

IN IRELAND.

III.

LIMERICK, July 16.—The people of Limerick are generally wide awake and intelligent—I think a great deal more so than the people of Cork. The city is kept in splendid condition, the streets being clean and in perfect repair. Some of the buildings which have been erected in recent years for commercial purposes are up to those in the average European city in point of architecture. The large dry goods establishments, of which there are several, as Limerick supplies not only the middle classes but the aristocracy of a large district, have as a rule tasteful and sometimes elegant fronts, while their interiors are arranged after the manner of dry-goods stores all over the world.

The salesmen are called "shop-boys" in Ireland, and the salesladies are called "shop-girls." But these appellations, I am told, are not agreeable to them. They like to be called "clarks." A clerk is a clark in Ireland, a clawarke in England, and a clark in Scotland.

The Irish papers, daily and weekly, have improved wonder fully since my last visit. They are still behind the age, as are all the newspapers of Europe, with a few notable exceptions. They don't appear to be particularly anxious to obtain the latest news over here, and such a thing as enterprise in journalism is unknown outside the larger cities. They have queer notions, too, as to what constitutes news. Columns are given to art, scientific and social matters; the movements of the nobility are closely followed; everything that concerns the queen or their various highnesses is presented in detail, and the proceedings of the land, civil and criminal courts are reported almost verbatim, but the main stand-by of them all, liberal, conservative, and nationalist, is the parliamentary report. I am beginning to wonder what these papers will do when parliament adjourns. Four, five and six columns of debate daily, sometimes an entire page, frequently two pages, are given up to the proceedings of the House of Commons, most of which is dry and commonplace.

In Great Britain and Ireland every newspaper reader reads the parliamentary proceedings, as all power is centralized in that body. It meddles with everything. It deals, indeed, so much in little things that it has not had for years (or until Parnell arose and confronted it with the fact) time enough to deal with big things. One of the strongest arguments now in favour of Home Rule for Ireland is that it will give the English people a chance to legislate for themselves. Since Parnell took the leadership in Irish affairs the country he represents has monopolized the business done at Westminster.

But I said the Irish papers had improved. They have. I mean in tone, in spirit, in boldness, in audacity. Their editorials now are worth reading. They talk pretty plainly about each other, too, at times. The nationalist papers are not afraid to call Balfour a liar in these days. A few years ago such an epithet applied to the Irish secretary would be considered down right treason.

We have visited the ancient and glorious ruins at Newcastle, Rathbane, and Adare, and have passed over the fertile "golden vale" of Limerick, a stretch of agricultural country as beautiful as any I ever laid my eyes on. We see noble mansions and squalid huts everywhere, sometimes so near each other that the effect of each is spoiled. We have driven out to many country seats which have not been occupied by their owners for years. At one place the housekeeper told us her master had never seen the place—as beautiful a spot as there is on earth.

The lakes of Killarney are to the south of us, not far away. Shall we go toward Dublin or visit the lakes? This is the question before the house as I mail this

TOWN OF KILLARNEY, County Kerry, Ireland, July 19 — We are back from the enchanting scenery of the lakes. It was my second visit. The rest of our little party had never beheld them before. I believe I enjoyed the delight expressed on the faces of my companions, as view after view opened up before us like the beautiful transformation of a kaleidoscope, as much as I did the gorgeous scenery itself. The most brilliant descriptive writers of the age have failed to do justice to the Lakes of Killarney. Poets have fallen short in their efforts to portray. The golden tongue of eloquence has been silenced in the presence of these beautiful scenes. Fancy lags behind.

The imagination is, so to speak, handicapped. I most certainly will not undertake the impossible. All that I can say is that no description you have ever read could have exaggerated the wild grandeur of the mountains or the placid beauty of the waters. Saints may have seen such places in their vision of a better world; the child may form in its mind some idea of the Garden of Eden from its mother's teachings which might be likened to it, but only saints and children can lure up pictures here below that can have any semblance to the perfect beauty of the Lakes of Killarney.

"Angels fold their wings and rest
In this Eden of the west—
Beauty's home—Killarney,
Ever fair Killarney."

To those who have "been over the ground" I will say that our footsteps have followed theirs. We have been silent with amazement in the Gap of Dunloe; we have gone into ecstasies over the green-capped mountain peaks, the old red sandstone cliff, the stately and forbidden dignity of the Reeks and the Purple mountains. The valley of Kenmare has been to us as fair a scene as the vale of Cashmere could ever have been to Lalla Rookh—

"With its roses the brightest that earth ever gave;
Its temples and grottos and fountains as clear
As the love-lighted eyes that hung over their wave."

And why did not Tom Moore describe this valley as he has described the other? He has given us but a small remembrance of Killarney in all his poems, that which sings of "Poor Innisfallen."

Moore never saw India, but in his own time and mine the description which he gives in "Lalla Rookh" of that land have been pronounced as correct as though he had lived there half his life. That he had seen Killarney before he wrote the "Light of the Harem" is certain, and that he drew from the scenery round about the inspiration which gave us the following not to be questioned. However much it may fit the Vale of Cashmere, all that is necessary is the change of a few words and we have as beautiful a description of Killarney as ever was penned:

"Oh! to see it at sunset—when warm o'er the lake
Its splendour at parting a summer eve throws
Like a bride, full of blushes, when lingering to take
A last look at her mirror at night ere she goes;
When the shrines through the foliage are gleaming half-shown
And each hallows the hour by some rites of its own.

Oh, to see it by moonlight—when mellowly shines
The light o'er its palaces, gardens, and shrines;
When the waterfalls gleam like a quick fall of stars.

Or at morn when the magic of daylight awakes
A new wonder each minute as slowly it breaks;
Hills, cupolas, fountains, called forth every one
Out of darkness as if just born of the sun."

We have been thrilled by the sublime beauty of the shrub-topped summits of the hills that rise from the waters of Loch Learn, and have gazed in rapture at the varying colours of the heath and the arbutus that fringes the waters. We have stood as if enchanted on the mossy banks of Ross Island and clambered over the fallen steps of that grand old Ross Castle. We have traversed "Sweet Innisfallen," and perhaps sent up a silent prayer for the old monks long since passed away in the ruined Abbey of St. Finan. We have sailed over the Torc and wandered through the old Franciscan abbey of Muckross, and we have sailed through the "long range," and from the boat beheld the mountains rising one above the other until they looked, in all their majestic splendour, like steps to heaven. We have sung "Home, Sweet Home" upon the waters, and have heard the echo of every line reverberated from Eagle's Nest, repeated seven times around the lakes. In a word, we have seen Killarney.

To those who have had the good fortune to spend the day among these Kerry mountains this will be sufficient. To those who have not no words can convey an idea of the delights, the charms, the satisfying influence of the place.

The town of Killarney is a stirring little place during the tourist season. It has been greatly improved within a few years.