

## Inland charms of county Clare

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*Ireland*

*its scenery, character*

*and history*

Samuel Carter & Anna Marie Hall

During our stay in Limerick we made a visit to Killaloe, which is situated also on the Shannon, about twelve miles north of that city. It is one of the remarkable or memorable places of Ireland ; the celebrated Brien Boru (or, of the tributes), one of the most distinguished of the ancient Irish monarchs, having resided in its vicinity, as did many of his ancestors, as well as successors of his line.

Killaloe lies on the Clare side of the river, and is approached from that of the county of Tipperary by an excellent bridge of nineteen arches, which crosses above the rapids in the only fordable part of the Shannon. Some of the arches are ancient ; three or four in the centre, of ample span, were built in 1825. Below this a ledge of rocks obstructs the navigation, and in time of flood the fall of water has a magnificent effect as it passes over it ; above the bridge the river is cut up by numerous eel and salmon weirs. The canal between Limerick and Lough Derg, constructed for the avoidance of the falls, terminates a little above the bridge, where the river is deeper and more tranquil, and from thence steamers ply between the town and Portumna. At either side of the bridge, occupying the extent of two small islets, are two ruinous castlets of the ante-Tudor era, which formed the ancient defences of the pass. The town, situate on the hill-side, is old, poor, small, irregular, and neglected. Its population is about one thousand. It contains two cathedrals, the Protestant and Roman Catholic ; the latter, a new unfinished structure, in a very plain pointed style. In the neighbourhood are some excellent slate-quarries, which are actively wrought ; there is also a mill for polishing and preparing marble, brought down the Shannon by the steamers, and which, when manufactured, is exported to England and elsewhere. The old cathedral is a cruciform building, surmounted in the centre by a low massive tower. The style of this structure is of a mixed character ; that predominant in it is the early Gothic, but portions of it, in the Romanesque, indicate a higher antiquity. The history of this building informs us, that it was founded (it should be, reconstructed) in 1160 by Donald O'Brien, King of Thomond ; but we also find amongst the few peaceable acts of his predecessor, Brien Boru, that he caused the church of Killaloe to be *repaired*—that was, one hundred and forty-six years earlier. These statements are verified by the present appearances of the building ; portions of the old church of Brien may be found in the nave, where a highly-ornamented Romanesque door remains, closed up—ignorantly called by some Boru's tomb. The lancet style of the rest of the building is at once referable to the age of Donald. The whole is about two hundred feet in length, the span of the roof being fifty feet. The windows are narrow lancets, splayed inwards. That of the chancel consists of three lights, the centre being round-headed ; those at each side are pointed ; they are surmounted by a weather cornice ; at the east end angles are two straight pilaster-like buttresses. The nave is a large, void, and naked-looking space, not used for service. The north transept has been converted into a school-house, under the stair in which lay, thrown from its pedestal, the old floridly-ornamental font. In the same enclosure with the cathedral stands a still more ancient stone-roofed church. It is considerably decayed, and sadly wants the friendly assistance of the renovator. Its high-pitched roof is covered with mosses, small ferns, and shrubs, which have inserted their roots between the interstices of the stones. The dimensions of this building are not large. At the west end is a round-headed door, now walled up. The arch, which is deeply moulded, rests upon two short columns, on the capitals of which are carved figures resembling those of a baboon and an elephant. Over this, near the apex of the gable, is a small round-headed window, narrower at the arch spring than at the base. The eastern wall also possessed an opening, as if into some lesser external building once annexed to it ; but a Gothic pointed arch, now closed up, shows that it was not of the same antiquity as the rest of the building ; above this, corresponding to the round-headed window of the western wall, is one of those ancient Pelasgic lancet windows

found only in the round towers, and their immediate successors—the small, early *damhliags*, or stone churches.

On an island below the bridge, and in front of the episcopal grounds, is another stone-roofed church, which bears all the characteristics of a still higher antiquity. The stones with which it is constructed are of large size, fitted to each other in the cyclopic or polygonal manner. The door is framed of great stones, and covered in by a single lintel. It is broader at the base than at the head. To the antiquary, this building possesses, in its architectural details, a greater interest than the old church near the cathedral. It is considered to prove, that with the change of religion, from Paganism to Christianity, there was no change of architectural style.

The history of Killaloe is little better than a record of its various destructions and resuscitations : thus, in 1061, 1080, 1116, 1154, and 1155, it was successively burned. The only other event of interest in its story beyond what appertains to its church, is the building of a bridge here, in 1054, by Turlogh O'Brien. We ascertain its materials from a mention of it in the Four Masters, at 1170, where it is called the "Clar droichet Cilledalua," the timber bridge of Killaloe. This did not outlast two centuries, as in the beginning of the fourteenth century the passage was only known by its ford, then called *Claris ford*, from Thomas de Clare, who had obtained possessions in the east of Clare from one of the Princes of Thomond. The power of the De Clares was, however, but temporary, for about forty years afterwards, the victorious Morrogh O'Brien, "of the Ferns," resumed his authority over the place, and Killaloe became known again by its former denomination. Of the palace of *Kincora*, the seat of the celebrated Boru, no vestiges remain beyond one fort, still called Bal-Boru, which formed one of its adjuncts. This site was the chosen residence of several of the kings of Munster and North Munster, before the accession of the most distinguished of them, Brien Boroimhe (pronounced Boru), in the latter part of the tenth century; but it was under Brien himself, who held his court here, both as king of Munster, and afterwards as monarch of all Ireland, that the place obtained its greatest celebrity. After his death, at the celebrated battle of Clontarf, in 1014, where the power of the Northmen was for ever broken in Ireland, his children and successors continued to inhabit Kincora for some generations, but the "palace" shared largely in their reverses. Connected with Kincora, was a character not less famed than the patriot monarch Brien himself, although in a different vocation ; this was his chief bard MAC LIAG, a few of whose productions have reached posterity. Among them is a "Lament for Kincora," occasioned by the death of Brien. And well might he mourn ; for a prince more generous than the fallen monarch, laureat never bewailed. Rich, various, and frequent were the *cumals* of cattle, the cloaks, the ounces, the brooches and rings of gold bestowed on him for his lays. Nor long did the grateful bard survive the loss of his munificent master he ... died in the year succeeding the fatal battle of Clontarf.

Almost all traditional memory of Kincora, as far as we are able to collect, appears to be lost here. One old woman only was able to tell us that Bal-Boru Fort was Brien's parlour, and that "his kitchen was at Kincora, where the steam-boat station now is." Thus have even the ruins and their memory perished. But still, the people of Ireland

"Remember the glories of Brien the Brave,  
Though the days of the hero are o'er ;  
Though, lost to Momonia and cold in the grave,  
He returns to Kincora no more."

While speculating as to the probable site of the Palace of many kings, and giving scope to our fancy by calling up a long array "of chiefs and ladies bright," listening to the harp of the old minstrel, we were suddenly startled by the distant sound of the bagpipes. It was two years ago, and there was a fair in the neighbourhood ; we followed the music, and after walking through a gathering crowd—it was too early for the sports to begin we made our way into a tent, and were there introduced, not to the bard of the brave Brien, but to his successor, the village-piper, and, perhaps, one of the last of his *original* race—for the class is rapidly "going out ;" faction-fights have altogether ceased, and dances are, now-a-days, few and far between. The piper consequently finds it a hard matter to live by his music. But his worst "enemies" are the "brass-bands" of the Temperance Societies ; they are now become so numerous as to be found in nearly every town, and at the time of which we write had

attained sufficient popularity to make the old pipers, and their adherents, tremble for the results. We found one, as we have invariably found his fellows, very “chatty” and communicative, mourning over “ould times” as pathetically as did his great prototype Mac Liag over the downfall of Kincora ; wrathful exceedingly upon two or three points,—the decay of mountain stills, the decline of dancing, the departure of all spirit out of the hearts of “the boys,” and, above all, the introduction of “brass-bands,” from which was to be dated the ruin of Ireland. We were greatly amused with and interested in the old man, of whom “the neighbours” told us much ; and perhaps the reader will permit us to print a passage from his auto-biography.

Rory Oge, or Young Rory, as he is always called, is as enthusiastic and yet as *knowing* a piper as ever “blew music out of an empty bag.” He is now or rather was when we saw him a large portly man, with a bald high brow, down either side of which flowed a quantity of greyish flaxen hair; his nose had a peculiar “twist,” and his mouth was the mouth of a Momus—full of ready laughter. He was blind from his birth, and jested at this infirmity with great good humour : sometimes he would say that the fairies took away his eyes, “they war so handsome ;” or that he was blinded “out of mercy to the girls,” who, but for that, would have broke their hearts after him ; that they would give him no peace as it was, but that, sure, if the thought of what he would be, “if his blinkers were to the fore,” almost made himself mad—what would it make others?

Rory was in great request all over the country. His father, “Red Rory,” the sire, had been universally admired, and Oge inherited his reputation; but the son laid claim to greater musical knowledge than the father. Red Rory never attempted other than the old-established Irish tunes ; while Rory Oge, who had visited Dublin, and once heard Catalani sing, assumed the airs of a connoisseur, and extolled his country’s music in a scientific way. When he played some of the heart-moving Irish planxtys, at the commencement of the movement he would endeavour to look grave and dignified ; but before he was half through, his entire face expanded with merriment, and he would give “a whoop” with voice and fingers, as it was concluded, that manifested his genuine enthusiasm. Once in his life he had visited Dublin ; it was, as we have intimated, for the purpose of hearing Catalani ; and when he was in, the mood, his uncourtly auditors used to derive great pleasure from the recital of his interview with the Queen of Song.

“You see,” he would commence, “I thought it was my duty to hear what sort of a voice she had ; and on my way to the grate city, in the cool of the evening, just by a place—they call it by the name of ‘the Meeting of the Wathers’—in the county Wicklow, if ye ever heerd tell of it, and if ye didn’t ye’ve a grate loss. Well, just in the cool of the evening, I sat, myself and my little boy, by the side of the two strames—and I’ve always observed that birds sing most and best by the sides of rivers—and it wasn’t long till a thrush began in a rowan-tree on the opposite bank, and then another ; and then a blackbird would give his tally-ho ! of a whistle, high and above all the rest ; and so they went on singing together for ever so long ; then, two or three would stop, and one grate songster would have it all his own way for a while, until the rest would stand it no longer ; and then they’d hark in together, and if there was any pause, why you’d hear, maybe, the thin, fine note of a finch, or one of the little hedge birds, like a single thread of silver—so low, and light, and sweet, and delicate ; and then the grate flood of music would gush out again. In the midst of it all, the little gorsoon fell asleep—and by the same token, fine melody ever and always set that boy sleeping—and I felt the tears come down my face just with thinking of the beautiful music the Almighty puts into the throats of them fluttering birds, and wondering if the furrin lady could bate the thrush in the rowan-tree. In the afternoon of the next day I was in Dublin, and thinking she was to sing that night, I had hurried meeself ; but not a bit of her was to tune it up till the night afther, and I was kilt intirely with the impatience, and so—but I’ll tell you all about it, straight. Why, God bless ye, the Dublineers were going just as mad about her singing, as they are now about them nasty, braying, brass-bands—my bitter curse on ’em—that has no more of the rale music in them than a drove o’ donkeys. I’ll say nothing about the Temperance at all—but as to the bands ! Well, dears, I’ll not be thinking of them now, putting me past my patience, only just come to the furriner, and more’s the pity she was one ; so, as I said, think-ing, as I was a born musician, and all my family for hundreds of years before me, I thought, for the honour of the counthry, I’d call upon her ; for, troth, I was just fairly ashamed of the fellows that war round her, from all I heerd, giving her no idea of the rale music of Ireland, only playing, night afther night, at the theatre, St. Patrick’s Day ; as if there was ne’er another saint in the calendar, nor e’er another tune in

the country. Well, I got my pipes claned, and my little guide-boy a bran new shoot of cloes ; and to be sure I was in the first fashion ; and the lace ruffles round my wrists, that my father wore when he rattled the fox-hunter's jig to the House of Commons, there, in College Green. And I sent up my card, and by the same token, it was on the back of the tin o' diamonds I had it wrote ; I knew the card by the tin pricks of a nail Jemmy Bulger put in it ; for I always had great divarshion with the cards, through the invirition of Jemmy—rest his soul !—giving me eyes, as I may say, in the tops of my fingers ; and I got the man where I put up to write on it, ' Rory Oge, the piper of all Ireland and His Majesty, would be proud to insense Madame Catherlany into the beauties of Irish music.' Ye see, the honour of ould Ireland's melodies put heart into me ; and I just went up stairs as bould as a ram, and before she could say a word, I recited her four varses, my own poethry, that I made on her. Oh, bedad, girls! you may wink and laugh ; but I'll tell you what—that was what *she* didn't do. ' Only, Mister Ror Ogere,' she said, not understand-ing you see, and spaking English with the short unmusical clip the Englishers put on their words, ' I'm glad to see you, and I'll not be *insensed* at anything you plase to say.' ' I'm sorry for it, my lady,' I makes answer, ' though to be sure it's only faamale nature to shut their beautiful eyes upon sense of all kinds.' Well, I can't think she understood me rightly, which maybe was natural, living as she did among furriners ; but she was as kind as a born Irish ; she asked me to sit down and play her an ' Irish jig ;' and I just said a few words, by the way, to let her see that I wasn't a mere bog-throtting piper, but one that could play anything, Handel or Peter Purcel, or any of the Parley-voos ; and betwixt and between them all, there isn't a better air in any of their Roratoreys than a march my own father played one day that restored an ould colonel officer to the use of his limbs—there was the power of music for you !—and maybe she didn't think so, and asked me to play it—and maybe she wasn't de-lighted ! Well, though I was consated enough to be proud at traducing to her my own family's music, *it was the music of my counthry my heart bate to tache her* ; and so after awhile I led on from one to another the fine ould ancient airs, the glories of Ireland—the melodies ; and, after all, that's but a poor word to express them in all their grandeur and variety, for melody seems a feeble thing, sweet and feeble ; but the wonder of the Irish music—do ye see me now—is that its sweetness is never feeble, and its strength never rude ; it's just a holy and wonderful thing, like the songs of the birds by the meeting of the wathers, or the talking to-gether of angels.—Well, jewel Oge ! maybe she didn't drink them down ; and then ' stop,' she'd say, and tune them over every note as clear and pure—the darling ! faix, I almost forgot the air when she got round it, every note she'd give as clear as the silver bell that the fairees (God bless us!) do be ringing of a midsummer night under the green hills ; and then she'd say, ' Play another,' and in the midst of it all, would have my little guide into the room and trated us like a queen to fine ancient wine : and now she says, (and didn't *that* shew the lady she was ?) and now she says, ' You've played for me, and I'll sing for you ;' and—she—did—sing !”

“ And what did you do, Rory Oge, agra ?” one of his audience would inquire.

“ Why, then, just forgot my dignity altogether; and before she'd half done, I fell upon my knees ; I couldn't tell how I did it or why, but I *did* it, and stopt there till it was finished, every note ; and bedad, girls—and now you'll think this hard to believe, but it's true—*she put me out of consate with the pipes !* she did, bee Jakers! it was as good as a week before I could tatter a note out of 'em; and I left myself a beggar going to hear her sing ; and sure enough didn't I rejoice I gave her a taste of the melodies before I heerd her, for I don't think I could have played a note before her aafter. So,” added Rory, drawing himself up, “ you may judge what she was—I never forgot her, and if the Lord had given me a minute's sight to see if she was like her music, I think—the Holy Mother forgive me—I think I should have died a hap-pier man ; and yet, when I was laving her, she said, spaking of my music, that I had delighted, but not *insensed* her about Ireland music : the craythur spoke broken English, you see, and understood nothing else.”

“ Rory Oge,” said a pretty blue-eyed girl, nodding her head at us to lead us to understand that she was quizzing him, “ do you mind last year, the time you sat under where you are now, and never heeded the fight outside, nor the breaking up of the fair, and the stripping of the tent, and you playing away for the dear life, and how you kissed old Molche Brenan —thinking it was me, and yer wife to the fore.”

“ Ah ! Peggy,” exclaimed Rory, “ it's just jealousy makes you tell that.”

“ That was before the brass-bands took the shine out of the pipes.”

Rory Oge grasped his hat, and without a word, flung it in the direction of where the laughing girl had been, “ To the dickens with all brass-bands,” he exclaimed, “ and I hope I’ll see the end of them, the hallooing, groaning, thieving vagabones. I’ll engage, if my pipes met with a misfortune, I’d have to thavel the counthry before I’d gather enough to buy me an-other, while there’s pounds upon pounds paid for their roaring.”

“ Why, then, that’s thru for you, Rory Oge, darling,” replied the girl in a tone of most provoking sympathy ; “ but sure you played them down once in the Main Street, anyhow.”

“ Bedad, that’s thru, Peggy ; they were drivin’ at ‘ God save the Queen’ at one end of the street, and I struck up ‘ St Patrick’s Day’ at the other and maybe the boys didn’t gather to me ; sorra a dozen staid with the *braishers* !”

We left Rory in despair at the state of national music, and full of dread that, owing to the heresy of brass-bands, he would be the last of the pipers.

We are limited to a very brief view of the interior and the northern districts of the county of Clare ; the southern and western coasts, bounded by the Atlantic and the Shannon, supply more attractive and important objects for the tourist. Ennis, the assize-town, is situated nearly in the centre of the county. It is very irregularly built, and watered by the rapid and turgid Fergus here navigable only for small boats. The streets, which are rather narrow, and kept in no very excellent condition, are paved with limestone. The original name of the town was *Inisluan ruadha*, a name still preserved in Clonroad, one of its suburban districts. In this lay the mansion of O’Brien, the lord paramount of Thomond, under the Tanistic institute. The holder of this chieffy having, in the reign of Henry VIII., laid down his title of O’Brien and received that of Earl of Thomond, his indignant followers and liege men set his dwelling on fire, and would have burned himself in the flames, but for the interference of Mac Clanchy, the chief-justice of the native Irish in North Munster. The abbey church is an ill-assorted combination of the ancient and modern, the nave of a fine old monastery having been re-paired and covered in. On the central bell-tower angular pinnacles are placed. The friary of Ennis or Inisluan ruadha was erected in 1240, by Donagh Cairbrach O’Brien, for Conventual or Grey Friars of the Franciscan order, more commonly called Friars Minors. In 1305, it was repaired by one of the family of the founder, and many rich gifts were presented to it. Several of the chiefs of Thomond—the O’Briens, Macnamaras, &c.—were interred within its sacred precincts. In 1343, one of the latter race built the refectory and sacristy, and soon after died here, in the habit of the order. In 1540, the house was reformed by the Franciscans of the Strict Observance.

In front of the little bay of Skariff, which lies at the upper extremity of Loughderg (one of the many lake-like expansions of the Shannon) is a group of three small islets—the principal of which, Iniscealtra, or Holy Island, contains twenty acres. It has been famous from very early ages for its reputed sanctity: it possesses structures belonging to the Pagan as well as Christian periods ;—a round tower and seven small churches, or rather cells or oratories. The round tower is about seventy feet high, and in good preservation. The principal church is called Teampol Camin, or the Chapel of Saint Camin, because that saint was either the founder, or patron. From the little delivered to us by the old hagiologists, we collect that Camin flourished in the first half of the seventh century ; that he was of the princely house of Hy Kinselagh (in Leinster), and half-brother of Guare, the generous King of Connaught. Be-taking himself to the seclusion of Iniscealtra, he there led a life of contemplation and great austerity, the fame of which attracted to its shores numbers desirous of imitating his virtues and receiving instruction. The concourse of these disciples became at length so great, that the holy man was compelled to found a place for their reception and shelter, and thus originated a monastery, which in after times enjoyed a far-spread reputation, and was deemed one of the *asylums of Ireland*. Camin died somewhat about the year 658. He wrote a Commentary on the Psalms collated with the Hebrew text—a copy of which was seen by Archbishop Usher.

Of the civil history of the island the facts are few ; they may be classed under the head of Danish invasions, which succeeded each other in 834, in 908, and 946. The Irish themselves sometimes also

disregarded the sanctity of this holy islet, as we find a devastation of this kind by some unscrupulous freebooter in 949, just three years after the last wasting by the northern Vikings. In 980 the heroic monarch, Brian Boru, re-edified the church of Iniscealtra. The neighbouring waters were in after years the scene of several conflicts between the fleets (not, doubtless, of very large craft) of his descendants and those of the O'Connor dynasty of Connaught.

Holy Island continues a favourite burial-place with the peasantry ; and, although its religious establishments are ruined and desecrated, the ancient sanctity of its character still endures ; and pilgrims from remote distances seek its shores. On the *patron* or festival day of St. Camin (12th of March) the crowd of these devotees is very great ; but the clergy have of late years, with much propriety, discountenanced such assemblages.

Few of the counties of Ireland contain finer monastic ruins than the county of Clare—that of “Quin” is, indeed, worth a pilgrimage to see. Nor is Clare—so magnificent in the huge barrier it presents to the ocean—without its inland charms. The lake of Inchiquin may be classed with the most beautiful lakes of the island. It is situated about twenty miles north-west of Ennis. We picture it as its fine expanse of waters spread before us on a clear summer morning, bearing an aspect of romantic loveliness we shall not speedily forget. Its calm sur-face, diversified by only one solitary islet, reflecting the inverted forms of the surrounding hills and woods, and partaking of their varied colours. At our feet lay a sandy beach, against which feebly plashed a slow succession of tiny ripples ; on the north side stretched out a range of swelling hills, which, though not aspiring to the dignity of mountain heights, yet in the picture assumed all their irregular beauty of forms. On the south side, tufted groves and broad sweeping meadows, shady banks, and many-gladed woods and green up-lands, offer a charming contrast. The mansions and demesnes of several of the gentry skirt their shores. But the principal object of the scene—that which imparts to it the associations of romance and of old feudal recollections, is the castle—a warrior pile, which, though shattered and time-worn, retains a stern and frowning dignity even in its decay. It stands on a small island, or rather peninsula, lying close in to the northern shore, and consists of a square embattled keep, vaulted within, a curtain wall, and barbican tower. It is supposed to have been erected by Theige O'Brien, Prince of Thomond, who certainly made it his residence in 1406 ; to which period the architectural style of the building refers. The territorial district in which it stands was anciently called Tulloch O'Dea, of which the O'Cuins, or Quins, were proprietors. Tradition says that the last O'Quin, previous to the O'Brien possession, was starved in the castle. The transfer of property in old time was so often by violence that this story may not have been without its truth, although the conjecture is equally worthy of a belief that it may have passed to the O'Briens by family alliance, several intermarriages being on record between the O'Quins and the O'Briens. The name given to this peninsula, in all likelihood originated from a previous *dun*, or fortified residence of that kind, used by the Irish previously to the introduction of castellation, and which O'Quin must have regarded as a site peculiarly eligible in an age when, although saints much abounded, turbulent sinners, little regardful of the differences between *meum et tuum*, were not at all few. The lake is regarded as the site of a city long lost by the power of enchantment; the key by which it is to be disenthralled, is lying buried with the redoubted Conan the Bold, in his grave beside the lake of the sun, on the “ very bleak Mountain of Callan.” The legend says, that one of the daughters of this en-chanted city, in times of old, frequently visited the surface of the lake in the figure of a swan, and on one of these occasions saw and loved “ the youthful O'Quin,” whose stronghold looked out upon these haunted waters. A secret marriage between them ensued, but, upon strange conditions, as to the continuance of their union ; these conditions being afterwards violated, caused the late nymph to return to her subaqueous home.

It is, however, the great ocean-river, the Shannon, that gives its chief attractions to Clare County. And these attractions of beautiful and magnificent scenery, ruined abbeys, and dilapidated castles—commence seaward with the borders of Limerick city, and terminate only with the mountain-rocks that keep out the Atlantic. In the immediate vicinity of Limerick, the road lies over a rich alluvial flat, which stretches from the shores of the river to the base of the highlands, which rise behind the woods of Cratloe. These flats, which are remarkably fertile, are here called *Corcass* lands, a term originating in the Irish word *Corroch*, a swamp or morass, which these grounds, previously to the hand of reclamation reaching them, must unquestionably have been. They are still often over-flowed by the Shannon ; and along the high road which traverses them, stone pillars are raised, at frequent intervals,

as indexes of its limits on such occasions. The neighbourhood of the hamlet of Cratloe possesses two of those solitary castelets so frequent in the south of Ireland, which would almost seem as though they never possessed any outworks or other adjuncts. One of these is called Cratloe Castle, the other Cratloe Beg. They belonged to the lesser chiefs—the feudatories of their period—the followers of the lords paramount of Thomond, the O'Briens in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and are of the earliest class of castellation. The lower chambers are dark and vaulted, the walls massive, and the chambers narrow and dimly lighted. They must be regarded as the next in succession to the Duns, Rathes, and Liosses of the earlier periods.

- What had been the particular character of the structures at Kincora, we have but little means of conjecturing. In 1012, the “ Four Masters ” record the erection of many daingins, or fortified places, by Brien Boru ; amongst the rest, the cahir of Kincora ; but this we regard as merely a re-edifying, for we have numerous notices of the place previous to that year, and even in the year preceding (1011). We find the same annals mention that Brien, at the head of an expedition which he made to Cinell Conaill, carried off with him O'Maoldora, the king of that district, in captivity, to Kincora. As this re-edifying, or reconstruction, was anterior to the introduction of the castellated style of building in Ireland, we can only suppose that the strength of these places lay in the outworks the great stone ramparts, and successive ditches rather than in the interior dwellings and offices, which were probably not storied, and in which length and breadth, rather than height, were had in view. Timber framework, or cobwork, formed the walls, and the roofs were thatched : such we know to have been the style of contemporaneous Saxon and British dwellings. That Kincora was ornamented with trees, and possessed the luxuries of artificial fish ponds, or rather salmon-weirs, we gather from Tigernach, who informs us that, in 1061, Hugh O'Connor burnt Killaloe, and overturned Kincora to its very foundations, and that his soldiers devoured the salmon from the fish-pond ; which pond they also at the same time destroyed. Kincora was soon afterwards re-edified, for in 1069, Tadg, son of Toreloch O'Brien, is recorded as dying in his father's bed at that place. In two years after this, the cahir of Kincora was again destroyed by the northern Irish, who had pursued Murkertach O'Brien thither, and from thence carried off captives. In 1094, it was again reedified by Murtogh O'Brien. In 1104, it was burned by lightning ; and in 1118, Tureloch O'Connor of Connaught led a great army thither, which place they flung into the Shannon, as well the stones as the trees. This passage evinces that mason-work had been used in the construction of the cahir, which was not the case in that of the fort of Bal-Boru, the only one of the many foundations now remaining which once constituted the palace of Brien. This solitary relic consists of a large circular earthen fort, at present having but a single vallum of about twenty feet in height, and the ditch partly filled up. The external circumference is about six hundred and fifty feet ; a low modern stone wall has been built for the protection of the lower part of the rampart. The inner area is eighty feet in diameter, and the surrounding vallum about ten feet in height ; the whole has been thickly planted with fir-trees. On the whole, there is nothing in the appearance of this structure to distinguish it from the thousand similar forts everywhere remaining over the face of the country, but its strong position, at the extremity of a steep green headland, whose base is washed at three sides by the water of the river.
- These “ brass-bands ” are becoming nearly as numerous as the branches of the Temperance Society ; and we hope they will increase, for the wonderful change that has been wrought in the habits of the people has, unquestionably, driven the piper and the fiddler out of fashion ; and any mode of giving amusement extensively should be carefully encouraged. Indeed, it is absolutely necessary that some healthful excitement should be introduced to replace the unhealthy excitement formerly induced by whiskey. The subject may not be unworthy the attention of Government by which money might be granted as aids to build humble assembly-rooms in all the principal towns of Ireland. There must be some luxury to replace the luxury the people have so completely abandoned. There are no people in the world who have so few amusements as the Irish ; now that drinking and fighting are done away with, they can be scarcely said to have any ; for dancing and hurling seem to be equally neglected, the absence of the accompanying stimulus having induced indifference towards them. Education will in time give rise to home enjoyments ; but although nearly all the younger branches of families can read, many of the older members cannot ; and it is difficult to invent for them a relaxation and a resource. It would be a most serviceable application of the public funds to reprint, for cheap or nearly gratuitous circulation, such entertaining and in-

structive books as would tempt to perusal ; such as children might read to their parents, and such as would receive the sanction of their spiritual teachers.

We were forcibly struck with the absolute necessity of providing occupation for the mind after hours of labour, when we were in the town of Westport. It was Midsummer Eve, “ St. John’s Night,” a famous holiday in old times. A few years ago every second person we encountered would have been half-mad from animal spirits and whiskey ; every public-house would have had its piper or fiddler ; and the chances would have been in favour of half a dozen faction-fights in the vicinity of the town. Indeed it would have been hazardous on such an evening to have walked about the streets. On this occasion, there were two or three turf “ bone-fires” blazing, fed by little boys, who demanded halfpence from the passers-by ; but there was not a sound of music in the neighbourhood, nor was there a single dancer to be found. We walked through every street of the town towards midnight, and heard and saw nothing that could remind us of “ Old Ireland.” In fact, temperance has completely changed the Irish character ; and, to the mere seeker after superficial pleasure, greatly for the worse. There is little of that humour and love of fun, considered to be inherent in an Irishman, now perceptible; a silent and apparently sullen manner has taken the place of wit and “ devilry” among the car-drivers, boatmen, and persons of similar classes ; and the stranger in Ireland will find it difficult to credit the statements he has heard of the almost universal drollery of the race. We cannot call to mind half a dozen smart things gathered by us during our recent tour through Connaught, although we were continually in the way of hearing them ; and as for legends and superstitions, they can be now pretty nearly as easily picked up in the wealds of Kent or the marshes of Essex. Indeed, at present, and, as we think, for the future, travellers in Ireland will obtain characteristic stories only at second-hand. This change may be regarded as anything but an evil, if means are adopted for turning it to a right account. The soil is better prepared for useful and wholesome seed ; but it is also more easily made ready for weeds, or a crop that will prove still more injurious. It should be borne in mind that the Irish population is half its time without employment, and according to the homely song

“ Satan finds some mischief still,  
For idle hands to do.”

A little reflection, and a limited acquaintance with the country of late years, will enable any person to perceive that the Irish cannot now be dealt with as they were formerly: a spirit, mighty for good or for evil, has been abroad among the people. It will not be easily swayed to a bad purpose, for reason has been active with it; but if aroused, ordinary methods will fail to destroy it. It is notorious that the Rebellion of 1798 was suppressed infinitely more by the whiskey than by the bayonet. The legislator and the philanthropist will, we humbly presume to say, do wisely to consider this altered state of things, so as not only to guard against danger arising from it, but to direct it into a salutary and beneficial channel.

All apprehensions as to the political design, or even tendency, of the Temperance movement seem to have vanished ; but there is little doubt that by the two great parties in Ireland the millions who form “ the Society” are regarded by the one as important auxiliaries, by the other as dangerous opponents, in case any circumstances should arise which God of his mercy forbid to create hostility between England and Ireland. A prominent partisan once pointed our attention to a Temperance procession consisting of perhaps 20,000 able, healthy, well-dressed, steady and sober men, marching in order, headed by their band. He asked us what “ General Johnson would have done at Ross, if such a force had opposed him instead of drunken maniacs ?” Our answer was that no military force could have sufficed to have subdued this and similar hosts over the country ; but that no rational person could for a moment imagine the possibility of cajoling such men into rebellion ; sober men were not the tools for faction ; and that, unless a despotism existed against which a people ought to rise, it would be impossible to force or seduce such a body to become rebels. We added also, that if we did suppose this Temperance army to be in possession of the town of Ross still history would have to record no such tragedy as that of “ Scullabogue.” In short, although, under existing circumstances, a general outbreak in Ireland might have for its result the separation of Ireland from England, every accession to the Temperance ranks removes further from both countries the chances of so appalling and ruinous an event.

We earnestly desire to impress upon the minds of parties who are bound to give this subject deep and serious consideration, the importance, nay the necessity, of finding some modes by which the minds of the people may be occupied and amused, now that the old excitements have departed ; and in especial we presume to suggest the policy of establishing Halls for wholesome entertainment in the several towns, and pieces of land where the men may pursue the national game of hurling ; and, more particularly, the circulation of such books as they will read and will be permitted to read.

Temperance Societies have now existed in Ireland several years. Instead of their diminishing, they have largely increased ; the numbers of those who have taken “ the pledge ” are continually augmented ; while of those who depart from it there are singularly few. In fact, the people of Ireland may now be described as universally sober. In our recent tour through the several counties of Connaught, we did not encounter a single person in the slightest degree intoxicated. In the northern counties, the old habit still exists to some extent ; but in those that are more exclusively Irish, drunkenness is unknown. We once received a remarkable illustration of the distinction between the two great classes. Driving with a police inspector into the village of Inistoge, in the county of Kilkenny, we met two men staggering up a hill, and expressed our astonishment at this novelty. Our companion said, “ Depend upon it, these men are Protestants. ” They were at a considerable distance at the time, so that he could not have recognised them. On their drawing near, however, we ascertained upon questioning them that his opinion was correct. It was easily accounted for, when we asked an explanation. “ I know, ” said he, “ that every Roman Catholic in this district has taken the pledge ; and that consequently no man would dare to appear with the sign of liquor upon him. He would be ducked in the nearest pond before he had been a hundred yards from the public-house. Protestants, of course, the people will not touch. ” In the earliest part of our work when the Temperance movement was viewed with suspicion and alarm it was our fortunate lot to aid in removing much of the prejudice against it. We anticipated its beneficial working upon the country ; describing it as a blessed change, out of which only good could arise. Now that we are about to close our book, we make the same report. It has been a blessed change ; and good only has arisen out of it. Persons of all creeds and opinions now class among the benefactors of mankind the great and good man who has been, under Providence, the means of regenerating his country. But, as certainly, evil will arise out of it, if the minds of the people are not diverted into some healthier, purer, and happier channel, than the turbid and perilous stream of politics.

- “ Insense, ” a word in common use, meaning, to make one understand a thing.
- Midway between Ennis and Milltown Malbay on the coast, about ten miles north-west of the former town, the almost isolated mountain of Callan lifts its huge bulk. It is a site of great interest to the antiquary, and is much frequented by curious visitors. Near its summit has been found a monument inscribed in those ancient characters entitled the Ogham, of which we had occasion to speak when describing Killarney. Much had been written by the seanachies and historians of the country on this character, which was represented as the sole depositary of the remaining Druidic learning of ancient Ireland. The concurring testimony of many centuries declared and authorized the fact ; and accordingly its origin, history, and use were descanted on as matters of certainty, and its rules laid down in every Irish grammar ; but previously to 1784, no one had ever seen it practically used either on parchment or on any monument ; consequently, doubts were urged by the less credulous ; and it was only by the evidence of actual unimpeachable inscriptions that the public could be brought to place reliance any longer on these oft-repeated assurances and statements. Lhuyd had, in the beginning of the last century, mentioned an Ogham inscribed monument which he had seen near Dingle ; but his statement was almost unknown to the literary world. It was, therefore, with much satisfaction that the announcement was made, in 1784, to the Royal Irish Academy, of the discovery of a veritable Ogham inscription on Callan Mountain. Theophilus O’Flanagan, the alleged discoverer, was dispatched with instructions to show it to Mr. Burton ; and the report of that gentleman was satisfactory. He found the stone and its letters covered or incrustated with lichens ; an evidence that if the inscription were a forgery, as Ledwich and some others afterwards affected to consider it, the imposition could not have been effected by O’Flanagan, or any person of the then generation. The discovery was unfortunately not followed

up by any other of a similar kind for many subsequent years, and we know not what further discredit this solitary Ogham might not have fallen into, had it not been for the successful exertions of Messrs. Abell and Windele in the south, within a few recent years, to which we have elsewhere more particularly referred. Although several copies of this inscription have been from time to time published, it is curious enough that neither by the academy, nor General Vallancey, &c., has any been given to us on which any reliance could be placed, until the above named Mr. A. Abell, in 1838, visited the monument, and from the experience which he had obtained in his successful researches in the south, was enabled to make the only genuine copy hitherto given to the public. This has been published by his sister, Mrs. Mary Knott, in her very pleasing “Two Months at Kilkee.”

Mr. Windele has kindly supplied us with the following remarks concerning this singular and interesting monument : “ We ascended the mountain on the south-east side, following the course of an old road, or rather bridle-path, until we came in view of a lonely Cromleac, an old altar of that sun (*Grian*), to which the whole mountain in Paynim times was consecrated. It consists of three immense stones; two of them pitched on end, and the third laid incumbent on these, and forming the great sacrificial stone. The latter measures twelve feet in length by four in breadth ; the others are each ten feet in length, eight broad, and one foot thick; two more lie extended on the ground, closing, when erect, the extremities of the crypt, which the whole structure formed when complete. The interior has been recklessly excavated in search of treasure. The peasantry call this Cromleac *Altoir na Greine*, or ‘ Altar of the Sun,’ and also *Leabba Diarmuid agus Graine*, i. e., ‘ Diarmuid and Grany’s Bed.’ Vallancey regards these as the names of two of the Pagan deities of Ireland ; one the *God of Arms*, which Diarmuid certainly signifies, and the other the *Sun* himself. But the romancers have reduced these celestial beings to more mundane proportions. They form a portion of the wonder-working, all-enduring personages of the multitudinous Fenian legends of Ireland, chaunted in musical prose by the itinerant story-tellers of old, and in verse by a host of bards, who, from the earliest times down to the sixteenth century, gave forth such lays of marvels under the one well-known and attractive name of Ossian. Tales like these formed, and still form, the amusement of the long winter nights to the inhabitants of the wild mountain districts of Ireland, as well as of the highlands of Scotland, and served as the grand staple of those very beautiful, but very mendacious poems, in measured prose, which James MacPherson launched into the world in the early part of the reign of George III.”

- That Camin was not, however, the first Christian ecclesiastic who dwelt in Cealtra, we have the authority of the venerable Bede, who informs us that, in 548, there was a great mortality in Ireland, and that, amongst others, there died St. Columba of Inis Kealtra. We further learn from Colgan, that Stellanus, Abbot of Inis Kealtra, flourished about 650, and died 24th of May; this would indicate an establishment distinct from that of Camin. The latter, probably, was *bishop* of this island, with the jurisdiction belonging to that office, distinct from that of the abbacy. Such a division of functions did certainly exist there, for we have, at 951, the death of Dermot MacCahir, bishop of Inis Kealtra. About the year 660, Coelin, a monk of Inis Kealtra, wrote a metrical life of St. Brigid. In 1040, the Abbot Corcoran, who had obtained a remarkable celebrity, not only in Ireland, but in foreign countries, for his learning and piety, died at Lismore. In three years after, his death was followed by that of Anamachad, an Irish inclusorius at Fulda, where he had lived in exile, having been banished from Kealtra Island by this Abbot Corcoran, on account of a venial act of disobedience.
- The round tower of Iniscealtra is one of the few structures of that class of which we have any notice in our annals, and that a very significant one too. The Four Masters relate, at the year 898, that “ Cossrach, from whom the *Turaghan* (pronounced *Turain*) of the anchorite of Iniscealtra is called Scandal of Tigh Telle, and Tuahal, the anchorite die.” We have at vol. v. page 174, &c., availed ourselves of this interesting passage, which so distinctly refers the use of these buildings to the sun-worship which prevailed in Pagan Ireland, in common with all the elder oriental nations of antiquity. A reference to Bryant’s most learned “ Analysis of Ancient Mythology” will enable the reader to trace back their origin through Spain, where he will find the names of places derived from these structures, which he properly calls Prutaneia, as in *Tarne*, or *Tar-ain* and *Torone* ; through Mauritania, where occurs another *Tor-on*. But the extract which we proceed to give will better assist our view :— “ The Amonians,” he says, “ esteemed every emanation of light, a fount-

ain, and styled it *Ain*, and *Aines*, *Agnes*, *Inis*, *Inesos*, *Nesos*, *Nees* ; and this will be found to obtain in many different countries and languages. The Hetrurians occupied a large tract of sea-coast, on which account they worshipped Poseidon, and one of their principal cities was *Poseidonium*. They erected upon their shores towers and beacons for the sake of their navigation, which they called *Tor-ain*, whence they had a still further denomination of *Tur-aini*, and their country was named *Tur-ainia*, the Turrenia of the later Greeks. All these appellations are from the same object, the edifices which they erected. Even Hetruria seems to have been a compound of *Ai-tur*, and to have signified the Land of Towers.”

The term Angcoiri applied to this Turain of Holy Island, we have also shown applies to an after or secondary use. The practice with anchorites in Ireland, and they were an extremely numerous class, was to shut themselves up in natural caves, or small lowly enclosures. St. Anmchad, already mentioned, as banished from Inis Kealtra by the over-strict Abbot Corcoran, died at Fulda, in 1043, and according to his countryman and successor, Marianus Scotus, he led an eremetical life at that place “ in lapidei reclusorii ergastulo clausus,” &c. We may rest assured that this was not a round tower, although Anmchad had come from an establishment at Holy Island, where such a building had been used 145 years previously, by St. Cosgrach for that purpose. Fulda does not, and never did, possess a Tur-ain. Out of Ireland we must seek, not in Tudesque, but in more sunny southern regions for such structures. We perceive that Sir William Betham has published a drawing of another round tower found at Coel, in India, which carries out the resemblances we had heretofore pointed at, even stronger than those at Bhaugulpore.

Connected with the Helio Arkitism of the round tower, before adverted to, we may mention, that at many of their sites there are traditions of wonderful cows. Thus, at Ard-patrick, were discovered the bones and one of the horns of the great milcher of St. Patrick ; at Cashel the various traditions of a celebrated cow are supported by the fact of a road having been constructed either by or for her, which is said to be traceable in many places between Cashel and Ardmore. Another road for the same purpose is said to be traceable from Castle Hyde, in the county of Cork, to Ardmore. At Clonmacnois is a carving of St. Kieran’s cow. At Scatterry Island the legend of St. Senanus’ cow is well known. The round tower of Inis Kealtra has some tradition of the same kind ; the island itself is situated in Loch Bodearg, the “ Lake of the Red Cow,” and the promontory of Balborua, the “ Place of the Red Cow,” near Killaloe, forms the southern boundary of that lake. In Hanway’s Travels, it is stated that the devotees at the perpetual fire, near Baku, on the west shore of the Caspian, not only adore the sacred fire, but have a veneration for a red cow.

Ireland, its scenery, character and history (1911)

Author : Hall, S.C. (Samuel Carter), 1800-1889 ; Hall, S. C., Mrs., 1800-1881

Volume : 6

Subject : Ireland — Description and travel

Publisher : Boston : F. A. Niccolls

Language : English

Digitizing sponsor : MSN

Book contributor : Kelly — University of Toronto

Collection : kellylibrary; toronto

Source : Internet Archive

<http://www.archive.org/details/irelanditsscener06halluoft>

Edited and uploaded to [www.aughty.org](http://www.aughty.org)

April 11 2011