

The Wilds of Kerry 1834

Ireland in 1834 : A Journey Throughout Ireland, During the Spring, Summer, and Autumn of 1834 (1835)

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Most people travel this road on horseback ; but not being able to get horse or pony to my mind, I hired a car, and two men to assist. These cannot well be dispensed with, unless the horse drag kindly up, and back well down hill. The road, though excessively bad, and so extremely steep that one must walk nearly the whole of the way, presents so many fine mountain views, that no one has any right to grumble. The rock scenery is particularly interesting ; and, mixed with the oak and holly woods, above which the great rocks lift their broad backs, is not only of a picturesque, but of a very novel character. I left the road, to visit a lodge of Lord Bantry's, remarkable only for its seclusion, and for the clearness of the stream which rushes by ; and took the opportunity of also visiting two houses,—in one of which I found a peasant who owned three acres, for which he paid 3*l.*; and in another, a peasant who owned three acres and a half, for which he paid 3*l.* 10*s.* It is a good mode of confirming the truth of what one hears from different individuals, to inquire not only as to their own circumstances, but also into those of their neighbours ; if the statements of their neighbours correspond with their own, there is every reason to believe them correct

I found the road as bad, but not so steep, as it had been represented. I believe the horse could have dragged up the car without assistance ; but the men assured me, that in descending, I should find their aid indispensable. Just as we reached the summit of the pass, the mists, which had been floating about the mountains,—veiling the extent of the views, but adding perhaps to their beauty,—dispersed ; the sun came brilliantly forth ; and the whole of the mountains stood clearly out, with all their glens and shadows, and little silvery lakes. The descent I found to be indeed very rapid : the men had brought ropes, with which they endeavoured to lock the wheel, by attaching it to the axle ; but the rope was rotten, and broke ; and the descent was not accomplished without some scrambling.

From the foot of the mountain to Kenmare, I passed through an evidently improving country : the road was tolerably good : I saw several comfortable looking houses ; and a greater number of lime kilns, the beneficial effects of which were evident in the appearance of the neighbouring land. Every farm, indeed, appeared to have a lime kiln of its own. A few miles before reaching Kenmare, the valley of the Kenmare river, and the river itself, are descried from a height over which the road passes. Soon after a bridge is crossed ; and the road, running parallel with the river, and under a fine arch of trees, reaches the town.

Kenmare is a small, but very prettily situated town. The estuary, called the Kenmare river, reaches some miles above it ; and from Kenmare to the sea, the distance is about twenty-six miles. The estuary varies in breadth, from two or three hundred yards, to upwards of a mile ; and presents, in its whole line, the aspect of a magnificent river. I was struck by observing from the windows of the inn, what is rather a novel spectacle in the small Irish towns,—several large houses in course of building ; and, upon walking over the town, I counted no fewer than eleven good houses in a state of forwardness : a considerable number of others seemed to be newly built ; and although I observed six or eight houses in a ruined condition, I thought myself warranted in concluding, from what I had seen, that these were intended to be replaced by a better description of buildings. This I afterwards found, was to be immediately done. Extending my walk a little way out of the town, towards the river, I

reached a new pier, from which, I was glad to learn, that corn had been shipped, for the first time, last autumn, for the English market This neat little pier cost 2100*l.*, of which the Marquis of Lansdowne contributed 1200*l.*

I spent two days in and about Kenmare,—one, of them, a long summer's day, mounted on a Kerry pony, riding down the opposite side of the Kenmare river,—riding and walking in and out among the mountain glens, and traversing the greater part of the Barony of Glanrought. I had a double enjoyment in the ramble : arising both from the charming weather and fine mountain views, and from the spectacle of a rapidly improving country, and a comparatively comfortable population.

I think I said, in a former chapter, that from the moment of setting foot in Ireland, I had heard the highest character of the property of the Duke of Devonshire ; and that, on that account, I felt a more than usual interest in reaching Lismore. A precisely opposite reason increased the interest of a visit to Kenmare ; for I had heard very indifferent accounts of the property of Lord Lansdowne ; and was told in Cork, that I should find a miserable population, who were accustomed to shut up their cabins, and go a-begging for months during the summer. Now, it affords me the greatest pleasure to be able, from minute personal observation and inquiry, to bear testimony to the improving condition of this extensive and naturally barren tract, and to the comparatively comfortable condition of the people. Formerly, the greater part of this property was held in large farms, by lessees, who sublet these lands in small portions, and therefore became middle-men. As these leases have dropped, by death, or otherwise, the estates, so held, have been divided into farms of equal size, and let to tenants holding immediately under Lord Lansdowne, who has erected upon each farm, a comfortable dwelling-house, the whole expense of which, excepting labour, has been defrayed by his lordship.

Riding through this part of Kerry, one is immediately struck by the absence of mud cabins, and, by the presence of these new farm-like houses, everywhere dotting the slopes. Such things being rarities, I did not content myself with a distant view ; but visited ten or twelve of these houses, and they seemed to me well suited to the wants of the individuals by whom they were occupied. There was nothing of pretension about them. I found them to be built of lime-water, rough-cast, with chimneys, and with two apartments inside ; and generally containing a sufficiency of furniture, and a fair portion of comfort,—speaking always, let it be recollected, with reference, to the character and habits of the people. And, what is most important of all, I did not find that the tenants were paying exorbitant rents. One tenant, occupying a little farm of nine acres, with one of these houses, paid 2*l.* 13*s.* for his possession ; that is, about six shillings an acre. From one to two acres of this farm were under tillage ; and the rest was in pasture, on which two cows were fed. I found another tenant occupying eighteen acres, paying for his farm 7*l.* 2*s.*, or eight shillings an acre. This was somewhat more improved land ; it supported four cows ; and grew potatos, corn, and flax. I found another, with thirty acres, paying 6*l.* 4*s.*, or four shillings an acre. This was poorer land ; but the farm supported six cows—though four would have been a more proper number—and grew a little wheat on low spots, and excellent potatos. All of these farms had houses attached ; and I certainly feel myself bound to say, from a very minute observation of these houses and lands, that these, and all the other tenants similarly circumstanced, held their land on terms, on which any industrious man might pay his rent, and support his family in that degree of comfort consistent with Irish notions. There are other advantages too, which these tenants possess. Every one has turf, *à discretion*, for the trouble of cutting and fetching it ; and as the whole of these lands lie along the Kenmare river, fish is easily attainable. I counted upwards of forty boats lying on the beach ; and to the smaller tenants, whose farms are chiefly in pasture, and require little labour, the privilege of fishing is a most valuable one, both for the purposes of sale and subsistence.

During this day's ride, I counted fifty-seven farm-houses of the description I have mentioned ; and I was informed, by the farmers, that I had not seen a third part of the number. Throughout the whole of this tract, there are not any of those mud cabins, with a small patch of potato land, which are so numerous in most parts of Ireland. No tenant holds a less quantity of land than about eight acres. I speak, at present, of land held immediately under Lord Lansdowne ; for nothing will strike a traveller, in this country, more than the difference in the condition of land so held, and of that land which is held under several middle-men. I passed through some clusters of as miserable cabins as I ever beheld—twelve or fifteen of them congregated together. I went into several of these, and found that they were all held under lessee middle-men—some of them resident, and some absent. These cabins had but a small portion of land annexed, and were, beyond description, wretched abodes ; and the inmates of two of them, told me, that they were in the habit of shutting up their cabins, and going, for a month or two, during autumn, in search of work, or livelihood, into Cork county, or elsewhere. If I had merely inquired upon whose estate these people lived, and heard from them that the estate was Lord Lansdowne's, without inquiring whether there was any intermediate holder, I should have thought I had found confirmation of the necessitous condition, and begging propensities, of that noble Lord's tenantry. It is proper for me to state, that I found several larger middle-men, excellent men, and improving landlords, and with no tenantry in the condition I have mentioned.

In the course of a ramble, up one of the distant glens, I fell in with two men holding mountain farms. These, as they, themselves, told me, had been holders of little more than cabins, under middle-men ; and, when the lease expired, and the land was divided and appropriated among the existing tenants, these two, being considered to have least claim, and the original farm not being large enough to be divided among all those who had holdings on it, were turned upon mountain land : eight acres were given to one of the two and fifteen to the other. One paid a rent of *2l. 6d.* for his farm ; the other *4s.* They told me they could scarcely live out of their land ; but I suspect industry was wanting, for on land close to theirs, I saw good corn and potatoes growing ; and both lime and sea-sand are plentiful over this country. Idleness will make a pauper of any one ; and it is impossible for any landlord altogether to exclude pauperism. Standing with a farmer, at the door of his house, I observed, in a hollow at a little distance, five or six cottages in a ruined condition ; but smoke issued from the door, and through holes in the roof of one of them. These, the farmer told me, were the cabins of those who had been on a farm, of which the lease had expired, and which was now divided ; but he knew nothing of the inmate of the smoking cabin. I walked down to the hollow, and found a man, his wife, and three children, living in this roofless and utterly unfurnished hovel ; and although, at first, I could get no other information than that they were tenants of Lord Lansdowne's, I ascertained, at length, that they had been tenants, of this same cabin, under a middle-man ; and when the lease dropped, and the farm was divided, this individual was offered a mountain farm, which he would not accept ; and, after having been wandering through different parts of the country, begging, he had returned, with his family, and taken possession of the cabin in which he had formerly lived.

I have dwelt the longer on the events of this day's ride, and on the condition of the property on the Kenmare river, because of the very unfavourable reports I had heard : and finding as I did that these reports were utterly without foundation ; and that this very untractable district,—so unfavourable in many respects to improvement,—exhibited those unerring signs of it, which can result only from a considerate landlord, and an intelligent agent, I felt it to be my duty to state the facts upon which I have grounded my opinion : and I would only add, that the more distant I was from these estates, the more unfavourable were the reports I heard of them ; and in their immediate vicinity, and amongst those best qualified to judge, I heard nothing but the most favourable reports. I would take the liberty of particularly mentioning the Earl of Kenmare,—by universal consent, one of the best of land-

lords,—who spoke to me in the highest terms of the condition of the property to which I have so particularly alluded.

There is still one other observation I have to make, before proceeding on my journey. When we speak of a poor or a rich tenantry, we ought to speak with reference to the nature of the land. A rich population is not to be expected on a mountainous district, like the barony of Glanrought ; and when we find tenants of mountain farms circumstanced as they are in this country, we ought to expect nothing beyond a very moderate share of comfort. Suppose a farm of a hundred acres to have been held by a middleman, and that thirty tenants are located upon it ; this lease drops, and the landlord proceeds to divide. To continue these thirty tenants upon the hundred acres, giving little more than three acres to each, would only be, to perpetuate pauperism. The landlord has perhaps laid down a rule, that he will have no tenant with a smaller possession than eight acres ; because, in an upland country, no man can be comfortable on a less quantity of land : the twelve most improving of the thirty tenants are therefore selected for holdings, each of eight acres, on these hundred acres ; and the remaining eighteen become possessors of mountain holdings—not so good, indeed, as those possessed by the selected twelve ; but vastly better to an industrious man, than no holding at all : and thus it will be seen, that poor, though not pauper tenants, must exist upon every improving estate, situated in an upland country.

Before leaving Kenmare, I visited Blackwater bridge, which lies amongst the mountains, about six miles distant. It is a very agreeable ride to this spot, and the scene itself is beautiful. The river tumbles through a deep channel, in a ravine finely fringed by oak and ash trees ; a high and very picturesque bridge of two arches spans the river ; and I had there an opportunity of seeing the spectacle so often described, of the unwearied efforts of the fishes to get above the fall.

Kenmare, and all this district, will receive incalculable benefits from the fine road now constructing from Bantry to Cork : this road, which takes Glengariff in its line, will connect Killarney with Cork by a most interesting route ; and it is intended to throw a bridge over the Kenmare river, or sound, as it is there called, just below the town.

I now left Kenmare, for Killarney. The first part of this excellent road is not particularly interesting. It leads through an upland, bare, and partly cultivated country, in which, however, there are signs of improvement, and some tolerably good houses ; and after passing a lake and a few cottages, the descent towards Killarney begins. The first view one obtains of the upper lake of Killarney, is not striking : it disappointed me ; but the weather was rather unfavourable for the enjoyment of scenery, and I suspended my judgment, although I could not alter the impression. The descent along the sides of the hills, and through the fine woods with which they are clothed, pleased me much ; and here, for the first time, I saw, almost in its perfection, the arbutus—the far-famed pride of Killarney. I noticed here also, for the first time, that pretty little flower which forms sometimes our garden borders ; and which is called, “ London-pride,” or “ none-so-pretty.” In descending to the lake, the road passes through a tunnel, which has a good effect, but which was certainly unnecessary ; as a little more free use of gun-powder, would have entirely opened up the passage. Soon after passing through this tunnel, the road descends close to the shore of the upper lake, and winds first along part of its margin, and then continues to skirt a part of Turc lake, with the fine wooded elevation called Turc mountain, on the other side. There, however, the road leaves the lakes ; and passing through a fine rich country, and skirting several domains, leads into the town.

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The Town of Killarney—Idleness and Pauperism—Lord Kenmare—Bad Feeling among the Aristocracy, and its Causes—The Lakes—The Author's Opinion of Killarney Lakes—Their Character—Upper Lake, Turc Lake, Lower Lake—Glena—Innisfallen—The Echoes—Comparison with the English Lakes—Muckross Abbey—The Earl of Kenmare's Domain.

KILLARNEY suggests to an Englishman, merely a spot where lakes are situated : it is nothing but a name. But to one residing in the neighbourhood, it suggests a biggish, populous, noisy, and not very pretty town. The situation of the town is good, without being at all picturesque ; for although, with a fine country around, it lies at least a mile and a half from the nearest point of the lakes. There are two good streets in the town ; but many bad alleys, and close filthy lanes and yards ; and I regret to say, that there is a large pauper population, and a vast number of idle persons,—some from necessity, and some from choice : for besides its own natural proportion of destitute and unemployed persons Killarney has in addition, that class of the idly disposed and poor, who are either attracted to every spot much resorted to by strangers, or who are created, by the charm which precarious employment possesses in the estimation of many, over the more certain, but more moderate wages of labour.

Killarney is the property of the Earl of Kenmare ; but his lordship is just as little answerable for the faults of Killarney, as the reader of this book. The whole of the town is held under leases for ever ; so that Lord Kenmare has no power of improvement in his hands : and this is greatly to be regretted ; for a better man, or a better landlord than Lord Kenmare, does not exist ; and were it not for the employment afforded on his estate, by this wealthy resident and public spirited nobleman, the pauperism of Killarney would be fearfully great. A considerable part of Lord Kenmare's large estate, is in the hands of middle-men ; but his lordship is strenuously exerting himself, to bring about a better system.

There is much bad feeling among the aristocracy in the neighbourhood of Killarney : and Lord Kenmare is far from being so popular among a certain class, as he deserves to be. Amongst the neighbouring gentry, there are many large middlemen, who are not fond of Lord Kenmare's reforming system ; and there are also some of Mr. O'Connell's friends, and even some branches of his family, who cannot forgive the sin committed by the head of the Irish Catholic aristocracy, in being an anti-repealer, and a respecer of order ; nor pardon the slight put upon them by Lord Kenmare, in selecting as his deputy lieutenants, men upon whom he thought he could depend for support, in time of emergency. Through these causes, bad feeling has been also excited among the lower classes, which is greatly to be regretted ; because Lord Kenmare's religious opinions, and his high rank (for the Irish peasant has much respect for blood) might have otherwise exerted a most powerful influence on his numerous tenantry and dependents,—an influence which would certainly have been well exerted.

But I must not forget, that there are such things as the lakes of Killarney ; and although I have no intention of writing a guide to the lakes, I must not pass over with too slight a notice, objects deserving all the reputation they have acquired. To obtain any correct notion of the beauty of the Killarney lakes, it is necessary to embark at the head of the upper lake, and to descend the chain—a distance of about fifteen miles. The best way of accomplishing this, which may be accomplished in one day, is, to go from the town round the lower part of the lower lake, and by the gap of Dunlow. By this route one passes some fine seats—particularly that of Lord Headly,—and another, the residence of one of the O'Connell family. The mountain views, too, are fine,—particularly the views of M'Gillicuddy's reeks, and of another mountain, Carràn Tùal, which is now admitted to be the highest of the Irish mountains. This claim always carries some little interest with it ; and Mangerton—always an ugly mountain,—divested as it now is, of its claim to being the highest, has become almost insignificant. The height of Mangerton, is 2550 feet ; while that of Carràn Tùal, is 3410.

The gap of Dunlow did not seem to me, to be worthy of its reputation : it is merely a deep valley : but the rocks which flank the valley, are neither very lofty, nor very remarkable in their form ; and although, therefore, the gap presents many features of the picturesque, its approaches to sublimity are very distant. I was more struck by the view after passing the gap, up what is called “ the dark valley,”—a wide and desolate hollow, surmounted by the finest peaks of this mountain range.

After passing the gap of Dunlow, and descending the steeps on the south side, I embarked at the head of the upper lake, and descended the chain of lakes, through many varied and most enchanting scenes. I saw Killarney to every advantage ; for I was favoured by one of those warm days of sunshine and shade, which are particularly calculated for the enjoyment of mountain and lake scenery,—a sky, warm enough to give richness to the landscape ; and yet, without the haziness which accompanies heat ; and air, just enough to vary the effects of light and shade, on lake and mountain, without disturbing that tranquillity which is the peculiar charm of lake scenery. I had likewise the advantage of Lord Kenmare’s boat and rowers, and of the particular instructions which they had received from his lordship.

If the traveller visit Killarney without those exaggerated notions which are apt to be conveyed by a guide book, he will certainly be satisfied and delighted. There is nothing of the sublime about Killarney ; but there is all of that kind of beauty, which depends upon the combinations of form and colour. The mountain outlines can scarcely be finer than they are ; and in the variety of colour produced by the variety of foliage,—from the beautiful bright green of the arbutus, to the brown mountain heath,—Killarney is eminently distinguished.

To my mind, the upper lake is the most attractive : the mountains are nearest to it ; it has not one tame feature ; and it is more studded with islands, than either of the other lakes. I landed upon several of the islands, and was delighted with the luxuriant vegetation ; and above all, with the arbutus, which is here a great tree ; and whose fresh tints, contrast so well with the grey rocks among which it grows. There is a sweet secluded cottage on the shore of this lake, usually called Hyde’s cottage, but which is now the property of the Earl of Kenmare.

The narrow passage or channel, between the upper and the other lakes, is at least five miles in length ; and offers a charming variety of scenery. Indeed, I doubt whether anything about Killarney, surpasses the scene around Dinas island. It is a perfect specimen of close river scenery ; nor have I any recollection of having seen its equal on the banks of any of the many Continental rivers which are familiar to me.

Turc lake, which is reached after passing through the channel, is not at the first glance, so attractive as either of the other lakes ; but if the traveller do not coast round Turc lake, he will lose much. It has numerous tiny bays and coves,—beautiful in form,—and offering to the eye of the painter, the most exquisite combination of colour ; arising from the union of rock and foliage, and from the infinite variety of fern, lichens, and mosses, that overspread its banks.

The lower lake is preferred by some, to the two others ; and although I do not coincide in this opinion, I willingly concede to it, merits of a very high order. Its chief character is beauty ; and certainly a spot of more loveliness than Glena, it would be difficult to find. It is a little cove, at the head of the lower lake ; and here Lady Kenmare has built her a pleasure house, on a gentle swell, with the freshest of verdure, and the sweetest of shrubs and flowers around ; and set, like an emerald, in the bosom of deep towering woods. Another cottage, at a little distance, has been erected by Lord Kenmare, for the use of strangers ; and although I am rather inclined to look upon a picnic as a good dinner spoiled ; yet, in such a spot as this, the calamity might be endured.

One of the most beautiful islands on any of the lakes, or, I might perhaps say, on any lake, is Innisfallen. Never saw I such ash-trees as are here,—never such magnificent hollies. A walk round this little paradise well repays one. Although the island contains scarcely twenty acres, it offers a wonderful variety of scenery : little emerald lawns—forest glades in miniature—sylvan amphitheatres—groves, bowers, and thickets of evergreens, and flowering shrubs—and magnificent single trees, worthy of a primeval forest. There is an old ruin too, on the island, and a banqueting-house erected for the accommodation of strangers ; and, when I saw it, it was prepared for a banquet. Lord Kenmare is the owner of Innisfallen ; and also of Ross Island, another large and beautiful island on the lower lake. In speaking of Killarney, I must not forget its echoes. I had the advantage of having, in my boat, the Prince of Killarney buglemen, and I had also a cannon of a larger calibre than the public boats carry ; and, in the course of our voyage, we often woke the echoes of the hills, and I never heard echoes in greater perfection. There is, certainly, something bordering on the sublime, in the oft-repeated echoes of the mountains, even when these are awoke, not by the deep-mouthed thunder, but by the sonorous bugle. The hills seem, alike, to call to each other ; and, although it would have puzzled Burke to trace the emotion of sublimity to terror, it may be traced to its truer origin—power ; for—when we hear the call repeated and answered, from mountain to mountain—sometimes loud, and without interval, and then fainter and fainter—and, after a solemn pause, again rising, as if from some far distant glen—our imagination endues the mountains with life ; and to their attributes of magnitude, and silence, and solitude, we, for a moment, add the power of listening, and a voice.

It will not be irrelevant, to say a few words in this place, of the comparative merits of the English and the Irish lakes.

Although the lakes of Killarney are three in number, yet they are all contained in one mountain hollow ; and certainly there is not, within the same compass, anything in England presenting the same concentration of charms. There is infinitely greater variety at Killarney. In form, and in the outline of its mountain boundaries, the lower lake of Killarney is decidedly superior to Winandermere : and although the head of Ulleswater presents a bolder outline than is anywhere to be found at Killarney ; yet it is upon this outline alone, that the reputation of Ulleswater depends. Elsewhere than at Patterdale, the lake scenery is tame ; and the same may be said of Winandermere ; which, towards its lower extremity, is almost devoid of attraction. On the contrary, throughout the whole chain of lakes, there is a variety at Killarney : tameness is nowhere to be found ; and I cannot think that the somewhat nearer approach to sublimity which is found at the head of Ulleswater, can weigh in the balance against the far greater variety in the picturesque and the beautiful, which Killarney affords. It would be unfair to compare the lakes of Killarney, with Winandermere, Keswick, and Ulleswater; for these are spread over a great extent of country ; whereas, the lakes of Killarney are all contained within a smaller circumference than Winandermere : but even if such a comparison were to be admitted, Killarney would outvie the English lakes in one charm in which they are essentially deficient. I mean, the exuberance and variety of foliage which adorns both the banks and the islands of the Killarney lakes. Such islands as Ronan's Island, Oak Island, Dinas Island, and Innisfallen, covered with magnificent timber and gigantic evergreens, are nowhere to be found amongst the English lakes. I think it will be gathered from what I have said, that I accord the preference to Killarney.

No one must visit Killarney, without seeing Muckross Abbey. It is a very beautiful and very perfect remain,—and contains within it, the most gigantic yew tree I have ever seen. Its arms actually support the crumbling wall, and form a canopy above the open cloisters : the trunk of this majestic yew, measures thirteen feet in circumference. I was somewhat shocked with the want of propriety observed in the management of this spot. Human skulls in

hundreds, and bones in thousands, are heaped in every corner ; and at each step, it is more than likely, that one will kick some eyeless relic of mortality. The domain of Muckcross is beautiful : it lies along the shores of the lower lake, and its shady walks are adorned by innumerable blossoming shrubs ; amongst others, the rose of Sharon, and the gum-cistus.

The domain of the Earl of Kenmare is altogether lovely. Its lake and mountain views, and vistas, are beyond praise. I think I have never beheld any thing more captivating, than the vista from the dining-room windows : when the declining sun, streaming from above the mountain tops, falls slanting on the lake, and on the bright velvet lawn that stretches to its shore.

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Journey through the Wilds of Kerry—Castlemain Bay—Killorglin—Lord Headly's Estate—Sea Views—O'Connell's Country—The Agitator in his own Country—The Grand Jury Bill—An Anecdote—Cahir-siveen—Condition of the Landholders—Intelligence of the Kerry Peasantry—Examples—Valentia Island—Voyage across the Bay of Dingle—Dingle, and the Condition of the People—Peculiarities of the Inhabitants of this district—Extreme early Marriages—The Catholic Clergy, and proposed Provision for them—Brandon Bay—The Tithe Question—Journey to Tralee.

My course now lay through the wilds of Kerry ; and first, to Cahir-siveen, and Valentia Island ; which, with the exception of the little islands called the Blaskets, is the nearest point of Ireland to the coast of America. The distance from Killarney to Cahir-siveen, which, on the maps, is generally marked Cahir, is about forty English miles, and the road is altogether a very interesting one ; both on account of the scenery through which the traveller passes, and on account of the peculiarities that attach to the people of these parts, which are said to have been colonized by Spanish settlers, and which long held a close intercourse with the Peninsula.

The first few miles of the road, I had already passed over, in exploring the beauties of Killarney ; and till reaching Milltown, there is not much to interest the traveller, excepting the glimpses of the lakes, which are caught from every eminence one passes. Milltown is a very poor town ; the property of Sir George Godfrey ; who, from all that I could learn, has more the will than the power of benefiting it. Beyond Milltown, the view opens finely, over the upper part of Dingle Bay and Castlemain : and soon after, I reached the town of Killorglin ; the property of the Mullins' family,—and a still poorer place than Milltown. Beyond this town, the road continually increases in interest. The Iveragh range of mountains rises boldly on the left ; and a lake, called Lough Carracht, is seen with one end buried among the steep, and the other, approaching near to the road. A little farther on, the road enters and traverses for several miles, an extensive bog, also the property of the Mullins, or Ventry family. I never saw a bog better situated for improvement : it lies close to the bay of Dingle, and at a considerable elevation above it ; and at the distance of but a few miles, there is a plentiful supply of limestone ; and abundance of sea-sand close at hand. Yet, with the exception of that part of the bog which belongs to Judge Dey, it is entirely neglected, arid nearly profitless. Judge Dey has the universal character of being an excellent and enterprising landowner ; and, judging by what I saw, I have no doubt, that if this bog were all his property, it would long ago have been covered with luxuriant crops of grain and potatos. It is on this road also, where lies that estate of Lord Headly,—so well known by the evidence of Mr. Nimmo, before the House of Commons. The exertions made to reclaim that land, and the success which attended them, have been so fully detailed in that evidence, that any imperfect notices of mine are unnecessary. I saw land, which had formerly owned but the dominion of the sea, bearing fine crops of every description ; and I saw a population, which before the exertions of Lord

Headly, was little removed from savage, comfortably housed and clothed, and exhibiting more certain indications of civilization, than are often to be met in the most fertile and central parts of Ireland. In a little bay here, Lord Headly has erected some neat bathing cottages, which are much frequented during the summer. His lordship has an extensive property in this neighbourhood; and it everywhere exhibits those symptoms of improvement which might be expected.

Nothing can be finer than the road skirting the sea, after leaving Lord Headly's property. In the magnificence of its mountain and sea views, it is little inferior to any of the celebrated roads which have been constructed along the shores of the Mediterranean; and is every way superior to the road from Bangor to Conway, in North Wales. I am sorry I cannot say so much for the population and their dwellings. I never passed more wretched cabins, than on some part of this road. Some of the worst of these, are situated on the property of Lord Lansdowne, but are held under his lordship, by middle-men.

I was now in O'Connell's country: here was the property of Daniel O'Connell, Esq., or the liberator, as the people called him; there, the property of Charles O'Connell, Esq.; and there again, the property of another O'Connell: but the greater part of the O'Connell property—almost all that of *the* O'Connell, is held under head landlords; and he, is only an extensive middle-man. Near to Cahir-siveen, is the birth-place of the great agitator. It is a ruined house, situated in a hollow near to the road; and when I reached the spot, the driver of the car pulled up, and inquired whether I would like to visit the house. But the driver of my car, was not a native of these parts; for be it known to the reader, that O'Connell is less popular in his own country than he is elsewhere. If you ask an innkeeper, or an innkeeper's wife, any where in O'Connell's district, what sort of a man their landlord is? "Och, and sure he's the best o' landlords!—he takes the childer by the hand, and he wouldn't be over proud to dthrink tay with the landlady." But if you step into a cabin, the holder of which owns Daniel O'Connell, Esq., as his landlord; and if you ask the same question, he'll scratch his head, and say little any way. Shortly before I visited Cahir-siveen, there was a road-presentation in that neighbourhood, and the rate payers, who have now a vote in these matters, refused at first to pass it, unless the O'Connells would pay two-thirds of the expense; because, said they, "the O'Connells have lived long enough out of road presentations!"

As I have mentioned this subject, I will add, that I have reason to know, from unquestionable authority, that before the late Grand Jury Bill was enacted—that is, up to the present time—there had been much shameful grand jury jobbing in many of the Irish counties; particularly in Tipperary, Clare, Limerick, Kerry, and Roscommon. A grand juror of Tipperary called one mornings previous to the holding of the quarter sessions, upon a brother grand juror—a man, however, of much greater influence than himself,—and pulling out, and unfolding voluminous plans and papers, began to explain the advantages which would accrue to the public, from the construction of a certain road through his, the expounder's property. "Put your papers in your pocket, man," said the man of influence; "say nothing about the public advantage. I'll just say it's a little job of my own;" and so things were managed. There can be no doubt that, in some respects, the Bill will work most advantageously for the public service, and most fatally for jobbers. It cannot be denied, however, that there will be exceptions from its benefits. A few days later, when I was at Tralee, a presentment account was opposed by several magistrates, on the ground that the road had not been repaired as it ought to have been; that the money had been mis-spent, and that the road was at that moment in a bad condition. The rate payers, however, being the majority, passed the account: because, said they, although the road might not be good enough for their Honours' springed carriages, it answered very well for them. Neither has the late Act fit all removed the evils of the Grand Jury Assessment, there is great and manifest injustice in many

provisions of the Grand Jury Assessment Act ; and particularly in this,—that the expense of permanent improvements are laid upon the occupier of the land, and not upon the owners.

I reached O'Connell's town, Cahir-siveen, in time for an excellent fish dinner of haddock, and mullet ; and the three or four hours that intervened between dinner and bed time, I spent in rambling about, the environs of the village, and in the neighbouring country. The town is said to be rather improving; though, from its situation, I cannot think the improvement can ever be great ; for it lies within a very dangerous navigation, high up the stream, that there forms an inlet of the sea ; and in strong westerly winds, the only safe entrance, between the mainland and Valentia Island, is all but inaccessible.

The country around Cahir-siveen is extremely wild, and but very partially reclaimed : and the condition of the people far from being comfortable. I visited several wretched cabins, and found the inmates paying exorbitant rents. Land is not let here by the acre ; but by the quantity of land fit to support a cow. I found one man owning land for six cows, paying at the rate of 50s. per cow; and at that time, the price of butter was such, that not more than 40s. could be got for the produce of each cow. Others, I found paying in precisely the same proportion. The greater industry of the people—and, I may add, the greater intelligence, universal among the Kerry peasantry,—help them with their indifferent bargains. I saw in many of their cabins, beautiful examples of industry—every branch of a family occupied in doing something useful ; and I did not address one individual, from whom I did not receive answers, that would have done credit to persons of any education ; and yet, on asking one individual who had conversed with me readily and sensibly upon many subjects, how many weeks there were in a month,—I was answered, that there were two. Nature has done much for these people—education little.

Walking along a mountain path, I overtook a girl of about fourteen or fifteen years old—I speak by guess, for it is rarely in this country, that a girl can tell her age. She carried a basket, in which were from four to five dozen of eggs. I asked where she had got the eggs ?—She had been round the country buying them cheap. Where was she taking them to ?—She was going to send them, and some dozens more, with Mich O'Sullivan's carts, to Cork.—Upon whose account was she buying the eggs ?—On her own. On her own account ?—Yes. Who gave her the money ?—The parson (she was a Protestant) had lent it to her some time ago) her cousin had sent a basket of eggs with Mich O'Sullivan, to Cork, and he had made three shillings. This was certainly a curious example of enterprise and industry. I returned into the town with the girl, and saw her father : he was a small landholder; and he said, Bidy went, after her day's work was done, and merchandized for herself.

The views about Cahir-siveen are interesting—of a wild and solitary character. The mountains jut into the sea on every side ; the island of Valentia lies opposite, separated from the main land, by a narrow channel ; and the small town, enclosed among the brown mountain slopes, seems like a place at the world's end.

The next day I visited Valentia Island : but my visit to it was a hurried one ; for the navigation of Dingle Bay is safe only in fine weather ; and being anxious to reach Ennis at the opening of the Clare assizes, it was necessary that I should take advantage of the favourable weather to cross the bay to Dingle. A great part of Valentia Island, is under tillage ; and there is a considerable range of pasture. The houses of the tenants, I found of a superior description ; but their internal comforts scarcely corresponded ; for land is high let. Nearly all, if not all the island, belongs to the Knight of Kerry, who is much respected in this neighbourhood ; and who has done considerable service to the place—not so much by outlay of money, as by example, in various modes of improvement. The slate quarry on the island is extensive and valuable, and is at present in the Knight of Kerry's own hands ; and is worked

for export. It is used for flagging, for fish slabs, and for many purposes to which marble has been usually applied ; and finds a ready market in England. Several good houses are scattered over Valentia Island, besides those of the farmers. The house of the knight is situated near to the sea, on an eminence, on the east side of the island, and near to a little glen, and small rivulet.

I returned from Valentia Island to Cahir-siveen, just in time to save the tide, and embarked in a heavy fishing-boat, which was about to return to Dingle. With a smart breeze the voyage may be accomplished in two hours, but I had no such good fortune. There was scarcely a breath of wind, and we were forced to row the whole way ; sometimes, indeed, profiting by the brief course of a passing breeze to hoist our sail ; but losing more than we gained, by the suspension of rowing. This must, indeed, be a frightful navigation, with a heavy rolling sea before an Atlantic north-wester ; and, being only desirous of reaching Dingle before night-fall, I did not regret the slowness of our progress, and the tranquillity of the sea, which encouraged a more leisurely observation of the fine scenery that lay on every side. The tide did not permit us to steer directly for Dingle ; and, accordingly, we made the opposite shore, considerably to the west, and then rowed under the rocks, eastward, passing in succession, Ventry Harbour, numerous bold headlands, and singularly formed rocks, and many curious sea-worn caves, never visited but by the sea-fowl, that are congregated in thousands along this coast,—riding on the wave, covering the rocks, and wheeling on the sides of the cliffs. I noticed many varieties of sea-fowl : some were of the purest white ; some were white, all but the tips of the wings ; and some were speckled-bodied, with red feet and bills.

Dingle harbour is what sailors call a blind harbour ; that is, a harbour that, from the sea, is not discovered to be a harbour. It is exceedingly difficult to make this haven during a strong westerly wind ; and vessels passing it by, and running to the eastward, are infallibly lost on Castlemain bar. When once entered, however, Dingle harbour is a very secure one. A vessel of six hundred tons' burden may go up to the pier, with a spring tide ; and vessels of any tonnage may find secure anchorage within the inlet.

The town of Dingle is situated on the slope of the hills, with fine, and very high mountains round it on all sides, excepting one, where the sea forms a large inland lake. It is rather a good-looking town. The number of respectable houses is much greater than one would expect to find in so small and remote a place ; and good gardens are generally attached to them ; so that, viewed from a distance, the town appears to be well screened with wood. But Dingle is not a flourishing town. A thriving linen trade was once carried on here ; and no trade is so beneficial as this, in giving employment to different descriptions of persons. But this trade is entirely fallen, and has not been replaced by any other. There is however, a considerable and an increasing export trade in corn and butter. About ten cargoes, averaging each two hundred tons, leave Dingle yearly, with corn and butter, for British ports. The town enjoys also a tolerable retail trade. The neighbouring country, as well as Cahir-siveen, and the opposite side of the bay, are supplied from Dingle ; and one or two dealers lay in their stocks themselves, direct from England. There is also a considerable fishery at Dingle :—upwards of fifty fishing boats, with about 350 men, afford the means of support to about 1200 persons. Dingle supplies Tralee market with the finer kinds of fish ; and fish-hucksters traffic regularly, with horses, between Dingle and Tralee.

I found a considerable number of unemployed persons in and about Dingle, and labour extremely cheap. Sixpence a day, and seven-pence at most, is the usual rate without diet ; and it is the universal practice, in this part of the country, to work, during the summer, from five in the morning until seven in the evening. The provisions of the poor, however, are cheap here. I found potatos only $2\frac{1}{4}d.$ a stone.

The land around Dingle is in a very indifferent condition, as regards the occupiers. A great part of it is the property of the Mullins' family, held under a trust, created by a former Lord Ventry, and is badly managed. Tenants occupy miserably small lots ; and being unable to live on the produce of their land, go, half the year, a begging, or in search of employment. Fuel, too, is scarce in this country ; but the facility of catching fish perhaps counterbalances this disadvantage.

The Peninsula, or stripe of land, reaching from Tralee, westward, to the Atlantic, of which Dingle is the chief town, is said to have been colonized from Spain ; and, in many respects, the people yet retain strong traces of their origin. Here, we see women with dark hair and jet black eyes—and dark brown-headed boys, that might have served as a study for Murillo—and men, whose gait and complexion only require to be set off by a Spanish hat, jacket, and girdle, to pass for bandits of Andalusia. Nor is the resemblance visible only in the aspect of the people : I fancied I discovered more pride, and more reserve; and, in a quarrel which I chanced to see, there was less vociferation, and, as it seemed to me, a graver deportment than I had elsewhere observed. But this might possibly be fancy: it is certain, however, that the features of many of the people are decidedly Spanish ; and in the names of places, a Spanish origin may often be traced.

Marriages in this district are contracted at an earlier age than in any part that I had yet visited. Fourteen and thirteen, are common ages for the marriage of girls ; fifteen is not considered at all an early age for marriage ; and there are even instances of their having been contracted at so early an age as twelve. This is, on many accounts, a great and public evil: and, among the benefits which might be expected to be derived from the assignment, under cautious regulation, of some government provision for the Catholic clergy, the discouragement of early marriages would certainly be one. It is well known that marriage is among the most fruitful sources of profit to the priest; and if the abolition of baptismal and marriage dues were made consequent upon such a provision as I have alluded to, it would be no longer the interest of the priest to encourage, or countenance—as it is certain he often does—the unwise, and almost criminally early marriages of the peasantry. I am far from meaning to say that such encouragement is universal ; I know, however, that it is frequent ; and the Catholic priest, who betters his condition by the marriages of his flock, would be committing an act of rare virtue were he not merely neutral, but were even to discourage early marriage. At all events, it appears to me, that men's interests ought never to be placed in opposition to the public good ; and that—if legislation can prevent this—legislators are bound to apply the remedy. I will mention another advantage which would certainly result from such a provision for the Catholic clergy. It would encourage a more respectable class of men to become members of the priesthood ; and this would essentially contribute towards the peace of the country. The warmest defenders of the Catholic clergy would admit, that many, are utterly disqualified from exercising judiciously, and in a spirit suited to the times, the functions of their calling, owing to the sphere of life from which they have been taken : and, that some certain provision, by way of glebe, or otherwise, would tempt a better order of men to enter the priesthood, cannot I think admit of the smallest doubt I may probably again recur to this subject : at present, I shall only add, that I would look for benefit from the provision alluded to, rather in its results upon early marriage, and in the encouragement it would give to a better order of clergy, than in the effect which some suppose it would have, in diminishing the influence of the priesthood.

The inns, in this part of the country, put me in mind of those I had seen in the Engadine, The houses are very spacious ; and the keeping of the inn is only one branch of the business of the inn-keeper. Both at Cahir-siveen, and at Dingle, the inn-keeper kept an extensive shop for the sale of groceries, and of all kinds of cloth and haberdashery goods.

Before leaving Dingle, I crossed the mountains to the heights above Brandon Bay, which lies on the north side of the Peninsula. It was a long and fatiguing ascent ; but it was repaid by the very striking and extensive view from Connor's Hill, from which you look down upon the sea on both sides : the view on one side embracing Dingle Bay, as far as Valentia Island, with the town and fine harbour immediately below ; and on the other side, comprehending Brandon Bay, and various fine headlands, with high mountains on both sides, and deep and wide mountain valleys ; and innumerable tarns, dark and still, lying in the hollows of the hills ; and distant cascades, and nearer torrents; and all, in short, that lends interest to mountain scenery.

Returning from this excursion, I remarked some bog land brought newly into a state of partial cultivation ; and upon making some inquiries, I was told that this was done, because no tithe would in future be exigible from it. There and everywhere I have yet travelled, I have found the tithe question a difficult one to grapple with. Utterly and at once to extinguish tithes, every one in Ireland admits, would be only making a present to the landlord ; and any adjustment that leaves it in the landlord's power to shift the burden from himself, would confer little benefit on those for whom it is intended. Even, however, if the landlord should succeed in laying the addition upon the rent, it is better that the tenant should pay the charges upon his possession in a lump, than by separate demands : and that all the charges should be exigible by the landlord : a farmer could better calculate the amount he had to pay ; and would know when to be prepared ; and as it cannot be the true interest of the landlord unnecessarily to distress a good tenant, more indulgence might in general be expected from him, than from the inexorable tithe-proctor.

After spending an interesting day or two at Dingle, I left it for Tralee. The road traverses the mountains, diagonally from the Dingle, to the Tralee side ; and leads the traveller through an improving country, and through scenery of a highly attractive character. Several inconsiderable villages are passed through : a gap, far superior to the gap of Dunlow, is seen on the left, with a fine lake half hidden in it ; and from the summit of the mountain ridge, a splendid prospect opens over Tralee Bay, across to Kerry Head, and the Shannon Mouth. I reached Tralee a little before dusk, and found the streets and every inn crowded,—for the quarter sessions had opened the day before : but I succeeded in finding comfortable lodgings.

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