen gave us reason to expect.

St. Patrick's well, at a short distance from Adair, still continues to be held in high veneration for the miraculous curative power of its waters. Credulity may generally be esteemed as the associate of ignorance, and in most cases claims more pity than censure. The exaltation and accession of intelligence to the human mind during the last half century is wonderful. An equal period of time may reasonably be expected to unrivet, if not completely remove, the chains by which the influence of superstition has so long degraded the uneducated. At the southern extremity of the village, a chapel, formerly appertaining to another monastery, was presented by the Adair family, and by them fitted up as a place of worship.

Oxen are worked by some of the farmers in this neighbourhood. At a little distance from the town are a number of neat cottages, erected by Lord Adair for the residence of his laborers. How delightful to behold such sights !

On quitting Adair, the country became less fertile until our approach towards Rathkeel, when we were gratified by the sight of a better soil and an improved management. Very many acres of potatoes were drilled, and, though somewhat too late, the farmers were earthing them up with the plough. The adoption of any mode which would accelerate the harvest in Ireland, would be attended with important advantages. The wetness of the spring season is here of itself sufficient to induce winter ploughing. By this practice in the north of England, nearly three weeks has been gained in the time of harvest ; and I can see no reason why this country should be later than Cumberland. The frosts in April and in May sometimes injure the potatoes with us : the mildness of the climate here precludes any apprehension of this sort, and is a further inducement for early planting, which, from prejudice or want of exertion, is not often concluded before the middle of May.

We were not permitted long to enjoy the pleasure of observing practices entitled to be called management ; the reverse attended us during the six miles to Newcastle, over a dead uninteresting flat from Rathkeel, the road through which place exposed us to no small jeopardy ; for although the town is of considerable extent, and very populous, the streets for a carriage are nearly impassable. It seems incomprehensible, in a country where the roads are so generally good, that such a nuisance through a large town should be tolerated.

Newcastle is but a small place, though greatly increased of late years in consequence of the new line of road by Tralee and Dingle to Killarney. A wish to spare our horses induced us to prefer the shortest road, by Castle Isle, which we have had more causes than one to regret.

On quitting Newcastle, the ascent from the foot of the Kerry mountains commenced. We understood that three pounds for rent, and ten shillings per acre for tithes, were the customary prices of the land. The value of tithes varies according as they are held by ecclesiastics, or let to proctors—as the lessees, or holders of tithes are here called. Were the clergy resident in their respective parishes, and could they be induced to attend to their own concerns, the tyranny at present usurped in letting and collecting their tithes could not be practised.

The Kerry mountains afford pasture to numerous herds of cattle, which, having hitherto been little attended to, are inferior in shape to the breed of the Kyloe, though they bear to them a strong resemblance. Only two distinct breeds of cattle have yet come under our observation, the long-horned and the Kerry ; and it appears not impossible, that the long-horned breed was first introduced into England from hence. Much pains have recently been bestowed here on improving the long-horned breed, by the importation of the best bulls that could be procured from Leicestershire. The luxuriant herbage of the pastures, in this part of the island, cannot fail to reward the judicious efforts made by the graziers, and of producing fine specimens of any cattle ; but I cannot help considering those of the long-horned breed slow feeders, late in coming to maturity, and on the whole to be an unprofitable stock, when compared with those from Holderness and Durham.

Our road continued for ten miles very mountainous to Abbey Feal, where we breakfasted. Great part of the property through which we passed, recently appertained to Lord Courtenay. It was lately sold in lots, which were principally purchased by the tenantry. A division of landed property would highly contribute to an extended cultivation and the general prosperity of Ireland, by the introduction of gradations in society, which at present do not exist. The distance now between high and low—the few and the many, is so great as to preclude the practices or habits of the one from influencing or producing any benefit to the other. The first change likely to create emulation, and awaken the subordinate classes to improvement, will be that of seeing those of their own order daily acquiring an augmentation of comforts, by the profitable results of their own exertions.

To the subdivision of the land in Great Britain, among all ranks, may be referred that independence of character in the people, and that general improvement over the face of the country, which excite the admiration of foreigners. This distribution is not less contributory to the support of the state, than it is beneficial to the subject. The possession of property, and particularly of this description, is ever accompanied by an honest pride, which stimulates the owner to be a fit successor to that station in society he may hereafter fill. This happy disposition is amply rewarded by acquirements in the rising generation—by a tenacious regard to character, and a cheerful submission to the laws, ensuring at the same time individual happiness, and national prosperity.

As the same causes are known to produce the same effects, may we not reasonably indulge in the hope, that were portions of the unwieldy estates in Ireland thus allotted and sold off, like the Courtenay property, the same happy consequences as in England would result to this country. At any rate the experiment might be worth making, as the increased value of the central part retained, would recompense the proprietor for any loss which might be sustained by a sale of the outskirts.

A short distance from Abbey Feal, we had a considerable hill to ascend. The valley is narrow, and confined on both sides. Whether we were indebted purely to chance, or to the

courtesy of the proprietor of a beautiful cottage on the opposite bank of the river, I cannot decide ; but either the report of a cannon, or the blasting of rock, produced a most astonishing effect, in the repetition of the echo, at various points, for some seconds.

Abbey Feal is a very small place, the accommodations wretched. For the comfort of future travellers a new inn is building, and in great forwardness. I am sensible that the cursory information obtained by persons like ourselves, passing hastily through a country, ought always to be received with great caution ; and I would willingly hope, that an account detailed by a stranger, who joined us on the road, was much exaggerated. He stated that in the neighbourhood of Newcastle, forty shillings for tithes had been exacted for an acre of potatoes by a proctor, who rented the tithes from the rector, on very reasonable terms, which made the hardship on the poor cottier so much the greater. The blame of extortion is seldom found with justice imputable to the clergy ; the abuse is created by those who act under their authority, whose greediness and want of feeling for those whom they oppress know no bounds.

The less duty incumbent on the ministers of the church of England, for promoting the spiritual interests, the more scrupulous ought those members be, to take care that the temporal concerns of their parishioners do not suffer by a delegation of their powers to unfit persons. The Bishop of Elphin's remark, I mean the late Dr. Law, is worthy of being recorded in the heart of every protestant clergyman. On observing, that as he had no chance of making protestants of the people, in his diocese, " I will do all I can," said he, " to make them good catholics."

The composition generally paid for tithes in Ireland is considerably higher than in England. Nothing, it is generally allowed, would be more desirable to the clergy of both countries, or more advantageous to their spiritual and temporal interests, than a general commutation of tithes. The want of this most salutary measure falls particularly hard on the small farmer ; it has occasioned many of the unfortunate commotions in this country, and will continue to agitate the public mind until a remedy for the evil be applied.

The cultivation of flax is extending towards the south of Ireland. A great quantity of linen is now manufactured in Kerry. The commencement of this valuable trade in Ireland may be referred to the seventh and eighth of William the Third, when all productions of hemp and flax were allowed to be exported to England and the British plantations free of duty. " Mr. Dobbs, an able and impartial inquirer, computed that in less than forty years the home consumption and export of linen amounted to a million sterling, and this from the produce of thirty thousand acres ; employing one hundred and seventy thousand persons." [1]

We had ten miles of very mountainous country to Castle Isle, where we expected to meet with some comforts, but in which we were grievously disappointed. Bad as inns have sometimes been, Castle Isle is ten times worse. In the course of the day we had met several droves of cattle, destined to no specific market, but travelling through the country for sale. The owners of these beasts ought to be endowed with an uncommon share of patience to wait the tardy disposal of such numbers to individual customers, with whom no competition would be found to quicken the market. A number of goats, mostly coupled together to prevent their depredations, are kept by the cottiers ; these browse on the scanty herbage of a most deplorable looking country, in which but few enclosures are to be seen. The constant presence of water renders the crops very poor and stunted ; even the grass, in some of the meadows which we saw cutting, would scarcely cover the scythe. Draining here, which might be accomplished by a certain advance of capital, would amply repay the proprietor.—Lord Eardly, of course an absentee, is not likely to further so remote an undertaking, and misery and poverty will continue to distinguish the property.

Poverty most commonly operates, not only to depress, but to degrade our fellow creature ; for when all his efforts are only sufficient to procure that scanty subsistence which barely prevents his family from starving, all hope of bettering his own condition, or assisting that of his offspring, seems totally lost—he becomes wholly indifferent to the concerns of life. Thus we were arguing, when an unlooked-for incident produced a solitary cheering gleam, and gave us reason to rejoice that on the present occasion we had somewhat miscalculated. In a small cabin, close to the side of the road, we discovered a school, where about thirty children were teaching. The boy, who was occupying the immediate attention of the master, was hurrying over some verses in the Bible, with a rapidity that outstripped the ear of ordinary attention ; leaving a doubt, whether it was English or Irish on which he was employed ; which being intimated to the master, seemed to give offence. But on our inspecting their performances in writing, I was enabled to make my peace with the good man, by justly complimenting the teacher, and rewarding some of the scholars. The cost of this education, which continues during the summer only, was small, though great when compared with the means of those at whose expense it was furnished. In a country thinly inhabited, many of the children had a considerable distance to travel, which, in the winter, precluded their attendance, and during these months the master resided with some of the little farmers, and taught their children for his maintenance. He had never heard of Dr. Bell's or of Mr. Lancaster's mode of instruction. I was, however, agreeably surprised to find the cultivation of the mind attended to, where every thing else seemed to be neglected. Friendless, unassisted, without patron or adventitious support, thus to make sacrifice of a portion of earnings, at all times unequal to the absolute wants, for the purpose of obtaining what knowledge came within their reach, is an effort of great affection on the part of the parents. If this feeling be so cherished in one of the most forlorn districts, a hope may surely be entertained that the value of learning is, or soon will be, appreciated by all classes and in all quarters of this prolific island.

Through most parts of the country we have passed, we have discovered no disinclination in the parents to afford their children the benefit of education, nor did we suspect there was any want of schools.

All past experience sanctions the gratifying belief that in proportion as the knowledge of man is advanced, so is his estimability and happiness increased. The causes which for years have so widely diffused the present wretchedness over one of the most fertile countries of Europe, will naturally become developed as the expansion of the mind proceeds to establish this very important conviction—that all the evils so much to be deplored have their origin in self creation, arising from the absence of moral rectitude, principle, and restraint. Nothing is more easy or less common than to shift the censure from ourselves to the operations of the state : I am not disposed to exempt government from its share of blame ; but the real and substantial cause of Irish misery has its origin in its redundant population. Absenteeship, and the too general neglect on the part of the higher to the comforts of the lower classes, as well as their own, though undoubtedly grievances, are of minor consideration in the great scale of their sufferings. To avert the further accumulation of distress, and the calamities which are daily increasing, the great body of the people must be made sensible that the source whence all their miseries arise is their predilection for improvident and premature marriages. Education cannot fail of inculcating the advantages resulting from a due obedience to the will of God, and a cheerful compliance with the laws of man. A fundamental change, a thorough reform of habits and opinions, is the work of ages, and can only be effected by a gentle and slow operation. It is above the power of government to effect by legislation such a radical reform. Example, encouragement, and patronage, may greatly promote it, but the work must be performed, as in all other laborious undertakings, by the people ; and, happily, they evince a kindly disposition to assist a revolution so interesting to every friend of humanity.

We had scarcely travelled a mile from the spot which had afforded us so unlooked-for a

source of gratification, when we had an excitement of feeling of a very different kind. Our attention was called to one of those scenes which unfortunately are so common in this country. A poor woman of about forty came from a cabin at a little distance from the road, assisted by a girl about eight or nine years of age. When the carriage came opposite to her, the poor creature fell on her knees, and lifted up her hands with a fervency of supplication that indicated the extreme of distress, proceeding either from an intensity of misery, or the most subtle and refined hypocrisy : the least reflection, however, decided in favor of the former ; for considering the few opportunities which could be afforded for the successful effect of the best acting, the practice could not be made to answer. The figure and deportment of the pitiable mendicant were sufficient evidence of the reality of her sorrows : the cause of which we had no opportunity of learning, but their impression will not readily be effaced.

At Raithkeele we took leave of the limestone substratum over which we had travelled almost one hundred miles, and which in some places stretched nearly across the island.

At Castle Isle we understood we should meet it again. The whole town is built with limestone, surrounded by morass, so that it may be described an island of limestone, in the centre of an ocean of bog.

Two miles from Castle Isle is an ascent of more than a mile : after gaining the summit we had a most extensive plain below us, bounded by a lofty chain of mountains, which surround the lake of Killarney, and extend towards Bantry Bay. Castle Isle was formerly the county town, and a very thriving, opulent place ; at present it is almost in a dilapidated state : nothing can exceed the misery it exhibits as a town ; and I am constrained to add, that the inn was in strict conformity with its general appearance.

The court-house is unroofed, and the walls nearly down ; nor has the general state of devastation spared even the church, notwithstanding the living is of considerable value. The rector is non-resident, and the church seems likely soon to decay. The property belongs to the Pelham family, but was granted some years ago to a lessee, for such a term of years as amounts nearly to a perpetuity. The rent is fifteen hundred pounds a-year, which at the time was a full consideration : it is now probably let for at least double that sum. The demise is supposed to be defective in powers to the lessee for granting renewals. The proprietor and the lessee disagreeing is highly injurious to the place, the destruction of which, in a few years, will leave little more than ruins to mark its site.

Pleased and gratified with the richness of surface—the romantic scenery, and stupendous grandeur of the country, little ills have had no power of disconcerting either my companion or myself ; but Castle Isle is so repulsive to every *sense*, that it cannot be recollected but with feelings of the most unpleasant nature ; and to complete our disgust, we were most grossly imposed on, while the landlord had the effrontery to declare he was the only honest and loyal man in the town. The written vouchers which he produced were not testimonials of the former, and I greatly doubt his being able to produce any evidence of the latter. The poor horses were worse off than ourselves, which made our abode still more intolerable. We shall start with the next light of day, impatient, not only for objects that await us, but to escape from ills hardly to be endured. Adieu.

J. C. C.

Killarney, Sept. 10, 1813.

BEFORE the sun rose we were ready and impatient to quit Castle Isle. The distance to Killarney was a short eight miles. A new line of road, recently finished, in a great measure avoids the hills, by which route, however, fine views of the lake and its Alpine boundary are lost. We overtook a number of people on their way to the market at Killarney.

The prospect from the summit of the mountain, over which the old road passed, determined us to quit our carriage, and to perform the journey on foot, as the only means of obtaining a sight of the promised landscape.

Killarney has long ranked as one of the grandest and most distinguished objects in this interesting country. The beauties of its lakes are held as not inferior to any in Europe—the only rivals of our northern lakes in the British empire, and by most persons considered as superior to them in picturesque effect.

From the moment it was deemed practicable to extend our tour to this enchanting spot, I never ceased to anticipate the highest gratification from an examination of it, and much satisfaction in the opportunity of being able to determine, from the exercise of my own judgment, as to the sum of its pretensions and merits : but what is strange, and not easily to be accounted for, when the moment arrived for the accomplishment of objects on which I had dwelt with so much anxiety, I no longer felt the same zest or inclination. We quitted our horses at the rise of the hill, and walked up.

When the mind is deeply affected with the near approach of some momentous or interesting event, the pulsations of the heart become hurried and irregular—the tongue mute—conversation inconvenient ; and, as solitude is preferable on such occasions while my companion was engaged in chat with those going to market, I took the opportunity of proceeding alone. The ascent of two miles gave me ample leisure to commune with myself: I could not hide from my own heart, nor will I disguise it from you, how much I apprehended, lest I should now be compelled to acknowledge there was a spot on the surface of this habitable globe more enchanting than Windermere. The weakness inseparable from human existence often obliges even the greatest characters to blush at their own littlenesses ! This acknowledged defect in our nature makes me less scrupulous in disclosing the secret cause of my perturbation :—I was provoked, and out of humour with myself ! I wished to persuade myself I was disposed to be candid and to decide fairly, at the instant I was imagining the most specious arguments to justify my prepossessions. I was ashamed at being forced to believe myself incapable of being impartial—my reason disclaimed it ; and, after a time, I discovered that a further abstraction of thought would be likely to deprive me of the promised enjoyment, to the fullest extent of that delight, which is ever attendant on the contemplation of the sublime works of nature, or of indulging in the enthusiasm so universally excited by views of a grand and beautiful description.

I had been so entirely absorbed in my own reveries, that I lost sight of all that was surrounding me, and had nearly reached the top of the hill, before I perceived a thick fog, which had risen from the plain, and had so rapidly ascended as to obscure the sun and all distant objects : by the time I had reached the summit, an impenetrable mist involved the whole country. Under other circumstances this would have been the most cruel of disappointments ; but on the present occasion, truth obliges me to confess, I felt relieved and comforted in being freed from an immediate decision. We were too well versed in these casualties of climate to wait for the precarious chance of the fog's dispersing ; and in descending the hill we were now and then gratified with a momentary glimpse of the rugged tops of some of the stupendous mountains before us ; Occasionally a peak was seen towering far above the fog,

and magnified by the medium through which it was observed. The undefined outline of this imposing obscurity gave endless scope for the exercise of the imagination, leaving it to fancy to supply and fill up the chasm. I much question whether a more sublime and exalted impression was not made on our minds, by this partial and imperfect disclosure of beauties, than would have been produced had the whole landscape burst at once upon our sight. Rousseau, when speaking of the dress of the sex, observes, “ that the most faultless and exquisite form loses nothing of its powers of fascination by being partially and indistinctly seen ; the lover’s fancy depicts what is hid from the eye, in beauties co-equal, if not superior to perfection itself.”

The flat surface of the vale of Killarney is covered by a poor soil ; the culture of it is very indifferent ; and the whole is destitute of any beauty, if we except that which the hedges, planted with apple trees, afford.

Nothing worthy of remark occurred till we reached Lord Kenmare’s upper park, two miles from the town, where the ground is diversified, and decorated with some stately timber.

Killarney is a respectable town, the principal street is well built, of considerable width and extent. The number of hotels and private lodgings indicate the influx of strangers, and afford an incontestable proof of the attractions in its neighbourhood. Our choice of an inn was decided by the notification of “ good stabling with stalls :” the poor beasts had, however, to regret that these existed only on paper. A heavy rain had commenced before we reached the town ; the sun, however, seemed disposed to contend for empire ; and though appearances were unpromising, our hopes led us to entertain no doubt of fine weather after breakfast.

The report of a stag hunt at Glená, had caused all Lord Kenmare’s boats to be engaged. For the first time during our excursion, our good fortune had deserted us ; but we soon had an offer of a small fishing boat, many of which are occasionally employed, when the others are not to be procured. Rates have been established for the hire of Lord Kenmare’s boats, to prevent impositions. Double the expense of the boat however, is contrived to be charged, under the head of refreshments and liquor for the boatmen. Complaints are frequently made of extravagant demands on visitors to our northern lakes, but they bear no comparison to the exactions made here ; yet it seems in some degree but reasonable that, in consideration of the resort here being confined to a few months, greater charges should be made than where the business is constant and regular.

Our anxiety for exploring the beauties of the lake superseded every other consideration ; and we set out, regardless of the falling rain, and in the hope of sunshine.

Lord Kenmare’s house is at the head of the principal street ; it is a large pile of building, without any appearance, either in itself or situation, to recommend it. The grounds about it are confined, and skirted by a considerable tract of bog.

Ross Castle, about a mile and a half from the town, is the usual place of embarkation—our boat was stationed a little lower down, opposite to Cherry Island. The mist was still dense, obscuring every object, save those in our immediate neighbourhood. In the centre of the small bay where we embarked, a singularly beautiful rock rises abruptly to a considerable height above the water, and is designated O’Donoghue’s Prison. The bay is formed by Cherry Island to the north, which is well wooded, though containing but a few acres ; Ross and Innisfallen to the south. Cherry Island is of some length, but very narrow—the boldness of the rocks on the shores of the several islands contributes, in a high degree, to the scenery of the lake.

Although the violence of the wind had abated, yet a great swell on the water continued, and it was with some difficulty we reached the outer point of Innisfallen ; where, in spite of the badness of the day, we became delighted with the half clouded rocky shore, and the indistinct masses of wood. From this point we had to cross the lake, which is here computed at two Irish miles. Before we had, however, proceeded a hundred yards, we were completely enveloped in fog ; which continued to obscure all our prospects, until we had nearly approached the opposite side, when a sudden burst of sunshine pierced the gloom, and instantaneously “ the curtain of heaven drew up,” and exhibited Glená, to our admiration, in all its majestic grandeur. This gleam of light falling exclusively on the mountain, while all else remained in obscurity, added a splendid solemnity to its appearance. Before us was Glená, single and alone, clothed with umbrageous wood from its base to a considerable elevation ; while its upper regions and lofty summit, robed with rich purple heath, augmented the fascination by the contrasted colouring of these covering mantles. Here sat the smile of beauty, there stood the frown of majesty, contending for superiority, and disputing which should decide the appropriate character of the mountain. The deep tints of the purple heath were momentarily dimmed by light masses of fog, passing rapidly over its summit, or along its side at different heights ; conspiring in a singular manner, by the alternate light and shade, to beautify the view. The sight was so novel and extraordinary as to border on enchantment, while the fear of its closing every instant heightened the admiration of the moment. Nothing could have been devised or wished for, to make the impression stronger ; in a few minutes the fog again interposed—the sublimity of the scene faded away, and left us in doubt, whether what we had seen was real, or only an airy dream of the imagination. So transient was the view—so powerful the effect, that fancy was left to the full exercise of all her empire. We were not, however, long suffered to enjoy the delusion created by this sudden and irresistible incitement of feeling. The rain began to fall in torrents, and obliged us, in despair of making any further progress, to take shelter in the cottage at the foot of Glená.

The hunting party had here been assembled since nine in the morning, and, having exhausted their store of patience, were embarking when we landed. We found a comfortable room with a good fire, and we received much civility from the keeper. Unwilling to relinquish all hope of the rain ceasing, our first care was to get our clothes dried. After some time, one of the parties by whom the room had been previously engaged returned ; and, on our preparing to quit it, Mr. O’Connell, who was one of the company, understanding we were English travellers, most politely and hospitably invited us to join them. The excessive good humour and gaiety which now prevailed soon obliterated the chagrin which our disappointment had occasioned.

In the course of the afternoon, we got from an eminence a transient view of the opposite shores of the lake, and some parts of the mountain scenery ; what we saw, however, did not qualify us to form any opinion, or to decide on the pretensions of the scenery, yet it was sufficient to satisfy us that it possessed great sublimity. The vapors arising from the boggy grounds which surround Killarney presented numerous appearances resembling minor rainbows.

A most important part of a repast here is salmon, taken immediately from the lake, and broiled on boughs of the arbutus, which are considered to add highly to its flavor.

A frank and unconstrained discussion, which our inquiries occasioned, led us to take “ no note of time ;” it was late in the evening before we left the cottage. The night was too dark to allow of our distinguishing any of the objects around us, though we had a tolerably fair moment for returning.

The weather here had of late been so uncertain that several parties had been waiting a week for a fair day ; our prospect for the morrow was considered almost as hopeless ; which, with our time being so circumscribed as to allow us only another day to explore objects that would fully and delightfully occupy many, did leisure depend on will, produced us inexpressible regret. If our good fortune should yet attend us in the morning, and the sun should shine, my only unpleasant reflection will be that of your absence ; but as far as I can compensate such a loss, I shall joyfully do it, by giving you a faithful detail of every impression I may receive from the contemplation of this wonderful scenery.

I am already convinced that the pre-eminent features of Killarney are so opposite and distinct from those of our lakes, that, were the picturesque to be contested, the decision would be independent of comparative merits ; and would arise out of the preconceived notions in the party, in favor of the sublimity and grandeur, or of the beautiful and smiling works of nature ! The points of perfection in either are so entirely dissimilar, that no possibility exists of bringing them fairly into comparison, or of weighing them in the scale of competition against each other. The fascinations of a Claude differ so materially, and form such a contrast to the wild romantic conceptions of a Salvator Rosa, that those who prefer the charms of the former to that of the latter, or *vice versâ*, must be decided by the influence of a pre-conceived intellectual discernment. The sublime gives birth to grand, to lofty ideas, whilst beauty produces less elevated, though not less pleasing sensations. A well-performed tragedy creates more interest, and exercises more powerful influence over the mind, than an equally well-acted comedy ; the effects of the one is to exhaust our feelings, whilst that of the other is to delight them. As a landscape for casual contemplation, I should prefer Killarney ; as a permanent residence, I should choose Windermere.

I do not know whether my reasoning and reflections will comport with the view you may take of the subject ; they have, however, had the good effect of making peace with myself, and I should hope their proximity will not disturb that of yours. Adieu. This is the first day we have had cause to complain of the weather, and this is being remarkably fortunate. Yours.

J. C. C.

[1] Campbell's Political Survey

Observations on the state of Ireland, principally directed to its agriculture and rural population : in a series of letters, written on a tour through that country (1818)

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