

AUBANE IN 1832

This account is by a German traveller who visited Killarney and came through Aubane via Moulnahorna and Mauma.

“Only after several hours of journeying through these wilds did we reach a great valley that like our path ran along the foot of the mountain range we had just crossed and at the same time broadened out in rolling landscape towards the north as far as the eye could see.

At this point the area is quite densely strewn with farmers’ dwellings, which I would call cabins if this word did not conjure up the image of houses that, compared to these holes in the ground, would have to be styled palaces. The majority of them are literally hollowed out of the remaining walls or terraces of turf cuts and covered over from above with a roof of only grass or reeds. Only in very few cases did I notice a door or window, or even an aperture for smoke; in short, everything that I saw could be described at the very most as the first stage of a dwelling culture.

In one of these boggy dugouts, whose interior was at the most ten feet long and about half as wide, there lived a family of no less than seven persons whose appearance, as can only be expected, corresponded in misery to that of their habitation. The earth roundabout is probably cultivable in part, but completely neglected, barren and wild.

One would tend to call the area the *Vale of Tears* if the inhabitants were not so unconscious of, or indifferent to, their poverty, indeed blither and wittier than their fellow-countrymen in more prosperous districts.

It is hard to imagine that only a few miles from this populated wasteland there lie the world-famous lakes whose beauty lures hundreds of travellers every year from far and near.”

From “*Sketches from Ireland*” published in 1832, quoted in “*Poor Green Erin*” by Eoin Bourke, 2012.