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COMPLIMENTARY


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Ireland Next Year

Two classes contribute to the success of a tourist season—the visitors who give their patronage and we who put up the programmes to attract those visitors. Both are in danger of being unjust to themselves in regard to 1931, for to both immediately occurs the fact, a very damning one as it happens, that it is the year preceding 1932. At this stage, therefore, may we say a word for the prospective Cinderella of the Century.

First of all, these are big events promised in the next 12 months. The Tailteann Games will, we hope, eclipse the successes of the two previous Irish Race Olympics, and that will be no mean achievement. The Games will provide the greatest possible variety of interest, ranging from the muscular to the musical.

The continued success of the Dublin Spring and Summer Shows is so much of a foregone conclusion that both our visitors and ourselves are inclined to ignore their interest and importance. The August fixture, attracting its 100,000 visitors each year, is world-renowned and can be relied on to keep up its record-breaking history. Still there are thousands of our kith and kin in other countries who have no idea of its immensity or of its interest. The Horse Show, coupled with the Tailteann Games, makes a fitting central point for the ideal holiday, especially with the innumerable opportunities for amusement and interest which the Irish season and Irish scenery provide as a background.

So much for the High Season period. Before that arrives, however, there will be equally attractive features to compel interest. The Spring Show, to be held in May, which has grown mushroom-like in the past few years, is fast rivalling its more fashionable sister in popularity and as an early-season attraction for American visitors challenges comparison with any of its European rivals. Too often, because of its title—"Agricultural"—it is ignored by the travel promoter, but that gentleman, equally often, knows less about agriculture than about promotion and less still about our Spring Show!

Finally there is our "dark horse" of 1931. The Royal Dublin Society was founded in 1731, and now, in the fulness of years and achievement, it has decided to celebrate in June, 1931, its 200th birthday. The celebrations, like the weddings and other happy events of bygone days, will "go on for a week." What their nature will be is still a matter of conjecture, but it is safe to assume that they will provide a programme of world-wide interest. The Director of the R.D.S., Mr. Edward Bohane, is seeing to that, and his manner of rising to the occasion each year with a new programme and a new interest for his 150,000 regular patrons of the Spring and Summer Shows is sufficient guarantee that he will rise even more magnificently on this one occasion in a century. For one thing, the honour of the Society will be particularly involved, and for another he probably expects that it will be his last opportunity to control a Centenary Celebration of the R.D.S.

These are our big items in 1931. In the next few months we shall publish details of smaller but equally interesting events in various parts of the country which we hope will provide a programme of continuous abundance, outstanding merit and varied interest.
Camping in Kerry.

By R. W. Reynolds.

To the town-dweller who wants to see the most
glorious scenery of his own country, or to
the tourist from England or further afield
who desires a really enjoyable holiday in exquisite
surroundings at very small expense, there is no place
in Ireland more likely to delight and satisfy than
Kerry and Western Cork. But he must see it in the
proper way. The average tourist, who has been
spoon-fed on his way from Dublin or Cobh with glowing
descriptions of the beauties of Killarney, arrives at
last in a small drab Irish village, which he finds
entirely lacking in the qualities of "old-world charm"
and "naive beauty." If he has fine weather he goes
on the regular excursions round the various sights,
which he finds rather commercialised and a little disappointingly after all that he had heard and read. If
it is wet, he stays in his hotel smoking or playing
cards, and from time to time looking out of the
window at the rain and cursing the fate that led him to
take his holiday in Ireland.

But the right way to see Kerry—or indeed any
part of Ireland—is to bring one's hotel and railway
with one. And that is what we decided to do. An
old Rover car—nearly as old as the youngest of the
four of us—was our means of transit. Two small
rot-proof hike tents, which could be erected in a
quarter of an hour, provided us with a roof which we
wished to sleep, and took up less than two feet of
the running-board. The rest of our belongings, packed
into ruck-sacks (which are the most convenient receptacles on such a trip), were stowed easily into the
spare seat, and on the luggage-grid. All we needed
now was moderately fine weather—"moderately,"
because it is a curious fact that the rain which seen
from indoors is a hostile downpour, comes to the
camper more in the guise of a soft, caressing, and
inviting friend.

The whole holiday, from Dublin to Dublin, lasted
17 days, of which five were spent on the journey to
and from Kerry, although a more modern car would
need but three. The car was used only to convey us
from one place to another; once arrived at a sheltered
centre near wood and water, we did our sight-seeing
on foot, and so missed none of the delightful walks
through scented woods and dewy meadows and along
wind-swept ridges which are a little off the beaten
track for the ordinary visitor.

The first port of call in Kerry was Tralee, where we
found a sheltered spot in a field belonging to a near-by
farmer. There, as everywhere during our tour, we
were surprised by the hospitality accorded to us.
Never was there the least trouble in obtaining permis­sion
to camp, and not once would the owner accept
payment. Even when we asked for milk it was given
unstintingly, and often—especially in the poorer dis­tricts—the farmer became almost angry if we offered
money. More than one, fearing a sudden break in
the weather, offered us a bed, which, however, we
valorously refused.

Our itinerary from Tralee is too well-known to need
detailed description. From the road to Killarney
there was a magnificent view of the Reeks—the only
time during our stay that their summits were not lost
in mist. After three days spent in a charming spot
near Lough Leane, we set out on the famous Atlantic
drive through Killorglin, Caherciveen and Waterville,
where the surroundings are wild enough to suit the
most misanthropic aesthete. Thence through warm
and wooded land by Sneem and Parknasilla to Ken­nmare, and along the tunnel road over the Caha Moun­tains to the almost tropical splendour of Glengarriff,
probably the prettiest spot in Ireland. From there
we reluctantly turned home through Cork, traversing
on the way the rugged pass of Keamanleigh and touching
on Lake Gougane Barra. The roads everywhere
were good, except where we left the main routes in
search of a camping ground.

This type of holiday should suit many who want to
get out of the usual rut. For the lover of the beau­tiful there is no more glorious and more varied scenery
within such a small compass; for the novelist or
amateur sociologist there is no better way of getting
in touch with the real Irish country farmer; for the
pedestrian and the outdoor man the life is ideal; the
poet has infinite stimulus for his Muse; and Kerry is
a Mecca for anglers and bathers.

It is also the poor man's Paradise. Our whole
holiday, lasting seventeen days, including luxuries as
well as necessities cost us £5 apiece.
Keel, Achill Island.

By P. L. Banim.

Much has been written about Achill, the largest island off the West Coast of Ireland, and Keel with Dugort, Doonagh and Dooega, has received its share of attention. Much, however, remains to be said, particularly with regard to Keel, which has one of the prettiest bays imaginable. It is almost horseshoe shaped, and is composed of firm sand which makes walking easy and a pleasure. The shore slopes gradually; there is a complete absence of rock and "duirling." Higher up on the beach, however, there is a fairly extensive "claddagh." Bathing there is very pleasant and is absolutely safe even for children.

Strange to say, Keel is almost neglected by Irish holiday-makers. It is known to some discerning English people, who return there year after year. On one of my visits there the only tourists I met were English who, attracted to this place by its unspoilt appearance and old-world habits, were content to take life easily and leisurely and to conform to its daily life and customs.

The fact that this particular resort is visited by English people and not extensively by Irish people is all the more remarkable by reason of the distance the former have to come. For Irish people it is at the most an eight hours' journey, whereas to this must be added, in case of English people, the distance they are compelled to travel from their homes in England. The railway station is at Achill Sound, and one must proceed to one's destination by car or bus.

There are several nice walks or drives, with Keel as the base. Dugort, which lies about three miles to the north, possesses a very pretty strand and excellent bathing. Doonagh lies the same distance to the west, and Dooega about three times as far in a southerly direction. Kim, where Achill amethysts may be found, is fairly convenient and is worth visiting.

There are some very excellent hotels in Keel where good food is served and comfortable accommodation provided. When you arrive at any of these hostleries you are assured of a genuine Western welcome and made quite at home in a short space of time.

Across the Bay of Keel may be seen the Mee­nawn lifts, or, as they are more familiarly called, the Cathedral Rocks. These rocks were formed by the action of the sea on the base of Mee­nawn, a mountain fifteen hundred feet high which rears its head between Keel and Dooega. They are an hour's walk from the village.

There are excellent facilities for hill-climbing in fairly close proximity to Keel. There are Knockmore, Mee­nawn and Slievemore, not to speak of many lesser mountains. In Keel Lough, which is close to the shore, there is good fishing.

For anyone who desires a real restful, natural holiday, Keel presents the most attractive features. One does not associate it with pictures, theatres or vaude­ville, and the modern amusements and side-shows provided at present-day resorts, but there may be found all the essentials of a healthy holiday: unspoilt beauty, good air, good food, good fishing and bathing. There are many for whom these are sufficient. It is for such that this article is written.
Monaghan of the Songs

By M. MacC.

It is many years ago since Padraic Colum's Road Round Ireland first appeared as My Irish Year. The author of that charming book of the road makes a travelling fiddler, whom he met in Cavan, say that Monaghan was a poor place for a fiddler; for a Monaghan man cared little for dance and song. Now, a poet couldn't cast a more damning aspersion, and I had the temerity which first youth gives the unfledged to contradict him.

So far is this slur from having any basis of truth Monaghan is a county where every event, from an election to a cockfight, calls forth the talent of all the inglorious if not mute bards in the country side. I have known an outraged hero who broke into male-dictory verse when his hens were taken from the roost:

Andy Askin stole my fowl;
'Twas Andy surely; damn his soul!

The Monaghan man literally "lisp in numbers." And not only can he turn a ballad to please you on the smallest provocation, but he can keep a ballad of other parts,—heard at a fair, or bought from a ballad singer,—better than any other people I know. Here are lines of a half century old ballad, treasured in County Monaghan, which celebrates an episode of the Land War in County Galway:

The place where Murty lives is bouncy to Loughrea,
The man was good and decent but he was led astray; He did what every Christian must call a burning shame—
But now he has repented and cleared his honest name.

When the noble Land League had heard of the disgrace
They sent a man to Murty to reason out the case;
"I own my crime," says Murty, "but I'll wash out the stain,
I'll keep the farm no longer; I'll give it up again."

Now, I have asked many people from the County Galway for the history of that event,—some of them, like Murty Hynes, living "hardly to Loughrea."
"Never heard of it" has been the invariable answer. Dozens of other ballads forgotten in the places they have reference to are remembered and kept fresh in County Monaghan.

For those whose interest in a district is not ballad-gathering but travelling, Monaghan is a county of charm and varied delight. It is the County of the Little Hills. From its natural arrangement comes great variety. A saying in Monaghan meant as a warning for the over ambitious: "There's a height and a hollow between you and it," is an idiom taken from the country's natural formation. The motorist, going from one part of this slender county to another, will have many a height and many a hollow to travel. A long stretch of unbroken plain he will never come upon. But at each height he will look out for fresh features, a reshaping of the landscape and a new order of houses.

Monaghan is a county of small, well-tilled fields bounded by trim thorn hedges varied to delight the eye by the colour which moor and bog, the whin and the broom can add. Then there is the enchanting sparkle of little lochs which lie in many a hollow glinting like spar under the sun or gloomy like a purple fall under the clouds.

County Monaghan is alive with historic interests. It was in the battle area on which the Gael and the Invader met most frequently in the seventeenth century, when the Gaelic order went down before the new régime. Benburb, Clontibret and the Boyne all drew Monaghan into the war net. When the Gael was broken, Monaghan was planted with great thoroughness, so that its fairest pastures and richest plains changed their Gaelic names. "Ballyalbany," the "Town of the Scotsmen," and "Ballinagall," the "Town of the Foreigner," are typical names for the naturally favoured spots in this heavily colonised county.

The demesnes of Rossmore, Castleshane and Glasslough in the north of the county, of Castleblayney, Dartrey and Carrickmacross in the south are beauty spots which only the real "show" places in the other provinces surpass.

The stranger will find the Monaghan people pleasant to travel among—cordial without being sugary. Where sign posts are scarce, and he is compelled to ask his road, the Monaghan man will try to give him guidance without breaking his heart:—
"You're right; you have a long journey in front of you. If you take the short cut the road is bad enough in spots; but it's a pleasant road for all that," he'll encourage you. "Now, the long, main road is grand to travel by, but I'd say myself that there's less to see on the main roads than on the bye roads."

As in all Ulster counties, there is a good standard of living. Where there is a good standard of living ordinarily, the traveller gets good food at a moderate price.

The Ulsterman is given to thrift and comfort, and the traveller will find to use Ulster parlance, that he can "pay his footing" without a severe "pain in his pocket."
Historic Associations of Co. Cavan

Gen. Phil Sheridan’s Birthplace—Dean Swift’s House and Stella’s Bower—Owen Roe’s Grave

Planted by Dean Swift, it is composed of eighteen beautiful lime trees encircling a space of 30 or 40 feet.

Where Richard Brinsley Sheridan wrote “The School for Scandal,” the first rehearsals of which took place on a mound just opposite the house. Sheridan is said to have built the small island on the lake adjoining.

The cottage was originally double the size but the present occupant’s father, a descendant of the Sheridan family, rebuilt a modern house, preserving only the actual room where Sheridan was born.

Sheridan as a youth set out from here with his mule and cart for Drogheda, from whence he sailed for America.
Ballyshannon and the First Invaders.

By H. Neville Roberts.

If we are inclined to place any credence in the stories of the early invasions of Ireland by peoples from over the seas, the historic associations of Ballyshannon take us back to ages that make the ruins of its twelfth century Abbey of Asseroe seem very modern, and even the tale of the drowning of Aedh-Ruadh in the falls of Asseroe appear somewhat less than ancient, though he was the father of Queen Macha of the Golden Hair, who built the palace of Eamhain-Macha near Armagh three centuries before Christ, and gave her name to the town that was to become the ecclesiastical capital.

The coming of Parthalon and his people belong admittedly to a period when mythology is blended with history. We have but verbal tradition in place of written records to cover the many centuries prior to the age of writing, but from the time that our scribes first attempted to record the history of Ireland the story of this and the later invasions has been included by them in their histories. They, at least, accepted the tradition as historically true, possibly basing their acceptance upon no better—and no worse—argument than that there is no smoke without fire.

According to the "Annals of the Four Masters," in which all the existing records were incorporated after they had been laboriously collected and carefully sifted, Ballyshannon was the scene of Parthalon's invasion some two thousand seven hundred years before the Christian era. We are told he was a Scythian, who hailed from Greece, but it was not then the Greece of the Greeks, for they did not give their name to that country until they invaded it about one thousand five hundred years later. Parthalon is said to have established himself on the little island of Inisaimir in the River Erne, close to the falls of Asseroe, now occupied by buildings connected with the salmon fisheries. If he used this island as a temporary headquarters there is reason to believe that he established himself more securely on the mainland in course of time.

On the river bank, on the town side, there is a small promontory with almost perpendicular sides, inaccessible on every hand except from the landward. Through the connecting neck of land a fosse has been cut, and on the headland, thus made impregnable, there is an underground dwelling, partly cut from the rock and partly built of un cemented masonry of the very early type called cyclopean, the roof being formed of large flat stones laid across the chambers and passages, the sides of which are sloped inwards to carry this primitive roof. It has been suggested that this fort may be ascribed to Parthalon, and, in default of any definite evidence to the contrary, the supposition is reasonable.

Apart from the difficulty in entirely disbelieving the persistent tradition of the very ancient invasions of Ireland from the shores of the Mediterranean, it is not at all incredible that the earliest sea-going peoples should have reached our coast. Authorities are now agreed that the ancient people of Crete were sailing the Atlantic as long ago as three thousand five hundred years before Christ. The idea that these most ancient of mariners should have made their way to Ireland, by no means preposterous in itself, is supported by the similarity that our earliest architecture and our most primitive metal work bear to those of the lands around the eastern Mediterranean.

History, or the legend the historians accepted as history, tells that one of Parthalon's sons, Slainge by name, was buried beneath the cairn, still to be seen, on top of Slieve Donard, the highest of the Mourne Mountains. This mountain was known as Slieve Slainge until after the time of St. Patrick, when it was renamed after a disciple of his who built a church there. It would seem that Parthalon's colony was of considerable number and spread over a wide area, but the story of these invaders of Ballyshannon takes us still further afield.

· The "Annals of the Four Masters" state that Parthalon died thirty years after his arrival in Ireland at Sean-Magh-Ealta-Edair, which means the Old Plain of the Flocks of Edair. This plain is the lowland between Howth Hill and the Dublin Mountains, and is therefore the district occupied by the Dublin of to-day and its suburbs, and which will be the Greater Dublin of to-morrow if contemplated legislation be enacted. Edair lived many centuries after the days of Parthalon, and the Four Masters are here using a name for the district that is of much later origin than the period of which they are writing, as when Parthalon is said to have come from Greece that country is being given a name that properly belongs to a much later era in its history.

Three hundred years after the invasion of Ballyshannon it is recorded that nine thousand Parthalonians died of a plague in one week on Sean-Magh-Ealta-Edair. "Whence," say the Four Masters, "is named Taimhleacht-Muintire-Parthaloin." Taimhleacht is Tallaght, in County Dublin, on the lower slopes of the Dublin Mountains, and the word means a plague pit or burial place. In his romantic novel,
“She,” Rider Haggard takes us in imagination to the ruins of Kôr, the city of his fictitious creation, and while She escorts her friend Holly through its tombs, that mistress of pathos wrings our hearts with the picture she paints of the great plague that visited the ancient city and laid the last of its people in dust, while Holly shrinks from the too human horror She but half humanly reveals. The visitor to Dublin as he walks the streets of the city and its suburbs, and catches a passing glimpse of the hills to the southward, will be recalling history, not creating fiction, if he conjures a vision of the remnant of Parthalon’s people bearing painfully their nine thousand dead from the Old Plain of the Flocks of Edar to the plague pit on the hillside beyond, burying the dead until none were left alive to do the burying—for the annals record that the last of the Parthalonians perished of this plague in this place.

Angling on Loughs Corrib and Mask.

Half a day’s catch of trout by six rods on Loughs Corrib and Mask. The total catch numbered 62—from 1 lb. to 3½ lbs. The headquarters of the party was at Cong, lying between the two lakes.

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A Village of the Pale.

By C. W. Cummins.

ABOUT 24 miles by road and rail from Dublin lies a little village of thatched cottages, each with its acre or half-acre of garden, packed tight with vegetables and fruit trees; and dominating all a great castle built of the local limestone. As you survey it on a summer’s day, shimmering in the heat of the broiling sun, heavy with the smell of the ripening fruit, you congratulate yourself on discovering an unspoilt corner of that old Ireland which is fast disappearing for ever. Modern progress has little use for ancient cottages, or ancient castles, either; and such pictures as I am trying to depict will soon be but a misty memory. Already the high wall of a passing ‘bus on the adjacent main Dublin-Belfast road heralds the approach of a new era, where such haunts of rustic peace will become rarer and rarer.

For six hundred years the picturesque village of Gormanston, Co. Meath, has slept beneath the shadow of its castle, near yet infinitely remote from the turmoil of the city. Like many another hamlet, its history has been the history of a family. Ever since an astute lawyer in the fourteenth century decided to found a family, and with the shrewd wisdom of his race, bought this estate in fertile Royal Meath, the story of Gormanston has been the chronicle of the doings of the Prestons, Viscounts of that ilk.

The grey walls of the ancient castle rise starkly against the skyline, the four round turrets outlined against the background of azure sky and billowy white clouds. Tall trees stand sentinel, as if to guard this, the sanctuary of a race. Through the branches you catch a glimpse of a stone building, which is the chapel, with a seventeenth century date carved over the porch. Across the deep green sward two peacocks strut self-consciously, rapt admirers of their own magnificence. A half-dry moat separates the castle grounds from the roadway, across which, the villagers will tell you, Cromwell leapt his horse on that memorable September morning when he and his Ironsides marched to the sack of Drogheda.

He drew his men up facing the castle, and attempted to seize the young heir, but a faithful priest fled with him to France, where he was educated and brought up as a Catholic, for the Prestons, Viscounts of Gormanston, have always been loyal to the Old Religion. Where Cromwell halted his men you can see great trees planted in rigid line (some of them, alas, now fallen in decay), for it was a whim of the Lord Protector that a tree should be planted for every Ironside he had with him that day. On this condition he agreed to spare the castle of his enemy.

Down through the little village swung the coaches of the eighteenth century gallants who came to some gay ball or entertainment at the castle; all the old historic names of the Pale: Plunkets, Flemings, Husseys, Caddells, St. Laurences, bent on merriment and laughter, as were their ancestors on war. The village has changed little since those far-off days, and it might not be inaptly called ‘The Village Where Time Stood Still,” for it is substantially the same as it was in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

As you stroll down the village road you will be struck by the number of fruit trees in the gardens, and a little inquiry will effect the fact that this small hamlet is one of the best-known fruit-raising districts in Ireland. Apples, pears, strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, black and red currants, and damsons, all are grown here. And during the season you may see the lorries from the Dublin jam factories loading up with their delicious freight. It always gives me pleasure to think that the jam I am sampling so appreciatively at tea-time may have originated in this truly ideal spot in Meath.

But there is one other attraction at Gormanston which I have kept to the last: the sea. Making your way down to the strand from the picturesque village, you come upon a wide stretch of sand, some two-and-a-half miles in extent, which is surely one of the finest spots for bathing in all Ireland. It is ideal for children, being very level and completely safe. The cool easterly breezes keep you vigorous and alert on the hottest day; though the sun will do his best to tan your body to a dark shade of mahogany.

It has always surprised me to find so few people there when I happen to pay Gormanston a visit. One or two cars (you can bring your car right down to the sands) proclaim the presence of a few happy picnickers. They are the lucky ones who have discovered this peaceful paradise for children—and for grown-ups, too, who dislike the uncomfortable over-crowding and banal entertainments of the average seaside resort.

But for the most part this typical village of the Pale lies undiscovered and unspoilt, though I regret to say that one of the cottages has forsaken its traditional thatch for a roof of galvanised iron, that ugly product of an ugly age . . . But as I write, the sky outside my window is darkened with flying crows and jackdaws, making a terrific clamour, then slowly they get into formation and wing their way homewards. They are making for a certain tree near the gate of Gormanston castle. By the time I have finished this article the sky will be black with them; for have they not haunted that particular spot for untold centuries?
‘Irish Travel’ Photograph Competition
THE PRIZE WINNERS.

DURING the past month the Editor of ‘Irish Travel’ offered (through the courtesy of Messrs. Thos. Mason, Dublin, the well-known photographic specialists) four cameras to the senders of the best photograph of

(1) An Irish Antiquity.
(2) An Irish Landscape.
(3) A Holiday Scene at an Irish Resort.
(4) A Sporting Scene in Ireland.

The following are the prize winners in the four groups:
(1) W. Dowler, 6 Mill Street, Galway.
(2) Miss K. Ennis, Main Street, Milltown, Co. Dublin.
(3) Mrs. J. Croke, Airmount Villas, Waterford.
(4) Mrs. Woods, 6 Argyle Road, Dublin.

The results of the Competition for Articles will be announced next month.
"To Ara of Connacht's isles
As I went sailing o'er the sea,
The wind's word, the brook's word,
The wave's word was plain to me—
There is no King can rule the wind,
There is no fetter for the sea."

THESE lines express the sturdy independence of the Aran Islanders—so self-contained, so aloof, so different in many characteristics from the people on the mainland, that they might almost seem to be another race in another clime, instead of the dwellers in a little triple island annexe to the sea-strewn coast of Galway.

The three Aran Islands—Inismore, Inishmaan, and Inisheer, i.e., Great, Middle and South-east Islands—are reached by a steamer from Galway, which runs twice a week, weather permitting, and takes from four to six hours to do the thirty miles. Sometimes in winter the islands are cut off for days from communication with the mainland. The steamer comes first to the South and Middle Islands, where there are no proper piers, so if anyone wishes to land there it means being transferred into a curragh, a flat-bottomed canvas-covered canoe, handled with marvellous dexterity by the islanders.

When the steamer anchors off the islands there is a wild rush of the curraghs from the shore, and as they come up alongside the steamer you hear the vehement flow of Gaelic shouted by the rowers as they manipulate their craft and take aboard the passengers and goods, including live stock. As you sit in the bottom of the curragh—there are no seats except for the rowers—the sensation of buoyancy on the green glittering waters, which seem to toss the canoe among themselves, has no resemblance to the heavy movement of a boat. On the small pier you are greeted by a large crowd of men, women and children, all dressed in their beautiful homespun and home-dyed clothes of many colours, the women and children with their scarlet petticoats, blue bodices and plaid shawls, and the men and boys with indigo shirts and many-coloured hand-woven belts. Against the grey background of the islands, which are almost entirely composed of limestone slabs of rock, the effect is all the more striking, with the sea turquoise and emerald shining behind.

The steamer meantime proceeds to the big island, where there is a pier and where visitors can stay in a hotel. This island is nine miles long, and has a population of 1,500. It contains a great wealth of antiquarian remains, Pagan and Christian, and was called "Aran of the Saints." There are the ruins of seven small churches close together as at Glendalough in County Wicklow, and other solitary ruins are scattered round the island. The prehistoric Fort of Dun Aengus, one of the finest of Western Europe, dating from two thousand years ago, is built on the edge of a high cliff on the western side of the island where the Atlantic rollers dash themselves against the rocks beneath, and woe betide the curragh that gets caught in a sudden storm off that grim coast.

The fishing industry,
at one time quite a flourishing concern, has now been almost completely abandoned owing to the advent of foreign trawlers that come in close to the islands and take or destroy all the fish. The kelp industry, which was prosperous during the war, as iodine was obtained by burning the seaweed for kelp, has also lapsed considerably owing to the transport difficulty.

Agriculture is a most difficult process in Aran, as there is practically no soil, the people have to convey sand from the shore in panniers on horses and donkeys. Having put a layer of sand on the limestone rock foundation, they convey seaweed from the shore for manure and then proceed to plant their crops of potatoes. The animals eat what grows in the crevices between the rocks and horses are sent to the mainland in winter.

As the old mother says in "Riders to the Sea"—"I've had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in the house—six fine men though it was a hard birth I had with every one of them and they coming into the world, and some of them were found, and some of them were not found, but they're gone now, the lot of them. They're all gone now and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. It's a great rest I'll have now and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain (Hallow Eve), if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking. No man at all can live for ever, and we must be satisfied.''

Anyone wishing to get a real insight into the life of the islands must stay in a cottage on the Middle Island, which is the most primitive. There you are treated as an honoured guest, and can watch your hostess going about the work with the quiet dignity that seems to pervade everything in Aran. The silence is another characteristic—no roads and therefore no traffic, not even a footfall, as the people wear "pampooties"—made of raw cow-hide by themselves—on their feet, which enable them to climb over the rough rocks that abound on all sides. The only recreation is card playing in the evenings, and conversation, which is not a lost art in Aran. Round the turf fire at night the flow of Gaelic is unceasing, and whether one understands it or not, the rhythmical stream flows over one with a feeling of ineffable charm.

Occasionally the old people sing long ballads with legends and stories, and the young people dance to the strains of a fiddle or concertina.

The sea is at the back of everything in Aran, a source of hope and still more of dread. Talking to the women as they sit with their knitting at their cottage doors, you watch their eyes gazing out to the glittering sea with a far-away look in them as they tell you how a father or a brother or a son was drowned. "Riders to the Sea," the play by J. M. Synge, gives a wonderful picture of the old woman who, having lost all her men folk by drowning, is at rest from anxiety at last. Their fatalism makes them submit to the inevitable, so much so that they will not try to rescue a drowning person, and many have perished who could have been saved.

A Road in Aran.

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Description of a Trip to Kinsale
By a recent visitor.

It happened in this way. A trio of city workers having decided to spend a Sunday in some sequestered spot, it was resolved by a majority to select Kinsale. It was further resolved by the same majority to make a survey of the town and its environs. Whereupon, the minority, that is the writer of these lines, secretly determined to make an independent survey, and to embody the results in a satirical paper on the crooked lanes of Kinsale. So much by way of introduction.

The white walls of the village of Scilly gleam in the forenoon sun as we glide down an incline to a quay in Kinsale.

From the ferry boat, at the World’s End, step ashore a contingent of the inhabitants of Castlepark, on their way to Mass. It appears that while their own parish church is four or five miles distant, a pull across the river and a walk of less than twenty minutes will carry them to either of the two churches in Kinsale.

"Going across, gentlemen!" inquires the ferryman. Instantly forgetting our programme, we step aboard, and after some pleasant tossing on the miniature billows of the spreading Bandon, we find ourselves at Castlepark, and presently on the summit of the Old Fort. All my readers have, I presume, heard of King James’ Fort in Kinsale. Many of them, perhaps, are familiar with the outlines of its history. Here, leaving history to able pens, let us glance around. Could anything be more delightful than to sit here on the battlements of King James’ shattered fortress, wooing the ozone wafted in from the broad sun-kissed bosom of the Atlantic? Or, if you have any taste for geology, to figure out how that peninsula on the west and Pheughane Point on the east came to be fashioned in that long ago period when this island of ours was taking shape. Or, again, if you have read the annals of our country, to fix your eyes on the town across the harbour and imagine you are reading the history of Ireland in epigone. For with slight, if any, exaggeration, it can be said that Kinsale was “ancient ere grey time was born.” Ere Finbarr left lone Gougane Barra to found the school and City of Cork, the roads leading from the interior of the country to the port of Innisownach (Kinsale) echoed the clanging wheels of many a chariot. Nay, more, while Severus lorded it over imperial Rome and Cnomaæ reigned at Tara, the town of Kinsale bore a name of importance. But, hold! A member of the staff whispers, in fancy, at my elbow: “Cease your dreaming, man, and describe the scenery of Kinsale.”

Yes, I shall have to fulfil my promise. But now that I have actually essayed the task, how painfully do I realize my limitations. Here, indeed, is needed the pen of a Bulfin to depict with a few deft touches the town climbing up from the hollow to the green hills, the roofs, a maze of colours; bells of varying notes pealing over the harbour; the waves of melody caught in some nook and tossed back into the town; motors and horse vehicles careering along the quays; echoes of cheery shouts and banter reaching our ears across the intervening stretch of water.

But there are points of observation, other than the tumbled grass-grown ruins crowning Castlepark. Westward beyond Rinerone Castle and church lies the hamlet of Sandycove. Two roads lead to it: one over the hill past the churchyard, where there are several ruined houses, budding flower gardens on their gables. Rinerone has a history, but to us strangers it is a sealed book. However, Rinerone is not lonely, for there are several farmhouses and labourers’ cottages on the way. The other road skirts the river bank and winds around the base of the fern-clad rock where the castle sits “like a snatching bird.” Thrushes are lively on this day in a grass-grown lane, which dips sharply from the castle to the strand, as they were before the mail-clad warriors raised their watch tower, and in their swelling pride took unto themselves the title Baron Rinerone.

Presently Rinerone Creek comes into view. At the head of this sinuous estuary a rustic picture catches the eye. Out of a hollow, behind an orchard, a stream purls to the sea, the orchard, a bird sanctuary, is athrill with melody; a shady lane, where a tiny cascade tinkles over a bank, is delicious with a profusion of primroses and hawthorn blossom. The brakes, on the off-bank of the creek, are putting on their summer glory, while chirping, piping, and whistling tell that here, at least, our feathered songsters are safe from the depredations of a class such as we know only too well in Cork.

Beyond the village is an unfenced but safe road. Where it leads to we do not know yet. But on one point all agree. In seeking sun, and sea breezes, or a quiet place for study, no better place could be chosen than the recesses along this road. What is that roofless house on the cliff head some twenty feet above the strand? That is the ruined church of Courtafourteen. It looks bare, for no tree has been planted near it; a metal paling enclosing the burial ground except on the cliff side. It is, however, one of the nearest rural graveyards I have ever seen. The church is built of unhewn stone and covered with a thousand years’ growth of lichen; the east window, a mere slit, is remarkably low, as if the indurated debris of centuries had raised the level of the cemetery. A strange site for a church on the edge of the ocean! It appears, however, that at one time the sea was a mile further out. So our mentor contends.
IRISH TRAVEL.

Views at Duncannon, Co. Wexford

Duncannon lies on the Wexford side of Waterford Harbour and is one of the numerous small resorts which lie along the Irish coast and offer an opportunity for the ideal type of quiet holiday—bathing, boating, tennis, golf and sea-angling.
The Stimulus of Dublin.

What is it that ranks Dublin amongst the most stimulating of cities?

By Henry O'Connor.

So much has been said and written of the attractions, the beauty, the glamour of Dublin, that the mental elevation, the restorative force experienced by every visitor has been overlooked. Great and manifest as are the city's appeal to the artist, the architect, the street planner, the scholar, the student, the lover of beauty in nature and its imitation by man, there lie above and beyond all these, what some or all of them explain, the recovery of strength, the awakening of energies: that is the first experience of every visitor, whatever his business, on his crossing to Dublin.

The splendour of its streets, the proportion and beauty of its public buildings, its admirable nature-gardens, its two Universities, its colleges and schools, the variety and correctness of its architecture, its ancient fames, sources of interest and delight to every visitor, as are the artistic conception of its public monuments, its museums and public libraries. So much is to be said and thought over in beauties of Dublin buildings and distribution, that though every visitor has experienced it, few seem to think over it or to inquire into the tonic of Dublin, its stimulant, not to bodily health merely, but its elevation of the mind. Dublin's first greeting to every visitor is of the energies of mind and of body. Yet no one asks why, and no one asks how.

What is this bracing air of Dublin? To what is it due? The tourist, the commercial man, the artist, the scholar feels it as soon as he reaches the city. It cannot be the attractions of the streets, for the tourist who arrives in the evening and goes to his hotel, where he seeks rest after his journey, experiences this quickening of his thought and energy, though he may have seen nothing of the streets.

What is this magic that takes hold of every visitor, whether he reaches the city from the ocean in the west or south, or across the expance of sea between Ireland and Wales, or comes down from the north? Dublin is drier than most places in Ireland. Our City Fathers in the past wrought many changes for good. They lighted our streets by electricity since the early eighties of the last century. They taught the citizens the uses of electricity for domestic heating and lighting, and many of our manufacturers its use for power. Thirty years earlier they brought to Dublin from a distance a gravitational supply of the purest water. They constructed a main drainage scheme with a suction siphon beneath the Liffey to connect the two systems north and south of the river. They established public baths and wash-houses. They made the streets bright and clean. They have housed thousands of working families.

But these improvements, great as they are for public health, are not the cause of the stimulus of Dublin, for the stimulus was there before these reforms were begun or even considered.

South of Dublin in the County Wicklow we have ranges of mountains, some of whose summits reach a height that is inferior only to these of Kerry, and a range of mountains of lesser eminence wall in Dublin from the south. The prevailing winds from the south and south-west strike the Wicklow range, and their currents, curling upward, reach the colder reaches of the atmosphere, where they are chilled and contracted and part with their moisture in rain. The County Dublin range receive the last discharges of these vapours and the air reaches Dublin, blessing it with an atmosphere drier than elsewhere. This atmosphere lifts much of the moisture from the streets of the city. These winds come to Dublin laden with the odours of the mountains, the heather, the wild rose, the laurels. And again the great limestone plain extends westward from Dublin, and the Galway and Mayo mountains bring down the cloud in rain, and the atmosphere reaches Dublin fresh and dry and filled with the refreshing perfume of leaf and flower and the rich vegetation of the richest of soils.

Thus Dublin is attended by its fairy zephyrs, drying its streets and its sylvan and pastoral surroundings.

And in this way Dublin, dry and wholesome, is ever refreshed by the fragrance and aroma of rich pastures and woods and hills, and the breezes that bring their aromatic balm to the city has also dried the atmosphere, making it healthy and stimulating.

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Kilkenny.

By H. E. T.

SHOULD you happen to be travelling to Waterford or Tramore and for once, to have a little time to spare, leave your train at Kilkenny station, and take a walk through that most interesting old city, with its pleasant shining river and its stately castle o’ertopping all.

Kilkenny is a city of churches. You could not take your stand in any part of the town, and if you can throw at all, cast a stone in any direction that would not hit some part of a church, and probably do considerable damage to one of them, ere the force of the throw was spent.

There are two Cathedrals, one Protestant, and one Roman, one with its spire still a-building, the other possesses a tower seven centuries old. Cromwell stabled his horses in it once, and the hoof marks may still be seen on the flags of the floor. He did more damage than that, too, for some of the old stone effigies of ancient heroes have had a leg or an arm hacked away in wanton mutilation. The floor of the chancel has been renewed, and in it can be seen different species of Irish marble, from the sombre black of Kilkenny to the pale translucent green, brought from the western hills of Connemara.

Truly Kilkenny was built for pedestrians. The streets are narrow and winding, with short cuts everywhere. You go on a voyage of discovery, through a quaint old archway, and up a flight of worn stone steps, and straight you find yourself in another part of the town. There are no cul-de-sacs, a flight of steps comes at once to your aid, provided you are a pedestrian. St. Canice’s steps lead up to the Cathedral, and save more than ten minutes’ walk by the road. You can do a straight line in almost any direction if you know the short cuts, and go up and down the flights of steps. In fact, Kilkenny would be a glorious city for a gigantic game of Hide-and-Seek, with all superfluous traffic swept aside, and the Town Hall for home.

Kilkenny is—as the geography books say—on the River Nore, and the inhabitants make the most of their very beautiful river. Everyone either boats, bathes, or fishes in it, and on Sunday morning the old Canal Walk forms the Hyde Park of Kilkenny, with its Church Parade.

A more peaceful spot on a warm June evening than the banks of the river could scarcely elsewhere be found, save for the bloodthirsty midges, which, if you are the sort of person they appreciate, worry you perpetually, and, like a policeman in the city, keep you always moving on.

Were the river utilised as fully for labour as it is for pleasure, Kilkenny city would surely be one of the most prosperous in the South. But alas—mills that once were scenes of busy industry now lie in idleness and decay, and the dormant strength of the river, that might be the source of power never ending, passes peaceably on its way, unneeded and unused.

So, unless you are hopelessly modern and up-to-date, and look with contempt on things that are lovely and of good report—being old—visit Kilkenny, wander around the quaint old streets, discovering here and there in unexpected corners ruins of ancient abbeys or historic relics of the past, and you will consider your time not wasted, and your visit there well worth your while.
September, 1930.

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