

## CURIOSITIES

Curious objects, structures, monuments, landmarks, sights, etc. For example, Wishing stones or "chairs," freaks of nature (i.e. grotesque rock formations)—in fact, any scene or object which may be regarded as queer, quaint or mirth-provoking. Location and description. Any story or legend to be related.

The single-storey, neat, thatched cottage of Mrs. Sweeney of Drumnaskeen was in 1880, erected overnight. The house was built for a man named Brennan (who had been evicted from his former home). It is known as the "Land League cottage."

The site chosen for the house by the Land Leaguers was a fully pebbled. It was erected at a point where three estates joined — those of Kilmaine, Donbille and Lynch-Blessie. Thus before Brennan could be evicted from his new home much and costly litigation would have to be entered into concerning the rights of any of the three landlords to enforce his ejection as is said locally — "if the bailiffs of one landlord came into Brennan's kitchen — all he had to do was to go to his bedroom which stood in another estate and they could not get him out."

Most interesting feature (and fully authentic) of the history section of the "Land League cottage" is that three of the men who laboured at its building bore the names Early, Moore, and Knight.

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## CUSTOMS, PATTERNS, ETC.

Brief account of old customs, traditional cures, etc., still practised in the district. Pilgrimages to Holy Wells, Shrines, etc. Patterns.

A few weeks, it is said, due to the cleaning up of the Holy well at Balla called Tobac House — and commencing to visit the well to pray and seek cures.

Just as many people will not pay out money on this day. On St. Bridget's Eve many people make straw crosses and hang them in their houses which are thus placed under the saint's protection. There are too, the "bridegoms." Children go around carrying a doll, and sing and play at neighbour's houses.

Shrove Tuesday is "pancake night."

On May Day prinrosses are gathered and placed on window sills etc. in honour of the day.

Milk will not, by many, be sold, but is given away on May Day. Bonfire's night, June 23rd. Fires are lighted in the open air and the coals thrown amongst the crops to ensure good harvests.

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(Signed) Daniel J. Faughnan

Surveyor.

DATE

May 1st 1945

Hallow E'en: youngsters fling cabbage stumps at doors, and play practical jokes.

St. Martin's night: a fowl is killed and its blood sprinkled in the four corners of the house.

St. Stephen's Day. The 'wren' boys who carry a live wren with them as they go, dressed in fantastic gear, from house to house. (It is said that the obnoxious custom prevails of killing the wren after the fun is over).

### Funerals.

Take the longest route to the graveyard.

The relatives often cross the field in grass <sup>just</sup> after interment. Rains on which the coffin rests are tipped over so soon as the coffin is lifted before leaving.

Clocks are stopped when death occurs. Set going again after the funeral.

Gravediggers place spade and shovel in the form of a cross over the open grave.

Wakes are held. They are decisionous affairs.

### Marriages.

The bride must not return to her own home until a month after the wedding. The return is called the "month's visit."

### Churning.

Sometimes a quenched coal is placed under the churn to ensue against "stealing the butter."

A visitor must always lend a hand with the dash.

Some people, after haircutting, place the hair in a sieve and refuse to burn it lest it bring ill-luck.

While these customs survive - they are not widespread.

The "Yeas bridge" or "Yals na". years ago some local youths, for no apparent reason, erected in rough fashion with loose stones, an effigy of a man on the top (648') of the hill that now bears the name. The hill is the highest point of a small wild mountain tract between Balla and Ballyvaughy.

Originally the "Yeas bridge" was of giant size. It crumbled away however - and was later now as less crudely rebuilt by local children. It is about six ft. high and a few feet thick and can be seen from the main road, though not distinctly.

[FOR PUBLICATION IF DEEMED ADVISABLE]

A feature of Balla town which evokes much curiosity is the reconstructed dwelling house of Mr. McEllin, merchant, main st.

Originally the house was a plain two-story edifice standing between and attached to, a dwelling house on one side and Mr. McEllin's business premises on the other.

Its reconstruction takes the form of a most eccentric medieval castle frontage in cemented concrete. Flanked by a pair of tall thin towers with many loops there is much pseudo renaissance of the chimney tops and the upper wall front. The windows are modern steel casements - the house itself is set a few yards back from the towers which are on the pavement edge, the intervening space being covered over to form a kind of frontal porch. Connecting the towers at porch height is a further line of ornamentation. A flagstaff rests on the summit of one of the towers.

SURVEYOR'S NOTE: Respectfully suggest that as this edifice is a reflection of owner's eccentricity it be not published in 'Curiosities' - such publication would probably have repercussions - it is mentioned in Town D. The building is, however, one of the sights of Balla.

"Poll na bairille" - "hole of the crozier" is a name given to an adjunct of the small river which flows past the C.C.'s house at Balla. There is an older one and so given because of the outline of the pool. Now however the pool is stagnant and not so obvious in outline. Seen from main road at C.C.'s residence.