

A TRIP TO EUROPE

Fifteenth article in a series by Miss Margaret Laundry.

IRELAND

On leaving Dublin we crossed directly thro' the centre of Eire thro' Athlone to Galway. It was poor country - flat and uninteresting with many mud, thatched-roof houses. It was late afternoon when we reached Galway and we did "watch the sun go down on Galway Bay", but I'd just have soon have seen the sun go down on Terrace Bay! Galways banks are flat with pebbly beaches and as far as we were concerned it was just a large calm bay with a fairy tale name. Claddaugh, a suburb of Galway, is famous for its good luck rings made from Claddaugh marble. As we were coming out of the town next morning the market square was crowded with little two wheeled, potato filled, carts pulled by sad faced little donkeys - a sight that became quite common as we travelled in Eire.

From here on we stayed at "Bed and Breakfasts", usually in small rooms above cafes, since the hostels were too far removed from the main roads. In our last hostel about 7 miles from Dublin we had to walk 1/2 a mile for every pail of water which we thought was roughing it just a bit too much.

From Galway we came directly south over the River Shannon, thro' Limerick. There were many white and orange thatched cottages; many of the women, young and old wore plaid or black fringed shawls. The towns were dirty and smelly with a permanent coating of manure on the streets. The industrial era does not seem to have touched many parts of Eire yet for horses, oxen, donkeys do most of the farm work. I believe that at least in the lower schools, to perpetuate the language, all subjects are taught in Irish although English is the common tongue on the street.

As we came closer to Killarney, the countryside became more hilly and beautiful. Our drivers pointed out mountain ranges to us, with the most peculiar names - Macgillycuddy's Reeks, Sleive Mish, and one range to the east Knockmealdown Mountains! Killarney itself is a typical town (already described), a tourist haunt about a mile from Lough Leane, the largest of the Killarney Lakes. The Lake is very commercialized, built up by large hotels who do not encourage those other than their guests to walk on their property.

The next day we rented bicycles with hand brakes, and rode seven miles to the Gap
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of Dunbe. At the mouth of the pass was Kate Kerrnie's Cottage. I never did find out its story but it was filled with post cards, souvenirs and American tourists. At the door way were line up ponies, horses, and trotting carts waiting to take passengers thro' the Gap. The road was too steep and too narrow for automobiles but we decided to take a trip on our bikes. However soon after we'd got started the dark sky decided it was time to spoil the fun - and down came the rain! With it came a strong and what felt like a seventy-five mile per hour wind. We walked our bikes in perhaps a mile but the wind and rain were too much so we turned tail and got home as fast as possible. Needless to say we were so wet when we got back that the only thing left was to hang up our clothes to dry and go to bed for the rest of the day.

That evening after the rain had stopped, we decided to tour the Lough Leane, so rode around it to a park at one end of the Lake past Mulkross Abbey. Mountains rise steeply to one side but they were completely covered with mist that evening. Its banks are heavily treed with evergreens and small wooded islands are sprinkled through it.

Next morning we were hoping to take the coast road along through Bantry but the rain and lack of traffic decided us to cut directly through the Kerry Hills (Derrynasaggart Mountains) to Cork. Had a ride with a lady school teacher, who, when we reached her farm, had her children bring out a big pitcher of foamy milk (fresh from the coos) and a batch of home-made cookies. It didn't take us long to finish off both.

Our next ride was with a couple from Belfast, holidaying with their ten year old son. Five miles north of Cork they took a detour from the main road to let us see Blarney Castle. The castle is in ruins - that is it has no roof or inside but the walls are still sturdy. We climbed a 100 step circular stair case and walked around the parapet to the Blarney Stone - That mythical stone that whosoever shall kiss it shall be gifted with eloquence. Since the stone formed the upper part of the window on the floor below the parapet it was necessary to sit down, hang on to an iron bar above your head and swing backwards, with someone holding your legs, till your head came level with the stone to kiss it. (What a combination of lip-
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