

THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND



There are many cottages like this one dotted through the Irish midlands.

IN an island which measures only about three hundred miles from the extreme north in Co. Donegal to the extreme south in Co. Cork, and only a little over one hundred from Dublin on the east coast where Galway looks westward on the open Atlantic, we might expect a certain uniformity both in land and people. To what extent, in Ireland, do they get that uniformity?

The visitor who has spent a few weeks traveling around the country may be inclined to answer that they don't get it at all. He leaves the modern city of Dublin—filled with tales of Ireland which themselves lack uniformity—and finds himself in a few hours in some Connemara or Kerry valley, by a turf fire with Irish being spoken around him, dimly conscious of the presence of something old, unique and vital, a culture different from any that he knows. The following day may take him to industrial Belfast, whose atmosphere of hard work and self-denial he will find grim or tonic according to his temperament. Here in any case he will probably be told, with deep conviction, that there are "two nations" in Ireland: the Ulstermen, hard-headed, practical, thrifty, and the South-erners, a vague people, given to romantical and mystic attitudes. Yet, within an hour of Belfast, in the Glens of Antrim, or farther on in Western Ulster (Co. Donegal) he finds himself in the same purely Gaelic atmosphere as in Connemara. Finally, perhaps, still clutching at his new theory, he goes to the farthest south, in quest of vague romantics, and reaches the keen commercial city of Cork, beside whose clear-eyed and soft-spoken inhabitants the shrewdest Belfast-man is but a child.

NORTHERN AUTO DEALERS SUPPLIED FROM CORK

Ford dealers in Northern Ireland, have recently learned that, as a temporary measure, they must obtain their supplies of the new Anglia and Prefect models from the factories at Cork instead of Dagenham.

While the change in the method of supply will benefit the rail link between Cork and Belfast, the cross-Channel, shippers are faced with a considerable loss of revenue.

The Ford Company says that the new plan will enable the Dagenham factory to devote its shipments to the overseas markets.

THE VISITOR CAN BE BAFFLED.

It is no wonder the visitor can be baffled. "They told me there were two nations," said one American visitor. "Brother, there are thirty-two!

Yet underlying all this diversity is a real unity, written into the very structure of the island, the central plain with its concentric ring of hills. The diversity is a diversity of regions—confusing to people from the New World,

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THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND

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accustomed to thinking in larger units, but natural in an old country. The unity is implicit in the way God made the country and it stamps the people: one Irishman knows another anywhere, whether he comes from town or country, from Kerry or from Antrim.

THE LAND

Everywhere in Ireland agriculture is the principal industry, in every province of the land is the source of livelihood of most of the people. The challenge the land presents is a very varied one. Certain regions—County Meath for example and the famous Golden Vein in Munster—are among the most productive agricultural lands in the world. The best Irish grasslands on the central limestone plain are second to none anywhere—not even to Kentucky's renowned "Blue Grass" region. On the limestone pastures of Kildare were bred such world-famous horses as Nasrullah and his offspring Noor, whose repeated victories over America's finest race horses have awakened United States breeders to the merits of Irish stock. There also are fattened the cattle which form the mainstay of Ireland's export trade. Throughout the country extremes of heat and cold are rare and rainfall is high and well distributed.

NATURE IS A HARD MASTER.

Yet there are parts of this land also where Nature is a hard master; where the brown bog yields no feeding to cattle; where the plough is repulsed by strong ground. In the parts of the central plain covered by the great Bog

of Allen, in the rocky thin-soiled land of Western Connaught and parts of Ulster, and on the western islands where men actually brought soil in their coracles from the mainland to spread on the bare rock, it has always been very hard to wrest a livelihood from the land. This is especially so since to the challenge of Nature has been added the challenge of history—the troubled history of Ireland which has left its mark not only on the people but physically on the land itself. An alien rack-renting landlord system deprived farmers of incentives and the land of heart. From this system there came emigration and land unnecessarily left to waste. In most of Ireland the land-owner, often an absentee, never invested money in his land: the tenant had none to invest. The landlord, who probably always felt in his heart that his tenure in Ireland was insecure, did not even trouble to replace cut timber on his estates—the bare treeless expanses through the Irish countryside still surprise the foreigner as do the miles of high stone walls which are perhaps the most conspicuous memorial of Irish landlordism. In short, the natural wealth of Ireland over centuries was simply drained away, and much Irish labor was put to unproductive purposes.



A turf fire in a country cottage has a charm all its own.

GOVERNMENT AIDS THE FARMER

Today, with the landlord system a thing of the past, the Irish farmer, new owner of his farm, has the task of making Ireland what she is best fitted by Nature to be—one of the most prosperous of the small European nations. In that task he has, naturally, had the energetic support of the

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"COMBINATION COVERS"
ONCE PLENTIFUL, NOW MUCH SCARCER

By Perry Adams, E.P.A. #84

As applied in Irish philately, the term "Combination Covers" is perhaps not as clear as it should be. Yet it seems less of a mouthful than "Covers Upon Which Irish and British Stamps Were Combined". Some find this longer designation equally confusing. "You mean," they are apt to say, "the combination of British postage dues with Irish postage stamps when necessary, since Ireland had no dues of her own until 1925?"

This is a phase of the story, but no more than an offshoot. Between February 1922, when the first Irish overprints appeared, and issue of the first Irish dues in 1925, the use of British dues was indeed a standard makeshift, and covers combining such material have increasing value. But as used here, the words "Combination Covers" primarily have to do with appearance of Irish and British postage stamps upon the same covers...Why did this happen at all?

At times after the first Irish overprinted stamps appeared on February 17th 1922 a certain unevenness in their distribution resulted in temporary shortages of various values—so that their still available British value-counterparts were sold to fill out. This accounts in part for many of the earliest Combination Covers. But the sale in Irish post offices of British stamps without overprint became invalid after March 31st 1922. On April 1st an accounting of all remainders on hand was made to the British, so that theoretically and doubtless almost literally, the ruling was carried out: Irish over-the-counter sale of British stamps ceased.

But there was one factor which prolonged Combined Covers well into the future. Quantities of the British stamps bought but not used prior to April 1st, remained in the hands of the public. In all fairness, the Irish post office continued to accept such stamps when presented affixed to mailings. Of later Combination Covers resulting from this, undoubtedly some were speculative, for even after supplies of the British stamps bought in Ireland were consumed, there was nothing to prevent purchasing more in England. However, changing British types soon curtailed the practice.

Today, by their very nature such covers

have a high rate of mortality. The moment the the affected stamps are removed from paper, their property of "combination" is destroyed. This is written in the middle of September of 1955 and the point is, that each year until the present one I have been able to acquire a fair quantity of these Combination Covers, with 1922, 1923 and 1924 cancels. Since the end of 1954 I have not handles a single one.

Sudden realization that the supply seems to drying up, as with so many Irish philatelic items, prompts me to mention the category to our members. These covers serve as a breath from an unforgettable period in history, and surely deserve space in every Irish collection.

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JOSEPH FUREY: VETERAN STAMP CLUB EDITOR

E.P.A. and its members congratulate Mr. Joseph Patrick Furey (E.P.A. #125) on his 20 years as editor of the Metropolitan Life Insurance stamp club bulletin.



It was back in the fall of 1935 that Joe became editor of the Metco Messenger, official bulletin of the Metco Stamp Club. The publication is a monthly source of news and information. Mr. Furey tells his readers what happened at the last meeting, what's going to happen next time. He provides all kinds of information about stamp collecting and people who collect.

NATIVE OF DONEGAL

Mr. Furey, who was born in County Donegal, Ireland, came to this country when he was 19 years old. He joined Metropolitan as a Mail Clerk. Most of his career has been spent in the Group Disability Claim Section of the Accident and Health Division, where he is Assistant Supervisor.

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successive Irish Governments. Together farmer and Governments have accomplished a great deal. The farmer has received good markets for his products at favorable prices together with Government grants for improvements to his farm. He has seen sugar factories established in country towns to use his beet crop. He has benefited from the advisory services of the Department of Agriculture and from Government aid in negotiating good prices for his food in foreign markets. The State has helped him by meeting the great natural challenge which the land presents. After the rivers, the turf-bogs are beginning to be turned into electric power and the electricity is being brought to the farmer.

EUROPEAN RECOVERY PROGRAM AN AID TO IRISH

Long-term planning has made use of American Loan Counterpart Funds—that is the proceeds in sterling of the dollar loans made by the American people under the European Recovery Program—to make good the under-investment of the past. Plans have been made for the reclamation over a period of ten years of four million acres of waste or unproductive land. Improvements already carried out under this scheme—in which farmers have eagerly co-operated—include intensive field drainage, the removal of scrub and boulders and the reclamation of marsh land. Plans for reforestation at a rate of 25,000 acres a year have been enacted. A great movement of rehabilitation begun with the earliest years of the State is steadily gaining momentum.

THE FARMER

So much for the State's effort. But the future of the land depends finally on the effort of the farmer himself. And for the farmer recent years have produced both severe challenges and rewards. Although Ireland was not involved in the Second World War her farmlands, like those of other countries, suffered from war-time shortages, especially lack of fertilizers. To meet the population's needs the farmer had to grow much more wheat, often on unsuitable land. The nation's need was for hard work and the farmer met that need. Today, partly as a result of his work and of the favorable position of the primary producer in the post-war world, and partly as the fruit of policies designed to help him since the foundation of the State, the Irish farmer is more prosperous than at any time in history. He is reacting to that prosperity—which has spread fairly evenly through-

out the country, for extremes of wealth and poverty are rare—with the traditional wisdom of a man who has seen many changes, bad years as well as good. He is saving, investing in farm machinery—and generally improving his holding. He faces the future with confidence but without complacency.



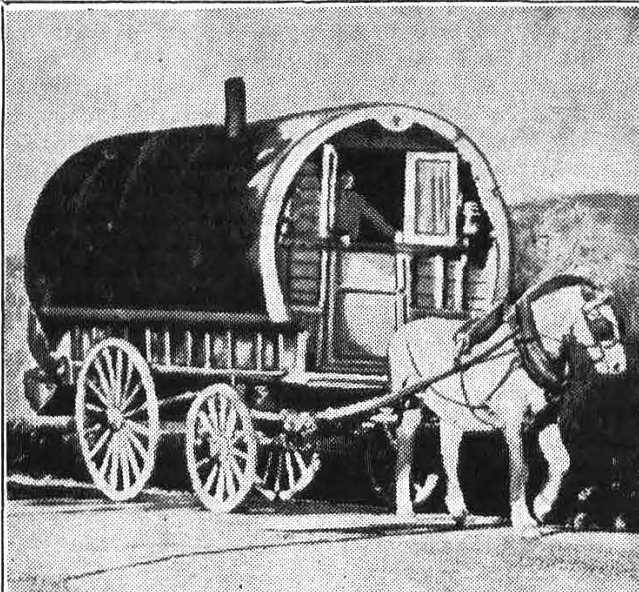
The road to the creamery. Cloghane, Co. Kerry

The farmer's work even in these days of relative prosperity, is hard and heavy. Although compared with most European countries Ireland is a country of rather large farms—a fact not usually realized—farmers with holdings of more than 100 acres, employing paid labor, are not characteristic. These bigger farms, on the rich grasses of the midlands play an important part in the country's cattle export trade; but more typical is the farm of 30 or 40 acres where the family engages in mixed farming. The farmer tills enough to provide his family and feed his live stock. He may also grow barley—for which the famous Irish brewers and distillers provide a steady market—or wheat or sugar beet for sale, but the breeding and rearing of livestock, principally cattle, is his main business. He will probably send his milk to the local co-operative creamery, getting the skim milk to feed his stock. The farmer's wife usually looks after the pigs and poultry. The value of egg exports runs well over twelve million pounds and represents only a part of her contribution to the country's economic welfare.

FACING A PROBLEM

Despite increased prosperity, the rural community faces a serious problem. The natural increase of the population—17,000 a year—has been accompanied by an actual fall in the numbers on the land. Emigration, a feature of Irish life for centuries, and migration to the big cities, have more than matched the natural increase.

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CARE-FREE LIFE OF IRISH TINKER THREATENED

Modern trends are threatening the tinkers. A campaign is under way to curb these colorful knights of the road whose carts and caravans have given a touch of romance to the Irish countryside.

The tinkers—estimated at about 5,500 in the Irish Republic, half of them women—have their defenders, however, in the world outside their own.

Sometimes, the tinkers are called gypsies. Such reference is a careless one. The gypsies look down upon the tinkers and the tinkers snub the gypsies too. To mix with them is "bad luck", say the tinkers.

TINKERS MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS

Tinkers—always ready for a drink or a fight—mean different things to different persons. Farmers denounce them because they live off the countryside, and keep a close watch on the crops and cattle when they are near.

Poets and songsters see these men and women as romantic figures. The tinkers have been described as "God's gentry" and as "children of the rainbow."

Historians are not sure where the tinkers came from. Some say they are the descendants of the armorers of the ancient kings of Ireland who took to wandering when the royal system broke down; others think of them as descendants of the Raparees, the Robin Hood of Ireland, who waged war on foreign soldiers.

These nomads are versatile mystics and card sharps, healers, men of odd jobs, and some (Continued on page 246)

NEW BOOK PUBLISHED ON COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., of New York, has recently published a new book, "Commemorative Stamps of the British Commonwealth," by Mr. Harrison D.S. Haverbeck. The book consists of 240 pages, is cloth bound, and sells for \$6.50.

This publication contains a wealth of information on the British Commonwealth commemoratives. It is a generic philatelic entity describing in detail the event or person commemorated, the date of issue, designer, printer, printing data and errors of philatelic significance. But, it is the author's treatment of the Irish commemoratives that we shall review.

TREATMENT OF IRISH COMMEMORATIVES

The philatelic data is adequate. And, although it will not satisfy the specialist's specialist, the check listing is sufficiently comprehensive for the average Irish collector. The "bullet hole" in the 2d. O'Connell, the paper varieties of the Shannon Barrage and other commemoratives, and the variations in the lines of the surf on the Gaelic Athletic Association Jubilee commemorative are omitted as being varieties of insignificant importance. In a work of this nature the author is probably justified in his treatment of the subject.

IRELAND IS LISTED UNDER "E."

Ireland is listed alphabetically under "E" (for Éire), which is a bit surprising. The name, "Éire," has been used for some time by the British as a means of political distinction in the governments of the country. Of course, geographically, this is incorrect.

The tenor of the descriptive matter is more Anglo-Saxon than Irish but this is not offensive to even the most nationalistic Irish philatelist.

The translation of the Irish for the Father Matthew commemorative is incorrect. It is shown as "Honour in God's Name, Father Matthew." The correct translation is: "Here Goes, in the Name of God." The few minor faults do not detract from the book's value as a handy compilation of philatelic data.

GIBBONS LISTS 144 PRICE INCREASES

Stanley Gibbons lists 144 new price increases in Vol. I of the 1956 Catalog.

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE (Continued from page 244)

The people themselves and their successive governments have seen this danger and taken measures to combat it. The re-equipment of agriculture and rehabilitation of the land, rural electrification and reforestation, the building of new houses (rural housing in Ireland was completely transformed in the years before the Second World War) and the government sponsored programs for the marketing of the products of home industries as well as the establishment of numerous factories in country towns, are examples of measures now in operation. They have slowed the process but have not halted it. In recent years however the farmers themselves have increasingly been interested in the problem. In different parishes energetic leaders have seen that the best and most radical solution lies in making life more interesting, co-operative and creative.

THE YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS

The Young Farmers' Clubs, now nation-wide, are breaking down the isolation of rural life by encouraging their members to study the agricultural methods of other countries and apply them, where suitable, at home. They combine educational and social activities, organizing excursions to other clubs in remote regions—from Mayo to Tipperary. These outings are both pleasant and a real means of acquiring new knowledge. Many of these young men are graduates in agriculture or veterinary science and are doing a great deal to enrich Ireland both economically and socially.

MUINTIR na TIRE

Muintir na Tíre (The People of the Land) is an organization founded by the Parish Priest of Bansha, County Tipperary, Father Hayes. One little parish of 230 inhabitants in North Cork has shown what can be done, and what Muintir na Tíre is determined to do elsewhere. This typical rural parish, under the guidance of a Muintir na Tíre organizer, formed a guild representing the different sections of the community—farmers, laborers, women and trade, business and professions. The women were the first to put forward a set of suggestions to the Parish Council—for the establishment of a weekly poultry and egg market in the village and for a winter class in poultry raising. In three weeks the first market was held: it grew and thrived, helped by a new turkey station and a station for egg distribution which was established following the start of the poultry

class. The farmers established a horse fair and purchased a co-operative owned tractor plough. They also purchased bulk supplies of seeds and manures. A bull inspection center and a cow testing association have been formed. All sections of the guild, together, have improved the landscape by planting groves of trees and shelter belts over a treeless countryside.

A NEW IMPROVEMENT IN SOCIAL LIFE.

Classes in drama, Irish and dancing have added to the social life. Sports, music and family participation in music and community dancing has been encouraged.

With the help of the government and the various societies interested in restoring Ireland to an agricultural nation, she will eventually overcome the obstacles that have beset her. (End)

CAREFREE LIFE OF IRISH TINKER THREATENED

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are not beyond begging.

THEY HAVE THEIR OWN LANGUAGE AND LAWS

They have their own secret language that has never been decoded by an outsider.

They marry young and live a strict moral code. A married woman may mix only with men of her own tribe or her husband's relatives.

They have their own courts to deal with any breaches of the law—their own law, that is, for they do not recognize any other.

Any attempt to force the tinkers to settle down is sure to meet opposition from those who regard them as the last of romantic Ireland. As one poet said: "Why cage a bird, why 'civilize' a tinker? Put them in houses and they will die."

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E.P.A. ELECTION RESULTS

Thomas F. Bannigan, Jr., Chairman of the E.P.A. Election Committee, reports the election of the following candidates:

For President, Malcolm G. O'Reilly, North Bergen, New Jersey; Vice President, John W. Travers, Toronto, Canada; Secretary, George D. Stevens, Flint, Michigan; Treasurer, Robert Gray, Flint, Michigan.

Directors elected are: Thomas E. Field, Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield, England and Neil Stack of New York City.

Alternate Directors are: Michael F. Wadden and Hans Zervas, both of New York City.

All officers and directors will hold office for the period of two years—from Sept. 15, 1955 to Sept. 14, 1957.

JUNIOR PHILATELIC SOCIETY RECEIVES REVEALER

The Junior Philatelic Society of England, founded in 1899, has received a file of The Revealer and is now indexing them. A formal acknowledgement has recently been published in the "J.P.S. Library Notes" in The Stamp Lover.

European Representative, Mr. Michael P. Giffney, was instrumental in making E.P.A. known to the J.P.S. editor. And, contrary to name, this organization is composed of mature men—not juniors.

FORD TO PRODUCE "THREE LEAVES OF A SHAMROCK"

John Ford, American movie director and native of County Galway, has chosen Galway City as headquarters for his new all-Irish film, "Three Leaves of a Shamrock."

Most of the scenes will be made in Connemara but some pictures may be shot in Killarney, Bantry and Waterford.

Mr. Ford says that no date has been set for starting the picture but that he intends to be in Ireland before November.

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-BRING IN A NEW MEMBER-

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- MISCELLANEOUS -

E.P.A. Labels--40¢ per 100 or 300 for \$1.00.
Back copies of The Revealer ... 35¢...each.
Gaelic-English Town Cancellation Listing---A
limited supply on hand--\$1.50 each--while
the supply lasts.

Map of Ireland--small supply on hand--send
10¢ in coin to cover handling charges.
All above miscellaneous items may be obtained
by writing John J. Clark--947 East 32nd
Street, Brooklyn 10, New York.

ITEMS STILL AVAILABLE AT IRISH G.P.O.

The 1d (Watermarked "SE" or "E") and the
1 sh. (Watermarked "E") stamps of an earlier
issue now withdrawn from general use are still
available through the G.P.O. All requests
should be addressed to: The Controller, Philatelic Section, G.P.O., Dublin, Ireland.

FAMOUS IRISH GIANT

James Byrne, "The Irish Giant," who was
born in 1761, measured eight feet two inches.
He is often confused with a rival Irish giant
of the same period, Patrick O'Brien, who was
said to be eight feet seven inches. James
died in 1784 at the age of 22; Patrick died
in 1804 at the age of 39.

When Byrne died the anatomists scrambled
for his skeleton, and it was said that even
more consultations were held than had been
convened to keep Henry VIII alive. A famous
surgeon Dr. J. Hunter, won the "Battle for
Byrne." The famous skeleton can still be
seen in the Royal College of Surgeons at
Lincoln's Inn Fields London.



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