

WIGGIN KATE SMITH

PENELOPE'S IRISH
EXPERIENCES

Kate Wiggin
Penelope's Irish Experiences

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Penelope's Irish Experiences:

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Kate Douglas Wiggin

Penelope's Irish Experiences

Part First—Leinster

Chapter I. We emulate the Rollo books

*'Sure a terrible time I was out o' the way,
Over the sea, over the sea,
Till I come to Ireland one sunny day,—
Betther for me, betther for me:
The first time me fut got the feel o' the ground
I was strollin' along in an Irish city
That hasn't its aquil the world around
For the air that is sweet an' the girls that are pretty.'*

—Moirá O'Neill.

Dublin, O'Carolan's Private Hotel.

It is the most absurd thing in the world that Salemina, Francesca, and I should be in Ireland together.

That any three spinsters should be fellow-travellers is not in itself extraordinary, and so our former journeyings in England and Scotland could hardly be described as eccentric in any way;

but now that I am a matron and Francesca is shortly to be married, it is odd, to say the least, to see us cosily ensconced in a private sitting-room of a Dublin hotel, the table laid for three, and not a vestige of a man anywhere to be seen. Where, one might ask, if he knew the antecedent circumstances, are Miss Hamilton's American spouse and Miss Monroe's Scottish lover?

Francesca had passed most of the winter in Scotland. Her indulgent parent had given his consent to her marriage with a Scotsman, but insisted that she take a year to make up her mind as to which particular one. Memories of her past flirtations, divagations, plans for a life of single blessedness, all conspired to make him incredulous, and the loyal Salemina, feeling some responsibility in the matter, had elected to remain by Francesca's side during the time when her affections were supposed to be crystallising into some permanent form.

It was natural enough that my husband and I should spend the first summer of our married life abroad, for we had been accustomed to do this before we met, a period that we always allude to as the Dark Ages; but no sooner had we arrived in Edinburgh, and no sooner had my husband persuaded our two friends to join us in a long, delicious Irish holiday, than he was compelled to return to America for a month or so.

I think you must number among your acquaintances such a man as Mr. William Beresford, whose wife I have the honour to be. Physically the type is vigorous, or has the appearance and gives the impression of being vigorous, because it has never the

time to be otherwise, since it is always engaged in nursing its ailing or decrepit relatives. Intellectually it is full of vitality; any mind grows when it is exercised, and the brain that has to settle all its own affairs and all the affairs of its friends and acquaintances could never lack energy. Spiritually it is almost too good for earth, and any woman who lives in the house with it has moments of despondency and self-chastisement, in which she fears that heaven may prove all too small to contain the perfect being and its unregenerate family as well.

Financially it has at least a moderate bank account; that is, it is never penniless, indeed it can never afford to be, because it is peremptory that it should possess funds in order to disburse them to needier brothers. There is never an hour when Mr. William Beresford is not signing notes and bonds and drafts for less fortunate men; giving small loans just to 'help a fellow over a hard place'; educating friends' children, starting them in business, or securing appointments for them. The widow and the fatherless have worn such an obvious path to his office and residence that no bereaved person could possibly lose his way, and as a matter of fact no one of them ever does. This special journey of his to America has been made necessary because, first, his cousin's widow has been defrauded of a large sum by her man of business; and second, his college chum and dearest friend has just died in Chicago after appointing him executor of his estate and guardian of his only child. The wording of the will is, 'as a sacred charge and with full power.' Incidentally, as it were, one of his junior

partners has been ordered a long sea voyage, and another has to go somewhere for mud baths. The junior partners were my idea, and were suggested solely that their senior might be left more or less free from business care, but it was impossible that Willie should have selected sound, robust partners—his tastes do not incline him in the direction of selfish ease; accordingly he chose two delightful, estimable, frail gentlemen who needed comfortable incomes in conjunction with light duties.

I am railing at my husband for all this, but I love him for it just the same, and it shows why the table is laid for three.

“Salemia,” I said, extending my slipper toe to the glowing peat, which by extraordinary effort had been brought up from the hotel kitchen, as a bit of local colour, “it is ridiculous that we three women should be in Ireland together; it’s the sort of thing that happens in a book, and of which we say that it could never occur in real life. Three persons do not spend successive seasons in England, Scotland and Ireland unless they are writing an Itinerary of the British Isles. The situation is possible, certainly, but it isn’t simple, or natural, or probable. We are behaving precisely like characters in fiction, who, having been popular in the first volume, are exploited again and again until their popularity wanes. We are like the Trotty books or the Elsie Dinmore series. England was our first volume, Scotland our second, and here we are, if you please, about to live a third volume in Ireland. We fall in love, we marry and are given in marriage, we promote and take part in international alliances, but

when the curtain goes up again, our accumulations, acquisitions—whatever you choose to call them—have disappeared. We are not to the superficial eye the spinster-philanthropist, the bride to be, the wife of a year; we are the same old Salemina, Francesca and Penelope. It is so dramatic that my husband should be called to America; as a woman I miss him and need him; as a character I am much better single. I don't suppose publishers like married heroines any more than managers like married leading ladies. Then how entirely proper it is that Ronald Macdonald cannot leave his new parish in the Highlands. The one, my husband, belongs to the first volume; Francesca's lover to the second; and good gracious, Salemina, don't you see the inference?"

"I may be dull," she replied, "but I confess I do not."

"We are three?"

"Who is three?"

"That is not good English, but I repeat with different emphasis WE are three. I fell in love in England, Francesca fell in love in Scotland—" And here I paused, watching the blush mount rosily to Salemina's grey hair; pink is very becoming to grey, and that, we always say, accounts more satisfactorily for Salemina's frequent blushes than her modesty, which is about of the usual sort.

"Your argument is interesting, and even ingenious," she replied, "but I fail to see my responsibility. If you persist in thinking of me as a character in fiction, I shall rebel. I am not the stuff of which heroines are made; besides, I would never appear in anything so cheap and obvious as a series, and the

three-volume novel is as much out of fashion as the Rollo books.”

“But we are unconscious heroines, you understand,” I explained. “While we were experiencing our experiences we did not notice them, but they have attained by degrees a sufficient bulk so that they are visible to the naked eye. We can look back now and perceive the path we have travelled.”

“It isn’t retrospect I object to, but anticipation,” she retorted; “not history, but prophecy. It is one thing to gaze sentimentally at the road you have travelled, quite another to conjure up impossible pictures of the future.”

Salemina calls herself a trifle over forty, but I am not certain of her age, and think perhaps that she is uncertain herself. She has good reason to forget it, and so have we. Of course she could consult the Bible family record daily, but if she consulted her looking-glass afterward the one impression would always nullify the other. Her hair is silvered, it is true, but that is so clearly a trick of Nature that it makes her look younger rather than older.

Francesca came into the room just here. I said a moment ago that she was the same old Francesca, but I was wrong; she is softening, sweetening, expanding; in a word, blooming. Not only this, but Ronald Macdonald’s likeness has been stamped upon her in some magical way, so that, although she has not lost her own personality, she seems to have added a reflection of his. In the glimpses of herself, her views, feelings, opinions, convictions, which she gives us in a kind of solution, as it were, there are always traces of Ronald Macdonald; or, to be more

poetical, he seems to have bent over the crystal pool, and his image is reflected there.

You remember in New England they allude to a bride as ‘she that was’ a so-and-so. In my private interviews with Salemina I now habitually allude to Francesca as ‘she that was a Monroe’; it is so significant of her present state of absorption. Several times this week I have been obliged to inquire, “Was I, by any chance, as absent-minded and dull in Pettybaw as Francesca is under the same circumstances in Dublin?”

“Quite.”

“Duller if anything.”

These candid replies being uttered in cheerful unison I change the subject, but cannot resist telling them both casually that the building of the Royal Dublin Society is in Kildare Street, just three minutes’ from O’Carolan’s, and that I have noticed it is for the promotion of Husbandry and other useful arts and sciences.

Chapter II. Irish itineraries

*'And I will make my journey, if life and health but stand,
Unto that pleasant country, that fresh and fragrant strand,
And leave your boasted braveries, your wealth and high command,
For the fair hills of holy Ireland.'*

—Sir Samuel Ferguson.

Our mutual relations have changed little, notwithstanding that betrothals and marriages have intervened, and in spite of the fact that Salemina has grown a year younger; a mysterious feat that she has accomplished on each anniversary of her birth since the forming of our alliance.

It is many months since we travelled together in Scotland, but on entering this very room in Dublin, the other day, we proceeded to show our several individualities as usual: I going to the window to see the view, Francesca consulting the placard on the door for hours of table d'hôte, and Salemina walking to the grate and lifting the ugly little paper screen to say, "There is a fire laid; how nice!" As the matron I have been promoted to a nominal charge of the travelling arrangements. Therefore, while the others drive or sail, read or write, I am buried in Murray's Handbook, or immersed in maps. When I sleep, my dreams are

spotted, starred, notched, and lined with hieroglyphics, circles, horizontal dashes, long lines, and black dots, signifying hotels, coach and rail routes, and tramways.

All this would have been done by Himself with the greatest ease in the world. In the humbler walks of Irish life the head of the house, if he is of the proper sort, is called Himself, and it is in the shadow of this stately title that my Ulysses will appear in this chronicle.

I am quite sure I do not believe in the inferiority of woman, but I have a feeling that a man is a trifle superior in practical affairs. If I am in doubt, and there is no husband, brother, or cousin near, from whom to seek advice, I instinctively ask the butler or the coachman rather than a female friend; also, when a female friend has consulted the Bradshaw in my behalf, I slip out and seek confirmation from the butcher's boy or the milkman. Himself would have laid out all our journeyings for us, and we should have gone placidly along in well-ordered paths. As it is, we are already pledged to do the most absurd and unusual things, and Ireland bids fair to be seen in the most topsy-turvy, helter-skelter fashion imaginable.

Francesca's propositions are especially nonsensical, being provocative of fruitless discussion, and adding absolutely nothing to the sum of human intelligence.

"Why not start without any special route in view, and visit the towns with which we already have familiar associations?" she asked. "We should have all sorts of experiences by the way, and

be free from the blighting influences of a definite purpose. Who that has ever travelled fails to call to mind certain images when the names of cities come up in general conversation? If Bologna, Brussels, or Lima is mentioned, I think at once of sausages, sprouts, and beans, and it gives me a feeling of friendly intimacy. I remember Neufchatel and Cheddar by their cheeses, Dorking and Cochin China by their hens, Whitby by its jet, or York by its hams, so that I am never wholly ignorant of places and their subtle associations."

"That method appeals strongly to the fancy," said Salemina drily. "What subtle associations have you already established in Ireland?"

"Let me see," she responded thoughtfully; "the list is not a long one. Limerick and Carrickmacross for lace, Shandon for the bells, Blarney and Donnybrook for the stone and the fair, Kilkenny for the cats, and Balbriggan for the stockings."

"You are sordid this morning," reproved Salemina; "it would be better if you remembered Limerick by the famous siege, and Balbriggan as the place where King William encamped with his army after the battle of the Boyne."

"I've studied the song-writers more than the histories and geographies," I said, "so I should like to go to Bray and look up the Vicar, then to Coleraine to see where Kitty broke the famous pitcher; or to Tara, where the harp that once, or to Athlone, where dwelt Widow Malone, ochone, and so on; just start with an armful of Tom Moore's poems and Lover's and Ferguson's,

and, yes,” I added generously, “some of the nice moderns, and visit the scenes they’ve written about.”

“And be disappointed,” quoth Francesca cynically. “Poets see everything by the light that never was on sea or land; still I won’t deny that they help the blind, and I should rather like to know if there are still any Nora Creinas and Sweet Peggies and Pretty Girls Milking their Cows.”

“I am very anxious to visit as many of the Round Towers as possible,” said Salemina. “When I was a girl of seventeen I had a very dear friend, a young Irishman, who has since become a well-known antiquary and archaeologist. He was a student, and afterwards, I think, a professor here in Trinity College, but I have not heard from him for many years.”

“Don’t look him up, darling,” pleaded Francesca. “You are so much our superior now that we positively must protect you from all elevating influences.”

“I won’t insist on the Round Towers,” smiled Salemina, “and I think Penelope’s idea a delightful one; we might add to it a sort of literary pilgrimage to the homes and haunts of Ireland’s famous writers.”

“I didn’t know that she had any,” interrupted Francesca.

This is a favourite method of conversation with that spoiled young person; it seems to appeal to her in three different ways: she likes to belittle herself, she likes to shock Salemina, and she likes to have information given her on the spot in some succinct, portable, convenient form.

“Oh,” she continued apologetically, “of course there are Dean Swift and Thomas Moore and Charles Lever.”

“And,” I added “certain minor authors named Goldsmith, Sterne, Steele, and Samuel Lover.”

“And Bishop Berkeley, and Brinsley Sheridan, and Maria Edgeworth, and Father Prout,” continued Salemina, “and certain great speech-makers like Burke and Grattan and Curran; and how delightful to visit all the places connected with Stella and Vanessa, and the spot where Spenser wrote the Faerie Queene.”

“Nor own a land on earth but one,
We’re Paddies, and no more,”

sang Francesca. “You will be telling me in a moment that Thomas Carlyle was born in Skereenarinka, and that Shakespeare wrote Romeo and Juliet in Coolagarranoe,” for she had drawn the guidebook toward her and made good use of it. “Let us do the literary pilgrimage, certainly, before we leave Ireland, but suppose we begin with something less intellectual. This is the most pugnacious map I ever gazed upon. All the names seem to begin or end with kill, bally, whack, shock, or knock; no wonder the Irish make good soldiers! Suppose we start with a sanguinary trip to the Kill places, so that I can tell any timid Americans I meet in travelling that I have been to Kilmacow and to Kilmacthomas, and am going to-morrow to Kilmore, and the next day to Kilumaule.”

“I think that must have been said before,” I objected.

“It is so obvious that it’s not unlikely,” she rejoined; “then let us simply agree to go afterwards to see all the Bally places from Ballydehob on the south to Ballycastle or Ballymoney on the north, and from Ballynahinch or Ballywilliam on the east to Ballyvaughan or Ballybunnion on the west, and passing through, in transit,

Ballyragget,
Ballysadare,
Ballybrophy,
Ballinasloe,
Ballyhooley,
Ballycumber,
Ballyduff,
Ballynashee,
Ballywhack.

Don’t they all sound jolly and grotesque?”

“They do indeed,” we agreed, “and the plan is quite worthy of you; we can say no more.”

We had now developed so many more ideas than we could possibly use that the labour of deciding among them was the next thing to be done. Each of us stood out boldly for her own project,—even Francesca clinging, from sheer wilfulness, to her worthless and absurd itineraries,—until, in order to bring the matter to any sort of decision, somebody suggested that we consult Benella; which reminds me that you have not yet the

pleasure of Benella's acquaintance.

Chapter III. We sight a derelict

*'O Bay of Dublin, my heart you're troublin',
Your beauty haunts me like a fever dream.'*

Lady Dufferin.

To perform the introduction properly I must go back a day or two. We had elected to cross to Dublin directly from Scotland, an easy night journey. Accordingly we embarked in a steamer called the Prince or the King of something or other, the name being many degrees more princely or kingly than the craft itself.

We had intended, too, to make our own comparison of the Bay of Dublin and the Bay of Naples, because every traveller, from Charles Lever's Jack Hinton down to Thackeray and Mr. Alfred Austin has always made it a point of honour to do so. We were balked in our conscientious endeavour, because we arrived at the North Wall forty minutes earlier than the hour set by the steamship company. It is quite impossible for anything in Ireland to be done strictly on the minute, and in struggling not to be hopelessly behind time, a 'disthressful counthry' will occasionally be ahead of it. We had been told that we should arrive in a drizzling rain, and that no one but Lady Dufferin had ever on approaching Ireland seen the 'sweet faces of the Wicklow mountains reflected in a smooth and silver sea.' The grumblers

were right on this special occasion, although we have proved them false more than once since.

I was in a fever of fear that Ireland would not be as Irish as we wished it to be. It seemed probable that processions of prosperous aldermen, school directors, contractors, mayors, and ward politicians, returning to their native land to see how Herself was getting on, the crathur, might have deposited on the soil successive layers of Irish-American virtues, such as punctuality, thrift, and cleanliness, until they had quite obscured fair Erin's peculiar and pathetic charm. We longed for the new Ireland as fervently as any of her own patriots, but we wished to see the old Ireland before it passed. There is plenty of it left (alas! the patriots would say), and Dublin was as dear and as dirty as when Lady Morgan first called it so, long years ago. The boat was met by a crowd of ragged gossoons, most of them barefooted, some of them stockingless, and in men's shoes, and several of them with flowers in their unspeakable hats and caps. There were no cabs or jaunting cars because we had not been expected so early, and the jarveys were in attendance on the Holyhead steamer. It was while I was searching for a piece of lost luggage that I saw the stewardess assisting a young woman off the gang plank, and leading her toward a pile of wool bags on the dock. She sank helplessly on one of them, and leaned her head on another. As the night had been one calculated to disturb the physical equilibrium of a poor sailor, and the breakfast of a character to discourage the stoutest stomach, I gave her a careless thought of pity and

speedily forgot her. Two trunks, a holdall, a hatbox—in which reposed, in solitary grandeur, Francesca's picture hat, intended for the further undoing of the Irish gentry—a guitar case, two bags, three umbrellas; all were safe but Salemina's large Vuitton trunk and my valise, which had been last seen at Edinburgh station. Salemina returned to the boat, while Francesca and I wended our way among the heaps of luggage, followed by crowds of ragamuffins, who offered to run for a car, run for a cab, run for a porter, carry our luggage up the street to the cab-stand, carry our wraps, carry us, 'do any mortal thing for a penny, melady, an' there is no cars here, melady, God bless me sowl, and that He be good to us all if I'm tellin' you a word of a lie!'

Entirely unused to this flow of conversation, we were obliged to stop every few seconds to recount our luggage and try to remember what we were looking for. We all met finally, and I rescued Salemina from the voluble thanks of an old woman to whom she had thoughtlessly given a three-penny bit. This mother of a 'long wake family' was wishing that Salemina might live to 'ate the hin' that scratched over her grave, and invoking many other uncommon and picturesque blessings, but we were obliged to ask her to desist and let us attend to our own business.

"Will I clane the whole of thim off for you for a penny, your ladyship's honour, ma'am?" asked the oldest of the ragamuffins, and I gladly assented to the novel proposition. He did it, too, and there seemed to be no hurt feelings in the company.

Just then there was a rattle of cabs and side-cars, and our

self-constituted major-domo engaged two of them to await our pleasure. At the same moment our eyes lighted upon Salemina's huge Vuitton, which had been dragged behind the pile of wool sacks. It was no wonder it had escaped our notice, for it was mostly covered by the person of the sea-sick maiden whom I had seen on the arm of the stewardess. She was seated on it, exhaustion in every line of her figure, her head upon my travelling bag, her feet dangling over the edge until they just touched the 'S. P., Salem, Mass., U.S.A.' painted in large red letters on the end. She was too ill to respond to our questions, but there was no mistaking her nationality. Her dress, hat, shoes, gloves, face, figure were American. We sent for the stewardess, who told us that she had arrived in Glasgow on the day previous, and had been very ill all the way coming from Boston.

"Boston!" exclaimed Salemina. "Do you say she is from Boston, poor thing?"

("I didn't know that a person living in Boston could ever, under any circumstances, be a 'poor thing,'" whispered Francesca to me.)

"She was not fit to be crossing last night, and the doctor on the American ship told her so, and advised her to stay in bed for three days before coming to Ireland; but it seems as if she were determined to get to her journey's end."

"We must have our trunk," I interposed. "Can't we move her carefully over to the wool sacks, and won't you stay with her until her friends come?"

"She has no friends in this country, ma'am. She's just travelling for pleasure like."

"Good gracious! what a position for her to be in," said Salemina. "Can't you take her back to the steamer and put her to bed?"

"I could ask the captain, certainly, miss, though of course it's something we never do, and besides we have to set the ship to rights and go across again this evening."

"Ask her what hotel she is going to, Salemina," we suggested, "and let us drop her there, and put her in charge of the housekeeper; of course if it is only sea-sickness she will be all right in the morning."

The girl's eyes were closed, but she opened them languidly as Salemina chafed her cold hands, and asked gently if we could not drive her to an hotel.

"Is—this—your—baggage?" she whispered.

"It is," Salemina answered, somewhat puzzled.

"Then don't—leave me here, I am from Salem—myself," whereupon without any more warning she promptly fainted away on the trunk.

The situation was becoming embarrassing. The assemblage grew larger, and a more interesting and sympathetic audience I never saw. To an Irish crowd, always warm-hearted and kindly, willing to take any trouble for friend or stranger, and with a positive terror of loneliness, or separation from kith and kin, the helpless creature appealed in every way. One and another joined

the group with a "Holy Biddy! what's this at all?"

"The saints presarve us, is it dyin' she is?"

"Look at the iligant duds she do be wearin'."

"Call the docthor, is it? God give you sinse! Sure the docthors is only a flock of omadhauns."

"Is it your daughter she is, ma'am?" (This to Salemina.)

"She's from Ameriky, the poor mischancy crathur."

"Give her a toothful of whisky, your ladyship. Sure it's nayther bite nor sup she's had the morn, and belike she's as impty as a quarry-hole."

When this last expression from the mother of the long weak family fell upon Salemina's cultured ears she looked desperate.

We could not leave a fellow-countrywoman, least of all could Salemina forsake a fellow-citizen, in such a hapless plight.

"Take one cab with Francesca and the luggage, Penelope," she whispered. "I will bring the girl with me, put her to bed, find her friends, and see that she starts on her journey safely; it's very awkward, but there's nothing else to be done."

So we departed in a chorus of popular approval.

"Sure it's you that have the good hearts!"

"May the heavens be your bed!"

"May the journey thrive wid her, the crathur!"

Francesca and I arrived first at the hotel where our rooms were already engaged, and there proved to be a comfortable little dressing, or maid's, room just off Salemina's.

Here the Derelict was presently ensconced, and there she lay,

in a sort of profound exhaustion, all day, without once absolutely regaining her consciousness. Instead of visiting the National Gallery as I had intended, I returned to the dock to see if I could find the girl's luggage, or get any further information from the stewardess before she left Dublin.

"I'll send the doctor at once, but we must learn all possible particulars now," I said maliciously to poor Salemina. "It would be so awkward, you know, if you should be arrested for abduction."

The doctor thought it was probably nothing more than the complete prostration that might follow eight days of sea-sickness, but the patient's heart was certainly a little weak, and she needed the utmost quiet. His fee was a guinea for the first visit, and he would drop in again in the course of the afternoon to relieve our anxiety. We took turns in watching by her bedside, but the two unemployed ones lingered forlornly near, and had no heart for sightseeing. Francesca did, however, purchase opera tickets for the evening, and secretly engaged the housemaid to act as head nurse in our absence.

As we were dining at seven, we heard a faint voice in the little room beyond. Salemina left her dinner and went in to find her charge slightly better. We had been able thus far only to take off her dress, shoes, and such garments as made her uncomfortable; Salemina now managed to slip on a nightdress and put her under the bedcovers, returning then to her cold mutton cutlet.

"She's an extraordinary person," she said, absently playing

with her knife and fork. "She didn't ask me where she was, or show any interest in her surroundings; perhaps she is still too weak. She said she was better, and when I had made her ready for bed, she whispered, 'I've got to say my prayers'.

"Say them by all means,' I replied.

"But I must get up and kneel down, she said.

"I told her she must do nothing of the sort; that she was far too ill.

"But I must,' she urged. 'I never go to bed without saying my prayers on my knees.'

"I forbade her doing it; she closed her eyes, and I came away. Isn't she quaint?"

At this juncture we heard the thud of a soft falling body, and rushing in we found that the Derelict had crept from her bed to her knees, and had probably not prayed more than two minutes before she fainted for the fifth or sixth time in twenty-four hours. Salemina was vexed, angel and philanthropist though she is. Francesca and I were so helpless with laughter that we could hardly lift the too conscientious maiden into bed. The situation may have been pathetic; to the truly pious mind it would indeed have been indescribably touching, but for the moment the humorous side of it was too much for our self-control. Salemina, in rushing for stimulants and smelling salts, broke her only comfortable eyeglasses, and this accident, coupled with her other anxieties and responsibilities, caused her to shed tears, an occurrence so unprecedented that Francesca and I kissed and

comforted her and tucked her up on the sofa. Then we sent for the doctor, gave our opera tickets to the head waiter and chambermaid, and settled down to a cheerful home evening, our first in Ireland.

"If Himself were here, we should not be in this plight," I sighed.

"I don't know how you can say that," responded Salemina, with considerable spirit. "You know perfectly well that if your husband had found a mother and seven children helpless and deserted on that dock, he would have brought them all to this hotel, and then tried to find the father and grandfather."

"And it's not Salemina's fault," argued Francesca. "She couldn't help the girl being born in Salem; not that I believe that she ever heard of the place before she saw it printed on Salemina's trunk. I told you it was too big and red, dear, but you wouldn't listen! I am the strongest American of the party, but I confess that U.S.A. in letters five inches long is too much for my patriotism."

"It would not be if you ever had charge of the luggage," retorted Salemina.

"And whatever you do, Francesca," I added beseechingly, "don't impugn the veracity of our Derelict. While we think of ourselves as ministering angels I can endure anything, but if we are the dupes of an adventuress, there is nothing pretty about it. By the way, I have consulted the English manageress of this hotel, who was not particularly sympathetic. 'Perhaps you shouldn't

have assumed charge of her, madam,' she said, 'but having done so, hadn't you better see if you can get her into a hospital?' It isn't a bad suggestion, and after a day or two we will consider it, or I will get a trained nurse to take full charge of her. I would be at any reasonable expense rather than have our pleasure interfered with any further."

It still seems odd to make a proposition of this kind. In former times, Francesca was the Croesus of the party, Salemina came second, and I last, with a most precarious income. Now I am the wealthy one, Francesca is reduced to the second place, and Salemina to the third, but it makes no difference whatever, either in our relations, our arrangements, or, for that matter, in our expenditures.

Chapter IV. Enter Benella Dusenberry

*'A fair maiden wander'd
All wearied and lone,
Sighing, "I'm a poor stranger,
And far from my own."
We invited her in,
We offered her share
Of our humble cottage
And our humble fare;
We bade her take comfort,
No longer to moan,
And made the poor stranger
Be one of our own.'*

Old Irish Song.

The next morning dawned as lovely as if it had slipped out of Paradise, and as for freshness, and emerald sheen, the world from our windows was like a lettuce leaf just washed in dew. The windows of my bedroom looked out pleasantly on St. Stephen's Green, commonly called Stephen's Green, or by citizens of the baser sort, Stephens's Green. It is a good English mile in circumference, and many are the changes in it from the time it was first laid out, in 1670, to the present day, when it was made into a public park by Lord Ardilaun.

When the celebrated Mrs. Delany, then Mrs. Pendarves, first saw it, the centre was a swamp, where in winter a quantity of

snipe congregated, and Harris in his History of Dublin alludes to the presence of snipe and swamp as an agreeable and uncommon circumstance not to be met with perhaps in any other great city in the world.

A double row of spreading lime-trees bordered its four sides, one of which, known as Beaux' Walk, was a favourite lounge for fashionable idlers. Here stood Bishop Clayton's residence, a large building with a front like Devonshire House in Piccadilly: so writes Mrs. Delany. It was splendidly furnished, and the bishop lived in a style which proves that Irish prelates of the day were not all given to self-abnegation and mortification of the flesh.

A long line of vehicles, outside-cars and cabs, some of them battered and shaky, others sufficiently well-looking, was gathering on two sides of the Green, for Dublin, you know, is 'the car-drivingest city in the world.' Francesca and I had our first experience yesterday in the intervals of nursing, driving to Dublin Castle, Trinity College, the Four Courts, and Grafton Street (the Regent Street of Dublin). It is easy to tell the stranger, stiff, decorous, terrified, clutching the rail with one or both hands, but we took for our model a pretty Irish girl, who looked like nothing so much as a bird on a swaying bough. It is no longer called the 'jaunting,' but the outside car and there is another charming word lost to the world. There was formerly an inside-car too, but it is almost unknown in Dublin, though still found in some of the smaller towns. An outside-car has its wheels practically inside the body of the vehicle, but an inside car carries its wheels

outside. This definition was given us by an Irish driver, but lucid definition is not perhaps an Irishman's strong point. It is clearer to say that the passenger sits outside of the wheels on the one, inside on the other. There are seats for two persons over each of the two wheels, and a dickey for the driver in front, should he need to use it. Ordinarily he sits on one side, driving, while you perch on the other, and thus you jog along, each seeing your own side of the road, and discussing the topics of the day across the 'well,' as the covered-in centre of the car is called. There are those who do not agree with its champions, who call it 'Cupid's own conveyance'; they find the seat too small for two, yet feel it a bit unsociable when the companion occupies the opposite side. To me a modern Dublin car with rubber tires and a good Irish horse is the jolliest vehicle in the universe; there is a liveliness, an irresponsible gaiety, in the spring and sway of it; an ease in the half-lounging position against the cushions, a unique charm in 'travelling edgeways' with your feet planted on the step. You must not be afraid of a car if you want to enjoy it. Hold the rail if you must, at first, though it's just as bad form as clinging to your horse's mane while riding in the Row. Your driver will take all the chances that a crowded thoroughfare gives him; he would scorn to leave more than an inch between your feet and a Guinness' beer dray; he will shake your flounces and furbelows in the very windows of the passing trams, but he is beloved by the gods, and nothing ever happens to him.

The morning was enchanting, as I said, and, above all, the

Derelict was better.

"It's a grand night's slape I had wid her intirely," said the housemaid; "an' sure it's not to-day she'll be dyin' on you at all, at all; she's had the white drink in the bowl twyst, and a grand cup o' tay on the top o' that."

Salemina fortified herself with breakfast before she went in to an interview, which we all felt to be important and decisive. The time seemed endless to us, and endless were our suppositions.

"Perhaps she has had morning prayers and fainted again."

"Perhaps she has turned out to be Salemina's long-lost cousin."

"Perhaps she is upbraiding Salemina for kidnapping her when she was insensible."

"Perhaps she is relating her life history; if it is a sad one, Salemina is adopting her legally at this moment."

"Perhaps she is one of Mr. Beresford's wards, and has come over to complain of somebody's ill treatment."

Here Salemina entered, looking flushed and embarrassed. We thought it a bad sign that she could not meet our eyes without confusion, but I made room for her on the sofa, and Francesca drew her chair closer.

"She is from Salem," began the poor dear; "she has never been out of Massachusetts in her life."

"Unfortunate girl!" exclaimed Francesca, adding prudently, as she saw Salemina's rising colour, "though of course if one has to reside in a single state, Massachusetts offers more compensations than any other."

"She knows every nook and corner in the place," continued Salemina; "she has even seen the house where I was born, and her name is Benella Dusenberry."

"Impossible!" cried Francesca. "Dusenberry is unlikely enough, but who ever heard of such a name as Benella! It sounds like a flavouring extract."

"She came over to see the world, she says."

"Oh! then she has money?"

"No—or at least, yes; or at least she had enough when she left America to last for two or three months, or until she could earn something."

"Of course she left her little all in a chamois-skin bag under her pillow on the steamer," suggested Francesca.

"That is precisely what she did," Salemina replied, with a pale smile. "However, she was so ill in the steerage that she had to pay twenty-five or thirty dollars extra to go into the second cabin, and this naturally reduced the amount of her savings, though it makes no difference since she left them all behind her, save a few dollars in her purse. She says she is usually perfectly well, but that she was very tired when she started, that it was her first sea-voyage, and the passage was unusually rough."

"Where is she going?"

"I don't know; I mean she doesn't know. Her maternal grandmother was born in Trim, near Tara, in Meath, but she does not think she has any relations over here. She is entirely alone in the world, and that gives her a certain sentiment in regard to

Ireland, which she heard a great deal about when she was a child. The maternal grandmother must have gone to Salem at a very early age, as Benella herself savours only of New England soil.”

“Has she any trade, or is she trained to do anything whatsoever?” asked Francesca.

“No, she hoped to take some position of ‘trust.’ She does not care at all what it is, so long as the occupation is ‘interestin’ work,’ she says. That is rather vague, of course, but she speaks and appears like a nice, conscientious person.”

“Tell us the rest; conceal nothing,” I said sternly.

“She—she thinks that we have saved her life, and she feels that she belongs to us,” faltered Salemina.

“Belongs to us!” we cried in a duet. “Was there ever such a base reward given to virtue; ever such an unwelcome expression of gratitude! Belong to us, indeed! We can’t have her; we won’t have her. Were you perfectly frank with her?”

“I tried to be, but she almost insisted; she has set her heart upon being our maid.”

“Does she know how to be a maid?”

“No, but she is extremely teachable, she says.”

“I have my doubts,” remarked Francesca; “a liking for personal service is not a distinguishing characteristic of New Englanders; they are not the stuff of which maids are made. If she were French or German or Senegambian, in fact anything but a Saleminian, we might use her; we have always said we needed some one.”

Salemina brightened. "I thought myself it might be rather nice—that is, I thought it might be a way out of the difficulty. Penelope had thought at one time of bringing a maid, and it would save us a great deal of trouble. The doctor thinks she could travel a short distance in a few days; perhaps it is a Providence in disguise."

"The disguise is perfect," murmured Francesca.

"You see," Salemina continued, "when the poor thing tottered along the wharf the stewardess laid her on the pile of wool sacks—"

"Like a dying Chancellor," again interpolated the irrepressible.

"And ran off to help another passenger. When she opened her eyes, she saw straight in front of her, in huge letters, 'Salem, Mass., U.S.A.' It loomed before her despairing vision, I suppose, like a great ark of refuge, and seemed to her in her half-dazed condition not only a reminder, but almost a message from home. She had then no thought of ever seeing the owner; she says she felt only that she should like to die quietly on anything marked 'Salem, Mass.' Go in to see her presently, Penelope, and make up your own mind about her. See if you can persuade her to—to—well, to give us up. Try to get her out of the notion of being our maid. She is so firm; I never saw so feeble a person who could be so firm; and what in the world shall we do with her if she keeps on insisting, in her nervous state?"

"My idea would be," I suggested, "to engage her provisionally, if we must, not because we want her, but because her heart is

weak. I shall tell her that we do not feel like leaving her behind, and yet we ourselves cannot be detained in Dublin indefinitely; that we will try the arrangement for a month, and that she can consider herself free to leave us at any time on a week's notice."

"I approve of that," agreed Francesca, "because it makes it easier to dismiss her in case she turns out to be a Massachusetts Borgia. You remember, however, that we bore with the vapours and vagaries, the sighs and moans of Jane Grieve in Pettybaw, all those weeks, and not one of us had the courage to throw off her yoke. Never shall I forget her at your wedding, Penelope; the teardrop glistened in her eye as usual; I think it is glued there! Ronald was sympathetic, because he fancied she was weeping for the loss of you, but on inquiry it transpired that she was thinking of a marriage in that 'won'erfu' fine family in Glasgy,' with whose charms she had made us all too familiar. She asked to be remembered when I began my own housekeeping, and I told her truthfully that she was not a person who could be forgotten; I repressed my feeling that she is too tearful for a Highland village where it rains most of the year, also my conviction that Ronald's parish would chasten me sufficiently without her aid."

I did as Salemina wished, and had a conference with Miss Dusenberry. I hope I was quite clear in my stipulations as to the perfect freedom of the four contracting parties. I know I intended to be, and I was embarrassed to see Francesca and Salemina exchange glances next day when Benella said she would show us what a good sailor she could be, on the return voyage to America,

adding that she thought a person would be much less liable to sea-sickness when travelling in the first cabin.

Chapter V. The Wearing of the Green

*'Sir Knight, I feel not the least alarm,
No son of Erin will offer me harm—
For tho' they love woman and golden store,
Sir Knight, they love honour and virtue more!'*

Thomas Moore.

“This is an anniversary,” said Salemina, coming into the sitting-room at breakfast-time with a book under her arm. “Having given up all hope of any one’s waking in this hotel, which, before nine in the morning, is precisely like the Sleeping Beauty’s castle, I dressed and determined to look up Brian Boru.”

“From all that I can recall of him he was not a person to meet before breakfast,” yawned Francesca; “still I shall be glad of a little fresh light, for my mind is in a most chaotic state, induced by the intellectual preparation that you have made me undergo during the past month. I dreamed last night that I was conducting a mothers’ meeting in Ronald’s new parish, and the subject for discussion was the Small Livings Scheme, the object of which is to augment the stipends of the ministers of the Church of Scotland to a minimum of 200 pounds per annum. I tried to keep the members to the point, but was distracted by the sudden appearance, in all corners of the church, of people who hadn’t been ‘asked to the party.’ There was Brian Boru,

Tony Lumpkin, Finn McCool, Felicia Hemans, Ossian, Mrs. Delany, Sitric of the Silken Beard, St. Columba, Mickey Free, Strongbow, Maria Edgeworth, and the Venerable Bede. Imagine leading a mothers' meeting with those people in the pews,—it was impossible! St. Columbkille and the Venerable Bede seemed to know about parochial charges and livings and stipends and glebes, and Maria Edgeworth was rather helpful; but Brian and Sitric glared at each other and brandished their hymn-books threateningly, while Ossian refused to sit in the same pew with Mickey Free, who behaved in an odious manner, and interrupted each of the speakers in turn. Incidentally a group of persons huddled together in a far corner rose out of the dim light, and flapping huge wings, flew over my head and out of the window above the altar. This I took to be the Flight of the Earls, and the terror of it awoke me. Whatever my parish duties may be in the future, at least they cannot be any more dreadful and disorderly than the dream.”

“I don't know which is more to blame, the seed that I sowed, or the soil on which it fell,” said Salemina, laughing heartily at Francesca's whimsical nightmares; “but as I said, this is an anniversary. The famous battle of Clontarf was fought here in Dublin on this very day eight hundred years ago, and Brian Boru routed the Danes in what was the last struggle between Christianity and heathenism. The greatest slaughter took place on the streets along which we drove yesterday from Ballybough Bridge to the Four Courts. Brian Boru was king of Munster,

you remember” (Salemina always says this for courtesy’s sake), “or at least you have read of that time in Ireland’s history when a fair lady dressed in fine silk and gold and jewels could walk unmolested the length of the land, because of the love the people bore King Brian and the respect they cherished for his wise laws. Well, Mailmora, the king of Leinster, had quarrelled with him, and joined forces with the Danish leaders against him. Broder and Amlaff, two Vikings from the Isle of Man, brought with them a ‘fleet of two thousand Denmarkians and a thousand men covered with mail from head to foot,’ to meet the Irish, who always fought in tunics. Joyce says that Broder wore a coat of mail that no steel would bite, that he was both tall and strong, and that his black locks were so long that he tucked them under his belt,—there’s a portrait for your gallery, Penelope. Brian’s army was encamped on the Green of Aha-Clee, which is now Phoenix Park, and when he set fire to the Danish districts, the fierce Norsemen within the city could see a blazing, smoking pathway that reached from Dublin to Howth. The quarrel must have been all the more virulent in that Mailmora was Brian’s brother-in-law, and Brian’s daughter was the wife of Sitric of the Silken Beard, Danish king of Dublin.”

“I refuse to remember their relationships or alliances,” said Francesca. “They were always intermarrying with their foes in order to gain strength, but it generally seems to have made things worse rather than better; still I don’t mind hearing what became of Brian after his victory; let us quite finish with him before the

eggs come up. I suppose it will be eggs?"

"Broder the Viking rushed upon him in his tent where he was praying, cleft his head from his body, and he is buried in Armagh Cathedral," said Salemina, closing the book. "Penelope, do ring again for breakfast, and just to keep us from realising our hunger read 'Remember the Glories of Brian the Brave.'"

We had brought letters of introduction to a dean, a bishop, and a Rt. Hon. Lord Justice, so there were a few delightful invitations when the morning post came up; not so many as there might have been, perhaps, had not the Irish capital been in a state of complete dementia over the presence of the greatest Queen in the world.¹ Privately, I think that those nations in the habit of having kings and queens at all should have four, like those in a pack of cards; then they could manage to give all their colonies and dependencies a frequent sight of royalty, and prevent much excitement and heart-burning.

It was worth something to be one of the lunatic populace when the little lady in black, with her parasol bordered in silver shamrocks, drove along the gaily decorated streets, for the Irish,

¹ Penelope's experiences in Scotland, given in a former volume, ended, the meticulous proof-reader will remember, with her marriage in the year of the Queen's Jubilee. It is apparent in the opening chapters of this story that Penelope came to Ireland the following spring, which, though the matter is hardly important, was not that of the Queen's memorable visit. The Irish experiences are probably the fruit of several expeditions, and Penelope has chosen to include this vivid impression of Her Majesty's welcome to Ireland, even though it might convict her of an anachronism. Perhaps as this is not an historical novel, but a 'chronicle of small beer,' the trifling inaccuracy may be pardoned.—K. D. W.

it seems to me, desire nothing better than to be loyal, if any persons to whom they can be loyal are presented to them.

“Irish disaffection is, after all, but skin-deep,” said our friend the dean; “it is a cutaneous malady, produced by external irritants. Below the surface there is a deep spring of personal loyalty, which needs only a touch like that of the prophet’s wand to enable it to gush forth in healing floods. Her Majesty might drive through these crowded streets in her donkey chaise unguarded, as secure as the lady in that poem of Moore’s which portrayed the safety of women in Brian Boru’s time. The old song has taken on a new meaning. It begins, you know,—

‘Lady, dost thou not fear to stray
So lone and lonely through this dark way?’

and the Queen might answer as did the heroine,

‘Sir Knight, I feel not the least alarm,
No son of Erin will offer me harm.’”

It was small use for the parliamentary misrepresentatives to advise treating Victoria of the Good Deeds with the courtesy due to a foreign sovereign visiting the country. Under the miles of flags she drove, red, white, and blue, tossing themselves in the sweet spring air, and up from the warm hearts of the surging masses of people, men and women alike, Crimean soldiers and old crones in rags, gentry and peasants, went a greeting I never

before heard given to any sovereign, for it was a sigh of infinite content that trembled on the lips and then broke into a deep sob, as a knot of Trinity College students in a spontaneous burst of song flung out the last verse of ‘The New Wearing of the Green.’²

‘And so upon St. Patrick’s Day, Victoria, she has said
Each Irish regiment shall wear the Green beside the Red;
And she’s coming to ould Ireland, who away so long has
been,
And dear knows but into Dublin she’ll ride Wearing of the
Green.’

The first cheers were faint and broken, and the emotion that quivered on every face and the tears that gleamed in a thousand eyes made it the most touching spectacle in the world. ‘Foreign Sovereign, indeed!’ She was the Queen of Ireland, and the nation of courtiers and hero worshippers was at her feet. There was the history of five hundred years in that greeting, and to me it spoke volumes.

Plenty of people there were in the crowd, too, who were heartily ‘agin the Government’; but Daniel O’Connell is not the only Irishman who could combine a detestation of the Imperial Parliament with a passionate loyalty to the sovereign.

There was a woman near us who ‘remimbered the last time Her Noble Highness come, thirty-nine years back,—glory be to God, thim was the times!’—and who kept ejaculating, “She’s

² Alfred Perceval Graves.

the best woman in the wurrlld, bar none, and the most varchous faymale!” As her husband made no reply, she was obliged in her excitement to thump him with her umbrella and repeat, “The most varchous faymale, do you hear?” At which he retorted, “Have conduct, woman; sure I’ve nothin’ agin it.”

“Look at the size of her now,” she went on, “sittin’ in that grand carriage, no bigger than me own Kitty, and always in the black, the darlin’. Look at her, a widdy woman, raring that large and heavy family of children; and how well she’s married off her daughters (more luck to her!), though to be sure they must have been well fortunèd! They do be sayin’ she’s come over because she’s plazed with seein’ estated gintlemen lave iverything and go out and be shot by thim bloody Boers, bad scran to thim! Sure if I had the sons, sorra a wan but I’d lave go! Who’s the iligant sojers in the silver stays, Thady? Is it the Life Guards you’re callin’ thim?”

There were two soldiers’ wives standing on the pavement near us, and one of them showed a half-sovereign to the other, saying, “Tis the last day’s airnin’ iver I seen by him, Mrs. Muldoon, ma’am! Ah, there’s thim says for this war, an’ there’s thim says agin this war, but Heaven lave Himself where he is, I says, for of all the ragin’ Turcomaniacs iver a misfortunate woman was curst with, Pat Brady, my full private, he bates ‘em all!”

Here the band played ‘Come back to Erin,’ and the scene was indescribable. Nothing could have induced me to witness it had I realised what it was to be, for I wept at Holyrood when I heard the

plaintive strains of 'Bonnie Charlie's noo Awa' floating up to the Gallery of Kings from the palace courtyard, and I did not wish Francesca to see me shedding national, political, and historical tears so soon again. Francesca herself is so ardent a republican that she weeps only for presidents and cabinet officers. For my part, although I am thoroughly loyal, I cannot become sufficiently attached to a president in four years to shed tears when I see him driving at the head of a procession.

Chapter VI. Dublin, then and now

*'I found in Innisfail the fair,
In Ireland, while in exile there,
Women of worth, both grave and gay men,
Many clerics, and many laymen.'*

James Clarence Mangan.

Mrs. Delany, writing from Dublin in 1731, says: 'As for the generality of people that I meet with here, they are much the same as in England—a mixture of good and bad. All that I have met with behave themselves very decently according to their rank; now and then an oddity breaks out, but never so extraordinary but that I can match it in England. There is a heartiness among them that is more like Cornwall than any I have known, and great sociableness.' This picturesque figure in the life of her day gives charming pictures in her memoirs of the Irish society of the time, descriptions which are confirmed by contemporary writers. She was the wife of Dr. Delany, Dean of Down, the companion of duchesses and queens, and the friend of Swift. Hannah More, in a poem called 'Sensibility,' published in 1778, gives this quaint and stilted picture of her:—

'Delany shines, in worth serenely bright,
Wisdom's strong ray, and virtue's milder light.

And she who blessed the friend and graced the page of Swift,
still lends her lustre to our age.
Long, long protract thy light, O star benign,
Whose setting beams with added brightness shine!

The Irish ladies of Delany's day, who scarcely ever appeared on foot in the streets, were famous for their grace in dancing, it seems, as the men were for their skill in swimming. The hospitality of the upper classes was profuse, and by no means lacking in brilliancy or in grace. The humorous and satirical poetry found in the fugitive literature of the period shows conclusively that there were plenty of bright spirits and keen wits at the banquets, routs, and balls. The curse of absenteeism was little felt in Dublin, where the Parliament secured the presence of most of the aristocracy and of much of the talent of the country, and during the residence of the viceroy there was the influence of the court to contribute to the sparkling character of Dublin society.

How they managed to sparkle when discussing some of the heavy dinner menus of the time I cannot think. Here is one of the Dean of Down's bills of fare:—

Turkeys endove
Boyled leg of mutton
Greens, etc.
Soup
Plum Pudding
Roast loin of veal

Venison pasty
Partridge
Sweetbreads
Collared Pig
Creamed apple tart
Crabs
Fricassee of eggs
Pigeons
No dessert to be had.

Although there is no mention of beverages we may be sure that this array of viands was not eaten dry, but was washed down with a plentiful variety of wines and liquors.

The hosts, either in Dublin or London, who numbered among their dinner guests such Irishmen as Sheridan or Lysaght, Mangan or Lever, Curran or Lover, Father Prout or Dean Swift, had as great a feast of wit and repartee as one will be apt soon to hear again; although it must have been Lever or Lover who furnished the cream of Irish humour, and Father Prout and Swift the curds.

If you are fortunate enough to be bidden to the right houses in Ireland to-day, you will have as much good talk as you are likely to listen to anywhere else in this degenerate age, which has mostly forgotten how to converse in learning to chat; and any one who goes to the Spring Show at Ball's Bridge, or to the Punchestown or Leopardstown races, or to the Dublin horse show, will have to confess that the Irishwomen can dispute the palm with any nation.

‘Light on their feet now they passed me and sped,
Give you me word, give you me word,
Every girl wid a turn o’ the head
Just like a bird, just like a bird;
And the lashes so thick round their beautiful eyes
Shinin’ to tell you it’s fair time o’ day wid them,
Back in me heart wid a kind of surprise,
I think how the Irish girls has the way wid them!’

Their charm is made up of beautiful eyes and lashes, lustre of hair, poise of head, shapeliness of form, vivacity and coquetry; and there is a matchless grace in the way they wear the ‘whatever,’ be it the chiffons of the fashionable dame, or the shawl of the country colleen, who can draw the two corners of that faded article of apparel shyly over her lips and look out from under it with a pair of luminous grey eyes in a manner that is fairly ‘distractin’.

Yesterday was a red-letter day, for I dined in the evening at Dublin Castle, and Francesca was bidden to the concert in the Throne Room afterwards. It was a brilliant scene when the assembled guests awaited their host and hostess, the shaded lights bringing out the satins and velvets, pearls and diamonds, uniforms, orders, and medals. Suddenly the hum of voices ceased as one of the aides-de-camp who preceded the vice-regal party announced ‘their Excellencies.’ We made a sort of passage as these dignitaries advanced to shake hands with a

few of those they knew best. The Lord Lieutenant then gave his arm to the lady of highest rank (alas, it was not I!); her Excellency chose her proper squire, and we passed through the beautifully decorated rooms to St. Patrick's Hall in a nicely graded procession, magnificence at the head, humility at the tail. A string band was discoursing sweet music the while, and I fitted to its measures certain well-known lines descriptive of the entrance of the beasts into the ark.

‘The animals went in two by two,
The elephant and the kangaroo.’

As my escort was a certain brilliant lord justice, and as the wittiest dean in Leinster was my other neighbour, I almost forgot to eat in my pleasure and excitement. I told the dean that we had chosen Scottish ancestors before going to our first great dinner in Edinburgh, feeling that we should be more in sympathy with the festivities and more acceptable to our hostess, but that I had forgotten to provide myself for this occasion, my first function in Dublin; whereupon the good dean promptly remembered that there was a Penelope O'Connor, daughter of the King of Connaught. I could not quite give up Tam o' the Cowgate (Thomas Hamilton) or Jenny Geddes of fauld-stule fame, also a Hamilton, but I added the King of Connaught to the list of my chosen forebears with much delight, in spite of the polite protests of the Rev. Father O'Hogan, who sat opposite, and

who remarked that

‘Man for his glory
To ancestry flies,
But woman’s bright story
Is told in her eyes.
While the monarch but traces
Through mortal his line,
Beauty born of the Graces
Ranks next to divine.’

I asked the Reverend Father if he were descended from Galloping O’Hogan, who helped Patrick Sarsfield to spike the guns of the Williamites at Limerick.

“By me sowl, ma’am, it’s not discinded at all I am; I am one o’ the common sort, just,” he answered, broadening his brogue to make me smile. A delightful man he was, exactly such an one as might have sprung full grown from a Lever novel; one who could talk equally well with his flock about pigs or penances, purgatory or potatoes, and quote Tom Moore and Lover when occasion demanded.

Story after story fell from his genial lips, and at last he said apologetically, “One more, and I have done,” when a pretty woman, sitting near him, interpolated slyly, “We might say to you, your reverence, what the old woman said to the eloquent priest who finished his sermon with ‘One word, and I have done’”.

“An’ what is that, ma’am?” asked Father O’Hogan.

“Och! me darlin’ pracher, may ye niver be done!”

We all agreed that we should like to reconstruct the scene for a moment and look at a drawing-room of two hundred years ago, when the Lady Lieutenant after the minuets at eleven o’clock went to her basset table, while her pages attended behind her chair, and when on ball nights the ladies scrambled for sweetmeats on the dancing-floor. As to their probable toilets, one could not give purer pleasure than by quoting Mrs. Delany’s description of one of them:—

‘The Duchess’s dress was of white satin embroidered, the bottom of the petticoat brown hills covered with all sorts of weeds, and every breadth had an old stump of a tree, that ran up almost to the top of the petticoat, broken and ragged, and worked with brown chenille, round which twined nasturtiums, ivy, honeysuckles, periwinkles, and all sorts of running flowers, which spread and covered the petticoat.... The robings and facings were little green banks covered with all sorts of weeds, and the sleeves and the rest of the gown loose twining branches of the same sort as those on the petticoat. Many of the leaves were finished with gold, and part of the stumps of the trees looked like the gilding of the sun. I never saw a piece of work so prettily fancied.’

She adds a few other details for the instruction of her sister Anne:—

‘Hheads are variously adorned; pompons with some accompaniment of feathers, ribbons, or flowers; lappets in all

sorts of curli-murlis; long hoods are worn close under the chin; the ear-rings go round the neck(!), and tie with bows and ends behind. Night-gowns are worn without hoops.'

Part Second—Munster

Chapter VII. A tour and a detour

*“An’ there,” sez I to meself, “we’re goin’ wherever we go,
But where we’ll be whin we git there it’s never a know
I’ll know.”*

Jane Barlow.

We had planned to go direct from Dublin to Valencia Island, where there is not, I am told, ‘one dhry step ‘twixt your fut an’ the States’; but we thought it too tiring a journey for Benella, and arranged for a little visit to Cork first. We nearly missed the train owing to the late arrival of Salemina at the Kingsbridge station. She had been buying malted milk, Mellin’s Food, an alcohol lamp, a tin cup, and getting all the doctor’s prescriptions renewed.

We intended, too, to go second or third class now an then, in order to study the humours of the natives, but of course we went ‘first’ on this occasion on account of Benella. I told her that we could not follow British usage and call her by her surname. Dusenberry was too long and too—well, too extraordinary for daily use abroad.

“P'r'aps it is,” she assented meekly; “and still, Mis' Beresford, when a man's name is Dusenberry, you can't hardly blame him for wanting his child to be called by it, can you?”

This was incontrovertible, and I asked her middle name. It was Frances, and that was too like Francesca.

“You don't like the sound o' Benella?” she inquired. “I've always set great store by my name, it is so unlikely. My father's name was Benjamin and my mother's Ella, and mine is made from both of 'em; but you can call me any kind of a name you please, after what you've done for me,” and she closed her eyes patiently.

‘Call me Daphne, call me Chloris,
Call me Lalage or Doris,
Only, only call me thine,’

which is exactly what we are not ready to do, I thought, in a poetic parenthesis.

Benella looks frail and yet hardy. She has an unusual and perhaps unnecessary amount of imagination for her station, some native common-sense, but limited experience; she is somewhat vague and inconsistent in her theories of life, but I am sure there is vitality, and energy too, in her composition, although it has been temporarily drowned in the Atlantic Ocean. If she were a clock, I should think that some experimenter had taken out her original works, and substituted others to see how they would run. The clock has a New England case and strikes with a New

England tone, but the works do not match it altogether. Of course I know that one does not ordinarily engage a lady's-maid because of these piquant peculiarities; but in our case the circumstances were extraordinary. I have explained them fully to Himself in my letters, and Francesca too has written pages of illuminating detail to Ronald Macdonald.

The similarity in the minds of men must sometimes come across them with a shock, unless indeed it appeals to their sense of humour. Himself in America, and the Rev. Mr. Macdonald in the north of Scotland, both answered, in course of time, that a lady's-maid should be engaged because is a lady's-maid and for no other reason.

Was ever anything duller than this, more conventional, more commonplace or didactic, less imaginative? Himself added, "You are a romantic idiot, and I love you more than tongue can tell." Francesca did not say what Ronald added; probably a part of this same sentence (owing to the aforesaid similarity of men's minds), reserving the rest for the frank intimacy of the connubial state.

Everything looked beautiful in the uncertain glory of the April day. The thistle-down clouds opened now and then to shake out a delicate, brilliant little shower that ceased in a trice, and the sun smiled through the light veil of rain, turning every falling drop to a jewel. It was as if the fairies were busy at aerial watering-pots, without any more serious purpose than to amuse themselves and make the earth beautiful; and we realised that Irish rain is as

warm as an Irish welcome, and soft as an Irish smile.

Everything was bursting into new life, everything but the primroses, and their glory was departing. The yellow carpet seemed as bright as ever on the sunny hedgerow banks and on the fringe of the woods, but when we plucked some at a wayside station we saw that they were just past their golden prime. There was a grey-green hint of verdure in the willows that stood against a dark background of firs, and the branches of the fruit-trees were tipped with pink, rosy-hued promises of May just threatening to break through their silvery April sheaths. Raindrops were still glistening on the fronds of the tender young ferns and on the great clumps of pale, delicately scented bog violets that we found in a marshy spot and brought in to Salemina, who was not in her usual spirits; who indeed seemed distinctly anxious.

She was enchanted with the changeful charm of the landscape, and found Mrs. Delany's Memoirs a book after her own heart, but ever and anon her eyes rested on Benella's pale face. Nothing could have been more doggedly conscientious and assiduous than our attentions to the Derelict. She had beef juice at Kildare, malted milk at Ballybrophy, tea at Dundrum; nevertheless, as we approached Limerick Junction we were obliged to hold a consultation. Salemina wished to alight from the train at the next station, take a three hours' rest, then jog on to any comfortable place for the night, and to Cork in the morning.

"I shall feel much more comfortable," she said, "if you go on

and amuse yourselves as you like, leaving Benella to me for a day, or even for two or three days. I can't help feeling that the chief fault, or at least the chief responsibility, is mine. If I hadn't been born in Salem, or hadn't had the word painted on my trunk in such red letters she wouldn't have fainted on it, and I needn't have saved her life. It is too late to turn back now; it is saved, or partly saved, and I must persevere in saving it, at least until I find that it's not worth saving."

"Poor darling!" said Francesca sympathisingly. "I'll look in Murray and find a nice interesting place. You can put Benella to bed in the Southern Hotel at Limerick Junction, and perhaps you can then drive within sight of the Round Tower of Cashel. Then you can take up the afternoon train and go to—let me see—how would you like Buttevant? (*Boutez en avant*, you know, the 'Push forward' motto of the Barrymores.) It's delightful, Penelope," she continued; "we'd better get off, too. It is a garrison town, and there is a military hotel. Then in the vicinity is Kilcolman, where Spenser wrote the *Faerie Queene*: so there is the beginning of your literary pilgrimage the very first day, without any plotting or planning. The little river Aubeg, which flows by Kilcolman Castle, Spenser called the Mulla, and referred to it as 'Mulla mine, whose waves I whilom taught to weep.' That, by the way, is no more than our Jane Grieve could have done for the rivers of Scotland. What do you say? and won't you be a 'prood woman the day' when you sign the hotel register 'Miss Peabody and maid, Salem, Mass., U.S.A'"

I thought most favourably of Buttevant, but on prudently inquiring the guard's opinion, he said it was not a comfortable place for an invalid lady, and that Mallow was much more the thing. At Limerick Junction, then, we all alighted, and in the ten minutes' wait saw Benella escorted up the hotel stairway by a sympathetic head waiter.

Detached from Salemina's fostering care and prudent espionage, separated, above all, from the depressing Miss Dusenberry, we planned every conceivable folly in the way of guidebook expeditions. The exhilarating sense of being married, and therefore properly equipped to undertake any sort of excursion with perfect propriety, gave added zest to the affair in my eyes. Sleeping at Cork in an Imperial Hotel was far too usual a proceeding,—we scorned it. As the very apex of boldness and reckless defiance of common-sense, we let our heavy luggage go on to the capital of Munster, and, taking our handbags, entered a railway carriage standing on a side track, and were speedily on our way,—we knew not whither, and cared less. We discovered all too soon that we were going to Waterford, the Star of the Suir,—

'The gentle Shure, that making way
By sweet Clonmell, adorns rich Waterford';

and we were charmed at first sight with its quaint bridge spanning the silvery river. It was only five o'clock, and we walked

about the fine old ninth-century town, called by the Cavaliers the Urbs Intacta, because it was the one place in Ireland which successfully resisted the all-conquering Cromwell. Francesca sent a telegram at once to

MISS PEABODY AND MAID, Great Southern Hotel,
Limerick Junction.

Came to Waterford instead Cork. Strongbow landed here 1771, defeating Danes and Irish. Youghal to-morrow, pronounced Yawl. Address, Green Park, Miss Murphy's. How's Derelict?

FRANELOPE.

It was absurd, of course, but an absurdity that can be achieved at the cost of eighteen-pence is well worth the money.

Nobody but a Baedeker or a Murray could write an account of our doings the next two days. Feeling that we might at any hour be recalled to Benella's bedside, we took a childlike pleasure in crowding as much as possible into the time. This zeal was responsible for our leaving the Urbs Intacta, and pushing on to pass the night in something smaller and more idyllic.

I dissuaded Francesca from seeking a lodging in Ballybricken by informing her that it was the heart of the bacon industry, and the home of the best-known body of pig-buyers in Ireland; but her mind was fixed upon Kills and Ballies. On asking our jarvey the meaning of Bally as a prefix, he answered reflectively: "I don't think there's annything onderhanded in the manin', melady; I think it means BALLY jist."

The name of the place where we did go shall never be divulged, lest a curious public follow in our footsteps; and if perchance it have not our youth, vigour, and appetite for adventure, it might die there in the principal hotel, unwept, unhonoured, and unsung. The house is said to be three hundred and seventy-five years old, but we are convinced that this is a wicked understatement of its antiquity. It must have been built since the Deluge, else it would at least have had one general spring cleaning in the course of its existence. Cromwell had been there too, and in the confusion of his departure they must have forgotten to sweep under the beds. We entered our rooms at ten in the evening, having dismissed our car, knowing well that there was no other place to stop the night. We gave the jarvey twice his fare to avoid altercation, 'but divil a penny less would he take,' although it was he who had recommended the place as a cosy hotel. "It looks like a small little house, melady, but 'tis large inside, and it has a power o' beds in it." We each generously insisted on taking the dirtiest bedroom (they had both been last occupied by the Cromwellian soldiers, we agreed), but relinquished the idea, because the more we compared them the more impossible it was to decide which was the dirtiest. There were no locks on the doors. "And sure what matther for that, Miss? Nobody has a right (i.e. business) to be comin' in here but meself," said the aged woman who showed us to our rooms.

Chapter VIII. Romance and reality

*'But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.'*

Charles Wolfe.

At midnight I heard a faint tap at my door, and Francesca walked in, her eyes wide and bright, her cheeks flushed, her long, dark braid of hair hanging over her black travelling cloak. I laughed as I saw her, she looked so like Sir Patrick Spens in the ballad play at Pettybaw,—a memorable occasion when Ronald Macdonald caught her acting that tragic role in his ministerial gown, the very day that Himself came from Paris to marry me in Pettybaw, dear little Pettybaw!

“I came in to find out if your bed is as bad as mine, but I see you have not slept in it,” she whispered.

“I was just coming in to see if yours could be any worse,” I replied. “Do you mean to say that you have tried it, courageous girl? I blew out my candle, and then, after an interval in which to forget, sat down on the outside as a preliminary; but the moon rose just then, and I could get no further.”

I had not unpacked my bag. I had simply slipped on my macintosh, selected a wooden chair, and, putting a Cromwellian towel over it, seated myself shudderingly on it and put my feet

on the rounds, quoting Moore meantime—

‘And the best of all ways
To lengthen our days
Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear!’

Francesca followed my example, and we passed the night in reading Celtic romances to each other. We could see the faint outline of sweet Slievenamann from our windows—the mountain of the fair women of Feimheann, celebrated as the hunting-ground of the Finnian Chiefs.

‘One day Finn and Oscar
Followed the chase in Sliabh-na-mban-Feimheann,
With three thousand Finnian chiefs
Ere the sun looked out from his circle.’

In the Finnian legend, the great Finn McCool, when much puzzled in the choice of a wife, seated himself on its summit. At last he decided to make himself a prize in a competition of all the fair women in Ireland. They should start at the foot of the mountain, and the one who first reached the summit should be the great Finn’s bride. It was Grainne Oge, the Gallic Helen, and daughter of Cormac, the king of Ireland, who won the chieftain, ‘being fleetest of foot and longest of wind.’

We almost forgot our discomforts in this enthralling story, and slept on each other’s nice clean shoulders a little, just before

the dawn. And such a dawn! Such infinite softness of air, such dew-drenched verdure! It is a backward spring, they say, but to me the woods are even lovelier than in their summer wealth of foliage, when one can hardly distinguish the beauty of the single tree from that of its neighbours, since the colours are blended in one universal green. Now we see the feathery tassels of the beech bursting out of their brown husks, the russet hues of the young oak leaves, and the countless emerald gleams that 'break from the ruby-budded lime.' The greenest trees are the larch, the horse-chestnut, and the sycamore, three naturalised citizens who apparently still keep to their native fashions, and put out their foliage as they used to do in their own homes. The young alders and the hawthorn hedges are greening, but it will be a fortnight before we can realise the beauty of that snow-white bloom, with its bitter-sweet fragrance. The cuckoo-flower came this year before instead of after the bird, they tell us, showing that even Nature, in these days of anarchy and misrule, is capable of taking liberties with her own laws. There is a fragrance of freshly turned earth in the air, and the rooks are streaming out from the elms by the little church, and resting for a bit in a group of plume-like yews. The last few days of warmth and sunshine have inspired the birds, and as Francesca and I sit at our windows breathing in the sweetness and freshness of the morning, there is a concert of thrushes and blackbirds in the shrubberies. The little birds furnish the chorus or the undertone of song, the hedge-sparrows, redbreasts, and chaffinches, but the meistersingers 'call

the tune,' and lead the feathered orchestra with clear and certain notes. It is a golden time for the minstrels, for nest-building is finished, and the feeding of the younglings a good time yet in the future. We can see one little brown lady hovering warm eggs under her breast, her bright eyes peeping through a screen of leaves as she glances up at her singing lord, pouring out his thanks for the morning sun. There is only a hint of breeze, it might almost be the whisper of uncurling fern fronds, but soft as it is, it stirs the branches here and there, and I know that it is rocking hundreds of tiny cradles in the forest.

When I was always painting in those other days before I met Himself, one might think my eyes would have been even keener to see beauty than now, when my brushes are more seldom used; but it is not so. There is something, deep hidden in my consciousness, that makes all loveliness lovelier, that helps me to interpret it in a different and in a larger sense. I have a feeling that I have been lifted out of the individual and given my true place in the general scheme of the universe, and, in some subtle way that I can hardly explain, I am more nearly related to all things good, beautiful, and true than I was when I was wholly an artist, and therefore less a woman. The bursting of the leaf-buds brings me a tender thought of the one dear heart that gives me all its spring; and whenever I see the smile of a child, a generous look, the flash of sympathy in an eye, it makes me warm with swift remembrance of the one I love the best of all, just 'as a lamplight will set a linnet singing for the sun.'

Love is doing the same thing for Francesca; for the smaller feelings merge themselves in the larger ones, as little streams lose themselves in oceans. Whenever we talk quietly together of that strange, new, difficult life that she is going so bravely and so joyously to meet, I know by her expression that Ronald's noble face, a little shy, a little proud, but altogether adoring, serves her for courage and for inspiration, and she feels that his hand is holding hers across the distance, in a clasp that promises strength.

At five o'clock we longed to ring for hot water, but did not dare. Even at six there was no sound of life in the cosy inn which we have named The Cromwell Arms ('Mrs. Duddy, Manageress; Comfort, Cleanliness, Courtesy; Night Porter; Cycling Shed'). From seven to half-past we read pages and pages of delicious history and legend, and decided to go from Cappoquin to Youghal by steamer, if we could possibly reach the place of departure in time. At half-past seven we pulled the bell energetically. Nothing happened, and we pulled again and again, discovering at last that the connection between the bell-rope and the bell-wire had long since disappeared, though it had been more than once established with bits of twine, fishing-line, and shoe laces. Francesca then went across the hall to examine her methods of communication, and presently I heard a welcome tinkle, and another, and another, followed in due season by a cheerful voice, saying, "Don't desthroy it intirely, ma'am; I'll be coming direckly." We ordered jugs of hot water, and were told that it would be some time before it could be had, as ladies were

not in the habit of calling for it before nine in the morning, and as the damper of the kitchen-range was out of order. Did we wish it in a little canteen with whisky and a bit of lemon-peel, or were we afther wantin' it in a jug? We replied promptly that it was not the hour for toddy, but the hour for baths, with us, and the decrepit and very sleepy night porter departed to wake the cook and build the fire; advising me first, in a friendly way, to take the hearth brush that was 'kapin' the windy up, and rap on the wall if I needed annything more.' At eight o'clock we heard the porter's shuffling step in the hall, followed by a howl and a polite objurgation. A strange dog had passed the night under Francesca's bed, and the porter was giving him what he called 'a good hand and fut downstairs.' He had put down the hot water for this operation, and on taking up the burden again we heard him exclaim: "Arrah! look at that now! May the divil fly away with the excommunicated ould jug!" It was past saving, the jug, and leaked so freely that one had to be exceedingly nimble to put to use any of the smoky water in it. "Thim fools o' turf do nothing but smoke on me," apologised the venerable servitor, who then asked, "would we be pleased to order breakquist." We were wise in our generation, and asked for nothing but bacon, eggs, and tea; and after a smoky bath and a change of raiment we seated at our repast in the coffee-room, feeling wonderfully fresh and cheerful. By looking directly at each other most of the time, and making experimental journeys from plate to mouth, thus barring out any intimate knowledge of the tablecloth and

the waiter's linen, we managed to make a breakfast. Francesca is enough to give any one a good appetite. Ronald Macdonald will be a lucky fellow, I think, to begin his day by sitting opposite her, for her eyes shine like those of a child, and one's gaze lingers fondly on the cool freshness of her cheek. Breakfast over and the bill settled, we speedily shook off as much of the dust of Mrs. Duddy's hotel as could be shaken off, and departed on the most decrepit sidecar that ever rolled on two wheels, being wished a safe journey by a slatternly maid who stood in the doorway, by the wide Mrs. Duddy herself, who realised in her capacious person the picturesque Irish phrase, 'the full-of-the-door of a woman,' and by our friend the head waiter, who leaned against Mrs. Duddy's ancestral pillars in such a way that the morning sun shone full upon his costume and revealed its weaknesses to our reluctant gaze.

The driver said it was eleven miles to Cappoquin, the guide-book fourteen, but this difference of opinion, we find, is only the difference between Irish and English miles, for which our driver had an unspeakable contempt, as of a vastly inferior quality. He had, on the other hand, a great respect for Mrs. Duddy and her comfortable, cleanly, and courteous establishment (as per advertisement), and the warmest admiration for the village in which she had appropriately located herself, a village which he alluded to as 'wan of the natest towns in the ring of Ireland, for if ye made a slip in the street of it, be the help of God ye were always sure to fall into a public-house!'

“We had better not tell the full particulars of this journey to Salemina,” said Francesca prudently, as we rumbled along; “though, oddly enough, if you remember, whenever any one speaks disparagingly of Ireland, she always takes up cudgels in its behalf.”

“Francesca, now that you are within three or four months of being married, can you manage to keep a secret?”

“Yes,” she whispered eagerly, squeezing my hand and inclining her shoulder cosily to mine. “Yes, oh yes, and how it would raise my spirits after a sleepless night!”

“When Salemina was eighteen she had a romance, and the hero of it was the son of an Irish gentleman, an M.P., who was travelling in America, or living there for a few years,—I can’t remember which. He was nothing more than a lad, less than twenty-one years old, but he was very much in love with Salemina. How far her feelings were involved I never knew, but she felt that she could not promise to marry him. Her mother was an invalid, and her father a delightful, scholarly, autocratic, selfish old gentleman, who ruled his household with a rod of iron. Salemina coddled and nursed them both during all her young life; indeed, little as she realised it, she never had any separate existence or individuality until they both died, when she was thirty-one or two years old.”

“And what became of the young Irishman? Was he faithful to his first love, or did he marry?”

“He married, many years afterward, and that was the time I

first heard the story. His marriage took place in Dublin, on the very day, I believe, that Salemina's father was buried; for Fate has the most relentless way of arranging these coincidences. I don't remember his name, and I don't know where he lives or what has become of him. I imagine the romance has been dead and buried in rose-leaves for years; Salemina never has spoken of it to me, but it would account for her sentimental championship of Ireland."

Chapter IX. The light of other days

*'Oft in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond memory brings the light
Of other days around me.'*

Thomas Moore.

If you want to fall head over ears in love with Ireland at the very first sight of her charms, take, as we did, the steamer from Cappoquin to Youghal, and float down the vale of the Blackwater

'Swift Awniduff, which of the Englishman
Is cal' de Blackwater.'

The shores of this Irish Rhine are so lovely that the sail on a sunny day is one of unequalled charm. Behind us the mountains ranged themselves in a mysterious melancholy background; ahead the river wended its way southward in and out, in and out, through rocky cliffs and well-wooded shores.

The first tributary stream that we met was the little Finisk, on the higher banks of which is Affane House. The lands of Affane are said to have been given by one of the FitzGeralds to Sir Walter Raleigh for a breakfast, a very high price to pay for

bacon and eggs, and it was here that he planted the first cherry-tree in Ireland, bringing it from the Canary Islands to the Isle of Weeping.

Looking back just below here, we saw the tower and cloisters of Mount Melleray, the Trappist monastery. Very beautiful and very lonely looked 'the little town of God,' in the shadows of the gloomy hills. We wished we had known the day before how near we were to it, for we could have claimed a night's lodging at the ladies' guest-house, where all creeds, classes, and nationalities are received with a *cead-mile-failte*,³ and where any offering for food or shelter is given only at the visitors pleasure. The Celtic proverb, 'Melodious is the closed mouth,' might be written over the cloisters; for it is a village of silence, and only the monks who teach in the schools or who attend visitors are absolved from the vow.

Next came Dromana Castle, where the extraordinary old Countess of Desmond was born,—the wonderful old lady whose supposed one hundred and forty years so astonished posterity. She must have married Thomas, twelfth Earl of Desmond, after 1505, as his first wife is known to have been alive in that year. Raleigh saw her in 1589, and she died in 1604: so it would seem that she must have been at least one hundred and ten or one hundred and twelve when she met her untimely death,—a death brought about entirely by her own youthful impetuosity and her fondness for athletic sports. Robert Sydney, second Earl

³ A hundred thousand welcomes.

of Leicester, makes the following reference to her in his Table-Book, written when he was ambassador at Paris, about 1640:—

‘The old Countess of Desmond was a married woman in Edward IV. time in England, and lived till towards the end of Queen Elizabeth, so she must needs be neare one hundred and forty yeares old. She had a new sett of teeth not long afore her death, and might have lived much longer had she not mett with a kinde of violent death; for she would needs climbe a nut-tree to gather nuts; so falling down she hurt her thigh, which brought a fever, and that fever brought death. This my cousin Walter Fitzwilliam told me.’

It is true that the aforesaid cousin Walter may have been a better raconteur than historian; still, local tradition vigorously opposes any lessening of the number of the countess’s years, pinning its faith rather on one Hayman, who says that she presented herself at the English court at the age of one hundred and forty years, to petition for her jointure, which she lost by the attainder of the last earl; and it also prefers to have her fall from the historic cherry-tree that Sir Walter planted, rather than from a casual nut-tree.

Down the lovely river we went, lazily lying back in the sun, almost the only passengers on the little craft, as it was still far too early for tourists; down past Villierstown, Cooneen Ferry, Strancally Castle, with its ‘Murdering Hole’ made famous by the Lords of Desmond, through the Broads of Clashmore; then past Temple Michael, an old castle of the Geraldines, which

Cromwell battered down for ‘dire insolence,’ until we steamed slowly into the harbour of Youghal—and, to use our driver’s expression, there is no more ‘onderhanded manin” in Youghal than the town of the Yew Wood, which is much prettier to the eye and sweeter to the ear.

Here we found a letter from Salemina, and expended another eighteenpence in telegraphing to her:—

PEABODY, Coolkilla House, near Mardyke Walk,
Cork.

We are under Yew Tree at Myrtle Grove where Raleigh and Spenser smoked, read manuscript Faerie Queene, and planted first potato. Delighted Benella better. Join you tomorrow. Don’t encourage archaeologist.

PENESCA.

We had a charming hour at Myrtle Grove House, an unpretentious, gabled dwelling, for a time the residence of the ill-fated soldier captain, Sir Walter Raleigh. You remember, perhaps, that he was mayor of Youghal in 1588. After the suppression of the Geraldine rebellion, the vast estates of the Earl of Desmond and those of one hundred and forty of the leading gentlemen of Munster, his adherents, were confiscated, and proclamation was made all through England inviting gentlemen to ‘undertake’ the plantation of this rich territory. Estates were offered at two or three pence an acre, and no rent was to be paid for the first five years. Many of these great ‘undertakers,’ as they were called, were English noblemen who never saw

Ireland; but among them were Raleigh and Spenser, who received forty-two thousand and twelve thousand acres respectively, and in consideration of certain patronage ‘undertook’ to carry the business of the Crown through Parliament.

Francesca was greatly pleased with this information, culled mostly from Joyce’s Child’s History of Ireland. The volume had been bought in Dublin by Salemina and presented to us as a piece of genial humour, but it became our daily companion.

I made a rhyme for her, which she sent Miss Peabody, to show her that we were growing in wisdom, notwithstanding our separation from her.

‘You have thought of Sir Walter as soldier and knight, Edmund Spenser, you’ve heard, was well able to write; But Raleigh the planter, and Spenser verse-maker, Each, oddly enough, was by trade ‘Undertaker.’

It was in 1589 that the Shepherd of the Ocean, as Spenser calls him, sailed to England to superintend the publishing of the Faerie Queene: so from what I know of authors’ habits, it is probable that Spenser did read him the poem under the Yew Tree in Myrtle Grove garden. It seems long ago, does it not, when the Faerie Queene was a manuscript, tobacco just discovered, the potato a novelty, and the first Irish cherry-tree just a wee thing newly transplanted from the Canary Islands? Were our own cherry-trees already in America when Columbus discovered us, or did the Pilgrim Fathers bring over ‘slips’ or ‘grafts,’ knowing that they would be needed for George Washington later on, so that he might furnish an untruthful world with a

sublime sentiment? We re-read Salemina's letter under the Yew Tree:—

Coolkilla House, Cork.

MY DEAREST GIRLS,—It seems years instead of days since we parted, and I miss the two madcaps more than I can say. In your absence my life is always so quiet, discreet, dignified,—and, yes, I confess it, so monotonous! I go to none but the best hotels, meet none but the best people, and my timidity and conservatism for ever keep me in conventional paths. Dazzled and terrified as I still am when you precipitate adventures upon me, I always find afterwards that I have enjoyed them in spite of my fears. Life without you is like a stenographic report of a dull sermon; with you it is by turns a dramatic story, a poem, and a romance. Sometimes it is a penny-dreadful, as when you deliberately leave your luggage on an express train going south, enter another standing upon a side track, and embark for an unknown destination. I watched you from an upper window of the Junction Hotel, but could not leave Benella to argue with you. When your respected husband and lover have charge of you, you will not be allowed such pranks, I warrant you.

Benella has improved wonderfully in the last twenty-four hours, and I am trying to give her some training for her future duties. We can never forget our native land so long as we have her with us, for she is a perfect specimen of the Puritan spinster, though too young in years, perhaps, for determined celibacy. Do

you know, we none of us mentioned wages in our conversations with her? Fortunately she seems more alive to the advantages of foreign travel than to the filling of her empty coffers. (By the way, I have written to the purser of the ship that she crossed in, to see if I can recover the sixty or seventy dollars she left behind her.) Her principal idea in life seems to be that of finding some kind of work that will be ‘interestin’ whether it is lucrative or not.

I don’t think she will be able to dress hair, or anything of that sort—save in the way of plain sewing, she is very unskilful with her hands; and she will be of no use as courier, she is so provincial and inexperienced. She has no head for business whatever, and cannot help Francesca with the accounts. She recites to herself again and again, ‘Four farthings make one penny, twelvecence make one shilling, twenty shillings make one pound’; but when I give her a handful of money and ask her for six shillings and sixpence, five and three, one pound two, or two pound ten, she cannot manage the operation. She is docile, well mannered, grateful, and really likable, but her present philosophy of life is a thing of shreds and patches. She calls it ‘the science,’ as if there were but one; and she became a convert to its teachings this past winter, while living in the house of a woman lecturer in Salem, a lecturer, not a ‘curist,’ she explains. She attended to the door, ushered in the members of classes, kept the lecture-room in order, and so forth, imbibing by the way various doctrines, or parts of doctrines, which she is not the sort of person to assimilate, but with which she

is experimenting: holding, meantime, a grim intuition of their foolishness, or so it seems to me. 'The science' made it easier for her to seek her ancestors in a foreign country with only a hundred dollars in her purse; for the Salem priestess proclaims the glad tidings that all the wealth of the world is ours, if we will but assert our heirship. Benella believed this more or less until a week's sea-sickness undermined all her new convictions of every sort. When she woke in the little bedroom at O'Carolan's, she says, her heart was quite at rest, for she knew that we were the kind of people one could rely on! I mustered courage to say, "I hope so, and I hope also that we shall be able to rely upon you, Benella!"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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