They were uniformly countenanced and in could appreciate the heart-stirring strains. which the bagpipes continue to be the some of whom I was acquainted, others others into the ear and soul with delight, whilst when performers in the southern and midland intolerable. little more than that under the hands of a mentalist it is really poor, squeaky, full, sonorous, perfectly harmonious, it fills most generally adopted at the present day.

Of the sound of the instrument I shall say, in instances sustained and fostered by the gentry of the neighbourhood in which they lived. It is certain that not a few of them owed their easy but rather dissipated position to the support of some one great man who kept house in the old state of an age which is gone by and who could not rest without his piper.

One of the most celebrated of his time as well as one of the most accomplished of musicians was Jack Carroll of Birr. He was blind in his latter days and in his very best days he was well-nigh thoroughly so. He had been leader or handmaster of the Roxborough Fencibles band in which he played the clarinet, which was his forte, with extraordinary good taste and a surprising execution. Personally he was rough, uncouth, pochmarked, strong featured, very unmusical looking indeed. In manner too he was stiff and extremely abrupt but under this somewhat unaccomplished and forbidding exterior he not only possessed a soul for music but he had a warm and generous heart which had broad sympathies with suffering humanity and which ever urged him to relieve distress no matter what form it assumed. Carroll, who, if it may be observed, had no small notion of his own potential, was at every dinner party, ball, rout, etc. in the vicinity of Birr, Roscrea, etc. There was no enjoyment at which he was not present with his pipes which were in constant requisition. Those who heard him were anxious to hear him again and again. His masterly performance of national airs could not be excelled. Carolan's Planxties were played by him in their alternations of moving wistfulness and deep and suggestive melancholy just as Carolan himself, the bard of the eighteenth century, would have them played. Carroll's very soul was absorbed in his work. Everything about him partook of earnestness and vigour. When he played one would imagine that he alone was his own parallel. No doubt he was for all over Leinster and Munster he had no superior. He was always at the Droughts of Whigsboro, the Lloyds of Gloster, the Poes of Salsboro, the Cowper Crawfords of Rapla and I doubt not he played on several occasions at Birr and Portumna Castles. He wore a battered hat hat which he usually kept under his chair and on being remonstrated with as to its unfashionable shape and damaged appearance he used to say that if he had a new one it would be stolen. His coat was of grey frieze, his short corduroy, yarn stockings and strong shoes. He was a Protestant but strange to add a determined friend of the Irish tenant and Protestant but strange to add a determined friend of the Irish tenant and to denounce oppressors in the strongest possible shape and manner. On being complimented by a lady of fashion on his superior
I Power who ultimately took up his blindness was caused by his well-dressed respectable gentleman-like feet habits unlike nearly every one of his predecessors and contemporaries. He was blind but his man. His coat was always of the best black cloth, and well-made. He was blind but his appearance. Clonmel was his head-quarters whilst his star was in the ascendant. Though stone blind he was accustomed to look and in manner, venerable rather, in quarters where he was accustomed to play his music. Power was really a magnificent performer on the pipes for such was his fame and the esteem in which he was held that when the Duke of Rutland was Viceroy of Ireland Power was frequently at the Castle where he delighted the guests of His Excellency with his wonderful notes.

The contemporary of Denny Shelly was John Power of the Great Woods in Ikerrin. Power was really a magnificent performer on the pipes for such was his fame and the esteem in which he was held that when the Duke of Rutland was Viceroy of Ireland Power was frequently at the Castle where he delighted the guests of His Excellency with his wonderful notes. Power who ultimately took up his residence permanently in Dublin lived in Lucy's Lane, off Merrion Row. One of his sons became a first-rate violin player in that city. Others of his children, all of whom were grown before his death, were destitute. Power, in addition to his dexterity on the pipes, was a great ball-player. He was of middle size, dark complexion, smart and energetic-looking and he usually wore a blue frock coat. I need not add that he was not blind. Jack Power visited all the houses of the nobility and gentry of his county and of Dublin whilst his star was in the ascendancy.

Kyran Fitzpatrick was another of the celebrated pipers of the present generation. He played admirably and the Marquis of Normandy countenanced him. I am certain he played before Her Majesty Queen Victoria in 1837. His after career was encouraged greatly during his visits to Waterford where he gave performances in the Town Hall of that city. One of his most active patrons was Alderman James Delahunty of that city who took a decided interest in him and who introduced him to many persons who were in a position to befriend him. Of all these pipers Power was the foremost and best. He was accustomed to call about him occasionally all the pipers of the country and set them playing for an hour or two. He would then begin himself and the others would observe a most respectful silence. His pipes which were furnished with a double chanter and were of the very best pitch and tone could not be excelled. He taught several and gave them his own method and superiority of style.

William Geary or Guiry of Hospital played in excellent style at the houses of the gentry on the union pipes and though blind from his infancy was one of the best pipers of the country and set them playing for an hour or two. He would then begin himself and the others would observe a most respectful silence. His pipes which were furnished with a double chanter and were of the very best pitch and tone could not be excelled. He taught several and gave them his own method and superiority of style.

Shanahan of Killinan and Buckley of the same place, brothers-in-law, were first-class pipers. I should not forget to refer to O'Brien 'the Limerick Piper', whose portrait and that of his child squatting by the late accomplished artist Mr. Haverty is so well known. O'Brien in his youth was a powerful finelooking Clareman; he got blind however. In old age his station was at the Crescent near Hartstown Street where he was known for several years by everyone and where he played diligently until 8 or 9 o'clock each night. His favourite airs were
Garryowen, the Fox chase, some of Carolan's Planxties, etc. He died about twelve years ago at the age of 86 years in a garret in Englishstown and in his last hours he was attended constantly by the truly pious and indefatigable administrations of the Sisters of Mercy. It is said that in his early days blindness did not afflict him or until he was about 25 years old and that he studied classics and was well informed.

There were indeed many pipers besides these here enumerated and scarcely a gentleman of the last century that had not his piper as an essential member of his establishment and that had not his fool besides. Garret Nagle of Ballinamona, Co. Cork, was one of those fine old gentlemen who was never without his piper and fool. He inherited most of his immense riches and who bequeathed them to Garret. There was no higher position than either of these and who often startled me in my boyish days was one who was known in Waterford by the name of Cracked Shaw or Cracked James Shaw. He certainly had a very mad look as mad as any look in Bedlam. Shaw's hat was the top off his head and was prevented from falling by the collar of the coat which supported it. His hands were always adjusted under his armpits. His hair was nearly white, his teeth enormously large, his eyes grey and somewhat crooked. He flew off in a tangent no matter the subject he spoke on. He filled a situation in the then comparatively small post office of that city and I have frequently heard that as letter-sorter and clerk he was not to be surpassed in the amount of business he was equal to which he discharged with the very greatest correctness.

Of fiddlers, their name is legion. One of the oldest of the craft to whom I was introduced in childhood was a certain Ned Kelly who was accustomed to perform at all the parties, balls, etc., in and about Carrick-on-Suir, where, on an occasional visit there, I was accustomed to listen to his manipulations of the violin with something like the interest that I rejoiced in the wizard strains of Paganini and in the wondrous power of Ole Bull, Signor Viotti, Herr Ernst, Master Burke, etc. in later years. Kelly wore a queque [sic] dressed in the fashion of the last century. He played pretty well for his day and time but his performance of the Fox chase, the Foxhunter's jig, etc., I considered in my childish estimation unsurpassed and unsurpassable by any player of older or modern times. He was under the middle size, spare in frame, of florid complexion and I remember he never refused to play the Fox chase when I asked him for which he was usually well rewarded with an extra measure of his favourite beverage.

Country fiddlers are frequent nowadays but I fear they have lost many of their former charms in the public mind. John O'Brien who played in Scott's great house as is also Gerry O'Brien another good player whose Fox chase was a universal favourite. He was a gay card player. He and the former John O'Brien were contemporaries but not relatives.

November 8, 1867

... Our business however is with the Irish dances and dancers and it must be confessed indeed in reference to both that there has been a manifest decline in latter years owing in the main to the wholesale decimation of the population during the famine years and afterwards to the clearance system which as well as the famine broke the heart of the people.

In my youthful days the elder Garbio was the leading man in the south of Ireland as a teacher and some used to say that he Gallicised his name to appear fashionable and that his real patronymic was the old Irish one of Garvey. Be that as
wore in dark profusion was oiled and dressed, well-mannered, gay and pleasant curled and parted in the style of the Prince Carlow, etc., and in the College of Carlow he was a prime favourite and his blind fiddler in the drab livery was a real picture.

Holden, one of the men of the eighteenth century, preceded Garbois and taught in private families. He performed on the violin himself dispensing so far with an attendant that the 'kit' or small fiddle was usually carried in a large pocket behind his swallow-tail coat or sometimes in the breast pocket of his surtout whenever he wore one, which indeed was very seldom. He resembled Harry Brougham in a rather prominent feature but which only happened to be the nose. Holden was in rather slender circumstances whilst Garbois who was succeeded by his son who I believe at present at the head of his art in Dublin, was always said to be in easy circumstances.

Goodman was another teacher. He too enjoyed a first-class business. He was a pompous, well-fed-looking man about the middle height but having got paralysis of the lower limbs in consequence of running after the maidservants for which he was late through the streets of Dublin he was unable in after years to reap the fruits of his industry.

These however were dancers of the highest grade and did not come perhaps within the circle of Irish dancers. It is likely that most, if not all, of them had heard of and practised in early life the rinka das, the Moneen jig, the double hornpipe and those other saltatory movements in which the natives have been in the habit of indulging time out of mind. Whether they did or not know these dances is not however the question. If they did they ignored them as well as the names which they received from their fathers. For instance Mr. Doolan of Dublin called himself Dulan a name which is neither French nor Irish, English nor German, but which might be French if spelled Dulin accentuating the last syllable and pronouncing it a la francaise.

The old dancing-master whom I especially propose to the reader's attention as a type of his class and as a representative man occupies a middle place between the fashionable Terpsichorean professor of the present day and the village 'hop merchant' or tripodator who practised the heel and toe step and cut and shuffled a la Donnybrook while preparing young girls and boys for the Sunday dance at 'cakes' or fairs and has been admirably described by William Carleton as performing 'on an unhinged door' or 'welting the flure' in the village ale-house. There was another specimen of the same lively genius who might be seen performing on a plank at Donnybrook where I have frequently observed him in his glory while realising the fanciful etymology of the word 'tripudiate', given by the commentators upon that passage in the Odes of Horace in which the labourer is represented as thrice beating the earth with his energetic light fantastic 'ter pede terram'.

The dancing-master proper, his archetypal idea as Plato would say, who occupies the mind at the present moment, generally used to go from one gentleman's house to another and sometimes attended schools when the season for dancing had set in with increasing coolness of the weather. His arrival, whenever and wherewer he existed, was the signal for universal fun and relaxation. The moment the first scrape of his 'kit' or little fiddle was heard all the cankering cares and blue devils including school studies and task work of all kinds were supposed to vanish as instantaneously as the toads and serpents at the voice of St. Patrick. The hop-merchant in ordinary generally sat long at table for if not a gourmand or epicure he had as it were a weakness for post-prandial indulgences and generally imbibed pretty freely after opening the door to let the ladies pass to the drawing-room, a piece of politeness which he invariably challenged as a peculiar privilege of his profession and performed with a special pleasure as it was the signal for free conversation and too free indeed it used to be in those days and for setting in for serious drinking.

The dancing-master having the modelling of the physical education of the young hopefuls of the family was always treated with the greatest of hospitality and though generally enjoying the reputation of being a free liver was invariably received with good-humoured familiarity and attention by the ladies who however made themselves compensation behind his back by laughing at his vulgarity. I remember a dear old dancing-master on the Connought circuit originally named Curley and subsequently well-known as Coreille and Von Coreille whose advent used to be hailed as a public blessing by all the young people and not a few of the old among whom he made his periodical appearances. He used to indoctrinate us how to come into a room, bowing right and left and to the imaginary occupants, nodding familiarly to the piano, shaking hands affectionately with the great arm-chair. I remember part of the drill was that you were to stand in the third position when saluting and always raise the head after bowing. It was very amusing to see how seriously Coreille used to resent any deviation from his rules but more especially the solemness of beginning to dance a quadrille before the playing of the first part was quite finished. He had a sort of programme of the performance which he used to repeat very fast before commencing, suppose one of Payne's or the Lancers' Quadrilles then in fashion and which he expected that everyone who joined in the set should observe as rigidly as the Medes and Persians were supposed to obey their laws. It ran somewhat in this way: 'Chassez - half right and left - balancez promenade - ladies chain - advance and retire', all of which he used to utter with great volubility and with the gravity of a general giving the word of command to his soldiers.

The sons of the family were generally taught most, if not best, for they had to learn jigs as well as quadrilles, and hornpipes as well as country dances. I must, however, observe, that I have never seen these young gentlemen perform these extras on emerging from the chrysalis state into the full-blown butterfly of modern society. As my own dancing days are over and I never expect to tread a measure again I hope I shall be excused for returning with something like respectful regret, participating in imagination in those scenes with which
most of my middle-aged readers must still be familiar.

As a rule the forte of the old 'hop-mERCHANT' was not morality but then if he was not exactly rigorous in this way he not form the manners of the rising generation exteriorly while the last finish was supposed to be given by some schoolmaster's wife who had enjoyed unheard of advantages by way of genteel society in her pre-connubial epoch?

As I have said it is not with the Frenchified or Terpsichorean professors that I have to do but with the old Irish dancers or yet with that inferior class of them who in the absence of proper nomenclature were accustomed to impart their knowledge by affixing gads and hay-rope to their pupils telling them to 'rise upon sugawn and sink upon gad'. These were the very humblest of the profession. They'd beat the world hollow, sir, so they would, these Kerrymen. Their heels were as light as bits of cork. Why, sir, there was no equalling them at the dancing line. Mr. Dominick Meany was another Kerryman, all for style, he was a stout lump of a man, slightly pock-marked, and he was one of the best teachers. Mr. William Gamble was a general teacher and he taught in gentlemen's houses. He was a Cork man and very able. The Moneen jig, the Irish jig, the Moneen jig, sir, was the first that ever came out. Mr. Michael Leddin, a county Limerick man was celebrated in his day, he kept a dancing school and taught and played in gentlemen's houses. Mr. George Hickey of Cork was a tip top man, he kept in the city and county of Cork always and was first-rate. He made a fortune by his dancing. He was a real teacher. Then there was John and William Power who taught between Ballyea and Charleville. Who has not heard of them sir, they were known everywhere, all over Munster, capital dancers, tip top. John was a dissipated man, a first class teacher, however, as was William also. They will be remembered always'.

Arthur Spearin also taught in the county Limerick. Spearin was hung for United business. His was a sad fate. He as well as some of the others were notorious topers, very fond of the bottle. Thomas Flanagan of Newcastle West in the county of Limerick should not be forgotten. He was one of the most successful teachers in Munster. His pupils were many and some of them moved in high circles. One pence-a-man became the most celebrated Moneen jig dancer in Munster, while several who emigrated to Australia, America, etc. were famous for their execution of Irish dances'.

'As for myself', continued my informant, 'I have taught up and down, everywhere, I was first-rate in my day. Even now my limbs have not lost the suppleness. I would have the Moneen jig with the best of them and the hornpipe with any man that ever put foot to floor. But I lost my sight in a measure and I can't see the man forenenst me. Only for that I would go through my work as well as ever'.

So far my aged informant. I may add that addition to Garbois, Goodman and several others who graced their profession in my younger days the name of Mr. Wall should not be omitted. He was not only a celebrated teacher but he was one of the most exemplary of men and gave nearly all his savings to buy lamps for Catholic altars, an instance of religious devotion in one of the art which I believe to have been unprecedented. But Wall was a truly excellent man in every particular.