

**A KERRY PASTORAL IN
IMITATION OF THE FIRST
ECLOGUE OF VIRGIL**

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A Kerry Pastoral in Imitation of the First Eclogue of Virgil by T. Crofton Croker

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**A KERRY PASTORAL IN
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A KERRY PASTORAL

IN IMITATION OF

THE FIRST ECLOGUE

OF VIRGIL.

By
Mumoghda De Courcy (pseud.)

EDITED,

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES, BY

T. CROFTON CROKER, ESQ.



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INTRODUCTION.



THE Kerry pastoral now presented to the Members of the Percy Society, is reprinted from a copy, 12 pages 4to, believed to be unique, in the possession of the Editor, to whom it was given by Sir William Betham, in 1829.

Dr. Smith in his history of Kerry, p. 418, thus refers to this composition. "Some of the inhabitants have produced tolerable specimens of poetry, not only in their native language, but also in English; for besides some occasional verses already hinted at, p. 108,* not many years ago a humorous eclogue called 'a Kerry Pastoral,' was addressed by a poet of this country to the fellows of T. C. D. which had no inconsiderable share of merit." But slight glances at the history of the county in which this poem was circulated—at the

* The passage referred to is copied at p. 34.

period, just when the Hanoverian succession was established, and at the circumstances under which it was written, are necessary to place its object and merits fairly before the English reader. In addition to which, the Editor has been induced to support the allusions to local peculiarities by extensive extracts from various works, which prove how very accurate a picture is given of Irish manners at the time.

The most extensive grant of lands in the county of Kerry, under the Act of Settlement, according to Smith, was "made to the Provost and Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, who, by letters patent of K. Charles II, dated November 10th, 1666, had a very large estate settled on the said University for ever, with courts leet and courts baron at Noghavel and Carigfoil, together with fairs, markets, &c., and the king was pleased to reduce the crown rents of the said estate in this county, to the sum of £100 per annum." Looking at the time when this grant was made, it appears to have been a patriotic and judicious proceeding, for its object was the encouragement of literature and science. "The kingdom of Kerry," as the southern part of the county is still facetiously termed, was, with a small part of the county of Cork, a palatinate jurisdiction under the Earls of Desmond; and when Elizabeth

waged the warfare of extermination against Geraldine dominion, the advantages of Kerry as a military position for guerilla movements, became generally known, and, in consequence, its mountain fastnesses were, at various subsequent periods, the retreat of those who defied English power,

“ When all but hope was lost.”

The settlers, who had been introduced under the grants made by Charles II, were seriously disturbed during the reign of James II; their bawnes were attacked,—their cattle carried off,—their granaries plundered, and their improvements destroyed, by swarms of wild mountaineers, whom they were unable to repress.

These mountaineers received and welcomed among them men who, having been deprived of their inheritance by legal forfeiture, supplied the places of their natural leaders, and, true to their policy, protracted an irritating conflict for feudal supremacy; every act of plunder, and even murder itself, was considered by them as a justifiable deed of retribution.

The state of the county of Kerry at this period may be gleaned from “ An exact relation of the persecutions, robberies, and losses, sustained by the Protestants of Killmare [Kenmare] in Ire-