

THE GOOSE'S CORNER

The custom of dining on goose at Michaelmas existed as far back as the fifteenth century and the habit seems to have arisen merely from the circumstance being naturally in season at that time of the year.

In the world of business, Michaelmas is now observed principally as one of the four regular quartered days on which rents are paid. In the year 1575 the poet Gascoigne published a work which he called his "Poesies", in which he refers to this and other similar customs, which appear to have originated in the same way:-

And when the tenants come
To pay their quarter's rent,
They bring some fowl at
Midsummer,
A dish of fish in Lent:
At Michaelmas a goose,
And somewhat else at New Year's tide
For fear their lease fly loose.

One of the deeply satisfying things in life is to stand on a bridge and listen to the stream murmuring underneath, so let us pause for a while on O'Dwyer Bridge and watch the silent swans glide by and the clouds flit over the blue hills of Clare. Once all round here was slobland, caused by the constantly overflowing waters of the Abbey River. Reclamation began in part in 1760, when the old city walls at the head of Athlunkard Street were demolished, and the materials utilised in the building of the quays. Two counties met here and a line drawn from St. Mary's Parochial House across to Harrison's will give a rough idea of the boundary between the city and county.

In the year of 1824 Athlunkard Street was built and in 1835 Park Bridge was erected, and further land around reclaimed. Park Bridge was replaced by the present

by Dolly Stewart

O'Dwyer Bridge in 1932.

North of the original bridge was built a wooden jetty, where the Abbey fishermen moored their cots and landed their catches. It was also put to another use. It made an ideal platform for dancing, and in the glow of the long summer evenings the fiddler and piper tuned up and the young people of the district danced many happy hours away.

Behind the pier is a small bit of land enclosed by a low stone wall, and this is the place that has been a landmark for generations, and for which the spot is named the Goose's Corner. It was once the site of flourishing poultry markets, principally at Michaelmas and Christmas, when the neighbouring farmers brought in their fine fat geese for sale. It is said that a fowl epidemic once caused the slaughter of a large number of geese at one of these markets, and the dead fowl were buried on the spot.

Large baskets of goose eggs were also sold, the goose egg being held the most satisfying of breakfast dishes on Easter Sunday morning after the long fast of Lent.

The elders of the district also used the Goose's Corner as a gathering place and would sit about on the low wall idly watching the dancers and, like the Walrus in "Alice in Wonderland":

To speak of many things,
Of ships and shoes and sealing wax,
And cabbages and kings.

Oh! murdher, blood and thunder
Are the muses dead, I wonder?
Those fine old ancient maidens
That once lit the poet's glow.
Are our bards all gone to blazes?
That none will sing the praises
Of the city of the sieges
And the Siege of Clampett's Bow.

There's many a fight and ruction
That causes more destruction
But was ever one more striking?
The never a one I know,
Except that siege more glorious
When Limerick was victorious
And when women fought for Sarsfield
And Ireland long ago.

You may boast of all the glories
Won by Russians, Turks and Tories,
In Plevna, Afghanistan and on later
fields you know,
And the Zulus may surprise you,
But Garryowen defies you,
For such a siege you'll never see
Than that of Clampett's Bow.

Shure the neighbourhood of John St.
Is immortalized by one street,
Where our heroes on Chalk Sunday
Marched forth to meet the foe,
When the baton-wielding pol-ice
Were routed holus-bolus,
With stones and broken bottles
By the boys of Clampett's Bow.

Upon the battle's border
The friends of law and order,
Kept modestly retiring when
the boys began to throw,
But soon tremendous chargins
Knocked down our boys and vargins,
And roused the mortal vengeance
Of the men of Clampett's Bow.

Twas the grandest of all shindies,
When they barred the door and windies,
And let fly their hail like missiles
on the beleaguered down below.
You may talk of pioneering
And "civil" engineering,
But Vanban himself must yield
The palm to the boys of Clampett's Bow.

We are told that many a Zulu
That fought at Isandula
Put a dead man on his head-piece
to ward the coming blow,
So each peeler stout and able
On his noddle placed a table,
Which afforded no protection from
The stones of Clampett's Bow.

Then hurrah for drink and fightin
And the srees we take delight in,
And the good ole times when constables
were rare as summer snow,
With John Jam-e-son to feed us
And the Clampett boys to lead us,
We'll never want such laurels
As we won at Clampett's Bow.