



Mary Carbery's West Cork Journal

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This is the remarkable journal of an Enlishwoman in her early thirties abroad in Ireland, recently widowed and sole mistress of the vast neo-medieval Castle Freke overlooking a remote headland in west Cork, where she raised her young family in the company of servants, dependants and occasional visitors. Reflective and sensitive, Mary Carbery was deeply attuned to the spirit of place and to the people she lived amongst in Ross Carbery, studying Irish and taking note of local speech, folklife and customs. This journal of 1898 to 1901, previously unpublished, is an intimate record of one woman's growing attachment to an alien contryside and its inhabitants, bringing them vividly to life with the eye of a naturalist and the ear of a writer. The editor, Jeremy Sandford, describes his grandmother's life before and after the period of journal, and the fate of the Carbery family at a time of seismic political and social change. His commentary encompasses the terrible fire of 1910, and the rebuilding of the castle; the disaffection of her eldest son John, and 10th Lord Carbery - a daredevil aeronaut who sold Castle Freke in 1919 and joined the 'Happy Valley' set in Kenya; and Mary's own wanderings, writings and gentle decline at Eye Manor in the Welsh border country. A singular work, appearing in the centenary year of its inception, Mary Carbery's West Cork Journal will take its place among the minor classics of Ireland's Literary Revival.

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