

Sir Vere Hunt 1761-1818

It is said that in eighteenth-century Ireland the first two questions asked as to a young man's respectability and qualifications, particularly when he came as suitor, were, 'What family is he of? Did he ever blaze?'

Vere Hunt had had his first duel by the time he was eighteen, in which year he had also ridden a race, fallen in love with an actress, left college, taken to gambling and sat on a Grand Jury.

His family, the Hunts, had lived at Curragh Chase near Adare in Limerick since the early seventeenth century and were descended through the female line from the Earls of Oxford. (In the hope of gaining the extinct title, succeeding generations called themselves de Vere.)

All this must have made an acceptable c.v., for in 1782, when he was twenty-two, Vere Hunt writes: 'Captain Hill speaks to me about Miss Pery - I go and see the Bishop [her father], I dine with him. - propose for his daughter - accepted - broke off in consequence of a misunderstanding with my father. Renewed.'

I do not think his marriage was a happy one; in his diary he always refers respectfully to his wife as Lady Hunt, but on the whole they lived separate lives. Their only son, Sir Aubrey de Vere, was a poet, as were his sons; one of whom wrote the 'Snowy Breasted Pearl'.

Vere Hunt was created a baronet after he had been High Sheriff of the county. He was also, for a short time before the Union, a Member of Parliament for Askeaton, a seat that had cost him £5000. It was in an effort to recoup his losses that he voted for the Union even though he opposed the measure. In the diary he comes across as something of a maverick and enthusiast, though many of his schemes failed. He took a theatre company around the south of Ireland - unfortunately he did not keep a diary for this period and there survive only brief notes; he owned a coal mine at Glangoole in Tipperary, for which he laid out and built the village of New Birmingham. In one entry in his diary he writes, 'Too wet to lay out Oxford Street.'

One of his more colourful ventures was the purchase of Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel, though after spending some months there during a winter he was most anxious to leave; negotiations for the sale of the island to the government continued for many years.

Because he was such a heavy gambler he was always in debt and spent much time in London, where the entries record a constant whirl of financial transactions and also his ceaseless pleadings with the government - and Castlereagh in particular - to pay the

Sir Vere Hunt

money they owed him for raising a regiment and for Lundy Island. In the end he was arrested and spent many months in the Fleet, the debtor's gaol, though it does not sound as if it was much hardship - he was often on day release, usually had people to dine with him and played bowls in the prison yard.

28 March 1798

The County [Limerick] met at one over the Exchange. I proposed that it be recommended to landlords to give a temporary abatement to poor tenants on account of the fall of grain, and to pay tythes for those under £10 a year rent. It was negatived. A memorial was sent to the Lord Lieutenant signed by thirty-six Justices to proclaim the entire county as in a state of insurrection. Dined at Harry Fosbery's and got drunk.

1 April 1798

Left Limerick at twelve, got home to dinner, and found Lady Hunt and Aubrey in good spirits considering the dreadful state of the county which was this day proclaimed in rebellion. Fixed to send them to England, put up the rules of the Insurrection Act for the information of the poor people and had a small guard of my own people ... Determined to put the house in a state of defence and made up different doors and windows with stone and mortar.

9 April 1798

My dear wife & darling Aubrey went to Limerick on their way to Dublin & probably England to avoid the dangers of this unhappy distracted county ... A guard mounted. Then came back to dinner, lonesome! I cd not eat a bit.

11 April 1798

Went with John Waller's Corps, thirty-eight in number, to Askeaton, arrived there at four & found thirty of the Tyrone Militia under arms. Searched different houses in town and got seven firelocks and some swords, etc ...

17 April 1798

Heard that my Uncle Harry's son, Phineas, was the head of the United Irishmen about Cappah, but that he gave himself up to General Sir James Duff and made a full discovery.

19 May 1798 - Dublin

Dined at Tom Quin's. At nine an express came for the Surgeon-General, who dined with us, to go off to dress Lord Edward Fitzgerald's wounds, who had just been taken by Major Sirr and Justices Swan and Ryan.

23 May 1798 – Dublin

The town in great confusion and a rising expected every hour ... Went to the Castle, saw Lord Edward Fitzgerald's uniform ... Lord Rossmore showed me an impression of the Great Seal found on Lord Edward ... People taken up every instant and flogged by military law to get confessions ... Determined to send my family off without delay, called with a hackney coach for Lady Hunt, Aubrey and Jenny Bindon, and set out for the *Prince of Wales* Packet. She could not sail, the wind being foul, and we all slept on board. Heard from Captain Hill of the *Lady Fitzgibbon* that Frank Arthur, Dr Hargrove, Doctor Ross (all from Limerick) and others were apprehended, and from my Uncle William Hunt that his son Billy was taken up.

He went to England, where he was much occupied with recruiting, and in May 1799 he took the regiment to the barracks in Guernsey. In January 1800 he returned to Dublin.

17 January 1800 – Dublin

Got into the harbour at daylight and after landing, proceeded to Dublin on foot and put up at Quin's Hotel in Crow Street. In the evening to the House of Commons and most warmly welcomed by Lord Castlereagh. Called on Lord Glentworth and consulted him on my expectations from Government. Strongly advised by him not to take any bargain, as those who acted steadily and honourably to the Government would be more liberally treated than if they made a contract.

19 January 1800 – Dublin

Lord Glentworth and I had another conversation and he suggested to me to ask for the Government of Limerick when it may be vacant, and promised me whenever the County or City Militia were vacant he would get it for me. I dined with him.

21 January 1800 – Dublin

Conversed again with Lord Glentworth and spoke on the subject of a peerage. He seems averse to my pressing Government but to leave matters to themselves. Found my situation very unpleasant, pledged to Lord Castlereagh through Lord Glentworth to support a measure which my honour was bound to but my soul revolted at.

3 April 1811 – Curragh Chase

This morning at four o'clock departed this life, John Leahy, who lived for seventy or eighty years with my father and me, and who lived as a pensioner with me for the last twenty years. His honesty and fidelity were great, and I sincerely

lament the departure of so old, tried and valuable a domestic. Ordered a coffin to be made for him of the old elm-tree, coeval with himself, or rather antecedent to him, which was blown down last winter. Kill a lamb and dine on a forequarter of it, fish etc. Dr Lee the parish priest of Adare with me. After dinner, he and I go up to Leahy's house, where I give directions for his wake, funeral etc. Lee sleeps here.

13 May 1813 – Dublin

Lounge to the Exhibition of Paintings by Irish artists at Dublin Society House, and very much amused at it for above an hour. Dead game, vegetables and fish pieces by Doctor Richardson – very capital. Landscapes by Petrie and Sadleir – very well done. And some pictures by Allpenny – pleasing. A full-length of Mr Foster, the late Speaker, by Sir William Beechy, also hangs there. From thence I went to see the Museum of the Dublin Society, and the library belonging to it. I was highly pleased at both, and determine, when I can spare fifty guineas, to become a member of that useful institution.

... I remarked some things which might, on a future day, be applicable to Currah, viz., the geometrical staircase, specimens of models of various implements connected with husbandry and domestic management ... Lounged from the Museum to an auction in Clare Street, of a Mr Isaac who, after having furnished his house in a most magnificent style, found out his error and miscalculation as to his means to support it; and all, of course, went to the hammer – Going! Going! Just going! Gone!!!

Dined at Lelands. They all went in the evening to a concert at the Rotunda and I went home quietly to bed.

17 May 1813 – Dublin

Look in at Gilbert and Hodges, see some books bespoke by Aubrey, and see for the first time the celebrated Archibald Hamilton Rowan, who walked in attended by two monstrous and beautiful Danish dogs.

27 May 1813 – Dublin

A fine day at last. Go out at eleven o'clock in James Hunt's jaunting car with his son Harry to the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin, and much disappointed at not meeting Doctor Wade the Botanic Professor there. Spent two hours very pleasantly, viewing the plants and arrangements, attended for the most part by the head-gardener, who seems to have considerable technical knowledge of the profession, but by no means sufficient depth of knowledge, genius, education and comprehension, to entitle him to be the head of so considerable a national institution.

The plants in general have undergone a removal and new arrangement this season, on which account they do not appear in so flourishing a state. I particu-

larly remark here the following shrubs trained to a twelve-feet wall, and most beautifully covering it, viz., *Pyracantha*, *Phyllaea*, *Alatimus* and *Acacia*. Saw three plants of large-leaved Mountain Ash, exactly the same as the Curragh accidental variety of it which, I was informed, came from Lee and Kennedy's Nursery^A as *Sorbus Hebrides*.

Saw a good collection of Irises, some varieties of Box, a Gold Arbor Vitae, some varieties of Holly, many of Poplars and Willows, a very beautiful Pine, the Aleppo, the leaves like the Scotch but delicate, and the branches weeping, and the lower branches all successfully laid. A Siberian Stone Pine grafted, common-cleft way, on the Scotch, and perfectly thriving. In the flower-garden, I noticed a large globe flower with orange flowers. Went all through the Hot-houses which are capitally stocked, and a most curious and extensive variety. Returning very hungry, having had no breakfast, I gratify myself with cold lamb, a pint of porter, and a tumbler of punch at the Globe Tavern in Essex Street.

In the evening, I stopped and went through the Richmond Institution for the Industrious Blind, and saw some employed weaving coarse canvas, and others basket-making, which they did very clumsily. I also went through the Farming Society's Concerns in Summerhill, which establishment seems very complete. The workshops for carpenters, smiths and the various persons employed in making agricultural implements are extensive, commodious and well laid out. In the yard are many new and, curious machines and implements of husbandry; and, adjoining the house in the rear, is a small compartment of ground laid out in beds, and the various grasses and greens for cattle are systematically classed and arranged there.

I should not omit that, on my way to Glasnevin today, I went over a great school, established on the Lancastrian plan, situated close by the Bridge, which seems to be most attentively and well conducted.

Returned at nightfall, jaded to death. Took refuge in an obscure tavern in Anglesea Street, the Shakespeare, where I took a crab, bread and butter, a pint of porter and two tumblers of raspberry punch. Strolled home and got to bed and rest, which I never more wanted, at ten o'clock.

28 May 1813 - Dublin

Walked into town and met Major Sirr near the Castle, who stopped me and told me exultingly, as if I had been, which God forbid, an enemy to Catholic Emancipation, that the question was lost, a majority of four being against it in the Commons. I surprised him not a little, when I replied I was most heartily concerned to hear it ... Thence to Nick Mahon's where I dined sumptuously on fish, no meat as per following bill of fare: - Salmon, fresh herring, potato pudding, asparagus, sole, haddock epergue, turnips, asparagus, salt fish, turbot, removes, rice pudding, pies, cheese, etc. The company, three ladies, Doctor O'Shaughnessy, Catholic Bishop of Killaloe, Doctor Reynolds, Counsellor

O'Gorman and his brother, the two Mr Everards and two or three others. Home at eleven, smoked a pipe and then to bed.

4 June 1813 - Dublin

Very fine day, and being the King's birthday, the town was in bustle and hurry from morning till night. In the early part of the day a Review in the Phoenix Park, where all ranks and classes were crowded together to see poor soldiers sweating and stinking, and great Militia officers, from the mighty Colonel to the puny Ensigns, exhibiting their bravery and military acquirements. City Buckeens on hired horses and with borrowed boots and spurs; young misses slipping away from their mammas to meet their lovers; old maids taking snuff, and talking and thinking of old times; pickpockets waiting for a lob, and old bawds and whores for a cull; handkerchiefs in constant employ, wiping dust, sweat and dander from the face and head; coaches, landaus, gigs, curricles and jaunting cars in constant jostle and confusion in the backstreet to avoid paying money and the shops open to try to get some; mail coaches making a grand procession through the principal streets.

A Levée at the Castle, attended as usual by pimps, parasites, hangers-on, aidecamps, state-officers, expectant clergymen, hungry lawyers, spies, informers, and the various descriptions of characters that constitute the herd of which the motley petty degraded and pretended Court of this poor fallen country is made up. Alas, poor Ireland.

I spent the day lounging about, seeing what was to be seen, and, in proud feelings of superior independence, looked down with utter contempt of the weakness of an administration, imbecile, evasive, and mouldering into contempt; and every loss of public opinion and respect ever must attend the paltry pretended administration of this despicable and degraded country.

After dinner take a rambling circuit over Westmoreland Street and up Anglesea Street. Lounge into booksellers' shops, then to Crow Street to see, according to ancient custom, all the blackguard boys collected to insult and pelt with small stones, gravel, periwinkles, etc. the ladies who go to the Play on this night. Boxes being free for the ladies, consequently it may be supposed what degree of respect is due to that class of the tender sex who avail themselves of enjoying a theatrical treat.

5 June 1813 - Dublin

Dined at the Griffin Tavern, a private and obscure, but comfortable place, No 3 Dame Court. Very good veal cutlets, cold lamb, bread, cheese etc., ale, and a tumbler of excellent punch for 3s 1d. Walked in the evening with Jerry Barrett who I met, and treated him at the Griffin to ale and punch. A piper, according to the evening custom of the house, played in the Box-room, for the entertainment of young attorneys, buck-shopmen, bankers' and merchants' clerks, and those

under-rate would-be sprigs of dash and fashion, who roll into this and such houses to pass their evenings over a plate of cockles and a pint of beer. I, however, remarked some who possibly pilfer the till now and then to enable them to gratify in this sort of luxury, extend themselves in their expenditure and boldly call out 'Waiter, a kidney, and be sure let it be nice.' Another, with a gentler voice, 'Waiter, a naggin of raspberry and *meteerials*.' Another, 'A tumbler, half and half, mix it yourself waiter, and make it stiff, with a slice of lemon on the top.' They all seemed delighted with the piper, but it was a great annoyance to me who would have been much more highly gratified by the eccentric anecdotes of Jerry Barrett than the musical strains of the Orpheus of No 3 Dame Street Lane. Heavy and affected in my chest the entire of this day, and very glad to get home to my bed at ten o'clock.

11 June 1813 - New Birmingham

Awake at three o'clock and remain so, coughing incessantly till six. Then, by the help of tongs, pulled a wire that runs across the ceiling of my barnish-looking room and procured the appearance of a chamber maid who seemed much disappointed in my not inviting her to my bed, my thoughts being on much better subjects. I did not pity her chagrin but ordered her to send Thomas to me and to have the carriage brought to the door. I get up at half past six and set out in an excellent carriage to Maryborough where arriving at half past eight, I have the misfortune to be transferred to a deal box not more than double the size of a sedan, which Mr Phelan, the inn-keeper, insisted was a most capital posting chaise and I was the first gentleman that faulted. I was obliged to be satisfied and on proceeding drove to fortune, as the handy boy scientifically announced it, until I got to Abbeyleix where I made him stop on the account of my wanting breakfast, and seeing there some capital carriages at an inn laterly set up under the patronage of Lord de Vesci, I discharged the lad and sent him back with his shay discomfited at his disgrace. Proceeded after breakfast to Johnstown where arrived at half past one and leaving it at two arrived at four at New Birmingham. This day was as wet as ever a day came. I stopped at Dr Meighams, the parish priest at Pasterville and gave him a dozen Dublin herrings having bought some this morning in Monasterevan. And I dined myself on another dozen and some Glangoole eels. Joe Hunt and Mrs Hunt with me. Dr Connor came in the evening. He considered me much worse than I think myself as I increased coughing and oppression. This evening as well as repetitive pulse I have travelled in a very weak state forty miles to dinner. It would quicken the pulses of a strong man in perfect health. He ordered me a blister to my chest and a bottle of pectoral stuff. Slept at Joe Hunt's in a room most comfortably appointed. Rested tolerably well but had several courses of coughing. Found on my arrival in New Birmingham, that poor Paddy the weaver died this morning and had not a coffin. Gave a pound.

29 June 1813 - Curragh Chase

An Holiday. St Peter and Paul's day. Compelled the men to work much against their inclination. Father Halpenny the priest, coming to christen Edmond Ryan's child, made a great rout about it, and although I was convinced on enquiry that the holiday was one usually kept, and would otherwise on so finding it out have dismissed the men from work, yet the tyrannical and overbearing manner of Sacerdos in his interference between my tenants and me, obliged me rather than yield to him to continue a compulsion which I felt unpleasant in doing.

1 October 1813 - Curragh Chase

... Reynard the Palatine, and lessee to the inappropriate tithes of Adare, besieges me with an horrible bill for tithes, claiming about £26. Having this day paid Mr Croker his tithes or balance of them, I had hoped I would have some temporary respite from sacerdotal harpies and legal depredations, but alas! I am doomed for ever to be a martyr to the imposition and dunment of this class of taxation so truly irritating and obnoxious to my feelings, as well as to the general feeling of this kingdom.

13 October 1813 - Lanespark (having spent the night at Pallace Inn)

Up at eight, after nine hours confinement with my knees to my chin in a camp-bed, schoolboy-sized, scantily curtained and obliged to make up a sufficiency of covering with the auxiliary box-coat of an unknown rascal who was put into a second bed in the room before I was well asleep. I thought on his first entry he might be a robber, as I had no idea of a male companion being billeted on me, but when, by the glimmering of a solitary coal in a pigmy grate, I perceived the fellow stripping, for he brought no candle, my apprehensions on that subject subsided.

The first lodgment of his habiliments, the aforesaid cloak, was made on the only chair in the room, which was at my bed-foot as a support to the end of the mattress, three feet longer than the bedstead, and which was turned up against the chair. The fellow plunged into bed with a crash that shook the room, and the quivering of the bed-posts and creaking of the sacking bottom, for at least a minute after he made good his lodgment, bespoke the ponderous qualities of its possessor.

After spending an hour in grunting, groaning, hiccuping and belching, to my great annoyance, a temporary cessation of his noisome and noxious easements was succeeded by a nasal overture, indicative of his being at length in the chains of repose. I then made that gentle seizure of his coat which I had long meditated and, dragging it through the foot curtains, I made myself the more comfortable for the night.

The morning came and displayed a wyatt window with three panes broke, and the sugar-paper substitute for them blown by the storm of the night on the

floor. I looked for my companion and found he had gone. I looked for the coat, which was also gone. I looked for my own clothes, and found all was safe. The rascal therefore was more honest than I expected, or otherwise was afraid of the gallows, which latter construction is, I think, the fairest to be put on him.

I got up, shaved with cold water and a deceitful-looking glass with so many curls and shades in it, one part of it making my face as round as a buttock of beef, and the other part making it as lank and as sharp as a hatchet, that I wondered how my throat escaped in the operation.

After abusing the house and everything in it, except the interesting waitress, I stepped in to a tolerable carriage, to which were hampered a pair of poor unfortunate woe-worn remnants of post-horses. My stage being but three miles, it was judged they had so much work in them, and the last penny was to be taken out of them ...

Arrive at New Birmingham at 10 and find everything wrong. Joe Hunt's cows on my lawn, the entire of it ploughed with un-rung swine, geese dragging the remnants of grass & ducks repasting on worms. The town filthy, dung-heaps at every quarter and turf ricks made in the streets!!!

30 October 1813 - Dublin

Dine at the Ormond Tavern on mock-turtle, a beefsteak and raspberry punch. An antiquated gentleman with few ideas but a great appetite, sat in the box with me and greedily devoured a bloody beefsteak as thick as a deal board. The only information I could extract from him was that Taverns are dearer now than they were forty years ago, and that the Ormond Tavern then went by the name of the Bird-House, in consequence of there being an aviary in it. His countenance was horrible, his eyes goggled, blear and raw, and his breath was pestiferous. Adjourned to the Hotel, read Hunter's *History of Botany Bay* till ten, and then to bed.

3 November 1813 - Dublin

Omitted in my journal yesterday that I saw the new Lord Lieutenant, Lord Whitworth, for the first time, it being his weekly day of giving audience, and of keeping up the mockery of state in this fallen and degraded sham-court.

He drove in from the park with his wife, the Duchess of Dorset, and one aide de camp, in a plain coach and four postillions in buff cloth, plain jackets, and two out-riders. The castle seemed deserted, few, I believe, seeking audience; and except the mere hangers-on, secretaries and clerks, two or three Generals and Judges, I presume, from appearance, His Excellency was not much annoyed by visitors.

6 November 1813 - Dublin

Dined at Hemy's Commercial Tavern, notwithstanding the glorious news, on a plain and humble dish of tripe, a pot of porter and two tumblers of punch; and after paying the extravagant sum of 3.9½d for my collation, I lounge to James

Hunt's who, I find in overflowing loyalty, drinking the alternate health of the gallant leaders among the allies. I join in his conviviality, drink tea with the ladies, leave it at ten, drop into a book-auction, buy two volumes of the *Anthologia Hibernica* for 5.10d, and read them in bed till one. MEMO: - John Kemble made his first appearance this night in *Macbeth*.

8 November 1813

This being the first day of the Grand Illuminations for the victory of the allies, I amused myself looking at the Show in Sackville Street till ten, and then perambulated the streets in view of this ebullition of loyalty, reading insincerity and disappointment in the countenances of nine-tenths of the blaze-gazers, and considering everyone but myself an idle fool, who strolled about in view of this wax and tallow exhibition.

These celebrations were for the defeat of Napoleon at Leipzig.

13 November 1813

Dine at Nick Mahon's, a party of twenty-four. Dinner magnificent. Having sat at the head of the table, was consequently obliged to devote my time more to the slavery of carving, and ceremonious attentions, than to the luxury of masticating the delicious viands before me, and the sensuality of gormandizing soups, fish, flesh and fowl, assorted and cooked in the most inviting manner, and accompanied with appropriate sauces sufficient to create keen and exurient propensities in the most debilitated and picktooth appetite. Turbot with never-to-be-forgotten lobster sauce succeeding soup, and mock-turtle stewed in Madeira succeeding turbot, produced claimants succeeding claimants on my patience, and in unremitting pressure evinced their determination that no respite should be granted to me.

Each dish was in its turn disposed of, and tantalus-like, I had the mortification to help the last portion of each, and see its china repository flit from my view in the clumsy and hasty grasp of a coarse, unhandy and unfeeling knight of the shoulder-knot, who kept me in constant agitation and dread of having my ear cut or my clothes besaued in his pro and con placing and replacing dishes, and thrusting for replenishment the plates of the rapacious and unsatisfied cormorants, to whose gratifications I was this day doomed to take an active part.

The second course at length arrived, and before me were placed, three plump and substantial sweetbreads. Fortunately for me, the ladies preferred wild fowl. Under the circumstances, I felt more for myself than for the gentlemen, and I neither recommended the dish to them, or offered to send any round. What then did I do? Why, I eat them all, and much good may they do me, and before the removal of the cloth, I successfully accomplished the making good the time I had lost by a further devourment of one plate of apple-pie, another of blancmange, and another of jelly, two custards, two lemonades and a brandy-peach. Thank God, the ladies did not stay long after the removal of the cloth, and I made a

most comfortable exchange from the chilling situation of being a master-of-ceremonies to a parcel of women I cared nothing about, to a warm position near the fire between two bishops, viz., Father Toohey of Limerick and Father O'Shaughnessy of Killaloe. The rest of the company were, Counsellors, O'Connell, O'Gorman, Scully and Finn, all celebrated orators of the Catholic Board, Mr MacNevin, Mr Richard O'Gorman, Mrs O'Connell, Mrs O'Gorman, beautiful; Mrs Finn, Miss Mary Hussey, Mrs Kelly and several of minor note whose names I did not know.

I spent a most pleasant evening, the wine excellent and the conversation varied, enlivening, amusing and instructing. We adjourned at ten to the drawing room, where there was an addition of about twenty people, four cardtables, and a grand pianoforte at which the Miss Sharkys, the Miss Meades, and Miss Mahon played and sang delightfully and alternately, and the rest of the company amused themselves as usual, in hearing, seeing, admiring, lounging, whispering, taking snuff and drinking tea. I left at half-past eleven, came home, took a pint of porter, read the *Evening Post* and went to bed.

16 November 1813 - Dublin

Dined at a tavern in Dame Court on whiting, veal cutlets, and oysters in shells. In the opposite box to me sat a most communicative man who appears to have been in business in the Liberties, and to be new-retired from it and living in the country. His name Burgess, he amused me with a detail equal to a gazette account of the Rising in 1803 under Emmet, in which he, according to his own account, was the most valiant hero that fought the Battle of Thomas Street on that memorable night. He was then a Liberty Ranger, but, preferring the Line to the Yeomanry, he joined the Twenty-first Regiment and, if he is to be believed, he acted more as their Commanding Officer than as a Volunteer. To his judgment, skill, local knowledge of lanes, alleys and posts, as well as to his gallantry in heading and encouraging the troops, and the extermination of rebels by his own hands, was, as he assured me, this Insurrection put down. I believed him, politely of course, and asked him what reward he had got, wondered he did not get a Red Ribbon, a Baronetage or some such mark of royal gratitude, to which he proudly answered that he sought no such distinctions, that the honourable recollection of his having been a saviour of his country, as every weaver in the Liberty well knew, was a sufficient reward to him ...

14 November 1813 - Dublin

Strolling about, I see hungry expectants, legal, clerical and military, some old beaux, some vain country gentlemen, and some remnants of the Irish nobility, rolling in hackney coaches in costume to Lord Whitworth's humbug levee. Poor things, how grand they think themselves going in state to the Pseudo court. In perfect contempt of the mockery, I sojourned to McDermott's Tavern, where I

dined with Chadwick and his friends; the one a faded relic, the other a plump, maukish, gawkish, unlettered, coarse, ordinary lump of flesh. They both ate beef-stakes and veal cutlets as voraciously as if a meat repast was a treat to them; and as to Raspberry Punch, when that made its appearance, they seemed perfectly intimate with it and received it most affectionately. I was sick of the bitches, and leaving them to the care of their friend, I went home to sup and bed.

18 October 1814 - Bruff

Arrived in Bruff at half past one. Fair day there and meet many friends in Bennett's Inn, all in desponding strains, lamenting the decreased value of fat cattle, the best fat cows bringing this day but twelve guineas each. Milch cows high from £18 to £20, pigs tolerably high, sheep low. Set out at two o'clock for Tipperary and meet near Kilballyowen a very fine threshing machine for Decourcy O'Grady. Soon after I had the misfortune to find myself in a crashing machine, for, crash went the front spring of the crazy depository in which I was journeying, and, having extricated myself by a judicious leap-out from the ill-fated vehicle, I perambulated ankle-deep to the aforesaid Bruff, when, there arriving, I found the parlour of the Inn occupied by Cork butchers and discontented farmers to whose society I would have unfortunately been consigned for the day but for the hospitality of John Bennett who invited me to his house, where I fared capitally both in board and bed. I was highly pleased at seeing there in a very small square pond opposite his hall door, duck, mallard, cooter and various other wild fowl in great abundance and perfect tameness, and I was particularly amused by the eccentricities of Standy Bennett who, in his way, is both clever and entertaining ... he is about to publish a book of poems, which of course I will be among the first to have. In bed at eleven and sleep like a top.

19 October 1814 - Curragh Chase

Eat a most hearty breakfast, voraciously commixing cold roast beef, eggs, toast, bread and butter and tea. John Bennett sat with me and gave me an account of the proceedings of the county: - the fall of rates, the elopement of tenants, break-up of half-gentlemen, stilling of putteen, disobliging conduct of bankers, security of money and increase of taxes. Sated with an abundant breakfast and overloaded with his commonplace communications, after putting on a clean shirt, purchasing a pair of spectacles and a pair of sleeve-buttons, I set out at one and arrived at Currah at half past four.

4 May 1815 - New Birmingham

Annoyed very much this evening by an itinerant sow-gelder who announces his arrival in town by the uncouth blasts of an abominable horn, to the terror of swine doomed to emasculation, and the disturbance of quiet citizens, retiring to rest at close of day.

18 March 1816 – Curragh Chase

Remove everything from the old to the new cellar, and a most disgraceful stock it was for a baronet's cellar, once well furnished, and into which in former days, two pipes of port were often put in together, two hogsheads of claret brought together, and varieties of white wines' etc. Thanks to the French Revolution and the Warlike ministers who have now taxed wines to nearly a prohibition, and taught the aristocracy of the country to drink putteen. To commemorate them I shall record my stock:- 10 bottles of claret, 1 of Methylin, 4 of Hock, 2 of Madeira, 20 of Barsac and Hermitage, 3 dozen of vinegar and 4 dozen of cyder. Send to Rathkeale for a quarter of mutton, no sheep being now *here* but six cull ewes in lamb and a Kerry horned gale. Such is the remnant of a fine flock, lost by the mange and the neglect and indolence of my servants ...

After dinner sleep four hours, overcome by eating and vexation.