

The Stranger in County Armagh

by Joe Canning

The sources recommended for the study of local history are many and varied, but there is one which can be entertaining as well as informative. For leisure reading it is hard to improve on the well-written travel book. Travel writers obviously did not put pen to paper for the benefit of future historians, but there is no doubt that travel literature is a most important source not only for the local historian but also for the social and economic historian. The visitor to a place will often notice and comment on things that the native will take for granted, e.g. housing, dress, pastimes, agricultural practices. In addition the traveller may be an expert in some particular subject and what he has to say on it will be particularly valuable to the researcher. The visitor was usually a well-off person and so examples of poor living conditions were likely to attract his attention and to be commented upon by him.

Many of the people who have written accounts of their visits to Ireland have included County Armagh in their travels. The county had much to attract the traveller — an ancient city which was the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland and, since Primate Robinson's time, had many buildings of outstanding architectural merit; large estates which had introduced new farming methods; the linen industry, which played an important part in the economy of the county; and quite a lot of attractive scenery.

This article will consist mainly of extracts from the writings of four travellers who visited that part of the county which might be described as the catchment area of our Society. The four people are all English — two of them were in Ireland in the second half of the eighteenth century, one was involved in a military campaign at the beginning of the seventeenth, while the fourth made a study of social and economic conditions in the years before the Great Famine.

The first stranger to be introduced was a man who believed firmly in the advantages of travel and who had plenty of practical advice for those who were planning to set out on their travels. His name was FYNES MORYSON. He was born in Lincolnshire in 1566 and took his degree at Cambridge in 1580. Four years later he became a Fellow of Peterhouse College and thus became entitled to travel abroad. In May 1591 he left England for the Continent, and during the next five years he visited Germany, Holland, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland and France. He returned to England in

May, 1595, and after a break of five months he was on the move again. After passing through Holland, Germany and Italy he went on to Joppa, Jerusalem and Antioch and spent Christmas in Constantinople. He returned to England in 1597. Everywhere he went he collected information about manners and customs, and this formed the basis of his "Itinerary" which was published in 1617.

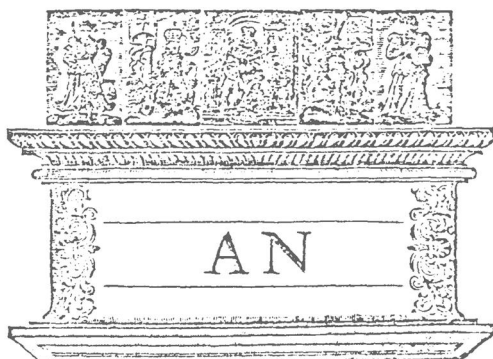
At the time of his return from the Continent, Moryson's brother, Richard, was acting as governor of Dundalk. Fynes was invited over to Ireland, and the invitation was accepted with "hopes of preferment" in that country. He arrived in Ireland in November 1600 and his hopes were soon realised as he was appointed secretary to Lord Mountjoy who was then Lord-Deputy in Ireland. He was with Mountjoy all through the long campaign which ended in the Battle of Kinsale. He returned to England with Mountjoy and continued as his secretary until his death in 1606. After that he settled down to work on the "Itinerary." In addition to the account of his continental travels, he gives in this work a description of Ireland and a detailed report of Mountjoy's campaign.

One of the ways in which Mountjoy hoped to destroy the sovereignty of O'Neill was by securing the permanent establishment of garrisons in Ulster, and this of necessity brought him into County Armagh. In late 1600 a fort was built in the parish of Loughgilly, and this is how Moryson describes that part of the campaign:

The fourteenth of September his Lordship began another journey into the North, and the fifteenth in-camped at the hill of Faghard, three miles beyond Dundalke, and there his Lordship lay till the ninth of October, in such extremitie had not withstood him, his Lordship's tent being continually wet, and often blowne downe. Before his Lordship came, Tyrone with his uttermost strength had possessed the Moyry, being a strong fastnesse, as any the Rebels had, but his Lordship resolved to march over him, if hee stopped his way, and make him know, that his Kerne could not keepe the fortification against the Queens forces. Many skirmishes fell out happily to us, and two severall dayes the Rebels were beaten out of their trenches with great losse, till at last, upon the eight of October, they left the passage cleere. Then after the army was a few daies

refreshed at Dundalke, his Lordship marched the twenty one of October to the Newry, passing through the Moyry, where he caused all the rebels trenches to be laid flat to the ground, and the woods to be cut downe on both sides of the Pace. At the Newry for want of victuals, his Lordship staid till the second of November, when he set forward eight miles towards Armagh, and there incamped. The Rebels horse-men shewed themselves upon a hill; whereupon Sir Samuel Bagnols Regiment having the Reare, and being not yet come into the Campe, was directed to march towards them, there being a bog between us and them, but the Rogues quickly drew to their fastnes. The next morning his Lordship rode some quarter of a mile from the Campe, and viewed a place where Sir John Norreys formerly intended to build a Fort, and liking his choice, set downe there with the Army to build the same. The

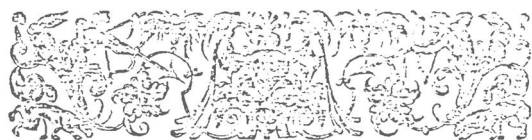
place is a hill like a Promontory, all invorned with bogges, a River, and great store of wood. By it on the right hand over the River and a great bogge, was a little firme ground, and then another bogge & over that a faire Countrey, with houses and much corne. His Lordship could by no meanes send over any horse, but foure miles about; wherefore he commanded a regiment of foote to advance to the first peece of firme ground, and from thence to send over the next bogge some few men, to bring in the Corne and Tymber of the houses, with directions to make their retreat to the grosse, if the enemies horses should fall downe that way. On the left hand and before was a bogge, over the bogge before a great wood, that continueth through all this fastnes, and over the bogge on the left hand a hill, where Tyrone all that day and most of the time that the Army lay there, did muster himselfe and his men.



ITINERARY
VVITTEN
By FYNES MORYSON Gent.
First in the Latine Tongue,
AND THEN TRANSLATED
By him into ENGLISH:



Facsimile of the title page of the original edition of Moryson's work.



CONTAINING
HIS TEN YEERES
TRAVELL THROUGH
THE TWELVE DOMJNIONS OF
Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland.
Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, Eng-
land, Scotland, and Ireland.

Diuided into III Parts.

THE I. PART.

Containeth a Journall through all the said twelve Dominions: Shewing particularly the number of miles, the soyle of the Country, the situation of Cities, the descriptions of them, with all Monuments in each place worth the seeing, as also the rates of hiring Coaches or Horses from place to place; with each daies expenses for diet, wine, meate, and the like.

THE II. PART.

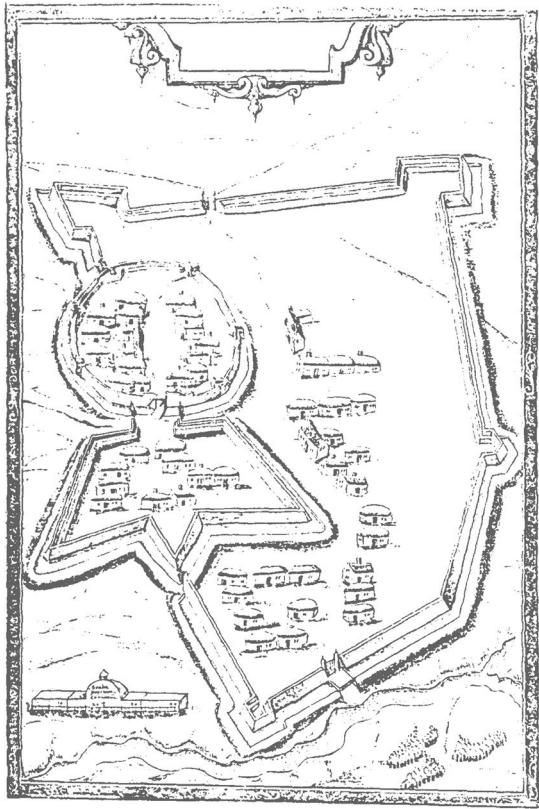
Containeth the Rebellion of Hugh, Earle of Tyrone, and the appeasing thereof: written also in forme of a Journall.

THE III. PART.

Containeth a Discourse vpon severall Heads, through all the said severall Dominions.



AT LONDON
Printed by John Beale, dwelling in Aldersgate
street. 1617.



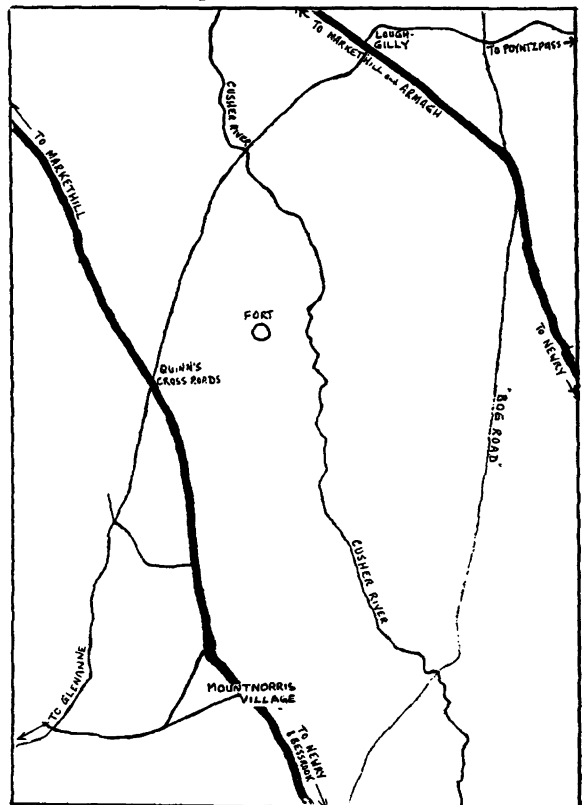
Mountnorris Fort plan.

This day most of his horse and foote fell over, but farre about on the right hand, upon which, our straglers that went out retired to the firme ground, over the first bogge, and there beganne betweene our foote and theirs, a very good skirmish, till our men did beate them off, and brought with them great store of Corne and wood, and killed divers of them. In the meane time, their scouts on the other side being somewhat busie with ours, Neal Oquin was taken prisoner, being the chiefe favourite unto Tyrone. The next day we beganne to worke, in the building of the Fort, and to impeach our worke, the rogues beganne to skirmish with us on both sides, which was excellently maintained by some few of our men, that we sent out: We saw many of them killed, and after understood they lost a great number, whereof many were horsemen, of the best sort, that had lighted to incourage their men to fight. They were then so well beaten, as they would never after offer to meddle with us, till our returne by Carlingford. The ninth of November the Fort being finished, his Lordship called it Mount Norreys, in honour of his Master, (so he tearmed him, under whom hee had served his apprenticeship in the warres), and he left therein foure hundred foot, under the command

of Captaine Edward Blaney, with six weekes provision of victuals.

The weather grew so extreame, as it blew downe all our Tents, and tore them in pieces, and killed many of our horses, so that the tenth day his Lordship putting all the Army in armes, with all the Drummes and Trumpets, and a great volly of shot, proclaimed Tyrones head, (with promise of 2000. pound to him that brought him alive, and 1000. pound to him that brought him dead), which was done in the face of his own army, and so his Lordship marched to the Newry. He had purposed to plant a garrison at Armagh 8. miles beyond Mount Norryes, but the rebels Cowes had eaten up all the grasse thereabouts, which should have fed our horses, and the time of the yeere with the weather, was now unseasonable for that purpose.

The site of this fort is almost one mile north of the modern village of Mountnorris. A map of the fort, made subsequent to its extension in 1601, still exists, but the only trace of the structure which can still be seen in a circular field on the farm of Mr. Robert J. Walker in the townland of Mountnorris. The river referred to by Moryson is obviously the Cushier. The circular field, which was declared a scheduled monument in 1983, would seem to be the round enclosure shown on the map.



The second stranger would probably not qualify as a travel writer in the accepted sense of that term. He did not come to Ireland to admire the scenery, to study agricultural methods, or to examine social and economic conditions. He came on a very special mission, and "mission" is the operative word here. The person in question is JOHN WESLEY, founder of Methodism. His first visit to Ireland was in August, 1747, and he made twenty other visits after that, his last being in 1789. He kept a very detailed diary and from this compiled his "Journal" which he published in a series of extracts. One edition of the "Journal" consists of eight volumes, each containing around 500 pages.

While the "Journal" is mainly an account of his preaching and other religious activities, there is much in it of use to the historian — interesting local tit-bits, comments on the religious state of communities, references to contemporary political events, descriptions of particular places and information on important figures in the community, and of course, it is an essential source for the local history of Methodism.

Wesley first arrived in this area on Wednesday, 21st July, 1756, having travelled from Newry. The entry in the "Journal" for that date tells us:

Wed. 21 — In the morning there was such violent lightning, thunder, and rain that the very beasts ran out of the fields and the birds flew from their usual coverts to take shelter in the houses. But before we took horse the sky cleared up, and we had a pleasant ride to Terryhoogan, near Scarva. The road lay on the edge of a smooth canal, with fruitful, gently rising hills on either side. We were at a lone house, but the people found their way thither in the evening from all quarters. I preached in a meadow near the house, the congregation sitting on the grass. And surely they had ears to hear. God give them hearts to understand!

Why he chose to preach in such a relatively obscure place as Terryhoogan may be explained by the fact that a man from this townland, James Kershaw, together with a William Irwin from Cargans, heard Wesley preach in Dublin in April, 1747, and on his return home he held a prayer-meeting with twelve other persons in his home, at which he gave an address entitled "Mr. Wesley, the prophet of these times."

Almost two years later he was back in Terryhoogan, having again come from Newry. The entry in the "Journal" for Tuesday, 9th May, 1758 reads:

Tues. 9 — We rode by the side of the canal, through a pleasant vale, to Terryhoogan. The room, built on

purpose for us here, is three yards long, two and a quarter broad, and six foot high. The walls, floor and ceiling are mud; and we had a clean chaff bed. At seven I preached in a neighbouring ground, having a rock behind me and a large congregation sitting on the grass before me. Thence we retired to our hut, and found it true —

*Licet sub paupere tecto
Reges et regum vita praecurere amicos.¹*

*'Under a lowly roof a poor man may have
more real enjoyment of life than even monarchs and
their friends'*

At the end of April, 1760 he was back in Terryhoogan again, and he talks about spending a comfortable night in what he calls "the prophet's chamber" — the building which had been erected for him before his previous visit; the name given to it recalls the title of Kershaw's address. His next visit was a very brief one — the entry in the "Journal" for 27th April, 1762 tells us that he "preached in Lurgan at five, in Terryhoogan at ten, and at two in the market-house at Richhill."

His first visit to Tandragee took place in April 1767. The crowds coming to hear him were so large that he had to preach in the market-house. During his stay in the town he went out again to preach at Terryhoogan which he refers to as "the mother church of all these parts." His last visit to Terryhoogan was in April, 1769, when the people had to raise a tent to screen him from the north wind. A few days later he was preaching in Tandragee.

A further six visits to Tandragee are recorded in the "Journal." It was a place which he liked very much — he had an excellent relationship with the rector, Dr. Henry Leslie, and he was very impressed by the scenery of the district. Of his visit in June 1773 he says:

I preached at nine with great enlargement of heart. At half-hour past eleven the Church Service began. The curate read prayers exceeding well, and the rector preached with uncommon earnestness. But what I most admired was (1) the cleanness of the church, equal to any I have seen in England; (2) the serious behaviour of the whole congregation; and, (3) the excellent singing by forty or fifty voices, half men and half women. I have heard nothing like it in any church since I came into the kingdom.

The rector inviting me to dinner, I spent an agreeable hour with him and his curate. The congregation at six was exceeding numerous, and exceeding serious. We concluded the day with the societies, gathered from

all parts: and great was our rejoicing. Many were filled with consolation, and many feeble hands were strengthened.

The description of his visit in June 1778 shows why he was so fond of Tandragee:

Tues. 23 — I went to Tandragee, one of the pleasantest towns in Ireland. As it was a fair, calm evening, I had designed to preach in the avenue to the castle; but, being desired to preach in the courtyard, I took my place under a tall, spreading tree, in the midst of a numerous congregation, who were still as night. There could not be devised a more pleasing scene: the clear sky, the setting sun, the surrounding woods, the plain, unaffected people, were just suitable to the subject, 'My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.'

Wed. 24 — For exactly two months we have had only two days without rain. In the evening I preached in the same lovely place. I dined, supped and lodged at Dr. Leslie's, the rector; a well-bred, sensible, and I believe a pious man. We had family prayers before supper which he read with admirable propriety and devotion; and I know not that I have spent a more agreeable evening since I came into the kingdom.

Thur. 25 — I walked round Dr. Leslie's domain. A pleasanter spot I never saw. It lies on the top of a fruitful hill, at a small distance from the town, and commands the whole view of a lovely country, east, west, north, and south; and it is laid out with the finest taste imaginable. The ground I took for a park I found was an Orchard, tufted with fruit-trees and flowering shrubs, and surrounded with a close, shady walk. I spent another hour with the amiable family this morning; and it was an hour I shall not soon forget. But it will never return! For one, if not more, of that lovely company are since removed to Abraham's bosom.

Following a visit in June, 1785 he again speaks of the town as being one of the pleasantest in Ireland "surrounded by woods and fruitful hills, with a clear river running between them." The entry in the "Journal" for 14th June, 1787 gives further information about Dr. Leslie's domain:

Thur. 14 — Mr. Broadbent and I walked round Dr. Leslie's domain. I have not seen anything of the size in England that is equal to it. The house stands in the midst of a fruitful hill, which is part beneath and part above it. In approaching it you see no walls, nothing but green trees and shrubs of various kinds. Enter the courtyard and gate, and you still see no stone walls, but on either hand —

The verdurous wall of Paradise upsprings;

and that summer and winter, consisting wholly of evergreens, that bloom all the year round. On the upper side of the house the gently rising hill yields the loveliest scene that can be conceived; such a mixture of shady walks and lawns sprinkled with trees; at the top of which is a natural rock, under which you may sit and command a most beautiful and extensive prospect: and all this variety has arisen from a rough, furzy heath, by the industry of Dr. Leslie, in thirty years.

The account of his last journey to Tandragee on 11th June, 1789 sheds some light on the problems of travel in those times:

Thur. 11 — I preached in Rathfryland about noon; and before two set out for Tandragee. But in about half an hour the iron part of my fore-axletree broke, so I walked forward with two of our brethren, which was easier than riding either of their horses. But before we came to Loughbrickland, my strength was so exhausted I was glad to stop at a little inn, and send to Banbridge, about two miles off, for a post-chaise. It came soon after six o'clock, and I set out immediately. I had gone about a mile, when Mrs. Leslie met me with her chaise (who set out as soon as ever she heard that my chaise was broke down), and took me with her to Tandragee.

The third stranger was in Ireland from June, 1776 to the autumn of 1779, and so his stay in the country coincided with some of Wesley's visits, but it is hardly likely that their paths ever crossed — they stayed at different places and their interests were very different. This person was a traveller in the true sense, for he came to Ireland to observe closely and record what he saw, his main interest being farming methods. His name was ARTHUR YOUNG and he was born in 1741. He was a very talented person and had great literary ambitions. However he turned his attention to farming after his mother had inherited the family estate. He did not have the patience to become a good farmer but he was able to acquire the knowledge of agriculture which would help him to earn the title of "apostle of the agricultural revolution." In 1793 he was made secretary of the Board of Agriculture by Pitt. It is generally agreed that he had more influence on English agriculture than any man of his time. His tour to Ireland was made at the suggestion of the Earl of Shelbourne, the first Marquis of Lansdowne. This nobleman had an extensive estate in County Kerry, and he was firmly of the opinion that the remedy for Irish poverty lay in the improvement of agriculture. Young obtained in-

A
T O U R
IN
I R E L A N D;
WITH
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PRESENT STATE OF THAT KINGDOM:
MADE IN
THE YEARS 1776, 1777, and 1778,
AND
BROUGHT DOWN TO THE END OF 1779.

BY ARTHUR YOUNG, Esq; F.R.S.

Honorary Member of the Societies of DUBLIN, YORK and MANCHESTER;
The Oeconomical Society of BERNE; the Palatine Academy of Agriculture,
at MANHEIM, and the Physical Society at ZURICH.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, STRAND; AND J. DODSLEY, PALL-MALL.
M DCC LXXX.

Facsimile of title page of Young's "Tour of Ireland..."

roductions to people in Ireland who would be able to provide him with useful information.

He arrived in Ireland on 24th June, 1776 and in the course of two journeys round the country he travelled 1,500 miles. At the end of 1777 he was actually given a job in Ireland — Lord Kingsborough, son of the Earl of Kingston, invited him to be his agent at Mitchelstown, County Cork. This gave him a further opportunity to study Irish conditions. It was obviously his intention to stay in Ireland as he sold his farm in England and was joined by his wife. However because of reforms that he wanted to introduce and because of jealousy he found his position being undermined, and he eventually decided to return to England. The work resulting from his stay in Ireland was published in 1780. It is in two volumes — the first describes his journeys round the country, while the second contains a general survey of the conditions in Ireland.

Young arrived in County Armagh on 22nd July, 1776, the first place which he wanted to visit being the Gosford estate at Markethill. He spent the previous night in the Globe Inn in Newry. The road between Newry and Markethill did not impress because he tells us:

This road is abominably bad, continually over hills, rough, stony and cut up. It is a turnpike, which in Ireland is a synonymous term for a vile road; which is the more extraordinary, as the bye ones are the finest in the world. It is the effect of jobs and imposition, which disgrace the kingdom; the presentment roads show what may be done, and render these villainous turnpikes the more disgusting.

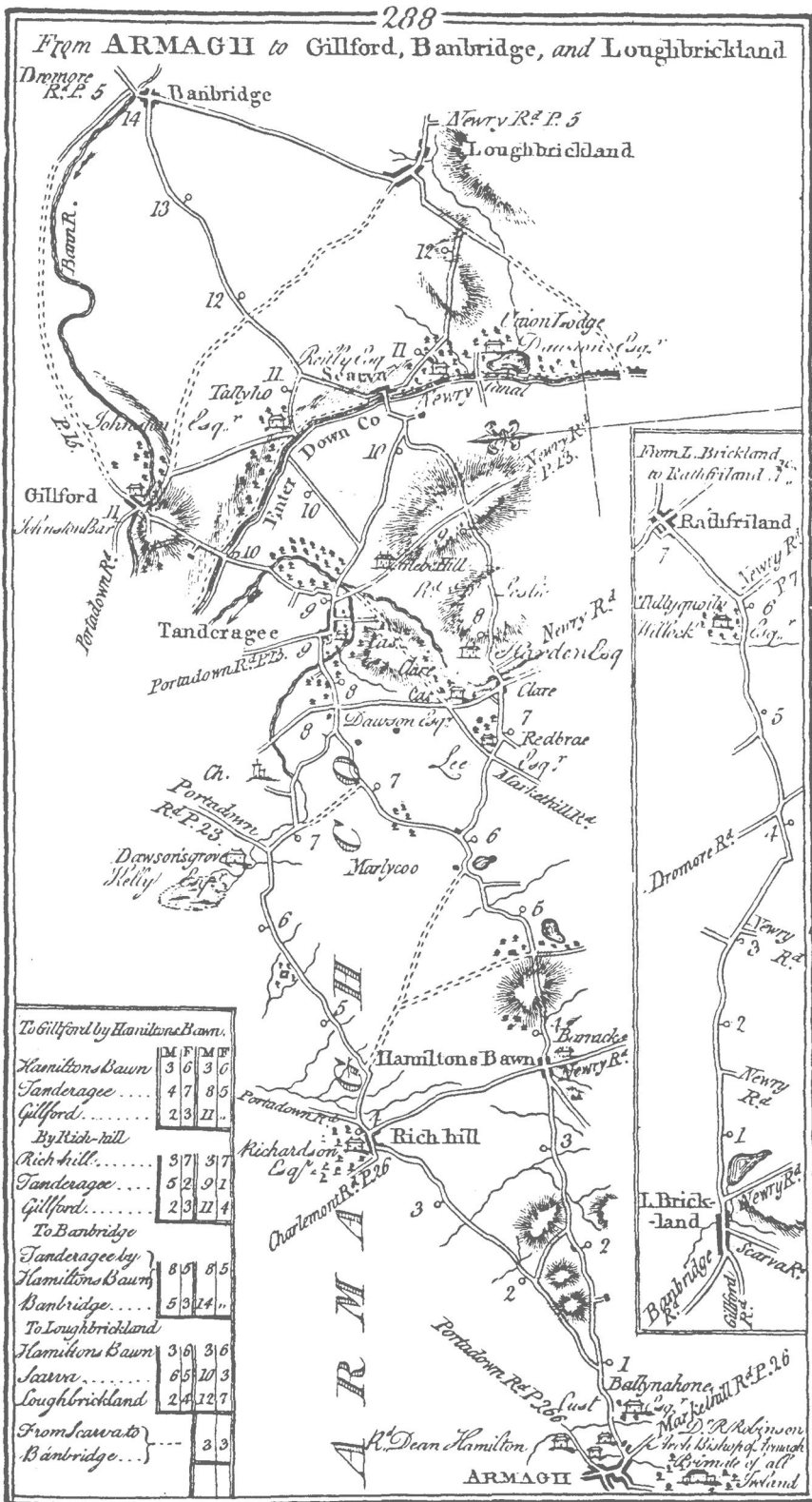
The following is his description of the farming methods on the Gosford estate:

Called at Lord Gosfort's, to whom I had been introduced by Lord Harcourt; but he was not yet come from Dublin; his steward, however, gave me the few following particulars. About Market-hill they measure by the English acre, and let from 8s. mountain to 12s. and 14s. The courses are:

1. Oats. 2. Oats. 3. Oats. 4. Oats. 5. Oats. 6. Oats, then leave it to itself to graze 3 or 4 years, this on good strong land; on worse 3 or 4 of oats, and 3 or 4 of grass, that is weeds; they reckon the best management to lime it on the sod, then 3 crops of oats, and 3 years left, and that one liming will last many years.

Measure by bolls, each 10 bushels; sow 6 bushels of oats to an acre; a good crop is 60 bushels, but that is extraordinary, 4 or 5 bolls common; and the crops will hold good through the whole course, the first will be the worst. Another course:

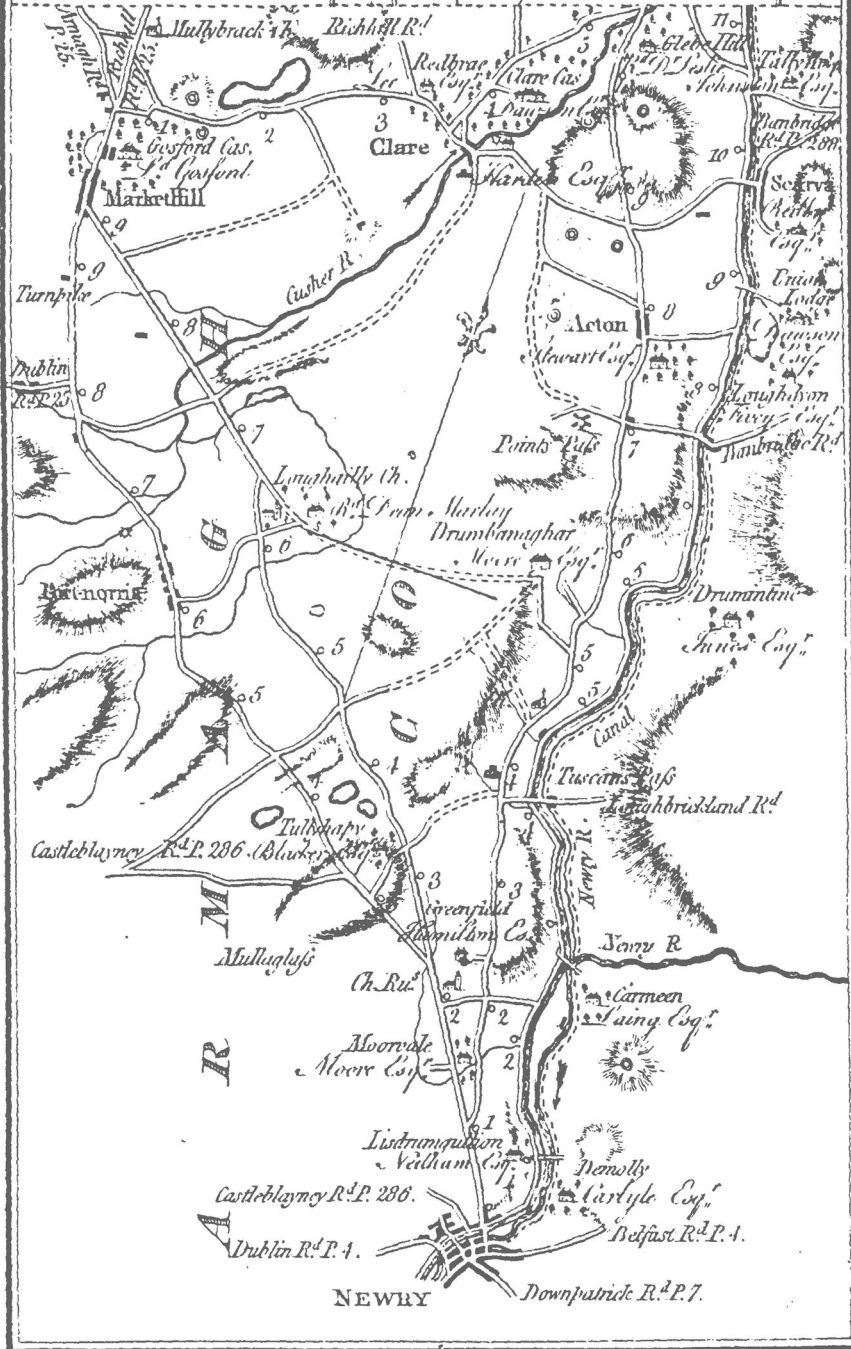
1. Potatoes. 2. Flax or oats. Also after several crops of oats, plough thrice and sow flax seed, 2 bushels to an acre, and yield 12 to 18 stone to every bushel of seed. Never sow flax twice running, Plant 16 to 18 bushels of potatoes on an acre; they do not live entirely on them, but have oatmeal, oaten bread, and sometimes flesh meat, once or twice a week. In spinning, a woman will do 5 or 6 hanks a week, and get 30s. for it by hire, as wages for half a year; a girl of 12 years old three halfpence, or two-pence a day. A man will earn by weaving coarse linen 1s. 2d. and 1s. 6d. by fine linen. The manufacturers live better than the labourers; they earn 3s. 6d. a week in winter, and 4s. in summer. Manufacturers have all from 6 to 15 acres from 6s. to 20s. an acre, and the house into the bargain: generally 2 or 3 cows, and a bit of flax enough for half a bushel or a barrel of seed, at 3 bushels to an acre. The country labourers have also from 6 to 10 acres. A cabin without land £1. 1s. a year. Cloth and yarn never to dear as at present, and people all employed — none idle. A cottage-building £5, ditto stone and slate £80. A great rise of both labour and provisions; 20 years ago beef 1d. and 1¼d. per lb. and labour 3d. and 4d. a day.



Taylor and Skinner's "Maps of the Roads of Ireland (1783)".

From NEWRY to Market-Hill and to Stewartstown.

	M	F	M	F		M	F
Market-hill			9	3	Newry to Market-hill by Loughgilly		9
To Stewartstown							
Sunderagee	10	6	10	6	Market-hill to Sunderagee		5
Clashdown	4	3	15	1	Sunderagee to Lurgan		7
Blakenwaterfoot	0	7	22		Lurgan to Stewartstown		14
Stewartstown	5	3	27	3	Newry to Scarva		9



Terry sculp

Religion mostly Roman, but some Presbyterians and Church of England — Manufacturers generally Protestants.

The manufacturers' wives drink tea for breakfast. No cattle but for convenience among the small farmers. No farms above 100 acres, and those stock ones, for attending cows and bullocks. Very few sheep in the country. Manures are lime, of which 20 to 60 barrels per acre, at 1s. 6d. will last for ever; best for light land — marle, grey and white, best on heathy ground. Some soapers' waste at Armagh and Newry, but not much.

The last of the four chosen visitors came to Ireland on what can be described as official business. In 1835 the Government established a Royal Commission whose brief was "to inquire into the condition of the poorer classes of our subjects in Ireland and into the various institutions at present established by law for their relief; and also, whether any, and what further measures appear to be requisite to ameliorate the condition of the Irish poor, or any portion of them." The reports which were published as a result of the Commission's investigations give a most detailed account of social conditions in the country in the 1830's. One of the topics which the Commission had to look at was agriculture and the conditions of the agricultural workers. The assistant commissioner who had responsibility for this part of the inquiry was a JONATHAN BINNS. He paid two visits to Ireland, and in the course of these he travelled through nearly every county in the country. His decision to write an account of his travels was motivated, he says, by "a desire to promote, on the part of the inhabitants of this country (England) a more familiar acquaintance with the real situation and dispositions of the Irish people, and to encourage a more practical sympathy for their sufferings." The work was published in 1837, and its title was "The miseries and beauties of Ireland."

One of the places in which the Commission collected evidence was Markethill, and Binns arrived there at the beginning of August, 1836. He stayed at Mrs. Stratton's inn, and his first task was to issue notices of the "intended examination" which was to take place in the local court house.

The agent on the Gosford estate at this time was William Blacker — a man who had advanced ideas on farming methods, and Binns was obviously keen to find out about these. He tells us:

The system of Mr. Blacker, Lord Gosford's agent, is first to level at the old crooked fences and make straight ones, as a division between each occupier,

allotting a square piece of land, consisting of about four statute acres, to each person; and as the tenants were in the last stage of destitution, he found it necessary to provide them with lime and seeds, as a loan, without interest; opening an account with each of them on their first entering upon the farm. A person called an *agriculturist* looks after the agricultural department, weighs out the seeds, and instructs the people in the cultivation of their farms. Upwards of sixty of these agriculturists have been introduced from Scotland through Mr. Blacker's means, and been distributed amongst gentlemen who have applied to him in various parts of Ireland. Their wages are from thirty-five to £40 per annum, including all allowances.

Mr. Blacker, not being able to attend us himself for a few days, directed the agriculturist, Mr. Bruce, to accompany us on our inspection of Lord Gosford's farms. We soon arrived at Mr. Black's farm; he occupied 14 acres, at a rent of 22s. per acre; the tithe in addition was 1s. 8d., and the county cess 2s. 4d. per acre. He sows a few turnips, and they, along with his other crops, were good. His house, which was very comfortable, contains two looms; these were used when his family were not all occupied on the farm. Some of his cattle were kept up on green food, but they were very dirty. Bruce also kept his own cattle up, and we observed that they were dirty also; on which he remarked that they never cleaned them on Sunday (which happened to be the day before). Black appeared a clever manager; his crops were good, and his land clean and Bruce said he was saving money, but he was not an out-and-out green-crop farmer. The next tenant we called upon was an old woman who was attempting the turnip husbandry; she had, however, neglected thinning her few perches of turnips until they had mastered and discouraged her; she burst into tears, and said she had done her best. The poor creature had been carefully picking out a plant or two when she ought to have hoed them down by scores; and like all novices in turnip growing, she thought it a pity to throw the turnips away, and was anxious to let them grow till the thinnings were food for her cow — just as many planters destroy their plantations by allowing trees to crowd and kill each other, in order that the thinnings may be of some value.

He visited a number of other farms and he discovered that improvements being introduced by the landlord or his agent were not always acceptable to the tenants; he quotes one old man who was having a cottage built for him at Lord Gosford's expense as saying:— "I would rather live and die in my old cabin; the mud



View of Mowhan Bridge from Greig's Report on Gosford estates (1820).
Binns would have passed this way.

walls are warm; it is the warmest hut in all Ireland. I like the smoke to come round me and warm me in my cabin. I would rather live comfortably amongst smoke.”

Blacker was also the agent on the Close estate and he accompanied Binns on a visit to Drumbanagher which he described as follows:—

In company with Mr. Blacker we visited Col. Close, who is becoming, under the able advice of that gentleman, a spirited improver. On his estate at Drumbanagher is a magnificent villa of the pure Italian style, in the design of which the architect, Mr. Playfair, of Edinburgh, has displayed consummate skill. It is surrounded by gently sloping ground of great extent, adorned with plantations and stately trees. The terraces and lawns are ornamented with water, and parterres enriched with the gayest flowers. From this splendid mansion a striking effect is produced. The gentle slope is terminated by a sudden and precipitous descent; and the eye, unconscious of the deep and wide-spreading valley that intervenes, is carried to the richly cultivated land at the foot of the noble mountains that bound the view.

Colonel Close has a large establishment, over which he presides with paternal care. From twenty to thirty servants joined the family at morning and evening prayers. This excellent individual has the good fortune to possess a valuable agent in Mr. Blacker, under

whose directions he is adopting the agricultural plan so successfully pursued on the Gosford estate. Several of the tenants I saw: they were confident of success.

The Commission started taking evidence about the barony of the Fewes Lower on 12th August, and the following is some of the information which Binns collected from it:

(a) The Linen industry

In the opinion of the most intelligent persons at the examination, the number of labourers continues nearly the same; and there was a general impression that the linen trade had improved, and that the weavers as a body were better off than they had been for some years. We did not, however, see any reason for acquiescing in this opinion. Under the present system, a few capitalists give out the yarn to be worked by the weavers up and down the country, and pay them wages varying from 8d. to 1s. 3d. a day, according to their skill, while the profits of course go to the employer. Formerly, the weavers were able to purchase the yarn themselves; and thus, besides their wages, enjoyed the profits from the finished linen.

(b) Women's Work

Women are employed for a short time pulling flax, for which they get eightpence a day near towns, and sixpence in the country. They receive also sixpence a day for shearing, in harvest. The wives of labourers



Graveyard at Terryhoogan where an annual Wesley Memorial Service is held.

can sell nothing but a few eggs or chickens; and some of the farmers will not permit them to keep fowls, for fear of injury being done to their corn fields; what a labourer's wife can make by them is not worth mentioning. She sometimes manages to scrape together a few eggs, and exchanges them for "a bit of soap, or a grain of tea."

(c) Stipends for the clergy

The priest receives from the farmers four shillings, and from labourers two shillings a year; one being paid at Christmas and the other at Easter, If they cannot afford this, sixpence is paid "The priest here is kind."

(d) Use of alcohol

Although there are twenty-five whiskey shops in Market Hill, the population of which is only 1040, it was the general opinion that these pernicious establishments are decreasing. There is certainly but little drunkenness among the labourers. Not many women drink, "but still," said Barney Halley "they don't hate a drop." "If a labourer is cold" said another witness, "a *Johnny** won't do him harm; and if he is in a heat, it is not the first thing that will hurt him."

*A small measure of whiskey, value one penny.

(e) Pawnbroking

The only pawnbroker in the barony lives in Market Hill, and his business must be a thriving one, for "every thing that can be mentioned," said one of the witnesses, "is pawned." Such is the attachment of the people to this ruinous system, that the Rev. Mr. Atkinson was of opinion that if small loans could be obtained, upon the deposit of pledges, as now, but upon more moderate terms, and without the present secrecy, though the institution might be encouraged, many would still frequent the pawn-office.

With regard to Lord Gosford's efforts to provide education for the children on his estate Binns speaks at length:

Lord Gosford educates upwards of a hundred children of the neighbourhood. They are Protestants, Catholics, and Presbyterians, but are instructed by a Protestant master, and use the Protestant bible entire. They are principally his tenants' children, and I did not find that the parents objected. They are permitted to take the bible home with them.

I visited the school, which is a beautiful building, surrounded by a garden, in which roses and other sweet flowers and beautiful shrubs abound. The scholars are taught writing, reading, grammar, and accounts. Some of the boys evinced great quickness in answering the various questions proposed to them. The girls are now generally instructed in needle-work.

Education is making rapid progress here. There were stated to be five hundred scholars now for one formerly. Lord Gosford supplies schooling, pens, ink, &c., free of charge; in other schools, a charge of a penny or twopence a week is made. It was gratifying to meet so many children on their way to and from various schools. The extension of education, which is happily taking place, promises a beneficial change in the habits and manners of these naturally quick and gifted people.

Our final quotation from Binns provides a link with the present. Recently Gosford Castle was put up for sale. During his stay in Markethill, this building was being erected. This is what he has to say about it:

On the site of his former mansion Lord Gosford is building a baronial residence, under the superintendence of Mr. Hopper, the architect. Though far from being finished, it has already cost about £80,000. The battlements and corbels struck me as being too light, and the arrangement in some parts appeared rather cramped, but the situation is good, and the grounds are well wooded.