

merry unless he is drunk; and he has never been known to talk to his wife—he only swears at her.

Our walking tour was over, and Dulcie and I were at home again.

"I shall go out and buy a rump steak," I said with some decision, directly we had seen that all was right and had resumed the costumes of civilisation.

"Yes, do, there's a dear!" said Dulcie. "And, Fred dear——"

"Well?"

"You must buy a bigger one than you used to."

"I will."

I did; and Dulcie and I played at Jack Sprat. And I beg that the fastidious reader will not be too hasty in condemning this as a vulgar and unnecessary detail. It is the moral of my story.

Did I say that our walking tour was over? Nay, then I talked but as the fool who knoweth not the pleasures of memory and the imagination! Before our feet had been soiled by the dust of the high road, we had rejoiced in the "good time coming"; while we tramped side by side through the green garden of Merrie England, we tasted to the full the bitter-sweet of reality; but now the best of all had come.

We remember our walking tour; we talk it over together, we tell our friends about it; and, forgetting everything that was unpleasant, we magnify all its joys, and exaggerate about it, telling lies which are always true, because they idealise the real thing, and tell of a walking tour as it should be.

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view."

SEE ANTRIM: A SKETCH OF A LITTLE HOLIDAY IN IRELAND.

BY HENRY FRITH.

(Illustrated from photographs by R. Welch, Belfast.)



THE GIANT'S WELL, GIANT'S CAUSEWAY.

"GOOD-BYE; hope you'll come back safe."

"Don't get shot, old fellow. Can I do anything in case of accidents?"

"What on earth are you going to do *there*?"

These were some of the cheering remarks which greeted the writer when he announced his impending departure with some relatives for Ireland. The speakers

affected much sympathy and offered many good wishes, but the "vacant chaff" did not impose upon us, and we quitted Euston Square for Stranraer and Larne in excellent spirits in August last.

There is nothing novel in the journey, though the change at Carlisle is irksome, and a through train would be appreciated. However, we found a well-appointed steamer awaiting us, and after an unaccountable delay were permitted to go on board.

Of course the condition of the sea was of great interest to the ladies, but the *Princess May*, one of a well-conducted line (of steamers), made nothing of the passage, and reached Larne in a couple of hours. There we rested for the night, and next morning—a Friday—commenced our tour of the north coast.

There are two ways of doing everything, and in this instance we had the usual choice. We could either

leave Larne by the "kyar," and drive up the coast to the Giant's Causeway, or take the train to Portrush, and work back to Larne again by road. We chose the latter alternative.

Behold us, then, landed at Portrush, in the somewhat châlet-like railway station, surmounted by an elegant clock-tower, which was a few days later struck by lightning. We purposed to obtain lodgings, and with that view—and little other prospect, for the rain was descending in torrents—we sallied forth.

"Lodgings? Bless you, sir, I have none to let!"

In this sentence hung our fate. If the Ulster men are divided upon political questions, the unanimity of the Ulster women as regarded domestic arrangements was complete.

"Not a room to let until the fifteenth of the month."

It would appear that lodgings must be let and relet by the middle and end of the month. At any rate, the same answer met us, draggled and wet as we were, at every door. Politeness was general. We were not particular, either, but we could not secure apartments even in some hotels, and we returned to the station damp and somewhat disheartened.

But in every party there is one person who seizes the situation, and holds it. So on this occasion. An hotel was stormed. Yes, there were rooms, as it happened—in an hour the house would have been full! We sat down at once, sent for the luggage, lunched—dined, rather—and then, the afternoon having cleared, wandered about to watch the homeless seeking rest, and to see the surroundings of the "Queen of Ulster."

At the risk of being considered disloyal, we cannot quite recognise the title of Portrush to queenly state. The town is prettily situated, but primitive. The cliffs

and sands are pleasing and extensive, and the views from the road to Dunluce, and from the headland beyond the town, whence the Donegal mountains and bold promontories are picturesquely displayed. There is little to amuse (but much to interest) the traveller, unless he is a devotee to golf, and is fond of scenery of a more or less Cornish order.

There are cliff walks and scrambles, some caves in the "white rocks," and sands for strollers. But the only amusement is Golf. The variously-attired devotees of this popular game are much in evidence, and, of course, care nothing for scenery, excursions, or any such uninteresting pastimes.

But we explored the coast, and even had an idea of imperilling our limbs at Dunluce Castle. This ancient sea-beaten stronghold stands upright upon the sea-shore, dark and forbidding, merged in the cliff at a little distance from the spectator, but bold and frowning upon him as he stands upon the slope of the greensward over against it, within the precincts of the castle.

A narrow, unprotected path over an arch forms the only entrance to the castle. From this somewhat dizzy height an unfortunate cow had just fallen as we arrived, and "gave us pause." The poor creature was already in the hands of "fleshers." As we continued to gaze down, the longing to cross the arch became fainter.

The independence and dreadnought air with which we had arrived, bent upon crossing, gradually oozed away. We were not afraid—oh dear, no! Only very prudent. After all, there was not much to see. What is the use of risking life and limb just to say we have crossed? And so on.

Thus we persuaded ourselves, and as we hesitated we were "lost." A pair of goats in vain tried to encourage us by strolling across the narrowly-bridged chasm, and pausing in the centre of the unguarded path—about eighteen inches wide and some hundred feet high. We saw only the dismembered cow, and shuddered, envying the goats, which complacently looked down from their superior standpoint at the hesitating bipeds.

"I wouldn't mind if I had four legs," remarked one of the party, as she stood at the edge of the chasm; while the writer, nearly half-way across, stood wondering whether he should cross or return. He returned, and thus relinquished the inspection of the castle, the legendary Sweeper's Chamber, the moss-grown apartments, and the cavern in one rash moment—and has repented ever since! It is a grand old pile; and if ever fortune brings us thither again, the crossing of the bridge shall be made.

From Portrush to the Giant's Causeway electricity and steam convey the

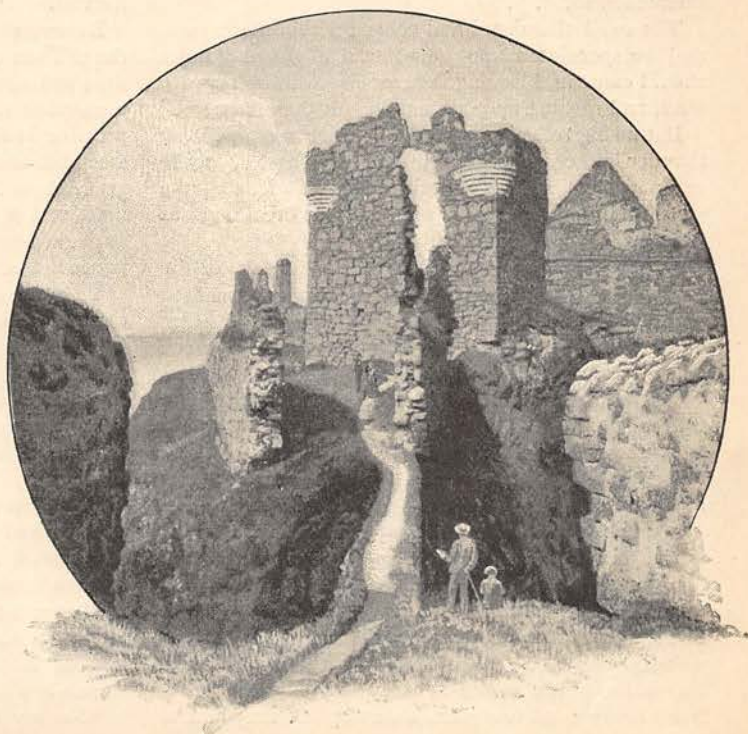
tourist along a fine road, embracing ever-changing views of cliffs and sea. The curious "Heads" and "Faces" in the worn rocks will be sought and seen on the way.

Passing by Bushmills, celebrated for salmon and whisky, we reach the terminus, and are strongly advised to go to the newer of the two hotels. We didn't! The "Causeway" and the "Royal" are rivals. Readers must choose, but the latter is much cheaper, and was more frequented than the other, apparently, while we stayed.

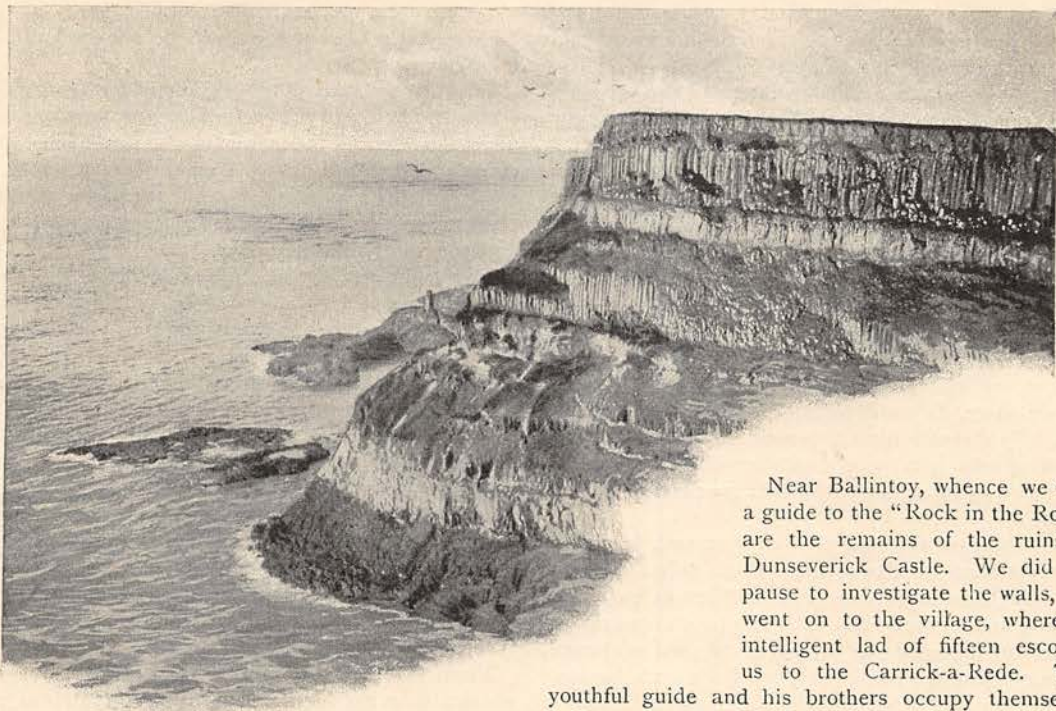
The politeness we met with from Mrs. Kane and her sons must be acknowledged gratefully. Their good-nature and unobtrusive kindness will be pleasantly remembered by us all.

Of course, the Causeway is the Lion of the North, and is at first disappointing. So many have described and illustrated the place that there is absolutely nothing left unsaid or undepicted. Pictures and photographs give one the idea of a much more extensive and more lofty series of columns, but the wonderful natural arrangement, the marvellous surroundings, fully repay the tourist, and after a few days' sojourn, when he has visited the caverns and inspected the coast from a boat, he will confess that the time has been well spent.

From the high bold cliffs a most extensive view is obtainable, including Portrush, Innishowen Head, and the entrance to Lough Foyle. Fair Head and the Scotch coast are also discernible. So we walked and explored the caves by water and by land—the latter a curious experience, inasmuch as we had to be



ENTRANCE CAUSEWAY, DUNLUCE CASTLE.



PLEASKIN HEAD, GIANT'S CAUSEWAY.

lifted in from a side-chasm in the dark, as the storm threatened us. . . .

The swell thundered and echoed within the cavern, and we speculated upon our fate if a gigantic roller should come in, blocking the entrance with its massive form, and rushing upon us standing at the upper end.

But no big roller appeared. The tide was low. The thunder had ceased, the lightning had passed away to sea, and Neptune had gone below to rest, leaving the waters heaving and panting in long lazy breathings as the day declined.

So we came and saw the "lions," drank of the Giant's Well, sat in the Wishing Chair, purchased crystals, and would have played the "Giant's Organ" had it been accessible. We laid in a stock of ozone and fresh air before we quitted our hotel in a private "kyar," under young Kane's cheerful guidance, for Ballycastle.

The road to Ballycastle, thirteen miles, passes near "Carrick-a-Rede," the famous "Rock in the Road" of the salmon, which are caught here in large numbers. To cross the apparently frail rope bridge to the island is the test of the tourist's nerves. A slim, swaying structure, with one rope as a "handrail," is stretched over the "boiling abyss." It is not difficult to cross to the island if care be diligently exercised, but the return, being at a greater slope, the feat is increased. People have been known to cross once, but the back-track has proved too great a strain, and they had to be rescued by a boat.

Near Ballintoy, whence we take a guide to the "Rock in the Road," are the remains of the ruins of Dunseverick Castle. We did not pause to investigate the walls, but went on to the village, where an intelligent lad of fifteen escorted us to the Carrick-a-Rede. This

youthful guide and his brothers occupy themselves and support the family in summer by conducting tourists to the bridge.

In the winter months our little guide "lets himself" to the farmers. He is a pleasant, well-spoken, and intelligent boy, and no doubt reaps a sufficient harvest.

Re-mounting our car, after a steep scramble up from the cliff, we continued our way over a sloping, winding road to Ballycastle. The approach is beautiful—the mountains, the valleys, and the sea being equally impressive in their several degrees of beauty. From the steep hill above the seaside portion of the town there is a delightful view of the coast and the country inland, and it was with some regret that we descended to alight at the Marine Hotel, where rooms were to be in readiness.

These were apartments in a private house; and if one does not mind sleeping in a lodging-house drawing-room, and turning a marble-topped cheffonier into a toilette-table and washing-stand, there is no reason why one should not be comfortable, even if the gasalier hang over your bed, and threaten to fall at what time the nurse rises in the night to soothe the upstairs infant!

This infant was a feature of the entertainment. Its "food" had not arrived, and the hotel maiden had thoughtfully supplied sour milk to the nurse. Consequent restlessness of infant, while the long-suffering mother was compelled to go out at four a.m. to seek food! No one but a man was visible, and he was seeking admission to the sleeping hotel. Burglar! wretch!

"No, my lady; I'm the sweep; and sorra one can I make hear me! Milk, is it? Well, then, just go down

to Jenny Cole ; she has a son with a broken leg, an' is sittin' up. She'll give ye some."

So she did—gave it willingly—and the child became more restful. Such is an incident of Ballycastle hotel life. If young Cole had not broken his leg the infant would have "starved," and the lodgers would have been greatly annoyed. So there is a fair side to every ill.

Ballycastle is, in our estimation, preferable to Portrush. There are some charming walks in the vicinity, and the excursion to Fair Head, a most extensive and wild promontory, commanding a grand view, will repay the pedestrian or the lazier car-occupant. We twice wandered to the head of the coast-road, across the golf links, and along the rough road and path by the quarries.

On the first occasion, just as we had reached the upper hill-path, rolling thunder and massive clouds warned us to seek shelter. But little protection could be found. Under the lee of a wall, part of a ruined cottage, we huddled, and weathered the storm, which was pretty severe while it passed overhead. By the time it had enveloped Rathlin Island we felt more disposed to return to Ballycastle than to continue the expedition.

Besides, the evening was still threatening ; so we went back unsatisfied.

However, next day we gained the Head by the same route, and trudged across its weird and extensive wastes. The mountain tarns embedded in the wild bog-land, the stillness and solitude of the place, are extremely striking. Anyone in want of a situation—for a novel

—or requiring grim and gruesome surroundings, should pass an hour or two upon the slopes of the wild and rugged headland called Fair.

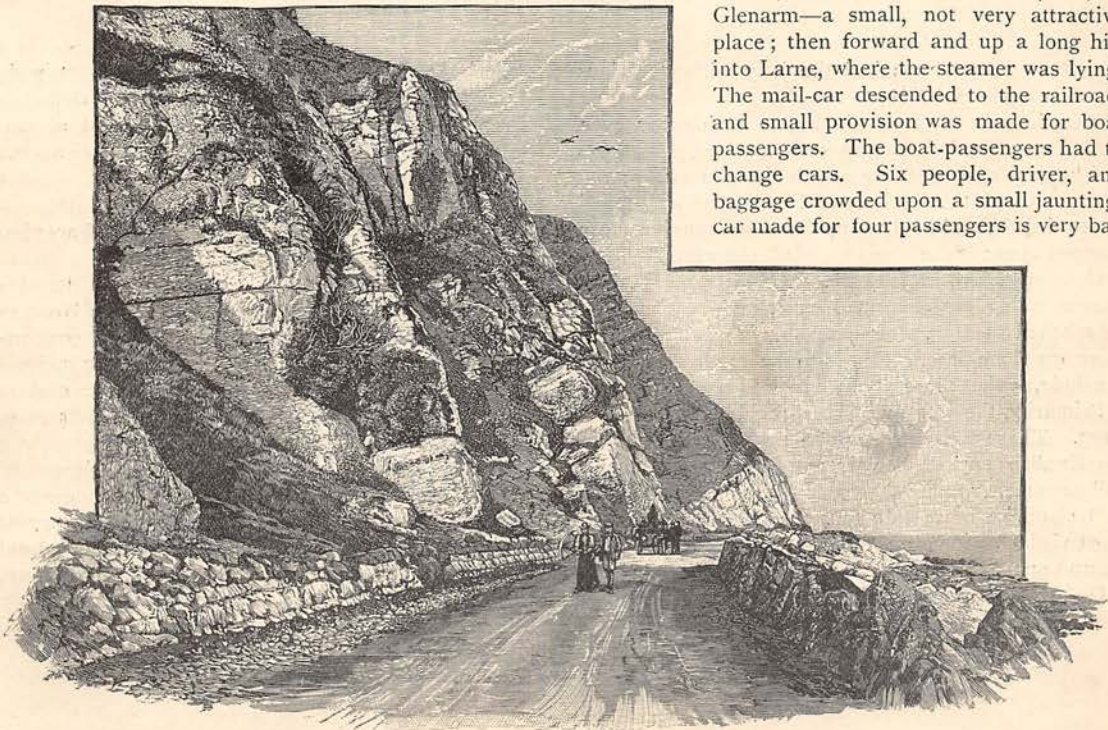
The sea rolls in grandly upon Ballycastle beach, and dashes in over the black rocks ; the hills rise pleasantly close by, and the fields are ripe to harvest of wheat and flax. But we leave these attractions, and drive to Cushendall across a wild, almost uninhabited district, chiefly moorland, heather-covered in all directions. The heather was lovely in its hues in the whole district traversed.

When we reached Cushendall we were confirmed in our opinion that we had chosen the proper direction for our route. This little town is beautifully placed in a valley by the sea. Trees grow and flourish at the water's edge. Beautiful valleys — one spanned by a remarkable viaduct — penetrate inland, and the charming Glenariff, a wooded river-gorge, lively with waterfalls, and clothed in fern and foliage, is easily accessible.

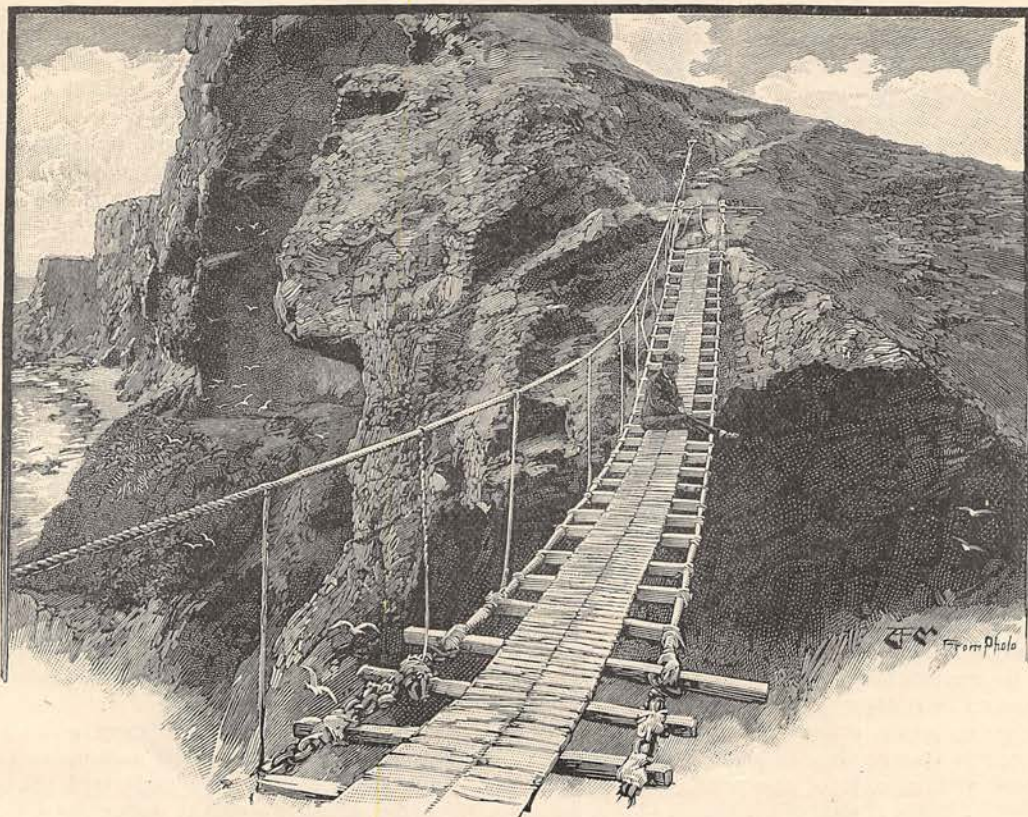
Our kindly host of the hotel (Delargy) gave us a delightful drive to Cushenden in his own particular car one morning, and we thus had special opportunities to see the neighbourhood. In every direction beautiful views and kindly inhabitants, sea, woodland, glen, and mountain meet us pleasantly. Here at Cushendall was buried "Ossian the Bard" ; and there are many places worthy of a visit in the vicinity.

But time will not permit us to tarry, and space is limited now. Off again upon the mail-car to Larne, we go along a fine and well-engineered coast-road close to the sea all the way to Larne ; past Garron

Tower, the home of the Tempests, to Glenarm—a small, not very attractive place ; then forward and up a long hill into Larne, where the steamer was lying. The mail-car descended to the railroad, and small provision was made for boat passengers. The boat-passengers had to change cars. Six people, driver, and baggage crowded upon a small jaunting-car made for four passengers is very bad



GARRON POINT.



CARRICK-A-REDE BRIDGE.

catering. How we reached the jetty without serious accident is still a marvel to all.

With bags in our laps, clinging to each other, even resting upon the lady passengers' shoulders, passengers and luggage managed to reach the jetty in safety; and I hereby thank the dignitary of the Church who gripped me so tightly, and held me up by sheer muscle as we bumped along, "the observed of all observers."

Once on board, we felt safe. Stranraer received us after a rolling but pleasant transit, and next evening we reached London, after sixteen days' absence. But there are some practical notes to be made before we conclude, so that those who intend to run may first read.

Primarily, the hotels we visited require some amendment. There are many improvements desirable from the English tourist's view, but no doubt "the season" will account for many shortcomings. Yet in "justice to Ireland," I must state that the defects noted were most visible at the only "first-class" house we stayed at, and one "under English management," too!

On the other hand, at Kane's and Delargy's Hotels

particularly, liberality and cheapness are met with. At the "Royal" (Giant's Causeway) and at Delargy's "Cushendall," kindness, civility, and liberal accommodation are evident without any sense of obligation.

"Oh, it's no trouble at all!"

"Anything you like, sir!"

"Ye shall have it!" and such-like cheerful acquiescence was usual.

Politeness and good-nature everywhere. No attempts at extortion, no "hanging round" for "tips." Honesty and kindness, and the desire to make one comfortable, are present in the hotels we visited. The sanitary arrangements are satisfactory. The average cost of living "by private arrangement" at the hotels mentioned was seven shillings a-day each.

In conclusion, we may sum up our experiences of the trip thus: it was cheap, pleasant, abounding in fine scenery, novel, and healthy; but we would suggest going earlier in the season than August. The total cost is ten pounds per head, if the tourists can put up, as we did, with and at the cheaper class of hotels.

