

## **Billy goes to Ireland**

Eventually we got to Cork. It was green all right; the hills come up right behind the town, which is nestled by a bay. We sailed into that bay, then up a wide river and suddenly wound into this port city and found it to be a picturesque place. You could smell the salt air, which I was kind of sick of anyway, and fish. I've never been one much for fish. Oh, once in while I've been known to eat a trout out of a river or stream, but I've never been much of a fish-eater.

I got into the town and started exploring with my saddle thrown over my shoulder and my grip in the other hand. I found a place to stay for the night in the middle of town. I cleaned up then went around sightseeing and visited some of the pubs. I observed that people were both friendly and curious. A lot of people asked me "What kind of hat's that?" and "What kind of outfit's this?" They were interested in my saddle and everywhere I went I had all kinds of questions: I was the center of attention in Cork, I reckon.

I drank some of their dark beer, which I didn't like too much, so I switched over to their yellow beer and that was a little bit better. It was a little stronger. I listened to their music, walked the cobblestone streets and toured the marketplace. The marketplace fascinated me. They were selling everything from fish to bread to cockles and muscles alive alive oh. The farmers were coming in with their wares 'cause it was harvest time and I brought some fresh vegetables from them. It was kind of nice to get some of those to chew on.

The smells, the streets and the people of Cork were all new experiences for me. Cork seemed to be a lot cleaner than New York, where the streets were dirty and the smell was bad. Some of the towns in the West were a little dirty, but at least the air was clean.

The people in Cork reminded me of Irish brogue Mexicans. They were simple people, friendly and curious, a lot like the Mexicans. I don't think they'd like to be compared to Mexicans, but they didn't know a Mexican from a Cheyenne or Arapahoe. They didn't know too much about cowboys, really. The pulp books hadn't yet got over there to Ireland; some had heard about the West and they knew about the United States, of course. They knew we had a West and they knew it was wild, but they didn't know a damn thing about it, so it was fun telling 'em. They'd sit on the edge of their chairs and listen to me. I was a talking minstrel, I reckon, telling 'em stories of the cowboy and Indian and horses. Those people really liked horse races and things like that.

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