IRISH LAND AND IRISH LIBERTY

MICHAEL J. F. McCARTHY

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Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

AN IRISH FARMER.

"Here I am, and my hat on me!"—*Page* 303.

A type of the class of men on whose good faith the British public have staked a sum of money (over £200,000,000 sterling) amounting to more than one-third of the funded National Debt.

IRISH LAND
AND
IRISH LIBERTY

A STUDY OF THE NEW LORDS OF THE SOIL

BY

MICHAEL J. F. McCARTHY

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AUTHOR OF "FIVE YEARS IN IRELAND" "PRIESTS AND PEOPLE IN IRELAND" ETC.

"King Henry the Seventh was profound and admirable; in making farms and houses of husbandry of a standard; that is, maintained with such a proportion of land unto them as may breed a subject to live in convenient plenty and no servile condition; and to keep the plough in the hands of the owners, and not mere hirelings."—BACON, *Of Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates.*

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PREFACE

GREAT changes have taken, and are taking, place in the ownership of Irish land. Great political changes are promised and foreshadowed in the near future, as to which the air is full of rumours and counter-rumours.

The operations of Land Purchase — involving hundreds of millions of British capital, subscribed and to be subscribed on the British Treasury's guarantee that the interest will be regularly paid—are effecting a revolution, without parallel in English history, by transferring the freehold of the most fertile area in the United Kingdom from a body of landlords, who have long been called "The Protestant Garrison," to a body of owner-occupiers, nearly nine-tenths of whom are Catholics.

And yet there is, perhaps, no class in the British Isles about whom such general ignorance prevails as about the new Catholic lords of the soil, who dominate Irish public opinion as represented in Parliament by the Nationalist Party, and on whose good faith the British public have staked a sum of money amounting to over one-third of the funded National Debt.

This book is mainly concerned with sociology; but,

as there are no people in the British Isles in whose secular concerns religion still plays so predominant a part, it would be impossible to make the position of Irish Catholics intelligible to the average British reader without considering its influence. I have scrupulously avoided the controversial note, however, and have considered it, in conjunction with ownership of the soil, entirely as a sociological fact.

Neither have I approached the contemplated political changes in a spirit of partisanship, but rather with the desire of assisting the reader to stand for a moment in the shoes of the new Irish lords of the soil before coming to a decision on those weighty matters.

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IRISH LAND AND IRISH LIBERTY

CHAPTER I

Beautiful and homely Ireland—The motherland of English-speaking Roman Catholicism—Probable increase of population—Immemorial respect for the Church—Isolation of Irish Catholics—The smiling 'seventies—Contrast between Irish land policy of eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

IRISH sociology may be studied in Irish landscape. There are certain spots whose tender and etherial beauty is unsurpassed, if not unequalled, by any scenery in the world; the sight of which awakens emotions of love for the Emerald Isle even in the most hardened tourists. Such are the view of Dublin Bay, in clear weather, from the top of Howth; the view of the Wicklow and Dublin Mountains from the western slope of Killiney; the first glimpse of Glena and the Toomies across the Lower Lake at Killarney; Queenstown and Cork Harbour from the water at full tide on a fine summer's afternoon; Achill Sound; Glengariffe Bay and its golden islets in September; and many others. These correspond

with the chivalrous and beautiful elements in the national character.

But, over the great part of Ireland where tourists never penetrate, the prevailing character of Irish landscape is its openness and prosaic homeliness. The view is very extended, as a rule, owing to the admixture of hills and plains ; and very simple, owing to the clearness of the atmosphere and the absence of large timber. There are none of those gorgeous elms and oaks, none of those gossamer hazes, which give an air of richness and mystery to English scenery. This prosaic and practical tone of the Irish landscape has its counterpart in the crudeness, logicality, and unattractive obviousness of a great deal of modern Irish character.

There are fields of many sizes, oftener small than large, and of irregular shape, enclosed by thick fences taking up much room, but necessary for the confinement of the nimble-footed Irish cattle. The ideal Irish fences are of stone and earth, usually five feet high and two or three feet broad at the top, in which is generally planted a hedge of furze, thorn or briar. The furze predominates, and in early summer its bright golden blossom fills the air with perfume and gives the country a very festive and heavenly appearance. The three all-important grades in Irish society are represented by the three classes of houses to be seen in almost any Irish view—the gentleman's, the farmer's, and the labourer's. The gentleman-farmer's house is mostly in the Queen Anne style, square, comfortable, refined well-placed on

sloping ground, fronted by its lawn, ornamented but not hidden by its plantations, and looking particularly distinguished amid the prevailing homeliness. Scattered picturesquely about the fields, and usually at a distance from the road, are the farmsteads, each partly hidden by a clump of trees; the dwelling-houses, still mostly of the cottage type with white walls and thatched roofs, standing in the midst of their out-buildings and haggards; each group forming a landmark of considerable size. Smaller white patches are seen at frequent intervals, with single trees or clumps of shrubs; these are the labourers' cottages, often in a village and always on the side of the road. There is generally, except in the central plain, a line of hill country in sight with a furze brake or a plantation on its side, and a patch of heather on the top; with a mountain, or a range of mountains, somewhere in the distance; and, perhaps, a glimpse of the sea, or of some rushing river. Such are the features of the average view from any hill in most of the Irish counties, the country lying before the spectator like an open book, in which one may read the simple avocations of its people. It is a homely, untidy, but lovely and lovable country—a country beloved by many who do not love its people.

The new Irish lords of the soil and their fellow-Catholics now cover so large a field in the British Empire, at home and in our Oversea Dominions, that no apology is needed for devoting a book to them. Their position, so aloof and distinctive, not

only in the British Empire but in the United States of America ; their religious solidarity, excelling even that of the children of Israel ; their great and growing political influence : all make it rather a subject for wonder that they should fill so small a space in serious English literature.

They figure incidentally, it is true, in a great number of books. They are always with us in the newspapers, and occasionally in the reviews. They are contemptuously sneered at by some critics and passionately condemned by others ; petted by one school of politicians, coerced by another ; lauded for their faith and piety by one section of the British religious world, scorned for their idolatry and superstition by another ; praised as heroes, denounced as traitors ; painted as angels of innocence and gentleness by their champions, as fiends of viciousness and cruelty by their assailants ; and always laughed at. But, able and interesting as the apologetic, denunciatory, casual, and humorous methods of treatment may be, they do not supply the place of that thorough and systematic consideration which has been given to topics infinitely less important ; and which is long overdue to a people whose country, as the motherland of English-speaking Roman Catholicism, has been sending forth for sixty years a living stream of emigrants to fortify and refresh the many-millioned host of Hibernians who dominate Roman Catholicism wherever the English language is spoken.

There is reason to believe that this stream of emigration is about to run dry, and that the popula-

tion of Ireland, which has been steadily falling for sixty years, will again begin to increase; the number of emigrants in 1908 being the smallest recorded since the first year of enumeration. The fall from 39,982 in 1907 to 23,295 in 1908, that is to say, 40 per cent., was too great to be permanent or solely ascribable to the increased prosperity of Ireland. It was largely due to the exceptional depression prevailing in the United States of America that year—that country being the destination of three-fourths of the Irish emigrants—and was part of a general decrease in the flow of emigration from all Europe to the great Republic of the West. The decrease in emigration, however, has been a fairly constant factor in the statistics of the country now for many years, the number of emigrants for the decade 1891–1900 being lower than any previous decade; while the average for 1899, 1900, and 1901 was 42,000, as against 77,600, the average for fifty years.

For the ten years before the last census, the average birth-rate of Ireland (23 per 1000) exceeded the death-rate (18·2 per 1000) by 4·8 per 1000; and, as the emigration in 1908 amounted to 5·2 per 1000 of the population (as taken at the census of 1901), the emigration figures will have to decrease still further before the population can increase. All the symptoms indicate, however, that we are near the turn of the tide of population in Ireland.

An important force making for an increase of population is to be sought for in the improved houses —stone-walled, slate-roofed, three-roomed, and with

half-acres of land attached—which the Rural District Councils now provide for labourers at the small rent of a shilling per week. The old white-washed hovel, with walls of mud and roof of thatch, is disappearing so fast that a remarkable change has taken place in the character of Irish landscape; and archæologists may soon be imploring the Board of Works to preserve a few specimens for the information of posterity. In 1881, when Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., used to be the special parliamentary champion of the Irish labourer, just before the first Labourer's Dwelling Act, there were 33,693 of these hovels; in 1891, only 16,891; and in 1901, only 7683—in the country districts. In 1881, there were 6972 mud cabins in the urban districts; in 1901, there were only 2222. The improvement in the better-class houses is equally notable. In the decade 1891 to 1901, houses of the first grade increased from 70,740 to 75,225; houses of the second grade increased from 466,632 to 521,454; while houses of the third grade decreased from 312,589 to 251,606. Eminently satisfactory as this may be, lovers of the picturesque will regret the disappearance of the white-washed thatched cottage from the landscape, where it used to snuggle under its clump of fir or alder like an egg in a nest.

An increase of Irish influence in the United Kingdom, as well as in the Oversea Dominions, will always stand for an increase of ecclesiastical influence in the Government. This is amply proved by a glance backwards at our domestic history since the extension of the franchise in 1884; and at Colonial

and United States history since 1850, when Irish emigration on a large scale began—especially with regard to the public attitude towards denominational education.

It is impossible to understand the working of the Irish Catholic's mind unless one takes his religion into account; and, in order to study profitably the religious influences at work in Ireland, one must lay aside what is called "the controversial spirit" and stifle all preconceptions against "Romanism" as an unscriptural form of Christianity. Religious controversy has no place in sociology. The Roman Catholic religion must be accepted as a great fact, an old-established religious creed, filling a larger part in the national life of Ireland than politics, education, or business, exercising an influence greater than, perhaps, it wields amongst any other people at the present day.

From time immemorial the Church has been the greatest power in Ireland. Our country's only historic claim to European celebrity lies in her early saints and missionaries. All the historic pre-Norman remains in Ireland are connected with the Church. It was to the Pope that Malachy appealed early in the twelfth century to put the Irish Church in order, so that, by its means, the country itself might be saved from barbarism, setting forth twice on the long journey to Rome for that purpose. Cardinal Paparo came from Rome and reorganised the Church in Ireland twenty years before Henry II. landed with his Normans. The Church was the most authori-

tative, almost the only authoritative, body in the country when Henry was acknowledged by universal consent as monarch of Ireland. The people have adhered to the Church from that day to this, drawing the sword against their English rulers in defence of the Roman Catholic religion more than once since the Reformation, notably in Elizabeth's reign, in Charles I.'s reign, and in James II.'s reign.

During the O'Connell and Parnell agitations, the Church was the mistress of the situation, being the only organised body in the country which, standing apart from the agitators and the Government, never lost its hold on the minds of the people. And the Church was immeasurably more powerful during the Parnell agitation than in O'Connell's time. The British Government collectively lost its head more than once during the Land Agitation, but the Church, as a body corporate, never swerved from its prescribed course, never lost an atom of its attraction for the people. Individual priests or bishops may have been indiscreet and lost popularity, but the sacraments of the Church and its religious observances never sank into disesteem on that account.

At the beginning of the Land Agitation, when Colonel Colthurst, an English convert to Roman Catholicism, was contesting the county of Cork against Mr. Kettle, the nominee of Mr. Parnell, the parish priest of our town worked for Colthurst, while the Land League was for Kettle. I saw the parish priest on a fair day standing in a pig-crib to which a horse was harnessed, and which contained two pigs,

Photo by Guy, Cork]

PILGRIMS AT ST. FINNBARR'S SHRINE, CO. CORK (PRESENT DAY).

"Individual priests or bishops may have been indiscreet and lost popularity, but the sacraments of the Church and its religious observances never sank into disesteem on that account."—*Page* 8.

addressing a small knot of people in favour of the aristocratic Catholic candidate—or "Cawtholic," as the Nationalists satirically called such people during the agitation; while, across the road in another pig-cart, a gigantic Catholic farmer was holding forth to a far larger crowd in favour of Kettle, the plebeian Nationalist and tenant-farmer. While I was looking on, the landlord of the farmer orator, accompanied by his daughters, passed by, superfine personages who looked like beings from another world, and I remember the landlord stopping and laughing heartily and pointing his tenant out to his daughters, as if it were an amusing spectacle. He, no doubt, thought that the quarrel between the priest and the laymen would end like the historic fight between the Kilkenny cats, as so many dissensions between opposing sections of the Catholic laity had ended before, and have ended since. A great many landlords then held the same view and thought the agitation a capital joke. But the Church accommodated itself to the times, without really altering its own policy, and gained strength amidst all the turmoil, while the people had apparently turned aside after false gods in the persons of Mr. Parnell and his eloquent lieutenants.

The hierarchy and priesthood really believe that they are doing a great work in carrying out the Church's policy. They are all Irishmen. Let us give them credit for the belief, whether we approve or disapprove of the policy. But we are not, on that account, to pass them over and leave them out of account, as so many writers on Ireland do. Religion

is the chief thing in the Irish Catholic's life, and to omit it from consideration, in any serious attempt at elucidating Irish sociology, would be like presenting the tragedy of *Hamlet* and omitting the part of Hamlet himself. If religion be not considered in conjunction with the other great facts of Irish life, no useful conclusion can be arrived at.

There are hundreds of thousands of really pious, God-fearing Irish folks who derive from Roman Catholicism all the consolations associated with religious belief honestly held. That is a great fact, but if there are other facts connected with the ecclesiastical polity of Rome in Ireland, which do not make for individual or national peace, they too must be considered.

Six facts will always tend to separate the Roman Catholic Irish from the general body of their fellow-citizens, and keep them in a condition of political aloofness unknown to the members of any other religious sect:—(1) Their isolated geographical position; (2) their concentration in the agricultural industry; (3) the overwhelming majority in which they find themselves in three and a half out of the four Irish provinces; (4) the severely exclusive polity of the Roman Catholic religious system, which claims that it alone is the One True Church, out of which there is no salvation, compelling its adherents, under pain of eternal damnation, to attend its religious services, and forbidding them, under the same penalty, to attend the religious services of any other religious body; (5) the continuing faith of the

Roman Catholic Irish in the exclusive mission and divine agency of the Roman Catholic Church; (6) the sectarian or denominational system of education which has just culminated in the new National University at Dublin, created and endowed by the Irish Universities Act of 1908, of which the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin is Chancellor.

The higher education of the country is now officially divided into three religious departments, though no mention of religious endowment is made in the statute. The Presbyterians control the new Queen's University at Belfast. The Episcopalians (old Established Church of Ireland) dominate the Dublin University or Trinity College. The Roman Catholics own the new National University, whose chief college and headquarters are being erected at Dublin, but which also possesses two important constituent colleges (hitherto known as the Queen's Colleges) at Cork and Galway, and has the power to affiliate the great theological college at Maynooth, which will naturally be the predominant partner in the whole concern.

The recent history of the Catholic Irish is largely a history of passion followed by remorse, elation followed by reaction, violence followed by exhaustion —the periods of excitement and depression succeeding each other like waves in an agitated sea.

After the close of the eighteenth century, the rebellion of 'Ninety-eight was followed by a period of calm, until a great wave of disturbance, in the triple form of the Catholic Agitation, the Tithe War,

and the Repeal Agitation, swept the country during the third, fourth, and fifth decades of the nineteenth century. Then came a period of rest, broken by the small disturbance known as the Fenian Rising in 1867. After that came a twelve years' calm, until 1879, when the Land Agitation broke out, which, of all the Irish disturbances, proved the most lasting and far-reaching in its consequences.

The peace and quietness in the years before 1879 seemed almost incredible, as one looked back on them from the stormy 'eighties. The Royal Irish Constabulary, the mainstay of government in Ireland, had been greatly strengthened after 1867, but it had literally no work to do in those smiling 'seventies. At every sub-inspector's station, the mounted serjeant's mare was as fat and glossy as a prize ox, and he rode her out for exercise every morning with the air of a West End dandy in Rotten Row. The foot-police had even less to do, having no horses to groom. In the afternoons, they took their *dolce far niente* before the barrack door, smoking with tunics unbuttoned; or would go for a walk, their brightly-polished boots and uniforms in order. Even when on beat, there was nothing to be done, except on fair days; and, even then, the breaking-up of small faction fights and the arresting of drunken men were little more than exhilarating exercise after a month's lethargy, and engendered no ill-feeling whatever. They were on the friendliest terms with the people of the district, and it was a common occurrence for one of them to marry the daughter

of a small shopkeeper or farmer, and be transferred with his wife on marriage to a different county. In the Catholic districts, there was some jealousy between the Catholic and Protestant constables, Catholics complaining that there was an undue proportion of Protestants among the officers and head-constables. The Protestants, on the other hand, always held that promotion was obtained solely by capacity, or by ingratiating oneself with superior officers. But the public knew nothing of this grievance, and the Protestant constables in Catholic Ireland were, perhaps, even more popular than the Catholic. After 1879 all this was changed; and, since then, there has not been a more worried and calumniated, or a more admired and belauded, police force in the world than the Royal Irish Constabulary.

A famous American warrior reviewed a detachment of them at their dépôt in Dublin, after the force had gone through the terrible first ten years of the Land Agitation, and paid them, as he thought, the greatest compliment in his power by declaring that there was not "an Irishman amongst them." I have the story from an unimpeachable source. He came to Dublin to receive the freedom of the city from the Nationalist and anti-British Corporation; and, though the Corporation and the Government were at daggers drawn, the recipient of Nationalist favours was so broadminded as to accept an invitation to stay at the Viceregal Lodge.

To the great wonder and amusement of the Viceroy and the guests, all Unionist, assembled at

the viceregal table, the American had nothing but playful sarcasm for the Irish in the States—the Roman Catholic Irish, of course, not the Protestant Irish, of whom President M'Kinley was one.

"You've got to keep your foot on 'em," he said. "We keep our feet on 'em, and that's why they're all right with us."

When the American went to the City Hall, naturally, though he told how the Irish were "all right in the States," he did not say why they were so.

The Lord-Lieutenant, amazed at his contemptuous references to the Irish, asked him if he would like to see a fine body of Irishmen; and, on the American replying that he would be "*de*-lighted," sent him off to inspect the constabulary at the dépôt.

At the viceregal table that evening, the American general confessed that he had never seen a finer body of men, but he added: "I guess there's very few Irish amongst them."

"On the contrary, they're all Irish," replied the Lord-Lieutenant.

"I guess not," said the American smilingly, "you must be making a big mistake, sir. They're all Englishmen."

The Inspector-General was at dinner, and, being appealed to, he gave the precise statistics—out of several hundred men paraded, only three or four, less than one per cent., were English.

"Well," said the unabashed American, "it comes to the same thing. It's the same with you as it is

with us in America, you've got your foot on 'em. That's why they're all right."

It cannot have occurred often in the recent history of Ireland that a Viceroy has been the recipient of such candid and luminous guidance as to the necessity for firm government and the perils of Home Rule.

In the 'seventies, the farmers were very prosperous, notwithstanding the alleged high rents. The prices of cattle and corn were high, crops were plentiful, and the whole country was thriving and happy. The shopkeepers, who were entirely dependent on the farmers, were making money; and the professional classes, dependent on both farmers and shopkeepers, were also doing well. Though the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed in 1829, and though the Queen's Colleges were in working order twenty years later, it was only in the 'seventies that the fruits of Emancipation began to manifest themselves generally, and Roman Catholics began to assert a systematic influence in public life. The Catholic doctor and solicitor began to appear everywhere; an occasional Catholic magistrate was to be found on the bench; and Catholic Town Councillors and Poor Law Guardians began to regard themselves as personages. I do not think it was through partisanship that few Catholics were Justices of the Peace in the Catholic districts; it was rather that there were so few of them in a social position equal to that of the Protestants who were appointed to the bench. Nothing could have seemed more unlikely in those days than that Catholic tenant-farmers were destined to become in

the near future not only magistrates but lords of the soil.

The first bad harvest, in 1878, which was the immediate cause of the Land Agitation, came precisely a century after the passage of Gardiner's Relief Act in 1778. The main object of those stringent "penal laws" against Roman Catholics, passed after William III.'s defeat of James II.'s Catholic supporters in Ireland, in 1690–91, seems to have been to divorce the Irish Catholics from all proprietorship of the soil. The confiscations of Elizabeth, James I., and Cromwell had already put the ownership of the Irish soil almost entirely into the hands of Protestants. The confiscations of William III. then completed the Protestant monopoly. The few Catholic landlords who were permitted to retain their estates by the Treaty of Limerick were forbidden to make a testamentary disposal of their property; their estates were equally divided at their death between all their sons; and, if the eldest son declared himself a Protestant, he became entitled to the whole estate.

Catholics in general were debarred by statute from buying, inheriting, or receiving land as a gift from Protestants. They could not hold life annuities or mortgages charged on land. They were permitted to hold a lease of land, but not for longer than thirty-one years; and they were not allowed to make more profit in any year than one-third of the rent. If a Catholic infringed any of these statutes, the land in his occupation passed by law to the first Protestant

who made discovery of the facts to the officers of the law. Gardiner's Relief Act enabled Catholics, on taking the oath of allegiance, to hold leases for 999 years and to inherit land in precisely the same way as Protestants; but they could not acquire the freehold. Despite the century which had elapsed since Gardiner's Act, and subsequent statutes giving full liberty as to land tenure, the great bulk of the freeholds and most of the long leaseholds were still in the hands of Protestants at the beginning of the Land Agitation—a situation which we shall briefly consider in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

Estrangement of landlord and tenant—English contrasted with Irish village life—The priest contrasted with the parson—Sport and jesting—The Church of Ireland before and after 1870—The new *Pax Clerica*—An explanation of how it came about.

THE only social element wanting in the Roman Catholic provinces, to perpetuate the universal peace, was a widespread personal acquaintanceship between landlord and tenant, and this defect, I think, must not be attributed to *malice prepense* on the part of either, but to the difference of religion which kept them apart in so many ways and on so many occasions, but especially on that one day of rest when they might have seen one another at their best. Without understanding this, it is impossible to understand the sociological conditions prevailing during the Irish Land Agitation.

By way of illustration, let us contrast the basal facts of life in an English village with those of an Irish village for the past forty years. In the English village one sees the comfortable brick or stone cottages, usually two-storeyed, with large windows and several rooms, besides one or two outhouses each, standing in their gardens, small or

large, in which are fruit, vegetables, and flowers. The so-called new "garden cities" are nothing more than a new edition of the old villages which are to be met with everywhere in England. If you make inquiries, as I have done, you will find that the cottages and gardens are the property of the squire, or lord of the manor, or other landlord, and that they are let to agricultural labourers at a very moderate rent—often quite as low as the new cottages in Ireland.

In each English village you will notice the parish church, standing in its ancient cemetery or God's-acre, with the rectory or vicarage not far off. Into this church every Sunday, all the year round or at certain seasons, comes the squire or lord of the manor, or other landlord, with his wife, children, and guests, to worship along with the villagers. There also come the farmers and their families. Every resident in the village and in the parish is known to the parson and his wife, who, as a rule, are on intimate terms with the lord of the soil. There are rights-of-way in all directions, so that adults and children may claim and enjoy part-ownership in the fields. Does a cottage need repairing? The defect is at once made known and attended to by the landlord. Does a peasant meet with a reverse, or is he stricken down by calamity? The landlord is at once acquainted with the fact, either by the parson or through some other channel, and something is done. The landlord is in even closer touch with the farmers, whose

gates, fences, and buildings are kept in excellent repair.

In an Irish village, on the contrary, the cottages are placed right on the edge of the road, not only without a garden, but often without a back yard. They are one-roomed, or at most two-roomed, earthen-floored, thatch-roofed, with small windows or no windows. If there be a small back yard or a front yard, it usually contains a pig-sty and an evil-smelling heap of manure. Right behind the cottage are the fields into which villagers dare not enter except as trespassers. There are no rights-of-way, nothing but the bare, hard road. The cottages belong, not to the landlord, but to the farmers on whose holdings they stand; and the farmers speak of the cottagers as their "tenants." Are they out of repair? They are allowed to remain so for an indefinite time, often till they fall to ruin.

The farmers' own houses and outhouses are in a chronic state of bad repair; so are the gates and fences on the land. Instead of order, there is disorder. If the farmer puts up a piece of wood to mend a fence, the peasant's wife will steal it for firewood. Having no fruit trees, flowers, or vegetables of their own, the villagers have no respect for the property of others in such matters. The farmers' gardens and orchards and fields are raided; but they never think of invoking the aid of the law or the constabulary.

There is a chapel in the village and, near it, a priest's house. But the priest, excellent man though

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

IRISH VILLAGE LIFE.

"The cottages are placed right on the edge of the road, not only without a garden, but often without a back yard. Behind are the fields, into which the villagers dare not enter. There are no rights-of way, nothing but the bare, hard road." *Page* 20.

he be, is a celibate and leads the life of a recluse. The Irish priest is not really in as close touch with the peasants as the English parson is; he only meets them in the chapel or at the "station." The priest is not in touch with the landlord or agent at all. Even when the landlord is a Catholic, the priest does not, as a rule, associate with him. While the farmers and labourers are looking at the priest offering up sacrifice in the chapel, the resident landlord or agent is joining with the parson at common prayer in the church. The landlord, or his agent, never comes to mass on a Sunday in that chapel. If the landlord resides abroad, he is never seen on his property—and to repeat a well-known bull, the country is "full of absentees." His agent is only seen on rent-days, or when he comes out to hunt or shoot. If the landlord lives at home for the whole or part of the year, he is usually unknown to his tenants, and is only seen by them when he is out for sport.

It is unjust to blame the landlords for this separation into which they were forced. They have as much right to their religious beliefs as the peasantry. But, once the separation had taken place in religion, it was next to impossible to prevent it from spreading, as it did, to almost every sphere of life. The landlords and agents took to joking and fun when they met the farmers and labourers and condescended to throw a word to them. What was the use of talking seriously to such people? The peasantry humoured them,

showing their teeth laughingly, and giving them ample food for merriment, until Mr. Parnell taught them how to bite.

Sport, almost necessarily, became the business of life with the landed gentry, who were thus literally driven out of serious affairs in dealing with their tenants and their tenants' tenants. There were many exceptions, but that was the rule. The minority of Catholic landlords followed the example of their Protestant *confrères* in everything. Lord De Fresne and others, for instance, who had such trouble with their tenantry, were Roman Catholics.

Jesting with an Irishman is not the way to win his respect. The priests rarely jest with the people; and, in the exceptional cases when they do so, they lose in power and influence. The Catholic Irishman is disposed to familiarity, or to "making free," as he calls it, and he never feels respect for those who make free with him by joking. Serious kindliness, not jesting kindliness, is the best way to hold his esteem. Even seriousness without kindness is a better way than jesting with kindness, that is, in the long-run.

The result of what one may call sport-worship amongst the upper classes was that the farmers and labourers too learned to be discontented with their duties, and thought it a grievance that they had to work for their living. It was the state of things thus brought about that caused Thomas Drummond, the remarkable Scotsman who was Under Secretary for Ireland from 1835–1840, to remind the Irish

landlords publicly that "property had its duties as well as its rights." No such reminder was necessary in England, where the landlord always treated his land, whether let on lease or to tenants at will, with the respect which an Englishman has for his own property; and where landlord and tenant were personally acquainted, and kept their relationship on a friendly business footing.

But I do not think that anything, short of reverting to the Roman Catholic religion, would ever have enabled the landlords in the Catholic provinces of Ireland to wield the same influence over public opinion as the landlords did in England and Scotland; for they could never have got into such close touch with the tenantry. In Ulster, where the tenants were usually Presbyterians, while the landlord belonged to the Church of Ireland, there was no such severance as in the Catholic provinces. The ministers exercised no compelling power over their congregations; the points at issue were mainly questions of Church government rather than doctrinal beliefs; and there were innumerable points of social contact between the laity of both denominations. And yet, even in Ulster, there was not to be found that absolute harmony which one finds in the rural districts of England, where the landlord's duties are as clearly defined as the labourer's, and where the parson, though under strict discipline himself, is always there to see that duty is not neglected by high or low.

Up to 1870, the rectors of the Established Church

of Ireland had been great notabilities in each parish, discharging the functions of a squire in the absence of the landlord; being mostly well-bred men, personally popular, possessed of relatively ample means, and moving in the society of the landlords and other resident gentry.

Ever since 1829, their position had been one of great difficulty. The grant of Catholic Emancipation in that year, instead of introducing religious peace, produced religious war, and was followed by a complete revulsion of popular feeling towards the parsons who, till then, had been on the friendliest terms with the Catholic peasantry. Within three years came the Tithe War; and, after that was settled by the Commutation Act, there ensued an implacable and open hostility on the part of the Catholic hierarchy and priesthood to the clergy of the Established Church.

The feelings of the priesthood are quite intelligible. They were the clergy whose ministrations were accepted by the overwhelming majority of the people, whereas the parsons had few if any followers. The churches in which they ministered, the glebes in which they lived, the tithe rent-charge which constituted their endowment, had once been the property of priests in full communion with Rome; the Roman Catholic dead were still being buried in the Protestant graveyards. Why, then, since the people remained faithful to Rome, should the emoluments of the people's priesthood be enjoyed by clerics who had rebelled against the Church of Rome?

Whenever a priest showed himself socially inclined, he was received with open arms by the clergy of the Established Church and the landed gentry. But, for ninety-nine priests out of a hundred, the amenities of cultured society had no charm. Their training and their celibacy made them shy and sensitive. They felt their own social inferiority too keenly to enjoy associating with the Protestant clergy and gentry and their female relatives. Cut off from so many of the joys of life, they come naturally to find their chief pleasure in the exercise of power, and they could gratify that more completely as "veiled prophets" than as ordinary men of the world mixing freely with their kind. They, therefore, kept austerely to themselves; and it was only where a priest was gifted with a keen sense of humour, like Father Healy of Bray, that he came down from his pinnacle and condescended to accept invitations to dinner from the aristocracy. In spite of all this, however, the rectors of the Established Church maintained their place in Irish society, a very important place, and lived down all unpopularity, except the professional hostility of the priesthood.

But, on the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1870, their power and prestige declined, and there was a proportionate access of social influence to the P.P.'s, or Parish Priests, who, being celibates, exercised it in quite a different way from the genial clerical magnates of the Establishment.

Since the fever of the Land Agitation in the Catholic provinces abated, a kind of *pax clerica* has

been proclaimed. The laity on both sides, with few exceptions, were already friends, having tacitly agreed to eschew religious discussion and remember only that they were "Irishmen all." But their divines could not well be friendly, seeing that the Catholic priests, ever since 1870, had been standing on their dignity as the officers of the One True Church, and refusing to co-operate, not merely in things religious, but in social and charitable projects, with the Protestant clergy, or even to allow the laity to do so; the prohibition extending in Dublin to the Hospital Sunday collection. The Church of Ireland rectors, thus forced to assume the defensive, were rarely on speaking terms with the Parish Priests throughout the Land Agitation. The different social position of the men would have been sufficient to account for that; the parson being the pastor and friend of the landlords, the P.P. being the pastor and friend of the farmers. Feeling between the opposing divines ran so high in my youthful days that we little boys used to be told satirically that if we looked closely enough at the boots of the local rector—a most gentlemanly man—we might see the outline of the cloven hoof.

In recent years, this professional hostility has been fast dying out. The younger Church of Ireland and Presbyterian parsons, wiser in their generation than the old school, have been imitating the example of Mohammed, and have been going to the Mountain, since the Mountain would not come to them; and are now, in many parts of the Catholic provinces,

on speaking terms with the parish priests. This policy has been disapproved of by those devoted Protestants who fear lest it may bring about a reversion to pre-Reformation practices in the Church of Ireland, and cause the Protestants to lose their individuality by intermarrying freely with Roman Catholics, thereby consigning their children to Rome, if not actually going over themselves. It has been approved by others who do not fear either result. It is, at any rate, an important new fact of the situation in Ireland which we have to accept, whether we approve or disapprove of it, and its effects will become apparent in time.

At a social function recently, an English clergyman asked if he might speak to me about Ireland, and opened the conversation by saying: "My father was a Protestant clergyman in Ireland for forty years and he made it a practice every day, except when it was absolutely impossible, to write a personal letter to at least one Roman Catholic in his parish pointing out the errors of the Church of Rome and adjuring his correspondent to accept the blessings of Christianity as set forth in the Scriptures. Do you know," he asked anxiously, "if that custom still prevails with Irish clergymen?"

I assured him that, as far as I knew, it was as extinct as the Dodo, and the good man, so far from rejoicing, allowed his disappointment to be visible in his face.

For the present, those who do not seek for troubles ahead may be permitted to rejoice at the increasing

friendliness of rectors and P.P.'s in the Roman Catholic provinces, and to enjoy the sight, so unwonted in Ireland, or, indeed, in any country—which a friend assured me he saw recently in the South of Ireland—of a Roman Catholic and a Protestant bishop sitting side by side, as they took a motor trip in their common diocese. This would have delighted Mr. Lefanu, who says, in his charming and humorous book, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*: "Since my early days I have seen a vast improvement in everything but intolerance in religion; that, I grieve to say, is as strong as ever."

In England we see an almost complete revulsion of public feeling from the anti-popery of sixty years ago, attributable to a wider spirit of toleration; to the decline of the papal power and prestige; and to the proverbial generosity of Englishmen who dislike to hit a man when he is down, especially when the man happens to be an old-time antagonist fallen upon evil days. There has been a swing of the pendulum towards Roman Catholicism in all English-speaking countries, and the danger now is that the misfortunes of the Papacy may be exaggerated, and that the public sympathy of to-day may overshoot the mark as far as, if not farther than, the public antipathy of two generations ago.

Ireland has suffered so much from religious and political hate, that those who wish for her collective prosperity are prepared to welcome any change indicating a growth of religious tolerance and an increase in the number of common platforms for

persons of all creeds. The greatest gainers by such a change would be the Catholic Irish themselves, who would be relieved from the burden of hating an imaginary Sassenach England transplanted into Ireland, and free to concentrate their critical energies on themselves. Few who know the history and character of those gifted people can come to any other conclusion than that they were ever their own worst enemies; for, if our ancestors suffered at the hands of their conquerors, much of their suffering, including their first conquest, was due to themselves.

It is only right to state that, in the new treaty of peace, all the yielding has been on the Protestant side; and the Catholic ecclesiastics have not abated a jot of their pretensions. The conciliatory spirit of the younger Protestants is accounted for in this way. The Catholic hierarchy refuse to allow any books, historical or otherwise, to be used in the State-supported elementary schools, if they record facts damaging to the claims of the Roman Church as the infallible guide in faith and morals. They assert the same power of supervision and veto over the books selected for the valuable intermediate examinations for which the boys in most Irish secondary schools have now been trained for thirty years. Thus it has come to pass that the standard books in use in Protestant elementary and secondary schools for the past generation have all been either flattering to the Roman Church or specially written in a neutral tone to meet the needs of the peculiar scholastic situation in Ireland. In the universities attended by Protestants

the same process has, to a large extent, been at work, in the divinity schools as well as in the general course, owing to the desire of the governing bodies to conciliate the Catholic hierarchy. In this way the younger generation of Irish Protestants have been softened, and know little or nothing of the struggle for freedom which their forefathers had to wage against the Roman Church in the past.

CHAPTER III

The three ideals of forty years—The first Catholic doctors and solicitors—The hierarchy's agitation for a university—Their end achieved—Home Rule—Protestant leaders and Catholic parties.

THE Roman Catholic Irish are collectively a race of idealists; and, during the forty years since 1870, they steadily kept three great ideals before their mind, namely: (1) The ideal of the hierarchy (formally enunciated in 1850) to obtain a university entirely endowed by Government but entirely under the control of the Church; (2) the ideal of the great majority of all classes, clergy and laity (formally stated in 1873), to obtain an Irish Parliament and executive at Dublin with untrammelled control of Irish affairs; (3) the ideal of the farmers to obtain the freehold of their farms.

The hierarchy, during the struggle for their ideal, were continuously working for control of the national or elementary schools, and establishing secondary schools, under the control of priests, monks, and nuns, all over the country; while always aiming at the acquisition of the University as the keystone of the arch of the educational system. After disestablishment, they asserted their newly-acquired influence

mainly by agitating for a Roman Catholic University and denominational education in all grades.

Well-to-do Catholics—professional men, shop-keepers, and farmers—were sending their sons to the Queen's Colleges against the advice of the bishops, who were continually issuing pastorals and passing resolutions against what they called the "godless colleges." There was no alternative, except Trinity College, which was very much dearer, or the so-called "Catholic University," which, having no charter, could not give a degree. It was not customary to go to a university to become a solicitor, and the Roman Catholics asserted themselves in that profession somewhat earlier than in the medical.

I distinctly remember the first Catholic solicitor in my native town. He was a distant relative of mine, a farmer's son, and his family were as proud of him as the Corsican Bonapartes were of Napoleon. His own brothers would stand mute before him, cap in hand, in the street, showing him greater respect than they would show to the landlord and as great as they would pay to the priest. His wonderful performances seemed to them like magic. How loudly their hearts beat inside their thin, Irish skins, when they saw him rise in court, at petty or quarter sessions, to defend a prisoner; or heard him contradict and confute some Protestant solicitor, the friend of the aristocrats; or observed him setting the magistrates, all landed gentry, right on a legal point, and daring to differ from the Barrister (now the County Court Judge); or as they hung upon his words, during an eloquent address to

the jury, and shared with him in his triumph when a verdict of "Not Guilty" was brought in!

I also remember the first native-born Catholic doctor, a publican's son, who set up a practice in our town. We all shared his magnificence and gloried in his unrivalled ability; stopping to admire his high trap, his well-groomed horse, his man in livery, and himself, as he set out every morning, smoking a cigar, to visit his patients. It was so astounding to see a son of the people taking his place amongst the gods, as it were.

I think the priests were at first somewhat jealous of the Catholic professional men, and did not relish the homage paid to the new stars by the laity.

The Gladstone University Bill of 1873 gave the hierarchy great encouragement in their agitation. One of my earliest recollections is the sight of a crowd of men—chiefly farmers—and many widows waiting round a table outside the chapel door to sign a petition for a Catholic University; the priest himself commanding the people to sign. The vast majority of those who signed had no conception of what the petition was about, and not one in five hundred of them would ever send their sons to a university.

When any other petition was placed for signature outside the chapel, it was not with the approval of the parish priest. I often saw petitions for the amnesty of the Fenian prisoners, but they were mostly got up by the young men of the district without consultation with the parish priest, and the promoters

were often compelled to place their table in the road outside the precincts of the chapel. There was usually a curate who assured them that if he were in power they would be welcome to bring their petition inside the chapel-yard. In this way the people were kept in touch with the Church while acting in opposition to its policy for the moment. The agitation of the hierarchy bore its first-fruits in the establishment, in 1880, of the Royal University, governed by a senate composed of Protestants and Catholics in equal numbers; the abolition of the Queen's University by that Act creating much indignation in the north of Ireland, where the Belfast Queen's College has been most successful and popular. The persistence with which the hierarchy pursued their agitation for a Catholic University, first in the peaceful years before 1879, and afterwards through all the turmoil of the Land Agitation, well illustrates the peculiar ability of the clergymen of the Church of Rome. Their long-continued efforts were completely crowned with success by the abolition of the Royal University and the establishment and endowment of the National University, at the entire expense of the British Exchequer, in 1908.

To deplore the passing of that Act now would be as vain as to condemn the policy of land purchase. It was passed to satisfy the long-continued demands of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, effectively voiced in Parliament by the Nationalist Party. Men of both political parties and all creeds joined in passing it. There is nothing now left for practical men but to

accept the situation cheerfully; remembering that, though the new foundation will form a fresh nucleus and rallying-centre for the Roman Catholic Irish, and seems likely, in the nature of things, to segregate them more than ever from their fellow-countrymen of different religious persuasions, it starts largely under the management of the Roman Catholic laity, who, for the first time in history, are given a controlling influence over higher education.

But, while acknowledging this redeeming feature in our new Irish educational policy, let us frankly recognise the fact that Roman Catholic young men studying for the professions, instead of, as hitherto, submitting themselves for examination and degrees to a university under the common management of men of all politics and religions, will henceforth graduate in the Nationalist and Roman Catholic atmosphere of the National University.

In acquiring control of their own higher education, under the endowment and official patronage of the British Government, the Roman Catholic professional classes are casting off that association with their fellow-countrymen of other religious views which, by applying the spur of comparison and competition, brought many of them so much gain in learning, giving them a width of view in all things, but especially a feeling of charity in matters of religion and politics.

If the Roman Catholic laity are allowed to use worthily and perpetuate the temporary share in the control of their own higher education lately given to

them, they may, by developing freely along the lines of native genius, recall the age when all Europe knew their country as the "island of saints and scholars."

But, on the other hand, if they allow recent legislation to restrict their relationships still more rigorously within their own particular religious fold, they may find themselves lowered at once in intellectual capacity and material prosperity. What if their National University, for instance, should turn out to be, not an institution for the education of men, but an ecclesiastical seminary for manufacturing priests for the service of the Roman Catholic Church in the whole English-speaking world?

The second ideal kept before the Roman Catholic Irish for forty years, namely, that of Home Rule, was looked upon as chimerical for many years after Mr. Butt enunciated it, and it did not become practical politics until Mr. Parnell became leader of the Irish Party. A Catholic priest, Father Luke Barton, writing in the *Freeman's Journal* on Sept. 6, 1876, called Home Rule "an Orange thing hatched in Trinity College for the purpose of creating a split between the people and the priests," "an unclean thing," "a snare"!

It brought the townspeople more into politics than heretofore; for the Land League, which was exclusively a farmers' organisation, was suppressed by the Government, and the National League, which took its place, embraced all classes of the community. When Mr. Butt and the Rev. Mr. Galbraith of Trinity

College propounded their Home Rule programme in 1873, it came by surprise on the farmers, who were more occupied with the thought of getting "The Three F.'s." Mr. Butt's father had been a clergyman of the Established Church. Mr. Galbraith was himself one. They, and many other Protestants connected with the start of the Home Rule movement, were actuated more by feelings of disappointment with the Government for having disestablished the Church than by any real desire to obtain such a form of Home Rule as Mr. Parnell afterwards proposed.

Irish Catholics have been frequently praised for their willingness to return Protestants as members of Parliament for the last forty years, and even to give Protestants the leadership of Catholic parties. It might be said with equal truth that the Catholics used the superior ability of Protestant leaders to obtain concessions which they could not otherwise have got for themselves; for it must not be forgotten that Protestants elected by Catholics had in the first instance to support the full Roman Catholic programme. Many shrewd observers think that the Irish Catholics are now on the eve of realising their second ideal by obtaining Home Rule; but I shall postpone the consideration of this important question to a later chapter.

Whether Home Rule be granted or not, the British public will be most deeply interested in the Irish farmers, as creditors of the State, and also in the agricultural labourers; and, as these classes are mostly Catholics, the sociological conditions under

which Irish Catholics live are likely to become a subject of serious study, rather than a source of laughter, as, perhaps, Irish sociology has too often been in the past. One gladly admits that the mirth of the steady-going Englishman at many of the self-imposed troubles of the Irish—social, religious, and political—is well-nigh inevitable, and by no means springs from ill-will.

Indeed, the collective troubles of the Catholic Irish, as dimly realised across the Irish Sea and St. George's Channel, may often seem like the woes of the inebriated Dubliner who was found outside the railings which surround a well-known statue, holding on to them like a drowning man to a plank, shouting out that an enemy had imprisoned him and begging to be released! Or they may seem as imaginary as the grievances of another Dubliner who, returning from a club dinner, fell asleep in the last Rathmines tram, and, when the conductor stopped the car and woke him, saying, "This is your house, sir!" protested indignantly that he didn't know a single person in the room, and ordered the passengers out, abusing them for having dared to invade the privacy of his home.

Let us now briefly consider the progress made towards realising the third ideal set before Catholic Irishmen since 1870, as illustrated by the latest phase of the land question, which is fast transforming the impecunious and complaining tenant-farmers into the lords of the soil of Ireland.

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

SOME FARMERS AT A COUNTRY SHEEP FAIR.

"You will see a flock of fifty or sixty sheep in a field, each with a pair of its legs spanselled," etc.—*Page* 133.

CHAPTER IV

Ownership of 18,000,000 acres of Irish land shifting from Protestant landlords to Catholic owner-occupiers — Fertility of Irish soil—Sub-division of farms—The Irish graziers.

THE ideal of the farmers, who paid no attention to education, was to secure the overthrow of the landlords. For this they worked, incoherently and irregularly at first, but afterwards with organised force, persistence, and violence. The Land Act of 1870 gave them a certain property in their holdings, but had produced no radical change in land tenure, except from a lawyer's point of view. They now first aimed at getting what they called "The Three F.'s," namely, fixity of tenure, fair rent, and free sale; and as yet made no demand for absolute ownership, though even then that was their ultimate goal, for the families of thousands of them had been on the farms from time immemorial, and they saw so little of the landlord that they thought themselves the rightful owners. "The Three F.'s," now demanded in the Catholic provinces, was little more than what was then known as "The Ulster Custom"—a conciliatory arrangement arrived at between Protestant landlords

and Protestant tenants in the North, without the enactment of any compulsory statute.

The facilities given to the tenants of glebe lands, after the disestablishment of the Church in 1870, to purchase their holdings from the Church Commissioners, may be said to have been the beginning of land purchase in recent times in Ireland.

The Irish laity are as persistent as their clergy in their pursuit of anything on which they have set their minds. They make it a point of honour, like children, to achieve their end, whether it is to their advantage or not. In this they differ from their clergy. Once having declared for a certain thing, they feel more bound to follow it up, even when it is a losing game, than when it is a profitable speculation, not knowing their own minds and being influenced by orators, crowds, and what they call public opinion. That the farmers lost heavily by the Land Agitation, even they themselves would be the last to deny; but that they have ultimately and completely and ideally triumphed is undoubted—winning, not merely the three F.'s, but the complete ownership of the soil, without any present expense to themselves, and entirely at the risk of the British Government, besides overthrowing the landlord system.

The policy of land purchase, with State aid on a large scale, which has been on its trial since 1885, is now very far advanced. About half of the farmers have purchased, or entered into agreements to purchase, their farms; and, at the anticipated rate

of progress, we are within measurable distance of the day when all the farmers will have ceased to pay rent and will have become payers of instalments of purchase money to the British Government.

"Under Acts previous to 1903," said the Chief Secretary recently in the House of Commons, "twenty-four millions and upwards of money has been advanced for land purchase, and 2,500,000 acres of land had passed under these Acts." By that operation 72,000 tenants were converted into owners; the average purchase price being £9, 12s. per acre. "Under the Land Act of 1903" (Mr. Wyndham's Act), the Chief Secretary went on to say, "Up to March 1, 1909, there had been advanced £28,000,000, and there were pending agreements for £56,000,000; the total average of land sold, or agreed to be sold, under that Act being 7,231,000 acres."[1] By that operation 228,958 tenants have been, or are being, converted into owners; the average purchase price being £11, 12s. per acre.

The total number of agricultural holdings in Ireland at the census of 1901 was 490,501—of which, on April 1, 1909, 300,000 had either been bought by the occupiers, or were in process of being bought; the total amount of money involved being £108,000,000, while the total amount of land transferred, or now in process of transfer, was 9,723,252 acres.

The whole area of Ireland, including barren

[1] *Parliamentary Debates, Irish Land Bill*, 1909, March 30 and 31, 1909: speeches of Mr. Birrell, Mr. J. H. M. Campbell, Mr. Wyndham, Sir Edward Carson, and others.

mountain, is 20,228,192 acres, of which 18,739,644 acres consist of agricultural holdings. Therefore more than half the arable land of Ireland has passed, or is being passed, from landlords to farmers; while, of the extreme amount of purchase money, now estimated as likely to be spent when the Government shall have acquired all the Irish land, considerably over half has been actually advanced, or is in process of being advanced.

Ireland is therefore no longer what Mr. Lecky described it as having been in the eighteenth century, and what it continued to be until our own times, a land of "Protestant landlords" and "Catholic tenantry,"[1] but has already, to a large extent, become, and is soon destined to become wholly, or almost wholly, a land of Catholic owner-occupiers. The result of recent land legislation has been thus a complete reversal of the policy of the penal laws.

The owner-occupier system is likely to increase the population for this amongst other reasons. It was the landlords' policy to increase the size of the farms on their estates, and thereby decrease the number of tenants. From 1881–1901, for instance, the number of farmers holding between 30 and 500 acres increased by 5964; while in the same period the number holding between 1 and 30 acres decreased by 26,766. This policy made for a decrease of population, for the number of people on a plot of 5 or 10 acres will often be as great as on a farm of 50 or 100 acres.

Furthermore, the landlord did not allow the large

[1] *Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. p. 2.

farmer to divide his farm between his sons at death, so that, as a rule, only one son could get the land and the others emigrated. Henceforth, we may expect to see a sub-division of large farms between the sons at the father's death, or on the marriage of a son during the father's life; so that there will be two or more families where there is now only one.

A few figures to illustrate how the population rises in direct ratio to the number of small holdings may be pardoned. In 1901 there were 7,504,910 acres divided into small holdings, whose annual valuation did not exceed £20, and these holdings supported 353,530 families. In the same year, there were 11,234,734 acres divided amongst large farmers whose annual valuation ran from £20 to £300 and over. Yet the large farms only supported 190,310 families. If the large farms supported proportionally the same population as the small holdings, they should have borne 529,229 families.

It is probable that Ireland will never again witness such a prolonged period of turbulence as the Agrarian Agitation, which, beginning in 1879, raged fiercely through the 'eighties and 'nineties, and is now dying a natural death. The Home Rule question, however, is beginning to loom large in political speeches and legislative programmes; and though it is not as burning as it was in 1886 or 1893, it is not likely to relapse into the academic position it occupied at the beginning of the Land Agitation. For the moment the operation of land purchase has weakened the force behind the Nationalist Party. The yearly

instalments of the purchase money are always much less than the old rent, besides being subject to periodical reductions, and ceasing altogether at the end of a definite number of years.[1] And, as every year that passes will bring the farmers nearer to the goal of absolute immunity from all payments in the nature of rent, there ought to be a constantly diminishing field for the agrarian agitator. But this blessing may cease to be appreciated as its novelty wears away, and the farmers may once again declare themselves "aggin the Gover'mint," instead of trying to stand well with their chief creditor. The Government will, therefore, need to keep a watchful but friendly eye on its debtors, advising and helping them through the Department of Agriculture, and strangling at its birth any professional attempt to organise a campaign of repudiation.

Hitherto the Roman Catholics and non-Roman Catholics in Ireland have both been steadily decreasing; but, as the Roman Catholics were losing more by emigration than the other religious bodies, the proportion of non-Roman Catholics was relatively increasing. If, however, the agricultural population now increases, all this will be changed; as 83 per cent. of the adult population who work on the land are Roman Catholics, namely, 714,260 out of 855,252.

Out of 399,387 "farmers and graziers," 329,754, or 82 per cent., are Roman Catholics. Out of 140,316 cottagers with a patch of land, or working for the

[1] The whole period of purchase under the early Acts was forty-seven years; under the later, sixty-eight.

farmers, 120,000, or 85 per cent., are Roman Catholics. Out of 85,926 indoor farm servants, 74,813, or nearly 90 per cent., are Roman Catholics.

The importance of agriculture in Ireland may be gauged from the fact that, out of a total population of 4,458,775, there are living directly by it 543,840 families, or a total of 2,664,204 souls; and, of the balance of the population, by far the greater share live partly or indirectly by the land. The urban population proper, that is, those who live in towns of over 20,000, of which there are but six—Dublin and its suburban townships; Belfast; Cork; Limerick; Londonderry; and Waterford—only numbers 879,153, or less than one-fifth of the population. The same class of towns in England contain half the population of the country. In the smaller towns, which run from 1300 to 20,000, almost every one is dependent on the farmers directly or indirectly, except in the north-eastern corner. So many classes in Ireland being thus dependent on the agricultural population, a growth in that will bring about a corresponding growth in the subordinate sections of the population, in most of which the Roman Catholics are in a majority.

As nearly as possible, the Roman Catholics are three-fourths of the whole population, the remaining one-fourth consisting mainly of Protestant Episcopalians (old Church of Ireland) and Presbyterians. There are only four counties, out of thirty-two, and only one county borough, in which the Roman Catholics are actually in a minority, and these are all

in the province of Ulster, namely—Armagh, in which they are 45 per cent. of the population; Londonderry, 41 per cent.; Down, 31 per cent.; Antrim, 20 per cent.; and Belfast, 24 per cent. Outside this north-east corner of Ulster, they are practically nine-tenths of the population. In the five counties of Connaught, the average proportion of Roman Catholics is over 95 per cent.; in the twelve counties of Leinster, the percentage is 85; and in the six counties of Munster, the percentage is 93. In the five Catholic counties of Ulster, which have not been mentioned, they average 68 per cent. of the population.

The country, which is now fast passing into the hands of the Roman Catholic majority, is one of the most fertile in the world, including the great central plain which produces the finest grass-fed beef and mutton sent to the English markets. Few people realise the fertility of Ireland, many Englishmen being under the delusion that the island is a dreary waste of bog and mountain. The barren mountain is only between one-ninth and one-tenth of the area; the bogs are only one-eighteenth, and they are chiefly peat-bogs, most of which are highly productive and remunerative. In the province of Leinster, for instance, out of a total area of 4,829,835 acres, there are no less than 4,021,605 acres under grass and crops, and 233,377 acres of useful peat-bog, while the barren mountain is only one-twenty-third of the area. In Munster, with a total acreage of 5,274,562, there are 4,480,036 acres under grass and crops. In Connaught, out of a total area of 4,185,862 acres,

there are 2,703,232 under grass and crops, the grass lands being some of the finest in Ireland ; and of the remaining area of Connaught, 535,372 acres are productive peat-bogs, which supply the province with fuel. The total area of the portions of the country which will presently pass into the hands of owner-occupiers, of whom nearly nine-tenths are Roman Catholics, is thus no less than 18,084,878 acres, of which 13,441,721 acres are under grass and crops, and a large portion of the remainder profitable peat-bog; the rateable valuation being £8,446,318, which is considerably less than the annual rental, and is not at all commensurate with the true value.

The total area of the four counties in which the Roman Catholics are in a minority is 2,143,314 acres, of which 1,766,568 acres are under grass and crops ; the rateable valuation being £1,615,349.

The land now owned, or about to be owned, by owner-occupiers in the Roman Catholic parts of Ireland is equal to 60 per cent. of the area of England, that is to say, equal to the combined area of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Cambridgeshire and Ely, Leicestershire, and Northamptonshire.

It is too late now to discuss the wisdom of transferring the sole ownership of so much territory to people who have not the money, and could not possibly have borrowed the money through any of

the ordinary commercial channels, wherewith to purchase this wide and fertile domain. Many, including the writer, believe that the disappearance of the landlords will be a loss to Ireland; for no country can fail to feel the withdrawal of a cultured and intellectual class from partnership in its financial affairs. But the time for regrets has passed, and one can only hope now that the rest of the purchase agreements will be carried through with caution, and that the British Government will not do anything to interfere with the rational progress of land purchase by any policy which would have even the semblance of hustling landlords into selling or tenants into buying.

From what has been said it is evident that we are now about to witness in Ireland a complete reversal of the position of religious parties which prevailed during the Protestant ascendancy of the eighteenth century. Then the ownership of the land was with the Protestants, and enterprising Roman Catholics could only become wealthy by devoting themselves to trade. Now and henceforth, the ownership of the land will be with the Roman Catholics, and the means of livelihood of the other religious persuasions will be more than ever confined to commerce, handicrafts, and the professions.

It is not likely that there will be a free market for land in Roman Catholic Ireland, even after the completion of land purchase. In the memorable words of Mr. Parnell, families will "keep a firm grip of their holdings," out of sentiment and un-

willingness to leave their birthplace, even when their method of working the land does not give them a decent livelihood. The purchase instalments will be so much lower in the future than the lowest conceivable rent in the past, that there will be no probability of eviction. The prospect of ownership is only likely to quicken the tenacious spirit which kept the old Irish stock rooted in the soil through many centuries of oppression, when they were not admitted to have any rights of ownership; and afterwards through a century of agitation for ownership, during which they lost millions by emigration.

The Roman Catholic Irish, in acquiring the ownership of the land, are casting off the ties of association between them and the landlords; and while it is true that those ties were much more loosely knit than in Great Britain, nevertheless they kept the Irish country districts in touch with higher standards of life socially and intellectually, and with wider views of politics and patriotism.

If ownership excites the farmers to increased industry, men now middle-aged may live to see Ireland become an Arcadia more prosperous than Denmark, because more fertile and spacious. Subdivision of the farms, besides increasing the population, should greatly increase the productiveness of the land; as, for many years, it has been impossible for holders of large tillage farms to get labourers enough to work their land properly. Holdings of 10, 20, and 30 acres, worked entirely by the farmers and their families, have been producing twice or thrice as

much per acre as the larger farms worked by hired labour. All small holdings are not well cultivated, but, where they are, they are more productive per acre than big holdings. It is only in the rich grazing districts, of which Meath and Limerick are examples, where a *minimum* of labour is wanted, that large farms have been giving a proper return.

Excessive sub-division of holdings would be highly undesirable. Indeed, many, remembering the sub-division and consequent increase of population before the Famine of 1847, are in favour of large farms and a small population. But conditions have radically changed since 1847. The extraordinary increase in the population of Great Britain has been accompanied by a diminished attention to agriculture in that country, necessitating a vast importation of foreign-grown food. Communication between Ireland and Great Britain is now as rapid and easy as it was slow and difficult in 1847. It cannot be sound economy, therefore, with such a market to be supplied within the United Kingdom, to have so much Irish land inadequately worked for want of labour. A caste of landless labourers cannot be counted upon under modern conditions. The farmer and his family will have to do most, if not all, of their own work. If there is to be better cultivation, with a view to more production, the population must be increased by increasing the number of farms and the number of working farmers' families.

But there can be no hope of improvement unless the ownership of the land leads to increased industry.

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

A PROFITABLE PEAT BOG.

"The bogs are only one-eighteenth of the area, and they are chiefly peat-bogs, most of which are highly productive and remunerative."—*Page* 46.

If ownership were to beget indolence, an increase of population would only lead to a disaster like that of 1847. Already the question is being asked: Has the industry of the Irish farmer diminished as a consequence of fixity of tenure and reduced annual payments? A German critic has pointed out that the extraordinary advantages as to purchase and tenure, conferred on Irish farmers by all the Land Acts of the last thirty years, have not increased the productiveness of Irish land, and, therefore, have not given the State its due return in an increase of home produce and a decrease of foreign importations.

If such an impeachment should prove true, it will be of no avail to Catholic Irishmen to possess, as they do, the three first essentials to success as owner-occupiers—a fertile soil; the best market in the world at their doors; and a well-endowed Department of Agriculture eager to teach, help, and organise them.

The Irish graziers, against whom so much hostility has been shown during the latter years of the Land Agitation, represent a class for whom no parallel exists in England. They flourish in the great central plain which stretches across the country from Dublin to Clew Bay. They hold rich allotments of land in Meath, Kildare, Westmeath, Roscommon, Galway, Mayo, and elsewhere. Their land needs no cultivation, being usually old pasture which has not been tilled from time immemorial, and throws up an abundance of thick, sweet, juicy grass, possessing wonderful fatting qualities. The grazier tries to get as much land as he possibly can; for he is under no

expense for labour, building, implements, or manure. He goes to the fairs in the tillage counties and buys thin cattle, technically called "stores," lets them out on his grass, and sells them in the Dublin market, at Ballinasloe fair, and elsewhere, when they are fat. While they are getting fat he has nothing to do but amuse himself.

All the year round, these cattle pass through Dublin in an endless stream on their way to England by all the steamship lines. Landlords have been in the habit of letting their farms, on the eleven months' system, to graziers, that is to say, the tenancy ends at the end of that period, and for a month of every year the land reverts to the owner. If the grazier held the land for twelve consecutive months, he would become a tenant, with full rights under the Land Acts. He could not be evicted except for non-payment of rent, and he could at any time call in the Land Commissioners to fix a fair rent for the holding independent of the landlord. Tenants who are fortunate enough to hold farms in the grass counties, let them out on the same system to cattle-dealers, or take in cattle at so much a head to graze, making an immense profit. Three or four pounds an acre is a high rent to pay a head-landlord for such a farm, but the tenant will often get ten, eleven, or twelve pounds an acre from the dealers. I have known farmers with about two hundred acres of rich land, sub-letting it in this way, and making anything between £500 and £1000 a year while they lived in absolute idleness.

The popular demand now is that the Government

should compulsorily buy up the grass lands, put out the graziers, and sub-divide the land into small allotments to be tilled by the new occupiers; and in Connaught this has been and is being done on a limited scale. Whether the proposed sub-division will be beneficial or not depends on the industry of the small holders. The fortunes of all the tenant-purchasers, large and small, will ultimately depend on their own exertions. But in the immediate future much will also depend on whether the leaders to whom they look for guidance will be wise enough to discourage political factiousness and religious intolerance, and cultivate the wider patriotism attributed by Macaulay to the ancient Romans, when he says that "none were for a party but all were for the State"—construing the term "State" to mean that United Kingdom which has been not merely just but generous to Ireland in recent years.

The graziers are almost all Roman Catholics, and it has been so from time immemorial. Campbell, in his *Philosophical Survey*, writing of Ireland in the eighteenth century, says: "The oppression of the poor in the South proceeds very much from the papists themselves, as the graziers who engross the farms are mostly Romanists." Another writer in 1761 says: "Pasturage, a lazy, wasting, and depopulating sort of industry, is alone adapted to their (the Catholics') condition."[1] An explanation is given by another writer of the same period, who says: "The law about

[1] *The Dangers of Popery to the Present Government*, by M. O'Connor. Dublin, 1761.

informers has converted the Popish landowners into a huge tribe of graziers like our Scythian ancestors. Pasturage is one defence with them against informers, and is their sole occupation."[1] Holders of large farms of land more suitable for pasture than tillage will still continue to be graziers, after purchase, because the life is so much easier and the risks fewer; but it is not to such men that Ireland need look for regeneration.

In a later chapter we shall consider the graziers' wives and daughters.

[1] *Observations on the Popery Laws*, 1771.

CHAPTER V

Riches of the Catholic provinces—Royal Meath—Archiepiscopal Armagh—Asses and ass-beating—A land of live-stock—The County Down—Richness of Irish land as compared with English—Protestant Denmark *v.* Catholic Ireland—An interesting contest.

THE productiveness of Irish land, when properly treated, is attested in all parts, even the most unexpected, of the Catholic counties. There are square miles of Galway, for instance, where, to the casual eye, the only product of the soil seems to be stone. The fences are dry stone walls, gathered from the surface of the land, and there are stacks of stones in the fields, garnered like a harvest. But, between these stones, succulent root crops or corn may be seen flourishing, and sheep and cattle grazing on the greenest and sweetest grass in the world. In other counties, a teeming population seems entirely cut off from the natural riches of the soil. In Mayo, with its 199,166 people, 97 per cent. of whom are Roman Catholics, the cottages are thickly sprinkled along the edges of bog and mountain; while the rich pasture plains are houseless and full of cattle and sheep—there being only 153,000 acres, or 11 per cent.

of the area, cultivated, as against over half a million acres of grazing.

The county of Meath—or Royal Meath, as the Irish love to call it, in memory of the historical fact that the High Kings of Ireland in olden times held their court within its confines at Tara—is the richest tract of grass land in the world. In the old pastures between the high thorn hedges the voice of man is seldom heard, the silence being only broken by the lowing of cattle or the bleating of sheep. It contains 417,512 acres of rich grass and 112,691 acres of tillage, out of a total area of 576,399 acres; the proportion of barren land being only 1 in 1000. There are 220,000 fat or fatting cattle in the county, and as many sheep. The population is about 67,000; and, if we add the horses and pigs to the cattle and sheep, we find that there are eight profit-making beasts for each human being in the county, and that without counting the poultry. In some districts the scenery is English in character, as one would expect in a county which was within the Pale and so near the seat of the English Government; yet, in this Pale county of lonely roads and well-stocked fields, 92 per cent. of the population are Roman Catholics.

No greater contrast to the royal county can be imagined than the archiepiscopal county of Armagh, one of the four which have a majority of Protestants. Next to Dublin it is the most thickly populated in Ireland, having 192 people to the square mile as compared with Dublin's 196. Though only little

more than half the size of Meath, its population is more than 50 per cent. larger. It is a county of small tillage farms, 16,000 out of a total of 17,000 farms being under 50 acres. Its roads and fields are alive with people rather than beasts, the proportion of four-footed animals to human beings, which was 8 to 1 in Meath, being only 1½ to 1 in Armagh. It had a larger amount of tilled land, in proportion to its area, than any other county in 1901. The landscape is typically Irish in its homeliness, especially near the hills, where the white cottages are scattered about as thickly as if thrown from a gigantic pepper-castor. There are considerable manufactures at Portadown, Lurgan, Armagh, Bessbrook, and elsewhere, but agriculture is also actively carried on. Whenever you touch a Protestant district, you will find in general an increase of population and some skilled industry extra to the land. You will find, may I say, people and progressiveness, as opposed to quadrupeds and ass-beating.

One of those fortuitous straws which show how the religious wind blows, and marks the difference, strange to say, between the Catholic and Protestant counties, is the relative esteem in which asses are held. Antrim, the most Protestant county in Ireland, has the least use for asses. In every other county, these animals are to be found in thousands: Tipperary, for instance, having over 17,000; Cork nearly 20,000; Mayo 25,000, and so forth—but Antrim, with its great area and a population larger than that of any other Irish county, had only 783 asses within its

borders in 1901. The county of Londonderry, the population of which is less than quarter of that of Antrim, kept only 582 asses in the same year. Down, which is the best agricultural and, next to Antrim, the most Protestant county in Ireland, having a population double that of Londonderry, only maintained 1389 asses. Armagh, another of the four counties in which the Protestants are in a majority —and, next to Dublin, the most densely-peopled area in Ireland—only keeps 2000 asses. But in all the Roman Catholic counties—except Tyrone, which is a kind of neutral ground—asses are to be reckoned in thousands, especially in Munster and Connaught. If there were only the same number of asses in the Catholic counties in proportion to population as in the Protestant, there should only be 20,000; instead of which there are 234,180. The Irish donkey is, perhaps, the most unwilling, aimless, and unprofitable brute in the world; and, as a means of locomotion, the worst procurable. It represents a day of hard work for an Irish labourer or his wife to get an average donkey to carry them a distance of five or six miles to the market-town and bring them home again with their purchases. The ass cannot be got to go ahead without shouting and beating, and beating the air is profitable compared with beating the ass. If you neglect him for an instant, he will wander into a dyke and upset the cart. If he meets a particularly dusty bit of road, he wants to lie down and roll. He has no sympathy, no sense of duty, no gratitude. It is very difficult to find an ass that is

worth keeping, and it is because the Protestants of the north-east do not think the game worth the candle that they leave it to their Catholic fellow-citizens, who spend much precious time and labour in trying to cajole and coerce a quarter of a million of donkeys to do work for them.

To some extent it would be true to say that the Protestant north is a land of men and women, while the Catholic remainder of the country is a land of live-stock. In Antrim, Down, Armagh, and Londonderry, there is about one profit-making live beast for each person: the human beings numbering 1,020,142, or nearly a quarter of the whole population, as against 1,112,604 head of live-stock. In the rest of the country there are nearly three beasts for each human being, the figures in 1901 being—people, 3,436,404; horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs, 8,430,421.

As an illustration of the difference between a Protestant and a Catholic county, let me compare Down with Meath, the areas of which are as nearly as possible alike (Down, 607,916 acres; Meath, 579,320). Both are famous agricultural districts. The Roman Catholics in Meath are 97 per cent. of the population; in Down they are only 30. The first difference observable is the density of population in the Protestant county, which, if we include the suburb of Ballymacarrett, contains 290,000 people: without it, 208,000. The Catholic county, on the contrary, has only 67,500 people. In beasts the proportions are reversed. Down contains 358,000

head of live-stock, or almost 1·3 for each human being; whereas Meath contains 472,000, or nearly 8 for each human being. The second difference to be noted is that the Protestant farmer lives by tilling the land, while the Catholic does so by letting cattle graze upon it; with the result that while there are 36,600 persons employed in agriculture in Down, there are only 18,178, or less than half the number so employed in Meath. In Down there are 105,645 acres under corn; in Meath only 19,596. In Down there are 66,000 acres under root crops; in Meath only 16,600. In Down there are 64,756 acres under clover and grass seeds, it being almost the only county in Ireland where grass seeds are saved by the farmers; in Meath there are only 12,000 acres. There are 9499 acres of flax in Down, and only 37 in Meath. Down grows more wheat, oats, flax, and new hay than any county in Ireland, irrespective of area; though Cork is treble, Mayo and Galway double, and Kerry, Donegal, and Tipperary almost double its size.

The animal riches of some of the so-called poor Catholic counties are calculated to astonish those who have not considered the question. In Galway, for instance, with its population of 172,000, there are 654,000 sheep, 200,000 cattle, 26,000 horses, and 66,000 pigs; the value of the tillage crops in the same year being estimated at about £1,120,000. In Kerry, which those who only know its beauty spots, look upon as a poverty-stricken place, with its population of 165,000, there are no less than 111,362

milch cows, 117,000 other cattle, 140,000 sheep, 60,000 pigs, and 15,000 horses. In Donegal also, with its population of 173,000, known chiefly to the world for the beauty of its scenery and the nominal poverty of its Catholic people, there were in 1901 no less than 188,000 cattle, 201,000 sheep, 26,000 pigs, and 22,000 horses. Irrespective of the live-stock, the value of the crops raised in the county in that year was £1,529,827, an amount only exceeded by four other counties. In the spacious county of Cork, with its population of 404,000, there are no less than 55,000 horses, 189,000 milch cows, 262,000 other cattle, 319,000 sheep, and 142,000 pigs; the value of the tillage crops raised in the same year being estimated at £2,785,000. It is the wealth of the poor Catholic counties, rather than their poverty, that astonishes one. And, when there is such abundance, with things at their worst and nothing being done in the way of intelligent, collective industry, what might not be done if all Ireland were as energetically and intelligently cultivated as, let us say, the County Down?

In whatever way you test it, Ireland as a whole is a more fertile country and better repays cultivation than Great Britain; in other words, it is the most fertile part of the British Isles. Though the area of England, which is popularly supposed to be the most fertile division of the United Kingdom, is over 32,500,000 acres, while that of Ireland is only 20,000,000, the number of cattle in Ireland in 1901 was almost as great as in England, the precise figures

being, for Ireland, 4,672,035, and, for England, 4,791,535: while the estimated value in money was about the same, that is to say, somewhat over 60 millions sterling. The number of cattle in Scotland, the acreage of which is about the same as Ireland, in 1901 was only 1,229,281, of an estimated value of about 16 millions sterling.

Mr. Jesse Collings used to talk of "three acres and a cow." In 1901, there was not enough of cattle of *all* classes in England, much less milch cows, to supply one for every *seven* acres or for every seven individuals. In Ireland, on the contrary, there were cattle enough to supply a beast for every individual, including babies; and of milch cows alone 1,482,483, which, if we divide the population into families of four persons each, would give a milch cow to every family and leave 357,483 milch cows over as a reserve.

The cattle alone, without counting the horses, sheep, and pigs, exceed in number the human beings in Ireland now. A cynical statistician has been heard to declare that, in his opinion, in all those counties where the kine outnumbered the men, the kine also exceed the men in value to the country. So harsh a judgment does not need refutation. The day cannot be far off, when mankind, as well as cattle, may thrive in Catholic Ireland.

But it is not only in wealth of cattle that Ireland surpasses Great Britain, but also in the average yield per acre of tillage crops. The average product of the following crops in Ireland and Great Britain

respectively for the three years 1898, 1899, 1900 was:—

	Great Britain.	Ireland.
Wheat	32 bushels	33
Barley	33 ,,	39
Oats	38 ,,	45
Turnips	12 tons	15
Hay from grass seeds	30 cwts	44
Hay from permanent pasture	28 ,,	48

In potatoes, curious to note, the average yield per acre in England was greater than in Ireland, being over five tons, as against four in Ireland. It is not out of keeping with Irish character, as evolved so far, that Irishmen should be partial to a crop which does not do well in the country from a competitive standpoint.

Ireland devoted 635,340 acres to potatoes in 1901, as compared with 415,105 acres given up to that crop in England, and as compared with 130,178 acres in Scotland; and the average Catholic Irishman with a bit of ground would consider it unnatural not to grow some potatoes.

Besides the 11,416,395 head of live-stock—which includes donkeys and those very useful animals, goats—there are over 20,000,000 poultry. It may be safely said that, if the land were as diligently and thriftily worked in Ireland as in Denmark, the country could easily support double the number of live-stock and poultry, could produce double the quantity of crops, and could carry a population double that which it now bears. In order that this by no means improbable contingency should be

brought about, the Catholic owner-occupiers must be put into close, intelligent, and constant touch with the British market. They must become convinced that their business has the paramount claim on their thought and labour: that the rule of law must be supreme in all disputes; and that the methods of violence and intimidation must only be a memory of a dead and regrettable past. This ought to be and would be the only natural and successful conclusion of the land-purchase policy of the last twenty-five years, the suitable *quid pro quo* to the United Kingdom for advancing and guaranteeing the huge sum required to make the farmers of Ireland owners of the soil. There can be no new era in reality for Ireland, as the result of land purchase, without a change in the character of the Catholic farmers themselves. If that change takes place, we shall see Catholic Ireland one of the most prosperous and contented of European countries, and we shall see a great reduction in the value of the foreign agricultural produce annually imported into the United Kingdom.

It is remarkable that Denmark, which is now Catholic Ireland's keenest competitor for the supply of the English market, should be the most Protestant country in Europe—the land from which Catholic ecclesiastics were most rigorously banished. In a copy of the *Catholic Directory*, published in Dublin forty years ago, I find the following amusing note under the head of Denmark: "In this country, which surpasses England in religious bigotry and

Photo by W. T. Hasse.]

CREEPING HOMEWARDS.

"It represents a day of hard work to get the average Irish donkey to carry you a distance of five or six miles to the market town and back."—*Page* 98.

Photo by W. T. Hasse.]

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

"If there were only as many asses in the Catholic counties, in proportion to population, as in the Protestant, there should be only [illegible], instead of which there are [illegible]."—*Page* 98.

unchristian intolerance, there are no bishops or vicars apostolic, except at Copenhagen, where there is one chapel, and the new bishop is allowed to act officially under the protection of the Austrian Embassy." Though there is full religious liberty, and dissenters from the Established Lutheran Church incur no civil disabilities, there are only some 5000 Roman Catholics in Denmark at the present day, out of a population of 2,500,000.

Denmark is considerably less than half the area of Ireland. It contains less than 2,000,000 head of cattle, as against nearly 5,000,000 in Ireland, and about the same number of pigs as Ireland, yet it sends to England annually over £10,000,000 sterling worth of butter, £5,500,000 worth of bacon, and close on £2,000,000 worth of eggs, besides beef, fish, and live horses—the best of the London 'bus-horses, before the introduction of motors, coming from Denmark, which has far more horses, in proportion to its area, than Ireland. So serious has been the competition of Danish with Irish bacon, that some of our most enterprising Irish bacon manufacturers found it necessary to start factories in Denmark. The advance of the Danes, as competitors with the Irish for the supply of the English market, has been phenomenal. During the forty years since 1870, the greater part of which was spent in quarrelling and agitation in Ireland, the imports of Danish butter into England increased thirteen-fold, and Irish butter has been ousted from the premier place it used to occupy in the English market. The same observation

applies to eggs and bacon. And this has been achieved, though Denmark labours under enormous disadvantages in the contest.

The Danes are foreigners; the Irish are British citizens. At four points the Irish coast is only 14, 23, 60, and 64 miles from Great Britain. Whereas Copenhagen is 600 miles from Hull, the nearest English port, Dublin is only eight hours from London. There are at present six express services of combined trains and steamers, each running at least twice a day each way, between London and the North, Midlands, and South of Ireland,[1] with connections to all the chief British and Irish centres. Why, with all those disadvantages against it, has the small and chilly northern land thus multiplied its imports of agricultural produce into England, while the large and fertile country, basking in the salubrious climate of the Gulf Stream, and within a few hours' journey of the most densely populated districts of Great Britain, has not increased its output? This rivalry between an ultra-Protestant and an ultra-Catholic country for the supply of the English market, in which all the disadvantages are on the side of the Protestant, and all the advantages on the side of the Catholic country, is one of the most interesting contests of modern times, and ought to call forth the best energies of Catholic Ireland.

[1] The Great Western Railway's new express route from Paddington *via* Fishguard and Rosslare brings the whole Catholic South of Ireland into direct and easy communication with the most populous part of South Wales and the London market.

It is worthy of note that the land in Denmark is minutely sub-divided. The law forbids small farms from being joined together into one, and encourages the sub-division of larger farms. Like Ireland, Denmark is very poor in mineral resources. The Lutheran Danes show the same aversion to ass-beating as the Ulster Presbyterians, there being only 139 donkeys in the whole country, as against nearly a quarter of a million in the Catholic provinces of Ireland.

CHAPTER VI

Catholics in trades and professions—Englishmen and Scotsmen in Ireland—John Bright's holiday in Ulster—Strange "business" methods in Catholic Ireland — Arcadian simplicity.

OUTSIDE the agricultural industry, the preponderance of Roman Catholics is noticeable in several trades and professions; but the pre-eminently Roman Catholic spheres of activity are not in the learned professions, or in the higher branches of commerce, or in the skilled handicrafts. There is only one profession in which they have a preponderance in proportion with their numbers, and that is the ecclesiastical profession, of whose members they claim 14,145 (male and female) out of a total of 17,528. In the small profession of sculptors, out of a total of 114, they claim 91, the work being mostly for churches and cemeteries. Out of 531 authors, journalists, and reporters, they claim 317, or 60 per cent. In the other professions, they are in a striking minority. Of 2216 legal practitioners, they claim only 948; of 1377 engineers and surveyors, only 495; of 382 architects, only 141; of 400 artists, only 194.[1]

[1] These and all the following figures are taken from the census returns of 1901.

In the Irish Civil Service they make a better figure, accounting for 4875 officers and clerks (male and female) out of a total 8289. They do still better in elementary teaching; for, out of 16,620 teachers (male and female), they claim 11,013. The police service is even more popular with Roman Catholics; for, out of a total strength of 12,293, they number 9102; which is in almost strict accordance with their numbers in the population. For disciplinary reasons the army must always be regulated differently from the police; and therefore it does not surprise us to learn that, out of some 21,000 officers and men composing the army in Ireland in 1901, only 5500 were Roman Catholics; and out of 2100 naval seamen, only 625. Out of 2407 municipal and poor-law officers, they claim 1642. But of all branches of Government employment, they are relatively most numerous in the Civil Service messengers, numbering 6029 out of a total 7535.

There are three trades in which they may be said to have something like a monopoly, namely, the retail spirituous drink trade, the cattle trade, and the fishing trade. Out of a total of 17,765 persons engaged in the first, 14,757 are Roman Catholics; out of a total of 4942 dealers in cattle, horses, and pigs, 4502 are Roman Catholics; and out of 10,361 fishermen, 9077 are Roman Catholics. They are strong in the woollen trade, supplying 4145 out of 5348 engaged in it; this being the only manufacture in which they predominate. For the rest, they constitute the great majority of railway servants,

tramway men, carters, dockers, canal men, general shopkeepers, or hucksters, general labourers, and domestic servants.

The number of male indoor servants is decreasing with such rapidity as a result of land purchase, that the class will soon be extinct—having fallen, during the decade 1891–1901, from 13,193 to 8828, of whom 6632 are Roman Catholics, which is almost exactly their proper proportion of three-fourths. In the same period the female domestic servants had decreased from 197,902 to 166,672, of whom 139,585, or 84 per cent., are Roman Catholics.

In the severer branches of indoor female labour, the non-Roman Catholics contribute proportionally more hands than the Roman Catholics. In all departments of women's work connected with textile fabrics, for instance, out of 73,000 females employed, only 35,000 are Roman Catholics, that is 47 per cent. when it ought to be 75. In other heavy branches of female labour, the same phenomenon is found; out of 56,000 shirtmakers and seamstresses, for instance, 21,000, or under 40 per cent., being non-Roman Catholics. But to the lighter branches of millinery and dressmaking, the Roman Catholics contribute nearly their full quota, namely, 32,000 out of 44,513.

The more important skilled trades in which the Roman Catholics constitute the great majority are: bakers, blacksmiths, butchers, builders, coachmakers, coopers, masons, pilots, saddlers, shoemakers, slaters, tailors and tailoresses. The skilled crafts in

which they are in a majority much less than they ought to be, in proportion to their numbers, are: bricklaying, carpentry, cabinet making, merchant seamanship, painting and glazing, plumbing, and printing. Nor are they as numerous as they should be in the grocery, drapery, milling, and other trades.

The professions, handicrafts, and branches of commerce, besides these already mentioned, in which Roman Catholics are in an actual minority are: accountants, 924 out of 1930; auctioneers, 404 out of 1113; bankers, 61 out of 169; bank clerks, 773 out of 2506; boilermakers, 477 out of 1601; commercial clerks (male), 9256 out of 18,952; commercial clerks (female), 1405 out of 3437; commercial travellers, 1412 out of 3442; confectioners (male), 284 out of 594; chemists, 562 out of 1856; electricity, 405 out of 899; engine-makers, 792 out of 1904; fitters and turners, 1369 out of 3501; flax, linen, and cotton (male), 6540 out of 24,146; hemp, jute, and rope (male), 462 out of 945; iron manufacture, 1526 out of 4617; ironmongers, 851 out of 1782; lithographers, 140 out of 436; millwrights, 116 out of 365; photographers, 306 out of 677; shipbuilders, 506 out of 4375; ship-carpenters, 563 out of 1585; watchmakers, 474 out of 1190.

The question of religious rivalry or grievance does not arise in connection with this natural apportionment of labour in the interests of the country as a whole. The Roman Catholics own, or will soon own, the great bulk of the land, and they almost monopolise the cattle trade, the most important

business connected with the land. It is only reasonable, then, that men of other religious persuasions should turn their attention to commerce and all those handicrafts which, by increasing the amenities of life, are calculated to retain in the country a resident population not directly dependent on the land, and to enable farmers to put their produce quickly and attractively before the millions in Great Britain who are eager to buy it. Those who love Ireland best would not willingly see her become a wholly peasant state like Servia or Bulgaria.

An impartial view of the country leads one to the conclusion that the non-Roman Catholics bear their full, nay, more than their full, share, not only in supplying the guiding intelligence, but in performing the arduous labour; and whatever they have is fairly earned. They bear the full brunt of the linen and shipbuilding trades, which they created. And in other trades, from which the Roman Catholics get most employment, and to which they are most attracted, it will often be found that the non-Roman Catholics supply the controlling power or the directing brain. This is so even in the spirituous drink trade, in which the heads of the great firms with a world-wide repute—such as Guinness, Jameson, and Dunville—will be found to be non-Roman Catholics. In the drapery, tea, wine, corn, and other trades, the same may be said of those who are at the top, or at the helm, not in Belfast and Derry alone, but also in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford. Indeed, where Irish commerce is most active, it is

usually directed by men who do not see their way to admitting the spiritual claims of the Catholic hierarchy.

That perfect freedom which flourishes in England, absorbing the stranger of every religion and no religion into the body-politic without an effort, admitting them to all privileges as a matter of course, is unique in the history of nations. But it must, in fairness, be said of Catholic Ireland that, despite all the historical denunciations of England in the abstract, Englishmen are liked and well-treated. England is always "base, bloody, and brutal," but every Englishman who settles in Nationalist Ireland is soon found to be a "dacent man," or a "rattling good fellow." In the city and county of Dublin, at the last census, just five out of every hundred persons, or nearly 21,500, were English-born, and, perhaps, the happiest people in the district. Allowing that 5000 of these were soldiers, we still have 4 English-born persons per 100 nearly in the general population of the Irish capital—which is a kind of Irish cosmopolis, 34 in 100 of its inhabitants being natives of other parts of Ireland, Great Britian, or foreign lands. The number of English-born people in Ireland has been steadily increasing from 69,382 in 1881, to 74,523 in 1891, and to 76,977 in 1901. It is to be noted that the increase since 1891 took place in Ulster, Leinster, and Munster—mainly in Ulster—there being an actual decrease in Connaught in that period.

Scotsmen also do well in Ireland and are very popular. Scotland is never denounced in the abstract, though not a little of the "coercion" in Ireland has been fathered upon Scottish Chief Secretaries: but the virtues of every Scotsman in Ireland are spoken of with qualifications. "Hard, hard," they will say, "a canny Scot, you know, that will try to beat your price down all day long, and be after coming smiling to you in the evening with his 'Weel, ma laddie, is yer head nae sair yit?'" There are only 4500 Scottish-born persons in Dublin, but the Scotch make a brave show in the business life of the Irish capital, nevertheless. The number of Scottish-born people in all Ireland, which in 1881 was 22,328, increased to 27,323 in 1891, and to 30,101 in 1901; the increase in the last ten years being entirely in Ulster, as there was an actual decrease in the Roman Catholic provinces. It is very curious to note how intensely Irish the children of Scottish parents become in the Roman Catholic provinces. Just as the young Germans in London will insist that they are English, so the young men and women in Southern Ireland, whose fathers and mothers speak "braid Scots," will disown the fatherland in which their parents take such pride, and tell you, in guttural Dublin or shrill-toned Cork accents, that "indeed an' indeed they detest an' abominate Scotland and everything Scotch, so they do, an' tha's the gospel truth."

In the same way the children of English parents become very Hibernian, but they do not abuse the

land of their fathers. I know numbers of people born in Ireland, whose fathers and mothers were pure English, but who are now literally "more Irish than the Irish themselves," except for their acknowledgment of an English ancestry. I do not speak, of course, of upper-class people who send their sons and daughters to English schools, but of people who have come to Ireland as stewards, managers, artisans, professional men or business men.

In the north-east of Ireland, it is deemed a legitimate subject of pride to be of English, and especially of Scotch, parentage; but this is not to say that the Protestant Irish are less proud of their Irish blood than the Roman Catholic Irish. Indeed, Protestant and Roman Catholic Irish alike are racy of the soil, and differ mainly in their methods of business and their attitude towards England. The Protestants do not denounce England in the abstract; but, nevertheless, they are very much less yielding to the individual Englishman, when he comes their way, than are their Nationalist and Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. They are willing to learn from England and claim all their rights in the partnership of the United Kingdom. Their remarkable abilities are not always pleasant to those Englishmen who are Liberal or Radical in politics, Nonconformist in religion, and engaged in trade. You will always find this class of Englishman partial to the Roman Catholic Irish, and prepared to discount the opposition of the Protestant Irish to Home Rule—believing, perhaps, that in no conceivable set of circumstances

will the Protestant Irish be unable to take care of themselves.

There is a curious story told of John Bright's dislike of the Protestant Irish. He used to come to Ulster for a fishing holiday in the years before and at the disestablishment of the Irish Church; and, during one of his visits, he got into a discussion with a gentleman of the locality on that burning question. The Irishman exhausted his eloquence in support of the Establishment. He pointed out all the advantages it conferred on Ireland, and, forgetting that almost all the manufactures of the province are owned by Presbyterians, the most numerous Protestant body in Ulster, asserted that Ulster's prosperity was entirely due to the Church of Ireland. "And am I to understand," asked Bright, "that the Ulster people whom I see and meet here every summer are the product and creation of the Church?" "Emphatically," was the triumphant reply. "Well, then, if that be so," said Bright, "the Church ought to be disestablished at once, and the sooner the better."

It may seem almost incredible to those who only know of Ireland through the accounts of the Land Agitation, but it is, nevertheless, a fact that English merchants find the Catholic Irish very good payers and profitable customers. They are idealists in commerce, as in politics, land tenure and religion; and purveyors of what Carlyle used to call "cheap and nasty" goods, or of spurious, make-believe commodities, do not prosper in Ireland as they

Photo by H. E. Ward.]

A COUNTRY PIG FAIR.

"Out of 4942 dealers in cattle, horses, and pigs, 4502 are Roman Catholics."—*Page* 69.

Photo by H. E. Ward.]

A GALWAY HOOKER.

"Out of 10,361 fishermen, 9077 are Roman Catholics." *Page* 69.

seem to do in England. But vendors of sterling articles in every line are sure of a welcome, and their goods are admired even by those who cannot afford to purchase—the Irish ideal always being to buy the best of everything, and to have "lashings and leavings" of it.

The Catholic Irish can hardly be said to be business people, as a whole, though there have been and are brilliant exceptions to this rule. The suddenness with which they develop likings and dislikings for certain persons is not conducive to business. During the progress of a deal between business men in Dublin, I heard one of them make the following observation, which I took note of:—"I always thought that man was a low, mean, cringing cur, but now, though I only met him three times, I think he's a prince and a gentleman."

Some of the primitive principles of Catholic Irishmen are fatal to good business, according to English notions. They borrow very much between themselves, some poor farmers tilling their ground almost entirely with borrowed implements, borrowing a plough, a horse, or a man for a day; the housewives in the towns borrowing "a handful o' coals," a pot, a pair of boots, a loaf of bread, a clean shawl, or a gown, from one another. This lack of exclusive proprietorship in their chattels makes them careless, and they do not repair things when they get broken. An Irishman's ingenuity is most amazing when he is asking a favour, or making an excuse, or endeavouring to make shift with something out of repair or

unsuitable to the occasion. He thinks there is no great credit due to a man who works with sound implements that are his own property. When the broken utensil gets hopeless, or the lender absolutely refuses to oblige, then the martyred Irishman is at his best.

A London paper once put the following heading to a review of a book about Ireland:[1]—"Poor Ireland: A Patient who Resolutely Refuses to Get Well!" That heading enshrined a great truth.

It would be risky to suggest to the average farmer or country shopkeeper that he should insure his life—and he would deem it impious for one of his family to make the suggestion.

"The Lord be praised!" I heard a shopkeeper say, when such a subject was casually mentioned, "How could I ever be expected to give them that ought to be sorry reason to be glad of my death! Any one belonging to me would be ashamed of their lives to let me do such an unnatural thing, much less to ask me!"

And his wife added: "I couldn't sleep easy at night if I thought I had an insurance on the life of any one belonging to me. Thanks be to God, I want no blood money."

There is something Arcadian about the simplicity of the Catholic Irish in commercial transactions, though the farmers are shrewd enough in selling and buying live-stock and agricultural produce. It is far easier to get change for a dirty one-pound banknote

[1] *Five Years in Ireland*, my first book, published in 1901, as reviewed in *The Daily Mail*.

in the country districts than for a sovereign. The same note, if presented in London, might lead to the arrest of the presenter. But, in primitive Ireland, they like the paper, and the dirtier it is the better; for they see so little gold money that they fear lest a sovereign might not be genuine. There is nothing which makes an Irish visitor to London so indignant as the difficulty he finds in changing the Bank of England notes he always brings with him—except, perhaps, when he unsuccessfully tries to get cash for a Bank of Ireland note, and then he boils over with rage. The average Catholic Irishman has not a true perception of the value and use of money, but I shall deal with that subsequently.

Most of those who hoard money in Ireland do so in the same spirit as collectors hoard bric-à-brac. They do not know how to make use of it. I knew a man who "saved up" a cheque until long after the drawer's death! Every one, even the miser, boasts occasionally that he despises money. I have seen men and women throw money on the road, or into a river, or into the fire, in a fit of passion, to show their independent spirit. Wealthy people are not respected for their riches; for the poor Catholics, in their innermost minds, remembering the case of Dives and Lazarus, consider themselves heirs to a far greater treasure in Heaven because of their poverty in this world.

The Catholic Irish have an ingrained objection to keeping accounts. I never knew a farmer who kept a regular account-book, or ever knew how much he

received or expended in the course of a year. They usually pay their debts yearly after harvest, and occasionally at other seasons of the year when they sell cattle. Then a farmer and his wife will go into a shop, where they get credit, and laying ten, twenty, or thirty pounds down on the counter, one of them will say: "God is good to us, umshure, an' 'tis time for us to be thinkin' of thim that wor good to us whin we had no ready money throughout the year." Then the shopkeeper produces his book and gives credit for the sum received. Perhaps the farmer, or his wife, will ask the question: "An' is there much owing by us now after that?" If they do, the shopkeeper will tell them the balance due; but very often the question is never put. The account is never closed, and the debtors never know exactly how they stand. There is something childlike in such innocence and trustfulness. I have never met with it anywhere outside the Catholic provinces of Ireland. How those same people, or their blood-relatives, can so completely change their nature, as it were, when dealing with a landlord or a landgrabber almost passes comprehension.

The Irish Catholics got a bad name through not paying their rents, and fully deserved it; but there is something to be said in extenuation for people whose ideas of business are of the crudest. Though in some cases they were ground down by the oppression of rack-renting middlemen, in the greater number of cases they were spoiled and misled by the indulgence of head-landlords, who allowed them to fall into arrears with their rents.

When the agitation began, the men in arrears became desperate and dishonest. They felt in honour bound to pay all their shop-debts; but they only felt legally bound to pay the landlord—and, unfortunately for themselves, the Roman Catholic Irish do not respect the law. They saw their other creditors before their eyes, men struggling like themselves with the world. Their landlords they rarely saw, and came to regard as beings of another world—sybarites and millionaires who could not possibly be in want. Life was made so unpleasant for landlords that most of them were forced to become absentees; and when they were out of sight they were out of mind. The shopkeeper gave something worth paying for; the landlord apparently gave and did nothing. The tenants forgot that it was by the use of the landlords' soil that they obtained the money to pay for shop goods.

Their worst passions were aroused by eloquent agitators, most of whom, being as ignorant as the farmers themselves, believed what they preached; while others, better informed, had ulterior motives for fomenting the quarrel between landlord and tenant. It is to be hoped that neither the present nor any future Government will be guilty of the cruel kindness of allowing the owner-occupiers to think that arrears in the purchase-instalments will be condoned under any circumstances. Happily for all parties, the payments so far have been made with exemplary regularity.

The personal element which entered so largely into

the quarrels between landlord and tenant will happily be absent from the relations between the State and its debtors. Difference of religion had so completely estranged owners and tillers of the soil in the Catholic provinces, where the agitation raged, that, once hostilities began, a compromise was impossible. There should be no such *casus belli* as between Government and owner-occupiers, and, when the land business is conducted on rational lines, every other branch of Irish business should run smoothly and pleasantly; for everything in Catholic Ireland depends on the land.

May one now, in all sympathy and reverence, consider the daily lives of the Roman Catholic Irish, amongst whom one was born and bred, and amongst whom are all one's relatives by blood and marriage? In doing so, without dwelling on their faults or boasting of their virtues, one may perhaps help the provident and methodical Britisher, who is so justly amused at Irish absurdities, to appreciate the forest of obstacles, self-imposed or inherited, through which Irish Catholics have to cut their way before winning even a foothold on that clear, firm ground of order, reason, and foresight in which the average Britisher is born. There is no other way by which we can hope to understand the new lords of the soil.

CHAPTER VII

Irish Christian names and surnames—Prevalence of nicknames—A high cake and its consequences—Love of mischief—A lost tribe of Israel.

THE Christian names in Ireland are an almost certain index to the religion of the bearer. It is only natural that such Saints' names as Ignatius, Alphonsus, Aloysius, Francis Xavier, and many others, should be confined to Catholics. But there is no such obvious explanation of the adoption by Roman Catholics of other names, except that, when once a name had become common amongst them, it was avoided by the non-Roman Catholics, and *vice versa.*

The catholicity of Irish taste is strikingly shown by seven popular Roman Catholic names—Patrick, Lawrence, Denis, Maurice, Eugene, Cornelius, and Edmond; the first and second being Roman Saints' names, the third and fourth Norman-French, the fifth Greek, the sixth Roman, and the seventh Saxon. The Irish for Eugene is *Eoghain*, which is softened into *Owen*; but the most popular form of the name is *Hugh*, obviously a contraction of the Greek *Eugene.* William is also a very common name amongst Roman Catholics, though it was last immortalised by the Protestant victor at the Boyne; but George

(pronounced *Shoarsha* in Irish) is usually a Protestant name.

Of the Hebrew names so frequently met with in Ireland, Adam is Protestant, so is Seth; but Abel is Roman Catholic. Abraham, Isaac, Benjamin, Joshua, and Nathaniel are Protestant; Moses is Roman Catholic. It is notable that Michael, which is so popular in the extreme East of Europe, should also be so popular with Roman Catholics in this corner of the extreme West. Of the Hebrew prophets, the Roman Catholics have taken Jeremiah and Daniel for their own; Samuel, Saul, and Jonathan are almost invariably Protestant; David, Roman Catholic.

Of the four evangelists, Matthew and John are Roman Catholic names; Mark and Luke (usually) Protestant. Of the apostolic names, Philip and Bartholomew are Roman Catholic; so is Peter; but James, Thomas, and Andrew are used indifferently by all religions, the Roman Catholic bearers of those names being, of course, in a large majority. Joseph is almost entirely Roman Catholic; a feminine form of it, Josephine, being one of the commonest of girls' names. Of other New Testament names, Timothy and Thaddeus are almost monopolised by Roman Catholics, and are regarded as the same name, the bearer being indifferently called Tim or Tade (Irish *Teague* or *Tigue*).

Of Hebrew female names, Hannah or Johanna is very common amongst the Roman Catholics, and one occasionally meets with a Rachel; but Sarah, Rebecca, Ruth, Esther, Deborah, and Dorcas are

Protestant. Mary, Bridget, and Ellen are, perhaps, the most popular female names with the Roman Catholic Irish; Catherine, Margaret, and Nora are also Roman Catholic and very common. In recent years certain Roman Catholics, wishing to distinguish themselves from the common herd, have been giving their children, especially the girls, unusual names. I once heard a well-to-do farmer and his wife discussing how they should name their infant daughter. The mother mildly pleaded for Johanna as being the name of the child's grandmother and aunt. But the father, more ambitious, said: "I declare any man that would allow his daughter to be christened Johanna ought to be tried for his life. 'Tis equal to murder to send a girl into the world with a label entitling any one to call her Joan, or Joany, or Hanny, or Hanneen." The girl was ultimately given the fashionable and pious name of Christina Josephine, having been born about Christmastide.

In the case of Irish surnames, you will find Protestants bearing the names of all the primitive Irish septs, the number of non-Roman Catholics with such names being a fair index to the extent to which the native Irish adopted the Reformation. There is hardly an ancient Irish family at present of which a leading representative is not a member of the Reformed, or, as some prefer to call it, the Primitive Church of Ireland.

Irish familiarity, a national failing to be resisted, takes great liberties with Christian names. If a boy's name be Patrick, for instance, he is rarely

addressed by his full name, but is called Pad, Paddy, Pat, Patsy, Paddeen, Paudeen. The Michaels are usually addressed as Mike, Mikey, Mick, Micky, Mikeen, Mickleen or Mickeen. They throw respect or disrespect into their way of pronouncing a person's name. Thus, if a man's name be Patrick O'Donovan, one who feels well towards him will give him his full name, but one who feels ill towards him will speak of him as Paddy Donovan. To omit the O or Mac is very hurtful to an Irishman's feelings. Disrespect is also shown, amongst the English-speaking Irish, by calling a man by his Irish instead of his English name; as, for instance, to call a MacCarthy by the Irish equivalent of his name, *Caura*; or to call a Fitzgerald *Garrulthuch*; or to call a man whose Christian name is Jeremiah, *Deermud*; or to call a Denis *Donoghoo*. These are usually devices for wounding the feelings, or ridiculing the pretensions, of a person deemed to be "too Englified."

People of notoriety, general or local—premiers, chief secretaries, judges, landlords, land-agents, magistrates, doctors, authors, traders, farmers, and labourers—have their names thus mutilated by those who differ from them; and even bishops and priests are not exempt. This mutilation of a man's name is considered a peculiarly deadly form of sarcasm; and they think the most effective way of putting a man down is to show disrespect and contempt for him. It has been said that in this the Irish are only copying the English, by whom they themselves were treated with contempt; and that they still keep up

the methods of their eighteenth-century tyrants. In thus ascribing all our faults to English example, we go too far, inasmuch as we leave out of account the Anglicised Irish who, with all the zeal for which proselytes are famous, gladly heaped contempt on their unregenerate countrymen. Therefore it is probable that this habit of self-disrespect is native and not imported.

Nicknames are almost universal; there being hardly a man, woman or child without one, expressive of some physical defect or mannerism, or commemorative of some mistake made by the bearer on some well-remembered occasion. The Irish, being highly sensitive, feel those nicknames keenly sometimes; but, in a number of cases, they are quietly accepted. I knew a workman of splendid physique who was never spoken of, even to his own mother, except as *Soggarth*,[1] and the man himself responded so willingly to that name that few people knew what his real Christian name was. The insinuation conveyed in the nickname was obvious, as the man's mother was employed as an outdoor servant by the parish priest with whom she had come as a young widow into the parish from a distant part of the county. She and her son were very good-tempered and well-behaved people, and failed to see anything derogatory in the nickname. I knew a middle-class man who was always called Camel, because he walked with a stoop, and he answered to it as willingly as to his own name. The avidity with

[1] The Irish for priest.

which a whole parish or town will take up a nickname and stick to it is remarkable. Even the most respectable people spoke of these two men as Camel and *Soggarth*.

That fools and simpletons should be given nicknames is not so extraordinary, but that men should be harassed and driven mad by nicknaming is, I fear, almost entirely confined to Ireland nowadays. The Irish are fond of sport, and the chief pleasure of nicknaming lies in the rage displayed by the victim. The cases of two men occur to me who were driven crazy in this way. One was a labourer and devoted to his widowed mother, whom he used to help with her housekeeping—a very unusual thing for an Irish son to do. Like most Roman Catholic Irish, he was sensitive and hot-tempered, but quite as sane as his neighbours. One day he went into the forge—which in Ireland is the poor man's club—and, on the spur of the moment, announced triumphantly that he had just baked a cake which had risen so splendidly that, as he said, it was "that hoight," indicating the height by holding his hands over the smithy hob.

There and then he was nicknamed "High Cake."

He resented the nickname, and when the little boys ran after him calling out "High Cake," he attacked them in return and hurt a child. This drew public odium down on him, and, when he appeared in public, adults as well as children called out "High Cake." He would retaliate by firing stones at his tormentors; they would reply with a fusilade, and those who had nothing better to do—and idlers are

very plentiful in Catholic Ireland, one regrets to say —would join in chasing him through the fields. He lost his employment, and was so sensitive that he was ashamed to look for work in the town, and had to be content with irregular work from farmers at a distance. But his tormentors used to lie in wait for him in the evenings, and a chase after High Cake became one of the recognised diversions of the lower classes. Then they invented a whistle with a high and a low note to represent High Cake, which maddened him still more. Whenever he was seen, the air would resound with this whistle, and the unfortunate man would jump over the nearest fence and take refuge in the fields with his fingers in his ears. This lasted for years, and, when his mother died, he became a regular misanthrope, letting his hair grow long and his clothes fall to rags, while his nails protruded over the tops of his fingers like claws. His body, once erect, now stooped, so that when he was trotting through the fields he seemed to be going on all-fours.

The words High Cake and the whistle were then generally adopted for annoying anybody that it was desirable to irritate. When the "boys" wanted, as they said, to "take a start" or "a rise" out of somebody, they shouted or whistled "High Cake." There was a young shopkeeper in the town whose pretentious dress and sarcastic "Englified" manner made him unpopular; but who, nevertheless, was doing well in business and had a very presentable wife and young family. One day some boys went into his shop and called him "High Cake." He sprang

over the counter and chased them into the street, where they dispersed, shouting the well-known cry. When he returned to his shop, the boys reassembled, shouting and whistling "High Cake"; and, after several sorties by the shopkeeper, a crowd assembled to see him standing at bay before his door anathematising his tormentors.

From that day forth, the shopkeeper became the leading High Cake of the locality. I have often seen him suddenly stop on hearing the whistle or cry of "High Cake," when walking quickly to the train or to the bank, or on some other mission of business. He would glare and fume like a mad bull, stamp his feet and claw the air with passion; laughed at, when his back was turned, by everybody in sight. In the evenings, whenever an evil spirit moved the mischief-makers, a scheme would be promoted for "starting" the new High Cake, usually with entire success, for he was more irritable and combative than the original. He took to denouncing the mob from his upper windows, and then he gradually began to make speeches on public questions, so that there was thenceforth a double object in starting him. It was most amusing to hear him deliver a fluent, rhetorical harangue to several hundred people on some important item of news which had appeared in the morning paper, his oration meeting with such general acceptance that the police never felt it necessary to spoil sport by interfering. His wife and children had to leave him, he became bankrupt, left the town, and ultimately disappeared.

These cases illustrate not only the vulnerable temper and sensitiveness to ridicule of the Roman Catholic Irish, but also their boyish cruelty and love of mischief. It was in the same spirit that led them to torment High Cake that they combined to starve out Mr. Bence Jones at Bantry and Captain Boycott in Mayo—the first landlords systematically attacked at the outbreak of the Land War thirty years ago. It is hard for Englishmen to make allowances for such conduct. I think it was Cobden who said he would as soon think of entering into an alliance with Daniel O'Connell as with an Apache Indian. But the Catholic Irish have the good as well as the bad qualities of boys, and are generous, devoted, and self-sacrificing; being very easily influenced for good when the proper forces are brought to bear on them, and most susceptible to their surroundings. That is why they do so well in the police, and in the army and navy, and other Government services, where they are disciplined and taught to respect their superiors; and in foreign countries, where they get into the company of good people. But, like children, they do not show a tendency to improve when left to themselves.

I heard a witty Irishman say that he believed the Catholic Irish were one of the lost tribes of Israel; because, besides their partiality to the names Jeremiah and Daniel, they resembled those Hebrew prophets in their faculties of denunciation, disagreeable truth-telling to one another, and vision-seeing. Somebody objected that the Irish were too fond of swine's flesh

to be Hebrews. "Not at all," was the reply; "they were a tribe that was agginst the Judaic Government, in other words, against the Levitical Law, and became fond of pork to show their independence!"

If we consider how children are reared in Roman Catholic Ireland, we shall be prepared to extend our heartfelt sympathy to all offending Irishmen. For the wonder is, not that they are so unruly and irresponsible as compared with Britishers, but, rather, that they are so docile and improvable when subjected to good influences.

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

AN ENTERPRISING MOTHER.

"If a respectable stranger should pass that way, and if the child ask the mother who it is," etc.—*Page* 93.

CHAPTER VIII

Management of Roman Catholic children—Fear, lies, and joking as a liberal education—Ghost stories—Habit of frightening children—Sticks and quarrels—Irish Catholic nurses—Indifference of fathers—Sons preferred to daughters.

In managing children, fear seems to be the only incentive to duty known to the parents—of course, I except the upper classes. Lies are always deemed justifiable, when dealing with children. If, for instance, it is desired to keep the boy out of a certain field, he is told there is a mad bull in it, though there may be no such animal, sane or insane, in the immediate vicinity. The baby, still toddling unsteadily about the cottage door, is gravely told that the patched and weather-beaten beggar who tramps the country in search of alms, with his sack on his back, is a Boody Man looking for little children to take away with him. If a respectable stranger should pass the way, and if the child ask the mother who it is, the answer will probably be that it is a man or woman looking for bold boys and girls to put them in prison.

The child is not only frightened but also misinformed. In the country districts, where those

big-framed Irishmen are born whom one meets in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, New York, Chicago, and elsewhere, as porters, dockers, navvies, policemen, and employed in a hundred other ways, the earth is full of terrors for the little children. Every one thinks it right to tell them lies, one of the best-established forms of amusement being that of misinforming a child. I have often seen a man or woman thus keep a large company in roars of laughter for an hour or more. The child sees an unfamiliar object and asks the natural question: What is that? All present await the answer, hoping for a display of wit on the part of the person interrogated.

A machine for sowing corn, for instance, stops on the road outside a cottage, on its way from one farm to another. The driver comes into the cottage for a glowing ember of wood, or turf, or coal from the hearth, to light his pipe, introducing himself with the customary "God save all here!" The woman of the house is delighted to see a stranger and anxious to oblige him, she is so seldom cheered by the sight of a new face. The children go out to look at the machine.

"Wha's that?" asks a little boy.

The mother looks half-proudly, half-quizzically at the man, as she says: "An' where's yer manners gone, boy? Are y' after saying, 'Wha's that, pig?' or 'Wha's that, sir?'"

Then the boy, thirsting for information, says sheepishly: "Wha's that, sir?"

"Oh," says the driver, between the puffs of smoke from his glowing pipe, "tha's a machine for turning childer into ould people, whin I drives it forward; and whin I drives it backward, it changes ould people back into childer."

The mother and any other elders who may be present burst out into laughter at this display of inventiveness, the mother saying gleefully: "There now, are you satisfied?"

"Would you like to set up on the machine with me, bouchil (boy)?" says the driver, laughing. "Come," he cries, making as if he would seize the boy. "Come along, an' in less nor a mile you'll be changed into a fine young man, an' then you'll be able to airn money for yer mother."

The boy retreats in terror, his eyes full of tears.

"If you doan come then," roars the driver, "I'll take yer mother with me an' turn the machine backwards an' change her into a baby again, an' then you won't have no mom to cook yer victuals, nor nothing."

The driver pretends to seize the woman of the house, who enjoys the sport immensely. Whereupon all the children cry out in concert, and the visitor departs in triumph, shaking with laughter as he gives the woman of the house the usual "Good-day an' good luck, ma'am," having established his reputation as a wit, or, as the Irish say, "a man with great sploder in him entirely."

Roman Catholic Ireland is not so much a land of indolence, as many suppose it to be, as a land

of misapplied ingenuity and misdirected energy—and this is especially manifest in the treatment of its children. From this it may be gathered that the child's reasoning powers are not nurtured or developed; its legitimate curiosity is not gratified; it is made to feel itself ridiculous; and it soon becomes shy, silent, and secretive in the presence of its seniors. It gets into the habit of distrusting grown-up people, and thus never knows the benefit of parental advice, except when it comes in the form of passionate scoldings, slaps, kicks, blows, and strappings.

The children are not allowed to listen to the parents talking about serious affairs; indeed, calm discussions of ways and means between father and mother are as rare as angels' visits in the average household. Thus the child is launched on life as an unreasoning rather than a reasoning being.

It sees or hears ghosts in the graveyards or other lonely places; is frightened by the darkness, the wind, the moaning trees, the thunder and lightning, the howling dog or bellowing cow heard at night.

Amongst other misinformation, grown-up people delight in telling children ghost stories; and the little boys and girls fear the shadows of night, not so much in dread of mortals as of immortals. The Banshee or ghost-woman, whose howl gives warning of death, and the slightest touch of whose garment is instant death, is especially formidable. So also is Petticoat Loose, the immoral girl, whose spirit is condemned to wander the earth forever, inflicting

harm on all she encounters, unless kept off by sign of cross or holy water, a malevolent spirit who can assume all shapes at will—now a pig, now a bitch, now a goat, and anon a cow, a black mare, or a woman, always travelling by night. When in the shape of a woman, she is known by her petticoat trailing on the road behind her.

The old men tell weird tales of hurlers seen at dusk, men dead for many years, playing the Irish game of hurley, or hockey, one parish pitted against another, playing across the fields, ignoring the fences, and often crossing the road, so that a man out after nightfall is sometimes caught in the midst of them—and then he comes home to die, if not that very night, at no distant date.

The Headless Coach still rolls along the road at night in the imagination of the child frightened by a course of ghost stories, with its headless horses, its headless driver and guard and passengers; bringing woe or death to those who meet it. Bowling along the public roads, with solid iron bowls about the size of a cricket ball, used to be a favourite pastime when I was a boy, and it is still indulged in, where the police are few and far between; the match being won by the players whose bowls reach a given point first, the ground traversed being from two to three or four miles. It is a dangerous game, for the bowls are thrown to a great distance, and have more than once broken a horse's leg or hurt a pedestrian. One of the players is always sent on ahead to warn passers-by, and I often remember our car being held

up waiting for the bowl to be thrown; and sometimes it would come far beyond the anticipated distance, frightening ourselves and the horse. Children are informed that dead men play at bowls on certain evenings as of old, and woe to those who are so unfortunate as to meet them and to have the misfortune to interfere with their game.

Thus it comes about that for the child who happens to be out after sunset there are portents to be feared at every step of the road, or in a journey across the fields. With what relief the belated little one sees the tallow candle shining in the window of its cottage home! What happiness to hear the door closed in safety behind, and see familiar forms on every side!

The frightening of children by stories of the supernatural makes them attached to their homes all through life, so that an Irishman will stick to his leaky cottage and half-acre of bog or hillside as if it were a palace—unless he goes to America, and there he will brood on it and idealise it, and love to think about it as long as he lives, always hoping to return in triumph and astonish those of his friends who are still in the land of the living; and if all are dead, he consoles himself by thinking that the trees and fences and roads will recognise him to whom they gave so much pleasure by day, and into whom they instilled so much terror by night.

Thus frightened on all sides, the child begins by thinking that all the world is an enemy and in a conspiracy to do him harm, and begins to cherish

that suspicion and distrust which militate so much against his success in after-life. His intercourse with mankind not being regulated by the early and ineffaceable experience of a rational upbringing, he assumes that every man is going to wrong him until he finds out the contrary; and when he gets some reason to trust a man, he becomes too confiding.

The habit of teasing and misinforming children is vulgarly called "codding," and is one of the most prevalent, as it is one of the most objectionable, of Irish customs. The children, being naturally quick-witted, soon see through it; and when it becomes impossible to get any more amusement out of them, their seniors take little further interest in them. When an Irishman tries and fails to "cod" a child, he is usually very wroth, and angrily calls the child a *cobberra*—an epithet applied to a youngster who is uncannily wise for its years, or "crabbit," as they say in Ireland.

As the children have been accustomed to being ruthlessly taken down by their seniors, so they find a judicial pleasure in taking down any of their own contemporaries who show the least inclination to "side," or, as the Irish call it, "scoach." It is almost impossible for an Irish boy or girl to cultivate what the Scotch call "a gude conceit of themselves." Every one thinks it a sacred duty to break their spirit and bring down their pride. This explains a fact, noted by Thackeray and other sympathetic students of Irish Catholic character, namely, that

Irish Roman Catholics, as a rule, have a very poor opinion of themselves at heart, despite a superficial vaingloriousness which they often assume to hide a want of self-confidence.

Some of the kindest people I ever knew had this habit of frightening little children. I recall an old labourer, a good husband and father, whose face at seventy bore an expression of such seraphic innocence that his photograph would have made an ideal presentation of a medieval saint.

After a lifetime spent in hovels of mud and thatch, the old man was so lucky as to get one of those modern cottages, with half an acre of land attached, which have been erected by the Boards of Guardians all over Ireland, and took a married son to live with him. While the daughter-in-law kept the house and the son worked for a farmer, the old man spent his days working in the half-acre of garden, always accompanied by his little grandson, of whom he was very fond.

It was most amusing to stand outside the hedge and listen to the conversation between the old man and the child. To every question that the child asked, to every movement or observation that it made, the old man's unvarying acknowledgment was, "Ha, ha! I'll bate you!" One day, when we listened, the old man was digging potatoes.

"I'll be after building a house o' praties for meself, to be sure I will, so I will," said the child.

"Ha, ha! I'll bate you," the old man replied, but with no intention of carrying out his threat.

"I'm ploughing with horses, I am. Comeer, Sally! Keep off, Billy! Whee, back!"

"Ha, ha! I'll bate you! Here's Petticoat Loose!"

"All these praties are the hounds, an' this wan far away entirely 'tirely is the fox, and these are the gintlemin with the red coats, an' this is the ditch they'll have to jump. Look at it, daddy!"

"Ha, ha! I'll bate you!"

The old man could think of nothing else suitable to say to the child.

When I lived in one of the Dublin squares, the head gardener took a delight in frightening and teasing the children of the residents. My daughter (aged five) and her brother (aged two) used to spend a good deal of time in the gardens with their nurse, and whenever they came near the gardener, he would say to the little girl: "Ha, ha! I'll take away your brother!"

Then he would walk over to the pram and pretend to put his threat into execution, the nurse smiling at the joke. But the little girl would cry and beat him off with an umbrella or with her hands; and it was not until her face was wet with tears that the gardener would desist, pleased with his success. He acted thus out of friendliness; and though he professed an admiration for the children who refused to be frightened by him, he seemed to get more amusement out of those he frightened.

Many people of his class say that this practice hardens children, and that it is good for them to have their susceptibilities blunted. But the result

is to make the children distrustful and sensitive and predisposed to take offence—qualities pre-eminently characteristic of the Roman Catholic Irish. Irishmen of the same class delight in setting little boys fighting, or "scuffing," as they call it; and one of the most approved forms of practical joke is that of telling children untrue stories about one another, so as to foment a fight. But the fight is never carried through on rational principles of fair-play, like the combats at an English public school; and in after-life the majority of Irishmen never rely upon their fists in self-defence, preferring to keep their assailants at bay with a stick—a weapon with which an Irishman can do wonderful execution. From his earliest years the Irish boy's ambition is to have a good stick—an ashplant for riding, or for driving cattle; a blackthorn with a knob on the top for walking and self-defence. The original shillelaghs, used at Donnybrook Fair, were oak saplings, and got their name from the village of Shillelagh, on the borders of the counties of Wicklow and Wexford, near which were great oak woods belonging to Earl Fitzwilliam. The Wicklow and Wexford boys used to constitute the strongest faction at Donnybrook, and their "shillelaghs" grew so famous that the word became a generic title for an Irishman's stick, and is now applied to sticks of all woods, but especially to the blackthorn, which is sometimes called "a Tipperary lawyer."

The habit of being teased by their seniors engenders a quarrelsome disposition in the boys, who

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

AN IRISH STICK-SELLER.

"From his earliest years the Irish boy's ambition is to have a good stick—an ashplant for riding, or for driving cattle; a blackthorn with a knob on the top for walking and self defence."—*Page* 102.

are always longing to revenge themselves on the world in general: while it makes the girls excessively timid.

"Give me raison, an' I'll fight you!" is one of the commonest invitations addressed by one Irish boy to another. To which the aggravating reply generally is: "If 'twas a fight you wanted, 'tisn't waiting for a raison you'd be."

"You're a coward not to give me raison!" urges the reason-seeker, who, in the early half of the last century, would have grown up to drag his coat behind him at Donnybrook for some unwary member of the public to tread upon and thereby give him "raison" to use his shillelagh.

The peasants being thus reared, it is only natural that, when they go into employment as servants, they act in the same way to the children of their employers. It is a most difficult, though by no means impossible, thing to get a reliable Irish nurse; but I have known some exceedingly competent elderly Irish nurses. The average Irish nurse will kiss and cuddle the children and overwhelm them with endearing phrases, but she lacks that sustained, solid, and rational affection for her little charges that the English nurse has. Indeed, the first thing that strikes an Irishman, on coming to live in England, is the comfort of the children of all classes, and the kindness and attention paid to them by nurses, parents, and elder sisters and brothers.

At one moment you will hear an Irish nurse talking like this to the child: "Ah, my little love, a gra

gal, my angel, my honey, my darling's darling, my pet, my petteen, a lanuv machree, sure I'd rather a lock o' yer hair than a purse o' gold, an' I'd rather yer little finger"—*loodeen*, the Irish call it—"than all the whole world, sure I would, you know I would, wouldn't I? Kiss me, me own pearrl!"

Ten minutes afterwards you will, perhaps, hear the same nurse saying to the same child: "You're a dirty, rotten, good-for-nothing little pest! Amoshtha, I wished I was at th'other side o' the world far away from you an' all belonging to you, 'tis then I'd give you a good trouncing, for me heart is broke with you! I'll go this minute an' call in the Boody Man or Petticoat Loose. Aither o' them will soon settle you. I declare of all the young devils I ever met, you're the worst. I doan know where they got you from Adam, but you have the bad drop in you beyond a doubt. I'd rather be mindin' pigs—a thing none o' me family ever demaned ourself be doing—than in charge o' you. Go 'long!"

And then probably follows a slap on the face or the bare arm; the nurse only doing to others as she was done by in her own youth. Solomon said: Spare the rod and spoil the child. But in Roman Catholic Ireland they do not spare the rod, and yet they spoil the child. For the most part, the children of the middle classes, however intelligent the parents may be, are frightened by their peasant nurses. I knew a widower who had an only child, a daughter whom he idolised. He used occasionally to go out in the evenings, leaving the little girl and the house

in charge of the servants and the nurse. As soon as the master had gone out, the nurse, who was a young woman, would frighten the child to sleep with stories of ghosts or Petticoat Loose; and the child, in order to escape the scolding of the nurse, would either pretend to be asleep, when it really was awake, or used to wake soon after going to sleep, from nervous excitement, when the nurse had gone away. The nurse had prepared a lay-figure of a woman for such occasions, and she used to place it at the foot of the bed, when she thought the child was asleep; and then she would go off to enjoy herself with the other servants, leaving the child in the house alone.

It is impossible to say exactly what happened after the nurse left, whether the child was awake when the figure was stealthily introduced into the room, or whether it woke soon afterwards and found the apparition at the foot of the bed. The child surely took the figure for a malevolent being, and, fearing to cry aloud, used to spend the evening in speechless terror, until the nurse returned and took away the figure. The little girl was afraid to complain of the nurse to the father, got into ill-health, and eventually lost her reason, the father only discovering the cause when it was impossible to undo the mischief.

A second case of the same kind, but in a different family, was discovered by the next-door neighbours, whose attention was attracted by the screams of the deserted child. They got into the house through a window, and, going up to the bedroom, found what they took for a woman with a shawl drawn over her

head standing at the foot of the bed. For a while they were afraid to enter, mistaking the figure for a real person, in the rays of the night-light, and thinking that they had to do with a thief or a lunatic. When they saw through the deception they took the child into their own house, where they kept it until the parents returned, thereby putting the parents on their guard and exposing the nurse.

Another nurse, in a family that I knew, used to frighten three little sisters, when they were undressing, by saying that there was a man under the bed who would catch them by the bare legs if they did not get into bed quickly—the result being that nothing would induce them to get out of bed in the dark during the longest winter night. When the girls were grown up, one of them suffered from a nervous disease and was taken to a specialist, who, after examining her, asked the mother if the girl had been frightened when a child. The mother replied in the negative, and turned for corroboration to her daughter, who then for the first time told what she and her sisters had suffered for so many years in the nursery, unknown to their parents.

Being frightened from the beginning, the children are very much afraid of their nurses and fear to complain of them to their parents. They become irritable, resentful, and mischievous, and grow up with what is called a "short temper," one of the Irishman's commonest inheritances. Perhaps the most frequently-heard comment on a little boy, and a by no means uncomplimentary one, is: "He have his

timper very near him, God bless him, just like his father."

It is deemed unlucky to notice children in their presence, especially in the way of praise, and, except when it is done by a person who is greatly respected, such as a priest, it is sure to call forth a rebuke from the mother, who will say: "Yerra, don't overlook the child!" The word "overlook" here means "over-notice," with a suggestion of the evil eye, which the peasantry generally believe in.

The habit of lecturing and scolding children is universal. When reprimanded for a fault, the child will retort, probably accusing its reprover of a similar offence; then, as they say, "one word borrows another," the original point at issue is forgotten, and all the misdeeds ever done by the offending party are raked up anew, coupled with appropriate abusive epithets, of which every Irish man and woman has a boundless vocabulary. The dullest Hibernian becomes brilliantly eloquent when scolding or foreboding evil—a very Jeremiah come to judgment, though few of the Roman Catholics know of the existence of the great prophet whose name so many of them bear.

The fathers, as a rule, pay little or no attention to the younger children. To do so is considered unmanly, and the young husband who is discovered minding a baby is ridiculed unmercifully. A man who interests himself in his young children, or, indeed, in any branch of domestic affairs, is called by the contemptuous name of a "Sheelah." It is not

an uncommon thing to find fathers who do not know the names of their own children, when there is a large young family. "I know nothing about such things," a man will say; "that is my wife's business."

"If you don't look out that child will grow up an idiot on you," I once heard a father of the middle class say to his wife, as if it were a matter entirely for her, with which he had no concern.

"That's an ugly sore that little boy has on his cheek. You ought to look after it," I heard one shopkeeper say to another, as they were talking on the street and a child ran past them into the shop.

"What have I to do with it?" asked the other in surprise.

"Why wouldn't you? He's your own child."

"Oh! Faith, I never noticed him. My wife looks after all those things," was the reply.

The women are by no means displeased with their husbands' ignorance of family matters, as it gives them more liberty within their own domain and proves the husband's confidence in the wife. You will hear women constantly boasting of their husbands' ignorance of domestic economy, whereas they never boast of their husbands' proficiency in this respect, when comparing notes among themselves.

When the sons are three or four years old, an occasional father will take one of them, usually the youngest, for a walk, and even carry the boy pickaback, if he gets tired; but such men are the exception. You will see a woman with a baby in her arms and a heavy basket slung on her back, coming home from

market, while her husband walks unencumbered twenty yards ahead, as if he had nothing to do with the mother and child.

Fathers consider the daughters entirely outside their sphere. Amongst the peasantry, and indeed among all classes, more or less, the couple with a large family of sons are considered fortunate, while the couple with many daughters are pitied and condoled with. The husband gets angry with his wife if she presents him with many daughters.

CHAPTER IX

Life in a mud cabin—Food and drink—Child-life in the open—Merciful neglect—Over-tidiness unlucky—Objection to bathing—Shyness about eating—Irish pride—Child petting—Self-pity developed—Connaught harvesters and other labourers—Card-playing.

THE boys are taught to look upon themselves as superior to the girls at a very early age and soon cease to associate with them; the average boy of nine or ten being ashamed to be seen in the company of his sisters, lest he should be called a Sheelah. The peasants' cottages, especially of the old mud-walled type, are so small, and the families usually so large, that the boys and girls are of necessity very much together indoors. But their modesty is exemplary; and, though sleeping, perhaps, in the same apartment, the boys are as separate from the girls as if they were in the different bedrooms of a large mansion.

Let me try to describe the interior of a one-chambered cottage of the old type. Its walls are of earth or mud faced with stone, built in the same way as the fences which divide the fields, and not infrequently propped up by stone buttresses. Its roof is of thatch supported by smoked rafters and cross-trees,

its floors of hard earth or mud. Its entire supply of light is derived from the open door and, perhaps, one window, or at most two windows, each about eighteen inches square, and often boarded or papered when a pane of glass has been broken. Many of the cottages are without a window, but most of them possess a half-door outside the door; the half-door being kept closed, when the door is open during the daytime, so as to admit light and air, while excluding pigs and fowl, and confining children.

The interior is divided into two parts by, let us say, a hencoop and a four-posted bedstead with a timber tester—placed opposite to each other against the walls, so as to leave a narrow passage between them in the centre. The portion inside the bed and coop is the private apartment, where the parents and the younger children sleep. The part outside, in which are the door and the fireplace, is the public apartment; its furniture usually consisting of a table, a dresser and a settle, with some chairs and stools. The settle is used as a sofa by day, and is opened out by night so as to form a bed in which two adults, or four youngsters, may be accommodated. The dresser is tastily covered with delf, and, in comfortable cottages, with brass and copper; amongst which a pretty piece of old china or glass may still be picked up in neighbourhoods inhabited now or formerly by some of the old Irish gentry, who had very good taste in china, glass, and furniture.

In a corner of the public apartment there is usually a small heap of coal, or a large heap of dry turf, or a

still larger pile of dried furze, for firing. The fire is laid on an open hearth in a deep ingle, with an open flue through which one may see a large piece of the sky. In the flue is fixed an iron bracket moving on hinges, from which pots are suspended over the fire. In the centre of the hearthstone there is usually an aperture fitted with an iron grating, over which the fire is laid. From this grating a small tunnel runs to the side of the ingle, where a revolving fan is fixed under the earthen floor at the end of the tunnel. This fan is connected by a belt with a wheel placed above it. When the wheel is turned, the fan revolves and sends a blast of fresh air along the tunnel to the fire, which it quickly raises to a white heat. One of the commonest, as it is one of the pleasantest, sights in an Irish cottage is that of a mother or daughter seated on a stool and singing one of the countless native melodies, while she twists the bellows to boil the kettle for tea.

In the morning the family are awakened by the crowing of the cock, for the coop is full of poultry. The father rises at the appointed hour, draws on his clothes hurriedly and goes off to work, often without washing his face, but with his clay pipe alight, for the average labourer's first thought is of his morning's smoke. The wife and children then get up as the spirit moves them. The door is opened, and the house is filled with the delightfully fresh air of an Irish morning. The fowl are released. The woman of the house, or *vanithee*, as the Irish call her, pays her customary visit to the pig in his sty at the gable-end

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

A CABIN OF MUD AND STONE (OLD STYLE).

"Its walls are of earth or mud faced with stone, built in the same way as the fences which divide the fields, and not infrequently propped up by stone buttresses."—*Page* 110.

of the cottage. The fire is lighted and the bellows-wheel rattles merrily. The earthen floor is swept with a small heather broom. When the housewife finds work amongst the farmers, these duties are done by one of the daughters—usually a child of twelve or thirteen, for after that age the girls go into service.

The breakfast is prepared for the man of the house, who always washes his hands before sitting down to table, and blesses himself by making the sign of the cross before he begins to eat. The meal usually consists of tea, or coffee, with a little milk and sugar, and home-made cake baked in a bastable on the hearth. The Irish labourer considers such a breakfast a banquet fit for the gods, and desires nothing more save a smoke immediately afterwards, without which the best of meals would, in his opinion, be incomplete. When milk can be obtained, and when potatoes are new and plentiful in August and September, potatoes are used for breakfast as well as for dinner and supper. The Irish love potatoes, and, when they are new and floury, and eaten with milk and butter, they are delightful. At dinner, the labourers take red herring or stock-fish and a sauce made of dripping and onions with the potatoes. This is a staple Irish dinner, and is called by the peasantry "praties an' dip," because there is usually only one plate of herring and sauce for the family, or, at most, one plate between two or three persons, and each person, having pealed a potato with the fingers, "dips" it in the common plate before eating it. In

many poor households, potatoes and salt and water constitute the staple food thoughout the year, varied by such luxuries as herring and " dip," tea and bread, when times are good. A piece of bacon, usually the pig's cheek, with potatoes and cabbage, is considered the *ne plus ultra* of luxury for a Sunday dinner in a labourer's cottage. Drink is not kept in the house or taken with meals, as a rule, in the country districts; water, or skimmed milk, got at the farmer's, being the only liquid taken at meals. The potatoes are thrown out in a heap on the coarse canvas tablecloth, steaming from the pot, and every one takes freely from the heap. It is only when potatoes are plentiful that all the members of a farm labourer's large young family really get as much food as they can eat; the supply of cake, and especially of baker's bread, being strictly limited for the youngsters, to satisfy whose cravings the mother herself often goes short. The return of the father for his meals is the great event of the day in the cottage. If it be not raining, the children are out all day on the roadside, or in the fields close by, inhaling the balmy Irish air, which is, perhaps, the purest and most delightful in the world; resting their eyes on the emerald grass; drinking copiously of pure Irish water; and growing up like the young calves, lambs, and foals by which they are surrounded.

This free outdoor existence and merciful neglect constitute the bright side of Irish child-life in the country districts. The children bask in the sun beside some old fence whose grey, quartz-veined

stones are upholstered in a dark-green and light-green plush of moss and lichen, brightened by a pattern of pennyroyals; with wild geraniums, violets and primroses of many hues—yellow, white, pink, and dark red—peeping out between the crevices; the whole crowned by a hedge of gold-blossomed, sweet-scented furze. Or they race and roll themselves in a field which is like a jewelled sea, with its feathery grasses waving and nodding in the breeze, its daisies, cowslips, or buttercups gleaming in the sun. The larks are singing; the scent of hawthorn, furze, or heather is in the air; and a babbling brook is rarely out of hearing, as it races along between foxgloves and meadowsweet.

It is a common sight to see a poor family of six or more children, all in rude health, thus getting a glimpse of heaven; their ages, beginning with a baby of eight or nine months old, mounting up regularly by intervals of a year to the eldest boy or girl of seven or eight. If there be an interval of two years between a child and its immediate junior, the mother explains that she lost a child at that particular time.

Life in the ordinary farmhouse presents the same generic features as in the cottage, except that food is more plentiful and there is more outdoor work for the women and girls, and that there are other sleeping apartments besides the kitchen. But, even in the best farmsteads, the kitchen settle is used as a single or double bed.

The children of the labourers and small farmers never get a bath after their infancy. They get a change of

underclothes, though not as frequently or regularly as to satisfy the English standard of personal cleanliness. But oxygen is a marvellous cleanser, and their constant outdoor life, combined with the singular purity of the Irish air, keeps them not only healthy but clean, so that there is no disagreeable odour, as from the unwashed in crowded cities or hotter climes.

Over-cleanliness or over-tidiness is considered unlucky. I knew a woman who used to feed the pigs on Sunday in the silk gown she had worn at mass, and of which she was inordinately proud. She had lost her husband and her farm, and was employed as a servant by a relative of mine. One day, when passing through the yard, the pigs were screaming loudly, and I heard the mistress say: "Mary, did you feed the pigs?"

"Faix, I didn't ma'am," was the nonchalant answer. "'Tis unlooky to be too regular."

Mary was a picture of health and innocence, though I do not suppose she had ever taken a bath. You will find thousands of healthy, bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked old men and women in Ireland whose bodies have never been immersed in water since the first year after their birth; and this explains why so many of the Irish in large cities in Great Britain and America, as well as in Dublin and Belfast, become hopelessly dirty. They do not realise that what may be dispensed with in the pure country air becomes imperative in the impure air of the city.

When I was a boy I used to spend the summer vacation on the Atlantic coast at a farm of a relative

who, like many of the neighbours, kept a fishing-boat which used to go out at night manned by a crew of farm labourers, each of whom got a share of the catch. I often asked the captain to come for a swim with me; but he regarded the suggestion as supremely ridiculous, saying that he got more salt water than he relished when out fishing or taking oarweed, and, moreover, that he could not swim. With boyish importunity I used to press him to bathe, and was so far successful that, one fine August day, in a sheltered nook between the rocks, he took off his coat, vest and trousers, socks and boots. He kept laughing as if at his own folly while he was undressing, saying: "Amoshta, if any one sees me, they'll say I'm mad."

But when it came to taking off his shirt, he lost courage, exclaiming: "Begannies, I wouldn't do it for a pound!"

I was in the water quite near him, and implored him to enter, but he refused and dressed himself again, chuckling over his narrow escape; and saying that if any of his friends had seen him naked at his time of life, they would make him "the talk of the country."

Allowing for exceptions, the Irish middle and lower classes have what the English would call very unpractical notions about food. If a stranger, even of their own class, discovers them eating, they are quite confused, especially the women, and hurry through with the meal, or finish before they have taken as much as they had intended to take; while the children retire into the dark corners of the cottage.

The labourer's children, as a rule, never get a regular, sit-down meal, but take their food anyhow, in scraps given to them by the father when he is eating, and by the mother, after the father has gone to work. The Irish mother will see herself or her husband short rather than allow the children to go hungry, and usually does so in secret. How often have I seen a labourer, after a hard morning's work, sit down uncomplainingly to a comfortless dinner of dry bread and black coffee, eagerly watched by his children and his dog. And, although there would not be enough set before him to make half a meal for an English workman, the poor man would give mouthfuls to his children as he broke the bread, and occasionally throw a piece to the faithful dog, which probably had never got, and would never get, a full meal in the whole course of its life, while the cat looked on with disapproval from the top of the dresser. When the man had left the house, the wife would produce more food and give the children a comparatively good meal!

This sensation of shame at being found eating, so general amongst the Irish labourers and small farmers, is partly due to a suspicion that the food and its mode of service are not good enough to do them credit; and partly to a feeling of pain that they cannot ask the visitor to join them; and also because the self-sacrificing Celtic spirit thinks it a weakness to be obliged to eat at all. Most Irishmen and Irishwomen are proud of being able to fast, and would be ashamed to complain to a stranger about short-

ness of food, or to admit that they were hungry. It is only the professional beggars in towns—a class who are rarely hungry—that "make a poor mouth" to strangers, with the object of getting money.

Why an Irishman should be ashamed that a stranger should see the poor quality of his food, seeing that he has never known any better, is a question that goes to the root of Irish character. It suggests the larger question: Why is the Catholic Irishman so secretive about his affairs that, although so convivially inclined, he is the least social of men in practice and least capable of friendly intercourse. The truth is that the most miserable and self-abasing Irishman has a pride that the world little suspects; and he has dreams, ideals, and ambitions to which the comfortable Saxon nature is a stranger. The chronic state of an Irishman's mind is discontent, a feeling that he ought to be better and better-off than he is. His nerves are sensitive and raw. He seems to have intimations that, in the person of his ancestors, he once occupied a higher place in the scale of creation, to which he has a yearning to reascend. Absurd as it may seem to the practical Saxon, the humblest O'Keefe, or O'Donnell, or MacCarthy, or MacMurrogh, or any one with the name of a primeval Irish sept, feels in many respects like a dethroned king, with a grievance against the world—which finds vent in insubordination, and expressions of disrespect for his immediate superiors.

The instinct of generosity is ingrained in the Irish

nature, and Irish Catholics find it easy to say "yes" and hard to say "no," when it is a question of giving or spending. The Irishman enjoys giving more than receiving, though he can receive very gracefully; and spending more than accumulating. There are misers in Ireland, but they are not typical. They are rather men who, finding it impossible to gratify their spending proclivities, seek satisfaction in the inferior pleasure of accumulating money in old stockings or in the bank.

The Irishman's indifference to food, his unwillingness to talk about it, his unsociability when he becomes a householder, arise to some extent from his pride, and, jointly with it, are the cause of his discontent. He thinks the food at his disposal and his domestic arrangements are unworthy of him and not worth talking or thinking about. These are the opinions concerning food and domestic comfort with which poor children are reared. They are led to believe that, if they had their desserts, they ought to be much better off.

Although the children are so frightened, they are also at times excessively petted and flattered, so that child-life oscillates violently between two extremes, and finds no rest in that happy atmosphere of reason and regularity in which the Anglo-Saxon child-mind flourishes. The children grow up in ignorance of the world, a prey to their emotions, ignorant of the real value of things, and their true place in society. Waste and want prevail all around them; wasteful joy followed by wasteful sorrow; wasteful passion

by wasteful remorse; waste of food and money by the waste of hunger and poverty.

Envy and self-pity are excited in them from the first, and they only accept their lot in life under protest; the labourer aggrieved by the prosperity of the farmer, who, in turn, feels himself a victim to the landlord. Indeed, all classes in their heart of hearts think themselves a persecuted race, defrauded of their rights and property which are now enjoyed by others —a feeling which, it is hoped, the operation of land purchase may dispel.

The class distinction between even the small farmer and the labourer, who lives in a mud cabin or in a new cottage, is very sharply drawn. The man who works for wage for another is an infinitely lower caste than the man who works for himself. I have known small farmers so poor that they had to send their sons to work occasionally in the town, or to do carting with their horses for traders. It was considered a great disgrace. Yet these men, when they did a day's work for a big or "strong" farmer, could not be got to accept money. They would only take "help," that is, agricultural produce, the loan of men and implements at hurried times, the service of a bull or a ram, and so forth.

Intermarriage between small farmers and labourers is rare, and, when it occurs, is deemed a "downfall" for the small farmer's family; while the gulf between the strong farmers and the labourers is as impassable as the chasm between the nobleman and the farmer.

The class of Irish labourer known in Great Britain

as "harvesters," give no just idea of the respectable farm labourers of Munster and the East who never leave home. They come chiefly from Connaught, where the peasantry do not possess that peculiar aversion to alms-taking and to making their distress public for which the home-keeping cottagers of the other provinces are remarkable. They get corrupted, or, one should say, perplexed, by their four or five months' sojourn in Britain every year; and, without becoming anglicised, lose the raciness of Irish character. The winter and spring, which they spend at home, are given up for the most part to idleness and trifling; and they are very much looked down on by the Catholics of the other provinces. I think they are very largely responsible for the degeneracy of the western province—which is known as "Sibaria" amongst all classes of civil servants.

They are the victims of circumstance, and their peculiar condition is due to the fact that there is so much of the fertile land of the province given up to pasturage—that "lazy, wasting, and depopulating sort of industry" which gives so little employment. They are transported to Britain every year at very low rates, being conveyed to Dublin in droves like cattle; and there herded on the quay at the North Wall for despatch in cargo-boats along with the oxen and sheep fatted on the very land where the harvesters could not get a bare subsistence. The enormous meetings which set the Land League going in the winter of 1879, and other "demonstrations" infinitely more reprehensible, for which Connaught was notorious,

were due in a large measure to the presence of so many idle "harvesters."

The impression they give to strangers is misleading. They seem spiritless creatures from whom no harm need be apprehended, yet they will commit a murder more readily than the manlier peasants of Munster and the East. In the other provinces the tillage farmers exercise a moderating influence on the passions of the labourers; but in Connaught the graziers, their co-religionists, are the object of aversion to the labourers, who have no respect for any power but the Church. The labourers along the tourist tracks have a tendency to degenerate. Too inept to make money legitimately out of the strangers, they just sink by the force of example into open begging, or they stand sullenly aloof and will not make the country pleasant to the strangers.

There is more sociability amongst the labourers in all the provinces than amongst the farmers. They are very fond of card-playing, and on Sundays they have parties in houses where the *vanithee*, or woman of the house, is pleasantly disposed; and spend the day, and often the night, playing for low stakes or for rounds of drink. They will begin playing after mass, break up for dinner, assemble again to play for a few hours in the afternoon, and then walk in a body to the nearest public-house to drink the stakes. This was the practice before the Sunday Closing Act of 1878. After that Act, the younger men used to go to some public-house three miles away to qualify as "bona-fide travellers"; but a few years ago the

distance was increased to six miles, and they have now to postpone the drinking of the winnings until the next day. During the Land Agitation there was hardly a Sunday on which there was not some sort of a meeting or "demonstration" for the denunciation of the landlords within walking distance. These meetings supplied the diversion which in quieter times was found in cards, and the labourers made up the bulk of the audiences. I never found that they really understood what the speakers said, but came away from every meeting with the same notions as they had brought with them, namely, a general idea that landlordism should be abolished. They gained little or nothing for themselves by the agitation. When the landlords everywhere were giving big reductions to the farmers, the labourers asked for no commensurate increase of wages. Once, in the earlier years of the agitation, there was a strike of labourers, but it was settled at once. I remember my father's men did not strike at all, and were inclined to be tearful and apologetic; from which I drew the moral that, if the landlords had been in such close touch with the farmers as the farmers were with the labourers, there would not have been a happier pastoral country in the world than Catholic Ireland. The labourers work very hard for the Irish farmers, their masters. My experience is that they do three times as much as the English labourers in a day, when they put on a spurt. Some of our young labourers went to England once to work in the summer, and the tales they brought back were most

amusing. "Two horses an' a wagon is big is a thrain 'ud be sint into town for a reel o' thread, begannies, an I dhrivin' 'em meself. Five males a day! Tay brought out into the field to us, an' we sthretchin' at our aise to dhrink it an' plinty bread an' butter. But, divil a lie I'm tellin' ye, though you'll find it hard to b'lieve, beer used to be brought out to us too! I used to be doin' nothin' but atin'; I'd be hardly done thinkin' about wan male whin 'twould be time to be thinkin' o' the next!" Such were the wonders I heard of from them. But they did not go back again, notwithstanding, though they had only three meals, and those of the simplest, at home, without any picnics in the fields; and no chance of any extras beyond a pint or two of porter on threshing-days. Horses as well as men are less worked on the English farms, where you will see four and five horses drawing a harrow, or a plough, or a grubber, which in Ireland would be hauled by two horses.

The Irish labourers will spend themselves in their master's service without extra payment. Indeed, the tillage farms are all so undermanned that, if this were not so, the crops could never be sown or saved in time. A pint of porter given to a labourer will get a double day's work; even a soft word or an appeal to good nature will secure the same result.

Sometimes a farmer will join with the labourers in card-playing, when it is impossible to get a game with men of his own class. I knew a large farmer who used to stay up all night playing with the

labourers in another farmer's kitchen. He used to be turned out by the mistress of the house, but, after she had gone to bed, he would return; and he was often found still playing when the servant came in the morning to light the fire.

The home example given to the children, as may be gathered, is thus very bad; the new lords of the soil being in many cases worse offenders than their labourers, who copy them in everything. There is something quixotic and unpractical, even when there is nothing evil, in what the child sees, and, along with self-pity, a species of false pride, which may be called Irish pride, is developed. The Irish boy is a born gambler. He is ready to decide everything by tossing up coins and buttons; and his method of showing the strength of his convictions is to offer to make a bet on it. "I'll bet you anything on it," you will constantly hear one little boy saying to another. When I was a very small boy, I once made an assertion, while standing in a field near where a labourer was working. The labourer differed from me. I still maintained my point. "What'll you bet on it?" he asked. Without thinking, I replied: "I'll bet you half a crown." "Done," said the man, who was the father of twelve children and had but seven shillings a week. He stopped work, and deliberately drew out a small cotton bag from between his shirt and skin, from which he took a half-crown, which was all that it contained. Tears came into my eyes, for I had not a half-crown, but I ran back to the friend's house where I was on a visit, and

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

IRISH CHILD-LIFE—IN THE CORN FIELD.

"This free outdoor existence and merciful neglect constitute the bright side of Irish child-life in the country districts."—*Page* 114.

impetuously asked for half a crown. On explaining what I wanted it so urgently for, the request was refused. I then went back to the labourer and told him that I would owe him the money if I lost the bet. He agreed. I lost. But he refused to allow me to be in his debt, saying that he never betted in "airnest" with children. There are a great many people in Ireland, and if you venture to differ with them about anything incapable of instant proof you will have to make a bet with them or apologise. Amongst the labourers, with whom money is scarce, the betting is verbal only for the most part; or there is a fight if they are in liquor. It is cheaper to fight than to bet. The prolonged arguments are almost as bad as betting, and more wasting than a fight. I have heard two men spend over an hour in arguing about something as to which neither of them knew anything certain; while a small crowd would stand listening, now egging on one, now the other, and getting great amusement out of the argument unknown to the combatants. The boys in Irish schools have a habit of "starting" their masters in this way, and I have often seen the whole time of a particular class spent in an argument with a testy Irish master, which ought to have been devoted to lessons—the principals in the plot being boys who had not learned their lessons. Betting on English races is rife in all the large towns amongst rich and poor—Dublin being especially prone to this habit. Though there is quite as much of this sort of thing in England, there is infinitely less talk about it than

in Ireland, and therefore its effects on the children are not proportionately as bad.

I think the reason the labourers pulled so well with the farmers through the Land Agitation was that they were paid in kind, and had many liberties on the land. If the landlords had been in the habit of coming on the farms and ordering repairs and improvements as in England, there would have been a similar bond of sympathy between them and the farmers, and there would have been no Land Agitation.

The married labourers, or "tenants," as they were called in the South, received a money wage of, say, seven or eight shillings a week. The additional payments in kind consisted of a free cottage kept in repair by the farmer; the right of grazing two sheep on the farm with their lambs until the latter were saleable; the right to a "bockle" of straw, when it was plentiful, and the right to "scour" the boundary fence along the road near the cottage and use the grass and briars for litter and manure; the free gift of a certain amount of milk, new or skimmed; a quarter of an acre of potatoes, sown and tilled by the farmer, and usually as much more if the labourer can supply manure and seed; the right to cut furze for firing if there are furze-brakes on the farm; and many other perquisites which vary according to the disposition of the farmer and his wife. The privilege of getting milk is a great boon to the children. The wages of the unmarried men, or servant boys (of any age from thirteen to fifty), runs from £6 to £12 a

year with board and lodging; the neglect of their sleeping quarters being such that British people would scarcely credit it.

A man cannot till the soil without learning to love it; and the Irish labourers, as a rule, took as great an interest in the farms they worked as Andrew Fairservice did in his master's garden. Nevertheless, the married labourers change their quarters frequently, and, on Lady's Day, March 25, the roads are usually alive with "tenants" and their families moving their household goods from one farm to another, the new employer supplying the means of locomotion. This nomadic life of the labourers widened the social gulf between them and even the smallest farmer, who was always rooted in his patch of soil, while it added another element of uncertainty and unrest to the child-life of their offspring.

CHAPTER X

Jealousy between men and beasts—Mulligan's donkey and Brady's horse — Treatment of animals — Punishment of children — An Irish horse-tamer — Blood thicker than water—A nine-year-old pugilist—Domestic rudeness—Parents and children—Irish "boys" in every sphere of society.

ALMOST the first spiritual information conveyed to the children of the labourers by their parents, and to the children of the middle classes by their nurses, is that every human being has an immortal soul, and is therefore immeasurably superior to the brutes. There is something strikingly redolent of primeval man in the relationship between human beings and beasts which prevail amongst the Irish Roman Catholic peasantry. I have seen a mother grow black with passion and spit at a dog, because it dared to come near her child in the friendliest way. "Go 'long, you brute," she hissed, as she spat at the animal, "don't dare to come near the baptized infant!" I have often heard mothers laboriously explain to their children how horses, cows, sheep, pigs, and all other animals had no souls, and how the poorest ragged child was infinitely superior to the most valuable beast. This feeling of jealous rivalry and animosity

towards animals is markedly shown by the peasants to pampered specimens, such as prize horses and cattle, and even more so to pet animals belonging to the well-to-do. They think it sinful that inferior beings should be so much better treated than themselves. Mothers of children speak as contemptuously to such animals when they come in their way, as if the animals could understand them; such is the rivalry between man and the brute creation still evidenced in Ireland. The peasant and his wife are exceedingly kind and attentive to their pig which is being fatted for market, treating it with greater kindness than a member of the family: but they are not as kind as they ought to be to their ass, dog, or cat.

The children of the next-door neighbour, who is not so lucky as to own an ass or a pig, are reminded of the difference between the ass or the pig and themselves twenty times a day.

"There's Mulligan's donkey, I declare to God! Turn out the brute baste!" Mrs. Murphy will exclaim, if the lucky neighbour's ass should happen to come near her door, or enter the stretch of public road, over which Mrs. Murphy claims a prescriptive right to manure and ditch-scouring. They will defend their own animals against insult with as much heat and violence as they will defend themselves and their children. "Hit me, hit my dog!" is a saying that applies everywhere in Ireland.

I knew a carpenter, named Brady, who, though he had no ground, kept a horse which he used to turn

out to graze on the roadsides. The animal was known all over the district as Peter Brady; and every friend of the carpenter that met the horse on the road, would say: "Hallo, Peter Brady, is that you, far beg (little man)?" And Peter Brady would stand to be rubbed, feeling quite pleased with himself. But if an enemy of the carpenter passed by, he would usually say to the horse: "Bad cess to you, Brady!" or "Hell's ind to you, Brady!" and even whip the poor horse. At the approach of well-known enemies, Peter would turn his head to the fence and lash out fiercely with his free hind-leg; for one pair of his legs, fore and hind, were always fettered, or, as they say in Ireland, spanselled or lankished.

Thus, in addition to the uniform, though often dormant, contempt for the soulless beast with which the children are inoculated, there is developed in after-life a criminal propensity to punish the man through his cattle. As in the case of the children, so in the case of the animals, there is no rational treatment, no such sustained kindness and affection for them as one sees in England. Shy and sulking horses, trespassing or runaway cattle, sheep, and pigs, are an everyday sight in Ireland. One may often see a driver or a rider fighting with his horse on an Irish road, and the whole population of a village looking on with interest for an hour or more. The horse rears, bucks, plunges, kicks, bites, backs, but will not go forward. The man whips, spurs, kicks, and curses, forgetting all but the desire of victory. On one memorable occasion, when every means of flagellation

Photo by H. E. Ward.]

AN IRISH COW IN A HURRY.

"Irish cows are expert trespassers, scaling fences which no English animal would attempt."—*Page* 133.

Photo by H. E. Ward.]

MAN, CHILD, AND CATTLE.

"The first spiritual information conveyed to the children is that every human being has an immortal soul, and is therefore immeasurably superior to the brutes."—*Page* 130.

had been tried in vain, including a crowbar, I saw a fire kindled under a horse's belly, causing him to start off at a gallop amid the cheers of the crowd, largely composed of children.

The Irish cows and sheep are expert trespassers, scaling fences and walls which no English animal would attempt. It is a common sight to see cows blindfolded in the fields, either by bandages—in the case of hornless, or, as the Irish call them, *male* cows—or by a square board suspended from the horns over the forehead; and you may often see cows with the horn tied to the fore-leg to prevent them from trespassing. Sheep are mostly spanselled or lankished. You will see a flock of fifty or sixty sheep in a field, each with a pair of its legs spanselled; and sometimes the spansels will cut through the skin from being left on the same legs too long, so that the sheep can hardly walk. When the farmer observes this, the spansels are changed to the other pair of legs, and then one sees the raw red groove on the legs which have been released. Many sheep are so insubordinate that they have to be double-spanselled, that is, spansels have to be put on both pairs of legs at once. The spansel is a rope of hay or straw with a noose at each end which is tightened on the leg; and, except on the large holdings kept by gentlemen farmers on the English system, a great deal of time is lost in spansel-making. Along the roads you will meet goats coupled and fettered, and donkeys and mules fettered.

As the children grow up, they see law and order

thus defied and coercion constantly in operation on all sides of them. They are habitually chastised themselves, and even fettered and confined by being tied to a bedpost or kept in bed; but that soon becomes impossible with the wild Irish boys, and corporal punishment is the parent's only resource. How often, when passing by a cottage, have I heard a great uproar, and, hesitating to go in, inquired its cause from some neighbour listening at her door. "Wisha, 'tis oany Mary Mullany batin' her little gorsoon," the reply would be, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Or, perhaps, some father would be inflicting punishment on an elder boy; and then the screams of the boy would be augmented by intercessory cries from the mother and indignant curses from the father. Corporal punishment is so frequently inflicted that it is spoken of by the children in a variety of ways. Besides such ordinary terms as "beating," "thrashing," "trouncing," and "wolloping," the words "leathering," "conning," and "flamming" are in constant use, to denote a regular and formal, as opposed to a casual, castigation.

A man's behaviour to animals is always a fair index to his treatment of children; for both require patience and sympathy. And it is the same defect in management that makes children and animals so intractable and unreasonable in Ireland. I knew a well-to-do man, owner of a posting establishment in which several men and horses were employed, who used to beat his sons with the same heavy whip as he used for sulking horses. He was a very good-natured man,

a famous story-teller, and a great source of entertainment to little boys in his leisure hours. But when his blood was up, or "the divil roused in him," as they say, he acted and looked like a fiend incarnate. His lips would dry up, his nostrils quiver, and he would show a great deal of the whites of his eyes. He was low and thickset, with a voice like Stentor, which used to make horses tremble and cause everybody within range to put their fingers in their ears. He took a pride in conquering ill-tempered young horses, which he bought at low prices from the farmers, and the boys of the town were always on the look-out for sport when it was known that he had bought a new horse.

The town held its breath when a new purchase was being harnessed for the first time. Sometimes the horse was led out of the yard quietly, but generally refused to move when the driver took his seat. Then the horse-taming owner would order the driver down and take the whip and reins, smiling like a hungry man about to begin a good dinner. An awful scene would then ensue, such as old Romans used to witness in the Coliseum. How well I remember the roaring of the man and the hissing of the whip! And the tragic silence of the horse! I have sometimes seen the horse, with heaving sides and red nostrils, charge on to the sidewalk, put his fore-hoofs on the facia-board of a shop, and then fall backwards on the car, but only to be whipped to his feet again. After half a dozen pitched battles on the street, the horse was usually conquered and settled down to his work. The

police never interfered, and all the spectators, especially the little boys, agreed that the horse was properly served, feeling pleased that they had the advantage of living where such free entertainments were provided of an afternoon.

This horse-tamer was a man of a very old Irish family, and when he was not roused, perhaps the most polite, and certainly the most obliging, man I ever met. At any hour of the day or night he was willing to come to the assistance of a neighbour, never counting the cost to himself, always ready to lend harness, vehicles, or horses to a friend in need. His wife was one of those placid Irishwomen with slow utterance and unruffled brow, who seem to a stranger to be the embodiment of patience, long-suffering, and all the other saintly virtues. Yet in this good woman's presence the horse-tamer was as meek as a sucking dove, quietly accepting the mild sarcasm with which she always treated him. He gave her all his money, and rarely had a penny in his pocket. In the evening he would sit smoking on a large sofa in his parlour, telling yarns of his adventures in the Rockies and the Gulf of Mexico, to a room full of boys, while his wife sat quietly knitting, occasionally lifting her eyebrows in surprise at some particularly "tall" yarn; and saying in measured tones with a laugh: "Well, I wonder you're not afraid the ground might open under you and swallow you up in the middle of one of your lies!"

He had half a dozen sons, and they were terribly

afraid of him. While he would put forth all his narrative powers to please the neighbours' sons, he rarely gave his own sons anything but a scolding. I have often seen him tie one of them to a post in the stable, or skilfully hem him into a corner, and, standing back at a distance of three or four yards, whip the boy about the legs, catching him on the hands or neck whenever they were exposed, while a crowd of boys looked on, at first in amazement, then in fear and trembling and with bated breath. Finally, the boys would intercede and get the delinquent pardoned, the whip would be put up as carefully as if it were a sacred thing, the horse-tamer would produce his pipe, and all his anger would evaporate in clouds of smoke. He was a very handsome man, his features bearing that stamp of refinement so common amongst the middle and lower classes in the South of Ireland, and which one usually identifies with old lineage.

These outbursts of passion are only passing, and are quickly forgotten; and it is a risky and a thankless task for a stranger to come between a husband and wife, or parent and child, in Ireland. The real Irish are so fond of their own people that their hearts seem physically joined together, and, though they may scold and assault one another, it is not safe for any outsider to breathe a word against their blood-relatives, except in very extreme cases. The old clan spirit is still the spirit of Roman Catholic Ireland. Whatever a child possesses is divided between his brothers and sisters, who look upon it

as their own. There is no clear conception of the difference between *meum* and *tuum*, such as one finds in England, even among very young children. In the peasant's family, the body of each individual is regarded as the property of all, the only exception being the barrier of natural modesty which separates the sexes. The body of the parent belongs to the children to work for them, to starve for them, to fret for them; the body of the child to the parent, to caress it or beat it, to feast or stint it, to work it or spare it.

One evening, when visiting a friend, an architect whose business was mainly ecclesiastical, I had a forcible illustration of the spirit of clannishness and pugnacity amongst Irish children of the middle class. The children, four little boys, aged seven, eight, nine, and ten, were taking their tea-supper in the dining-room at six o'clock, under the supervision of their mother; the father sitting at the window with a tumbler of whisky and soda-water near him on a side-table. A country parish priest, or P.P., as they call such clergymen in Ireland, for whom the host was doing some building, was seated near me on a sofa, and I was carrying on a conversation with the host, to which the P.P. listened, and in which the mother joined, when her attention was not absorbed by the children. Our host laid it down in his peremptory Irish way that Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake* was the greatest novel in the English language.

I ventured to differ from him, saying: "I like

the book, but I should not say that it is the greatest novel in the language."

Scarcely were the words out of my mouth when the second son, aged nine, wriggled off his high chair and rushed over to me with his fists clenched, saying in a loud voice: "If you call my father a liar, dash you, I'll break your face!" And he threw himself into a sparring posture, looking indignantly at me and throwing an admiring glance over his shoulder at his father, who smiled and wagged his head at his diminutive champion, while the P.P. roared with laughter; but the mother forced the boy back to his chair with apologies to her guests, though not without a perceptible pride at her child's display of spirit.

Nothing hurts the feelings of an Irish boy so keenly as a derogatory word said of his family, however low may be his position in the social scale. Indeed, the family affections of the Roman Catholic Irish chiefly display themselves in resisting assaults on the family from the outside, which might often be as well passed over—and there is little, if at all, of personal kindnesses among the members of the family in their daily life. They are ashamed to show politeness to one another in the home, while they proudly display such violent passions as love (towards very young children), anger, and grief; being thus the complete opposite of the Anglo-Saxons, who revel in the superficial amenities of daily life, but instinctively refuse to give rein to the deeper feelings—thereby saving themselves from

that wear and tear of body and mind to which the Irish are so incessantly subjected.

The want of practice in family politeness makes the Irish self-centred, absent-minded, slow to observe the common phenomena of social life, and, except on rare occasions, incapable of reading the feelings of others. They are ready to excite themselves about public questions, to throw terrific energy into a quarrel, to convulse their frames with grief for the loss of a friend, but when the necessary little attentions of daily life are wanted in their own families, they are half comatose. The children thus grow up amidst home influences which combine to give them a softness of heart and intellect, a roughness of tongue, an awkwardness of carriage, an unreadiness, and an ignorance of human character—a heavy fivefold handicap for the race of life.

Amongst the labourers and small farmers one often finds the children still calling the parents by their Christian names—a practice which was much more common thirty years ago, and at one time seems to have been general. When the mother wishes her son to call his father, she will say: "Run out, Allanuv, and tell Tade to come hether!" Whereupon Johnny scampers off and shouts to his father: "Tade, Tade! Come hether to Peg!" Irish children of the lower classes rarely address their parents with respect when they are grown up, making no use of the obvious titles "father" and "mother"; the result being that conversation between parent and child is carried on very gruffly, and sounds

unpleasantly in the ears of one accustomed to the endearing intercourse prevalent between the members of lower class Anglo-Saxon families. On the other hand, the sweetness of Anglo-Saxons to their relatives seems hypocritical, and is most distasteful to untravelled Irish folk.

People that are too "sweet" in Ireland are distrusted; and it is considered a mean thing to be deferential to one of your own family, for it is always assumed that you so act for the purpose of making things comfortable for yourself—the most ignoble object that any one can have, in the opinion of the true Irishman. Terence's Self-Tormentor (*Heautontimoroumenos*) is a very typical Irishman; and one of my classical masters used to say that Terence must have been an Irishman, not merely because his name was so Irish, but because of his knowledge of Irish character as shown in his famous comedy!

That personal dignity which sweetens home-life amongst the Anglo-Saxons, noticeable in the regularity of their habits, their tidiness, their mode of serving their meals, their personal cleanliness, is conspicuous by its absence amongst the Catholic Irish; and this is all the more to be regretted, as they seem well mannered by instinct—even the lowest of them possessing that well-bred disposition which one associates only with the upper classes in England.

The habit of addressing parents by their Christian names did not take its rise from disrespect for the parents. There are districts of Ireland where the

Christian name of the parent is still the recognised patronymic of the family. I used to know a prosperous colony of small farmers — it is still in existence—of which every member was addressed and spoken of by two names, the first being the individual's Christian name, the second being the father's or mother's Christian name. When the mother was the master-mind, her Christian name was used to identify the children. Thus, in a family named Hennessy, there was Micky Feg, Paddy Feg, Biddy Feg, and Mary Feg, so called because their mother's Christian name was Peg (pronounced in Irish, Feg). In another family, the second name was the Christian name of the father; and the members were known as Jerry Tade, Maurice Tade, Norah Tade, and Hannah Tade. It was only by an effort of memory that many of the neighbours could recollect the surnames of these people, who were primitive Irish folk, very self-respecting (except when under the influence of liquor), very industrious, and a most useful class of citizen. Their small farms produced twice or thrice as much per acre as the large farms by which they were surrounded, and they were never in arrears with their rents.

The sense of individuality, the faculty of private judgment, is not fostered by such casual upbringing, and Irishmen feel the want of that steady courage and self-reliance in after-life which are developed in English children during infancy. Neither is that remarkable English capacity for partnership evolved. An English boy of five is more mature, accom-

modating, and manly than the average Irish boy of fifteen. There are thousands of Irish boys who never grow up, though they may live to see threescore and ten, always preserving the minds of children in the bodies of men, and thus completely deceiving and perplexing Englishmen who do not make allowance for this national trait.

Such "boys" are to be found in every walk of life in Ireland, half-earnest, half-tittering, under as many guises as Proteus himself, of all ages, and of every rank, but almost all of the one creed. I say *almost* all; for I have known some elderly boys in high position in Ireland who were not Roman Catholics. Specimens of these boys, or "lads," as they are called in Ireland, are to be found in all the best Dublin clubs—the United Service, the Stephen's Green, the University, the Sheridan, and the Kildare Street; in the Castle and all its departments; on the bench and at the bar, in high court and petty sessions—especially in the Four Court's library and the dining-hall of King's Inns; in the pulpit and at the altar; in the dispensary, the operating theatre, and the dissecting room; at the designing and building of labourers' cottages and cathedral spires; in the shops and merchants' offices; in the banks; in the college lecture-halls; in the municipal board-rooms; and, above all, in Parliament. The most alarming peculiarity of those "lads" is that they are most maliciously frolicsome when they are apparently most sedate and where you least expect to find

them; so that the all-important question for a stranger to ask himself when he has to deal with an Irishman is: Am I dealing with a man or with one of the "lads"? Much depends on one being able to find a satisfactory answer to this query.

I fear that the new lords of the soil possess amongst them a by no means small percentage of such "lads," who, it is to be hoped, will grow into men under the steadying influence of ownership.

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

A COLLEEN, A GORSOON, AND AN ASS.

"Whatever the Irish little boy possesses is not his own, but the property of his friends. If he has a donkey, his friends ride it, and he only gets a mount himself as a concession."—*Page* 155.

CHAPTER XI

The Catholic child's consciousness of God—Heaven and hell —The Devil—Cursing—Anger—The Catholic child's notion of a Protestant—Three irreverent Irish stories—Knight-errantry of the Irish child.

FROM the beginning, the child has an overpowering consciousness of the existence of God and His active intervention in human affairs. The child hears constantly of the struggle for existence; the all-important changes of the weather; the failure or success of the crops; the price of commodities in the neighbouring town; the chances of hunger or of plenty, and with every remark hears the existence of God attested. The parents say: "These are good times, Glory be to God!" or "God send us better times!" or "This is grand weather, thank God!" or "May God soon send us a change in the weather!" or "May God keep the blight from the praties!" or "May God cheapen the price of bread till the praties are fit to dig!" or "God keep the hunger from us this spring!"

When neighbours meet, the child hears the salutation: "God and Mary be with you!" and the reply: "God, Mary and Patrick, be with you!"

But the more anglicised the country becomes, the less one hears of this.

When neighbours part, the child hears the expressions: "God be with you!" "God send you luck!" When one person confers a favour on another, the thanks of the recipient take the form of—"God be good and merciful to you and yours!" or "God reward you!" or "May Heaven be your bed!"

When a neighbour asks: "Will you be coming into town to-morrow?" the child hears the reply: "Please God I will!" When his mother is in doubt he hears her say: "God direct me!" When a neighbour comes for advice, the parting word is: "God direct you!"

When a tale of suffering is told, the comment is: "God help you!" or "God's will be done!" When a death occurs, or when a dead person's name is mentioned, the child hears the parents say: "God be merciful to him!" or "God rest her soul!" When a happy event is recorded, every one says: "God be praised!" or "Glory be to God!"

This Christian politeness, which makes every Irishman at heart a gentleman, and gives him a glimpse of a higher and better world than that in which he lives, is the remnant left us of our golden age: when the primitive Christianity, preached on the hillsides of Galilee, was practised on the hills and plains of Ireland, or, as it was then called, Scotia; those days when a beautiful young woman, bearing rich jewellery on her person, could travel

unattended from one end of the island to the other without fear of insult or injury.

The child thus acquires a pervading sense of an omnipotent God, who is ever being casually appealed to, and on whom everything depends. And here we touch a singular point of resemblance between the evangelical Christian's faith and that of the simple and devoted Roman Catholic, which explains why those who leave the Roman Church usually join the most evangelical Church possible.

From the first, two important and contradictory spiritual conceptions fill the child's mind: a fear of irregular evil spirits, and a realisation of the presence of Almighty God, beneficent, one and indivisible. Associated with the name of God, the child constantly hears other names of benevolent, supernatural personages — notably, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph—but it is at a later stage that the cult of the saints will make an impression.

The child hears constantly of heaven and hell, and gets definite ideas about them. Heaven is a place of joy and glory where God lives, and where He takes good people to be with Him after death. When the death of an infant, or of some holy nun or priest, is announced, the child hears its parents say: "I wish my own death was sure to be as happy as his. He's gone to heaven, if any one ever went there!" Baptized children who die before coming to the use of reason, the limit fixed by the Church being seven years of age, are assured of heaven; and the bereaved parents get great con-

solation from that belief. Nay, they often rejoice that the child should have escaped the wickedness of the world, and found its everlasting home with God—for it is regarded as an impossibility that one who has spent many years in the world should go straight to heaven after death, without passing through the flames of purgatory.

Mothers suffering from religious mania frequently kill their children in infancy to win everlasting happiness for the little ones. A fearful case of that kind is narrated in my first book, *Five Years in Ireland*; but, unfortunately, they are of constant occurrence, and by no means confined to Ireland. The last case which came under my notice was that of a Catholic mother at Castle Eden in Durham, who killed her four infants in this way at the end of 1909.

The child gets equally clear ideas of hell as a pit of eternal fire, where bad people remain after death for all eternity, tormented by Lucifer and the fallen angels. Thus the Irish Roman Catholic begins life with an ominous sense of the certainty of death and a fear of the life after death; and the domestic atmosphere in which he lives is redolent of illnesses, deaths, wakes, and funerals.

Another spiritual conception, which the child gathers from the conversation of its seniors, is that of a powerful wicked spirit who is seriously invoked in moments of anger as the Devil, or more familiarly alluded to, when there is no bad temper, as "the Ould Boy." The child notices that the Devil is

always asked to wreak vengeance on somebody who has displeased the speaker. When a misfortune is considered to have been well deserved, the child hears the comment: "Devil mend him!" There is an amazing variety of verbs used to find employment for the Devil, which I shall leave to the imaginations or memories of my readers. Suffice it to say, that at all hours of the day the Devil is asked to kill or cripple somebody, or to break some one's neck. This is the reverse side of the picture.

The child often finds itself the object of these vengeful prayers to the Devil, when the father or mother hastily says: "Devil bother you, stop that!" or some such expression. I do not think there is any human being more to be pitied, or more perplexed at the outset of life, than the Irish Roman Catholic child. The fine susceptibilities of the spiritual side of his nature are hurt and blunted every hour, instead of being developed. If those vengeful appeals were only addressed to the Devil, the child's condition, bad as it might be, would not be so hopeless. But those evil prayers are also constantly addressed to the beneficent God, to whom worship and adoration are casually offered a thousand times a day. The Devil is always asked to do harm; God is asked to do harm and also good, but is held responsible for everything.

The child hears God invited to inflict the most awful injuries on people who have given offence. It would be irreverent to go through even part of the copious litany of curses which perpetuate disorder in

Irish domestic life, and infect the spiritual lives of the children. Suffice it to say that the Deity is asked every moment to damn one or other of His creatures; and that the habit of cursing is so habitual that the most heinous imprecations are regarded as mere decorative phrases in conversation—South of Ireland people being the worst offenders in this respect. The fact is, that the cursing and swearing customs of society in the eighteenth century still survive in Ireland.

But there are more serious curses, the hearing of which embitter the child's existence. Such are the curses of the wronged wife, widow, or mother, smarting under some real or imagined injury done to husband, or child, or property. The baneful effect of such maledictions is still believed in, and pious people make the sign of the cross when a wicked person curses in their presence.

If asked how the child gets its first knowledge of sin, I should say that anger, that fleeting form of madness, is the deadly sin with which the young Irish Catholic comes first and oftenest into contact. Brought up in an atmosphere charged with fiery temper, the child gets no counsel, by way of precept or example, to control its own temper. Indeed, a bad temper is looked upon as not at all a bad sign of a youngster. They have never heard how "anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Anger disarranges everything in the average house, and the child's condition is to be pitied indeed. The mother disrespects the father, the father disrespects the mother,

the children disrespect the parents, under the influence of the evil spirit of bad temper. There are no regular devotions, no reading of the sacred book, to recall all parties to a sense of their duties to God and to each other. Children never hear the warning: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." The confusion thus bred in the child's mind is such that English or Scottish people find it hard to realise. In order to understand the Irish adult, you must know and pity the Irish child.

One other clear conception of a semi-spiritual nature, which the Roman Catholic child gets in infancy, is that of the difference between a Protestant and a Catholic, as clear almost from the start as the difference between hell and heaven, or day and night. The child hears constant reference to this vital subject. "Glory be to God," the mother will say, "people that eat meat on Friday must be all the same as beasts." Of a neighbour it is said: "He's a decent man, it's a pity he's a Protestant." If the neighbour should die, it is said: "I'd like to pray for the repose of his soul, but I can't, as he was a Protestant." The child thus learns that to be outside the Church is the greatest of evils.

The Protestant is a spiritual outcast, tolerated—nay, respected—if he be of good character or position; but pitied, as one against whom the gates of heaven are closed; or hated, if unpopular, as an obdurate heretic, who would persecute the faithful, if he dared; or reviled as a renegade from the faith, or the son of a

renegade. All other sins may be forgiven, but the unforgivable sin is to leave the Church. That is the child's creed.

It is noteworthy that the Irish word for Protestant is Sassenach, which means literally Saxon or Englishman, so that the child starts life with a strong bias against the predominant partner in the United Kingdom.

Besides the confusion created in the child's mind by the babel of prayers and curses with which his little ears are besieged, he is further perplexed by the reprehensible custom, so prevalent in Roman Catholic Ireland, of jesting about the most sacred concerns of spiritual life. It is impossible to over-estimate the harm done to children by this particular joking habit, of which I shall give a few instances, showing the lengths to which it is carried.

My own uncle, a noted wit and fox-hunter, and a most kindly man, lay on his death-bed, his skull broken by a kick from his horse. He was quite conscious before his death; and the parish priest, an immense man of twenty stone weight, was seated by the bedside chatting. At the end of a long conversation about this world and the next, my uncle, anxious about his hounds, said he hoped that horseflesh was plentiful and that the pack were well fed in his absence. Whereupon the priest said jocularly: "Well, Edmund, I think you don't care what becomes of a man, body or soul, as long as the hounds are well cared for!" My uncle's answer was: "Well, Father O'Brien, I needn't be uneasy about your soul;

but, if you were to die before me, I wish I could have your body for the hounds!"

That was a layman's joke. May I now give two specimens of priestly wit, showing in what light esteem sacred things are held, despite the abiding hope of heaven and the fear of hell. Most people have heard of Father Healy, parish priest of Little Bray, not many years dead, the only priest in Ireland that remained on friendly terms with the Irish Government during the Land Agitation. Various Lord-Lieutenants, Chief Secretaries, Lord Chancellors, and other high officials were frequent visitors at Father Healy's house from to time, and were usually kept in roars of laughter by their host. They often served a useful purpose by going there, as it gave them their only opportunity of meeting some of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, who occasionally honoured the company at one of those *noctes ambrosianæ.* A book of Father Healy's witticisms has been published, but I have not seen it. I heard these stories and others from persons who knew what they were speaking about, and knew more than it would be right to divulge. One evening, a certain Chief Secretary had a metaphysical argument with Father Healy, at the end of which the Chief Secretary said to the parish priest: "Well, Father Healy, will you tell me which would you rather go to—heaven or hell?"

The priest's answer was: "I should like to go to heaven for the sake of the climate, as I cannot stand excessive heat; but, as most of my friends are

Protestants, I should prefer hell for the sake of the company!"

Father Healy also used to tell a story of an unsophisticated country parish priest, who triumphantly brought home the evil effects of drunkenness to the minds of his congregation by telling them in a sermon how a distressed and rack-rented tenant, shooting at his tyrannical landlord from behind a hedge, had actually missed his mark because of having taken too much drink—thereby proving the sad consequences of over-indulgence!

There is a vein of chivalry, a sporting spirit, in the Irish nature, which even the poorest child inherits. Though his parents may frighten, scold, and beat him, he knows they love him with more than the intensity of animal affection. However poor, however numerous the family may be, they would not part with him for his weight in gold. The custom of making over one's children for a consideration to people better off than the parents is repugnant to the Catholic Irish nature.

I think it may be said that the poorest Irish child has in him the makings of a knight-errant, in his eagerness to relieve distress, in his respect for poverty, in his disdain of setting a price on his labours, in his devotion to lost and unprofitable causes, in his readiness to sacrifice himself and give away his time, labour, and money to those who have no claim on him.

There are no juvenile philosophers in Ireland, like those sages of nine, ten, and eleven, who deliver the

milk or the newspapers in a London suburb, and who always tell you that they are over fourteen, so as to save their parents from the penalties enforceable under the English Education Acts.

The child sees its parents lending provisions, clothes, tools, and money to their neighbours, and borrowing the same in return. There is never an account kept, but everything is left to that sense of honour which is so strong in Irishmen at the outset of life. If you want to pay a compliment to a true Irishman, ask him for the loan of something.

Whatever the Irish little boy possesses is not his own, but the property of his friends, for he has the soul of a Timon of Athens. If he has a donkey, his friends ride it, and he only gets a mount himself as a concession. If he has a top, it is mostly whipped by the topless amongst his acquaintance. When he has a penny to spend, he does not go to market without his friends.

This is the trait which, in later years, makes an Irishman think it a mean thing to go into a public house, or even an eating-house, alone, and which gives rise to the custom of treating, to be dealt with at a later stage. An Irishman is naturally a hospitable man, who enjoys giving only when there is no possibility of any return being made, and that is the disposition especially of the Irish child.

From this brief sketch we may realise dimly what the average Irish Catholic little boy is like, when he first comes into contact personally with the Church.

CHAPTER XII

Child's first knowledge of the Church—No Bible, no Christian visitors—The Swords religious riots—The Catholic child at school—The four prayers—The communion of saints—The first confession—The descent into sin—The first communion—A poor boy's tragedy.

It is interesting to observe how the child first comes to realise the existence of, and first comes into contact with, the priest and the Church.

Hitherto it has only seen the priest pass by on horseback, or in his car, and has always gone to hide at the great man's approach. Twice a year the priest has come formally to some neighbouring farmer's house, in the morning, to hear the confessions of the entire townland, administer communion, and collect his dues. If there has been a serious illness in the home, the boy has seen the priest come to administer extreme unction and holy communion. What a commotion there was! Candles, holy water, clean linen had to be prepared, or borrowed—a long period of waiting followed, when every sound set the heart beating—and then the priest swooped down upon the house like a visitant from another world, performed his rite, and disappeared as suddenly as he had come.

The child had has no chance of enlightenment from outside his home and the little circle of his parents' few acquaintances. Two of the most powerful spiritual influences have never been brought to bear on him: First, the wisdom of the Bible and the unrivalled insight which it gives into the character of man are as unknown to him as to his parents. Second, no educated Christian man or woman has ever visited his father's house to give spiritual consolation or sensible worldly advice. There may be a few exceptions, but this is the prevailing rule. There are no church-workers, no visiting curates, no Lady Bountifuls in the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, nothing but the formal administration of sacraments at stated times. Voluntary effort by individual Protestants in their own districts, such as used to be made before disestablishment, has long ceased, owing to the risk and odium attendant on it, and owing to the paramount political influence of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. (*See note at end of chapter.*)

Not only is it impossible for Christians of other denominations to visit poor Roman Catholics, but in the towns and villages of Ireland it is dangerous for such Christians to meet for prayer and worship amongst themselves, unless it be in the recognised churches of the parish. As this may seem almost incredible to residents in Great Britain, I shall give one recent instance showing the atmosphere of narrowness in which the twentieth-century child is reared in part of the United Kingdom. In the ancient town of Swords, about ten miles from Dublin,

in the month of October 1908, a few Christians—such as are called Nonconformists in England—met for prayer and worship in a private house, as Christians meet in private houses in Great Britain every day. As soon as the townspeople heard of the meeting, the house, which was a place of business, was surrounded by a mob, who blew horns, hooted, broke the windows, and threatened the lives of the shopkeeper and his family. Extra police were drafted into the town the next day, but the rioting continued night after night for a week, until it was stopped by the parish priest.

The Church of Ireland rector of the parish, a most accomplished and scholarly man, thus referred to the incident from his pulpit. I quote from *The Irish Times* of October 19, 1908. He said that a man of the town, who did not belong to his congregation, " but who worshipped the same God, had used the right, which he and every other Christian possessed, of holding meetings in one of the houses of the town. The man and his friends had met with the most violent intolerance from their Roman Catholic neighbours, who had ruthlessly stoned the house of meeting, and had for the past week destroyed the peace of the town and made night hideous with senseless yelling and ribaldry. For that foolish ignorance and bigotry there had been no adequate cause, no proselytising or street preaching." In Catholic Ireland evangelising and street preaching are looked upon as justifying a riot. The rector of Swords went on to condemn what he truly described

as " the violent intolerance which in a free country had rudely and senselessly insulted God-fearing men." And he further said: " That was the way all over Ireland. The lower classes of Roman Catholics were very ignorant, and consequently a ready prey for any bad leading and bad passions." " So sensitive were they," he continued, " about religion, that they would hardly mention the subject, and the least suspicion of proselytising—which he was glad to say the Church of Ireland never attempted — was quite enough to drive their Roman Catholic neighbours of a less educated class into paroxysms of senseless intolerance."

I have been informed that, since the date of that sermon, the preacher has retired from his rectory at Swords and has taken a living in the Church of England. I am not in a position to say whether his withdrawal was the result of his candour, but simply record the coincidence.

The child's mind, at the stage before it goes to school, is like a tilth carefully prepared for the seed which the Church is about to sow in it with the certainty of an abundant crop. It is, in fact, a "ready prey"—to quote the rector's words—"for any bad leading," or for any good leading.

The frightened child, boy or girl, whose belief in God is as genuine as its ignorance of the true relationship between God and man, begins to attend school at six or seven—either a Christian Brothers' school or a nuns'; or, if it be in remote country districts, a "national" school conducted by lay

teachers who are paid by the Government, but appointed and dismissible by the parish priest.

As the Roman Catholic hierarchy did not allow the Compulsory Education Act to be enforced in the Catholic counties, the children do not go to school as systematically as in England. The words of Admiral Coligny, written in France over 300 years ago, are true of Ireland to-day: "The ignorance of letters hath brought with it thick and skulking shadows, not only to the State but to the Church." Nevertheless, so great is the respect for education in Ireland, even among the illiterate, that the children go to school in hundreds of thousands without legal compulsion. But, when they go there, of course, the Church is in the school before them to give them its dogma as a much more important branch of education than scientific knowledge. The monks and nuns have statues and crucifixes in every schoolroom and corridor; and they develop the cult of saint-worship and other devotions which children who attend the "national" schools under lay teachers in a large measure escape.

The first prayers taught to the child, four in number, are Christian in character, and give no clue to the labyrinth of religiosity to which they are the portico and entrance-place for so many—indeed, one may use the word "superstition," in its literal sense of something standing over another thing so as to conceal its true nature and apparently change its character. These four prayers are learned in conjunction with the catechism, and are: the Lord's Prayer, taken *verbatim* from the New Testament;

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

GOLDEN ISLETS OF GLENGARIFFE.

"There are certain spots whose tender and ethereal beauty is unsurpassed, if not unequalled, by any scenery in the world; Glengariffe and its golden islets in September, and many others." *Page* 1.

the Hail Mary, taken largely from St. Luke's Gospel; the Apostles' Creed, exactly as one finds it in the Book of Common Prayer; and the Confiteor, or I Confess. These four prayers constitute the ordinary Roman Catholic's entire spiritual outfit; when all else is forgotten they are remembered; they are his substitute for the Bible.

The Hail Mary is divided into two parts—the Scripture salutation: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus"; and the unscriptural appeal to the Virgin to intercede with God for the remission of the suppliant's sins: "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

It is through the article in the Creed expressing belief in the "communion of saints" that the child is first led into dangerous ground. The catechism in use in England at present teaches the child to say: "By the communion of saints I mean that all the members of the Church, in heaven, on earth, and in purgatory, are in communion with each other as being one body in Jesus Christ." And again: "We are in communion with the saints in heaven by honouring them as the glorified members of the Church, and also by praying to them and by their praying for us; we are in communion with the souls in purgatory by helping them with our prayers and good works. It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins."

I do not propose to burden these pages with anything in the nature of religious controversy. The Roman Catholic religion is a great—some people think it the greatest—fact in Ireland; and, as such, its consideration must be included in any useful survey of Irish affairs. Those who seek for a refutation of its dogmas will have no difficulty in obtaining what they desire from sources too numerous to specify. That those dogmas are genuinely believed in by the Catholics who are acquiring the freehold of the Irish soil, and by the vast majority of the priests who form the minds of those Catholics, is what concerns us.

The "communion of saints" is not understood as a fellowship among Christians now living. Though a child is taught to regard himself as a member of a chosen race, a believer in the only true religion, and a despiser of those outside that religion, it is as an outcast that he himself prays to the saints. He has never read the Epistle to the Ephesians: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." To the children, the monks and nuns are the personification of the saints on earth; while the parish priest, of whom the monks and nuns stand in great awe,

seems a kind of God, except when the bishop appears once in three years and becomes, as he sits enthroned on the altar, not only a deputy of God but a very God.

The fourth prayer, the Confiteor, is founded on James' exhortation: "Confess your faults, one to another." It has two parts. The first is a confession, not to God, but to God and other heavenly personages: "I confess to Almighty God, to the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles, Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed. Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault." The second part is a request to the Blessed Virgin and the other persons named, to intercede with God for the remission of the suppliant's sins.

In Catholic Ireland there is a proverb: "Open confession is good for the soul," yet the child is discouraged from openly confessing its sins to its parents, and is driven into the secret confession-box. After an elaborate preparation by the monks, nuns, or other teachers, the child makes its first confession as soon as possible after seven years of age.

He enters the dark confessional in a state of utter nervous prostration, and there for the first time in his life comes face to face with the priest. It is there he tastes the bitter fruit of the tree of knowledge and first feels naked and ashamed; and, like his first parents, falls from his high estate, losing by degrees

the naturally generous instincts and better nature of childhood which Wordsworth so finely describes in his "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood."

He leaves the confessional an altered being. No longer do "meadow, grove, and stream" seem to him "apparelled in celestial light." "There hath passed away a glory from the earth." His heart leaps up as he emerges from its gloomy portals. He has got a penance and he performs it. Then there is a brief respite. But his thoughts recur to the confessional, where he has learned that sin is capable of being analysed, and he undertakes its analysis. He does not know the advice, "Flee the danger or ye perish in it," as applied to things mental. He falls again. He confesses again and is forgiven. He performs his penance again. He falls a third time, and then perhaps he begins to conceal his sins, for fear of the priest's rebuke—and some priests are brutally severe. He is then a victim of remorse, for, in the words of the catechism, he "has added to his other sins the heinous crime of sacrilege." He becomes desperate, and sinks into a very low moral state. It is a pitiful story, this descent to Avernus year by year, instead of a moral ascent, as the boy grows to manhood. Confidence between parent and child is lost, each having his own private account in sin to keep him busy.

Sometimes a little boy will conceal an act which he knows to be a sin out of sheer fear and shame of acknowledging it specifically to another. Then he

becomes a vagabond in his own mind. The longer he puts off telling it, the more impossible it becomes, each subsequent confession making another sin which he is afraid to acknowledge to the priest. In this way a child, who may have nothing at all bad in him beyond the fleshly failings common to humanity, becomes convinced that he really is a bad character, and thinks that one sin more or less, or a score of sins more or less, can make no difference in his condition.

Then take the case of the boy who confesses his sins of thought and deed. The mere fact of going over each thought and act, especially of a sensual nature such as the young are prone to, makes him sin again in the same way. He is led by the study of the sin to attach an undue importance to it; he finds an increased pleasure in it because it is forbidden fruit. He finds he can get forgiven for the sin by performing a penance of three or four Hail Marys a day for a week. In this way the peculiar sins of boys are encouraged, and they make the fatal mistake of imagining that all the consequences of the sin are obliterated by the absolution of the priest, ignorant of the abiding damage done to health and character.

As all sins are considered a matter exclusively for confession, and as it is forbidden to speak of what is told in confession, the Roman Catholic boy is deprived of advice from his parents or friends; his character is destroyed; and, next to the deprivation of the Bible, I think this practice of secret confession, which alienates the child and parent, is the most fruitful cause of the failure of Roman Catholics, as compared

with Protestants. It makes the Roman Catholic boys sheepish and shame-faced, and secretive and cowardly, and wanting in reasoning power, and subject to fits of remorse. It eats away the minds of the girls, making the really virtuous girls a prey to scruples, depriving them of all courage, and making them very helpless in the battle of life.

The child's most abiding conception of Christ is that of a sanctified and preternaturally smart little boy who was able to confute learned doctors at twelve years of age. At Christmas the child is taken, as a great treat, to see the crib, where a boy doll lies in a toy manger, between a toy ox and a toy ass. The smell of the wax candles, the flicker of the coloured lamps in the gloomy church, produce a creepy feeling which is mistaken for supernatural influence.

In Lent the children have to abstain from butter, meat, and eggs—not much of a deprivation to the poor; on Good Friday they hear of the tortures inflicted on Christ and shed tears over them; on Easter Sunday they get up early to see the sun dancing in honour of the resurrection; and they see the breakfast-table loaded with eggs, of which they are expected to eat as many as they can, and far more than they ought.

Though Christ is devoutly acknowledged to be the Son of God and second person of the Blessed Trinity, the child only realises Him in three phases: the babe in the manger, the boy disputing with the doctors, and the agonised victim on the cross.

Christ's work on earth is not understood; the child does not know what it is to follow Christ in the true sense of the word, as it is ingrained in children in the Church of England and other Churches in Great Britain and Ireland.

He has never read the Bible—his father and mother have never read the Bible! Herein lies the root-difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant child. Instead of the wisdom-giving picture of the struggles of man to be found in the Old Testament, and of the love of Christ for man in the New Testament, the Irish child gets legends of impossible saints.

After going to confession for some time he is prepared for first communion by a further study of the catechism, learning by rote unintelligible definitions of dogmas, with many stories of the saints. He has to make a "general" confession before communion, when all his sins and sacrileges (omissions from previous confessions) must be told. The child's mind is well-nigh distracted; and if he goes to first communion without making a proper general confession he regards himself as lost, and goes on making bad confessions all the rest of his life, until he gives up going to confession altogether. One can understand why Roman Catholics are collectively so unintelligible to Christians of other denominations, when one realises how their minds are distracted by scruples and remorse from childhood.

All the children from a great school will make their first communions together in a body on an

appointed morning. Every child is quaking with fear lest he should not have made a good confession, and lest he should be about to commit the awful sacrilege of taking the Lord's body and blood, soul and divinity, at a time when he has an unconfessed sin on his soul! Nobody but a Roman Catholic can realise the dreadful position.

The day I made my first communion with about a hundred others, there was a poor boy who was afflicted with scruples as we were going to the chapel, a thin raw-boned boy with black hair and large blue eyes. The rule is that you must approach the altar fasting from the preceding midnight; but this boy had a cold, and he swallowed some of his own expectoration, and he was sobbing as we went into the chapel, thinking he had broken his fast and not knowing what to do. No one had the courage to consult the monks, and the boy knelt at the altar rail with all the others in a long row. As the priest approached murmuring the words, *Corpus domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiet animam tuan in vitam eternam, Amen*, the boy shivered with fright. I was near him, and saw his trepidation. He held up his head, as we were all instructed to do, opened his mouth, put out his tongue, which was parched, and waited while the priest laid the wafer on his dry tongue. The wafer must be swallowed without being chewed or, if possible, without being touched by the teeth, but the boy could not swallow it. He coughed, and the sacred Host fell to the ground, the boy falling along with it.

Imagine, if you can, what consternation there would have been, if the carrying of the Host had been allowed at Westminster in 1908; and if, in the midst of the procession, the Host had fallen from the monstrance and been trampled in the gutter. Immeasurably greater was the consternation amongst the boys in that chapel that morning. We all looked for a miracle. The boy had fainted and he was dragged away. The priest came outside the rails and picked up the Host. The administration of communion was resumed. But the boy was carried home, and afterwards went to the hospital, as we heard, with meningitis or brain fever.

Some time after first communion, the boy receives confirmation, and begins to get intimations of approaching manhood. May I at this stage briefly consider the education given by the Church to the boys and girls, especially of the better classes, so that the reader may judge how the minds of the new Irish lords of the soil are formed.

[NOTE.—There is still much organised, as contrasted with individual, effort, especially in the cities, *e.g.* the work of the Irish Church Missions and other Societies.]

CHAPTER XIII

Education of Irish Catholics—The Jesuit system—Stoneyhurst —Effects of Jesuit education—Embellished memories—Not reflective reasons—Jansenists—Jesuit ascendancy—New National University—The Christian Brothers—Signal and slapper—Inducement to join the priesthood—Masters and pupils—Ambition developed.

BEFORE the Reformation, the Roman Church ruled Europe on the alleged, and generally admitted, authority of divine right. At and since the Reformation, it maintained and maintains its spiritual sway over Roman Catholic Europe—an irregularly-shaped territory whose western points are in Ireland and Portugal, and whose eastern points are in Sicily and Poland—by its control of secular education.

We find no pre-Reformation college or university founded in Ireland by the Roman Church corresponding to the great English foundations at Oxford and Cambridge, or the Scottish foundations at St. Andrews, Aberdeen, and Glasgow. Trinity College, Dublin, the oldest educational institution in Ireland, is a post-Reformation foundation by the Protestants in Elizabeth's reign.

The Reformation followed very closely upon what is known as the Renaissance of learning in Europe,

and the first reformers were as remarkable for their love of secular knowledge as for their devotion to the Bible. In England, for instance, the boy-king, Edward VI., devoted much of the wealth taken from the papal Church to the foundation of grammar schools. The great Scottish reformer, John Knox, devised for Scotland that wonderful scheme of education by means of which the Scottish race has attained to a position of extraordinary power in the modern world.

When the Roman Catholic upper classes saw their Protestant friends thus eager in the pursuit of learning, they, too, grew anxious that their children should be educated. But they were told that education was exclusively an affair of the Church, with which laymen had no more right to meddle than with the settlement of dogma or the administration of sacraments.

It was clear, however, that this *non possumus* would not suffice, and ecclesiastical brains were busy with the problem. Early in the sixteenth century a gentleman of Spain, the famous Ignatius Loyola, went to Rome with a patent plan, by which education might be given to Roman Catholic gentry without endangering the papal supremacy. Loyola's device was not to refuse education, but to give an education "of our own make"—an education which would at once satisfy the faithful and leave the supremacy of the Church intact.

Though Loyola was a Spaniard, it was in France, as the most intellectual of Roman Catholic countries,

that the Jesuits achieved world-wide fame, and gave the lead to the Roman Catholic world in education. The influences brought to bear on pupils in Roman Catholic schools in Ireland, Great Britain, the Colonies, and the United States, are only a legacy from the Jesuit schools of France, where the Jesuits became the real masters of education, a position which they retained until the end of the eighteenth century. And to the present day the education given to the better-class Roman Catholics, whether by the Jesuits themselves or by other monastic orders, is based on the principles devised by Ignatius Loyola.

If therefore we would understand the mental constitution of the educated Roman Catholic, we must study the educational plan of Ignatius Loyola and his followers. The Jesuits have not written treatises on education. Loyola's *Ratio Studiorum*, published in 1559, is still their educational code. With them education is only a means to an end, their object being to preserve the papal supremacy by gaining control of the better-class Roman Catholics. They appear to adapt themselves to the times, but they never really deviate from Loyola's purpose or modify their original constitution. They aim at obtaining control of the upper and middle classes, their object being to rule the ruling classes for the benefit of the papacy. Their college at Stoneyhurst in Lancashire, where Roman Catholics of the upper and middle classes are educated, is the most important Roman Catholic school in Great Britain at present. Stoney-

hurst College claims to have been originally founded, at St. Omer in France, by the well-known Jesuit, Robert Parsons, in the reign of Elizabeth. Expelled from St. Omer in 1762, the Jesuits transferred the school to Bruges. Expelled a second time, they again transferred it to Liege. Finally, driven from the Continent, they got an asylum at Stoneyhurst from an English Roman Catholic in 1794, and there the school has ever since remained. Their college at Clongowes Wood, outside Dublin, is the most important Roman Catholic school in Ireland.

The Jesuits have always aimed at dominating institutions for university education. We hear of a Roman Catholic university at Washington at present; it belongs to the Jesuits. We know of the new Roman Catholic or National University at Dublin, so lavishly endowed by the Government; its head college may be said to be the absolute property of the Jesuits, and they and their nominees will get the benefit of the large endowment. We hear of a Roman Catholic mission at Oxford; that, too, is conducted by the Jesuits. The Jesuits never did anything for the education of the common people, whose ignorance it held to be "the best safeguard of their faith"—and Loyola's supreme end was to preserve the public faith in the Pope. Intellectual culture in some form had become a necessity for the upper classes who had remained faithful to the Church, but the Society regarded it as a dangerous commodity to be dispensed only by itself.

And what sort of education did the Society give

the ruling classes? Lord Macaulay has well said that the Jesuits "seem to have discovered the point up to which intellectual culture can be pushed without reaching intellectual emancipation." They cultivated the pupil's showy faculties. In classical literature, for instance, they directed the boy's attention to eloquent passages in prose and poetry, laying stress, not on the thoughts, but on the niceties of expression and rhetorical effect. They neglected scientific studies: in Dublin, for instance, not a single student from their college got a scientific degree in the Royal University for the twenty years ended 1901. They neglected the study of history, one of their maxims being: "History is the destruction of him who studies it."

Their object from the first was to produce, not men of strong character, but superficially-polished gentlemen, possessing a considerable amount of craft, and mentally dependent on the Church. They gave the mind occupations that absorbed it, "soothing it like a dream without awakening it." They gave their pupils an "embellished memory," not a "reflective reason." So recently as 1854, their General described their colleges as "a gymnastic for the intellect, which consists far less in the assimilation of real matter than in the culture of pure form." A gymnast, as we know, makes little progress: and the man who is continually turning somersaults is easily out-distanced by the man who walks straight ahead. Hence, despite their brilliant literary fireworks, despite their educational artifices, the Jesuit-trained

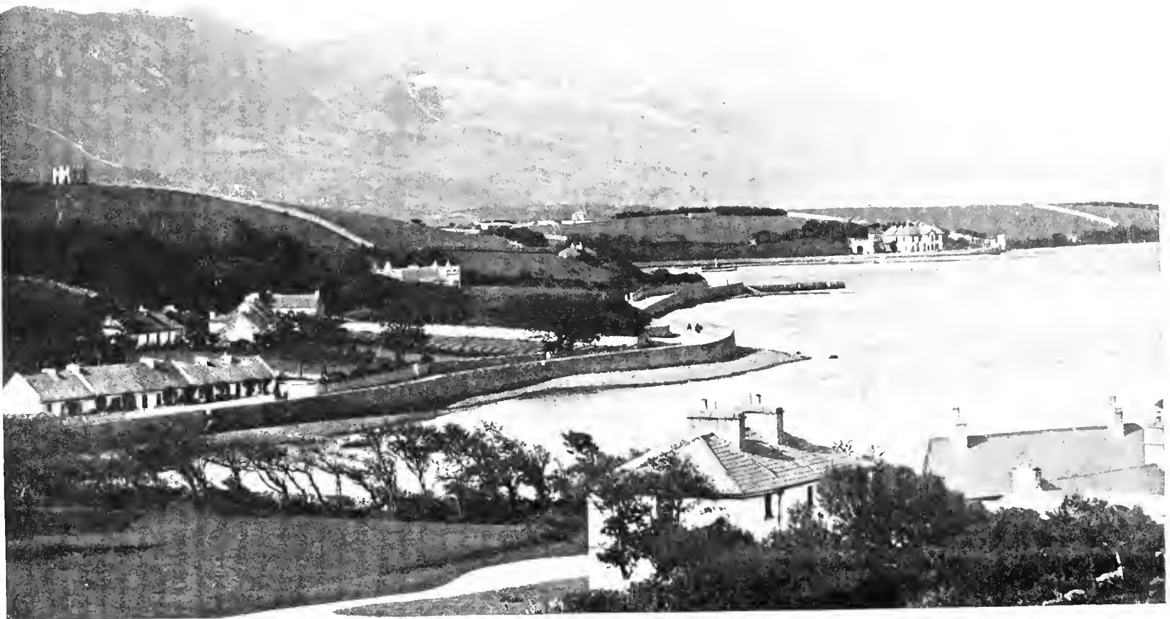

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

IRISH SCENERY—CROAGH-PATRICK, NEAR CLEW BAY.

"With a mountain, or a range of mountains in the distance; and, perhaps, a glimpse of the sea, or of some rushing river."—*Page* 3.

gymnasts have been outstripped and overcome everywhere by the plain faith and plain common sense of men whose minds have been formed on simple, scientific lines, and whose characters have been strengthened by applying the right of private judgment to the Bible.

One of the constant results of Jesuit education is to detach the child from its family. The Society teaches that woman is as dangerous to-day as she proved in the garden of Eden, and that it is she who still drives man from Paradise. A celebrated Jesuit, when his mother visited him at college, said to her: "I refuse to notice you, not because you are my mother, but because you are a woman." This is a natural, or unnatural, result of all teaching by monastic orders. The basic principle of Jesuitical education is the necessity of blind obedience to the Church. This may be gathered from the following maxims:—"To renounce one's wishes is more meritorious than to raise the dead." "We must be so attached to the Church as to hold for black an object which she tells us is black, even when it is really white." "One must allow himself to be governed by the Superiors of the Society, just as if one were a dead body that could be put in any position whatever, and be treated accordingly."

But, nevertheless, the Jesuits flatter their pupils, gilding the bars of their mental prison by a lavish distribution of prizes, titles, and decorations. In the advertisement of Stoneyhurst College one reads: "The system of prizes is unusual, as besides the

larger prizes offered to the best in the various subjects, smaller prizes are offered to all who do well all round in their work. This plan is found to offer much encouragement to boys of average talent who cannot hope for the competitive prizes. During the winter months plays are acted from time to time, and concerts given in the large hall known as the Academy Room." Loyola did not dispense with the rod, but, when it was necessary to use it, the punishment was inflicted by a layman set apart for that purpose. The Jesuits encouraged espionage amongst the pupils by rewarding those who reported the faults of others, their rule being that a boy who reported a fault in another should be pardoned for a fault committed by himself.

The "embellished memory" imparted by the Jesuits and other Orders enables some of their pupils, especially Irishmen, to pass competitive examinations brilliantly; but such young men, however successful, however crafty, are mostly men of unstable character, devoid of "reflective reason" and power of initiative; and, however high the position to which they may attain, are the slaves of the Church to the end of their days. The Jesuit principles of education are imitated by the other teaching orders of priests. The Vincentians, by whom I was taught for four years before going to a Protestant school, followed the Jesuit lines very closely in everything. One result of this system of education is that educated Roman Catholics are found, as a rule, to be agreeable, conversible men of

the world, anxious to please those with whom they are thrown into company.

It has always appeared to me that the Jesuit priests acquire their influence in the world largely by expressing agreement with any one of position who comes in their way, being pre-eminently "men-pleasers." I have heard a Jesuit say to a pleasure-lover: "Christ condemned the Sabbatarians. Christ supplied wine for the feast when the supply ran short. Christ did not deem the harlot outside the pale of his society." I have it from a sincere Protestant, whose word is his bond, that a Jesuit said to him: "Oh, I don't believe in half the decrees of the Church. They are mere paper decrees never intended to be acted upon. There is nothing worth living for, but Christ and the salvation of souls." With such instances within one's experience, one can imagine a Jesuit saying to an educated Mohammedan: "Your religion and the Christian religion are only different in detail. Polygamy and concubinage were practised by the men we most admire in the Old Testament, which we hold as of equal authority with the New Testament."

While the better-class Roman Catholic youth are receiving the sort of secular education I have described—for, in all essentials, the other teaching Orders copy the Jesuits—they are being sedulously drilled in every medieval dogma and observance of the Church. The year is a continual round of masses, confessions, communions, and various forms of ritual—masses for the release of the dead from purgatory,

or for the glorification of canonised saints. They learn nothing of the Bible, either the Old or the New Testament, save what they hear in isolated texts and passages read before a sermon or lecture in chapel, and which, like extracts from the classics, are only appraised for their rhetorical beauty, and are not regarded as a call to action or a rule of life. The "real matter" in the Bible is not assimilated, however much the "pure form" of the phraseology of some of its chapters may be admired. The Jesuit-bred man of the world knows far more about Jesuit saints, Ignatius Loyola, and Francis Xavier, than about Jesus.

When the Jesuits had been teaching in France for sixty years, another teaching Order, the Oratorians, was founded, which gained notoriety in England through Cardinal Newman, the best known of its members. They professed they were actuated by a love of liberty as well as by religious ardour, but their efforts were discouraged and they were forbidden to teach philosophy. Thirty years later, another band of French priests, the well-known Jansenists, heroically tried to establish a system of genuine education for Roman Catholics. Fearlessly asserting that "education was, in a sense, the one thing necessary," they started, in 1643, the famous Little Schools of Port Royal. They cultivated the solid faculties of their pupils, the judgment and reason; instead of rhetoric, they taught logic; they did not flatter, and gave no prizes; their aim being to give their pupils "sound intelligences." Their educational

theories were not only in advance of their own, but of our times. They taught the mother-tongue in preference to Latin and Greek; and they apportioned the tasks according to the intelligence of the particular boy. They aimed at making the pupils think for themselves, which is altogether opposed to the spirit of Jesuit and Roman Catholic education in general.

They held the same educational views as John Knox had propounded a century earlier, namely, that every child in the country, whether rich or poor, had the right to be instructed according to his ability. They were true reformers. They wrote their Latin grammars in French, being the first to act upon the now generally admitted principle that it is ridiculous to try to teach the rudiments of a language in the very language that is to be learned, and which is utterly unknown to the pupil. They said that the pupil "was not to be blinded by a vain flash of words void of sense," and was "never to rest satisfied until he had gained a clear insight into things." The weak point of Jansenist education was a too insistent belief that human nature was corrupt and man wicked. "The Devil," they said, "already possesses the soul of even the unborn child." The pupils were considered as wholly inclined to evil, finding pleasure only in vice; sick souls to be raised from their fall. Here they closely touched the professed belief of latter-day Evangelicals. There was to be no spirit of emulation; God alone being praised for whatever talents the child possessed.

Asceticism was encouraged amongst the boys; for the Jansenists were great ascetics—Pascal, as is well known, even denying himself the pleasure of reflecting on geometry in which he delighted.

The Jansenist scheme of education, despite its tendency to pessimism, its excessive distrust of human nature and fear of human pride, marked a great advance on the tinsel commodity purveyed by the Jesuits; and, if it had spread over France, the rupture with the Vatican might have taken place two centuries earlier than it did. A race of independent laymen might have been produced, and the domestic economy of the Church might have been altered; but the Jesuit scheme, which was universally adopted or copied, produced a kind of sham mental independence, more hopeless, perhaps, than the complete mental submission which existed before the Reformation. The Jansenists had not been long teaching when the Jesuits preached a war of extermination against them; and, after a brief existence of seventeen years, the Little Schools of Port Royal were closed and the teachers dispersed. The very house was razed to the ground, the foundations ploughed up, and the dead in the graveyard of the community torn from their graves.

The Jesuit system of education is now in the ascendant in Catholic Ireland, either as operated directly in the Dublin college of the new National University and the various Jesuit and Marist schools, or as imitated in the other Catholic colleges and schools, which are all priest-owned. Whatever

reverses the Pope may have suffered, however irretrievably he may have fallen from his once high estate in Europe, he is still the sole Vicar of Christ on earth in Catholic Ireland, holder of the keys of heaven, hell, and purgatory. Laymen have no authority over education, except as the servants of the bishops and priests. With perhaps some infinitesimal exceptions, there is not a secondary Roman Catholic school kept by a layman or laywoman in the British Isles. All are owned by priests, monks, and nuns, and conducted on Jesuit principles.

The lay representatives in the first senate of the National University will only hold office for a few years, after which the senate will be elected by the graduates, the majority of whom will be ecclesiastical students from Maynooth who will be entitled to degrees on exceptional terms, without residence, or attendance at lectures, and mainly on the strength of their theological attainments as certified by Maynooth. The hierarchy in 1897, in one of their many pastorals on this question, said: "One of the advantages which we expect from a Catholic university is the opportunity it will afford of giving a higher education to the candidates for the priesthood in Ireland; and these alone will make from the first a large accession to the number of students in the university. . . . And hence it will be seen that we, bishops, approach the settlement of this question not empty-handed." The ecclesiastical graduates will swamp the lay graduates and put the university

entirely in the power of the Church. They will neither be in it nor of it, yet they will govern it.

It is the experience of all who seriously study the question that the mental subjugation of the better-class young men, thus educated by the Church for secular professions, is just as complete as that of their uneducated brethren. Many of them revolt secretly, after vainly trying to think that they believe what they know they do not believe. But the sensations of the frightened child cling around them, and fear makes them conform to a system which they believe to be a sham. Where fear fails, self-interest succeeds. Some of these young men call themselves rationalists, but, alas, they are rationalists without reason, and their convictions rarely carry them farther than diatribes against the Church, into whose fold they are ultimately gathered back, to resume the old dreamlike occupations which soothed without awakening their minds. Educated Roman Catholic young men, in mental revolt, find it to their interest to remain in the Church. In Ireland there is no possibility of Government promotion, and not much prospect of private success, for a Roman Catholic unless he be friendly with the Church—and especially with the Jesuits. It has long been the Government practice to promote a man with a Jesuit recommendation in preference to any other Roman Catholic. The Government's position is intelligible. They say: "If we are to enlist the support of the Roman Church, let us make friends with its real governors, and not with its rebels." This is not

stated as a complaint or for purposes of controversy, but solely as an important fact and sign of the times, to be duly noted by those who take an interest in politics and sociology.

Powerful as the Jesuits are, they only educate the better-class minority, and not the rank and file. The great majority of Irish Catholic boys—sons of labourers, artisans, farmers, and shopkeepers—are educated either at the national schools or at the schools of the Christian Brothers. The national schools correspond to the Board schools in Great Britain, with this important difference, that they are not governed by Boards. Though practically their entire maintenance is provided by the Government, each school in the Roman Catholic districts is controlled by the parish priest alone, as the sole manager, with power of appointing and dismissing the teachers; and the religious instruction consists of the Roman Catholic catechism, not the Bible.

In the schools of the Christian Brothers, now to be found in most of the towns, the religious instruction is of a more decided character. These schools are not under the control of Government, or even of the parish priest, but are entirely the property of the Brothers, whose rule used to be to accept no Government money; but exceptions to that rule are yearly becoming more frequent. They are supported by local voluntary contributions and school pence, but children who cannot afford even a penny a week are admitted free. The order of Christian Brothers originated in France, having been founded in 1684

by De La Salle, a canon of Rheims Cathedral, who resigned his prebendship and devoted his life to giving primary instruction to pupils who could not pay for it. In this respect his work was very different from that of the Jesuits, who gave secondary instruction to pupils who could pay for it. The Order was introduced into Ireland at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Edmund Ignatius Rice, and, as an educational power, they are now only second in importance to the Jesuits. They are not in holy orders, though they dress like priests, and they can leave the community when they wish. Like their founder, they sometimes find themselves in opposition to the parish priest; but such differences are quickly settled in the interests of the Church.

De La Salle and his disciples made a vow to conduct "schools of gratuitous instruction, even when, in order to do this, they might be obliged to ask alms, and live on bread alone." He used to spend whole nights in study, kneeling on sharp stones before his table, to which was fixed a board with iron spikes, so that, if his head nodded in sleep, it would strike against them. The clergy opposed him, for they did not approve of educating the poor. His name will always be remembered as a great pioneer of education, for he was the first on the Roman Catholic side to recognise not only the necessity for popular instruction, but that it should be gratuitous and compulsory — a principle only admitted in England towards the close of the nineteenth century. He was the first to start schools for technical in-

struction, and to open a seminary or training college for schoolmasters. He introduced the monitorial system, which created such a sensation when introduced in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

I attended the Brothers' schools for a time in infancy, and my mind is full of memories of them. De La Salle imposed a rule of silence not only on the pupils but on the teachers. When it was absolutely necessary to speak, he ordered it to be done in the lowest possible tones; and he instituted a code of signs to take the place of verbal commands. How vividly I remember the instrument known as the signal, which called the school to order with a loud sharp click. When the boys were seated at their desks, one click called them to attention; two clicks made them vault from the forms and stand before the desks; three clicks sent them marching out to the classes, arranged in semicircles against the walls. Everything was done with military precision. If a boy wanted to make an application to the Christian Brother, he held up his hand, and patiently waited until his signal was observed.

The Brothers' school in our town was a large two-storey building, with four spacious apartments, each of which was called a school, and contained from 100 to 120 boys, the total attendance being between 400 and 500. The first school was for the youngest and most backward, the fourth for the older and most advanced boys, some of whom were quite grown-up young men. Instruction in the same subject was given to all pupils at the same time, the classes being

taken by monitors. The Brother went round the school, helping, observing, and punishing; arrayed in a long black soutane and Roman collar, the lower half of which was black and the upper white, and wearing a biretta on his head. Round his waist was a black sash, and in his pocket were a large red handkerchief, his signal, and his slapper.

There was only one Brother for each school, but he kept it in perfect order. Although De La Salle forbade his followers to "lay hands" on a boy, he invented a slapper for their use, a piece of doubled leather about fourteen inches long and an inch wide, which, when applied to the palm of a boy's hand, gave a fiery shock never to be forgotten. Throughout the day, amidst the hum of lessons, the silence and the signalling, the slapper used to be busy, and an occasional shriek—for which extra punishment was given—would ring through the school. The day opened and closed with prayers. There was always a statue of the Virgin or St. Joseph; and, when the clock struck each hour, work stopped automatically and the Hail Mary was recited by the whole school. The uniformity of De La Salle's system made teachers and pupils mere machines. But the Brothers give a good education in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar, and, above all, in the catechism. The founder attached great importance to good writing, and his successors do likewise; and the boys of the Brothers' schools need not fear competition with those of any English school in the subjects I have named.

There are three orders of teaching Brothers, namely, the Christian, the Presentation, and the Patrician. As most of the monastic priests, as well as the Jesuits, are engaged in teaching, it may be gathered that there is enough, and more than enough, of book-learning in Roman Catholic Ireland, for which, however, the Roman Catholics have chiefly to thank the British Government and British taxpayers. But those politicians who imagine that this book-learning is preparing the way for the overthrow of the power of the Roman Catholic priesthood labour under a delusion. How can such a result ever come from schools in charge of the Church itself, which is now fortified by the invaluable experience of so many failures abroad; or from a new National University governed by Jesuits, with the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin as its Chancellor; or even from a Carnegie Library for which the local priests select the books?

Notwithstanding his scholastic aptitude and the abundance of schools, the home-bred Catholic Irishman still finds a great difficulty in expressing his thoughts in English as compared with an Englishman, and the fact is responsible for much of the misunderstanding between the two countries. The average Anglo-Saxon cannot understand how the Irishman, whose fluency on the platform, in the pulpit, and at the bar seems so marvellous, can ever be at a loss for words to convey his meaning. The Irishman is set down as dishonest or insincere when he is only inexact or inarticulate. The words are running away

with his ideas and distorting them. Hence the common Irish comment on an eloquent man: "Language has great command over him, God help him!" But the explanation is not far to seek. Out of ten Catholic Irishmen, aged between thirty and forty, at the present day, nine are the grandchildren of men and women who either spoke Irish as their only tongue, or who, if they knew English as well as Irish, thought in Irish when they spoke in English.

Though the fluent English-speaking Irishman of the present day does not speak Irish at all, he nevertheless thinks in the Irish fashion; and he finds a difficulty in making the English words fit the Irish thoughts. The Irishman is therefore at his best in a set speech on a grand night, let us say, on the second reading of a bill, but is at his worst in committee, when he has to think and speak at once. Hence the English saying: "An Irishman must always speak twice"; and hence the other saying: "A Scotsman thinks before he speaks, an Englishman thinks while he speaks, and an Irishman thinks after he has spoken." There was some truth in the Irish servant's answer to her English mistress who rebuked her for not thinking before she spoke: "Bedad, ma'am, if I did, I'd forget what I was going to say."

There is a constant canvass going on for eligible boys for the priesthood, at home or abroad, in all the schools, high grade and low grade. Parents, especially widows, are importuned, and the desirable youths are captured at the tenderest age possible.

The thoughtful boy of fourteen or fifteen can

hardly avoid coming to the conclusion that the celibate priest—or, if he be of a lower station in life, that the monk or Christian Brother—constitutes the highest ideal of Christian life. Some boys set before them the life of the monastic priest, thinking that to spend one's life in a monastery, performing set devotions at prescribed hours, and only leaving the monastery to conduct missions and retreats in the world outside, is the nearest possible approach to Christian perfection, the surest way to win everlasting life. This class of youth so fears the world that he flies from it to find safety in the cloister, in the same way as the girls come to believe that life in the convent is the ideal life, the perfect and safe life for a Christian woman ; boys and girls, as a rule, having been educated by monks and nuns who have themselves fled from the world. They have been favourably impressed by the order and regularity of convent life, as they saw it, and cannot avoid contrasting it with the struggles and disorder of home-life as they know it. The unhappy home-life of Roman Catholics ; the frequent quarrels between father and mother, between parent and child ; the disgust and discontent with life which the boy hears expressed on every side by elderly people in fits of temper : all these things go to confirm and intensify the fear implanted in the mind of the child in infancy.

Other boys set before them the ideal of the parochial or secular priest, who has such unlimited power over souls and bodies ; of whom every one is afraid ; to whom ordinary men take off their hats, and

women bend the knee in the streets. There may be a spice of ambition in this class of youth, as he contemplates the dizzy heights to which a successful man may rise in the Church as P.P. of an important parish, or vicar-general of a diocese, with the possibility of becoming a bishop, an archbishop, or even a cardinal.

This peculiarity of Roman Catholicism in Ireland deserves to be noted—namely, the orderliness and prosperity of its great organisations as compared with the disorder and unhappiness of its individual and family life. Underneath the apparently strict discipline of the great clerical organisations there is often serious secret disorder and discontent; but that in itself is a testimony to the force of the discipline, for the discontent never, or hardly ever, comes to an open rupture. The same may be said with regard to secret lapses from virtue in the great clerical organisations. They are dealt with in the confessionals, and are never allowed to mar the superficial beauty of the organisation which the young are taught to admire as a kind of realisation of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Children, boys and girls, cultivate a peculiar and lifelong affection for priests, monks, and nuns by whom they have been educated. So great is this feeling of love that there is no request which the schoolmaster or schoolmistress may not safely make from the pupil. There is no such tie between pupils and a married pedagogue; for there the teacher's own children have the first claim. But in the case of the priest, monk,

or nun, there is nobody to come between the pupil and the teacher, no superior claim, no check to confidence. This spirit of affection of the pupils for their teachers, and of the teachers for the pupils, continued after schooldays, gives great solidarity to Roman Catholicism, and is almost entirely due to the celibacy of the priests, monks, and nuns.

There is one thing especially for which the pupil loves his sacerdotal or monastic teacher, and that is for the flattery so lovingly administered and the ambition thereby awakened in the youthful mind. The priest and monk, out of the competition of life as they are, cherish dreams of what they might have done if they had not betaken themselves to the cloister; and, noting the ecstatic face of the talented boy, sanguinely hope to see all their own possible success, or more, realised in their pupil. The Irish priest sees men of the humblest birth, and by no means extraordinary attainments, rising to be bishops, archbishops, and cardinals. He might have done so himself, he thinks. Why should not his pupil rise to equally giddy heights in some other walk of life? This ambitious spirit, thus fostered in the minds of Catholic youth with the best intentions by unpractical teachers, is the cause of a great deal of misery. It is one of the latent forces to be reckoned with always in dealing with Irish Catholics; and the Englishman particularly must be careful not to wound our ambitious susceptibilities, however humble the individual Irishman may seem. It is this secret ambition that makes a Catholic Irishman so quick to take offence,

so preposterous in his claims, so overweening in his manner—in short, so absurd, as an Englishman would call it. He is not to be blamed for this. It is part of his education, and he cannot divest himself of it.

The future of the new lords of the soil and of Ireland will chiefly depend on whether they allow themselves to be mastered by ambition or guided by common sense.

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin]

IRISH CHILD-LIFE—GIRLS AT THE PUMP.

"The boys are taught to look upon themselves as superior to the girls at a very early age, and soon cease to associate with them."—*Page* 110.

CHAPTER XIV

Old Roman sensuality—Sensual tendency of the Roman Church —Revolt of the Protestants — Catholic sensuality more mental than physical—Effects on boys in clerical schools —Sedentary habits of masters and pupils — Censurable practices in priestly schools—A personal experience.

THERE is a special and delicate branch of the general subject of Roman Catholic education which one feels bound to touch on, with much hesitation, it is true, but with a mind cleansed from idle curiosity; and, if one may compare small things with great, actuated by the same spirit that inspires the book of Leviticus or the Epistle to the Romans. Why is there such a want of vital, or cerebral, force amongst Roman Catholics as compared with Protestants? Why is this want especially noticeable amongst the young men educated by priests and monks?

The heaven of the ancient Romans was a carnal, sensual place; sensual indulgence was their *summum bonum* in the last days of the Republic; and, as we know from the various books composing the Augustan history, the passion for sensual gratification grew beyond all bounds in the days of the Empire.

The early Christians in Rome were like an island of virtue in the midst of a raging sea of carnal pollu-

tion of every description. They and their elected Church officers, including their bishops, were godly men and women. Virtue was then the essence of Christianity; nay, we may go further and say that virtue was Christianity, and Christianity was virtue. There were many virtuous people amongst the pagan Romans, but they were exceptions. Amongst the early Christians, all were virtuous; for to cease to be so was to ensure instant expulsion from the Church. Backsliding was not allowed, though there was always forgiveness for those who repented and were born again.

All were looking forward to the coming of the Lord and to the resurrection of the dead—a frame of mind which found expression in the first catacombs, secret burial-places where each body was carefully laid away, so as to be ready for the resurrection. The administrative duties of the simple-minded men who were the first bishops of Rome were largely those of a chairman of a burial board. Nothing was further from their intentions than to claim any earthly sovereignty for themselves or their office.

A vital, or, perhaps, one should say a devitalising, change in the character of Roman Christianity took place when the Emperor Constantine became a Christian and Christianity became the State religion, and when the Bishop of Rome assumed the old pagan office and title of Pontifex Maximus, or Master of the Rites for the Roman Empire—a title which the Pope still retains. Numbers of pagans at

once became Christians, every public office-holder had to do so; and, of the millions who then joined the Roman Church, the great majority regarded Christ merely as a new God, of the same generic kind as Jupiter or Neptune, and had no intention of leading the Christ-like life of the early Christians. Though the new converts called themselves Christians, they continued to worship Bacchus, Pan, Priapus, and the Bona Dea in their daily lives as before. Christianity, being the State religion, could not expel all these sinners from its fold, as it would have done in the happy days of primitive privacy and fervour.

Thus the Roman Church became a body mainly composed of people who lived in sin instead of in virtue. The simple-minded, plain-living bishop became an ambitious politician aiming at world-sovereignty. And it is only the bare truth to say that Christian Rome remained throughout the centuries, from Constantine to Victor Emmanuel, a centre of impiety and sexual vice, its immorality unrelieved by the splendour and greatness of old Rome. The system of accommodating itself to vice, that is, tolerating profession without practice, remained a characteristic of the Roman Church.

The essence of the Reformation was an insistence on practice, as opposed to mere profession; and, to put it broadly, it is because Protestant peoples have cast off the effeminate sensuality of ancient Rome that they possess more vital energy than Roman Catholics. The protestors, or Protestants, against the Roman religious system, with its pernicious

legacy from paganism, have come to dominate the world, because their collective brain has been cleared of Roman sensuality. How long this will continue is a question for anxious consideration.

All Protestants are not virtuous, nor are Protestant peoples without their share of irregular sexual intercourse, self-stupefaction by alcohol, and so forth; but, bad as their backsliding may be, it is not as character-killing as the sensuality engendered by the Roman system; and wherever Protestantism is in the ascendant, there also health, energy, integrity, and industry will be found in the ascendant. This is stated as a fact, and not for the purpose of insulting the Catholics. Nothing could be further from the thoughts of one, like myself, whose kith and kin are all Catholics. Roman sensuality debases the mind, because it is more in thought than in action, more mental than physical. The priests lead a very sedentary life; they spend long periods brooding in solitude; and their system of education imparts the habit of brooding to their pupils. The continual examination of conscience, as a preparation for confession, makes the Roman Catholic look backwards instead of forward. Virtue on the Catholic side is mostly allied to stoppage and meditation; meditative life in the cloister being the highest ideal of virtue. In the churches which were formed in protest against the Roman system, virtue is found in conjunction with virility and activity. Vice on the Catholic side is found in conjunction with effeminacy and indolence. On the Protestant side it is alleviated,

though not palliated, by virility and activity. There is no district in the world so free from Romanism now as Scandinavia and Denmark; and the strenuous measures adopted against it there show how thoroughly they understood that it meant sensuality.

Bearing in mind how our Catholic educational system in Ireland came to us from France through the Jesuits, the Christian Brothers, and other Orders of priests, it will at once occur to the experienced reader that France is not a country, however much one may respect it in many ways, from which to take a lesson with advantage in moral conduct. Many French Catholic schools are deplorable places. I knew some youths in Ireland who were educated at them, and the habits of sensual indulgence they had contracted at fifteen or sixteen years of age were indescribable. Two of them shattered their constitutions and died just when they reached manhood. They died lingering deaths; but if they had died suddenly, and if the facts of their wretched lives could be brought before a coroner, the verdict would have been, or ought to have been, one of suicide, with their pedagogues as accessories in the first degree.

Before one had well considered this question, one was inclined to join with those who condemn the English public school system of education, because the boys are encouraged to pay too much attention to games. But one must confess that one now thinks it to be the salvation of England.

The small boys at the monks' schools, or at the State schools which are under the management of

the parish priests, spend much time without supervision, owing to the insufficiency of teachers, sitting idle at the desks, or in class in charge of a boy just a little, or not at all, older than themselves. I cannot help thinking, and I say it regretfully, that evil thoughts are encouraged in boys by the system of auricular confession. They begin to go to confession at seven or soon after, at a time when the faculty of evil thinking is almost unknown to them. They are made aware of their own capacity in this respect, and come to regard evil thoughts as a necessary of life. Some confessors will ask a boy to give particulars of each bad thought, and of the resultant acts or motions of members of the body. Other confessors will accept the statement that the boy has had bad thoughts and ask for no particulars. Each system of dealing with the question is bad in its own way. The boy thus eats of the tree of evil knowledge in the preparation for confession, learning his own power of conjuring up mental pictures followed by pleasurable sensations. To be told that indulgence is a sin only adds zest to the enjoyment. To be led to think that forgiveness can be expressly obtained by a whispered confession, keeps him in ignorance of the degrading results of such practices on character and the suicidal results on health.

The confessor, who requires details, confirms the impression of the thought in the boy's mind. If he be a conscientious priest and scold the boy, or take the extreme step of postponing his absolution for a week—a course often taken—the boy is not deterred

from eating the forbidden fruits again, though he may abstain for a short time. He soon finds out the other class of confessor, who does not ask for particulars; for the boys compare notes after confession, without, however, telling their special sins to one another; and the reputation of every priest as a confessor is known. Or the boy goes to confession on some evening when the chapel is crowded with penitents, when the priests are in a hurry to clear off their work, and when his confession is rushed through and he gets absolution without particulars and without censure. He returns to his sin, and relies on getting absolution in this easy way.

Thus the practice of sensual thoughts is encouraged amongst young Catholics in a way that the young Protestant is preserved from; and they are deceived as to the mind-killing consequences by being led to think it a matter entirely between confessor and penitent.

Vice is more openly discussed amongst vicious Protestants and is therefore robbed of its secret pleasure, and the light of common sense exposes its deadly physical effects. In considering the causes of Catholic degeneracy, everything is superficial, and all debates and discussions are mere empty verbiage, as compared with this. It is sensuality in thought and act amongst the young that causes the want of vital force; for it attacks the very seat of life, the brain and nervous system, the organs through which intellect and character are developed. That was the legacy of woe that the pagan Pontifex Maximus transmitted to the Christian Pontifex Maximus for

the enervation of humanity. That is why the Protestant Britisher, the Protestant German, the Protestant American or the Scandinavian, is so superior, mentally and physically, to the Spaniard, the Portuguese, the Italian, the Frenchman, or the Pole.

In countries where the Roman Catholics are only part of the population, as in Ireland, America, and in Germany, they gain by contact with Protestant virility and common sense.

The priests unconsciously create an atmosphere around them which is sensual and, as far as the relations of man and woman are concerned, unnatural. They have always been forbidden by their vows to associate with females, yet in the confessional they continually hear the grossest details of sensuality from their penitents of both sexes. It is hard to expect a priest to have an exalted conception of womankind. It is only sins that are told in confession, and it is the seamy side of woman's character that the priest becomes conversant with.

Many priests, who are men of remarkable self-control, preserve their virtue, not only in action but in thought. I have known several with whose names I could not associate the commission of any sin, or the doing of any dishonourable act; and it is by those excellent men, good in spite of their environment, that the Church is saved from extinction, though they are men who have hardly any voice in directing its policy.

Many priests I went to confession to were really nice-minded men, whose modesty seemed to shrink from any details, and who were only anxious to

convince one of the enormity of sin and the love of God. They were curates in our parish, living respectably in their own houses, temperate, well-mannered, and self-controlled men. Secular priests who live in presbyteries or clergy houses, and monastic priests who live in community, are rarely imbuded with this modest or kindly disposition.

But how many priests fall a thousand times, if not in deed, assuredly in thought, being at first smitten with remorse after each fall, then growing callous, and becoming hopelessly degraded in character. I asked a priest once what he did when he had committed mortal sin. His answer was: "I have the same right of approach to the tribunal of penance as any other man." The priests who are not good grow very hard-hearted. Those who are intimate with Irish Catholics know that, alas, one hardly ever hears of acts of personal kindness done by priests. In Catholic Ireland their collective record is one of heartlessness and avarice. I do not know how the objectionable Irish priest can be better described than by saying that he is an avaricious spendthrift, all his money being spent on himself. It is hard to censure them, for they are accustomed to seeing distress and have been trained with the idea that it is their business to receive, not to give, charity.

Priests are shy. They are upholders of the secrecy of the confessional, and shrink from talking openly with a boy, even at confession; while they never do so out of confession. In Catholic boarding-schools, an outside priest is usually brought in to hear the

pupils' confessions; to save the boys from the risk ot committing sacrilege by concealing their sins from their priestly teachers, if they acted as confessors. These are some of the many drawbacks in the working of the priestly system of education, but the prevalence of sensual indulgence, before and after puberty, is the gravest of all, and the magnitude of it in some clerical schools is revolting. A large Irish school, managed by an Order whose headquarters were on the Continent, was so infected by pernicious practices that, when a new Prior came, or was sent for the purpose, he expelled nine-tenths of the boys and dismissed many of the teachers with a view to stamping out the vice—which some particularly strong-minded parent had discovered and complained of. That supplies a reason against the reception of the fugitive French priests in England, especially teaching Orders, and it ought not to be lost sight of. The feeling against this rottenness in clerical schools, entertained by French anti-clericals, found expression in Zola's *Truth*, after the publication of which the author, it will be remembered, met a sudden and mysterious death.

It is not often that a Roman Catholic parent will complain of anything done in a school managed by priests. In Ireland the lapse of a priest from virtue does not affect public belief in the Church. We have no wholesale or open immorality whatever, and the Church can cover up the tracks of an individual priest so effectively that they cannot be followed. The Church possesses institutions in which children may be born and reared in ignorance of their own

origin, and in which they may die, without any one in the outer world being the wiser. I do not think the British Government in Ireland would prosecute a clerical institution for the concealment of a birth or the non-registration of a death; one has never heard of such a case. One has heard of cases of wholesale poisoning in Irish religious houses; but there was always a Government inspector instantly on the spot, and, almost before the victims were buried, there was an official report exonerating and complimenting the institution in which the fatality occurred. Though, in British law, there is no exemption for clerics at the present day, the ecclesiastical organisation in Ireland is in many respects practically outside and above the law.

Some relatives of mine went to a boarding-school kept by secular priests; and the boys became disgusted with the school, and begged to be taken away from it. But their request was not granted, unhappily for themselves. They complained that the whole school, priests and pupils, got drunk on St. Patrick's Day; that the priests forced the boys to drink whisky; and that they more than once saw priests drunk and suffering from nausea on the altar while celebrating mass. The President of the college used to punish the boys who refused to take the whisky on festive days, standing behind a door and kicking them as they passed along the corridor. This came to the ears of a relative who was a very strong temperance man, and though he was under many obligations to the Church in connection with

his business, he wrote to the President, threatening that the boys would be taken away and sent to a Protestant school. The result was a marked improvement. The President of this college was promoted, on resignation, to a rich parish and a title; but it was well understood that he had taken the pledge against alcoholic liquor, and had given the bishop an assurance that he would continue to abstain.

At another school, where I had some friends, the priests used to do other things equally shocking. A Protestant superintendent used to come to the school yearly to conduct the intermediate examinations, in which valuable prizes and exhibitions are given to the successful candidates by the Government, and even more valuable result-fees to school managers. The superintendent used to open the sealed papers according to law in the examination hall, in the presence of the candidates, each morning. Immediately that the papers were distributed, one or more of the boys, by order of the President, would learn the questions by rote, and then ask for permission to go to the lavatory. There the boy would find a priest waiting for him, to whom he would repeat the contents of the examination paper. Then the priest would go off and ascertain the answers to the questions, and the boy would return to the hall. After an interval, another boy would get leave to come out, and he would bring back the answers as received from the priest, with instructions to pass them from boy to boy through the whole hall. The

boys who refused to "cog," as it was called, that is, to take the answers from their neighbours, would be punished or derided by the priests and their fellow-pupils, as "fellows with no public spirit," "cads that would refuse to help the school to some of the Government money!" At the interval for lunch, and whenever a boy came out to the lavatory, the priests would say, "Let ye cog, boys, 'tis no harm!" I hope this case was exceptional.

To a person accustomed to thinking that grace may be obtained by means of indulgences, and that duty may be evaded by dispensations, there is nothing very wrong in such conduct, nothing that cannot be readily absolved at the next confession. And just as in the case of the bad thoughts, the boys think that absolution wipes out the effect of such conduct, and that it is altogether a question between the priest and the penitent.

The superintendents who came to conduct the examinations year after year at this college never reported it for irregularity. They may not have noticed anything wrong. But they knew that if they reported a Catholic clerical school, the emoluments of a superintendentship would never again be available for them in Ireland.

In my student days in Dublin, some other Roman Catholic young men and I used to make up a party and attend mass at the chapel of a monastic Order of priests. After mass, we would be invited to lunch or early dinner with the community in the refectory, where the meal was eaten in silence, while a novice

read a book to which nobody listened. There was a capital plain dinner, after which the head of the community and another priest, on whose invitation we came, would adjourn with us to the summer-house in the fine garden of the monastery to smoke cigars supplied by the Prior, who was the most ungodly—indeed, the only openly licentious—priest in his speech I ever knew. His whole talk was criticism on the personal appearance of the women he saw at mass. He used to swear and tell what are called "smutty" stories; and, looking back upon it now, I really think he delighted in trying to corrupt our minds. The other priest, who was a different stamp of man, would always deliver a lecture on the Prior's piety after he had got tired of scandalising us and had gone away.

It is worthy of remark that, while the Prior was telling his gay adventures in the summer-house, there used to be a crowd of credulous and pious laity gathered round a cross at the other end of the garden, at the foot of which another member of the Order used to sit, or stand, holding the alleged bones of a saint in his hand for the poor people to kiss, and taking money from them. It is only right to say that the holder of the relics was an enthusiast and a devotee, and had nothing in common with the Prior, who treated him and his relics with open contempt. Three of the young men who, along with myself, went through this ordeal, are now successful professional men. At first they were very independent, and spoke with rebellious contempt of

all priests; though their minds were so nicely constituted that they came scatheless through the ordeal of association with the particular priests I have referred to. When they got married and had children, they one and all made their submission to the Church again; and now, if you met one of them, they would speak very unkindly of me for the stand I made in giving expression to what they once felt, and must still feel, in their hearts.

Those priests used to tell us of sins told to them in confession when on the mission; incest, adulteries, fornications, bestiality, and murder. The tears used to start into our eyes when we heard them. This object may have been to induce us to go to confession to them, hoping to prove to us that our own sins were so trivial by contrast to those which they had forgiven, that we need have no doubt of getting absolution, and no fear of shocking them. They were both men of generous instincts, and I do believe that most of their faults were due to their training for the priesthood, and the sedentary lives they had to lead.

I knew a Roman Catholic family in which there were two brothers, youths on the threshold of manhood, the difference between whom was a striking object-lesson in the different results of a Protestant as compared with a Catholic education. The elder boy was educated at a Roman Catholic day-school, and at a sacerdotal boarding-school on the Continent. The younger was educated from the beginning at Protestant schools, and then at one of the great English public schools. I used to know both of them

since they were children, and they were so much alike that I could hardly know them apart. The difference now is so great that you could hardly believe them to be brothers. The elder is a furtive, unmanly young man, with whom you would not like your child to associate—one whom you would suspect of evil habits—shy, secretive, and ill-mannered. The father deemed it advisable to keep him entirely apart from the younger brother. The younger is open-visaged, frank, well-mannered, manly, and altogether healthy, such as a young Englishman ought to be; holding himself erect, looking you straight in the face, and wonderfully proficient in book-learning. The father delights in his company, and they are to be seen continually together. I wish two pictures could be painted of the brothers: one when they were children and so much alike; the other at the present day, after years spent at different schools, to illustrate the different results of Protestant and Catholic education.

There will have to be an entire change of governmental policy in Ireland before the evil effects of Catholic education can be counteracted. Such a change could be brought about either by an independent Catholic Government under Home Rule—a very doubtful eventuality,—or, better still, by an independent Irish Government, under the Imperial Parliament, determined to consult the laity in preference to the hierarchy on the question of the education of Catholics. At present Local Government Board inspectors, Education Board inspectors,

Reformatory inspectors, and most other sorts of inspectors, even when Protestants, are all fulsome flatterers of the priests' and nuns' schools. The Government would not retain a man in its service, or it would assuredly not encourage him, if he reported unfavourably upon any Catholic institution receiving public money. This cannot be officially admitted, but it is the practice. The sympathy at headquarters now for many years in favour of Catholicism stultifies the Irish Civil Service, when brought face to face with the ecclesiastics on questions of business. In justice to the inspectors, it must be remembered that the ways of the priests are so Machiavellian that they can hardly be caught in any glaring offences; and the inspectors know that, as the law would never be enforced, they would be only beating the air in making hostile reports.

CHAPTER XV

Irish Catholic girls—Their education—Fénelon and Madame de Maintenon—Convent schools—Home-life of girls—How nuns are made—The worldly girls—Northern and Southern women—English husbands and Irish wives—The graziers' daughters.

I ONLY propose to say a brief word about the education of Irish Catholic girls. The lower and middle class girls are educated in day-schools by the different orders of nuns—such as the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of Charity, the Presentation Nuns, the Dominican Nuns, the Sisters of the Holy Faith, and many other varieties, all of whom accept Government grants. In country districts where there are no convents, the girls go to the national schools, where their religious instruction is similar to that received by the boys. Those who attend the nuns' schools become great devotees—dedicating themselves to the Blessed Virgin, and performing many special rites and devotions. Religion becomes, for them, the most important reality in life, so much so that it would be impossible to exaggerate the power of the nuns, and, through them, of the priests, over the female mind in Ireland and, through Ireland, over other English-speaking countries.

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

GIRL IN HOODED CLOAK (OLD STYLE).

"The home-life of the girls on the threshold of womanhood is less enviable than that of the boys. Their thoughts naturally go back to the days spent at the convent school," etc.—*Page* 214.

The peasant girls who go for a few years to the convent or national schools, go into service immediately on leaving school at thirteen or fourteen years of age, and frequently earlier. They are troubled with no such qualms and scruples as their middle-class and upper-class fellow-countrywomen. They lead a hard, but healthy and comparatively natural life, taking such diversions as come their way—a "crack with the boys," or a more serious flirtation when the chance offers—the brightest moments of their existence being the trip to mass on Sundays and holy days, with all the adventures which only young people meet on such occasions. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get servant girls in Ireland, owing to the inducements offered to the girls to emigrate and the want of inducements to remain at home. If the home-life of women—especially servant girls—in Catholic Ireland could be made pleasanter and more comfortable, it would do much to stop not only female but male emigration.

After attending the day-schools, the better class girls go to boarding-schools, which are all kept by nuns. It would not be easy to find a better description of a convent boarding-school than that given by Fénelon, the famous Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cambrai, in a letter of advice to a lady of quality. "It is better for your daughter to be with you," he wrote, "than in the best convent you could select. If a convent is not well governed, she will see vanity honoured, which is the most subtle of all the passions that can affect a young girl.

She will there hear the world spoken of as a sort of enchanted place: and nothing makes a more pernicious impression than that deceptive picture of the world, which is seen at a distance with admiration, and which exaggerates all its pleasures without showing its disappointments and sorrows. So I would fear a worldly convent even more than the world itself. If, on the contrary, a convent conforms to the fervour and regulations of its constitution, a girl of rank will grow up there in a profound ignorance of the world. She leaves the convent like one who had been confined in the shadows of a deep cavern and who suddenly returns to the full light of day. Nothing is more dazzling than this sudden transition, than this glare to which one has never been accustomed."

There has been so little change in the mental condition of Roman Catholic women, allowing for some exceptions, that Fénelon's words are as true to-day as when he wrote them. Fénelon's assistant, Abbe Fleury, records that in his time it was held that Roman Catholic women ought only to learn "catechism, sewing, and different pieces of work, dancing, singing, dressing in the fashion, and how to make a curtsey." This is almost startling because of its accuracy as a fair general description of the standard of perfection still held up to the great bulk of Irish Catholic girls in the convent boarding-schools.

There were no female Jansenists; but we have to look to France for the only effort perhaps worth recording, which was made to give Catholic women

a rational education, namely, that made by a king's mistress, Madame de Maintenon, at her celebrated convent at St. Cyr, founded in 1686. She openly aimed at educating women for their real duties in life, as wives and mothers. A few of her maxims were: "Teach girls to be very sparing as to reading, and always to prefer manual labour"; "Work calms the passions, occupies the mind, and does not leave it time to think of evil"; "Young girls must wear as few ribbons as possible." Rollin, writing about the same time, said: "Bad spelling must not be imputed as a crime to women, since it is inherent in the sex."

Madame de Maintenon's efforts were not supported; and assuredly the pious, maiden ladies to be found in Irish and other English-speaking convents at the present day, are not the proper people to instruct girls in the duties of wives and mothers. In the exceptional cases where Catholic girls now get a higher education, care is taken, as in the case of the boys, that the intellectual culture given never reaches the stage of intellectual emancipation. School-life for the ordinary girl in the ordinary convent is a life in which spiritual terror, by which the young mind is depressed, alternates with babyish merriment and diversion. Time passes in unending routine, relieved by intervals of effervescence; in silence or whispers, or giggling, from morning to night, under the constant custody of nuns who have spy-holes in every door. The girls are taught to regard their bodies as food for worms, rather than as temples of

the Holy Ghost; while amongst themselves, or in conversation with the younger nuns, they speak of the world as "an enchanted place" and exaggerate all its pleasures. The youth of many hundreds of girls is literally buried yearly in those retreats. They grow so frightened that they are afraid to leave them, and they become nuns themselves.

The home-life of the middle-class girls on the threshold of womanhood is, perhaps, less enviable than that of the boys. The boys spend much time out of doors, and can enjoy long periods of forgetfulness of trouble. However reluctantly they may wend their way to a comfortless home in the evening, they can at least look forward to leaving home in the morning, and breathing the fresh air and enjoying the liberty which all men feel under the boundless sky. But the average girl has no such prospect; the dawn brings her no such hope of relief. Her thoughts naturally go back to the days spent at the convent day-school or boarding-school, where all was order and cleanliness, and prayer to God and the Virgin and Saints; where the manual work was done, as if by magic, not by the nuns themselves, but by invisible servants, of whose lives and histories the schoolgirl naturally knew nothing.

Standing at the parting of the ways, the Roman Catholic girl who is so fortunate as to have a choice, sees three courses open to her: marriage, life at home, or life in the convent. She remembers how she envied the nuns when she was a schoolgirl, and now what a glorious future it seems if she can be

a nun herself! She imagines herself arrayed in that impressive and picturesque but, I am told, uncomfortable costume, with which we are all now so familiar; commanding reverence wherever she goes; her time fully occupied all day with just the right occupation at the right time; her hours of rising and retiring, of rest, recreation, and contemplation, fixed and unalterable; relieved from the possibility of ever having to come to a decision for herself; her salvation assured by the prescribed round of sacraments and ritual.

If she be constitutionally a religious girl, devoid of any promptings of human love—and the Roman Catholic system of education breeds many thousands of such girls who have given Irish womanhood its well-deserved reputation for chastity—she goes into a convent as to her allotted home, as the one place of refuge for girls trained from childhood by the nuns. But if she be a girl who does not know her own character, and who, all unknown to herself, has deep natural feelings, which have been merely covered up by superficial piety, as by a veil; and if she, in her innocence and enthusiasm, chooses the life of the cloister, with a mistaken conception of herself—then she may be truly said to be led into the convent, like a lamb to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before her shearers, she is dumb, and openeth not her mouth.

The preliminary periods of residence in the convent, first as a postulant, then as a novice, are frequently not sufficient to open the eyes of a girl who has

entered without understanding her own character. During the first six months or so, while the girl is a postulant, before she puts on the convent uniform, or, as it is said, before she takes the white veil, she is petted and flattered and treated like an honoured guest—that is, if she be a girl whom the nuns, their spiritual directors, or the bishop, really desire to add to the community. And, when the day for taking the white veil arrives, she is so intoxicated by a sense of her own self-importance, as demonstrated to her by the elaborate ritual of that day, that she can hardly be held responsible for her actions.

From early morning, this day, the day of her reception, as it is called, is given over to devotion and feasting by the whole community, and she finds herself the central figure of it all. The ceremonial culminates in the actual reception, at which the bishop and a host of priests in gorgeous robes officiate, in the convent chapel. The postulant first appears arrayed in her best dress, usually of white silk. I shall never forget my emotions the day I saw one of my first cousins thus received, especially when, in all her splendour, she threw herself flat on the carpet of the altar before the bishop, who sat enthroned in his mitre and cope, holding his pastoral cross in his hand, looking down at the prostrate and panting figure before him. It was indeed a sacrifice such as pagans might have well delighted in, and—if one may say so without imputing anything sinister to those concerned—many a girl is veritably slain, morally and mentally, at that gorgeous sacrifice, when she

casts off her expensive worldly attire, and puts on the black robes and white veil of the community.

After acting her part as the central figure in this great drama, the girl becomes a novice, and the novitiate usually last for two years. It is only a girl of extraordinary strength of character who will turn back after her solemn reception. We all know how hard it is, out in the free world, to withdraw from any position we have taken up, any course we have entered upon. How much harder is it to turn back inside the convent walls, where all the influences combine to urge the girl on, and no word is ever spoken to induce her to retreat. During the two years' novitiate she is at liberty to come out; but as she is subject to all the rules of the Order, just like the fully professed nuns, and, in the case of enclosed Orders, never goes outside the walls, that liberty counts for very little.

The feeling of shame is one of the most active in the character of Irish Catholics. Shame of what her friends would say to her; shame of the nuns, the priests, and the bishops; shame of the world; fear of the world; the belief that her chance in life is lost: all these combine to chain the novice down almost as completely as the fully professed nun.

And when the two years of novitiate are over, when the solemn ceremony of profession takes place, when the black veil is given instead of the white veil, and when the vows are taken for life, the novice is often glad that the doubts and fears by which she has been harassed for two years are all over, and

there is no longer room for doubt or fear. She is glad that she has surrendered herself body and soul, and is ready to sink into the rôle of a human machine, except, if one may say so, once in three years, when the election of the Reverend Mother and other officers takes place. Then there is a kind of pandemonium, I am told, in many convents. Faces are scratched, arms are pinched and hair is torn out. I hope, if any of my readers are suffragettes, they will not think I am trying indirectly to damage their cause.

I have known many girls who left the convent after their reception, that is, during the novitiate; and, on analysis, I find that they were girls who, as the nuns thought, would be of no use to the community, and who were forced to retire; or they were girls of extraordinary strength of mind who at length discovered their true selves, and dared to assert themselves. In both cases the result was unfortunate. The first class of girl, who was, as it were, dismissed, frequently lost her reason or died, and always had a wretched life. The second class of girl, the girl with extraordinary strength of mind, usually married the first man she met, and rarely the right man, and the union proved to be a lifelong agony.

The vows which a nun takes on her final profession are taken under the penalty, not merely of mortal sin, but of sacrilege; and to break them involves excommunication, exclusion from the rites of the Church and Christian burial, followed in the next life by eternal damnation. The Pope alone can release a nun from her vows. An appeal to Rome

is one of the most invidious, costly, and tedious proceedings in the world; and therefore, speaking from my own experience as the near relative of many ladies who have resided in convents, and without making any insinuations whatever, I do not think that bishops and priests should be permitted to administer such vows or oaths to young girls without restriction; or, if they be permitted, I do think the State should see that the young women who take these vows under such blood-curdling circumstances are protected by some kind of civil inspection—such inspection as has already been granted to persons of feeble minds in private and public asylums. If it be right to protect the factory girl against her employer; if it be right to protect the well-to-do lady of feeble mind against those who keep her in a private asylum; it cannot be wrong to give some protection to the nun against those who impose such vows upon her in such a way.

The girls who do not yield to the temptation to become nuns and who dare to face the world may be said to be of two types—the one eager for the world's exaggerated pleasures, especially if they come from a worldly convent; the other in fear and trembling at its dangers, especially if they come from a strictly conducted convent. Both come back into the world with the minds of babies and the bodies of women. I once visited another of my first cousins in an Ursuline convent, where she had been a boarder for years. She was eighteen years old, and, as we walked in the convent grounds, she pointed to a

large gasometer, or gasholder, in the town below, and told me that none of the girls knew what it was; and, without waiting for an answer, asked me bluntly if it was the theatre! Marriage becomes the all-absorbing idea with those who dislike the convent, while those who like the religious life constantly yearn to go back to it. The girls of both dispositions find home like a foreign land. As the nuns look down upon those who live in the world, so the girls deem themselves superior to their parents, whose advice they despise. They are strangers, out of touch with the common round of daily life; they are unfitted for responsibility; and they are always on the watch for a miracle to deliver them from an irksome position, either by sending a husband or by sending them back to the nuns.

When the miracle does not happen, they fret away their lives in discontent. Their one longing is to escape from the paternal home—which is often the reverse of comfortable. Those who long to be married are so sanguine and so ignorant of human nature that they cannot realise how, in escaping from present troubles, they may only find themselves face to face with far greater evils. When the convent-educated girl reaches marriageable age, she finds herself in a very tragic position indeed. The ritual and pious formality in which her youth has been spent have alienated her from her kindred and given her no haven of refuge in her own mind, where she can drop anchor and find the peace and self-satisfaction which Protestant girls know. Devoid

of spiritual strength, she seeks consolation in that levity, so characteristic of Catholics everywhere, seeking for happiness in things outside her own mind, grasping at baubles and shadows, like the baby that she is, and relapsing into disappointment after every momentary gratification.

It is not hard to realise what the average educated Catholic young woman and young man are like, when they approach marriageable age. He, with his showy qualities and sham mental independence, often secretly in revolt against the Church to whose observances fear makes him outwardly conform; trading on his embellished memory and without a reflective reason; a man in stature, but a child, and a spoiled child, in intellect and character! She, with the mind of a baby in the body of a woman, whose only education has been received from spinsters cut off from the world, whose ideal life is made up of rules and regulations never to be broken except by committing sin!

The indolence of the Irish Catholic women has long been a subject of comment with writers upon Ireland, who only look at such things from the utilitarian point of view; while other writers have preferred to dwell on their softness and attractiveness. Their husbands never compelled them to do the heavy labour to which the wives of the peasants in other lands have been accustomed. Sir William Temple, in his *Essay on the Advancement of Trade in Ireland*, says: "No women are apter to spin well than the Irish, who, labouring little in any kind with their

hands, have their fingers more supple and soft than other women of the poorer condition amongst us." Skelton says: "They are wholly useless everywhere, excepting in the North." The same writer says: "The women who in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, are scarce of any use except to bear beggar children, in the North give birth to all the wealth of the kingdom." Lord Molesworth, writing in 1723, says: "The women and wives of the poor small farmers and labourers are generally of little or no service to the maintenance of their families, not applying themselves to any useful work." Arthur Young, writing fifty years later, speaks of "the Irish ladies in the cabins, who cannot be persuaded on any consideration even to make hay, not being the custom of the country."

It is still a common expression with the Irish labourers, used in jest or in earnest, to say: "I don't care a d——, my wife is a lady!" I have known hundreds of labourers' wives who never did any work, except to sweep the earthen floor and sew on their husband's buttons. This is almost universally true of the labourers' wives in the southern towns. I have known several farm labourers' wives who could only be got to help in the fields at the busiest time of the year by a great deal of coaxing and as a special compliment. Nothing strikes an Irishman on coming to England or Scotland so much as the activity of the women in all ranks and their business capacity. The Catholic Irish peasant's wife considers it unnatural that she should do anything beyond keeping the

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

IRISH WOMEN—BINDING THE CORN.

"I have known several farm labourers' wives who could only be got to help in the fields by a great deal of coaxing," etc.—*Page* 222.

house, and does as little of that as possible. The wives of the new lords of the soil look after the making of the butter and the feeding of the calves and fowl, but do it very perfunctorily, compared with the thoroughness with which women's work is done in Great Britain.

There is a spirit of indolence generated in all Irish Catholic schools, even more so in girls' schools than in boys', and more in conventual schools than in the national schools under lay teachers. Englishmen find Irishwomen very attractive by reason of their contrast in this respect to their own womankind. When the Statute of Kilkenny made it a crime punishable by outlawry for an English settler to marry an Irishwoman, the Earl of Desmond and Baron Grace at once broke the law, one marrying an O'Meagher and the other a MacCormack. Thomas D'Arcy MacGee, in a lyric celebrating this event, thus paints the charms of the Irishwoman:—

> "My Irish wife has clear blue eyes.
> My heaven by day, my stars by night—
> And twin-like, truth and fondness lie
> Within her swelling bosom white.
> My Irish wife has golden hair—
> Apollo's harp had once such strings—
> Apollo's self might pause to hear
> Her bird-like carol when she sings."

The pity of it is that the young Irish women do not sing more than they do, especially the old melodies of the country. The convent schools seem to kill "the soul of music" in their pupils, who can do no more than hammer out on the piano a piece of

German music or scream some modern operatic air. I remember being at a well-to-do farmer's on a Sunday afternoon. There were a good many visitors, and his singularly handsome daughters, just returned from convent boarding-schools, were singing a duet at the piano, while the company sat entranced. The farmer waited very restively until the song was finished; and then he rose and said: "Why the mischief don't them nuns tache ye to sing without screeching?" There was a general burst of laughter as he left the room. I accompanied him, and we went out to the cow-houses where the servant girls were milking the cows, of which he had a splendid stock. As we got near the cow-house door we heard singing from within. Two of the girls, with their heads pressed against the cows' sides, were singing an old Irish air, the modern words of which begin: "Oh, the song she sung was charming." It was delightful to hear, and we stood listening unseen, the milk streaming into the frothing cans as the girls pulled the paps in time to the melody.

"That's what I call music," said the farmer, and I agreed with him; but my opinion was worth very little, for I was very young at the time.

The convent-bred girl looks forward to having an idle and a good time after marriage, work being the last thing in the world she means to demean herself with. I knew an Englishman married to an Irish wife, and he used to say he would not live in a house with an Englishwoman for any amount of money. It may have been only his English way of making the

best of everything; but he said there was no rest in an Englishwoman, who was always finding something to do for herself and those about her! The Englishwoman always cared, but the Irishwoman acted up to the principle of her countrymen, "The Devil may care!" The Englishwoman always saw before her, but her Irish sister usually saw behind her! He was the severest critic of Englishwomen I ever heard.

The baby-minded Catholic girls are assuredly charming to look upon. I never saw such an accumulation of girlish beauty as I did in a national school in South-west Kerry—a refined type of beauty which would have done honour to the noblest birth. The pity is that they cannot acquire more knowledge of the world before they enter upon the married state. If they could do so, the prospects of the new Irish lords of the soil would be considerably brightened.

Probably the Irish graziers' wives and daughters are the idlest women in the world at present—assuredly the idlest in the British Isles. I knew a large family of graziers' daughters, each of whom had spent several years at a convent boarding-school. Their father had died so wealthy that each had a fortune sufficiently large to make her independent. Neither their mother nor they knew anything of the business by which the father made his money and the sons still lived. Their residence was in the centre of a large farm, but they knew no more about farming than East-End Cockneys. They bought the milk, eggs, and bacon for the table, and spent their

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days driving in and out of town, dressing and interviewing dressmakers, and paying long visits to friends or acquaintances made on their holiday trips.

These "heifers," as the young graziers call all girls, never missed a race-meeting in Dublin or the Midlands; admitted no responsibility to their kind; never visited or tried to do anything for the poor in their neighbourhood; and never thought of religion except to "make their souls" periodically by going to confession and communion. They scorned to make or mend their own clothes. Their evenings were spent loafing at home when there did not happen to be a dance or card-party at one of their friends' houses, and when there was no other excuse for going out.

The graziers' sons, whom such girls use every innocent art to entrap into marriage, are just as idle as the girls, except that they go to the market and fair to buy and sell, or make an occasional trip to England to sell their own cattle there. The eldest son or father keeps a racehorse or two, and the boys ride races on their own or other people's horses. The men, old and young, play cards with an ability which would astonish Bret Harte's Chinaman — always playing for high stakes. They devote as much time to the science of card-playing as the girls do to the science of dressmaking. When a serious game is not possible, they play for counters with their sisters to keep their hands in. These young Midland graziers and their sisters are exceedingly "hard" about money, being loth to part with a farthing

except for their own amusement. Backing race-horses and winning at cards are the highest forms of pleasure they know; and, as sobriety is necessary to achieve those triumphs, they drink sparingly. They say little, being close of speech, like most born gamblers, and afraid of "giving themselves away." The girls' highest ambition is to marry a doctor or a solicitor, so as to get into town; the young men dream of making a *coup* at betting, or riding or owning a winner. Like the men, the girls have no conversational powers, and many of them end by becoming nuns. The country they live in is known as "the land of the short grass," because it contains few meadows and little corn, and the sweet grass is kept close-cropped by the cattle.

CHAPTER XVI

Courtship—Shrovetide—Skellig—Catholic view of matrimony — Female anxiety for marriage — Irish divorce law — Separation of the sexes — Matchmaking amongst the farmers—Recalcitrant bridegroom and a perfect bride—Priests' fees—Illegitimacy—A low marriage rate.

THERE is a great deal of what may be called flirtation by innuendo amongst Catholic young people of the middle classes—farmers, shopkeepers, and professional men. The passion for matchmaking is in the air, and a whole town or parish will sometimes take up the rôle of matchmaker, deciding that Mike Murnaghan, the well-to-do shopkeeper or farmer, ought to marry Mary Josephine O'Bryne, daughter of another prosperous trader or farmer; or that some bachelor solicitor, dispensary doctor, bank clerk, policeman, or excise officer, ought to marry some particular eligible spinster who is supposed to be pining away for want of a proposal from the one acceptable man. The parties may never, or hardly ever meet; but they carry on a courtship often for years, by innuendo. She sets out for her afternoon walk day after day, week after week, her mind engrossed with one idea, namely, that there is a chance of meeting and being seen by him. He is on

the look out for her and retreats at her approach. She is quizzed about him, and he about her; yet, if they do meet, it is only to interchange some commonplace remarks and separate immediately.

The peasant girls are not bound by such rigid conventionality. They arrange for clandestine meetings in the evenings, but the young couples rarely muster up courage to go for a walk openly. Bashfulness is epidemic, and it seems impossible to speak of love, courtship, and marriage without conveying some *double entendre* which sends the hot blood rushing alike to the cheeks of the young woman and the young man. I have heard more than one young labourer and farmer say that he would like to marry a particular girl. "But," he added, "I declare to God, I'd be ashamed o' me life. I'd never pull through it."

This is quite opposed to the English conception of the Irishman, who is supposed to make love to every woman he meets. There are, it is true, a good many men amongst the Catholic Irish who pride themselves on being "lady killers"; but I think it is the Protestant Irishman who has given his countrymen the reputation for audacious gallantry and fortune-hunting which they enjoyed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century. I cannot imagine any one more awkward and helpless than the average Catholic Irishman in the matter of a proposal of marriage and rational preparation for married life. The girls are not so bashful, but they are hampered by conventions and super-modesty. The want of married clergymen

is mainly responsible for this *impasse.* There is no married—or, if not married, marriageable—rector or vicar, as in England, to break the ice and set things in motion. Hence the necessity for matchmakers.

The season between Christmas and Lent, called Shrovetide, is the great marrying time amongst Roman Catholics. Every girl of marriageable age and every bachelor able to support a wife are then on the matrimonial market. The parish priests, or, as they are commonly called, the P.P's., are surveying the scene everywhere like husbandmen, calculating the yield of a crop. They exact the largest fee possible for the wedding ceremony. Having no fixed tithes or sustentation endowments, they are driven, or one should say, perhaps, they prefer, to make up their income as best they can in this way. The nuns are naturally trying to get eligible girls with fortunes to enter the convents; for religious communities require to be renewed physically and financially. Fathers, as a rule, are trying to induce their daughters to take husbands. Mothers are praying for desirable sons-in-law, or in doubt between the advantages of a religious life and the attraction of life in the world for their girls. Younger sisters are in a state of expectancy as great almost as presumptive brides. Matchmakers are busy throughout the land.

The man or woman of marriageable age who lets Shrove go by without getting married is an object of commiseration. In Munster such a person is said to

Photo by Guy, Cork.]

A MOUNTAIN COLLEEN.

"The peasant girls are not bound by such rigid conventionality."—*Page* 229.

Many go barefoot for choice. I have met them so walking to town with a pair of new boots slung over the shoulder.

"go to Skellig," and the neighbours pass very inconsiderate and indecorous comments; the spinster being more severely dealt with than the bachelor. On Skellig night, that is, the evening of Shrove Tuesday, the last day of the marrying season, girls fear to stir abroad after nightfall, for the boys go out with ropes and horns to carry spinsters to Skellig. Songs, called Skellig Lists, satirising those who have gone to Skellig, are published and sometimes sung from door to door by ballad-singers. When the Skellig boys encounter a girl, they make a great show of dragging her to the nearest pond or river, blowing horns and shouting, as if with the intention of giving her a ducking. But, except in the case of very unpopular persons, they rarely go to extremities; the utmost ransom exacted being a kiss, in the case of young girls, and in the case of maturer spinsters, a solemn promise not to let another Shrove pass without getting married.

The Skellig boys are often set in motion by an unsuccessful suitor. I remember, when a child, being with a spinster relative on Skellig night; and, as we were driving home to her house, the side-car was held up by the Skellig boys on the high road. The lady, who held a farm in her own right, had refused several offers of marriage and was a confirmed spinster, being about forty years old. She bore her capture with great good humour, promising that, if any one would have her, she would surely get married next year. Thereupon one of the Skellig boys shouted out the name of a farmer in the locality who had

been pestering her with his attentions for years, and the car was released amid loud cheers. But my relative never got married, and died quite recently at an advanced age. The customs of Skellig night are being stamped out by the police, and it is not as generally kept as when I was a boy. But the spirit underlying it still lives, namely, the primitive man's desire for marriage — and nowhere in the world, perhaps, does one come into closer touch with the natural man, held in leash by religion, than in the Emerald Isle.

The prevalent view of matrimony amongst the Catholics is a strange admixture of the spiritual with the grossly materialistic. Though the Irish temperament is passionate and sentimental, and though marriage is in theory a sacrament before everything else, there are, on the whole, few love matches amongst the farming class, who constitute the backbone of the orthodox Catholic population. Amongst the gentry, professional men, shopkeepers, and labourers, love matches are more frequent. In the eighteenth, and the first half of the nineteenth, century, fire-eating Hibernians were to be found at fashionable resorts in England forcing their attentions on heiresses, and sending challenges to all and sundry who dared even to look at the object of their suit. Though manners have changed in Ireland as well as England, it is still the rule in Ireland that men should seek fortunes with their wives; and, among the farmers in particular, the wife may be said to buy her husband.

It used to be the custom in Ireland, as in Scotland, and that not so long ago, for a man to force a woman to marry him; and, though abductions have ceased, the result of the *mariage de convenance* amongst the most important class of the population is that men as well as women are forced into matrimony by their friends, and married life has a tendency to become very grey and sordid. I have seen Jacob's love adventures re-enacted in Ireland, having more than once known a man to be forced to marry the plain, elder sister, when he had conducted all the negotiations on the assumption that the younger and prettier sister was to be his wife. I have seen men, who hated the thought of marriage, dragged to the altar like sacrificial victims, and wedded to women whom they could not be got to look at for love or money. I have also seen reluctant brides, but their disappointment was concealed by the bridal veil, and the male spectators at the church saw nothing more than the trembling lip and pallid cheek, becoming symptoms of maidenly modesty, as Beauty accepted the Beast before the altar. At the wedding-party afterwards, her perturbation was attributed to the same cause, as she reluctantly walked with him through a set of quadrilles, praying secretly that the hours might be prolonged before she must go home with him in the darkness of the night, or the grey of the morning.

These complications arise largely from ignorance of female character and from the quaint and absurd conception of woman, as wife and lifelong com-

panion, which young men get from their bachelor schoolmasters and spiritual directors; and from the equally weird ideas of man, in the capacity of husband, which young women get from their spinster schoolmistresses and their bachelor confessors.

Many Catholic girls still like the appearance of being forced into an engagement and have a preference for masterly wooers. The courtship of "Mr. O'Brien from Clare" with the bashful "Widow Malone," as described by Charles Lever, will perhaps never be out of date in Ireland. Every one knows how Mr. O'Brien "put his arm round her waist" and "gave ten kisses at laste."

> "And the widow they all thought so shy,
> My eye!
> Ne'er thought of a simper or sigh—
> For why?
> But 'Lucius,' says she,
> 'Since you've now made so free,
> You may marry *your* Molly Malone,
> Ohone!'"

The catechism used in the schools, amongst other things, says materialistically that matrimony is a sacrament which "gives to those who receive it worthily a special grace to enable them to bear the difficulties of their state." Nothing could well be more prosaic, yet there are no people in the world who continue, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary, to expect from matrimony such wonders in the way of happiness as the Catholic Irish. Nowhere may it be more truly said that girls are "dying to get married."

This idea is forcibly put into verse by Thomas Davis, where he makes an Irish girl say :—

> "Oh, the marriage, the marriage,
> With love and ma boochil for me !
> The ladies that ride in a carriage
> Might envy my marriage to me ;
> For Eoghan is straight as a tower,
> And tender, and loving, and true ;
> He told me more love in an hour
> Than the squires of the country could do.
> I long through the winter to skim,
> Though Eoghan longs more, I can see,
> When I shall be married to him,
> And he will be married to me."

The catechism does not explain that matrimony differs from the other six sacraments in this : that the priest is not the administrator of the sacrament, but only a witness—the parties administering the sacrament to themselves. I have heard of a case in Ireland where the Church held a man and woman to have been validly married by the mere act of the man taking the woman's hand in the presence of the parish priest and saying aloud : "I take this woman to be my wife"—the woman consenting. The P.P. in that case was opposed to the marriage, and was an unwilling witness, being taken unawares by the parties, who thrust themselves into his presence. But those strenuous days are gone, never apparently to return.

It is said that divorce is impossible in the Roman Church, but, if one prosecutes a suit at Rome, one may get a divorce, the decree being a pronouncement

that the marriage was null and void from the beginning, and was never really a marriage. It is only a very devout Catholic who would go to Rome for a dissolution of marriage; it is only a very rich one who could afford to do so. Catholics who appeal to the ordinary law of the land to redress a matrimonial injustice have to be content with what is known as a divorce from bed and board, or *a mensa et thoro*. The Church does not recognise a complete legal divorce with right of re-marriage, and it is hardly ever applied for by Roman Catholics. Owing to the Government's respect for Roman Catholic sentiment in Ireland, it is impossible for Irish people of any religion, if domiciled in Ireland, to obtain a full divorce in the law courts. They must get a special Act of Parliament passed at their sole expense to complete the divorce and confer the right of re-marriage—an expensive procedure only resorted to by wealthy persons not belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. Roman Catholics, being very shy, dislike the publicity involved in legal proceedings, and rarely apply even for the divorce *a mensa et thoro*, but, of late, the exceptions to this rule have been increasing.

The ideal view of marriage in Catholic Ireland is that it is a supernatural rather than a natural, a spiritual rather than a physical, union, a sacrament rather than a legal contract. But, as in most other things Irish, the actual falls woefully short of the ideal, and all the circumstances of the average Catholic marriage are of a most materialistic character;

and, if one could avoid considering the after-fate of the high contracting parties, Irish matchmaking customs have, to the orderly English mind, a tendency to be humorous rather than etherial.

Considered in connection with marriage, there are certain traits noticeable amongst the young people of both sexes—(1) A coarseness of expression and *mauvaise honte* in the young men, which conceal and often efface their underlying good nature; (2) a certain spirituality, or refinement, or a yearning for refinement, accompanied also by *mauvaise honte*, in many of the girls; (3) an unfitness in both young men and young women for what one may call that rational courtship which gives opportunities for a mutual study of character; (4) the conception of what a consort should be, on one or other or both sides, is either decidedly animal and materialistic, or else impossibly ideal, the first prevailing amongst the men, the second amongst the women.

Each party, being an idealist, is not prepared to accept the other with all his or her faults and shortcomings; each is ready to take "for better" but not "for worse." Of course, happily, there are many exceptions; but, as a rule, the Irishman's conception of a helpmate is rarely as reasonable as that of the great and typically English poet, Wordsworth :—

> "A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food,
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles."

The sanguine Irishwoman's ideal is well expressed in Miss Downing's ballad, "My Owen":—

"Proud of you, fond of you, having all right in you,
Quitting all else through my love and delight in you!
Reading your eyes till new love they shall teach to me,
Though wild and weak till now,
By that blest marriage vow,
More than the wisest know *your* heart shall preach to me!"

Songs like this, which are constantly sung by the people, are the best index to their thoughts, and that must be my apology for quoting a few of them.

There is a large class of Catholic Irishmen who approach marriage with a shiver; for the typical Irishman apparently likes doing what he does not like, though he groans terribly under the operation. The nervousness of those diffident bridegrooms recalls the shudder of the man reluctantly about to take a cold plunge, rather than the serious determination and sense of duty of the young Englishman of the same type. Their frame of mind is well expressed by a modern Irish bard (Mr. Francis A. Fahy):—

"I've kissed and courted them all,
Gentle and simple, short, medium and tall,
But kept a merry heart free
Till it was stole unknowst by Kitty Magee."

On the day of his marriage, one of those men and his boon companions imagine that Freedom shrieks, as she is said to have done "when Kosciusko fell." And the bridegroom may be imagined whispering to the bride: "Dance light, for my heart it lies under your feet, love!"

There is another large class who marry on the impulse of the moment, believing that all women are angels, and that, choose whom they may, they cannot make a mistake. Moore has expressed this frame of mind:—

> "To ladies' eyes a round, boy!
> We can't refuse, we can't refuse:
> Tho' bright eyes so abound, boy,
> 'Tis hard to choose, 'tis hard to choose:
>
> But fill the cup! where'er, boy,
> Our choice may fall, our choice may fall,
> We're sure to find love there, boy,
> So drink them all! so drink them all!"

Then there are many who treat courtship and marriage as a jest. Samuel Lover depicts a young man of this kind in *Rory O'More*:—

> "He wished in his heart pretty Kathleen to please,
> And he thought the best way to do that was to tease.
> 'Now, Rory, be aisy,' sweet Kathleen would cry,
> Reproof on her lip, but a smile in her eye,
> 'With your tricks, I don't know, in troth, what I'm about:
> Faith, you've teased till I've put on my cloak inside out.'"

Lady Morgan immortalises a young woman of the same species in "Kate Kearney":—

> "Oh, did you not hear of Kate Kearney?
> She lives on the banks of Killarney;
> From the glance of her eye, shun danger and fly,
> For fatal the glance of Kate Kearney."

And Mr. A. P. Graves does likewise in his "Fan Fitzgerl":—

> "Wirra! Wirra! Ologone!
> Can't ye leave a lad alone,
> Till he's proved there's no tradition left of any other girl
> Who's been up to half the devilment of Fan Fitzgerl!"

Allowing for exceptions, it may be said generically of all Irish Catholic marriages that—(1) the men are incapable of giving assistance in domestic affairs or household management, or of appreciating a wife's difficulties; and (2) the women are incapable of understanding the husband's trials and temptations. Both sides lack the power of management and compromise in which English people excel.

The system of separating the sexes has always been characteristic of the Roman Catholic Church. In hundreds of chapels in Ireland the men are still separated from the women at mass, except in the private pews belonging to the principal families. And though this custom is not preserved in the costly new churches, which are taking the place of the old chapels, other steps have been taken by the Church to prevent young people of both sexes from enjoying each other's society.

When I was a boy, the immemorial custom of holding dances at the cross-roads on Sunday and holiday afternoons in summer was still so general that, in a drive of eight or ten miles, one could hardly fail to see two or more of those festive gatherings, at which the boys and girls—sons and daughters of small farmers and labourers—met in the open air, in the daylight, and on the public road, to enjoy themselves harmlessly together.

The Church made open war against those dances, making it a "reserved sin" in many places to attend them, and thus the cross-road dances were abolished in my own time. The priests did not do this from

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

COURTSHIP ACROSS THE HALF-DOOR.

"A certain spirituality, or refinement, or a yearning for refinement, accompanied also by *mauvaise honte*, in many of the girls."—*Page 237.*

zeal for the due observance of the Sabbath; for, while denouncing the dances, they stimulated the young men to hold football and hurling matches all over the country on Sundays. The result is that the dances have entirely ceased, and the young men now go off by themselves on Sundays, while the girls are left at home, and the separation of the sexes on Sundays is more complete than ever.

Apart from all this amatory byplay and lighter side of courtship, there remains to be considered the marriages of the Catholic farmers—the freeholders whose land is mortgaged to the British Government, and in whom every taxpayer is financially interested. These marriages are diplomatic negotiations, the preliminaries of which may take years to arrange, and rarely indeed are they love matches. I cannot better illustrate the mode of procedure than by citing a definite case — one of many known to myself.

The father of the young man to be married was a well-to-do farmer who held 150 acres of good freehold land, rented a fertile leasehold farm of 250 acres, and held, besides, 200 acres of grazing land from year to year. The freehold was entailed and would go to the eldest son on the father's death; and the young man lived on it apart from the family, who lived on the leasehold farm. The eldest son was industrious and a good farmer. But he was exceedingly boorish, and had a horror of young women. He had several sisters and brothers. The girls considered themselves very refined, were fond of society, dressed well, and,

there being many comfortable farmers in their district, of whom not a few were Protestants, had a very enjoyable time. They used to take it in turn to housekeep for their eldest brother, a duty which they regarded as a banishment; while it was such agony to him to be in his sister's company that he would take his meals with the servants in the kitchen, while she ate alone in the parlour. And if he were forced into the parlour, he would lose all control of his nerves, sit at table with his hat on, and eat with his fingers.

His father was anxious that Patrick should get married, and proposed several matches, but none of his sisters' friends would have him. Whenever his father would touch on the subject of marriage, Patrick would run away. The father would scold him, saying: "Can't you saddle the young horse and go to mass in different parishes, and see if there's any girl you would like; and, if she's at all suitable, I'll have the match made for you without any trouble to yourself." But Patrick always made some excuse for not obeying his father's command.

The father at length invoked the aid of a match-maker, a prosperous young shopkeeper who had, as they say in Ireland, "a great way with him entirely," explaining the position to him thus: "I want money to fortune off my eldest girl; and I'm prepared to give Pat my life-interest in the freehold farm for £500 cash and a life annuity of £25, and I'll make him a present of the stock and growing crops. If you could find a girl whose people would pay that

much to put her into such a snug place, and if you can get Pat to marry her, I'll be forever grateful."

"And may I ask if you intend that £500 as a fortune for your eldest daughter, sir?" said the shopkeeper, who was one of the many admirers of that young lady.

"I will give £500 with her, if she marries a man of whom I approve," replied the father.

The shopkeeper sportingly undertook the commission, and suggested that this daughter, who was the most refined of the sisters, and the one that Patrick most detested, should at once go and live permanently with Patrick; and his advice was taken.

When the sister had been some weeks housekeeping for Patrick, the matchmaker paid her a visit, and got a heartrending account of her sufferings in exile.

He then went out to the fields to see Patrick, explaining that, as he was accidentally passing, he had called to pay him and his sister a visit.

Patrick make sad complaint of his sister, saying: "Since she came, I don't know what it is to eat a meal, to take a smoke, or to sit by the fire in comfort in the house. 'Tis in the stable or in the cow-house I spends my evenings. If others suffered half what I do, they would go on a spree for a month."

"That's a pity," said the shopkeeper, "for your father tells me that she's to stay here for the rest of his life. It appears she has her mind made up never to get married, and she came up here to avoid being

pressed by the family and her many admirers. She says that, as ye're both determined on a single life, she'll devote herself to you henceforth. She'll polish up your manners and teach you to dance and sing and pass compliments, so that the most genteel girl would be proud to marry you."

Patrick felt stunned; for he hated all the genteel accomplishments which were the breath of life to his sisters and their set. To him it seemed the most dismal of fates to have to live with his sister until the death of his father, who might live for thirty or forty years. On the other hand, it was the shop-keeper's highest ambition to marry the girl whom Patrick so disliked.

"I often wish I was under the sod with the daisy quilt over me!" said Patrick with a long Irish face.

"'Tis a nasty outlook certainly," said the match-maker, "but you have the cure in your own hands. The minute you get married, your sister will have to make it Lady Day and quit the premises."

Patrick sighed, as Irish Catholics only can sigh. "That's all very fine," he said. "If there was such a thing as a sensible woman with the ways of a man, I might put my shame in my pocket and live in one house with her."

"I know just the girl you mean," said the match-maker. "She's able to do all farming work as well as a man."

"I wouldn't ask her to do that," said Patrick. "I only want her to do woman's work, and to be grauver in herself, and not to be getting in my way, and

not to have no nonsense or kimmeens about her. 'Tis the kimmeens I can't stand."

"This is the very girl for you then," said the matchmaker, who thoroughly gauged Patrick's ideal of a wife. "She don't want to do man's work, but she can do it, if she's put to it. And, as for being grauver, she's as fat as a prize heifer, and as easy-going in her ways. She don't smoke herself, but she fills her father's and brother's pipes for them in the evening; and she always takes a drop of whisky with the men, only a small drop, just to show her sympathy. And as for her smile, 'tis all over her face, as broad as 'tis long. She need never say a word, only just smile."

"Haven't she any kimmeens?" asked Patrick.

"No," said the matchmaker. "She'd as soon see a man with his hat on as off in the parlour, and don't care whether you sit on a table or a chair, and never likes to see a man with his boots clean or done up tasty, as we, townsmen, have to be. She gets up at cockcrow and works all day without stopping. And, after supper, she sews or knits until bedtime, when she's so tired that she can hardly keep awake while she's saying her prayers."

"Do she talk much?" asked Patrick.

"Only when spoken to," was the reply. "And if she asks a question, it is 'What'll I be after doing next, mother?' or 'Is that to your liking, father?' and so on. One of her father's labourers told me that he worked a whole day hoeing alongside of her, and she never passed a remark. She knits a pair of

socks on the way to and from town every day she goes to market."

Patrick was unable to repress his astonishment. "Can she read and write?" he asked.

"Faith, she can do that well," said the matchmaker, "but only when necessary. She got a splendid education, but never looked in a book since she left school, saving her prayer book, and never read a story paper in her life. And I have it for a fact, that when her father and brother comes home after the fair a little elevated, as 'tis often a good man's case, she helps 'em upstairs; and the next morning she always cures them with a hair of the dog that bit 'em, as the old saying is."

"'Tis a great wonder that she's not picked up," said Patrick contemplatively. "How old is she?"

"Quite a young girl," was the answer, "old enough to be good and young enough to be better; and I don't know but she's picked up already. I heard from a man of her parish that there's numbers inquiring about her this Shrove."

After a long pause, Patrick said: "I believe I couldn't be worse off than I am at present, anyway." And he whipped up his horses and left the matchmaker, who paid a further prolonged visit to Patrick's sister to report progress.

Before daylight next morning the matchmaker set off for the high land twenty miles away, where this paragon of female virtue had her home. He first saw the girl's father, and proposed the match to him in the farmyard. Then he went into the house and

restated his proposal to father and mother over the inevitable glass of grog. It was well received, as coming from a part of the country so much more fertile than that in which the girl's parents had made their money; and a day was fixed for the father to come and inspect the freehold farm. Then the matchmaker saw the girl herself, and felt that she was just the wife for Patrick. The subject of the match was not broached in her presence, but she suspected the errand on which the young shopkeeper had come, for there was nothing but matchmaking in the air at that time of the year. She cooked the dinner, laid the table, carved the fowls and bacon, and dispensed all hospitality; the mother sitting by, so as the better to display her daughter's ability.

A few days afterwards her father and brother came upon Patrick unawares, as if to buy some seed barley. Patrick suspected nothing, and they haggled for half an hour about the price, when the matchmaker arrived, as if by accident, professing the greatest surprise at seeing the strangers. He tried to make a bargain between them by splitting the difference, but Patrick would not give way, and the visitors had to buy the barley at Patrick's price, which greatly increased their respect for him.

The matchmaker then took Patrick aside and said, "You'd better ask your sister to get out the whisky and prepare a bit of extra dinner. 'Twould give you a bad name if these respectable men were let go without asking them if they had a mouth on

'em; and while you're inside, I'll take 'em for a walk over the farm."

When the matchmaker and the visitors returned to the farmyard, having carefully inspected the land, Patrick called the matchmaker aside, and tragically whispered: "She says she won't allow such cawbogues as these to dirty her parlour, and she won't have no whisky drinking in the house while she's in it. They must go as they came."

The matchmaker pretended to be in a towering rage and, to Patrick's dismay, explained the situation to the visitors with many apologies.

The girl's father laid his hand on Patrick's shoulder, saying: "'Tis meself that have a daughter that would make you comfortable and trait your friends daisent. 'Tisn't for me to say it, but——"

The matchmaker interrupted him: "Why then, without interrupting you, sir, might I ask if you're Mr. O'Driscoll from Ballygurteen, whose daughter is so much spoken of for her good qualities?"

Patrick immediately walked off to the stable, whence he emerged between two horses harnessed for ploughing. The matchmaker tried to hold him by force, but he tore himself away, saying: "Ye'll have to settle it without me."

The three matchmakers then went off to town, and met Patrick's father by appointment, and the match was made that afternoon in the shopkeeper's parlour; the whole party going to the solicitor's to give instructions for the marriage settlement.

Patrick refused to go and see the girl at her home;

and as she insisted on his coming, the help of the P.P. had to be invoked. Patrick determined that he would not go in the daytime, and, this concession being made, he yielded to the superior power of his Reverence's eye, and drove off in the twilight on his long drive, being thoughtfully supplied by the shopkeeper with a bottle of whisky to keep him quiet.

The father and brother of the girl met them on the road near their house, into which Patrick had to be dragged. He looked over his shoulder as he was being introduced to his intended wife, while she scrutinised him narrowly. Nor could he be got to speak a word, even when she left the room to prepare supper. When the party were at punch after supper, the father announced with a wink and a smile that his daughter, like the good girl that she always was, found no fault with the husband provided for her by her parents, and that the match was to proceed.

A week afterwards the reluctant bridegroom was brought to the wedding by a posse of his brothers and friends, under the leadership of the shopkeeper, as best man. He acted like a somnambulist during the ceremony. He blushed and was silent when the priest asked him if he would take this woman to be his wife, and he entirely ignored the priest's command to him to kiss his wife. There was an immense gathering of cars at the chapel, as the whole party was to take a processional drive of ten or twelve miles round the parish before going back to the wedding dinner. On reaching the chapel door, Patrick ran away from his wife, and took refuge in

the shopkeeper's trap, from which he refused to be evicted; and the best man had to take the bridegroom's place in the first car beside the bride.

Before the end of the same Shrove, the matchmaker married Patrick's sister, and thereby profited by his exertions on behalf of his brother-in-law. It is only fair to add that Patrick and his wife got on very well together. They had a numerous family, and were perhaps the most comfortable people of their class in their district.

All young farmers are not as boorish as Patrick, but bashfulness is very prevalent. Nor are all matches made as easily as his; many matches taking years in the making, because of a difference about the fortune, the objection of one of the parties, or the unwillingness of the parents, who, in the meantime, try to get their son or daughter better married elsewhere. The P.P's. and the curates, who are called C.C's., frequently figure as matchmakers—the confessors of the young people and of the parents naturally having great power in such matters.

Patrick's marriage was a commonplace one, presenting no difficulties to the Church, and only entailed the payment of the marriage fees, £25 to the bride's P.P. and £10 to the P.P. of the bridegroom. In other cases, as where a dispensation is required, there are great complications and heavy outlay on religion. I have known priests get £100 from rich farmers, even where no dispensation was necessary, so eager are such people for the blessing of the Church and to be well spoken of by the clergy. In recent years the

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

IRISH WOMEN—A WOOL-SPINNER.

The Catholics "are strong in the woollen trade, supplying 4145 out of 5348 engaged in it. This being the only manufacture in which they predominate."—*Page 60.*

custom has grown up of having nuptial masses, at which from three to thirty priests assist, according to the position of the parties, each priest getting a fee of £1 as well as dinner; and this expense is extra to the fees agreed on for the marriage.

There is a huge squandering of money at the typical farmer's marriage. Friends come in shoals to a wedding, and yet, amongst the real Irish, there are no wedding presents given to the young couple—except perhaps little keepsakes to the bride from her girl friends—no household furniture, no cheques, no wearing apparel, except a trousseau from the bride's mother. The young couple begin life with little but the memory of a great wedding with its elaborate religious ceremonial, followed by an enormous consumption of meat and drink, an avalanche of speech-making, and a tempest of music and dancing—the rioting at polkas, reels, jigs, hornpipes, and schottisches surpassing anything seen in England, even Kitchen Lancers.

It sometimes happens that the young man, or "boy," as the peasants call him, has the strength of mind to do his own matchmaking. In one case of this kind which I have in mind, the man's parents were both dead. He was a younger son living with a married elder brother and had a few hundred pounds; and his idea was to find a girl with a farm who would make him master of herself and her property in consideration of his money. He directed his attention to widows with marriageable daughters, and made a round of the county, the period of his

visitations to each place lasting several months. He used to ride a mule that had a habit of sulking, and as he had been several years on the look out for a wife, he and the mule were known in half a dozen parishes.

I well remember one spring afternoon, when he was going to pay a visit at a farm occupied by a widow who had seen better days, and whose elder daughter was exceedingly popular in the neighbourhood, as well for her good looks and placid disposition as for the misfortunes of her family. The mule sulked opposite a row of labourers' cottages, and the women all came out to ridicule him, being indignant with him for the length of time he had been visiting, saying that he was unreasonably hard to please, and that the girl was worthy of a better man.

" What a cheek the likes of you have," said one matron contemptuously, "to come spraddled on a mule to ask Mrs. O'Grady for her daughter, a girl that, in her father's lifetime, the best man mounted on the best horse in the barony couldn't be good enough for!"

It is the custom for a man who is looking for a wife to ride his best horse or drive his best equipage.

"What a *clean-a-shtig* (son-in-law in the house) you'd make, to be sure!" cried another. "Is it behind you on the mule you'd take your wife to market!"

When at length the animal consented to move off, it was not in the direction of the girl's home but of its owner's. The retreating suitor was pelted with

sods and stones, and never returned to pursue his quest for a wife and farm.

The orthodox match is a very solemnly conducted affair. If the prospective bride has cash, a deputation of her parents and knowledgeable friends will visit the prospective bridegroom's farm; if he posseses the cash, and she the farm, a deputation of his friends visits her place. There are a great many consultations, and every item in the matrimonial sale and barter is haggled over, little or no attention being paid to the feelings of the parties.

The small number of illegitimate births in Ireland, as compared with Protestant countries, is a subject to which the Catholic hierarchy and priesthood and all Catholic publicists continually draw public attention, as a testimony to the high standand of morality produced by the Roman Catholic religion. Of the total births registered in 1907, 2·5 per 100 in Ireland, 6·4 per 100 in Scotland, and 10 per 100 in Denmark were illegitimate. The low figure for the Catholic country may be attributed to the scrupulous veneration for the sacrament of marriage instilled into Irish womanhood by the Irish priesthood. But that a low rate of illegitimacy is a characteristic result of the Roman Catholic religion is far from being true, as an illustration drawn from three Catholic countries will suffice to prove. In Portugal, for instance, the rate of illegitimate births is 12·5 per 100, in Bavaria 12·9, and in Austria 19. The Catholic hierarchy in the British Isles entertain such a lofty conception of the sacrament of matrimony that a British Roman

Catholic prelate recently stigmatised co-habitation after marriage in a registry office, as "an adulterous and incestuous connection." The marriage fees constitute one of the principal sources of income of the unendowed Catholic clergy; and it used to be the general custom to make a collection for the priest at the weddings as well as at the burial services—a practice which, though largely discontinued, still prevails in some localities. The marriage fees exacted from Catholics in Ireland are very high, as already explained. To assume, however, that every so-called illegitimate birth registered in Scotland represents a child of sin would be a capital error. The custom prevails there of marrying on trial, or handfasting, before taking the irrevocable step; and in the great majority of cases the full legal marriage is the ultimate consequence. By the Scottish law, a child becomes legitimate by the subsequent marriage of its parents at any time, which is not the case in England or Ireland. Therefore there is not the same stigma attaching to birth before marriage there as in the rest of the United Kingdom. If, after a child is born, the parents agree to part without a legal marriage, for incompatibility or other sound reason, it is surely preferable to an ill-suited union. The child grows up under the sole government of the mother, living with her family, instead of under the distracting rule of two quarrelling parents; and the father is bound to pay for its support. The mother continues her career; there is no secrecy, no disgrace; and she probably marries some man more suitable to

her temperament. There is no motive for concealing an illegitimate birth under such circumstances. The same observations apply to Denmark. But in Ireland quite a different view prevails. There a girl is regarded as lost, and treated as a pariah in the Catholic provinces, if she has a child before her marriage. She is a sinner in the eyes of the Church and of the public. Her future is ruined, and there is no hope for her but to leave the country. There is the strongest reason, therefore, to avoid pre-nuptial connection; and there is also an overpoweringly strong motive for concealing the illegitimate birth.

Irish nurses tell gruesome stories about such cases in well-to-do families. One told me how she was visited by a Jesuit, who offered her a handsome fee if she would consent to undertake a midwifery case under peculiar circumstances. She was to get into a cab at once and allow herself to be blindfolded while she was being driven with the priest to the house where the case was.

The nurse was a Protestant, and, being attracted by the fee and the romantic nature of the proposal, she consented. Having spent a fortnight in a well-furnished house, when she had performed her duty, the patient being a very young woman, the nurse was escorted home by the same priest; and never afterwards discovered where she had been to, nor did she ever meet the doctor again who had co-operated with her.

We may explain such a case as this as imagination or experience may suggest. It is only one out of

many mysterious affairs in which Irish priests are concerned. If the young woman were of the poorer class, and if the Church was concerned for her, she would probably have been dealt with in some Catholic institution; going to a convent, perhaps, after recovery; the child, if it survived, going into one of the many orphanages owned by the Church.

The lowness of the marriage-rate in Ireland, as compared with Great Britain, is quite as deserving of notice as the percentage of illegitimacy, and may be claimed with equal or greater justification as a result of the Roman Catholic religion. In England and Wales, with an estimated population of over 35,000,000, there were celebrated in 1907, 276,421 marriages; in Scotland in the same year, with a population of 4,750,000, there were 33,260; and in Ireland, with a population of 4,377,000, 22,500. The number of persons thus joined in wedlock in a year in the three countries were—England and Wales, 552,842, or 16 per 1000 of the population; Scotland, 66,520, or 14 per 1000; Ireland, 45,000, or 10 per 1000. It would be idle to deny that the number of young men and young women who become religious and adopt a life of celibacy contribute to the low marriage-rate in Catholic Ireland. In this connection, the strength of the Catholic religious establishment in Ireland, compared with the Protestant clerical profession of all denominations in Scotland, is noteworthy. In 1901 we had in Ireland 4 archbishops, 24 bishops, 14,145 priests, monks, and nuns, to minister to a Catholic popula-

tion of 3,300,000. In Scotland, in the same year, there were only 4877 clerics of all Protestant denominations to minister to a Protestant population of 4,170,000. Thus, while in Scotland the Protestant laity, broadly speaking, were 30 per cent. greater than the Catholic laity in Ireland, the Scottish Protestant clerical establishment was 60 per cent. less, or only a third of the number of the Irish Catholic religions. The Scottish clerics are not debarred from marriage, whereas the Irish are. If the Protestant clerical establishment in Scotland were on the same scale as the Catholic establishment in Ireland, instead of 4877 ministers, Scotland should have had 18,127 prelates, priests, monks, and nuns. To the number of the Irish religious celibates must be added a large number of servants and other hangers-on in the priests' houses, monasteries, and convents, who, though bound by no vow, follow the example of their superiors and never marry.

CHAPTER XVII

The start in housekeeping — Difficulties of newly-married Catholics—Borrowing a cradle—The house disorderly—Home-life not cultivated—Connubial strife—Disadvantages of a celibate priesthood—Catholic wives and Protestant doctors—A Franciscan confessor.

AFTER the wedding, bare and comfortless is the new home, as a rule, and cheerless the prospect with which the average young couple begin life. In the majority of cases they start without cash, for the bride's fortune goes to a relative of the bridegroom. Luckily it comes naturally to the Irish to do without a host of things which English folk deem necessary. They eat with little ceremony, and sometimes miss a meal, if they go out for a day, or if anything unusual is afoot. With them the ideal household is one in which there are "lashings and leavings," "full and plenty," or *lawnavawla*, as they say, rather than comfort or elegance. In other words, when you get a thing at all, you get plenty of it.

Indoors, sights are seen which make the orderly Englishman stare and gasp. Owing to the scarcity of furniture, the bride's hats and bonnets will be seen hanging permanently on the corners of the

pictures in the sitting-room, and her best clothes on the corners of half-open doors which can never be closed. Towels or cloths will be found hanging on door-handles, and the husband's best hat on the knob of the window-shutter. If there be a side-table, it will be so crowded with indescribable chattels that nothing fresh can ever be laid on it. If there be a sofa, it will be occupied by topcoats, car-rugs, or clothes waiting to be mended. A newly-baked cake will, perhaps, be reposing on one chair; a bandbox, or even a horse collar, on another; a tray of delf on a third; and so it is not easy to find a seat. I think the Irish surpass all other nations in their capacity for putting things to uses other than those for which they were intended—that is what they call "managing" or "striving"!

If there are rats in the barn, a heap of special seed corn may be found on the floor of the room set apart as a drawing-room. The settle in the kitchen will be found piled with things that ought not to be there, so that the servant boys cannot sit down, and gladly find rest in the stable, or in the nearest forge. As for the servant girls, they are never supposed to sit down.

"Is it the china breakfast saucer you're using to take the turf ashes from under the grate, Bridget?" asked a distressed young mistress.

"Sure I have nothing else, ma'am," was the reply.

"Why then," retorted the mistress, in righteous indignation, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Use this common plate, if you please, as you can't

find the fire-shovel. And run out to the hayloft for a bucket of coal."

"What'll I bring it in, ma'am?"

"If there isn't an old newspaper about, take anything next to hand. The master's father's old tall hat will do; 'tis on the top shelf of the dresser."

Another remorseful young wife apologised for the state of her parlour, saying: "I declare I'm ashamed that you should find everything littered about here just as if it was a bedroom. But sure a body would want four pairs of hands to keep this house in order."

To the Englishman, it seems as if the happy-go-lucky Irish nature delights in such shifts and contrivances; but the truth is, the Irish have very high ideals, of comfort as well as of other things, and, finding it impossible to realise them, they give way to despair. It is next to impossible for them to improve on the standard of living set to them by their parents, for there is no outside source of enlightenment. They never see the interior of a better-class house which is managed at once comfortably and economically. The Church forcibly cuts them off from the Protestants, and the Catholic gentry, from whom they get little good example, completely cut them. The priests and the nuns, whose word is the law and the prophets and the whole duty of man, can give them no useful precept or example: being celibates who only know from experience that those who marry seldom do well, while those who do not marry mostly do better.

Nor will the Church now permit the Roman

Catholic laity to intermarry with Protestants, except when the Protestant is prepared to give a written guarantee that all the children will be brought up as Roman Catholics, and is willing to be married in the Roman Catholic Church. In many cases, the Church insists on the Protestant party becoming a Roman Catholic—that is especially the case where the Catholic party is a titled person. There is no escape from this rule, which seems to be as readily submitted to by rich American heiresses as by middle-class Protestants in the United Kingdom. A young Irish Presbyterian told me that he was to be married to a Roman Catholic girl on such an agreement; and, when I expressed surprise, he assured me proudly that he had a secret agreement with his future wife that the open agreement was not to be kept. What a false start to make in life!

There is no married vicar or rector, no vicar's wife or daughters, no Roman Catholic ladies of the better class, to rouse up the newly-married couple by visiting them, or by inviting them to social or religious meetings, where the young people might learn how others meet the same troubles by which they are confronted. Life is thus a social blank; troubles are concealed and brooded over, and the young people pretend that all is well, when things are really in a very bad way. The only safety-valve is found in the confessional, and then the cure is often worse than the disease.

There is no sustaining power within the wife or husband to enable them to face their difficulties with

confidence or resignation. Quarrels soon begin. There is no open confession or discussion, but secret confession to an adviser who cannot help. The husband fights shy of the tribunal of penance, to which the wife frequently has recourse, and smothers his conscience in too many cases in alcohol. He is often made to feel himself a rogue and a spiritual outcast, when there is nothing wrong which might not be settled by a little sensible discussion.

There is no sadder sight, to my mind, in Irish sociology than the tragic speed with which the blooming bride is changed into the haggard, hopeless wife, and the light-hearted bridegroom into the pessimistic husband. Each believes that freedom is lost, and that lifelong slavery is the only prospect.

It is deemed unlucky to make preparation for an expected baby, especially to buy a cradle—the proper thing being to borrow one at the last moment, or have one given to you. Children are highly prized; there can never be too many of them—and those who are childless are looked down on and pitied. Nevertheless, the little ones are very indifferently attended to, and English people would deem them very badly treated; but they grow up to be great healthy men and women—their frames being formed, not so much by food as by the good air and water of Ireland.

The parents are very proud when a boy is born to them, but make little of the birth of a girl, unless she be the only one in a family of boys. I have known a man to beat his wife for presenting him

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

IRISH MARRIED LIFE.

"There is no sadder sight to my mind in Irish sociology than the tragic speed with which the blooming bride is changed into the haggard, hopeless wife, and the light-hearted bridegroom into the pessimistic husband."—*Page 262.*

with a daughter twice in succession, and to turn the nurse out of the house, as if she too were in fault! I have known a nurse to be afraid to tell the father the sex of the new-born child, because it was a girl; and when, on hearing it, the father expressed no displeasure, the nurse said he was a very nice man indeed to take it so well.

When the children begin to arrive, the discomfort increases. The young mother quickly becomes a drudge. I once remember calling at the house of a couple who were seven years married, and had six children aged from one to six years. The wife was laid up in bed with a violent headache. She was without a servant, the house was in chaotic disorder, and the six children were in the yard without any one to mind them, now howling in concert, now fighting, now rooting in the earth. I knew that the husband had to go without his regular meals, being unable to get them for himself. Indeed, like the average man of his class, he would be ashamed to do anything of that kind for himself—a man who would do so being thought unmanly and called by the opprobrious epithet of "Sheelah." He sought in alcohol an escape from worry, and shunned his children as if they had the plague; though the same man would have been most kind to pups, lambs, or calves, if they were in the same deserted condition.

The average wife's work is never done. This may be interpreted in two ways. If she is capable and industrious, she is busy from morning to night; if

she is the reverse, she is evading work or doing it unwillingly from morning to night. Her only outgoings are the trip to mass on Sunday and the occasional journey to market. Of the husband the same may be said, but he has the advantage of working, or idling, in the open air, and meeting his neighbours.

Irish labourers have no pre-nuptial connections, no handfasting, as the same classes have in England, Scotland, and Wales. Like their betters, they spend more money than they can afford on the wedding, at which the party is as numerous as possible; and, as they cannot afford a drive, they all go for a processional walk in the interval between the ceremony and the wedding dinner.

On the first Sunday after marriage, a labourer and his wife are allowed by custom to walk home from mass together, but not on the second Sunday, or ever after. The separation of husband and wife seems a relic from primeval times. Coming from or going to market, the wife does not walk with the husband, but always precedes or follows him on the road at a distance of twenty or thirty yards. It is very amusing to hear them holding a conversation by shouting at each other, as they go along.

What has been said of farmers applies, though with qualifications, to the homes of newly-married professional men and shopkeepers, whose ranks are recruited from the main stock of the farming class. But they, living in towns, have more household conveniences and more distractions. The wives are,

however, often very lonely in country towns where there is very little social life amongst Catholics. The wife of the professional man finds herself with nothing to occupy her mind beyond the management of her children, which she is often led to regard, not as a privilege and an opportunity, but as task-work; comparing her lot with that of the ideal woman who is almost always a nun. She complains of being overworked, when she is really suffering from want of engrossing occupation. The wives of the shopkeepers sometimes assist their husbands in business, and then are always much happier—except when, as sometimes happens, the husband takes all the money and pleasure and leaves the wife all the work.

Disappointed in marriage, from which their ignorance of human character had led them to expect impossible joys, many of the wives give all their attention to the children and treat their husbands with disrespect and even vindictiveness. Many husbands treat the wives badly from the same cause, but in a different way, namely, by spending all the time they possibly can outside their homes. In the country towns, where there is a little visiting in the evenings, amusing complications arise. You will usually find Mr. O'Brien diverting a large party at Mrs. Barry's, while his wife sits alone at home; and you will find Mr. Barry playing cards somewhere else; while each husband comes home with a brow as black as night. Indeed, the most unlikely place to find a married man in the evening is at his own house. It may be laid down as a rule, to which, of

course, there are many exceptions, that the Irish show the worst side of themselves at home and keep the best side for strangers. That also is true of our nation collectively.

Home-life is not cultivated, as it is in England and elsewhere. I fear it may be said that the Roman Catholic religion is not a religion of the home or of common life. It cannot be carried about in the pocket, or in the mind, like the Bible. And, for all classes of Roman Catholics, religion is the great outstanding fact which rises above the huxtering and squabbles of everyday life. But the religion is in the consecrated church, not in the unconsecrated home. In the church the mass is said; there the confession is heard; the retreat is made; the absolution pronounced; and the eucharist received. There the newly-married couple forget their disappointments for a while, when they find themselves in the midst of thousands gathered together every Sunday to witness the great act of the consecration of the Host and Chalice, which they believe so realistically to be a special creation and sacrifice of God the Son for their benefit. The great essential of life is thus outside the home; in the consecrated building, from which it is a mortal sin, punishable with eternal damnation, to absent oneself; and in the anointed person of the priest, who possesses the keys of heaven and of hell. No consecration in home-life will suffice without the rites in the chapel; and so it comes to pass that the married couples struggle on without self-consecra-

tion at home, and depending on the fleeting weekly consecration in the chapel.

You will find the newly-married men of the better class, who go to mass with great parade on Sundays and holy days, spending their evenings card-playing, drinking and gossiping in public-houses or hotel parlours; while the newly-married labourers spend their evenings in the street, sitting on walls or congregated at corners, if the night be fine, taking shelter under archways, if it be wet. Any one who knows an Irish country town cannot fail to have noticed the number of people who spend the evening in the street, as compared with an English town of the same size. The wish seems to be: Anywhere, anywhere, out of the home! Even in the country districts, the men collect at certain popular houses, where there are chairs and settles available for sitting upon, and there they talk, smoke, and play cards between supper and bedtime; while their wives are working, or fretting or moping at home. The labourers usually go to a forge, if the smith is working; and take shelter in outhouses for the evening, if the forge is closed.

Among newly-married Catholics of all classes in life, one finds husband and wife puffed up with an exaggerated idea of their own rights, while the obligations are lost sight of. Each is full of self-pity and fond of raking up the past—a habit which naturally becomes intensified by frequenting the confessional, where the past must necessarily be analysed and lived over again. There is no give-and-

take. "No surrender" is the motto on both sides, though each is continually surrendering and expressing sorrow privately in the confessional, in order to obtain absolution.

Husband and wife almost always have different confessors; and, as the confessor usually aims at soothing his penitent, each leaves the confession-box with an exalted idea of his or her grievances, and comes to look upon the other as the one obstacle to happiness. If there are relatively fewer divorce court exposures, fewer magisterial separations amongst Catholics than amongst Protestants, it is not that there is less discontent and unhappiness in married life; it is only that the wasting fires of connubial misery burn in secret and are not publicly exposed for extinction. There are, of course, many orderly and comfortable households to be found in Roman Catholic Ireland, and there is something peculiarly innocent and celestial about such households; where the men are pure-minded and the women are startlingly like the ideal pictures one sees of the Virgin and female saints. But one feels bound to give some idea of the helplessness and domestic unhappiness which are unfortunately too prevalent; while cherishing a hope that, under the new conditions of land tenure, everyday life may be made as bright and pleasant for commonplace people as it is in Saxon England. This can only be the outcome of increased self-helpfulness; but may we not hope for that too, when there will be no longer a landlord to be blamed for every mishap?

Undoubtedly the incapacity for domestic partnership in married folk and the consequent want of comfort in the homes are largely due to the ideal of celibate prosperity which the men and women see before them in the lives of the priests and nuns. If in each parish they had an ideal home before their eyes, such as the members of the Church of England and the Church of Ireland have in the rectory or vicarage, inculcating the all-important lesson of how to be "passing rich on forty pounds a year," the conditions of home-life amongst the Irish Catholics could not fail to be improved.

Yet there is much to be said for the celibacy of the clergy too. If Lord Kitchener is justified in thinking that "a soldier married is a soldier spoiled"; how much more is the Roman Church justified in thinking that "a priest married is a priest spoiled." Candidly, I think the Roman Church in Ireland would be shorn of its strength in one generation if the priests were allowed to marry. The unmarried priest, living in conformity with the discipline of the Church, is lord of himself and all the world besides. The laity never see a flaw in his armour. He is an object of respect, fear, and wonder to the struggling married folk, so few of whom enjoy privacy, or respite from care; so few of whom know what it is to be masters of themselves, and who are constantly coming to the priest to excuse and explain themselves and humbly beg for forgiveness.

One of the texts most constantly quoted in support of clerical celibacy is that well-known one from Paul's

Epistle to the Corinthians: "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife." In making celibacy compulsory, the mistake seems to have been made of forgetting Paul's other warning: "For I would that all men were even as myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, another after that. . . . But if they cannot contain, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn." The liberty on this question given to clergymen in the Church of England seems in complete accordance with the Apostle's views, and deserves not a little credit for the peculiar sacredness of home-life in England and the patience and contentment of the English people. The same remark applies to the Established and Free Churches of Scotland, where the manse is a centre of light and culture in every parish and district; and, of course, to the Episcopalian and Presbyterian Churches in Ireland.

It is claimed for the Catholic priest, in sermons from the altar and other public deliverances, that he is more fearless in going to the bedside to hear confession and administer extreme unction and communion, in cases of contagious diseases, than any married priest, with a wife and children dependent on him, could be expected to be.

Without expressing an opinion on this point, it may be said without doubt that a celibate priesthood are more whole-hearted and single-minded for

the enhancement of their own power and the perfection of their sway over the laity. They act as one man on all crucial occasions, where a married clergy, having divergent interests, will be divided. They can hold more aloof from the laity, and, enshrouding their private lives with a certain mystery, excite awe and respect in the credulous and uneducated. Believing, as they profess, that their ecclesiastical organisation, which is the Church, constantly acts under the direct guidance and special confidence of God, and is the sole conduit through which grace comes to mankind, they cannot be blamed for perfecting that organisation in the interests of humanity. And certainly none of the papal regulations so tend to perfect that organisation and maintain its power, as the decree enforcing the celibacy of the clergy.

There are many delicate questions to be considered in regard to the relationship of the celibate priesthood with early married life, as well as with education, amongst Roman Catholics. Young Catholic women usually prefer to be attended in their confinement by a Protestant doctor; and in the Roman Catholic city of Dublin, the great midwifery hospital at the Rotunda is, perhaps, the most Protestant institution in the Irish capital. The reason of this is a theological one. It is the general belief that the Church instructs doctors in confession that, in cases where it is a question of sacrificing the life of the mother or the child in a parturition, the life of the woman is to be sacrificed; inasmuch as she can

prepare for death by confession and communion, whereas the unborn child cannot do so, and if it died unbaptized, its soul would be lost.

The result of this belief for the doctors was that the most of the Roman Catholic midwifery business went to Protestants. The Archbishop of Dublin has been doing all he can to encourage a Roman Catholic midwifery hospital, but the poor Catholic women go to the Rotunda wherever it is possible. If you put a direct question to a Jesuit on the theology of the subject, I have no doubt but he would deny that the Church ever taught such a creed to doctors, but the popular belief cannot have grown up without foundation; and we need not pay much heed to Jesuit denials or assertions.

There was a Roman Catholic *accoucheur* in Dublin, who tried to relieve the Roman Catholic doctors from the stigma under which they lay in this matter, by proclaiming that he had invented an instrument in the form of a syringe by means of which holy water might be injected into the womb of the mother, thereby enabling the practitioner to baptize the child *in utero* and then put it to death with an easy conscience and save the mother's life.

This man did a large business; and, when I lived in Dublin, was known and advertised by the priests and bishops as the great Catholic gynæcologist; though his invention was the subject of countless ribald jests in the profession, and was very little trusted by intelligent Catholic women.

A Franciscan, a disciple of Francis of Assisi, in

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

A FAIR FLAX-SPINNER.

Sir William Temple says: "No women are apter to spin well than the Irish, who, labouring little in any kind with their hands, have their fingers more supple and soft than other women."—*Page* 221.

Ireland had a great vogue for piety, and my own experience of him as a confessor well exemplified one of the many embarrassments which Roman Catholics have to face in early married life. He used to ask for most excruciating details, putting leading questions to which one had to answer "yes" or "no." He gave the unsolicited information that he, as a confessor, had power to sanction unfaithfulness in cases where the husband and wife lived apart, or, for good cause shown, even where they lived together. This priest worked in a poor neighbourhood, but well-to-do people used to go to confession to him on account of his reputation for piety; and many penitents used to be turned away from his box on a Saturday, because he had no time to hear them. His statement about a dispensation for adultery seemed to find notorious corroboration in the life of a rich Roman Catholic in the neighbourhood. This man had no children, and his wife looked worn and dispirited and aged beyond her years; and in the house with them lived a buxom young woman, who had no place in the household except as the husband's friend, for whom he used to buy the most expensive jewellery, and who used even to accompany the husband and wife to mass on Sundays. She was permanently in the house, and it seemed as if the wife, who was a devoted Roman Catholic, consented to the *liaison*, under some such dispensation as the confessor told me he had power to grant. I have more than once seen the trio coming from mass, the wife sad and neglected, while the husband was paying all

the attention of a lover to the other woman. The entire locality knew of it and commented on the strange relationship which, I imagine, could hardly be maintained if it had not some powerful sanction.

With regard to the morality of the priests themselves, I can only say, speaking from experience, that they are very well conducted. It may not always have been so. In the old days the line between them and the laity was not so strictly drawn, and the saying "every priest christens his own child first," still constantly used in Catholic Ireland, may then have had more than a figurative meaning. One has known isolated lapses from chastity, but they were always put down to the failings of the individual priests and in no way injured the Church. I knew, amongst other cases, a curate who used to keep company with a tradesman's daughter, being continually in her father's house and asking her to his house which was in the chapel yard. He was removed to another parish, and she went to keep house for him in his new place. After some time, she returned home, and a child was born in her parents' house, which was opposite the chapel gates. The parents never gave any explanation as to who its father was; but both it and its mother were always well cared for and far better dressed than people of their class could afford to be. She and her baby remained there before the chapel gates for five years, an eyesore to the new priest, who made every effort to get her to go away. At length, the priest, whose housekeeper she had been, got into trouble with the

bishop and was silenced; and soon after the girl went to America, leaving the child to her parents. The incident produced no effect whatever on the people's belief in the divine mission of the Church, though it was freely talked of in the parish.

CHAPTER XVIII

Irish Catholics in middle age—Political power of the Church—Attitude of Liberals—The three widows—Gloomy splendours of Roman Catholicism in Ireland—Mixed marriages—The story of a wife's new birth.

LOOKING back over the lives of countless Irish Catholics whom I knew, it would seem as if the collective result of the Roman religious system is to break the spirits of those who believe in it—just as the specific object aimed at in certain monastic Orders is to break the spirit of the novices. Amongst Irish Catholics, one finds that inordinate yearning for freedom so characteristic of slaves; the mind is enfeebled; instead of rest, there is terror; instead of peace, discontent.

When they come to middle age, the spirit of the majority of them, male and female, is, as a rule, completely broken. From childhood they have been forbidden to use their intellects on the question of religion and a future state. Their cerebral energy has been so misdirected at school that it has wasted itself away. Their minds, at or soon after middle age, seem to degenerate yearly until death. And those who, until then, have been in a state of revolt, open or suppressed, inevitably surrender to the Church.

Of course, there are exceptions, but it is noticeable that just when the children are growing or grown up, and when the problems of existence are most difficult, the average father and mother become tired and mentally incapacitated, and are glad to transfer their parental responsibility to the Church. One meets thousands of Roman Catholics old and broken in spirit, though not old in years or broken in physical health.

When I first came into touch with the Episcopalians and Presbyterians in Ireland, what surprised me most was the youthfulness of the middle-aged and old men—not an affectation of juvenile dress or manner, but a youthfulness of mind and spirit, displaying itself in cheerfulness, courage, and sharpness of intellect. The most astonishing thing of all to me, I remember, was that the old men had no fear of death; but, on the contrary, as Wordsworth says, seemed to have manifest intimations of immortality.

> "In the faith that looks through death,
> In years that bring the philosophic mind."

The fear of death is the master-passion amongst elderly Roman Catholics, and is so great as to prevent them from being provident, except when the love of money is their chief enjoyment. Just as, when young, they feared to buy a cradle for the expected first-born, so afterwards they fear to discuss or provide for the future careers of their children, or to make timely provision for affairs of business, not to speak of insuring their lives or making their wills. They are often afraid to think, and more afraid to speak,

of next year; thinking it impious or unlucky to count on living so long. Doubtless it is a good thing for a man to remember his last end; but of what use is it to a man who spends his life in sinning one day and repenting the next, with never an assurance that he has a clean balance-sheet with which to face the next world? Too many of the ills of Roman Catholic Ireland are due to this mental unrest. It may be and is laid aside and forgotten as often as possible. It is the one thing never spoken of openly, though often hinted at as an excuse for sullenness and bad temper. Remorse of conscience, more or less acute, is a normal affliction of the Catholic mind, and it breaks out periodically with paralysing effect, incapacitating parents, causing family divisions, making sons eager to fly off to America, and daughters anxious to retire into convents or to marry any one who will take them. There is a tremendous waste of vital energy.

The unrest of mind causes what English people would deem fearful quarrels between husband and wife, parent and child. And it is no wonder that there should be virulence in Irish public life, when domestic life is so embittered. If we could sweeten home-life, we would settle every Irish trouble; and that part of Ireland which has been so unhappy for over a thousand years would become the brightest spot in the British Isles. The trouble is spiritual and mental, not political and physical; and once we get this clue, every phase of the so-called Irish question becomes intelligible. The stronger the ecclesiastical

organisation grows, the weaker become the subject laymen; and it is a great source of danger to a nation to contain several millions of mentally weak, excitable, terrified men and women.

That the power of the Church shows a tendency to increase is mainly due to the fact that the Government, as I have said, finds it politic to be on friendly terms with the hierarchy, who are the real governors of the Church, and to avoid those Catholics who rebel against ecclesiastical authority. The Catholic ecclesiastics have frequently been accused of fomenting political discontent amongst the people; while posing as peacemakers to the Government and extorting concessions for their own order. Be that as it may, the hierarchy are the only body-corporate in Ireland whose aims never change, and which is always there to be negotiated with by all Governments, Liberal or Conservative. It owes its power primarily to its own exertions and precautions, and not to any outside source. The main result of the religious education in the schools is to frighten the men and women for the rest of their lives and make them think they will be damned if they dare to disobey the Church. It is no exaggeration to say that the parish priest is the autocrat of his parish. He knows the secret sins of the husband which the wife has no idea of; he knows the secret sins of the wife which the husband has no conception of; he knows the secret sins of the child which the parent has no knowledge of. Certain sins in various dioceses are from time to time made "reserved sins"

—that is to say, the confessor is bound to send the penitent to the bishop to confess them. Thus the bishop acquires a unique power over the faithful in the whole diocese. These are facts which must be taken into account in any sociological survey of Ireland, and to do so is as far removed from bigotry or uncharity as to record the downfall of the landlords and the uprise of the owner-occupiers.

The word of a P.P. is all-important in dealing with the Government; while the word of a Catholic bishop has often proved more powerful than that of half a dozen Privy Councillors. The perplexed father with a son to provide for at home; the tenants on an estate who wish to purchase their farms; the promoters of a light railway or fishery harbour; the Government official wanting an increase of salary or promotion; the lawyer or doctor seeking preferment; the applicant for an old-age pension—all alike find it their interest to conciliate the Church.

The hierarchy collectively never issues a pronouncement in favour of the British Government, or its policy at home or abroad, being always hostile critics. During the dark days of the Boer War, Cardinal Logue solemnly warned young Irish Catholics against enlisting in the British army—a course of conduct for which an ordinary citizen would be liable to be prosecuted. Yet it was to Cardinal Logue's house—called *Ara Cœli*, or the Altar of Heaven—that Mr. Birrell, as Chief Secretary for Ireland, took the unprecedented step of making a pilgrimage before drafting the Irish Universities Act of 1908.

Had the cardinal objected to the measure, it would have shared the fate of the Irish Councils Bill of 1907, to which his Eminence was one of the first to object, and would never have been presented to the House of Commons.

I cannot understand how a great school of political thought, calling itself Liberal and professing to be devoted to social reform, can lend itself to increasing ecclesiastical power gained and maintained as the power of the hierarchy is in Ireland. If they only knew the actual results of that ecclesiastical power in the daily lives of the common people, they would rather feel inclined to hold a thanksgiving service yearly on the anniversary of the day that Henry VIII. broke the connection between the Church of England and the papacy. I wish, for instance, they could contrast the despondency of the middle-aged women in Roman Catholic Ireland with the cheerfulness, courage, and self-respect of the same class of women in England, Scotland, or Protestant Ireland. I wish they could see the Catholic women as they sit and mope, brooding on their sorrows, thinking of their dead, reproaching themselves with past sins, shuddering at the thought of death, yet longing to be freed from the cares of the world.

It is a sad spectacle, and yet the sadness is sometimes so exaggerated as to be humorous—for in Ireland there is always a smile seen through the tears. The humorous and pleasant side of the individual is, as a rule, exhibited to the outside world ; the other side being kept for use in the home,

as if they feared that the good side, like Sunday clothes, would wear out with use and they would have nothing left to show off with. An Irishman thinks he saves up his face by looking cross.

"Did I smile at her?" I once heard an Irishwoman exclaim. "Indeed then I didn't. I wouldn't be wearin' out my face looking pleased in the company of such a body!"

I knew three widows, owners of large farms, who, after mass every Sunday, used to meet together, dressed in funereal black, in the parlour of the one whose house was nearest to the chapel. I remember well the first Sunday that the woman in whose house they met, who was the last to become a widow, attended mass in full mourning after her husband's death. Her two friends, whose husbands had been several years dead, were in the parlour before her, when she arrived in her new widow's weeds; and, at sight of her, the eldest of the widows flung up her hands and cried out:

"Oh, the three of us! God help us!"

Whereupon the three burst into tears, and set up such a howling as one hears at a wake. This weeping concert was repeated for many Sundays; and one Sunday, in the midst of it, a servant girl came in to announce that a famous local fool—a chartered libertine—was in the kitchen and threatened to come into the drawing-room and thrash the life out of them with his shillelagh if they did not promise to get married next Shrove!

Somebody, I think it was an Englishman, has said

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

MOTHER SPINNING AND DAUGHTER COMBING FLAX.

Skelton wrote of the Ulster women in his day that they "give birth to all the wealth of the kingdom."—*Page 222.*

that the virtues of the Irish are their own, their defects imposed on them from outside. Without giving an unqualified assent to that proposition, one may admit that those exceptionally innocent and lovable people, men and women, to be met with amongst Irish Catholics, are good because of their inherent virtue. Lightness of heart seems to be a virtue of the race; the national proneness to despondency seems imposed on us by the exigencies of the Roman religion, from whose grave and solemn ritual every incentive to cheerfulness is divorced. Our national music, for instance, consists of the noblest and brightest collection of original melodies known to mankind—melodies from which every European composer of note has borrowed—yet, so foreign to Ireland is the Roman Catholic religion even at the present day, that its Irish hierarchy have never put Christian words to any of those soul-stirring airs and caused them to be sung by the people in the chapels.

Since ritual seems a necessary of life, an infusion of cheerfulness into religion in Catholic Ireland is badly wanted, if it were only to show the people that mirth and sinfulness do not necessarily go together. Gloom, hysteria, and mania ought not to be the gifts of religion to a naturally buoyant and generous people. Statistics show that, with a decreasing population, lunacy is on the increase in Ireland; and experience goes to prove that religious mania is largely responsible for the increase. I gave some dreadful instances of this disease in *Five Years in Ireland*, which

occurred within the compass of a single twelvemonth. I know of scores of others. After every mission there are sure to be one or more cases of madness. On one farm alone, I know of three labouring men who went mad at different times immediately after missions.

The missioners—always strange priests of one of the monastic Orders, Redemptorists, Franciscans, Augustinians, Oblates, Dominicans, or Passionists—make a processional entry into the parish on the appointed day, preceded by a colossal mission cross, on which hangs a life-size human figure, bloodstained, terrifying, repulsive. The friars are in their robes, with sandalled feet and shaven crowns, enormous rosary beads and crucifixes hanging from their belts. The giant crucifix is erected in the chapel yard, where it drives terror into old and young. Sometimes it is set up in the chapel, inside the altar rails. The whole parish comes to the mission; to stay away would be dangerous; and, for three weeks or a month, the missioners roar and storm at the people, dilating on the tortures of hell and purgatory, dwelling on the danger which even good people run of going to hell through some slight mistake made in confession, or some other apparently trivial omission. They vary the theme occasionally by a discourse on heaven, where all the saints of the Church are said to occupy the highest places, enlarging on the difficulties which people with money will find in getting there.

I wish some of those charitable and broad-minded English and American people, who describe

the Roman Catholic religion as "interesting" or "sweetly pretty," as if it were a pageant for the amusement of the public, could hear a Franciscan or Dominican missioner preaching a sermon on hell in an Irish country chapel; or could follow him into the confession-box and hear some of his questions and suggestions to penitents.

Many of the young people, naturally brave, whose day of surrender has not yet come, may scoff at the missioner's fiendish ranting; but, for the middle-aged who have lost courage, fright and mental paralysis follow in the track of the missioner. The blood-stained cross conjures up demoniacal nightmares, instead of filling the mind with visions of infinite love and mercy, increasing hope, and stimulating courage.

I remember attending a mission at which one of the missionaries was a Spaniard who spoke English fluently; and his questions in confession and his addresses to "men only" were so bestially suggestive that several young men could not repress their indignation. But, when they consulted the elder men, intending to make a protest to the P.P., they were only censured by the seniors and warned that, if they went to the P.P., their last state would be worse than their first.

I have known innumerable cases illustrating the depressing effects of the Roman religion on the middle-aged in Ireland. That of a Protestant woman, married to a Roman Catholic husband, occurs to me. She and he had been servants in a gentleman's house, had married and set up shopkeeping. Prior to

marriage, they had to give the usual undertaking to the priests that all the children would be brought up Roman Catholics. Their shop was in a part of Dublin where there was a considerable number of Protestants; and, for nine years, I constantly remarked this woman as the only melancholy or despondent Protestant woman in the neighbourhood. Her husband was a respectable man, while she was an excellent housekeeper. They had several children who went to mass with the father on Sundays, went to the convent school on weekdays, and, unlike the Protestant children of the same class, gave their mother no help. The woman had that tired, martyred, over-worked appearance so common amongst the Catholic women and so rare amongst the Protestants. On Sunday afternoons, when all the Protestant children would be seen bright and busy, going to service or Bible class, or in company with their parents, this woman's children would be loafing about on the side of the street with other Roman Catholic children of the same age. The parson used to visit her, and, knowing this, the priests and nuns jealously watched the children, and even visited the house—a thing the priests never do, among Roman Catholics of the same class, except to hear the confession of a dying person. The Protestant mother seemed to feel that she could not rear her children as she knew she ought; and it prayed upon her mind, so that her face was like a tombstone, telling of something dead and buried underneath—her expression and appearance were

so despondent that for a long time I could not bring myself to believe she was a Protestant.

Another case, worth quoting by way of contrast, is that of a Roman Catholic woman married to a Protestant husband, also in Dublin, and under the same agreement about the children. She was a pretty girl, but after the first years of married life, she lost all regard for personal appearance and, as the family grew numerous, became a confirmed slattern.

When the husband would come home from business in the evening, at the appointed time, he would perhaps find a bucket of coal on the parlour table, instead of his supper; while his wife would be lying on all-fours on the fender, her face as black as a Christy minstrel, vainly trying to light a fire which she did not know how to lay properly. Another evening, coming at the appointed hour, he would find the baby screaming on the floor of the hall, and the other children rioting all about the house, while their mother could not be found. Going into the kitchen to seek her, perhaps, he would have to force the door, it being blocked by a tub of steeping clothes which had been waiting to be wrung out and hung up to dry for many days. Then, perhaps, going into the back garden, he would find his wife with half her body over the wall, gossiping with her next-door neighbour, and wearing his Sunday overcoat to keep herself warm. There was not a disengaged nail or peg in the house for the man to hang up his hat or topcoat; and not a chair to be sat upon, for they

were all used as resting-places for things which ought to be elsewhere.

It was heartrending to the man to see his children being brought up in the same way as their mother. Many another Irish husband would have taken to drink; but this man kept his head, and never abandoned hope of converting his wife. Fortunately, the Church of Ireland rector of the parish, in which there was a small scattered Protestant congregation, was one of the old pre-Disestablishment type who was not afraid to try and make a convert whenever a chance offered.

After many years of misery, the husband's character proved stronger than the wife's; and she began to stay in the room when the rector came to visit her husband. She became friendly with the parson, and in the end he converted her, and she and all her children joined the Church of Ireland. But that was not all. Her nature changed. She became neat and active; she got back her good looks; her house became tidy and comfortable; her children bright and healthy. The last I heard of her was that she had taught herself to play the piano, with the object of making the home cheerful for her husband and children. There never was a case more calculated to convince the sceptic of the possibility of a new birth.

A third case is worth mentioning by way of further contrast. It is that of a Protestant Englishwoman, who had become a Roman Catholic and married an Irishman of the squireen class, owner of

a small property. When I got to know of her, through a Catholic girl who went into her service as governess, she was about forty-five, and had been a long time married. I remember congratulating the girl on being employed in an Englishwoman's house; but she told me things about the place that I would be ashamed to repeat. The house was like an Augean stable. There is an old saying: When you are in Rome, do as Romans do. But this Englishwoman went further, and, like the early Normans, became more Irish than the Irish themselves. Her piety was more morbid than that of the Irishwomen, and her domestic economy even more boldly original in its perversity. One day, for instance, when a friend of her husband came to lunch unexpectedly, there was not a tablecloth in the house, and the lady ordered a sheet to be taken off one of the beds to supply the deficiency!

To cite these cases is not to impugn the sincerity of the bishops and priests. That the great majority of them believe realistically in their own claims to special power is undoubted. They believe that the laity cannot be saved except by obedience to the Church. It is the most time-honoured belief in the world, having existed since the days of Aaron, and before Aaron in the days of Melchisedek. It existed apart from the Judaic and Christian dispensations, amongst the chosen priesthood of the cultured Greeks and Romans, and was acquiesced in, publicly if not privately, by men like Homer, Herodotus, Pericles, Julius Cæsar, Virgil, and Marcus Aurelius. For an

Irishman to state the facts about the relationship between the laity and chosen priesthood in Ireland, so far as he knows them, implies no animus against the priesthood any more than the recital of Clodius' escapade in Cæsar's house betrayed animus against the established religion of Cæsar's time.

CHAPTER XIX

Irish drinking habits—Dublin and Belfast contrasted—The drinking habits of the priests—No fast on drink—Drink instead of duty—Drinking at fairs—The farmers' wives —From the refectory to the confessional—Father Mathew —"Treating."

I HAVE said many other Irish husbands, in such a difficulty as the Protestant husband, would have taken to drink. This brings me to a question which cannot be passed over, for it is about middle age that men and women become confirmed slaves to drink. Any one who knows Roman Catholic Ireland must know that toping and drunkenness destroy the happiness of thousands of homes; and that there is hardly a family without its roll of victims.

Drink is almost adored as a sacred thing in Irish literature. The Irish for whisky, *usquebaugh*, means "the water of life." All the most popular national songs are in praise of drink and drinking; and the modern English wordings are even worse than the old Irish. What a golden opportunity a truly national religion would have of putting joyous, Christian words to these airs and teaching them to the children.

The "Cruiskeen Lawn," or "The Little Full Jug,"

is sung by Irishmen all over the world. In the Irish chorus—

> "Gra machree, ma cruiskeen
> Slanthe gal mavourneen!"

the jug is personified as a girl, the words meaning in English—

> "The love of my heart is my little full jug,
> Here's health to my darling girl!"

Another famous song, "Whisky, Drink Divine," closes with these words:—

> "And when tyrant Death's arrow shall transfix ye,
> Let your latest breaths be Whisky, Whisky, Whisky!"

The English version of the famous song, "Garryowen" begins thus:—

> "Let Bacchus' sons be not dismayed,
> But joined with me, each jovial blade,
> Come booze and sing and lend your aid
> To help me with the chorus."

In an old Irish song by Turlogh O'Carolan, the bard thus addresses whisky:—

> "Why, liquor of life, do I love you so,
> When in all our encounters you bring me low?
> You're my soul and my treasure, without and within,
> My sister, my cousin, and all my kin!
>
> O Usquebaugh! I love its kiss—
> My guardian spirit I think it is;
> Had my christening bowl been filled with this,
> I had swallowed it, were it a fountain!"

Amongst the Irish Catholics, drink is the synonym for hospitality. It stands alone and is not associated

with food. Every festive meeting, every social call, every business transaction, must be wet, as they say, with a drink. The man that does not stand a drink is considered a mean man; the man that gives drink freely in his own house and pays for it for others in public-houses is "a decent fellow." There is a kind of veneration for the man who has spent a fortune or ruined a career by drink; and people expatiate on the great things he might have done, if it were not for drink. The brewers and distillers are the most important people in the Catholic provinces. In Dublin, to a large extent, business means drink and drink business; the wine merchants and publicans being the most powerful section in municipal affairs, and the most pushful and self-assertive politicians of the community. For many years, I know for a fact that there was not a single Protestant publican in the Irish metropolis, and it is probably so at the present moment; though the Protestants number nearly 80,000.

In the city of Belfast, which is now as populous as Dublin, the publicans are, perhaps, the least important and least respected class of the community. And, though over three-fourths of the population are Protestants, the retail drink trade is almost entirely in the hands of the Roman Catholics. Many of the Protestant Irish take drink; but the Protestants, as a whole, take very little, as compared with the Roman Catholics. In the majority of Protestant houses in the North, you will not see drink even at dinner. The Protestant clergy are all temperate, if not

teetotallers. Water is pre-eminently the sign of the Presbyterian house. In the distinctly Protestant songs, such as the Orange ballads, "No Surrender," "The Boyne Water," "Oliver's Advice," and "The Protestant Boys," drink is only once mentioned, and then as a thing to be refrained from. "The Protestant Boys" thus opens:—

"Tell me, my friends, why are we met here?
Why thus assembled, ye Protestant boys?
Do mirth and good liquor, good humour, good cheer,
Call us to share in festivity's joys?
Oh, no, 'tis the cause
Of King, Freedom, and Laws
That calls loyal Protestants now to unite;
And orange and blue,
Ever faithful and true,
Our King shall support and sedition affright."

Even the small minority of Orangemen who lie about the streets of Belfast drunk on the Twelfth of July attend to their business and are good workmen, when the fit is over—like the Scotchmen after Glasgow Fair. That is not so with the Roman Catholics, whose lives are ruined by the drinking habit. They get no example of temperance from their clergy, except, perhaps, a Platonic sermon once a year from a priest who may not practice what he preaches, or an impassioned oration from a missioner.

The bishops and priests pride themselves on their hospitality; and assuredly hospitality is not a virtue to be condemned. That they are hospitable is undoubted, and that their hospitality springs from warm

hearts cannot be gainsayed. The champagne consumed at a Maynooth banquet would astonish even the Lord Mayor of London. Decanters of whisky and bottles of wine are to be seen on the average country P.P.'s sideboard. The Protestant wine merchants who supply the theological colleges, the monasteries, the bishop's houses, and the presbyteries, will not hear a word said against the Roman Catholic Church. The lonely lives the priests lead, the vacant minds resulting from their peculiar education, and the habit of taking wine twice fasting (first when communicating, then at the ablutions) when celebrating their daily mass, make them particularly prone to the peculiar influence which alcohol has wielded over the human mind from the beginning of history.

The fasting on one meal and a collation imposed by the Church in Lent, and the abstinence from meat on all Fridays, as well as the abstinence from meat, butter, and eggs on various days throughout the year, are largely responsible not only for the national love of drink but also for its singularly evil results among Irish Catholics. It is a fact that a great many priests obtain dispensations and do not fast either in Lent, or even on Fridays; but the same infirmity which exempts from fasting becomes an excuse for stimulants. They compel the laity to fast, and make it troublesome to obtain a dispensation, which usually involves the payment of money directly or indirectly.

The laws as to fasting used to be very severe, and though, for the last twenty years, they have not been

so strictly enforced, especially in towns, they are still largely observed; and their rigorous observance for generations has left its mark. The enforcement of the heavy fasts made the people careless about their meals. There was never any fast imposed on drink; and, when the people felt weak, they took drink instead of food.

This also applies to tobacco smoking, which is carried to excess in Catholic Ireland. How often have I known a labouring man to take a smoke instead of his breakfast, when food was scarce! How often have I heard them say that, if put to the choice, they would prefer a smoke to a meal! I have seen a middle-aged labourer go to his cottage at noon for dinner, only to find his wife not yet returned from town with the week's provisions, and not a crumb of food in the house! And I have seen the man produce his pipe and take a long smoke of strong tobacco, as he sat amidst his hungry children, and then go back to work satisfied. And I have seen his wife, when she came back, send out a chunk of bread to him in the fields along with an ounce of tobacco to pacify him; and he refused the bread, while he greedily took the tobacco.

The main difference between the drinking habits of Ireland and Great Britain is that Irishmen drink fasting, while Englishmen drink with and after food. Statistics show that the consumption of drink in Ireland is less per head of the population than in England or Scotland; but, for the reasons stated, drink does more harm to the national character in

Ireland than in the sister countries. The Irish are sensitive and intellectual, and alcohol is not suited to their constitutions. When in their cups, they do not get mellow and stupid, but imaginative, argumentative, quarrelsome, and mischievous.

Drink is more idealised in Ireland than in England, through not being kept in the home and taken there with meals as it is in England. The diminution in the consumption of whisky and tobacco in England, consequent on the extra duties imposed by the Budget of 1909–10, shows that the Englishman's devotion to alcohol is strictly limited. I believe that, if we could have the Irish figures separate, it would be found that there was nothing like a corresponding decrease in the consumption in Ireland.

There is one prevailing note in the average Irish Catholic's way of drinking which calls for attention. My experience is that the average Englishman enjoys doing his duty, whereas the average Irish Catholic is restive and rebels against doing it. It comes about then that, when a particular thing has to be done, the Irishman finds his spirit sulking against it, and to soothe himself he goes off and takes a drink instead of doing the thing which he knows he ought to do. He fights his conscience, as it were, with alcohol. If the worship of Bacchus had been introduced into Ireland, the god would have found such devoted worshippers as he never found elsewhere.

Is a girl beautiful and does a young man feel

that he ought to exert himself to win her as his wife? Instead of doing so, he takes a drink and thinks and talks about her, and never woos her. Is there a delicate piece of business to be attended to? The man whose duty it is to do it goes off and takes a drink and thinks and talks about it, but does not do it. Is there trouble or illness in the house, requiring extra diligence and help from the man of the house? He goes off and takes a drink and tells all his boon companions about the affliction at home, and they consider that he is only showing a natural feeling in taking drink under such circumstances. Is a young student anxious about an approaching examination, for which he feels he ought to read with redoubled application? He takes a drink and talks about the dangers of being plucked and the necessity of study, but does not study. In fine, there are vastly more men in Catholic Ireland, in proportion to the population, who go off and take a drink as a substitute for doing some necessary thing, than there are in Great Britain.

If Bacchus worship were the prevailing religion, this would be piety, a dutiful consulting of the god in difficulty; but, in the searchlight of reason and political economy, it is only work-shirking and duty-shirking.

There is no credit given to a sober, diligent man in alcoholic Ireland. "Yerra, why wouldn't he succeed?" the sons of Bacchus will say. "Sure if meself gave half the time an' labour to it, I'd surpass him." The really admirable man seems to be one

who can achieve all the victories to be won by sobriety and industry and yet be continually drinking and idling. The ideal set before them seems to be to have in full measure the pleasures of vice and the rewards of virtue, without the painful consequences of the first, or without the exertions necessary to secure the second. The man who "might have done" wonderful things, "but for drink," is a kind of hero; no limit having ever been imposed to his possible success by the measure of attempt and achievement. The nervous, highly-strung Irishman, afraid of failure, afraid of not being first in the race, seems to incapacitate himself deliberately, so that it may be in his power to say after the event: "Och, sure, if I only minded myself, I'd bate the whole of 'em. 'Tis this drink that kept me always from doing justice to meself!"

Besides their irregularity in taking food, the Irish Catholics display other qualifications for asceticism. They do not study their comfort in clothes, and will go out on a cold winter's day in the same apparel as they wear in summer, thinking it as natural to be cold as hungry. Whenever I see a procession of the unemployed in England, what strikes me most, as an Irishman, is the comfort and soundness of their clothes, as compared with Irish labourers in the best of times on a working day. The priests are the most comfortably clad men in Roman Catholic Ireland, making no pretence of imitating any of the threadbare and fasting anchorites whom they hold up as exemplars to the laymen. All this

makes for trouble and disorder. As Tennyson's Northern Farmer says—

"'Tisn't them as 'as munny as breaks into 'ouses and steals,
Them as 'as coats to their backs an' takes their regular meals."

The middle-aged farmer or labourer in Ireland will start for fair or market at four or five a.m., and, when his business is done, at, or soon after, noon, will go straight to a public-house and stay drinking with his friends and relatives until eight or nine in the evening, when he leaves for home helplessly drunk, not having taken a morsel of food all day. Nor does he take food when he gets home; but throws himself into bed to sleep off his carouse. Not till the next day will he taste food, after a thirty or even forty hours' fast.

A great many, indeed the majority, of the middle-aged farmers do not resume drinking on the day after, but keep sober until the next market or fair, when the same thing occurs. I remember a well-to-do farmer who used to stagger home in broad day in summer, and in the dusk in winter, once a week after market, and was considered a very steady man because he could walk home. How he managed to do so seems a miracle now; but they say in Ireland that a special Providence takes care of fools, drunken men, and children, and his case seems to prove it; for he not only never met with an accident, but was made a Justice of the Peace, being one of the first Nationalists appointed during Mr. John Morley's Chief Secretaryship, 1892–95!

On any fair day you will see hundreds of solvent farmers going home blind drunk, or, as they consider it themselves, gloriously drunk. Many of them keep on drinking for several days after the fair. Others never give up tippling. And thus they spend their lives; taking the pledge occasionally at a mission, or after a particularly heavy spree; and breaking it; and confessing the breach and getting forgiven; and sinning again; and so on to the end.

And may I say, in this connection, that the nearest approach to saints and martyrs that I, as an outsider, could conceive on earth, were to be found among the middle-aged Catholic farmers' wives? Their dress is not unlike that of the nuns, but their faces are far more innocent and healthy, as they shine out from the halo made by their lace-frilled, tight-fitting white caps, which cover the hair and ears. Their outer garment is a capacious black cloth cloak, with a large hood, usually thrown back so as to show the cap, but drawn over the head when going home at night, or as a shade in hot weather, or if it rains.

In the good old days—which justice compels me to say mean, in this case, the rack-renting landlord days of the 'sixties and 'seventies—one of those cloaks and a feather tick were an invariable present from the parents to their daughter on getting married. A good cloak of broadcloth, with a satin-lined hood, used to cost about £20, and lasted a lifetime. But they have gone out of fashion among

the younger women, who wear cheap, shoddy clothes of modern cut, and do not look at all so well when they reach middle age.

These good women were positively melting with kindness, not only to their husbands but to their children, and to all in distress. I have seen one of them take a garment off her own person to give it to a beggar more than once. Like the pelican, they would give of their own flesh and blood to any one with a claim on their charity, and to be in want was the one thing necessary to constitute a claim. Truly the Recording Angel must have dropped many a tear to blot out an entry of the husband's intoxication, for the sake of those kind-hearted Irish wives. Their patience, at any rate in public, with their drunken husbands was unbounded. And it must be noted that such a thing as wife-beating was unheard of. A man who struck his wife amongst the farming class would be an object of scorn and horror. But, allowing for exceptions, the average Irish Catholic woman fears her husband; and, having seen her father come home drunk, is not much surprised at her husband doing the same.

And what grizzly bears many of those middle-aged farmers were! I knew of one who would sit at the head of his table at dinner with his wife and family, on some high festival day, with his tall hat as firmly pressed down on his head as if he were a member of the House of Lords sitting in his place in that select assembly. Looking round, and asserting the awful authority of the paterfamilias, he would

Photo by Guy, Cork.]

FARMERS' SERVANTS AT A BUTTER MARKET.

"The wives of the new lords of the soil look after the making of the butter and the feeding of the calves and fowl," etc.—*Page* 223.

say: "Here I am and my hat on me!" There used to be several old tyrants of this sort, but they are survivals of a dying race. Common Irishmen do not like to remove their hats from their heads except in the chapel. And, as is well known, it is an Irishman, Lord Kingsale, who has the unique privilege of being allowed to wear his hat in the presence of the sovereign of the realm.

The tippling habits of the better-class Catholics in the cities and towns are worse than those of the farmers. To one who has lived for some time in England, the mixture of tippling and business seems like some incredible dream. Little bits of business got in, as if by stealth, between the drinks during the day! Few, indeed, are the men of business to be found invariably at their places of business. One has to seek out most of them elsewhere, usually in the drinking bars. Such men never seem to do anything for itself alone, except drinking. If they go to fish or hunt, it is to fish or hunt and drink; if to visit a sick friend, it is to see the friend and drink; if to walk or ride, it is to walk or ride and drink; if to buy or sell, it is to buy or sell and drink.

I regret to say that you will meet priests drinking in country or seaside hotels everywhere, but not in their own parishes, having left home apparently for the purpose of drinking. They call for dinner, in a private room if obtainable, and remain drinking at the table for hours afterwards, and no believing Catholic feels shocked at the spectacle. If a critic were to censure such conduct, the reply would prob-

ably be: "His Reverence's business is to preach the gospel. 'Tis nothing to you whether he practises it or not. Do as he says, not as he does!" Familiarity with the little weaknesses of an individual priest does not seem to weaken faith in the Church.

I remember a middle-aged bachelor, a business man, who got married to a girl with money. He took a house and furnished it expensively. There was a great wedding, and the first thing the man did, when he and his wife went into residence, was to call in the P.P. to say mass in the new house, so as to bring down a blessing on it and its occupants. After mass, the priest in his vestments, attended by the parish clerk holding a lighted candle, went into every room in the house from attic to coal-cellar, exorcising evil spirits and blessing each room in Latin and sprinkling it with holy water.

The same night there was a dinner, followed by a dance and a card-party in the house, at which all the men got more or less inebriated; the P.P. himself being present at the dinner, and one of the curates staying till the small hours at the card-party. Nobody seemed to see anything incongruous in a carouse following so quickly on the celebration of mass and the blessing ceremony under the same roof. The fact would seem to be that the clergy, as a social institution, almost stand apart from the mystical and superhuman Church of which they are the officers.

I got a startling object-lesson in this one evening, when attending at a well-known church in Dublin to make my confession. The clergy were supposed

to be in their boxes at seven p.m., and I went there at half-past six, so as to get a good place at my confessor's box. Seven o'clock passed and eight o'clock struck, but none of the priests appeared. The church was crowded with waiting penitents, many of the poor people striking their hearts and groaning in anguish either at the prospect of being rebuked and getting a heavy penance, or in genuine sorrow for their sins.

At ten minutes past eight the clergy appeared in their birettas, soutanes, and stoles, coming into the church in single file through a door which led from the monastery. I shall never forget the spectacle. It was evident that they came direct from the refectory, and one and all of them seemed gorged to repletion, many of them being unsteady in their gait. With eyes cast down they made their way, like rolling ships, through the people to the confessionals; and, flinging themselves into their seats in the dark recesses, began to hear the confessions with lightning rapidity to make up for lost time, and scarcely understanding a word that was said to them.

My confessor, from whom I had been expecting a castigation, did not hear a word I said, even when I passed a sovereign through the opening in the partition which separates confessor and penitent, asking him to say mass for my continuance in the state of grace; he only half-opened his eyes and murmured a few words in Latin. You could hear the sliding shutters in the partitions slamming incessantly in all the boxes, each slam meaning that a confession had

been heard and a penitent dismissed. Many a sinner got absolution that night who never expected it.

I inquired from the chapel-man, on going out, why the priests had been so late, and he told me that there had been a grand night in the refectory in honour of some foreign members of the Order who were visiting Dublin. One does not wish to be censorious, and priests, after all, are only human; but it is nevertheless appalling to contrast the implicit faith of the waiting crowds in the church with the mental condition of the confessors.

However, it must be remembered that if it were a company of middle-aged and elderly laymen of the same class as that to which the priests belonged, they would have been, after a similar reunion, perhaps more unfitted for business. The old habits of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century still live in Catholic Ireland, where teetotallers are regarded as freaks and cranks collectively, however respected they may be as individuals, and where it is believed that there can be no warm-heartedness or conviviality without alcoholic drinks. The priests were reared with that idea amongst people who saw no harm whatever in it, and the sinfulness of an act depends chiefly on the point of view of the doer.

I do not think the faith of the laity present that night was at all shaken by what they saw. I know that I did not consider the validity of my own absolution in the least impaired. There were many present who did not dare to notice what was so obvious to me and others, and I suppose they would

say that it is the disposition of the penitent that matters, and not the condition of the confessor.

Irish Catholics are justly proud of Father Mathew, the famous temperance reformer; but how many of those to whom his name is familiar are aware that he was started on his crusade by the encouragement of an Irish member of the Society of Friends; or that, when the parish priests of Cork elected him to the bishopric of that important diocese, to their lasting credit, the Pope vetoed his nomination and appointed a friend of the brewers to the see—a man who had only received a few votes? Few of those who unthinkingly give the Church the credit of Theobald Mathew's achievements are aware that his priestly colleagues allowed the great reformer to be arrested for debt; and that, at the close of his career, while he was dependent for support on the generosity of Protestant friends, the late Queen Victoria came to his rescue and gave him a Civil List pension of £300 a year to enable him to end his days in peace.

An Irishman never forgives or forgets an offence offered to him when he is drunk. He deems it a mean advantage taken of him. If a kindness is done to him in the same condition, he will be eternally grateful. But it must be a kindness from *his* point of view, that is to say, it must not take the form of a lecture, or a stoppage of further drink, or any reflection on drinkers and drink generally. It is astonishing how he remembers everything personal that happens when he is in his cups, money lent, shelter given, liquor supplied and so forth, and deems

them debts of honour. The most lasting ill-feeling arises out of offence given and taken when parties are drinking.

The habit of "treating," which prevails to some extent in Great Britain, is a social law in Catholic Ireland enforced with all the vigour of a Coercion Act. If a man happens to be in an inn or public-house alone, and if any of his acquaintances come in, no matter how many, it is his duty to "stand," that is, to invite them to drink and pay for all they take. Then, when the drinks are consumed, another member of the company is expected to "stand," and invariably does so. Then if there are half a dozen men in the company, each insists on "standing" drinks all round. There is usually a dispute, as some of the men do not want to take so many drinks; but, if the majority are in favour of letting each man pay for a round, the minority have to give in. It is a deadly insult to refuse to take a drink from a man, unless an elaborate explanation and apology be given and accepted. Some such conversation as this is commonly heard:

"Hallo, Tim, how the mischief are you? 'Tis a cure for sore eyes to see you. Come an' have a drink?"

"I'm thankful to you, Jerry, but I'd take it as a great compliment intirely from you not to ask me to take anything now, because——"

"Yerra, what nonsense! Is it not to have a drink from meself! Begorr, that would be a quair way o' showing frinship. Have I offinded you in any way?"

"Och, not at all, only I'm in such a hurry, an' have so much on me mind, that if me father, God be merciful to him, rose out o' the grave an' asked me to take a drink to-day, I wouldn't do it."

"Yerra, don't be carrying on! I'll be just as good as you now, for I tell you if you were the Pope o' Rome himself I wouldn't let you off of accepting this trait from me. A man that can't take a glass o' grog is no man, an' I always regarded yerself as a man. So now!"

If a third man should intervene, his vote is usually given in favour of the drink, and so they go off to have not one, but three drinks each; for Tim, having accepted Jerry's treat, insists on Jerry accepting one in return, and then the third man lays an embargo on both of them until they have taken a drink from him. The man who accepts drinks from his equals without giving drinks in return is regarded as a sponger; but, where a man is known to be poor, and is good company, he is not expected to pay back in kind. There is no such thing as a man coming in and calling for a drink for himself alone, if there are any friends or acquaintances present. He must allow the man who happens to be standing treat when he enters to pay for his drink. Porter is the drink of the labourers and small farmers; whisky of the better classes. There is a great deal of noise and often quarrelling over drink, but fighting is greatly on the decrease. The first two or three drinks seem to awaken all the generous, liberal, humorous, and festive instincts of the Catholic Irish-

man. He sees visions and talks in epic strain. He becomes confiding. *In vino veritas.* But, alas, stupefaction and a forgetting of trouble seem to be the ultimate joy expected from drinking.

I have often heard a sober labourer say enviously, upon seeing a man returning stupidly drunk from town: "'Tis well for him! I wished I wor half as drunk as him!" In the North of Ireland, where the spirit of parsimony is abroad, the farmers and labourers took to getting drunk on methylated spirits, and the custom became so general, that not many years ago a Viceregal Commission sat to inquire into it. The explanation of the practice was that twopence worth of methylated spirit produced as much stupefaction as two shillings worth of alcohol; and, when the fit of insensibility came to an end, it left behind it none of the after-effects produced by alcohol.

There is no such keen appreciation of the value of money in the South of Ireland as this implies; no such niggardliness in connection with drink and drinking. The spendthrifts in the Catholic provinces spend most of their money on drink for themselves and others, or they spend it in card-playing and other ways, when under the influence of drink. Drink is venerated; the best must always be procured, when one's means permit; the Catholic Irishman being, perhaps, the most critical connoisseur of liquor in the world.

And, of all classes in Ireland, there are fewest teetotallers amongst the new lords of the soil.

CHAPTER XX

Irish Catholics in old age—An old woman and her funeral—Beggars—The respectable poor in the country—Three old men—The poor in the towns—Indulgences—An Irish farmer's view of legacies for masses—Children circumvented by the Church—Priest before doctor—A sick wake—A nun's hospital—Waking the dead—Purgatory—Mortgages for masses.

It was Kinglake who said that "the laws of nature are uniform in their operation over all the world except Ireland." There is some justice in the exception; for does it not seem contrary to nature to find death, the gravest of human occurrences, treated amongst the same people as an occasion for the most intemperate festivity, and for the most exaggerated sorrow?

One of the great advantages of an Established Church, with a regular endowment, such as the Church of England and the Church of Scotland possess, is that the clergy are relieved from the necessity of importuning the laity or of setting a price—often an exorbitant price—by indirect means on their sacred ministrations. In Ireland the clergy have to depend to a great extent on money received from people who are ill, and on legacies. And so it

comes about that in practice the priests divide ailing and elderly Roman Catholics into two classes--those who have money, and those who have none. Those who have no money never receive a visit from a parish priest, but only from a curate when they are in *articulo mortis*, and he comes to hear confession and administer communion, making as short a stay as possible. Poor people are warned not to send for the priest, except in case of necessity, and are openly told that the simple Act of Contrition, made directly to God, is as efficient for salvation as the most elaborate rites of the Church! They are buried without a priest or a burial service, and no masses are ever said for the repose of their souls; the clergy only attending a burial or offering a post-mortem mass when paid for doing so. That is to say, the very compulsion which is objected to in the form of tithes or tenths, has to be applied in a far more objectionable form, savouring, in fact, of simony.

It is curious to observe in many cases how the absence of the priest seems to strengthen the old people spiritually. I have known many poor old people, whose children were able to keep them out of the poorhouse, who met death apparently in perfect peace without any of the rites of the Church, cultivating an independent spiritual life, and able to stand alone before God, with whom they seemed really in touch.

I once asked a poor woman of eighty, who had not spoken to a priest or been to mass for years, if

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

CATHOLIC OLD WOMAN.

"Many of them sit spinning wool outside the door in warm weather, and just inside the threshold in cold weather."—*Page* 313.

she were afraid to die. She laughed with an obvious sense of superiority.

"Why should I?" she asked, "I was long enough afraid of it, but now I am longing to die."

"Would you like to see the priest or to go to mass once again?" I asked.

"Ah," she replied, "such things are for the rich. High mass, high money; low mass, low money; no mass, no money!"

Amongst the respectable poor who live till over seventy—and so many of whom have now got old-age pensions—the women always have their habits made for many years before they want them —that is, the garment in which the body is dressed after death, and in which it lies during the three-days' wake, to be inspected by all the friends. They are as anxious about their wake and funeral as a bride about her wedding. I knew an old woman who lived by herself on my uncle's land in a one-roomed cottage. Her husband and children were dead or gone away, and it was only the old neighbours who remembered them. She supported herself by working for the farmers; and, though my uncle would gladly have given her the cottage free, she preferred to pay the rent in work. She used to sit spinning wool outside her door in warm weather, and just inside the threshold in cold weather.

Her one ambition was to have a good funeral. She used to get every farmer she knew to promise to attend her funeral; and would get them to repeat the promise over and over again. But she never

asked a priest to do so, for she knew that luxury would have to be paid for, and she could not afford it. Besides, it would have been contrary to local custom that a priest should attend the funeral of a person of her class. She bought her habit and her coffin; and had the blessed candles and the holy water always in the cottage. She had made all the arrangements for her laying-out after death with a woman skilled in such matters, and looked forward to death as younger people look forward to some exciting event. I often heard her counting up the number of local big-wigs amongst the farmers who had promised to attend her funeral. She had a wonderful flow of spirits, and set every one laughing when she came into a house. Whenever any one wanted to tease her, they would say they had heard one of the farmers saying that he would not go to her funeral. Not a few, who had promised, predeceased the old woman, for she lived very long; and, whenever she used to hear of the death of such a person, she would explain: "Och, what a pity! God be mercy to him! And he had promised to come to my funeral. I must get his son to promise now to come instead of him."

At length her appointed day came. Her door remained closed till midday, and the next-door neighbour, on going in, found her sleeping her last sleep peacefully on the little bed. It had not been necessary to break in the door, for it was never fastened at night. This is by no means uncommon. I remember going into one of our labourers' cottages

at half-past ten at night, when I found the door wide open and the whole family fast asleep. After awakening the man of the house and telling him my message, I asked him if he were not afraid that some one would come in and rob him. "Faix, we're not, sir," he replied, "for if any one came in to rob us, he'd find nothing to take; and, maybe, we'd rob him instead!"

The old woman who was over eighty when she died, had a large wake, at which, according to local custom, there was a quantity of whisky, porter, tobacco, and snuff for the mourners; the cottage being so small that most of the company had to sit on the fences by the roadside. It was summer-time, and many of the young men spent the night in playing practical jokes on unpopular neighbours—robbing orchards, hiding agricultural implements where the owners could not find them, opening gates so that cattle might stray away, and so forth—a curious way of showing respect for a dead friend which surely justified Kinglake's observation. Had the wake been in winter-time, the young men would have gone to the nearest forge or lime-kiln, kindled the fire and sat there telling stories all night; going down occasionally to have a look at the corpse and get a drink of whisky, or a fresh supply of tobacco.

There was an unprecedentedly large and respectably-attended funeral for a woman of her class, all those who promised to attend, and survived, faithfully keeping their words. When this amazing funeral—consisting of a two-horsed hearse, followed by a

number of farmer's spring-cars and common butts, and five or six mounted men—was passing through the village, I heard a woman, with tears streaming down her face, exclaim:

"Och, isn't it a pity the poor thing couldn't live to see her own funeral!"

Whereupon another woman said: "Faix, if she did, 'twould kill her with grandeur!"

This old woman had never received a penny of poor relief; and in this respect she was only typical of the self-respect of the Irish poor. The Irish beggars of whom one hears so much are a professional class, and are a remnant of pre-Reformation days, when the monasteries were the great landholders. They are a class which survived in Ireland after it had been stamped out in Scotland, England, and Wales, and which has got a new lease of life by the revival of the monasteries in Ireland in recent times. Where there are many convents and monasteries, the professional beggars will be found numerous; groups of them are to be met always near the chapels and nunneries and in the streets of Roman Catholic towns, whence they spread over the country.

The line is very sharply drawn between the professional beggar and even the poorest classes of self-supporting people; but there is a curious combination of contempt and respect for the beggar, very characteristic of Ireland, and not entirely due to a fellow-feeling for poverty. The proudest boast of a poor person in Ireland is that they and their kin never

received alms, public or private; yet the same people will stand in awe before a mendicant, as before a superior being, calling the beggar "sir," or "ma'am," and telling their children to do likewise. There is no between-class in Ireland, such as you meet with in England, who seek and accept charity through indirect channels, except, perhaps, in Dublin, for cities always seem to demoralise. There are thousands of old people in Ireland who would starve rather than acknowledge they were hungry. That I hope is the true Irish or Celtic spirit: the whining, querulous spirit being an artificial product, a borrowed failing. It is the same self-respecting spirit one finds amongst the Protestant Celts in Wales, Scotland, Cornwall, the Isle of Man, and elsewhere.

I knew two old bachelor brothers, who had a small bit of mountain land, their sister keeping house for them. One worked at home, the other worked as a roadmender. The sister died and they were left to themselves; and, when they began to get feeble, they had a very hard struggle. The elder worked from dawn to dark; but the one who had been a roadmender used to go abroad to collect the news. As he said himself: "Bein' always used to so much shusiety on the road, 'twas like prison to be at home."

He wore a frockcoat, knee-breeches, and a tall hat, all very brown with age; and would come into the kitchen at my mother-in-law's between meals, as jauntily as a man paying a visit to a friend, talking in a loud voice, so that you could hear him very far

away. He was a keen politician, and was eternally discussing Gladstone, Parnell, or the latest "Roosian" war. He blamed the "Roosians" for every foreign disturbance, and often spoke of Bonaparte, in comparison with whom he said all modern generals were only "plishpeens."

If the servants told him that the mistress was from home, he would go away at once, without holding converse with any one. If she were at home, he would sit on the settle in the large kitchen, or stand in the yard outside, talking freely to the servants; and when the mistress appeared, he would tell her the news or give her advice on the management of the farm. She had reason to know that he was always hungry when he paid her a visit, and that he never came except when his brother was ill and times were very bad. But he never asked for anything or made a complaint; and his whole demeanour—even on occasions when my mother-in-law learned afterwards that he could not have tasted food for more than a day—was that of a well-mannered man in easy circumstances visiting a friend. He was always asked to stay for dinner, and always refused at first, only consenting at the second or third asking. At dinner with the servants, he would keep up such a rattle of conversation, and there would be such explosions of laughter in the kitchen, that guests in the dining-room were often not a little surprised; for he could be heard all over the house, as he laid down the law, and illustrated it by wise sayings and modern instances.

These two old men maintained their independence till the last, and died in their cottage, first the elder and then the younger, without receiving a penny of poor relief, both being well over eighty. I don't think they believed in anything but God, and had very little of what I shall call priest's religion, and they did not seem to fear death.

I knew another old man, a typical big Irishman, over six feet high, who had been a foreman on the farm of a relative of mine, and left the place after forty years to set up on a small farm for himself. He had cheerful manners, and prided himself on his politeness and general correctness, especially in the presence of ladies. He married a wife much younger than himself; but, after a few years of married life, she died, and he was left alone with a little daughter. He reared the child, kept the house, and attended to the little farm, living mostly by the produce of his bees and goats.

His ambition was to make his daughter "a lady," and he succeeded so far that she grew up to be a remarkably fine, as well as a good, girl, and got a place as a schoolmistress, to the great pride of her father; but, alas, she died when she was twenty, and he was left entirely to himself. Soon afterwards, he became totally blind; and his fate seemed pitiable in the extreme. Yet he bore up manfully, and used to walk four miles across the fields to visit the widow of his former master, always bringing some honey or a kid as a present; in return for which he would accept another present, but would never take money. He

would stay for dinner or supper in the kitchen. Sometimes, if the mistress wanted to talk to him, she would ask him into the dining-room, into which he knew the way as well as if he had his sight. But nothing would ever induce him to sit down in the dining-room.

"Sure I couldn't so far forget myself as that, ma'am," he would say. "God be merciful to the master!"

I think he always believed that the master, who had been dead for many years, was still sitting in his accustomed chair. After a pleasant evening in his old haunts, where he had spent the best part of his life, this big man of seventy, as he was when I last saw him, would start off in the darkness for home, night being then the same as day to him.

One day a terrible mistake was made. When he came to the kitchen door, with his basket of honey in his hand, it was a new servant girl that opened the door, and she, having never seen or heard of him, mistook the big blind man, with unkempt hair and rusty clothes, for a beggar. Telling him to wait outside, she closed the door, and, going in, informed the mistress that a beggar was asking for something "for God's sake," and the mistress, who never refused alms to a beggar, sent out some coppers.

The old man was stunned. "You're after making a mistake," he said; and, returning the money, walked away with his basket.

The mistress, on receiving back the money, suspected the truth, and, on hurrying to the door,

saw him trudging off in the distance. She sent the girl after him to apologise, but he would not come back, and did not appear again for over a year.

He lived for many years attending to his bees and goats, cooking his meals, washing his clothes and mending them, and keeping his house tidier than the average labourer's wife in the locality kept hers. Beyond attending mass on Sundays and holy days while he was able, and going to the "stations" twice a year, he had no relations with the priest, even in his last moments. Almost to the last, he used to walk across the fields to see his mistress; and when he died, considerably over eighty, he left a small sum of money to her to cover the expenses of his wake and funeral.

The old people I have described lived in country districts, where the parishes are perhaps five or six miles long and the same distance wide, covering about thirty square miles, and in which there would be only the parish priest and one curate; two or more parishes being often amalgamated, owing to the decrease of population. But the old poor in urban districts, where they are near convents and monasteries, have rarely such self-reliance. There you will see the most pitiable specimens of devotees —old men and women whom the younger Irish call "craw-thumpers," because of the frequency with which they beat their breasts, and "altar-scrapers," because they so often prostrate themselves before the altar —wretched people, whose minds are worm-eaten with superstitions. They are usually unclean, unhealthy,

and altogether woebegone, and you will see them being hunted out of the churches by the priests.

These poor people are learned in all ways of gaining indulgences; as, for instance, by saying a certain number of prayers for the Pope's undeclared intentions; or by saying prayers at specified times; or by praying or lighting candles before a particular altar or statue. The indulgences granted for such devotions vary from a few days in length to long periods of years; and on special occasions a plenary indulgence is granted. The Church teaches that even a good confession, followed by absolution, performance of penance, and the reception of holy communion, does not completely forgive sins. It is alleged that there remains a temporal or temporary punishment after death in the flames of purgatory which are said to equal those of hell in intensity.

The Pope claims to have the power of remitting this temporal punishment, and he measures time in eternity by the rule which prevails on earth; remitting three days, three hundred days, or three years in purgatory, according to the specific prayers recited or duty performed, and in alleged furtherance of his own private motives! The plenary indulgence remits all the purgatorial punishment, even for a million years, which may be waiting for a particular soul at the date it is gained; but from that date forward the punishment begins to accumulate again. By this policy, even the most devout Catholics, who go regularly to confession and communion, are kept in fear and trembling all their lives, without any assur-

ance of salvation. I knew more than one old woman who kept a reckoning of all her indulgences; but they used to gain so many for different periods that the calculation generally proved too much for them. I knew a woman of the better classes who kept an accurate account, and I heard her say that she had gained 25,000 years of indulgences!

There is also a special kind of indulgence which enables one to get the purgatorial punishment remitted without performing the specific devotions required for gaining the indulgence in the ordinary way; but this is only known to an inner circle of devotees.

The elderly Roman Catholics with money may be divided into two classes, as regards their mental condition: namely, those who are completely in the power of the priests, and those who preserve a certain amount of mental independence. Amongst the well-to-do Roman Catholics, an independent person means little more, in practice, than a man or woman who believes that it is not necessary to salvation to put all, or the greater part, of his or her property at the disposal of the priests, either by purchasing indulgences or paying for masses.

When *Five Years in Ireland* appeared in 1901, my Roman Catholic friends and relations fought very shy of me, especially the so-called independent ones. But when *Priests and People* appeared in 1902, a young Catholic professional man wrote warmly commending me. He seemed particularly enthusiastic about the chapter on wills and legacies, and he informed me of a case he had just met with and

could vouch for. A farmer had called in a solicitor to draw up his will, believing himself to be in danger of death. He began by leaving £100 to the Franciscans, £100 to the Redemptorists, £100 to the Jesuits, £100 to the Augustinians, £100 to the Dominicans, and a like sum to other Orders of priests, for masses to be said for the repose of his soul. He then left £100 to the bishop, and divided £100 between the priests of the parish for masses for the same purpose. And these bequests were followed by many legacies to various Orders of nuns.

At length the solicitor, knowing that the man had a wife and children, and that his estate was nearly exhausted by the bequests already made, could contain himself no longer.

"Surely you're not going to forget your own kith and kin," he said. "Surely you won't leave all your money to strangers who have no claim on you!"

The dying man looked up in amazement, being in full possession of his faculties, and said: "I'm not spending my money on strangers at all."

"Yes, you are," said the solicitor. "You must have nearly disposed of it all now, and you have not made a single bequest to your own, but all to strangers."

"I'm not giving my money to strangers," said the man solemnly, "I'm spending it on myself!"

It was in vain that the solicitor pressed his point. The testator insisted on spending seven-eighths of his life-savings on himself, as he put it; or, as Archbishop Magee would have said, he invested his money in an insurance against fire.

Photo by Guy, Cork.]

A CATHOLIC OLD MAN.

"Such old men as this maintain their independence till the last, without receiving a penny of poor relief."—*Page* 310.

Soon after this I discovered that it was not on principle my friend had become interested in my work. He had large expectations from his father, and feared lest the money should be left to the Church. He got his father to read my books and even induced the old man to make a will, in which £500 was bequeathed to the bishop and £500 between the local priests and nuns, leaving the rest, about £18,000, in equal shares to his children. Relying upon this arrangement, which he frankly attributed to my books, and looked upon as a great victory for independence, my friend's mind was easy. But he reckoned without his host. For when the father died, some years afterwards, a second will of later date was produced by a Protestant solicitor of unimpeachable character, in which the testator divided his estate into two equal parts, one to be divided amongst his children, and the other for the Church. There was nothing to be done but to acquiesce; and even then it was said that the testator had proved himself an independent Catholic; for, as the other testator would have said, when he might have spent *all*, he only spent half of his property on himself. The son was very angry, but he felt that a sixth of the loaf was better than no bread. He told me that if it had not been for my books, the bishop would have got all the money.

But when the fight for the parental fortune was over, he took no further interest in promoting the cause of religious independence. He is now eager for ecclesiastical patronage, and works in subservient alliance with the Church. It is very hard for such

men to do otherwise, seeing how they have been educated, and seeing how the Government respects the bishops and priests, while it boycotts Catholic laymen who try to assert their right to the mental and religious liberty enjoyed by Protestants.

When a Catholic falls ill or meets with an accident, it is the priest who is first sent for, and not the doctor. One sometimes reads of a Dublin magistrate or coroner condemning this practice; but officials in country districts dare not condemn this or any other pious custom. The sick are not well cared for, not through lack of affection, but owing to the incompetence of Catholic women as nurses, and also owing to their distraction of mind. If an illness lasts for any length of time, the people get the idea that the doctor's coming is of no use; and they will spend their money on masses rather than on medical advice and nursing. I knew an admirable and most industrious woman who got a stroke of paralysis, and, though she was speechless and could not make a confession, her husband's first act was to send for the priest and have her anointed. I suggested sending for a doctor, but the husband said: "Don't you think it would be foolish to be spending money on doctors? Wouldn't it be better to give it to the priest to say masses for her?" This man was a comfortable farmer, and should have known better, one would have thought.

Illness produces a paralysing effect on Irish Catholics. The illness of a "strong" farmer in the prime of life will interfere with business in several townlands. People who are not relatives make

long pilgrimages to visit the invalid. The pilgrims bring no gifts with them, and render no domestic service to alleviate the illness; they come to testify their sympathy by their presence; and they usually expect the invalid to die. They are very kind about helping to do outdoor and farm work for a sick friend.

I remember accompanying a doctor who was paying a call at the house of a well-known farmer, father of a large family, who had been ill for some time. As we drove up, I saw a crowd of people standing on the roadside, and I said to my friend that it looked as if his patient were dead, and as if these people had come to the wake and to find out the time of the funeral. The doctor said grimly that he would not be astonished if it was so. It turned out, however, to be what is called a "sick" wake, and not a "dead" wake. There were twenty or thirty men standing sheepishly at the gate. The doctor jumped out of his trap and I followed him. When we entered the farmyard we found more men standing at the cow-house doors and at the house door. Making our way through, we found the kitchen filled with women. The doctor passed into the bedroom, while I remained lost amid the crowd in the kitchen.

Presently a drove of people came surging out of the bedroom, and I heard the doctor's voice raised saying: "Get out of this! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves. The man wants fresh air, and you are crowding in here taking it all away from him. I said the last time I came here, that if I found any strangers

in the house when I came again, it would be my last visit!"

My friend then had the room ventilated, and gave strict injunctions to the patient's wife that all visitors were to be kept out of the house. When he re-entered the kitchen, his face was flushed with indignation. Closing the door of the sick-room, he said to the women in the kitchen: "I command every one of you to go out. Ye come here out of sympathy for the man, but in reality ye're killing him. Go home and let this man either recover or die in peace."

They went reluctantly into the yard, murmuring: "Shure we never heard the likes before; shure we thought we were doing no harm; shure we only do as we always did"! One of them said indignantly: "What a value you sets upon yourself! Ain't all in the hands o' God? Shure wan mass the priest 'ud say, 'ud be better than all the doctors in Cork!"

The doctor spoke very gravely to the brother and the elder son of the invalid on the objectionable crowding of the house; but as we drove away he said he had no hope that his instructions would be carried out. I said I was quite sure the people would not dare to go into the house again.

When we had travelled about two miles, he turned his horse and drove back to within a hundred yards of the house. Tying the horse to a tree, he invited me to return with him to the house; and, entering by a back door, we found the kitchen and bedroom again thronged by the people who had just been expelled. Once more the doctor drove them out, but this time

they did not go so peaceably, giving him to understand that the priest should be sent for again, that "doctoring" was of little use, and that their ideas of how the case should be treated were entitled to respect. Company, they thought, was what the dying man wanted, rather than quiet.

The man died next day, and was buried three days afterwards, his funeral being nearly a mile long.

Catholic doctors tell their trusted co-religionists what the Germans call "hair-raising" stories of their experiences of hospitals conducted by nuns. A Catholic doctor, who was for many years on the staff of a large nuns' hospital in Dublin, suddenly resigned his position, and I asked him why he took so strong a step and one so likely to injure him in his profession. He refused to say; and it was long afterwards he told me his reason. He said that he discovered that when the doctors had handed in their prescriptions to the dispenser and left the hospital every morning, the Reverend Mother used to visit the dispensary and go through the list of drugs, telling the dispenser that she could not afford to get the expensive ones, and that the prescriptions were to be made up in bottles without these drugs!

My friend spoke to the other doctors, who were all Roman Catholics, but the senior physicians only laughed at him and refused to take action. He resigned on principle, but the others remained on and flourished exceedingly under episcopal patronage in their general practice. He had a very hard struggle, though he was a very able practitioner. He educated

all his large family himself, so as to keep the children out of the priests' hands, and made a living independent of the priests. But when his children grew to near manhood and womanhood, he found he had no prospect for them unless he submitted to the Church, and he gave them over to the priests and nuns. He had educated them so well that they distinguished themselves at competitive examinations, for which the Church claimed all the credit and the lion's share of the profit.

But all he had done for them was undone; and it was a sad thing for himself, just when old age was coming on, to be compelled to lower the flag he had kept flying so bravely for so many years. His former colleagues at the hospital had all outdistanced him in the race of life. The fact is that he had too much courage and yet not enough, for if he had taken the bull by the horns and left the Church with his family, his great ability might have been fittingly rewarded out of Ireland, if it were impossible that he should get his deserts at home. Like the general run of independent Catholics, while prepared to condemn the dishonesty of ecclesiastics in specific cases, he was not bold enough to differ, or to admit that he differed, with them on the question of religion.

However indifferently the sick may be treated, the Irish surpass all other nations in their generosity to their friends when they are dead, or, as not infrequently happens, when they have helped to kill them by kindness or neglect or ignorance. Amongst all classes a death in the family is an occasion for

display, or, as the Irish call it, showing off. Money which ought to have been spent on comforts for the invalid is saved up for the wake and the funeral. There is a great commotion when a death occurs. The whole house is put in order; the body is tastefully and reverently laid out on the best bed in the best room, with lighted candles, holy water, and a crucifix or decorated statue on a side-table close by. The rosary is recited and the room is well sprinkled with holy water. It is astonishing how quickly the news of a death travels; and the first thought is: "When will the wake begin?"

The wake begins as soon as the body is laid out and the house is in order for the reception of visitors, and it usually lasts three days and nights. It is as much the etiquette to go to a wake as to a funeral; and you must always go without being asked. The wake is under the management of the women who, as a rule, do not attend the funeral, which is entirely managed by the men. There are hundreds of women who would not miss a wake on any account. When the death occurs in a well-to-do family, the cooking of hams and fowls straightway begins; butcher's meat, bread and cake, whisky and wine, ale and porter, tobacco and snuff are sent for post-haste, if not already in stock. Chairs and forms are borrowed, and the house prepared for such a number of guests as perhaps it never received before.

There are two kinds of wakes, respectable and rowdy; the latter being confined to the lowest classes, and not at all as numerous as they used to be. A

rowdy wake is a disgraceful sight. It is not only the occasion for drunkenness and unseemly frivolity, but also for taking revenge on personal enemies by cattle-driving, cattle-maiming, and vindictive practical jokes. Indeed, the night of any largely-attended wake in the country districts, even that of a respectable person, is made an occasion for outrage or larking. There are countless songs about disreputable wakes, like those about drinking. A very well-known one is called "Finnegan's Wake," of which the first verse of the chorus will give an idea of the frame of mind of those who attend such wakes:—

> "Pill-a-milloo, your sowl to glory; well to floor your trotters shake!
> Wasn't it the truth I towld ye? Lots of fun at Finnegan's wake!"

I don't think there is any sight in the world half so sad as a respectable Irish wake. The grief-stricken, frightened relatives—the widow or widower, the children, the broken-hearted father and mother, the appalled brother and sister—with faces red from bitter tears, sit by the bed of death silently weeping, or rocking themselves to and fro in dumb anguish, looking ever and anon at the marble features of the dead; and breaking out now and then in wails of uncontrollable anguish. Or they glide like ghosts about the crowded house, passing through the people from room to room, along the stairs and landings, attending to the comforts of their friends as a distraction from the paralysing grief that is in their own hearts. And this lasts for three weary nights, so

that all are exhausted when the body is taken to the grave! I shall not harrow the reader's feelings with a repetition of the dreadful details I have more than once witnessed when, alas! those near and dear to me were being waked. The wake, of course, had its origin in affection for the deceased and in sympathy for the bereaved relatives. Would that this well-spring of affection, instead of expending itself in remorse and vain regrets, in the useless prodigality of wakes, funerals, and obituary masses, might be directed so as to expend its bounty in practical help and love for the living!

Some years ago it was the general custom to have keeners at wakes and funerals; but now it is only the poor, who cannot afford to pay the priest, who keep up the practice. But even in respectable houses keening is still far from being entirely discontinued. The keener does the same sort of work vocally as the mute does in silence at an English funeral—the contrast well exemplifying the difference in character between the two nations. The keener is always an elderly woman, not infrequently a professional, who sits by the bedside and sings a melancholy dirge in praise of the dead person, reciting all the excellences of the deceased and the many reasons the relatives have for grief. It is a harrowing experience to listen to one of those Irish keens. Beginning with a series of howls or wails, it gradually becomes articulate. First are heard the Irish exclamations of woe—very much resembling those of the chorus in a Greek drama—Ullagone! Allaloo!

Mavronethuch! Gu-vo-gu-deering! Ma-grine-chree-ha! and many others. Then comes the definite allusion to the dead person, and so the keen goes on, until the keener is exhausted, and is removed for refreshment. There is always a keen raised, even in respectable houses, at the supreme moment when the body is being removed to the bier.

At a respectable person's funeral, a great concourse of people is waiting outside the house to receive the body on starting for its last earthly journey—cars of every description, mounted men and pedestrians; and a procession from half a mile to a mile in length is no uncommon sight. Visitors to Dublin, who care to see such spectacles, should go to Glasnevin Cemetery, the great Roman Catholic burial-place, about eleven a.m.; for there are no interments allowed there after noon. In country places, where the distance to be traversed is usually long, the priests' car goes first, being generally two hundreds yards in advance of the hearse. Each priest is presented with a cambric hatband and sash, and all the men at the funeral get crepes; so that the draper's bill is a very heavy item. While one of those great funerals is passing through a country town, all business is stopped, most of the shops having their shutters up, and the public-houses in the town or village nearest to the graveyard always do a brisk trade after the interment.

Thus the body of the Irish Roman Catholic is laid to rest amid great commotion and display; but the agonised relatives have no certain, or approximately certain, assurance that the deceased's soul is likewise

at rest; and masses and anniversary masses have to be ordered and paid for, while those live who take sufficient interest in the deceased and can afford to pay for them.

Purgatory has a melancholy fascination for the pious Irish Catholic. There the dead relatives are waiting to be released; how many of them are still in durance vile it is impossible to say. I remember once, after the interment of a friend, walking about the graveyard with an aunt, reading the inscriptions on the tombs. We came to a moss-covered stone, and when she had laboriously diciphered the name of the person last interred under it, she exclaimed: "That was my granduncle by the mother's side, and your great-granduncle! Let us kneel down and say a prayer for him. Who knows but he may be in purgatory yet and in need of it?" She was full of the idea of her granduncle who had given her a shilling long ago in childhood's days, but whom she had quite forgotten. And that evening she actually sent a remittance to a priest with a request that a mass might be offered up for the release of his soul from purgatory!

It is the practice of dying Roman Catholics to leave money to priests absolutely for unspecified charitable intentions. This is done at the priest's request, except in very rare cases, and such legacies are absolute gifts without any directions to show how the money is to be expended. The hierarchy, through the Nationalist members, have just secured a promise from the Liberal Government that legacies of this

description are to be exempt from duty. It would be very important, in the interests of the country, if some legal enactment were made forbidding farmers, who have purchased their holdings, from charging them with an annuity for priests in payment for masses. There will be a temptation to mortgage farms in this way, by open or underhand means, when cash is scarce, and when a testator feels impelled to "spend his money on himself." And if the Church set its mind on acquiring land, nothing would be easier for it than to do so by this method in Ireland, where the widow or children would gladly consent to an annual charge rather than a cash payment. If this custom were to become general, the Church would soon become the largest mortgagee and ultimately the largest landowner in Ireland, if the present realistic belief in purgatory subsists.

Photo by H. E. Ward.]

IRISH DREAMERS—MEN.

"The idleness in Catholic Ireland is naturally a source of constant wonderment to English visitors."—*Page* 341.

Photo by H. E. Ward.]

IRISH DREAMERS—WOMEN.

"But it is only right to say that the Irish hurry through their work, and do not spin it out for the love of it, as the English do."—*Page* 341.

CHAPTER XXI

Irish idleness—Showing off—A shopkeeper's defiance—English activity and Irish craving for rest—A Catholic Irishman's conceit—Bossing—Sensitiveness—Enmity—Influence of Newspapers—Edmund Dwyer Gray—Partisanship.

THERE is no part of the British Isles in which idleness is so aggressive as in Catholic Ireland. Cut off, as they were, from serious intercourse with their tenants, the landed gentry made no pretence of having anything to do but to amuse themselves when they appeared in public. Their talk, always loud, was invariably of amusement. The same class of people in England seem quite preoccupied and busy in comparison. It thus became the ambition of all classes, following the fashion set by their betters, to appear in public as if they had nothing to do. In this way the country gave itself, and got, a reputation for idleness which it did not deserve. There is a a great deal of idleness, but some of it is pretence.

The effects are often comical. You will meet a young farmer, for instance, whose dress, except on Sundays, is a flannel waistcoat, caubeen, corduroy trousers, and hobnail boots, waiting at a railway station arrayed in a gentlemanly tweed suit, brightly

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polished boots, collar and tie, bowler hat, and kid gloves, and carrying a cane in his hand. His acquaintances point him out to one another, proudly or jeeringly, and say: "Yerra look at Pat Murphy. He's a great man entirely. Isn't he just as grand as one of the big fellows? Where's the differ between him now and the best of 'em?" Another will perhaps remark: "Why wouldn't he? Shure 'tis the fine feathers makes the fine birds. If we could only dress ourselves up like they do, there would be no differ between any of us an' the gentry. Shure the poorest will be higher than the richest in heaven, glory be to God!" One would think that the speaker dealt in birds of paradise instead of geese and turkeys.

The final verdict on Pat Murphy is always that "he is a credit to the country." Pat Murphy himself in his new clothes, holds aloof from his acquaintances. To some extent he believes he has changed his nature with his apparel. He enjoys the obvious looks of admiration on the countenances of his friends. But it is when he gets out of the district in which he is known, and finds himself in the market town or city, that he is in his glory, and becomes really possessed by the idea that, as Lover puts it, "he is not himself at all." Every acquaintance he meets openly compliments him on his appearance; for flattery and the broadest compliments are considered the best possible taste. But what he enjoys most is posing as a country gentleman in the company of those who do not know him, and who, as he thinks,

are completely ignorant of his true position. He thinks he comes of an older and better family than his landlord, because the landlord's ancestor came over in Elizabeth's, James I.'s, or Cromwell's time.

Pretence is very general in Catholic Ireland, and is also to be found amongst a section of the Protestant Irish. If you observe the Irish first-class passengers at the railway stations or on the Channel steamers, especially between Kingstown, Dublin, and Holyhead, you cannot avoid being struck by their grandeur. They are wrapped up as if for a voyage to the Pole; they order the porters about and lose their luggage, and, if they are accompanied by servants, let all the world know it. When they get to England some of them sink into comparative insignificance, others keep up their conquering manners, and give the impression that they are at least millionaires or royalties travelling incognito. All have the notion "at the back of their minds" that they are really great personages, and only require to get away from those who know them in order to blossom forth in their full splendour.

There is something childish in this habit of make-believe in adult Irish people, which never completely disappears, though it usually becomes dormant after forty; the pretence of having nothing to do; the longing to be thought an aristocrat, who lives not on personal exertions, but on property acquired by some distant ancestor. It is almost universal in Ireland, and pervades all classes more or less. If you notice the doctors driving about Dublin in the morning in

their carriages, you would imagine, if you did not know, that they were all wealthy private gentlemen taking the air in a sedentary way. The barristers and solicitors on their way to Court do not seem on business bent, but rather like men of leisure up from the country who are hurrying through some commission, so as to be free to amuse themselves. The business men seem like people out for a holiday, with nothing to do but to joke and stare at every one and everything they see. I knew an old trunk-maker whose shop was on the Quays in Dublin. He was in a very small way of business, and always wore an apron in his shop. But he used to turn out twice a day, in the forenoon and afternoon, in Grafton Street in a silk hat, black coat, and gloves, swinging an umbrella and enjoying the town as keenly as if he had never seen it before. His grandeur and pompousness were extreme, and I often thought he would probably run you through with his umbrella if you stopped him and said: "You are so-and-so, the trunk-maker on the Quays."

The same classes of people in London, or in any of the English cities, carry the stamp of business about them, giving one the impression that they are earning their livings by work, and that their minds are taken up by the problem of existence. The Englishman in England really enjoys himself at business, which he accepts as the natural condition of existence. He is at his best, perhaps, when settling his goods in his own shop window, or successfully disposing of an article at a profit; and he is overwhelmingly polite to a possible customer. While

the Englishman is at his best in England, at his best at business, at his best at home, the Catholic Irishman does not do himself justice in Ireland, either at business or at home; and therefore is anxious to escape from both, so as to enjoy liberty in what he believes to be his true sphere, namely, that of a man born to spend money and be waited upon by others.

I knew a shopkeeper in Grafton Street who kept very good things, and he used to stand idle all day behind his glass door, looking out into the street. He would stare indignantly at any person who came into his shop and whom he did not know. If the new arrival ventured to criticise any of the goods shown by the assistant—for the shopkeeper himself never acted as salesman—the shopkeeper would come forward and stand at the customer's elbow with a sneer of contempt on his face, but saying nothing. If the customer turned round in surprise and did not withdraw his criticisms, the shopkeeper would open the glass door, and say briskly: "You must go where they keep cheap things. This shop wouldn't suit you." When the shop was closed, this man might be seen, dressed in the height of fashion, smoking a cigar on Kingstown Pier, and, I do believe, imagining that his identity was shrouded in mystery.

The idleness of people in Catholic Ireland is naturally a constant source of wonderment to English visitors. But it is only right to say that the Irish hurry through their work in order to enjoy their spell of idleness, and do not spin out work for the

love of it, as English people do. There are, however, numbers of Irish people who never do any real work. Such are the fat and unshaven farmers one sees standing idle at the cross-roads, before the public-house doors, in the forges, or lying asleep in their own fields, during working hours. Such, too, are the shopkeepers whom one sees equally stagnant in the towns. Seeing that the sensations, known as shame, penitence, and remorse, are so much stronger in the Irishman than the Englishman, it is a wonder such men are not ashamed to be idle. Englishmen in the same position would not enjoy being idle, because instinct tells them that present idleness means future discomfort. Physical activity and restlessness are characteristic of Englishmen and Englishwomen; whereas rest and rumination constitute the ideal of the Irishman. The activity and restlessness of the Irishman are mental, and usually spring from remorse for duties unperformed. He seeks relief mostly in drink and tobacco, occasionally in an outbreak of violence, but ultimately in confession and absolution. It often seems as if, in the process of evolution, the mind is the faculty last added to man; and amongst the weaker races man feels unequal to mental activity, and by the use of alcohol and opium tries to stifle it and reduce himself to the enjoyable, careless condition in which he was, before mind began to work. It appears as if this were the wrong way to lull the mind to sleep. The Englishman's habit of bodily activity is the right way; for then the mind keeps pace with the body, and we get men of action instead

of men of dreams and imagination. An English dentist said to me recently: "I never think, I act." What he really meant was, that thought and act were simultaneous. If Englishmen had any ideal, it would seem to be activity; if they had any special thought it would be: "Something attempted, something done, to earn a night's repose." In tropical climes, when there is not enough of business to occupy them, they expend their energy in polo and cricket and other forms of activity. The Englishman in Ireland throws himself into sport, and into anything which is not business, with an energy which would astonish his friends at home.

The home-bred Irish Catholics, on the contrary, cannot understand why a man should do anything involving muscular exertion when he can avoid it. There are exceptions, of course, but on the whole they cannot imagine why Englishmen and Irish Protestants go out of their way to seek for unnecessary employment. They could not understand the frame of mind of the English family, for instance, whom I found spending their holiday last Christmas in addressing circulars for a foreign mission at the request of the salaried secretary, describing their occupation as "most delightful and charming," and joyously proclaiming that they had addressed, stamped, and posted two thousand circulars in four consecutive evenings.

The prevalence, in a considerable degree, of this spirit amongst the Protestant Irish, inevitably suggests an explanation. The Church of Ireland and

Presbyterian clergy, being all married men with families, have to exert themselves not merely to perform their parochial duties, involving a great deal of visitation, but also to rear their children respectably; and therefore, naturally, present a constant example of activity to their parishioners. Amongst the Catholics, the priests are far more venerated by the laity than the parsons amongst the Protestants, and therefore their example is more contagious. The Catholic attributes a certain supernatural power to the priest with which the Protestant does not accredit his parson. Now the appearance presented by the priests in public is usually that of lethargic, sleek, prosperous, and portly bachelors, whose business in life is rest and meditation, varied by a little quiet walking exercise. The priests preach, but no one can tell whether they practise. They have no social duties or family responsibilities. This is the model, or ideal man, that the shopkeepers and farmers have before them, and they cannot avoid being affected by it. One of the highest compliments that can be paid to a person in Catholic Ireland is to say of them that "they never touched a hand to anything in the way o' work in their lives."

The idlers are usually very fat; but frequently they are thin, when, as often happens, food is scarce. Fatness is a thing to be proud of. If a man meets a friend who has been absent for some time and finds him grown fat in the interval, the customary compliment is: "Begannies, you're greatly improved"; or "You're looking splindid intirely." Fatness is

strength; they believe in "putting up mate" instead of putting up muscle. The same idea prevails amongst the women, by whom, and in whom, fatness is greatly prized.

I knew a middle-aged Catholic of the old school, who was a magistrate and employed a considerable number of men. He was very fat, and used to appear in the street after breakfast about ten o'clock, taking his stand in a nook formed by an iron railing and the wall of a private house, right in the middle of the town. There he would stand until early dinner-hour, laying down the law or gossiping with a knot of shopkeepers; the two policemen on beat saluting him reverentially as they passed up or down the street. Another elderly Catholic merchant, retired, used to hold a *levée* at a corner every fine evening from about seven to ten, denouncing every one who happened to be mentioned, especially those who had risen, telling how he knew the grandfather of one to have been a poor pot-boy, or how he often saw the grandmother of another gathering manure in the road. Nothing more scandalous or unedifying could be imagined, nothing more at variance with the temper of the present day in England, than the violence of the language used by those men in discussing private and public affairs. Fortunately their talk was never translated into action, being only the outflow of over-active minds out of touch with the will and muscles. But though it only excited laughter amongst the listeners, especially the young, it acted like a wasting disease on the speakers themselves.

The pride of such violent Irishmen is not that self-respecting pride which enforces a respect for admitted superiors and possible rivals, but a false pride accompanied by open contempt for others. When I came home first from college in Dublin, I was speaking to a farmer's son who had spent a few years at a priest's boarding-school and was about my own age, giving him some idea of what Dublin, and especially Trinity College, was like. He seemed so awe-stricken and deferential that I thought I had never seen any one so humble.

But he astonished me by saying: "I suppose now you consider yourself the equal of any living man, after such an eddication an' such exparience as you have got?"

I replied that, so far from doing so, I had a far lower estimate of myself than I had before I left home.

"That's quair," he said; "I considers meself as good as the Queen any day; an', umsure, you ought to think yourself a dale better."

This ridiculous pride, or conceit, coupled with a longing for idleness, explains the Irishman's special aptitude for "bossing." Labourers returned from America have often told me that the Irishman is the most exacting and domineering of all bosses. The yearning of the lower-class Irish for positions of authority makes them eager to become policemen, here and in America. And, though a pious vocation must be the chief incentive to holy orders, it very often happens that the same craving for power and

desire to escape manual work will attract one brother to the constabulary depôt in the Phœnix Park and another to the ecclesiastical seminary at Maynooth.

There are few Irish men or boys so low as not to have some one under them to boss. Every farmer's or shopkeeper's son has a labourer's son to act as his Sancho Panza. It is most amusing to hear the tenant of a small farm shouting passionate words of command to his only servant boy, some ragged urchin who obeys his orders like a slave, but who, when the master's back is turned, will make a face and shake his fist threateningly, saying: "There's no law for the poor boy, but, umsure, I'm young and me turrn may come yit wid the help o' God." There is no more loyal force in the Empire than the Royal Irish Constabulary, and yet the language they use in private about their superiors is so appalling, that you wonder there is not a mutiny. It is only the Catholic Irishman's habit of showing his teeth when he cannot bite.

They are exceedingly sensitive and are thin-skinned in the literal sense of that word. You can hear their hearts beating, when they are excited or exerting themselves, in a way that I have never noticed with Englishmen and Scotsmen. They are easily offended, the slightest disrespect wounding them more than a blow of the fist hurts an Englishman. Yet they are continually giving cause of offence to one another, either by telling disagreeable truths, reviving unpleasant memories, sneering, scolding, or hinting. It is impossible to tell when you will offend a Catholic

Irishman, especially if he is an acquaintance of long standing.

I remember a shopkeeper, whose son had just been ordained a priest and celebrated his first mass. The fact was recorded in a paragraph in a prominent part of the local paper, as such matters usually are in Ireland. The shopkeeper was, I believe, more delighted with the paragraph in the papers than with the event it recorded. Many of his friends came to his house early to congratulate him on his fame and wish well to the new priest. Not satisfied with this he set out to make a promenade of the street at midday, and received, as he expected, many more handshakes and congratulations. But there were many of his acquaintances, as well as persons of superior station, who passed him by with the usual nod of salutation and made no reference to the ordination of his son. In most cases, though probably not all, the omission was unintentional; but the shopkeeper believed it was malicious in every case, and set all who did not congratulate him down in his black books, cut them when next he met them, and did not make it up with them for a long time after!

A stranger may say almost anything he likes to an Irishman, for he will put the most favourable construction on everything. I often think the reason an Irishman is so glad to see a stranger is because it is such a joy to meet somebody with whom he has never fallen out, and with whom he can start fair. To meet a perfect stranger is one

of the greatest pleasures the average Catholic Irishman knows.

They are rarely on friendly terms with their own relations. The ordinary politeness and affection to one's kindred, which come so naturally to the lower-class Anglo-Saxons, are discarded as affectation by the Hibernian. For a husband to kiss his wife or be even attentive to her is deemed effeminate, and produces a feeling akin to nausea in the onlookers; whereas brusqueness and positive rudeness excite no surprise. It is considered a good sign of a man to be rude; and it frequently is so, in Ireland. Never despair of carrying your point with an Irishman who loses his temper and even swears at you. If you are only patient, you will find him pliant when the reaction sets in. Most Irishmen like to do kindnesses to strangers, feeling that they will be thanked for it; whereas the same service, if done to one of their family, would be taken as a debt paid, and elicit no expression of thankfulness.

It is quite a common thing to find near relatives —brothers, sisters, husband and wife, or parent and child—at deadly enmity with each other, or, as it is called, "black out." This estrangement may last for a day, a week, a month, a year, or for life. I knew two brothers who lived in the same townland, their farms adjoining, who did not speak to each other for twenty years, the quarrel extending to all the members of their families. They went to mass every Sunday to the same chapel, went to their "duty," that is, made their confessions and com-

munions regularly twice a year, but they never made friends. Wherever there is a duty, or obligation, between one Irishman and another in Catholic Ireland, there is a predisposition to quarrel, a tendency to revolt, mutiny, or mutual exasperation, ready to burst into flame on the slightest provocation. If the obligation is even an impersonal one of business, the inclination is not to yield to it; the desire always being to concern oneself about things which are not business.

Newspapers exercise a marvellous influence in Ireland, the old veneration for print, the old belief that what is printed must necessarily be more authentic that what is not printed, still flourishes in Catholic Ireland. The importance of a Nationalist speech is measured by its length. The father of the young priest, for instance, never expected to be publicly congratulated until the ordination of his son was chronicled in the newspaper. I remember a farmer who, in the old National League days, used to open the *Cork Examiner* at breakfast, and, seeing a speech of Mr. Dillon, or Mr. O'Brien, or one of the other leaders, would exclaim: "Och! This bangs Banagher! Wan, two, three, four—ayeh, is there more of it?—five, six, seven columns of a speech by William O'Brien! Mustn't he be a great man intirely?" And then he would put down the paper without reading a word of it, and go out and hear it discussed in the village by the schoolmaster, who would leave his school for an hour in honour of the occasion, the smith, who would desert his

forge, and some farmers who meant to spend the day drinking, in celebration of the event.

The same thing on an enlarged scale would be witnessed amongst the shopkeepers in the towns that day. A stranger, who did not know them, would think from the terms of passionate eulogy in which they would speak of the orator, that each and every one of them was ready to lay down his life at the command of Mr. O'Brien, or the man whose words occupied so much space in the morning newspaper. After a great speech, they always thought that something was bound to happen, and remained under that impression till the next great speech.

It was the newspapers that made the Land Agitation so important. At the time of O'Connell's Repeal Agitation, the common people were not able to read. *Caret vates sacer.* The world was not impressed; and the agitation failed. There is not much use in holding monster meetings and making monster speeches, if they are not reported for, and read by, the outside world. In that sense, it was Mr. Edmund Dwyer Gray, owner of *The Freeman's Journal,* as much as Mr. Parnell, who made the Land Agitation. After hesitating for a while, Mr. Gray determined to throw in his lot with Mr. Parnell, and made his paper the *journal officiel* of the Land League and National League. The circulation went up to figures never before reached in Ireland. The paper went into every corner of the land; the other Catholic papers had to follow its leadership; Mr. Gray made a fortune such as no other newspaper-

owner had ever made in Ireland; and, though neither Mr. Gray nor Mr. Parnell lived to see it, most of their coadjutors have lived to see what Michael Davitt called "the fall of feudalism" in Ireland.

The Irish Catholics are pre-eminently one-sided and born-partisans. Starting with the dogma that theirs is the only true Church, outside which there is no salvation, as the catechism puts it, they come to be incapable of seeing any side of any question but their own; thinking that any view taken up by their leaders and themselves collectively must be the only right one. As they put it, "what every one says must be true"—every one meaning the people within their own limited horizon. No Nationalist could read a Unionist paper without an explosion. Every uncompromising Unionist is "a hard man against the people." In their opinion it would be as mean to read a Unionist newspaper as it would be to attend service in Protestant churches, while continuing to profess to be a Catholic. From their own standpoint they are the soul of honour. There is no man so hated as he who "tries to carry the two sides." It is neck or nothing, and a fight to a finish; no compromise and no surrender. Such a movement as the Land Agitation could never be carried through in England—happily for English people. If such an agitation were launched in England, as it was in Ireland, the right of private or individual judgment, which is admitted in religious matters, would at once come into play. Several landlords would declare on the side of the

tenants; several tenants on the side of the landlords; each man, whether landlord or tenant, would act on his own judgment, or in his own particular interest. But in Ireland the habit of implicit obedience to ecclesiastical authority and of acting together in large bodies, which follows from the surrender of the right of private judgment in religion, brings about a unity of action and thought which makes the Irish Catholics collectively a mere implement, for the time being, in the hands of the popular and able agitator. When the agitator dies or loses popularity, the Church, which made and keeps the people a united body, again resumes its sway. The unity and persistence of the Irish Catholics during the Land Agitation, however imposing and temporarily effective, were suggestive of a stampede of half-wild cattle broken loose from their drovers. Much more profitable results might have been achieved by the free exercise of private judgment, individual attention to business, and reasonable negotiation with the landlords. But then we should not have had the new Irish lords of the soil!

CHAPTER XXII

Best and worst Irish traits—Thorough but changeable—Irish generosity—An unendowed priesthood—Thoughtfulness for others—Hospitality—The Irishman's feelings—Protestant ascendancy replaced by ecclesiastical—Want of social reunions among Catholics—Married or marriageable clergy sadly missed—A home-bred and home-keeping priesthood—Catholic vindictiveness—Outrages on beasts—The *mauvais gré* in Flanders—Grumbling, lack of reverence, mutual disrespect, rebelliousness—Gallantry to women.

THE best points in the character of the Catholic Irish are curiously akin to the worst, their virtues becoming transformed into vices, and the extremes of both being frequently found mixed in the same person. As it has been said: "If an Irishman is good, you will scarcely find a better; if bad, you will seldom find a worse." We find moderation and self-restraint conspicuous by their absence; the middle way, in which lies safety, being held in slight esteem. Unaccustomed from birth, as they are, to exercise private judgment on the smallest particular of the one subject which dominates their lives, namely, religion; having no voice whatever in Church government or parochial management; they lose the faculty of bringing the judgment or the will

to bear quickly and effectively on anything. They act for the most part on impulse. They are only strong in passion, but rarely, if ever, in calmness, as the Englishman is. They are extreme and thorough while the stimulus of passion or sentiment lasts; but they are changeable.

They were professedly ready to "shed the last drop of their blood" for Mr. Parnell after the decree of the Divorce Court had been pronounced. But when Mr. Gladstone wrote his memorable letter a few days afterwards, suggesting Mr. Parnell's retirement, they veered round in a body, ecclesiastics and laymen, except for a few stalwarts here and there, and hounded their once-idolised leader to a premature grave. I was present at the delivery of what was, I think, Mr. Parnell's last speech in Dublin shortly before his death. He was reduced almost to a skeleton. His hair and beard were untrimmed, and his wonderful eyes blazed like diamonds under his pallid brow. His clothes were hanging loosely on his emaciated frame; and I remember him standing on tip-toe, and crying out, like one who felt he was on the verge of death: "Ah, men of Dublin, when Wellington withdrew behind the lines of Torres Vedras, his generals did not form a plot to stab him in the back!" It was a pathetic scene and a grim object-lesson on the unreliability of Catholic Irish character. The violent language, hatred, and dissension between the Parnellite minority and Anti-Parnellite majority, then and for several years afterwards, not merely on the platform

and in the papers, but in the home, by the fireside and at meals, and at every social or business meeting, can hardly be understood by the present generation of Britishers.

There is not one of their virtues—and they are many—which is not almost obliterated, as a national asset, by the want of judgment and moderation I have mentioned. There is not one of their failings or vices which is not in reality a virtue turned awry from the same cause.

First amongst their natural virtues I would place their generosity. The true Irishman thinks he holds his property not by right but by good luck or special grace. He thinks that others have as good a right to it as he; and when he sees a fellow-being in want, his first impulse is to put his hand in his pocket. The general drift of Catholic sermons, in so far as they deal with money, is not conducive to thrift, but to generosity; and the sermon is the only source of enlightenment for adult Irish Catholics. The sermon is a continuation of what they have previously been taught in the schools. In it the people are constantly reminded of the text which states that it is harder for a rich man to enter heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle; as well as of the parable of Lazarus and Dives. There is therefore a contempt for money and other worldly possessions amongst the laity which Britishers find it impossible to realise. This does not apply to the Catholics in the Protestant counties of Ulster, who stick tightly to their money

and rarely part with it except under pressure of the Church.

The people in the Catholic provinces are urged to give their money to the Church, or, as it is put, "to spend it in making their souls." When persons receive the sacraments, go to mass on a weekday, or pay for a special mass, or say the rosary at home, or perform any other unusual devotion, they call it "making their souls"; or, "making their beds in heaven." The free horse is constantly spurred; for the unendowed clergyman's position in Catholic Ireland is totally different from that of the parson or minister in the established Churches of England and Scotland. There are no parochial committees charged with providing for the priests, as in the Free Churches of Great Britain—no Church Representative Body as in the disestablished Church of Ireland, no General Assembly as in the Presbyterian Church—and nobody knows how much money the priests get. The want of provision for them, and their entire dependence on the people, give them a claim on the generous Irish which has developed into the same kind of tyranny as a spoiled child exercises over a fond mother. All the collections at the chapels are for the priests themselves, except when the bishop orders a general collection for a new cathedral or other diocesan purpose—and that does not often occur. The ordinary collection is made before mass at the door or gates, and those who do not pay are forbidden to enter, or put to a great deal of un-

pleasantness, including a promise to pay double next Sunday. Those collections for outside charities, under management entirely independent of the parochial clergy, which are such a feature in English and Scottish churches and chapels, have no place in the ecclesiastical economy of Irish Catholics.

The layman's relationship with the priest is that of one who can give nothing but money, mere dross, in return for priceless sacraments and the gift of eternal life itself. They always feel at a disadvantage. Their generous instincts are therefore untrained. The education in generosity which members of non-Roman churches undergo, is wanting to them, and their generous instincts not infrequently run riot, to the injury of the individual and the family. What strikes one most on returning to Catholic Ireland after some years absence is the disappearance or decadence of families that were once well-to-do. They are usually spoken of regretfully as "dacint people, too dacint for themselves," and their failure is mostly the result of misdirected generosity. One scarcely ever sees the pleasant spectacle, so common in England, of elderly people retiring from business with a competence, while in possession of their full powers.

The Catholic Irishman's thoughtfulness for others is another virtue which, for want of judgment, becomes a national loss instead of a gain. It is quite a different quality from the politeness of the Anglo-Saxon which springs from forethought and rational motives of self-interest. The English

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

THE INDUSTRIOUS LABOURER'S WIFE.

"The average wife's work is never done. If she is capable and industrious, she is busy from morning to night."—*Page* 263.

are more social but less friendly than the Irish. The Irishman is so painfully alive to the interests of other people, that his altruism produces the worst results for himself and others. He considers another's case according to the best of his lights, and with an amount of concentration which he could not bring to bear on his own. But he necessarily does so from his own standpoint, honestly asking himself what he would do if it were his own case; and being very logical, he comes to a rigid conclusion, which he at once tenders in the form of advice or assistance. If, as usually happens, his advice is not appreciated, he feels wounded and insulted, his sensitive nature wilts under the rebuff; and after several such experiences he becomes a cynic and a pessimist, and settles down into playing the rôle of a misunderstood and unappreciated man for the rest of his life—brightening up only when he meets a stranger.

It cannot be doubted that much of the Catholic Irishman's pleasure in the practice of hospitality, or entertainment of strangers, arises from his eagerness to be with people from whom he has never met a disappointment, and by whom he has never been distrusted—he becomes desperate when he feels he is distrusted. He does not enjoy giving business dinners, in return for favours received, or in expectation of favours to come. To him that would be mere business and unworthy of the name of hospitality. Besides, business could never be enjoyable. He would deem it a very mean act to

entertain a man with a view to getting some advantage from him. It would never occur to him that his guest might be able to look after his own interest and quite above being caught by chaff. The feeling in his own mind that he is trying to do by indirect means what he cannot accomplish directly, would be unbearable.

The Catholic Irishman is a martyr to his feelings. Instead of controlling and suppressing them, he indulges them. The Irishman thinks the Englishman shameless and heartless because he shows so little "feeling," being unable to realise how the feelings can be brought under control by self-discipline and made a scource of strength instead of weakness. The long discipline of subjection to the Normans did much to strengthen Anglo-Saxon character, but I doubt if the Saxon's nature was ever as sensitive as the Celt's. On the other hand, the long discipline of the confessional, in which the feelings are continually lacerated, analysed, and indulged, has done much to soften and weaken Irish Catholic character. The hospitality for which Ireland was famous in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was chiefly exercised by the Protestant Irish, who, when they were natives who had left the Church of Rome at or since the Reformation, were only continuing the habits of their ancestors, and, when they were the descendants of British settlers, were faithfully imitating the manners of their adopted country.

It was not only the early Normans who became "more Irish than the Irish themselves." The

Cromwellian troopers, fanatical Nonconformists and Evangelists as they were, became converted by their Irish wives; and their descendants to-day are the most pious believers in Roman Catholicism and the most determined exponents of the Anti-English programme of the Nationalists. The town of New Tipperary was built by the descendants of Cromwellian Independents. The surname "English" is quite a common one in the county, and those who bear it are almost all Catholics. One does not think it extraordinary that men, so descended, should fight against England, for they did so on a far larger scale in America; but it is astonishing that they should have adopted the religion to which in England they were so bitterly opposed.

The old Protestant hospitality has almost ceased to exist in the Catholic provinces, except in Dublin and its neighbourhood, owing to the rapid disappearance of the gentry; and nothing has sprung up to take its place. Wherever you go, you see old mansions, or "great houses," as the peasantry called them, untenanted or in ruins. Throughout the eighteenth, and up to the middle of the nineteenth, century, Protestant ascendancy meant a lusty, vigorous life—thoroughly human, and, as was the fashion all over Europe then, rather animal than refined or spiritual. With all its faults, and they were many, it was life; and year by year as it dies away, it leaves behind it a silence and lethargy as of death.

The hated Protestant "ascendancy" has been replaced, not by independence, as those who worked

for its overthrow fondly hoped, but by ecclesiastical ascendancy. Social reunions amongst the Catholics are the exception rather than the rule. Wherever there is any amusement, you will usually find that one or two Protestants are the moving spirits. The chances of meeting amongst Catholics are chiefly outdoor, races once or twice a year, or Sunday games. There are no parties, no friendly indoor gatherings, except for the upper-class Catholics, who find most of such entertainment in Protestant houses. In the large cities, like Dublin and Cork, there are Catholic social sets, of course, but the amusement always has a tendency to degenerate into gambling, and presents none of that variety which one meets in England and amongst the Irish Protestants. It is also wanting in moderation, for the young do not coalesce with the elderly, or the elderly with the young. The feelings are brought too constantly into play. Hopes are raised too high and disappointments are too keenly felt. The elder men require more employment for their "feelings" than is supplied by conventional forms of entertainment, and cannot do without the excitement of gambling and drink. The younger men are not content with what they get of female society in a drawing-room. The young women are too eager in craving for marriage, and lay themselves open to heartrending disappointments. The elder married women receive no attention and lapse into the ignoble position of gossipers and *chaperons*, who are merely waiting for their daughters or husbands. There are, of course, exceptions, where Catholics mix

socially with Protestants; but this is the main impression left by a study of the purely Catholic sets in Irish society.

The married, or marriageable rector, vicar, and curate are sadly missed; for the priests, as a rule, do not show themselves at social reunions, except at a dinner-party. Their presence is felt as a damper by the laity, and a sigh of relief goes up from the young people when the black-coated ecclesiastic departs. The priests cannot join in games with ladies; they have lost the power of small-talk and of being amused with trifles. Even such a priest as Father Healy, who was a priest in a thousand, was better calculated to shine at bachelor dinner-parties than in a drawing-room. The younger the priests are nowadays, the more shy and impossible they are. The latitude which the older generation of priests enjoyed under Protestant ascendancy finds no place in the new *régime* under what I shall call Maynooth ascendancy. I heard a young Maynooth priest preach a sermon in which he said he hoped Holy Ireland would never be polluted by the smoke of factories and the noise of traffic, as Protestant England was; and that he might live to see the day when church spires would be as numerous in Ireland as smoke-shafts in England, and when the only noise that would awake the echoes of the glens would be the chimes of matin or vesper bells from the churches, monasteries, and nunneries. Thus, in his opinion, would Ireland be worthy of her ancient title of "the island of saints and scholars." The young man had

been two years in England, waiting for a vacancy in his native diocese, and had just returned to take up his first curacy at home. The ecclesiastical laws prevalent in Catholic Ireland made it practically impossible that a priest can become well-mannered, or even what is called a man of the world. After seven years confinement in Maynooth, or some other theological college, where, except for a yearly vacation spent at home, he is kept under a restraint not unlike that which prevails in asylums for harmless lunatics, or penitentiaries, the young man is appointed straight to a curacy in the diocese in which he was born, and remains in that diocese all his life. He is not allowed to minister in his native parish. If there is not a vacancy for him in his native diocese, he waits until there is one, serving in the meantime in England or elsewhere. Young men who go on the English, or foreign, mission, make their election at the start; and, as a rule, they are the sons of a poorer class of people than those who remain on the home mission. Under this arrangement the priests in a given diocese, being all natives, can never infuse any new blood or new ideas into their parishioners. For a priest to leave his diocese and go to another is practically unheard of.

And the priests never travel. Their annual holiday rarely carries them farther than Bray, or Kilkee, or some other Irish watering-place, or, perhaps, to Harrogate or Buxton. The priest who takes a continental trip is a *rara avis*. A wealthy Catholic brewer once took Father Healy for a trip to Rome, in which of course the brewer paid all expenses.

When they returned to Westland Row station in Dublin, the luggage was sent on by carriage to the brewer's house in Merrion Square and the two friends went by tram. When the collector came to collect the fare, which was a penny, the brewer put his hand in his pocket as usual, but Father Healy seized him by the arm with a great show of indignation and said: "'Tis my turn now, Mat. It wouldn't be fair to let you go to any further expense!" And he presented the brewer gravely with a tram ticket.

The Catholic Irish share the characteristic daring and courage of almost all Irishmen on great occasions, but they are deficient in everyday courage. When his blood is up, or his feelings aroused, there is probably no man in the world so willing as the Irishman to throw all considerations of self-interest to the winds and sacrifice himself without any ulterior motive whatever. A public or national call to service is far more potent with him than an individual call. In this he is unlike the Englishman, upon whom the individual call has the stronger claim, the peculiar strength of the English nation consisting in the sum-total of the individual calls to duty. The Irish are fit for service under a tyrant, or autocrat, but are not adapted for counsel under constitutional government. Their exclusion from all participation in Church government produces this defect, which is general in Catholic lands. When they are not pessimistic, they are disposed to be optimistic and sanguine. Vacillation is one of their weak points. They are quick to advance, but equally quick to retreat. They

can stop and rest and wait and procrastinate with a persistency unsurpassed by any people in the world, but they cannot keep up a steady, even pace.

You continually hear them say: "I have a kind of a feeling within me that things are going to turn out all right"; or, with even greater conviction, "I have an inspiration that there's good news coming." Most Irishmen know that kind of feeling more or less; and, if indulged in, it is an almost unerring premonition of failure. The Irish Catholics cultivate this feeling; and the poorer they are, the more sanguine they are. I have never heard a name given to this peculiar sensation which becomes a kind of disease with thousands of them. They wish for a thing, and think that by cultivating this feeling they are sure to get their wish. One constantly sees painful exhibitions of this weakness in Catholic families when any important matter is pending. If a farmer is one of many competitors applying to the landlord for a certain farm; if he has made the landlord an offer of purchase for his farm; if his son is a candidate for a situation, or at an examination; if a man is going to the fair with some cattle, or is trying to sell some property: not only the man himself, but all his family cultivate this curious feeling. Many of them will even go so far as to prophesy. If this were done in a spirit of sport, or if it meant nothing more than an intelligent business interest in the matter, there would be nothing remarkable in it. But it is really a species of self-torture; or, if you like, a wasting kind of self-excita-

tion. There are visions of the best possible result one day, and of the worst possible result the next. They are up in the clouds flying on angels' wings, or they are down in a slough of despond rolling in the mire, without any prospect of getting out. And all this for some pending event, to influence which they neglect every sensible precaution through giving way to this feeling! Those ups and downs in the feelings are the only constant feature in the average Irish Catholic's life. The steadiness of the Anglo-Saxon or the Irish Protestant seems unnatural or, as it really is in this respect, unfeeling. The indulgence of this feeling often produces a permanent despair which acts like mental paralysis. In youth and early middle age it is counteracted by periods of hopefulness, and a belief that "there's a good time coming"; but they abandon hope in old age, and the sense of approaching death overshadows all their vacant moments.

One of the worst traits of Irish character is vindictiveness, and capacity for keeping up grudges. In this the Irish Catholics excel most of the races of the world. It is a natural attribute of their temperament. I think it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that of all the many outrages on dumb animals committed during the Land Agitation, and still persisted in, not one was ever proved to be the act of a Protestant. A particularly bad feature of those outrages is that they are committed because they cannot be easily detected, and because the dumb animals cannot inform or retaliate. The man

who cuts the hamstring of a neighbour's horse or cow, would cut the neighbour's throat if he could do so with the same prospect of immunity. These outrages on cattle and other property during the Land Agitation, were something totally different from the destruction of mills and machinery by strikers or unemployed workmen in the North of England. To do injury to inanimate objects, the introduction of which threatens one's livelihood, to make a physical assault on the man who introduces those novelties, is intelligible, and may be condoned under circumstances of grievous provocation. But for outrages on dumb animals there can be no palliation, nothing but contempt and all the rigour of the law. It bespeaks a manly spirit to shoot at a cruel landlord or land agent, even from behind a hedge, as compared with the spirit that sends a man into a neighbour's field to lay poison, to put nails into the turnips thrown out as food for cattle, to disembowel a brood mare, cut the udder from a milch cow, and do any of the many horrible things—of which cattle-driving is the least censurable—done by Irish Catholics in recent years.

The *mauvais gré*, or *haine de cense* as it was called, which was a feature of the land troubles in French Flanders and, across the Belgian frontier, in Hainault and Brabant, between 1836 and 1850, produced outrages similar to those perpetrated in Ireland fifty years later. There, as in Ireland, the Catholic tenants had become possessed with the idea that they were owners of the soil, and the man who went into

occupation of a farm from which the landlord ejected the former tenant on the expiry of a lease, was subjected to outrage "by threats, cutting and maiming, and destruction of agricultural implements." His daughters were mobbed and his sons driven from their work. Incendiarism, poisoning of cattle, and assassination were also rife. The Belgian and French Governments acted with much greater severity and success than did the British Government in Ireland, presumably knowing better the spirit of the people with whom they had to deal. Several executions took place; three men were sentenced to death at Hainault assizes in 1843 for poisoning cattle; the last execution, in 1850, being that of a man who had been hired for seventy francs to assassinate a landlord.

The *Procureur du Roi*, speaking in the Appeal Court at Brussels in 1863, said that, though no special leglislation for land had been passed, agrarian outrages were then unknown, because it had been realised that "any such acts would be punished by the Government (ever jealous of the rights of property) with severity." In France the Government quartered troops on the communes and increased the gendarmerie in disturbed districts; and, furthermore, they held the outgoing tenant responsible for outrages committed on his successor within six years of his leaving the farm. If this course had been taken in Ireland, it would have been very effective, for all such outrages are perpetuated by the outgoing tenant or his friends.

The procedure adopted in Ireland of empowering the County Court Judge to award compensation to the victim of an outrage, leviable on the district, only punishes the innocent and lets the delinquent go scot-free. The Royal Irish Constabulary have been singularly unfortunate in the detection of the perpetrators of outrage; and as the judges usually award high compensation, there is undoubtedly a temptation to struggling farmers to destroy their own property in the assurance that they will be handsomely remunerated for the loss. In the eighteenth century the barbarous custom of "houghing" men, that is, cutting their hamstrings, was prevalent in the streets of Dublin; and a statute was passed by the Irish Parliament in 1783, giving the man that was houghed a pension for life, or until the hougher was convicted, the amount to be paid by the district in which the offence was committed. The statute increased the crime it was meant to suppress; for numbers of men, anxious to avoid enlistment in the army, or soldiers anxious to procure their discharge after they had been pressed or entrapped, began to hough themselves, and so escaped military service and got a pension for life!

The Irish Catholics will not give information to the police; their sympathies are either with the criminal, or they fear that, if they inform, an outrage will be committed on themselves. There is a saying in Ireland: "It is a dangerous thing to find a dead man." They have very little faith in the law; and, though there is much bad temper, there is very little

civil litigation in the Catholic provinces. They believe in taking the law into their own hands.

Their habit of being "agginst the Government" sours their disposition. They become envious and cannot enjoy what they possess themselves, if they see better things in the possession of their neighbours. They are prone to grumbling. An Irishman will grumble at the sun for putting out the light of his farthing candle. They are worried by contradictions, attaching greater importance to words than to the things they represent. If a Catholic Irishman had a hundred pounds, and if the neighbours said he had not got it, all his pleasure in the possession would be destroyed for the time being. He collapses internally under a cold, critical stare, and feels as if he were melting away; so susceptible is he to the opinion of others, so little reliance has he upon himself. While the Englishman is compact of self-respect, the Irishman is too busy analysing the opinions of others to respect himself. The Englishman loves his home, and, however humble it is, speaks of it to a stranger as "a good 'ome." The Irishman finds fault with his home, and though he clings to it, he does so like a vegetable; because, in his ignorance, he thinks that leaving it would be like tearing him up by the roots and certain death.

The English poor respect each other, and in conversation with their betters, speak of one another as "ladies" and "gentlemen." The Irish disrespect each other, and speak disrespectfully of one another to those above them. The reverence of the Catholic

Irishman seems to be all absorbed by the Church and the mysteries of religion. He rejoices at hearing people of title and high position attacked; whereas it grates upon a Englishman to hear an embittered personal attack on any one, but especially on the holder of an honoured title or position, however unworthy may be the individual. This admirable feeling in England is due in no small degree to the co-operation of the Church of England clergy with the aristocracy, and the identification of the Church with the Throne and Government. One does not find the faculty of reverence cultivated to the same degree in the Nonconformist churches even in England, how then can we be surprised at its absence in Catholic Ireland?

The Englishman practices a little harmless deceit upon himself for the sake of his internal comfort, magnifying pleasant news, minimising unpleasant. The Catholic Irishman always tells himself the whole truth, and more than the truth, whether it is good news or ill. He tells his near relatives and friends the truth too, or what he thinks is the truth, especially when the spirit moves him to point out their failings. This practice is prevalent amongst the Presbyterians in the North also; but being done temperately and systematically, does not give such offence as amongst the Catholics, with whom it degenerates into scolding, and is a prolific source of domestic unhappiness.

Duty is not loved in Catholic Ireland. That an act is a duty makes the doing of it a thing to be avoided. The person to whom a duty is due becomes

obnoxious. The most popular way of showing one's independence is to refuse to do one's duty. Husband and wife treat each other with disrespect and neglect, as a protest against the obligations of the marriage tie; children show their independence by revolting against parental authority at an early age; while one and all are eager in proffering their courtesy and services to those who have no claim to them. To do something for a person who has no claim is gratifying; but to be considerate or affable to one who has a claim, or to do or forego something in the interests of business is demeaning and shows a slavish spirit. There is no country in which "slavishness" is so despised and independence so esteemed; and yet there is no country in Europe in which there is so much slavery and so little independence; for its people have the worst masters in the world—their own feelings and passions.

A fellow-countrymen, passing judgment over sixty years ago on a turbulent Irishman, said he displayed "strange and almost incompatible traits of character," and went on to specify "his alternate gentleness and ferocity, love of justice and violation of all law; his lenity and cruelty; patient endurance of wrong; yet perpetration of foul and atrocious murders." The same writer, eulogising another fellow-countryman who was hanged for accidentally murdering a young heiress whom he was abducting, when he only meant to kill her father, says: "His manners were soft, gentle, and insinuating, and his disposition naturally generous and humane; but when roused

by strong excitement, his passions were most fierce and uncontrollable." I do not think these epigrammatic sentences could be improved upon as a racy summary of a good deal of Irish Catholic character at the present day.

The Catholic Irishman feels in a melting mood when in conversation with women; but his devotion and gallantry to the weaker sex, as a whole, often degenerates not merely into boorishness to the women he knows, but into misogyny. Nowhere will you hear such wholesale and cynical strictures on female ineptitude and inconstancy as in Catholic Ireland. The Irishman loves not wisely but too well, and is prone to bitter disappointment. Allowing for exceptional cases, however, it may be laid down as a rule that the Irishman has a boundless respect for every woman he does not know, and for any woman he knows and likes—if she be beautiful, he is her slave to command.

I can well believe the story of the charming maiden, glittering with jewellery, who safely performed a journey alone from one end of Ireland to the other in the reign of Brian Boru, "with a wand only in her hand, at the top of which was a ring of great value"—an incident related in Warner's *History of Ireland*, and immortalised by Moore in his well-known lyric.

The gallantry which made the Irishmen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries treat their wives with a consideration unknown amongst the peasantry of other lands, as I have mentioned, is but

another phase of the true Irish attitude towards women. A lady whom I sat next one evening at dinner in London told me a story of how the friends of a well-known Lord-Lieutenant, at the most embittered stage of the Land Agitation, took advantage of this characteristic trait. She was herself on a prolonged visit to the Viceregal Lodge when things were at the worst; and when the Viceroy went out he was always accompanied by a lady. She herself took the post of honour several times. Once, going with the viceregal party to Punchestown, she took the window-seat in the railway carriage, with the Lord-Lieutenant sitting next to her on the inside; and some rough-looking countrymen were about to hurl a stone at the carriage, but desisted on her account, one of them saying audibly: "We can't strike a woman whatever!"

This arrangement, it may be added, was the device of the Lady-Lieutenant, whose firm faith was thus expressed: "No Irishman will ever run the risk of hurting a woman."

Irishmen themselves never bring their women with them when on business involving danger or unpleasantness, lest it should be said they were sheltering under the petticoat. I remember once when going to and returning from a lecture-hall in the North of England at a place where my friends feared there might be some physical expression of disapproval, my English host insisted on my walking between him and his wife, saying: "You know an Irishman will never hurt a woman."

This is one of the pleasantest features of Catholic Irish character; and all strange ladies coming to Ireland should regulate their attitude towards the people by the last two lines of Moore's song—

> "And blest for ever be she who relied
> On Erin's honour and Erin's pride."

Unfortunately, one has heard of ladies being treated with discourtesy during the Land Agitation, when their husbands, or sons, or brothers were boycotted for offences against the law of the Land League, and of ladies being boycotted themselves for similar breaches. There were also cases of violence to parsons' wives and daughters during the Tithe War. But these were exceptions which prove the rule, and one is happy to say that this deep respect for women, as distinguished from mere conventional politeness, flourishes amongst the new lords of the soil and their tenants, the respectable labourers.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Outlook—A priestly aristocracy—The Church of Ireland clergy—Protestants who are on the Catholic side—Dublin a lesser Rome—The Irish Catholics in the Colonies and the States—Growth of the Church in the English-speaking world — Atheistical defections abroad — Discipline of French, American, and Irish clergy—25,000,000 of British and English-speaking Roman Catholics.

INHABITED by such a people, what then is likely to be the future of Catholic Ireland? The withdrawal of the land-owning class from the Catholic provinces, after land purchase, will entail other withdrawals, leaving the Catholic farmers masters of the situation; and the question of the future is, How will they use their mastery? I do not see how their views can possibly become wider than they are, seeing that their only source of enlightenment will be through the Church, whose bishops and priests are their own home-bred and home-keeping kith and kin.

The hierarchy and priesthood regard themselves, or are regarded, as a superior caste; their superiority being derived not from birth, or intellect, or experience of the world, but solely from their divine agency and the superhuman powers accredited to them as the result. An increase of intelligence in the laity,

or anything in the nature of a religious evolution, would not be relished by the dominant caste. However subservient or agreeable those outside the fold of the Church may make themselves, their presence will never be really acceptable to the Catholic clergy; and it is possible that they, or their children, will find it to their advantage to move to the North or across the water.

The tendency in recent years has been for those who do not belong to the Roman Catholic Church to concentrate themselves in the North. In the Catholic provinces, increase of local government has restricted instead of extending the openings for professional men who do not belong to the Catholic Church; so that we shall have to reckon upon the possible loss of the Protestant professional men as well as of the Protestant gentry. The new professional men will be all educated by the Church, and their sympathies as well as their interests will be inextricably bound up with those of the great institution which they speak of as "their Holy Mother."

The hierarchy will gradually occupy the place of the nobility, and the priesthood that of the landed gentry. The idea of an ecclesiastical aristocracy has been steadily kept before the Irish Catholics for the last forty years. The cardinal, archbishops, bishops, and other dignitaries are sons of the common people, and, despite their superhuman attributes, the common people look upon them as their own, and in honouring them feel that they are honouring themselves. When, in 1876, Cardinal Franchi, Prefect of the

Photo by H. E. Ward.]

A MOUNTAIN COT (OLD STYLE).

"Smaller white patches are seen at frequent intervals . . . these are the labourers' cottages."—*Page* 3.

Photo by H. E. Ward.]

VILLAGE COTTAGES (OLD STYLE).

"The cottages belong, not to the landlord, but to the farmers on whose holdings they stand."—*Page* 20.

Propaganda, visited Ireland officially, as the first papal delegate since disestablishment, the *Freeman's Journal* wrote as follows: "For the first time in a history that counts by centuries, two princes of the Sacred College—two of the Scarlet Hats, beside which the Garter and the *Toison d'Or* and the Iron Cross are but baubles of yesterday—were enthroned before an Irish altar." The second prince was Paul Cullen, son of a Carlow tenant farmer.

The bishops are received by cheering crowds and deputations with bands and banners, when they make their visitations, or go to lay a foundation, or perform some other ministerial duty. All the materials for a temporal sovereignty are ready to hand in the carefully trained dispositions of the faithful people; and the withdrawal of the Protestant magnates and gentry would seem to offer a clear field for the ecclesiastical aristocracy.

On the Church of Ireland clergy will apparently devolve the duty of maintaining a temperate, dignified and friendly, but firm, position, as the representatives of that wider culture, sympathy, and knowledge of the world which were once so general in the Catholic provinces, and cannot, in the nature of things, be expected from seminary-bred celibates, however pious and well-meaning. The Protestant laity who remain and honestly try to co-operate with the ecclesiastical powers in matters commercial, municipal and political, will have to be on their guard lest they become, to all intents and purposes, Roman Catholics. There are numerous instances of

actual conversions, or perversions, according to the point of view. One does not care to mention the names of the living, but one need not go back to Cromwell's troopers for a reminder. Sir John Gray, proprietor of *The Freeman's Journal*, a singularly able Dublin Protestant of Scotch descent, became the champion of the Catholics and Nationalists, and was greatly honoured by the Church. His son, Edmund Dwyer Gray, joined the Church of Rome.

The Protestants who join with the Nationalists and the Church, even when they do not desert the faith of their fathers, seem to become more Catholic than the Catholics themselves in advancing the "Catholic programme." Men, for instance, like Thomas Davis, Sir John Gray, Issac Butt, William Shaw, and even Mr. Parnell, had more to do with setting up the present ecclesiastical ascendancy than any four Catholics one can think of. There was not one of those men who did not honestly start with the idea that he was going to make use of the hierarchy, unconsciously at first, but afterwards against their wills, for the advancement of liberal views amongst the people. But, in the event, it was those men themselves who were used by the hierarchy for the perfection of ecclesiastical ascendancy. There is something almost superhuman in the way those home-bred Irish priests have circumvented every Irish patriot or British statesman who has entered into alliance with them. The patriots die impoverished and broken-hearted, the statesmen depart ingloriously across the Irish Sea, leaving the

Church stronger after every rebellion or agitation, richer after every political deal.

It must be remembered, furthermore, that the strength and influence of the Irish branch of the Roman Catholic Church is not confined to Ireland itself. Dublin is, as it were, a lesser Rome, Ireland a sacred territory to which Irish Roman Catholics in the United States, Canada, Australasia, South Africa, and elsewhere look back with veneration. It is because of the Irish Roman Catholics in those new lands that the legislatures in the States and our own Oversea Dominions have passed resolutions in favour of granting Home Rule to Ireland. Those resolutions do not represent the settled convictions of the American or Colonial publics on the question of Home Rule, but rather the policy of trying to conciliate the Irish vote. People of other nationalities become citizens of the commonwealth to which they or their fathers have emigrated. But the Irish remain separate always, more or less; and it is mainly owing to the influence of their ecclesiastics, so many of whom come straight from the Irish ecclesiastical seminaries. Whenever the Irish are organised by their priests, they will be always found fighting against the State system of education, and insisting on getting Government grants for exclusive Roman Catholic schools. In the Colonies they have denominationalised education to a large extent. In the States they are fighting hard to do the same by starting schools of their own, and forbidding the laity to send their children to the splendid State schools.

Cases are frequently met with in America where ignorant Irish immigrants are refused the sacrament because they will not remove their children from the State school and send them to the priest's school. All the Roman Catholics in America and the Colonies are kept in close touch with Irish sentiment by their Irish priests and bishops; and are being so guided by their ecclesiastics that the English-speaking Roman Catholics now constitute, perhaps, the most powerful and best organised body of adherents of the Church of Rome to be found in the world. There is much misconception prevalent in Great Britain as to the strength of Roman Catholicism as it affects ourselves and our Empire. A book was recently published by an English writer, an ex-priest of the Roman Church, in which he dilates on the decay of the Church in various countries, and counts up the defections by millions.[1]

The news contained in the volume was evidently very welcome, if one may judge from the approval with which it was received in certain quarters. It no doubt helped to allay doubts and heart-searchings as to the advantages to be reaped by the Roman Catholic Church from Home Rule. If the Church of Rome was decrepit and decaying, it could not greatly matter whether she gained a little or not in Ireland; there could be nothing to fear. In this way the book helped to keep the religious aspect of the Home Rule question out of sight of the electorate at the general election of January 1910.

[1] *Decay of the Church of Rome*, by Joseph M'Cabe.

The Church of Rome has lost millions of adherents in France who have gone over to atheism. There is a problematical loss in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and other countries from the same cause. But except for the disestablishment of the Church in France, all these defections have resulted in no weakening of papal power, but rather in a chastening which has strengthened it. Is the Benedictine Abbot of Rio de Janeiro, who issued a prospectus in the British press last year, asking for a loan of £400,000 on the ample security of his real estate in the Brazilian capital, a whit less powerful than his predecessor was under the Brazilian empire? The Church was an established Church under the emperor; it is a disestablished Church under the republic; but the abbot is probably richer and more powerful than ever It is not two years ago since I saw a Brazilian paper in which was an advertisement from a local church, announcing that Pontius Pilate's daughter had just been released from purgatory, and claiming it as a great victory!

The defections of atheists from the Church of Rome are rarely permanent. There is a great deal of nominal atheism amongst the younger Catholics in Ireland; but they always return to the bosom of the Church. It involves a very exalted conception of human nature to look forward to a time when men can stand absolutely alone without guidance or authority in regard to morals and a belief in a future existence. Those who cherish that ideal may rejoice in the atheistical defections from the Church of Rome. But experience shows that the Mexican,

Peruvian, Brazilian, Spanish, Philippine, and other atheists who spit at the holy statutes and curse the priests in private, take off their hats to the priests in public, send their children to the priests' schools, and usually send for a priest to shrive them on their death-beds. Personally, I know of no more contemptible type of man than the Irishman who talks atheism in the club, or the literary society, or the saloon bar, and then attorns to the Church when it comes to practical business. The British, Colonial, and American Agnostics assuredly have no terrors for the Church of Rome; they are apparently amongst her best friends in the legislatures of both countries. So much is this the case that, in reckoning up the defections from Rome, one can only count with certainty on those who have taken the specific step of openly joining another religious communion. Some of our popular leaders, especially Labour representatives who profess to be Catholic-minded and Agnostic at the same time, should remember Mr. Bradlaugh's warning: "Beware when that great Church, whose power none can deny, tries to use the democracy as its weapon."

The author I refer to gives us to understand that there is serious disunion in the ranks of the Roman clergy. Where is the proof of it? A certain class of English authors take too much concern in the bickerings and jealousies of the different Roman Catholic orders of priests, but forget the fact that they are always united when it comes to business. Take the case of France and the United States, where

the unity of the Church was most seriously threatened in recent times. The French clergy were always noted for their independent attitude towards the Vatican, so that the term "Gallicanism" meant a certain ecclesiastical independence. It is an open secret that the majority of the French bishops were willing to come to terms with the French Government before the recent disestablishment of the Church in France. But the Pope intervened and ordered them to break with the Government, with the result that the whole episcopate and clergy of France are now obeying the Pope's orders and at war with the Government. They allowed the papal nuncio to be expelled from Paris, the French ambassador to be withdrawn from the Vatican, the Church in France to be disendowed and disestablished, the monastic Orders to go into exile—they suffered all this rather than disobey the Pope's decree. That is not disunion or mutiny, but union and submissiveness.

It is the same in the United States, where, under the leadership of Irishmen, like Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Ireland, and under the direction of a resident papal delegate, the American bishops and priests are absolutely, nay slavishly, in line with the Vatican. It is only a few weeks since President Taft proudly related how he himself had gone as special ambassador from the United States to the Vatican at Rome — the first approach ever made to the papacy by the republic to ask officially for the Pope's help in pacifying the Philippines; and President Taft publicly thanked the Pope for the

assistance then given! "Americanism," as an ecclesiastical term denoting a certain independence of the Vatican, has gone out of use because it has lost its meaning.

There is no proof of any clerical revolt in any other Roman Catholic country. I can vouch for it, and public events endorse my testimony, that the Irish hierarchy and priesthood are, so far as the outside world is concerned, absolutely at one with the Vatican. When the Pope condemned the plan of campaign some years ago, many Englishmen thought that the Irish hierarchy would revolt. How unfounded were their expectations! They thought they could use the Pope to lessen the power of the Roman Church in Ireland. They never seem to have heard that it is not by Beelzebub one can hope to cast out devils. Those personal differences which from time to time exist between the Vatican and certain bishops—and to which the English writers are inclined to attach an undue importance—never come to anything, and vanish when once the general policy of the Church is decided on. Those who have tried to use the Roman ecclesiastics have always ended by being used themselves.

But even if it be true that the Church of Rome is losing in influence and numbers abroad, the comfort, if such there be, to be derived from that knowledge would be more than counterbalanced, so far as we are concerned, by the growth and consolidation of English-speaking Roman Catholicism. A few figures on the subject may not be out of place here. They

are not quoted with any alarmist view—for there is nothing in them to cause alarm—but because they seem to be overlooked just at present by those who speculate on the prospects of Roman Catholicism as a world power.

During the reign of Queen Victoria the number of Roman churches in Great Britain, without including Ireland, grew from 500 to 2000—a growth of over 400 per cent. The number of Roman Catholic priests in Great Britain rose from something like 500 to over 3500—an increase of 700 per cent. The number of elementary schools rose from 89 to 1300—an increase of 1500 per cent.; while the pupils grew from 8445 to 320,000—an increase of thirty-eight-fold, or 3800 per cent. The number of nunneries increased from 17 to over 600—an increase of nearly forty-fold, or 4000 per cent. The number of male monasteries increased from 6 to over 300—an increase of fifty-fold, or 5000 per cent. And these figures were compiled by the Roman Catholics before the French immigrants began to come in any considerable number to our shores. One cannot state officially what is the number of lay Roman Catholics in Great Britain, but they must be, or will be very soon, as numerous as those of Ireland. In Ireland, as we know, they number 3,300,000, and constitute three-fourths of the population.

In Canada, our most populous colony, at the last census the Roman Catholics were the largest religious denomination, being three times as large as the Presbyterians, the next largest denomination—the ecclesiastical organisation in the Dominion consisting of

a cardinal, seven archbishops, twenty-three bishops, and thousands of priests, monks, and nuns. They influence every step of public policy, and have changed the character of the national scheme of education.

In the Australian colonies the Roman Catholics have not such predominance as in Canada; but they are a most powerful religious body and have to be consulted as to every step of public policy; the ecclesiastical organisation consisting of a cardinal, four archbishops, twenty bishops, and thousands of priests, monks, and nuns. They are the second largest religious denomination in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, West Australia, and Tasmania. In South Australia and New Zealand they take third place. In South Africa, where the population is so largely composed of Dutch Protestants, Roman Catholicism has not flourished as it has done in Canada and Australia; but it is increasing. In our Indian Empire the Roman Catholics at the last census were three times as numerous as the Anglicans, who were the next largest denomination of Christians. In the smaller colonies the Roman system flourishes exceedingly, its adherents constituting the majority of the population in many cases, as in Malta, Mauritius, and elsewhere.

Along with these powerful bodies of Catholics within the British Empire, we must take into account the millions of English-speaking Roman Catholics in the United States of America, in close touch with and under the same leadership as British Roman Catholics. Those who have recently come from

America tell of the great growth of Roman Catholicism there, where from being a despised and negligible factor, as it was fifty years ago, it has become so powerful that not a single step of national policy can be entered on without taking it into account. There one sees its political and religious sides in full play. It gains political power by its religion, and religious power by its politics.

If we put the Roman Catholics within the Empire down at 12 millions — Mr. Redmond's figure — I think the American Catholics are rather more; so that we may estimate that there are now about 25 millions of English - speaking and British Roman Catholics—a number which is being constantly increased by the inrush of Poles, Italians, Austrians, and others into the United States, where they quickly become English-speaking people.

I do not think the British public have any desire to evade the issues raised by these figures, by setting off against them the decay of the Church of Rome elsewhere. The swing of the pendulum towards Roman Catholicism in England is largely due to a feeling of pity for a denomination which was severely dealt with in the past; and, as I ventured to say at the outset, there is a danger lest public sentiment, in its rebound from the old anti-popery position, should now swing too far the other way. Roman Catholicism everywhere within the British Empire has sufficiently recovered, to put it mildly, from the effects of the penal laws, and is no longer in need of commiserate treatment. It is very well able to

take care of itself; and what one is disposed to fear now is lest it may begin to dictate the policy of the country; or, at all events, wield an influence over our national affairs out of proportion to the numbers and standing of its adherents.

There are about 50 millions of adherents of the various reformed Churches, or non-Roman Catholics, white men and women, in the British Empire, who may be relied on, if and when an emergency arises, to deal effectively with the political side of Roman Catholicism—even though its adherents of all colours should number 12 millions. There is no desire on the part of any representative section of British public opinion to interfere with the religious freedom of Roman Catholics; but the Roman Catholic ecclesiastics are exceedingly able politicians, who mostly use laymen as their spokesmen, and their pretensions must naturally be resisted when they clash with those of the country as a whole.

As for Roman Catholicism in the United States, it is not our business to criticise the action of the Protestant majority there. But it may be stated for the reader's information, if not for his solace, that there must be well over 45 millions of professing Protestants in that country, as compared with the liberal estimate of 13 millions of Roman Catholics. What does concern us is the advantage which may be taken of the blood-relationship existing between the Irish, Irish-American, and Colonial Roman Catholics, in case of a dispute between a Dublin Parliament and the Mother of Parliaments at Westminster.

CHAPTER XXIV

Will the new lords of the soil be wise?—Their risks in undertaking a Home Rule agitation—The doubtful results even if it succeeded—Prospects under Tariff Reform—Forecast of a Home Rule agitation after the passage of a first Home Rule Act—Separation as in Norway, or re-conquest as in the Transvaal?—The case of Ulster briefly stated.

KNOWING the home surroundings, education, and religious environment of the new Irish lords of the soil, the question in which all Britishers are interested is: Are they likely to embark on a fresh agitation for a Dublin Parliament; or will they justify Mr. Parnell's prediction about them when he said: "If you once make the Irish tenant owner of his holding, he will turn the sands into gold." If they calculate the sufferings of thirty years of land agitation, they are likely to seek for gold rather in the fertile soil than in the barren sands of politics.

Those who yearn for peace in Ireland—and they are to be found amongst the Catholics as well as the Protestants—point out the sterility of a Home Rule agitation; and I venture to summarise their predictions as facts of the situation and not for the purpose of controversy. They allege that, all through

the misery of the Land Agitation, the goal of ownership was to be pleaded in justification of the hardships incurred; but, at the end of a Home Rule agitation, there cannot be anything similarly substantial for the people. What would be the results, they ask, if Home Rule were obtained? The transfer of the management of public business from trained and impartial civil servants, all Irishmen, to a body of men whose highest testimonial of character would naturally be their political activity in the past, would not benefit the people, but a crowd of office-seekers; while all classes, Munster owner-occupiers no less than Ulster manufacturers, would lose heavily by a disorderly and inefficient administration. It is pointed out that the Civil Service could scarcely be more Irish than it is at present; and that there could not be any appreciable increase of local self-government, of which at present Ireland has just as much as Great Britain; the county, district, and municipal councils and boards of guardians being already under the management of the same class of men that would control them under a Dublin Parliament. It is pointed out that those popular boards have not given the public any relief in rates as compared with the old *régime*. On the contrary, rates are higher. The probabilities are in favour of an increase of taxes also under a local Parliament.

The abolition of the Royal Irish Constabulary, on which the Nationalist members have set their hearts, would bring no financial gain to Ireland, while it would mean a serious diminution of security for life

and property. The cost of the force is now borne by the whole United Kingdom; and Ireland could never afford to maintain a police force as effective at her own expense. Other large sums of British money expended on the civil government of Ireland would necessarily be withdrawn also on the establishment of a Dublin Parliament; and there would be a heavy pension list, if existing officials retired to make way for new favourites.

Numerous schemes of public works would be expected from a Dublin Parliament; and these, not being of a remunerative character, would necessitate an increase of taxation, ultimately if not immediately. And, in the nature of things, the incidence of that taxation would fall heavily on the Ulster manufacturers at first, but would afterwards take the form of a tax on land, to be paid, not by "alien" landlords, but by native owner-occupiers. The Nationalist party, as well as the Radicals with whom they work, have always favoured taxation of land, if not full nationalisation. Under such circumstances it would be the interest of the manufacturers who remained in the country to join with the owner-occupiers in a demand for the taxation of imports to make up a revenue independent of domestic taxation. And as British goods form the bulk of the imports, the tariff would fall mainly on them. "Burn everything English except the coal" has been a popular saying in Ireland since the days of Dean Swift. Mr. Parnell used to say that if a brass wall were built round Ireland, she would find all the resources necessary to

her prosperity within herself. That belief is widely held in Ireland at present; but, if it were put into practice under Home Rule, how would it be likely to work out?

Great Britain seems coming round slowly to a policy of Tariff Reform, based on a mutual preference between the various countries of the Empire, that that policy may be in force before many years. A Dublin Parliament would then have to deal, not with a Free Trade Britain, but with a Tariff Reform Britain. A tax on British imports into Ireland would disarrange the whole scheme of Tariff Reform, unless Britain took the same course with Ireland as with foreign countries which taxed imports from Britain. Irish goods imported into Britain would have to be taxed. And if Britain taxed live-stock and agricultural produce from Ireland, while admitting colonial produce free, all the visions of prosperity held out to Irish owner-occupiers, founded on the special advantages enjoyed by Ireland for the supply of the British market, would be rudely dispelled.

These are some of the dangers to Ireland which the advocates of peace and industry foresee in the achievement of Home Rule, in addition to the loss incurred by the antecedent agitation.

On the other hand, it is pointed out that under a policy of Tariff Reform, with one parliament and one government for the United Kingdom, the Irish owner-occupiers would stand a fair chance of becoming the wealthiest body of agriculturists in the world; enjoying something approaching a monopoly of the British

market, owing to their proximity as compared with the Colonies. The taxation of the manufactured goods imported into the United Kingdom from abroad would, in the opinion of the Tariff Reform leaders, have the effect of increasing the home production of those articles, and thereby increasing the amount of non-agricultural labour required in Great Britain. Under such a policy there would be no surplus of labour for British land, and Ireland would be more than ever the main source of supply within the United Kingdom for beef, bacon, butter, and other agricultural produce. The increased market need bring no fear of an increase of rent or taxation; and owner-occupiers would stand to gain all the increased profits, instead of sharing with the landlords as they did under the old system of joint-ownership, or paying a heavy land-tax, as they would probably be asked to do by a Dublin Parliament. Whether this forecast be well founded or not, it is evident that the Irish lords of the soil will act more sensibly if they settle down to reap the fruits of ownership and take advantage of the flowing tide in their favour, than if they launch out again on the troubled sea of agitation.

That is briefly the fair prospect of peace and prosperity now opening for Catholic Ireland in the opinion of those who honestly consider what Home Rule has to offer from the point of view of the best interests of the new Irish lords of the soil.

It would not be fair to ignore the opinions of those who approach the question from the wider standpoint

of the interests of the United Kingdom as a whole—including not only Irish Unionists, but also Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen, every one of whom has a stake in this question as well as the Irishman. May one be permitted to state this view without advocating it?

It is complained that the men who have proposed the most revolutionary changes in Ireland have been men who never lived in the country, even for a short time, or even visited it—this being notably so in the case of Mr. Gladstone and equally true of Mr. Asquith. It is pointed out that there are two voices heard on the Home Rule side as to what the position of Ireland would be under a Dublin Parliament. The Nationalist voice says that Ireland will then be "a nation once again" in the fullest sense of those words. Mr. Asquith, representing the Liberal voice, has said that an Irish Parliament will be so limited in its powers that it can never tax imported goods from Great Britain. It is almost needless to point out that any such restriction will be nothing more than a provision of statute law; and, as things go now, no statute is so sacred as to be beyond the possibility of change. (*See Note at end of chapter.*)

The question of independent trade rights was the very rock on which the union of Sweden and Norway was shattered. Norway demanded separate consular, or trade, representation first; then followed the demand for political separation; and Sweden, finding the union not worth fighting for, surrendered her rights under the Act of Union and let Norway go

her own way without striking a blow. Those who speak with a more than superficial knowledge of the question, believe that one of the first demands to be presented by the Irish to the British Parliament, after Home Rule, would be for separate consular representation.

It is also pointed out that if the first Home Rule Act be the limited measure Mr. Asquith hints at, it will not represent the *end* but the *beginning* of the Home Rule agitation. This forecast is based on the history of the Land Agitation. It will be remembered how Mr. Gladstone, when he became Premier in 1880, exaggerating the strength of the forces behind Mr. Parnell, precipitately determined to pass a revolutionary Land Act, which, as he fondly thought, would cut the ground from under the Nationalist leader. That statute took the ownership of the land from the landlords; transferred the right of fixing rents to a tribunal specially appointed for the purpose; made rack-renting and summary eviction, the chief causes of agitation in the past, impossible; gave the tenant complete fixity of tenure, and the right to sell his interest in his holding. What further need could there be for agitation? Mr. Parnell deprecated the Act, *after it was passed*, and prevented the tenants from rushing to take advantage of it. And, as the British taxpayer knows to his cost, it was only after the passage of that epoch-making Land Act of 1881 that the real Land Agitation began in Ireland.

Act after Act then began to be passed, to an

accompaniment of boycotting, outrage, and murder, until, by the Purchase Act of 1903 and the Amending Act of 1909, arrangements were finally made for the transference of all the land in Ireland from the landlords to the tenants. The credit of the British Treasury has been pledged to the provision of a sum of money amounting to well over 200 millions sterling, as well as to a guarantee of the interest on the same. The revolutionary, and, as it was hoped, final Act of 1881, which was to have made it possible for landlord and tenant to live in harmony by the intervention of an all-powerful mediator, proved only to be the first step on the road to complete separation between landlord and tenant. And now millions of Irish Land Stock are being issued at a heavy loss to the Treasury, and, in the opinion of those qualified to judge, to the derangement of the market for British securities.

It is pointed out that no Home Rule Act which Mr. Asquith can pass, will be more far-reaching, as regards self-government, than the Land Act of 1881 was in its emancipation of the tenant from the landlord. And the question is asked, How can any reasonable man, with the experience of the Land Agitation before him, imagine that a limited Home Rule Bill will be anything but the beginning of a Home Rule agitation, ending in complete separation between Great Britain and Ireland, such as is now taking place between landlord and tenant? One cannot help seeing, without taking up a partisan position on this question, that the forces which will work for separation

Photo by H. E. Ward.]

IRISH DREAMERS—CHILDREN.

"But the poor in urban districts rarely have such self-reliance."—*Page* 321.

Photo by H. E. Ward.]

A COUNTRY CATTLE FAIR.

The grazier "goes to the fairs in the tillage counties and buys thin cattle to fatten on his grass."—*Page* 52.

in Ireland are stronger than in Norway. The Norwegians belong to the same race as the Swedes and profess the same religion. Of the Irish, on the contrary, three-fourths pride themselves on being Gaels, who aim at mastery and independence, not partnership, with the Saxon; while, as Roman Catholics, they are taught by their Church that "Protestantism is the mental poison of Ireland."[1] This is not stated for purpose of controversy, but a fact to be taken into account.

The free importation and use of arms could not be prohibited in Ireland any more than in the Transvaal, once Home Rule were granted. There would be volunteers and yeomanry; and, not improbably, unpleasant encounters between the regiments of the North-east and those of the Catholics. If, in that event, British sympathy were on the side of the Northern minority, there would be no scarcity of American sympathy and aid for the Southern majority. It is urged, therefore, that the British sympathy had better be given to the Northerns now, before the question emerges from the constitutional sphere and becomes a dispute between armed forces.

It is also pointed out that the first Home Rule Act would increase the world's sympathy for Nationalist Ireland on the grounds that "nothing succeeds like success." It was only after the passage of the Gladstone Land Act that the world saw there was some-

[1] See *inter alia* report of sermon by Father Kane in *The Irish Catholic*—an Irish Jesuit holding a position similar to that of Father Bernard Vaughan in England.

thing in the Land Agitation, and support and encouragement began to flow in from all quarters. Bearing in mind the sympathy shown on all occasions by the Catholic Irish for the enemies of Great Britain, it is naturally feared that a Dublin Parliament would prove to be a lever by means of which enemies or rivals could bring pressure to bear on Great Britain in every negotiation. One can realise the difficulty in which Britain would have been placed if there had been an independent Dublin Parliament during the Boer War.

If a hostile British army should have to be poured into Ireland after Home Rule, it would give rise to complications unheard of in previous military operations. The sympathy for the Irish Nationalist cause in America, which is now only as water, would be as wine in such a contingency. The Catholic Irish have, as we know, 13 millions of kinsmen and co-religionists across the Atlantic, settled within the borders of Ireland's nearest neighbour on the West. The Atlantic is no longer an insurmountable obstacle, and it is pointed out that the Americans have a fighting fleet which can circumnavigate the world, and for the increase of which they possess every facility. Neither Australia nor Canada could be relied on to help in retaining Ireland forcibly, once Home Rule was granted. They have so many Irish and French Roman Catholics within their borders that to do so might involve them in a civil war. It was primarily to conciliate the Irish Catholics that the Colonies passed formal resolutions from time to time in favour of Home Rule. But if, contrary to colonial expecta-

tions, those resolutions were acted upon, and if there were two Parliaments in the British Isles, there would soon be manifest a great loss of respect for the mother country in the Oversea Dominions. It is alleged that under Home Rule the position of Great Britain would be that of suzerain and nothing more; and dearly-bought experience has taught us how little suzerainty was worth in South Africa. A reconquest of Ireland would be, not impossible, but inpracticable for political reasons; and there would be nothing for it, when it came to an irreconcilable difference of opinion, but separation, accepted with the best grace imaginable under the circumstances.

Mr. Gladstone used to talk in his most sanguine moods of "the golden link of the Crown" as sufficient to hold Great Britain and Ireland together after Home Rule. He used to appeal for proof to Norway and Sweden, nations with separate Parliaments and executives but with one sovereign. If he were alive now, he would see how mistaken was his opinion.

In fine, those whose views I am endeavouring to express as facts of the situation allege that the man must be supersanguine who can think that our relationship with India and the Colonies would undergo no change for the worse with an Irish legislature to embarass us within the British Isles, backed up, as it would be, by foreign support, and looking to the United States of America rather than to Great Britain as its examplar in everything except its religion, which it would continue to take from Rome.

There is still another view of the situation which

needs to be stated, and without which any picture of contemporary opinion would be imperfect. It concerns the claim of the Northern minority in Ireland upon the support and protection of the United Kingdom, and it does not seem to be as generally understood in Great Britain as it ought to be.

An Irish Catholic minority of, say, 3 millions, out of a total population of 45 millions, that is to say, a minority of a little over 6 per cent. claims a separate legislature and executive on the grounds that they are out of sympathy with the social and religious views of the 94 per cent. who constitute the majority. That is the demand pressed by the 6 per cent. on the 94 per cent. of the population of the United Kingdom.

If that demand were granted, what would be the new situation then created in Ireland? It would be this, that a very much larger minority proportionately, namely, 25 per cent., would be subjected against their wills to the government of a majority of 75 per cent. of the population—that majority being far more antagonistic to the social and religious views of the minority than the majority of 94 per cent. is to the minority of 6 per cent. in the United Kingdom. If six men out of a hundred are to be conceded the right of breaking up a political partnership and starting for themselves, it is obvious that twenty-five out of a hundred have a proportionately greater right to do so. If it be an injustice to compel a Catholic minority of 6 per cent. to submit to laws made by

the Imperial Parliament, which is absolutely impartial on matters of religion, will it not be an infinitely greater injustice to compel a Protestant minority of 25 per cent. to submit to a Government and Parliament controlled by devoted Roman Catholics?

If it be wrong for a Government to compel a section of its citizens to remain true to their allegiance, the compulsion of the Protestant North of Ireland under a Dublin Parliament would be more unjustifiable than the compulsion of the Roman Catholic South of Ireland under the present dispensation of one Parliament for one United Kingdom. That is the view of those who are concerned for Protestant Ulster. They hold that the only logical position for those who maintain the right of a 6 per cent. minority to secede would be the position that compulsory allegiance is never justifiable; and that any section of the population have the right of withdrawing the territory they inhabit from the jurisdiction of the national Government.

When the Southern States wished to secede from the American Union, it might have been, and was, argued that it was entirely their own affair, and that the Northern States had no right to prevent them. But the Northerns thought differently; and the Union then forced on the Southern States by sword and gun has proved the making of the Republic. The results of the American Civil War make it impossible for any student of modern history to maintain that a union established and upheld by force cannot be beneficial alike to those who imposed it and to those

upon whom it was imposed. And if force be justifiable as against a Protestant minority of 25 per cent. under a Catholic Parliament, it is immeasurably more justifiable as against a Catholic minority of 6 per cent. under a United Parliament, elected and conducted on non-sectarian principles.

Reviewing the whole position, it may be said that the overwhelming majority of those Irishmen who do not belong to the Roman Catholic Church believe that the passage of a Home Rule Act would be ruinous to them, and would mean the end of the United Kingdom as a united power. A considerable minority of the Catholics are prepared to accept land purchase and the recent university education settlement and start afresh, having no faith in the results of a new political agitation. It seems that sensible men are warranted by the results of the Land Agitation; by the experience of Norway and Sweden, as well as of Great Britain and the South African Republics; and by a consideration of the connection between the Catholics of Ireland and the United States; in coming to the conclusion that Home Rule, however circumscribed at first, could only find its logical end in complete separation or reconquest. They think it could not possibly offer any solid benefits to the country which may not be secured by a wise use of the advantages conferred by land purchase and a rational extension of the existing local government. They think, on the contrary, it would turn the heads of an excitable people, and give supreme power to a school of political doctrinaires

who would in the future, as in the past, be amenable to no controlling influence but that of the Roman Catholic Church. There only remains now for our consideration the dreams, hopes, and ambitions of the Irish Catholics themselves in regard to Home Rule.

One does not like using the terms "Catholic" and "Protestant" in connection with a political measure; one would prefer to say "Nationalist" and "Unionist" simply. But if one did so, one would be giving the British reader the misleading impression that religion had as little to do with Irish as with British politics —an impression which, being altogether inaccurate, can result in nothing but mischief.

NOTE.—The latest authoritative pronouncement on Home Rule was made by Mr. John Redmond at Chicago, October 18, 1910. I quote from the usually reliable Reuter: "The Irish Party and I stand, on the question of Home Rule, precisely where Parnell stood, and I have not receded, and never will recede, one inch from the position he took up. Our minimum demand is for an Irish Parliament, with an Executive responsible to it and full control over all purely Irish matters. This is the definition of Home Rule to which the British Prime Minister and the entire Liberal Party stand pledged."

CHAPTER XXV

Dreams and ambitions of the new lords of the soil—Present position contrasted with 1886 and 1894—Protestant position then and now—Attitude of farmers during Boer War—Decadence of Nationalist politics—Revival of old dreams by present supremacy of Nationalists over Government—Control of judges and police—Power of Church after Home Rule—Quebec and Belgium—Martial ambitions of the young men—The safe and the unsafe way for Ireland and the United Kingdom.

In order to understand the dreams and ambitions of the new Irish lords of the soil, it is advisable to compare the present situation with that which existed while Mr. Gladstone's first and second Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1894 were impending. At the end of 1885 and the beginning of 1886, Catholic Ireland was nearly as much surprised by Mr. Gladstone's sudden conversion as Great Britain was. Only twelve years had elapsed since Isaac Butt had propounded Home Rule, and for two-thirds of that interval, that is, until the suppression of the Land League at the end of 1881, the agitation had been half-hearted and almost nominal. I remember that, when a speaker alluded to Home Rule from the hustings in the county of Cork, he was almost invariably met with the satirical cry of "Three cheers for Home Rule and

Bottled Porter!" After the suppression of the Land League, followed almost immediately by Mr. Parnell's victory over the Liberal Government in the Kilmainham Treaty, Home Rule became a reality for the people as the main plank in the platform of the new National League. And now, in 1885, within three years of the foundation of the National League, here was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom announcing himself a convert to its policy! The Celtic imagination was dazzled by the brilliancy of the Nationalist victory, and there was jubilation throughout the Catholic provinces.

At that time there were no County or District Councils, the county administration being vested in Grand Juries composed almost entirely of Protestant landlords. The first small Land Purchase Act, just passed by the Conservatives, attracted very little attention; and relations between landlord and tenant were very strained everywhere. All classes of people, especially the farmers, were "dreaming dreams" about the glorious time that was coming, when an Irish Speaker would once more preside over an Irish House of Commons in College Green; and when Dublin Castle would be taken possession of by an Irish Catholic Government elected by the suffrages of the Catholic majority. A Catholic nation was to be ruled by a Catholic Government, and the men that tilled the soil were to be the lords thereof.

The then newly-appointed Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Walsh, was so sanguine as to say of Mr. John Morley: "We may receive him with no uncertain

greeting. He is not coming to govern Ireland; he is coming to lend his help in the carrying out of the noble scheme of his great political leader, as probably the last English Chief-Secretary of Ireland." Some of the better-class Catholics, identified with the British Government in Ireland, or interested in maintaining the Union for some other reason, as landlords or manufacturers, were opposed to Home Rule; but even they participated in the general thrill of jubilant expectation.

The Protestants, on the other hand, were unspeakably depressed, especially those in the humbler walks of life, who, unlike their rich brethren, could not look forward to residing out of the country; while the very few Protestants who had joined with the Nationalists became persons of great importance for the moment, and were looking to a share of the spoils with a keener and more practical eye than the Catholics. In Belfast and the Protestant counties the excitement was intense. Besides the Orange lodges, there were other secret gatherings, and bullets were being melted in many a Belfast warehouse after business hours, by men who held rigidly aloof from Orangeism. In the Catholic counties of Ulster—Cavan, Monaghan, Fermanagh, Tyrone, and Donegal—where the poor Catholics are much less amiable and more ignorant than in the South, the belief was that there would be a general redivision of property. In Monaghan I heard of poor Catholics going round and selecting the houses of the Protestants which they would take in a redivision. There was to be full

compensation for past sufferings. The Protestants, who had hitherto been first, would thenceforth be last; while the poorest Catholic would be amongst the first in the land.

In the South no personal vindictiveness was shown against the local Protestants in this way; but there was a general hope amongst the farmers and shopkeepers and professional men that they were "coming into their own"; and that the landlord and the Protestant had had their day, and would have to eat humble pie. The constabulary in many parts were treated with scorn, and told that they would now have to be content with being servants, and no longer masters of the people. Some of the elder and more intelligent Catholic farmers and traders, whose political experience consisted mainly in disappointed hopes, believed that the passage of the Home Rule Bill would be "too good to be true"; but the dreams and ambitions of the younger men rose to the giddiest heights.

There was then no certainty that the House of Lords would dare to reject a Government measure, or brave the indignation of the people and Mr. Gladstone; and it was generally believed that if the Bill passed the House of Commons it was sure to become law. The Nationalist members were dividing the high offices of State amongst the most distinguished of their colleagues. Mr. Parnell was to be Prime Minister and first Lord of the Treasury; Mr. Sexton, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Speaker of the Irish House of

Commons; Mr. John Dillon, Minister of the Interior; Mr. Timothy Healy, Lord Chancellor; Mr. William O'Brien, Minister of Public Works; and so forth. Many an amusing debate have I heard as to the qualifications of each for the particular office which he was to have. There would be nothing wrong in allotting such offices to those men in case Home Rule were granted. They were fully as capable of filling them as those we have seen appointed in recent years to similar offices in England. The pity of it is that the Nationalist leaders cannot be induced to aim at governing their country under the Parliament of the United Kingdom, and securing such offices of power and responsibility for themselves.

Nobody knew what Mr. Parnell, or "The Chief," as he was called, thought of all this. Once he said publicly that if Home Rule were granted the distribution of patronage would be a most dangerous and unpleasant task; and was the one thing he dreaded in connection with the complete victory of his policy.

The Protestants were no longer buoyed up with the assurance that the Imperial Parliament would support them; though they were hoping against hope that the new public opinion of Great Britain, made operative for the first time by the Franchise Act of 1884, would come round to their side. The Catholics, on the other hand, had a double reason for rejoicing as the result of the Franchise Act. First, they had succeeded in returning no less than 85 out of the

103 representatives for Ireland, and, in addition, a Nationalist member for a division of Liverpool—making up the powerful Irish Party known as "The Eighty-six of '86." And, secondly, the transference of political power in Britain from the "classes" to the "masses," as Mr. Gladstone was then expressing it, had given them apparently as mighty an ally in the British democracy as the Protestants used to have in the British aristocracy.

Catholic Dublin was looking forward to becoming once again the capital of the nation. The innumerable mansions in her great squares and streets north of the Liffey were to be retenanted by rich Irish-Americans and others who would find it their interest to reside in a city containing a permanent Viceregal Court, a whole bevy of Cabinet Ministers, and all the machinery of Government. In Protestant Belfast, on the contrary, all this jubilation gave rise to the profoundest alarm. In the four Protestant counties no greater calamity could be imagined than the prospect of being compelled to live under the rule of a Catholic Parliament and Government. Those who were accustomed to celebrate the Battle of the Boyne could not be expected to be ignorant of what Protestants suffered under the last Catholic Parliament which had sat in Ireland under James II. in 1689; and young men were mustered and drilled in the evenings in many parts of the Protestant province, in view of the probability of having to resist the authority of a Nationalist Parliament.

The Protestants of the North-east enjoyed complete

independence under the Parliament of the United Kingdom; and, though subject to precisely the same laws as the Catholics in the South, had thriven wonderfully since the Union, making their district a distinct kingdom, with its linen, shipbuilding, and other industries, and its flourishing capital, Belfast, now quite as large as Dublin, but in closer touch with Glasgow and Scotland than with Dublin and Catholic Ireland. In the forty years from 1861 to 1901, the four Protestant counties of the North-east, including the city of Belfast, were the only district in Ireland which held its own in population; while the remainder of the country, in which the Catholics are in a majority, lost just 22 per cent. of its people. In those forty years the population of Belfast was almost trebled. If, then, the prospect of Home Rule excited more alarm in the North than in the South, it was because the Northerns had more to lose by the severance of the Union.

When the Home Rule Bill of 1886 was thrown out on second reading, the Catholics did not accept the defeat as final; for, with Mr. Gladstone pledged to make the attainment of Home Rule for Ireland the main object of his existence henceforth, it was felt that success was ultimately certain.

During four years of Unionist Government and coercion, following the defeat of the first Home Rule Bill, the Nationalists maintained a fast alliance with the British Liberals. But when the Irish Party split in 1890, after the decree of the Divorce Court, the Parnellites declared for independence of all British

parties, while the M'Carthyites remained true to the partnership with the Liberals. In the turmoil caused by the split, the Church became paramount once again in Irish politics; and at the general election of 1892, Mr. Parnell being then dead, the Catholic electors, under ecclesiastical guidance, returned 72 M'Carthyites and only 9 Parnellites—five seats being recaptured by the Unionists. As, under Parnell's leadership, the Irish Party was by no means subservient to ecclesiastical influence, the Church, by acquiring dominion once again over the parliamentary representation of Catholic Ireland, was the greatest gainer by the downfall of "The Chief."

After the split, the Catholics had to a considerable extent lost their political fervour, and were not so sanguine about Home Rule. The Parnellite minority took no pride in Mr. M'Carthy's boast that his party in the House of Commons "held the Government in the hollow of their hands." There was not, therefore, that undivided and virgin interest in the Home Rule Bill of 1894 which was taken in the Bill of 1886. Moreover, the Unionists had removed some agrarian grievances in the interval by admitting leaseholders to the benefit of the Land Act of 1881, and granting a second sum of £5,000,000 sterling for land purchase.

The rejoicings of the farmers at the prospect of Home Rule in 1886 had been entirely based on the gain likely to result to themselves from sweeping reductions or total abolition of rent. How this was to be achieved they did not stop to inquire. They only went so far as to draw a distinction between

absentees who had obtained their properties by direct inheritance from some Elizabethan, Cromwellian, or Williamite ancestor, and those who had purchased their estates in later times. To the first they believed that no compensation was due, and that their lands should be taken by the State and vested in the occupiers by a process of summary confiscation, like that pursued by the Catholic Parliament in 1689. To the second they admitted that compensation should be paid, but how or by whom they could not say. The farmers, in fact, only regarded Home Rule as a measure certain to result in great reductions of rent, and possibly in total abolition of rent, it being never contemplated that Home Rule and landlordism could exist together. This was the only practical conception of Home Rule which the bulk of the farmers had in 1886.

But, since then, they had seen £10,000,000 sterling advanced by the Government to enable tenants to buy out their landlords. The money had been over-applied for, and 24,000 farmers were now in possession of the freehold of their farms; the average purchase price paid being between 17 and 18 years' purchase of the rental, to be repaid in 49 years. In 1894, therefore, the farmers had thousands of concrete instances of how landlordism was to be got rid of without Home Rule. They saw that a farmer whose rent had been £100 a year had now only to pay annual instalments amounting to £70 a year; so that, instead of having to pay anything out of pocket, the tenant purchaser actually received a large bounty in reduced

Photo by Lawrence, Dublin.]

BRITISH FLEET IN KILLARY HARBOUR.

"If a hostile British army should have to be poured into Ireland after Home Rule, it would give rise to complications unheard of in previous military operations."—*Page* 400.

yearly payments for accepting the luxury of becoming his own landlord.

While Catholic enthusiasm for Home Rule was thus damped for a variety of reasons, the Protestants, on their part, felt no such alarm in 1894 as they did in 1886. Knowing that the Government did not represent a British majority, but were altogether dependent on the M'Carthyites, it was confidently expected that the second Home Rule Bill would be rejected by the House of Lords. I happened to be in Cork the morning after the rejection of the Bill by the Peers; and every Protestant landlord and agent whom I saw and knew, was wearing a silk hat and black coat in celebration of the event, instead of the usual well-cut fashionable suit of tweed and bowler hat.

The return of the Unionists to power in 1895 was received with rejoicing by the Protestants, and accepted with resignation by the Catholics. The leaseholders were now getting their rents reduced in the Land Courts; the £10,000,000 advanced for land purchase had been eagerly taken up; a further sum was provided by a new Act in 1896. The centenary of the Irish Rebellion was made the occasion for the passage of the Local Government Act in 1898, which gave Ireland the same local self-government which Britain had got in 1888. In the next year, 1899, an Agricultural Department for Ireland was created and liberally endowed. The results of all this remedial legislation on the minds of the farmers was amply proved by the quiescence of the country during the

Boer War. If the Irish Party had retained its pristine power, under Mr. Parnell's leadership, until 1899, there would assuredly have been some outbreak in Ireland which would have prevented Great Britain from successfully prosecuting the war with the South African Republics. Since the year of Waterloo, Ireland had not been so denuded of troops; yet though there was a constant flow of seditious language and writing, on the part of ecclesiastics as well as laymen, no action was taken. The sympathy with the Boers was universal in the Catholic provinces; but except an exhortation by a high ecclesiastical dignitary to Catholic young men not to enlist in the British army, it went no further than the passing of resolutions—and the only notice taken of it was the removal of one or two demagogues from the magistracy to which they had been appointed by Mr. John Morley. The bulk of the farmers had begun to settle down, and were disinclined to violence, and without the farmers no agitation can become formidable in Ireland.

The death of Mr. Gladstone in 1898, and the return of the Unionists to power again in 1900, caused Home Rule to recede into the background, and the farmers began to think less and less about it. The passage of the Wyndham Land Act in 1903, as the result of a conference between delegates representing Nationalist farmers and Unionist landlords, made universal land purchase feasible; and, in the seven years which have since elapsed, the number of owner-occupiers has grown to the huge figure specified in an earlier chapter.

The Irish Party under Mr. John Redmond's leadership has been steadily losing influence in Ireland; subscriptions to the League as well as attendance at Sunday meetings growing smaller year by year. The young farmers and farmers' sons of to-day do not take the same keen interest in politics as their predecessors did a generation ago, in the years from the foundation of the Land League to the return of "The Eighty-six of '86." There are no commanding personalities now to compare with Mr. Parnell and Mr. Davitt; those leaders who have survived are no longer young; and the new aspirants to popular confidence have no definite message of importance and carry no weight. There are few landlords to be denounced, and fewer real grievances to be redressed. Indeed, when the Liberals returned to power at the end of 1905, the demand for Home Rule had become almost purely formal and confined to the utterances of the Nationalist members—many of whom are political pensioners living on attenuated stipends and allowances from the United Irish League, old soldiers of Land League times commingled with well-meaning but pettifogging newcomers who never caught the divine glow of Parnell's chieftainship, and following the uninspiring lead of a few of Parnell's lieutenants who have made themselves pecuniarily comfortable in one way or another since the fighting 'eighties.

If both British parties could only come to an agreement not to resuscitate the project for creating a second Parliament and executive within the United Kingdom, Home Rule would soon be dead past

revival. Unfortunately, this seems as impossible to-day as it was twenty years ago. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman feared that if he did not declare in favour of Home Rule before the general election of 1906, the Unionists would angle for and secure the Irish vote —there being a section of the Unionist party not above suspicion on the Home Rule question. He did not foresee that, without a declaration for Home Rule, his party would have come back from the polls with the same huge majority, over Unionists and Nationalists combined, as that which enabled them to remain in office from 1906 to 1910 without introducing a Home Rule Bill. They projected an Irish Councils Bill, it is true, in 1907—a practical measure establishing popular control over the Irish Local Government Board, Board of Works, National Education Board, and Agricultural Department—which is said to have had the approval of the Irish leaders. But, the proposal having been first sneered at by Cardinal Logue and other bishops, who shrewdly foresaw that it would give the Catholic electors control over elementary education and enchance the status of the political leaders without adding to the power or emoluments of the Church, it was condemned by a national convention at Dublin, at which Mr. Redmond did not dare to say a word in its favour, and was then instantly dropped by the Government.

At the general election of 1910, Mr. Asquith again revived the question of Home Rule; and, coming back to power with a majority dependent on the Irish vote, felt compelled to promise a Dublin

Parliament and executive presumably more independent than Mr. Gladstone proposed to give. The power exercised by Mr. Redmond's party in the House of Commons over Mr. Asquith's Government was extremely flattering to the national vanity in the Catholic provinces, and re-awakened many of the dreams and ambitions of 1886, which had lain dormant since the split of twenty years ago. The tenants who have become lords of the soil, however, are not predisposed to take further part in a Home Rule agitation than the recording of their votes for a Nationalist member. If Home Rule can be got by the simple plan of maintaining an Irish Party at Westminster pledged to refuse any office under the control of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, it will be welcome. The change that has come over the new owners proves that Mr. Lecky was right when he wrote: "Land, being an irremovable property, subject to Government control, has always proved the best pledge of the loyalty of its possessor, and its acquisition never fails to diffuse through a disaffected class conservative and orderly habits."[1] On the other hand, those who have not purchased their farms will be restless until they have done so; and the landless peasantry of the "congested districts" will continue to agitate for a subdivision of the grass lands. The agitation for Home Rule will be kept up by these two classes, not for its own sake, but as a lever for obtaining redress of agrarian grievances.

[1] *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 150.

But while the agitating energy of purchasers and non-purchasers will differ in degree, both classes alike cherish the dream of a Parliament in College Green as the realisation of immemorial hopes and ambitions. The vast majority of Catholics, who lovingly describe the building which is now the head-office of the Bank of Ireland in Dublin, as "The Old House at Home," are so ignorant of history as not to know that the Parliaments which met there were exclusively Protestant, and that the prosperity of Ireland during the period known as "Grattan's Parliament" was the result of Protestant management of public affairs. "Much covets more," and the Irish pride of the owner-occupiers, who know that what they have gained is secure, will grasp at the pomp of political power in addition to the solid benefits of lordship of the soil. There is an ineradicable pride of race and conviction of high destiny in those farmers who have made so sorry an exhibition of themselves by whining, haggling, and bullying reductions of rent from the landlords during the agitation. They would like to see the magisterial benches manned with their co-religionists, and containing a majority of farmers. They desire to get control of the police and the administration of petty sessions. They would like to see the judges of the High Courts and County Courts appointed by an Irish Government elected by themselves. If this were accomplished, it would mean that the Catholic provinces would be more than ever isolated from the rest of the United Kingdom. We must

remember that security of life and property was only maintained during the Land Agitation in these provinces by the judges and police standing firmly in opposition to the will of the people as expressed by the farmers and labourers. After Home Rule this would be impossible; and those who differ from the standards of life and morality of the Catholic farmers and labourers, as described in earlier chapters, would find themselves in an untenable position, and would ultimately have to conform to Catholic ways or leave the country. The social and religious creed, which is now confined to the Catholic churches and schools, would then be preached from the benches of justice.

The power of the Church is not likely to suffer any declension after Home Rule; for the new lords of the soil are most respectful to their ecclesiastical kinsmen. Quebec has enjoyed Home Rule within the British Empire now for half a century; and yet the verdict of all recent visitors is that the power of the Church of Rome over the people there is greater than ever and constantly increasing. "In modern France," writes one competent authority, "the power of the Church of Rome was never so low as now; in Quebec it was never so high. The priest is always behind the politician."[1] Intimately connected as the new lords of the soil are with the Church, they are equally bound up with the traders in alcoholic liquors. In the Catholic provinces the publican is the richest trader. He is usually in some other business, but it

[1] *Canada as It Is*, by John Foster Fraser.

is by the sale of drink he makes his money. The only opposition to publican's licences in Ireland has come from Protestants, either as magistrates on the bench, or as representatives of Temperance Societies appearing in Court. The rich publican, like the rich farmer, always has a brother or son in high position in the Church; so that the new lords of the soil, the publicans, and the clergy are likely to form an all-powerful trio if Home Rule should come to pass. Belgium, which has enjoyed complete independence for nearly a century, and is pointed to as the one prosperous Catholic country in Europe, enables one to forecast the power of the Church and the liquor trade in Ireland under Home Rule. It is only a few years since the Governor of Hainault, addressing the provincial council, said: "Belgium, where public libraries are almost unknown, enjoys 190,000 public-houses, or one for every twelve men above seventeen years of age, the publicans included."[1] Another Belgian patriot, M. Anet, added: "The publicans are with the priests the real rulers of Belgium; all the elections being decided in the confessionals and in the public-houses." Bearing in mind what has been written in a former chapter on the drinking habits of Catholic Ireland, the power of the Church and the drink trade is not likely to be diminished by Home Rule. How often has one seen a group of well-to-do farmers, such as

[1] This and the following quotation are taken from a prize essay on the Evils of Drink, written by the Rt. Hon. John Burns, M.P., and published by the United Kingdom Alliance in 1904.

will be henceforth the lords of the soil, drinking whisky on a fair evening, and excusing themselves for over-indulgence by saying: " Sure 'twas med from our own barley, an' wouldn't it be quair if we didn't support home manufacture?"

The parish priest will be sure to be a magistrate, and the bishop a Deputy-Lieutenant, if not actually Lieutenant of his county, if a Dublin Parliament be established. Nothing would chime in more completely with the views of the new lords of the soil than to see the temporal and spiritual powers of their august relatives made commensurate. If the Irish Parliament should contain an Upper House, the bishops are sure to be members of it or to control it. If, following the precedent of the Irish Local Government Act of 1898, persons in Holy Orders are excluded from membership of the Lower House, it will be at the desire of the Church itself as tending to increase her dignity and influence.

The younger farmers and farmers' sons would like to have the free privilege of bearing arms; and the youth would especially rejoice in having volunteer regiments. Though they have been disarmed for centuries, they are one of the most martial races in Europe; and it is not impossible that the education of military discipline, coupled with the responsibility of carrying arms, might develop those manlier qualities in which home-keeping Irishmen have hitherto been so deficient. Other students of Irish character think that, leaving out of account the possibility of collisions between Catholic and

Protestant regiments, the fights between the different regiments of Catholic volunteers would revive in a more deadly form the faction-fights of the days before Daniel O'Connell. If there were 20,000 or 30,000 volunteers in the Catholic provinces, maintained by liberal grants from a Dublin Parliament, it is impossible to predict the consequences. If there were fighting going on anywhere in the world, they would find it very hard to restrain themselves from taking a share in it ; and if Great Britain were one of the combatants, one does not like to speculate as to which side would have the sympathy of the Irish Nationalist Army.

With a patriotic army of her own, and enjoying independence in everything under the formal headship of a Viceroy appointed by the Crown, is Catholic Ireland likely to prove a more loyal partner to Great Britain than she has been in the past? Experience amply proves that, though the Catholic Irish have a marvellous genius for ecclesiastical and political organisation, they do not possess the genius for friendly partnership for which the Anglo-Saxon is pre-eminent. In Catholic Ireland one hardly ever finds men in partnership in trade. Partnership in the medical profession, so common in England, is unknown. Even partnership among solicitors, so universal in England, is far from common. In England, where you will see two persons at a common job, each taking a share of the risk and profits, in Catholic Ireland you will only see one.

Where father and son are engaged in the same business, they are generally opposed to one another, and hold opposite views as to how things ought to be done. Partnership between relatives in any sort of trade is rare, and where it is found is seldom successful. There are exceptions, but that is the rule.

In Belfast and the North-east, the contrary is the rule. Partnerships are common, as well between men who are not related as between relatives; being especially frequent and successful between father and son.

Whole families will work together, it is true, on a plot of land in Catholic Ireland; but there is always discontent and disunion, and it would be better if they separated. In Catholic Ireland it is the rarest sight to see husband and wife partners as they are in England. The husband usually keeps the wife in complete ignorance about his business, and she, on her part, expects him not to interfere in hers or to call her to account.

The popular Irish song, "Ourselves Alone," gives appropriate voice to this independent spirit, this impatience of control and objection to be accountable to another. Its author, John O'Hagan, was an eminent Catholic lawyer and judge of the High Court, one of the first Land Commissioners appointed under Mr. Gladstone's Land Act.

The Catholic Irishmen's ideal, as there set forth, is:—

> "To do at once what is to do
> And trust Ourselves Alone."

. . . . .

"No friend beyond her own green shore
Can Erin truly own:
Yet stronger is her trust therefore
In her brave sons Alone."

. . . . . .

"And if, at length, we proudly trod
On bigot laws o'erthrown,
Who won that struggle? Under God,
Ourselves—Ourselves Alone."

No sentiment could be more inspiring; no ideal more alluring—to the Celtic imagination. But if there is one lesson more than another which Irish history drives home, it is that the Catholic Irish can point to fewer great deeds done by "themselves alone" than any other race in Europe. Except for the missionary zeal of Patrick's successors, our history is a blank. We "ourselves alone" did nothing great, or even admirable, before or since the coming of the Normans under Henry II. The brilliant achievements of Irish soldiers of fortune on the Continent were done under foreign masters: the gallantry of Irish Catholics in the British service is the result of British discipline and co-operation with Britishers in a common cause. It will be found on investigation that all the genuine success of Catholic Irishmen within the Empire is directly proportionate to the cordiality with which they have entered into partnership with Britishers. In friendly partnership with English, Scotch, and Welsh, they rise to the greatest heights: in isolation, they become snarling grumblers and agitators. "Ourselves Alone," we only seem able to find con-

tent in the cloister or to voice our discontent by agitation.

In the same way it will be found that the success of the Catholic Irish in the United States is in direct proportion to the degree of loyalty with which they enter into partnership with the other citizens of the Republic; and that their failure is always according to the measure of their isolation.

Without being dogmatic, one is disposed to say that there seem to be a safe and an unsafe way for the new lords of the soil to travel in the future: and that the road of isolation and the policy of fighting for "ourselves alone" do not indicate the way of safety. The Catholic Irish will soon possess all that is worth the having in Ireland—namely, the fertile soil. Once that is acquired, there will remain nothing to fight for but shadows and baubles. In cordial partnership with Great Britain, the ownership of the soil will bring wealth in direct proportion to the industry of the freeholders. But that will only be possible if the sense of ownership brings with it that change of character predicted by Mr. Lecky, namely, if it "diffuses through a disaffected class conservative and orderly habits," developing that capacity for friendly partnership heretofore so sadly wanting.

In that happy eventuality, the new lords of the soil will recognise that time and money may be better spent on co-operation than on antagonism and agitation. They will see that the way of separation from Great Britain must necessarily be a way of

trouble and—of war; whereas the way of co-operation will be a way of peace and prosperity, such as Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen now pursue, in which every longing for true independence may be gratified. Which way will the new lords of the soil elect to follow? The answer depends, not only on the civilising effects of ownership, but also on whether competing British political parties will continue to make Home Rule a party cry, or wisely agree to strike it out of their rival programmes of legislation, while at the same time entrusting representative Irishmen with the largest possible share in the government of their native country.

If the new lords of the soil elect to travel the way of peace and prosperity, their descendants may be able to say of them that, in acquiring the lordship of the Irish land, they also laid the foundations of Irish liberty.

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