

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-62735-2 - A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present
State of that Kingdom Made in the Years 1776, 1777 and 1778

Arthur Young

Excerpt

[More information](#)



A TOUR IN IRELAND

PART I



Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-62735-2 - A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present
State of that Kingdom Made in the Years 1776, 1777 and 1778

Arthur Young

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-62735-2 - A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom Made in the Years 1776, 1777 and 1778

Arthur Young

Excerpt

[More information](#)

PART I

MINUTES OF THE TOUR

JUNE 19TH, 1776. Arrived at Holyhead. Found the packet, the *Claremont* (Captain Taylor), would sail very soon. After a tedious passage of twenty-two hours, landed on the 20th in the morning, at Dunleary¹, four miles from Dublin, a city which much exceeded my expectation². The public buildings are magnificent, very many of the streets regularly laid out, and exceedingly well built. The front of the Parliament House is grand, though not so light as a more open finishing of the roof would have made it. The apartments are spacious, elegant, and convenient, much beyond that heap of confusion at Westminster, so inferior to the magnificence to be looked for in the seat of empire. I was so fortunate as to arrive just in time to see Lord Harcourt³, with the usual ceremonies, prorogue the Parliament. Trinity College is a beautiful building, and a numerous society; the library is a very fine room, and well filled. The new Exchange will be another edifice to do honour to Ireland; it is elegant, cost £40,000, but deserves a better situation. From everything I saw, I was struck with those appearances of wealth which the capital of a thriving community may be supposed to exhibit. Happy if I find through the country in diffused prosperity the right source of this splendour! The common computation of inhabitants 200,000, but I should suppose exaggerated.

JUNE 21ST. Introduced by Colonel Burton⁴ to the Lord Lieutenant, who was pleased to enter into conversation with me on my intended journey. Made many remarks on the agriculture of several Irish counties, and showed

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-62735-2 - A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom Made in the Years 1776, 1777 and 1778

Arthur Young

Excerpt

[More information](#)

himself to be an excellent farmer. Viewed the Duke of Leinster's house, which is a very large stone edifice, the front simple but elegant, the pediment light. There are several good rooms, but a circumstance unrivalled is the court, which is spacious and magnificent. The opening behind the house is also beautiful. In the evening to the Rotunda, a circular room, 90 feet diameter, an imitation of Ranelagh, provided with a band of music. The barracks are a vast building, raised in a plain style, of many divisions; the principal front is of an immense length. They contain every convenience for ten regiments.

JUNE 23RD. Lord Charlemont's house in Dublin, is equally elegant and convenient, the apartments large, handsome, and well disposed, containing some good pictures, particularly one by Rembrandt, of Judas throwing the money on the floor, with a strong expression of guilt and remorse; the whole group fine. In the same room is a portrait of Caesar Borgia, by Titian. The library is a most elegant apartment of about 40 by 30 feet, and of such a height as to form a pleasing proportion; the light is well managed, coming in from the cove of the ceiling, and has an exceeding good effect; at one end is a pretty ante-room, with a fine copy of the Venus de Medicis, and at the other two small rooms, one a cabinet of pictures and antiquities, the other medals. In the collection also of Robert Fitzgerald, Esq.⁵, in Merrion Square, are several pieces which very well deserve a traveller's attention; it was the best I saw in Dublin. Before I quit that city I observe, on the houses in general, that what they call their two-roomed ones are good and convenient. Mr La Touche's⁶, in Stephen's Green, I was shown as a model of this sort, and I found it well contrived, and finished elegantly.

Drove to Lord Charlemont's villa at Marino, near the city, where his lordship has formed a pleasing lawn, mar-

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-62735-2 - A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom Made in the Years 1776, 1777 and 1778

Arthur Young

Excerpt

[More information](#)

DUBLIN

5

gined in the higher part by a well-planted thriving shrubbery, and on a rising ground a banqueting room, which ranks very high among the most beautiful edifices I have anywhere seen; it has much elegance, lightness, and effect, and commands a fine prospect. The rising ground on which it stands slopes off to an agreeable accompaniment of wood, beyond which on one side is Dublin harbour, which here has the appearance of a noble river crowded with ships moving to and from the capital. On the other side is a shore spotted with white buildings, and beyond it the hills of Wicklow, presenting an outline extremely various. The other part of the view (it would be more perfect if the city was planted out) is varied, in some places nothing but wood, in others breaks of prospect. Returned to Dublin and made enquiries into other points, the prices of provisions, etc. The expenses of a family in proportion to those of London are as five to eight.

Having the year following lived more than two months in Dublin, I am able to speak to a few points, which as a mere traveller I could not have done. The information I before received of the prices of living is correct. Fish and poultry are plentiful and very cheap. Good lodgings almost as dear as they are in London, though we were well accommodated (dirt excepted) for two guineas and a half a week. All the lower ranks in this city have no idea of English cleanliness, either in apartments, persons, or cookery. There is a very good society in Dublin in a parliament winter; a great round of dinners, and parties, and balls and suppers every night in the week, some of which are very elegant, but you almost everywhere meet a company much too numerous for the size of the apartments. They have two assemblies on the plan of those of London, in Fishamble Street, and at the Rotunda, and two gentlemen's clubs, Anthry's and Daly's, very well regulated: I heard some anecdotes of deep play at the latter, though

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-62735-2 - A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom Made in the Years 1776, 1777 and 1778

Arthur Young

Excerpt

[More information](#)

6

A TOUR IN IRELAND

never to the excess common at London. An ill-judged and unsuccessful attempt was made to establish the Italian Opera, which existed but with scarcely any life for this one winter; of course they could rise no higher than a comic one. *La Buona Figliuola*, *La Frascatana*, and *Il Geloso in Cimento*⁷, were repeatedly performed, or rather murdered, except the parts of Sestini. The house was generally empty, and miserably cold. So much knowledge of the state of a country is gained by hearing the debates of a parliament, that I often frequented the gallery of the House of Commons. Since Mr Flood⁸ has been silenced with the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland, Mr Daly⁹, Mr Grattan¹⁰, Sir William Osborne¹¹, and the Prime Serjeant Burgh¹², are reckoned high among the Irish orators. I heard many very eloquent speeches, but I cannot say they struck me like the exertion of the abilities of Irishmen in the English House of Commons, owing perhaps to the reflection both on the speaker and auditor, that the Attorney-General of England, with a dash of his pen¹³, can reverse, alter, or entirely do away the matured result of all the eloquence and all the abilities of this whole assembly. Before I conclude with Dublin I shall only remark, that walking in the streets there, from the narrowness and populousness of the principal thoroughfares, as well as from the dirt and wretchedness of the *canaille*, is a most disgusting and uneasy exercise.

JUNE 24TH. Left Dublin and passed through the Phoenix Park, a very pleasing ground, at the bottom of which to the left, the Liffey forms a variety of landscapes; this is the most beautiful environ of Dublin. Take the road to Luttrellstown through a various scenery on the banks of the river. That domain is a considerable one in extent, being above 400 acres within the wall, Irish measure; in the front of the house is a fine lawn bounded

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-62735-2 - A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom Made in the Years 1776, 1777 and 1778

Arthur Young

Excerpt

[More information](#)

LUTTRELLSTOWN

7

by rich woods, through which are many ridings, four miles in extent. From the road towards the house, they lead through a very fine glen, by the side of a stream falling over a rocky bed, through the dark woods, with great variety on the sides of steep slopes, at the bottom of which the Liffey is either heard or seen indistinctly; these woods are of great extent, and so near the capital, form a retirement exceedingly beautiful. Lord Irnham¹⁴ and Colonel Luttrell have brought in the assistance of agriculture to add to the beauties of the place, they have kept a part of the lands in cultivation in order to lay them down the better to grass; 150 acres have been done, and above 200 acres most effectually drained in the covered manner filled with stones. These works are well executed. In the county of Dublin, good grass land lets at 40s. an acre. Mow most of it for hay. Most of the people drink tea and consume plenty of whisky and tobacco. Rent of cottages 26s. to 30s. with a potato garden. No emigrations. The religion in general Catholic. Labour throughout the year 10*d.* a day, about Dublin 1s. Leaving Luttrellstown I went to St Wolstan's [Co. Kildare], which Lord Harcourt had been so obliging as to desire I would make my quarters, from whence to view to the right or left.

JUNE 25TH. To Mr Clement's at Killadoon [Co. Kildare], who has lately built an excellent house, and planted much about it, with the satisfaction of finding that all his trees thrive well. I remarked the beech and larch seemed to get beyond the rest. He is also a good farmer.

JUNE 26TH. Breakfasted with Colonel Marlay at Celbridge. Walked through his grounds, which I found in general very well cultivated.

Walked through Loughlinstown [Co. Kildare], the farm of the late Mr Wynn Baker¹⁵, to whom the Dublin

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-62735-2 - A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom Made in the Years 1776, 1777 and 1778

Arthur Young

Excerpt

[More information](#)

8 A TOUR IN IRELAND

Society¹⁶, with a liberality that does them great honour, gave for several years £300 annually in order to make experiments.

Viewed Lucan [Co. Dublin], the seat of Agmondisham Vesey, Esq.¹⁷, on the banks of the Liffey; the house is rebuilding, but the wood on the river, with walks through it, is exceedingly beautiful.

Leaving Lucan the next place is Leixlip¹⁸ [Co. Kildare], a fine one, on the river, with a fall, which in a wet season is considerable. Then St Wolstan's, belonging to the Dean of Derry¹⁹, a beautiful villa, which is also on the river; the grounds gay and open, though not without the advantage of much wood, disposed with judgment. A winding shrubbery quits the river, and is made to lead through some dressed ground that is pretty and cheerful.

Mr Conolly's²⁰, at Castletown [Co. Kildare], to which all travellers resort, is the finest house in Ireland, and not exceeded by many in England. It is a large handsome edifice, situated in the middle of an extensive lawn, which is quite surrounded with fine plantations disposed to the best advantage. To the north these unite into very large woods, through which many winding walks lead, with the convenience of several ornamented seats, rooms, etc. On the other side of the house, upon the river, is a cottage, with a shrubbery, prettily laid out; the house commands an extensive view, bounded by the Wicklow mountains. It consists of several noble apartments. On the first floor is a beautiful gallery, 80 feet long, elegantly fitted up.

JUNE 27TH. Left Lord Harcourt's, and having received an invitation from the Duke of Leinster²¹, passed through Mr Conolly's grounds to his Grace's seat at Carton. The park ranks among the finest in Ireland. It is a vast lawn, which waves over gentle hills, surrounded by plantations of great extent, and which break and divide in places so

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-62735-2 - A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom Made in the Years 1776, 1777 and 1778

Arthur Young

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CARTON

9

as to give much variety. A large but gentle vale winds through the whole, in the bottom of which a small stream has been enlarged into a fine river, which throws a cheerfulness through most of the scenes: over it a handsome stone bridge. There is a great variety on the banks of this vale; part of it consists of mild and gentle slopes, part steep banks of thick wood. On one of the most rising grounds in the park is a tower, from the top of which the whole scenery is beheld. The park spreads on every side in fine sheets of lawn, kept in the highest order by 1100 sheep, scattered over with rich plantations, and bounded by a large margin of wood, through which is a riding. At a small distance from the park is a new town, Maynooth, which the Duke has built; it is regularly laid out, and consists of good houses. His Grace gives encouragement to settling in it; consequently it increases, and he meditates several improvements.

Reached Kilcock [Co. Kildare].

JUNE 28TH. Breakfasted with Mr Jones of "Dolleston" [Dolanstown Ho., Co. Meath]. From hence took the road to Summerhill the seat of the Right Hon. H[ercules] L[angford] Rowley. The country is cheerful and rich, and if the Irish cabins continue like what I have hitherto seen, I shall not hesitate to pronounce their inhabitants as well off as most English cottagers. They are built of mud walls 18 inches or 2 feet thick, and well thatched, which are far warmer than the thin clay walls in England. Here are few cottiers without a cow, and some of them two. A bellyfull invariably of potatoes, and generally turf for fuel from a bog. It is true they have not always chimneys to their cabins, the door serving for that and window too. If their eyes are not affected with the smoke, it may be an advantage in warmth. Every cottage swarms with poultry and most of them have pigs. The plantations and

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-62735-2 - A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom Made in the Years 1776, 1777 and 1778

Arthur Young

Excerpt

[More information](#)

ornamented grounds at Summerhill are extensive and form a very fine environ, spreading over the hills and having a noble appearance. The house is large and handsome, with an elegant hall, a cube of 30 feet and many very good and convenient apartments.

Went in the evening to Lord Mornington's²² at Dangan [Co. Meath], who is making many improvements, which he showed me. His plantations are extensive, and he has formed a large water, having five or six islands much varied, and promontories of high land shoot so far into it as to form almost distinct lakes; the effect pleasing. There are above 100 acres under water, and his Lordship has planned a considerable addition to it. Returned to Summerhill.

JUNE 29TH. Left it, taking the road to Slane [Co. Meath], the country very pleasant all the way; much of it on the banks of the Boyne, variegated with some woods, planted hedgerows, and gentle hills. The cabins continue much the same, the same plenty of poultry, pigs and cows. The cattle in the road have their forelegs all tied together with straw to keep them from breaking into the fields; even sheep, pigs and goats, are all in the same bondage. I had the pleasure of meeting Colonel Burton at the Castle, in whom I was so fortunate to find, on repeated occasions, the utmost assiduity to procure me every species of information, entering into the spirit of my design with the most liberal ideas. His partner in Slane mills, Mr Jebb, gave me the following particulars. Every farmer has a little flax from a rood to an acre and all the cottages a spot. If they have any land they go through the whole process themselves and spin and weave it. From hence to Drogheda there is a considerable manufacture of coarse cloth, which is exported to Liverpool, about 1s. a yard.

Lord Conyngham's²³ seat, Slane Castle on the Boyne, is one of the most beautiful places I have seen; the grounds