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Parnell and his Island

BY

GEORGE MOORE

AUTHOR OF

‘A MUMMER'S WIFE’ ‘DRAMA IN MUSLIN’ ETC.

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PARNELL AND HIS ISLAND.

DUBLIN.

This is Dalkey, a suburb of Dublin. From where I stand I look down upon the sea as on a cup of blue water; it lies two hundred feet below me like a great smooth mirror; it lies beneath the blue sky as calm, as mysteriously still, as an enchanted glass in which we may read the secrets of the future. How perfectly cuplike is the bay! Blue mountains, blue embaying mountains, rise on every side, and amorously the sea rises up to the lip of the land. These mountains of the north, these Turner-like mountains, with their innumerable aspects, hazy perspectives lost in delicate grey, large and trenchant masses standing out brutally in the strength of the sun, are as the mailed arms of a knight leaning to a floating siren whose flight he would detain and of whom he asks still an hour of love. I hear the liquid murmur of the sea; it sings to the shore as softly as a turtle-dove to its mate. I see white sails scattered over the grey backgrounds of the sky, and through the dissolving horizon other sails appear and disappear, lighter than the large wings of the sea-gull that floats and plunges, sometimes within a few feet of the cliff's edge, a moment after there are a hundred feet between it and the sea. My thoughts turn involuntarily to the Bay of Naples, which I have never seen, but perfect though it be—Nature's fullest delight above which no desire may soar —it cannot be more beautiful than the scene which now lies blue and translucid before me.

I am two hundred feet above a sea striped with purple and violet; and above my head the rocks rise precipitously. From every side the mountains press with voluptuous arms the voluptuous sea: above my head the villas are perched like birds amid the rocks. There I see a bouquet of trees, here I see a green sward where the white dresses of the young girls playing tennis float this way and that. From villa to villa a white road winds, like a thread leading through the secrets of a labyrinth; sometimes it is lost in a rocky entanglement, sometimes it vanishes in the dark and long shadows of a pine wood; sometimes it is suspended, it is impossible to say how, out of the mountain-side, and higher still spread out on the clear sky, and crowning the mountain-brow is the imperial heather.

In the exquisite clarity of the day every detail is visible; and as my glance passes from the highest heights down to the depths of the shore I see women in long bathing-dresses crawling up the strand far away: they appear like flies: the naked flesh of some boys bathing shines in the sun ray, they are climbing up the black sides of a boat,—that one on the prow joins his hands above his head and disappears in the purple of the waves. On the terrace by me stands a fat man, the type of commercial prosperity (he is a distiller); his family is about him, enjoying the delicate listlessness of this summer afternoon. Now I hear the rushing rumble of a train, the strident whistle tears the air and is repeated high and far through the sonorous distances of this strange mountain. The eye follows the white steam across the bridge; then the train is lost in a tunnel; now it re-appears and turning and twisting it scuttles away like a rabbit through the rocks.

No town in the world has more beautiful surroundings than Dublin. Seeing Dalkey one dreams of Monte Carlo, or better still of the hanging gardens of Babylon, of marble balustrades, of white fountains, of innumerable yachts, of courts of love, and of sumptuous pleasure places; but alas, all that meets the eye are some broken-down villas! The white walls shine in the sun and deceive you, but if you approach you will find a front-door where the paint is peeling, and a ruined garden

And in such ruin life languishes here! The inhabitants of the villas are, for the most part, landlords whom circumstances have forced to shut up their houses and to come here to economise; or, they may belong to the second class of landlords: widows living on jointures paid by the eldest sons, or mortgagees upon money placed by them or by their ancestors upon the land. For in Ireland there is nothing but the land; with the exception of a few distillers and brewers in Dublin, who live upon the drunkenness of the people, there is no way in Ireland of getting money except through the peasant.

The socialistic axiom that capital is only a surplus-value coming from unpaid labour, either in the past or in the present, is in other countries mitigated and lost sight of in the multiplicity of ways through which money passes before falling into the pockets of the rich; but in Ireland the passage direct and brutal of money from the horny hands of the peasant to the delicate hands of the proprietor is terribly suggestive of serfdom. In England the landlord lays out the farm and builds the farm-buildings. In Ireland he does absolutely nothing. He gives the bare land to the peasant, and sends his agent to collect the half-yearly rent; in a word he allows the peasant to keep him in ease and luxury. 'I am an Irish landlord, I have done this, I do this, and I shall continue to do this, for it is as impossible for me as for the rest of my class to do otherwise; but that doesn't prevent me from recognising the fact that it is a worn-out system, no longer possible in the nineteenth century, and one whose end is nigh.' In Ireland every chicken eaten, every glass of champagne drunk, every silk dress trailed in the street, every rose worn at a ball, comes straight out of the peasant's cabin. A few years ago this tribute (for in Ireland rent is a tribute and nothing else) was accepted without astonishment, without an after-thought, absolutely—as in other ages the world accepted slavery and feudalism.

But one day, suddenly, without warning, the scales fell from the eyes of the people, and the people resolved to rid themselves of this plague. Visible hitherto only to a small number, and they denied its existence save in the poorest districts, this plague-spot is apparent to-day to every eye; it is visible everywhere, even in the heart of the slums as in the most elegant suburb; it was as if a veil had been drawn revealing the boils with which the flesh of Ireland is covered.

You see that coarse, common man dressed in a greasy, worn-out tweed jacket, smoking a black pipe at the end of the weed-grown terrace of the dilapidated villa which he has hired for the season? He is speaking to his daughter, a sad-looking girl dressed in a long red cashmere buttoned down the back; she tells him that she wants a new dress to go to a tennis party in the neighbourhood. He grumbles, he thinks she had better not accept any more tennis parties this year. Does he want her to remain an old maid? Nothing is done for her that she may get a husband; no parties are given for her, never is there a young man invited to the house. Finally he draws from his pocket a roll of bank-notes black and greasy, notes with worn-out edges, notes cut in two and stuck together, notes which smell of the smoke of the cabin, notes that are rancid of the sweat of the fields, notes which have been spat upon at fairs for good luck, notes which are an epitome of the sufferings of the peasant of the west of Ireland.

The young girl runs away skipping with three or four of these notes to buy a dress, to dream of the husband which she will never get; the man sinks into gloom, dreaming of the Land League and of the possibility of getting out of the tenants in the autumn what they refused to pay in the spring; and I dreaming of the bank-notes, of the husband-hunting girl, of the ruined proprietor, of the villa in ruins. I read in all this, as in an epitaph upon a tomb, the history of a vanished civilisation. Then as my thoughts return to the beautiful landscape—with its broken rocks full of lights and shades, its bits of white road and the strange railway suspended as if by magic above the blue bay, and the violet mountains standing out against the silver clouds, I dream of Paris and of what Paris would be if within a few miles of so beautiful a panorama. Paris would sing in this bay; Paris would dance on these terraces; columns and palaces, balustrades, arches and cupolas would extend from height to height the enchantment of their architecture. The calm and sombre waters of the bay, illuminated by gondolas coming and gondolas going—white beneath the moon, yellow and gold beneath the lamps—would be a floating dream; fireworks darting from the abrupt hollows of the dark hill-side, would jewel the forehead of the night, detonations of champagne, cries of the dancers, blaring of the *cors de chasse* and the sonorous mountain echoing with the various sounds of festival.

And still dreaming of my Irish France I listened to the monotonous cry of a broken barrel-organ, and, looking at the poor devil of an Italian, I know well that nobody here, except perhaps the distiller, is rich enough to throw him a penny.

Far away those are the Wicklow mountains. Bound about Dublin like a blue scarf, they are as bright notes of joy in the pale monotony of the pale dim streets.

The character of Dublin is the absence of any characteristic touch. Dublin is neither ugly, nor pretty, nor modern, nor ancient, but all these qualifications might be applied to it as to an 'old-clo' shop.' Yes, Dublin reminds me of an old-clothes shop where ball-dresses, dress coats, morning trowsers, riding habits, wellington boots, lace shawls are to be let or sold. Nothing seems really to belong to anyone. Everybody might have owned everything—language, dress, and manners—at one time or another. The streets are built of pale brown bricks, a pale poor brown—poor but honest. Nor are they built at hazard, improvised like London streets, but set out artificially in squares and monotonous lines, like a town that a tired child might have improvised out of a box of bricks. Here you find no architectural surprises, like in other towns; no alleys or curious courts filled with life—strange, picturesque, and enigmatic; none of those singular byways with reft of sky in the brick entanglement, sometimes bulging out into courts; where shops of fried fish, coal shops, shops of old iron and old paper, lean one against the other in giddy confusion; sometimes slipping into passages narrow and twisted, where bands of little children dance joyously to the sound of a friendly organ.

'We are poor but honest,' the houses cry aloud, and in their faded elegance they bend and bow like ladies who have seen better times. Others who would give themselves fashionable airs trail their finery like a middle-aged coquette in a provincial town. The flower-boxes rot in the windows, the rose-coloured window-blinds are torn, the railings rot with rust, the areas exhale the fœtid odours of unemptied dust-bins; add to this the noise of a hundred pianos; imagine a society of ill-bred young girls, making love to a few briefless barristers, their clerks, the employés in the breweries; beat this all up to waltz music from four o'clock in the afternoon till four in the morning, with an interval of three hours or so for dinner, and you will have realised the exterior aspect of Dublin society.

The following conversation which I overheard in 'the best society,' will give an idea of the general culture and the normal *esprit* of Dublin girls.

Scene, a ball-room. Dramatis personæ, two officers and a charming girl. First officer: 'By Jove, what a pretty girl you have been dancing with! She is really a Juno, she is superb. You must introduce me to her.'

Second officer: 'She is not ugly, but

I don't think you would care about her, she's rather common.'

'Common with that face, impossible!'

The two men approach the beauty. He who thinks her common leaves her with him who considers her divine. I listen to see how this acquaintance, so happily begun, will end. Overcome with emotion the lover seeks for words; should he begin by speaking of the weather, or of the excellence of the floor? Important question! At last the young girl breaks silence, and whilst her admirer is still seeking for a transitional phrase to lead up to more important matter, she says, after having examined him from head to foot: 'Ah Captain, what a little foot you've got!'

In the sombre and sad streets of Dublin there are two open spaces—Stephen's Green and Merrion Square.

The first—which has lately been reclaimed from its Indian-jungle-like state and decorated with mounds and bridges and ponds, and presented to the city by a rich nobleman—resembles in its present state a school-treat for charity children; the other still flourishes in all its ancient dilapidation; rusty iron railings, decrepit trees, and a few lamentable tennis players; in the deep ruts of the roads two or three outside cars lie hidden—that singular vehicle which defies description, two wheels with seats suspended on either side and from which you will certainly be thrown if you don't hold on with all your might.

On every door in Merrion Square there is a brass plate. For there are more doctors and lawyers in Dublin than any other city in the world. Dublin is a town of officials. Every man wears the red ribbon of the Castle in his button-hole; and more than one woman wears it instead of a garter.

Nobody reads, nobody thinks. To be considered a man of the world, it is only necessary to have seen one or two plays in London before they are six months old, and to curse the Land League. In the 'best society' I have met with young men who have never read 'Vanity Fair' and young women who have never heard of Leonardo da Vinci. Once I was dining with a Mr. Ryan; on the club table there were two photographs, one was of Richard Wagner and the other was of Beethoven.

Mr. Ryan: 'Who is that?'

I: 'That is Wagner.'

Mr. Ryan: 'Who is Wagner?'

I (recovering myself with an effort):

'Don't you know? Richard Wagner, the great breeder of shorthorns!'

Mr. Ryan: 'Begorra 'tis strange I niver came across him in Ballinasloe; and who is the other?'

I: 'That is Beethoven.'

Mr. Ryan: 'Who is Beethoven?'

I: 'Don't you know? He is the great breeder of cobs.'

Mr. Ryan: 'And I niver met him at the Dublin horse show; does he niver go there? Tell me—are you listening to me?—what sort of stock does he go in for?'

Dublin is in a barbarous state, and, what is worse, in a retrograde state.

. . . . .

Dublin is divided into four parts: The Castle, the Shelbourne Hotel, the Kildare Street Club, and Mrs. Rusville the fashionable dressmaker.

THE CASTLE.

To describe the Castle it is only necessary to compare it to an immense police barrack. It is devoid of all architecture, and the brick walls are as bare and as bald as an official document; everything, even to the red coats of the sentinels, reminds you of the red tape with which these documents are tied. The Castle rises like a upas tree amid ruins and death; the filth of the surrounding streets is extreme. The Castle dominates the Liffey—a horrible canal or river flowing between two stone embankments.

Curious and characteristic details: between the bridges great sea-gulls fly back and forwards with a mechanical regularity, diving from time to time after the rubbish which the current bears away to the sea.

On either side there are sombre and sinister streets, aged and decrepit buildings filled with old books rotting in dark and fœtid confusion; dark holes where, in Rembrandt *chiaroscuro*, you see the form of a hag groping amidst heaps of something—something that may be clothes; shops where suspicious-looking women pretend to sell cheap cigars; others where placards announce the excellence of obscene goods manufactured on the premises; then the perspective floats in a slight curve, and is lost in the smoke of breweries and distilleries, an appropriate horizon for this town of miserable vice and hideous decrepitude.

From the Castle the law in Ireland is administered, and it is there that the Viceroy holds his mock Court; every sort of religious ceremony may be turned into ridicule, but it is certain, when a man not a king is forced to mimic royalty as far as possible, that everything that is grotesque in the original becomes in the imitation a caricature. The Viceroy is not an actor who consents to play a part, nor a Messiah audacious enough to declare himself God, but something indefinable between the two that says: 'Of course you know that I am not a king, but I hope you will consider me one, and you will address me as such.' Such an anomaly necessitates a multitude of situations which are very suggestive of a Palais

Royal farce. Although the Viceroy plays the part of a king, his wife is not authorised to play that of a queen.

How, therefore, is a drawing-room to be held? It is clear that the ladies who are presented cannot kiss the hand of the Viceroy as they kiss the hand of the Queen in Buckingham Palace. A difficult situation of which this is the solution: the Viceroy must kiss the ladies. It is impossible to imagine anything more absurd than this Viceroy, an English nobleman, chosen for the post by the Government actually in power, standing upon a daïs surrounded by red guardsmen, all the ladies of the household behind him upon an estrade, kissing an interminable procession of women, young and old, fat and thin, as they are announced by the Chamberlain who reads out their names like a Doge's secretary in an opera bouffe.

And then how are all the innumerable sinecures of the Castle disposed of? Underlings, hirelings, of all sorts, swarm about this mock Court like flies about a putrefying carcass. A sight indeed it is to see them marching in procession through the drawing-rooms after the presentations. The A.D.C.'s, the Medical Department, the Private Secretary, the Military Private Secretary, the Assistant Under-Secretary, the Gentleman-in-Waiting, the Master of the Horse, the Dean of the Chapel Royal, the Chamberlain, the Gentlemen Ushers, the Controller, the State Steward walking with a wand, etc . . . It is easy, therefore, to understand the hatred of the people for the corruptions and injustices of the Castle.

The Castle is for the National party—

to employ a comparison whose success is unquestionable—what a red flag is for a bull. This mock Court is considered as an absurdity by all classes of society except fashionable women to whom the fêtes of the Castle are of all importance. There are no mothers in Ireland as there are in France ; it is not in the circle of their friends that they search for possible husbands for their daughters. As soon as a young girl has left school she is taken to Dublin, kissed by the Lord-Lieutenant, and let loose of the ball-rooms of the Castle to flirt as extravagantly or as discreetly as she thinks proper. In France the chaperon has a meaning ; in England and Ireland she is a nonentity : from the moment a chaperon enters the ball-room till the time she leaves it she sees nothing of her charges. Still, nevertheless, the young girl passes four or five hours dancing; or, when an occasion presents itself, searches for a favourite corner hidden at the end of a dark corridor. The young girls without any great moral conscience make their way at the Castle, and those who are well introduced may amuse themselves, but for the majority it is a place of torture and despair. The girls outnumber the men in a proportion of three to one, the competition is consequently severe; and it is pitiable to see these poor muslin martyrs standing at the door, their eyes liquid with invitation, striving to inveigle, to stay the steps of the men as they pass by. But although these balls are little else for the young girls than a series of heart-breaks, nevertheless the most abject basenesses are committed to secure an invitation.

THE SHELBOURNE HOTEL.

The Shelbourne is a large and commodious hotel. On entering, a winter garden on the first floor strikes a pleasant note of green, and a little fountain murmurs pleasantly amid grey stone frogs. The pen of Balzac would be necessary to describe the Shelbourne Hotel; it is the *pension* of Madame Vauquier placed in aristocratic circles. For three pounds a week you can live there; and this liberality on the part of the proprietor is singularly appreciated by widows and old maids of all sorts. The ladies' drawing-room is on the right, and Flaubert's celebrated phrase may be applied to it, 'It was the moral centre of the house.' The walls are decorated with Swiss landscapes—mountains, chamois, cascades, and lakes.

About the chimney-piece there are a great number of low chairs, chairs for invalid ladies, chairs made for novel reading and for wool-work. Nothing is spoken of but men and marriages; it is here that all the scandals of Dublin are laid and are hatched.

At this moment the drawing-room wears its most habitual air. Two old ladies are seated on the sofa knitting. Two old maids who come up every year husband-hunting, are sitting artlessly advancing their little slippered feet; between them is the chaperon who has brought them to Dublin for the Castle season.

'Oh, so you have all come up to the Castle, and are going to be presented! Well, you'll find the rooms very grand and the suppers very good, and if you know a lot of people, particularly the officers quartered here, you will find the Castle balls very amusing. The best way to do is to come to town a month before the drawing-room and give a ball; and in that way you get to know all the men. If you haven't done that I'm afraid you won't get many partners. Even if you do get introduced they will only ask you to dance, and you will never see them again. Dublin is like a race-course, men come and speak to you and pass on. It is pleasant enough if you know people, but as for marriages there are none, I assure you. I know lots of girls, and very nice girls too, who have been going up for six or seven years, and have not been able to pull it off.'

'And ah,' said a girl speaking with a terrible brogue, 'the worst of it is that the stock is for iver increasing; ivery year we are growing more and more numerous, and the men seem to be getting fewer. Nowadays a man won't look at you unless you have at least two thousand a year.'

At the Shelbourne the fashionable world stays during the Castle season. The hotel is then as full of girls as a beehive of bees; their clear voices are heard in the corridors, and the staircase is gay with passing and rustling silk; and then, too, is made manifest the morality which is so characteristic of all English-speaking countries where young girls have acquired the same liberty as men. Complete freedom of speech is granted them. In Dublin a virgin is scarcely a favourable specimen of virginity: scandals, divorce cases, and invitations to the Castle are the sole themes of her conversation.

THE KILDARE STREET CLUB.

The Kildare Street Club is one of the most important institutions in Dublin. It represents in the most complete acceptation of the word the rent party in Ireland ; better still, it represents all that is respectable, that is to say, those who are gifted with an oyster-like capacity for understanding this one thing: that they should continue to get fat in the bed in which they were born. This club is a sort of oyster-bed into which all the eldest sons of the landed gentry fall as a matter of course. There they remain spending their days, drinking sherry and cursing Gladstone in a sort of dialect, a dead language which the larva-like stupidity of the club has preserved. The green banners of the League are passing, the cries of a new Ireland awaken the dormant air, the oysters rush to their window—they stand there open-mouthed, real pantomime oysters, and from the corner of Frederick Street a group of young girls watch them in silent admiration.

MRS. RUSVILLE.

To this sympathetic dressmaker all fashionable figures are confided, and all highbred griefs and scandals.

When the giggling countess leaves, the sighing marchioness is received with genial sympathy.

'My dear Helen, I can bear up no longer; my husband is a brute! It is only here I find any comfort; you only are kind.' Overcome with emotion the women fall into each other's arms and they kiss fervently. Finally, they retire to Mrs.

Rusville's boudoir, a delicious little retreat hung with Japanese draperies. Reclining gracefully, sometimes hand in hand laid gently, they drink their afternoon stimulants. In delicately cut glasses gin loses much of its vulgarity, but when sportswomen are announced, brandy and sodas are ordered, and telling of adventures and disappointments they watch with dreamy eyes great crabs crawling through the long sea-weeds, and a flight of wild geese that hide with their wings the silver disc of the moon.

As may be supposed, the business could not but suffer by these long hours passed in drunkenness and scandalmongery, but Mrs. Rusville had three daughters to bring out, and she hoped—when she had disposed of her shop, and her feet were set on the redoubtable staircase of Cork Hill—

that her aristocratic friend would extend to her a cordial helping hand. Mrs. Rusville is one of the myriad little schemes with which Dublin is honeycombed.

The Castle is the head, the Shelbourne Hotel the body, the Kildare Street Club and Mrs. Rusville's Shop the members of the miserable creature covered with bleeding sores that is called Dublin Society. To-day it trembles with sullen fear, and listens to savage howling of the pack in kennels set in a circle about the Castle, the Hotel, the Club, and the Shop; and as Gladstone advances, the barking springs to meet him; the fierce teeth are heard upon the wood-work. Will he lift the latch and let the hounds rush in on the obscene animal?

AN IRISH COUNTRY HOUSE.

YES, I am in an Irish country house—in a real Irish country house; there are hundreds like it. A square box-like structure approached by stone steps. On the right and left are the drawing-room and dining-room. The walls are papered with a hideous French paper, red flowers on a gold ground. The windows are curtained with bright red curtains, scarlet curtains. My host remarks that when they were bought that red was the fashionable colour. There are two flagrantly modern rosewood cabinets nailed against the wall and a few exquisite Chippendale chairs, the value of which no one even remotely suspects. In the dining-room there is a beautiful Chippendale sideboard; the walls are hung with pictures of horses whose histories and fortunes are being constantly related to you. Here is the hunter that carried the present squire twenty-five years ago over a six-foot wall; there is the race-horse that ran second for the Chester cup half a century ago; and the present mortgaged condition of the property is owing to the losses sustained on that occasion.

From either side of the house long woods extend like the wings of a theatre, and they embrace a green lawn on which cattle feed. The drive is covered with cow-dung. At the back of the house is a stable-yard with falling roofs and broken doors—an unpaved stable-yard full of pools of water whither pilgrim ducks direct their processions; and further away ensconced in an open place in the laurels is an iron hut in front of which two policemen sit cleaning their rifles. They have been on guard all night and have just been relieved; and their comrades are now walking up and down in front of the house. I can see them as I lean forward to tie my cravat. Mine host has long been under police protection. There is probably no one in Ireland whose life the Land League is so determined to have as his; but being a wise man he never stirs out except when preceded by a car, full of policemen armed to the teeth. These clear the way, and a second car, likewise full of policemen armed to the teeth, follows and guards against his being attacked in the rear. Mine host's unpopularity is easily accounted for. His own property amounts to no more than a thousand a year, and it is mortgaged to the extent of seven hundred a year. The seven hundred must be paid and all reductions must come out of the remaining three hundred. The sins of the fathers descend on the children, and my host's property exists upon paper only. But he has another source of income, he is a land agent and he collects rent to the extent of fifty thousand a year, for which he is paid at the rate of five per cent. To collect so vast a sum from poor people necessitates the serving of writs, evictions, seizures of cattle, etc.; and mine host's pecuniary difficulties force him to do all this remotely. Hence his unpopularity, hence the desire of the National party to remove him. (Remove him is the euphemism in the West for to murder.)

My host's family consists of a wife, three girls, and a son. Two of the girls are tall, strong, ugly young women from three to four and twenty years of age. They think nothing of riding fifteen miles to a hunt, hunting all day and riding home in the evening; and next day they are ready to play a tennis match or to drive thirty miles to a ball. The third girl is a pale little thing with golden hair. She spends her time painting flowers on the panels of the doors and helping her mother with the housekeeping. The son is a type very characteristic of Ireland, and of the present ordering of things in Ireland. We will call him Tom. Tom, after having been in London, where he spent some years in certain vague employments, and having contracted as much debt as his creditors would permit, and more than his father would pay, he had returned home through the Bankruptcy Court and returned home to wearily drag through life, through days and weeks so appallingly idle that he often feared to get out of bed in the morning. At first his father tried to make use of him in his agency business, and it was principally owing to Mr. Tom's bullying and insolent manners that mine host was now unable to leave his house unless accompanied by police. Tom is about thirty years of age. His legs are long, his hands bony, and stable-yard is written in capital letters on his face. He carries a 'Sportsman' under his arm, a penny and a halfcrown jingle in his pocket; and as he walks he lashes the trousers and boots, whose elegance is an echo of the old Regent Street days, with an ash plant. Given a certain versatility in turning a complimentary phrase, the abundant ease with which he explained, not his ideas, for he had none, but his tastes, which although few were pronounced; add to this the remnant of fashion that still lingers in his wardrobe—scarfs from the Burlington Arcade, scent from Bond Street, cracked patent leather shoes and mended silk stockings—and it will be understood how the girls in this far-away country built something that did duty for an ideal out of this broken-down swell.

After breakfast he begins to chatter. He curses Ireland as the most hideous hole under the sun; he frightens his mother by reiterated assurances that the Land League will leave them as beggars, and, having established this point, he proceeds to develop his plan for buying young horses, training them, and disposing of them in the English market. Eventually he dismisses his audience by taking up the newspaper and falling asleep with the stump of a burnt-up cigarette between his lips. Nothing more is heard of him for an hour; then he is seen slouching through the laurels on his way to the stables; and, whistling to their dogs, his sisters rush after him, their hands thrust into the pockets of their cotton dresses, the mud of the yard oozing through their broken boots. Behind the stables there is a small field lately converted into an exercise-ground, and there the three stand for hours, watching a couple of goat-like colts, mounted by country lads, still in corduroy and hob-nails, walking round and round.

The great argument against the doctrine of eternal punishment is that human nature habituates itself to all things; ample proof of this has been given of late years in the West of Ireland. You would not think it an easy matter to enjoy a shooting party with a policeman walking behind you to prevent a Land Leaguer shooting you while you shot the pheasant! You would not think it an easy matter to enjoy a flirtation, with a policeman watching to see that your kissing was not interrupted by a Land Leaguer sticking a knife into you from behind—you who spend pleasant lives in the Row, think that it would be impossible to enjoy love or sport under such circumstances, but you are wrong! Notwithstanding the precautions absolutely indispensable if you would preserve a whole skin, the gentry in Mayo enjoy themselves very well indeed.

And now I hear nothing talked of but a picnic—an afternoon dance which the people I am staying with are getting up. It is, I hear, to be given at a house on Lough Carra—'a house with a splendid floor for dancing,' cries one of the girls. 'And to whom does this house belong?' I ask. 'Oh! to a fellow who lives in Paris—he never comes here. Pa is his agent, and we can do what we like with his house.'

As we drove to the picnic we caught glimpses of the lake, the grey light of the beautiful mere-like lake flashing between the broken lines of rocky coast and the sloping ridges of the moorland; and then there are the blue waving lines of the Clare Mountains drawn in a circle about this landscape, this barren landscape, so suggestive of savage life and rough and barbarous minds. For in Ireland you think of border forays, wild chieftains, and tribes dressed in skins. The graft of civilisation the Anglo-Saxon has for seven hundred years striven to bind upon the island has never caught, but whether the Celt will be able to civilise himself when he gets Home Rule I do not pretend to say. At present he is a savage, eminently fitted for cattle-lifting, but ill-suited to ply the industry of farming which the law forces as the alternative of starvation upon him. Down in the wet below the edge of that bog lies the village. The cabins are built out of rough stones without mortar. Each is divided into two, rarely into three, compartments; and the windows are not so large as those of a railway carriage. And in these dens a whole family, a family consisting of husband and wife, grandfather and grandmother, and from eight to ten children herd together as best they can. The cabins are thatched or are roofed with green sods cut from the nearest field. About each doorway there is a dung-heap in which a pig wallows in the wettest and the children play on the driest part. The interior of these cabins can be imagined: a dark place from which exudes a stink; a stink which the inmates describe as a warm smell! Around the walls are vague shapes—what, you cannot quite see; like high boxes pushed out of sight are the beds. The floor is broken in places and the rain collects in the hollows, and has to be swept out every morning. A large pig, covered with lice, feeds out of a trough placed in the middle of the floor, and the beast from time to time approaches and sniffs at the child sleeping in a cot by the fireside. The old grandmother waves her palsied hands and the beast retires to his trough. As we have seen the pig, let us see the family at dinner. Of cookery, they have no idea whatever; there is not a single plate or kitchen utensil of any kind in the hovel except the black iron pot that hangs over the fire. The father and mother enter, followed by the brood. The mother, a great strong creature fit for work in the fields, dressed in a red petticoat which scarcely falls below her knees—you see the thick shapeless red legs—lifts the black pot off the fire and carries it to the threshold, one of the children holds a sieve and the water is strained off. Then the pig is hunted under one of the beds, and the family eat their dinner out of the sieve. Cold water from the well washes down this repast; sometimes well-to-do families keep a cow and there is a little butter-milk. These people are called small farmers; they possess from three to ten acres of land, for which they pay from twenty to five-and-twenty shillings an acre. In their tiny fields, not divided by luxuriant hedges like the English fields, but by miserable stone walls which give an unspeakable bleakness to the country, they cultivate oats and potatoes. With the former crop and the pig they pay the landlord, with the latter they live. As Balzac says, 'Les beaux sentiments fleurissent dans l'âme quand la fortune commence de dorer les meubles;' and never have I observed in these people the slightest æsthetic intention—never was a pot of flowers seen in the cottage window of an Irish Celt.

You want to know what Ireland is like? Ireland is like the smell of paraffin oil! The country exhales the damp, flaccid, evil smell of poverty—yes, a poverty that is of the earth earthy. And this smell hangs about every cabin; it rises out of the chimneys with the smoke of the peat, it broods upon the dung-heap and creeps along the deep black bog-holes that line the roadway, and the thin meagre aspect of the marshy fields and the hungry hills reminds you of this smell of poverty—the smell of something sick to death of poverty.

Driving along the bleak roads suddenly we see trees, and through the foliage the grey lake glitters, and its many aspects are unfolded; long wooded promontories, islands, ruined castles, and wide expanses of white water. This is

Lake Mount, the property of the mysterious being of whom nothing seems to be known, except that he lives in Paris and writes French poetry. The park is handsome; it is adorned with trees more than a century old, but even here the bitter smell of poverty lingers. The gate-lodge is in ruins, the drive is weed-grown and covered with cow-dung, and herds of cattle wander through the woods and feed along the terraces. The house is very much like the one we have just left: but it is handsomer. Four large pillars support a balcony ; the hall door is approached by a wide and imposing flight of steps, and over all there is a huge tablature, on which is written the family motto and the date of the building of the house. Around the gravel-sweep in front of the house, carriages and vehicles of all descriptions are collected, and the protecting policemen and soldiers are talking as naturally of their charges as the nurses do in the Champs-Elysées of their babies! Now a couple leave the group, and, apologising for the intrusion, a policeman reminds a pair of lovers of the danger of pursuing their flirtations into the darkness of the trees.

The day dreams tenderly, and in the genial sunlight the pink dresses of the girls are sweet spots of colour, and the wide lake, with all its reeds and islands and shallowing shores, sparkles like a hand-mirror in the sun. Some of the company stand on the steps feeding their eyes on the summer prospect, others are dancing in the drawing-room to the slangy jingle of a piano; and the gaiety of the day proceeds without interruption until suddenly appears a singular individual—a young man in a long green coat. His tiny hat, his long hair, his Parisian-cut clothes and his Capoul-like beard give him a very strange and very anomalous air. On the Boulevard he might pass muster, but where he stands he is un *être de féerie.* He is evidently very angry at something; and he rings impatiently. The aged servitor appears.

'What are all these people doing here?'

'This is Mrs. So-and-so's afternoon party, sir. Mr. —— lent the house. I should be very happy to show you over it, but they are dancing in the drawing-room, and lunch is laid out in the dining-room.'

'Show me over the house indeed! Don't you know me; this is my house? I have just returned from Paris.'

'Goodness, gracious, sir! I beg your pardon; will you go and speak with Mrs. ——?'

It is easy to imagine the embarrassment of this worthy woman. She could not very well ask the proprietor to give her the pleasure of his company at an afternoon dance in his own house, and on the other hand she could not very well call her guests together, pack up her luncheon, and be off. But the Parisian's heart was one of pity, and seeing how matters stood, he went upstairs, changed his clothes, and begged to be allowed to join in the dance—a permission that was graciously extended to him.

Soon we became friends; soon I was invited to spend a few days with him. He told me his story—that on the refusal of his agent to supply him with any more money he had come over from Paris with a few pounds, and a volume of Baudelaire and Verlaine in his pocket. Of all the latest tricks that had been played with French verse he was thoroughly master; of the size, situation, and condition of his property he knew no more than I did. Indeed, he hated all allusion to be made to it, and he looked forward with positive horror to meeting his tenants, and discussing a reduction of rent with them. This type of man is not unfrequent in Ireland.

THE HOUSE OF AN IRISH POET.

HERE we find traces of the riches of other generations—traces that in themselves are characteristic of Ireland. The original design as it shows through the wreck and ruin seems to indicate that from the first all had been undertaken on a scale a little above the fortune of the owner; and this in Ireland! The western Celt is a creature quick to dream, and powerless to execute; in external aspects and in moral history the same tale is told—great things attempted, nothing done; and the physiology and psychology of his country is read in the unfinished pile.

Ireland is a country of abandoned dreams. Here are a few—see this room, it is forty feet square. The floor is of choice French parquet—the walls, stucco of course replaces marble, but in every other respect the room is an exact copy of a Greek chamber. The panels are in mauve and straw colour; and painted in the centre of each panel is a neo-Greek picture. But no curtains fall from the Greek cornices, and the room is furnished with a few bits of heavy and meaningless furniture that would do violence to the taste of a retired soap-boiler. Outside there are terraces and pleasure-grounds laid out according to Italian rule, and the great woods extend from either side down to, and along the shores of, the pale, mild, mere-like lake—a lake that smiles as wearily in the weak sunlight, to use a

Balzac simile, *comme une beauté de keepsake dessinée par Westhall*, and this lake is surrounded by amphi-theatrical mountains, and is covered with islands on which you perceive a corner of an old castle, a remnant of the brigandage of old time. But to-day as well as yesterday is in ruins. The great stables once filled with thirty or forty race-horses, are now for the most part but formless masses of brick and mortar: here a bit of roofing still holds on, and there a young ash-tree forces its way through the rack out of which the winner of the Chester cup once drew his hay. And the great wide green path of the race-course that wound in and out through the woods and fields is now overgrown and lost; and the garden where several generations of children played and grew amid everchanging ideas and desires from childhood to manhood, is now but a wild, a sad, and savage place—a strange place where strange weeds overtop the apple closes, and where the roses have returned to the original eglantine. Pushing my way through the jungle I come upon a sun-dial that the sun has not seen these many years, and as I brush away the leaves and earth, and read the markings on the dial, I experience the sensations of awe felt even by him who strives to decipher an inscription upon a lost and forgotten Brahmin tomb. And upon the tall and morose walls, wet with the rain that drips from the overhanging beeches, a peacock—the last of the many generations of peacocks that in gladder days decorated the terraces and the long lawns—now cries dolorously for the pea-hen *morte d'antan.*

And amid these ancient sights my host and I wander: he with his pockets filled with back numbers of 'La Vogue,' from which he occasionally reads sonnets by Mallarmé and Verlaine. And our poetic discussions are prolonged till the hour when in the baronial hall—sad, like the drawing-room, with the sadness of incompleted things—we dine on trout taken that day from the lake, and tiny, half-starved chickens that the *vieux serviteur* procured for us in the village; then in the long evenings we turn over the books in the library—a library to which not a book has been added for the last fifty years: and so the days pass until the hour comes for my friend the Irish poet to go through the dreaded interview with his tenants.

The agent, having lived all his life

among bullocks, partook of their animality. His thick legs are encased in gaiters, and he wears a long ulster.

'How do you do?' he exclaimed. 'Do you know that things are getting worse instead of better? There's been another bailiff shot down in Mayo, and we have had a process-server nearly beaten to death down our side of the country. Gad! I was out with the sub-sheriff and fifty police trying to serve notices on Lord ——'s estate, and we had to come back as we went, such blowing of horns you never heard in your life. The whole country was up, and they had a trench cut across the road as wide as a canal.'

'Well, what do you think we had better do with these fellows? Do you think they will take the twenty per cent.?'

‘’Tis impossible to say. Gad! the League is getting stronger every day. But they ought to take it; twenty per cent. will bring it very nearly down to Griffiths’.’ [Griffiths’ valuation is a valuation that was made thirty years ago by order of Government for purposes of taxation.]

‘But if they don’t take it?’

‘Well, I don’t know what we will do, for notices it is impossible to serve. Gad! I will never forget how we were pelted the other day, such throwing of stones, such blowing of horns! I think you will have to give them the thirty, but we will try them at twenty-five.’

‘And if they won’t take it?’

‘What, the thirty? They will take that, and jumping, you needn’t fear. Here they come.’

Turning, the two men watched the forty or fifty peasants, who, with heads set against the wild gusts, advanced steadily up the avenue. The peasants lift their hats, and the interview begins:—

'Now boys,' cries the poet, who thought that a little familiarity would not be inappropriate: 'I have asked you to meet me so that we might come to some agreement about the rents. We have known each other a long time, and my family has been on this estate I don't know how many generations. Therefore —why, of course, I should be very sorry if we had any falling out. I don't know much about farming, but I hear everyone say that this has been a capital year; and now. . . well, I think I cannot do better than to make the same offer as I did before through my agent—that is to say, of twenty per cent. abatement all round—that will bring your rents down to Griffiths' valuation.'

The poet intended to be very impressive; but feeling that words were betraying him he stops short and waits anxiously to hear what answer the peasant who steps forward would make. The old man begins by removing a battered tall hat, out of which falls a red handkerchief; the handkerchief is quickly thrown back into the crown, and at an intimation from the poet hat and handkerchief are replaced on the white head.

'Now, your honour, the rents are too high; we cannot pay the present rent, leastways without a reduction. I have been a tenant on the property, and my fathers before me for the past hundred and fifty years, and it was in '43 that the rents were raised—in the time of your father—the Lord have mercy on his soul!—but he had an agent who was a hard man, and he raised the rents; and since then we have been living on yellow meal and potatoes—potatoes that are watery; there's no diet in them, your honour, and if your honour will come and walk the lands yourself, you will see that I am speaking the truth; we ask nothing better than that you should walk the lands yourself. There are two acres of my land, your honour, flooded for three months of the year, and for that same land I am paying twenty-five shillings an acre. I have my receipts paid down to the last half-year.' And, still speaking, the old man fumbles in his pockets and produces a large pile of papers, which he strives to push into the poet's hand, alluding all the while to the losses he had sustained. Two pigs had died, and he had lost a fine mare and foal.

'I should be delighted to give you thirty per cent. reduction,' cries the poet, as soon as the question of reduction, that had been lost amid schemes for draining and bad seasons, had been re-established. 'But you must remember I have to pay charges, and my creditors won't wait any more than yours will. If you refuse to pay your rents, and I get sold out, you will ruin me, but you won't do yourselves any good; you will have some Englishman here who will make you pay your rents.'

'An Englishman here!' cries a peasant. 'He would go back quicker than he came.'

'Maybe he wouldn't go back at all,'

cries another, chuckling. 'We would make an Irishman of him for ever.'

'Begad! we would make him wear the green in real earnest, and a fine sod it would be,' shouted a third.

The witticism is greeted with a roar of laughter, and upon this expression of a somewhat verdant patriotism, the dispute concerning the reduction was resumed.

'Give us the land all round at the Government valuation,' says a man in the middle of the group.

'Why, you are only fifteen per cent. above the valuation,' cries the agent.

For a moment this seems to create a difference of opinion among the peasants; but the League had drawn them too firmly together to be thus easily divided. They talk among themselves in Irish. Then the old man says:

'We can't take less than thirty per cent.; the League would not let us.'

'I can't give you more than twenty.'

'Then let us come home; there is no use our wasting our time here,' cries a sturdy peasant, who, although he spoke but seldom, seemed to exercise an authority over the rest. With one accord they follow him, but rushing forward the agent seizes him by the arm.

'Now then, boys, come back. He will settle with you right enough if you'll only listen to reason.'

Then after a great deal more discussion during which the poet, intensely wearied, strove to recall the tercets of a sonnet by Mallarmé, a bargain was struck, and the tenants agreed to take twenty-five per cent.

But this arrangement by no means

ended our poet's troubles. That very evening the agent said, in a pause in the conversation, 'You must see the tenants on all your different properties.'

'On all my different properties? And where are my different properties?'

'You have several properties in the north of Mayo.'

'And where is the north of Mayo?'

'About thirty miles from here. And there you will have an opportunity of visiting the tomb of your ancestor, the man who built this house.'

The poet glanced at the portrait above his head and relapsed into reveries. He seemed however determined to meet his fate. On the following morning a car is waiting for us at the door, and we start on our pilgrimage. During the first eight or nine miles the country presents its usual sad aspect of servitude and poverty. We see on our right and left the same miserable cabins stuck here and there under the potato-fields that feed the family; poor miserable cabins built of loose stones without a tree or a bush to hide their nakedness or shelter the inmates from the wild wet winds—wet with Atlantic surges—that howl up and down the bleak roads and sterile uplands. The children play and pigs wallow on the dung-heap, the woman with her worn red petticoats blowing about her thick red legs, gathers the peat in the brown bog that strikes through the scanty fields, and along the hillsides the woods of the domain lands extend in curving lines, and I see the square white houses of the landlords gleaming at the end of the vistas—handsome square white houses—each is surrounded with a hundred or so of filthy tenements that Providence and God have decreed shall unite and keep the master in affluence and ease. Soon after we enter a small town; the market-place is filled with peasants; a platform has been erected, and, amid a number of green flags, a village orator explains that the landlord whose house he indicates with his finger must not be paid a shilling until he agrees to accept thirty per cent. reduction; the orator is followed by a fat priest who draws subtle distinctions between the different kinds of murder. Two kinds are peculiar to Ireland, he declares: behind-the-wall murder, and eviction murder, and the law of self-preservation is the first law of life. We listen for a few minutes, and then we climb on to the second car that has been prepared for us. The agent sits with a policeman on one side; he thinks if he brought his whole escort it might excite the tenants to refuse to come to terms; the poet and myself sit on the other, the driver sits on a small seat perched over the horse's tail; we are all armed to the teeth. So we enter on a new country, a country bleaker even than the one we left. No landlords live here, they only come here to collect rent. And to find the tenant face to face with nature, removed from the perhaps refining influence of his terrible task-master, is a mournful sight—the mournful grey of these western skies, the morose sterility of these desert hills. We do not readily understand that a cab-horse may find pleasure in life, nor any more do we understand what hopes or aspirations may animate the peasants who live here striving to cultivate this arid land. Now the hills have been left behind and we are passing through an interminable stretch of bog land; and even into this wilderness eviction has forced the peasant. Out in this swamp there are huts, and in the ooze and mud the procreation of the human race is continued. We pass a dwelling-place that strikes me as being the farthest possible limit to which human degradation may be extended. Into the bank formed by the cutting of the peat a few poles have been thrust, and on these poles sods of earth have been laid, the front and sides are partly built up with soft black mud. And in this foul den a woman has brought up five children, and in the swamp a few potatoes are cultivated, but the potato crop has failed this year and the family are living on the yellow meal the parish authorities allow them. They are boiling it now in the black iron pot, and will probably eat it out of the pot, for the hut contains nothing but the pot and the straw on which the family sleep. The man in a torn shirt looking like a wild beast is climbing out of the bog hole. 'Whose tenant are you?' I ask. 'M——' he replies, mentioning my host's name, 'but I have received notice to quit.' 'Is not that the best thing that could happen to you?' I ask. 'Why don't you apply to the Tuke fund to be emigrated?'

'My wife likes the old country and we might be worse off in America.'

'But you could not be worse off.'

'Oh, times may mend,' he replies!

How times can mend for him I know not, and I leave him with a picture of most awful poverty burnt for ever in my memory.

Then, as we drive to the end of this region of bog, we see a man approaching. It is the bailiff. He tells us that the tenants are waiting to meet us behind that far hill, and there we find ourselves in the presence of thirty or forty men. The agent and the poet get off the car and address them; but it is clear that their minds are made up; they will accept nothing less than thirty per cent. Hoping that the news of their refusal to come to terms will not reach the next property before us we proceed, and some miles farther on a similar scene is re-enacted and with almost similar results.

'It was here your ancestor lived before he went to India and made his fortune,' says the agent. 'The old house is in ruins, and the chapel where he is buried is likewise in ruins; but would you like to see his tomb?'

'Yes, I think I would,' replies the poet; and followed by a group of nearly naked peasants all chattering together, some explaining their differences with their neighbours and begging the landlord to interfere; others insisting on a reduction of rent, because their crops have failed—because 'the potatoes are watery, there is no diet in them'—we approach a ruined chapel. With some hesitation, the reason of which we do not at first understand, one of the peasants shows us the gravestone almost hidden from sight beneath a monstrous growth of nettles.

After two hundred years the grave

has been violated by the peasants for the leaden coffin, and the bones of him who created all that has been wasted—by one generation in terraces, by another in race-horses, and by another in dissipation in Paris, lie scattered about the ground trodden by chance of the passing feet of the peasant.

Notwithstanding his cynicism my friend was touched to the heart. Three days afterwards he began a poem on the subject, the chief merit of which lay in the ingenuity of rhyming Lilith with lit.

THE LANDLORD.

Mr. Blake lives in a great square box-like house, placed in the centre of a wet lawn, set about with melancholy trees. The lawn is let to a grazier, and herds of cattle feed even to the hall door. The beasts tramp through the laurels across the terraces, and the walks are covered with cow-dung; every ornamental fence has been broken down; the cut stone has slipped out of the corner walls of the stable and garden, and in slush, neglect, and ruin the aspect of these places is that of a decaying farmyard. If you pull the shaky bell-handle you will hear a mournful ringing far away down in the distant corridor; you will be kept waiting a long time, but eventually the butler, an old, shabby, and decrepit creature, whose life has been passed in ever-humbling servitude, will open the door to you. He is now dressed in his master's old clothes—they are three sizes too large for him, and the sleeves of the coat are turned up some five or six inches. Like everything else in Ireland he bears signs of better days; and, through all the shabbiness and all the poverty, you see the fashionable London servant. He is the rat that has not left the sinking ship, and he has starved even to this. Still there is an air of fashion in the way he shows you into the drawing-room—a fadingly furnished room—heavy antique chairs and sofas, a broken piano, and some lamentable pictures of dogs going after birds. This was good enough for yesterday, it is good enough for to-day, and to-morrow we may not be here. You sit on a sofa which seems to be stuffed with the national potato, and you seek for something to read. There is nothing but the 'Freeman's Journal,' and mechanically you glance through the daily list of outrages until a worn and uninteresting lady enters. Platitude is read in every gesture, trouble in every look ; she introduces you to her six children, and asks you to have a cup of tea. An effort is made to speak of London, but in a few minutes the conversation has lapsed into the usual and never-ceasing wailing concerning the prospects of the country—in other words the chances of collecting rent.

The story of Mr. Blake's life is as

follows:—When he came of age his father made him an allowance of three hundred a year, and sent him to London to see the world and if possible to pick up an heiress. He took a couple of furnished rooms in Duke Street, St. James's, and then came the whelming desire to eat of the fruit and gather the flowers of life—to dine in fashionable places, to feel delicately dressed, to be *chic*, to avoid the public road of dust and heat, and choose a pleasant by-path adorned with flowers and where but few are seen. . . All Irish gentlemen are sportsmen. Mr. Blake has a friend in a hunting county, and to bring a couple of horses and go and stay with him is the first step. Mr. Blake is a first-rate rider, the horses turn out well, and he sells them for twice as much as he gave for them. He buys some more and disposes of them on equally advantageous terms. He repeats the trick again and again, with varying success, until at the end of the season he returns to London crazed with the money he has made, with pleasure, with flattery, and a prospect of gay life. Having some hundreds of pounds in the bank he henceforth pays a pound a day for a handsome apartment and he goes to the Gaiety Theatre. . . . .

At the Gaiety Theatre he meets Maud. Maud, who sings in the chorus or dances in the ballet, delights in supper parties, and is insatiable as regards the number of her admirers. For some months he enjoys the privilege of paying Maud's bills and being constantly at her side. About August Mr. Blake begins to look anxiously to the hunting season as a means of replenishing his exhausted exchequer. This time he goes down to Northamptonshire with five horses, but the horses fall lame, he loses his money at cards, everything goes wrong, and there is nothing to do but to have recourse to the Jews. Luck comes again and luck goes again, but the expenses remain the same, and at last the end comes, and there is the usual storm of sighs and bitter recriminations. Nevertheless at his club that evening Mr. Blake comes to the conclusion that after all it was perhaps for the best, indeed a glance at his bank-book convinces him that the rupture came not one hour too soon—and marriage loomed above the horizon. Henceforth Mr. Blake is a reformed man. He calls on the Jesuits in Farm Street, and he is seen at various luncheon parties in Bayswater; and for a year he made love to every girl he met in the hopes she might be the heiress whose fortune would pay off the mortgages that 'to a certain extent crippled the property.' But the heiress never came, and if she did she was invariably engaged to some one else; and the money-lenders were pressing, so pressing that after five years' dissipation Mr. Blake had to return home to economise; and soon after his broken-hearted father—who had lived in London and returned home some thirty years ago in exactly the same way—died, leaving his son to get out of the money-lenders' clutches as best he could. But six thousand pounds is a large sum, and press the tenants as he would, though he might demand premiums for the letting of every farm, Mr. Blake found that if he wanted to make both ends meet he would have to deprive himself of every pleasure—that is to say he would have to live in Roscommon all the year round; at the most he could not hope to spend more than a fortnight in London. He can still keep a couple of horses, he can get as much shooting and tennis-playing as he desires, and for six months his longing for London is neither bitter nor profound. There is only one thing that troubles him, and that is a haunting and irritating remembrance of Maud, not perhaps of the Maud he knew and admired in the Strand, for his love once so personal has now become catholic. . . .

A young unmarried landlord is an object of the keenest interest to the peasant women of Ireland; so soon as he settles down to live at home, the drama commences. The mother and the comely daughter are loitering at the hall-door. The door opens, and the young master appears. He admires the girl's rosy cheeks and takes an interest in her. Three days after when he is out shooting he meets the girl. She tells him she wants to go out to service, speaks of going to England. He easily dissuades her, and takes her in as housekeeper. Biddy's brothers are transferred from the fields to the stables, and some become grooms, bailiffs, and gamekeepers.

Five years bring five children. Mr. Blake is weary of his numerous dependents, and he is harassed by debts. The money-lender has been paid, but other debts have been contracted and are pressing on him sorely. How is he to relieve himself? There is no way but marriage. A neighbour has an elderly daughter whom he has never been able to get rid of; he is a rich grazier and he can give her seven thousand pounds down. Seven thousand pounds is Eldorado to embarrassed Mr. Blake, and he proceeds at once to come to terms with Biddy and Biddy's family. The father-in-law declares that he could not hear of their remaining in the country, to America they must go if the marriage is to be, and to America Biddy and her five children are sent, the brothers elect to start for England, the father and mother are given twenty pounds, and Mrs. Blake takes the place vacated by the discarded Biddy.

About every landlord's house in Ireland traces are found of immorality with peasant women, and it is curious to note the proportion of tenants that bear the landlords' names, and often at a petty sessions the magistrate will not convict the prisoner because he knows Blake to be his half-brother or his son.

. . . . .

Sometimes, before the birth of her eleventh child, the landlord takes Biddy to church, and puts the ring on her finger, and the baby who is born two months after is legitimate and heir to the property—and title, if there be one in the family. The young landlord grows up amid his illegitimate brothers and sisters, for whom the father is striving to lay by a few thousand pounds. I know of no novelist who has touched this subject, and yet how full it is of poor human nature: vice, degradation, pity, hard-heartedness, grow on its every branch like blackberries in an autumn hedge.

. . . .

The first three or four years that succeeded his marriage were happy ones; Ireland was quiet, rents were paid, and his wife's fortune had relieved Mr. Blake of his personal debts. But in '77 came the periodic failure of the potato crop, and the people starved. Enactments were issued by the thousand, and the country was about to be depopulated again as it was before in '49. He who knows Ireland knows what it is to pass from a region where the hovels are plentiful, and the gaunt hill-sides are divided into patches by walls—loose round stones piled one on top of the other—to a region of wide pasture lands where herds upon herds of bullocks graze. Look at the fragment of ruined cottage, and think of the misery and woe. Family after family were dug out with crowbar and pick, as if they were rabbits, and were driven forth to die or to find their way to America. Many died, but the survivors and their sons are now wealthy men in New York, Chicago, and Boston; and it is they who supply Parnell with money to prosecute to exile and ruin the war against landlordism.

I am a landlord to-day, but I will recognise it as a fact that had not Davitt organised the Land League in '78, a great clearance of peasants would have been again made in '78. Mr. Blake is not a hard-hearted man, but in Ireland we are accustomed to evictions, and no doubt he would have cleared his property of as many tenants as possible, and have re-organised it on a system of grazing. For since '49 every good landlord regrets his goodness; when we pass the great tracts of pasture land with the fragment of ruined cottage we say in our hearts: 'Oh that I had, or my father had, evicted like the others in '49!'

Mr. Blake's estate is one of the worst in the West of Ireland; Mr. Blake has two hundred tenants, there is not a man on the estate who is worth a hundred pounds, and most of his tenants live out on the verge of the bog, where they till a few wretched acres of land, and for which they pay on an average from four to five pounds a year. Mr. Blake's rental stands at two thousand a year, but his father who kept race-horses put a mortgage of five per cent. on the estate, for which five per cent. interest is paid a year. Then the widow is in receipt of three, and the younger children of two, hundred a year; Mr. Blake's agent takes five per cent. of the gross rental, for Mr. Blake must have an agent, it is the custom in Ireland to have agents, and this is so partly because the landlords are too fine gentlemen to do their own business, partly because a third person can deal more summarily with the tenants than the landlord. In '81 the Land Act knocked three hundred more off his income, leaving, when taxes and bad debts are deducted, something about four hundred a year for our typical landlord to live on. For, mark you, all losses must be borne by the unfortunate Mr. Blake—all bad debts, and the forcible reduction of rent ordained by the Land Act of '81 come out of his pocket—the mortgagees, the widow and the younger children lose not one penny, no matter what disastrous seasons time may bring; no matter what Radical Land Bills Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Parnell may force through the House of Commons; and yet they, mortgagees, widow, and younger children all draw their income from the same source as the landlord. Herein lies, it seems to me, the great injustice of the Land Bill of '81 and likewise of the Bill on which Mr. Parnell is speaking as I write this very line; if rents are reduced by State intervention, no distinction should be made in proprietorship—mortgagees, widow, etc., should bear a proportional loss.

But will the margin that the Land Act of '81 left to the proprietor, will it continue to be paid? This is the terrible 'To be or not to be' that now gnaws at every landlord's heart, and most of all at Mr. Blake's; for he has six children to support, and he is now forty and incapable of earning a shilling unless perhaps as a common labourer. Is it possible that the entire upper class of a country will be deprived of all its worldly goods and turned adrift out on the world to starve, and that we shall soon have a country composed exclusively of peasants? Never has the world seen, no not even France in time of revolution, such a reversal of fortune as that which is threatened in Ireland. And it is far from certain that this change in the affairs of men will not come to pass. Ireland is now quiet; at the sign of Mr. Parnell murder and violence have ceased, but when he finds that he and his party are powerless to obtain Home Rule he will say, like Pilate, 'I will wash my hands of the blood of these men;' and then outrage and murder will again make the land horrible, and the tenant-farmers will again dictate their terms to the landlords and those of this already enfeebled class, whom the assassin scare will gradually starve to death or exile.

THE TENANT-FARMER.

Micky Moran is a tenant-farmer. His holding consists of ten acres of land, not set in one compact flat about the cabin which he built himself by the roadside, but scattered here and there through the surrounding farms: to get at his oat-field he has to cross his neighbour's potato-garden, and this right of way is conducive, as may be easily imagined, to fierce disputes.

The sun is setting behind the blue band of mountains, the islands with their hanging shadows shove their black noses like fish through the motionless silver of the lake, and now the pale elusive distance floats away in long curving lines, in tones of grey and rose; the quacking of the ducks in the reeds adds an exquisite stillness to the scene. But suddenly the sonorous shores resound with oaths, and the tranquil evening is rent with screams for vengeance; women rush for pitchforks and spades, the children crowd out of the filthy hovel, and Micky Moran has much difficulty in escaping with his life.

Micky Moran is a strong-built man of forty-five: a pair of corduroy trousers, a frieze coat, a dark discoloured skin with scanty whiskers, a snub nose, blue eyes set deep under a low forehead, receding temples and square-set jaws. His face is expressive of meanness, sullenness, stupidity; he is obviously nearer to the earth than the Saxon; he reminds me of some low earth-animal whose nature has not yet risen from out the soil. He is evidently of a degenerate race—a race that has been left behind—and should perish, like the black rat perished before the brown and more ferocious species. Micky is not a Celt, he is a Fin. Ages ago the Fins were defeated by the Celts and driven into the outlying districts of Connaught; there they should have died, but owing to their extraordinary power of reproduction they are now making headway against the superior races. If pestilence or war do not intervene, families of ten will win the battle of existence for the most ill-favoured race that ever trod the earth. And Micky's and his wife's philoprogenitiveness is quite up to the average; they are ten in family. His eldest son and daughter are in America, the two next are working in different employments in Manchester, at home there is a baby in arms, three children, three, four, and six years of age, a boy of seventeen and Mary a girl of eighteen. Poor Mary! She went in for making a big catch and got herself into trouble.

The Irish peasants are the most moral people in the world. Their morality fails only when their landlord covets their daughter, and that custom being a survival of the serfdom of the past is rapidly dying out. But in certain parishes where the ruling of the priest is feeble, the young girls in order to get husbands allow themselves to be seduced, counting on the influence that will be brought to bear on the young man that he will marry them afterwards. In all other ways they are as I say the most moral (using the word moral in its limited, not its general, sense) people in the world. And this special morality is necessitated by their mode of living, their ignorance, their superstition. For to save their flocks from sin—I mean the sin the most generally hateful to the spirit and teaching of the Catholic Church—the priests encourage early marriages; in Ireland you seldom see a young man who is not married, and there is in all classes a very general absence of any practical theory of life, and much dull acquiescence in the belief that God does not bring life into the world without providing for it. If you bear this in mind, and if you take into account that the Irish peasant has lived for centuries in a damp, black, miserable hole from which he was expelled if he did not give up his daughter, if he did not vote as the agent told him, you will begin to understand why he is grossly superstitious and stupidly improvident, and why he breeds blindly like a newt in the wet and the slime. The Irish race is one that has been forgotten and left behind in a bog hole; it smells of the wet earth, its face seems as if made of it, and its ideas are moist and dull, and as sterile as peat.

A dim idea floats in the minds of the young men that they had better leave home, that there is not much to do, not much to hope for in the plot of ground that they till on a hill-side of this far western land; but the agitator comes along and declares that Ireland is for the Irish, that her children must not go away. The young man thinks over what he has heard at the meeting, and as he walks home he stops to speak to his neighbour's daughter.

He admires her rosy cheeks, and her hideous thick red legs do not strike him as abominable, for he has never seen others; he meets her the following evening and they pass from the lane into the shadows of the fields. Why detail the sequel? Mary knows that in due time her father, mother, and above all the priest, will intervene, and that the young man will be forced to marry her. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred these tactics prove successful, but Mary is the exception that proves the rule. Actuated by the laudable desire to do as well for herself as possible, she made eyes at the best *parti* in her village—a young man whose father farmed something like thirty acres of land. Up to a certain point everything went as well and as successfully with Mary as the most hopeful Irish maiden could desire.

As to the present there had been nothing extravagant or eccentric in Mary's conduct; she had proceeded on the most approved principles, and her father and mother looked upon her with love and respect, seeing in her the wife of their rich neighbour, and they waited anxiously for the time to come when she would throw herself into their arms and confess her sad condition. When this occurred about three months after, like good parents that they were, they took immediate steps to rehabilitate their daughter in the opinion of the world. They went round to see the father of the young man, who declared his son to be as innocent as the new-born babe, or rather as the babe unborn. The priest was applied to; but he was of the old school, a quiet man who loved his Latin authors and his glass of punch, and his denunciation of the young man from the altar did not seem to change anything in the young man's determination, and the publication of the banns seemed as far off as ever. Threats and violence were then resorted to, the outraged parents summoned their cousins and their uncles, and a moonlight expedition was spoken of; but the young man was a prominent member of the League, and the project had to be abandoned. The young man continued to deny the seduction, and when at last it became clear that he could not be forced into marrying, the fallen woman was driven from the hearth she had disgraced, and told to make her way to the workhouse, the proper place for her to bring her bastard brat into the world.

I shall not forget the last time I saw

Mary. She was living on the confines of the village in a hollow in the hill-side built about with rough stones and covered with clods of earth; a still more horrible dwelling-place than the one she had been driven from, with an old woman who had been a priest's servant. There she had been delivered of her child. No one speaks to her; and in the morning and evening you see her sitting under the hawthorn tree, sole tree of that wild landscape. She nurses the child, and her thighs and bosom are bare, and the wind is full of her wailing, and as you turn and see her sitting—lonely, oh! so lonely—she is as touching a picture of human misery as the mind of man can conceive.

. . . . . .

I have said that Micky Moran's farm consists of ten acres of land.

For these ten acres he used to pay a yearly rent of nine pounds five shillings, but the Land Act of '81 reduced his rent to seven pounds. An acre and a half is devoted to potatoes, three acres and a half to oats, and the remainder is in grass on which he feeds a few sheep and a yearling calf. The sheep generally die, and the calf often dies, and if the milk does not fail the family lives upon yellow meal which is bought with the money the daughter sends home from America, where she works as kitchen-maid, and the money the son sends from Manchester, where he works as barman in a public-house. And here I must say a word in praise of the conduct of the Irish children towards their parents. Never do they forget them; I have known sons and daughters who have been away in America for ten, yes and fifteen, years, and who regularly send home their savings to the old couple in Ireland. But how does Micky Moran pay his rent? Some of the rent comes from America and Manchester, some from the sale of the pig, and then Micky Moran goes to England every year to do harvest work, and if he is lucky he returns with half-a-dozen pounds. The farm, although it be not a profitable concern, is at least a plot of ground where the wife may bear children and the pig may wallow. From our point of view Micky Moran's life has been neither pleasant nor successful. He was born in the darkness and damp of a hovel, and excepting the months of the year when he goes to England to earn the rent, he has lived in it. Moreover he and his father before him have lived in daily and nightly fear of being evicted from their horrid home; for the possibility of the Moran family being able to supply the yearly demands of the agent has never been even at best of times more than a bare possibility. Since his name was substituted for his father's in the agent's books, he has received innumerable notices to quit, and his sheep and his pig and his calf have been seized for rent on many occasions. But by making great sacrifices he has always been able to keep a roof over his head.

It was however a very bad year for poor Moran; everything went against him: the potato crop had failed, his pig and his sheep had died. Then he wrote to his sons in Manchester, and to his daughter in New York, but the young people could not make up the money, and the sheriff's officers were at the broker's door. Micky Moran threw himself into the arms of the League that were extended to save him. Moran was saved. The agent was fired at, and when the sheriff's officers, protected by a hundred police, came to evict, they were met by some thousand people who pelted them with stones and forced them to retreat. Henceforth Micky Moran understood his power; in company with the other tenants he attended and told him flatly that they would pay no rent unless they were allowed a reduction of twenty-five per cent. 'We do not expect the land for nothing,' they said, 'but we must have it at a fair rent.

So it was that Micky Moran first defied the law; but his connection with crime did not end here. The son who remained at home now goes out every night for a walk on the road; and not to meet a girl, but half-a-dozen young fellows like himself, varying in age from eighteen to twenty-six. Sometimes they go to the public-house which Balzac in his novel, 'Les Paysans'—that most wonderful anticipation of all the phenomena of the Irish crises—calls 'the people's parliament,' but more often they go to each other's houses, where they sit and talk till midnight. Now they are at Moran's. A great peat fire is blazing on the hearth, and the licking red flames and the heaps of white ash are a picturesque decoration; and then the sheep-dog curled up in beautiful attitude, the sharp nose resting on the paws, his long coat glistening. The chins and hands of the speakers stand out in trenchant contrast, and the squalor of the background is concealed in romantic shadow. The mother and younger children have gone through the hole of the dividing wall, and the bed in which the girl sleeps is vague and shadowy. The men speak in Irish and in undertones; they sit round the fire on logs of wood, and they are drawn close together. Micky smokes in the chimney corner, and sullenly acquiesces in what is said. The young men are bolder than he, and he fears that there will be, as he puts it, 'Bad work done before long.' In truth the conversation does seem a little dangerous. They are talking of their landlord's bailiff.

'If it weren't for that son of a ——, Ferick, Mr. Blake would give us the thirty per cent.'

'He would; but Ferick can do what

he likes with him: hasn't he got the best land in the parish?'

'Wasn't it only ten years ago that he took up five acres from which Widow Flanagan was evicted?'

'And he would do the same again if he had the chance.'

'He thinks he'll be a landlord one of these days in the parish. Don't they say that he has five hundred pounds put away in the bank?'

'And haven't you heard that he has an ejectment decree out against Patrick Murphy, your uncle? and if he gets him put out he will take up the land.'

'He nor the likes of him will never take up Patrick Murphy's land, not as long as there's lead to be bought in Ireland.'

'He would walk on us all if he could, but I think his time is nearly up.'

'It is if he has taken out a decree against Patrick Murphy, and no mistake.'

'I will for one, and I think there are a couple of boys in the parish.'

'Begorra, he must be got rid of! We can stand him no more.'

'We might get some help from the League; leastways we might ask what the League thinks of him. We will speak to Daly after mass next Sunday. I don't think he knows that there is a decree out against Patrick Murphy.'

This conversation caused Micky Moran much anxiety, and had he been able he would have prevented his son from attending Mass on the following Sunday. But the boy was obstinate, and then Micky reflected that to lose Mass——

Inherited beliefs and customs, profitable although their rejection may be, cannot be put aside at will by force of will, and some years will elapse before Micky and his likes will say that the land they till is theirs, and will by force of numbers—by that force that having nothing to lose brings—will gradually terrify the mortgaged landowners into bankruptcy; but sooner or later this will come to pass, and then, when the estates are put up for auction, Micky Moran and his like will terrify, with assassination and threats of assassination all intending purchasers away—will, in fine, by an intermittingness of effort, win back to the Celt the land that was taken from the Celt.

THE PRIEST.

Father Tom Shannon is the son of a village grocer. Having shown more than ordinary intelligence at school it was hoped that he would devote himself to patriotism, but being of a sober, mild, and retiring disposition, it was eventually decided that he was more fitted to be a priest. Priesthood and patriotism are the only ways of advancement open in Ireland to those who are not landlords. Father Tom was therefore sent to Maynooth. (Maynooth is a college subventioned by the State for the education of those who intend to enter the Irish priesthood.) There he remained six years learning Latin and theology. He was ordained when he was twenty-three, and immediately after he was allotted a curacy among the mountains, and when he had served God for about ten years in this humble position the bishop gave him a parish, and this is the highest position he may hope to attain to.

Let us look at his house. It is a long cottage, whitewashed and solidly thatched, and stands in a green field: it faces the high road. The door is painted, the windows are three feet by four, and a spray of woodbine clambers about one corner; there are a few trees and a paling. It is clean—it is, in a word, inhabitable; it is the one point in the vast abyss which lies between the hovels of the peasants and the large square houses of the landlords. There is a little brass knocker on the door; you knock, and the priest's servant—they are all the same, nondescript women of fifty—dressed in a red petticoat—barely covering her naked legs, her shoulders are covered with a shawl, opens the door, and saluting you with a curtsey, asks you to walk into the parlour. You are in the very narrowest of passages, and you are conscious that there are all sorts of rooms about you—rooms run up hurriedly with ill-fitting boards and rudely papered. These arrangements were necessary, for Father Shannon has three sisters dependent upon him for support, and the promiscuity of the cabin is not possible in the priest's house. The shutting of doors and the flying steps you heard as you waited on the doorstep were the three sisters leaving the parlour. For more than all else the Irish priest is diffident of his female relations, and he anxiously keeps them out of sight as much as possible. The lot of these poor women is a hard one: they cannot associate with the peasant women, and if the Catholic landlord would strain a point and invite them to an occasional lunch party, their brother would not allow them to accept. And the same scrupulousness pervades his entire conduct in his relations with women. Shakespeare says: 'For one chaste man I will show you twenty lascivious turtles,' but this was because Shakespeare did not know the Irish priesthood. They may, and they no doubt do, occasionally get drunk, and it cannot be denied that their utterances on the altar savour strongly of incentive to murder, but of other immorality they know nothing. Their behaviour on this point is most curious indeed, and how so large a body of men can live so free from reproach would prove an interesting subject for physiological and psychological analysis. That they sin and elude discovery, no one who knows the country, no one who knows how they live apart, every eye fixed upon them, would believe for a moment. It is said that they undergo a fortifying discipline for two years at Maynooth, which exceeds in severity that endured by the early Fathers of the Church.

In Father Tom's parlour there is a fragment of ragged carpet, a small book-case, some dilapidated chairs, and a piano. Father Tom is a large, heavy man, he walks with his stomach advanced—there is much ostentation in his walk, there is treachery in the long warm squeeze of his hand, and dissimulation in the unctuous words of welcome with which he greets you. But Father Tom is better than the first impression would lead you to believe; he is no doubt arrogant, vain, and his intelligence, notwithstanding the parade he makes of it, you soon perceive is limited and of a common kind. He affects an interest in literature, he alludes to pictures he has read or is acquainted with through the medium of engravings, but it is not until the conversation becomes political that Father Tom comes forth fully fledged in all the glory of patriotism and priesthood. He speaks of all the principal Members of the House of Commons by name, and on the slightest provocation he will explain to you their views and the arguments with which they uphold their views. He astonishes you with his knowledge of Free

Trade, and he bewilders you with the reasons that may be adduced for the adoption of some sort of protection tariff; and his lengthened discourse is broken up by 'Now do take a glass of wine. . . let me run and get you a glass of wine. . . now you must take a glass of wine. . . do you prefer port or sherry? After your walk I am sure you would like a glass of wine' . . and even when you have taken up your hat and stick he will hold your hand in his large fat paw, and continue to press you to drink, and as you walk away you hear him crying after you. . . 'I wish you would, you must not go away without having had a glass of wine.'

You have talked a great deal with Father Tom, and you saw that he was nervously anxious to prove to you that he was in no way behind time, that he was in every sense of the word up to date. Father Tom was very anxious to convince you of his modernity, and curiously enough this is the very quality that he is lacking in. Ireland has moved rapidly in the last eight or nine years, many have been left behind in the race, and Father Tom, although he is far from suspecting it, is one of these. Father Tom is a compromise between the priest of the last generation—the benign old man who loved his Horace and prepared his favourite landlord's sons for a public school in England, and the drunken demagogue of the present day who preaches assassination from the altar. The majority of the priests of Ireland are of Father Tom's persuasion. He believes in nearly all that is supposed to represent progress: peasant proprietors, fair rents, and Home Rule; he will denounce land-grabbing—(land-grabbing is willingness to take land from which another has been evicted)—but Father Tom is a little diffident about accepting the principle of boycotting. And here I must beg leave to make a digression and explain the meaning and the origin of the word boycotting. Captain Boycott is a friend and neighbour of mine in the West. He is as fine a sportsman as I ever knew, a fearless rider and an excellent shot; a man who never bestowed a passing thought on immorality of any kind, and when it was violently thrust upon him, strove to the best of his power to shirk the responsibility. It was in the autumn of 1879, that Captain Boycott, who was then Lord Erne's agent, declared, in spite of all warning, that he would collect his lordship's rents if there was law in the land. When his determination to evict at all cost and all risk became known it was reported through the county that the Captain had been to London, and had strongly advised Lord Erne against giving any reduction whatever. This was not to be borne, and when the news reached the head office of the League, in Dublin, advice was sent to Mayo that pressure should be put on the people, that Captain Boycott's servants should be forced to leave him, that no one should sell him bread, food, or wine; that his crops should be left to rot in the fields. These counsels were received with enthusiasm, and acted upon vigorously. Soon it required a hundred police to save the Captain from assassination, and when labourers came from the North to save his crops the anger of the peasants waxed louder, and their resolution not to miss their vengeance became more and more marked. I shall never forget when I saw a regiment of soldiers encamped on the poor man's lawn, and he, looking like a hunted animal walking up and down between the huts, a repeating rifle under his arm, two revolvers and a long dagger in his belt. Like a comet the verb 'to boycott' appeared, it was passed from mouth to mouth, it was caught up by the reporter, and passed on to the leader writer; soon after it appeared in magazines and books, and within two years of its birth it was as firmly established as any word in our language, and every future lexicographer will have to include it. To-day it is not considered slang, and would be used by our most elegant writers. The ready adoption of this word seems to indicate the rapid advance of the Irish struggle and the inevitableness of Irish idea in the future.

It is Sunday morning. High up in the cold air the chapel-bell is clanging harshly, and the reverberation travelling over stony upland and boggy plain summons the villagers to Mass. They are coming along the grey roads, and they stand against those endless grey stone walls to let the landlord's carriage pass. The women and girls carry their boots and stockings in their hands; from long custom they prefer to walk bare-footed. Presently they will find a quiet corner where they will finish their toilet. The very old men are dressed in the traditional tail-coats and breeches; they pass, mumbling their toothless gums, evidently a little troubled by the new ideas and the new action of Ireland of to-day. The chapel gate is plastered with bills announcing a Land League meeting; and, standing on the grave-stones, the young men watch the great lumbering carriage of a neighbouring landlord drive up to the door. They guess how annoyed he will be at the sight of the proclamations calling on the tenant-farmers to assemble in thousands and put down the land-grabbers, and the land-thieves. And they are right; the landlord looks abashed, he seems ashamed of his fine carriage, and he is terrified like someone who knows his doom is written, although it has not been spoken judicially.

The young men we saw talking round Micky Moran's fire are now grouped round a tombstone, and in veiled words and covert insinuation they discuss the necessity for Ferick's 'removal.' Apparently they are asking the advice of Daly, a tall young man who stands by, one foot on the tomb, listening attentively. In dress and manner he seems a little superior to the others. He is careful not to answer any of the questions that are put to him, and he advances no opinion except that if all they say is true, and he has heard as much in another quarter, 'that Ferick ought to be boycotted.' He leans to the opinion that boycotting is better than 'removal.' As he speaks he turns to cast a contemptuous look at the priest who is passing towards the door of the sacristy.

Father Tom is proud, ostentatious, overbearing, and it is maddening to him to know that there exists anyone in his parish who dares to sneer at his authority. It has been whispered that young Daly does not believe in God, and thinks priests should be prosecuted under the Vagrancy Acts. What evil so poisonous as this? The flame of Father Tom's hatred is blown red; he will crush this viper, he will stamp out this impudent upstart; there shall be no followers of Voltaire in his parish; to pervert the minds of the young from the truths of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. What was this upstart talking of? No doubt preaching infidelity or plotting outrage on man or beast. Ferick has been threatened, and it is well known that his life is in danger; murder is forgiven in the confessional, but for wilful infidelity there can be no salvation. Then the agitation against rent is exceeding its natural limits, for now the tenant-farmers refuse to pay the village shopkeepers as readily as they do the landlords—Father Tom's parents are grocers. Alarmed at the steady increase of outrages in his parish, and indignant at the opposition that was offered to the shopkeepers when they attempted to enforce their claims by law, Father Tom for some time back had been considering the Land Question from a different side.

. . . . .

He who has not attended Mass in an Irish Chapel cannot judge of Irish life;—its three or four aspects are strangely reflected and sharply epitomised in that fugitive hour. You have the Irish landscape well in your mind's eye—the grey sky and blue mountains in a ring, the hovels, the grey stony uplands, and the miles of brown bog where the curlews are flying. Say then, if it is not parcel of this gaunt white chapel, through whose broken windows the swallows fly circling? In the middle of the earthen floor there is a rude font for holy water, and in their haste and devotion the peasants splash the water so that it seems like an *abreuvoir* where cattle have been lately drinking. There are a few pews; those next to the Communion rails are reserved for the landlords. The fluff on the bended neck of the girl is gold in the beam of white light that falls across the chapel, she prays gracefully, with refinement, addressing God in sweet and conventional phrases, and the delicate odour of *verveine* rises out of silk and fur and evaporates; the peasant women wrapped in their long black cloaks are bent double over the pews; their thin, long, yellow hands extended beyond their faces clutch a rosary feverishly; some of the men are down on their hands and knees grovelling, some kneel with straight backs, chins lifted, breasts advanced—poses that recall those of martyred saints; they groan they strike their breasts, their hearts are full of the gross superstition of the moment, they address God in the coarse language of the cabin; out of their torn shirts, revealing the beast-like hair of their breasts, rises the rancid sweat of the fields; and the sour smells of frieze and the heavy, earthy smells of the cabin are as an almost palpable dust in the intense morning light as it flows through the windows. They cough and groan as they pray, and the spittle splashes on the floor.

Father Tom continues his murmuring at the altar, and as he mumbles through the well-known Latin, he chews the cud of his vengeance: once for all he will stamp out the evil thing that has grown up in his parish. And as he turns round to preach as is customary before the last gospel, the peasants, like a herd advancing, tramp up the church to get well within hearing. He begins by deploring the outrages that have lately taken place in his parish, he dwells on the terrible punishment that awaits those who commit murder, and then, resolved to strike a severe blow, he says, taking a piece of money from his pocket, 'Give unto Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar, and to God what belongs to God.' But the people do not understand, and when, to explain himself, Father Tom tells them that they should pay their lawful debts, they walk, Mr. Daly at their head, out of the chapel. Father Tom's pride suffered terribly; it was a sore blow to be thus rebuked in his own chapel, and it was a worse one to be told that his congregation did not care to hear politics preached from the altar. And a few days after he was asked to take the chair at a Land League meeting; he refused, urging that he could not stand on the platform with men who were in the habit of impressing on the tenant-farmers that they should pay their landlords with lead and not with gold; whereupon he was politely informed that if he did not attend the meeting he would be paid no dues that year.

Father Tom knows that the Land League is Socialism, and that Socialism is atheism, but the need of the moment is the greatest need of all, and he goes to the meeting striving to arrange a middle course, striving to adapt murder to his cloth. He declares that murder is unnecessary, and then he says that it is against the law of God, and then he argues that there are two kinds of murder: the murder committed by the landlord when he turns a whole family to die in the ditch in the middle of winter, and the murder committed by the father of that family when he hides behind a wall and shoots the landlord as he drives past in his carriage. Father Tom does not like land meetings, his heart and conscience revolt against them; the landlords pay him well, it would be a great loss to him to lose them, and he would miss his Sunday dinner in the 'big house;' so considering all these things Father Tom strives, as we say here, to sit on two stools—as they say in France, *de ménager la chèvre et les choux.*

THE PATRIOT.

James, when he was ten years old was running bare-footed to the National School, and as he ran he touched his little cap to every landlord who passed him on the road. But he was a sharp lad, and he soon attracted the priest's attention. The priest was one of the last generation—a kind old man who loved his Horace and did not interfere, save when begged to intercede with the landlord in favour of a penniless tenant, or when he threatens to denounce a young man from the altar if he does not marry the girl he has seduced. It amuses him to teach his beloved Latin; he has prepared two or three of his favourite landlord's sons for the public schools in England, but they are away now, and he sees no outlet for his charity but little James. The boy is called in, and henceforth he spends his mornings with the priest. And although he does not make much progress in Latin—(he is of that temper which disdains all which it does not see can be turned to practical and immediate account)—he profits largely by his relations with the priest. Father Pat was a great talker, and sitting by the little fire in the parlour he spoke to him not only of Horace and Virgil, but of Shakespeare and Milton, the histories of Greece, Rome, and England. And then a good many books, newspapers, and magazines found their way from the landlords' houses into the priest's parlour. All these, and especially the newspapers, the boy devoured greedily.

This was in '70, when Ireland was peaceful, and the tenants came trooping in on rent day and paid their rents to a man. The oldest inhabitant could only recall one agrarian murder, and the cutting off the tails of the cattle was a crime unknown. All the servants, butlers, footmen, coachmen, gamekeepers, and bailiffs had been ten, fifteen, or twenty years in their various employments; the labourers too came to and fro daily till they died, and then their places were taken by scarcely less familiar faces. This was at a time when Ireland was a land of peace, and we loved and reposed so much trust in each other that we could not believe the news that Sir A—— had dismissed his favourite bailiff Daly for stealing, insolence, and drunkenness. Daly, the man we all knew so well, had he stolen? Daly, whose son James had been educated under our eyes by the priest? Too true that it had been rumoured lately that James was misconducting himself: that he was always in the country town, that he was often seen talking with the proprietor of a Radical print; that he read Darwin, had ceased to believe in Christ, and, worst of all, that he was the writer of some very unpleasant articles which had lately appeared in the 'Clare Telegraph.' We did not wish to believe ill of James, and we avoided as much as possible speaking of his Darwinism and his friendship with the editor, etc. But we were, alas! soon forced to admit that these rumours were not without foundation, for next week an article appeared in the 'Telegraph,' denouncing Sir A—— as a rack-renter and an exterminator of the people. There was at first some doubt as to the authorship of this article, but James, whom we had petted and spoilt, now threw off the mask; and going from public-house to public-house, feeding on flattery, his vanity and his patriotism grew together. For a moment it seemed as if James would degenerate into a common, drunken, village ruffian; but there was more than that in James, and he soon began to see that Ireland was still a country where you would have to do something besides talking to get a living. There is no way of earning a livelihood except by farming, and there is only one kind of farming that is profitable—and that is to fatten cattle. Nothing can be simpler. You hire a farm, say a hundred acres of pasture land; you buy yearling bullocks at the nearest fair, you allow them to eat the grass for some months, and then you drive them to another fair and sell them. If the price of cattle goes up, you make money; if it goes down, you lose money. Of course a certain skill is required to choose the cattle that are likely to fatten best, but that is soon acquired; and if it can't be acquired the herdsman supplies the requisite judgment. But James did not require any herdsman to point out to him the difference between good and bad bullocks; he had lived all his life among them, and knew the beasts that were likely to suit him. And for three years he attended the fairs buying and selling cattle, making his way steadily upwards; but, notwithstanding his good fortune, he did not cease to speak on all occasions of his country's wrongs. In the afternoon he was always at the railway station with a newspaper under his arm, in the evening in the bar-room of the hotel, and in 1877 when the failure of the potato crop threatened famine, and Davitt and Parnell came down to Mayo to start the Land League, James was at once appointed president of the local branch. Then he did not cease to call landlords land-thieves in the 'Telegraph,' and he became the special correspondent of the 'Freeman's Journal,' and supplied that excellent journal with much information concerning the distress prevailing in the West. In a few months he was removed to the head of the League in Dublin, where he continued to work to obtain his country's freedom, until he was thrown into prison under Mr. Forster's Act: and once an Irishman has been in prison for a political offence—and in Ireland anything and everything is a political offence —he becomes at once an immortal.

James, on his release from prison, was of course elected Member of Parliament; a few questions were asked as to what he would live on, and the usual answer was given—journalism.

Imagine, therefore, this Celtic peasant —for James is a pure unadulterated peasant; chance has given him an intelligence a little sharper than his cousins who remain in the Western bogs, but he is of the soil as they are; he is cunning, selfish, cruel, even as they; his blood is thin with centuries of poverty, damp hovels, potatoes, servility; his passions are dull and sullen as an instinct. And this half-animal walks out of Euston Square into London. He is dazzled, bewildered, and a little cowed; he steals out of the splendour and turmoil to his lodging in Lambeth. He cannot realise the city yet, all is vague, uncertain; but the low peasant nature ferments, and foul imaginings of gross gratifications bubble and burst in the brain. He knows the women who pass are *demimonde*, though they appear like houris in some Mahomedan paradise; they are so wonderfully dressed, so beautiful, so bewitching. The long colonnade of Regent Street turns round against the pale blue sky, the telegraph wires come out distinct on the rose tints. The evening is breathless; the street is swept clean as a ballroom; the pungent odour of the cigarette rises, and from the cloaks of the women passing are wafted whiffs of patchouli; women looking exquisite in white fur and silk come down the steps of a restaurant, while their companions, tall young English-men, with fashionable capes hanging from their broad shoulders, and pale aristocratic faces, escort them. The poor savage Celt steps out of the atmosphere of a flower shop, the strong perfume of the gardenias, the fine wine-like fragrance of the roses sickens him, for his nostrils are filled with the rank smells of the dung-heap, the pig, the damp cabin, the dirty paraffin-oil odour of the West. His brain is shaken, his throat is dry, and with a feeling akin to nausea his heart seems to come up to his mouth; his eyes grow dim; but he revolts against it; he turns like a dog from a vanille ice, he turns from this glitter and refinement of passion—as well strive to feed a hyena on chocolate creams; a plainer, coarser food is what he longs for; he is savage with envy and rage; he cannot seize any fragment of this scintillating elusive life that passes him; he dare not yet aspire to be one of that gay throng. And that terrible thick brogue—how ashamed he is of it. He strives to bite off the end as he speaks in the vapoury, greasy eating-house at the end of his street. There he can devour beef and pudding and drink of beer till he is heavy and torpid with undigested food; he can take home a bottle of whisky and drink himself drunk. The plain satisfaction of his instincts is to this peasant a mighty joy; all the centuries of fasting find a vent in these cheap orgies and patriotism is apotheosised in pudding. He looks forward to night, and he counts the hours of the afternoon, and, standing on the grating outside he exhales the odours, excites his eyes, and lashes his appetite with the thong of anticipation.

The House is sitting. The Irish Members are talking of some Bill of vital importance. One after another they get up, maddeningly irrelevant are their remarks, hideous is their English. It is James Daly's turn to speak. He looks at the clock, half-past one. Heavens! the streets will be empty when the House breaks up. His thoughts are far away from Ireland and her wrongs. He would give his life to get away, but the eyes of Parnell are upon him, and he mumbles along with his rattletrap sentences grown lame in longing and disconnected in despair.

James Daly is one of the numerous servitude that Parnell has enlisted and that America supports. In Clare he seemed to have some little ability, but in the House of Commons his platitude is painfully apparent, and from his vulgarities the leaders of his party shrink. Still he is malleably facile, quick to observe and correct his deficiencies, and in two or three years the most obvious marking of the peasant origin will be rubbed away. The thick, greasy brogue will remain, the soul of the soil, of the bog, will still be reflected in his face, but when he has edged his way into some Bayswater drawing-room you will be surprised at how quietly he speaks and the tact he shows. And his tastes have refined. He has learned to despise the cheap eating-house, he frequents fashionable restaurants, sips champagne and chats fluently with the actresses. What will eventually become of him? Will he go back to Ireland and continue cattle-farming? No. He will either marry a girl with money, or he will go to America and lecture to the potboys and housemaids on the wrongs of the old country, or he will continue to live mysteriously in London — how, nobody can tell. On the subject of the landlords' incomes the Parnellites are glib enough: concerning their own they are mute. There is, of course, a great deal of talk about journalism, but in the case of those who cannot even write a letter intelligently, much less an article, other expedients are resorted to. The most common of these is to fill half a dozen wash-tubs with chemicals, and when a friend calls to turn a handle and ask him to notice the bubbles that rise to the top and then . . . inventions . . . patents, etc., for there is no sorer subject with these political parasites than to suggest that they live on the nursemaids in

America. But in the midst of all this lying there is a truth to be recognised—these Irishmen love their country. The Parnellite party is to-day so strongly knit, but to-morrow it may be bankrupt, or it may wax stronger and mightier and force England to surrender; one solution is as likely as another, but in either eventuality James Daly's love of Ireland will remain the same as it was when he advised the peasant lads in the West to boycott and not to murder Ferick. Life will make him humble, and when he has settled down, when he has children about him, he will begin to grow conscious of the fact that the weak must submit to the strong; that some are born to live in obscurity, others in glory. He will have learned that he personally is not great nor noble, but he will never learn that his country is neither great nor noble. He may even betray his country by accepting some government appointment, but he will never cease to believe in her, to laud and to love her. I am a close observer of life, and am, I think, as free from prejudice as any man, but this I am bound to admit —that it is impossible to over-estimate the patriotism of Irishmen, '*L'amour de l'Irlande est chez eux comme un vice de constitution que rien ne peut ni pourra jamais déraciner*:' Their love of Ireland is, as it were, a sort of constitutional vice that nothing can, that nothing will be able to uproot.

A CASTLE OF YESTERDAY.

To awake in the vague, cold darkness; to awake with the brain filled with all the hallucinations of midnight—I am in a large four-posted bed . . . the room, yes, I know it all, but how cold are the white curtains of the bed, and the windows are draped in white, and how strange is the shadowy servant moving about with the candle that burns, oh, so brightly, in the cold dark! There is something of a funeral in the room, and I am pained with a blurred and confused, but none the less a very real, impression of illness, of death.

'It is nearly five o'clock, sir, and Mr. Dacre said he would be here about that time; it won't do to keep him waiting.'

The dreams are torn and fall into the void of night, and again I grow alive to the realities of the hour. Of course, how stupid of me I had forgotten, but now I remember, I am going out duck-shooting with my friend Dacre; he sent the boat in a cart overnight, and I sent it on a couple of miles up the lake, and we shall drive there, and then we will row out a mile or so to a point that lies—I think he told me somewhere near Castle Burk—— But here my retrospect is interrupted by the grating of wheels on the gravel and a loud whistling. 'Open the window,' I cry, 'and tell him I shall be down in five minutes.'

A rush of cold air that causes me to

disappear under the bedclothes, but even there I hear a loud young voice speaking as if out of the heart of the night.

'Down in *five* minutes? I'll see he is down in *one* minute; tell him I am coming upstairs.'

A few moments after a loud trampling of feet comes resounding along the corridor, and a tall, dark, well-built young man strides into the room. He is dressed in knickerbockers and a Norfolk jacket; a thick comforter is wound round his throat.

'Now then, lift your leg, shake your leg,' he cries, laughing uproariously the while, 'we haven't a moment to lose, it is on the stroke of five; we have three miles to drive and a mile to row, and if we aren't there before daylight it is all up with us. Now, then, do make haste. No bath, no shaving, no breakfast. Take a hunch of bread if you like. Now then, pull on your clothes; you'll wash yourself when you come home, or perhaps we'll get as much washing as we want in the lake, for it is blowing pretty strong, I can tell you.'

'I hope you didn't forget to load some cartridges with number two shot last night, and some with number four?'

'That's all right, I have fifty cartridges in the bag; if we fire all that away we won't do bad, I guess. But do be quick and lace up those boots.'

Soon after we are on the car. The horse trots briskly. It is not very dark, but the sky, how grey it is, and how cold the wind is! We draw the rugs round our feet and discuss the prospects of sport. There will be no mistake about the boat.

none; it was left in charge of the shepherd; we have only to knock at the door, he'll be up in a moment, he will take care of the horse and help us to launch the boat. Then we lapse into silence, and each lays plans to outdo the other. The horse trots into a village. There is the priest's house; see its white walls and green door; see the grey gaunt chapel and its tombstones. Facing them there are some hovels; one is licensed to sell spirits and tobacco, another has fallen and only a fragment of roof covers the sleepers; and a little farther on there is a cottage that looks cleaner and more respectable, and there is a forge at the corner of the road. Thinking of the ducks I talk to Dacre about his farming. He declares that things are going from bad to worse, and that if there is not a rise in the price of cattle he will be bankrupt. He did not sell his bullocks last October because the price was so bad, but he will not be able to keep them beyond May; go they must. Dacre is a young Scotchman who came to settle in Mayo some eight or nine years ago. The Scotch farmer is a characteristic of Ireland. Here and there you find these strong, thrifty Northern men, forming, with their neat farmyards and their richly ploughed fields, a striking contrast to the desolate hillsides which the peasants scratch rather than till with wretched spades and hoes. But Ireland is a country of failure and ruin, nothing succeeds there but patriotism, and after a few years of trial even the hard-working Scotchmen left in despair. Some few remained, and, surrendering gradually their civilised agriculture, sought to win back some part of their lost fortune in adopting the aboriginal and native cattle-rearing. Mr. Dacre is one of these. He farms three hundred acres of land, keeps a subscription pack of harriers, and is the best rider and the best shot in the county. A strong handsome young man whose life is passed in the saddle or on the moor with his gun; jovial and genial he is, and we laugh heartily as we tell the tale of a girl or recall a sporting reminiscence. The horse trots briskly, the country is veiled in shadow, the cattle are sleeping in the fields, and as we pass out of the night of some overhanging trees we come in sight of the stormy lake.

'This is the place,' says Dacre, pulling up in front of a hut by the roadside, 'do you get out the guns and I'll go and wake the fellow up.'

The flaring peat-fire, with tongues of red flame darting into the darkness, and the heaps of white ash ; the sheep-dog is sleeping, his fine nose is thrown up as we approach the door, and barking violently he challenges our entrance.

'All right, your honour,' cries a voice out of the darkness, and struggling into a pair of trousers a man appears. He warms his hands, and a moment after he is with us helping to take the horse out of the car, and as he leads him into the hut, and ties him up by the fireside, he tells us that we shall find the boat on the shore. We shoulder the oars, and the peasant comes down to help us to get afloat. A wild wind is blowing; the headlands are but vague shadows seen like clouds upon the grey sky, and the dim expanse of water breaks into waves, whose crests are treacherously white. And the boat that looked so large in the cart last night now seems the veriest cockle-shell. The peasant notices this, and he speaks about the lake being a little rough. But we do not listen: I seize the bow oar, Dacre takes the stroke, and kicks the spaniel into his place in the stern, and we are shoved into deep water. Now pull away! But the boat is like lead, and it seems almost impossible to force her through the waves: heavy waves are breaking sharply about us, and the oars are buried in them. Our arms are strong, our will is as iron, and we get half a mile from the shore; we round the headland and the dark lake is all about us,—unutterably dark and chill. Our difficulties now increase tenfold, our little boat can hardly rise above the wallowing waves, and the oars are buried deeper than ever. On our right are the vast ruins of a feudal castle, before us there is nothing but the lake. Pull, pull, but the boat makes but little way, and the spaniel is jumping about, striving to avoid the waves.

I hear them as they splash against the bow, as they fall about my back. Then the chill of water strikes through my big shooting boots. I look down, but it is so dark I can scarcely see.

'There seems to be a lot of water in this boat, Dacre.'

'Nonsense,' he replies, 'row on; if we don't get there before daybreak we are done; the ducks coming from their feeding-ground alight there at daybreak, and they remain a few minutes pecking and pluming their feathers: row on.'

It seems to me impossible it could be

right for so much water to be in the boat, but yielding to Dacre's superior knowledge of boats, I stick my feet against the seat in front of me, and pull doggedly. The minutes elapse slowly, and again I feel conscious that the water is rising about my legs. I put my hand down; it seems to me the boat is half full of water.

'I don't care what you say, but it can't be right that the boat should be half full of water. Put down your hand and try.'

'By God, it is up to my elbow! have we anything to bale her with? No, there is a hole in the saucepan. . . Here, give me up your oar and get into the stern, and bale out with your hat. . . that infernal dog will upset us . . . lie down, sir, lie down. My God, there is a lot of water in the boat! I think you had better be getting off your coat and shoes, we'll have to swim for this. . .

'Swim! that's all very well for you, but we're four hundred yards from shore, and I can't swim fifty yards.'

'Then bale, I tell you—bale like mad!'

One glance before I go to work: a dreary expanse of a dark Irish lake, vague shores shadowy as death, a tiny boat half full of water. How sharply the thought cuts; a severing with all things, no further progress; projects and friends, all suddenly stand and look at you . . . and what a pity, the novel I am writing will never be finished—never!

'Bale, man, bale!' cries Dacre, as he pulls towards the shore, and hatful after hatful of water is thrown over the side. How awful the lake's loneliness! how strangely tense a moment of peril! a moment or a few minutes have been wondrously prolonged; magically each second has dropped out of the glass of time, and yet it is but physical pain, there is none of the sickening sorrow, the dull, aching despair of men who suffer with life before them empty and vacant, only a thrilling sense of severing, and soon even that is lost in work.

But the boat does not leak, and when her head is turned from the waves she ceases to take in water. But we do not perceive this, and Dacre puts all his strength into one oar for the waves are driving shoreward; I bale fast and furiously; at last the keel grates on the pebbles.

Thank goodness! I was about done for.

'Where are we?'

'At Castle Carra. Get the cartridges out of the boat, I hope they aren't all wet; we may get a duck or two on the off side of the headland.'

'But I am wet through—I don't know if you are—and my hat is——

'Not up to much,' he replied laughing; 'you had better tie your handkerchief round your head. We can't get out of this place till daylight, these rocks are slippery and full of holes, and I would prefer to catch a cold than to risk breaking my leg down one of these infernal crevices.'

As far as I see we are on a neck of land paved as it were with enormous rocks; out of the space, there grows a dense growth of stunted hazel; on the height at the back there are some tall trees, and the ivy-grown ruin is ringed about with bunched bushes. Under these we sit, striving to forget time in the discussion of our narrow escape. But the moon passes out of the trailing wrack into a clear space of sky, and dawn seems far away. Then to escape the bitter bleakness of the wind we propose, now that there is a little light, to get into the shelter of the roofless castle. Dacre says he'll be able to find the way, and after much scratching amid the bushes, and one cruel fall on the rocks, we reach some grass-grown steps and climb through an aperture into what was once probably the great hall. A high gable shows black and massy against the sky, and tall grass and weeds grow about our feet, and farther away the arching has fallen and forms a sort of pathway to the vault beneath. Centuries of ivy are on the walls, and their surfaces are broken by wide fissures, vague and undistinguishable in the shadow and cold gloom. But as the moon brightens I see, some fifteen feet above me, a staircase—a secret staircase ascending through the enormous thickness of the walls. What were these strange ways used for? who were they who trod them centuries ago? Slender women in clinging and trailing garments, bearded chieftains, their iron heels clanging; and as I evoke the past, rich fancies come to me, and the nostalgia of those distant days, strong days that were better and happier than ours, comes upon me swiftly, as a bitter poison pulsing in blood and brain; and regardless of my friend's counsels, I climb towards the strange stairway, as if I would pass backwards out of this fitful and febrile age to one bigger and healthier and simpler. These walls have been touched by hands that trembled not as mine, and I shall never touch those hands, and the eyes that looked down through this loophole on wild foes will never be known to mine. Ah! I should have known those men, should have fought out my life with them, and not grown sick with grief in this querulous age. And those women of early Ireland I should have seen holding their robes from their feet as they ascended this stair to the battlements, to watch for their husbands and brothers coming back fresh from border forays with beeves and prisoners. . .

And when amid the beeves and prisoners they saw a stretcher whereon the wounded or dead man was laid, they sat on these very steps where I am standing, and wept. And when the castle was besieged they fled down the passage through the gable through which I am now passing. The stair descends to an embrasure in the wall, and the moonlight is streaming through, and there is something there—a soft low snoring in the moonlight; the staircase descends before me, but I cannot follow it, I cannot pass this ghostly ray of moonlight.

And then the thing ceases to snore in the moonlight, and a white form passes softly down that length of stair, softly away; and then the large and beautifully soft white form comes back, comes up softly, so softly towards the moonlight and me. That moon ray is not so chill as I, and this bloodless agony is more terrible than mortal death. Death that is darkness were sweet, but this cold white spirit of death dreadful to behold; this icy death of wandering white is a terrible death to be taken in.

And where has it passed to, is it about me, will it come back to me again? There is sweat upon my brow, there is death in my heart. Full of the wild water's tune the gaunt castle rises; the secret ways curl up to the savage ivy, and the sky is ghostly pale. Oh, the lapsing tune of the lake! oh, the masses of stone, damp and smooth with the dews of a thousand years! Sickness and terror to look back, terror in the neck and shoulders, like a spirit escaping through a shadow-land, I grope my way down these ancient walls.

. . . . .

I hear a voice calling in the hall below; my heart bounds to the living world. But not at once do I dare make answer, and trembling I make my way to the aperture whence I came. Time seems to have stood still since I left Dacre sitting with his spaniel amid the weed-grown banqueting hall, and I have to ask him to help me down. The place is still ghostly and strange in the grey dawn, but it is natural and homely compared with the minutes of torture I have suffered up in those ancient walls, wet and smooth with age.

'What is the matter with you—you seem frightened out of your life?'

'No, I am only a little cold—wet and cold.'

'Well, then, look alive, I think day is about to break. Let's make haste and get down to the corner before the ducks come in.'

Night gathers her blue garments about

her, and the yellow skirt of dawn appears above the mountains, but it is not yet day, and as we scramble through the rocks and bushes, a strange white form swoops through the twilight. Dacre fired, and, through what seemed a sudden shower of snow, a great snowy owl falls at our feet. This, then, was the spirit of the castle whom I had heard snoring in the wintry moonlight.

'I am sorry. The great snowy owl is almost extinct; a couple have been known to frequent the castle for years.'

As we made our way through the castle gateway, we saw the traces of the moat that once divided the neck of land and completed the isolation of the castle. It once covered the entire promontory. The ruins of the outlying fortifications extend to the edge of the lake: a barbaric chieftain and a numerous servitude once lived there: and now far down the shores of the lake the *silhouette* of another castle appears through the lingering twilight, and on the island far away there still stands a corner wall. Ireland, land of brown bog and fabulous ruin! On every commanding height, generally on a wild promontory harassed by the waves of these tideless inland seas, we find remains of the castles of Irish chieftains—remains full of penetrating poetry, and silent suggestion of turbulent life and the glitter of battle. We dream of border forays and cattle-lifting, but all is vague, and of the inner economy of these tribal people we know less than of the Babylonians or the ancient Egyptians. That they once were is all we know. And now, passing to the mainland, I find the ruins of what is almost a modern house; there is a vast courtyard, and in the centre a colossal stone fox, and farther away is the ruin of the great gateway, and on the hill stand colossal foxhounds. It was here that the descendants of the castle's chieftains came on the decline of brigandage; it was here they drank, swore, hunted, and fought duels at twelve paces.

A CASTLE OF TO-DAY.

A FEW days after our return from the north-west, my host said, throwing a letter across the table:

'This is from Lady Ardilaun, a neighbour of mine, asking us on a visit to Ashford.'

All who do not live more than ten or twelve miles apart are next-door neighbours in Ireland, and as the jolting-car pursued its way along the interminable roads, my friend told me all he knew of the people we were going to stay with. Lord Ardilaun is a man of immense wealth. It is said that he sold his share in the great brewery (Guinness's brewery) for a million of money. This money he has invested in different securities all over the world; his landed property, although large, is only a small part of his income; he is the only man in Ireland who is in a position to defy the Land League. Hence his unpopularity.

'Is he unpopular?'

'For the moment; and it is a shame that it should be so, for no man ever lived who behaved more generously to Ireland than he. Others may be accused of drawing money from Ireland, and spending it on the banks of the Thames and the Seine, but not he. When he was member for Dublin, he bought Stephen's Green; it was then a savage waste; he spent thousands of pounds planting trees, making artificial water, and inclosing it, and presented it to the city. He bought the Rotunda, made it into a beautiful winter garden, where the people might go of an evening, walk and listen to the band playing. At first everybody thought it delightful; but sooner or later, like everything else in Ireland, it was sneered at, and when the people finally refused to go near it, it was sold. Lord Ardilaun was then member for Dublin, and at the next general election he was beaten. And the same want of sympathy is shown to him at Ashford. Would you believe it, he is guarded by policemen in a place where he has spent thousands and thousands of pounds, where he has done more real good—that is to say, good in the sense of encouraging industry, good in the sense of relieving suffering—than perhaps any Irishman that ever lived? At the present moment I hear that his labour bill is over two hundred a week. Any other man who had been requited as he has been would have left the country long ago; but when people are naturally good, they go on being good in spite of all opposition.'

'Then how do you account for his unpopularity?'

'First his large fortune enabled him to successfully resist the Land League, secondly he is a Protestant, and thirdly he is a Conservative. In Ireland popularity is bought with hatred of England; if you are a Catholic so much the better—indeed it is a distinct advantage to be a Catholic, but the first of all things is to hate England.'

While speaking we grow gradually conscious of certain changes in the aspect of the country: it seems more orderly, and it wears an air of well-to-do-ness that we had not before observed. The rickety walls built out of loose round stones piled one on the top of the other have disappeared and are replaced by handsome stone and mortar walls; and the cottages of the peasants are less dirty, and here and there the landscape is marked by small cleanly-built slated houses. Upon questioning our driver we learn that we are now entering upon Lord Ardilaun's estate, and as the panting horse drags the car to the top of a high hill he says, 'That's Lough Carrib, the largest lake but one in Ireland; thirty miles long by ten wide.' And the view as it now appears over the verge of the long line of sloping green sward is full of an august and visionary beauty. Below us, falling in sweet inclining plain, a sea of green turf flows in and out of stone walls and occasional clumps of trees down to the rocky promontories, the reedy reaches and the long curved woods which sweep about the castle—such a castle as Gautier would have loved to describe—that Lord Ardilaun has built on this beautiful Irish land. There it stands on that green headland with the billows of a tideless sea, lashing about its base; and oh! the towers and battlements rising out of the bending foliage of ten thousand trees. The lake from where we stand looks like a girdle of pale grey silk bound about the green garments of the Emerald Isle: the long line of mountains upbreaking in jagged outlines, through a drift of clouds—now dark with storm, now resplendent with sunshine! And we lift unsatiated eyes from this rapture of scenical loveliness.

We are still two miles from our destination, and as we advance signs of wealth and industry increase. We pass large roads, domain walls in process of construction, and a large archway upon which at least a hundred men are at work. And as I gaze I ponder on the crookedness of the Celtic mind ; it would put an end to all I see around me, and would willingly relapse into dirt and patriotism—which are apparently but two words for one and the same thing. On either side of us the park now spreads. Through the hillocks hundreds and hundreds of fallow deer move away at our approach, and over the crest of a hill the broad bluff red-deer raise their antlered heads and gaze at us steadfastly as lions. From the deer-park we go into the drawing-room-like beauties of the pleasure-grounds, and skirting by the laurel-filled nooks and rhododendron-covered slopes, overhung by the dark branches of cedars, we find ourselves facing the river, and it is only after some little difficulty that our horse is induced to trust himself on the picturesque wooden-way which in drawbridge fashion spans the inky stream which whirls round the point on its way to the lake.

Those who love life welcome new impulses, and desire the emotion of unexpected impressions. I am such a one; and the simple pleasure of sitting at a farm window, watching the villagers strolling in bands and couples and single figures across the darkening green, listening to the chattering voices of loitering women, to the howl of a distant dog, to all the vague sounds and shadows that mark the sinking to rest of the world, have never failed to thrill my heart with happiness. 'The poetry of the world is never dead,' and to me it is now an exquisite delight as I stand in long shadowy saloon brushing my hair for dinner to see the moon shining on a vast lake, to watch the weird darkness of the buttresses and the romantic enchantment of the battlements, now standing out sharp against a silvery cloud, from which the moon slowly passes—as Shelley would say,

> like a dying lady, lean and pale,
> Who totters forth, wrapt in a gauzy veil,
> Out of her chamber, led by the insane
> And feeble wanderings of her fading brain.

And after a week spent in the thin, mean poverty of the north-west, amid the sadness of ruined things, this strangely beautiful castle renders me singularly happy. The sight of the long drawing-room, full of refined faces glowing upon the warm shadows, and lights of the shaded lamps, comes with a sense of welcome relief. And to awake in the cool spaces of a bedroom, beautiful and bright with Indian curtains, and musical with the rippling sound of the lake's billow, is also full of gracious charm and delicate suggestion of poetry to him who is alive to the artistic requirements of to-day. And then there are the pleasant morning greetings to look forward to, and the sitting down to breakfast in the oak room within sight of the fountains that foam so lovely and so white upon an endless background of mountain and lake. Here we are almost shut out of the storm and gloom of crime and poverty that enfolds the land, but even here the shadow of murder and outrage falls across our way. For as we sit at breakfast we hear the smothered detonation of the dynamite exploding in the huge moat which our host is having cut through the solid rock, and sometimes small splinters of stone strike the windows. Fifty or sixty men are engaged upon this work; and, after breakfast, as we walk down the grounds, we examine this new fortification, which when finished will separate the castle from the mainland. It is thirty feet deep by twenty feet wide.

'You see,' says our host, 'I have a taste for the picturesque. The moat will be protected by battlements, and cannon will be placed at convenient distances. I shall be able to defend myself in case of invasion, and as the drawbridge will be raised nightly it will be difficult for the dynamiters to get at me.'

But the day I shall remember best of the four days passed in this beautiful western retreat is the last day. It has been arranged that we are to go in the yacht (she now rides at anchor, her steam up, under the castle walls) to picnic on an island some miles down the lake—an island famous for some late pagan and some early Christian ruins. The day is breathless, but the sky is full of a soft grey light; and in the fairy-like silences of the lake, when nothing is heard between the pauses of the conversation but the ripple of the water along the vessel's side, and the subdued panting of the machine, the many aspects of this noble wilderness, the wild outlines of the guardian mountains, the dark promontories covered with rough wood, the marshy shores where the heron stalks, arise as supernaturally still and calm as the visions of an Icelandic god, and in the exquisite clarity every detail is visible; the shadows of the pines fall like ink into the smooth mirror. And now the chain rattles through the porthole, the steamer swings at anchor, and we are helped by the sailors into the small boat. The island, *ma foi*, is a large one —some sixty or seventy acres—and on the side we landed on it is cultivated by three families, and the land has passed from father to son, so it is said, for the last thousand years. In any case the island has never been without its three families —there is the boat in which they transport their farm produce, there are their cottages, there is the grave-yard, and here is the church that St. Patrick's brother (the hermit) built in the fifth century; and the paved path leading from it to his cell is distinctly visible along which he walked fourteen hundred years ago, and along which we walk to-day; and here are the pagan remains, but we cannot look farther back. Behind this stone is the savage darkness out of which we, who now examine this mute record with gloved fingers, slowly and painfully crawled. This island is a little world complete in itself—a little world lost and forgotten in the midst of a greater world. But lost though it be and forgotten, it is strangely present in our minds to-day, and the poetry it evokes is strongly intense and penetrating; and the nostalgia of the past holds me in tether, and I cannot escape it even when quaffing champagne on the tower built for picnicing purposes, nor when looking over Lady Ardilaun's shoulder while she sketches with a free and certain hand a long range of jagged mountains—one of the mountain prospects she loves so dearly, and with which her London drawing-room is so beautifully decorated. The scene is now supernaturally still. The day dies in pale greys and soft pink tints, and harmonies in mauve more delicate and elusive than the most beautiful Japanese water-colour; the lake hangs like a grey veil behind the dark pine-woods through which we wander, making our way to the yacht; and at the vistas we look on the long wavy lines of mountains that enclose the horizon, and they seem now like women sleeping the sleep of enchantment, and the mountains whose precipitous bases rise out of the lake are as fabulous creatures in a northern legend guarding the solitude. Our eyes follow the black flight of the cormorant along the smooth greyness of the water, and our souls are filled and stilled with a sadness that is at one with the knowledge that the dear day we have lived through is now a day that is over and done; and as we think of this lonely island, its ruined church, its grave-yard and the endless generations that lie there, we must fain dream of the lightness of life, of the oblivion that awaits us, of those eternal and simple truths of which even the centuries of barbarous dust lying beneath our feet has in its day dreamed of even as bitterly as we.

On the following day I started for Dublin. The carriage is full of Irish Members and American agitators. They denounce the injustice of England, and proclaim the sweet Irish peace that will follow on Home Rule.

AN EVICTION.

A STRANGE woman lives in the west of Ireland; a sort of she-Nero besotted with drink and maddened with lust of cruelty. She is a woman with pale blue eyes, so pale that they look like porcelain; she is middle-aged, she is fat, she is dressed in man's clothes. Iron-grey hair grows thinly over large scabs of dirt, the red flesh of the cheeks is loose and hanging, and something shapeless moves beneath the long, filthy jacket which falls like a petticoat and is bound about her with a leathern strap; her legs are covered in a pair of corduroy trousers, patched and greased and stained with abominable stains; and the thick, coarse hand, which looks as if it were all thumbs, twitches at the hem of the discoloured jacket.

The judge (to the solicitor): 'You might grant the tenant time if he promises to pay.'

Miss Barrett (in a bellowing, half-drunken tone): 'Certainly not. A decree of ejectment is granted.'

And the pale blue eyes catch expression horribly indicative of cruelty and rapacity, but only to fade a moment after into the usual helpless semi-idiotic stare. Other cases have to be heard, and Miss Barrett consults with her companion, Miss McCoy, at all, raw-boned Scotchwoman, so tightly buttoned up in a brown, mud-smeared ulster, that it is difficult to say if her undergarment is a petticoat or a pair of trousers.

The night is falling, and the people are coming out of the court-house. The sullen faces of the peasants are hardly visible in the gloom, but their exclamations of hatred are very audible: 'You dirty old petticoated brandy vessels; oh, the filthy animals!'

But paying no attention to these jeers, the two women pass with their guard of police and their bailiffs to the nearest public-house; and from public-house to public-house they go, drinking and cursing with ever-increasing ardour until at last the glass slips from their hands and the oath dies on their lips, and they fall helpless on the ground. Then they are piled up and tied on a car by the police and driven home to sleep off the effects of their drunken bout.

Many are the legends concerning Miss

Barrett. It is said that she was once—a quarter of a century ago—a pretty and graceful Irish girl, whose blue eyes and merry voice were the delight of her friends, and particularly of a young English painter with whom she was passionately in love. It is suggested that he painted her as Ophelia and that the picture still exists in London; but her father, so report goes, would not hear of the marriage and sent his daughter abroad in the charge of a companion. A few weeks after he died, and Miss Barrett came travelling back, as fast as express trains could bring her, to bury her father and marry her painter. But the painter had already married another, and Miss Barrett returned to her Western home and spoke of founding a convent. That there is some truth in these stories is probable enough, for it is certain that Miss Barrett was not only born, but once lived, as a lady, but the cause of her decline into the sewer of debauchery is not known, and it is impossible to trace the steps by which she descended into these lowest and most horrible depths. Golden fortune has however always attended her; relative after relative died, leaving her their properties, which they could not will away from her, and she is now possessed of vast wealth, which she has no power or way of spending except in an occasional drinking-bout with her bailiffs and caretakers in a county town.

Her house and grounds once differed nowise from those of the surrounding gentry; but the same changes have taken place in them as in herself. How dissolute, how degraded! All the trees have been cut down, and the hewn stumps show naked out of the great green field. In large scabs the cement is falling from the wall; the windows are broken and are barricaded on the inside with rough boards. The hall-door is nailed up, and there are great beams of wood and stones lying about; clearly the only entrance used is the back one. Inside there is but filth and barrenness. You can tell which was the drawing-room by the broken piano, by the gilt cornices that strew the floor. A patch of carpet remains, a deal table stands in the middle of the room. Apparently washing was once done here, for a wash-tub stands on a fragile Chippendale chair that somehow escaped destruction before the room was abandoned. In the bedrooms only the huge four-posters remain; foul earthy odours assail your nostrils; damp, decay, and dust meet you alternately and in combination. Bottles and broken glasses grow more frequent as you descend to the kitchen—now the principal apartment of Miss Barrett and her sister-in arms, Miss McCoy; and there their herdsmen and bailiffs come of an evening and are made riotous with whisky, —and the lampless Irish night grows shrill with shriekings, and the echoes of orgie follow the traveller across the desolate bogs.

The house is surrounded by immense pasture-lands—thousands of acres, from which the tenants have been driven at different times. These are stocked with herds of sheep and cattle. Dressed as a man, in her dreadful corduroy trousers and felt hat, Miss Barrett attends the fairs, and counselled by her herdsmen she buys and sells, spitting and swearing and drinking out of a flask, while she drives the bargain. The sexual economy of animals has no secrets for her; she goes down before the rams are turned into the fold, and it is she who often passes the usual coat of red paint over the animals' bellies. Miss Barrett is delighted as little as she is disgusted by the procreation of beasts; she merely declines to acknowledge the mystery with which we occidentals have surrounded such things, and having chosen to become a herdsman she accepts the duties in all their completeness. Against her virtue not a word has ever been said; she is execrated in the county in which she lives, but it is for drunkenness and cruelty that she is so violently and vehemently abused. To evict her tenants is her one desire, to harass them with summonses for trespass is her sole amusement. She watches them collectively and individually, and when an unfortunate one is a few months in arrear he is at once served with a writ, law costs are run up, every effort is made to render it impossible for him to save himself from ejectment. If by any chance the money should be scraped together and the tenant saved Miss Barrett is wofully disappointed, for she looks forward to an eviction as men did to cock-fights in the old days. . .

. . . . . .

The streets of a county town are swarming with police, they are driving in on cars from all sides—great, big, brawny fellows clad in black cloth and armed with rifles and sword-bayonets. They come thronging in from all parts of the country: sergeant and constables from Ballina, Ballinrobe, Ballindine, Clarenorris, Kelimach, Louisburg, Newport—in fact from every station in Mayo, for it is not known if the peasantry will resist eviction. Three car-loads of police are now crossing the railway bridge. The station is deserted, the platform is empty, a single grey line stretches to and is lost in the interminable bog. Nearer the town there are a few green fields belonging to a landlord who keeps a dairy farm. Then come some filthy cottages where roofs are falling and pigs run grunting from the horses' hoofs. The road is flowing with mud. Suddenly a pavement and stone houses appear, then the market-place and the court-house, and then the spire of the church; and grey houses follow as untidily as dirty shirts and towels hung out on a line in a back yard. Dark and dingy goods, thick boots and shoes, coarse clothes, etc., are piled up in the shop windows, but nowhere is seen a flower-vase, a balcony, a fantastic gable.

At the cross roads of Logafoil, about a mile distant on the other side of the town, we perceive long lines of policemen, about a hundred in all. They are drawn up in lines, headed by their different officers and commanded by Major Murphy. Surrounded by a special guard the gaunt hungry Scotchwoman, Miss McCoy, gives her arm to Miss Barrett—that strange creature in corduroy trousers strapped round her with a belt; fat and bloated she is with drink, and her blue eyes stare with the vagueness of coming idiocy. But she wakes up a little when the order to march is given, and as she whispers to her friend an expression of atrocious cruelty steals over the faces of the women. On the other side there is her bailiff—a man named Pratt, whom the peasants assail, as we march, with the bitterest reproaches concerning his birth and the applications he had made for the post of hangman.

'At all events I have gentleman's blood in my veins, even if it did not come to me through the marriage-ring, and that is more than any of you can say.'

'The devil a drop, the Colonel disowned you, your —— of a mother was caught by a policeman one night in a ditch: that's more like it.'

And with such lively passages of wit, varied with sarcastic allusions of a like delicate nature, the tedium of our walk is enlivened. Hundreds of people have assembled, there is some blowing of horns on the hill-side and at first we think the police will have to charge the people. But having been fired upon lately they are frightened, and allow themselves to be driven back with the butt-ends of the rifles, and the little army is posted about the wretched hut from which a human family is to be driven. So horrible is the place that it seems a mockery, a piece of ferocious cynicism to suggest that the possession of it is about to be contested, and that to restore it to its rightful owner an army has to be gathered together. It lies under the potato-field, and the space between bank and wall is a stream of mud and excrement. The incessant rain has rotted the straw of the roof, and at one end it droops ready to slip down at every moment. The weak walls lean this way and that, and their foundations are clearly sinking away into the wet bog. Hard by the dung-heap, in front of the door, where the pig strives to find a place dry enough to lie in, the mud and filth have lapsed into green liquid where some ducks are paddling; under the thatch there is mould and damp, about the door and window-holes blackness and ooze, mud permeates and soaks through every crevice; the place seems like a rat's nest built on the edge of a cesspool. Not a tree is to be seen, not even a bush. There is the brown bog far away, and the flashes of water where lapwings are flying; there are the tumble-down little walls which separate the fields that the peasants scratch rather than till; there is the desolate lake where waves are breaking and rushes are blown in the wild wind. And this chilling landscape is bound with the usual sash of blue mountains.

Only the voice of a child crying is heard. Pratt and a one-armed man, upon whom the peasants continued to shower the strangest abuse, approach and ask for admittance.

'I'll not open it. 'Tis not like the last day, when you boasted you caught the buck in the house.'

'Now, Thomas,' says Pratt, 'the easy way is the best. If you don't open I'll have to force the door.'

'You hang-in-bone dog! You may thank the law, or you wouldn't come this way to my door; I would scatter your brains on the street, you dirty bloodhound and nameless bastard! My father and grandfather were reared here, and you want to put me out of it—a fellow who couldn't tell who was *his* grandfather. When your old mother called you after Colonel Pratt, to try and knock money out of him, he always denied that you had a drop of his blood in you, and you have not, *Billeen Sollagh.*' This speech is received with roars of laughter, and Pratt puts his shoulder to the door, but it does not give way, and paying no heed to the sarcastic suggestion that he might fetch a long ladder and get down the chimney, he seeks about for a stone. Selecting the largest he can find he launches it against the door. There is a cry from the children within, but the door has not given way. The missile is hurled again and again, and when he starts a plank he levels his next throw at the same place; a piece of wood snaps off short; he is invited to put his hand inside, but he wisely refrains. And all the while the children are crying, and the mother utters unceasingly that long wail traditional with the Gaelic people and always used by them in times of mourning; and on the dung-heap and on the road there is jeering; and wild curses are showered on the extraordinary creature—the lumpy, worn-out debauchee, who stands staring vaguely, her bloated face now and then lighting up in an expression of cruelty, her trembling hand twitching nervously at the hem of her abominable dress. At last the door gives way, and Pratt, the one-handed assistant, and a couple of police, force their way into the black den. There is the father, the wife and her six half-naked children. The father, covered only with a pair of trousers, his hairy shoulders showing through the ragged shirt, rushes out like a wild beast to strangle Pratt, but he is seized by the policemen; and the clearing of the house of furniture is commenced—an iron pot, a few plates, three logs of wood that are used as seats, a chair, a cradle, and some straw and rags on which the whole family slept; Miss Barrett looks on with manifest satisfaction. Here are a few remarks snatched as it were out of the crowd: 'McCoy, have you anything in that flask? You ought to give a drop to your neighbours. Barrett, you buy this old cradle, it was a very lucky one! Who knows what might turn up for you yet, in the shape of some old devil of a husband as ugly as yourself but not so great a drunkard?'

Then the family has to follow the furniture. The father struggles, held fast by two policemen, the children are soon shoved out of the door, but the woman offers a stubborn resistance. She is a strong, stout, shapeless creature. A red petticoat falls to her knees, a shawl is wrapped round her shoulders, and she carries a baby in her arms.

'Ah, you dirty illegitimate beast, I dare you to lay a hand on me; I am an honest woman and not a dirty slut like your mother. . . Don't touch me! Will you? you are breaking my back. . . You are killing the innocent child. Leave go of me! Is there no one here to save me?'

'Now you had better go for the asking; we don't want to hurt you, but out you must go.'

'You don't want to hurt me? I tell ye you are breaking my back. The death of the child be on your head; he isn't a dirty bastard like you. Will you leave me go?'

Pratt pushes her from behind, the one-armed man pulls her in front, but she always manages to evade the door-way. It is a marvel how she jerks up the child when it seems on the point of slipping from her. The woman writhes to and fro; she shrieks and shrieks again, the red petticoat is twisted round her waist, and she appears, as she struggles across the doorway in strong and savage nakedness.

But her strength is beginning to fail her, and at last, uttering a wild cry, she slips on the ground, screaming that Pratt has kicked her in the stomach, that she is dying. Leaving his shirt in the hands of the police the husband slips out of their grasp and he would have probably done for Pratt had he not been again seized.

Howls and execrations! Pratt swears he never touched her; the husband swears he saw him; the one-armed man calls God to witness to a number of things; and Major Murphy orders his men to disperse the crowd. Then many things happen: Miss Barrett loses her brandy-flask, a neighbour brings in a saucepan of milk, and the wounded woman is consoled and questioned.

'And where did he kick you, awornine?'

'I'm loth to tell you with all the people about.'

It is infinitely pitiful and infinitely grotesque. The woman, no doubt, hit herself in her conflict with the bailiff, but she is evidently pretending to worse injuries than she received. For her wailing is more horrible than natural; and the suffering of the little children crying on the dung-heap is more heart-rending. An hour and a half passes. At last she allows herself to be helped out of the house, and she is laid down on some straw under a wall. It seems as if it never could end. The husband goes from group to group collecting evidence against Pratt; the wife shrieks she is bleeding to death—'that she can feel it running down her inside'—and the little boys mock at Miss Barrett's breeches, taunt her with her drunkenness, and Pratt with his bastardy. At last the doctor arrives. But how is he to examine her? Those who after so much trouble have possessed themselves of her house refuse to readmit her even for a few minutes on any pretext whatever. The woman writhes on the straw, her red petticoat twisted about her naked red legs;

and Pratt, still swearing that he never laid a hand or a foot on her, suggests that the Major should clear away the crowd so that the doctor might examine her at once.

'The woman is not a sheep or a cow and cannot be examined in the open air. . .'

'He is thinking of his old mother, your honour; many a time she was examined in the open air; and more is the pity the wall did not tumble upon her and the Colonel, and we wouldn't have him here—Billy, the bad begot!'

Meanwhile a large hole is being made in the roof, the rafters are being torn up, and the woman in breeches and pot-hat, who it is said was once in love with a painter and sat for a picture of Ophelia, puts a padlock on the door.

A HUNTING BREAKFAST.

'HALLO! Down already? Fall to—what will you have? Here are some beefsteaks and kidneys; you'll find a cold chicken on the sideboard; or will you have a couple of boiled eggs?'

'Thanks, I'll help myself to some chicken and ham, and do you pour me out a cup of coffee.'

'All right, but don't dawdle, there's a good fellow; remember we have a good ten miles to ride.'

'The others aren't down yet; we have lots of time, it isn't nine o'clock.'

'Lynch—is *he* up? What is he doing? Did you look into his room?'

'Yes, he was trying to tie a necktie. I told him to hurry, and he said he would not be long.'

'Is the coffee to your liking?'

'Yes, first-rate; I think I'll change my mind and trouble you for a kidney. . . . Thanks, that will do!'

'Ten minutes past nine, and Sally isn't down yet; goodness me—this is so provoking! I must send up to hurry her.'

'You needn't bother; I met the maid in the passage, and she told me Miss Sally was nearly dressed, and would be down in a few minutes. Give me another cup of coffee. . . What a fellow you are! and for all the hunting we shall have——

'Why, do you really think the hounds will be stopped?'

'So they say. I hear that all the county round Tuam is placarded with notices calling on the farmers to refuse to allow hounds or horses to cross their lands, in consequence of the refusal of the landlords to give twenty per cent. reduction. They say all the coverts are poisoned, and that at an attempt to run a fox the farmers will assemble in hundreds and stone the hounds from the scent—and us too, for the matter of that.'

'God, I should like to see one of the dirty ruffians throw a stone at me! I'd ride at him and flay him within an inch of his life. Hallo! Down at last, Sally? we must be off in a few minutes. . .'

'I assure you, Miss O'Neil, he has not ceased to speak of the time since I came down, and I was down at half-past eight.'

'Oh, he is always like that; I don't mind him now; but where is Mrs. Molloy? Isn't she down yet?

'No, mother sent word that we weren't to wait for her.'

'What are you riding, Miss O'Neil?'

'A young chestnut Mr. Trench was kind enough to lend me. I have no horses of my own: I depend upon the kindness of my friends.'

'But of course they are only too glad to have their horses ridden by so good a rider as you, Miss O'Neil. . . I have heard of you in Leicestershire. I hear that we have no one who could touch you—that if you were to come over, you'd tail us all off.'

'Oh, not at all! I am sure I never should be able to cross your double post and rails. . . I sha'n't be able to ride at all to-day from nervousness, if you are going to watch me.'

'Will you have an egg, Sally? Are you ready for some more coffee?'

'Thanks, I haven't finished this yet. . . but tell me, is it really a fact that the covers are poisoned, and that we shall be stoned if we attempt to run a fox?'

'Impossible to say. Hartley, who came from Tuam last night, says the country is posted with notices?'

'Aren't you afraid, Miss O'Neil? It does seem so odd to one coming from England to hear of poisoned covers and hounds being stoned. I thought the Irish were better sportsmen.'

'Until Parnell and Davitt came with their Land League there wasn't a more sporting peasantry in the world than the Irish, but everybody who has anything to spend has been driven out of the country. . . The Empress of Austria isn't coming to Meath this year on account of the Land League—there's thousands of pounds gone out of the country.'

'And if they don't let the hounds hunt, what shall we do?'

'Nothing for it but to come back again the same way we went. . . We lunch at Mrs. Jack's—she is one of the characters of the County of Galway.'

'Yes, she's got an heiress staying with her; she is the girl's guardian. Now there's your chance, Fleming: but it will take you all your time to outwit the old girl. She'll be down on you like a thousand of bricks if she even suspects you of making up to the girl.'

'Why! Does she not want the girl to marry?'

'Not she; if the girl, Maggie Jordan, does not marry, all the money will go to Mrs. Jack's relations. She is an orphan, and the whole family watch her like a lot of hawks. The aunt is ready to fly at any would-be suitor, and Maggie is locked up for days in her room if she so much as dares to look at a man twice. . . The whole thing is very sad.'

'But who is Mrs. Jack? What is she? Surely a creature like that is not received in society?'

'She was once a great gaunt ugly girl, six feet high, and as strong as a policeman. She had scarcely enough to eat at home, and when she was introduced to a man at a ball, the first thing she said was, "Take me to the supper room," and there she remained gorging as long as he would stop with her, and then she put cakes in her pockets to eat in the carriage going home. But her ball-going was not of long duration; her mother soon found that she was hopeless, and Betsey remained an old maid till she was fifty. Then she married Jack Thorne, a pawnbroker, a county usurer who built a villa residence for her and left her all his money. He was a funny old chap, a brown wig and a splendid set of false teeth. The teeth were much admired by Mrs. Jack; she insisted on his getting them before his marriage, and when he died she did not forget them. She rushed at the coffin, crying, "They are going to bury him in his teeth." Pushing in her fingers, she pulled out one set, wiped them in her handkerchief, and then made another dive after the upper jaw. . . She bought her mother's mourning before the old lady was dead; she had a whole drawerful of clothes, and she used to show them to her friends, and hoped that the fashions would not change before 'poor mother passes away.' When her brother died she would not let the remains be taken into his own house, and he had to be buried from a lodging.'

'And this is the person with whom we are going to lunch after we have been well stoned by the Land Leaguers! . . . I sha'n't go.'

'Yes, you will; I wouldn't for the world that you should miss seeing Mrs. Jack: and you must really go in for mashing the niece. It will be splendid fun: for Mrs. Jack hasn't the slightest notion of behaving herself. Once I was dining there and got into a dispute with her butler, and the man gave her warning before the entire company.'

'And you say her niece, an heiress, lives with this ignorant, coarse woman?'

'Yes, there are many sad things in life, and this is not the least sad. I assure you the girl is very nice, and to see her brought up alone with this savage creature, never a sweeting influence, never the gleam of light cast by a refining thought, nothing to break the darkness of an animal existence. 'Pon my word it is very sad; to-day the girl is hopeful and pleasant; she is young, but in a few years life will be crushed out of her, and she will be as degraded, and as dead to all the tendernesses of life as that vulgar brute who bought her mourning before her mother was dead.'

'Here you are at last, we can't wait

for you; we had better make a start at once, what do you say? Sally, are you ready?'

'I am quite ready; and I think we had better be off. . . What kept you so long, Mr. Lynch?'

'Oh! I don't know; sometimes everything seems to go wrong. I could not find my razor-strop, and I could not get my boots on, and I forgot to unpack my new coat last night, and it was in a portmanteau that they had forgotten to bring upstairs. What do you think of the coat? Does it fit all right?'

'For God's sake drink a cup of coffee, and let us get off!'

'Now don't excite yourself, old man. Ring and order the nags round. I shall put a sandwich in my pocket.'

The scene is a breakfast-room A

silver urn hisses on the table, and over the cups and plates there floats a decided odour of coffee and kidneys. The speakers are Molloy—a tall, strong, fine-looking man, some six feet high; Fleming—a young man, thin and pale, with pale English hair and blue eyes; Lynch—a stout-set man with a heavy jaw and rough hands; Miss O'Neil, or Sally, as she is generally called—a little woman with light yellow hair, small features, tiny feet that move prettily beneath her short riding-habit of green cloth. The men are all dressed in breeches and red coats. Presently they adjourn to the stables, where the hacks are waiting that will carry them to the meet; the hunters have been sent on overnight, and are now munching the corn at a house ten Irish miles distant (twenty kilomètres). The horses canter briskly; there is no time to lose. At the cross roads they meet Rose, Sally's sister, and Mrs. Manly, a lady who has a child every year, rides to hounds three days a week, and is said to have jumped five feet four months before the birth of her last. She joins her admirer, Mr. Molloy, the two sisters ride on in front, and Mr. Lynch tells Mr. Fleming a great deal concerning the respective horsemanship of Rose and Sally. It is difficult to say which is the better. Rose's is a more determined and more bullying method; she takes a horse by the head and holds him as if he were in a vice, pushes him along by main force; whereas Sally is quiet and clever, the horse scarcely feels her light hands. She wants no one to tell her what line to take, she decides immediately and very often squanders the whole field.

It is a misty morning, and out of the greyness the red horsemen come from the right and left. They exchange with us a hasty salutation and press forward. A little farther on we meet the master of the hounds, his splendid pack about his horse's heels, and his two whips trotting behind him. Ominous rumours have reached him that the peasants are determined to stop the hunting, and Mr. Trench has received several warnings that if he attempts to draw the covers the tenant-farmers will assemble and stone the hounds from the scent. But to all our inquiries Mr. Trench only replies that he has hunted the county for thirty years, and he believes Irishmen to be too good sportsmen to interfere with horse or hound at anyone's bidding, even that of the Land Leaguers.

'Anyhow I am going to put it to the

test. I shall listen to no warning, either written or verbal,' he says, waving away a respectably-dressed man who, touching his cap, begs to have a word with Mr. Trench. 'I have hunted the county for thirty years. I shall put the hounds in—yes, I would put them in if you told me the cover was poisoned, and if the tenantry like to throw stones at me and my hounds, they can.'

'They'd be very sorry to do it, yer honour, but we have agreed among ourselves that unless certain——'

The rest of the speech is lost in the pattering of horses' hoofs. Opening a gate with the end of his riding-whip, Mr. Trench lets himself through, and followed by his hounds and whips, who lash out at the stragglers and call to them to join the pack, he trots across a field towards a large fir-wood. We are all very nervous, our hands twitch at the bridles, and our lips grow dry, for we know not but that the peasants may come out armed with rifles and shoot at us and the hounds; or perhaps they will choose scythes to attack us; and involuntarily we consider the respective advantages of the weapons. Rifle bullets would follow quicker than our horses' heels could take us away, but there is something revolting in the idea of being hacked about by a scythe. There are only about thirty out, and we beg of the ladies to keep back. Quite unmoved, however, Mr. Trench continues to draw the cover. 'Now then, there,' he shouts, 'hunt him out, hunt him out; get to cover, will you! Admiral, get to him, get to him! Ah, hark to Beauty, will you, hark to Beauty! They have got him! Get to him there!

Hunt him out! hark to—hark to him there, I say, hark to— Now then, gentlemen, don't ride round the cover, stop in one spot, I beg of you; you are driving him back; tell that fellow there to come back; if he is headed again he'll be chopped, the hounds are close on him!'

At this moment the red varmint is seen stealing across the field, and Beauty and the hounds are getting through the hedge, giving tongue. Mr. Trench blows his horn: 'Gone away, gone away, away again, again.' The blare of the horn rings out over the grey sleepy fields—'gone away.' 'Now then, gentlemen, I beg of you wait until the hounds are out of the cover.'

We have forgotten all the Land Leaguers, and, tense with excitement, we watch the hounds crowding through the fence. Every horse is prancing. A moment more and we shall be riding at that stiff piece of wall, four feet and a half—even now Mr. Manly is advising his wife not to risk the life of the unborn by attempting it. But peasants are climbing that wall: hands, heads, and shoulders appear: they are standing on the top, and are throwing stones at the hounds. Bellringer has been struck, and has run whining from the scent, then half-a-dozen more have stopped short, surprised at the strange interruption.

'Oh, the brutes!' exclaimed Mr. Trench, as he watched a tall thin peasant, a young man dressed in a torn frieze coat, with large pieces of the flannel lining hanging out of the rents, who with a stick is beating the hounds away as they attempt to cross the wall. Others armed with pitchforks and scythes declare that they'll scatter our brains on the grass if we venture to ride over their lands. The stone-throwing is kept up, and a sharp piece of limestone has just struck Sally's horse, and the frightened animal rears violently. This is too much for Molloy, and, regardless of consequences, he touches his horse with the spur and makes for the aggressor. The coward runs like a sheep, and he howls for mercy when the heavy thong of the hunting-whip circles round his shoulders.

'Come on this way, Trench,' cries Molloy, 'we can cross here, and we'll push up to the scent farther on.'

'No, no, I have had enough of it; I have seen Irishmen stone my hounds. Well, I thought there was more sport in Irishmen than that; I believe in the country no more.' And blowing his horn the old huntsman collects his hounds round him . . . his last illusions are shattered, the bitterest blow has fallen—Irishmen are no longer sportsmen. After that come what will; he has seen the new era in, he wants to see no more. It is time he should be gathered to his fathers. He will not speak; the affront has sunk into his heart like a dagger . . . we ask him to come with us, we laugh, we pooh-pooh the whole thing, and declare we shall have better hunting than ever next year, but he shakes his head sorrowfully. And as we go to Mrs. Jack's to lunch, we turn in our saddles and we see the old man riding away, his hounds about him, like one on whom a great calamity has fallen.

'And now, Fleming, mind you, no humbug! I and Sally separately and together will engage Mrs. Jack's attention, at least as much of her attention as it is possible to engage, and you make love to the niece. Try to get her to sit down with you in a corner; anyhow, make the flirtation conspicuous, and we'll have Mrs. Jack nearly mad with rage . . . She is half a savage, you know, and we shall be all probably turned out of the house.'

'But perhaps the girl won't flirt; she may be too shy?'

'Never mind, try to draw her out. Poor little thing, hers is a sad fate! Gee up, old horse! Those brutes of Land Leaguers, Gladstone and Parnell, ought to be hanged'

CONCLUSION.

THE scenes in the pages of this book point to no moral—at least to no moral that I am conscious of; they were not selected to plead any cause, or to announce the success or failure of Land Leaguers or landlords; they were chosen because they seemed to me typical and picturesque aspects of a primitive country and barbarous people. Unconcerned with this or that interest, indifferent to this or that opinion, my desire was to produce a series of pictures to touch the fancy of the reader as a Japanese ivory or fan, combinations of hue and colour calculated to awake in him fictitious feelings of pity, pitiful curiosity and nostalgia of the unknown.

Ireland is a bog, and the aborigines (the Fins) are a degenerate race—short, squat little men—with low foreheads and wide jaws. But the bog, its heather and desolation, and the Fins and their hovels and dirt are as good a subject for brush or pen as an English village clustered round a green—red roofs showing against the foliage of the elms, rows of great sunflowers flaring in the gardens, and quaint windows overgrown with roses. Picturesque comfort or picturesque misery *l'un vaut l'autre* in art, and I sought the picturesque independent of landlords and Land Leaguers; whether one picture is cognate in political feeling with the one that preceded I care not a jot; indeed I would wish each to be evocative of dissimilar impressions, and the whole to produce the blurred and uncertain effect of nature herself. Where the facts seemed to contradict, I let them contradict. Nevertheless, it does not strike me as wholly foreign to, and incompatible with, my method to look upon that which the world terms the serious side of things. The serious side of things I take to mean: first, the direct pecuniary loss or gain; secondly, the indirect, or in other words, the moral loss or gain. I will consider what has been the moral loss or gain to Ireland since she became, under the Parnell *régime*, a free country. Murder, in the first place, is now recognised as a fine art, a popular pastime, and an important factor in politics. Murder? No—boycotting and moonlighting, these are the Parnellite equivalents. 'Murder is unnecessary,' cry the patriots. 'More boycotting, more moonlighting.' And at their bidding, bands of dreamy youths wander about the country at night, breaking into the different cottages, pulling the occupants out of their beds, and shooting in the legs all whom they suspect of wishing to pay their rents, shooting through the head all who might betray them. 'Moonlighting,' Mr. Parnell says, 'is our only preventive against eviction.'

Secondly, the tenants are told that they must pay only a fair rent; and a fair rent is defined as the sum that remains when they have taken what they consider will keep them and their families in decency and comfort. Imagine trying to collect rents anywhere—even in the Champs-Elysées, Parisian, Jovian, or Christian—on such a principle. In 1881 the

Irish rents were fixed by law, a fourth was generally struck off, and then the tenant was considered to be assessed at a fair rent. The Coercion Act was then in force, Ireland was profoundly quiet, and the leaders waited. They had not to wait long; party politics rendered its revival impossible, and when the sword was raised outrages began on man and beast. Then in despair, but continuing his dream of settling the Irish question, Gladstone began to consider the probability of Home Rule. Parnell ordered the outrages to cease, and they ceased. But Gladstone failed to carry his Bill. The country was appealed to, and the country by an immense majority decreed against Home Rule. What was to be done? Decidedly moonlighting must begin again. Parnell must feed and clothe his impecurious army. Each ragamuffin costs him two hundred and fifty a year—seventeen thousand five hundred a year—and the pot-boys and nursemaids will want something for their money. Something must be done. No better plan than to bring in a Bill to still further reduce the rents. Say that the judicial rents are not fair rents, that's the idea. Open up the whole question—Gladstone is on his last legs and will vote for anything. The Bill will be thrown out, of course, but it will consolidate us with what remains of the Liberal party and will be a brilliant start for a campaign against rent in Ireland—a campaign against rent, that is to say plenty of moonlighting and boycotting.

Murder and repudiation of debt, such is the doctrine of the League, and insidiously in veiled phrases, in euphemisms of all sorts, the doctrine is preached at land meetings and brooded over, as we have seen, by the cottage fireside. Imagine the ferment produced by these teachings in the minds of a primitive people—and worse than primitive, a people in a retrograde state. Imagine the disintegration of all simple associations of belief, the discarding of all familiar ideas and usages; it is as if all the fibre and nerve of a body were destroyed, pus oozes, and the gases of decay are exhaled, and all the phenomena of dissolution begin—such was Ireland in 1882. Murder had begotten murder, agrarian with political assassination had bred like snakes in dark places, the landlords were forgotten in private animosity, individual hatreds, family misunderstandings had bred in and out and back again to the original stock with riotous longing and brutal lust of cruelty. In 1882 Irish society was coming to pieces like a rotten sponge; the Phœnix Park murders brought the disease to a head; and the Crimes Act came as a saving and a blessing to the poorer tenants who lived in terror of their lives. Tortured and intimidated by the moonlighters, it fell like manna in the desert of their afflictions. Here is one instance which, like one pustule brought under the microscope, reveals the depth of the disease. There are two sisters who do not get on very well together. In the words of the survivor, 'they found it difficult to live in the same house.' One morning, after a quarrel with her sister, Bridget goes out into the potato-field, where a man is digging. She asks him if he can do nothing for her; he scratches his head reflectively and says that he is going to see some one that night, and will speak to him on the subject. On the following day Bridget again goes to meet her friend in the potato-field—of whom, mark you, she knows little or nothing. He says he talked the matter over last night and it can be done for a pound. But Bridget cannot make up so much money and a bargain is struck, and she pays fifteen shillings to have her sister murdered. A night is chosen, Bridget asks if she may absent herself, she does not care to be in the house on the night her sister is to be murdered; but the man says it might arouse suspicion, and Bridget's scruples are overruled. The murder itself is executed in the latest and most approved fashion. One man mounts on guard, the other enters the hovel at midnight, revolver in hand and shoots the woman dead.

This murder took place at Mullingar, but a jury courageous enough to convict the murderers was not forthcoming, and they escaped. At the time I am speaking of murders and mutilations of man and beast were of daily and nightly occurrence, and I could easily select one for physical barbarity infinitely more repellent, namely, the Maamtrasna murders, which for sullen debauchery and low liquorish cruelty stand unrivalled and unapproached even in the great charnel-house of Irish crime; but the simple Mullingar tragedy, so simple and so free of all melodramatic interest, seems to me more than anything else illustrative of the decay and final dissolution of the moral nature even in its most elementary and original forms.

The priests at first attempted to stem the tide of outrage and murder, but when religion found it was imperilling its own existence it strove to compromise with murder on the Land League platform as it does with the Darwinian theory in the laboratory.

And now to money matters. Let us see if the tenant has benefited pecuniarily by his devotion to Parnell, and to what extent. The Land Act of 1881, by reducing the Irish rents by one fourth or one fifth, puts something like three millions annually into the pockets of the tenants. This is no doubt a very substantial gain, but it is not all gain. First, the lawyers' fees and the cost of the Land Commission ran into a great deal of money; then there were subscriptions—forty thousand pounds had to be collected to pay Parnell for the services he had rendered the Irish tenantry; then there is a continual subscription to the Land League, the ordinary subscription and supplementary subscriptions; subscriptions for the support of the Irish members; subscriptions for the support of evicted tenants, etc. The addition of this is no doubt a good round sum, but it is far from three millions sterling: where does the balance go to? In idleness and drink. Attendance at Land League meetings and political conversations prolonged into the small hours of the morning are not conducive to industry: the land is therefore more neglected than ever, and the tenant is so much more out of pocket.

Since he has become part-proprietor of his holding he has borrowed money at the bank. The bills fall due; they are renewed; the interest keeps running on. In the past he was rendered improvident and thriftless by the uncertainty of his tenure, and the certainty that if he made any improvements they would be confiscated—(I remember when they would not thatch their houses for fear of being evicted)—now having passed from servitude through land meetings and murder, plans to murder and mutilate, he is at once afforded facilities for borrowing of all kinds. Is it possible to conceive a state of things more calculated to destroy whatever remnant of morality political agitation may have left to him? His passions are awakened—but for food, for drink, for dress. Never was an Irish peasant known to spend a penny of his newly-acquired fortune in improving his house, in relegating the pig to a stye, in planting a few flowers that would relieve the intolerable bleakness of his cottage. He spends his share of the money in the public-house, his wife and daughters spend theirs on hideous millinery—dreadful hats with ostrich feathers and shapeless mantles, and tea and eggs for breakfast. Dissoluteness, subscriptions to the Land League, and borrowing money at the banks, have in five years reduced the tenantry to the verge of bankruptcy, and headed by Parnell they again come to their landlords and demand large reductions. And this will occur again and again until the landlords are ruined, and the tenants become sole proprietors of their holdings. Nor will it then cease; the banks will insist upon payment of their bills, and worse than the banks, there will be the county usurers (a class of men that

Balzac has more than once depicted with terrible eloquence), and several generations will pass before the Irish peasant will be able to hold his own against these men and the temptations they will hold out to him ; and were an Irish Parliament sitting in Dublin, unless, indeed property were abolished and a Commune established, I am convinced that in five years' time there would be more evictions carried out by order of the banker and the usurer than there are by the landlords to-day. The Irish peasant has been left a little behind in the march of civilisation: he will have to first conquer the landlords, then he will find himself outdone by banks, usurers, and centuries of inherited idleness and filth, supplemented by ten years of the most infamous moral teaching possible to conceive. When he has overcome these dangers and difficulties he may then be able to take his place as an equal by the side of his Saxon neighbour.

But this is looking very far ahead: let us confine ourselves to considering the issues of to-day's combat. The Parnellite party consists of eighty-five members vowed to render all government in Ireland a farce, and all legislation in England impossible, until England has surrendered autonomy to the Irish people. Eighty-five votes are a terrible weight to be able to throw into either scale; it has already overthrown three Ministers, and with our system of party government, it is impossible to anticipate how many more may not fall before it: and to come to terms with it seems out of the ken of all possibilities: England has been asked the question, and has decided to maintain the Union at all hazards. The fight will then be a terrible unintermittingness of effort. Of Parnell's leadership, it is unnecessary to say a word —the world knows of it; of the ability and courage of some dozen or twenty men grouped around him, I can speak with confidence—some of them are friends of mine, others I know of through their writings. The rest of the party is composed of Mr. Dalys, music-hall managers, and publicans from Liverpool and Manchester. This tagrag and bobtail is supported principally by subscriptions collected from the nursemaids and potboys of New York and Chicago; the immediate object of Mr. Daly is therefore to prove his patriotism by vehemently abusing the landlords, and condoning murder and outrage as ingeniously as his knowledge of the English language allows him. Abuse is his bread, and sophistry is his butter.

This is certainly not very great or very noble, and yet the destiny of the British Empire hangs upon it. For the whole question resolves itself into this:—Will the American nursemaids and potboys continue to subscribe from fifteen to twenty thousand a year to keep Mr. Daly in a cheap lodging, and a cheap dinner, for—let us say a period of ten years? For it is not too much to suppose that, after ten years of obstruction, England would be ready to concede anything? Or, on the other hand, will England return Lord Randolph Churchill to the head of affairs with sufficient majorities to outvote all possible combination that may be brought against him? In ancient times the Goths and Visigoths held the destinies of the Romans, but it is the nursemaids who hold the destinies of the British Empire. A text to ponder on, but I will not ponder. . . I will ask what measures will Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill adopt to rid themselves of this terrible Irish incubus? In the hopes that the peasant will become Conservative when he is sole owner of his holding, efforts will be made in the direction of peasant proprietary. . . And will the solution of the problem be found in this?

It would be well in accordance with my philosophy, with that view of life which is constitutional to me, to deny the existence of a race-hatred. It would be comforting to hug the belief that if the peasants were the owners of the soil they till, that if the exasperatory yearly tributes they are called upon to pay were abolished, that patriotism would exist no longer and that the Celt and the Saxon would henceforth live together in brotherly peace and love. My special temperament inclines me to this view of the question, but when I look Ireland in the face, the face I have known since I was a little child, I find myself obliged to admit the existence of a race-hatred—a hatred as intense and as fierce as that which closes the ferret's teeth on the rat's throat. The Saxon heart is a noble heart, a heart that is ever moved by generous aspirations, a heart that is full of a love of truth and justice. It was these qualities that gave the Saxon the greatest empire the world has ever known, and it will be these very qualities that will now shatter and destroy that empire. The English heart to-day throbs with an hysterical, with a theoretic, love of justice. For a moment under the pressure of excitement we don the fierce bear-baiting, prize-fighing nature that was once ours; but we have sloughed that nature like a snake its skin, and we can wear it no longer; soon, very soon, we must return to our second self, that self which is now our real self—that self which is now incarnate in Mr. Gladstone and Mr. John Morley. In two years, certainly before the former is eighty, this will be accomplished, and amid praise and acclamation a free Parliament will be given to Ireland. Then the Irish-Americans, those who have subscribed millions of dollars to achieve this, will flock to Ireland, and in seven years all the traces of seven hundred years of Saxon conquest will be effaced. And, looking still farther into the future,