

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

BEATRICE GUBBINS  
of Dunkathel, Co.Cork.  
(1878-1944)



CRAWFORD  
MUNICIPAL  
ART GALLERY

*April 17—MAY 13, 1986*



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## PREFACE

This exhibition of the work of Beatrice Gubbins is the first in a series designed to bring the work of lesser-known artists to the attention of the public. The series will concentrate, not on contemporary artists, but on artists from the earlier part of this century and from previous centuries.

Beatrice Gubbins lived for most of her life at Dunkathel, a large house just outside Cork city. Dunkathel is open to the public in the summer. It is a family house, lived in by the Russell family, and the Crawford Gallery is grateful to them for their assistance in mounting this exhibition.

After its showing at the gallery, the exhibition will move to Dunkathel House, where it will form one of the central features for visitors to see.

Beatrice Gubbins, as an artist, falls into the category of 'talented amateur'. Her work is not, however, untutored, as it is likely that she spent some time studying at the Crawford School of Art. The Queenstown Sketch Club, of which she was a member for many years, employed a system of criticism which was quite rigorous. Member's works were circulated, and comments and observations were invited. For the purposes of anonymity, Beatrice called herself, at various stages, 'Greyhound', 'Jessamine' and 'Benjamin', and many of her watercolours are inscribed thus.

The present catalogue does not attempt to present a complete picture of the life and work of Beatrice Gubbins. Francis Russell has compiled a biographical essay from those of her diaries which are still extant, Shirley Armstrong-Duffy has contributed an essay on sketching clubs in Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century. Most of the watercolours preserved at Dunkathel are undated, and further work remains to be done on building up a chronological picture, and analysing the artist's development.

For the moment, it is the hope that this exhibition will enable a more considered assessment of Gubbins's artistic stature to be made, and that she will join that rapidly growing band of women artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who are achieving a very belated recognition and acclaim--artists such as Mildred Ann Butler and Rose Barton.

Peter Murray

curator

Crawford Municipal Art Gallery

April 1986

BEATRICE GUBBINS:  
SOME BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

by

Francis Russell

March 1986

Beatrice Edith Gubbins was born on the 19th September 1878, the youngest of two brothers and five sisters. For the greater part of her sixty-six years she lived at Dunkathel, a fine late-Georgian house overlooking the river Lee at Glanmire, just outside Cork city. The house enjoys 'one of the finest prospects in Ireland', with far-reaching views over Lough Mahon and picturesque Blackrock Castle on the opposite side of the river. Dunkathel is situated about three miles from Cork city: Although suburban Cork now reaches out far beyond it, the estate is untouched, and with its rolling fields and mature woodlands it looks today very much as it must have done in Beatrice Gubbins's day. It was certainly a most beautiful situation in which to grow up--many of Beatrice's sketches depict the woodlands and fields around her home--and she took a keen interest throughout her life in the running of the estate.

THE FAMILY BACKGROUND

The Gubbins family hailed from county Limerick. Various other branches of the family lived in that area, and their homes included Bruree House, Kenmare Castle and Kilfrush. The family was never very numerous and today there are few Gubbinses left. The 1958 edition of Burkes shows the family as being 'extinct'. The family were prominent in the Church and were famous race-horse breeders. Jack Gubbins, Beatrice's uncle, bred the winners of two Derbys at the turn of the century (Galtymore in 1897 and Ardpatrick in 1902). Jack's elder brother, Thomas Wise Gubbins (Beatrice's father), moved to Cork in 1883 to take up the running of Wise's distillery at North Gate. This he had inherited through his mother, who was the daughter of Thomas Wise. Thomas Gubbins shortly after purchased Dunkathel, where he resided until his death in 1904.

Beatrice's brothers and sisters were very talented; her eldest brother Joe was a champion yachtsman of international reputation. In his younger days, whilst still living at Dunkathel, he would keep his yacht "Wraith" moored on the nearby Clashaboy river. Two fine watercolours at Dunkathel depict Wraith winning races in 1884. Although Joe inherited Dunkathel, he spent his later years at Chatley in Somerset, leaving the house in Cork in the hands of his mother and four sisters. Beatrice in her later life often stayed at Chatley. Joe's

younger brother, Russell, was a colonel in the artillery and served abroad for most of his life, paying visits to Dunkathel when on leave. Russell had two children, one of whom died in infancy and the other, tragically, of blood poisoning in his teens. Joe's only child also died in infancy, thus spelling the end of the name Gubbins.

## "THE MISSES GUBBINS"

Of the five sisters, Marion, the eldest, left Dunkathel to take up farming at nearby Hermitage. She is said to have been the first person in Ireland to import and breed Friesian cattle (although this distinction is also claimed by Beatrice's life-long friend and fellow-artist, Edith Somerville). The second sister, Frances Gertrude, married in 1895. Her husband, Edward Hughes, suffered from an incurable disease and died five years later. They had no children. She was the only sister to marry (probably because all five sister suffered varying degrees of deafness, an affliction which was hereditary and which, presumably, they had no wish to pass on). Frances Gertrude returned to Dunkathel after her husband's death, and lived there for the rest of her life. Maria Maud, the third sister, was in charge of the household. Kathleen ran the farm, producing some of the best dairy butter in Ireland, which won frequent prizes at the Dublin Horse Show. Kathleen was also a very talented photographer and her prize-winning works were often used in country journals and local and national newspapers. Two of her photographic albums have been preserved at Dunkathel.

Duties around the estate were strictly divided between the sisters; Beatrice's artistic flair was put to good use around the house, although she was forbidden to alter the hall with its original 19th century marbling (which still survives today). She redecorated the entire house during the 1930's.

The house and estate were run as a strict regime: Seven gardeners were employed in producing vegetables, fruit and flowers both for the house and for sale in Cork. Other would look after the maintainance of the house and farm. Sometimes Beatrice would ask them to sit as models for her sketches. One of the finest of these figure studies depicts two washerwomen at work in the laundry. In 1980, an elderly local woman on a visit to Dunkathel (which is now open to the public during the summer) was surprised to be shown this sketch of herself as a young girl. In the sisters' heyday, the estate was a thriving concern, and if you ask around the village of Glanmire, you will find many who remember Dunkathel in the days of "The Misses Gubbins".

## BEATRICE GUBBINS: THE EARLY YEARS

Thus it was that Beatrice Gubbins, always the baby of the family, grew up in an atmosphere of strict Victorian codes, a vanished society of discipline and high morals—yet a happy one which gave rise to the nurturing of productive talent, and allowed above all the time in which to develop creative abilities. This discipline is

evident in the meticulous style of her diaries, which she kept throughout her life. The three volumes which span the years 1911 to 1936 are still preserved at Dunkathel; they record in some detail her social life and travels, but there is, unfortunately, very little mention of her painting activities.

At the beginning of the first volume of her diaries she gives a chronological list of her travels between the years 1893 and 1911, curt summaries which tell us little other than the places she visited. Consequently, it is not clear where she received her early training as an artist, but it is believed that she studied first in Cork, presumably at the Crawford School of Art. (The registers for that period are not extant, but in the register for 1883 Frances Gertrude Gubbins is recorded as having enrolled at the Crawford School of Art. Gertrude was then sixteen years of age; the occupation of her father is given as "gentleman".)

The diaries record her travels on the Continent during these early years. She invariably travelled abroad during the Springtime, visiting the Italian lakes and Venice in 1899, and Paris in the following years. Significantly, she records a visit to Barbizon in 1902. As a young girl and in her early twenties she travelled to many of the scenic beauty spots in Ireland, mainly with her mother and sister Kathleen. The places they visited are recorded in many of her watercolours; Miltown Malbay, Killarney, Connemara and Lahinch, to name but a few. She visited Whiting Bay and Ardmore several times.

These days heralded the advent of the motor-car, and Beatrice in her youth was a keen motorist. Her motoring trips would last from ten days to three weeks, usually two or three times a year. The trip to Italy she made in 1899 with her mother seems to have made a great impression on her. She returned to this country for long periods later on in her life. Her other trips abroad before the war include two tours of England and Wales, a trip to Scotland, and a visit to Lausanne. She also visited Holland, in 1910. Her second visit to Italy in 1905, with her friend Amy, resulted in many of her finest watercolours, as did a prolonged stay in Spain the following year.

In the early years, Beatrice's home life was complete and active. An ardent churchgoer, she was also keen on hunting and bridge during the winter months, whilst the summer would find her attending many fetes, garden parties and tennis gatherings either at the local Glanmire tennis club or at neighbouring houses, notably Lota Park and Dunsland. "Sept. 19th 1911: Our tea day at Glanmire Tennis Club. I got up a 1/- Sweepstake American 10 minutes croquet tournament. Ten couples entered, so it was quite a success,—I played with Mr. Charles Colthurst, and we came in last." Beatrice often played bridge with members of the Crawford family. "Dec. 14th 1912: Tower Hill Bridge Tournament. Marion and I went to it—5 tables—quite good fun—I was an easy 'booby'!" February 1912 found Beatrice rehearsing an amateur theatrical "The Bugle Call" at Lota Park. She was playing Bates, a parlourmaid. In that same month she was also

out hunting again. "Feb.16th 1912: Gertrude sent Russ and me out to Killeagh Cross Roads in her motor—a fast hunt from Clarks to Carrignavar—but straight against a high wind and rain, and as it was very disagreeable and looked like being wet, Russ and I rode home—but Alas! the rain cleared off tho' the storm increased—and we hear they had a good hunt afterwards."

Along with other members of her family, Beatrice spent much of her time working to raise money for local charities, the blind, and distributing food and clothing to the needy. "Dec. 24th 1912: Cork—then distributing clothes and food around the country in G's car & back in time to give out mother's Christmas presents."

During the years 1912 and 1913 Beatrice paid frequent visits to London where she underwent treatment of her ears, a factor which may have saved her from the fate of deafness. "Oct.4th 1911: Went to see Mr. Heath. 34 Devonshire Place—this morning. Examined my ears—Said . . . nerve in excellent condition. trouble is seated in middle ear . . . hopes to improve hearing by his painting treatment which he has started today—treatment lasts six weeks, fee a guinea each time! But what is that if it will really make me better! It has put hope and new life into me."

#### THE FIRST WORLD WAR

As with many other young women of her day, the onset of this terrible war found Beatrice Gubbins undergoing intensive training as a nurse. She was first attached to Tivoli hospital just outside Cork, where she describes in her diaries the treatment of the wounded shipped in from the Continent and the many operations she attended, removing shrapnel from their wounds. "Nov.12th 1915: An awful day blowing a gale and snow in afternoon. Had all preparations for a serious operation on Evan's head—but at 5.30 when he had been anaesthetized, the bit of shell came out with a forceps!! It was outside the skull the whole time—everybody laughed!!" Thirteen days later: "Operation on Sgt. Barry. Diseased bone of leg taken away . . . he struggled for an hour after op: fighting in the Dardanelles! & it took 5 of us to hold him down."

Her brother Russell was fighting in France at this time: "Russ and Janet arrived. He has got ten days leave from France. Seems pretty well played out after his two months there—but then he came in for a bad time with the battle of Loos.

Events in Ireland during this time are recorded in the diaries. "Apr.25th 1916: Russ and Janet had to motor back to Athlone (Petrol very scarce, they had to get an order from the Barracks to procure it.) There is no train running to Dublin—as the Sinn Feiners have risen there, got possession of the P.O., Four Courts, Broadstone &



Westland Row stations & a lot of people have been killed."

On the last day of December 1916, Beatrice left Tivoli Hospital " . . .for good & all. Feeling very sad." She sailed for England in the first days of January to take up her appointment at the No. 1 Hospital, Exeter, where she worked until January 1919. Although the circumstances of her work must have been harrowing, with convoys of injured arriving constantly, it is interesting, and perhaps characteristic of her, that she continued to find time to do an occasional sketch by the canal. She returned to Ireland for six months in 1917 in order to have an operation on her arm, and in that period picked up some of her old social life, dining with the Crawfords, decorating Little Island church for Easter. But the changing political climate could not escape her. "Apr.23rd 1918. Today a general strike (or holiday?) has been organised all over Ireland--Anti-conscription--no trains, post, bread, papers & all shops shut--Lord, what a country it is!!" She returned to Exeter in May 1918, travelling by the mailboat to Holyhead: ". . . we talked on deck the whole time--lovely night--zig-zagged all the way--no escort of either destroyers or aeroplanes." Back in Exeter she returned to work in the hospital, and took out her old bicycle: "June 14th 1918 . . .in the evenings I have been doing up the bicycle--first getting off the rust! and then painting with aluminium paint--& finally touching up with black enamel. A bigger job than I bargained for! but it looks quite smart!" She took the bicycle and her sketching materials on the train to Dartmoor, but was disappointed ". . .A lovely day, sketched near Dartmouth--but absolutely cloudless--and not suited to the moor, at least for painting--I really do think the moor is much over-rated --and not a patch on Connemara." She records in her dispassionate way "Nov.11th 1918: Armistice signed by Germany. Such joy & decorations in Exeter. One can hardly believe this awful war is at an end."

#### LIFE AND TRAVELS IN POST-WAR EUROPE

When Beatrice Gubbins returned to Cork in 1919, the Irish Troubles were starting. Due to her family's popularity, these did not affect them seriously, although they were stressful times. Dunkathel Road Bridge and Glanmire Bridge were both blown up in September 1922. Trees adjoining the road were cut down to form road-blocks. The family Daimler was 'borrowed' on one occasion and returned a day later, although what it was used for can only be surmised. For Beatrice, although she was to travel extensively, Dunkathel was to remain her home; her mother was not in the best of health, and for the next seven years, more and more of her time was devoted to taking care of her. Her mother died peacefully of old age at Dunkathel on December 21st 1927. "There is now a feeling of such an appalling emptiness and loneliness in the house--our home is no longer what it was without our little mother and her wonderful love and sympathy." Caring for her mother occupied Beatrice's time exclusively in the years after 1924, but she was able to make journeys abroad immediately after the war.

Beatrice's diaries are interesting for these journeys, not because her insights into the peoples and places, but more because she was the sort of person who would record in minute detail the problems encountered by a traveller on the Continent in the early part of the twentieth century. Her travels would fall somewhere between the classic Grand Tour of the eighteenth century lasting a year or more, and the modern-day tourist, with deadlines and bookings in advance. She did not travel first class: none of the Gubbinses were ever extravagant, and it is likely that she financed these travels abroad from her own means, which were not great.

#### 1920: ITALY

Making her way over to London by Fishguard, she records a calm crossing to Calais, and a comfortable train journey to Paris. This city seems to have been in the throes of a general strike. Trains, buses, underground and taxis were all out of action, and Beatrice and her friend Honor spent a hectic day trying to change tickets and find transport to the Gare de Lyon, where special trains were laid on: "Taxis refusing to take us to Gare de Lyon. . . eventually succeeded in getting two seats on a bus--Then at Gare de Lyon just  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour before our train started, to find it already crammed full--were told of another train going  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour later but found it to consist of 1st Class only--were then told of another going at 8.30.--to find every place on it had already been booked." Eventually they succeeded in finding an apartment to themselves on a later train and made their way along the Rhone via Avignon and Nice to Italy where they alighted at Florence. Spending a week here, Beatrice visited the Palazzos churches and museums, taking in the works of Michelangelo and Raphael. "Oct 5th. To the Uffizi in the morning--Saw the Battistero after lunch--beautiful bronze doors, especially the one by Ghiberti--the Interior is very lovely too with niello floor--mosaic roof, black and white marble etc.: All the Florence babies are baptised here--."

Her second stop was Siena, where she stayed a week visiting the churches and monasteries with their beautiful frescoes and columns, and walking along the graffiti pavements of the town. Stopping next at Peruggia, visits were made to the Picture Gallery and Cathedral with its Etruscan pillars and foundations. The next port of call was Assisi, St. Francis's home town, where she was unfortunately laid up for several days with a bronchial chill. "Nov. 5th. Got another Doctor instead--like him much better--of course the temp. went down to normal when he arrived!! Felt such a fraud--but its good to know lungs are all right." Recovering by the 10th November she ventures out to visit the Temple of Minerva and the Cathedral Rufini. The 16th Nov. saw her on the road again, passing through Pistoia, the old City of Lucca with its ramparts all round, and finally to the seaside town of Sistri Levante. Nov. 22nd found her on a train back to Genoa, and thence she returned to Paris

## 1922: CORSICA

Although of only six week's duration, Beatrice's Springtime visit to Corsica provided good opportunities for sketching. Many of her paintings portray the towns, shorelines and rocky passes of this Mediterranean island, Napoleon's birthplace. She took motor tours around the island, not all of them, it seems, being entirely happy: "We're very glad to be back safe and sound at 7 p.m.--having nearly been upset once to avoid a collision round a corner, and nearly killing a dog, a goat, and a man! Not a bad record for one day!" Apart, perhaps, from her experience of Corsican drivers, she obviously enjoyed this particular holiday tremendously as she waxed lyrical on the scenery in her diaries and was very sad on leaving: "Sun 7th May. We left Bastia this evening by S.S. Corte--so very sorry to say Goodbye to it all."

## 1924: SICILY AND ITALY

This time with no strikes in Paris, she set out with her friend, Honor, by rail, tracing the same route as four years earlier, but continuing on to Rome, Naples, and finally crossing by Steamer to Palermo in Sicily. Her diaries tell us that she was really not very enamoured with the island. She stayed there nearly a month visiting the churches and temples with their Doric columns, and sketching occasionally. "Apr. 13. In our same country cart for about 3 miles, whence we proceeded on foot up the Pathway to Segesta--After about 1½ miles (& incidentally taking off our shoes and stockings and fording a river to the disgust of the donkey boys!) we got to what is considered to be the most preserved Elynian Temple in Sicily. It is pure Doric, and its magnificence, strong simplicity and size strike one dumb--it is most impressive." Many of the places she records, however, as not being very interesting. She seems more to have enjoyed the last part of her holiday sketching around the bay of Naples in Italy and visiting the picturesque villages around Mt. Etna, she certainly did not let the threat of volcanic eruptions worry her: "Randazzo is a most picturesque village on the N. side of Etna. It is built mostly of lava--and very interesting and different to other places. St. Martin's is a very interesting church (outside) with its lava in white marble--and many of the shops have lava counters outside their arched entrances--On the way back we crossed the stream of lava of last year. Some of it is still smoking and in one part it was actually in flames."

Leaving Naples on May 16th. she took a steamer to Capri, and from there on to Sorrento, ending up in the mountain village of Corpo di Carva where she stayed until May 23rd. On the way back to Naples, she stayed for a few days at Sorrento, taking the opportunity to bathe and sketch, before beginning the train journey home via Paris, arriving in London on June 1st.

## 1929: AVIGNON AND MOROCCO

Having spent the last few years in Ireland, during which time her mother died, a considerable time had elapsed since her last trip abroad. This particular trip provides us with some of her most prolific works, including many examples of the street life of Moroccan towns and villages with their alleyways and market places, and plentiful figure studies of Arab men and women. Setting out on Jan. 29th. with her brother Joe and his wife Helen, she spent several days at Avignon, and arrived at Algiers on Feb. 9th. where she made her base for some time. From here she visited many of the Moroccan towns such as Sidi-Bon-Medine with its huge Grand Mosque, and Taza, where she was given guided tours of the Arab shops, occasionally staying overnight at these places. She gives a wonderful description of a night spent at the Palais Jamai Hotel in Fez (from which hotel a set of five menus were found attached to her diaries): "I am in the Harem!!.....in the evening there was an Arab performance in the Hotel. We sat on couches round 3 sides of the room, the performers at one end. The men played violins--held like a Banjo--and instruments like huge mandolins. After that another violin started a solo, and the women joined in with their voices, clapping of hands and drums, making an appalling noise--There is rhythm but not music! and only a very small range of tone in their voices--After that the women, each in turn, danced a Pas Seul--terrible contortions of their tummies and hips seemed the principle thing--and most ugly and repulsive--(we would call it indecent!) Mint tea in glasses was handed round half way through--quite nice--also sweetmeats highly flavoured with allspice--we all joined in the finishing choruses much to their delight--A wonderful entertainment but I don't want to see another!!"

Beatrice ended her holiday in Marrakesh where she stayed for several days visiting the temples and mosques. On the journey home she stopped in Casa Blanca. Mistakenly believing the British Consul to be John Trant, (whose family were well known in Cork and who at one stage owned Dunkathel) she called at the Embassy in Casa Blanca to pay her respects, but "found another man there!" So she went shopping instead. Continuing up the coast of Portugal by sea, she visited Lisbon, and finally came ashore at Bordeaux, thence travelling by train to Biarritz, Paris, and Boulogne for the crossing to Dover.

## 1930: WEST INDIES

She was again accompanied on this Spring trip by Joe and Helen, and most of it was spent at sea. Leaving Avonmouth near Bristol on the 22nd of Feb., she was confined to her cabin for much of the crossing of the Atlantic: "Sun 23rd. Cold grey day. 24 ditto with slight roll. 25 Heavy sea and bad roll.

Helen and I kept our berths--Joe took a toss flat on his back but fortunately was not hurt--only six passengers up out of 38. 26 Nice day, deck chairs p.m. 27 Bobbly, wind S. 28 Bobbly wind N.E. March 1st Very Rolly. Fiddles on tables and furniture roped."

On arriving in the West Indies, the ship's first port of call was Bridgetown, Barbados, where Beatrice went to see a sugar factory and did some shopping. From there they set sail of Port of Spain, Trinidad, where the Botanical Gardens were visited. Spending roughly a day in each place, they proceeded to the Panama Canal, Kingston, Jamaica, which Beatrice loved, and paid another visit to Trinidad before setting sail for home. The greater part of the holiday seems to have been spent crossing and recrossing the Atlantic, so not many opportunities presented themselves for sketching and there are not many paintings to commemorate this voyage. She arrived home by Rosslare on April 10th.

#### 1931: ALGERIA AND TUNIS

Obviously having been inspired by their previous visit to Africa two years earlier, the trio, Beatrice, Joe and Helen, decided to make a return visit to the Continent. This time they started out by air from Croydon Airport on January 13th., and Beatrice comments briefly on her first flying experience: "Wonderful, but very noisy--visibility bad, foggy, so flew mostly at about 200ft., instead of 2,000ft." Re-visiting Algiers on her arrival in Africa, she made her way along the coast of Constantine. She visited towns such as El Oued, Tozeur and Sidi Bon Said with their mud huts and mosques, before terminating a relatively short holiday with her return to Dover on Feb. 10. Perhaps one of the reasons why she did not prolong this trip was because of the French troubles in Africa at the time. There is a brief reference to military presence in her diaries: "Jan. 18th.....En route we stopped at Fort National, the strategic point of these parts from where the French guns command all the surrounding villages." A number of postcards sent from Tunisia are preserved in her diaries as are photographs of the places she visited, and these make an interesting study.

#### 1934: PORTUGAL

Although it is possible that she may have travelled abroad in her later years, this is the last trip that is chronicled in her diaries. She was accompanied by her friend Honor, and appears to have been vastly impressed with the buildings of Portugal. She sketched many of the churches and interiors of buildings with their Romanesque and Gothic Flavours. The visit lasted only for the month of April, but she packed a lot into it, especially on the sketching side, and produced some very fine paintings to commemorate her stay. She returned to England by ship, arriving in Southampton on April 30th. and, after a few days visiting friends in England, returned to Cork after a lovely crossing.

For many years, Beatrice Gubbins had been a member of the Queenstown Sketching Club, in fact fulfilling the position of Honorary Secretary. It would have been up to her to see that all paintings of this club were sent in on time, and the portfolios distributed monthly to members for marking and criticism. Many of her own paintings still have attached to them slips of paper with the club heading on them and criticisms and marks entered beneath.

Beatrice Gubbins died on the 12th August, 1944 at the age of 66, the youngest of the family to have been born and the first sister to die. She was blessed with a sweet nature and loving disposition. She ended her life at her beloved Dunkathel, overlooking the banks of the River Lee, and she is buried at the nearby church in Little Island.

## EARLY AMATEUR SKETCHING CLUBS IN IRELAND

by

Shirley Armstrong Duffy

Sketching clubs were quite a feature in the artistic life of Ireland in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Around 1870 numbers of amateurs in different centres organized themselves into groups for mutual encouragement. The idea of sketching clubs and societies probably came from similar groups in England, for example, the Dublin Sketching Club records in the minutes of its inaugural meeting in October 1874, that the group came together 'for the purpose of forming a sketching club on the plan of the London Artists Club.

However, it was the women who were the first in the field. Strickland tells us that the Irish Amateur Drawing Society - which became the Irish Fine Art Society and finally the Watercolour Society of Ireland - originated in a local Drawing Society founded by six ladies for the 'mutual improvement in painting and drawing and the cultivation of a taste for Art'.

In 1872, Miss Deane, presumably a daughter of Thomas N. Deane R.H.A., with some friends started the Ladies Sketching Club, the first of its kind in Dublin. The following year gentlemen were admitted and the name changed to the Dublin Amateur Artists' Society, the management remaining in the hands of the ladies. In 1874, Miss Mary Kate Benson took over the secretaryship until 1887 when the club amalgamated with the Dublin Sketching Club.

Apparently by 1874 the gentlemen also felt the lack of a society where they could meet to discuss and improve their artistic endeavours. An enthusiastic amateur artist and well known Dublin dentist, Mr. William Booth Pearsall remedied this when he called a group of like-minded friends together to form the Dublin Sketching Club. This club soon acquired premises where the members could meet weekly, and where they were to illustrate a given subject in the space of two hours. The members then criticised each others work so that they might hope to improve. These sketches formed the basis of the work for their exhibitions and added the flavour of a game, which no doubt gave interest to even the less accomplished work. Certainly it is a feature that was regularly commented upon in press reports.

The Dublin Art Club was formed around a breakaway section of the Dublin Sketching Club in 1886: It became the Dublin Arts Club in 1893 when it combined with the Instrumental Club. The rivalry between these two clubs spurred them on to seize fresh ideas and opportunities. For instance, in the same year as the split occurred, the Dublin Sketching Club invited similar English societies to exhibit with them.

The Langham Sketching Club from London sent some fifty works by their members, the Bewick Club from Newcastle-on-Tyne and the Atheneum Graphic Club in Manchester also sent pictures. There was even a circulating library of international art publications, a photographic section and in the Summer, sketching expeditions to which students from the Art School were invited.

In Belfast, the Ramblers' Sketching Club existed from about 1879 as a semi-private society whose principle rule was 'that this Club be called the Belfast Ramblers' Sketching Club: the sole object being to encourage sketching from Nature and Original Compositions'. A few years after it had acquired permanent rooms the name was changed to the Belfast Art Society.

Besides having similar objectives, there was one important feature that the societies so far mentioned shared: public exhibitions of their work. It is largely due to the newspaper reports of their exhibitions that we can attempt to piece together their history. At a time when such accounts were less terse than now, we can learn about methods of selection, the hanging arrangements and about the exhibitors themselves.

Two exhibitions were held in 1871 by the forerunner of the Amateur Drawing Society; possibly no catalogues were printed for these, but the 'Sentinel' published one for their third exhibition held in Carlow in May 1872. One hundred and twenty-one works by forty-five artists were shown. This society drew its members from all over the country and for the next twenty years held one or two exhibitions each year, one in Dublin and one in Cork or Belfast. It is to be hoped that further catalogues will come to light as the early records of this society have large gaps in them. Miss Fanny Currey was the organising honorary secretary for a number of years and it is a great pity that we have not more records of her organizing ability, which appears to have been considerable. Miss Benson must have kept records for the Dublin Amateur Artists' Society which would be equally fascinating if they should ever be found.

The Dublin Sketching Club was fortunate in its honorary secretary of many years, Alexander Williams. He was most enthusiastic and kept meticulous records of the early days of the Club: the personalities involved, working methods in the club, the entertainment and the exhibitions, though again not always the catalogues, unfortunately.

It also appears to have been the Dublin Sketching Club which introduced the element of entertainment into the art scene. They held conversaziones and Smoking Concerts where the works of members were shown.



The social aspect was helped by having club rooms in which to hold these informal gatherings. Their first public exhibition was held in 1876 in the Leinster Hall, Molesworth Street, Dublin, a hall which was to be used by all societies. The catalogue for this exhibition states that the Club was formed for the purpose of bringing together 'artists, amateurs and gentlemen interested in Art, in friendly and social intercourse promoting a taste for the fine arts in Dublin...'

Their third exhibition in 1877 was opened by H.E. the Lord Lieutenant and 'there was a large and very fashionable general attendance'. This seems to have set the tone for the amateur exhibitions in Dublin and the Lord Lieutenant of the day regularly opened the exhibitions of each of these societies.

In 1885 the Dublin Sketching Club introduced the idea of Corresponding Member, i.e., not necessarily resident in Dublin, what is more, a Corresponding Member might be a LADY ARTIST! Actually, the work of women artists had been included in their exhibitions from the beginning, but of course were to have no voice in the management of the club.

Apart from these firmly established clubs, there were a number of small clubs throughout the country, organized on a more informal basis. For example, Miss Ettie French recalls Mary Swanzy telling her that she and Percy French belonged to a sketching group in the early 1890's. Miss Swanzy also remembered that she was attending such a group around 1894 with such painters as Walter Osborne.

The Queenstown Sketch Club was an enthusiastic amateur group, in the early days of this century. Miss Beatrice Gubbins was the club's honorary secretary for some time and most fortunately the rules have been preserved amongst her papers. These rules have a resemblance to those of the Dublin Sketching Club in that a subject to be illustrated was set regularly, in this case each month. There was also the competitive element which was very strong in the Dublin Amateur and Artists' Society under Miss Benson. As the Queenstown group pseudonyms and no list of members has come to light, it is not possible to trace the artists. It is also unlikely that anything in the way of public exhibitions were held as they would certainly have been reported in the press, but the individuals may have been members of other societies which did exhibit. Although Miss Gubbins' name does not appear in any of the catalogues so far available, her friend Edith Sommerville exhibited with the Irish Fine Art Society in the 1880's, and Beatrice Gubbins may also have done so in later years. Miss Gubbins certainly exhibited with the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1910 when she had two pictures accepted (A Misty Morning and The End of the Day, both priced 5. 0. 0.), and in 1911 when she had three pictures (Untrodden Ways, The Kerry Coast, His Mother's Pride, again all marked 5. 0. 0.)

It is not clear for how long the Queenstown Sketch Club prospered, but it may have continued until the outbreak of the Second World. It appears to be a fact that small enthusiastic clubs in various fields of endeavour, are very much dependent on the unselfish work done by one efficient organizer, in this case Beatrice Gubbins. When that person can no longer carry on, the whole group disintegrates. Queenstown was fortunate to have someone of the calibre of Miss Gubbins for so many years.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- W.G. Strickland, A Dictionary of Irish Artists, (Dublin 1913)
- Catalogues of, Dublin Sketching Club, Irish Amateur Drawing Society/Irish Fine Art Society/Watercolour Society of Ireland, Dublin Arts Club  
Ramblers' Sketching Club.
- Archives of - Dublin Sketching Club and Watercolour Society of Ireland
- Numerous Newspaper Reports.
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CATALOGUE OF WORKS

All Watercolour on paper unless otherwise stated

CAT. NO.	TITLE	DIMENSIONS CMS	REFERENCE
1	<u>Sestri Levanti 1905</u>	36 x 25.5	[PA 8]
2	<u>Toledo</u> initialled "B.G."	34 x 24	[PA12]
3	<u>Moorish Wall with City Behind</u>	27 x 37	[PA18]
4	<u>Trees in Summer</u> initialled "B.G."	35.5 x 25.5	[PA26]
5	<u>Study</u> initialled "B.G." dated 1908	26 x 18.5	[PA32]
6	<u>Dunkathel Entrance Gates</u>	28 x 38	[PA38]
7	<u>A Sunny Morning</u> initialled "L.F.S.C."	29 x 23	[PA47]
8	<u>Flowers in Vases with China Figurine</u>	24 x 34	[PB53]
9	<u>In a Looking Glass</u> by "Benjamin" initialled "B.G."	24 x 34	[PB57]
10	<u>'Some Vegetables'</u>	19 x 36	[PB58]
11	<u>Calvi</u> initialled "B.G."	28 x 39	[PC67]
12	<u>Coastal or Lake Scene</u> initialled "B.G."	23 x 35	[PC80]
13	<u>Italian Coastal Town</u> initialled "B.G."	23 x 35	[PC81]
14	<u>Italian Coastal Town</u> initialled "B.G."	35 x 25	[PC82]
15	<u>By the Sea, Bettyhill</u> Sept. 1937 by "Greyhound"	24 x 35	[PC84]
16	<u>Palm Trees</u>	25 x 18	[PF 4]
17	<u>Arabs in Town Square</u>	23 x 34	[PF10]
18	<u>Tulips</u>	27 x 33	[PF16]
19	<u>Autumn Colouring</u>	18 x 23	[PF17]
20	<u>Brightly Dressed Women</u> <u>Beneath Archway</u>	18 x 23	[PF21]
21	<u>San Domenico</u>	36 x 28	[PF22]

CAT. NO.	TITLE	DIMENSIONS CMS.	REFERENCE
22	<u>The Dance</u> Watercolour over pencil	24 x 29	[PF27]
23	<u>Forewarned, Forearmed</u> by "Greyhound" ink and watercolour	18 x 24	[PF29]
24	<u>Merry King at Table</u> Nursery Rhyme by "Greyhound" pencil and watercolour	27 x 26	[PF31]
25	<u>Play</u> by "Greyhound"	18 x 23	[PF32]
26	<u>Woman on Sofa, Knitting</u> Dated May 1939	38 x 28	[PF40]
27	<u>Interior</u> by "Greyhound" initialled "B.G."	39 x 29	[PF41]
28	<u>Exterior of a Cottage with a Barrel</u> initialled "B.G. 1903"	13 x 18	[PG 2]
29	<u>The Corn Field</u> initialled "B.G."	18 x 25	[PG 7]
30	<u>Trees in Autumn</u>	16 x 25	[PG12]
31	<u>Winding Road and Cottage</u>	18 x 23	[PG14]
32	<u>Quiet Estuary Scene</u>	18 x 25	[PG15]
33	<u>Boats in a Mediterranean Port</u> initialled "B.G."	23 x 30	[PG18]
34	<u>Landscape Composition</u> by "Greyhound"	26 x 38	[PG19]
35	<u>Portrait of a Young Girl with a Red Bow</u> initialled "B.G.1913"	34 x 23	[PG20]
36	<u>Study of a Head</u> by "Benjamin" Nov.1912	35 x 25	[PG22]
37	<u>Spanish Youths</u>	35 x 25	[PG24]
38	<u>Solitude</u> by "Greyhound"	23 x 31	[PG29]
39	<u>Misty Valley</u>	26 x 35	[PG31]

CAT. NO.	TITLE	DIMENSIONS CMS.	REFERENCE
40	<u>Riverscape - On the Lee</u>	23 x 34	[PG32]
41	<u>The Dunaiya</u> by "Greyhound"	23 x 34	[P 3]
42	<u>An Interior Washing Pots</u> by "Greyhound" Jan.1912	35 x 24	[P 9]
43	<u>Untitled</u>	35 x 25	[P 15]
44	<u>Patio Leading to Door</u>	35 x 25	[P24a]
45	<u>Ronda</u>	18 x 13	[P 24]
46	<u>Labourers Cutting Hay</u> initialled "B.G." Jul.1921	24 x 36	[PY14]
47	<u>Woman at Cauldron with</u> <u>Man Seated Reading</u>	32 x 23	[PZ 1]
48	<u>Old Woman Seated Beside</u> <u>Cauldron</u> initialled "B.G."	36 x 25	[PZ 2]
49	<u>Desk and Chair in Interior</u> <u>of Room</u>	36 x 24	[PZ 4]
50	<u>Curiosity</u>	23 x 17	[PZ 7]
51	<u>Lamplight Study</u> by "Jessamine"	23 x 32	[PZ10]
52	<u>View of River over Inchera</u>	18 x 26	[F 1]
53	<u>Belvelly Castle</u>	24 x 34	[F 2]
54	<u>Quaint Street Cottage with</u> <u>Figure in Doorway</u> initialled "B.G."	30 x 24	[F 3]
55	<u>Landscape at Dunkathel</u>	24 x 40	[F 4]
56	<u>Still Life, Fruit and Plate</u>	20 x 32	[F 5]
57	<u>Mountain Town</u>	13 x 19	[F 6]
58	<u>Trees and Water</u>	12 x 17	[F 7]
59	<u>Dredger by Docks</u>	23 x 32	[F 8]
60	<u>Dutch Fishing Boats</u>	24 x 34	[F 9]
61	<u>Road to Hillside Cottages</u>	17 x 22	[F 10]
62	<u>View of St. Anne's, Shandon</u> initialled "B.G."	32 x 24	[F 11]
63	<u>View of Lake and Mountains</u> initialled "B.G."	24 x 32	[F 12]
64	<u>Girl Feeding Geese Outside</u> <u>Cottage</u>	23 x 33	[F 13]

CAT. NO.	TITLE	DIMENSIONS CMS.	REFERENCE
65	<u>River Reflecting Trees, Boat by Bank</u> initialled "B.G."	38 x 56	[F 14]
66	<u>Young Woman With Laundry Basket</u>	24 x 24	[F 15]
67	<u>Landscape of Sand and Mountains</u> initialled "B.G."	18 x 27	[F 16]
68	<u>Landscape of Trees and Flat Fields</u>	13 x 28	[F 17]
69	<u>Trees with Autumn Colouring</u> initialled "B.G."	34 x 24	[F 18]
70	<u>Belvelly Castle</u>	23 x 33	[F 19]
71	<u>Lakes and Coastline</u>	33 x 40	[F 20]
72	<u>Interior of Church/Mosque with Pillared Arches</u>	29 x 24	[F 21]
73	<u>Women at Well</u> initialled "B.G."	34 x 24	[F 22]
74	<u>Sewing Women</u>	12 x 17	[F 23]
75	<u>Hillside Town</u>	30 x 24	[F 24]
76	<u>Fortress on Mountain Top</u> initialled "B.G."	32 x 24	[F 25]
77	<u>Boat on River by Windmill at Night</u>	17 x 24	[F 26]
78	<u>Two Little Children by Market Stall</u>	34 x 25	[F 27]
79	<u>People in Front of Tent</u> initialled "B.G."	24 x 33	[F 28]
80	<u>View over River Lee from Dunkathel</u> initialled "B.G."	24 x 33	[F 29]
81	<u>Man in Shed</u>	33 x 21	[F 30]
82	<u>Humpback Bridge</u> initialled "B.G."	32 x 45	[F 31]
83	<u>Tangiers</u>	28 x 23	[F 32]
84	<u>Three Men and Vat</u>	22 x 17	[F 33]
85	<u>Town at River's Edge</u>	24 x 35	[F 34]
86	<u>Mediterranean Street</u>	28 x 22	[F 35]
87	<u>Man at Work</u>	33 x 22	[F 36]

CAT. NO.	TITLE	DIMENSIONS CMS.	REFERENCE
88	<u>Taornima</u> by "Miss B. Gubbins"	24 x 34	[F 37]
89	<u>Hen</u> initialled "B.G."	23 x 28	[F 38]
90	<u>Ship in Harbour</u> initialled "B.G."	43 x 30	[F 39]
91	<u>Portrait of Grey-bearded Man</u> by "B.G." dated 1908	43 x 30	[F 40]
92	<u>Springtime</u> by "Greyhound" initialled "B.G."	23 x 35	[F 41]
93	<u>Old House</u> watercolour and faint pencil	35 x 24	[F 42]
94	<u>Interior with Lilies</u>	38 x 25	[F 43]
95	<u>Mediterranean Village</u>	25 x 18	[F 44]
96	<u>Countryside with Lakes and Houses</u>	24 x 32	[F 45]
97	<u>Arabs under Archway</u> initialled "B.G."	25 x 21	[F 46]
98	<u>Bridge over River</u>	21 x 32	[F 47]
99	<u>Workmen on Construction Site</u>	17 x 24	[F 48]
100	<u>Steps at Malta</u>	33 x 15	[F 49]
101	<u>Trees in Field</u>	13 x 21	[F 50]
102	<u>Lake Beneath Mountains</u>	24 x 34	[F 51]
103	<u>Workmen on Building Site</u>	33 x 23	[F 52]
104	<u>The Old Dredger</u> initialled "B.G."	24 x 35	[F 53]
105	<u>Trees in Front of Mud Flats</u> initialled "B.G."	24 x 34	[F 54]
106	<u>Trees on Hillside</u> initialled "B.G."	17 x 25	[F 55]
107	<u>Countryside with Roadside Cottage</u>	20 x 25	[F 56]
108	<u>Autumn</u> by "Greyhound"	24 x 34	[F 57]
109	<u>An Old Age Pensioner</u> initialled "B.G." 1923	24 x 34	[F 58]



CAT. NO.	TITLE	DIMENSIONS CMS.	REFERENCE
110	<u>Cattle Beneath Trees</u>	23 x 32	[F 59]
111	<u>Coastline and Sea on Left</u> initialled "B.G." 1912	28 x 49	[F 60]
112	<u>Man Sitting by Streetside</u>	21 x 16	[F 61]
113	<u>Haystacks in Countryside</u> initialled "B.G."	19 x 30	[F 62]
114	<u>Woman and Girl on Country</u> <u>Road</u>	19 x 34	[F 63]
115	<u>Cliffs and Sea</u> initialled "B.G."	35 x 25	[F 64]
116	<u>Countryside with Water</u> <u>in Foreground</u>	26 x 35	[F 65]
117	<u>Interior of Church under</u> <u>Repair</u>	37 x 27	[F 66]
118	<u>Rowing Boat by Side of Canal</u> inscribed "28 August'26" initialled "B.E.G."	19 x 25	[F 67]
119	<u>River and Shoreline</u>	19 x 25	[F 68]
120	<u>Trees and Rocks in Front</u> <u>of Sea</u>	17 x 14	[F 69]
121	<u>Country Cottages Beside</u> <u>Mountain Road</u>	16 x 21	[F 70]
122	<u>River with Hills in the</u> <u>Distance</u>	32 x 57	[F 71]
123	<u>Man and Woman Walking in</u> <u>Country</u>	28 x 23	[F 72]
124	<u>Wolverton</u>	35 x 23	[F 73]
125	<u>Tulips in Vase</u> initialled "B.G."	24 x 23	[F 74]
126	<u>Flowers</u>	22 x 25	[F 75]
127	<u>Lake in Front of Mountains</u>	24 x 35	[F 76]
128	<u>Girl Feeding Geese in Front</u> <u>of Thatched Cottages</u>	16 x 28	[F 77]
129	<u>Plate of Fruit, Wine Glasses</u> <u>and Bottle</u>	23 x 29	[F 78]
130	<u>River Lee from Dunkathel</u>	27 x 20	[F 79]

CAT. NO.	TITLE	DIMENSIONS CMS.	REFERENCE
131	<u>River Lee from Dunkathel</u> initialled "B.G."	17 x 23	[F 80]
132	<u>Study of Flower</u> initialled "B.G."	40 x 30	[F 81]
133	<u>Portrait of Frances Gubbins</u> Beatrice's Mother	16 x 12	[F 82]
134	<u>Ruined Church and Tower</u>	23 x 30	[F 83]
135	<u>Profile of Woman Claspig</u> <u>Hands</u>	34 x 25	[F 84]
136	<u>Portrait of Lizzie</u> initialled "B.G."	25 x 18	[F 85]
137	<u>Four Cocks</u>	22 x 16	[F 86]
138	<u>Portrait of Boy</u>	18 x 15	[F 87]
139	<u>Shepherd and Sheep</u> <u>Mountain Road</u>	23 x 33	[F 88]
140	<u>Woods</u>	15 x 11	[F 89]
141	<u>Foliage and Flowers</u>	20 x 26	[F 90]
142	<u>Trees and Stream by Side</u> <u>of Field</u>	14 x 11	[F 91]
143	<u>Woman Sitting Reading</u>	34 x 24	[F 92]
144	<u>Portrait of Old Man</u>	24 x 17	[F 93]
145	<u>Man Seated in Chair</u>	20 x 15	[F 94]
146	<u>Woman Holding Baby</u>	34 x 24	[F 95]
147	<u>Washerwoman at Dunkathel</u>	36 x 26	[F 96]
148	<u>Portrait of Old Man</u>	30 x 24	[F 97]
149	<u>Houses Beyond Lake</u>	23 x 34	[F 98]

QUEENSTOWN SKETCH CLUB.

RULES

1. An Entrance Fee of 2/6 - An Annual Subscription of 5/- to be paid in advance. The Club Year begins on November 1st. Members joining after May 1st are let in on half subscription.
2. One sketch to be sent each month. Size not to exceed 16" x 12" or weight more than 2½ oz.
3. All sketches, which should be completed within the previous 12 months, must be strictly original and not done under the supervision of a master. They may be executed in any medium except oil, and must be signed with a pseudonym.
4. A Subject is given each month, but Members if unable to illustrate the given subject, may send an alternative sketch; this however is not eligible for votes.
5. Sketches to reach the Hon. Sec. before the 1st of the month for which they are intended. When no sketch is sent a fine of 6d to be paid.
6. The Portfolio will be sent to Members every month. They are requested when possible to despatch it the day following receipt, but it may be kept 48 hours, after which a fine of 3d to be paid for each day's delay. Dates of receipt and despatch must be entered on Postal List - omission of this renders Members liable to overtime fine for delay of Portfolio. It is important that "To be forwarded" be written on parcel.
7. Members may criticise and give a maximum of 3 votes to each sketch (their own excepted). Votes and criticisms to be signed with pseudonym.
8. Any Member to whose name a X is prefixed on Postal List, to send a post card to the Hon. Sec. stating dates of receipt and despatch which portfolio and to whom forwarded - or a fine of 3d to be paid
9. Subscriptions and fines to go towards paying a Professional Critic - to subscribe to the Studio - to pay current expenses and to give prizes to those who have received most votes.
10. Any Member winning a 1st prize will not be eligible for a prize of the same grade the following year.
11. "Leave of Absence" is granted to Members going abroad for more than a month - for illness - or for any other good reason.
12. Anyone wishing to join, must first submit 2 specimens of their work to the Hon. Sec. for approval.

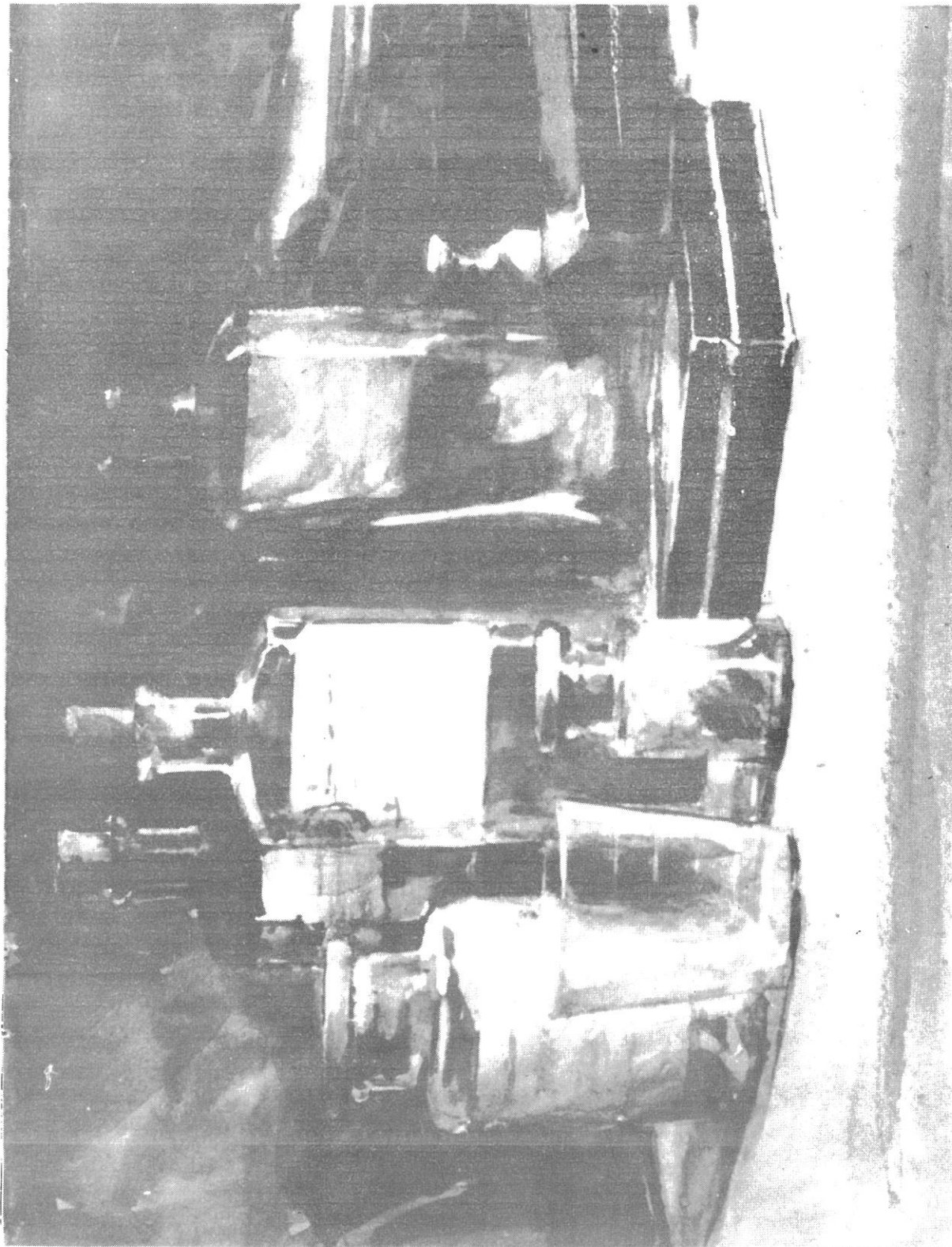
Hon. Sec.

MISS B. E. GUBBINS,

DUNKATHEL,  
GLANMIRE, CO. CORK.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



CAT.NO.9

"IN A LOOKING-GLASS" watercolour on paper 24x34<sup>cm</sup>  
Initialed "B.G." Inscribed on verso "In a Looking-Glass, by Benjamin"



CAT.NO.47  
WOMAN AT CAULDRON WITH MAN SEATED READING  
watercolour on paper 36x25<sup>cm</sup>

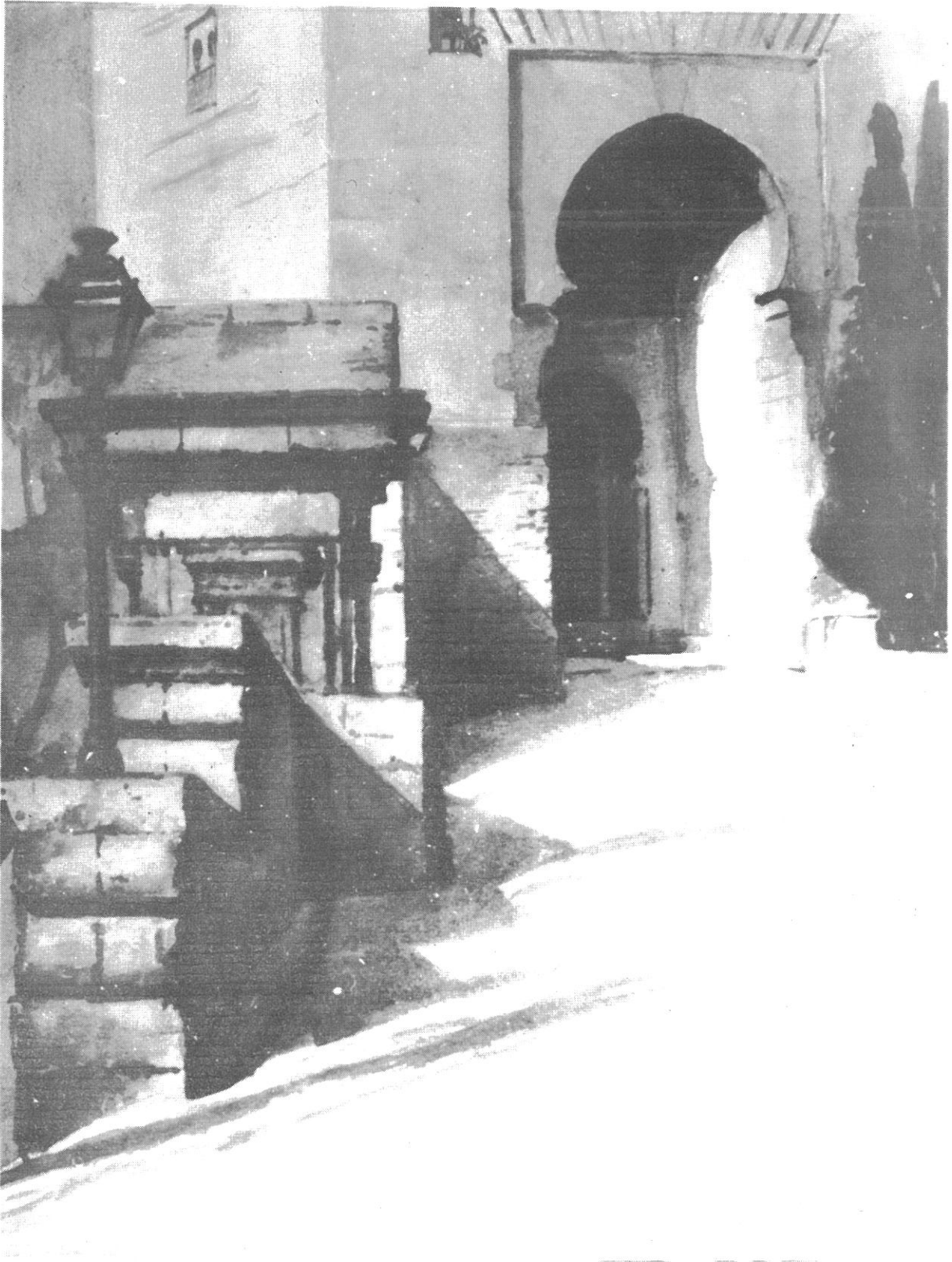


CAT. NO. 32  
QUIET ESTUARY SCENE - WINTER AT DUNKATHEL  
watercolour on paper 18x25<sup>cm</sup>

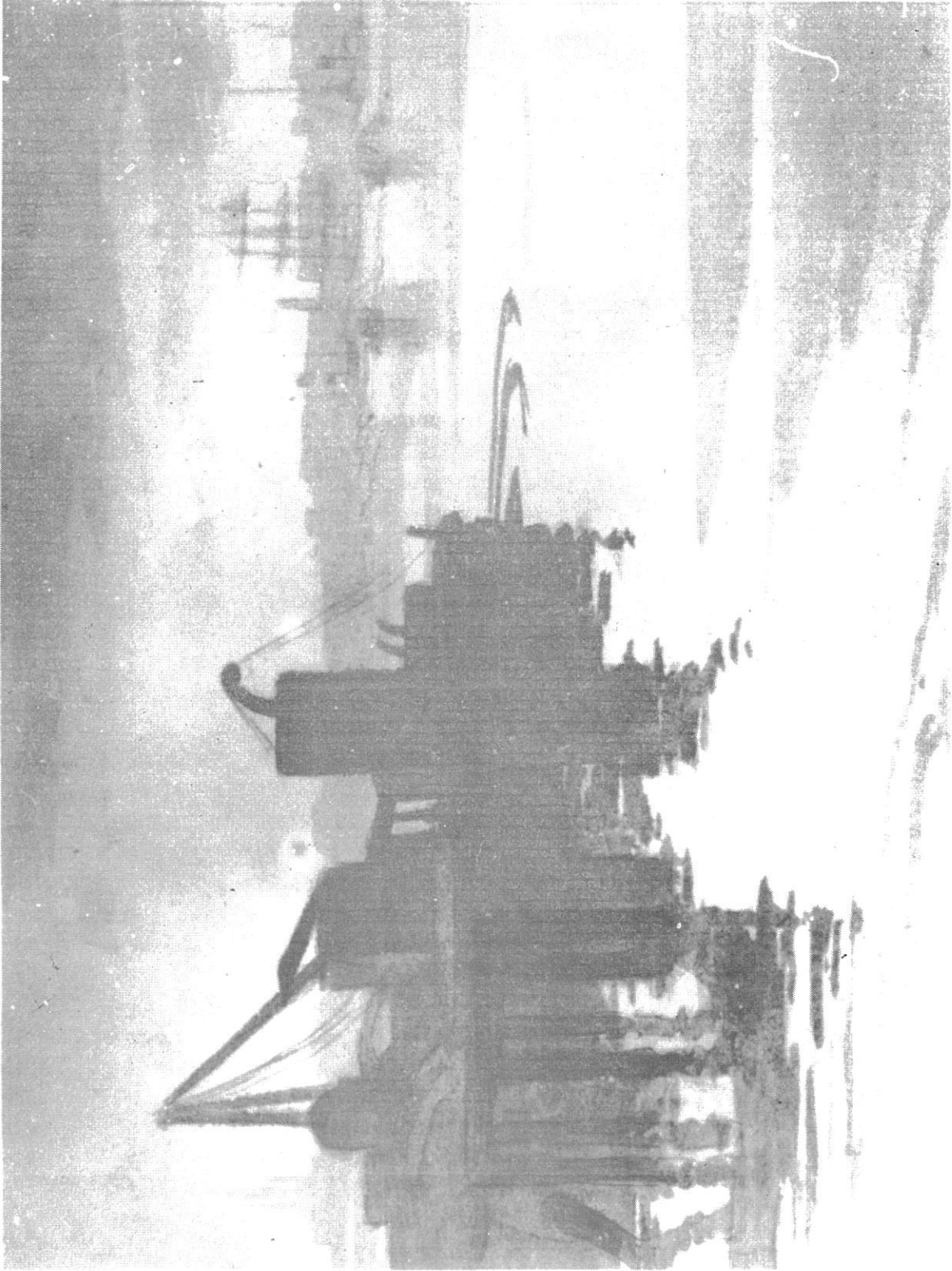


CAT.NO.43  
WOMAN AND CHILD IN COTTAGE INTERIOR  
watercolour on paper 35x25<sup>cm</sup>





CAT.NO.1  
SESTRI LEVANTI 1905 watercolour on paper 36x25.5<sup>cm</sup>



CAT. NO. 40  
RIVERSCAPE - ON THE LEE watercolour on paper 23x34<sup>cm</sup>



CAT. NO. 31  
WINDING ROAD AND COTTAGE watercolour on paper 18x23 cm

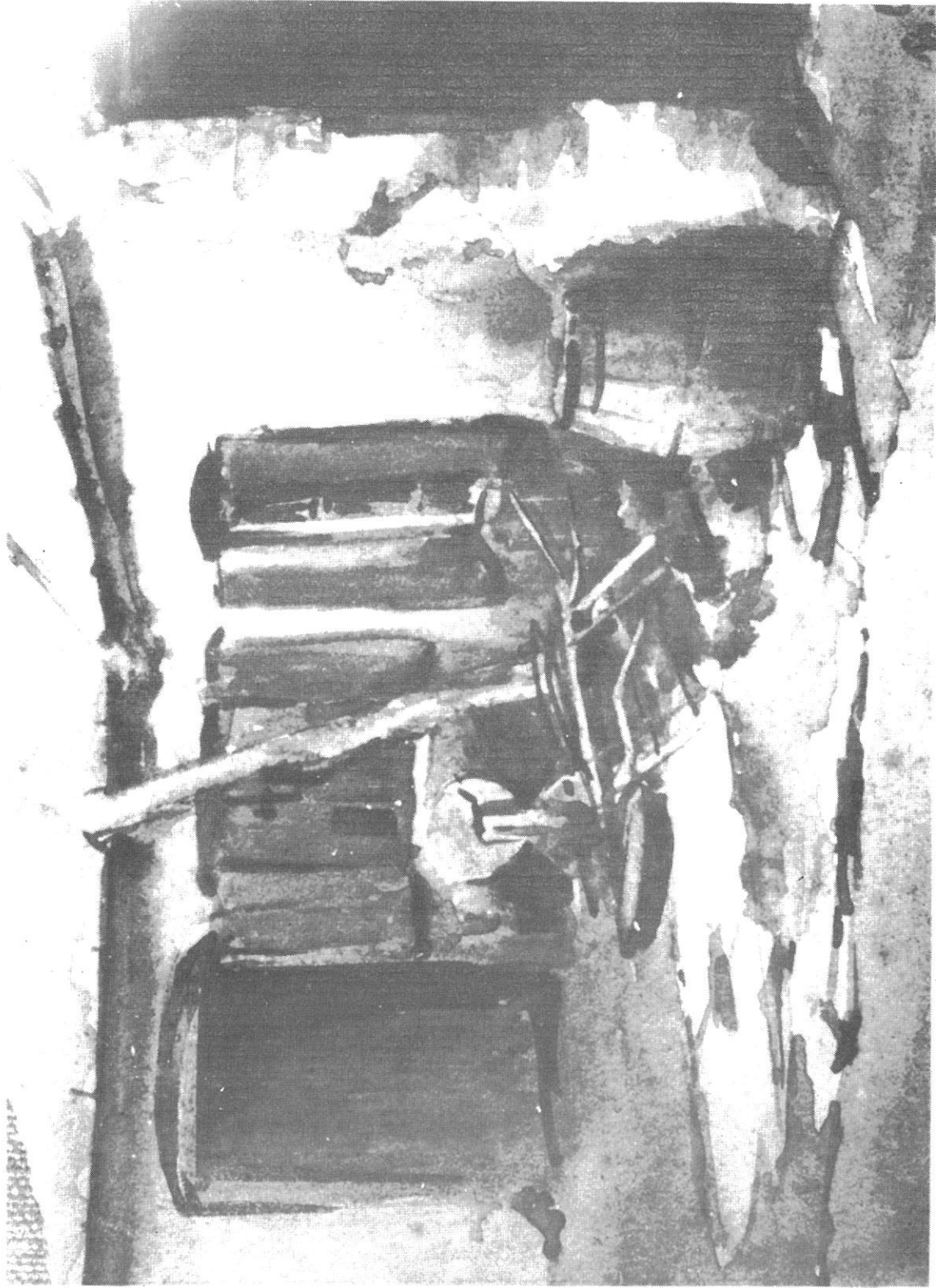


CAT. NO. 29  
THE CORN FIELD  
initialled "B. G."

watercolour on paper 18x25 cm



CAT.NO.8  
FLOWERS IN VASES WITH CHINESE FIGURINE  
watercolour on paper 24x34<sup>cm</sup>



CAT.NO.28  
EXTERIOR OF A COTTAGE WITH A BARREL watercolour on paper 13x18 cm  
Initialed and dated "B.G. 1903"