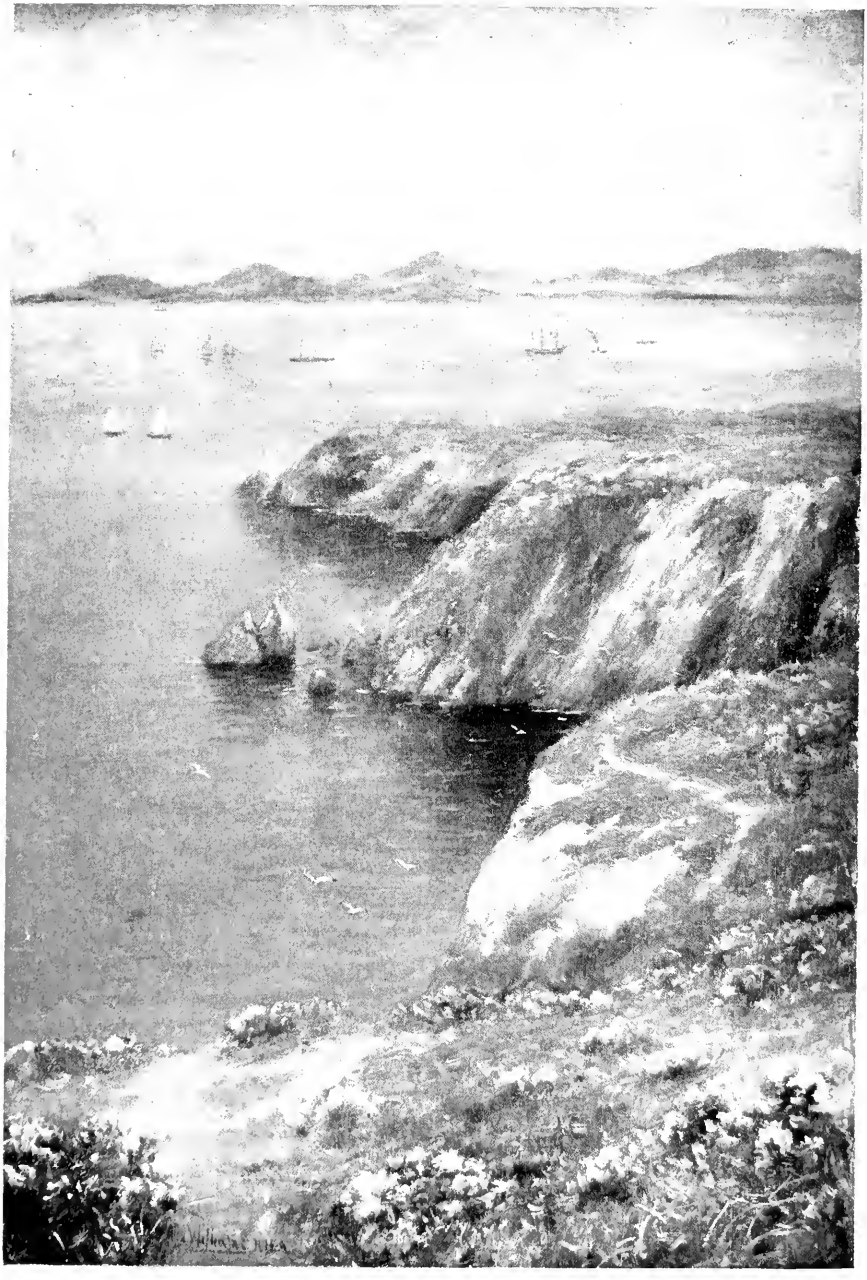
LEINSTER

Pictured by Alexander Williams

Described by Stephen Gwynn



BAY OF DUBLIN FROM HOWTH CLIFFS

LEINSTER

Described by Stephen Gwynn
Pictured by Alexander Williams

BLACKIE AND SON LIMITED
LONDON GLASGOW AND BOMBAY
1911

Beautiful Ireland

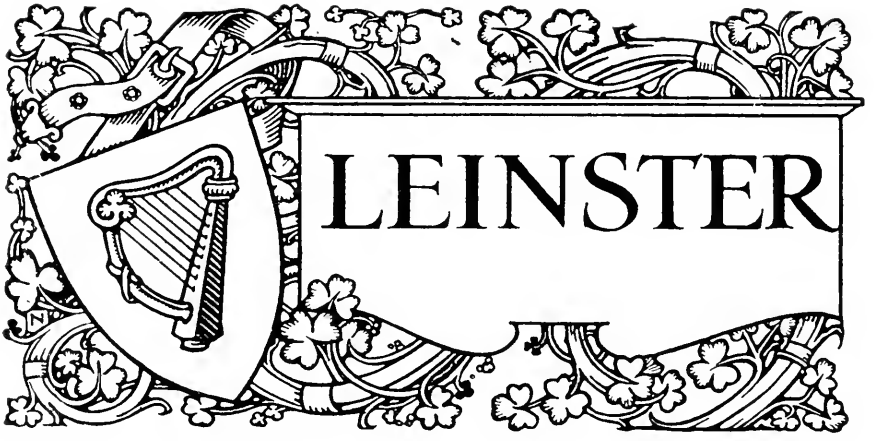
LEINSTER
MUNSTER
ULSTER
CONNAUGHT

Uniform with this Series

Beautiful England

OXFORD
THE ENGLISH LAKES
CANTERBURY
SHAKESPEARE-LAND
THE THAMES
WINDSOR CASTLE
CAMBRIDGE
NORWICH AND THE BROADS
THE HEART OF WESSEX
THE PEAK DISTRICT
THE CORNISH RIVIERA
DICKENS-LAND
WINCHESTER
THE ISLE OF WIGHT
CHESTER AND THE DEE
YORK

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



I

Leinster is the richest of Irish provinces, the heart of Ireland, and for beauty it can challenge any of its sisters, save in one respect only: it lacks the beauty of wildness. What it has to show of most beautiful lies within twenty miles of the capital. There is no city north of the Alps which has so lovely surroundings as Dublin—or so varied in their loveliness. Sea and mountain, plain and river, all come into that range of exquisite choice. But everywhere in it the beautiful frame of nature has been modified and beautified by man.

Since it is not possible, in the small space available, to describe exhaustively the features of this great province, which stretches from the sea to the Shannon and from the Mourne Mountains to Waterford Haven,

a selection must be made and indicated at once. First, then, the county of Dublin itself, infringing a little on Kildare. Secondly, the Wicklow Mountains and their glens. Thirdly, that rich valley of the Boyne, which was the heart of the ancient kingdom of Meath. But, before details are dealt with, some general idea of the topography must be given.

Suppose you are on deck when the mail boat from Holyhead has been two hours out, or a little more (I write here for strangers), you will see Dublin Bay open before you. To your right, making the northernmost horn of the curve, is the rocky, almost mountainous, peninsula of Howth, and ten miles north of it you see its shape repeated in the Island of Lambay.

Except for that, to the north and to the west, coast and land are all one wide level, far as your eye can reach—unless by some chance the air be so rarefied that you discern, fifty miles northward, the purple range of Carlingford Hills (still in Leinster), and beyond them, delicate and aerial blue, the long profile of the Mourne Mountains, where Ulster begins.

But to the south of the city (where it lies in the bight of the bay, spilling itself northward along the shore to Clontarf of famous memory, and southward to Kingstown and beyond) mountains rise, a dense huddle of rounded, shouldering heights, stretching away far as you can see. Near Dublin they almost touch the

shore: one rocky spur comes down to Dalkey Island, which was the deep-water landing place before Kingstown harbour was built: it rises into the peaked fantastic summit of Killiney Hill. Beyond it the coast curves in a little, giving a bay and valley in which lies Bray, our Irish equivalent for Brighton. The Bray river marks the limits of County Dublin; and beyond Bray again is the high, serrated ridge of Bray Head, fronting the water in a cliff. Landward from it rises, peak by peak, that exquisite chain of heights which from Little Sugarloaf to Great Sugarloaf runs back to connect here once more the main body of mountains with the sea.

Mr. Williams in his picture has shown Bray Head and the lesser Sugarloaf in a glow of light which turns their heather covering to a golden pink; and from his vantage on the slope of Killiney, he has been able to catch the shape of Wicklow Head beyond and between the nearest summits of this chain.

South of that, you, from your steamer, can distinguish how the margin of land between mountain and coast line widens progressively. Wicklow Head shoots far out into the sea; and beyond it you can trace the long, low coast of Wexford projecting farther and farther from the hills. Wicklow, in truth, is a ridge of mountains, with small apanages of lowland on each side; Wexford, a level space east of the

mountains which separate it from the vast central plain, nearly all of which is Leinster.

This mountain range, trending south and a little west from Dublin, is the main feature of Leinster—well marked in history. All the rest of the province was the most fertile, the most accessible region in Ireland, and therefore the first to be subdued. The Normans made, indeed, their first landings in Wexford and Waterford, but they quickly consolidated their power in Dublin, which was itself a city of foreign origin—which, even when they came in the twelfth century, was Danish rather than Irish. Centuries after that, when southern Ireland had slipped completely from under foreign control, the "pale"—the district centring round Dublin and varying from reign to reign in its limits—always remained subject to English law.

But the pale, however far it might stretch west and northward, stopped at the base of the Dublin hills. There the Irish clans of the O'Tooles and O'Byrnes held sway in strong fastnesses; and even in the nineteenth century, after the last great rising of 1798 had been put down in blood and fire, Michael Dwyer could still hold out on these hills so securely that Emmet, escaping from his ill-starred attempt in 1803, found sanctuary within two hours' march of those castle gates which he had failed to storm.

KILLINEY BAY AND BRAY HEAD

Climb those hills as Emmet climbed them. If you care to follow the most tragic romance of Irish history, get your car driver to bring you where Bride Street joins Thomas Street, not far from the house where Lord Edward Fitzgerald was taken (a tablet marks it). There, in the wedge of mean yards enclosed by Bride Street and Marshalsea Lane, was the site of Emmet's armoury and arsenal, whence he issued out that July night—to how ghastly a failure! Then you can drive up Francis Street (the route he followed in escaping) and so to the Green at Haroldscross where he used to meet Miles Byrne, the Wexford rebel, Emmet's right-hand man, but later a colonel of Napoleon's army with the cross of honour upon his breast. Beyond the Green is a little range of houses on the right; somewhere there Emmet was taken by Sirr. Farther still towards the hills is Rathfarnham, where he lived during the long months of elaborate preparation; and here it was that his faithful servant, Anne Devlin, refused to betray his movements though they half-hanged her between the shafts of a cart. Farther still, beyond Rathfarnham, a road takes you past the Priory, the abode of John Philpot Curran, that famous orator and patriot, whose daughter, Sarah, was the heroine of Emmet's romance and of Moore's lovely song, "She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps". In the grounds of the Priory

and of the neighbouring Hermitage, "Emmet's Walk", "Emmet's Seat", are shown: that old story has left many marks. Curran's name has not been so cherished: instincts are quick in Ireland, though it is only within the last few years that we have learnt how mean a part the great orator played in that tragic history. Yet it is worth glancing at the Priory, for here came all that was famous in Ireland's most famous day: famous orators, famous duellists, patriots, and placemen — worse even than placemen, for Curran's closest friend was Leonard MacNally, who for a lifetime posed as the champion of men like Emmet, and for a lifetime sold their secrets to Government, while acting as their advocate in the courts where they were tried for dear life.

All the great houses that stud the lower slope of these hills, with parks about them, and with much beautiful decoration inside, are work of that period in the eighteenth century when Ireland had her brief prosperous hour, when her capital was in truth a metropolis. To-day, as you rise above this belt of wooded land and make your way out on to the slopes of Three Rock or Kilmashogue or Tibradden—the nearest heights—you will look over a country not much changed in aspect probably, save that land which was then cornbearing is now nearly all in grass. The city itself spreads wider than it did in Grattan's

day—there has been a great movement out along the shore of the bay. But the building has been mostly of houses for people with small means and narrow ambitions. The great houses of great men that clustered within a short radius of College Green are great houses no more. South of the river they have become public buildings: Lord Castlereagh's a Government office in Merrion Street, "Buck" Whalley's the old University College, and so on. But on the north side, Lord Moira's mansion, once a marvel of splendour, is to-day a mendicity institution; and few of the fine houses of that period have had even so lucky a fate. With their elaborate, plaster-moulded ceilings, their beautiful entrance fanlights, and all the other marks of that admirable period in domestic architecture, they house squalid poverty to-day, each room a tenement. The growth of Dublin is illusory. In Grattan's time it was one of the great capitals of Europe. To-day it is something between a hope and a despair.

But this is history. I return to topography.

From your height on the Dublin hills you can look over two-thirds of Leinster. Southward, the mountains hide Wicklow and Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny. But over all that vast plain, stretching in champaign north and west, your eye can travel till it reaches far into Ulster on the north, and westward there is nothing

to stop it between you and the Shannon. This is a country of many rivers. The Liffey flows out below your feet. Five-and-twenty miles northward the Boyne has its estuary. All the rest of the plain is drained southward—part into the Shannon, and so ultimately westward, but most into the great systems of the Nore and Barrow; and ill they drain it. For twenty miles inland is choice soil, but beyond that you reach the central bog of Allen, where long expanses of brown heather or of land only half-reclaimed make up a landscape of melancholy charm. Such a scene as Mr. Williams has drawn somewhere in the Queen's County is intensely typical of this midland country. Even where the furze blossom makes a flicker of gay colour, the whole effect is dismal, and its loneliness is constantly accentuated by what he has suggested, the flight of wild marsh-haunting birds: the trees are apt to be stunted and weather-twisted by winds off the "stormy Slieve Bloom", whose veiled purple shapes are shown against the western sky in his picture.

Yet the folk of this outer pale are "kindly Irish of the Irish"—none kindlier; and I have often thought the character of Ireland could not be better expressed than in a chance phrase I heard in the talk of a girl from that low-lying region. "My father used always to tell me: 'Put plenty of potatoes in the pot, Maria.

You couldn't tell who would be stepping in to us across the bog'."

Leaving out of sight, because I must, the famous city of Kildare with its Cathedral (half-church, half-fortress); the broad lakes of West Meath, endeared by hope to patient anglers; the city of Kilkenny, where something of Ireland's prosperity remains unbroken, where the Butlers' Castle stands undestroyed, where are churches that were never ruined (almost a prodigy in Ireland); saying nothing of Lissoy, where Goldsmith lived in the village that his pen immortalized; briefly, dismissing about two-thirds of Leinster with a wave of the hand, let me come back to Dublin and its environment.

II

Of Dublin itself, what shall be said? A much-travelled Belgian priest told me recently that only in Naples had he seen such widespread marks of destitution, and in Naples they have little to suffer from cold. A young Irish nationalist, London-bred, describing the emotion with which he made his first visit to the country he had worked so hard for, said that his week in Dublin left one leading impression on his mind—the saddest people he had ever seen; nowhere had he heard so little laughter. He had

lived near poverty all his life in London and yet had not seen so many pinched and drawn faces. All this is true, especially on the north bank of the Liffey. And yet an artist who came with me once to the city spent his days in rapture over the beauty of the public buildings. That also is true. The King's Inns, the Four Courts, and the Custom House on the north side of the river; in College Green, the front of Trinity College and the old Parliament House, (still—in 1911—the Bank of Ireland), are all splendid examples of the severe Georgian style of architecture, which found even happier expression in many noble and nobly ornamented dwelling houses. All this building was done in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when Dublin had its day, when it was in reality the capital of Ireland.

Traces of its earlier history are found in the Castle, Norman built, but standing where the Danish founders of the city set their stronghold by the ford above the tideway; and in Christ Church, first founded by the Danes when in the eleventh century they came over to Christianity. Skilful restoration of the cathedral has disclosed much of the early fabric—Norman work on Danish foundations. And yet that ancient Danish stronghold interests me no more than Cæsar's Londinium; nor does the medieval city hold any charm for my mind—lying as it did outside the real life of Ireland,

NEAR ABBEYLEIX, QUEEN'S CO.

merely a fortress of a foreign power. Strongbow's tomb is there to see in Christ Church, but to my thinking a far more significant monument is to be found in the other cathedral, St. Patrick's. Dublin as we know it, the capital and centre of an English-speaking Ireland, really dates from the eighteenth century; and its first outstanding and notable figure was Jonathan Swift, the immortal Dean. The Deanery, in which were spent the most remarkable years of his splendid and sinister existence, stands outside the main entrance; near that entrance, in the south aisle, surmounted by a small bust, is the marble slab which enshrines his famous epitaph. I translate it:—

"Jonathan Swift, for thirty years Dean of this Cathedral, lies here, where fierce indignation can no longer prey upon his heart. Go, traveller, and imitate, if you can, him who did a man's part as the strenuous upholder of liberty."

The liberty which Swift upheld was the liberty of Ireland. He sought to free Ireland from that system of laws restricting all industrial development, whose consequences are with us to-day. He came to Dublin in 1715, a politician in disgrace, and was hooted in the streets. Seven years later he was king of the mobs, and no jury could be bullied to convict, no informer could be bought to denounce, when Government sought the author of those pamphlets which every living soul knew to be his. He began the work

which Grattan and the volunteers completed—yet he was an Englishman and no lover of Ireland. Born in Ireland by chance, bred there of necessity, consigned to a preferment there against his hope and will, he was spurred on to work for Ireland by that *saeva indignatio* which his epitaph speaks of, which he himself renders in this sentence of a letter:—

"Does not the corruption and folly of men in high places eat into your heart like a canker!"

The greatest perhaps of British humorists, he died mad and miserable; and died as he expected to die. His other monument is Swift's Hospital, built for a madhouse out of the money willed by him in a bequest, which his savage pen thus characterized:—

"He left the little wealth he had
To build a house for fools and mad,
And showed by one satiric touch
No nation wanted it so much".

In the north transept an epitaph written by Swift marks the tomb of "Mrs. Hester Johnson, better known to the world by the name of 'Stella', under which she is celebrated in the writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of this Cathedral". The world has always wanted to know, and never will know for certain, whether she ought to have borne the name of him who celebrated her. But his bones were laid by

hers, and still lie there, under a column in the nave; though the indecency of antiquarians dragged out their skulls when the cathedral was under restoration, made a show of them at parties, and preserved a memorial of this outrage in plaster casts, now deposited in the robing-room.

You can see also, in the vestry, not a cast, but the authentic skull of William's General Schomberg, who fell in glory at the head of victorious troops crossing the Boyne. You can read also Swift's epitaph on the tomb which Schomberg's relatives and heirs declined to pay for, leaving the pious task to Swift and his chapter. The Latin sentence keeps the vibrant ring of Swift's indignation. If only his ghost could write the epitaph of those who ransacked tombs and groped among mouldering relics of the immortal and unforgotten dead, to find objects for a peepshow! Yet after all it is in keeping with the story. In the dark end of Swift's life, while he paced his guarded room between keepers, servants used to admit strangers for a fee, to see that white-haired body which had once housed so great and terrible a mind.

St. Patrick's Cathedral, which Swift made famous, dates, like Christ Church, from Norman builders; but it was renovated fifty years ago at the cost of Sir Benjamin Guinness, head of the famous brewery. Christ Church, on the other hand, was rebuilt out of

whisky—the restorer was Mr. Henry Roe. Broadly speaking, the century which began with the legislative Union was marked in Dublin by the growth of distilling and brewing and the decay of all other industries. Guinness's is to-day one of the sights of the city, and admission by order, easily procurable, will take the visitor over the biggest thing of its kind anywhere to be seen—and, let it be said, one of the best managed. Nowhere are workmen better treated, and no rich manufacturers have made more public-spirited use of their wealth. Dublin owes to Lord Ardilaun not only the opening but the beautification of St. Stephen's Green, once an enclosure but now a very attractive public park in the middle of the city's finest square. We may well thank Providence for this one great industry—but of how many it has had to take the place!

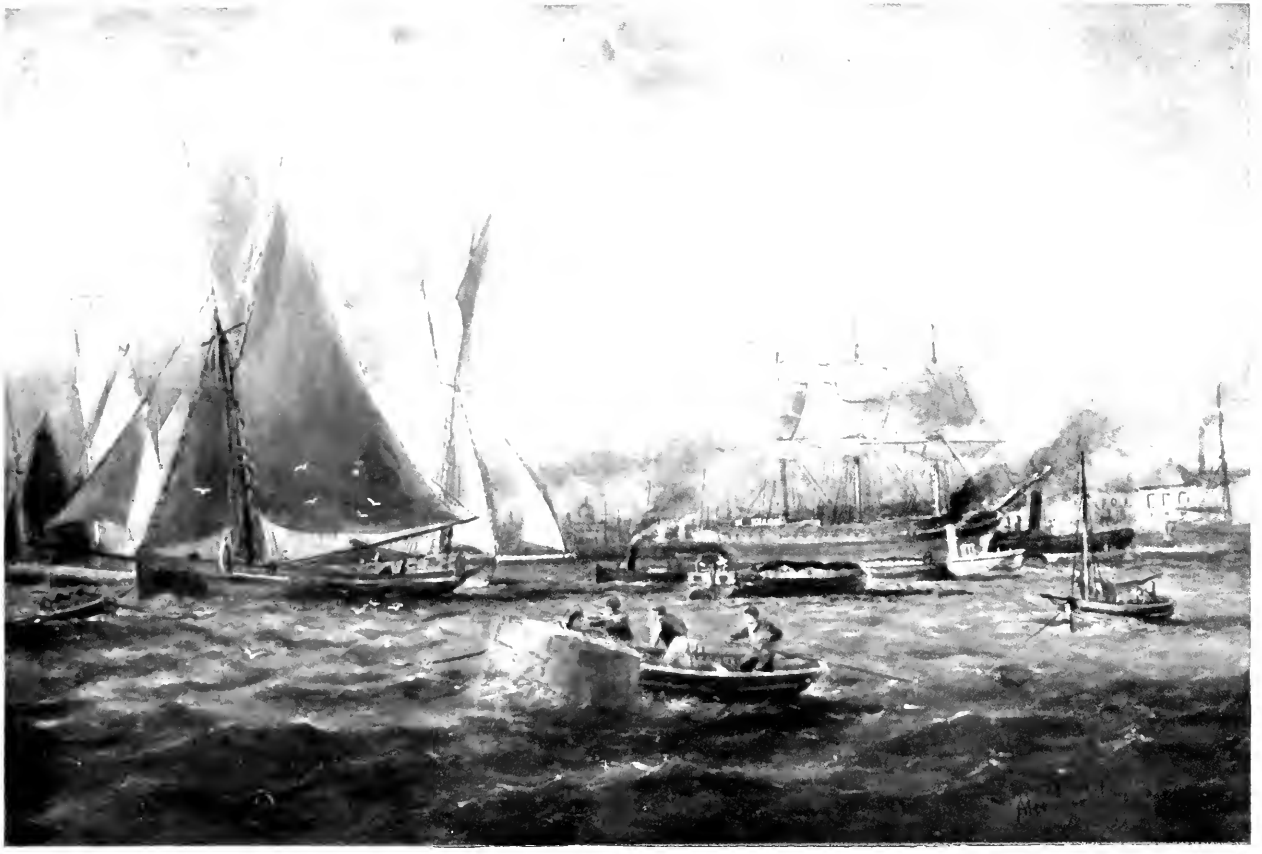
Dublin in its metropolitan days was a true centre of craftsmanship and art. I have spoken of the architecture, which used so finely the dove-coloured limestone of Wicklow. Gandon, who designed both the Four Courts and the Custom House, was not Irish, but Ireland gave him his opportunity and in Dublin only can he be judged. No great painter adorned that period among us; but all the subsidiary arts flourished exceedingly. Horace Walpole used to send across his books to be bound; Sheraton, Chippendale's

rival, was a Dublin artist-craftsman; glass-cutting, silversmiths' work, all these things furnished men with infinite skill of hand and grace of design. Within twenty years after the Union all these things had vanished like a dream.

Except Guinness's stout, the nineteenth century has little to show that is local and characteristic and excellent. It can best afford to be judged by Foley's admirable statues of our Irish worthies. Burke and Goldsmith stand outside Trinity College, to which they belonged—though poor Goldsmith had even less cause than Swift to love the stepmother of his studies. Doubtless Goldsmith was not easily distinguished from the ruck of troublesome undergraduates, and that dignity with which the sculptor has invested his odd and appealing ugliness was not evident except to the eye of genius. Grattan holds the centre of College Green, a dominating figure near those walls which he filled with stately eloquence. O'Connell, the great tribune of a later day, stands lifted on an elaborate monument in the street, and facing the bridge, which now bear his name—at the other end of that broad promenade and thoroughfare (which part of Ireland still calls Sackville Street, not so much out of love for a forgotten Viceroy as out of dislike to the change) there will stand from 1911 onwards a newer memorial to a later leader—the monument which Augustus Saint

Gaudens designed to commemorate Parnell. The famous American sculptor has set his bronze figure, of heroic size, on a low pedestal; but behind it rises an obelisk of brown Galway granite, inlaid with bronze and crowned with tripod and leaping flame. Thus Dublin possesses the only work by this artist (Dublin born, of a French father and an Irish mother) which the United Kingdom can show, save for the small medallion of Stevenson in Edinburgh. In America, where he lived and worked, his fame is established by many examples.

Moore, a national hero hardly less popular in his day than even O'Connell or Parnell, has been much less happy in his statue. It faces the Bank of Ireland in Westmorland Street, and is, in truth, very absurd and ugly. But Moore's volatile charm of countenance, which a hundred contemporaries describe, did not lend itself to reproduction in bronze. More interesting by far is the tablet in Aungier Street, which marks the little shop where he was born and bred, and from which he issued forth on the most amazing career of social conquest recorded in the annals of society. The earliest and best of the *Irish Melodies* were written in Dublin about 1810; but Moore's parents had before then moved to a little house near the Phœnix Park, where the son's influence procured his father a sinecure.



THE PORT OF DUBLIN

The group of poets who succeeded Moore—writers of the Young Ireland Movement in 1848—find their commemoration in the bust of James Clarence Mangan, recently erected in Stephen's Green—almost as unobtrusive as was in life that strange and unhappy genius.

To-day, as the world knows, we have poets neither few nor unremarkable—Mr. Yeats chief among them; and one of the intellectual landmarks of Dublin is the Abbey Theatre, standing obscurely enough, but not obscure in the world. Here have been produced the poetical dramas of Mr. Yeats himself, the still more notable prose dramas of Mr. Synge, together with much work of Lady Gregory, William Boyle, Padraic Colum, and many lesser names; and they have been produced by a company of Irish actors—first formed by Mr. W. G. Fay—who have displayed an amazing range of talent. Any visitor to Dublin who cares for a beauty and an interest wholly unlike that of the usual machine-made play ought to try and see a performance at the Abbey.

For the artistic life of Ireland—past, present, and to come—Dublin is your only ground of study. Among the things which every lover of Ireland should have seen are two—the Book of Kells in the Trinity College Library, the Cross of Cong in the Kildare Street National Museum. The craftsmanship of art was never carried to a higher point than in the

marvellous illumination of that manuscript, the equally marvellous inlaying of the famous reliquary. These are only the masterpieces, each in its own kind; they are the index of a civilization which existed before the Norman crossed to Wexford. How far back native Irish civilization stretches is matter for the archæologists; but in Kildare Street is a wonderful collection of the ornaments, weapons, and utensils, from gold fibulæ to flint arrowheads, which are the documents of that research.

And at the other end of the history, belonging rather to the twentieth century than the nineteenth, is the choicest collection of modern painting which these islands can show—the Municipal Gallery in Harcourt Street, gathered together by the enterprising genius of Sir Hugh Lane. The house itself is a monument of the eighteenth century: it belonged to Lord Clonmell, judge, placeman, and duellist; and it is a fine example of the Georgian domestic architecture. The gallery is rich in pictures of the Barbizon school, and with them can be seen the work of a living Irish landscape painter who worked in his youth along with that group. If Mr. Nathaniel Hone had chosen to exhibit outside of Dublin, his name would to-day be widely known, and there are pictures of his there—pictures of the low-lying Leinster coast by Malahide and Rush—well able to hold their own beside the famous French-

men's masterpieces. There also can be seen an interesting gallery of portraits by a painter, bred and trained in Dublin, who, although still young, is reckoned among the greater names of British art—Mr. William Orpen. The portraits are not all examples of his best work, but they are strongly characterized studies of contemporary men and women widely known in Ireland and outside Ireland. Another artist is represented there too, but not at his best: for an adequate example of the work of Walter Osborne, whose untimely death robbed Ireland of more than she could afford to lose, it is necessary to visit the National Gallery of Ireland—on all accounts, indeed, well worth visiting. But this one picture of a tree-bordered meadow, with cattle grazing quietly in the sun-dappled shade, and beyond it the whitewashed front and blue slate roof of a long shed, renders a subject so characteristic of Ireland, so characteristic above all of Leinster, in its exquisite colour, its sense of large air, its leisurely charm, that no one can look at it without there stealing into his heart that beauty of Ireland, which is not scenic, which has no striking features, and yet which is the most intimate, the homeliest, and perhaps the loveliest of all.

III

Beauty of this kind stretches away from Dublin north and west over the broad fertile plain of Fingal, the territory of the "White Strangers", the fair-haired Norsemen. You can find such beauty, with scenic accessories, in the famous Phœnix Park—so called by corruption of the Gaelic name given to a well there, *Fionn Uisge*, the Bright Water. The wide expanse of the park has lovely glades, deer-haunted like the one which Mr. Williams has pictured; it has backgrounds of mountain, the Dublin hills looming up to the south; it has foregrounds of cricket matches, or, better still, of hurling. Hurley is the most picturesque game I have ever seen played, except polo; and polo, too, in the summer, you can watch in the Phœnix at its very best, though the splendid ground is less beautiful than it was before the great "February storm" of 1903 swept down the long line of elms which bordered it. Still, in "horseshow week", when the cup matches are on, all the world can go and see, "free, gracious, and for nothing", one of the finest spectacles that modern civilization can afford.

Skirting the park to the south, and trending westward, is the valley of the Liffey, and no one looking at the unsightly, sometimes unsavoury, stream which divides Dublin would guess at the beautiful water which

A HAWTHORN GLADE, PHŒNIX PARK

the Liffey-bred salmon reaches in a couple of miles after he has left the sea. Mr. Williams has drawn a reach of it, still in the tidal limit, at Palmerston, halfway to Leixlip — that is Salmon Leap: the Norse name tells its story of the city's founding. The picture shows the steep wood leading up to green expanses of the park on the south side; and in the gap seaward, all the vague expanse of brick and stone. Within an easy ride from the park—how often Swift rode it! —is the village of Celbridge, where his "Vanessa", Esther Vanhomrigh, settled herself to be near the man she loved so fatally. The Liffey where it borders Vanessa's Marley Abbey, and lower down, where it skirts Castletown demesne, may challenge comparison for beauty with any of Ireland's rivers. By its bank famous men grew up—Charles, George, and William Napier, sons of the beautiful Lady Sarah Lennox; nephews, therefore, of Lady Louisa Connolly, whose husband then owned Castletown, and first cousins of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, whose home was near by, at Carton, the seat of his father the Duke of Leinster. The conqueror of Sind and the historian of the Peninsular War got their schooling in Celbridge. They formed in their school a class of boy scouts against the troublous days of the "Ninety-Eight" rising; and yet their sympathies were largely with their cousin, Lord Edward, most picturesque among its leaders.

He was not the first rebel in the famous Geraldine family. Carton gates open from the little town of Maynooth, where, outside the famous ecclesiastical college, stands the ruin of that strong castle which was the seat of the Geraldine power when all Ireland could not rule the Earl of Kildare and therefore it was settled that the Earl of Kildare should rule all Ireland.

And over against the castle is a yew of portentous size and age, which bears the name of Silken Thomas's tree. In 1534 the Earl of Kildare, Lord Deputy of Ireland, had been summoned to Henry VIII and detained in the Tower; his son Thomas remained in Ireland with power as Vice-Deputy. After a few months the rumour came that Kildare had been put to death—a rumour no way incredible. His son, in natural indignation, determined to owe Henry no more allegiance, and on St. Barnabas' Day rode into Dublin with one hundred and forty followers wearing silken fringes to their helmets. The council was fixed to be held in St. Mary's Abbey, and the Geraldine troop rode splashing through the ford of the Liffey to the north bank. In the council chamber sat the Chancellor, Archbishop Cromer, and Silken Thomas, with his armed followers tramping in at his heels, renounced his allegiance, and called on all who hated cruelty and tyranny to join him in war upon the English. His speech ending, he proffered his sword

of state to the Archbishop, who refused to take it and reasoned pathetically with the young noble. But a hereditary bard of the Geraldines, O'Neylan, burst in with an Irish poem which recalled the glories of the Geraldines, and upbraided Silken Thomas with too long delay. The chant ended in a clamour of applause from the armed men, and Thomas Fitzgerald, flinging down the sword, marched at their head out of the presence, none daring to check him.

Yet his attempt came to nothing. As always, the other great Anglo-Norman family, the Butlers, sided against the Geraldine, and from their stronghold in Kilkenny harassed him while he endeavoured fruitlessly to reduce Dublin Castle. Months went by, and Silken Thomas was little more than the head of a roving guerrilla force; but he roved at large. At last, in March, 1535, Skeffington, the Lord Deputy, moved out to the capture of Maynooth. His batteries made a practicable breach within five days, and then the commander, Christopher Paris, foster-brother to Silken Thomas, thought it was time to make terms for himself. The plan was ingenious. By concert with Skeffington the garrison of a hundred men were allowed to make a successful sortie and capture a small cannon. Paris filled them with praise, and with drink. At dawn of the next morning the walls were stormed by a surprise, and so the castle fell.

Out of forty prisoners taken, twenty-four were hanged. Paris received his stated price from Skeffington, but with the money in his hand was marched straight to the gallows, and from that day the "pardon of Maynooth" became a byword.

Silken Thomas surrendered in July, lay destitute in the Tower for sixteen months, and was then hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn with his five uncles, of whom two had always been strong supporters of the English power. One male scion of the Geraldines was left, Silken Thomas's half-brother Gerald, and the hunt was hot after him. His southern kinsmen, the Geraldines of Desmond, refused him shelter, but he got it from the O'Briens of Thomond, still independent rulers, and after long months escaped to Italy, where he lived till Edward VI restored him. And from that day to this, the line has lasted in Kildare, and the Duke of Leinster holds foremost place among Irish nobles. Yet Leinster House, the great building which the National Gallery adjoins, is now only the home of the Royal Dublin Society; and though the Geraldines still own Carton, they are landlords no longer, having sold all they owned, under the Act of 1903, passed by one himself in part a Geraldine—Mr. George Wyndham, son of Lord Edward's granddaughter.

Not far from Maynooth, in the wide grounds of Clongowes Wood College, you can see a section of

the actual "pale"—a broad ditch and dyke which fenced in the region under English shire law. A few miles more would bring you to the famous Curragh of Kildare. But to visit these things one must lose sight of the sea, and that is a pity, for nowhere in Ireland does the sea come more beautifully into landscape than in Leinster, and especially about Dublin itself. North of the city are broad stretches of green fields, which lead the eye out to that still wider level of blue—colour laid cleanly in mass against colour. Sometimes between the pasture land and the ocean lies a stretch of sand links, beloved of golfers, who have classic ground at Dollymount on the North Bull; at Portmarnock, with the exquisite view of Howth and Ireland's Eye drawn by Mr. Williams; and, most interesting of all, in the island links at Malahide. This strange jumble of sandhills by the mouth of the pleasant little estuary has a special interest as a bird sanctuary; the terns breed there in hundreds during June and July.

But for the beauty of all beauties neighbouring Dublin, give me Howth, the mountainous peninsula, almost an island, all but a mountain, which makes the northern limit of Dublin Bay. In all that long low eastern shore it is the only piece of cliff scenery (for Bray Head can scarcely deserve the title) and it commands an amazing prospect. On the north of

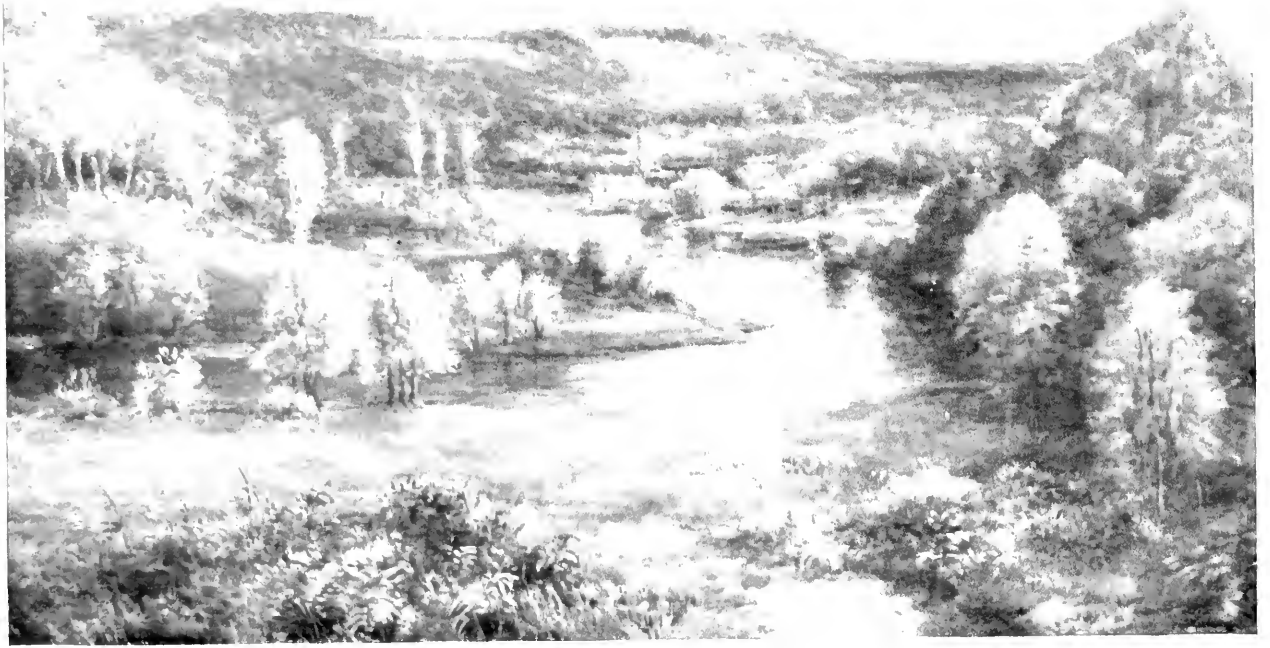
it lies the little old town, the quaint and beautiful harbour with its seawalls, and across a narrow sound off the harbour is the little, uninhabited, cliffy, fern-covered island of Ireland's Eye. "Eye" is Danish for island; Howth is "hoved" (head), and the people of Fingal keep near the Danish word, pronouncing almost Ho-at. The Irish name was Benn Edair, (Edair's Cliff), and many a time it comes into Irish story, mostly as the point from which heroes sailed or at which they landed. Howth was the general landing place for Dublin until Kingstown Harbour was constructed about a century ago and called after George IV. But of all the heroes and kings and commonalty who crossed the Channel, none deserves mention more than Mr. Robert Loraine, the actor. He flew from Anglesey, and had all but accomplished his exploit when something broke, and he directed his aeroplane to Howth, which was the point nearest. A level shore he might have reached, but the cliff rose too high for his sinking wings to surmount, so he plunged into the water a stone's throw from land, and swam ashore somewhere near the Old Bailey Lighthouse, which stands on a historic site, Dungriffen, that is the Fortress of Criffan. Now Criffan (or Crimhthann) was King of Ireland in the fourth century, at the beginning of the period when Irishmen made many forays on the seas—

in one of which Saint Patrick was captured and brought a slave to Ireland. A good many people think all this history legendary, a pack of fables. And very probably, if you had told Crimhthann, when he ruled in his dun (or even the builders of the Bailey Lighthouse when they were at work on his old rampart), that a gentleman would come flying across from England and drop like a winged bird off this promontory, they also would have been a trifle slow of belief. Anyhow, Howth Head, with its memories of ancient robber kings, Irish and Danish, and of all the folk who landed there from Chester, or from Anglesey, down to this last and most surprising debarkation of all, is surely a place of associated landmarks in history, as well as probably the most beautiful spot in Ireland.

Often on a clear day of sun and driving cloud I have been tempted to prefer the northward view, from the haven or above it; for even from the sea's level you can see far away past all that long, plain and low coast to the Carlingford Hills, purple and solid in their serrated ridge; and beyond, higher, fainter, and more delicate, Slieve Donard, and all the goodly company of Mourne Mountains show themselves against the sky. Nor is the foreground less lovely: the quaint old port, and, opposite it, the purple and brown ruggedness of Ireland's Eye, which is divided by

another narrow stretch of blue water (lightly crested, perhaps, with foam) from the long smooth whiteness of what we call at Portmarnock the Velvet Strand. Surely earth has not many things to show more fair. Yet when you climb the hill (a tram will take the infirmer) and first see eastward over the wide blue, then, gradually ascending, get sight of Dublin Bay's southern shore with the Wicklow Mountains behind it, and finally of Dublin itself, lying between beauty and beauty—beauty of sea, beauty of plain, beauty of mountain, beauty of azure, of purple, of green—then, I think, the southward view will seem to you richer in variety and incident. For the mountains make a great mass of round huddling shoulders, their lower slopes tree-clad; but nothing in the world is more dainty than the line of peaked summits which, stringing out from the main mass, carries the eye delighted with their chiselled shapes from peak to peak downward to the sea. And away west, past this mountain mass, Ireland stretches broad and fertile, well timbered, well watered, a country of park and champaign, fertile to luxuriance.

Beauty is all about you too; for the hill from midsummer on is purple with heath, and the purple is set off by gold of the autumn-flowering furze which grows in little round trim bushes. Lord Howth's demesne is one of the oldest and most charming



THE RIVER LIBLY AT PALMERSTON

places in Ireland, and it encloses within its precincts a cromlech under which, so they tell, lies Aideen, wife of Oscar, Ossian's son, chief hero of those legendary warriors, the Fianna.

A beauty of more modern date is to be seen by those wise and fortunate folk who visit Ireland in May or June: the rocky glen overgrown with choice rhododendrons and azaleas, which the Howth family have gathered and cherished. Imagine a steep cliff, a hundred feet almost sheer, but piled with tumbled boulders, and through them, up to the very top, bush after bush of these gorgeous blossoms—crimson, scarlet, mauve, buff, yellow, and exquisite diaphanous white. I never saw rhododendrons anywhere to touch these. And while we talk of flowers, another sight you can see from Dublin in May, the like of which takes visitors to Holland—the great daffodil and tulip fields at Rush, some fifteen miles north along the coast. There, growing in among the pale sandhills and grey bent, you shall see these huge patches of trumpeting colour—acres of tulips, close ranged like soldiers on parade, all of one type, uniform in their perfection. And with that you can inspect an industry employing many workmen and workwomen throughout the year in a country where work is none too plenty.

One more word about Howth. When you look from the hill towards Dublin, you look across one of

the most famous of modern golf links, that long narrow spit of sand which is called the North Bull. But you also look across the scene of one of the notable battles of history. Between the North Bull and the Liffey mouth is Clontarf, where the fight raged on Good Friday in the year 1014, when Brian Boru inflicted on the Danes of Dublin and their allies from the Orkneys and from far-off Scandinavia—yes, and Irish allies too—a defeat which was felt all through the regions that the vikings haunted. It is true to say that that victory stemmed the advancing tide of barbarism. Brian won for Christianity rather than for Ireland, and he lost his life in the fight.

Just near Clontarf parish church, in the grounds of a private house is a yew tree under which, they say, men laid down the slain king, nine hundred years ago. Whether that be historically true or no we cannot say; but, I am told, experts agree that no other yew tree in these islands has an appearance of antiquity at all comparable to this giant, which, still lusty, covers fully a rood of ground. Try and see it on your way from Howth: much can be got (in Ireland) by civil asking.

IV

I come now to deal with what lies south of Dublin —the Wicklow Hills with all their apanages. And here one is conscious of two divisions. First of all, the obvious cleavage between the sunny seaward-facing slopes, thickly inhabited, and the mountains themselves or those glens that lie behind the first ridges. Secondly, the division, not less notable, between what is Wicklow pure and simple and what really belongs to Dublin, just as Brighton and Richmond belong to London.

This is not a mere question of distance. Dublin hardly makes itself felt beyond the immediate suburbs on the north and west: it stops with the tram lines. And towards the mountains, if you leave your tram at Rathfarnham, an hour's good walking will take you into a strangely wild ravine. Follow the military road—driven through these hills after 1798 had shown how strong they were, to be the first effectual instrument of subjugation—up towards Glencree, through Rockbrook, and so by a long steep ascent you will reach a wood where the road divides, on the shoulder of Tibradden, or the Kings' Burying Ground. To your right will be Killikee, with Lord Massey's beautiful demesne, and woods covering it almost to the top, but the bare summit crowned by a shattered ruin—the

"Hell Fire Club", built by young bloods in the wild duelling and card-playing days of Dublin's gaiety. Turn your back on this and follow to the left into Glen Cullen (the Holly Glen), which, dividing Tibradden from Featherbed, sweeps round behind Two Rock and Three Rock, and so, if you keep steadily by the left, brings you back into the suburbs and villadom after a round of some sixteen miles. But you will have traversed a glen as bare and lonely, as devoid of any suggestion of a great city's nearness, as even Connemara could show.

Very beautiful it is, too, up there, on a fine day; and bilberries grow to perfection among the deep heather on the slopes of Featherbed. When I was last in it, instead of keeping to the left, we cut across southward to the right by the first road out of the valley, and from that height saw what is not often seen—the coast of Wales clearly visible. Then, dropping swiftly, we reached a road which, leading from the city through Dundrum, traverses the Scalp—a fine gorge of tumbled stone with fine woods effectively planted; and so down a famous coaching road to the pretty village of Enniskerry on the Dargle River, and down along that river to Bray—and the train.

So quick and so emphatic is the transition from one region to the other—from the region of lonely car drives to the snug neighbourhood of gas and

steam. But let me define or describe the limits. If instead of going out by road you take either the train from Harcourt Street, which skirts the base of the hills, or the Westland Row line, which follows the sea all the way through Kingstown and Killiney till both lines meet in Bray, you will, of course, have suburbs about you, merging into villadom: and the suburbs continue on the sealine almost unbroken to Killiney. Then comes a gap, and at Bray you have a considerable town, from which villadom—a very pleasant and cultivated villadom—extends towards the hills. Beyond Bray, the line rounds the face of Bray Head in a series of little tunnels, with intervening glimpses of sea dashing below, in the best Riviera manner; and then you come to Greystones, another even more suburban settlement. I set Greystones—some fifteen miles south of Dublin—as the suburban limit: beyond that you have honest country—Wicklow proper. Only, let it be clearly understood that this is no disparagement. The most beautiful things in Wicklow are outside what I call Wicklow proper, and inside Dublin's "sphere of influence". These I now proceed to describe.

First of all, there runs up from Bray the famous Dargle, a steep wooded glen with the river dividing two demesnes—Lord Monk's and Lord Powerscourt's. For miles you can drive or walk through a scene

of constantly varying beauty, with glimpses of mountain behind the wooded slopes, until at last you come to the Powerscourt Waterfall with its plunge of a hundred feet out of an upper ravine. Climb round, get above the waterfall, and at last, on the slopes of Douse Mountain, you reach wild nature—and you forget Dublin. Till then the spirit of Dublin is with you—the spirit of a prosperous Dublin, inhabited by rich men who liked to adorn the countryside with some of the graces of the town, to set elaborate plantations of foreign shrubs against a backing of rock and heather. Very pretty it is, and nowhere done more prettily.

Or again, if you go from Bray to Greystones by road, you may take the short road through Windgates and traverse the dip in the ridge between the Head and the Lesser Sugarloaf—a charming drive—with the Head and the sea on your left, the peaked shape of Sugarloaf on your right, bracken and heather clad, and over part of its height enclosed in a deerpark full of sturdy Japanese deer. You may do better still: you may take the long road and go inland, leaving Little Sugarloaf on your left, towering up purple and splendid above you, pineclad on this side to half its height; then, curving round, come into the defile by Kilmacanoge, which divides it from the Greater Sugarloaf. Here now is the parting of the regions. From Kil-

PORTMARNOCK GOLF LINKS

macanoge a road runs up the Rocky Valley, sweeping round Great Sugarloaf, and it instantly brings you into wildness: in half an hour's going you will be round the mountain and out on the bleak levels of Calary Bog, with the soft gradual side of Douse tempting you to run up to the top—an easy victory. Yield to that temptation, and, unless your way is picked knowingly, you will be floundering in heather shoulder high, ashamed to turn back and almost too tired to go on. Still, to go on is worth it. Once on the top of Douse you are in the heart of real Wicklow—and you see, far below you, the road winding which leads out through Sallygap, west of Kippure Mountain to Kildare and the plains.

But supposing that at Kilmacanoge you do what forty thousand other people will have done that year before you, and hold straight on between the Sugarloaves, the road, curving gradually eastward and seaward, brings you into the Glen of the Downs, another noble defile, wooded to the very crest with scrubby timber, so close as to be almost impassable—lovely as the loveliest in its way. Yet somehow the little gazebo of an octagonal summerhouse set high up on the north side in Bellevue grounds stamps the scene. It is nature, but nature decked and laid out and caressed and petted by man. A little farther and the road brings you into Delgany, at the foot of

the sloping Bellevue grounds, a village prettier even than Enniskerry. And in truth Bellevue was a splendid type of what I have in mind: place and grounds created in the eighteenth century by a cultivated Dublin merchant of Huguenot stock; a house where Grattan was a frequent guest; which till the other day showed in gathered perfection all the domestic art of that great period, with its Sheraton and Chippendale sideboards, its marvellous plaster cornices and ceilings, its inlaid marble mantelpieces, and, for a final glory, its bedstead painted by Angelica Kaufmann. The grounds were planned to match—in the same delicate graceful taste, a little mannered, but always admirable. It had a lovely nature to work upon, and that same taste has made the seaward fringe of these nearest Wicklow Hills into the very garden of Ireland. That is the beauty nearest to the capital. And if the feeling of trimness wearies you, all you have to do is leave the road and strike out where you will across the heather. To their great honour, the liberality of all landowners in this playground of Dublin leaves the casual passer-by free to wander almost as unrestrained as he might be in Achill or on Slieve League.

For the country which lies beyond Dublin's immediate playground there is this to be said. Even the railway going to it is delightful. I know of no prettier

line than the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford, and if its trains are something sluggish, why, you have the more time to admire the view. Beyond Greystones you pass through a long marsh, full of wild fowl, and then come to Wicklow, a pleasant little town sheltered by its low head. There is an old Norman keep here, Black Castle, but much more remarkable is the work of modern builders. Wicklow Head is adorned with three lighthouses—one carrying a light. The first tower was built by a wise and thoughtful Government, and the lamp duly fixed with ceremony. But when it came to be lit, seamen reported that while from certain quarters it was admirably visible, the Head itself blocked it from half the horizon. Nothing daunted, Government ordered another tower to be built on a spot indicated in their offices, and built it was. This illumined the previously excluded section of sea, but was shut out from the area lighted by the first tower. Finally, as a counsel of despair, they sent down someone to look at the ground, and the third tower, which now carries the light, was duly erected. The other two remain as monuments of the persistence with which the English Government has sought to do things right in Ireland.

From Wicklow you strike into a new type of country. Rathnew brings you close to the Devil's Glen, another Dargle, but one with less urbanity and

more rusticity. At Rathdrum you strike the valley of the Avonmore, which is the centre of all this beauty that makes southern Wicklow famous. The line runs through a wooded ravine with the river below it, plunging and swirling, and beyond the river you catch a glimpse of Avondale House, now a school of forestry, but once known to every Irishman as the home of Charles Stuart Parnell. The water comes down here discoloured with mineral washings that remind one of the chemical investigations which made up the pleasure of Parnell's strange life. He dreamed of gold mines in Wicklow—it was only in politics that the stern practical bent of his mind made itself apparent and effectual.

A little farther on the Avonbeg meets the Avonmore; farther yet, beyond Woodenbridge and its hotel, this main stream is joined by the Aughrim River, and controversy still rages as to which of the two confluences was honoured in Moore's melody:

> "There is not, in the wide world, a valley so sweet
> As that vale in whose bosom the wild waters meet!"

Moore himself very diplomatically said he was not sure; but at any rate the valley through which the train runs till it reaches Arklow at the river's outfall is Moore's "Sweet Vale of Avoca"; there is no mistake about that, and no question of its gentle loveliness.

THE MEETING OF THE WATERS, WOODENBRIDGE

Arklow itself is an ancient town, whose name keeps, like Wicklow, a memory of Danish beacon fires—"low" or "lue" is the word for flame (still preserved in lowland Scotch). Its population keep the hardy seagoing tradition—Ireland has no better fishermen; but they are incommoded by an odd circumstance. At this point of the coast there is practically no rise and fall of tide, and many a useful harbour is useful only because it can be reached with the flood, which never comes to Arklow.

Here first one meets a landmark of the great "ninety-eight" rising. The Wexford insurgents received at Arklow the decisive check which curbed their very wonderful successes. The rebellion spread no farther north, though, after the rout of Vinegar Hill, stray parties of fugitives maintained themselves for long enough in the mountains where the meeting waters have their rise.

To reach this wider and more open region — far less beautiful, yet having for some eyes an even greater charm—you should follow up the valley of the Aughrim River. A train will take you to Aughrim town, then comes a road, passing at first between slopes of cultivated and well-planted land. But as you go on, the valley widens and spreads, the woods recede, and before you are the great brown flanks of Lugnaquilla, highest of all the Wicklow Mountains — higher indeed than

many a hill in Donegal or Kerry whose bolder shape gives a far more imposing appearance.

Here at last, far up on the moors, you strike the military road near its southernmost point; and planted on it, facing down the glen, is a queer, gaunt, half-ruined building, evidently a barrack. A barrack it was; but in more recent times it fell to Parnell, who rented these moors, and he used it as a shooting-lodge—furnished in the roughest way, with a few bedsteads and chairs. There is a kind of legend about the haughty, unbending chief, who treated all his followers with the scantest courtesy. Very different is the impression I have got from those who were privileged to walk the hills after birds with him and to camp in that bare but friendly shelter. To-day, indeed, its grimness is somewhat mitigated; but, as you may readily discover, the old barrack has not lost its associations with the nationalism of to-day.

From Aughavanagh the military road will carry you north across the hill, till beyond it you reach the valley of the Avonbeg and Drumgoff Bridge. Here is the foot of Glen Malure—boldest and wildest of all these glens—which divides Lugnaquilla from Lugduff. This valley, commanding the pass westward into the plains at Dunlavin, was always the central stronghold of the O'Byrnes, the great Irish clan who held out stubbornly among the hills. Lord Grey de

Wilton, Elizabeth's deputy, tried to drive them out in 1580, but his force was cut to pieces by the mountaineers, and a few years later they had a sure asylum to offer to Red Hugh O'Donnell, when he escaped from Dublin Castle and the captivity into which he had been foully kidnapped.

But the spot in all this region which offers most attraction to travellers is Glendalough, site of the Seven Churches, a place of most venerable memories. Kevin, to whom it owes its fame, was born A.D. 498, sixty-six years after Patrick first preached in Ireland. His name, *Caomh-ghen*, means the *Gentle-born*, and he was son of the King of Leinster. The whole of this princely family became passionately religious, for two brothers and two sisters of Kevin were canonized, and their names are in the Calendar.

Kevin was sent for nurture to a Cornish holy man, St. Petroc, who had come to spread the light in Wicklow, but the young Prince finished his studies under the guidance of his own uncle, Eoghan or Eugenius, who had a monastic school somewhere in the beautiful parish of Glenealy on the sunny south-eastern slope of these hills.

He was a handsome lad, and his looks so distracted a beautiful girl that she tried to seduce him from his vocation. Modern tradition tells that she followed him into his cave in the cliff above the

upper lake, and that he flung her out into the water. The Life of him relates a different version, according to which he threw her into a bed of nettles and whipped her with them over her face and arms till, as the pious author says, the fire without subdued the fire within, and his discipline determined her to follow his example and enter the monastic life.

However that be, Kevin fled from the society of men—and women—to take up his abode in the lovely but peaceful spot for ever associated with his name: "a valley closed in by lofty and precipitous mountains beside a lake". "On the northern shore", says the Life, "his dwelling was in a hollow tree: but on the southern shore of the lake, he dwelt in a very narrow cave, to which there was no access except by a boat, for a perpendicular rock of immense height overhangs it from above."

This is an overstatement: any active man can get into the Bed from above; but even from below (where Mr. Williams shows the boat lying in his picture) it needs some climbing. Within is only room for a man to sit or lie—not to stand. But Kevin's dwelling on the north shore was leafy and bird-haunted, and the wild creatures, it is said, used to come and light on his shoulder, and sing their sweetest songs to God's solitary.

At last his fame went aboard, and folk flocked

ST. KEVIN'S BED AND THE CHURCH OF THE ROCK, UPPER LAKE GLENDALOUGH

to his sanctuary and begged him to found a monastery. He submitted unwillingly, and let them build him (still on the slope of the same mountain, Lugduff) a beehive cell of stones, or "skellig": and near it they built an oratory, *Tempul-na-Skellig*, on a rock projecting into the lake — now wrecked, for, as Archbishop Healy writes in his *Ancient Schools and Scholars*, "fifty years of tourists in the mountain valley have caused more ruin to these venerable monuments than centuries of civil war".

But there was no room on this cliffy shore, and Kevin was admonished in a vision to build in the open space by the outfall of the lower lake. "If it were God's will," said Kevin, "I would rather remain until my death here where I have laboured." "But," said the angel, "if you dwell where I bid you, many blessed souls will have their resurrection there and go with you to the heavenly kingdom." So Kevin consented to move; and he built the monastery on which all those churches and towers sprang up that can be seen or traced to-day. Yet in this city he did not depart from his austerities, but slept on the bare ground and lived on herbs and water.

The foundation of the monastery may date from about 540. Kevin lived on, they say, till 620, and died surrounded by his disciples, a man of God and a peacemaker, among the best beloved of Ireland's saints.

All that great congeries of ruins dating from pre-Norman times speaks of a very large community. They are typical. There is the round tower, *cloigtheach*, a belfry, place of retreat into which the pious monks used to retire, drawing up the ladder after them; there is the big church with high-pitched roof of stone, and its galaxy of lesser chapels, just as in Ciaran's city at Clonmacnoise. About these doubtless were numberless huts of wattle and clay, dwellings of the clergy and the students. For here was the real metropolitan see of Irish Leinster. Dublin was a Danish foundation, and for centuries the primacy was disputed between them, till the dispute was ended by calling the provincial see the Archbishopric of Dublin and Glendalough—joint dioceses with separate organization to this day.

For archæological and historic interest no place in Wicklow can approach this "glen of the two lakes", *Gleann Dá Loch*. But for romance, I at least should put Glen Malure far before it; and, for beauty, would infinitely prefer the lovely cup of Lough Tay or Luggilaw, where it nestles under the western slopes of Douse. This, and Lough Dan as well, you can see by a slight detour on your way to Dublin; and if you have come by Bray, it is best to take the military road back to Dublin, which brings you through Sallygap by the headwaters of the Liffey, and past the other beautiful

little lake of Lough Bray at the sources of the Glencree River. So, keeping high among the hills till you have passed Killakee and begin the descent into Rathfarnham, you will complete almost the whole of your journey amid the haunts of shepherd folk such as those among whom Synge lived, and from whom first he got his vivid vision of Irish peasant life—a vision coloured no doubt by long residence in far-off Aran, and told in words that keep an echo of the Gaelic tongue, yet always, as most of our visions must be, in its essence the vision of that particular countryside where he was born and bred.

V

The very antithesis of Wicklow, with its mountains, its small plunging rivers, and its breed of little light-footed sheep, is the plain country of Meath, watered by the deep stream of the Boyne, and grazed over by the finest and biggest cattle. No other place in Ireland is so rich in monuments of all the ages; nor is there anything in Ireland better worth seeing than the valley of the Boyne itself, from Navan to the sea.

If I had time and a motor car, I should begin by driving to Trim, and stopping just short of it at Lara-

cor, to see where Swift lived in the early days of his growing fame. At Trim you will find an amazing cluster of beautiful ruins, but notably "King John's Castle", as fine a specimen of the Norman keep as can be seen. It was founded in 1173 by Hugh de Lacy, so no Norman building can be much older in Ireland. Its history is full of romance—Richard II held Henry of Lancaster prisoner there for a while—and many deeds of note were done in the old place. But there is not space to deal with Trim, nor with the beautiful ruins of Bective Abbey, which you can arrange to see on the way to what no traveller should leave unseen—the Hill of Tara.

Tara of to-day is only a field or two of rich grass, covered with the trace of ancient earthworks—most curious of them the Banqueting Hall of King Cormac, a long narrow parallelogram—250 yards in length by 15 wide—with the fourteen openings of its doors still traceable, as they are shown in two plans preserved in very ancient Irish manuscripts. But for the detail of these monuments you must consult the plan in Mr. Cooke's admirable "Murray"; for some general account of the history of Tara I may refer to my own *Fair Hills of Ireland.* Here I single out only one thread in that vast fabric of associations.

Looking north-east from Tara you will see easily (any child can point it out) another somewhat higher

ON THE RIVER BOYNE AT TRIM

rise of ground, seven or eight miles distant—the Hill of Slane. That is where, on Easter Eve in the year 433, Patrick lighted the Paschal fire which gave menace and warning to the High King and his druids, keeping their state on Tara. It was a bold challenge, for a great druidic festival was in preparation, and no man in Meath was permitted to light a flame till Tara itself should give the beacon signal; and the night of that challenge is a marking-point in the history of Ireland—even in the history of the world.

For in that period of the fifth century, all Europe, as we know it to-day, was included within Rome's Empire, save for two exceptions—the outlying retreats of Scandinavia and of Ireland. Christianity was the religion of the Empire, the religion of civilization, and there is little doubt but that before Patrick's coming Christianity had got some footing in the south-eastern parts of Ireland, which were in closest commerce with Great Britain.

Patrick, by birth a Briton (almost certainly of Wales), was a Roman born in the same sense as St. Paul; his father was an official of the Empire; and from his father's house he was carried into captivity by these outer barbarians of Ireland. In his captivity he found his mission, escaped, with the fixed design to prepare himself for it, and spent thirty years on that preparation before, in 432, he came back to make

captivity captive. He touched at a port in south-eastern Ireland—probably Wicklow—but stood on with his vessel, coasting past Dublin Bay till he landed again for water and provisions at the little island of Skerries, which since then is called Inishpatrick. Still north he sailed, up to Strangford Lough, where, landing, he made his first convert, the chief Dichu, and founded his first church—Down Patrick—where many years later he returned to die. Here for a time he sojourned. Before he turned south there was an errand he had to do, to bring his message to the valley of the Braid, in Antrim, where he had been a captive, herding swine on the slopes of Slemish. But at last, in the spring of 433, he set his face to the very core and centre of his purpose—the evangelization of Ireland at the fountain head of pagan civilization and pagan power. For the success of Patrick's mission lay in this. He addressed himself to the chiefs, he bearded the pagan in his strong places: he won those who carried others with them. That was the method he had learnt in more than a generation of labour, spent seeking knowledge throughout Europe "in the college of the Lateran at Rome, at Cecina on the Tuscan Sea, at Auxerre in Gaul", jealously profiting by his right as a citizen of the Empire, before the Empire should crumble, and knowledge and religion perish with it, under the redoubled assaults of barbarism. No man

will despise the Hill of Slane who realizes what lay behind the kindling of Patrick's watchfire. I quote a passage from a great Irish writer, who had the gift of seeing things in their relations—the late Sir William Butler. It is from his last volume *The Light of the West*:

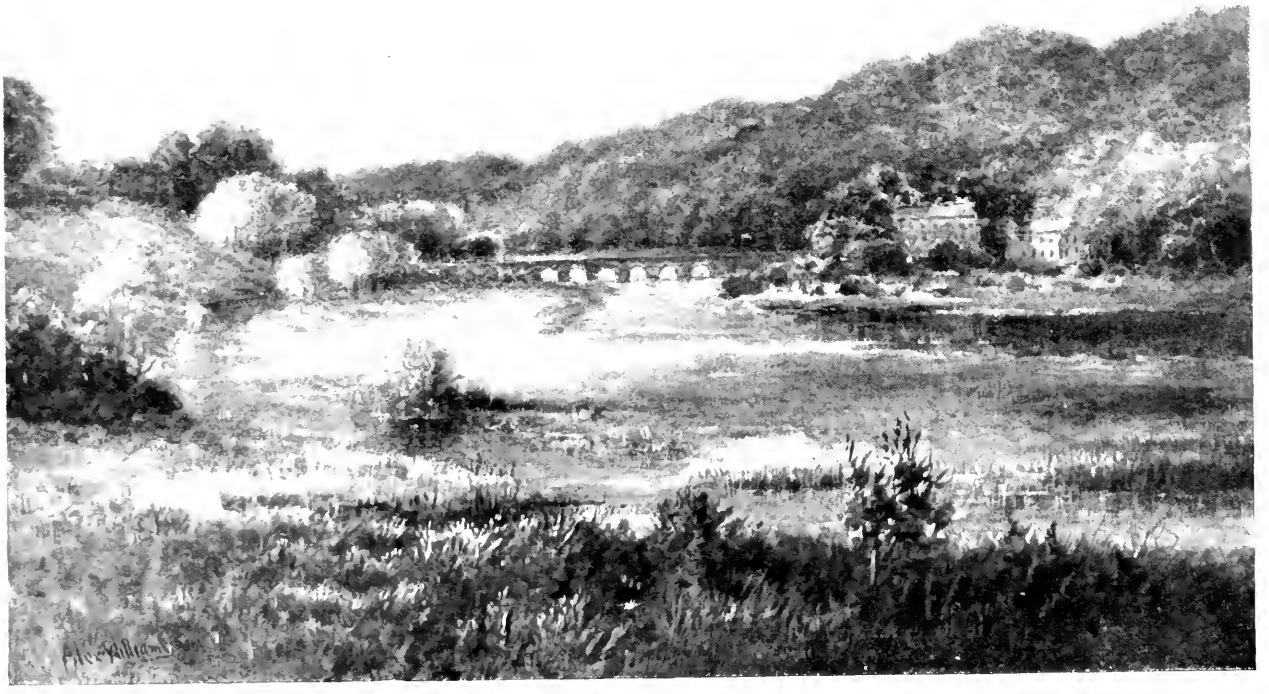
"The Easter Eve, 433, is falling dark and cold upon the realm of Ireland — dark and cold because to-morrow is sacred to the idols — and it has long been ruled in Druids' law that on the night preceding the great fast of Tamhair no fire is to burn on hearth or hill—no light is to gleam from palace or hovel until the flame of the sacred pile, kindled by the king on the green 'rath' at Tara, shall be seen burning over the plains of Meath. So the twilight comes down, the light lessens in the west, and the wide landscape is wrapt in deep and solemn gloom, as though it had been a land in which man's presence was unknown. While yet the sun was high in heaven, the missionary had quitted his boat in the estuary of the River Boyne, and had passed on foot along the river valley towards the interior of Meath. Evening found the little band encamped upon a grassy ridge on the north side of the Boyne, and overlooking the winding channel of that river. To the south, some miles away, the hill of Tara was in sight. The March evening fell chilly upon the pilgrims; but the hillside yielded store of furze-faggot and oak-branch, and soon a camp fire blazed upon the ridge, casting around a wide circle of light into the momentarily deepening sea of darkness. What memories of far-off nights on the Antrim hills come to the pilgrim over the mists of thirty years, as here he stands in the firelight, on Irish soil again! How much has passed since last the furze-faggot warmed his lonely shepherd's bivouac! How much has yet to be in all yon grim surrounding gloom ere his task shall be accomplished! Never in all the ages of the world has the might of savage man been more manifest on earth. Already the Vandal king is in Carthage; the Visigoths are seated at Toulouse; Attila

has reached the Rhine, having ridden his charger over the ashes of the Eastern Empire.

"And here, in the light of the solitary fire, stands an unarmed, defenceless man, who, even now, keeps this Easter Eve as a vigil of battle against the powers of Pagan darkness, throned over yonder in all the might of armed multitudes.

"The darkness deepens over the scene; the March winds smite the faggot flame, and around the lonely bivouac the breezes come filled with the vast sadness of the night. Feeble to outward sense must seem the chances of the coming struggle. But the inner sense of the Great Missionary may this night be looking upon a different vision. Beyond the bleak ridge and circle of firelight —out beyond void of darkness, perchance those deep-sunk eyes are beholding glimpses of future glory to the Light he has come to spread; and it may be that his ear, catching in the echoes of the night wind the accents of ages yet to be, is hearing wondrous melodies of sound rolling through the starlight.

". . . Yes, there was light far away in the West—out in the great ocean—far down below the sunset's farthest verge—from westmost hilltop, the New World lay waiting for the light. It came—borne by the hands of Ireland's starving children. The old man tottered with the precious burthen from the fever-stricken ship; the young child carried the light in feeble hands to the shore; the strong man bore it to the Western prairies, and into the cañons of snowy sierras; the maiden brought it into the homestead to be a future dower to her husband and a legacy to her children; and lo! ere famine's night had passed from Ireland, the Church of Patrick arose o'er all that vast new world of America, from where the great St. Lawrence pours its crystal tide into the daybreak of the Atlantic, to where California flings wide her 'golden gate' to the sunsets of the Pacific. Nearly 1400 years have gone since, on the 17th of March, 493, Patrick passed from earth to Heaven. Empires have flourished and gone down, whole peoples have passed away, new faiths have arisen, new languages have sprung up, new worlds have been born to man; but those fourteen centuries have only fed the fire of that faith which he taught the men of Erin, and have spread into a wider horizon the light he kindled. And if there be in the great life beyond the grave a morning trumpet-



THE BRIDGE OF SLANE, RIVER BOYNE

note to sound the réveillé of the army of the dead, glorious indeed must be the muster answering from the tombs of fourteen centuries to the summons of the Apostle of the Gaels.

"Nor scarce less glorious can be his triumph when the edge of sunrise, rolling around this living earth, reveals on all the ocean isles and distant continents, the myriad scattered children of the Apostle, whose voices answering that sunrise rollcall re-echo in endless accents along the vaults of heaven."

That is no untrue vision. Rome went down in blood and dust, and in the centuries that followed, if the lamp of learning was not wholly quenched, it was because Patrick had kindled, in this remote island beyond the bounds of Empire, "the Light of the West"; if Christianity did not perish in the weltering chaos, it was very largely due to the fruit of the seed which Patrick sowed.

Miracles are mingled with the story of that Easter evangelization. Laoghaire, the king (pronounce him "Laery", which has been softened into "Leary"), set out to meet him, but stopped short of the Boyne, and the Christian came into the camp chanting a verse of Scripture: "Some in chariots, some in horses, but we in the name of the Lord our God". At his coming, Erc, the king's chief judge, rose up and did him homage; but a druid blasphemed, and Patrick wrought a miracle of destruction. And next day he was bidden to Tara, and ambushes were set for him on the road; but he changed his people into deer, and so they

escaped and reached the king's dun, and other miracles were wrought in it. At all events, by whatever means, Patrick made converts among the king's own kindred, and Laoghaire, though he himself would not change, left him free to preach, and probably welcomed his help in writing down the laws and customs of Ireland. For wherever Patrick went he spread the arts of peace, and Ireland was not slow to profit by them. Take one instance only. On the hill of Slane a great monastery grew up, centre of learning as well as of arts, so famous that in the middle of the seventh century, Dagobert II, heir to the throne of France, came here to be educated, away from the weltering turmoil of Continental Europe.

Of that monastery there is not even so much trace as can be seen of Tara's greatness, yet within four miles of it are monuments of surpassing interest that show the Ireland of a day before St. Patrick, and others that show the Ireland which he made. On the north bank, at New Grange and at Dowth, are the burying places of prehistoric kings: gigantic structures of huge monoliths, stone slabs, each of them man-high, so arranged that standing stones make a passage, roofed with other huge blocks, and this passage leads to a vaulted chamber, built in the same marvellous fashion. How on earth these stones were handled no man can guess, yet there they are

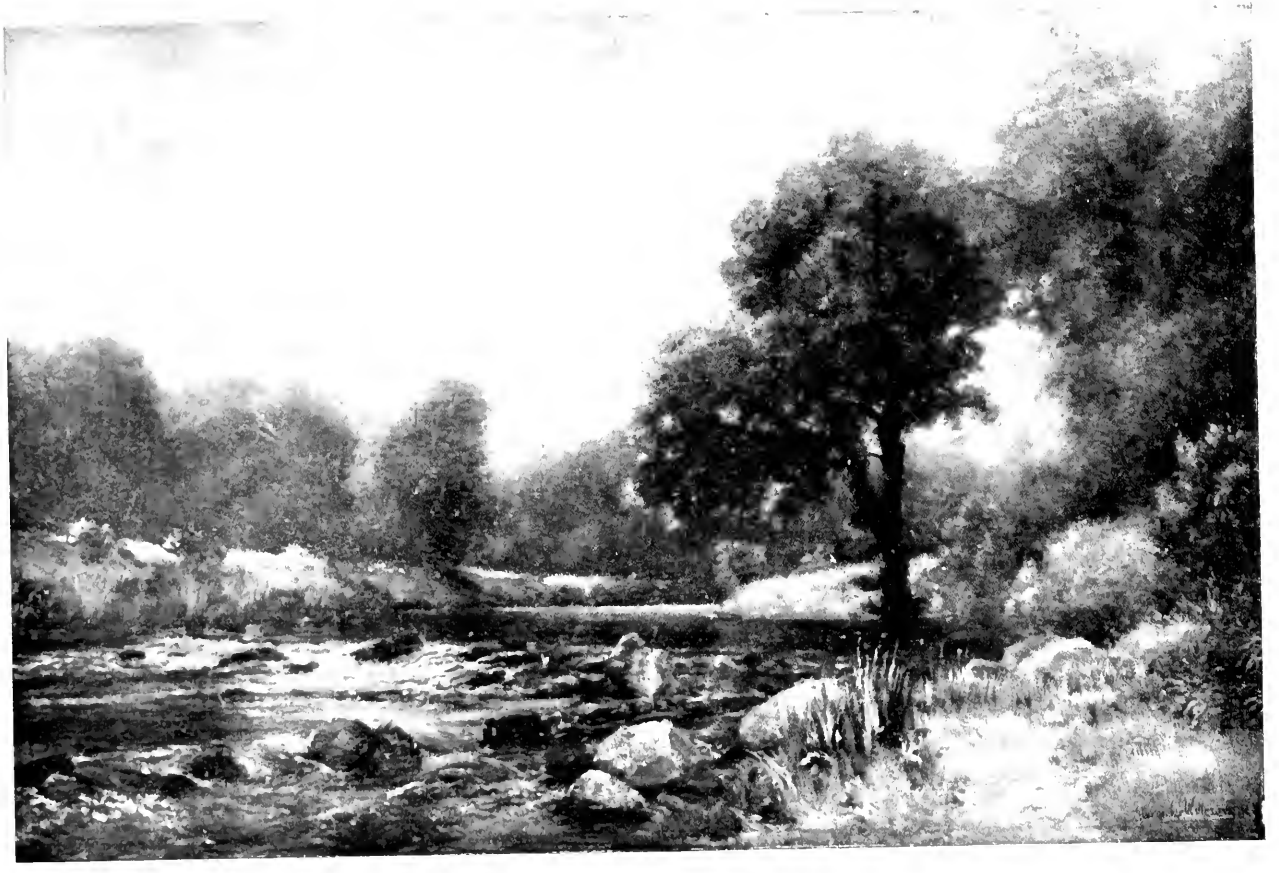
—Cyclopean architecture with a vengeance. But these habitations of the dead are not exposed to daylight, for over the whole structure was heaped a mound of lesser stones, so huge that the whole thing covers an acre of ground, and now, grass-grown and tree-covered, stands out like a natural hill—into whose recesses you may burrow fearfully along this amazing corridor. Strange spiral ornamentation on the stones at New Grange is the joy and bewilderment of archæologists; and though we know the names of kings who were buried there, we can only guess vaguely at the builders of these structures, comparable to the tomb under which Agamemnon rests in Mycenæ.

Nearer to Drogheda, not less interesting, and far more beautiful, are two monuments of Christian Ireland. One is the ancient monastic settlement of Monasterboice, where stand a round tower, two small ancient churches, and for its supreme interest, two huge stone crosses covered with the most elaborate sculpture, on Scriptural subjects, presenting churches, monks, and warriors as they were in Ireland of the ninth or tenth century. One of the two crosses is signed by its deviser, Muiredach, probably the Muiredach whose death is recorded at 924 A.D., and purely Celtic art has no more important monument.

A few miles off is the other ruin, which shows what point monastic civilization had reached in Ireland

before yet the Normans had crossed the sea. The Cistercian Abbey of Mellifont was the first of its order in Ireland, and it was built by Irish craftsmen trained at Clairvaux, in Normandy. Enough of the ruin is left to show how noble and how pure was the work of these early builders, who brought into Ireland the Norman civilization but not the Norman rule. Yet there is also the monument of her who gets the blame of bringing in the hostile, not the peaceful, invasion. Dervorgilla is buried there, O'Rourke's wife, whose abduction by Dermot MacMurrough led to MacMurrough's banishment from Ireland, and so to his calling in of foreign aid.

De Lacy's castle at Trim is not the only evidence that the Normans, when they came, were quick to fasten upon this fertile valley. At Randalstown, near Navan, Colonel Everard's tobacco plantations are an object of interest to thousands to-day; but perhaps not many of them realize that this enterprising country gentleman is living to-day where his forefathers have lived since the first of them got a grant there in the twelfth century, among the other knights and squires who rode with De Lacy. Norman they were and Irish they soon became, yet here in the pale they kept far more distinct than the Geraldines of Desmond or the De Burgos of Connaught; and so they kept on the lucky side, the side whose supremacy was finally



ON THE RIVER SLANEY AT BALLINTEMPLE

established when William of Orange fought his way across the fords at Oldbridge.

Oldbridge is only about a mile upstream from Drogheda, and an obelisk marks the site of the famous Battle of the Boyne. The battle was decided before it was fairly begun, because a large force had been thrown across the bridge at Slane, and thus turned the Irish position, which lay along the south bank from opposite the Mattock River to where the hill rises steep below Oldbridge. Schomberg fell in the ford above the island, probably some two hundred yards below the present bridge — fell rallying his Huguenots like a hero.

No record of brutality sullies that feat of arms; but at Drogheda, one of the most picturesquely situated towns in Ireland, and made more picturesque by the high viaduct which here spans the river, there are terrible memories connected with those old defences of which one part remains perfect — St. Laurence's Gate with its two-storied tower. Here it was that Cromwell perpetrated the first of those massacres which disgrace his name. Such of the captured as were not slain were sent for slaves to the West Indies, where to-day in certain islands a debased Irish can be heard from negroes, and Irish names are general among the negro population.

Yet in that lovely valley it is hard to think of

cruelties. Historic records crowd so thick in it that one has scarcely time to speak of beauty. And yet from the ridge of the hill above Monasterboice is a view which pleases me beyond almost anything I know in Ireland. Midway on that northern plain one has the Mourne Mountains beyond fertile levels to the north, the Dublin Hills beyond fertile levels to the south, and the blue sea close at hand abreast of all. Still, you may match that elsewhere in Ireland; you cannot match the river itself. From Navan a little leisurely steamer will take you to Drogheda, dodging from canal into river, from river back to canal, through scenery as fertile and as cultivated as the banks of the Thames, yet rendered far more beautiful by the charm of the river itself—a typical salmon stream, with its pools, its plunging flood, its long swirling reaches. I have written of it elsewhere and may perhaps be allowed to quote my own writing:

". . . Above Navan the Boyne is sedgy and weed-choked; but if you follow the towpath down from Navan, between canal and river, you will find yourself heaping scorn on the Thames. Here are wide spaces of smooth water, with steep wooded banks beyond them—banks ambered, when I saw them last, with all the tones of autumn. But (since Boyne is a famous salmon stream, and way must be made for the running fish) here are no high lock-gates damming back the water in long sluggish flats. Everywhere the run is brisk, and constantly broken by low weirs, under which long races swirl and bubble in a way to tantalize every angler, and delight even those who do not know the true charm

of a salmon pool. When I came in sight of Dunmor Castle, a ruined Norman keep of the sixteenth century, perched high on a bare grassy cliff above one of these lashers, it seemed that here was surely the finest point of all; but after I had passed Stackallen bridge, and was travelling now down the left bank, I learnt my error. Under the woods of Stackallen House, canal and river merge into one broad stream, closely pent by precipitous banks, variously wooded. Below the lock, where the canal joins the main water, a pool begins, stretching some two hundred yards straight down, until it is closed by a cliff of ochre-tinted rock, bold and bare among the foliage. So swift is the rush from the lasher, so far does it swirl down into this reach, that the water has no look of dullness; it is a pool, not a stretch. I walked on quickly, eager to see what lay around the sharp bend, and suddenly towards me there swung round the cliff a barge, brightly painted. The line of its sides, the fan-shaped curve of the wave spreading outwards and backwards, as the craft drew towards me, had a beauty in that setting that only sight could realize. If any spot of the world is enchanted, it must be that water; and as you round the cliff it is more beautiful still. For there, under Beaupark House, is a cliff answering that on the Stackallen bank, and a precipitous lawn beside it; and the river, bending south here at right angles, then breaking out again, stately and splendid, on its old line due east, has movement and stillness all in one; it is a sliding, swirling mirror for banks which well deserve such a glass to echo their perfection."

That valley is to my mind the most beautiful and the most typically beautiful thing in Leinster. For Leinster is the province of cultivated fertility; it is also the province of great and beautiful rivers. The Shannon, except from Killaloe and Limerick, is somewhat lacking in beauty; it has majesty, but not charm. In Leinster the rivers are more manageable in size—the Nore, the Barrow, the Boyne, the Liffey, and the

Slaney. Each of them has its own character; and the lower tidal reaches of the Slaney, reed-fringed and swan-haunted, are not less lovely than the salmon pool in the upper waters near Carlow which Mr. Williams has drawn so lovingly. And those who imagine Ireland as a country of mere beggary might find something to learn as well as to see either amid the fertility of Meath or again in South Leinster, where a poorer soil has been tilled into high perfection. The valley of the Nore in particular is affluent in loveliness from its banks at Kilkenny, where Moore courted the pretty actress who made him the best of wives, down to the head of the tideway at Inistiogue, where under the shelter of Mr. Tighe's great woods you can stay at a neat little hotel in a charming village, and fish to heart's content in splendid pools and shallows, where trout and salmon are plenty, and if you cannot catch them, it must be either your fault or theirs. And if they are hard to capture—as I found them in weather which all but fishermen adored—that is just because it is a free water, because here as everywhere there is something of that easy live and let live spirit which endears Ireland to those that know her, and which everywhere makes the visitor welcome —perhaps with most natural kindliness in those parts which are least accustomed to look upon the stranger as a source of revenue. The most beautiful places in

Leinster are far less known to Englishmen than the barren cliffs of Achill. Yet if you go to Inistiogue, or any similar place in Leinster, you will begin to realize why it is that in Leinster only of the provinces does the population increase in these days.

There, under the new conditions of tenure, the farmer begins to invest freely, his money and his labour, upon soil that can repay exertion, and under a climate that has none of Ulster's harshness. In Wexford, where most of the Irish tobacco was grown till the growing of it was prohibited by an amazing Act of Parliament some seventy years ago, the plant took so kindly to the soil that it perpetuated itself without cultivation: and when (after infinite solicitation and manœuvring) leave was given us to revive this industry, the distinctive variety was recovered from these casual plants, and has been cultivated among other species in Colonel Edwards's farm at Navan. Now a soil and a climate in which tobacco will reproduce itself in the wild state is a rare combination so far north, and Wexford men are trying to utilize its advantages.

In Carlow and Kilkenny one sees prosperity too on every side, while Louth disputes the palm with Wexford. Only on the richest land of all, through Meath into Kildare, is there the lamentable spectacle of depopulation — a rich wilderness. Yet even there

it is to be hoped that the spread of co-operation and the gradual work of land settlement may undo some of the mischief wrought by reckless clearances.

Those who in visiting Ireland have too often found images and memories of beauty marred by the association of ragged poverty, overshadowed by a very cloud of despair, may find in Leinster at least a beauty where all the omens are hopeful and where, even beside the ruins only too evident, a strong new fabric of industry is being built up.

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