

Lady Sydney Morgan

*The
Wild
Irish
Girl*



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The Wild Irish Girl

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**THE EARL OF M———
TO THE HONORABLE HORATIO M———, KING'S
BENCH.**

Castle M———, Leicestershire,

Feb. —, 17——.

If there are certain circumstances under which a fond father can address an imprisoned son without suffering the bitterest heart-rendings of paternal agony, such are not those under which I now address you. To sustain the loss of the most precious of all human rights, and forfeit our liberty at the shrine of virtue, in defence of our country abroad, or of our public integrity and principles at home, brings to the heart of the sufferer's dearest sympathising friend a soothing solace, almost concomitant to the poignancy of his afflictions; and leaves the decision difficult, whether in the scale of human feelings, triumphant pride or affectionate regret preponderate.

"I would not," said the old earl of Ormond, "give up my dead son for twenty living ones." Oh! how I envy such a father the possession, and even the *loss* of such a child: with what eagerness my heart rushes back to that period when I too triumphed in my son; when I beheld him glowing in all the unadulterated virtues of the happiest nature,

flushed with the proud consciousness of superior genius, refined by a taste intuitively elegant, and warmed by an enthusiasm constitutionally ardent; his character indeed tinctured with the bright colouring of romantic eccentricity, but marked by the indelible traces of innate rectitude, and ennobled by the purest principles of native generosity, the proudest sense of inviolable honour, I beheld him rush eagerly on life, enamoured of its seeming good, incredulous of its latent evils, till fatally fascinated by the magic spell of the former, he fell an early victim to the successful lures of the latter. The growing influence of his passions kept pace with the expansion of his mind, and the moral powers of the *man of genius*, gave way to the overwhelming propensities of the *man of pleasure*. Yet in the midst of those exotic vices (for as such even yet I would consider them,) he continued at once the object of my parental partiality and anxious solicitude; I admired while I condemned, I pitied while I reproved.

The rights of primogeniture, and the mild and prudent cast of your brother's character, left me no cares either for his worldly interest or moral welfare: born to titled affluence, his destination in life was ascertained previous to his entrance on its chequered scene; and equally free from passions to mislead, or talents to stimulate, he promised to his father that series of temperate satisfaction which,

unillumined by those coruscations, *your* superior and promising genius flashed on the parental heart, could not prepare for its sanguine feelings that mortal disappointment with which *you* have destroyed all its hopes. On the recent death of my father I found myself possessed of a very large but incumbered property: it was requisite I should make the same establishment for my eldest son, that my father had made for me; while I was conscious that my youngest was in some degree to stand indebted to his own exertions, for independence as well as elevation in life.

You may recollect that during your first college vacation, we conversed on the subject of that liberal profession I had chosen for you, and you agreed with me, that it was congenial to your powers, and not inimical to your taste; while the part I was anxious you should take in the legislation of your country, seemed at once to rouse and gratify your ambition; but the pure flame of laudable emulation was soon extinguished in the destructive atmosphere of pleasure, and while I beheld you, in the visionary hopes of my parental ambition, invested with the crimson robe of legal dignity, or shining brightly conspicuous in the splendid galaxy of senatorial luminaries, *you* were idly presiding as the high priest of libertinism at the nocturnal orgies of vitiated dissipation, or indolently lingering out your life in elegant but unprofitable pursuits.

It were as vain as impossible to trace you through every degree of error on the scale of folly and imprudence, and such a repetition would be more heart wounding to me than painful to you, were it even made under the most extenuating bias of parental fondness.

I have only to add, that though already greatly distressed by the liquidation of your debts, at a time when I am singularly circumstanced with respect to pecuniary resources, I will make a struggle to free you from the chains of this your present *iron*-hearted creditor, through the retrenchment of my *own* expenses, and my temporary retreat to the solitude of my Irish estate must be the result; provided that by this sacrifice I purchase your acquiescence to my wishes respecting the destiny of your future life, and an unreserved abjuration of the follies which have governed your past.

Yours, &c. &c.

M——.

TO THE EARL OF M———

My Lord,

Suffer me, in the fullness of my heart, and in the language of one prodigal and penitent as myself, to say, “I have sinned against Heaven and thee, and am no longer worthy to be called thy son.” Abandon me then, I beseech you, as such; deliver me up to the destiny, that involves me to the complicated tissue of errors and follies I have so industriously woven with my own hands; for though I am equal to sustain the judgment my own vices have drawn down upon me, I cannot support the cruel mercy with which your goodness endeavours to avert its weight.

Among the numerous catalogues of my faults, a sordid selfishness finds no place. Yet I should deservedly incur its imputation, were I to accept of freedom on such terms as

you are so generous to offer. No, my Lord, continue to adorn that high and polished circle in which you are so eminently calculated to move; nor think so lowly of one, who, with all his faults, is *your son*, as to believe him ready to purchase *his* liberty at the expense of *your* banishment from your native country.

I am, &c. &c.
King's Bench. H. M.

TO THE HON. HORATIO M———.

An act to which the exaggeration of *your* feelings gives the epithet of banishment, I shall consider as a voluntary sequestration from scenes of which I am weary, to scenes which, though thrice visited, still preserve the poignant charms of novelty and interest. Your hasty and undigested answer to my letter (written in the prompt emotion of the moment, ere the probable consequence of a romantic rejection to an offer not unreflectingly made, could be duly weighed or coolly examined) convinces me experience has contributed little to the modification of your feelings, or the prudent regulation of your conduct. It is this promptitude of feeling, this contempt of prudence, that formed the predisposing cause of your errors and your follies. Dazzled by the brilliant glare of the splendid virtues, you saw not, you would not see, that prudence was among the first of moral excellences; the director, the regulator, the standard of them all; that it is in fact the corrector of virtue herself; for even *virtue*, like the *sun*, has her *solstice*, beyond which she ought not to move.

If you would retribute what you seem to lament, and unite restitution to penitence, leave this country for a short time, and abandon with the haunts of your former blameable pursuits, those associates who were at once the cause and punishment of your errors. I myself will become your partner in exile, for it is to my estate in Ireland I *banish* you for the summer. You have already got through the “first rough brakes” of your profession: as you can now serve the last term of this season, I see no cause why *Coke upon Lyttleton* cannot be as well studied amidst the wild seclusion of Connaught scenery, and on the solitary shores of the “steep Atlantic,” as in the busy bustling precincts of the Temple.

I have only to add, that I shall expect your undivided attention will be given up to your professional studies; that you will for a short interval resign the fascinating pursuits of polite literature and belles lettres, from which even the syren spell of pleasure could not tear you, and which snatched from vice many of those hours I believed devoted to more serious studies. I know you will find it no less difficult to resign the elegant theories of your favourite *Lavater*, for the dry facts of law reports, than to exchange your duodecimo editions of the amatory poets, for heavy tomes of cold legal disquisitions; but happiness is to be purchased, and labour is the price; fame and independence are the result of talent united to great exertion, and the elegant enjoyments of literary leisure are never so keenly relished as when tasted under the shade of that flourishing laurel which our own efforts have reared to mature perfection. Farewell! My agent has orders respecting the

arrangement of your affairs. You must excuse the procrastination of our interview till we meet in Ireland, which I fear will not be so immediate as my wishes would incline. I shall write to my banker in Dublin to replenish your purse on your arrival in Ireland, and to my Connaught steward, to prepare for your reception at M——— house. Write to me by return.

Once more farewell!

M———.

TO THE EARL OF M———

My Lord,

He who agonized on the bed of Procrostus reposed on a couch of down, compared to the sufferings of him who in the heart he has stabbed, beholds the pulse of generous affection still beating with an invariable throb for the being who has inflicted the wound.

I shall offer you no thanks, my Lord, for the generosity of your conduct, nor any extenuation for the errors of mine.

The gratitude the one has given birth to—the remorse which the other has awakened, bid equal defiance to expression. I have only (fearfully) to hope, that you will not deny my almost forfeited claim to the title of your son.

H. M.

TO J. D., ESQ., M. P.

Holyhead.

We are told in the splendid Apocrypha of ancient Irish fable, that when one of the learned was missing on the Continent of Europe, it was proverbially said,

“Amandatus est ad disciplinum in Hibernia”

But I cannot recollect that in its fabulous or veracious history, Ireland was ever the mart of voluntary exile to the man of pleasure; so that when you and the rest of my precious associates miss the track of my footsteps in the oft trod path of dissipation, you will never think of tracing its pressure to the wildest of the Irish shores, and exclaim, *“Amandatus est ad, &c. &c. &c.”*

However, I am so far advanced in the land of *Druidism*, on my way to the “Island of Saints,” while you, in the emporium of the world, are drinking from the cup of conjugal love a temporary oblivion to your past sins and wickedness, and revelling in the first golden dreams of matrimonial illusion.

I suppose an account of my high crimes and misdemeanours, banishment, &c. &c. have already reached your ears; but while my brethren in transportation are offering up their wishes and their hopes on the shore, to the unpropitious god of winds, indulge me in the garrulity of egotism, and suffer me to correct the overcharged picture of that arch charicature *report*, by giving you a correct *ebauche* of the recent circumstances of my useless life.

When I gave you convoy as far as Dover, on your way to France, I returned to London, to

“Surfeit on the same
and yawn my joys——”

And was again soon plunged in that dreadful vacillation of mind from which your society and conversation had so lately redeemed me.

Vibrating between an innate propensity to *rights* and an habitual adherence to *wrong*; sick of pursuits I was too indolent to relinquish, and linked to vice, yet still enamoured of virtue; weary of the useless, joyless inanity of my existence, yet without energy, without power to regenerate my worthless being; daily losing ground in the minds of the inestimable few who were still interested for my welfare; nor compensating for the loss, by the gratification of any one feeling in my own heart, and held up as an object of fashionable popularity for sustaining that character, which of all others I most despised; my taste impoverished by a vicious indulgence, my senses palled by repletion, my heart chill and unawakened, every appetite depraved and pampered into satiety, I fled from myself, as the object of my own utter contempt and detestation, and found a transient pleasurable inebriety in the well practised blandishments of Lady C——.

You who alone know me, who alone have *openly* condemned, and *secretly* esteemed me, you who have wisely culled the blossom of pleasure, while I have sucked its poison, know that I am rather a *méchant par air*, than from any irresistible propensity to indiscriminate libertinism. In fact, the *original sin* of my nature militates against the hackneyed modes of hackneyed licentiousness; for I am too profound a voluptuary to feel any exquisite gratification from such gross pursuits as the “*swinish multitude*” of

fashion ennoble with that name of little understood, *pleasure*. Misled in my earliest youth by “passion’s meteor ray,” even then my heart called (but called in vain,) for a thousand delicious refinements to give poignancy to the mere transient impulse of sense.

Oh! my dear friend, if in that sunny season of existence when the ardours of youth nourish in our bosom a thousand indescribable emotions of tenderness and love, it had been *my* fortunate destiny to have met with a being, who—but this is an idle regret, perhaps an idle supposition;—the moment of ardent susceptibility is over, when woman becomes the sole spell which lures us to good or ill, and when her omnipotence, according to the bias of her own nature, and the organization of those feelings on which it operates, determines, in a certain degree our destiny through life—leads the mind through the medium of the heart to the noblest pursuits, or seduces it through the medium of the passions to the basest career.

That I became the dupe of Lady C——, and her artful predecessor, arose from the want of that “something still unpossessed,” to fill my life’s dreadful void. I sensibly felt the want of an object to interest my feelings, and laboured under that dreadful interregnum of the heart, reason and ambition; which leaves the craving passions open to every invader. Lady C—— perceived the situation of my mind, and—but spare me the detail of a connexion which even in memory, produces a *nausea* of every sense and feeling. Suffice it to say, that equally the victim of the husband’s villainy as the wife’s artifice, I stifled on its birth a threatened prosecution, by giving my bond for a sum I was

unable to liquidate: it was given as for a gambling debt, but my father, who had long suspected, and endeavoured to break this fatal connexion, guessed at the truth, and suffered me to become a guest (*mal volontaire*) in the King's Bench. This unusual severity on his part, lessened not on mine the sense of his indulgence to my former boundless extravagance, and I determined to remain a prisoner for life, rather than owe my liberty to a new imposition on his tenderness, by such solicitings as have hitherto been invariably crowned with success, though answered with reprehension.

I had been already six weeks a prisoner, deserted by those gay moths that had fluttered round the beam of my transient prosperity; delivered up to all the maddening meditation of remorse, when I received a letter from my father (then with my brother in Leicestershire,) couched in his usual terms of reprehension, and intervals of tenderness; ascertaining every error with judicial exactitude, and associating every fault with some ideal excellence of parental creation, alternately the father and the judge; and as you once said, when I accused him of partiality to his eldest born, "talking *best* of Edward was *most* of me."

In a word, he has behaved like an Angel. So well, that by Heavens! I can scarcely bear to think of it. A spurious half-bred generosity—a little tincture of illiberality on his side, would have been Balm of Gillead to my wounded conscience; but with unqualified goodness he has paid all my debts, supplied my purse beyond my wants, and only asks in return, that I will retire for a few months to Ireland, and this I believe merely to wean me from the presence of

an object which he falsely believes still hangs about my heart with no moderate influence.

And yet I wish his mercy had flowed in any other channel, even though more confined and less liberal.

Had he banished me to the savage desolations of Siberia, my exile would have had some character; had he even transported me to a South Sea Island, or threw me into an Esquimaux hut, my new species of being would have been touched with some interest; for in fact, the present relaxed state of my intellectual system requires some strong transition of place, circumstance, and manners, to wind it up to its native tone, to rouse it to energy, or awaken it to exertion.

But sent to a country against which I have a decided prejudice—which I suppose semi-barbarous, semi-civilized; has lost the strong and hardy features of savage life, without acquiring those graces which distinguish polished society—I shall neither participate in the poignant pleasure of awakened curiosity and acquired information, nor taste the least of those enjoyments which courted my acceptance in my native land. Enjoyments did I say! And were they indeed enjoyments? How readily the mind adopts the phraseology of habit, when the sentiment it once clothed no longer exists. Would that my past pursuits were even in *recollection*, the aspect of enjoyments. But even my memory has lost its character of energy, and the past, like the present, appears one unwearied scene of chill and vapid existence. No sweet point of reflection seizes on the recollective powers. No actual joy woos my heart's participation, and no prospect of future felicity glows on the

distant vista of life, or awakens the quick throb of hope and expectation; all is cold, sullen and dreary.

Laval seems to entertain no less prejudice against this country than his master, he has therefore begged leave of absence until my father comes over. Pray have the goodness to send me by him a box of Italian crayons, and a good thermometer; for I must have something to relieve the *tedium vitae* of my exiled days; and in my articles of stipulation with my father, chemistry and belles lettres are *specially* prohibited. It was a useless prohibition, for Heaven knows, chemistry would have been the last study I should have flown to in my present state of mind. For how can he look minutely into the intimate structure of things, and resolve them into their simple and elementary substance, whose own disordered mind is incapable of analyzing the passions by which it is agitated, of ascertaining the reciprocal relation of its incoherent ideas, or combining them in different proportions (from those by which they were united by chance,) in order to join a new and useful compound for the benefit of future life? As for belles lettres! so blunted are all those powers once so

“Active and strong, and feelingly alive,
To each fine impulse,”

that not *one* “*pansee couleur de rose*” lingers on the surface of my faded imagination, and I should turn with as much apathy from the sentimental sorcery of *Rosseau*, as from the voluminous verbosity of an High German doctor; yawn over “The Pleasures of Memory,” and run the risk of

falling fast asleep with the brilliant *Madame de Sevigne* in my hand. So send me a Fahrenheit, that I may bend the few coldly mechanical powers left me, to ascertain the temperature of my wild western *territories*, and expect my letters from thence to be only filled with the summary results of metoric instruments, and synoptical views of common phenomena.

Adieu.
H. M.

LETTER I.

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TO J. D. ESQ., M. P.

Dublin, March, —, 17—

I remember, when I was a boy, meeting somewhere with the quaintly written travels of *Moryson* through Ireland, and being particularly struck with his assertion, that so late as the days of Elizabeth, an Irish chieftain and his family were frequently seen seated round their domestic fire in a state of perfect nudity. This singular anecdote (so illustrative of the barbarity of the Irish, at a period when civilization had made such a wonderful progress even in its sister countries,) fastened so strongly on my boyish imagination, that whenever the *Irish* were mentioned in my presence, an *Esquimaux* group circling round the fire which was to dress a dinner, or broil an enemy, was the image which presented itself to my mind; and in this trivial source, I believe, originated that early formed opinion of Irish ferocity, which has since been nurtured into a *confirmed prejudice*. So true it is, that almost all the erroneous principles which influence our maturer being, are to be traced to some fatal association of ideas received and formed in early life. But whatever maybe the *cause*, I feel the strongest objection to becoming a resident in the remote part of a country which is still shaken by the convulsions of an anarchical spirit; where for a series of ages the olive of peace has not been suffered to shoot forth *one* sweet blossom of national concord, which

the sword of civil dissension has not cropt almost in the germ; and the natural character of whose factious sons, as we are still taught to believe, is turbulent, faithless, intemperate, and cruel; formerly destitute of arts, letters, or civilization, and still but slowly submitting to their salutary and ennobling influence.

To confess the truth, I had so far suffered prejudice to get the start of unbiassed liberality, that I had almost assigned to these rude people scenes appropriately barbarous; and never was more pleasantly astonished, than when the morning's dawn gave to my view one of the most splendid spectacles in the scene of picturesque creation I had ever beheld, or indeed ever conceived—the bay of Dublin.

A foreigner on board the packet compared the view to that which the bay of Naples affords: I cannot judge of the justness of the comparison, though I am told one very general and commonplace; but if the scenic beauties of the Irish bay are exceeded by those of the Neapolitan, my fancy falls short in a just conception of its charms. The springing up of a contrary wind kept us for a considerable time beating about this enchanting coast; the weather suddenly changed, the rain poured in torrents, a storm arose, and the beautiful prospect which had fascinated our gaze, vanished in the mists of impenetrable obscurity.

As we had the mail on board, a boat was sent out to receive it, the oars of which were plied by six men, whose statures, limbs, and features declared them the lingering progeny of the once formidable race of Irish giants, Bare headed, they “bided the pelting of the pitiless storm,” with no other barrier to its fury, than what tattered check

trousers, and shirts open at neck, and tucked above the elbows afforded; and which thus disposed, betrayed the sinewy contexture of forms, which might have individually afforded a model to sculpture, for the colossal statue of an Hercules, under all the different aspects of strength and exertion. *

* This little marine sketch is by no means a fancy picture;

it was actually copied from the life, in the summer of 1806.

A few of the passengers proposing to venture in the boat, I listlessly followed, and found myself seated by one of these sea monsters, who, in an accent that made me startle, addressed me in English at least as pure and correct as a Thames' boatman would use; and with so much courtesy, cheerfulness, and respect, that I was at a loss to reconcile such civilization of manner to such ferocity of appearance; while his companions as they stemmed the mountainous waves, or plied their heavy oars, displayed such a vein of low humour and quaint drollery, and in a language so curiously expressive and original, that no longer able to suppress my surprise, I betrayed it to a gentleman who sat near me, and by whom I was assured that this species of colloquial wit was peculiar to the lower class of the Irish, who borrowed much of their curious phraseology from the peculiar idiom of their own tongue, and the cheeriness of manner from the native exility of their temperament; "and as for their courteousness." he continued, "you will find them on a further intercourse, civil

even to *adulation*, as long as you treat them with apparent kindness, but an opposite conduct will prove their manner proportionably uncivilized.”

“It is very excusable,” said I, “they are of a class in society to which the modification of the feelings are unknown, and to be sensibly alive to *kindness or to unkindness*, is, in my opinion, a noble trait in the national character of an unsophisticated people.”

While we spoke, we landed, and for the something like pleasurable emotion, which the first on my list of Irish acquaintance produced in my mind, I distributed among these “sons of the waves,” more silver than I believe they expected Had I bestowed a principality on an Englishman of the same rank, he would have been less lavish of the *eloquence* of gratitude on his benefactor, though he might equally have felt the *sentiment*.—So much for my voyage *across the Channel!*

This city is to London like a small temple of the Ionic order, whose proportions are delicate, whose character is elegance, compared to a vast palace, whose Corinthian pillars at once denote strength and magnificence.

The wondrous extent of London excites our amazement; the compact uniformity of Dublin our admiration. But a dispersion is less within the *coup-d’oil* of observance, than aggregation, the small, but harmonious features of Dublin seize at once on the eye, while the scattered but splendid traits of London, excite a less immediate and more progressive admiration, which is often lost in the intervals that occur between those objects which are calculated to excite it.

In London, the miserable shop of a gin seller, and the magnificent palace of a Duke, alternately create disgust, or awaken approbation.

In Dublin the buildings are not arranged upon such democratic principles. The plebian hut offers no foil to the patrician edifice, while their splendid and beautiful public structures are so closely connected, as with *some* degree of policy to strike *at once* upon the eye in the happiest combination. *

* Although in one point of view, there may be a policy in this close association of splendid objects, yet it is a circumstance of general and just condemnation to all strangers who are not confined to a partial survey of the city.

In other respects this city appears to me to be the miniature copy of our imperial original, though minutely imitative in show and glare. Something less observant of life's prime luxuries, order and cleanliness, there are a certain class of wretches who haunt the streets of Dublin, so emblematic of vice, poverty, idleness, and filth, that disgust and pity frequently succeed in the minds of the stranger to sentiments of pleasure, surprise, and admiration. For the origin of this evil, I must refer you to the supreme police of the city; but whatever may be the cause, the effects (to an

Englishman especially) are dreadful and disgusting beyond all expression.

Although my father has a large connexion here, yet he only gave me a letter to his banker, who has forced me to make his house my home for the few days I shall remain in Dublin, and whose cordiality and kindness sanctions all that has ever been circulated of Irish hospitality.

In the present state of my feelings, however, a party on the banks of the *Ohio*, with a tribe of Indian hunters, would be more consonant to my inclinations than the refined pleasures of the most polished circles in the world. Yet these warm-hearted people, who find in the name of stranger an irresistible lure to every kind attention, will force me to be happy in despite of myself, and overwhelm me with invitations, some of which it is impossible to resist. My prejudices have received some mortal strokes, when I perceived that the natives of this barbarous country have got goal for goal with us, in every elegant refinement of life and manners; the only difference I can perceive between a London and a Dublin *rout* is, that here, amongst the first class, there is a warmth and cordiality of address, which, though perhaps not more sincere than the cold formality of British ceremony, is certainly more fascinating. *

* “Every unprejudiced traveller who visits them
(the Irish)
will be as much pleased with their cheerfulness as
obliged
by their hospitality; and will find them a brave,
polite,
and liberal people.”—Philosophical Survey through

Ireland

by Mr. Young.

It is not, however, in Dublin I shall expect to find the tone of national character and manner; in the first circles of all great cities (as in courts) the native features of national character are softened into general uniformity, and the genuine feelings of nature are suppressed or exchanged for a political compliance with the reigning modes and customs, which hold their tenure from the sanction and example of the seat of government. Before I close this, I must make one observation, which I think will speak more than volumes for the refinement of these people.

During my short residence here, I have been forced, in true spirit of Irish dissipation, into three parties of a night; and I have upon these occasions observed that the most courted objects of popular attention, were those whose talents alone endowed them with distinction. Besides amateurs, I have met with many professional persons, whom I knew in London as public characters, and who are here incorporated in the first and most brilliant circles, appearing to feel no other inequality, than what their own superiority of genius confers.

I leave Dublin to-morrow for M——— house. It is situated in the county of ————, on the northwest coast of Connaught, which I am told is the classic ground of Ireland. The native Irish, pursued by religious and political bigotry, made it the asylum of their sufferings, and were separated by a provincial barrier from an intercourse with the rest of Ireland, until after the Restoration; so I shall have

a fair opportunity of beholding the Irish character in all its *primeval* ferocity.

Direct your next to Bally———, which I find is the nearest post town to my *Kamskatkan palace*, where with no other society than that of Black stone and Co. I shall lead such a life of animal existence, as Prior gives to his Contented Couple—

“They ate, and drank, and slept—what then?
Why, slept, and drank, and ate again.”—

Adieu. H. M.

LETTER II.

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TO J. D. ESQ., M. P.

M——— House.

In the various modes of penance invented by the various *penance mongers* of pious austerity, did you ever hear the travelling in an *Irish postchaise* enumerated as a punishment, which by far exceeds horse-hair shirts and voluntary flagellation?

My first day's journey from Dublin being as wet a one as this moist climate and capricious season ever produced, my berlin answered all the purposes of a *shower bath*, while the ventillating principles on which the windows were constructed, gave me all the benefit to be derived from the *breathy* influence of the four cardinal points.

Unable any longer to sit tamely enduring the "*penalty of Adam, the season's change*," or to sustain any longer the "hair-breadth 'scapes," which the most dismantled of vehicles afforded me, together with delays and stoppages of every species to be found in the catalogue of procrastination and mischance, I took my seat in a mail coach which I met at my third stage, and which was going to a town within twenty miles of Bally———. These twenty miles, by far the most agreeable of my journey, I performed as we once (in days of boyish errantry) accomplished a tour to Wales—on foot.

I had previously sent my baggage, and was happily unincumbered with a servant, for the fastidious delicacy of Monsieur Laval would never have been adequate to the fatigues of a pedestrian tour through a country wild and mountainous as his own native *Savoy*. But to me every difficulty was an effort of some good *genius* chasing the demon of lethargy from the usurpations of my mind's empire. Every obstacle that called for exertion was a temporary revival of latent energy; and every unforced effort worth an age of indolent indulgence.

To him who derives gratification from the embellished labours of art, rather than the simple but sublime operation of nature, *Irish* scenery will afford little interest; but the bold features of its varying landscape, the stupendous attitude of its "cloud capt" mountains, the impervious gloom of its deep embosomed glens, the savage desolation of its uncultivated heaths, and boundless bogs, with those rich veins of a picturesque champaigne, thrown at intervals into gay expansion by the hand of nature, awaken in the mind of the poetic or pictorial traveller, all the pleasures of tasteful enjoyment, all the sublime emotions of a rapt imagination. And if the glowing fancy of Claude Lorraine would have dwelt enraptured on the paradisial charms of English landscape, the superior genius of Salvator Rosa would have reposed its eagle wing amidst those scenes of mysterious sublimity, with which the wildly magnificent landscape of Ireland abounds. But the liberality of nature appears to me to be here but frugally assisted by the donations of art. Here *agriculture* appears in the least felicitous of her aspects. The rich treasures of Ceres seldom wave their golden heads over

the earth's fertile bosom; the verdant drapery of young plantations rarely screens out the coarser features of a rigid soil, the cheerless aspect of a gloomy bog; while the unvaried surface of the perpetual pasturage which satisfies the eye of the interested grazier, disappoints the glance of the tasteful spectator.

Within twenty miles of Bally——— I was literally dropt by the stage at the foot of a mountain, to which your native *Wrekin* is but a hillock. The dawn was just risen, and flung its gray and reserved tints on a scene of which the mountainous region of Capel Cerig will give you the most adequate idea.

Mountain rising over mountain, swelled like an amphitheatre to those clouds which, faintly tinged with the sun's prelusive beams, and rising from the earthly summits where they had reposed, incorporated with the kindling æther of a purer atmosphere.

All was silent and solitary—a tranquility tinged with terror, a sort of “delightful horror,” breathed on every side. —I was alone, and felt like the presiding genius of desolation!

As I had previously learned my route, after a minute's contemplation of the scene before me, I pursued my solitary ramble along a steep and trackless path, which wound gradually down towards a great lake, an almost miniature sea, that lay embosomed amidst those stupendous heights whose rugged forms, now bare, desolate, and barren, now clothed with yellow furze and creeping underwood, or crowned with misnic forests, appeared towering above my head in endless variety. The progress of the sun convinced

me that *mine* must have been slow, as it was perpetually interrupted by pauses of curiosity and admiration, and by long and many lapses of thoughtful reverie; and fearing that I had lost my way (as I had not yet caught a view of the village, in which, seven miles distant from the spot where I had left the stage, I was assured I should find an excellent breakfast,) I ascended that part of the mountain where, on one of its vivid points, a something like a human habitation hung suspended, and where I hoped to obtain a *carte du pays*: the exterior of this *hut*, or *cabin*, as it is called, like the few I had seen which were not built of mud, resembled in one instance the magic palace of Chaucer, and was erected with loose stones,

“Which, cunningly, were without mortar laid.”

thinly thatched with straw; an aperture in the roof served rather to *admit* the air than *emit* the smoke, a circumstance to which the wretched inhabitants of those wretched hovels seem so perfectly naturalized, that they live in a constant state of fumigation; and a fracture in the side wall (meant I suppose as a substitute for a casement) was stuffed with straw, while the door, off its hinges, was laid across the threshold, as a barrier to a little crying boy, who sitting within, bemoaned his captivity in a tone of voice not quite so mellifluous as that which Mons. Sanctyon ascribes to the crying children of a certain district in Persia, but perfectly in unison with the vocal exertions of the companion of his imprisonment, a large sow. I approached—removed the barrier: the boy and the animal escaped together, and I