

The Hyperborean Island 1891

*Three months' tour in Ireland*

By

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THERE is a great charm in a country that can only be reached by sea. When, after three hours' choppy crossing between Holyhead and Kingstown, the dark outline of the "hyperborean" island of Diodorus becomes visible on the purple horizon, the attraction of that unknown land is enhanced by the mysterious veil of perpetual mist with which it is always surrounded, and through which the setting sun now darts streaks of gold. One feels a childish pleasure, too, in watching how the details of the coast accentuate themselves with each turn of the paddle-wheel, and in trying to make out the shape of the immense Bay of Dublin, which the Irish say is like the Bay of Naples. It may be so—*minus* Vesuvius, and *plus* fog, and without counting many other points of difference, of which they can hardly be fair judges who have never seen Naples, as is the case with the greater part of the Irish people. It is curious that when one never finds two leaves alike on the same tree there should be this mania for comparing different countries and climates ; the truth being that one bay resembles another bay only as one man resembles another. The Bay of Dublin in reputation for beauty is second to none : let it be content with that, and leave Naples alone. Unfortunately, its charms are unobtrusive, and not seen all at once ; too often the outlines of the chain of mountains with which it is surrounded are hidden in clouds, which give to its waters a leaden tinge, and contrast sadly with the boundless reach of seagreen streaked with violet in the offing. The result is a grey and indistinct effect, not altogether unpleasing.

The first object that meets the eye on landing is a squat and ugly obelisk, surmounted by a crown lying on a cushion. The emblem is not badly chosen to remind one of the idle and voluptuous monarch, in memory of whose visit to Ireland in 1821 this monument was erected. The name of "Kingstown" was then given to this little harbour instead of "Dunleary," which signifies "Fort of Leary," one of the last Celtic Pagan Princes. One would naturally imagine this was the place where George IV. landed when honouring his Irish subjects. Not at all ; it is where he re-embarked on his departure. Was it for him or for them that the remembrance of this glad day was immortalized in granite ? A touching emblem of the love that unites the crown of Great Britain to the people of her so-called "sister" island !

Nothing is so irritating to the inquisitive traveller as arriving at an unknown place late in the day. However quickly one's luggage may be transferred from the boat to the train, which in twenty minutes lands you in Dublin from Kingstown, the waiting seems interminable, because one feels the shades of night are already falling on all one is so anxious to see. At Westland Row Station one again blesses the wonderful organization of English railways. No luggage ticket to give up, no visit to the Custom-house, no mad rush after a conveyance ; none of that bustle and commotion which, in our country, makes the arrival of a party of travellers resemble the letting loose of Bedlam itself. With the help of a most civil and

obliging porter, we fish out our own boxes from the van, and then jump into one of the numerous conveyances drawn up in line against the pavement. However, before we have arrived at our lodging, jolted all the time across streets where, in the deepening shadows, shapes and lights are growing indistinct, chosen our room, and eaten our dinner—for there is such a thing as hunger—the night has come. Still, in the hope of seeing something, we set off for a stroll.

Fine broad streets, with fairly-good three-storied houses, swarm with people dawdling on the pavement in front of the closed shops—no cafés, few lights, ragged and barefooted urchins calling out in shrill voices the “extra special” of the evening newspapers. Going straight on, we come upon streets deserted, silent, badly lit, with a vanishing perspective of low and dark house fronts. If it were not for the heavy and measured tread of a policeman on his beat, we might as well be in a city turned to stone. The sight of a great flare of gas, accompanied with the sound of voices, attracts us to a corner further on. Good ! here we can see, at all events, though the sight is hardly a pleasant one. These festive lights illuminate public-houses like those in England ; places which are nothing more than “gin-shops” of the lowest order. Huddled together like a flock of sheep, the customers of these wretched places drink standing about, leaning on the counter, or up against the wall, in an atmosphere poisoned by alcoholic vapours, thick with tobacco smoke, and reeking with the exhalations of foul humanity. At first they talk quietly enough, then the drink begins to tell, the noise increases, songs are sung in hoarse voices, intermixed with wild yells, and it becomes an infernal Sabbath, till such time as the landlord, with the help of the few sober drinkers left, and to make room for others, forcibly expels those who are drunk. These stagger away to their hovels, to sleep off the fumes of whisky, provided that before this they have not already tumbled down in some corner, there to snore till morning. The sexes are very equally represented at these drinking-bouts ; and certainly if a drunken man is sufficiently repulsive, it is nothing to the sickening sight of a woman in that condition. There is one being turned into the street at this moment ! It is a hideous spectacle—this miserable emaciated creature ; her gaunt limbs, which tremble convulsively, are hardly covered by her dirty rags ; her eye is fixed, and she has the mad look of a wild beast, having been brutally jostled by the sneering crowd. She has just thrown herself down in a heap on the dirty pavement ; and had not the special Providence that watches over drunkards saved her, she would most certainly have broken her head.

A squalid and revolting scene ! And it would not be wise to be out late in these far-off cut-throat looking quarters. One asks the way of a policeman, who has been the immovable and cheerful spectator of the orgy ; and is surprised at finding oneself almost immediately at the hotel, whence can still be heard distant sounds of the hideous revelry. This is Saturday evening—a day of rest and merriment. The people who a short time since were taking the air in the now empty streets of the town, are the peaceful inhabitants of those suburbs, on traversing which we had arrived at the centre of the town, the scene of popular jocularities. People laughed at our indignation and horror. These drunkards are very good sort of men, who to-morrow will go quietly to mass, and no other blood will stain the taverns but that of the drinkers who have hit the wall with their stupid heads. Moreover, people assure us that, putting aside agrarian crimes, there is no country in the world where the Assize Courts have so little to do as in Ireland. A comforting reflection to sleep upon—as peaceably as our impatience for the arrival of to-morrow will allow us.

I admire sensible people who leave home with a plan of their journey carefully marked out in “Baedeker” or here I ought to say “Black.” I admire but do not envy them, for they deprive themselves of the delightful uncertainty of first experiences in a foreign land, and of the unknown charm there is in wandering about at one’s own sweet will eyes and mind awake

to all new impressions. Besides, the features of a town which partly reflect its moral individuality are so much more interesting than its mere material details. The first acquaintance is better made in the freshness of the early morning ; but in Dublin the chances are that if you are up too early you will find the whole town still asleep. In the middle of summer at eight o'clock in the morning, shutters are closed and streets empty ; towards nine people are beginning to wake up, maid-servants lazily sweep out the doorsteps, and shops are leisurely opened, though you can rarely find anyone ready to serve you before ten. Between six and seven in the evening everything is shut again—they sell so little, why tire themselves ? The Trams are empty at these early hours. These conveyances were first called *Outram-cars*, from the inventor, they are now abbreviated to '*Trams*. In Dublin there are no other omnibuses. Numberless lines of them radiate in all directions. Almost all of them start from the Central Post Office, an ostentatious building in the Grecian style, whose pediment is surmounted by statues of Hibernia, Mercury and Fidelity. It is told of a stranger that, on asking his driver what these three figures represented, he received the unhesitating answer, “ The Twelve Apostles !” and on his observing that the numbers did not tally, “ I will explain it to your honour,” was the reply. “ They only go out three at a time, turn and turn about.” This is a good specimen of popular wit.

In one of these clean and comfortable cars you arrive at Phoenix Park in less than half an hour. I do not believe there is another city in the world that possesses at its very gates a public park of such size, and such rare beauty. In the space of rather more than 17,000 acres of gently undulating land, there are woods of splendid elms, and copses of pink-and-white thorn, whose gnarled trunks grow to an immense size ; meadows carpeted with golden-eyed daisies, on which are browsing lovely dun-coloured cows, grey sheep with black faces, and pretty little spotted fallow deer, almost tame ; a zoological garden, a flower garden with trees and exotic plants and carefully-kept flower borders with the regulation rockwork, and the artificial lake tenanted by Barbary ducks ; a manoeuvring and parade ground, polo and football grounds ; the summer residences of the Lord-Lieutenant and the Secretary of State for Ireland ; the Irish Military College, Royal Military Hospital, artillery and police barracks. Phoenix Park contains everything but pedestrians, and it is no doubt owing to its enormous size that it has this deserted look. Once the property of the Knights Templars, it passed afterwards into the hands of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and was confiscated in Henry VIII.'s time. The Duke of Ormond and Lord Chesterfield enlarged and beautified it considerably, and in 1745 it was presented to the people of Dublin. They seldom go there, which makes it all the pleasanter for other people. The mass meetings of this ever-rebellious people are held in the place called the *fifteen acres*, under the eyes of a laurel-crowned statue of Wellington, which was made out of the bronze of French cannon, of which there are also some at the foot of this monument. The Iron Duke was really a native of Dublin, and his family titles of Baron Mornington and Viscount Wellesley belong to the Irish Peerage. He was no more proud of the fact than are his pretended compatriots ; the Irish Celts do not regard the descendants of Anglo-Saxon colonists, however remote may be the period of their settlement in the country, as one with themselves, and he himself, when twitted with his Irish origin, answered sharply, “ Is one necessarily a horse because one was born in a stable ?” Nevertheless, an outburst of official enthusiasm, which cost the City of Dublin 20,000/., resulted in the year 1817 in the erection of this monument; a massive obelisk, 150 feet high, decorated with bas-reliefs in bronze.

One has scarcely set foot on the poetical “ Emerald Isle” when the ghost of a tragic event stares one in the face. Exactly opposite the Viceregal Lodge, on the other side of a ditch which runs along the broad central walk, two marks, in the form of a rough cross lightly cut in the sod, arrest the attention of the passer-by; it is the place where, on the 6th of May, 1882, Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, Secretary and Under-Secretary of State respect-

ively for Ireland, fell under the knives of the Invincibles. It was about ten o'clock in the forenoon when two cyclists passed them on the road, walking ; some minutes afterwards, on returning to the town, they perceived their two dead bodies lying on the sidewalk. At the same moment the police and some of the Castle servants arrived on the scene of murder. The alarm had been given by the Viceroy himself, Lord Spencer, who had seen from a window a struggle between persons, whom at that distance he could not identify, and the rapid disappearance of a carriage, which had been waiting a little way off. It was the Under-Secretary who was the object of vengeance, and Lord F. Cavendish was killed in trying to defend him. This unfortunate young man had only arrived from England the night before to take up his post. But justice overtook the assassins, and, denounced by one of their accomplices, who, with the help of his mare Peggy (name henceforth to be historical) had galloped off with them, five of the Invincibles were hanged and four more were transported. The informer, however, notwithstanding the protection of the police, and that he had left the country under a feigned name, paid for his treachery with his life. To understand the audacity of these conspirators, it is necessary to appreciate the care with which every approach to the Viceregal Lodge is guarded, day and night, by numbers of the city police, with revolvers in their belts, in contradistinction to the English custom, which forbids the police to carry firearms. At this very spot I talked to one of them, a peaceful pink-and-white giant, whose athletic form was well defined under a blue tunic with large silver buttons, and his leather helmet ornamented with a shining steel chain. He was on duty not very far from the spot where the crime was committed, and had heard nothing. "But," said he to me, "there were many people then in the Park who must have seen what happened, but who were afraid to interfere."

On Sunday the population of Dublin make a pilgrimage to this place, with mixed feelings of curiosity and indifference. One good lady, in a red shawl, white apron, and with an indescribable feather in her straw bonnet, has discovered this to be a favourable spot for the sale of her green plums, sour gooseberries, and antediluvian cakes. I have heard some of these Irish, who are the kindest people in the world, and would not even harm a fly, carelessly say that the attack by the Invincibles was "an unfortunate occurrence." There is no other country where they are so blinded to the first principles of humanity by their over-excited political passions. It is more extraordinary still that the Government has not set up a stone to mark the place, for England is by no means niggardly in her appreciation of those who die in her service ; but perhaps she fears it might be the cause of insult to the dead and incitement to further outrage.

The number of troops in the island is proportioned to its disloyalty. There is, first, the Irish Constabulary, analogous to a *gendarmerie*, composed of picked men, courageous, strong, and sober. It is curious that this corps is recruited entirely from natives, and on no occasion has its loyalty been doubted. There is one of them passing now on horseback, a true Celt every inch of him, with high forehead, brilliant blue eyes, long fair moustache, like a Merovingian prince, slender, well built, broad shouldered, seated like a Centaur on a powerful, well-groomed bay. He is dressed in the black uniform of his corps, livery of woe, which just now is very appropriate to the sad duties that fall to him. The small cap, stuck on one side, which is kept in its place by a thin strap of leather under the lower lip, is the undress head-piece of all British cavalry. Galloping away in the distance is a dragoon in red tunic and helmet of steel. He is passed by a patrol of hussars, with trimmings and facings of gold. A company of riflemen in a green uniform—so dark it is nearly black, but with white collar and braid to lighten it—is returning from parade, rifle slung across the shoulder, butt behind and muzzle in front, a curious way the English have of carrying arms. All these troopers march with a firm and brisk step, and their appearance is smart to a degree. But the pearl of the Dublin garrison is the Scotch infantry—muscular, determined-looking men, bare kneed, with red and black stockings rolled back half-way up their legs, white cloth gaiters fastened by streamers of red

woollen riband, a plaited kilt or skirt of blue and green tartan, blue cap with heron's wing, white shoulder straps, a pouch of goat-skin, and undress jacket of white cloth ; for full dress they wear a scarlet jacket with yellow collar. The checked plaid is fastened crosswise over the shoulder, and falls behind, being fastened on the top of the shoulder by a brooch of the national emblem, the thistle. Under arms Highlanders wear a high bonnet, with black feathers, three plumes falling on to the side, reminding one of the grotesque head-dresses of Chinese warriors, which were said to strike terror into their enemies' ranks.

One of the principal thoroughfares in Dublin is that which extends from the quay of the Liffey, on the left bank, as far as Rutland Square, where is the Rotunda, a public building, in which meetings and concerts are held. At the head of the bridge, which is named after the great Liberator, O'Connell, is an imposing monument, erected in 1882 to his memory, which, besides his own colossal statue in bronze, comprises fifty allegorical figures of lesser size, the largest of which represents Erin breaking off her fetters. Opposite the Post-office, and so high as to be nearly lost in the clouds, is a melancholy statue of Nelson, on the summit of a too lofty column of stone in the Doric style. Groups of ragged people cluster round the steps of its pedestal from morning till night, and spend their time smoking and talking politics, and watching the passers-by with folded arms. They are the husbands, brothers, and sons of the miserable women who, at the rate of sixpence a day, will do the roughest and hardest work, and who swarm here in countless numbers. The men say they do nothing because they have nothing to do. More than a hundred and fifty years ago Swift excused the habitual laziness of his compatriots on the same ground. It may be true, but they have been idle so long that want of occupation does not distress them in the least.

There is a curious history attaching to this street, which is officially called Sackville Street, as indicated on the signs ; but since the erection of O'Connell's statue, and no doubt feeling that a bridge was hardly an important enough monument to erect to his memory, the people of Dublin decided that the whole street should repose in his shadow. It is useless to speak of it to your driver by any other name than that of O'Connell Street ; he will pretend not to understand you. I am sure, too, that even his Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant's coachman is a party to this tacit understanding.

It has every right, too, to be called after the great agitator, for at No. 43 is the office of the Central Committee of the National League, unblushingly advertised to the public in letters of gold. It has large windows on the ground floor, so that the policeman on his beat can see the clerks of this ministry of rebellion despatching correspondence, whose avowed end, according to the formula now become traditional, is "to bring the Government into hatred and contempt." The Dublin patriots do not yet feel satisfied at having practically given a national name to their principal street : they hope to do the same to all the others that have received Saxon names from their conquerors, like Nassau Street, Brunswick Street, Grafton Street, Northumberland Boad, and many others. One cannot blame them, provided they do not revert to certain of the old names, which are really too barbarous, like, for instance, that of Machillamocholmog Street, which I see on an old map. With this end in view, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Sheriffs study diligently the many historical recollections of their town. Unfortunately, for the most part they are of a tragic nature, as they are everywhere in this country, the result being that though the history of old Dublin is very interesting, the actual memorials of it are rare. To preserve even these ruins Ireland must enjoy a peace and prosperity which have never yet fallen to her lot.

The word Dublin signifies *blackmarsh*, a term justified by the soil, as well as by the condition of the Liffey at low tide. The buoys which mark out its course for some distance into the bay might almost have been dispensed with—its muddy waters are a sufficient guide for

the ships that ascend its channel. It was only at the invasion of the Danes at the end of the eighth century that Dublin grew to be of any importance. In a chart, dated 904, it is called the “*Very Noble City*.” Among other Scandinavian princes who reigned there, tradition tells of the giant McTorcall, who, with one blow of his battle-axe, mowed down the horsemen like ripe corn. When the sea king’s power was brought to an end in 1014, the colonists who wished to embrace Christianity were permitted to remain, on payment of tribute to the Celtic kings of Munster. In 1172, the treachery which delivered Ireland over to the Anglo-Normans opened to them the gates of the town, which King Henry II. gave as a present “to his good citizens of the City of Bristol.” He soon came over to hold a parliament with great pomp, when most of the Irish princes, beginning with the *Ardreigh* Rory O’Connor, swore faith and loyalty to him—“a form which they considered worthless,” as certain national historians naively say. But the Norman knights thought differently ; and after 700 years England and Ireland still suffer from the consequences of this more or less wilful misunderstanding. Since then Dublin has been the capital of the *pale*—territory occupied by officers of the British crown. At the beginning of the thirteenth century a strong fortress was built, which has been used since the reign of Elizabeth as the residence of the Lord-Lieutenant and the seat of civil and military government. The foundations only now remain. The present castle is an irregular pile of heavy and sombre-looking buildings, of no particular style, forming two huge quadrangles, without character or grandeur. It is cold, ugly, and melancholy ; only two of the buildings are of any interest. One is a chapel in the flamboyant style, but of no historical value as it dates from the beginning of this century ; the other is a massive round tower, with battlements, called “Bermingham,” from the name of a powerful Anglo-Saxon family, who once held the office of chief judge, which has been so well restored that not one stone of the old keep is left. Formerly a state prison, it is celebrated in Ireland for the dramatic escape of Hugh O’Donnell the Red, who, after receiving favours from Queen Elizabeth, revolted against her ; but at the end of eight years’ of durance vile he managed to regain his principality of Donegal.

Not far from this melancholy castle, the object of hatred to all Irish patriots, and one that they need have no artistic scruple in razing to the ground the day their dream of deliverance is realized, are two large buildings, facing each other, with deplorable Greek façades—one of the Ionic, and the other of the Corinthian order. The first is the old Parliament-house, which, since the union of the two kingdoms, has been turned into a bank. Each time that Daniel O’Connell passed by this temple of lost liberty he uncovered, as a sign of respect and grief. The Irish have, however, little reason to regret a House of Commons which betrayed and sold them, and where a seat could be bought for gold, like that of Lord Castlereagh, who paid for his election the trifling sum of £10,000 sterling. Besides, the Nationalists of to-day say that when they have their own Parliament (the Parliament of Parnell, as that was the Parliament of Grattan) it is not there they will assemble ; they will build yet another house for it, far more beautiful than the last. In this poor country people are possessed by the mania of doing things in grand style.

*Dear dirty Dublin !* Such are the familiar terms—now become proverbial—in which Lady Morgan, in her writings, apostrophizes her native town. Dear dirty Dublin is nothing more than a conglomeration of poor quarters, whose misery overflows on to the doorsteps of the rich, resembling in that respect the cities of former times, where the classes elbowed each other much more than they do in the towns of this democratic age.

## Galway and the Highlands of Connemara.

OF the numerous bays which fringe the Irish coast, especially on the west, that of Galway is, without exception, the finest ; tradition says, that it is the site of a lake known in the old chronicles by the name of Lough Lurgan. The encroachments of the ocean must have, at one time, broken down the coast, from the Witches Head to Travor Bay, for a length of twenty miles, only leaving a few fragments, which are now the Isles of Arran ; and the salt water must have invaded the lake, and penetrated thirty miles inland, measuring from the middle of the North Channel to Kilcrogan Point.

From the pretty beach of Salthill, which is a suburb of Galway, the eye takes in this vast watery plain, indented with the inland bays of Oranmore, Kinvarra, Dunbellaun, and Ballyvaughan. In the south, the horizon is bounded by the strange amphitheatre of the Burren of Clare, which, bathed in purple mist, appears like the ruin of a fantastic palace of white marble. From the Black Point, a dark line indicates the formidable wave-beaten barrier of the Cliffs of Moher, reaching as far as the Witches Head, behind which the coast suddenly disappears.

On the west, the three isles of Arran bar the entrance to the bay with their huge rocky fronts. The entrance through these is difficult, and neutralizes the natural advantages of this fine anchorage. Galway being the nearest European port to New York—2,700 miles—it was proposed to make it the head-quarters of the transatlantic line. The crossing would have the advantage of being eight hours' shorter than by Queenstown, and the mail expenses would have been considerably reduced ; so four million francs were spent in jetties, quays, docks, and basins. But here, things are started with energy, and never finished. The loss of a large steamer, which struck on a forgotten reef, and foundered in sight of the port, damped all enthusiasm, and, except a few emigrant ships, the sea-traffic of Galway is nil. Where is to be found food for commercial enterprise in this country, with deserts of stone, heather and turf such as I have already described ? The people would be very much put to it to export products that are hardly sufficient to keep them alive ; as for the numerous articles of importation that they really require, they have no money to pay for them. It is the same all through Ireland. But nowhere is commercial and industrial stagnation so profound as in Galway. We are in Connaught, the most barren of the four provinces, and at the same time the most overpopulated. The connection between the two is not entirely chance, nor must it be entirely attributed to the general fact that the fecundity of a population is in proportion to its poverty. In the brutal times of the conquest, the English thought they could transplant the Irish beyond the Shannon, to avoid being disturbed in their new domains. The western counties still suffer from the great transplanting effected by Cromwell in 1654.

Mr. Parnell and his friends are credited with the converse project, if they ever become masters, of arranging an exodus of the surplus population of Connaught into the richer lands of the south and the East, but no one foresees that the result of this would be to pauperize one set without enriching the other. In the present state of agriculture and Irish industry Ulster is comfortably off ; Leinster makes the two ends meet ; Munster is poor ; Connaught is poverty-stricken. In all this, one does not clearly see the elements of that National prosperity associated by Home Rulers with the obtaining of Irish autonomy.

Although the aspect of Galway may distress an economist, it will delight the traveller in search of picturesque impressions. It is the capital of the " Wild West" of primitive Ireland, whose history is nothing but a dim legend, Nothing is known of this town before the invasion, for the Danes never got so far, except that it belonged to the clan of the fierce O'Flahertys, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Anglo-Norman colonists settled there

under the sovereignty of the House of Burgho—thirteen families, called “ The Tribes of Galway,” mentioned in the popular lines :—

Athy, Blake, Bodkin,  
Brown, Deane, D'Arcy, Lynch,  
Joyce, Kerivan, Martin,  
Morris, Skerret, French.

The greater part of them have fallen into decay—the fate of everything in Ireland ; and at each step one sees these names over low little shops, side by side with the native O's and Mac's. A hundred years later, the intruders were so well “ Irishized,” that at the time of the assassination of the Red Earl of Ulster they openly revolted against the Crown, and it was more than two centuries before the country was subdued—in the reign of Elizabeth.

In Irish history the word submission must be understood in the sinister sense of the “ Peace of Warsaw” of the Czar Nicholas. The English knew the value of the saying, “ When the beast is dead the poison is dead !” yet both Cromwell and William of Orange had to go with soldiers and cannon to destroy the germs of rebellion that remained. There are represented in Galway the three elements that go to make up the present population of the island : the pure Irish, of Celtic origin, whose migration dates back from pre-historic times ; the Anglo-Irish, descendants of the Anglo-Norman conquerors of the twelfth century, who were absorbed into the native race, and remain Catholics ; and the English Protestants, descended from the adventurers of the time of Elizabeth and James I., colonies of soldiers, Puritans and Orangemen, whom Paddy obstinately refuses, not without reason, to recognize as compatriots, though they may have been established in the Emerald Isle for more than 200 years. It is right to say that the thirteen tribes were so turbulent and violent that Galway did not lose any more by their fall than by that of the Thanists whom they supplanted. The Lynch family is the one most renowned in history—one of them, James Fitz Stephen, mayor of the town in the twelfth century, deserves the name of the Irish “ Manlius” for having put to death his only son, who was guilty of mutiny on board ship. The young man was going to be judged when his father, learning that a deputation from the family meant to solicit his pardon, cut short all disputes by hanging him to a window of the house. A stone, fastened into the black wall of the cemetery of St. Nicholas and bearing the inscription—“ 1524 : Think of Death : All is Vanity !”—under a scull and two cross-bones, commemorates this deed of Roman justice. The house, known as “ Lynch Castle,” which was the scene of this domestic tragedy, is the best preserved of all the old feudal houses so numerous in Galway. One would be sorry to see a grocer's shop occupying the ground-floor if one did not remember that it is to this democratic use that it owes its preservation. But nowhere have I seen so many ruins. One could easily believe the town had just been sacked ; side by side with old buildings, whose dilapidated stone-work is blackened by age and damp, are deserted shops, silent mills, and desolate houses, slowly crumbling into dust. With the exception of a cathedral of the thirteenth century, so well hidden in a labyrinth of dirty black streets that it is difficult to find it, and impossible to get a good view of it all at once, Galway has not a single monument. For a commercial traveller it is a very ugly town; for an artist it is “ amusing”—in studio jargon. A day might be spent in the fish-market, an irregular square, one side of which is formed by a deserted quay, and which is guarded by an old fortified gateway. Women squatting on the broken pavement with their goods, which consist of a large flat wicker-basket full of fresh herrings, mackerel and shell-fish, are waiting for buyers ; others stand round in groups, chattering and bargaining for an hour over a purchase that costs but a few pence. Their dress contributes not a little to the picturesqueness of the whole. Over bare legs, that are well made, unless deformed by rheumatism, which is the national disease of damp Erin, hang several petticoats, one on the top of the other, of coarse plash, in every tint of red ; over these a cloak

of the same stuff, but of bright blue, under which, held up by straps, is often a baby, with its head peering from under its mother's arm to enable it to breathe. Sometimes they have a basket, or sack, which carried behind, under the cloak, gives the woman a most extraordinary figure. The old ones wear hoods over their heads ; the young ones wear their natural head-covering of beautiful chestnut hair—fitting adornment to their oval face, with its delicately-cut features, brilliant blue eyes, and a complexion dazzling in its freshness, until privation and drink have laid on it their withering touch.

But if the young and pretty girls are very attractive, there is no sight so horrible as that of some old Irisliwomen, wrinkled and shrivelled up, with swollen legs, dim eyes, and hanging lip ; brutalized by the degradation of a life of misery, for which they seek unwholesome consolation in copious draughts of adulterated whisky. Their dress, moreover, which I have just described—often adorned with a questionable white apron—being destined to last a lifetime, the amount of dirt and rags increases with each year. Spun, woven, and dyed in the ruined hamlets of the Connemara highlands, the material, it is true, is strong, and so thick that the weight of so many petticoats worn one on the top of the other is very great ; but with time they get worn out, faded, patched with all sorts of parti-coloured bits, and lamentably frayed out at the hem.

A short time spent in the shops of Galway will give one an insight into the business habits of Ireland, as well as a clue to the chronic state of decay of this unhappy country. One does not find much in them, which is natural enough, considering the paucity of customers and their slender purses. But even to get that little, what time, what words and superfluous energy are wasted ! I remember the mending of an umbrella which gave me more trouble than the purchase of a complete set of furniture ; and the whole thing was so extraordinary, that my legitimate anger evaporated into a fit of laughter. I will add that the good temper of the Irishman was such, that instead of being offended at my laughter, he joined in with me, and refused all payment. Truth compels me also to admit that this umbrella held out to the end of my travels ; and heaven knows it was frequently put into requisition. Another time it was the purchase of a few sheets of drawing-paper that kept us a good hour at the principal stationer's in the town. But when travelling for pleasure and instruction it is useless to be impatient ; and, besides, one gains nothing by it. Someone else was buying wafers ; a third, a penny pencil, and a whole family were in consultation over the purchase of a bottle of ink : this was sufficient to flabbergast the husband, wife, and the small errand-boy ; in fact, if we had left without paying they would never have found it out. There is usually a desperate hunt for the zinc cash-box when change is wanted ; it is dragged about from counter to counter—the key being sometimes in one person's pocket, sometimes in another's. One characteristic feature of the lower classes is their familiar manner with their betters, which is not altogether devoid of respect. Impelled by their love of talk, as well as their wish to be of real use to anyone they recognize as a foreigner, they will give you information on many needful subjects ; but in return they expect you to confide in them all your plans and your impressions : and one must praise everything without reserve.

I leave at the post-office the address to which I want my letters forwarded ; and the clerk, seeing that I am about to explore Connemara, and being a native of those parts, forthwith overwhelms me with brotherly advice on the hygienic precautions that I must take with regard to my health ; asks if I have plenty of warm clothes and waterproof cloaks ; tells me the best inns, and warns me of the prejudices of poor-hearted tourists, who look on those mountains as a barbarous country. A moment afterwards at the station a porter, paternally this time, begs me not to be frightened by the agrarian agitation, which has prevented so many people from visiting Ireland ; then, as he is returning to the town, begs to be allowed to walk a little part of the way with me, learns with pleasure my nationality, questions me about General

Boulanger, asks whether France wishes for Monarchical restoration, and says that he considers Royalty a superannuated institution, which may be useful when it exists, but need not be renewed. Then, on leaving me, he says, “Au revoir, Madame,”—very proud of these three French words he has picked up somehow. I promised him that, on my return from Connemara, I would stop again at Galway on purpose to visit the Isles of Arran, but to my sorrow I was unable to do this after all, as my time did not allow of it, and the steamer only crossed to them once a week. But the Claddagh alone is worth a journey to Galway. This Gaelic word, which means beach, is the name of the fishing village situated on the other side of the river that joins the bay to Lough Corrib. One reaches it by a bridge, which unites it with the picturesque fish-market—a curious village, composed of low huts of rough stone-work, built anyhow, along the side of the lake, divided by small shingle-walls, on which linen and red rags are drying, and big pools of brackish water, where pigs and geese dabble about. Stunted bushes and trees grow in places sheltered from the sea-breeze, and by the side of a heap of manure and broken crockery may be seen a lovely fuchsia one mass of bloom, or a group of graceful tamarind trees.

The population of the Claddagh is about 4000, and is a small state within the State. Not only have the people intermarried exclusively among them-selves for 2000 years, but they do not even allow a stranger to settle among them. If a fisher-man from the neighbouring shore throws his nets into the bay, they are cut the first time ; the second time he himself receives personal injury. Fishing is their only industry. The salmon-fishing would be very lucrative if it were not appropriated by a company that work the mouth of Lough Corrib, who have erected weirs there, upon which one can see the salmon leap by hundreds. The people are content with mackerel and herrings, of which there are large shoals out at sea, and with the lobsters and crabs that they find in the bay. Money is scarce with them, and their daughters' dowries consist of a feather bed, a share in a boat, and a gold wedding-ring—a heart held between two hands—which descends as an heirloom from generation to generation. Here in Claddagh, as all through Ireland, they idle away their time, and half of the population will gather round an artist at his easel, though not always from curiosity. A well-known artist on *Punch's* staff arrived one day to sketch different types. How they discovered that the stranger was drawing caricatures for a *Sacsannach* newspaper no one could tell, but there was a disturbance among the people, and he would certainly have been ducked had he not been able to make them understand in English, strongly mingled with *brogue*, that, born in Ireland himself, he was not guilty of the intention of turning his com-patriots into ridicule in the eyes of their hereditary enemy ; after which, he departed quicker than he had come ! They have not a high idea of the art of painting ; they consider photography infinitely superior, because you can turn out forty pictures to one in the same time, and, contrary too to the generality of the lower classes in Ireland, they set no great store by intellectual culture. A newspaper even a week old is always received by Paddy with delight. I offered a young fisherman a *Freeman* of the day, but he declined it, saying, proudly, that, he did not know how to read.

Once see the interior of these Irish *cabins*, and you can then understand how much they prefer living out of doors. There is a low small room, lighted by the door (which is always open) and by a skylight, curtained by many thick layers of dust ; the blue smoke of the peat-fire escapes by a hole in the roof, and overcomes, by its pungent resinous smell, the stink of dirt and stale fish. Upon a low bench are the remains of the dinner ; a lean yellow cat is trying to pick up a livelihood among the fish-bones and potato peelings. In the corner a pallet, opposite a tumble-down cupboard ; a few rough seats, some broken-lipped pots and cracked saucepans lie in disorder on the clay floor ; nets and strings of salted herrings hang from soot-covered rafters.

The woman is netting. Upon the bench is some knitting—no doubt the work of that pretty girl of sixteen, who is leaning idly against the door-post, with her fresh bare arms crossed under her black-and-red tartan, vaguely looking at the sea with her great dark eyes. She is the eldest of the three surviving children ; several died young, and two boys were lost at sea. Polite, but reserved and somewhat shy, these women treat us as equals, complain of nothing, ask nothing. There is a great difference between this almost haughty bearing and the begging servility of the rest of the country. The influence of the sea has ennobled the people here.

This day we had to leave Galway because we were turned out. It was race-week, and all the rooms in the hotel had been engaged a month before. From an early hour Eyre Square, the centre of the town, where the hotels, banks, and clubs stand in a row round a railed-in public garden, presented a scene of extraordinary animation. Besides the neighbouring squires, with their families, on whose account we had to depart, and the Catholic priests, who are always in force at public gatherings, the farmers arrived, with wife and children, in their varnished deal traps or bright red cars, which they unhorsed in the street. They came in their Sunday clothes. Some of the old men were in their old-fashioned national dress—grey coats with square lappets and metal buttons, big waist-coats and short breeches of yellow velvet, long woollen stockings, tall hats of rough shiny rabbit-skin, immense red and green cravat. But black tail-coats were more common, with the younger men in tweed suits. The sight of such good stuffs and well-starched white shirts would not lead us to believe that they came from the hovels so often entered in our country excursions. All have some half-crowns in their pockets to put on a horse, or to spend with card-sharpers in the taverns. Absolute destitution must not be inferred from the wretched appearance of Ireland ; filth and rags go hand in hand with a certain amount of comfort ; and, besides, Paddy, unless he be reduced to extreme distress, always has some money to spend on pleasure. Beggars, cripples, and blind men have risen up as if from the earth. Young girls are dancing a jig upon a scrap of carpet to the sound of a shrill flute, dwarfs are making grimaces and contortions in the middle of a ring of loungers, ragamuffins run in and out of the shops selling race-cards for a penny, and as busy as a stockbroker at the busiest time of day. The sun is bright, the day is warm; everything is noise, movement, dust ; you might imagine yourself in a Spanish town intoxicated with the excitement of a bull-fight.

Necessity agreeing with inclination to make us flee from these mundane dissipations, we took our places at nine o'clock in the Royal Mail, which was to take us to the heart of Conneraara, fifty miles by mountain and valley, and accomplished in eight hours. I have described the jaunting car, with two wheels and seats for four. Make it longer, put it on four wheels, and add a raised seat for the driver, harness three strong horses, and you will have the vehicle which corresponds to the French *diligence*. Of course, it is always quite uncovered, as if the natives wished to make themselves believe it never rains in their country. The travellers seat themselves in a line like a string of onions, back to back, six or seven on a side, separated by a mountain of luggage, which, though well fastened with ropes, rocks in a disquieting way above our heads. If it all came down, we should be crushed to jelly, and at each lurch of the machine we think tow we shall be flattened out if it goes over. But, taking everything into consideration, tourists should be thankful for these means of locomotion, which, as a whole, are well arranged, even in the most forsaken districts. The credit is due to an Italian, named Bianconi, who, fifty years ago, set up as a post-master in Clonmel, in Tipperary, and kept as many as 1300 horses. He is still remembered, in spite of the building of railways, which, however, do not exist in this immense peat-moss, intersected with marshes, and broken by barren mountains. The only resources of this wretched district are poor pasturages, a very few potatoes, the quarries of Ballynahinch, which yield a pretty marble like the Italian *verde antico*, some veins of porphyry in the mountains, a small mine of argentiferous lead, and on the coast the kelp which is burnt for soda. And so, no wonder villages are less abundant than ruins.

Past Outgherad we enter the Highlands, a series of plateaus which rise gradually between the dome-shaped peaks, most inappropriately called the Twelve Pins. A swarm of little lakes enliven the moor with their silver mirrors. The pen gets tired of describing landscapes of ever-varying line and light and colour, to the service of which it can only apply a limited and monotonous vocabulary. The eye even becomes weary of looking, and when the traveller has had eight hours of the comfortable vehicle described above, he reaches a condition of half-awake somnambulism, which is pleasant enough but by no means intelligent, and lets himself go up and down to the soothing trot of the horses, not knowing where he is or where he is going.

If only it did not rain so much, this would be the most delightful country in the world. Fox used to ask everybody who arrived in Ireland —“ Has the shower finished.” It was rather exaggerated, for even in Ireland the showers do not last for years, but, in fact, they are very frequent, and though the continual movement of the clouds produces very beautiful skies, still you get tired of being so often wetted that you scarcely have time to dry. Sometimes the showers prolong themselves beyond all reasonable bounds. We were kept waiting forty-eight hours at Clifden, the terminus of the first day’s journey of the Royal Mail, by a deluge before which, with all our daring, we recoiled. It is a charming village—I mean town—it has 1300 inhabitants). Clifden, standing on a spur of the mass of the Twelve Pins at the end of the little bay of Ardbear, which, according to the geography-book, “ exports a considerable quantity of grain.” Where is this grain gathered ? I ask myself. Along the coast there is the usual number of little islands, peopled by one or two families of shepherds, tending a few cattle, amidst prehistoric ruins. As in all the west, the sea is superb, though its rage is here softened.

Do not believe that this enforced stoppage annoyed us much. All the cataracts of heaven would not prevent the natives setting forth if the whim seized them. And so, one of those days of drifting rain the two cars, coming from Galway to Westport, brought nineteen tourists, of both sexes, dripping like fountains, and as ravenous as wolves. Their arrival was something to see—very satisfactory to us, who had quietly spent the day in dryness by the side of a cheerful peat fire. Twenty-two people sat down to dinner—to judge by the astonishment of the staff, the Mullarkey Hotel had never seen so many before. The dinner will be cherished among the most joyful souvenirs of my life.

In Ireland, at the less pretentious *tables d’hôte* (which are the best), the chief dishes are put before the guests who happen to be at the ends of the tables ; they have to cut and serve themselves. This custom is not unpleasant—at any rate for people who are careful not to seat themselves in these places of honour. This evening, everyone had been careful, and the seats were unoccupied. After we had had one of those abominable soups of pepper and cloves, of which the secret is shared between England and Ireland, the rest of the dinner was brought in *en bloc*, in accordance with the custom that will have everything eaten together. Two legs of mutton, roasted to a turn, and swimming in a delicious gravy—the only triumph of Irish cookery—were put at one end of the table ; at the other were four of those boiled fowls, which would be excellent were they not dishonoured by a white paste, with chopped parsley in it—the national sauce. In the middle was an appetizing ham, full of cloves ; and arranged round, in delightful disorder, were half-a-dozen covered vegetable dishes, containing potatoes “ boiled in their jackets,” peas, beans, cauliflowers, and turnips—which are an indispensable accompaniment to every dish.

However, hungry as all were, they only looked at each other to know who would lift his murderous knife upon the victuals : no one stirred. The sharpest set are their bread. Consternation reigned : someone called the waiter, who, smitten with stupor, simply looked on at this Tantalus-like torture; he protested vigorously his ignorance of carving, and ended by dis-

appearing to escape the importunities of the travellers. At last one of them (it was a she) dragged the roast fiercely to her side, and furiously cut a few slices. That broke the charm : everybody began to help his neighbour, amid wild laughter, which, however, did not cause the loss of a single bite, for everything was quickly scraped to the bone. The same reception was given to the sweets—rice pudding and badly-cooked gooseberry pie eaten together, with milk and a sprinkling of sugar. Soon a guest, appeased but not satiated, rose to bring the Cheddar cheese, which the confused waiter had forgotten on the sideboard. With it celery or radish was munched, and dry biscuits with plenty of butter. It was a lively dinner, and though we have eaten more savoury ones in better restaurants, yet they were not seasoned with such an appetite.

Except at the pretentious hotels of the large towns, this menu is pretty constant : the mutton is sometimes replaced by an excellent duck, with quite a wild flavour, but spoilt by a stuffing of aromatic herbs. On fast-days you get two or three plates of fish, fried, boiled, and roasted ; salmon, mackerel or herrings, or most often a kind of big sole, with softer and fatter flesh : for infidels, the everlasting ham or cold lamb is provided. The classical roast beef of England is uncommon. Lunch is served *à la carte* about one o'clock. This is the dialogue that always takes place on the subject : “ What can you give us ?” The waiter, or the maid, with a dignified air, “ Whatever you like.” “ Well ?” “ Chops or steaks.”—Yes, a little like shoe-leather the beefsteaks, and it is sad to see how the nice cutlets are spoiled by frying.—“ Nothing else ?” With hesitation : “ Steaks or chops.” “ Hum.” Then, with an air of triumph, “ Eggs and bacon.”

Do not ask for more, but choose your eggs and bacon, or cutlets or beefsteak. With tea, always of good quality, of which you get to drink pints in a day, and the addition of milk of innocent purity, accompanied by excellent bread, toasted, if you like, and no less excellent butter and some delicious marmalade, a very decent lunch can be made, much more healthy, too, all things considered, than the abominable ragouts so pompously served in most second-rate hotels.

But enough of this gastronomic digression ! Passing Letterfrack, a clean little hamlet at the foot of the Diamond Hill, we come to the narrow defile of Kylemore,, which winds along between Maamturk and the northern parts of the Twelve Needles. Here there remains one of those rare primæval forests that formerly covered Ireland. Here, too, by the edge of a romantic lake, that might be the habitation of banshees and their queen Maobh, Mr. Mitchell Henry, M.P., has built himself a splendid residence. Soon the road descends to the sea, and rounds the double Bay of Killery, resembling those fjords we see in Norwegian paintings. The little village of Leenane, at the end of the bay, at the foot of the oddly-shaped peak called the Devil's Mother, owes its prosperity to the sportsmen who come to stay in the fine season. Fishermen find plenty of amusement in the little lakes of the district and in the streams that fall into the bay. Either gratuitously or by payment—according as the proprietor's financial condition allows him to be liberal or not—they can catch with the line salmon of ten and twenty pounds, and trout, both sea and river, of which half a day's fishing will yield a dozen, varying from two to ten pounds. Perch are plentiful in the lakes, also immense jack, of thirty pounds weight, whose jaws often deprive the novice of his tackle and rod.

When we were climbing a hill, escorted by a dozen ragamuffins, of both sexes, I unfolded a map : at once a girl of thirteen, with red hair, wearing an old yellow jersey of her father's, and a rag of a red petticoat, asked me “ If it was the map of Ireland ?” When I said yes, she wished to see it, and showed me, almost without mistake, the mountains and the courses of the rivers. In France it would not be necessary to penetrate into our mountainous wilds to find peasants, old and young, incapable of such a feat. At eighteen this girl will go out to service

as “ general servant,” otherwise “ maid-of-all-work,” at Galway or Dublin, or even in London or New York, knowing in all how to boil potatoes, to knit socks and dance the jig. The great Irish judge, Sir Michael Morris, said, lately, “ It is a hopeless task for a stupid people to govern a quickwitted one.” Perhaps it is true. Still, when this intelligent nation is starving, while that other is bursting with riches for all its stupidity (the word is not mine but the eminent magistrate’s), the conclusion is, that doubtless these intelligent people are lacking in some quality essential to prosperity ; and a comparison between the peasants of Auvergne and of Ireland shows easily that intelligence is rather harmful than otherwise, when it is a question of digging the ground.

Another trait, besides those I have already told, will give an idea of the carelessness that in practical life spoils “ wit.” If it rains as they are starting, the drivers of the public cars cover the luggage with a tarpaulin ; but if the downpour is as yet only threatened, be the sky black as ink, and the wind laden with colds in the head, this preservative measure is not taken. We are in a country where the national formula of salute is “ Fine day !” no matter if it is pouring in torrents, for then they add, with a smile, “ Oh, it’s going to clear up.” If the sun is shining —“ Splendid day” is the exclamation ; and the reply—“ Glorious.” The morning we left Clifden for Westport it was clear to any creature of sense that the shower had not said its last word : no matter, it was not raining, so—“ Fine day !” After a few miles it came down in cataracts, and for two mortal hours we were submitted to a dreadful shower-bath. You can be philosophical for yourself ; but it makes you wild to think that your boxes are all wet for want of a little common sense and a piece of tarpaulin. When you get to the dining-place not only the unhappy boxes, reduced to the state of sponges, but the bags and small packages, hitherto protected in the well, are thrown out in the mud, and remain there in the pelting rain. No one thinks of taking them inside, and the natives seem to think it is all right. Ask someone to look after your belongings, and he will reply, graciously, “ All right, sir,” “ In a moment, lady,” and will do nothing. There is nothing left but to drag your luggage inside yourself.

An hour later, a brilliant sun beams on the dripping country. But now, have no anxiety : as a few drops were still falling when we started, the luggage, now completely soaked, is carefully covered by the tarpaulin, and no consideration, human or divine, will induce the guard to uncover them to get dry. And so, when you arrive at your lodging, drenched to the bone, you will only be able to change into linen that requires wringing. It is certain that people with their common sense thus developed, do not make their fortunes !

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