

the only seat the cart affords, often agreeably exchanging puffs from the same comfortable pipe.

But step with me here beside the way near the town, and see the motley crew constantly augmented in number from every by-way lane and intersecting road. What a queer, kindly lot they are! Here are "the byes," edging along in concentric groups, settling questions of neighborhood moment in tremendous but friendly harangue and dispute. Every manner of cart drawn by every manner of animal, but chiefly by rebellious donkeys, and all piled with every manner of Irish produce and humans, clatter and rattle through the misty morning—carts with sheep bleating piteously, with geese craning their necks in viciously-hissed interrogation; with goats and kids lamenting in pathetic altos and trebles; with pigs springing on all-fours from side to side while snorting violent protests and surprise; and you will notice as you must all over Ireland, that the Irish pig boasts a pink in color that vies with the most radiant flush of the rarest seashell.

All along the way are old men, humped and severe, admitting and protesting in ethics and politics with other calm old men who argue, a priori, in the blandest and most convincing tones. There are maidens, too, straight as a Croagh Patrick fir, glancing with those entrancing Irish eyes, smiling with those ruby Irish lips, and setting the lads wild with that most delicious of all rhodomontade, the lovable blarney of the musical Irish tongue; while the great packages of yarn they carry without effort would break an American woman's back completely. Not far from them ever are the old, old women with braideen-covered baskets on their backs.

These contain a few cones of butter, a brace of fowls, may be a dozen or so of eggs, or any other product of the holding or their labor that may "bring a few pence the day," but old or young, they are knitting away vigorously in time to step and gossip; and all still, old or young, with their shoes slung across their shoulders, or hidden in the baskets; for they are saving them until the edge of the village is reached, where a brush from a whisp of dewy grass will make them shine from their late greasing, and their owners will walk proudly into the fair with their shapely feet hidden from the gaze of men, in brogans that

Wud harm an insulter,
Or bate a deal table,
With nurtherin' power
While their owners wor able!

It is catch-as-catch-can at an Irish market, or fair. The first upon the ground is best served as to location. At the village market there is no attempt at system or arrangement, and the market-place itself is never a covered structure, but simply a large walled enclosure along the principal street, with gates like a castle, with walls of enormous height and thickness as though attacks from battering-arms were apprehended, and usually it is surrounded, at least on three sides, by the quaintest structures, village homes, inns, grogeries and shops, furnishing as picturesque scenes as the excited groups within the enclosure.

From the market-gates there extend in every direction temporary avenues by carts ranged side by side with their backs to the way, and the constant crowds

coming and going with the large number belonging to each cart, all engaged in heated arguments over values, make much good-natured squeezing and pushing a matter of necessity. There are seldom inner enclosures. Cattle are herded against the walls at one point; asses at another; pigs on foot, kept gently moving in circles by the skillful use of their drivers' long ash pikes, will be massed at another point; goats and sheep, both extraordinarily combative by the enforced association, at still another; while all manner of lollipop sellers and brave-voiced market-amusement purveyors are huddled together in any extra space that may be found.

For the first hour or two of the morning the sale of the small truck, such as butter, eggs, poultry and vegetables proceeds merrily enough; but the attitude of buyer and seller of whole cartloads of potatoes and of all animals, is amusing indeed. Beves of buyers for the Dublin and London markets, men of gigantic stature with red, puffy faces, and great-coats hanging over top-boots to their heels, each carrying a whip of tremendous length, will saunter in, take a hasty run about the place, shrugging their shoulders as if nothing worth their attention had been seen, and finally hastily depart. The while the Irish yeomen, with folded arms, and nose in air expressive of fine scorn, bid them all a cheerful defiance in ludicrous attempts to appear unconscious of their presence.

These double pretenses may proceed until noon with now and then a bargain struck on the sly; but the entire populace at the market are on the alert for the seductive wiles of the buyer, and to protect each other valiantly from being carried away for fleecing singly to the enticing grogeries near. This metaphorical throwing of dust in each others' eyes is carried on during the Belfast fair days, on the first Wednesday of each month, with greater finess and contempt between buyer and seller, than I have seen in any other portion of Ireland. This is particularly true between the factors, or flax-buyers from the mills and the hard-headed peasantry in charge of their cart-loads of flax.

Scores of factors will make their appearance; surround the carts; handle the silken "stone" bundles as though it were a pity to bring such stuff to the attention of men whose time was valuable, and condescendingly clap a counterfoil price and order for payment on their respective houses in the sellers' hands, as if a disagreeable charity had been performed; whereupon the sellers toss them back disdainfully or light their pipes with them in fine scorn. Then the factors disappear. But that is not the last of them. One by one or in little groups they return. These stubborn people must be somehow saved from their fatal ignorance. Then follow protestation and rejoinder, blarney and blackguarding, as silvery and fine as ever human ears overheard. It is of no avail. Away they all go again. "The byes" calmly resume their pipes and their "gosthering" with the old women and young. The next assault by these sleek and ruddy Belfast factors, who are undoubtedly the canniest buyers in the world, is on the confidential line. It is getting late in the day. They come in droves. With military precision the sellers are herded in squads. Palaver, concession, sacrifice and deference (for

prices, plunder and division are already unyieldingly agreed upon) effect purchases with marvelous rapidity, and in half an hour the entire great market is completely cleared of flax—the same old games having been played in precisely the same manner for the past hundred years.

In the average village market along towards noon buying is likely to begin in what might seem to a stranger as an alarming riot. The big traders will make an onslaught upon a willing subject. Bravely he apparently resists their efforts to bully or deceive him. If by main strength he is taken from among his friends they will rally and set upon the traders and rescue him. Some rough tussling may follow, but nobody is alarmed at this. It is a way they have of impinging upon formality. The ice once broken, buying begins in earnest, and higher and higher rise shrill voices, often aided in pitch and intensity by John Barleycorn, who is ever the real master of ceremonies here, until one would think murder must follow the excited dickerings. Buyers thrash the air with their whips, and pour fearful oburgations on the poor animals and their owners; while the latter aided by valiant wives pay back the fierce blackguarding with rich interest. The "lucky-penny," which goes with each single beast or group of animals sold is shrieked over as though it were the value all the market holds. Babel has begun. The lesser sellers crowd around and "rise their voices" lugubriously. Every person has drunk enough to be interested in every person's affairs.

Sales are now rapidly made, "dirtying the bastes" sold, or rubbing mud on their haunches to so distinguish them, and driving them from the grounds creates constant commotion; cart-loads of pigs are dumped, amid deafening porkers' shrieks, from the farmers' carts into carts of the buyers, whose donkeys are pounded and rushed through the crowds vociferously; an escaping hog drives through the forest of legs madly, often giving old ladies and young enforced aerial experiences amid shouts of laughter; the hurdy-gurdies blare; candy sellers roar; pipers add to the universal din; the young people crowd the dancing spaces and beat the turf or improvised floors amid whoops and yells.

The entire place until the evening comes is a wild conglomerate of commotion, courtship, laughter, yelling and rude but good-natured enjoyment, which for unrestrained heartiness and unqualified decency is something delicious and wonderful to behold. Irish literature is full of the Irish shelelegh and broken heads. It is untrue of these people as I have seen them; for at over 150 fairs and market-day scenes I have visited, I never yet saw a human being harmed save by whiskey; and that is the "heart-some stroke" no true-born son of Erin ever feared.

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LONDON May 1, 1893.—Throughout the entire South of Ireland, and particularly along the banks of such rivers as the Barrow, Suir, Blackwater, Breid and Lee, are found the ruins or the well-preserved remains of huge square castles, built by the heads of septs and clans at different periods during the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and a few as late as the sixteenth centuries.