



## By "LONGSIIPS"

Adare Castle, ruined and ivy-covered, can be seen from the bridge of fourteen arches over the River Maigue, on the road to Limerick.



## TOURING AND SIGHTSEEING IN THE COUNTRY OF DREAMS COME TRUE



The mountain road which runs between Kilgarvan and Snave Bridge, at Bantry.

**T**HE idea of a touring holiday in Eire had for long been in our minds, so that when both time and tide unexpectedly proved propitious, we decided, without more ado, to translate the thought into action. About a week later, our appropriately coloured green 1¼-litre M.G. was driven along the railway station platform at Fishguard, for shipment to Waterford in the S.S. *Princess Maud*. The crossing was uneventful, although one or two rolls during the night made one hope that the M.G. had been secured in a proper seaman like fashion. We need not have

## L U L L A

worried; it had been, with baulks of timber under the wheels and hawsers thick enough to hold a car twice its size.

Waterford was reached at breakfast time, and soon afterwards, with an Eire circulation permit temporarily replacing our British licence on the windscreen, we set off to discover Ireland. Our first day's run took us through Dungarvan and Youghal, on the road to Cork. Approaching Youghal we crossed the estuary by a fine iron bridge which is 300 yards long and has a swing portion originally constructed in 1883. It has, however, now been condemned as unsafe, a speed limit of 5 m.p.h. being imposed and effectively enforced by obstructions which make it obligatory to steer a zig-zag course at the slowest pace; the obstructions also automatically ensure a one way passage! Youghal has an extensive sandy beach, ideal for family bathing, and the M.G. was allowed a brief pause so that we might enjoy the prospect seawards across Youghal Bay.

Then, continuing our journey, a pleasant thirty miles brought us to the city of Cork, which was impressive by its wide main thoroughfares and excellent shops; but we dared not tarry. Passing over the River Lee by St. Patrick's bridge and along the wide imposing curve of Patrick Street, where the traffic was at its busiest, we left the city by the noted three-mile "Cork straight," used for international motor racing. It was, however, beyond Macroom that the real interest began, with the mountains coming into view and the scenery surpassing anything we had expected.

At the foot of the Pass of Keimaneigh, on the Macroom side, a by-road leads to one of the most romantically situated of all the lakes in Eire, Gougane Barra, the name meaning St. Finbarr's hollow. The lake is small and is shut in on three sides by precipices rising to 1,500ft, while on a wooded islet off the shore are to be seen the ruins of the saint's ancient oratory, dating from the sixth century. From the lake, a remote mountain road may be



followed, which affords magnificent views of the Derrynasaggart range, and eventually brings one to Kilgarvan, on the old road to Killarney. Irish mountain roads are narrow, and often cling precariously to the mountainside, with most unexpected twists and turns, but their surface is generally very fair.

Through the Keimaneigh Pass, where the vivid gold of the gorse, lit by the sun, showed up as a blaze of almost startling colour against the blue sky above, the road descends steeply by the Ouvane River to reach the hamlet of Ballylickey, at the head of Bantry Bay. Here we joined the coast road (T65) leading to Glengariff, and a little distance along this road, beyond Snave Bridge, we found our first halting place, at Ardnagashel, beautifully situated by the water's edge on a tree-shaded inlet of Bantry Bay, opposite Whiddy Island. We could not have chosen a more favoured spot. Approaching the house, through an archway by the farm adjoining, we were intrigued to find a notice with the words "Slow through arch please, turkeys and twins!" The twins, we found, belonged to the farm tenant and his wife, also the turkeys; the twins and the turkeys were generally inseparable, thus a warning notice was most necessary.

From Ardnagashel the M.G. took us far and wide, over the mountains by tumbling streams and little remote lakes, surprisingly hidden until a twist in the road brought them suddenly into view, rock encircled and full of colour; from Adrigole, at the foot of Hungry Hill (2,251ft), along the shores of Bantry Bay, the M.G. crossed the Caha Mountains by the Tim Healy Pass, constructed in 1931, which reaches the summit (1,084ft) by a remarkable series of curves and loops, so skilfully planned that nowhere is the gradient steeper than 1 in 10.

Another interesting run was from Kilgarvan over the

mountains to Snave Bridge, which brought us back to within a very short distance of our "Twins and Turkeys." Some care is needed, as the road is narrow and has numerous sharp corners with a sheer drop on the outer side, but the views are remarkably fine. During the ascent an unusually spectacular waterfall is seen at close quarters, the road being carried directly over it, leaping down the steep mountainside in a series of cascades which, seen at a distance, look like lacework against the dark slopes. Beyond the fall the road passes through a tunnel cut in the rock, to reach the summit, 1,169ft.

Killarney was our next objective. Everywhere is almost unbelievably lovely, and, it may be added, it is a quiet, peaceful loveliness that one can never forget. The scene that conveys best, perhaps, the spiritual charm of Killarney, is a summer's sunset seen over the lake, the dark shadows of the mountains reflected in the still, clear water, and their peaks, caught by the sun, a delicate purple, sharply outlined against the pale blue evening sky. It is no wonder that the monks of Muckross should have chosen this site to found their abbey.

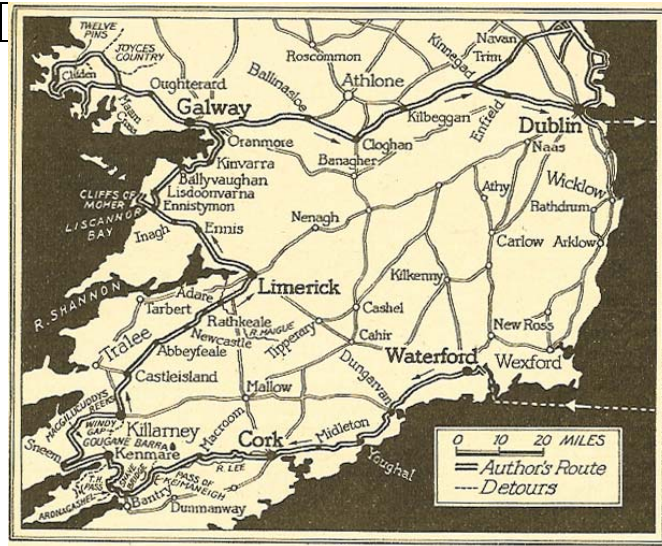
The road to Killarney from Glengariff, by Kenmare, is reputed to be one of the most picturesque in Ireland. Few would wish to quarrel with this opinion; the views of mountain, lake and wooded glens could scarcely be surpassed. From Glengariff—the rugged glen—the road winds gradually up the valley to Turner's Rock where it enters a tunnel cut through the solid rock, 300 yards in length, by which one passes from County Cork into Kerry. During the descent to Kenmare three other, but shorter, tunnels are met with. The road has an excellent surface, and the gradients are sufficiently easy for many cars to negotiate in top. From Kenmare one climbs fairly steeply to Windy Gap where MacGillycuddy's Reeks (meaning pointed peaks), the

# B Y I R E L A N D

Not for nothing have poets praised Killarney; it has a quiet, peaceful beauty that few can forget







and as we neared the mountains the surface deteriorated considerably, becoming rough and stony, while the gradient steepened until it was found expedient to make use of first gear. But amid such surroundings, a fast climb was in no way indicated; we wanted time to take in the grandeur of the scene, and also to choose as smooth a passage as possible for the car between the stones and gullies. Towards the top the road became completely shut in, the precipitous, boulder-strewn sides of the mountain towering up to over 1,000ft on either side. Jagged rocks, dislodged from the mountain, lay scattered around in fantastic profusion. Seen among them, the M.G. looked in strange company indeed, and tiny by comparison. Bringing out the map, we found we had come to the Ballaghbearna Pass, a steep rocky defile that threads its way through a gap in the mountains. The pass was our introduction to the Reeks, and one could not imagine a more inspiring approach.

## LULLABY IRELAND . . . . continued



The large rocks by the roadside dwarf the M.G. as it stands at the summit of Ballaghbearna Pass, in MacGillycuddy's Reeks.

highest of Ireland's mountains, come into full view. Then follows a descent of some ten miles into Killarney, the scenery along this section being nothing less than magnificent. The Reeks were tantalizingly near—how could one get up to see them at close quarters? It was worth trying, and a road eventually was found by Gearha Bridge over the Blackwater, by Kenmare River, which seemed to offer possibilities. From the solitary lonely looking signpost where the road forked, we gathered that it led to Glencar. The name meant nothing to us, but the road, so far as its course could be followed by the eye, apparently disappeared into the very heart of the mountains.

Although signposted the road was little more than a track,

It had been our intention to make Limerick our first stopping place but, when still south of the Shannon, we came to the little village of Adare, it presented a picture of such charm, with its neat thatched cottages and wide well-kept main street, that finding it to possess also a hostelry of exceptionally inviting character, we decided there and then that the M.G. need go no farther. Adare was unique, and Limerick we could see on the morrow! From our window at the Dunraven Arms (an inn, so we found, of much note among Irish motorists and fishermen) we looked out over the broad and well-wooded demesne of Adare Manor, the ancestral home of the Earl of Dunraven, descended to him from the Earls of Kildare and anciently a stronghold of the O'Donovans, whose tenure lasted until the 12th century when they were driven south into Kerry. Through the lands of the manor flows the River Maigue and on its peaceful rush-fringed banks there still stand the battlemented walls of the old castle, begun by the O'Donovans but considerably extended by their successors. Beyond the castle, in an ideal woodland setting, may be seen the ivied cloisters of the Franciscan Friary founded by the seventh earl in 1464. In the village itself is an even older monastic building, known as the *White Abbey*, which was founded in 1230. At one time it was in danger of being used as the village market-house, but fortunately, now survives as a Catholic church.

### Limerick

The following morning, in bright sunshine, with the foliage of the oaks casting a dappled pattern of light and shade on the road leading to the river, we went on our way, the Maigue being crossed by an interesting old bridge having no fewer than fourteen arches, from which a particularly fine view of the castle was obtained. Entering Limerick by O'Connell Street, a wide imposing thoroughfare over a mile in length and having some fine Georgian houses, one felt the city to possess something of the atmosphere of our own Bath. There is a dignity about this quarter of the city that cannot fail to impress—an elegance handed down from an age of wealth and quiet good taste. The older parts of the town, while interesting, more betoken its character as a seaport. By which of the city's bridges the M.G. crossed the Shannon into County Clare remains somewhat of a mystery. We are inclined to think that 'in exploring the purlieu of English Town—the, old walled quarter adjoining the Abbey



River—our navigational sense must have broken down, and to such an extent that we have, be it confessed, no recollection of having passed over any bridge. We must have, however, because we later found ourselves passing Shannon Airport, on the correct road to Ennis!

From Ennis we made our way to the coast at Lahinch, a popular seaside resort, with fine sands at Liscannor Bay.



Typical of the Connemara coastal scenery and depicted on innumerable occasions by Victorian watercolour painters; the road to the coast at Carna, from Recess, with the Twelve Pins in the background.

Following the dunes around the bay and crossing a small sandy inlet where a tidal stream comes down to the sea, the road presently left the shore, and we were faced with a long and fairly steep climb which brought us within a short walking distance of the far-famed Cliffs of Moher. A lone-some spot, and with the rain beating down, blotting out the landscape, we sat in the car hoping that the weather might break while we had our tea. A watery gleam of sun came, and we chanced it, there being but two rough sloping fields to cross to reach the cliff edge. The cliffs extend for a distance of some five miles, and are a grim and impressive sight, having a sheer drop of nearly 700 feet. They are, also, the home of innumerable sea birds, whose cries echo uncannily off the black precipitous rock, holed by caverns, until one feels enveloped by their eerie continuous low wailing. Far below was the sea, calm but grey, with only an occasional streak of misty sunlight to relieve its sombreness. We watched in silence, and then, with our backs to the wind and rein—which had started again—hastened to reach the shelter of the car under the lee of the low stone wall.

The road continued along by the cliffs northwards, but we found it rough going and, in the rain, not inspiring. We therefore retraced our footsteps to Liscannor, heading thence, through Ennistymon, to Lisdoonvarna, a spa of considerable repute but, so it seemed to us, possessing few attractions as a resort. The scenery beyond Lisdoonvarna, towards Galway, is bleak and barren to a degree, but, nevertheless, is by no means devoid of interest. The numerous cottage homesteads passed on either side of the road, the maze of low stone walls enclosing small irregular fields that would seem incapable of bearing anything but stones, and the bare hills of terraced limestone, give this part of Ireland an unusual, foreign appearance. The M.G. might have transported us, it seemed, to Spain, or southern Greece! After some miles the plateau ends in a steep descent, appropriately known as Corkscrew Hill (a favourite venue for trials) to

reach the southern shore of Galway Bay at Ballyvaughan, a small fishing village. Thence the road continued along by the coast, passing several landlocked inlets of considerable charm, until the main road from Ennis to Galway was joined at Kilcolgan.

By this time the weather had cleared, and entering Galway we at once decided that, as a town, we liked it. We were attracted by its narrow, busy streets and the architecture of many of the old buildings, which show a strong Spanish influence, dating from the time when, in the 13th—14th centuries, Galway had an important overseas trade with Spain. A fragment of the old city wall is still known as the Spanish Arch, and beyond it one comes to Spanish Parade, where, one may imagine, the Spanish merchants and their ladies were wont to take the air on summer evenings. Columbus is said to have visited Galway, when he attended Mass at the Church of St. Nicholas, in Shop Street, and it is known that at least one member of his crew on his voyage of discovery to the New World, in 1498, was a Galway man. The following morning dawned as the most perfect summer's day imaginable. White clouds chased each other across a sky of the deepest blue, the sun was really hot, while the sea air from the Atlantic was delightfully mild yet thoroughly invigorating. Connemara beckoned, and the M.G. longed to be off! Soon it was, bowling along an excellent road, tree-shaded at first and with pleasing glimpses of Lough Corrib on our right, until we came to the wilder, open country beyond Oughterard, where the steep green slopes of the Corcogemore Mountains came into view, and, a little later, we had our first glimpse of the high conical peaks of the famous Twelve Pins or Bens standing out, a deep indigo blue in colour, against the by now more cloudy sky.

### Connemara

Connemara is vastly different from the softer and more luxuriant scenery found in the south-west, but if wilder and mostly treeless, with its stony nature amply evident, it is a region, nevertheless, that exerts an allure few can resist. Remote it may be, yet there is no sense of loneliness. There is life, there is colour—everywhere; while the country folk one meets, bringing in peat loaded high in panthers slung on either side of a sturdy, shaggy-haired donkey, or, on a Sunday, neatly dressed in black, driving by pony cart to mass along some remote mountain road, all display a natural simplicity and charm of manner that one comes to look upon as part of the Irish character, endearing them and their land, and in a very short space, to the stranger amongst them.

Clifden, as a town, cannot be said to possess many attractions, but its surroundings, with the peaks of the Twelve Pins forming a background, do much to make up for it. Soon we were ascending the Pass of Kylemore, with the mountains again all around, and by the lough beyond the pass came in sight of Kylemore Abbey, formerly Kylemore Castle, the tragic home of the Henry family, romantically situated under the steep wooded slopes of Doughruagh Mountain, its towers reflected in the still waters of the lake. A further climb followed, amidst magnificent scenery, after which the road descended again to the shores of Killary Bay, a narrow sea inlet running ten miles inland, where, in days gone by, the Navy would bring the whole of the old Channel Fleet to anchor. Shut in by towering mountains, Killary Harbour is unsurpassed in these islands for its grandeur and loveliness.

### Joyces Country

From Leenane the M.G. took us among the mountains by Joyces Country (so named from the ancient tribe who settled

there from Wales in the 13th century) to Maam Bridge, and then along a particularly attractive by-road, fringed by hedges of wild fuchsia mingled with patches of golden gorse, which brought us to the village of Cong, situated on the isthmus between Lough Corrib and Lough Mask and notable for its 14th-century cross and the very lovely remains of its old abbey. The road by the lough seemed specially suited to a car of the M.G.'s temperament, having many ups and downs requiring a frequent use of the gear lever, the steepest climb being not far from Maam Bridge, to reach the summit of a hill named, in Irish, *Maimin a Gamhain*, but which, rendered in English, gives it the intriguing title of "the little pass of the yearling calf."

There was the occasion, also, when, following a remote by-road by Lough Inagh, under the high peaks of Beanna Beola,

as the "Twelve Pins" are called in the Gaeltacht, we came upon a shaggy-coated little donkey, all alone, rolling in ecstatic enjoyment on a heap of soggy black peat by the wayside, his four legs wildly kicking in the air. Caught in the act, he subsequently posed docilely while his photograph was taken—a picture of conscious guilt, but wholly unrepentant! The picture also remains of a dark-haired Irish girl, heavily, laden with a full bucket of water in either hand, walking unconcernedly over the wet boggy surface of the mountain back to the little primitive thatched cottage on the hillside that was her home; we should have sunk up to our knees at once, and let go both buckets, but, to her— "'twas nothin' at all" The days went by, all too quickly, until the time arrived when, with the charm of Connemara still in our hearts, the M.G. had, perforce, to be given sailing directions for home.

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