

Southwest Donegal

Illustrated Handbook of the Scenery and Antiquities of Southwestern Donegal

James Stephens

1872

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AMONG the ancient memorials and historic remains in Ireland of the long forgotten past, it must be admitted that there is a deeply interesting mine for the antiquary, which hitherto has been but very imperfectly explored and investigated. It happens however as the archeological taste has become more fully developed, that now and then some of the finest of our historic monuments are dug up from their hiding places where they had remained in obscurity for ages. And this is especially the case as regards the beautiful Celtic Tomb of the famed warrior and chieftan, Niall Mor, of which it may be said “ the cold chain of silence had hung o’er it long,” but which is now so carefully preserved in the Church of Killybegs.

The fine historic land of old Tirconnell is filled with interesting memorials of other days, and studded over with old ruined abbeys, and churches, and castles, which, in the days gone by, filled up some bright pages in the “ Annals of Ireland.” And what a solemn interest attaches to those fine old ruins, which cover the land with their mournful but magnificent desolation, and which at once remind us of the glories and sufferings of our Church. These fine old abbeys, now a desecrated ruin, once resounded with the praises of the Most High, and from their quiet sanctuaries went forth apostolic preachers to enlighten barbarous kingdoms, which now rank high in the scale of nations, giving Bishops to the Church, Doctors to the Universities, and Martyr^ and Confessors to Heaven. Need I more than allude to the fine old historic Abbey of Donegal, immortalized by its work of the “ Annals of the Four Masters,” which forms the largest collection of national, civil, military, and family history, ever brought together in this, or, perhaps, in any other country, dating from the Deluge to A. D. 1616. I cannot pass over in my enumeration the old Cistercian Abbey at Ballyshannon, of Asheroe (Eas aedh Euaidh), the Cataract of Red Hugh, founded in 1178, by Roderick O’Cannanan, Prince of Tirconnell :—

The bore tree and the lightsome ash across the portal grow,
And heaven itself is now the roof of the Abbey Asheroe ;

and the ruined Abbeys of Killyodonnell, Fahan, and Rathmullen, where

“ The thinking sculpture helps to raise deep thoughts
To the mind’s ear, and inward sight ;
Their silence speaks, and shade gives light.”

“ Who sees these ruins, but will demand
What barbarous invader sacked the land :
And when he hears no Goth nor Turk did bring
The desolation, but a Christian King ;
While nothing but the name of Zeal appears
’Twi’xt our best actions and the worst of theirs,
What must he think, our sacrilege would spare,
When such the effects of our devotion are ?”

Add to these the dismantled and crumbling castles of the Mac Swynes, the O'Donnells, the O'Clerys, and the O'Doghertys.

And should we not all feel an interest in the preservation of these fine old historic landmarks, and cherish with fond affection the memory of the chieftains who owned them ; for—

“ Thus shall memory in dreams sublime
Catch a glimpse of the days that are over,
Thus sighing look through the waves of time
For the long faded glories they cover.”

Besides those fine old ruined abbeys and castles we find in Donegal some of the most interesting monuments of the days of old ; for instance, the palace of the Northern Hy Niall ; the historic Griannen of Aileach ; the remains of the seven churches and round towers on Torry Island ; the pillar stones and Druidical remains at Raphoe and Culdaff ; the numerous cromleachs ; the fine old stone crosses, since the days of St. Patrick and St. Columbkil ; and the holy wells, which are to be found in almost every parish, dedicated to some favourite saint.

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History of The Holy Wells.

“ They have left the cot for the holy well,
Near the cross in the valley flowing ;
Its bright blue tide hath a seraph's spell,
Light and joy to the blind bestowing.”

The distinguished antiquarian, Sir William Wilde, who has done so much to make archæology a delightful and interesting study, has expressed a wish that the history of the Holy Wells of Ireland were written ; and, in his work on the Boyne and Blackwater, makes the following beautiful address to them :

“ Thou chosen spring of sacred gift,
By prayer and penance blest,
Here on thy knee-worn margin
My wanderings find a rest.
I could not pass thee heedlessly.
Or deem with scoffing thought
That God hath through thy hallowed drops
No healing wonder wrought.

“ With solemn pause I gaze upon
Thy surface calm and pure,
Recalling days when simple souls
In faith found simplest cure.
Who knows thou art unsanctified,
And hast no salving power ?
Let me at least revere thee now
In thy departed hour.”

On the western shore of the beautiful Bay of Killybegs there is a holy well dedicated to St. Catherine the Martyr, much frequented by the pious pilgrims, who, on its knee-worn margin,

offer up many a fervent prayer to heaven. There is another of these holy wells at an ancient place called the *Relic*, not far from the Killaghtee Chapel, near which is an old mutilated cross, going back to the days of St. Conall. St. Conall was Abbot of the Monastery of Inniskeel. His feast is observed on the 22nd of May ; and the church and holy wells dedicated to him are much frequented by pilgrims. (See “ Martyrology of Donegal,” and “ Colgan MSS.”) There are other holy wells in different parts of the county ; among them the celebrated Doon Well, near Kilmacrenan, and immediately below the rock, on which the O’Donnells were inaugurated ; the Abbey Well of Ballyshannon ; Malin Well, in Ennishowen ; many of them traditionally said to be blessed by St. Columba.

“ Oh thou pretty holy well,
Wreathed about with roses,
Where, beguiled with soothing spell,
Weary foot reposes.

“ Clear as childhood in thy looks,
Nature seems to pet thee ;
Fierce July, that drains the brooks,
Hath no power to fret thee.”

May I now be permitted to give a short history of those holy and sequestered spots so long consecrated by the exercise of holy prayer and penance ? At an early period in the history of Ireland, before the arrival of St. Patrick, who was then commissioned by Pope Celestine as the Apostle of Ireland, we find the people worshipping the sun, and the moon, the fire, the water, and the oak, and transferring to these inanimate symbols of the Deity the worship that was due to the living God. And how did St. Patrick and the early missionaries overturn this hideous fabric of superstition, and bring over the ancient Druid to the Christian faith ?

History records that it was accomplished by the same wise policy, which Christianity did not disdain to win its way with in more polished nations, by making the *outward form* the *vehicle* through which to convey the vital truths of the Christian religion.

Hence we find days that were devoted to Pagan festivals, now transferred to the Christian cause. The feast of *Samhim*, which had been held annually at the vernal equinox, was found to correspond with the great festival of Easter ; and the fires lighted to welcome the summer solstice were continued afterwards, even to the present time, in honour of the eve of the feast of St. John the Baptist. And thus we find at every step the way smoothed down for the introduction of the faith. The pillar stone of the Druid and the cromleach were marked with the Christian symbol of the cross ; in the same way the oak and the sacred grove were converted to Christian uses by the erection of the monastery and the church ; and the *well*, at which their fathers worshipped, was made the baptismal font where the convert received the sacred rite of baptism. The name of the ancient monastery, *Doire Calcaich*, from which the Maiden City derives the name of Derry, still recalls the memory of the hill of oaks on which the monastery was built by St. Columbcille. The name of Kildare also reminds us of the Cell of the Oaks on which the Church of St. Bridgid was afterwards erected. We find also in a record, going back to A. D. 448, that Alphin Mac Eochaid, King of Dublin, and his subjects, were baptised in St. Patrick’s Well, now shown to visitors in St. Patrick’s Cathedral in that city.

We find the same policy recommended by Pope Gregory to St. Augustine, in the conversion of England (Bede’s Eccl. Hist.), where he suggests that the temples of idols in that nation should not be destroyed. “ Let the idols that are in them be destroyed, and let holy water be made and sprinkled on the said temples, and altars erected ; for if these temples are well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of

the true God ; that the nation, not seeing those temples destroyed, may renounce error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may more willingly resort to the same places they were accustomed to (Hume “ On the Policy of the First Missionaries”).

Let us now see what was the result of this policy. We are told by our countryman, Thomas Moore, in his “ History of Ireland,” that, whilst in other countries the introduction of Christianity was the slow work of time, and had been resisted by either the Government or the people, and seldom effected without a lavish effusion of blood, in Ireland, on the contrary, by the labours of St. Patrick, and with but very little preparation of the soil by other hands, Christianity burst forth at the first ray of apostolic light, and with the sudden ripeness of a northern summer covered the whole island. Kings and princes, when not themselves among the ranks of the converts, saw their sons and daughters join the train without a murmur ; chieftains at variance in all else, agreed in meeting beneath the Christian banner, and the proud Druid and bard laid their superstitions at the foot of the cross.”

Who, then, familiar with these details of history, will refuse the tribute of his respect to these holy wells, which have been diverted from a debasing superstition to places of resort for the pilgrim, where, apart from the bustle of life, he tells his beads and communes with his God in prayer ? And where, let me ask, can a more appropriate place be found for the exercise of this holy duty than around the clear and gentle spring, gushing forth in all its purity, as it were, from the hands of God, and its bright and crystal waters the reflected image of the purity which should be found in all our actions ? Hence it is that we find those holy wells amidst some wild glen, surrounded by stern and savage rocks, in the sequestered valley, or the secluded seashore, such as St. Catherine’s Well, where the beauty and tranquillity of the scene teach us to look from Nature to Nature’s God.

Mr. Frazer, in his “ Ballad Poetry of Ireland,” supplies us with the following beautiful passage :—

“ The holy wells, the holy wells, the cool, the fresh, the pure,
A thousand years has rolled away, and still these founts endure
And while their stainless chastity, and lasting life has birth
Amid the cozy cells and caves of gross material earth,
The scripture of creation holds no fairer type than they ;
The city sent pale sufferers there the faded brow to dip,
And woo the water to depose some bloom upon the lip.
The wounded warrior dragged him towards the unforgotten
tide,
And deemeth draught a heavenlier gift than triumphs at his
side.”

The Well of Bethsaida

We have a remarkable instance of a holy well in the sacred writings, the Pool of Bethsaida (5th chap. John). “ Now, there is at Jerusalem a pond called Probatica, which, in Hebrew, is named Bethsaida, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of blind and lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water. And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved ; and he that went down first into the pond after the motion of the water, was made whole of whatever infirmity he lay under.”

There is another passage, in the ninth chapter of the same Evangelist, where a blind man was sent by Christ himself to the Pool of Siloe to wash himself. “ He went therefore, he washed and he came seeing.”

Before bringing to a close this very imperfect notice of the holy wells, I cannot forego the pleasure of introducing another poetical tribute on this subject, from the graceful pen of Mrs. Kevin Izod O'Dougherty.

“ Oh lonely silent crystal well,
Thy stilly waters gleam
From out the shaded emerald dell,
As in a tranquil dream.
No voice to break the solitude,
But low winds' wailing tune,
As through the night above thee brood
The wild bird and the moon.

Within thy charmed silver ring
What precious memories sleep :
The faith and hope that fondly cling,
The love and sorrow deep.
Sad smiles, that tell the sad hearths tale,
Sweet tears that softly fall,
Like winter sun and summer rain,
Thou hast them treasured all.

“ The gnarled oak tree droops above,
As pilgrims watch and pray,
With rifted arms of reverent love,
Through ages dim and gray.
Upon its seamed and gristly bark
Lov'd names have once been traced.
But now the eye can scarcely mark
Those records half effaced.

“ The moss and lichen idly creep,
The ivy tendrils twine ;
Of characters, once fresh and deep,
New growth scarce leaves a line.
Ah thus it is with loved ones' names,
Once writ upon the heart,
When time brings forth new hopes and aims.
And bids the past depart.”

Some few years ago a friend of ours, a very talented and enterprising young architect, Mr. E. W. Godwin, whilst engaged in the building of St. Baithin's church, at St. Johnston, and the churches in Torry Island and Newtowncunningham, was also actively employed in collecting materials for a work on the Antiquities of Donegal, comprising the history of the ruined abbeys and churches, its castles and its round towers, pillar stones, Druidical circles, cromleachs, its stone crosses, and its holy wells. The work was all but in the hands of the printer with some fifty illustrations.

Mr. Godwin soon afterwards removed to the busy metropolis of London, to “ fresh fields and pastures new,” and, I presume, from his many various avocations, did not proceed with its publication. He has since taken a great interest in the Antiquities of England, and has become a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and has oftentimes taken a prominent part in

their *seances*, from which it is hoped he may yet be induced to proceed with the publication of his work.

The topography of the county, with much of its history and its legendary lore, has been done ample justice to in “The Donegal Highlands,” a work which has introduced quite a host of tourists to our beautiful scenery. May we express a hope that its accomplished author will favour us with another work which is so much desired, “The Ecclesiastical Annals and History of the Diocese of Raphoe and the Ancient See of St. Eunan ?” Formerly the diocese of Raphoe was co-extensive with the boundaries of the county, taking in the peninsula of Ennishowen ; but in 1166 the Rt. Rev. Gervaise O’Cherbailow, the Bishop of Derry, whether from the rapacity of the churchman or that he thought his own diocese not sufficiently large for his zeal, possessed himself of part of the see of Clogher, the Bishop of which was *paralytic* at the time. He next stripped Raphoe in the same manner, which augmentation remains to the present day.

This seeming bold usurpation was not lost sight of, for we find the Rt. Rev. Dr. Coyle, Bishop of Raphoe, protesting against the spiritual right of the Bishop of Derry to the barony of Ennishowen ; and we are not sure but even yet his Lordship of Clogher, the Most Rev. Dr. Donnelly, and some future Bishop of Raphoe, may bring up the question. (No proscription against the Church,)

Among others who have done good service by their graphic delineations of our beautiful mountains and valleys, I may mention the author of the “Cliff Scenery of South Western Donegal,” and the writer of “Ennishowen,” once enobled by the genius of the late lamented Maginn, which classic region has found such an able expositor in Mac Tocher.

Since sending off my Notes on the famous Clan of the Mac Swynes, to the publisher I have been favoured with a copy of a rare work, “Edmond Spenser’s View of the State of Ireland in 1596,” from a kind friend of mine in this neighbourhood, Mrs. Barrett of Bruckless House, a lady to whom the archæology of this district is much indebted for the interest she has taken in the discovery and preservation of the ancient memorials of former days, and, from her knowledge of the Celtic tongue and ancient records, the ability with which she so well develops their historical importance.

Being a lineal descendant of the O’Connors, formerly the princes of the country, she clings at all times with fond affection to the memories and noble deeds of Ireland’s ancient chieftains. From this work I am enabled to take the following interesting extract :—

“The Irish themselves report that the Mac Mahons in the North, were anciently English, to wit, descended from the Fitz-Ursulas, which was a noble family in England ; likewise, that the Mac Swynes, now in Ulster, were anciently of the Veres in England, but that they themselves for hatred of English so disguised their names. But proud hearts doe oftentimes, like wanton colts, kicke at their mothers, as we read Alcibiades and Themistocles did, who, being banished out of Athens, fled unto the kings of Asia, and there stirred them up to warre against their country, in which warres themselves were chieftains.

“So they say did these Mac Swynes and MacMahons for private despite turne themselves against England. For at such times as Robert Vere Earl of Oxford was in the barons’ warres against King Richard the Second through the malice of the Peeres banished the realm and proscribed, he with his kinsman Fitz-Ursula fled into Ireland, where being prosecuted, and afterwards in England put to death, his kinsman there remaining behinde in Ireland, rebelled, and conspiring with the Irish, did quite cast off both their English name and allegiance, since which time they have Remained so still and have since been counted mere Irish.

“ The very like is also reported of the Mac Swynes, Mac Mahons, and the Mac Sheehys of Munster, how they likewise were English, and old followers to the Earl of Desmond, untill the reigne of King Edward IV., at which time the Earle of Desmond, that then was called Thomas, being, through false subornation (as they say) of the Queene, for some offence by her against him conceived, brought to his death at Tredagh most unjustly, notwithstanding that he was a very good and sound subject to the King. Thereupon, all the kinsmen of the Geraldines, which then was a mighty family in Munster, in revenge of that wrong, rose into armes against the King, and utterly renounced and forsooke all allegiance to the Crowne of England, to whom the said Mac Swynes, being followers, did the like, and have ever since so continued. And with them, they say, all the people of Munster went out, and many others of them, which were meere English, thenceforth joined with the Irish, against the King, and termed themselves very Irish, taking on them Irish habits and customes, which could never since be cleane wyped away, but the contagion hath remained still amongst their posterities.”

Sir James Ware holds the opinion, that the families of the Mac Machons and the Mac Swynes belong to the ancient Irish. And the learned Celtic scholar, O'Donovan, says that the statement of Spenser, with regard to the Mac Mahons, the Mac Swynes, and the Mac Sheehys, being of English descent, is without foundation, and nothing more than a mere invention of the creative fancy of that great poet and politician. He also tells us that the ancestors of the Mac Swynes and the Mac Sheehys of Munster removed to Scotland in the tenth century, or the beginning of the eleventh, and some of their descendants returned to Ireland in the beginning of the fourteenth century and were hereditary leaders of the gallowglasses to many of the Irish chieftains.

Dr. Geoffrey Keating, and others, also disprove th« statement made by Spenser.

The earliest notices of the Mac Swynes that I have been able to discover in the “ Annals of the Four Masters” are in the fourteenth century. In 1351, Owen *na liag oiche* Mac Swyne, in Donegal, was slain by Manus O'Donnell ; and in 1352, in a 'ar with O'Rorke, a slaughter of the gallowglasses of the Mac Swynes took place.

D'Alton, in his King James's Army List, mentions a distinguished military leader of this name in 1424. I may here observe, that Ware states, with regard to the Franciscan Church at Ballysaggart, St. John's Point, that it was founded by Mac Swyne, and calls it Bally-macswyne of the Conventual Franciscans.

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Tourist's Route to the Donegal Highlands.

From Dublin, the tourist takes a ticket at the Amiens-street station of the Irish North-Western Railway for Ballyshannon, the frontier town of Donegal, by which he will be enabled *en route* to obtain some magnificent views of Lough Erne, with its wooded shores and islands, and the rapids and porcelain factory at Belleek. From Ballyshannon a well-appointed van will bring him to Donegal, at which town he will be taken in charge by M'Ginty on a similar conveyance, who will bring him in dashing style to Killybegs. From Killybegs a mail car leaves for Carrick, besides which, at the respective hotels, there is always to be had a good supply of post-horses and intelligent drivers, when a respectable *turn-out* can be obtained at a short notice for the Wilds. The tourist, after arriving at the pretty hotel at Carrick, can survey at his leisure the mountains and cliff scenery by which he will be surrounded. After climbing up the heights of Sliabh-liag (2000 feet), and enjoying the majestic prospect that will open on his view, he will proceed into the *Shan Glen*, by way of Malinmore and Malinbeg, where he can survey and inspect the ancient memorials in con-

nexion with St. Columbcille, and the mountain cliffs of Glen Head and Slieveatoey. In the glen he will be taken good care of at Mr. Walker's of Malinmore, and Mr. Buchanan's. He will afterwards continue his route by the magnificent Pass of the Glengesh, which, in natural grandeur and boldness, is said not to be surpassed by the Alpine passes in the Tyrol. He will then proceed by Ardara, and Glenties, and Duharry Bridge to Dungloe, and the Gweedore, where he will be glad to rest for awhile at that very comfortable hostelry, the Gweedore Hotel (Lord George Hill's), where he will be surrounded by mountain scenery of the sublimest character. From Gweedore he proceeds by Dunlewy, along the base of Arrigle (2500 feet), by Dunfanaghy Derryveagh, Glenveagh, and Kilmacrennan to Letterkenny. From Letterkenny he proceeds either by the fertile valley of the Lagan, through Newtown Cunningham to Derry, or by the western shores of Lough Swilly, by Ramelton and Rathmullen, crossing over the ferry to Fahan, where he meets the rail for Derry. From the Maiden City he can make a detour at his leisure through the far-famed Ennishowen.

Writing about Donegal some years ago, in the pages of "Once a Week," Miss Fanny Cobbe thus disports herself: "If it should happen to a parent to have a son troubled with a strong desire to emigrate to Upper Canada or New Zealand, we should recommend, as the best possible remedy, that the youth should be induced to make a short and easy trial of how he really likes solitude by spending six months or so in the County Donegal. If he pass through that ordeal, and returns to London, still talking of the delights of living out of the world, then let him go by all means to the Antipodes, or the society of those sweet creatures which brave Sir S. Baker met about Gondokora. He has certainly a call from St. Anthony. Donegal is a vast shire, some forty miles long, at the N. W. angle of that island of whose history and geography you know less than of those of Kamtschatka. Donegal is large, and Donegal is beautiful, in a certain wild, desolate style. There is a magnificent rock-bound coast to the north, and a bay like the Bristol Channel, swarming with fish, to the south, and plenty of mountains and salmon rivers, and a few woods here and there; altogether, a county which, if in England, people would walk over and would talk on perpetually. Notwithstanding its solitude, yet Donegal has its charms. Very delightful it was in spring to ramble through the pine-wood, with the ground so blue with bluebells as to look like bits of sky fallen through the trees; very soothing was it to lie beside the river in summer, among the heather and flowering fern and sweet orchids, and listen to the roar of the waterfall, and watch the golden salmon leaping up the rocks; very sweet was it, late in the long midsummer twilight night, to wander on through the valley after the sun had gone down behind the purple *Siebengeberge*, and when every herb and flower, broom and gorse, and pine tree and honeysuckle exhaled their perfumes as flowers only breathe in the soft, rich, Irish atmosphere; these were pleasant things. Then there were sports for such as loved them—that large portion of English humanity which never thoroughly enjoys nature unless it have a chance to strike out a few of its living beauties, to entrap one or two of its golden salmon darting among the deep dark pools, to stretch lifeless the playful brown hare leaping among the grass, to fill the boat with shuddering, gasping creatures dragged by the net from the depths of the sea—there were abundance of all these spots in Donegal. But, a truce to all this word painting."

I shall close this notice on Donegal by the insertion of a sweet ballad, so full of feeling, connected as it is with the history of its frontier and principal town, Ballyshannon. It is entitled "The Emigrant's Adieu to Ballyshannon," and is from the pen of one of its most respected sons, "Willie Allingham," who is now residing in England, and who largely personifies in himself all the ballad's attractive features. May we indulge the hope that he will again return to his native town, build a villa at the Bullybawns, looking over on the ancient little island of Innis-saimar, on the sand hills of Finner, and entrenched by the deep blue range of the Leitrim mountains and Benbulbin.

The Emigrant's Farewell To Ballyshannon.

Adieu to Ballyshannon, where I was bred and born ;
Go where I may, I'll think of yon, as sure as night and morn.
The kindly spot, the friendly town, where every one is known,
And not a face in all the place but partly seems my own.
There's not a house or window, there's not a field or hill,
But East or West, in foreign lands, I'll recollect thee still ;
I leave my warm heart with you, though my back I'm forced to
turn—
So, adieu to Ballyshannon and the winding banks of Erne.

No more on pleasant evenings we'll saunter down the Mall,
When the trout is rising to the fly, the salmon to the fall ;
The boat comes straining on her net, and heavily she creeps,
Cast off ! cast off ! she feels the oars, and to her berth she
sweeps.
Now stem and stern keep bawling, and gathering up the clue.
Till a silver wave of salmon rolls in among the crew ;
Then they may sit and have their joke, and set their pipes to
burn,
Adieu to Ballyshannon and the winding banks of Erne.

The music of the waterfall, the mirror of the tide.
When all the green hill'd harbour is full from side to side ;
From Fortnason to Ballybawns, and round the Abbey Bay ,
From the little rocky island to Coolnargit's sandhills gray
While far upon the southern line, to guard it like a wall,
The Leitrim mountains clothed in blue gaze calmly over all ;
And watch the ship sail up and down, the red flag at her stern ;
Adieu to those, adieu to all, the winding banks of Erne.

Farewell to you, Kildoney lads, and them that pull the oar ;
A lug sail set, or haul a net, from the Point to Mullaghmore ;
From Killybegs to Carrigan, with its ocean mountain steep,
Six hundred yards in air aloft, six hundred in the deep ;
From Dooran to the Fairy Bridge, and round by Tullan strand,
Level and long, and white with waves, where gull and curlew
stand ;
Head out to sea, when on the lea the breakers you discern,
Adieu to all the billowy coast and winding banks of Erne.

Farewell to you, Bundoran, and the summer crowds that run
From inland homes to see with joy the Atlantic's setting sun ;
To breathe the buoyant, salted air, and sport among the waves,
To gather shells on sandy beach, and tempt the gloomy caves ;
To watch the flowing, ebbing tide—the boats, the crabs, the fish ;
Young men and maids to meet and smile, and form a tender
wish ;
The sick and old in search of health—for all things have their
turn ;
And I must quit my native shore and the winding banks of
Erne.

Farewell to every white cascade, from the harbour to Belleek,
And every pool, where fins may rest, and ivy-shaded creek ;
The sloping fields, the lofty rocks, where ash and holly grow ;
The one split yew tree gazing on the curving flood below ;
The lough that winds through islands, under Skean Mountain
green ;
The Castle Caldwell's stretching woods, with tranquil bays
between ;
And Breesie Hill, and many a pond, among the heath and fern.
For I must say adieu, adieu, to the winding banks of Erne.

The thrush will call through Camlin grove the livelong summer
day ;
The waters run by mossy cliff, and bank with wild flowers gay ;
The girls will bring their work, and sing beneath the twisted
thorn,
Or stray with sweethearts down the path among the growing
corn ;
Along the river side they go, where I had often been ;
Oh I never shall I see again the days I once have seen ;
A thousand chances are to one I never may return ;
Adieu to Ballyshannon, and the winding banks of Erne.

Now measure from the Commons down to each end of the Purt,
From the Red Barn to the Abbey, I wish no one any hurt ;
Search through the streets, and down the Mall, and out to
Fortnason,
If any foes of mine are there, I pardon every one.
I hope that man and womankind will do the same with me,
For my head is sore and heavy at voyaging the sea.
My loving friends, I'll bear in mind, and often fondly turn.
To think of Ballyshannon and the winding banks of Erne.

Adieu to evening dances, where merry neighbours meet,
And the fiddle says to boys and girls, Get up and shdke your
feet ;
To *shanachus* and wise old talk of Erin's days gone by,
Who trenched the rath on such a hill, and where the bones
do lie
Of saint, or king, or warrior chief, with tales of fairy power,
And tender ditties sweetly sung to pass the twilight hour.
The mournful song of exile is now for me to learn ;
Adieu, my dear companions, on the winding banks of Erne.

If ever I'm a money'd man, I mean, please God, to cast
My golden anchor in the place where youthful years were passed.
Though heads that now are black or brown must meanwhile
gather gray ;
New faces rise by every hearth, and old ones pass away,
Yet dearer still that Irish hill than all the world beside—
It's home, sweet home, where'er I roam through lands and
waters wide.

And if the Lord allows me, I surely will return
To my native Ballyshannon, and the winding banks of Erne.

Ballyshannon has all the advantages of a fine site on the banks of the River Erne, the outlet of the great lake of that name, which in superficial extent is only second to Lough Neagh ; but which is far superior to it in scenic attractions and beauty. It is the chief town of the County Donegal, comprising a population of 3197 . It was incorporated by a charter of James I. (1613), and had the honor of returning two members to the Irish Parliament. It is said to derive its name from *Bell ath seanaigh*, the mouth or opening of an old ford. This ford was a little below the present eel weir. At the picturesque and beautiful village of Belleek, the Erne descends the first step of that grand staircase by which it reaches the sea ; sometimes flying sometimes lingering down the frescoes on either side of mural cliffs, rough rocks, caved and ivied hanging woods, and smooth slopes of grass, till it makes its last bound into the tide, at the famous salmon leap at Ballyshannon. During the summer months Ballyshannon is the favourite resort of anglers, many of them from England ; and in my schoolboy days I still remember the comely appearance of the great inventor of the safety lamp, Sir Humphry Davy, as he stood upon the banks of its beautiful river, making a raid with rod and fly among the finny occupants of its waters.

The banks of The Pool is a favourite resort for strangers in the fine summer evenings, to watch the silvery salmon taking the leap at the fall as the tide rises. For a few seconds all is still ; then, perhaps, a monster bounds from the water, and is observed for an instant quivering in the air ere he lights on the very edge of the cataract. For a single moment he struggles with the descending torrent, shoots through it like a stream of light, and disappears in the calm deep sheet above. As if encouraged by this success, about forty or fifty dash simultaneously at the fall ; some succeed, but more fail, to renew their attempts again and again, till finally triumphant.

I sat by Ballyshannon in the summer,
And saw the salmon leap ;
And I said, as I beheld the gallant creatures,
Spring glittering from the deep,
Through the spray, and through the prone heaps striving
onward
In the calm clear stream above ;
So seekest thou thy native founts of freedom,
In thy brightness of strength and love.

THOMAS DAVIS.

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