

outer entrance was within a trifling distance of the pit-door, and gave an easy escape to those in that part of the house. But to attain the boxes from the street it was necessary to descend into a long passage and ascend again by an angular staircase. The gallery had a distinct entrance, and its occupants escaped. The suffering and death fell on the occupants of the boxes, who, panic-struck, did not see that the pit was immediately left vacant, but pressed on to the crowded and tortuous way by which they entered. The pit-door was so near the general entrance, that those who occupied that portion of the house gained the street with ease. A gentleman who escaped from the pit among the last, saw it empty, and when in the street, looked back again upon the general entrance to the pit and boxes, and the door had not yet been reached by those from the lobbies. A gentleman and lady were saved by being thrown accidentally into the pit; and most of those who perished would have escaped if they had leaped from the boxes, and sought that avenue to the street. But all darted to the lobbies. The stairs were blocked up. All was enveloped in hot scorching smoke and flame. The lights were extinguished by the black and smothering vapour, and the shrieks of despair were appalling. Happy for a moment were those who gained a window, and inhaled the air of heaven. Those who had issued to the street cried to the sufferers at the windows to leap down, and stretched out their arms to save them. Some were seen struggling to gain the apertures, to inhale the fresh air. Men, women and children precipitated themselves from the first and second stories. Some escaped unhurt; others were killed and mangled by the fall. Some with their clothes on fire, shrieking, leaped from the windows, to gain a short reprieve and die in agonies.

"Who can picture," says a correspondent of the Mirror, "the distress of those, who, unable to gain the windows, or afraid to leap from them, were pent up in the long narrow passages." The cries of those who reached the upper windows are described as heart-sickening. Many who found their way to the street were so scorched or burnt as to die in consequence, and some were crushed to death under foot after reaching the outer door.

Add to this mass of suffering, the feelings of those who knew that they had relatives or friends who had gone to the house that night. Such rushed half frantic to the spot, with the crowds of citizens from all quarters; while the tolling bells sounded the knell of death to the heart of the father or mother, whose child had been permitted to visit the theatre on that night of horror.

"As my father was leading me home," said Mr. Henry Placide, "we saw Mr. Greele, exhausted by previous exertion, leaning on a fence, and looking at the scene of ruin. For all was now one black mass of smoking destruction. 'Thank Heaven!' ejaculated Greene, 'thank Heaven! I prohibited Nancy from coming to the house to-night.' She is safe."

Nancy was his only daughter, just springing into womanhood, still at the boarding-school of Mrs. Gibson; and as beautiful and lovely a girl as imagination can picture.

Mrs. Gibson and the boarders had made up a party for the theatre that evening; and Nancy Greene asked her father's permission to accompany them. He refused, but unfortunately added his reason—"The house will be crowded, and you will occupy a seat that would otherwise be paid for. On these words hung the fate of youth, innocence and beauty. "I will pay for your ticket," said the instructress; "we will not leave you behind." The teacher and the pupil were buried in the ruins on which the father gazed, and over which he returned thanks for the safety of his child. He went home and learned the truth.

An instance of the escape of a family is given. The husband, with three children, were in the second boxes; his wife, with a female friend, in another part of the house. The wife gained a window, leaped out, and escaped unhurt. Her friend followed, and was killed. The father clasped two helpless girls to his breast, and left a boy of 12 years old to follow. The boy was forced from his father, and ran to a window, sprang out and was safe. The parent, with his precious charge, followed the stairway, pressed upon by those behind him, and those who mounted on the heads and shoulders of the crowd before them; he became unconscious, but was still borne along; he was taken up, carried to his bed, and opened his eyes to see all his family safe.

On the contrary, Lieut. Gibbon, of the navy, as exemplary in private life as in the service of his country, and on the brink of a union with Miss Conyers, the pride of Richmond for every accomplishment and virtue, was swept into eternity, while exerting himself to do all that man should do in such trying circumstances. He was with his mother at the theatre, and carried her to a place of safety; then rushed back to save her in whose fate his own was bound up. He caught her in his arms, had borne her partly down the staircase, when the steps gave way, and a body of flame swept them to eternity.

Friday the 27th of December, 1811, was a day of mourning to Richmond. The banks and stores were closed. A law was passed, prohibiting amusements of every kind for four months. A day was set apart for humiliation and prayer. A monument was resolved on, to be erected to the memory of the dead and to the event—*Dunlap's History of the American Stage*.

THE GIANTS CAUSEWAY

Nothing can be more beautiful than the banks of the Bann along which we for some distance proceeded. About a mile from the town

is the famous salmon-leap, and in the vicinity is also to be seen a curious range of basaltic pillars called *Giant's Hall*. Having dined here, we hired a car to Port Stewart, a small village pleasantly situated immediately on the sea coast, and a good deal resorted to as a bathing place. The localities are in general very romantic, though they exhibit every variety from the gently sloping beach to the lofty and precipitous crag. As the coast is here exposed to the full sweep of the Northern Ocean, a north-west gale of wind, lashes the sea into a scene of wild beauty which many a tourist would wait for six weeks to observe. The present evening was misty and rainy, the sea lazily heaving with scarce a breeze to raise a ripple on its bosom, but its reflux waters, dashing with a continuous roar against the bold dark rocks which in general line the coast.

At an early hour on the following morning, we proceeded towards the causeway, and made our first pause at Dunluce Castle, a striking and extensive ruin, standing on a high and precipitous neck of land, with one of its sides a mere continuation of the high and rocky bank. The only approach to this wild keep of the ancient chieftain is by a narrow walk, about 14 inches wide, which crosses a deep chasm, each side of the frowning ravine being lined with rocks. Having crossed this giddy pass, we enter the castle, which, while it afforded a complete retreat from the bustle of the world, must have bidden defiance also to the lawless marauders of the time. We pruned into almost every apartment and recess, not forgetting the room which Maw Roe, the bushie or fairy, is said to sweep every night; a fiction derived from the fact that the room constantly appears as if just swept from the strong draught of wind which scours through this as well as other apartments of the ruin. Beneath the castle is a cave, into which we descended to hear the melancholy moan of the waves as they lash the upper walls, creating a dismal sound, as if the spirits of the place were mourning over the desolation which time's ravages and man's neglect had caused in the crumbling edifice above.

Crossing again the dizzy pass, we drove on to Bushmills, in the vicinity of which we engaged a boat to take us to the Causeway. Having embarked accordingly with four stout rowers, and a very intelligent and attentive guide, we first entered the Dunkerry Cave, about 60 feet in height and 26 feet wide, and penetrating by a narrow aperture to a distance inland. In this wild and gloomy cavern, we lay for a few minutes rocking in our boat: to complete the wild interest of the scene, a bugle was sounded, and the multiplied responses of the echo were startling and beautiful; but when a pistol was fired, as was done twice, the noise and reverberations were so loud and fearful that a general dislocation of the surrounding rocks was apprehended.

A little beyond Dunkerry cave we disembarked and walked over rocks and craggy ledges towards the Giant's Causeway. Here I must confess, that the Causeway apart from the natural curiosity it presents, in the singular pieces of columnar stone of which it is composed, it is the least striking part of the wild and magnificent scenery with which these coasts abound. It derived its name from a tradition among the natives that the Giants commenced it as a road to Scotland, but being expelled by the ancient Irish chieftains, left it unfinished. The Causeway consists of three promontories, as they may be called, jutting out a little distance into the sea, composed of perpendicular pieces of basaltic rock, about two and a half feet high, and ten inches in diameter, generally of a hexagonal shape and fitted together—a slight crevice between each, just enough to point out the separation—with so much nicety as to rival the most careful workmanship of art. When these little columns are separated from each other, the ends exhibit sometimes a convex surface, and they are piled upon each other in this manner to the height of thirty and in some cases nearly fifty feet. They exhibit the appearance, as nearly as possible, of a gigantic honeycomb; and in one spot, close to the precipitous bank, a succession of these basaltic pillars has received that name. Connected with the curiosities of the Causeway is the *Giant's Loom*, a sort of colonnade rising to the height of six and thirty feet; and on the opposite side, in the face of the cliff, is a cluster of pillars called the *Giant's Organ*, to which they bear a very close resemblance.—Here also we have the *Giant's Well*, a spring which gushes up from amongst the pillars, and where a damsel is always at hand to furnish you with a draught. In the immediate vicinity of the Causeway are also pointed out the *Giant's Chair*, the *Nurse and Child*—The *Giant's Grandmother*, &c. all bearing a striking likeness to the objects after which they are named.

A little onwards, on a very high and steep cliff are seen what are denominated the *Chimney Tops*,—a few columns which it is said the Spanish Armada, in sailing past this coast, mistook for Dunluce Castle, and directed against them in consequence a brisk cannonade. Adjacent in a little bay—since called Port-na-Spagna,—a wrecked vessel belonging to the Armada is said to have been wrecked, and the bones of the lost crew are stated even now to be sometimes found.

The next point of particular interest, we come to is Pleskinn,—a semicircular precipice of extraordinary beauty, rising more than 350 feet from the sea, and presenting, as it were, tier above tier, a great variety of strata. Dark rock, fringed at their base with incessant foam, first rise some distance above the level of the sea,—after which there is a verdant slope of nearly 200 feet. Hereupon a wide stratum of red ochre, stands a magnificent range of basaltic columns 45 feet in height; and above these is a bed of

black irregular rock 160 feet thick, which forms the base of another pile of basaltic pillars of nearly equal height.—The whole forming an amphitheatre of great magnificence and beauty, and altogether a piece of scenery unequalled on this interesting coast. On one side of these stupendous colonades, is what is not inaptly termed the *Giant's Pulpit*, and jutting out from another portion of the bank is a mass of red ochre, bearing the name of the *Giant's Head*. About a mile beyond Pleskinn, Benger's Head, said to be the northern extremity of Ireland from which,—being 330 feet in height—we obtain a good view of the opposite island of Rathlin or Raebary, as well as of the jutting extremity of the Mull of Cantyre in Scotland. We continued onwards in our boat, the progress of which was now much aided by a favourable breeze; to Carrick-a-Rede,—passing on the whole route, a coast of varied and romantic beauty. Carrick-a-Rede is chiefly remarkable for a rope bridge thrown over a chasm, about 90 feet high and 60 wide,—wild and craggy rocks on either side, and a foaming ocean below. Getting again into our boat, we rowed to the entrance of a small cave, which, it is said, is an exact resemblance of Fingal's Cave in the nearly opposite island of Staffa,—presenting the same columnar pieces of basalt which compose the Causeway, and neighbouring banks, in perpendicular, horizontal, and oblique positions.

CURE OF A HYPOCHONDRIAC

"Now, my dear," said Mrs. Woodsum faintly to her husband, "the time has come at last. I feel that I am on my death-bed, and have but a short time to stay with you. But I hope I shall be resigned to the will of heaven. Those things are undoubtedly all ordered for the best—and I would go cheerfully, if it was not for my anxiety about you and the children. Now don't you think, my dear," she continued with increasing tenderness, "don't you think it would be best for you to get married again to some kind, good woman that would be a mother to our dear little ones, and make your home pleasant for all of you?"

She paused, and seemed to look earnestly in his face for an answer.

"Well I have sometimes thought, of late, it might be best," said Mr. Woodsum, with a very solemn air.

"Then you have been thinking about it," said Mrs. Woodsum, with a slight contraction of the muscles of the face.

"Why yes," said Mr. Woodsum, "I have sometimes thought about it, since you have had spells of being so very sick. It makes me feel dreadful to think of it, but I don't know, but it might be a matter of duty."

"Well, I think it would," said Mrs. Woodsum, "if you cannot get the right sort of a person. I want a kind, sensible, and independent woman; and I hope you will be very particular about who you get, very."

"I certainly shall," said Mr. Woodsum, "don't give yourself any uneasiness about that, my dear, for I assure you, I shall be very particular. The person I shall probably have is one of the kindest and best-tempered in the world."

"But have you been thinking about any one in particular, my dear?" said Mrs. Woodsum.

"There is one, that I have thought for a long time past, I should probably marry, if it should be the will of Providence to take you from us."

"And, pray, Mr. Woodsum, who can it be?" said the wife, with an expression a little more of earth than heaven, returning to her eye. "Who is it, Mr. Woodsum? You haven't named it to her, have you?"

"Oh, by no means," said Mr. Woodsum, "but, my dear, we had better drop the subject—it agitates you too much."

"But, Mr. Woodsum, you must tell me who it is—I can never die in peace till you do."

"It is a subject too painful to talk about," said Mr. Woodsum, "and it don't appear to me it would be best to tell names."

"But I insist upon it," said Mrs. Woodsum, who had, by this time raised herself up with great earnestness, and leaning upon her elbow, while her searching glance was reading every muscle in her husband's face. "Mr. Woodsum, I insist upon it."

"Well, then," said Mr. Woodsum, with a sigh, "if you insist upon it, my dear—I have thought that if it should be the will of Providence to take you from us to be here no more, I have thought I should marry for my second wife, Hannah Lovejoy."

An earthly fire at once flashed upon Mrs. Woodsum's eyes—she leaped from the bed like a cat, walked across the room, and seated herself in a chair.

"What!" she exclaimed, in a trembling voice, almost choked with agitation, "what! marry that sleepy slut of a Hannah Lovejoy! Mr. Woodsum, that is too much for flesh and blood to bear. I can't endure that—nor I won't! Hannah Lovejoy to be the mother of my children! No, that's what never shall be! So you may go to your ploughing, Mr. Woodsum, and set your heart at rest."

"Susan," she continued, turning to one of the girls, "make us more fire under that dinner pot."

Mr. Woodsum went to the field, and pursued his work; and when he returned at the dinner hour, he found the family dinner well prepared, and his wife prepared to do the honours of the table. Mrs. Woodsum's health from that day continued to improve, and she was never afterwards visited by the terrible illness of the hypochondriac.