

## Route To Cork 1815

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

Anne Plumptre

1817

On leaving Dublin, my course was first directed to Saint Valeri, in acceptance of the kind hospitalities to which I had been invited by Mr. Walker. I was here introduced to Mrs. Walker, and to their amiable but suffering sister, Miss Walker. This lady had been the constant companion and nurse of her Brother during a long and lingering illness ; and perhaps the invalid state into which she has fallen almost ever since, is to be traced up to the fatigue of body and mind inseparable from so painful an attendance. Though she is the proper owner of Saint Valeri, such is her kindness towards the present Mr. Walker and his family, that the house and place are as much theirs as if they were the actual possessors. It is indeed a sweet spot, but it stands in a country where every spot is sweet. To a house small when he came to it, the late Mr. Walker added a very handsome room for a library, which is extremely well filled : it is scarcely necessary to say that a collection of rare and choice Italian books forms an essential part of it ; of such a collection the author of the *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, and the *Essay on the Revival of the Drama in Italy*, must have been possessed.

The situation of the house is extremely good, on a considerable slope, having the smallest of the sugar-loaf mountains directly in view of the windows : it was at this time most beautifully tinted with a variety of colours from the heath-plants growing about it ; the prevailing were a bright purple and a glowing yellow. The Dargle is not more than a quarter of a mile from hence ; the entrance to Mr. Grattan's side of the dell, not the most frequented one, is seen from the windows of Saint Valeri. Thus near the Dargle, I had an opportunity of exploring this delightful spot much more completely than before ; but I found nothing particular to add to what has been said of it already. The grounds at Saint Valeri are not very extensive but there is a delightful walk through a plantation round the base of the slope on which the house stands, having the stream which comes from the Dargle, and thence pursues its course to Bray, running at the foot. Very good potter's clay is dug in this slope.

In a plantation at the back of the house, running along the side of the road, is an ancient stone cross, of the same kind as that mentioned at Glendaloch, and of which there are several more remaining in different parts of the country. The cross at Saint Valeri was brought from a glen at some distance, and stood originally in the centre of the little paddock, round which runs the plantation. But it became so much an object of devotion among the neighbourhood, that paths without number were made over the grass to get at it ; and Mr. Walker found it expedient to remove it into a situation where the devotions might be paid without trespassing on his grounds : it stands now so close to the road, though just within the fence of the plantation, that any one may kneel down and say a prayer en-passant, without turning a step out of the way. In another part of the grounds is a holy well, close by which stands a bush stuck all over with little morsels of rag, votive offerings to the saint who presides over the spot, though I really do not know who the saint is. I believe the water cures all ailments. Mr. Walker has made a gate close by the well to give free access to it ; a sort of little parterre is planted with shrubs and flowers, having stone seats ranged about it ; and he has chained a drinking-cup by the side of the well, to furnish the means of drinking to any one who wishes it. Some of the neighbourhood are rather scandalized at his giving so much encouragement to the Romans, (for so the Catholics are universally called, he being himself a Protestant of the Church of England : but I truly believe, that humouring to a certain extent the prejudices in

which they have been educated, and showing such lenity towards them, is by far the most likely way to lead this class of people in the end to renounce their errors. Conciliate their regard by kindness, and a vast step is made towards leading them to adopt your opinions. Violence has made many a hypocrite ; it never made a sincere convert ; kindness has made many a one.

The Romans is so much the appellation by which the Catholics are called in Ireland, that some people seem scarcely to have an idea but that it is exclusively theirs. Once in a large dinner company, when subjects of cookery, as happens not unfrequently, occupied a considerable share in the conversation, one of the company observed, that the Romans seemed to have made the science of cookery their study very much, that they appeared to have been very great eaters. “ Well,” said a lady in company very eagerly, “ so my husband says. He dined among a whole heap of ’em the other day, and he says you may talk of their fasting as much as you please, but he never saw people eat such dinners in his life.”

The first morning of my stay at St. Valeri was spent in a visit to *Loch-Hela*, better known by the name of *Luggelaw*, which sprang originally from a corrupt pronunciation of the true name. That of *Loch Hela*, the *Lake of Hela*, is now so little known, that it is very commonly called the *Lake of Luggelaw*. I have seen it called so under an engraving of the spot ; nay, I have seen it spelt *Lugula*. It is about nine or ten miles from St. Valeri. After passing the finely wooded and cultivated country about Powerscourt, the road ascends to a great height among the ocean of mountains which occupies so large a part of the county of Wicklow ; and the rest of the way lies entirely among these mountains. It was soon after arriving at this elevation that I saw the head of the great waterfall at Powerscourt, as mentioned in the former part of my Narrative. After going up and down among these mountains for about live miles, coasting round the base of the great sugar-loaf, at length in descending a pretty steep declivity at a sharp angle, appears far beneath what looks like a sheet of very black mud. This is the lake ; but a small part of the expanse is, however, then seen, and none of the cultivated scenery around it ; nothing but dark and naked rocks, which throw such a shade over the water as to deprive it in great measure of its aqueous appearance, and give it the semblance of mere slime.

In proceeding onwards down the descent, which winds round a high rock, a different scene presents itself. These wilds are the receptacle of a vast quantity of game, particularly grouse ; and in this recess among the mountains, upon the borders of this lake, has Mr. Peter Latouche, the proprietor of *Belle-Vue*, and the *Glen of the Downs*, made a very pretty shooting-box. The rocks on the side of the lake down which lies the road are granite, sloping away considerably from the water. These are now entirely planted ; the trees are in a very thriving state ; and a road lies through the plantations to the house, which is at the other end of the valley. The lake terminates some way before the valley closes : in this part stands the house ; and the whole space is occupied with meadow-grounds and plantations. The valley closes with a vast amphitheatre of rocks, down which pours a water-fall, but not a very ample one, forming at the foot a little stream, which winding through the meadows runs into the lake. The opposite side of the valley to that on which runs the road is bounded by slate-rocks, which rise very abruptly above the lake. Such is the beautiful spot which art improving on natural advantages has formed in the midst of this wild country. I can conceive no greater surprise than any one would experience on being led to it, not having the least idea of what he was to expect. Though the water, on descending further into the valley, loses much of the black slimy appearance which is at first so striking, yet from the local circumstances it always retains a very dark hue. Such is the rocky chasm which it occupies, that the water in the centre of the lake is un-fathomable. This circumstance, combined with its inclosed situation, and the dark slate-rocks rising on one side directly above it, sufficiently accounts

for its Acherontic tint : when taken out of the lake it looks clear and fine. There is a boat, if any one chooses to row upon the water ; but the navigation is bad, and the lake exposed to sudden squalls of wind through the entrance, which are dangerous when they occur, so that not many people venture upon it : indeed it is so small, that the whole surrounding scenery is just as effectually seen from the shore. At the foot of the lake is a little extent of beach, of a sort of sand or gravel composed of the debris of granite rocks, with some pebbles of mica slate intermixed. Abundance of beautiful mosses were growing about.

But it must be remembered, that the borders of this lake were not always cultivated ; that the whole valley was once naked, dreary, barren :—what then so natural, in the ancient times of superstition, as that this black, dark lake, surrounded with dark and barren rocks, should be fixed on as the abode of darkness, of DEATH ? for such was the *Hela* of the ancient Danish mythology. The lake of *Hela*, or of *Death*, was an appropriate title to such a spot, given probably by the Danes while they inhabited the island, and handed down from them ; though this derivation is lost in the corrupted name now so generally used. I could almost doubt whether the spot is improved in lessening its wild horrors, by mingling the grand features, which must be ever unchangeable, with the milder beauties bestowed by the hand of cultivation.

The next day I went to visit the lead-mines of Shankill, not far from the Scalp. These mines lie on the County of Dublin side of this chain of mountains ; and to reach them from St. Valeri, I went by a road directly over the summit of the mountain : a plain proof that there was no occasion for the Danes to have hollowed out that immense chasm, the Scalp, to establish a communication between the counties of Dublin and Wicklow. The ascent is carried in such an oblique direction along the slope of the mountain to the summit, that though long it is by no means steep. These mines were formerly abundantly productive, and might be so still, but from the little excitement to industry held out. The rocks are granite, abounding exceedingly with galena, or sulphuret of lead. I also obtained some beautiful specimens of crystallizations of carbonate of lead ; others containing sulphate of barytes, others with phosphate of lead, and others again with haematite or oxyd of iron. The granite every where abounds with mica ; in some places is particularly rich in it : in one specimen I got, the mica appears (if I may be allowed to use such an unmineralogical expression) almost plated over the stone. The granite of the Scalp, which is scarcely half a mile from the mines, equally abounds with mica ; it sometimes assumes the character of a coarse-grained gneiss.

The road from St. Valeri to the mines skirts the domains of Powerscourt, and then passes through the village of Enniskerry, which stands very picturesquely upon the slope of a steep hill. It is seen to most advantage coming down the hill on the other side from the Scalp ; the view of it is then remarkably pretty. It is one of the neatest villages to be seen in Ireland. Above the road, coming\* down from the Scalp side, are lofty sand-banks, things not often to be seen in this country. The remainder of my stay at St. Valeri, which was extended to five days, was spent in driving or walking about, and exploring different parts of the neighbourhood : every where it abounds with pleasant walks and drives.

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*Route to Cork.—Tallagh.—Blessington.—Poll-a-Phuca, a Fall of the Liffey.—Ballymore Eustace.—Ruins of New-Abbey.—Kilcullen Bridge.—Old Kilcullen.—Quaker Village at Ballytore.—Castle-Dermot, the Ruins there.—Carlow and its Ruins.—Leighlin-Bridge.— Old Leighlin.—Kilkenny.—Lord Ormond's Agent, Mr. Barxvis.—Dr. Ryan.—The Castle at Kilkenny.—The Marble Quarries.—Ancient Remains.—The Cathedral.—The Black Abbey. — The College.—Kilkenny Theatricals.—Clonmel.—Fermoy.—Glanmire.—Arrival at Cork.*

THE first place of my destination on quitting St. Valeri was Kilkenny. For want of a road over that part of the mountains which lies in the way, I was obliged to return within three miles of Dublin, coasting round the foot of the hilly region, till at length I gained the high road at Tallagh, five miles from the Capital. Here was once a summer residence of the Archbishop of Dublin ; but it has long been deserted, and the house looks old and ruinous. The country about is flat and dull. Blessington, nine miles further, is a very neat pretty little town, belonging almost entirely to the Marquis of Downshire, who has a fine seat in the neighbourhood. There is a handsome new church built by the Marquis. Here I turned out of the road to see a natural curiosity, the fall of the Liffey at *Poll-a-Phuca*, as it is called, or *The Dæmons Hole*. In going thither we pass Russborough, the seat of the Earl of Miltown, a modern-built house with a very handsome front seven hundred feet in length. The house contains a good collection of pictures, but I did not stop to see them. Ireland abounds every where with noblemen's and gentlemen's seats ; but these did not excite my curiosity like the natural beauties and wonders of the country. There must inevitably be a kind of sameness in these seats, and when one has seen a few, little is to be attained by seeing many more : but in the works of Nature there is an unceasing variety which never can pall ; they are always presenting something new, something to charm, to fill the mind. If copies of the works of Nature are fine, and fine paintings are undoubtedly very fine things, how much finer must be the models from which the copies are made !

I did not therefore stop to see Lord Miltown's seat at Russborough ; but went on to *Poll-a-Phuca*, about two miles beyond it. Approaching the spot is a curious ruin of a church, with a small part of a round-tower, and a stone cross. I have not found this round-tower mentioned in any enumeration of those now standing, either in whole or in part. While I was in Dublin I had many times talked of going to see *Poll-a-Phuca*. " Oh dear," says one, " 'tis never worth while to give yourself any trouble about that—just a bucket of water pouring over a rock ;—so I'm told at least, for I never saw it."—" You are quite in the right," says another, " 'tis a noble fall, as I hear, and well answers going a little out of the way to see it."—" Well, you are indefatigable in hunting after sights," says a third ; " but I should have thought that by this time you must have seen waterfalls enough, without giving yourself any more trouble about them."—But I was determined, though I had seen so many waterfalls, to see one more ; and I earnestly recommend to every body who has a taste for the striking features of nature to judge of this for themselves :—the fall at Powerscourt, which every body goes to see, is certainly very fine, and they are right to go and see it ; but this which scarcely any body seemed to know more than by name is much finer : the fall is broken by a shelving of the rock, so that there are two distinct rushes of water, not together amounting to the height of Powerscourt, but exceeding it very far in breadth, consequently making a much finer rush and foam. One side of the dell for some way below the fall, as well as above it, is bordered by abrupt and naked rocks ; the other side, the bank being less steep, is cut into walks and planted with shrubs, having moss houses and other seats scattered about. This was all done by the late Earl of Miltown for the accommodation of the neighbourhood, who in the summer season often make parties hither and bring their dinner to enjoy the delightful scene. At this time there were five or six such parties. Mosses in great variety were to be collected here, as at Loch-Hela. I returned into the road at Ballymore Eustace, four miles beyond Blessington, and there stopped for the night. This is a small town standing on the Liffey near where it issues from the dell of *Poll-a-Phuca*. There is a handsome bridge over the river, which spreads out to a considerable width, though very shallow.

The family of Eustace, after whom this town takes its name, was a very ancient one. It is probable that the proper name of the town is Bally-Eustace, that is, *the town of Eustace* ; *Bally* signifying a town ; and that by some accessory circumstance it has been extended into Ballymore. Near Kilcullen-Bridge, five miles further, are the ruins of a castle, formerly the

residence of this family ; and near them the remains of an abbey, still in its fallen state, retaining the name of *New Abbey*, which was founded by a Sir Rowland Eustace, in the fifteenth century, for Franciscan friars. In the church was a very fine monument to the founder. Both that and the church were well preserved till about eighty years ago, when a great part of the church was pulled down to furnish materials for building a Roman Catholic chapel in the neighbourhood. Kilcullen-Bridge is a town raised upon the downfall of Old Kilcullen, which stood on a hill about a mile further. The building a bridge here over the Liffey was the first step which led to the abandonment of the old town ; and the situation was found so much more advantageous, that it was not long before the town was entirely transferred hither. The remains of Old Kilcullen now standing are very trifling. The walls of a church in tolerable preservation, with part of a round-tower close by, placed on the brow of the hill, form conspicuous objects some way round. The architecture of the church is that which is called Saxon, appearing about the date of the tenth century. The remains of a stone cross having some curious sculptures upon it are also to be seen here, some particulars respecting which may be found in *Dr. Ledwich's Antiquities*. The town in its prosperity was walled round, and had seven gates : some vestiges of two are remaining. Of habitations there is nothing now to be seen but a few very poor cabins. The most ancient name of this town was Killeughly, as the principal town of the barony in which it stands, which was then so called. It was afterwards called *Penkoyle*, or *The Church on the Hill*, having at length its present name, according to some traditions, from being the burial-place of St. Caëlan or Colyn ;—*kill*, as I have before remarked, meaning a burying-place. Others give a different derivation of the name. On a hill a little to the north is a circular intrenchment, supposed to have been the rath, or fortress, of the Mac Kellys, ancient Irish chiefs, and called from them *Caër Caëllan*, The fort of the Caëllans, or Kellys ; whence comes Caëllan, or Cullen, not from the name of any saint. Within this intrenchment Oliver Cromwell encamped for one night when he was on his march to the south.

About six miles beyond Kilcullen, just out of the road to the right, is an assemblage of neat white houses, which cannot fail immediately to catch the eye. It is a village inhabited entirely by Quakers, and every thing about bears the impression of their sect ; it is neatness itself. The inclosures are surrounded with quickset-hedges, kept in the nicest order, having trees planted in them all at regular distances ; the fields are like lawns, not a weed is to be seen in the orchards and gardens : nothing can exceed the neat and orderly appearance of the whole place. The name of the village is Ballytore ; a little river called the Greece winds through it. It is said that Mr. Burke received the first rudiments of education at a school in this village ; it is certain that if he did imbibe his A B C here, he did not imbibe with them the placidity, calmness, and tranquillity of mind and manners that characterize this remarkable sect.

Castle-Dermot, thirty-four miles from Dublin, was once a very large fortified town, and the residence of the Dermods kings of Leinster, the last of whom, Dermod-Mac-Murrough, was the principal occasion of the conquest of the island by Henry the Second. Very large remains of a Franciscan abbey, founded about the middle of the thirteenth century by Gerald earl of Kildare, are now standing. Part of a round-tower, very much overgrown with ivy, and having the appearance of the celebrated round-towers, is incorporated in the outward walls, in the manner of a bastion in old fortifications ; all the ruins are overgrown with ivy, which always gives a picturesque effect. This place continued to be of considerable note for a long time after the English conquest : so late as the year 1377 a parliament was held here, and there was a mint to coin money. What remains of the old parliament-house is now converted into an inn.

Carlow, five miles further, stands on the river Barrow. On an eminence directly above the river are the ruins of an old castle erected in the reign of King John, as a security to the English frontier, which then extended no further. In 1397 this castle was taken by Donald Mac-Art, of the family of the Kavanaghs, who called himself Mac-Murrough king of Leinster. It remained in the hands of him and his descendants till the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when it again received an English garrison. There are also some fine ruins of an abbey. Carlow is a large town, superior in the neatness of its appearance to most towns. It has one very long street crossed about the middle by another not of equal length, and from these principal streets diverge several smaller, and many back lanes. A manufacture of woollen cloth is carried on here, and the inhabitants are much employed in the collieries of Castlecomer in the county of Kilkenny, which are not more than eight miles off, particularly in transporting the coals to different parts of the country. From hence to Leighlin-Bridge the road is very pleasant, almost all the way along the banks of the Barrow.

Leighlin-Bridge (pronounced *Lochlin*) is a small town or village like Kilcullen-Bridge removed from the old town for convenience of situation. Old Leighlin in conjunction with Ferns forms a bishop's see. The remains of that town are three miles from Leighlin-Bridge, among the mountains : besides the cathedral and the seat of a Mr. Vigors, there are only a few poor cabins. The cathedral is old, but kept in good condition by the bishop. Just without the church, at the east end, is a famous well surrounded by tall ash-trees dedicated to Saint Lasarien ; it is held in great veneration, and much resorted to by the people in the neighbourhood. There is something very wild and romantic in the situation of these remains. From hence to Kilkenny, the extent of my this day's journey, is twelve miles ; Kilkenny being fifty-seven miles from Dublin.

At Kilkenny I had an introduction to the Earl of Ormond's agent, an English gentleman, Mr. Barwis, and we were not a little surprised on meeting, to find that we had been fellow-passengers in the packet from Holyhead to Dublin. One of my objects here was to collect all the information I could for a mineralogical friend of mine respecting the coal of the country, so well known under the title of Kilkenny coal. But I found that the collieries, though in the county of Kilkenny, were not very near the town, but at Castlecomer, nine miles off, and I was obliged to defer going thither till my return from Cork and Kilkenny. Mr. Barwis very obligingly, on the morning after my arrival, showed me the castle, the seat of the earl, now Marquis of Ormond, and accompanied me to the marble quarries just without the town ; but then being engaged with business which could not be deferred, he invited me to make the castle my residence for a day or two on my return, when I could see any thing left now unseen. He besides introduced me to Dr. Ryan, an eminent physician in the place, from whom I not only obtained much mineralogical information, but who favoured me with some valuable mineralogical specimens. Among these must be particularly mentioned some excellently well defined vegetable impressions found in the schale about the veins of coal, consisting principally of ferns and a gigantic species of reed.

Kilkenny stands upon the river Nore, one of three rivers that unite to form the harbour of Waterford ; the Nore being first joined with the Barrow, and their united streams afterwards combining with the waters of the Suir. Though the general name of Kilkenny is given to the whole town, it consists of two distinct divisions, Irishtown and Kilkenny, which are under separate jurisdictions, the former being governed by a portreeve, the latter by a mayor. Irishtown is one of the oldest towns in the whole island ; by the inhabitants it is now called *Bally-gaël-loch*, or the *Town of Gaël on the Lake*, the part whereon it stands having been formerly a marsh, sometimes so overflowed as to become like a lake ; it is still very subject to inundations from the river. The first embryo of a town consisted only of a range of cabins, in this marshy ground running along the margin of the river. Such seems to have been the taste

of the ancient inhabitants in choosing spots for their establishments ; this was the case with Dublin, it was so with Cork, it was so with Limerick.

The name of Kilkenny is differently derived. As nothing can go forwards very well in Ireland without the assistance of a saint, we have here one under the name of Saint Canice or Kenny. He was brought up in his infant years by a cow, whose milk he sucked, but how he came to be consigned to her care does not appear. No mention is made of a similar fate to that of Romulus and Remus when the wolf had compassion on them, the fact alone is stated that a cow was his nurse. He was afterwards employed as a shepherd's boy ; but here he seems to have neglected his flock, for he was continually occupied in making little churches cut out of wood, or framed with osier twigs, with all the appendages of altars, crucifixes, &c. &c. This devotional turn constantly increasing upon him, when he grew up he entered himself in a monastery, where having continued several years, he by consent of the superiors travelled to Rome : here still distinguishing himself by his extraordinary devotion, he obtained the highest renown. He was first buried at Aghabœ [1], but his remains were afterwards transferred to Kilkenny, from which time it has been known by its present name, signifying the *Burial-place of Kenny*. Some, however, not satisfied with this derivation, say that the name is derived from the local circumstances attending the hill on which now stands the cathedral ; in those times it was covered with wood, and thence called *Coil* or *Kyle-ken-üi*, the *woody head*, or *hill, above the river* ; thence the transition is easy to Kilkenny.

The cathedral is a very ancient structure ; it was begun about the year 1230 by Hugh Mapilton then bishop of the diocese. It is, like all cathedrals, in the form of a cross, the length from east to west being 226 feet, from north to south 123. The steeple is broad, but not lofty ; it is supported by four very massive pillars of the black marble of the country ;—of the same marble are the pillars which support the roof. But by the strange and absurd taste, or rather want of taste, in those who had the guardianship of the church about seventy or eighty years ago, they were all whitened over with a lime-wash. The original east window was esteemed one of the finest pieces of Gothic architecture ever seen in Ireland. So highly finished was the workmanship, that when Rinucini, archbishop and prince of Fermo in Italy, was in Ireland in the year 1645, as nuncio from the Pope to the Irish Catholics, he was so much struck with it that he would fain have purchased it to carry to Rome, offering for it no less than 700*l.*, a large sum in those days. The Chapter, however, could by no means be prevailed upon to comply with his wishes. Only five years after, amid the troubles of the civil-wars, this window shared the fate of many monuments of art about the country, and was demolished. Some fragments of it were subsequently collected by that great scholar and traveller Dr. Pococke, when he was bishop of the diocese, and are now in the church. The stained glass in it contained the history of Jesus Christ from his birth to his ascension. The choir of the cathedral is fitted up with oak varnished, but quite plain without any carved work.

That the church is still standing is principally to be ascribed to the great zeal and care of Bishop Pococke. When he came to the see it was in a very ruinous state, having been wholly neglected for a long course of years. He made a large subscription in the diocese, to which he himself contributed amply, and had it put into complete repair, superintending the workmen himself, often being with them by four o'clock in the morning. In the church is a monument to the memory of this distinguished prelate, executed by Scheemaker ; it is of white marble. A whole-length figure representing Piety stands with her head reclined upon one hand, which is rested on an urn supposed to contain the ashes of the deceased ; in the other hand she has a book. The bishop's arms are at the end of a long shaft. On the monument is the following inscription :

Sacred to the Memory of Richard Pococke, LL. D.  
Who from the Archdeaconry of Dublin

Was promoted to this See M.DCCLVI.  
And translated to that of Meath M.DCCLXV.  
Where he died September 15th in the same year.

He discharged every duty of the Pastoral and Episcopal Office  
With prudence, vigilance, and fidelity,  
Adorning his station  
With unshaken integrity of heart and of conduct.  
Attentive to the interests of religion,  
He caused several parochial churches to be rebuilt  
Within his Diocese ;  
He promoted and liberally contributed to the repair  
And to the embellishment of this Cathedral Church  
Then unhappily falling to decay.

A zealous encourager of every useful public work,  
Especially the Linen Manufacture,  
He bequeathed a very considerable legacy  
To the Governors of the Incorporated Society  
For promoting the united Interests of Industry and  
Charity,  
Within this Borough of Saint Canice.

The bishop was not, however, buried here, but at Ardraccon in the county of Meath. There are a great many monuments and inscriptions about the church, most of them very old. A round-tower stands within a few yards of it on the south side : it is very lofty, and in a state of high preservation. The cathedral is dedicated to St. Canice.

The abbey of St. John was the oldest monastic foundation in Kilkenny, and was built early in the thirteenth century. It stands on the east side of the river Nore. Very extensive remains of it are still existing; but a great part has been terribly degraded by being patched up into barracks. The wall of the east end of the church, the whole of the south, and part of the north, are standing ; and at this time it was just determined to add whatever was wanting to complete the building, modelling the work exactly after the old part, and convert it into a parish church,—a very laudable undertaking. The abbey of the Dominicans, known as the *Black Abbey*, is on the other side of the river. Most of the outward walls of the church, with the Gothic windows, are still standing, with two handsome towers. The carved work of the windows is very rich, much superior to St. John's. There is an idea of restoring this also as a church and it is much to be wished that it may be prosecuted. This abbey was built in the thirteenth century, within a few years after St. John's. The Franciscan abbey was very extensive, and showed some equally good specimens of Gothic architecture ; but a great part of its remains have been converted—shall I not say *perverted*—into barracks.

The castle makes a very grand appearance on entering the town, crowning an abrupt and precipitous rock, with the Nore running at its base. This rock had been previously the site of a Danish fortress, which was finally demolished at the conquest of the island by the English. The present castle was built as a fortress to supply its place, but who was its original founder is not well authenticated, the credit of it is generally given to Earl Strongbow. A very high wall of solid masonry runs along the base of the rock, and probably was once continued all round the domain ; it now only serves to inclose a lawn and shrubbery in front of the house. Between the wall and the river is a walk, which is a great mall for the gentry of the town. It seems to have been intended that the building should be a square, with a court in the centre,



having large round turrets at each corner. Only two sides of the square, with three towers, were ever completed ; but the foundations of the remaining part of the building appear.

The great entrance is by an archway in the centre of one side of the building which fronts the parade ; this leads into the court, where is the entrance to the house. The principal front of the house is to the river, looking along its course over two bridges, having the lawn directly before it. There is nothing of magnificence in the interior ; scarcely a single room is regularly shaped, yet there is an air of antiquity and nobility about it altogether, that sufficiently compensates for its irregularities. The breakfast-room is of the most irregular form, running into the principal turret. The walls are of such an immense thickness, that each window forms a separate recess, large enough to hold a company of six or eight at breakfast. In the room are some good tapestries. There are a vast number of portraits in different parts of the house, and some other pictures, but none very remarkable. In a gallery 150 feet long are whole-length portraits of Charles the First, Charles the Second, James the Second, King William the Third, Queen Mary, Queen Anne, and the first Duke of Ormond, besides a vast number of others. In an apartment called *The Evidence Chamber* is a very large collection of papers relating both to the private family concerns, and the many important public events in which the family have at various times borne a conspicuous part. Among other curious things which Mr. Barwis showed me, was an old house-keeping account-book of the family, from which a general idea might be gathered of the mode of living in those times : I think it was about 200 years old. From the top of one of the turrets is a fine view over a vast extent of flat country, skirted by mountains, some more, some less, elevated. The stables are magnificent ; and the kitchen-garden and conservatories good.

Though I could not now go to see the collieries, I saw a noble fire in the kitchen made from the produce of them. The coal is of a remarkable quality, burning entirely without smoke ; having much more the appearance of a fire of charcoal than of mineral coal. It is difficult to light it at first, a large foundation of turf must be laid underneath ; but when once lighted, it burns for an amazing length of time without any addition of fuel. It is a most valuable coal for cookery, secure from all danger of things being ever smoked, perhaps the very worst fault that cookery can have.

Near the castle, on the opposite side of the river, is a school, or college, originally founded and endowed by the Ormond family. The election of a master of this school is vested in the provost, fellows, and scholars of Trinity-College, Dublin ; but it is thought that the latter description of persons are not much consulted by the two former when a vacancy is to be filled up. The house is a neat modern one, and there is a spacious play-ground for the boys. Over the Nore are two handsome bridges ; that nearest the castle has three wide elliptical arches, the other has seven circular ones. Both are built of the black marble of the country. During the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, parliaments were frequently held here. A memorable one was that of 1367, when the old Brehon laws were abolished, and the English laws alone substituted in their place. Very high penalties were enacted on this occasion upon any Englishman wearing the Irish dress.

The marble quarries are not above a quarter of a mile from the town ; they are very extensive ; the whole mass of rock for a great way seems entirely composed of the marble, differing only in quality, some coarser, some finer ; it is in fact the stone of the country. The inhabitants of Kilkenny boast that they have fire without smoke, earth without bog, water without mud, air without fog, and that their streets are paved with marble. The first clause is certainly very true, as I have testified above ; for the second, I can say that I undoubtedly did not perceive any bog in the environs of the town ; for the third, the water, as far as I saw of it, was perfectly clear and pure ; for the fourth, I was not there a sufficient time to say any thing

about it ; the last, that the streets are paved with marble, is very true. But how paved with marble ? Those who should expect to walk or ride over beautiful polished marble slabs, would find themselves exceedingly mistaken. The marble is, as I have said, the stone of the country ; the fine slabs taken from the quarries are reserved to be polished, and used for the purposes of chimney-pieces and the like, while the coarser parts are employed in all the most ordinary uses to which stone is usually applied ; with this refuse the town is paved, and in walking over the pavement, nothing more appears to the eye than as if it was of the most ordinary pebbles ; nay, if broken, the interior scarcely displays so much beauty as one of the pieces of Scotch granite which paves the streets of London. For some objects, the dark hue of the marble, though beautiful when polished, is unfavourable ; as for example, to the bridges it gives a *sombre* funereal appearance, the effect of which is far from being good. Some of the poorest houses in the town are in like manner built of marble, the roads are mended with marble, and some of the inclosures are fenced with marble.

The black, when first polished, is very fine ; but, as is too frequently the case with the marbles of this country, and of most in the British islands, the intensity of colour is by no means permanent ; after a time it becomes gray, and exhibits numerous white spots. All does not, however, show an entire black at first ; indeed, the more prevailing character is to be mottled *ab origine*, the result of the marine exuvixæ with which all marble abounds. Distinct casts of shells are occasionally found in it, but not very frequently. An Italian, who was once at Kilkenny, seeing a particularly fine slab just then come from the polisher's hands, appearing an entire and pure black, was so struck, that he said, if they could send a few such to Italy, any price would be given for them, for that none so pure was produced there. The person to whom he said this was obliged to confess, that the beauty he so much admired was not lasting ; that after being exposed awhile to the air white spots would appear. Such was the case with some chimney-pieces of Kilkenny marble which I saw at Mr. Weld's at Ravens-well : he said they were at first a perfect black ; when I saw them they had many white spots about them. Crystallized carbonate of lime occasionally mingles itself with the marble.

Very near the quarries is a pit of a dark coarse sand, composed of siliceous and calcareous matter, with numerous pebbles of common limestone, generally of a dark colour, but sometimes approaching to a cream-colour ; nodules of iron-clay also occur occasionally. Whether this sand or gravel is transported to Dublin I cannot tell ; but it certainly has very much the appearance of the dark gravel which I have noticed as used there. The idea did not immediately strike me ; nor indeed did it till after I left Ireland ; but certainly no gravel of that kind, or of any kind, occurs in the neighbourhood of Dublin.

The theatricals of Kilkenny were for a long time exceedingly celebrated, but they have now for some years ceased entirely. They were carried on by a society of gentlemen, who used to perform for about a month every year, which created a sort of jubilee in the town. They had a little theatre of their own, and whatever remained of surplus from the receipts at the performances, after paying the nightly expenses, was given to different charities in the town. The dresses were not allowed in the general expenses, they were each person's individual expense, and sometimes very large sums were expended in them. The female performers were actresses from the Dublin stage. But a thing of this kind, however eagerly pursued at first, in time begins to cloy ; and after flourishing awhile, the performances gradually became less and less attractive, till at length they were entirely dropped ; yet, though they ceased from being neglected, all persons now talk of them with such regret, that no one hearing it could suppose their failure was owing to such a cause.

A woollen manufactory for blankets and cloths is carried on here to a very considerable extent. It was first established by the Ormond family. Pierce earl of Ormond, and his wife the

Lady Margaret, brought over manufacturers from Flanders expressly for the purpose. There is also a considerable starch manufactory. Before the Union, each division of the town returned two members to the parliament ; at present the united towns send only one. The population of the town is estimated at about twenty thousand. A Book Society has of late years been established by subscription, upon the plan of being open to the subscribers to go and read there, but the books not to be circulated. It has always appeared to me, that half the use of such societies is annihilated by not circulating the books, *bien entendu*, under proper regulations : this the subscribers to the Kilkenny library have found so strongly, some of them at least, men of business, whose chief time for reading was in the evening, after the library was shut up, that they were making great exertions to get the inconvenience remedied, and the books put into circulation.

Clonmel, twenty-four miles from Kilkenny, eighty-one from Dublin, is an ancient town with a good deal of modern addition to it, standing on the Suir, one of the rivers that runs to Waterford harbour. Over the river is a handsome bridge of twenty arches. A town is believed to have existed here before the Danish invasion. In Oliver Cromwell's time Clonmel made a longer resistance to his arms than any town in Ireland ; when it surrendered, he ordered the castle and fortifications, which were very strong, to be demolished ; few fragments of them now remain. At present the town is much inhabited by Quakers, who, wherever they go, communicate to a certain extent a spirit of neatness ; this town consequently, though so ancient, is very clean. A Dominican friary was founded here in the year 1260, and a Franciscan friary the same year. The church of this latter was one of the most magnificent that any monastery in Ireland could boast ; in it was an image of Saint Francis, celebrated for the many miracles it performed. The town consists of four streets crossing each other at right angles. A very extensive woollen manufacture is carried on here principally by the Quakers. Not far from the town, on a hill rising above the Suir, is a spa-spring, formerly in great repute as a remedy for scorbutic complaints and other chronic diseases ; but the fashion is now over, other waters have come into higher repute, and this is entirely neglected. The river is navigable from hence to Waterford. Clonmel was the birth-place of the celebrated Sterne, author of *Tristram Shandy* ; assuredly one of the first of wits, though it were to be wished that he had not on all occasions so entirely given the reins to it, but had tempered it with more of delicacy.

The road does not cross the river here, it continues on the north side seven miles further to Ardfinnan. This is a very ancient village, where are the ruins of an old Gothic castle standing on a rock which overhangs the river. It was built by King John while he was Earl of Morton. An abbey for regular canons was founded here by Saint Finian the Leper, to which the noted Cormac Mac-Quillenan, archbishop of Cashel and king of Munster, bequeathed in the year 903 his horse, his armour, and some other bequests in gold and silver. The town and abbey were sacked and plundered by the English in 1178.

Fermoy, a hundred-and-seven miles from Dublin, is one of those striking instances not unfrequently to be seen, of what may be accomplished in a very short space of time by the intelligence and activity of one man. It stands upon the Blackwater, and an ancient bridge of thirteen arches here crosses it at a weir of the river. Of this bridge the annexed plate gives a view. The whole is entirely overgrown with ivy, so that the water pours through green arches down the weir ; the white foam of the falling water mingling with the green arches produces an uncommonly pretty effect. But though the bridge is ancient, the town is entirely modern. In the year 1791 it was a very poor village, consisting only of a few mud cabins. At that time the Government, having determined to erect barracks somewhere in this neighbourhood, were in treaty for the purchase of a parcel of land from a gentleman, not exactly in this spot, but at a little distance. The owner, however, asked such an enormous sum for his property, that a

demur was made whether to conclude the bargain or not ; when Mr. Anderson, who had some property here, offered what land was wanted at a reasonable price. The bargain was immediately concluded, and a contract was entered into with him for building the barracks. From that time the town has rapidly risen, under the auspices of this spirited and active member of the community, to its present flourishing state. A large square is built at the foot of the bridge, at the corner of which is a most excellent inn, one of the best I found in any part of Ireland ; also an excellent range of houses along the side of the river, and several new streets. Manufactories have been established which are in a very flourishing state, and every thing wears the appearance of ease and prosperity. The church stands very prettily upon the ascent of a hill above the river ; the barracks are spacious, and make a handsome appearance. If I could have been tempted to wish for ancient castles with frowning battlements rising above the stream, or for the sombre fragments of a fine Gothic abbey, as according better than neat spruce modern habitations with the ancient bridge overgrown with ivy, yet I forgave these modern houses their want of picturesque effect, in consideration of the pleasing associations they afforded, from the idea of the comforts enjoyed by their inhabitants.

Fermoy is a name of great antiquity ; one of the numerous petty kingdoms of Ireland in ancient days was so called, and such is now the name of one of the baronies of the county of Cork, though not that in which the town of Fermoy stands. The ancient name of the district was Fearnmuigh, and the sovereignty of it was in the family of the O'Kiefs, or Mac Kiefs, who claimed their descent from the Milesian kings of Ireland. The name of Fearnmuigh is differently derived ; some say it signifies simply and humbly *grassy plains*, this being a country rich in pastures. Others, who like to trace all derivations back to something of the marvellous, say that *Muigh* was an eminent Druid of old who assisted the king of Munster in gaining a great victory over his enemies, obtaining by his prayers that the sun should stand still for two or three hours, till the forces of the adversary were completely routed. In consequence of this service, the district in question was granted to Muigh, who from that time was called *Fearnmuigh*, that is *Muigh the doer of great deeds*, and this name was afterwards given to the district.

Rathcormuck is a neat little town a hundred-and-eleven miles from Dublin, standing on the river Bride, which runs into the Blackwater. To the north of this town is a range of mountains, the most easterly of which is called *Cairn Tierna*, or the *Thane's Heap*, from one of those Cairns or heaps of stones which are so common on the tops of mountains. This hill is a conspicuous object from various parts of the country. The last place to be mentioned, before the city of Cork, is Glanmire. This is a little village in a beautiful and romantic situation, with a small stream running through it on which are several mills: from hence it winds through a deep and romantic glen, till it joins the Cork river about three miles below the town. After descending the hill of Glanmire, the road runs by the side of the Lee till it enters Cork.

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

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