

But we had a visible *Aurora Borealis* the 29th of *December* 1736. The Day was clear, with a brisk cold Wind North-west, the Evening calm and serene, and about Seven we had a red *Aurora Borealis*.

On the 19th of *November* 1737, about Sun-set, many People in this Town saw a fiery *Meteor* in the Air, large and bright; it seemed in the *Zenith*, and so it seemed to them some Miles from Town; it was observed to be higher than the lower Clouds.

On the 7th of *December* 1737. a Minute or Two before Eleven at Night, we had two Shocks of an Earthquake, greater than ever felt here before. The second Evening after, and for several Evenings in this Month, a red Vapour appeared to the Southward and South-westward, like the *Aurora Borealis*.

XXI. *A Description of the Cave of Kilcorny in the Barony of Burren in Ireland, contained in a Letter from Mr. Charles Lucas, Apothecary at Dublin, to Sir Hans Sloane, Bart. Pr. R. S. &c.*

S I R,

BEFORE I give a particular Description of this Cave, it may be proper to give a short Sketch of that Part of the Country in which it is situate, being mostly neglected, or deemed unworthy of the Notice or Observation of any Historian hitherto.

That Part of *Ireland* called *Burren*, is a small Barony in the North-west Part of the County of
Clare,

Clare, and bounded on the North Side by the Bay of *Galway*. It is from one End to the other a Continuation of very high, rocky, Lime-stone Hills, there being little or no plain Land throughout the Whole. It is that Part of which it is reported, that *Oliver Cromwell* said, (when he came to storm a few Castles in it) That he could neither see Water enough to drown a Man, Wood enough to hang a Man, or Earth enough to bury a Man in: Notwithstanding it is most fertile, and produces immense Quantities of Juniper, and some Yew; besides great Variety of the Capillary Herbs, *Virga Aurea*, *Verbena*, and some other common Plants, I have found the *Teucrium Alpinum magno flore*, of *Caspar Bauhin*, and a large shrubby *Cinquefoil*, answering the Description Mr. *Morison* gives, in his Second Volume of *Hist. Oxon.* of his *Pentaphylloides rectum fruticosum Eboracense*.

The Inhabitants are but few, and they mostly poor Cottagers, whose chief Stock is a Parcel of Goats. They are courteous and good-natured to Strangers, though very wild and unpolished; weak, blind, superstitious Zealots to the Church of *Rome*, and (like some more polite People in the World) led and enslaved by a Set of mean, ignorant and illiterate Priests.

The Place where this Cave lies, is called *Kilcorny*: It is a pretty low Valley, in Comparison to the Hills that surround it: The Entrance is into the East End of it, (for it lies East and West) about Midway. There are the Ruins of an old Church, and, a little Westward of it, an even Plain of about an Acre of Ground; on the North Side of which, under a steep rugged Cliff, lies the Cave.

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The Mouth of it is level with the Plain, about Three Feet Diameter: It has been much larger, but was blocked up with Lime and Stone, which plainly appears still, but to what Purpose is not known. Some conjecture it was an Attempt to restrain the great Flux of Water; but the fabulous Natives, who tell numberless romantic Tales of it, say, it is a Passage to the *Antipodes*; and that a Stud of fine Horses have been seen coming out of it very often, to eat the Corn sown in the Valley: They further add, that many Stratagems have been tried to catch some of them; but, with the Loss of some Mens Lives, they could catch but one Stone-horse, the Breed of which, being very valuable, they say is kept to this Day by *O Loghlen*, which with them is a kind of titular King that they pay great Respect to. But to return to the Cave:

When you pass this narrow Entrance, it grows much wider and loftier. The Floor is a pretty even Rock, from Two to Four or Five Yards broad: The Sides and Top are rugged and unequal, from Six to Twelve or Fourteen Feet high.

About Forty Yards from the Door, there is a pretty deep Pit, Seven or Eight Yards over; but, when passed, the Floor is plain and even, as before, for about Two hundred Yards, which is the farthest that any one known has ventured into it: For my part, I did not pass this Pit, but have seen several that did, whose Veracity I can depend upon. Most People that have gone into it, went by a Thread or Clue; others have carried a Bundle of Straw, and dropped it by the Way, to guide their Return; which seems altogether unnecessary, there being no Windings or Chambers throughout

throughout of any Extent. It is all over, even in the Depth of Winter, as dry as any Place of the kind under-ground can be; and what seems very prodigious, is, that it often pours forth such a Deluge as covers the adjacent Plain, sometimes with above twenty Feet Depth of Water.

The Times of its overflowing are uncertain and irregular; sometimes it does not happen above once in a Year or two, but most commonly Three or Four times a Year: It is sometimes observed to succeed great Rains and Storms, though it often happens without either.

The neighbouring Inhabitants are alarmed at its Approach, by a great Noise, as of many falling Waters at a Distance; which continues for some Hours before, and generally all the time of the Flood.

The Water comes forth with extreme Rapidity from the Mouth of the Cave, and likewise from some smaller Holes in the low Ground, attended with a surprising Noise: It flows for a Day or two, and always returns into the same Cave, and partly into the small Holes, from whence it was observed to come before, but with a more slow and tardy Course. The Water is of a putrid Quality, like stagnated Pond-water, insipid as Spring-water. It always leaves a filthy muddy Scum upon the Ground it covered, which greatly enriches the Soil.

It has been known sometimes (though rarely) to overflow and ebb in six or eight Hours time, but in a much less Quantity.

There is neither River or Lake any where in that Part of the Country, and it is above Six Miles from the Sea. There are very near it several much lower
A a a Valleys,

Valleys, in which there is no Appearance of Water, unless a little Rain-water collected in a Pit, in the Fissure of a Rock, or the like.

If there be any Queries about further Circumstances relating to it, any way material to be asked, I shall be always ready to answer them, having spent a good deal of Time upon the Spot, examining of it myself; so that I can aver this whole Narrative for Truth, from my own actual Observations.

I thought it a pity so remarkable and wonderful a *Phænomenon* of Nature should lie hid from the Learned; and though conscious of my own Insufficiency, and Incapacity of writing or stating the Case methodically, have at last resolved, at all Adventures, to send you a true, simple, and naked Description of it.

I have been very cautious in saying more than any Man may see there.

S I R,

*Your most obedient,
and faithful humble Servant.*

Dublin,
Nov. II. 1736.

Charles Lucas.