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ULSTER

Pictured by Alexander Williams

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Irene Dwen And
Ulster - 1926

MUCKROSS BAY, KILLYBEGS, DONEGAL

ULSTER

Described by Stephen Gwynn
Pictured by Alexander Williams

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AT THE GAP OF THE NORTH

Ulster is a province much talked of and little understood—a name about which controversy rages. But to those who know it and who love it, one thing is clear—Ulster is no less Ireland than Connaught itself. No better song has been written in our days than that which tells of an Irishman's longing in London to be back "where the mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea"; nor indeed is the whole frame of mind which that song dramatises, with so pleasant a blending of humour and pathos, better expressed in any single way than in the phrase "thinking long"—an idiom common to all Ulster talk, whether in Down or Donegal. And when I who write these lines "think long" for Ireland, it is to Ulster that my thought goes

back, back to the homely ways and the quaint speech of northern folk, hard yet kindly, with the genial welcome readier even in their rough accent than in smoothest Munster: for these things there rises in my mind the vague aching, half-remembrance, half-desire, which we call "thinking long". It is a far cry from Belfast, with its clang of riveters, to the vast loneliness of Slieve League or Dunlewy; and yet the great captain of industry, nurtured and proven in the keenest commerce, has upon his tongue, in his features, in the whole cast of his nature, these very traits which endear themselves to me in some Irish-speaking schoolmaster of western Donegal. Soil, climate, and common memories—these are what identify and what bind. No man gets his living too easily in Ulster, and need makes neighbourly. Protestant and Catholic have to fight the same battle with hard weather—of which perhaps even the summer traveller may form some judgment; they are rewarded by the same loveliness which makes a fine day in Ulster the most enchanting upon earth; and they fend against the stress of storm by the same warm shelter, the same glow of the turf-piled hearth.

The Ulster of which I shall write in these few pages is the Ulster of four sea-bordering counties only, Donegal, Derry, Antrim, and Down, since beyond doubt these exceed the other five in attractions.

Only let a word be said of two great lakes. Lough Erne, which belongs mainly to Fermanagh, though bordering Donegal in part, is to its champions the Cinderella of Irish waters, and some day it will come into its inheritance of fame. Lough Neagh, with its eighty miles of shore, divided among five counties, has never been seen by me but in tranquil loveliness, one vast sheet of shimmering blue; and whether at Antrim, where many memories have their monuments, or at Toomebridge, where the Bann flows out majestically, has seemed well worth a day's journey —the more because its beauty is set among lands not fertile, yet prosperously tilled and inhabited by people, not rich indeed, yet safely removed from the stress of poverty. Not far from it is Armagh, a cathedral city, richer in associations than any in Ireland. If I do not write of Armagh, it is because the oldest of these associations has its monument also at the southern gate of Ulster, where the division of the province is best marked.

Carlingford Lough, according to modern geography, marks that division, but in truth the lough's southern shore, the rocky promontory of Cooley, belongs to Ulster by all titles, though it be included in the modern county of Louth. A steamer will carry you from Holyhead to Greenore (where is a hotel with the inevitable golf links) and land you nominally in Leinster.

But all that mountainous headland is inhabited by folk who still keep the Gaelic speech alive among them, and whose remote forbears owned in far distant times the overlordship of Ireland's most famous champion, when Ulster had a pagan chivalry, the Red Branch Circle, which is to Irish legend what the story of Arthur's knighthood is to British romance, or the tale of the Nibelungs to Germany. Cooley (in Irish, *Cuailgne*) was the fief of Cuchulain; and the Brown Bull of Cooley was the object of that great foray made by the rest of Ireland upon Ulster, which is related in the oldest and finest of all Celtic hero tales.

Cuchulain's dwelling was outside Cooley, outside Ulster proper; his stronghold was Dundealgan, the "Thorn Fort" which gives its name to Dundalk. It was an outpost guarding that pass in the hills, the gap of the north, through which the railway, leaving the plains of Leinster, winds into the mountainous and threatening regions of Armagh and Down.

All the story of Cuchulain's hero-feats can be read in Lady Gregory's admirable version, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*; but Cuchulain's fort you can see for yourself. It stands close to the town of Dundalk, visible from the railway, a flat-topped mount, surrounded by a trench some thirty feet deep, with a steep outer rampart surrounding this in its turn. The whole is now tree-covered. Mr. Tempest, an antiquary of

NARROW WATER CASTLE, CARLINGFORD LOUGH

Dundalk, whose exertions have saved this monument from the spade and plough, thinks that he has identified, a couple of miles south of Dundalk, the place where Cuchulain died. Cloghafarmore, the "Big Man's Stone", at Ratheddy is one of the "standing stones" found through Ireland, as through other Celtic countries, and tradition identifies it with the pillar to which Cuchulain made his way from his last fight. For ninety days, he and his charioteer Laeg, and his pair of horses, Black Sanglain and the Grey of Macha, had harassed and held back the host of Ireland, destroying champion after champion, singly or by groups, in fights at each ford, and raining missiles upon the main body with marvellous sling-throwing; but at last, encompassed and at bay, he had got his death-wound with his own charmed spear, which passed through the bodies of nine men in its last flight from his hand. When, flung back at him by Lugaidh, last survivor of the sons whose father Cuchulain had slain, it had ripped his body open, the wounded warrior, holding his bowels together with one hand, staggered to this pillar stone, and bound himself to it by his scarf, so that even in death and defeat he might still stand upright. So he stood propped, while the Grey of Macha, loosed from its harness, defended him with teeth and hoof, letting none approach, till men saw that on the hero's shoulder a raven had lighted.

"It is not on that pillar birds were used to settle", said one of his foemen. Then the grey horse knew that life had ebbed away, and she left the body to its despoilers. But the man who struck off Cuchulain's head, and took it with him, had his own head struck off by a comrade of the Red Branch before he reached the plains of Liffey.

Such is the fierce temper of that old hero-cycle; but if its heroes are not to be outdone in fierceness neither are they in generosity. How much is legend, sheer invention, none can say: the great earthworks at Armagh, Cuchulain's fort at Dundealgan, and a hundred other things testify to a truth behind the tale. And it is fairly well established that the race which had its centre at Armagh was not the race which governed from Tara: the Red Branch was Pictish, Tara was Milesian. How distinct the racial types show where they have survived tolerably pure is hardly realized, save by some such chance as befell me, when, at an exhibition in Limerick, I was summoned to look at a strange foreign folk from the north. They were girls from an Irish-speaking district in Donegal—not far from Rosapenna—pretty girls, too, but among the big, buxom, oval-faced, soft-bodied Southerners their short profiles, their high cheek bones, and hard, bright colour showed as strange as if they had been from another quarter of the world.

All the subsequent stages in Irish history meet you about the shores of Carlingford — Carline-fiord; its name tells of Danish settlements. The old castle in Carlingford town was erected by de Courcy at King John's bidding; the monastery was Norman built too, by Richard de Burgo, Earl of Ulster, but the Norman rule in Ulster was closely limited to a few strongholds on the coast. The Narrow Water Castle, which Mr. Williams has drawn against its background of the steep richly wooded slopes which make the chief beauty of this beautiful lough, is on the site of a thirteenth-century fortress, but that was destroyed in the Great War of 1641, and this building dates from Charles II's reign. At Warrenpoint a tall obelisk records the name of Ross of Bladensburg, one of the many brilliant officers whom Ireland gave to Wellington's armies—with how many thousands of the unnamed peasants to fill the ranks that they led! All those wooded hills behind Rostrevor, the little watering-place that nestles snug among them, looking south to the sun and the hills of Cooley, speak of comfortable days and territorial dominion. Behind those same wooded hills lies the southernmost point of industrial Ulster, Newry town, with its whirring looms.

These are some of the stepping-stones to guide one through Irish history; yet how many more might be added! Where the road and rail strike north from

Dundalk, as they rise to that pass which is the famous Gap, you reach Faughart, scene of the battle where Edward Bruce ended his disastrous adventure of conquest in Ireland. And on the plain below, William and Schomberg had their camp and mustered their army before it set out to march upon the Boyne.

Memories of war—Pict and Connachtman contending for Cuchulain's head; the Dane plundering and trading; the Norman building his strongholds; the Scot heading Ireland's endeavour to shake off the Norman yoke; that other convulsion in 1641, and then new castles built; the Dutchman landing, and his triumphant march; and from the subdued Ireland, thousands, tens of thousands, of soldiers, gentle and simple, issuing forth to uphold the English name. Yes, but other memories are there too. Some maintain that here Patrick landed on his mission. But at all events at Faughart, in the fifth century, Brigid was born, the "Mary of the Gael", "mother of all the saints of Ireland". Her work was done in Leinster, but surely her birthplace here on the threshold of Ulster should not be overlooked.

"THE BLACK NORTH"

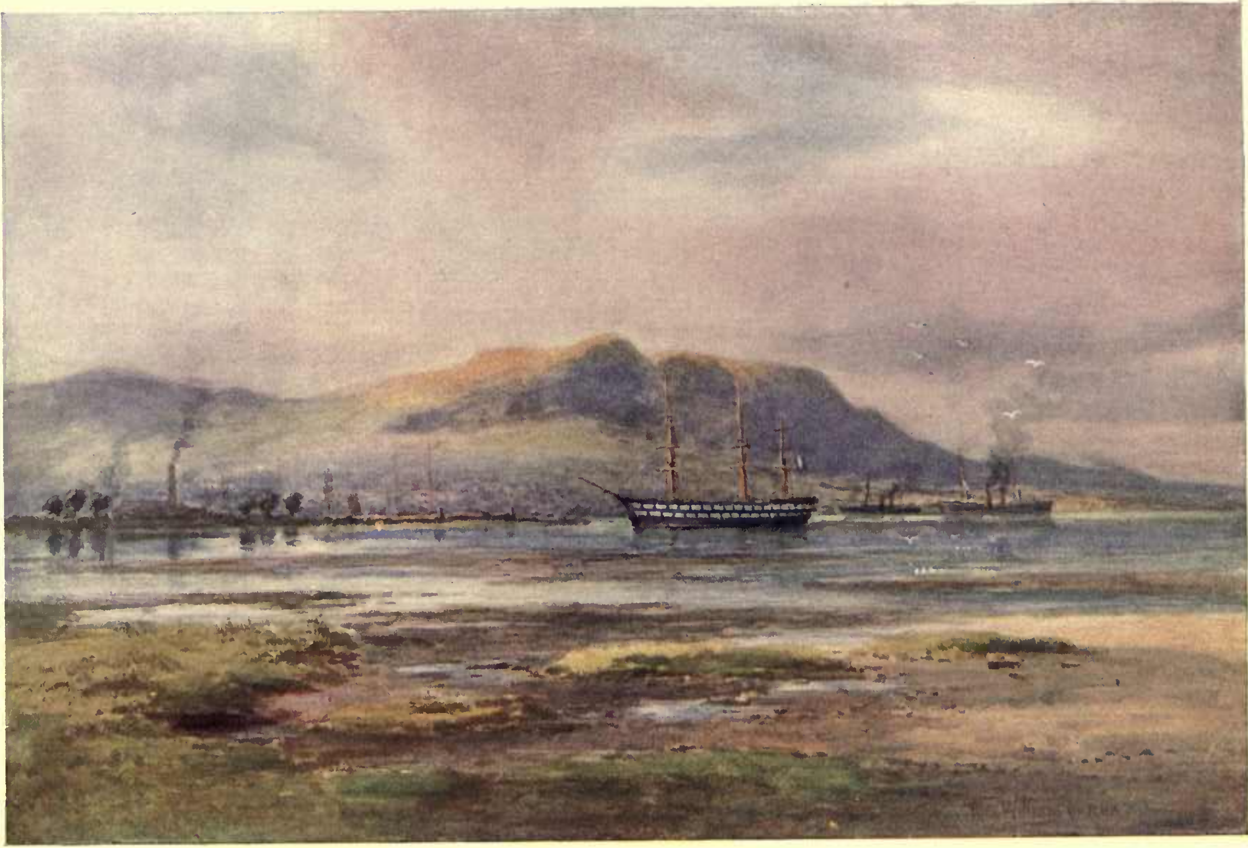
I shall assume that from Dundalk and its neighbouring beauty, that narrow lough winding among the hills, you go straight to Belfast, with the glorious range of Mourne Mountains on your right hand to make the journey attractive. At "Portadown upon the Bann", where the Pope has a bad name, you are not far from the focus of the industrial north—at all events of the great linen industry. From the train you will see fields white as snow with bleaching webs; and it is said that one cause of this trade's localization is a special suitability of climate, like that which makes Lancashire head of the world for cotton-spinning. Belgium can beat Ireland in producing flax—can get 50 per cent more for the same weight of finished fibre—but in the spinning and weaving Ulster is unapproachable. Unhappily, as in all textile trades, the individual withers and the machine grows more and more: hand-loom damask weavers, who can still make a product marvellous for craftsmanship, find their occupation gone—the machine runs them too close.

What the linen trade has been worth to Ulster can never be counted. It was the one industry which England's jealousy spared, and even (after long refusal) grudgingly fostered, in those very decades when

her manufacturers were urging Parliament to stamp out and destroy the woollen trade. Its existence preserved in this corner of the country that industrial habit which means not only an inherited skill but the transmitted aptitude for factory work, with its regular hours and mechanical routine, so unlike the conditions of labour on the land, in which all the rest of Ireland has found—since 1800—its only resource.

Even agriculture has been helped by the proximity of towns where all, down to the labouring classes, have money to buy with. The district which centres about Portadown is to-day foremost of all Ireland for the culture of fruit and flowers, though neither climate nor soil specially favours it. One beauty that Ulster has far more generally than any other province is the flower-bordered cottage. They grow orange lilies in fine profusion, but they grow other and less emblematic blossoms as well.

Belfast—when you reach it—is not calculated to charm the eye. It has the features of any English manufacturing town so far as its buildings are concerned, and the finest structures it can show (without disparaging its handsome Town Hall) are the vast fabrics which rise in the dockyards, such ships as have never been built in the world before—marvels of symmetry and strength. To see them in the building up is to watch, perhaps, the most impressive ex-



CAVE HILL, BELFAST

hibition of human skill and energy. Ireland, for all its defective development, can boast of heading the world in certain enterprises: Guinness's brewery, Harland and Wolff's engineering works, and Barbour's great net and rope factory at Lisburn are, each in its kind, the biggest and best in Europe, or out of it.

Once you get down to the water in Belfast, beauty is abundant, and for my part I like best the view from the docks. But Mr. Williams has chosen a distant indication of the town under the bold headland, at whose foot it lies so well. This aspect of Cave Hill does not show its strange feature—the vast Napoleonic profile flung up against an eastern sky. Time was when Belfast must have been curiously divided about that portent; for in the Revolution period northern Ireland was fiercely republican. It was on Cave Hill that Wolfe Tone, most formidable of all Irish rebels, with a group of young Ulster democrats, founded the Society of United Irishmen.

Belfast does not dwell much on these memories to-day, nor indeed on any memories; her interest is in the prosperous present, the growing future. And although it has its absurdities, notably in the claim to be more populous than Dublin (a result achieved by omitting Rathmines and Pembroke, townships separately governed, but as much part of Dublin as Kensington and Chelsea are of London), the strong

pride of Belfast is amply justified. It is not its proximity to Scotch coalfields nor its moist climate (dear to spinners) which really makes its fortune, it is the hard-bitten, restless, courageous spirit of its people.

Like Dublin, it has close access to places of great natural charm. Just beyond Cave Hill, on the north shore of the lough, is Carrickfergus Castle, whose grim strength Mr. Williams has excellently suggested. It was built within six years of the Norman invasion, by de Courcy, first grantee of Ulster; and here, as at Carlingford, the invaders managed to retain their grip. The Bruces wrested it, after a fierce siege, from de Lacy, who then held it, Robert Bruce aiding his brother; but on Edward Bruce's defeat it fell back to the English. In the ultimate conquest of Ireland it marked a great moment, for here William of Orange landed, and pious care has recorded the flagstone on which he first set his foot.

At Carrickfergus you are already well advanced on the prettiest road in all Ireland—that which skirts the northern shore of Belfast Lough, then, crossing the neck of Island Magee peninsula, carries you past Larne's inland water, and from Larne follows the cliffy shoreline up to where Fair Head marks the northern limit of Antrim's eastward-looking coast. Then, cutting in behind the Head, it emerges on the pleasant town of Ballycastle, sheltered in its bay, and so follows

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the coast again past the castles of Dunseverick and Dunluce, famous ruins, and past the Giant's Causeway, that still more famous piece of an older and more majestic architecture. Portrush ends your journey if you be a golfer; but dearer to me than the links at Portrush are the sandhills beyond Portstewart and the long strand at the entrance to Lough Foyle—ten miles of a stretch, but the Bann's outflow divides it. No other beach that I have known is rich in such a variety of shells; on no other sandhills do the little delicate sandflowers, ladies'-slipper, thyme, ladies'-bedstraw, and the rest, grow so charmingly.

Now, in all that long coastline what to write about? First, perhaps, its geography. A line of high hills, or low mountains, runs north from Belfast, and beyond Larne they approach close to the sea. Westward of them is prosperous industrial country, draining into Lough Neagh or the Bann—a country of thriving towns, Ballymena and Ballymoney, with many factories. But east of this is the marginal land, running steeply down with short watercourses to the sea, and this is the country of the Glens of Antrim; lordship of the MacDonnells, who were also Lords of the Isles. The sea here—*Sruth na Maoile*, the Stream of the Moyle, is a link rather than a barrier; you could row across with no great danger in a skin-covered boat; and at this point the Gael of Alba and the Gael of

Eire have been always one race. The Irish that I heard spoken by old men whom a Feis of the Glens had gathered together in Glen Ariff was few removes in sound and even in idiom from the Highland speech; and all tradition, whether Ossianic, in the stories of Finn and his companions, or that older cycle of the Red Branch, brings the Scotch islands and west coast into full touch with Irish legend. It was to the Isle of Skye that Cuchulain went for his training, to be taught by a woman warrior—whose name that island keeps as the Coolin Hills preserve his name; it was from the Scottish shore that Cuchulain's son by the daughter of this warrior-queen came over to contend with the Red Branch heroes, refusing his name in order—so the deserted witch designed it—that his father, the one man able to master him, might unknowingly slay his own son. I took down from the lips of an Ulster peasant, not able to read or write, and perhaps with ten generations behind him of folk who never used the pen, the carefully guarded text of a poem framed not later (from its language) than the fifteenth century, which told the tragedy of that slaying. There is a touch in that ballad fine as any I know, when the dying lad says to his vanquisher:

> "Cuchulain, beloved father,
> How is it you did not know me
> When I flung my spear so sluggishly
> Against your bristling blade?"

That was the only sign he could give. Knowing himself, knowing his antagonist, yet sworn not to reveal the secret, he could only make a cast so half-hearted that surely Cuchulain might pause to wonder whether it was indeed an enemy who threw the spear.

These legends linking the coasts together suggest the charm of that eastern shore; not the magic of infinite distance, not the Atlantic's illimitable blue, but a continual tempting of the eye with that shore beyond the sea, sometimes not visible at all, often faint, an exquisite mirage, yet sometimes so vivid and distinct that you can discern even the whitewashed cabins on the farther side.

The mountains of the glens have no marvel of beauty. Slemish, lying back from the rest, is best marked, with its flat top, which is indeed evidently the crater of some volcano, forced up in the wild convulsion that has left its other traces in the basalt of Fair Head and the Causeway. Marked, too, it is in history; for on its slopes Patrick in captivity herded his master Dichu's swine. Yet this was on the landward of the hills, in the valley of the Braid, which drains west into Lough Neagh, and stands outside the grouping of the glens. Tibullia, another peak easily discerned, is distinguished by having on its summit a formation of flints where man of the Stone Age had a regular factory; chipped and flaked imple-

ments, marred in the making, can be found there (by the knowing) in basketfuls.

But the true distinction of these hills is that they have found their poet. Samuel Ferguson first in his ballad of "Willy Gilliland" (which has its climax by the walls of Carrickfergus) celebrated the stretch of green "from Slemish foot to Collon top". But it is a later singer, the poetess, "Moira O'Neill", who in her *Songs of the Glens of Antrim*, has made all their names resound: from "Slemish and Trostan, dark with heather", to "ould Lurgethan" where it "rises green by the sea". And not the hills only but the glens—Glenann, for which the emigrant "does be thinking long"; "lone Glen Dun and the wild glen flowers", with the little town at the outflow of its river, Cushendun, *Cois-an-duin*, Dun-foot. Her volume should be in the hands of every traveller in the glens, unless its verses are already written in his memory.

This Antrim coast has one charm distinguishing it above the rest of Ireland—its variety of geological formation. At the foot of Glen Ariff, Red Bay is called after the sandstone cliffs past which the road is cut, and in one place the rock makes an arch near an old castle. There is a cave, too, at various times inhabited. At Fair Head one reaches the basalt, and this huge promontory faces the sea with cliffs whose

CARRICKFERGUS CASTLE, BELFAST LOUGH

columnar formation gives that odd suggestion of human workmanship which reaches its climax at the Causeway. This black basalt with the numberless fissures is a good rock for birds to build in, but a very bad and treacherous dependence for those who climb to pry after their nests. Beyond the Causeway comes a line of white chalk cliff, such as is familiar to all in the south of England, but very strange to us in Ireland; though the sea off the Antrim coast is too deep to have that opaline appearance—as though milk were spilt into it—which the Margate tripper knows.

I have never yet been able to bring myself to write about the Causeway, which is a geological freak very curious to look at, and quite worth the sixpence you have to pay for admission, since a company enclosed it some years ago. But in Ireland we expect to have our cliff scenery free. The guides there will tell visitors plenty of comic stories about Finn Mac Cool. But Finn, in authentic Irish legend, is not a comic figure: he is the centre of the Ossianic tales.

That country north of the glens—which stop at Ballycastle, where Glen Shesk and Glen Tow have their meeting—is called the Route, and so keeps alive a memory of a period older than the Ossianic legends. Dal Riada, or Dal Reuda, that is, the "Portion of

Reuda", was the name given to a principality established by one Reuda, who about the second century broke off with a body of followers from the kingdom of Ulster, and established rule on both sides of the narrow seas. Reuda was of the Pictish race, probably; and here in the north the Picts held out longest against the invading Milesians, who came (according to modern theories) drilled foot soldiers, to defeat the earlier chariot-fighting warriors. But the Milesians pushed their conquest here also in about the sixth century, and Fergus, an offshoot of the northern Hy-Neill (Sons of Niall), the dominant Milesian house, made a petty kingdom for himself on both shores; and from him the kings of Scotland traced their descent. This prince, Fergus Mac Erc, has left his name on the Irish coast, for Carrickfergus is shown as the rock on which he came to wreck, when sent adrift by tempest in one of his crossings between the two portions of his kingdom.

Shortly after its establishment, this kingship, or chieftainship, lost its Irish character and centred in Scotland. But relations were constant—though by no means constantly friendly—and the Lords of the Isles held Rathlin Island for many centuries. However near the Irish coast this island lies—only divided by some five miles from the base of Fair Head—the sound between it and the mainland is so dangerous, with its

racing tides, as to be an effectual barrier; and very often passage may be easier made from the Scotch coast than from the bay of Ballycastle. At all events, the Mac Donnells owned Rathlin when Robert Bruce needed a refuge, and the castle is still there in which the Bruce sheltered for seven years—and in which it was that he watched the spider's patience and drew the moral for his own far-off designs.

The Mac Donnells were one of three great clans who divided a disputed lordship in Ulster before Ulster (last of the provinces) was finally subdued. The Mac Donnell lordship was the least authoritative and (although it traced descent to the sixth century) the latest in date. O'Neill and O'Donnell, the true Gaelic overlords of Ulster, sprang from two sons of Niall of the Nine Hostages, High King of Ireland from 379 to 405. Of their sons, Conall settled himself on Donegal Bay, and Eoghan (or Owen) on the Inishowen hills. Tyrconnell—*Tir Chonaill*—takes its name from the one son; Tyrone—*Tir Eoghain*—from the other. About these centres power grouped itself, each chief having sub-chiefs or *urraghts* under him, each with his own sept. It was only in the tenth century when Brian Boru was High King that the hereditary surnames came to be adopted—O'Neill for the lord of Tyrone, O'Donnell for the princes of Tyrconnell.

Their country was remote of access, difficult of passage for troops; their people were hardy; and so it happened that in the reign of Henry VIII, and even of Elizabeth, when all else in Ireland had been fairly brought within British sovereignty (even the O'Briens of Thomond submitting) O'Neill and O'Donnell could still hold their own. But mutual jealousies and border feuds weakened the Gael; the O'Neills were the strongest people, yet the O'Donnells on one flank and the Mac Donnells on the other often sought advantage by English alliance. Shane O'Neill, perhaps the most dangerous foe that Elizabeth had to meet in Ireland, of whom Sir Henry Sidney wrote that "this man could burn, if he liked, up to the gates of Dublin, and go away unfought", met his crushing defeat at the hand of Irish enemies, the O'Donnells, who routed him on the Swilly river near Letterkenny; and in his trouble he fled to unfriends on the other side, the Mac Donnells, in whose camp at Cushendun he was poniarded, and his head sold to the English.

Yet after his day another O'Neill, Hugh the great Earl of Tyrone, levied desperate war on the English, in close league with a successor of the O'Donnell who defeated Shane; and though the Mac Donnells gave them no direct assistance, they also made an effort at that time to throw off the invader's yoke. The history of Ireland under Elizabeth is largely the history of

war with these three clans—and a shameful history it is, full of horrible records of treachery and cruelty.

Each of the three peoples threw up remarkable leaders in the final struggles under the Tudors, and no figure of those days is more notable than the MacDonnell chief, Somhairle Buidhe, "Yellow Charles", Sorley Boy, as the English wrote him: and often the State Papers had occasion to write his name between 1558, when he came to lordship of the North, and 1590, when he died (singularly enough) a natural death in his own castle of Duneynie and was buried among all the Mac Donnells in the Abbey at Bonamargy near Ballycastle. Two sayings of his are memorable. They showed him the head of his son impaled above the gate of Dublin Castle. "My son," he retorted, "has many heads." And in truth that stock sprung up like nettles after cutting.—Elizabeth, in one of the phases of her diplomacy, sought to enlist this warrior on her side, and sent him a patent for his estates and chieftaincy as Lord of the Pale, engrossed on parchment. They brought him the writing to his castle of Dunluce, and he hacked the scroll to shreds. "With the sword I won it," he said; "I will never keep it with the sheepskin."

Nevertheless, time brought him counsel, and when Sir John Perrot, Henry VIII's bastard, came and battered Dunluce with cannon, Sorley, now eighty years

of age, made his submission and travelled to Dublin, to pay his homage to the Queen's picture, going on his knees to kiss the embroidered pantoufle on the royal foot. After his death, his son Randal joined the rising of Hugh O'Neill and Hugh O'Donnell; but when that last great effort to throw off England's power was foiled by the defeat at Kinsale, the Mac Donnell made submission, and Elizabeth's successor, James, who after all had a natural kindness for the Mac Donnells (seeing that they were to the last Scotch rather than Irish) accepted his submission and endowed him with the whole territory from the Cutts of Coleraine to the Curran of Larne.

Dunluce, which stands on a projecting rock, approached only by a narrow footway over a very deep natural trench, has to stand a battery more continuous than Perrot's cannon could bring to bear. The sea is under it, for a cave pierces the rock, and wind and wave are for ever straining at the old fortress. Part of it fell in 1639, and to-day they say the whole ruin is menaced with collapse; and, since it stands in private grounds, no public authority can intervene to save it.

For some heads the crossing of that wall into Dunluce has a danger; and a fall would be serious. But the real test of resistance to giddiness can be made at the famous hanging bridge which joins the main-

THE GIANTS' CAUSEWAY

land with the island rock of Carrickarede, near Port Ballintoy. The bridge consists of planks laid two abreast, and lashed to ropes; a single rope is the only handrail. The people use it to get out to their nets and boats for the salmon fishing, which are kept out here, and also, since there is grass on the island, for carrying sheep across on their backs. For my own part I stepped on to it readily enough; but when it bent down steeply under me, and inclined to swing, the surprise was not pleasant. And though I forced myself to cross it a second time, back and forward, to convince myself that there was no necessity for qualms, I cannot say that the qualms wholly disappeared. As for carrying a sheep over, or a bale of nets, heaven defend me! But I never heard that anyone, native or tourist, drunk or sober, came to grief there! The drop is about eighty feet into deep water between cliffs.

THE MAIDEN CITY

Adjoining the Route, and divided from it by the River Bann, is County Derry, which was once the territory of the O'Cahans, chief *urraghts* or sub-chiefs of the O'Neills. When the O'Neill was by adoption of the clans installed after the Irish usage at Tullaghogue in County Tyrone, it was the O'Cahan who performed the ceremony of inauguration. With these facts two memories connect themselves for me. The first is that when the Gaelic League was established, to save the language of Ireland from oblivion and decay, amongst those who joined it was the Reverend Dr. Kane, a mighty orator on every Twelfth of July, when the anniversary of the Boyne is celebrated. "I may be an Orangeman," he wrote, "but I do not forget that I am an O'Cahan." Many of us who did not share his politics cherish his memory for that saying. The other associated idea for me is that, once setting out with other nationalist speakers, I was followed by a strong body of police. Asking why, I was told they were to prevent an attack on us in Tullaghogue, which is now a strong Orange centre!

Coleraine is where you join the train to get to Derry, and the rail skirts the shore of Lough Foyle—easternmost of the great succession of sea loughs

which make the distinctive beauty of Donegal. Inishowen, its western shore, is included in that county by English geography, though this peninsula never formed part of Tyrconnell. Its lordship was always disputed between O'Neill and O'Donnell, and the best evidence of its separateness is given by the ecclesiastical boundary, which here, as always, follows the old tribal demarcation. All the rest of Donegal is comprised in the diocese of Raphoe, but Inishowen falls under the see of Derry. One result of that was traceable in the fact that *poteen* (illicit whisky) was freely procurable in Inishowen long after its manufacture had ceased in any other part of Donegal; for the austere decree which the present bishop of Raphoe —an O'Donnell and a ruler of men—proclaimed against this "smuggling" had no effect east of the Swilly, though throughout Tyrconnel it was heard and obeyed, to the great advantage of his people, whom the old traffic (which I remember flourishing in spite of law and police, fines, seizures, and imprisonments) had seriously demoralized.

Derry and Raphoe have for a century been in the Protestant Church one united see, and in the days before disestablishments, made a princely preferment. You can see the proof of it at Castlerock, where the line from Coleraine strikes out on the shore of Lough Foyle by the long Magilligan strand. Here is Down-

hill, the seat built in the eighteenth century by that amazing prelate Lord Augustus Adolphus Hervey, Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry, who took a leading and not a very pacific part in organizing the volunteers and in winning Ireland's legislative independence.

"He appeared always", says Sir Jonah Barrington, "dressed with peculiar care and neatness, generally entirely in purple, and he wore diamond knee and shoe buckles; but what I most observed was that he wore white gloves with gold fringe round the wrists and large gold tassels hanging from them." A troop of horse headed by his nephew used to escort him everywhere and to mount guard at his door. Later, growing tired of Ireland, he migrated to Italy on the plea of ill health; and though many of his costly purchases were sent home to Downhill, where unhappily a fire destroyed the most valuable, he never came back, but remained abroad (says the austere Lecky, himself born on the shore of Lough Foyle), "adopting the lax moral habits of Neapolitan society", and in extreme old age writing letters to Emma, Lady Hamilton, "in a strain of most unepiscopal fervour".

There are no such bishops nowadays, but my childhood was familiar with the last of Lord Bristol's successors under the old order—the late Bishop Alexander, most eloquent of divines, afterwards Primate

of Ireland. His talents brought him to the episcopate, while still a young man, only a year or two before disestablishment, and the life-interest in his £12,000 a year came to be compounded, not only for his own benefit, but for that of the Church. While the financial negotiation was still in progress, my father, then rector of a parish in Donegal, and financier-in-chief to the diocese, sent his bishop out for a day's driving in charge of a young curate, and trysted to meet them on Mulroy Bay. Arrived there, he saw with dismay the bishop, not on land but afloat, being sculled by the curate through the numberless rocks and swirling currents of Mulroy in a battered curragh—a hundred thousand pounds of ecclesiastical capital divided from submersion by a piece of tarred calico. And the famous orator, even at that period of his life, could not have weighed less than eighteen stone. Long years after, the curate, become venerable in his turn, remembered and recalled for me the rating which he received when at last he landed his passenger.

Another memory from the same source may be worth recalling. Downhill is the house which Charles Lever describes in his novel, *The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly*, though the story has no historic connection with the house or any of its inmates. But Lever knew this "Bishop's Folly" in the days when

he was a dispensary doctor at Portstewart, and my father remembers well how *Harry Lorrequer* came out by instalments in the *Dublin Morning Magazine*, with what delight he heard them read aloud, and how sudden was the addition of interest when one day the news came in that the anonymous author was no other than their own dispensary doctor—the brilliant young collegian for whom a place had been suddenly created in this outlying village during one of the visitations of cholera. After that, whenever the doctor came to call, a shy boy used to creep into the drawing-room and ensconce himself, apparently with a book, out of sight behind a sofa, where, undisturbed by apprehensions, he could be all ears for the rattling talk of that wonderful tale-teller.

Lever learnt a good deal in Portstewart from a neighbour, W. H. Maxwell, author of *Wild Sport of the West*, who lived in those days at Portrush. But it was the west and south of Ireland that always drew Lever—his florid taste in incident and humour found its choice elsewhere than in the discreet greys and browns of Ulster character. And east of Lough Foyle he was still in the Ulster which politicians mean—the country of the plantations. Derry is in reality its frontier town, though the Scotch strain and the Protestant element ramify out from Derry a certain distance into Donegal.

But the frontier town, like all frontier towns in

FAIR HEAD, CO. ANTRIM

a country that has been much fought over, keeps an intense, militant, and aggressive character. Derry stands for the extreme type of Protestant assertion —oddly enough, for in the beginning of its history, it was the monastic seat, Doire Coluimchille, "Columba's Oakgrove", to which that great apostle of Christianity looked back from his mission overseas—"thinking long" in Iona for—

> "Derry mine, my own oakgrove,
> Little cell, my home, my love".

There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of that Irish poem, transmitted in ancient manuscript, which a scholar has thus translated—Columba's lyric cry towards the Ireland which he had left.

Yet, after all, the new is more to us than the old, and Derrymen have good right to be proud of Derry walls. The famous siege was a great event, the resistance was indeed heroic, though I think that popular fame has selected the wrong man to be the centre of hero-worship. A tall column which rises from the walls behind the bishop's palace is Walker's monument, and Walker was no soldier but an elderly, loquacious, and somewhat vain, preacher. If contemporary records are any safe guide, the true organizer and inspirer of that long resistance was Murray—whose fame, I am glad to say, is kept alive by a

Murray club. Yet the man who best of all, perhaps, deserves commemoration has no memorial in Derry. The siege had lasted from April 18, and on June 13 the town was already starving when a fleet was sighted in Lough Foyle. Kirke, who commanded it, lay outside, intimidated by the defences of the narrow channel. So it went on for six weeks; but there was at least one Derry man with the fleet who could brook the delay no longer. This was Captain Browning, of the *Mountjoy*, and he insisted that attempts should be made to run the batteries and to break the boom, whose site is still preserved in the name "Boom Hall". The *Mountjoy* was a merchantman, and another, the *Phœnix*, of Coleraine, joined the venture, and a frigate was sent with them to help in drawing the enemy's fire. The *Mountjoy*, with Browning himself at the helm, headed straight for the boom under full sail, struck it, and with the impact the boom gave. But the shock caused a rebound which flung the ship back on a mudbank, and at the same moment Browning was shot down at his post. The *Phœnix* had slipped already through the gap and was away with her full cargo of meal. Boats were out from the forts to seize the *Mountjoy*; but she fired a broadside, and the recoil lifted her off the bank, and she too slipped through, carrying the body of her dying skipper to the wharf of the city which his courage and deter-

mination had rescued from famine and from enforced surrender. Life stayed in him long enough to let him hear the cries of welcome, to know that the goal was reached, the blockade broken, and his city saved, before the rush of blood from his pierced lungs finally choked him: and surely no man ever died a more enviable death.

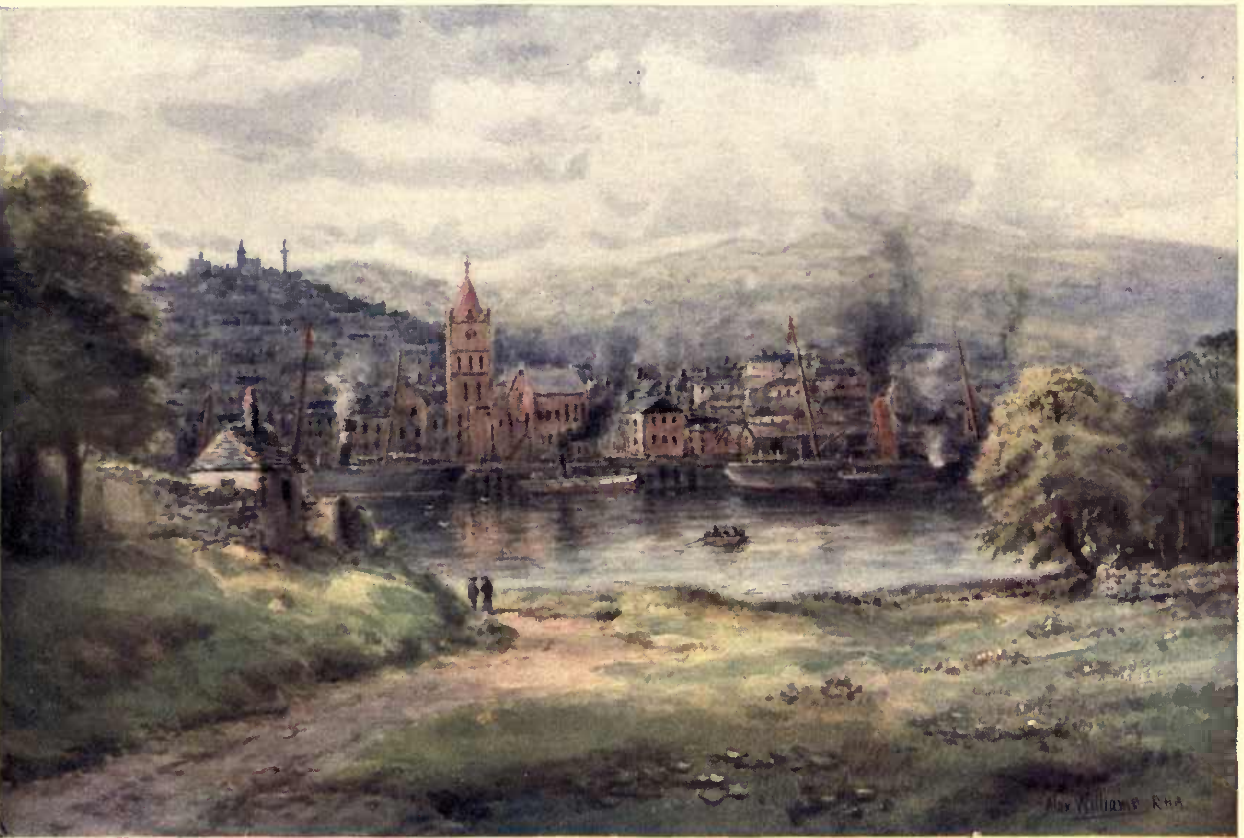
Yet in truth it was the people who had rescued themselves. In the previous month of December, before hostilities were really declared, King James had been imbecile enough to withdraw the troops which held the city. A fresh garrison under Lord Antrim was marching in, and was seen actually outside the walls. The city fathers deliberated; it was thirteen prentice boys of the town who armed themselves, rushed to the Ferryquay gate, seized the keys, and locked it in the teeth of Antrim's men. when they were within sixty yards of the entrance.

This deed is commemorated annually on December 18th, when Lundy, the officer who commanded in James's interest, is duly burnt in effigy—or used to be. Nowadays Catholic and Protestant are so evenly balanced in the "Maiden City" that such demonstrations risk a formidable riot, and are accordingly kept in check.

But the embers are always hot, and crave wary walking. Once a concert was being held, "strictly

non-sectarian", and it had been decided to omit "God save the King", which in Ireland is made into a party tune. All went off smoothly, and the building was being emptied, when suddenly war rose. The organist, a stranger, had thought it would be proper to play the people out with "Auld Lang Syne"—not knowing that to this tune is sung "Derry Walls", most aggressive of Protestant melodies.

Derry walls are there, broad and solid—you can drive a coach on them. But, what is more important, you can there find the best entertainment that I know in Ireland. A little hotel, whose doorway gives on to the east wall, is kept by Mrs. MacMahon, and all persons of understanding go there to get the kind of meal which you may hope for in the pleasantest north of Ireland country home: the fruits of the earth, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, each according to his kind (not omitting Lough Swilly oysters), with the home-made bread, which is one of Ulster's greatest charms. It is not an elaborate modern hotel. If it were, you would not get the sort of entertainment that I describe; but to stay there is to get an insight, and a most happy insight, into the homeliness, the hospitality, the shrewdness, and the good housewifery of Ulster.



LONDONDERRY FROM THE WATERSIDE

TIRCONNELL

Donegal has become to-day the best pleasure ground in Ireland. Second only to Kerry in natural beauty, and superior to it in grandeur, for Kerry has no cliff scenery to compare with Slieve League and Horn Head, it has far more variety of resource than the southern county—or, in two words, it has golf and Kerry has not; and it has much more free fishing. It is equipped as a playground, and as a playground I shall write of it—with this preface. When I was a boy, between thirty and forty years ago, there were only two passable hotels west of Lough Swilly, Lord George Hill's at Gweedore, and Mr. Connolly's at Carrick. Both of these were built for men who wanted to fish and shoot; and to reach them meant in literal truth a day's journey into the wilderness. There was no railway in the county except the little line from Derry to Buncrana; and it was the regular usage for strangers to bring introductions which got them hospitality from the resident gentry. I remember scores of such casual visitors at the big, old rectory where I was brought up.

To-day there is hardly any point in the county more than ten miles distant from a rail—Irish miles of course, and hilly ones. But when the train takes

you from Derry to Burtonport, curving in behind Lough Swilly, and following all the northern coast to its extreme remotest corner, you may fume, as I have often fumed, at the vagaries of that wonderful organization; you may think it amazing to be a matter of three hours late in a journey of four hours, as has happened to me; still, it is well to remember how you might have had to drive the same distance on an outside car in such wind and rain as Donegal can furnish.

And of course the delays I speak of are probably not so usual as at the first wild beginnings of that traffic. No longer, probably, will you see the engine driver getting out to replenish his supply of fuel from a wayside turf stack; no longer will you need to scour the whole countryside for a truckload of luggage casually mislaid. It is only fair to add that where I finally unearthed our possessions was at a mountain siding near two excellent salmon pools, with which I then became acquainted and where I subsequently caught fish. If the engine does break down anywhere on that run there is sure to be a little river within a mile or so, and it is quite worth putting up your rod and going out to have a try; at least one man to my knowledge returned triumphantly with a good salmon—the messenger sent to fetch him having come in handy to gaff it.

But in all seriousness tourists have got to remember that these lines are not there for holiday traffic. Goods and passengers travel together, and the real purpose of the whole is to give a market to the thousands of cottagers along that wild yet populous shore. What it means is that the coast fisherman who nets a salmon now can sell it for perhaps twopence a pound less than it will fetch in Billingsgate—tenpence, a shilling even, for summer fish. In the old days there was no one to give him more than perhaps a shilling for his whole fish. And in truth in the old days a Donegal peasant hardly conceived that he could be the legitimate possessor of a salmon.

That is the real change. In the days that I remember, the country was owned by the landlords, was governed by them and by their agents, with assistance from the Church of Ireland clergy. To-day a great part of the land is owned by the people who till it; it is all governed by them. And in increasing measure they own even the game, most jealously guarded of seigniorial rights.

Take, for example, the little town of Milford. I remember it a miserable line of hovels, with only two decent buildings, the agent's house and the always imposing police barrack. To-day it has an excellent hotel, and every look of prosperity. I remember when every soul in it and for ten miles round was

in the grip of a really tyrannical landlord, whose murder, when it ultimately came, was indeed an act of what Bacon calls "wild justice". Much of the improvement visible here is due to the able and courageous man who succeeded the "old lord". But, good landlord or bad landlord, no man can ever again hold that countryside at his pleasure, cowering under the threat of eviction. Rent is fixed by a court, and while a man pays his rent he is irremovable. And within a short period every man will be paying, not rent, but instalments of purchase for the land which he and his predecessors have worked—which in nine cases out of ten they have reclaimed from bog and barren moor. With the ownership of the land the game rights must ultimately go, and in many cases already they have gone. The hotel proprietor at Milford, an enterprising man, had, I found, bargained with not a few tenant purchasers for the exclusive fishing of little lakes in their property and for the shooting over their moors and bogs. That is the attraction which he has to offer to visitors, who, now that the country is opened up, come in shoals. On Lough Fern, the big lake adjoining, it was unusual to see two boats fishing, three made a rarity. Now, in summer, there will be fifteen or sixteen out. And not only that, but boats have been put on seven or eight of the numberless smaller lakes and bogholes which nobody ever fished

at all, except once in a blue moon, when a curragh would be carted over. Some of them breed good trout, and now these are being stocked with a new strain of fish. All this means the circulation of money in the country where poverty before was universal, where famine even was not unknown. A failure of the potato crop to-day is a grievous loss: thirty years ago it meant something like starvation.

What took me to Milford the other day was significant of the new order. I was with a departmental committee appointed to consider how the fisheries of Ireland would be affected by the substitution of peasant proprietary for landlord ownership; and our main purpose was to emphasize the value of the interests involved, the possibility of increasing that value, and the necessity for combination unless the whole were to be destroyed. And here was no question merely of providing an attraction for the summer visitor: it meant conserving a mainstay of livelihood for hundreds of labouring men.

When I was a boy a regular feature in that countryside was the fish pedlar—some old man or old woman with a donkey and two creels, hawking round fish that had been carted up from the coast by Sheephaven. Along the prosperous settled shores of Lough Swilly, by Ramelton and Letterkenny, these poor folk found a market at the end of a day's journey. It was a

poor market and a small one. But since the railroad was instituted, the fish pedlar takes a back place. Fish goes straight to the great towns, and it has been worth men's while to organize for catching the summer run of salmon which skirt the coast in June and July. From Malin Head to Arranmore, and from Arranmore into Donegal Bay, scores of thousands of pounds must have been earned in this way during the past seven or eight years by the coast-dwelling folk, half-farmers, half-fishermen, working through the short nights in their four-oared yawls. A lucky crew will earn ten pounds a man in two months' fishing—in a country from which each year thousands go across to Scotland or Lancashire for field labour and are content if they bring home ten pounds for their season's toil. It is easy to see how great an added source of prosperity this fishing means. Yet if the fish are killed out in the breeding streams, it ends the fishing; and when a river is divided into a hundred interests instead of one, no individual has a sufficient inducement to preserve the stock of salmon. A lesson in citizenship has to be learnt; public opinion has to be created. Donegal is leading in the attempt to develop co-operative preservation of game and fish, and whoever helps that endeavour is doing a good turn, not only to the interests of sport, but to the interests of Ireland.

Golf, which for the present is even a greater attrac-

TORY ISLAND FROM FALCARRAGH HILL, DONEGAL

tion than sport, does not extend into the wilder parts of the country; though, indeed, twenty years ago Port Salon and Rosapenna, where the most famous links are, were outlandish enough: it is golf that has brought them well into the pale of civilization—over-civilization, some of us grumble, when we see smart frocks among the sandhills by Downings Bay. Yet anyone who goes to Rosapenna, and has curiosity enough to enquire, can learn the whole history of a great industry's development within a score of years —for Downings is the centre of a most prosperous herring fishery, and the girls and boys from that outlying region are fetched at high wages to do skilled work in curing herring wherever herring are being caught, as far south as Dublin Bay, and very likely beyond.

And if I had any choice of all the fine places in Ireland to spend a holiday in, I would choose the one which makes the centre of Mr. Williams's sketch from Rosapenna—the low headland of Ards, jutting into Sheephaven, with wood of oak, and fir, and beech, and ash, so exquisitely blended, spread for a covering over ground so beautifully diversified; with little bays and creeks of blue water over the cleanest and tawniest sand running up into the heart of wooded or heathery slopes. Nowhere else is the scent of the brine so clean and strong across the

other pungencies of heath, and bog-myrtle, of oak, and of bracken; nowhere else that I know does a perfect day give such fulfilment of desire.

Rosapenna shore and the village of Carrigart are too much dominated by the hotel and by foreign ways for my liking; but on the opposite shore, where Portnablah gives a harbour (not safe, alas!) to the boats of my friends, is the place of all my affections. This rocky little townland is set thick with whitewashed cottages, and here it has been an old custom for Irish folk from Derry and Letterkenny to come to the salt water and find homely quarters. The "bathers", as they are called, have of late years grown to be a multitude: if you want rooms in a farmhouse there you must bespeak them far in advance, and no wonder. If my ghost haunts any place it will be there, where the white road to Dunfanaghy (white, for this is a limestone tract), leaving the wall of Ards demesne, rises to a crest with a few houses (filled with bathers) on the right; and on your left is Sessiagh Lake, prosperously stocked with trout, and watched over by an old herring fisher, still able to pull a stout oar when the strong gale catches that high-lying water, but for the most part happy to drift contentedly and spin yarns about the men and the things and the fish that he has known. Quick with his tongue, too, in a leisurely way. "I suppose people very seldom die

here," said a stranger, commenting on the healthiness of the situation. "Never more nor once," said old Tom.

Beyond the houses and the limekiln and the glimpse of Sessiagh's delusive waters (Heaven knows how many blank days I fished there!) is a line of grassy hillocks—the mass of Horn Head blocks the view beyond them to the west, but full north, suddenly, held in the curve between two of these little summits, you catch sight of the Atlantic blue. Blue, it may be, or purple, or greyish green, or black almost, with white spray flying; but there it is, held as if in a cup—the very quintessence of the saltness, the strength, and the freedom of the sea. When the herring are in, you shall see it dotted over with smacks and yawls, and here and there a curragh crawling slowly on the water like some black insect; or at night all a-twinkle with lights, till you rub your eyes and wonder if a town has not suddenly sprung into being. And all about, the steep shores of the bay are patched and striped with careful tillage, crops, well-tended, nestling in for shelter under every rocky hummock; and nestled, too, into the folds of the ground, are the white-fronted houses, with stone pegs across their eaves for cording to lash the roof secure against their terrible gales.

It is worth while being there in bad weather, to watch the run of sea on those cliffs; sometimes, in

a sinister calm, rolling in mountain-high, tearing itself to whiteness on the long black spines of rock; and then, after this forerunner, comes the storm itself. It is then, when you see the smacks running in for shelter, or when, after a night of this, you see them put out to pick up costly nets that have been cut adrift to save men's lives, and that still must be recovered even at grave peril—it is then you will realize how these people take a grip of their country and cling to the foothold for which all life is a struggle.

Yet life goes merrily there. In the winter through some parishes there will be dancing almost every night in one cottage or another, and the crowd is thick on the floor and about the big turf fire.

These people are for the most part pure Irish, and west of Dunfanaghy all are Irish speakers. Under Irish rule it was the territory of the M'Swineys, chief urraghts of the O'Donnell, and Doe Castle, at the outfall of the Lackagh, was the fortress of the chief of the name. Owen Roe O'Neill made his landing here, Cromwell's most formidable opponent in Ireland—removed at last either by sickness or poison. Here Red Hugh O'Donnell was fostered by Owen M'Swiney of the Battle Axes before the treacherous kidnapping at Rathmullen. There were three M'Swiney clans—M'Swiney Doe, M'Swiney Banaght in the west of the county, and M'Swiney Fanad in the peninsula

MUCKISH AND ARDS FROM ROSAPENNA, SHEEPHAVEN, DONEGAL

that divides Mulroy from Swilly. Each had its own war tune, and a schoolmaster friend of mine—himself a Sweeny—who collected native airs, had got two of the three, but not the third; until at last he heard of an old bedridden man in Fanad who might have it. He rode the twenty miles from his home at Gartan, with fiddle on his back, and found the old peasant wavering on the brink of death, yet still able to frame feebly the whistle or lilt, which my friend picked up on the strings of the fiddle bit by bit, till gradually he had it all, and, there and then, by the dying man's bedside, set the cabin ringing with the oldtime war march of his clan.

Another M'Sweeny that I have known was Turlough, the famous piper of Gweedore, whose repute has travelled far overseas. Aristocrat he is to the finger tips—saddened indeed because those fine finger tips have been coarsened by spade labour. "Look," he said to me; "can there be any music in these hands?" He told me his own generations, connecting him back with the hereditary bards of the M'Swineys, and I said that he must know the history of the county better than most. "No," he answered; "I was never curious of these things, except just as they concerned myself and my own people."

Mr. Williams's picture shows Errigal where it rises by Gweedore over Dunlewy Lake—one of the grandest

among Ireland's mountains. But the most striking view of it is east of Gweedore, where the little river flows out by Gortahork; and here is a thing of much interest, the Cloghaneely College, where folk go to study Ulster Irish amongst those who have it for their native speech. Still farther east is Falcarragh, and the view which Mr. Williams has given adds less than due emphasis to the astonishing castellated outline of Tory where it rises out of a tremendous depth of water. I never landed there, though I often talked with the Tory fishers, including one who had made his fortune at the goldfields and come back to the place of his birth among the rocks and the fish heads. There is one sheltered spot, one growing bush, and one only, on Tory. There, of course, Irish is the language, and they maintain the practice of verse, chiefly for purposes of satire; quarrels are revenged in rhyme. I talked to a red-bearded mountainy man near Gortahork about this, but he said it was a peevish thing to do; he would rather have a skelp at a man. In truth there is an old feud between Tory and the shore, and fierce battles have been waged. I do not know why so few people stop at Falcarragh: there is a good little hotel, the views are beautiful, there are three little rivers, all holding salmon, and, at the point where the longest of them flows out across the long range of sand beach west of Horn Head, there

is a view of Tory and of Horn Head that passes all I know. Running water across sand, clean sand dunes and grey bent, pure illimitable sea and high cliffs, sunsmitten or in shadow—there is landscape reduced to the simplest terms of a broad elemental beauty.

Also at Falcarragh there must be the makings of a links equal to any in Ireland. The line of dunes runs for several miles along the sea, ending in one of the strangest natural features I know, the huge mountain of clean sand which centuries of westerly gales have piled up against the rocky mass of Horn Head. That famous head is in truth an island, the counterpart of Tory on its seaward face, yet in the gap between it and Dunfanaghy such a deposit of sand has accumulated that only a small causeway has been needed to give access from the mainland to the tiny farms and the one demesne.

If in Donegal you want to buy Donegal homespun, Falcarragh is a good market for the product, since some weaving is done about there with an eye to local wear; and what the Donegal man means to wear, the Donegal housewife "tramps" in soapsuds and water till the web thickens into a fabric fit to turn weather. On the western shore, by Carrick and Ardara, where is now the headquarters of this industry, cloth is produced solely for export, and the

English ladies and gentlemen for whom it is designed seek softness and fineness rather than solidity. Indeed the countryfolk themselves treat this merchandise with frank scorn: they fancy something far less flimsy for their own use, and in old days, when nothing but homespun was worn, it used to be sent to a tacking mill and battered till the cloth had the thickness of felt. But the tacking mill at Bunlin, whose big wooden mallets rising and falling used to interest us children, is a ruin now; and the homespun of to-day, with its multitude of pleasant colours, is very different from the massive greys or heavy indigo-dyed frieze which used to come from that mill.

The industry has been a godsend to that country, and one wet day in the little village of Carrick was redeemed to me by the chance of seeing all these folk, men and women, come marching over the hills with the baled cloth on their backs, and then watching the bargaining that proceeded among the various buyers. I bought, too, but I believe the merchants will not allow the people to sell to tourists any more.

I have not written yet of that western shore which stretches southward from Dungloe (much haunted by sea-trout fishers) to Glenties, Ardara, Carrick, and Killybegs. The most beautiful place

MOUNT ERRIGAL FROM THE GWEEDORE RIVER, DONEGAL

that I know on it is at the mouth of the Gweebarra River where it flows out due west between a line of sandhills which shine dazzling white in the sun against the immensity of blue. No place is less known; but you can reach it easily from Portnoo, where is a hotel. And off Portnoo is an island where on certain days in summer a pilgrimage takes place, at spring tides, for it is essential to walk barefoot to the island. The ceremonies performed with certain stones are Christianized in form, but evidently had an origin long before Christianity. Glenties, some eight or ten miles farther south, is at a point where several glens converge (*na Gleantai*, the Glens) in the valley of the Ownea River, famous for its salmon fishing, which is now vested in purchasing tenants who have attempted to introduce co-operative preservation. If the experiment succeeds it will mean better preservation than has ever been known before; if it fail, I fear that one great source of the salmon supply will be wiped out, with loss to sport, and with loss much graver to all the labouring fishers who live by that industry. But, as things stand, the man who wants good fishing is more likely to get it cheap at Glenties or Ardara than any other place known to me. In both towns there is a decent hotel. Ardara stands near the outfall of the Ownea but actually on a smaller river, the Owentogher, which is not only

very picturesque, but a good stream for salmon and sea trout, if only it could be preserved. And one of the most pleasant bits of fishing I ever had was on a tiny stream, the Brocky, which comes down a mile farther on and was fishable before the tearing flood had subsided in the bigger rivers.

Glenties and Ardara are places where you go for sport, though the beauty of mountain and river is all about you. But for scenery Carrick and Killybegs are your destination. Killybegs is the terminus of that light railway which runs from Donegal town along the north shore of Donegal bay, past the Marquis of Cunningham's wooded demesne at first, but gradually getting into wilder country, till at last it reaches this trim little town on its magnificent harbour. Warships use that harbour, and there is nowadays a good fishing fleet operating from it for the herring and mackerel; but of other commerce it knows little. Yet for the lover of boating and bathing it would be hard to discover a more attractive spot. There, too, you can see the parent factory of the Donegal carpet trade; and pretty it is to see the big looms, with a row of six or seven little girls bareheaded (and often barefooted) in front of each, with nimble fingers knotting on the tufts of richly coloured wool, or driving them down into their place in the solid fabric, while the pattern grows slowly before you on

the wide warp. It is odd that so rare a merchandise should come out of these impoverished regions, for no costlier carpets are made; but labour is cheap, and willing, and skilful, and nowhere else is factory work done under more wholesome or happy conditions. All the big room seemed to be a-ripple and a-play with the young faces and the swift, graceful movements of these children, for most of them are no more than children; and small though the wage they earn, it is a big thing in that countryside, where the old-age pensioner with five shillings a week seemed at first to himself or herself rich beyond imagination. There is another of the factories at Kilcar, halfway to Carrick, built in a sheltered nook almost by the sea; and another in the wild tract between Gweedore and Falcarragh.

To the west of Killybegs begins that wonderful line of cliff stretching away past Carrick and Glen Columbkille, and girdling all the projecting headland till it runs back to Loughros Bay, near Ardara. For wildness and for majesty this region has no equal, except in Achill; and it has what Achill lacks, the charm of rivers. Mr. Williams's pictures illustrate well the coastline, which even when it is low runs out with huge flag stones and giant boulders into the deep—fit buttress against such waves as roll in there even on a day of calm. Everything is big

there; distances are long, and a mile never seems to get you far in any direction. It is a country to walk, the finest of all the countries known to me; but I would gladly supplement my walking with a bicycle, travelling one of the roads as far as it will carry me and then leaving it simply by the ditch at the roadside, among the osmunda fern which grows everywhere free as the heather. It commits you to return that way; but what you leave by the roadside is as safe as if Argus watched it—unless, indeed, some mountainy heifer should pass that way and eat it: they will chew anything from a fishing rod to a suit of clothes. I have seen embarrassed bathers pursuing an active cow, who carried essential garments in her mouth, still masticating them even while she pranced in her clumsy gallop.—Carrick is the centre for this country and Slieve League the great excursion; it is a fine walk down by the little port of Teelin and then up the track which winds along the cliff edge of the mountain—perhaps the finest view of all is when you are halfway, with seven or eight hundred feet of sheer cliff below you and the steep face towering up another thousand above. At the somewhat overrated hazard of the One Man's Pass you would fall, I dare say, sixteen hundred feet before you reached the water; but from the top a pebble may be dropped two thousand feet plumb into the sea.

GLENVEAGH, DONEGAL

Horn Head is only seven or eight hundred feet; yet because the cliff face there is undercut, and the Horns themselves project so oddly, it always seemed to me a dizzier place than the greater cliff. The really marvellous thing at Slieve League is that view across Donegal Bay to the mountains of Sligo, Benbulbin of magic fame, and along the wild Mayo coast that stretches out and out to the west till the long promontory is finished off by island rocks, the Stags of Broadhaven.

Yet, since I scorn to deceive, what endears Carrick to me is not its cliff scenery, but its little rivers and its people. I know the rivers are too small: you cannot seriously hope to kill salmon there except in a raging flood, and then your flood runs off in a couple of hours: I hooked four fish there inside the first hour after breakfast, killed two of them, and never touched another all day. But for sheer beauty; for infinite variety in the shape and colour of flowing water (the most beautiful thing to me on God's earth); for pools where the eddy swirls past clean rock with glossy ferns in every crevice; for banks where the scent of bog-myrtle is all about as you brush through the heather; for anything that can entice the eye of an angler, I never saw the equal of that main stream. The little Owen Buidhe, too, in its boggy glen, has attractions of its own, deeper pools and

seductive corners; but it is the Glen River, flowing down from Meenaneary, that haunts my vision when in London I crave for the things that I desired in boyhood, and love more in middle age.

And of all the human beings whom I have known among the peasant folk of Ireland, none had ever quite the charm of old Charlie Carr, the gillie who fished with me at Carrick. By an odd chance, he was no sportsman. He would want you to be pleased, and to catch fish, if so you fancied it; but I remember how my vanity was hurt when, on a difficult day, I had hooked and landed a fine sea trout, the first that anyone had seen for a long time. "Them O'Hagans was great people too", he said as he shook the fish out of the net, calmly pursuing his discourse about the ancient days and the generations of old, and the lore of those few books which he had, and studied with passion. He was no true shanachie; what of Irish legend and song his memory kept had no real value. He was a lover of knowledge, not for vanity, not for the sense of power, but simply because it added to the richness of life—one of God's gifts that he welcomed as the sunshine. If ever I met a happy nature, a soul without spot, it was this Irish peasant; if ever I have seen letters full of grace and simplicity they were those that reached me once in a rare while from that lonely glen, asking, never

for himself, but perhaps that I would give a prize to some school children, or the like, and always full of an affection that knew no difference between man and man. I can see now the wonderful blue eyes in that kind face, a handsome peasant face with its fringe of grey close-cropped whisker. If I remember a word of complaint from him, it was when he saw his neighbour go by on a car — a man no soberer, no more industrious, no better educated than himself, yet one who had had the instinct for buying and selling, for putting penny to penny and pound to pound. The neighbour was a good man too, in his way; kindly and friendly, prompt to do a service, yet not to be reckoned amongst those elect upon earth whom everyone using discernment will have recognized on his way through life, of whom not a few that I have known have been Donegal peasants. But none had quite the grace, the simplicity, and the distinction of this old dreamer and student who carries net and basket by the Glen River without repute among men.

For all my love of Carrick I could hardly conceive of living there. It is too bare, too vast. And though there is no frost, though every second bush you see in summer is crimson fuchsia full of blossoms, yet winter must be of a terrible loneliness. But the Donegal that I was brought up in—Donegal of more inhabited and habitable shores by Lough Swilly and

Sheephaven and Mulroy—does seem to me a place not for summer visitants only. However, this book concerns itself with summer, and nowhere is summer more delightful. Of course it rains often, and sometimes hard. "Did it rain ony wi' ye?" "It didna tak time to rain; it just cam doun buckets," is a fragment of descriptive dialogue. But take the country as I saw it in mid-July, when London was stewing on a griddle of asphalt and flags, and when English country was all one monotonous deadened green with heavy haze dimming the blueness. Out at Bunlin, beyond Milford, all was green too; I looked from the steep road across a glen breast-deep in bracken, with the curve of Cratlagh wood beyond, and nearer me trim fields of green oats and turnips. There was beauty of line there in Mulroy with its score of scattered islands, in the hills, not very high, but very mountainous, bold, and jagged, falling from the peak of Lough Salt to the glen, and to the Mulroy water, crest by crest, sharp to the last little rocky hillock. There was beauty of colour too, for the green of the bracken was broken by silvery grey stone, with glint of mica in it, showing up through the fern, and crowned or set about with purple cushions of heath, here and there a foxglove adding another and a brighter purple. There was wonderful beauty of detail in the wooding nestled into the hills—wild growth, scrub oak, light, feathery ash

THE ENTRANCE TO MULROY BAY, DONEGAL

and birch, with the gleam of silvery stems, Scotch fir and larch—planted trees, yet falling naturally into forestation which had none of the heaviness, the citizen look of elm and sycamore. All was light, hardy and strong—not a wilderness, but a cared-for country where the eye wandered over a fair expanse of varied beauty, lying there in full summer without summer's drowsiness or blowsiness. Lightness, airiness, was the note of it all—light air, breath of bog-myrtle across the salt of the sea; and even the decent homely people, lacking the graces of Cork and Kerry, had yet in their motion and in their eye just the dash of wildness which marks the Celtic strain.

Next day was Donegal all over—fresh breeze, clouds driving swiftly, and then bright sun, lighting up a lovely blueness. We were out on small lakes up among the hills, two of us who fancied ourselves not a little as fishermen, and got no encouragement for that faith; but after all what could be pleasanter, airier, or more resting and more bracing at once? and how good one's lunch is on the stones by a reedy shore! I had to go back to London, and the car took me to Rathmullen on the Swilly shore; and when the little steamer put out from the pier it seemed to me that of these lovely loughs this is after all the most beautiful. All was grey and green in the westering light; the hills on the Inishowen shore opposite showed softer than

the crags by Mulroy. They were green now, with the olive green of young heather; in another month they would be glowing purple. The lough as we crossed it was a great round lake throwing arms west and south-west to Ramelton and Letterkenny, beyond which all was bathed in a sunny haze. As we ran farther out, the western mountains of Inishowen came in sight, then suddenly beyond Dunree the sea gap opened, letting the eye out to limitless ocean; and soon the sheer crag of the Binn of Fanad was disclosed flanking that portal on the west. Looking back to the shore we left, the Devil's Backbone writhed sinister and jagged along the crest of the Knockalla range behind Rathmullen; and away to the west in the sun haze, accustomed eyes could make out the faint shapes of Errigal and Dooish.

History was all about us, evident in actual landmarks. On the hills which divide the lough from Derry stood out boldly the ring of stone, the great circular fort, which was the Grianan of Aileach, chief seat of the northern Hy Niall, whose kinsfolk reigned in Tara. Here Patrick preached about 450 A.D., baptized Eoghan, founder of the great Tyrone clan, the O'Neills. Here, in a later age, came an O'Brien of Thomond, one of Brian Boru's earliest successors, to avenge a raid of these Northerners on Clare, and the stones of Aileach were carried away to

be built into the cathedral at Limerick. Over at Rathmullen is the beach from which the boy Hugh O'Donnell was rowed out to see the English ship which lay at anchor, offering hospitality with black treachery behind; for the crew cut their cables while the young chief and his company were below seeing the vessel's stores, and sailed off with the prisoner so dishonourably made, to the Castle of Dublin, where Hugh lay for years immured, captured but not submissive; attempting escape after escape with unfailing heart till at last he got loose, and after bare deliverance from death in the snow-covered hills was free to exact a reckoning for the wrongs he had suffered.

On a low hill beyond Inch Island rises the square town of Birt, which has memories of another chief, Cahir O'Dogherty, lord of Inishowen. Cahir was fostered by the M'Devitts of Birt, and when Red Hugh claimed lordship over Inishowen, the M'Devitts sought English protection for their foster-brother and got it. The O'Dogherty became the Englishmen's ally and helped to pronounce forfeiture on O'Donnell and O'Neill after the two great earls took their flight in 1607—setting out from this same ill-omened port of Rathmullen. But a new governor of Derry arrived, quarrelled with Cahir O'Dogherty and struck him. The blow was dearly paid for. Cahir went back to Birt, called out the M'Devitts, and sacked and burnt Derry.

But the Irish power had been broken beyond retrieving when the earls fled, and O'Dogherty was soon a mere outlaw on his keeping. They ran him to earth finally by Doon Well, near Kilmacrenan, where he was shot dead in the encounter. Doon Well is famous to-day, but I doubt if many there remember Cahir O'Dogherty's fate, or even that on the Rock of Doon took place the installation of each O'Donnell prince. What is remembered is the sanctity of the holy well, whose water still draws thousands of pilgrims and still works miracles of healing.

History more modern is in view at Lough Swilly, for here the English fleet brought in their prizes after the action with Bonaparte in 1798, and brought more than they knew, for they had captured Theobald Wolfe Tone, the most dangerous enemy to England that Ireland had in those or perhaps any other days. To-day there is a strong guard on Lough Swilly. Dunree—*Dun Riogh*—means the King's Fort and the king has his fort there, of the most modern type, commanding the entrance to this great haven, with an armament very unlike that of the martello towers which are dotted about, marking another of England's recurring scares—the scare of the "French colonels" under the lesser Napoleon.

All these things came into my mind as I sat on the beach by Fahan and watched the colour fade

out and new colour take its place—masses of dark green where there had been shimmers of grey and blue. Other memories came there too—less historical: it was there that somewhere in the 'seventies I had my first sight of a real railway train. I carry away from Lough Swilly my earliest as well as my latest impression of pleasant, beautiful Ulster, enhanced by a grateful thought of the dinner which Mrs. MacMahon provided for one about to take a long night journey. And whoever leaves the north of Ireland with such impressions on his mind will have no cause to quarrel with the close of his holiday.

Yet it is not well to depart leaving unexplored the mountainous peninsula of Inishowen which separates Lough Swilly from Lough Foyle. This great ridge of land is dominated by the graceful shape of Slieve Snacht ("Snow Mountain"), a model of what mountains should be: bold and peaked, yet with swelling curves that balance on either flank, it fills the centre of a distance more impressively than far loftier hills.

Inishowen was owned by the O'Doghertys, a clan who, tossed between Tyrone and Tirconnell, had at least great staying power, for the saying is — you cannot beat a bush in Inishowen without "rising" an O'Dogherty. Their castles remain, and at Green Castle, on Lough Foyle, is the work of greater men, Norman-planned, Richard de Burgo's fortress. Many

traces, too, of a far older period are to be seen. At Carrowmore, not far from Culdaff, is a "souterrain" with five chambers—a great mansion, in short, for these burrowers. Rivers and lakes, too, are there with fair fishing, though I believe that a certain old professor in Derry has skimmed the cream of it all in his learned leisure, any time this fifty years. But the Castle River at Buncrana is a fine salmon stream still, and the links there constitute an attraction for very capable golfers—though not equal to those at Port Salon on the opposite shore. In a word, if you cannot get to the west of Lough Swilly you may be very well content with the east of it; and though much of infinite beauty and interest lies beyond, when you have seen and known Lough Swilly and its shores, and the people who live on them—that mixed race, Scot and Irish, lowland and highland, Protestant and Catholic, all neighbourly together—why, at least you will have had a very fair chance to know and love, not the Ulster that people rant about or rail at, but Ulster as it really is.

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