

'In no degree inferior': Scotland and 'tourist development' in late-Victorian Ireland

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In the last decades of the nineteenth century, many state agencies and business groups championed tourism as an engine of Irish economic development. Railway companies, local and national tourist development bodies and the state, acting in collaboration and sometimes in competition with each other, aimed to create a modern mass-tourist infrastructure which would provide efficient transportation and comfortable accommodation to British and overseas visitors to Ireland. As they fashioned the public image of an enchanting 'Emerald Isle' offering dramatic landscapes and a legion of sporting pursuits, Scotland's achievements came under close scrutiny. Fashionable tourist destinations such as the Scottish Highlands appeared to some Irish observers as emblematic of Caledonia's rural prosperity and civil peace. Extensive and systematic comparisons of rural Scotland and Ireland as holiday sites were structured around putative similarities between their mountainous western landscapes, wind-swept islands and shimmering streams, and also around apparent contrasts between Scotland's highly-developed tourist sector and the shaky infrastructure and poor reputation that bedevilled Irish tourism. These assessments were underpinned by wider, often implicit comparative evaluations of political and social conditions, as well as economic 'progress', in the two countries. Exploring the positioning of Scotland within Irish tourist development discourses highlights its influence over Irish tourist programmes. It also situates the sector outside the Anglo-Irish and trans-Atlantic frameworks within which patterns of Irish cultural, social and political exchange are most frequently analyzed.

Tourism has become a central focus of historical research as scholars explore representations of national heritage, points of interaction between cultures and the development of a major sector in modern economies.¹ Although the historical development of the rural tourist sector in Ireland has only recently become a focus of scholarly inquiry,² extensive research on Scottish tourism offers valuable perspectives

¹ John Urry, *The tourist gaze* (2nd edn, London, 2002); Brian Graham, G.J. Ashworth & J.E. Tunbridge, *A geography of heritage; power, culture & economy* (London, 2000); David T. Herbert (ed.), *Heritage, tourism and society* (London, 1995). ² Irene Furlong, 'Frederick W. Crossley: Irish turn-of-the-century tourism pioneer', *Irish History: A Research Yearbook*, 2 (2003), pp

on another member country of the United Kingdom which historically played a key role in discussions of the Irish sector. Indeed, Scotland featured prominently as a comparator in contemporary evaluations of Ireland's prospects – evaluations which expressed contested views of the countries' conditions under the Union, and on the relationship between tourism, economic development and political peace.

Tourist development in Ireland was premised on 'opening' rural districts to tourists. Frequently subsumed under the wider rubric of 'constructive unionism',³ opponents of home rule promoted it as a programme which would allow Ireland to develop its infrastructure, advance rural prosperity and attract tourists from Britain. In their advocacy of a range of initiatives, from the improvement of tourist accommodation to passenger steamer services, they made explicit reference to the Scottish Highlands, which had become a focus of extensive tourism in the nineteenth century.⁴ There, rural landscapes, 'customs' and inhabitants were promoted as components of the national 'soul' by those who encouraged tourists to visit the district.⁵ Tourists to Ireland were also promised glimpses into the 'last bastions' of a Celtic society that had not yet been diluted or reconstructed through processes of modernization. Rural Ireland, especially districts of the country's West, functioned for many

162–76; I. Furlong, 'Tourism and the Irish state in the 1950s', in Dermot Keogh, Finbarr O'Shea & Carmel Quinlan (eds), *The lost decade. Ireland in the 1950s* (Cork, 2004), pp 164–86; Glenn Hooper, *Travel writing and Ireland, 1760–1860: culture, history, politics* (Basingstoke, 2005); G. Hooper, 'The Isles/Ireland: the wilder shore', in Peter Hulme & Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge companion to travel writing* (Cambridge, 2002), pp 174–90; G. Hooper (ed.), *The tourist's gaze: travellers to Ireland, 1800–2000* (Cork, 2001); Eric G.E. Zuelow, "'Ingredients for cooperation": Irish tourism in North–South relations, 1924–1998', *New Hibernia Review*, 10:1 (2006), 17–39; E. Zuelow, 'The tourism nexus: national identity and the meanings of tourism since the Irish Civil War', in Mark McCarthy (ed.), *Ireland's heritages: critical perspectives on memory and identity* (Aldershot, 2005), pp 189–204; E. Zuelow, 'Enshrining Ireland's nationalist history inside prison walls: the restoration of Kilmainham Jail', *Éire-Ireland*, 39:3&4 (2004), 180–201. 3 See Andrew Gailey, *Ireland and the death of kindness: the experience of constructive unionism, 1890–1905* (Cork, 1987). 4 Julie Rak, 'The improving eye: eighteenth-century picturesque travel and agricultural change in the Scottish Highlands', in Julie Candler Hayes & Timothy Erwin (eds), *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 27 (Baltimore, 1998), 43–64; Christopher Smout, 'Tours in the Scottish Highlands from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries', *Northern Scotland*, 5:2 (1983), 99–121; Alastair J. Durie, *Scotland for the holidays: a history of tourism in Scotland, 1780–1939* (East Linton, 2003); Katherine Haldane Grenier, *Tourism and identity in Scotland, 1770–1914: creating Caledonia* (Aldershot, 2005) and Katherine J. Haldane, "'No human foot comes here": Victorian tourists and the Isle of Skye', *Nineteenth Century Studies*, 10 (1996), 69–91. 5 Charles Withers, 'The historical creation of the Scottish Highlands', in Ian Donnachie & Christopher Whatley (eds), *The manufacture of Scottish history* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp 143–56; John R. Gold & Margaret M. Gold, *Imagining Scotland: tradition, representation and promotion in Scottish tourism since 1750* (Aldershot, 1995); R.W. Butler, 'Evolution of tourism in the Scottish Highlands', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12:3 (1985), 371–91; Mairi MacArthur, "'Blasted heaths and hills of mist": the Highlands and Islands through travellers' eyes', *Scottish Affairs*, 3 (Spring 1993), 23–31.

late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century observers as a repository of this culture, and was the subject of intense political contest. In advocating the opening of the West to tourism, tourist development advocates pointed to the success of other smaller countries, such as Norway – until 1905 in a personal union of crowns with Sweden – and the independent state of Switzerland. Successful tourist sectors in these places were seen as harbingers for Ireland, whose scenery was regarded as no less appealing to the tourist. Norway's dramatic fjords were often compared with the landscapes of Ireland's western seaboard.⁶ And Switzerland's hotels were identified as models for the Irish sector, the standards of which were judged to be inferior to those of the small Alpine state.⁷ Indeed, as Switzerland became a favoured holiday destination, promoters of the Irish tourist sector elaborated a framework within which the attractions of Ireland could be highlighted to Britons through references to this fashionable, but distant, country.⁸ As *The Times* reported in 1905:

During a long course of years one of the perennial grievances of Ireland was the neglect by the British travelling public of the picturesque scenery of the sister island. The complaint was not without justification five-and-twenty or thirty years ago, and even at the present time thousands of English people who are more familiar with the Scottish Highlands and the Snowdon district of North Wales than with their own Lake Country have never crossed St George's Channel, or, at the best, have a very slight and casual acquaintance with Killarney and Connemara, far less intimate than that which they possess of Switzerland and the Tyrol. This has been due to a combination of causes, in which political disturbances, though these did not affect tourists to any appreciable degree, were a powerful factor. The inferior character of Irish hotels and inns of every class, except in a few well-known centres, was, perhaps, the greatest drawback in those days to travelling in Ireland, while the railway service did not keep pace with the improvement which had begun earlier in the cross-channel steamers.⁹

With landscapes that equalled the magnificent scenery of more popular destinations, and with the advantage of its proximity to Britain, Ireland's promoters believed that they could lure the British holiday-maker to the Emerald Isle. They were encouraged by people such as Morton P. Betts of Bristol, whose letter was reprinted in the pages of the *Irish Cyclist*:

6 See, for example, *Cook's Traveller's Gazette*, 22 Apr. 1911. 7 See, for instance, [*The*] [*Irish*] [*Tourist*], 4, 7 (Oct. 1897). 8 For an excellent discussion of British tourists in Switzerland, see Laurent Tissot, 'How did the British conquer Switzerland? Guidebooks, railways, travel agencies, 1850–1914', *Journal of Transport History*, 16:1 (1995), 21–54 and *Naissance d'une industrie touristique: les Anglais et la Suisse au XIX^e siècle* (Lausanne, 2000). For a useful comparison of discourses of rural life in Ireland and Norway, see Ulrike Spring, 'Imagining the Irish and Norwegian peasantry around 1900: between representation and representation', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 80:1 (2001), 75–99. 9 *The Times*, 14 Aug. 1905.

Three friends are thinking of spending a short vacation with me in Switzerland this summer, but if you can kindly put me in the way of obtaining the necessary information as to route and approximate cost for a fortnight's tour or stay in the south of Ireland I shall certainly bring it before them.¹⁰

In the pages of many English, Scottish and Irish tourist periodicals prospective visitors queried the costs of travel and standards of tourist amenities in Ireland, asking if they compared favourably with those found on the Continent and in Scotland, Wales and England. The frequency with which Scotland was invoked in these discussions was remarkable – as was the degree to which it was mobilized to market Ireland's comparatively hidden charms. Allusions to Scotland's successful tourist sector had particular value to advocates of the Union: to them, the stable, prosperous 'sister' kingdom illustrated their aspirations for Ireland within the United Kingdom. Even in marketing the attractions of Ireland, guidebooks built frameworks of trans-national comparison within which tourists were invited to fix their gaze on complementary sites in the sister kingdoms. Railway companies offered tours to Scottish and Irish sites, encompassing the two countries in integrated travel itineraries such as six 'Combined Scotch and Irish' tours offered by Thomas Cook and Son in 1901, most of which focused on the western coasts of both countries.¹¹ These tours also contributed to an ongoing construction of rural Ireland in the popular tourist imagination through which the qualities of Irish landscapes, rural recreational pursuits and tourist amenities were evaluated with reference to those in Scotland.

If Scotland's lucrative tourist trade inspired Ireland's tourist development champions, it also positioned the Scottish Highlands as rural Ireland's key 'competitor'. Speaking in Dublin in April 1895 to a meeting of parties interested in furthering Irish tourist development, the lord lieutenant, Lord Houghton, proposed to 'institute a comparison which would be invidious to the sister kingdom of Scotland'.¹² Pointedly asking 'What advantage has Scotland as an attraction to travellers?', Houghton pithily cited Scots' penchant for self-promotion, and enumerated other factors: the influence of Sir Walter Scott; precedence over Ireland among 'those who like to follow the train of fashion'; and proximity to lucrative tourist markets. Yet he asserted that a tour in Ireland repaid the lengthier journey with landscapes rivalling those of the sister kingdom: 'Ireland can show scenery which both in grandeur and of a softer beauty can bear comparison to any in Scotland, and which is, in historical interest and association, in no degree inferior.'¹³

Despite Houghton's assertion, many comparative evaluations of the Scottish and Irish tourist sectors offered unfavourable assessments of Ireland's infrastructure, and

¹⁰ *Irish Cyclist*, 25 Apr. 1900. ¹¹ *Specimens of Cook's independent tours in England, Scotland and Ireland, season 1901* (London, c.1901), pp 33–6. ¹² *IT*, 2, 1 ('New Series', 1895). ¹³ *IT*, 2:1 ('New Series', 1895).

linked relatively modest levels of tourist traffic there to anxieties surrounding civil unrest. In Houghton's view, the standard of tourist amenities in Scotland served as a barometer of relative under-development in the Irish sector. It also signalled possibilities for Irish prosperity under carefully-stewarded tourist development programmes. He wrote in 1895 that:

It is to be hoped that before many years have passed, hotels of various grades, but approaching in each case the best Swiss or Scottish standard, may be found at all places in Ireland to which tourists are for any reason likely to resort. That this is not yet the case may frankly be owned.¹⁴

In his analysis, Scotland's tourist traffic offered a benchmark for evaluating the lamentable level of visitors to Ireland. But it also suggested to Houghton that the Irish sector could flourish: he believed that Irish landscapes and recreational attractions were at least as appealing as those to be found across the Irish Sea. Gerald Balfour, the Irish chief secretary, endorsed such a comparison in an 1896 speech to the Irish Tourist Association, a body featuring leading landed figures, political leaders such as Horace Plunkett, and individuals connected with tourist businesses in Ireland:

If they compared Ireland with Scotland they must admit that the development of the tourist traffic in Ireland fell far short of that in the sister country. It was hard to say what was the reason. As a Scotchman he might be allowed to say that it appeared to him that Ireland was at least as attractive as Scotland to the tourist, so far as the advantages conferred by nature were concerned.¹⁵

Of the much-maligned Irish climate, another putative hindrance to the industry's development, Lord Houghton asserted that 'it is only necessary to say that in the matter of rainfall it does not compare unfavourably with that of western Scotland. As in the Scottish Highlands, the moister atmosphere clothes the landscape and the ocean-plain with a kind of pearly light, a mysteriousness of distance, not to be found in harsher and dryer latitudes.'¹⁶ The weather on the West coast, the leading trade periodical, the *Irish Tourist*, also insisted, was neither as tempestuous as snowstorms in the Alps, nor as dense as the mists of the Scottish Highlands, which turned them into 'a delusion and a snare'.¹⁷ From this perspective, Scotland's landscapes and climate served as a foil for extolling Ireland's comparative attractions. Such favourable assessments featured in many commentaries, including remarks by the noted Scottish writer Alexander Innes Shand in his 1884 'Letters from the West of Ireland', published as a series in *The Times* and later as a book.¹⁸ Sometimes regions such as the Donegal

¹⁴ The piece, 'Ireland unvisited', by Lord Houghton, by now the former lord lieutenant, appeared in the July 1895 edition of the *National Review* and was reprinted in *Littell's Living Age*, 206:2668 (24 Aug. 1895), 496-503. This quotation appears on p. 498 of the reprint.

¹⁵ *IT*, 3:3 ('New Series', 1896). ¹⁶ Houghton, 'Ireland', p. 499. ¹⁷ *IT*, 10:5 (Aug. 1903).

¹⁸ Alexander Innes Shand, *Letters from the west of Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1885).

Highlands – whose very appellation evoked the better-known Highlands of Scotland – were characterized as diminutive versions of those found in Caledonia. The *Irish Times*'s 1888 publication *Tours in Ireland* advised that tourists beholding the scenery from Carrick to Ardara in Donegal might imagine themselves 'transported' to a Scottish Highland moor.¹⁹ But *The Scotsman* asserted that the Scottish Highlands offered a much more dramatic landscape. 'As compared with the Highlands of Scotland,' it advised readers in 1880, 'the Highlands of Donegal will probably be regarded by most lovers of the picturesque as in many respects inferior.' They lacked the Scottish district's 'richness in the scenery, owing partly no doubt to the absence of woods and copses, which diversify the grandeur of our Scottish landscapes', and also lacked the 'impression of awful loneliness that is to be experienced in many mountain fastnesses of Scotland'.²⁰ Though a tourist in Donegal might not encounter unrivalled landscapes, the newspaper reassured its readers that he could find other things to 'interest him', including the 'novelties of the life and manners brought under his notice'. But in other evaluations of Ireland's charms, the newspaper judged that Irish landscapes were more scenic than those found in many Scottish districts: it described Slieve League in Co. Donegal, Achill Head in Co. Mayo and the 'Twelve Pins' in Co. Galway in 1892 as 'as fair as anything in Ross-shire or Sutherlandshire, in Scotland; while the historical interest of Innisboffin, and still more of Aran, is greater than that of any spot on the western Scottish coast, except Iona'.²¹ In addition to these scenic delights, the tourist in Ireland could roam unrestricted through rural terrain and enjoy sport that was unconstrained by heavy regulation or ruinous commercialization.

Lord Houghton asserted that 'In the region of sport, a comparison with Scotland naturally suggests itself – a comparison which, for the purpose of this article, Ireland need not hesitate to face.'²² He argued that Ireland had virgin terrain which offered tourists of modest means an opportunity to engage in sports which they could not enjoy in Scotland. In Ireland, he wrote, a day of shooting in the West might be enjoyed with only 'a letter or two of introduction'. Houghton also rhapsodized about the Emerald Isle's attractions for the angler, asserting that 'the Irish tourist will find himself distinctly more favoured than the Scottish'. While Ireland offered 'more numerous and varied' opportunities for the angler, Houghton nevertheless cautioned that 'As the country becomes better known, the balance will doubtless be corrected.'²³ In this analysis, Ireland's 'undiscovered' charms included unregulated sport, and terrain which had not been fully commercialized. Houghton stressed this point in 1895:

And what seems to me a very important point, that for those who like to leave the beaten tracks of the road, and also for sporting, there is considerably

¹⁹ *Irish Times*'s *tours in Ireland: a descriptive handbook for tourists* (Dublin, 1888), p. 78. ²⁰ *The Scotsman*, 3 July 1880. ²¹ *The Scotsman*, 9 July 1892. ²² Houghton, 'Ireland', p. 500. ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 500.

more freedom than can be found, so far as I know, in any part of Scotland; and I believe that if a similar comparison were instituted with Norway (which has of late years become so favourite a resort for tourists), Ireland would by no means suffer in any such comparison.²⁴

Relatively uncontrolled angling in Irish salmon streams also attracted favourable comment, and did not escape the notice of the Scottish press, which reported in 1892 that the Fishery Board for Scotland had dispatched the Inspector of Salmon Fisheries to report on the elaborate salmon ladders erected in Ballisodare, Co. Sligo.²⁵ Other observers offered equally positive assessments of the sportsman's prospects in Ireland, the writer Alexander Innes Shand suggesting that an informant who 'knows Scotland well' had remarked on the unrivalled quality of shooting grounds near Buncrana, Co. Donegal.²⁶ To proponents of Irish tourism, the Emerald Isle's rural districts offered open fields, and Irish holiday spots provided unfettered and unmediated access to sportsmen, regardless of their means. The *Irish Tourist* also welcomed the assessment of Grant Govan, who advised the *Weekly Irish Times* that "you have quite as good a country as Scotland from a sportsman's point of view".²⁷ The *Irish Tourist* enthused that "This is good, coming as it does, from a Scotchman, and from one having such a wide experience and practical knowledge in sporting matters."²⁸ In 1895 the periodical repeated a familiar refrain in asserting that shooting in Ireland cost 'much less' than in both Scotland and England.²⁹ At the same time, it noted that one of Scotland's advantages lay in its careful stewardship of game, which was in Caledonia 'a national business, just as it ought to be here in Ireland'.³⁰ Yet, inverting a familiar critique of the primitive and 'under-developed' character of the Irish sector, it underscored the special appeal of rural districts, depicting the absence of commercial sporting tourism as an advantage to tourists in the Emerald Isle.

Commentaries on the prospects for Irish tourist development which represented Scotland as a country offering similar landscapes and comparable (if more expensive) rural recreations were also part of broader analyses of the comparative economic and civil condition of the two countries. While the absence of extensive tourist traffic led some observers to extol Ireland's charms as a sporting-ground, to others it was an index of its chronic under-development. This, in turn, reflected the instability and poverty which plagued the sister kingdom.

Most observers agreed that tourism was a foundation for rural Scotland's prosperity, though they debated why Ireland had not matched it in popularity. The poet-laureate Alfred Austin, writing in *Blackwood's Magazine*, decried the condition of the Irish Mail as he boarded his train for Holyhead, observing that the Scottish Mail

24 *IT*, 2:1 ('New Series', 1895). 25 *The Scotsman*, 8 Aug. 1891. 26 *The Times*, 26 Aug. 1884. 27 Quoted in *IT*, 1:2 (July 1894). 28 *Ibid.* 29 *IT*, 2:4 ('New Series', 1895). 30 *Ibid.*

was given precedence in leaving the platform, 'as though it will always be soon enough to get to Ireland'. He also contrasted the condition of the carriages:

The Scotch Mail consisted of every conceivable kind of railway carriage, each a model of sumptuous, almost ostentatious, comfort; and the occupants gave like indications of opulent ease. Footmen, valets, and ladies'-maids moved to and fro with dignified obsequiousness, instructing porters solicitous to please as to the disposal of gun-cases, fishing-rods, and dressing-bags. Pointers, retrievers, and lapdogs were the object of the most sedulous attention; and the young men of Messrs Smith & Co.'s bookstall carried none but the smartest editions and the sixpenny Society papers to the carriage windows.³¹

Austin decried the fact that as the Scottish train 'glided away' from Euston Station the platform book-stall was closed, leaving those boarding the much humbler Irish train without amenities afforded travellers to Scotland. T.W. Russell, parliamentary secretary to the Local Government Board, also condemned the 'English' railway companies' lack of attention to Ireland, and suggested that until they 'gave the traveller to Ireland equal facilities with the traveller to Scotland the latter country would have the advantage'.³² In these assessments, Ireland's relative poverty was presented as an obstacle to the development of a high-quality tourist infrastructure. As long as railways, tourists and the British state privileged Scotland, the charms of rural Ireland would continue to be unknown to tourists.

The relatively simple, and at times rough, reputation of Ireland's hotels and inns was also regarded as a hindrance to improving Ireland's image. Yet Alexander Innes Shand saw them as part of the West's appeal as *terra incognita*. He described Scotland's premier Highland tourist accommodations as 'three or four great hotels, each and all of them overflowing with their supercilious landlords spoiled by prosperity'.³³ In Shand's estimation, Ireland's relatively rustic accommodations were emblematic of a less crassly commercialized sector than in Scotland. The condition of Irish accommodations had long served as a proxy for discussions of the 'primitive' features of the Irish tourist sector generally. Marie O'Dowda, writing in the *Irish Tourist*, insisted that though to *voyageurs*, 'our little island, by comparison, holds its place as unrivalled amid the countries and scenes of the entire globe', the charms of Scotland were nonetheless more accessible to the tourist who sought comfort as well as fine scenery:

Some few years since, when returning to Ireland, we were forced to notice the lack of tourist accommodation, as well as the indifference shown with regard to regulating and suggesting their movements, routes, &c.

We had remarked that while in Scotland, although quite foreign to the country, we were enabled to see its most interesting features within the

³¹ These pieces were reprinted in Alfred Austin, *Spring and autumn in Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1900), pp 49–50. ³² *IT*, 3:3 ('New Series', 1896). ³³ *The Times*, 26 Aug. 1884.

compass of a very short time, because at each spot our arrival was anticipated by the general system which prevailed partout, and boats, cars, guides, &c., were provided previously, to effect our transport from place to place.³⁴

A related assessment of Ireland's historically poor reputation as a tourist destination stressed that it lacked an articulate champion of its landscapes and people – a figure such as Sir Walter Scott, who could popularize rural space and carve a distinctive cultural identity in the wider British imagination. A 'travelling correspondent' for *The Scotsman* rhapsodized in 1894 about the Emerald Isle's potential as tourist-ground, extolling the charms of Wicklow, the grandeur of Killarney and the Giant's Causeway and the majesty of 'the wilds [*sic*] heights of Connemara and Donegal, as yet a *terra incognita* to the stranger-tourist'.³⁵ Asking, as many others did, why the scenery attracted relatively few tourists, he lamented that 'there never has been that rush of visitors from abroad which has done so much to enhance the fame of Scottish scenery, and to add to the prosperity of Scotland in her utmost borders'.³⁶ But then, Scotland's 'utmost borders' had Scott as their patron – the "Divine Poet" credited with discovering 'Loch Katrine and the Trossachs, Benvenue, and Ben Aan'.³⁷ This sentiment was shared by Shand, who lamented in his fourth 'Letter from the West of Ireland' that the Irish people had not benefited from a 'mighty magician to bring gold out of the rocks by the wand of the enchanter. It is curious to speculate as to what might have happened had Walter Scott been born an Irishman'.³⁸ He also asked why the Irish scenery he lauded in *The Times* had escaped the notice of so many artists who found inspiration in Scotland: 'We have any quantity of Scotch highland landscapes at the Academy, à la Graham and Maculloch, but seldom or never a scene from the West of Ireland'.³⁹ Lord Houghton also lamented that Ireland did not, like Scotland, enjoy 'the advantage of the magic name of Sir Walter Scott',⁴⁰ and Gerald Balfour explicitly identified the need for the Irish Tourist Association to assume Scott's mantle in Ireland:

As regards advertisement, the Association had already done a good deal. Scotland had had her praises sung by a great writer. He wished Ireland, too, could have her Walter Scott. Till such a man arose, however, they must be content to resort to humbler methods.⁴¹

From this perspective Ireland was seen as lacking neither the attractions nor prospects for increased tourism; it suffered in comparison with Scotland because it lacked an eloquent tribune to enshrine it within the consciousness of the wider world. It was also a unionist rejoinder to those who allied the nascent Irish Literary Revival to political nationalism. To ardent defenders of the Union, Scott, the arch-

34 *IT*, 7:3 (July 1900). 35 *The Scotsman*, 11 Sept. 1894. 36 *Ibid.* 37 *Ibid.* 38 *The Times*, 2 Sept. 1884. 39 *The Times*, 8 Sept. 1884. 40 *IT*, 2:1 ('New Series', 1895). 41 *IT*, 3:3 ('New Series', 1896).

Tory unionist, offered an ideal example of a writer who had devised distinctive images of Scotland, without questioning the merits of its political incorporation within the United Kingdom. Scotland's experience illustrated how programmes of economic and cultural development might be intertwined to fix the landscapes of Ireland's West within the national and international imagination, without challenging the tenets of political Union. This agenda was adopted by groups such as the Irish Tourist Association, founded in the mid-1890s by leading landed figures, politicians and businessmen to promote the sector's development, and by a related body, Tourist Development (Ireland) Co., Ltd. In noting recent improvements in the tourist infrastructure, Marie O'Dowda heaped praise on the Association for promoting standards of tourist amenities in Ireland which approached those of the sister kingdom – a salutary development which, she contended, would bring much more prosperity to Ireland 'than futile efforts to obtain Home Rule'.⁴²

O'Dowda was by no means the only commentator to incorporate evaluations of Irish tourism within discussions of Ireland's turbulent politics, critiques of political nationalism and favourable allusions to relatively settled conditions in Scotland. Although many assessments of tourists' personal security in Ireland concluded that the countryside was safe for travel, they nevertheless highlighted a feature of rural Ireland's popular reputation that placed contrasts with Scotland in sharp relief. In 'Ireland unvisited', Lord Houghton enumerated concerns that deterred tourists from visiting Ireland, particularly, he lamented, 'the much-abused "South and West"' which some people held to be a risk to visit, 'like Somaliland, or the Solomon Islands'.⁴³ *The Scotsman's* correspondent also expressed regret that Ireland had to contend with 'civil strife and political agitation' which, the writer asserted from personal knowledge, had 'contributed very largely to the tardy progress of touring in the country', especially among female travellers.⁴⁴ Yet through tourist development the piece identified prospects for advancing tourism and undermining political nationalism by demonstrating the fruits of Union. Indeed, it expressed the desire that:

... all Scotsmen, and especially Scottish advocates for Home Rule to Ireland, will next year give tangible proof of their heartfelt interest in Ireland's welfare by making a tour in the country, or by settling down for some weeks in one of her health-giving resorts. Let them examine its beautiful scenery, enjoy its sporting golf links, and make the acquaintance of its witty, good-natured, and kind-hearted peasantry, and they will thus do more to promote the lasting good of Ireland than if they were to breakfast agitators all the year round and applaud to the echo their tawdry rhetoric and their mistaken patriotism.⁴⁵

This forthright denunciation of home rule expressed an important dimension of tourist development discourses that was more implicitly offered by energetic tourism

⁴² *IT*, 7:3 (July 1900). ⁴³ Houghton, 'Ireland', p. 497. ⁴⁴ *The Scotsman*, 11 Sept. 1894.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

proponents such as F.W. Crossley in the pages of the *Irish Tourist*. In their estimation, the development of a programme of tourist improvement illustrated the merits of Ireland's full political integration within the United Kingdom, intensifying human flows between the 'sister islands' and strengthening the economic and political foundations of the Union. Scotland was the exemplar of such salutary achievements.

Despite assessments of the relatively backward condition of rural Ireland, the primitive position of its tourist amenities and the unsettled character of its politics, comparisons of tourist facilities on either side of the Irish Sea did not always find inferior institutions in Ireland. Indeed, programmatic efforts to improve the sector in Ireland under the aegis of the Irish Tourist Association and the Tourist Development (Ireland) Co. won plaudits from across the Irish Sea.⁴⁶ The formation of the body provided an impetus for the Scottish tourist industry to reflect on means of improvement, too. As *The Scotsman* noted in 1896:

While men of all parties in Ireland are thus devoting time and money to attract tourists to that country 'without expecting any return for the same, except good to Ireland,' movements of a similar kind have been started in several districts of Scotland, to secure, if possible, greater patronage from summer visitors. Popular as the Highlands have long been with tourists from the South, the new manager of the Highland Railway is persuaded that there are many people in England who have hitherto been prevented from coming so far North by the costliness of a brief stay in the Highlands.⁴⁷

There was an undertone of anxiety in these remarks on the potential impact of Ireland's tourist improvement programme. The *Sunday Times* also mischievously intimated this in comments on the formation of the Irish Tourist Association:

The movement is one worthy of support. For beauty of natural scenery the 'Emerald Isle' runs close even 'Caledonia stern and wilde,' [*sic*] and we have heard travelled Scots declare their doubts whether their own 'land of the Mountain and the Flood' or the Sister Country took the palm.⁴⁸

To defenders of the Union, Scotland offered evidence that a small country could reap the rewards of political integration with England and prosper from its tourist traffic. Promoters of a royal residence in Ireland also pointed to the success of the royal presence in Scotland; indeed, the *Irish Tourist* insisted that efforts to establish an

⁴⁶ For a review of tourist development bodies in Ireland, see D.J. Wilson, 'The tourist movement in Ireland', *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, 11, part 81 (1900-1), 56-63. ⁴⁷ *The Scotsman*, 10 Apr. 1896. ⁴⁸ Quoted in *IT*, 3:3 ('New Series', 1896).

official royal residence would see Ireland surpass Scotland as a tourist destination.⁴⁹ The annual meeting of the Hotel and Restaurant Proprietors' Association in Dublin in 1897 endorsed this position, insisting that Ireland had the potential to become more 'fashionable' than Scotland, owing partly to its wider variety of scenery.⁵⁰ Those who believed that economic development through tourism would cement sentimental bonds between people in Britain and Ireland, direct British leisure tourist expenditure to the sister country, increase Ireland's prosperity and secure its economic and political development within the Union, found in Scotland a bastion of civil peace and prosperity.

Underpinning many of these comparative assessments of Irish and Scottish tourism were broader cultural, political and even racial evaluations, which intertwined discussions of the undiluted and undisciplined character of Irish 'Celtic' culture with assertions that unsettled politics retarded the progress of commerce and industry. Alfred Austin, rhapsodizing about a journey in Ireland, declared:

My parting exhortation, therefore, naturally is – 'Go to Ireland, and go often.' It is a delightful country to travel in. Doubtless the Irish have their faults; I suppose we all have. Ireland never had, like England, like most of Scotland, like France, like Germany, like Spain, the advantage of Roman civilisation and Roman discipline, by which their inhabitants are still influenced far more than they dream of.⁵¹

Scotland was central to many of these evaluations of Ireland's nascent tourist development programme. In them, the sister kingdom served variously as a mirror and a foil. While their physical landscapes and salmon streams were often identified as equals, discourses on terrain, hotels and tourist routes were central to broader evaluations of the Scottish and Irish economies, their political and civil conditions and the relative place of their 'utmost borders' in the national and international imagination. To proponents of the Union, Scotland, through its tribune, Sir Walter Scott, and carefully-stewarded development of its tourist sector, had fixed these borders firmly, without challenging the political boundaries of the state within which it was incorporated. Their positioning of Scotland within discussions of Ireland as a tourist destination reveals the complex relationship between cultural appraisal and political ideology in the construction of the United Kingdom's western and northern holiday-grounds.

⁴⁹ *IT*, 1:4 ('Special Horse Show Number', 1894). James Loughlin notes that Victoria's enthusiasm for Ireland was much more tempered than for Scotland, where the royal imprint under her reign was deep. See James Loughlin, 'Allegiance and illusion: Queen Victoria's Irish visit of 1849', *History*, 87:288 (2002), 491–513. ⁵⁰ *IT*, 4:1 (May 1897). ⁵¹ Austin, *Spring and autumn*, p. 45.