

A
DESCRIPTION
OF
IRELAND
BY
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SECRETARY TO THE LORD MOUNTJOY, LORD DEPUTY.
MDXCIX to MDCIII
1600-1603.

THE longitude of Ireland extends four degrees, from the meridian of eleven degrees and a half to that of fifteen and a half ; and the latitude extends also four degrees, from the parallel of fifty-four degrees to that of fifty-eight degrees. In the geographical description I will follow Camden, as formerly.

This famous island in the Virginian Sea is by old writers called Ierna, Inverna, and Iris ; by the old inhabitants Erin, by the old Britons Yuerdhen, by the English at this day Ireland, and by the Irish bards at this day Banno, in which sense of the Irish word, Avicen calls it the Holy Island ; besides, Plutarch of old called it Ogygia, and after him Isidore named it Scotia. This Ireland, according to the inhabitants, is divided into two parts, the wild Irish and the English-Irish living in the English Pale ; but of the old kingdoms, five in number, it is divided into five parts.

1. The first is by the Irish called Mowne, by the English MUNSTER, and is subdivided into six counties, of *Kerry*, of *Limerick*, of *Cork*, of *Tipperary*, of the *Holy Cross*, and of *Waterford*, to which the seventh County of *Desmond* is now added. The Gangavi, a Scythian people, coming into Spain, and from thence into Ireland, inhabited the County of Kerry, full of woody mountains, in which the Earls of Desmond had the dignity of Palatines, having their houses in Tralee, a little town now almost uninhabited. Not far thence lies St. Mary Wick, vulgarly called Smerwick, where the Lord Arthur .Grey, being Lord Deputy, happily over-threw the aiding troops sent to the Earl of Desmond from the Pope and the King of Spain. On the south side of Kerry lies the County of Desmond, of old inhabited by three kinds of people, the Luceni (being Spaniards), the Velebri (so called of their seat upon the sea-water or marshes), and the Ibernii or upper Irish, inhabiting about Bear Haven and Ballimore, two havens well known by the plentiful fishing of herrings, and the late invasion of the Spaniards in the year 1601. Next to these is the country of M'Carty Moore, of Irish race, whom, as enemy to the Fitzgeralds, Queen Elizabeth made Earl of Glencar in the year 1566. For of the Fitzgeralds of the family of the Earls of Kildare the Earls of Desmond descended, who, being by birth English and created Earls by King Edward the Third, became hateful rebels in our time. The third county hath the name of the City Cork, consisting almost

all of one long street, but well known and frequented, which is so compassed with rebellious neighbours as, they of old not daring to marry their daughters to them, the custom grew, and continues to this day, that by mutual marriages one with another all the citizens are of kin in some degree of affinity. Not far thence is Youghal, having a safe haven, near which the Viscounts of Barry, of English race, are seated. In the fourth County, of Tipperary, nothing is memorable but that it is a Palatinate. The little town Holy Cross, in the County of the same name, hath many great privileges. The sixth County hath the name of the City Limerick, the seat of a Bishop, wherein is a strong castle built by King John. Not far thence is Awne, the seat of a Bishop, and the Lower Ossory, giving the title of an Earl to the Butlers, and the town Thurles, giving them also the title Viscount. And there is Cassiles, now a poor city, but the seat of an Archbishop. The seventh County hath the name of the City Waterford, which the Irish call Porthlargi, of the commodious haven, a rich and well-inhabited city, esteemed the second to Dublin. And because the inhabitants long faithfully helped the English in subduing Ireland, our Kings gave them excessive privileges ; but they rashly failing in their obedience at King James's coming to the crown, could not in long time obtain the confirmation of their old charter.

2. Leinster, the second part of Ireland, is fertile and yields plenty of corn, and hath a most temperate mild air, being divided into ten Counties, of Catherlough, Kilkenny, Wexford, Dublin, Kildare, the King's County, the Queen's County, the Counties of Longford, of Ferns, and of Wicklow. The Carcondi of old inhabited Catherlough (or Carlow) County, and they also inhabited great part of Kilkenny, of Upper Ossory, and of Ormond, which have nothing memorable but the Earls of Ormond, of the great family of the Butlers, inferior to no Earl in Ireland (not to speak of Fitzpatrick, Baron of Upper Ossory). It is ridiculous which some Irish, who will be believed as men of credit, report of men in these parts yearly turned into wolves, except the abundance of melancholy humour transports them to imagine that they are so transformed. Kilkenny, giving name to the second County, is a pleasant town, the chief of the towns withinland, memorable for the civility of the inhabitants, for the husbandman's labour, and the pleasant orchards. I pass over the walled town Thomastown, and the ancient city Rheban, now a poor village with a castle, yet of old giving the title of Baronet. I pass over the village and strong Castle of Leighlin, with the country adjoining, usurped by the sept of the Cavanaghs, now surnamed O'Moores. Also I omit Ross, of old a large city, at this day of no moment. The third County, of Wexford (called by the Irish County Reogh), was of old inhabited by the Menapii, where, at the town called Banna, the English made their first descent into Ireland ; and upon that coast are very dangerous flats in the sea, which they vulgarly call Grounds. The City Weshford, Weisford, or Wexford, is the chief of the County, not great, but deserving praise for their faithfulness towards the English, and frequently inhabited by men of English race. The Cauci, a sea bordering nation of Germany, and the Menapii aforesaid, of old inhabited the territories now possessed by the O'Moores and O'Byrnes. Also they inhabited the fourth County of Kildare, a fruitful soil, having the chief town of the same name, greatly honoured in the infancy of the Church by St. Bridget. King Edward the Second created the Gerald's Earls of Kildare. The Eblani of old inhabited the Territory of Dublin, the fifth County, having a fertile soil and rich pastures, but wanting wood, so as they burn turf, or sea-coal brought out of England. The City Dublin, called Divilin by the English, and Balacleigh (as seated upon hurdles) by the Irish, is the Chief City of the Kingdom, and seat of justice ; fairly built, frequently inhabited, and adorned with a strong Castle, fifteen churches, an Episcopal seat, and a fair College,— an happy foundation of an University laid in our age,— and endowed with many privileges; but the haven is barred and made less commodious by those hills of sands. The adjoining promontory, Howthead, gives the title of a Baron to the family of St. Lawrence. And towards the north lies Fingal, a little territory, as it were the garner of the kingdom, which is environed by the sea and great rivers, and this situation hath defended it from the incursion of rebels in former

Civil Wars. I omit the King's and Queen's Counties (namely, Ofaly and Leix), inhabited by the O'Connors and O'Moores, as likewise the Counties of Longford, Ferns, and Wicklow, as less affording memorable things.

3. The third part of Ireland is Midia or Media, called by the English Meath, in our fathers' memory divided in Eastmeath and Westmeath. In Eastmeath is Drogheda, vulgarly called Tredagh, a fair and well-inhabited town. Trim is a little town upon the confines of Ulster, having a stately castle but now much ruined, and it is more notable for being the ancient (as it were) barony of the Lacies. Westmeath hath the town Deloin, giving the title Baron to the English family of the Nugents ; and Westmeath is also inhabited by many great Irish septs, as the O'Maddens, the MacGeoghegans, O'Mallaghans, and MacCoghlan, which seem barbarous names. Shannon is a great river, in a long course making many and great lakes (as the large lake or Lough Regith), and yields plentiful fishing, as do the frequent rivers and all the seas of Ireland. Upon this river lies the town Athlone, having a very fair bridge of stone, the work of Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy, and a strong fair castle.

4. Connaught is the fourth part of Ireland, a fruitful Province, but having many bogs and thick woods ; and it is divided into six Counties, of Clare, of Leitrim, of Galway, of Roscommon, of Mayo, and of Sligo. The County of Clare, or Thomond, hath his Earls of Thomond, of the family of the O'Brenes, the old kings of Connaught, and Tuam is the seat of an Archbishop, only part, but the greatest, of this county was called Clare, of Thomas Clare, Earl of Gloucester. The adjoining territory, Clan-Richard (the land of Richard's sons) hath his Earls called Clanricarde of the land, but being of the English family De Burgo, vulgarly Burke, and both these Earls were first created by Henry the Eighth. In the same territory is the barony Atterith, belonging to the barons of the English family Birmingham, of old very warlike, but their posterity have degenerated to the Irish barbarism. The City Galway, giving name to the County, lying upon the sea, is frequently^[1] inhabited with civil people, and fairly built. The northern part of Connaught is inhabited by these Irish septs, O'Connor, O'Rourke, and M'Diermod. Upon the western coast lies the Island Arran, famous for the fabulous long life of the inhabitants.

5. Ulster, the fifth part of Ireland, is a large Province, woody, fenny, in some parts fertile, in other parts barren, but in all parts green and pleasant to behold, and exceedingly stored with cattle. The next part to the Pale and to England is divided into three counties, Lowth, Down, and Antrim ; the rest contains seven counties, Monaghan, Tyrone, Armagh, Coleraine, Donegal, Fermanagh, and Cavan. Lowth is inhabited by English-Irish (Down and Antrim being contained under the same name), and the barons thereof be of the Birmingham's family, and remain loving to the English. Monaghan was inhabited by the English family Fitzurse, and these are become degenerate and barbarous, and in the sense of that name are in the Irish tongue called Mac-Mahon, that is, the Sons of Bears. I forbear to speak of Tyrone and of the Earl thereof, infamous for his rebellion which I have at large handled in this work. Armagh is the seat of an Arch-bishop, and the Metropolitan City of the whole island, but in time of the rebellion was altogether ruined. The other Counties have not many memorable things, therefore it shall suffice to speak of them briefly. The neck of land called Lecaile is a pleasant little territory, fertile, and abounding with fish and all things for food, and therein is Down, at this time a ruined town, but the seat of a Bishop, and famous for the burial of St. Patrick, St. Bridget, and St. Columb. The town of Carrickfergus is well known by the safe haven. The river Bann, running through the Lake Evagh into the sea, is famous for the fishing of salmons, the water being most clear, wherein the salmons much delight. The great families or septs of Ulster are thus named, O'Neill, O'Donnell (whereof the chief was lately created Earl of Tyrconnel), O'Buil, MacGuire, O'Kane, O'Dogherty, MacMahon, MacGennis, MacSurley, &c. The Lake Erne, compassed with thick woods, hath such plenty of fish as the fishermen

fear the breaking of their nets rather than want of fish. Towards the north, in the midst of vast woods, and, as I think, in the County Donegal, is a Lake, and therein an Island in which is a Cave famous for the apparition of spirits, which the inhabitants call Ellanvi frugadory, that is, the Island of Purgatory, and they call it Saint Patrick's Purgatory, fabling that he obtained of God by prayer that the Irish seeing the pains of the damned might more carefully avoid sin.

The Land of Ireland is uneven, mountainous, soft, watery, woody, and open to winds and floods of rain, and so fenny as it hath bogs upon the very tops of mountains, not bearing man or beast, but dangerous to pass, and such bogs are frequent all over Ireland. Our mariners observe the sailing into Ireland to be more dangerous, not only because many tides meeting make the sea apt to swell upon any storm, but especially because they ever find the coast of Ireland covered with mists, whereas the coast of England is commonly clear and to be seen far off. The air of Ireland is unapt to ripen seeds, yet, as Mela witnesseth, the earth is luxurious in yielding fair and sweet herbs. Ireland is little troubled with thunder, lightning, or earthquakes, yet—I know not upon what presage—in the year 1601, and in the month of November, almost ended at the siege of Kinsale, and a few days before the famous battle in which the rebels were happily overthrown, we did mightily hear and see great thunderings and lightnings, not without some astonishment what they should presage. The fields are not only most apt to feed cattle, but yield also great increase of corn. I will freely say that I observed the winter's cold to be far more mild than it is in England, so as the Irish pastures are more green, and so likewise the gardens all winter-time, but that in summer, by reason of the cloudy air and watery soil, the heat of the sun hath not such power to ripen corn and fruits, so as their harvest is much later than in England. Also I observed that the best sorts of flowers and fruits are much rarer in Ireland than in England, which notwithstanding is more to be attributed to the inhabitants than to the air ; for Ireland being often troubled with rebellions, and the rebels not only being idle themselves, but in natural malice destroying the labours of other men, and cutting up the very trees or fruit for the same cause or else to burn them, for these reasons the inhabitants take less pleasure to till their grounds or plant trees, content to live for the day, in continual fear of like mischiefs. Yet is not Ireland altogether destitute of these flowers and fruits, wherewith the County of Kilkenny seems to abound more than any other part. And the said humidity of the air and land making the fruits for food more raw and moist, hereupon the inhabitants and strangers are troubled with looseness of body, the country disease. Yet for the rawness they have an excellent remedy by their *Aqua Vita*, vulgarly called Usquebaugh,[2] which binds the belly and drieth up moisture more than our *Aqua Vita*, yet inflameth not so much. Also inhabitants as well as strangers are troubled there with an ague which they call the Irish ague, and they who are sick thereof, upon a received custom, do not use the help of the physician, but give themselves to the keeping of Irish women, who starve the ague, giving the sick man no meat, who takes nothing but milk and some vulgarly known remedies at their hand.

Ireland after much blood spilt in the Civil Wars became less populous, and as well great lords of countries as other inferior gentlemen laboured more to get new possessions for inheritance than by husbandry and peopling of their old lands to increase their revenues ; so as I then observed much grass, wherewith the island so much abounds, to have perished without use, and either to have rotted or in the next springtime to be burnt, lest it should hinder the coming of new grass. This plenty of grass makes the Irish have infinite multitudes of cattle, and in the heat of the last rebellion the very vagabond rebels had great multitudes of cows, which they still, like the nomades, drove with them whithersoever themselves were driven, and fought for them as for their altars and families. By this abundance of cattle the Irish have a frequent though somewhat poor traffic for their hides, the cattle being in general very little, and only the men and the greyhounds of great stature. Neither can the cattle possibly be great, since they eat only by day, and then are brought at evening within the bawns of castles,

where they stand or lie all night in a dirty yard without so much as a lock of hay ; whereof they make little, for sluggishness, and that little they altogether keep for their horses. And they are thus brought in by nights for fear of thieves, the Irish using almost no other kind of theft, or else for fear of wolves, the destruction whereof being neglected by the inhabitants, oppressed with greater mischiefs, they are so much grown in number as sometimes in winter nights they will come to prey in villages and the suburbs of cities. The Earl of Ormond in Munster, and the Earl of Kildare in Leinster, had each of them a small park enclosed for fallow deer, and I have not seen any other part in Ireland, nor have heard that they had any other at that time ; yet in many woods they have many red deer loosely scattered, which seem more plentiful because the inhabitants used not then to hunt them, but only the governors and commanders had them sometimes killed with the piece. They have also about Ofalia and Wexford and in some parts of Munster some fallow deer scattered in the woods ; yet in the time of the war I did never see any venison served at the table, but only in the houses of the said Earls and of the English commanders. Ireland hath great plenty of birds and fowls, but by reason of their natural sloth they had little delight or skill in birding or fowling. But Ireland hath neither singing nightingale, nor chattering pie, nor undermining mole, nor black crow, but only crows of mingled colour such as we call Royston crows. They have such plenty of pheasants as I have known sixty served at one feast, and abound much more with rails, but partridges are somewhat rare. There be very many eagles, and great plenty of hares, conies, hawks called goshawks, much esteemed with us, and also of bees, as well in hives at home as in hollow trees abroad, and in caves of the earth. They abound in flocks of sheep, which they shear twice in the year, but their wool is coarse, and merchants may not export it, forbidden by a law made on behalf of the poor, that they may be nourished by working it into cloth, namely, rugs (whereof the best are made at Waterford) and mantles generally worn by men and women and exported in great quantity. And of old they had such plenty of linen cloth as the wild Irish used to wear thirty or forty ells in a shirt, all gathered and wrinkled, and washed in saffron, because they never put them off till they were worn out. Their horses called hobbies are much commended for their ambling pace and beauty ; but Ireland yields few horses good for service in war, and the said hobbies are much inferior to our geldings in strength to endure long journies, and being bred in the fenny soft ground of Ireland are soon lamed when they are brought into England. The hawks of Ireland, called goshawks, are, as I said, much esteemed in England, and they are sought out by money and all means to be transported thither. Ireland yields excellent marble near Dublin, Kilkenny, and Cork ; and I am of their opinion who dare venture all they are worth that the mountains would yield abundance of metals, if this public good were not hindered by the inhabitants' barbarousness, making them apt to seditions, and so unwilling to enrich their Prince and Country ; and by their slothfulness, which is so singular as they hold it baseness to labour ; and by their poverty not being able to bear the charge of such works ; besides that the wiser sort think their poverty best for the public good, making them peaceable, as nothing sooner makes them kick against authority than riches. Ireland hath in all parts pleasant rivers, safe and long havens, and no less frequent lakes of great circuit, yielding great plenty of fish ; and the sea on all sides yields like plenty of excellent fish, as salmons, oysters (which are preferred before the English), and shell fishes, with all other kinds of sea fish ; so as in all parts the Irish might have abundance of excellent sea and fresh-water fish, if the fishermen were not so possessed with the natural fault of slothfulness, as no hope of gain, scarcely the fear of authority, can in many places make them come out of their houses and put to sea. Hence it is that in many places they use Scots for fishermen, and they, together with the English, make profit of the inhabitants' sluggishness ; and no doubt if the Irish were industrious in fishing they might export salted and dried fish with great gain. In time of peace the Irish transport good quantity of corn; yet they may not transport it without licence, lest in any sudden rebellion the King's forces and his good subjects should want corn. Ulster and the western parts of Munster yield vast woods, in which the rebels cutting up trees and casting them on

heaps used to stop the passages, and therein, as also in fenny and boggy places, to fight with the English. But I confess myself to have been deceived in the common fame that all Ireland is woody, having found in my long journey from Armagh to Kinsale few or no woods by the way, except the great woods of Ofaly, and some low shrubby places which they call Glins. Also I did observe many boggy and fenny places, whereof great part might be dried by good and painful husbandry. I may not omit the opinion commonly received that the earth of Ireland will not suffer a snake or venomous beast to live, and that the Irish wood transported for building is free of spiders and their webs. Myself have seen some, but very few, spiders, which the inhabitants deny to have any poison, but I have heard some English of good credit affirm by experience the contrary. The Irish having in most parts great woods or low shrubs and thickets, do use the same for fire, but in other parts they burn turf and sea coals brought out of England. They export great quantities of wood to make barrels, called pipe-staves, and make great gain thereby. They are not permitted to build great ships for war, but they have small ships, in some sort armed to resist pirates, for transporting of commodities into Spain and France, yet no great number of them. Therefore, since the Irish have small skill in navigation, as I cannot praise them for this art, so I am confident that the nation, being bold and warlike, would no doubt prove brave seamen if they shall practise navigation and could possibly prove industrious therein. I freely profess that Ireland in general would yield abundance of all things to civil and industrious inhabitants. And when it lay wasted by the late rebellion, I did see it after the coming of the Lord Mountjoy daily more and more to flourish, and in short time after the rebellion appeared, like the new spring, to put on the wonted beauty.

Touching the Irish diet, some lords and knights and gentlemen of the English-Irish, and all the English there abiding, having competent means, use the English diet, but some more some less cleanly, few or none curiously ; and no doubt they have as great and for their part greater plenty than the English of flesh, fowl, fish, and all things for food, if they will use like art of cookery. Always I except the fruits, venison, and some dainties proper to England and rare in Ireland. And we must conceive that venison and fowl seem to be more plentiful in Ireland, because they neither so generally affect dainty food nor so diligently search it as the English do. Many of the English-Irish have by little and little been infected with the Irish filthiness, and that in the very cities, excepting Dublin, and some of the better sort in Waterford, where, the English continually lodging in their houses, they more retain the English diet. The English-Irish, after our manner, serve to the table joints of flesh cut after our fashion, with geese, pullets, pigs, and like roasted meats ; but their ordinary food for the common sort is of white-meats, and they eat cakes of oat for bread, and drink not English beer made of malt and hops, but ale. At Cork I have seen with these eyes young maids stark naked grinding of corn with certain stones to make cakes thereof, and striking off into the tub of meal such reliques thereof as stick upon their belly, thighs, and more unseemly parts. And for the cheese and butter commonly made by the English-Irish, an Englishman would not touch it with his lips though he were half-starved ; yet many English inhabitants make very good of both kinds. In cities they have such bread as ours, but of a sharp savour, and some mingled with aniseeds and baked like cakes, and that only in the houses of the better sort.

At Dublin and in some other cities they have taverns wherein Spanish and French wines are sold, but more commonly the merchants sell them by pints and quarts in their own cellars. The Irish *aqua vita*, vulgarly called usquebaugh, is held the best in the world of that kind ; which is made also in England, but nothing so good as that which is brought out of Ireland. And the usquebaugh is preferred before our *aqua vita* because the mingling of raisins, fennel-seed, and other things, mitigating the heat and making the taste pleasant, makes it less inflame, and yet refresh the weak stomach with moderate heat and a good relish. These drinks the English-Irish drink largely, and in many families—especially at feasts—both men and

women use excess therein. And since I have in part seen, and often heard from others' experience, that some gentlewomen were so free in this excess as they would, kneeling upon the knee and otherwise, carouse health after health with men ; not to speak of the wives of Irish lords or to refer it to the due place, who often drink till they be drunken, or at least till they void urine in full assemblies of men. I cannot, though unwilling, but note the Irish women more specially with this fault, which I have observed in no other part to be a woman's vice, but only in Bohemia. Yet, so accusing them, I mean not to excuse the men, and will also confess that I have seen virgins, as well gentlewomen as citizens, commanded by their mothers to retire after they had in courtesy pledged one or two healths.

In cities passengers may have feather beds, soft and good, but most commonly lousy, especially in the highways, whether that came by their being forced to lodge common soldiers or from the nasty filthiness of the nation in general. For even in the best city, as at Cork, I have observed that my own and other English-men's chambers, hired of the citizens, were scarce swept once in the week, and the dust then laid in a corner, was perhaps cast out once in a month or two. I did never see any public inns with signs hanged out, among the English or English-Irish ; but the officers of cities and villages appoint lodgings to the passengers, and perhaps in each city they shall find one or two houses where they will dress meat, and these be commonly houses of English-men, seldom of the Irish, so as these houses having no signs hung out, a passenger cannot challenge right to be entertained in them, but must have it of courtesy and by entreaty.

The wild and (as I may say) mere Irish, inhabiting many and large provinces, are barbarous and most filthy in their diet. They scum the seething pot with an handful of straw, and strain their milk taken from the cow through a like handful of straw, none of the cleanest, and so cleanse, or rather more defile, the pot and milk. They devour great morsels of beef unsalted, and they eat commonly swine's flesh, seldom mutton, and all these pieces of flesh, as also the entrails of beasts unwashed, they seethe in a hollow tree, lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set over the fire, and therewith swallow whole lumps of filthy butter. Yea (which is more contrary to nature) they will feed on horses dying of themselves, not only upon small want of flesh, but even for pleasure ; for I remember an accident in the army, when the Lord Mountjoy, the Lord Deputy, riding to take the air out of the camp, found the buttocks of dead horses cut off, and suspecting that some soldiers had eaten that flesh out of necessity, being defrauded of the victuals allowed them, commanded the men to be searched out, among whom a common soldier, and that of the English-Irish, not of the mere Irish, being brought to the Lord Deputy, and asked why he had eaten the flesh of dead horses, thus freely answered, " Your Lordship may please to eat pheasant and partridge, and much good do it you that best likes your taste ; and I hope it is lawful for me without offence to eat this flesh, that likes me better than beef." Whereupon the Lord Deputy, perceiving himself to be deceived, and further understanding that he had received his ordinary victuals (the detaining whereof he suspected, and purposed to punish for example), gave the soldier a piece of gold to drink in usquebaugh for better digestion, and so dismissed him.

The foresaid wild Irish do not thresh their oats, but burn them from the straw, and so make cakes thereof ; yet they seldom eat this bread, much less any better kind, especially in the time of war. Whereof a Bohemian baron complained who, having seen the Courts of England and Scotland, would needs, out of his curiosity, return through Ireland in the heat of the rebellion ; and having letters from the King of Scots to the Irish lords then in rebellion, first landed among them in the furthest north, where for eight days' space he had found no bread, not so much as a cake of oats, till he came to eat with the Earl of Tyrone; and after obtaining the Lord Deputy's pass to come into our army, related this their want of bread to us as a miracle, who nothing wondered thereat. Yea, the wild Irish in time of greatest peace impute

covetousness and base birth to him that hath any corn after Christmas, as if it were a point of nobility to consume all within those festival days. They willingly eat the herb Shamrock, being of a sharp taste, which, as they run and are chased to and fro, they snatch like beasts out of the ditches.

Neither have they any beer made of malt or hops, nor yet any ale, no, nor the chief lords, except it be very rarely. But they drink milk like nectar, warmed with a stone first cast into the fire, or else beef broth mingled with milk. But when they come to any market town to sell a cow or horse, they never return home till they have drunk the price in Spanish wine (which they call the King of Spain's daughter) or in Irish usquebaugh, and till they have outslept two or three days' drunkenness. And not only the common sort, but even the lords and their wives, the more they want this drink at home the more they swallow it when they come to it, till they be as drunk as beggars.

Many of these wild Irish eat no flesh but that which dies of disease or otherwise of itself, neither can it scape them for stinking. They desire no broth, nor have any use of a spoon. They can neither seethe artichokes nor eat them when they are sodden. It is strange and ridiculous, but most true, that some of our carriage horses^[3] falling into their hands, when they found soap and starch carried for the use of our laundresses, they, thinking them to be some dainty meats, did eat them greedily, and when they stuck in their teeth cursed bitterly the gluttony of us English churls, for so they term us. They feed most on white-meats, and esteem for a great dainty sour curds, vulgarly called by them Bonaclabbe. And for this cause they watchfully keep their cows, and fight for them as for religion and life ; and when they are almost starved, yet they will not kill a cow except it be old and yield no milk. Yet will they upon hunger, in time of war, open a vein of the cow and drink the blood, but in no case kill or much weaken it. A man would think these men to be Scythians, who let their horses blood under their ears and for nourishment drink their blood ; and indeed, as I have formerly said, some of the Irish are of the race of Scythians, coming into Spain and from thence into Ireland. The wild Irish, as I said, seldom kill a cow to eat, and if perhaps they kill one for that purpose, they distribute it all to be devoured at one time ; for they approve not the orderly eating at meals, but so they may eat enough when they are hungry, they care not to fast long. And I have known some of these Irish footmen serving in England (where they are nothing less than sparing in the food of their families) to lay meat aside for many meals, to devour it all at one time.

These wild Irish, as soon as their cows have calved, take the calves from them and thereof feed some with milk, to rear for breed, some of the rest they flay, and seethe them in a filthy poke, and so eat them, being nothing but froth, and send them for a present one to another. But the greatest part of these calves they cast out to be eaten by crows and wolves, that themselves may have more abundance of milk. And the calves being taken away, the cows are so mad among them as they will give no milk till the skin of the calf be stuffed and set before them, that they may smell the odour. Yea, when these cows thus madly deny their milk, the women wash their hands in cows' dung, and so gently stroke their dugs ; yea, put their hands into the cow's tail and with their mouths blow into their tails, that with this manner, as it were, of enchantment, they may draw milk from them. Yea, these cows seem as rebellious to their owners as the people are to their Kings, for many times they will not be milked but of some one old woman only, and of no other. These wild Irish never set any candles upon tables—what do I speak of tables ? since indeed they have no tables, but set their meat upon a bundle of grass, and use the same grass as napkins to wipe their hands. But I mean that they do not set candles upon any high place to give light to the house, but place a great candle made of reeds and butter upon the floor in the midst of a great room. And in like sort the chief men in their houses make fires in the midst of the room, the smoke whereof goeth out at a

hole in the top thereof. An Italian friar coming of old into Ireland and seeing at Armagh this their diet and the nakedness of the women, is said to have cried out

“ *Civitas Armachana, civitas vana,
Carnes crudae, mulieres nudaæ.*”

“ Vain Armagh city, I did thee pity,
Thy meat's rawness and women's nakedness.

I trust no man expects among these gallants any beds, much less feather beds and sheets, who, like the Nomades removing their dwellings according to the commodity of pastures for their cows, sleep under the canopy of heaven, or in a poor house of clay, or in a cabin made of the boughs of trees and covered with turf, for such are the dwellings of the very lords among them. And in such places they make a fire in the midst of the room, and round about it they sleep upon the ground, without straw or other thing under them, lying all in a circle about the fire, with their feet towards it. And their bodies being naked, they cover their heads and upper parts with their mantles, which they first make very wet, steeping them in water of purpose ; for they find that when their bodies have once warmed the wet mantles, the smoke of them keeps their bodies in temperate heat all the night following. And this manner of lodging not only the mere Irish lords and their followers use, but even some of the English-Irish lords and their followers when, after the old but tyrannical and prohibited manner vulgarly called coshering, they go, as it were, on progress, to live upon their tenants till they have consumed all the victuals that the poor men have or can get. To conclude, not only in lodging passengers not at all or most rudely, but even in their inhospitality towards them, these wild Irish are not much unlike to wild beasts, in whose caves a beast passing that way might perhaps find meat, but not without danger to be ill entertained, perhaps devoured, of his insatiable host.

[1] *Frequently*, here and in other places, numerously.

[2] Usquebaugh is from *Uisge*, water, and *Beatha*, life. *Uisge* for water gives its names to rivers, Usk, Esk, Exe, &c., and in modern English spelling it is whisky, or whiskey.

[3] Sumpter horses.

Ireland under Elizabeth and James the First, described by Edmund Spenser (1890)

Author: Morley, Henry, 1822-1894, ed
Subject: Ireland — History 1595-1612
Year : 1890

Source : **Internet Archive**

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