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March, 1917

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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

VOLUME XXXIII, SECTION C, Nos. 17, 18

J. H. BERNARD

THE FOUNDATION OF TINTERN ABBEY,
CO. WEXFORD

J. P. MAHAFFY

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ASS AS
A BEAST OF BURDEN INTO IRELAND



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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

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In the year 1902 it was resolved to number in consecutive order the Volumes of the PROCEEDINGS of the Academy, and consequently attention is requested to the following Table:—

CONSECUTIVE SERIES.	ORIGINAL NUMERATION.
VOLUME I. (1836-1840) is	VOLUME I. 1st Ser. Sci., Pol. Lit. & Antiqq.
„ II. (1840-1844) „	„ II. „ „
„ III. (1845-1847) „	„ III. „ „
„ IV. (1847-1850) „	„ IV. „ „
„ V. (1850-1853) „	„ V. „ „
„ VI. (1853-1857) „	„ VI. „ „
„ VII. (1857-1861) „	„ VII. „ „
„ VIII. (1861-1864) „	„ VIII. „ „
„ IX. (1864-1866) „	„ IX. „ „
„ X. (1866-1869) „	„ X. „ „
„ XI. (1870-1874) „	„ I. 2nd Ser. Science.
„ XII. (1875-1877) „	„ II. „ „
„ XIII. (1883) „	„ III. „ „
„ XIV. (1884-1888) „	„ IV. „ „
„ XV. (1870-1879) „	„ I. „ Pol. Lit. & Antiqq.
„ XVI. (1879-1888) „	„ II. „ „
„ XVII. (1888-1891) „	„ I. 3rd Ser. Sci., Pol. Lit. & Antiqq.
„ XVIII. (1891-1893) „	„ II. „ „
„ XIX. (1893-1896) „	„ III. „ „
„ XX. (1896-1898) „	„ IV. „ „
„ XXI. (1898-1900) „	„ V. „ „
„ XXII. (1900-1902) „	„ VI. „ „
„ XXIII. (1901) „	„ VII. „ „
„ XXIV. (1902-1904):—	
Section A. Mathematical, Astronomical, and Physical Science.	
„ B. Biological, Geological, and Chemical Science.	
„ C. Archæology, Linguistic, and Literature.	
„ XXV. (1904-5)	} In three Sections like Vol. XXIV.
„ XXVI. (1906-7)	
„ XXVII. (1908-9)	
„ XXVIII. (1909-10)	
„ XXIX. (1910-11)	
„ XXX. (1912-13)	} In three Sections as above.
„ XXXI. (Clare Island Survey, 1911-15.)	
„ XXXII. (1913-15)	
„ XXXIII. (Current Volume.)	

XVII.

THE FOUNDATION OF TINTERN ABBEY, CO. WEXFORD.

BY THE MOST REV. J. H. BERNARD, D.D., PRESIDENT.

Read FEBRUARY 12. Published MARCH 30, 1917.

IN the search for charters bearing upon the history of the Cistercian Abbey of Graiguenamanagh, in co. Kilkenny, I happened lately upon a reference "Graiguenamanagh?" in the Index to the Charters and Rolls in the British Museum.¹ The charter to which reference is made is classed Add. MS. 4783, fo. 28. I have obtained a transcript of it by the good offices of Dr. F. Elrington Ball, and I give it here, expanding the contractions.

"Johannes dei gratia Rex Anglorum, Doininus Hybernie, Dux Normannie (et) Aquitanie, et Comes Andegavie, omnibus fidelibus suis salutem.

"Noveritis nos gratum et ratum habere testamentum dilecti et fidelis nostri Willelmi Mariscalli comitis Pembroë sicut illud condidit per manus executoris ipsius testamenti faciendum :

"Volentes et firmiter precipientes quod inviolabiliter observetur et precipue de voto suo perficiendo, scilicet de quadam abbacia de ordine Cisterciensi in Hybernia construenda, de triginta carrucatis terre in loco competenti, sicut I(sabella) comitissa uxor sua et Gaufridus filius Roberti senescallus eius providebunt, quibus injunxit hoc facere.

"Testibus : dominis Exonie et Wigornie episcopis, G. filio Petri comite Esseæ, et W. comite Sarisbiæ, apud Hamsted iij die Decembris."

This instrument is an early copy (no seal is attached, and the names of the bishops of Exeter and Worcester are not given) of Letters Patent of King John confirmatory of a Will of William Marshall, the great Earl of Pembroke, in which he left 30 carucates, that is, about 3600 acres of land, for a Cistercian abbey to be founded in Ireland "in loco competenti." As King John died before William Marshall, the Letters Patent must have been issued in William Marshall's lifetime. But, as Mr. Goddard Orpen has pointed out to me, in the early part of the thirteenth century alienation of

¹ Vol. ii, 1912.

land by testamentary disposition had not been fully established, and the King's confirmation would naturally be sought in the case of a tenant in chief.

The instrument is dated December 3rd, but the year is not mentioned; nor is it specified at which of the many places called "Hampstead" it was issued; nor is the name of the abbey given which was to benefit by the earl's gift. We must take these points separately.

As to the date. Geoffrey Fitz Robert, the earl's seneschal, and baron of Kells, died in 1211,¹ so the Letters Patent must be prior to that year.

Next, the history of the See of Exeter helps us. Henry Marshall, the earl's brother, was Bishop of Exeter from 1194 to November 1st, 1206, when he died. The See was then vacant until 1214. Hence we conclude that the Letters Patent must have been issued before November 1st, 1206. This leaves only seven years in the reign of John to be considered.

1199 is impossible, for the See of Worcester was vacant throughout that year; and, besides, on December 3rd King John was in France.

The itinerary of the King's movements, drawn up by T. Duffus Hardy,² shows us that in 1201, 1202, 1203, in like manner, King John was in France on December 3rd. In 1204 he was, on December 3rd, at Clarendon in Wiltshire, and journeyed to Gillingham in Dorsetshire; and in 1205 he was at Canterbury on the same day of the month.

Hence 1200 remains as the only possible year for our Letters Patent. And on December 3rd in that year, Hardy finds the King at Abingdon in Berkshire, and also at Bedwin in Wiltshire. Now Hampstead Marshall is on the way from the one to the other, and is quite close to Bedwin. There is, then, no doubt as to the date and place of issue of these Letters Patent. They were given at Hampstead Marshall, in Berkshire, on December 3rd, 1200.

This date, 1200, shows that the Abbey to which the Letters Patent relate was not the Abbey of Graiguenamanagh. The beginning of that great house was several years later. It was established by William Marshall for monks from the Abbey of Stanley in Wiltshire, but their first migration to Ireland did not take place until 1204,³ and they did not settle down at Graiguenamanagh until 1206. Nor indeed have we any evidence that the foundation of Graiguenamanagh was due to a vow or promise made by the earl, such as his will mentions.

¹ Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, ii, 266.

² *Rotuli litterarum patentium*, ed. T. D. Hardy (1835).

³ See *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I* (Rolls Series) R. Howlett, ii, 508.

The name of the Abbey of which we are in search is, however, not doubtful. It was the Cistercian Abbey of Tintern Minor, or “de Voto” in the county of Wexford.

In the manuscript Annals of St. Mary’s Abbey, Dublin,¹ there is a brief memorandum under the year 1200, “Fundata est Abbatia de Voto”; and this is explained by a fuller entry in another volume of Latin Annals of Ireland,² preserved in the Bodleian Library, which I transcribe:—

A.D. 1200. “Fundatum monasterium de Voto, id est, Tynterne, per Willelmum Mareschallum, comitem Mareschallum et Pembrochie, . . . quia predictus Willelmus . . . fuit in maximo periculo in mari die nocteque votum vovebat domino Jesu Christo, quod si liberaretur a tempestate, et veniret ad terram, faceret monasterium Christo et Marie matri eius, et sic factum est cum pervenisset secure ad Weysford, fecit monasterium de Tynterne ex voto, et vocatur monasterium de Voto.”

The date at which the foundation charter of Tintern was granted by William Marshall cannot be prior to the year 1207, as Mr. Orpen has shown;³ but the story of the Annals is that he had made a vow that he would establish a Cistercian House, if delivered from shipwreck, in the year 1200. It will be seen that the Letters Patent which are here printed corroborate the Annals very remarkably. We lose sight of Earl William, as Mr. Orpen points out, from September 3rd, 1200, when he was with the King’s court, to March, 1201, when he appears again at the court; and it is plain that he set out for Ireland in the late autumn of 1200, and was in danger of shipwreck off the coast. On reaching safety, he immediately took steps to redeem his vow, and not only executed a Will leaving a large tract of land to the monastery which was to be his thankoffering, but got his Will confirmed by the King’s Letters Patent on December 3rd. It is not without interest to find so complete a confirmation of the accuracy (which has been questioned) of these Irish Annals as to the date on which William Marshall first visited Ireland, and the circumstances in which he founded the Abbey of Tintern Minor, so called because it was first occupied by monks from the great house of Tintern in Monmouthshire.

¹ MS. E. 3. 10, Trinity College, Dublin; see Gilbert’s *Chartularies of St. Mary’s Abbey*, ii, 278.

² MS. Laud. 610; see Gilbert’s *Chartularies, &c.*, ii, 307.

³ *Ireland under the Normans*, ii, 207.

XVIII.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ASS AS A BEAST OF
BURDEN INTO IRELAND.

BY REV. J. P. MAHAFFY, D.D., C.V.O.

Read FEBRUARY 26. Published MARCH 30, 1917.

QUITE recently our valued member, Mr. Garstin, who not only makes researches himself, but promotes them in others, sent me a query he had received on this point—on the introduction of the ass as a beast of burden into Ireland—with the suggestion that of course the use of asses in Ireland would be found in Arthur Young. There was no reference, however, given, so I took down the book to verify it. To my great surprise I was unable to find it, and also in the index (which, like most indices, is untrustworthy) there was no mention whatever of the animal. I searched the book up and down, especially the many details regarding the life and habits of the poor, and I have been unable to find any allusion to this, now their almost universal companion. We all know that the country was full of small horses, so far back that most of us believe this species to be here indigenous. We also know that all through the eighteenth century the gentry were importing sires from England, and so was produced the famous Irish hunter—one of the best products of the country. But how comes it that Arthur Young, who mentions the hobbies or ponies in Ireland, and the barbarous habit of using them for ploughing by the tail, never mentions the ass? It was easy to find out that the Royal Dublin Society, about the middle of the eighteenth century, offered prizes for the importing of the Spanish ass, but only as a sire to breed mules, never, so far as I can find, to improve the breed of the asses already in the country.¹ There seemed to me something so strange in this blank in the observations of a careful author, studying Ireland thoroughly in the years 1773-6, that I began to look for other evidence on this social and economic question. And I may dispose at once of the possibility of finding ass-bones in ancient deposits, or of any use of the animal in the Middle Ages. The original word for ass in Irish is *asal*, evidently borrowed from the current name in Latin; and except perhaps in artistic representations of the Flight

¹ Twiss saw a good many mules about Dublin in 1773.

into Egypt, or the Ride of Jesus into Jerusalem, there is no reference to be found in early Irish life. This I have been told very positively by our specialists in Irish. I come back then at once to modern times.¹

There are plenty of books of travel among us, made by both English and Irish tourists in the eighteenth century. I could not, indeed, remember any allusions to the ass in those I had read, but to search them for stray allusions was a task from which I recoiled on account of the long labour it would entail.

Then I bethought me of the records of the various cities which still had walls and gates, or at least the survival from them of exacting dues for all the animals and all the produce which entered their gates or came into the markets, and found such a list ready to my hand in the docket of tolls printed at the end of Appendix VIII of Whitelaw and Walsh's "History of Dublin" (vol. ii, Appendix, p. lix). In this very long alphabetical list there are horse-loads in quantities; also car-loads, without specifying whether they are worked by men or by draught animals; but that there were no ass-carts seems certain, for there is a toll for a sheep, a lamb, a pig, and also for the skins of each of these animals, as well as for the skin of a horse or bullock. The ass is not once mentioned in the whole catalogue. This tariff was imposed by the Corporation of Dublin in 1763, therefore some years earlier than Young's visit.

Lest this negative evidence might be due to some mistake or some peculiarity of Dublin, I tried the annals of another city, that of Youghal, whose Council Book has been so admirably edited by Dr. Caulfield. Here we have a very similar docket of dues drawn up in 1759, and confirmed by an Act of the Corporation in 1790. This toll was indeed not for passing a gate, but for crossing in the ferry-boat, which brought all the produce from the north side of the Blackwater into the town on its south side (p. 523 of the vol.). Here is what we find:—"For every cow or horse, 2*d.*; for every large pig, dead or alive, 1*d.*; for every small one, dead or alive, $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.*; for every sheep or goat, dead or alive, $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* (and so on for calves and lambs); for every passenger, 1*d.*" There are also horse-loads taxed, calf skins, and lamb skins. But the ass is not once mentioned.

This evidence seemed to me sufficient, at least for the very superficial study I could make of the subject; but I hope that younger and more laborious members may be induced to search for more in the annals of other towns, which may either confirm or confute my conclusions.

I had time, however, to turn to another chapter of evidence—that of the

¹ Cf. note at the end of this paper.

Irish Acts of Parliament during the eighteenth century (and indeed much earlier), which are carefully indexed. Under the word "ass" what do we find? The first mention is in the Act 17 Geo. II, vol. vi, p. 656 (1743), and in this very indirect fashion: "Any person who shall kill, cut open, or skin any cow, calf, &c., sheep or lamb, or any horse, mare, gelding, colt, filly, ass, or mule, with intent to steal the fat, flesh, skin, or carcase thereof, &c., &c., shall suffer death, as in cases of felony." That enumeration is repeated in later Acts, threatening people who skin any such animal and leave the carcase on the high road, especially in the vicinity of Dublin. But I do not put much stress on this enumeration, which is merely for completeness' sake, and may well have been copied by some official from an English Act. There were a few Spanish asses imported for breeding mules, and there were a few mileh asses, so that the animal was not unheard of in modern Ireland.

At last, after several repetitions of these Acts, we come to something definite in the Act 23 & 24 Geo. III (vol. xii, 596), 1783. It is (along with other matters) an Act for licensing hawkers and pedlars. It puts a licence, with a tax of 20s., on any person travelling with any horse or horses, ass or asses, mule or mules, or any other beast or beasts drawing burthen," and the phrase is repeated several times through the forest of verbiage which deprives all these Acts of the remotest pretension to be called literature.

Here, then, I had found what I sought—clear evidence that the ass was recognized as a beast of burden after 1776—the date of A. Young's ignorance—and before the framing of the Act of 1783-4. We may put the date provisionally at the surprisingly recent figure of 1780. In later Acts, up to 1800, I have found no new light; so it may be inferred that the diffusion of this new beast of burden was gradual, and, therefore, silent.

I have not hunted through the books of travel after that date, but have heard from the President that in a book published very early in the last century the writer wonders why they do not have donkeys at Killarney, instead of the ponies used according to the old habit of the country. Here, however, is fresh evidence.

About the year 1800 the Royal Dublin Society organized the production of careful statistical surveys for every county in Ireland, of which twenty-two were actually published, and by special inquirers, to whom the Society issued a list of subjects, as suggestions of the course the inquiry should pursue. In this list, under the head of stock, we find horses, cows, sheep, pigs, even rabbits and bees, but no mention whatever of the ass. There was also to be a chapter of general observations, among which the inquirer might add any matter of interest which occurred to him. Although, there-

fore, the Royal Dublin Society did not enjoin upon these inquirers the duty of reporting on the use of asses, it was most unlikely that they would have ignored it had it been of importance in any county; and in particular they entrusted five counties to one of their most important members—Sir Charles Coote—who reported first on what I may call his own two counties, King's and Queen's, and then on the three midland counties of Ulster—Armagh, Monaghan, and Cavan. We may therefore assume that if he found asses worth mentioning in any one of these counties, he would do so in the rest. He gives a careful and minute account of all the husbandry in these counties. He has chapters on the live stock, on ploughing with oxen, on fairs and markets—in fact, on every detail of the agriculture.

What evidence does he afford on the question before us? His last (Armagh) volume is dated 1804, his earliest 1801. In four of these volumes I could not find the ass even mentioned, though he speaks frequently of the poverty of the cottiers, and their difficulty in cultivating even an acre of land with the help of an occasional horse. He talks of the better class ploughing with three horses abreast, where an ass might have been substituted for one. He tells us in the barony of Trough (Monaghan) of manure of all sorts “scraped together, and carried out on the backs of the poor people who cannot afford to keep a horse for the use of their little farm” (p. 148). And presently we come (p. 164) in the barony of Monaghan to a passage in which he says: “In this and several counties of the North of Ireland they use a small, strong breed of horses which comes from Rathlin Island, off the Antrim coast. This breed seldom exceeds 3 guineas in price, and are most durable and serviceable, especially in a hilly county.”

There then follows this sentence:—“Asses are also very numerous here. Frequently 100 of these animals may be counted in the busy seasons, within the circuit of a mile or two. They are found extremely serviceable, and are very easily fed. They are particularly fond of the tops of furze and green whins, which also contribute much to the feeding of the Rathery (Rathlin) horses” (p. 165). This solitary utterance in a careful survey of five counties corresponds with the other evidence which has been adduced. Sir Charles speaks with no surprise of this plenty of asses. He may possibly, in spite of his obdurate silence, have seen some at least in the neighbouring counties of Armagh and Cavan. But one thing is certain: they were as yet of no import as a help to the life and labour of the poor. By the rich they were certainly not used for labour.

Not content with evidence from one witness, I examined the similar surveys by other specialists of Kilkenny and Wexford, in Leinster; of Londonderry, Antrim, and Down, in Ulster; of Leitrim, Galway, Clare, and

Sligo, in Connaught, with similar results. I could find only two solitary allusions to the ass, and both in connexion with mules.

Mr. Dubourdieu, in his volume on Londonderry, tells us (p. 336) that some years earlier (the volume is dated 1812) Mr. M'Neill imported an ass from Malaga to breed mules, in which he was very successful. He describes this fine animal, above fourteen hands high, used for the saddle, "his head not of that heavy, dull cast so common in our unfortunate creatures of the same species." Apropos of Kilkenny, Mr. Tighe reports (p. 309): "Mules are often used and purchased here and in Co. Wexford at reasonable prices. For a small four-year-old, fit for an Irish car, four guineas, and from that up to sixteen guineas for a very handsome mule." There can be little doubt that here again we have to deal with the importation of a Spanish sire. But the volume on Wexford, a very interesting volume, never corroborates the fact. So treacherous is negative evidence! Still, in 1812, the author on Londonderry knows and despises the local ass.

Now let us hear what the author on Cork says, writing in 1815 (vol. i, p. 224):—"The working beasts of the county are horses and mules. The latter, which are, as a rule, of a very small size, got by the common jackass, are in the south and south-west of the county. They are occasionally employed in draft, but chiefly for back-loads; and, being easily fed, very long-lived, and able to endure great fatigue, are admirably suited to the purposes of a poor peasantry in a rough country. Their greatest fault is a vicious and intractable disposition, for which the owners generally find a sufficient corrective in hard work and bad keeping."

This is in 1815. But I have also found at the very end of the survey of Clare, published in 1808, the following isolated passage (p. 161):—"Very great use is made of mules and asses for carrying baskets and small loads, such as poor people usually load them with; for such persons as are not able to keep a horse they are a great convenience. It is astonishing what a load these little asses will carry, frequently twenty-four stone, much more than their own weight."

The same observer, Hely Dutton, publishing an elaborate volume on Co. Galway in 1824, only mentions the ass *once*, and in this way:—"The verge of almost every bog is inhabited, for the sake of carriage of turf and black mud, of great consequence to the poor man, who frequently possesses no better means of carriage than two baskets on an ass's back, sometimes the human back, and the female sex shares the burden."

Townsend, on Cork, mentions the very high price of cavalry horses, about 1813-14, when he was gathering his information.

The outcome of all this is very plain. The ass was put to the same uses

that he now is in Monaghan in 1802, in Clare in 1808; probably, along with mules, in a few other counties. But, generally, the animal was of little account till the first decade of the nineteenth century.

Yet, if the negative conclusions derived from the silence of the eighteenth and opening nineteenth centuries seem to me well established, I am still at a complete loss to answer the questions which this argument immediately suggests. If the common use of asses be indeed so recent, surely we should be easily able to find out by whom they were imported, and for what reasons? And yet to these obvious questions I have failed to find an answer which is supported by direct evidence.

Naturally, in the face of the Act of 1783, concerning hawkers and pedlars, many of whom were certainly gipsies, and at the suggestion of Professor Kelleher, I turned to that people as the importers of the working ass to Ireland, especially as the travelling tinkers of the present day (mostly gipsies) usually have an ass or two to carry their furniture. I had no leisure to study the history of the gipsies with any care; but, so far as I went I could find no special association between asses and gipsies in England, Scotland, or here. I went through the Index of seven volumes of the *Gipsy Lore Journal*, and could not find a single allusion of any sort to the ass. The gipsies in Scotland—they have been there since Tudor times—are closely connected with horse-dealing and horse-stealing; but I cannot find in books on the subject that they went about Scotland with asses.

Though, therefore, it is quite possible that the first trade in asses may have been through Galloway gipsies, there is no clear evidence so far as I can find.

We come now to the possible causes which may have induced the poor in Ireland—a country full of horses and ponies—to adopt this inferior animal, at least inferior as it exists in Ireland, for none will use such language of the Egyptian or the Spanish ass.

From what I have found, I take the early days of the nineteenth century to be those in which the wide diffusion of the animal took place among us. Were there any large causes acting then which might have affected Ireland? It was obvious to think of the Peninsular War, which lasted 1808-13, and to which the British expedition actually started from Cork. The excellent index to that precious book, *Wellington's Despatches*, in twelve vols. (Gurwood), shows that he was in constant anxiety about his supply of horses. He even discusses whether it were practical to import them from America or from Brazil for his army. He spoke of £30 or £40 each, then a very large sum, being given for cavalry horses, and complains that England and Ireland seem unable to supply one-twentieth of the horses which the French

can command. All this makes it perfectly certain that there must have been a great drain on Irish horses, not only those fit for cavalry, but cart horses, which Wellington tells us are unfit for that purpose, and lighter horses used for draught and transport. This depletion of the country as to horses must have given a singular advantage to those who offered the ass as a cheap and safe substitute, not liable to be bought at fancy prices for the war; and so by some silent process, probably by the poor, and for the poor, this useful beast of burden came into Ireland almost surreptitiously, till it spread over all the country. While the great Duke was conquering the Peninsula, the little ass was conquering Ireland. And, let me add, that a peaceful conquest is often more enduring than a brilliant one. The bray of the ass may signify more lasting peace than the blare of the trumpet. I cannot abandon the conjecture, though I have found no evidence, that the tinkers or gipsies were the agents who produced the change. Sir Charles Coote, as you have heard, spoke of importations of ponies from Rathlin—why not equally asses from the neighbouring Galloway?

My friend Mr. W. G. Strickland tells me that he remembers seeing when he was a boy, in the county of Roscommon, an old man who was said to have helped his father, and himself made his livelihood, by the trade of going to Scotland, and thence importing asses to the north of Ireland, and on to the west. I think it very likely that this accidental bit of information may yet be the clue which will lead us to the solution of the problem.

Unfortunately the history of Ireland for the first twenty years after the Union is very little studied. As the political interest in the country was abolished by the Union, and great foreign wars engrossed all men's attention, there are but few students who have occupied themselves with that period. I, for example, who know something about the Ireland of the eighteenth century, know hardly anything about the early nineteenth, beyond what my mother used to tell me of the social life of Dublin. I earnestly hope some younger member of the Academy, interested in Irish history, will take up that neglected period, and make us know more of the life of the people 100 years ago, before the collapse of high prices for horses, cattle, and agricultural produce after the war, and some bad harvests in the twenties, led to new troubles, such as the tithe war, and other movements which were the beginning of modern Irish agrarian agitation. In these troubles none stood by the Irish poor better than the patient, despised ass.

Quite apart from these historical studies, I can tell zoologists who are in search of a new and attractive subject that there is in all the libraries I have consulted, even in our College library, and the London Library, for which my friend Dr. Hagberg Wright has compiled a valuable subject catalogue—in

all these there is no monograph on the ass even attempting completeness. I have only found the short book of Tegetmeier, which concerns itself almost exclusively with the foreign European varieties, the ass fit for breeding mules. England, he says, has produced no such varieties.

Here are, however, some interesting scraps. I have learned from Professor Pope, one of our best Orientalists, that there are in Arabic two distinct words for two distinct varieties: one, *hamar*, the large saddle ass, always highly valued in the East, and still in southern Europe and northern Africa; the other, the smaller or baggage ass, called *ghash*, which seems to be the parent of our words for it in Latin, French, English, and German. This smaller sort was mainly used as a beast of burden, and was consequently esteemed as such. This suggests a new explanation of a passage in Scripture (Zech. ix. 9) which in the Hebrew has no sensible meaning. But both in the LXX and in the Greek of St. Matthew, who quotes it, the matter is made clear: "Behold, thy King cometh . . . lowly, and riding on a beast of burden (*ὑποζύγιον*), even an ass's colt [or small ass]." The Greek authors knew the distinction between the saddle ass, always a dignified conveyance in the East, and the mere baggage or pack animal. It was a distinct variety, now represented by the asses of northern Europe.

The writer of the monograph I suggest must not only be a zoologist but a historian, and also even a psychologist. For he must set himself to explain how this animal, so dignified in early Oriental history, should have been for centuries the emblem of stupidity and the object of ridicule. Any of us who have studied animals even superficially knows that the ass is not less intelligent than the horse, or even than other animals of higher pretensions. All I can tell our problematical writer of the monograph is that these jokes are at least as old as classical Greek,¹ and this human idiosyncrasy has lasted to the present day. When permission was asked ten days ago by our Secretary that I should read this paper, the proposal was received cordially, but with a burst of hilarity—a curious bit of evidence how easy it is, with a topic worn threadbare through many centuries of repetition, to amuse even the higher varieties of the human species.

NOTE ADDED IN PRESS.—Since this paper was written, various friends and correspondents have added the following facts to my knowledge of the subject. Mr. Burtchaell tells me that in a heraldic book about Irish families, it is stated the ass was the crest of the Monie family, one of whom was

¹ From Homer and old proverbs through the Greek comedy. Cf. Homer, *Iliad*, xi, 558, where the ass is cited as a type of obstinacy, but of intelligent obstinacy.

nominated in the Charter of T.C.D. as one of the first three Fellows in 1592. This crest (which he has not seen) would probably be as old as Tudor days in England.

In Mr. Bagwell's "Ireland under the Stuarts" (II, 30), the captors of Maynooth Castle in 1642 complain that they only got the benefit of one ass in their loot.

Mr. Garstin tells me that he read somewhere of Primate Boyle, who died a very old man in 1702, having an ass to accompany him for the sake of its milk.

Mr. Westropp has found advertisements as early as 1723, and subsequently, in Dublin papers of milch-asses, and the Royal Dublin Society, in 1753, offered a reward of £20 for the importation of a Spanish ass (to breed mules). These references show how the bringing in of the ass as a beast of burden caused no surprise. The use of milch-asses among the richer classes may have been not uncommon in the early part of the eighteenth century.

The experiment was made about sixty years ago by a Mr. Hassard, who owned a rough heather mountain in Co. Antrim, of letting asses loose to live there as do the rough ponies of the country. They all died out in a couple of years, thus proving what Aristotle said long ago, that asses will not live wild in a cold country.

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