

Famine Letters

by Alexander Somerville

Introduction

by R.D.M. Snell



Alexander Somerville, a Scot, first visited Ireland in 1843 and reported on atrocities by landlords in Co. Kilkenny, as a result of which the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, established the Devon Commission to investigate relations between landlords and tenants, the mode of occupation of the land, cultivation of the land, the need for improvement and conditions and habits of the labouring class. He returned in 1847, the worst year of the famine, "sent from England by the proprietors of the *Manchester Examiner*, to travel through Ireland, to examine into its actual condition, without regard to political or religious parties, and to report to that paper what I saw". He subsequently published the letters as part of his *The Whistler at the Plough* (Manchester, 1852). The Irish section of this book was republished by Irish Academic Press in 1994, titled *Letters from Ireland during the Famine of 1847*.

Much is known about Somerville, as he was the author of a very readable autobiography, *The Autobiography of a Working Man* (1848). He was born in 1811, the eleventh child of very poor labouring parents living in a one-roomed hovel in Oldhamstocks, East Lothian. His schooling had to be delayed because his parents could not find adequate clothing for him, other than the rags he normally wore, resulting in mistreatment by the other children at school. At a young age he began a miscellany of employments in agriculture and other labouring work, as farm helper, ploughboy, sawyer, limekiln labourer, stone breaker, sheep shearer, itinerant harvester, drainer, quarryman, and dock labourer. In 1828 he joined his brother in Edinburgh as a sawyer, spending his leisure time reading, play-going and in political activity. In 1832, hard pressed for money, he enlisted in the Scots Greys.

He entered the regiment at a critical moment. He was stationed at Birmingham on the eve of the Reform riots, when a mob was expected to march on London. The soldiers were ordered to sharpen their swords to deal with the expected trouble. Somerville wrote a letter to the *Weekly Dispatch* stating that while the Scots Greys could be relied upon to put down disorderly conduct, they should never be ordered to lift up arms against the liberties of the country and peaceful demonstrations of the people. The inexperienced officer in charge, Major Wyndham, took this as a libel on the regiment, and Somerville was charged at an informal and hastily convened 'court martial' with a trumped-up offence, and was sentenced to a military flogging of two hundred lashes. After one hundred lashes, he was taken down in case he died, and in hospital afterwards said, "This shall be heard of yet; I shall make it as public over England as the newspapers can make it".

His case became front-page news, discussed in Parliament, referred to the King. The incident was officially investigated, and the regiment's officers were execrated in public by indignant crowds. There were large popular demonstrations against flogging in the army. Major Wyndham received an official reprimand. Somerville became the hero of the reform movement, used for political

ends, often against his inclinations. A public subscription was started for him. He met and was befriended by William Cobbett, who had written at length on conditions in Ireland, often in a tone similar to that later adopted by Somerville. Cobbett offered him advice on a career as a writer. In August, 1832, he purchased his release from the army, and returned to Edinburgh. His efforts to start a newspaper and then a shop were unsuccessful, so he joined the 'British Legion', serving with it for two years in Spain, involved in the grim warfare of 1835-37 on behalf of Queen Isabella against her uncle, Don Carlos. He received special commendations and was promoted to lieutenant before being invalidated out in 1837 with a bullet in his arm which he carried with him to the grave.

His politics were not of the more radical kind, and he became increasingly 'conservative' during his life - although his conservatism was of an idiosyncratic, humane and economically liberal kind, informed also by his Scottish covenanting background. In the 1830s he supported the transported Tolpuddle Martyrs, but berated trade union leaders for seizing on the Martyrs' cause in an opportunistic way, which was not primarily concerned with the plight of the persecuted Dorset labourers. He condemned anti-combination laws, but criticised restrictions on entry practised by trade unions via apprenticeship, and the unions' secrecy. In 1837 he published his *Narrative of the British Legion in Spain*, an account of his military experience of the Spanish Civil War of 1835-7.

This was followed by his *Warnings to the People on Street Warfare*, attacking the 'instructions' issued by the revolutionary Colonel Francis Maceroni to the people on street warfare. Somerville argued for the futility of using violence in England to achieve political ends. He had returned in the autumn of 1837 with first-hand experience of the brutal savagery of war in Spain; and he was soon introduced to two members of a Chartist 'Secret Committee of War', as an experienced soldier 'who could give a practical opinion of the feasibility of their intended insurrection'. Somerville, a huge and powerfully built man himself, told the secret committee that he had seen, besides the horrors of bloodshed and death in battle, 'fertile fields trodden under the hoofs and wheels of the artillery ... vines cut down ... the houses of rich and poor ... of political and non-political inhabitants, battered to atoms'. In particular, he attacked what he called the 'absurd ... dangerous, warlike notions' of the Chartist Peter McDouall, pointing out that, unlike continental soldiers, British troops were unlikely to go over to the side of crowds, and that the army was a formidable force for civilians to confront.

He wrote to similar effect, in his *Public and Personal Affairs*, of how 'the agitation in the manufacturing districts is high enough for immediate action, and from a too well grounded discontent - but that agitation is not yet national, nor from the mingled indifference and opposition of the middle classes will it soon become general - therefore an armed movement must be defeated'. There were some who tried to persuade him to join the 'Welsh insurrection of



The police came under increasing pressure as the famine worsened.

1839' - the Newport Rising - but he refused to become involved. He also wrote critically of the Chartist Land Plan in the *Manchester Examiner*, as he does on occasion in the *Letters from Ireland*, basing his view on an assessment of the questionable viability of extremely small-scale peasant holdings, as found in many parts of northern and western pre-famine Ireland. Indeed, his criticism was such that two historians have since referred to him as 'the vitriolic anti-Land Plan propagandist'.

It is for the part Somerville played in the troubles of these years that he has been remembered, mainly by historians of Chartism. Yet it is probable that his best literary work was his subsequent rural commentaries on Ireland, Scotland and England: devoting himself largely to social and economic topics and their political ramifications, writing for the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Manchester Examiner*, with a particular sympathy for the work of the Anti-Corn Law League. *The Whistler at the Plough*, his *Letters from Ireland during the Famine of 1847*, and his *Free Trade and the League* were written around this time, when his public influence was undoubtedly at its height.

A meeting with Richard Cobden, following letters Somerville had published in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1842 on the Corn Laws, began his career as a rural writer. He was supported by the Anti-Corn Law League to report on rural conditions. Known to the League's organisers as a rather difficult fellow they called 'Reuben' - whose occasional drinking bouts they tolerated because of his excellent and authoritative prose - he published his writings under the authorship of 'One who has Whistled at the Plough'. Somerville's views on English and Irish rural society were widely discussed at the time, for he was a persuasive, intelligent and often moving writer. He tells us that 'I resolved to write ... in a manner ... which eschewed the didactic and the still less welcome array of dry figures, which in newspapers had hitherto made agricultural politics an uninteresting subject, and to take up a style of narrative and description'.

Somerville's purpose in England had been to investigate the possibility and results of Corn Law repeal. By 1847 this cause was won. In Ireland his priority was to convince a

sceptical British public, and their politicians, that a disaster was occurring of enormous and unrecognised proportions. He wanted also to comprehend how conditions had deteriorated to such a point. He was a man capable of compelling rhetorical effect in his writing, but his discussion here was level-headed, accusatory and indignant, but still analytical, always urgent. If Somerville can be said to lay blame anywhere for what he saw, and for the causes of the famine, it was at the doors of the larger Irish landlords, regardless of their faith or politics. However, he went beyond superficial allocation of blame - outlining the structural problems of the Irish agrarian economy, dealing with the problems of entailed estates, tenant right, inadequate leases and the disincentives for tenants to improve land, the Irish poor law question, dependency upon land, the considerable extent of subletting, and the conacre and rundale systems. He made detailed comparisons between the respective circumstances of Irish and English agriculture, and also discussed the reasons for the lack of Irish industrial development compared to England. It is clear that he saw the causes of the famine as lying in avoidable institutional, legal and structural flaws rather than in the 'natural' (i.e. inevitable) causes which were emphasised by many in 'responsible' positions as an excuse for inaction. Somerville's journalistic skill, his literary and descriptive imagination, and his sympathy for the Irish people produced a deeply humane account of the hardships suffered, their structural causes, and the inadequate attempts to relieve them.

After his work on Ireland he continued to write for many years, but largely in another country. He emigrated to Canada in 1859. Sadly, his wife died just eleven months after his arrival there, although they left a number of children who settled in America and Canada. Despite many literary initiatives, his own fortunes did not improve. Late in life he listed his writings, including his account of Ireland, and remarked that 'it will be seen that many of the subjects are, unfortunately, such as an author may become poor upon, rather than popular and well remunerated'. His earlier sympathetic attitude towards the Irish in the 1840s seems to have taken some knocks following the Fenian attack on Upper Canada in May, 1866, under General John O'Neill, with the seizure of Fort Erie, and the attacks on St. Armand and Frelighsburg. On these occasions he defended the Upper Canadians, on the grounds that their livelihoods and new homes were being threatened, and that they were not themselves involved in the controversy in Britain over Ireland.

Somerville died in 1885, aged seventy-four, in poverty in a squalid boarding house in Toronto. For some years he had been sleeping throughout the year in a woodshed outside, with the snow in winter seeping through the window. And it is certain that, all those years later, he had not forgotten the deplorable scenes he had witnessed during the famine: men like 'the phantom farmer, Thomas Killahel', near Newcastle, Co. Limerick, who had followed him at one point, while on the hillside two 'spectre children' had stood leaning on their long and narrow spades, 'spades made for spectres to dig with'. Thomas Killahel 'said nothing, but looked - oh! such looks, and thin jaws! ... The lean man looked as if his spirit, starved in his own thin flesh, would leave him and take up its abode with me. I even felt it going through me as if looking into the innermost pores of my body for food to eat and for seed oats. It moved through the veins with the blood, and finding no seed oats there, nor food, searched through every pocket to the bottom, and returned again and searched the flesh and blood to the very heart; the poor man all the while gazing at me as if to see what the lean spirit might find; and it searched the more keenly that he spoke not a word'. Thomas Killahel may have spoken not a word, but Alexander Somerville wrote for him.

Somerville Letters

Limerick, 9th February 1847

I had intended to write a letter, instead of this, from the county of Clare or Galway; but the snow-storm which enwraps the country and fills the atmosphere with smothering drift prevents me from getting further west for the present. And the state of the roads is already such as to render it doubtful if even this letter will reach Manchester in time for next Saturday's paper.

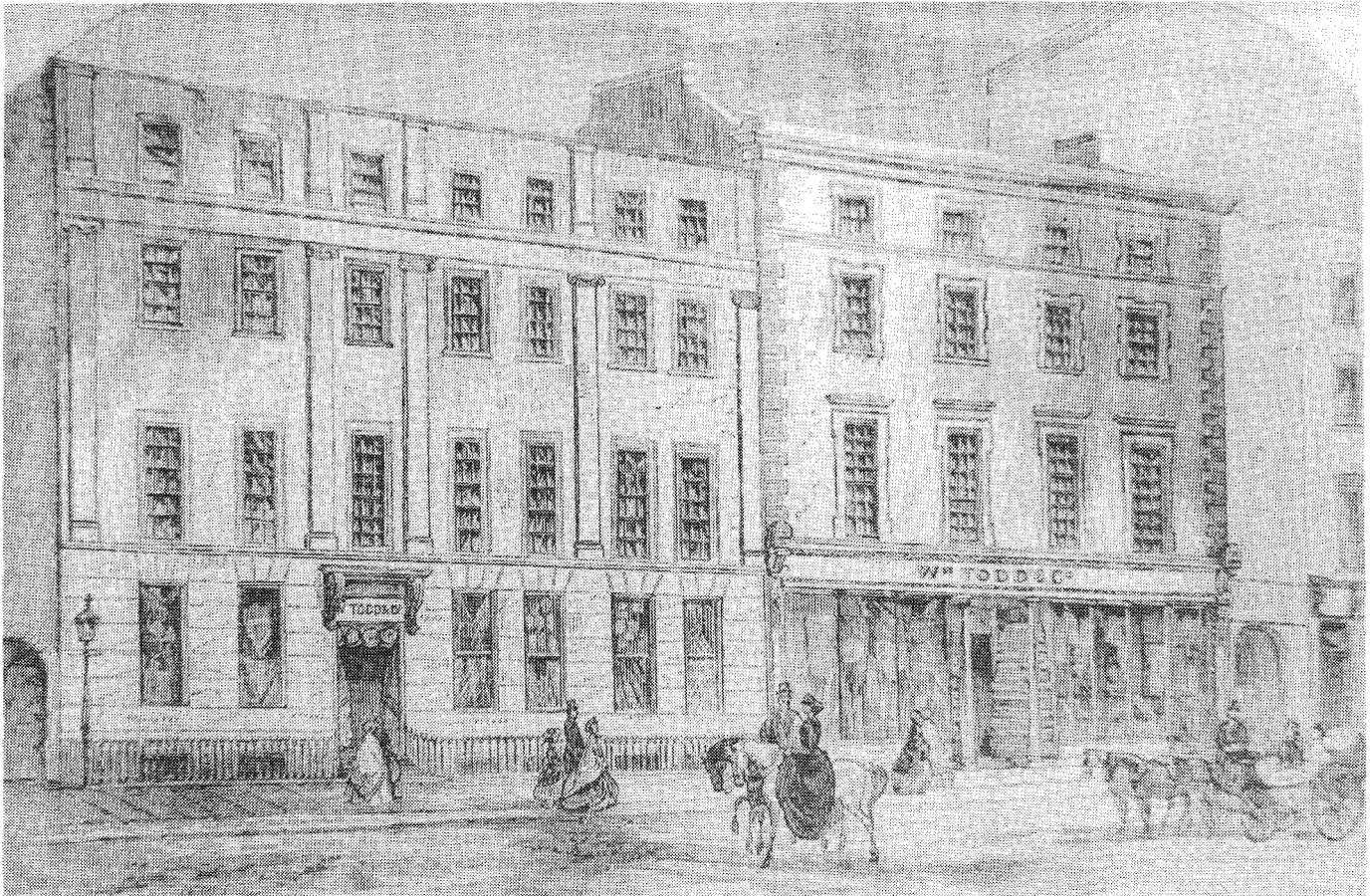
But there is no want of matter to write about here. Long before I reached this city I had matter enough, of the deepest interest, for a volume, instead of a column or two in a newspaper. The difficulty with me is to select the topics of most pressing interest, and postpone or leave untold what cannot be now published. To begin and continue to tell of all the ghastly faces, hollow and shrunken, which I have seen, with death looking out of the eyes, might horrify and appal the reader, but would not, I fear, instruct him; the masses of population amongst whom I have travelled through Tipperary and part of this county, sinking from health to sickness, from life to death - not yet dead, but more terrible to look upon and think upon than if they were dead; living, but with death and his

attendants in possession of the human tenement, and keeping possession until the indwelling spirit of the clay is ejected, thrown out, out at the windows where it is already seen struggling to stay within, and glaring horribly upon the passer by; those masses of population would afford, in description, scope enough to fill all this paper, from title to printer's name. But the means of relieving them from present suffering and impending death are the topics which I shall rather choose.

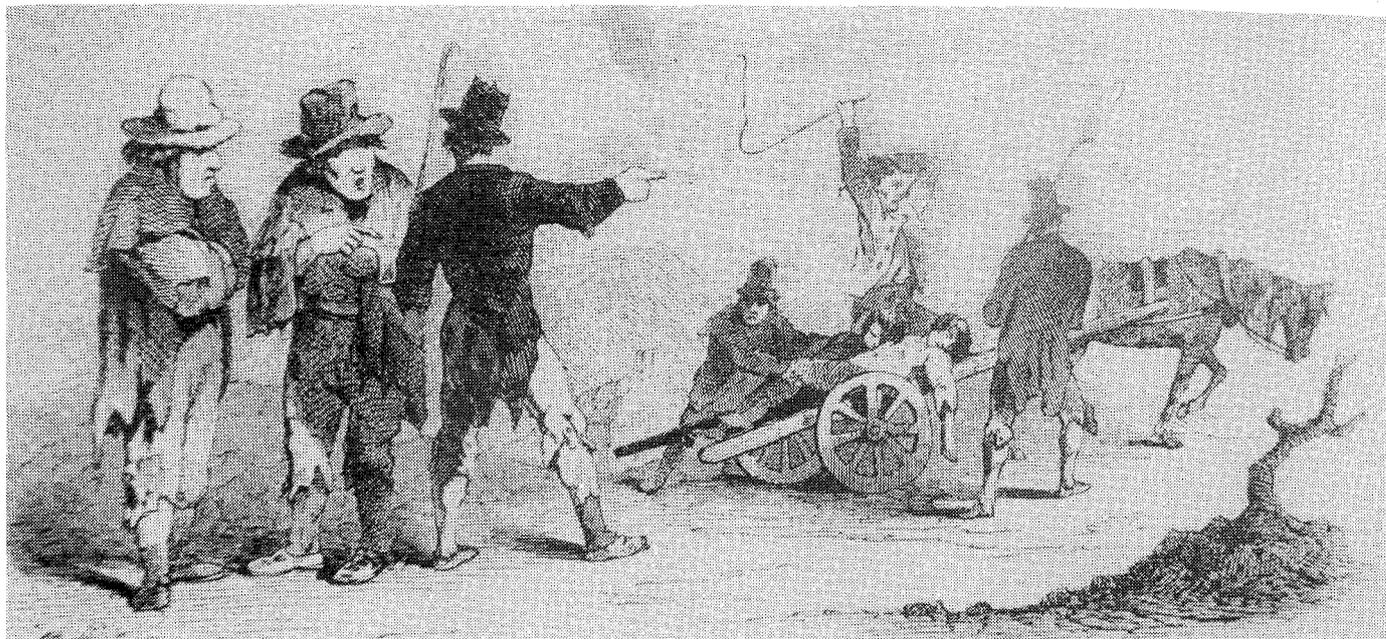
On the subject of subscriptions to relief committees, a very few sentences shall at present suffice. Government doubles the subscriptions of private individuals, so that by a subscriber giving £50, the relief committee gets £100. The munificent contributions from England, and the government duplication of them, (the government being in that case only the dispensers of taxes paid chiefly by Englishmen who work, who take off their coats to work, and sweat with their coats off), these contributions are in many places the only dependence of the people for subsistence. In no place can I see, or ascertain by inquiry, that the nobility or landowning gentry are contributing, save in the most paltry sums; most of them giving nothing at all. A landlord who has nominally an income of £20,000 per annum, but who, it is believed, has

positively £10,000, puts his name down, in the county of Cork, for £5. Another in Tipperary county, who either is rich or lives as if he were rich, puts his name down for £4. The town of Bridgewater in England alone has contributed for Irish relief above £1100 in the course of a few weeks. Its population is about 10,000. The population of Clonmel in Ireland is about 16,000. Its contributions to the relief fund are about £1000, being by far the most liberal of any town in Ireland according to the population. But with the single exception of Mr. Bianconi, the rich car proprietor, who gives £25, the 'Saxons' resident there, or the 'Celts' favourable to Saxon alliance, are the liberal contributors. The only titled or landed subscriber is the Earl of Clonmel, who gives £20. The millers, most of them, give £100 or £50 each, their daughters and sisters giving sums of £20 and £50, in addition to an endless stream of private beneficence. From a few shillings up to £5, but seldom more than 10s. is the range of the subscriptions of the shopkeepers, gentry, and anti-Saxon aldermen and town-councillors (Mr. Bianconi excepted) of Clonmel. And they have been making speeches, writing, and printing, and publishing all manner of anti-Saxonism, at least twice-a-week, up to last Saturday.

But, to pass to more comprehensive



A mid-19th century picture of the William Street store of William Todd & Co.



A funeral at Skibbereen. Engraving, *Illustrated London News*, 30 January, 1847.

and permanent measures of Irish relief, let me glance at the proposition to give sixteen millions sterling out of the imperial exchequer to make Irish railways. In the report of the debate on Lord George Bentinck's motion there is the following:

Captain Osborne thanked the noble member for Lynn, Lord George Bentinck, for the able and energetic manner in which he had taken up the cause of Ireland. He looked upon the noble Lord as the only party leader of that house who had brought forward a really great plan for the redemption of Ireland, (the proposal to advance sixteen millions sterling to make railways). He could assure the government that the people of Ireland looked for some comprehensive plan for the amelioration of their condition.

The people of Ireland and the landlords of Ireland must not be mistaken the one class for the other. Both may be poor, and need relief; but the means by which they became poor are very different. Mr. Roebuck might speak more softly in the hearing of the Irish landlords in parliament; but, in whatever tone he might speak of their disposition to job for their own exclusive benefit with public money, he could only offend them. So must any one else who speaks or writes of their jobbing dispositions and practices. Yet, is truth to be withheld, and sixteen millions sterling laid hold of, in addition to the ten or eleven millions spent, and to be spent by the government in Ireland for Irish relief, merely because a class of men, far more remarkable for their corruption than for their impeccability, splutter and explode in the face of every one who estimates them according to their past doings? I protest against the inference that the Irish people are insulted, or should feel insulted, because those very men who have beggared the Irish people and the Irish land cannot suffer to hear themselves

spoken of. I would rather refrain from speaking of them; but how can the ills of Ireland be explained and redressed if the owners of her land are not to be named! How are they to be named without blame, and trusted with vast sums of public money without suspicion, when we see some of the most practical and least poverty stricken of them in this very season of famine, distress, and disorder, opposing the public benefit, and deferring the employment and payment of labourers to promote their own private ends - those very men standing up in parliament, demanding in the name of the people sixteen millions to help to make railways, while their own greediness mars the making of railways for which the money is already provided?

The line from Limerick to Waterford would have been employing several thousands of men at this moment, if the capital had been all subscribed. The government, seeing this, came forward to make up the deficiency of capital for the earth works, three weeks or a month ago. No man in England or Ireland knows that fact more clearly than Mr. Osborne. No man with the breath of life in him knows better than Mr. Osborne why this railway is not now going on, and why time and money are now being wasted in new surveys, while thousands of unemployed men, along the course of the line, are dependent on charity, and on government advances to relief committees, for subsistence. The public do not know the causes of that delay; I shall tell them one, at least, of the causes.

The line, as formerly surveyed and adopted, passed near the park walls of an important landowner in Tipperary; but it did not go through more than a few acres of his estate. The line by that course went in a straight direction, and through level meadows. The important landowner, either to get it to go through some miles of his property for the sake of the money to be paid for leave to do so, or because he

thinks that a railway and the trains upon it shooting along the valley, (miserably bad taste if he thinks so!) in sight of his fine new park, would deteriorate the beauty of the scenery of the Suir river and the Waterford hills beyond - to please himself, in one or the other of these respects, or to effect some purpose equally unworthy, is endeavouring to turn the railway out of the straight line in the plain by the river side, to go round some miles of country, chiefly on his estate, in form of a crescent, part of that course being in deep cuttings. The additional expenses, by taking that erratic course instead of the even one, will be £10,000 for construction, besides the great expense now incurred for new surveys, and the great loss to the public from delay.

But his deviation of the line has a more serious disadvantage. The largest flour mills in Ireland, save perhaps one establishment, were to be served by the straight line. A station was to be made close to the mills. The owner of the mills, having beautiful private grounds sloping towards the river, was willing to have them encroached upon by the railway for the advantage of the station for business. That miller is rich enough to live without business; affluent enough to live, if he chose, in higher style than any landowner in the country; liberal enough to live, as he does, genteelly and beneficently; yet he looks to the advantage of his business, which is the public advantage, and would allow the railway to cut up his pleasure grounds rather than it should not bring wheat to the mill and carry away its flour. Moreover, the station at that point would be a passenger station, and would induce many people to leave Clonmel and return again for pleasure, while by the deviation there will be no point of attraction whatever.

The important landlord, to serve his private purposes, takes, or tries to take, the railway accommodation from the public, and the large mills of the greatest employer of men and money in the neigh-

bourhood, offering no public advantage in return. His influence with the government, conjointly with other landowners of influence, has procured for the railway an advance of public money. Which advance being so obtained gives him great power over the directors of the company. That power seems destined to change the course of the railway. That change in the course of the railway is augmenting the expense and causing delay. That delay is disappointing thousands of men ready to work, and who are starving for want of work. That important landlord is Mr. Bernal Osborne!

In the present emergency, one would not be greatly surprised if the Irish landlords, to facilitate railway construction, enlarge employment, distribute wages, and relieve in some degree the charitable from the burthen of supporting the unemployed - one would not be greatly surprised if they offered the land required for the new railways at a moderate and reasonable price. Not a foot of it will they yield at a reasonable price.

But railways will do so much good to Ireland that it would be well to facilitate their construction in every practicable way. At present the land requires all the manual labour, to prepare its crops for next harvest, which Ireland can give, if those crops are to sustain the Irish people; and it requires more horse labour than all the work-horses in Ireland can give. Every farmer who has horses able to draw a load of corn or of meal is now in receipt of such pay for his horse labour as draws him and his carts and horses from the farm. The food of Ireland is coming to her shores as hard corn. That corn has to be carted great distances to mills to be ground to meal. The meal has to be carted to greater distances for distribution. In order to have the escort of military guards, the carts, and horses, and men, a man to each, are restricted in their locomotion. At the distance of twenty, or thirty, or forty miles from home they are obliged to remain inactive a day, or two days at a time, awaiting the meal, for which there is such competition that they would not be loaded if they did not wait. While, once more, with the harassed, wearied, worn-out soldiery, not numerous enough, great as their numerical strength is in Ireland, to furnish guards so frequently as the carts are loaded and ready to move; with this disadvantage they must again delay.

I cannot form an estimate of the number of men and horses employed thus throughout Ireland, and to be employed thus until the end of that time when Ireland is to be publicly fed as now. But an opinion of the mischief that is to befall the land and its culture and crops may be formed from the fact that every agricultural work-horse which I have seen, and which is able to work, each with its master, or master's son, or master's hired man, is employed in transporting corn and meal at one halfpenny per cwt. per mile; a payment liberal enough to make Irish farmers forsake ploughing to get ready cash for carting.

To produce food from oats, and barley, and rye, instead of potatoes, three acres of land will require to be sown instead of one acre of potatoes. Neither wheat nor turnips can be sown in any available quantity this year, from the deplorable misculture of the soil. Its wetness, foulness, and poverty, though much of it is naturally fertile, unfits it at present for wheat and turnips.

The land cannot be prepared in time nor at all, save in some limited and favoured districts, to sow grain. The horses are otherwise employed. The peasantry have neither numerical strength nor physical strength to prepare the land with the spade in the requisite time; no, not an eighth part of it, to produce corn enough to supply the place of the potatoes, though every man able to handle a spade began to delve tomorrow and delved until the month of June.

Wherefore, I, after observing closely, thinking anxiously, and making many calculations, declare my opinion to be, that if the sixteen millions sterling were now lying loose and without other uses, it would be the most mischievous thing for Ireland which could be devised, to embark in extensive railway works with that money, while so vast a proportion of the land is untilled, with the horse labour employed otherwise than in tillage, and while the whole manual strength of the country is but fractional to the strength required to put crops in the ground.

Ennis, County Clare, 12th February 1847

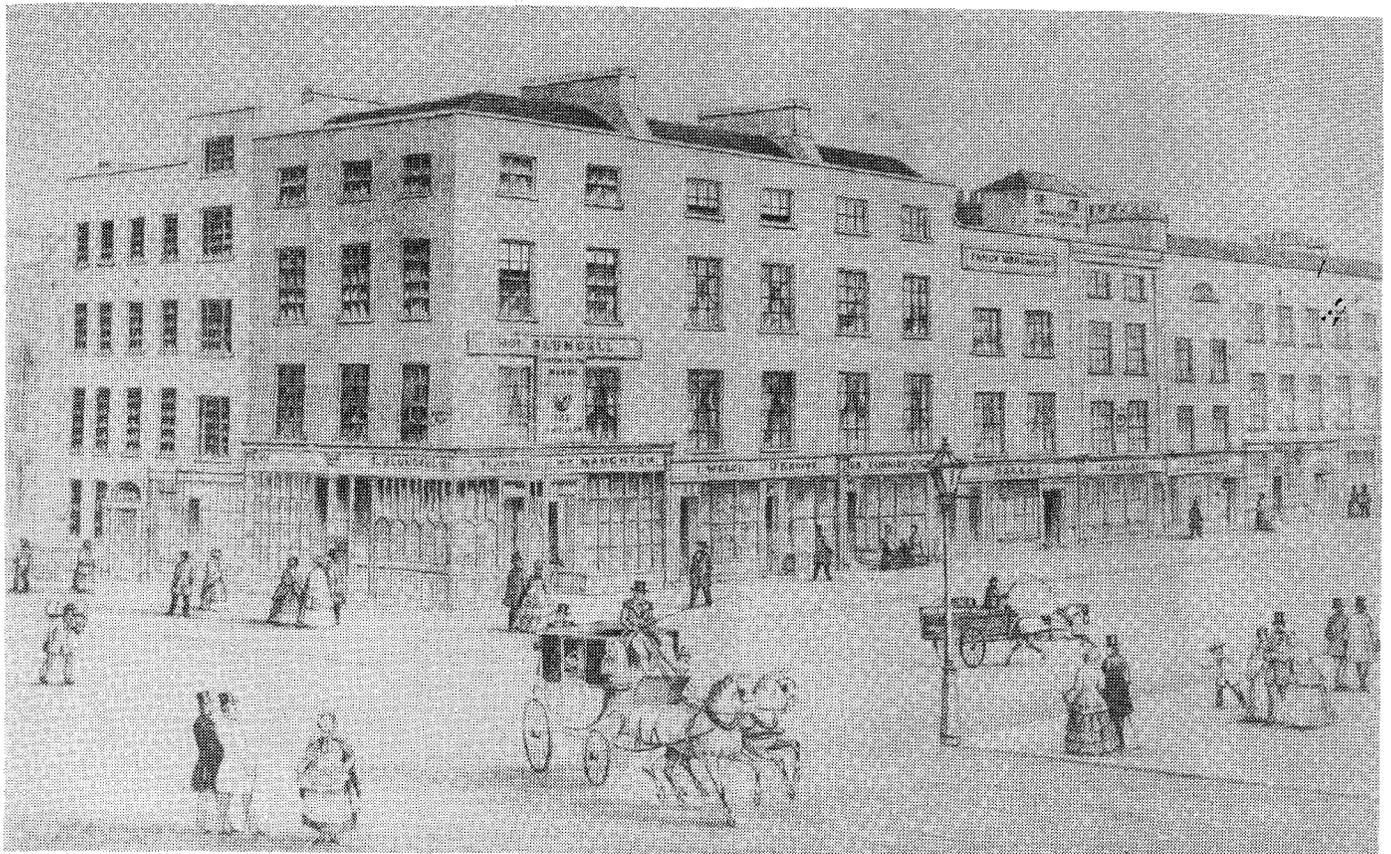
Looking from this western county town, through the medium of notebooks and recollections, upon the counties journeyed over from the east and the south, the soil not lessening in fertility, the face of the country not declining in beauty, but the distress deepening, human life sinking to the west, (may it indicate the dawning of a brighter morrow!) and looking around me here on hungry Clare, a question arises as to the cause of Clare, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo, and other grass-growing counties being so generally devoted to pasturage, giving no employment to the people. With that question before us, it may be interesting to take a general review of Irish agriculture; and it is as fit to take that review from this point as from anywhere else. Space need not be now occupied with lengthened descriptions of the people's sufferings. All that can be said of the peasantry of the west is comprised in the words, hovels, hunger, rags, rheumatics, weakness, sickness, death. All that can be said of the gentry of the west is comprised in the words, castles, pride, idleness, improvidence, poverty, debt. There is hardly a middle condition or a middle class.

Until a period of time not yet reaching a hundred years, the surface of Ireland was almost exclusively devoted to pasturage. If the potato plant goes out of cultivation followed by famine, it came into cultivation preceded by famine. It was long

after the introduction of the potato by Sir Walter Raleigh - it was not until three generations after his death - that this plant was cultivated for food. From Raleigh's time it had been preserved in the family garden and eaten at the family table of Sir Richard Blackwell, his grandfather having received some tubers from Raleigh. Blackwell, seeing the excessive privations to which the people were exposed by periodical recurrences of famine, urged the cultivation of the potato plant as a relief from famine.

In 1727 an unsuccessful attempt was made to introduce an act of parliament to compel landholders to till five acres out of every hundred, exclusive of mountain and bog, and to release tenants to the same extent from the penal covenants in their leases against tillage. In 1762 an act passed to grant bounties on corn brought by land to Dublin, which was not withdrawn until 1780. In 1764 the sum of £5,483 was paid as a bounty for this purpose. The sums increased annually until 1780, when the bounty for that year amounted to £77,800. The counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Meath, Queen's, and Tipperary, received the largest share of the bounties.

There are about one and twenty millions of acres in Ireland, of which one third is not touched by spade or plough or the hand of man. Much of that third part is capable of being profitably cultivated. But a far larger proportion of the other two thirds is capable of being doubled, trebled, or quadrupled in productiveness by the presence of money, labour, wages, and skilful direction, and the absence of entails, leases on lives, tenancies-at-will, and all the other evils which the Irish landlord is heir to. It is almost a universal custom throughout Ireland for the landlord to let the bare farm to a tenant to erect dwelling-places for himself and his beasts, at his own expense, according to his ability and taste. The ability being low, the taste is kept at the same level. It is also common, though not universal, for the landlords to get rid of a tenant by pulling down the house. There being always a keen competition for land, a farm can be readily relet to another tenant on condition of that other tenant rebuilding the house. The landlord having no expense to incur, is not particular about pulling down a house, or a dozen or a score of them. In all parts of the south and west of Ireland the wrecks of human habitations are seen, the roofs having been taken off to get the tenants out. A low state of morals is a consequence of wretched dwelling-places; wretched dwelling-places are the natural result of the tenant being the builder at his own expense for the landowner to be the sole proprietor of the building. Leases used to be granted for 999 years upon the payment of a sum of money. In such a case the leaseholder is the real owner, but he cannot sell. He can only sub-let. The sub-tenant under him divides the property among a lower class of tenants. The law is such, that if the second tenant fails to pay his rent to the first tenant, though the



A fashionable view of George Street in the mid-19th century.

third one, who is the occupier and cultivator, may have paid the rent to the second, the third can be seized upon for the default of the second, and all of his stock swept away.

If there be tenants of the first, second, and third degrees, with a head landlord over all, that head landlord recovers his rent from any one of the three. This system gives the landlords a better chance - at least they think so - of getting rent, than if they had only one tenant for the one farm. Therefore they encourage this pernicious system of sub-letting.

Another kind of lease not now granted, but still existing and to exist, is that of a lease on lives, renewable for ever by payment of a fine on the death of the lives named in the lease.

The more common leases now are for sixty-one, thirty-one, and twenty-one years, with one or more lives added thereto. The lives are commonly those of neutral persons not in any way connected with the property. If the lives expire before the term of years, the lease expires with the years, if no other lives are added to it. If the years expire first, the lease does not end until the persons named in it die. The hazard and uncertainty of this system cannot be otherwise than detrimental to agriculture; at all events, a good capital, enterprise, and industry, must be unsettled, checked, and weakened, by this system of uncertainty. Speaking of it to Mr. Mannix, the Chancery receiver, whose experience so well entitles him to give an opinion on this subject, I was told that unless some uncertainty existed as to the termination of the lease, the tenants would ruin the land. When the expiry of a

term of years approach, they would cease to fertilize the soil, and lay the buildings, gates, and fences in ruins. It is, therefore, requisite, he said, to name lives, so that, their termination not being foreseen, the occupation of a tenant may end before he can do injury to the farm.

With all respect to the experienced Chancery receiver, I deny the expediency or necessity of this system. Tenants have ill-used their farms, but they were ill-used tenants before they did so. The most distinctive characteristic of an Irish farmer is his want of faith, his ever wakeful suspicion in his landlord and in the agents of his landlord. The most trustful and faithful of human beings is the Irishman when he is himself trusted, and has been convinced that he is trusted. This is no idle sentiment; it is capable of proof. Nor can I pass without denial the assertion that the Irish peasant is from choice the enemy of industry and the security of property and of human life. Look at the Quakers of Clonmel and of other towns in Tipperary who have large capitals invested in business, who employ Irishmen and pay them without reference to their religion or politics; who avoid all strife and contention, and do justice to all with whom they have intercourse; which of those Quakers is afraid of the peasantry of Tipperary who know him? Not one of them. And more orderly and industrious working men do not exist than those whom the Friends employ.

I cannot permit the Tipperarians and the Irish peasantry generally to be libelled as a naturally turbulent and assassin race, not even by men of the *Nation*, whose pens are dipped in ink from week to week

to excite the peasantry to dip their hands in blood. I purchased a volume of songs and poems at Limerick, reprinted from the *Nation* newspaper, and called the 'Spirit of the Nation'. If it had been called the 'Spirit of the Butchers' Shop' or the 'Spirit of the Shambles' it would have been more appropriately named. From beginning to end it presents the mind with no other idea than that of butchers whetting their knives to cut throats. There is no other sentiment in it. Even as to poetry, for which, according to the preface, the book has been praised by political opponents, I see but very little. The rhymes are harmonious and flow smoothly, but any versifier of talent might disembowel the dictionary and string its words together in such lines, just as easily as a butcher separates, lays together, and dresses raw tripe.

Ireland, rich in natural treasures under the earth and above the earth, richer in rivers to move machinery and to float ships than any other portion of the globe of the same length and breadth, and with an abundant population needing to work, seeking to work, and willing to work, only requires peace, and men of peace, with money and skill in their hands and in their heads. With these Ireland may have, *will have*, manufactures, commerce, wealth, wages, inward order, outward power, and landed estates productive and valuable. Since I wrote my last letter, dated at Limerick, I have stood upon the shores of the Shannon, *have sailed upon*, steamed upon, mused upon, and wondered at, this river's mighty breadth and length and strength. Two hundred and thirty-five miles long, with a volume of running water

equal to the three largest rivers of England, the Thames, Trent, and Severn united; swelling into lakes, four, five, and six miles wide, and from twenty to thirty miles long, as if the Shannon spread himself out to invite the world to launch its ships upon him; again gathering himself together to shew his strength, as if bidding the world build mills upon his shores - mills, if the world likes, to grind all the corn and spin all the yarn of the earth. Standing upon, musing upon, and wondering at, the waters of this river, the awe inspired by its measureless power, and the contemplation of what the Almighty Maker made it for, is only surpassed by the deeper awe arising from the havoc, disorder, famine, and crime, made by men who waste the fertile land upon its shores, as well as its godlike gift of motive power - waste, in the face of frowning Heaven, one of the noblest treasures of nature which God ever gave to man.

See a nobleman, owner of a vast territory on one side of it, an amiable man he is, getting his rents collected, extracted, and remitted to him once a month to London, because he cannot live two months without them! His income nominally £20,000 a-year; his acres three times twenty thousand; his wretched tenantry in misery at all times, dying of famine now; he not able to contribute a sack of meal to their relief; government sending meal to their relief. This nobleman, naturally, I believe, one of the best meaning of men, but born to entailed land and entailed beggary, with the misfortune of being a Lord with dignity and debt upon his head heavier than mill-stones, is no doubt anxious to serve his native country if he can. He has only one way of doing so, and only one way of serving himself; the same measure will serve both. Let him promote the abolition of the entail upon his heritage; let him sell a third part or a half of his acres to purchasers who have money to buy and knowledge and a will to make the money so invested profitable; and let him apply the money he receives to the emancipation of himself, the fertilizing of his estate, the well-being of his tenants, and the profitable employment of some of the people unemployed now. When this is done, that accumulation of poor houses called a town - his own town, with his gaunt castle, both famishing on the Shannon, with the Shannon going idly by - may become a great town, though not exclusively his Lordship's own, and fulfil its share of that world which the mighty Shannon is destined to perform.

Lough Derg, County Galway, 16th February 1847 Extract

I cannot let this letter go to England without an account of the Shannon river and its great lakes, on the shores of one of which I now write. The trade of the Shannon is small, the capacity of the river for trade is boundless.

At the city of Limerick, seventy-seven



William Smith O'Brien.

miles from the Atlantic Ocean, ships of 300 and 400 tons load and unload. At five miles below Limerick, seventy-two miles from the ocean, ships of 800 tons load and unload. The running water is, above Limerick, about 600 feet wide, and at the shallowest and most impetuous currents of that width between three and four feet deep; when not running impetuously, the usual depth is from 30 to 40 feet. Close to Limerick, it falls 9 ft. 6 in. Between that place and Castle Connell, five miles above Limerick, it falls 66 ft. 11 in.; and between Castle Connell and Killaloe it falls 20 ft. 8 in. Altogether, in fifteen miles above Limerick and adjoining the navigation from the Atlantic Ocean, this great river falls 97 ft. 1 in. The water-power, for mechanical purposes, which could be used in that space of fifteen miles, can only be expressed and comprehended by the term illimitable. The space for manufactories, public-edifices, water-courses, streets, and thoroughfares, is far beyond what could be occupied by any conceivable extension of trade; while on gentle eminences and hills, rising above the river and the plain, there are sites for an extent of city, which might arise out of manufactures and commerce, though that city exceeded twice in size the greatest metropolis of the world - London.

The navigation from Limerick to Killaloe, owing to the rapids and falls of the river, is partly by canal and locks. Including stoppages in the locks, the swift passage-boats, drawn by three horses each, the horses being changed every four miles, do the distance in about two hours.

At Killaloe, which is ninety-two miles from the sea, the steam navigation of the upper Shannon begins and proceeds upwards. Iron steam vessels were brought in sections from Liverpool and put together and launched here for the navigation of the upper Shannon. That which I took a passage with, the *Lady Lansdowne*, was 90 horse power. Her fuel was turf, and her engines required for six hours' work 65 boxes of turf, each box containing 20 cubic feet, each 20 feet of the value of sixpence. The fuel for 90

horse power for six hours thus costs £1:12:6. It would be an inconvenient kind of fuel for long voyages or for vessels of heavy loading. The steamers on the upper Shannon convey loads commonly by acting as tugs to heavy barges. The conveyance of passengers between the canal at Killaloe and the canal at Shannon harbour, a distance of thirty-seven miles, is also a chief branch of their trade. The vessels are commodious, well fitted up, and the best cabin fares are only 5s. 10d. for the whole distance of fifty-two miles from Limerick.

Between Killaloe and Portumna, a distance of twenty-three miles, the Shannon is a lake, known as Lough Derg. Deep and broad, with islands, headlands, creeks, and tributary rivers, the lake extending back into the rivers, farther than can be seen from the ship's deck, Lough Derg is delightful to look upon and to be upon. Its beauty and serenity, with the shores of Munster on one side and of Connaught on the other, make one feel as if heaven had descended in the olden time to separate men who loved strife and made their country poor by their strife, and held out to them the beneficence of nature to make themselves rich, and still stood, still holding out the gift which they, in the strife of creeds and factiousness of politics, still neglected. The existence of steam packets on the lake may seem to disprove the inference here drawn, that the dwellers on the shore neglect the resources of the Shannon river. Those steamers do not derive much of their trade from the shores of Lough Derg. Tourists in search of health and pleasure from distant places; passengers travelling between Dublin and Limerick by the Grand Canal, which joins the Shannon, seventy-nine miles from Dublin; military stores and troops; corn and provisions between market towns; and, at present, food to relieve the famine; these constitute the chief business of the steamers on the Shannon. But they will, in time, create trade for themselves. It is not yet two years since the large boats were launched on the upper Shannon. As yet they cannot ascend higher than Shannon harbour, thirty-seven miles from Killaloe, fifty-two miles from Limerick, one hundred and twenty-nine miles from the sea. When the improvements of the river now in progress, and soon to be completed, permit, they will go up to Athlone, which is twenty miles farther. Ultimately steam vessels will go to Lough Allen, two hundred and thirty-four miles from the sea, one hundred and fifty-seven miles above Limerick, and one hundred and forty-two miles of direct steaming from Killaloe. At present a smaller class of steamers go twice a-week over the twenty miles between Shannon harbour and Athlone.

Proceeding up the river from Athlone to Lanesborough, the distance is twenty-one miles, most of it a lake called Lough Ree, wider, more diversified, and said to be finer in scenery than Lough Derg. At Lanesborough the water is 15 feet

10 inches above Killaloe. From Lanesborough to the junction of the Arigna river, fifty-two miles, the difference of water level is 34 feet. From the Arigna river to the head of Lough Allen the distance is ten miles more. The Shannon, above Lough Allen, has no distinct character. Several small rivers flow into that lake from Leitrim county, and one from the mountains of Cavan, smaller than the rest: this last is called the Shannon. It wells up in a deep basin 50 feet wide.

From the head of Lough Allen to the sea, the course of the Shannon is 234½ miles; the fall of the water is 146 feet 11 inches, 97 feet of those falls being within fifteen miles of Limerick; 76 feet 5 inches within five miles of Limerick and of the ocean ships, as if nature had been specially regardful to make this the most generally useful of rivers. It waters the boundaries or parts of them, or collects the water tribute of twelve counties - Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, King's, Tipperary, Galway, Clare, Limerick, and Kerry. If all the sinuosities and creeks be reckoned on both sides, and such of its islands as are situated in powerful currents, or which possess natural harbours, the entire water frontage of the Shannon, available for business, exceeds 2500 miles. If the tributaries, many of them navigable, be reckoned in the same way, those of them traceable on common maps give an additional water frontage of 6100 miles. If every streamlet of any size, such as are anxiously sought for and made use of by the manufacturers of Lancashire, be reckoned, there will be probably not less than 6100 miles more; in all 14,700 miles of inland water-side extent, communicating with the Shannon, and through it with the Atlantic Ocean, at the most western and most favourable point of the United Kingdom.

The Arigna, falling into the Shannon at Lough Allen, runs through a region of iron ore, *said to be* of boundless extent. Coals are *said to be* found there also. Turf fuel is found abundantly everywhere. I cannot hazard an opinion as to its applicability to steam machinery on a large scale. If water power were used it might serve for heating purposes well enough. I can only speak of the vastness of its quantity. It is hardly possible to conceive a time when the turf of Ireland would be all burned, or any amount of consumption which would burn it. Calculations of its extent and duration, and its reproduction (for turf bogs grow), have been made by Professor Kane and others.

Roscommon, 24 February 1847 [Extract]

'Yesterday, William Smith, Esq., sub-sheriff, with Captain Granville and detachments of the 55th Infantry and 8th Hussars, and a strong party of police, (the armed constabulary), under head constable O'Malley, proceeded to Ballinacarriga to take possession of land from James Hanley and six others for non-

payment of rent. This property belonged to the Rev. Charles Dawson, who was murdered on those lands in the year 1835. There were great crowds assembled, but no breach of the peace was attempted'. - *Limerick Chronicle, 17th February.*

No breach of the peace attempted! Is the stewardship of seven small farms by a squadron of dragoons, a company of infantry, each man of the company with sixty rounds of ball cartridge in his pouch, and a large detachment of the most completely armed corps in Ireland, the Irish police, no breach of the peace? Perhaps not. Perhaps it is no breach of the peace nor of public decency to eject tenants from Irish land now, and only now, because the munificent charities and liberally-allowed taxes of England are contributed to save such ejected tenantry from starvation. At other times Irish landlords have felt a fear of their land-owning neighbours, and have dreaded to execute ejections to augment the burthen of the poor-rates; at other times they have had the dread before them of turning the tenantry out to starve. They have no such fear now. Benevolent men from England, with a pilgrim's staff in one hand and cash to relieve the distressed in the other; relief committees to disburse English subscriptions; and lastly, Sir John Burgoyne, with the English treasury purse in his hand, and all the commissariat stores under his control, to make soup and ladle it out in every village; these come all between the Irish landlords and the death of their evicted tenantry. The present is a favourable time for evictions; the English taxes keep the evicted from falling on the Irish poor-rates and from dying, as such tenants did in other years, in Irish stone quarries and Irish ditches.

In this case we have the great drama of Ireland compressed into one short act - an act so short, that it may be called a piece of bye play, done while the great players occupy public attention with their Irish business in front of the stage in London. We have a 'reverend' and turbulent parson quarrelling, strong in law, strong in political churchism, with his vexed tenantry of another creed. We have him murdered. We have as much public money expended in avenging, or in seeking to avenge his murder, as would have purchased the freehold of all his land; at all events, as much as would have built those tenants decent houses to live in, and as would have put their farms in such workable, though humble order, as would justify the exaction of rent. We have another landlord still quarrelling with them, doing everything to exasperate, nothing to conciliate - everything to oppose, nothing to assist; and calling to his help the military power of cavalry, infantry, and constabulary, and the civil powers of the sheriff's office. We have England paying out of English taxes all those armed men, and providing them with bullets, bayonets, swords, guns, and gunpowder, to unhouse and turn to the frosts of February those tenants and their families. We have English private charity

and the English public treasury providing food for those unhouse families. And while this is being done, we have the 'patriotic' knaves of Limerick, Clare, and Galway - this landlord of Ballinacarriga and the rest - calling for more money from England, and calling the English ill names because they do not give sixteen millions at once.

Strokestown, 26th February, 1847 [Extract]

My last letter, though written from Roscommon, began with a notice of the eviction of tenantry in the county of Limerick in the previous week, and complained that landlords should choose the present time to clear their land of people, only to take advantage of the public provision for those people. This letter must also begin with a reference to Limerick county, though it chiefly refers to Roscommon.

Mr. William Monsell of Tervoe, a place in the vicinity of Limerick city, has written a letter to the *Times*, which has been reprinted in Ireland, and is attracting much notice. He professes to advocate an effective poor-law for his country; but deprecates the proposed enactment of Lord John Russell, because its scope of taxation is too wide. Mr. Monsell says that the landlord who does his duty to the people should be exempted from paying the same amount of poor-rates as those landlords who do not do their duty. Wherefore he pleads that the taxation for the relief of the poor should not be regulated by electoral districts, as the government proposes, but by some smaller and fairer division. Lord Stanley has made the same objection to the bill, and Lord Lansdowne has promised to give attention to Lord Stanley's objection. Nothing at first sight seems to be more equitable than the proposition of having limited districts for poor-law taxation, so that owners of property may be taxed for the poor according to their merits in giving employment to the poor. Mr. Monsell's letter is overflowing with sentiments of humanity for the poor, and so it has got a place in the *Times*.

But, practically, his plan would be extremely unfair to ratepayers and to the poor. Practically he is not himself entitled to much consideration on the subject. Whatever the tenants may do to employ the people out of their income, he at least draws his rents and employs none - none at present. I have this fact on the authority of a poor-law commissioner, who is prepared to prove it if it is denied. His plan of taxing estates separately, in 'units', or in very limited district, to adapt the rates to the pauperism of the estates, would allow him and his land, and the large estates of some of his relatives in the county of Limerick, to escape taxation for the paupers, many of them probably living in Limerick city, who were cleared as cumberers of the ground from his estates.

If the bill has not yet passed, and the alterations are not yet made, let this new

move of the Irish landowners be narrowly watched. It has one purpose, and one only, to relieve the owners of estates which have been cleared by the eviction of tenantry from paying rates to support the evicted, now that they are paupers crowded into villages and towns.

Longford, 5th March, 1847
[Extract]

Mr. John O'Connell, M.P. for Kilkenny, has written a letter from London to the Repeal Association, which is reprinted in most of the Irish newspapers. It may possibly attract no attention in England, nor may this notice of it attract attention in Ireland; but the subject is profoundly important; and, as the member for Kilkenny has the temerity to provoke a discussion on such a subject - that of the generosity of the English public to the Irish people in this present season of distress - I shall not shrink from telling him, respectfully yet firmly, that his letter to the Repeal Association now circulated throughout Ireland is a most unfounded and unworthy libel upon the English people. And more, that of all the gentry in Ireland, the repeal members of parliament, so far as I have yet seen their estates and the starving people on their estates, (and I have already visited a considerable number of them), are the gentry least entitled to accuse the English public of apathy or hardheartedness.

Mr. John O'Connell, referring to an address delivered by him on the previous evening in the House of Commons, says in his letter -

I also drew attention to a monstrous sentiment prevailing in some quarters here, that it is in the natural order of things for a population to be suffered to diminish down to the diminished supply of food in a country afflicted with scarcity. I implored of the government and the house not to let this cruel sentiment have influence upon them in dealing with the question of relief to Ireland, and expressed my fears, from what I had seen, that inadequate and insufficient as are the measures proposed by the government, yet, in so far as those measures involve the expenditure of money, the government are absolutely in advance of English opinion.

I can prove to Mr. John O'Connell, and to all whom it may concern, by reference to Irish estates one by one, to farms upon those estates one by one, and by reference to the charity given or wages paid for actual labour now performed, giving the names of the proprietors and middlemen one by one, whose reputation is involved in the question, that, whatever the stage of liberality may be now arrived at by the government, public opinion and public generosity in England are far in advance of public opinion and public generosity in Ireland.

Some Irish gentlemen may be too poor to have much to give away in the present



A farmer and his wife.

emergency; but the poorest of them might give something. The greatness of the necessity seems to be, for them, an excuse for doing nothing at all - literally nothing at all. Moreover, they might pay wages sufficient to keep their work-people out of the public soup-kitchens, and in a condition able to work.

It would seem invidious, and would be very unpleasant, to pick those gentlemen out by name; but if Mr. John O'Connell, Mr. Smith O'Brien, and the others, of Old and Young Ireland, continue to

misrepresent in their letters to Ireland the generous exertions of the English government and the English public on behalf of the Irish people, I shall name them, and name them in connection with conduct which should cover them with shame.

Cattle are dear and corn is dear. The incomes arising from cattle and corn are better this year, in many districts, than usual. In some counties rents have not been well paid; in others rents were never so readily paid, nor the tenants able to pay

them, as this year. Yet even there, the apathy of the gentry is the same. This very squire, whose working men are starving as I have related, rails in public against the government; against political economy; and in the hearing of hundreds of people, the other day, of whom I was one, declared that Lord John Russell was answerable for all the deaths that were taking place in Ireland, for that he could make food cheaper if he chose.

As to Mr. John O'Connell's assertion of 'A monstrous sentiment prevailing in some quarters here, (in London), that it is in the natural order of things for a population to be suffered to diminish down to the supply of food in a country afflicted with scarcity', it is neither more nor less than a monstrous mis-statement on his part of one of the simplest principles of the most philanthropic of mankind - the political economist.

It is *not* said by them to be 'in the natural order of things for a population to be *suffered* to diminish down to the supply of food in the country afflicted with scarcity'. It is said by them to be 'in the natural order of things for a population, to *suffer from* a diminution of food, and to sink in wretchedness and suffering in proportion to the increase in their numbers and the decrease in the supply of their food; ultimately, if the diminution of food becomes excessive and of long duration, to die and diminish with it'. It is in the natural order of things for human beings to die if they do not obtain sustenance for their bodies, just as it is in the natural order of things for agriculture to languish and fail to produce food for a great population when idle, dissolute, and improvident proprietary classes exact, and compulsorily extract, from the cultivators all their capital, the improving cultivator only being a mark for the landlord's cupidity. It is in the natural order of things for the tenant farmers of Ireland to be oppressed and degraded and made bad farmers when their political uses are deemed of higher importance by the landlords than their agricultural uses. It is in the natural order of things for the oppressed tenantry to listen to those who are continually telling them of their oppression, and promising them a blissful change by some one mighty action which cannot be performed, and which would be as worthless if performed as another moon would be in the sky to give them moonshine of their own. It is in the natural order of things, at least Irish things, for the people to be deluded.

It would be in the natural order of things for an Irish parliament of Irish landlords to legislate for themselves and against their tenantry and the great body of the people. Cruel as the political Protestant landlords have been in persecuting the Catholic tenantry for their religion and their adherence to repeal politics, they are exceeded in cruelty by landlords of the repeal party - the very vultures of a heartless, ignorant, haughty, and selfish class of men.

It is in the natural order of things for

agriculture to be profitless without a manufacturing and trading population to purchase and consume the agricultural produce. It is in the natural order of things for an exclusively agricultural population to be always liable to famine; for it is in the natural order of things for such a population to overstock the land with itself, having no other outlet for the younger branches of families, until they become so numerous and so poor that they cannot afford to cultivate the land: they eat up their seed, their stock, their implements, and consume their own strength.

And so saying, I leave all the rest of Mr. John O'Connell's assertion to its own refutation, namely, that 'a monstrous sentiment prevails in London, that it is the natural order of things for a population to be suffered to diminish down', &c. It must have required a good deal of courage, to say the least of it, for any Irishman to have written that of the English people in reference to their present treatment of the Irish.

Here is a passage from another gentleman, who is frequently in print on this side of the channel, John S. Dwyer, Esq. of Castleconnell, near Limerick. The letter is one of a series addressed to Lord John Russell. His Lordship is better employed in the service of Ireland than to be reading such letters. Yet this, as an Irish landlord's letter, is a curiosity worth reading. Castleconnell, where it is written, is the locality of the great rapids of the Shannon, powerful for manufactures to an illimitable extent, and upon which there is only one mill, and that for grinding corn.

Your Lordship is aware that the party of whose name and traditions you are the representative and leader has very slight claims on the confidence of either the agricultural classes of Great Britain or of the Irish as a nation - a party who, when in power, legislated solely for the advantage of capitalists, systematically sacrificing the interests of society to the aggrandisement of money-dealers, merchants, and manufacturers.

Mr. Dwyer, like every other Irish gentleman, tells the government and everybody else that they know nothing about Ireland. 'Oh! sure you know nothing about Ireland'. 'What Englishman knows anything about Ireland!'

Now, I have very serious doubts if the Irish gentry do not know less of Ireland, their mother country - the mother whom they have reduced to beggary and shame - than most Englishmen do who have transacted business in Ireland. At all events they know nothing of England, and I hold that it is essentially necessary that to do their own country good they should know something of England.

For instance Mr. Dwyer thinks that the complicated tenures of Irish land are the sole reason for the defective state of Irish agriculture, and he compares those complicated tenures with the 'simple' tenures of England, under which he says

she has flourished. Now, in England, the legal harness under which land is held is identically the same as in Ireland. Leases for ever, renewable on fines - copyholds - leases on lives - joint ownerships - tenancies-at-will - and every other obstacle which can mar good agriculture, exist in England. Moreover, the burthens of county-rates and poor-rates are, and have long been, heavier on English land than on Irish land. Hitherto the Irish landlord has laid all the burthens of the soil on the tenant. Even the poor-rate, which he is supposed to pay one-half of, he makes the tenant pay the whole of, deducting his own half afterwards from that half-year's rent which relates to the half-year when the rate was made, the tenant being thus obliged for the landlord's convenience to pay part of his rent before it is due. So far as English agriculture is more prosperous than that of Ireland, it is so in defiance of the complicated tenures.

It is the readier and higher-priced markets in England that makes agriculture more profitable there; and those readier and higher-priced markets are created by the manufacturing and trading classes. Even the rents of the Irish landlords are chiefly obtained from the manufacturing and trading classes of England, who eat and pay for Irish produce. If the Irish landlords would keep that produce at home, and would still have their rents, they must create manufactures, and commence at home; and such gentlemen as Mr. John S. Dwyer must cease to think, and write, and act nonsense.

If he knew more of England than he does, he would know that legislation in favour of English manufactures is repudiated. It never did good; it always did mischief. Manufactures thrive by being left alone, untouched by legislation.

If he knew anything of England, he would know that she is not jealous, as he asserts she is, of Irish prosperity. The more that Ireland could manufacture, the richer would her population be, and the better customers would England and Ireland be to one another. Lancashire and Yorkshire lie near each other; they are not enemies, yet they are competitors; the prosperity of the one is the life of the other. Ireland and England would be related in a similar manner, if more nearly on an equality of prosperity. It is the interest of England to raise Ireland to her own level; they are the enemies of Ireland who prevent it; those enemies are within herself.

Limerick, 22nd March, 1847

Though a previous letter was dated here, I have not yet described Limerick city and county. Even now the city must be omitted, but the county has pressing claims to notice.

Its greatest length from east to west is fifty-four miles; its greatest breadth from north to south is thirty-five miles. It is chiefly a plain lying south-east of the Shannon, gently undulating. The soil is

fertile beyond anything that can be expressed in common agricultural language. With good roads in some parts, and the best of hard stone to make good roads everywhere; with intersecting streams that drive mills and make meal and flour; with other rivers navigable from the Shannon inland, with the Shannon, broad and deep, all along the western boundary, rolling to the Atlantic, with water more than sufficient to float all the ships of the world at once; with the city of Limerick situated on that river, containing docks and harbourage, and affording a first-class market for agricultural produce; with all those advantages, Limerick county is still a poor one, if we may judge it by the employment it gives to the population and the wages paid by its agriculturists to their work people, ninepence and tenpence per day in ordinary years; one shilling per day in this extraordinary year of high prices received for their corn and cattle; still a poor county, if judged by the enormous proportion of its people unemployed by its own resources; still poor, if judged by the common evidences of poverty and disorder, an overwhelming military force in the principal town, barracks for soldiers in the smaller towns, stations, seventy in number, for the armed constabulary in the villages; still poor, if judged by the crimes committed in the struggle to sustain human life on the smallest amount of food now, and on the worst quality of food always before now, which human beings ever subsisted on; but a rich county if judged by the amount of rent paid to its landowners, and by their grandeur of castles, parks, mansions, equipages, ancient family lineage, and new dignities outshining family lineage.

There is Sir Lucius O'Brien, and William Smith O'Brien, M.P. for the county, and other O'Briens, all descendants of the kings of Munster. There are several O'Gradys; and there is 'the O'Grady' of Killyballyowen. There is John Fitzgerold Fitzgerold, 'the Knight of Glin' Castle, Glin on the banks of the Shannon, very ancient; and next door to him, at Mount Trenchard, there is Lord Mounteagle, almost bran new. There is the Earl of Devon, owner, but, I regret to say, only as yet nominal owner, of a large tract of the very richest land near Newcastle. There is William Monsell, Esq. of Tervoe, who writes so fervidly in favour of a poor-law which shall authorise rates to be levied on each estate separately, according to the pauperism on that estate. And there is the Earl of Dunraven, his father-in-law, whose great estates are, like his own, so well cleared of population and paupers. There is the Earl of Clare, Lord Guillamore, Lord Clarina, Lord Cloncurry, Earl of Kingston, Lord Muskerry, and about a hundred other proprietors, resident and non-resident, for whose names and titles space is not allowable in these columns. One of them, Squire Westropp, may be named, however, as it was from a part of his estate that the sub-sheriff, constabulary, 55th infantry, and 8th hussars were employed about a month

ago in ejecting tenants for the non-payment of rent.

And this fact recalls to my mind that the English Earl of S— owns an estate in this county from which some years ago, before English newspapers took much note of Irish affairs, and before Irish papers dared to publish and comment on the acts of landlordism, 1500 persons were turned out homeless, landless, penniless, and potatoless, at the point of the bayonet, in one day. Mr. Doolan of Fairy Hill, Portumna, county of Galway, formerly commandant of the police in Limerick county, told me a few days ago that he had the command on that occasion, and that he saw many of those people lingering on the roads and dying of want months after. Some of them are still paupers in the towns and villages.

Mr. Doolan also stated, and authorised the use of his name in connection with it, that while in that command he was employed in obtaining evidence in cases of murder, and in paying the witnesses to go to America after they had given evidence. One case of murder was as follows:— A farmer was distrained upon for rent, and his potatoes, stored in a pit in the haggard, were under distraint watched by two keepers. The farmer's family had no other food but those potatoes. The keepers would not allow them to have any potatoes, the orders being against it. In desperation the family at last rose upon the two keepers and murdered them. They were tried and hanged, but not all at once. The father was hanged first; next two sons; next their mother was hanged; and at last one of the daughters. The whole expense of the trials and the rewards to witnesses was £10,000, for which Mr. Doolan holds vouchers, and to the correctness of which he says he is ready to make oath. He says that his undoubting opinion is, that had the most ordinary feelings of humanity, simple fair play, been observed towards those people, no murder would have been committed. The two lives of the keepers would have been saved, and the five lives of father, mother, daughter and two sons, would not have been given to vengeance and the gallows. And there would have been saved £10,000, expended on a special commission, on different trials, on prosecuting, counsel, witnesses, and hangmen; besides the saving to England in not being called upon to augment the garrisons of Limerick and the other towns with additional cavalry, infantry, and artillery.

But the most extraordinary part of this drama of cruelty, vengeance, and judicial butchery, is probably this, that the owner of the property on which the distraint for rent was made and the murder committed, lived at the time in Yorkshire, lives there still, draws, it is believed, about £60,000 per annum out of his Irish estates, chiefly in the county of Limerick; has not been in Ireland once during the present century, though an Irishman born; and averred to Mr. Doolan, on the latter paying him a visit a few years ago, that he had never,

before Mr. Doolan told him, heard of the distraint, the murders, the trials, and the executions; that he left everything to his agents, and that it was their business, not his, to know those things.

Mr. Doolan was concerned, as commandant of the police, in another murder prosecution, for which there was a special commission which cost, with the outfit of the witnesses to Canada, £30,000—*Thirty thousand pounds* of national taxes, besides extra military expenses, for one murder; that murder occasioned by the inhuman conduct of an Irish landlord with the law of landlordism at his command.

Lord Devon's commission of 1844 did not receive evidence on any cases of agrarian outrage beyond a very recent period; nor did it take note of such cases save when they came out incidentally. Mr. Doolan states that such cases as the ejectment of 1500 persons by the Earl of S—, which led to awful misery and crime, and enormous military expenses, could not occur now. The Earl of Lucan in the House of Lords, two weeks ago, doubted the truth of a statement made by Lord Brougham, that 400 ejectments had been effected in the barony of Tyrawley, county of Mayo 'because', said Lord Lucan, 'there is now so much noise made about those things in the newspapers, I do not think so many ejectments could have taken place without us hearing more about them'. The fear of the newspapers is the reason given by Mr. Doolan for such things being impossible or unlikely now.

My last letter from Mayo allowed some light to fall upon the ejectment cases in that county. To get rent for the landlords and to get the largest amount of cost for the agents are the causes of ejectments being brought against the small tenantry. They are brought in hundreds, though not intended to be carried into execution.

As to the impossibility of such a case as Lord S—'s ejection of 1500 persons being repeated now, because of the newspapers, I shall here relate a case not yet three years old, which the newspapers have allowed to pass with less notice than enough. It occurred in Suffolk, on Lord S—'s estate there, and exposes the injustice and evil working of the feudal privileges of land and landlords being permitted to exist in this commercial age of England.

Anne Manning, of Wangford, in Suffolk, was tried at Ipswich for setting her cottage on fire, and found guilty, and sentenced only to eighteen months imprisonment because of peculiar circumstances in the case. I was present at the trial, and, from what I heard then, I made inquiries, and ascertained these appalling facts:—

That it was customary for the Suffolk labourers to steal pheasants' eggs from one gamekeeper and sell them to another gamekeeper who was anxious to breed up a large head of game for his master. All of the labourers were habitually low paid in Suffolk, through their superabundance of numbers, as they are in Limerick, and through the waste of the corn crops by



Many people were forced to beg in order to survive.

game and bad farming. Therefore, with low wages and inadequate employment, it became a trade eagerly pursued by the farm labourers, that of robbing the pheasants' nests and selling the eggs to the gamekeepers, probably to those from whom they had been stolen. One of Lord S——'s gamekeepers had lost so many eggs that he was afraid to face his Lordship. His Lordship was over here seeing his Irish estates, and sent notice to Suffolk what day he would return from Ireland. The gamekeeper dreaded that day the more the nearer that it came, and at last, in desperation, shot himself. The evidence on the coroner's jury found a cause for the suicide in the depression of spirits, arising from the loss of pheasants' eggs, and a consequent diminished number of birds. Another gamekeeper imitated the first, and also shot himself. One of the men who had stolen those eggs, the husband of Anne Manning, was committed to jail for three months, by the magistrates, for the offence. During his imprisonment, his wife, with a family of very young children, was left to her own resources at out-field labour for her own and their support, the wages for women at field labour being only 8d. per day. Her cottage rent, which had been paid weekly before her husband was caught stealing the pheasants' eggs, fell into arrear. The landlord of the cottage distrained upon the

furniture for the rent, and upon a certain day the poor furniture was to be sold. The wretched woman became desperate, and said the furniture should not be sold. To prevent it, she set fire to the house. This was in June 1844, when incendiary fires were unhappily so common in Suffolk, when the madman Lancaster, convicted of some of those fires, urged others to kindle them, and excused himself for kindling them, because *it was for the good of the farmers and the landlords to burn the corn and make it scarce and dear!* And it was at the assizes at the end of July that Anne Manning was tried for the burning of her cottage, her husband in prison for the eggs, her little children in the workhouse. The late Mr. Justice Williams was the judge; and it was reported through the courts and Ipswich at the time, that he declared himself unable, as a man, to pass sentence on that woman, as a judge. At all events he did not pass sentence on her. She was taken into the adjoining court, and Mr. Baron Alderson sitting there, adjudged her to eighteen months imprisonment, a light punishment for arson; and even he was overcome with emotion as he did it.

But to quit Suffolk and its poor farm labourers, and return to Limerick with its poorer, where Lord S——'s estate, depopulated of 1500 persons in one day, is situated. I find in the Devon Blue Book,

Part II, page 595, that a Mr. Michael Byrne, in complaining of the county-cess being entirely paid by occupiers who have no control over its expenditure, says -

The landlords will not pay one single shilling of the charges for repairing roads and bridges, and for the police and gaols and dispensaries. In the case of a new road, as in the case of Lord Stradbroke, made by the occupiers in the barony which it passed through, Lord Stradbroke did not pay one shilling, though it improved his estate 50 per cent; they made roads through the mountains which improved the value tenfold - it fell upon the people totally unconnected with his estate; that I think very unjust. I must pay for all the improvements on Lord Portarlington's estate, though he does not pay one shilling. In the last session there were fourteen of the great people (voting away the money as grand jurors) that did not pay one shilling tax of the kind. They are benefited, but they do not pay the tax.

'Do you consider that the tenants do not take into consideration the amount of the county-cess at the time they are proposing for land?'

'It is very little calculated. They are so anxious to get into a farm, they make no calculation. They are anxious to get

anywhere, whatever farm they can, and then struggle away'.

In those *italic* lines is written the agricultural and whole social history of Ireland. They were uttered before the commissioners on the 15th of August 1844. Immediately following which Lord S——, who was in Ireland at the time, (in fact, it was this very visit in 1844, the return from which the gamekeepers in Suffolk so dreaded, the eggs being lost, that they shot themselves); Lord S——, in a very angry tone, denied that the county-cess was spent in making the road through his mountain property as alleged by Mr. Byrne. His Lordship says, Appendix B, page 53 -

'Some ten years since, £50,000 were granted by parliament for improving roads and opening lines in districts requiring them'.

He then proceeds to say that he expected a part of this money, but did not get any of it to make roads through his mountain property, though he went to the expense of having surveys made to plan where those roads should be. His Lordship adds that, for 'such persons as Mr. Michael Byrne' to be bringing the names of landlords before the public who went to the expense of private surveys for private roads, expecting to get public money to make them, and who did not get the public money, is a very hard case.

It is clear that Lord S—— did not make the roads on his Limerick estate, he says so himself; and as they are made, I am inclined to believe Mr. Michael Byrne's account of the source of the expense. The view from those very roads of the great plain of Limerick is thus described in the 'Hand Book for Travellers in Ireland', published in 1844, by the Messrs. Curry of Dublin:-

In ascending by the new road which winds along the slopes of the hills, the eye ranges over one of the most extensive fertile plains in the kingdom, and in this fertile but wretchedly cultivated district, except the larger towns and demesnes there are few objects on which the eye can with pleasure repose. The numerous low clay-huts, exactly the colour of the soil, afford no relief, and the widely scattered seats appear as mere specks on the surface of the immense space. In the autumnal months, however, when the various corn crops are ripening, this bald, though from its extent, sublime scene is enriched by the golden colours of the waving grain.

I quote this passage because I have not seen Limerick plain in harvest; and also to shew that other writers than myself call it 'fertile, and wretchedly cultivated'. This great plain of Limerick has had for many a year all the advantages enumerated at the beginning of this letter. It has landlords resident and non-resident, Saxon and Celtic, all of whom, or any one of whom, might have done whatever they chose - some of them have even manured the soil with human blood, all have done what

alone landowners can do, thinned out the population; but still the fertile plain is wretchedly cultivated.

Rathkeale

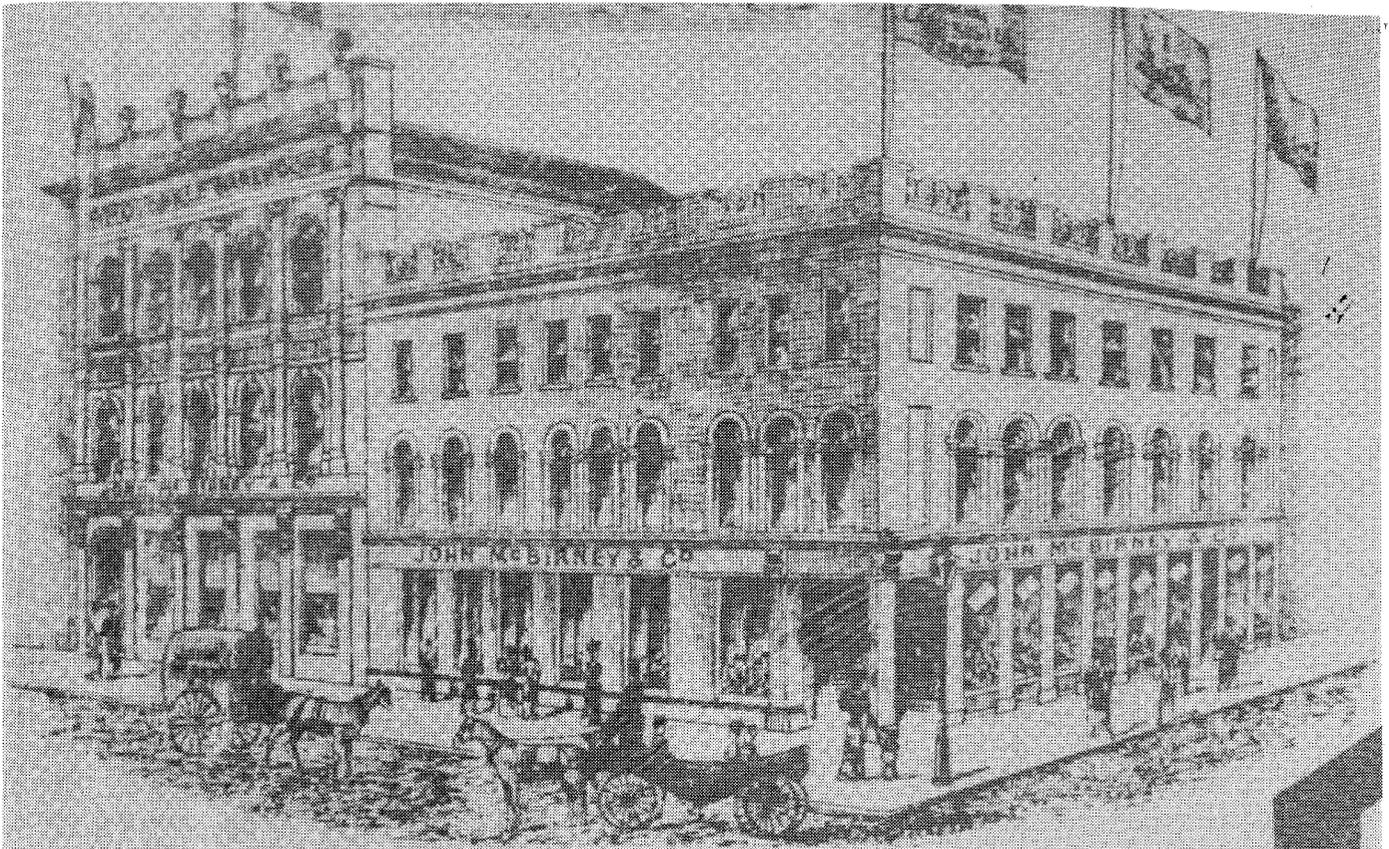
This is a town seventeen miles from Limerick, on the road to Killarney, containing 4201 inhabitants. It is a mile long, beginning on the top of a gentle eminence descending on the slope to the river Deel, which is navigable to the Shannon, and ascending the rising ground on the other side. It has a church, a Catholic chapel, some schools, a prison, a court-house, a barrack for soldiers, a barrack for police, a post-office; an hotel, some flour mills, a number of small shops, a fever hospital, and fever enough to fill the hospital until it runs over and drops out - drops out its dead into the graveyards and fills them. It is a very ancient town, with old castles about it, and old legends, and has probably had fever from the earliest times until now, as it is only now that its street is getting a drain to carry the filth from places where filth never could escape from before, and where it lies, and runs and oozes out, to lie most odiously and pestilentially even now. This drain is being cut over the brow of the eminence through a hard rock, and formed wholly to the river at an expense of the Boards of Works; in other words, at the expense of the general taxes.

The land around this town for several miles is a free fertile loam, easily cultivated, capable of bearing any kind of farm crop, affording rents varying from £2 to £3 per Irish acre, and well cleared of those obstructions called men and women, which are more formidable to the Irish landowner than the forest trees of the American backwoods are to the Irish emigrant. Yet the men and women are still so plentiful that the farmers can obtain the best of the men as ploughmen for £4 per annum and their diet in the farm house. Married men who live in their own houses receive 6d. per day and their diet of two meals per day. The best ploughing, ploughs, horses, and smartest workmen whom I have yet seen in Ireland are now ploughing in the fields between Limerick and Rathkeale, and to the distance of two miles beyond Rathkeale on the opposite side. Going over those two miles we reach a country lying chiefly in grass, and employing at the rate of four persons (at 8d. per day for boys and 1s. for men) to each £400 of rent! The estate of Cahermoyle, belonging to William Smith O'Brien, Esq., M.P. for the county of Limerick, is one of the first met with in this direction, lying almost in grass, entirely depopulated, and employing the population, which are crowded into the villages and towns adjacent, at that rate and that only. The Earl of Devon's estate is another in grass; but only some of its farms are discultured. The whole of Mr. O'Brien's are uncultivated. They are chiefly large, well stocked with cattle, which, when fattened, find their way to Cork and to England. The population of

Cahermoyle and the other estates are on the public works at 1s. 4d. per day; those employed by Mr. O'Brien in the demesne of Cahermoyle are paid only 1s. per day, without diet, or any part of it. But as I shall devote a letter to a full description of this and the adjoining estates, giving the rents, taxes, wages, food, produce, and the prices of the produce sold, I shall not go farther into those statistics at present, but return to describe that country of matchless fertility lying between Limerick and Rathkeale. I cannot, however, return from Cahermoyle, which is about five miles from Rathkeale, without saying that, on the borders of Mr. O'Brien's property the most deplorable dwellings and the most appalling misery which I have seen in Ireland is to be seen now; not on the Cahermoyle estate, for this reason, that no population, not even to cultivate it, is allowed to get a footing there.

Leaving Limerick by the road which goes south-west, taking us, if we go far enough, to the lakes of Killarney, in the county of Kerry, and from thence to Derrynane Abbey, and other remarkable places on the sea coast, we go out by a street which in amplitude and elegance may be classed with the best streets of any town or city in the United Kingdom. And leaving that street behind, and with it Limerick, and losing sight of the Shannon, and feeling as if there was room for heart-sickness because the Shannon is out of sight - so beautiful upon the visual senses, so suggestive with its broad waters, deep and clear, of contemplation deep though not clear, of what such a river was made for, if not to be made to do more for mankind on its shores before many years are over; losing sight of the Shannon and leaving Limerick, we have several miles of road of such a breadth, hardness, and smoothness, as to be unsurpassed anywhere; though not always so ample in breadth, it continues good throughout the county. The limestone rock, which abounds everywhere, affords road metal of the best kind, cheaply and abundantly. That same limestone rock bears upon its surface a fertile soil, laid out in larger farms than we see in other parts of Ireland, and seemingly better cultivated. It also affords good building stones for the cottage dwellings of the county, and these dwellings we see in many parts standing with substantial walls and without roofs, the roofs having been taken off to get the indwellers out, as if they had grown too large within to be got out at the doors. They had, in fact, only held too tenaciously, somewhat as the limpet does on the sea-rock, which suffers its shell to be broken and itself exposed to death rather than quit its hold; the instinct of self-preservation being the same in the shell-fish of the sea-rock and in the tenant-farmer of Ireland, neither knowing how to live if they quit their hold.

Those roofless houses are more numerous as we approach Rathkeale, where the landlords have been making clearances more recently. The landlords who cleared the population from their



The store of John McBirney & Co., George Street, in the first half of the 19th century.

estates ten, fifteen, and twenty years ago, have now large farms, with Scotch ploughs drawn by two horses each, held by Irish ploughmen who have been taught by Scotch ploughmen, and all signs of human wreck have been cleared away with the people who were wrecked.

That better cultivation prevails, with better rent paid to the landlords, and more produce sent to market on those farms that have been cleared, is undeniable; and the fact is not to be lost sight of, that the more produce that can be raised upon any estate with the least of it consumed on that estate, even if it be for the benefit of the landowner in the first instance, is for the national good ultimately. But this is not so if the consumers beyond the estate, who should eat and pay for that produce, are not profitably employed at work which enables them to pay for it. The Irish landlord sees his English brother Lord, or if he be an Englishman with an Irish estate, he sees his Irish estate encumbered with a dense population which eats the heart out of the soil, and he forthwith sets to work to clear the Irish estate, expecting to make it resemble that of England. He does not seem to know that the English land is "cleared" - (I use the offensive word in reference to England, because it is the universal term, and appropriately so in Ireland) - by the manufactures and commerce of the country drawing the rural population to a more profitable from a less profitable employment. The English landowner is kept free of a population that would eat the heart out of the soil, and starve when too poor to cultivate it, not by any good act or design of his own, but in despite of all his class

prejudices and class legislation. He has despised the trading and manufacturing people of his country, to whom alone he is indebted for not having his land over-run and over-eaten and swallowed up by a dense rural population like his Irish brother, and he has legislated against those people. The Irish landlord, or he himself on his Irish estate, following in the same course of destructive and anti-national ignorance, despises the manufacturers and traders, clears away the rural population by a force applied by himself behind, without regard to there being a place in the world for those people to go to, and not as in England by a force applied by others before them to draw them out and provide profitable employment for them. The Irish landlord also legislates for his class against manufactures and commerce. And yet these people who have been cleared by him from his estate, and who have found an outlet, and food, and life, beyond Ireland, have chiefly found the outlet through the commerce and manufactures of England, while nearly all the rent paid into his pocket, and carried away in his pocket, to be spent in whatever part of the world his own convenience finds a pleasant place, as a predatory bird carries its prey in its talons or its beak and flies aloft, or flies afar, to enjoy it at leisure, has come into his hands through the market provided for his farm produce by the people of England, who work and make wealth, but not upon the English land.

Such are the very different means by which landed estates are cleared in England and in Ireland. Irish agriculture is more profitable where the dense

population is thinned out, the cleared soil being at the same time a fertile soil. But where is the right, legal or moral, human or divine, to clear away the inhabitants without making industrial provision for them elsewhere and otherwise than in agriculture? The right is not to be found even in the expediency which political economy would suggest, of providing a larger quantity of national food at a cheaper cost, because the national loss of having so many millions of the population dependent on charity and national taxes, and exposed to famine, and ever on the verge of social disorder, with a vast army of military and police ever required to check the disorder, is nationally a loss far exceeding the benefits derived from the larger quantity of national food produced at a cheaper cost.

But even the augmentation of produce for the markets does not always follow a thinning out of the population. In the first twenty miles of country seen from the public road south-west of Limerick the marketable farm produce has been augmented. The soil is so fertile and so easily worked, that it could not fail to give more corn to the market, the population on the soil being reduced, if ploughed and sown even in the most simple way. But to speak justly of the cultivators in that district, they seem to have advanced in agricultural progress far before the rest of Ireland, except, perhaps, a part of the county of Carlow. They are approaching the present agricultural condition of some parts of Suffolk and Norfolk, or that of the Lothians in Scotland twenty years ago. But this approach is only in the style of culture, crops, and rent; the wages of the

ploughmen are not more than half, on some farms little above one-third, of the wages of ploughmen in Norfolk or the Lothians. The Limerick men are not able to work well from sheer emptiness of stomach, consequently their work becomes dear labour. The farmers and landlords who employ them are despisers of political economy, because political economists have denied the liability of the English tax-payers to support Irish paupers. Political economy while it proclaims the wrong of state provision superseding private exertion, and asserts the rightfulness of wages being regulated by the supply of workmen and the demand of labour, never teaches that a private employer of labour should give his workmen barely half enough of food, which results in his getting less than half enough of work. Political economy teaches a doctrine directly opposed to this. It teaches that the labour is cheapest which is best - that an article may be dear though it be low priced. It would teach the Limerick farmers and landlords that, though they can get labour done for 8d. per day, the supply of men being so much over the demand for them, and though they are under no *legal* obligation to pay more, it would be for their own profit to pay more and keep the workmen in a condition to work efficiently.

Political economy is in itself the very essence of humanity, benevolence, and justice. It is its conflict with selfishness, error, ignorance, and injustice that makes it appear otherwise to some eyes at some times.

Having left Limerick city behind us three miles, we pass Patrick's Well, a village named after St. Patrick. Near it is Attyflin, seat of Squire Westropp; Greenmount, seat of Squire Green; and other parks or demesnes or pleasure grounds, with landlordly residents in them, named Fort Etna, Richmond, Jockey Hall, Kilpeacon, Maryville, and Faha.

On the seventeen miles from Limerick to Rathkeale we pass close to or near the residence of Sir David Roche, M.P., the ruins of Dunaman Castle and the round tower of Dysart, Carass Court, seat of Squire Browning, and Croom Castle, once a stronghold of the Fitzgeralds, and often besieged by their mortal enemies and near neighbours the O'Donovans. The war-cry of Crom-a-boo (Fitzgerald to Victory) which is still the motto of the Fitzgerald race, though that wild race is now headed by the tame Duke of Leinster, was derived from this castle and its battle-grounds around it. The Rev. Thomas Croker has repaired a part of this warlike ruin, and lives in it. Near it is Croom House, with Squire Lyon within. Not far from that is Islanmore, the nestling place of Squire Maxwell; and two miles from that is Cherry Grove, the seat of Squire Harding. Islanmore and Cherry Grove! there is poetry and prettiness in the very names; though the prettiness is not confined to the names.

But all of them recede to nothing in comparison with Adare Castle, its old

Abbeys and Monastery, and village on the river Maigue, about ten miles from Limerick, the seat and demesne of the Earl of Dunraven. Here we have broad meadows, and green uplands, and noble forest oaks, miles of them; and open glades and wooded thickets; the wandering river loitering in the woods before taking its course of six miles to the Shannon with the traffic of Adare through lands called the Golden Valley, but richer with yellow butter at all times and yellow corn in its season than if it were paved with gold; three abbeys of ancient times on the green banks of the loitering river, the shadows of their venerable towers upon the water; lofty trees around the towers, with colonies of rooks in the lofty trees, and ivy on the old grey walls, with birds innumerable in the ivy; one abbey restored from ruin and made a parish church; another restored by the same good taste and liberal hand, Lord Dunraven's good taste and liberal hand, and given to the Catholics as a chapel, to whom all the three belonged once; the third standing between the two, being converted into a mausoleum for the reception of Lord Dunraven's body when he dies. May he yet, as a living man, enjoy for many a year the repose of beautiful Adare, to which, as far as the reconciliation of adverse creeds can go, he has done so much - alas! that it should be so seldom done in Ireland! to give tranquillity.

Ardagh, County Limerick

This is a village of poor houses, forming two long rows, on a gentle slope from west to east, surrounded by a deep calcareous loam on limestone subsoil, some if it in tillage, most of it in pasture. Nearly all the houses are hovels, whose ill-built walls of stone and mortar, though stone and mortar are natural products of the district in measureless abundance, are falling or have fallen, and have been patched up again in every style of wall-building save the styles of elegance and strength. The houses not built of stone and mortar are made of clay, not so high in the walls as the others, and more crooked. The roofs of most of them are thatched, or have been thatched. From the absence of tillage in the district, straw to repair the roofs is not obtainable, and the inhabitants are all too poor to purchase slates. The landowners have no immediate personal interest in repairing those dwellings, or in building new ones, consequently they do not repair or build. On the contrary, they prevent, whenever they can, the erection of new houses. The overgrowing population must erect dwelling-places where the landlords cannot prevent them, which is in some narrow siding or nook of a public road, with no garden, yard, or haggard behind, or on some small patch of ground which belongs to a person who makes more profit by letting it be covered with clay-huts than he could obtain from it if covered with corn crops; or upon land held by lease from some head landlord,

who, though he tries, cannot prevent the erection of new places of human abode.

In the last case the new places are usually seen behind the rows of old ones, when you can get through the old ones or round the end of the row to look behind. With low crooked clay walls, those huts of the married children of the parents who live in front, look as if they were stricken with age, and were decrepit and feeble, and not able to stand up; or, which is a fact as well as a similitude, they are crouching down behind for fear of being seen by the landlord or his agent. They are narrow and low for this reason; and as they are at first built to accommodate a youthful pair, newly-wedded, who are content to be in a small space, and who have not the means of adding many more feet of clay to the walls, the inducement to keep to a mere hut operates on every side. In due time, and frequently sooner, children accumulate, and grow in size and number, and they in their turn build huts behind, and have children, while still the old people, or the youngest sons and daughters of the old people, live in front. All have pigs and asses in the huts with them in ordinary times. They have not all pigs now, for the food of the pigs is no more; but all have dunghills and pools of stagnation in the narrow places between and at the end of the huts, and not unfrequently within them. That there should be fever and other diseases originating in filth, dampness, and foul air, is only a natural consequence at the best of times. That there should be an aggravation of those diseases and death with them now, when to filth, dampness, and foul air is added famine, is not to be received as a wonder, but as a natural result. The wonder is, if wonder there be, that gentlemen of wealth, humanity, and patriotism, possessing broad lands, and so much fresh air that they know not what to do with that great share of earth and heaven which has fallen to their lot, should deny their neighbours and fellow-creatures room to live and work.

The nearest and most remarkable landlord to this village of Ardagh is Mr. William Smith O'Brien, M.P., Cahermoyle; his residence is about half a mile distant. The Cahermoyle estate is almost wholly laid down in large grazing farms, on none of which are the overgrowing population of the district allowed to build houses; they have only the choice of going, and they must go, to Ardagh, and obtain leave to erect a hovel, in rear of the other hovels there, at an enormous rent, paid to the inhabitant of the hovel who permits the new comer to come; or they locate themselves in some nook of a field, or siding of a road, without a foot of ground, save what the clay-hut stands on. Mr. Smith O'Brien permits none to settle on his estate in that manner, nor in any way else.

Part of his property is in the Newcastle poor-law union, and part of it in Rathkeale union. The portions of it in Newcastle union are rated for the poor at ninepence in the pound, there being two half-yearly rates of fourpence halfpenny each. His

farms, which are in the Rathkeale union, are rated at tenpence in the pound per annum, only one rate for the year having been made there; while Rathkeale district, being more densely peopled, is rated at 2s. 6d. in the pound. Thus, the poorer district of Rathkeale pays three times more money for the relief of the poor than the rich grazing farms of Cahermoyle.

The entire population of Ardagh, and of the farms of Cahermoyle, and every other landed property, is employed on the public works, save five men who are draining within the demesne of Cahermoyle, and men and boys at the rate of about one full grown man and two half grown lads to 350 acres of ground. Those men and boys have only been kept on the farms and prevented from going to the public works by being hired for the year. The wages on the public works have been 1s. 4d. per day. They were not paid by piece-work, but at 1s. 4d. per day overhead, married and single, weak and strong, all alike. The farmers have not given higher wages than 10d. per day, that being 2d. more than the wages given previous to this year. The men hired by them are paid, the highest, £1 per quarter, or £4 per annum, with diet in the farm-houses. But a man receiving £1 per quarter is a first-rate ploughman or herdsman; the more common rate for hired men is 15s. per quarter, £3 per annum and diet. The boys receive from 5s. per quarter up to 10s. according to their strength. The ploughman of Mr. Barry, a tenant farmer, told me that Mr. Barry's service was considered the best in Ardagh parish; it was a most excellent house for diet; they had meat twice a week. None of the other farmers thereabout gave their men meat at all, save perhaps once in six months. Mr. Barry, he said, had a brother who had carried on business in England, in Ipswich, had recently died there, but had made a small fortune before his death. In visiting him in Ipswich, the Irish farmer had seen the Suffolk ploughmen getting bacon to eat, and as they performed at least double the work that the Irish farming men did on their potatoes and milk, he very wisely thought his men would work better if they had better diet. So he gave them pork or bacon; and this is the 'meat' which the grateful ploughman who told me of the circumstance eats twice-a-week.

If two lads at 5s. and 10s. per annum respectively, and one married man at 6d. per day and two meals of potatoes and milk on each working day, are constantly employed on a farm of 200 acres statute measure, with a few extra hands at the time of planting potatoes in March; at the time of hay-making, in July; at harvest, say three weeks in September; and at potato-digging, say a fortnight in October, the wages of the extra hands at those times being 1s. and 1s. 4d. per day with diet; that farmer of 200 acres giving such an amount of employment is considered to be, and comparatively is, a liberal employer. But it is rare to find such an employer. The great overplus of population not so provided for hire conacre for potatoes,

or shift in some other more miserable way than on conacre.

Mr. Smith O'Brien employed some men in the winter of 1845, as a relief for the potato failure of that year, in making a road through the demesne of Cahermoyle; he paid them 10d. per day. The men whom he now employs in draining the demesne are paid 1s. per day, which is 4d. less than the pay on the new roads, which are being made in various directions on and around his property by the Board of Works. As the farming men only remain on the farms who are hired by the year and dieted in the farmers' houses, and they do not all remain, the 1s. 4d. per day of the Board of Works being a temptation too strong for them to resist, and as the expense of providing them with meal at 3s. per stone in the absence of potatoes is an inducement to their masters to let them go to the public works, in some cases to release them from their hiring to allow them to go, so the 1s. per day, the highest wages paid by Mr. Smith O'Brien, only procures him men who have houses or conacre from him, and are bound to work for him.

With meal of Indian corn or of oats at 3s. per stone, labourers under the Board of Works on the roads around Cahermoyle are only able to procure 42 lbs. 5 oz. of meal per week; which, divided among a family of five, or six, or seven persons, of which families there are many in small unhealthy huts in Ardagh and on the adjoining farms, gives an allowance less than can possibly sustain them in health, even had they wholesome dwelling-places to live in. But Mr. Smith O'Brien has men working for him who live in such huts, with such families, and in greater hunger, for they have less food by one-fourth.

I was told that of five men employed in the demesne of Cahermoyle, four of them might be reckoned as employed there in charity. If they be so employed, the charity or relief is one-fourth less than that paid by government in the locality. But I demur to their employment being called charity or relief. They were performing work most necessary to be done - draining; work which, if done to the extent required on the Cahermoyle estate, should employ 200 men six months of the year for five years; an estate which, if cultivated as it should be to yield the greatest amount of produce for the food markets and of profit to the owner, should employ as many men per 100 acres as Mr. Morton's Whitefield farm in Gloucestershire. The geology of Cahermoyle and Whitefield is the same. The present state of Cahermoyle is similar to the previous state of Whitefield. Weeds, rushes, inferior grasses, inferior cattle; utter waste of manure from the cattle; corn growing portions of the farms over-cropped and exhausted; potatoes planted for the one or two workmen on each farm to live upon as the chief part of their wages; these are the characteristics of the estate of Cahermoyle. These were the characteristics of Whitefield farm up to 1840, when Mr. Morton entered upon it. The likeness of the two places extends

farther. Cahermoyle, besides being on the same geological stratum as Whitefield, is seven miles from the Shannon. Whitefield is about seven miles from the Severn. Cahermoyle is twenty miles from the city of Limerick; Whitefield is nearly the same from the city of Bristol.

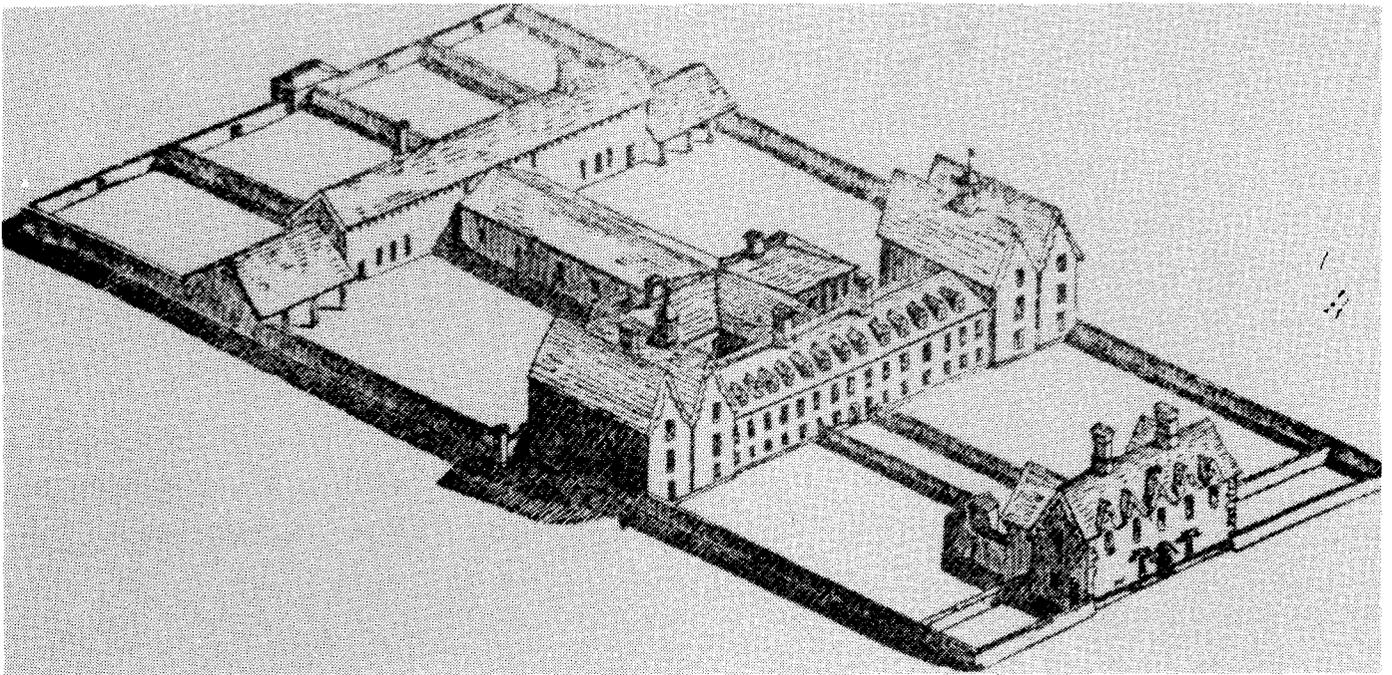
But here the likeness ends. Whitefield contains 240 acres; Cahermoyle upwards of 1000. The best land of the latter is superior to any of the land of the former, and constitutes more than a half of the whole; the best land, the alluvium, of Whitefield, is but a few acres; of Cahermoyle it is 400.

The expenditure for drainage, buildings, and useful roads on Whitefield was £7827. The expenditure on drainage on the farm land of Cahermoyle is nothing; that on the useful roads for improving the value of the land is nothing by landlord or tenants; the Board of Works, with the public money, is improving the farm roads.

Besides the sum of £7828 expended on permanent improvements on Whitefield farm by the landlord, the Earl of Ducie, Mr. Morton, the tenant, has stock and working capital on it to the amount of £4500. The rent, before he took the farm in 1840, and before the capital was expended on it, was £200 per annum; title £33; poor rate £28; and road rate £4. The rent is now augmented to the amount of five per cent. upon £7828. The farmer calculates upon ten per cent. on his personal services on the farm; on wages for ten men at twelve shillings a-week each, and on all the payments to keep implements and roads in repair. What he obtains over all those returns is profit. And he has had profit after all those returns.

I apprehend that such a man as Mr. Morton is the true benefactor of his country, and that if Mr. Smith O'Brien would turn his attention to his own property to enrich himself by producing human food from that land so naturally rich, now lying waste, he would be a patriot.

Since writing the foregoing, I have been on another farm of Mr. O'Brien's where the natural quality of the soil far exceeds that of Gloucestershire. Mr. Sheehy, one of his tenants, holding about 150 acres, at 24s. per acre, has only one lad in his employment, and not another person, not even of his own family, employed in cultivation. The land is just sloping enough to be of easy drainage; a stream of water runs through it fit for irrigation or machinery; the Board of Works has just made a road through the farm; a fine rich loamy soil all in grass and rushes covers the whole surface; the limestone rock is everywhere on the farm within two, three, four, or six feet of the surface; a kind of coal, excellent for burning lime, is found in the mountains within one hour's walk, and roads were made to it by government grants of money several years ago, and more roads are being made to it by government now; but no attempt is made, has been made, or seems likely to be made by Mr. O'Brien to



The plan of a typical workhouse.

manufacture lime or bring lime to his farm land. The farmbuildings are clay huts, the roofs fallen or falling in; the fences are crooked mounds of earth with crooked ditches beside them; all manure from cattle runs waste into the ditches; the cattle lie in continual wetness, and are overtaken by periodical epidemics; but when fattened, (as fattened they are despite all the wreck and waste of the land, the soil is so rich), they go to the contractors for the navy in Cork and to England to be sold.

Such is Mr. Sheehy's farm, with only one lad, at 10s. per quarter of wages and his diet, employed on it; the other man, who has a family, and who used to be on the farm at 5d. per day and his diet, is now on the public works at 1s. 4d. per day.

On Mrs. Nolan's farm, near Cahermoyle, rich grazing land, about 100 acres, one lad only is employed. Her second workman has also left and gone on the public works. She has a field unsown, and she has been waiting to see if the government would give her seed to sow. This farm, I believe, belongs to a Mr. Studdert. But it is difficult to know who the landlords are. Smith O'Brien and several other gentlemen hold land as middlemen, at a very low rent, in this neighbourhood, under Dublin College.

Mr. Patrick Power has a farm of about 240 acres. Some of the fields, I see, have been in tillage, and are laid down to rest to recover from their exhaustion. They lie thus without grass or crop of any kind, but weeds that rise spontaneously for five or six years. Meanwhile, all his cattle manure runs to waste; the cattle lie without straw or bedding to make manure; the roofs are falling in above them; epidemic diseases periodically destroy them; two women only are hired in summer to make the butter; only one lad at 10s. per quarter is on the farm at present. The herdsman, Walsh, is on the public roads, at 1s. 4d. per day, with Mr. Power's consent, and

Walsh's mother, a widow, is doing the herdsman's work in payment of 30s. of house rent. I went with her to her house. It is three paces square inside; was erected by her late husband; the roof is propped up by poles standing in the middle of the floor. I had to crouch nearly two fold to get in at the door; the floor is a puddle hole; the roof is broken in; the daylight is seen through it every day; the rain comes through when there is a shower.

Three similar hovels, and no other houses are on this farm. They had all a few perches of haggard or garden, but since the failure of the potatoes in 1845 and 1846, the rent of 30s. each was not paid, and the haggards have been taken from them. James Muksey and Donovan, two of the cottier tenants of the hovels, are on the public works at 1s. 4d. per day. The highest wages they ever earned before was 8d. per day. Mathew Daly and his wife, another of the cottier tenants, are both sick of fever in their wretched hut, without fire, without food, without air or light, but what comes through the roof, which is nearly touching their fevered heads. Their wretched bed is on the wet puddle of the floor.

This farm, with those wretched people belongs to Captain Bateson, M.P. who voted the other day against the out-door relief clause of the New Poor Law. It adjoins Cahermoyle. The farm is valued for poor-rates at £1:1s. per acre; the rate is 10d. in the 20s. per annum.

Cahermoyle demesne, consisting of 150 acres, is valued at £185 for rates, and rented by Mr. Massey for about £2 per acre for grazing. Wages paid upon that about £2 per annum and diet for one person.

Mr. O'Brien's house and garden, and 14 acres of plantation, are valued for poor-rate at £70; the rate 10d. in the pound.

Mr. Condin's farm, belonging Mr. O'Brien, of 55 acres, is rated at £66. This, and a quantity of other land not on Mr.

O'Brien's estate, employs at present one youth at 10s. per quarter and diet.

Mr. Magner's farm of 150 acres, rated at £190, is connected with other land not Mr. O'Brien's. It has two persons employed.

The men usually employed on all of those farms at this season of the year are on the public works. The farmers say that none of the men are worth their 'keep' at present, 'keep is so dear'.

Mr. Robert O'Brien, brother to the member for Limerick, gave evidence before the Devon Commission. The reader will understand the force of it after reading the state of those grazing farms, and I have given a picture of them considerably within the truth. Mr. Robert O'Brien is agent for his brother, Sir Lucius O'Brien, in Clare; for his brother, William Smith O'Brien, Esq. M.P. of Cahermoyle; for their mother, Lady O'Brien; and for himself and other proprietors in Limerick and Clare. He states, *Devon Blue Book*, Part II. page 810:-

'If a pasture farm is converted into tillage, it may be taken as a sign that the tenant is going down in the world'.

The tillage farms, it seems, are carried on without capital; the grazing farms must have *some* capital. Whitefield farm barely afforded a living to its tenant and £200 of rent to its landlord when the working capital was only £3:2:7 per acre, and the wages of labour, part of it for a thrasher, was only £75 per annum. Now, exclusive of all wages for draining, building, and road-making, the sum of £312 per annum is paid in wages, though there is machinery for thrashing, for regular weekly hands, and the working capital is £19 per acre.

Mr. Morton is a political economist, and as such pays 12s. per week to his men, though the current wages of the district are 8s. and 0s. He gets *better men and cheaper labour* by paying 12s. This is political economy.

Mr. Smith O'Brien is not a political economist. No portion of his estate measuring 240 acres (the size of Whitefield) pays more than £20 per annum; and the capital per acre is under £3. Instead of trying to get better men, or to *make better men*, in order to have *cheaper labour*, by paying higher wages than the wages of the neighbourhood, as a sound economist would do, he pays one-fourth less than the government pays.

Mr. Morton was an advocate for the repeal of the corn-laws, to enable him to carry on his farming with more economy and profit. Mr. Smith O'Brien used all the power he possessed to preserve the corn-laws.

It was one of the commonest arguments used on his side of the question that land would go out of cultivation and become pastures if protection was taken away. In Limerick, and on his own estate, it is deemed a sign of a 'farmer going down in the world' when he brings his farm into tillage.

Mr. O'Brien demands a repeal of the union, in order that Ireland may keep her produce and her wealth at home. He and his tenants send their cattle to England for sale; and they keep none of their produce at home for the people to consume, nor allow the people to obtain the means of consuming it.

Yet I was told, in the vicinity of Cahermoyle, that if all landlords were like Mr. Smith O'Brien, Ireland would have no famine. Ireland would have no complaints; 'Sure everything would be kept at home. Sure it is more of Smith O'Brien's sort that would do Ireland good'.

In short Mr. Smith O'Brien is expected to be able to bring 'the repeal' to them, but what the repeal is or will be they cannot tell.

Postscript, 29th March

The Boards of Works is now reducing the number of men and the wages, in accordance with the last Treasury order. In all parts the wages are to be less on relief works than the current wages paid in the neighbourhood, to induce men to leave the relief works, and seek employment on the farms. The 'patriots' (Heaven save Ireland from such patriots!) exclaim against this cruelty of the imperial government, and they tell the people how differently an Irish parliament would have acted. It does not seem to occur to them that if they had raised the standard of wages in the neighbourhood, or if they raised them now, the relief wages would follow.

Newcastle, County Limerick [Extract]

This place contains about 3000 inhabitants in its streets, and probably 1000 more closely adjacent in clay huts; the huts standing in crooked rows, and huddled in some parts hut behind hut three deep, with only a narrow passage, filled with filth between them. Behind those huts are

fields of grass, as fresh in March and as green as many English fields are in May.

Approaching the town from the direction of Limerick on the east, and from Cahermoyle and Ardagh on the north, the buildings look new, some of them handsome. The rows of huts have been cleared away; the small farms have been made into larger ones; the narrow lanes of the town have been widened into spacious thoroughfares; and a beautiful rivulet comes through the town, falling over ledges of limestone rock, fall succeeding fall, for the space of half a mile; while for a whole mile it is shaded by trees, the trees having the castle among them, and some smaller places of genteel residence.

This stream is beautiful to look upon. But it is large enough to make one feel pained that it is not something more than beautiful. It has no mill upon it to grind meal; all meal must be ground at a distance of ten or twelve miles from hence. Its water falls from ledge to ledge, gathering into broad deep pools, whirling and playing below the shadows of the trees, and starting away again, as if calling for those who look idly on to come and catch it; and again it falls; but the people only look at it; they do not respond to its invitation and go to catch it. This little river, called the Arra, goes on to the Deel, which is a river of magnitude, a mile and a half below Newcastle, and with the Deel it reaches the Shannon by a course of about twenty miles.

Newcastle had once a linen trade of small extent, and it still keeps a few looms going in coarse woollens. It had a bleach-field also for linen woven here and elsewhere, but that has disappeared. Its disappearance is spoken of bitterly. 'England took the linen trade from us, as she took everything else. She takes our corn and cattle, and she has our linen trade'. Thus did I hear consequential persons in Newcastle speak. 'Belfast and the counties in the north of Ireland have your linen trade', I answered; 'they would take that river Arra from you also if they could convey it there; and depend on it, that if Belfast had those waterfalls which you have, she would make more linen than she does. As to England taking your corn and cattle, there is William Smith O'Brien, your popular member, and, next to Lord Devon, your principal landlord; *he sends* the cattle to England. As to corn, the same thing may be said; it is sold for rent. You have not even thought it worth while to erect a mill to grind corn, though possessing all that water-power to drive the mill. So far from the English people desiring to take your corn from you and leave you to starve, they sought to buy corn in other countries of the world to supply themselves, and struggled hard for many years for leave to do so, but Mr. Smith O'Brien did all he could to prevent them, lest they might get enough elsewhere without taking it from you'.

'By gar! his honour is spaking like a gentleman. There is truth in that same about Smith O'Brien and the corn bill'.

'And do not you see, that with all his

complaints about the government starving the people in these hard times, that he has been paying working men one-fourth less than the government has been paying them? Do not you see that his farms of 150 acres do not each give employment to more than one slip of a boy, at 10s. per quarter and diet - yellow meal now, potatoes and milk when there were potatoes - while the rent from the same land is nearly £200?'

'By gar! that is the truth, every word of it; and never a word of a lie'.

'Well, the English merchants, despite of Smith O'Brien and the monopolist landlords of both countries, obtained leave to look abroad for corn, and if they had had leave to try abroad for it much sooner, they would have been able to bring much more of it to England, and to Ireland too, than they have done. But, as it is, they are fetching corn from all the world to Ireland, and Smith O'Brien and his rich tenant are sending their cattle to be sold and eaten in England. Cattle are the only products of his land'.

'And butter and pigs, and a few acres of potatoes afore the disease took them'.

'Very well, butter and pigs; they and the cattle go to England, not by the English forcing them from Smith O'Brien, but by his own free will. He does not allow you to get houses on his land, nor to get the land, nor to work upon it for wages, nor to eat its produce; and yet you say that if all the landlords and members of parliament were like him, you would soon be right enough; that Ireland would soon have her own. Do you mean her own landlords? for, if you do, the Earl of Devon, as an Englishman, who allows the small tenantry to have houses and holdings on his estate, will at least bear comparison with Smith O'Brien, who does not. His Lordship inherited the estate overwhelmed in debt, as you all know. The stewards upon it, of whom some of you have had reason to complain, were the stewards of the trustees. Since his Lordship got the property into his own hands, he has erected a tile manufactory to make drain tiles, and has begun to drain and improve the land by employing labour on it. He has gone but a small way compared with what should be done; but he has, at all events, done more than Smith O'Brien. Now the greater the number of landlords you have in your country who, with their servants, horses, and dogs, consume food and produce none, the poorer do they make your country'.

'But it is the parliament, your honour; the Irish parliament we are looking for to do us good'.

'If you are promised great and good things from the Irish parliament by those who bid you look for it and in whom you put your faith and trust as leaders, it is natural that you should expect the Irish parliament to be indispensable to your well-being. But, in the first place, your parliament, if you had it, would be entirely composed of landlords and lawyers, neither of whom have as yet done you any

good service, but much mischief. The imperial parliament was until recently comprised of the same materials. The English commercial classes have, after long struggles, succeeded in changing the current of imperial legislation, a change vastly more important than changing the seat of parliament from one city to another. The representation in parliament of trade, intelligence, and toleration is now beginning to have the ascendancy in England. Feudalism and territorial representation is on the decline. It will decline more and more in England every year; but you would restore it in Ireland by an Irish parliament of landlords and law-jobbers. You have no middle class to control them. It is to the new current of legislation from the commercial classes of England that you must look for real substantial benefits to Ireland'.

'Sure the English manufacturers are jealous of Ireland; they would not let her wave one yard of cloth or make a shoe for her own foot, if they could prevent her'.

'Not true, my friends; it is the converse of true. The old suicidal system of protection by which the feudal representatives legislated proceeded to bolster up the trade of one place at the expense of another. Lord George Bentinck for England, and Mr. Smith O'Brien for Ireland, are the representatives of that barbarous system of legislation now. And you confess that if you had an Irish parliament you would protect yourselves from the manufacturers of England. By so protecting yourselves you could only make yourselves poorer. England is all the poorer for her barbarous legislation, having once attempted to protect her manufactures against those of Ireland. Such a system is one of mutual robbery in the first instance, and mutual suicide at last. If every man and woman in Ireland wore a fresh change of Irish linen every day; if they had as many new garments in a year as they have holes in the old ones; if they made leather and boots and shoes to walk, and iron and railways to ride, and manufactured as largely for themselves in Ireland as the people of Lancashire and Yorkshire do, England would transact business with Ireland to an extent immeasurably greater than she can now do when Ireland is poor. English ships from India and America, instead of putting into Kinsale or the Cove of Cork in passing, for water only, or for shelter, would put in to deliver cargoes of sugar, tea, silks, and other things, rich and rare, rich over all the world, rare in Ireland, and they would reload with Irish manufactured goods'.

'But what if Ireland had ships of her own?'

'All the better; the more ships the more trade; ships create trade. Ships are to commerce what ploughs are to agriculture; if you had Irish ships ploughing the ocean, and Irish ploughs ploughing Smith O'Brien's land, both Ireland and England, and you and Smith O'Brien, would be in better circumstances than you have yet been in. As to jealousy, you might as well

suppose that England and Scotland would be jealous. As to ships, you might as well think that if Glasgow had none, and no trade, that Liverpool would have more ships and more trade. But Liverpool would suffer greatly if Glasgow ceased to have ships and trade. In like manner, Liverpool would be greatly benefitted if Ireland was covered with manufactures, and had her shores swarming with ships. That narrow policy of protection is now powerless; its office was never anything but mischief; the English trading classes have overthrown it in defiance of such territorial legislators as Mr. Smith O'Brien. England repudiates the assertion of the Irish repeal politicians, that she was ever benefitted by the barbarous legislation which sought to protect her manufactures against Ireland. She and Ireland were mutually injured. England asks Ireland to protect herself against such bad legislators as the feudal owner of Cahrmoyle. The condition of his own estate should be a warning to people who would trust him with the remodelling of a nation'.

Such is the substance of a conversation held in Newcastle, in the county of Limerick; other topics were included, for which I have not space here. ...

I have only space to say, that the estate of the Earl of Devon here is part of the great territorial possessions once belonging to the Irish Earl of Desmond. For an Irishman, as such, to lament that an English Earl should have been substituted for an Irish Earl, is natural enough. It was a wrong policy of that faction in England which has always held the government - the landed faction - to do so; but now that the deed has been effected for some centuries, and it is seen that the ancient race of landlords do no more for their land than the new race, it becomes the Irish people to look to something else for redemption than to landlordism.

Newcastle, County Limerick

I have written a letter from this place already; but as the subject of this one is somewhat diversified, I send it too. I got a man named Michael Hearn to go with me one day on a pedestrian ramble among the farmers and poor cottiers, over the plain and up the mountain, and I shall here relate what we saw. First, however, of Michael Hearn, as he was a type of a very large class.

He rented about twelve statute acres under a Major Campbell of Scotland, whose property here lies intermingled with the Earl of Devon's and Mr. Smith O'Brien's. He had been all the winter working on the public works; but was discharged when the New Relief Act came into operation on the 20th of March, he being a farmer. He had sown two and a half acres of his land with oats, and, having no more seed, had sublet the remainder of the ground for the season. He had a wife and eight children. She and seven of the children were in the workhouse and the fever hospital. His eldest

daughter, aged seventeen, remained with him on the farm, but also lay ill of fever and dysentery. He said he had two sisters in London, and did not know what to do unless he put the bed and bedding in pawn, locked up the house, and took his daughter with him, when she recovered, to her aunt's in London, and put over the summer that way, at such work as he could get in England, leaving his family in the workhouse until he returned, and his farm, a rich fertile loam on limestone subsoil, to the care of the person who had the crops for the present year.

He showed me, as we passed along, a field where evictions took place twenty-two years ago, in reference to which the threatening letters signed 'Captain Rock' were first issued. Then he told of a murder that followed; and shewed me where five persons were all hanged in a row at once for that murder.

We next called upon, and were accompanied by, Cornelius O'Donnell, over his little farm of about fifteen statute acres. He is a tenant under Lord Devon, and has his farm in much better order than those of his neighbours, large or small. He drained it with sod drains three feet deep, some of it twenty years ago, some of it recently. The sod drains of twenty years ago were running as freely as new tile or stone drains, which I was surprised to see, but I doubt of all sod drains lasting so long.

One of the new roads of the Board of Works had gone through his farm; it was left unfinished, and he seemed much aggrieved at not having proper fences put up where his pasture field was divided by the new road.

We next proceeded over Cloghdeen farm, of ninety-four Irish acres, which are about equal to 153 statute acres. One of the new roads runs partly through this farm, and continues on one side of it for about half a mile, the farm being long and narrow. The land is almost wholly in pasture, very wet, and full of rushes. It is gently sloping, and could be easily drained in every part. A stream runs through the centre of it, laying bare the limestone rock at the general depth of six or eight feet. On this stream there was once a mill, alleged by Michael Hearn to be 900 years old, and erected by the Danes. It had been laid in ruins and covered up. Part of the water-wheel was dug out of the ruins not long ago. It is of hard oak, and is preserved as a curiosity. The stream does nothing now but wimple over its blue stones, wash the ankles of the bare-footed maidens while they wade in it after their cows, and carry away the farm-yard manure. The farm belongs to Mr. Smith O'Brien, and does not give employment to any person but the farmer, a 'slip of a boy', and a female who makes butter. The soil is a calcareous loam of the best quality, but everywhere undrained and overrun with foul vegetation.

At the west end of it, by the side of the rivulet, is a circular mound of earth said to be the remains of a Danish fort. The Danish water-wheel was found about a mile from this fort, and many human



People often rallied together in efforts to prevent evictions.

bones, supposed to be the remains of Danish soldiers, have been found.

Cloghdeen farm remains undelved and untouched by spade or shovel; not so this fort. It had the reputation of holding crocks of gold somewhere in its earth works, and many a spade and pick have been at work digging for the gold. Near a tree on the east side, Michael Hearn pointed to a place where the people went in great numbers to dig two or three years ago, in consequence of 'a boy, named Hugh Ward, dreaming he seen the gold there. He lived in Newcastle then, he is now gone to London. Sure the drame was true and had to do with it, for the people got the tokens, when they dug wid their spades, that the boy seen in his drame. It was a horse shoe and four nails he seen. By gar! they dug, and sure enough there wor the shoe and the four nails; the tokens wor found anyway; but they dug down and down, and all back here, but they did not get the gold. Ah, sure it was God's will, praise be to his name, they wor not to get it'.

The reverence with which these poor flesh-worn peasants speak of sacred things is very remarkable. Michael's hand was instantly at his old hat, and the hat lifted as he spoke the last sentence. Sometimes I talk with a dozen or a score of poor creatures in some wretched cabin, where, seeing me enter, they soon gather together to ask questions. No question is more frequently put to me than this, 'Now, your honour, is the potato gone entirely do you think? Will it ever come back to us to grow as it done before?' To which I usually say, 'I have no fear but we shall have sound potatoes again; every law of nature or ordinance of God known to us justifies that expectation'. The moment they hear me speak the sacred name every hand is

lifted to the old hats, and when the sentence is concluded, they say in a low, solemn tone, 'Glory to his name!'

Leaving the Danish fort on Smith O'Brien's estate (the people pronounce this name as if written *O'Breyne*) we proceeded through other farms, all in a state of nature and waste. The only sign of a landowning hand upon the property for any good purpose was a school-house conspicuous from its situation and white-washed walls, built by Lady O'Brien, the mother of the member for Limerick county.

A cross section of hills was half a mile before us, running from south to north, our faces being to the west. In a wooded ravine or recess in the hills was a white house of genteel appearance occupied by a Mr. Lake, who holds a number of good sized farms on leases for ever, from a family of Maunsels who again hold them under some other chief. The farms are sublet by Mr. Lake, and hardly one furrow had been at that time turned up. The tenants of ninety acres had been working on the relief works up to the 20th of March.

Having expressed much interest on the subject of digging in the earth for gold, I was shewn, at a distance, a place in the wood on the face of the hill fronting us, near Mr. Lake's house, where people had dug for gold. The last time any one had tried it, he said, an awful noise was heard in the wood, like a bull roaring, and the wind rushed and made a noise in the trees different from any noise ever made by the wind before that anybody had heard. They left off digging and came away, and the noises ceased.

At another place to which he pointed there was a round spot on which snow never lay in winter, and which never had

dew on it when dew was on the grass around; the people went there to dig for gold, but the fumes of sulphur came up out of the ground and they took warning in time and left off.

There is a stratum of coal found in that hilly ridge, containing a great deal of sulphur. Probably the gas escapes from it through the earth at this spot, where snow melts and dew never lies.

Crossing an upland stubble field, I found the son of the tenant of ninety acres, already alluded to, at the plough. He had been at the public workshop to the previous week, and was only now beginning to plough the oat stubble, which had carried two crops without manure, to sow oats again. The liquid manure of the cows and yards on this farm, and most of the solid washed by the rain, was running to the streams and rivers. The young man left the plough and the horses standing in the middle of the field, and went up the hill-side with me, where the Board of Works had been making a road in the slaty rock winding up to the turf bogs four or five miles. His purpose in going with me seemed to be to shew how deceptive the slaty rocks were which they had been cutting down at so much a yard, there being hard places where they had not been able to make half as good wages by the yard as the men working by the day.

His father held the land under a tenant who held from a Mr. Massey. The lease was thirty-one years and some lives. All the years had expired and all the lives save one. That life was now old. He said if that life was out he would get a new lease, and he hoped a new under-landlord. His father would offer double the rent he now paid, which was about 12s. per statute acre, on condition of getting the land drained. But

at present neither the tenant under Mr. Massey nor Mr. Massey would do anything 'until that old life was out'.

Higher on the hill sides we found smaller holdings and a more numerous population. The measure of land there was a 'cow's grass'. The extent of land called a cow's grass differed according to quality. Its rent was £3:10s. A man named Thomas Killaheel and two children, boy and girl, were digging oat stubble. He held two cows' grass under Mr. Lake. He had only two pecks of oats for seed. This man was tall; his children were tall for their age; all three looked like spectres with spades in their hands. I have seen other such sights, but none worse. Their purpose was to dig for life, but they looked as if breaking ground for their own burial, and as if a very shallow grave would serve them, they were so thin. The poor man shook his head when I spoke about his getting seed from his landlord. 'There were too many landlords above his little piece of ground', he said, 'all trying to get something out of it; none of them would *give*; they would only *take*'.

We left him and went to the top of the hilly range to see the turf bogs, and have a view from thence of the great plain of Limerick and the distant waters of the broad Shannon, lying on the green plain, in colour and shape as if all womankind had been washing and had chosen the plains of Limerick, Clare, and Kerry, to spread down their linen to dry.

I looked behind me, and there stood the phantom farmer, Thomas Killaheel, who had followed us up. He said nothing, but looked - oh! such looks, and thin jaws!

We went on through intricate passes in the bogs; and my attention was directed by Hearn to the district of iron and coals, the latter within a mile of us, the iron supposed to be everywhere through fifty miles of hilly country. I turned round to take the measure of those mountains of treasure with my eyes, and there again stood the lean hungry man. He caught at my words when I said a mountain of iron was worth more than a mountain of gold, and said, 'Sure the gold will buy more bread than the iron would?' 'But,' said I, 'the iron would make better spades and ploughs to till the ground and make corn grow, and corn must grow and bread be made from it, before it can be purchased with gold'.

The lean man looked as if his spirit, starved in his own thin flesh, would leave him and take up its abode with me. I even felt it going through me as if looking into the innermost pores of my body for food to eat and for seed oats. It moved through the veins with the blood, and finding no seed oats there, nor food, searched through every pocket to the bottom, and returned again and searched the flesh and blood to the very heart; the poor man all the while gazing on me as if to see what the lean spirit might find; and it searched the more keenly that he spoke not a word.

On our return, half way down the hill side to his field, his two spectre children still stood leaning on their spades, which

spades being long and narrow - only four inches broad, with handles six feet long - looked like spades made for spectres to dig with. His piece of land is sown.

We went into one of the numerous clay huts on the hill side to rest after a very long walk. An old woman was spinning flax. She was aged about fourscore, and could only speak Irish; yet by the aid of Michael, my interpreter, we held a discourse which she seemed well pleased with, so far as I could tell her what she desired to know about the Queen and London. She had two grand-daughters with her, young women, one of them a beauty, both barefooted and very meanly dressed, poor things.

But in respect of beauty in a clay hut, I saw it in another house where Michael took me to get a drink of milk. One of the finest looking women of the English aristocracy is a duchess whose portrait has appeared often in the fashionable annuals. In this clay hut, with a baby four weeks old at her breast, on a stone at the turf fire, sat a young woman, wife and mother, a fac-simile in features and shape of head of that duchess, but younger by sixteen or eighteen years. She was considered to be comfortably married, as her husband and his people had some substance. The milk which I got bore evidence that they had a cow, as did the cow's stall on that side of the floor, two yards behind the beautiful young mother. A horse, which stood on the opposite side, with his hind feet two yards and a half from the hearth-stone, and his head haltered to the wall at the window, was another symptom that they were not the poorest of people. There would have been a pig had there been potatoes. An elderly woman, Michael's sister and the husband's mother, said, speaking of the baby, 'He has come to us in hard times; but may the times be better before he knows them, an it please God'. To which Michael lifted his hat reverently and said, 'Glory to his name'. And the beautiful young mother, sitting on the stone among the ashes, turned her lustrous eyes to the low black roof of the hut and said, 'Glory be to his name', and then kissed her baby. Her mother-in-law followed both by the word 'Amen!'

O'Brien's Bridge, County Clare, 12th April, 1847

The letters from the county of Limerick, in which the uncultivated estates of Mr. Smith O'Brien and his neighbours are described, require that I should now say something of capital required for cultivation. I am now thirty-five miles from Smith O'Brien's property; but this little town, and its long bridge, were built by one of his ancestors, a king of Munster; and at the distance of four or five miles from here, by a road which I have just travelled over, lives his brother, Mr. Robert O'Brien, whose experience as a land-agent is large, and whose evidence before the commissioner inquiring into the 'Law and practice of the occupation of

land in Ireland' is comprehensive and practical. I may therefore pause at this place on my journey to the north, and take pen in hand once more to write of the land of the O'Briens.

On capital, Mr. Robert O'Brien says:-

'There appears to be a great deal of unnecessary outcry on the subject of capital, as there exists sufficient in the country for its agricultural purposes, if it was applied with skill, and it would then become reproductive, instead of lying nearly idle in the funds and banks. A great deal of money belonging to the agricultural classes in this country is lying in bankers' hands, bearing a very low interest, which, if applied on the almost neglected land of the same farmers, would yield large returns; nor can any difference be discovered in the conduct of such persons, arising from their having leases or no leases'.

Because the leases are encumbered with law, and so full of reservations for the proprietors, and of penalties on the tenants, that they cannot cultivate wisely and well. Let them move spade or plough, let them move hands or feet, for the reclamation of their land from waste, the law is at them. To go into the strata of limestone rock under their farms, and quarry it to make lime of it in a kiln to lay on their farms, they might as well go into a den of animals with tusks which eat men alive, or into the limekiln itself, the lawyers are instantly or ultimately at them, and consume them with law.

I stand now on the north side of the Shannon, where it is approaching the falls of Castle Connell, and opposite to me is the farm of Mr. James M'Nab, a Scotchman. The years are yet few in number, only about fifteen, when all that farm had from twelve to twenty feet of bog moss on it. The grass, corn, and root crops which now grow on those farm fields, enlarging the supply of human food, grow where the moss has been removed. The moss has been removed on a scale of greatness and precision of system which only an enterprising man of capital could undertake. The bog which only fed a few wild ducks and snipes was manufactured into fuel for the supply of Limerick city, giving the comfort of household fires to more people at a cheaper rate than they ever had such comfort before. Wages were paid to several hundreds of people, not employed before, in cutting the moss, and at a rate above the usual wages of the county. I see sixty people at work on the farm now at 8s. per week, while ordinary farmers and gentlemen employers pay only 5s. and 6s. per week. Canals are cut, and boats enter from the Shannon, go through the farm where the land is reclaimed, to those parts where it is in process of reclamation, and are loaded with the dry fuel to go to Limerick. Some of the workmen said to me to-day, as I passed them near the road, 'God bless Mr. M'Nab and all his sort! he makes farm land where a snipe could not live, and pays such wages as never were paid here before. Pray God, Sir Richard gets the



A mid-19th century tavern scene.

worst of the law, and does not succeed in turning Mr. M'Nab out'.

This Sir Richard is the owner of vast possessions measured only by miles, which only fed snipes. He employs himself in feeding horses and dogs, and in hunting foxes. His whole employment is amusement. He has a residence near Mallow, in Cork, and another at Castleconnell, in Limerick. Horses and dogs to hunt and eat corn and meal; idle servants to eat bread and meat; a river, like a sea broken out of bounds, rolling and roaring through his demesne, with water-power equal to the millwheels of a world - is also kept idle: those are the signs of what Sir Richard de Burgho does or is likely to do, with the exception that he is at law with Mr. James M'Nab, endeavouring to eject him from the farm on some informality in the lease. A similar lease under which Mr. Watson, another tenant, held, has been abrogated, owing to the legal technicalities not being complied with, and it is generally feared that Mr. M'Nab's lease will be broken in the same way.

Had he taken the bog on lease, and kept it to breed snipes and frogs, miasmatic fevers and famine, he might have held it without his lease being questioned. But to have cattle and corn, and healthy farm fields, and to have much to sell to a population who require much, and the profit going into his pocket, strikes the mind of the De Burgho, chief of an ancient race, as an injustice to him, and he must try to get a share to help him to maintain his dignity, his hounds, horses, and idle servants. The lawyers tell him how to get, not only a share, but the whole; and so he goes to law.

The more honest, and I shall venture to say the more honourable and dignified way of getting possession of such farm fields as those brought from beneath the

barren moss by James M'Nab, to beautify a country and feed its people, is for Sir Richard de Burgho to go to work and clear a bog for himself. He has many more to begin upon. Hundreds of people in Castleconnell and O'Brien's Bridge are without work and food; the corn and meal, and bread, and meat which he feeds idle horses, dogs, and servants upon, would afford them wages and food to begin work upon.

At all events, his success in taking Mr. Watson's property from him and his attempt to take that of Mr. M'Nab, though both held on lease, will not encourage other men of capital and enterprise to try to create fertility and fullness out of barrenness and famine. And, if he succeeds, one other warning will be given to agriculturists to put their money in the bank, even at a low per centage, rather than risk it in the cultivation of land, as Mr. Robert O'Brien says they do.

This gentleman proceeds to say -

'The tillage is carried on with a very small amount of capital by the 'free crop' system. And if they do purchase manure, they consume the crop in such a way as to yield little return to the capital, and, by their crops, take out of the land rather more than they put into it. Hence the frequent failures in the overworked soil'.

The term 'free crop' is thus explained:-

'The labourer, not having land of his own, gathers during the year, heaps of manure, and in spring applies to the farmers who have have land and not manure, who suffer him to put the manure on the land and cultivate a crop of potatoes; and, according to the quality of the land, sometimes a sum of money is paid, varying from 4s. to £1 per quarter of an Irish acre, in addition to the manure, by the labourer'.

It is always on very poor land where

this 'free crop' of the labourer is permitted. Much of his own time and all the time of his family is employed in collecting this manure on the roads, while, strange to say, the very farmer on whose farm it is to be applied - on land exhausted by three, four, or five crops without manure - is allowing the streamlets and rivers to carry away the natural riches of his cow sheds, stables, and farm yard. This waste of manure is universal; but the free crop system is not universal.

Having explained the meaning of that term, Mr. O'Brien proceeds to say that no attempt to establish agricultural societies has succeeded, because the only parties having an interest in tillage or a desire to see it extended, are the poorest of the farmers, not able to support agricultural societies; and -

'The gentry generally hold rich lands, which are kept for pasture, and do not as a class feel so direct a sympathy with those who occupy the waste and poor lands. A farmer, with little or no capital, through the medium of conacre and free crops, can sufficiently manage to hold a tillage farm; but he must have capital to hold it as a pasture farm. The consequence of such tillage tends to the impoverishment of the land, and it is for this reason that so many landlords have inserted covenants in their leases against breaking pasture land'.

Mr. Smith O'Brien is one of those who do so, while he amuses himself with crying for a repeal of the union as if *it* would repeal the covenants between him and his tenants. If he would do his part as a landlord towards providing that food for Ireland which he blames the government for not providing, he will repeal those covenants, and set himself to teach his tenants how to make their farms productive of food; he will build habitable houses for them and for the cattle, and contrive

to drain the meadow springs into the rivulets, instead of allowing the rivulets to take the farm-yard manure.

Mr. Robert O'Brien continues -

'Generally, it may be established as a rule, that it is only the poor lands which have been cottiered, (tilled by a cottier tenantry;) for, while the population is very large and poor on the hilly lands, you may find - but a comparatively small population on the rich lands'.

This has arisen from the clearance system. Under the old forty shilling freeholds, previous to 1829, the people, if cleared from the rich lands on the levels, were set to the mountains to farm there, for the sake of their votes. Many of the hills were occupied by those people rent free, for the sake of their votes; but when they were disfranchised they were called upon to pay rent, and ejected wherever the land was worth taking possession of, if they did not pay rent. If thus cleared away there, they swelled the measure of pauperism in the towns; if left there, they became the parents of pauper families on the hills. All that the landlords of the levels did or cared for was to keep them either on the hills or in the towns, or to get them off to England or America, or anywhere, so as they did not come down to take the grass from the horned cattle which were feeding to go to England for rent.

Mr. O'Brien proceeds thus, in corroboration of similar statements made by me in previous letters, before I knew that I had such a valuable witness -

'The consolidation of farms is generally that of a number of small farms in tillage, giving subsistence and labour to whole families, into large pasture farms *not requiring any labour*; for a single herdsman, who receives no money wages, will be able to do all the labour required on a large farm, which, if kept in tillage, would employ a great many hands'.

Yet on the farms of Cahermoyle, belonging to Mr. Smith O'Brien, and on others near them, even the herdsmen have been all the winter and spring on the relief lists of the Board of Works, the farmers, to save the herdsman's diet in the farm-houses, consenting to let some sister, or aunt, or mother, do the herding, that the herdsman might go and earn one shilling and fourpence per day on the relief works, an amount of wages never paid, never heard of, never dreamt of in that part of country before - wages which even Mr. Smith O'Brien, while railing at the government for not paying enough, would not come within fourpence of to his labourers in Cahermoyle demesne.

Relative to the increase of pauper gentry, Mr. Robert O'Brien says -

'The great value of land during the war induced many who were of a respectable farming class to sublet their lands, and set up to be gentlemen; and one frequently meets with people who say their father had £100, £200 &c. a-year out of such and such lands'.

This is another testimony against war, and against any policy of government, peaceful or warlike, which shall force



The Bishop's Palace, Church Street, King's Island.

consumption faster than production. Armies are paid out of taxes upon industry, and hundreds of thousands of working men and women are drawn from employment nationally profitable to supply the armies with food and clothing which is nationally unprofitable. It is another testimony against forcing money into circulation in greater amount than the industry of the nation requires to keep it in motion. A large supply of money let loose, or forced into circulation, does not necessarily give an impulse to industry and to the production of real national wealth. Its good or evil effects depend on the currents it gets into - whether it sets people to consume without producing something that is useful to others, or sets them to produce more than they consume. In the time of the war it not only excited a vast consumption but from the universal ignorance of industrial economy which then prevailed - and which though not universal, still prevails - the occupiers of land, when the flood-tide of an over-high circulation made eddies at their doors, ceased to work, and ceased to direct the money which flowed to their doors to the farm fields to pay for more labour, to produce more corn; they took the money and retired with it to eat corn without working; they set themselves up as consumers, ceased to be producers, withdrew the national capital from production, and turned the current into a wrong channel.

The Irish members of Parliament, in crying for money to be poured into Ireland, and also seeking to have a larger number of idle consumers compelled to

reside in the country - the absentee landlords, horses, hounds, and non-producing servants - do not seem to know that more consumption without more production will only make the country poorer. Mr. Smith O'Brien who proposed a few weeks ago to enforce the residence of landowners, under a penalty of a tax of ten per cent on their incomes, is himself an instance of a landlord who takes rent, buys food, clothes, and personal service with the rent, and adds no value to his land or to anything on the land.

Even those who get together a few thousand pounds by trade in Limerick, or in other Irish towns, with the exception probably of Belfast, set up as gentry. A tradesman with £10,000 in the bank, thinks it time to retire from business, and hunt, and keep a carriage and servants. The English manufacturers and merchants do not withdraw from business, to keep a retinue of servants and animals to consume food and clothing, and produce nothing, as soon as they have the means of retiring to be gentry out of business. They add the profits of one year to the capital of the year before, and do more business, create a greater amount of the necessaries and comforts of human requirements, and enable a greater number of human creatures to obtain them.

On the Value of Small Farms [Extract]

Small farms are a favourite theme with certain parties in England. To relieve the competition for labour they would introduce a competition for land. Let us



Sketch by John Locke in 1846 of Shanagolden Church, Co. Limerick.

glance at the results of competition for land in Ireland, and the evidence shewing how many acres are required in different counties to maintain a small farmer and his family.

Limerick - Mr. Roche, farmer: - 'A farm of sixteen acres sufficient to support a family comfortably'.

Mr. Monsell, land proprietor, states that there is no class of labourers in Limerick county who depend entirely on money wages. He pays some of his labourers by giving them land, they paying the rent in labour; and to others he gives conacre, potato ground for one crop only. He says he endeavours to regulate the wages in some degree according to the size of the families, by giving one shilling in summer and tenpence in winter; 'no other person in the county', he says, 'giving more than eightpence'.

In the letter dated from Rathkeale, which gave an account of the county as seen from the road between Limerick and that place, the agriculture was probably made to appear better than it really is. I mentioned the village of Patrick's Well. Mr. Monsell, speaking of his attendance at the petty sessions as a magistrate at that place, says, on the 26th of Aug. 1844 -

'It is decidedly desirable to have my labourers holding their ground immediately from myself. There was a curious instance occurred at the petty sessions at Patrick's Well on Friday last; there was a man who appeared before us, and it came out in the course of his examination that he paid *thirty days' work for four perches of ground, and he built a house upon the ground himself.* The person he held from held eight acres and a-half, and he paid £3:8:5 per acre, the outside value of the land being about £2 the acre. He held it from a middleman, and that middleman from another, and he held it again from the head landlord; and I

should say such cases are not rare'.

Here we have the competition for land producing five gradations of tenant misery, the lowest tenant paying for four perches of land, the work of thirty days, and building his hovel besides. Yet with those appalling facts known to him, Mr. Feargus O'Connor, himself an Irish middleman once, and deriving whatever knowledge he has of agriculture from his experience as a middleman who lived on the rents of a wretched under tenancy, attempts to introduce his pernicious competition for land in England, by parcelling the English soil into two acre, three acre, and four acre farms to begin with. At least he attempts to make the working-men of England believe that they would be independent of the wages of labour and the competition in wages if they had the land.

Mr. Monsell proceeds:-

'Subletting and dividing of farms still continues; chiefly in the way of people endeavouring to divide even very small farms for the sake of allocating portions to their children'.

Would not all England, if divided, as propounded by Mr. Feargus O'Connor, into small farms of four acres, have to be divided again to allocate portions to chartist children? Listen to the questions and answers which expose the poverty of those parts of Ireland where the population in desperation are still able to get some of the land to divide:-

'What, in your opinion, is the general effect of the system?'

- 'The general effect is to produce wretchedness and misery beyond description. The condition of the labourers who do not receive constant employment is very miserable indeed. I have had occasion to make a list of the persons in my parish, in which there is a good deal of employment given to the poor, and they are a good deal

looked after, and I find the people are in general in a very destitute state. Out of 600 or 700, there are 158 in a state of very great destitution; they are in a state of great poverty, because they are only partly employed'.

Yet those people have, on an average, more than the breadth of land to each family that is to be allotted to the chartist prizeholders in England; and it is better land than that at O'Connorville, or any other in the county of Hertford. It may be alleged that the rent in Ireland eats up the produce and the profit, and that the chartist prizeholders would be differently circumstanced, having no rent to pay. But their liabilities are equal to a heavy rent at the very outset; while the absence of rent does not save the occupiers from destitution when the land is minutely subdivided. Mr. Monsell continues:

'There is one spot in the parish where the proprietor allowed people to settle and charged them no rent, and the state of absolute destitution in which those people are it is impossible to describe'. (This was in 1844).

'Are those people, generally speaking, willing to work if they can get it?' - 'Yes, perfectly willing'.

One source of the delusion under which working men in England have been induced to become shareholders in Feargus O'Connor's land company is the fictitious quantity of produce alleged by him to be derivable from the land.

But I shall not at present pursue the subject further. The English working population have neither been so well cared for, nor have they cared so well for themselves, as should have been and as will be; but it is not by a system of general pauperism upon minute portions of land that they are to make a change for the better - they must go forward, not turn back.