

My Remoter Travels 1814

Narrative of a residence in Ireland during the summer of 1814, and that of 1815

Anne Plumptre

1817

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Departure from Dublin.—Swords.—Drogheda.—Dundalk Bay.—The Weeping-ash Tree.—Town of Dundalk,—Hilsborough.—Lisburn.—The Valley of the Lagan.—Arrival at Belfast.—Flourishing State of this Town.—Places of Worship.—The New Chapel.—Charitable Institutions.—Literary Societies,—Manufactories.—Belfast Lough.—Dr. Macdonnell—His Collection of Drawings, Minerals, &c.—Mr. Ryan.

As the principal object of my journey was to visit the North of Ireland, I had not intended staying more than a fortnight at Dublin, but I was detained there nearly a month by the illness of my servant. It was not till the eleventh of August that I could set off on my remoter travels. The country on this side of Dublin is flat, dull, and monotonous ; and the weather being unfortunately very wet, it was seen to particular disadvantage. The road runs near the coast, and to a considerable distance has the Hill of Howth, with Lambay and Ireland's Eye, constantly in view. When these are lost, some other little islets lying off the coast succeed, as the Skerries, Racabitt, and Patrick's Island.

At Swords, seven miles from Dublin, are very extensive ruins. Here was originally a monastery, which at the abolition of religious houses was converted into a palace for the Archbishop of Dublin ; nothing now remains but walls overgrown with ivy : a round tower stands only fifty feet from the church, so that at a little distance it has the appearance of a turret belonging to it This tower is between seventy and eighty feet in height On account of the rain I did not stop to examine it ; but I am informed that the upper part for several feet was rebuilt within the last half century ; if so, though to appearance one of the most perfect in Ireland, it is not one of the best specimens remaining of these extraordinary structures. At Balruddery, twenty miles from Dublin, upon the very edge of the sea, are the ruins of a church, which have a very picturesque effect

The town of Drogheda is twenty-four miles from Dublin ; it stands on the river Boyne, only five miles from its mouth, and vessels of a considerable size come up to it The approach to this town is rather striking, having the river with the vessels lying in it and the bridge at the bottom while the town rises in a slope above them. Both the town and river, from association, excite a considerable degree of interest ; the town from the remarkable siege it sustained in Oliver Cromwell's time, the river from the still more memorable battle fought on its banks by that illustrious monarch King William the Third. Before the Reformation, Drogheda abounded with monastic institutions ; the buildings of many are still standing, though no longer the abodes of religion, as they were called, one excepted, which is now a nunnery. But we read of so many murderers and malefactors of various descriptions taking sanctuary at different times in one or other of these monasteries, that they seem rather to have been harbours for the wicked than receptacles for the pious. The Catholic Primate of Ireland has a house here, which is a conspicuous object in approaching the town. The Boyne is celebrated for the excellence and abundance of the salmon and trout that it yields.

Just beyond Castle Bellingham, which is ten miles from Drogheda, the road comes directly to the edge of Dundalk Bay. This bay is very extensive, but the water is so extremely shallow that no vessel, scarcely even a fishing-boat, can at any time come near the shore. When the tide is down, the extent of sand is so great as immediately to suggest the idea, (like the North Bull in Dublin Bay,) that by industry a vast tract might be rescued entirely from the water, and rendered cultivable land. But sufficient encouragement is not given to Irish industry to induce such speculations. Vast quantities of cockles are gathered in this bay. On the shore are extensive salt-marshes, where a number of sheep and cattle are always feeding ; the sheep thrive here particularly well. The marshes and sands abound with sea-fowl, as wild-geese, barnacles, gulls, and many others.

The road continues along the Bay for three miles, when at Lurgan Green it turns to a greater distance from the coast. Between that place and Dundalk my attention was arrested by seeing in a hedge-row, among a number of ash-trees with which it was interspersed, two of the kind now well known in England as the weeping-ash. One of these was of a great height, and was evidently a tree of many years growth ; it must have been much, much more ancient than the date when these trees came into general notice in this country ; it had, however, been stripped of its long branches, and only a few young shoots were now growing from the top. The other was of a considerable size, larger than any I ever saw in England, the parent stock excepted.

It is remarkable that this tree, now to be seen in almost all plantations, was scarcely known till within somewhat more than the last thirty years. At that time the existence of the parent tree, though then of a great age, was known to very few ;—chance led to my becoming acquainted with it. It stands in the village of Gamlingay in the county of Cambridgeshire, where a woman, who had been servant in my father's family, went to live with her husband. Seeing this woman occasionally, she talked to us very much of a great curiosity in their village, a weeping-ash tree ; and one day when some of the family were at the village she carried us to see it. It was then in a field close by a farm-house, a large forest-tree, the trunk growing to a great height quite straight, without a shoot, and from the head the long branches hung sweeping to the ground, forming a perfect arbour within ; it did indeed appear to us a great curiosity. She said that her husband had taken some grafts from it which he had grafted upon common ash stocks, and if the experiment should succeed, she would request my father's acceptance of one. In due time one was brought and presented to him at his living of Wimpole in Cambridgeshire ; and the man having been servant in Lord Hardwicke's family, another was presented to His Lordship's steward to be planted in the grounds. These I have good reason to think were the first two known out of Gamlingay.

Since that time the breed has spread vary much ; but I believe it may with truth be affirmed, that all are descendants in a direct or remote line from the same parent. The dispersion of the family has brought the parent into more notice, and occasioned investigations to ascertain if possible its origin and age ; but the oldest people in the place, one man eighty-eight years of age, could only say that he remembered the tree ever since he was a boy, and always a large and well grown one. The last time I saw it was about three years ago. A very neat small house had been built close by it, where lived the curate of the parish, and the tree was enclosed in his garden ; he had rescued it from the axe, to which it had been sacrilegiously doomed. It was not in so great beauty as when I first knew it ; one side had suffered exceedingly in a hard winter, and so much had died, that on that side the arbour was quite laid open ; on the other side the branches hung with as fine and majestic a sweep as ever, a remarkable thing is, that if the seeds of this tree are sown they come up common ash trees, the only way of propagating the species is by grafts. The same casualty that first produced this tree must probably have operated to produce those in the hedge-row on the

Dundalk road ; but no such chance as that I have mentioned ever drew these into the same notice, they seemed to stand here wholly unheeded.

Dundalk is a large town, forty miles from Dublin, having one street running through it to the extent of a mile, from which diverge several smaller ones. The last coronation that took place of a monarch of all Ireland was at Dundalk ; it was for a long time a royal residence. There is a good port, and a cambrick manufactory, the principal one in Ireland. The country beyond this place becomes much more hilly and stony, interspersed with some tracts of bog. The road passes a very fine seat of Lord Clermont's, well wooded, but having the air of a deserted and abandoned place.

Newry, fifty miles from Dublin, is a large and very commercial town, standing on a river called the Newry-water, which runs up from Carlingford Bay. A canal goes from this town to Lough Neagh. A singular kind of pitch-stone is found in the neighbourhood, but in one particular spot only. About seven miles from Newry the road passes a small fresh-water lake called Lough Brickland.

Dromore, sixty-six miles from Dublin, is a very ancient city standing on the river Lagan. For many years it had been declining exceedingly, since, though a bishop's see, it was deserted by its shepherd ; his residence was fixed at Magheralin, a village at a little distance. But Dr. Beresford when he was bishop built a house in the town, at which he came to reside in 1781, and ever since it has revived, and is now in a tolerably flourishing state. It is ancient as a see, its first foundation dating as far back as the sixth century, but it was refounded by King James the First with extraordinary privileges. Among other marks of his royal favour, he ordered that the bishops should be distinguished as *by devine providence* Bishops of Dromore ; all the other bishops in Ireland, excepting those of Meath and Kildare, are only styled Bishops *by divine permission*.

Hilsborough is sixty-nine miles from Dublin. This is one of the neatest towns I saw in all Ireland, which it owes principally to the cares, the attentions, and the liberality of the first Marquis of Downshire, grandfather to the present marquis. By him a very handsome church was built. The Marquis has a house in the town with a fine library. All the way from Newry nearly to Belfast, the Mourne mountains, some of the highest in Ireland, are seen in the distance raising their towering summits behind, and far above all the lesser hills of the county of Down. Since mail coaches have been established, the roads have been turned in many places to carry them round the bases of the hills instead of going over their summits ; following the old maxim, that "*the furthest way about is the nearest way home.*"

Lisburn, four miles beyond Hilsborough and seventy-three from Dublin, is a very neat town situated on the river Lagan. It has every appearance of a place of much industry and commerce, and has long been celebrated as one of the principal marts of the Irish linen manufactory. Much of its present flourishing state is ascribed to the number of French refugees who settled here at the revocation of the edict of Nantes ; and they, coming from the parts where were the best linen manufactories in the French dominions, improved by their knowledge those of the country which afforded them an asylum.—But more of this place and of its manufactures hereafter.

Here the road enters the county of Antrim, and continues along the valley of the Lagan quite to Belfast, where the river joins the Bay of Belfast, or Belfast Lough. This valley and the lough run in a direction from south-west to north-east, and the valley is skirted from a very little way beyond Lisburn by a continued chain of mountains. The country constantly improves, till in the neighbourhood of Belfast it becomes very beautiful, being scattered over

with a number of villas, the summer residences of the citizens of Belfast The town stands exactly at the junction of the river with the bay, or perhaps it should rather be said that the bay from its mouth is constantly contracting itself till at Belfast it is narrowed to the breadth only of a river ; when it assumes the name of the Lagan. The same is the case with Carlingford Bay in the county of Down ; it narrows up to the river called Newry-water ; and such also is the Kenmare river in the county of Kerry, a bay narrowing gradually till it becomes no wider than a river. The Lagan is crossed at Belfast by a very old bridge of twenty-one arches, which, like most old bridges, is very narrow, with the arches very small. Three of the arches are in the county of Antrim, the remainder of the bridge is in the county of Down.

Belfast is one of the most opulent towns in Ireland : it is the largest town in the county of Antrim, though not the county town, and is a principal deposit of the linen-trade. It has increased in wealth and size very much within a few years ; there are many streets entirely new-built, and nearly at the entrance of the town is a spacious and handsome linen-hall almost new. For its present flourishing state it is much indebted to the late Marquis of Donegal : this family has a large property in the town ; many of the new streets are upon ground leased from them. The late Marquis built at his own expense a handsome assembly-room over the Exchange. Large as the town is, it contains only one parish ; the church is a neat one, but has nothing in it particularly striking. A very large portion of the inhabitants are not, however, of the church of England. This county and Down, approaching the nearest to Scotland of any part of the island, have been very much colonised by Scotch families, consequently dissenters from the church of England ; yet many do not adhere to the religion they brought over with them, but have adopted other persuasions. Unitarianism is more prevalent here than in any part of Ireland; the catholics are not numerous, though they have two chapels. There are eight congregations of protestant dissenters of different descriptions, including a quakers and a methodists meeting.

As the church had become too small for the increased size of the town, a chapel of ease was in considerable forwardness when I was there. It was raised from the spoils of one out of the many houses built by the late Earl of Bristol, and Bishop of Derry. Besides that at Ickworth in the county of Suffolk, he built two in the county of Derry ; Down Hill, now the property of Sir Hervey Bruce, and that in question, I think, near Derry. The heir to his estates has thought proper to pull down the latter, and selling the materials, sufficient were purchased by the town of Belfast to build a chapel; among these materials were some fluted Ionic columns, which form a very handsome portico.

The principal charitable institutions at Belfast are, a general infirmary for the sick poor, a fever hospital, a lying-in hospital, an asylum for the blind where, as in similar institutions in other places, they are taught such works as they are capable of executing, particularly basket-making ;—an asylum for aged men and women and orphan children ; the latter are fed, clothed, and educated, till of age to be bound out as apprentices ;—a house of industry intended to abolish mendicity,—and indeed' in no part of Ireland are so few beggars to be seen ; perhaps this is rather to be ascribed to the country hereabouts being in a more flourishing state than most other parts.

A plan was formed some years ago for establishing an university, principally with a view to the education of protestant dissenters. Not much progress had at this time been made in it, and it seemed probable that the scheme would fall entirely to the ground. There are literary societies for the promotion of philosophy, the medical sciences, and music :—the latter has principally in view the revival of that ancient national instrument, the harp, such as it was in former days, not with any of those modern *improvements* which entirely deprive the instrument of its true national character. This town is considered as a very literary place, it is

a sort of metropolis of the north. Besides the great staple article of manufactory—the linen, there are large manufactories of cotton, sail-cloth, sugar, glass, and earthenware. The streets are well paved with *trottoirs* and well lighted. All round the town there are very large bleaching-grounds.

The Bay at the flow of the tide is truly beautiful, scattered over on each side for a short distance from the water with country-seats finely wooded, and high hills rising behind them ; the hills on the northern shore are much the highest. When the tide is down, a very large portion of the Bay is but a continued sand or rather mud, with a small channel winding through it up to the town. This channel is marked by posts for the direction of vessels coming up at high water, and the depth is then sufficient to admit vessels of a considerable size. Oysters, muscles, and cockles, abound in the Bay, and the shores at low water are scattered over with the shells ; but there are no other shells, and no weed or pebbles worth notice. Further down the Bay, towards Carrickfergus, the shore becomes more pebbly, and some shells are to be found of the genera *Buccinum*, *Venus*, and *Arca*.

By the kindness of Mr. Hamilton Rowan, I had a letter of introduction to Dr. Macdonnell, one of the principal physicians in Belfast, and a zealous geologist and mineralogist. To this gentleman I was particularly obliged for a vast deal of information which proved of infinite use to me in going round the county of Antrim, and for seeing many very interesting objects in the neighbourhood of Belfast which might otherwise have escaped my notice. In his possession I saw a collection of drawings of all the most remarkable points round the coast of Antrim, taken by an Italian, who went out repeatedly in a boat along the coast for this purpose. I examined them now with very great pleasure, as giving me an excellent idea of what I was going to see :—I saw them with redoubled pleasure at my return to Belfast after having visited the several spots. They are taken with perfect accuracy, exhibiting a series of wonders of which those who have never seen any thing of the kind cannot form an idea.

Dr. Macdonnell has a large collection of minerals, with many other objects of curiosity ; among them two arrow heads of carved flint, worked in a way which nobody now is able to execute, nor can anybody that sees them imagine with what kind of instrument it could be performed. There are also some axes similar to those that have been mentioned in the Dublin Society Museum, called there Carthaginian axes. The Doctor is, however, not very much disposed to believe them so : he says they are found in such numbers, in districts so very remote from each other, and from any part the Carthaginians are ever supposed to have visited, that they must have been an implement in common use among the natives, though it is difficult to surmise for what purpose. The metal of which they are composed appears a composition of copper and tin.

Among many other topics of conversation with the Doctor, he was very particular in his inquiries about our new theatrical meteor, Mr. Kean ; whether I thought his merits really deserving the encomiums bestowed upon him in the newspapers, and the enthusiasm which he seemed to have excited in London. After the opinion I have already given of this great actor, my answer will be readily anticipated. Upon this the Doctor said : “ I understand it to be a well ascertained fact that he was playing at Belfast a few years ago almost unnoticed. What a reflection upon a town which pretends to so much taste and literature that we could not discover such talents !”

Breakfasting with Dr. Macdonnell the day that I was to quit Belfast on my progress round the country, I met a great miner, Mr. Ryan, almost inevitably, therefore, a great mineralogist. He had in his possession a piece of wood. part of a perfect wheel which had been found at a

great depth in a bog ; and he mentioned having heard of a boat which had recently been found entire at a great depth in another bog not very far from Portrush, the north-western extremity of the county of Antrim. This he knew only from report, he had not been able positively to ascertain the fact ; but he heard it from authority which he had very good reason to credit. He was making inquiries by which he hoped to arrive at the truth, but I never learnt the result of them. He gave me a small piece of uranium which he had obtained from the Gunnis Lake at Calstock in Cornwall, in a vein of quartz four hundred and fifteen feet from the surface of the earth. It is of a brilliant green colour, and has the lustre of what is known by the name of foil

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The Valley of the Lagan.—Divis Mountain.—The Gypmm Quarry.—The Cave-Hill.—Carrickfergus.—Island Magee—The Town and Bay of Larne.—The Gobbins.—Reputed Massacre there.—Promontory of Ballygelly.—Cairn-Castle.—Town of Glenarm—Enormous marine Plants.—Garran Point, and steep Descent there.—Red Bay.—Cushendall—Civil Attentions of a Scotchman there.—Adventures of the Night.—Cushendun, and its Caves.—Vast Tract of Bog.—Arrival at Ballycastle.

At the valley of the Lagan commences the curious basaltic region which I was now going to explore. It is the first of a range of valleys which intersects at certain distances the eastern coast of the county of Antrim, each having a stream running down to the sea, with stupendous mountains extending along their sides. In most of these the upper stratum of the mountains on both sides is basaltic, resting upon a limestone base : they are only so on the north side of the Lagan valley ; on the south side, which is in the county of Down, they assume a wholly different character. Along the north side run in succession the mountains of Colin, Divis, the Cave-Hill, Carnmoney, and Knockagh. They constitute one chain, but these are the principal points. The Cave-Hill has the appearance of being the highest, since it rises abruptly to its extremest point ; Divis, on the contrary, which is really the highest, after rising to a considerable height shelves off, and runs level for some way ; then again rises what may almost be termed another mountain. This form is, however, only to be observed at a distance ;—looking up from the foot nothing more than the first rising is seen, nor in ascending is the second discernible till the summit of the first is reached. The two divisions include a height of 1400 feet above the level of the Lough ; the Cave-hill is only 1140.

Along the side of a small stream which runs at the foot of Divis is a vast quarry of gypsum. The prevailing rock mass here is schistose ; it is crossed by a whin dyke [1]. The gypsum is accompanied by a bed of indurated clay, the prevailing tints of which are gray or dull red, and of these the gypsum occasionally partakes. It exhibits a beautiful glimmering lustre, and a splintery fracture ; in many places it is fibrous, forming extensive veins, and constituting the variety commonly known as satin-spar. The veins are occasionally as much as two feet in thickness, from which they run along the bed of clay wherein they are formed, shooting out into a variety of ramifications like the roots of a tree, till they are lost at length in a wedgy termination. The stream which runs through the quarry abounds with chalcedonic flints variously coloured with red and gray, having a whitish coating, the result of partial decomposition. In ascending the mountain we come to a stratum of limestone of a moderately clear blueish gray colour and close texture, which is susceptible of a polish not of the highest kind ; this stone is called here blue marble. Adjoining is a compound stratum of calcareous and other matter, containing numerous small pebbles, which is distinguished provincially by the appellation of *mulatto*, it being for the most part nearly white, minutely dotted with black and gray. In the more simple calcareous matter shells and various marine exuviae are by no means rare. I ascended this hill to a height sufficient to gratify my curiosity by procuring on

the spot specimens of these several constituent parts, but did not ascend far enough to see the upper region and examine of what that is composed ; in figure it is very much rounded. This moimtain rises directly above the town of Belfast.

The Cave-Hill is between three and four miles east of the town, along the north shore of the Bay. It is composed of a white limestone, with a summit of basalt, or *trap* as it is here more commonly called, an appellation derived from the German *treppe*, a staircase—the form which the basalt assumes in parts where it is not columnar, having often the appearance of vast steps. This mountain as well as Divis is intersected by a whin dyke. I ascended about half way up to a large limestone quarry, but did not reach the basaltic region, which is indeed only accessible by making a very long and toilsome circuit. The chalk is abundantly furnished with beautiful crystallizations of nearly puce carbonate of lime, which present themselves in veins : it abounds also with flints in a state of partial decomposition, they are mostly of a brownish-red colour approaching to hornstone. Amygdaloid is a prominent feature in several parts of this hill ; its cavities are chiefly filled with common quartz. The basalt approaches in its general character to the greenstone of the Wernerian school. The caves whence the name of the hill is derived are in a higher region than that to which I ascended. Great doubts are entertained whether they are the work of nature or of art. Dr. Drummond of Belfast, in the notes to his pleasing poem of *The Giants' Causeway*, is decidedly of opinion that they are the work of art, and his poetic imagination is disposed to render them the ancient habitations of some of the mighty warriors for which the country was celebrated,—some Ossianic hero ; or perhaps the country-seat of the great Brian Boïromhe. I saw them not, so can form no opinion about them.

While I was upon this hill I enjoyed the sight of a most beautiful phænomenon, of which I had often heard, but had never before seen it. A very heavy shower of rain came on, and the sun shining at the same time formed a most beautiful rainbow below, which seemed to lie upon the water in the Bay. The colours were particularly bright and vivid ; and the breadth appeared double, or even treble that which the rainbow ordinarily appears. Even had I not been protected from the rain by a good plaid cloak, I would most gladly have purchased the gratification I experienced from so enchanting a spectacle at the expense of being wet through. It continued for a full quarter of an hour, so that ample leisure was afforded to contemplate it. A very fine view is presented from hence to the town of Belfast, and a considerable way beyond up the valley of the Lagan eastward, over the Bay to the county of Down, with the majestic Mourne mountains in the distant scene southward ; and westward to Carrickfergus and the mouth of the Bay. From the top of the mountain in a clear day may be seen the Isle of Man, with the shores of Galloway and Ayrshire.

This hill I explored in my way from Belfast to Carrickfergus. I had intended setting out early in the morning, but found so much entertainment at Dr. Macdonnell's breakfast-table, that I did not quit the town till twelve at noon. Between this delay and the time I spent upon the hill the day was so far advanced when I reached Carrickfergus, that I had thought of stopping there for the night ; but I found the inn such a deplorably dirty disgusting place, that I determined—contrary to my usual practice of never risking being in the dark—to go on that night to Larne, and only stop at Carrick to bait the horse. It is needless to observe, that this town was once a place of very great note, giving name to the bay, which now has its name from Belfast. It stands upon the northern shore of the bay, not very far from its mouth. Here King William landed when he came to the defence of the country against the expelled monarch James the Second, and the foreign forces he brought with him ; and the stone on which he first set his foot on landing is still shown as an object of veneration. There are large remains of an old castle, standing on a rock, not a very lofty one, of greenstone ; once a very strong-fortress : there are still guns mounted, with a small garrison, and stock of

ammunition ; but as no apprehensions of a siege are now entertained, the provision is not very ample. In the war of 1756 this castle was for two days in possession of the French under the celebrated adventure Thurot ; but it was soon retaken, and the cause amply revenged by the capture of the whole attacking squadron. At the time when I was at Belfast, three vessels belonging to the town had very recently been captured by American privateers.—The views all along the bay from Belfast to Carrickfergus are very beautiful.

I had for many reasons taken a jaunting-car for this tour, as the most eligible mode of travelling. The road I was now going was not a very frequented one, and ill-sorted to a four-wheeled carriage ; in some places, indeed, it would have been scarcely passable for one ; nor would a two-wheeled carriage, unless of the low construction of a jaunting-car, have been very safe. It had, besides, the recommendation, that, as I very often found occasion to dismount from my vehicle, the better to examine some object which engaged my attention, I should not have found any other so conveniently constructed for the purpose. The greatest inconvenience I experienced was, that I had by this means a driver unacquainted with the country ; and as we were now to travel principally through bye-roads, they were not well furnished with direction-posts to guide us on our way. At Carrickfergus my servant had made inquiries concerning the road we were to take to Larne, and we set off accordingly. As I had studied the map of our route very attentively, we had not gone far before I began to suspect that we were not in the right road ; we appeared going not sufficiently in a northern direction ; and I observed to the servant that I thought we were wrong. He assured me that he had made very particular inquiries, and that we were certainly going the road we were directed. I was still not perfectly satisfied ; but I suffered the carriage to go on nearly a mile further, when coming to the point of the estuary which separates a remarkable tongue of land, called Island Magee, from the main, between which and Belfast-bay there is only a very narrow isthmus, I saw plainly that we must be wrong ; that we were going to the east of the estuary, whereas Larne was on the western shore. I had, therefore, just insisted upon turning about and measuring back our steps till some means of inquiry should present itself, when we spied two women coming towards us. When they came up I inquired whether we were in the right road to Larne. “ Oh, by Jasus, no, my lady,” they replied, “ you are come quite the wrong way ; and the clouds of the night will come over you entirely before you can get at all at all to Larne.” They then gave us very ample directions for finding the proper road, such that no fears could be entertained of missing our way a second time ; but we had to return two full miles in order to get into the road. To the honour of the Irish I must here observe, that in every part of the island through which I have travelled, whenever an occasion occurred in which we were obliged to inquire, our way, the utmost anxiety was always shown to set us right, to give such ample directions as could not be misunderstood, and to assure themselves that they were perfectly comprehended ;—unlike John Bull, who is far too much disposed to think he is showing great wit and humour under such circumstances by leading a person astray.

Our directors were perfectly right with regard to *the clouds of the night* ; they did indeed overtake us entirely before we got to our destined quarters. One object had, however, been gained by going out of our way, to compensate, in some sort, the travelling for a full hour *in the clouds of the night*—that we had seen a very fine point of view round the northernmost entrance of Belfast-lough. We had just sufficient light to see the view over the Bay of Larne in descending to the shore, and it would indeed have been a great loss to miss it. The descent is here very abrupt ; and as the road takes a sudden turn before it comes to the shore, which cannot be seen from the top of the hill, especially as it began to be duskish, we seemed driving down directly into the water.

To make amends for what I had lost in entering Larne in the dark, the next morning I set off very early to walk along the bay, going as far back as Glen Larne, a little village at the distance of about a mile and a half, most beautifully situated on the borders of the bay, and mingled among trees in a manner to form a truly picturesque object from a point of the road about half a mile distant. Between this village and the town are considerable salt-works. The whole form of the coast here is very singular. From the bay of Larne runs down, in a southward direction, the estuary or loch which separates Island Magee, as it is called (though it is in reality not an island but a peninsula), from the main land ; while from the northern part of the bay a neck of land, in the form of a sickle, called the Peninsula of Curran, runs down into the bay. This has often been likened to the celebrated Sicilian cape, Drepanon ; nearly at its extreme point stand considerable ruins of Olderfleet-castle. This point comes within three quarters of a mile of the eastern shore of the bay, forming as it were a smaller bay within the large one. But it is at high water only that it is a bay ; at low water it is a tract of mud. I was looking at it, the tide then being down, when a man accosted me with supposing I was a stranger. I replied in the affirmative : he then entered into conversation with me upon different subjects, till at length he adverted to the tract of mud spread before us. “ Ah,” said he, “ what use is it now, neither land nor water? —if it was in England it wouldn’t long be thus.” “ What do you mean ?” I asked. “ What an easy thing,” he said, “ it would be to make an embankment along that narrow part ; and all this tract, which is about 1600 acres, might then be thoroughly drained, and soon brought into cultivation :—so it would be in England, but there is no encouragement in Ireland to undertake such a work ; the great people here think of nothing but getting their rents, they never think of improving the country.” Indeed I thought the man was perfectly right in his idea of the practicability of rendering this now unproductive tract productive ; how far he was right as to the rest I do not take upon me to say. For a short distance from the town the road runs along a sort of terrace, with fine meadow-ground sloping down to the very edge of the water, and a row of lofty ash-trees on each side of the road. The town of Larne is very prettily situated at the north-west corner of the bay. It is a much neater town than I expected to have found, according to the reports I had heard of this part of the country ; and at the Antrim Arms I had a very clean comfortable sitting-room and bed-chamber, with the best bread I had met with since I had been in Ireland, and the most civil and attentive maid possible to wait. A small stream called the Kilwalter runs into the bay just at the entrance of the town.

At the north-east end of Island Magee is a precipice known by the name of The Gobbins, varying from 200 to 230 feet in height. It is said to be a mass of basaltic rock, having a tendency to colliunarity. I did not see it. This spot has been made by tradition the theatre of a dreadful massacre committed in 1641 by the Puritan garrison of Carrickfergus, under their leader Munro, upon a number of Catholics inhabiting the peninsula. Three thousand persons, according to some accounts, thirty families, according to others, were precipitated over these rocks ; and spots are still shown, called the blood of the unfortunate victims. That a dreadful atrocity was perpetrated by the garrison of Carrickfergus in this place is true ; but from depositions made by the relations of the sufferers, which are now extant in Trinity-college at Dublin, it is ascertained that not more than thirty persons, instead of thirty families, fell, and that they were massacred in their own houses, not precipitated over the Gobbins. It is unnecessary to aggravate an outrage in itself sufficiently disgraceful. The circumstance of the massacre is mentioned by Leland the historian, in the third chapter of his fifth book, but he does not mention the precipitation over the rocks.

The Bay of Larne will admit vessels of between four and five hundred tons burthen. This is the only place in the long range of coast between Belfast lough and Lough Foyle, in the county of Derry, where vessels can find shelter from the tempestuous north winds so preval-

ent in these seas. The rocks hereabouts are limestone ; and in a large quarry near the town ammonites and pentacrinites are to be found in abundance. Gryphites are said also to be common, but I did not see any. To the north-west of the town are to be seen the towering and precipitous cliffs of Agnew's Hill, which are considered as the loftiest summits in the county of Antrim.

Quitting Larne, a hill is soon ascended, whence there is a very fine view over the bay and the hills around it. The bold promontory of Ballygelly soon after appears to the right, and continues frequently in view till near Glenarm. Below the promontory are the ruins of Cairncastle, situated upon a rock which at high-water is insulated. Here, according to tradition, one of the mighty cheftains of old shut up his daughter, considering her secure against the attempt of a lover, who, as has been very often the case, and probably ever will continue often to be the case, did not find so much favour in the eyes of the old gentleman as in those of the young lady ; but, as also most commonly happens in these cases, the ardour of youth was mightier than the vigilance of age ; paternal cruelty was baffled, and notwithstanding the massive walls of the castle, and the mighty force of the billows which dashed against their rocky basement, the lover at length succeeded in bearing his mistress away triumphantly in a vessel. To the left of the road here the Salagh braes sweep majestically from north to south in an amphitheatral form ; these are limestone mountains topped with basalt, the articulation of the masses being in some places very distinct.

A very high hill is ascended about a mile and half from Glenarm, and descending it again, at a turn of the road, the town appears suddenly in view at the end of a beautiful deep wooded dell which runs by the road side, through which flows a very pretty little stream murmuring down the declivity. The chateau and grounds belonging to the Antrim family form a distinguished feature in this scene ; the deer-park runs beautifully along the opposite side of the dell. The town is a shabby one, full of ruined houses, not venerable remnants of antiquity, but buildings, comparatively modern, fallen to decay, giving the melancholy idea of a town in a state of complete *decadence*. I however found a very decent inn, and got excellent chickens ham and pease for dinner. Indeed in all these small places I found chickens much easier to be obtained than butchers' meat. I had intended attempting to see the castle, where are some curious ancient swords, and part of the vertebræ of a whale ; but going first upon the shore of the little bay, my attention was so much arrested by other objects that the time was soon past which I had allotted to stopping here. As if every thing connected with the shores of this extraordinary corner of the globe was of a gigantic nature, I found marine plants of a size so enormous that every thing of the kind, which before I had thought vast, were dwindled into pigmies ;—they were besides of a totally different kind from any I had seen before. Part of the principal stem of a leaf which I picked up and carried away with me, but afterwards unfortunately lost, measured nearly four inches in circumference. I was not more fortunate with two immense leaves which I brought away, one measuring above three yards in length ; in consequence of being continually moving from place to place, they could not anywhere be hung up for a length of time sufficient to dry them, and before I got to my journey's end they were in a state of entire decay. The shore is very pebbly, without any sand. A number of women and children were occupied in gathering up pebbles and making little heaps of them out of reach of the water. I inquired whether they were intended for mending the roads ; they said No, they were to be sent to Liverpool for making china. On inquiry afterwards at Liverpool I learnt that this was very true. I found them upon examination to be both of flint and of amygdaloid. The latter seems to form an essential component part of the hills hereabouts, since abundance was laid upon the roads to mend them.

From hence the road continues close along the shore all the way to Newtown-Glens, as it is now called, formerly known by the name of Cushendall. On quitting the inn at Glenarm I

observed a gentleman standing by the door, who made me a very civil bow as I passed, and wished my servant a good journey. This led me to inquire of the latter who he was ; when he told me that he was a Scotch gentleman, who had landed two or three days before at Donaghadee, and had come that morning from Belfast ; that seeing my vehicle at the door his curiosity was awakened, and that he had made many inquiries about me and my mode of travelling. At some distance from Glenarm in ascending a considerable hill my attention had been attracted by some mineralogical objects, and having descended from my car I was loitering about to examine them. At this moment the same Scotchman passed on horseback, and again saluted me by taking off his hat ; he rode on, and when I had satisfied my curiosity I remounted my car and pursued my course.

Till Garron-point, which is about half-way between Glenarm and Newtown-Glens, the mountains do not come to the very edge of the shore, but the road runs upon a sort of terrace at some height above the sea, with a little space of corn-field between that and the water's edge, and the towering basaltic summits rising on the other side. Garron-point, which forms the southern boundary of Red Bay, is one of the most remarkable spots along this eastern coast of Antrim ; perhaps it may be called as extraordinary a sport of nature as can any where be seen. Rising from the beach is an enormous mass of rock, which, though in the limestone region, seems to be basaltic ; it has exactly the appearance of having glided gently from the mass above, and one end having reached the ground the side has rested against the rocks below, where it remains in the manner of an inclined plane, the other end rising above the rocks against which it rests, leaving a hollow space between that and the mass above just sufficient for the road. Down this hollow is I think the steepest piece of carriage-road I ever saw, unless it be another corresponding with it on the opposite side of the Bay. I did not attempt to go down in the car ; in fact we all dismounted, and while the driver led the horse my servant held back the carriage as much as he was able. We were informed that not very long before, two gentlemen in a gig, not having used the same precaution, had narrowly escaped with their lives, from not being able to keep the horse up properly. From this point the road runs along the south side of Red Bay at the foot of the mighty rocks by which it is bounded, and which are nearly perpendicular masses of basalt. The whole shore is over-strewed with broken fragments of rock, which look like the ruins of nature ; sometimes the road is at the very edge of the water, at others it is carried over a steep crag or ledge of rock. On the summit of one of these short but steep ascents is a most remarkable rock, which at a little distance has the appearance of being the colossal statue of a venerable bishop sitting, with his canonical three-cornered hat and episcopal wig, upon his head, and the full lawn sleeves on his arms. The highest points of this chain are distinguished as Craig Murphy and *Sliabh* (pronounced Slieve, and meaning a mountain) Barraghad. After coasting the south side of the Bay the chain continues to run along a wild and romantic valley called Glenariff, the scene, according to tradition, of some of the great achievements performed by the hero Oisín or Ossian ; and indeed such is the wild appearance of this valley that it seems the proper theatre for feats, so wild and romantic.

After having continued for a length of way along this broken rugged road, one is not a little surprised immediately on turning round the south-west corner of the Bay, to find for a short distance a broad strand of fine hard sand, and for about half a mile a deep sandy road. Coming to the northern shore of the Bay the rocky country is renewed ; but it is no longer the vast perpendicular masses of basalt, they are exchanged for rocks of a deep red calcareous sandstone. Among them are several natural excavations, looking like the arches of a bridge ; in two of them the fishermen have formed themselves habitations, but it must be owned they are very wretched ones. In the smallest, water is continually dropping from the little vaulted roof above into a basin below, so that the whole arch is incrustated over with stalactite, from which minute inverted pillars already hang, and will in time no doubt, if not molested, reach

to the ground. After remounting a very steep ascent, corresponding with that at Garron-point, the road runs along heights till it descends to the little town of Cushendall or Newtown-Glens. This town, like Glenarm, bursts all on a sudden upon the view at turning an angle of the descent ; but its situation is not by any means so beautiful and picturesque as Glenarm : the dell in which it stands has nothing particularly striking in it.

As we approached the town we perceived that it was thronged with people, and on inquiry learnt that it was the time of a fair. We proceeded to the principal inn, if inn a very paltry public-house might be called, where the first object that presented itself was the Scotch gentleman whom we had seen at Glenana. “ Madam,” he addressed me, “ I am sorry that my efforts to serve you have not been more successful. As I passed you on the road I observed you to be much occupied with some objects which had engaged your attention, and it struck me that it might perhaps be late before you would reach Cushendall : I hastened forwards, in hopes that arriving in good time I might have the satisfaction of securing you a bed, but there is not one to be had at any public-house in the town.” I was struck with this very kind piece of attention in an entire stranger, and made proper acknowledgments for it : the intelligence, however, which accompanied it was not pleasant, since it was already quite dusk, and time to think of stopping for the night. In thanking my Scotchman I therefore consulted with him, as I found he was acquainted with the country, what was to be done. He advised if possible to get a private lodging, as he said there was no place nearer than Cushendun, which could not be reached for more than an hour, and there was only one very poor public-house, where perhaps we might not get accommodations ; while the place was so small that there was no resource if we could not. Inquiry for a private lodging was then made ; but every bed in the town was engaged, and I began to think that the night must be passed in the street sitting in my car. At length, however, a miserable little parlour, as it was called, was procured through the interest of the landlady of the inn, and thither I went. The question now was, what was to become of our kind and attentive Scotchman, and of my servant and driver, since accommodations for them were no more to be had at the inn than for myself : it was with some difficulty that room in a stable had been made for the Scotchman’s horse and mine. I requested the Scotchman to sit down with me in my parlour ; but it was not without difficulty that two chairs were procured with a table and apparatus for tea ; and for a time it appeared as if we must have sat together here for the night, or perhaps have been joined by my servant and driver sitting on the floor, who would otherwise run the risk of being left without a roof to shelter them. However, at length another arrangement was made ; a bed and bedding was found for me which were deposited upon the floor, while the Scotchman and the two servants retired to a straw-loft. My Scotchman and I, however, drank tea together and entered into conversation, when I found him a very pleasant intelligent man, well acquainted with the country I was exploring ; he indeed pointed out to me two or three objects of interest in my route, which I had not heard of before, and of which but for this whimsical interview I had never known

At six the next morning, August 17th, we both quitted our lodging-room, and wishing each other a more prosperous continuance of our respective journeys, he mounted his horse to proceed directly to Ballycastle, while I ascended my car taking the road to Cushendun, a place I wished to visit on account of some curious caves there. I had indeed been much advised at Belfast, if the weather should be favourable when I reached Cushendun to send my car on to Ballycastle, and taking a boat myself to sail to the little island of Rathlin off the coast opposite to Ballycastle. By pursuing this navigation I should have had no opportunity of seeing some remarkable parts of the coast which could not be seen in going to Ballycastle by land, particularly a bold and fine head called Tor Point. Upon it stand the ruins of an old tower, that of Dunavarre, which according to the traditions of the country was built by

giants : at a little distance is a sort of tumulus which has the appellation of Sleacht-na-Barragh, or the Giants' Grave. This tower is believed to be very ancient, and supposed by some antiquarians to have been consecrated to the sun, the worship of which there is very strong reason to believe anciently prevailed in Ireland. Tor Point, however, I could only see at a great distance ;—all question of undertaking the aquatic excursion purposed was soon settled on my arriving at Cushendun, since there was no boat to be had. If for a moment I regretted missing a navigation which I had been taught to believe would prove extremely interesting, when I afterwards became better acquainted with the sea which I must have traversed, I found ample reason to bless my fortunate stars which had put so decided a native upon it.

The country between Cushendall and Cushendun exhibits a very different character from that over which I had travelled the day before. The acclivities are much less abrupt ; there are no masses of naked rock ; the slopes are all well clothed and cultivated : the whole face of the country, for the four miles between these two places, brought very much to my mind the district of Le Porez in France. Cushendun-bay is the termination of one of the numerous little valleys that intersect this coast. A rapid stream runs through the valley, which empties itself into the bay. This stream is remarkable for its waters having the same dark hue that is almost always observable in streams rolling at the bottom of wooded dells, over broken masses of rock : though the same cause does not exist here to produce the effect ; for the sides of the stream are neither abrupt nor wooded, and the depth of water at the mouth is considerable, notwithstanding which it has the same dark hue. On one side of this stream the shore is flat and sandy ; on the other, but not directly above it, are lofty rocks of breccia, or pudding-stone, consisting of quartz pebbles embedded in a very hard reddish sandstone cement. Some of these pebbles are extremely large. The caves run for a considerable way within the rocks ; but no part of the interior presents any other appearance than the same pudding-stone material. To the eye it would appear as if the pebbles might be easily removed ; but when the hand is applied, they are discovered to be so firmly fixed in their rocky bed, that without tools, and very strong tools, it is impossible for them to be wrenched out. Vast masses of the rock occasionally fall ; many were lying on the shore : but the pebbles are not loosened by the shock, they still remain firmly fixed. Such of these rocks as are covered at high water were studded all over with small shells of the nerite tribe. Here again were lying on the shore seaweeds of the same gigantic nature that I had seen at Glenarm. This is an excellent part of the country for game ; on which account Lord O'Neale, the proprietor of Shanes Castle, has built a little shooting-box very near the shore, whither in the season he often comes to shoot. I found that I had done very right in not attempting to come on hither the night before ; for so many people had come on account of the difficulty of finding lodging at Cushendall, that the greatest part had been obliged to sit up in the kitchen all night. *The New Traveller's Guide in Ireland*, published in 1815, gives a list of all the fairs held in the different parts of the country. A traveller would do well to consult this list ; and wherever he is going, arrange his journey so that he may not fall in with a fair at any place where he proposes stopping for the night. The mass of fairs all over the country is prodigious.

Quitting the valley which runs down to Cushendun-bay, a very different character of mountain is presented, strewed all over with broken masses, chiefly of micaceous slate. These blocks exhibit great variety in their colouring, from the different matter with which they are impregnated ; some, from the presence of oxydated iron, are of a bright red ; while mixed with the quartz, with which they are everywhere veined, pyrites is occasionally to be found. With the masses of mica-slate are many of sand stone, both calcareous and siliceous ; the latter frequently containing a considerable quantity of ferruginous matter. They appear referable to the primitive class of rocks, and have sometimes a close resemblance to granite.

After a long-continued ascent, all among these scattered fragments, and having at length attained a pretty considerable height, an immense extent of boggy country is presented to the view :—over a widely-extended horizon nothing but continued bog is to be seen ; not any thing like a village or human habitation, all is dreary waste. This continues for three or four miles, in all which distance only one object presented itself that engaged my attention ; this was the species of *juncus*, vulgarly styled the cotton-plant, from its emitting a substance of a cottony nature. It was a plant wholly new to me, and was growing in great abundance. Such is the loose nature of the soil here, that in looking attentively at the road, a gentle undulation is evidently discernible from the motion of the carriage.

About three miles from Ballycastle the face of the country begins somewhat to mend, and some appearance of cultivation is to be seen : the waste is, besides, relieved by the view of the sea on the north shore of Antrim opening, with the noble promontory of Benmore, or Fairhead, and the little island of Rathlin. About half a mile from the town I was again surprised, in a region where I expected to find nothing but rock, with coming upon a short space of entire sandy beach, and a very heavy sandy piece of road. The approach to Ballycastle is pretty, the road running for about a quarter of a mile under a verdant archway, formed by two rows of ash-trees which border the road. Here I arrived about two o'clock, most fortunately just as a heavy rain commenced, which continued for the rest of the day, detaining me a close prisoner. It afforded me, however, an excellent opportunity for looking over, arranging, and packing the minerals I had hitherto collected. I found a very comfortable hotel ; and had from my window a full view of the noble promontory of Benmore, distant about four miles.

[1] All the varieties of basalt in Scotland as well as Ireland are provincially called Whin-stone. Whin dykes have been regarded by the Vulcanists as important corroborations of their theory. A Dyke seems to imply a chasm formed by the decomposition either of basaltic or other matter of a looser texture than the *remaining parts* or *walls* of the dyke. These seem to be composed of small prisms, lying horizontally ; such appearances being frequently discernible on a superficial view : or, if not, they are commonly produced by fracture. Of these dykes there are many intersecting the basaltic regions in the different parts of the north of Ireland.

Narrative of a residence in Ireland during the summer of 1814, and that of 1815 (1817)

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