

A NOR'-EASTER.
From a Drawing by F. NOEL PATON.

AN UNKNOWN COUNTRY.

PART III.—THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY.

EVERYBODY has heard of the Giant's Causeway, but it is strange how few out of Ireland, or even in Ireland, have seen it. Probably because it is considered—and perhaps was, till late years—a sort of Ultima Thule of civilisation; its nearest links to which, Portrush, Port Stewart, and Bushmills, being, half a century ago, little more than villages. And any one who knows what an Irish village is now, can imagine what these were then.

Port Stewart afterwards grew into a small town, and was well abused as such by one young writer, who just passed through it, William Makepeace Thackeray, and as heartily praised by another, Charles Lever, who was for some time its dispensary doctor, and married there. Meanwhile Portrush became a railway terminus, and a genteel watering place. But little Bushmills remained *in statu quo*, innocent of tourists, bathers, and sight-seers; known only as the nearest point to the celebrated Giant's Causeway; until an enterprising engineer, Mr. W. A. Traill, conceived the idea of utilising its river—the Bush—for the water-power of an electric railway; and so opening up the country, with all its wonders. There are magnificent coast scenery; ruined castles, abbeys, and burial-grounds; cromlechs; Druidical circles; lake-

dwellings, and underground caves; treasures dating from prehistoric times, and absolutely priceless to the artist and the archaeologist.

But even these gentlemen must eat, drink, and sleep, and have a few more comforts than are supposed to be found in an Irish cabin, where the family repose, stretched out like the spokes of a wheel, with their feet towards the turf-fire—of which the smoke goes out by a hole in the roof. A slightly imaginative description, which English tourists will not find realised anywhere; certainly not at the Causeway Hotel.

Arriving dead tired, we noted nothing except that we speedily got a most welcome tea—and a still more welcome bed. Awakening next morning it was to find ourselves in a large, but not too large, hotel, planted on a rising ground near the sea. From the seven windows of its coffee-room and drawing-room one could trace the little bay below, the outline of shore beyond, and then away, away, across the wide Atlantic—our “next door neighbour” they told us, being New York. Malin Head, the last point at which Transatlantic voyagers see land, was dimly visible in the distance.

But where—and what—was the Giant's Causeway? Of course we had read about it, and some of us had seen pictures of it; but

NOTE.—The author has lately been informed that she erred in supposing the present O'Neills of Shanes Castle to be descended from the Red Hand of Ulster. They were an English family called Chichester, who took the name of O'Neill on acquiring the property.

If any future errors, verbal or otherwise, may, despite her care, creep into these papers, the author would be very glad to receive immediate corrections.

I think, even the Violet-the most learned amongst us-had very vague ideas about it. Should we attack it by land or by sea?

"By sea is best, and then you can row first to the caves, which are very fine," said a visitor who, in response to a letter of introduction, had appeared at nine that morning, and soon turned from a stranger into a friend. "I should advise you to start at once--it is a calm day" (alas, his notion of "a calm day," and ours, we found afterwards, did not quite coincide). "You may not get such weather again. How soon can you be ready? and I'll find you the best guide I can--John King--he knows everything, and everybody knows him."

Shortly John King stood at the door, cap in hand; a shrewd-looking, intelligent Irishman, elderly but not old, wiry and weather-beaten.

"Sure, ladies, it's a beautiful day, and I've got ye a good boat--and I'll take yez down to the landing-stage in no time."

The landing-stage-our artist has sketched it--was a flat, smooth rock at the foot of a steep descent, ending in one of the many small bays that indent the coast. There had it all to ourselves, for the hotel was nearly empty--as it had been, we heard, from the time the Belfast riots began--and the little handful of tourists--who come by rail and car for a "day out," rarely appear before noon.

The waves ran gently in and out of this peaceful, sheltered cove; so we entered gaily one of the boats lying there--good, strong, heavy-oared boats, looking as if accustomed to be much knocked about by the waves, as in a few minutes more, they certainly were.

I am no geologist, and when John King began to dilate on basalt and limestone, strata and formations, I felt exceedingly small. So did the Bion Bird, and so did the "Wild Irish Girl--in spite of her hitherto proud position among the castles and graves of her ancestors. The Violet alone was equal to the occasion. We left her to sustain conversation, and admired silently Portcoon cave--where a hermit giant, who had vowed to eat no food from human hands, was fed by seals, which brought it to him in their mouths; and Dinnkerry Cave, four hundred feet long by sixty feet high, and only approachable by water, not habitable, therefore, even by giants. Its solemn black basalt walls, against which great hillocks of water slowly rose and fell, according to the measure of the waves outside, gave one a strange sense of the power of the sea, and the utter powerlessness of petty man.

By and by, our heavy boat began to toss like a skiff on the huge rollers that came tumbling in from the Atlantic. And when the Bird quoted gravely a verse from an anonymous poem

"There's a sort of an up-and-down motion
On the breast of the troublesome ocean,
Which gives me a shadowy notion
That I never "as meant for the sea,"

we all coincided heartily that John King's proposal to "take the long course" and row round the Pleaskin, was decidedly negatived. I fear he displeased us; but we were content to be despised.

What he might have thought of our learning after his experience, in "Huxley and Tyndall," as he familiarly called them, we dared not speculate. He only inquired respectfully what the shining lights had talked about, when they visited the Giant's Causeway.

"Deed, ma'am," said John, with a twinkle of his shrewd eye, "they didn't say much. Ye see, they wanted to get as much out of me as they could, and I wanted to get as much as I could out of them. Sure, them professors is much the same as everybody else, to my thinking. I took out the British Association some years ago. There were several boatfuls, an' I showed 'em everything, but they didn't say much. It was a middling fine day; though not so calm as this one."

Calm indeed! We did not contest the point, but only hoped the British Association had enjoyed itself.

But now for one explanatory word in the humble way in which alone I dare offer it to readers possibly as ignorant as myself.

For one thousand square miles on the north of Ireland there extends a sheet of basalt, varying from ten to a thousand feet in thickness. It is a sort of volcanic lava, which must have been poured out, molten, uncounted ages ago. To volcanic action is also ascribed the curious fact that when this sheet of basalt nears the coast it becomes columnar in character. Fair Head, Bengore, the Pleaskin, are promontories composed of enormous pillars, which at Port-na-Spania--a little bay so named because one of the Spanish Armada went to pieces there--slope gradually down to the sea, forming a perfect causeway, which may possibly extend right under the sea to the opposite coast of Scotland. On the Islands of Staffa and Iona the same formation reappears, giving rise to the legend that it was made by Finn McCool, the Irish giant, out of

politeness to a Scotch giant, whom he wished to come over and fight him, "without wetting the sole of his foot."

John King told us this, and many other stories; pointing out the Chimney-tops, the Giant's Organ, the Giant's Grandmother, &c.—Irish imagination gives a name to everything. And this opportune moment, when the boat was pitching violently, the boatmen chose for showing us boxes of

in the little creek beside the Giant's Causeway.

Most people on first sight of it are disappointed, but every minute's observation lessens this feeling. It is a wonderful place—like nothing else in the world. Imagine a great sloping, natural jetty, jutting out into the sea, its floor composed of vertical basaltic columns, on the tops of which you walk—the bottoms being sunk deep into the sea. There are forty thousand of these columns, and they are set so close together that they form a pavement—fitting as neatly as a parquet floor. Hexagons, septagons, pentagons, are all as exact as if outlined by a human hand and a carpenter's rule—the columns being not formed of a



LANDING-PLACE NEAR THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY.
From a Drawing by F. NOEL PATON.

specimens—which we devoutly wished at the bottom of the sea. Hopeless of purchasers, they pulled up, and suddenly bade us land. The younger folk eagerly leaped out. For me, when at my age you find yourself with one foot on a slippery water-worn rock, and the other—nowhere particular, with the boat sinking from you into the trough of a big wave, the sensation is—not exactly pleasant! I owe it to John King's strong arm and steady hand that, instead of sitting here writing, I am not at this moment quietly sleeping among the two hundred and fifty Spaniards who lie drowned

single block but in pieces varying from one to two feet high, piled each on each, and wedged firmly together, the one end being convex and the other concave. Nature mimics Art so perfectly, that it is difficult to believe the whole was not the handiwork of man—that wonderful last creation, "in action so like an Angel, in apprehension so like a God."

In spite of rather oppressive information as to details—such as the one triangular column, the three nine-sided columns, the Giant's Loom, and the Lady's Wishing-chair—whereon sat a respectable young person

with a strong Belfast accent—the impression of the place was so mysterious, so unaccountable, at least to the unscientific mind, that a sense of awe crept over us. What strange agencies must have been at work—what eons after eons must have slipped by, since the making of the Causeway! There it is now, and will remain, until the end of the world. Yet two hundred years ago it was absolutely unknown. There is no record of it in any ancient Irish literature; and in “Lord Antrim’s Parlour”—a nook in the rocks chosen by the omnipresent British tourist whereon to inscribe his all-important name—the earliest date cut is 1717.

The tradition of the Spanish Armada, which attempted to sail round this coast, and was wrecked there, vessel after vessel, is still rife. We had pointed out to us three different places where the ships are said to have gone down. About the one lost at Port-na-Spania there is no doubt. The story runs that the captain mistook the three Chimney-tops—rocks exceedingly like chimneys—for the pinnacles of Dunluce Castle, and so ran ashore. Every soul perished, except four sailors who were picked up alive. For centuries Spanish coins were occasionally found on the beach at low water, and one large chest full of treasure was taken to Dunluce Castle. Thence, long after, it was removed to Ballymagarry and Ballylough; being finally claimed by the Earl of Antrim, in whose possession the empty coffer—the treasure having long vanished—still remains.

John King, though he conscientiously pointed out the spot and told the tale, seemed more interested in a modern shipwreck—one of those tragic stories which must be common enough on this dangerous coast. An American liner, the *Cambria*, had been wrecked in sight of land, and every soul perished.

“She went down just over there”—by Malin Head. “Some of us rowed out to her, but it was too late. We brought home one dead woman in the bottom of the boat.”

He spoke of it in a matter-of-fact way—as if an every day occurrence, on this dangerous coast. But the fearful element with which they have to deal has its effect, moral and physical, on a seaboard race. John King, though long over sixty, looked hale and hearty, had an arm of iron, and muscular, surefooted limbs that many a young man might have envied. “I’m not done yet,” he said with a smile, when he told me how old he was: and may it be long before he is “done!”

At parting he presented me with a four-

leaved shamrock—that rare find, which grants every wish of the possessor; offering another to the Violet—whom he seemed to regard with greater respect than any of us. Doubtless she will keep it and benefit by it. I gave mine away where it will be more useful than to me, whose “wishing” days are all done.

Returning to lunch, we found the empty coffee-room enlivened by a hot discussion between two new-comers—a mild and rather melancholy-looking American and a rotund specimen of “John Bull”—the John Bull who has made himself—or rather his money; a very different thing—and considers all the world, except England, scarcely good enough for him to set his foot on. During our innocent lunch of bread and jam and milk, we heard him loudly ordering his, which was rather extensive and ended with champagne, and haranguing violently against Ireland.

“It’s a wretched country, and the Irish are such a discontented lot, they’d never be satisfied with anything we” (oh, that magnificent *we!*) “gave them.”

Here the Yankee tried to put in a good word, but was quickly annihilated.

“You Americans are just as bad. You back Ireland in all her rebellion. And what are you yourselves? Only ‘third class.’ You’ve no gentlemen among you. And your ladies—they’re not bad-looking but they get old in no time; after five-and-twenty they haven’t a tooth in their heads.”

Here the much-enduring American blazed up. “Sir, I could tell you a few things about your English ladies, if there were not some of them present,—”

We never heard the end of the sentence, for we rose at once and departed—the three girls burning with indignation. Age takes things more calmly than youth; but I determined as a warning to travellers to write down *verbatim* the conversation of these two men. I know nothing of either—not even their names—but they deserve to be thus anonymously pilloried: it cannot harm them, and may do them good. The slow-brained, overbearing, money-loving Saxon is of all things most repellent to the proud, irascible, impassioned Celt. Neither can comprehend the other’s virtues, while all their faults are obnoxiously clear. No wonder that England finds it so difficult to govern Ireland.

We were getting a little hot ourselves over the never-ending question of race—equally balanced between us four—when the scale was turned by the sudden appearance of a fifth addition to our party; whom, following the same system of *lucus a non*

lucendo, I will entitle the Barbarous Scot. Middle-aged but merry, pleasant and paternal, the three girls hailed him with enthusiasm. He had travelled without stopping for thirty-six hours, yet was in the best of spirits, determined to enjoy everything.

Apparently he had thought there was little or nothing to be enjoyed, for he looked round the hotel with an air of mild surprise, "Why, you are quite comfortable!"

Certainly we were—even in the far north of Ireland. We had all that travellers could need, and some things which they seldom get—a charming drawing-room and a first-rate piano. Also, hear it not, ghosts of Finn MacCoul and the Grey Man!—there was actually between us and the wild Atlantic—an asphalted lawn-tennis ground!

The Barbarous Scot eyed everything with great content; and then made the very natural inquiry, "And where is the Giant's Causeway?"

He was taken thither, not by sea—he had had enough of that—but down the steep path, which is really the best way to see it, and from which the groups of midday tourists had all disappeared, leaving the place as silent and solitary as heart could desire.

Equally so was the high cliff-walk—eastward towards the Pleaskin, and looking down on the Causeway, with its surroundings of strange-shaped rocks and boiling sea between—on this coast it seems as if the sea could never be quiet; while turning westward you could see the clear curve of the distant coast—part Donegal, part Derry—with Malin Head at the furthest point, and beyond it the sea, which at the north of Ireland still looks as desolate as in the time of the mythical giants or foreign marauders, Picts and Scots, as much barbarians as the race they attacked and vainly tried to conquer.

As I watched the sun drop down, a red ball of fire, into the Atlantic, it was easy to imagine it all, and difficult to go back into modern life—excellent *table d'hôte* and polite conversation—which to our amazement we saw going on also at the further end of the table between John Bull and the American. They must have settled their little difficulty, and agreed that "Live and let live" is the best motto for opposing nationalities, as well as individuals.

By the time we went up into the drawing-room the wind and sea had risen, and were howling outside like a thousand demons. Windows rattled—doors shook: we could hardly hear ourselves speak. But the fire burned brightly, as if it had been December

instead of August; the jest and the laugh went round; we all felt so happy and "at home" that it was difficult to believe we were sitting in a strange hotel at the utmost north of Ireland.

August 26th.—And the most hopeless day imaginable! The storm had abated—the girls declared they had actually felt their beds shaking during the night: but day-break brought calm, and a downpour of rain that seemed as if it would never cease. A visit to the electric tramway, between Portrush and Bushmills, and to Dunluce Castle, which we had arranged with our kind stranger-friend over-night, became impracticable. However we had letters to write; and found that we could communicate with the outer world by telegraph as easily as we could at home. So we settled ourselves stoically indoors—leaving the Barbarous Scot, who of all things detests doing nothing, to enjoy himself under a macintosh outside, or stand inside, with a field-glass, intently contemplating something in the far distance—perhaps New York.

At noon it began to clear—Irish weather does clear in the most extraordinary way, when you least expect it. Our original plan was vain; but half a day was too much to lose—so we decided on revisiting Carrick-a-rede, which the girls declared they had only half seen in the dim twilight two days before.

It was a grey day still, with occasional droppings of rain; but we determined to enjoy it. We pointed out to the Barbarous Scot all the places we had already seen—Dunseverick, which looked grand against the dull grey sky, and which he allowed was one of the finest old castles he had ever beheld; Ballintoy, which he considered "a wretched hole," as perhaps it was. But the ragged inhabitants, who came out to look at us, only looked; not one of them begged, as, alas! is often done in Ireland—and elsewhere. And when we alighted, to walk past the large quarries in the open cliff—the quarrymen were very civil, and the man with a flag who hurried us on—as they were waiting to "blast" until we had gone by—did his duty as considerately as possible.

When we paused, out of breath, and deafened by the explosion behind us, the Barbarous Scot—who evidently thought he had been brought a long and difficult road to see nothing—demanded—as some readers may also demand—"And what *is* Carrick-a-rede?"

Carrick-a-rede is an isolated rock separated from the mainland by a deep chasm of about

sixty feet across—the island itself being ninety feet above the level of the sea. Over this chasm is a bridge, so slight, that in our artist's sketch it is invisible. It is made with two ropes—barred by transverse pieces of wood so as to form a footway. A third rope is used as a guide-rope for the hand. Across this perilous bridge the fisher-folk—men, women, and children—pass and repass; often carrying heavy weights, as the island is an excellent place for salmon-fishing. One false step and down they would go into the boiling sea, which makes a perpetual whirlpool through this narrow channel.

When we reached the spot, three men were preparing to cross; one at a time, as the bridge swings so, the footway seeming to swing one way and the guide-rope another. Also, the island being somewhat higher than the cliff-side opposite, there were several feet of a steep slope before reaching the centre of the bridge. And the noise and roar of the waters below dashing themselves against black jagged rocks—it turned one dizzy to look and to listen. But the three men crossed, one after the other, with complete indifference, and ascended the ladder—which was fixed against the rocky point where we stood—laughing and joking among themselves.

"Ay-ay, ma'am," said one whom I spoke to—an elderly man—"it needs a bit o' care, an' a steady foot. But we're used to it. We begin it as children, and then we're all right."

"Does no one ever fall?"

He paused a minute. "A year ago a man went over. But he was hearty."

Hearty, we found, is the local euphemism for *drunk*. "And of course he was drowned?"

The fisherman pointed to the whirlpool below. "Couldn't live two minutes, *there*."

"Did you get his body?"

A shake of the head only. "Knocked to bits—sure to be," said the fisherman, as he shouldered his bundle—nets, I think; but each of the three men carried something—and marched off up the steep hill-side. These Antrim men have the Scottish characteristic of speaking but little, and seldom unless spoken to.

After that we watched more men come across, six in all, and then our three girls descended the cliff-ladder. One, the Violet, being "young and foolish," set her foot on the first step of the bridge—but wisely drew back again. We wondered if our artist, who we knew had been there, had crossed it.

"Depend upon it he has! No active

young fellow could resist the pleasure of doing it," said the Barbarous Scot.

I said I hoped this young fellow would have the sense to resist doing a foolhardy thing, except for duty or necessity. The girls, having no data to go upon, argued the point in the abstract; and thence ensued one of those ethical conversations over which we were wont to beguile the time—sometimes fighting so energetically that we quite forgot what we were fighting about. (We afterwards found that this dispute was like that of the two knights on either side the shield. Our artist, when questioned, replied composedly, "Oh yes; the island was the best point for sketching; so I crossed." But I would advise most tourists to think twice before venturing the bridge of Carrick-a-rede.)

It was growing late—yet we lingered; listening to the roar of the waves below, and looking at the sea beyond—wide and blank, except for two islands. One, Sheep Island, was a mere dot on the water. There is a superstition that only twelve sheep can be pastured upon it, if thirteen are landed there they starve; if eleven, they over-eat themselves and die. Rathlin Island, lying like a long narrow fish on the top of the water, five miles distant from the shore, is a curious place—of which we afterwards heard a good deal.

An anonymous writer, two centuries back, calling it by its ancient name of Raghery—describes it as "shaped like an Irish stocking, the toe of which pointeth to the mainland." It is five miles long by half a mile broad; very rocky to the westward—some rocks taking the columnar form as at the Causeway—while the eastern slope is fertile and cultivated. Its inhabitants, once about fifteen hundred, are now not more than five hundred souls—exclusively farmers and fishermen. They speak a combination of Irish and Scottish Gaelic, but very little English; and are a distinct and remarkable race, hardy, daring, and superstitious; and clinging closely to their old history, or tradition, for it is not easy to divide the two.

The quantity of human bones found on the island implies that it must have been the scene of many a forgotten battle; and the islanders speak with a wrath as hot as if it had happened yesterday, of a massacre about the time of Elizabeth, when all the women living there, except one, whose name was McCurdy, were flung over the rocks into the sea. But the only visible relics of antiquity are a part of the cliffs still called "the White Palace," where a Norwegian king is

said to have courted the daughter of an Irish chieftain; and "Bruce's Castle"—a mere fragment—supposed to be one of the many refuges of that great Scottish hero.

Visitors to Rathlin are few, as the only communication between it and Ballycastle, the nearest point to the mainland, is by open boat; and narrow as the channel is, sometimes it cannot be crossed for days or weeks.

Its fauna and flora are said to be interesting. There are no frogs—which, spite of St. Patrick, have crept into the mainland—but there are wild goats, Cornish choughs, gyrfalcons, and abundance of puffins and guillemots. Two tiny fresh-water lakes furnish some rare lacustrine plants. In fact, Rathlin would be a desirable spot for any tourist who was not particular about his accommodation—and indifferent as to the length of time he stayed.

Though boasting a priest and a parson, it is said to be happily free of both doctors and lawyers. The only administrator of justice is Mr. Gage, the owner of the island, and a permanent resident there. Being a legally appointed J.P., he settles all disputes among the innocent and peaceful inhabitants, to whom he is—report declares—an excellent landlord. So, on the whole, Rathlin may be considered a happy island.

We regarded it with longing, though to visit it would, we felt, be impracticable. But those adventurous souls who do so may be sure of the pleasure which there always is in investigating an almost unknown place, where everything is strange and new.

The fishermen who came from Carrick-a-redetold us we could reach the main road without re-crossing the quarries; so we went. It was a stiff climb, up a slippery, grassy slope. I sat and rested at the roadside while the others went on to send back the car from Ballintoy: amusing myself with watching two beautiful white goats that were tethered near a cottage—out of which soon came the mistress. She looked, as to her clothes, what in England would be called "a bundle of rags"—but had a bright, clean, smiling face, and the pleasant manner which you seldom miss in Ireland.

"Ye'll be looking at my goats, ma'am? They're bonnie craythurs, aren't they? And they give such a lot o' milk."

I said I supposed they served instead of a cow.

"'Deed an' we couldn't keep a cow—any of us. She'd eat too much. But these eat very little"—patting the snowy necks of her goats, who seemed to know her well—

"an' their milk's wondherful. D'ye know, ma'am," looking in my face with a simple confidence which was quite touching—"I made three pounds of butter last week—besides the milk for the childhre."

I expressed surprise and congratulation, and then her sympathy flowed towards me.

"Ye're looking tired, ma'am. Ye'll have been to Carrick-a-rede? It's a steep brae"—so many Scottish words and phrases I noted were current here—"Will I fetch you a chair? or would ye come inside? or maybe ye'd like a drink o' milk?"

"Inside" was an abode about as large and not so well-built as that of my pig at home. And I had tasted goat's milk once—but have no intention of doing it twice. Nevertheless, the hospitality was declined—I trust—as gratefully as if it had come from a palace. We stood a long time talking together and admiring the goats, till she at last bade me "Good day" with cheerful politeness, and took her "craythurs" with her into the cabin—which, no doubt, they shared with the rest of the family. And yet "John Bull" that morning had declared that the Irish were always discontented!

I allow, there is a wholesome discontent which rouses into amendment, and there is a lazy content which ends in hunger and rags. But between these two lies a happy medium. And I must say, throughout the north of Ireland I was less struck by the poverty than by the cheerfulness with which it is borne.

The grey day had brightened into a splendid evening, and we drove back westward, facing one of the grandest sea-sunsets I ever saw. At the hotel door we found waiting two of the many kind stranger-friends who seemed to turn up everywhere. From them we gained no end of information, and spent with them one of those social accidental evenings which are the true enjoyment of travelling; when both sides have to break into absolutely new ground, and find therein much that they never expected to find, but can warmly appreciate when found.

August 27.—As usual, the bad day was followed by one so gorgeous that we said at once, "What a day for Dunluce!"

"And for the electric railway," added the Barbarous Scot, who is mechanically-minded, and had been filling his soul over-night with turbines, dynamos, and what not. But as I do not understand these things, and have received so often the humiliating advice, "Don't let your ignorance be known," I will not commit myself to any scientific explanations.

However, I may safely say a word or two about this railway, which is the great feature of the district, and the key which may unlock its resources to both pleasure and commerce.

About 1881, Sir William Siemens, Sir William Thomson, and Mr. W. A. Traill, all men of practical scientific knowledge, and the two latter connected by birth with the north of Ireland, conceived the idea of opening up the country, utilising labour, and bringing in capital, by means of an electric tramway, to extend from Portrush to the Giant's Causeway, and to be worked by the abundant water-power of the river Bush, at a salmon-leap near Bushmills. It was to be constructed on a raised footway along the main road—a very good one, which runs close by the coast.

Enormous opposition arose—as is often the case with suggested improvements in Ireland. The principal landowners, and the directors of the Northern Counties railway, set themselves equally against it. Into their reasons, or motives, it is needless to enter; since, as nothing succeeds like success, probably all these excellent gentlemen will have changed their minds by now. But at the time they were a great hindrance to what outsiders would have considered a permanent benefit to the country.

"I must distinctly state," one who had knowledge of the facts said to me, "that under any system of local self-government, guided by local prejudices, the originators of the tramway would never have been able to carry it through. Only by applying to an unbiassed, extraneous tribunal such as the Imperial Parliament, could they have succeeded in attaining their end."

But it was attained. They got their bills passed, their railway constructed, and on the 28th of September, 1883, it was opened by the then Viceroy, Earl Spencer, as far as Bushmills. This winter of 1886-7, it will be opened to the Giant's Causeway—that is, to the hotel grounds, a distance of eight miles. One of the most energetic of its projectors has passed away without seeing its completion; Sir William Siemens died almost immediately after the day of opening, when they gathered round them, besides many scientific men, a host of friends; whose sympathy—and money, which almost entirely came from a distance—had been theirs from the first.

The tramway was constructed entirely by local workmen—which was one of the important ends desired to be accomplished. Not without difficulty, for the typical Irishman, at least in his own country, has to be taught

to work. He will stand, spade in hand, for a given number of hours, then throw it down, and consider that he has given his employer a fair day's work for a fair day's wages. The rule of what we call in England piece-work—that is, that payment should be for the amount of work done, not the time it takes to do it—is to him almost unknown. The gangers on this railway had not only to tell their men what to do, but to show them how to do it, and see that they did it, for most of them were mere agricultural labourers of the most ignorant kind.

Notable exceptions, however, there were, when the ingrained quickness of the Irish brain—so valuable, if only it is united to perseverance—showed itself here and there, conquering every difficulty. The present electrician, who overlooks the dynamos, was the engineer's coachman, who had no previous knowledge of electricity whatever, and the man who attends to the turbines and generators was a farm labourer, taken on at the age of eighteen, when the tramway was begun, and working his way up to his present position—a very important one. He has to remain at the "generating station," at Bushmills, and regulate the water that drives the enormous electric dynamos, one of which weighs five tons, and has had seven miles of copper-wire used in its construction. Yet the machinery is so delicate that the indicators on the wall tell him the precise moment when a train leaves Portrush; the amount of electricity which is being used enabling him to calculate to a nicety the weight and speed of the cars, so that he can supply the turbines with more or less water to meet the strain required on any point of the journey.

The intelligent conscientiousness of this young man, upon whom so much depends, contrasts pleasantly with the narrow-minded ignorance of others, chiefly carters and car-drivers, who often wantonly injure the railway, from a foolish notion that it is injuring them. Anything like progress is so difficult to be comprehended by an uneducated race, and the apparent simplicity of the lines of railway—unprotected, except by a low hand-rail, and a warning "not to touch"—roused the dangerous curiosity of passers-by. Many comical stories are told—of an old woman who sat down, basket and all, upon the hand-rail, and slipped backwards into a low quarry behind; and a horse, which having strayed and fallen across the rails, when lifted up by the tail, gave out shocks of electricity through his whole body to such an extent that his rescuers took to their heels and ran away.

But though it is good to impress upon the ignorant country folk not to meddle with the mysterious railway, there is practically little or no danger in it, exposed as it is. The power required to propel two or three cars, with fifty or sixty passengers, absorbs so much of the electric current as to render it harmless to chance touches; and when little work has to be done the tension is kept so low that only a very slight shock could be felt. Sometimes people are seen amusing themselves by holding hands in a ring, to "see what will happen"—but as no harm ever has happened, we may safely hope none ever will.

These facts, gathered from an entirely reliable source, we learnt afterwards, but this forenoon all we noticed was the single line of rails, guarded by a low hand-rail which ran alongside of the main road where we were driving. We stopped, as the cars stop, at the little wicket gate leading to Dunluce Castle.

This many-pinnaced sea-fortress is one of the most picturesque ruins I ever saw. It is built on a rock like Dunseverick, but not near so ancient; the earliest mention of it being in the time of the Tudors, when it was taken from the native McQuillans by the Scottish McDonnells. The story runs that a young McDonnell came over to help McQuillan in his wars with the savage tribes round him; spent a winter at Dunluce, and at the end of it ran away with his host's daughter, married her, and based upon that marriage a claim to the castle and all the land. Since then the McQuillans have all died out, name and race, but the McDonnells still populate the whole country side.

However, the fact with which some of our party consoled ourselves, that probably half of their respected ancestors were hanged, and the other half ought to have been, did not prevent us from enjoying the soft sunshine which bathed every nook or corner of the old castle, which had seen so much bloodshed in it or near it.

It is in two distinct parts, the remains of the stables and servants' offices being on the mainland, while the castle itself is on an isolated rock, crossed by a grass-edged foot-bridge no wider than a plank. It contains many rooms, still distinguishable, among the rest the Banshee's Chamber, which has the peculiarity of being always clean, some curious current of air sweeping every particle of dust from the floor. The Banshee, usually a female ancestress of the family, was in this case the daughter of a cruel father who imprisoned her in this chamber; trying to

escape thence by means of a rope-ladder, she and her lover both were drowned. So, of stormy nights she is still heard, weeping and wailing in this tiny room.

Nothing, I think, strikes one more in examining old castles than the miserable smallness of the domestic apartments in which our forefathers passed their time. The banqueting-rooms were grand, the kitchens enormous, but the family must have lived and slept anyhow and anywhere.

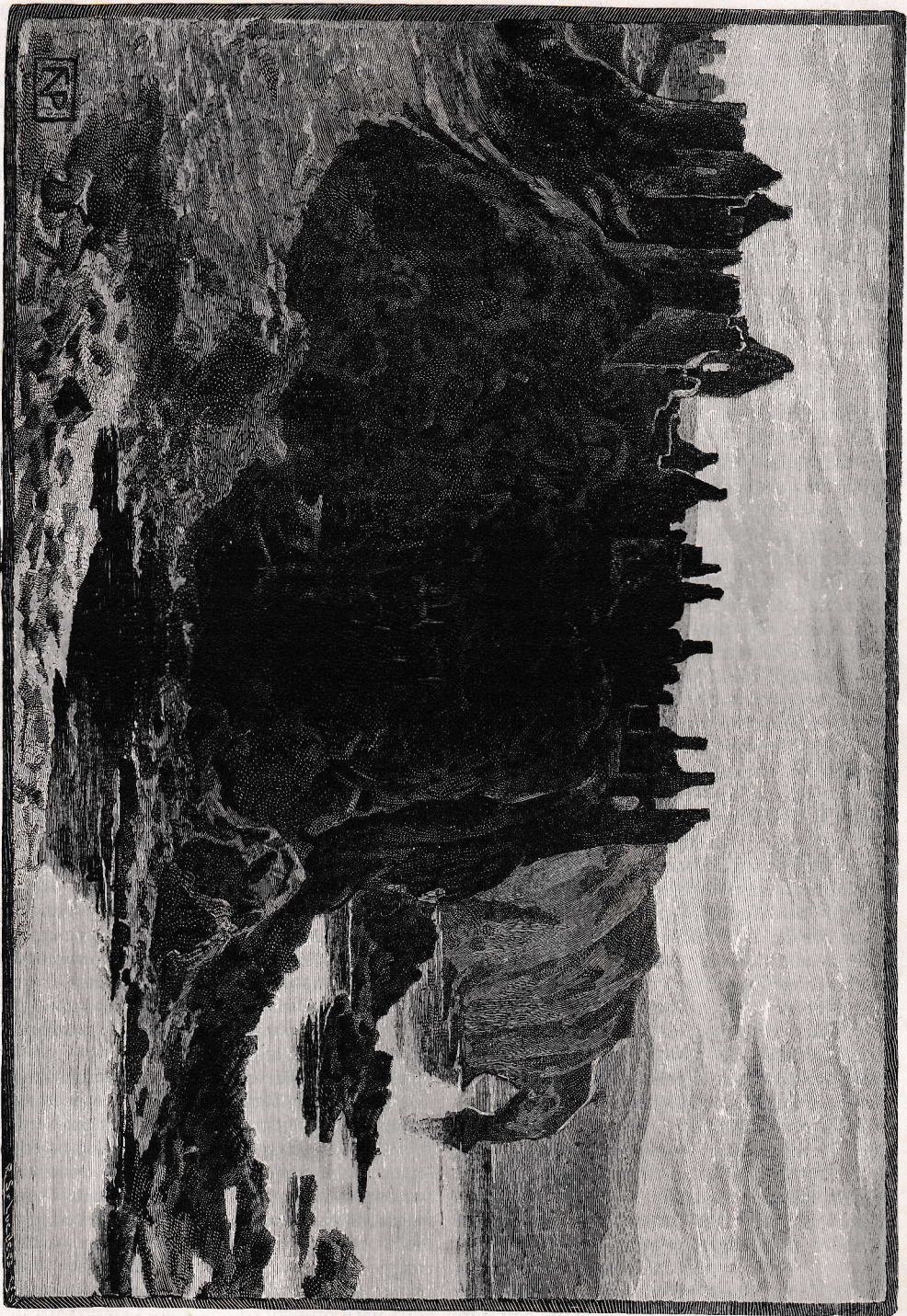
The clever mediæval workmen who built these walls, fitted them so ingeniously to the very edge of the cliff, that they look like a continuation of the rock itself. Especially near the Tinker's Corner—which is shown as the spot where, one stormy Christmas night, a travelling tinker made his bed, much to the annoyance of the servants of the castle. However, before morning, a sudden hurricane blew the kitchen wall, and eleven people with it, right into the sea below—the poor tinker alone escaping.

But one might find—or make—endless legends about Dunluce; which is said to have been inhabited as late as the year 1750. Now it lies desolate, except during the brief hour or two when Belfast people make "a day out" and roam about it—or stray tourists like ourselves go peering in and out, and gazing from the windowless windows, as the Banshee lady, or more determined McDonnell maiden must have done, in the days when women were mere appendages to men, to fathers, husbands, and brothers, to be fought for, or bargained for, as occasion served. My three girls, with their hearts and their lives in their own hands, free and merry, busy and content, were, in some things, a happy contrast to the fair damsels of former days.

They wandered about as much as they wished; then we left ancient for modern times, and devoted ourselves to the examination of the great mystery of future science—electricity.

The salmon-leap on the river Bush is an extremely pretty waterfall which science has converted into most satisfactory ugliness by means of certain extraordinary machines called "turbines"—the use of which my readers, I hope, know, or can find out, for I dare not attempt to explain. Close by is a deafening engine-room, which the resident engineer, Mr. Traill, regarded with the utmost tenderness, as he did every portion of his work. To his enthusiastic energy, combined with perseverance, the electric railway owes nearly all its success.

When we arrived he and two of his men



4

DUNLODGE CASTLE.
Engraved by R. S. Lupton, from a Drawing by F. Noel Paton.

were digging at a small hole close above the waterfall.

"We've found it!" he said (something had gone wrong, and the cars yesterday had been obliged to be drawn by the tramway-engine, kept permanently for the goods traffic). "I have traced it all the way from Portrush, and have just found the flaw. We shall put it right and be in working order to-morrow."

Which seemed to us a wonderful thing, until we remembered hearing how, soon after the laying of the first Atlantic telegraph, a similar flaw was discovered and traced for thousands of miles at the bottom of the sea. These secrets of Nature, discoverable to science, always strike the uninitiated mind with a sense of the marvellous, which appeals strongly to the imagination. Little as we understood of its working, we could not but feel the advantage the electric railway was likely to be in this district, if the people have sense to accept the advance of civilisation, of which it is a token, and use the resources of the country, which have so long lain dormant. That this was not always so, is evident from a discovery made more than a century ago by two men "pushing an adit," as it is called, in the coal-fields of Ballycastle. They came upon an ancient mine, and for more than twelve hours wandered among a labyrinth of passages; thirty-six distinct chambers, fashioned with a skill equal to that of the present day. They also found baskets, mining instruments,

and other relics of workers whose labour must have ended perhaps a thousand years ago—for there is no record whatever, either in history or tradition, of this mysterious mine.

Thus the tide of civilisation sweeps backwards and forwards, advancing and retiring, over the whole world; and the utmost we petty men can do is to take it at the turn, and make the best use of it.

We took our last walk along the beautiful cliff, and spent our last evening in the pleasant drawing-room, thinking how delightful would be a Christmas week at the Causeway Hotel, with the wind blowing and the waves roaring—almost as good as being at sea, yet with a safe footing on terra firma. Those seven windows looking on Blackrock Strand, Dunluce Castle, Ramore Head, with the Donegal mountains behind, would furnish a landscape and seascape unsurpassable in the three kingdoms.¹

Also—which is not to be despised, amidst all the outside beauty—to be thoroughly comfortable within doors, well-warmed, well-housed, well-fed, well-lighted (with the electric light, which is to be brought up from the railway this winter), might attract those who do not care for higher things. Lovers of the grand and beautiful, artists and archaeologists, will go through any hardships to gain their delights; but even lovers of creature comforts might do worse than spend a few—or a good many—delightful days at the Giant's Causeway.

¹ NOTE.—On repeating this wish to "one who knows"—being a resident close by—he smiled grimly. "Well, it's a matter of taste. We have a hurricane about once a fortnight: our sky-lights are occasionally smashed, the hotel is entirely dismantled from October to April, and the seven windows you couldn't well look out of; they have to be boarded up, or they would be blown in." So I am obliged to recant, and must not advise anybody to winter at the Giant's Causeway.

(To be continued.)

