LIMERICK

Which contains about sixty-thousand inhabitants, and is situate on the south bank of the river Shannon, forty-five miles north from Cork, and ninety south and west from Dublin, has a showy appearance, as you approach it. Limerick is improving fast; and, were it not for the tone of voice, and a few other peculiarities, you could not, in many parts of it, help thinking yourself in London; so like are some of the streets and the general contour of the houses. The chief difference is, they, have no squares; nor, among the vast number of buildings going on, do they seem to be forming any. The old buildings and streets are extremely irregular; but, from William-Street, which is a continuation of George's-Street, a variety of new ones, at certain distances, run off at right angles toward the harbour and river. The most beautiful view of the city and country, is from the top of St. Mary's, or the steeple at the cathedral. Lord Limerick, who is lord-paramount of all the land about the city, has let it on long and advantageous leases, which is partly the cause of the growing prosperity of the city.

Limerick sustained a siege in the days of Oliver Cromwell; and the bones of Ireton, one of his generals, lie here. It was besieged in the days of king William, and the articles of capitulation were, from that period to the union with England in 1800, the fundamentals of the laws of Ireland.

It is curious to trace the history of Ireland. During the twelfth century, Henry II. of England, having conquered Wales, and fortified it with castles, formed the design of annexing Ireland to his dominions. About that time, owing to the feuds and divisions amongst the petty princes, he was able to settle a kind of civil government at Dublin; and most of the people submitted to his power. The monarchs of England have ever since been trying to conquer the rebellious spirit of the Irish, but have not completely succeeded. Notwithstanding the repeated attempts of the English to establish their power and their law, the Irish, or Brehan law, reigned in most parts till the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when English law only began to be established. By the Brehan, or Irish law, every baron had the power of life and death on his own estate; and every crime, even murder, might be atoned for by money. By the Brehan law there was an eric, or fine, appointed for every crime. Thus, if a man simply struck another, he was fined sixpence (a considerable sum in those days). If he struck him so as to leave a mark, the fine was double. If he wounded him, the fine was tripled; if he maimed him, it was still higher: in short crimes of every denomination, in the ludicrous expression of feudal times from the tail of a cat to the head of a king, might be atoned for by money. The business of the judges was to determine the degree of eric, or compensation, to be given. According to the canon law, the striking a priest was a much more heinous crime than striking any other man, and generally cost the perpetrator all he was worth, if not his life. It was in consequence of his having nothing to pay, that at man was imprisoned, pilloried, or put to death. When a man could not pay, or could not be found, his clan (for clanship prevailed among the Irish as well as among the Scots) paid it for him; and this was generally divided between the family injured, and the chieftain, or head of the clan: on some occasions the clan rose hr a body against those that insisted on the fine being paid, carrying fire and sword wherever they went.

The lands in Ireland were frequently forfeited by rebellions. Those forfeited in the north were, during the reign of James the First, given to a colony from Scotland; and those in the south to a colony from England.

In the days of Charles the First, the natives, more than three fourths of whom were and are still Catholics, rose in a body, and, in one day, murdered, it is said, some thousands of the
Protestants. By the battle of the Boyne, more than a million and a half of acres were forfeited to the crown, and given, in large portions, by King William to his adherents and followers. The treaty of Limerick being made soon after, contained the fundamentals of the law of Ireland, as above mentioned, till its union with England in 1800.

In former times, Limerick was surrounded by a wall, part of which is still standing; the materials and rubbish of this wall are employed in forming the new quay. In a word, so fast is Limerick increasing, and so valuable is property become in the vicinity, that a man, who, with his father, had lately only five hundred pounds in all, has now a lot of houses, near one of the quays, round which he can walk in four or five minutes, worth nearly four thousand pounds annually.

The bridge over the Shannon, at Limerick, which has eleven arches, was built in the days of King John; and, according to tradition, cost thirty pounds. It would take as many thousands to build a similar one now.

The fertility of the soil first induced farmers to settle about Limerick, and raise grain. This again induced them to buy and ship it off; as also, at length, to buy the hogs and cattle in the country, and not suffer them, as usually was the case, to be sent to Cork to be slaughtered, salted, and then shipped off for the navy. Hence there have, of late, been erected extensive granaries, mills, storehouses, and the like, near the quays; and immense business in the shipping line is done here, though it be sixty miles from the sea.

After rain there is always on the streets of Limerick a kind of tough paste, formed by the dust; the streets, as at Tralee, being paved with a species of lime. All the stones hereabouts are of lime. The walls of the city were built with lime-stone; the cathedral, the steeple, and the churches. In George's-Street they dig the stones out of the cellar, with which they build the lower part of the house; but the upper are generally of brick; for the making of which they have plenty of clay in the vicinity, and a stratum of bog, in some places twenty feet deep.

Besides the fine blue limestone-quarries, they have excellent marble here, which can be cut into blocks of any shape, or size. Hence, as marble takes a finer polish, and is not apt to send out fire by friction, government orders all their powder-mill-stones from Limerick; where they are shipped of various sizes, at a certain sum per solid foot. This is said to be a good job for the contractor.

The new Roman Catholic chapel at Limerick is one of the most extensive and showy of all the religious buildings in the king’s dominions.

At the Artillery-Barracks, which are commodious and extensive, and where they have a number of cannon of various calibre, I was amused with the conduct of a female fox, belonging to Captain Flott. She is fixed by the neck, by a long, neat chain; and so tame, that she licked my hand and lay on her back, holding up her feet like a lap-dog. She has beautifully white teeth, which not only appear when she is angry, but also when she is pleased. She would run about, and then come arid rub her head, neck, and side, against my legs, like a cat. At first she was shy; but, having procured it for the purpose, I offered her some boiled, and some raw flesh on the same plate, putting the boiled on the side next her, when I held it out for her to take it; but she put her bead over the boiled, and immediately seized the raw; which she swallowed most greedily. She did indeed afterwards eat the boiled, but seemed less fond of it. The giving her this, and patting her, seems to have been the reason she became so attached to me. From a minute view of this new acquaintance, whom I visited at different times, I am led to conclude that even foxes are capable of gratitude; and that it is chiefly owing to their being hunted and tormented they become so sly and destructive. Dogs sometimes visit her; to whom she is kind. She has not as yet, however, had any young, in mount-
ainous countries it is no uncommon thing to find curs half-foxes; their mothers and the foxes, in the night, having met, and been friends. These half-foxes make excellent shepherds and house-dogs, and never take a sheep or a lamb, except when urged by necessity.

And here let me observe, that the power which man has over animals, and the pleasure lie takes in subduing them, is too often mingled with cruelty. It is true, that sometimes there is a necessity for animals being put to death, to make the use of them for which they were deigned, or to prevent an increase that would be hurtful: but even then, their death ought to be made as easy as possible. Unfortunately, this law, prescribed by nature, is little attended to by sportsmen. Men, in this respect, often shew themselves more cruel tyrants than the fiercest beasts. Is not the way of hunting a hare, a fox, or a stag, dreadful to every feeling heart? Can it be innocent pleasure to pursue with rage and fury, a poor animal, which flies from us in violent anguish, till, at last, exhausted with terror and fatigue, it falls and expires in horrid convulsion? Is it humanity not to be affected with such a sight? To purchase a pleasure by the death of an innocent creature, is purchasing it too dearly. It is a dangerous pleasure, if it make brutality familiar to us. It is impossible that the heart of a man, passionately fond of hunting, should not insensibly lose the sweet feeling of humanity. Such a man soon becomes cruel and barbarous. He finds pleasure in none but scenes of horror and destruction; and, having accustomed himself to be insensible towards animals, he soon becomes so towards his fellow-creatures.

Hunting does not appear, in general, an occupation which we can reconcile with the duties we are called upon to fulfill. It is certain that hunting dissipates too much time, and fills the mind with ideas incompatible with serious employment. Gentler amusements are more proper to divert and unbend the mind than those tremulous pleasures, which do not leave us the use of reflection.

To a moral and religious man, hunting must ever appear a dangerous employment; particularly to a clergyman; for, ought we not to be afraid of a pleasure which leads to sins and irregularities? Does not the health suffer by such violent exercise, and the sudden transitions from heat to cold? What excesses, what swearing, what cruelties, are often allowed! How are the horses, the dogs, and even the men, sometimes treated! What mischief done to the meadows and fields! Can these be called trifles? If we were wise, we should seek pleasures more innocent and pure; and we should certainly find them. Why should we run after gross pleasures, which leave remorse and disgust behind? We have, within ourselves, an abundant source of enjoyments; a number of intellectual and moral faculties, the culture of which might afford the greatest satisfaction. The good man has learned the art of being happy without much preparation or trouble, and particularly without being so at the expense of his virtue. — To return.

In the county-jail at Limerick, I found a great number of both sexes confined; but chiefly for stealing and murder.

I was sorry for a serjeant-major, a fine looking man, who has been confined here, it seems, nine years for a trifling debt. Having a turn for drawing, he has the whole of the walls of his room etched over with curious caricature figures; some of which display taste and genius, as well as much practice.

There is something wrong in the laws about debtor and creditor. It is for the wisdom of parliament to rectify matters. Confinement is not punishment enough for some, and it is too severe for others. Were a cessio bonorum more a compulsory matter, it might be attended with beneficial consequences.
The poors’-house at Limerick, is in a miserable state. In that department where lunatics are kept, some of the men are absolutely naked. I found one young woman nearly in the same state, chained by the waist. She had, it seems, formerly been fond of dress, and shewing herself. Mercury, improperly applied, is supposed to have been the cause of her derangement. Here I found one young man with the corona meneris ; and I must say, that, after having visited most of the bedlams and madhouses in Ireland, and many of those in Britain, the physicians in Ireland appear to me, in general, either too profuse in their use of mercury, or too careless of the situation of their patients under a course of it. Many are, no doubt, in madhouses, in consequence of taking mercury themselves, and having it administered by quacks. To give mercury when the patient has not the means of keeping himself so warm and free from damps as is necessary, is, in the opinion of some, nearly as criminal as cutting their throat. Many of the mad-people are put in the shower-bath in the coldest weather, and like it. In the poor’s-house the children are taught to read and write, and be industrious. Every one, who is able to work, is employed, and they get the half of all they earn ; though in most houses of the kind they have only fourth.

Those in the poor’s-house, who are Roman Catholics, being, allowed no priest, generally appoint one of themselves to read the prayers of the day. When I entered the room where they meet for this purpose, they were all on their knees, except one old man, a Protestant, who, it seems, hates the Catholics ; and who, being a taylor, was busy at his needle, while they were all thus devoutly employed on their knees, within a few feet of him.

Among the ladies, the gloves of Limerick have long been famous. The woollen manufactory here is yet in its infancy.

The carving on the seats of the major and minor canons in the cathedral, which are made of fine black oak, is variegated and curious ; and shows that the mechanics in Ireland, in former times, were neither destitute of ingenuity, nor sparing of their labour.

The bishop, whose yearly income may be about five thousand pounds a-year, is beloved by the clergy. At a late visitation, one of them complained, “That the people were prevented from coming to his church, by the smell of the corpses in the church-yard, many being buried half above ground.”

I have seen a bishop with a numerous retinue, a well-powdered wig, lawn sleeves, silk stockings, and neither gout nor corns, yet having a patch on one of his shoes. I have my peculiarities; for I confess the patched shoe drew my attention more than the excellent dinner, the more than ordinary quantity of plate, or any thing else I saw. In a word, there is no accounting for the sentiments of individuals. The ground on which a certain chapel was built lately, happened not to have been consecrated, which, by the canon law, should have been done before the foundations were laid. This trifling circumstance rendered the chapel for some time useless. By law, prayers could not be read in the chapel till it was set apart for religious duties by the bishop; and the bishop was unwilling to appropriate it, as the ground on which it was built had not been consecrated. This being the case, it was the opinion of some, that the chapel must come down, in order that the ground on which its foundations were laid, might be consecrated and set apart by prayer.

In France there was a law, as I believe is yet the case in most states of Europe, that no player shall be buried in consecrated ground, or allowed to take the sacrament. On finding this, and that Moliere could not be buried in a certain church, Lewis the Fourteenth sent for the bishop, and enquired, how far down the consecration went. On being pushed for an answer, the bishop replied, “Fifteen feet.” “Then,” replied the king, “Moliere shall be buried at sixteen.” Had the bishop recollected this anecdote, he, perhaps, would not have been so dilatory in consecrating the chapel.
There are seldom any unnatural crimes here, and but few forgeries. One poor fellow, however, was hung not long ago for forgery. Being fond of mathematics, and reading about them, he forged a bill, it seems, to get money to buy books to read on that subject.

I found Dr. O’Halloran, the celebrated antiquarian, to whom I had been introduced, old, infirm, and confined to his chair. I had seen the Doctor's antiquities, and other productions, with his Treatise on the Head; in the preface to which, as an excuse for his writing on it, he says, “That during the course of twenty years practice, he had never been a month without half-a-dozen of broken heads coming under his inspection; and one or two skulls to trepan, that had been caused by fighting.” The Doctor, who had considered the matter minutely, and has had the best information, is of opinion, that though there are considerably above two hundred thousand individuals in the county of Limerick, (which is but a small one,) yet it could be made, with tolerable cultivation, to support three times that number. There is only one circulating library here.

In his History of Ireland, the Doctor mentions, that the favourite troops of Brien the Brave, when they were interrupted in their return from the battle of Clontarf, by Fitzpatrick, prince of Ossory, and many of them wounded; the wounded men entreated that they might be allowed to fight with the rest. “Let stakes (said they) be stuck in the ground, and one of us, being tied to and supported by each of these stakes, be placed in his rank, by the side of a sound man.” Between seven and eight hundred wounded men, pale, emaciated, and supported in this manner, (says O’Halloran,) appealed mixed with the foremost of the troops.

It is said that, during the reign of this prince, the people in Ireland were so inspired with the spirit of honour, religion, and virtue that a young lady of great beauty and virtue, adorned with jewels, and a costly dress, undertook a journey alone, from one end of the kingdom to the other, with only a wand in her hand, on the top of which was a ring, of very great value; and that such an impression had the laws and government of that prince made on the minds of all the people, that no attempt was made on her honour; nor was she robbed of her clothes or jewels.

In many parts, to this day, which is a relic of the worship of the sun and fire its representative, they have very peculiar notions respecting the fire in a house, which for a long time has never been allowed to go out. In one house, I know, the people boast that they sit round a fire, which has not been extinguished, to their certain knowledge, for sixty-five years; the inhabitants having been careful to keep life in it all that time; a thing not difficult, where they burn turf. If the fire of people, many miles distant, happen to go out, they always come to this old fire as they call it, to give life to the one that has happened to go out. But to return to Limerick.

It was proposed lately, to have a hundred subscribers, at five guineas each, and a guinea a-year, to erect a library, and to admit others, as readers, at what terms the subscribers pleased. When the paper went round, not above twenty could be found to subscribe. However, the aspect of things will, in all probability, soon be changed, for the inhabitants are beginning to be anxious to have their sons taught to read and write; and, so flourishing is the state of female education, that several young ladies have from fifty to sixty guineas a-year, with board, &c. for, being assistant-teachers here, in ladies’ boarding-schools.

As at Cork, and the other trading towns, there are numbers of Scots; so here: and, notwithstanding that nine-tenths of the people are Catholics, the Presbyterian clergyman, who is one of the hundred and eighty belonging to the synod in the North of Ireland, has a numerous, respectable congregation.
There is a canal from Limerick to Dublin, and boats almost perpetually passing and re-passing.

As in most places of Ireland, the people here are uncommonly fond of tobacco; not as a soporific, which it evidently is, but as an enlivener of the spirits. It is no uncommon thing to see a smith here, at the fore-hammer, with a pipe in his mouth.

There are several fine falls in the river Shannon, a little above the city, where mills and machinery of various kinds might be erected, did not indolence, and the want of capital, prevent improvements of this kind.

Though sixty miles from the sea, the salmon-fishing at Limerick brings in above two thousand pounds a-year; and, were the water in the Shannon nearly as clear as, in general, in the rivers in Scotland, it would fetch three times that sum.

Near the mouth of the Shannon, where numbers of oysters are to be found, a crow having lately, as they sometimes do, when very hungry, put in its nib to pull out the oyster, the shell closed, and held the crow fast, till the tide came in and drowned it.

Notwithstanding all their improvements, here still remain many vestiges of barbarity. In Scotland, England, and Wales, as well as Ireland, in former times, it was customary for parish to rise against parish, county against county, and often for reasons the most insignificant, to engage in pitched battles. I chanced to be a spectator of battle of this description in Limerick, which, in ferocity, surpassed any thing I had seen; and, which indicates that, at a distance from towns, civilization is making but little progress. The battle took place, in consequence of a misunderstanding, a few weeks before, between two men at a neighbouring fair.

The two, having fought, but been separated, each went to his friends, and represented that he had been insulted. In consequence, hundreds on each side engaged to resent the quarrel, and that too the very first holiday. Having therefore, according to agreement, met to fight at Limerick, they began about half an hour after prayers, but were separated by the magistrates. In the evening, however, about five, the whole street again being full of people, I observed one fellow, surrounded by hundreds, without a coat, raise his arm, and grasping a thick blackthorn cudgel, about four feet long, swing it round his head, pronouncing aloud, (his companions having promised to support him,) “Jesus be praised, Jesus be praised for ever;” after which, an opening of the crowd being made, he ran down the street, with hundreds after him, armed with cudgels, to meet the opposite party. In a few minutes, hundreds of cudgels, in all directions, were employed; the women as busy as the men. I observed one woman put in a stone at the mouth of a glove, which she tied fast, to prevent the stone's coming out, and then knocked a man on the head, by which he came to the ground. Many of the women, having tied stones in the corners of their cloaks and pocket-handkerchiefs, were employed in the same way. To the disgrace of the inhabitants, many of them shouted and applauded those that were most active, calling them by name from their windows, “Bravo! well done!” while they hissed those disposed to be quiet. In the evening, great numbers of boys, some of them not above twelve, in imitation of the men, were fighting in good earnest, with sticks, scarcely any preventing them; except the magistrates, who were going about, taking the sticks from them. It was ten at night before the streets could be cleared. In a public-house into which I had stepped, to see what was doing, a crowd being about the door, I found numbers of both sexes employed in clipping the hair, clotted with blood, from the heads of the combatants; and several shirts in the house red and stiff with blood. Man is, perhaps, the only animal that bleeds at the nose, though in health.

In fairs, five or six hundred men often meet and fight. When any of the parties begin to retire, the other follows with sticks and stones; so that, if persons be killed, it is often very
difficult to fix on the person who committed the deed. When a fight begins, he that intends to
join any of the parties, if he has not a good stick, generally seized the first he sees; the occas-
on often of a new fight.

In a word, with great numbers in Ireland, fighting continues fashionable, and has grown
into a habit. Care, however, should be taken not to let our inclinations run up into any hurtful
habit. As the passions of young men are warm, and their imaginations lively, it would be
wrong to endeavour to tie them up from the pursuit of innocent pleasure. But those among
them that think at all, can never form a more useful and happy resolution, than not to suffer
themselves to be drawn into any habit, except those that are of the useful kind. To acquire a
habit of being quarrelsome can serve no good purpose.

In Limerick I had the misfortune to be bitten by a monkey. Not having had an opportunity
of examining the pouch, or bag, about the chops of monks properly, and, having in eye that
part of Gulliver’s Travels, where the monkey is represented as taking Gulliver to the top of
the house; and, having squeezed something out of its poach, cram it into Gulliver’s mouth, I
gave a monkey, which happened to be in the house where I was, a variety of things, which it
soon ate up; and, among this rest, some figs, of which it seemed extremely fond. The gentle-
man to whom it belonged, told me that, although it had snapped up all the figs by the mouth,
they were not in his stomach, but in its pouch, or bag; and, to convince me of this, took the
monkey, and, from one of the sides of its chops, forced out some of the figs. Though it al-
lowed him, and can at any time, with the help of its foot, squeeze up the food lodged in its
chops, the monkey could not suffer me to force up any thing from the other side, but bit me;
imagining I was going to take the figs back and eat them. They have taught it to imitate a
variety of sounds. Its conduct in mimicking these put me in mind of a clergyman I have seen
in Scotland, who got a good living from a certain patron, for having acquired a facility in
uttering the sounds of different animals, particularly lap-dogs; to do which, the reverend
gentleman often crept under the table, soft, &c.; and made those, who did not know he was
there imagine that some strange cur had got into the house. I could mention names, but prud-
ence forbids me.

Mutianus, an antient author, says, that he had seen monkeys playing at chess. If monkeys be
capable of this, why are they not shewn at London doing this? When viewing the monkey, I
could not help reflecting that the inferior animals have many advantages which man has not.
They do not require the clothes, defence, and conveniences, which we need; nor are they
obliged to invent, to learn, and exercise the arts necessary for these purposes. At their birth
they bring with them everything they want; or, at least, have only to follow the instinct,
natural to them, to obtain all that can make them happy. This instinct never deceives them; it
is a constant, sure guide; and, as soon as their appetites are satisfied, they are perfectly con-
tent. In all these circumstances they have the advantage of man, who must invent, labour, and
receive instructions, or he would remain in perpetual childhood, and could scarcely procure
the necessaries of life. His instinct and his passions are not sure guides to him. He would be
wretched were he to give way to them. Reason alone, and its consequences, make the essen-
tial difference between him and the brutes: it supplies all deficiencies, and, in other rejects,
gives a superiority, which they can never attain. By means of this faculty he obtains every
convenience, and multiplied the pleasures of sense: it ennobles them, and makes them so
much the more sensibly enjoyed, as he can render his desires subservient to reason. His soul
is capable of pleasures entirely unknown to animals: pleasures which spring from wisdom,
science, virtue, and religion; and which infinitely surpass all those of which the senses are
the organs. He makes continually new discoveries, acquires farther lights, and makes bound-
less progress in the road to perfection and happiness; whereas the beasts are always confined
within their narrow limits; never invent nor improve, nor ever rise above animals of the same
species. It is reason alone which, gives man the superiority over the brute, and it is in this that
the excellence of human nature mostly consists. To make use of our reason, in order to en-

noble the pleasures of some, and to enjoy more and more those that are intellectual; this is what distinguishes man — this is the end to which he was created, — But not to wander too far.

Though there are many pious people in Limerick; yet they are not all so. A beautiful young woman here, not long ago, went off with an old nobleman, notwithstanding that her husband is young and handsome. I mention this, because, of all the whims which enter into the heads of women, and, if we can believe old bachelors, there is scarcely any whim which does not enter into the heads of some of them; that of a young woman choosing an old man in preference to a young one, is what never enters into their heads.

When I left Limerick, and was proceeding through the county of Clare, to Killaloe, my next resting-place, I found a countryman sitting by the way-side, counting his rosary. After he had gone round it three times, and said some Pater-Nosters and Ave-Marias, he told me that he had counted it fifteen times every day, for many years; and trusted in God, that nothing would ever happen which would prevent him from performing a duty so important. As the man could not read, and the beads in his rosary, by being of a more than ordinary size, called up to his mind certain of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, I advised him to be careful in imitating the piety and virtue of these; if he wished to be happy either here or hereafter. On giving him this advice he said he would think of it, but must consult the priest, who had, as he termed it, his soul in keeping.

At Donass, between O’Brien’s bridge and Limerick, the Rev. Mr. Massy, the rector, has tithes to the amount of seven hundred pounds a-year; while the salary of the school-master is only two pounds. Some parishes in the interior, as well as the south of Ireland, have neither school nor schoolmaster. Where parishes have a schoolmaster, they have often neither house nor garden. This circumstance, and the little encouragement otherwise given to schoolmasters, naturally damps their ardour, compels them to betake themselves to other pursuits, and bestow little trouble on the improvement of their scholars. Proceeding up the banks of the Shannon, I arrived at

KILLALOE

Of which the Hon. Robt. Tottenham, brother to Lord Loftus, is bishop. The cathedral is small, without any organ, and there is generally no person either to instruct the clergy, or the people, except the Rev. Mr. Allan, who is the bishop’s curate, and who keeps a school. It is no uncommon thing in Ireland to see cathedral churches without an organ. In the Archbishop of Cashel’s church, it seems, there is none. The bishop here, however, who has a noble palace in the midst of a park, containing above two hundred acres of excellent land, is extremely humane. When a blind man came to him, soon after he was made bishop, to ask something, the bishop gave him a guinea, desiring him to come every month, and he would get the half of that sum. When the bishop heard that a poor man had lost his cow, he sent him seven guineas to buy another; that being the value of the one that died: and, having learned that many of the poor had not a sufficient number of blankets to cover them in cold weather, he sent and bought a hundred to be distributed among them.

The late bishop erected a school of industry for poor children here; and, among other things, paid a school-master to teach the Roman Catholics their own catechism. The present bishop continues the salary.

There belong to the bishopric a dean, archdeacon, vicar-general, chancellor, and many others, who all receive considerable revenues from it; but who are scarcely ever seen here, except when they come to receive the money. One item of the bishop’s income is the tenth of the eels caught in the river, at Killaloe.
Dr. Parker, rector of Castleton, who lives on the banks of the Shannon, has a beautiful house and farm on a long lease, and a right, at the end of it, for any improvements whatever that may be made. The doctor, who gives employment to many, in draining, planting, inclos-ing, levelling, building, and the like, will (which is said to be his object) be able to give in an account, at the end of the lease, equivalent, if not greater than the whole value of the farm.

While standing, not far from Killaloe, observing a stout young fellow driving out manure in baskets on a horse, and a young woman stooping and spreading it with her hands. Major P — came up, with his lady and parasol, in a gig ; and, with much complaisance, entered into conversation with me. But, when I hinted, among other improvements in each county, the propriety of raising a subscription to buy something with prongs for spreading the manure, and preventing women from the humiliating employment of doing it with their hands, and said I was certain that every feeling person would be glad to give less or more, the Major, who has extensive estates in this corner, sneaked off, without saying a word.

A few miles from Killaloe, on my way to Woodford, I found high words, which ended in blows, between three men with some pigs and cows, on the one side, and two men on the other. The three men were the tithe-proctor and his assistants, who were carrying cows, calves, pigs, and the like, to the pound-park of the parish ; and the two other were the sons of tenants in the vicinity, who would not permit the tithe-proctor to carry off the cow of a widow in their neighbourhood, who had got a few shillings in arrear to the parson.

In every parish there is a pound-park, to which they take the cows, pigs, calves, and the like, of those who are in arrear for tithes. In eight days after the cattle have been in pound, if the owner do not come and relieve them, by paying the tithe and other expenses, the cow, or whatever it may be, is sold to the highest bidder ; and the balance, if any, after paying what had been due, and all expenses, is given to the person to whom the animal, or thing, belonged. There is generally also a pound-park in the parish for the landholders ; and middle-men, or receivers, do the same when there happens to be any arrear of rent. One of the young men, opposing the tithe-proctor, had his head tied up, which had been bruised in defending the widow’s cow. The young man argued that the widow, though industrious, was poor ; that she had a number of children to support ; that she had, no money, and only that cow to give them milk ; and that the rector, who has many hundred pounds a-year for doing nothing, was more able to want the few shillings than the widow was to pay them. While I was speaking to the tithe-proctor in behalf of the poor widow, the young man went off with the cow ; nobody preventing him.

A tithe-proctor, in this part of the country, having become extremely troublesome, and often raised more than double what he had to pay the rector, the heritors and tenants came to a determination to pay no more than he had bargained to pay the rector for life. This becoming a process at law, it was found that the parish is bound to pay no more than the clergyman had agreed to take from the tithe-proctor ; but that some one of the heritors must put that sum yearly into the rector’s hand, which the heritors, in the present instance became bound to do; and the tithe-proctor was found to have no right to the tithes nor the profits, notwithstanding a written agreement with the rector. He that catches at more than belongs to him, justly deserves to lose what he has. Yet nothing is more common, and, at the same time, more pernicious than this selfish principle. It prevails from the king to the peasant ; and all orders and degrees of men are, more or less, infected with it. Monarchs have been drawn in by this greedy humour to grasp at the dominion of their neighbours. If the kings of Persia had been contented with their own vast territories, they had not lost all Asia for the sake of the little petty state of Greece. The tithe-proctor had been covetous and greedy of exorbitant profits, and therefore lost the whole.
For about twenty miles above Killaloe, the Shannon forms itself into a lake, in some places from two to three miles broad. The ground rising gradually from its banks gives a beautiful variety to the country all around.

At Mount Shannon, where was once a linen-factory, the inhabitants are all Presbyterians. The manufactory was, however, some time ago, given up, and the village is going to ruins; he who set it going, being dead, and the property squandered by his son and heir.

About half way betwixt Mount Shannon and Woodford, to which I next directed my course, there being no public-house near, and the evening approaching; at the recommendation of a priest, with whom I fell in, I put up at a farmer’s near the road, who has a numerous family. When the mistress of the house, who was extremely hospitable, shewed me where I was to sleep, I found three beds in the room, and, in one of them, two fine young women, her daughters, fast asleep. Having appointed me what she termed their best bed, she went away. The good woman and her husband, however, came soon after, and occupied the one next to that in which I lay. Being good Catholics, and seemingly not bad Christians, before they lay down, each of them muttered some Latin prayers, crossing their forehead, breast, and farther down, several times, both at the beginning and end of each prayer.

In the morning, when I awaked, the good man and his wife were gone, as were also the two young women; but a beautiful girl, another daughter, about seventeen or eighteen, who had been at a wake in the vicinity a part of the night, lay on the bed in which her sisters had been. Having awaked while I was shaving myself, she said, “Good morning, Sir;” begged to know whether I wished for a little hot water or any thing, and sat up in bed a considerable time, repeatedly enquiring if she could be of any use. And such is the innocence and simplicity among the people in this part of the country, that she felt no shame; nor seemed to think there was either impropriety or danger in being in bed in the same room with a man she had never seen, except a few minutes at supper in the evening.

On enquiring what they did at the wakes? she told me, while she lay a-bed, that some go there with their faces blacked, and men in women's clothes; that various amusements are introduced, even where they have no whiskey. At one of these amusements, which they call, mending the old coat; she told me that a coat is spread on the floor, and that two persons, a young man and woman, sit down, and pretend to mend it, while the rest are dancing in a ring around them, wheeling sometimes one way, and sometimes another. At length, the young man and woman get up, then kiss, and join in the dance; that another couple sit down and do the same; and so on, till all have mended the old coat.

Though they have no manner of acquaintance, or relationship to the dead person, young people, she told me, sometimes come a dozen miles to a wake. The priest, having given to the dead the extreme-unction, and prayed for the repose of the soul; they think that all will be well with their departed friend, and that grief would be improper. Hunt the slipper, and blind-man’s-buff, are also common amusements. On some occasions, where there is plenty of whiskey, the. singing and music stop, and the old women set up a howling for the dead in general; at which, if they please, young women may learn to howl. At wakes they sometimes introduce legendary tales. Amusements of this kind are also common in some parts in Scotland, even to this day in the winter-eveings. What are now called Ossian’s Poems, were the tales which the people repeated at their fire-sides, and meetings in the winter-eveings; and which they repeat even yet, where they cannot read, and do not know that these poems are published.

There are some excellent tracts of land betwixt Mount Shannon and Woodford, seemingly in the same state in which it has ever been since the days of Noah. These, and the like, with tolerable cultivation, might be made to support thousands of families; the grain not necessary
for the new settlers, could easily be shipped off by the canals connected by the river Shannon, either to Limerick or Dublin, where it would be sure to find a ready market.

Here I observed a girl with an orison and gospel hung round her neck, given her by the priest to keep away, as she expressed it, “O'er canny neighbours;” meaning witches, &c.

Near Woodford, some poor people are settling in the hills and bogs; but their cabins and little farms are too often taken from them, in the course of a few years, by middlemen and rich monopolizers.

The justices of the peace, in this part of the country, generally appoint people to go and search where they suspect distilling to be carried on. Hence whiskey and distilling-utensils are seized here; not by the excise and revenue officers, as in Britain, but by those appointed by the justices, and not improperly called still hunters. Though a lucrative, this is by no means a pleasant business; for, not many years ago, a person having taken and destroyed many of their distilling-utensils, more than half a dozen of them, considering themselves as robbed, and him as a robber; followed him, and knocked out his brains. There is a heap of stones near Woodford, on the spot where this happened, and many, as they pass, throw a stone against it to this day. A country-man, who overtook me near it, carrying a great stone, said he was surprised, as I was a stranger, that I did not throw a stone at it; to contribute my mite in perpetuating a deed which had cleared the country of their greatest scourge and oppressor. He told me, that only one poor old man was hung for the deed; though half a dozen were proved to have been concerned in it; and that this man, on the scaffold, in his address to the multitude, who considered him as innocent, among other things advised them who had come to see him hung, to attend to what fortune-tellers say; for that one of these, more than forty years before, had told him that he would be hanged.

Information against criminals and enemies of the public is, in itself, not odious: but the circumstances and manner of doing it often make it a vile and detestable employment. He that accuses another for the sale of a promised reward, whatever he gets by the bargain, is sure to lose his reputation. For indeed the most innocent company is not safe with such a one in it; nor the neighbourhood secure in which he lives. A villain of this stamp, whose only end is getting, will as soon betray the innocent as the guilty; let him but know where there is a suspected person, and propose the reward, and he will scarcely fail to find him out. We have no small comfort concerning this sort of people, when we consider how improbable it is that they should prosper long: for he that can betray another for the sake of a reward, must be a man of such bad principles, that it cannot be for the interest of any community to encourage him to live amongst them. Besides, he himself will not be contented with one single villainy, and there is little fear but he, sooner or later, provoke justice to inflict on him, at least as great a calamity as he, by his malicious information, has brought upon another.

There was an iron-work at Woodford, not many years ago; but there being no coal in the country, and not much wood, it was given up.

It is surprising that Sir Thomas Bourke, the lord-paramount of this village, and who, with many of the proprietors of land around, has been at much pains in planting, does not know that, where the soil is damp, as is the case in many places here-abouts, except aquatics, it is better to put the young plants on the surface, and dig up earth about them, than to dig and plant them in trenches, as he has done. Much depends on adapting the plant to the soil. When trees are planted in trenches, where the soil is either wet or thin; by the roots coming soon in contact with the soil below, the tree generally becomes stunted, and soon dies. On the other hand, when the roots are placed on the surface, and earth heaped up about them, the tree has a greater chance of thriving, as it is long before the roots perforate down to the cold, wet soil, and by their being above ground, and ex-posed to the genial rays of the sun, they grow much
more quickly. Nor do they seem to know here-abouts, that the quincunx method of planting affords much more room for the growth of the plants, than when these are planted directly opposite to one another in the commit way.

In a house, into which I stepped, between Woodford and Eyrecourt, I found they had been teaching a dog to smoke tobacco. He held the pipe tolerably well, and seemed to relish it. I had seen dogs, horses, cats, pigs, and monkeys, fond of spirits and strong beer; but never before had seen a dog smoking. It is not uncommon for the people of these parts to learn their dogs to chew tobacco; and for goats, in most places, to steal and eat it. Tobacco, being an herb, and a bitter, goats are fond of it; but, being a strong soporific, they generally soon fall asleep after they have eaten much of it. Goats have been found to break cannisters and tobacco-boxes with their feet and horns, for the sake of the tobacco, and to tear bladders, and lick up the snuff which had come out of them.

In this part of the country I learned that the other year, about Christmas, when they had laid a good old ripe cheese on the table, before the fire, and were about to cut it, a bat, (the, only bird that has teeth, brings forth its young alive, and suckles them,) came out of a hole in the cheese, and flew about the room.

EYRECOURT.

At Eyrecourt, a village containing about one thousand inhabitants, and which is about fourteen miles from Woodford, Colonel Eyre, of Eyrecourt, has a pack of seventy or eighty hounds in a kennel, within a few hundred yards of the parish church. The howling and barking of these is, not unfrequently, heard by the people at their devotion; and sometimes found to drown their voices, while singing psalms. The dogs, not unfrequently, set up an uncommon howl, when they hear the psalms begin. The rector of the parish can certainly oblige the colonel either to remove the kennel from the church, or the church from the kennel. But the parson has generally some favour to ask of the squire. Besides, the colonel has interest and the reverend gentleman has, it seems sons not yet sufficiently provided for in the church.

The road from Eyrecourt to Clonfert, to which I next directed my course, is turned shamefully about, to enlarge a certain great man’s park. The direct, and by far the best line, is straight through the middle of the park, which, as it saves nearly a mile, was the road, till lately. But, what will not dinners and dozens of wine accomplish? The great man asked and the gentlemen of the county of Galway, in compliance with an unreasonable request, ordered the good old way to be stopped, and every one, poor or rich, be they on foot or on horse-back, to go round; thus sacrificing the good of the public to that of an individual, and making the law a public, open, and daily robber.

On the way to Clonfert, within two hundred yards of the cathedral, I found some people killing sheep, working among potatoes, and engaged in other occupations, during the time of public worship. When I mentioned this to the bishop, he told me that the greater part of the people in the country being Catholics, generally do on Sunday what they please, and will not be restrained; re-monstrances against their conduct, from Protestants, generally making matters worse. It is a bad sign of the morals of a country, when the people do as they pleased, and will not be prevented. If such conduct continue, and even bishops are obliged to wink at it, what is to be expected.

CLONFERT.

Having stayed some time at Clonfert, I found the bishop hospitable and kind. His Lordship, who has here an income of at least five thousand pounds a-year, seems to deserve it; and although the country, in general, is neither beautiful nor well-improved, yet owing to the fertil-
ity of the soil, in the immediate vicinity of the cathedral, and the planting and improvement about the bishop’s palace, Clonfert seems a little paradise. His lordship has an extensive domain, and some hundred acres, belonging to the see, in his own hands, mostly in grass, and well stocked with cattle.

Though bishops in Ireland, as, I believe, in most countries, cannot let their lands much longer than their own lives; yet, there, being a clause in the act excepting bog, and what is denominated useless land, his Lordship has let to his son and only child, who is a clergyman, a thousand acres of bog, belonging to the see, on a lease of sixty-one years; and, having entered into a contract with government, to supply some barracks in the vicinity with fuel, he cut deep drains, at right angles, all through, and round the bog; and the turf cut from these drains supplied the barracks. The thousand acres are now drained; and let at five shillings the acre, on a short lease. So that the son, having a sixty-one years lease from the father, and laid out nearly a thousand pounds on draining, &c. has already three hundred pounds a-year, for what was lately scarcely worth as many pence. And, as the ground must gradually become more and more valuable, it is probable that this lease to the son, or his heirs, long before the end of the sixty-one years, may be a good thousand pounds a-year; and, at the end of it, not a bad thing for the then bishop. In the mean time, the granting this lease has afforded employment to many of the poor, added beauty to the county, increased the quantity of food for mankind, and otherwise done good. It is fulfilling the end of our creation when we do good to the bodies as well as the souls of men; and frustrating it, when we suffer opportunities of doing good to escape us. Why do not the other bishops in Britain and Ireland, who have waste ground, act in the same way? It would find employment for the poor in these trying times, and especially benefit themselves.

The law preventing bishops, and the clergy, from letting improved lands much longer than their own lives, is extremely proper. The bishop of Clonfert, for instance, has only twenty-six pounds a-year for a farm, belonging to his see, in the parish of Moore, which fetches eight hundred pounds; a former bishop having given a lease of it, renewable for ever, for that sum annually.

When at the bridge of Shannon, only a few miles from Clonfert, I went to see The Seven Churches; a place so called, because, besides the round tower, and a Protestant church at it, the ruins of six or seven religious buildings are still visible. As at St. Patrick’s Purgatory, a small island in Loch Derg, near the Bay of Donegal, people come hundreds of miles to perform pilgrimages here; and thousands believe that the waters of a well, at the ruins, gives the blind their sight, and makes the lame to walk. They also believe, that those buried near the ruins have the half of their sins forgiven, and that the soul only remains half the time in purgatory it otherways would. If a dead body be once brought to the churchyard here, many believe that no power on earth could take it out again. Fortunately, there is burying-ground enough for several counties. Those who come from a distance, often wake the corpse in a lonely house in the vicinity. On such occasions, they generally take care to have plenty of whiskey. Daily prayers are put up for the dead here; and, on Good-Friday, thousands are to be seen prostrate over the graves of their friends, praying for the repose of their souls, and for their speedy escape out of purgatory; and people on pilgrimages often go round the well a number of times, on their bare knees.

There is a place in Ireland, much frequented by pilgrims, (I forbear mentioning names); where, when ordered to do penance round it, on their knees, two hermits generally do it for them, praying, all the time they walk, for their employers. The knees of these hermits are so hard, that they now feel no pain; and, from practice, they can walk nearly as well on their knees as on their feet. Were I condemned to walk a mile on my bare knees, I certainly would rather pay money than do it myself; the effect produced by either being the same.
In this, as in many parts of Ireland, for the spitting of blood, they take dandelion, (dens leonis,) which the common people call heart's-ease; and straining the juice of two or three handfuls into half a pint of spirits, take a little every morning, fasting. Here, and in various parts, they apply poultices and fomentations of hemlock, for discussing old scrofulous and stubborn swellings. Poultices of this kind, I have good reason to conclude, have been applied with success to swellings in the breast, arising from the putrefaction of milky particles. The Author of Nature never would have caused hemlock to grow, had it not been good for something.

When they mean to praise a priest, they say, in this part of the country, “He is as good a man as ever turned a back to an altar.”

SHANNON BRIDGE.

At Shannon Bridge there is a small fort, and some pieces of artillery. While I was on the banks of the river, looking over my notes, and marking the ideas which the surrounding objects suggested, Captain Levy came to me; and, without any apology, took me up as a spy. The Captain insisted on having my book of notes, in which I was writing, and which he examined with care: seeing nothing in them of a treasonable nature, he, in about an hour, returned them to me, telling me I was at liberty to go where I pleased. On this, his attendants, who, I found, had come to guard me, seemed sorry at what he said; they having entertained hopes that they should be sent to guard me to Dublin, if not to London, and be well paid for their trouble.

As there are water-falls in the Shannon, at Shannon-bridge, which impede the navigation, they are digging a canal, and making docks here and there, which will add much to the convenience of water-carriage in this, as well as through the interior of the country.

In France, at the locks on their canals, the flood-gates are of iron: the Romans introduced whatever improvements they found among those they had conquered. Why do not we incorporate with our own, the ingenious arts and economical plans of other nations? Flood-gates of iron at the locks of our canals have not been introduced in Britain.

About half a mile from Athlone, my next resting-place, I found myself completely beset with beggars; yea, so much so, that my poney (some of them being extremely importunate,) found himself impeded in proceeding. One would think that, at least, half of the inhabitants in Ireland are in a state of beggary. The increase of paupers in England is alarming, but not so much so as in Ireland. In Queen Elizabeth's reign, with a population of six millions, England had only two hundred million of paupers. Now, at a medium, every seventh or rather sixth person, is a pauper. At the celebration of the late jubilee, more than half of the inhabitants in the parish of Hampstead, near London, applied to receive the donations of the liberal minority; and, in many parishes, at present, nine-tenths of the inhabitants are relieved by the tenth part. One of the beggars, to whom I had given a few halfpence, (a decent, but poor-looking woman, told me,) as I approached Athlone, that she had changed the saint to whom she used to pray, for St. Matthew the Evangelist, who she was glad had heard her, and induced me to give her something. There were thirty thousand gods worshipped in Greece and Rome, in the days of St. Paul; and, I doubt not, but there are nearly as many saints worshiped, at present, in Ireland, every Roman Catholic having one, to whom; in a peculiar manner, he prays, and looks up for protection. The poor woman told me, that, having long prayed to the saint she had chosen, without having her prayers answered, she had turned him off; and hoped the one she had chosen would be more kind. Musing on the ignorance, credulity, and poverty of the poor Catholics in Ireland, and wishing that the lamp of religion might, some-how or other, be made to burn more clear among them, I arrived at Athlone, a town of considerable extent, and nearly in the centre of Ireland.
Travel through mystical Celtic Ireland on this full-day bus tour from Dublin! With an expert guide, journey back in time to Boyne Valley, home of the ancient Loughcrew Celtic Tombs, the Hill Of Uishneacht, and the Hill of Tara—a hotbed of archaeological treasures. From Killarney, travel through scenic mountain regions and along Ireland’s rocky beaches. Spot ancient huts and historic buildings such as the Gallarus Oratory, visit Dingle Town, and get a splendid view of Slea Head—the most westerly point in Europe. More.

Ireland Tours & Trips. Find the right tour for you through Ireland. We've got 288 tours going to Ireland, starting from just 1 days in length, and the longest tour is 18 days. The most popular month to go is August, which has the most number of tour departures. Dates & length.

Places. Filters. 250+ Ireland tour packages with 1,744 reviews. View Map. In-depth Cultural. Ireland Motels Ireland Campgrounds Ireland Hostels Ireland Green Hotels Ireland Beach Hotels Ireland Luxury Hotels Ireland Spa Resorts Ireland Business Hotels Ireland Resorts Ireland Family Hotels Ireland Romantic Hotels Ireland Ireland Casinos. 4-stars Hotels in Ireland 5-stars Hotels in Ireland 3-stars Hotels in Ireland. Ireland Hotels with Pools Ireland Hotels with Free Parking Pet Friendly Hotels in Ireland. Tours & Activities in Ireland. Popular Ireland Categories. Ireland Tours and Trips 2021/2022. Ireland, fondly called the Emerald Isle, is a destination for those looking to enjoy both nature and culture. The capital city of Dublin features some great breweries and photography and art tours. At night, be sure to visit Temple Bar for some great nightlife! 14 day chill out tour through Dublin, Belfast, County Donegal and 5 other destinations in Ireland. Read More. Tour Type Group Tour.