

BALLYVOURNEY NOTES

When the late Dr. Lynch referred to his native parish as "The Capital of Irish Ireland," he used the expression in no figurative sense, but he believed in the essential truth of the phrase.

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Ballyvourney has zealously retained the title in spite of the rival claims of Ballingearry to the honour. Had the worthy doctor been alive to-day he would probably settle the question by asking rival claimants another: "Have you heard of Coolea?" He would not have put the question in English, but the territorial possession of Coolea is of great strategic importance in the assertion of right to the title.

Although of little more than ornamental value, the title confers a certain importance on either place in the present Gaelic revival.

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During the great war, the lovely woods of Ballyvourney were ruthlessly cut down for timber, and much of its scenic charm was destroyed. Some of the hills were denuded of their charmingly regular growth of pine and fir, but the efforts of Sir George Colthurst to beautify Ballyvourney were not in vain, and with the passing of time a new undergrowth of trees is springing up, and the hilltops are losing their bare appearance.

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Not alone are young trees springing up but new houses are also springing up as it were both in the village of Ballymakeera and westwards beside the tree-lined roadway of "the Mills." During the past 10 or 15 years Ballymakeera has undergone an architectural transformation. Several of the old houses have disappeared and have been replaced by artistic and well-built shops and residences. A number of good looking houses are in course of construction to the west of the village, and there is an evident air of prosperity and activity to be observed.

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The houses are not jerry built, and the traditional genius of St. Abbey, as exemplified in the well-preserved walls of her ancient church, seems to still guide the local architects and masons.

Strange how the name Ballymakeera is so seldom used locally. The village is almost always referred to as Ballyvourney or "Carriganimid" in Gaelic. Ballyvourney is the popular name, and by special request, a tenderly-written poem by Thomas Boyd, a comparatively unknown poet of the last century, is given here. The theme of the poem appears to be based on the early death of some youth from Ballyvourney in a strange land.

BALLYVOURNEY.

He came from Ballyvourney, and we
called him "Ballyvourney."

The sweetest name in Erin that we
know,

And they tell me he has taken now the
last, the last long journey,

And it's young he is, it's young he is,
so very far to go.

He came from Ballyvourney, from the
town set in the morning,

That has caught the lights, the lights
of dawn, we have waited for so long

And he was Ballyvourney, the child of
Erin's morning,

In his hope that shone before him, in
his speech more sweet than song.

Where are you, Ballyvourney? God is
good and will be giving

Their own heaven, as they wish it to
the Gael:

In an island like our island there is joy
you will be living,

Where the simple joys you loved will
never fail.

There you strike the golden ball, and
there you will be dancing,

Who but you could foot it well? I have
seen you many a time;

And there you rest by shining trees,
where lights of heaven are glancing.

Listening to the holy birds that sing the
hours in chime.

Before our eyes, just like a flower, we saw
your life unfolding.

As day by day you grew in bloom of
early manhood's grace.

Ah, death! to pluck the flower and to
snatch from our beholding.

The head of rippled gold and the happy
morning face.