The Reminiscences of an Irish Land Agent eBook

The Reminiscences of an Irish Land Agent

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ANCESTRY

‘My father and mother were both Kerry men,’ as the saying goes in my native land, and better never stepped.

It was my misfortune, but not my fault, that I was born at Bath and not in Kerry.

However, my earliest recollection is of Dingle, for I was only three months old when I was taken back to Ireland, and up to that time I did not study the English question very deeply, especially as I had an Irish nurse.

There is a lot of Hussey history before I was born, and some is worth preserving here.

It is a thousand pities that so many details of family history have been lost, and to my mind it is incumbent on one member of every reasonably old family in this generation to collect and set down what should be remembered about their ancestors for the unborn to come.

My contribution does not profess to be very exhaustive, but it will serve for want of a better.

When a man claims to be descended from Irish kings, it generally means that his forbears were bigger scoundrels than he is, for they were cattle-lifters and marauders, whilst his depredations are probably disguised under some of the many insidious forms of finance. Just as every Scotsman is not canny and every American is not cute, so every Irishman is not what the Saxon believes him to be. But there can be little doubt what type of men these ancient Irish sovereigns were, and I regretfully confess I cannot trace my descent from them.

The family of Hussey was of English extraction, according to that rather valuable book *The Antient and Present State of the County of Kerry*, by Charles Smith, 1756—the companion volumes dealing with Cork and Waterford are much less precious. Personally I always understood that the Husseys hailed from Normandy, as will be seen a few pages on, but tradition on such a point is not of much value.

Anyway the family of Hussey settled in very early times at Dingle, and also had several lands and castles in the barony of Corkaquiny.

Dingle was the only town in this barony, and it was incorporated by Queen Elizabeth in 1585, when she granted it the same privileges which were enjoyed by Drogheda, with a superiority over the harbours of Ventry and Smerwick. The Virgin Sovereign also presented the town with L300 for the purpose of making a wall round it.

The Irish formerly called Dingle Daingean in Cushy, or the fastness of the Husseys. One of the FitzGeralds, Earl of Desmond, had granted to an ancestor of my own a considerable tract of land in these parts, namely, from Castle-Drum to Dingle, or as others say, he gave him as much as he could walk over in his jackboots in one day. That Hussey built a castle, said to be the first erected at Dingle, the vaults of which were afterwards used as the county gaol.

There is mention of this in the grant of a charter to Dingle by King James I. in the fourth year of his reign: 'The house of John Hussey granted for a gaol and common hall to the corporation.'

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A grim interest lurks in the fact that the dedication of Smith's *History* to Lord Newport, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, recites that 'this Kingdom, my lord, is a kind of Terra Incognita to the greater part of Europe.'

Is it not so to this day?

Do I not meet scores of people who tell me they would love to go to Kerry, but they have never been nearer than Killarney.

That is the sort of speech which makes me wonder how geography is taught.

It is on a par with the remark of a prominent Arctic explorer, that he had never been to Killarney because it was so far off.

People, however, who go there apparently like it.

The chief Elizabethan settlers in Kerry were William and Charles Herbert, Valentine Brown, ancestor of the Kenmares, Edmund Denny, and Captain Conway, whose daughter Avis married Robert Blennerhasset, while a little later, in 1600, John Crosbie was made Bishop of Ardfert and Aghadoe.

To-day the descendants of those settlers are still among the principal folk in Kerry, though that is more due to their own selves than to the support they had from any British Government.

This Valentine Brown, who was a worshipful and valiant knight, wrote a discourse for settling Munster in 1584. His plan was to exterminate the FitzGeralds and to protestantise Ireland; but by the irony of fate his own son married a daughter of the Earl of Desmond and became a Roman Catholic.

In the Carew Manuscript it is recorded that he estimated that one constable and six men would suffice for Cork, but for Ventry, 'a large harbour near Dingle,' one constable and fifty men were necessary; so he evidently had a clear apprehension of the villainous capabilities of the men of Kerry.

It is also recorded that in the parish of Killiney is a stronghold called Castle Gregory, which before the wars of 1641 was possessed by Walter Hussey, who was proprietor of the Magheries and Ballybeggan. Having a considerable party under his command, he made a garrison of his castle, whence having been long pressed by Cromwell's forces, he escaped in the night with all his men, and got into Minard Castle, in which he was closely beset by Colonels Lehunt and Sadler. After some time had been spent, the English observing that the besieged were making use of pewter bullets, powder was laid under the vaults of the castle, and both Walter Hussey and his men were blown up.

Prior to this, ’on January 31, 1641, Walter Hussey, with Florence MacCarthy and others, attacked Ballybeggan Castle, plundered and burnt the house of Mr. Henry Huddleston, and did the same to the house and haggards of Mr. Hore, where they built an engine called a saw, having its three sides made musket-proof with boards. It was drawn on four wheels, each a foot high, with folding doors to open inwards and several loopholes to shoot through, without a floor, so that ten or twelve men who went therein might drive it forwards. These machines were set against castle walls whilst the men within them attempted to make a breach with crows and pickaxes.’

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Infernal machines are, after all, not confined to our own times, and this same rascally ancestor of my own appears to have had predatory habits more likely to be appreciated by his followers than by his foes.

Dingle is now a somewhat dilapidated town, but that was not always the case, for it is mentioned in my dear old friend Froude's *History of England* that the then Earl of Desmond called on the ambassador of Charles V. at his lodgings in Dingle. The old records of the place would be worth diligent antiquarian research, a matter even more difficult in Ireland than elsewhere. Should all be brought to light, I fancy the part played by my family would not grow smaller.

The Husseys spread away over the county, after having their lands forfeited under both Elizabeth and Cromwell, which was the most respectable thing to suffer in those times. In the reign of Queen Anne, Colonel Maurice Hussey sold Cahirnane to the Herberts, and there is a garden still called Hussey's Garden in the property. He built a mortuary chapel for himself on the top of a small hill just outside the gates of Muckross, where his own grave near that beautiful abbey can be seen to this day.

This Colonel Maurice Hussey resided for some time in England, and appears to have married an English lady; and it is odd that though a Roman Catholic he was trusted by the Governments of both William and Anne. There seems to have been something versatile about his rather mysterious career, the key to which may be found in the surmise that until the accession of King George he was a Jacobite at heart; which throws some doubt on his assertion in a letter that there are very few Tories—or outlaws—in Kerry, where the Whig rule was never enforced with great severity. He was, however, committed to 'Trally jail' (*i.e.* Tralee) on the fear of a landing by the Pretender, whence he wrote pleading letters, in one of which he mentions that his son-in-law, MacCartie, has taken the oaths of abjuration; and later, when released, he seems to have been disturbed at the large number of German Protestants, driven out of the Palatinate by Louis the Fourteenth, who settled at Bally M'Elligott.

Any one who rambles about Dingle and investigates the older buildings, so carefully examined by Mr. Hitchcock, will notice how frequent is the emblem of a tree; and that is a conspicuous feature of the Hussey armorial bearings.

With reference to the allusions made in Smith's book to my ancestors, it may be pointed out that he repeated the popular tradition at the very time when the Husseys, like the rest of their fellow Catholics all over the country, were disinherited and depressed, and when he could gain nothing by doing them honour.

As for my name, it seems to have really been Norman, and to have been De La Huse, De La Hoese, and later Husee, Huse, and, finally, Hussey.

Burke in his extinct *Peerage* states that Sir Hugh Husse came to Ireland, 17 Hen. II., and married the sister of Theobald FitzWalter, first Butler of Ireland, and that he died seized of large possessions in Meath. His son married the daughter of Hugh de Lacy, senior Earl of Ulster, and their great-grandson, Sir John Hussey, Knight, first Earl of Galtrim, was summoned to Parliament in 1374.

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Moreover, the State Papers in the Public Record Office, quoted in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Irish Antiquaries* for September 1893, p. 266, prove beyond question that Nicholas de Huse or Hussy and his father, Herbert de Huse, were land-owners of some importance in Kerry in 1307. Stirring times they must have been, of which we have no fiction under the guise of history, though then men had to fight hard to preserve their lives and maintain their dignity. We can imagine the tussle, even in these degenerate days when no challenge follows the exchange of insults, even in the House of Commons, and when the perpetration of the most cowardly outrage in Ireland has to be induced by preliminary potations of whisky. Of course, those old times were bad times, but the badness was at least above board and the warfare pretty stoutly waged. There is some sense in fighting your foe hand to hand, but to-day when a battle is contested by armies which never see one another, and are decimated by silent bullets, the courage needed is of a different character, and the wicked murder of such combats is obvious.

But let us quit war and confiscation for the equally stormy region known as politics, wherein it may be noted that in 1613 Michael Hussey was Member of Parliament for Dingle.

Now for a coincidence in Christian names.

Only two Husseys forfeited in the Desmond Rebellion, and they were John and Maurice.

In the Irish Parliament of James II., when Kerry returned eight members, two of them were Husseys, and their names were John and Maurice.

My grandfather's name was John, and his father before him was Maurice, and I christened my two surviving sons John and Maurice.

We do not go in for much variety of nomenclature in our family.

My grandfather, John Hussey, lived at Dingle, his mother being a member of the well-known Galway family of Bodkin. He was an offshoot of the Walter Hussey who had been converted into an animated projectile by the underground machinations of Cromwell's colonels. He was a very little man, who had a landed property at Dingle, did nothing in particular, and received the usual pompous eulogy on his tombstone. I never heard that he left any papers or diaries, and I do not think that he ever went out of Kerry —he had too much sense.

A rather diverting story in which his sister was the heroine may be worth telling, if only because it was so characteristic of the period.

In those days, as now, Husseys and Dennys were closely associated, and both my great-aunt and Miss Denny, known locally as the 'Princess Royal,' were going to a ball.

At that time it was the fashion for the girls of the period to wear muslin skirts edged with black velvet. The muslin was easily procured; not so the velvet, which was eventually obtained by sacrificing an ancient pair of nether garments belonging to my great-grandfather.

After the early dinner then fashionable, each of the damsels was departing for the Castle, with a swain at the door of her sedan-chair, when our kinswoman, Lady Donoughmore, who was on the door-step watching them off, enthusiastically shouted: —

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‘Success to the breeches! Success to the breeches!’

Imagine the horrified confusion of the poor ‘Princess Royal,’ not then eighteen.

This episode reminds me of the modern Scottish story of a tiresome small boy who wanted more cake at a tea-party, and threatened his parents with dire revelations if they did not comply with his demands. As they showed no signs of intimidation, he banged on the table to obtain attention, and then announced:—

‘Ma new breeks are made out of the winter curtains.’

An incident connected with one of the earliest private carriages in Kerry is worth telling. The vehicle in question had just been purchased by a certain Miss Mullins, daughter of a former Lord Ventry, who regarded it on its arrival with almost sacred awe. A dance in the neighbourhood seemed an appropriate opportunity for impressing the county with her newly acquired grandeur, but the night proving wet, she insisted on reverting to a former mode of progression, and rode pillion behind her coachman.

The result was that she caught a violent chill, which turned to pneumonia, and as her relatives were assembled round her deathbed, the old lady exclaimed, between her last gasps for breath:—

‘Thank God I never took out the carriage that wet night.’

CHAPTER II

PARENTAGE AND EARLY YEARS

My father, Peter Bodkin Hussey, was for a long time a barrister at the Irish Bar, practising in the Four Courts, where more untruths are spoken than anywhere else in the three kingdoms, except in the House of Commons during an Irish debate. All law in Ireland is a grave temptation to lying, and the greatest number of Courts produced a stupendous amount of mendacity—or it was so in earlier times, at all events.

Did you ever hear the tale of the old woman who came to Daniel O’Connell, outside the Four Courts, as he was walking down the steps, and said to him:—

’Would your honour be so kind as to tell me the name of an honest attorney?’

The Liberator stopped, scratched his head in a perplexed way, and replied:—

‘Well now, ma’am, you bate me intoirely.’

My father had red hair, and was very impetuous. Therefore he was christened ‘Red Precipitate’ by Jerry Kellegher.

This legal luminary was a noted wit even at the Irish Bar of that time, a confraternity where humour was almost as rampant as creditors—irresponsible fun, and a light purse are generally allied; your wealthy fellow has too much care for his gold to have spirits to be mirthful.

The tales about him are endless. Here are just a few I have heard from my father’s lips.

Jerry had a cousin, a wine merchant, who supplied the Bar mess, and a complaint was lodged that the bottles were very small.

To which Jerry retorted:—

‘You idiot, don’t you know they shrink in the washing,’ which satisfied the grumbler. And that always seemed to me the strangest part of the story.

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In those days religious feeling ran pretty high—I will not go so far as to say it has entirely died down to-day—and the usual Protestant toast was:—

‘The Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender.’

Now, Jerry was a Roman Catholic, none the less earnest because he had a merry way with him. On a certain Friday he was seen to be fasting by a very foppish barrister, who thought a great deal of himself.

He remarked to Jerry, with unnecessary impertinence:—

‘Sir, it appears you have some of the Pope in your stomach.’

To which Jerry, quick as a pistol-shot, retorted:—

‘And you have the whole of the Pretender in your head,’ after which there was the devil to pay.

There was a certain Chancellor in Ireland who was born a few years after his father and mother had separated. As he did not like Jerry, he used to make a great fuss about how he should pronounce his name. At last in Court one day he burst out:—

’Pray tell me what you wish me to call you—Mr. Kellegher, or Mr. Kellaire?’

’Call me anything you like, my lud, so long as you call me born in wedlock.’

The Chancellor did not score that time.

At one time there were grave complaints made about the light-hearted way in which Jerry handled his cases, and his practice fell off. He was conversing with a very stupid judge, lately elevated to the Bench, and observed:—

’It’s a very extraordinary world: you have risen by your gravity, and I have fallen by my levity.’

He had a son who, in my time, had a large practice at the Bar, but I never came across him, nor did I ever hear that there was anything remarkable about him, except that he was not so witty as his father, which was not wonderful.

After all, as Jerry was before my own experience, I must not delay over him, so I will only give one more tale about him, and pass on.

When Lord Avonmore got his peerage for voting for the Union, he had his patent of nobility read out at a dinner-party, and it commenced, ‘George, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.’

‘Stop,’ cried Jerry, ’I object to that. The consideration is set out too early in the deed.’

This long digression over, I revert to my father about whose respectable practice at the Four Courts I know nothing except that he allowed others to become judges, and did not find solicitors putting his services up to auction.

By the death of his elder brother, he succeeded to a property, near Dingle, on which he went to live and then got married, which was the wisest thing that he could do.

My mother was Mary Hickson, and her descent was this wise.

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The Murrays were said to have come to Scotland from Moravia in the first century; and a pretty bulky history of the clan reveals as much truth about them as the author cared to put in when tired of inventing less probable facts. Sir Walter Murray, Lord of Drumshegrat, came to Ireland with Edward de Bruce and was killed in battle, leaving three sons, one of whom, christened Andrew, settled in County Down. Some of his descendants migrated to Bantry, where, in 1670, William Murray married Ann Hornswell, and was succeeded by his third son George, who was in turn succeeded by his eldest son William, who married Anne Grainger. Of the marriage, there was only one daughter Judith, who married Robert Hickson, heir to the property.

They had five sons and two daughters, the younger of whom married Sir William Cox, and the elder my father.

The superior of my dear mother never drew the breath of life. She lived until I was twenty-five, and I never met any man who could say more than I could for my mother, though equalled by what my own sons could say of theirs, and she too came of the same stock, for I married my first cousin, Julia Agnes Hickson. It is said no man is thoroughly happy until he is suitably married, an opinion I absolutely endorse; but happiness so great as my married life is not of public interest, and if it were, I should not wear my heart on my sleeve for general inspection. Any tribute from me to my dear wife would be superfluous; the devoted love of our children has been the endorsement by the next generation of the feelings which I have always felt towards her.

She was the daughter of my mother's eldest brother, John Hickson, called the Sovereign of Dingle. He had powers to collect customs, to hold a court, and to try cases in much the same way that a lord provost had.

On one occasion when a case was to be tried, two attorneys appeared from the town of Tralee, about thirty miles off. Now John Hickson had his own ideas about the attorneys of those days—ideas such as all honest men had, but dared not express. So he sent a crier through the town to say that the court was adjourned for a fortnight. When the appointed day arrived, the attorneys arrived also, so again the melodious tones of the crier proclaimed through the town that the court was adjourned for yet another fortnight, Captain Hickson remarking to his wife that he was not going to be helped to administer justice by those who earned their living on injustice. The attorneys gave it up in despair, leaving Captain Hickson to lay down the law as he liked, and to do him justice, his ideas were more conducive to peace and order than the arguments of Irish attorneys generally are.

He was loved and revered by the people, so that when the cholera raged in 1833 and 1834, and the constabulary were ordered to go into the houses to remove the corpses (this to prevent the people 'waking' the dead, and so spreading the contagion), they dared not enter the cabins unless Captain Hickson went with them, as the people were so enraged at their dead being molested that they would have killed the police.

Fortunately Captain Hickson had enough moral influence to make the people obey the law.

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In the eighties he would have been shot in the back by some scoundrel who had primed himself with Dutch courage from adulterated whisky.

He raised a Yeomanry Corps at the time of the Whiteboys to guard the country against these lawless bands, and against the dreaded French invasion. This regiment was called the Dingle Yeomanry, and the tales about it are many.

On one occasion when Captain Hickson was in London, the general from Dublin inspected the corps. In the absence of the commanding officer, his brother was ordered to parade the battalion, and being a nervous young man, he completely forgot all the words of command, so to the unconcealed amusement of the old martinet from the capital, he shouted:—

‘Boys, do as you always do.’

It says well for the discipline of the regiment that they did not implicitly obey the order.

His mother, this Mrs. Judith Hickson, was the only one of my grand-parents I ever saw, and very little impression she has left on my memory, except a notion that she had less sense of humour than pertains to most Irishwomen by the blessing of God and their own mother wit.

My father was a Roman Catholic, and my mother a Protestant. By the terms of the marriage settlement, we were all brought up in her faith, which occasioned a tremendous row at that time, and nowadays would never be tolerated by the priests.

All the same my father was an obstinate man, not disposed to care much for the whole College of Cardinals, and indifferent if he were cursed with bell and book. Of course he was not a good-tempered man, or he would not have justified his nickname of Red Precipitate, but he spared the rod with me, and failed to keep me in order. I was the youngest of a pretty large family and the pet into the bargain.

My eldest brother, John, was drowned at St. Malo. He was unmarried, and his profession was to do nothing as handsomely as he could.

James was in the 13th Light Dragoons, and subsequently in the 11th. He saw no service, and was an excellent soldier at mess and off duty. I am not qualified to speak with authority about his fulfilment of the trumpery trivialities which fill up garrison life, but here is one anecdote about him.

Soon after Lord Cardigan took command of the 13th Light Dragoons, a great many of the officers left the corps, and a man wrote to the papers to say that this was chiefly due to the great expense of the mess.

My brother retorted in print that for his part the reason was due to its being ’incompatible with my feelings as a gentleman to remain in the regiment as it is equally impossible to exchange out of a regiment that has the undeserved misfortune to be commanded by his lordship.’

Edward lived at Dingle, and was much liked by the people there. He was an active magistrate and a conscientious man. He married and left two sons, one in the Horse Artillery and the other a colonel in the Engineers. They have all joined the great majority.

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Robert, who chose to be an army surgeon, died in India, leaving me without a relation in the world of my own name.

It reminds me of the story in *Charles O'Malley* about the old family in which it was hereditary not to have any children. However, I altered that by having eleven of my own, two sons, John and Maurice, and four daughters being alive, at the present time. More power to them say I, in the current phrase of good-will in Kerry.

My sister Mary died at Bath when I was born. It was her health which prevented me from being by birth what I am at heart, a Kerry man.

Ellen was married to Robert, elder brother of the late Knight of Kerry, and her grand-daughter is married to Colonel Thorneycroft of Spion Kop fame.

Ellen's sister, Julia, married Sir Peter FitzGerald, Knight of Kerry. The two therefore married brothers, and if there had been any more they might have done the same.

I suppose I ought to give the date of my birth, but despite all the efforts of those in Ireland, who loved me so much that they became active agents to convey me to heaven, I cannot yet give you the date of my death.

My friend, Mr. Townshend Trench, is, I believe, writing a book to prove the world will come to an end in about thirty years' time, but that will see me out, and those then alive may discover that the Great Landlord has given the tenants an extension of the lease of the earth.

I was born on December 17, 1824, and I have none of those infantile recollections which are such an insult on the general attention when put in print.

Still my earliest memory is so characteristic of much that was to follow that I set it down.

The very first thing I remember is being placed on the seat of a trap beside the local R.M. (Resident Magistrate), and thus going out, escorted by a party of soldiers, to collect tithes.

I clapped my hands with glee, but an old woman by the road-side said that it was a shame to take out that innocent babe on such bloodthirsty work.

I could ride before I could walk, and was always fond of the exercise. What Irishman is not?

My taste for this was fostered by my father, who had broken his leg when young, and not only disliked walking, but had a slight limp, which did not prevent him being in the saddle for many hours each day.

As a child, I led a fresh, natural, out-of-doors, healthy life, exposed to wind and rain, and all the better for both. There are very few trees about Dingle, and I quite agree with the remark of an American that it was the most open country he had ever seen.

I was always bathing, but I never got drowned, not even in liquor, although I have sat with some of the best in that capacity. I have myself been pretty temperate in everything, to which I attribute my longevity. And yet I am not sure that any rule can be laid down in this respect, for I have known men who saturated themselves in alcohol until they ought to have been kept out of sight of all decent people live longer than those that have kept straight in every way.

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In proof of this, let me quote the delightful account of a centagenarian out of Smith's *History of Kerry*, a book already referred to, and which can now be finally put back on its shelf, dry as dust, as Carlyle might say, 'but pregnant with food for thought, ay, and for grim mirth,'—those are not exactly the words of the Sage of Chelsea, but just have the rub of his tongue about them.

'Mr. Daniel MacCarty died in February 1751,' as the account said, 'in the 112th year of his age. He lived during his whole life in the barony of Iveragh, and buried four wives. He married a fifth in the eighty-fourth year of his age, and she but a girl of fourteen, by whom he had several children. He was always a very healthy man, no cold ever affecting him, and he could not bear the warmth of a shirt at night, but put it under his pillow. He drank for many of the last years of his life great quantities of rum and brandy, which he called *the naked truth*; and if, in compliance to other gentlemen, he drank claret or punch, he always took an equal quantity of spirits to qualify those liquors: this he called a wedge. No man ever saw him spit. His custom was to walk eight or ten miles in a winter's morning over mountains with greyhounds and finders, and he seldom failed to bring home a brace of hares. He was an innocent man, and inherited the social virtues of the antient Milesians. He was of a florid complexion, looked amazingly well for a person of his age and manners of life, for his use of spirituous liquors was prodigious, a custom that much prevails in these baronies.'

Indeed, no one who was slightly acquainted with the characteristics of the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Kerry would suggest that total abstinence was even to-day their predominant virtue.

It is the fashion to say that it is a good thing to be one of a large family. From a financial point of view I am quite certain that the reverse is preferable, and as I was the youngest of nine—two others besides those I mentioned, James and Anne, coming to early demises—I received as many kicks and cuffs from my brethren as I did halfpence and affection from my parents. So, like Thackeray, as a child I sympathised with Lord MacTurk who wished to cut off the heads of his brethren. Now I have survived them all, and I fondly regret the sounds of voices that are still.

But as I sit in my arm-chair and ruminate over the past, which every old man must do in the intervals of reading the *Times*, going to the club, or losing his money by careful attention to speculation, I have the consolation of remembering that I did as much mischief as any other child. To be a really good child means that the animal is a prig or unhealthy. To-day I am fond of all my grandchildren, but the one I like best is the one which proves himself or herself the naughtiest for the moment.

This is a hard saying for parents, and not a good precept for the young, but there is solid truth in it and a bit of common-sense too, for it is best to get the original sin out in the years of innocence.

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CHAPTER III

EDUCATION

Perhaps the biggest wrench in life is going to school. It may not seem so very much afterwards—as the boy said of the tooth when he looked at it in the dentist's forceps—-but the wrench is really bad.

I learned my letters from my mother, and picked up a few other smatterings before I had daily lessons from a tutor at Dingle. Strange to say, a very good classical education could have been obtained there in the thirties, better, so far as I can estimate, than could have been expected from a town double the size at the same period in England.

At the age of ten I was sent to Huddard's, then a very sound school in Dublin. I was well enough taught, not caned enough for my deserts, though more than sufficed for my feelings, and sufficiently fed, but at the end of two years I had to leave owing to ill health.

An apothecary, who selfishly recollected that the more medicines I took the better for him if not for me, converted me into a human receptacle for his empirical abominations, but another surgeon, who was rather tardily called in, packed me off to the country.

One of the leading Dublin physicians certified that I had only one lung; but as the other has served me faithfully for sixty-nine years, I am rather sceptical as to the accuracy of his diagnosis.

I remember very little about Huddard's, except that it was in Mountjoy Square, and about a hundred boys were herded there in unsought proximity. We boarders always fought the town boys, but also had to cajole them in humiliating ways to smuggle us in contraband articles of food. The meals at Huddard's were fairly good, no doubt, as school fare goes, but the sugary stick-jaw stuff for which the soul of a boy longs was naturally not part of the official bill of fare. The bullying was of a reasonable nature, or at all events I could hold my own with the best of them, being indifferent to punishment so long as I could hit out effectively from the shoulder. One of the ushers, a dwarf of malignant disposition, was an awful tyrant, and we always had an ardent desire to tar and feather him, only we did not know how to set about the operation even if we had ventured to attempt it.

After a happy interval of convalescence at home, I was sent to a smaller school kept by Mr. Hogg at Limerick. One of the boys there subsequently became that illustrious ornament of the Bench, Lord Justice Barry.

He was a very eloquent man, counted so even at the Irish Bar, where a certain high-flown loquacity is pretty prevalent, and had a great repute. He arrived at Cork once,

and had to fight his way through a dense throng to get into court. On inquiring the reason of the crowd, he was told that everybody wanted to hear the big speech that was expected from Councillor Barry.

’Well, unless you make way for me it’s disappointed every mother’s son of you will be, for I am twin to Councillor Barry, and I never heard tell he had a brother.’

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He carried on the old-fashioned habit of after-dinner conviviality, and used to sit drinking three hours after the wine had been put on the table, which was why I never accepted his hospitality in after years, for, as I said before, I am a man of moderation.

In my young days it was the regular thing to bring in whisky-punch after dinner; and for many years I regularly took one tumbler and never had a second, not once to the best of my recollection.

There is a good deal of change in the habits of life. When I was a boy coffee was unknown for breakfast, cocoa had not become known as a beverage, and tea was regularly drunk. We seldom took lunch, nor did the ladies, and afternoon tea was unheard of. Instead, tea was brought into the drawing-room about eight in the evening, and was always drunk very weak and sweet. In those times it was invariably from China and pretty costly.

We dined at five. Dinners were very solid. Soup was a pretty regular opening, but could be dispensed with without comment, and it was almost always greasy. At Dingle fish was pretty plentiful, but sweets were regarded as a great extravagance.

I remember, when grown up, dining with an elderly man near Cahirciveen, who had a turbot for which he must have paid at least eight shillings, but he apologised for not having a pudding on account of the necessity for economy, though a pudding would not have cost him eightpence.

Made dishes were very few and badly cooked. The food was chiefly joints, and, in nine cases out of ten, roast mutton. Vegetables were not so much eaten as now, always excepting potatoes, which were consumed in large quantities. There was practically no fruit, except a few apples and oranges at Christmas.

Men sat very long over their wine. Sherry used to be served at dinner and often claret afterwards, but the great beverage was port. I am inclined to think that port has sensibly deteriorated since my young days. It was as a rule more fruity then, but we never talked of our livers, as subalterns and undergraduates do nowadays.

Port used to come direct to Dingle. It was an easy harbour ‘to run,’ and there was some smuggling.

On one occasion some soldiers were sent to protect the gauger, who was bent on making an important seizure. A few of the inhabitants of Dingle took the opportunity of entertaining the officer, and whilst he slumbered from the effects of their hospitality, the opportunity for making the seizure was lost.

There is no particular reason why I should tell the following story here, but it is worth recording, and I don't know any other part of my reminiscences where it is more likely to slip in appropriately.

In Kerry in 1815, the farmers had been an extra long time fattening up their pigs. After the Peace, prices all fell, and though the farmers were reluctant, they had to yield to circumstances. One day the dealers were buying at extremely low rates in Tralee market, when the postman brought the news that Napoleon had escaped from Elba.

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Instantly all the farmers broke off their bargains, and proceeded to start homeward with their swine, shouting:—

‘Hurrah for Boney that rose the pigs.’

My mother often told me of this scene, which she herself witnessed.

There was always a distinct sympathy with France, owing to the smuggling from that land, and after the English had prohibited the exportation of wool, it was smuggled into France, whence were brought back silks and brandy.

The geography of Kerry is ideal for landing contraband store, and I should say even more was done in this respect locally than on the coast of Scotland.

There is a certain amount of good-will between people whose mutual interests are similar until they fall out, and the hope of a French landing in Ireland, though never very serious, always fanned the native disaffection to the Government in the West.

The veracity of an Irishman is never considerable, for as a rule he will say what he thinks likely to please you rather than state any unpleasant fact. Of course the gauger —excise officer—was an especially unpopular personage, and I doubt if a tithe of the lies told to him were ever considered worthy of being confessed at all.

O’Connell’s family made much money by smuggling, which was a pursuit that carried not the slightest moral reproach. Indeed ’to go agin the Government’ in any sort of way has always been an act of super-excellence.

The most lucrative side of the commercial enterprises of Morgan O’Connell was his trade in contraband goods. In Derrynane Bay, he and his brother landed cargoes which were sent over the hills on horses’ backs to receivers in Tralee.

Of O’Connell himself most stories have been told, but it is difficult to indicate the enormous influence he had over the lower classes in his own country.

Years before George IV. had aptly expressed the situation amid his maudlin tears over Catholic emancipation.

’Wellington is King of England, O’Connell is King of Ireland, and I suppose I’m only considered Dean of Windsor.’

As an advocate, the Liberator had many of the attributes of Kenealy, and his popularity was so great that he was often briefed in every case at an assize.

There is no doubt that he bullied judges, was allowed enormous laxity in browbeating opposing counsel and witnesses, and, like Father O'Flynn, had a wonderful way with him, so far as the jury was concerned.

When I saw him in Dublin, I at once realised how true must be the bulk of the stories of his great conceit. He has been elevated into a superhuman being by the posthumous praise of hundreds of blatant mob orators.

Dan had two brothers, John and James. The latter was the first baronet, and noted for his witty sayings.

He presided at a dinner given for the purpose of presenting an address to the manager of a bank. On the toast of the Army and Navy being proposed, the only man who could return thanks for the former was a solicitor named Murphy, who said that if he were forced to respond to the toast, it clearly proved what a peaceful community they lived in, adding:—

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’It is such a long time since I laid by the sash and the sword, that I have forgotten my drill.’

‘But you have never forgotten the charge,’ observed the chairman, who had a long bill from Murphy in his pocket at the time.

On another occasion, a lady spoke to James about subscribing to the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Killarney.

‘For my part,’ she observed, ’it’s little I can do in my lifetime, but I have left all my money for the good of my soul.’

‘I believe, ma’am,’ says James, ’you were an original shareholder in the Provincial Bank. The shares are now quoted at eighty and they pay six per cent. That is very much like twenty-one per cent. on the original capital.’

‘I am not a clever man like you at making these calculations,’ replies the lady; ‘I have higher and holier things to think about.’

‘Don’t say that again to me, ma’am,’ says he. ’I put my money into farms, and I get five per cent, from a grumbling and unsatisfactory set of tenants. And what are you getting? Twenty-one per cent. in this world and salvation in the next. It’s the most damnable interest I ever heard tell of, either in this world or any other.’

Yet another tale about him.

He had received an unconscionable bill of costs from an attorney, and happening to meet a Roman Catholic bishop in Cork, he asked him if an attorney could ever be saved.

’Why not? Even an extortioner can be if he make ample restitution in his life-time, and dies fortified with the rites of the Church.’

‘May be so, my lord,’ replied Sir James, ’you know more about these things than I do, but if it is as you say, you are taking a confounded amount of unnecessary trouble about the rest of us.’

The bishop was not a bit disconcerted.

‘I am an honest labourer striving to be worthy of my hire,’ he explained.

And at that Sir James left it, because he said it was not respectful to ask too many invidious questions about a man who had the making of your soul at his own will.

All this is a digression from my education, which was as desultory as these reminiscences.

After a spell at Limerick I was again sent home ill, and for six months I really had to be treated as an invalid. I was always very fond of books, notably history, and I think I have read pretty well every book published upon the history of Ireland. It was at this time I began teaching myself a bit, and that is the teaching which is better than any other, except what one has to learn against one's own will and for one's own advantage in the school of life. Like a good many other people I was led to history not only by a shortage of lighter books at home, but also by curiosity aroused by the novels of Sir Walter Scott. In the way of promoting better reading, I believe Scott has been far more beneficial than any other writer of fiction in English.

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I was for a short time at school in Exeter, and then at a rather rough establishment at Woolwich, where my father wished me to have the tuition in mathematics which could be obtained from the masters in the Academy at irregular times. By all accounts the fagging and bullying in that establishment were appalling. The headmaster of the school I was at was an able fellow, and many of the cadets used to come to have a grind with him. Some of their tales were 'hair-erectors,' as the Americans say.

One new boy had the misfortune to sprain his ankle, and to incur the fury of the head of dormitory on the same evening. The latter tied his game ankle up to his thigh, and fastening him by the wrist to the bottom of the bed, made him stand the better part of the night on his bad ankle.

This reminds me of the story of a certain royal prince going to an educational establishment and being asked who his parents were. On his reply, the senior—or 'John'—gave him a terrific *cuff* on the side of the head saying:—

'That's for your father, the prince.'

And before the half-stunned boy recovered, he received a stinging blow on the other ear with:—

'That's for your mother, the princess, and now black my boots.'

His Highness could say nothing, but in time he grew to be the biggest and the worst bully.

Then the younger brother of his former tormentor came, and the prince sent for him, and telling him what his brother had done some years before, made him bend down and flogged him so unmercifully that he had to go into hospital.

Years after, when in an important position, he met his former victim, now a general, and congratulating him on his career said:—

'Perhaps I made your success by giving you that tanning at Sandhurst.'

I wonder whether there was murder in the heart of the grim old warrior at the recollection. Of course that would not be strange, for many a time officers have been actually shot in action by their own men.

Here is a perfectly true story, only neither the men nor the officer need be specified.

A colonel who had grossly mismanaged the regiment knew his fate was sealed.

So when the men paraded for the engagement, he said:—

’I know you mean to shoot me to-day, but for God’s sake don’t do so until we have won the battle.’

This was greeted with a cheer, and he came back safe to be decorated and to play whist at his club as badly as any member in it.

I am not sure that cards ought not to be considered part of every lad’s training. If a man goes through life without touching a card, he probably loses a good deal of innocent amusement, and debars himself from much pleasant society. If he learns to play when grown up, he may find it a costly and unsatisfactory branch of education. But if he is taught to play reasonably well as a boy, and is shown that excellent games can be had without gambling—I do not consider an infinitesimal stake, in proportion to his means, gambling—he will have an extra amusement made for him and a relaxation after his day’s work.

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A near relative of my own gets his club cronies to play bridge with his son, aged eighteen, and pays his losses, in order that he may be thoroughly grounded in the game. The lad is a capital boy, and all the better for his early association with elder men on their own level.

One of the resources of my old age is three games of picquet every night after dinner with my wife, and very much I enjoy them. There is often the fashionable bridge played in the room by my children and their friends, but I have never taken a hand, though in younger days I derived a fair amount of diversion from whist.

CHAPTER IV

FARMING

My years of schooling having come to an end, I was back in Ireland in full enjoyment of youth, high spirits, and thoughtless carelessness. These holiday times were delightful. I could be in the saddle all day if I liked, was free to shoot or bathe as I pleased, had dogs at my disposal, could pass the time of day with all sorts and conditions of men—a thing which I have relished all my life—and in fact led the gay existence of the younger offshoot of an Irish squire.

In those days things were not so impecunious in Ireland as they subsequently became, but there was always a vivacious Hibernian scorn for false pretension, and a determination to have the best possible time, such as you can read in Lever's novels of old, and the capital tales of those two clever ladies, Miss Martin and Miss Somerville, to-day.

It is perfectly true that there are many Irish landlords in sporting counties who cannot have three hundred a year, and yet all their sons and daughters manage to hunt four days a week.

This would be impossible out of Ireland, and is absolutely incomprehensible even there; but the fact remains that it is done, and all one can remark is to echo the patter of the conjuror:—

'Wonderful, isn't it?'

I, however, was not destined to be left a derelict at home, as falls to the hapless lot of far too many good fellows in Ireland.

There were a good many family counsels, and the authorities could not make up their minds what to do with me. However, I thought farming was the idlest occupation, and suggested it should be my profession—an idea hailed with rapture, principally because it saved everybody the trouble of racking their brains about me.

Personally, I have often regretted that what in modern phrase may be called the 'Stevenson boom' did not coincide with my search for a career. Big posts were in due time going for engineers; and those young men who had the stamp of apprenticeship to, or association with, the great man could get almost anything in the days of the fever for railway construction.

Even later than the period I am now recalling, the journey from Dublin to Dingle would take more than two days, and, so far as I can recollect, it certainly took five from Dingle to London. Those coaching journeys were terrible experiences in wet weather, for you were drenched outside and suffocated inside, whilst you paid more than three times the present railway fare for the miserable privilege of this uncomfortable means of transit.

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The old posting hotels used to be uncommonly good and comfortable, whilst they did a thriving trade. The coach purported to give you ample time to breakfast and dine at certain capital hostels, but by a private arrangement between mine host and the guard and driver, the meals used to be abruptly closured in order to save the landlord's larder.

On the way down from Dublin, a thirty minutes' pause was allowed at Naas for breakfast; but on the occasion of my story, as well as on every other, after a quarter of an hour the waiter announced the coach was just starting.

Everybody ran out to regain their seats, except one commercial traveller, who picked up all the teaspoons and put them in the teapot before calmly resuming his meal.

Back came the waiter with:—

'Not a moment to spare, sir.'

'All right,' said the traveller; 'which of the passengers has taken the teaspoons?'

The waiter gave one glance of horror, and then proceeded to have every one on the coach examined for the missing articles.

By the time that the commercial traveller had calmly finished a hearty meal there was nearly a riot, and then he emerged from the coffee-room, and suggested that the waiter had better look in the teapot.

By the way, I don't fancy that he regularly travelled on that road, for he would have been a marked man at Naas for years to come.

I was seventeen at the time when I had decided, with parental acquiescence, to be a farmer, and I was sent to learn my profession to the south of Scotland, to a farmer named Bogue.

I there acquired, at all events, one curious fact, which has stuck in my head ever since, and it is thus:—

Scotland and Ireland are governed by the same Sovereign, Lords, and Commons. Scotland is the best farmed country in Europe, and Ireland about the worst.

One pair of horses in Scotland were then supposed to cultivate fifty acres of tillage, and in Ireland the average was one horse to five acres. Indeed it is in both cases much the same to-day.

In reality a farm is a workshop from which you turn out as much produce as possible. But on an Irish farm it is the habit to squeeze out the last possible ounce without putting

anything in, for it is not run with an eye on future years, but only in a hand-to-mouth, beggar-the-soil kind of way, without a thought beyond contemporary exigencies.

There were several other pupils with Bogue, but I stuck to the business more than the rest, who were perpetually gallivanting into Kelso, or even going up to Edinburgh, where they learnt nothing which taught them their trade or put money into their pockets. Therefore it happened that I was selected by Bogue to have an excellent practical demonstration of farming, after this wise. He had a pretty sharp illness, and left me for a short time full management of all his six hundred acres, and that bit of responsibility made a man of me once and for all. I stepped out of boyhood instantly, and became an adult in feelings and bearing; but to this day I hope my sense of fun is only keener than it was as a lad.

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I acquired a good deal of common sense in Scotland, and learnt to observe for myself, a thing many men never acquire, and on their deathbeds they will never be able to enumerate the opportunities they have consequently lost.

As I was to be a farmer, I thought it was no use to confine my attention to the one I was on, but contracted the habit, when work was at all slack, of going about to pick up what wrinkles I could from other proprietors, as well as to make observations on my own account.

Subsequently I have made two agricultural tours through Scotland for the same purpose, getting as far north as Sutherland, in order to find out how the Highland farmer dealt with more barren soil under a less propitious climate. I have noted more improvement in farming in Ayrshire in the interval than in any other county. Yet there is a letter in existence by Burns in which he observes that Ayrshire lairds are getting English and East Lothian notions about rents, and raising them so high that it will soon be a wilderness.

The fact is that the Scotsman is a farmer by nature, but the Irishman is a farmer by inclination.

An Irishman tries to exist on land cultivated by the minimum amount of labour, and does not farm a bit better if his land is cheaper.

Every farmer in Scotland and England is laying down his land in grass, and giving up tillage as fast as he can. It is notorious that Ireland is more suitable for pasture than tillage, and yet the Government have constituted a Board to break up the rich grazing lands in Ireland and divide them into small tillage farms, on which the tenants could not get a decent living even if they had it free of rent and taxes.

Old Bogue was a bachelor by profession, and his polygamistic tendencies were duly concealed, though pretty generally known, as most things are in the country. He had as housekeeper a woman so skinny that it made you feel cold to look at her, and her disposition was on a par with her appearance. Of course, it suited the national thrift, particularly congenial to Bogue, to feed us meanly, but we did not relish her parsimonious economies.

There was one thing none of us might shirk, and that was regular attendance at kirk on Sunday. I have been a church-going man all my life—in my late years in London I have especially appreciated the beautiful services at St. Anne's, Soho—but the kirk has always been the breaking of precious ointment over an unworthy head, so far as I am concerned. The improvised prayer, that is always so carefully prepared, and is often one delivered in regular rotation, always seems to me rather humbugging for that reason, and the tremendously long sermons, which have a minimum of three quarters of an hour, no matter what the text or the ability of the preacher, are to me a vexation of

spirit. I have occasionally heard good sermons in kirk, but I think the standard of Scottish preaching has always been overrated.

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Moreover, I agree in the main with the American critic of sermons, who said if a preacher can't strike ile in ten minutes he has got a bad organ, or he is boring in the wrong place. It is always unfair to bore in the pulpit, because the congregation have no means of retaliation except by subsequently staying away, and in the country that is not compatible with the public worship of their Maker.

We have all heard the traditional stories about the divines who, having found the sand of the hour-glass exhausted, calmly reversed it and continued for a second spell, to the complete satisfaction of the congregations. But in my experience only one preacher could have done that without unendurably provoking me, and he was Archbishop Magee, of whom I shall have something to say when I am dealing with County Cork.

For the Scots in character I conceived much respect and little enthusiasm. If there is anything more remarkable than the hard-working powers of the Scottish farmer it is his capacity for hard drinking. But that only makes him offensive in his brief conviviality and morose in the long subsequent sulkiness. Whereas I defy you to be seriously angry with a drunken Irishman, if you have a due sense of humour—and without that you have lost the salt of life. To my mind there is something austere in the better characteristics of the Scot, and also something hypocritical about his morality. You always hear that professed in Scotland, and never in Ireland. But in the latter fewer illegitimate children are born than in any other country in Europe, and in Scotland—notably Glasgow—the high percentage has become sadly proverbial. Yet, despite these adverse points, the Scottish character has a native grandeur which must provoke admiration, though all my warmth of feelings goes to my own oft-erring countrymen.

I returned to Ireland in 1843 with the intention of farming in Kerry on the scientific system I had learned in Berwickshire. However, I found the land so subdivided that it was not only difficult, but impossible, to obtain a farm of sufficient size to return a reasonable percentage on the necessary outlay. The population of Kerry was then 293,880, and the land was divided into 25,848 farms, the holders of which, I may say, entirely depended for existence on 26,030 acres of potatoes. To give an example of the intense love of subdivision, I knew a case where one horse was the property of three 'farmers,' and as they differed as to who was to pay for the fourth shoe, they sold the horse, which was bought by an uncle of mine.

Few farmers ate meat except at Christmas. They wore homespun flannel and frieze, and their only luxury, whisky, was obtainable at a quarter of its present price. A young couple were considered ready to start in married life when they had obtained a 'farm,' consisting of a couple of acres for potatoes and a mud hovel for themselves; and thus a population, dependent on a precarious root, increased very rapidly.

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It was thicker near the sea coast than inland. The rents then were about double what they are now (though half what they had been at the beginning of the nineteenth century), yet, with good potato crops, people seemed content and times were fairly good. I should say there was not such general drunkenness as in later times, and very little porter was consumed in those days—at all events outside Dublin. What schools there were were shockingly bad, and reading, not to say writing, was an exceptional accomplishment, not only among the labouring classes, but among those who held their heads much higher. This of course impressed me coming straight from Scotland, where a really grand education has been the national birthright for generations.

I began to farm about sixty acres near Dingle, and gave my entire time to it, an assiduity I have compared in my mind to that of the Norwegian reclaiming the little arable spots on the mountain. We both worked pretty hard for very scanty results. I did not even live on my tiny property, but with my mother—my father had died after I returned from my English schools and before I went to Kelso.

Still matters were not long satisfactory, owing to the failure of the potato crop in 1845, when the mortality became fearful in consequence.

So at the very end of the year I migrated from Kerry to become an assistant land agent in Cork, and thus really embarked on the profession of my life—one which, on the whole, I have most thoroughly and heartily enjoyed.

I hoped then that I had not done with my beloved Kerry, and my association with that great kingdom has indeed been lifelong. I have always understood the feeling of the Irish emigrants who have had sods of their native earth sent out to them to the New World. *Heimweh* is after all a good thing, and Kerry to me would always seem to be appealing, however far I had roamed.

CHAPTER V

LAND AGENT IN CORK

Had I been able to obtain a reasonably large farm near Dingle, I should never have become a land agent, and I most certainly should never have given evidence before any Commission.

In default of adequate land accommodation, I embarked on my profession by becoming assistant land agent to my brother-in-law, the Knight of Kerry, who was agent to Sir George Colthurst. I lived with the Knight at Inniscarra in County Cork, not far from Blarney.

From that time onward I worked steadily, and as I take my ease at the Carlton to-day, I really feel I have done as much honest labour in my career as has any man.

In proof I may cite a day's record some years later, taken almost at random from my diary.

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I began with an hour in my Cork office, went by train to Killarney, a journey of three and a half hours, where I spent three hours in my office, and then by train on to Tralee, a further one and a quarter hours, where I had an hour and a half in my office in that town, and then drove out to Edenburn, seven miles, to sleep. That done fairly often makes a decided strain on endurance and mental concentration, because the affairs at each place were of course for different landlords and needed the memorising of a fresh section of business all absolutely intrusted to me, whilst the train service in Kerry then and now is not calculated to promote mental tranquillity or facilitate business.

Having alluded to my diary, I had better explain that I kept no journal until 1852, and subsequently to that year it consisted merely of bald memoranda of my movements; therefore it has not been of the least use in preparing these reminiscences.

In 1846 I became a Government Inspector of Land Improvements and Drainage Works, and in that capacity went to Bantry, where I saw the appalling destitution caused by the famine, with which I shall deal in the next chapter.

I had made application for this post before I left Kerry, directly I had found my farm too small for my requirements, and I received the appointment from the Chairman of the Irish Board of Works. Practically speaking the pay was about a pound a day with allowances.

This post in no way interfered with my duties as a land agent then, but I afterwards resigned it owing to the increasing exigencies of my profession.

It may be as well to detail for readers other than Irish what are the avocations of a land agent, especially as the class in Ireland will probably soon be as extinct as the dodo.

The duties of an Irish land agent comprise a great deal of office work, drawing up agreements with tenants, receiving rent, superintending agricultural and all landlords' improvements, sitting as magistrate and representing the landlord when the latter is absent at poor-law meetings, road sessions, and on grand juries.

With very rare exceptions the salary has been five per cent, on the rents received. So the agent has been paid five per cent, on all the money he has put into the landlord's pockets, whilst an architect has always received five per cent. on all he took out of them, an arrangement which in the latter instance has not worked at all well for the landlords.

The tendency has gradually been to consolidate and amalgamate land agencies, for as the difficulty of getting rents increased, more competent men of experience and judgment were needed by the landlords. As a proof of the trust reposed in me, I may mention that at one time I received the rents of one-fifth of the whole county of Kerry—-and that in the worst times.

Such a task is not one to be envied, however joyously a man may take up the burden of his daily toil, and of course the agents as the outward and visible signs of the distant or absentee landlords obtained the greater share of the hatred felt for the latter.

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In the worst period Lord Derby received threats that if he did not reduce his rents, his agent would be murdered.

He coolly replied:—

’If you think you will intimidate me by shooting my agent you are greatly mistaken.’

That is exactly the reply the agents desired the landlords to make, but it did not conduce to making their own existences any the more secure or enviable.

Of course in the due working out of the Wyndham Act, land agents will be utterly ruined.

There are no openings for them because they are too old to commence learning another profession, and they will not get employment under the County Council because they belong to the landlord class and have unflinchingly fought the battles of the landlords.

The agents are a class who have devoted their time and risked their lives in order to get in the rents due to their employers, and there is not the smallest chance—save in a few isolated and exceptional cases—of their being kept on when the landlords will have only their own demesne in their own hands and employ some underling, such as a bailiff in England, to collect the stray rents of the few cottagers who may still chance to be tenants.

Judge Ross stated that there was no more deserving or painstaking class in Ireland than the land agents, and he considered it a great hardship that under the Wyndham Act they obtain no compensation.

By agreement in most cases they receive three per cent. of the purchase money, but that is a very poor sinking fund to provide for a middle-aged gentleman, who has probably a family to support; and absolute bankruptcy must be the result if there is, as on several large properties, an agent with a couple of assistants.

When the Ashbourne Act was passed in 1885, it was never contemplated that the purchases would be on a wholesale scale. As a matter of fact only a few estates were sold, and on the purchase price of one of those for which I was agent I received two per cent. It should be also borne in mind that the profession of a land agent in Ireland is on a far higher social plane than in England. In many cases the younger son or brother of the landlord is the agent for the family property; and in some instances this has worked uncommonly well. In other cases, gentlemen by birth conducted the business, or else the administration of several estates was consolidated and carried on from one office.

In every case the billet was regarded as one for life, only forfeited by gross misconduct, and the relations between landlord and agent have been nearly always of an intimate and cordial character. Each agent began as an assistant, obtaining an independent

post by selection and influence, and few entered the profession unless they had reasonable prospects of a definite post on their own account in due course.

In my time the landlord was the sole judge of the agent's qualifications, but the profession has become a branch of the Engineering Surveyor's Institution.

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As may be imagined, there are now remarkably few candidates for the necessary examinations, because it is virtually annihilated.

Things were very different when I embarked without mistrust on a career which has landed me comfortably into my eighties, although under Government every appointment has to be compulsorily vacated at the age of sixty-five. No one starting now could anticipate any such result in old age, and so without affectation I can say *autres temps autres moeurs*, which may be freely translated as 'present times much the worst.'

More pleasant is it to turn to a few brief memories of Cork. It was a cheerful place at the time I am speaking of, for there was plenty of entertaining and truly genial hospitality. The general depression caused by famine, fever, and Fenians hardly affected the great town, and after those funereal shadows had once passed, Cork was as gay as any one could reasonably desire.

The townsfolk are very witty and clever at giving nicknames, as the following little tales will show.

When a citizen in Cork makes money, he generally builds a house, and the higher up the hill his house is situated, the more is thought of him.

Mr. Doneghan, a highly respectable tallow chandler, built a fine residence early in the nineteenth century, which he called Waterloo.

The populace said it should have been named Talavera (*i.e.* Tallow-vera), and as that it is known to this day.

Mr. Maguire, who was Member for Cork, and Lord Mayor of the City into the bargain, was very influential in the promotion of a gas company. With the money he made out of it, he reared a rather lofty mansion, which was promptly christened the Lighthouse.

All butter in Cork is sold at the wharves, and the casks are branded with the quality of the butter they contain. One man made a fortune out of the first class butter on its merits, and out of the sixth class butter, which he put in the first class casks and sold on the testimony of the brand on the wood. This became in time notorious to most people except the more unsophisticated of his clients, and when he embarked on bricks and mortar his house was generally known as Brandenburg.

One more and I have done with these baptismal sobriquets.

A lady on a Queenstown steamer had put her foot down the bunker's hole, and broke her ankle through the accident. She brought an action against the company, duly proved negligence on the part of the employes, and obtained substantial damages. These considerably assisted her in erecting a rather attractive mansion, which she decidedly resented being called Bunker's Hill.

Some people have their own ideas about the definition of a gentleman, as a certain rather diminutive racing man found to his cost.

It was at a meeting close to Cork, and he was standing next a burly farmer close to the rails when the horses were nearly ready to start.

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Pointing to one disreputable-looking ruffian about to mount, he observed:—

‘That fellow has no pretensions to be a gentleman-rider.’

The farmer caught him by the collar of his coat and the seat of his breeches, and shook him as a mastiff would a rat.

‘Mind yourself, small man,’ said he, ’that’s a recognised gentleman in these parts.’

There was a mighty shindy, and when the farmer was told his victim was a prominent English peer, he retorted:—

‘Well, that won’t make him a judge of an Irish gentleman.’

In the last chapter I mentioned that the preacher I most admired was Archbishop Magee. I had the privilege of frequently hearing him in Cork, where he drew crowded congregations to a temporary church—the cathedral being under repair.

I never heard any one who so magnetised me from the pulpit, and I am by no means prone to admire sermons. There was a sort of mesmerism in the very eloquence of Magee which kept my eyes riveted on his lips—rather big, bulgy lips in an expressive, sensitive face. An hour beneath him sped marvellously fast, and more than once in Cork I have heard him preach for that length. The impression he made on me has never been effaced, and it was with no surprise I learnt in due course that he became Archbishop of York.

The late Lord Derby said that the most eloquent speech he ever heard in or out of the House of Lords was Magee’s speech on the Church Act, the peroration of which—-quoting from memory after many years—ran:—’My Lords, I will not, I cannot, and I dare not vote for that most unhallowed bill which lies on your Lordships’ table.’

Have all Magee stories been told?

I am afraid so. Yet in the hope that a few may be new to some, though old to others—-who are invited to skip them—here are just a small batch.

When he was a dean, he one day attended a debate on tithes in the House of Commons, and was subsequently putting on his overcoat, when a Radical Member courteously assisted him, whereupon he remarked:—

’I am very much obliged to you, sir, for reversing the policy of your friends inside, who are taking the coats off our backs.’

This was equalled by the wife of an Irish landlord who lost her purse in the Ladies’ Gallery of the House of Commons.

Mrs. Gladstone, who had been sitting next her, after kindly assisting in the ineffectual search, observed:—

‘I hope there was not much in it.’

’No, it was a nice little purse I had had for a long time, but thanks to your husband there was nothing in it.’

An Irish story of Magee’s concerns an Orange clergyman in Fermanagh, who asked leave to preach a sermon by Magee. Now, this clergyman, who was an ambitious man, was rather ashamed of his mother, and would not let her live at the parsonage, but had taken lodgings for her in the town. Magee, moreover, always a moderate man, did not like Orange sermons, and most certainly had never composed one. As he good naturedly did not want to offend the other, he said he would give him a capital sermon to deliver if he—Magee—might select the text.

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‘Of course, of course,’ assented the other; ‘what is it?’

‘"From that time His disciple took her to his own house."’

Even this was hardly so cutting as his remark, when a bishop, to a clergyman of whom he did not think highly, but who upbraided him for not giving him a living.

’Sir, if it were raining livings, the utmost I could do would be to lend you an umbrella.’

Mention of Magee suggests an ecclesiastical tale concerning a most convivial attorney—George Faith by name—who had rather a red nose, which he explained was caused by wearing tight boots.

His father in old age got married a second time, and George was asked why his stepmother was like Dr. Newman.

The answer was because she had embraced the ancient Faith.

Among old time Irish members, Joe Ronayne, M.P. for Cork, was among the most diverting.

He was a railway contractor, and much wanted some additional ground at the terminus of the line, which the proprietor, Lord Ventry, would not sell.

The size of the coveted patch was only seven feet long by three broad. Mr. Ronayne grimly retorted:—

’That’s very strange, for it is exactly the amount of ground I’d like to give him,’ *i.e*. for his grave.

Another experience of Ronayne’s was to the following tune.

He had obtained advances from a local bank for his railway contract to the satisfaction of both parties, and when asked by the manager for some wrinkles about the making of a railway, replied:—

‘The best thing is to run it into a soft bank.’

He was a plucky chap as well as a witty one, for owing to some internal malady, from which he died, he had to have his leg amputated, at the same time resigning his seat for Cork.

Addressing the surgeon, he observed:—

’I cannot stand for the borough any longer, but I shall certainly stump the constituency as a county candidate.’

Poor fellow, he was all too soon an accepted candidate for his passage over to the great majority.

A certain attorney named Nagle used to do most of his work.

Speaking of another attorney this Nagle remarked:—

‘He has the heart of a vulture.’

‘I know what’s worse,’ was Ronayne’s comment.

‘Indeed!’

‘Yes; the bill of an aigle’ (which is the broad Cork pronunciation of eagle).

This Nagle was not remarkable for the extent of his ablutions.

At one period, when he was becoming an ardent Radical, an obsequious toady said:—

‘You’ll become a second Marat.’

‘There’s no fear that he will die in the same place,’ promptly came from Ronayne.

On another occasion the two were waiting for the judges outside their lodgings during the Assizes.

Suddenly Ronayne, in the hearing of a number of acquaintances, called out:—

‘You had better come away at once, Nagle.’

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‘Why should I?’ indignantly.

’If you stop five minutes longer there’s a shower of rain coming on and you might get washed.’

On a third occasion, Nagle told Ronayne he was going to invest some money in a mining exploration.

‘Explore your own landed property, my dear fellow,’ was Ronayne’s advice.

‘But you know I have not got any.’

‘Good Heavens, you don’t mean to say you have cleaned your nails?’

Though he was an out-and-out Fenian, Ronayne was as honest a man as I ever met, and he was considered one of the most amusing men in the House of Commons.

The attorneys in Cork at one time formed quite a small coterie, who divided all the business until it grew too much for them, one, Mr. Paul Wallace, being especially harassed with briefs.

At length a barrister named Graves came down from Dublin, and was introduced to Wallace by another attorney with the remark:—

‘Counsel are very necessary.’

‘Yes,’ said Wallace; ’as a matter of fact, we are all being driven to our graves.’

At Kanturk Sessions, Mr. Philip O’Connell was consulted by a client about the recovery of a debt. He at once saw that the defence would be a pleading of the statute of limitations, so he told his client that if he could get a man to swear that the debtor had admitted the debt within the last six years, he would succeed, but not otherwise.

O’Connell went off to take the chair at a Bar dinner to a new County Court judge.

As the dessert was being set on the table, a loud knock came at the door, which was immediately behind the chairman.

‘What is it?’ cried O’Connell.

A head appeared, and the voice from it explained:—

’I’m Tim Flaherty, your honour, as was consulting you outside, and I want you to come this way for a while.’

‘Don’t you see I am engaged and cannot come?’

‘But it’s pressing and important.’

‘I tell you I won’t come.’

Then at the top of his voice Tim yelled:—

‘Will a small woman do as well, your honour?’

The members of the Bar present, quite unaware of the previous conversation, exploded in a shout of laughter, and it was long before O’Connell heard the last of the invidious construction they put on the affair.

One of the interesting people I came across in the vicinity of Cork was Mr. Jeffreys, who up to his death in 1862 was the most enterprising and experimental landed proprietor in the county. He imported Scottish stewards, and people from far and near came to see his farms.

I should say that in the fifties he did more for agriculture than any other one man who could be named in Ireland.

He often said to me:—

’The system of small farms will not last long in Ireland, for the occupiers are sure to strike against rents.’

He did not live to see the fulfilment of his prophecy, but its effects were felt by his grandson, Sir George Colthurst, who inherited his property.

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Most of his stories were very improper, but their wit excused them.

In the Kildare Street Club one day he saw a very pompous individual, and asked who he was.

’That’s So-and-So, and the odd thing is he is the youngest of four brothers, who are all married without having a child between them.’

‘Ah, that accounts for his importance—he is the last of the Barons.’

Finding him very meditative in the County Club at Cork one Friday, I asked him what was the matter.

‘I am making my soul,’ said he. ’I began my dinner with turbot and ended with scollops.’

CHAPTER VI

FAMINE AND FEVER

It is now necessary to revert to that terrible page of Irish history, the famine, which culminated in what is still known as ’the black forty-seven.’

I have often been asked, ’How is it that Ireland could formerly support a population of eight millions as compared with only five now?’

The answer is simple: Eight millions could still exist if the potato crop were a certainty, and if the people were now content to exist as they did then. But to the then existing population—living at best in a light-hearted and hopeful, hand-to-mouth contentment—-there was a terrible awakening.

The mysterious blight, which had affected the potato in America in 1844, had not been felt in Ireland, where the harvest for 1845 promised to be singularly abundant. Suddenly, almost without warning, the later crop shrivelled and wasted.

The poor had a terribly hard winter, and the farmers borrowed heavily to have means to till a larger amount of land in 1846.

Once more the early prospects were admirable, and then in a single night whole districts were blighted.

This is how Mr. Steuart Trench described the catastrophe:—

’On August 1, 1846, I was startled by a sudden and strange rumour that all the potato fields in the district were blighted, and that a stench had arisen emanating from their

decaying stalk. The report was true, the stalks being withered; and a new, strange stench was to be noticed which became a well-known feature in 'the blight' for years after. On being dug up it was found that the potato was rapidly blackening and melting away. The stench generally was the first indication, the withered leaf following in a day or two.'

The terrible sufferings which ensued were complicated by some blunders of British statesmen.

In 1845 Sir Robert Peel was Prime Minister. He imported Indian meal, and established depots in the country, where it was sold to the people at the lowest possible price, thus putting a complete check on private enterprise.

In 1846 Lord John Russell was Premier. He declined to follow the example of Sir Robert Peel, because he considered that it interfered with Free Trade, and, reversing the policy of his predecessor, announced that he left the importation of meal to private enterprise.

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But capitalists having been alarmed, meal was not imported in sufficient quantities, with the result that Indian corn rose to eighteen pounds a ton, when it might have been laid in at the rate of eight pounds a ton.

Had Lord John Russell's policy come first, and that of Sir Robert Peel subsequently, the result would have been very different.

The fight over the Corn Law question in England at the time was decidedly an injury to Ireland, because the Protectionists minimised the danger of famine in the winter of 1845 for fear of the calamity being made a pretext for Free Trade.

Dealing with an unforeseen calamity of such stupendous magnitude at long range from Downing Street entailed delay; and public relief, waiting until official investigation had tardily reported the hardships, suffered in the truly distressful country.

The state of things round Bantry, of which I had accurate knowledge, was appalling. I knew of twenty-three deaths in the poorhouse in twenty-four hours. Again, on a relief road, two hours after I had passed, on my ride home I saw three of the poor fellows stretched corpses on the stones they had been breaking.

The Registrar-General for Ireland, Mr. William Donelly, officially stated that five hundred thousand one-roomed cabins had disappeared between the census before the famine and the one after it.

Whole families used to starve in their cabins without their plight being discovered until the stench of their decaying corpses attracted notice.

Some superstition also prevented even the children from eating the myriads of blackberries which ripened on the bushes.

Directly the calamity was comprehended, the English poured money into the country with unbounded generosity, but the management was bad.

The relief works organised by the Government took the form of draining and road-making. This entailed delay, owing to the preliminary surveying, and when employment could be given, the people were too emaciated and feeble to work. All over Ireland unfinished roads leading half way to places of no consequence are to-day grass-grown memorials of that ghastly effort of State assistance.

Almost the earliest of the private soup-kitchens for the relief of the sufferers was that opened at Dingle under the joint initiative of Lady Ventry, Mrs. Hickson, my future mother-in-law, and Mrs. Hussey, my mother. So as not to pauperise the people, subscriptions of one penny a week were asked from every house in the town. At ten in the morning those who wanted it could get a pint per head of really excellent soup for

themselves and their families. Those who were known to be able to pay had to contribute a penny; the really destitute had gratuitous relief.

So bad was the famine that people coming in from the country fell in the street never to rise again. One woman was found lying on the outskirts of the town almost dead from starvation, her three children having succumbed beside her, and had she not been carried to the soup-kitchen she would not have survived them many hours.

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My wife well remembers another case. One day her mother emerged from a cabin carrying what looked like a big bundle of clothes. It was the form of an emaciated woman, whose four children and husband had all starved. My mother-in-law took her to her own house, fed her at first with spoonsful of soup, and kept her there until she had rebuilt her once vigorous constitution.

My wife subsequently recollects her as a hale, buxom, young widow coming to say good-bye before emigrating to America.

Very soon all the coffins had been exhausted, and in many places the dead were taken to the graves and dropped in through the hinged bottom of a trap-coffin.

After soup had been introduced, Indian meal stirabout proved efficacious, and it was distributed from large iron boilers set up by the roadside to the gaunt, cadaverous wretches who scuffled for the sustenance.

Even more terrible than those privations was the fever which supervened. Apart from the lack of food, a great cause of mortality lay in the change of diet. Potatoes form a bulky article of food, and stirabout, unless very carefully made, used to swell after it was consumed. Many, too, ate raw turnips from sheer destitution, and these also caused swelling of the stomach as well as a dysentery almost always fatal in a few days.

Numbers of starving Catholics had gone to Protestant clergymen and offered to become converts in return for food, and when some of these sickened with the fever, the priests declared it was a judgment on them, and religious hostility became intensified.

At Dingle Lady Ventry and her helpers were denounced from the pulpits as ’benevolent sisters bent on superising the poor’—to superise being the improvised verb for Protestantising, a thing they decidedly did not attempt.

A very early instance of the open-air cure never before recorded took place at Lismore. When every possible place in the hospital had been filled with fever patients, a number had to be lodged in a disused quarry near the Blackwater, and of the latter not a single sufferer died, though the mortality within doors was excessive.

I remember one rather quaint incident.

A large amount of sea biscuit was brought into a house for distribution by a benevolent gentleman. His daughter, aged seven, surreptitiously stole a biscuit for the purpose of eating it. But at the first attempt to bite the tough thing, out came a loose tooth. She howled with fright, thinking it a judgment on her for her misdeed, and went in tears to tell her mother.

I have always hoped the latter had enough sense of humour to laugh at the incident, but my shrewd suspicion is that she improved the occasion—an error for which there is

always temptation, and on which there is often the retribution of the few words having the opposite effect to that intended.

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The conduct of the landlords during the famine and fever has been much discussed and variously represented. But many of the Nationalists themselves have declared that the diatribes of their comrades have been thoroughly undeserved. Absenteeism apart—for which no excuse need be attempted—the Irish landlords did their best, gave of their substance, and imperilled their own lives for the sake of the sufferers. Mr. Richard White of Inchiclogh, near Bantry, fell a victim to the fever. Two other landlords who gave their lives for others were Mr. Richard Martin, M.P., and Mr. Nolan of Ballinderry. The conditions of tenure did not admit of lavish financial generosity, but as one of their sharpest critics in later times admitted, the vast majority 'went down with the ship.'

The survivors of this terrible time numbered heroes drawn from all classes of life; and it would have been well if the lesson of universal charity then practically demonstrated had been allowed to sink into all hearts.

Instead I will quote the following extract from John Mitchel's *History of Ireland*, a thick, paper-bound volume, which, at the price of eighteenpence, has circulated enormously among the Irish, not only at home, but in Glasgow and America.

On page 243:—'That million and a half of men, women, and children were carefully, prudently, and peacefully *slain*' [the italics are those of Mitchel] 'by the English Government. They died of hunger in the midst of abundance which their own hands created; and it is quite immaterial to distinguish those who perished in the agonies of famine itself from those who died by typhus fever, which in Ireland is always caused by famine.

'Further, this was strictly an *artificial* famine—that is to say, it was a famine which desolated a rich and fertile island that produced every year abundance and superabundance to sustain all her people and many more. The English, indeed, call that famine a dispensation of Providence, and ascribe it entirely to the blight of the potatoes. But potatoes failed in like manner all over Europe, yet there was no famine save in Ireland. The British account of the matter, then, is first a fraud; second, a blasphemy. The Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine.'

Such pestilential perversion of truth is freely circulated and firmly believed, for contradiction never penetrates to those gulled by these lies. In America the gutter press section of journalism is esteemed at its true worth, and is as harmless as a few squibs. In Ireland what is seen in bad print is always believed, and is corroborated by the lower class of priest. When I say so much I am simply indicating a national sore, but it needs a wiser physician than myself to apply a successful remedy.

Perhaps with the spread of education may arise the same power to discriminate between the true and false published in the papers that is a characteristic of both the

English and Scottish. As it is, the Irishman believes whatever he reads in print; and in most cases the solitary paper that he reads is one full of treason and untruths.

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When the famine took place, the Irish fled as from a plague to America, and when they landed there both men and women were the prey of every blackguard without a single person to advise or protect them.

Had the Government taken the movement in hand and employed agents at New York to provide for them until they obtained employment, and to direct them where to apply for it, England would to-day probably have had a grateful nation on the other side of the Atlantic. Instead, we have a hostile multitude which neglects no opportunity of voting for any politician hostile to Great Britain; and this disaffection sadly militates against that union of Anglo-Saxon hearts, which is so freely accepted by journalists and politicians as a sort of millennium.

Miss Cobbe related a story about a steady-going girl who had received money from her sister who was doing well in New York to pay her passage money out.

She told Miss Cobbe how she had been to an emigration office and booked her passage.

‘Direct to New York, of course.’

‘Well no, Miss. But to some place close by, New something else.’

‘New something else near New York?’

’Yes; I disremember what it was, but he said it was quite handy for New York.’

‘Not New Orleans, surely?’

‘Yes, Miss, that was it, New Orleans, quite near New York,’ he said.

The scoundrelly agent had taken her passage money and sent her off absolutely friendless to New Orleans, where she died of a fever in less than a year.

Many of the three million emigrants after the famine must have been as easily duped.

A considerable time ago (but if I were in Kerry I could give the date from my diary, because I met the man at a dinner given at the St. James’s Club by Lord Kenmare’s son-in-law, Mr. Douglas) one of the big New World railway companies sent over an emissary to the British Government.

He was charged to offer to take every distressed man in Ireland, with his priest—if he would go—piper, cat, wife, sister, mother, and children, to the land through which the great railway ran. Each man was to be given a log-house with three rooms, one hundred and sixty acres, ten of them under cultivation, and no residence was to be

more than ten miles from a railway station. All that was asked in return was a loan for ten years without interest to cover the expenses of transportation.

I rather think Mr. Chichester Fortescue was the Chief Secretary. Anyhow, whoever occupied that post urged the Cabinet to accept the offer. The conclave wavered, but Mr. Gladstone firmly vetoed the idea. He was afraid the plan would be unpopular with the priests, who would see themselves bereft of the favourite members of their congregations.

Instead of this admirable scheme, we have ever since had the pitiable sight of the parents, the sisters, and the sweetheart crooning over the emigration of the best able-bodied young men from Ireland.

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No one who has heard the keening and wailing, say at Limerick Junction, over Paddy going over the water will forget the appealing sorrow of the scene, the sound of which rings long in one's ears after the train has gone out of sight.

The emigrant has been the theme of song and story. He has also been one of the finest recruits of the United States, whilst he is a stigma on English politics, and a drain on the land which in all Europe can least afford to spare him.

Mr. Wyndham's new Act will not arrest emigration, indeed it will probably increase it.

At present the landlord is often able to put pressure on his tenants to give employment to respectable men. But the small farmer is certain to use as few men as possible. You can see the analogy in contemporary France. Therefore more families will see the pride of their cabins starting for the New World.

Perhaps what I am proudest of, was being called in an address in Kerry 'the poor man's friend,' for it is what I have always striven to be.

But if I were to be a young man to-morrow, instead of a day older than I am to-day, I should be powerless to merit such a title in years to come.

And the reason, as I have just indicated, is the fault of the Government.

I sometimes think the canniest man of whom I ever heard was the old Scottish minister who was accustomed to preface his extempore petition with the words:—

'My britheren, let us noo pray that the High Court of Parliament winna do ony harm.'

CHAPTER VII

FENIANISM

I am quite aware the opinion I am about to deliver will cause great surprise, but I give it after mature consideration, supported by all my knowledge of Ireland.

It is this:—

The old Fenianism was politically of little account, socially of no danger, except to a few individuals who could be easily protected, and has been grossly exaggerated, either wilfully or through ignorance.

Matters were very different after Mr. Gladstone, by successive acts, of what I maintain were criminal legislation, deliberately fostered treason and encouraged outrage in Ireland.

Irish agitation would never have reached genuine importance unless it had been steadily assisted in its noisome growth by the so-called Grand Old Man, at whose grave may be laid every calamity which has affected Ireland since it had the misfortune to arouse his interest, and the ill effects of whose demoralising interference will bear fruit for many years to come.

This is set down in sober earnest and in as unprejudiced a spirit as it is possible for any sincerely patriotic—using the word in its true and not in its debased meaning—Irishman to feel when he is thoroughly acquainted with all the niceties of the national history for the past sixty years.

I am far from saying that subsequent British cabinets have always understood the Irish questions, but they are at least only reaping the whirlwind where Mr. Gladstone sowed the wind.

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I would broadly characterise as Fenian every Irish outbreak or ebullition in the nineteenth century up to the time of the baneful influence of the man who conducted the Midlothian campaign.

Half the tumultuous efforts of the earlier movements would have been rendered ridiculous had it been possible to have them contemporaneously examined by a few special correspondents. I can imagine the representative of the *Daily Mail* finding material for very few sensational headlines in the Whiteboys Insurrection.

As for the tales of single-handed terrorism, these in Ireland did nursery duty to alarm imaginative children, just as the adventures of Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard or the kidnapping of heirs by gipsies serve as stories to thrill English little ones.

Of course in 1789 to have killed three Protestants was counted a passport into heaven in the vicinity of Vinegar Hill. But Father Matthew's temperance crusade was worth more salvation to the nation, and mere threatening letters count for nothing. I have had over one hundred in my time, yet I'll die in my bed for all that.

My father-in-law had a pretty solid contempt for the Whiteboys—not the original breed, but those who assumed the title in Kerry early in the nineteenth century.

He was told that these miscreants had a plan to surround his house that night and to shoot everybody in it, and at that very moment they were confabulating at a certain farmhouse.

Refusing to be escorted or guarded, he made his way to that farm, and walking into the kitchen, rated the lot of them in unmeasured terms.

Cowed and abashed they listened to him as he threatened the law, hell, and the devil alone knows what beside. Finally, pistol in hand, he bade them produce their arms and put them in his dog-cart.

This they actually did—for they had imbibed no liquor to give them false pluck—and, with a final curse, he whipped up his horse and drove away 'with all their teeth' to the barracks, where he left a very useful arsenal, and was never troubled by one of them again.

To thus obtain complete immunity by sheer coolness is as much a matter of personal magnetism as anything else. An instance of this, which impressed me much, occurred in a coiner-ghost story told by Mr. T.P. O'Connor, which I venture to quote.

'The hero was no less a person than Marshal Saxe. One night, on the march, he bivouacked in a haunted castle, and slept the sleep of the brave until midnight, when he was awakened by hideous howls heralding the approach of the spectre. When it appeared, the Marshal first discharged his pistol point-blank at it without effect, and then

struck it with his sabre, which was shivered in his hand. The invulnerable spectre then beckoned the amazed Marshal to follow, and preceded him to a spot where the floor of the gallery suddenly yawned, and they sank together through it to sepulchral depths. Here he was surrounded by a band of desperate coiners who would forthwith have made away with him if the Marshal had not told them who he was, and warned them that if he disappeared his army would dig to the earth's centre to find him, and would infallibly find and finish every one of them.

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'"If I am reconducted to my chamber by this steel-clad spectre and allowed to sleep undisturbed until morning, I promise never to relate this adventure while any harm can happen to you by my telling it."

'To this the coiners after consultation agreed. He was led back to bed, and next morning ridiculed all spectral stories to his officers. It was not until the world of coiners was finally broken up that he related his experiences.'

In that story I wonder who went bail for the Marshal's truth. Veracity and gallantry may not have gone hand in hand, or perhaps they were affianced, and therefore took care not to come near one another.

Another sort of gallantry was noteworthy in what was known as Young Ireland, for in 'the set' were several ladies, Eva, Mary, and Speranza, all prone to write seditious verse. Eva was Miss Mary Kelly, daughter of a Galway gentleman, who promised her lover to wait while he underwent ten years penal servitude, and kept her word, marrying him at Kingstown two days after his release. 'Mary' was Miss Ellen Downing, whose lover was also a fugitive after the outbreak; but he proved unfaithful, and she was one of the last I heard of who died of pining away. It used to be much talked of in my young days. Perhaps now that it is not, it more often occurs. 'Speranza' was Lady Wilde, a fluent poet and essayist, who survived her husband the archaeologist. One of her children inherited much of her talent, but bears a chequered fame. I always thought the wit of Oscar Wilde anything but Irish, and was always glad it possessed no national attributes —unless impudence was one.

At one of his own first nights in London (I think it was on the occasion of the production of *An Ideal Husband* at the Haymarket) he was summoned before the curtain by the customary shouts for 'Author, author.'

He stood there for a moment amid the cheering, and then, in response to cries for a speech, calmly took a cigarette case out of his pocket, selected one of the contents, and, having very deliberately lighted it, said:—

'Ladies and gentlemen, I do not know what you have done, but I have spent a very pleasant evening with my own play. Good night.'

His brother, known as 'Wuffalo Will' among his friends, is the hero of many stories.

Once he went up to a policeman and said:—

'Which is the way to heaven?'

'I don't know, sir; better ask a parson.'

’What do you think I pay taxes for? It’s your business to be able to tell me the way to heaven. As for the bally parsons, they don’t understand.’

A broad smile came over the constable’s face.

’Were you asking where you could get blind drunk comfortably, sir? because if so—’

And out came the hint with a wink.

Wilde was fond of that tale at one time.

The affair of ‘’48’ was a farce. Stimulated by the French Revolution, John Mitchel wrote rabid sedition, but received short shrift at the hands of the Government, who arrested him, sentenced him to fourteen years’ transportation, and almost from the dock he was taken manacled in a police van, escorted by cavalry, and put on board a steamer, which at once put out to sea.

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Smith O'Brien was the leader of this feeble insurrection. He had boasted he would be at the head of fifty thousand Tipperary men. Instead his army consisted of a few hundred half-clad ragamuffins, which attacked a squad of police who took refuge in a farmhouse, and easily routed the rabble.

Smith O'Brien proved himself an arrant coward. He hid in a cabbage garden, and is still believed to have made his temporary escape from the police in the habit of an Anglican sisterhood, of which his sister, Hon. Mrs. Monsell, was Mother Superior.

The bigger outbreak was not a bit more serious. It was all trumped up by the Irish in America, and their reliance upon help from American soldiers was destroyed after the war. This agitation was the one known as the work of the Phoenix Society, and the object was the separation of Ireland from England and the confiscation of Irish property.

The leaders were James Stephens, who had nearly escaped being shot by a policeman in the Smith O'Brien campaign, and that indomitable scoundrel O'Donovan Rossa. It was at this time we began to hear of mysterious strangers. In this case it was Stephens; later Parnell wrapped himself in strange isolation; and subsequently Tynan, who was known as 'Number One.'

Cork and Kerry were the chosen parts of Ireland for the new Fenianism to come to a head, and a certain amount of enrolling and drilling did take place.

I was then residing within two miles of the city of Cork, and one night the Fenians came out and encamped all round my house, without offering the slightest molestation or injury to anybody.

Two Fenians walked into the house of my stableman, about a quarter of a mile from my own, and asked for food, saying they were ready to pay for it.

The woman replied that she had no food in the house, but the breakfast of her brother Charles, which she was about to take to him in the stables.

They wanted to pay her a shilling for it, but she declined, and then they went away quietly.

The principal outbreak was to be in Killarney, and they plotted to attack the police barrack at Cahirciveen, because they had an ally in the son of the head constable.

But a man in the town, to whom he had shown kindness, warned the head constable of the attack, which in the end consisted of a few shots fired by a ragged rabble of about three hundred, half of whom were half-hearted, and the other half half-drunk.

The coastguards manned their boat and rowed off to a gunboat in the harbour to ask for some marines; and the moment this was known to the besiegers they dispersed. Some

of them marched rather downcast towards Killarney, and on the road they met a mounted policeman riding to warn Cahirciveen of the attack which was to be made against the barracks, for every movement of this silly rebellion was known to the Government.

They called on the man to stop and deliver up his despatches. He declined to do so, and so soon as he had ridden on they shot him in the back, wounding him badly.

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He recovered, but was very shabbily treated by the Government, who only awarded him a miserably small pension, a niggardly act which aroused much dissatisfaction.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Killarney, Doctor Moriarty, protested strongly against the cowardice of the Fenians, who were afraid to face one armed man, and waited until his back was turned before they shot him.

However, as I have indicated, the Fenian movement was very insignificant, and was known in all its aspects to the Government, which dealt pretty roughly with it.

It is a singular fact that in the Fenian councils Killarney should have been selected for the outbreak.

This is a town where nearly all the landed proprietors were Roman Catholics, where there was a Catholic Bishop, a monastery and two convents, while one half-ruined Protestant church sufficed to accommodate the few worshippers who sat under a dreary, inoffensive vicar on a very small salary. All reasonable folk, moreover, know that Killarney is the town to which, more than any other in Ireland, it is important to attract British tourists.

It was well known that some of the promoters and instigators of the movement betrayed it before its very inception to the Government; and Bishop Moriarty, from his pulpit, in his sermon alluded in no measured language to those criminals who instigated the innocent peasants to play a part in this mock insurrection, and then betrayed them.

He concluded:—

’It may be a hard saying, but surely hell is not too hot nor eternity too long for the punishment of such villainy.’

Yet the whole of Irish history is disfigured by the poisonous trail of the insidious informer.

I was in Kerry at the time of the Cahirciveen fizzle, in the neighbourhood of Dingle, and it was rumoured that the insurrection was to be general.

That was not my opinion, for I travelled on an open car by myself, with a large quantity of money, and no other weapon than an umbrella.

It was a very different state of affairs in the distress caused by Mr. Gladstone’s legislation, for then I never travelled without a revolver, and occasionally was accompanied by a Winchester rifle. I used to place my revolver as regularly beside my fork on the dinner-table, either in my own or in anybody else’s house, as I spread my napkin on my knees.

And yet it is strangely difficult to see any other cause than Mr. Gladstone's Acts for such ill-feeling.

As my sworn evidence, on which I was cross-examined in the Parnell Commission, showed, I had only ten evictions in six years among two thousand tenants.

I should like to ask, in what class of life is there not more than one in twelve hundred that gets into financial troubles in a year?

In the insurance world such a ratio of claims to premiums would make a perfect fortune to the companies.

The tenants were not associated with the Fenian movement at all, the outbreak being solely confined to the townsfolk, which, in Ireland, helped to make it a feeble affair. I did not know one *bona fide* farmer that was connected with the movement, and though the arms were mainly smuggled in from America, mighty little hard cash came to the pockets of any but the leaders.

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Stephens was the original ‘Number One,’ and he was let out of Kilmainham by the chief warder’s wife. No one knew where he was to be found, but the police, who were well aware that he was devoted to his own wife, kept a strict watch on her, and eventually caught him through his opening communications with her.

When the hue and cry was loudest, it was reported he had come to Cork to foster the Fenian movement, and that he was disguised in feminine garb.

One day my wife found her steps dogged by a man in the most aggravating way, for he followed her into three shops without attempting to speak to her, his only desire being to shadow her, which he was doing in the most clumsy manner.

I was away at Dingle for the day, so my wife went into the establishment of the leading linen-draper, and sending for the head of the firm, asked him to speak to the man, who was then pretending to buy some tape.

It turned out that he was a detective fresh from Dublin, who had taken it into his head that she was Stephens, and was most apologetic, as well as crestfallen, at his error.

Some time after this Fenian fizzle, my coachman saw a number of people being chased by the police for drilling; and about two years later, when I sent him to the Cork barracks on private business, he told me that he there noticed some of the very people who had been routed by the constabulary, but this time they were being drilled by the Government as militia.

I have always had a theory that Ireland was created by Providence for the express purpose of bothering philosophers, and preventing them or politicians from thinking themselves too wise.

At the time when the Fenian scare was damaging Killarney as a tourist resort, Sir Michael Morris—as he then was—was staying at Morley’s Hotel in London, and saw in the American paper lying on the table a vivid account of how the Fenian army had attacked a British garrison, and would have easily captured the stronghold had not an overpowering force of English cavalry and artillery hurried up to deliver the besieged.

Of course, the facts were, that in County Limerick several hundred ‘patriots,’ led by a man in a green calico uniform, attacked a police barrack in which were five constables. Keeping as much out of range of the constabulary fire as possible, they had exchanged a few shots when a District Inspector of Police, who resided some eight miles off, arrived with ten constables on a couple of cars, at the sight of which stupendous relieving force, the whole corps of young Irishmen bolted.

Morris gave the waiter a shilling for the paper—and took it off his tip at leaving, no doubt—and carefully treasured the journal until he went to hold the next assizes at Limerick, when he found the bulk of the attacking army in the dock before him.

When the D.I. was giving evidence, Morris asked him:—

‘Where were the British cavalry?’

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’What cavalry, my lord? Why, there was none.

‘Oh ho,’ says the judge. ‘And where was the artillery?’

’Faith, my lord, there was as much artillery as there was cavalry, and that would not get in the way of a donkey race.’

Then Morris, with appropriate solemnity, proceeded to read out the newspaper account for the benefit of the audience. The whole Court was convulsed with laughter, in which the prisoners in the dock heartily joined.

After the trial was over, a parish priest came to congratulate Morris, and said to him:—

‘My lord, you have laughed Fenianism out of Limerick.’

[Illustration: Mrs. Hussey]

CHAPTER VIII

MYSELF, SOME FACTS, AND MANY STORIES

In 1850 I became agent to the Colthurst property, which consisted of most of the parish of Ballyvourney, one estate alone containing about twenty-three thousand acres. The rental was then over L4600. There were only three slated houses on the property, hardly any out-buildings, only seven miles of road under contract, and about twenty acres planted.

By 1880 the landlord had expended L30,000 on improvements, there were over one hundred slated houses, about sixty miles of roads, and over four hundred acres planted.

Under the Land Act of 1881 the rent was reduced to L3600.

That was the encouragement officially given to the landlord for assisting in the improvement of his property.

From the time of Moses downwards, the policy of all Governments has been to give relief to the debtor. By the Encumbered Estate Act, which was passed just after the famine, special relief was given to the creditor.

What the English view was may be taken from the *Times*—

’In a few years more, a Celtic Irishman will be as rare in Connemara as is the Red Indian on the shores of Manhattan.’

That is to say, English capital was at last to flow into Ireland for the purchase of encumbered estates, but the anticipation of course was erroneous.

English capital was placed for preference in Turkish and in Egyptian bonds, to the great loss of all concerned. As for Ireland, out of the first twenty millions realised by the new Court, over seventeen was Irish money; and at the outset there was an inevitable downward tendency of prices which involved heavy depreciation.

Credit was destroyed in Ireland, and every man who owed a shilling was utterly ruined. Had the Government given loans at a reasonable rate of interest, which would have amply repaid them, all this could have been saved. As it was, properties were sold like chairs and tables at a paltry auction, and in thousands of cases the judge expressed himself satisfied that the rent could have been considerably increased.

I knew one unfortunate shopkeeper who paid L6000 for a property under these circumstances; and in place of an increase of rent, the confiscators—that is to say the commissioners imposed by Mr. Gladstone—took a third of the rental off him.

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Those purchasers who were English conceived when they bought properties that they would get as much from them as the solvent tenants were willing to pay. The legislation of Mr. Gladstone in coalition with the blunderbuss soon put an end to the pleasing delusion. It was one more of the English mistakes about Ireland, where, when the tenant is content to pay, the British Government and the Land League both combine to prevent him from offering a reasonable rent to a landlord.

As a matter of fact, even the most seditionary organs confessed that the tenants gained little and lost much by the change from the old type of landlord to the new, for the latter, being practical men, had no sympathy for the man who was permanently behindhand with his rent. And no one can say that this habitual arrear was a healthy stimulus to the moral wellbeing of the tenant himself, though he felt aggrieved at its being checked.

There is not the least need to sketch how I gradually became one of the largest land agents in Ireland. It has been published in other books, and would only prove wearisome if set out in detail in this volume. So I will merely observe that only two years after the big Fenian rising, as it was called—which I should describe as being composed of a rabble of less importance than the ragamuffins led by Wat Tyler—so little was I impressed by its magnitude that I went to live at Edenburn. There I laid out a lot of money in rebuilding the house, spending over L2000 in additions. This was most idiotic of me, because I had not counted on the infernal devices of Mr. Gladstone to render Ireland uninhabitable for peaceful and law-abiding folk.

When I first settled down there, labourers were working at eightpence or tenpence a day. Now the lowest rate is two shillings. The labourer rectified this rate by emigration, and if the farmers, who could more advantageously have emigrated, had done so, the cry for compulsory reduction would never have arisen.

Thus far I have dealt with facts and myself as concerned in them, but I propose now to relate a few stories, a thing more congenial to my temperament than any other form of conversational exercise. Whether it will equally commend itself to the reader is a matter on which I, as an aged novice in literature, though hopeful, am of course uncertain.

Indeed I am in exactly the predicament of a farmer’s wife who was asked by the Dowager Lady Godfrey, after a month of marriage, how she liked her husband.

‘I had plenty of recommendation with him,’ was the reply, ’but I have not had enough trial of him yet to say for sure.’

There is a story about a honeymoon couple at Killarney which is worth telling.

The bridegroom had a valet, a good, faithful fellow, long in his service, but talkative, a thing his master loathed. He said to him:—

’John, I’ve often told you to hold your tongue about my affairs. This time I emphatically mean it. If you tell the people in the hotel that I am on my honeymoon, I’ll sack you on the spot.’

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So John promised to be as silent as the grave, but on the third afternoon, as the happy pair were ascending the stairs of the Victoria Hotel, they saw by the giggles and smirks of the chambermaids that their secret had been discovered.

The bridegroom rang his bell and went for John in a towering passion, but the fellow held his ground.

’Is it not unfair the way you are taking on? Sure the other servants did ask me if you were on your honeymoon, but I was even with them, for I told them “devil a bit, your honour was not going to marry the lady until next month."’

I do not know how that alliance turned out, but the happy pair left the hotel early next morning.

I can tell rather more about the matrimonial experiences of an Archdeacon at Cork, who married firstly a woman who was very fond of society. She died, and he then married another, who grew very stout. She also died, and the indefatigable cleric married as his third experiment a widow cursed with a very violent temper.

He was one day chaffed on the practical demonstration he had given to the Romish doctrine of the celibacy of the Church, when he said:—

’After all they were a trial, for I married the world, the flesh, and lastly the devil, and now I tremble whenever I think of recognition in eternity.’

This Cork story comes naturally, because at that time I was living near Cork and very happily too.

Now and again we took trips up to Dublin when I had business there.

I am not much of a playgoer, but in Dublin we always went to the theatre on the chance of hearing some of the proverbial wit of its gallery.

On one occasion, a lady in the play, when her lover had had some doubt of her fidelity, exclaimed:—

‘Would there were a mirror in my side that you could see into my heart.’

Whereupon a voice from the gods shouted:—

’Would not a pain [*i.e.* pane] in your stomach do as well. I have one myself.’

Lord Chancellor Brady was of a notoriously convivial temperament, which did not prevent him being an admirable lawyer when he would allow his wits to get their heads above water, so to speak, though it was little enough that he used to dilute his spirits.

When Jenny Lind sang in some Italian opera, he occupied a seat in the vice-regal box, and gazed at her through a portentously enormous *lorgnette*.

This was too much for a wag in the gallery, who yelled:—

‘Brady, me jewel, I’m glad to see you’re fond of a big glass yet.’

At the time of the Crimean War, John Reynolds, a very energetic citizen, was perpetually raising the question about the dangerous practice of driving outside cars from the side instead of the box—in which he was undoubtedly right.

When he went to the theatre, a gallery boy shouted:—

‘Three cheers for Alderman John Reynolds the hero of Kars.’

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The Lord Mayor of the period who sat beside him was a tallow chandler, and the same spokesman shouted out:—

’Three cheers for his grease the Lord Mayor just back from the races at Tallagh.’

That sort of thing seems to be particularly indigenous, the only parallel being when undergraduates or medical students get gathered together.

The eloquence of Irish members in the House of Commons has really nothing to do with my reminiscences, but I remember one occasion when it was uncommonly well excelled by a stolid Englishman.

Fergus O’Connor—an Irishman, as his name betrays—was an ardent Chartist, and before the Reform Bill was introduced he said in the House that he had been accused of being a personal enemy of King William’s. This was quite untrue, for if there were only good laws he did not care if the devil were King of England.

Sir Robert Peel replied:—

’When the honourable member is gratified by seeing the sovereign of his choice on the throne of these realms, I hope he will enjoy, and I am sure he will deserve, the confidence of the Crown.’

Whilst I am anecdotal, perhaps I had better say something about books into which my stories have been pressed. I was always given to telling tales, but of course my great time was when Lord Morris and I would sit trying to cap one another. If he were ever too idle to remember an anecdote of his own, he would reel off one of mine: as for his own fund of stories and humour ever approaching exhaustion, that was not to be thought of. He was far and away the wittiest man I ever met, and if I do not quote one of his tales on this page it is because no single sample can show the superb richness of his vintage, and more than one of his brand will be found scattered in the present volume.

I gave a good many anecdotes to my dear old friend Mr. W.R. Le Fanu—cheeriest of fishermen, kindest of jolly good fellows—for his garrulous book. He observes in his preface that he makes his first attempt at writing in his eight-and-seventieth year. I am nearly twenty-four months his senior when thus far on the road of these reminiscences. I also echo another phrase of his:—

’I trust I have said nothing to hurt the feelings of any of my fellow-countrymen.’

Just one quotation—and only a little one—which is not mine, but the warning which Sheridan Le Fanu, author of that capital novel *Uncle Silas*, gave in the *Dublin University Magazine* against matrimony:—

’Marriage is like the smallpox. A man may have it mildly, but he generally carries the marks of it with him to his grave.’

And very true too in his division of an Irishman’s life into three parts:—

‘The first is that in which he is plannin’ and conthrivin’ all sorts of villainy and rascality; that is the period of youth and innocence. The second is that in which he is puttin’ into practice the villainy and rascality he contrived before; that is the prime of life or the flower of manhood. The third and last period is that in which he is makin’ his soul and preparin’ for another world; that is the period of dotage.’

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Shakespeare's seven ages of man may have been more poetical, but it does not betray a closer grip of the Irish temperament.

My other appearance as a literary ghost or rather as an anonymous contributor was when I supplied Mrs. O'Connell with stories for *The Last Count of the Irish Brigade*. That was about twenty years ago, and therefore long after the death of the hero who was uncle to the Liberator.

The writer was a daughter of Charles Bianconi, the originator of all the mail-cars in Ireland, who owned at one time sixteen hundred horses, and always laughed at the idea of any violence on the part of the peasantry, pointing out that though his cars daily covered four thousand miles in twenty-two counties, no injury was ever done to any of his property.

Mrs. O'Connell was married to a nephew of the great Dan, and he represented Kerry in Parliament for nearly thirty years. He was an intimate friend of Thackeray's, and gave him all the idioms of his delightful Irish ballads. This O'Connell was a clever, amusing fellow, and precious idle into the bargain.

I remember one story he told me.

Mrs. MacCarthy, near Millstreet, had a son, a small proprietor, and he got married. The mother-in-law lived with the daughter-in-law, who had rather grand ideas, and set up as parlour-maid in the house a raw lass just taken from the dairy.

One afternoon old Mrs. MacCarthy saw the parish priest coming to call, and told the girl if he asked for Mrs. MacCarthy to say she was not in but the dowager was.

Now the maid had never heard the word dowager in her life, but thought she would make a shot for it, so when his reverence asked if Mrs. MacCarthy was at home, she blurted out:—

'No, sir, but the badger is.'

And to her dying day the relic of deceased MacCarthy went by the name of 'the badger.'

Now it is really time I related how my own beauty was spoilt, by breaking my nose in 1858.

I was racing the present Knight of Kerry and a young gunner named Hickson—no relation—on the Strand, when the horse of the latter collided with my own, and they both fell at the same time. He was a loose rider, and being shot off some distance from his animal picked himself up unhurt. I had always a tight grip, so I got entangled in the saddle which twisted round, and my mare almost literally tore off my face with her hind hoof.

I walked back a quarter of a mile, trying to hold my face on to my head with my hand; and in a month's time I was able to get about again, which the doctor said was one of the quickest cases of healing he had ever known.

But I was absolutely unrecognised by my acquaintances when I reappeared, and Mr. Dillon the R.M. actually took me for a walk in Tralee to see the town, thinking I was a stranger, a situation the fun of which I heartily appreciated.

Before that infernal gallop I had a hooked nose like the Duke of Wellington; and it's lucky I got married when I did, for no one would have had me afterwards, though my own wife always says 'for shame' if I make the remark in her presence, God bless her.

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When I went to the Abbey of St. Denis, near Paris, I told the verger I was very anxious to see the likeness of the saint who had walked for six miles with his head in his hand, because I was the nearest living counterpart, having walked a quarter of a mile with my face in mine.

Hickson was universally congratulated on his lucky escape. He went out to India and was dead in eighteen months, and here am I at eighty with half my face and some of my health still in spite of the attentive care of my family and the doctor.

My present doctor is a capital fellow, and when he comes to see me he laughs so much at my stories that I always think he ought to take me half price. Instead of that he regards me as an animated laboratory for his interesting chemical experiments; but I had the best of him last time I was laid up, for I made him take a dose of the filthy compound he had ordered for me the previous day.

First he said he wouldn't, then he said he couldn't, but I said what was not poison for the patient could not hurt the physician; and in the end he had to swallow the dose, making far more fuss over its nasty taste than I did. But I noted that he at once wrote me a new prescription, which was as sweet as any advertised syrup, and further, that he arranged his next visit should be just after I finished the bottle.

However, that is years and years after the time of which I am treating.

Yet I am tempted to anticipate, because the mention of Edenburn earlier in this chapter suggests a quaint individual about whom a few observations may be made.

Bill Hogan was our factotum. He was stable-boy, steward, ladies'-maid, and professional busybody, as well as a bit of a character, though he possessed none worth mentioning.

When we were packing up to leave Edenburn, my wife was watching him fill two casks, one with home-made jam, the other with china.

Called away to luncheon, she found on her return both casks securely nailed down.

'Oh, you should not have done that, Bill,' she said, 'for now we shan't know which contains which.'

'I thought of that, ma'am,' replies Bill, 'so I have written S for chiney on the one, and G for jam on the other.'

Bill's orthography was obviously original.

So was the drive he took with a certain cheery guest of mine one Sabbath morning.

The said guest desired more refreshment than he was likely to get at that early hour at Edenburn, so he drove into Tralee, ostensibly to church, and told Bill to have the car round at the club at one.

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‘Well,’ narrated Bill afterwards, ’out came the Captain from the club, having a few drinks taken, and up he got on the car with my help, but at the corner of Denny Street he pulled up at the whisky store, and said we must drink the luck of the road. Well we drank the luck at every house on the way out of the town, and presently in the road down came the mare, pitching the Captain over the hedge, and marking her own knees, as well as breaking the shaft. At last we all got home somehow, and there in the yard was the master, looking us all three up and down as though he were going to commit us all from the Bench. Then a twinkle came into his eye, and he said as mild as a dove to the Captain, “I see by the look of her knees you’ve been taking the mare to say her prayers."’

CHAPTER IX

THE HARENC ESTATE

So large a part has the purchase of this estate made in my more public appearances, owing to the fact that I have been brought into general notice through offensive legal proceedings, that a brief account of the matter must form part of my reminiscences.

Prior to 1878, a gentleman named Harenc, the owner of a large extent of landed property in the north of Kerry, died.

Who the estate subsequently belonged to I am uncertain. Anyhow, according to the title-deeds, it was somehow divided among ten or twelve individuals before the property came into the Land Estate Courts for sale.

This circumstance suggested to a large number of the tenantry that it might be an opportunity to avail themselves of the provisions of the Bright Clauses, and become pretty cheaply the owners of the land on which they lived.

After they had offered the sum of L75,000 for the estate, for the purpose of splitting it up into small holdings, it was found that the trustee had privately agreed to sell it to Mr. Goodman Gentleman, the agent for the late Mr. Harenc, for L65,000.

The tenants were not going to be frustrated by that—being Irishmen and litigious, which is one and the same thing. So they appealed to the Landed Estates Court, and induced Judge Ormsby to make an order annulling the deed of sale, and directing that the property should be put up in lots suitable to the purposes of the tenants.

Several of the tenants who did not want the property split up approached me to suggest I should buy the property, and appeared by counsel—the present Judge Johnson—in support of me.

I met the tenants, and stated that if it fell to me I would give each of them a lease of thirty-one years, and indemnify myself for the purchase-money by a rise on the entire rental of five per cent, on the valuation of each estate, according to current estimates, at which they showed every sign of satisfaction.

I then offered L80,000 for the whole estate, and was declared the purchaser. A large bonfire was lighted on February 20th, 1878, by the tenants at Aghabey, near Luxnow, on their being apprised I had become their landlord.

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Another section of tenants, however, were anxious that the property should be bought by Messrs. Lombard and Murphy, private individuals I never met.

The judge of the Landed Estate Court, Judge Ormsby, gave them the property.

I appealed against this decision, and the Court of Appeal unanimously reversed the verdict of Judge Ormsby, the three judges being the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the Master of the Rolls—who said it was one of the most important cases decided since the foundation of the Land Court—and Lord Justice Deasy. I have been told on most excellent authority that Lord Justice Christian declined to sit because, as he told the Lord Chancellor, he felt so strongly in my favour that he could not hear the case with an unbiassed mind.

There had been a demonstration at the previous decision, but it paled before the great rejoicings over my success among all the tenantry over whom I was agent. There were more than fifty bonfires blazing that night in Kerry, so that the county looked as though it were signalling the advent of another Armada, as in the fragment Macaulay left. The only place where any opposition was exhibited was in Castleisland, whence the Lombard family originally sprang; and there the lighted tar-barrels, which had been placed on the ruins of the old castle, were extinguished, to avoid unpleasant contact with a gang of rowdy roughs.

Messrs. Lombard and Murphy had stated that they were buying on behalf of the tenants. So I served them with notice that if they undertook to sell to every tenant his own holding they might have the property.

This they very wisely declined, and left me in the position that in 1879 I finally purchased a property on what was called an indefeasible Parliamentary title, under the approval of Her Majesty's Judges, and in 1881 an Act of Parliament practically took one-third of it from me.

In 1881 I wrote a letter to Mr. Gladstone, asking him to take my property and give me back my money.

To this he returned an evasive answer, declining my offer.

If the tenants had themselves bought the Harenc property at that time they would by this time all be paupers, for they could only get two-thirds of the money from Government, and would have had to borrow the other third at a heavy rate of interest.

One man, Mr. Hewson, bought one of the farms for L13,500, and under Mr. Gerald Balfour's Act of 1896 it was compulsorily sold to the tenants for about L6000. I have the exact figures at Tralee, but these are approximate enough for the purpose of demonstration.

Several of the other tenants took me into Court.

I had a piece of reclaimable ground on my own hands which I let for eight shillings an acre. The adjoining tenant, with exactly the same nature of land—which he swore on oath he had paid more than the fee-simple in improving—had his rent fixed by the County Court at four shillings an acre.

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To be sure, if the County Court valuer had not done so, he would have quickly lost his employment. The position is one incompatible with honesty, and the value of land, apart from what you can get for it, is a very disputable matter.

My relations with my Harenc tenantry were always good.

After the purchase in 1879 I had no trouble with them, and on the contrary received the warmest thanks from the parish priest for my conduct as a landlord.

I drained soil and imported seed potatoes, besides executing other improvements. The estate was not in good order when I purchased it, and I know from other sources that the tenants were well satisfied with me.

I may as well mention, that having no agencies on the Listowel side of Kerry, I was never on the Harenc property before the question of purchasing arose, and it had on it no house in which I and my family could reside.

Until 1881 no tenant made any hostile move, but one fellow, who took me into the Land Court after the Land Act, presented a very curious case.

This man, whose rent was sixty-five pounds a year, applied to the Court for reduction. There was a press of business at the time which necessitated an adjournment, but in the end the Court fixed the new rent at the same amount as the old rent.

The tenant appealed; but though the Appeal Court valuers attested that it was worth seventy-five pounds a year, still the rent was unchanged.

In other words, the Government sold me a farm and parliamentary title at sixty-five pounds a year which one set of Commissioners thought fair and the other thought cheap, and yet I had to spend more than half a year's rent in defending my title to it.

There is no appeal as to value, except to the head Commissioners. They appoint two other Sub-Commissioners to inspect the land, and they of course avoid disagreeing with their brethren.

It is very like Mr. Spenlow in *David Copperfield*, who said, 'If you are not satisfied with Doctors' Commons you can go to the delegates,' and being asked who the delegates were, he replied that they came from Doctors' Commons.

I bought the Harenc property as a speculation, and it turned out a confoundedly bad one.

Once I had a conversation with a Land Leaguer on the subject. He said:—

'You bought a stolen horse, and must take the consequences.'

‘If that were so,’ I retorted, ’I would have an action against the Government which sold me the horse.’

I had a correspondence on the subject with Mr. Chamberlain, which elicited some remarkable letters; but as he marked all of his private and confidential, they of course cannot be published.

Now for a few anecdotes, just to show that I have not exhausted my stock.

It would be cruel to specify the individual of whom I can truthfully say, he was the biggest fool that ever disfigured the Irish bench.

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He had been tutor to the children of a great peer, and his patron subsequently pressed the Prime Minister to do something for him.

‘I can’t make him a County Court judge,’ said the Prime Minister, ’for he would never decide rightly.’

‘Well,’ said another Minister, ’we are going out, and have not the ghost of a chance of ever getting in again in our time. Let him be Solicitor-General for Ireland during the last weeks we hold office.’

So this was done out of sheer good-nature; but after the election the Government found themselves saddled with him, for in those days holders of high office were not shelved at the caprice of Premiers, whilst the country had unexpectedly returned the old gang to power.

It has always been averred by the Irish Bar that an office was specially created for the purpose of shunting this legal luminary into it, but as an historical fact I will not vouch for the truth of the sarcasm. The account of the Cabinet conclave came to me on excellent authority.

When Chief Justice Monaghan died, Lord Morris, who was then a Puisne Judge of Common Pleas, observed that he himself had a good chance of the post.

‘What about Keagh and Lawson?’ asked his acquaintance, they being brother judges.

‘Very good men,’ replied Lord Morris, ’but as they were not appointed by the Tories, I don’t think they’ll promote them.’

‘And how about Ormsby?’ continued the other.

‘Ah now,’ said Morris, ‘you are getting sarcastic.’

There is a cheery story about Judge Keagh, who has just been mentioned.

A number of brothers were before him, charged with killing a man at Listowel.

The judge was most anxious to ascertain from an important witness what share each of the accused had in the murder.

‘What did John do?’

‘He struck him with his stick on the head.’

‘And James?’

‘James hit him with his fist on the jaw.’

‘And Philip?’

‘Philip tried to get him down and kick him.’

‘And Timothy?’

’He could do nothing, my lord, but he was just walking round searching for a vacancy.’

Which reminds me that fair play is not always recognised as essential in these matters, as the following anecdote shows.

There was a faction feud between the Kellehers and Leehys near Sneem.

One of the Leehys had a bad leg, and was therefore bound apprentice to a shoemaker in Sneem.

On a fair day a solitary Kelleher ventured into the town, and very speedily the Leehys had half-killed and beaten him as well as their numbers would allow.

Suddenly there was a shout, and the poor lame Leehy came hobbling down the street as fast as his wooden leg would permit.

‘Boys, for the love of mercy,’ says he, ’let a poor cripple have one go at the black-hearted varmint.’

One of the counsel engaged in the Harenc case was Mr. Murphy, who was a near relative of Judge Keagh, and he was a man of ready wit into the bargain.

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There was a company promoter from London, who had induced several people to take shares in a bogus concern, and was consequently defendant in an action brought against him in Cork.

He thought he would make an impression on the wild Irish by being overdressed and gorgeously bejewelled.

When Murphy arose to address the jury, he said:—

’Gentlemen of the jury, look at the well-tailored impostor without a rag of honesty to take the gloss off his new clothes.’

Another counsel in the case was Mr. Byrne. He was always in impecunious circumstances despite his legal eloquence, but the lack of a balance at his banker’s never troubled him.

Once he took Chief Justice Whiteside to see his new house in Dublin, which he had furnished in sumptuous style.

‘Don’t you think I deserve great credit for this?’ he asked at length.

‘Yes,’ retorted Whiteside, ‘and you appear to have got it.’

Lord Justice Christian, who had declined to sit on the Appeal, was considered one of the soundest opinions in Ireland. When he ceased to be sole Judge of Appeal, he had addressed the Bar after this fashion:—

’As this is the last time I sit as sole Judge of Appeal, it is an opportune time for me to review my decisions. By a curious coincidence, I have been thirteen years in this Court, and I have decided thirteen cases which have been taken to the House of Lords. Eleven of my decisions were confirmed, one appeal was withdrawn, and the last was a purely equity case. The two equity lords went with me, the two common law lords were against me, and when I inform the Bar that my judgment was reversed on the casting vote of Lord O’Hagan, I do not think they will attach much importance to the decision.’

Judge Christian’s allusion to the Land Act is most noteworthy, for he said:—

’The property of the country is confided to the discretion of certain roving commissioners without any fixed rules to guide and direct them. In fact, we have reverted to the primitive state of society, where men make and administer the laws in the same breath.’

Reverting to the Harenc estate, a rather amusing account was once perpetrated by a Special Commissioner.

‘Never heard tell of Ballybunion?’ said his carman to the journalist as on the road they met the carts laden with sand and seaweed from that place. ’Why it’s a great place intirely in the season, when quality from all parts come for the sea-bathing.’

As he evidently regarded it as the first watering-place in the world, the Special Commissioner thought he had better see the place, and here is his description:—

’A village perched on the summit of a cliff, an ancient castle of the Fitz-Maurice clan, wonderful caves, and a little hotel are the leading features of the place.

’The morning after my arrival, I experienced a wish to see the cliffs and caves, and no sooner were the words spoken than a figure bearing an unlit torch appeared at the door.

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’It was Beal-bo (which may be translated into a somewhat Sioux cognomen—the Yellow Cow). A figure in rags with an inimitable limp, and a fashion of closing one eye that reminds one of Victor Hugo’s Quasimodo of Notre Dame. A more intimate acquaintance proved there was much instruction, and a good deal of amusement, to be derived from this strange character.

’The grand cave is Beal-bo’s special source of revenue. He regards it as his own property, and takes a pride in it accordingly. This is the theatre of the many wiles he practises upon unsuspecting strangers. When he has lured them into the bowels of the cave, he turns down a gallery, and informs them that they cannot get out unless they cross a pool about five feet wide. When he has his victim upon his back, he seizes the opportunity to levy blackmail, for the pool is a quicksand and he suddenly affects great fear. After he has sunk to the knees in the yielding sand, the tourist is glad enough to give him a shilling to hurry across.

’In another gallery it is necessary for the stranger to cross a pool on a plank which Beal-bo provides for the occasion, and on this he charges a toll. He used to let the water in to deepen the pools before the tourists came through, in order to bring his plank into requisition.

’Suspended on a cliff between heaven and sea, one hundred feet above the water, on all sides were piled the immense masses of masonry, the ruins of which are all that remains of the once proud Castle of Doon. Gazing in awe down the horrid depths of the “Puffing Hole,” Beal-bo informed us:—

’"Twas there Brian used to sleep in the day, and come out at night to milk the cows up in the Killarney hills, he and his dog."’

The Special Commissioner looked incredulous, but Beal-bo was confident:—

’"May I never be saved, sir, if I haven’t seen him meself, many a night, sir, as he climbed the cliffs backwards to rob the hawks’ nests."’

How can even a Special Commissioner dispute an eyewitness?

Still the knowledge that I own a harbour of refuge for Brian will hardly repay me for all the expense and anxiety the Harenc property has caused me.

Before quitting the subject, I can conclude with a more gratifying fact.

At the time of the Tralee election, when I stood as a Conservative, a small clique of mob orators and amateur politicians tried to make political capital out of the history of the Harenc estate, and a priest, Father M. O’Connor, rode the jaded topic to death. The unkindest cut of all to him was the direct contradiction by the tenants themselves of every assertion that their self-constituted champions made on their behalf.

’We, the tenants of the Harenc estate, think it our duty to state that since Mr. S.M. Hussey became purchaser of the above estate, he has in every respect treated us kindly. He was good enough to give us seed potatoes for half the price they cost himself; he also drained our portions of the land at two and a half per cent., employed all the labourers, and paid them good wages while so employed by him. As a landlord we find him liberal and generous.’

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To this were appended fifty signatures, and the best part of all is that the whole of the manifesto was absolutely unsolicited by me, proving an unexpected source of pleasure.

CHAPTER X

KERRY ELECTIONS

An election in most places is an occasion for breaking heads, abusing opponents, and other similar demonstrations of ardent local philanthropy. Such opportunities are never lost by Kerry men, whose heads are harder and whose wits are sharper than those of the average run of humanity. If you are a real Kerry man of respectable convictions, and self-respecting into the bargain, you will never let the man who is drinking with you entertain any opinions but your own at election times. If he contradicts you, it's up with your stick and a crack on his skull, and as that only tickles him up—having much the effect of a nettle under a donkey's tail—you then go outside and mutually destroy as much of each other as can be effected in a fight. Some weeks later, when the vanquished is able to crawl away from the dispensary doctor, and so save his own life amid the dire forebodings of that physician, who refuses to answer for the consequences, you begin to drink with him again just to show there is no ill-feeling; which of course there is not, if you and he are both real Kerry men. Naturally, if you get a sullen, revengeful, calculating Protestant from the North, it's another matter, for he'll be far too friendly with the constabulary and won't hold with the good old local ways approved by every Kerry Papist and tolerated by most of the priests.

In 1851 there was a Kerry election. A Protestant candidate stood, and so did one who in those days was a Whig. I went stoutly for the Protectionist, but the priests plumped for the Free Trader, and their congregations have been regretting it ever since.

One tenant was driving in a gig with me to the poll when a priest passed me on the road and said to my tenant:—

'May the blast of the Almighty be upon you, for I know you are being taken to vote the wrong way.'

The tenant got very nervous, for in those times it was generally believed that the priests had power to change men into frogs and toads, a superstition by no means obsolete even now in lone districts. However, I took him along very easily, giving him the benefit of the roll of my tongue as to what he should do, and before he reached the polling-booth he recovered and voted for the Tory.

A Mr. Scully from Tipperary was the Whig candidate, and the family was not popular in its own county.

A Cork man, making inquiries of a Tipperary man about him, was answered:—

’I don’t know this gentleman personally, but I believe we have already shot the best of the family.’

Mr. Scully was a very amusing man, and in the House of Commons he used to go by the nickname of ‘old Skull.’

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Lord Monk accosted him by this name one night, and Mr. Scully replied:—

’If you have taken the “e y” off your own name, my lord, it is no reason you should do it off mine.’

Here is another story of him.

Mr. Dillwyn said to him, a Roman Catholic:—’I have lived sixty years in this world, and I don’t yet know the difference between the two religions.’

‘Bydad,’ retorted Scully, ’you will not have been five minutes in the other without finding it out.’

Shortly after the franchise was enlarged—which threw Imperial Parliament at the mercy of the ignorant—old Lord Kenmare died and the present peer was called up to the House of Lords.

Lord Kenmare was the most popular landlord in Kerry, and he selected a Roman Catholic cousin of his, Mr. Dease, to stand for the county, Mr. Roland Blennerhasset, a young Protestant landlord, being started against him in support of Home Rule principles.

The Roman Catholic bishop and most of the priests backed Mr. Dease, but the Home Rule candidate beat him by three to one. Some of the priests, who were very obnoxious to the people, supported Mr. Blennerhasset, and were then idolised, whilst a very popular parish priest, who canvassed for Mr. Dease, had to run for his life.

From thenceforth no one but a Home Rule candidate had any chance in Munster, and Mr. Roland Blennerhasset, having seen the error of his ways, afterwards became a Unionist candidate in England. He is a very clever man, who was quite young then, but has now blossomed into a K.C. in London, and is mighty shrewd about speculations.

The election was great fun except for the stones and bricks, of which enough were thrown about to build a city without foundations. Mr. Dease got a blow on his ribs at Castle Island, which told on his health, and he died soon afterwards. He was a brother of Sir Gerald Dease, and a man very much liked.

It was during this election that I was fired at one night at Aghadoe, returning from Puck Fair at Killorghin. A rumour was started that it was the work of one of the tenants on Sir George Colthurst’s Cork estates, and the Tralee correspondent of the *Examiner* telegraphed his belief in this, adding ‘so repugnant are Kerry men to these dastardly outrages.’

They took to them as greedily as a duck to water in later times, as all the world knows; and in the light of subsequent events it is delightful to remember that the *Freeman* stated, ’All condemn this dastardly act, for Mr. Hussey is universally respected.’

It atoned for this lapse into truth by subsequently taking my name in vain hundreds of times in the bad periods that were ahead.

There had been a libel case between the Rev. Denis O'Donoghue, parish priest of Ardfert, and myself. The address of this cleric in proposing Mr. Blennerhasset at the nomination had annoyed those he assailed intensely. Up to that point I had been utterly indifferent, but after that I strained every nerve to defeat Father O'Donoghue's nominee.

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This is an extract from his speech at Ardfert:—

’Sam Hussey is a vulture with a broken beak, and he laid his voracious talons on the consciences of the voters. (Boos.) The ugly scowl of Sam Hussey came down upon them. He wanted to try the influence of his dark nature on the poor people. (Groans). Where was the legitimate influence of such a man? Was it in the white terror he diffused? Was it not the espionage, the network of spies with which he surrounded his lands? He denied that a man who managed property had for that reason a shadow of a shade of influence to justify him in asking a tenant for his vote. What had they to thank him for?’

A voice: ‘Rack rents.’

’They knew the man from his boyhood, from his *gossoonhood*. He knew him when he began with a *collop* of sheep as his property in the world. (Laughter.) Long before he got God’s mark on him. It was not the man’s fault but his misfortune that he got no education. (Laughter.) He had in that parish schoolmasters who could teach him grammar for the next ten years. The man was in fact a Uriah Heep among Kerry landlords. (Cheers.)’

The result of this and other incentives to irritability was that the voters for Mr. Dease had to be escorted by troops and constabulary.

The sporting proclivities had already been shown over a race. In the County Club at Tralee there was an altercation between Mr. Sandes and a leading ‘Deasite’ as to the rival merits of a bay mare belonging to one and a chestnut horse owned by the other.

Quoth Mr. Sandes:—

’I’ll run you a two mile steeplechase for a hundred guineas if you like, and I’ll call my horse Home Rule—do you call yours Deasite; each to ride his own horse.’

No Kerry man could refuse such a challenge, and the race excited more interest than the election.

Mr. Sandes won, leaving ‘Deasite’ nowhere, and this helped Mr. Blennerhasset to head the poll.

More than one man is asserted to have voted for:—’Him you know that me landlord wants me to vote for.’

But I should say several dozen voted for:—

‘Him you know that the priest, God bless him, tells me to vote for.’

The libel over which the action arose was alleged to have been published in the *Cork Examiner*, and the words complained of were pretty sturdy.

The jury returned a verdict of one farthing for the plaintiff priest, and I do not think he derived as much advertisement out of it as Miss Marie Corelli obtained from a similar coin of the realm.

Of course all this should have shown me that I had in my own interests better keep clear of Kerry politics, but after I had bought the Harenc estate, I stood for Tralee as a Tory against The O'Donoghue, who was a Nationalist. I never supposed I was going to get in, but I really had a capital run for the Parliamentary Handicap, though I was weighted by political convictions and penalised by my creed. The priests made a most active set against me. There were only fifty Protestants on the register, and yet I managed to get one hundred and thirty votes, for which suffrages some eighty honest men must have been well worrited in the confessional.

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The O'Donoghue polled one hundred and eighty votes, and I believe a good many of his supporters had strong views on the currency question, and he was backed by a wealthy merchant. The constituency is now merged into the county, and the remotest chance of returning a rational member is now at an end.

The O'Donoghue did not stand after the merging of the constituency, though he was well used to electioneering work and had fought me very pleasantly, with as much devil about him as would make an angel palatable.

I did not much care for the whole thing. Still I was always a bit of a stormy petrel rejoicing in a gale, and my capacity has not waned even in my eightieth year.

The mob indulged in some lively work. A good many windows of houses belonging to my supporters were broken and a man stabbed.

The polling day was made the occasion of a public holiday, which meant that the bulk of the population was imbibing a great deal more than was compatible with the laws of equilibrium. Some amusement was caused by the panic of The O'Donoghue's supporters at the votes I was getting, and presently they brought up in cars one poor man in an advanced stage of consumption, and another unable to walk from old age.

It was a wearisome day to me; but before its close it became abundantly evident that if the electors were allowed to exercise a free discretion and vote according to their consciences, I should have headed the poll by a large majority. However in Ireland man proposes and the priest disposes.

At a meeting of the Conservative electors in Cork, Mr. Standford read a telegram announcing the return of The O'Donoghue in Tralee, which was received with hisses. He said the reason I had stood there was a requisition, signed by Sir Henry Donovan, in the presence of nine grand jurors of the County of Kerry, calling on me to do so. Sir Henry Donovan had since turned over to The O'Donoghue from the man he had forced into the field. Now that would teach them not to be fooled by Liberal promises. It almost made him believe no truth, no honour, and no sincerity existed among their opponents.

This was received with applause, which was renewed with laughter when Mr. Young observed:—

'I will make one remark. I think Sir Henry Donovan and The O'Donoghue are well met.'

To show that strong views in my favour were not confined to Protestants, I may quote the following letter written from the Augustinian Convent in Drogheda by J.A. Anderson, O.S.A.:—

’If the electors of Tralee return Mr. O’Donoghue (*alias* The O’Donoghue) as their representative in the coming Parliament, they will be false to Ireland, false to the men that galvanised the dead body that Gavan Duffy left on “the dissecting table” before starting for Australia, and they will have the honour (?) of returning to Parliament the greatest political renegade to Irish nationality that this generation has known.’

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A lady has recently drawn my attention to a footnote in Mr. Lecky's *History of Ireland*, where is quoted from a letter of my ancestor, Colonel Maurice Hussey, the following opinion:—

'It—i.e. Tralee—was a nest of thieves and smugglers, and so it always will be until nine parts of ten of O'Donoghue's old followers be proclaimed and hanged on gibbets on the spot.'

So when O'Donoghues have troubled me, it is a case of history repeating itself, and if the percentage of the followers of the modern chieftain had been 'removed'—as the modern phrase in Ireland ran—according to the manner advocated by my ancestor, I could have voted in Parliament against dismembering the Empire to gratify the eagerness of an old man to truckle to the traitors of the country intrusted to his care.

CHAPTER XI

DRINK

Of course one of the great troubles in Ireland is drink. I am no advocate for teetotalism, for I think a man who can enjoy a moderate glass is a better one than his brother who has to drink water in order that he may not yield to the overpowering 'tempitation'—to quote Mr. Huntley Wright—to get drunk! But for my fellow-countrymen I can see that drink is a terrible curse, one which is the cause of half the crime, half the illness, and more than half the misery that exists there.

Of all Irish benefactors, possibly Father Mathew was the greatest; but in my boyish days, when it became known that men, not yet in a lunatic asylum, had taken up the notion that human life was possible without alcoholic drinks, the wits of Kerry and Cork were heartily diverted at the bare idea.

It used to be the stock joke after dinner, even when Father Mathew was in the zenith of his triumph.

In Cork if you laugh at a thing you can generally suppress it, for, whereas all Irishmen are keenly susceptible to ridicule, the Cork folk are even more so.

The cold water business furnished endless jests, but it survived them.

Perhaps the strangest thing of all was the clergyman who preached against it as being irreligious, taking as the text of his sermon, 'Wine, that maketh glad the heart of man.'

I like a man who is disinterested, therefore I wish to remind the present generation that Father Mathew came of a stock of distillers, and his family was among the first to suffer by his preaching.

It was probable there would be a reaction after his death; and when that event took place, after the famine and fever, none really took his place to warn the diminishing population, in sufficiently effective fashion, of all the ills that drink was laying up for them.

Wherever, in my work, I found Government relief works, within a stone's throw of every pay office a whisky shop started into operation.

New Ireland arose from the famine, and she has never since shown much sign of temperance. Indeed, an excessive amount of money is, and has ever since then been, spent on liquor in Ireland.

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At Castleisland, the scene of so many outrages, the population of the town is thirteen hundred, and the number of whisky shops is fifty-two. Very nearly the same proportion can be noticed in several other towns.

There never was an outrage committed without an empty whisky bottle being found close to the scene of the murder.

In the worst time a moonlighter slept for a fortnight close to the house of an Irish landlord, who was well aware that he was there for the express purpose of shooting him, but he never even attempted it.

’Time after time I lay in a ditch to have a go at him, but he would ride by, looking for all the world as if he would shoot a flea off the tail of a shnipe, so that, with all the whisky in the world to help me, I dared not do it,’ was his explanation before he left for America.

Did you never hear the parish priest’s sermon?

’It’s whisky makes you bate your wives; it’s whisky makes your homes desolate; it’s whisky makes you shoot your landlords, and’—with emphasis, as he thumped the pulpit—’it’s whisky makes you miss them.’

There is as much truth in that sermon as in any that was preached last Sunday between Belfast and Glengariff.

As a matter of fact, the profits to the drink retailer are not so enormous as might be imagined, owing to the competition.

In the neighbourhood of Castleisland there is one group of twelve houses and nine of these are whisky booths. However anxious the population may be to consume immoderate amounts of the fiery liquor, and however large the traffic on the road—-never a big thing in Ireland, except on market-day—the division of the local receipts by nine is apt to diminish the profits in each case.

It has been suggested to me by a lady who knows Kerry well, that the consumption of drink might be diminished if a law were passed forcing the publicans to sell food. As she very truly remarks, it is often impossible for the country folk, even on market-day, when coming into a town, to get food for immediate consumption.

However, I do not think this would have any effect. When away from his cabin the Irishman and the Irishwoman want drink, not food, for there are a few potatoes at home which will provide all the solid sustenance most of them desire.

If her proposal were made law, each publican would keep a loaf in his window, and there it would stay for a year.

That reminds me of the man who was waiting in Waterford Station on March 12th, and to pass the time had a ham sandwich at the bar.

After one mouthful he asked the astonished barmaid for another, made of February bread, because he really felt that it was time January bread might have a rest.

To give an example of how Irishmen crave for drink, I will relate an incident connected with the Parnell Commission.

Three of Lord Kenmare's tenants had been sent over in charge of an experienced and reliable man to give evidence, and on their return journey, when they arrived at North Wall—the hour being 6 A.M.—the conductor said:—

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‘There is cold meat, or bread and cheese. Now, what will your fancy be?’

Far from wanting nutrition after an all night journey, or even the soothing solace of a cup of tea, it was half a pint of whisky apiece that they all asked for.

Just as much drinking exists among the Protestants as among the Roman Catholics, only there is a trifle more geniality in the bibulous propensities of the latter. Much less affects an Irishman than a Scotsman. The latter, when he has absorbed all the whisky he can assimilate in a bout—and no bad amount it is, let me observe—will go quietly to sleep. But an Irishman’s joy is incomplete unless he knocks somebody down, which may account for the fact that the Irish are the best soldiers in the world.

One redeeming feature in the liquor traffic is the increasing consumption of porter, for that at least has some nourishment in it, and is reasonably wholesome, whereas the whisky is vilely adulterated, not only by the publicans before it reaches the consumer, but also in some of the factories.

Puck Fair is the great annual fete and mart of Killorglin; and it is so called because a goat is always fastened to a stave on a platform, and gaily bedizened. Formerly the animal was attached to the flagstaff on the Castle. To this fair all Kerry for many miles congregates, and the neighbouring roads towards evening are literally strewn with bibulous individuals of either sex.

On one occasion a Killorglin publican was in jail, and his father asked for an interview because he wanted the recipe for manufacturing the special whisky for Puck Fair. It has been a constant practice to prepare this blend, but the whisky does not keep many days, as may be gathered from the recipe, which the prisoner without hesitation dictated to his parent:—

A gallon of fresh, fiery whisky. A pint of rum. A pint of methylated spirit. Two ounces of corrosive sublimate. Three gallons of water.

An Irishman’s constitution must be tougher than that of an ostrich to enable him to consume much of the filthy poison. Temperance orators are welcome to make what use they like of the recipe of this awful decoction, annually sold to a confiding population.

It is not considered etiquette to come out of Killorglin sober on Puck Fair; and, judging by the state of the people in the vicinity in the evening, this social custom is rigidly observed.

They are wonderfully particular in Kerry in attending to exactly what is congenial to them, and if it were not for the thickness of their heads a good many lives would be lost.

There was a gauger, in a central county in Ireland, killed by a blow on the head from a stick.

The man who struck him, in his defence, stated:—

’I did not hit him a very hard blow, and why the devil did the Government make a gauger of a man that had a head no thicker than an egg-shell?’

Mighty few of the Killorglin folk have egg-shell heads, and the bulk of these do not come to maturity.

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The avowed fact that lunacy is largely on the increase in Ireland has been pronounced by the committee which sat on the question in Dublin to be mainly due, not only to excessive drinking, but to the assimilation of adulterated spirits.

Though the foregoing recipe furnishes a pretty fair example, I certainly would not wager that it could not be beaten elsewhere in Ireland.

For a long time the priests were entirely apathetic on the subject, but latterly they are bestirring themselves, and are doing their best to put down wakes, which simply mean one or more nights of disgusting intemperance in the immediate vicinity of the corpse.

Keening, by the way, is dying out, and what remains of this curious, mournful waiting is now almost entirely in the hands of old women who are experts in the art, and get remunerated not only in drink but also in cash.

It is, however, possible that when I am deploring the alcoholic tendencies of the Irishman, that these may be due to his more vegetarian dietary, and not to any undue natural craving for alcohol. This is borne out by the fact that no Irishman will willingly drink alone, and that his potations are in the shops where whisky and porter are sold for consumption on the premises, or at fairs, markets, weddings, or wakes, to the diminishing number of which I have just called attention.

The parish priest of Dingle recently stated in court that in a population of seventeen hundred there were over fifty licensed houses, and he rightly declared that all dealings in licences should for the present be only by transfer, and that for five years at least no new licences should be granted. The argument so often heard against stopping licences is that then more illicit drinking will ensue, but this does not convince me that the redundant licences should be renewed.

My remedy would be to increase all renewals of licences to fifty pounds apiece, and to apply the difference as compensation to unrenewed licences. If a man fits up his house as a shebeen, and has conducted it tolerably, he ought to receive just compensation when his licence is cancelled owing to there being too many in a district.

If this is not done, he would be the victim of as great a robbery as was perpetrated on the unfortunate landlords by the Land Act.

I have a yarn or two on the subject of drink which may be appropriately related here.

Old David Burus, the steward at Ardrum, County Cork, was a great character who had got inextricably confused between the Council of Trent and the Trant family in the vicinity, and no amount of explanation could ever enlighten him. Directly he had begun to be jovial, he used to say:—

’My blessing on Councillor Trent, who put a fast on meat, but not on drink.’

And he proved the devoutness of his gratitude by conscientiously getting drunk every Friday.

That recalls to my mind the case of the illustrious gentleman—also a fellow-countryman, I regret to say—who committed burglary and murder when there was an opportunity, but religiously refrained from eating meat on Friday.

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Reverting to David Burus: on one occasion I remonstrated with him on the amount of whisky he drank.

‘I did drink a great deal of whisky, and I would have drunk more.’ was his reply, ‘if I had known it was going to be as dear as it is now.’

He evidently regretted not having thoroughly saturated himself with alcohol. It was the only way in which he could have possibly increased his consumption.

He was wont to say that if he had known the trick Mr. Gladstone was going to play on honest, God-fearing men, with sound stomachs and a decent appetite, by imposing a ten shilling duty on every gallon of whisky, he would have drunk his fill beforehand, even if *delirium tremens* had been the penalty.

Such hard drinking as his, and so calmly avowed, must, even in the south of Ireland, be fortunately rare, for few constitutions can stand conversion into animated whisky vats.

There was a farmer at Kanturk railway station who confided to the stationmaster that he himself on the previous evening had been as drunk as the very devil.

A parson on the platform, overhearing him, said:—

’You make a mistake, my friend, the devil does not drink. He keeps his head cool for the express purpose of watching such as you.’

The countryman replied:—

’You seem to be very well acquainted with the respected gentleman’s habits, your riverince.’

And then they walked off different ways.

Which reminds me of another clerical incident.

A parish priest within twenty miles of Tralee, who subsequently left the Church—I will not say on account of his thirst, though, as that was unquenchable, it no doubt conduced to his retirement—came into the parlour of the manager of the bank with two farmers to have a bill discounted.

The manager, having ascertained the farmers were good security, cashed the bill and gave the proceeds to the priest. He was very much surprised on the following day at the two farmers walking into his room with the money.

‘What’s the meaning of this?’ says he.

’Well, your honour, we could not stay in the parish, if we refused to join his reverence in the deal, which was sure to be a very bad one for us. So we thought the best thing to do was to get him a little hearty at his own expense on the way home. And then we picked his pocket and have brought the money to your honour, whilst he is cursing every thief outside his parish, and will probably ask the congregation to make up the amount next Sunday.’

And that is a true story, and as illustrative of the Irish peasant as any you could ever get told to you.

A coffin-maker named Sullivan thrived in Tralee. He received an order for a coffin for a man living about six miles away from the town. It was not called for for a week, and so he went out to the house where the man lay dead to inquire the cause.

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When he came back to Tralee, he said to a friend:—

’Who do you think I saw, Mick, but that scoundrel of a corpse sitting in a ditch eating a piece of pig’s cheek.’

That reminds me of another coffin story.

A man who lived in Cork was notorious for being always behind time for everything. He knew his failing, and was rather touchy about it.

One night, stumbling out of a whisky shop, he lurched into a yard, fell against a door, which gave way, and finished his slumbers peacefully in the shed, which was the storehouse of an undertaker.

In the morning he awoke, rubbed his eyes in astonishment at the strange surroundings amid which he found himself, and after recollecting his own pet proclivity, as he ruefully surveyed all the empty coffins, ejaculated:—

‘Just my usual luck. Late for the Resurrection.’

Which recalls another tale:—

A man was dead drunk, so some friends, for a lark, brought him into a dark room, lit a lot of phosphorus, and made up one of their party in the guise of a devil before they flung a bucket of water over their victim.

‘Where am I?’ asked the fellow, looking round ‘skeered.’

‘In hell,’ retorted the devil, with exaggerated solemnity.

’Heaven bless your honour, as you know the ways of the place, will you get me a drop of drink?’

But a mere drop does not suffice as a friend of mine found out.

He was wont to reward his car-driver with a glass of whisky, and gave it to him in an antique glass, which did not contain as much as cabby wished for.

‘That’s a very quare glass, captain,’ says he.

‘Yes,’ replied Captain Stevens; ‘that’s blown glass.’

‘Why, Captain,’ says the carman, ’the man must have been damned short in the breath that blew that.’

This would no doubt have been the opinion of a Dublin carman who was in the habit of bringing a present to an acquaintance of mine from a lady living at some distance, and being recompensed with a glass of grog. By degrees, however, the water grew to be the predominant partner in the union within the glass, so at last he burst out in disgust:—

’If you threw a tumbler of whisky over Carlisle Bridge, it would be better grog than that at the Pigeon House.’

Which being interpreted into cockneyism would read, ’If you threw a glass of whisky over Westminster Bridge it would be better grog than that at Greenwich Pier.’

Still all consumption of liquor is not confined to Ireland, and I well remember when I was with Bogue in Scotland, that one night he had a fellow-farmer of the very best type to dine with him, and about ten o’clock, with much difficulty, my man and I hoisted him into the saddle.

An hour afterwards we heard a knock at the door, and a voice rather quaveringly inquired:—

‘Pleash, can you tell me the way to X., I have lost my way?’

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The tracks next morning revealed he had been riding round and round the house without once quitting the vicinity, which was almost as bad as Mark Twain's famous nocturnal perambulation with his pedometer, when he went on a tramp abroad!

Of potation stories I could tell scores more, and the Tralee Club has seen enough whisky imbibed within its walls to drown all the members.

A quaint character named Mullane was at one time steward, and decidedly astonished a member, who was a total abstainer, by charging him in his bill for three tumblers of punch.

'Well,' explained Mullane, 'it's this way. Some take six tumblers, and some takes none, so I strikes an average—and to tell you the truth, it's mighty convenient for the great majority.'

A quaint member of the club was Mr. Edward Morris. He was extremely diminutive, and he wore an eyeglass. One evening he was standing on the first landing, pondering in a bemused state whether he could get downstairs without falling, when a pursey little doctor trotted past him without even touching the bannister.

This inspired Morris with courage, so he let go his hold of the balustrade, whereupon he promptly fell on the physician, and both rolled to the bottom of the stairs.

Thence in hiccuping tones were heard:—

'Waiter! Waiter, put the glass in my eye, and let me see who the scoundrel was who struck me.'

On another evening in the club, when he had imbibed very freely, he ordered an additional glass of grog, and began to moralise aloud, addressing it after this fashion:—

'Glass of grog, if I drink you now, you'll cut the legs from under me. And yet I want you, and I will not do without you. So I know what I will do. I'll go to bed and I'll drink you there, for I don't care a damn what you do to me then.'

The indifference of a drunken man to subsequent consequences was rather quaintly shown by that weird individual Dr. Tanner, when he went up to Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett in the lobby of the House of Commons, and abruptly observed:—

'You're a fool.'

Sir Ellis fixed him with his eyeglass, and, in disgusted tones, replied:—

'You're drunk.'

‘I suppose so,’ retorted the Irishman, ’but then I’ll be sober to-morrow’—in the most plaintive tone, then in a crescendo of scorn—’ whereas you’ll always be a fool.’

Moreover as he slouched down the lobby, he was heard to say:—

’If I do get a headache, I’ve a head to have it in, not a frame on which to hang an eyeglass.’

That is a political amenity on which I will not dwell.

Very little money-lending is to be heard of in the south of Ireland, and in all my experience I only remember one case in Kerry. Tenants in Ireland, however, have great horror of breaking bulk, and many of them will do a bill for a neighbour when they have deposits in the bank for themselves. As it is a point of honour never to refuse a friend in this respect, you can easily imagine the amount of ‘paper’ which is fluttering.

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Even when a farmer has a tidy sum of money on deposit with the bank at one per cent., if he wants to employ a sum for a short time, say for the purchase of cattle, he prefers to raise the money on a bill at six per cent.

That is to say, the bank is lending him his own money at five per cent.—a truly Hibernian trait, which it would be difficult to beat anywhere.

A bill for drink is not recoverable, but occasionally an insidious publican will take a man's I.O.U. and sue on that.

One applied to me to help him to get the money from a tenant.

'You must show me the account,' said I.

As I suspected, there was whisky in it, and I declined on the spot.

All drink in Ireland is on cash down terms only.

If they gave tick, they would never recover the money, and if every Irishman is a knowing scoundrel, the publican is a trifle more knowledgable than the customer, whose brains are besodden.

A man, who had been a servant of mine, started a public near Tralee, and thinking he would get customers from the other whisky stores, he gave tick. His popularity lasted just as long as the tick did, and a week later he was broke. I do not say so much about Tralee being able to support one hundred and sixty liquor shops, because there is a little shipping, but how Cahirciveen can enable fifty publicans to thrive is a melancholy mystery to me.

I was animadverting once, at Dingle, on the topic, when one of my labourers remarked:—

'It's the gentry does the drinking.'

'Now that's very curious,' said I, 'for as there are only two of us, and as I never touch spirits, the other must have such a thirst that he'd consume the bay if only it were made of whisky.'

In these democratic days, it is as well to resist any undue aspersion on the upper classes.

To pass any aspersion on the bibulous propensities of a tenant of mine named Flaherty would be impossible. When he was buying his farm, I told him the Government ought to take him on very easy terms, when they became his landlords.

‘And for why?’ he asked.

‘Because,’ I replied, ’the duty you pay on the whisky you drink is more than twenty times your annual rent.’

I had, however, one personal illustration of the drinking propensity in Scotland, which I think is worth preserving. It is some years now since I went to see a certain farmer who, his wife told me, on noticing my approach, was compelled to go upstairs to cool his head as it was after dinner. She said this much in the same casual tone, as I should mention that my wife had gone up early to dress for that meal.

Next, I heard heavy splashing of water, and then a crash which portended that the farmer had fallen over the washstand, making a fearful clatter.

In rushed the drab of a servant maid, perfectly indifferent to my presence, shrieking:—

’O missus, come up, come up, the maister is just miraculous among the chaney!’

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CHAPTER XII

PRIESTS

I have been asked, since my friends became aware that I am perpetrating my reminiscences, whether I was going to write anything supplemental to Mr. MacCarthy's *Priests and People*, and *Five Tears in Ireland*.

My reply was:—

'Certainly not.'

To begin with, I have many friends among Roman Catholics, and plenty of cheery acquaintances among the priests. Secondly, the state of feud and hostility on which Mr. MacCarthy dilates is more likely to be found in Ulster and Leinster than in Kerry, where the Roman Catholics form more than nine-tenths of the population.

On one occasion, when a distinguished Englishman was staying at Killarney House, I told him that he should go to the north to see the strangest sight in the world—two races hating one another for the love of God.

It is not my business to estimate what would happen in Kerry if a few thousand rabid Orangemen were plumped down among the present inhabitants; but according to existing circumstances creeds are not torn to tatters nor religion disfigured by strife and slander.

All the same, I am bound to say that the Roman Catholic priests, when I was young, were much superior to those of to-day. They were drawn from a better class, because, having to be educated at Rome, or, at least, as far away as St. Omer, entailed some considerable outlay by their relatives. Moreover, they brought back from their continental seminaries broader ideas than can be acquired in purely Irish colleges. Their interest had been stimulated at the most impressionable age in much of which the farmers and labourers had no conception. Therefore the priest could address his flock with authority, and was invariably looked up to as well as obeyed.

The parish priest at Blarney erected a tower in commemoration of the battle of Waterloo, and a public house in the vicinity bears the name to this day.

What parish priest would raise a memorial to any English victory in the twentieth century?

The greatest curse to the Irish nation has been Maynooth, because it has fostered the ordination of peasants' sons. These are uneducated men who have never been out of Ireland, whose sympathies are wholly with the class from which they have sprung, and

who are given no training calculated to afford them a broader view than that of the narrowest class prejudice.

As for the much discussed Irish university, I do not myself believe it will be founded.

Should even an English Government be blind enough to allow it, an Irish university could only become a hot-bed of treason, and practically all educated members of the Roman Catholic community would avoid sending their sons to such a seminary of sedition, where the influence would be insidiously directed to make the undergraduates even more hostile to England than they already are by inherited instincts and by all they have been told in their own homes.

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On the very day this page is written, I have mentioned the question of an Irish university to two Protestants in the Carlton, both Members of Parliament, and both approved of the idea in a languid way. I have also mooted the topic this afternoon to two leading Roman Catholics, and both vehemently disapproved, alleging that it will work endless mischief.

As far back as 1872 Dr. Macaulay wrote:—

'The Irish university question has been put off from year to year, and at length presses for settlement.'

In the best interests of Ireland, may the same thing be written thirty years hence!

If the Roman Catholics of England send their sons to Oxford and Cambridge, why should not more Irish Roman Catholics send theirs to Trinity College, Dublin? Only a very few do, although the education is said to be quite as good as at either of the great English Universities. A far tighter hold is kept, however, on the Roman Catholic laity in Ireland than in England. It always surprises English people to learn that, in Ireland, Roman Catholics are not allowed to enter Protestant churches to attend either funerals or weddings. Nor do I think there is much probability of these restrictions being removed.

Of course, in the years of outrage and terror in Ireland, many of the priests from the altar denounced loyal members of the congregation, or incited their hearers to deeds of wickedness by their inflammatory sermons. These facts are among the blackest in the history of any creed, and I do not hesitate to class the work of some of the priests who disgraced their Church with the worst perpetrations of the Spanish Inquisition.

Fortunately all priests were not, and are not, after this style. I have known many good and worthy men among them, as well as capital fellows, fond of a joke. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church did not always take the side of the Land League.

For example, the bishops and parish priests laboured assiduously to get Lord Granard his rents from his estates in Longford.

Why?

Because Maynooth held a great mortgage on the property.

In the famous De Freyne case, the parish priest energetically assisted the landlord in every way in his power, because the property was heavily mortgaged with Roman Catholic charges.

These are two facts that occur to me on the spur of the moment, and probably other people could supply similar instances.

As for the Episcopacy, it was the violence of Dr. Walsh, the Archbishop of Dublin, which prevented him from obtaining the coveted cardinal's hat. This was given to Dr. Logue, the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, a witty, capable, clever man, who had such an inveterate habit of taking snuff that he did so even when conversing with Queen Victoria.

'It prevents me from sniffing out heresy,' he explained, with a twinkle, 'and so gives me an excuse for shutting my eyes to the different views of my neighbours.'

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The Queen was much amused, but the remark conveyed a true view of Irish Catholicism.

The fact is, his bishop can do very little with a treasonable man when once he has been inducted a parish priest; and the curate who obtains irregular fees, of course, panders even more to the taste of his congregation. A bishop will haul up a tonsured subordinate mighty sharp for any breach of ecclesiastical duty, but when it comes to politics and instigation to crime, he finds it far more difficult to keep a tight hand.

As a broad rule it may be stated that the bishops are well selected, and are of a much higher type than the average priest.

Of the bishops of Killarney, Moriarty put down Fenianism with no light hand, preaching, as I have already shown, in the most manly and emphatic style—which could have been emulated with advantage in other Episcopacies in my country. MacCarthy was a bookworm from Maynooth, who played the deuce with the diocese, allowing all the priests to run wild, and by his laxity becoming criminally responsible for much of the terrible condition of Kerry. Higgins was the nominee of a friend of Moriarty, and he worked hard to suppress outrages, by which course he certainly did not add to his popularity among his flock. In his upright and courageous conduct he has been worthily emulated by his successor, Coffey, whose demise occurred only in the present year.

Kerry possesses one bishop, fifty-one parish priests and administrators, sixty-nine curates, and eleven priests occupied in tuition.

There are six religious houses for males, and seventeen convents, representing about five hundred inhabitants, as well as three hundred students, which, with the occupants of subsidiary sacerdotal establishments, is estimated to make up 1265 persons.

In 1871, when the population of Kerry was 196,586, there were 337 priests and nuns. In 1901, when the population had become reduced to 165,726, the priests and nuns had increased to 546.

And these statistics bring me to a salient point:—

The one reality above all others in Irish life is the grip of the Church.

In the last book which I have received from the library—*Paddy-Risky* by Mr. Andrew Merry—one of the stories is that of a poor widow beggaring herself in order to provide the parish chapel with a bell, and that is the kind of thing you hear of everywhere.

The Roman Catholic Church presides over every function in the life of each member of its community, and the priest charges heavily for administering the rites.

At a wedding he does not take a prescribed fee, but makes a bargain, usually with the family of the bride. I have known as much as twenty-five pounds paid to a priest at a small farmer's marriage; and the sum obtained is very often out of all proportion to the dowry of the bride, or even to the funds of the happy pair.

An example may be cited—the case of a labourer in my own employ, who received forty pounds as his wife's fortune, and had to pay eight to the parish priest.

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It is the same thing with funerals, over which a ridiculous amount is still spent, although the wake is falling into disrepute under the ban of the Church, and women are now rarely hired to 'keen.' There is a craze to have a number of priests attending the service, and a good many of them do go, very well pleased, as to a picnic.

In parishes where the poverty is something appalling the members of the congregation not only contribute Peter's Pence, but you cannot go into the chapel without seeing some tiny candles lighted before the altar of Mary, which must literally represent the scriptural mites of the widow and orphan.

Before I relapse into a few stories, let me say something about the Protestant clergy.

They are nearly always recruited from the ranks of the smaller Irish gentry, and whilst, perhaps, richer in proportion than many of the curates and incumbents in England, there are no 'fat' livings, and all are distinctly poorer since the Disestablishment.

The average in Kerry, and over most of the south of Ireland, is a stipend of two hundred pounds a year, which involves reading services in two churches each Sunday, and therefore puts the clergyman to the expense of keeping a horse and trap.

About 1820 the district around Castleisland was divided into three parishes—-Castleisland, Ballincushlane, and Killeentierna—the joint revenues of which were eighteen hundred a year. These were vested in the Lord Bandon of the time, who lived in the lovely cottage on the upper Lake of Killarney.

He allowed a curate fifty pounds a year to do the joint duties, and I hardly think the man was worth the money. He subsequently obtained a Government living and was in the habit of asking his congregation, as they went into church, whether they wanted a sermon or not. The general concensus of opinion was a polite negative—to the relief of all parties.

The method of electing a vicar in Ireland since the Disestablishment is both sensible and practical.

Three parish nominators, one lay diocesan nominator, two clerical diocesan nominators, and the bishop, between them, choose the new incumbent. By the constitution of this Court of Election, it is certain that no one will be appointed to whom the parish objects, whilst if the parish desires the nomination of an incompetent man, that is checked by the diocesan voters in conjunction with the bishop.

In fact it is an admirable system, far better than the patronage plan still rampant in England.

The Irish bishops are also chosen by nominators drawn from the clergy and laity of the diocese, provided a two-thirds majority be obtained for any one candidate. If not, the Irish bench of bishops jointly selects the new wearer of lawn sleeves.

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This, again, works with perfect smoothness and never arouses the ill-feeling aroused by the selections nominally made by the Prime Minister. To-day the *Foundations of Belief* may not be an essay which causes confidence in the ability of the author to pick the best bishops, and all the much-vaunted religious convictions of Mr. Gladstone did not make his nominations to the Episcopacy particularly successful. It is now no secret that Lord Cairns used to choose bishops for Disraeli and that Lord Shaftesbury often was consulted by Prime Ministers who knew more about sport than clericalism.

So far as I can recollect, among all the Irish clergy I have met not one was an Englishman, though there are plenty of Irish in the English Established Church.

All the Disestablished Church of Ireland is exceedingly anti-ritualistic.

‘I do not want Mock-Turtle, when I am so near real Turtle,’ said Sir George Shiel, when asked to visit St. Alban’s, Holborn, one of the Ritualistic temples—an observation which represents the feeling animating clergy and laity in Ireland, though they are none the better pleased that out of the funds of the Disestablishment, Maynooth should have received a capitalised sum equal to the previous annual grant from Government.

And now for just a few clerical tales.

A man was dying and the priest was with him.

‘Ah, Father Philip,’ said the poor fellow, ’I am sure the likes of you would never be deceiving a poor man and him on his deathbed. Tell me straight, is my soul all right?’

’It is, my son, and in a very short time you’ll be in the company of the Blessed Saints.’

’In that case, Father, I’ll tell the devil he may just kiss my toe and bad luck to him for all the trouble I have had to get out of his clutches,’ and the priest noticed his last sigh was one of complete satisfaction—no doubt anticipatory.

Purgatory forms the foundation of many stories.

A certain very poor widow was paying the priest money for the soul of her son, who was killed in a faction fight.

’And it’s more masses you must have Mrs. Murphy, for Paddy has only got his red hair out of purgatory.’

Later, when she was asked for further contributions:—

’It’s his mouth which is out now, and he sends his mother on earth messages to have prayers said to get him to heaven.’

A third time did Widow Murphy give the priest what she could not in the least afford.

Yet again he reported progress.

’Now you must make a great effort, for his head and shoulders are out of purgatory.’

’Then it’s devil another penny of mine will go for masses, for if my Pat has his head and shoulders out, I can safely reckon he’ll soon wriggle himself away entirely, God bless the poor darling.’

Another purgatory tale, this time concerning Father Batt.

A fellow-priest came to see him, and over a friendly glass:—

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‘And what’s the news?’ asked Father Batt.

’None that I know on earth, but I do hear tell that the floor of purgatory has given way and all the inhabitants have fallen into hell.’

’Oh, the poor Protestants, that will be all crushed by the weight atop of them,’ was Father Batt’s rejoinder.

Few priests in Kerry have been better known or more beloved than he, almost the last of the old-fashioned school, and he was always warm friends with his Protestant colleague in Milltown, where he resided.

Father Batt invariably took a few tumblers of hot whisky punch after dinner, and having got ill was advised by the doctor to give it up and take to claret.

When the bishop met him some time later, he said:—

’Well, Father Batt, I am afraid you do not like claret so well as the whisky.’

‘It’s this way, my lord,’ he replied. ’I don’t object to the taste so much as I thought I should, but I find it very tedious.’

It is with some diffidence that I venture upon a convent story. To begin with, I am a Protestant, and secondly, in relation to one of these ladies’ clubs under sacerdotal patronage I feel like Paul Pry, always apologetic when putting in an appearance.

Still, the tale is quite innocent and is absolutely true.

The convent is in Kerry and up to recently the order had been an enclosed one. But a papal edict arrived one day, bidding the nuns go out to teach, and to collect, as well as to relieve, the suffering in their own homes.

The Mother Superior was exceedingly wroth.

‘What!’ quoth she. ’Does the Holy Father want to be interfering with me after I have been within these walls for the last eight-and-twenty years? I am not going to begin tramping the roads at my time of life, not for the Holy Father himself, no, nor all the Cardinals too. A pretty state of things indeed. Why, he’ll be telling me to ride a bicycle next!’

The county of Cork was at one time so notorious for cattle-stealing that a Roman Catholic bishop went down specially to admonish them.

When telling one parish priest to be firm with his congregation on the subject, the bishop observed:—

’Nothing is more clearly laid down in the Bible than that if a man has possession of another man’s property he can never enter the kingdom of heaven.’

‘The Saints preserve us,’ exclaimed the priest; ’there’ll be plenty of empty houses there.’

It is not uncommon for a priest to get a bit of truth by accident or by cunning from one of his flock.

The parish priest was congratulating a man who had married three wives upon getting a bit of money with each, and received this answer:—

’Well, your reverence, I did not do badly at all, but between the weddings and the funerals, your reverence took care it was not all clear profit.’

There is plenty of hard barter about the terms of these ceremonies, and on one occasion at Brosna, when the curate stood out for three pounds as his fee for performing the marriage service, the would-be bridegroom held out a thirty shilling note, saying:—

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’Marry yourself to this, your reverence, and we’ll be happy with your blessing.’

As the persuasive eloquence of another man could not abate the price which his priest demanded for a funeral, he blurted out:—

’Why, the blessed corpse in purgatory would shiver at the thought of costing so much to put away, and we but poor folk, with the pig that contrary we don’t know whether the litter will survive.’

Here is a fish story connected with a member of my own family, Miss Clarissa Hussey, who was my aunt, and also a pious Roman Catholic. She used to hospitably entertain her confessor Father Tom, a priest with a keen appreciation of the good things of the table. Among his parishioners it was known that he indicated the value he put on the coming fare by the length of his preliminary grace.

On a certain Friday in Lent he dined with her, and on a huge dish being put down in front of his hostess, he expected a fine salmon, and shutting his eyes proceeded to pronounce a benediction the length of which greatly gratified my aunt. On the cover being removed, however, his face fell, and in severe tones he rebuked her:—

‘Was it for bake, ma’am, that I offered up the full grace?’

Nor could he be appeased all through the meal.

That leads me to relate the funeral sermon delivered by a clergyman on a lady who had died suddenly at her morning meal:—

’You all, dear brethren, well know the loss we have sustained in our departed sister. She was ever alert and kindly, ever bountiful though without extravagance. To the last she preserved her characteristics. On the fatal morning of her removal from among us, she rose as usual and came to the family breakfast-table. With no premonition of what was to come she took her egg-spoon and cracked her egg, an egg laid by one of her own hens. In another moment failure of the heart transferred her to a higher sphere. She began that egg on earth, she finished it in heaven.’

CHAPTER XIII

CONSTABULARY AND DISPENSARY DOCTORS

An Englishman once asked me, if I could suggest any way by which all Ireland could be made loyal. I inquired if he thought the Irish constabulary a loyal body.

‘Most decidedly,’ said he, without hesitation.

‘Then,’ I replied, ’if you will pay every Irishman seventy pounds a year for doing nothing, but look after other people’s affairs—a thing by nature congenial to him as it is—you’ll have the most loyal race on earth.’

That Englishman went away thoughtful, but I had shown him the solution of one Irish problem which may be stated thus:—

Why do one half of the sons of farmers in Ireland, who have been or are members of the Irish constabulary, represent a body of men unequalled for their respectability, loyalty, and courage, while a large proportion of the other, at least in the eighties, made up the bulk of the ignoble army of moonlighters, cattle maimers, and cowardly assassins crouching behind stone walls to shoot at an unsuspecting victim in the opening?

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The answer is *L s. d.*, not an agreeable one, but truth is not always composed of sweetstuff.

The constabulary are recruited from the sons of peasants and farmers. They are drilled, disciplined, well fed, well clothed, well paid, and show themselves well conducted. During all the bad times, there was not a single case of a disaffected man, though every sort of inducement must have been brought to bear on them. The prevailing characteristic of all ranks has been the high sense of duty, so that they composed the most mobile and the most effective corps in Europe.

As detectives, they have, however, proved quite ineffective, because the peasant has everywhere been too shrewd for them; 'yet the relative position of the police to the people, and the intimate connection with America, marked it out as a force peculiarly adapted to the prevention and detection of crime committed in Ireland, but often inspired from America.' So wrote one of the most experienced resident magistrates, Mr. Clifford Lloyd, afterwards Minister of the Interior in Egypt, and subsequently Lieutenant Governor of the Mauritius and Consul at Erzeroum, where he died at the age of forty-seven.

The constabulary are enlisted without any consideration of creed, but when Sir Duncan MacGregor was at the head of the force he arranged that of the five men in every police barrack, two should be Protestant, and three Roman Catholic, or *vice-versa*. This check has subsequently been swept away, by no means to the advantage of the service.

Very recently the Inspector General, and the Assistant Inspector General retired, and their places were filled by an Englishman and an Irishman, neither of whom had been in the force, which gave rise to great and well-founded dissatisfaction. One of the pair is a warm friend of my own, but that is no reason why I should approve of the appointment.

While the bulk of the officers are Irish gentlemen, educated in Ireland, Englishmen are also to be found among them. Officers enter by nomination after passing an examination designed to show that they are not 'crammed,' but the perversity of the examiners has always thwarted this excellent intention. That is like the admirable purpose of Cabinet Ministers, bent on reforming their different departments, but dexterously 'blocked' by the permanent officials.

Before the reduction commenced by Mr. Wyndham, the Constabulary numbered 10,679, and cost L1,390,917. In my opinion it will be found necessary in the future, not only to keep the force up to its full strength, but to materially increase its number so soon as the Government becomes the sole landlord in Ireland, especially now that they are going to have Volunteers in the country.

The existence of this force merely means that landlords will be shot at half price; so, for the sake of their own skins, the latter had better get clear of the country before the

recruits have had much musketry instruction. The badness of the shooting saved many a landlord in the eighties, and if that is remedied, why they will be popped as easily as my grandson knocks over rabbits.

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There is a story of an English tourist seeking for information about the distressful country, he being at Tallaght near Dublin.

He asked his carman whether there were many Fenians about.

‘A terrible lot, your honour,’ replied the fellow.

‘I suppose a thousand?’ the tourist suggested, somewhat apprehensively.

‘That is so, and twenty thousand more,’ answered the carman without hesitation.

‘Are they armed?’ was the next question.

‘They are that, and finely into the bargain.’

‘And are they prepared to come out?’ the tourist being much perturbed, and thinking it would be his duty to write to the *Times*.

‘Prepared to come out in the morning, your honour.’

‘And why don’t they do so?’ with English common sense.

’Begorra, because maybe if they did, the constabulary would put them in jail.’

So the constabulary have some value after all, in spite of the sneers of Home Rule members in the House of Commons.

Half a dozen Kerry priests screeched with laughter when I told them that story in the train, having met them on a journey to Farranfore.

Here is another I also gave them on that occasion.

A couple of policemen were discussing the state of Ireland once upon a time.

Says Dan to Mick:—

’Sure we’ll niver get peace and quiet in the blessed country until we fetch Oliver Cromwell up from hell to settle the unruly.’

Replies Mick to Dan:—

‘Have done, you fool, isn’t he a deal quieter where he is?’

Judge Keagh thought worse of his fellow countrymen than do other men with less than his great experience, and although a Roman Catholic, he had to be escorted by two constables wherever he went.

He was told that he ought to be guarded by four policemen, because the two might be attacked.

But he knew the man that said it wanted to make the protection more conspicuous, so he replied:—

’Sir, I have the most implicit confidence in the invincible cowardice of my fellow countrymen.’

That recalls an observation of my own.

On one occasion, a telegram was sent from the Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Kerry to the Scotland Yard authorities to say there was to be an attempt to murder me in London, and in consequence a gentleman from the department for providing traffic directors in metropolitan streets called at my house in Elvaston Place, to inquire what police protection I wanted.

‘None,’ said I, ’for if a man shoots me in London he’ll be hung, and every Irish scoundrel is careful of his own neck. It’s altogether another matter in Ireland, where Mr. Gladstone has carefully provided that he shall be tried by a jury, the majority of which are certain to be land leaguers.’

I brought out the same idea on a more important occasion.

Once, in Mr. Froude’s house, Professor Max Mueller—who was a great admirer of Mr. Gladstone—remarked that after all I had not much reason to complain, because I had had plenty of police protection in Ireland.

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‘I should prefer equal laws,’ said I.

‘What inequality of law have you to find fault with?’ he asked.

‘Well,’ I replied, ’if a land leaguer shoots me in Ireland, he will be tried by a jury of land leaguers. If I shoot one of them, I would require that I be tried by a jury of landlords, and if that be granted I’ll clear the road for myself of all suspicious characters, and ask for no more police protection than you require at Oxford.’

He subsided at that, and Froude laughed at him so heartily, that he had not another word to say on the subject all day.

Did you ever hear the rhyme about moonlighting? It runs as follows:—

’The difference betwixt moonlight and moonshine
The people at last understand,
For moonlight’s the law of the League
And moonshine is the law of the land.’

That would have clinched my argument beyond all dispute, but the expressive poem was not written at that time.

Reverting to the topics of this chapter, it is needless to observe that there is a bond of connection between constabulary and dispensary doctors, for the latter are needed on many occasions to attend to the wounds of those just arrested.

The dispensary doctors do not form a satisfactory feature of Irish life, simply because the farmers elect individuals out of friendship.

A dispensary doctor had to be appointed at Farranfore, and I was most anxious to get the best man for the position. So I proposed that the candidates’ papers should all be submitted to Sir Dominic Corragun, a Roman Catholic physician of high standing in Dublin.

I could not even get a seconder to my motion, which therefore fell stillborn, and I wrote to Lord Kenmare that if Gull or Jenner had been suggested, neither of them would have obtained three votes.

Virtually the appointment of the dispensary doctor is vested in the dispensary Committee, which is a local body, usually consisting of one or more guardians, and four or five specially elected ratepayers. In the same way are chosen all the local sanitary authorities, who are of course under the District Council.

You remember that *Punch* called the sanitary inspector the insanitary spectre, but the beneficent climate of Ireland fortunately averts all the evils his authority would not be able to arrest if it came to really checking filth.

I remember the occasion of the election of another dispensary doctor, when I was curtly told that only a moonlighter could hope to be appointed.

My reply was:—

’I suppose it is easier for him to poison people when he is drunk than to shoot landlords when in an inebriated condition.’

I do know that a dispensary doctor not thirty miles from Killarney was thrown out of his trap, because he drove the horse through his own front door, when he was under the intoxicated impression he was entering his stable yard.

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He broke his leg, and as there was no one to set it, he told his nephew to get a pail of plaster of Paris, and he himself would tell him how to manage the operation.

First they had a glass of whisky to fortify them for the ordeal, and then another, and after that a third to drink good luck to the broken leg.

Finally, when they set about it, the nephew spilt the whole pail of plaster of Paris over the bed in which his uncle lay, and then fell in a drunken stupor into the mess. There they both stayed all night until they were hacked out with a chisel in the morning.

It is strange that the Irish, who are brimful of shrewd sense, use no more discretion about appointing schoolmasters than dispensary doctors.

The petty pedagogues, who are the Baboos of Ireland, are drawn from the small-farmer class. There is great competition among the incompetent to get lucrative posts in my native land: they probably appreciate the Hibernian eccentricity of giving important positions to the men whose claims in any other country would never obtain a moment's consideration.

There was a schoolmaster near Castleisland, who died of sparing the rod but not sparing the potation. His family were anxious his nephew should be appointed.

As he was an utter ne'er-do-weel, the parish priest justly considered him unfit for the situation, and brought from a neighbouring county a schoolmaster highly recommended by the National Convention.

They had a quiet way of expressing their feelings in Kerry in those days, and the moonlighters fired by night through the windows of every one who sent their children to the nominee of the parish priest.

The District Inspector thought he had better look into the matter himself, for it was stated they had always fired high with the sole purpose of intimidating the occupants of the various cabins.

However, when this inspecting authority found a bullet-hole in a window-sill only three feet from the ground, he observed:—

'Well, that shot was meant to kill.'

One farmer standing by remarked:—

'It was not right to fire into a house where there were a lot of little children.'

'Begorra,' cried another, in a tone of virtuous indignation, 'the careless fellows might have killed the poor pig!'

That was sworn before me.

Here is another incident, also sworn to in my presence.

I must explain that the first poor rate was in 1848, and half was made up by local subscription, while the rent was added by the presentment of the county, and not paid out of the rates. It was in those days a common practice for dispensary doctors to put down on the list imaginary subscriptions from friends, so as to draw more from the county.

A young fellow, whose name had thus been used, fired into a Protestant doctor's house, and threatened to murder everybody unless he was given some money.

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He obtained half a crown, with which he bought a pint of whisky and a mutton pie; but just as he was putting his teeth into the crust of the latter, he paused in horror.

‘I was near being lost for ever, body and soul,’ says he, ’this being Friday, and me so close on tasting meat.’

The woman in the place where he bought the provisions proposed to keep the mutton pie for him until the following day.

He thanked her civilly, and went away, but had the misfortune to mistake the police barracks for the rival whisky store, and was promptly arrested for threatening with intent to do injury.

The next day he asked to be allowed to eat his pie, which is how the story came out.

The dispensaries are often worked with more attention to the pocket of those on the premises than is compatible with the principles of honesty, as recognised outside the legal and medical professions. At one dispensary in Kerry the Local Government Board was horrified at the consumption of quinine—an expensive medicine. Indeed, so much disappeared that, if it had not been for the chronic aversion of any low-born Irishman to outside applications of liquid, it might have been surmised that the patients were taking quinine baths. The matter was privately put into the hands of the police, who within a week arrested the secretary getting out of a back window with a big bottle of quinine, which he meant to sell.

That man, for the rest of his life, inveighed against the petty and mischievous interference with private industry tyrannically waged by public bodies.

I should like to claim for Kerry the honour of being the land where the following hoary chestnut originally was perpetrated, the exact locality being Castleisland.

A landlord, who had returned in a fit of absent-mindedness to his property after a sojourn in England, was condoling with a woman on the death of her husband, and asked:—

‘What did he die of?’

’Wishna, then, did he not die a natural death, your honour, for there was no doctor attending him?’

A not dissimilar story is that which concerns a Scotch laird who had fallen very sick, so a specialist came from Edinburgh to assist the local murderer in diagnosing the symptoms.

The canny patient felt sure he would not be told what was the matter, so he bade his servant conceal himself behind the curtains in the room where the doctors talked it over, and to repeat to him what they said.

This is what the faithful retainer brought as tidings of comfort to the alarmed invalid:—

’Weel, sir, the two were very gloomy, one saying one thing and the other another; but after a while they cheered up and grew quite pleasant when they had decided that they would know all about it at the post-mortem.’

That recalls to my mind Sidney Smith’s definition of a doctor as an individual who put drugs of which he knew very little into a body of which he knew considerably less.

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There is a rare lot of truth in some witticisms.

For some illogical reason only known to my own brain—perhaps with the desire of keeping up the fashion for inconsecutive and rambling observations common to all books of reminiscences—the foregoing stories suggest to my mind the excuse made to me by a wary scoundrel for not paying his rent.

’I had an illegant little heifer as ever your honour cast an eye over, and who is a better judge than yourself, God bless you? But the Lord was pleased to take her to Himself, and it would be flat heresy for me not to say He is not as good a judge as your honour’s self.’

There was an action brought against a veterinary surgeon for killing a man’s horse.

Lord Morris knew something of medicine, as he did of most things, and asked if the dose given would not have killed the devil himself.

The vet. drew himself up pompously, and said:—

‘I never had the honour of attending that gentleman.’

‘That’s a pity, doctor,’ replied Morris, ‘for he’s alive still.’

The Government introduced into the House of Lords an additional bill for the complication and confiscation of landed property in Ireland.

Lord Morris said it reminded him of the bill a veterinary surgeon sent in to a friend of his, the last item of which ran:—

‘To curing your grey mare till she died, 10s. 6d.’

Never was the Irish question more happily expressed than in his famous reply to a lady who asked him if he could account for disaffection in Ireland towards the English.

’What else can you expect, ma’am, when a quick-witted race is governed by an intensely stupid one?’

Lord Morris told many stories, but for a change, here is one told of him.

A Belfast tourist was riding past Spiddal, and asked a countryman who lived there.

’One Judge Morris, your honour; but he lives the best part of his time in Dublin.’

‘Oh yes,’ says the other, ‘that’s Lord Chief Justice Morris.’

’The very dead spit of him, your honour; and I was told he draws a thousand a year salary.’

‘He has five thousand five hundred a year.’

‘Ah, your honour, it’s very hard to make me believe that.’

‘Why don’t you believe it?’

’Because when he’s down here he passes my gate five days in the week, and I never saw the sign of liquor on him.’

Evidently the bigger salary the bigger profit to the whisky distiller was the rustic’s theory.

I have forgotten how the story came to my ears, but I told it to Lord Morris, who much appreciated it.

Another Kerry story, not unlike one narrated earlier in this chapter, runs thiswise:—

Two men came to order a coffin for a mutual friend called Tim O’Shaughnessy.

Said the undertaker:—

’I am sorry to hear poor Tim is gone. He had a famous way with him of drinking whisky. What did he die of?’

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Replied one of the men:—

’He is not dead yet at all; but the doctor says he will be before the morning; and sure he should know, for he knows what he gave him.’

Sometimes, however, the patient is quite as clever as the doctor.

A physician in Dublin had a telephone put in his bedroom, and when he was rung up about half-past one on a freezing wintry night, he told his wife to answer it.

She complied, and informed him:—

‘It is Mr. Shamus O’Brien, and he wants you to come round at once.’

The physician knew this to be purely an imaginary case of illness, so not wishing to be disturbed, said to her:—

‘Tell him the doctor is out, and will not be home till morning.’

Unfortunately he spoke so near the telephone that his remark was audible to the patient. So when the wife had duly delivered the message, the answer came back:—

‘If the man in your bed is a doctor, send him here.’

CHAPTER XIV

IRISH CHARACTERISTICS

It’s the proudest boast of my life that I am an Irishman, and the compliment which I have most appreciated in my time was being called ‘the poor man’s friend,’ for I love Paddy dearly though I see his faults. Yes, perhaps one of the reasons why I love him is because I do see the faults, for the errors of an Irishman are often almost as good as the virtues of an Englishman, and are far more diverting into the bargain. You must not judge Paddy by the same standard as you apply to John. To begin with, he has not had the advantages, and secondly, there’s an ingrained whimsicality, for which I would not exchange all the solid imperfections of his neighbour across the Irish Channel.

You would not judge all Scotland by Glasgow, and so you should not fall into the error of judging all Ireland by Belfast. Kerry is the jewel of Ireland, and it is with Kerry that I have fortunately had most to do in my life.

Whilst I am alluding to the mistake of generalising, let me point out how erroneous it is ever, historically, to talk of Ireland as one country. When Henry II. annexed the whole land by a confiscation more open but not more criminal than that instigated by Mr.

Gladstone, there were four perfectly separate kingdoms in the island. Now there are four provinces which are quite distinct, and an Ulster man, or a Munster man, or a Connaught man, knows far more, as a rule, of England, or even Scotland, than he does of the other three provinces of his native isle. For one Ulster man who has been in Munster, three hundred have been to Liverpool or Greenock, and until lately there was no railway between Connaught and Munster, so that you had to go nearly up to Dublin to get from one to the other.

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There is much that is incomprehensible to the Englishman who comes among us taking notes, and not the least is that no one wants his cut-and-dried schemes of reforming what we do not wish to reform. As for conforming to his method and rule by vestry and county council autocracy in a methodical manner, it is utterly at variance with the national temperament. Very often, too, the stranger falls a victim to the Irishman's love of fun, and goes back hopelessly 'spoofed' and quite unaware what nonsense he is talking when he lays down the law on Ireland far from that perplexing land.

'Don't you want three acres and a cow?' asked an enthusiastic tourist from Birmingham, soon after Mr. Jesse Collins had provided the music-halls with the catch-phrase.

'As for the cow I would not be after saying it would not be a comfort, but what would the pig want with so much land?' was the peasant's reply.

And that suggests an opportunity to give as my opinion that the most practical measure England could take to benefit Ireland would be to drain the large bogs and so improve fuel. In some places the bogs are likely to be exhausted, but in others there is plenty of turf (turf, O Saxon, is not the grass on which you play cricket or croquet, but is the Hibernian for peat). Indeed, there is ample for all the needs of Ireland for a hundred years to come, but it should not be used in the shamefully wasteful way so often noticeable. It is no excuse that the heat it contains is not so great as in coal.

If coal were to run out in England, to what a premium would turf rise in Ireland!

Formerly turf could be picked up free, and even now it is very cheap, the chief expense to the consumer being the cost of transport from the bog to the turf rick behind the cabin.

The mineral rights of Ireland are most deceptive. There are plenty of indications of minerals, but they are of too poor a nature to warrant working.

Personally, I tried working coal-pits near Castleisland for three months, and silver lead was worked for six months near Tralee by a company which was more successful in working its own way with the bankruptcy court. I firmly believe the reputed mineral wealth of Ireland to be greatly exaggerated, and should never advise any one to invest money in a syndicate for its discovery. Smelting was largely perpetrated in olden times in Ireland, which entailed cutting down the oak forests, that then crossed the country, to obtain fuel, the ore being brought from England. But the introduction of the coke process in the north of England settled that industry, which was one of the earliest Irish ones doomed to extinction.

An Irish industry which as yet shows no sign of losing its commercial importance is the blessed institution of matrimony, a holy thing which in Ireland is particularly beneficial to

the pockets of the priest, who pronounces the blessing, and to the distiller, who sells the whisky, in which the future of the happy pair is pledged.

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The matrimonial arrangements of Irish farmers in Kerry may sound queer to an English reader, but are the outcome of an innate, though unwritten, law that the whole family have a vested interest in the affair.

For example, when the family is growing up, the farm is handed over to the eldest son, who gives the parents a small allowance during their lives, while the fortune that he gets with his wife goes, not to himself, but to provide for his younger brothers and sisters.

Hence, if the eldest son were to marry the Venus de Medici with ten pounds less dowry than he could get with the ugliest wall-eyed female in the neighbourhood, he would be considered as an enemy to all his family.

A tenant of a neighbour of mine actually got married to a woman without a penny, a thing unparalleled in my experience in Kerry, and his sister presently came to my wife for some assistance.

My wife asked her:—

‘Why does not your brother support you?’

And she was answered:—

’How could he support any one after bringing an empty woman to the house?’

There was a tenant of mine, paying about twenty-five pounds a year rent, who died, and his son came to me to have his name inscribed in the rent account.

I asked him what will his father had made.

He replied that he had left him the farm and its stock.

‘What’s to become of your brother and sister?’ says I.

‘They are to get whatever I draw,’ says he.

‘That means whatever you get with your wife?’

‘That is so.’

’Well, suppose you marry a girl worth only twenty pounds, what would happen then?’

‘That would not do at all,’ very gravely.

‘Is there no limit put on the worth of your wife?’

‘Oh,’ says he, ‘I was valued at one hundred and sixty pounds.’

I found out afterwards he had one hundred and seventy with his wife.

A tenant on the Callinafercy estate got married, and the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law did not agree. So the elder came to complain to the landlord of the girl's conduct, and after copiously describing various delinquencies with the assistance of many invocations of the saints, she wound up with:—

'And the worst of all, Mr. Marshall, is that she gives herself all the airs of a three hundred pound girl and she had but a hundred and fifty.'

Filial obedience in the matter of marriage is as uniform in these classes in Kerry as it is conspicuous by its absence in old English novels and comedies. The sons never kick at the unions, the daughters are never hauled weeping to the altar, while an elopement or a refusal to fulfil a matrimonial engagement would arouse the indignation of the whole country side.

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Decidedly these marriages turn out better than the made-up marriages in France. I will go further, and seriously affirm my belief that the marriages in Kerry show a greater average of happiness than any which can be mentioned. To be sure there is the same dash after heiresses in Kerry that you see in Mayfair, and the young farmer who is really well-to-do is as much pursued as the heir to an earldom by matchmaking mothers in Belgravia. But the subsequent results are much more harmonious in Kerry, and though the landlord's advice is often asked to settle financial difficulties in carrying out the matrimonial bargains, less frequently is he called upon to settle differences between man and wife.

'Sure, he's well enough meaning, your honour, with what brains the Blessed Virgin could spare for him,' is the sort of remark a wife will make on behalf of her lazy husband.

Fidelity is the rule; so is reasonable give and take, though each, being human, likes to receive better than to give. And one thing which impresses a stranger is the rarity of illegitimate children out of the towns. This is, of course, partly due to the influence of the priests, but partly also to the innate purity of the Irish character, as well as by the standard of respectability:—

'Ah, he's a strong man,' you will hear said of So-and-So.

'How do you prove that?' says I.

'Why, has he not his farm, and his family with one son a priest, and one daughter in a convent, and he with a bull for his own cows?'

Could you want more to get him on the County Council if he has no conscience and a convivial taste in the matter of whisky?

There can be no doubt that the Irish take better care of their children than the parents of similar position in either England or Scotland. Cases of cruelty, which so constantly disfigure the police courts in both the latter countries, are very rarely heard in the sister isle.

It is true that in many cases they cannot do much for their offspring, but what little they are able to do is done with a good will and ungrudgingly.

I remember a Saharan explorer telling me that in the desert he came across some tribe, stark naked, utterly poor, but all on apparently affectionate terms. He was much impressed with the love shown by the children of all ages for their parents, and inquired what the latter did to inspire such enviable emotion.

'We give them a handful of dates, when there are any.'

It was apparently their sole form of sustenance.

The Irishman is very good to his wife, although the courting is a matter of business, as I have shown. Wife-beating and even more ignoble forms of marital cruelty are almost unknown.

This is surely a big national asset.

Furthermore, the Irish are a very moral people; and this in spite of the close proximity and confinement necessitated by the crowded condition of many cabins.

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I was going to add that the light food may have something to say to this, but as the Irish are not remarkable for their small families, this would be an unwarrantable aspersion.

Of course in the big towns there are women of no importance, and Dublin has always borne rather a lively reputation in this respect, though that in no way affects the general high standard of morality.

The climate of the country, despite the moisture, is one conducive to good health, owing to the absence of any extreme vicissitudes.

It may be asked why, considering the overcrowding and insanitary conditions of living in the miserable cabins, there is not more disease, and my reply is that the peat which is burnt is so healthy as to act as a disinfectant.

Indigestion, like lunacy, is, however, largely on the increase.

Nearly any old woman—or old man for the matter of that—as well as a sad majority of younger people, will tell you:—

‘I have a pain in the stomach,’ with the accent on the second syllable of the locality.

This is due to excessive consumption of tea.

Nearly twenty times as much tea must be drunk now in Kerry as in the early sixties, and so far as I can recollect tea was unknown, not only in the cabins but among the farmers until after the famine.

Fairly good tea is obtained, for the Irish will never buy tea unless they are asked a high price, and for that price they usually, owing to competition, obtain an article not too perniciously adulterated.

What is highly injurious is the method of making the tea.

A lot is thrown into the pot on the fire in the cabin in the morning, and there it stands simmering all day long, that those who want it may help themselves.

This is in sharp contrast to the method employed by Dr. Barter, the famous hydropathic physician at Cork, one of the cleverest men I ever met and one of the very few who never permitted medicine under any circumstances, relying on water, packing, and Turkish baths, with strict attention to diet.

He used to make tea by putting half a teaspoonful into a wire strainer which he held over his cup, and pouring boiling water upon the leaves, the contents of his cup became a pale yellow, to which he added a little milk and instantly drank it off, the whole process lasting but a few seconds. I remember he equally disapproved of the Russian method

of drinking tea in a glass with lemon, of the fashionable way of letting the water ‘stand off the boil’ upon the leaves in a teapot, and of the Hibernian stewing arrangement alluded to above.

Personally I regard all hydros as so many emporiums of disease, an opinion in which I am singular, but that does not convince me I am wrong.

A bailiff once went to St. Ann’s Hydro to serve a writ, and he told me afterwards that he served it on his victim in a Turkish bath, remarking:—

’And your heart would have melted within your honour in pity for the poor creature not having a pocket to put the document in.’

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Which observation recalls to my mind the story of a gentleman in a Turkish bath asking a friend to dinner, and saying:—

‘Don’t mind dressing; come just as you are.’

Another misunderstood answer was that of the absent-minded man who entered a hansom and began to read a paper.

‘Where to?’ at last cabby asked laconically.

‘Drive to the usual place.’

’I’m afraid I have too much on the slate there, sir, unless you pay my footing.’

‘Oh, go to hell,’ retorted the other in a rage.

’It’s outside the radius, sir, and it will be a steep pull for my old horse after we’ve dropped you.’

The light-heartedness of the Celt is another feature which strikes the least observant stranger.

An Irishman has been described as a man who confided his soul to the priest, and his body to the British Government, whilst he holds himself devoid of any vestige of responsibility for the care of either.

Here is another tale, illustrative of his contentment.

A philosopher, in search of happiness, was told by a wise man that if he got the shirt of a perfectly happy man and put it on, he would himself become happy.

The philosopher wandered over the world, but could find no man whose happiness had not some flaw, until he fell in with an Irishman; with whom he promptly began to bargain for his shirt, only to find he had not one to his back.

From philosophy to the deuce is not a big stride, according to the view of those folk who jibe at political economy and all the abstract of virtues and governments. So, on the tail of their fancy, I am reminded of another story about the devil—a very large number of Irish stories are connected with him, because in a very special sense he is the unauthorised patron saint of the sinners of the country, and he has had far too much to say to its government into the bargain.

An Englishman, in the witless way in which Saxons do address Irishmen, asked a labourer by the wayside:—

‘If the devil came by, do you think he would take me or you?’

The labourer never hesitated, but replied:—

‘He’d take me, your honour.’

‘Why do you say that?’

‘Oh, he would,’ says he, ‘because he’s sure of your honour at any time.’

The Irishman is not so black as he may seem to the Saxon, who reads with disgust the horrors that mar the beauty of the Emerald Isle, and I should say that his finest trait is patience under adversity. No nation, for example, could have more calmly endured the terrible sufferings of the famine, more especially as the high-strung nerves of the Celt render him physically and mentally the very reverse of a stoic.

Again, in no other nation are the family ties closer.

The first thought of those who emigrate to America is to remit money to the old folk in the cabin at home. So soon as the emigrants have obtained a reasonable degree of comfort they will send home the passage money to pay for bringing out younger brothers or sisters to them.

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Did you ever hear the story of the homesick Kerry undergraduate at Oxford, at his first construe with his tutor, translating *contiguare omnes* as ‘all of them County Kerry men’?

It was a true home touch, though not exactly a classical reading of the passage.

In the same way, in my boyish days at Dingle, we all of us firmly believed that King John had asked in what part of Kerry Ireland was. That question was our local Magna Charta, though what the origin of the tradition was I have no idea.

But then things do differ according to the point of view, and ours of history was not stranger than many others of far more importance.

As an example of lack of comprehension I would cite the following incident.

An English gentleman was shooting grouse in Ireland. He got very few birds, and said to the keeper:—

‘Why, these actually cost me a pound apiece.’

‘Begorra, your honour, it’s lucky there are not more of them,’ was the unexpected answer.

This allusion to sport reminds me of the Frenchman’s description of hunting in Ireland, which was to the effect that about thirty horsemen and sixty dogs chased a wretched little animal ten miles, which resulted in seven casualties, and when they caught the poor beast not one of them would eat him.

The French do not always appreciate our institutions. One of them landing at Queenstown in the middle of the day asked if there was anything he could amuse himself with between then and dinner-time.

‘Certainly,’ said the waiter; ‘which would you like, wine or spirits?’

By way of amusing the reader, before going any further, I will give him a chance of reading a genuine, but unique testament in which I figured, and which is not a bit more queer than many which have been as formally proved.

’I Robert Shanahan in my last will and testament do make my wife Margaret Shanahan Manager or guardian over my farm and means provided she remains unmarried if she do not I bequeath to her 2 shillings and sixpence I leave the farm to my son Thomas Shanahan provided he conducts himself if not I leave the farm to my son Robert Shanahan I also wish that there should be a provision made for the rest of the family out of the farm according as the following Executors which I appoint may think fit Mr. Hussey Esq. Revd. Brusnan P.P. and James Casey of Gorneybee. Given under my heand this 7th day of February 1872.

his

ROBERT X SHANAHAN.

mark

Witnessed by
JOHN O'BRIEN.
JEREMIAH CONNOR.'

I have a few tales to tell of Kerry landlords, a race who would have furnished Lever with a worthy theme, men as humorous as they are brave, as diverting as they can stand, loyal to the Crown despite much disparagement, and proud to be Irishmen, though so unappreciated by the paid agitators and their weak tools.

However, as I wish to be on good terms with all my neighbours in this world, and with the ghosts of the departed ones when I meet them in the next, I am not going to give many names or rub up susceptibilities.

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Of Kerry landlords, Lord Kenmare naturally suggests himself to be first mentioned. He has been somewhat unjustly attacked more than once about the condition of Killarney as though the town was his private property. As a matter of fact, he is utterly powerless there, as it was all leased away for five hundred years by his grandfather. About the town the following may be worth telling:—

A very neat plan was drawn up for improving it, which included a gateway between every double block of houses to lead down to the stables and garden, but as it was not thought necessary to put a subletting clause into the lease, the actual consequence was that all these passages were converted into filthy lanes. Outside the town Lord Kenmare has built some nice cottages, but within its confines he could effect nothing.

To show you how short-lived is Irish gratitude, ponder over this:—

When Mr. Daniel O'Connell, son of the great Dan, stood for West Kerry as a Unionist, he was warned by the police officer that he could not be answerable for his life if he came into Cahirciveen, for he had only twenty constables to protect him; and his wife—-a most charming woman—when driving through the town was surrounded by an insulting mob, members of which actually spat in her face.

That reminds me of a similar experience which befell the wife of Mr. Cavanagh, the man without arms and legs, who, until denounced by the Land League, was exceptionally popular.

Mrs. Cavanagh was walking along the road in Carlow carrying broth and wine to a poor sick woman, when she found herself the target for a number of stones and had to run for her life amid a shower of missiles.

Despite his exceptional infirmities Mr. Cavanagh could do almost anything. He used to ride most pluckily to hounds, strapped on to his saddle. On one occasion the saddle turned under him, and the horse trotted back to the stable-yard, with his master hanging under him, his hair sweeping the ground, bleeding profusely; he merely cursed the groom with emphatic volubility, had himself more safely readjusted, and then rode out once more.

He always wore pink when hunting. One day a pretty child of ten years old was out with her groom, who followed the scent so ardently, that he forgot all about his charge, who was left behind, and finding herself lost in a wood, began to cry.

Suddenly there swooped out on a very big horse, the armless and legless figure of Cavanagh in his flaming coat, and seeing her predicament, he seized her rein somehow —she never seems quite clear how—saying:—

'Don't be frightened, little girl, for I know who you are, and will take care of you.'

He was as good as his word, but the high-strung, sensitive child, so soon as she was in her mother's embrace, went from one fit of hysterics to another, crying:—

'Oh, mummy, I've seen the devil, I've seen the devil.'

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In after years they became great friends, and he often dined with her after she married and settled in London.

Reverting to Lord Kenmare, the following story, which in another version recently won a railway story competition in some newspaper, really pertains to his son Lord Castlerosse.

On a line in Kerry there is a sharp curve overhanging the sea. An old woman in a great state of nervous agitation was bundled at the last moment into a first-class compartment.

Lord Castlerosse, the only passenger in the compartment, by way of relieving her obvious agitation, tried to calm her by telling her she could change at the next station.

‘Is it me that can be aisy,’ she replied, ’when it’s my Pat is driving the engine, and him having a dhrop taken, and saying he’ll take us a shpin round the Head?’

After all, to my mind, for sheer humour of a quiet sort, nothing beats the observation of the late Sir John Godfrey, who never got up before one in the day, and invariably breakfasted when his family were having lunch. Being asked one day to account for this rather inconvenient habit, he replied:—

‘The fact is, I sleep very slow.’

I commend this to every sluggard who wants an excuse to resume his slumbers when awakened too soon.

There was a gentleman who had rather a red nose, and some one remarked that it was an expensive piece of painting, to which some one else significantly added, that it was not a water-colour.

‘No,’ said Sir John, ‘it was done in distemper.’

One night a landlord in Kerry, who shall be nameless, though he has passed over to the great majority, went to bed without having much knowledge how he got there.

Two of his sons crept to the neighbouring town, unscrewed the sign outside the inn, and put it at the end of their parent’s bed.

When he awoke, he looked at the sign for some time in a bewildered way. Then he observed aloud:—

’I thought I went to sleep in my own bed, but I’m d——d if I have not woke in the middle of the street.’

A certain roystering gentleman named Jack Ray got drunk and fell asleep in the woods of Kilcoleman. Some of the Godfrey boys, seeing him prostrate and with foam on his lips, ran to summon their father, saying to him:—

‘There’s a man dead in the wood.’

Sir William hastened to the spot, and having put on his glasses to get a view of the corpse, observed:—

‘Come away, my boys, this man dies once a week.’

Another Kerry landlord, who was also a baronet, dealt with the National Bank, the local manager of which was an arrant snob, who loved a title, and bored everybody with his pretended intimacy with the impecunious baronet. But at last even his patience was exhausted, and he sent the squire a pretty stiff letter about the arrears due.

The other received the letter at breakfast, and showed it to his son just come down from a University, who whistled and ejaculated:—

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‘O tempora! O mores!’

His father instantly retorted:—

‘You get me the temporary, and I’ll promptly see we have more ease.’

In the bad times, an old woman came into the office at Tralee to pay her rent. Mr. Francis Denny was in a real bad humour with somebody else who had defaulted, and he was raging along in a manner qualified to display his intimate acquaintance with the florid embellishments of the language. The old woman listened with evident admiration for some time. At last she ejaculated:—

‘Ah, the nate little man.’

And with that slipped out, without settling her account.

Mr. Francis Denny has the misfortune to be rather lame, and one day another old woman, who liked him, observed:—

’If he had two sound legs under him, there’d be no holding him in Tralee, but he’d be up at the Castle setting the Lord Lieutenant right in his many errors, not to mention going over to London to give the Queen herself a bit of his mind.’

In the bad times, one lady was left in her Kerry residence with her baby boy and a pack of maidservants, her husband having been called over to England.

She had sixty pounds of gold in her bedroom, and one night a housemaid rushed in to say a party of moonlighters were in the house.

The lady threw a sovereign and some silver on to the dressing-table, and hid the rest under her mattress.

In came the masked scoundrels asking for gold, and when she pointed to the money that was visible, one replied that it was not enough.

‘Very well,’ she said, ‘give me your name and I’ll write you a cheque.’

On that they left precipitately, to her intense relief.

All moonlighters calculated upon the terrorism their appearance would cause, and if this was apparently conspicuous by its absence they were nonplussed, because they never felt over secure in their own hearts at the best of times, and grew frightened directly others were not frightened by them.

In all moonlighting affrays no one scoundrel ever became personally conspicuous as a leader, and all the wisest leaders, such as Stephens, Tynan, and Parnell, shrouded their movements in mystery. Fenianism in Ireland since Emmett has never had one capable leader possessing the physical courage to show himself in the forefront on all occasions.

On the other hand, it is a singular fact that nearly every general of note in the army of the United Kingdom, since the time of Marlborough, has come from Ireland. The Duke of Wellington was born in County Meath, Lord Gough in Tipperary, Lord Wolseley in County Carlow, Lord Roberts in Waterford, Sir George White in Antrim, General French in Roscommon, and Lord Kitchener in Kerry.

The attempts of the English Government to manufacture an English general in the South African war were a miserable fiasco. They only produced one, Sir Charles Tucker, and he did his best to atone for the accident of his English birth by marrying a Kerry lady.

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I had the pleasure of meeting Sir Redvers Buller in Killarney, and after he had been there a couple of days he proceeded to describe Kerry to me, who had been managing one fifth of it for several years. His agricultural reforms would have been as drastic as they were ludicrous had any one attempted to carry them out, but when expatiating on them to me, he was not even aware that there was any difference between an English and an Irish acre. When I heard that he was taking charge of the whole army in South Africa, I mentioned that as he had been unable to command three hundred constabulary in Kerry, I was sceptical of his ability to manage the British army. He was without exception the most self-sufficient soldier I ever met, and his subsequent career has not made me change my view.

Here is a soldier story which is mighty illustrative of Irish traits.

A peasant's son in Limerick enlisted in the militia for a month's training, for which he received a bounty of three pounds. With part of this money he bought a pig and gave it to his father to feed up. When the pig was fattened, the father sold it and declined to give him the price. So the son was seen by the police to take his father by the throat, saying:—

'Bad luck to you, old reprobate, do you want to deprive me of my pig that I risked my life for in the British Army?'

Everywhere I like to slip into this book instances of the injuries suffered by Irish landlords, so here is another case *a propos des bottes*, if you will forgive it.

The Knight of Kerry let nine acres of land to a tenant for a rent of forty-five pounds. Having expended a large sum of money in roadmaking and fences, at the tenant's request, he also borrowed thirty-five pounds to build a small house for which he has to pay thirty-five shillings per annum. The commissioners cut down the rent so heavily, that it has resulted in the landlord having to pay five shillings a year for the pleasure of looking at the man in occupation of his land.

Reverting to my reminiscences—or rather to what are for myself less interesting portions, for I am a land agent by profession and an anecdotist only by habit—I remember that an Englishman subsequently a Pasha commanded the coastguard at Dingle in 1856, and then had an encounter with a local Justice of the Peace in which he came off second best.

Captain —— occupied the Grove demesne. The J.P., who had been a Scotch militia officer, had been in the habit of shooting crows over the demesne, and continued to enjoy the sport, to which the Captain strongly objected. After an angry correspondence the J.P. sent a challenge, which the other did not seem to stomach, for he sent an apology by a subordinate with full permission to continue the immolation of the birds. If a cruiser had to capitulate to this bold blockade runner, the Captain himself had to

endure a similar humiliation at the hands of an indignant Kerry man, though he was very popular in Dingle.

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There is nothing pusillanimous about the Irishman, except when in cold blood he was expected to attack an agent, or landlord, or policeman, armed to the teeth. In such cases, he remembered that his parents, by the blessing of the Holy Virgin, had endowed him with two legs, and only one skin, which latter must therefore be saved by the discretionary employment of the former.

In other cases he is very brave, especially in verbal encounters. Fighting is in his blood. That is what makes the Irish soldier the best in the world, and that was why he used to revel in the faction fights. As a paternal Government now prevents the breaking of heads, at all events on a wholesale scale, the pugnacious instincts of the nation have to be gratified by litigation, and certainly there never was such a litigious race in history as the contemporary Ireland.

I know of a case on the Callinafercy estate, where a widow spent fifty pounds 'in getting the law of' a neighbour whose donkey had browsed on her side of a hedge. She took the case to the assizes, and when the judge heard Mr. Leeson Marshall was her landlord, he said:—

'Let him decide it. He's a barrister himself, and can judge far better than I could on such a subject.'

To this there are literally hundreds of parallels every year. Readers of *La Terre* will remember how much of the funds went into the hands of the lawyer who thrived on the animosities of the family, and that sort of thing is constantly reduplicated in Kerry.

'I'd sell my last cow to appeal on a point of law,' I once heard a Killorgin farmer say; and that is typical of all the lower classes in the South and West.

As for the solicitors, I am not going to say a word about them, good or bad: there are men no doubt worthy of either epithet in a profession that preys on the troubles of other folk. But I will tell one very brief story on the topic.

Outside the Four Courts, a poor woman stopped Daniel O'Connell, saying:—

'If you please, your honour, will you direct me to an honest attorney?'

The Liberator pushed back his wig and scratched his head.

'Well now, you beat me entirely, ma'am,' was his answer.

He had more experience than me, being one.

Talking of the Four Courts reminds me of Chief Baron Guillamore, who had as much wit as will provoke 'laughter in court,' and a trifle over that infinitesimal quantity as well.

A new Act of Parliament had been passed to prevent people from stealing timber. A stupid juryman asked if he could prosecute a man under that act for stealing turnips.

‘Certainly not, unless they are very sticky,’ retorted the judge.

His brother was a magistrate, and committed a barrister in petty sessions for contempt of court. An action was brought against him, but the Chief Baron raised so many legal exceptions, that it had finally to be abandoned through the fraternal law-moulding. This action was pending in the civil court, when a lawyer was very impertinent to the Chief Baron in the criminal. Instead of committing him, the Chief Baron said very quietly:—

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’If you do not keep quiet, I shall send to the next Court for my brother.’

Another judge had applied for shares in a company of which a friend of his was secretary. Meeting him in Sackville Street, he stopped him to inquire what would be the paid-up capital of the concern.

The other forgot whom he was addressing, and blurted out the truth by replying:—

’Well, I really cannot tell you just yet, but the cheques are coming in fast.’

The judge withdrew his application by the next post, and confidently expected to see his friend in the dock. I believe in less than six months he was not disappointed.

The poorer class in Ireland do not appear to be business-like in the ordinary sense, however much they may develop commercial instincts after emigrating. It is to promote the latent capacity obviously within their power that creameries and other assisted promotions have been started in various parts of the country, sometimes with great success. Sir Horace Plunkett and others have dealt with all this in the most serious spirit. I prefer to allude to it, and add one anecdote.

A lady asked a respectable old woman how her son was getting on as manager of the creamery, and the reply came after the following fashion:—

’Whisna the poor man and all the trouble he has, and him never able to make the butter and the books scoromund,’ which, being translated, is ‘correspond.’

Another example I can cite of the difficulty in getting people to put their intelligence to practical use in the south is to this effect:—

There was a certain widdy woman in a neighbouring parish who was making great lamentation over her ‘pitaties’ to the priest, and in consequence he lent her a machine for the purpose of spraying them. She professed the profoundest gratitude as well as interest in the implement, but the task speedily became too big an effort, for she subsequently informed me that she had sprayed ’half the field to plase his Rivirence, but left the rest to God.’

And that is the kind of negative piety which is distinctly a characteristic Irish trait.

CHAPTER XV

LORD-LIEUTENANTS AND CHIEF SECRETARIES

Any Irishman who has reached the shady side of threescore years and ten must remember many Lord-Lieutenants—the pompously visible symbols of much vacillating misdirection.

To analyse them would be the work of an historian, to criticise would be superfluous. They have been so many Malvolios, all alike anxious to win the favour of that capricious Lady Olivia Erin, and not one of them has succeeded, though several have merited better fortune than they met with on Irish soil.

The first Lord-Lieutenant I personally met was Lord Carlisle.

He was a gentleman, but not otherwise remarkable. He had come into the Government on the resignation of the Peelites, and his popularity in Ireland was greater than any other holder of the post in the century, possibly owing to his negative qualities, and also to a charm of manner more effusive than usual among Englishmen.

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He had a habit of dropping his state, and going about Dublin, if not like Haroun Alraschid, at least with the independence of men in less august positions.

On one occasion, needing some local information, he went to see the Lord Mayor of Dublin, but finding him out, was given the address of an alderman who could tell him what he wanted to know.

The alderman was not in either, but his wife was, and begged him to stop to lunch, which was just being served.

Lord Carlisle told her he hardly ever ate lunch, and was not in the least hungry.

But under pressure he sat down to the meal, and got on very well with it, whereat the lady remarked:—

'You see, your Excellency, eating is like scratching: when you once begin it is hard to stop.'

His predecessor, Lord Clarendon, had been in office when Lord John Russell, the Prime Minister, urged on the House of Commons a bill for the abolition of the Lord-Lieutenancy. The great point that he made was that the Chief Secretary might become a mayor of the viceregal palace, a thing that has now long been the case, for the Lord-Lieutenant has to be a plutocrat of high descent, and the Chief Secretary is the virtual administrator of Ireland—a thing unknown, however, until the advent of Mr. Foster. The second reading was carried by a majority of over a hundred and fifty, but it was then dropped.

The story went that the Duke of Wellington had suggested to Prince Albert the possible diminution of respect for the Crown in Ireland without a visible representative, and the Teutonic mind could not endure such a notion.

Lord Clarendon upheld the dignity of his position, though he was liked by neither party in Ireland. He is the only Lord-Lieutenant who ever administered sharp discipline to the Orangemen—who regard their loyalty as permitting them a good deal of licence—for he removed the name of their leader, Lord Roden, from the Commission of the Peace because he encouraged a turbulent procession at Dolly's Brae. With his pompous manner he made a very Brummagem monarch, quite indifferent to his unpopularity. As a matter of fact, some allege that all Lord-Lieutenants are hated by the disloyal section of the populace, and if they go through the farce of currying popularity, they can only do so by largely patronising about a dozen shopkeepers, who eventually curse because yet more has not been spent. But this is altogether too limited to be true.

Lord Kimberley followed Lord Carlisle. In those days he was Lord Wodehouse, and the Fenians used to issue mock proclamations, in ridicule of his, signed 'Woodlouse.' He

was an experienced parliamentarian—a man who held office for many years, and worked conscientiously, according to his lights.

In Ireland he always appeared to be a naturalist, perplexed at not understanding the species among which his lot was for the time cast.

His mother was subsequently married to Mr. Crosbie Moore, and she ran away with Colonel Fitz-Gibbon, afterwards Lord Clare.

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Mr. Crosbie Moore had not much sense of humour, as the following tale will show.

He was presiding at Ballyporeen Petty Sessions, when a village tailor was summoned for having his pig wandering on the road.

The fellow pleaded that it was due to great curiosity on the part of the pig, who saw some constabulary passing by, and rushed out to see what they were like.

He made this explanation in such humorous fashion that most of the magistrates were for letting him off; but Mr. Crosbie Moore said it was scandalous that they had directed the police to summon people on that very ground, and they wanted to acquit the culprit because he had made a joke.

The rest of the Bench had to acquiesce, and the tailor was fined one shilling.

He paid his shilling, and said:—

'I have no blame to you at all, gentlemen, except to Mr. Crosbie Moore; and, indeed, if he reflected, he should have known that no live man could keep a woman or a pig in the house when she wanted to be off.'

A subscription raised for him outside the Court realised twenty-three shillings.

Tradition goes that when Lord Kimberley, Lord Carlingford, and Lord Granville were all in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, Mr. Chamberlain—then at the Board of Trade—in a moment of vexation called them 'Gladstone's grannies,' and if the phrase is not his, it most certainly was apt and truthful.

Lord Kimberley was known as 'Pussy' among a gang of disrespectful subordinates. He really did as little to earn respect as he did to forfeit it; in fact he was a pre-eminently respectable mediocrity of the kind that, towards the close of the mid-Victorian period, clung like barnacles to office, and he was a Whig during the period that Whiggism was growing obsolete.

The Duke of Abercorn certainly had no tendencies towards the lavish extravagance by which a modern Lord-Lieutenant has to pay his footing. A short time before he was chosen he had claimed the Dukedom of Chatelherault in France, and was known in consequence among the malcontents as the 'French Frog.' His wife was the daughter of one Duke of Bedford, and when another came to stay at the viceregal, it was for a time called the 'Dukeries.' The A.D.C.'s, who were particularly good-looking, were at once known as the 'Duckeries.'

The Duke of Marlborough settled down well to his work. He was frankly the friend of the landlords, and did his best for them. But he brought no English politicians in his train;

he never thought he could settle every Irish question after he had smoked a pipe over it; and he was never inaccessible.

He came on a visit to Muckross when Sir Ivor Guest had the shooting, and I dined there to meet him. He visited Killarney on several occasions, and on each of them I had long talks with him. I always thought him a painstaking, well-meaning man.

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Lord Cowper was an honest nonentity who left the country in disgust because he was not backed up by the Government. Several modern figureheads would be very much surprised at any Government expecting them to do more than 'understudy Royalty.' But Cowper thought himself a diplomatist; was fond of authoritatively laying down the law on continental affairs, as though he had the refusal of the Foreign Office in his pocket; and felt he ought to have as much support as Palmerston obtained from the various Cabinets he burdened with European embroglios.

However, Lord Spencer, on being reappointed for a second term, took up the thankless task at an especially black moment. He was as brave as a lion; and if his red beard gained him the nickname of 'Rufus,' the Red Viceroy was as fearless as though his life were absolutely secure, instead of depending wholly on the vigilance of those surrounding him.

We all admired Lord Spencer for his firmness; but this was soon discovered to be due to the fact that he absolutely followed the sage advice of Sir Edward Sullivan, the Lord Chancellor, and after the death of the latter, Lord Spencer's weakness was quite as remarkable as his previous firmness.

He was seen on one occasion with his hands pressing his back.

Said one man:—

'I fear his Excellency has lumbago.'

'Not at all,' replied his friend; 'he is feeling for his backbone.'

The state of Westmeath was really the worst feature of the period of his rule, yet Lord Spenser was in the country all the while, and allowed matters to degenerate with his eyes open.

He rode hard to hounds, in spite of countless threats, and might have had a less uncomfortable time had the head of the Constabulary been as thoroughly capable as his subordinates.

Lord Carnarvon very nearly ruined the Government by his communications with Mr. Parnell. He meant well, and struck out a patriotic line of his own, which failed because it was made in absolute ignorance of the Irish character. But he never intended to involve his colleagues, although numbers of people chose to regard him as a Tory Home Ruler. His previous action in resigning the Secretaryship of the Colonies in Lord Derby's third administration, owing to a difference of opinion on parliamentary reform, and his subsequent resignation because he disapproved of Lord Beaconsfield's Eastern action in 1878, showed him to be a man of marked and fearless opinions. Lord Salisbury

ought to have known that he was thrusting a brand into the fire when he sent him to be the official bellows-blower of the Hibernian pot.

Lord Aberdeen will always be remembered as the husband of his wife. Lady Aberdeen was a more ardent Home Ruler than even her brother, Lord Tweedmouth. On one occasion Lord Morris was next her at dinner, and she said she supposed the majority of people in Ireland were in favour of Home Rule.

'Indeed, then, with the exception of yourself and the waiters, there's not one in the room,' was his answer.

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‘Of course, not in the Castle,’ she replied with dignity; ’but in your profession, and when you are on circuit, surely you must meet a good many?’

‘Occasionally—in the dock,’ he drily retorted, after which she discreetly dropped the subject.

Lord Aberdeen was most exemplary during his brief tenure of office, and certainly it was not in his time that the folk christened the royal box at the theatre the ‘loose box,’ in allusion to the rather dubious English guests of the vivacious viceroy.

Lord Londonderry and Lord Zetland may be both briefly bracketed together as having done their duty admirably in times less out of joint than those of their predecessors. Lord Londonderry always drank Irish whisky himself, and recommended it to his guests as a capital beverage—a thing which the licensed victuallers did not mind mentioning to Paddy and Mick when they were having a drop, despite their vaunted contempt of all at ‘the Castle.’

No other Lord-Lieutenant ever had such a mournful experience as Lord Houghton. Son of Monckton Milnes, the ‘cool of the evening,’ he needed his father’s temperament to enable him to endure the boycott which Irish society inflicted on him as the representative of the Home Rule disruption policy. With no class did he go down, and on a crowded market-day in Tralee not a hat was raised to him.

One of his A.D.C.’s was subsequently on the veldt, and when asked if it was not lonely, he replied:—

‘Not more than Dublin Castle, when Houghton was the king.’

On one occasion some people were officially commanded to dine. Not a carriage was to be seen as they drove up to the Viceregal Lodge, so the gentleman told his coachman to drive round the Phoenix Park, as they must be too early. There was still no sign of any gathering as they again approached the official residence, and when they entered they found they were the only guests, and the infuriated Lord Houghton, as well as all his household had been kept waiting twenty minutes by this hapless pair.

Another story, which was much enjoyed in Ireland as showing the pomposity of his Excellency, may be recalled. Whether true it is now difficult to say, but there is no doubt that the tale was started among the very house-party who were at Carton at the time.

The beautiful *chatelaine*, the lovely Duchess of Leinster, was walking through the fields one Sunday afternoon with Lord Houghton.

They came to a gate, which he opened, but to her astonishment proceeded to walk through it first himself.

The indignant Duchess haughtily remarked:—

’The Prince of Wales would not think of passing through a gate before me.’

‘That may be; but I represent the Queen,’ replied Lord Houghton, with unruffled imperturbability.

Lord Cadogan and Lord Dudley come so absolutely into contemporary history that on them nothing can here be said, except that their munificence has rendered it impossible for any peer of moderate private means to hold the office.

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In sober truth, however, the administration of Government really rests with the Chief Secretary in recent times, although it was not so before the advent of Mr. Foster. Men like Lord Naas, Sir Robert Peel the younger, and Mr. Chichester Fortescue—afterwards Lord Carlingford—were mere official cyphers, but after Mr. Gladstone's 1880 ministry this has never been the case.

Of Sir Robert Peel it was wittily said that when Chief Secretary he went through the country on an outside car, which made him take a one-sided view of the Irish question.

Lord Morris said to an inquiring Scottish M.P.:—

'Did you ever know a Scottish Secretary who was not Scottish, or an Irish Secretary who was Irish?'

'No,' said the Scotsman.

'Well, go home and moralise over that as a possible solution of some Irish difficulties, for may be, if an Irishman was sent over, by accident, to be Chief Secretary, the official would not fall into the mistake of trying to reconcile the irerconcilable.'

And to my mind Lord Morris had the last word in every sense.

Mr. W.E. Forster was far too honest to be the tool of Mr. Gladstone's Hibernian dishonesty. He was perfectly fearless, but, beneath his rugged exterior, deeply sensitive. He winced under 'buckshot,' and many other epithets; but abuse and danger alike never prevented him from doing what he had to do to the best of his ability. His earliest acquaintance with Ireland had been in the famine, when he was one of the deputation of succour organised by the Society of Friends, and everybody who has read Mr. Morley's *Life of Cobden* will remember the appreciation of their efforts by the great free-trader.

Mr. Forster did not think the Irish administration should be all 'a scuffle and a scramble,' and he inaugurated a reversal of the old balance between Lord-Lieutenants and Chief Secretaries which has never been subsequently changed. Indeed, it is often only the latter who has a seat in the Cabinet. He was the victim of many misapprehensions—the bulk of them wilful—but one which worried him was a widespread conviction that he was a slow man. His delivery was slow, his manner deliberate, and he did not lightly give an opinion. Yet emphatically he was not a slow man, and as an instance may be stated the fact that he elaborated his scheme of decentralising the powers of the Irish Government in a single evening in December 1881. I know he was harassed, nay, martyrised, beyond endurance, through the evasive volubility of Mr. Gladstone, which, both by mouth and letter, formed a heavier burden than all the Irish attacks; but he was a just and conscientious man, and I never heard of a case where appeal was made to him on

which he did not act as reasonably as was compatible with loyalty to such a Prime Minister.

His courage in walking unarmed and without police escort in Tulla and Athenry was as great as ever was displayed by a knight-errant of old. The Nationalist papers, no longer able to taunt him with cowardice, took to declaring him to be a person notorious for ferocious brutality.

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Sir Wemyss Reid said that in the House of Commons his fellow-members had literally seen his hair whiten during those two years of patriotic martyrdom in Ireland, and I always feel that the inner life of this reticent, commanding statesman would have made a wonderful human document. His capacity, if not his forbearance, has been inherited by his adopted son, Mr. Arnold Forster, the present Secretary for War, who acted as his private secretary in the latter years of his life.

When I read Lord Rosebery's speech advocating a Cabinet of business men, I instinctively thought of the late Mr. W.E. Forster, and it is his heir who is the first illustration of the Liberal Peer's theory. Since Cromwell cleared out the House of Commons, no one has done so much as Mr. Arnold Forster, for he upset the seats of the mighty in the War Office three months after he kissed hands. I wonder how he would have dealt with Parnellism and crime.

Mr. Forster's predecessor, Mr. James Lowther, was an uncommonly capable man, and gifted with a fund of humour which prevented him from taking the Irish too seriously. In 1879 I heard the Irish members in the House of Commons vituperating him after a manner that subsequently became unpleasantly familiar, but was then regarded as a gross breach of the conventions of debate. 'Jim' lay back on the Treasury bench with his hat over his eyes, and to all appearance sound asleep. Never once did he show sign of hearing their verbal tornado; but eventually he sprang to his feet, and with infectious gaiety literally chaffed them to madness. I have often thought that the long-limbed Tory member for Hertford, who was then private secretary to his uncle, Lord Salisbury, must have taken note of the methods of Mr. Lowther in dealing with the Irish party, for it was absolutely on the same lines that he subsequently developed that superb flow of sarcasm which made him, Mr. A.J. Balfour, the popular idol ten years later.

It has been a practice for many years to appoint a man Chief Secretary for Ireland in order to see if he is fit for anything else. This plan turned out well in the case of Mr. A.J. Balfour, for he knew Ireland better than any other Chief Secretary, and when he came to know it properly he was removed.

His brother did as much harm in Ireland as Mr. Arthur Balfour did good. Indeed, in the whole nineteenth century no other incompetent Chief Secretary misunderstood Ireland with such complete complacency, and if it had not been for the supervision which 'A.J.' undoubtedly gave, Mr. Gerald Balfour would have a still worse record.

There was a poem, not particularly brilliant, which may be quoted because it is not widely known:—

'If I had a Balfour who wrong would go,
Do you think I'd tolerate him?—No, no, no!

I'd give him coercion in Kilmainham jail,
And return him to Arthur, who'd laugh at his wail.'

In fact the impression prevailed that Ireland was then sacrificed to the nepotism of Lord Salisbury, who had inflicted the least capable of the House of Cecil on the distressful country.

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When the Duke of York was in Ireland, he stayed with Lord Dunraven, and Mr. Gerald Balfour as Chief Secretary was one of the house-party, and the mother of the Knight of Glin was also there.

A short time before, a chemist from Cork, who had been appointed sub-confiscator, and desired to secure his own position, had heavily cut down the Fitzgerald rents.

Mr. Balfour, by way of making polite conversation, observed to Mrs. Fitzgerald:—

‘I believe your son’s property has been a long time in the family.’

‘Yes,’ she said, ’we got it in the reign of Edward I., and held it until last year, when the Government sent an apothecary from Cork to rob us of it.’

The conversation dropped.

Mr. Arthur Balfour was very plucky, not only personally, but in his legislative efforts, and he did wonders for Ireland—the light railways relieving numbers from starvation, and opening up the country.

An English journalist went down to the West, and tried to make inquiries about the popularity of the Chief Secretary.

He came to the cabin of a man who had been rescued from starvation by getting Government employment, and had thrived so well that he had become possessed of a pig.

This pig, on the appearance of the Englishman, escaped into a potato-field, and he heard the woman of the house shout to her son:—

’Mickey, look sharp and turn out Arthur Balfour before he does any mischief.’

The name of the pig showed the gratitude of the family.

When alluding to Mr. Lowther I omitted to mention that he was always of opinion that a well-planned scheme of education was the best panacea for the Irish troubles, and it certainly would have brought up a generation less keenly sensitive to the exaggerated wrongs of the country to which both sexes are so frantically attached. During his not very lengthy tenure of the office of Chief Secretary it was asserted that Sir George Trevelyan also had some such idea; but whether he went so far as to draft his plan, and it was consigned to some forgotten pigeon-hole by Mr. Gladstone, I cannot say.

When the Duke of Argyll described Sir George Trevelyan as a jelly-fish, he made a comparison which, from my personal experience, I should call particularly apt.

Ireland had very little use for such a flabby politician, and it may be added, he had very little use for Ireland.

He was in such a devil of a fright at being forced to succeed poor Lord Frederick Cavendish that it was some time before the pressure put upon him sufficed to make him accept office, nor would he be induced to go over to Dublin Castle at all until he had been given Cabinet rank. As for the Cabinet, they were so anxious to settle upon a living target for the Home Rulers to practise upon, and so afraid that through his default one of themselves might have to undertake the unpleasant office, that they would have given the prospective victim almost anything he liked, on the principle of letting the condemned criminal choose what he prefers for his final meal before that brief interview with the hangman.

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Directly after the formation of the following Radical Government, I met an Englishman of considerable political importance in Pall Mall, and he observed:—

‘The new Cabinet is quarrelling among themselves.’

‘Who are fighting?’ I asked.

‘Chamberlain and Trevelyan,’ he replied.

‘What about?’

’Chamberlain says that he brought the party back into office, and he wants the Colonial Office; but Gladstone insists on his being content with the Local Government Board. Trevelyan says that, as he has for years had experience in naval affairs, he ought to be made First Lord. But Gladstone, though he cannot prevail on him to be Chief Secretary, has sent him to the India Office.’

‘And may give him free lodgings in Kilmainham if he is refractory,’ I chimed in. ’And so these two are like pigs with their bristles hurt, poor things. There’s a pity.’

Some time later, when I heard Messrs. Chamberlain and Trevelyan were so disgusted with the Home Rule Bill that they were leaving the Government, says I to myself, ’I wonder if Mr. Gladstone in his own heart thinks if he had gratified their wishes about office he could have retained them.’

But as a matter of fact both are patriots far above such demeaning insinuations.

Mr. John Morley was a very well-meaning Chief Secretary, but a very misguided man.

In a conversation with me, Mr. Morley observed that, owing to the agitation, he saw no alternative but to make Parnell Chief Secretary.

I said that would be no use, for if he attempted to do his duty he would be shot, even more readily than I should.

Mr. Morley retorted:—

‘He is the leader of the Irish nation.’

‘I admit it,’ I replied, ’and he is the only man you can make terms with.’

‘How?’ says he.

‘You had better ask him,’ says I, ’to nominate some foreign potentate to appoint commissioners who will say to Mr. Parnell, “Let Ireland pay her share of the national

debt and buy out every loyal person who wishes to leave the country," and then, if Mr. Parnell says, "We are not able to do that," let them retort, "We will then disfranchise you, for this humbug has been going on long enough."'

'That's about it, according to your lights,' replied Mr. Morley.

Was I not right?

It is a singular fact that Ulster and Alsace-Lorraine have about the same acreage—-5,322,334 to 3,586,560—and about the same population—1,581,357 to 1,719,470. The French and Germans are each willing to spend a hundred millions of money and half a million lives, the one to recover, the other to retain, the province, and yet Mr. Gladstone proposed, not only to abandon Ulster, but to put it under the rule of the people the Ulsterites hate most on earth.

It is also remarkable that at the time of the Union the population of Belfast was 35,000, and Dublin 250,000. Now Belfast is 335,000, while Dublin remains at a quarter of a million. Belfast, in point of customs, is the third largest city in the British dominions, coming next after London and Liverpool, whilst it is the finest shipbuilding town in the world.

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Yet its inhabitants were to be sold as though they were African slaves, for the sole purpose of getting votes for the Liberal Government.

I was one day invited by Froude to come to his home to argue out the Irish question with Mr. Jacob Bright and Mr. John Morley.

I counted on having Mr. Froude on my side, knowing his strong views, but as host he would not interfere. However, Miss Cobbe was there, and to my mind was equal to any of the company. With her on my side, I flatter myself we were too many for the others; but the worst of all arguments is that the arguing rarely serves any purpose except to make either party more obstinate.

I knew John Bright very well.

He was far and away the most honest man of all the Liberal party, and he fully realised the fact that a visible concentration of property and universal suffrage could not exist together. He was therefore anxious to enlarge the number of proprietors, but he did not countenance it being done entirely at the expense of the English Government without the tenants having to find such a sum of money out of their own pockets as would give them an interest in paying off the Government charges.

He was a very broad-minded man, with a simplicity of character which was admirable. I liked him much, and my one complaint against him was that he would never accept my invitations to come and pay me a visit in Kerry.

I never heard him make a speech, but with his beautiful voice it was a great treat to hear him read Milton. On one occasion he took me to the House specially to see Mr. Gladstone, but after nearly an hour he had reluctantly to tell me that the Prime Minister could not find leisure for our conversation that day owing to pressure of business, and another opportunity never came.

Although I regret not having met Mr. Gladstone, I yet feel glad that I never shook him by the hand. I may here mention that I never met Mr. Parnell, though I have seen him in the House.

From my point of view Mr. John Morley has a dual existence. As man and as historian he is Jekyl, but as politician he is Hyde.

There is a well-known story about him, so familiar to some of us that it is possibly forgotten in England, wherefore I venture to relate it once more.

He was on a car, and asked the driver:—

‘Well, Pat, you’ll be having great times when you get Home Rule?’

‘We will, your honour—for a week,’ replied the man.

‘Why only a week?’ inquired the politician.

‘Driving the quality to the steamers.’

CHAPTER XVI

GLADSTONIAN LEGISLATION

Although the exact measure of my appreciation of the Irish policy of the most dangerous Englishman of the nineteenth century has already been clearly indicated by casual remarks in previous chapters, that will not absolve me from duly setting forth some sketch of the inestimable amount of evil which resulted from the interest he unfortunately took in my unhappy land.

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If Napoleon was the scourge of Europe, Mr. Gladstone was the most malevolent imp of mischief that ever ruined any one country, and I am heartily grieved that that country should have been mine.

It is so difficult to get English people to take any interest in Irish topics that I fully expect this chapter will be skipped by most of my readers east of Dublin. Yet if any will read these few pages, they will get as clear a view of the harm one man can do a whole land as by wading through hundreds of volumes, for I am giving them the concentrated knowledge I have accumulated by years devoted to profound study of the subject.

The course of history may be taken up almost on the morrow of the famine, for potatoes began to be a scarce crop again in 1850, yet the country was improving rapidly, and the relations between landlord and tenant were as cordial as in any part of the world.

So they continued in absolute amity until what is virtually universal suffrage was introduced and the ignoramus became the tool of every political knave.

Mr. Gladstone stated that he brought in the Irish Church Act to pacify the country in 1868, when the land was as peaceful as English pastures on a Sunday evening. He must really have done so to propitiate English dissenters, for no one in Ireland appeared to want it.

By this Act a resident gentleman was taken away from every parish in Ireland, whereby the evils of absentee landlordism were gravely enhanced.

Mr. Gladstone called it an act of sublime justice from England to Ireland. Previously, in virtue of ancient treaties commencing as far back as the reigns of William and Mary, the English Government was giving Presbyterians a grant—called Regium Donum—of L70,000 a year, and by a more recent arrangement was giving Maynooth a grant of L24,000, but that Whig Government actually paid them off out of the spoils of the Irish Church, thereby saving the British Exchequer L94,000 a year.

And if this be an act of justice, then Aristides can be classed among hypocritical swindlers.

It must be borne in mind that when William Pitt caused the Act of Union to be passed in Parliament, the union of the Churches was a fundamental feature, and this, indeed, was the main inducement held out to Protestants to promote the Union.

Surely it cannot be held to be a valid Union when the principal consideration in it is set aside, to say nothing of increasing the taxation by two million sterling a year more than was ever contemplated by the Act. This was clearly borne out by a Royal Commission composed mostly of Englishmen and presided over by Mr. Childers, an earnest politician and an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Catholic priests who expected that their Church would be established were disappointed, while the landlords, who were generally Protestants, had henceforth to support their clergy and at the same time to pay tithes to the State.

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As Irish taxation increased 50 per cent, while that of England only increased 18 per cent., the Irish people did not find Mr. Gladstone's Act soothing or profitable.

His next perpetration was the Land Act of 1870, whereby he provided that no landlord could turn out his tenant without paying him for all his improvements (even if these had been done without the knowledge or sanction of the landlord) and giving the tenant a compensation in money equal to about one-fourth of the fee-simple.

This Act might have been all right in principle, but it was useless in practice, and the compensation made to the County Court Judge for adjudicature came to far more than the amount awarded.

This is easily accounted for, thus:—

You might as well bring in an Act of Parliament to prevent people cutting off their own noses.

No sane person does such a thing, and no landlord ever turned out an improving tenant.

But the Irish tenants, having almost the sole representation of the country in their hands, returned a body of representatives pledged to the confiscation of landed property; and in order to keep his party in power by securing their votes, Mr. Gladstone brought in the Land Act of 1881.

I heard him introduce the motion in the House of Commons, and his speech was a truly marvellous feat of oratory. He was interrupted on all sides of the House, and in a speech of nearly five hours in length never once lost the thread of his discourse.

As far as I could judge, he never even by accident let slip one word of truth.

When the Act passed, Mr. Gladstone anticipated that eight sub-commissioners would do the work. This number very soon ran up to one hundred sub-commissioners and more than twenty County Court valuers.

The result is that every tenant has been running down his land and letting it go out of cultivation, for the tenants know the commissioners value the ground as they find it, and a premium is thus, of course, put on neglecting the soil.

To show the system on which the valuation was done, many cases have been known of the commissioners arriving to value a property after three o'clock on a December afternoon.

It is a positive fact that there are professional experts who obtain substantial fees for showing tenants the speediest methods of damaging their own land.

All the same I cannot help thinking their services are a matter of supererogation, for a recalcitrant Irish tenant in the South and West needs instruction in no branch of villainy.

On one of Lord Kenmare's estates, I executed drainage works costing over L200. These were dependent upon sluices to keep out the tide at high water. A few days before the land was to be inspected, the tenants put bushes in the sluices, let the tide in and flooded the whole land.

And then a prating, mendacious local schoolmaster began comparing these villains to the patriotic Dutch who flooded their land rather than permit it to be conquered by the national foe.

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I could give scores of such instances of wilful destruction of property for the purpose of obtaining a reduction.

Here is one.

A tenant near Blarney, in County Cork, was seen to be ploughing up a valuable water meadow.

When asked by a gentleman why he was injuring his land, he replied without hesitation that he was going to get his rent fixed, and immediately afterwards he should lay it down again as a water meadow.

It is scarcely credible how great was the amount of perjury that this Act brought into the country.

A tenant on a property to which I was agent, whose rent was L6 a year, swore he expended L395 on improvements and all that it was worth afterwards was L4, 10s. He received the implicit credit of the court.

According to the laws of the Roman Catholic Church perjury in a court of justice is a reserved sin for which absolution can only be given by a bishop or by priests specially appointed for that purpose.

One priest applied to the bishop for plenary powers, and said the bishop to him:—

‘Are the people so generally bad in your parish?’

‘It’s the fault of the laws, my lord,’ replied the priest.

‘What laws?’ asked the bishop.

’Firstly, under the Crimes Act, my poor people have to swear they do not know the moonlighters that come to the house, or they would be murdered.

’Secondly, under the Arrears Act, they have to swear they are worth nothing in the world or they would not get the Government money.

’Thirdly, under the Land Act, while they have to swear up their own improvements, they must also swear down the value of the land, or they will get no reductions.

’So you see, my lord, the sin lies at the door of those who made the infamous laws which lead weak sinners into temptation they cannot be expected to overcome.’

The bishop said nothing, but he gave the priest all the powers he desired.

I myself heard this story from a parish priest who was present, and as I have several times told it to different people, it may have found its way into print, though I have no recollection of ever seeing it in black and white.

Allusion having just been made to the Arrears Act, it may be here opportune to point out that this was the next step in Mr. Gladstone's long sequence of Irish mismanagement. This iniquitous measure provided that no matter how great the arrears owed by the tenant, by lodging one year's rent another could be obtained from the Government, and the landlord was compelled to wipe out the balance. So that if Jack, Tom, and James were all tenants on town land, should Jack be an honest man he obtained no redress, whereas if Tom and James were hardened defaulters they obtained the complete settlement of all their arrears.

To obtain the grant of a year's rent from Government, the tenant had to swear as to his assets and also as to the selling value of his farm.

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Here is an illustration which came under my own observation.

A tenant named Richard Sweeney, whose rent was L48 a year, owed three years' rent. He paid one year, the Government provided another, and the landlord had to forgive the third.

To obtain this result, Sweeney swore that the selling value of his farm was *nil*, and he received a receipt in full.

A few weeks later he served me—as agent for the landlord—with notice that he had sold his interest in the property for L630.

That is not the end of my story.

The purchaser was a man named Murphy, and a very few years afterwards, upon the ground that the rent was too dear, he took the farm for which he had paid L630 to Sweeney into the Land Courts and got the rent reduced to L36.

The absurdity of this system was well brought out before the Fry Commission, when one high-commissioner and a sub-commissioner both said that in valuing the land they took into consideration the tenant's occupation interest.

The reader will see the way this works out, if he will accept the very simple hypothetical case of two tenants holding land to the worth of L40 each, and one of them only paying L20 a year rent. When they both took their cases into the Land Court, the man paying the lower rent of L20 would obtain the larger reduction, because he had the greater occupation.

These facts will show that a Purchase Bill was an absolute necessity. Lord Dufferin truly remarked that landlord and tenant were both in the same bed, and Mr. Gladstone thought to settle their disputes by giving the tenant a larger share than he had ever had before. But the tenant considered that as he had obtained that concession by fraud and violence, if he could only give one effective kick more, he would put the landlord on the floor for the rest of the term of their national life.

When introducing the Land Act of 1870, Mr. Gladstone proved himself if not an Irish statesman, an admirable prophet, for he denounced in anticipation exactly what the effect of the Land Act of 1881 would be.

In 1870, he prospectively criticised such an institution as the Land Court, which in 1881 he proposed, with its power to give a 'judicial rent.'

'But it is suggested we should establish, permanently and positively, a power in the hands of the State to reduce excessive rents. Now I should like to hear a careful argument in support of that plan. I wish at all events to retain at all times a judicial habit

of not condemning a thing utterly until I have heard what is to be said for it; but I own I have not heard, I do not know, and I cannot conceive, what is to be said for the prospective power to reduce excessive rents. If I could conceive a plan more calculated than everything else, first of all, for throwing into confusion the whole economical arrangements of the country; secondly, for driving out of the field all solvent and honest men who might be bidders for farms; thirdly, for carrying widespread demoralisation throughout the whole mass of the Irish people, I must say it is this plan.'

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And again:—

’We are not ready to accede to a principle of legislation by which the State shall take into its own hands the valuation of rent throughout Ireland. I say, “take into its own hands” because it is perfectly immaterial whether the thing shall be done by a State officer forming part of the Civil Service, or by an arbitration acting under State authority, or by any other person invested by the law with power to determine on what terms as to rent every holding in Ireland shall be held.’

This categorical denunciation of the principle which he was then asked, and which he peremptorily refused to sanction, was not enough for Mr. Gladstone, for the records of debate show he went farther, but enough has been cited to show that never was prophecy more fully fulfilled. Outrage followed outrage with a rapidity unequalled in Europe, and that in a country which previous to his remedial measures had practically been unstained by an agrarian outrage for fifty years.

It would certainly be both remiss of me, and altogether below the character which I trust I have acquired for honest plain speaking, if I omitted to give my views upon Mr. Wyndham’s Act, for those readers who regard my book as something more than a storehouse of anecdotes—and since it is written at all, I maintain it claims to be more than that—having noticed the freedom with which I have spoken of previous English legislation for Ireland, may very naturally think I should be begging the question of the hour, if I did not offer a few observations on the latest development of the Irish question.

I must emphatically repeat what I have already asserted:—that the Acts of Mr. Gladstone rendered a Purchase Bill inevitable, and it fell to Mr. Wyndham’s lot to formulate the scheme which has now become law.

Mr. Wyndham’s Act is a great one for Ireland, because where a tenant previously paid L100 a year rent, all he will have to pay—even at twenty-four years’ purchase—is L80 a year, and at that rate with the bonus the landlord obtains twenty-seven years’ purchase. But this scale is a little halcyon in most instances.

It should prove a boon to the country, and it is the necessary outcome of the Land Act of 1881, by which rents were cut down by commissioners, whose means of living depended on the reductions they made.

And to make this state of things yet more remarkable, there were two courts established for fixing rates. The one consisted of sub-commissioners, who were paid by the year, and the other was that of the County Court judge, who was wholly dependent on a valuer paid by the day.

So, whoever cut down the most earned the most.

A valuer in Limerick was remonstrated with for cutting down local rents so low, and he replied:—

’It is all for the good of trade, for it will bring every tenant into the Court.’

And so it actually did, for that Court very shortly afterwards was chock full of cases.

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My own opinion is that the Wyndham Act would have been far more beneficial, if the Government had given the tenant a free grant of some of the purchase money, and insisted on his finding some more of it himself, whereby would have been created a deeper interest in his land than is now inspired in his breast by the mere transference of his lease from his old landlord to the Government.

I made this remark to an Englishman at the Carlton Club, and he said to me that, according to his view, England should lend whatever money was wanted but give no free grant.

I replied:—

’A poor man from Kerry came to my house in London, and asked for the loan of a pound. I declined to lend him the sovereign, but I did lend him half a crown, and as he bolted to America the very next day, I think I had the best of the bargain.’

My friend accepted the analogy and dropped the subject.

That was far more tactful on his part than the conduct of the English Government, for the different Acts of Parliament relating to Ireland have had the effect of rendering the feelings between landlord and tenant much worse than they were before.

And the Act of 1881, which provided that landlord and tenant should have a lawsuit every fifteen years, brought the feeling up to boiling pitch.

Now the Government inherits all this hatred by proposing to be the sole landlord in Ireland. Therefore, England is reaping the whirlwind where Mr. Gladstone sowed the wind.

This does not appear to me to be sound statesmanship. An open hatred of the Government has been instilled into the brain of thousands of Irish children side by side with a more hypocritical hatred of the landlord. Now that these two are to be combined in one passion, and that directed against the receiver of rent, matters do not present a promising outlook.

If the Government sell up those tenants who do not pay rent in years to come, no Irish occupiers of the property will be obtainable.

If English tenants be imported, the latter had better insist on coats of mail for themselves, and on life insurance policies in favour of the nearest relatives they leave behind in England.

That reminds me of a story.

Sir Denis Fitzpatrick and his daughter were making a tour of the Kerry fjords some years ago, and the lady asked a boatman on Caragh Lake, what would happen to a tenant who took an evicted farm.

The reply was:—

’I don’t think he’d do it again, Miss, leastways it’s in the next world alone he’d have the chance of making such a fool of himself.’

This may be commended to any unsophisticated English who contemplate Hibernian immigration as a prospective way of cheaply obtaining that once popular bait of Mr. Jesse Collins, three acres and a cow.

Here is another aspect of not paying rent to Government, which would occur to no one unacquainted with Ireland, but is quite characteristic:—

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Suppose twenty men were tenants on a townland; one would pay, and the other nineteen after being evicted would also squat down on his patch. Unless caretakers at a cost of about three times the rent were put in under excessive police protection, all the nineteen farms would promptly become derelict.

It would have been far better if the Government had given a free grant of one quarter of the purchase money, had compelled the tenant to himself find another quarter, and had lent the remaining half for a comparatively short term, say twenty-five years.

Then the tenant would have had genuine interest in the redemption of his own property.

But, asks the English tourist impressed by the apparent beggarliness of all he sees, how could the tenant procure a quarter of the money?

Naturally it would be alleged by the agitators that he could not. All the same you may confidently contradict any such denial as that.

It is clear that almost any tenant could get the money, if you bear in mind that though rents are so reduced, the most unimproving tenant can get from ten to twenty years' purchase for the good-will of his farm.

Of course, just now the old order is changing considerably in Ireland, but the loss of their old landlords is not appreciated by the better class of tenants, though the good have of course to suffer for the bad—a thing even better known in my country than elsewhere. I heard an interesting confirmation of this from a lady of my acquaintance, who having asked a respectable woman what had become of her son, received the reply:—

'Ah, for sure, he has got a situation with a farmer.'

'Well, that's a good start in life, is it not?' asked my friend, to which the woman retorted in melancholy accents:—

'That may be, but my family have always been rared (*i.e.* reared) on the gentry until now,' thereby expressing a feeling very prevalent in Ireland to-day.

The Home Rulers allege that these high prices which are paid for the good-will of land are attributable to two causes:—

(a) Excess of competition for land.
(b) Irish returning from America.

Both these reasons are absurd.

When the population of Ireland was nearly eight millions, these prices could not be obtainable, nor anything like them, while to-day the population is only four millions. Unless the returning emigrants thought they were obtaining good value for their money, they would hardly abandon a country—the United States—where they can get land for nothing.

The enormous increase in the Irish Savings Banks, as well as the deposits in other Irish Banks, must be almost entirely derived from the savings of the farmers. The landlords have been ruined by the Land Act; labourers have no money to spare; and traders will not leave their money idle at the small rate of interest credited.

If the farmers thought they had better means of using the money, they would withdraw it, and they are without doubt as well aware as I am how they can do the English Government in the future, for if there is any roguery unknown to them, it is infinitesimal.

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I cannot say that I think many landlords will leave Ireland in consequence of the Wyndham Act. The few who will go are those who are glad to be quit at any price, and to be free to pack out of the country. But many a landlord will be far more comfortable on his own estate, when he has rid himself of all his tenants.

One feature of this curious Act is that the Geraldines have got rid of the last of their property, and escaped all the forfeitures.

As for the sporting rights, far too much fuss has been made over them. Except where there are plantations or good fishing, they are of very little value one way or the other. The Act will not affect the hunting. Small Irish farmers like to see the hunt almost as much as the hunting set themselves like to participate in it.

Of course, too, the Act ought to be popular in Ireland, because it is taking so much money out of England.

A point I wish to emphasise is one about which there has been a great deal of misconception.

A considerable amount of capital has been made out of the depreciation of agricultural produce in Ireland as compared with England. But Ireland is a stock-producing country and not an agricultural country in the strict sense, for the cultivation of wheat in Ireland has long since ceased to exist. The true relation may be seen in the fact that in England the difficulty of getting store-cattle was a loss to farmers, whereas it has been a decided gain to farmers in Ireland—though they are not best pleased when you impress the fact on them.

Mr. Finlay Dun in *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland in 1881* cites some examples which may be apt to-day when we are considering Mr. Wyndham's Act.

He writes on page 64:—

'Kilcockan parish between Lismore and Youghal was in great part disposed of in the Landed Estates Court thirty years ago. It was bought, some of it by occupiers, some of it by shopkeepers and attorneys. Rents have been raised, and there is not much appearance of prosperity. Newtown, for several generations the fee-simple property of a family of the name of Nason, after the famine of 1846, was cut up and sold; the family residence is in ruin. At Lower Curryglass, a few miles east of Lismore, a good farm of five hundred acres, belonging to a family who have been obliged to leave it, bears sad evidence of neglect; the good old deserted manor-house, the farm buildings, and a dozen cottages in the village are falling to pieces. Contrary to what might be anticipated, some of the smaller proprietors in this district have been strenuous supporters of the Land League, although it is to be hoped that they repudiate the destruction of the cattle on the land of Mr. Grant, which were stabbed, and some of

them drowned in the river. Mr. Grant had come under the ban of the League for evicting a dissipated bankrupt tenant, whose debts to the extent of two hundred pounds he had paid, and who would have been reinstated, if there had been the remotest prospect of reformed habits or of getting clear of his difficulties. Such acts appear to justify the statement, “that Irishmen don’t know what they want, and won’t be satisfied until they get it."’

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God knows we have waded knee deep in blood of men, and domestic animals since that was written, yet to-day are we any nearer the final solution of the Irish difficulties? In my opinion, certainly not.

CHAPTER XVII

THE STATE OF KERRY

It has been stated that it is only within the last forty years that the bulk of the people of Ireland, long outside the pale of the ballot-box, have actively entered political life. This is quite true.

The whole of the Home Rule troubles followed the presentation of practically universal suffrage to the half-educated and over-enthusiastic Irish, who are easily led away, apt to believe mob-orators, and, by inherited instinct, to go against the Government.

What the effect of universal suffrage in India would be it is not my business to estimate. Still, the analogy of what the ballot-paper provided in Ireland, if applied to the teeming population of our Oriental Empire, suggests a pandemonium to which the horrors of the Mutiny are but a mere scream of agony.

The ballot transformed Ireland; or rather, it permitted the worst passions of the most ignorant to be played upon by interested adventurers, when the political power of Ireland had passed for ever out of the hands of the restraining classes. Democracy spelt anarchy, and the word patriotism was degraded in a way that had no parallel since the French Revolution.

The first outward and visible sign was the creation of the Irish Home Rule party, which constituted itself separate and distinct from the rest of the House of Commons, the standard of which the new gang was to debase. Nor did they rest content until it became the scene of faction fights and organised obstruction in combination with the flagrant violation of all decencies of language and behaviour.

Members were returned for Irish constituencies who had been convicts; others came who richly deserved imprisonment for life. They instigated murders, and clamoured because the murderers were not regarded as heroes; or if they were hung, canonised them as martyrs. They attempted to prostitute the law to their own base standard of political morality. They assiduously laboured to render life valueless in Ireland and property worthless, whilst no deed was too cowardly, no atrocity too barbarous, for them to praise. They alone in modern times warred against women and children. Animals were the dumb victims of the inhuman ferocity they in no way tried to check, and they effectively taught the receptive Irish millions that a British Government could be coerced

into giving what was demanded provided a sufficient number of crimes created a holocaust large enough to intimidate the weak-kneed at St. Stephen's.

But Mr. Parnell and the Land League would all have been promptly reduced to the pitiful unimportance from which they had so noisily emerged if it had not been for Mr. Gladstone.

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The root of English politics has been party government—'where all are for a party, and none are for the State,' to reverse Macaulay's famous line. Now the Irish vote of sixty was a solid asset, capable in many cases of weighing down one side of the political scale. It was obvious that the votes would be unscrupulously given, and Mr. Gladstone bid higher than the Tories. Literally the necessary parliamentary machinery for the government of the United Kingdom was clogged by the Nationalists, who brought obstruction to a fine art, and it was Mr. Gladstone who always gave in when the Irish outcry would have stimulated an honest man to avail himself of all loyal forces which law and the common weal provided.

Long before this the Irish political agitator had set himself to embitter the relations existing between landlord and tenant. An Englishman goes into Parliament for various motives; an Irishman for his living. If he did not outshout his neighbour, if he were not implicitly obedient to Mr. Parnell, if he did not arouse the worst passions of the worst people in his constituency, he was promptly dismissed.

To do them justice, the Irish members gave such an exhibition of blackguardism as has no parallel on earth, though it earned but the mildest rebuke from their obsequious ally, Mr. Gladstone.

In 1869, for example, before this balloting away of all that was creditable to Ireland, the relations between landlord and tenant were of the most kindly nature. The leading landlords of Kerry generally represented the county in Parliament with uniform decency and occasional brilliance, while larger sums were borrowed and expended by the landlords under the Land Improvement Act than were spent in the same way in any other county. I can prove that the principal landowner in Kerry—Lord Kenmare—-expended a greater sum in ten years on his estates than he received out of them, though I cannot say he ever found out for himself that it was better to give than to receive.

For fifty years prior to what Mr. Gladstone was pleased to call his 'remedial legislation,' Kerry was unstained by agrarian crime; all things went on smoothly, and a number of railways were constructed with guaranteed capital, half of which was contributed by the landlords, although they received no benefit from the increased prices of farm produce caused by railway communication. The Board of Works returns show that the money borrowed by Kerry landlords under the different Land Improvement Acts amounted to almost half a million, and yet the deductions made under the Land Act were greater in Kerry than in other counties.

Here is an instance from my own experience.

I purchased from the Government in 1879 an estate, the rental of which was L517, 2s. 4d.; it was considered so cheaply let that the majority of the tenants offered twenty-seven years' purchase for their farms. I borrowed from the Government and expended

on drainage L1120, 14s. 11d. Then the Commissioners under the Land Act reduced the rental to L495, 10s. 6d., and the Government which sold me the estate continued to compel me to pay interest on the amount borrowed, although by its own legislation I was deprived of any advantage resulting from the outlay.

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The rental of Kerry in 1870 was considerably less than it had been forty years previously, and higher prices were paid for the fee-simple of land than were offered in any other part of Ireland. But Mr. Gladstone's 'remedial manoeuvres' changed the country and the people.

Demoralising bribes to the Irish nation frittered away the proceeds of the plunder of the Irish Church. A notable instance was a million under the Arrears Act, the principle of which was that no honest tenant who had paid his rent could derive any benefit from it, but that any drunkard or squanderer who had not paid his rent might have it paid for him by the Government on swearing that he was unable to pay.

Here is an instance that occurred on an estate under my management.

A tenant, whose yearly rent was L48, had one year's rent paid by Government and another year's rent given up by his landlord, on his swearing that the selling value of his farm was *nil*; ten weeks afterwards he served me with a notice, as required by the statute, that he had sold the interest of the farm for L670.

Again, there was a tenant who swore that he had expended L513, 14s. 6d. in permanent improvements, and that after this expenditure the fair letting value of the farm was only L17, though the original rent was L26, 4s.

How could I blame an ignorant peasantry for making false statements, when laws were framed by the leaders of public opinion in England which released the Irish tenants from every moral obligation, and made their assumed responsibilities and agreements a dead letter; while orators, living on the wages of patriotism, were allowed to preach sedition and plunder to an excitable people? The result was that the work of demoralisation made rapid progress, perjury became a joke, assassination was merely 'removal,' and men who had been brutally murdered were said to have met with an accident.

I have already shown how apt a prophet Mr. Gladstone was in his forecast in the House of Commons in 1870, and one more quotation adds testimony to his inspiration—though from what direction it came I will not linger to inquire:—

'Compulsory valuation and fixity of tenure would bring about total demoralisation and a Saturnalia of crime.'

Exactly.

Mr. Laing, formerly M.P. for Orkney, in a magazine article defended the 'Plan of Campaign' as an innocent attempt to defend the weak against the strong, and as having been adopted only on estates where rents were too high, in fact, as the result of high rents. As a matter of fact, in Orkney the rents advanced 194 per cent., and during the

same period in Kerry they dwindled. He also asserted that the Irish tenants' improvements had been confiscated by the landlords as the tenant improved.

Certainly the law did not prevent them increasing the rent; but, unfortunately for the reasoning of Mr. Laing, and his taking for granted imaginary 'confiscations,' figures most decidedly prove that the landlords did not use any such power. The rentals have steadily decreased while the landlords were borrowing and expending nearly half a million in my own county.

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This fact is conclusively demonstrated by the Government returns.

As to the National League—with all its paraphernalia of boycotting, shooting from behind a hedge, merciless beating, shooting in the legs, and other similar variations of Irish Home Rule, on which I shall dwell in a later chapter—being only a protector of the weak tenant against the hard landlord, I think one fact will prove more forcibly than any argument the fallacy of such an assertion.

There were two estates in Kerry let at a much lower rate than any others in the county —those of Lord Cork and Colonel Oliver.

Colonel Oliver's agent was the only one fired at in Kerry in 1886, and Lord Cork's agent was the only one obliged to employ over two hundred police to protect him in endeavouring to recover in 1887 rent which was due in 1884. This rent was due on land let at considerably under the Poor Law valuation, and the rents were only half what was paid in 1860.

These cases afford a decided proof that the Land or National League carries on its government irrespective of high or low rents, and the 'Plan of Campaign' is worked according as the local branches of the League have disciplined or terrorised the inhabitants of a district, the orders from 'headquarters' depending on the probability of success.

I should like to retort on Mr. Laing that, while the evidence before the Land Commissioner proved the rental of Ireland was diminishing, that of the country where his own property lay increased to an unusual degree. I do not say the landlords confiscated the tenants' improvements, possibly they made none. But figures are hard facts, and they prove three things:—

First, that Kerry landlords spent L453,539 on improvements. Secondly, that the rental of Kerry was lower in 1880 than in 1840. Thirdly, that the rental of Orkney increased 194 per cent. during that time.

On the south-west coast of Kerry lie the Blasquets, a group of islands the property of Lord Cork, one of them inhabited by some twenty-five families. The old rental was L80, which was regularly paid. This was reduced by Lord Cork to L40, the Government valuation being L60. Now this island reared about forty milch cows, besides young cattle and sheep, and at the period when might meant right in Ireland the inhabitants, having some surplus stock, took possession of another island to feed them on.

This island was let to another man, but he was not able to resist the tenants any more than the mouse nibbling a piece of cheese is able to fight a cat.

For ten years up to 1887 those tenants paid no poor rate. They successfully resisted the payment of county cess, to the detriment of their fellow taxpayers, and they only paid one half year's rent out of six, and that not until they had been served with writs. And these people, in the year 1886, sent a memorial to the Government to save them from starvation.

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This is a remarkable case, and proves that poverty and the cry of starvation are not always the result of rents and taxes, as the Irish patriots and their English separatist allies so frequently assert.

I am going to quote a colloquy overheard at a Kerry fair to show how deeply the teaching of Messrs. Parnell, Gladstone, Dillon, Morley, Davitt, Biggar, and Company has taken root in the Irish mind.

Jim from Castleisland meeting Mick from Glenbeigh, asks:—

‘Well, Mick, an’ how are ye getting on?’

‘Illigant, glory be to the Saints.’

‘How’s that, Mick? Sure, prices is low.’

’True for you, Jim, prices is low; but what we *has* we *has*, for we pays nobody.’

And to that I will add another observation.

Somebody asked me:—

‘If Ireland were to get Home Rule, what would become of the agitator?’

I replied:—

’He would be called a reformer, unless it paid him better to clamour for a fresh Union. He’d sell all his patriotism for five shillings, and his loyalty could be bought by a few glasses of whisky.’

And that’s the whole truth of the matter.

CHAPTER XVIII

A GLANCE AT MY STEWARDSHIP

Davitt called the generation after O’Connell’s ’a soulless age of pitiable cowardice.’

I should call the generation that was active in the early eighties ’a cowardly age of pitiless brutality.’

Times had begun to mend in Ireland from 1850, and had continued to do so until the ballot made the country a prey to self-seeking political agitators.

Mr. Gladstone considered that if you gave a scoundrel a vote it made him into a philanthropist, whereas events proved it made him an eager accessory of murder, outrage, and every other crime.

Yet this happened after Fenianism had practically died out in the early seventies.

I myself heard Mr. Gladstone say that landlords had been weighed in the balance and had not been found wanting, for the bad ones were exceptional.

None the less were they and their representatives delivered over to their natural opponents, who were egged on by the Land League and by its tacit or active supporters in the House of Commons.

Emphatically I repeat the assertion that neither Mr. Parnell nor the Land League would have been formidable without the active help of Mr. Gladstone.

Before 1870 Kerry used to be represented by gentlemen of the county. The present members in 1904 are an attorney's clerk, an assistant schoolmaster, a Dublin baker, and a fourth of about the same class.

This was no more foreseen by the landlords when the ballot was introduced any more than we anticipated the way in which we were to be plundered. Many considered that the confiscation of the Irish Church, which had been established since the reign of Elizabeth, was an inroad into the rights of property very likely to be followed up by further aggressions, but we never looked for such a wholesale violation as ensued.

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By the Act of 1870 no tenant could be turned out without being paid a sum averaging a fourth of the fee-simple in addition to being paid for his improvements, and there the most observant of us thought the worst had been reached.

When the Act of 1881 was passed, I met Lord Spencer, one of the authors of it, and said to him:—

’This Act will have as much effect in settling Ireland as throwing a cup of dirty water into the Thames would have in creating a flood.’

My words were soon proved right, for the tenants, having obtained half the landlord’s property by it, thought that by well working their voting and shooting powers they would get the remainder.

I have been getting away from my own experiences to give my own convictions. When you have meditated for twenty years amid the ruins of what you had been building up all your life long and know that it is due to Irish outrage and English misrule, there is a temptation to speak plainly on breaking silence.

The year 1878 was a wet year and yielded a bad harvest; 1879 was worse. The prosperity of Ireland depends on its harvest, and starvation is the opportunity of the lying agitator.

On July 8, 1880, I gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Agriculture, being mainly examined by the president, the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, others on the board being Lord Carlingford, Mr. Stansfeld, afterwards Lord, Mr. Joseph Cowen, and Mr. Mitchell Henry.

Here are some of my statements on a then experience of thirty-one years:—

’The expenditure by landlords on farm buildings is as great in Ireland as in Scotland.’

’In the exceptional state of things I strongly disapprove of tenant-right in Ireland, which, as Lord Palmerston said, is landlord wrong.’

’Small holdings are a very bad thing in Ireland where they are not mixed with large holdings.’

’The distress in Kerry is considerable, but has been considerably exaggerated.’

‘Every tenant in Ireland has six months to redeem after he is evicted.’

‘I have never known a man leave a farm unless compelled.’

’I contradict the statement that tenants make improvements which tend to increase the letting value of the land.’

’You pay four times as much for spade tillage as for ploughing by horse.’

’Bad farming in Ireland is due to want of education and to the enhanced subdivision of the land. When the farmer gets higher up the social scale he will have more sense than to make beggars of his children by subdivision.’

‘Distress has not produced the discontent.’

‘Almost more land has been sold in Kerry than in any county in Ireland.’

Three months later, in my evidence before the Irish Land Act Commission, in answer to the Chairman, I stated that in my opinion it was simply impossible to arbitrate on rent. I had two tenants of my own whose yearly rent was L20 and whose valuation was L20. One of them in 1880 sold L135 worth of pigs and butter, and the other man’s children were assisted in charity from my house, though both had equal means of success.

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I also pointed out that there were then 300,000 occupiers of land in Ireland, whose holdings were under L8 Poor Law valuation, and these occupiers when their potatoes failed had nothing but relief works, starvation, or emigration. To give them their whole rent would not meet the difficulty.

I submitted a scheme of purchase, in which Baron Dowse was greatly interested, and I suggested that all holdings under L4 a year should be ejected at Petty Sessions, because it was a great hardship for the tenant of such a holding to have L2, 10s. costs put upon him.

I ended with:—

'There is a case in this county in connection with which there is likely to be very considerable disturbance. A man had a farm put up for sale and a Nationalist bought it at a very low figure, on the understanding that he was to keep it for the man's family; but as soon as he got it he turned Conservative and kept it.'

BARON DOWSE—'Turned what?'

MYSELF—'Conservative.'

BARON DOWSE—'Rogue, I would say. You would not say that Conservatives are rogues?'

Since that was a debatable point on which the Commission had no jurisdiction to inquire, I returned no answer.

As the distress was alluded to above, I may lighten the recent seriousness of my observations by an anecdote on the topic.

In 1880 the Duchess of Marlborough organised a fund for supplying the people with meal. The Dublin Mansion House did the same, but their meal was of a coarser description.

A Blasquet Islander was asked how he was getting on, and made answer:—

'Illigant, glory be to the Saints. We're eating the Duchess, and feeding two pigs on the Mansion House.'

This recalls the story of the Englishman who inquired of a Kerry man which measure of English legislation had proved most beneficial for Ireland.

'The Famine (of 1879) was the best, beyond a shadow of doubt,' was the reply, 'for I fattened and sold ninety fine turkeys on the strength of it.'

In 1880 some Kerry men did a very good stroke of business. They sent a cargo of potatoes from Killorglin to Scotland and brought them back as imported Champion seed, selling them for six times the original price.

About this period Mr. Leeson-Marshall, who had been away from Kerry and coming back found some cottages near Milltown still only half built, observed:—

‘Good God, aren’t those houses finished yet?’

‘Well, sor,’ was the reply, ’the contract’s finished but the houses aren’t.’

And it has been my life-long experience that ninety-five per cent, of all the penalties in contracts are worthless, as the contractors themselves are only too well aware.

Being a land agent, I wish to provide some account from another pen of my stewardship, for which said stewardship I was falsely called ’the most rack-renting agent in Ireland.’

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Out of Mr. Finlay Dun's book, from which I have previously quoted, I condense the following from the chapter he devoted to the estates for which I was agent.

He observes that in 1881 my firm had the supervision of eighty-eight estates, upwards of three thousand farming tenants, and annually collected rents to the value of a quarter of a million sterling. From the particulars I furnished him he deduces:—

'So recently as the end of November the Lady Day rents had been well paid up; old arrears had been reduced; on two estates in the Court of Chancery L6000 had been collected with only a few shillings in default. Dairy farmers prospering had been particularly well able to pay rents and other claims. More recent rent collections, unfortunately, were not so satisfactory. Tenants generally had earned the money, but had not been allowed to pay it over.

'Many of the low-rented estates were badly farmed and the tenantry in low water. On the higher rented, the struggle for existence had brought out extra industry and energy and led to fair success.'

The following provided an apt illustration:—

'Mr. Gould Adams of Kilmachill had a small estate on the north side of a hill rented at 20s. an acre; the rents were paid up, the tenants doing well. On the southern aspect of the same hill, with better land, at the devoutly desiderated Griffith's valuation, which was 16s. 4d., the tenants were invariably hard up, some of them two years in arrears. All tenants had free sale, averaging five years' rent.

'The larger proprietors, as a rule, were most helpful and liberal to their tenants. Where improvements were not effected or initiated by the landlords, they were seldom done at all. There had often been considerable difficulty in overcoming the prejudice and "the rest-and-be-thankful" spirit both of landlords and tenants.

'On Sir George Colthurst's Ballyvourney estate, twenty miles east of Killarney, under Mr. Hussey's auspices about L30,000 had been expended in draining, building, and roadmaking. The economic value of many holdings had been doubled, although the rents had only been increased five per cent., and subsequently the Commissioners fixed the rents at 25 per cent. less than they had been fifty years earlier.

'The extending village of Mill Street had been in great measure reconstructed by his exertions.

'The Land League having enforced non-payment of rent, the obligation to meet other debts was weakened. Although there was more money than usual in the hands of the farming community, shopkeepers were not so willingly and promptly paid as formerly. Want of security checked the improved business which should have set in after a good

harvest. The Land League agitation generally originated with the publicans, small shopkeepers, and bankrupt farmers, rather than with the actual land occupiers. For peace and protection, many pay their subscription to the League and allow their names to be enrolled. The intimidation and 'boycotting,' which was so widely had recourse to, rendered it dangerous for either farmers or tradesmen to make a stand against the mob. With Sam Weller it was regarded expedient to shout with the biggest crowd.'

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Thus wrote a critical visitor keenly surveying the situation in no prejudiced spirit, having gone on a visit to Ireland to inquire into the subjects of land tenure and estate management.

In his next chapter is a tribute to Lord Kenmare, ’a kind and considerate landlord, united to his people by strong ties of race and creed, residing for a great part of the year on his estates, ready with purse and influence to advance the interests of his neighbourhood. On his mansion and on the town of Killarney, since his accession to the property in 1871, he has spent L100,000. At his own expense he has erected a town hall, and improved and beautified Killarney. Within the last twenty years L10,000 of arrears have been written off. From last year’s rents ten to twenty per cent, was deducted. During the last few years of distress, L15,000 has been borrowed for draining and other improvements; regular work has thus been found for the labourer; on such outlay in many instances no percentage has been charged. Since 1870, three hundred labourers have been comfortably housed and provided with gardens or allotments varying from one to three pounds annually.’

I could not myself so tersely put the situation to-day as by quoting this contemporary narrative, the facts for which I supplied.

Once more let me draw upon Mr. Finlay Dun. ’Unmindful of all this consistent liberality, ungrateful for the great efforts to improve his poorer neighbours, popular prejudice has been roused against Lord Kenmare; it has been impossible to collect rents; threatening letters have been sent to him. Mortified with the apparent fruitlessness of his humane endeavours he has been compelled to leave Killarney House.

’His agent, Mr. Hussey, who for twenty years has been earnestly and intelligently labouring to improve Irish agriculture, to bring more capital to bear on it, to render it more profitable, and has, besides, most energetically striven to elevate and house more decently the labouring population, has also brought down on himself the odium of the powers that be. For months he has had to travel armed and guarded by a couple of constables; now he has thought it discreet to leave the country.’

This, however, is erroneous. I only took a house for my family in London for the winter, and was backwards and forwards between Kerry and the metropolis.

Against all this let me set another quotation. In *New York Tablet* for 1880, a letter from Daniel O’Shea, who stated that for a large number of years he was a resident in Killarney.

’Among the most prominent tyrants was Lord Kenmare, who has so recently surpassed himself and his antecedents in despotism. He is a lineal descendant of the original land thief, Valentine Brown, who was a special pet of ‘the Virgin Queen’ Bess, and strange to

relate, this descendant of that Brown is a much-favoured pet of John Brown's Queen. Let me explain that he lives with the Queen in London where he holds

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the position of chamberlain (*sic*) ... At Aghadoe House now resides that ruthless Sam Hussey. Allow me to give you an outline of this heartless fellow's antecedents. This Hussey is of English origin and was formerly a cattle-dealer, and practised usury as far back as 1845. If all Ireland were to be searched for a similar despot he would not be found. He is a regular anti-Christ and Orangeman at heart, and, in fact, he acts as agent for all the bankrupt landlords in Kerry. An English-Irish landlord is an alien in heart, a despot by instinct, an absentee by inclination; and all the foul confederacy of landlordism in Kerry is always in direct opposition to the cause of Ireland.'

There is a copious mendacity about that effusion which makes me think the real mission of the writer should have been to become an Irish Member of Parliament. His powers of misrepresentation would have raised him to an eminence among obstructionists.

After all, scurrilous denunciation never affected me. His life by Sir Wemyss Reid reveals how Mr. W.E. Forster flinched under the vituperation levelled at his head. But he was not an Irishman, least of all a Kerry man, and so he never felt the fun of the fray, the grim earnest of the fight which made me set my teeth and give as good as I received. Indeed, I'll take my oath no man had the better of me, either in bandying words or yet in acts, so long as they were open and above-board, but it has always been the way of sedition and conspiracy to hit below the belt.

CHAPTER XIX

MURDER, OUTRAGE AND CRIME

Once launched upon memories of those horrible perpetrations by so-called Christians, which disgraced alike my native country and all Christendom (because the criminals nominally worshipped the same God, and professed reverence to Him), I could enumerate instances until I had filled a volume.

You know how the Ghost told Hamlet that he could a tale unfold, whose lightest word would harrow up his soul. Why, I could tell five score, and still not have exhausted the roll of crime.

As my experience is mainly connected with Kerry, it is characteristically Irish for me to start with an example from County Cork. The outrage was on the Rathcole estate of Sir George Colthurst. The rental was L1500, and the landlord had expended L10,000 on improvements, so that it was not to be wondered that the labourers should meet to celebrate their employer's marriage.

Nor to any one knowing Ireland was it surprising that the Land League should have despatched one of their well-armed bands to fire on them for so doing.

This was apparently a challenge to Kerry not to be outdone in barbarity by Cork, her neighbour and rival.

Kerry was quite equal to current demands on her inhumanity.

A labourer of the M'Gillycuddys was visited by another Land League detachment and had his ear, *a la* Bulgaria, cut clean off to the bone, because he worked on a farm from which a tenant had been evicted.

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The next night a small Protestant farmer near Tralee found his best cow tortured and killed because he had sold milk to the police.

On the same night a farmer's house was sacked because he had bought some 'boycotted' hay.

Still on the same night, at Millstreet, another Land League gang attacked a house, one of the Land League police being killed, and one of the Crown police wounded.

In fact, all law save Land League law was for a time at an end in Munster.

At one Kerry Assize, a criminal caught by four policemen in the very act of breaking into a house, was acquitted, and at the Cork Assize the Crown Prosecutor, after half a dozen acquittals, announced he would not continue the farce of putting criminals on their trial.

I mentioned boycotting just now, but I am tempted to pause, because a new generation that knows not Parnellism, nor the extent of crime in that unhappy period, may not be aware of the origin of the term.

Captain Boycott was agent for Lord Erne's Mayo estates, and laid out the whole of his capital L6000, in improving and stocking his own property. Because, in the course of his duty, he served some ejectment notices, he was denounced by the Land League, his farm servants were terrorised into leaving his employment, and when he imported fifty labourers from the north of Ireland to save his crops, the Government had to despatch a small army corps of troops and constabulary to protect them. So great was the power of the League, that even in Dublin the landlord of a hotel declined to let him stop more than twenty-four hours in the house, as he was threatened if he ventured to harbour him. For the protection of his life and no more, the unfortunate gentleman had to leave the country.

Baron Dowse said in charging the Grand Jury of the Connaught Western Assize, that this case had 'excited the wonder and amazement of a great part of the United Kingdom and the sorrow of a considerable portion of Ireland.' Very soon the name of Boycott was given to the approved method of actively sending a man to Coventry, or threatening his life and property as well as refusing to permit him to be supplied with even the bare necessities of existence.

Baron Dowse, a man who had no fear of unmanly criminals, justly styled this a reign of terror.

Kerry is divided into six Poor Law Unions, three of them—Kenmare, Cahirciveen and Dingle—are very poor districts; but there was practically not an outrage in them. Killarney, Tralee and Listowel are rich by comparison, Tralee being the richest of the three, and Castleisland the wealthiest portion of the district. There were nearly as many

outrages there as in the whole of the rest of the country, which shows that poverty was not the cause.

I was in and out of Castleisland, but though I had a sheaf of threatening letters, I never met with any insults or received a threat to my face.

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Only once did I overhear any hostile mutterings. This was when I was driving out of Tralee, and my coachman stopped to give a message in the dusk at a house on the outskirts of the town.

Suddenly two or three men came up, and one said:—

‘Now’s the time to settle old Hussey.’

Old Hussey—to use their accurate nomenclature—popped his head out of the window, and also his right hand which held a most serviceable revolver and invited them to come on.

They did not. In fact they scattered with a rapidity which proved they had not imbibed enough whisky to affect their legs or give them courage.

This will show that my business—to collect what was due to the landlords I represented—was not always agreeable work or always easy. But my duty was to get in rents, and so I got them, whenever I could.

The tenants did not all pay direct, for many were far too frightened. Quite a number, even of the Roman Catholics, used to send the money through the Protestant clergy.

How they settled this in the confessional I do not know, possibly it was a trifle they did not consider worth troubling the priest with.

Three tenants on Lord Kenmare’s estate came into my office on one occasion, and said they would like to pay their rent, but were afraid of the Land League.

I treated their fears as arrant nonsense, but told them to come and argue it out with me in my own room.

So soon as they could not be seen by any one they paid up.

Within a few days an armed party went to their houses and shot the three in their legs.

One man’s life was despaired of for some time, but finally they all recovered.

This outrage was a rather late one, because the Land League latterly decided to shoot objectionable characters only in the legs, because though a fuss was made at the time, if a man was killed it was soon forgotten afterwards, whereas a lame man was a lifelong testimony to their power.

There is a man hobbling about Castleisland to this day, who was peppered in this comparatively humanitarian way. I am quite sure he would say such a comparison had proved odious.

Judge Barry very truly said that a thatched cabin on a mountain-side was not much of a place of defence, and if the tenant was supposed to have paid his rent, he would be told to run out with probably three men standing at the door to shoot him. That was terrorism as inculcated by the so-called friends of Ireland.

Mr. Forster in his plucky speech to the crowd at Tullamore, said:—

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’I went when I was at Tulla to the workhouse, and there saw a poor fellow lying in bed, the doctors around him, with a blue light over his face that made me feel that the doctors were not right, when they told me he might get over it. I felt sure that he must die, and I see this morning that he has died. But why did that man die? He was a poor lone farmer. I believe he had paid his rent—I believe he had committed that crime. He thought it his duty to pay. Fifteen or sixteen men broke into his house in the middle of the night, pulled him out of his bed and told him they would punish him. He himself, lying in his death agony as it were, told me the story. He said, “My wife went down on her knees and said, ‘Here are five helpless children, will you kill their father?’” They took him out, they discharged a gun filled with shot into his leg, so closely that they shattered his leg.’

Now there were dozens of instances of that kind of thing in Kerry.

Mr. Parnell started the whole vile crusade, when at Ennis he gave the advice to shun any man who had bid for a farm from which a tenant had been evicted.

’Shun him in the street, in the shop, in the marketplace, even in the place of worship, as if he were a leper of old.’

His words were implicitly obeyed, and outrage followed mere boycotting till the rapid succession of crimes prevented each one having its full effect in horrifying civilised Europe.

A very bad case occurred in Millstreet.

Jeremiah Haggerty was a large farmer and shopkeeper. There was no objection to him, except that he declined to join the Land League, for which his shop was boycotted, which he told me meant the loss of a thousand a year to him, but the League failed to boycott his farm, because he was too good an employer.

He was fired at coming into Millstreet, and the outrage had been so openly planned, that it was talked of on the preceding evening in every whisky store.

On another occasion he was leaving Millstreet station, about a mile from the town, and when about twenty yards from the station he was fired at and forty grains of shot lodged in the back of his head, neck, and body. As it was twilight, a railway porter obligingly held up his lantern to give the miscreants a better view of their victim.

He was a man of most honourable and upright character, who had worked his way up, and he has now regained his popularity. He started as a clerk in quite a small way, and must now be worth a very large sum of money. I was instrumental in getting him made a magistrate, and I have the greatest respect for him.

I regard this as a decidedly serious example, because of the popularity of the victim, and also because he had offended no one by word or deed. Still, there were, of course, many instances which were even more outrageous.

A farmer, name of Brown, was shot at Castleisland. Two men were arrested for the murder, and were twice tried before Cork juries. The first disagreed, but the second found them guilty.

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A subscription was made up for the families of the two murderers, to which contributions were made by the leading shopkeepers of several neighbouring towns. For several years afterwards, Mrs. Brown could not get a man to dig her potatoes, nor a woman to milk her cows, although she had tendered no evidence at the trial, and it was clearly proved that Brown had given no cause of offence.

But, as a Land Leaguer said to me, it was suspected that he might be in a position to do so.

Red Indians, or any other barbarians you can think of, would not have been guilty of wreaking vengeance on the widow of an innocent murdered man, nor of endowing the wives of his assassins.

Here is another murder story.

A caretaker on an evicted farm on the property of Lord Cork, near Kanturk, was murdered for taking charge of it.

The evicted tenant had owed eleven years' rent.

Lord Cork had agreed to accept one year's rent in full acquittal, and so good a landlord was he, that the neighbours of the debtor offered to make up the amount to that sum.

The tenant firmly declined to pay, because he said another year would bring him within the statute of limitations.

So then he had to be evicted.

Two men were clearly identified as having perpetrated the unprovoked crime of assassinating the temporary occupant of the property, and were arrested.

The Gladstonian Attorney-General, in order to curry popularity, declined to challenge the jury, when the first man was put on his trial. Consequently three cousins of the prisoner were impanelled, the jury disagreed, and the wretch bolted to America that same night.

The second man, though less guilty, was duly tried before a challenged jury, and not only sentenced but hanged.

He was the organiser of outrages for Cork, and his brother held the similar delectable office for Kerry. A good deal of the impunity with which crime was committed was due to the change in the jury laws, by which so low a class of man was summoned into the box, that criminals began to consider conviction impossible. To my mind it was quite worth the consideration of the Cabinet of the time, whether trial by jury ought not to be abolished in Ireland—indeed, even to-day, I can see few reasons for its retention and many for its abolition.

Anyhow in the bad times I am now dealing with, to send persons for trial before a jury was but to advertise the weakness of the law.

Two men at Tralee were suspected of having paid their rent to me, and in spite of their assurances that they were quite innocent and had not paid a farthing for two years, it was necessary for the police to escort them after nightfall to their homes about four miles away, and to advise them not to venture into the town for a long while after.

One of the worst features, however, of all this terrible period was that helpless girls and women were victims as well as men, I know of a case where some ruffians entered the house of a family at night, went into the bedroom of one of the girls, seized her violently, forced her on her knees, and held her in that position while one of the gang cut off her hair with shears, and then poured a quantity of hot tar on her head before entering the bedroom of her sister to do the same.

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A similar fate befell two girls named Murphy merely because they were suspected of speaking to a policeman.

A man named Finlay was boycotted and then shot dead, and the neighbours jeered and laughed at his wife, when in her agony she was wringing her hands in grief.

The poor woman went into the street and knelt down crying:—

’The curse of God rest upon Father —— for being the cause of my husband’s murder.’

The priest had denounced him from the altar on the previous Sunday.

‘Carding’ has always been a favourite Irish form of physically insinuating to a man that he is not exactly popular. It consists of a wooden board with nails in it being drawn down the naked flesh of a man’s face and body. This foul torture was often heard of, and it has been whispered that women and even girls have been the victims of this atrocity.

The merciful man is proverbially merciful to his beast, and those who showed mercy to neither man nor woman had none on the dumb animals owned by their victims.

A valuable Spanish ass belonging to Mr. M’Cowan of Tralee was saturated with paraffin, set on fire, and horribly burned.

A farmer named Lambert found the shoulder of a heifer had been smashed by some blunt instrument like a hammer. I myself had a couple of cows killed and salted.

Indeed cattle outrages became incidents of nightly occurrence. Tenants in all disturbed counties, besides having their houses burnt, saw their cattle so horribly mutilated that the poor dumb creatures had to be killed to put them out of their misery. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would have no chance of obtaining general support among the lower classes in Kerry, where beasts belonging to your enemy are simply regarded as so many goods and chattels, to be as badly damaged as possible.

It is a curious thing that the Irish and the Italian are the two most poetic and most sensitive races of Europe, and also are the two which exhibit the greatest indifference to the sufferings of dumb animals.

The distress in Kerry, of course, in the winter of 1879 had been as great as in the more famous famine, and I have heard the theory advanced in a London drawing-room that physical suffering renders uneducated people indifferent to any torture endured by animals. Personally, I should have thought a fellow feeling made us wondrous kind.

Reverting to matters with which I had more personal connection, an interesting episode occurred in June 1881, when The O’Donoghue moved the adjournment of the House of

Commons to force a debate upon the subject of Lord Kenmare's estate, and I wrote a letter in the *Times* in reply, from which may be condensed the following facts:—

On the Cork estate, from 1878 to 1881, the evictions did not average one for each year for every two hundred tenants.

On the Limerick estate for five years there have been no evictions.

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On the Kerry estate, since he succeeded (in 1871), Lord Kenmare has expended L67,115 on drainage, road-making, and building cottages. The evictions have been about one in five hundred in every half year. The abatements, allowances, and expenditure in 1878, ’79, ’80, and ’81, exclusive of what was spent on the house and demesne, were, L33,645, and I am under the mark when I say that, altogether, for these years of distress, Lord Kenmare spent more on his Kerry estates than he received out of it; yet for this, Land League meetings were held on his estate, and he was denounced in Parliament. The week that the Land League compelled Lord Kenmare to discontinue his employment to labourers, the weekly labour bill was L460.

There is no need to trouble readers with any further correspondence on a topic on which no one could answer me except by abuse, which is no argument; nor will I inflict any of the letters in which Mr. Sexton was clearly proved in the wrong when he misrepresented the case of Pat Murphy of Rath.

As an example of the state of affairs, in Millstreet—a mere village—there were thirty cases of nocturnal raid in the month of August 1881, even while it was engaging the attention of Mr. T.O. Plunkett, R.M., Mr. French, chief of the detective department, two sub-inspectors, thirty-five constabulary, and fifty men of the 80th Regiment.

In the *Daily Telegraph*, with reference to the murder of Gallivan, near Castleisland, this remark appeared in a leader:—

’Horror-stricken humanity demands that an example be speedily made of the truculent and merciless ruffian who perpetrated this outrage.’

I quoted this in a letter the editor published, adding:—

’A few weeks after that occasion an old man named Flynn was shot within two miles of the place, because he paid his rent. His leg has since been amputated.’

Then I gave the following horrible case:—

On Sunday night the Land League police went to the house of a man named Dan Dooling, who lived within a mile of Gallivan’s house, and within one mile of Castleisland, and because he paid his rent on getting a reduction of thirty per cent., he was taken out and shot in the thigh. His wife, who was only three days after her confinement, pleaded for mercy on this account, but these lynch law authorities were deaf to the appeal for mercy, and she did not recover the shock of the entry of these ‘moonlight’ Thugs. This man could have identified his assailants, but he did not dare.

A good fellow called M’Auliffe, whose arm was shot off, could have done the same. The poor chap could be seen walking about with one arm, deprived of the means of earning

his bread, and no doubt moralising over the state of the law, which would compensate him for the loss of his cow, if he had one, but gave him nothing for the loss of his arm.

On Friday, November 18, 1881, two tenants, named Cronin and one O'Keefe, holding land from Lord Kenmare, came into my office in Killarney.

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O'Keefe, an old man of seventy, was the spokesman, and said:—

'If you plase, sorr, we have the rint in our pocket, and would be glad to pay it if it were not for the fear that we have of being shot.'

To my lasting regret, I replied:—

'There is no danger. You must pay.'

They did, and on the Sunday week following, a band of marauders, headed by fife and drum, went to the houses of these men, and shot them in the presence of their families. All the flesh on the lower part of O'Keefe's legs was shot away, one of the Cronins was shot in the knee, but the other in the body.

Everybody in the neighbourhood knew the perpetrators of this ghastly outrage, but said:—

'What use would there be in our telling, as the jury would acquit them, and we should be shot?'

Then came this announcement, which caused great excitement in Killarney:—

'In consequence of the difficulty of getting his rents, the Earl of Kenmare has decided to leave the country for the present. All the labourers employed on the estate are discharged, as well as some of the gamekeepers.'

My own opinion was that he showed great wisdom in abandoning the ungrateful locality where only man, debased by the Land League, was vile.

Outside my own folk, I found the people stiffer and less affable than formerly; but at no time had I any difficulty in obtaining or keeping domestic servants, though my wife got the majority from the neighbourhood of Edenburn.

I used to sit, on and off, on the bench as regularly as most of the other magistrates, whenever, indeed, my business permitted me to do so, and to my face no one ventured to abuse me.

Quite late in the bad times when I wanted a decree of ejectment against a fellow, the chairman, desiring to make peace, explained that his hesitation was entirely on my account, to save me from danger.

I replied that I had not quailed all those years, and I was too old to begin; so I had my decree, and that fellow's threats were as contemptuously treated as all the rest.

The Bank had a decree against a tenant of mine, and, having sold him out, entered into possession and put in a caretaker.

He was in occupation about eight hours, when he grew so frightened that he ran away. The tenant then went back into possession as a caretaker, whom nobody dared dislodge, and he promptly went to the Tralee Board of Guardians to obtain a pound a week as an evicted tenant.

At that time two-thirds of the poor-rate was paid by the landlord. When the tenancy was over L4 a year, they had to allow each tenant half the rate he paid; when it was under this sum, they had to pay the whole of it, and, of course, all the rates for land in their own occupation.

Thus the Board of Guardians were utilising the money of the landlords in order to remunerate the men who were robbing them of their property.

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If a tenant—who generally had some money—was evicted, a notice was served on the relieving officer to provide him with a conveyance, in which he was taken to the poorhouse; but if a farmer evicted a labourer—who had, perhaps, nothing but the suit of clothes in which he stood up—he was allowed to walk to the poorhouse as best he might, and, when he got there, he obtained no special relief.

It is true that the passing of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act offered another opportunity to the Government for striking a severe blow, but it was frittered away, although, before it became law, many of the leaders of disorder left the country, dreading its provisions.

Instead, the isolated arrests revealed that the criminals were provided with special accommodation and superior fare.

A district officer, asked by Lord Spencer for his views on the Coercion Act, replied:—

’The only coercion I can perceive, your Excellency, is that people accustomed to live on potatoes and milk are forced to feed on salmon and wine.’

The last outrage I intend to mention in this chapter was a very remarkable one.

There was a contest for the chairmanship of the Tralee Board of Guardians. The Land League put forward a candidate who was at the time an inmate of Kilmainham gaol. The landlords, who at this earlier stage still had some power, conceived that the residence of the Home Ruler would not facilitate his control over the Board, and chose a candidate whose abode was not only more adjacent, but whose movements were unfettered.

The voting was even, until Mr. A.E. Herbert came into the room and gave his casting vote against the involuntary tenant of the Kilmainham hostelry. For this he was murdered three days later, and by the crime they hoped to ensure that on the next occasion the landlords would abstain from voting at all.

That murder of Mr. Arthur Herbert on his return from Petty Sessions at Castleisland was one of the worst, and as an exhibition of infernal hatred and vengeance it transcended the murders of Lord Mountmorres and Lord Leitrim. It cannot be denied that Mr. Herbert committed acts of a harsh and overbearing character. He was a turbulent, headstrong man, brave to rashness and foolhardiness, and too fond of proclaiming his contempt for the people by whom he was surrounded. As a magistrate, sitting at Brosna Petty Sessions, he expressed his regret that he was not in command of a force when a riot occurred in that village, when he would have ‘skivered the people with buckshot,’ language brought under the notice of the Lord Chancellor and the House of Commons.

He was the son of a clergyman, and lived at Killeentierna House with his mother, a venerable old lady over eighty, he being himself forty-five. His income was estimated at about four hundred a year, and as his relations with tenantry were not harmonious, he never went out without a six-chambered revolver in his pocket. Physically he was very robust—over five feet ten in height, and very corpulent. In his own neighbourhood he always was known as ‘Mr. Arthur.’

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Leaving Castleisland about five in the afternoon, he was accompanied for about a mile by the head constable, who then turned back. Mr. Herbert had not proceeded a quarter of a mile further when he was felled by the assassins. The spot chosen was singularly open, no shelter being visible for some distance. Several shots were heard by a labourer at work in a quarry, and when he came up he found Mr. Herbert lying on his face in the road, quite dead, the earth about him being covered with pools of blood. The body was almost riddled with shot and bullets.

That night a further illustration of the vindictive ferocity of the outrage was given. The lawn in front of Killeentierna was patrolled regularly by some of the large body of police which at once occupied the house. On this lawn eleven lambs were grazing. At half-past two these were seen by the police to be all right. At daybreak the eleven were found stabbed with pitchforks—nine of them killed outright, and two wounded to death. This act, as wretched as it was daring, added a new horror to the crime.

Mr. Herbert's murder was received with such exuberant delight in Kerry that my steward said to me:—

'You would think, sir, that rent was abolished and the duty taken off whisky.'

Constabulary had for a long while to be told off to prevent his grave being desecrated.

That is a pretty tough outrage for optimistic philanthropists to consider when they are addicted to announcing how far our generations have progressed from barbarism.

The price of blood in Kerry was not high. For example, the men that murdered FitzMaurice were paid L5 for the job, and they had never seen him before. His family had to be under police protection for five years, and I managed to get L1000 subscribed for them in England, Mr. Froude taking an enthusiastic and generous interest in a very sad case. The victim left two daughters, who both married policemen.

One young and cheery Kerry landlord was very proud, about 1886, at the price of forty shillings being offered for his life by the Land League, whereas nearly all the others were only valued at half a sovereign apiece.

As a matter of fact, almost any one could have been shot at Castleisland if a sovereign were offered, for they cared no more for human life than for that of a rat. Parnell himself would have been shot by any one of a couple of dozen fellows willing to earn a dishonest living if a five-pound note had been locally put upon his head. A patriotic philanthropist, destitute of the bowels of compassion and of every dictate of humanity, might have saved a great deal of undeserved suffering if he had made this donation towards his 'removal'—a pretty euphemism of Land League coinage.

Most of that generation are dead, in gaol, or have emigrated. It would take the deuce of a big sum to tempt any Castleislander to-day to commit murder, except under provocation, and the same improvement is observable all over Ireland. I believe a hundred pounds might be put on the head of the least popular agent or landlord, and he might walk unscathed without police protection.

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All that has been set forth in this chapter might be regarded as a heavy indictment of crime and disorder, but I cannot avoid adding one confirmatory piece of evidence, as eloquent as it is accurate. This is the fearful description of the state of Kerry which appears in Judge O'Brien's charge to the Grand Jury at the Assizes, founded, of course, on the report of outrages submitted to him. It is impossible to guess in what stronger words his opinions would have been expressed if the total number of outrages committed had been laid before him; but it is well known that only a few of those committed were reported, as, if the criminals were taken up and identified, the victims would be likely to be shot in revenge, while the guilty persons, tried by a sympathising jury, would obtain acquittal and popular advertisement.

The charge was as follows:—

'COLONEL CROSBIE AND GENTLEMEN OF THE GRAND JURY OF KERRY—I requested your permission to defer any observations I was about to make to you, in order that I might have an opportunity of examining certain returns which had been made to me containing materials for forming a judgment upon the state of things in this county of which I was put in possession upon my arrival, and I was desirous of being afforded an opportunity of examining these materials to try if I could discern whether, in the considerable lapse of time that has happened since the last Assizes, I could see any reason to conclude that an improvement had taken place in the state of things that has now so long existed in the County of Kerry, and other counties in the south of Ireland, to try if I could discern whether lapse of time itself, the weariness of that state of things, if the law and influences that lead persons to avoid violations of the law, or to follow the pursuits of industry, had led in the end to any favourable change in the state of things; but I grieve to say that it is not in my power, unfortunately, to announce that any change has taken place. On the contrary, all the means of information that I possess lead to the unhappy conclusion that there is no improvement, but that, on the contrary, there exists, even at this moment, a most extraordinary state of things—a state of things of an unprecedented description—nothing short, in fact, of a state of open war with all forms of authority, and even, I may say without exaggeration, with the necessary institutions of civilised life.

'These returns present a picture of the County Kerry such as can hardly be found in any country that has passed the confines of natural society and entered upon the duties and relations, and acknowledged the obligations, of civilised life. The law is defeated—-perhaps I should rather say, has ceased to exist! Houses are attacked by night and day, even the midnight terror yielding to the noonday anxiety of crime! Person and life are assailed! The terrified inmates are wholly unable to do anything to protect themselves,

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and a state of terror and lawlessness prevails everywhere. Even some persons who possess means of information that are not open to me, profess to discern in the signs of public feeling, in the views of some hope and some fear, the expectation of something about to happen, something reaching far beyond partial, or local, or even agrarian, disturbance, and calculated to create a greater degree of alarm than anything we have witnessed, or anything that has happened.

’When I come to compare the official returns of crime with those of the preceding period, I find that the total number of offences in this county since the last Assizes is somewhat less in number, even considerably less in number, than in the corresponding or the preceding period of the former years. But the diminution of number affords no assurance or ground of improvement at all, because I find that the diminution is accounted for entirely in the class of offences that acknowledges to some extent the power and influence of the law, namely, in threatening letters and notices, while the amount of open and actual crime is greater than it was in the former period, showing that there is an increased confidence in impunity, and that menace has given place to the deed. Within not more than ten days from the time that I am now speaking, not less than four examples of midnight invasion of houses in this county have occurred, accompanied with all the usual incidents of disguises and arms, and the firing of shots, and violence threatened or committed; in one instance the outrage having been committed upon the residence of a magistrate of this county, a man living with his family in his home, in the supposed delusive security of domestic life, of law, and respect for social station; and in another instance committed upon a humble man, and encountered, I am glad to say, in that instance, with a brave resistance, giving an example of courage which, if it were widely imitated, many of the evils that this country suffers from would no longer exist.

’I need not dwell upon the most aggravated instance of all which this calendar of crime presents—one that is quite recent, and within the memory of you all—the murder of Cornelius Murphy, a humble man, but one enjoying apparently the confidence and respect of all his neighbours, who had done no harm to any person, who was not conscious of any offence, whose house was invaded at a still early hour of the evening, and before the daylight had departed, by a band of men that is shown to have traversed a considerable distance of country, giving opportunities of recognition to many, and with hardly the pretext of an offence on his part, and in reality with the object of private plunder or private hostility—one of those motives that always take advantage of a state of disturbance in order to gratify private ends—slain in his own house in the presence of his own family. Certain persons, it would appear, have been arrested on a charge of complicity with this crime, and it may

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be that this cruel and wicked crime may be the means of discovering other crimes, and of leading in the end to the detection, if not to the conviction, of persons who have been connected in them, and those who rest in the supposed confidence of impunity may find the spell broken, may find the light of information to reach them, and may find in the end that the law will be able to prevail; because it must be in the experience of many of you that it is unhappily in the power of a few persons who engage in this system of nightly invasion of houses to multiply themselves, apparently by means of terror and intimidation, although at the same time there can be no doubt that, on account of interval of distances, and for many such reasons, there must be many such combinations in this country, acting entirely independent of each other.

’No person can be at a loss to understand the misery and suffering that arises from a state of crime; but perhaps all persons in the community do not equally understand one form of consequence to material prosperity that results from it. I have before me a document that contains most terribly significant evidence of mischief, alike to all classes of the community, that results from crime and a state of social disturbance. I have a return of malicious injuries which form the subject of presentment at these Assizes, in number, I understand, exceeding all former precedent. There are no less than eighty-six presentments, representing all forms of wicked outrage upon property, a tempest—I might say without exaggeration, a tempest—of violence and crime that has swept over a considerable portion of this county. The claims amount to L2700, with the result that the Grand Jury had presented upon a certain part of this county L1250, exercising apparently the greatest care and discrimination in reducing the amount of the claims, and this L1250 was not put upon the whole county, but on certain parts of the county, and the amount at the very least aggravated in a most serious degree the weight of taxation that falls upon the ratepayers of the County Kerry, deepening the difficulties that all classes alike must experience from the depression of the times, and from the other burdens they have to meet in providing against the demands that are made upon them.

’But, of course, you can easily understand that these things do not at all give you any idea of other forms of material injury that arise from crime and disturbance, in the loss of employment and the discouragement of capital, the injury to trade, and the multiplied consequences of all kinds detrimental to the community that arise from insecurity to personal property and life. And to all those evils we have to add another, and perhaps the worst of all—that of which you are all conscious, of which experience and observation reaches you every day in all the forms of social life—a system of unseen terrorism, a system of terror and tyranny that the well-disposed class of the community ought to detest and abhor, and in reference to which, on all sides, I have heard, in this county and other counties, one universal expression of desire—that some means should be found to put an end to it.

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’I possess no power myself to effect this state of things, and I cannot say that in the relation to the law which you fill as members of the Grand Jury, or in any other relation to the law, you possess the means to effect it. The duty of providing against so great an evil existing in the community—the duty and the obligation rests with others. My duty is simply confined to representing to you the state of things that exists, and, indeed, in that respect I know that I am doing what is entirely unnecessary, for the state of the County Kerry now, and for a period of five or six years, in all its essential features, is known far beyond the limits of the county, to every single person in the country. I will merely make use of one general observation—that I by no means share in the opinion that has been expressed as to the inability to deal with this state of things. On the contrary, I entertain the most perfect confidence that it is in the power of those who are intrusted with the duty of maintaining the public peace to re-establish order and law and peace in this county. And as my duty is confined to representing that state of things, that duty does not carry me to indicate to those on whom the responsibility rests the means to attain that object.’

CHAPTER XX

THE EDENBURN OUTRAGE

In the early part of the winter of 1884, so bad did the state of Kerry become, and so menacing was the attitude of the Land Leaguers towards myself, that I felt I had no right to endanger the lives of my wife and daughters by any longer permitting them to reside at Edenburn.

In all those years, from 1878 to 1884, be it noted that I gave more employment in Kerry than any one man, a fact which has been testified to by different parish priests, but at the same time I was agent for a great many landlords, and tried my level best to get in rents for my employers.

For this cause my life had been repeatedly threatened, and now, in November 1884, dynamite was put to my house, the back of it being badly blown up. There were sixteen individuals in the house, mostly women and children, and an attempt was therefore made to murder them all in the effort to take the life of one individual they were afraid to meet in the open.

The house was repaired and I received compensation in due course from the County, but my family did not think after what had occurred that Edenburn was a desirable place of residence. So I henceforth resided much in London, and therefore spent a great deal less money in Kerry.

Perhaps, however, I had better be a little more diffuse about what was known all over the British Isles as the Edenburn Outrage, but the bulk of this chapter will be drawn from

observations by members of my family and newspaper accounts, for the episode left considerably less impression on my mind than it did on that of my womenfolk, and indeed on the public, at the time.

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To show how matters stood, one of my daughters reminds me that I gave her a very neat revolver as a present, and that whenever she came back from school she always slept with it under her pillow. Moreover, she recollects that the customary Sunday afternoon pursuit was to have revolver practice at the garden gate.

There had been several episodes of an ugly nature; for example, one of my sons competing in some sports at Tralee was advised to make an excuse and to go home separately from the womenfolk.

He took the hint, and my wife with the governess and several children went back without him in the waggonette. About a mile and a half from the town, just where the horses had to walk up a steep hill, a number of men with bludgeons and sticks came out of a ditch, peered into the trap, and seeing it contained nothing but women and children let it pass on with a grunt of disgust, whilst they trudged back to Tralee.

One of my daughters, years after, on being taken in to dinner in London, was asked by her companion if she was any relation of mine.

She having confessed the fact—one I hope in no way detrimental, though I say so, perhaps, who should not—he mentioned that he had been to a most cheery dance at Edenburn, which had made a great impression on his mind, because for seven miles along the road by which he and his friends drove there were pickets of constabulary, and the hall table was piled so full with the revolvers brought by the guests, that all the hats and coats had to be taken to the smoking-room.

It may be as well to again mention that my wife during the very worst periods had never any difficulty in keeping or obtaining domestic servants. No doubt the maids liked having two or three stalwart constables always hanging about the place, and capital odd job men they made.

A constable neatly humbugged a footman, and I may here mention the incident, though it is subsequent to the episode of this chapter.

One house we took in London was in Glendower Place, and when the servants arrived, my wife found that the footman's face was covered with sticking-plaster. He was a regular gossoon, though shaped like a fine specimen of the pampered menials who condescend to open the front door of large mansions to their betters.

A constable had hoaxed him into believing that he could never walk in the London streets without using firearms, and having advised him to learn to do so, the idiot put the weapon against his cheek, and the first kick had knocked away a voluminous portion of his countenance.

At the end of November 1884, we were packing up to leave, and all the big cases were in the stable-yard ready to be carted away. There were five policemen at the time in the house, and two of them were on sentry duty all through the night.

None of us had had good nights for some time past, but on the evening of November 29th I came back from the meeting of the Board of Guardians at Listowel, and said to my wife as we sat down to dinner:—

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’After all, we are starting for England to-morrow morning without any necessity, for I do believe the country is beginning to settle down.’

This is the only occasion on which I ever ventured on a cheerful prophecy since Ireland came under the baneful spell of Mr. Gladstone, and it was the most foolish remark I ever made.

That night came the explosion, but I prefer to let the press tell the tale.

The *Manchester Guardian* relates:—

’The explosive matter was placed under an area in the basement story, dynamite being the agent employed for the outrage. A large aperture was made in the wall, which is three feet thick. Several large rents running to the top have been made, and it now presents a most dilapidated appearance. The ground-floor, where the explosion occurred, was used as a larder, and everything in it was smashed to pieces, the glass window-frames and shutters being shivered into atoms. On the three stories above it, the explosion produced a similar effect. To the right of it, one of Mr. Hussey’s daughters was sleeping, and the window of her room was entirely destroyed. Mr. J.E. Hussey, J.P., slept in another room about thirty feet from the scene of the explosion, and his window and room fared similarly. The butler slept in a small room on the basement, which was completely wrecked, the windows being shattered to pieces, the lamp and toilet broken, and the greater part of the ceiling thrown on him in the bed. The length of the house is about fifty yards, and the windows in the back, numbering twenty-six, have been altogether destroyed. Mr. S.M. Hussey and his wife slept in the front, and they were much affected by the explosion. Three policemen who had been stationed in the house for the past couple of years slept on a ground-floor in front. The coach-house and stables near the house were considerably damaged. In the garden two greenhouses, one about 120 yards away, and the other fully 150, were injured, the greater portion of the glass being broken and the roofs shaken. In several houses at long distances the shock was plainly felt. The dwelling-house subsequently presented a very wrecked appearance. On looking at the back of it, there are several rents or cracks to be seen in the solid masonry, and the slates are shaken and displaced. Everything shows the terrific force of the explosion. In the yard a large slate-house was much damaged, the slates being displaced and the roof shaken and cracked. A large stone was found here, having been blown from the dwelling-house.’

From the *Times* may be culled these additional particulars:

’There is a fissure some inches wide in the main wall from the ground to the roof, and a little more force would have effected the evident object of making the residence of the obnoxious agent a heap of ruins. The damage done is estimated at from L2000 to L3000, but this is only a rough conjecture.’

The *Cork Constitutional* throws further light in a somewhat badly expressed article:—

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’The most extraordinary circumstance connected with the outrage is the secrecy and stealth which must have been resorted to in order to avoid detection. It was well known in the neighbourhood that not alone were three policemen constantly at Edenburn for Mr. Hussey’s protection, but that a number of dogs were also kept on the premises, and it is, therefore, astonishing the care and caution which must have been resorted to in order to successfully lay and explode the destructive material. Some idea of the force of the explosion as well as the stability of the building which resisted it in a measure, may be gathered from the fact that it was distinctly heard in the town of Castleisland four miles away. Mr. R. Roche, J.P., who lives a mile from Edenburn, also distinctly heard the explosion, which he describes as resembling in sound that caused by the fall of a huge tree in close proximity. Those who were at Edenburn at the time state that between four and half-past four a low rumbling noise, followed by a sharp report, was heard. The house trembled and shook to its foundations. The inmates, some of whom were only awakened by the shock, were seized with an indescribable terror. All the windows were smashed to atoms, the furniture and fixtures in the interior were rattled, and some lighter articles disturbed from their position. The suddenness of the alarm, and the darkness of the night, coupled with an indefinite idea as to the nature and extent of the explosion, made the occupants of the house afraid to stir, and it was not until some servants living adjacent arrived that the consternation caused in the household subsided sufficiently to enable them to examine the house, and judge of the narrow escape they had had from a violent and horrible death.’

The consternation most decidedly did not spread to the master and mistress of the establishment. The *Kerry Sentinel* quickly had an allusion to ’a report that Mr. Hussey turned into bed after the outrage with one of his laconic jokes—that he should be called when the next explosion occurred.’

As a matter of fact what I did say was:-"My dear, we can have a quiet night at last, for the scoundrels won’t bother us again before breakfast.”

And I can solemnly testify that within ten minutes of that observation I was fast asleep, and never woke till I was called.

But perhaps the best impression of what occurred can be obtained from the recollection of my daughter Florence, now Mrs. Nicoll, who was an inmate of Edenburn at the time.

’I was awakened by a terrific noise, which to my sleepy wits conveyed the impression that the roof had fallen in. It was then between three and four in the morning. I lit a candle and ran out into the passage where were congregating my family in night attire. My father was perfectly calm.

’"Dynamite and badly managed,” was his laconic explanation. We all asked each other if we were hurt, and began to be alarmed about my brother John, who, however, put in

an appearance in a singularly attenuated nightshirt, with a candle in one hand and a revolver in the other, with which he was rubbing his sleepy eyes.

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'"Singular time of night, John, to try chemical experiments without our permission, is it not?" said my father.

'Then John and my mother went downstairs to inspect the premises; of the back windows, thirty-four in number, there was not a bit of glass as big as a threepenny piece left. Our brougham was in the yard; the window next the explosion was intact, but the one on the further side was blown to smithereens.

'The servants were very scared, and one maid having rushed straight to a sitting-room, was there found hysterically embracing a sofa cushion.

'We received one odd claim for compensation. An old woman living half a mile off complained that the force of the explosion had knocked some of the plaster off the wall, and that it had fallen into a pan full of milk, spoiling it.

'Whilst we were all chattering about the outrage, father said:—

'"Don't be uneasy about a mere dynamite explosion; it's like an Irishman's pig, you want it to go one way and it invariably goes in the other."

'And with that he went off to bed again, with the remark about having a quiet night which he has mentioned earlier in this chapter.

'The only other thing which I now recall is, that a detachment of the Buffs in the neighbourhood had found us the only people to entertain them.

'On being told that Edenburn had been blown up, one of them said:—

'"They were the only neighbours we had to talk to, and the brutes would not leave us them as a convenience."'

The Cork correspondent of the *Times* wrote:—

'Among the general body of the people of Kerry, the news of the attempt to blow up Mr. Hussey's house at Edenburn caused comparatively little excitement. In the County Club at Tralee, the announcement was received with something like a panic. Hitherto, persons who considered themselves in danger were careful to be within their homes before darkness had set in, and when going abroad had a following of police for their protection. Now it is shown that their houses may prove but a sorry shelter, even when a protective force of police is about, and it is no wonder that, with the terrible example furnished in this instance of the daring of those who commit foul crimes, the class against whom the outrages are directed should be filled with fears for the future. The people generally show but small interest in the occurrence.

’The attempt to blow up Mr. Hussey’s dwelling is the first of its kind in Kerry, and the third that has been made in Ireland. Within the past few years the districts of Castleisland and Tralee have been distinguished for the number and ferocity of the outrages that were committed there.’

I am also tempted to quote from the ‘Leader’ in the *Times* on the outrage:—

’Mr. Hussey has a reputation, not confined to Ireland, as an able, fearless, and vigorous land agent, the best type of a much abused class of men who have endured contumely and faced dangers, by day and night, in order to protect the rights of property intrusted to them.

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’It appears that, owing to the disturbed state of the locality, he intended to leave it for the winter; and this probably being known to his enemies, they made an effort to destroy him before he got beyond their reach. He, at all events, seems to have been under the spell of no pleasing illusion as to the supposed tranquillity and the reign of order. On the contrary, he is alleged to have stated that more outrages than ever are committed, and that but for the deterrent force employed by the Government, there would be no living in the country, ... This is the opinion of the majority of Englishmen. They are not all satisfied that the spirit of lawlessness and disorder is rooted out; and they will find only too strong confirmation of their doubts in the reckless violence of the National Press, and in the attempt—marked by novel features of atrocity—to destroy Mr. Hussey’s household.’

As for the National Press, it indulged in an ecstasy of enthusiasm over the perpetration, combined with intense disgust “at the miscarriage of justice” of my having escaped without hurt or more than very temporary inconvenience. On my departure, one eloquent writer compared me to ‘Macduff taking his babes and bandboxes to England,’ a choice simile I have always appreciated.

The *United Ireland* of December 6, 1884, in a characteristic leaderette, headed ‘A very suspicious affair,’ observes:—

’We should like to know by what right the newspapers speak of the affair as “a dynamite outrage”? A very curious surmise has been put forward locally, namely, that the house had been stricken by lightning. The shattering of a building by lightning is by no means phenomenal, and the absence of all trace of any terrestrial explosive agency, gives colour to the hypothesis that the destruction was due to meteorological causes.’

With one last quotation I cease to draw upon what may be termed outside contributions, and it is one which gratified me at the time.

It is taken from the *Cork Examiner* of December 12, 1884:—

’Dear Sir,—Authoritative statements having been made in the Press and elsewhere, that some persons living in Mr. Hussey’s immediate neighbourhood must have been the perpetrators of the horrible outrage, or, at least, must have given active and guilty assistance to the principal parties concerned in it; now we, the undersigned, tenants on the property, and living in the closest proximity to Edenburn House and demesne, take this opportunity of declaring in the most public and solemn manner that neither directly nor indirectly, by word or deed, by counsel or approval, had we any participation in the tragic disaster of November 28. The relations hitherto existing between Mr. Hussey and us have ever been of the most friendly character. As a landlord, his dealings with us were such as gave unqualified satisfaction and were marked by justice, impartiality, and very great indulgence.

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As a neighbour he was extremely kind and obliging, ready whenever applied to, to help us, as far as he was able, in every difficulty or trial in which we might be placed. The bare suspicion, therefore, of being ever so remotely connected with the recent explosion, is, to us, a source of the deepest pain, a suspicion we repudiate with honest indignation. Furthermore, the singular charity, benevolence, and amiability of Mrs. Hussey are long and intimately known to us. We witness almost daily her bountiful treatment of the poor, and tender care of the sick and infirm. Her ears never refuse to listen with sympathy to every tale of distress, nor will she hesitate with her own hands to wash and dress the festering wounds and sores of those who flock to her from all the surrounding parishes. With such knowledge as this, we should indeed be worse than fiends did we raise a hand against the Hussey family, or engage in any enterprise that would necessitate their departure from among us:—

’Richard Fitzgerald.
Denis Daly.
John Reynolds.
Cornelius Daly.
William Hogan.
Darby Leary.
John Mason.
Jeremiah Dinan.
J. O’connell.
John Neligan.
Daniel Neill.
John Daly.
Thomas Connor.
Jeremiah Connor.
Thomas Shanahen.
Michael Moynihar.
Widow Aherne.
James O’sullivan.
John M’elligott.
Henry Gentleman.’

As for those really concerned, people tell me that the three implicated in the dynamite business are all dead in America, and if the information is accurate no local person was connected with the explosion, though the miscreants were, of course, housed in the immediate vicinity.

There was one delicious incident.

The local branch of the Land League at Castleisland refused to pay any reward to the dynamiters because we had not been killed, and the leading miscreant actually fired at the treasurer. Eventually the passages to America of all the triumvirate were paid, and they thought it discreet to quit the country, cursing their own stingy executive even more deeply than they blasphemed against the Law and execrated me.

A man from the neighbourhood subsequently wrote to me from London that he could tell me who perpetrated the Edenburn outrage.

I told him to call on me at the Union Club, of which I was then a member, and informed him—his name was O'Brien—I would arrange with the Home Office, in the event of his information being valuable, that he should get a reward.

He replied that his life was in danger in London from another Fenian.

I went to the Home Office and saw Mr. Jenkinson on the subject. He asked me to send O'Brien down to him and he would settle matters, adding that he had reason for believing that the story of threats from another scoundrel was true.

I saw O'Brien and told him to call on Mr. Jenkinson.

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He answered that he would go, but he never did, and Mr. Jenkinson subsequently told me that the Land League scented he was going to prove a troublesome informer, so they practically outbid the Government by paying O'Brien a large sum, which was handed to him on the steamer as it was starting for America.

From that time, until I have been recalling the incidents of the explosion for this book, I have never given a thought to the affair and not mentioned it half a dozen times in the twenty years that have elapsed.

CHAPTER XXI

MORE ATROCITIES AND LAND CRIMES

I brought my family back to Kerry in the following summer, and after I had rebuilt Edenburn I lived there until I gave it to my elder son, who has it to this day and resides there in peace.

Matters were very different to that state of idyllic simplicity in the critical times on which I am still dwelling.

One night, while in London, I was at the House of Commons, and the London correspondent of the *Freeman*, being presumably extremely short of what he would term 'copy,' he proceeded to make observations about me after this fashion:—

'Over here Mr. Hussey is something of a fish out of water. It would be hazardous to say that if he was to begin his career as an agent again he would eschew the system that has made him famous, but his present frame of mind is unquestionably one of doubt as to whether, after all, the game was worth the candle.'

That young man will go far as a writer of fiction.

I received, among more pleasant welcomes on my return to my native land, the following delightful blast of vituperation from the *Irish Citizen*, and beg to tender the unknown author my profound thanks for the diversion his ink-slinging afforded me:—

'Here is something about a man who ought to have been murdered any day since 1879—indeed we don't know that he should have been let live even up to that date, and as for his family, their translation to the upper regions by means of a simple charge of dynamite, which nobody of any sense or importance would even think of condemning, has been most unaccountably deferred to the present year. This man is Mr. S.M. Hussey, the miasma of whose breath, according to a well-informed murder organ in Dublin, poisons one-half of the kingdom of Kerry. Let any man read the speeches delivered in Upper Sackville Street, and the articles in *United Ireland* against Mr. Hussey, and he must ask why the fiend incarnate has not been murdered long since.

The infamy of persistently turning hatred on a man like Mr. Hussey, and then escaping the consequences of having thereby murdered him, has no parallel in any country in the world. Inciting to murder is practically reduced to a science in Ireland. That Mr. Hussey has not been murdered years ago is not the fault of the scientist, but the watchfulness of the police.'

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My experience while in England had been that few people I met really appreciated what boycotting was like, so how are my readers of twenty years afterwards to do so? Yet when I went back to Ireland, it seemed to me even more cruel than when I had grown comparatively accustomed by sheer proximity to it.

Mr. Parnell had himself given the order in a public speech:—

’Shun the man who bids for a farm from which a tenant has been evicted, shun him in the street, in the shop, in the marketplace, even in the place of worship, as if he were a leper of old.’

This was done with the thoroughness which characterises Irishmen when back-sliding into unimaginable cruelties. Should a boycotted man enter chapel, the whole congregation rose as with one accord and left him alone in the building. Considering the sensitive and pious disposition of the average Irishman, such ostracism was even more poignant than it would be to an Englishman.

Only two families in Kerry, possibly in Munster, at Christmas 1885, had the courage to resist the National League police, commonly called moonlighters. These two were the Curtins and the Doyles. The Curtins had to be under constant police protection, were insulted wherever they went, and their murdered father was openly called ‘the murderer.’ As for the Doyles, the Board of Guardians was urged to harass his unfortunate children, who were both deaf and dumb.

The same Board of Guardians was most lavish in its relief to any man evicted for declining to pay his rent. In one case they gave a man fifteen shillings a week—or treble the ordinary out-of-door relief—for over six years.

Sir James Stephen, a man of acute discriminations, who has done more justice to the Irish problem than any one else, wrote:—

’The great difficulty the Land League and the National League have had to contend with is that of hindering the neighbouring farmers, peasants, and labourers from frustrating the strike against rent by taking up vacant farms, however they came to be vacant. Boycotting never succeeded unless crime was at its back. The Crimes Act cut the ground from under the feet of the boycotters, not so much by its direct prohibitions of the practice as by making it unsafe to commit outrages in enforcing the law of the League. The Land League and the National League were nothing else but screens for secret societies whose work was to enforce the League decrees by outrage and murder.’

Whenever the ‘History of Modern Ireland’ comes to be written, that glowing outburst of truth ought to be quoted.

There were some evictions carried out at Farranfore on the estate of Lord Kenmare, by the sub-sheriff, Mr. Harnett, and a force of military and police numbering about one hundred and thirty.

During the eviction of one Daly, horns were blown and the chapel bell set ringing. These appeals drew about three thousand people to the place, who groaned and threw some stones, besides growing so menacing that the Riot Act had to be read, upon which the whole crowd moved off.

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This brought a characteristic effusion from *United Ireland*:—

’We remember the time when Kerry was a county as quiet as the grave, when its member, Henry A. Herbert, in the debate on the Westminster Act of 1871, was able to rise in his place and boast that in purely Celtic counties like his there was no crime, and that agrarian outrages was confined to districts infused with English blood, like Meath and Tipperary. What has changed it? Principally the malpractices of a couple of agents ruling over half its area, whose bloated rentals grow swollen under their hands with the sweat of dumb and hopeless possessors.’

Whatever else he possessed, that writer had not one vestige of truth with which to cover the indecency of his misrepresentations.

He did not mention that Mr. Matthew Harris, a Member for Galway, had publicly observed that if the tenant farmers of Ireland shot down landlords as partridges are shot in the month of September, he would never say a word against them.

It is a fact that the convulsion of horror at the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish alone prevented an organised campaign for the ‘removal’ of Irish landlords on a systematic and wholesale scale.

By the way, according to his son, it was quite by chance that Professor Mahaffy—that illustrious ornament of Trinity College—was not also murdered. He had intended to walk over with poor Mr. Burke after the entry of the Viceroy and Chief Secretary, but he was detained by an undergraduate and so found it too late to catch the doomed victim before he started. Had he walked with them, it is questionable if the murderers would have attacked three men: on the other hand, he might, of course, have been added to the slain.

There was a meeting of Lord Kenmare’s and Mr. Herbert of Muckross’s tenants at Killarney addressed by Mr. Sheehan, M.P., who advised them, as the landlords refused 70 per cent, only to offer 50 per cent., and nothing at all in March (1887), as by that time the new Irish Parliament would have allotted the land free to the present holders, without any compensation to the landlords.

Despite the efforts of traitors on both sides of the Channel, that Irish Parliament has not yet been summoned.

The parish priest, Mr. Sheehy, stopped the Limerick hunting, and so took L24,000 a year out of the pockets of the very poor. That man did more harm than the landlords, who alone gave the poor work, and there is no doubt that many of the worst crimes were instigated and indirectly suggested from the altar.

At this point I want to interpose with one word to the reader to beg him not to regard this as either a connected narrative of crime, much less a regular essay with proper deductions—the trimmings to the joint—but only a series of observations as I recall events which impressed me, and which I think may come home with some force to a happier generation that knew neither Parnellism nor crime. To write a consecutive and connected history of these atrocities would be to compile a volume of horrors. I prefer to give a few recollections of outrages, and to let the direct simplicity of these terrible reminiscences impress those who have bowels of compassion.

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A gentleman named Nield was killed in Mayo, simply because he was mistaken for my son Maurice. This was in broad daylight, in the town of Charlestown. It was raining hard at the time—a thing so common in Ireland that no one mentions it any more than they do the fact of the daily paper appearing each morning—and the unfortunate victim had an umbrella up, so the mob could not see his face. They shouted, 'Here's Hussey,' and tried to pull him off the car, but the parish priest stopped this. However, before he could reduce the villains to the fear of the Church, which does affect them more than the fear of the Law, they gave poor Nield a blow on the head, and, though he lived for six months, he never recovered.

Another time, when returning to his house in Mayo from Ballyhaunis, on a dark night, my son Maurice found a wall built, about eighteen inches high, across the road, for the express purpose of upsetting him. It was only by the grace of God—as they say in Kerry—and his own careful driving, that he was preserved.

In those same Land League times, my son was a prominent gentleman rider. At Abbeyfeale races he rode in a green jacket and won the race, which produced a lot of enthusiasm, the crowd not knowing who it was sporting the popular colour. They only heard it was my son after he had left the course, whereupon a mob rushed to the station, and the police had to stand four deep outside the carriage window to protect him, to say nothing of an extra guard at the station gates.

The cordiality of my fellow-countrymen also provided me with another disturbed night at Aghadoe, which I had leased from Lord Headley.

To quiet the apprehensions of my family, and also to relieve the mind of the D.I. from anxiety about my tough old self, there were always five police in the house, and two on sentry duty all night.

On this particular date, about two o'clock in the morning, we were aroused by hearing shots fired in the wood below the house, the plan of the miscreants being to draw the police away from the house. As this did not succeed, a second party began a counter demonstration in another quarter. The theory is that a third party wanted to approach the house from the back in the temporary absence of the constabulary, and disseminate the house, its contents, and the inhabitants into the air and the immediate vicinity by the gentle and persuasive influence of dynamite.

However, the police were not to be tricked, and soon the fellows, having grown apprehensive, or having exhausted all their ammunition, were heard driving *off*. Signs of blood were found on the road towards Beaufort next morning, so the attacking force suffered some inconvenience in return for giving us a bad night.

Lord Morris, among a group of acquaintances in Dublin, pointing to me, said:—

’That’s the Jack Snipe who provided winter shooting for the whole of Kerry, and not one of them could wing him.’

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‘Mighty poor sport they got out of it,’ I answered, ’and I have an even worse opinion of their capacity for accurate aiming than I have of their benevolent intentions.’

Other people know more of oneself than one does, and I was much interested to hear that, in this year of grace, the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* said of me:—

’Sam Hussey, yes, that’s the famous Irishman they used to call “Woodcock” Hussey, because he was never hit, though often shot at.’

I always thought ‘Woodcock’ Carden had the monopoly of the epithet, but am proud to find I infringed his patent.

I was benevolently commended by a vituperative ink-slinger, Daniel O’Shea, in his letter to the *Sunday Democrat* in 1886, but none of those he blackguarded were in the least inconvenienced by ’the roll of his tongue,’ as the saying is:—

’A vast number of the Irish have been heartlessly persecuted by the most despotic landlords of Ireland, such as Lord Kenmare, Herbert, Headley, Hussey, Winn, and the Marquis of Lansdowne, all of whom are Englishmen by birth, and consequently aliens in heart, despots by instinct, absentees by inclination, and always in direct opposition to the cause of Ireland. Poor-rate, town-rate, income-tax, are nothing less than wholesale robbery, and is it any wonder that some of the people who are thus oppressed should be driven to desperation? It is deplorable to learn that they should have had any cause to commit what are called “agrarian” crimes. Why not turn their attention to these landlords, the police, the travelling coercion magistrates, not forgetting the emergency men? These are the people to whom I would direct the attention of the men of Kerry.’

I have given a number of examples of how I have been genially appreciated in the hostile Press, but my family are of opinion that it would not be fair, considering how many kind things were published in loyal journals, not to render some tribute to them too. I was sincerely obliged when I received a good word, but, frankly, the bad ones amused me much more. However, I am not ungrateful, and I have specially prized one able description of my attitude which appeared in the *Globe*, the manly strain of the writing of which is in healthy contrast to the hysterical effusions tainted with adjectival mania of those who wanted me shot, but were too cowardly to fire at me themselves:—

’Mr. Hussey is admittedly fair and just in his dealings with his own tenants. But he is only just and fair, which, in the ethics of Irish agrarianism, is equivalent to being a rack-renter and a tyrant. He refuses to let his own land at whatever the tenants think well to pay for it. He persists, with exasperating obstinacy, in refusing to sacrifice the interests of the landlords for whom he acts. In short, Mr. Hussey is one of the most determined and formidable obstacles to the success of the Land League. While such men have the courage to face the agrarian conspiracy, that grand consummation of patriotic effort—-the rooting out of landlordism—must be a somewhat tough and tedious business. He

has lived in the midst of enemies, who would have murdered him if only they had the opportunity. His life, it may be safely said, has had no stronger security than his own ability to protect it.'

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And yet some one ventured to call Irish land agents ’popularity-hunting scoundrels.’

‘Popularity and getting in money were never on the same bush,’ as I told Lord Kenmare, and if I had stopped to think how I should make myself popular, I should have bothered my head about what I did not care twopence for, and provided an even more easy target for firing at at short range.

Drifting from a man who paid no heed to scoundrels, I am led to allude to the attitude of a profession, the members of which profited by their amenities—I, of course, mean solicitors—because some one put a question to me on the subject only the other day.

My answer is, that none of the solicitors were in the Land League, and they did not instigate outrages; but they drew comfortable fees for defending the perpetrators.

Swindlers and murderers never agree, for they practise distinct professions.

We were fighting a Land War, and though I have kept back land questions as much as I can, in order not to weary the reader with what never wearies me, I have one or two examples to give which cannot be omitted if I am to portray the true facts.

My firm was agent for an estate in Castleisland, the rent of which, in 1841, was L2300. I exhibited the rental, showing only three quarters in arrear. By 1886 it was cut down by the Commissioners to L 1800, and the landlord sold it for L30,000, for which the tenants used to pay four per cent, for forty-nine years, to cover principal and interest.

There was a tenant on that estate named Dennis Coffey. He took a farm at L105 a year; the Commissioners reduced that rent to L80. He purchased it for L1440—-eighteen years’ purchase, for which his son has L42 a year for forty-nine years. The father had purchased a farm for fee-simple of equal value for L3000, which he left to two others of his sons. So that one son, by paying half what he had covenanted to pay, and which he could pay, gets a farm equal in value to what his father paid L3000 in hard cash for. The man who is paying rent has his farm well stocked; the others are paupers, and one died in the poorhouse.

That may belong to to-day, and not to the period of outrage with which I have been dealing; but it duly points the moral, and is the outcome of those times.

At the Boyle Board of Guardians in 1887, upon a discussion over the Kilronan threatened evictions, Mr. Stuart said:—

’There was one of these men arrested by the police. His rent was L4, 12s. 6d., and, when arrested, a deposit-receipt for L220 was found in his pocket.’

This case had been freely cited at home and in America as a typical instance of the ruthless tyranny of Irish landlords.

My friend and neighbour, Mr. Arthur Blennerhassett, addressed the following letter to Mr. W.E. Gladstone, then Prime Minister:—

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’Sir—I beg respectfully to call your attention to the following statement. In 1866, Judge Longfield conveyed to my uncle, under what was called an indefeasible title, the lands of Inch East, Ardroe and Inch Island, and previous to the sale, Judge Longfield caused them to be valued by Messrs. Gadstone and Ellis, and in the face of the rental, he certified that the fair letting value of Inch East and Ardroe was L230, and that the fair letting value of Inch Island was L75, now in hand. On the strength of will, my uncle purchased the lands valued at L305 for L6200, and your sub-Commissioners have just reduced the rental of Inch East and Ardroe at the rate of from L230 to L170 a year.

I therefore request you will be pleased to take some steps to recoup me for the L60 a year I have lost by the action of the Government, and I may say this can be partially done by abandoning the quit rent and tithe rent charge, amounting to L34, 5s. 4d., which I am now forced by the Government to pay without any reduction.

A. BLENNERHASSETT.’

The Right Honourable W.E. Gladstone.

The oracle of Hawarden was as dumb to this as to my effusion to a similar purport already mentioned. Not even the proverbial postcard was sent to Tralee, so the verbosity of Mr. Gladstone was strangely checked when he found himself pinned down to facts by Irish landlords.

Whilst landlords and their families were literally starving, and agents were collecting what they could at the peril of their lives, the real land-grabbers, the no-renters, were accumulating money, and investing it in land.

I sent the following series of sales to the *Times* to show the real value of land:—

(1) The interest on Lord Granard’s estate, the valuation of which was five guineas, was sold for L280, and the fee-simple subsequently bought for L80.

(2) On one of his own farms for which the tenant paid L65 annual rent, the tenant’s interest fetched L750 and auction fees.

(3) A farm at Curraghila, near Tralee, annual rent L70, Poor Law valuation, L51, 10s., area stat. 73 acres. The tenant’s interest was sold for L700.

(4) Tenant’s interest on a farm in County Tipperary, on Lord Normanton’s estate, at yearly rent of L30, was sold for L600, and the fee-simple purchased for L450.

(5) Tenant's interest at Breaing, near Castleisland, held at the annual rent of L51, 10s., was sold for L550.

(6) At Abbeyfeale, County Kerry, tenant of a small farm, at annual rent of twenty-four shillings, sold his interest for L55.

All the sales, save the Tipperary one, were in a district in which, prior to the Land Act of 1881, tenant-right was unknown.

Poetry is always congenial to an Irishman, probably because it has licences almost as great as he likes to take, and has a vague, irresponsible way of putting things, much akin to his own methods.

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Here are some lines from the ‘Irish Tenant’s Song’ which express a good deal of the popular emotion:—

Oh, Parnell, dear, and did you hear the news that’s going round? The landlords are forbid by law to live on Irish ground. No more their rent-days they may keep, nor agents harsh distrain, The widow need no longer weep, for over is their reign. I met with mighty Gladstone, and he took me by the hand, And he said, ’Hurrah for Ireland! ’tis now the happy land. ’Tis a most delightful country that I for you have made—You may shoot the landlord through the head who asks that rent be paid.’ We care not for the agent, nor do we care for those Who come upon us to distrain—we pay them back in blows. And when hopeless, helpless, ruined, these landlords vile shall roam, We’ll hunt and hound them from the roofs they’ve held so long as home.

I don’t say that was sung in Castleisland, but it might have been the local hymn and verbal companion to the brutal misdeeds of the benighted inhabitants.

As if matters were not bad enough, that Apostle of outrage Mr. Michael Davitt came to Castleisland on February 21, 1886, and in a pestilential speech, inciting to crime, he showed that, at all events, he appreciated that for sheer blackness and turpitude Kerry was bad to beat. He said:—

’For some time past Kerry has attracted more attention for the occurrences which have been taking place here, than the whole remainder of Ireland put together. I am not without hope that henceforth, until the battle with landlordism and Dublin Castle is triumphantly over, the people of Kerry will be towers of strength to the national cause. The hope of Irish landlordism is now centred in Kerry. Elsewhere it has none, it is a social rinderpest, since the National League was started 1600 families have been turned out in this one county.’

Captain M’Calmont in the House of Commons, three weeks afterwards, called attention to Mr. Baron Dowse’s address to the Grand Jury of the County of Kerry in which he stated:—

’That this county is in a very much worse state than it has been for years: that there are no less than three hundred offences specially reported to the constabulary since the Assizes of 1885, consisting of two cases of murder, eighteen cases of letters threatening to murder, thirty-nine cases of cattle, horse, and sheep stealing, eleven cases of arson, eighteen cases of maiming cattle, fifty-two cases of seizing arms, seventy-four cases of sending threatening letters, and twenty-four cases of intimidation.’

You will observe that this is the same picture from two different points of view.

Almost the worst case in which I was personally interested, was that of the Cruickshank family.

The father, an industrious, respectable, elderly Scotsman, supported his family at Inch by the proceeds of a rabbit-warren which he rented. He had no farm, and therefore might expect to live in peace, even in Kerry, in those times; but, as he was a Scotch Protestant, and had arms, he was a marked man.

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Having been threatened, he was partially guarded by the police who patrolled the district. However, in April 1885, when the Prince of Wales visited Ireland, and the constabulary from country districts were drafted into the towns through which he had to pass, a number of disguised Nationalists entered Cruickshank's house at night. They gave him a frightful beating, even breaking a gun on his head, which was seriously injured. This was done in the presence of his wife and daughters, and of a young son who, with one of his sisters, went off in the night to a police station four miles distant, to obtain assistance for his father.

Between the fight and the chill received that night, the boy fell into a decline of which he died in May 1886. One daughter, not strong at the time of the outrage, became a chronic invalid. The father, as soon as he was able to move after the perpetration, applied for compensation under the Crimes Act, but as it was then to expire in about a fortnight, the Lord-Lieutenant refused to consider the case. The poor fellow continued to suffer from the wounds on his head, and so affected was he by the shock of his son's death, that he became insensible and only survived him a few weeks, leaving his widow and three daughters without any means of support.

My wife and the former Archdeacon of Ardfert appealed for subscriptions and obtained L120, which enabled the unfortunate survivors to return to Scotland.

That was the settlement of the land question that suited the Nationalists, namely, to cause the death of the head of the family, and to get the rest out of the country. It did not say much for the civilisation of the nineteenth century, but after the brutalities of the spring of 1871 in Paris, there can be no doubt how thin is the veneer over the barbarity of even the most civilised; those deeds were perpetrated in the heart of the European capital specially devoted to amusement: what I describe took place in the most distant portion of Europe, where Nature is lovely and man, alas, the creature of impulse, the prey of those who lead him into the worst temptations.

Another settlement was suggested by an anonymous writer who concealed his identity under the pseudonym of Saxon. He observed:—

'Two hundred millions of English money are now (1886) to be spent buying out Irish landlords, but would it not be surely better and more in accordance with reason and justice to buy out the tenants? At a very low calculation, two hundred millions would put a couple of hundred pounds in every Irishman's pocket, and there is not one of them that would refuse to leave his beloved country, and bless America or Australia on these terms. The island could be populated with Scotch and English settlers, and our difficulties be at an end. The Irish must not have their own loaf and ours too. I commend this scheme to Messrs. Gladstone and Morley. It is quite as just, quite as reasonable, and more forcible than their own.'

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Hear, hear! say I, but our grandchildren's grandchildren when grey old men will still be trying to settle the Irish question, which can never be settled until there arises a big man strong enough to force his will on the Empire and fortunate enough to be able to hand over the reins of political dictatorship to an equally enlightened and powerful successor.

It is hopeless to expect Irish matters to go well, when the balance of parties in the House of Commons is held by hirelings and traitors, men who debase patriotism and would to-day encourage outrage as much as they did in 1884, if it was worth their mercenary while.

I had a word to write myself a year later to Mr. T. Harrington, who thought he could tell as many lies about me as suited his own purpose, and I addressed my reply, published on August 29, 1887, to the Editor of the *Times*. It ran as follows:—

'Sir—I have just read the speech of Mr. T. Harrington in the debate on Mr. Gladstone's motive relating to the proclamation of the National League, in which he states that I invented and gave to Mr. Balfour the particulars of the boycotting of Justin M'Carthy. I beg you will allow me to state that I never wrote to Mr. Balfour, or to any member of the Government, on that or any subject. Had I supplied the information, I would have mentioned some facts which Mr. Balfour omitted, for instance, that a man named Andrew Griffin was nearly murdered because he brought provisions to Justin M'Carthy, that four men were put on their trial for the outrage, but notwithstanding a plain charge from the judge, the jury, fearing the vengeance of the League, acquitted the prisoners. I would also mention a fact that would seem almost incredible to your English Catholic readers, that the old man cannot attend his place of worship without being hissed at in the church, and that his aged wife, while partaking of the sacrament of the Holy Communion, was hissed at and jeered. These things can be proved on oath, and are not to be set aside by frothy declamation. Neither can the fact be disproved that one of the offences for which Justin M'Carthy has suffered was that he purchased his farm from me under Lord Ashbourne's Act, a proceeding which (as it is likely to settle down the country) is considered a deadly crime; and for committing the same offence another man in the same barony had his cows stabbed.

Your obedient servant, S.M. HUSSEY.'

There is yet another case I cannot forbear from handing on to a generation that knows no outrages nearer home than Macedonia. Six ruffians, having their faces covered with handkerchiefs, and armed with heavy cudgels, entered the house of a farmer named Lambe and began to beat him. To save his head from the blows, he ran the upper part of his body up the chimney and held on by the cross-bar. His wife, on coming to his assistance, was beaten so severely that her skull was fractured, while an aged female —stated to be in her ninety-seventh year—was not only roughly handled, but also beaten. A most discreditable episode indeed, in a land formerly renowned for respect for womanhood, and for the warm-hearted generosity of her sons.

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In only one instance in Kerry was police protection being regarded as necessary up to the present summer, and all who know the contemporary condition of affairs will at once recollect that Mrs. Morrogh Bernard is the lady in question.

The late Mr. Edward Morrogh Bernard of Fahagh Court, Bullybrack, was a Roman Catholic, who had resided in Kerry all his life, and some five-and-twenty years ago he built on his property the residence in which he died in the spring of 1904. He and his wife, an English lady, who was justly beloved for her wide charity, were one night, after dinner, sitting in their drawing-room, when a party of masked moonlighters walked in. One of them held a pistol to her head, and told her not to scream or move, else he would shoot her. Another performed the same kindly office for Mr. Bernard, whilst the rest ransacked the house for arms and money.

Mrs. Bernard noticed that the hands of the man who was threatening her with violence were not those of an agricultural labourer, because they were small and white. On the strength of this clue, the police arrested a little tailor in the village, and she courageously identified him in court, though every possible pressure was brought on her not to do so. He was sentenced to several years' imprisonment, and his friends vowed they would make it hot for Mrs. Bernard, and ever after she has been protected by two or three constables. The police did not live in Fahagh Court, but in a hut specially built for them a few yards off, and at night they always came into the house. To the very last days of Mr. Bernard's life whenever he and she went to pay a call on a neighbour, two policemen followed them either on a car or on bicycles, and I have never heard any reasons advanced to show that these precautions were superfluous.

Meeting this little party on the highway was the only thing in the twentieth century which brought home to the British tourist the terrible deeds which blackened Kerry in the eighties.

I have always looked on the light side of life, even when it has seemed blackest, and so I will not close this chapter without a more cheery anecdote.

There was a good deal of friction among Land Leaguers over the amount of relief money and other remuneration doled out by the rebel authorities. This seldom reached a more droll pitch than in the complaint of a girl at Rossbeigh, who wrote to a prominent member of Parliament—since deceased—that another girl had been awarded a pound for booing at a sergeant, 'while I, who broke a policeman's head, never got so much as would pay for a candle to the Blessed Virgin.'

Sometimes the crafty Paddy utilised the agitation for his own purposes, as the following example will prove.

A farmer's house was fired into, but no one could tell the reason why, for he had not paid any rent and was a good Land Leaguer. He was asked if he could account for it

himself, and after some shuffling under promise of strict secrecy, made the following revelation.

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’Well, it was this way, I married a dacent girl from the North, and all went well with us until her mother came along, and she had the divil’s own tongue, and nothing could get her out of the house. I would say “the North has fine air, would not a change back there get you your health?”

’To which the old Biddy would reply:—

’"Where would I live except with my only daughter and her husband?”

’And this sort of thing made me desperate, and I promised the “bhoys” five shillings if they would fire round the house on a certain night. On the evening that had been agreed upon, I began reading on the paper how farms in Castleisland were being fired into, and the old woman said that if these things were so, County Kerry was worse than County Cork, and I thought to myself “maybe you’ll find it so, you ould divil.”

’Well, they came and did their work in grand style after we had gone to bed, and there was the mother-in-law screeching and bawling, and every hour too long for her until daylight, when I put her in the cart and drove her to the station.’

The sequel is that the couple left to themselves lived happily ever after, a thing more likely to happen to people in England and Ireland, if it was no one’s business to make bad blood between them.

CHAPTER XXII

COMMISSIONS

I have probably given evidence to as many Commissions as any living man, for I have been before seven, and never once was asked a question that posed me.

I enjoyed the experience of being asked about what I knew by those who knew nothing on the subject, and if the legal mind was a little more obtuse than the civil, well, it was only the choice between a grey donkey and a black.

The earliest Commission I gave evidence before was one on Agriculture. Professor Bohnamy Price was one of the Commissioners, and he knew what he was talking about, others being Lord Carlingford, the Duke of Buccleuch, and the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, who presided. The peers were all used to big parks, obsequious bailiffs, and huge demesnes. I think they metaphorically picked up their coat tails and stepped carefully away from the Irish potato patches and acres of turf.

It was alleged that prosperity of nations was a good deal owing to tenant-right.

‘I do not think so,’ said I, ’because Donegal and Kerry have approximately the same value and area, same number of miles of road and sea frontage. There is extreme tenant-right in Donegal and none in Kerry, yet the prosperity of the farmers in Kerry is extremely superior to those of Donegal.’

‘There is too much tenant-right in Donegal,’ said Mr. Chichester Fortescue, who was examining me.

‘Not if it is a good thing,’ I replied, ’for then you could not have too much.’

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Mr. Shaw Lefevre's Commission on the housing of the working classes in Ireland was very uninteresting. 'Oxen are stalled, pigs are styed or take possession of the cabin, but what is done for the Irish labourers?' asked a passionate mob-orator, and in many cases it might have been answered that a good deal more has been done for them than the idle ruffians deserve. I had no difficulty in showing that landlords were always willing to give assistance in housing labourers, and when an ex-mayor of Cork on the Commission seemed to doubt my assertions, I might have retorted that though he was used to factory hands, yet he had never bothered himself how they lived out of work time.

The Duke of Devonshire was on this board. He has obtained his great and honourable reputation by conscientiously slumbering through many duties. His tastes are for racing and shooting, but from sheer patriotism he has devoted himself to politics with all the energy of his lethargic manner, which successfully conceals abnormal common-sense. It was he, more than any other man, who saved Ireland from Home Rule, though as an Irish landlord he has not come much to the fore, because his vast English estates are immeasurably more important than those situated round Lismore. This picturesque town was once called the abode of saints, but only antiquarians remember that its university was once so important that Alfred the Great went there to study, and that in the old castle Henry II held a Parliament. The Cavendishs rebuilt the latter, and both in appearance and position it much resembles Warwick Castle. It has not very many bedrooms, and when the King was first expected, among various extensive alterations, a bathroom was put up. The Duke has generally visited Lismore twice a year, and has never stood unduly on his dignity, but been approachable by all, and reasonable about everything, which has also been characteristic of his political views.

Lord Bessborough presided over a Commission on Irish Land Laws. He was a very kind, very lean man, who was wont in old age to walk about London wrapped in a black cape, and was idolised at Harrow, where twenty generations of boys knew him and his brothers and valued their unabated interest in school cricket. Baron Dowse, a judge I have already mentioned, the O'Conor Don, and Mr. Shaw, were the members who put questions to me. I remember the O'Conor Don was much impressed when I mentioned I had made six tours in Scotland, and had been in Holland, in Belgium, in France, in Germany, in Italy, and just before in Spain, to inquire into the state of agriculture. I said that if a man persisted in farming badly I would serve him with notice to quit even if he paid his rent, and I pointed out that there were three hundred thousand occupiers of land in Ireland whose holdings were under L8 Poor Law valuation, and these occupiers, when their potatoes fail, have nothing to fall back upon but relief work, starvation, or emigration,

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and I further laid before the Commission a purchase scheme. There would be twenty years' purchase-money to be lent by the State, two years' purchase to be found by the tenant and two years more at the end of ten years. Thus the landlord would get a price for his property that would induce him to sell (reductions had not then been wholesale) and the tenant would get a lease for ever with abolition of rent at the end of thirty-five years by paying a fine of two years' rent down and two more at the end of ten years.

They would not have it. Who ever expected that Justice would lift the bandage from her eyes for the sake of fair play to the landlord?

Lord Salisbury had a Commission on the working of the Land Act of 1881. Lord Dunraven, Lord Pembroke, and Lord Cairns were on it, the latter being chairman. He was so austere that, when he was made Lord Chancellor, it was said he had swallowed the mace and could not digest it. His law may have been profound, but it was never relieved by a gleam of humour, and his ecclesiastical proclivities were of the lowest Church type. For some time he nominated Tory bishops, and it was declared he was so evangelical that he would have suggested any clergyman for a vacant bishopric who promised to forego the ecclesiastical gaiters. His horror of Anthony Trollope's novels was notorious, especially his dislike of Mrs. Proudie and her attendant divines.

I said the working of the Land Act was ruin to Irish landlords, and cited a case. A Kerry gentleman had an estate of L1200 rent roll, with a mortgage of L8000 which involved charges of L400 a year, a jointure tithes and head rent took L400 more. The Commissioners by so cutting down the rent by L400 made a clean sweep of what that landlord had to live on. Fortunately, he had his mother's fortune of L40,000, which his grandfather had wisely provided should not be invested in Irish lands, having, in fact, established a contingency in case his grandson should be dispossessed of the property he had held for generations, by a Government truckling to blustering 'no-renters.'

Before Lord Cowper's Commission on the same subject, I said much the same thing over again and realised that Royal Commissions are most valuable for the purpose of shelving pregnant topics. The only good derived from these official inquiries is that the witnesses get their expenses and the Government printers have a lucrative contract.

There is a story told of a witness who was being brought over to London to give evidence.

'Patrick,' said the priest, 'you'll be having to mind what you're saying over there. Perjury won't help you no more than I can, my poor fellow.'

'What happens if I get a bit wide of the truth then, father?'

‘You won’t get your expenses, my son.’

’Holy Mother, to think of that! I’ll be so careful that I won’t know how many legs the blessed pig has that’s round the cabin all day long.’

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Sir Edward Fry's Commission had none of the tinsel of big names nor the tawdriness of aristocratic apathy. Sir Edward meant to find the truth, and so did his colleagues—all practical men. What they did was to strike against the hard rock of party government which was too adamant to receive the evidence sown by these gardeners. Dr. Anthony Traill, who was one of the Commissioners, has in this very year of grace been made Provost of Trinity, and from what I saw of him I am certain he will be the apostle of fair play between undergraduates and dons.

I answered over five hundred questions and rammed home one or two points. For instance, I expressed my disapproval of a system by which a man who is a sub-Commissioner at the hearing on the first term may become the Court valuer on the next.

In valuation, it is wrong that men from the north should be sent to value in the south, or *vice versa*, and to prove that I cited the example of my tenant, Anne Delane. Her rent was fixed first term in 1883 for L34, 10s. In 1896, for second term, the sub-Commissioner fixed it at L23, 10s., and on appeal it was raised to L25. Mr. O'Shaughnessy, who was one of the sub-Commissioners on the first term, acted as a Court valuer on the second. On the first time he allowed L103, 6s. 9d. for drains and buildings, and on the second omitted it.

In the case of Hoffman, who held a farm at a rent of L30, I reduced it to L20 in 1881. In 1896 he went into court, and the County Court judge reduced it to L15, and on appeal he got it again reduced to L13.

On land which came into my own hands after 1881, I was able to get rents over 50 per cent. in excess of those fixed by the sub-Commissioners. In the case of Patrick Quill, the farm on which the rent was cut down from L20 to L16 was sold for L300 with a charge of L9 on it.

In the case of Michael Callaghan, Colonel Hickson expended L300 and Callaghan L100 on the farm, for which the rent was L70, and he sold his interest for L700.

This perpetual wrangling and litigation is ruinous, for every man is farming down his land and letting it deteriorate as fast as he can; and there is a most marked difference in the county between those who have bought their land and those who are tenants. When a judicial rent was fixed and a tenant came into Court for a second judicial rent, I think the landlord should have been at liberty to stop him by tendering the farmer twenty years' purchase; that would give him a reduction of 20 per cent, and make him a proprietor in the course of time.

In 1850 at Milltown Fair, yearlings were selling for 30s. apiece. The same cattle now are selling for L5, and Kerry is a great stock-breeding country.

It is very hard to define a landlord, and you will hear of some being landlords who do not get a shilling from their estates. Under these circumstances they would be like the fox in AEsop's fable who had lost his own tail.

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To show how the Land Act works, on the Harenc estate I was offered twenty-seven years' purchase before the Act for a holding, and at the time of the Commission they offered me sixteen years' purchase on two-thirds of the rent.

One other Commission besides that of the *Times* remains to be mentioned. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, a dour Scot with a lot of gumption in his head, was chairman of one on Imperial *versus* local taxation. My easy task was to show the excess of the latter in Kerry, which is the highest taxed county in the three kingdoms.

When a man thinks of the vast amount of information buried beyond all probable excavation in the Blue Books of the last fifty years, he may well break into Carlyle-like diatribes against the waste of the whole thing—which is paid for out of the taxpayer's pocket.

Alluding to all these Commissions reminds me that there were three Land Commissioners—Mr. Bewlay, who was very deaf; Mr. FitzGerald, who was rather hasty; and Mr. Wrench, who consistently absented himself to attend the Congested Board.

So they were respectively, though not respectfully, called, 'The judge who could not hear, the judge who would not hear, and the judge who is not here.' This was one of the witticisms of my clever friend, Mr. Robert Martin—'Bally-hooley'-one of the very few men who can write a good Irish song, and sing it well, into the bargain.

I appeared in the witness-box in the case of O'Donnell *v.* the *Times*. I suppose people buy newspapers to obtain information, or else to get a pennyworth of lies to induce equanimity in bearing the income-tax, the weather, and all other ills that an unnatural Government is responsible for; and I further suppose a halfpenny paper has to condense its inaccuracies, and serve them up in tabloid form for mental indigestion. However, that is as it may be; anyhow, I had a hearty laugh at the *Star*, which wrote:—

'A look round the Court again this morning brought the strange impression which one now always feels on entering the Court. The space is so comparatively small, but one feels as though it were all Ireland in microcosm. You see representatives of every class in the terrible conflict of war, of rival passions, hatred, and traditions. This man with the large nose, the large and disfigured face, is Mr. Hussey, and those scars that you see, and the distortion of the features, are perchance marks left by some desperate and homicidal tenant avenging his wrongs.'

That 'perchance' is good, considering my riding misadventure in County Cork, of which I gave an account earlier.

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As for the Parnell Commission, it was the outcome of superb patriotism on the part of the *Times*. That great organ, in the spirit of purest devotion to the best interests of England and Ireland, honestly attempted to expose treachery, and to denounce treason. Hundreds of columns of the valuable space at their daily disposal, as well as thousands of pounds earned by the highest journalism of any country, were freely lavished in this tremendous denunciation, known as 'Parnellism and Crime.' The crime of Pigott eventually saved Parnell and his followers. But the last word on that has not yet been spoken. Another pen than mine may, perchance before long, tell the whole truth about that tragic episode, and explain what is still an unsolved riddle in all dispassionate minds. Without challenging and exciting the strongest racial prejudices, it will be impossible to lift the veil, and I have no intention of affording even the slightest preliminary peep behind the scenes of that dramatic affair. The wheels of God grind slowly, and they ground exceeding small almost before the absurd exultation of Nationalist relief over the Pigott episode had abated. It is almost time to treat the whole affair from the historical point of view, and then the idol of Home Rule will be pulverised. However, that is another story in which I have no chapter to write.

My own share in the Parnell Commission was on November 29, 1888, on the twenty-third day. I was examined by the Attorney-General, the present Lord Chief Justice, and the most popular and most honourable of men. At that very time, I have heard, he sang each Sunday in the surpliced choir of a Kensington church, and I suppose he is the very best chairman of a committee or of a public meeting of our own or any other time. A Parnellite once said he had the unctuousness of a retired grocer, but was contradicted by a more reverent English Radical, who said, 'No, he has the unction of grace,' whereas, the truth is, he has the platform manner with him always.

I told the Court I had been a Kerry magistrate for the previous thirty-seven years, and, after deposing to the earlier state of my property, I insisted that moonlighting and 'land-grabbing' were unknown terms before 1880. My examination under the Attorney-General was, in fact, too practical and useful to provide amusement for latter day readers.

My cross-examination was begun by Sir Charles Russell, who led off with a sneer about my being the most popular man in the county, and, when I adhered to other statements, he added, 'Well, a very popular man. I will not put you on too high a pinnacle.' (Laughter.) Then for an hour and a half he plied me with the best balanced statistical questions I ever heard put in a hostile spirit, and without a note I could answer every one. After considerable hesitation I admitted on consideration that there was in Kerry one farmer benefiting by the Act of 1870. I have never heard since that he was caught and exhibited as the solitary outward and visible sign of the inward and legal benefit of the legislative force of Imperial Parliament.

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Mr. Lockwood, to whom, as artist, I had been serving as a model, evidently preferred to handle me with pencil rather than with questions, for he was almost as brief as Mr. Reid. It is my view that they both had consigned me to petrification under Sir Charles Russell, and finding me alive and kicking, thought me too tough to expire under such *coups de grace* as they could inflict.

We came to banter when Mr. Michael Davitt suggested that the young men of Castleisland took part in nocturnal raids because there was no such social inducement to keep them quiet, as a music-hall or a theatre; but I told him there ought to have been no inducement to them to shoot their neighbours, and that Castleisland was past redemption.

He blandly alluded to my popularity with the tenants before 1880; but I only said that I got on fairly well with them, for I do not think that any agent was ever really popular.

‘Relatively?’ insidiously.

‘Yes.’

Then came this curious question, put with a gentleness that would have aroused the suspicion of a babe:—

’Did you ever say, in reply to a question put to you by Mr. Townsend Trench as to why you were not shot, that you had told the tenants that if anything happened to you he would succeed you as agent?’

’Yes, I did say so; but it is not original, because it is what Charles II. said to James II.’

This historic reference, which elicited laughter in Court, did not seem intelligible to my questioner, but some better informed person probably soon quoted it to him:—

’Depend on it, brother James, they will never shoot me to make you king.’

From the kid-glove amenities of Mr. Davitt to the aggressive harshness of Mr. Biggar was a sharp contrast. He heckled me vigorously, and I retorted to him pretty hotly. A great deal had been expected of this cross-examination, but the general opinion was that I gave rather better than I received. Coolness is the despair of cross-examiners, and I think mine made more impression on the Court than the impulsiveness of a dozen inaccurate Nationalists.

Mr. Biggar asked:—

‘You said you were popular in the district up to 1880?’

I retorted with emphasis:—

’I never had a serious threat until you mentioned my name in Castleisland, and then people told me, ’Get police protection at once, or you will be shot!’

That made the Court laugh. Mr. Biggar did not appreciate the humour. He returned to the charge viciously:—

’Did not some of your sympathisers light a bonfire in 1878 at Castleisland on account of the triumphs of your buying the Harenc estate? and did not the population of Castleisland, who knew your character, scatter that bonfire, and put it out?’

’I heard they had a row over it. There were nine bonfires lighted in Kerry after I succeeded. I was fairly popular until you held up my name as a subject for murder in Castleisland. You said Hussey might be a very bad man, but you would take care of one thing—that if any person was charged with shooting him, or any other agent, they would be defended, which meant they would be paid.’

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Mr. Biggar did not appear to relish the line he was on, and shunted to another topic; but he could not shake my view that the rents of 1880 were, on the average, twenty-five per cent. lower than in 1840.

‘You bought the Harenc estate over the heads of the tenants?’

‘No, I did not.’

’You spoke about an address which you received from the tenants when you were a candidate for Tralee?’

‘Yes.’

Then, with the snarl of a wild beast, Mr. Biggar blurted out:—

’Have you any idea whether this was got up by the bailiffs on your property?’

’I am quite certain it was not, because I had no bailiffs on the property. I gave an immense deal of employment, and I believe that had something to do with it.’

Mr. Biggar presently sat down, having made less of me than he and his friends hoped.

On re-examination, the Attorney-General observed:—

’You say one of the bonfires, lighted when you succeeded, was put out. I suppose the Irish people are not very averse to a row at times?’

‘Oh no.’

‘And bonfires do produce rows at times?’

‘Certainly.’

‘Your popularity did not depend on one bonfire?’

‘No.’

Nor did my life, fortunately, depend on the good will of Messrs. Parnell, Biggar, and their associates.

With reference to my freedom in telling the truth, an application was made against me, in July 1891, for an attachment of the Land Court. It ended abortively, and permitted me to continue with perfect impunity to give in letters to the *Times* evidence I was debarred from giving in Court.

I certainly did not miss a chance of pointing out the proper path to the Commissioners, and I have taken an even affectionate interest in every department of the Land Commission. Sarcastically, a Home Rule paper politely christened me as the fatherly patron of the Court, and informed me that my own conscience had given up communication with me, in consequence of the many snubs it had received.

The intimate knowledge of my most private affairs that this purports to represent proves the empty-headedness of the writer, and when he added that the strong indictment rebounded off my hide because I had heard myself a hundred times denounced in language equally eloquent, I can only agree that he was a mere lisping babe in comparison with some adjectival denunciators who, to their regret, find I am still alive and equal to them all.

CHAPTER XXIII

LATER DAYS

With advancing years comes a change in the point of view, for anticipation contracts even more than retrospect expands. Associates of early days have passed away, and where I was once one of a battalion, to-day I am only a survivor of the old guard. This is not a cause for sadness, but an incentive to take the best of what remains of life, though at times chills and other ills, including doctors, drugs, and income-tax, do their best to depress the survivor. It has been said to be a characteristic of Irish humour that tears are very near the laughter, and sometimes the unshed tears over lost opportunities must be the chief bitterness of age—one which I have been mercifully spared.

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After all, youth may round the world away, as Charles Kingsley wrote; but when the wheels are run down, to find at home the face I loved when all was young is the blessing of life, and when, at our golden wedding, our children called us Darby and Joan, I am sure my wife and I were quite willing to answer to the names.

This was happiness very different to that of George IV., who, when the death of Napoleon was announced to him in the words:—

‘Sir, your great enemy is dead,’ exclaimed:—

‘Is she? By Gad!’ thinking it was his wife.

I remember an amusing case that occurred in our own family. One of my kith and kin, who had been married in the year of the battle of Waterloo, died at the ripe old age of a hundred and three.

There was a faithful old fellow on the estate who was much attached to her, and this was his view, just before her end:—

’I am sorry to hear the old mistress is dying, very sorry indeed, for she’s been a good mistress to us all. Maybe if she had taken snuff she’d have lived to a good old age,’ which suggests wonder as to what his conception of longevity really was. Probably the famous Countess of Desmond, who died from the effects of a fall from a cherry-tree in her one hundred and fortieth year, would have satisfied him.

I have already observed that much of my later years has been spent, much against my will, in London, and no portion of this period was so satisfactory to me as my friendship with Mr. J.A. Froude, which I regard as one of the privileges of my life.

My first acquaintance with him was in consequence of reading his *English in Ireland*, which I found so accurate and informative that I wrote to ask him for an interview. I came to like him very much, not only because he was the most gifted writer I have met, but also because he understood Ireland better than any other Englishman.

My first conversation with him was in his house in Onslow Gardens, and there I very frequently sat for hours with him, and he also presented me with copies of all his books, with an autograph letter on the fly-leaf of each. I think the recent Land Purchase Act, having been followed by increased agitation for Home Rule in Ireland, bears out what he said about the folly of trying to reconcile the irreconcilables, and also bears out what Lord Morris called the ‘criminal idiotcy’ of attempting to satisfy eighty Irish members, forty of whom would have to starve directly they were satisfied.

So far as I am aware, Mr. Froude never contemplated standing for Parliament, which would not have been a congenial atmosphere for him, though I am convinced he would

have made more mark at Westminster than his friend Mr. Lecky, whom I never had the pleasure of meeting.

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People to-day seem to regard Mr. Froude simply as the Boswell of Carlyle, and, forgetting his own great services to historical literature, degrade him to the mere chronicler of the bilious sage of Chelsea. This is absolutely a distortion of fact, and one calculated to do injury to the memory of both these famous men. Therefore it may be of real utility to state that during my long and very intimate acquaintance with Mr. Froude, he never mentioned the name of Carlyle to me but once, and that was to describe a conversation between Lord Wolseley and Carlyle, which dealt with the contemporary situation in Ireland. There was, therefore, nothing to show me that my friend 'was utterly absorbed in the Carlyles, and had no thought for any one else.' On the contrary, he was a man full of keen interests, of which they were only one, and, as far as I saw, an entirely subordinate one. He was a broad-minded man, who hated petty misconception or a narrow view of anything, and he would have been horrified at the prurient indecency with which the most private affairs of the Carlyles have been exposed and distorted to please a public which really has a higher moral tone than is possessed by those who have gibbeted the defenceless dead.

Mr. Froude was not addicted to talking much about his own works, but I remember his telling me that *Oceana* had paid him best of them all, and I think his view therein that the colonies will recede from England when they are strong enough, following the example of the United States, is accurate. Just tax Canada as Ireland has been taxed, and see how long the Canadians will be contented. The ministers of George III. tried that policy on the United States with the result that, before many years, George had to receive the Plenipotentiary Minister of dominions over which he himself had once reigned. It is absurd to compare Ireland with Yorkshire, as has been done, for Ireland once had a separate Parliament, and the Union was a matter of agreement, the outcome of which was that Mr. Childers's Commission found she was taxed three millions more than she should have been. The colonies are on the alert, with all the rather irritable uppishness of youth on the verge of manhood, and their younger generations are sure to take full advantage of any tactless conduct of the British Government. Such was Froude's view, and nothing has happened since his death to shake its inherent probability. The waves of Imperial patriotism in war time go for very little, for Ireland is admittedly disloyal, and yet Irish soldiers and Irish regiments were absolutely the most successful in South Africa.

When the Government was introducing some quack measure into Ireland, Froude wrote to me:—

'I see they are putting some fresh sticks under the Irish pot, so it will soon boil over.'

Which it did, with a vengeance.

To the end of his days Froude was a great reader, but his interest in Church affairs and in ecclesiastical differences had completely died away. He told me that the most accurate man of business of any period was Philip of Spain, and that his notes and

memoranda were a marvel of practical aptitude. He derived the chief information for his *History of England* from Spanish despatches, and would to-day have benefited considerably by the translations of Major Martin Hume.

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Personally Froude had no cranks; his disposition was most urbane, whilst he was very neat in his appearance and also in his handwriting. It would certainly be of interest to give a few of his racy letters, too often undated, which I have preserved. Unfortunately, his executors firmly refuse the necessary legal consent, so that I am compelled to make my book irreparably the poorer by omitting what should have been one of its most attractive contents. In justice to Froude's memory, I ought to add that there was nothing in his correspondence with me that would have diminished his high repute. I mention this because otherwise busybodies might have misinterpreted the arbitrary action of his executors to the detriment of his fame.

A later friendship than that with Froude also must have a sincere allusion in these pages, for I have derived much pleasure from my association with Sir Henry Howorth, a ripe old lawyer of Portuguese extraction, who has rendered valuable political service by his polemical letters to the *Times*, on which I can pass a most favourable opinion. His histories of the Mongols, the Mammoth, and the Flood are possibly more permanent, but they are not of such contemporary note. At any rate, I respect them from a distance, whilst I admire the political effusions as the capital work of a comrade under arms, and one who is not afraid to verbally bludgeon any formidable contemporary Hooligans.

Sir Henry Howorth occasionally breaks out into a story, though he is more frequently a listener to mine. This is one of his that I happen to recall:—

The Mayor of Richmond gave a dinner, at which a distinguished Frenchman sat next the Mayor's son, and on replying for the guests in imperfect English, observed:—

'I am vary happy to be here, and to meet my young friend, who is a sheep of the old bloke,' meaning, of course, a chip of the old block.

I plead guilty to have materially increased the interest felt by Sir Henry in Irish affairs, which is not diminished by the fact that a niece of Lord Ashbourne is married to his son.

I think it was to him that I recommended another panacea for the evils of Ireland, namely, that it would be a good plan to exchange Ireland for Holland, for the Dutch would reclaim Ireland, and the Irish would neglect the banks of Holland, with the eventual result that the living Irish question would be washed away.

Just now I alluded to a mayor, which reminds me of a story about an Irish mayoress. As his Majesty has by this time been entertained at several Corporation luncheons, it is not invidious to give the tale.

The Mayoress, who was the heroine of the festal occasion in question, felt completely overpowered by the royal society in which she found herself, and when seated at the meal next to the King, was absolutely unable to articulate any reply at all to the

observations he addressed to her, so eventually he gave her up, and turned his colloquial attentions to the lady on the other side.

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After a while, fortified by the champagne, the Mayoress grew more courageous, and, admiring the gentleman in full uniform on her right, said to him:—

‘Might I be so bowld as to ask whether you are Lord Plunket?’

‘No,’ he replied, with a smile, ‘I am not.’

‘Would you mind telling me who you are, for I’m sure I don’t know?’

‘I am the Duke of Connaught,’ complaisantly replied her neighbour, upon which she gasped:—’Oh, God in Heaven, another of them!’ and subsided into unbroken silence for the rest of the repast.

Another amusing case of mistaken identity occurred when Mr. Gladstone was concocting his treasonable Home Rule Bill. He had been informed that Lord Clonbrook would be able to give him invaluable information, so he told his wife to ask him to luncheon. She, however, mistaking the name, invited the late Lord Clonmel, a jovial sportsman known to his friends by the nickname of ‘Old Sherry.’

Somewhat surprised at being thus honoured, Lord Clonmel consulted a few cronies, who all advised him to accept, and in due course he proceeded to Downing Street, where he found the French Ambassador was the only other guest. It is possible that Mr. Gladstone thought him a little odd and his attire somewhat demonstrative, but he was prepared for any eccentricity in an Irish peer, and hardly noticed how excellently his guest was doing justice to the meal, whilst preserving impenetrable silence. Directly it was over, the Prime Minister took him apart, and said:—’Now I want you, privately and confidentially, to give me your view of the exact relation between landlord and tenant in Ireland.’

‘Absolute hell, my dear boy, absolute hell,’ was the emphatic reply of the old sportsman.

That confidential conversation went no further; but I have never been sure that Lord Clonmel in the least overstated the case.

This renewed allusion to the lower regions that appears so closely connected with Irish affairs reminds me of an amusing incident which took place in a Dublin tram. Two members of the fair sex were discussing their plans for the summer in the interior of a car, and one of them in a mincing brogue said to the other:—

’I think I shall go to England this summer; it is so difficult in Ireland to get away from the vulgar Irish.’

‘Faix,’ screamed in much indignation an old Biddy sitting opposite, ’if it’s the vulgar Irish you want to avoid, and the English you want to be meeting, it’s to hell you must go, and you’d better go there this summer.’

That's the sort of quick retort which a Scotchman calls Irish insolence, but then, who expects appreciation of real wit from any one canny? Wit is irresponsible, a truly Irish propensity.

The two mincing young women were almost as much disgusted as another old lady who found herself opposite a stalwart working man, who incensed her by his frequent expectoration. Gathering her skirts round her somewhat ample form, she called the conductor and asked:—

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‘Is spitting allowed in this tram?’

‘By all manes, me lady,’ was the gallant reply, ’shpit anywhere you like.’

While alluding to trams, I cannot forbear relating one other Dublin tale, which Lord Morris picked up from me and was fond of telling. Its brief course runs thus:—

‘Would you tell me, if you plaze, where I’ll find the Blackrock tram?’ asked a fussy little old woman of a policeman, busily engaging in manoeuvring the traffic of a crowded street.

‘In wan minute you’ll find it in the shmall of your back,’ was the laconic reply.

The mere allusion to a query suggests how the British tourist invariably starts trying to discuss the Irish question directly he is across the Channel, and the insoluble part to any Saxon is that half the Irish do not seem to desire a solution at all.

‘What a fine country this would be if it were peaceful,’ observed a thoughtful Britisher, with a Cook’s ticket in his pocket, on Killarney Lake.

‘Peace! What would we do with it?’ was the scornful reply of his boatman, surprised for once into ejaculating the truth.

Some landlords know how hopeless it is to attempt to prevail against these sons of our epoch.

‘It has been of no use to hold up a candle to the hydra-headed devil,’ said one landlord to me about his tenants, ’for affability is more expensive than absenteeism. If I say, “Good morning, Tom,” the fellow expects twenty per cent. off the rent, and “How’s your family?” is considered to imply forty per cent, abatement’—and that cannot be called putting a premium on good fellowship from the landlord’s point of view.

I have not said much about the way in which the Irish in America foster insurrection, because it does not come within my own province. But I have before me the type-written essay on the subject composed by a Kerry landlord, who, in his lifetime, had exceptional opportunities of judging of this in New York, and from it I am tempted to take a few sentences as the manuscript is never likely to see the light of print.

’There are three distinct types of the Irish-American Home Ruler, who have been and are even now supporting with their dollars or their eloquence, the “Irish Cause” as it is somewhat vaguely termed throughout the United States. They can be distinguished as follows:—

’1. The American—born Irishman of immediate Irish descent.

’2. The native Irishman who has emigrated from Ireland.

’3. The American Irish-American of long American descent, who, though not inheriting a drop of Irish blood, is yet a vigorous if not obstreperous ally of the Irish party in America. This last is the most striking of the three, as on the face of it, he would not appear to have any logical *raison d’etre* as a political entity, but in reality exerts a powerful influence in favour of “the Cause.”

’One phase of the methods favoured by Irish-American

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Home Rulers is the ingenuity with which cable reports, as printed in the newspapers, are utilised for platform purposes. Let an account be flashed under the Atlantic descriptive of some agrarian demonstration in Ireland, which having been declared illegal, is dispersed by military. Forthwith the opportunity is seized, and on some public platform or at some big banquet, the fervid orator poses as the champion of human liberty. "Another British outrage upon the Irish people! A brutal and licentious soldiery let loose to gag free speech and prevent, at the point of the bayonet, the exercise of the rights of freeman. Thank God, that you and I my Irish-American fellow-citizens, are living in this glorious republic, where such things are impossible!"

'After hearing this amazing outburst, it is well to recall actual facts, and compare the methods of suppressing riots in the United States and the United Kingdom. For example, on July 12, 1871, a number of Orangemen had organised a procession through the principal thoroughfares of New York, which was resented by a large contingent of Catholic Irishmen, and on a violent collision ensuing, the State militia was called out to restore order, a task they most effectually accomplished by firing volleys into the crowd of belligerents. The citizen soldiery of America are accustomed to adopt summary measures with impunity. They possess the resolution of the Irish constabulary without the uncomfortable vacillation of Dublin Castle to thwart their efforts.'

In the past the Irish vote in America has been hostile to England, and has had much to do with that measure of ill-feeling in the United States which has deterred that Union of the Anglo-Saxon races that would enable them to lick creation.

An example may be cited in the case of Egan. This man was an ex-Fenian leader, who wielded much influence in Nationalistic circles as far back as the seventies, and when he was Treasurer of the Land League, he is described by Mr. Michael Davitt—who ought to have a fine capacity for discriminating degrees of scoundrelism—as the most active and able of the Nationalist leaders in Dublin. Some time after the Phoenix Park murders he settled in the United States, and whilst distinguishing himself by the exceptional violence of his appeals on behalf of outrageous Ireland, he was actually sent as American Minister to Chili. This would not have caused me to notice him here but because it is necessary the community should be warned that, unlike a good many of his contemporaries and comrades, he is not an extinct volcano. On March 10 of this current year, when still the chief Nationalist in the States, he had a long interview with Count Cassini, the Russian Minister at the Russian Embassy at Washington, just before a meeting of all the diplomatic representatives, and the American correspondent of the *Morning Post* does not hesitate to accuse Russia of financially assisting the cause which Egan

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fosters. This sort of thing ought not to be ignored in England. As an international action, it is hitting below the belt, and when bad times come again to Ireland the Nationalists will look to the Ministers of the Great Bear for funds, and are not likely to be disappointed. Still it is curious that a Government which, at home, exiles Nihilists and other bomb-throwers should, abroad, give contributions to the cause that instigated the blowing up of my house, and the outrages which rendered Ireland so notorious.

Not many years ago my wife was once more seriously alarmed at Edenburn by the formidable proclivities of a man P——, who sat all day at my gate with a gun, which he said he used for shooting rabbits: but we all knew I was the rabbit he wanted to put in his bag. However, he has gone to another sphere, and I am spending the present summer of 1904 very happily in the same county.

A couple of letters addressed there showing the way in which an old widow expresses herself, when after great labour she has delivered herself of an epistle, may not prove undiverting. The point is the amount she can obtain from her children.

’Samuel Mr. Hussey Esq.

Sir—I hope you will be good enough to speak to Downing to give me Justice. They have any amount of cattle, 2 horses, and my son-in-law’s wife carried 78 pounds book account before Mr. Downing got the case in hands I would get 2 hundred pounds. I think it little for me according to the means that was theirs. Now sir, two daughters very ritch sir minding milk and butter and the one taking it away and selling it. My son is not wright in his health or mind. They turned him against me and he is more foolish than your Honour would believe. He says he will give his uncle that ran away long ago to America mortgage, that Mr. Downing gave him power to do what he like and those two daughters are very well off and they will not allow me to do anything. Sir I am shamed of the way they are treating me. My health and mind is very good, thanks be to God and to you two Sir. They would not give me the price of the habit that was berried with their father. Sir it would not pay my debts and support me long. My father lived 100 years. The Judge said I would live longer. Sir three hundred pounds is little enough for me according to the means that is theirs. If I went into the workhouse I would not take what they wish to give me. L160 they are giving me and I have my Confidence in God and in your Honour’s charity that you will be good enough to speak for me. If the land don’t sell to 5 hundred pounds I will give it back to the attorney. Will your Honour tell them and I’ll pray to God sir ever to bless you.

Faithfully,

MARY LUCY.’

And the same dame favoured me with this further effusion:

’Mr. Hussey Esq.

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Sir—100 pounds was offered to me before the purchase, a foolish priest making little of me, himself trying to get it for his friends. The Bishop, Sir, is kind to me always. For he knows I was wronged and he don't like the foolish priest, and when I complain of him he is very good. Sir some good people tell me that anyone at all have no claim but myself and I wish it was true as all is very valuable. Mr. Connor is very truthful and nice to me Sir when I will see him I am very sure he will wish me well and all the good Honourable Gentlemen and yourself are the best of all to my equals. I know it very well and I will for ever pray to God in Heaven for you.

Faithfully,

MARY LUCY.'

So a landlord and agent, even in 1904, still has a few of the patriarchal attributes in the eyes of the tenants. But to sift wheat from chaff is easier than to sift truth from the lying blandishments employed on such occasions.

The reference to the priest shows that though always feared, when the land-passion seizes a parishioner, he is set at as much defiance as possible, should he be moderate, and these are the only occasions when they venture to tell their confessor unpleasant truths to his face, for in some country districts they are still convinced that the priests have power to transform them into frogs and mice.

A priest once threatened a bibulous parishioner, that if he did not become more sober in his habits, he would change him into a mouse.

'Biddy, me jewel, I can't believe Father Pat would have that power over me,' said the man that same evening as the shadows fell, 'but all the same you might as well shut up the cat.'

Over elections the priests have paramount influence as I have already shown, but may cite an example at the last County election in Kerry, when three candidates stood, Sir Thomas Esmonde (Anti-Parnellite), Mr. Harrington (Parnellite), and Mr. Palmer (Conservative). The last-named out of a poll of six thousand obtained seventy votes. One of them was given after the following fashion.

An illiterate voter at Killorglin being asked in the polling booth how he wished to vote, replied:—

'For my parish priest.'

'But he is not a candidate. The three are Esmonde, Palmer, and Harrington.'

'Well, then, I'll vote for Palmer, because it is more like Father Lawler than the others.'

Naturally all concerned were convulsed with laughter, but the vote was duly recorded.

It is no uncommon thing to see priests carefully teaching illiterate voters the appearance of the name of the candidate for whom they are to poll, and also giving them printed cards merely containing his name, so that they can recognise it on the voting-card.

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Of course an Irishman would take a bribe one way and calmly vote another. But even this diplomatic tendency is outwitted by the priests, for nowadays, when they have any doubt of the political sincerity of a man, they insist on his declaring himself an illiterate voter. Then the whole question of who is to be voted for is gone through audibly and verbally, so that the honesty of the voter is known to those hanging round. In the parish of Milltown, the education is as complete as in any in Ireland, but at the last election, one third of the voters confessed themselves illiterate, with the result anticipated by the priest.

If the priest understands his parishioner—a thing which admits of no possible shadow of doubt—it is equally certain that the Englishman does not, as is shown by the following frivolous tale, always a favourite of mine.

‘Paddy,’ said a tourist at Killarney, ’I’ll give you sixpence if you’ll tell me the biggest lie you ever told in your life.’

‘Begorra, your honour’s a gentleman! Give me the sixpence!’

No one would have thought of making such an offer to an English loafer, and no English loafer would have had the wit to so neatly earn his emolument.

It is the assumption of simplicity that does the trick, and so well is that put on that it comes close to the real thing.

The other day, when the King and Queen were at Punchestown, a Britisher chartered a car at Naas to drive out to the course, and on the way remonstrated with the carman on the starved condition of his horse, whose ribs would have served for an anatomical study.

‘Well, your honour,’ the jarvey explained, ‘it’s an unlucky horse.’

‘How unlucky?’ asked the Englishman.

’Well, it’s this way, your honour. Each morning I toss with that horse whether he shall have his feed of oats or I have my glass of whisky, and would your honour credit it, the horse has lost these ten days past.’

I am reminded of the reply given by Lord Derby to a gentleman who sent him a dozen of very light claret, which he said would suit his gout. Lord Derby subsequently thanked him, but said he preferred the gout, and I have no doubt that that horse, had he been able to give tongue, would have been an ardent upholder of teetotalism when it ensured him a feed of oats.

One more story of Lord Derby, as I have just mentioned his name:—

A worthy trader had bothered him to let him stand for a certain borough on the Tory ticket, but the Whig was returned unopposed on the day of the nomination, and the candidate was subsequently attacked by Lord Derby for not coming forward as he had promised.

The man was almost as shaky in his aspirates as in his political propensities, and his reply was:—

’I would have stood, my lord, but there was a ‘itch in the way.’

‘It was the more necessary for you to come to the scratch,’ was the immediate retort.

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I always find that story popular at the Carlton, where I spend my afternoons when in London. I was proposed by Mr. James Lowther and seconded by the Duke of Marlborough, and very much obliged have I been to them both, for I have many acquaintances there, and it has all the conveniences of a comfortable hotel, without having to pay extravagantly for the privilege of looking at a waiter.

In the intervals of reading the papers and listening to other people, I have there, as elsewhere, endeavoured to impart what I know to others who know nothing about Ireland. They know much more about China or the aboriginal tribes of Australia, in London, than they do on the topics dearest to me.

An English Radical member, after a long chat with my son Maurice, observed:—

’You actually mean to say that if Home Rule were given to Ireland you would not be allowed to reside there?’

‘Certainly not,’ replied Maurice, who knew what he was talking about.

The member replied that he could not believe him, but that if he had known that that was the real nature of the Bill he would never have voted for it.

I could not desire a better example of English wisdom on this subject—one which Lord Rosebery has consigned to a distant date in futurity, foreseeing that if the Opposition are to be handicapped with Home Rule they will not stand a forty to one chance at the next election.

That election will, of course, turn on Protection, and I am therefore tempted to quote from an article I contributed to *Murray’s Magazine* in July 1887, entitled ‘After the Crimes Bill, What Next?’ for I feel my forecast of over fourteen years ago may serve a useful purpose to-day. It ran thus:—

’In my next suggestion I feel that I am treading on dangerous ground; still, having undertaken to suggest a remedy for Irish discontent and anarchy, I must not shrink from offending the prejudices of some of the wise men of England.

’Ireland is an agricultural country. There are in Ulster, as in England and Scotland, factories which support the greater portion of the population, and cause the prosperity of the province; but outside of Ulster, cattle and butter are the staple products. And how does Ireland stand in her only market, England, as compared with other nations? She enjoys free trade in butter, no doubt, but so do France and Holland; but these countries, while they find an open market in England, tax all English and Irish productions, and being manufacturing countries themselves they can afford to sell butter at so cheap a rate as to swamp Ireland’s market. A slight protective duty on foreign butter would be

hailed with gratitude in Ireland, and do more to allay discontent than any further acts of so-called “generosity.”

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’Again, the great thinly peopled countries of the West find in England a free market for cattle and flour, and America taxes very highly all English goods. Why not place Ireland on a par with America, by levying a slight protective duty on American beef and flour? Every little village in Ireland formerly had its flour mill, which worked up the corn grown in the country as well as imported grain. These mills are now generally idle and the men who worked them ruined. A small duty on manufactured flour would restore this industry, and enable men with some capital to give employment to labour, and to work up in small quantities for the farmer, at a cheap rate, their home-grown corn, as well as to grind imported grain. Our own colonies may have, no doubt, a right to object to our taxing their goods, but not so foreign countries.

’The Free Trade system of England would, no doubt, have been successful if reciprocated. But the question is worth considering, whether the English people do not now lose more by taxation resulting from the chronic state of rebellion in Ireland than she gains by bringing in American beef and flour, and foreign butter and butterine, free, to the impoverishment of Ireland, and of the agricultural portions of England and Scotland? “Remedial measures” for an agricultural country are certainly not those which spoil its market.’

Don’t dismiss that as pre-Chamberlainese Protection for it is sheer common-sense on a matter of national importance, and what I wrote in 1887, after many years, has become part of the political convictions of a great and an increasing party.

I wonder what the Protective party will be like when it eventually comes into office. Promises out of office are often the whale which only produces the sprat of legislation when the time of fulfilment arrives. This is an impartial opinion on most Cabinets of the last fifty years.

One of the few occasions on which a recent British Government has recently shown some signs of appreciating a really keen and capable man was when they made Mr. Ellison Macartney, Master of the Mint.

I wrote and congratulated him, observing that I hoped he would never be short of money, but if that was his plight all he had to do was to coin it for himself.

I have a bad recollection for faces, and one day in Dublin his father came up to me, and seeing I did not remember him, recalled a story with which I had amused him in the lobby of the House of Commons.

It was to this effect, and may prove new to others:—

Coming out of Glasgow one evening two Irishmen waylaid a Scotsman for the sake of plunder. He was nearly enough for them both, but numbers prevailed, and when they had mastered him, after searching his pockets, they only found three halfpence.

Said one Hibernian to the other:—

’Glory be to the Saints, Mick, what a fight he made for three halfpence.’

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‘Oh,’ replied the other, ’it was the mercy of the Lord he had not tuppence, or he’d have killed the pair of us.’

Killing suggests the Kerry militia, the corps in which no one dies except of good fellowship, one which has done a good deal to unite the divergent interests of north and south Kerry, and which provides fine physical development for soldiers of all ranks.

Last year the militia received a grant of L120 from Government to be expended on route marching with the band through the county in order to promote recruiting. The net haul in the Milltown district was the village idiot, who promised to enlist after the next sessions if the jailer did not take him—he being apprehensive of committal to prison.

But even this was not enough, for his mother came to a neighbouring magistrate, weeping and praying for his remission, because—

’It was a drunken freak on Patrick, for if the lad had kept his senses, sure, he would never have done it.’

Another Kerry man being asked why his son did not enlist, replied:—

’Ah, Jamsie was not a big enough scamp for the militia, because you have to be a great blackguard before you can get in there.’

Which shows that the camel and needle’s eye trick is easier to perform than to induce a country-bred man to enlist in the King’s militia; though once in, every fellow loves it.

This intimation of an army suggests an anecdote of the past war-time. The militia was being embodied, and several landlords who held commissions were going under canvas with the corps at Gosport. One of his tenants stopped a popular landlord on the road and asked:—

‘What do you want to go to be shot at by them Boers for, sir?’

’To be sure, Tim, my tenants have the first right to shoot me, have they not?’ was the prompt reply.

The fellow roared with laughter at the retort, and after shaking hands, wished him luck.

It was also characteristic of Irish proclivities for a soft-voiced woman on the estate to say to Miss Leeson Marshall:—

’When the war broke out first we were all praying that the English might be beaten out of South Africa. Then when Mr. Marshall went away to the army, we thought we should not like his side to lose, so we changed our prayers round by the blessing of God and His Saints.’

If any real impression has been given in these pages of the inconsistent Irish character, the genuine character of this sentiment will be comprehensible. It has been said that an Irishman will tell the truth about everything except one thing—that, of course, is a horse. When not engaged in shooting his landlord, the tenant is by no means disaffected to him, whilst the female appurtenances, mindful of all the small doles they obtain, are much more voluble in their cordial protestations.

Sometimes the women are enigmatical: one does not know if they are acting out of kindness or from duplicity. For example, not so long ago a girl came up to one of my daughters in the road and said to her:—

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’For the love of God tell your mother to order your father’s coffin for he’ll need it, the Saints preserve us.’

And with that she started away before there was time to reply.

Nothing came of it, of course: nothing ever has, of real importance.

Nothing, alas, also seems so often to be the verdict on life when looking back. Mine, however, has been too full a one, not only with griefs and trials but also with happiness and fun, for me to dismiss it thus. There has been so much more to live through than to write about, and yet, in these pages, has been told something which would have gone for ever untold if I had not in old age become garrulous. Things forgotten have been recalled to my mind and may prove suggestive to other people who read them, and it is my hope, in concluding, that I have provided diversion and a little food for reflection.

I feel that a critic may consider too much that has been set down here is disconnected, yet if he will let a gramophone record an animated conversation, he will find that it ebbs and flows with the uncertain babbling of a brook—and so it has been with me. Only the other day, in the preface to Camden’s *History of the British Islands*, I came across the phrase:—

‘bookes receive their doome according to the reader’s capacitie,’

and that alone emboldens me to hope for some measure of success for the present volume. Readers do not always want serious subjects, and it is in an hour when they desire a little diversion that I hope my reminiscences may commend themselves, for in a phrase not unknown in my native Kerry, this book consists of ‘little things, and that away.’

THE END

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